

Dadansoddi ar gyfer Polisi



Analysis for Policy

Ymchwil gymdeithasol  
Social research

Number: 99/2014



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

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# Evaluation of the Welsh-medium Education Strategy

## Interim Report

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### **Arad**

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The opinions expressed in this report are those of the researchers and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the Welsh Government.

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Tel. 029 2082 5720

Welsh Government Social Research, 26 November 2014

ISBN 978-1-4734-2520-0

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# 1 Introduction and context

## Introduction to the evaluation

- 1.1 Arad was commissioned in October 2012 to undertake an evaluation of the Welsh-medium Education Strategy (the Strategy) on behalf of the Welsh Government. The aim of the evaluation is to measure the effectiveness and impact of the Strategy, considering to what extent the Strategy has achieved the expected aims, objectives and outcomes.
- 1.2 The evaluation is based on a comprehensive research programme combining a range of evaluation methods. The Strategy is being evaluated alongside individual reviews of some of the specific programmes that form part of the strategic action plan. As part of the research programme, reviews of the Sabbaticals Scheme, the Welsh-medium resources commissioning programme, and the Bilingual Champions in further education project have already been published (see Sections 1.13-1.15 below).<sup>1</sup>
- 1.3 A Proposed Evaluation Framework for the Welsh-medium Education Strategy was published in 2011 to support the process of *‘reviewing the efficacy of the Welsh-medium Education Strategy, as well as the effects, effectiveness and the efficiency of the policies implemented in its name’* (p.3).<sup>2</sup> The content of the Evaluation Framework has informed the research methods and tools used during the evaluation.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://wales.gov.uk/statistics-and-research/welsh-medium-education-strategy/?skip=1&lang=en>

<sup>2</sup> Welsh Government (2011), Proposed Evaluation Framework for the Welsh-medium Education Strategy  
<http://wales.gov.uk/docs/caecd/research/120330welsheductionen.pdf>

## Introduction to the Strategy

1.4 The Welsh Government published its Welsh-medium Education Strategy (the Strategy) in April 2010.<sup>3</sup> The Strategy's vision is to:

*'have an education and training system that responds in a planned way to the growing demand for Welsh-medium education, reaches out to and reflects our diverse communities and enables an increase in the number of people of all ages and backgrounds who are fluent in Welsh and able to use the language with their families, in their communities and in the workplace'. (p.4)*

1.5 The Strategy notes the Welsh Government's ambition for a country where Welsh-medium education and training are integral parts of the education system. There are six aims in the Strategy which provide the strategic direction for Welsh-medium and bilingual education and training (see Chapter 4 for an analysis of progress against these aims). There are 43 objectives associated with the aims, which form the basis of the action plan designed to achieve the Strategy's vision. Finally, there are five outcomes that support the process of monitoring progress made in implementing the Strategy.

## The purpose of this report

1.6 This report presents an update on the progress of the research programme, along with an analysis of the evidence collected between January 2013 and February 2014 in relation to the aims and objectives of the Strategy. It outlines the evidence in relation to:

- whether the Strategy's vision, aims and outcomes are appropriate;
- progress thus far in achieving the Strategy's six strategic aims;

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<sup>3</sup> Welsh Government (2010) *Welsh-medium Education Strategy*  
<http://wales.gov.uk/docs/dcells/publications/100420welshmediumstrategyen.pdf>

- the effectiveness of structures put in place to support the implementation of the Strategy, including structures to strengthen the planning mechanism, both locally and nationally;
- consideration of the additional research questions highlighted in the Proposed Evaluation Framework, including:
  - what are the external factors that influence the outputs / results / outcomes of the Strategy?

1.7 The report also notes the areas that will be given further consideration by the research programme and in the final report.

### **The evidence base**

1.8 The findings presented in this interim report are based on the following elements, completed between January 2013 and February 2014:

#### Fieldwork: interviews with national stakeholders and area studies

- Interviews with national stakeholders: interviews were conducted with 26 individuals representing 11 organisations, including Welsh Government, Estyn, CollegesWales and the office of the Welsh Language Commissioner (see Annex 1 for further details);
- Two area studies to conduct interviews with a total of three secondary schools and eight primary schools, along with interviews with senior local authority representatives (two directors of education and two senior managers with responsibility for schools).

#### Desk research

1.9 Desk research to review policy documents; reports and reviews relating to Welsh-medium education; regulations and guidance;

administrative data linked to the Strategy's outcomes and indicators; Welsh in Education Strategic Plans (WESPs); previous evaluation reports and research publications.

Studies of specific programmes implemented to support the Strategy

- *A Review of the Use and Quality of the Resources Commissioned by the Welsh Government's Welsh in Education Unit*

1.10 The review is based upon data collected through a combination of research methods: firstly, an electronic survey was distributed to practitioners in schools and further education institutions, focussing on the awareness and use of resources commissioned by the Welsh Government; secondly, qualitative data was collected from head teachers, subject teachers, tutors and learners. Further details about the research methods are available in the review report.<sup>4</sup>

- *A Review of the Welsh Language Sabbaticals Scheme for Educational Practitioners*

1.11 A review of the Sabbaticals Scheme was published in January 2014.<sup>5</sup> The Sabbaticals Scheme provides Welsh language and methodology training for practitioners so that they are able to teach, lecture or train through the medium of Welsh or bilingually. Data was collected through an online questionnaire for participants who attended the Sabbaticals courses between January 2011 and December 2012. Telephone interviews were conducted with a sample of practitioners and line managers in order to collect additional qualitative data. The work was supported by desk research to review application forms, post-

