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# Review of the Welsh Language Support Service for Schools

# **Review of the Welsh Language Support Service for Schools**

**Einir Burrowes, Nia Bryer, Huw Bryer, Cefin Campbell  
and Eluned Charles  
Old Bell 3 Ltd, Dateb and Sbectrwm**

Views expressed in this report are those of the researcher and not necessarily those of the Welsh Government

For further information please contact:

Alison Rees

Social Research Division

Strategic Planning, Finance and Performance

Welsh Government

Cathays Park

Cardiff

CF10 3NQ

Tel: 029 20801125

Email: [Alison.Rees@wales.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Alison.Rees@wales.gsi.gov.uk)

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. Old Bell 3, in association with Dateb and Sbectrwm, was commissioned by the Welsh Assembly Government to undertake a review of the Welsh language support service for schools provided by Local Authorities and other partners and agencies. The review was undertaken between March and September 2010.
2. The main aims of the review were to:
  - look at the funding and organisation of the Athrawon Bro service, and consider the breadth and scope of Athrawon Bro's work;
  - look at Welsh-medium and Welsh-language training that is delivered by Local Authorities and by agencies such as the WJEC<sup>1</sup> and the Association of Bilingual Schools in Wales (CYDAG)<sup>2</sup>.
  - offer recommendations on how to establish greater cooperation and cost-effectiveness in the delivery of Welsh-medium and Welsh-language training in future.
3. The review involved:
  - a review of background information;
  - a review of documents relating to each of the 22 Local Authorities in Wales;
  - face to face discussions with key 'national' stakeholders; and
  - face to face discussions with key staff within each Local Authority, as well as with the staff of a sample of schools.

## FINDINGS

4. The Welsh Assembly Government has made clear its desire to revitalise the Welsh language and its Welsh Medium Education Strategy points to the crucial role which schools have in realising that ambition. Although it is primarily concerned with the teaching and learning of Welsh as a first

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<sup>1</sup> The WJEC is an examination and awarding body which also provides educational resources  
<sup>2</sup> , CYDAG exists to promote and develop all aspects of bilingual education

language, the Strategy indicates that the Welsh Assembly Government also wants to see an improvement in the teaching of Welsh as a second language.

5. Alongside this, developments such as the introduction of the revised National Curriculum for Welsh and Estyn's<sup>3</sup> new Common Inspection Framework also all point to the need for progressively higher order Welsh language skills among practitioners working in schools, and more particularly in non Welsh medium schools. In this context, the Welsh Medium Education Strategy calls for the development of a coherent national and regional infrastructure for the delivery of Welsh-medium and Welsh-language teaching related in-service training.
6. Of course, Local Authorities already provide Welsh language support services to schools. These are funded by monies derived from:
  - the Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills within the Welsh Assembly Government, via its Better Schools Fund. In 2009/10, this represented just over £2.2millions, roughly 58 percent of which was allocated directly to schools;
  - the Welsh Language Board, whose contribution represented some £2.9 millions in 2009/10. Just over £2.3 millions of this funding were derived from the Department for Culture and Sport within the Welsh Assembly Government (under Section 21 of the Education Act) with the balance made up from the Welsh Language Board's own resources; and
  - Local Authorities, which between them, contributed at least £3.3 millions in 2009/10.
7. Athrawon Bro form a central plank of Welsh language support services for schools. Across Wales, 138 individuals (126 full time equivalents) are employed as Athrawon Bro or Latecomer Centre<sup>4</sup> staff. The vast majority are

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<sup>3</sup> Estyn is the office of Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales.

<sup>4</sup> Latecomer Centres are specialised education units which allow non-Welsh speakers moving into particular areas to learn Welsh rapidly so that they can cope with a Welsh medium/bilingual education in their new school

women and the age profile of the Athrawon Bro workforce is skewed towards the over 40s. Most Athrawon Bro are contracted to work during term time only, though some are employed under Soulbury<sup>5</sup> terms, more akin to Local Authority advisory staff.

8. Athrawon Bro teams generally reside within School Improvement Teams, often under the auspices of a school improvement officer with a specific responsibility for the Welsh language. In some areas, School Improvement Teams straddle Local Authority boundaries, with services managed and/or delivered by Local Authority subsidiary organisations or by consortia of Local Authorities.
9. The service which Athrawon Bro deliver varies significantly from area to area, largely reflecting the relative strength of the Welsh language in different parts of Wales. Nevertheless, the services provided can be broken down into four broad categories, as follows:
  - o practical support for schools in teaching Welsh and using Welsh as a medium for communication;
  - o teaching Welsh to Latecomers;
  - o developing teaching and learning resources; and
  - o delivering In Service Education and Training (INSET) courses.
10. Although they were once regarded as peripatetic teachers of Welsh, the role of Athrawon Bro is, by and large, focused on supporting schools to take greater ownership of teaching and using the Welsh language. The largest part of Athrawon Bro's time is spent in non-Welsh medium primary schools where they provide 'on the job' training to practitioners by supporting them in teaching Welsh as a subject or in teaching other subjects through the medium of Welsh. This aspect of their work often complements INSET programmes on offer to practitioners.

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<sup>5</sup> The Soulbury Committee is a collective bargaining forum for the negotiation of salaries and conditions of service for Local Authority educational advisory staff

11. Overall, contributors were complimentary about the enthusiasm and energy that Athrawon Bro show in promoting and teaching the Welsh language.
12. However, the position of the Welsh language in some schools remains fragile and, although Athrawon Bro have been crucial to sustaining Welsh language teaching in such schools, it was acknowledged that they represent too limited a resource, particularly in the face of recent policy developments, such as the introduction of the Foundation Phase, the introduction of the new National Curriculum and the introduction of pupil assessment in Welsh as a second language. Schools (including Welsh medium/bilingual schools in some areas) also rely upon Athrawon Bro to support them in managing pupils' linguistic progression as they make the transition from primary to secondary schools as well as in organising Welsh language immersion and extra-curricular activities.
13. A combination of previous evaluations, recent policy developments and tightening budgets has led some Local Authorities to start targeting Athrawon Bro's services. Others have been reluctant to do so, on the basis that schools in their areas simply lack the capacity to meet their obligations without support from Athrawon Bro.
14. There are Latecomer Centres in eight Local Authority areas. These allow non-Welsh speakers moving into particular areas to learn the language rapidly so that they can cope with a Welsh medium/bilingual education in their new school. Most serve pupils in Key Stage 2, although a secondary Latecomer Centre, catering primarily for Key Stage 3 pupils has been established in Gwynedd.
15. The nature and intensity of experiences offered by Latecomer Centres varies from one area to another. Latecomer Centres in a number of areas also provide ancillary services such as 'after-care' for pupils and their schools and 'family engagement' services.

16. The work done by Latecomer Centres is generally well regarded and, in many areas, considered fundamental to the preservation of the linguistic characters of schools in communities where Welsh is widely spoken.
17. Athrawon Bro teams across Wales have, over the years, invested a significant amount of time in developing teaching, learning and assessment resources for use by practitioners in the classroom. Latecomer Centre staff in north Wales have developed a structured programme (Cynllun y Llan) which introduces the Welsh language incrementally to non Welsh speaking pupils. In some cases, Athrawon Bro have collaborated across Local Authority boundaries, but there has, undoubtedly, been a high degree of duplication in the development of certain types of resource.
18. Some of the resources produced were held up as examples of good practice. Unfortunately, however, there was only limited evidence that such resources are widely shared.
19. Local Authorities offer teachers a range of Welsh language/Welsh medium<sup>6</sup> 'off the job' training opportunities, often in partnership with neighbouring authorities. INSET programmes are normally delivered by members of School Improvement teams, although Athrawon Bro sometimes have an input, as do the WJEC and CYDAG.
20. A number of Local Authorities offer intensive courses which blend language teaching and methodology training and which are aimed at practitioners with little or no Welsh. The courses are generally thought to do much to engender more positive attitudes towards the Welsh language among practitioners and to increase practitioners' willingness to use Welsh on an incidental basis. However, the extent to which these courses equip practitioners with the skills needed to teach Welsh or to use the language in anything but the most superficial way in the classroom is open to doubt.

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<sup>6</sup> Welsh Language relates to teaching Welsh as a subject, whilst Welsh medium relates to the use of Welsh as a medium for teaching other subjects.



21. Nevertheless, two intensive Welsh language and teaching methodology courses (Cwrs Iaith a Methodoleg Cymraeg ail iaith (CIMCai)) and the Sabbaticals Scheme in Pembrokeshire) were held out as exemplars, albeit that there is insufficient evidence of their effectiveness at this stage to make informed judgements of their relative merits.
22. Local Authorities do not generally put on Welsh language courses for practitioners working in Welsh medium or bilingual settings. However, they do offer courses (often via the WJEC's national programme of Welsh-medium in-service training) to do with teaching Welsh as a first language.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

23. The report concludes by making 12 recommendations which relate to:
  1. The Welsh Assembly Government ensuring that compulsory modules, focused on developing Welsh language skills and on developing the skills to teach Welsh as a second language, are built into all the Initial Teacher Training courses it sponsors;
  2. The Welsh Assembly Government working with relevant stakeholders to develop and pilot an all-Wales language skills development programme for practitioners with little or no Welsh, drawing on those stakeholders' experiences of delivering CIMCai and the Sabbaticals Scheme;
  3. The Welsh Assembly Government working with Local Authorities to evaluate the effects of existing approaches to the development of practitioners' Welsh language and related pedagogical skills, using newly developed simple assessment tools tied into Welsh for Adults levels;
  4. The Welsh Language Board focusing grant funding on Local Authorities which demonstrate their intention to target Athrawon Bro's services in order to build sustainable capacity within schools;
  5. Local Authorities targeting support upon schools which demonstrate the most coherent and realistic plans for building their Welsh language/Welsh medium capacity;

6. Local Authorities setting Simple, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timebound (SMART) targets and gathering information to evaluate the impact and effectiveness of Athrawon Bro's intervention;
7. The Welsh Assembly Government taking steps to moderate the resources used to assess pupils' attainment in Welsh as a second language at the end of Key Stage 2;
8. The WJEC facilitating the sharing and coordinated production of teaching and learning resources;
9. The Welsh Assembly Government and relevant Local Authorities exploring how the use of resources developed for use in Latecomer Centres in north Wales might be extended to other parts of Wales;
10. The Welsh Assembly Government and the Welsh Language Board committing to the longer term funding of Latecomer Centres, as appropriate;
11. The Welsh Assembly Government merging the funding streams currently in place to create a single all-Wales grant scheme administered by the Welsh Assembly Government, whilst also making a commitment to sustaining existing funding levels;
12. The Welsh Assembly Government facilitating cross border working between Athrawon Bro teams to maximise efficiency and effectiveness.

# 1 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

1.1.1 Old Bell 3 Ltd, in association with Dateb and Sbectrwm, was commissioned by the Welsh Assembly Government to carry out a review of the Welsh language support service for schools provided by Local Authorities and other partners and agencies. The work was undertaken between March and September 2010.

1.1.2 This study has two main aims. The first of these was to look at the funding and organisation of the Athrawon Bro service, and consider the breadth and scope of the work undertaken in the Local Authority areas during the period of the review, and make comparison with activity undertaken in previous financial years.

1.1.3 This aim gave rise to five objectives, as follows:

- review the Athrawon Bro service within the Local Authorities (or in Cynnal and ESIS<sup>7</sup>) in terms of how it is managed, planned, structured and delivered in accordance with the targets and objectives of the 22 Local Authorities' Children and Young People Plans, the 22 Local Authorities' Welsh Education Schemes and the Welsh Language Board's conditions of grant;
- examine performance against the Welsh Language Board's annual targets as evidenced in the local authorities' progress reports and final reports on this service;
- examine the contribution of the Athrawon Bro to immersion teaching in the Centres for Latecomers (this will not include looking at the immersion teaching undertaken as part of the Welsh Language Board's immersion project as this work has already been done);

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<sup>7</sup> Cynnal and ESIS are education support service providers established by Local Authorities to work across Local Authority boundaries. Cynnal serves Gwynedd and Mon, whilst ESIS serves Caerphilly, Merthyr Tydfil, Bridgend and Rhondda Cynon Taff

- identify the Welsh-language teaching and learning materials produced by the Athrawon Bro and make recommendations on how materials could be made available across Wales;
- identify the key strengths of the Athrawon Bro and any constraints/issues that may impede their effectiveness;
- provide recommendations on how to enhance the work of the Athrawon Bro, drawing on best practice/lessons learned from their work in the schools and in Centres for Latecomers.

1.1.4 The second aim was to look at Welsh-medium and Welsh-language training that is delivered locally by the Athrawon Bro in the 22 Local Authorities (or by Cynnal and ESIS), and in partnership with the WJEC<sup>8</sup> and the Association of Bilingual Schools in Wales (CYDAG)<sup>9</sup>, and provide recommendations on how to establish greater cooperation and cost-effectiveness in the delivery of Welsh-medium and Welsh-language training in future.

1.1.5 This aim gave rise to three objectives, as follows:

- review the Continuous Professional Development programme for the development of Welsh-medium education including Welsh-medium and Welsh-language training that is delivered by the Athrawon Bro in the 22 Local Authorities (or by Cynnal and ESIS) and in partnership with the WJEC and CYDAG, and provide recommendations on how Local Authorities may be able to make more cost-effective use of training in the delivery of Welsh-medium and Welsh-language training in future;
- identify the training resources produced by the Local Authorities (or by Cynnal and ESIS) in support of Welsh-medium training (including training on curriculum development and management issues), and make recommendations on how partners could work together to produce and share training resources in order to avoid duplication of effort, and ensure that they become available across Wales; and
- identify the teaching and learning resources produced by the Athrawon Bro in the Local Authorities (or by Cynnal and ESIS) in support of Welsh-

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<sup>8</sup> The WJEC is an examination and awarding body which also provides educational resources

<sup>9</sup>, CYDAG exists to promote and develop all aspects of bilingual education

language training, and make recommendations on how partners could work together to produce and share teaching and learning resources in order to avoid duplication of effort, and ensure that they become available across Wales.

## **1.2 METHOD**

1.2.1 The study encompassed three main elements of work:

- desk-top research;
- fieldwork with ‘national’ stakeholders; and
- fieldwork with ‘local’ stakeholders.

1.2.2 The desk-top element of the study involved reviewing the documents listed in the bibliography given at Annex E, as well as a range of documents relating to each of the 22 Local Authorities in Wales. On the basis of this review, we were able to develop a questioning framework which formed the basis of topic guides used to steer our discussions with ‘national’ and ‘local’ stakeholders.

1.2.3 Our fieldwork with ‘national’ stakeholders involved conducting face to face interviews with key stakeholders who have a Wales wide remit. Contributors included representatives from the Welsh Assembly Government, the Welsh Language Board, the WJEC, CYDAG and Estyn<sup>10</sup>.

1.2.4 Our fieldwork with ‘local’ stakeholders involved visiting each of the 22 Local Authority areas in Wales. We held face to face interviews with the Director of Education (or equivalent), members of School Improvement Teams (generally Welsh Advisers, many of whom are responsible for the management of Athrawon Bro), Athrawon Bro and, where they exist, staff working in Latecomers’ Centres. It also involved gathering data about Athrawon Bro’s terms of employment in each area.

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<sup>10</sup> Estyn is the office of Her Majesty’s Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales.

1.2.5 In six Local Authority areas (Gwynedd, Môn, Wrexham, Pembrokeshire, Caerphilly and Rhondda Cynon Taf) our work additionally involved visiting a sample of schools to undertake interviews with head-teachers, teachers and pupils as they exemplify different working models.

1.2.6 Internal papers were produced outlining the situation in each area and these, along with data received about Athrawon Bro's terms of employment, were used to paint a picture of the current Wales-wide position.

1.2.7 We wish to thank the stakeholders who contributed so readily to this study.

### **1.3 STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT**

1.3.1 In the next chapter of this Report we present the context for this study, which has been informed by our review of the documents listed at Annex E and discussions with key national level stakeholders.

1.3.2 In chapter three, we present the findings of our fieldwork with local level stakeholders, and we set out our conclusions and recommendations in chapter four.

## **2 THE CONTEXT FOR THE STUDY**

### **2.1 BACKGROUND TO THE ATHRAWON BRO SERVICE**

2.1.1 The first team of Athrawon Bro was established in the late 1970s as a mechanism for supporting the teaching of Welsh in schools, and the concept was rolled out across the whole of Wales during the early 1980s. The way in which Athrawon Bro operate has evolved over time, and by the 1990s, there were significant differences in the approaches taken, reflecting the linguistic characteristics of different areas of Wales, the Welsh language skill profiles of the teaching workforce and individual Local Authorities' priorities.

2.1.2 Over the years, Athrawon Bro have principally been involved in supporting primary schools to teach Welsh as a second language although, as we discuss in Chapter 4, there are exceptions to this. Athrawon Bro's main functions were outlined by Estyn's review of 2003. They included:

- supporting schools 'by developing policies and schemes of work, including policies for teaching Welsh across the curriculum';
- offering 'practical support to teachers in their classrooms to help them to teach Welsh to their pupils and to use Welsh as a medium for teaching other subjects'. This, the report went on to say, could 'involve visiting a school in an advisory role as well as teaching alongside the teacher, in the classroom' in order to demonstrate good practice;
- acting as 'peripatetic teachers' of Welsh where school staff lacked the capacity to do so. In these situations, Athrawon Bro sought to encourage classroom teachers to 'join in and keep up the work in-between visits';
- working in 'language centres' to equip children migrating to Welsh speaking areas with the Welsh language skills needed to undertake a Welsh medium education in local schools;
- providing 'support for Key Stage 2 pupils from Welsh schools or streams, to improve the standards of their Welsh and to increase the proportion of pupils who could go on to study Welsh as a first language in Key Stage 3';

- in some cases, helping to bridge the gap between ‘Years 6 and 7 to promote progression in Welsh language skills’;
- arranging ‘residential courses’ for pupils in order to provide them with sustained exposure to the language in an informal environment;
- ‘organising, or contributing to training courses on methodology’;
- ‘providing various teaching and learning materials’; and
- monitoring and evaluating ‘pupils’ progress’ in Welsh as a subject.

2.1.3 These functions largely echoed those identified in the Welsh Language Board’s 1996 review of The Athrawon Bro Service, albeit that the earlier study provided a stronger flavour of the extent of variation that existed in the ‘patterns of service delivery’ adopted by different Local Authorities.

2.1.4 We return to the findings of these two studies later in our report, alongside the findings of our fieldwork. Before that, however, it is worth considering developments in Welsh Assembly Government policies which have impacted upon the work of Athrawon Bro in recent years.

