Identifying challenges and good practices in preparing trainee teachers in Wales to meet the needs of additional language learners

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Short Report - English
ABSTRACT

This study examines practices in Initial Teacher Training (ITT) provision in Wales in preparing trainee teachers to meet the needs of English as Additional Language and Welsh as an Additional Language (EAL/WAL) learners, with specific reference to QTS Standards S1.1 and S3.1.3, which refer to diversity, and especially to S3.2.5 and S3.3.5, which refer directly to EAL/WAL.

The study identifies challenges encountered and improvements needed to ensure that trainee teachers in Wales are adequately prepared by their training to meet the needs of EAL/WAL learners.

The research was carried out through:

- an e-survey questionnaire of trainee teachers at the end of their courses in June 2014
- structured interviews with university tutors in each of the ITT course provider institutions
- structured interviews with mentors in a selection of ITT placement schools.

The study found considerable variation in the experiences of trainees and in the provision offered by Higher Education Institution (HEI) providers and placement schools. There are examples of good practice and quite detailed coverage but there are also significant areas of weakness and instances of poor or non-existent coverage. The evaluation of evidence for assessment of the diversity and EAL/WAL standards is variable and would benefit from being more robust.

Several challenges were identified including the constraints of course programmes, the demands of government, university and school priorities, lack of staff knowledge and expertise and difficulties in finding and allocating placements in diverse schools for all trainees. Trainees' lack of direct experience with EAL/WAL pupils, due to a lack of diversity in their placement school cohorts, is not always adequately compensated for through supplementary learning experiences.

An extensive list of improvements was suggested by project participants for Welsh Government, university ITT providers and placement schools.

Recommendations include developing training programmes, resources, a good practice model for ITT and a software app for allocating trainee placements.
This short report summarises the main themes and key points in the Main Report. The Main Report contains considerably more detail from the e-survey and interviews, elucidating the good practice, areas of weakness, challenges, suggested improvements and recommendations.
SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

TRAINEE TEACHER E-SURVEY

FINDINGS

1) Which ITT Centre do you attend?

54 (40%) respondents attended teacher training institutions in North and Mid Wales, 43 (31.9%) in South West Wales, and 38 (28.1%) in South East Wales.

2) Which course are you studying?

Respondents to the e-survey trained on the Primary BA QTS/BA Ed courses, the Primary PGCE courses, all but two of the Secondary BA QTS subject courses and all but two of the Secondary PGCE subject courses, providing a broad representation of university-based courses.

The responses about school-based experience may be regarded as indicative of the trainees’ experiences only and may not be extrapolated to the school experiences of all other trainees.
Q3. How well has your training prepared you to meet the challenges indicated in the following QTS standards (specifically the underlined sections)?

a) **S1.1** Understand the diverse learning needs of learners and endeavour to provide the best possible education for them to maximise their potential, whatever their individual aspirations, personal circumstances or cultural, linguistic, religious and ethnic backgrounds.

Chart 1: Trainees’ responses to Q3a, preparation for QTS S1.1
b) **S3.1.3** Select and prepare resources, and plan for their safe and effective organisation, taking account of learners' interests and their language and cultural backgrounds, with the help of support staff where appropriate.

**Chart 2: Trainees’ responses to Q3b, preparation for QTS S3.1.3**

![Chart showing responses](chart.png)

The responses concerning these two QTS ‘diversity’ standards show a fairly high level of satisfaction, although 13–14% felt they were *not very well* or *not at all* prepared, suggesting inconsistency in course provision.
c) **S3.2.5** With the help of an experienced teacher, identify the levels of attainment of [EAL/WAL pupils] those learning English or Welsh where this is the language in which they are being taught and is different from the language or form of language of their home. Begin to analyse the language demands and learning activities in order to provide cognitive challenge as well as language support.

Chart 3: Trainees’ responses to Q3c, preparation for QTS S3.2.5

![Chart 3](chart.png)

Responses to the more specific EAL/WAL standards are less positive, with approaching a third of those surveyed feeling either *not at all* or *not very well* prepared for S3.2.5 and S3.3.5.

d) **S3.3.5** Be able to support [EAL/WAL pupils] those learning English or Welsh where this is the language in which they are being taught and is different from the language or form of language of their home, with the help of an experienced teacher where appropriate.

Chart 4: Trainees’ responses to Q3d, preparation for QTS S3.3.5

![Chart 4](chart.png)
Q4. How easy was it to identify self-evaluation evidence for the above QTS standards (underlined sections)?

Chart 5: Trainees’ responses to Q4, identifying evidence for standards

The difficulties that trainees had in identifying evidence fall under the following general themes:

- lack of opportunities to work with or observe EAL/WAL pupils in school placements;
- inadequate preparation from the university;
- difficulty with the online recording system;
- inadequate support in school;
- poor standard of mentoring;
- difficulty in understanding the QTS standards or what evidence was required to meet them;
- lack of experience of how to meet struggling pupils’ needs;
- lack of knowledge of what resources are available to support EAL/WAL pupils;
- workload.
Q5. In the university sessions, what training did you receive to help you meet the needs of EAL/WAL pupils? (You can select more than one answer)

Chart 6: Trainees’ responses to Q5, training received at university

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>University-based training</th>
<th>0%</th>
<th>10%</th>
<th>20%</th>
<th>30%</th>
<th>40%</th>
<th>50%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignment</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Undergraduate Module</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Half-day session</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full-day session</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single lecture from university tutor</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talk from external specialist</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Seminar discussion</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please specify)</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

29% of respondents said they received *no training* at all in the university sessions of their ITT course. The remaining 71% received a mixture of inputs. Several trainees had more than one type of input.
Q6. During school-based practice, what training did you receive to help you meet the needs of EAL/WAL pupils? (You can select more than one answer)

Chart 7: Trainees’ responses to Q6, training received at school

30% of respondents said they received no training at all during the school-based practice of their ITT course. The 70% who received some training in school had a variety of experiences but less than half had direct experience of teaching a class with EAL/WAL pupils in.

