



National Foundation for Educational Research

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# Assessing the International Dimension in Education in Schools in Wales Phase II

## Executive Summary

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<b>Angela Cook</b>	Principal Consultant – Cambridge Education
<b>David Istance</b>	Senior Adviser – OECD
<b>Polly Seton</b>	LEA representative Carmarthenshire/Ceredigion – Wales International Dimension in Education (WIDE)
<b>Catherine Evans</b>	Inspector – Estyn
<b>Emily Daly</b>	LEA representative Cardiff – WIDE
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## Executive summary

### Background

This project formed the second phase of research on the impact of the International Dimension in Education (IDE), commissioned by British Council Wales on behalf of the Welsh Assembly Government. **Phase I** of the British Council's research comprised a scoping study to identify the extent of IDE activities in schools in Wales and to gather schools' feedback on their effectiveness.

**Phase II** research focused on measuring the impact of IDE in schools in Wales through the development and trialling of a self-assessment tool, and an accompanying guidance document in a sample of eight schools. The research was conducted by the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) in partnership with the Council for Education and World Citizenship – Cymru (CEWC-Cymru) between January and July 2010.

The term International Dimension in Education (IDE) is reference to all components of education and learning that focus on or incorporate European and/or international activity. It is synonymous to the term global dimension, and encompasses activity found in many areas of the Welsh National Curriculum.

### *The value of the International Dimension*

The IDE is increasingly understood to be an important element in school education in Wales and beyond. A range of factors contribute to its relevance: the opportunities presented by global communication and new media; international trade and its associated social and economic issues; increased awareness of other cultures, languages and beliefs; and truly global challenges such as tackling climate change and sharing natural resources. It is linked to, and underpins the delivery of, Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship (ESDGC), which has been a priority area of the Welsh Assembly Government's education policy since 2004 and judged by Estyn as a key learning outcome to be assessed in school inspections from September 2010. The value of the IDE is strongly supported by education policy makers, as well as understood by many Welsh schools as a key element in their learning provision.

In addition, the 2010 report from the Development Education Association based on an Ipsos MORI poll, reported this learning nurtured a socially responsible and outward-looking populace, which counteracted discomfort about racial and religious difference. It also found a high level of public support for global learning in school.

### ***Why assess the IDE?***

The self-assessment tool was designed to help schools to move away from compiling a factual account of the IDE work they undertook, towards a focus on how the IDE benefited the school, in terms of contributing to educational effectiveness, social cohesiveness and the attitudes and values of both learners and teachers. The tool is divided into five sections: ‘outcomes for learners’, ‘outcomes for teachers’, ‘outcomes for the school as a whole’, ‘outcomes for the wider community’ and a final section to assist schools to plan the future development of the IDE. There is an opportunity for schools to assess the extent to which the IDE contributes to school effectiveness in the first four sections using the following descriptors ‘basic’, ‘developing’, ‘developed’ or ‘embedded’.

As well as being educationally valuable in its own right, by making the impact of IDE more explicit, schools would be able to use the tool to assess how effective their IDE activities were in delivering key components of the school curriculum.

### ***The IDE’s role in the school curriculum and qualifications***

The key curriculum areas and qualification frameworks relevant to the IDE in Wales were identified as follows:

- Wales, Europe and the World (WEW) / Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification.
- Personal and Social Education (PSE).
- Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship (ESDGC).
- Subject specifications, particularly: geography, history, government and politics, sociology, modern foreign languages and world development.

### ***The IDE’s role in whole-school development***

The development of the IDE assessment tool coincided with the emergence of two key documents which had started to shape schools’ practice: the Welsh Assembly Government’s *School Effectiveness Framework* (published in September 2009) and Estyn’s new *Common Inspection Framework* (published in April 2010). The self-assessment tool sought to reflect both of these frameworks in its structure, language and accompanying guidance.

## Key findings

The following key findings are based on the pilot schools' own self-evaluation of their IDE activities and on the qualitative interviews conducted with staff.

### *The IDE in the pilot schools*

- All schools noted a beneficial effect on the standard of learners' work, motivation and attainment levels, but currently found it hard to evidence. Other benefits included: greater understanding and awareness of global issues, opportunities for learners to broaden their horizons, reach a higher level of skills and develop better relationships with staff.
- Most schools believed that their IDE activities were contributing to their schools' effectiveness, by promoting positive outcomes for learners. This was in each of the six areas that had been identified: wellbeing of learners, assessment for learning/learner participation, development of attitudes and values, skills (thinking, communication, ICT, and number), knowledge and understanding of global issues/context, and attainment levels.
- The organisation and leadership for the IDE varied but all schools emphasised that staff commitment and engagement was vital. In the secondary schools there was usually involvement from the headteacher (as the overall school leader) or one of the assistant headteachers, while in the primary schools it was often the headteacher who took the lead.
- Schools which judged themselves to have 'embedded' the IDE had encouraged staff to consider how it might enrich their work at departmental level (for instance by examining how it might contribute to schemes of work). Discussion at departmental level could feed the wider whole-school approach focusing on how the IDE is included meaningfully across the curriculum, and as an activity in PSE and school assemblies etc.

