

Publishing Children's Books in Welsh

Report to the Welsh Books Council

Mairwen Jones

Presented to the Welsh Language Publishing Grants Panel

June 2014

Contents

1	Introduction and Background	3
2	Methods Used	5
3	Role of the Welsh Books Council	11
5	Booksellers' Views	18
6	Authors' Views	23
7	Teachers' Views	27
8	The Department of Education and the Literacy Framework	30
9	Librarians' Views	34
10	Marketing and promoting Welsh language books	40
11	Sales of children's books in English	45
12	Marketing and promoting children's books in English	50
13	Digital Developments	58
14	Recommendations	62
Appendices	(i) List of organisations and people interviewed	66
	(ii) Sample Questionnaire	67
	(iii) Bethan Gwanas' Letter on behalf of authors	72
	(iv) Feedback from Primary Schools	75

1. Introduction and Background

- 1.1 This report on publishing children's books in Welsh was commissioned by the Welsh Books Council's Publishing Grants Panel (Welsh Language). It was agreed that the work of researching and writing the report should be conducted between August and October 2013.
- 1.2 The Panel was aware that book sales in general have suffered during the last four or five years, mainly due to the economic situation. In the case of children's books, sales of books for young children are still very good, but the market for older children's books, and original books in particular, is not as robust.
- Panel members were also keen to see where children's books supported by the Publishing Grant fit into the wider provision available for children, including electronic material. They also wanted to learn more about broader trends influencing publishing for children in English and other languages, with the aim of applying relevant ideas and good practice. It was therefore decided to commission this research to ascertain the current situation of publishing children's books in Welsh. The report also includes recommendations, aimed at enhancing this area of publishing.
- 1.3 The research encompassed all current Welsh language publishing for children, not only products supported by the Welsh Books Council. Consideration was given to the opinions of diverse 'players', including: publishers; writers and illustrators; the Commissioning Branch of the Department for Education and Skills (DfES); booksellers; schools; librarians; key agencies such as Literature Wales, Bookstart, Mudiad Ysglion Meithrin, Urdd Gobaith Cymru; companies working in the digital field. The research also looked at websites where information was available, including www.gwales.com , and consideration was also given to material and guidance available on HWB Cymru provided by the Welsh Government's department of education (<https://hwb.wales.gov.uk/Home/Pages/Home.aspx?lang=cy>).

- 1.4 Consideration was given to different types of products for different age groups, from babies to teens. These included bilingual titles as well as books solely in Welsh. Educational textbooks were not looked at in detail. Naturally, the research also enquired if respondents were aware of any gaps in provision.
- 1.5 Current book marketing methods were also central to discussions and this report therefore includes feedback from various interest groups on developments as regards marketing children's books.

2. Methods Used

- 2.1 Interviews were conducted in person and by phone, as the primary means of gauging the general opinion of the main players in the field in Wales. E-mail was also used as a way of gathering facts and statistics, and to confirm viewpoints in writing. Appendix 1 lists the organisations and companies surveyed. Individuals who contributed comments and material were very willing to give of their time to this process of reflection and discussion, and it was clear that the welfare of the subject and the culture of which it is a part is of great importance to all concerned, without exception.
- 2.2 Simple questionnaires were also used as a basis for discussion – with different questionnaires provided for each sector. An example is included in Appendix 2. In the report, when a summary of a conversation or points are provided, it is stated which sector provided it - teachers, librarians, authors etc.
- 2.3 The Welsh Books Council's Grants Department provided relevant material such as the publishers' title lists, sales information (some of which is confidential, and therefore individual publisher's sales information is not quoted in the report), market research results, information about promoting APS and so on. Some additional statistics were provided by publishers and librarians.
- 2.4 As the social and political context is vital to any industry, an effort is made in the report to look at two very important elements in terms of children's books: (i) the Literacy Framework which is a statutory requirement since September 2013; (ii) changes to local authority budgets and services. In order to understand the true implications of both more thorough research would be required, but some points are raised as examples of how far-reaching the influence of these are on publishing children's books in Welsh.
- 2.5 As the consultation has yielded detailed comments by the people interviewed, this report is of a narrative nature, which means that members of the Panel will have a considerable amount of reading to do. I could have tried to summarise more but I believe that recording respondents' comments is worthwhile. The reader will notice

that there are different groupings within the world of books that often express different opinions; this is to be expected as authors, publishers, booksellers, librarians and readers/book buyers do not necessarily share the same the interests and opinions.

2.6 As the author of the report, I have set out recommendations in Part 14 of this document. It states my personal opinion on the basis of discussion and research, and clearly another person might have a different interpretation and offer different recommendations. In some cases, I do no more than agree with what has been proposed by other individuals or agencies (as stated in the relevant sections); at other times I have interpreted and prioritised according to my own experience and the opportunities that I feel are currently available. It is impossible to predict how technology will develop so it is possible that plans will have to be changed swiftly over the next few years. Acting rapidly and taking advantage of every opportunity when it arises will be particularly important and I apologise if my recommendations in this report will quickly become outdated. Even if that should be the case, I hope that aspects of the recommendations made will still deserve further attention and that consultation will continue as a matter of good practice, to the benefit of the industry.

2.7 It is worth bearing in mind that although I have spoken about children's books with different sectors, I have not spoken with children for the purposes of this research. There may already be too much speculation about the tastes and priorities of children within the field, and the author of this report could be justly accused of neglecting the voices that matter! However, many authors constantly meet children in schools and libraries, and thereby hear the views and opinions of children on a regular basis.

3 Role of the Welsh Books Council

- 3.1 Publishers receive assistance with publishing children's books from two sources, the Welsh Books Council and the Welsh Government's Department for Education and Skills. The Department of Education is responsible for supporting textbooks and other educational material of various kinds, and the WBC is responsible for funding leisure reading material of all kinds.

The publishers supported by the WBC's Publishing Grant fall into two categories. The programme publishers are given a budget each year to publish a certain number of books on the basis of an application made before the start of the financial year; these are the publishers who publish the greatest number of books, and in the field of children's books they include Gwasg Carreg Gwalch, Gwasg Gomer, Gwasg y Dref Wen, Rily and Y Lolfa. Publishers that publish fewer books with grant assistance each year, their applications are considered per book by the Council's Publishing Grants Panel (Welsh Language) which meets three times a year. Atebol, Cyhoeddiadau'r Gair and Dalen publish under this arrangement. The Department for Education and Skills (DfES) operates a tender system for books and other educational material.

- 3.2 The annual total of books for children in Welsh published with the support of the Welsh Books Council grant has remained constant over the past decade, at around 100 books.
- 3.3 The total number of books for children in Welsh received from the Distribution Centre over the same period has remained broadly similar. From 2002 to 2012 the number has been between 305 and 357 titles, except for 2010. (In that year 420 titles were published, but individual titles within educational series' account for this variance: Project X – 29 titles, Dechrau Da - 21 titles, Bwrlwm - 12 titles, Darllen mewn Dim - 12 titles.)
- 3.4 Information about publishers programmes' average sales of children's books in recent years can be seen below. The 18 months sales figures were collected 18 months after the end of the financial year in which the book was published, and the

6 months figures were collected 6 months from the end of the financial year in which the book was published.

Comparison of 18 months sales figures of children's books programme 04/05, 06/07, 07/08, 08/09, 09/10 and 10/11

	Children 04/05	Children 05/06	Children 06/07	Children 07/08	Children 08/09	Children 09/10	Children 10/11
Cymdeithas Lyfrau Ceredigion							
Gwasg Carreg Gwalch							
Gwasg Gomer							
Gwasg Gwynedd							
Gwasg y Dref Wen							
Y Lolfa							
The six publisher's average	1,180	1,245	1,148	1,131	1,107	957	856

Comparison of 6 month sales figures of children's books programme 04/05, 06/07, 07/08, 08/09, 09/10, 10/11

	Children 04/05	Children 05/06	Children 06/07	Children 07/08	Children 08/09	Children 09/10	Children 10/11	Children 11/12
Cymdeithas Lyfrau Ceredigion								
Gwasg Carreg Gwalch								
Gwasg Gomer								
Gwasg Gwynedd								
Gwasg y Dref Wen								
Y Lolfa								
The six publisher's average	924	970	883	871	831	745	648	775

3.5 It should be noted that Cymdeithas Lyfrau Ceredigion, a publisher specialising in children's books, ceased publishing in March 2009 when the company was bought by Gwasg Gomer. They had some very popular titles such as the Sali Mali books. As Rily became a programme publisher in 2013, new figures will be added to the table in the near future, and as this publisher has numerous bestsellers, this will have a beneficial effect on the publishers' average.

3.6 All publishers are concerned about maintaining turnover. Although this means that publishers have a tendency at times to look at their company's sales and income totals without necessarily paying close attention to the performance of one category or class of books. However, it should be noted that all publishers expressed concern about current patterns of selling/buying and realised the need to be resourceful, to understand the market and strengthen efforts to market children's books. All publishers welcomed the fact that the Grants Panel are giving particular consideration to children's books by arranging this research.

3.7 The vitality of all fields associated with children's books is relevant to the work of the Grants Department, so it will keep a close eye on children's books sales through the Distribution Centre - which covers all kinds of products, not only books which have received a grant. It is encouraging that sales of children's books in Welsh via the Centre remain buoyant at present.

2006/7	2007/8	2008/9	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
£1,015,737	£1,075,773	£1,019,668	£1,215,042	£985,381	£1,110,053	£1,165,798

3.8 It evident that Welsh language books for children is the Centre's largest 'category' in terms of turnover. It is currently therefore a very important area, as well as being crucial to the future - as any success with young readers is a way of cultivating an audience for adult books within a few years, let alone a bilingual, well-read and civilized society!

3.9 For many years the Books Council has been allocating production grants, which are given to publishers to compensate for any loss as production costs exceed sales' income. The fundamental reason why this funding is required is the size of the market for books in Welsh. There has been no significant increase in production grants for many years, but the support given to publishers and to the process of producing a book has augmented due to other types of funding available.

3.10 One important element in the support offered by the WBC to children's books (and adult books) is the publishers' editorial posts, as several editors work specifically or primarily on Welsh books for children. This is true in the case of Gwasg Gomer, Y Lolfa, Gwasg Carreg Gwalch and Rily Publications. At one time an editorial grant was also given to Gwasg y Dref Wen. The type of books and related strategic planning that can be undertaken by a publisher depend on having suitable staff that develop expertise. The editorial team at several publishing companies has been strengthened as a result of the grant received.

3.11 The product has also benefited from the fact that there has been a significant increase in the funding available to writers since 2002/03. The Council has divided this money into two schemes, namely Scheme A and Scheme B. Under Scheme A, a grant of £5,000-£12,000 is given per book; there is open competition for these grants and the Grants Panel considers all applications. Scheme B is for smaller grants, up to £3,000 per book; in the case of programme publishers, they receive an annual budget for this scheme, of which the expenditure is accounted for to the Council. Other publishers can also apply for Scheme B grants. Because of the relative length of children's books and adult books, Scheme B is most appropriate for payments given to authors of children's books, although Scheme A grants have been awarded to some books, such as two books in the same series, for example. The Grants Panel is aware of the importance of the grants given to children's authors, as so many writers have been commissioned with this grant in recent years, to write books that the publishers felt the market needed. Grants towards visual material, which pays for illustrations, photographs and design, are also available under Scheme A and B, and this has contributed significantly to the quality of the books available for children. Several instances of applications for ambitious Scheme A funding have been received in recent years, to support professional illustrators and ambitious artwork. All this has had a positive impact on the quality and format of original books in Welsh.

4. Publishers' Views

4.1 A discussion was held with proprietors or managers at the following publishers:

Atebol

Canolfan Astudiaethau Addysg

Cyhoeddiadau'r Gair

Dalen

Gwasg Carreg Gwalch

Gwasg Gomer

Gwasg Y Dref Wen

Rily

Y Lolfa

4.2 The latter five publishers are programme publishers working under the Publishing Grants programme administered by the WBC; Atebol, Cyhoeddiadau'r Gair and Dalen publish through individual applications, and Canolfan Astudiaethau Addysg does not receive grants from the Council as they only publish educational material. It is acknowledged that more support is needed to produce original material rather than adaptations, because of the investment required to create brand new design and artwork and also because of the pressure from authors for better fees for original work as opposed to adaptations.

4.3 In addition to publishing with the aid of grants from the Welsh Books Council, several publishers also publish books with grant assistance from the DfES, applying through tender to produce material in response to a given specification. It may be worth noting that 12 publishers work within the framework of the current DfES tenders.

4.4 Of the programme publishers, Rily publishes several titles each year without additional financial support. These titles are adaptations of English books, on which the price allows for some profit as they are bought in bulk. Publishers that receive grants for individual books, such as Atebol and Cyhoeddiadau'r Gair, also publish some of their books without grant assistance.

