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Minister for Education and Welsh Language



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref
Ein cyf/Our ref JMEWL/1464/22

Helen Morgan-Rees
Director of Education
Swansea Council

18 May 2022

Dear Helen

Thank you for submitting your draft Welsh in Education Strategic Plan for my consideration.

This work took place during an unprecedented global pandemic. I'd like to acknowledge that and thank you for the time put into the preparation of your draft Plan. Despite amending [The Welsh in Education Strategic Plans Regulations](#) so that the WESP planning and implementation cycle could start a year later, I fully understand that it remains a challenging time for local authorities.

I would also like to thank you for your willing co-operation on the WESP more generally, not only during this recent period, but since the publication of our long-term strategy for the Welsh language, [Cymraeg 2050: A million speakers](#), in 2017. For the first time, an ambitious target was set to reach a million speakers by 2050 and that simple and clear message has taken hold. This led to a review of the strategic plans, with a recommendation to amend the regulations so that they support the Cymraeg 2050 ambition. [The Welsh in Education Strategic Plans \(Wales\) Regulations 2019](#) ("the 2019 Regulations") followed shortly after.

Among the main changes was the decision to extend the WESP planning cycle to ten years driven by the Cymraeg 2050 milestones of 30% of learners receiving their education through the medium of Welsh by 2031. Focus on planning to stimulate growth was the clear message. A methodology was introduced to explain how those individual targets were calculated.

I'm pleased to see that your draft WESP sets out your clear commitment to achieving your 10-year target, by increasing the percentage of year 1 learners taught in Welsh from 15.4% (2019/20) to between 23% and 27% by the end of the Plan.

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

This is an important statement that confirms your commitment to our national vision of a million speakers by 2050, as well as your contribution to the [Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015](#)'s aim of 'A Wales of Vibrant Culture and Thriving Welsh Language'.

Your Plan is expected to outline how this target is to be met, and the 2019 Regulations set out a series of statements and targets that you need to include. I have assessed your draft Plan in accordance with these requirements, together with feedback collated across the Education, Social Justice and Welsh Language Group.

To meet your 10-year target, you are proposing a number of positive commitments which I welcome. However, I believe that there is scope for you to strengthen your Plan. Section 85(5)(a) of the [School Standards and Organisation \(Wales\) Act 2013](#) ("the 2013 Act") requires me to consult with you on any modifications I consider appropriate before approving your Plan.

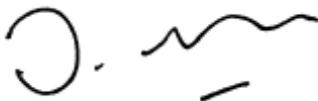
The annex to this letter outlines per outcome the matters I would like you to address I urge you to consider the comments carefully and take steps to modify your draft Plan accordingly.

I understand that you will need time to consider the comments and to implement any internal approval processes. With that in mind, I'm asking you to send me your revised Plan by **24 June 2022**. If your revised Plan addresses the issues outlined in this letter, I'll consider approving it.

Once I have made a decision to approve your Plan, I'd like you to turn your attention to the implementation. For the purposes of monitoring progress, I'd like to see an action plan for the first 5 years drawn up by the **end of the Autumn term**. This will be monitored annually in the form of a review report.

I want to assure you that my officials will provide any necessary support, advice or guidance during this period. Your local officer will be in touch within a few days to discuss.

Yours sincerely,



Jeremy Miles AS/MS
Gweinidog y Gymraeg ac Addysg
Minister for Education and Welsh Language

<p>Number/ Percentage of Year 1 learners being taught through the medium of Welsh in 2019/20</p>	<p>390/ 15.4%</p>	
<p>Target for 2030/31</p>	<p>Lower range 590/ 23%</p>	<p>Upper range 695/ 27%</p>
<p>Outcomes</p>	<p>Feedback</p>	
<p>Your vision</p>	<p>You make a clear commitment to your 10-year target which is to be welcomed.</p> <p>It's clear that you've given consideration to the data available to you and consulted with local schools and partners in the preparation of your Plan.</p> <p>The supporting background information provided as an annex to the Plan provides useful and important information, although where additional information to support actions in your plan is available, please reference it in the main body of your Plan.</p> <p>I'm pleased to see that your Plan has been strengthened following the public consultation. The purpose of this feedback is to be constructive and offer you the opportunity to strengthen elements of your WESP, rather than change your vision to meet your 10-year targets.</p>	
<p>Outcome 1: More nursery children/ three year olds receive their education through the medium of Welsh</p>	<p>Commitments made under this outcome need to be supported by information/data setting out your current childcare and early-years provision. This is included in your background annex but without reference to it, this useful context is lost.</p> <p>I fully support your commitment to ensure each Welsh-medium primary school is supported by a Cylch Meithrin and Ti a Fi, and the targets you've given yourself to ensure those provisions are in place. More detail around how you will formalise that working relationship with Mudiad Meithrin and others over the next few years to achieve these targets would be helpful. This is touched upon in Outcome 2 but is better placed here. Reference could be made to the establishment of an early years sub-group or task and finish group to monitor progress in this area.</p> <p>You currently have 1 Welsh-medium Flying Start provision. Are you in a position to strengthen your commitment to 'explore opportunities for more Welsh language settings' by setting yourself a target and a more detailed timeframe within</p>	

