

Welsh in education: action plan 2017-21

Frequently asked questions

Why a specific plan for Welsh in education?

- The purpose of the action plan is to set our direction for the development of compulsory Welsh-medium and Welsh language education over the next four years, in line with the vision of *Cymraeg 2050: A million Welsh speakers* and *Education in Wales: Our national mission*.
- It draws together the education strands of Cymraeg 2050 and Education in Wales: Our national mission in order to be clear on how the reforms to the education system will contribute to the goal of a million Welsh speakers.

What is the role of other organisations / stakeholders to support the plan?

- As noted in Education in Wales: our national mission, in order to deliver our reforms across the entire system we will need a bold commitment to collaboration. This will include Welsh Government, the teaching profession and the wider education workforce.
- This is a long-term agenda which requires careful planning to ensure sustainable delivery. We will provide the overall leadership for developments, but we will also require all our partners to work collaboratively with us as we move forward to deliver these essential important reforms.
- We will continue to work with experts from the sector, consult with our key stakeholders, and will continually monitor and evaluate and consider international best practice as we move forward to implementation.

How will the new curriculum enhance the language skills of children and young people?

- Welsh is part of the Languages, Literacy and Communication Area of Learning and Experience (AoLE). Pioneer schools are working in partnership with Welsh Government, regional education consortia, experts and other stakeholders to develop the new curriculum.
- The AoLE groups are currently working to identify what matters in the Areas of Learning and Experience. The 'what matters' will be the basis for the new curriculum.

- In the new curriculum, learners will be able to learn Welsh, English and an international language from primary school, to include literature for everyone.
- Schools will design a local curriculum for learners within a framework of expectations and national support.

What is a language continuum?

- The term Welsh second language will not be used in the new curriculum. We will acknowledge the different ways in which children and young people acquire the language in English, Welsh and bilingual schools and settings.
- As part of the development of the new curriculum, the Areas of Learning and Experience will develop a single continuum for learning languages, and the Welsh language will be part of it.
- Pioneer schools are working with the Camau project (University of Glasgow and the University of Wales Trinity Saint David) to map progression along a learning continuum from when the child starts in school or setting until the end of statutory education.
- Welsh Government is carrying out a programme of research to support the development of the languages continuum and to identify best practice in terms of effective pedagogy.

When will the continuum of languages be available to schools?

- In accordance with the timetable for each Area of Learning and Experience all primary school year groups and year 7 will use the new continuum of languages from September 2022. This will be followed by the introduction of the curriculum year-on-year.
- Key dates:
 - Draft curriculum available for feedback - April 2019.
 - Final Curriculum available (for planning purposes) - January 2020.

What about GCSEs? Will these change?

- We want to ensure that all learners can gain appropriate qualifications and recognition for their learning.
- We are working with Qualifications Wales to develop our ideas about a variety of qualifications for Welsh in the future in line with the new curriculum.

- Any new Welsh language qualifications will be introduced to coincide with the timetable for the introduction of the new curriculum. Once the curriculum is available in 2020, Qualifications Wales will begin the development of qualifications for teaching from September 2025 when the new curriculum will be introduced to year 10 for the first time.

How can we ensure Welsh language teaching and learning resources for the new curriculum?

- Welsh Government, through its educational resources commissioning programme, will continue to commission Welsh language and Welsh-medium resources to support the curriculum and qualifications.
- We will work with the pioneer schools, four regional consortia, the creative sector and other stakeholders to ensure that relevant and timely resources are provided, looking at what is already available, as well as commissioning and developing new resources.

How can we encourage more children and young people to use the Welsh language?

- We recognise that education alone cannot create confident Welsh speakers. Children and young people need opportunities to use the language in a number of contexts to enrich their learning and their awareness of Welsh as an everyday language.
- Plans are underway to ensure that embedding and extending informal use of Welsh is a core part of the areas of learning and experience within the new curriculum.
- Welsh Government has been working with the four regional consortia to fund a programme which enables them to support Welsh-medium primary and secondary schools to establish positive attitudes in relation to the Welsh language and to promote children and young people's informal use of the language. The programme includes the Language Charter and the supporting language use practices project.
- Welsh Government will give priority to this area over the next period and work further with the four regional consortia to develop a single framework for all schools in Wales, regardless of linguistic categories, in order to ensure that children and young people:
 - develop confidence to use their language skills
 - foster positive attitudes towards the language
 - increase their use of the language inside and outside of school.