## **2.2 NATIONAL POLICY CONTEXT**

2.2.1 Since the publication of its Plan for Wales (2001), the Welsh Assembly Government has been ‘committed to the cause of reviving and revitalising the Welsh language’. In *Iaith Pawb: An Action Plan for a Bilingual Wales* (2003), the Welsh Assembly Government gave voice to its ambition to see an increase in the number of people able to speak Welsh and made specific commitments to focus upon, inter alia, ‘encouraging individuals to learn and use the Welsh language’ and ‘extending access to Welsh medium education’.

2.2.2 *Iaith Pawb* acknowledged that considerable progress had already been made, not least through the introduction of the Welsh language as a compulsory subject (as a first or second language) within all maintained schools in Wales and through a growth in the availability of Welsh medium



education. However, the Welsh Medium Education Strategy, which was published in April 2010, makes it clear that much more needs to be done if the education system is to produce people able 'to use the language in their personal lives, socially and in the workplace'.

2.2.3 The Welsh Medium Education Strategy builds upon the pledges made in *Iaith Pawb* by setting out the Welsh Assembly Government's intentions in relation to<sup>11</sup>:

- planning the provision of Welsh medium education across all phases (Aims 1 and 2);
- encouraging linguistic development and progression (Aim 3);
- developing the Welsh medium education workforce (Aim 4);
- support mechanisms, including the development of teaching and learning resources (Aim 5);
- reinforcing language acquisition (Aim 6).

2.2.4 The primary focus of the Welsh Medium Education Strategy (2010) is upon the teaching of Welsh as a 'first language' and upon using Welsh as a medium for delivering the wider curriculum, on the basis that 'Welsh-medium education from the early years, with robust linguistic progression through every phase of education, offers the best conditions for developing future bilingual citizens' (p.7). It emphasises the importance of a broader use of the Welsh language in education, to ensure 'the momentum of the learning process' (p.7), from the early years onwards, so that learners 'achieve fluency in Welsh and English' (p.9). Whilst acknowledging that 'not all parents will wish their children to receive Welsh-medium education' (p.9), the Strategy makes clear the Welsh Assembly Government's wish 'to see all learners in English-medium settings benefiting from opportunities to develop language skills which enrich their experience of living in a bilingual country' (p.9).

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<sup>11</sup> The Aims of the Welsh Medium Education Strategy are set out in full at Annex A

### 2.2.5 The Strategy points to the need for:

‘gradual but purposeful changes ... to raise standards in the teaching and learning of Welsh [as a] second language’, leading to ‘more effective step-by-step acquisition of Welsh-language skills throughout statutory education’ in order to ‘raise achievement and skill levels for all learners’ (Welsh Assembly Government, 2010, p9).

### 2.2.6 This desire for improvement needs to be set against the background of concerns about levels of achievement in Welsh second language expressed in the Strategy as well as Estyn’s 2007/08 Annual Report (2009) which said that

‘in English-medium primary and secondary schools, there are [also] many weaknesses in provision for Welsh. In particular, there are too few opportunities for learners to use Welsh in other subjects, in extra-curricular activities and in informal situations. The most common shortcoming in many primary schools is that pupils do not make enough progress in Welsh as they move from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2. 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’ (p23).

Estyn’s 2008/09 Annual Report (2010), points to ‘some improvement in Welsh as a second language’ although standards in that area ‘remain conspicuously poor’ (Foreword iii).

### 2.2.7 Whilst the Welsh Medium Education Strategy (2010) acknowledges the need for schools to ‘set goals for improvement in achievement in Welsh [second language]’, it does not itself include outcome measures in line with that ambition e.g. the proportion of pupils attaining at least Level 4 in Welsh as a

second language at the end of Key Stage 2. Some contributors argued that this was a missed opportunity to reinforce the Welsh Assembly Government's ambitions, although arguably, the Strategy's focus on increasing the proportion of pupils assessed in Welsh first language at various points conveys a stronger message. Indeed, on a related point, the Strategy refers to the Welsh Assembly Government's intention to 'consider the options for developing and assessing skills in Welsh along a language continuum across all phases of education' (p16).

2.2.8 Each of the Welsh Medium Education Strategy's (2010) aims is underpinned by a series of 'Strategic Objectives' which, in turn, give rise to number of actions which the Welsh Assembly Government and various other stakeholders will undertake. Of particular relevance to this study are the intentions that:

- the Welsh Assembly Government should 'establish a national support unit to assist consortia and Local Authorities to ... coordinate training and [the] dissemination of good practice', and for Local Authorities to 'improve cross-boundary working through consortia ... using the national specialist support unit' (Action identified to address Objective AS1.2, p28);
- the Welsh Assembly Government should develop 'a coherent infrastructure at national and regional levels' for the delivery of Welsh-medium and Welsh-language teaching related in-service training, in the context of a wider 'review of CPD [Continuous Professional Development]' (Action identified to address Objective SO4.3, p40);
- local Authorities should 'improve the linguistic skills of practitioners by identifying priorities for training, correlating with planning processes at [the] local and regional level' (Action identified to address Objective SO4.3, p40);
- the Welsh Assembly Government should 'improve in-service training and support for school practitioners within Local Authorities and across consortia by building on the work of the Athrawon Bro' (Action identified to address Objective SO4.3, p40);

- schools and Local Authorities should work together to ‘increase and improve the Welsh–medium and Welsh-language content’ of the curriculum at Bilingual schools (Action identified to address Objective SO3.3, p35).
- schools should ‘set goals for improvement in achievement in Welsh [second language] for all ages, ensuring sufficient curriculum time, resources and adequate training for teachers’ (Action identified to address Objective SO3.4, p36);
- the Welsh Assembly Government should ‘identify best practice, especially at Key Stages 2 and 3, and consider options for pilot programmes for improving standards in Welsh second language’ (Action identified to address Objective SO3.4, p36).

2.2.9 Of course, undertakings set out in *Iaith Pawb* and the Welsh Medium Education Strategy were made against the backcloth of other significant developments in Welsh education policy.

2.2.10 The Framework for Children’s Learning for 3 to 7-year-olds in Wales (2008) placed specific requirements upon ‘schools and settings where English is the main medium of communication’ to develop children’s Welsh language skills progressively’ (Welsh Assembly Government, 2008, p12). The Welsh Assembly Government’s Framework for Children’s Learning for 3 to 7-year-olds in Wales (2008)<sup>12</sup> set out the kinds of learning experiences to which 3 to 7 year olds should have access in order to develop their Welsh language oracy, reading and writing skills. These experiences include, for example, listening to Welsh being spoken, participating in dialogue, listening to Welsh stories and writing ‘for different audiences’. From 2012, schools will be required to assess pupils’ attainment in Welsh as a second language at the end of the Foundation Phase.

2.2.11 The revised National Curriculum for Welsh is being introduced on a staggered basis as follows:

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<sup>12</sup> Which supported the roll out of the Foundation Phase

### Welsh

- 1 August 2008 for Years 3, 4 and 5 and Years 7 and 8
- 1 August 2009 for Year 6 and Year 9
- 1 August 2010 for Year 10 in Key Stage 4
- 1 August 2011 for Year 11 in Key Stage 4

### Welsh second language

- 1 August 2008 for Years 3, 4 and 5 and Years 7 and 8
- 1 August 2009 for Year 6, Year 9 and Year 10 in Key Stage 4
- 1 August 2010 for Year 11 in Key Stage 4.

2.2.12 Pupils are expected to ‘build on the skills, knowledge and understanding acquired’ during successive Key Stages and, from 2010, all pupils’ attainment in Welsh, whether as a ‘first’ or ‘second’ language, will be assessed at the end of Key Stage 2, thus adding emphasis to the importance of the language as a ‘core’ subject. A number of the stakeholders to whom we spoke thought that this policy was already helping ‘to raise the status of the Welsh language’ and there was a widespread expectation that it would lead schools to step up their game in terms of teaching Welsh as a second language and in using Welsh as a medium for delivering other elements of the curriculum. However, some stakeholders were concerned that schools and Local Authorities lack the capacity to respond quickly and effectively to this challenge and that the policy change runs the risk of putting undue pressure upon already stretched Athrawon Bro teams (see section 4.3). Some also feared that schools’ inability to respond without additional support would undermine the ability of the assessment process to drive home the Welsh Assembly Government’s ambition to improve the standards of teaching Welsh as a second language.

2.2.13 ‘Welsh language provision and the Welsh dimension’ forms a specific aspect of the ‘Learning Experiences’ indicator within Estyn’s Common Inspection Framework which comes into force from September 2010. There was a widespread expectation among the stakeholders to whom we spoke that this

would help to raise the profile of Welsh language and Welsh medium teaching in schools. However, it was acknowledged that some schools may currently lack the capacity to respond appropriately to this shift and it was foreseen that this could lead to pressure upon Local Authorities and Athrawon Bro teams to provide greater levels of support to those schools, particularly in the short to medium term.

2.2.14 All of these developments clearly point to the need for progressively higher order Welsh language skills among practitioners working in schools, and more particularly non Welsh medium schools, from the Foundation Phase through to Key Stage 4 and beyond. They also call for a sound understanding amongst practitioners of pedagogical approaches to teaching a range of subjects through the medium of Welsh or bilingually.

2.2.15 The introduction of the School Effectiveness Framework aims to improve learner outcomes by bringing

‘together existing programmes of action directed at school improvement’ to ‘deliver a coherent approach tailored to the Welsh context and aligned to the challenges faced by schools’ (Welsh Assembly Government, 2008, p.5).

Crucially, the School Effectiveness Framework requires

‘the development of professional learning communities at school, local authority and national levels to build collaborative capacity and engage leaders and practitioners at all levels in meaningful professional debate and learning’ (p10).

The Welsh Assembly Government’s School Effectiveness Framework (2008) document acknowledges that a significant level of collaboration already takes place, but advocates that more ‘schools work in cluster groups’, including clusters which straddle Local Authority boundaries, in order to build capacity.

2.2.16 The Better Schools Fund (BSF) was established in 2004 as the successor to the long-running Grants for Education Support and Training (GEST) programme. It provides a mechanism for supporting the implementation of various Welsh Assembly Government school improvement policies, including the 'Iaith Pawb mewn Ysgolion' (Iaith Pawb in Schools)<sup>13</sup> and latterly, 'Implementing the Welsh-Medium Education Strategy'<sup>14</sup>. The BSF, alongside Local Authority contributions, has provided some £3.7 millions<sup>15</sup> in each of the last five years to support Welsh language/Welsh medium related training and school improvement activities.

2.2.17 In general, the practice has been to prioritise particular themes for BSF support for periods of up to three years and the fact that Welsh language related activities have been supported over a longer period is testament to Ministerial commitment to driving the Iaith Pawb and now Welsh Medium Education Strategy agenda. It is also notable that, despite a substantial cut in the overall value of the BSF in 2010/11, Local Authorities and schools have been asked to 'ring-fence' at least 15 percent of their allocations to support the 'Implementing the Welsh-Medium Education Strategy' priority, which means that the level of investment they make will remain at similar levels to that made in the 'Iaith Pawb mewn Ysgolion' priority previous years. In essence, the Welsh Assembly Government has sought to safeguard the investment made in 'Implementing the Welsh-Medium Education Strategy'.

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<sup>13</sup> Iaith Pawb mewn Ysgolion represented the fifth of six BSF priorities until the Fund was restructured in 2010

<sup>14</sup> Implementing the Welsh-Medium Education Strategy represents the second of three BSF priorities from 2010

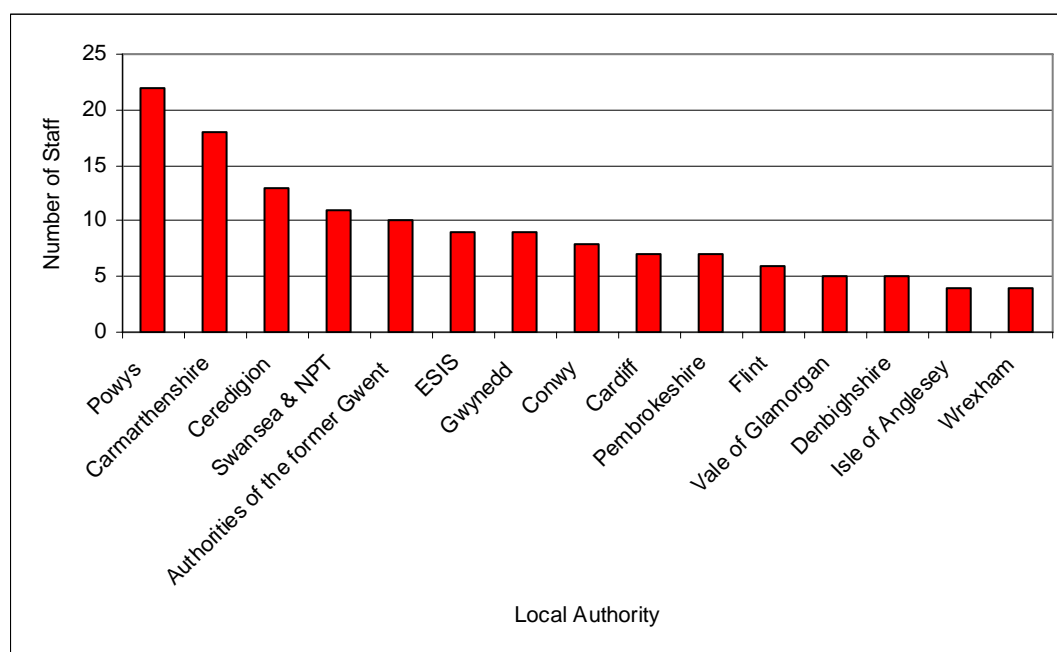
<sup>15</sup> A table setting out the amounts allocated to each Local Authority area for 2009/10 and 2010/11 is given at Annex C

### 3. THE ATHRAWON BRO WORKFORCE TODAY

#### 3.1 THE SIZE AND PROFILE OF THE WORKFORCE

3.1.1 A total of 138 individuals are employed as Athrawon Bro across Wales, equating to 126 full time equivalent posts. As shown in Figure 3.1 below, the size of the Athrawon Bro teams varies quite significantly in different parts of Wales.

Figure 3.1: Number of Athro Bro/Latecomer Centre Staff



Source:  
Data received from Local Authorities<sup>16 17</sup>

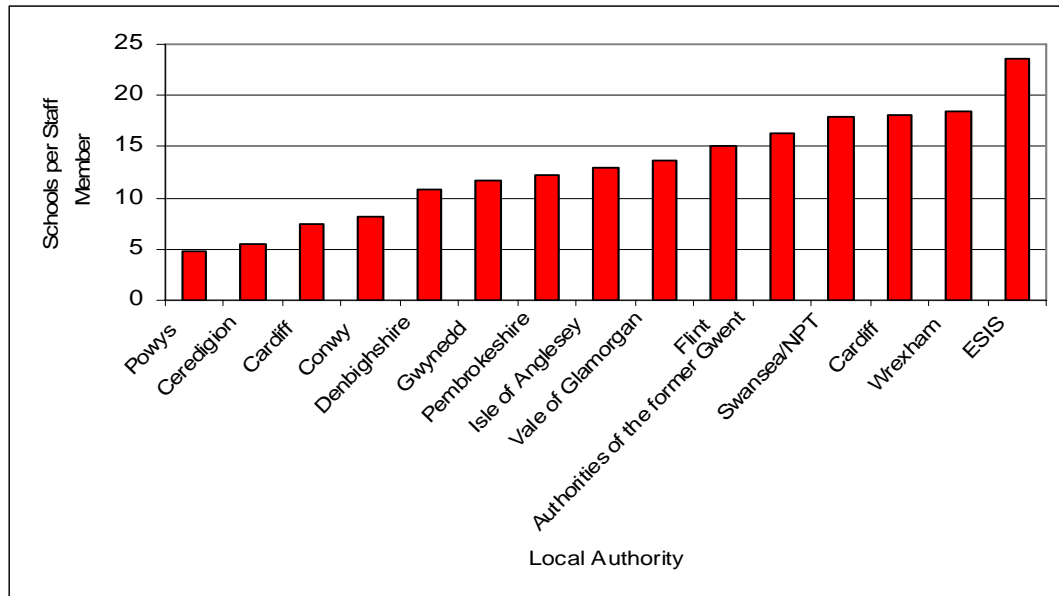
3.1.2 Figure 3.2 shows that there is also marked variation in the numbers of schools served by individual Athrawon Bro. This, in part, reflects differences in Local Authorities' Welsh education policies and the nature of the services they deliver. In most areas, contributors thought that the Athrawon Bro teams were big enough to do what was expected of them. However, this did not necessarily equate to the scale of perceived need. There was undoubtedly a sense that the needs in many areas are far greater than

<sup>16</sup> The Counties of the former Gwent are Blaenau Gwent, Monmouthshire, Newport and Torfaen  
<sup>17</sup> The Local Authorities served by ESIS are Bridgend, Caerphilly, Merthyr Tydfil and Rhondda Cynon Taf



Athrawon Bro teams, as they are currently constituted, can possibly hope to meet.

Figure 3.2: Number of Primary Schools per Athro Bro and Language Centre Based Staff Members

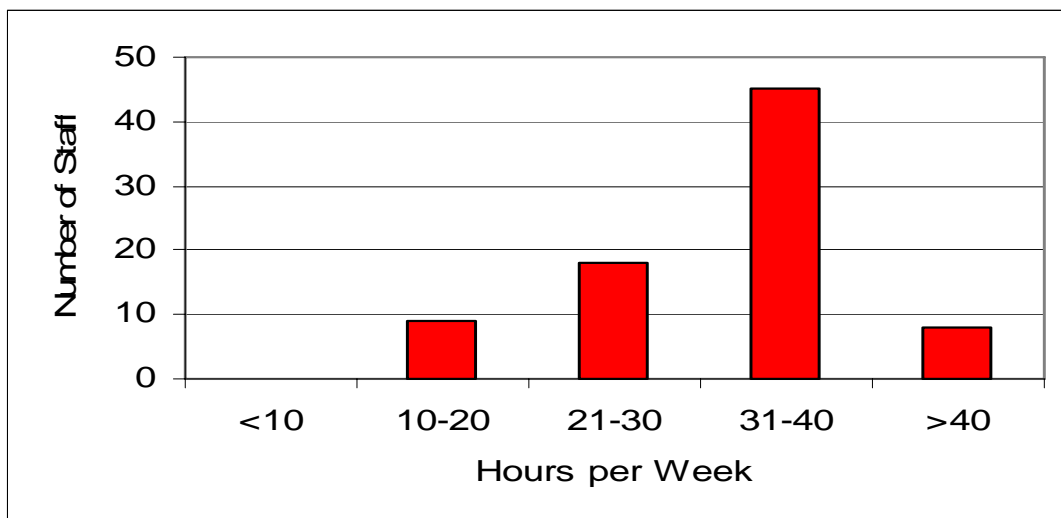


Source:  
Data received from Local Authorities

3.1.3 Two thirds (62 percent) of the Athrawon Bro for whom we received data work on a full time basis. A further 19 percent work between 21 and 30 hours a week, 11 percent work between 11 and 20 hours a week, whilst it was claimed that 9 percent of Athrawon Bro work more than 40 hours a week, reflecting additional work they undertake in their own time.