- 4.5 Programme publishers occasionally publish titles without grants programme assistance, but with the cooperation of other agencies, that offer alternative support. For example, they may commit to buy a certain number of copies, or existing artwork from other media will be provided by an agency as part of the publishing contract. Such savings can make publishing possible without grant assistance.
- 4.6 One aspect of publishing children's books that publishers felt positive about was the variety of books being produced due to the human resources available - authors, illustrators and designers, as well as the talented staff within the publishing companies. Publishers can certainly turn to skilled and experienced authors, but they are also willing to nurture new talent, as creative editors are always prepared to tutor and develop promising new work. A number of new names in the field of children's books have come to the fore over the past five years, and the fact that their work is suitable for publication is often the result of the editor's talent as a mentor.
- 4.7 For most authors, book-writing is not their main occupation. As a result, they often fail to keep to the agreed timetable, which means that publishers must have contingency plans in place and be prepared to juggle titles. Authors who make a living from writing (which usually includes other forms of writing as well) are better at keeping to a specific timetable but believe that the payments available are too low. There has been no increase in payments for over a decade.
- 4.8 As every programme publisher manages its own Scheme B budget, the WBC does not determine the author's fee for writing or translating/adapting a book. However, it might be appropriate for the Grants Department to discuss with the publisher if they are doing enough to attract the best professional authors to write for children. Several authors expressed their concern about the inadequate fees for original work, and their argument is entirely understandable: see section on authors' perspective (Part 6, page 23) and Bethan Gwanas' letter in Appendix (iii).
- 4.9 Some of the titles brought to my attention by the publishers and which they are very proud of, for their literary value, their format or their originality had often been

disappointing in terms of sales. Original picture books, gift books and non-fiction titles all require significant investment and sales rarely justify the investment. To make up for this, editors will ensure that there are other titles on their programme list that will be assured of commercial success. Of course, estimating sales is not an easy task, and it is apparent that some publishers have taken too great a risk with some titles overestimating their success. This results in an average sales figure that does not meet the Welsh Books Council's target, and sometimes a group of books will make a loss rather than the estimated profit. On the other hand, we have a varied product, which is often of high quality. When publishers assess their own success, the quality of their product is considered, as well as sales figures. However, in order to survive, they somehow have to recoup their investment.

- 4.10 It is clear that publishers take account of the numerous needs of target audiences, whilst aiming for commercial success. For example, (i) most publishers' books for young children provide some form of assistance for non-Welsh speaking parents, although the approach adopted varies greatly. (ii) All publishers consider how to attract boys to read their books - another hot topic. (iii) Each publisher has books linked to what children enjoy watching on TV. (iv) All publishers try and package some of their material in the form of a series, in order to attract and retain readers for follow-up titles. (v) A number of publishers have titles that will satisfy parental needs to help children develop educationally.

Therefore many routes that could lead to substantial sales are already being followed, but perhaps the intention, branding and targeting is not sufficiently focused. It appears that the publishers are all trying to achieve many different things at the same time.

- 4.11 Several publishers were worried that too many books for children under 7 are being published. As it is a promising target audience, there is strong competition between the publishers. As bookshops are generally quite small in size they have no room or revenue to keep an extensive stock, therefore the emphasis is always on new books, and quite often books are taken off the shelves before they have had a chance to achieve their full sales potential. In the following parts of the report it is apparent

that booksellers, librarians and customers hold a contrasting opinion and welcome a wide variety of books for young children.

Publishers could make a special effort to clear titles in their second year or beyond that by giving shops the opportunity to buy, say, 20 or more copies for a reduced rate, to be sold at book fairs in schools or nurseries. The concept of what is 'new' is not crucial for children under 7 and a reduced price could attract parents to spend on books.

4.12 Over the years there has been some overlap between educational and leisure reading material. The WBC supports leisure reading titles whilst educational titles are commissioned by DfES projects. However, an educational publisher such as Canolfan Astudiaethau Addysg published the *Henri Helynt* series, although this type of story book can be read at school or at home. And some of the WBC's programme publishers have occasional factual titles in their programmes that could be considered to be educational, but there is a market for these books to be used in the home as well as at school. Titles published with the aid of the Council's grants include dictionaries, bibles, language exercise books, atlases and learning-to-count books. This does not make any difference to the public or readers; a buyer is rarely interested in the fine print on the page listing publishing and printing details. The publishers noted that the WBC's flexibility in supporting a varied programme of books has been of great assistance in times where good opportunities have arisen to publish a particular kind of book. As the tenders produced by DfES in 2013 contain much fewer books and more digital material, which is beyond the commercial market, overlapping will probably be even less of an issue in future.

4.13 The lists of books published shows that many publishers have shown good timing in publishing special editions in recent years. For example, a football book, *Cwpan y Byd 2010*, May 2010 (Y Lolfa); then *Cwpan Rygbi'r Byd*, May 2011 (Y Lolfa); *Y Gemau Olympaidd a Champau'r Cymry*, May 2012 (Gomer); *Asterix yn y Gemau Olympaidd*, August 2012 (Dalen). This year Rily achieved quite an achievement by publishing the *Llawlyfr Minecraft* handbook in Welsh at the same time as the first English language *Minecraft* title. It means that a Welsh speaking user's interest can be engaged

through the medium of Welsh from the outset. Rily has also moved quickly in adapting *Tom Gates* to *Twm Clwyd*. Now the series is growing in popularity so it is pleasing to see it in Welsh.

- 4.14 Publishers who produce original books for children as well as adaptations are concerned that adaptations often sell better. Sioned Lleinau of Gwasg Gomer noted that she would like to see original material being improved further by investing more in the visual element. In a visual book, the illustrator is as much an 'author' as the writer.
- 4.15 Publishers believe that the market is currently contracting. The two main reasons put forward for this was that children's habits are changing very rapidly, and that public sector budgets are facing cutbacks (schools and libraries). These general trends therefore are a cause for concern.
- 4.16 In the face of this threat, all the publishers maintained that children's books should be marketed and promoted more effectively and would like to see more investment in that area. Their preferred option would be securing human resources within the publishing companies; publishers recalled the Joint Marketing Strategy created by the different sectors within the industry in 2000 and were aware that seeking marketing resources was to be the next target after receiving funding to improve material, namely funding for authors and visual material and funding for editorial posts.
- 4.17 Publishers believe that the overall marketing of Welsh books for children is very basic, and when the opportunity arises to take part in general campaigns, such as the Summer Books and Christmas Books leaflets, it is costly for them. There were also comments by publishers on how the Council and other agencies could embark on a joint venture that would draw attention to books. Some of the ideas are covered in the section on Marketing and Promotion.
- 4.18 There were examples of marketing campaigns where arrangements were led by the PR company supported by the Council. Lynda Tunnicliffe from Rily noted that the press release produced by them to coincide with the publication of the first

Dyddiadur Dripsyfyn managed to spark interest from the BBC. (Lynda herself then arranged an interview with Jeff Kinney.) She suggested that *Cip* include an article in their magazine which was also arranged by them. Otherwise, there had been no marketing on an exciting scale. Gwilym Boore of Gwasg y Dref Wen noted that the PR company's performance with the audio files on the Internet had been disappointing. Interactive methods such as mums.net etc. could have been used but no additional elements like these were proposed by the publicists.

- 4.19 A hugely significant question was raised by one publisher: given the importance of marketing, does the current investment in key aspects strike the necessary balance: editing, design and marketing are all important. Which is the most important in terms of survival?
- 4.20 As all publishers use the Council's distribution service, there was some discussion on its effectiveness. The organisation and systems used are considered well suited to new books, but there are some problems with backlist books. It would be beneficial to the Centre to consider their internal systems and to discuss these issues with publishers in order to ensure that a steady stream of books reach the stores. Otherwise, availability status on Gwales can mislead customers into believing that a book is not available.
- 4.21 Publishers noted that it would be helpful to receive more feedback about the product through the twice-yearly sales conferences. There should be clear channels to follow in order to discover the response of key partners such as booksellers and librarians and key customers such as schools.
- 4.22 Opportunities to sell Welsh books for children to families who do not frequent bookshops continues to be a challenge. Gwilym Boore noted that the role of supermarkets in the trade is now crucial and he wants to see the WBC lobbying for a discussion with the Welsh Government in terms of planning. He suggested that it could be a condition within planning permissions that a new supermarket stocks Welsh and Welsh cultural products. This could include books, music, DVDs etc.

5. Booksellers' Views

5.1 The proprietors of six bookshops were asked for their views, in order to gauge the opinion of a sample of that trade in Wales. Details are shown in Appendix One.

5.2 More than one bookseller expressed dismay that no printed catalogue was now available. It appears that the digital material does not give the bookseller the same opportunity to make suggestions and help customers. It is no longer possible to suggest that customers take the catalogue home with them to browse and make their selections.

5.3 Booksellers unanimously thought that there is a good selection of books for younger children up to 7 years, and this is where sales are highest. There were no negative comments about the format, price or suitability of the material. However, some additional aspects should be considered for this age range:

- There is a definite demand for bilingual books as well as significant sales. So it should be ensured that adequate numbers of these titles are published.

However, more than one bookseller said that the material concerned needs to be packaged in a clear and attractive format, to make the purchaser aware of the usefulness of the material for non-Welsh speaking adults. (This would also help Welsh speakers who wish to avoid them.) Another bookseller stated that the variation in format was a good thing, to enable people to buy what they are comfortable with. The variation includes: bilingual text, equal font size; bilingual text, larger sized Welsh text and smaller English text, English translation inside the cover; Welsh text at top of page, English at the bottom; recordings of Welsh books available to download free of charge (from the Gwasg y Dref Wen website). One bookseller stated that it would be worth experimenting with assistance for parents with pronunciation. He also noted that *Hide and Speak Welsh* (Rily) was very popular, partly because an unusual English spelling was suggested under the Welsh words in order to help parents with pronunciation. He felt that a special campaign was needed to increase the confidence of people who cannot read Welsh when buying and using books in Welsh (see Marketing

and Promotion). One bookseller was very pleased to have material such as *Mr Men* (Rily) available, with its visual humour and the iconic nature of the idea, to bridge the gap for children and their parents and learners of all ages.

- There is a shortage of books with an accompanying audio CD of stories. The *Rwdlan* (Y Lolfa), *Stori, Stori* (Gomer) and *Barti Smarti* (Gomer) are rare exceptions. This combination could be in a central place in the market if publishers took up the idea in earnest.
- There is a shortage of toys and other attractive material. Mixed packages of toys and books are very common in English but there is hardly anything available in Welsh at present. A Sali Mali doll was mentioned as one favourite that is no longer available. Flash cards, puppets, finger puppets and other kinds of toys would be useful for the toy market. There is a regular demand for Sam Tân material and it is a great pity that none is available.
- Parents look for books for ‘learning’ to read because they, naturally, want to help their children, but there is not much choice available. Individual titles such as *Darllen Mewn Dim* (Y Lolfa) are available, and *Bananas* (Dref Wen) is colour graded. Customers often ask for titles from the Oxford Tree, and booksellers would like to be able to offer other books to act as an extension to the Oxford Tree, similar in terms of level of language and content. These would need to be available at a reasonable price, and format might not be as important as other factors in this instance, namely appropriate content and reasonable price. They would also need to be sold individually. [Note: In 2014 Gwasg Gomer decided to sell books from the Pobl Pentre Bach reading scheme as individual books as well as in package form – this was made at the request of schools and individuals.] If useful and reasonable materials were available, booksellers were of the view that parents would respond very positively. The *Straeon Sam y Ci* series (Y Lolfa and Dewch i Mewn Cyf., November 2013) will be published shortly but neither the selling price nor the packaging are likely to lead to high levels of sales amongst parents who have not experienced the guidance from the author, Emyr Llywelyn. The minimum price is £7.50 for 3 books with a handbook retailing at £14.95.

- In terms of material to help a child's language and communication skills, the Helpwch eich Plentyn series (Gomer) is still selling consistently, as is the Gwaith Cartref series (Atebol). Another good seller is *Parod i Ysgrifennu* (Dref Wen), which gives a child the opportunity to follow dots in order to learn to form letters.
- Concern was expressed that there are by now so few original characters central to provision. Only Rwdlan and her group of characters (Y Lolfa), Sali Mali and the characters of Pentre Bach (Gomer) and Alun yr Arth (y Lolfa) are holding their ground. All are popular.

