

EDUCATION, YOUNG PEOPLE AND WELSH LANGUAGE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 23.6.23
CARMARTHENSHIRE'S ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE WELSH IN EDUCATION STRATEGIC PLAN 2022/23

1. Background

Section 84 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 requires a local authority to prepare a Welsh in Education Strategic Plan, and states that such a Plan should include:

- a. Local authority proposals on how it will carry out its education functions to:
 - i. Improve the planning of the delivery of Welsh-medium education in its area;
 - ii. Improving Welsh-medium education standards and Welsh language teaching standards in its area;
- b. The local authority's targets for improving the planning of the delivery of Welsh-medium education in its area and for improving the standards of that education and the teaching of Welsh in its area;
- c. Report on progress made to meet the targets included in the previous plan or the previous revised plan.

The Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) 2022-32 has now been approved by the Welsh Government. At the request of Carmarthenshire's Education, Children and Welsh Language Scrutiny Committee, it is timely to propose an annual review of progress in the implementation of the Scheme.

The Strategic Plan and action plan were organised under 7 main goals or outcomes:

- **Outcome 1:** More nursery age / three-year olds receive their education through the medium of Welsh
- **Outcome 2:** More reception class children/five-year olds receive their education through the medium of Welsh
- **Outcome 3:** More children continue to improve their Welsh language skills when transferring from one stage of their statutory education to another
- **Outcome 4:** More learners to study for qualifications in Welsh as a subject and subjects through the medium of Welsh
- **Outcome 5:** More opportunities for learners to use Welsh in different contexts in school
- **Outcome 6:** An increase in the provision of Welsh-medium education for pupils with additional needs (ALN) in accordance with the duties imposed by the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018
- **Outcome 7:** Increase the number of teaching staff able to teach Welsh (as a subject) and teach through the medium of Welsh

2. Action Plan

An Action Plan for the WESP has been drafted and submitted to the Welsh Government (WG) by 01/2023. The action plan is attached with this report (below). Progress in implementing the scheme has been highlighted by expected progress over the current year as well as suggesting progress over the next 5 years. We have received feedback on the scheme from Welsh Government civil servants, and the general advice was to ensure that the commitments in the WESP were clearly reflected in the action plan and that it was necessary to detail how we go about delivering on the commitments.

The plan has been fine tuned and updated by 05/2023.

3. **Recent progress** – here's a list of different progressives around the WESP who are/have come to fruition in our schools:

Outcome 1: More nursery age / three-year olds receive their education through the medium of Welsh

Outcome 2: More reception class children/five-year olds receive their education through the medium of Welsh

- Appoint a Welsh language Flying Start officer.
- Welsh language Development Manager now a member of the '*Flying Start Expansion Early Years and Welsh Language*' committee - Regular meetings to plan for language use in the Flying Start settings with a view to increasing the use of Welsh and raising linguistic standards in the Foundation Phase
- Hand in Hand Plan Foundation Phase – 12 English medium primary schools are involved here. 58 staff members at these second language schools receive practical training and advice on the classroom floor. The class language learning sessions will be held on Monday mornings and will then operate in class with the support of the Welsh Language Development Teacher Team who share current dedicated resources.
- Refine and develop the provision in the planning of intensive immersion education in the Foundation Phase.
- Conduct training for Immersion education pedagogy in the Foundation Phase.
- Filming a series of clips at Halfway, Penygaer, Llandeilo and Burry Port schools to show ways to introduce Welsh across learning areas.
- Conduct face-to-face training for the assistants with teachers involved in the projects

Outcome 3: More children continue to improve their Welsh language skills when transferring from one stage of their statutory education to another

- Arm in Arm KS2 plan being piloted - This is a follow up from Hand in Hand plan for teachers and classroom assistants to ensure linguistic continuity in our English schools.
- Create film clips to encourage the use of Welsh across learning areas
- Support Year 6 pupils of Welsh medium schools to ensure continuity with Welsh medium education.
- Supporting Year 6 pupils who need support in continuing Welsh Medium education in Secondary School – Running confidence building and language refresher sessions at Canolfan Gwên.
- Welsh Language Charter
 - Secondary Schools Charter launch – footage has been created from the launch at Canolfan Gwên on 17/03/23. Hosted by Heledd Cynwal, it was a very successful day, with special guests such as Ian Gwyn Hughes, Cefin Campbell MP and Marc Morris, Ysgol Pen y Dre Merthyr Tydfil creating a special tone and important messages for the pupils and school staff in attendance.
 - Organising events and competitions to promote the Primary Schools Charter eg Ar y Meic da Marci G – the input of a number of schools into the Marci G radio programme in introducing themselves and their schools. Schools to create a Radio programme following the format of Marci G.
 - Schools to continue on the journey towards the Language Charter Gold award with the support of TADG. This has been validated across the Partnership to ensure consistency of standards