3.1.4 On the whole, local stakeholders commented that the size of Athrawon Bro teams has been fairly static in the last two or three years, though in some areas, there has been a tendency not to replace Athrawon Bro who retire or move on. The main exception to this was in Pembrokeshire, where the size of the Athrawon Bro team has been reduced by over 50 percent in recent years in the wake of a marked change in the Local Authority’s policy towards teaching Welsh at English medium schools in the south of the county.

Figure 3.3: Athrawon Bro, by the Hours Worked each Week



Source:  
Data received from Local Authorities

3.1.5 Staff turnover within Athrawon Bro teams has been low on the whole and 51 percent of Athrawon Bro have been in post for more than ten years. That is not to say that some Local Authorities have not experienced difficulties in recruiting and retaining Athrawon Bro, however. Some Local Authority stakeholders reported problems in appointing appropriately qualified and skilled Athrawon Bro for a number of reasons, including:

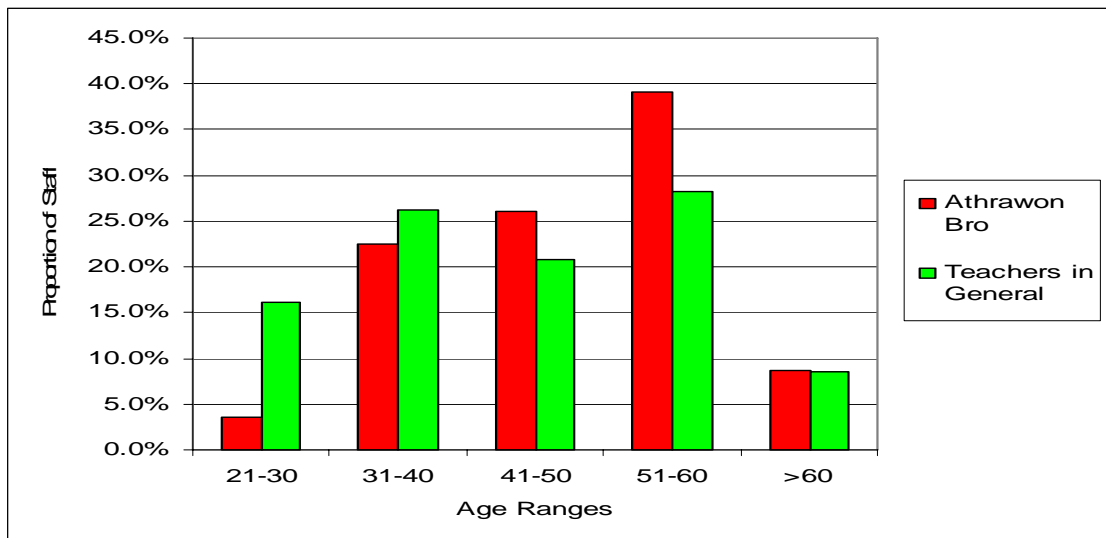
- a reluctance to work across a range of schools, including more difficult ones;
- the travelling involved;
- a reluctance to train adults as well as teach children;
- a reluctance to take on an advisory role;
- the salaries offered to Athrawon Bro in some areas are not comparable with what good teachers can earn in school situations – ‘any teacher worth his salt gets responsibility points and there’s no way we can compete’;
- uncertainty about future funding, given the annual grant funding system; and
- lack of a career path – ‘it’s not a job for ambitious teachers’.

3.1.6 Indeed, these difficulties largely echo factors which the Welsh Language Board identified as hindrances to the recruitment and retention of Athrawon Bro in its 1996 publication, *The Athrawon Bro Service: Report on the*

services which support the learning of Welsh as part of the National Curriculum.

- 3.1.7 Some Local Authorities offer 'secondments' into Athrawon Bro posts in order to assuage recruitment problems.
- 3.1.8 Whilst low staff turnover among Athrawon Bro teams was generally seen as a good thing insomuch as it enabled expertise to be retained, it was also regarded by some Local Authority representatives as a barrier to flexibility and change, not least because of the 'maternalistic ... non-challenging' approach taken by some Athrawon Bro. In one county, for example, it had proved difficult to introduce a new working model because Athrawon Bro were reluctant to change what they did, with Local Authority representatives commenting that 'the big challenge was to change the team's attitude from just delivering lessons to modelling lessons'. It must be emphasised, however, that Athrawon Bro teams in most areas were praised for their responsiveness to change and for their willingness to go the extra mile.
- 3.1.9 The overwhelming majority of Athrawon Bro are women (95 percent, compared to 75 percent of primary and secondary teachers in Wales, (General Teaching Council for Wales, 2010)) and, as shown in figure 3.4, the age profile of the Athrawon Bro workforce is somewhat older than that of primary and secondary teachers in general. According to one contributor 'this reflects when the service was established'. In some areas, the ageing profile of Athrawon Bro is of concern, in that imminent retirements could lead to the loss of expertise and, possibly, a contraction of the service. Some counties have anticipated this and have put plans in place to manage the retention of knowledge as older Athrawon Bro move on.

Figure 3.4: Proportions of Athrawon Bro by Age Group



Source:

Data received from Local Authorities and General Teaching Council for Wales, Annual Statistics Digest, March 2010

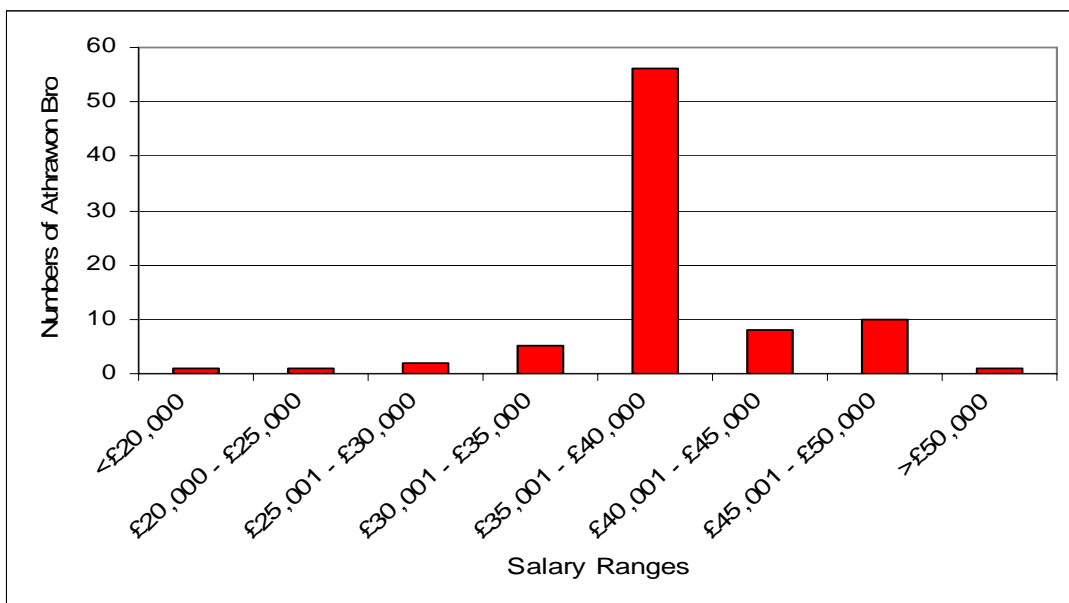
3.1.10 According to data received from Local Authorities, almost half of Athrawon Bro hold first degrees in either Welsh or Education, whilst just over a quarter hold other qualifications, including Bachelors degrees in various subjects e.g. History and Music and, most commonly, Certificates in Education, which to some extent reflects the age of the Athrawon Bro workforce i.e. they became teachers before degrees became prerequisite. Roughly a third of Athrawon Bro hold a Post Graduate Certificate in Education or Masters Degrees in Education.

3.1.11 Some 79 percent of Athrawon Bro are employed on School Teachers' Pay and Conditions (which means that they are contracted to work during term time only – 195 days per annum), though it is notable that several undertake work voluntarily during school holidays. A further 18 percent of Athrawon Bro are employed on Soulbury<sup>18</sup> conditions (which means that they work all year around and are eligible for a minimum of 20 days' paid holiday a year, in addition to public holidays). The remaining few Athrawon Bro were employed on temporary or sessional contracts.

<sup>18</sup> The Soulbury Committee is a collective bargaining forum for the negotiation of salaries and conditions of service for Local Authority educational advisory staff

3.1.12 Figure 3.5 below shows that the majority (73 percent) of Athrawon Bro earn a full time equivalent salary of between £35,000 and £40,000. Those on lower rates of pay are either relatively new to teaching or are, in fact, teaching assistants, rather than qualified teachers. In addition to their salaries. Athrawon Bro in some counties have been allocated either Teaching and Leadership Responsibility (TLR) allowances or Recruitment and Retention allowances.

*Figure 3.5: Numbers of Athrawon Bro Earning Salaries within Particular Bandwidths<sup>19</sup>*



Source:  
Data received from Local Authorities

3.1.13 The additional costs of employing Athrawon Bro (e.g. employers' National Insurance contributions and pension costs) amount to an additional 20 percent to 25 percent of their salaries on average

<sup>19</sup> Excludes Ceredigion, for which no data was received in this respect

## 3.2 PLACE WITHIN LOCAL AUTHORITY STRUCTURES

3.2.1 Athrawon Bro teams generally reside within School Improvement Teams, often under the auspices of a school improvement officer with a specific responsibility for the Welsh language.

3.2.2 Some Local Authorities work together on the delivery of school improvement and/or Welsh language support services and particular arrangements have been put in place for the management of Athrawon Bro teams. For example:

- whilst language coordinators and Latecomer Centre staff in Gwynedd and Môn are employed by one or other of the Local Authorities, their activities are planned and coordinated centrally by Cynnal, a subsidiary organisation set up by the two Authorities to deliver their school support services;
- Athrawon Bro in Swansea and Neath Port Talbot are also employed by the two Local Authorities, but their work is coordinated by the manager of St. Helen's Welsh Centre, Swansea. The work of Swansea's Athrawon Bro is directed and overseen by the Swansea Welsh Education Partnership (PAGA<sup>20</sup>), which comprises head teachers from both Welsh and English medium primary schools and head teachers and heads of Welsh departments from both Welsh and English medium secondary schools. PAGA is chaired by the Head of School Effectiveness in Swansea, whilst School Improvement staff from both Authorities, along with the manager of St. Helen's Welsh Centre play an advisory role;
- Athrawon Bro serving Bridgend, Caerphilly, Merthyr Tydfil and Rhondda Cynon Taf are employed and managed by ESIS, an organisation 'owned' by the four Local Authorities and contracted to provide them with school support services;
- Torfaen Council 'hosts' a Senior [Welsh] Language Advisor and Athrawon Bro who, on the basis of Service Level Agreements, service the four counties of Blaenau Gwent, Monmouthshire, Newport and Torfaen.

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<sup>20</sup> Partneriaeth Addysg Gymraeg Abertawe

3.2.3 Less formal arrangements exist to facilitate cooperation between Athrawon Bro in Conwy, Denbighshire and Flint, who work together on the development of teaching and learning resources and on the delivery of courses to practitioners. Over the years, this collaboration has been driven by a School Improvement Officer employed by Flintshire County Council<sup>21</sup>, but in recent times has relied on the Athrawon Bro Team Coordinator in each Authority to take the initiative in working with their opposite numbers.

3.2.4 In many areas, Athrawon Bro teams were said to have become more closely integrated with School Improvement Teams. Several contributors spoke of a shift in the role of Athrawon Bro over the years, from that of peripatetic teachers of Welsh to that of advisory teachers with a Welsh language and bilingual teaching specialism. In some counties, the epithet 'Athrawon Bro' is no longer used, with team members now referred to as 'Welsh Advisory Teachers' ('Athrawon Ymgynghorol y Gymraeg') rather than Athrawon Bro. However, the extent to which the role has changed varies from one county to another, with a lack of Welsh language capacity within schools hindering a desired evolution towards a more 'hands-off', advisory role for Athrawon Bro in some areas.

*Case Study: ESIS' Athrawon Bro Arrangements*

ESIS is a joint working arrangement between Bridgend, Caerphilly, Merthyr Tydfil and Rhondda Cynon Taf<sup>22</sup> Councils. It provides School Improvement Services across all four counties, including services to support the teaching of Welsh and Welsh medium teaching.

The organisation is answerable to elected members of the four councils, but is directed by a Joint Committee which is made up of senior members and chief officers drawn from each partner authority. Decision-making and accountability is further served by the Board of Management, which includes head teacher representatives from primary, secondary and special schools,

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<sup>21</sup> Sadly, the individual in question has passed away

<sup>22</sup> These are the Unitary Authorities which now serve the former Mid Glamorgan Council area

together with heads of services for Education and Children's Services from across the four authorities. The Board of Management provides additional professional perspective and overview to the work of ESIS and advises the Joint Committee.

Athrawon Bro form an integral part of ESIS' team of Advisors, which support all curriculum areas across all phases of school education<sup>23</sup>. It was argued that this enabled the Athrawon Bro team to 'be more than the sum of its parts' insomuch as it enables the efficient and effective exchange of information, enables complementary working (both within ESIS and between ESIS, LEAs and individual schools). The degree to which the Athrawon Bro team is integrated within these broader school improvement functions also enables a strategic approach to deploying the service in response to specific issues or requirements as they arise.

ESIS also provides a vehicle for the four Local Authorities to pool resources for the delivery of training and the development of teaching and learning resources. This assures that the training delivered to schools across all four counties is consistent, whilst also maximising economies of scale and minimising delivery overheads. ESIS also 'sells' its services and products to schools in other Local Authority areas.

A similar model is operated by Cynnal in Gwynedd and Môn.

3.2.5 It was also clear that there are differences in the importance attached by senior figures within Local Authorities to the Athrawon Bro service and, indeed to Welsh, both as a subject and as a teaching medium. Whilst a number of Local Authorities have set ambitious agendas for increasing the use of Welsh in schools and for improving pupil attainment, others were said to be more ambivalent towards the Welsh language in general. On this rather less positive note, one contributor commented that Athrawon Bro in one particular county are still referred to as 'the Welsh ladies'.

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<sup>23</sup> Although Athrawon Bro do not support secondary schools beyond their involvement in Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3 transition arrangements



### 3.3 MANAGING ATHRAWON BRO SERVICES

3.3.1 As discussed at section 3.2 above, Athrawon Bro teams in most areas sit within School Improvement Teams. Their work is generally planned and managed by school improvement officers, whose responsibilities encompass drafting applications for Welsh Language Board grants and producing reports upon the progress made against targets agreed. Local Authorities submit progress reports to the Welsh Language Board three times a year, though the reports submitted in September provide the most comprehensive overview of achievements.

3.3.2 The same teams are generally responsible for planning and managing Welsh language related activity part funded by the BSF. Their responsibilities include writing bids to the Welsh Assembly Government for BSF grant funding.

3.3.3 The Welsh Language Board has, over the years, challenged Local Authorities to set increasingly measurable targets. In the main, however, the targets agreed relate to processes rather than the effects of Athrawon Bro's intervention. Typical examples of process related targets set include:

- 'provid[ing] two language immersion courses (for 2 separate cohorts) during each academic year'<sup>24</sup>;
- 'offer[ing] leadership and support in assessing and moderating [pupil attainment] at the end of Key Stage 2'<sup>25</sup>; and
- 'training up to 30 Welsh [first language] teachers and 40 second language teachers'<sup>26</sup>.

3.3.4 Of course, some Authorities do set targets which relate to the effects of Athrawon Bro's services, albeit that Athrawon Bro's input may be only one of a number of factors affecting their achievement. Examples include:

- '65 percent of schools inspected by Estyn will achieve at least a Grade 2 for bilingualism'<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Neath Port Talbot's 2010/11 Grant Application

<sup>25</sup> Vale of Glamorgan's 2010/11 Grant Application

<sup>26</sup> Denbighshire's 2010/11 Grant Application

- '93 percent of pupils to reach Level 4+ in Key Stage 2 and over 36 percent to reach Level 5'<sup>28</sup>; and
- 'ensure that the language of 80 percent of Immersion Programme pupils increases at least 1 level'<sup>29</sup>.

3.3.5 However, targets relating to the effects of Athrawon Bro's work are far fewer, and a handful of contributors commented that the absence of 'impact measures' make it impossible for the Welsh Language Board or senior managers within Local Authorities to make informed judgements about the effectiveness or efficiency of Athrawon Bro services. In this context, several contributors saw the introduction of pupil assessment in Welsh as a second language at the end of Key Stage 2 as something of a breakthrough in that it renders schools more accountable for pupils' linguistic development. It was also argued that systems need to be put in place to track pupils' linguistic progression during Key Stages 3 and 4 to ensure that momentum is maintained.

3.3.6 Some Local Authorities had fairly sophisticated systems for monitoring the effects of Athrawon Bro's work on individual pupils, on practitioners and schools. However, this was not universally the case, and a number of contributors were candid that arrangements for monitoring performance within their own Local Authorities are fairly loose and largely ineffective. They argued that a failure to monitor the service in a systematic way leads to a tendency to stick to what has always been done, rather than challenging the status quo. Indeed, some argued that the deficiency of targets relating to the effects of Athrawon Bro services reflects a lack of clarity about what the service is designed to achieve and a lack of senior officer engagement with the planning and monitoring of the service in some Local Authorities.

3.3.7 Allied to this point, it is notable that references to Athrawon Bro services are absent from most Local Authorities Children and Young People's Partnership plans. They are referred to in Local Authorities' Welsh Education

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<sup>27</sup> Blaenau Gwent's 2009/10 Target Monitoring Report

<sup>28</sup> Cardiff's 2010/11 Grant Application

<sup>29</sup> Ceredigion's 2010/11 Grant Application

Schemes, alongside references to Welsh advisory services, though it should be noted that several of these schemes are rather dated by now, because they are five year schemes and are due for updating.