Standards S3.2.5 and S3.3.5 make reference to being met ‘with the help of an experienced teacher’. A quarter or less received mentoring or advice from an EAL/WAL-experienced class teacher or an EAL/WAL specialist. Cross-tabulation shows that ten trainees (9%) had help from both.
Q7. What were the most helpful aspects of your training in preparing you to meet the needs of EAL/WAL pupils?

Trainees’ responses fall under the following general themes.

a) University-based:

- specialist external speakers;
- university lectures;
- visits to schools with high percentage of EAL/WAL pupils;
- seminar discussions;
- assignments on EAL/WAL;
- open studies where EAL could be chosen as a focus;
- raised awareness of the presence of EAL and WAL pupils in schools;
- little or nothing.

b) School-based:

- direct experience of EAL/WAL pupils on teaching practice;
- observation of EAL/WAL pupils being taught;
- support and advice from specialists, experienced teachers and school mentors;
- professional development sessions in school focused on EAL;
- trainees’ own past experience of working as a classroom assistant;
- little or nothing.
Q8. What improvements would you suggest to enhance ITT provision in preparing trainee teachers to meet the QTS standards on diversity and EAL/WAL?

Trainees’ responses fall under the following general themes.

a) University-based:

- cover the issues to at least some extent;
- provide more coverage than at present;
- cover the issues in more specific and practical detail;
- use specialist external speakers;
- provide more practical experience;
- use assignments;
- use seminars/discussions;
- cover these issues earlier in the course;
- cover WAL as well as EAL.

b) School-based:

- provide practical experience or observation for all trainees;
- ensure all trainees get professional development sessions on diversity and EAL/WAL;
- improve advice and guidance;
- use assignments;
- improve practice in schools;
- improve coordination between universities and schools;
- no improvements are needed.
DISCUSSION

Polarisation of trainees’ responses indicates that there is both good and inadequate practice, revealing inconsistency across the ITT courses.

The proportions of trainees who had little or no training in their university sessions or school-based practice suggest that some providers have not been fulfilling their responsibilities in relation to these standards. Cross-tabulation shows that 15% (17/112) of the trainees surveyed received no training in either the university or the school component, highlighting the danger of assuming that one component will compensate for lack of coverage in the other. Most university inputs are deemed to be of merit, suggesting that using a variety of elements is valuable.

The surveyed trainees' placement experiences are far from uniform. Some said there were no improvements needed, suggesting there is very good practice in some placement schools, which needs to be shared. However, sizeable numbers of trainees may not get an opportunity to teach or observe EAL/WAL pupils. There may be a need to increase the accountability of placement schools to improve the quality of mentoring, direction and guidance. A future priority should be to create more opportunities for trainees to get direct experience of working with EAL/WAL pupils or to find ways to compensate for lack of experience through some other form of ITT input.

Although over half of the surveyed trainees found identifying evidence easy or quite easy, 38% finding it not easy or impossible indicates that significant improvements are needed for all trainees to meet the scope and evidence requirements.

The improvements suggested reiterate the need for: greater consistency; better coverage of diversity and EAL/WAL; more detailed and specific practical content, especially linked to subject areas; more practical experience and support; the use of external specialists and a more balanced workload.

Targeted assignments could be made compulsory to ensure all trainees’ development of knowledge and practical experience.

Distinguishing WAL and giving it specific attention should be accommodated quite easily.
UNIVERSITY TUTOR AND SCHOOL MENTOR INTERVIEWS

The interview responses are divided into two main categories: good practice and areas of weakness. Within these categories, provision and assessment are dealt with separately.

GOOD PRACTICE

Good practice in preparing trainee teachers to meet the needs of EAL/WAL pupils in the university component of Initial Teacher Training in Wales

1) What content is included in the university element of your ITT provision to prepare trainee teachers for working with pupils:
   a. … of diverse cultural, linguistic, religious and ethnic backgrounds?
   b. … who are learning EAL/WAL?

FINDINGS

Undergraduate Primary Courses

Responses refer to:

methodology and ways of raising matters in group discussions, lectures and seminars;

dedicated sessions on diversity or EAL/WAL-related topics delivered by university tutors or external specialists:
   • single sessions of one to two hours covering:
     ▪ EAL;
     ▪ identity, cultural, linguistic, religious and ethnic diversity;
     ▪ cultural diversity in the curriculum/Foundation Phase;
     ▪ bilingual and multilingual development;
     ▪ anti-racism, dealing with racist incidents and racist bullying, challenging preconceptions, stereotypes and myths about race and difference;
     ▪ the work of Virginia Collier and Wayne Thomas, Colin Baker and Jim Cummins with practical applications of the theory;

   • modules or blocks of lectures on:
     ▪ personal and social development and the integration of EAL/WAL learners;
     ▪ the 5 Stage Model of EAL Assessment;
- supporting EAL/WAL pupils' BICS and CALP (Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency);
- practical activities, use and production of resources, computer games, barrier games;
- theories linked to classroom practice;
- building relationships with parents, understanding their social, cultural and religious backgrounds;
- video extracts;
- multilingual reading books and resources;
- the representation of diverse identities in the media;
- teaching Welsh as a Second Language;

**embedded content** with examples of where relevant material on diversity is covered within topic areas of English, RE, Science, ESDGC, the Wider Curriculum, Philosophy for Children (P4C); Personal and Social Development, ALN, teaching in Church schools;

**visits**, usually short-term, sometimes organised to schools in other towns/cities with different diversity profiles and numbers of EAL/WAL learners.
Undergraduate Secondary Courses

Responses refer to:

**dedicated content** consisting of:

- two 2-hour sessions in one institution, delivered by external speakers from the local authority EMA Service, covering a mixture of theoretical and practical material including:
  - bilingual development;
  - language acquisition;
  - case studies;
  - setting EAL pupils appropriately;
  - a lesson in a 'foreign' language;
  - strategies to support learning;

**embedded content**, within the teaching of subject content, on aspects of:

- inclusive education;
- celebrating difference;
- incorporating positive diversity content in teaching and learning;
- removing bias and negative content;
- planning for EAL/WAL pupils;
- producing resources;

