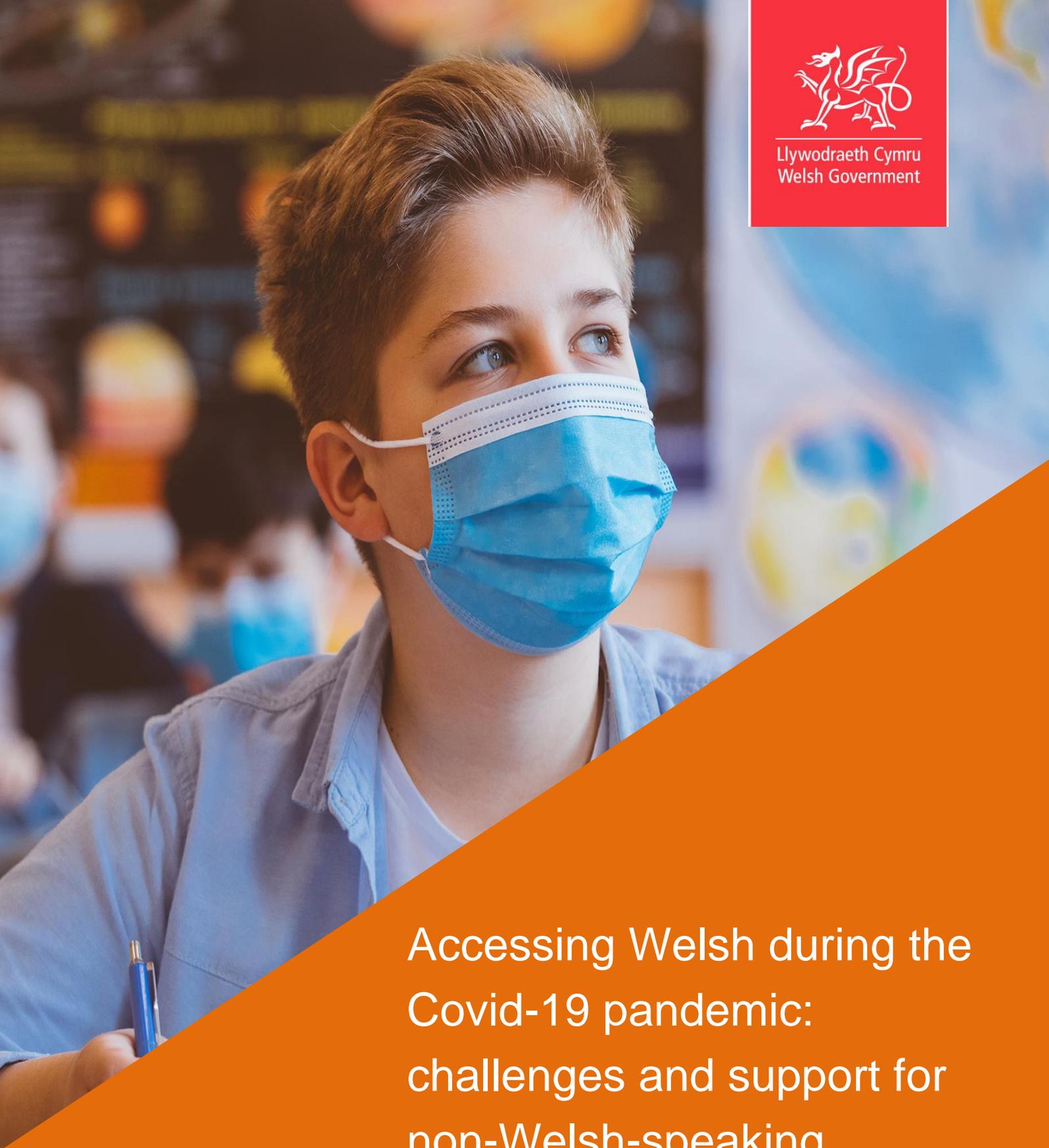




Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government



# Accessing Welsh during the Covid-19 pandemic: challenges and support for non-Welsh-speaking households

Title: Accessing Welsh during the Covid-19 pandemic:  
challenges and support for non-Welsh-speaking households

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

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## Glossary

Acronym/Key word	Definition
ITE	Initial Teacher Education
Additive bilingualism	Contexts where a second language contributes or ‘adds’ to a speaker’s knowledge in their first or native/natural language ‘without replacing it’ (Baker & Wright, 2021, p. 453). Development of the second or additional language is not at the detriment of the continuous development of the first (Pearson, 2008, p. 309).
Immersion	Immersion education is an umbrella term that refers to a variety of models of education where pupils are taught some or most of their content subjects through an L2.
Translanguaging	A bilingual pedagogical approach whereby pupils ‘receive information in one language and then use or apply it in the other language’ (Baker & Wright, 2021, p.464).
Co-constructed learning	Based in a constructivist tradition, co-constructed learning refers to a pedagogical approach that fosters collaborative learning across multiple partners with the pupil at the core.
EM Parents	Non-Welsh-speaking parents with children attending English-medium schools
WM Parents: non-Welsh	Non-Welsh-speaking parents with children attending Welsh-medium schools
WM Parents: Welsh	Welsh-speaking parents with children attending Welsh-medium schools

Retrieval practise	An approach to learning that encourages pupils to recall information they have already learned as a way of strengthening their continuous learning.
Task-based learning	A pedagogical approach that encourages pupils to solve tasks that have real world meaning. Through working collaboratively in groups, pupils develop deeper connections between language and the real world.
Mediation	As noted in the Curriculum for Wales ‘An activity in which meaning from a source is communicated from one person to another, sometimes within the same language (paraphrasing, summarising) sometimes from one language into another (translating, interpreting). The learner assists people to communicate with one another by relaying, explaining or translating information or ideas’

## 1. Introduction/Background

- 1.1 In response to the Covid-19 pandemic, Welsh Government funded a number of research projects to help understand the impact of the pandemic on learning and teaching in our schools. These projects aimed to identify the factors that affected various key stakeholders' experiences during the pandemic, and in particular how these factors impacted engagement with and delivery of various aspects of home schooling.
- 1.2 The research presented in this report is a collaboration between three Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) (Bangor University, Aberystwyth University, and University of Wales Trinity St David's - UWTSD), with data gathered from among the three HEIs' own network of partnership schools.
- 1.3 In particular, the project presented in this report considered the impact of Covid-19 on learners' engagement with and/or use of Welsh in both the Welsh-Medium/bilingual and English-medium sectors, with a specific focus on children attending Welsh-medium schools but living in non-Welsh-speaking households.
- 1.4 However, given the typological variation in the linguistic categorisation of schools in Wales as they currently stand,<sup>1</sup> and the diversity within in their respective models of delivery, we sought the views of individuals supporting various levels of engagement with Welsh, in Welsh-medium, bilingual and English-medium contexts, in order to build up a holistic view of the challenges facing Welsh language delivery and teaching across Wales during a pandemic.
- 1.5 Consequently, the report draws from a wide range of data sources, differentiated (i) according to stakeholder group (teacher, parent, Initial Teacher Education (ITE) lecturer, student teacher) and (ii) more crucially within the teacher and parent groups, according to language (school language category, and school language category X parent language). Together, these data represent the views and experiences of teachers (primary and secondary), parents, and University ITE

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<sup>1</sup> <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-02/defining-schools-according-to-welsh-medium-provision.pdf> accessed 16.8.2021.

lecturers and student teachers, who each had a role to play in the co-constructed delivery of pupils' education during the pandemic.

- 1.6 The recommendations presented in this report serve to enhance schools' ability to realise the ambition set out under one of the four purposes of Curriculum for Wales,<sup>2</sup> namely for all pupils to be '*ambitious, capable learners who... can communicate effectively in different forms and settings, using both Welsh and English.*' These recommendations, if implemented, may also serve as strategic enablers to complement the actions set in place to reach a million speakers of Welsh by 2050 and to double the number of individuals who are willing and able to use the language daily.<sup>3</sup> More specifically, making connections between languages, referred to in the Curriculum as *plurilingualism*, represents a core theme within the Languages, Literacy and Communication (LLC) Area of Learning and Experience of Curriculum for Wales.<sup>4</sup> Drawing on pupils' linguistic knowledge, no matter how advanced that knowledge may be, in either of their languages, helps pupils progress in all their languages, and developing good language skills lays the foundation for effective learning since '*effective language skills help learners to make sense of concepts across the curriculum.*' What the pandemic has done is to bring to the fore the natural juxtaposition of languages within authentic contexts of learning – at the micro (within individual), meso (within teacher-child or teacher-parent interactions) and macro (within the child's wider environment) levels – thereby accentuating the need to understand better how plurilingualism can be utilised effectively to enhance learning. Our recommendations therefore suggest actions that can lead to additive bilingualism for all learners, adopting a holistic, co-constructed approach to learning.

### **Context of the study**

- 1.7 There will, undoubtedly, be far reaching consequences to the Covid-19 pandemic and to our collective response - on a local, national and global level - to its challenges. These are indeed extraordinary times that require extraordinary

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<sup>2</sup> [Developing a vision for curriculum design - Hwb \(gov.wales\)](#) accessed 17.8.2021

<sup>3</sup> <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-12/cymraeg-2050-welsh-language-strategy.pdf> accessed 17.8.2021

<sup>4</sup> [Languages, Literacy and Communication: Introduction - Hwb \(gov.wales\)](#) accessed 17.8.2021

measures. However, whilst the measures employed may well be rooted in egalitarian principles, there are, unfortunately, far-reaching consequences to their implementation. Understanding what these consequences may be, and how they can be managed in the short, medium and long term, is vital if we are to at least partially regain the levels of economic, social and cultural stability that we were accustomed to before lockdown regulations were in place.

- 1.8 Two key aspects of Welsh society that have been challenged by this pandemic - with potential long-term consequences - are education and the Welsh language. Schools in Wales ceased to operate under normal conditions 23 March, 2020, remaining open to support the families of front-line workers and vulnerable pupils only. Stripped away from their experiences, knowledge and training as classroom-based educators, teachers were quickly tasked with delivering a brand-new model of teaching, with no specific training or guidelines, for a situation that no-one had ever encountered before. This new model involved a whole host of digital platforms that both schools and parents/pupils had to quickly become accustomed to.
- 1.9 Distance learning models and digital learning approaches are not new, and have been implemented quite successfully in education for many years (see e.g. Kozma 2011), sometimes as complete, virtual courses (Heart, Berger, Jacob, Loeb, & Hill, 2019) and sometimes as part of blended learning (De George-Walker & Keeffe, 2010). Within the primary and secondary school sectors, however, the use of digital technology has typically served to *complement and support* rather than *replace* face-to-face learning (Harju, Koskinen & Pehkonen, 2019). This sudden shift to a 'replacement' model triggered a number of challenges, including the challenge of constructing effective learning opportunities and ensuring equitable access to education for all.
- 1.10 The delivery of effective practice and access to education are particularly challenging for certain types of vulnerable pupils (children with Additional Learning Needs, children living in poverty, children in abusive households, etc.) for whom additional/alternative support would normally be available.
- 1.11 A lesser anticipated challenge, but one that could have far reaching implications for society, is the support for children for whom the language of education is not

necessarily their home language. This was the focus of the study presented in this report.

### **Issues relating to the Welsh language**

- 1.12 According to the 2011 Census data, 8% of individuals living in England and Wales speak one of 600 languages other than English as their main language, with Welsh - totalling 562,000 speakers - the most common of those. Within education in Wales, there currently exists a complex variety of linguistic models that involve largely Welsh-focused, immersion-based models on the one hand, and English-medium models teaching Welsh as a subject only on the other, with a variety of bilingual models in-between (Thomas, Gathercole & Hughes, 2013; see Welsh Government, 2007). However, the rich, linguistic diversity that has become increasingly evident throughout society is equally prevalent within the classroom, regardless of the linguistic model adopted.
- 1.13 During the 2019/2020 academic year, a total of 89,970 children were enrolled in mainstream schools (across the primary, middle, and secondary sector) where Welsh was the main or sole medium of instruction, with a further 12,095 children attending schools where Welsh was used as a teaching medium for part of the curriculum (Stats Wales, 2020).<sup>5</sup> A substantial proportion of children – over 102,000 children in Wales – are therefore normally in receipt of regular contact with Welsh during any given school day. However, of the children attending primary, middle and secondary schools in Wales (across all language mediums), only 41,705 are reported to speak at least some Welsh at home (Stats Wales, 2020).<sup>6</sup> The school context is therefore vital in providing children from non-Welsh-speaking backgrounds with the critical mass of exposure required in order to be able to abstract out the grammatical properties of Welsh from the input and develop their competence and confidence to use the language (Thomas & Gathercole, 2007; Thomas et al., 2014; Maratsos, 2000).

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<sup>5</sup> <https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Education-and-Skills/Schools-and-Teachers/Schools-Census/Pupil-Level-Annual-School-Census/Welsh-Language/pupilswelshclasses-by-localauthority-welshcategory>. Accessed 17.08.2021.

<sup>6</sup> <https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Education-and-Skills/Schools-and-Teachers/Schools-Census/Pupil-Level-Annual-School-Census/Welsh-Language/speakingwelshhomepupils5andover-by-year-sector-category>. Accessed 17.08.2021.

- 1.14 For that reason, the delivery of Welsh in immersion or Welsh-medium schooling is rooted in constructivist ideologies of bilingual acquisition. Constructivist accounts of language learning (see e.g. Gathercole, 2017) view language as being mainly input-driven, placing great emphasis on the frequency of exposure to, and engagement with, a given language (see also Usage-Based accounts – Tomasello, 2000).
- 1.15 Frequency of exposure to language, both as an L1 and as an L2, has been shown in numerous studies to impact on children’s proficiencies in that language (Gathercole & Thomas, 2009; Thomas et al., 2014; Binks & Thomas, 2019), and lack of sufficient input can lead to incomplete acquisition (Montrul, 2008).
- 1.16 Ensuring sufficient exposure to language during the Early Years in particular increases accumulative exposure over time (Unsworth, 2013), and the focus on Welsh in the Early Years links to the long-standing assumption that language learning follows a pre-determined biological time-frame linked to brain plasticity, making the early years particularly significant for language learning (Johnson & Newport, 1989; but see e.g. Hakuta, Bialystok, & Wiley, 2003 for alternate accounts). Early immersion is therefore featured as a key facilitator of later competence with the language, and is the period within a child’s life where language learning seems to be at its least effortful.
- 1.17 The immediate concerns around Covid-19, therefore, have to do with the sudden drop in frequency of pupils’ exposure to natural spoken Welsh, and the extent to which pupils – attending Welsh-medium schools in particular – have had the opportunity, encouragement and support to use their oral Welsh skills in meaningful ways. This concern may well be greater in relation to Foundation Phase pupils (Nursery, Reception, and Years 1 and 2), where early exposure helps build the underlying competence and confidence children need in order to start using the language confidently in later years, contributing to Welsh Government’s goal of creating life-long language speakers (Welsh Government, 2017 - Cymraeg 2050: A Million Welsh Speakers). However, the lack of linguistic scaffolding that is present in the classroom (via L1 Welsh peers, additional resources and/or the teacher) may also impact on older L2 Welsh pupils who are having to undertake a great deal of independent work, across various subjects, involving the use of worksheets,

terminology and documents that are written in Welsh. This means that all children, regardless of their age or level of education, will have been impacted in some way by the pandemic.

1.18 Consequently, some key and valid concerns in relation to children's home-schooling practices during Covid-19 are around:

- the lack of available exposure to natural spoken Welsh;
- the lack of necessity to communicate in the language within the non-Welsh-speaking home;
- the limitations to teachers' ability to set pupils oral work and group activities that serve to facilitate targeted language use;
- non-Welsh-speaking parents'/guardians' abilities/confidence to set children their given schoolwork if the work and resources used are in Welsh;
- non-Welsh-speaking parents'/guardians' ability to support (or 'school') their children in working through the work; and
- parents becoming fearful around their choice of schooling for their child(ren).

1.19 However, these challenges are not entirely irreversible, provided that appropriate measures are put in place. Welsh-medium schooling adopts an immersion-type model whereby children are initially exposed to 90% Welsh during the Foundation Phase, often progressing towards 50-50% Welsh and English by the end of Year 6. Welsh-medium teaching is therefore a form of bilingual – not monolingual – teaching, utilising pedagogical approaches such as translanguaging and task-based learning (Thomas, Apolloni & Parry, 2018; Fitzpatrick et al., 2018). In parts of Wales where Welsh-medium education is the only school model on offer, Welsh Government funds Welsh Language Units that provide intensive immersion experience for latecomers (children who arrive in Wales age 7 years or older). This provision provides children with the necessary catch-up experience to become fully immersed in mainstream education. There are also ways of increasing pupils' engagement with Welsh that can involve the use of English – by the pupil, the teacher and/or the parent – but our knowledge of the extent to which any such mitigating measures are available, understood or known to

teachers/parents/guardians, the extent to which the appropriate supportive messages are being delivered to reduce parent/pupil/and/or teacher anxieties around this issue, and the extent to which different contexts learn from each other (mainstream and Language Units) is limited at present. What we do know is that the accumulative value of Welsh-medium education in the long-run for children of non-Welsh-speaking families outweigh the price of suspended classroom exposure in the short-term, provided that appropriate measures have been put in place. This project aimed to identify what sort of challenges emerged for families and teachers during the periods when most pupils received their education at home and the types of strategies and interventions employed to alleviate such challenges.

### **Study objectives**

- 1.20 The objectives of this study were to identify how schools in Wales responded to the linguistic challenges set by the Covid-19 situation, with a view towards identifying the main hurdles faced, the limitations enforced by the situation, and examples of interesting practice. It aimed to identify and evaluate the perceived and potential effectiveness of the provision offered at that time, and explores potential implications of the findings to learn from the current situation in order to develop recommendations for innovative bilingual practices that benefit language learners in the long-term and inform language policy planning, beyond Covid-19.

## 2. Methodology

### Research Design

- 2.1 To achieve the study's objectives, given the tight time-frame for the study, the original plan was to adopt a *concurrent mixed methods design* (Creswell & Clark, 2011), whereby questionnaire (quantitative/qualitative) and interview (qualitative) data would be collected during a single phase in order to identify convergences and divergences and general patterns of responses across the data as provided by teachers, parents, ITE lecturers and ITE students.
- 2.2 However, due to the additional pressures on schools and parents during the time-frame of this study, in addition to the pressures on HEI staff and the evolving nature of the pandemic (see Limitations section, 2.49-2.56), we adapted our design to allow for an *explanatory mixed methods design* (Creswell & Clark, 2011) with respect to parents' and teachers' data, across two distinct phases: Phase 1, involving questionnaire (qualitative/quantitative) data collection and analysis, and Phase 2, involving follow-up interviews to help explain the findings of Phase 1. This design would allow for the purposive sampling of individuals for the follow-up interviews based on the patterns of data found. However, due to the added pressures on schools and parents up until the reopening of schools in March 2021, and the rich data base obtained via the questionnaire data, it was decided that further interviews with teachers and parents were not feasible.
- 2.3 Alternatively, we sought a series of vignettes among practitioners that provided interesting practice examples that supported some of the findings of the study. These are presented at the end of the report (see Annex A).
- 2.4 Likewise, given the added pressures on ITE lecturers and ITE students at this time, the original design was adapted to allow for a series of individual and focus group interviews where necessary. These interviews provided insights into the difficulties faced in preparing trainee teachers for the challenges of supporting and developing pupils' Welsh language skills within the current educational context. These interviews also provided insights into students' experiences of dealing with these challenges and examples of interesting practice.

- 2.5 Proposed methodologies and data collection tools for all data collection phases were approved by the Ethical Boards of Aberystwyth University, Bangor University and UWTSD, prior to the commencement of the study.
- 2.6 School and parental/guardian<sup>7</sup> data were collected during the first term of the 2020/21 school year. This allowed teachers and parents to reflect on the challenges of the first lockdown period whilst also reflecting somewhat on the readjustment period when schools welcomed all pupils back into class. The questionnaires remained open until January 2021. ITE staff and students were interviewed later on in March 2021. This was in order that students could reflect on a placement period within schools when responding to the questions.

### **Questionnaires**

- 2.7 Parental and teacher questionnaires were developed by the research team, and subsequently scrutinised, both by nominated members of ESTYN and by members of the Education Sub-Group of the Welsh Language Partnership Council, Welsh Government.
- 2.8 The questionnaire for teachers in Welsh-medium schools was created in Welsh. All other questionnaires were made available in Welsh and in English, so that participants could choose in which language they wished to respond.
- 2.9 Questionnaires were made available on-line, and involved a combination of carefully designed closed response questions - comprising categorical or scalar response options - and open-ended questions, that allowed informants to elaborate on their responses.
- 2.10 Generic questionnaires for teachers and parents/guardians were purposefully modified according to the linguistic medium of the school/individual. Teacher questionnaires for teachers teaching in Welsh-medium or bilingual schools involved 34 discreet questions. Teacher questionnaires for teachers teaching in English-medium schools involved 35 discreet questions.

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<sup>7</sup> Whilst some of the adults responding to the questionnaire may have been the child(ren)'s guardian, since we did not request that information we will adopt the term 'parent' throughout.

- 2.11 In all cases, teacher questionnaires collected relevant background questions about the school (official school language status, school language policies, communication with parents, language ethos, use of Welsh-language initiatives to support pupils' use and learning of Welsh in English-medium schools), and about teachers' experiences (the number of classes they taught, school year class, numbers of children in class, proportions of pupils from Welsh speaking vs non-Welsh-speaking background in class, years of service, prior on-line learning experience and professional learning<sup>8</sup> opportunities).
- 2.12 Background questions were then followed by a set of questions created specifically in order to explore the specific objectives of this project. These included questions around the discussions school had in terms of how best to support children from non-Welsh-speaking homes when engaged with work in Welsh; communication practices with pupils and their parents; what support was provided for parents; how work was set for children from various linguistic backgrounds; what kind of work was set to support pupils' development of their Welsh skills; how often this work was set and how pupils responded to the work; how schools catered for the development of spoken, written, reading and comprehension skills in Welsh; what they thought would be the ideal model of blended learning to support pupils' intellectual and linguistic development and to encourage children from non-Welsh-speaking homes to use their Welsh; what Welsh language resources were available and set, and how useful they felt these to be.
- 2.13 In English-medium schools, teachers were also asked specifically about initiatives/support to parents to help develop pupils' Welsh language skills as a subject and to encourage their children to use Welsh. Teachers were also asked if they had seen any long-term effects on pupils' Welsh (and English, in English-medium schools) skills, whether there were notable differences in pupils' Welsh across those educated at home and those who continued to access education in the school Hubs and whether any differences were seen upon pupils' return to school as compared to when they normally return after the summer holiday. In relation to these questions, teachers were asked if they normally implement any specific

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<sup>8</sup> Much of the discussion around professional learning referred to 'training'. For that reason, 'training' is retained as a term throughout the results sections.

strategies to support those pupils who may have been disengaged in their Welsh over the summer holidays upon their return to school in September, whether they implemented anything specific upon their return to school after the first lockdown and what support they had in place to deal with any further periods from school due to the need to self-isolate, etc. Teachers were also asked what they felt would be essential to include in ITE courses in order to prepare trainee teachers and NQTs for the challenges of teaching during a pandemic. Finally, teachers were asked if any parents had raised any concerns with them regarding the Welsh language and/or their ability to support their child's Welsh language skills at any point during the pandemic.

- 2.14 Similarly, generic questionnaires for parents were also purposefully modified according to their own linguistic abilities and whether their child(ren) was enrolled in Welsh-medium/bilingual or English-medium schools. The questionnaires included 34 questions, with an additional set of 21 statements placed on a Likert-type scale for parents with children in Welsh-medium/bilingual schools. As was the case for the teacher questionnaires, each questionnaire began with a set of questions exploring background information such as the age, gender, language skills, teaching experience, work status and highest level of education of adults in the home and which adults were involved in home-schooling; age of child(ren) in the home; whether their child(ren) was in receipt of Free School Meals, on the ALN register, or on School Action/School Action Plus programme; and which linguistic medium they were exposed to at school. These were then followed by a set of questions designed specifically to address the objectives of this research. These included questions about how schools communicated with parents during lockdown, how often, and in which language; whether any specific conversations occurred to discuss the challenges of home-schooling with work that was set in Welsh; what support was provided and what support would have been appreciated; the nature of bilingual communications; what kind of work was set and what sorts of resources did families already own or were provided by schools; how much of the work set did parents print; what other support would they have appreciated; and whether they felt that their child's abilities had deteriorated or improved over the course of the lockdown.

- 2.15 Given the commissioning remit of this project and the time limitations imposed, data from the parental questionnaires are anchored around responses to the closed questions. An exhaustive analysis of the qualitative data was not feasible at this point. However, responses to the open-ended questions were subjected to thematic analysis, conducted within a constructivist grounded theory approach, and the nine main emergent themes that arose from that analysis were used to substantiate and support the patterns emerging within the quantitative data. Presented together, the data analysed in these two data sets – quantitative and qualitative – provide a robust evidence-base from which to develop recommendations for the future.
- 2.16 As a cautionary note, when interpreting the results of the analysis, many contextualised variables need to be considered. These include (but are not limited to) the accuracy of memory recall, ambiguity of responses, socially acceptable responses, variations in experiences during different stages and periods of lockdown and Covid-19 epidemiology in geographical locations.

### **Semi-structured interviews**

- 2.17 A semi-structured interview design was adopted for the individual and focus group interviews with ITE lecturers and ITE students. A semi-structured approach was utilised in order that interviewers, in three different locations (Aberystwyth, Bangor and UWTSD), were consistent in their questioning. To further aid consistency, a series of 'planned prompts' (McCracken, 1988) was pre-approved and included to the interview protocol. Such prompts are useful to elicit additional/specific responses, and, whilst they can help retain consistency in individual interviewers' approach, they are not scripted, allowing for some flexibility (Leech, 2002).
- 2.18 The semi-structured focus groups for ITE lecturers and ITE students were developed and conducted by a sub-group of the team comprising of ITE specialists located in each of the three universities (Aberystwyth, Bangor and UWTSD).
- 2.19 The semi-structured interviews followed a similar model across the different samples interviewed (ITE lecturers and ITE students). The model comprised of a set of background, demographic questions, followed by a series of targeted, open-ended questions.

- 2.20 For ITE lecturers, these questions were focused around professional learning (referred to as ‘training’ in many of the responses presented in the results) and how they prepared students for the realities of on-line teaching and in addressing some of the issues pertaining to the challenges of teaching children from non-Welsh-speaking homes in Welsh-medium schools. ITE lecturers were asked how they prepared ITE students for the challenges of (i) setting work, (ii) connecting with their class, (iii) responding to pupils’ work, and (iv) providing feedback. A further set of questions explored the guidance they offered in relation to the types of oral Welsh tasks they could set, the various ways students could offer bilingual feedback on pupils’ work, and how to support all pupils, particularly those from non-Welsh-speaking homes, to deal with any work that was set in Welsh.
- 2.21 For ITE students, these questions focused around the training they had received at university and how they dealt with various situations during their placement. Students were asked how the university helped prepare them in relation to (i) contacting their class, (ii) setting work that would be undertaken by pupils at home, (iii) presenting lessons live and pre-recorded, and a series of questions relating to (iv) how pupils responded to the work set, (v) how many oral tasks they set for their pupils, (vi) what were the challenges of setting oral tasks, (vii) the methods and language they used to provide feedback on pupils’ work, and whether that feedback was targeted towards the pupil or pupil and parent, (viii) how they tracked pupil progress, and (ix) whether they felt able to support all pupils, particularly those from non-Welsh-speaking backgrounds, effectively.
- 2.22 All semi-structured interviews were conducted on-line via Teams and recorded for ease of post-session transcription and data coding and analysis.
- 2.23 Qualitative data was coded using ATLAS.ti (version 9) – a computer software for coding qualitative research data – to generate reports from manual and automatic coding. Initial coding, focused coding and categorisation was applied to the data, using a Constructivist Grounded Theory (CGT) approach, to group emergent themes that were divided into main themes and sub themes and to mitigate against unintended or inherent bias emanating from individual researchers’ views,

intentions, prior knowledge or culture when interpreting the qualitative data (Charmaz, 2020).

- 2.24 All interviews were conducted in Welsh, and were fully transcribed by an experienced native Welsh-speaking researcher.

### **Participants**

- 2.25 Questionnaires for teachers and parents were shared with schools within the school partnership networks that have been developed at each of the three constituent universities involved in the study (Aberystwyth, Bangor and UWTSD). An information sheet pertaining to the study and a series of links to Welsh-language and English-language versions of questionnaires designed specifically for teachers/parents of pupils in Welsh-medium/bilingual schools (primary and secondary) and teachers/parents of pupils in English-medium schools (primary and secondary) were sent to each school to share among their staff and parent populations. Teachers self-identified on the questionnaire as employees in a Welsh-medium, bilingual or English-medium school. Likewise, parents self-identified on their questionnaire as having (a) child(ren) enrolled in Welsh-medium, bilingual or English-medium school(s).<sup>9</sup>

### **Teachers**

- 2.26 98 educators<sup>10</sup> responded to the questionnaire. Approximately half of the responses came from teachers in English-medium schools (54%), with the remaining 46% from schools where Welsh was used either bilingually alongside English (12%) or as the main medium of instruction (34%).
- 2.27 The majority of teachers worked in the primary sector (65%), likely due to the prevalence of responses from teachers working in the English-medium primary sector (85% of the English-medium sector responses), although the majority of

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<sup>9</sup> These categories were loosely based around the more complex categorisation system as it currently stands: (see <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-02/defining-schools-according-to-welsh-medium-provision.pdf> accessed 16.8.2021) only simplified in order to be more meaningful for parents.