3.3.8 Given that a cornerstone of the Athrawon Bro service is to develop the capacity of practitioners to deliver Welsh language and Welsh medium education, it was argued that attention should also be given to assessing the effects of Athrawon Bro's services upon practitioners' Welsh language skills, upon their confidence to use Welsh and upon the actual use they make of the language as a teaching medium. One contributor commented that 'someone, somewhere needs to measure the effects of the money being spent ... there are courses running and hundreds of teachers attending them ... and standards are still [poor]'. At this stage, however, only a handful of Local Authorities seek to assess practitioners' Welsh language skills levels, and where it is done, the purpose of the exercise is generally to help plan Athrawon Bro activity rather than to assess the effects of the service delivered. Moreover, Local Authorities which gather data about practitioners' skills levels tend to use their own in-house systems, which means that it is not possible to compare practitioners' language levels or the progress made as a result of Athrawon Bro' support from one county to another. In essence, Wales lacks a systematic approach to assessing and recording the linguistic capacity of its teaching workforce.

3.3.9 At a more operational level, systems for managing Athrawon Bro's day to day work and for ensuring the timely exchange of information between Athrawon Bro and within wider School Improvement teams seem effective by and large. Athrawon Bro teams tend to meet regularly to discuss their work and exchange ideas: in some cases, this includes members of wider School Improvement Service teams. In one area, the targeting of services upon particular schools meant that Athrawon Bro no longer worked exclusively with clusters as they previously had, and it was claimed that this had gone a long way to stepping up interaction between team members.

3.3.10 At a wider level, reference has already been made to cross boundary working between Local Authorities, but it was acknowledged by some of those interviewed that this does not necessarily go far enough to satisfy the agenda set out in the School Effectiveness Framework. The prospect of adopting regional approaches elsewhere met with a mixed response. Whilst contributors acknowledged that benefits might include cost savings, more fluid sharing of expertise, more widespread sharing of teaching and learning resources and greater consistency of service, there was concern that a regional approach might be less flexible and less responsive to local need. Concern was also expressed that any regional arrangements should be cognisant of the linguistic characteristics of different areas as well as the nature of the service needed, and should not necessarily be based on geographic considerations alone. For example, it was argued that Ceredigion and parts of Carmarthenshire have more in common with Môn and Gwynedd than they do with other Authorities making up the South Wales and Mid Wales Consortium (SWAMWAC<sup>30</sup>) group. The southern and westernmost parts of Conwy have more in common with Môn and Gwynedd, whilst the nature of the service required in coastal and eastern parts of the county are more akin to those needed in Denbighshire.

3.3.11 It was also argued that a shared regional resource would make it more difficult to target services on areas of greatest need without introducing a potentially complex charging system. In this context, one contributor commented that the Networks of Professional Practice agenda pointed to an expectation that 'Local Authorities should reorganise without reorganising ... by networking'.

3.3.12 Nevertheless, the North Wales consortium has started to explore cross regional working and a 'Welsh Education' sub group has been established. It will shortly present a position paper to ADEW<sup>31</sup> at a national level.

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<sup>30</sup>SWAMWAC is, a consortium of six Local Authorities (Ceredigion, Carmarthenshire, Pembrokeshire, Neath Port Talbot, Swansea and Powys) which cooperate to develop systems and new ways of working, in order to improve the services delivered to children and young people so that they achieve higher standards

<sup>31</sup> Association of Directors of Education Wales

### **3.4 FUNDING THE ATHRAWON BRO SERVICE**

3.4.1 Welsh language support services for schools are maintained through a combination of:

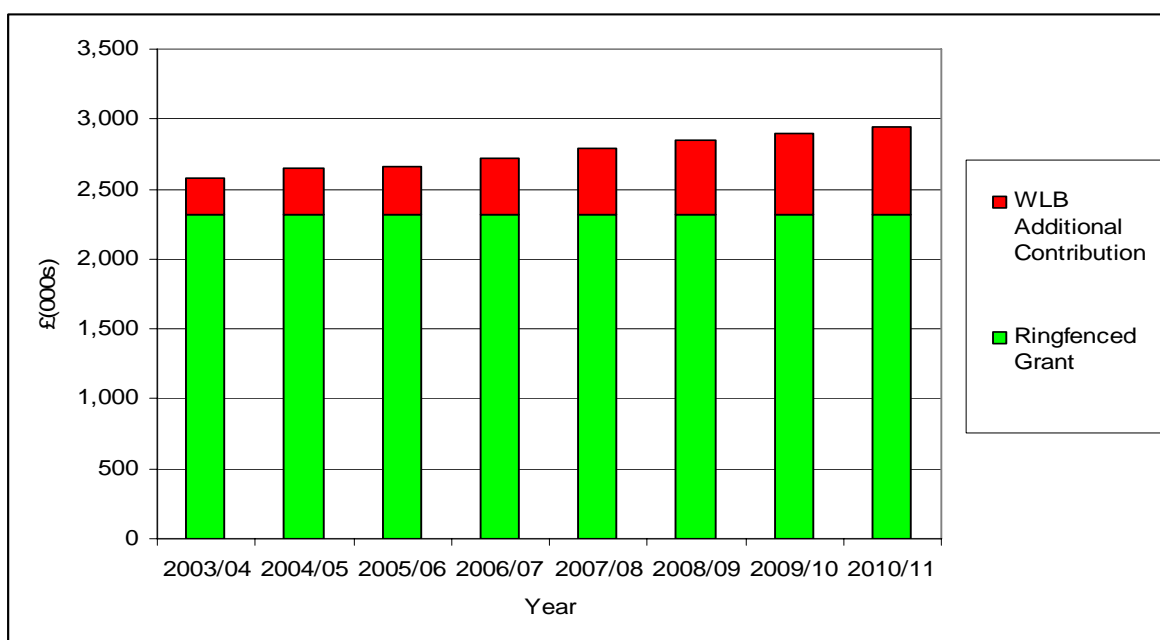
- grant funding from the Welsh Language Board. This funding has its roots in Section 21 of the 1980 Education Act and originates from the Department for Culture and Sport within the Welsh Assembly Government;
- grant funding derived from the Welsh Assembly Government's Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills (DCELLS), via the BSF; and
- contributions from Local Authorities.

3.4.2 The value of the Welsh Language Board grant in 2010-11 is £2.944 millions and in 2009-10, it was £2.901 millions<sup>32</sup>, although the value of funding provided by the Department for Culture and Sport (under Section 21 of the Education Act) has remained constant, at £2.312 millions per annum, since at least 2002/03. As illustrated in Figure 3.6 below, the Welsh Language Board has 'topped-up' that funding by incrementally larger sums each year in order to provide Local Authorities with inflationary increases. The Welsh Language Board has done this in recognition of the fact that a significant proportion of the grant funding is used to pay the salaries of Athrawon Bro and that it would not be possible to sustain the service without providing for wage inflation over time.

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<sup>32</sup> A table setting out the amounts allocated to each Local Authority area is given at Annex B

Figure 3.6: Total Value of Welsh Language Board Grant 2003/04 to 2010/11



Source:  
Welsh Language Board

3.4.3 According to the Welsh Language Board's 1999 strategy for grants to promote Welsh education (which remains in force today), the grant is intended to 'to supplement and support the work done via GEST<sup>33</sup> funding to present the Welsh language to teachers so that they, in turn, may teach the language to their classes'. The document goes on to say that there is a 'distinct boundary' between these two streams of funding, although 'both grants complement each other's work'. The priorities for Welsh Language Board grant funding, as set out in the strategy document, are to support:

- the 'Athrawon Bro' service;
- provision for latecomers;
- residential courses; and
- pilot schemes'.

3.4.4 Table 3.1 sets out the projected cost of Athrawon Bro and related services in each Local Authority Area for 2009/10 and the level of contributions derived from the Welsh Language Board and each Local Authority. It shows that the contribution made by individual Local Authorities varies significantly with, on

<sup>33</sup> Now the Better Schools Fund

the one hand, the Authorities served by ESIS contributing some 25 percent and Neath Port Talbot, on the other, contributing 77 percent.

3.4.5 The Welsh Language Board's grants to promote Welsh education document (1999) indicates that the grant should be used to fund Athrawon Bro in providing 'support with the practical work of teaching the [Welsh] language to pupils in the class' and 'should not be used to organise courses to improve teachers' own grasp of the Welsh language on In Service Education and Training (INSET) courses'. In essence, its focus is very much upon what might be labelled 'on-the-job' training. Within those constraints, however, the document allows Local Authorities a degree of flexibility to submit bids 'set within the context of the county's linguistic situation and its current policies regarding Welsh education'.

3.4.6 The BSF provides resource to support complementary 'off-the-job training' designed to:

- raise the standards of Welsh language teaching across all Key Stages;
- raise pupils' attainment levels in Welsh across all Key Stages;
- increase the numbers of pupils receiving a Welsh medium education in primary schools;
- increase the numbers of children and young people who continue to improve their Welsh language skills when they transfer from primary to secondary schools;
- increase the numbers of children and young people pursuing qualifications (general and vocational) through the medium of Welsh.

Table 3.1: Projected Cost of Athrawon Bro and Related Services 2009/10 (£000s)<sup>34</sup>

	Isle of Anglesey	Gwynedd	Conwy	Denbighshire	Flintshire	Wrexham	Powys	Ceredigion	Pembrokeshire	Carmarthenshire	Neath Port Talbot	Swansea	Bridgend	Rhondda Cynon Taff	Merthyr Tydfil	Caerphilly	Vale of Glamorgan	Cardiff	Torfaen	Blaenau Gwent	Monmouthshire	Newport	Total	
<b>Costs</b>																								
Athrawon Bro Service	49	0	269	226	233	146	990	119	202	546	509	461	126	230	72	167	156	365	190	190	190	239	5,675	
Language Coordinators	9	33	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	42
Latecomers Centres	271	531	136	86	0	0	0	71	83	7	57	57	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1,299
Residential Courses	0	0	3	4	5	137	8	0	15	4	7	7	0	0	0	0	2	10	0	0	0	0	0	202
Innovative Schemes	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	22	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	0	0	0	0	0	29
Total Grant	329	564	409	316	238	283	998	190	300	579	573	525	126	230	72	167	158	382	190	190	190	239	7,247	
<b>Sources of Funding</b>																								
WLB Grant	119	226	116	98	115	104	257	133	169	182	130	161	94	172	54	125	83	192	102	70	83	117	2,901	
LA Contributions	210	338	292	218	123	179	741	57	131	397	443	364	32	58	18	42	75	190	88	120	107	122	4,346	
Total	329	564	409	316	238	283	998	190	300	579	573	525	126	230	72	167	158	382	190	190	190	239	7,247	
<b>% funding derived from each source</b>																								
WLB Grant	36%	40%	28%	31%	48%	37%	26%	70%	56%	31%	23%	31%	74%	75%	75%	75%	53%	50%	54%	37%	44%	49%	40%	
LA Contributions	64%	60%	72%	69%	52%	63%	74%	30%	44%	69%	77%	69%	26%	25%	25%	25%	47%	50%	46%	63%	56%	51%	60%	

Source:

Welsh Language Board

<sup>34</sup> Information taken from Local Authorities' 2009/10 grant application forms



3.4.7 BSF guidance reflects the agenda set in the School Effectiveness Framework by placing an emphasis on 'collaboration across services within and between Local Authorities', with the following types of activities being identified in the 2010/11 BSF Circular as eligible for support:

- practitioners' attendance of training courses promoting the latest techniques in teaching Welsh as a language;
- practitioners' attendance of training courses aimed at improving their classroom-appropriate Welsh language skills;
- practitioners' attendance at events promoting the identification and sharing of best practice in the teaching of Welsh as a subject and in teaching other subjects through the medium of Welsh/bilingually;
- activities which foster continuity and progression in Welsh-language skills across Key Stages, particularly during pupils' transition from primary to secondary schools;
- meetings, courses and workshops for practitioners involved in extending Welsh medium provision within schools, particularly for the 14-19 age group; and
- other activities which analyses of needs demonstrate will complement aspects of the Welsh-Medium Education Strategy, related to the teaching of Welsh.

3.4.8 It is worth noting that the BSF grant is 'top sliced' to the tune of £120 thousand per annum in order to support the WJEC's 'national programme of Welsh-medium in-service training'. The Welsh Assembly Government's grant to the WJEC represents 60 percent of the total value of the training programme, with the remaining 40 percent (i.e. £80 thousand) being derived from Local Authority contributions.

3.4.9 It is difficult to define the precise value of Better Schools Fund grant monies used to underpin Welsh language support services directly. In allocating BSF grants to Local Authorities, DCELLS requires Local Authorities to delegate 60 percent of the monies received to schools, albeit that there is scope for flexibility in this respect. In practice, however, the proportion of the

Welsh language/Welsh medium education<sup>35</sup> related funding allocated to schools varies significantly. In 2009/10, for example, one Local Authority, under agreement with schools, retained the whole of the Activity 5 grant allocated to fund the Athrawon Bro service and related Welsh language/medium education related training. At the other extreme, three Local Authorities retained less than 5 percent of their Activity 5 allocation, allowing schools to buy Welsh language/medium education related training and support services as they chose. It is worth noting in this context that many schools buy such training from Local Authorities' School Improvement Teams, some of which use Athrawon Bro to deliver training sessions.

3.4.10 The situation is further complicated by a requirement that Local Authorities contribute from their own resources towards the costs of activities funded by BSF grants, with BSF representing no more than 60 percent of total expenditure. Here again, though, some Local Authorities invest more of their own resources than the minimum required.

3.4.11 Table 3.2 sets out the projected cost of in service training activities, including supply costs, in each Local Authority Area for 2009/10, as well as the level of funding derived from the Welsh Assembly Government (via the BSF) and the contribution made by individual Local Authorities to help meet those costs.

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<sup>35</sup> Under Activity 5 (Iaith Pawb mewn Ysgolion) until 2009/10 and under Priority 2 (Implementing the Welsh-medium Education Strategy) in 2010/11

Table 3.2: Projected Cost of Training Related to Welsh Language and Welsh Medium Education 2009/10 (£000s)

	Isle of Anglesey	Gwynedd <sup>36</sup>	Conwy	Denbighshire	Flintshire	Wrexham <sup>37</sup>	Powys	Ceredigion <sup>38</sup>	Pembrokeshire <sup>39</sup>	Carmarthenshire	Neath Port Talbot	Swansea	Bridgend	Rhondda Cynon Taff	Merthyr Tydfil	Caerphilly	Vale of Glamorgan	Cardiff <sup>40</sup>	Torfaen	Blaenau Gwent	Monmouthshire	Newport <sup>41</sup>	Total
<b>Costs</b>																							
LA Central Costs	46	72	5	104	82	62	148	55	125	81	129	108	7	76	10	6	91	204	56	54	34	55	1610
Individual Schools' Costs	36	56	124	18	96	41	0	19	45	127	42	167	164	207	77	222	85	123	67	43	66	75	1899
	81	128	129	122	178	103	148	74	170	208	171	275	171	283	87	228	176	327	123	97	100	130	3509
<b>Sources of Funding</b>																							
BSF Grant	49	77	77	73	107	62	89	44	102	125	103	165	103	170	52	137	106	196	74	58	60	78	2,105
LA Contributions	32	51	52	49	71	41	59	30	68	83	68	110	68	113	35	91	70	131	49	39	40	52	1,404
Total	81	128	129	122	178	103	148	74	170	208	171	275	171	283	87	228	176	327	123	97	100	130	3,509

Source:

BSF Management Information provided DCELLS, derived from data provided by Local Authorities

<sup>36</sup> £16.8 thousand of Gwynedd's allocation was transferred to support other school improvement activities

<sup>37</sup> £44.1 thousand of Wrexham's allocation was transferred to support other school improvement activities

<sup>38</sup> £4 thousand of Ceredigion's allocation was transferred to support other school improvement activities

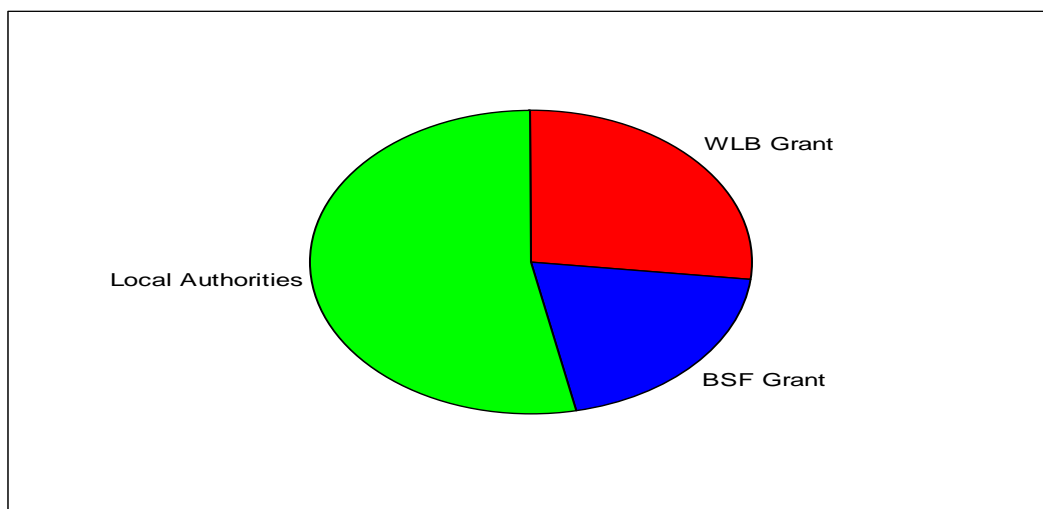
<sup>39</sup> £25.9 thousand was transferred from other Better School Fund streams to support Pembrokeshire "Iaith Pawb in Schools" activity

<sup>40</sup> £60 thousand of Cardiff's allocation was transferred to support other school improvement activities

<sup>41</sup> £61 thousand of Newport's allocation was transferred to support other school improvement activities

3.4.12 All in all, therefore, the costs of Welsh language related support services offered to schools by Local Authorities and their partners in 2009/10 amounted to some £10.8 million. As shown in Figure 3.7 below, the Welsh Language Board contributed 27 percent (2.9 million) towards those costs, the Better School Fund contributed 20 percent (2.1 million), and Local Authorities contributed 53 percent (£5.8 million).