**visits** of one half-day to a diverse school to ensure that trainees get some direct experience of observing EAL pupils in class.
PGCE Primary Courses

Responses refer to:

dedicated sessions, lectures or workshops, delivered by specialists or university tutors on:

- racism, stereotyping and bullying from Show Racism The Red Card;
- EAL;
- pupil diversity, inclusive practice, barriers to learning and Welsh–English bilingualism with some consideration of EAL/WAL bilingual learners;
- awareness-raising of the diversity of pupil needs and strategies to meet them;

embedded content in which:

- reference is made to provision of suitable support for EAL learners within English lectures;

opportunities with potential for EAL/WAL or diversity to be addressed within existing course content:

- on Tracking, Monitoring and Assessing individual pupils;
- in Literacy, Numeracy and Welsh in the wider curriculum;
- in ESDGC and PSE;
- on Schools and the Wider Community;
- in the Action-Research project linked to classroom practice;
- in the Professional Interest Strand;
- during their teaching practice when they are expected to look at a particular issue or area of education in more depth;

and within trainees’ pre-course school experience:

- PGCE trainees have a compulsory fortnight in a primary school, organised by themselves prior to starting the course, which could be used to ensure trainees get experience in a diverse school.
PGCE Secondary Courses

Responses refer to:

**methodology**, ways of raising matters through group discussions and questions, and encouraging all PGCE subject tutors to sit in on sessions delivered by Local Authority specialists on EAL/WAL and diversity;

**dedicated sessions**, lectures or seminars of one/one and a quarter hours duration, delivered by specialists or university tutors covering topics including:
- EAL theory, Cummins, Baker;
- assessment and the use of pupils’ first language in testing;
- language acquisition and bilingual development;
- case studies and strategies to support learning;
- tackling racism;
- supporting pupils of different backgrounds and the positive opportunities afforded by diversity;
- a lesson delivered first in a community language, then delivered again using EAL/WAL teaching strategies, followed by trainees’ reflections on what was effective;
- pupil diversity information and PLASC data;

**embedded content** including:
- differentiating for pupils of diverse backgrounds as part of individualised learning and lesson planning;
- teaching literature from ‘other cultures’ within English.

**opportunities with potential for EAL/WAL to be addressed**:
- in Welsh subject courses, raising awareness of the need to take account of pupils whose levels of Welsh may vary considerably, both where Welsh is taught as a first language and as a second language;
- assessed pieces of work that have an optional course component on EAL/WAL.
DISCUSSION

From these collated examples, providers should be able to gain ideas to enhance their courses and improve consistency across the three ITT Centres.

There is scope for giving diversity and EAL/WAL a higher priority and more thorough coverage, especially within the PGCE course constraints.

Best practice should include both a discrete focus on EAL/WAL and embedded content.

Dedicated sessions need to blend theory and practical application to address common misconceptions about diversity and EAL/WAL.

Secondary course providers could learn from Primary colleagues about integrating diversity content and the needs of EAL/WAL learners across the curriculum.

Injecting specific questions about EAL/WAL into discussions, seminars and interactive workshops could be expanded across course elements.

A ‘lesson’ delivered to trainees in a ‘foreign language’ is a valuable input but needs to go beyond letting trainees know ‘how it feels’, to including good practice strategies.

The inclusion of EAL/WAL and Ethnic Minority Achievement issues within ALN coverage in ITT needs to be modified.

Attention should be drawn to Welsh as an Additional Language learners as a distinct grouping with distinctive needs, exploring overlaps and differences between the strategies used to support W2L and WAL pupils.

The use of time before, during and after placements, and within trainees’ pre-course school experience, to gain greater experience of diversity through visits or exchanges, is a valuable area for further development.

Time allocated to input from Show Racism The Red Card could be combined with classroom strategies for working day-to-day with EAL/WAL learners across the curriculum.

All course tutors could sit in on specialist input or dedicated EAL/WAL sessions.

Areas with potential for development would benefit from being clearly structured and defined in terms of their detail.
Good practice in preparing trainee teachers to meet the needs of EAL/WAL pupils in the school component of Initial Teacher Training in Wales

1) What experience do you provide for trainee teachers on placement which prepares them to work with pupils of diverse cultural, linguistic, religious and ethnic backgrounds/who are learning EAL/WAL?

FINDINGS

Input provided during the induction period in placement schools, before trainees start teaching, covers a range of information including:

- the diverse personal, social, socio-economic, ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious backgrounds of pupils;
- the needs of refugee children and white minorities;
- religious festivals;
- intercultural relations with parents and pupils;
- racism and dealing with racist incidents.

Trainees are given:

- a school prospectus;
- a staff handbook;
- policies on racism;
- data on pupils’ backgrounds and EAL stages;
- a guide on Islam;
- top ten tips;
- information about Muslim pupils’ needs;
- a meeting with staff members responsible for supporting EAL/WAL in Infants.

Direction and advice from school mentors or class teachers includes:

- close supervision;
- procedures to follow when encountering issues that they are unclear how to handle themselves;
- analysis of class records, to identify pupil information about ethnicity, EAL and ALN;
- access to non-sensitive data on the Schools Information Management System (SIMS);
- differentiation, to address the needs of all children in the class including EAL/WAL learners, recognizing that some children need to be handled differently because of their circumstances and there is no one-size-fits-all approach;
- advice on valuing and using pupils’ first languages; using ‘buddying’ with good English language models; using same language speakers to translate or interpret; and understanding differences between children’s languages.
Professional support or advice from an EAL/WAL specialist is available.

Formal ITT professional development sessions are provided on:
- pupils' backgrounds;
- Child Protection;
- socio-cultural differences between pupils;
- ALN/SEN, including resource preparation;
- differentiation for pupils who are learning Welsh as a Second Language and how to use bilingual English–Welsh resources;
- religious festivals and the implications of Eid and Ramadan;
- data and school records;
- strategies and practical resources to use with EAL/WAL pupils;
- differentiation, strategies, techniques and the role of the EMLAS teachers and Bilingual Teaching Assistants in schools.