<sup>10</sup> We adopt the term 'teacher' rather than 'educator' throughout the report, since the majority of responses were obtained by individuals who were teachers during the pandemic. Whilst a small number of respondents in English-medium schools held managerial roles, it is unclear whether these individuals were also themselves in charge of teaching groups. However, since they all responded to the majority of the questions, their responses are presented together.

respondents from Welsh-medium (55%) and bilingual (58%) schools worked in the secondary sector (55%).<sup>11</sup>

**Table 2.1: Teacher Sample (Questionnaire Data)**

	School Type			Total
	Welsh-medium	Bilingual	English-medium	
Primary	15 (45%)	5 (42%)	45 (85%)	65 (66%)
Secondary	18 (55%)	7 (58%)	8 (15%)	33 (34%)
Total	33 (34%)	12 (12%)	53 (54%)	98 (100%)

2.28 The sample comprised of individuals with varied years of service to teaching, ranging from those in their first few years of the profession to those with over 20 years of service. This allowed us to gauge the opinions of teachers who were relatively new to the profession as well as those who have been within the profession for many years.

**Table 2.2: Years of service**

	School Type			Total
	Welsh-medium	Bilingual	English-medium	
0-5	2 (6%)	1 (8%)	4 (8%)	7
6-10	13 (39%)	1 (8%)	8 (15%)	22
11-15	4 (12%)	2 (17%)	12 (23%)	18
16-20	3 (9%)	3 (25%)	12 (23%)	18
20-25	8 (24%)	4 (33%)	11 (20%)	23
26+	3 (9%)	1 (8%)	6 (11%)	10
Total:	33	12	53	98

2.29 Within the primary sector, most of the informants (excluding members of the school management team) were usually in charge of a single class of pupils. Within the secondary sector, the number of classes a given teacher was responsible for ranged from 2 to 35.

<sup>11</sup> It was not possible within the timeframe of the project to code each open-ended response according to whether it pertained to asSecondary or primary school teacher or to a parent who had a child in Secondary or Primary school (or both). References to secondary and primary are only made where possible in the Results sections.

- 2.30 The linguistic make-up of pupils attending classes taught by the teachers who responded to the questionnaire was mixed. Very few teachers (21/329 = 6% of whole sample) reported teaching classes where more than 70% of pupils came from Welsh-speaking homes or homes where there was some Welsh spoken. A further 45% (148/329) reported teaching classes where between 1 and 40% of pupils came from Welsh-speaking homes or homes where there was some Welsh spoken.
- 2.31 Interestingly, for the purpose of this study, only 3% (5/169) of teachers teaching in Welsh-medium schools reported that they taught classes where over 70% of pupils came from homes where at least some Welsh was spoken. A further 8% (14/169) taught in classes where 41-70% of the class came from homes where at least some Welsh was spoken, and the remaining 88% (148/169) taught in classes where 1-40% of the classes came from homes where at least some Welsh was spoken. Likewise, only two teachers teaching in bilingual schools reported teaching classes with over 70% of the pupils hearing some Welsh in the home.
- 2.32 The majority of teachers had no experience of on-line teaching prior to when Covid-19 lockdown measures were in place (see Table 2.3). Of those that had some prior experience, most respondents reported using *Google Classrooms* and *Hwb*, sometimes due to their subject being taught in multiple locations but streamed from one host site, and other times for revision purposes, for marking and/or to set homework. One respondent noted how the school had been linking up with *Athrawon Bro* via Teams/Skype for a number of years, and another teacher mentioned their own engagement with on-line teaching through Open University courses. A further respondent mentioned private tutoring happening via Zoom since the start of the pandemic.

**Table 2.3: Proportion of teachers who had experience of on-line teaching pre-lockdown**

	School Type		
	Welsh-medium	Bilingual	English-medium
Yes	21% (n=7)	42% (n=5)	9% (n=5)
No	79% (n=26)	58% (n=7)	91% (n=48)

- 2.33 Proportions of teachers who had not received training prior to the lockdown were consistently higher than those who had in both primary (86% [57/66] vs. 26% [9/35]) and secondary (74% [57/66] vs. 14% [9/66]) sectors.
- 2.34 Whilst most of the informants had no experience of on-line teaching and learning prior to the conditions of lockdown, more staff in Welsh-medium schools had received training for on-line learning pre-Covid (38%) than were actively engaged in online teaching (21%) (see Tables 2.3 and 2.4). In English-medium and bilingual schools, similar proportions of staff had both experience of, and training in, on-line teaching pre-Covid.

**Table 2.4: Proportion of teachers who were trained for on-line teaching pre-lockdown**

	School Type		
	Welsh-medium	Bilingual	English-medium
Yes	38% (n=16)	42% (n=5)	6% (n=3)
No	62% (n=26)	58% (n=7)	94% (n=50)

- 2.35 In Welsh-medium schools, the proportion of teachers who had received training was greater in the secondary sector (56% [10/18]) than in the primary sector (40% [6/15]). The same trend was found in bilingual schools (74% [5/7] in the secondary sector vs. 0% training in the primary sector). In English-medium schools, the proportion of teachers who had received training was low in both sectors (14% [1/7] in the secondary and 4% [2/45] in the primary sector).
- 2.36 Much of this training involved how to use different platforms and was delivered largely by colleagues (sometimes from the IT department, sometimes the headteacher), and sometimes by local consortia during In-Service Training sessions. However, none of the informants mentioned training in terms of the pedagogical application of such platforms, only the practicalities of their use.
- 2.37 During lockdown, as would be expected, training in on-line delivery increased across-the-board:

**Table 2.5: Proportion of teachers who were trained for on-line teaching during lockdown**

School Type
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	Welsh-medium	Bilingual	English-medium
Yes	58% (n=19)	67% (n=8)	40% (n=21)
No	42% (n=26)	33% (n=4)	60% (n=32)

2.38 Whilst the increase in proportion is encouraging, the figures do suggest that 56% (62/110) of staff were **not** in receipt of any supplementary training for the on-line aspect of their delivery during the lockdown period. The type of training received focused again on using the various platforms rather than on discussing the pedagogical application of these features. Teachers were therefore largely inexperienced in on-line delivery prior to the lockdown being in effect, and training was relatively scarce during lockdown. This should be kept in mind when interpreting the results of this study.

### Parents

2.39 536 parents responded to the questionnaire. Each person who completed a questionnaire responded on behalf of the family unit. Each family unit included up to six individual adults/additional siblings, with varying age ranges, work status and educational attainments, as shown in Tables 2.6, 2.7 and 2.8 below:

**Table 2.6: Age of adults in each household (up to 6 per household)**

	Age in Years				
	<25 years	26-36 years	36-45 years	46-55 years	55+ years
Adult 1 (n=526)	3% (n=17)	15% (n=79)	44% (n=231)	31% (n=161)	7% (n=38)
Adult 2 (n=468)	3% (n=13)	15% (n=70)	40% (n=188)	36% (n=167)	6% (n=30)
Adult 3 (n=74)	70% (n=52)	8% (n=6)	4% (n=3)	11% (n=8)	7% (n=5)
Adult 4 (n=26)	73% (n=19)	15% (n=4)	-	8% (n=2)	4% (n=1)
Adult 5 (n=8)	75% (n=6)	13% (n=1)	-	13% (n=1)	-
Adult 6 (n=3)	66% (n=2)	33% (n=1)	-	-	-

**Table 2.7: Work status of all adults in each household (up to 6 per household)**

	Work Status				
	Full-time	Part-time	Furlough	Not in work	Other
Adult 1 (n=534)	59% (n=314)	13% (n=72)	9% (n=49)	11% (n=58)	8% (n=41)
Adult 2 (n=468)	57% (n=266)	15% (n=72)	7% (n=33)	12% (n=58)	8% (n=39)
Adult 3 (n=70)	30% (n=21)	11% (n=8)	16% (n=11)	20% (n=14)	23% (n=16)
Adult 4 (n=21)	29% (n=6)	5% (n=1)	14% (n=3)	24% (n=5)	29% (n=6)
Adult 5 (n=6)	33% (n=2)	-	33% (n=2)	-	33% (n=2)
Adult 6 (n=3)	33% (n=1)	33% (n=1)	-	-	33% (n=1)

**Table 2.8: Highest levels of education achieved among adults in each household (up to 6 per household)**

	Highest Level of Education Achieved				
	GCSE/NVQ	A-level	Diploma/degree	Postgrad	Other
Adult 1 (n=530)	29% (n=156)	10% (n=51)	41% (n=216)	12% (n=64)	8% (n=43)
Adult 2 (n=453)	30% (n=136)	11% (n=49)	42% (n=190)	11% (n=49)	6% (n=29)
Adult 3 (n=68)	35% (n=24)	32% (n=22)	21% (n=14)	3% (n=2)	9% (n=6)
Adult 4 (n=16)	56% (n=9)	19% (n=3)	6% (n=1)	6% (n=1)	13% (n=2)
Adult 5 (n=4)	50% (n=2)	25% (n=1)	-	-	25% (n=1)
Adult 6 (n=2)	100% (n=2)	-	-	-	-

2.40 As can be seen in Tables 2.6, 2.7 and 2.8, the majority of adults noted as Adult 1 or Adult 2 were in the 36-55 age range, in full-time employment, and educated to diploma/degree level. The majority of additional adults fell into the <25 years bracket, with many recorded as 'not in work' or 'other'. For those who opted for 'other', 'student' and 'at university' were noted as reasons in 26 cases, suggesting that many of these 'additional adults' were likely older siblings. This is supported by

the figures in Table 2.8 that show larger proportions of Adults 4-6 in the 'GCSE/NVQ' level, and Adults 3-5 in the 'A level' category.

- 2.41 However, in most cases, no more than two adults were engaged in home-schooling any child(ren), with 49% of households (n=254) with one adult involved in children's schoolwork, and 48% (n=250) with two adults contributing. The remaining 2% (n=13) were households where three adults were involved in the schooling, and the remaining 1% (n=2) households where four adults contributed to the teaching. Data presented by Adult 1 and Adult 2 are therefore central to the questions posed in this study.
- 2.42 The sample was relatively balanced in terms of gender representation among the adults in the home. Assuming that the majority of questionnaires were completed by Adult 1, the voice of both male and female adults is represented relatively equally within the data:

**Table 2.9: Gender of adults within the household**

	Gender		
	Male	Female	Rather not say
Adult 1 (n=532)	53% (n=281)	47% (n=251)	-
Adult 2 (n=469)	41% (n=190)	59% (n=279)	-
Adult 3 (n=76)	47% (n=36)	51% (n=39)	1% (n=1)
Adult 4 (n=27)	30% (n=8)	70% (n=19)	-
Adult 5 (n=8)	50% (n=4)	50% (n=4)	-
Adult 6 (n=3)	-	100% (n=3)	-

- 2.43 In terms of Welsh language skills, whilst a large proportion of the sample had L1 skills (Adult 1: 31%, n=165; Adult 2: 25%, n=114) a substantial proportion of adults were also reported as having some Welsh (Adult 1: 24%, n=129; Adult 2: 23%, n=111) or very little Welsh (Adult 1: 20%, n=108; Adult 2: 23%, n=108). Only 87 adults (68 Adult 1 and 9 Adult 2) had no knowledge of Welsh at all:

**Table 2.10: Welsh language skills of adults in the household (up to 6 per household)**

	Welsh Language Skills				
	L1 Welsh	L2 Welsh	Some Welsh	Very little Welsh	No Welsh

Adult 1 (n=531)	31% (n=165)	11% (n=61)	24% (n=129)	20% (n=108)	13% (n=68)
Adult 2 (n=465)	25% (n=114)	16% (n=73)	24% (n=111)	23% (n=17)	13% (n=9)
Adult 3 (n=72)	31% (n=22)	14% (n=10)	19% (n=14)	24% (n=17)	13% (n=9)
Adult 4 (n=19)	42% (n=8)	-	11% (n=2)	42% (n=8)	5% (n=1)
Adult 5 (n=7)	-	29% (n=2)	29% (n=2)	43% (n=3)	-
Adult 6 (n=3)	66% (n=2)	-	-	33% (n=1)	-

2.44 Many households (n=513) had more than one child that was in receipt of home schooling. The majority of these had two children (n=371), with 112 having three children, 21 having four, 8 having five and one having six children. 163 households had one child in receipt of home schooling. The majority of children were between 8 and 14 years of age, although a substantial number were also between the ages of 2 and 7 years and 15 and 16 years:

**Table 2.11: Number and age of children within each household**

	<3 years	3-7 years	8-11 years	12-14 years	15-16 years	17-18 years
Child 1 (n=534)	1% (n=8)	15% (n=79)	22% (n=115)	29% (n=156)	23% (n=122)	10% (n=54)
Child 2 (n=371)	4% (n=16)	24% (n=88)	33% (n=122)	28% (n=105)	9% (n=33)	2% (n=7)
Child 3 (n=112)	11% (n=12)	38% (n=43)	32% (n=36)	12% (n=13)	6% (n=7)	1% (n=1)
Child 4 (n=21)	14% (n=3)	38% (n=8)	24% (n=5)	5% (n=1)	14% (n=3)	5% (n=1)
Child 5 (n=8)	38% (n=3)	38% (n=3)	12% (n=1)	-	12% (n=1)	-
Child 6 (n=1)	-	100% (n=1)	-	-	-	-

2.45 Of the 981 children that lived within the various households for which full data sets were provided (i.e. those that were entered into any analysis), the majority attended

Welsh-medium schools (65% = 634/981; 50% Primary, 50% Secondary), with 14% (n=137; 36% Primary, 64% Secondary) attending bilingual schools and 21% (n=210) attending English-medium schools (40% Primary, 60% Secondary).

- 2.46 However, since many households had more than one child, with each child attending different schools, often with different linguistic practices and/or involving different mediums of instructions, in what follows, data are analysed according to the perceptions of parents with children attending English-medium schools, Welsh-speaking parents of children attending Welsh-medium/bilingual schools, and non-Welsh-speaking parents of children attending Welsh-medium schools. These three groups are represented in the analyses below as '**EM Parent**', '**WM Parent: Welsh**' and '**WM Parent: non-Welsh**' respectively.
- 2.47 Most parents reported owning a printer (417 'yes', 108 'no', 7 'other'), with no significant differences in proportions of respondents with or without a printer across the three groups ( $\chi^2(6, N=534) = 6.61, p > .05$ ). Despite most reporting that they did own a printer, the fact that 108 families did not own a printer may have influenced their ability to engage with aspects of the work that required hard copies to be made. Most parents also reported having ample connection to the internet to be able to access the resources available (430 'yes', 80 'sometimes', 19 'no'), with no significant differences in proportions of respondents with ample access always, sometime or none of the time across the three groups ( $\chi^2(6, N=534) = 4.53, p > .05$ ). However, there remained to be 108 families unable to print out resources for their children, which influenced their ability to engage with home schooling in various ways (see section 4 below).
- 2.48 Finally, only a small proportion of households had children who were either on School Action/School Action Plus (36/529=7%), ALN register (43/526=8%), or in receipt of free school meals (44/533=8%). There were no differences in prevalence across the three parental language groups in terms of School Action Plan/School Action Plus Plan ( $\chi^2(4, N=534) = 4.64, p > .05$ ) or for ALN ( $\chi^2(4, N=534) = 4.1, p > .05$ ). However, there was a significant difference in terms of Free School Meals (FSM) ( $\chi^2(6, N=534) = 29.98, p < .001$ ), with the majority of those in receipt of FSM (n=27) with children attending English-medium schools. Whilst the numbers here

are very low, this difference should be taken into consideration when interpreting any cross-group differences in the analyses.

### **Limitations**

- 2.49 Whilst this study provides a rich data base from which to draw initial conclusions and offer recommendations for future actions, these suggestions are caveated by some limitations that should be considered when interpreting the results. These limitations are outlined below.

#### *Sampling*

- 2.50 Data were limited to the experiences of schools and families within three sets of HEI-school networks. Whilst these networks covered three broad geographical areas of Wales (north – CaBan; mid – Aberystwyth University; south – UWTSD), schools that fell outside of these networks were not invited to participate.
- 2.51 Likewise, the experiences of university lecturers and student teachers enrolled on ITE courses were limited to the three HEIs. The experience of those enrolled on or teaching ITE courses in other HEIs were not captured in this study.
- 2.52 Given the timing of the project, and the co-occurrence of this project alongside other Covid-19 projects funded by Welsh Government, response rates to the questionnaires were low. The results of this study, as obtained by 98 teachers, 536 parents, 6 lecturers and 18 student teachers, should therefore be viewed as a sample of potential responses and not representative of the whole experience during this time.

#### *Design limitations due to Covid-19*

- 2.53 As outlined above (2.1-2.4), the study design continuously evolved due to external factors relating to rules and regulations around Covid-19 and the added pressures these posed on schools and HEIs. This hampered our intention to involve pupils themselves in the research, rendering the study devoid of pupils' voice. This also limited our abilities to 'measure' or experience pupils' Welsh language skills beyond teacher and pupils' subjective views on pupils' progress during and after lockdown.

- 2.54 Covid-19 restrictions also impacted on our ability to share and discuss different resources with schools and parents and to experience how these resources worked in practice.
- 2.55 Due to the volume of studies conducted in schools at the time of this study, surveys needed to be kept short and relevant. We were also cognisant of the need to ensure complete anonymity of individuals responding to our surveys, including school anonymity. Together, these limited the number and type of background variables that were included in the questionnaires, which limited, to an extent, our ability to assign certain responses to certain types of schools or individuals.
- 2.56 Questionnaires were designed to focus on specific issues relating to teaching Welsh (as a subject or as medium of instruction, or both). Consequently, different cohorts of teachers or different cohorts of parents responded to different questionnaires (or different sets of questions), although some questions overlapped some cohorts. This meant that data are sometimes discussed across certain groups of samples (e.g. Welsh-medium, bilingual, English-medium) but sometimes across other groupings (e.g. EM Parent, WM Parent: Welsh, WM Parent: non-Welsh – see 2.46). Data from parents in particular were complicated further by the fact that some households had children in the primary sector and some in the secondary sector, and others had some children attending Welsh-medium or bilingual schools and others attending English-medium schools. This limited our abilities to ascertain, in those cases, whether responses were related to one type of setting or individual than another.

### **Summary**

- 2.57 The variety of experiences, perspectives and opinions that exist within these participant samples provides a rich source of data that reflect the wealth of practices, challenges and achievements that occurred in delivering and/or receiving education during lockdown. In what follows, the analyses provide an overview of perspectives as experiences by teachers, parents, ITE lecturers and ITE students.

### 3. Teacher Questionnaire Findings

#### Introduction

- 3.1 Data obtained from teachers' responses to the questionnaire are presented below under the following themes: (i) training for supporting pupils' Welsh language skills; (ii) on-line resources; (iii) communication policies and practices; (iv) communication strategies during lockdown; (v) developing pupils' Welsh in Welsh-medium and bilingual schools; (vi) developing pupils' Welsh in English-medium schools; (vii) home learning effects on pupils' Welsh language skills; (viii) parental concerns; (ix) teaching strategies and practices for tackling learning loss after prolonged periods of absence from school; (x) long-term effects of the pandemic on Welsh-language skills; and (xi) implications for ITE.
- 3.2 Whilst data are mostly analysed and presented according to school language type (Welsh-medium, bilingual, English-medium), in some case, data from Welsh-medium and bilingual schools are presented together.

#### Theme 1: Training in how best to support pupils' Welsh language skills

- 3.3 A key question in relation to training was whether teachers had received any specific guidance in relation to supporting pupils' Welsh during lockdown. In Welsh-medium and bilingual schools, this question explored the extent to which any training/discussions had been offered to teachers that focused on providing the appropriate support for children from non-Welsh-speaking homes during the period when learning was undertaken in the home. In English-medium schools, the question focused more around supporting pupils' Welsh language skills (beyond Welsh as a subject lesson) during lockdown. In the majority of cases (65%, n=64), respondents noted that no such discussions/training had taken place.

**Table 3.1: Proportion of teachers who received specific training in relation to supporting pupils' Welsh language skills during lockdown**

	School Type		
	Welsh-medium	Bilingual	English-medium
Yes	36% (n=12)	33% (n=4)	20% (n=10)
No	48% (n=16)	58% (n=7)	78% (n=39)
Unsure	15% (n=5)	8% (n=1)	2% (n=1)

- 3.4 In Welsh-medium schools, where such discussions/training happened (36% of cases: n=8 in secondary and n=4 in primary), they took the form of policy directives set by the headteacher/senior management team (n=2), discussions around how best to support non-Welsh-speaking parents (n=2), preparing bilingual information (n=4), how to provide linguistic opportunities – pastoral sessions and the promotion of Welshness (n=1), discussions with *Athrawon Bro* (n=1) and support from local educational consortia (n=1).
- 3.5 In bilingual schools, these discussions/training occurred in the secondary sector only, and typically included whole-school discussions on how best to present the work (n=2), and the importance of ensuring that the work was presented bilingually in order to aid parental support during home learning (n=3).
- 3.6 Conversely, in English-medium schools, these discussions were absent in the secondary sector and only occurred in the primary sector.
- 3.7 In general, then, schools did not discuss potential consequences relating to the practicalities of non-Welsh-speaking parents supporting their child(ren)'s education at home in any depth, which left teachers largely unprepared and unsupported in this regard.

## **Theme 2: On-line Resources**

- 3.8 Teachers in Welsh-medium and bilingual schools were asked if they felt that there were enough high-quality resources available to support the linguistic needs of children from non-Welsh-speaking households. 67% (29/43) were of the opinion that there were **not** enough resources to support such pupils, 28% (12/43) felt that there were, whilst one additional teacher felt there were too many resources, leading to confusion and difficulty in knowing where to start. (An additional comment mentioned that this was irrelevant to them as their prime role was developing and setting exams.)
- 3.9 Teachers were asked to rate the suitability of on-line resources provided for pupils in developing various aspects of pupils' language skills. Most teachers found the resources to be useful or very useful, particularly for reading and comprehension. Fewer teachers found the resources suitable for spoken language, with 32% of all

teachers noting that resources were not very useful or not useful at all in relation to developing spoken language skills.

**Table 3.2: Teacher perceptions regarding the usefulness of online resources in developing pupils' Welsh language skills**

	Very useful	Useful	Not sure	Not very useful	Not useful at all
Writing	WM:13% (4)	59% (19)	19% (6)	9% (3)	0%
	B:27% (3)	45% (5)	18% (2)	9% (1)	0%
	EM:4% (2)	17% (8)	33% (15)	24% (11)	22% (10)
Subtotal:	10% (9/89)	36% (32/89)	26% (23/89)	17% (15/89)	11% (10/89)
Reading	WM:6% (2)	63% (20)	13% (4)	16% (5)	3% (1)
	B:18% (2)	45% (5)	27% (3)	9% (1)	0%
	EM:9% (4)	30% (14)	35% (16)	13% (6)	13% (6)
Subtotal:	9% (8/89)	44% (39/89)	26% (23/89)	13% (12/89)	8% (7/89)
Comprehension	WM:13% (4)	69% (22)	9% (3)	9% (3)	0%
	B:18% (2)	64% (7)	18% (2)	0%	0%
	EM:9% (4)	22% (10)	35% (16)	20% (9)	15% (7)
Subtotal:	11%(10/89)	44% (39/89)	24% (21/89)	13% (12/89)	8% (7/89)
Speaking	WM:9% (3)	41% (13)	22% (7)	22% (7)	6% (2)
	B:9% (1)	36% (4)	18% (2)	36% (4)	0%
	EM:7% (3)	29% (13)	31% (14)	20% (9)	13% (6)
Subtotal:	8% (7/88)	34% (30/88)	26% (23/88)	23% (20/88)	9% (8/88)
Total:	10% (34/355)	39% (140/355)	25% (90/355)	17% (59/355)	9% (32/355)

3.10 In English-medium schools, 50% (n=26) of teachers noted that they had prepared links to on-line resources that would help parents develop their child's Welsh language skills. A further 35% (n=18) noted that they had not prepared any such links, with the remaining 15% (n=8) unsure. Most of these resources included a

variety of Apps (e.g. AM, Duolingo), and digital platforms (e.g. Hwb, BBC Bitesize, Twinkle) that parents were encouraged to download and use with their child(ren):

‘Suggested parents downloaded Tric a Chlic app to support reading. I created help guides which were accessible to parents using some Twinkle resources’

- 3.11 Many teachers created their own resources instead of relying on on-line resources. In Welsh-medium schools, 93% of teachers reported that they created some (41%: n=31) or many (59%: n=19):

‘Roeddwn yn gosod fy ngwaith fy hun drwy Teams, Powerpoint, etc. Dim angen rhaglenni Cymraeg/Dwyieithog, ayb.’

‘I was setting my own work through Teams, Powerpoint etc. No need for Welsh/Bilingual programmes etc.’

‘Roeddwn yn creu taflenni fy hun er mwyn sicrhau fod y disgyblion yn ymarfer y Gymraeg adref’

‘I created my own worksheets in order to ensure pupils practised Welsh at home’

- 3.12 Teachers in Welsh-medium schools also noted some obvious gaps, particularly in relation to literacy, and suggested that the development of Welsh language reading programmes, such as those that work well in English (e.g. Reading Eggs and Headsprout) – should be developed for Welsh. Teachers in bilingual schools noted some flexibility in their approach, offering bilingual resources as and when necessary.

### **Theme 3: Communication policies and practices during lockdown**

- 3.13 All teachers were asked whether their school had a specific policy with regards to the language they use when communicating **with parents**. Whilst 44% (38/87) said that they had, and 18% (15/87) said that they had not, the remaining 49% (43/87) were unsure. In Welsh-medium schools, 59% (n=19) were aware that their school had such a policy whilst 34% (n=11) were unsure (the remaining 6% [n=2] were unaware if such a policy exists). In English-medium schools, 25% (n=13) were aware of a policy whilst 49% (n=13) were unsure (the remaining 26% (n=14) were

unaware of such a policy). Half the teachers in bilingual schools (n=6) were aware of such a policy whilst the remaining half were unsure.

- 3.14 When asked to detail the principles of the policy, the majority of responses from teachers working in Welsh-medium schools (67%, n=12) mentioned the need to communicate with parents bilingually, whilst the remaining responses referred to the school prospectus and language policy across the curriculum (22%, n=4), *Cymraeg yn gyntaf* 'Welsh first' (6%, n=1) and *polisi iaith – gwefan yr ysgol* 'school policy – school website' (6%, n=1). The three responses obtained by teachers working in bilingual schools included a reference to the school prospectus, the use of Welsh when any given parent speaks Welsh, and the need to communicate bilingually, although the language of administration is Welsh. In English-medium schools, the majority of responses (n=5) referred to English being the language of communication with a further comment noting that they follow LEA policy. A further three referred to the use of interpreters where necessary (e.g. when the home language is not Welsh or English). With specific reference to Welsh, one teacher referred to its use in a policy-driven context - '*the website has to have Welsh headings*' – whereas the remaining two responses suggested that English was used as the default, but they were happy to communicate in Welsh where appropriate/requested.
- 3.15 Teachers in English-medium schools were asked separately if the school had a generic language policy in place (not one specifically relating to communication with parents). 67% (n=35) reported that they did, whereas 25% (n=13) were unsure. Only 8% (n=4) reported that they did not have a generic, school-wide language policy in place. In elaborating about these policies, responses were numerous (n=24), and mostly covered pedagogical strategies used to get children to engage with Welsh (n=9) – e.g. incidental Welsh, *Siarter Iaith*, *Helpwr Heddiw*, *Cymraeg Campus*. There were a few references to bilingualism per se (n=3), with two references to the use of bilingual comments on children's work, despite being EM schools:

'Bilingual in terms of marking/feedback and incidental conversations'

‘Conversational Welsh to be used orally, and to incorporate it into written feedback to students’

3.16 A few comments related to the encouragement to use Welsh (n=6), with one of those comments referring to the visual prominence of Welsh and its cultural significance:

‘We try to have Welsh prominently placed around the school and encourage interaction in Welsh as much as possible. Our school reflects that we live in Wales.’

3.17 One teacher mentioned the proportion of their timetable that is reserved for the delivery of Welsh (30% of the timetable) through foundation subjects, whilst another explained that they are designed as an English-medium school, as stipulated by the Local Education Authority (LEA). A further commented that it was inappropriate to share school policies.

3.18 Teachers in English-medium schools are therefore largely aware of the strategies that are available and expected of them in order to encourage pupils’ engagement with and development of Welsh. However, a third of staff did not demonstrate knowledge of these strategies or any expectations in relation to the delivery or promotion of Welsh.

#### **Theme 4: Communication strategies during lockdown**

3.19 Teachers used a variety of modes to communicate with parents and pupils. The majority of teachers – 49% (79/162) – noted that they communicated with pupils using discussion platforms such as Google Classrooms, Zoom etc., either with live sessions or without. In contrast, 53% (50/94) of the teachers contacted parents either via on-line apps, such as see-saw (26%, 24/94) or on the phone (28%, 26/94):

**Table 3.3a: Tools used for communicating with pupils**

	School Type		
	Welsh-medium	Bilingual	English-medium
App (e.g. see-saw)	15% (n=9)	6% (n=1)	22% (n=19)
Online live discussion	38% (n=23)	59% (n=10)	26% (n=22)

platforms (e.g. Google Classroom, Zoom)			
Online platforms with no live sessions	13% (n=8)	6% (n=1)	18% (n=15)
On the phone	20% (n=12)	18% (n=3)	15% (n=13)
Letter	7% (n=4)	6% (n=1)	12% (n=10)
Other	7% (n=4)	6% (n=1)	7% (n=6)

**Table 3.3b: Tools used for communicating with parents**

	School Type		
	Welsh-medium	Bilingual	English-medium
App (e.g. see-saw)	25% (n=8)	18% (n=2)	27% (n=14)
Online live discussion platforms (e.g. Google Classroom, Zoom)			
Online platforms with no live sessions	3% (n=1)	0%	22% (n=11)
On the phone	34% (n=11)	36% (n=4)	22% (n=11)
Via a letter	13% (n=4)	9% (n=1)	4% (n=2)
Other	22% (n=7)	18% (n=2)	20% (n=10)

3.20 In English-medium schools, these tools were used in English only when communicating with parents, and, in most cases (94%: n=47), in English only when communicating with pupils. Only three teachers (6% of the responses) noted that these tools were used bilingually, sometimes using a translation service, sometimes using some Welsh greetings, and sometimes in order to support English as an Additional Language (EAL) learners.