*Figure 3.7: Sources of Funding for Athrawon Bro and Related Services*



Source:  
Welsh Language Board and Welsh Assembly Government

3.4.13 It is notable that there has, until very recently, been relatively little interaction between the team overseeing the BSF within the Welsh Assembly Government and that overseeing the grants to promote Welsh education within the Welsh Language Board. Whilst it was not thought that this led to any particular problems, some stakeholders thought that there might be scope to bring the grant schemes under the purview of one team. This could result in a more effective overview of the provision and better inform strategic planning, monitoring and delivery. It could also simplify matters for Local Authorities and, possibly, secure better integration of activities as well as administrative efficiencies. Indeed, a handful of stakeholders recognised that the proposed Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2010 (which will lead to the abolition of the Welsh Language Board) could, once passed, provide a catalyst for the better integration of these two grant schemes. There were concerns, however, that the potential transfer of the Welsh Language

Board's 'education' related responsibilities to DCELLS should not compromise the future of the funding currently derived from the Department for Culture and Sport, or indeed the 'top-up' made to that grant from the Welsh Language Board's own resources

3.4.14 Contributors were overwhelmingly in favour of retaining ring-fenced funding for the service, with several commenting that in the absence of dedicated Welsh Language Board and BSF grants, the monies invested in the service could very well 'be swallowed up' elsewhere. Several contributors expressed concern that Local Authorities will face immense financial pressures over the next few years and the investment made in Welsh education support services will, undoubtedly, come under scrutiny, alongside other services. Indeed, it was argued that the urgent need for greater efficiency requires Authorities and schools to ensure that the capacity exists at the 'chalk face' to deliver Welsh language and Welsh medium education and that Athrawon Bro services should become a thing of the past.

3.4.15 Contributors also felt that it would be beneficial to fund the service for periods of three years at a time in order to provide more realistic time horizons for planning. Indeed, this echoed an argument made in the Welsh Language Board's 1996 review that the system of funding the service on an annual basis hindered longer term planning and undermined the confidence of existing and potential Athrawon Bro in working for the service.

## 4. THE ROLE OF ATHRAWON BRO

### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

4.1.1 The services delivered by Athrawon Bro are very much contingent upon the linguistic capacity of staff within schools, which is itself largely the product of the strength of the Welsh language in particular areas and of the thrust of Local Authorities' Welsh language and recruitment policies over the years. At one extreme, schools in Môn and Gwynedd receive very little direct support beyond the services of part-time 'Catchment Area Language Coordinators', on the basis that their staff are expected to be fully bilingual. Non Welsh medium schools in counties where less Welsh is spoken, on the other hand, are highly dependent upon Athrawon Bro to underpin their Welsh language and Welsh medium teaching. In Gwent, for example, only 10 out of some 550 primary teachers outside the Welsh medium sector speak Welsh, which equates to about 1.8 percent of the workforce<sup>42</sup>.

4.1.2 Notwithstanding these contextual differences, the services provided by Athrawon Bro teams are generally shaped by:

- the terms of the Welsh Language Board's Grant to Promote Welsh Education and, equally importantly, guidance given verbally by Welsh Language Board staff;
- the views of Athrawon Bro themselves, who were said by Local Authority staff to 'know schools and teachers better than anyone' as a result of having worked with them over the years;
- information gleaned from School Improvement Officers;
- information emanating from head teachers and school self-reviews, including reviews of 'bilingualism';
- the results of Key Stage 1 and 2 pupil assessments in Welsh;
- forthcoming Estyn inspections i.e. Athrawon Bro help schools to identify and rectify weaknesses in advance of inspection;

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<sup>42</sup> Data received from the Local Authority

- the findings of Estyn inspections i.e. Athrawon Bro help schools to develop Action Plans in order to address weaknesses highlighted; and
- training or support needs arising out of changes in school staffing.

4.1.3 The thrust of their work is also influenced by changes in Welsh Assembly Government policy, which means that in the last three years or so, Athrawon Bro's work has changed quite considerably. This is discussed further below.

4.1.4 Whilst the range of work undertaken by Athrawon Bro varies from one county to another, their services can be broken down into four broad categories common to most, as follows:

- providing schools with practical support;
- teaching Welsh to 'Latecomers';
- developing teaching and learning resources; and
- delivering INSET courses.

4.1.5 Each of these activities is discussed in turn below.

## **4.2 PROVIDING SCHOOLS WITH PRACTICAL SUPPORT**

4.2.1 Across the board, the largest part of Athrawon Bro's time is spent in non-Welsh medium primary schools, where Welsh is primarily taught as a second language. Their main function is to support practitioners in teaching Welsh as a subject or in teaching other subjects through the medium of Welsh. This generally entails delivering 'model lessons', presenting or helping to develop specific teaching and learning resources to practitioners, discussing pedagogical approaches and observing practitioners teaching Welsh or using Welsh to teach other subjects. In essence, their role is to provide 'on-the-job' training to practitioners who are not fluent in Welsh or lack the confidence to use Welsh as a teaching medium. This aspect of their work often complements INSET programmes on offer to practitioners (see section 6.9).

4.2.2 This represents an important shift in the focus of Athrawon Bro's role and builds upon the recommendation made by Estyn in 2003 that Athrawon Bro should be used to 'advise classroom teachers as they increase in confidence and skill in teaching the language rather than depending wholly on Athrawon Bro to teach classes directly' (Estyn, 2003, p23). Without exception, Local Authorities have made it clear to schools that Athrawon Bro should not be regarded as peripatetic teachers of Welsh, but rather as a resource to help teaching staff develop their Welsh language/medium capacity. However, the line between teaching and delivering model lessons is often blurred and in a small number of cases, Athrawon Bro's activities undoubtedly err towards the former in some areas – according to one Welsh Advisor, 'Welsh still comes in and goes out of some schools with Athrawon Bro' - particularly where Welsh is less widely spoken. By now, Athrawon Bro teams have developed strategies for dealing with pressure from schools to play a more active teaching role, including the withdrawal of services from those who do not engage fully in developing staff and school capacity.

4.2.3 Pembrokeshire has taken a particularly strong stance in this respect.

*Case Study: Changing the Nature of Athrawon Bro's Service in Pembrokeshire*

Until some three years ago, Athrawon Bro in Pembrokeshire provided what amounted to a peripatetic Welsh language teaching service, under Service Level Agreements, to schools in the south of the county, where less Welsh is spoken. Whilst this approach enabled all schools to offer pupils at least some knowledge of Welsh, it did little to encourage schools to truly take ownership of teaching the language as a subject or to use it as a medium for teaching and communicating.

In order to promote greater school ownership of the Welsh language, the Local Authority adopted a policy of encouraging English medium schools to take on at least one member of staff capable of working through the



medium of Welsh and English. At the same time, the Local Authority reduced the Athrawon Bro headcount from 15 to eight and made it clear to schools that the smaller Athrawon Bro team would no longer teach Welsh to pupils, but that their role is to help schools build their capacity to teach Welsh or to teach through the medium of Welsh.

It subsequently nominated a number of existing practitioners who did not or were learning to speak Welsh to participate in an intensive course designed specifically to develop their Welsh language and related pedagogical skills. This training was supported under the Welsh Assembly Government's 'Sabbatical Scheme'<sup>43</sup>.

Contributors commented that the strategy adopted by the Local Authority has paid dividends in terms of getting English medium schools to accept responsibility for teaching and using Welsh - 'taking ownership for the provision within the school has been key... they [schools] are now responsible for the success or failure of their provision'. Only a handful of very small schools in Pembrokeshire now rely on Athrawon Bro teach Welsh to their pupils.

In principle, the model currently employed in Pembrokeshire offers a number of benefits, particularly in terms of building ownership of and the capacity to teach Welsh or to use it as a medium for teaching among schools in the south of the county. However, it is too early to come to any firm conclusions about the effects of this model upon the standard of teaching in Pembrokeshire schools.

4.2.4 Whilst accepting that schools should be encouraged to take greater ownership of teaching and using the Welsh language, a number lack the capacity to do so, with the position of the Welsh language within some schools being described as 'very fragile'. Several contributors commented

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<sup>43</sup> The Sabbaticals Scheme, alongside the National Practitioners Training Programme, is a Welsh Assembly Government sponsored initiative to help increase the supply of practitioners able to teach and train through the medium of Welsh across the range of pre- and post- 16 learning.

that Athrawon Bro had been crucial to sustaining Welsh language education in some schools over the years, but that they represent an insufficient resource to bring about the change necessary to meet the Welsh Assembly Government's ambitions.

4.2.5 However, both Estyn (2003) and the Welsh Language Board (1996) pointed out that Athrawon Bro's support was often 'spread too thinly' and was 'not targeted effectively enough to meet needs'. In this context, Estyn recommended that 'schools that need additional assistance on a temporary basis' (Estyn, 2003, p23) should be targeted.

4.2.6 Over the last two years or so, a handful of Local Authorities have started to target their Athrawon Bro services on particular schools and a number of others are currently considering the prospect of doing so. In many instances, this reflects an acknowledgement by Local Authorities that, all in all, a thinly spread, non-intensive service cannot hope to produce a system capable of generating Welsh speakers or delivering the pupil attainment levels sought. The increased emphasis on targeting services also owes something to the demands placed upon Athrawon Bro's time by developments such as the advent of the Foundation Phase and Curriculum 2008 and the introduction of pupil assessments in Welsh as a second language at the end of Key Stage 2. On a rather less positive note there was also a strong suggestion that financial considerations may well have played a part in prompting some Local Authorities to target Athrawon Bro's services more carefully.

4.2.7 Conwy and the Vale of Glamorgan have developed 'traffic light' systems to identify schools which need additional support. Ceredigion has introduced a particularly transparent approach to targeting support.

*Case Study: Targeting Athrawon Bro Support in Ceredigion*

From September 2009, Ceredigion began to target Athrawon Bro's

services according to the capacity within schools (in terms of Welsh language and Welsh medium teaching), having offered a fairly ubiquitous service prior to that.

Schools deemed to be in need were invited to submit 'applications' for additional support, thus ensuring that they gave due consideration to how Athrawon Bro could most effectively be used to improve standards, whilst providing the Local Authority with assurance that schools were committed to the process. The application process also allowed a clear and shared understanding between schools, the Local Authority and Athrawon Bro of the weaknesses to be tackled.

Whilst the majority of schools still receive some Athrawon Bro support, the intensity of that support varies, with:

- 5 English medium schools receiving two days' input a week, spread over four days, for a whole year. The aim of this support is to increase the proportion of the curriculum taught through the medium of Welsh/bilingually;
- 20 schools receiving one days' input a week, spread over two days, for a whole academic year;
- 9 schools receiving one day's input a week for a single term;
- 15 schools receiving a visit every fortnight or so.

For those schools which no longer receive any support from the Athrawon Bro team, the Local Authority has organised input from a theatre company<sup>44</sup>, which focuses on developing pupils' oracy skills using 'education through drama' techniques. The activities undertaken are designed to fit in with curricular themes whilst also developing particular vocabulary and language patterns. The introduction of this support arguably goes some way to mitigate the effects of withdrawing services from those schools which perform best.

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<sup>44</sup> Theatr Arad Goch

- 4.2.8 Other Local Authorities remain reluctant to target Athrawon Bro's services, primarily because prioritising some schools would inevitably mean depriving others of support which, it was argued, is critical to their ability to teach Welsh as a second language. In these Authorities, Athrawon Bro generally work with clusters of primary schools feeding particular secondaries.
- 4.2.9 Over recent years, greater emphasis has been put on using Welsh as a medium for teaching other subjects in non Welsh medium schools. Again, the extent to which this has been possible has varied from area to area. As indicated above, Ceredigion has adopted a purposeful strategy of targeting Athrawon Bro support upon schools seeking to increase the proportion of the curriculum taught through the medium of Welsh. A similar approach has been taken in Conwy. In other areas where less Welsh is spoken, such as the Vale of Glamorgan and Powys, Athrawon Bro have sought to develop practitioners' skills and confidence to a sufficient degree to enable them to present elements of the curriculum through the medium of Welsh, with a particular focus on more practical and visual subjects such as Art, Design and Technology, Music and Physical Education. In Gwent, Athrawon Bro have provided support for an intensive Welsh language programme at the end of Key Stage 2 in the feeder primaries of one of its English medium secondary schools, with the aim of equipping pupils to study some subjects through the medium of Welsh.
- 4.2.10 Whilst Athrawon Bro's work has historically focused mainly on Key Stage 2, the introduction of the Foundation Phase provided an opportunity for Athrawon Bro to introduce the concept of using Welsh as a communication and teaching medium. Athrawon Bro teams were quick to grasp the initiative by producing resources designed for use by Foundation Phase practitioners (teachers and teaching and learning assistants), including those with only a very weak command of the Welsh language. Alongside producing teaching and learning resources, Athrawon Bro have been involved in training Foundation Phase staff, both off and on the job. Some contributors claimed that the focus placed on the Foundation Phase by Athrawon Bro over the last two years or so has had a discernible positive effect on pupils' second

language skills as they enter Key Stage 2, to the extent that it has been possible to shift the focus of teaching in Years 3 and 4 to reading and writing because pupils possess the grounding in oral Welsh needed. This, of course, puts pressure on schools to ensure that they have the capacity to develop pupils' Welsh (as a second language) language skills further in Key Stage 2.

4.2.11 More recently, Athrawon Bro in many areas have produced resources designed to accord with Curriculum 2008 (focusing on the development of thinking skills, communication skills etc), again for use by practitioners with a relatively weak command of the Welsh language. The nature of the resources produced is discussed in more detail at section 4.6, but it is worth noting here that Athrawon Bro teams invested a considerable amount of time over the last two or three years not only in the development of these resources, but also in delivering INSET courses and on-the-job training to enable practitioners to make effective use of them.

4.2.12 Allied to this, Athrawon Bro in many areas have sought to promote the use of 'incidental Welsh' (that is simple, everyday Welsh words and expressions) and have extended their support to teaching assistants and school administrative and service staff. This, of course, ties into efforts to create a more Welsh ethos within schools and in some areas, Athrawon Bro teams have been instrumental in helping schools develop plans for extending the use of Welsh as a teaching and communication medium. It is notable that Local Authorities such as Conwy and Pembrokeshire invite Governing Bodies to promote and monitor the degree of 'bilingualism' achieved by individual schools.

4.2.13 A minority of practitioners were said by Welsh Advisers and Athrawon Bro to have been quite resistant to using Welsh as a teaching and communication medium because it placed a significant burden on them. In essence, it required them to develop language skills quickly, as well as to familiarise themselves with curricular developments in order to 'stay one step ahead' of pupils. By the same token, some Welsh Advisers thought that some head

teachers 'delegate Welsh too much to subject leaders' instead of themselves taking ownership of promoting bilingualism with their schools. This did not reflect attitudes towards the Welsh language in general, however.

4.2.14 In general, Welsh Advisers and Athrawon Bro thought that the profile of the Welsh language is 'much higher now than it was when I started [working as a teacher] all those years ago' and that practitioners have become considerably more awake to the benefits of bilingualism over the last decade or so. Indeed, it was said that a number of teachers recognise the benefits of bilingualism for their own career development. This was put down in large part to Welsh Assembly Government policy, but also to Athrawon Bro's enthusiastic and sustained 'evangelising'. Allied to this, Athrawon Bro serving areas where less Welsh is spoken tended to think that pupil attainment in Welsh as a second language has improved – 'when I started, we prepared some materials that were used in year six. We still use them now, but in meithrin and derbyn [nursery and reception]'.

4.2.15 The recent introduction of pupil assessment in Welsh as a second language at the end of Key Stage 2 is very much seen as a 'game changer' in that, even in those schools where the teaching of Welsh has not hitherto been seen as a priority, it can no longer be 'swept under the carpet'. During 2009/10, Athrawon Bro in most areas have been actively involved in helping schools to assess relevant pupils' attainment in Welsh as a second language at the end of Key Stage 2. This has often involved developing systems and producing resources to enable practitioners, who are not themselves fluent in Welsh, to assess pupil language levels (these resources are discussed further below), as well as training and guiding practitioners through the assessment process. It was anticipated that schools would require on-going support in assessing pupils' language levels, albeit that the systems put in place this year will certainly lessen the demands upon Athrawon Bro's time in future years. In order to ensure that the moderation process at the end of Key Stage 2 is consistent within and

across all Local Authority areas, some contributors called for clear guidance and specific training to be provided at a national level.

4.2.16 Allied to the assessment of pupils' language levels at the end of Key Stage 2, Athrawon Bro in most areas have been involved, to a greater or lesser extent, in assisting the process of managing pupils' linguistic progression as they make the transition into secondary education. Athrawon Bro and primary practitioners argued that second pupils' language levels are often underestimated by Key Stage 3 teachers and that, as a consequence, there is a tendency in Year 7, to go over ground already trodden by pupils in Years 5 and 6. This, it was said, arrests pupil progression and results in many becoming bored and disillusioned with learning Welsh. In order to ensure continuity in the teaching of Welsh as a second language, Athrawon Bro in several counties have facilitated a process of 'moderating' Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3 practitioners' assessments of language levels. This has been done by working with secondary schools and their feeder primaries to review samples of work undertaken by pupils during their time in Year 6 and to discuss the curriculum covered during Key Stage 2. This illustrates the increasingly advisory nature of Athrawon Bro's role and was seen by several contributors as something that would need to continue over the next year or so at least.

4.2.17 Athrawon Bro in most areas get involved in organising and, in some cases, delivering extra curricular activities for pupils studying Welsh as a second language. This includes organising residential courses for pupils at Urdd sites, organising events such as Eisteddfodau and 'Jamborees', organising inter-school competitions (such as the Cwis Llyfrau) and so forth.

4.2.18 Some Athrawon Bro also contribute towards immersion and intensive language teaching programmes (some of which are supported by Welsh Language Board grants). Typically, this involves Athrawon Bro getting involved in the delivery of six week long intensive Welsh language immersion courses for Key Stage 2 pupils studying Welsh as a second

language, but who are considering moving into Welsh medium secondary education, whether at Welsh medium or bilingual schools<sup>45</sup>.

4.2.19 More recently, Athrawon Bro in Ceredigion have been experimenting with the delivery of week-long immersion programmes at selected primary schools, linked into events such as Christmas and St David's day. These short, sharp programmes are designed to build upon and reinforce longer (6 week) immersion programmes delivered in non-Welsh medium schools in the summer term.

4.2.20 Of course, the services discussed above mainly relate to schools where Welsh is primarily taught as a second language. The general expectation is that staff in Welsh Medium schools, both primary and secondary, possess the Welsh language skills necessary to teach Welsh and to teach through the medium of Welsh. On this basis, the majority of Local Authorities devote less resource to supporting the Welsh medium sector, with services generally amounting to those delivered by advisory staff and INSET opportunities (see section 4.9).

