Teachers' lived experiences of Collaborative Professional Learning for the development of oracy skills in Welsh: insights from the *Ein Llais Ni* design-based implementation programme

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ABSTRACT

Spoken language skills – often referred to as 'oracy' – are key predictors of children's later academic and life successes (Oracy All-Party Parliamentary Group, 2021). Good oracy skills are linked with improved reading abilities (Bialystok, 2007). However, many children struggle to acquire oracy skills sufficiently, highlighting the need for professional learning opportunities to equip teachers with useful strategies to develop pupils' oracy skills at school. This study evaluates the effectiveness of the *Ein Llais Ni* (ELIN) programme, a design-based implementation programme delivered to ninety-five Welsh-medium schools as a form of Collaborative Professional Learning (CPL) to support teachers through mentorship and training, co-constructed and delivered through a collaborative partnership model, in order to develop pupils' oracy skills in Welsh.

Using semi-structured interviews, we asked twelve teachers from across seven participating primary and secondary schools about their experiences of the ELIN CPL programme during the first year of the project's implementation. Thematic analysis of the interviews found that whilst teachers face a variety of linguistic challenges, they highly valued being part of

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a collaborative programme focused around a common goal. They particularly valued the programme's emphasis on professional collaboration and the availability of diverse resources and events. Some initial uncertainty regarding their roles and expectations were noted, but these did not overshadow the positive impact of being part of the programme.

Overall, teachers reported improvements both in pupils' oracy skills and in their own teaching practice. However, they also expressed some uncertainty about aspects of self-evaluating their own practice, suggesting a need for clearer guidance in this area to further enhance the programme.

Keywords: Welsh, oracy, literacy, design-based research, design-based implementation research, collaborative professional learning

INTRODUCTION

The ability to contribute fluently, confidently and persuasively within society has become a crucial skill to develop, particularly within the workplace (see e.g. Bronn, 2014; Gray, 2010; Haslam, 2002; Jackson, 2014; Young and Murphy, 2003). Good oracy skills – 'the capacity to develop and express ideas through speech' and 'being able to listen attentively and speak lucidly and understandably' (Donaldson, 2015: 48) – are essential components of thinking and learning, and developing effective oracy skills has become a core aspect of children's educational experiences (Alexander, 2013; Shiel et al., 2012). However, despite its introduction into the education system as far back as the 1960s (Wilkinson, 1965), the development of oracy skills has tended to receive less attention and recognition within schools as compared to other language and literacy-based skills (Alexander, 2013; Kaldahl, Bachinger and Rijlaarsdam, 2019; Mercer, Warwick and Ahmed, 2017), leading to 'the relationship of oracy to literacy [being] generally perceived to be one of subordination' (Haworth, 2001: 13).

Whilst oracy is often associated with speech or speaking, oracy skills involve much more than simply using or producing a language expressively. Oracy involves a wide variety of competencies, encompassing cognitive (e.g. executive function – attention, selective attention, memory, memory recall, processing, listening, interpreting, analysing), linguistic (e.g. pronunciation, intonation),

pragmatic (e.g. body language; engagement; initiating, sustaining and ending conversations) and psychosocial skills (e.g. attitude, confidence, emotion, etc.) (see, e.g. Thomas and Caulfield, 2022; 2024). For this reason, the concept of oracy has been viewed as 'a web of interconnecting skills' which ultimately lays the foundation for children's learning and ultimate achievements (Moats, 2010: 3; Oracy All-Party Parliamentary Group, 2021). Developing good oracy skills is known to result in positive outcomes for children, both in terms of their language development and in other domains. In particular, studies have shown positive relationships between good oracy skills and aspects of language ability such as vocabulary (Beck, McKeown and Kucan, 2002) and reading comprehension (Nakamoto, Lindsey and Manis, 2008; Ouellette, 2006). Similarly, children with poor language skills at age five are six times less likely to reach the expected standard of English by age eleven (Oracy All-Party Parliamentary Group, 2021).

The increased application of asynchronous learning during the Covid years, paired with various other restrictions to people's daily lives (e.g. socialising and household mixing) meant that many children experienced a lack of meaningful interactions that may have impacted their oracy development and language development more generally. Consequently, many children may have lost confidence in using their oracy skills around others: to effectively express themselves, communicate with, and listen to others (see, e.g. Thomas et al., 2021, for a review on the impact of the pandemic on children's Welsh). Schools therefore need to be at the forefront of pupils' skills development in the post-pandemic era, and to identify effective practices via methods that actively involve pupils and engage their interests (Stephen et al. 2008). One way of achieving this would be through combining professional learning with evaluative processes as a means of learning about the impact of different learning opportunities. Design-Based Research is one such approach.

Design-based research

Design-Based Research – also referred to as *Design Research* (Oh and Reeves, 2010), *Development Research* (Conceição, Sherry and Gibson, 2004) and *Educational Design Research* (McKenney, 2024) – has gained popularity as a research methodology in education since the early 1990s (Bell, 2004; Anderson and Shattuck, 2012).

Common to all design-based approaches is the intention to bridge education research and practice more effectively (Getenet, 2019), using research findings to inform and sometimes solve authentic classroom-based problems (Penuel et al., 2011). In that sense, design-based paradigms have some shared commonalities with other approaches to classroom evaluations such as *Implementation Research* (Fixsen et al., 2005) and *Participatory Evaluation* (Cousins and Earl, 1992). However, whilst a design-based research paradigm offers a degree of flexibility to how it is delivered (Bell, 2004), there are three key elements that are characteristic of the approach (cf. McKenney, 2024: 76):

First, one of the goals of design-based research is to generate improvement in educational practice. This is done through exploring and evaluating new ways of delivery, fuelled by a combination of practical and theoretical knowledge. In this sense, design-based research is seen as interventionist. Second, effective change in educational practice happens through academic researchers and practitioners working collaboratively towards a common goal, bringing their own skills and experiences together. In partnership, they develop strategies for education improvement that are often rooted in theory and practice. In this sense, design-based research is seen as collaborative. Finally, in implementing interventions in the classroom, researchers and practitioners work together in responding to findings, refining techniques, '[using] theory as an input and … produc[ing] or refin[ing] theory as an output' (McKenny, 2024: 76). In this sense, design-based research is seen as responsive. This interventionist, collaborative and responsive approach to educational improvement lends itself well to models of Collaborative Professional Learning (CPL). The characteristics of CPL are outlined below.