Local authority Welsh in Education Strategic Plans

- Welsh Government has acknowledged that it is disappointing that the local authorities' Welsh in Education Strategic Plans (WESP) have not resulted in a significant growth in Welsh-medium education.
- Following the publication of Aled Roberts' rapid review of the WESPs in August, the former Minister, Alun Davies, wrote to the 22 local authorities with comments along with Aled Roberts views on the plans, asking them to make the appropriate adjustments.
- Officials have been working closely with the local authorities in order to support and challenge the revised plans along with continuing to develop close relationships and partners of the local education fora to ensure robust and ambitious plans.

What about capital funding for Welsh-medium schools?

- Band A of the 21st Century Schools and Education Programme 2014–19 will see investment of over £1.4 billion across Wales. Provision of Welsh-medium places to meet demand is a key consideration within the Programme and we are spending in excess of £400 million to build or refurbish Welsh-medium schools in Wales and meet the growing demand for Welsh-medium education.
- A second wave of investment has recently been announced, which earmarks a further £2.3 billion investment, which will commence in April 2019. The Welsh language will remain a key priority and we would anticipate similar or greater levels of expenditure on Welsh-medium provision in this wave of investment.
- During the development of the second wave of investment, local authorities and further education institutions have proposed projects that meet the objectives of the Programme, which include:
 - Reduce the number of poor condition schools and colleges;
 - Ensure that there are sufficient places to meet the demand for Welsh and English medium education; Increasing community use of schools and colleges.

How can we ensure a sufficient workforce to realise the plan?

- As we know, the education system is totally dependent on its workforce.
- Although we recruit an adequate supply of Welsh-medium teachers for the primary sector, if we are to meet our targets for secondary teachers we need to increase recruitment to Welsh-medium initial teacher education each year in order to reach the target by 2021.

- The Cabinet Secretary for Education announced a new Welsh-medium incentive which will target prospective secondary teachers who are training to teach subjects through the medium of Welsh or bilingually. The new incentive of £5,000 complements existing arrangements and it is hoped that it will lead to an increase in the pool of secondary teachers who can teach the Welsh language and subjects through the medium of Welsh.
- Initial teacher education is not the sole source to increase the pool of teachers. In 2017/18, there are 20 graduate teacher placements in Welsh-medium schools. Officials will work with consortia to try to increase this number in the future.
- Through the Discover Teaching campaign, we will work with the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol to promote teaching through the medium of Welsh with undergraduates, with the aim of increasing the intake for the future.

How can we up-skill the existing workforce?

- We are investing in the development of the workforce through the Welsh language Sabbatical Scheme, which provides intensive Welsh language training to practitioners. In addition, funding is being provided to the regional consortia to develop and deliver a regional programme of professional learning to support the teaching of Welsh and subjects through the medium of Welsh.

What about learners with additional learning needs?

- We must ensure that all learners can have equal access to Welsh-medium education and experience the best opportunities to develop their language skills.
- Equity requires that we ensure that the system, at school, local and national level takes account of and responds to the unique challenges that present themselves to individuals or groups of learners.
- Working with local authorities, health boards, regional consortia and a range of stakeholders we must ensure that the Welsh language is considered at the forefront of planning and delivery of services to support our learners with additional learning needs and ensure that practitioners and the wider education workforce have access to Welsh language support and resources to help both our most vulnerable and our most talented learners to reach their potential

How will you encourage more parents to choose Welsh-medium education, and help them to support their child?

- Underpinning all our objectives will be a comprehensive communication and engagement plan to ensure that all stakeholders are included in the development of Welsh in education. The aim is to engage stakeholders, parents/carers and learners to be a part of this exciting journey for Welsh language and Welsh-medium education in Wales.
- We will develop specific campaigns and resources to support parents/carers when they choose Welsh-medium education for their child and inspire young people to continue to study through the medium of Welsh, by demonstrating opportunities to use the language at work and as part of everyday life.