Outcome 4: More learners to study for qualifications in Welsh (as a subject) and subjects through the medium of Welsh

- Plan for Language Centres ensures consistency and continuity including lesson plans and theme timetable across the Centres
- Language Centres – The centres below are currently running but as the language needs of the county change 'Pop ups' within specific areas will be needed for newcomers
 - Gwên, Drefach
 - Ysgol Llangadog
 - Griffith Jones, St Clears
 - Y Bedol, Garnant
- Current numbers and schools attending.

Language Centre	Schools
Canolfan Gwên - (two days) Latecomers -12	Parc y Tywyn, Ffwrnes, Five Roads, Llechyfedach, Nantgaredig, Llandybie
Canolfan Gwên – (8 days) Confidence building- 9	Cross Hands, Bancffosfelen, Y Fro, Pontyates
Canolfan y Bedol – one day - latecomers. – 13	Betws, Brynamman, Blaenau, Y Bedol
Llangadog Centre - latecomers -one day– 14	Talley, Rhys Pritchard, Cwrt Henri, Llangadog Ffairfach
Llangadog Centre Building Confidence – one day - 13	Llangadog, Rhys Pritchard, Talylychau, Cwrt Henri, Fairfach

- Supporting in the Schools – Meidrim , Hafodwennog, Llanpumsaint Llanybydder Bro Brynach
- Ffwrnes / Llechyfedach online lessons
- Continue with digital workshops of more able and talented year 6 pupils

Outcome 5: More opportunities for learners to use Welsh in different contexts in school

- Running Refresher lessons for target groups – with numbers varying on demand
- Parents - A film for parents to assist in the work within the language centres . Running opportunities at the end of sessions to share pupils' work with their parents.
- Collaborating with the Mentrau Iaith – Officer based at Bryngwyn school including conducting oral activities e.g. coffee and chat mornings at school.

Outcome 6: An increase in the provision of Welsh-medium education for pupils with additional needs (ALN) in accordance with the duties imposed by the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018

- Ensuring our pupils with needs have the same opportunities when it comes to learning Welsh – Collaborate with TADG to create a series of tri-lingual books – Welsh, English and Sign Language called Derwyn a'r Ddraig
- Support ALN and encourage them to compete in the Eisteddfod
- Intensive conversations with the County ALN team to ensure collaboration and equal opportunities.

Outcome 7: Increase the number of teaching staff able to teach Welsh (as a subject) and teach through the medium of Welsh

- Working together to forward plan. Use of language audits on an annual basis and of the TADG's understanding of those schools that are keen to move linguistically. A number of schools have sought help with the support of the governing body
- Share good practice on the class floor