3.21 Teachers in Welsh-medium and bilingual schools were also asked how often they kept in touch with pupils and parents. In most cases, teachers were in contact with pupils on a daily (73%, n=33) or a weekly (22%, n=10) basis, while the remaining two respondents communicated less often (3%, n=1) or chose 'other' (3%, n=1).

Conversely, the majority of teachers were in contact with parents either weekly (31%, n=13) or less often than that (43%, n=18). Only 5 (1%) of teachers mentioned that they communicated with parents on a daily basis, with the remaining 4 (9%) selecting other, which included speaking to parents if pupils were unavailable, they made contact with their registration class (due to their pastoral role) but not with their subject pupils, whilst others mentioned using some forms of communication more often than others (e.g. using the phone more often than email).

3.22 In bilingual schools, one teacher commented that there was no communication with parents/guardians during lockdown, whilst another teacher mentioned that communication with parents was not part of a teacher's role and is something that senior staff should be doing.

3.23 In general, then, very little contact was made between schools and parents.

#### **Theme 5: Developing pupils' Welsh in Welsh-medium and bilingual schools**

3.24 Interestingly, the proportion of teachers who differentiated classwork and any associated information relating to the classwork based on pupils' home language practices was relatively low. In Welsh-medium schools, only 33% (n=10) noted that they did differentiate where possible and 15% (n=5) where necessary, whilst 45% (n=15) did not differentiate because everything was bilingual. Only 9% (n=3) did not differentiate at all. At the same time, 39% (12/31) of teachers in Welsh-medium schools noted that they had a purposive plan to include oral and written exercises to help develop pupils' Welsh language skills. A further 39% (12/31) had no such plan, with the remaining 23% (7/31) unsure.<sup>12</sup> Among the respondents working in bilingual schools, only one teacher noted that they differentiated the work based on pupils' language background, and that they consistently did so by setting 3 levels of challenge. Similarly, only 25% (n=3) of teachers in bilingual schools noted that they had a purposive plan to include oral and written exercises to help develop pupils' Welsh language skills, with 58% (n=7) unsure and 17% (n=2) noting that they had no such plan.

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<sup>12</sup> It could be that tasks related to Welsh are integrated across the curriculum instead of featuring as a plan in and of itself. Care must be taken in interpreting the responses to this question.

3.25 Teachers in bilingual schools provided a varied list of examples of support they provided parents with when setting work to be completed in Welsh. These included setting the work itself bilingually (n=4), providing simple bilingual instructions to accompany the work (n=4), video to explain the task (n=1), weekly phone calls/emails (n=2), informing parents about the help button on Hwb (n=1), and a purpose built App to support parents (n=1):

‘Bu i sawl rhiant gysylltu drwy app am gymorth pellach, ac roed aelod o staff bob amser yn barod i geisio cysylltu gyda hwy i’w cynorthwyo’

‘Many parents made contact via an app for further support, and a member of staff was always on hand to try to contact them to offer support’

3.26 In general, then, teachers tended to treat all pupils the same, and did not differentiate the work based on their knowledge of Welsh.

#### **Theme 6: Developing pupils’ Welsh in English-medium schools**

3.27 Reflecting on the pre Covid-19 lockdown period, 92% (n=49) of the teachers in English-medium schools said that they regularly implement strategies in their teaching that support pupils’ use of Welsh. Only a very small proportion (4%, n=2) said they did not usually do that, with the remaining 4% (n=2) unsure.

3.28 These strategies mainly involved the implementation of *Helpwr Heddiw* (n=31), *Cymraeg Campus* (n=21), *Cymraeg bob Dydd* (‘Incidental Welsh’; n=10 responses), *Criw Cymraeg* (n=9) and *Siarter Iaith* (n=9). Additional strategies that were mentioned included *Cenhadon y Gymraeg* (‘Language Ambassadors’) (n=1), *Pod Antur* (n=1), *Siaradwr Cymraeg yr wythnos* ‘Welsh speaker of the week’ (n=1), *Cymro/Cymraes yr wythnos* ‘Welsh person of the week’ (n=1), *brawddeg yr wythnos* ‘phrase of the week’ (n=3), *Ticw* (n=1), ‘*Morning check-in and helper in Welsh (Based on Welsh Macarena)*’ [direct quote] (n=1), *slot drilio* (n=3), Welsh sabbaticals (n=1), *Tric a Chlic* reading scheme (for Foundation Phase) (n=1), *Urdd* (n=1), *Clwb Cymraeg* (n=1), *Eisteddfod* (n=2), *tocyn aur* (n=1), *Cymraeg ar dy dafod* (n=2), *gemau buarth* ‘playground games’ (n=1) *Jambori* (n=2), *Dil a Del* reading project (n=2), *Iaith ar gân* (n=2), *Adfer Iaith Sir Ddinbych* (n=1), *Naid Ymlaen & Ymestyn Iaith* (n=1), and *Dewch i chwarae Pack* (n=1). An additional

teacher mentioned that staff would normally be involved in conversational Welsh lessons but that this had not happened during lockdown.

- 3.29 Teachers in English-medium schools were also asked if they had received any training or discussions regarding how to support pupils' Welsh language skills (beyond the Welsh as subject lesson) whilst preparing on-line/blended learning. Whilst 21% (n=11) said that they had received some support, and 2% (n=1) was unsure, the remaining 77% (n=41) had not had those discussions or any support in that respect.
- 3.30 Teachers in English-medium schools were asked how important they felt the need to ensure the continued development of pupils' Welsh language skills when setting tasks for them to complete at home during the lockdown. Unsurprisingly, given the prominence of English in the English-medium sector, opinion was split on this matter. 43% felt that it was important (n=7 very important, n=16 important) 47% felt that it was not important (n=16 not very important, n=5 important) with the remaining 9% (n=5) unsure. From the 18 comments that elaborated on informants' responses, the majority (n=8) elaborated on the types of activities they had planned that encouraged pupils' engagement with Welsh in various ways, e.g.:
- 'Myself and another colleague who share Welsh read stories [sic], had discussions, sang songs, taught patrwm yr wythnos. We filmed ourselves and share it with the whole school weekly. It was great fun.'
- '...links to Bore Da magazine that allows the children to play games in Welsh at a variety of levels'
- '...add a Welsh challenge on our blended learning in Year 6'
- 'X provided me with an appropriate set of songs (with Powerpoint support) for guardians to use with their children. Older siblings were effective in helping and supporting their younger brothers and sisters. X also provided me with digital reading schemes with audio supported questions.'
- 3.31 A further four respondents specifically mentioned parents. One of these respondents simply noted *rhieni di-Gymraeg adref* ('non-Welsh-speaking parents at home'), which either indicated that they prepared additional tasks with parental

language abilities in mind, or that they did not prepare such tasks because of the parents' lack of knowledge of Welsh. The other respondents noted:

'...parents' lack of knowledge was an issue as the children's knowledge was better and being young needed parental support.'

'Most parents would not be able to support children in learning Welsh.'

3.32 A further five respondents provided various reasons why no specific focus was placed on developing pupils' Welsh during the lockdown. These reasons included the low prioritisation of Welsh during that time:

'The use of Welsh language really was not a priority'

'It hasn't been a priority in my lessons online'

'Children were struggling with language skills in their first language so these became the priority'

3.33 Others mentioned the importance of maintaining staff and pupil wellbeing, suggesting that placing any additional burden or focus on Welsh would serve as an additional stressor to what was already a highly stressful situation:

'Rhaid gwneud y plant yn hapus a helpu efo gwaith Saesneg a numeracy'

'The children must be made to be happy and help with English and numeracy work'

'Staff welfare and pupil engagement is more critical'

3.34 Another teacher remarked that Welsh took low priority since it:

'Just wasn't relevant at the time due to suspension of the National Curriculum.'

3.35 Whilst a few others may not have prioritised Welsh during this time, they nevertheless thought it was important and either made some attempts to include Welsh in their plans or, upon reflection, would have liked to have included some more:

'In hindsight, we would have put more emphasis on the use of Welsh. We initially thought that lockdown would be shorter than it was and focused on English and Maths.'

‘We were fully focused on delivering our course content, still try to use incidental Welsh, but no expectation.’

3.36 Interestingly, one comment related to the need for continued external support from *Athrawon Bro*:

‘We used to be able to request help and support from our Athrawon Bro team, however they have all now retired or finished in their positions of employment.’

3.37 However, the extent to which pupils responded to and engaged with work that was designed specifically for the purpose of enhancing their Welsh language skills during lockdown varied from one school to the next. In most case (n=18) respondents reported that engagement was very low, with one hypothesising that pupils always opted for an English-medium activity over a Welsh-medium one:

‘Some pupils engaged. However, pupils chose English-medium activities before the Welsh. When lessons were set, tried to reinforce sentence patterns and set oracy work.’

3.38 An additional teacher suggested it was 50-50, and another mentioned that some engaged very much whereas others not at all. A further 6 were unsure, with comments such as the following:

‘All activities were dependent upon parent participation’

‘Not sure as majority did not return to class, and due to the age of the children the work was oral, therefore no written evidence was provided’

‘No way of knowing for sure as all online but some children commented on the games upon their return to school’

‘They were directed to Welsh websites, although I can’t be sure how, when and if they engaged with the links’

3.39 However, five informants noted a more positive trend, noting that all (n=1), the majority (n=2), or ‘*about 60%*’ (n=1) completed the work, with an additional comment noting ‘*completed most weeks*’ (n=1).

3.40 It therefore seems that pupils quite easily disengage with Welsh where the opportunity to turn to English is provided as an alternative.

### Theme 7: Home learning effects on Welsh language skills

3.41 Teachers were asked if they felt that pupils responding to work during the lockdown period found the work more confusing than they normally would when taught in school. In both Welsh-medium and bilingual schools, opinion was split with 48% of teachers in Welsh-medium schools of the opinion that pupils were more confused and 48% of the opinion that they were not. In Bilingual schools, 50% were of the opinion that pupils did find the work more confusing, whilst 33% were not of that same opinion (17% were unsure).

**Table 3.4: Teacher opinions regarding differences in levels of confusion in relation to the work set pre- and during lockdown**

	Quite a difference	Some difference	Not sure	Not much difference	No difference at all
Welsh-medium	13% (n=4)	38% (n=12)	3% (n=1)	38% (12)	13% (n=4)
Bilingual	17% (n=2)	33% (n=4)	17% (n=2)	33% (n=4)	0%

3.42 Focusing on Welsh language abilities, teachers were asked if they felt that pupils' language skills had been impacted upon their return to school after the lockdown period. This time, more of the teachers felt that pupils' language skills had been impacted, with 67% of teachers in Welsh-medium schools and 55% of teachers in bilingual schools having experienced differences in pupils language skills after the lockdown.

**Table 3.5: Teacher perceptions of the impact of the lockdown on children's Welsh language skills**

	Quite a difference	Some difference	Not sure	Not much difference	No difference at all
Welsh-medium	34% (n=11)	34% (n=11)	6% (n=2)	28% (n=9)	0%
Bilingual	18% (n=2)	36% (n=4)	9% (n=1)	27% (n=3)	9%% (n=1)

3.43 One teacher from a bilingual school opted for 'other', noting as follows:

'Dim pob disgybl sydd gennyf sydd yn fodlon neu yn awyddus i ddysgu...mae hyn yn amlwg yn creu argraff mawr ar y canlyniad'

'Not all my pupils are willing or happy to learn...this obviously creates a big impact on the results'

3.44 In English-medium schools, teachers were asked if they had seen any learning gains in pupils Welsh or English skills after the lockdown period. Only 4% (n=2) had seen some gains, with 8% (n=4) unsure. The remaining 88% (n=44) saw no particular gains in pupils' language skills. The reasons provided were as follows:

'Human beings are social creatures and need communicative exchanges in person - the idea that technology is 'great' is extremely worrying.'

'It is fair to say that most curriculum areas can be re-ignited and preserved, however it's very difficult to re-engage pupils with Welsh - particularly when they are registered to attend an English medium high school next year'

'Writing has suffered due to phonic programs not being done at home'

3.45 Following on from this question, teachers were asked if these differences were more pronounced having been away from the school environment for the duration of lockdown as compared to when children are away from school over the normal summer period. The difference observed was clearly quite pronounced in English-medium schools, where all teachers noted at least some difference in pupils' Welsh language skills:

**Table 3.6: Teacher perceptions of difference in language skills after summer break vs. after lockdown**

	Quite a difference	Some difference	Not sure	Not much difference	No difference at all	Other
Welsh-medium	38% (n=12)	3% (n=1)	13% (n=4)	38% (n=12)	3% (n=1)	6% (n=2)
Bilingual	25% (n=3)	0%	33% (n=4)	0%	25% (n=3)	% (n=2)
English-medium	51% (n=26)	49% (n=23)	0%	0%	0%	0%

3.46 Of those who noted 'other', two were new to their current school and were therefore unable to explore any comparisons. One teacher from a Welsh-medium school noted that as all pupils were back with them there were no differences in terms of the effects of lockdown. The remaining teacher noted that differences were present, but not across-the-board:

‘Gwahaniaeth i’w weld, mawr mewn rhai o’r disgyblion, a dim llawer mewn eraill’

‘A difference was seen, large in some pupils, negligible in others’

3.47 Interestingly, some of the additional comments provided by teachers in English-medium schools were varied, with some positive responses, such as the following:

‘Those that speak it at home carry on as normal’

‘Surprisingly not much difference – they have soon got back up to speed’

‘Children are all enthusiastic to speak Welsh’

‘As a reception teacher, their knowledge is only beginning, so I was easily able to make it up with daily use of Welsh language daily Helpwr Heddiw and lessons’

3.48 Others focused on parental abilities to speak Welsh and pupils’ lack of confidence as reasons for the decline (n=3):

‘Because parents don’t speak it at home’

‘Lack of confidence as it wasn’t used’

‘They have lost much of their confidence’

3.49 A couple of responses referred to the lack of exposure pupils had to Welsh during the lockdown:

‘I always say to staff- the children only hear Welsh in school.’

‘They weren’t having their daily dosage of language. Well, the majority weren’t anyway as they didn’t use the online provision.’

3.50 A further teacher commented that is was worrying how little Welsh the children had upon their return, whilst another poignantly wrote:

‘Pupils are dealing with trauma, and all learning has been impacted. At the moment feeling safe and secure is particularly important to pupils, learning will only be able to resume once pupils are able to relax and feel secure.’

3.51 Similarly, teachers were asked to elaborate on whether they saw any obvious differences when comparing those pupils who had been receiving their education at home with those who had continued to receive their education at school. Of the 24 responses provided by teachers in Welsh-medium schools, 13 said ‘no’ or not much difference’ and four said ‘yes’ or ‘a little’, whilst the remainder provided a variety of answers including that this was unmeasurable (n=1), that they themselves did not teach in the school during lockdown (n=1) or that there weren’t many children attending school at the time (n=2). Two teachers mentioned that it was not expected of them to teach pupils during that time at school:

‘Dim gwahaniaeth mawr, oherwydd “gwarchod” oedd yr athrawon yn ystod y cyfnod hwn’

‘Not a big difference, because teachers were “baby sitting” during this time Period’

‘Dim gwahaniaeth. Hefyd, y cyfarwyddyd gafwyd oedd mai dim ond cynorthwyo NID addysgu yr oeddem yn yr Hybiau Gofal, ar wahân i’r wythnos olaf cyn Nadolig 2020.’

‘No difference. Also, the instructions that we were given was that we only supported NOT teach in the Support Hubs, other than the last week before Christmas 2020’

3.52 Another commented that pupils needed to be reminded to do the work in Welsh, possibly due to the parents’ lack of Welsh language abilities. Three more comments provided additional insights into the potential differences across the two pupil cohorts:

‘Oedd ychydig gan fod y disgyblion yn yr ysgol y cael ymarfer eu Cymraeg drwy’r dydd a nid mewn cyfarfodydd wythnosol ar lein.’

‘Yes, somewhat, because the pupils in school could practise their Welsh all day and not in weekly meetings on-line’

‘Rhai mwy tueddol o droi i’r Saesneg ar ôl bod adref am gyfnod hir’

‘Some more likely to turn to English after being home for a long period of time’

‘Y disgyblion hynny yn clywed llawer mwy o’r Gymraeg’

‘Those pupils heard way more Welsh’

3.53 In bilingual schools, of the 7 responses that were provided, 6 said ‘no’ with one noting that they only had a very small number of children from their class at school, suggesting that a comparison was not appropriate.

3.54 In English-medium schools, of the 42 responses provided, 37 noted ‘no’ and one reported ‘yes – *those in school are better*’. As was the case in Welsh-medium schools, one teacher referred to the school provision as ‘childcare provision’, where it was not necessary to teach the pupils. One teacher remarked on how much pupils enjoyed singing in Welsh at school, and ‘*I don’t know how much/often they used the songs at home*’. One teacher commented on the importance of consistency in supporting the continued development of pupils’ Welsh:

‘They returned not knowing the difference between ‘bore da’ and ‘pnawn da’! They struggle, at the best of times, if we don’t use consistent sequences and regularly repeated structures.’

3.55 Another teacher reflected on their own experience as a non-Welsh-speaking parent in responding to this question:

‘From my own personal experience, my son attends a Welsh comp and because we speak English at home and he wasn’t hearing Welsh daily, his command of the language decreased and he was at a definite disadvantage returning to school in Sept as compared to those who came from a Welsh background. He is in Year 11 which was even more worrying with important exams/coursework due this term.’

### **Theme 8: Parental concerns**

3.56 Teachers were asked if any parents raised any concerns with them about their own abilities to home school their children by following work that was set by the school in Welsh. 47% (n=15) of teachers in Welsh-medium schools said ‘yes’, 28% (n=9) were unsure, and 25% (n=8) had not received any correspondence with parents

claiming to have any such concerns. In bilingual schools, 27% (n=3) had received some indication from parents of their concerns, whilst 18% (n=2) were unsure and the remaining 55% (n=6) had not received any indication of parental concerns in this regard. The concerns expressed, and the school's response to these concerns, are noted below:

**Table 3.7: Parental concerns regarding teaching their children with work set in Welsh – Welsh-medium school**

Nature of concerns	How it was resolved
Didn't understand the instructions	Ensured that staff set bilingual guidelines when necessary
Didn't understand the work so unable to help the child Only happened 1 or 2 times. Their child does not understand the work, and they do not understand the work in Welsh and therefore cannot help. Unable to understand the work, unable to motivate the child to work.	Simple instructions provided in English-but 6th form fairly independent Gave English instructions on what was needed to be done. Guidance and explanations provided for parents, consistent contact with those families by phone and email etc.
Failure to understand challenging texts in terms of the language	Differentiated tasks
Failure to understand the work at times especially Mathematics Pupils unable to explain to parents what needed to be completed. Need to improve pupils' Digital skills to use Microsoft Teams unable to assist, pupils not receiving parental instruction	Provided additional support, instructions and guidance for parents Created and shared videos for pupils explaining how to do the things they were unable to do - e.g. how to upload their work for assignments in Microsoft Teams Incentivised; explain tasks in English
Parents feel unable to support their children	More meetings and support on Microsoft Teams
further clarification in the English language required	Provided all materials bilingually.
Everyone appreciated the time that went into translating everything - the problem was working at home and educating the children at the same time	the most important thing for us as a school was the children's wellbeing and happiness

A pupil said that they didn't understand the work, and the parent said that as the work was in Welsh (and they themselves were not good with mathematics) that they were unable to help their child.	Sent a link to a video on YouTube with an explanation in English.
Focusing children's attention, and the fact that they were unable to support in terms of the language	Provided reassurances for parents that there was no need to put pressure on their children, focusing only on what they could do
Only explain that they were unable to help much with the Welsh work.	Parents were told that they were not expected to be educating their children, just supporting.
They were unable to explain and discuss the task in Welsh with their children and failed to read in Welsh	Signposted parents to the Welsh apps available

**Table 3.8: Parental concerns regarding teaching their children with work set in Welsh – bilingual schools**

Parents' concerns	How the issue was resolved
don't understand the steps - lack of language	Translated the tasks
don't understand the work	Translated the work to English
Technological issues mostly. Parents were very supportive of the majority of the work set for the children.	Offered assistance for parents through using the app we have for contacting parents or over the phone.

3.57 Teachers were also asked if any concerns were raised specifically about ensuring the development of their child's Welsh language skills. In Welsh-medium schools, only 25% (n=8) reported that parents has raised concerns, with 16% unsure and 59% (n=19) having not had any concerns raised by parents.

**Table 3.9: Parental concerns regarding the development of their child(ren)'s Welsh - Welsh-medium schools**

The nature of the concerns	How it was resolved
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Don't speak it at home	Provided live lessons in order for children to hear the language spoken
Failure to support the child/ looked for opportunities to hear and use Welsh	Directed them to potential opportunities/resources
Parents who were first language English	Provide reassurance and support for the comments given
Unable to read to the children	Created videos and recorded stories
Some parents worried that their children were unable to work independently and needed constant support with the Welsh language	More support provided on Hwb and Teams
Parents do not know how much work the children should be doing through the medium of Welsh – worry that the children do not have the opportunity to discuss in Welsh.	Explained that several were in the same situation.
Only a few mentioned that there is a lack of interesting Welsh reading books for their children and needed help in encouraging and keeping children interested in Welsh rather than English books.	Introduced learners to a class novel. Explained that books could be borrowed from the library or web library (BorrowBox)

In bilingual schools, only two teachers reported parental concerns:

**Table 3.10: Parental concerns regarding the development of their child(ren)'s Welsh - Bilingual schools**

Parents' concerns	How the issue was resolved
lack of conversation practise in Welsh	talked to the children on the phone
Double checked that the work was going to be bilingual	Provided the work bilingually

3.58 Teachers were also asked if any parents had expressed any concerns with them about their child(ren)'s Welsh language skills since pupils were back in school after lockdown. Most respondents responded 'no' (20/33 Welsh medium, 5/8 in bilingual and 52/53 English medium). Some extended responses included one comment

suggesting parents had expressed a concern, but no more so than they usually do when their children transfer to a Welsh-medium secondary school.

‘Oes, un rhiant yn dweud bod ei merch yn pryderu ei bod yn cael trafferth dilyn gwaith y dosbarth oherwydd ei bod wedi anghofio llawer o’i Chymraeg’

‘Yes, one parent said that her daughter was worried that she struggled to follow class work because she had forgotten a lot of her Welsh’

- 3.59 Another teacher mentioned that parents had raised concerns after the teachers themselves raised concerns regarding pupils’ literacy skills following a series of tests, while others had expressed concerns on the phone during parents’ evening. However, despite these concerns, some suggested that parents are much happier now that their child(ren) is back in school:

‘Dim llawer – rhai wedi son ar y ffon ond pethau positif – dweud ei bod nhw’n hapus eu bod nhw’n trafod yn Gymraeg eto’

‘Not many – some have mentioned on the phone bot positive things – saying they are happy they are discussing in Welsh again’

- 3.60 Another teacher mentioned that education is parents’ main concern, not Welsh.

### **Theme 9: Teaching strategies after a break from Welsh**

- 3.61 Teachers were asked if they normally implement specific strategies with pupils from non-Welsh-speaking backgrounds upon their return to school after the summer break to help them re-engage with their Welsh language skills. Only 9% (n=3) of teachers in Welsh-medium schools said that they did, with 50% (n=16) stating that it depended on the pupil, 34%(n=11) saying that they did not do anything specific, and 3% (n=1) opting for ‘other’, who noted that a Welsh culture programme should be adopted at all times. In bilingual schools, 67% (n=8) also noted that it depended on the pupil, whilst 33% (n=4) said that they did not usually implement such strategies. Teachers in English-medium schools tended not to implement any such strategies (53%: n=26), although a few (18%: n=8) did, whilst the remaining 29% (n=14) said that it depended on the child. This suggests that most teachers do implement Welsh language strategies to support pupils to re-engage with their Welsh upon their

return to class after the summer holidays if and when such strategies are necessary, and particularly so in Welsh-medium and bilingual schools.

- 3.62 However, upon return to school after the lockdown, the proportion of teachers who said that they did implement specific strategies to support pupils' re-engagement with Welsh increased to 45% (n=14) in Welsh-medium schools, 64% (n=7) in bilingual schools and 35% (n=17) in English-medium schools. Among the examples provided as to the types of strategies implement, were the reintroduction of basic Welsh skills, such as verb tense and number, mutations and reading, increasing the amount of Welsh spoken with pupils in bilingual schools, additional intervention groups to support Welsh, additional teacher to help support groups to develop their Welsh skills, and introduce Welsh tv, books, and songs to the pupils.
- 3.63 Having observed pupils' language abilities upon their return after lockdown, 41% of teachers in Welsh-medium schools and 50% of teachers in bilingual schools felt that this experience highlighted the need for schools to develop specific interventions to support pupils from non-Welsh-speaking backgrounds to re-engage with their Welsh after the normal summer holidays.

#### **Theme 10: Potential long-term effects of the pandemic on Welsh language skills**

- 3.64 Teachers were asked to reflect on whether they thought that the period of home learning had had an effect on pupils' Welsh language skills. In some instances, these reflections were influenced by the results of measured observations of pupil abilities, but in most cases, reflections on pupil progress during and beyond lockdown were largely subjective in nature. These reflections should therefore be interpreted with this in mind. Of the 29 responses obtained from teachers working in Welsh-medium schools, the majority (66%: n=19) had witnessed various levels of deterioration of Welsh language skills – in reading, writing and/or speaking – among their pupils. Some of the comments focused on pupils' tendency to revert to their L1 (cf. Thomas & Roberts, 2011):

'Eithaf tipyn-llai o Gymraeg ar y coridorau. Dirywiad mewn iaith ysgrifenedig hefyd yn amlwg'

‘Quite a lot - less Welsh on the corridors. Deterioration in written language also obvious’

‘Yn bendant. Saesneg y mae plant fy nosbarth presennol yn siarad, yn cyfathrebu â'i gilydd. Mae wir angen rhywbeth er mwyn ail gydio yn y Gymraeg’

‘Definitely. Children in my current class speak English, in communication with each other. There is a dire need for something to re-connect with Welsh’

3.65 Others commented specifically on various aspects of language abilities that seemed to have deteriorated over the lockdown period, e.g.:

‘Dirywiad mewn iaith ysgrifenedig hefyd yn amlwg’

‘Deterioration in written language also obvious’

‘Problemau sillafu, dim defnydd digonol o dermau pwnc penodol

‘Spelling problems, not enough use of specific subject specific terms’

‘Mae sgiliau darllen disgyblion wedi dirywio'n sylweddol (yn enwedig ym ml.7)’

‘Pupils’ reading skills have deteriorated significantly (especially in Yr. 7)’

‘Yn bendant - safonau darllen Cymraeg a safon iaith lafar disgyblion wedi dirywio yn sylweddol’

‘Absolutely – Welsh reading standards and pupils’ oral language standards have deteriorated significantly’

‘Sgiliau darllen a llafar wrth gwrs’

‘Reading and oral skills of course’

‘Pan ddychwelodd y plant ym mis Medi, roedd rhai ohonynt bach yn 'stiff' yn siarad y Gymraeg - yn ystod y tymor, mae pwyslais wedi bod ar ddatblygu sgiliau darllen a llafaredd y plant’

‘When pupils returned in September, some were a Little ‘stiff’ in speaking Welsh – during the term, there has been an emphasis on developing children’s reading and oracy skills’

3.66 Others focused on the Impact of lower exposure levels and engagement practices with Welsh, including patterns of prior exposure to the language:

‘Y disgyblion oedd yn newydd i’r ysgol a heb gael llawer o gefndir o’r Gymraeg cynt. Mae y disgyblion hynny yn gweld dysgu yn y Gymraeg yn her eleni’

‘Pupils new to the School without much prior background in Welsh. These pupils see learning in Welsh challenging this year’

‘Effaith mawr ar disgyblion sy’n dod o ardaloedd lle does dim llawer o Gymraeg tu allan i’r ysgol.’

‘Large effect on pupils coming from areas where there is not much Welsh outside school’

‘Does dim modd hyrwyddo a bwydo sgiliau Cymraeg hanner cymaint ar lein, ac yn enwedig i’r disgyblion sydd heb wneud fawr o waith dros y cyfnod clo, ni fyddan nhw wedi defnyddio’r iaith yn ddigonol ac felly wedi colli’

‘It is not possible to promote and nurture Welsh skills half as much on-line, and especiallt for pupils who haven’t done much of the work over the lockdown period, they won’t have used the language sufficiently and therefore it’s become lost’

3.67 Only 7 offered positive perspectives on children’s Welsh language skills, focusing primarily on how quickly pupils have gotten back on track. One teacher who commented positively due to being placed in a school where most pupils came from Welsh-speaking families, also commented that home learning is not the same, and impossible to challenge pupils to achieve their best:

‘Nid wyf yn bryderus y bydd yno effaith hirdymor barhaus ar sgiliau Cymraeg y disgyblion gan eu bod wedi cyflawni nifer o dasgau yn y Gymraeg ac fod nifer o deuluoedd yr ysgol yn Gymraeg iaith gyntaf. Wedi dweud hynny, mae gwahaniaeth mawr yn safon yr hyn mae nhw yn ei gyflawni yn annibynnol adref mewn unrhyw bwnc, nid dim ond y Gymraeg. Mae modd herio a cheisio cael gwaith o’r safon uchaf posib wrth weithio gyda’r dysgwyr yn y dosbarth gan fod yr amgylchiadau yn gwbl wahanol.’