Collaborative professional learning

In educational contexts, Collaborative Professional Learning (CPL) can be defined as 'any occasion where a teacher works with or talks to another teacher to improve their own or others' understanding of any pedagogical issue' (Duncombe and Armour, 2004: 144). The idea of CPL is also similar to that of professional learning networks or communities: groups where people work with others outside of their typical work community in order to improve standards of teaching and

learning, either within their schools or across the school system more generally (Poortman and Brown, 2018).

Teachers' professional learning experiences typically involves a variety of opportunities, which may include a mixture of activities that are either formal or informal, compulsory or voluntary in nature (Wilson and Berne, 1999). This idea of collaborating with others across schools is one that has gained traction in recent years. Stoll (2010) proposed that new challenges that arise within the education sector are too great for schools to tackle alone, ultimately necessitating a shift from focusing upon improvement *within* schools to improvement *across* schools (Chapman, in Prenger, Poortman and Handelzalts, 2021). Such networks can allow teachers to consider their existing pedagogical knowledge and build upon it to improve and enhance their own teaching practices (Carmi, Guberman and Cohen Brandeis, 2025); this can be achieved by exchanging ideas and receiving feedback around their existing practices, and by becoming aware of their beliefs and being able to critically analyse them when needed (Putnam and Borko, 2000). This can be aided by a repertoire of resources and tools that can be developed further as the networks themselves evolve (Wenger, 1998) and become rooted within their practice as teachers become more acquainted with the tools (Brown and Duguid, 1991; Longhurst, Jones and Campbell, 2022).

Prenger, Poortman and Handelzalts (2021) identified a series of characteristics that should be considered before the implementation of any professional activities. These are (i) structured activities that are suitably related to practice, (ii) shared goals and a solid focus on a concrete outcome (e.g. Hord, 2004; Sleegers et al., 2013), (iii) a collective focus on student learning (e.g. Mitchell & Sackney, 2000; Strahan, 2003), (iv) previous knowledge and motivation, (v) trust (e.g. Stoll et al., 2006), (vi) collaboration and active participation (e.g. Berry, Johnson & Montgomery, 2005; Bolam et al., 2005; Phillips, 2003), (vii) reflective dialogue (e.g. DuFour and Eaker, 1998; Little and McLaughlin, 1993), (viii) leadership (Kruse, Louis and Bryk, 1994), (ix) support from stakeholders such as headteachers and colleagues, and (x) facilitation. Other studies have noted additional characteristics that may be common aspects of collaborative professional learning. These include, but may not be limited to, continuous learning and improvement (DuFour and Eaker, 1998; Hollins et al., 2004), which would ultimately result in professional and individual growth (Bolam et al., 2005) and experimenting with newfound strategies and ideas (DuFour and Eaker, 1998). Whilst continuous learning and improvement

can happen through collaborative learning, it can be facilitated further through additional processes that serve to evaluate the effectiveness of teaching methods such as Design-Based Implementation Research.

Design-based implementation research

Whilst design-based research focuses on improving classroom learning opportunities through developing practitioners' confidence to create, implement and evaluate their own tried-and-tested strategies in an iterative and collaborative fashion (Tinoca et al., 2022), *Design-Based Implementation Research* (DBIR) (Penuel et al., 2011) allows for a more systemic approach, focused around developing capacity for sustained change on a broader organisational level (Fishman et al., 2013). In doing do, DBIR involves multiple, interdisciplinary teams of stakeholders including researchers, regional school improvement advisors or their equivalents, and practitioners. As with design-based research, DBIR is firmly rooted in a collaborative, iterative approach to learning about the effectiveness of any classroom intervention. This is often achieved through co-design and co-development of Professional Learning (PL) programmes that are aimed at improving educational practices in targeted areas through meaningful collaboration between researchers and practitioners (Wang and Hannafin, 2005), learning *with* rather than *about* those individuals involved in developing and delivering these programmes (Supovitz, 2013). However, the strengths lie in combining the insights, expertise and perspectives that each stakeholder brings, leading to new knowledge and understanding of the effectiveness of the PL programme as it develops. Working collaboratively in this way allows system-wide programmes to be refined and adapted to suit the needs of different schools and learners in order to 'foster alignment and coordination of supports for improving what takes place in classrooms' (Penuel et al, 2011: 331). In taking a wider, multi-school-based approach to school improvement, some DBIR programmes are directed by the region or district such as the Middle School Mathematics and the Institutional Setting of Teaching (MIST) project led by Vanderbilt University (Cobb, Henrick and Munter, 2011). The focus of such projects – in this case mathematical ability – is often influenced by political or strategic target settings, such as Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) results, organised by the Organisation for

Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). Such DBIR programmes often span over multiple time periods in order to provide breathing spaces for learning and iteration as the programme develops, but is coordinated by a single team of programme developers working in close collaboration with the remaining stakeholders. This team of programme developers decide on the area for intervention, but the shape and form of the wider programme evolves as the programme progresses.

In the current study, we explored a systems-wide approach to supporting effective implementation of a Welsh-language oracy intervention in the form of a CPL programme rolled out to multiple schools within an area spanning six regional jurisdictions, the *Ein Llais Ni* 'Our Bilingual Voices' project.

The *Ein Llais Ni* programme

The *Ein Llais Ni* (ELIN) programme is built on the principles of collaboration, the sharing of effective practice, leadership development, and the application of research to classroom practice that, together, form the basis of professional learning (Prenger, Poortman and Handelzalts, 2021). A key focus that sets this programme apart from others has been the development of effective oracy pedagogy within the bilingual and multilingual context of Wales. Wales is an official bilingual country where both Welsh and English hold legal status (Welsh Government, 2011) and where education is devolved. All pupils attending government-maintained schools in Wales learn Welsh, either through studying Welsh as a subject or through receiving their education through the medium of Welsh (Jones, 2016). At the time of the current study, 25.5 per cent of schools in Wales (n = 375) were Welsh-medium, catering for 77,693 pupils, 4.4 per cent were bilingual (n = 64; 31,638 pupils) and 66.9 per cent were English-medium (n = 983; 355,716 pupils) (StatsWales, 2024a, 2024b).[1] In order to focus on pupils' development of oracy in Welsh, the current study focused on Welsh-medium

1 The percentages noted above total 96.8 per cent of all schools in Wales at the time of the study (n = 1,422). The remaining 3.2 per cent (n = 48) are noted as being non-applicable to the linguistic categorisations, due to being special schools, nursery schools etc. (StatsWales, 2024b).

schools, where all pupils received their education through the medium of Welsh and were therefore acquiring Welsh as an L1. However, each school varied in terms of the proportion of pupils who were already L1, coming from Welsh-speaking families versus the proportion of pupils coming from non-Welsh-speaking families and therefore acquiring Welsh predominantly through the school system. This posed an interesting context for the development of effective oracy development in a minoritised language, across varying proficiency levels, through the ELIN project.