4.2.21 Where support is given it is provided by dedicated Athrawon Bro or School Improvement Service staff (typically Welsh Advisors). The activities undertaken by these individuals highlight the increasingly advisory nature of the role played by Athrawon Bro and include:

- working with subject leaders to develop whole school strategies and language models (vocabulary and syntax) to be used across the range of subject areas;
- discussing and demonstrating good language teaching practice in schools which suffer disappointing attainment rates in Welsh as a first language at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2. This includes demonstrating how to teach and 'drill' pupils in particular vocabulary and language patterns in order to improve pupils' grasp of the language. One county has focused this kind of support on underachieving boys in particular;

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<sup>45</sup> Immersion and Intensive Language Teaching Pilots have been evaluated separately. The final report was published in 2009



- delivering lessons to targeted groups of pupils alongside class teachers. This service extends to pupils from Welsh speaking families where it is felt that their use of the language has become ‘ragged’. In two counties the focus of this teaching shifted from oracy in the autumn term, to reading in the spring term and then to writing in the summer term. It is notable that there is an overlap between the role of Athrawon Bro and Literacy Advisers in some areas;
- developing advanced reading skills (especially for boys) to improve basic literacy skills;
- working with schools to ensure the effective transition of pupils into first language Welsh medium secondary education – ‘pontio’. This has included getting involved in moderating pupil assessments and facilitating discussions between secondary schools and their feeder primaries as well as organising ‘taster sessions’ for Year 6 pupils in Welsh medium secondary schools. In Môn and Gwynedd, ‘Catchment Area Language Coordinators’, rather than Athrawon Bro per se<sup>46</sup>, are responsible for ensuring that pupils follow appropriate language tracks upon transition into secondary education;
- providing pre-inspection support and helping schools address areas of weakness;
- organising extra curricular activities designed to ‘immerse’ pupils in the Welsh language, primarily activities delivered at one of three Urdd sites;
- organising an annual book quiz;
- the creation and introduction of relevant resources to support language activities; and
- observing and mentoring newly qualified primary school teachers.

4.2.22 Athrawon Bro’s involvement with secondary schools tends to be fairly limited, primarily because secondary schools have specialist Welsh language departments. Where Athrawon Bro have contact with secondary schools, it tends to be linked to managing pupil transition from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3. Exceptions to this are:

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<sup>46</sup> Môn and Gwynedd’s Catchment Area Language Coordinators are funded by the Welsh Language Board in much the same way as Athrawon Bro

- Athrawon Bro involvement with pupils participating in Immersion Schemes;
- Latecomer Centre based Athrawon Bro supporting the delivery of subjects through the medium of Welsh at their 'host' secondary schools;
- secondary school based Athrawon Bro at one Pembrokeshire school; and
- Wales' only secondary Latecomers Centre.

4.2.23 Local Authority representatives and school staff were overwhelmingly complimentary about the enthusiasm and energy that Athrawon Bro show in promoting and teaching the Welsh language. Indeed, both Estyn (2003) and the Welsh Language Board (1996) have said that Athrawon Bro have been 'instrumental in helping schools to implement the National Curriculum requirements for Welsh'. Estyn also concluded that Athrawon Bro have has a 'positive influence on the attitudes of classroom teachers towards the Welsh language' and helped to raise 'standards in Welsh', albeit that 'Welsh as a second language [remained] one of the Key Stage 2 National Curriculum subjects where standards [were] lowest'. Estyn also pointed to Athrawon Bro's invaluable role in demonstrating and 'disseminating good methods of teaching Welsh'.

4.2.24 Nevertheless, a small number of stakeholders contended that the Athrawon Bro service represents a 'plaster which covers the wound', which is the lack of capacity within schools to deliver Welsh language and Welsh medium education, 'rather than being part of a cure'. In this context, it must be recognised that they are only part of the 'mix' of interventions which influence practitioner capacity and pupil attainment. As indicated above, the service is fairly limited and it was argued by some that a far more fundamental reform is required to ensure that practitioners within the system are equipped with the necessary skills to teach Welsh as a subject and to use it as a medium for teaching other subjects. As one secondary school head teacher put it, 'I agree with the philosophy behind the Welsh Medium Education Strategy ... but practice is the problem, because the population of teachers [able to use Welsh as a teaching medium] isn't there'. Some

contributors argued for a stronger policy lead from the Welsh Assembly Government rather than successive initiatives to address weaknesses within parts of the existing system. Indeed, some saw that passing of the Welsh Language Measure (2010) and the publication of the Welsh-Medium Education Scheme as key catalysts to bring about changes in this respect.

4.2.25 Whilst outside the scope of this study, some stakeholders argued that those training to become teachers should be better equipped with the language and methodological skills required to teach in Welsh schools. In essence, it was argued that in the longer term, Initial Teacher Education and Training (ITET) should address the skills gap currently addressed by Athrawon Bro.

### **4.3 TEACHING WELSH TO LATECOMERS**

4.3.1 There are 'Latecomer Centres' in eight Local Authority areas. These allow non-Welsh speakers moving into particular areas to learn Welsh rapidly so that they can cope with a Welsh medium/bilingual education in their new school. Table 4.1 below summarises the kind of immersion experience offered in each county.

4.3.2 All but three<sup>47</sup> of the primary schools in Môn and Gwynedd are deemed 'bilingual' and the starting assumption is that pupils will study Welsh as a first language and pursue other subjects within the curriculum through the medium of Welsh. The expectation is that all pupils will reach a 'firm level 3' in Welsh as a first language by the end of Key Stage 2 and will continue to study Welsh as a first language into Key Stage 3. In order that pupils moving into the area with little or no knowledge of Welsh are equipped with the language skills necessary to pursue a fully bilingual education and to be assimilated successfully into school communities, they are 'immersed' in Welsh from the outset. Those arriving before the age of seven are generally 'immersed' within their home school setting, whilst newcomers in Key Stage 2 attend Latecomer Centres, usually during their first term in the area. The

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<sup>47</sup> Our Lady's School, Bangor, St Mary's School in Holyhead and Caerceiliog School in Valley

few that do not achieve level 3 at the end of Key Stage 2 are supported to study Welsh as a second language in secondary school.

- 4.3.3 In 2004, Wales only secondary Latecomers Centre has been established in Gwynedd to serve non Welsh speaking Key Stage 3 pupils moving to live in the southern and western parts of the area. The Centre primarily focuses upon developing the language skills of Year 7 pupils, though Year 8 and Year 9 pupils are also accommodated, when numbers allow.
- 4.3.4 Conwy operates one Latecomers Centre along similar lines to the primary model adopted in Môn and Gwynedd. Alongside this, the Local Authority sponsors a less intensive approach at a 'satellite' Centre which operates as and when needed in a deeply rural part of the County, where pupil numbers are smaller and demand is less predictable. To all intents and purposes, the burden of developing the Welsh language skills of pupils attending the 'satellite' Centre is shared between the Centre and pupils' home schools.
- 4.3.5 Conwy also runs a 'satellite' language Centre which is focused upon strengthening first language speakers or accomplished learners' command and use of Welsh in an area where English tends to dominate. This is done in order to preserve the linguistic characteristics of traditional Welsh schools in areas where the Welsh language has become increasingly fragile.
- 4.3.6 The Latecomers Centre in Denbighshire opened in September 2009 and provides a three day a week immersion programme for primary aged pupils over one whole academic year. Weekly reports on the vocabulary and sentence patterns presented are sent to pupils' home schools, along with reports on the progress made. This is intended to reinforce what pupils have learnt with their teachers and fellow pupils.

Table 4.1: Outline of Immersion Programmes offered at Latecomers' Centres

County	Number of Centres	Year Groups Served	Duration of Immersion Period	Comment
Môn	2	3-6	5 days a week for 1 term	One Centre is open all the year round, whilst the other is open during the Autumn and Spring terms only.
Gwynedd	4	3-6	5 days a week for 1 term	Four primary Centres are open all year round, subject to demand. Where demand is lower, one Centre closes during the summer term.
	1	7	5 days a week for 8 weeks	One secondary Centre is open all year round.
Conwy	1	3-6	5 days a week for 1 term	Centre is open all year round.
	1		2 days a week for 2 terms	A 'satellite' Centre which opens as and when needed.
	1		2 days a week for 1 term	A 'satellite' Centre which caters for first language Welsh speakers in a 'marginal' area.
Denbighshire	1	2-6	3 days a week for 3 terms	Centre is open all year round and located in a primary school
Ceredigion	6	3-6	2 days a week for 3 terms	Centres located within secondary schools. Four of the six Centres functional in 2009/10. ABs from non-functional Centres have been supporting pupils in the classroom
Carmarthenshire	6	3-6	4 days a week for 2 terms	Centres located within secondary schools and, in some cases, ABs also support Year 7, 8 and 9 pupils in pursuing elements of the curriculum through the medium of Welsh <sup>48</sup>
Pembrokeshire	2	3-6	2 days a week for 2 terms	Located at Welsh medium secondary schools, but cater for pupils in Key Stage 2.
Swansea and Neath Port Talbot in collaboration	1	1-6	4 days a week for 1 term and then 3 days a week for ½ a term <sup>49</sup>	Located at Ysgol y Wern, Ystalyfera.

Source:

Data received from Local Authorities

<sup>48</sup> E.g. History, Geography, Maths and Science

<sup>49</sup> The pattern of pupils' attendance was changed from 3 days for 2 terms in response to Estyn recommendations

- 4.3.7 Latecomer Centres which serve Key Stage 2 pupils in Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion and Pembrokeshire are all located at Welsh medium or bilingual secondary schools, typically those to which the pupils in question hope to progress. Again, the aim of these Centres is to equip pupils arriving in Welsh speaking communities with the skills necessary to pursue a Welsh medium or bilingual education but, as shown in Table 4.1 above, the programme offered in each county differs in terms of intensity and length.
- 4.3.8 Key Stage 2 pupils in Swansea and Neath Port Talbot are offered the opportunity to attend a Latecomer Centre located at a Swansea primary school. In common with other Latecomer Centres, the Centre and its host school work in close cooperation, to the extent that Centre pupils participate in morning services, singing lessons, physical education lessons and special events. In addition to this, sixth form pupils from a nearby secondary school have been used to deliver language sessions to pupils attending the Centre.
- 4.3.9 Whilst it is beyond the scope of this study to assess the relative effectiveness of different Latecomers Centre models, we note that Estyn (2003) commended the more intensive approach adopted in Môn, Gwynedd and the Conwy valley. Indeed, consideration was given to the adoption of a more intensive approach in Ceredigion, but concerns about the sustainability of small rural schools if pupils were removed for sustained periods thwarted any such development.
- 4.3.10 Latecomer Centres in Gwynedd and Môn have tended to be full, with waiting lists on occasion. Those in Carmarthenshire and Ceredigion, on the other hand, have seen a marked decline in demand for places of late. It was recognised that the structure of Latecomers Centres may need to be reviewed if this trend persists, but the short term response to the decline in demand in Carmarthenshire, for example, has been to use Athrawon Bro working in Latecomers Centres to support pupils studying first language Welsh in improving their basic skills and to support Key Stage 3 pupils at

Centres' host schools in studying various elements of the curriculum through the medium of Welsh.

4.3.11 Concern was expressed at what was seen as 'misuse' of undersubscribed Centres by a handful of primary schools which fail to take responsibility for their pupils' linguistic development. There have been examples of latecomer pupils whose Welsh language skills remain weak after a period of immersion being sent to Centres for a second time.

4.3.12 Staff working in Latecomers Centres also provide 'after-care' service to pupils and their host schools. The precise nature of this service varies from Centre to Centre, largely depending upon the level of demand for Centres' services at any given time. After-care was nevertheless seen as a crucial element of the Latecomers Centre mix and one which some contributors would like to see extended, even in areas such as Môn and Gwynedd. Indeed, one Local Authority employs one Athrawes Fro on a 'sessional' basis, so that it is able to flex the nature and level of service offered, according to need. On the whole, however, aftercare service includes:

- the provision to pupils' home schools of reports on the progress made by individual pupils;
- the provision (in Môn, Gwynedd and the Conwy valley) of 'an aftercare pack', which sets out the vocabulary and language patterns covered in Latecomers Centres. This enables teachers at pupils' home schools to reinforce and build upon the language skills pupils acquire during their time at Language Centres;
- visits to pupils' home schools during the period immediately following their attendance at Latecomers Centres. The purpose of these visits is to maintain momentum by extending former Centre attendees' vocabulary or revisiting language patterns, for example; and
- in Môn and Gwynedd, tracking pupils' linguistic progression during Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3, using data received from Cynnal. This is tied into the process of ensuring appropriate linguistic progression during transition.

4.3.13 In several counties, Language Centre staff seek to engage with the families of latecomer pupils in order to enhance parents' understanding of the Welsh language and culture in order to allay any fears they might have about their children pursuing a Welsh medium/bilingual education. They also seek to secure parental support for their children's acquisition of the Welsh language in order to help them integrate successfully into local communities. The nature of activities undertaken varies from county to county, but include, for example:

- hosting events to introduce parents and pupils to the Welsh language;
- encouraging family participating in social events and language 'taster sessions' organised by Mentrau Iaith;
- encouraging participation in Urdd activities;
- interacting with providers of Welsh for Adults courses and encouraging participation in Welsh for the Family courses; and
- delivering a 'parents assimilation programme' (in Môn, Gwynedd, Ceredigion and Pembrokeshire), using resources developed by Centre staff in Gwynedd and Môn, building upon work done in the area some years ago. The developmental work and assimilation programmes were undertaken with the aid of Welsh Language Board project funding<sup>50</sup>.

4.3.14 Contributors were overwhelmingly enthusiastic about the work of Latecomer Centres, with several arguing that they are fundamental to the realisation of Local Authorities' Welsh language policies and, indeed, to the preservation of the linguistic characters of local schools in the face of significant immigration over the last fifteen years or more. Practitioners within schools that we visited commented that Latecomers Centres were particularly effective, with one saying that they 'perform miracles with the kids that go there ... the difference [in pupils' Welsh language skills after attending] is astonishing'.

4.3.15 Some Latecomer Centre staff contribute towards immersion and intensive language learning programmes (see paragraph 4.6.17 above). This usually

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<sup>50</sup> i.e. grant funding for Welsh language support services was not used



takes place during the summer term, when not every Latecomers Centre is open.

4.3.16 Some counties have adopted alternative models for enabling non Welsh speaking pupils moving into Welsh speaking areas to pursue a Welsh medium education. In Powys, for example, Welsh medium primary schools admitting non Welsh speaking migrants are funded to employ a dedicated teacher and classroom assistant to provide five hours' a week additional language support to the pupils in question over a two year period. This allows the Authority the flexibility to respond to hitherto very limited demand across a large geographic area. Other Authorities depend on immersion and intensive language learning programmes to enable in-migrants to capitalise upon a Welsh medium education, alongside other learners.

#### **4.4 DEVELOPMENT OF TEACHING AND LEARNING RESOURCES**

4.4.1 Athrawon Bro teams across Wales have, over the years, invested a significant amount of time in developing teaching, learning and assessment resources for use by practitioners in the classroom. A handful of stakeholders thought that possibly 'too much' time had been spent on resource development, to the detriment of hands-on support for teachers in the classroom. Without exception, the nature of resources to be developed is decided by Athrawon Bro teams, drawing on feedback from schools and colleagues within School Improvement Teams. There are examples of cross Local Authority collaboration on the development of resources, beyond formal arrangements between Môn and Gwynedd, the counties served by ESIS and those involved in the Gwent consortium, for example, between Conwy, Denbighshire and Flintshire and, to a lesser extent, between Carmarthenshire and Ceredigion. Each Local Authority is also represented on various WJEC working groups, which ensures that consideration is given to resources being developed centrally when planning local resource development activities.

4.4.2 The resources produced are wide-ranging and some Athrawon Bro teams have built up substantial catalogues of materials over the years. Examples of resources developed include:

- lesson plans;
- worksheets;
- flash cards;
- games;
- audio and video resources to aid with teaching accurate pronunciation. Non Welsh speaking practitioners to whom we spoke found these particularly useful;
- interactive resources for use on Electronic Whiteboards. A significant emphasis has been put on developing electronic/interactive resources over the last two or three years. On the whole, electronic resources are produced in Digital Versatile Disc (DVD) form and loaded onto Local Authorities' web-sites;
- resources to enable pupil assessment, including 'Pupil profile packs' which are designed to help manage appropriate linguistic progression during the transition to Key Stage 3;
- full learning programmes with supporting classroom materials e.g. Cynllun y Llan, which has been developed over a number of years by Latecomer Centre staff in Mon, Gwynedd and Conwy; and
- teaching packs (see case study below).

*Case Study: Teaching and Learning Resource Development in Powys*

During 2009/10, a group of Athrawon Bro in Powys worked on the development of a teaching pack for use by Foundation Phase practitioners who have very limited knowledge of the Welsh language. The pack is made up of 12 thematic units of work that complement Framework for Children's Learning for 3 to 7-year-olds in Wales, and comprises an A4 file containing lesson plans, a range of supporting materials (designed to meet the needs of pupils of different abilities) and detailed instructions on how to use the resources. The pack is seen as something 'foolproof' and easy to use, which non-Welsh speaking teachers can have 'on tap' for use at any

time.

The intention is to launch the pack during training events to be held in September 2010. Funding has been set aside by the Local Authority to meet the costs of supply cover so that schools are in a position to release staff to attend these events. Members of the Athrawon Bro team will present the pack to practitioners and demonstrate how it might be used. The training events will be followed up with visits to each school, during which Athrawon Bro will discuss the pack in more detail and guide appropriate staff on its use in the classroom.

The team intends to develop a second pack, for use in Key Stage 2, during 2010/11. In the meantime, consideration is being given to putting the first pack produced on the National Grid for Learning (NGfL<sup>51</sup>) web-site so that it can be shared beyond the borders of Powys.

4.4.3 Criticism was levelled at some of the resources produced for not being sufficiently focused on the development of pupil's language skills. One contributor observed that in developing resources some practitioners 'take themes as their starting point ... but language teaching philosophy seems to have passed them by ... so they [the resources produced] lack [appropriate] structure'.