‘I’m not worried that there will be permanent long-term effects on pupils’ Welsh skills because they have been completing many Welsh tasks and many of the school’s families are first language Welsh. Having said that, there is a big difference in the quality of what they achieve independently at home in any subject, not only in Welsh. One can challenge and try to get the best quality work whilst working with pupils in the classroom because the content is totally different’

3.68 Although one teacher was positive about pupils’ abilities to catch up, they nevertheless noted how pupils continued to struggle with aspects of syntax, and required a ‘back to basics’ approach:

‘Mae y rhan fwyaf o'r disgyblion sydd yn fy nosbarth wedi ymdopi hefo ail gydiad yn y Gymraeg, er fod rhai yn straffaglu a chystrawen ers y cyfnod clo, ac angen ail ymweld a strwythur frawddeg.’

‘Most pupils in my class have coped with re-engaging with Welsh, even though some struggle with syntax since the lockdown period, and need to re-visit sentence structure’

3.69 Ten responses were returned from teachers teaching in bilingual schools. Three of those responses were complimentary, with two focusing specifically on the time factor, suggesting that catch-up can occur with time. Another teacher felt that whilst pupils from Welsh-speaking homes were unaffected, those from non-Welsh-speaking homes had certainly demonstrated some deterioration in terms of their Welsh language skills. Another felt that there would be some long-term effects, so focusing on basis language skills would be important. Whilst there were no clear patterns of deterioration in some aspect of language knowledge over others, one teacher noted specifically deterioration in writing skills, another noted deterioration in both writing and oral skills, and another noted a deterioration in ‘Welsh language skills’. Drawing on their own experiences, both linguistically and logistically in relation to the challenges of working full-time as a teacher at home whilst also home-schooling their own children, one teacher mentioned how they would expect there to be long-term effects in both directions, commenting that they themselves did not speak any English at home and would likely struggle to speak in English

when back at work. Another teacher commented on the paucity of live learning opportunities due to GDPR issues and the unavailability of full-time working parents to supervise such contact, and how the reduced exposure to Welsh in the home will inevitably have had an effect on pupils' opportunities to use Welsh.

- 3.70 Of the 44 responses returned by teachers in English-medium schools, the majority (55%: n=24) indicated that pupils had forgotten the basics of Welsh, mostly due to lack of engagement, exposure and use, but some also commented on pupils' language deterioration in general, in Welsh and in English:

'Negative. Basic skills in English have really suffered from previous lockdown. Welsh has taken a back foot.'

'Pupils have lost a great deal amount of knowledge and skills in English and Welsh'

'Pupils have lost the habit of using incidental Welsh such as asking questions, using English and Welsh for key purposes such as checking in, asking questions, etc.'

'They were initially behind but have quickly picked up. However, Welsh no longer has such a strong focus as English skills are very much behind where they were'

### **Theme 11: Best model for the future**

- 3.71 Teachers in Welsh-medium and bilingual schools were asked to reflect on their experiences of teaching through the pandemic, and offer ideas regarding good practice in supporting pupils from non-Welsh-speaking backgrounds to develop academically and linguistically and to use Welsh orally. In terms of developing academic skills, the main themes raised among the responses included the following: (i) regular use of live on-line sessions to ensure pupils are hearing Welsh on a daily basis, including at the primary ages, and to allow for frequent conversations in Welsh; (ii) flexible use of languages, such that the focus is more on Welsh (with approximate information in English/other language) in some cases, equal balance (e.g. providing terms in both languages; creating bilingual schemes) in others, or a mixture of modalities (written tasks in Welsh with voice recorded

instructions in English) in others, etc.; (iii) continual developments in language technology, such as software that provides an English voice-over for texts highlighted in Welsh or that can 'read' Welsh text in English and the need to integrate translation tools into learning and teaching platforms and the ability to highlight texts on screen when in virtual teaching mode; (iv) using role play as a means of supporting learning, either pre-recorded on apps or as a learning task; and (v) use of on-line platforms to create small group teaching where learning and repetition can take place, and to create opportunities for pupils to be able to contact teachers in a one-to-one manner when any challenges arise.

3.72 In terms of linguistic skills, some additional themes included (i) more live on-line sessions; (ii) the need for more differentiated work packages; (iii) focus on audio more than written instructions – '*speaking is the way forward*'; (iv) more on-line bilingual resources for schools; (v) basic language refresher sessions for pupils and parents; (vi) twinning non-Welsh-medium schools with Welsh-medium schools; and (vii) more support from the Welsh Language Units to plan activities and promote the Welsh language.

3.73 Finally, in terms of language use, the themes comprised the following: (i) more live on-line sessions; (ii) discussion groups and realistic role-play to practise spoken language; (iii) more practical tasks; (iv) more on-line bilingual resources; (v) Flipgrid; (vi) twinning non-Welsh-medium schools with Welsh-medium schools; and (vii) more support from the Welsh Language Units to plan activities and promote the Welsh language.

### **Implications for ITE**

3.74 Teachers were asked to reflect on their experience of teaching during the pandemic, and to note what skills they felt necessary to develop in ITE students to prepare them for the possibility of blended or on-line teaching in the future. The majority of responses mentioned IT and blended learning skills and training, with a number of comments also in relation to the ability to develop resources. Some additional comments included literacy and maths skills, the need to prepare ahead of any session, engage learners and parents, the ability to adjust/be flexible, resilience, provide concise feedback instantaneously, the availability of experienced

mentors and guidance from leaders, confidence to create interesting videos, and to develop a variety of tasks without placing too much emphasis on one task. A small number of comments (n=3) focused more around wellbeing, with two focusing on the need to set a realistic workload, and the other focusing on the need to be able to ensure your own health and wellbeing:

‘Cognitive behaviour therapy, counselling, coaching, personal development in our welfare.’

3.75 Only a few comments related specifically to the language needs of ITE students, although a few more reiterated the importance of live sessions (including songs with younger children) to engage pupils in using Welsh:

‘Ymwybyddiaeth o ddwyieithrwydd a’r sgil o osod cyfarwyddiadau yn glir a syml i ddisgyblion’

‘Awareness of bilingualism and the skill of setting instructions clearly and simply for pupils’

‘High level of Welsh language skills to build confidence and use of Welsh’

## 4. Parental Questionnaire Findings

### Introduction

4.1 In general, the parents who responded to the questionnaire were novices when it came to teaching. Most had **no** experience of teaching prior to the lockdown (67% among the ‘Adult 1’ group; ‘Adult 2’ - 69%; ‘Adult 3’ - 79%; ‘Adult 4’ - 88%; ‘Adult 5’ - 83%; ‘Adult 6’ – 100%). As can be seen in Table 4.1, very few classified themselves either as being a teacher or as having been a teacher, or as having any other experience as a ‘teacher’ e.g. at Sunday school or in a sporting capacity:

**Table 4.1: Teaching experience per adult within the household**

	Prior teaching experience				Total
	Teacher	Used to be a teacher	Sunday school, sport etc.	None	
Adult 1 (n=527)	17% (n=91)	2% (n=12)	13% (n=69)	67% (n=355)	n = 527
Adult 2 (n=458)	11% (n=52)	6% (n=28)	14% (n=64)	69% (n=314)	n = 458
Adult 3 (n=63)	5% (n=3)	2% (n=1)	14% (n=9)	79% (n=50)	n = 63
Adult 4 (n=17)	6% (n=1)	-	6% (n=1)	88% (n=15)	n = 17
Adult 5 (n=6)	-	-	17% (n=1)	83% (n=5)	n = 6
Adult 6 (n=3)	-	-	-	100% (n=3)	n = 3
Total	n = 65	n = 41	n = 144	n = 742	n = 1074

4.2 The majority of responses to the questionnaire are therefore representative of families that were very ‘new’ to teaching, although it is unclear how much engagement these parents would typically have had in supporting their child(ren) with their homework under normal circumstances. It was important, therefore, to gauge the perspectives not only of parents who were ‘novices’ to teaching, but who were also ‘novices’ of Welsh (see section 2.42 of the Methodology for information pertaining to parents’ linguistic abilities).

- 4.3 In what follows, the focus will be on the experiences and opinions of non-Welsh-speaking parents/guardians whose child(ren) attend(s) Welsh-medium schools, as reflected in their responses to a series of 21 statements (see Table 4.2).
- 4.4 These responses are then supplemented by all parents' responses to the remaining 34 questions. These 34 questions involved both closed (quantitative data) and open-ended questions (qualitative data).
- 4.5 A sub-set of the project management team was involved in the process of analysing the qualitative data. Nine main themes emerged from the data: (i) communication, (ii) resources and engagement, (iii) parental and pupil support, (iv) feedback and assessment, (v) Welsh language skills progression, (vi) encouragement to use Welsh at home, (vii) wellbeing, (viii) parents as educators, and (ix) adverse socio-economic factors.
- 4.6 The combined (qualitative and quantitative) results of the remaining 34 questions of the questionnaire are discussed in relation to the nine main themes outlined above.

#### **Non-Welsh-speaking parents with children in Welsh-medium schools**

- 4.7 A series of 21 statements sought non-Welsh-speaking parents' opinions around the extent to which they felt schools successfully communicated with parents and had considered the specific needs and challenges facing non-Welsh-speaking parents of children attending Welsh-medium schools. These statements were entered as measured factors (within subjects factor) into a chi-square analysis, with gender, School Action/School Action Plus, ALN Register, and Education Achievements<sup>13</sup> entered as between subjects variables.
- 4.8 Non-Welsh-speaking parents' responses to these statements are shown in Table 4.2 below.
- 4.9 Overall, parents were quite satisfied that schools understood the challenges facing them as non-Welsh-speaking parents, and did what they could to support them in helping their child(ren) engage with the work set by the school, under very difficult circumstances. This included providing bilingual instructions for the work set,

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<sup>13</sup> FSM was not entered as a variable since the majority of households with children receiving FSM were among pupils attending English-medium schools.

encouraging pupils to share their work with the school, providing suggestions for on-line Welsh-medium resources, being available for discussions with the pupils or with the parents when needed, and offering instructions in English where necessary.

- 4.10 However, when work was set solely in Welsh, non-Welsh-speaking parents did feel that schools did not necessarily appreciate the challenge that created (50% 'agree/strongly agree', 27% unsure, 23% disagree/strongly disagree). They also felt that there were not enough English instructions available to support their child(ren) with the tasks that were set (48% agree/strongly agree; 23% unsure; 28% disagree/strongly disagree), although most responded that English instructions were provided when suitable to do so (53% agree/strongly agree; 22% unsure; 26% disagree/strongly disagree). In a similar way, many of the parents felt that the school's focus was more on providing everything through the medium of Welsh rather than on providing everything bilingually for the benefit of parents (53% agree/strongly agree; 24% unsure; 24% disagree/strongly disagree). Parents were also of the opinion that schools did nothing to overcome parents' lack of understanding of the Welsh language (58% agree/strongly agree; 23% unsure; 18% disagree/strongly disagree) and that bilingual material were seen as providing more 'superficial' support than being utilised as a tool to support non-Welsh-speaking parents (53% agree/strongly agree; 23% unsure; 25% disagree/strongly disagree).

**Table 4.2: Responses to statements around support and communication: non-Welsh-speaking parents of children attending Welsh-medium schools**

Statement	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly agree
i The school understood the challenges we faced as non-Welsh-speaking parents trying to engage our child(ren) with work in a language we did not understand	8% (n=20)	18% (n=43)	18% (n=44)	23% (n=56)	33% (n=79)
ii The school provided ample support to ensure non-Welsh-speaking parents were able to support their children with the work they were set	13% (n=32)	16% (n=40)	18% (n=43)	23% (n=56)	30% (n=73)
iii The school provided bilingual worksheets and bilingual instructions in order that parents could work through the problems alongside the child	12% (n=29)	13% (n=31)	16% (n=40)	23% (n=55)	36% (n=88)
iv Where necessary, the school provided language instruction/English explanations for parents who had very little or no Welsh	15% (n=36)	11% (n=26)	22% (n=54)	21% (n=51)	32% (n=77)
v The school was very sympathetic to non-Welsh-speaking parents' situation and made reasonable adjustments to the way they would normally disseminate pupils' homework	15% (n=34)	11% (n=27)	30% (n=73)	17% (n=41)	27% (n=65)
vi The school provided ample bilingual activities in order that the parents could work on the problems/activities alongside the pupil and ask questions to spur their thinking	14% (n=34)	13% (n=32)	24% (n=57)	20% (n=49)	29% (n=69)
vii The school failed to appreciate the difficulty non-Welsh-speaking parents had in helping their child with worksheets that were provided in Welsh despite providing a general information sheet bilingually	12% (n=29)	11% (n=27)	27% (n=64)	16% (n=39)	34% (n=81)
viii The school did nothing to support parents' lack of understanding of Welsh	10% (n=25)	8% (n=20)	23% (n=55)	21% (n=51)	37% (n=90)

ix	Non-Welsh-speaking parents were not given enough English instruction to be able to support their child through the activities provided	14% (n=34)	14% (n=36)	23% (n=58)	16% (n=41)	32% (n=81)
x	Bilingual communication was felt to be more of a gesture and did nothing to support non-Welsh-speaking parents with the task at hand	9% (n=21)	16% (n=37)	23% (n=55)	17% (n=39)	36% (n=84)
xi	I was unable to engage with the work given so I created my own activities for my child	7% (n=16)	11% (n=27)	18% (n=43)	14% (n=34)	50% (n=118)
xii	The school provided many links to Welsh-medium resources available on-line	5% (n=12)	11% (n=28)	25% (n=60)	30% (n=72)	27% (n=65)
xiii	My child was encouraged to share their work with the school	2% (n=6)	4% (n=10)	12% (n=29)	25% (n=60)	57% (n=139)
xiv	My child received feedback on the work they submitted in Welsh	10% (n=24)	9% (n=23)	17% (n=41)	26% (n=63)	38% (n=93)
xv	My child could easily contact their teacher if they had difficulties with the language	7% (n=16)	9% (n=22)	16% (n=38)	31% (n=76)	38% (n=93)
xvi	I was able to contact a teacher if I had difficulties with the language	10% (n=23)	8% (n=20)	23% (n=56)	28% (n=68)	31% (n=75)
xvii	My child's Welsh language abilities have deteriorated over the course of the lockdown	14% (n=34)	29% (n=69)	22% (n=54)	14% (n=34)	21% (n=50)
xviii	My child's English language skills have not developed during lockdown	5% (n=11)	12% (n=29)	26% (n=62)	23% (n=54)	34% (n=82)
xix	My child has not developed as much as they should academically because I was unable to help them with their work in Welsh	14% (n=35)	24% (n=58)	21% (n=52)	18% (n=44)	22% (n=54)
xx	The school's focus was too much on providing everything in Welsh and not setting bilingual tasks so parents could support the child through the work	10% (n=23)	14% (n=33)	24% (n=57)	23% (n=55)	30% (n=73)

xxi	My child continued to develop their understanding of Welsh but not their confidence to use spoken Welsh	12% (n=30)	27% (n=66)	27% (n=66)	15% (n=37)	18% (n=43)
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(All  $\chi^2$  (4, 276 - 287) = 21.15 - 285.58, all  $ps < .05$ )

- 4.11 Consequently, many parents felt the need to create tasks themselves (most probably in English) since they were unable to work together with their child on the work set by the school (64% agree/strongly agree; 18% unsure; 18% disagree/strongly disagree).
- 4.12 However, whilst 40% of parents were of the opinion that their child(ren) had not developed academically as they should because they as a parent were unable to help them with the work, 38% disagreed with this statement (21% were unsure). This response pattern may be reflective of the continued educational instruction these parents provided for their child(ren) - in English - using English sources that they created themselves.
- 4.13 Interestingly, the majority of parents noted that their children received feedback on their work through the medium of Welsh (64% agree/strongly agree; 17% unsure; 19% disagree/strongly disagree ), despite schools providing ample instructions for the work bilingually and providing English instruction where necessary. This meant that parents were unable to judge how well their child was progressing with their work.
- 4.14 Despite the challenges these parents faced, only 35% felt that their child's Welsh language abilities had deteriorated over the lockdown period, which is lower than the opinions expressed by the teachers. 43% of parents disagreed or disagreed strongly with this statement (22% were unsure). Conversely, parents were more critical of their child(ren)'s English language skills, with 57% of the opinion that their child(ren)'s English language skills had deteriorated compared with 17% who disagreed with this statement. Finally, 28% disagreed that their child's confidence levels in Welsh had deteriorated whereas 33% felt that it had (27% unsure).
- 4.15 In most cases, no effect of gender was found. The only indication of a significant trend by parental gender within the data related to the statement 'My child was encouraged to share their work with the school'. In this case, more males opted to 'disagree somewhat' with this statement than females ( $\chi^2 (10, N=254) = 22.04, p > .05$ ), which may reflect the fact that they themselves may not have encouraged their child(ren) to do so or engage directly with the work that was set by the school.

The remainder of the responses to this statement was almost equal across genders, and, overall, most respondents agreed with this statement (78% of respondents).

- 4.16 Likewise, an effect of Highest Education Level Achieved was only found in relation to five statements, namely Statement v, ix, x, xii, and xix (all  $\chi^2$  (25, N=254)  $\geq$  36.96,  $p < .05$ ) and an effect of School Action/School Action Plus only found in relation to two statements, namely Statement viii and x (all  $\chi^2$  (25, N=254)  $\geq$  19.88,  $p < .05$ ). These were due to parents with Diploma/Degree level education and those with no children on SA/SAP polarising opinions stronger around 'strongly agree' than other parents. An effect of ALN was seen in relation to all statements (all  $\chi^2$  (25, N=254)  $\geq$  7.002,  $p < .05$ ) suggesting that the responses from parents of children with ALN did not pattern in the same way as those of parents of children without ALN, supporting the notion that families of children with ALN have individualised and specific needs that require differentiated support.
- 4.17 The next section presents the results of the remaining 34 questions of the questionnaire, as responded to by all parents. The results from both qualitative and quantitative data are presented together under the nine themes outlined under 4.5 above.

### **Data from all parents**

#### ***Theme 1: Communication from school***

- 4.18 Given the requirements for simultaneous delivery of in-person, on campus teaching for children of frontline workers and vulnerable children on the one hand, and off-campus, distance learning for children having to continue with their education at home on the other, communication between the school and the home was critical for success, and particularly so from the 'novice teacher' parent perspective. In contexts where parents had no Welsh language skills, but their children attended Welsh-medium or bilingual schools, this communication was even more crucial in order that pupils continued to learn whilst also continuing to engage with and develop their Welsh language skills. This required some additional planning, as outlined in the responses from teachers noted under Section 3 above. However, the extent to which parents were able to support their child(ren) linguistically in order that they were able to continue to engage with Welsh in their learning depended on

a variety of factors, including how much they engaged with and made use of the support provided. The following section outlines the nature of the support provided, along with parents' experience of, and engagement with, that support.

- 4.19 Parents of children attending Welsh-medium schools proffered the majority of opinions in relation to communication, and opinions were largely positive, mirroring their response to the statements in Table 4.2. Many noted that communication from, and contact with schools was adequate, ranging from daily messages from the Headmaster to unlimited multimodal access to, and feedback from teachers. Significant numbers of respondents stated that schools were proactive and very responsive – in a timely fashion - to requests of support by parents, with school applying a range of methods and practices ranging from always available at the end of the phone, teachers and heads available through messages, some offering structured and pre-planned fortnightly phone calls, with others making themselves available through Microsoft Teams throughout the working school day. One respondent noted that there was an opportunity for their children to speak Welsh with a teacher for a certain period of time over the week. Indeed, one parent was highly complimentary about the whole experience:

‘teachers were readily available ...we felt included in every aspect and the whole teaching staff should be applauded.’

- 4.20 However, the communication was not sufficient in all cases, with some parents desiring more:

‘more communication’

‘a phone call would have helped just to touch base.....the primary did this but the comprehensive didn't which made me as the parent feel pressured and isolated’

‘Extremely poor communication – issue with child's work and took over 100 days to link with parent’

‘Expecting more communications between tutors and kid’

‘Regular contact (phone/text or email) from school to parents (not only the pupil via teams) to ensure child and parent can adequately understand the work set.’

4.21 In most cases, parents with children in Welsh-medium or bilingual schools noted that the school communicated with them bilingually (71%, n=248/349) (see Table 4.3). This was echoed in the qualitative data, with comments such as the following:

‘All assignments were sent with instructions in both Welsh and English, so parents were aware of what the task was. Teachers were available for both students and parents if there were issues.’

4.22 Whether or not this was common practice at the school or something that was introduced because of the lockdown is unclear from these data (see also the discussion relating to the complexities surrounding school language policies as expressed by teachers under Section 3, Theme 3, points 3.12-3.17 above).

**Table 4.3: School language of communication with parents according to parents in the three language groups**

	Language in which school contacted parents during lockdown				
	No response	Welsh	Bilingual	English	Other
EM Parent	1	0.7% (n=4)	13% (n=70)	20% (n=106)	0.4% (n=2)
WM Parent: non-Welsh	-	3% (n=16)	35% (n=187)	9% (n=49)	0.4% (n=2)
WM Parent: Welsh	-	7%(n=36)	11% (n=61)	0%	-
Total	n=1	n=56	n=155	% (n=1)	(n=4)

$\chi^2 (8, N=534) = 196.45, p < .001$

4.23 However, there remained to be 56 Welsh-medium/bilingual schools (10% of the whole sample) that provided communication solely through the medium of Welsh, and a further 49 schools communicating solely through the medium of English:<sup>14</sup>

<sup>14</sup> It remains unclear, however, whether some Welsh-medium schools provide all communication separately in Welsh and in English, meaning that Welsh-speaking parents WM Parent: Welsh’ group) in Table 4.3 may have reflected the fact that they may themselves only engage with the Welsh-medium information they receive and non-Welsh-speaking parents only engage with the English-medium information (‘WM Parent: non-Welsh’ group).

‘It would have been useful if the Hwb emails were bilingual...couldn’t understand some of the work as it was in Welsh’

‘translation of the work in English would have helped’

‘The teams timetable in English!! I think all the work should have been bilingual so non-Welsh-speaking parents could support and engage with the work set. I had no idea that my son had not submitted all his work until I received the formal report at the end of term. This is totally unacceptable and I emailed the school to complain’

4.24 Likewise, when work was set for pupils to complete during lockdown, it tended to follow the linguistic medium of the school, although the vast proportion of work shared by Welsh-medium schools was provided bilingually (78%, 210/268):

**Table 4.4: Language in which schoolwork was set according to parents in the three parental language groups**

	Language in which schoolwork was set during lockdown				
	No response	Welsh	Bilingual	English	Other
EM Parent	9	2% (n=10)	11% (n=58)	20% (n=100)	1% (n=6)
WM Parent: non-Welsh	3	13% (n=72)	29% (n=154)	0.7% (n=4)	4% (n=21)
WM Parent: Welsh	2	7%(n=35)	10% (n=56)	0%	0.7% (n=4)
Total	n=14	22% (n=117)	50% (n=268)	19% (n=104)	6% (n=31)

$\chi^2 (8, N=534) = 243.22, p < .001$

4.25 When asked to elaborate on the nature of bilingual communication around the work set, most respondent noted that work was usually in the form of direct translation. However, one noted that there were more details in the English versions than in the Welsh, suggestive of additional elaboration around the tasks for non-Welsh-speaking parents, and a few remarked on how clear the instructions were:

‘It provided information in plain English that allowed me (non-fluent Welsh reader) to understand completely the task at hand. Adult 1 who is fluent in Welsh would always read the task to our child in Welsh’

‘I believe the translation was direct. Using the bilingual worksheets I easily managed to support my primary aged children.’

‘Both clear Welsh and English. Frequently in separate documents.’

‘Yes – the communication was clear and easy to follow’

‘Clear instructions given bilingually’

4.26 One parent remarked on the variation across teachers:

‘It varied from teacher to teacher, sometimes it was a translation, sometimes a different version entirely’

4.27 One parent with a child attending Welsh-medium school noted that pupils were sometimes given a choice of language to complete their tasks:

‘Cyfarwyddiadau clir - dewis weithiau pa iaith i wneud y gwaith gyda'r eithriad o waith ‘Cymraeg’ fel testun’

‘Clear instructions – a choice sometimes in what language to complete the work with the exception of ‘Welsh’ as a topic’

4.28 Whilst two of the parents remarked positively on the quality of the translation, a few non-Welsh-speaking parents found the English translation a little problematic:

‘Translation from Welsh as some words did not sit correctly in the text’

‘To some extent it was a direct translation. The Welsh terms were very unfamiliar and quite difficult for the children to understand and follow. It was not fluent to read and took some time to comprehend.’

‘Direct translation but sometimes with instructions. On a couple of occasions the translation had incorrect English words.’

4.29 A few parents mentioned how the work and/or instructions may have been provided bilingually, but the learning outcomes were not clearly stated, suggesting that there were unclear as to the purpose of the task:

‘Same information in both English and Welsh from primary school. Only the task instructions were given. No learning outcomes/aims were given.’

‘It was a direct translation. There was no outcome for the activity given.’

‘No context unfortunately. Direct translation.’

‘Direct translation – no direction.’

‘The comprehensive tasks were really difficult to decipher! Had I of been given an English explanation of the task I would have felt a lot more confident in supporting my child. A ‘check in’ phone call would have given me confidence and reassurance that I wasn’t on my own’

- 4.30 Whilst this may not have been a language issue per se, their lack of knowledge of Welsh may have rendered non-Welsh-speaking parents less clear on the purpose and direction of a given activity if it was the activity alone that was translated. Nevertheless, one parent remarked that although the learning expectations were unclear, the information provided (that was not a direct translation) was useful:

‘Possibly not about what they were expected to learn, but it was not a direct translation. It was super helpful.’

- 4.31 However, two parents remarked positively on the link between translation and outcome:

‘Translated as well as relating to the expected learning from the activity’

‘There was some guidance regarding objectives’

- 4.32 Many of the parents noted that in addition to translations, tips were also provided:

‘They provided useful tips for completing the work’

‘Plenty of useful tips’

- 4.33 However, there remained to be some cases where communication was lost between the school and the parents, particularly within Welsh-medium schools:

‘Only bilingual information was in relation to school wide communication rather than schoolwork’

‘The schools do not provide Welsh translations. There have been instances in the past where I have requested English translations that [sic] these have been refused’

‘We don’t recall having this [translated] facility’

‘They did not provide bilingual translations for the work set, only the daily update from the headteacher’

‘The bilingual communication daily were just general messages to the whole school community and not specific to my daughter’s specific daily learning’

‘I had to use Google Translate to help my child’

‘Bilingual communication was not provided’

‘Letters from school are provided bilingually. Work is all in Welsh.’

‘Welsh only apart from English [as a subject]’

4.34 In one case, the difference between primary and secondary emerged, with more translations available in relation to work in the primary:

‘Primary did but secondary didn’t’

4.35 Some parents suggested that this was due to the perception that secondary school age pupils were able to understand the work themselves.

4.36 A couple of respondents stated that it was not clear which language they wished their child to undertake their work set and that their

‘child would have struggled to complete it in Welsh on her own so some, and sometimes all, of the work would be returned in English.’

4.37 Some commented that their “children were fully capable of managing their work themselves”. A few commented on their eldest child being able to help out with translations.

4.38 Parents who had some children in Welsh-medium school and others in English-medium schools noted that they would have liked more support from schools in general regarding Welsh homework and to have the work in English also to assist their children. Some felt that availability of staff member to discuss the work would have sufficed, and others suggested a “*platform for the children to talk to each other via zoom for oral Welsh*”. Others went further, suggesting:

‘The work provided only in Welsh to the students is fine, but an English translation emailed/ accessible on school website to parents if required would

be helpful. Regular contact (phone/text or email) from school to parents (not only the pupil via teams) to ensure child and parent can adequately understand the work set'

- 4.39 The significance of the burden imposed on the learner to be the conduit of translation of tasks supplied only in Welsh was exemplified by this comment by a parent of a child/pupil with Additional Learning Needs:

'I pointed out, even before Covid that I was unable to adequately understand what my daughter was being asked to do, because it only appears in Welsh in Show my Homework. She is autistic and has some problems with verbal instructions and if she is set an essay, for example, I like to make sure she has adequately understood the question.'

- 4.40 The bilingual provision offered by Welsh-medium and bilingual schools was therefore highly variable. This variability included examples of excellent practice on the one hand, where schools provided translations, tips and/or links to task/learning outcomes, and examples of underdeveloped support and reluctance to translate on the other. Whilst schools that continued to communicate largely in Welsh may have done so as a continuation of their commitment to the delivery of effective immersion education, the context of the pandemic has raised valid questions concerning parents' active roles within a 'co-constructed' model of learning. In the Welsh-medium education context, these questions concern how best to involve non-Welsh-speaking parents as collaborators or partners in their child(ren)'s education, whilst ensuring that their child(ren) remains fully engaged with, and immersed in the Welsh language.