Currently in its fifth full year of operation, the ELIN project offers a collaborative learning experience (Poortman & Brown, 2018) allowing teachers the opportunity to work together with their peers across the region, receive mentorship, workshop training and advice, and access to high-level, research-informed tools and resources (Wenger, 1998) in order to build a portfolio of strategies and evidence-based evaluations of those strategies that are shared with their peers.

During the first year of operation, teachers signed up to the programme for an entire school year and had unlimited access to a range of resources via an on-line hub inclusive of example strategies, guidebooks, videos, etc., opportunities to attend various training events (in-person conferences, on-line tutorials, workshops, one-to-one drop-in support sessions, etc.) and were required to evidence their engagement and impact through producing portfolios of evidence to help evaluate the effectiveness of their interventions (see https://www.einllaisni.cymru/ for full details of the project). PL sessions were carefully designed to guide practitioners through the process of designing and implementing a programme of research-informed oracy strategies, either for themselves as classroom practitioners or as a school-wide approach, rooted in the values and principles of the Curriculum for Wales.[2] The programme involved both within- and across- school, teacher-teacher collaborations as well as cluster school collaborations led by designated oracy champions from within the practitioner pool. It involved leadership and input from regional support advisors working in collaboration with schools and oracy champions, and it involved academic input, resources and research co-developed with university researchers and language experts. As each PL session introduced new pedagogical strategies, participants deepened their understanding and

2 https://hwb.gov.wales/curriculum-for-wales

embedded effective oracy planning at the heart of their curriculum. Throughout the collaborative process, practitioners were encouraged to regularly share their progress and reflect on the impact of their actions with peers during the on-line collaborative sessions and at the end of year conference. In these presentations, they discussed how they had adapted, refined, and personalised shared ideas and resources to meet the specific needs of their learners. They prepared evaluation data and evidence to demonstrate effectiveness of their practices and recommendations for future applications.

Prior to its first year of operation, an open invitation was extended to all Welsh-medium schools in the north Wales region – covering 166 schools – inviting them to submit an application if they wished to participate. Of the 106 applications received, ninety-five schools committed to the requirements of the programme. Schools were compensated for their participation through financial remuneration in order to release two members of staff to attend a minimum number of PL events, with the amount received proportional to the level of engagement required (minimum five-day attendance, three-day attendance or two-day attendance). The core activities of the programme are outlined in Table 1:

Table 1: Timetabled events as part of the core provision of the ELIN project

Event	*Date*	*No. of participants*	*No. of schools*	*% engagement*
Conference	Sept. 2021	109	82	86%
Drop in 1	Nov. 2021	40	32	-
Network 1	Nov. 2021	67	51	86%
Drop in 2	Dec. 2021	23	17	-
Network 2	Feb. 2022	61	47	80%
Drop in 3	Mar. 2022	12	11	-
Digital workshop 1	Mar. 2022	52	44	86%
Digital workshop 2	Mar. 2022	37	31	86%
Network 3	Mar. 2022	41	33	56%
Student voice questionnaires	Jan. & May 2022	-	43	49%
Case studies	Jun. 2022	-	65	74%
Conference	Nov. 2022	Open to all stakeholders, including students		

Research aims

This study aimed to provide an evaluation of the first year of implementation of ELIN as a CPL intervention that was developed within a design-based implementation framework. Three research questions were posed:

1. What are the challenges to oracy development among L1 and L2 Welsh speaking children attending Welsh-medium schools in north Wales?
2. What are teachers' experiences of the project?
3. What impact did the project have on themselves as practitioners and on the pupils?

METHOD

Participants

Six teachers from four primary schools and six from three secondary schools were interviewed for the study. These seven schools were chosen from among ninety-five Welsh-medium schools that were part of the *Ein Llais Ni* (ELIN) project – 7 per cent of the schools involved – and were selected through purposive sampling (Palinkas et al., 2016). The criterion used to determine the selection of the seven schools included the need for representation from (i) the primary and secondary school sectors, (ii) the three cluster regions[3] of north Wales (see Tables 2 and 3), and (iii) areas where Welsh is at its most stable within society (Gwynedd and Anglesey), relatively stable in certain regions (Conwy and Denbighshire) and highly marginalised within society (Flintshire and Wrexham).[4] The demographics of each participating school are noted in Table 2.

3 We present our findings across three clusters due to the alignment of linguistic characteristics across the dyads of Local Education Authorities (LEAs) within each cluster. We refer separately to the individual LEAs where necessary.

4 Gwynedd and Anglesey are the two local authority areas with the highest proportions of Welsh speakers, at 64.3 per cent and 55.8 per cent, respectively; they are the only local authorities in Wales where Welsh is spoken by a majority of people. In Conwy and Denbighshire, Welsh is spoken by 25.9 per cent and 22.5 per cent of the population, whilst in Flintshire and Wrexham, it is spoken by 11.6 per cent and 12.2 per cent of the population (StatsWales, 2022).

Table 2: Demographics of participating schools[5]

Local Authority Cluster	*Sector*	*No. of pupils*	*% Welsh-speaking homes*	*% EAL*	*% ALN*	*% FSM*
Gwynedd & Anglesey	Primary	201–300	<10%	>50%	11–20%	21-30%
Gwynedd & Anglesey	Primary	301–400	Many[6]	-	21–30%	21-30%
Gwynedd & Anglesey	Secondary	401–500	61–70%	<10%	11–20%	11–20%
Gwynedd & Anglesey	Secondary	401–500	71–80%	<10%	<10%	11–20%
Conwy & Denbighshire	Primary	301–400	<10%	-	21–30%	<10%
Conwy & Denbighshire	Primary	<100	31–40%	<10%	11–20%	11–20%
Flintshire & Wrexham	Secondary	>500	21–30%	<10%	11–20%	<10%

Schools that were identified through purposive sampling were contacted, and their school representative(s) on the project invited to take part in an interview. Willingness to take part is a critical factor in purposive sampling, as it depends on participants' readiness to share their experiences and knowledge in an open manner (Bernard, 2002). Participation was therefore entirely voluntary and not a condition of the school, or themselves as school representatives, having taken part in the ELIN project. For that reason, and given time constraints on the project, it was not possible to involve equal numbers of schools per school sector and per cluster region in the interviews due to staff availability and willingness to take part. Coupled with the selection criteria outlined above to ensure suitable

5 The demographic data for each school has been gathered from each school's *Estyn* inspection report. To maintain anonymity, the inspection reports will not be referenced.