5.4 Publishing series for children aged 7-9 was praised. Strong branding and continuity of titles of the same standard and similar themes gives children confidence when selecting books and it is a particularly good guideline for a bookseller, parent, teacher and any other buyer. Amongst the popular series named were: *Cyfres yr Arch Anifeiliaid Bach* (Rily), *Bechgyn am Byth* (Gomer), *Gweld Sêr* (Carreg Gwalch), *Siriol Swyn* (Gomer), *Cyfres Lliw a Llun* (Dref Wen), *Lolipops* (Gomer), *Bwrlwm* (factual books from CAA); *Roald Dahl novels* (Rily), *Tudr Budr* (Gomer), *Alana, Seren y Ddawns* (Carreg Gwalch) and the *Dechrau Da* non-fiction series (Gomer).

5.5 As so many series are available, many booksellers said it was difficult to recommend a series for a particular age group. It would be very useful for booksellers to have an information card showing where a series fits in on the age range – as a kind of 'Ready Reckoner' to be kept close at hand.

5.6 Turning to books for the 9-11 age range, booksellers were of the view that clear branding and following trends were becoming increasingly important. So the *Dyddiadur Dripsyn* books (Rily), an adaptation of *Diary of a Wimpy Kid*, have been very successful. The original series *Cawdel* (Gomer) which is based on Urdd settings, has also hit the right note. It is not possible to brand every series with a specific character or common artwork because titles are so varied, however booksellers acknowledged the value of packaging, as it gives the booksellers themselves or parents guidance on which titles to recommend for a particular age group. The point

was made that more reliable information was required from publishers and subsequently their representatives regarding the intended audience for some series e.g. the Strach series (Gomer). It was also stated that the design of some series intended for this age group could be improved, for example Y Lolfa's Cyfres yr Onnen and Cyfres y Dderwen series – although it was acknowledged that the cover of some titles was very effective e.g. *Aderyn Brau*, Mared Llwyd.

- 5.7 It was noted that the choice of author became increasingly important for readers aged 11+. Children look for titles by authors such as Bethan Gwanas, Manon Steffan and Gareth F Williams, for example, because they enjoyed specific books. It was stated that not enough is done to strengthen the profile of many other authors.
- 5.8 In addition to the popular books that help children with their schoolwork (see 5.3 above), the need was noted for books intended for revision and exam preparation. This is a massive market in English.
- 5.9 Booksellers emphasised how much difference it makes to the profile of a book or series if an author is prepared to undertake promotional work themselves. Anwen Francis was named as an author who can create an incredible buzz for her work, because she promotes her role as an author at every opportunity, and collaborates closely with local bookshops, libraries, schools etc. This results in significant sales.
- 5.10 Although there is no shop specialising in children's books in Wales, shops selling Welsh language goods were praised for giving children's books appropriate attention and providing guidance for buyers wanting advice. Some shops are also keen to hold events to attract children (see Part 10: Marketing and Promotion).
- 5.11 As shops have had to diversify in order to maintain an appropriate income, many outlets now do more than just sell books. It would be a good thing for publishers to think of opportunities that arise from the particular characteristics of some shops. For example Awen Teifi in Cardigan has two rooms allocated for farm toys, and

buyers come from some distance to buy particular kinds of gifts. There is surely scope for specific books to take advantage of this opportunity.

- 5.12 There was praise for the next-day service provided by the Canolfan Lyfrau Gymraeg Distribution Centre, and its accuracy and packaging, although it would make a world of difference if products could also be delivered on Saturdays. One bookseller asked whether the reintroduction of this service could be trialled in 2 or 3 shops where towns are particularly busy on Saturdays.
- 5.13 Not all the shops are registered with the Council to receive pre-publication information leaflets from the publishers, which are distributed electronically, except for Y Lolfa's leaflets that are sent directly via email to shops that have agreed to this arrangement. These leaflets can be viewed when representatives are at the shop with their file, but this sometimes is a rushed process as the shop is busy. So booksellers cannot avail themselves of all the sales points and links with authors etc noted on the leaflet. Bookshops should be contacted again to ensure that they are aware of the service.
- 5.14 Booksellers have valuable ideas about new publications but feel detached from the people making the commissioning decisions. The opportunity to suggest ideas is a matter of chance – reliant on informal discussion at the Eisteddfod or on whomever happens to call in to the shop or hold a booklaunch etc. Formalising the process of contributing ideas might perhaps ensure that commercial ideas are considered by those people empowered to make decisions.
- 5.15 Several booksellers said that they would welcome guidance on books for children, because the expertise developed up to now has developed gradually, based on the fairly limited experience of individuals working in one place, with responsibility for all kinds of products.

6. Authors' Views

- 6.1 Although only four authors were consulted specifically for this report, the message from them regarding what needs to be changed was very clear, and it was what one would expect: they want better fees and greater recognition.
- 6.2 To begin on a positive note; all the authors were appreciative of their experience of publishing, stating that they received good editorial care. When asked why they decided to write for children, they all stated creative ambition as their main reason. Other factors were also noted: the fact that they enjoyed it; that they saw a specific need for material of a particular kind in Welsh; that they were invited or commissioned; they got a good response from children; they were fond of a specific medium, such as picture and story; they wanted to work with a particular artist; they had worked on another kind of provision for children and had developed confidence and experience.
- 6.3 They all noted the unfairness of fees offered for creative work. The same fee is usually paid for original work as for adapting another author's work into Welsh, authors saw this as devaluing an author's creative talent. It was also impossible to earn a living unless other kinds of work were available, such as writing for the media.
- 6.4 Bethan Gwanas recently decided to raise the matter of fees with the department that commissions material, the Department for Education and Skills (DfES), and she consulted other authors in order to write on behalf of a group of authors. The letter to Ann Evans, Head of Resources Commissioning Branch, Welsh in Education Unit, Department for Education and Skills, Welsh Government is included as Appendix (iii). In the response the authors received to their request, it was stated that prices in competitive tenders could not be influenced, and there was therefore no commitment to change. Although the DfES was the authors target at the time, these payments are similar to the fees available through the Welsh Books Council

schemes and that happens because publishers try to spread the benefit as thinly as possible when using the Scheme B commissioning budget.

- 6.5 It is only rarely that applications are made for funding from Scheme A to commission work for children by an author, as children's books are usually much shorter than adult titles. The situation is different when a novel is intended for teenagers, as the material can be placed in the same category as titles intended for adults. This means that a fairly small amount is offered for, say, a substantial and ambitious novel for readers aged 10-12 but a higher fee is available for a novel intended for older readers.
- 6.6 More than one author stated that they saw this as showing a lack of respect amongst well-read people towards writing for children. The difference in fees certainly contributes to this feeling.
- 6.7 All the authors interviewed were winners of the Tir na n-Og award, and could therefore describe the boost that winning that particular award had given them. However, they did not feel that the winner's work was given enough attention and thought consideration should be given to this when organising the competition.
- 6.8 Welsh language authors in general are very poor at promoting themselves. Only a handful of them have a website, but some of them have a twitter account. Bethan Gwanas started a new blog in November 2013, aimed at young readers, and her enthusiasm *as a reader* is infectious. Some of the publishers provide details of their authors on their websites, and there are also descriptions on the Literature Wales website. Compare having no online presence with what is provided by other authors, familiar to us in Wales, and that achieved without having to invest too heavily.

Malachy Doyle: <http://www.malachydoyle.com/mdpage1.html>

Jackie Morris: <http://www.jackiemorris.co.uk/blog/>

Berlie Doherty: <http://www.berliedoherty.com/>

6.9 Bearing in mind that publishers are continuously looking for new authors, it is a matter of concern there is no obvious route available for prospective authors. There are very few opportunities to learn the craft. Courses for authors wishing to write for children are held from time to time at Canolfan Tŷ Newydd, Llanystumdwy. A course was held there in November 2013, under the guidance of Angharad Tomos. Prior to that, the only course held was in February 2012, when a weekend course was held on adapting/translating Welsh language books for Children (hosted by a publishers' association Cwlwm Cyhoeddwyr Cymru and the Literature Exchange), with Mererid Hopwood as lead tutor. In previous years the Welsh Arts Council has held courses for prospective authors, as has the Government's Education Department (or ACCAC as it was at the time) for people wanting to write reading material for learners in the secondary sector. A considerable amount of the work produced on the course was later published in the Sbectol Inc series (Gomer). Apart from Tŷ Newydd, no such residential course has been offered by any agency or establishment for a decade or more.

6.10 The School of Welsh at Cardiff University offers a 'Children's Literature' module as an undergraduate option. The course is taught by Siwan M. Rosser, who has also started a new blog about children's literature, the first of its kind. See: <http://llynyddiaethplant.wordpress.com/>. There is no guarantee those who follow the module will take an interest in creating their own material, but it is a good thing that the craft is being studied.

6.11 The Books Council held an annual Children's Books Conference for many years, and a number of the people interviewed mentioned the influence some of the speakers had on an audience of authors, librarians and teachers attending the residential course. The authors interviewed would like to see something similar organised, accepting that only a one-day conference would be practical and reasonable these days. A discussion on how to capture children's imagination and form the material would be very interesting, particularly for new authors who have never had that experience.

- 6.12 In the programme of courses organised by the *Guardian* newspaper, a Guardian Masterclass on writing for children is held fairly regularly. Last autumn the following course was held twice: ‘Guardian Masterclass: How to write for children’ – with the subheading: ‘How to write stories to fascinate and entertain the toughest audience in literature’. Some of our editors are also authors of books for children: would attending such a course be beneficial for both roles?
- 6.13 Children’s authors might benefit from keeping in touch and sharing experiences. This is not very structured in Wales and it would be good to have a better way of networking. There are a number of groups available in England, such as the Picture Book Den, a blogging site where authors and artists post experiences:
<http://picturebookden.blogspot.co.uk/>
- 6.14 Literature Wales has a mechanism for mentoring. However, up to now no children’s authors have been involved in that scheme. Over the last decade, very few authors have received a scholarship from Literature Wales to write for young people. The only ones to have received such an award are Delyth George and Arwel Vittle (and both are also authors of books for adults and belong to a group of authors who communicate regularly). No one has received a scholarship to focus on books for younger children in Welsh.
- 6.15 Bethan Gwanas started in a new post as a Patron of Reading (the first in Welsh) in December 2013. She was invited by Ysgol Llanrhaeadr yng Nghinmeirch, Denbighshire. It’s an exciting scheme, where a specific author adopts a school and supports the interest in books in a number of different ways. It is hoped that publicity will result from Bethan’s investment, and that the idea will spread quickly. See <http://www.patronofreading.co.uk/>

7. Teachers' Views

- 7.1 Detailed discussions were held with teachers at a number of primary schools; see the 'case studies' in Appendix (iv). Teachers' views are given this time, and if a more ambitious research project were possible in future it would be worthwhile to also hold discussions with groups of children.
- 7.2 It was not possible to hold discussions at secondary schools for this report but there is a real need to obtain young readers' views in order to influence decisions. Rily are in regular contact with local schools. Other publishers who undertake DfES projects also contact schools in order to trial material, as that is part of the required process. However, the tendency is similar: more often than not it is teachers' views on behalf of the pupils that are received, so there is no proof every time that the target audience has been reached. Atebol and Y Lolfa said they were in contact with young people about their English language books, as that was part of the agreement with the DfES, and have found the experience valuable. This does not happen as regularly in the context of Welsh language books, although it should be borne in mind that a number of authors visit schools regularly and receive feedback from children in that way.
- 7.3 During a conversation with the Welsh Books Council's schools officer, Shoned Davies, it was noted there was considerable interest amongst secondary school teachers and librarians in new series, with a number of orders currently received for titles such as the Mellt series (Y Lolfa) and new titles in the Pen Dafad series (Y Lolfa). Despite a lack of funding, it is clear that money can be found if the product meets the teachers' requirements. She warned that what is on the cover can have a considerable influence on teachers' decisions: a number of schools chose to avoid *Pedwar* by Lleucu Roberts in the Mellt series because the bottles shown on the cover underlined the importance of alcoholism to the story and teachers wanted to avoid this. Shoned added that the fact an author was willing to visit schools made a

great difference to the interest shown in their books: Bethan Gwanas and Gwenno Hughes were quoted as cases in point. [When additional funding for books became available for schools in early 2014, teachers showed renewed enthusiasm. Shoned noted that positive comments were received regarding the contemporary and attractive format of books – and the word ‘cool’ was often heard.]

- 7.4 Local authority expenditure cuts in Wales are certainly influencing schools, and are doing so in a number of different ways. The budget available for reading is smaller because other requirements get priority (buying IT equipment is an obvious example). In many areas of Wales, the Schools’ Library service has been cut or has disappeared. In other areas, services such as an educational library etc. depend on paying a ‘membership’ fee or a fee for a level of service from a local authority, and some schools have to choose not to invest in this way, due to other priorities. For example, this is how the service works in Neath Port Talbot by means of the ELRS or Education Learning Resource Service:

Full Time Equivalent (FTE) teachers based in schools **which have a Service Level Agreement** (SLA) with ELRS may borrow the following resources:

- 1 Project loan per FTE teacher per term (maximum 30 items)
- 1 Literacy loan per FTE teacher per term - fiction but can include non-fiction on request (maximum 30 items)
- 4 Realia items per FTE teacher for up to 4 weeks
- 4 Video/Cassettes/DVD per FTE teacher for up to 2 weeks

- 7.5 Shoned Davies noted that there was a great demand for second language reading books in Welsh for both primary and secondary schools. This is such a large field that it is hard to believe that it would not be possible for publishers to take advantage of this opportunity, collaborating with education specialists in the counties.