- 4.41 Given how novice parents were at educating their own children at home, and the novelty of this new teaching environment for teachers, parents were asked if schools had discussed with them at any point and in any way the challenges of delivering tasks that encouraged the use of Welsh to families where Welsh was not the home language. In most cases (54%), schools had not discussed these challenges with parents, which echo the comments made by teachers themselves, with a further 31% unsure:

**Table 4.5: Number and proportion of schools that discussed the challenges of supporting children with Welsh language content in the home**

	Yes	No	Not sure	Other
EM Parent	2% (n=9)	21% (n=113)	11% (n=60)	0.2% (n=1)
WM Parent: non-Welsh	8% (n=43)	27% (n=142)	13% (n=67)	0.4% (n=2)
WM Parent: Welsh	2% (n=9)	6% (n=34)	7% (n=38)	3% (n=16)
Total	11% (n=61)	54% (n=289)	31% (n=165)	4% (n=19)

$\chi^2 (6, N=534) = 82.36, p < .001$

4.42 However, the significant pattern found in the data suggests that the group of parents who were most likely to have had such discussions with schools were non-Welsh-speaking parents sending their children to Welsh-medium schools (the ‘Welsh’ parents).

**Theme 1 summary:**

4.43 Parents were largely satisfied with how schools communicate with them during lockdown, although there were cases where communication had failed. In most cases, Welsh-medium and bilingual schools communicated with parents bilingually, although there were many examples provided where schools did not communicate with parents in a language they could understand. Primary schools tended to provide more support in terms of appropriate communication around work than secondary schools. Bilingual communication tended to be in the form of direct translations, which worked well in many contexts. However, there were many examples of instances where learning outcomes, general instructions and purpose of a given task was not provided in accessible language for parents to support their child(ren).

**Theme 2: Resources**

4.44 In order to explore parents’ engagement with Welsh-medium resources, parents were asked about the resources that were already available in the home as well as their engagement with the (largely bilingual) resources provided by the schools.

4.45 In general, parents reported having little or no Welsh-medium resources readily available at home. Chi square analyses revealed a significant effect relating to the amount of Welsh-medium resources at home ( $\chi^2 (10, N=534) = 179.85, p<.001$ ), suggesting that the families that were most likely to already have some Welsh-medium resources at home were those with children attending Welsh-medium/bilingual schools (n=107):

**Table 4.6: How many Welsh language resources did families have at home**

	Amount of Welsh language resources in the home			
	No response	None/very few	Not sure	Some/a lot
EM Parent	30	24% (n=126)	2% (n=11)	3% (n=16)
WM Parent: non-Welsh	20	28% (n=148)	8% (n=44)	8% (n=42)
WM Parent: Welsh	5	3% (n=15)	2% (n=12)	12% (n=65)
Total	55	54% n=289	13% (n=67)	23% (n=123)

4.46 A follow-up question asked how many Welsh-medium resources parents bought during the lockdown period. This again revealed a significant effect ( $\chi^2 (10, N=534) = 72.83, p<.001$ ) whereby the majority of parents did not purchase any Welsh-medium resources, but those that did tended to be parents of children in Welsh-medium/bilingual schools (albeit low in number – n=22):

**Table 4.7: Amount of Welsh-medium resources bought by the different groups of parents during lockdown**

	Amount of Welsh-medium resources bought during lockdown				
	No response	None/very few	Not sure	Some/a lot	Total
EM Parent	44	25% (n=136)	0.6% (n=3)	0%	183
WM Parent: non-Welsh	55	33% (n=177)	2% (n=13)	2% (n=9)	254
WM Parent: Welsh	10	11% (n=61)	2% (n=13)	2% (n=13)	97
Total	109	70% (n=374)	5% (n=29)	4% (n=22)	534

- 4.47 During lockdown, schools were clearly active in providing parents with resources and resource ideas. The majority of parents (63%, n=337), in each of the different groups (EM Parent - 60%, n=109; WM Parent: non-Welsh - 65%, n=166; WM Parent: Welsh - 64%, n=62) reported similarly that schools provided lists of resources that parents could use with their children ( $\chi^2 (6, N=534) = 6.71, p>.05$ ).
- 4.48 According to the qualitative data obtained, parents were very happy with the support that they had received from schools in identifying supplementary resources to support home-based schoolwork (beyond what was provided by schools) and that teachers were at hand to provide support. However, one mention that there were no resources/workbooks available in Welsh and had asked the school in pre-Covid pandemic times for a list of novels with age suggestions, but no response had been forthcoming.
- 4.49 All but two respondents were very complimentary on the suitability of the resources provided by schools to undertake home-based schoolwork with their children. These included links to websites, books in community libraries, supportive websites including translating, radio channels and TV programmes, and Welsh learning apps. Some schools offered tailored Welsh language classes whilst others offered direct access to a Learning Support Assistant. The remaining two respondents noted that they had not received the same level of support by schools, as characterised by this direct quote from a parent with a child attending Welsh-medium education:
- ‘Very little work provided, minimal contact and very poor support. Children were in childcare hubs full time and no time allocated to schoolwork, no active encouragement of use of Welsh language at the hubs.’
- 4.50 However, very few parents noted that they had printed any of the Welsh resources provided, with Welsh-speaking parents sending their children to Welsh-medium schools the most likely to do so ( $\chi^2 (10, N=534) = 79.37, p<.001$ ):

**Table 4.8: Amount of Welsh-medium resources parents printed during lockdown**

	Amount of Welsh-medium resources printed during lockdown				Total
	No response	None/very few	Not sure	Some/a lot	
EM Parent	37	22% (n=115)	1% (n=8)	4% (n=23)	183

WM Parent: non-Welsh	41	19% (n=101)	4% (n=23)	17% (n=89)	254
WM Parent: Welsh	7	8% (n=43)	4% (n=21)	4% (n=26)	97
Total	85	49% (n=259)	10% (n=52)	26% (n=138)	534

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4.51 Non-Welsh-speaking parents of children attending Welsh-medium schools proffered the majority of opinions in relation to the availability and adequacy of, and their own engagement with resources when provided with an opportunity to elaborate on their responses within the questionnaire.

4.52 Whilst opinions regarding resources were mostly positive, suggestions were offered for improving provision. These suggestions centred around the need for translation services, bilingual guidance and instructions for parents and oracy resources. Comparisons between primary and secondary school provisions were drawn by one respondent who noted that primary school tasks were fully explained bilingually but that this was lacking in the secondary (cf. 4.34).

4.53 For example, non-Welsh-speaking parents with children in Welsh-medium schools expressed concerns and angst over the inadequacy of instructional guidance for parents on how to undertake work with their children as some “could not understand the work in Welsh”, and other wanted “better Welsh resources” to ensure tasks were delivered in the right way. The majority were of the opinion that translation services was required, or

‘a call from teacher would have assisted in knowing how and where to access resources.’

4.54 Others wanted guidance on

‘how to include social use of Welsh and how to support Welsh language oracy.’

4.55 Parents with children attending English-medium schools gave less specific and more generalised responses such as ‘*any help and advice greatly received*’, but that they were “relying on Google translate” as they “wouldn’t have known how to teach

them [child(ren)] anyway” and that they would have liked “teachers pronouncing the words, basic phrases etc”. One comment perhaps indicated the dangers of parental disengagement with Welsh as a subject:

‘I just need to know how to educate my children in more useful subjects.’

- 4.56 Responses provided by non-Welsh-speaking parents with children attending bilingual schools reflected upon the usefulness of, and engagement with teaching and learning materials supplied by the schools in terms of modality:

‘More video interaction between the children and their schools- particularly for the elder child - she had very little social interaction over lockdown (as we were at work, her brother was in childcare hub), she also found that engagement in schoolwork entirely by word documents was dull, and affected her motivation. This was true even for English taught subjects, but was worse for Welsh taught subjects.’

### **Theme 2 Summary:**

- 4.57 Very few families reported owning or purchasing Welsh-medium resources during lockdown. Those that did tended to be Welsh-speaking families. Most parents noted that schools provided ample resource ideas and support for finding resources. However, very few parents printed the resources shared, and some found the resources inadequate and would have appreciated alternative modes of communication, including recordings to help with pronunciation patterns.

### **Theme 3: Parental and pupil support**

- 4.58 Parents were asked to share any comments in relation to their general experiences and observations of teaching their children at home during the Covid-19 instigated lockdown, specifically in relation to the support they received from schools.
- 4.59 Welsh-speaking parents with children attending Welsh-medium schools were generally very complimentary about their experiences:

‘Wedi mwynhau. Yr ysgol wedi bod yn wych. Nes i hefyd greu adnoddau fy hun er mwyn atgyfnerthu addysg fy mhlant’

'I've enjoyed. The school's been excellent. I also created my own resources in order to strengthen my children's education'

*'Yr ysgol a'r athrawon wedi gwneud popeth o fewn eu gallu'*

'The school and teachers have done everything within their ability'

4.60 Some noted that there was open dialogue and communications with schools and teachers on request and that, generally, schools were responsive to concerns and assistance provided. One mentioned having developed a

'newly found respect for teachers and the teaching profession.'

4.61 On a positive note, some mentioned that lockdown increased the independent study skills of the children. Others highlighted how lockdown presented challenges within families, particularly those families unable to support children of different age groups, understanding curriculum content, monitoring progress of the work submitted, absence of feedback, unclear instructions, personal home circumstances, medical issues, and those who were designated Key Workers.

4.62 A few noted that they did not need support as their eldest children could either help the younger ones, or that they were self-motivated children and confident enough not to need help. Others were concerned that not enough provision had been provided by schools, exasperating the complexities involved with sharing home technology and on-line provision:

*'Roedd hi'n anodd ysgogi fy mhlentyn ieuengaf i ymgymryd â'r gwaith. Ni ddarparwyd llawer o waith iddynt - roedd rhai ysgolion yn derbyn gwersi ar-lein helaeth. Nid hwn oedd ein profiad ni. Roedd fy mhlentyn hyn yn gallu cario mlaen a'i gwaith heb ymyrraeth gen i ac roeddwn yn ffyddiog ei bod yn gallu gwneud hynny yn annibynnol.'*

'It was difficult to motivate my youngest child to undertake the work. Not a lot of work was prepared for them – some schools had substantial on-line lessons. This was not our experience. My eldest child could carry on with their work without interference from me and I was confident they could do that independently'

4.63 Some mentioned how they would have liked to have received more support from schools:

‘I feel more bilingual help with a deeper understanding given would help direct the children better. Maybe a phone call, zoom meeting could have taken place to air language issues.’

4.64 Others mentioned issues relating to the challenges of using and engaging with the technology used as a mode of learning and teaching:

‘I felt completely out of my depth. Everything took so long to translate I didn’t know how to use teams, and a lot of the time we couldn’t fill the answers on the boxes as it wouldn’t work.’

4.65 Others mentioned the difficulties families had with compatibility and connectivity issues.

4.66 Parents with children attending bilingual schools commented on the volume of work provided during this time:

‘too much work was given during the first lockdown’

4.67 Others commented on how motivating children was harder the second time round, and that they didn’t feel sufficiently supported during that time:

‘My kids hated it and I wasn't going to fight them to complete tasks. School didn't ask how we were coping’

4.68 Parents of children attending English-medium schools remarked that there was not much Welsh taught or talked and Welsh was “sorely lacking through lockdown”. More assistance would have been welcomed in relation to the Welsh language via videos involving phonetic pronunciation.

4.69 However, parents of children with ALN found the whole experience challenging:

‘Very difficult especially for my younger son who is waiting to be assessed for ASD’

‘I have one child with ALN who missed some Welsh lessons due to ALN provision, so she struggles, and in general finds Welsh very hard now she is

back in lessons. It's difficult to support her as I know less Welsh than she does.'

- 4.70 One parent who had some children in Welsh-medium schools and others in English-medium schools felt that the school could have done more to support them:

'The school didn't support us as much as they could have. We had one phone call from the school to ask how we were. I was surprised by this. my 10 year old mainly went on bitesize.'

- 4.71 On the whole, non-Welsh-speaking parents wanted more support and contact from schools and gave specific advice on what aspects to improve (cf. 3.74 above):

'A list of topics covered and learning goals for each task, listed on the school website in both welsh and English would be a very valuable resource to both students and parents, both when completing work from home and normal homework.'

- 4.72 Finally, transitioning in education was particularly difficult for children who were recently transferred to a Welsh-medium secondary school with no help from parents or teachers.

### **Theme 3 summary:**

- 4.73 Welsh-speaking parents were generally very complimentary about the support received during the lockdown period, despite the context itself being very challenging for many families. However, on the whole, non-Welsh-speaking parents felt that they could have received more support, particularly with helping their child(ren) with work that was set in Welsh, and in developing their Welsh language competence.

### **Theme 4: Feedback and assessment**

- 4.74 Parents provided mixed opinions with regard to feedback, with some noting timely feedback, and others noting that very little feedback was provided:

'Most teachers gave work to pupils and timely feedback. It worked well and Welsh language usage didn't suffer. Teachers gave out Welsh language suggested reading'

‘Colli allan ar waith pwysig, dim lawer o adborth nol felly anodd gwybod os oedd y gwaith yn gywir’

‘Missing out on important work, not much feedback so difficult knowing if the work was correct’

- 4.75 Perceptions of parents with children in English-medium schools highlighted the paucity of feedback on the tasks provided, particularly in relation to Welsh:

‘was no oral practice given and very limited feedback given, if any’

‘Work was set but no feedback was given once completed. Work not marked and no interaction was given from the school’

‘My son was given lots of work to do on occasion but was only given feedback on one occasion. As a result of this his Welsh language has not progressed as he’s not had feedback on any positive or negative aspects of his work. I tried in vain to contact the school and the only response I would get was that I needed to appreciate that they were a Hub school. I felt as though work was being set to keep children busy as opposed to being set because there was a purpose to it as some work did not fit in the curriculum.’

- 4.76 Another parent remarked about the lack of feedback and how this impacted negatively on her son’s confidence with Welsh:

‘His Welsh language skills and his confidence has been hit as he spent a lot of time submitting work but didn’t receive and feedback.’

#### **Theme 4 summary:**

- 4.77 Opinions regarding feedback were mixed. Whilst some parents felt that the feedback was useful and returned in a timely fashion, many others felt that feedback was lacking, particularly in relation to Welsh. This, it was felt, impacted on pupils’ confidence as they had no clear indication of how well they were progressing despite putting a lot of effort into the work.

#### **Theme 5: Welsh language skills progression**

- 4.78 In line with responses obtained from teachers (see Section 3, Theme 7 above), and parents’ response to the statements in Table 4.2 above, some parents expressed

concerns about their child's lack of progression with the Welsh language during lockdown:

'My children's standard of Welsh dropped significantly during lockdown: their vocabulary became much narrower, and they almost stopped wanting to engage in Welsh. This is the major advantage of a Welsh medium school setting-they're immersed in it and therefore absorb the language around them. That was lost during lockdown and I think some ... lessons would have helped this so much. Appreciate it was new for teachers too, who had to adapt quickly, so this isn't really a criticism, just observation for the future.'

- 4.79 In offering an explanation for this deterioration, one parent referred to the fact that children were not accustomed to using any Welsh at home, and had no contact with Welsh-speaking children:

'I think it's fair to say their spoken Welsh has deteriorated- they always speak English at home and with friends and so this spills into their school life'

- 4.80 In general, however, very few parents noted that their children had experienced adverse effect on their Welsh language skills because of the conditions of the lockdown.

- 4.81 In responding to an open-ended question about any general language skills that had improved during lockdown, parents of children attending Welsh-medium schools identified a wide range of non-linguistic improvements, such as family wellbeing, independent study skills of children including self-efficacy and self-management, and self-discipline and confidence of children, and digital skills of children and parents, in addition to linguistics improvements such as:

'ysgrifennu a brawddeg'

'writing and sentence structure'

'ymarferion darllen a sillafu'

'reading and spelling exercises'

'Anghenion iaith y plentyn ADY. Ffocws ar ffurfio llythrennau a rhifau'

'ALN child language needs. Focus on forming letter and numbers'

‘English reading and command of the language’

- 4.82 Strong views were proffered by some, suggesting that any gains in educational outcomes (reading, in this particular example), was due to their own input and not that of the school:
- ‘My 6yr old learned to read properly, but that was through my input, not the school!’
- 4.83 Few respondents noted that there were no observable improvements, and fewer still stated that skills had worsened. No observable differences in Welsh language skills were reported among parents with children attending English-medium schools, although this could be due to non-Welsh-speaking parents’ inability to judge. Whilst this suggests that Welsh language skills had not worsened in these pupils, one comment noted that skills had lowered in reading and spelling because of suspected dyslexia.
- 4.84 Parents were also asked if they had observed any general deterioration in any aspects of language skills during lockdown. Again, parents with children attending Welsh-medium schools interpreted the question in a more general sense, discussing their child’s progress in subject specific terms - maths, science - and Welsh (writing, reading and conversational) and social and emotional skills [applicable to single child households in particular], including declining mental health, and confidence going back to school.
- 4.85 A strong sub-theme was that parents observed declining Welsh language skills due to lack of continuity and confidence in speaking Welsh related to social isolation.
- 4.86 A lesser theme here, but a theme that emerged throughout the data sets was the worsening or deterioration of skills (speech) for children with ALN – along with fine motor skills for writing.
- 4.87 The majority of respondents/parents who had no Welsh language at home and whose children were attending bilingual schools, stated that they did not observe any worsening in linguistic skills but some mentioned issues with Welsh reading and confidence in speaking Welsh (specifically pronouncing words correctly).

- 4.88 Most parents who had no Welsh language at home and whose children were attending English-medium schools stated that they were unaware of any worsening/deterioration in language skills in the main but perhaps command of English and Welsh vocabulary had suffered.
- 4.89 Again, a strong recurring sub-theme among non-Welsh-speaking parents was ALN:  
‘My ALN child regressed in her Welsh as her memory is not great at the best of times and she does not do well with online learning.’
- 4.90 A first example of more able and talented (MAT) child was also referenced in this context:  
‘for a MAT student - attitude to learning has been severely impacted as some work is too easy rushed and slapdash.’
- 4.91 Parents who had no Welsh language at home and who had some children attending Welsh-medium schools and others attending English-medium schools gave similar accounts, with two quotes encapsulating the polarity of opinions proffered and juxtapositions encountered:  
‘colli gafael ar waith ysgol/tablau/darllen/ysgrifennu brawddegau; cwympto tu ôl a ddim yn cael yr her o fod mewn dosbarth’  
‘losing grip on school work/tables/reading/writing sentences; falling behind and not receiving the challenge of being in a class’  
‘Brwdfrydedd tuag eu gwaith ysgol, ddim yn hoffi’r ysgol rwan-gormod o reolau.’  
‘Enthusiasm towards their school work, not liking school now – too many rules’
- 4.92 Another comment denotes the loss and worsening of language conditions brought on my lockdown and home schooling  
‘she suffers from a stutter and needed to restart speech therapy after bringing it under control previously.’
- 4.93 A few noted that they had not observed worsening of skills.

### **Theme 5 summary:**

- 4.94 Whilst parents' beliefs about their child(ren)'s progression/deterioration with the Welsh language was largely overtaken by their concerns/discoveries about other aspects of development, of the comments made specifically in relation to Welsh, no overwhelming feelings of gains or deterioration were reported. Some parents noted gains in language abilities whilst others noted aspects of deterioration that would likely be reversed once back in an immersion context.

### **Theme 6: Encouragement to use Welsh**

- 4.95 Hearing and using Welsh, particularly for children living in non-Welsh-speaking households, was clearly challenged by the restrictions posed by the pandemic.

- 4.96 This challenge was also met in the Hubs that provided continued on-campus education for children of Key Workers and children from vulnerable families (cf. teacher responses in 3.50 under Section 3):

‘No active encouragement of use of Welsh language at the hubs’

- 4.97 In most cases, children lived in families where no parent spoke or understood Welsh. Whilst engagement with Welsh was clearly easier for children living in homes where others also spoke Welsh, native-like competence or L1 language abilities were not necessary or essential in order for parents and children to engage with Welsh:

‘I think it was easier because we are learning Welsh, I think we would have struggled if we hadn't been able to understand any Welsh’

- 4.98 However, the opinions of parents with children attending English-medium schools with regard to the importance of Welsh can be summarised by one quote:

‘We decided as a family which areas to focus on and Welsh was far down the list.’

- 4.99 Some parents referred to the perceived deficiencies in their child(ren)'s oral Welsh skills:

‘Spoken Welsh suffered during lockdown as she wasn't using it’

- 4.100 Others attributed this trend to the lack of exposure to the language:

‘My children didn't hear the Welsh language spoken for several months, which resulted in them favouring English’

- 4.101 Only one parent expressed concern about their choice of linguistic medium of education for their child:

‘We seriously considered changing to an English-speaking school after our experience during the pandemic. As non-Welsh-speaking parents we made a very difficult decision to send our child to a Welsh school. I have found the whole experience a constant battle and one that I sometimes regret’

**Theme 6 summary:**

- 4.102 By and large, exposure to natural spoken Welsh and opportunities to engage in meaningful, natural conversations was largely compromised by the conditions of lockdown. This impacted on pupils’ willingness to engage with the language and influenced some families’ decisions to ‘push Welsh down the priority list (cf. teacher responses – 3.31-3.33).

**Theme 7: Wellbeing**

- 4.103 Several comments were made by parents articulating mental health and wellbeing of children in relation to the overburdening amount of work distributed by schools in the first lockdown period - predominantly by secondary schools - as encapsulated by this quote:

‘They could have not set so much work for the secondary children as it was too much and we struggled with working full time to ensure the work was kept on top of. Plus her wellbeing struggled as she struggled to keep on top of it all.’

- 4.104 Conversely understood and applied, the consequence and importance of this theme is poignantly communicated in this quote:

‘My daughter’s autism means she gets very anxious leaving the house, so I would say that her mental health improved in lockdown. Consequently, her ability improved because she wasn’t over-anxious. Self-harming ceased.’

4.105 More generally, parents expressed concern about the potential long-term effects of the lockdown period on children's health and well-being, across-the-board:

'I strongly feel that the children's mental well-being was overlooked. Seen a huge increase in young people experiencing increased anxiety, palpitations, developing motor & verbal ticks, direct self-harm and suffering from eating disorders.'

**Theme 7 summary:**

4.106 Whilst the focus of the comments discussed under Theme 7 were not specifically in relation to the Welsh language, learning during the lockdown period seemed to exacerbate poor mental health in some children, whilst offering unique focused family time that served to improve mental health for others. Ensuring appropriate support for pupils, regardless of the medium of instruction, is important, and includes appropriate engagement with parents in their child's learning, as outlined in this report, in order to protect mental health.

**Theme 8: Parents as educators**

4.107 The majority of parents enjoyed the home-schooling experience and remarked on the following positive attributes:

'Pleser rhan fwyaf nes i fwynhau amser adref gyda nhw a wedi siomi or ochr ora â'u addasiad i addysgu o gartref'

'Mostly pleasurable I enjoyed the time home with them and pleasantly surprised at their adjustment to home-schooling'

'Wedi mwynhau'r profiad o fod adref yn addysgu fy mhlentyn yn fawr iawn. Roedd gennym 'routine' cyfarwydd, ond hyblyg. Rhoddwyd ffocws ar ddysgu darllen (Tric a Chlic am ddim) a dysgu cyfri, adnabod gwerth rhifau (Numicon)'

'Have enjoyed the experience of being home educating my child very much. We had a familiar, but flexible routine. We focused on learning to read (free Tric a Chlic) and to count, recognise the value of money (Numicon)'

4.108 For some, education in lockdown was a conduit for family wellbeing focused on extra-curriculum matters:

‘I did not educate my child at home in terms of taking over where school previously would have provided education. I teach my child compassion, to be enquiring, confidence in herself and resilience. School teaches her maths, history etc.’

4.109 Some parents faced more challenges than others when the family unit had children across the education sectors:

‘Cur pen go iawn... gwaith cyfrifiadur ddim yn 'compatible' a cysylltiad gwe sâl - heb sôn am 3 plentyn yn trio gwneud pethau gwahanol.’

‘A real headache...computer work not compatible and poor network connectivity – not to mention 3 children trying to do different things.’

4.110 Some parents were working (from home) full-time throughout both lockdowns, which presented additional challenges:

‘Anodd iawn gan ein bod fel rhieni yn gweithio llawn amser yn ystod y cyfnod gyda pwysau gwaith uchel ac felly yn gweithio mwy o oriau na 37 awr yr wythnos yr un ac felly heb amser i wneud gwaith gyda’r plant. Oedd hyn yn anodd iawn ac yn bwysau mawr arnom ar y pryd. Ond wedi dod yn ei blaen yn gret nol yn yr ysgol. Hefyd oedd y ferch yn cychwyn yn yr uwchradd fis Medi ac felly ychydig anoddach iddi hi’

‘really difficult because we as parents worked full-time during the period with high work pressures and therefore working more than 37 hours a week each and therefore without time to do the work with the children This was very difficult and a big pressure on us at the time. But they’ve come along great after returning to school. Also the daughter was starting secondary school in September and so a little bit more difficult for her’

4.111 This is further substantiated by another quote that mentions feelings of guilt associated with commitments and routines of home schooling:

‘roedd cynnig cymorth addysgol ar yr aelwyd yn ystod oriau call yn amhosib. Mae hynny’n arwain at euogrwydd o fethu â’i dal hi bob pen’

‘Offering educational support at home during reasonable hours was impossible. This leads to the guilt of not being able to be everything to everyone at the same time’

- 4.112 Some parents were still working at their usual workplace presenting challenges to home schooling:

‘Roedd yn annodd cael yr hogie i weithio, gan nad oeddwn adre i’w cefnogi ac i sicrhau eu bod yn gweithio!’

‘It was difficult getting the boys to work, because I wasn’t home to support and ensure they were working!’

- 4.113 Another remarked on the challenges of home-schooling when their time was already committed to their job:

‘Working for the emergency services we did not have the time to educate as we had our own jobs to do. The education of our children should still have been undertaken by the school and they should have adhered to the timetable and the school day.’

- 4.114 Stronger views were expressed by some:

‘parents are not trained teachers/educators so they should not be expected to educate their children as if they were attending school’

- 4.115 These experiences were challenged further in families where at least one child had ALN:

‘It was difficult to teach well and work well you always felt as the adult that if you gave your time to one then the other was missing out.’

‘Was very little educating due to work and having no family support due to restrictions this was particularly challenging and also was unable to access Hwb ..... due to one child having ALN and therefore not liking change also challenges with behaviour due to lack of consistent routine and both parents working around each other and providing childcare’

### **Theme 8 summary:**

- 4.116 Whilst Theme 8 may not be directly related to Welsh language matters, it nevertheless highlights the additional challenges faced by different families, particularly those with multiple children requiring simultaneous access to computers, and those where parents were working full-time. These challenges may well be exacerbated further when adding communication difficulties, suggesting that appropriate support is crucial for these families.

### **Theme 9: Adverse socio-economic factors**

- 4.117 A minority of responses highlighted the hidden challenges of home-based education, including the requirement to produce resources (printing) and the practicability of access to a computer:

‘Mwy o waith trwy Hwb i ysgolion cynradd yn hytrach nag argraffu pob darn ac yna i lan lwytho, llawer o bapur ac inc wedi cael ei brynu a’i wastraffu. Bydd e’n well cael y taflenni ar lein a modd i gwblhau y gwaith yna’

‘More work through Hwb for primary schools rather than printing all parts and then uploading, lot of paper and ink bought and wasted. It would be better to get the forms on-line and being able to complete the work there’

‘It was hard having 4 children and no computer’

‘The school was unsympathetic about our problems with a laptop. The deputy phoned to find out why my child wasn't emailing work back, I said our laptop has slowed until it's unusable, she told me to order one from Amazon and it will be here the next day! Totally unaware of people's lack of money. We manage on one wage due to my disability. She also told me to print the work off and seemed unaware of the price of printer ink. We weren't able to follow the work so I tended to teach them from educational books we already had. School kept asking for vlogs about how they felt about the pandemic. My child hates being videoed and I didn't want to focus on the negatives, with a keyworker parent they were worried enough already. I was asked where we lived but told we lived too far away to borrow a computer. Seemed computers were only lent to local Welsh speaking families. No more QR codes either

please. They kept setting work asking them to make things, without masses of art supplies it was impossible'

4.118 Similar issues were aired by parents with children in English-medium schools:

'I found the whole experience very difficult with no computer or laptop despite telling school didn't receive any worksheets till the fire break lock down'

**Theme 9 summary:**

4.119 In a minority of cases, parents were unable to help their child(ren) engage with the work provided by the school due to issues relating to the availability of equipment, including computers and printers.

## 5. Findings from Interviews and focus groups with ITE staff and students

### Introduction.

- 5.1 A small number of interviews (6 in total) were held with ITE tutors and 3 focus groups were also held with ITE students from within the three HEI establishments that were involved in this project (Bangor University, Aberystwyth University and UWTSD). To protect individuals' and establishments' identity each interviewee was allocated a code (see tables below).

**Table 5.1: ITE Tutor Codes and Sector Specialism**

	Interviewee Code	Primary/ Secondary Tutor
1	TA1	Primary
2	TB1	Primary and Secondary
3	TB2	Primary and Secondary
4	TB3	Primary and Secondary
5	TC1	Primary and Secondary
6	TC2	Secondary

**Table 5.2: ITE Students' Codes**

	Focus Group Code	Interviewee Code
1	FGA (5 participants)	SA1; SA2; SA3; SA4; SA5
2	FGB (8 participants)	SB1; SB2; SB3; SB4; SB5; SB6; SB7; SB8
3	FGC (5 participants)	SC1; SC2; SC3; SC4; SC5

- 5.2 Each interview and focus group was subsequently transcribed and a thematic analysis of the key themes and sub themes was undertaken. A narrative of the themes identified and accompanying qualitative data taken from the interviews and focus groups can be seen below and a summary of the themes can be seen in Table 5.3.