- Create bespoke resources and conduct training
 - Second language good practice film available for facilitating and building staff confidence
 - Language Training Courses at the following levels
 - Complete beginners (Primary)
 - Entry Level – for beginners, language based and classwork
 - Foundation Level – for those who already had a bit of Welsh
 - Intermediate Level
 - Focus on learning Welsh as a subject and literacy -including language learning methodology and grammar
 - Advanced Level/Proficiency - aimed towards Welsh speakers to improve the teacher's language accuracy and confidence to enable them to develop pupil literacy
 - Advanced Level/Proficiency/Refresher (Secondary) - aimed towards Welsh speakers who are almost confident to learn a subject through the medium of Welsh including vocabulary for KS3 and KS4 tailor-made for the subjects of the teachers attending
 - Follow up – supporting Year 7 Secondary teachers to gain confidence and ensure accuracy in the delivery of the new curriculum.
 - S4C CROESO CYW Project – this was a very successful project incorporating pioneering work with S4C for Foundation stage children
 - **Staffing**
 - Use of the Immersion grant to run a Continuing Professional Development opportunity for 2 teachers – one Secondary one Primary all working within TADG
4. **Linguistic categorisation of schools** – The Department for Education and Children is working with schools to transition them to the Welsh Government's new linguistic categorisation system. The new regime now places schools in three categories:
- 1 – English Medium School**
2 – Two language school
3 – Welsh Medium School
- T2** and **T3** are transitional categories that facilitate the journey of schools from one category to another, namely T2 for moving from an English school to a dual language school and T3 from a dual language school to a Welsh medium school. Also, in secondary schools, category 3P denotes a specified Welsh school.
- In line with Welsh Government guidance, the County has taken the lead by highlighting a current new category that best reflects the current linguistic situation of each school
 - Also, each school was placed with an aspirational category which is a category to aspire to in the 10 year WESP rolling programme
 - This regime has been identified as good practice by the Welsh Government and there has been an opportunity to spread this good practice nationally at two recent conferences
 - All schools have been asked to respond to the categories proposed for them, and respond by the end of the Autumn Term 2022. The table below summarises the response received:

CURRENT / ASPIRATIONAL	Numberof Schools	%
AGREE AGREE	87	80.6
AGREE DISAGREE	1	0.9
DISAGREE AGREE	2	1.9
DISAGREE DISAGREE	11	10.2
REQUEST FOR MORE TIME	5	4.6
UNANSWERED	2	1.9
TOTAL	108	100

The response has been generally very positive, with a clear majority agreeing with the two categories suggested for them. Interestingly, of these 87 schools, 12 English medium primary schools wish to move along the language continuum; 2 2B secondary schools wish to convert to Welsh language schools (Category 3) and one 2A school wishes to move to become a Category 3P school.

As the response is slightly polarising, in the Spring 2023 term, officers held a series of conversations and meetings with the schools who wanted more time to consider the situation, and with those who disagreed with both categories. Of these 11 schools, 8 of the schools were from the same catchment area.

Formal meetings with Heads and Governors were attended as follows:

- Catchment area of schools in east Llanelli
- Ysgol Bryngwyn/Glanymor
- QE High

For the Summer term 2023 - we have granted an extension, for those schools that possess it, to consider their position further and to hold further discussions at governing body level. We therefore expect further answers by the end of the academic year.

During the Autumn Term, we will agree and finalise categories with all schools, offer advice on how to reflect the language category in the school prospectuses, paving the way for the categories to be recorded in the annual school census (CBLDY / PLASC) in January 2024.

5. Welsh Language Development Teacher Team –

- Professional Teaching Awards Wales. - Iona Llyr, Manager of the Welsh Language Development Teacher Team won an award in the category ' Using the Welsh language in an inspiring way'. Judges came to Canolfan Gwên to judge Iona when interviewing her and headteachers, Pupils/students, parents/carers, teaching colleagues and support staff, Head of Curriculum and Wellbeing, Department for Education and Children and external organisations.
- A ceremony was held in Cardiff for the winners at the summer 2023 conference.
- Iona has subsequently received a number of requests for television and radio interviews and also for sharing good practice across Wales

6. Standards –

- The speaking and listening skills of most pupils in both Welsh and English are strong across many of our schools. For example, most pupils demonstrate effective listening skills by following instructions, asking and answering questions and collaborating with others.
- In both languages, the early reading skills of most pupils in many schools are effective. They successfully use their phonic skills to understand the relationship between phonemes and graphemes. Many learners use a range of strategies well to read unfamiliar words and develop their fluency and

expression. In the majority of our schools many pupils use advanced reading skills successfully.

- Many pupils develop appropriate basic writing skills in many schools. The majority of pupils write extensively successfully and exhibit appropriate writing styles for different purposes.
- Many English medium or dual stream schools successfully implement the Cymraeg Campus project, and this has a good impact on pupils' awareness of the language, its culture and ethos. Many pupils in many of our schools are making effective progress in their acquisition of international languages from the valuable opportunities and experiences provided
- In the schools surveyed since September 2022 literacy was a recommendation to address by around half of them

7. Working with Partners - Partneriaeth / Mentrau Iaith

- Working together to forward plan. Use of language audits on an annual basis and of the Tîm Athrawon Datblygu'r Gymraeg (TADG) understanding of those schools keen to move linguistically . Many schools have sought help with the support of the governing body
- Use of Partneriaeth and Mentrau staff in working together on various specific projects across a number of schools to ensure movement along the language continuum.