6 Some *Estyn* inspection reports use worded quantities and proportions to describe schools' demographics as opposed to numerical proportions. *Estyn* (2023) state that 'many' is typically used to describe a proportion of 70 per cent or higher whilst 'most' is used to describe proportions of higher than 90 per cent (*Estyn*, 2023). Therefore, we can deduce that 70–89 per cent of pupils in this school come from Welsh-speaking homes.

representation within the sample, the final sample size of twelve was ample enough as a qualitative dataset to provide meaningful results (Guest, Bunce and Johnson, 2006). The final number of participants per school, and within each cluster region, that agreed to take part in the interviews is shown in Table 3. All twelve teachers were native Welsh-speakers and taught in Welsh-medium school settings.

Table 3: Number of teachers that were interviewed per school sector and cluster region

Local Authority Cluster	*Primary*	*Secondary*
Gwynedd & Anglesey	2 schools (3 teachers)	2 schools (4 teachers)
Conwy & Denbighshire	2 schools (3 teachers)	-
Flintshire & Wrexham	-	1 school (2 teachers)

A semi-structured interview protocol was devised, including a series of 'planned prompts' (McCracken, 1988) to ensure some level of consistency in application of the main research questions across the individual interviews whilst also allowing for some flexibility (Leech, 2002). Each question was presented in an open-ended format in order to encourage teachers to elaborate on their responses. The interviews were focused around three key aspects of interest: (i) contextual information (e.g., current linguistic challenges facing the school); (ii) the strategies they developed as part of the project; and (iii) their experiences (and that of their pupils) whilst being part of the ELIN project. Some interviews were conducted face-to-face, whilst others were conducted on-line using Microsoft Teams. All teachers consented for their interview to be recorded to aid transcription and analysis.

RESULTS

Responses to the interview questions were subjected to reflective thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2019), conducted within a constructivist grounded theory approach (Charmaz, 2014; 2016). Data were coded and clustered around a set of evolving themes. These themes were subsequently reviewed and refined following

multiple readings of the transcripts and discussions among the research team. In the end, the analysis yielded three main themes that aligned with the research questions, each with further thematic divisions. All direct quotations are reported verbatim.

THEME 1: LINGUISTIC CHALLENGES

Despite all of the schools involved in this project being Welsh-medium schools, developing pupils' Welsh oracy skills was challenged by a number of factors. These factors are discussed briefly below with annotated quotations where appropriate.

(i) The Children's Language Experiences

A number of teachers referred to the varying linguistic profiles of pupils in their class as a barrier to developing pupils' Welsh oracy skills. Certain types of home language experiences and socio-economic backgrounds were seen as limiting pupils' engagement with extracurricular experiences in Welsh. Teachers felt that many parents who themselves do not speak Welsh, and/or those that have limited means, were not always able to support the school's linguistic mission outside of school (e.g., by attending *Eisteddfod yr Urdd*).

> *Mae gennyn ni rhai o rieni sy'n deallt y Gymraeg, ond ddim yn siarad fo efo plant adre.*
>
> We have some parents who understand Welsh, but don't speak it with their children at home. (Primary Teacher – Conwy & Denbighshire)
>
> *Mae gennyn ni lot o rieni sydd wedi bod i [ysgol] yn ysgol uwchradd a dydyn nhw ddim yn hyderus rwan – 'oh I've lost all my Welsh' – 'oh yeah but that's fine' a – ychydig bach efo'r plant yn gwneud gwahaniaeth.*
>
> We have a lot parents who've been to [school] for secondary school and they're not confident now – 'oh I've lost all my Welsh' – 'oh yeah but that's fine' – a little bit with the children makes a difference. (Primary Teacher – Conwy & Denbighshire)

The effects of limited engagement with Welsh outside of school were noted as particularly challenging during the summer period, when any learning gains achieved at school can result in learning loss (Allinder et al., 1992; Broekman et al., 2021; Gershenson and Hayes, 2013).

Da ni yn y cyfnod rwan lle bydd rhai o blant yn mynd adre am chwe wythnos a maen nhw'n dod yn ol i'r ysgol a fyddyn nhw ddim yn siarad Cymraeg. Mae hon yn her eto, ti'n teimlo bod chdi'n dechrau o'r dechrau ym mis Medi bob tro.

We are in the current period where some children will go home for six weeks and they come back to school and they won't speak Welsh. This is a challenge again, you feel like you're starting from scratch in September every time. (Secondary Teacher – Gwynedd & Anglesey)

(ii) The Influence of English

Some teachers noted that developing children's Welsh oracy skills was particularly challenging in some of the more Anglicised areas where there are fewer models that practise using Welsh outside of school. This then leads to the misunderstanding that Welsh is the language of the school and not a living language, leading children (and their parents) to question the purpose or need to develop good Welsh language skills. Due to the pervasiveness of English, not only in the local community but also globally, teachers mentioned that many parents (and their children in school) believe that acquiring skills in English is sufficient on its own (cf. Thomas et al., 2024 for similar views around the perceived importance of English in the STEM subjects). Another adverse effect of the higher status of English that was noted by the teachers was that there is a tendency for children, even at primary school age, to hold negative connotations around the Welsh language, such as Welsh not being 'cool'. One teacher expressed this in the context of Welsh affecting their 'street cred' while another pointed out that some children simply refuse to speak Welsh, leading the teachers to use more English in the classroom than they did in previous years, which challenges the very basis of Welsh oracy:

Dwi'n siarad mwy o Saesneg rwan a dwi erioed wedi wneud achos dydy'r plant ddim yn deallt.