Other opportunities include:

**direct experience of working with EAL/WAL pupils;**

**experience of working with other teachers, EAL specialists or teaching assistants;**

**observation** of other teachers teaching children of diverse backgrounds; and EAL specialists working with early stage learners in small groups and with individuals;

**dealing with parents** including managing bilingual communication and using interpretation;

**visits** to the Welsh Language Unit and the local EAL Language Unit;

**participation in school CPD** that includes EAL;

**potential opportunities to learn from standard school practices** in the areas of:
- language and literacy;
- cultural diversity in school practice and across the curriculum;
- involving minority ethnic parents;
- differentiation;
- external input from specialists and local Youth and Community Support Teams;
- enhancing teacher effectiveness.
DISCUSSION

Schools with diverse cohorts and sizeable percentages of EAL/WAL pupils were much more aware of pupils’ needs, were better equipped in terms of expertise and resources and took on the responsibility of ensuring that trainees satisfactorily met the relevant QTS standards.

In less diverse schools, there is room for information about diversity and EAL/WAL to be included in professional development sessions and other guidance for trainees.

The good practice examples present a broad range of relevant learning experiences for trainees. Placement schools and university course providers could learn from and incorporate some of the detail from the practical examples.

Mentors and other school teachers need to develop their knowledge.
Good practice in assessment in the university component of ITT

In this section, university tutors’ responses illustrating examples of good practice in assessment, drawn from Questions 1, 2 and 3, are combined.

2) In relation to QTS standards S.1.1, S3.1.3, S3.2.5 and S3.3.5, how do you assess trainees’ knowledge and understanding of EAL/WAL pupils’ needs/practice in meeting those needs?

3) What support/guidance do you offer trainees to identify self-evaluation evidence to meet the above standards?

FINDINGS

Most interviewees talked in general terms about assessment and support for all QTS standards. Some responses were specific to the diversity and EAL/WAL standards.

EAL is identified as one of the areas where opportunities to demonstrate proficiency in the standards may be limited.

One institution removes standards S3.2.5 and S3.3.5 from the school practice record to avoid disadvantaging trainees who get little or no direct contact with EAL/WAL pupils. Instead they are assessed entirely through formal written assessments linked to university input.

Two course providers made a distinction between theoretical knowledge and understanding and practice as two different dimensions to be taught and assessed. In the other institutions, the distinction was less clear.

There is a strong expectation that schools will assess these standards through observations of practice.

General assessment procedures are expected by most university tutors to facilitate evaluation and assessment against the diversity and EAL/WAL standards, particularly within the school-based component of ITT.

Standard general assessment processes involve the following elements:

- a formal structure provided in university handbooks and professional development records;
- trainees taking responsibility for their own professional development and evidence gathering;
- evaluation of trainees’ progress by school senior mentors, class mentors/teachers and university tutors;
- lesson observation assessments recorded on a pro forma, standardised within each Centre;
• targets set for and by trainees;
• ongoing monitoring and informal assessment by school-based mentors, raising issues linked to QTS standards;
• review of trainees' professional development files, containing evidence of planning, differentiation and resources;
• pre- and post-placement discussions.

Some universities provide criteria and examples of evidence, including examples of very good practice.

**Good practice examples of assessment specific to EAL/WAL and diversity** include:

*direction to seek out opportunities and evidence* to
• gain experience of EAL;
• observe EAL pupils in other classes;
• consider the needs of EAL learners;
• read and apply theory and research provided in key texts, on websites and videos;
• set their own targets for development in this area;

*lesson observations*, during which the tutor would look to see if trainees have:
• identified EAL/WAL pupils in their class;
• taken account of their needs in lesson planning;
• catered for them and their learning needs in the lesson;
• engaged the pupils in learning;
• specially planned activities;
• differentiated classwork;
• produced resources;

*school-based evidence in working with specialists* such as:
• planning;
• resource preparation;
• working with in-class support;
• developing their knowledge and understanding;

*professional studies and other course modules* which specifically assess trainees’ knowledge and understanding in relation to these standards.

Trainees who are following the Welsh-medium Improvement Scheme get the support of an additional Language Mentor.

**Formal assessments provided within ITT course programmes** ensure that all trainees receive some input on EAL/WAL, which they can be assessed against. Interviewees’ responses identified:
Undergraduate Primary courses with formal assignments and compulsory exam questions across the three years on EAL/WAL, WSL and language development strategies;

Undergraduate Secondary courses with a formal assignment based on the sessions covering EAL;

PGCE Primary courses with a formally assessed Action-Research project linked to classroom practice, within which trainees can choose to focus on EAL/WAL;

PGCE Secondary courses with a formal assignment on identifying issues for EAL learners; an EAL focus in one of eight options for a reflective study; and a 6000 word open-choice classroom-based research report.

DISCUSSION

The undergraduate courses, especially Primary, have more formal assessments than the PGCE courses.

The formal written assessments of knowledge, understanding and applied theory are the most specific in their focus on EAL/WAL although some are only optional.

There is potential for course providers to learn from the collated examples detailed in the Main Report and to be creative within the constraints of the shorter courses.

For lesson observations, there is room to improve the detail of the criteria used to evaluate practical evidence for EAL/WAL and diversity.

A checklist of questions might help improve this aspect and provide trainees with more formative guidance to make their evidence more robust.
Good practice in assessment in the school component of ITT

2) In relation to QTS standards S.1.1, S3.1.3, S3.2.5 and S3.3.5, how do you assess trainees’ knowledge and understanding of EAL/WAL pupils’ needs and practice in meeting those needs?

3) What support/guidance do you offer trainees to identify self-evaluation evidence to meet the above standards?

School-based interviewees’ responses to Q2 and Q3 reveal a range of assessment practices and types of support offered, many of which simply describe the general standard processes of assessment which would be applied whether or not EAL/WAL pupils were in a class.

Some interviewees gave examples that were more specific to the assessment of EAL/WAL practice.