8. The Department of Education and the Literacy Framework

8.1 For many children, school is where they see Welsh language books for the first time, and school may be the *only* place where some children come across such books – particularly if they come from non-Welsh speaking homes or homes where books are not bought or borrowed. So the way in which schools present books and reading experiences to children is of key importance to children’s attitudes as they mature. In discussions with teachers, some variation was seen with regard to methods of presentation and children’s responses.

8.2 One recent development that needs to be looked at, as well as anticipating its possible impact, is the Literacy Framework. It has had statutory status since September 2013 and teachers are expected to implement its content and prepare children for the reading tests held every year.

8.3 Although teachers generally have not yet received the guidelines and relevant training, there is some concern amongst them about the implications of the framework. Although books are mentioned, particularly in the early years where learning to hold a book etc. is noted as a skill, there is not much mention of books subsequently and no emphasis on reading for pleasure. Amongst the skills to be evaluated at reception age for example is that of choosing reading materials, including books, but it also notes identifying words and pictures on screen and understanding their meaning.

By Year 6, the skills measured all involve technique. It is surprising that words such as ‘empathy’, ‘recognising character, incentive’ and so on are not dealt with in this context. Nevertheless there is room for a detail such as understanding how punctuation can vary, affecting the syntax and meaning of the sentence e.g. *Ces i gacen(,) siocled a chaws i de’* (I had cake, chocolate and cheese for tea / I had a cake containing chocolate and cheese for tea). The framework’s emphasis is on

learning skills rather than providing experiences or considering the real value of the experiences.

- 8.4 One unfortunate element is the guidance (in relation to Welsh language books) provided by Estyn as an appendix to the new Framework. *Supplementary Guidance: Literacy and Numeracy in Primary Schools* was published in September 2013 and is available to download from the Estyn website. It had a substantial section listing 'suitable' Welsh language books for use in the classroom and experienced teachers and publishers saw immediately that 90% of them were out of print. The list was at least 15 years old. A number of individuals contacted Estyn urging them to remove and replace the list, and by the end of October 2013 the appendix had been removed. This means that the document now has no guidelines on which Welsh language books to present to children.
- 8.5 It is over twenty years since a body responsible for supporting the curriculum in Wales worked with the publishers to create educational material, mainly in Welsh but with some emphasis also on Welsh resources in English. There is insufficient space here to go into the detail of the history, as bodies were merged and renamed and as priorities changed, but it must be emphasised that the activities of the department presently known as the Commissioning Branch within the Welsh in Education Unit have been extremely important to a number of publishers for the last decade at least. A large number of ambitious books have been published as a result of the support, including fiction, poetry, non-fiction books, games and toys, as well as purely educational material. It would be very difficult for a buyer to spot the difference between 'leisure' products and many of the attractive and interesting items published under the auspices of DfES, but as noted already that makes no difference to the buyer.
- 8.6 There is still a great deal of reading material published every year as part of DfES projects. Since projects take up to three years and maybe longer to complete, we have the legacy of 2010-11 projects still being published. For the first time in 18 months a new set of tenders were issued in October 2013. Prior to that, an

extensive set of specifications would be released twice a year, but there was a period of delay between November 2011 and October 2013. One reason for this was that the process of applying for a place on the tender framework did not permit an application through the medium of Welsh. Cwlwm Cyhoeddwyr Cymru was amongst those who expressed dissatisfaction with the situation. At one time, DfES was waiting for HWB Cymru, a teachers' resource website intended to replace NGfL Cymru, to be established

- 8.7 For DfES, it is not sales of resources but *use* of resources that is important, and current specifications make it clear that many of the projects proposed are ones providing reading material free of charge to schools, through HWB Cymru. There is great emphasis in this round on digital material of all kinds, which ties in with the emphasis of the Literacy and Numeracy Framework. Bearing in mind that 12 companies are involved in the tendering framework, it is likely there will not be many 'print' book projects available for any one publisher. This will have implications for a number of publishers, particularly those very reliant on DfES work, such as the Canolfan Astudiaethau Addysg in Aberystwyth. The director, Lynwen Jones, said diversification is currently an important topic for discussion.
- 8.8 During a conversation with Ann Evans, Head of the Commissioning Branch, two basic problems were discussed in relation to the products published with DfES assistance. The first is marketing. A recent study showed there was considerable lack of awareness of the resources amongst teachers. The department is now only able to draw attention to publications by digital means since there are no hard copies of catalogues. They are able to release statements via a fortnightly e-letter, and also post news of new publications on Facebook and Twitter. This e-letter is also used to invite teachers to make suggestions for publications that are needed; it is not surprising to hear that there has been a marked decrease in responses since this method of inviting discussion was adopted. In the past, meetings were held for consultation and forward planning. Ann Evans noted that methods of identifying need were something the Commissioning Branch would be considering anew after they had reviewed their processes.

- 8.9 The second problem noted by Ann Evans is the lack of funding in schools. Even after becoming aware of new resources, schools are often unable to afford to buy them.
- 8.10 The change of emphasis towards digital materials seen in the current raft of specifications was discussed. Ann Evans stated that the subject panels were considering the literacy framework together with the requirements of their particular field when setting priorities and developing specifications. The demand for more digital material in Welsh came from all directions, but it was noted that many of the projects would also include printed material.

9. Librarians' Views

- 9.1 The enthusiasm of the children's librarians is infectious and it is obvious that they have a very deep knowledge of this field. It is a great pity that there is no formal communication channel between the librarians and the publishers, in order to give feedback and offer ideas. Conversations with individuals to formulate this report have merely scratched the surface in terms of their unique perspective. As Nia Gruffydd of Gwynedd Library Service noted, there is a need for formal and regular networking rather than a 'scatter-gun approach'.
- 9.2 The future of the library services is very relevant to the future of Welsh language books for children, not only because they are significant buyers but also as they are in a situation to influence the attitudes of children and parents and to foster a new generation of book lovers.
- 9.3 Although the publishers and the Books Council have no control over local authority decisions, they can do much to support libraries' activities and vitality and in so doing assist them in proving that there is a demand for their services. A number of elements could be advantageous not only to libraries but also to publishers: visits by authors and artists; providing promotional material; exchanging information beforehand about products and events; holding book launches that are different and attract media attention. There is very little collaboration at present. Librarians stated that the link with both publishers and the Books Council was weaker compared to previous years.
- 9.4 There is some variation from county to county in terms of the kind of service offered to both public and schools, and also in terms of expenditure on Welsh language books, and even the 'hard' resources such as buildings, vehicles etc. This research did not allow for a comprehensive review of the counties but it is obvious that changes are on the way. Changes have already been seen in the service in a number of areas, meaning that fewer children are coming into contact with books

and fewer children are having the experience of borrowing books.

9.5 When librarians were asked what they would most wish to see, they asked that books in Welsh and arrangements for Welsh language provision should be treated equally with corresponding titles and arrangements in English. One example of this was the arrangements for the Summer Holidays Reading Challenge. The Reading Agency is responsible for planning the annual campaign to attract children into the library. The appealing theme for Summer 2013 was Creepy House. However it was very unfortunate that the Welsh language promotional material was months later in arriving than the promotional material in English. For an area librarian like Llinos Davies in Denbighshire, for example, it meant having to visit 26 schools during the final fortnight before the end of term, in order to encourage children to join. The librarians said that everything should be done to ensure that the Welsh language provision was not neglected in such a way. The scheme had been running for a fortnight before some of the activity leaflets reached the libraries.

9.6 It could be argued that another aspect of 'comparing favourably with English language provision' is to provide Welsh language adaptations, although not everyone would agree with that view. However, several librarians would put continuity in producing Welsh adaptations of English titles at the top of their wish list. They are glad to be able to offer adaptations of fashionable, popular books in English, so that the children can have a choice of language. In the librarians' view, children are influenced by English language publishers' marketing in any case, so it is useful to have the option of an appealing book available in their first language rather than only in English. When the choice is available, the Welsh language adaptation is widely read. Below are the loan figures from (i) Gwynedd and (ii) Ceredigion for 3 popular English language books and corresponding Welsh adaptations.

Control number	Title	Author	Issues/ Renewals
1849671001	Danny: Pencampwr y Byd / Roald Dahl	Dahl, Roald	180
0224083910	Danny the champion of the world / Roald Dahl	Dahl, Roald	83
1904357989	Dyddiadur Dripsynd / Jeff Kinney	Kinney, Jeff	393
0141324902	Diary of a wimpy kid: Greg Heffley's journal / by Jeff Kinney	Kinney, Jeff	702
1845212363	Pants Henri Helynt / Francesca Simon / adaptation by Elin Meek	Simon, Francesca	362
1842557246	Horrid Henry's underpants / Francesca Simon	Simon, Francesca	170

Ceredigion

Pants Henri Helynt: 15.5

8 copies between the branches – the copies have been loaned out 124 times since they were received – an average of 15.5 times per copy

Horrid Henry's Underpants: 21

7 copies between the branches – the copies have been loaned out 150 times since they were received – an average of 21 times per copy

Dyddiadur Dripsynd: 6

5 copies between the branches – the copies have been loaned out 32 times since they were received – an average of 6 times per copy

Diary of a Wimpy Kid: 11

6 copies between the branches – the copies have been loaned out 67 times since they were received – an average of 11 times per copy

Danny Pencampwr y Byd: 5

4 copies between the branches – the copies have been loaned out 23 times since they were received – an average of 5 times per copy

Danny Champion of the World: 25

10 copies between the branches – the copies have been loaned out 251 times since they were received – an average of 25 times per copy

(It should be borne in mind that Danny Champion of the World was published in English many years before the Welsh version, so that factor will need to be taken into account when considering the difference between the number of loans.

The difference between both counties is also interesting, of course. As there is so much demand for Welsh language material from children who visit the 'lorry' in Gwynedd, more Welsh language material than English is bought and stored, so a positive cycle is established. The expenditure within the library service on books for children in Welsh has increased recently and there is currently no threat to these services in Gwynedd.

9.7 Librarians also acknowledged that some adaptations for the older age group had not proved popular, such as the *Artemis Gwarth* series, Harry Potter in Welsh, (although it must be remembered this has sold very well), some titles like *Tyllau*, an adaptation of Louis Sachar's classic *Holes*, and *Fframio*, an adaptation of the novel *Framed* by Frank Cottrell Boyce. The problem may be that the original material is so popular, and that these stories have become very well-known long before the Welsh version appeared. It is obvious that careful selection is required before working to provide adaptations. There was also mention of clumsy adaptation at times, and using unfamiliar words, together with mistakes. On the other hand, some adaptations were described as 'excellent' for example, *Ceffyl Rhyfel* from Michael Morpurgo's *War Horse*, adapted by Casia Wiliam for Carreg Gwalch.

9.8 The importance of fashion trends in young people's interests was mentioned, and the importance of studying this carefully when selecting books to adapt into Welsh – recognising that things could change very quickly. The *Twilight* books and similar titles involving vampires were at the top of the lending charts for a number of years, and there was nothing at all available in Welsh to offer to readers looking for more of the same! This kind of book now appears to be less popular, although it has not vanished completely.

9.9 Visits by children's authors were mentioned as being valuable and very influential experiences. Gwynedd County Library now makes less use of the Writers on Tour scheme since they have concentrated recently on the touring show Hei Hogia. They

reported substantially more interest in the books read by the actors in the show, as a result of the performances.

9.10 Amongst the other events held by libraries in Gwynedd is Amser Stori (Story Time) held every week / fortnight / month, depending on the size and location of the library. In Caernarfon, there is a Babies' Club on Saturday mornings! In some counties, such as Carmarthen, no children's activities at all are held in the library. The schools' library service has also ended in that county. Therefore there is significant disparity in provision across Welsh counties and publishers probably require guidance with regard to potential. Where a framework of experienced staff to support events exists, there is an opportunity for publishers to work in partnership. Where there is no system at present, it would be a waste of time and effort for publishers to try to arrange an audience. However, if there were clear communication channels between one sector and another, opportunities for effective co-operation would become clear which would benefit both the book trade, and the service itself.

9.11 The librarians interviewed gave detailed comments about what is popular and about gaps in the provision. The views expressed were surprisingly similar to those of the booksellers. There was general praise for provision up to 7 years. A number of series for readers 7 and 9 years were highly praised but there is less choice of books for children aged 9+ and fewer books were praised by readers. By the time children reach 12 years, the majority have changed language and only borrow books in English, apart from some popular exceptions.