**Table 5.3: Themes from ITE Interviews (Staff) and Focus groups (Students).**

Themes	
1	Training
2	Feedback and Guidance
3	Oral Tasks
4	Challenges of online provision
5	Implications for Future Provision

5.3 As indicated in the table above similar overarching themes have been identified and are discussed further in the following narrative.

### **Theme 1: Training**

5.4 All respondents referred to some aspect of staff training that was undertaken to ensure staff were able to familiarise themselves with online resources. These training sessions included internal training on synchronised/unsynchronised learning, as well as training on the use of various platforms available i.e. Zoom/Microsoft Teams. One HEI also acknowledged the role of the local authority in providing key support for ITE staff and introducing them to various digital resources used by schools within the local authority:

‘gafon ni gefnogaeth wedyn gan tîm addysgu trwy dechnoleg gwybodaeth, a nathon nhw gynnal sesiynau i ni i ni gael ymglyfarwyddo fel tiwtoriaid ar ba fath o bethau sydd allan ‘na ar gyfer athrawon i addysgu, a rhyw fath o beth gallen ni fod yn gwneud o ran addysgu.’ TA1

‘...we then had support from a teaching team through information technology, and they held sessions for us to familiarize ourselves as tutors on what sort of things are out there for teachers to teach, and some sort of what we might be doing in terms of teaching.’

5.5 Several interviewees across HEIs also referred to sharing interesting practice and supporting each other whilst familiarising themselves with the new technology:

‘...helpu’n gilydd mewn ffordd hefyd yn de, mynd trwy’n gilydd a helpu’n gilydd a os yden ni wedi gweld arfer dda den ni’n mynd ar ôl y bobol yna a gofyn fasa modd cael rhyw fath o hyfforddiant.’ TB1

'... help each other in a way too, get together and help each other and if we have seen good practice we go after those people and ask if we could get some sort of training.'

5.6 One interviewee also referred to modelling good practice for ITE trainees and how their own learning/training had aided them in this respect. They also acknowledged that the training would also strengthen their knowledge for the next academic year,

'...dw i wedi bod yn trio modelu a rhannu syniadau o beth ellith rhywun wneud yn y maes o fewn y pwnc neu'r maes dysgu i osod gwaith i'r plant boed o'n gydamserol neu'n anghydamserol ...dwi wedi dysgu lot flwyddyn yma yn cydweithio efo fi'n hun a cael cydweithio efo cydweithwyr sydd yn dysgu yn yr ysgol, Dwi'n gobeithio erbyn y flwyddyn academaidd nesa fyddan ni mewn lle cryf rili.' TB3

'... I've been trying to model and share ideas of what someone can do in the subject or learning area to set work for the children, both synchronized or non-synchronized ... I've learned a lot this year working with myself and being able to work with colleagues who teach at the school, I hope by the next academic year we'll be in a really strong place.'

5.7 However, one institution also referred to the fact that resources used and what can be achieved differ greatly across the primary/secondary sectors:

'...so beth wnaethon ni fel criw oedd derbyn hyfforddiant ein hunain i wybod sut i addysgu'r myfyrwyr, ond mae'r sgil a'r technegau o addysgu'r disgyblion, boed e'n cyfnod allweddol dau, cyfnod sylfaen a cyfnod allweddol 3, yr uwchradd, yn gwbl gwbl wahanol pan ydych chi'n ystyried y rhai 3 mlwydd oed i rhai 18 mlwydd oed.' TA1

'... so what we did as a crew was to train ourselves for us to be able to know how to teach the students, but the skill and techniques of teaching the pupils, in key stage two, foundation phase and key stage 3, the secondary, is completely different when you consider the 3 year old to the 18 year old.'

5.8 All institutions referred to some aspects of additional online training for ITE trainees, training that may have included internal sessions organised by staff or external sessions with consortia/local authority. In one example an institution also appointed

an individual ITE staff member to lead on training trainee teachers on digital platforms. Although the training provided across institutions was varied in their attempt to prepare trainee teachers to use online platforms, several referred to training on platforms such as Microsoft Teams and Google Classroom, and software/apps such as Seesaw, Mood Board, Adobe Spark, Flipgrid, etc.

5.9 There may have been some further differences in ITE training across institutions during this period (largely due to Covid and in line with WG guidelines and regulations). In some institutions, students were out on placement before Christmas whilst other ITE providers amended their course structure in anticipation of more face to face contact after Christmas. These changes in course structure may have allowed for further instruction in some institutions before Christmas whilst other students may have learnt to use platforms during their placement along with other teachers in their placement schools.

5.10 ITE providers also acknowledged that individual experiences and use of platforms, software on placements will inevitably differ across trainees but that these differences may be more pronounced when teaching online:

‘...mae profiad pawb, fel arfer ta beth efo unrhyw ymarfer dysgu yn wahanol, ond oherwydd y sefyllfa yma mae’r gwahaniaethau yn amlygu. Dydi hynna ddim yn ddrwg o beth achos mae e jest yn adlewyrchu’n gwahaniaeth. Ni wedi ceisio paratoi pawb ar gyfer hyn ond wrth gwrs mae eu sgiliau nhw’n datblygu wrth i amser fynd yn ei flaen.’ TA1

‘... everyone's experience, usually with any teaching practice is different, but because of this situation the differences become more pronounced. That's not bad because it just reflects our difference. We have tried to prepare everyone for this but of course their skills develop as time goes on.’

5.11 As previously noted, when discussing staff training, all respondents referred to the need to adapt, and trainees were made aware that individual schools made use of different platforms and trainees needed to adapt accordingly. As ITE providers have close links with schools they were able to ensure that schools were made aware that the trainees would require specific guidance, perhaps further training on platforms, from the schools themselves in order for them to comply with the school’s

own policy. Therefore, some initial discussion would have taken place but flexibility on the trainee teaches part, was also required:

‘...paratoi grid ar eu cyfer nhw gyda rhyw fath o top tips a gadael gwaelod y grid yn rhydd i nhw feddwl am ba brofiadau roedden nhw wedi derbyn gyda darlithwyr eraill. Roedd e’n cadw’r meddwl yn agored.’ TC1

‘... prepare a grid for them with some sort of top tips and leave the bottom of the grid free for them to think about what experiences they had with other lecturers. That kept the mind open’

- 5.12 Several ITE providers referred to the challenge of creating a relationship with the pupils whilst teaching on-line and provided trainee teachers with some guidelines on how this may be achieved. One respondent also noted how they discussed how online teaching may affect trainee teachers’ sense of fulfilment and achievement that occurs after a specific lesson has taken place:

‘...mae hi yn anodd i siarad gyda sgrin...Mae’r oriau rhyfedda’n mynd i mewn i baratoi, ond o’n mhrofiad i be bynnag o oriau chi’n rhoi mewn i rhywbeth chi’n gael e’n ol fel gwefr achos bod pethe’n mynd yn dda. Anaml iawn ar ol ymdrech mor galed ... ges i ddim y wefr ‘na a dyna beth yw dysgu. O’n i’n treial esbonio iddyn nhw efallai bydden nhw ddim yn cael yr un gwefr oherwydd bod ffin y sgrin ‘na yn cau’r emosiwn i lawr ychydig a oedden nhw’n poeni am ddiffyg gweld plant. Hynny yw, bod y plant am gadw eu camerâu i ffwrdd, felly be oeddwn i’n dweud oedd beth efallai oedd y ffordd ymlaen oedd defnyddio’r posts a’r chat yn y sgwrs er mwyn cynnal perthynas gyda’r disgyblion a gofyn iddyn nhw os oedden nhw’n hyderus i droi eu camera ymlaen bod hynny’n iawn hefyd. O ran cyfarwyddwyd pellach, oedd rhaid iddyn nhw ddilyn protocol bob ysgol yn unigol yn doedd.’ TC1

‘... it’s difficult to talk to a screen ... An enormous number of hours go into preparation, but from my experience whatever hours you put into something you get back like a thrill because things are going well. Very rarely after trying so hard that... I didn’t get that buzz and that’s what learning is all about. I tried to explain to them that maybe they wouldn’t get the same buzz because the barrier of the screen shut the emotion down a little and they were worried

about not seeing the children. That is, the children may keep their cameras off, so what I was saying was perhaps the way forward was to use the posts and chat in the conversation to maintain a relationship with the pupils and ask them to, if they were confident, to turn their camera on that was fine too. In terms of further guidance, they had to follow the protocol of each school individually.'

- 5.13 According to respondents, no specific guidance seemed to be provided for trainee teachers on supporting children from non-Welsh-speaking households who attended Welsh-medium schools (although several referred to the need to adapt to the needs of individual pupils). The consistent message across institutions seemed to be focused on looking to individual schools for further guidance on supporting these pupils, and to ensure that trainee teachers followed the school policy on this matter:

'Be den ni'n gofyn i'r myfyrwyr wneud ydi cadw at polisi penodol yr ysgol wrth wneud hynny a mae hynna'n dod yn fwy a mwy amlwg wrth iddyn nhw gael trafodaeth gyda'u mentoriaid nhw wedyn.' TA1

'What we are asking the students to do is adhere to the school's specific policy in doing so and that becomes more and more evident as they then have discussions with their mentors.'

- 5.14 In general, it was agreed that training on supporting pupils from non-Welsh-speaking families was essential for trainees, and a few respondents also acknowledged that schools were expected to play their part in providing training:

'...bydden i'n pwysu'n drwm ar yr ysgolion i gynnig arweiniad... fi'n credu bod y myfyrwyr wedi symud gam ymlaen ond mae nhw wedi defnyddio ei gilydd ac arferion da o'i gilydd er mwyn datblygu gwell dealltwriaeth.' TC2

'... I would put a lot of pressure on the schools to offer guidance ... I think the students have made a step forward but they have used each other and good practice to develop better understanding.'

- 5.15 In line with the responses from ITE staff, several trainee teachers indicated that they had received some form of training from the university on using online platforms:

'Ia, gafon ni arweiniad gan y brifysgol ar sut i weithio ar wahanol raglenni ar-lein achos cyn hyn doedd gen i'm syniad o unrhyw raglen fel Teams na flipgrid na dim fel 'na. Mae nhw wedi rhoi arweiniad i ni. O ia, a gafon ni ymarfer meicro-ddysgu hefyd, oedd hwnna'n help.' SA3

'Yes, we had guidance from the university on how to work on different programs online because before this I had no idea of any program like Teams or Flipgrid or anything like that. They have given us guidance. Oh, and we did practice micro-learning as well, that helped.'

5.16 One respondent noted how they received a lot of subject specific guidance:

...dw i'n teimlo gafon ni lot o arweiniad gan y brifysgol yn enwedig yn ein sesiynnau pwnc' SB6.

'... I feel we got a lot of guidance from the university especially in our subject sessions.'

5.17 In addition, a few respondents also referred to specific training sessions they received, either from the local authority or via the consortia as well as the guidance from the schools themselves:

'Hefyd efo'r ysgol dwi ynddo, mae'r mentor yn wych a 'den ni'n cael llawer o hyfforddi gan [awdurdod lleol] ar sut i ddefnyddio wahanol raglenni.' SA2

'Also with the school I'm in, the mentor is great and we get a lot of coaching from [local authority] on how to use different programs.'

'Dwi hefyd wedyn wedi bod yn mynd i sesiynau [consortai] yn ychwanegol ar sut i ddysgu mathemateg ar-lein a mae rheina wedi bod yn ddefnyddiol iawn.' SB6

'I've also been going to additional [consortia] sessions on how to teach maths online and these have been really useful.'

5.18 However, other trainees also noted that they felt a little overwhelmed at first and that they had '*...cael ein taflu yn y deep end pryd athon ni mewn [i ysgolion]*,' "been thrown in at the deep end when we went in [to schools]" SC4. In addition, one respondent noted that *Ni ddim wedi cael hyfforddiant fel petai just sort of 'learn by*

*doing', dysgu wrth y job.* "We haven't really had any training just sort of 'learn by doing', learn on the job." SC5. This difference in responses may (as highlighted in the ITE staff data) reflect the difference in timetables across ITE provision during this period.

- 5.19 One area some respondents indicated they needed further training on (before going on placement) was synchronous and asynchronous learning:

'...ni wedi bod mewn grwpiau bach neu beth bynnag yn y breakout rooms yn dangos sut mae rhannu pwerbwynt, gwneud hyn a cwisiau gwahanol a fi'n teimlo fel bod ni wedi cael digon o ymarfer fanna ond efallai dim gymaint o ran y gwersi sydd ddim yn fyw.' SA5

'...we've been in small groups or whatever in the breakout rooms showing how to share a power point, do this and different quizzes and I feel like we've had enough practice there but maybe not so much in terms of the lessons that are not live.'

- 5.20 However, another trainee disagreed, highlighting once again the differences between trainees' experiences across HEIs:

'Dw i'n rili falch bod ni di cael y hyfforddiant gafon ni gan y brifysgol a dwi yn teimlo fatha bod ni wedi cael hyfforddiant teg i wersi cydamserol ac i wersi anghydamserol. Dw i'm di gwneud dim gwersi anghydamserol o gwbl, mond rhai byw a mae bob dim den ni'n neud ar google classroom a google meet.' SB7

'I'm really glad we received the training we had from the university, and I feel like we've been given fair training for both synchronized and non-synchronous lessons. I've done no synchronized lessons at all, just live ones and all we do on google classroom and google meet.'

- 5.21 As indicated above a few trainees noted that they would have preferred further training on asynchronous sessions. Linked to this finding, several trainees also referred to the need to adapt their skills depending on the online platforms used by a specific school:

‘[Gofynnodd ysgol] ‘Ti’n meindio gwneud rhan fwyaf o’r esboniad yn ddwyieithog ar fideo fel tros lais i’w uwch lwytho wedyn mae rhieni a plant yn medru mynd a gwyllo fo’n ôl drosto’. Do’n i ddim wedi cael lot o hyfforddiant ar sut i wneud ‘na.’ SA1

‘[A school asked] Do you mind doing most of the explanation bilingually on video as a voiceover to upload then parents and children can go and watch it back for it. I hadn’t had a lot of training on how to do that.’

5.22 Another respondent also noted that they would have benefitted from further guidance on using worksheets online:

‘Oedd y taflenni gwaith oeddwn i’n ei roi allan yn cael eu cyflawni yn anghydamserol ar ôl y wers, felly dwi’n teimlo bod y hyfforddiant ‘den ni wedi ei gael ddim yn gwbl ffitio mewn i’r dysgu ar-lein ond ‘den ni wedi cael hyfforddiant ar sut i gyflwyno ar-lein.’ SB1

‘The worksheets I gave out were completed asynchronously, after the lesson, so I feel the training we received didn’t quite fit into online learning but we Have received training on how to present online.’

5.23 A few respondents also indicated that further guidance from the university on how to communicate a given piece of work holistically to include information on the task itself and the purpose and scope of the on-line session would have been useful (specifically when also considering the parents’ role in the learning process):

‘Dwi’n teimlo efo’r taflenni gwaith neu’r tasgau, bod angen ‘chydig bach mwy o eglurhad ar be fasa’n digwydd yn y gwersi wyneb yn wyneb oherwydd bod angen fwy o gymorth ella arnyn nhw i ddeall y tasgau’n well.’ SB8.

‘I feel that, with the worksheets or tasks, there needs to be a little more explanation of what would happen in face-to-face lessons because they need more support to better understand the tasks.’

## Theme 2: Feedback and Guidance

- 5.24 Several respondents acknowledged that there was a need to adapt to providing feedback online via various platforms, although they all also noted that the basic principles of feedback is the same,

‘...mae’r egwyddorion yn un peth yn dydi ond technegau gwahanol den ni’n dysgu rwan ar-lein felly mewn ffordd ellwch chi roi adborth drwy ebost, defnyddio Google classroom mae’r rhan fwyaf yn gwneud efo hynny rwan, mae ‘na ffordd o roi adborth ar Google classroom, a fel dwi di son yn barod y Mood a ballu. Hefyd, yn y cynradd mae ‘na see-saw yn does wedyn, jest, mae rhoi adborth yr un peth yn dydi, mae’r egwyddor hollol yr un peth ond mae nhw’n defnyddio technegau gwahanol a dyna sy’n bwysig.’ TB1

‘... the principles are the same aren’t they but it’s the different techniques that we are teaching online now so in a way you can give feedback by email, use Google classroom most use that now, there’s a way to give feedback on Google classroom, and as I’ve already mentioned the Mood and default. Also, in the primary there’s also see-saw, just, feedback is the same isn’t it, the principle is the same but they use different techniques and that’s what’s important.’

‘...mae’r egwyddorion o asesu ar gyfer dysgu, asesu fel dysgu ar fideo yr un peth yn union ar-lein neu wyneb yn wyneb neu ar bapur’. TB2

‘... the principles of assessment for learning, assessment as learning on video are exactly the same online or in person or in paper form.’

- 5.25 Feedback was also made available on different platforms and programs i.e. using Flipgrid, Whiteboard on Teams as well as oral encouragement/praise as a way of providing informal feedback online. However, as previously indicated, the level of feedback required and how feedback was provided was largely dependent on the requirements of the setting, school policy and nature of the task. This was a consistent and strong message throughout the interviews.

‘A couple of respondents also referred to training on effective oral feedback – i.e. the use of mote (mote voice commenting for google classroom)’

*'...gallu clywed o'n syth bin a mae rhai pobol fel dach chi'n gwybod o ran y Gymraeg, mae eu dealltwriaeth nhw pan mae nhw'n clywed rhywbeth yn well na \*\* (darllen?) yn de.'* TB1

'... can hear it straight away and some people like, you know, from a Welsh perspective, their understanding when they hear something is better than \*\* (reading)'

- 5.26 In addition, encouraging trainee teachers to ensure they also follow interesting practice and model correct language use in their classroom was also touched upon by one respondent:

*'Mae hi'n bwysig bod ni yn...modelu iaith cywir i'r plant, i'r dysgwyr bob tro.'*  
TB1

'It's important that we...model the right language for the children, for the learners every time.'

- 5.27 However, it was also acknowledged (by a different respondent) that providing oral or other feedback online, for primary/ foundation phase pupils can be more of a challenge beyond brief praise and the use of a happy face.

- 5.28 Several respondents referred to the need to ensure any feedback provided was positive and reflected the difficulties experienced by different learners. Therefore, feedback tended to be brief and in Welsh only) i.e.

*'da iawn, ti wedi deall y gwaith'* SA1

*'well done, you have understood the work'*

*'beth am drïo hyn tro nesaf?'* SA1

*'what about trying this next time?'*

- 5.29 In line with responses from ITE staff, and as alluded to by parents in Section 4 above, all ITE trainees noted that feedback and guidance tended to be provided only in Welsh and mainly for pupils (rather than parents) but that adaptations were made when teaching online:

*'Ar y dechre o'n i jest yn neud e yn Gymraeg, ond ar ol cael sgwrs gyda'r ysgol mae'n rhaid i ni nawr neud e'n ddwyieithog oherwydd mae'r plant yn dysgu o*

bell felly mae'r teuluoedd yn siarad Saesneg adref felly mae'n rhaid i ni neud e'n ddwyieithog ar hyn o'r bryd.' SA2

'At first I just started doing it in Welsh, but after having a conversation with the school we now have to do it bilingually because the children learn from a distance so the families speak English at home so we have to do it bilingually at the moment.'

'Mae o'n orfodol bod ni'n rhoi'r Gymraeg yn gyntaf a wedyn bod ni'n rhoi y Saesneg. Hefyd pan 'den ni'n rhoi'r cyfarwyddiadau ar lafar yn ystod y wers, dwi'n gorfod rhoi'r cyfarwyddiadau'n Saesneg hefyd achos bod y rhieni yna yn eistedd gyda'r disgyblion a mae'r rhan fwyaf o'r rhieni yn Saesneg.' SA3

'It is imperative that we put Welsh first and then we provide it in English. Also, when we give the instructions verbally during the lesson, I also have to give the instructions in English because those parents sit with the pupils and most parents are English.'

- 5.30 Even when the school policy didn't require bilingual guidance one respondent noted that they chose to provide bilingual guidance anyway because of their own personal experiences:

'Mae'r ysgol dwi ynddi ar hyn o'r bryd wrthi'n cael ei rhestru i fod yn ysgol Gymraeg yn hytrach 'na ysgol ddwyieithog felly mae 'na lot o bwyslais ar wneud yn siŵr fod lot o'r gwaith yn cael ei gyflwyno'n y Gymraeg felly does dim rhaid i mi yrru'r gwaith allan yn ddwyieithog i lot o'r dosbarthiadau yn enwedig y rhai sy'n cael eu cyfri fel dosbarth Gymraeg ond dwi fel unigolyn wedi penderfynu gwneud oherwydd mod i'n gwerthfawrogi oedd fy mam i pan o'n i'n iau yn siarad Saesneg hefyd, er bod hi'n rhugl erbyn rwan a dwi'n gobeithio drwy wneud hynny, fel mae'r genod wedi son, bod pawb yn medru cael help o adre. Mae o'n lleihau fy llwyth gwaith i hefyd oherwydd dydyn nhw'm yn gyrru e-byst i mi left right and center.' SA5

'The school I am in at the moment is listed as a Welsh school rather than a bilingual school so there is a lot of emphasis on making sure that a lot of the work is presented in Welsh, so I don't have to send the work out bilingually to

a lot of the classes, especially those that are considered a Welsh class, but as an individual I decided to do it because my mother, when I was younger also spoke English, although she is now fluent [in Welsh] and I hope that (as the girls have mentioned) everyone can get help from home. It also reduces my workload because they don't send me emails left right and center.'

5.31 One trainee student also indicated that they provided additional support and guidance i.e. a list of terminology and further resources to aid students and parents:

'Dwi 'di bod yn gwneud gwersi byw ar powerpoint yn Gymraeg, a...mae gen i'r termau allweddol yn Saesneg hefyd ar bob sleid ond fel arall mae bob peth drwy'r Gymraeg a mae nhw'n ymateb yn ol i fi yn ystod y wers, yn fyw, yn Gymraeg. Dwi'n gosod gwaith cartref yn Gymraeg a dwi'n rhoi adnoddau sy'n gallu helpu nhw i gwblhau'r gwaith cartref yn Gymraeg. Dwi hefyd yn ddiweddar, ers neud gwaith ymchwil i'r asesiad diwethaf ar bwysigrwydd rol y rhieni adref, dwi 'di bod yn rhoi y links yn Saesneg hefyd just rhag ofn fod 'na sawl rhiant sydd ddim yn siarad Cymraeg.' SB6

'I've been preparing live lessons on PowerPoint in Welsh, and...I also have the key terms in English on every slide but otherwise everything is in Welsh and they respond back to me, live, during the lesson, in Welsh. I set homework in Welsh and provide resources that can help them complete their homework in Welsh. I've also recently, since doing some research on the last assessment of the importance of parents' role at home, I've been putting the links in English too just in case there are several parents who don't speak Welsh.'

5.32 In general, it was recognised that teaching pupils online, with parents often overseeing the session, was a particular challenge for trainee teachers,

'...athrawon dan hyfforddiant ydyn nhw ond mae nhw'n addysgu lot ohonyn nhw gyda rhieni yn yr un un stafell, sydd, bois bach, yn beth mawr.' TA1

'... they are trainee teachers but they teach, a lot of them, with parents in the same room, which is, let me tell you, a big ask.'

- 5.33 A strong and consistent message noted by respondents was that feedback was and should be targeted at pupils not parents, which poses a challenge to parents involved in the co-construction of their child's education:

'Oedd yr adborth ar gyfer y plentyn yn benodol. Yn fan hyn roeddwn i'n pwysleisio ac oeddwn i'n gwneud ymarferion o adborth gwahaniaethol hefyd o ran y math o iaith oedd yn cael ei ddefnyddio wrth osod adborth a'r math o dargedau, a dwi'n sôn yn fwy penodol am dargedau ieithyddol yn fan hyn, ddim ar dargedau cynnwys ond oedd yr adborth yn benodol ar gyfer y disgyblion. Mi oeddwn i hefyd yn pwysleisio pwysigrwydd fod 'na ddeialog yma rhwng y disgybl a'r athro a bod 'na dasg ddilynol unigol i bob un plentyn. Ond doedd yr adborth ddim yn mynd i fod yn cynnwys y rhiant.' TB2

'The feedback was specifically for the child. Here I was highlighting and discussing differential feedback exercises as well as considering the type of language used when providing feedback and the type of targets, and I'm talking more specifically about language targets here, not targets pertaining to content, but the feedback was specifically for the pupils. I also emphasized the importance of there being a dialogue between the pupil and the teacher and that each child had an individual follow-up task. But the feedback was not supposed to include the parent.'

- 5.34 A different respondent also noted that if parents requested support then arrangements could be made,

'...fyse fe ddim yn ddwyieithog, achos mae'r adborth ar gyfer y disgybl, nid ar gyfer y rhiant ond os oes angen trafod rhywbeth ymhellach neu fod angen trafod rhyw agwedd falle fasa nodyn yn iaith y cartref yn gwahodd rhiant i ddod i mewn.'

'... it wouldn't be bilingual, because the feedback is for the pupil, not for the parent but if something needs to be discussed further or some aspect may need to be discussed maybe a note to the home inviting a parent to come to the school.'

5.35 One respondent suggested that parents didn't always understand specific tasks (specifically if what was required is different to their own experience), indicating that further guidance may be needed on occasion:

'Mae 'na sefyllfaoedd lle mae myfyrwyr, athrawon dan hyfforddiant yn dweud 'wel, dwi'n gwybod bod y plant yn gallu gwneud y gwaith achos mae nhw wedi gwneud o wythnos diwethaf ond dydi'r rhieni ddim yn deall be mae nhw'n neud felly mae nhw'n dweud bod y plant ddim yn deall' a 'fel hyn oeddwn i'n arfer neud o yn yr ysgol' mae'r rhieni yn dweud.' TA1

'There are situations where students, student teachers say 'well, I know the children can do the work because they have done from last week but parents don't understand what they are doing so they say the children don't understand 'and' this is what I used to do at school 'the parents say.'

5.36 However, although several respondents noted that no differential feedback was necessarily given to pupils or parents from EMH, a few respondents noted that they encouraged bilingual feedback that was in-line with the pupils' language skills:

'...dwi yn sicr yn arwain nhw i roi adborth dwyieithog, neu dibynnu ar allu'r plant \*\* mae rhai yn well na'i gilydd yn dydi. Mae'r athrawon dan hyfforddiant yn adnabod y plant ac yn medru teilwra'r adborth yna o ran y Gymraeg iddyn nhw.' TB1

'I certainly encourage them to provide bilingual feedback, or depending on the ability of the children \*\* some are better than others. The trainee teachers know the children and can tailor that Welsh language feedback to them.'

'...oeddwn i'n dweud bod chi'n medru rhoi adborth yn hanner Cymraeg hanner Saesneg, code-switching felly, mae o'n dibynnu pa batrymau iaith oedd gan y dysgwyr wedyn oeddech chi'n perthnasu'r adborth i allu eich dysgwyr mewn ffordd. Mae hynny'n rhywbeth ti yn gweld hyfforddeion yn meddwl am hefyd.' TB1

'...I noted that you can give half the feedback in Welsh and half in English, so code-switching, it depends what language patterns the learners had then you

related the feedback to your learners ability in a way. That's something you see trainees thinking about too.'

- 5.37 Another respondents indicated that terminology may be offered bilingually, initially, until the pupil became familiar with the Welsh term. In addition, it was recognised that specific tasks may require bilingual guidance if parental support was required but communication with the pupil was solely through the medium of Welsh,

'Roedd yr arweiniad oeddwn i'n ei roi iddyn nhw yn fod y cyfathrebu efo'r disgyblion yn gyfathrebu drwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg. Mi gawson nhw arweiniad o ran \*\* yn ymgorffori termau, terminoleg newydd er enghraifft achos bod nhw unwaith yn dysgu terminoleg yn ddwyieithog ond wedyn yn bwydo'r term Gymraeg, a hefyd os oedd rhiant yn gofyn a'u bod nhw'n ymwybodol bod nhw'n mynd i helpu, bod nhw'n methu helpu drwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg felly rhiant yn cael arweiniad yn Saesneg ar gyfer y dasg yna. Ond efo cyfathrebu efo'r plentyn ei hun yn digwydd 100% drwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg.' TB2

'The guidance I was giving them was that the communication with the pupils was through the medium of Welsh. They were given guidance on \*\* incorporating terms, new terminology for example because they learned the terminology bilingually, but then reinforced the Welsh term, and also if a parent asked and they were aware that they're going to help, they can't help through the medium of Welsh so a parent gets guidance in English for that task. But communication with the child itself happens 100% through the medium of Welsh.'

- 5.38 One respondent also noted that it is important that the feedback given to pupils is effective and serves a purpose i.e. it allows the pupil to further develop the work rather than ensuring the parents are happy:

'...o ran yr adborth sydd yn cael ei rannu, ond sut mae'r adborth yna'n cael ei rannu'n effeithiol hefyd, beth yw pwrpas yr adborth. Mae'n rhaid bod yn wylriadwrus wrth osod adborth mewn sefyllfa o'r fath bod ni'n gosod yr adborth er mwyn datblygu gwaith pellach yn hytrach na jest clodfori a sicrhau fod rhieni'n hapus.' TA1

‘... in terms of the feedback that is shared, but how that feedback is also effectively shared, what is the purpose of the feedback. We need to be careful when we provide feedback in certain situations, that we provide the feedback in order to develop the work further rather than just praise and make parents happy.’