FINDINGS

General assessment procedures and practices could support the evaluation of trainees’ professional development in diversity and EAL/WAL if applied specifically to the relevant QTS standards and targets in these areas.

Mentors actively engage with trainees in discussing and selecting evidence for files, regularly checking the evidence, commenting on it and telling trainees when they are deemed to have met the standard.

The school communicates with the university about trainees if the mentors feel a trainee is not doing well.

Specific assessment of diversity and EAL/WAL includes:

- **Trainees’ understanding of diversity is assessed** by observing them teaching PSE and RE, leading an assembly; using activities linked to the cultural and faith backgrounds of the children, and including curriculum content that references diverse cultural backgrounds and interests, not just majority White Christian content.

- **Trainees’ knowledge, understanding and skills in relation to EAL/WAL are assessed** through:
  - asking ‘What provision have you made for EAL students?’ from the lesson observation pro forma;
  - examining trainees’ lesson plans to see if EAL/WAL pupils are listed by needs, with appropriate differentiation in groupings, strategies and techniques;
• challenging the trainee if pupils are showing a lack of interest in the work;
• observing a range of practical strategies, including the trainees’ own speech and selection of vocabulary, modelling of language, use of frameworks, activities, resources, Bilingual Teaching Assistants and first language buddies.

_trainees’ capacity to assess pupils is evaluated_ and supported by:
• providing the 5 Stage Model of EAL assessment to the whole staff so all class teacher mentors can direct trainees to use it to assess EAL/WAL pupils;
• expecting trainees to use pupils’ first language/s to gauge their levels of knowledge, understanding and attainment, to use Bilingual Teaching Assistants to interpret, and to use problem-solving games to assess cognitive skills.

Support is available for _trainees from class/subject teachers, EMAS specialists or the senior mentor_ to provide advice and guidance during placement.

_Targets are set_ if a trainee’s work with EAL/WAL learners needs addressing more effectively, and the mentor will model by example – ‘Watch how I do it, then you do it’. In high-diversity schools, targets are often linked to EAL because of the needs of the learners.

_Trainees are matched to particular pupils to help them address QTS standards_ in order to give them experience of different needs and opportunities to gather evidence. Pupil profiles are selected appropriate to the trainees’ professional development targets and one will always be an EAL/WAL learner.

**DISCUSSION**

In order to create some kind of parity between the experiences of trainees in more diverse and less diverse schools, opportunities must be created where trainees’ responses to pupils’ needs can be assessed.

Most of the specific points could be incorporated, with others, in a checklist of good practice for university tutors and school mentors to flag up issues and set targets for trainees to gain experience and gather evidence.

The use of translation apps and software must be judicious. They can easily become a shortcut that circumvents good language learning strategies. Teachers’ and trainees’ focus should lie firmly on planning inclusive whole-class and group activities that support language development and on providing direct person-to-person support.
AREAS OF WEAKNESS

Areas of weakness in course coverage in the university component of ITT

FINDINGS

No assurances could be given that relevant course content is included in some courses.

Only some ITT course providers address EAL/WAL within their Literacy coverage in part because EAL/WAL is not explicitly mentioned in the national Literacy and Numeracy Framework, or in Literacy guidance. The distinctive needs of EAL learners are not necessarily distinguished from the needs of E1L pupils in literacy work.

Relevant course content is limited on some courses.

Opportunities for EAL/WAL to be addressed are dependent on trainees raising the issues in interactive sessions, seminars and small group discussions.

Optional and open-choice components cannot ensure that EAL/WAL is covered by all trainees because not all trainees choose them.

The needs of WAL learners are not distinguished from those of W2L learners in ITT and the term WAL has not been used with English- or Welsh-medium trainees. The same strategies for E1L/W2L pupils are considered to be appropriate for EAL/WAL learners whereas this is not necessarily the case.

EAL/WAL is currently covered under ALN on a number of courses but some course providers and schools have not identified EAL/WAL or the needs of ethnic, cultural and linguistic minorities distinctly within it.

DISCUSSION

Contrasted with the good practice examples, these responses illuminate some reasons why there is inconsistency in the experience of trainees.

The admission of some course providers that they could not guarantee that these matters are included supports the findings of the trainees’ e-survey. This is a significant area of weakness where the universities are not meeting their requirements.

Not all trainees get direct experience of working with or observing EAL/WAL pupils. Although the Handbook of Guidance does not require direct contact to meet the
standards, an adequate level of coverage is clearly required to make sure all trainees feel sufficiently well prepared.

The use of short-term visits, exchanges and supplementary activities in both the university- and school-based components should be explored to compensate for these weaknesses. A mixture of direct contact and supplementary learning experiences is most helpful.

Optional course components, those reliant on trainee choice and open discussions are not adequate for ensuring that all trainees meet the compulsory QTS standards.

Whilst discrete sessions on EAL/WAL are important, making trainees aware of the need to differentiate work for EAL/WAL pupils across the curriculum and in literacy work is equally important because this is where most academic language development in school takes place.

There is a need to distinguish between the issues and needs facing EAL, WAL and W2L learners.

As a result of recent Welsh Government policy changes, EAL/WAL should no longer be regarded as an ALN. Consequently, some modifications to course programmes are needed. EAL/WAL is not itself a ‘learning difficulty’, but a proportion of EAL/WAL learners also have Additional Learning Needs. Therefore, it is still important for trainees to learn how to distinguish between EAL/WAL and ALN in EAL/WAL learners, and how to support both sets of needs where present.
Areas of weakness in provision in the school component of ITT

FINDINGS

The placement school provides little or no direct experience with EAL/WAL pupils because there are few or no pupils on roll and/or attention is not drawn to them.

Little or no specific direction is given to trainees on these matters. This is the case in schools that:

- have no EAL/WAL pupils;
- have small numbers of EAL/WAL pupils but do not regard EAL/WAL as ‘an issue’;
- interpret inclusive education to mean treating all children in much the same way;
- feel the university or another school placement should take that responsibility.