9.12 When comparing original books in Welsh with adaptations, it was stated that both format and standard of production have improved substantially over the years. Nevertheless, there are examples of terribly poor covers, particularly for readers aged 9+, with lacklustre design and 'blurb'.

9.13 A number of librarians said that children's linguistic ability meant that books intended for their ages were far too difficult for them. It was suggested by Sioned

Jaques, from the north east Wales library service that 'neutral' language could be aimed for in more titles, since there was feedback from the mobile library that the language in books was too south Walian.

- 9.14 Librarians were very eager for the Council to consider including children in a shadowing scheme for the Tir na n-Og Welsh language awards. Shadowing has been trialled in three areas in the case of the English language shortlist in 2011 and 2012, but not with Welsh language books. The pilot scheme ended due to funding cuts as it was not possible for the Council to supply the libraries with copies of the volumes on the shortlist. Librarians were very keen for the Council to reintroduce the scheme, which would be a way of securing more attention for the awards and winners.

10. Marketing and Promoting Welsh Language Books

- 10.1 In discussions with publishers, all noted the need for improved marketing. Each publisher was aware of the fact that they themselves were not doing enough and that they saw the work of raising product awareness as a very high mountain to climb.
- 10.2 The publishers' wish would be to secure extra staff to undertake the marketing and promoting work. They still hope that funding will be forthcoming for these posts.
- 10.3 There is no doubt about people's dedication in all areas involving children's books. It is a world full of ambassadors, working miracles, always prepared to go that extra mile. Without a huge investment, suggesting improvements to what is already taking place is not an easy task. In this current climate, we must face the likelihood that it will be a case of resetting priorities rather than investment.
- 10.4 1998-99 was assigned as The National Year of Reading and Rhiannon Lloyd was appointed as promoting officer. For once, the media reported news stories about books and reading. There is no sign of a similar investment in the foreseeable future.
- 10.5 Individual events are organised by publishers, libraries, bookshops, literature promoters and by the authors themselves. Thorough research is needed into what works best and what leads to higher sales.
- 10.6 It would be good to 'hear' digitally about events for children perhaps through a less official voice than the Welsh Books Council's Facebook or Twitter pages. (The same person could do this, of course, under a different name and role.) If a digital children's books magazine was available, it could 'tweet' using an appropriate/fitting name, such as 'Pori' (if reviving the name isn't too sentimental a step!). Nobody would expect people to travel across Wales to a storytelling session or an art workshop held by a children's book illustrator, but mentioning these events could generate excitement and encouragement to hold a similar event elsewhere. All this would be publicity for the books and their authors.

- 10.7 We must face the fact that there is a dearth of websites dedicated to children's books. We can only hope that the humour, energy and vivacity of the social media network can compensate for this scarcity. But currently there is no activity in that field either.
- 10.8 Every year the Welsh Books Council itself holds various events to promote interest in children's books. People were questioned about the outcomes of these events.
- 10.9 Although the authors who had won the Tir na n-Og prize were extremely proud of their award, they - as well as the publishers, booksellers and librarians - felt that there was room to improve the way in which the competition is promoted, as well as raising awareness/coverage for the books and the winners. Publishers did not report significant impact on sales and even though posters were produced of the winners, distribution was ineffective and nobody thought that children were interested in the product or the process. Everyone agreed that this was an opportunity to review the competition.
- 10.10 Teachers and librarians noted that the timing of the Books Quiz is unfortunate as the term concerned is a period when schools are preparing for the Urdd Eisteddfod, which accounts for many schools' reluctance to take part. It was stated that the children that participate receive a valuable experience, therefore it could prove worthwhile to reschedule the competition. Publishers revealed that titles which are included in the competition benefit from this exposure and show a higher rate of sales.
- 10.11 It is encouraging to report that several successful events have taken place. A 'Star Shining' night ('Noson Sgleinio'r Sêr') was organized in Caernarfon on October 31st, 2013. The original idea came from Angharad Tomos's *Mali Meipen* story book. Palas Print bookshop coordinated a campaign with neighbouring shops inviting children to wear a fancy dress so that they could meet Ceridwen the witch in the spirit of Halloween, rather than follow the 'Trick or Treat' tradition. The only problem was shortage of space!





10.12 Although publishers have mixed feelings about English titles, as they represent enormous competition, the publicity which they receive can be of great advantage to the Welsh adaptation, as the positive image created by the publicity is also transferred to the other language. Hence it would be worthwhile for the Welsh publisher to keep a close watch on the original company's activities. During the half-term holidays in October 2013 a series of advertisements appeared on Sky, Cartoon Network and two other television channels about the *Tom Gates* title. As the Welsh adaptation, *Twm Clwyd*, incorporates the same format and book-cover

as the English version, it's inevitable that Rily also gained from these advertisements. It would benefit Welsh publishers if they notified booksellers of relevant large scale campaigns – if only to guide bookshops into displaying the Welsh adaptation in their windows during that week.

- 10.13 One publisher noted that they would welcome a scheme by the Welsh Books Council where an experienced publicist would work with a publisher on children's books for a period of 3-6 months, before moving on to provide the same service at another publishing house. This was proposed as a second option, if no grant would be provided in the near future for marketing/publicity posts. The publicists could establish systems whereby marketing strategies for individual titles or a series would be set up; the use of social networks; appropriate use of the website or blog; suggest ways to input entertaining stories to a range of different connections. Publishers would then have the opportunity to implement good practice and carry on with the work themselves when the peripatetic publicist relocates to another publishing house. Publishers' suggested that funds currently used to secure the services of an external marketing/publicity company could also be used for this kind of scheme.

11. Sales of Children's Books in English

11.1 It is obvious that books for children can be very, very big sellers! The print run for the eighth book in Jeff Kinney's series, *Diary of a Wimpy Kid*, was 800,000 copies. The book *Hard Luck* (Puffin) that appeared on 6 November 2013 broke the record for the biggest print run ever for Penguin in a children's title. It is no surprise the Welsh language version is also a good seller – over 4,000 copies of the first volume in the *Dyddiadur Dripsynd* series (Rily) have been sold.

11.2 The author of this report is by no means a statistician, so the brief snapshot given here of sales of English language books for children is only based on headings from the *Bookseller* and reports from agencies such as the Booksellers Association.

2010: Sales of children's books in English in the UK reduced by 3.7% from 2009

2011: Sales of children's books reduced by 7% from 2010 (Publishers Association).

2012: Sales increased by 4%. 2012 was an extremely successful year for publishers in general in the UK.

The Hunger Games author Suzanne Collins sold 2.1million books, and children's writer Jeff Kinney - with his *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* series - sold 1.5million books. Sales of printed children's books in the UK were up 4% to £233million, while physical sales of school books saw a rise of 6 per cent to £172million.

Publishers' Association

Yearbook 2012

[The film *The Hunger Games* had appeared in the same year.]

2013 The news for 2013 is not as good. It appears children's book sales dropped by 8% in the first half of the year.

11.3 In the *Bookseller's* Children's Books Conference held in September 2013, there was an alarming report on the results of research into children's reading trends and practices, '*Understanding the Children's Book Consumer in the Digital Age*', carried out by Nielsen Book. The research showed there is an increasing percentage of children who get no experience of books: '*they found a significant fall in the number of children who read or are read to on a weekly basis, with the proportion*

of occasional and non-readers among children aged under 17 now at 28%, rising from 20% in 2012.'

According to the *Bookseller*, the research's authors see increasing use of tablet devices as one of the factors that have led to the dramatic and rapid change.

*The research shows that children's reading is being affected by alternative activities, such as playing games, watching videos on websites like YouTube, and texting. **During the past year, children's access to tablets more than doubled over the previous year.** The devices are being used for a range of activities, but reading is considered one of its least important uses. Only 20% of children use tablets for reading e-books, while 6% use them to read magazines and comics. Jo Henry, director at Nielsen Book, said: "This dramatic drop in engagement with reading (seen in the context of an 8% drop in the number of books bought for those aged under 17 in the first half of 2013) will give pause for thought for anyone involved in children's publishing, particularly at the older end of the market, which has seen the greatest decline."*

11.4 There are other factors, both economic and cultural, that impact sales and specialist assistance would be required in order to track and understand these, but it is interesting to note that the threat to Welsh language books and sales figures are not unique. There must surely be lessons for Welsh language publishers as they prioritise and plan their publishing programmes by looking at the English language market, where large businesses evaluate very carefully where their millions are to be invested.

11.5 The Bestsellers (Books for Children) over 100 days are shown below, from Amazon, 28 October, 2013. Following that are comments on the relevance of this for our industry.

1. **Dear Zoo (Picture Puffin) [Paperback] – Rod Campbell**
2. **Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Hard Luck [Hardcover] – Jeff Kinney**
3. **Demon Dentist [Hardcover] – David Walliams**
4. **Minecraft: The Official Annual 2014 (Annuals 2014) [Hardcover]**
5. **Allegiant (Divergent, Book 3) [Kindle Edition] – Veronica Roth**
6. **Asterix and the Picts [Hardcover] – Jean-Yves Ferri**
7. **Minecraft: The Official Beginner's Handbook [Hardcover]**
8. **Demon Dentist [Kindle Edition] – David Walliams**
9. **Gangsta Granny [Kindle Edition] – David Walliams**
10. **The House of Hades (Heroes of Olympus Book 4) [Hardcover] – Rick Riordan**

Notes on the above list in relation to the field of publishing books in Welsh for children:

1. ***Annwyl Sw*** available in Welsh since 1993, Gwasg y Dref Wen. And in print again since 2009 but as a very small book.
2. Three ***Dyddiadur Dripsyfyn*** titles available from Rily Publications.
3. Only one title from David Walliams is currently available in Welsh.
4. The Annual is not available in Welsh but the ***Llawlyfr Minecraft*** handbook appeared at the same time as the English language version, in October 2013. See 7 below.
5. A series of 'Dystopian' books with a female heroine. A successful attempt to gain female readers as well as male. The same audience as *Hunger Games*, the main seller in 2012. Nothing like this is available in Welsh.
6. Dalen published the Welsh language version, *Asterix a Gwŷr y Gogledd*, October 2013.
7. Rily used the *Minecraft* cover as a banner on their Facebook page, October 2013.
8. No David Walliams titles currently available in Welsh. This is a Kindle edition of the new title.
9. No David Walliams titles currently available in Welsh. A Kindle edition of a previous title is also performing well as a result of the new title.
10. Heroes of Olympus is a popular series, with apps from Disney, a sophisticated website including videos and a series of games. This is a Kindle version, following hardback and paperback versions that were very successful. The main character is Percy Jackson and a second DVD based on the series will appear in December 2013.

11.6 Whilst acknowledging that fashion and excitement around reading material will affect buyers, particularly readers aged 9+, it is interesting to note that a number of Welsh language publishers use something that is popular in English as a hook, hoping to benefit from that. However, there are some popular subjects not available in Welsh at all. (It must be emphasised that selling through Amazon is not the aim here, but it is a useful yardstick!)

11.7 It is worth looking at the Nielsen table of best sellers for 2012, the successful year, and seeing how few authors reach the top of the charts. English language publishers make full use of a successful author/title in a number of formats – hardback, paperback, e-book/Kindle.

Top 20 children's books 2012

Position	Title	Author	Imprint	Volume
SOURCE: NIELSEN # Released in a previous year				
1	Hunger Games,The: Trilogy#	Collins, Suzanne	Scholastic	832,350
2	Catching Fire:Hunger Games Trilogy#	Collins, Suzanne	Scholastic	667,980
3	Mockingjay:Hunger Games Trilogy#	Collins, Suzanne	Scholastic	612,687
4	War Horse#	Morpurgo, Michael	Egmont Books	309,761
5	Diary of a Wimpy Kid:The Third Wheel	Kinney, Jeff	Puffin Books	297,451
6	Hobbit,The#	Tolkien, J. R. R.	HarperCollins Publishers	238,827
7	Ugly Truth,The:Diary of a Wimpy Kid	Kinney, Jeff	Puffin Books	224,963
8	Billionaire Boy	Walliams, David	HarperCollinsChildren'sBooks	204,351
9	Ratburger	Walliams, David	HarperCollinsChildren'sBooks	199,445
10	Mr Stink	Walliams, David	HarperCollinsChildren'sBooks	184,819
11	Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Cabin Fever:Diary of a Wimpy Kid	Kinney, Jeff	Puffin Books	174,722

Top 20 children's books 2012

Position	Title	Author	Imprint	Volume
12	Theodore Boone: The Abduction	Grisham, John	Hodder Paperback	168,255
13	Gangsta Granny	Walliams, David	HarperCollinsChildren'sBooks	166,188
14	Dog Days:Diary of a Wimpy Kid	Kinney, Jeff	Puffin Books	166,084
15	One Direction: the Official Annual:2013#	One Direction	HarperCollinsChildren'sBooks	158,791
16	Diary of a Wimpy Kid:Diary of a Wimpy Kid	Kinney, Jeff	Puffin Books	157,172
17	Last Straw,The:Diary of a Wimpy Kid	Kinney, Jeff	Puffin Books	155,573
18	Rodrick Rules:Diary of a Wimpy Kid:	Kinney, Jeff	Puffin Books	150,454
19	Boy in the Dress,The	Walliams, David	HarperCollinsChildren'sBooks	149,492
20	Beano Annual 2013		D.C. Thomson & Co.,	146,897

12. Marketing and Promoting Children's Books in English

12.1 There is no doubt that leading and successful British (and international) publishers have very sophisticated marketing and promotional machinery.