4.4.4 Athrawon Bro in different areas have undoubtedly been producing very similar things, with a particular emphasis over the last two or three years on resources aimed at the Foundation Phase and resources to do with pupil assessment at the end of Key Stage 2. Contributors were candid that 'there probably is quite a bit of duplication' and that 'there is not enough sharing of resources'. Several contributors saw the potential benefit of coordinating the development and sharing of resources at an all Wales level, but they also recognised that, in practice, doing so might not be straightforward. Barriers

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<sup>51</sup> National Grid for Learning: <http://www.ngfl-cymru.org.uk/>

to wider sharing were said to include a preference among practitioners for resources with a local flavour, the need to accommodate regional dialect (and the difference between north and south Wales Welsh), the fear of breaching Intellectual Property Rights and the sheer logistical challenge of trying to gather, quality assure and distribute materials. Indeed, in 2004/05, the Welsh Language Board sought to establish a web-site to share resources produced by Athrawon Bro, but this coincided with the establishment of NGfL and, although the resources gathered were loaded onto the NGfL site, the discussions were taken no further. There was a sense in which the absence of national leadership means that Athrawon Bro teams do not really feel compelled to collaborate more closely on the development of teaching and learning resources.

4.4.5 Having said that, however, either Language Advisors or Athrawon Bro from each Local Authority contribute to two WJEC steering groups, one concerned with the teaching of Welsh as a second language and the other concerned with Welsh as a teaching medium. These working groups help the WJEC to prioritise the training packs it produces. These training packs are generally based on aspects of the National Curriculum, and include teaching and learning materials which Athrawon Bro and practitioners can use in the classroom. These resources are accessible via NGfL, as indeed are resources produced by a number of Athrawon Bro teams. It was clear that NGfL is by now regarded by many as a source of very useful, high quality materials which are appropriate for use by practitioners across Wales.

4.4.6 Almost without exception, the resources produced by Athrawon Bro teams are loaded onto Local Authority intranets and are, therefore, accessible to practitioners across individual Local Authority areas. However, there was no evidence that any monitoring is undertaken to assess the extent to which these resources are accessed or used.

4.4.7 In addition to the resources produced at a local level, the Welsh Assembly Government and NGfL have commissioned the development of resources such as 'Fflic a Fflac'<sup>52</sup>.

4.4.8 Staff within Latecomer Centres also develop their own resources, and in north west Wales, a bespoke teaching programme and accompanying suite of materials have been developed over the years.

*Case Study: Cynllun y Llan*

Cynllun y Llan has been developed over the years by staff working in Latecomers Centres in Môn, Gwynedd and Conwy, alongside officers from Cynnal, the Môn and Gwynedd schools support service. Cynllun y Llan is a language skills development programme and other resources are used within Centres to focus on other skill areas, numeracy, for example

Cynllun y Llan is made up of twelve units (one a week) based on an imaginary village and its residents. The course was designed to introduce vocabulary and language patterns gradually and to ensure that they are repeated time and again. Indeed, drilling language in ways that are fun, for example through reciting 'raps' or through playing impromptu games, is a core part of the course. Within the clear structure of Cynllun y Llan, pupils are encouraged to use Welsh during games and in playing the parts of different characters from the village during drama sessions. Gradually, pupils' writing, as well as their oral skills, are developed using techniques such as story boards, again based on characters and locations within the imaginary village.

Cynllun y Llan resources are not shared beyond the Latecomers Centres in north Wales, lest their novelty be compromised as pupils enter the Centres. Furthermore, the course was designed for use in teaching language

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<sup>52</sup> Fflic a Fflac is a web-site for teachers and parents to use with pupils in the Foundation Phase – see: [www.fflicafflac.com/](http://www.fflicafflac.com/)

through intensive methods rather than for use in more normal classroom situations. This means that specialist skills are needed to make the most of Cynllun y Llan resources.

Although Cynllun y Llan resources are not shared, NGfL materials are used by Latecomer Centre staff to complement the course. Indeed, it was said that interactive resources on 'the weather, clothes, the café, food and houses and homes' provided by NGfL are 'as if they'd been designed to fit with Cynllun y Llan'. Individual practitioners within Latecomer Centres also develop some of their own materials to complement Cynllun y Llan resources, and it was argued that 'it's important that teachers have the freedom to put their own stamp' on the course, albeit that they work within the structure of the programme.

## **4.5 DELIVERING INSET COURSES**

4.5.1 As already discussed, a significant proportion of Athrawon Bro's time is given over to delivering 'on the job training' to staff in schools. In the main this involves discussing pedagogical approaches, delivering 'model lessons', working alongside teachers in the classroom and observing practitioners teaching Welsh and teaching through the medium of Welsh.

4.5.2 In addition to this, Athrawon Bro in some counties work alongside colleagues from School Improvement teams to deliver 'off the job' training courses, which form part of Local Authorities' wider INSET offer. The general consensus was that this kind of approach works well, particularly where Athrawon Bro have become more firmly integrated within School Improvement teams. However, presenting INSET courses is not generally considered part of Athrawon Bro's role and some contributors pointed out that not all Athrawon Bro are suited to deliver formal training to adults.

4.5.3 On the whole, INSET programmes are planned and delivered on the basis of 'partnership' arrangements discussed at item 3.2 above. In addition to

this, however, Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion, Neath Port Talbot, Pembrokeshire, Powys and Swansea work together through a 'consortium' known as SWAMWAC. SWAMWAC seeks to identify areas where the six Local Authorities can work together 'to deliver improved services for children and young people', with a specific emphasis upon systems for planning and developing the teaching workforce. Some courses delivered by individual member Local Authorities are open to staff from other counties.

4.5.4 Other Authorities buy services or cooperate in a more limited way with neighbouring clusters. For example, both Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan Councils buy services from ESIS and Wrexham Council works with the Conwy Denbighshire and Flintshire consortium on the delivery of CIMCai<sup>53</sup> courses. Conwy subscribes to elements of Cynnal's Welsh as a first language INSET programme.

4.5.5 A number of Local Authorities offer 'intensive' courses to develop the language skills of practitioners with little or no Welsh. These courses are generally centred on particular resources developed or adapted by Advisory Service staff and/or Athrawon Bro and often reflect recent curricular or pedagogical developments. In this sense, courses blend language and methodology training and have the added benefit of providing practitioners with ready made lesson plans and teaching resources which they can use in the classroom.

4.5.6 The length of intensive courses varies from one area to another, with Cardiff offering courses of 20 days' duration and ESIS offering courses which last 15 days at two levels. Wrexham and Powys offer courses which last 10 days, whilst Conwy, Denbighshire, Flint, the Vale of Glamorgan and Gwent offer courses of six days' duration<sup>54</sup>. Gwent also offers week long courses focused on language appropriate to teachers of particular age groups. Intensive courses of this kind were generally valued by practitioners, were

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<sup>53</sup> CIMCai is an acronym for Cwrs Iaith a Methodoleg Cymraeg ail iaith (Language and Methodology Course in Welsh as a second language)

<sup>54</sup> In three two day blocks over the space of two academic years

thought to do much to engender more positive attitudes towards the Welsh language among practitioners and to increase practitioners' willingness to use Welsh on an incidental basis.

4.5.7 However, some contributors questioned whether such courses represented good value for money, in that they did not develop practitioners' language (as opposed to methodological) skills to a sufficient degree to enable them to utilise the language to anything but the most superficial level in the classroom. As one contributor put it, the structures and 'scripts' which are introduced on these courses 'are fine as a starting point, but they're not good enough as pupils' language levels improve'. Another argued that such courses, as well as the resources which generally accompany them, 'satisfy short term needs' rather than equipping practitioners with the language skills needed in the long term. A number of contributors argued that the effects of these relatively short language courses upon capacity within schools to teach Welsh as a second language or to use Welsh as a teaching medium needs to be examined more closely.

4.5.8 The considerably more demanding CIMCai course offered by Wrexham, Conwy, Denbighshire and Flint<sup>55</sup> was seen by some as a means of ensuring a better return on investment.

*Case Study: CIMCai*

CIMCai is a four year part time course which involves:

- weekly twilight sessions of 1½ hours' duration over a 26 week period;
- four days' theme centred training, with sessions on different areas of interest;
- the observation of six lessons delivered by course participants;
- the completion of 'weighty' written assignments at the end of each

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<sup>55</sup> Courses are delivered separately by Wrexham and by the Conwy, Denbighshire and Flintshire consortium



year, which require participants 'to read quite extensively about teaching second languages ... to look at their own teaching practice ... and to feed it [the theoretic learning] into their own professional development'.

The course is targeted at practitioners who are 'total beginners' (Welsh language wise) and aims to develop their Welsh language skills in parallel with their pedagogical skills. The language element of the course is based on the GCSE framework of vocabulary and syntax/language patterns, which means that practitioners are introduced to the language skills that they need to pass on to pupils. The course is underpinned by 'Effective Pedagogy' principles and encourages reflective learning through 'action research' and discussion with peers of the effects and effectiveness of particular approaches taken. Athrawon Bro are central to the delivery of CIMCai in that they tutor the weekly twilight sessions, undertake observations of course participants applying their learning in the classroom and mark year end assignments.

CIMCai is accredited by Bangor University<sup>56</sup> and leads to the attainment of Masters level credits. The course takes four years to complete, though participants are free to pursue one or more years and to accumulate credits as they go along<sup>57</sup>. Indeed, individuals are also able to combine CIMCai modules with other Masters levels modules e.g. Dyslexia in working towards a Masters Degree. Participants completing CIMCai are able to go on to write a 60 credit dissertation in order to achieve a Masters Degree. Bangor University charges the Local Authorities a registration fee of about £170 per annum for each participant.

Whilst it was acknowledged that CIMCai requires considerable commitment on the part of participating teachers, it was argued that 'it is a

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<sup>56</sup> Following the moderation of a sample of the assignments marked by Athrawon Bro

<sup>57</sup> 30 credits are awarded upon the successful completion of each year: after two years, participants achieve a Certificate in Professional Development and after four years, a Diploma in Professional Development

very practical course and, therefore, affects their [participants'] work in the classroom straight away'. Furthermore, the sustained focus on learning relevant language and methodology over a longer period was thought to yield greater and more enduring results than short, concentrated language/method courses. A former participant in CIMCai commented that it helped 'increase [her] subject knowledge that could be applied in small steps back in the classroom following weekly meetings/lessons' adding that she 'understood different, more varied ways of teaching Welsh' and that 'this knowledge has also helped me with the teaching of other subjects'. A primary school Welsh Language Coordinator with limited Welsh language skills said of another former participant, 'I was so in awe of the lady who'd been on CIMCai ... her commitment to the subject, the activities she was doing when her Welsh wasn't that good'.

Some participants find the completion of CIMCai assignments too burdensome and although they, therefore, fail to 'complete' the course, it was thought that the weekly sessions and the reflective learning undertaken impacts positively upon their practice in the classroom. Moreover, several contributors spoke of the positive effect that participation in CIMCai has not only upon participating practitioners, but also upon the schools at which they work.

According to one commentator, however, the course can be quite expensive to deliver, because of the relatively small numbers of practitioners who participate, rendering the costs of tutor input per participant higher.

#### *Case Study: Sabbaticals Scheme in Pembrokeshire*

As discussed in an earlier case study, Pembrokeshire has sought to shift responsibility for teaching Welsh and developing bilingualism from the county's Athrawon Bro team to schools themselves. In order to achieve this, the Authority has encouraged schools to recruit bilingual staff, where

possible, whilst also capitalising upon a Welsh Assembly Government sponsored '*Sabbatical Scheme*' developed and delivered by Trinity College, Carmarthen and South West Wales Welsh for Adults Centre specifically for practitioners with little prior knowledge of Welsh. This Sabbatical Scheme differs from the original National Practitioners Training Programme and Sabbatical Scheme developed by Bangor and Cardiff Universities, which was targeted at people with rather stronger Welsh language skills.

The Scheme involved practitioners selected by the Local Authority undertaking three months' intensive training in the Welsh language, in how to teach Welsh and in how to use Welsh as a medium for teaching other subjects. Crucially, the Authority worked closely with schools to ensure that plans were put in place to ensure the effective utilisation of participating teachers' new skills upon their return to work.

Whilst it is early to assess the impact of Pembrokeshire's new approach to promoting Welsh and developing bilingualism, Local Authority and school representatives alike were enthusiastic about what had been achieved.

4.5.9 One contributor regretted that so little has been made of Wales' position 'at the vanguard' in terms of equipping non Welsh speaking teachers to teach Welsh as a second language. He argued that a non French speaking teacher 'getting a class of kids to say bon jour in Bristol merits a half page spread in the Times Ed', whereas little is heard of former CIMCai participants' success in teaching Welsh to a considerably higher level to primary school pupils in Wales.

4.5.10 A number of Local Authorities have put on short (half or one day) courses deigned to introduce non Welsh speaking Teaching Assistants and support staff to 'incidental Welsh' and Welsh medium 'yard games'. In addition to this, Athrawon Bro teams in some areas have delivered short training sessions on basic Welsh in-situ at schools.

4.5.11 Gwynedd and Môn are the exceptions among Local Authorities, in that they do not offer courses to enable practitioners to develop their Welsh language skills. Both these counties have, for a number of years, implemented recruitment policies which require teachers to be able to work bilingually (with a handful of exceptions) and the assumption is that Welsh will be the primary language used in any classroom and in school life more generally. It was argued that, on this basis neither county 'has that cohort [of teachers] who need to develop their Welsh language skills, as is the case in other areas'.

4.5.12 In this connection, it is notable that very little is done to assess practitioners' Welsh language skills. Exceptions include an annual survey of schools undertaken by Powys, where practitioners are asked to assess their own Welsh language skills on a scale of 1 to 5 and to provide information about Welsh language related training they have undertaken. Whilst this information is used to help plan INSET, it is not used to plan or prioritise Athrawon Bro activity: schools receive proportionately the same level of Athrawon Bro support regardless of their staff's Welsh language capacity.

4.5.13 It is notable that contributors did not generally see a connection between developing practitioners' Welsh language skills and the Welsh for Adults programme.

4.5.14 Local Authorities do not put on Welsh language courses for practitioners working in Welsh medium or bilingual settings. However, they do offer courses to do with teaching Welsh as a first language and it is notable that a number of the titles delivered in the last two years or so have revolved around the development of Foundation Phase and Key Stage 2 pupils' basic literacy in Welsh i.e. they were focused on teaching 'oracy', 'reading' and 'writing'. In some areas, this was tied in quite purposefully to activities sponsored by Basic Skills Cymru.

4.5.15 Authorities have also offered a range of more generic titles, which involve a Welsh language/medium dimension, including for example:

- purposeful planning to develop language skills in the context of Curriculum 2008 and the Skills Framework;
- developing thinking skills in Welsh medium settings;
- developing 'bilingualism' (aimed at primary head teachers and Welsh language coordinators); and
- the use of Information and Communication Technologies in bilingual teaching.

4.5.16 In many areas, courses put on by the WJEC, via its national programme of Welsh-medium in-service training, represent an important element of the training offered to practitioners in Welsh medium or bilingual primary and secondary schools.

4.5.17 The WJEC is awarded an annual grant of £120 thousand (which is top-sliced from the BSF and Local Authorities are expected to contribute an additional £80 thousand from their own resources in order to reach an overall total of £200 thousand) to work with the Welsh Assembly Government and each Local Authority to:

- prepare training packages. This element of the WJEC's work is facilitated through working groups comprising Local Authority representatives, including Welsh advisors and Athrawon Bro. The groups, which consider Welsh as a first and second language in both the primary and secondary sectors, meet twice each term and are led by the WJEC's National Professional Development Officer. The groups function as working groups to design resource packs and share good practice;
- put on training events, including an annual two day national conference for Athrawon Bro. The conference includes presentations from language teaching specialists, an exhibition of teaching and learning materials and allows Athrawon Bro to network and exchange experiences with their counterparts from other areas; and
- maintain a register of trainers.

4.5.18 The WJEC is assisted in planning and undertaking this work by the two steering groups referred to at item 4.8.5 above - one of which is concerned

with Welsh as a subject and the other of which is concerned with teaching other subjects through the medium of Welsh. Each of these groups meets approximately twice a year and is made up of Advisory staff from Local Authorities (including Athrawon Bro in some instances) as well as a representative from Estyn. This arrangement provides a mechanism to ensure that training programmes organised by the WJEC complements rather than competes with the training delivered by Local Authorities.

4.5.19 Having been allocated BSF monies by the Welsh Assembly Government, the WJEC allocates each Local Authority a 'quota', which is used to 'buy in training from a register of specialist assistant trainers maintained by WJEC'<sup>58</sup>, sometimes in cooperation with neighbouring Local Authorities. According to Estyn, this system 'enables Local Authorities to plan training provision based on needs identified at a local level' and to use the services of specialist trainers to complement local INSET programmes. Local Authorities also tend to use Athrawon Bro to 'cascade' training delivered by WJEC trainers/speakers in order to reach a wider audience of practitioners.

4.5.20 As discussed at section 4.8 above, in addition to the training offered, the WJEC develops training materials which are made available via the National Grid for Learning Cymru (NGfL Cymru) website, and which Estyn claimed are 'used extensively and well by both teachers and LA staff'.

4.5.21 Estyn's review (2003) concluded by recommending that Local Authorities 'continue to support the Welsh and Welsh-medium training programmes by working in partnership with WJEC and by releasing staff to participate in working groups' and 'continue to finance the programmes'. It also recommended that Local Authorities should 'develop an impact-assessment tool to report back to WJEC on the success of the programmes'.

4.5.22 The training offered by the WJEC is complemented by a menu of courses offered by CYDAG. A sample of the titles delivered by both organisations in

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<sup>58</sup> The two exceptions to this are Môn and Gwynedd, which are receive funding from the WJEC to buy in training from a local provider, Cynnal.

2009/10 is given at Annex D. It is notable that CYDAG and the WJEC cooperate on the delivery of Welsh medium/bilingual courses in subjects where demand is limited (e.g. Welsh medium Chemistry in Torfaen). In such situations, the WJEC is able to use an element of relevant Local Authorities' quotas to contribute towards the costs of subject specific training delivered by CYDAG.

4.5.23 Contributors were generally less familiar with courses offered by CYDAG, though this probably reflects the fact that Athrawon Bro tend to have less involvement with Welsh medium schools in general and Welsh medium secondary schools in particular.

4.5.24 Much of the INSET delivered by Local Authorities is undertaken on the basis of school clusters. These include clusters of primary schools feeding particular secondaries or clusters of secondary schools within particular geographic areas. Contributors were quick to point to these as examples of 'Networks of Professional Practice', with one arguing that 'it's just a new name for something we've been doing for years ... clusters already help each other with things like writing policies, discussing challenges, developing resources, sharing good practice ... there is room to improve, but the rationale is there already'.