Potential opportunities for trainees to learn or gain experience can be missed because the trainee is not on placement at the time. If a trainee is not present during Anti-bullying week; Black History Month; a multicultural week; when Show Racism the Red Card visits the school; when using a reading scheme with cultural diversity content; or when a new EAL/WAL learner goes through the process of welcome, induction and initial assessment, then the trainee will miss out on valuable experience.

Potential opportunities for trainees to learn or gain experience are not taken up by the trainees. Some school mentors encourage trainees to visit the local EAL Language Centre, or see the school EAL specialist for advice, but some trainees don’t go.

The school placement induction talk does not break down profile information by ethnicity and EAL/WAL so trainees miss an opportunity to develop understanding of diversity in the school profile and how achievement varies by ethnicity or EAL/WAL stage.

Differences in parents’ cultural and religious backgrounds are not highlighted when how to deal with parents is addressed.

Professional development sessions do not cover EAL/WAL.

The standard of mentoring can sometimes be poor.

Some school staff may not be highly skilled at supporting EAL/WAL learners and some schools believe Learning Support Assistants should provide support for individual EAL/WAL learners, so trainees working as class teachers may not be given that responsibility.
Schools may rely on EMAS services for in-depth knowledge and advice rather than capacity-building to raise the levels of knowledge and expertise amongst the whole school staff, thereby equipping them to adapt their own teaching and learning and to advise trainees how to do so.

Welsh-medium schools do not necessarily provide support for EAL/WAL pupils’ development of English as an additional language beyond the subject English that is taught to all pupils. Where Welsh is the target language, EAL support may not be given.

DISCUSSION

Some placement schools clearly do not provide any substantive experience for trainees of working with or observing EAL/WAL pupils and they do not provide adequate information about ethnicity, EAL/WAL, culture and religion.

The absence of diversity in a pupil cohort and lack of expertise amongst school staff are key issues. Significant questions are how to improve the capacity of staff to provide useful professional development for trainees, and how to provide opportunities for some contact with, or observation of, EAL/WAL pupils during the school placement period.

There are examples in the good practice section that could be adopted more widely to address some areas of weakness.

Where LA EMAS expertise is not available, staff members still ought to be able to give information and insight to trainees on diversity and EAL/WAL issues.

The content of Induction talks could be made more specific and the scheduling of professional development sessions needs to be tightened up to ensure trainees do not miss out on any opportunities available.

Individualised support for language development and curriculum access requires extensive knowledge of topic-related lexis, grammar and appropriate strategies used in supportive whole-classroom environments and with differentiated class activities. These are the main responsibility of the class or subject teacher, and therefore also the trainee. TAs and LSAs rarely have such responsibility or expertise. Trainees need to learn how to manage and involve them to ensure the best quality support.

The distinctive linguistic, socio-cultural and identity-related issues of EAL/WAL pupils must be fully taken into account in Welsh-medium schools, distinguishing WAL pupils from English or Welsh second language learners.
Areas of weakness in the assessment of QTS standards S1.1, S3.1.3, S3.2.5 and S3.3.5 revealed in the university tutors’ responses

FINDINGS

There is a lack of standardisation across ITT centres. Course programmes, the staged coverage of QTS standards, course handbooks, specific assessment criteria, lesson observation pro formas and methods of recording are not standardised across all ITT centres.

- The professional development records vary between institutions. The institution that removes standards S3.2.5 and S3.3.5 from the trainees’ teaching assessment profile does so because practical experience cannot be guaranteed in all schools. Consequently, there is no specific evaluation of teaching practice in relation to these standards. Instead, knowledge and understanding are assessed through formal assignments and examinations. Whilst this decision is intended to create fairness, and trainees can include practical evidence against S3.2.5 and S3.3.5 if they wish, there is no expectation for them to do so.

- Standards are covered at different times on different courses, spreading coverage of the QTS standards through the year, so the diversity and EAL/WAL standards are addressed at different times with various consequences for trainees.

- There is no guarantee of formal assessment on all courses.

- Some courses only have optional assessed components for EAL/WAL, which limits the opportunities for universities to formally assess all trainees against these standards.

Assessment of EAL/WAL is dependent on the diversity of the placement school and if trainees are not placed in a diverse school their capacity to be assessed as meeting these standards is made much more difficult.

Target setting may not include the EAL/WAL QTS standards especially if a trainee has no such pupils in their teaching groups. It may be assumed or hoped that the trainee will gain experience elsewhere, which is not always the case.

The scope and quality of trainees’ self-evaluation is variable.

The quality of school-based mentoring is variable.
Schools adopt supposedly ‘inclusive’ rather than specific approaches to teaching EAL/WAL pupils.

The quality of university tutors’ assessment is variable because:

- university tutors have limited opportunities to assess trainees’ observed lessons;
- information on the ethnic and linguistic diversity of placement schools and trainees’ classes is not requested by all tutors;
- information on the ethnic and linguistic diversity of classes is not provided by trainees;
- some tutors are more proactive than others in evaluating trainees’ evidence;
- some tutors’ levels of confidence and expertise are low in these areas;
- review of trainees’ files is not always rigorous enough.

Good practice exemplars for the diversity and EAL/WAL standards may not be provided for trainees as illustrations of evidence for assessment.

Responses to key readings provide only limited evidence, leaving a disparity between trainees who only have this for evidence and those who receive much more formal input and practical experience.

DISCUSSION

Greater consistency is clearly needed to ensure that all trainees get sufficient experience and opportunity to gather evidence for the diversity and EAL/WAL standards.

Lack of direct experience teaching EAL/WAL pupils needs to be compensated for with supplementary activities that allow trainees to work with or observe pupils or to engage imaginatively with case study situations.

More detailed good practice examples are needed for trainees to assess themselves against.

Development of knowledge and understanding should be better balanced with some experience of practice. Although included in the Handbook of Guidance, providing a selection of key readings alone is unlikely to prepare trainees to support EAL/WAL pupils in their first teaching post.