### *Learners' views on the IDE*

- Learners identified a very wide range of benefits in terms of better global understanding and promoting harmony between nations. These included relevance of presentations made by people from other countries; better understanding of global inequality and deprivation; expanding their cultural understanding; the study of modern languages being more relevant and immediate; and the role of the IDE in deepening their understanding of global issues, conflicts and history.
- Most learners initially referred to benefits for other countries in relation to the IDE, -or to a very wide range of benefits in terms of better global understanding and promoting harmony between nations. They had often not considered to what extent the IDE had directly benefitted them as individuals or could help them in other contexts. However, with prompting, they identified the development of communication skills, ICT, planning skills, problem solving and enhanced subject knowledge as noted above.

- Learners were also very enthusiastic and pro-active in engaging in the planning and delivery of IDE related activities and, for example, language learning. They welcomed and respond to the challenges of engagement with other cultures, and were quick to recognise and report on differences between stereotype and reality.

### ***Outcomes for learners***

- Most schools believed that the benefits of the IDE were either ‘developing’ or ‘developed’ in terms of promoting positive outcomes for learners.
- More than half believed that the benefits of the IDE were ‘embedded’ in terms of the attitudes and values of learners.
- In addition to the evidence offered in the schools’ formal self-assessment, a range of positive outcomes were identified by the pilot schools both in the qualitative sections of the self-assessment tool and in the case study interviews. Many of these judgements were recognised to be highly qualitative in nature and included helping them to understand issues better, fostering informed citizens and developing their skills, (in particular communication and ICT) confidence and self-esteem.

### ***Outcomes for teachers***

- Most schools believed that the benefits for teachers were ‘developing’. Teachers were reported to be more aware of global issues, have a better awareness of the different pedagogical styles and expectations of other countries.
- Other outcomes included experience of using ICT to link with countries abroad, planning and leadership skills and the opportunity to interact informally with learners through activities associated with the IDE.
- Schools intended to maximise opportunities to develop networks of professional practice (for example, PLCs) which sought to develop a leadership role in relation to the IDE. The planned activities in this area included contribution to LA activities and links with other schools and networks.
- All schools noted a beneficial effect on staff motivation and satisfaction, along with opportunities for staff to travel and broaden their horizons. Two schools specifically mentioned greater shared practice and team working, particularly in relation to the Welsh Baccalaureate, while improvement in teacher/learner relationships was noted by all.

### ***Outcomes for the school community as a whole***

- Three schools believed that aspects of this consequence of the IDE were ‘embedded’ in two areas (the impact on ethos and the promotion of equality and human rights), and two of them also believed that the role of IDE was ‘embedded’ in terms of its impact on behaviour and social cohesion and pupil attendance levels.
- However, it was more common for schools to judge these aspects to be ‘developed’ or ‘developing’ and three schools believed that the impact of the IDE on attendance was at a ‘basic’ level.



### ***Outcomes for the wider community***

- Two schools believed that the impact of the IDE was ‘embedded’ in all aspects of the outcomes for the wider community, but an equal or slightly larger number believed that this was a ‘developing’ feature.
- It was recognised that the IDE could contribute to fostering links with the communities served by a school by raising awareness of what the children and young people had accomplished through fund-raising activities to support IDE-related activities.

### ***Usefulness of the self-assessment tool***

- All schools were positive about the IDE self-assessment tool and accompanying guidance document. They believed that it could provide them with valuable data both for accountability and planning purposes and would be of most benefit used as the basis for an on-going continual review process. Schools also recognised and welcomed the link with the Estyn Common Inspection Framework and the SEF.
- Schools believed that the action plan element included at the end of the assessment tool was particularly valuable to set targets and measure their effectiveness at a later date.
- In secondary schools the outcomes of IDE assessments could feed into departmental reviews as each head of department sought to evaluate on their teams’ existing strengths and areas for development.
- Five schools, including those who had rated themselves ‘developing’, indicated that they would welcome case studies and a list of useful websites to accompany the tool.

### ***Implementing the IDE effectively***

- The self-assessment tool itself was identified as a factor which would promote the leadership of the IDE alongside other possible drivers such as the role of schools’ eco-councils and priorities identified through implementing ESDGC.
- All schools emphasised that staff commitment and engagement, both in the school itself and abroad was vital.
- It was possible to delegate responsibility for implementing aspects of the IDE to a range of staff, but involvement of senior management was also required.
- Schools identified that convincing governors of its importance was often central if the IDE was to be embedded in their activities.
- Schools which judged themselves to have ‘embedded’ the IDE had encouraged staff to consider how it might enrich their work at departmental/subject level.
- The use of technology (video-conferencing, e-mail etc) in enabling more frequent access to communities overseas was also an aspect which was seen to promote ‘embedded’ IDE.

## Conclusions

All schools in the sample recognised the contribution of IDE and its role in the broader personal and social development of children and young people (in terms of attitudes and values). However, they also acknowledged that the outcomes of the IDE were often difficult to quantify. Increased awareness and knowledge of different countries, familiarity with and respect for cultural differences, and the confidence to contemplate living and working overseas for short or longer-term periods are attributes which may well prove increasingly important in a more global economy. Given that Wales has chosen not to adopt the model of specialist schools, the opportunity exists for all learners to benefit from the IDE. This approach would need to embed the IDE as a key complement of Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig, and as a response to other initiatives such as the rights of children and young people embodied in the Extending Entitlement agenda. This research suggests that for this to be done effectively, schools need to analyse their existing activities and develop a systematic approach to identifying opportunities and how those might be realised.

Further information on the research and programmes supporting the delivery of IDE in Wales can be found at: <http://www.britishcouncil.org/wales>.