	<p>the first 5 years? You will be aware of the recent announcement of the expansion of the Flying Start programme in Wales, with particular emphasis on strengthening Welsh-medium provision. You will be expected to include details of how you have incorporated plans for delivering a phased expansion of Welsh medium early years provision, to include all 2-year olds, via the Flying Start programme within the WESP.</p> <p>I welcome your commitment to undertake a full review of the authority's admissions process as well as commission research to better understand why under-represented groups and communities may not feel Welsh-medium education is an option. Given the importance of this work, please could you provide a timeframe for when this work will take place? I suggest within the first year of the Plan.</p> <p>Commitments made under this outcome are well placed, however, given your emphasis on filling surplus places, they need to be firmed up by measurable targets and commitment to deliver within the first few years of the Plan.</p>
<p>Outcome 2: More reception class children/ five year olds receive their education through the medium of Welsh</p>	<p>The commitment to establish 3 additional primary provisions is welcomed. Is there more information to share about the nature of the provision? Does it mean expanding provision in already established primary schools or are you considering establishing new schools? Please could this be clarified in the Plan.</p> <p>I note that the commitment for the additional provision is being made towards the end of the decade. Please could you clarify why these developments cannot progress any sooner? Is this due to planned LDP developments or capital funding restraints?</p> <p>To note, you need to change the references to 21 Century Schools and Colleges Programme to Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme.</p>
<p>Outcome 3: More children continue to improve their Welsh language skills when transferring from one stage of their statutory education to another</p>	<p>Your data shows that learner progression from one key stage to another is good, although you have identified and intend to monitor the increase in learners transferring from Welsh-medium schools to English-medium schools, which has increased during Covid-19.</p> <p>You are committed to further developing your late immersion provision following a successful bid from the Welsh Government. Is there anything to update following the work undertaken during 2021/22? eg any findings from the research that should be referred to in the WESP? You will have heard by now that the Welsh Government has committed further funding to support late immersion provision, which you will soon have an opportunity to apply for.</p>

	<p>Please could you clarify what you mean by 'Progress strategic plans to increase the permanent capacity of Welsh medium secondary provision'</p> <p>Given the emphasis on filling surplus places and expanding Welsh-medium primary provision, are you satisfied there is sufficient capacity within your Welsh-medium secondary provision to respond to this need? I would like this set out in the plan.</p>
<p>Outcome 4: More learners study for assessed qualifications in Welsh (as a subject) and subjects through the medium of Welsh</p>	<p>The small but stable growth in learners studying for a GCSE Welsh qualification is encouraging. It would be good to have a breakdown of the other subjects studied through the medium of Welsh at A-level.</p> <p>I note your target to increase the % of learners assessed in Welsh from 12% to 15%.</p> <p>Are you aware of E-sgol and have you considered the benefits of this programme to encourage more learners to continue to study and be assessed through the medium of Welsh? If you see this as an opportunity to strengthen your offer in your secondary schools, please state that in your plan.</p> <p>Reference is made to your intention to support learners in your English-medium schools to increase their provision of Welsh. A Welsh language learning framework is being developed to support English-medium schools and settings as part of Curriculum for Wales preparations. This work complements the arrangements announced in December 2021 which introduce a new approach to categorising schools according to their Welsh language provision. Emphasis is placed on expanding Welsh language learning experiences across the education sector, both within and outside the classroom. This applies to this outcome and to outcome 5.</p>
<p>Outcome 5: More opportunities for learners to use Welsh in different contexts in school</p>	<p>Your target to support all of your schools to reach the Siarter Iaith gold award (for Welsh-medium schools) and Cymraeg campus silver award (for English-medium schools) by the end of the Plan is welcomed.</p> <p>To support your mapping of Welsh-medium out-of-school provision with the partners listed, I would like to see more attention given to the work undertaken by your schools to ensure that activities to support learners' informal use of Welsh within the school day are recorded. A commitment to ensure that Siarter Iaith activities, among others, are included in School Development Plans would be a good starting point. I welcome the intention to form a sup-group to map opportunities to use Welsh language skills inside as well as outside of the classroom.</p> <p>There is an opportunity here, however, to expand on this work by working with your schools (both Welsh and English) to scope how much time is allocated to using Welsh in school.</p>