12.2 In Welsh, if you Google 'Henri Helynt', you are referred to (in this order) the S4C programme, a list of books to buy from Amazon, Gwales, eBay, the publishers and then the Radio Times and times of the programmes. And that's it. If you Google 'Horrid Henry' an exciting new world opens in front of you! The attractive website invites you to join the Purple Hand Gang, you can contribute jokes, pictures, news: you can persuade an adult to hire Horrid Henry outfits for a party or performance.

The screenshot shows the 'HORRID HENRY'S WICKED WEBSITE' homepage. The layout includes a navigation menu with links for 'The Books', 'Audio Books', 'Horrid Henry's World', 'Your Jokes and Pictures', 'News & Events', 'Join the Purple Hand Gang', and 'H.H. Home'. A 'Your Jokes & Pictures' section at the top right features a cartoon character and the text: 'Hilarious rib-tickling jokes from Horrid Henry and his friends - and you can upload your own jokes too!'. Below the navigation is a 'Latest Video' section with a video player showing 'How to Draw Horrid Henry with Tony Ross' and a 'Latest Book' section for 'Horrid Henry's World Records is coming soon!'. On the left, a text box asks 'Can't get enough Horrid Henry books?' and points to a stack of books. At the bottom, there are three promotional boxes: 'WIN the ultimate sleepover party kit!', 'The Purple Hand Gang' (a newsletter sign-up), and 'What's your Horrid Henry Name?' (a name generator). The footer contains links for 'Teachers notes', 'About the grown ups', 'Costume hire', 'Accessibility', 'Site map', 'Terms & Conditions', and 'Contact'. Copyright information for Francesca Simon and Tony Ross is also present.

There are a host of activities:

HORRID HENRY

Create your own

Monster



What is the SCARIEST thing about your Monster?

Join the Purple Hand Gang at
www.horridhenry.co.uk
for cool competitions, awesome
activities and all the latest news!



Orion
Children's Books

The Horrid Henry books are published by Orion Children's Books
Text © Francesca Simon Illustrations © Tony Ross
Activity sheet content © Orion Children's Books

HORRID HENRY

Monster Wordsearch



Horrid Henry loves scary stories full of monsters and slime, but Peter prefers tales about bunnies. Can you find the words Henry and Peter would use in their sleepover stories?

SLIME
FANGS
SCREAMING
WEREWOLVES
GRAVEYARDS
ZOMBIE
ALIENS

BUNNIES
PRESENTS
FLOWERS
NATURE
MUSIC
BIRDS
SWEETS

Join the Purple Hand Gang at
www.horridhenry.co.uk
for cool competitions, awesome
activities and all the latest news!



Orion
Children's Books
The Horrid Henry books are published by Orion Children's Books
Text © Francesca Simon Illustrations © Tony Ross
Activity sheet content © Orion Children's Books

12.3 But the award for most energetic marketing in the field of children's books, undoubtedly, goes to the Jeff Kinney books, *Diary of a Wimpy Kid*. Indeed, Puffin's campaign for this series won the main prize of the Book Marketing Society in 2012 (even beating *50 Shades of Grey*). It could be argued the economics of the publishing enterprise warrants major investment in marketing, but it is obvious the marketing people at Puffin do not rest on their laurels in terms of creating new interest as the latest title appears. Shown below is a competition advertised to schools through Teach it Primary, the TES and so on.

Teach it
Primary

*With sales of 115 million copies worldwide, the **Diary of a Wimpy Kid** series is a global phenomenon. Now is your school's chance to meet the author! *Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Hard Luck* (out 6th November) sees Greg Heffley decide to make all his decisions based on luck, using the roll of a dice or a magic 8 ball. So how lucky will your school be?*

One fortunate school will win a visit from Jeff Kinney during his ***Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Hard Luck** tour* 4th – 6th December 2013 (open only to UK schools, excluding Northern Ireland).

Eight runners-up will win a visit from The Wimpy Kid Show!

For your class to be in with a chance of winning this exclusive prize, visit:

<http://www.puffinvirtuallylive.co.uk/author/competition2013> and register your school's details.

12.4 Although it is difficult to adapt some ambitious ideas to our situation here in Wales, there are some lessons to be learnt. It would not be difficult to organize a competition similar to this across Wales. As booksellers and teachers have already noted, getting Bethan Gwanas to meet children would create a buzz. The same is certainly true for Ceridwen or Rala Rwdins, or some of the characters from Pentre Bach such as Coblyn or Bili Bom Bom. Linking the competition with the appearance of a significant title or series would draw attention to the products amongst teachers and children. The leaflet from the Book Club, Urdd periodical, discussion in the media, not to mention social networking methods (now in Welsh on Twitter

every Wednesday evening) would be a way of creating a buzz around it.

- 12.5 Another author at the top of the charts due to publicity is David Walliams. Here are details of a key pre-Christmas event:

Children's author David Walliams will appear at the Palace Theatre in London on 7th December in what publisher HarperCollins is billing a "World of Walliams Mega Event". Walliams will read from his new book, [Demon Dentist](#), and his first picture book, The Slightly Annoying Elephant, during an evening hosted by "Britain's Got More Talent" presenter Stephen Mulhern.

Following the readings, Walliams will take part in a signing session with illustrator Tony Ross. A boutique bookshop will also be set up at the venue on Shaftesbury Avenue, selling a range of Walliams books and merchandise. Walliams has sold over 2.4m books in the UK through Nielsen BookScan, with HarperCollins putting sales of Demon Dentist, his sixth title, at 100,000 copies in the UK across print and digital editions since its release in September.

Tickets for the event are being sold at £10 apiece through www.worldofwalliams.com

- 12.6 A number of the Welsh language authors who publish for children are also performers: Caryl Parry Jones, Meilyr Siôn, Bethan Gwanas, Beca Evans, Jeremy Turner, Manon Steffan, and Mererid Hopwood. I'm sure that entertaining shows could be created. Would it be possible to collaborate with a theatre company or performance company to create something to attract families?
- 12.7 David Walliams' previous book, *Gangsta Granny*, was part of BBC1's provision over Christmas 2013, with actors such as Joanna Lumley, Julia McKenzie, Rob Brydon and Miranda Hart taking part with the author himself. It is impossible to get the same kind of publicity for any book in Welsh, but it would be worthwhile for publishers or authors to discuss with the person commissioning children's programmes for S4C regarding the possibilities there are in a number of books in Welsh for children. The company responsible for much of the products for children

and young people is Boom Pictures (formerly Boomerang): are there discussions going on between the presses and that company?

12.8 One body of key importance in reading campaigns across Britain is the Reading Agency (or TRA). The librarians noted the importance of reading challenges coordinated by them every summer holidays (see 9.5). This year the Paul Hamlyn Foundation contributed £1 million to the TRA for a new campaign to enable young people to assist younger children to read, and the launch of it in London gained considerable attention. It is an easy original idea to copy and a number of secondary schools in Wales might be prepared to adjust their arrangements so as to include them as voluntary work. Young people need formal experience of volunteering in order to gain the Welsh Bacculaureate qualification. During a discussion with the heads of Ysgol Uwchradd Aberteifi and Ysgol Gynradd Aberteifi, the idea of having older pupils presenting Welsh language books to small children was welcomed. They are willing to be a pilot scheme if reading coordinators or promoters are available to implement the project.

12.9 In English, there is substantial and very interesting material on the internet to promote books for children, develop readers' interest and advise adults on the suitability of specific books. Here are two sites in particular:

<http://www.lovereadings4kids.co.uk> – all kinds of guidance, including comprehensive reviews of books by Julia Eccleshare, children's books editor for the *Guardian*. A particular emphasis on quality works – October 2013 was 'Michael Morpurgo month' for example.

www.welovethisbook.com – a section on children's books, interesting articles such as 'How I created Matilda' by Quentin Blake (October 2013), and 'Darren Shan's Halloween Reads' (October 2013).

It is difficult to know whether it would be possible to hold regular discussions on Welsh language books for children; a blog master would be required, to nudge authors and find interesting material week after week, also using Facebook and Twitter to attract people to the blog. But it is not impossible to achieve this. It will be very interesting to see how much interest there is in the blog established by Siwan Rosser of Cardiff University in September 2013, namely:

<http://llynyddiaethplant.wordpress.com/>.

12.10 We do not have specialist children's shops here in Wales but there is so much praise for the role they play in the reading industry in England that it would be worthwhile for us to study good practice. There is certainly room for general bookshops to adopt some of these ideas; indeed we have already seen this in some shops as noted in the section on promoting Welsh language books – see Sgleinio'r Sêr, 10.11. If a website/blog were available about children's books and reading, information about some of the children's bookshops would provide an interesting and useful article. This was the very subject for author Fleur Hitchcock in her blog last Christmas and Storytellers Inc. in St Anne's on Sea was highly praised by her. See <http://fleurhitchcock.wordpress.com/2012/12/>

12.11 According to the Booksellers Association report in 2012 no bookshops for children were forced to close in 2011 but 73 other bookshops had to close. Forty shops were flourishing, according to the author of the report. On the BBC website in July 2012, when the report on the previous year was published, there was a quote from the owner of *Mr & Mrs Doak's Bumper Bookshop for Boys and Girls*, Eastbourne: 'There are signs that people are spending more money on books for their children.' And indeed that is what happened in 2012.

12.12 Despite the vitality of this field compared to the activity here in Wales, those who love children's books do not believe it is enough. This is what was said by Julia Donaldson, Children's Laureate (at the time), in the *Daily Telegraph*, June 03, 2013:

A foreigner reading our newspapers, listening to our radio or watching our television, could be forgiven for getting the impression that we have little pride or interest in our children's writers and illustrators. How could they guess that children's books account for nearly one in four of all book sales, when far less than a fortieth of review space in printed papers is dedicated to them? Perhaps they might imagine that we have a dearth of parents, grandparents and teachers when they listen to A Good Read on Radio 4: of the 48 titles the programme has featured since that memorable day last July [the opening of the Olympic Games], just one is a children's book, namely the ubiquitous US export, The Hunger Games.

- 12.13 Children's books in Welsh are only very rarely discussed in the media. There are some items on *Heno* on television and *Go/wg* usually turns its attention to children's books twice a year. However it does little more than list some titles.
- 12.14 The current Children's Laureate, namely Malorie Blackman, has chosen to concentrate on books for teenagers, a field where there are very notable books that in her view do not receive the attention they deserve. A national conference on the subject is to be held for the first time, in June 2014 in London – known as the YALC (Young Adult Literature Convention). Would it be possible to use this as a way of drawing attention to the best of the products in this field in Welsh for young people?
- 12.15 Although we have a Welsh Children's Laureate in Wales, and a good attempt was made recently to attract attention and stimulate interest by means of a long interactive poem, there is no one to represent books in general. Who are the ambassadors making the case for the importance of Welsh language books for Children?

13. Digital Developments

- 13.1 We have to acknowledge that the change in children's leisure activities is a factor which poses a threat to the printed book, if not to the practice of reading in general. The Egmont company undertakes continuous research on children's reading practices and a useful discussion can be found at:
<http://readinglives.egmont.co.uk/category/reading-street-2/>. One obvious change in children's lives is the constant connection with the digital world by means of various devices. In the latest report by the researchers, it was noted that 'quiet time', with no interference from the digital world, is a very rare thing for children nowadays, and that the practice of reaching for a book is diminishing due to the continuous hectic demands of everyday life.
(<http://www.thebookseller.com/news/lack-quiet-time-hits-childrens-reading.html>)
- 13.2 Is there any possibility that the children who do not adopt the practice of reaching out for a book will turn to e-books? In 2011, the sale of English e-books for children increased enormously:
- 2.6 million e-books were sold during the first half of 2012, compared to 1 million in the previous year.
 - What has mainly accounted for the huge increase is the fact that it is now possible to 'flow' text in a way that was not previously possible. As technology enabled different types of books to be offered in digital format, the purchasing pattern also changed.
- 13.3 Very few books for children in Welsh are currently available in e-book format and it is too early to measure their popularity. Y Lolfa has invested more heavily and has provided more titles than any other publishing company and the authors interviewed welcome the fact that their work is available as e-books. It is difficult to foresee what impact this will have on publishing runs and the long term sales of both book forms. Y Lolfa has also continued with its efforts to persuade Amazon to include Welsh language material on Kindle.