I speak more English now than I ever did because the children do not understand. (Primary Teacher – Gwynedd & Anglesey)

Dechreuais i yma tua saith mlynedd yn ôl, ac am tair, pedair blynedd, nesh i'm clywed gair o Saesneg yn cael ei ddweud yn y cynteddau, ar yr iard, y neuadd ginio, na dim byd. Ond erbyn heddiw, da chi'n clywed y plant yn sgwrsio efo'u gilydd yn Saesneg.

I started here about seven years ago, and for three, four years, I didn't hear a word of English being said in the hallways, on the yard, the dinner hall, or anything. But by today, you

can hear the children chatting with each other in English. (Primary Teacher – Gwynedd & Anglesey)

Os ti'n dechrau siarad efo rhywun mewn un iaith, mae'n anodd newid i iaith arall.

If you start speaking with someone in one language, it's hard to change to another language. (Primary Teacher – Gwynedd & Anglesey)

(iii) Attitudes

In a few cases, the teachers noted that parents sometimes challenge the school's focus on developing children's Welsh language skills, as this is seen as hindering their development in English. A number of teachers noted that children from non-Welsh-speaking backgrounds influence other pupils to use English over Welsh (cf. Hickey, 2001, 2007; Thomas and Roberts, 2011). However, there was some awareness that children from Welsh-speaking households often use English expressions and vocabulary when conversing among themselves and also turn to using English when conversing with pupils from non-Welsh-speaking backgrounds. Although pupils attending Welsh-medium schools have a good understanding of Welsh, many of the teachers felt that pupils lack confidence in using Welsh. Whilst many do try to use Welsh, they quickly lose confidence and turn back to English:

Os di'r plant ddim yn gwybod gair yn Gymraeg, maen nhw dweud o yn Saesneg, ond maen nhw dweud y frawddeg cyfan yn Saesneg hefyd achos bod nhw ddim yn gwybod yr un gair 'na.

If the children don't know a word in Welsh, they say it in English, but they also say the whole sentence in English because they don't know that one word. (Primary Teacher – Conwy & Denbighshire)

However, one teacher commented that supporting more use of Welsh is possible in a controlled classroom environment, provided that the concepts under discussion are of interest to or have been chosen by the pupils.

Os mae'r ddiddordeb yna, os da ni'n gallu dod â ddiddordeb nhw i mewn, mae'r sgwrs yn dod lot haws; dyna beth da ni 'di sylwi efo'r gwaith pren. Mae gena i blentyn, ar ddechrau'r flwyddyn doedd o ddim yn siarad llawer o Gymraeg, yn reit benderfynol bod o ddim yn siarad Cymraeg chwaith. Ag roedd o'n gwneud ei westy gwenyn, a 'sawl hoel fydd ei angen?' oedd y cwestiwn, a wnaeth o droi rownd a dweud 'pedwar, un i bob cornel'.

> If there is that interest, if we can bring that interest in, the conversation becomes a lot easier; that's what we noticed with the woodwork. I have a child, at the beginning of the year he didn't speak much Welsh, quite determined that he didn't speak Welsh either. As he was making his guest house, and the question was 'how many nails will we need?', he turned round and said 'four, one for each corner'. Primary Teacher – Conwy & Denbighshire)

(iv) Impact of COVID-19

One consistent theme highlighted throughout the interviews was the long-term impact of the lockdown period, and the distance learning that occurred as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic (see also Thomas et al., 2021 and Lloyd-Williams et al., 2023 for a thorough treatment of teachers' and parents' perceptions of the impact of COVID-19 on children's Welsh language skills and engagement). According to a number of the teachers, the influence of English has been stronger than usual since the pandemic. Consequently, teachers felt that they are having to use English more now than ever before in class in order to ensure understanding. Others noted that the lockdown period destroyed any linguistic progress children had made up to that point:

> *Dydy plant ni ddim efo geirfa o gwbl.*
>
> Our children do not have a vocabulary at all. (Primary Teacher – Gwynedd & Anglesey)

However, one teacher also mentioned that children's oral skills in their L1 when arriving at Nursery had been declining over time and that developing children's language skills, especially in an L2 context, is more challenging today than ever before.

Together, these factors influenced the teachers' approaches to developing pupils' oracy skills in Welsh and served as a catalyst for their engagement with the ELIN project.

THEME 2: EXPERIENCE OF THE PROJECT

A number of strengths were highlighted for the project, and several comments were offered in order to help move the project forward to the next stage. These

are discussed under three sub-themes: (i) resources, (ii) project plan and requirements, and (iii) the events.

(i) Resources

All of the teachers noted that the quality, breadth and volume of content provided within the on-line resource (the 'tools' referred to by Wenger, 1998) was excellent, and served to trigger engagement with various strategies that some teachers had not engaged with for a while:

> *Roedd o'n braf yndoedd, cael enghreifftiau i atgoffa ni.*
>
> It was nice, wasn't it, to have examples to remind us. (Secondary Teacher - Gwynedd & Anglesey)
>
> *Mae'n braf i drio pethau gwahanol.*
>
> It's nice to try different things. (Primary Teacher – Conwy & Denbighshire)

Some teachers remarked that whilst a large volume of strategies and resources was greatly appreciated, the key element for them was usability within the classroom:

> *Dwi efo Blwyddyn 1, felly roeddwn i'n eisiau wneud rhywbeth mor syml ag oni'n gallu.*
>
> I'm with Year 1, so I wanted something as simple as possible. (Primary Teacher – Conwy & Denbighshire)

One teacher welcomed the variety of resources due to an apparent lack of age-appropriate resources for the age range of their pupils:

> *Mae llyfrau darllen Cymraeg yn anodd, mae rhaglenni teledu Cymraeg i gyd o'r de, so mae'n anodd i blant sy'n dysgu Cymraeg; maen nhw'n hŷn, dydyn nhw ddim eisiau gwylio cartoons, dydyn nhw ddim eisiau llyfrau Non a Sam, does na ddim byd i ddysgwyr yng Nghyfnod Allweddol 2.*
>
> Welsh reading books are difficult, Welsh television programmes are all from the south, so it is difficult for children who are learning Welsh; they are older, they don't want to watch cartoons, they don't want Non and Sam books, there is nothing for learners in Key Stage 2. (Primary Teacher - Gwynedd & Anglesey)

In particular, teachers appreciated the work that had gone into collating example strategies within the resource. The teachers felt that this reduced any expectation

that taking part in the project would entail teachers having to spend a lot of time engaging with the wider academic literature themselves and this collaborative aspect of the programme was therefore seen as a means of facilitating teachers' 'interventionist' (McKenney, 2024) role within the project.