	<p>You should use the data from your workforce linguistic skills audit to identify English-medium schools with the potential and desire to strengthen the contact time their learners receive in Welsh.</p> <p>This work would feed into the preparatory work for the Curriculum for Wales in terms of increasing Welsh medium provision, as well as helping you to prepare to implement the new arrangements for categorising schools according to Welsh medium provision. There is now greater emphasis on increasing opportunities for all learners, in Welsh-medium, English or dual language schools, to increase their contact with Welsh whether through classroom or out-of-class learning.</p> <p>As part of your sub-groups mapping exercise, it would be beneficial to consider how opportunities provided through the Menter Iaith, Urdd, Consortia positively impact Welsh language use amongst learners (in terms of acquisition, confidence and awareness).</p> <p>An action to undertake this work during the first year of the plan will provide a valuable baseline to set targets for future interventions.</p> <p>I welcome the action to establish an annual 'Shwmae Awards'.</p> <p>Actions relating to stakeholder engagement or research intended to better understand learners' experience of learning Welsh need to be firmed up, with clearer timeframes for delivery.</p>
<p>Outcome 6: An increase in the provision of Welsh-medium education for pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) in accordance with the duties imposed by the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018</p>	<p>Where are you in terms of the assessment of sufficiency of ALN provision for the Welsh-medium sector referred to in your plan? If there is specific data or actions relevant to the WESP, please include them in your Plan.</p> <p>The commitment to analyse the causes that influence movement from Welsh-medium to English-medium in the primary sector is encouraging. I would be interested in the outcome of this work. Including a timeline for when this work is likely to take place would be preferable.</p> <p>How will the size and capacity of the WM ALN workforce be determined?</p> <p>What structures are in place to support and co-ordinate actions aimed at achieving this Outcome? – eg a working group/sub group</p>
<p>Outcome 7: Increase the number of teaching staff able</p>	<p>Good use of the SWAC data has been made to analyse the Welsh language proficiency of your teaching workforce. It identifies that 237 teachers and support staff in English-medium schools have advanced Welsh language skills or are</p>

to teach Welsh (as a subject) and teach through the medium of Welsh

proficient in Welsh. Despite only representing a small % of the overall workforce, It would be good to see an action focusing on improving the confidence of the workforce able to teach in Welsh but not currently doing so. There's potential here to link this with your actions under outcome 5.

Your remaining actions are well placed, although setting out a clearer timeframe, particularly in relation to any audits or mapping exercises envisaged would be helpful. Any work of this nature should be prioritised during early implementation of the plan.

More detail around how you have worked out your future Welsh-medium workforce needs (40 teaching staff and 40 support staff) would further strengthen this outcome.

In order to achieve the targets for increasing the number of learners in Welsh-medium education, we need a partnership approach to planning the workforce needs. I ask you to work with us and other relevant stakeholders to:

- Undertake regular analysis of all data sources to understand trends in the demand for Welsh-medium teachers. This will require projecting annual transition rates of learners from primary to secondary education and looking at trends in terms of number of teachers moving into leadership roles, moving schools or leaving / retiring from the profession, for example.
- Based on the data analysis of the Welsh language skills of the workforce we would like you set targets for increasing the proportion of your workforce with language skills at foundation level, and at intermediate level or higher and report on these as part of your WESPs annual monitoring. This will help us to plan provision of Sabbatical Scheme courses and work with the National Centre for Learning Welsh to provide a range of courses to enable practitioners to develop their Welsh language skills in accordance with the professional standards.