8. Workforce Development Grant

Very recently, the Department for Education and Children has been successful in receiving funding of £105,000 to support the capacity of the Welsh-medium workforce in the County. We aim to combine the sponsorship with other grant sources to employ peripatetic teachers to increase the Welsh-medium teaching workforce, and the available subject range, in the primary and secondary sector in Llanelli and the secondary sector in Taf Myrddin.

9. The Way Ahead

a. White Paper

- The Welsh Government (WG) has been consulting publicly on the content of a new Welsh Language Education Bill. The results of the 2021 Census highlight the need for purposeful action to address the two-fold challenge of the growing numbers who can speak Welsh across Wales and to protect Welsh-speaking communities with high percentages of Welsh speakers, but are showing a decline.
- The bill includes proposals such as:
 - Set the national target of one million Welsh speakers by 2050 in law
 - Aim for pupils by statutory age to speak Welsh up to Level B2 (CEFR – Common European Framework of Reference)
 - Realising one Welsh continuum
 - Set school language categories on a statutory basis
 - Set a minimum for curriculum time provided in Welsh
 - Agree a principle that all schools should increase their Welsh language provision over time
 - Proposal to denote new schools as Welsh schools
- The education system has an integral role to play as we meet these challenges.
- WG says every pupil in Wales deserves to become a Welsh speaker, and everyone who works in the education system has a responsibility to work towards that goal.
- The proposals in the white paper reflect this new aim and ambition for our education system. Achieving this will mean increasing the number of Welsh-medium schools, but also

increasing Welsh language provision in schools that are not already designated Welsh-medium schools. Fundamentally, there is a vision that every pupil can become a confident Welsh speaker through the statutory education system.

- WG is committed to ensuring over time that all children receive a proportion of their education provision through the medium of Welsh beyond Welsh as a subject, in order to build Welsh language skills across the curriculum.
- The current path set by 'Cymraeg 2050' in 2017 sets a goal that at least 40% of all learners will be in Welsh-medium education by 2050.
- The White Paper sets out a number of important developments for Welsh-medium education, at least some of which can be considered far-reaching.
- In terms of the consultation, WG stated, *'The Welsh language belongs to all of us, and so we want to encourage everyone to consider the proposals... The consultation will run for 12 weeks, until 16 June 2023. We look forward to hearing the views of a wide range of people on our proposals.'*

b. Carmarthenshire as an area of higher density linguistic significance

The Welsh Communities Commission was established by the Welsh Government in August 2022 with the aim of making recommendations to strengthen Welsh-speaking communities. The Commission's final recommendations will be published in the form of a report by August 2024.

The Commission emphasises that Welsh is a national language. It has a number of universal features and language policy should reflect this. For example, language rights in Wales should be universal: they belong to all Welsh citizens wherever they live in the country.

In order to support Welsh as a national language, it also needs to be supported as a community language. In areas facing a language shift to English, there should be a willingness to allow the variation of public policy in socioeconomic and sociolinguistic areas in order to stabilise Welsh as a community language. These are areas such as town and country planning, land use, housing, education, community development, language planning and economic policies.

To enable the variation of public policy in such communities, areas of linguistic significance should be designated. These areas should be referred to as 'areas of linguistic significance (higher density)'.

The advantage of designating areas of linguistic significance (higher density) would be:

1. allowing policy diversity and policy emphasis in favour of Welsh as a community language
2. ensuring that the policy diversity responds to the diverse social and linguistic needs of these areas
3. intensifying consideration of the Welsh language within a policy framework
4. allowing pro-Welsh interventions to stabilise and strengthen it as a community language
5. providing necessary forces to empower communities to reverse language shift

Following the 2021 Census, Carmarthenshire, or parts of it, may well become an area of linguistic significance. We understand that education is within the scope of sponsorship that will be awarded to areas of this designation. Officers will examine the potential of this sponsorship for the education system in the County. Our aim will be to combine any subsistence we bring with other grants to further build on the Welsh-medium workforce in our schools.