It would benefit all trainees for EAL/WAL to be consistently highlighted and asked about in observed lessons. Where no EAL/WAL pupils are present, there is potential to ask trainees to think hypothetically about what they would do differently if EAL/WAL pupils were present.
It is debatable whether or not the removal of S3.2.5 and S3.3.5 from the trainees’ teaching practice record is the best solution to the apparent problem of lack of direct contact with EAL/WAL pupils. Although it puts all trainees on a similar footing in relation to the university-based assessments, it effectively removes any requirement from placement schools to follow up on these standards where opportunities do exist. In other institutions, gaps in evidence will be clear to mentors and tutors and could be flagged up for targets and practical development, but in this case they would not. The weaker emphasis on actual practice may be a disadvantage, especially in schools where smaller numbers of EAL/WAL learners are sometimes regarded as ‘not an issue’ and may not be drawn to the attention of trainees.
Areas of weakness in assessment of QTS standards S1.1, S3.1.3, S3.2.5 and S3.3.5 revealed in the school mentors’ responses

FINDINGS

These standards are not assessed because there are few EAL/WAL learners on roll, they are not perceived to have needs that are distinct from other children or because EAL/WAL is not regarded as an issue in the school.

It is impossible or near impossible to assess these standards because of the lack of diversity in the school. The expectation is that evidence must be sought through university sessions or from other school placements.

There is insufficient expertise or experience to offer guidance to trainees in these areas due to a lack of capacity amongst staff.

Some teachers provide more advice than others. Even in diverse schools, some teachers are better equipped than others to provide advice.

It depends on whether or not trainees have already had experience to contribute to the standards, in the university, in another school placement or in their own personal experience of teaching outside the ITT course.

Trainees do not ask for help.

Few suitable opportunities within the curriculum are available. When a school’s cohort is not very diverse, opportunities across the curriculum are perceived to be fewer.

No specific criteria are used to evaluate the EAL/WAL standards in low-diversity schools. Trainees are directed to differentiate activities and interactions to meet each individual’s needs but the needs of EAL/WAL learners are not distinct from those of the other children.

DISCUSSION

There is a marked difference between assessment of these standards in low-diversity schools compared to more diverse schools but, even in some schools with more than 5% EAL/WAL pupils, interviewees acknowledged a lack of capacity and expertise.

It is understandable that schools with few or no EAL/WAL pupils find it difficult to provide opportunities for gathering or evaluating evidence but such schools could provide artificial scenarios for their trainees. Whilst this is a poor substitute for direct practical experience, it may be a useful option for some trainees who get no
experience elsewhere. If made compulsory, universities and schools should work together to draw up scenarios and guidance for mentors.

Many teachers need to be better trained, equipped and given direct responsibilities in these areas to ensure they challenge trainees and evaluate their performance with greater rigour.

Together with the weaknesses identified by the university tutors, it seems that a range of assessment strategies needs to be employed to ensure all trainees can gain adequate evidence to meet the standards.
4) What challenges do you face in preparing trainees to address the issues detailed in the above standards?

Question 4 was put to both university tutors and school-based mentors. Some of the challenges identified are very similar.

FINDINGS

Challenges for universities

There is insufficient time and ‘room’ within the training programme to cover EAL/WAL in adequate detail with time pressures leading to the removal of sessions on matters like Equality, Diversity and Social Inclusion to be replaced with other Welsh Government priorities.

Government initiatives and priorities take precedence in programme development. Government priorities and changes drive ITT programme content and EAL/WAL is one of the areas likely to be reduced or pushed out of ITT programmes.

Trainees’ workload is very challenging and, at times, ‘overwhelming’.

Providing breadth of experience for all trainees is a difficult task. Ensuring that all trainees get experience of everything they need is virtually impossible. Finding and allocating placements in diverse schools for all trainees is difficult, especially for Welsh-medium trainees.

Trainees’ attitudes, viewpoints and lack of knowledge can present challenges, which makes ‘pitching’ content in this area more difficult for university tutors.

Some tutors lack knowledge and expertise and are not confident in advising trainees about the best strategies to use to support EAL/WAL learners or about specific types of evidence to provide.

Challenges for schools

There are limited opportunities to provide trainees with experience of EAL/WAL in schools with few or no EAL/WAL pupils. It is important to provide trainees with a real, authentic and worthwhile experience of what it’s like to work with EAL/WAL learners, not a contrived or artificial one.

There is insufficient time to cover everything.
School staff members and mentors lack experience and expertise to be able to offer trainees much help.

There is a lack of school training due to prioritisation of CPD by numbers and perceived needs.

Trainees’ workload is too great. PGCE trainees, in particular, feel bombarded, overworked and ‘needy’. The amount of extra time required to prepare and differentiate work for EAL/WAL pupils is a challenge.

Trainees’ attitudes and general lack of knowledge about diversity and EAL/WAL present challenges. Some trainees have experienced very little diversity in their lives or had experience of schools with high percentages of EAL/WAL learners, so their personal understanding of social and cultural differences can be limited. Many come with misconceptions and stereotypes. Welsh-medium and some English-medium trainees can feel that EAL and diversity are not relevant.

Trainees’ lack of specific knowledge of EAL/WAL issues and of how to meet EAL/WAL pupils’ needs in practice present challenges

Some trainees:

- do not understand what EAL/WAL pupils are actually experiencing;
- assume that EAL/WAL pupils don’t know any English/Welsh at all;
- assume that EAL/WAL pupils know more English/Welsh than they do;
- overlook EAL/WAL learners, because they are usually less vocal;
- are not good at evaluating the language levels of pupils and identifying their consequent needs;
- have difficulty distinguishing between language capability and academic potential;
- take a long time to grasp the extent of or the amount of time required for differentiation;
- don’t plan appropriately to meet EAL/WAL needs;
- have weaknesses in their own use of English;
- do not know how to differentiate their spoken language or model language appropriately for EAL/WAL learners at different stages of proficiency;
- find pitching work appropriately to Stage A learners difficult and need another adult to give individual support;
- have difficulty with new arrivals coming into GCSE year;
- lack confidence in how to manage teaching assistants and other support staff and some have difficulty with partnership teaching;
- need to develop their awareness of cultural differences;
- do not raise EAL/WAL issues as areas of concern, so they are not ‘on the radar’ as things to address during placements;
- prioritise their own challenges and, because they have so much to take on, EAL is not always included in their targets.