- 13.4 It has to be remembered that only 20% of children's time on 'digital tablets' will be spent on activities such as reading a book. Games, surfing, use of apps, watching videos and films, listening to music: these appear to be the most popular activities.
- 13.5 What are publishers in England doing in order to survive, or better still, to succeed and develop? In September 2013, Walker Books announced that they were going to establish a new imprint to concentrate on 'media' material.

'Our view here at Walker is that great content comes from anywhere. We are open-minded about new ideas—for us not to have a close eye on what is coming from digital and TV doesn't make sense. If we are accessing children, and they are in all these spaces, we need to be there.'

The aim of the new imprint is to collaborate with other companies specialising in different types of material which could lead to successful books. Among the first will be a series of books depicting 'Shaun the Sheep', which connects with the CBBC programme.

- 13.6 Although this reiterates a point raised previously in this report, we have to emphasise the need to hold discussions with the main producers of digital material in Wales, namely S4C and the companies that provide programmes for S4C. It seems that this is something that the individual publishing companies do not currently do and there is possibly a chance here for the Welsh Books Council to lead and co-ordinate such discussions.
- 13.7 A number of English publishing companies invest in creating apps to accompany their children's books. The publishers of Horrid Henry are among those who have done this. It is interesting to see from the reviews that buyers do not think very highly of them; several of the reviewers say that they do not offer value for money. The truth is that you have to be very inventive to make an impression on children immersed in the digital world, and a strong interactive element is expected. Lynda Tunncliffe mentioned the *War Horse* app (Michael Morpurgo) as a very good

example of what is possible. There is no doubt, however, that the cost of ambitious apps is way beyond the budgets of children's books publishers in Wales.

- 13.8 The Welsh Books Council is currently offering an apps creating plan which gives publishers a chance to develop material at a very reasonable price. Technical support is also offered by the providing company – by means of ‘webinars’ as the need arises. In the case of companies producing children's books, Atebol, Y Lolfa and Rily have accepted this offer.
- 13.9 There is no telling how disposed the Welsh audience will be to pay for these apps. As the digital area is one where so much free material is available, it is unlikely that leisure material will be in great demand. Apps which are seen as educational aids or which serve a specific need, however, are more likely to sell. Rily published *Ap Geiriadur, Picture Dictionary App* for younger children, priced at £1.99, and over 300 have been sold.
- 13.10 In the opinion of a number of parents who were questioned informally, a free app which links with children's books would be very welcome. *Golwg Ap Rwdlan* - which connects directly with the magazine *WCW* (and in turn with the books) – was accompanied by an app and it would be wonderful to have similar material for other original characters, such as *Alun yr Arth* and *Sali Mali*. Such material would be a marketing device, but it could also ensure that children continue to be faithful to the Welsh material and find it as interesting as the ‘entertainment’ available from other sources.
- 13.11 To understand the context, other free Welsh digital ‘storyline’ material should be looked at.
- (i) The Cyw website. There is a series of storybooks, and a sound reading to accompany the text and pictures as the pages are turned. Free.
 - (ii) *Ap Cyw* is available free of charge; also individual e-books
 - (iii) At school, use might be made of the stories on *HWB Cymru*, namely the Government website where resources are provided for teachers e.g. the tale of

Llyn-y-Fan Fach. Again, we have pages to turn, text to read and a reading to listen to. There is no reference to either author or artist, but in other ways these are very similar to books.

- 13.12 Some of the resources available free of charge can affect the sale of print books, and publishers should be very careful regarding what is placed on HWB Cymru, as discussed in another section of this report.
- 13.13 During the discussions with Gwasg y Dref Wen, the opinion expressed was that it is impossible to justify the effort put into providing readings of children's books as sound files and available free of charge on the publisher's website. Grant funding was received to produce them but the sales figures do not convince the publisher that the project is effective. Maybe this is a problem caused by lack of publicity and awareness?
- 13.14 In the *Bookseller's* Children's Books Conference held in September 2013, one of the seminars was : 'Being brave with apps and games'. It is clear that their aim was to raise awareness and understanding among publishers throughout Britain in general. Would it be a good idea to hold a workshop/browsing session for publishers of Welsh children's books, in the presence of someone who is very enthusiastic about the value of apps and their relevance to books?

14. Recommendations

As this report has been prepared at the request of the Welsh Books Council's Welsh Publishing Grants Panel the recommendations need to be steps that can be implemented by that body. Ideally, however, it would be useful if another body could lead on some of the following suggestions, but the initial points of action have to be submitted to the Books Council which commissioned this report.

- 14.1 To look again at the intention of arguing for funding to support marketing as the next step in the process of strengthening publishers, and to discuss this with partners within the Government.
- 14.2 To emphasise the importance of developing series with clear branding, when discussing publishing programmes with the programme publishers.
- 14.3 To arrange a specific session on presentation and current trends in children's books as part of training for editors. To also invite publishers' design staff to the event.
- 14.4 To review arrangements for the Tir na n-Og Awards and consider including children in the activity and/or the publicity.
- 14.5 To take steps towards offering guidance for non-Welsh speaking parents on how to choose and use Welsh books for children. To collaborate with those agencies who could provide assistance: AdAS, Cyw, Welsh for Adults Centres, Twf, and publishers willing to invest in this aspect of publishing.
- 14.6 To discuss with programme grant publishers the need for an ambitious publishing scheme aimed at parents who wish to help their children with reading and using Welsh. These would be 'home reading' books to strengthen the reading schemes already available in schools; a substantial number of titles on different levels; very reasonable prices; cheap production methods - using very basic stapling methods

and cheaper paper than is customary?

- 14.7 To discuss whether it would be possible to use the Apps scheme currently proposed by the Books Council to not only produce Apps for selling but also to produce Apps that would be available free of charge and intended as marketing resources. The contents would be 'supplemental' information, aimed at stimulating or enhancing interest in a specific title, series or books of a particular type.
- 14.8 To prepare a Summary of Fiction Series (ages 5-13) in a one-page chart form and distribute it to bookshops printed on a simple card (*cf* the card on Mutations which sells like hot cakes amongst Welsh learners!). This would be general guidance and would need to be updated annually. It could also be included in the children's books catalogue.
- 14.9 To discuss opportunities for tie-ins between television programmes and children's books in Welsh with the Commissioner of Children's Programmes at S4C. To act as an ambassador and circulate any advice or news that could be useful for publishers.
- 14.10 To discuss with AdAS in order to ensure that updated lists of books are available as part of the Appendix to the Literacy Framework, as originally intended when the Appendix was published in September 2013. To suggest a person or agency that could provide the necessary information.
- 14.11 To discuss with AdAS and/or WJEC/HWB the need to provide guidance for teachers with regard to educational resources *according to theme*. No comprehensive catalogue is currently available in any format, print or digital, to provide this information in an accessible form for teachers. There is great demand for lists according to common themes, and would be one way of increasing awareness of books. Every discussion, not only for this report but in several other contexts, shows that teachers would welcome assistance and guidance in terms of getting more information on the other books and resources available for the class.

- 14.12 To hold discussions with publishers regarding ways of taking advantage of HWB Cymru whilst at the same time protecting trade material. A body which realises the economic importance of the product, as well as the importance of marketing opportunities should lead on this. The Government Education Department should not be expected to look at things from the same perspective.
- 14.13 To commission research among children in order to discover their response to Welsh books. There are several ways of doing this – by taking advantage of social networks and also by meeting groups of children face to face. Feed the information back to the publishers with a view to influencing their plans.
- 14.14 To strengthen networking between ‘key players’ in this area, such as publishers, booksellers, schools, librarians, literature and events promoters. In the first instance, hold consultations on the types of systems or opportunities that the different sectors would favour in order to ensure easy and consistent connections. The suggestions put forward by booksellers are among the most ‘commercial’ and promising suggestions discussed during this consultation and it would be very useful if there was a specific method of feeding these suggestions to publishers.
- 14.15 To make greater use of the information leaflets (AIs) on Welsh books for children that publishers provide by ensuring that booksellers have access to them. To also ensure that these are available to booksellers in a downloadable format (pdf).
- 14.16 To arrange one-day training / conference for booksellers, publishers of children’s books (including marketing staff) and children’s librarians on the subject of book promotion, taking the good practice of the best children’s bookshops in England as a focus for the day. Methods of attracting and developing readers’ preferences, as well as advising on how to develop specialisation, would be relevant to the work of each of the above groups.

- 14.17 To hold workshops / browsing days for publishers of children's books in Welsh in the company of experts on Apps for children and their relevance to books.
- 14.18 Arrange for a publicist to pilot a scheme whereby secondary school students read books to small children (see 12.8 for more information). Ysgol Uwchradd Aberteifi and Ysgol Gynradd Aberteifi expressed their willingness to pilot the idea in 2014.

Appendix 1: Key people and establishments who contributed observations and information

Discussions were held with a number of **authors of children's books**, including Gareth F Williams, Manon Steffan Ros, Gwenno Hughes and Bethan Gwanas.

Teachers from the following **primary schools** contributed information and observations for the report.

Ysgol Bryn Saron, Llangeler, Carmarthenshire

Ysgol Bryn Iago, Pontarddulais, Swansea

Ysgol Abernant, Cardigan

Ysgol Cas-mael, Pembrokeshire

Ysgol Dolbadarn, Llanberis, Gwynedd

Ysgol Sant Curig, Barry, Vale of Glamorgan

The following **librarians** contributed extremely valuable points as well as statistics:

Bethan Hughes, Reading Services Manager, Denbighshire Library

Llinos Davies, Community Librarian, Ruthin and Denbigh

Delyth P Huws, Ceredigion Children and Schools Library

Nia Gruffydd, User Services Manager, Gwynedd Library Service

Sioned Jacques, Schools Library Service in the Counties of Conwy, Denbigh, Flint and Wrexham

Discussions were held with the owners of the following **bookshops**:

Siop Inc, Aberystwyth

Siop y Pethe, Aberystwyth

T-Hwnt, Carmarthen

Awen Teifi, Cardigan

Palas Print, Caernarfon

Dalen Newydd, Caerleon/Newport

Appendix (ii) Sample Questionnaire (for librarians)

Asking for librarians' opinions:

October 2013

I have compiled a simple questionnaire which could form the basis of a discussion on **Books for Children in Welsh**. It is not compulsory, and I would be very happy if the discussion takes us in a direction that I have not foreseen! Thank you for your time and your willingness to contribute to a review of this field.

PART ONE: your general opinion (regarding books which are not exclusively educational textbooks)

1. What are your views regarding the **choice** of Welsh books available for children at the moment? What is your general impression? *(Feel free to express your opinions on any points)*

Babies / Foundation Phase: all types of books

(Please circle) Good choice / sufficient choice / not enough choice

Age 7 to 9

- Stories / poems / novels

(Please circle) Good choice / sufficient choice / not enough choice

- Non-fiction / information / reference books

(Please circle) Good choice / sufficient choice / not enough choice

Age 9 to 11

- Stories / poems / novels

(Please circle) Good choice / sufficient choice / not enough choice

- Non-fiction / information / reference books

(Please circle) Good choice / sufficient choice / not enough choice

Age 11+

- Stories / poems / novels

(Please circle) Good choice / sufficient choice / not enough choice

- Non-fiction / information / reference books

(Please circle) Good choice / sufficient choice / not enough choice

2. In your opinion, what are the obvious gaps?

.....

.....

.....

PART TWO: Library resources and policies

1. Expenditure on Welsh books for children

As a service, how close are you to being able to purchase what you would wish to buy for children?

.....

What are your priorities?

.....

2. What provision is available for schools?

.....

3. What provision is being offered in terms of Saturday / after school / holiday activities?

.....

4. Do you have views on the following:

- Bilingual Books

.....

- The variety / choice of authors who publish in Welsh

.....

- Artwork and format of books for children in Welsh

.....

- The price of books in Welsh

.....

- The editorial / linguistic standard

.....

- The appeal of books for children in Welsh

.....

- Resources for marketing and promotion

.....

5. Additional resources

Do you make use of sound files / readings of Welsh books on the internet or on CD?

.....

What about e-books for children in Welsh?.....

What about apps?

PART THREE : response to books i English

1. How does the interest in English language books for children compare with the interest in Welsh language books? (among children fluent in both languages, if this can be analysed)

.....

2. In your opinion, is it possible to generalise at all on the attitude of children in specific areas or in specific types of schools towards Welsh books (in comparison with English books) ?