> *Roedd GwE wedi cael yr amser i chwilio am y gwahanol bethau yma; apps maen nhw'n gallu defnyddio, a mi oedd o'n werthfawr cael yr amser yna.*
>
> GwE had had the time to look for these different things; apps they can use, and I found it valuable to have that time. (Primary Teacher – Gwynedd & Anglesey)

For many teachers, providing the evidence base alongside the practical resource affirmed the appropriateness of their own educational practices and reminded them of the different strategies that exist, ultimately reinforcing a degree of flexibility in the approaches they could use to trial, adapt and enhance their own practices. However, not all teachers had been as involved as they would have liked to have been with the resources available due to the volume of documents on offer.

> *Yr unig ymateb oedd yn dod fyny gan yr athrawon eraill oedd 'sgena i ddim amser i chwilio pa strategaeth sy'n mynd efo pob un peth'.*
>
> The only response coming up from the other teachers was 'I have no time to search which strategy goes with each and every thing'. (Primary Teacher – Gwynedd & Anglesey)

(ii) Project Plan and Requirements

One key feature that seemed to have positively influenced teachers' experiences of being involved in the programme was its collaborative nature set around a common goal (cf. Hord, 2004; Sleegers et al., 2013). In particular, teachers were appreciative of the continued support provided by the project team throughout their journey. This was seen as a key feature of the CPL approach. Many felt that the programme's design helped them to consider the potential impact of their own engagement with the project on the development of oracy on a school-wide basis – allowing teachers to adopt the 'responsive' (McKenney, 2024) element of the design-based model. By being part of a collaborative regional project and learning from the experiences of teachers in other schools, many felt that the programme encouraged them to reflect upon the specific linguistic needs of their area and their pupils. One teacher

believed that more targeted levels of collaboration between schools could have been a beneficial aspect of the project, and mentioned this as something to be considered when moving the project forward:

> *Mi ddylsen nhw rhoi cyfleoedd i gael ysgolion weithio fel dalgylch, potentially efo ysgolion efo'r un her(iau) ieithyddol.*
>
> They should have opportunities for schools to work as a catchment area, potentially with schools with the same linguistic challenge(s). (Primary Teacher – Conwy & Denbighshire)

There was some ambiguity as to exactly what the requirements were from the point of view of the teachers involved in the project:

> *'Sa fo'n dda cael yr esboniad reit o'r dechrau just i mi gael dealltwriaeth cywir a dim just beth dwi meddwl dwi wedi deallt.*
>
> It would be good to have the explanation right from the start just so I have a correct understanding and not just what I think I have understood. (Primary Teacher – Conwy & Denbighshire)

However, the aims and objectives of the project became clearer as the project progressed, and the opinion of several staff was that this type of project needed time to root:

> *Mae hwn yn prosiect pum i ddeg mlynedd baswn i'n ddweud.*
>
> This is a five-to-ten-year project I would say. (Primary Teacher – Gwynedd & Anglesey)
>
> *Mae rhaid i ysgolion barhau – dydy'r prosiect ddim wedi gorffen – dydy'r broses yma ddim yn mynd i ddigwydd dros nos.*
>
> Schools must continue – the project is not finished – this process is not going to happen overnight. (Primary Teacher – Gwynedd & Anglesey)

(iii) The Events

One very positive feature was the fact that teachers benefited from collaborating with, and learning from, the experiences of other schools through the online mass meetings. The drop-in sessions in particular had been very useful and had enabled teachers to receive feedback to questions in a responsive manner, ensuring that they felt more confident in what they were required to do. By receiving effective

feedback in those sessions, teachers were able to act responsively (McKenney, 2024) and take ownership of their practices by analysing them and solving any potential issues: identifying what needed more attention, and what was potentially taking too much of their attention and disrupting what they were required to achieve. Whilst hosting these events on-line was necessary due to financial and time constraints, it was felt, by some, that the on-line experience was not always the best option when there were numerous attendees and that it missed the more nuanced elements that a face-to-face approach would allow:

> *Mae Teams yn gret, mae'n andros o handy yndydy, yn arbennig i betha felly. Ond pan mae yna gymaint ohonyn ni, dydy o ddim mor effeithiol nac ydy dros gyfrifiadur?*
>
> Teams is great, it's extremely handy isn't it, especially for things like that. But when there are so many of us, it is not as effective over a computer, is it? (Primary Teacher – Conwy & Denbighshire)
>
> *Mae'r ffordd mae rhywun yn modelu rhywbeth ar-lein yn hollol wahanol i sut basen nhw'n wneud o mewn person.*
>
> The way that someone models something online is completely different to how they would do it in person. (Primary Teacher – Conwy & Denbighshire)

However, one of the major obstacles for schools was releasing staff to attend drop-in sessions and online networking sessions, leading to some staff having missed some sessions. Drop-in sessions were held in the evenings and often clashed with after-school activities and/or scheduled all-school meetings. The point of missing workshops was specifically made by secondary school staff, noting that releasing teachers who have responsibility for pupils who are preparing for examinations is extremely challenging. When moving the project forward, a number of teachers suggested that a model where staff could be trained within the school and work with the school through a one-to-one method would work better.

THEME 3: IMPACT OF THE PROJECT

Before being part of the project, although the development of oracy skills had received specific attention in schools, and especially in the Welsh language departments, the feeling among the teachers was that it was 'ticking a box' more than a strategic attempt to develop children's oracy skills. Following the project, teachers noted that they now understood that oracy is more than getting children

to speak 'correctly' (cf. van der Meij, Declercq and Gosen, 2026 for an exploration of teachers' conceptualisations of oracy):

> *Mae'n golygu siarad mewn cyd-destunau gwahanol, i gynulleidfaoedd gwahanol, gyda phobl gwahanol, bwriadau gwahanol.*
>
> It means speaking in different contexts, to different audiences, with different people, different intentions. (Secondary Teacher – Gwynedd & Anglesey)
>
> *Dim bod yn berffaith yn y Gymraeg.*
>
> It's not being perfect in Welsh. (Primary Teacher – Gwynedd & Anglesey)
>
> *I wybod pa mor bwysig ydy o i gael plant yn mynegi eu hunain ac i wybod pwy ydyn nhw yn emosiynol a chymdeithasol ayyb.*
>
> To know how important it is for children to express themselves and to know who they are emotionally and socially etc. (Secondary Teacher – Gwynedd & Anglesey)

Although the programme only spanned one entire academic year, it was clear, from the teachers' responses, and from the case studies they produced at the end, that the implementation of the project in the school and active participation of relevant teachers had been beneficial, not only for the children but also for the teachers themselves.