- 5.39 In line with the quotation above this respondent acknowledged the need and pressure on trainee teacher to also be positive. As the trainee teacher continues to develop a relationship with pupils a balance must be achieved between effective and encouraging feedback

‘...mae dal isio bod yn bositif oherwydd mae isio sicrhau lles y disgyblion, ac efallai os yden nhw wedi cael rhyw ymateb negitif, efallai nawn nhw ddim cymryd rhan yn y sesiwn nesa am ba bynnag reswm felly mae y balans. Dydi’r myfyrwyr wedi cael y cyfle i greu perthynas go iawn gyda’r disgyblion cyn y pwnt yma.’ TA1

‘... there is still a need to be positive because you need to ensure the welfare of the pupils, and maybe if they have had some negative reaction, they may not participate in the next session for whatever reason so there is a balance. The students haven’t had the opportunity to forge a real relationship with the pupils before this point.’

- 5.40 The difficulties faced by teaches and trainee teachers alike in achieving this balance between effective feedback, parental approval and pupil wellbeing is captured effectively in the following vignette,

‘...mae ‘na deimlad fod y rhieni’n cymryd fwy o ddiddordeb, rhai rhieni, yn addysg eu plant. Oedd ‘na drafodaeth wythnos diwethaf gyda un athrawes dan hyfforddiant oedd wedi rhoi maes trafod penodol ar gyfer ei dosbarth hi a mi oedd rhiant wedi gwneud cwyn oherwydd cynnwys y wers. Mi fasa cynnwys y wers fel arfer, mi oedd o wedi cael ei gytuno gyda’r ysgol ac yn y blaen, ond fel arfer, oherwydd fasa hynny wedi cael ei addysgu yn yr ysgol fasa’r rhiant efallai ddim yn cwestiynu hynny ondyfe. Fel mae un o’n prifathrawon un o’n ysgol arweiniol ni wedi dweud, mae nhw’n addysgu gyda 30 o blant a 30 o rieni neu mwy hefyd yn enwedig yn y cyfnod sylfaen. Mae’r

sefyllfa yna'n un anodd ond mae o'n gwestiwn wedyn, dylai'r gwir adborth nodi yn elfennol yn iaith mae'r plentyn yn dysgu, beth mae nhw wedi gwneud yn iawn a beth yw'r ffordd ymlaen nesa, y feed forward 'ma yn lle feed back yn de ond mae o'n anodd. Mae o'n anodd oherwydd dech chi ddim isio gosod dim byd, ddim fasa chi ta beth, ond gosod rhywbeth sydd yn mynd i gael ei gamddechongli i fod yn rhywbeth negatif a tansailio hunan-hyder y disgybl hefyd.' TA1

'... there is a feeling that parents are taking more interest, some parents, in their children's education. There was a discussion last week with one student teacher who had given a specific area of discussion for her class and a parent had made a complaint about the content of the lesson. The lesson would usually be included, it would have been agreed with the school and so on, but usually, because it would have been taught at the school, the parent might not question it but. As one of our lead school headteachers has said, they teach with 30 children and 30 or more parents too, especially in the foundation phase. The situation is a difficult one but our question then is, should the actual feedback be in the language the child is learning, what they have done right and what the way forward, this 'feed forward' instead of feedback, but it is difficult. It's difficult because you don't want to set anything, nothing you wouldn't usually, but set something that is going to be misinterpreted as negative and undermine the pupil's self-confidence as well.'

- 5.41 However, one respondent also indicated that there was a further concern that if feedback was given bilingually (for the purposes of allowing the parent access to the feedback as well) the pupils themselves would also revert to the English medium feedback and, therefore, the bilingual nature of the feedback had to be tailored to the individual pupil's needs,

'...i ddisgybl o gefndir di-Gymraeg mi oedd 'na arweiniad. Mi nes i sicrhau bod geirfa'n cael ei gynnwys, taflenni gwaith yn cael eu cynnig yn Saesneg, ddim ddwyieithog oherwydd natur ddynol iaith disgybl hefyd i ddarllen y gwaith yn Saesneg, felly oedd, a mi oedd hwnnw yn gorfod bod yn reit unigol a wedi ei

deilwra ar gyfer y disgybl yn unigol, a oedd hynny'n cael ei bwysleisio yn gryf iawn iawn.' TC1

'... for a pupil from a non-Welsh-speaking background there was some guidance. I made sure that vocabulary was included, worksheets were offered in English, not bilingual because of the human nature of a pupil's language to read the work in English, so it was, and that had to be quite individual and tailored to the pupil individually, which was very strongly emphasized.'

5.42 In regards to oral feedback, there was some recognition that feedback may be more effective when offered verbally rather than in writing,

'Dwi'n meddwl bod o'n fwy effeithiol rhoi adborth llafar iddyn nhw achos does gen i ddim syniad os yden nhw'n darllen yr adborth ysgrifenedig a hefyd os dwi'n rhoi adborth llafar ellai ofyn cwestiynau wrthyn nhw hefyd...a i'r rhai sydd yn siarad Saesneg adref dim ond pan dwi'n siarad Cymraeg mae nhw'n clywed Cymraeg felly dwi'n trio neud o mor Gymraeg a phosib. Weithiau nai roi bach o Saesneg os ydi'r rhieni yn eistedd efo nhw.' SA3

'I think it is more effective to give them oral feedback because I have no idea if they read the written feedback and also if I give verbal feedback I might ask them questions too ... and for those who speak English at home it's only when I speak Welsh they hear Welsh so I try to do as much in Welsh as possible. Sometimes you also use a little English if the parents are sitting with them.'

### **Theme 3: Oral Tasks**

5.43 As indicated in the previous theme of feedback, several respondents discussed the importance of oral feedback and modelling interesting practice to promote oral language. Setting pupils oral tasks was also part of what was discussed in the interviews and platforms such as breakout rooms/activities on teams, modelling oral feedback via seesaw/blackboard collaborate/mood, creating language groups were discussed. One respondent noted:

'...mae pethau sy'n digwydd o ran tasgau llafar yr un peth eto, ond y technegau sy'n wahanol efo cyflwyno rheiny, podcast, ellwch chi neud o efo flipgrid. Dwi di bod yn darlithio a dwi 'di bod yn rhoi canllawiau efo voice clips

mewn ffordd neu audio clips i rannu geirfa \*\* (8'01ish). Dyna dwi di bod yn neud a dangos i'r myfyrwyr iddyn nhw neud hefyd o ran y gwaith llafar, bod nhw'n modelu y gwaith iddyn nhw hefyd drwy wneud podcast, pethe ar flipgrid a pwyntiau pŵer. Y pethe dwi di bod yn trio gwneud yn fy nysgu fy hun ydi modelu i'r hyfforddeion felly, be fasa nhw'n medru neud efo'r plant dan yr amgylchiadau.' TB1

'... things that happen in oral tasks are the same again, but it's the techniques that are different when presenting those, podcast, you can do with flipgrid. I've been lecturing and I've been providing guidelines with voice clips in a way or audio clips to share vocabulary \*\* (8'01ish). That's what I've been doing and showing the students that they do it in terms of the spoken work, that they model the work for them too by recording a podcast, stuff on flipgrid and power points. What I've been trying to do in my own learning is model for the trainees so what they could do with the children in the circumstances.'

- 5.44 In supporting pupils in developing their oral skills one respondent noted that there may be a need to address the awareness of bilingualism amongst trainee teachers and link tutors, but that there needed to be additional focus on how the parent can also support the pupil:

'O ran dwyieithrwydd, mae bod yn ymwybodol o sefyllfa ddi-Gymraeg nifer o'n disgyblion ni yn bwysig i ddefro yr ymwybyddiaeth o hyn efo'r myfyrwyr, yr athrawon cysylltiol, ond mae'n rhaid rhoi y ffocws ar ddatblygu sut mae'r rhiant yn medru helpu trwy rhoi adnoddau i'r rhiant, cyfeirio'r rhieni at wefannau dysgu Cymraeg, cyfeirio nhw at wefannau ar sut i ynganu ac ati, ymadroddion syml i rieni a cynnwys y rhieni yn y dysgu ond peidio \*\* lawr y llwybr o droi bob dim i'r Saesneg a bod ni'n helpu'r rhieni hefyd i fod yn lled-ddwyieithog neu dechrau ar y daith o fod yn ddwyieithog wrth helpu'r plant' TB2

'In terms of bilingualism, it is important to awaken the awareness of the lack of Welsh language skills of many of our pupils amongst students and the associate teachers, but the focus must be on developing how the parent can help by providing resources for the parent, directing parents to Welsh language learning websites, referring them to websites on how to pronounce

etc, simple phrases for parents and involving parents in the learning but not down \*\* a path of turning everything into English and that we also help the parents become semi-bilingual or embark on the journey of becoming bilingual by helping the children.'

- 5.45 Various ITE trainees referred to using different strategies to try to encourage pupils to contribute orally in online sessions:

'...mae'r un un disgyblion wastad yn barod i siarad felly den ni yn trio annog y rhai efallai 'chydig mwy distaw a llai hyderus i neud hefyd, ella dechrau galw enwau allan yn lle just gofyn yn agored 'pwy sy'n gwbod hyn' neu 'pwy ellith ymateb i hyn'.' SB6

'... the same pupils are always ready to talk so we're trying to encourage those, that maybe are a little quieter and less confident to contribute as well, maybe start calling out names instead of just asking openly 'who's know this' or 'who can respond to this'.'

'I ddechrau efo, oedden ni'n defnyddio olwyn dewis enwau ar hap er mwyn trio ysgogi nhw i geisio ymateb ar lafar ond mi oedden ni wedi sylwi fod 'na ambell un yn dueddol o adael y sesiwn pan oedden nhw'n gweld yr olwyn 'ma yn ymddangos felly... den ni'n gorfod bod yn ofalus rwan pwy den ni'n gynnwys yn yr olwyn neu mae 'na rai plant yn ypsetio.'" SB5

'To begin with, we used a random name selection wheel to try and motivate them to try to respond verbally but we noticed that some tended to leave the session when they saw the wheel appear, so .... we have to be careful now who we include in the wheel or some children get upset.'

- 5.46 One respondent went as far as banning the use of the chat in the online sessions in order to force the pupils to communicate verbally,

'...ond dwi wedi bannio'r defnydd o chat Saesneg yn fy ngwersi i felly os mae nhw eisiau siarad neu gofyn cwestiwn neu beth bynnag, oni bai fod ganddyn nhw broblemau technegol mae nhw'n gorfod dod ar microffon i siarad. Mae gen i un dosbarth ddwyieithog lle mae 'na rhaid i mi neud yn siŵr mod i'n cynnwys Saesneg ac yn derbyn atebion Saesneg ond fel arall, ddim mod i'n

gwrthod derbyn atebion Saesneg y dosbarthiadau eraill ond mi nai ofyn yn y Gymraeg hyd yn oed os ydw i'n cael ateb Saesneg, ac yn aml iawn mae nhw'n sylwi mod i'n eithaf ystyfnig a ddim yn mynd i newid fy meddwl felly mae nhw'n ymuno efo fi wedyn.'

'...but I've banned the use of chat now in my lessons so if they want to talk or ask a question or whatever, unless they have technical problems, they have to come on a microphone to talk. I have one bilingual class where I have to make sure that I include English and receive English answers but otherwise, I don't refuse to receive the English answers of other classes, but I will ask in Welsh even if I get an answer in English, and very often they notice I'm quite stubborn and I'm not going to change my mind, so they join me afterwards.'

- 5.47 Several ITE trainees also referred to the lack of confidence in using the Welsh language amongst a certain cohort of students, as well as references to the limits to what can be achieved online,

'Diffyg hyder yn y Gymraeg yn benodol efo'r disgyblion sydd gynna i. Mae lot ohonyn nhw yn deud 'ga'i ddeud o'n Saesneg yn lle' a wedyn wrth gwrs, dwi'n meddwl gawn nhw ddeud o'n Saesneg ond wedyn na'i ailadrodd be nathon nhw ddeud ond na'i ailadrodd o'n y Gymraeg. Dwi'n teimlo efo cyfnod allweddol 2 ellwch chi'm rili gwneud breakout rooms, mae o'n rhy gymhleth iddyn nhw. Mae 'na gyfyngiadau ar be 'dech chi'n gallu gwneud ar-lein ond ella yn y dosbarth fasa fo'n lot haws.' SA3

'Lack of confidence in Welsh specifically with my pupils. A lot of them say 'can we say it in English instead' and then of course I say they can say it in English but then I repeat what they said but I repeat it in Welsh. I feel with key stage 2 you can really use breakout rooms, it's too complicated for them. There are limits to what you can do online but in the classroom it might be a lot easier.'

'...oedd disgyblion yn amharod iawn i recordio'u hunain ond oedd 'na lot ohonyn nhw hefyd wrth fynychu gwersi byw yn teimlo bod eu Cymraeg nhw ddim yn ddigon da i ateb ar lafar, felly oedd rheina'n fwy tebygol o ateb yn y chat, ond dech chi'n teimlo bod chi methu'u cwestiynu nhw yn fwy estynedig fel yna yn aml iawn oherwydd nawn nhw ddim ymateb ar lafar.' SB5

‘... pupils were very reluctant to record themselves but many of them also when attending live lessons felt that their Welsh wasn't good enough to answer orally, so those were more likely to answer in the chat, but you often feel that you can't question them more extensively because they won't respond verbally.’

5.48 However, a few respondents noted that the use of Teams could also be beneficial to use with pupils,

‘...rhoi nhw mewn i breakout rooms achos mae e'n llai o bwysau ar blant, achos fi'n meddwl bydde nhw'n gweld e bach yn \*gwneud gwyneb\* bod nhw'n gorfod siarad o flaen y 30 disgybl arall, felly drwy roi nhw mewn breakout rooms, falle 4 neu 5 o nhw fyddde i mewn 'na bydde nhw lot fwy hyderus i siarad wedyn.’ SA5

‘... put them into breakout rooms because it's less stressful for kids, because I think they'd feel it's a little \* makes a face \* they have to talk in front of the other 30 pupils, so by putting them into breakout rooms, maybe 4 or 5 of them in each one then they'd be a lot more confident to talk then.’

5.49 In addition, a few respondents also noted that some students were more confident in communicating verbally than in the written form (again this may be dependent on the cohort of students in the class),

‘Mae mwy o hyder gyda nhw mewn siarad 'na beth sydd gyda nhw yn ysgrifennu achos hefyd dwi'n teimlo gyda plant yn cyfnod allweddol 2 mae e'n gloyach iddyn nhw siarad na mynd i mewn i'r chat ac ysgrifennu. Er bod nhw'n gwybod beth i'w ysgrifennu a sut i'w sillafu fe mae'n well gyda nhw i siarad ar lafar.’ SA2

‘They have more confidence in talking than what they have in writing because I also feel with children in key stage 2 it's easier for them to talk than to go into the chat and write. Although they know how to write and how to spell it they prefer to speak orally.’

5.50 The difference between cohort of students is also highlighted in the following quotation, where a student was placed in a school in a predominantly Welsh speaking area,

‘Sai’n credu bod diffyg hyder yn broblem gyda fi achos mae’r ardal ble mae fy ysgol lleoliad yn eithaf Cymreigaidd so mae’r plant gyda digon o hyder i siarad y iaith.’ SA1

‘I don't think lack of confidence is a problem with me because the area where my placement school is in is quite Welsh so the children have enough confidence to speak the language.’

5.51 Another challenge identified by several students when setting oral tasks online was the challenge of keeping pupils on task,

‘...os ydwi i’n rhoi nhw i mewn i breakout rooms falle bydden nhw ddim yn siarad am y cwestiwn o gwbl a wedyn, fel r’yn ni gyd yn gwneud, bydden ni’n gweld yr athrawes yn dod i mewn a ni’n dechrau siarad am y cwestiwn.’ SA5

‘... if I put them into breakout rooms maybe they wouldn't talk about the question at all and then, as we all do, we'd see the teacher come in and let's start talking about the question.’

‘Ond gyda’r oedran, mae’r pwnc yn hollol newydd, allen i fod yn gofyn cwestiwn, a fel mae meddyliau plant yn gweithio, bydden nhw’n mynd off a meddwl am rhywbeth arall i siarad amdano. Mae’r pwnc yn gallu newid yn eithaf clou ar Teams. Mae angen tipyn o ddisgyblaeth fi’n credu.’ SA1

‘But with age, the subject is completely new, I could be asking a question, and as children's minds work, they would go off and think of something else to talk about. The subject can change quite quickly on Teams. I think a lot of discipline is needed.’

5.52 Differences in use of oral tasks could also be seen among student respondents who taught in either a primary or secondary setting with contributions amongst pupils declining with age i.e. in primary,

‘Mae o’n ofynnol iddyn nhw siarad yn ystod y gwersi ar lafar a mae nhw yn neud hynna, yn enwedig blwyddyn 3 + 4, mae nhw’n siarad lot a wedyn 5 + 6

dech chi'n gweld bod nhw'n fwy, dwi'm yn gwbod os mai swil ydi o neu os ydyn nhw jest yn meddwl bod nhw'n rhy cool i siarad, dwi'm yn gwbod, ond dech chi'n gweld y gwahaniaeth rhwng blwyddyn 3 a 6 yn bendant.' SA1

'They are required to speak during the oral lessons and they do that, especially year 3 + 4, they talk a lot and then 5 + 6 you see that they are bigger, I don't know if they are shy or they just think they are too cool to talk, I don't know, but you see the difference between years 3 and 6 definitely.'

5.53 Also in secondary,

'...dw i wedi bod yn arsylwi gwersi lle mae nhw wedi bod yn cyflwyno podlediadau, a'r her fwyaf mae nhw'n ei weld efo hynny ydi cael y plant, am bod o'n natur y podlediad, mae'n rhaid iddyn nhw recordio'u hunain yn siarad a'i gyflwyno fo a mae plant yn amharod iawn i recordio'u hunain yn siarad.'

SB5

'... I've been observing lessons where they've been presenting podcasts, and the biggest challenge they see with that is getting the kids, due to the nature of the podcast, they have to they record themselves talking and presenting it and children are very reluctant to record themselves talking.'

5.54 In addition one respondent noted '*Yn yr uwchradd mae 'na fwy o ffocws ar y disgyblion i weithio'n annibynnol felly ella bod 'na llai o bwyslais ar rhoi adnoddau ar gyfer y rhieni.*' "At secondary level there is a greater focus on the pupils to work independently so there may be less emphasis on resourcing the parents." SB7

5.55 A few students also referred to the part technical issues played when setting and presenting oral tasks. These issues were often linked to poor connectivity, but also to lack of appropriate hardware,

'y problemau fasa chi'n ddisgwyl, problemau wifi, oedd y sain yn torri i fyny i dipyn ohonyn nhw felly doeddech chi'm yn clywed nhw cystal a fasa chi wedi licio.' SB5

'the problems you'd expect, the wifi problems, the sound was breaking up a bit for them so you didn't hear them as well as you would like.'

‘ges i chydig o drafferth wrth roi tasgau i fyny yn gynta wrth recordio fideo bod y flipgrid yn rhoi fatha subtitles ar y gwaelod ag oedden nhw’n andros o anghywir wrth gyfieithu i’r Gymraeg felly oedd hynna’n bach o issue o ran cyflwyno i’r plant a’r geiriau yn cael eu cuttio allan mewn ffordd.’ SB2

‘I had a bit of trouble getting tasks up first when recording a video as the flipgrid was putting subtitles on the bottom as they were terribly inaccurate when translating into Welsh so that was a bit of an issue in terms of presenting for the children and the words being cut out in a way’

‘Dwi ‘di sylweddoli fod lot o ddisgyblion yn gwneud pethau ar eu ffonau symudol, dwi’n gwbod bod ‘na rhai disgyblion wedi cael laptops a ballu gan y Llywodraeth ond ddim pawb, a felly, ddim jest llafar, lot o agweddau gwahanol, den nhw methu gwneud oherwydd dydi ffons ddim yn caniatáu iddyn nhw wneud.’ SB7

‘I’ve realized that a lot of pupils do things on their mobile phones, I know some pupils have got laptops and so forth from the Government but not everyone, and so, not just orally, lots of different aspects they can't do because phones don't allow them to.’

#### **Theme 4: Challenges of online provision**

- 5.56 A key challenge in teaching online and a common response among trainee teachers was creating a relationship with the pupils in their class,

‘Mae o’n anodd, fel oedd rhywun yn deud cynt, bod ni heb allu magu perthynas gyda’r disgyblion, felly ‘den ni ddim yn nabod nhw, den ni ddim yn gwbod yn union pwy ella, os fasa ni’n gwbod yn y dosbarth ‘mae’r person yma’n dod o gefndir mwy Seisnigaidd’, felly mae hi’n anodd pin-pointio pwy sydd angen y help ‘na a pwy sydd ddim.’ SB7

‘It is difficult, as one was saying before, that we were unable to build relationships with the pupils, so we do not know them, we do not know exactly who, if we know the class ‘this person comes from a more English background’, so it's hard to pin-point who needs that help and who doesn't.’

5.57 A few respondents also noted that some advice was provided to students from HEIs,

‘...mae’r brifysgol wastad yn gofyn, mae nhw wastad yn dweud wrthon ni i ofyn cwestiynau ar ddechrau gwersi fel bod ni’n dod i nabod y disgyblion yn well ond os na fydden ni’n gofyn y cwestiynau yna mewn ffordd bydde’r plant ddim yn ymateb trwy’r gwersi wedyn mewn ffordd ond wrth ofyn y cwestiynau ‘na ar y dechrau wedyn mae nhw’n fwy, wel mae plant moyn ymateb mwy wedyn ond dydy nhw achos mae nhw’n gwbod bod chi moyn dod i adnabod nhw’n well.’ SA5

‘... the university always asks, they always tell us to ask questions at the beginning of lessons so we get to know the pupils better but if we didn’t ask those questions in a way the children wouldn’t respond throughout the lessons... but when you ask those questions at the beginning they are more, well the children want to respond more then don’t they because they know you want to know them better.’

5.58 In addition several respondents indicated that they were unprepared and unsure of how to communicate with parents,

‘Hefyd, efo sut i siarad efo rhieni, dwi’m yn teimlo bod fi’n barod i gynnal noson rieni ‘na ddim byd fel ‘na, dwi’m yn teimlo gaethon ni ddigon o hyfforddiant fel ‘na, ond ella bod hwnna’n rhywbeth ga’i fwy o hyfforddiant o fewn lleoliad ysgol.’ SA3

‘Also, with how to talk to parents, I don’t feel ready to take part in a parents evening or anything like that, I don’t feel we got enough training like that, but that may be something I get more training on in a school setting.’

5.59 Several students also acknowledged that teaching online, with parents listening in, was a challenge:

‘beth oedd y her fwyaf oedd bod rhieni yna yn gwrando a fi’n credu oedd e’n gwneud i chi doubtio’ch hunan mewn ffordd fel ‘sa’i ddigon da i wneud hwn’ achos bod chi newydd, chi’n gwbod, dim ond hyfforddi r’yn ni’n gwneud, fi’n gwbod bod ni’n hyfforddi wrth i ni ddysgu nawr.’ SC4

‘..one of the biggest challenges was that parents were listening and I it made you doubt yourself in a way, make you think ‘that I'm not good enough to do this' because you are new, we are only training, I know we are training as we teach now.’

5.60 Generally, the focus (according to ITE students) seemed to be on encouraging any kind of communication,

‘Mae'r pwyslais wedi bod o ran cael disgyblion i ymateb o gwbl, ym mha bynnag iaith oedden nhw'n penderfynu ateb, felly os oedden nhw'n ateb yn Saesneg yn y sgwrs mi oedden ni'n rhyw fath o gyfieithu a wedyn yn parhau o hynny, dim ond bod ni'n cael unrhyw ateb’. SB5

‘The emphasis has been on getting pupils to respond at all, in whatever language they decided to answer, so if they were answering in English in the conversation, we were sort of translating then continue from there, only that we get no answer.’

5.61 Several respondents also referred to difficulties in addressing pupil engagement and motivation whilst teaching online,

‘Mae rhai plant sydd gyda problemau technegol yn mynd mas o'u ffordd i roi neges yn y chat yn dweud ‘miss, fi methu danfon gwaith, ydw i'n medru danfon o dros ebost?’ neu beth bynnag ond wedyn dwi'n gwbod bod y plant ‘ma, rhai o nhw, ddim moyn gwneud e o gwbl.’ SA5

‘Some children with technical problems go out of their way to put a message in the chat saying 'miss, we can't send work, can I send it by email?' or whatever but then I know that these children, some of them, don't want to do it at all.’

5.62 When joining lessons online attendance seemed to differ across settings with some reporting that only around half of pupils attended their sessions in comparison to others who noted that most would attend the online sessions. Pupils attendance in online sessions, according to a few respondents, was also dependent on parental engagement and support,

‘Yn y gwersi cydamserol faswn i'n dweud bod tua tri chwarter y dosbarth arferol yn ymuno bob bore. Yn sicr oedd hyn yn dibynnu ar eu rhieni nhw, bod

eu rhieni nhw'n codi'r plant i gael brecwast ac i fod yn barod i gychwyn erbyn 9 o'r gloch.' SB1

'In the synchronous lessons I would say that about three quarters of the normal class join every morning. Certainly this depended on their parents, their parents waking the children, eating breakfast and being ready to start by 9 o'clock.'

'...y mwyaf o gymorth sydd gyda nhw y mwya o gwaith sy'n cael ei wneud. Unwaith r'ych chi'n colli'r plentyn yna wedyn a mae'r plentyn yna'n mynd mewn i habit o ddim troi lan i'r gwersi 'na dyw'r cynnydd ddim yn cael ei weld ac o'n i'n teimlo fel athro, a fel darpar athrawes, o'n i wastad yn teimlo fel o'n i'n poeni am y person yma nawr oherwydd dyn nhw ddim wedi bod i'n ngwersi i, beth mae nhw'n gwneud gartre?' SC1

'...the more help they receive, the more work gets done. Once you lose that child then and the child then gets into a habit of not going back to those lessons, the progress is not being seen and I was feeling like a teacher, and as a prospective teacher, I always felt like I was worried about this person now because they haven't been to my lessons, what are they doing at home'

5.63 A few respondents also indicated that there was a difference in engagement across groups of learners,

'dwi'n meddwl bod o'n deg dweud bod y setiau uwch yn ymateb yn well, efo nhw mae 'na fwy o waith yn cael ei wneud fel arfer. Mae 'na llai o ddiddordeb ella o'r setiau is.' SB7

'I think it's fair to say that the higher sets respond better, with them there is usually more work going on. There is less interest from the lower sets.'

### **Theme 5: Implications for Future Provision**

5.64 The following responses are gathered from ITE staff only. Several members of ITE staff noted that there may well be future lockdowns, linked to the current and future pandemics and that they needed to adapt ITE provision and support for trainee teachers going forward,

'...mae'n rhaid i ni fod yn fwy ymwybodol yn y coleg hefyd o'r adnoddau sydd ar gael er mwyn hyrwyddo'r dysgu cydamserol ac anghydamserol yn effeithiol.' TB2

'... we also need to be more aware in the college of the resources available to effectively promote synchronized and non-synchronous learning.'

'...rhaid i ni fod yn barod rwan wrth fynd ymlaen a rhaid i ni addasu rhywfaint er mwyn y sefyllfa sydd yn newid, a weithiau mae o'n newid er gwell i ni gymryd rhywbeth cadarnhaol.' TB2

'... we have to be ready now as we continue and we have to adjust to the changing situation, and sometimes it changes for the better so we can take something positive.'

- 5.65 In addition (as indicated in the previous theme), the same respondent noted that there was a need for further training for link tutors/mentors in schools,

'Dwi wedi gweld hefyd bod 'na angen mwy o hyfforddiant ella neu godi ymwybyddiaeth o addysgu yn y sefyllfa ddwyieithog unwaith yn rhagor ar athrawon cysylltiol a sut i ddatblygu'r Gymraeg yn y sefyllfa ddwyieithog yn de. Dwi wedi bod yn gwneud sesiynau ar y cyd efo'r mentor yn yr ysgol, mae o'n rhan o rôl y mentor.' TB2

'I have also found that associate teachers may need further training on how to develop Welsh in the bilingual setting or perhaps further training on raising awareness of teaching in the bilingual context. I've been doing joint sessions with the mentor in the school, it's part of the mentor's role'

- 5.66 Further training for trainee teachers as part of future ITE provision was also recognised as important by another respondent in a different university, especially after the ITE staff have been able to up-skill themselves,

'Mae hi'n bosib eto mod i wedi defnyddio'r amser i ddatblygu fy sgiliau fy hun i addysgu a bod yn gyfforddus gyda hwnna yn hytrach na falle ei hyfforddi nhw ynglŷn â sut i ddefnyddio hwnna. Mae'r cwestiynau ti'n codi yn hyfryd oherwydd wy'n credu bod e'n adnabod bwlch yn ein darpariaeth ni yn enwedig o symud ymlaen yn y dyfodol a dysgu deuol.' TT2

'I may have used the time to develop my own teaching skills and be comfortable with that rather than being able to train them on how to use that. The questions you come up with are lovely because I think they recognizes a gap in our provision especially in moving forward in the future and dual learning.'