.....

3. Is the use made by children of ipads or tablets relevant to your service?

.....

4. Any views on use of English-medium digital material and its appeal?

.....

PART FOUR: dangers and opportunities

Are there any changes which are likely to harm the field in which you work?

.....

Are there any changes which create new opportunities for you as children’s librarians?

.....

PART SIX: contributing suggestions and summing up

Do you have any opportunity to influence companies or organisations which are relevant to the field of children's books?

.....

Would you welcome any additional ways of networking or collaborating?

.....

PART FIVE: other matters

Any observations on other matters relevant to Welsh books? (Do you have any idea how much influence some things have?)

70

e.g. Tir na n-Og Awards

The Books Quiz

Welsh Children's Laureate

Writers on Tour

Book Day

T Llew Jones Day

If you were given THREE WISHES: (sorry, no promises with this question!)

1.

2.

3.

Appendix (iii): letter from Bethan Gwanas on behalf of authors of Welsh language books for children

Ffrwd y Gwyllt, Rhydymain, Dolgellau, Gwynedd LL40 2AH

Ann Evans

Welsh Language Development Unit

ADAS, Welsh Assembly Government

Tŷ Afon, Ffordd Bedwas

Bedwas

Caerffili

CF83 8WT

21.1.13

Dear Ann and members of the Welsh Reading Books Panel,

71

I am writing to you because I have been disappointed with the amounts offered to authors of books for teenagers. Yes, immediately after declaring my disappointment that the amount is so low, I agreed to write my novel anyway, because I liked the idea behind the series and because I was aware of the real need for novels of this type.

But having realised how much work and time I put into writing the novel in question, I feel that it is my duty to draw your attention to the unfairness of the tendering system.

As you know, the publishing houses tender against each other for this work and since ADAS tends to go for the lowest price, this puts pressure on the publishing houses to offer the authors very low fees.

Perhaps this system is acceptable for the task of adapting textbooks but I, and a number of other authors, believe that this is totally unfair for creative work. To be honest, it reminds me of what is happening in cheap clothing factories in the third world. Writing an original novel is nothing like translating or adapting; first of all you have to think of an idea, also – more often than not - undertake research work, then work on the idea in order to create characters and plot before even starting on the writing process, which can take months – years if it is a long novel. Then, redrafting is often necessary, as well as editing, going through the proofs etc.

My novel is 27,000 words and the fee is £1,500, which works out as £55 for every thousand words (people pay £60-£80 per thousand words for translation). On average, I write approximately a thousand words per day - more on a good day, less on other days. £55 per day. Look at your own wages. Compare. Is this fair?

Would it be possible for ADAS to establish guidelines with the tendering specifications? What about recommending £100 (at least!) per thousand words for creative work and asking publishers to follow the guidelines when calculating their tendering price? The fee for a 27,000 word novel would then be £2,700 which is still disgracefully low for creative work, but more likely to attract experienced authors.

Although I am very happy with my novel, and have enjoyed the whole process, I am not likely to write another one for a series which is put out to tender like this. Not if I need to pay the mortgage / electricity bill.

I quote Gareth F Williams: “We write because we love writing. We write in Welsh, and for young people, because we love the language and strongly believe that there should be original literature available for them in their own language. Certainly, at the moment, the pay does not remotely reflect the commitment required for producing original work, and if it does not improve, I am afraid that a number of my fellow authors will lose heart and say ‘Oh – what’s the use? I can’t afford to write any more.’ And also that a number of prospective authors will decide that there is no point in starting.”

Here is a list of authors who support this letter:

Gareth F Williams

Manon Steffan Ros

Caryl Lewis

Lleucu Roberts

Gordon Jones

Sian Northey

Delyth George

Angharad Tomos

Mared Lewis

Haf Llewelyn

Gwyneth Glyn

Mari George

Gwenno Huws

Rhiannon Wyn

Meinir Pierce Jones

I would appreciate it if you could draw the attention of the other relevant panels to this matter as well, since – from what I understand of the process - fiction is commissioned within several parts of the curriculum.

Yours sincerely,

Bethan Gwanas

Appendix (iv): Feedback from Primary Schools

Example One:

- The main concern that the teacher has is the attitude of the children towards Welsh books. She specifically mentioned pupils in Year 5 and 6, who are much more enthusiastic about English books. According to the teacher, there are several reasons for this, namely the appearance/look of Welsh books which can be extremely boring, and also the fact that the language is difficult for the readers. For example, she said that primary pupils cannot cope with the language in the novels of T Llew Jones. She spoke highly of several series for younger readers such as Tudur Budr, Henri Helynt and the Gwreichion series, but was of the opinion that there is very little for the older readers (9-11), especially boys. Mention was made of books used in the class because of their connection with the curriculum, and very interestingly several of these were old and out of print e.g. *Cyfrinach Betsan Morgan* (1986; o/p), *Bwli a Bradwr* (1998; o/p), *Ta-ta Tryweryn* (1999, available). The teacher added that the children responded well to each one of these.
- Although the pupils enjoyed *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* by Jeff Kinney in English, the Welsh adaptations, *Dyddiadur Dripsyn* etc. were not available at the school.
- For the purpose of all kinds of research, use is made of the iPad in class. However, pupils do not come across much Welsh material.
- The teacher is aware that some of the children already read (English) books on Kindle at home.
- When asked what English titles are favourites among the pupils, it is interesting to note that every book apart from those by David Walliams are also available in Welsh. This is the list given: Harry Potter, books by Jaqueline Wilson, *Diary of a Wimpy Kid*, books by Michael Morpurgo, books by Roald Dahl, books by David Walliams.
- It was pointed out that the concept of a 'new book' is not very relevant to the school. The book that best meets the need is the most important every time.

Example Two:

- At this school, teachers were concerned that the overfull curriculum made it difficult to allow time for reading for pleasure. The library van used to visit the school but this service has lately been discontinued and there is even less opportunity now for the children to enjoy handling and choosing books.
- It was pointed out that it is more difficult to include parents in the effort to get children to read on a regular basis. Although every child has a personal reading diary to be shared with the parent (with space for the parents to sign and support) more and more parents now neglect to supervise it. The school tries to provide bilingual books for the children to take home with them because a high percentage of parents are non-Welsh speaking. Children in the Foundation Phase respond well to books related to what is shown on television.
- Teachers take an interest in books because they are parents themselves and often visit a good bookshop locally, but they feel that it is difficult to keep an eye out for new publications which children would find exciting. They were under the impression that the Books Council had not sent an information pack on books to the school for a long time [Misconception as this is sent out by post each term] Interestingly, *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* was named as one of the English titles that the pupils like but teachers were not aware that a Welsh version of three titles in the series is available.
- Regarding non-fiction books, it was stated that older children in the Foundation Phase were delighted with the Dechrau Da (Gomer) material and that more such material would be very welcome. Regarding the 7-11 years age group, extensive use is made of the iPad for research work, and it was noted that there is room for much more digital reading material in Welsh in order to ensure that children do not find information through the medium of English alone. Teachers were of the opinion that the investment for age 7+ should be in digital non-fiction material rather than in non-fiction printed books, which date very quickly.

Example Three:

- The teacher stated that the Foundation Phase children enjoy the variety of books available for this age group. Since a session is spent each day in the Reading Corner, they have a much better opportunity to handle, choose, read and discuss Welsh books. The teacher was of the opinion that there is a good choice of fiction but would like to see more factual books. She would welcome books similar to the Dechrau Da series (which has been very well received by children aged 7+) but aimed at the youngest children and containing easier text.
- Reading for pleasure is not well supported by parents. With regard to keeping record of reading under the learning to read plan they do co-operate, but very little use is made of the discussion questions recommended. The homework set for half term was to visit the public library and to take out two Welsh titles, but the teacher estimated that only around six parents would make the visit possible for their children although they lived in an urban area.
- The teacher can remember a time when there were resources on television/ video which reinforced interest in books, namely *Melin Mari* and later, *Darllen Da Fi*. Such programmes were very useful to play in the classroom at dinner time if the weather was wet and the children at that time enjoyed them greatly. There is nothing like this available now.
- The school receives the Urdd magazine *Cip*, therefore children can read about books from time to time. The Book Club leaflet is also read. However, very few books are bought as a result. The teacher notes that new titles cause a stir and that new copies of books would make a huge difference to the image of Welsh books and the attitude of children towards them. The school budget is very tight and although a representative from the Books Council calls at the school each year, there is very little money available for buying books.
- In Years 5 and 6 at the school there are avid readers, and it is good to report that they are willing to read in both languages. The library van calls once a fortnight, but very often the choice of Welsh books is limited. The teacher welcomes the appearance of titles such as *Dyddiadur Dripsynd* and *Twm Clwyd* since they are attractive to those who are not such keen readers. However, there is not enough

choice of weightier books which retain the interest of experienced and venturesome readers and the tendency then is for them to turn to English books – for example the *Hunger Games* series, the Dan Brown books etc. Anthony Horowitz books are also read, but in English rather than in Welsh. Among the popular Welsh titles at this school, the following were named:

Plentyn y Stryd, Berlie Doherty (adapt.) 2009

Dyddiadur Dripsyn, Jeff Kinney (adapt.) 2011

Carys Blodyn, Lauren Child (adapt.) 2005

Cath Modryb Bela, Dee Shulman (adapt.) 2009 [from the Hebog series, for 'unwilling' readers]

Codi Calon Tad-cu, Diana Hendry (adapt.) 2009 [from the Hebog series, for 'unwilling' readers]

Henri Helynt, various, Francesca Simon/Tony Ross (adapt.) 2006-13

Example Four:

- In the opinion of the young teacher questioned, Foundation Phase children in this rural school are keen on books. There is a good variety of story books for children under 7, although not as much as there was a few years ago and the teacher would hesitate before spending her limited budget on some of the books that are published nowadays. Lack of factual material is a problem. In the case of two themes which were central to the teaching over the last few months, no book was found which would be suitable for the children to handle unsupervised – namely books written in simple language and easily understood by the children. The two themes in question were: 'The Body' and 'Countries'.
- Another shortage noted was supplementary material such as toys, puppets and other objects. They do have Bag Cadi and the Cadi puppet but finger puppets, games, masks etc are very rare. The teacher had bought an English pack which offered books, puppets, game, toy etc. together with a card full of suggestions for the teacher. She has made very full use of the package and she makes a very serious appeal for similar material to be available in Welsh. She spent a very useful half term with 4 of the Pentre Bach story-and-picture books published

fairly recently, but she added that supplementary material would have been very useful as part of her plans.

- The Foundation Phase teacher makes use of stories which can be downloaded for free off Hwb Cymru. Additional Pentre Bach stories and 'Llyfrau Mawr' are among those which she and the children have welcomed and appreciated. Being able to show a book on the large screen is a dramatic and effective way of retaining the children's attention; it is more effective than holding up a single copy of a story-and- picture book. It is also available without using school funds.
- Children aged 7-9 are still enthusiastic about reading in Welsh and enjoy amusing books such as the Henri Helynt, Tudr Budr a Lolipops series. Because a wide range of books is published for this age group, the school has a fair amount of fiction available. More factual books are also available for this age group although there is never enough. The pupils use a computer for research but the school does not as yet have iPads on account of lack of funding.
- In Years 5 and 6 there are some avid readers. The County Library van visits the school every month but the choice of Welsh books is not extensive and many of the pupils choose English books. The County Library also provides a service for teachers – a box containing books on a specific theme – but the teacher noted that the choice is often limited and that she already has more titles in her class or in her personal store than are provided by the library. She stated that she purchases Welsh books herself in order to ensure sufficient variety when funding is low. A number of pupils enjoy the Hanes Atgas series. Children from a non-Welsh background favour English books when they reach Years 5 and 6, but the teacher does not feel that there is any real prejudice against Welsh books and that this tendency can be overcome with some perseverance: 'The challenge is making them aware of the books.' She stated, however, that it can be difficult to find new and 'challenging' books for years 5 and 6. They like humour on the one hand (Dyddiadur Dripsynd is popular, as well as the original English titles) but also serious and secret themes.
- Every Book Club leaflet is distributed and some orders are taken – approximately 6 out of 38 children purchase a book. In the past the school used to take part in

the Book Quiz but not in latter years on account of the work pressure. The emphasis on tests and 'raising standards' is a cause of concern for the teachers. The school ensures that every child spends some time reading every day and the parents are asked to listen to their children reading every other day. In the opinion of the teacher, respect for books and interest in reading does not exist in many homes. When the youngest children are questioned, only a few of them have a story before they go to bed.

- It was noted that the concept of a 'new' publication is not important in the Foundation Phase. Since every box of books on the new theme for the term is 'new' for the children, it is more important for the teacher to get hold of everything that is relevant.