(i) The Project's Impact on Children

Where there had been a specific effort to observe the effect of trialling specific strategies in schools, a number of teachers noted that the children seemed to enjoy participating in the oral activities, that the strategies helped promote their interest in the subject content, and increased their confidence in the Welsh language, which was the intended outcome of the programme. Some teachers specifically mentioned how their pupils' confidence had improved:

> *Mae'r plant wedi dod yn eu blaenau gymaint o ran hyder.*
>
> The children have come along so much in terms of confidence. (Primary Teacher – Conwy & Denbighshire)
>
> *Mae gen i ambell un, 'sa nhw ddim yn rhoi llaw i fyny yn y dosbarth, roedden nhw'n swil, ond roedd o'n lyfi gweld nhw yn dod fwy hyderus yn raddol i wneud nhw'n annibynnol.*

I have a few, they wouldn't put their hand up in class, they were shy, but it was lovely to see them gradually getting more confident to become independent. (Primary Teacher – Conwy & Denbighshire)

Others mentioned improvements in proficiency:

Mae'r prosiect yma wedi cael effaith anhygoel ar hyfedredd y plant yn y dosbarth.

This project has had an incredible effect on the children's proficiency in the class. (Primary Teacher – Gwynedd & Anglesey)

Others noted how getting children to simply speak Welsh was a success in itself:

Dwi wedi gweld gwahaniaeth yn fy mhlant i; gena i blant oedd yn dweud bod nhw ddim yn gallu siarad Cymraeg o gwbl sydd yn dod rwan ac yn rhoi brawddeg i mi.

I have seen a difference in my children; I have children who said that they couldn't speak Welsh at all who now come and give me a sentence. (Primary Teacher – Conwy & Denbighshire)

However, despite the clear focus on expanding teachers' knowledge and understanding of oracy in its broader sense, there remained a tendency for teachers to articulate progress in terms of 'improvement' in oracy skills, suggesting that some teachers may have remained focused on the 'correctness' of the language used by their pupils:

'Dw i'n gweld y gwahaniaeth yn eu llafaredd, dwi'n gweld bod nhw yn gwella.

I see the difference in their speaking, I see that they are getting better. (Primary Teacher – Conwy & Denbighshire)

Mae sgiliau llafar y plant wedi gwella yn arw.

The children's oral skills have improved dramatically. (Primary Teacher – Gwynedd & Anglesey)

Whilst such observations demonstrate clearly that pupils were progressing in terms of their linguistic confidence and proficiency, there were also signs that pupils were beginning to adopt local parlance, using words and expressions that were specific to their local dialect:

Maen nhw'n mwynhau gwersi Cymraeg, ond baswn i'n licio nhw siarad ychydig bach mwy, a weithiau mae 'na rhyw eiriau bendigedig [tafodieithol]… yn ymddangos. Be' sy gennyn nhw 'di gafael dda ar eirfa eu cymuned a eirfa bro sy'n perthyn i [yr ardal] a [yr ardal] yn unig.

> They enjoy Welsh lessons, but I would like them to speak a little more, and sometimes some wonderful [dialectal] words … appear. What they do have is a good grasp of the vocabulary of their community and local vocabulary that belongs to [the area] and only [the area]. (Secondary Teacher – Gwynedd & Anglesey)

Further evidence of pupil engagement with and enjoyment of the strategies were also presented in the video-based portfolios submitted by the schools as a requirement of the project.

However, refreshingly, some teachers stated honestly that their efforts had not always been successful, although in most cases, this was due to reasons outlined under Theme 2 above:

> *'Di o'm 'di gweithio'n gret i ni.*
>
> It hasn't worked very well for us. (Secondary Teacher – Gwynedd & Anglesey)

(ii) Impact of the Project on Teachers

The general feeling, across all the teachers, was that they enjoyed being part of the project, and that the project had a positive impact on them, their practice, and on the other teachers within their schools:

> *Mae'r prosiect wedi agor eu ll'gada nhw.*
>
> The project has opened their eyes. (Primary Teacher – Gwynedd & Anglesey)

Since being involved in the project, teachers understood the value of using purposeful strategies for specific tasks. As a result, they felt that there was an improved structure to the oracy strategies they were now using. Teachers also noted that their participation enhanced their pedagogical knowledge in relation to developing children's oracy skills, and inspired them to learn:

> *Dwi just eisiau dysgu mwy er mwyn gallu wneud yn siwr bod fi'n llwyddo efo llafaredd.*
>
> I just want to learn more in order to make sure that I'm succeeding with oracy. (Primary Teacher – Conwy & Denbighshire)

A particular benefit of the project's collaborative nature was having exposure to other schools' strategies and their impact highlighting what may work in certain

schools with certain types of learners and not in others. For others, being part of the project provided the space for them to reflect on their own practices, particularly around how strategies can be adapted in order to encourage rather than enforce pupils' use of Welsh.

However, one aspect of the project that teachers lacked confidence in was self-evaluating their own practice. This was largely linked to a general lack of understanding of what was expected of them, particularly in relation to the case study they were required to produce at the end of the programme. All teachers interviewed were of the opinion that specific training around reliable evaluation methods would have helped ensure that they were measuring the effectiveness of strategies reliably, rather than rely heavily on pupils' enjoyment and willingness to complete a task as a signal of success. Due to their apprehensions around self-evaluation methods, some teachers had not reached the point of considering the learner's voice as part of their evaluations and produced a case study that was more descriptive of what was done rather than an evaluation based on evidence that showed any specific behaviour/response/progress as a result of the use of a strategy.

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the effectiveness of *Ein Llais Ni* (ELIN) as a CPL programme rooted in the principles of intervention, collaboration and response (McKenny, 2024). Through a series of on-line and in-person events, supplemented by a repertoire of supporting evidence-based tools and resources (Wenger, 1998), teachers embarked on a collaborative journey focused around a common theme (Hord, 2004), namely the development of pupils' oracy skills in Welsh. As noted in the results, partaking in the programme provided the space for teachers to reflect upon and discuss their own practices, question or evaluate their own approaches, learn from and share their own practices and experiences with others, and to do so within the broader context of a wider community of support (Fishman et al., 2013).