5.67 Another respondent also noted that current and future provision for training teachers and recording lessons online may need to take into account the fact that this may put additional pressure on trainee teachers. This then leads to institutions having to adapt their expectations, to some extent, to reflect this,

'Be sy'n ddiddorol ydi, dwi newydd gael cyfarfod tiwtora efo un o'n myfyrwyr, a be oedd o'n boeni, mae o'n recordio'i wers, mae o'n creu adnoddau a mae o'n marcio wedyn, a'r broblem yn fan hyn ydi fod y broses yna'n cymryd amser hir achos mae na nifer o fyfyrwyr yn meddwl, os yden nhw'n recordio mae'n rhaid i bob peth fod yn gywir gywir gywir achos os ydech chi'n y dosbarth dech chi ddim yn cael ail gyfle felly mae o'n cymryd lot lot mwy o amser. Mae'n cymryd mwy o amser i wneud yr un math o beth faswn i'n dweud. Mae'n rhaid i ni gydnabod hynny fel cwrs hefyd ac ella lleihau y disgwyliadau. Mae 'na rai yn dysgu efallai 4 gwrs yr wythnos, mae 'na rai yn cynyddu wythnos yma i rhyw 12 gwrs yr wythnos ond mae hynny fwy efo'r criw uwchradd sy'n addysgu ar-lein drwy teams neu beth bynnag.' TA1

'What's interesting is, I've just had a tutoring meeting with one of our students, and what was worrying is, he's recording his lesson, he's creating resources and he's marking after that, and the problem here is that the process then takes a long time because many students think that if they are recording everything it has to be absolutely accurate because if you do it in the class you don't get a second chance so it takes a lot longer. It takes longer to do the same kind of thing I would say. We also have to recognize that as a course and maybe lower expectations. Some teach maybe 4 lessons a week, some increase this week to about 12 lessons a week but that's more with the secondary team that teaches online through teams or whatever.' TA1

## **Summary**

The data from ITE staff and students aid us in gaining further insight into the challenges of accessing Welsh during the pandemic and the particular difficulties faced in supporting learners from non-Welsh-Speaking families. Specific implications for ITE provision and other stakeholders will be discussed in the final two sections.

## 6. Main Findings

### Introduction

- 6.1 This study sought to investigate learners' engagement with, and/or use of Welsh during the Covid-19 pandemic, with a particular focus on the challenges facing non-Welsh-speaking families with children attending Welsh-medium schools. By exploring the experiences of parents, teachers, ITE staff and ITE students supporting pupils' learning during the pandemic, the study highlights some of the main challenges faced and how schools, HEIs and parents adapted to these challenges under very difficult circumstances. Delivering an entire curriculum through a completely new mode is a challenge for even the most experienced of teachers. Opportunities for innovative practice were largely restricted by the limitations imposed by safeguarding regulations, IT possibilities, funding and the automaticity of English for L1 English-speaking pupils when placed in an English-speaking environment, away their usual domain of Welsh language use. Nevertheless, from the data gathered for this report, it is clear that many schools acted swiftly and effectively to support families through this period, despite receiving little or no specific professional learning opportunities to support their actions, particularly in relation to supporting pupils' Welsh. Whilst the report highlights many excellent examples of support for non-Welsh-speaking families with children attending Welsh-medium schools, and excellent examples of support for the continuous development of Welsh language skills for children attending English-medium schools, this was not exclusively so, and there are a number of areas where further development and support is now required.
- 6.2 Whilst there may well be a shift back to a more permanent in-class model of teaching in the future, it is likely that schools will continue to make use of several digital platforms to supplement in-class learning moving forward. Learning how best to utilise these platforms to support pupils' Welsh – both inside and outside of the classroom – and involving parents more centrally within the process of co-constructed learning will ensure pupils are provided with the opportunities and encouragement to continue to engage with their Welsh outside school, during and beyond the pandemic.

- 6.3 In line with the requirements of the new Curriculum for Wales, this report offers an important insight into the steps that need to be taken to ensure that all pupils' Welsh language skills are effectively supported, developed, nurtured and improved as part of the educational changes that are taking place, and in line with Welsh Government's goal of reaching a million Welsh speakers by 2050.
- 6.4 The following section outlines the key findings of the study that feed into a series of recommendations outlined under Section 7.

### **Preparing teachers and trainees for good practice in supporting non-Welsh-speaking families**

- 6.5 Overall, parents were quite satisfied that schools understood the challenges facing them as non-Welsh-speaking parents, and did what they could to support them in helping their child(ren) engage with the work set by the school, under very difficult circumstances.
- 6.6 However, in general, schools did not discuss 'in house' the potential consequences relating to the practicalities of non-Welsh-speaking parents supporting their child(ren)'s education at home in any depth, and teachers did not receive any bespoke professional learning sessions. This may have left teachers largely unprepared and unsupported in this regard.
- 6.7 In most cases, schools did not actively discuss the linguistic issue with parents, leading some parents to feel 'left to their own devices', although many teachers and ITE trainees (in accordance with the guidance provided by schools) were happy to provide support when any concerns were raised.
- 6.8 A number of teachers and ITE trainees continued to communicate with pupils and their families in the language of the school, which meant that many non-Welsh-speaking parents with children attending Welsh-medium schools felt unable to support their child's development adequately during this time.
- 6.9 Most teachers were unsure if their school had any specific language policies regarding the linguistic medium of communication that should be adopted with parents.

- 6.10 Likewise, no specific guidance was (at least initially) provided to trainee teachers on supporting children from non-Welsh-medium households who attended Welsh-medium schools (although several referred to the need to adapt to the needs of individual pupils). The consistent message across institutions seemed to be focused on looking to individual schools for further guidance on supporting these pupils and to ensure that trainee teachers followed the school policy on this matter.

### **Communication between schools and parents**

- 6.11 In general, very little contact was made between schools and parents. Whilst teachers were in contact with pupils on a daily or a weekly basis, the majority of teachers were in contact with parents either weekly or less often than that.
- 6.12 Communication with parents was less frequent in secondary school, but teachers in Secondary Schools were often in charge of 2-35 classes and secondary school pupils were treated as more independent learners.
- 6.13 In most cases, parents/guardians with children in Welsh-medium or bilingual schools noted that the school communicated with them bilingually when setting work for their child(ren) to complete. However, there remained to be a number of instances where parents were unable to support their child because the work was set in Welsh.
- 6.14 The proportion of teachers who differentiated classwork and any associated information relating to the classwork based on pupils' home language practices was relatively low.

### **Linguistic medium of work**

- 6.15 In most cases, bilingual communication was in the form of direct translation – most often of the tasks themselves, but sometimes of instructions and additional tips – and information around the learning outcomes or the purpose of the activity were often amiss. This style of bilingual communication was felt to be more of a 'superficial' attempt at supporting parents rather than a purposefully developed 'tool'

to support non-Welsh-speaking parents and their child(ren). In a few instances, parents noted that the translation into English was difficult to follow.

- 6.16 The majority of children received feedback on their work through the medium of Welsh, despite schools providing the work bilingually and providing English instruction where necessary. ITE staff and trainees felt that feedback should be geared towards the pupil and not the parent.
- 6.17 Parents often found it difficult to follow guidance and to understand what was required in completing specific tasks, especially if this differed from their own experiences and knowledge of the subject (this was true of all parents including parents from non-Welsh-speaking homes).

### **Resources**

- 6.18 Most teachers were of the opinion that there were not enough resources to support pupils' development in Welsh. This was particularly the case in relation to resources suitable for developing spoken language skills. Others noted some obvious gaps, particularly in relation to literacy programmes and resources to develop oracy.
- 6.19 Parents who already owned or who bought Welsh-medium resources during lockdown tended to be Welsh-speaking parents. Pupils living in non-Welsh-speaking homes were therefore largely in environments where access to Welsh – either spoken or in text – was severely limited, and where the additional support pupils normal have in relation to Welsh in class (peers, resources and teacher) was removed.

### **Delivery methods**

- 6.20 Both parents and teachers commented on the limitations imposed by the pandemic on their ability to develop pupils' oral Welsh language skills in particular.
- 6.21 Whilst most secondary schools offered live teaching sessions, only a few primary schools did so. This meant that some pupils may have not had the opportunity to take part in live synchronous sessions where they would be able to further develop and practise their oral Welsh language skills.

- 6.22 Differences in timetables and approaches to teaching across HEIs, local authorities and consortia meant that trainee teachers in different locations received slightly different experiences.
- 6.23 One mode of delivery that was problematic for many was the sharing of worksheets on-line. Very few parents noted that they had printed any of the Welsh worksheets provided, despite most parents owning a printer.

### **Engagement**

- 6.24 The extent to which pupils responded to and engaged with work that was designed specifically for the purpose of enhancing their Welsh language skills during lockdown varied from one school to the next.
- 6.25 A few teachers, particularly those in English-medium schools, noted how Welsh was not a priority at all for them during lockdown. This was despite most teachers in English-medium schools noting that they would, under normal circumstances, use a variety of strategies in their teaching to embed the use of Welsh across the curriculum.
- 6.26 Issues with connectivity and lack of appropriate hardware were often identified as obstacles to pupils' ability to effectively contribute in online sessions. This was an issue whatever the language of instruction (see also Covid Project 1). However, in relation to the development and enhancement of Welsh language skills, this poses a particular challenge when pupils are unable to access any spoken Welsh or contribute orally themselves.
- 6.27 The influence of parents on pupil engagement and motivation was found to be key to their success (see also WG funded Covid Project on the use of blended and distance learning and Covid Project on the experiences of learners during lockdown). Clear communication with parents, in a language they understand, is therefore essential in order to 'reach' the pupils and support their bilingual journeys.
- 6.28 Differentiating appropriately – both linguistically and academically – may have been more challenging under the circumstances. However, pupils in lower sets tended to show lower levels of interest and engagement with Welsh in comparison to pupils in

higher sets, whilst MAT pupils tended to lose interest quickly as they often found the work not challenging enough.

### **Effects of the lockdown on pupils' Welsh language skills**

- 6.29 The pandemic affected a number of children in different ways in terms of their Welsh language skills. Some children continued to flourish, particularly those with other Welsh speakers in the home, whilst many children who were not in regular contact with Welsh throughout the day required additional support in getting themselves back on track. Many teachers felt that pupils' Welsh had been impacted by the pandemic.
- 6.30 However, as attested in some of the responses obtained in this study, pupils quickly regained their abilities when the appropriate support was in place.
- 6.31 Having observed pupils' language abilities upon their return after lockdown, most teachers in Welsh-medium and bilingual schools felt that this experience highlighted the need for schools to develop specific interventions to support pupils from non-Welsh-speaking backgrounds to re-engage with their Welsh after the normal summer holidays.

### **Additional learning needs**

- 6.32 Parents of children with ALN expressed different patterns of opinions in relation to the support they felt they received and their own abilities to support their child(ren) to work in Welsh.

### **Specific considerations for ITE provision**

- 6.33 Due to the variation in on-line platforms used in various schools, trainee teachers needed to adapt quickly to their surroundings. On the whole, most trainees responded well to this variation and adapted to the requirements of the school. This adaptability was identified by ITE lecturers and trainees as a key attribute of a successful teacher.

6.34 A few respondents noted that the current pandemic may have an impact on trainee teachers' sense of fulfilment and achievement that occurs after a specific lesson has taken place. Given the novelty of digital learning pedagogies and the variety of digital platforms available, ITE students can feel demotivated when a given approach fails and further encouragement and support from ITE staff was required on occasion.

## 7. Recommendations

<p><b>Recommendation 1:</b> Digital Learning Champion</p> <p><b>Recommendation 2:</b> National approach to Professional Learning</p>	<p>ITE partnerships should consider appointing an appropriate member of staff to oversee the digital learning needs of staff across the partnership – a ‘digital learning champion’ – who can liaise between different stakeholders in order to ensure parity of experience across-the-board. This individual should have excellent knowledge of the latest technological advances within education and the ability to use this knowledge to inform pedagogical application of these tools, particularly in relation to the implementation of strategies to develop pupils’ Welsh language skills.</p> <p>In moving forward, Welsh Government should consider a national approach to supporting bilingualism in schools in Wales, offering professional learning sessions and collaborative learning opportunities across a network of different types of schools, teachers and pupils across Wales. This would foster greater opportunities to share interesting practice and opportunities for schools that do not often come into contact with each other to foster links and learn from each other.</p> <p>Professional learning should include a unique blend of technological, pedagogical and content knowledge that helps teachers design and develop their own blended learning style. This training should equip teachers with strategies for effective use of technology in school-based and on-line learning contexts, and knowledge of how to benefit from the best of both worlds to fit individual student and individual contexts of learning. In relation to the Welsh language context, these strategies need to focus on oral language practice and ways of keeping students engaged with Welsh.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 3:</b> Use of incidental Welsh in feedback</p>	<p>A careful balance is required between providing feedback – written or oral – that is carefully geared towards supporting academic progress (combining feedback and ‘feed forward’ narratives) in the language of education, and providing feedback that is geared towards ensuring parents are able to gauge the level of their child’s work, in a language they understand.</p> <p>Bespoke professional learning sessions should include discussions around the appropriateness of using Welsh-only feedback for pupils in Welsh-medium schools and bilingual/English only notes on their progress to parents. Similarly, sessions for teachers in English-medium schools should include discussions around the usefulness of including incidental Welsh in feedback for pupils, with the inclusion of incidental Welsh in notes on progress for</p>

	<p>parents in order to normalise the use of Welsh beyond the school and expose parents to Welsh terms, particularly around praise and encouragement.</p> <p>In feedback to pupils, school should consider using programs such as <i>Mote</i> (Mote voice notes and feedback for <i>Google Classroom</i>) and <i>Flipgrid</i> that offer the opportunity to provide oral feedback – in both languages - on any tasks completed, and can help model accurate and authentic language use. Bespoke professional learning sessions should include references to how best to provide oral feedback.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 4:</b> Support for bilingual communication</p>	<p>Communicating with parents bilingually is good practice. However, when used superficially, it can mean that parents who would normally be willing and able to read Welsh may opt to read the English text, and those who normally only look at the English continue to do so without needing to encourage their child to engage with Welsh. Providing any aspect of work in both Welsh and English is more time-consuming than providing that work in a single language, and speaking a language does not mean that an individual possesses translation skills. However, given the paucity of resources in Welsh, teachers are often tasked with creating their own resources, and, during the pandemic, have had to increase the amount of bilingual communication with parents.</p> <p>Teachers in Welsh-medium and bilingual schools require additional support in order to adapt to a fully bilingual way of working.</p> <p>Welsh Government should explore ways of including support for bilingual working as a core service within its development of ‘community-focused schools<sup>15</sup>’ in order to help meet the needs of parents, teachers and pupils working in a Welsh and/or bilingual environment. This would involve funding full-time positions that would offer designated support to help alleviate the additional requirements of translation, source appropriate resources, and help develop Welsh and bilingual resources. LEAs should identify schools where such support should be prioritised.</p> <p>As an alternative measure, Welsh Government should consider implementing an adjustment to the teacher-pupil ratio in Welsh-medium and bilingual schools in order that sufficient capacity is built into the system to allow for the additional load of bilingual working.</p>

<sup>15</sup> <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-03/27-community-focused-schools.pdf>

<p><b>Recommendation 5:</b> Using bilingual communication effectively</p>	<p>Similarly, in the interim, Welsh Government and LEAs should consider ways of ensuring continued funding for <i>Athrawon Bro</i>, where applicable, who provide expert support in developing strategies to support pupils' development of Welsh in English-medium school contexts.</p> <p>Schools should be encouraged to consider adopting alternative strategies to direct translation, where possible, promoting bilingualism in a way that does not allow individuals to opt out of one language completely. Drawing on the principles of mediation, this could mean incorporating more Welsh within English communications with parents and pupils, but with support (such as translations of key content words; picture references, etc.), and/or adopting alternative ways of providing instructions and feedback that may be less time consuming – e.g. if provided as a video rather than in writing (see Recommendation 3 above). Bespoke professional learning sessions are required to support teachers and share good practice in this regard.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 6:</b> Bridging school and home</p>	<p>Parents/guardians have a strong influence on pupils' engagement with Welsh outside school. In the absence of natural contexts for communication in the home, schools/LEAs/Regional School Improvement Services should work together to think innovatively about ways of bringing the use of Welsh into extracurricular activities where communication is a natural occurrence. In moving forward, developing a more integrated co-constructed approach to learning, going beyond traditional methods of setting homework, is key to ensuring the continuation of learning beyond the classroom context. This is of particular importance in relation to developing and nurturing Welsh language skills, and most importantly in those contexts where Welsh is not easily accessible outside the home unless opportunities are created as an extension of the school experience.</p> <p>Schools should be encouraged to consider innovative ways of bridging aspects of pupils' learning activities across the school and the home in ways that normalise the presence and use of Welsh in both contexts, and are more dynamic in their approach than traditional homework. These could include setting work that increase children's exposure to authentic uses of Welsh – e.g. involving children's television programmes – or through encouraging use of online support platforms for parents (such as <i>Sôn am Lyfra</i> <a href="https://en.sonamlyfra.cymru/">https://en.sonamlyfra.cymru/</a>) to help empower parents to feel able to help support their child's engagement with Welsh. These could also involve collaborative tasks such as pupils teaching Welsh to their parent, writing food shopping lists in Welsh and testing their parent's food vocabulary when out in the shop, etc. Professional learning sessions should include discussions around how best to achieve this.</p>

<p><b>Recommendation 7:</b> Contact point for Welsh support</p>	<p><b>All</b> schools should consider assigning a key member of staff as a contact point for queries regarding supporting pupils in/with Welsh. This could be the class teacher or a specified individual/group of individuals on a rota basis that can liaise with other teachers in order to provide the appropriate support needed. Schools should ensure that pupils and their parents are aware of the service and how to access it.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 8:</b> School Language Policies</p> <p><b>Recommendation 9:</b> Supporting parents' Welsh</p>	<p>School language policies may need to be adapted in light of the recent experiences during the pandemic, and particularly in light of the forthcoming changes to the linguistic categorisation of schools. School language policies need to be communicated clearly to staff so that they are aware of their purpose and expectations, and professional learning opportunities should be offered in relation to how best to apply these policies in practice. LEAs should demonstrate thorough review of school language policies as part of their annual Welsh in Education Strategic Plan returns.</p> <p>In Welsh-medium and bilingual settings, these policies should include ways of communicating with non-Welsh-speaking parents that help develop their own Welsh language skills and promote the educational benefits of bilingualism. Stronger links should be forged between schools and <i>Y Ganolfan Dysgu Cymraeg Genedlaethol</i> to support opportunities to develop tailored support for developing parents' Welsh language skills.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 10:</b> Differentiation</p> <p><b>Recommendation 11:</b> Translanguaging</p>	<p>There is an opportunity to re-conceptualise assessment and feedback with a focus on differentiation where necessary – e.g. some pupils may need more input in oral Welsh whilst others may need more balanced approach where they can access information, at the same level, in both languages, etc. Professional learning events should include sessions discussing this issue.</p> <p>In some cases, providing the work bilingually meant pupils and parents could opt to discuss and complete the work entirely in English. An alternative approach would be to adopt the principles of translanguaging, particularly in KS2 and above, where pupils 'receive information in one language [in this case, English] and then use or apply it in the other language [in this case, Welsh]' (Baker &amp; Wright, 2021, p. 464), encouraging the use of mediation between pupil and learning partner (peer, teacher, sibling or parent) in the process. Bespoke professional learning should ensure sufficient reference to the purpose and scope of translanguaging in order that teachers feel empowered to enrich pupils' learning experiences beyond direct translation.</p>

<p><b>Recommendation 12:</b> Review of Welsh resources</p>	<p>A review of Welsh-medium resources – written, digital and e-learning – should be commissioned by Welsh Government in order to identify areas for development. This should include a review of resources focusing on literacy and oracy skills, and suggest areas for development, particularly in relation to supporting pupils’ access to and engagement with Welsh outside school, such as read-along audio books and bilingual resources that allow non-Welsh-speaking parents’ involvement.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 13:</b> Promote oral language practise</p> <p><b>Recommendation 14:</b> Consistency</p>	<p>Exposure to authentic use of language and opportunities to communicate in meaningful ways are essential for development, and schools should now be exploring ways of delivering live, on-line teaching, even exploring a blended learning mode, whenever possible and necessary to offer virtual learning opportunities.</p> <p>There is need for strategic investment in technology and resources, and training in ways of allowing on-line discussions and communication with pupils and parents.</p> <p>Further research is now needed into the effective use of different strategies (across the primary and secondary sector) that encourage verbal contribution in online sessions.</p> <p>Some schools (primary and secondary) offered synchronous learning opportunities (live, on-line teaching sessions) whereas others opted for asynchronous teaching only.</p> <p>There needs to be consistency in the messages provided to schools from LEAs around what they can and cannot do in terms of on-line teaching and a concerted effort to ensure live teaching wherever possible, ensuring pupil safety.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 15:</b> Increasing engagement in/with Welsh</p>	<p>Low levels of engagement with work set in Welsh leads to lack of exposure to and use of Welsh. This, in turn, has an impact on pupils’ Welsh language skills and subsequent confidence in using the language.</p> <p>Professional learning events are required to support teachers in implementing the principles of retrieval practise, whereby lessons are designed in order to revise what learners should already know. This would help the teacher identify those who may not have fully engaged or understood the previous lesson/task set, particularly when that information has been set in Welsh.</p>

<p><b>Recommendation 16:</b> Re-engagement after long periods away from school</p>	<p><b>All</b> schools should consider developing intensive language revision sessions, differentiated according to need, to be delivered as an integral part of the school curriculum whenever children have been away from the normal school setting for long periods of time. This includes the period of return after the summer holiday when children are readjusting to the school environment.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 17:</b> Supporting pupils with ALN</p>	<p>Since self-perceptions of language ability can impact on pupils' confidence and self-esteem, children with ALN and their families require continued pupil-centred support in order to support their learning of Welsh and/or through the medium of Welsh. Services for pupils who are normally in receipt of additional support, particularly if that support is for language, should continue as much as possible during lockdowns.</p>

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## 9. Annex A: Example interesting practice vignettes

Darparu cymorth yn ddwyieithog gyda'r gwersi anghydamserol er mwyn cynorthwyo gyda galluogi rhieni i ddeall ac i gynorthwyo eu plant gyda'r tasgau. Serch hyn, addysgwyd yn gyfan gwbl drwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg yn unig yn y sesiynau cydamserol.

[Provided support bilingually alongside our asynchronous lessons so that we could support our parents to understand and to help their children. Despite this, we taught fully through the medium of Welsh in our synchronous lessons.]

### **Rural, Welsh medium secondary school**

Pan ddychwelodd y dysgwyr i'r ysgol wedi'r cyfnod clo, roedd yn amlwg fod llawer iawn o'r dysgwyr wedi colli hyder wrth gyfathrebu yn y Gymraeg. Gyda dysgwyr blynyddoedd 7ac 8 penderfynwyd creu cardiau Cymraeg a rhoi cyfrifoldeb y Gymraeg i unigolion siaradus yn yr ystafell ddosbarth. Ym mhob gwrs byddai 'Capten Cymraeg' dynodedig ar gyfer pob rhes, gyda'r unigolyn yma yn newid o wers i wers, er mwyn darparu cyfle i bawb gael ymgymryd â'r rhan a'r cyfrifoldeb. Yn hytrach na cheryddu'r dysgwyr am beidio siarad Cymraeg, roedd y cardiau yn gosod y cyfrifoldeb am y Gymraeg ar y disgyblion, yn hytrach na'r athro. Gan fod posibilrwydd o ennill pwyntiau 'Class Charts' yn ystod y wers, roedd y dysgwyr yn ymateb yn dda i'r cyfrifoldeb o annog unigolion eraill ar eu rhesi i drafod yn y Gymraeg. Er bod nifer wedi ymateb yn bositif, roedd angen mwy o anogaeth ar rhai unigolion o fewn y dosbarth, yn enwedig gan fod torri'r patrwm o droi i siarad Saesneg yn arfer mor anodd ei dorri mewn rhai achosion penodol.

[When the learners returned to school after the lock-down period, it was clear that many of the learners had lost confidence in communicating through the medium of Welsh. With learners in years 7 and 8 it was decided to create Welsh language cards and to give the responsibility for maintaining Welsh within the classroom to individuals. In each lesson there would be a designated 'Welsh Captain' for each row, with this individual changing from lesson to lesson, in order to provide everyone with the opportunity to take on the role and responsibility. Instead of reprimanding the learners for not speaking Welsh, the cards placed the responsibility for the Welsh language on the pupils, rather than the teacher. With the possibility of earning 'Class Charts' points during the lesson, learners responded well to the responsibility of encouraging each other to discuss in Welsh. Although many responded positively, some individuals in the class needed more encouragement, especially as breaking the pattern of turning to speak English was a particularly difficult practice to break in some cases.]

### **Rural, Welsh medium secondary school**

Roedd y defnydd o *Collaboration Board*, *Nearpod*, gan ddefnyddio gweithgareddau megis 'matching pairs' a chwisiau, mewn gwersi cydamserol, yn annog mwy o ddysgwyr i ymateb yn Gymraeg.

[The use of *Collaboration Board*, *Nearpod*, and using activities such as 'matching pairs' and quizzes, in synchronous lessons, encouraged more learners to respond in Welsh.]

### **Rural, Welsh medium secondary school**

Mabwysiadwyd cyfloed go gyfer 'sgyrsiau' yn y gwersi cydamserol, lle'r oedd modd i'r dysgwyr ymateb ar lafar a thrafod agweddau ar eu gwersi.

[Adopted the opportunity for class 'conversations' in our synchronous lessons, where learners were able to respond orally and discuss aspects of their lessons [in Welsh].]

### **Urban, Welsh medium primary school**

Er mwyn cynyddu cymhelliant ac ymateb llafar dysgwyr yn ystod y gwersi cydamserol, defnyddiwyd strategaethau newydd fel *Answer Garden*, *Mentimeter*, *Screencastify* a *Whiteboard.fi*.

[To increase learners' motivation and verbal response during synchronous lessons, new strategies were adopted, such as the use of *Answer Garden*, *Mentimeter*, *Screencastify* and *Whiteboard.fi*]

### **Urban, Welsh medium primary school**

Rhwng y ddwy wers gydamsersol a gynigiwyd yn ddyddiol, darparwyd cyfleoedd i'r dysgwyr a'u rhieni i ofyn cwestiynau ac i geisio cefnogaeth gyda'r tasgau.

[Between the two synchronous lessons offered on a daily basis, learners and their parents were provided with the opportunity to ask questions and seek support with the tasks.]

### **Urban, Welsh medium primary school**

Penderfynwyd cyflwyno strategaeth ysgol gyfan lle'r oedd disgwyl i bob disgybl gwblhau tocyn ffarwel ar *Google Forms* a hynny drwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg.

[It was decided to introduce a whole school strategy whereby all pupils were expected to complete a farewell ticket on *Google Forms* through the medium of Welsh.]

**Urban, Welsh medium primary school**

Dechreuodd yr athrawon ddefnyddio *Adobe Sparke* sy'n gyfanwaith o luniau ac esboniadau, yn hytrach na naratif yn unig wrth asesu - gwelwyd bod hyn yn gwella ymgysylltiad -cynyddu hyder y dysgwyr, yn arbennig y rhai hynny o deuluoedd di-Gymraeg.

[Teachers began to use *Adobe Sparke*, which presents pictures and explanations, rather than just narrative in assessment. This was seen to improve engagement. It increased learners' confidence, especially those from non-Welsh-speaking families.]

**Urban, Welsh medium primary school**

Darparwyd cwisiau *Kahoot* yn adolygu nodweddion arddull ysgrifennu llythyr; adnabod technegau mynegi barn.

[*Kahoot* quizzes were provided so aid in reviewing the features of a letter writing style; identify techniques for expressing opinions.]

**Urban, Welsh medium primary school**

Defnyddio adnodd adborth cryno *Answer Garden* i bennu meini prawf llwyddiant yn annibynnol ar gyfer tasg ysgrifennu blog mynegi barn; i bennu meini prawf llwyddiant yn annibynnol ar gyfer ysgrifennu araith; a recordio araith.

[*Answer Garden* was used as a feedback tool to independently evaluate success criteria for an opinion blog writing task; to independently evaluate success criteria for speech writing; and recording a speech.]

**Urban, Welsh medium primary school**

Gwnaed defnydd o 'breakout rooms' ar *Teams* er mwyn annog trafodaeth o blith grwpiau llai o ddysgwyr. Roedd yn llwyddiant nodedig, yn ôl y cyfranwyr, wrth gynyddu hunan hyder dysgwyr.

['Breakout rooms' were used on *Teams* to encourage discussion for smaller groups of learners. It was a notable achievement, according to the contributors, in increasing learners' self-confidence.]

**Urban, Welsh medium primary school**

Er mwyn meithrin hunanhyder i ymateb yn Gymraeg yn y gwersi ar-lein, cynyddwyd y pwyslais ar wirio dealltwriaeth a chynnydd drwy'r defnydd o gwestiynu. Datblygwyd techneg lle ofynnwyd i bawb baratoi ateb ysgrifenedig yn y panel 'sgwrs' ar *Teams*, cyn datgan "3,2,1, danfonwch!" Roedd yn fodd o sicrhau ymatebiad cydamserol dysgwyr, ac er mwyn gwirio eu dealltwriaeth, er enghraifft, mewn perthynas â gwerthfawrogi barddoniaeth a gwirio ystyr geirfa.

[In order to build self-confidence to respond in Welsh in the online lessons, the emphasis on checking learners' understanding and progress was increased through the use of questioning. A technique was developed in which everyone was asked to prepare a written answer in the 'chat' panel on *Teams*, before the teacher would declare "3,2,1, send!" It was a means of ensuring the concurrent response of learners, and for checking their understanding, for example, in relation to appreciating poetry and checking their understanding of vocabulary.]

**Urban, Welsh medium primary school**