Interviewees indicated that few or no targets for trainees in their schools had ever highlighted the need to further develop EAL/WAL.
There is a lack of specialist support. Year-on-year cuts to Local Authority EMA/EAL services are leaving schools with less specialist support, weakening their capacity to help both pupils and trainees.

There are issues relating to overseas and minority ethnic trainees. It is very important to have overseas students and trainees from UK ethnic minorities who are good teachers working in schools, increasing the diversity of the workforce, but they may also need particular kinds of support.

DISCUSSION

Challenges relate to both priorities and practicalities. University tutors and school mentors identified several common challenges.

A balance needs to be struck, within the competing demands of the course programmes, between reducing or managing trainees' workload and including sufficient opportunities for trainees to develop their knowledge, understanding and experience of diversity and EAL/WAL.

At present, EAL/WAL does not have a high enough priority on all courses to ensure consistent coverage. More creative approaches should be utilised to provide a range of opportunities for trainees. Frequent Welsh Government changes in the focus and priority of education initiatives make this difficult to achieve. The downgrading of EAL/WAL as a priority in funding and policy does not help.

The weaknesses in trainees' knowledge are many and specific. They require well-informed, well-targeted information to be addressed. There is a clear need for training of staff members in universities and schools so they can adequately tackle these challenges.
SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

In this section, responses to Q8 of the trainees’ e-survey, Q5-7 of the university tutors’ and school mentors’ interviews, and Q8 and Q9 of the school mentors’ interviews have been combined. (See the Main Report for much greater detail.)

Q8. What improvements would you suggest to enhance ITT provision in preparing trainee teachers to meet the QTS standards on diversity and EAL/WAL? a) University-based and b) School-based.

5) What improvements could be made to enhance ITT provision through your Centre in preparing trainee teachers to meet the QTS standards on diversity and EAL/WAL? a) University-based and b) School-based.

6) How could the three ITT Centres, individual universities and partner schools work together more effectively to improve provision for trainee teachers in relation to diversity and EAL/WAL (e.g. practical strategies for sharing expertise and compensating for demographic differences across the regions and between schools)?

7) What, if any, external support (e.g. expert input, teaching materials, resources, video, online information ...) would help you to prepare trainees more effectively to meet the needs of EAL/WAL pupils?

Questions 8 and 9 were included to gather information about the ongoing needs of teachers after ITT because the Welsh Government regards teachers’ professional development as a continuum extending from ITT, through NQT Induction and on through CPD.

8) What provision does the school make, or have access to, to meet any ongoing training needs in these areas for: a) NQTs during their induction period? and b) fully qualified teachers’ CPD?

9) What additional external support, resources or training would help your school to meet ongoing training needs in EAL/WAL and diversity?
Suggestions for the Welsh Government

To improve ITT provision in Wales, the Welsh Government should:

- increase the diversity of the teaching workforce;
- fund more specialist support;
- prioritise EAL/WAL in ITT, CPD and Performance Management;
- develop a coherent cycle of professional development for all teachers through ITT, NQT and CPD that includes EAL/WAL;
- highlight the range of professional qualifications for working with minority ethnic and additional language learner pupils;
- extend the PGCE course and reduce the workload;
- provide more advice and resources on diversity and EAL/WAL;
- provide better mental health support for pupils;
- distinguish between W2L and WAL;
- supply ITT institutions with schools’ data.

Suggestions for universities providing ITT

To improve provision for trainees in the university component of ITT, providers should:

- provide training and improve professional development for ITT tutors;
- provide more detailed and specific coverage as a discrete element in the university component of ITT;
- embed more, relevant diversity and EAL/WAL content in other areas of ITT courses;
- make direct contact with or observation of EAL/WAL pupils a compulsory requirement;
- create enhancement or compensating opportunities for trainees where direct experience is not possible;
- offer better information and guidance for trainees on diversity and EAL/WAL.

All university ITT course providers should work together to:

- improve collaborative working between tutors in different ITT Centres;
- coordinate and harmonise course programmes;
- improve mentor training;
- allocate placements so as many trainees as possible have a variety of schools, at least one of which should be a diverse school with EAL/WAL learners.

University course providers should communicate effectively with partner schools and:

- make it a compulsory requirement for all schools to address EAL/WAL and provide specific types of experience of diversity and EAL/WAL for trainees;
- provide clear guidance and information for schools;
- hold schools accountable for fulfilling their requirements.
Suggestions for ITT placement schools

To improve provision for trainees on placement, schools should:

- provide better advice and support for trainees;
- set and evaluate EAL/WAL targets for all trainees;
- create opportunities for trainees to focus on EAL/WAL;
- organise visits for trainees to more diverse schools or centres.

To improve practice in schools so they are in a better position to support and advise trainees, schools should:

- analyse data by ethnicity and EAL/WAL;
- analyse language demands in greater detail;
- have a named teacher with responsibility for EAL/WAL;
- train staff members;
- involve pupils in discussing these matters and gather feedback from them;
- pair specialists and NQTs;
- make more planning time available;
- take more responsibility for developing EAL/WAL pupils’ English in Welsh-medium schools.

Suggestions for joint working between universities and schools

University providers and partner schools should work together to:

- share funding and exchange resources;
- explore the use of in-class cameras for observation of EAL/WAL pupils;
- produce resources to support training on diversity and EAL/WAL in ITT;
- establish centres of good practice;
- set up a support network for schools.
RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1
Draw up a model of good practice for addressing diversity and EAL/WAL in ITT courses in Wales.

Recommendation 2
Collate, commission or produce resources to meet identified needs.

Recommendation 3
Set up a formal training programme for Wales on diversity and EAL/WAL.

Recommendation 4
Produce a software app for allocating placements (see Main Report for a suggested model).

Recommendation 5
Follow a spiral model of teacher training and professional development incorporating EAL/WAL as a discrete element (see Main Report for a suggested model).