Following a period of adjustment to a new type of learner in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, it was clear from the responses that pupils had become more reliant on English despite being in Welsh-medium schools, and that this elevated the level of challenge to teachers in this domain. Together, the results of the evaluation

provide endorsement for a systemic programme approach to the development of pupils' oracy skills with an eye on developing sustained change on a broader organisational level, involving interdisciplinary teams of individuals spanning a variety of expertise (Penuel et al., 2011; Fishman et al., 2013). Whilst the results provide some interesting insights into teachers' lived experience of the programme as it was presented in its initial year, some specific areas are worthy of further discussion, as outlined below. These are discussed in relation to each of the research questions in turn.

In relation to the first question, all teachers presented challenges to developing the oracy skills of both L1 and L2 speakers of Welsh, but the nature of those challenges varied depending on the region where they taught. In particular, teachers who taught in Welsh-medium schools located closer to the border with England found it particularly challenging to make Welsh relevant to their children since Welsh, as a whole, is not mirrored to the same extent out in the wider community. However, whilst accessing naturalistic experiences of Welsh language use may be more challenging in some communities than in others, pupils' preference for using English over Welsh, particularly if they themselves speak English in the home, was a challenge, regardless of the area where they lived (cf. Thomas & Roberts, 2011). In the same way, the tendency for L1 speakers to turn to English with L2 speakers, despite all pupils attending Welsh-medium schools having a good grasp of Welsh, was a challenge for all (cf. Hickey, 2007). A CPL programme focused solely on developing the oracy skills of pupils in Welsh was seen as highly useful as a way of sharing effective practices and sharing ideas that could then be moulded to fit their own particular challenges. A key area for future refinement of the programme is the development of strategies that bridge the school and the home/community in order that Welsh is not seen as a school only activity. In this sense, the role of the home/community would be facilitative to the programme's aims, but their active participation in the programme could lead to normalising the use of Welsh in these domains, providing greater naturalistic models of language use outside school.

In relation to the second research question, teachers' experience of being involved in the project was generally very positive. Teachers appeared to greatly value the project and its collaborative nature, despite relatively small setbacks along the way relating to the ambiguity surrounding what was required of the teachers and understanding of how best to evaluate their own practice. Although teachers came to understand these requirements further along in the project, it is something

that should be clearly set out to teachers and schools at the onset of the project, allowing for full transparency and awareness regarding their role(s) throughout their participation in the project (cf. Hord, 2004; Sleegers et al., 2013). Further refinements of the programme have already included additional training on evaluating one's own practice. However, teachers did enjoy the wide range of content made available to them, which, when coupled with the on-line, drop-in sessions, made them feel supported in their efforts. However, due to the volume of resources available, coupled with barriers to participation due to other commitments, some teachers were unable to engage as much as they would have liked with the programme. Consequently, the current website that hosts the entire resource has been revised in order to be more accessible and to map directly onto the requirements of the Curriculum for Wales.

Finally, in relation to the third research question, whilst, at the time of data collection, the project had only been running for one full academic year, the experience of being involved in the project had already led to some positive impact, both on the teachers and on their pupils. Teachers experimented with a range of different strategies and new ways of delivery that would not likely have happened without the support of ELIN. Having experienced various aspects of the programme, teachers were very open to further enhance their own pedagogical knowledge (cf. Carmi, Guberman and Cohen Brandeis, 2025) and were appreciative of opportunities to share experiences with others to identify which strategies are viable for use within their classrooms, what works best with their specific teaching style(s), and whether they can be adapted to suit their pupils' needs/classroom's challenges (cf. DuFour and Eaker, 1998). As a result, a potential benefit of strategies being used widely among various teachers is that the same strategy/strategies can potentially be tailored for utilisation within a range of situations as opposed to being used for just a single issue (cf. Wenger, 1998). If any pre-existing strategies are utilised for new purposes, teachers could potentially note how they may or may not work for different types of oracy-based challenges and communicate this back to others on the project. Whether or not some of these sessions work best in an *en masse* on-line format or face-to-face was questioned. In moving the project forward, we have ensured that there remains a balance of face-to-face opportunities and on-line support in order to allow teachers to get the best out of participation. Whilst some teachers still tended towards viewing gains in oracy skills as 'improvement' in language skills, on the whole, teachers had a better sense

of the breadth of skills involved in oracy. Whether or not this related to 'grammatical correctness' or use of Welsh word rather than borrowings, etc. is unclear from the data presented here. However, in subsequent iterations of the programme, we have emphasised the multiple skills involved in oracy and continue to support schools to identify aspects that are relevant to their own context.

Regarding the impact on pupils, the project demonstrated a positive effect on their spoken proficiency and confidence. That pupils enjoyed the activities and strategies made available to teachers highlights that whilst strategies are ultimately designed with the aim of alleviating various oracy-based issues that they face, they should also ideally consider whether they are viable in terms of pupils' engagement with them (cf. Stephen et al., 2008). Being involved in a collaborative, multi-partner programme like ELIN allows for those key opportunities for shared practice and the generation of new, innovative strategies that serve to engage pupils positively in order to help achieve the core aims of those activities.

Limitations

Participation in the evaluation research was not a condition of enrolment with the ELIN project. Whilst a sample of twelve was sufficient to provide meaningful data (Guest, Bunce and Johnson, 2006), a more balanced sample representing both primary and secondary sectors in each local authority cluster would have been beneficial.

Conclusion

Within a minority language context where modelling good practice is essential for the continued revitalisation of the language, learning from others and co-constructing strategies on an individual – teacher, class, school – and on a collaborative – cross schools, cross LEAs, and cross sectors (school, FE, HE and LEAs) – level is essential. In Wales, the development of pupils' oracy skills in Welsh is a national priority, particularly within the Welsh-medium sector, and a key component of the drive towards improved literacy skills. A carefully designed CPL programme, developed within a design-based framework, can be effective in

developing teachers' approach to developing their own and others' strategic plans, particularly in areas of national importance, whilst also integrating continuous support to equip teachers with the knowledge and skills to evaluate their own practice. In the case of ELIN, such an approach helps raise teachers' confidence in developing pupils' bilingual oracy skills, providing them with the skills and experience that are necessary to enable them to engage positively within society.

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