## **5 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 5.1 The Welsh Assembly Government has made clear its intentions to increase the number of people in Wales able to speak Welsh and has pointed to the role to be played by schools in realising that ambition. At the same time, it has acknowledged that overall, the education system as it currently stands is not doing enough to develop the Welsh language skills of young people and Estyn has highlighted, time and again, significant weaknesses in the teaching of Welsh as a second language within primary and secondary schools. In essence, many schools lack the capacity to teach Welsh or to use Welsh as a medium of communication.
- 5.2 Two recent policy developments have served to highlight this deficiency particularly starkly to schools and Local Authorities:
- the introduction of pupil assessments in Welsh as a second language at the end of Key Stage 2; and
  - the introduction of Estyn's new Common Inspection Framework, which gives consideration to 'Welsh language provision and the Welsh dimension'.
- 5.3 Of course, the challenge faced differs from one area to another. In areas where the Welsh language is at its strongest, Welsh medium and bilingual schools struggle to maintain their linguistic characteristics as they deal with non Welsh speaking immigrants, whereas in areas where less Welsh is spoken, schools struggle to recruit staff capable of teaching Welsh or of teaching through the medium of Welsh. This means that there is significant variation in the approach taken by different Local Authorities to supporting Welsh language and Welsh medium education within schools.
- 5.4 Over the years, Athrawon Bro and related support services have been crucial to supporting schools. However, it is generally acknowledged that Athrawon Bro services, as they currently stand, are not sufficient to bring about the change now sought by the Welsh Assembly Government. There is an urgent



need for sustained national leadership to ensure that capacity is built within schools to teach Welsh as a language and to use Welsh as a medium for teaching other subjects. The status quo, which overall continues to yield disappointing results in terms of pupil attainment in Welsh as a second language, is not acceptable. A step change is required to ensure a worthwhile return on investment, both for the tax-payer and for pupils who invest several years in learning Welsh (as a first or second language) throughout their school careers.

- 5.5 As a first step, the Welsh Assembly Government should make clear its intention to support Local Authorities and schools to develop their Welsh language capacity. This can be done in two ways:
- by helping them to recruit new staff who have the requisite Welsh language and pedagogical skills;
  - by assisting them to develop the Welsh language skills of their existing teachers.
- 5.6 The current revision of arrangements for Initial Teacher Education and Training (ITET) in Wales provides an ideal opportunity to equip tomorrow's teachers with the language and methodological skills required to teach Welsh as a second language in English medium primary schools and Welsh as a first language in Welsh medium and bilingual primary schools. An on-going investment in the language and pedagogical skills of new entrants to the profession should help to ensure a steady build-up of capacity within schools over years to come.

*Recommendation 1*

All Initial Teacher Education and Training courses sponsored by the Welsh Assembly Government (via HEFCW) should contain compulsory modules focused on developing Welsh language skills and on developing the skills to teach Welsh as a second language. First language Welsh speakers should not be excepted from these modules.

- 5.7 Allied to this, schools should be encouraged to recruit staff with Welsh language skill wherever possible. To some extent, the focus which Estyn's new Common Inspection Framework places upon the 'Welsh dimension' should go some way to increasing the value attached by schools to Welsh language skills, as indeed should the assessment of attainment amongst pupils studying Welsh as a second language.
- 5.8 Whilst recruiting appropriately skilled new entrants might go some way to building Welsh language capacity within schools, it will not be sufficient in itself, particularly within the short to medium term. Most Local Authorities already offer courses designed to develop the language skills of practitioners with little knowledge of Welsh. Whilst these courses undoubtedly yield some benefits, there is doubt as to their effectiveness in developing the skills necessary to teach Welsh or to use the language at anything beyond the most superficial level. Two programmes of rather longer duration were thought to be more effective at developing practitioners able and willing to teach Welsh or use the language in the classroom, though there is only limited evidence to support this view at this stage.
- 5.9 Although there is limited evidence of the effectiveness of these two different approaches at this stage, the development of both programmes represents a significant public investment. There is, undoubtedly, much which can be learnt from both programmes and there would be merit in the Welsh Assembly Government working with the sponsors of each to develop a potential all-Wales programme.

*Recommendation 2*

The Welsh Assembly Government should work with stakeholders involved in the delivery of both CIMCai and the Sabbaticals Scheme as well as one or more Welsh for Adults Centres to develop an all-Wales language and methodology skills development programme for practitioners with little or no Welsh, although the emphasis should be firmly on developing language skills. In developing the programme, careful consideration will need to be

given to the intensity and duration of the training to be undertaken and to the ongoing maintenance and development of practitioners' language skills.

The programme should be developed by the summer of 2011 and piloted with a set number of practitioners from September 2011, before being rolled out more widely, if successful.

The Welsh Assembly Government should set aside a budget for piloting of this all-Wales programme by top-slicing Priority 2 within the BSF as well as using the monies already identified to support the Sabbaticals Scheme.

### *Recommendation 3*

In the meantime, the Welsh Assembly Government should work with the Local Authorities to monitor the effects of the existing approaches to the development of practitioners' Welsh language and related pedagogical skills. Consideration will need to be given to assessing the following metrics at the start of the training and at various points thereafter:

- participating practitioners' language levels;
- participating practitioners' confidence in teaching Welsh and using Welsh as a medium for communicating with pupils; and
- participating practitioners' use of Welsh in the classroom.

Given the absence of a common yard stick at present, this might involve developing a suite of simple assessment tools to allow participating practitioners' language levels to be measured at particular points. This should be tied into Welsh for Adults levels using the ALTE (Association of Language Teachers in Europe), system, albeit that it will need to be tailored to reflect language appropriate to teaching. The metrics and tools developed should also be used to assess the effects and effectiveness of the all-Wales programme referred to above.

5.10 Of course, neither Initial Teacher Education and Training or INSET can solve the immediate problem faced by many English medium schools. In the short term, it will be necessary to maintain the support currently offered by Athrawon Bro. However, the terms under which these services are provided need to change. Some Local Authorities have already started to target their Athrawon Bro services more purposefully, with the aim of building capacity within schools. This practice should become more widespread and the allocation of Welsh Language Board grants to Local Authorities should be conditional upon their demonstrating clear three year plans for developing Welsh language capacity within specific schools in their areas.

*Recommendation 4*

The Welsh Language Board should invite Local Authorities wishing to apply for grant funding to set out three year plans demonstrating how they will target Athrawon Bro's services in order to build sustainable capacity. In doing so, the Welsh Language Board should make it clear that it does not intend to fund 'blanket' services that do not yield measurable changes in individual, non Welsh medium schools' Welsh language capacity.

5.11 Similarly, Local Authorities should make it clear to schools that the purpose of the Athrawon Bro service is to help schools develop Welsh language capacity and that the services of Athrawon Bro will be confined to those schools which meet particular criteria. In essence, Local Authorities need to shift schools' expectations, so that they take responsibility for their Welsh language capacity, rather than relying on Athrawon Bro to plug skills gaps.

*Recommendation 5*

Local Authorities should set out the criteria which they will use to prioritise and target schools. Criteria might include:

- schools aiming to change medium or to increase significantly the proportion of teaching undertaken through the medium of Welsh;
- schools aspiring to feed a greater proportion of pupils into Welsh medium secondaries;

- schools with the poorest results in Welsh as a second language at the end of Key Stage 2;
- schools facing the loss of key staff involved in teaching Welsh or in promoting the use of Welsh; and
- schools, including Welsh medium schools, where specific difficulties are identified by School Improvement Teams.

Schools should then be invited to apply for Athrawon Bro support, with those demonstrating the most coherent and realistic plans prioritised.

5.12 Alongside this targeting of services, greater attention needs to be given to assessing the effects of Athrawon Bro and related services upon schools. In many cases, senior education officers acknowledged that they did not have effective systems in place to measure the impact of the work of the Athrawon Bro on improving language skills and to monitor and evaluate the quality of the provision.

*Recommendation 6*

Local Authorities to be asked to set SMART<sup>59</sup> impact targets. Whilst they may not be perfect indicators of the effects of Athrawon Bro and related services upon schools, impact measures that might be used include:

- proportion of the curriculum taught through the medium of Welsh at targeted schools;
- pupil attainment in Welsh as a second language at the end of Key Stage 2<sup>60</sup>;
- pupil attainment in Welsh as a first language at the end of Key Stages 1, 2 and 3; and
- proportion of pupils progressing into Welsh medium schools or pursuing a Welsh medium education at bilingual schools.

Soft information in the shape of impact reports from schools should also be

<sup>59</sup> Simple, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timebound

<sup>60</sup> And, from 2012, at Key Stage 1

used to build up a picture of the effects and effectiveness of Athrawon Bro's intervention.

- 5.13 Over the last year or so, Athrawon Bro have provided non Welsh medium schools with a considerable level of support in assessing Year 6 pupils' levels in Welsh as a second language. In many areas, this involved working with clusters of primary and secondary schools to develop standardised pupil level profiles, linked into planning pupil transition from Key Stage 2 into Key Stage 3. Whilst some Athrawon Bro teams worked across Local Authority boundaries in this connection, the work has undoubtedly involved a degree of duplication and there is clearly a risk that locally developed systems could lead to inconsistencies across Wales and, thus, undermine the credibility of the assessment process.

*Recommendation 7*

The Welsh Assembly Government should take steps to ensure consistency in the levelling of pupil assessments at the end of Key Stage 2.

In order to achieve this, it will need to call upon the expertise of key individuals within individual Athrawon Bro/School Improvement Service teams to 'moderate' materials already produced by practitioners in each area.

- 5.14 Athrawon Bro teams have also produced a wide range of other teaching and learning materials and it was accepted that there has been duplication in this respect too. There is undoubtedly scope to make the production of resources more strategic and to extend the utility derived from resources developed by sharing them more widely between Athrawon Bro teams across Wales.

*Recommendation 8*

The Welsh Assembly Government should ask WJEC (as the organisation which hosts NGfL) to invite Local Authorities to submit examples of resources which they have developed within the last two years or which

they believe are particularly useful. WJEC should then be asked to use its existing steering groups to identify gaps in NGfL's existing offer and to select the most appropriate of these resources to load onto the site, subject to aesthetic or technical improvements, as necessary, and for the development of complementary training/guidance resources. The Local Authorities whose resources are selected should then be rewarded for sharing their resources via WJEC. This would amount to a retrospective commissioning of resources.

Following the loading of resources onto NGfL, gaps should be identified and the panel should make recommendations as to the types of resources to be developed. The Welsh Assembly Government and Welsh Language Board should then agree a programme of resource development with WJEC and Local Authorities' grants should be top-sliced to allow for appropriate materials to be produced. At the same time, the Welsh Assembly Government/Welsh Language Board should make it clear to Local Authorities that only in exceptional circumstances should new resources be developed at a local level.

- 5.15 Cynllun y Llan, developed in north west Wales, provides a structured incremental language teaching programme complemented by a suite of tried and tested resources. The success achieved by Latecomer Centres in Môn, Gwynedd and Conwy over the years suggests that these resources, when used by appropriately skilled practitioners to underpin intensive language teaching approaches, are highly effective. Consideration should be given to how the use of Cynllun y Llan can be extended to other parts of Wales.

*Recommendation 9*

The Welsh Assembly Government should open discussions with Local Authorities in north Wales to explore how the use of Cynllun y Llan might be extended to Latecomer Centres in other parts of Wales.

- 5.16 In areas where Welsh is strongest, Latecomers Centres have been fundamental to equipping pupils who have little or no experience of Welsh with the skills necessary to pursue a Welsh medium education, thus ensuring that Welsh remains the main language for communication in primary schools. Whilst demand for places at Latecomers Centres in some areas has declined of late, we believe that there will be an ongoing need for such facilities for the foreseeable future.

*Recommendation 10*

The Welsh Assembly Government and the Welsh Language Board should make a commitment to providing ring fenced funding to support Latecomers Centres for rolling periods of three years. At the same time, however, those Local Authorities which have seen a decline in demand for places at Latecomers Centres should review their arrangements to ensure that they maximise efficiency.

- 5.17 There is some nervousness within Local Authorities about the future funding of Athrawon Bro services, particularly given the uncertain future of the Welsh Language Board and the ongoing decline in BSF grants. This is in danger of causing instability among practitioners who are key to the realisation of the Welsh Assembly Government's Welsh Medium Education Strategy.

*Recommendation 11*

The Department of Culture and Sport within the Welsh Assembly Government should issue a declaration that it will continue to support Athrawon Bro services via grant funding, regardless of what happens to the Welsh Language Board. The funding to which the Department commits should be at least equal to the existing grant, including the additional funding made available by the Welsh Language Board from its own resources.

The Department of Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills should also make a commitment to ring fence a similar amount from the



BSF to support the implementation of the Welsh Medium Education Strategy.

Having secured the value of the grants used to fund Welsh language support services for schools at present, consideration should be given to merging them to create a single all-Wales grant scheme administered by the Welsh Assembly Government.

The time horizon for the award of grant funding should be extended from one to three years, thus encouraging a more strategic approach to be taken.

Allied to this point, Local Authorities should be asked to produce one integrated BSF/Welsh Language Board grant application. Similarly, they should be asked to produce integrated progress and impact reports.

- 5.18 The agenda set out in the School Effectiveness Framework, along with the significant financial pressures currently facing local government, is leading to Local Authorities to give serious consideration to cross boundary working. We envisage that tentative developments already seen in this direction will accelerate, with the regional networks already established seen as the obvious vehicles for moving forward. In some areas, of course, Local Authorities already collaborate on the delivery of Welsh language support services to schools, generally on the basis of arrangements in place prior to the 1996 local government re-organisation. The strength of collaborative arrangements varies, with arrangements in the areas served by Cynnal and ESIS probably providing the most robust model. Although not all contributors subscribe to cross border working, there is a strong argument for doing so in future and it is important that the structures put in place to accommodate this make sense in the context of supporting the Welsh language.

*Recommendation 12*

The 'national support unit' referred to in the Welsh Medium Education Strategy should be charged with facilitating cross border working between Athrawon Bro teams (as elements of wider School Improvement Services). In so doing, the national support unit should consider the 'match' between Local Authority areas in terms of their Welsh language and Welsh medium education profiles. Whilst existing networks (e.g. ADEW groupings) might provide a useful starting point, it should not be assumed that Athrawon Bro teams should work with their immediate neighbours.

Nor should it be assumed that any 'networks' established should be enduring. It might be that they serve their purpose by providing an opportunity for the exchange of ideas and experience over a short period. Crucially, however, the national support unit should capture any learning so that it can transfer knowledge and good practice to other networks or areas.

## **ANNEX A: WELSH MEDIUM EDUCATION STRATEGY AIMS**

1. To improve the planning of Welsh-medium provision in the pre-statutory and statutory phases of education, on the basis of proactive response to informed parental demand
2. To improve the planning of Welsh-medium provision in the post-14 phases of education and training, to take account of linguistic progression and continued development of skills
3. To ensure that all learners develop their Welsh-language skills to their full potential and encourage sound linguistic progression from one phase of education and training to the next
4. To ensure a planned Welsh-medium education workforce that provides sufficient numbers of practitioners for all phases of education and training, with high-quality Welsh language skills and competence in teaching methodologies
5. To improve the central support mechanisms for Welsh-medium education and training
6. To contribute to the acquisition and reinforcement of Welsh-language skills in families and in the community

## ANNEX B: VALUE OF GRANTS ALLOCATED BY THE WELSH LANGUAGE BOARD

	2009/10	2010/11
<i>Local Authority</i>	<i>£(000)</i>	<i>£(000)</i>
Isle of Anglesey	119	121
Gwynedd	226	229
Conwy	116	118
Denbighshire	98	100
Flintshire	115	116
Wrexham	104	106
Powys	257	261
Ceredigion	133	135
Pembrokeshire	168	171
Carmarthenshire	182	184
Swansea	161	163
Neath Port Talbot	130	132
Bridgend	94	95
Vale of Glamorgan	83	84
Rhondda Cynon Taff	172	174
Merthyr Tydfil	54	55
Caerphilly	125	127
Blaenau Gwent	70	72
Torfaen	102	104
Monmouthshire	83	84
Newport	117	118
Cardiff	192	195
<b>Wales Total</b>	<b>2,901</b>	<b>2,944</b>

## ANNEX C: BETTER SCHOOLS FUND MINIMUM ALLOCATIONS<sup>61</sup>

	2009/10	2010/11
	P5	P2 <sup>62</sup>
<i>Local Authority</i>	<i>£(000)</i>	<i>£(000)</i>
Isle of Anglesey	49	57
Gwynedd	87	96
Conwy	77	86
Denbighshire	73	73
Flintshire	107	112
Wrexham	88	93
Powys	89	101
Ceredigion	47	53
Pembrokeshire	86	98
Carmarthenshire	125	137
Swansea	165	158
Neath Port Talbot	103	103
Bridgend	103	97
Vale of Glamorgan	106	89
Rhondda Cynon Taff	170	190
Merthyr Tydfil	52	47
Caerphilly	137	145
Blaenau Gwent	58	57
Torfaen	74	68
Monmouthshire	60	57
Newport	115	106
Cardiff	232	202
<b>Wales Total</b> <sup>63</sup>	<b>2,201</b>	<b>2,225</b>

<sup>61</sup> These figures represent 60% of Local Authorities' gross allocations, adjusted to take account of the £120K (£200k gross) top-sliced to support the WJEC's training programme

<sup>62</sup> The figures for 2010/11 represent 15 percent Local Authorities' Better Schools Fund allocations, which was ring fenced for Priority 2 (this equates to £3.7 million gross or £2.2 million net). The sum of £200,000 gross is top-sliced from the Better Schools Fund for allocation to the WJEC.

<sup>63</sup> May include rounding errors

## **ANNEX D: EXAMPLES OF COURSE TITLES DELIVERED IN 2009/10**

### **WJEC**

- Methodology (Methodoleg)
- Thinking Skills (Sgiliau Meddwl/Datblygu Meddwl)
- Interactive Learning (Dysgu Rhyngweithiol)
- Creative Writing (Ysgrifennu Creadigol)
- Factual Writing (Ysgrifennu Ffiethiol)
- Poetry (Barddoniaeth)
- Sampling Standards (Engreiffio Safonau)
- Raising Standards in Key Stages 2 and 3 (Codi Safonau yng Nhyfnod Allweddol 2 a 3)
- Language Accuracy (Cywirdeb Iaith)

### **CYDAG**

- Religious Education and the thinking skills agenda (Addysg Grefyddol a'r agenda sgiliau meddwl)
- Geography and the skills agenda in Key Stage 3 (Deuaryddiaeth a'r agenda sgiliau yn Cyfnod Allweddol 3)
- Interpreting History and the skills agenda (Yr agenda sgiliau a dehongli hanes)
- Creative writing in first language Welsh (Cymraeg mamiaith – ysgrifennu creadigol)
- Music (aimed at the primary sector)
- Alternative Maths (for the primary sector)
- Foundation Phase

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