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<sup>4</sup> Welsh Government (2014b), *A Review of the Use and Quality of Resources Commissioned by the Welsh in Education Unit*, Welsh Government  
<http://wales.gov.uk/docs/caecd/research/2014/140716-welsh-medium-education-strategy-review-use-quality-resources-en.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> Welsh Government (2014a), *Evaluation of the Welsh-medium Education Strategy: A Review of the Welsh Language Sabbaticals Scheme for educational practitioners: the experience of participants 2011-2012*  
<http://wales.gov.uk/docs/caecd/research/2014/140127-review-welsh-language-sabbatical-scheme-educational-practitioners-participant-experiences-2011-2012-en.pdf>

course feedback forms, course moderation reports and previous evaluation reports. See the report published in January 2014 for further details.

- *A Study of the work of the Bilingual Champions in Further Education*

1.12 The study was based upon a combination of desk research and interviews. Institutions' strategic plans were reviewed, along with the Bilingual Champions project's monitoring reports and other documentation relevant to the Bilingual Champions project. The research team completed visits to further education institutions in Wales in order to interview principals, senior managers, Bilingual Champions, tutors and learners. See the report on this element of the research programme for further information.<sup>6</sup>

Fieldwork methodology

- *Designing a topic guide*

1.13 The research programme involves the collection of evidence through surveys, desk research, interviews, focus groups and other methods, and draws on contributions from a wide range of individuals. During the initial phase of the research, the research team introduced a series of themes that was intended to connect all elements of the programme, and ensure consistency when comparing evidence drawn from different elements of the study and various data sources. The themes reflect the aims of the Strategy:

- *Planning provision (Strategic Aims 1 and 2)*
- *Continuity (Strategic Aims 1,2 and 3)*
- *Language skills (Strategic Aims 2,3 and 4)*
- *Developing the workforce (Strategic Aim 4)*

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<sup>6</sup> Welsh Government (2014c), A study of the work of Bilingual Champions in further education <http://wales.gov.uk/docs/caecd/research/2014/140925-welsh-medium-education-strategy-bilingual-champions-en.pdf>

- *Central support (Strategic Aim 5)*
- *Families and community (Strategic Aim 6)*

1.14 A semi-structured interview guide was drafted based on these themes, including different questions to reflect the roles and responsibilities of different participants (e.g. strategic stakeholders, school headteachers, practitioners).

- School visits

1.15 Before arranging the fieldwork for the area studies, a sample of schools in each area was agreed with the relevant local authorities and Welsh Government, ensuring a cross-section of both primary and secondary schools. Visits with schools were arranged by writing to headteachers, explaining the nature of the research project and asking for permission to visit the school. A request was made to interview headteachers, other members of the senior management team, heads of key stages, subject teachers and groups of learners. Parental consent forms were sent to schools in advance, and schools were asked to distribute forms to be signed by the parents of the learners involved in discussion groups. Visits to primary schools lasted half a day and between half a day and a full day in the secondary schools.

1.16 School visits conducted as part of other elements of the research (review of resources and a review of two Welsh second language projects) follow a similar pattern. See 1.21 for a description of the work in relation to the Welsh second language action plan.

1.17 The further work which needs to be completed during the research programme includes the following:

Four area studies

1.18 Visits to four areas are being conducted between June and November 2014, in addition to the two areas visited during the period prior to the presentation of this report. By the time all six area studies are completed, the evidence will be based upon a

cross-section of areas in terms of their geographical location, population, linguistic profile and characteristics of the Welsh-medium education provision. The aim is to collect evidence in a range of contexts in order to understand the different challenges faced in supporting Welsh-medium education in designated Welsh-medium schools and in bilingual/dual stream schools.

#### A survey of school head teachers and college principals

1.19 The purpose of the survey conducted during the autumn of 2014 is to collect mainly quantitative data from school headteachers (primary and secondary) and college principals relating to their perceptions of the progress made in implementing the Strategy. The data will support and reinforce the qualitative data collected through other methods and elements of the evaluation.

#### Further interviews with stakeholders

1.20 Interviews are planned with a number of the stakeholders who have already contributed to discuss further the themes of the research programme. Interviews will also be arranged with organisations who have not yet contributed, including local authority representatives, awarding bodies and teacher organisations.

#### Review of two elements of the Strategy's implementation programme

1.21 A review is underway of two projects that support Welsh second language activities. The first of these involves reviewing activities co-ordinated by the Urdd to support the use of Welsh outside the classroom. The second review focuses on the effects of a project that encourages Welsh-medium teaching in English-medium schools at Key Stage 2.

1.22 An assessment is also being conducted of the effects of implementing the Learning and Skills (Wales) Measure 2009 in the context of the Welsh-medium Education Strategy. The objectives of this element of the research programme are as follows:

- To consider the nature of the inter-relationship between the Learning and Skills (Wales) Measure 2009 and the Welsh-medium Education Strategy;
- To assess the impact of the Learning Pathways 14-19 programme, including grant funding, on Welsh-medium or bilingual provision;
- To consider the factors that could be influencing the implementation of the Learning and Skills (Wales) Measure 2009 (e.g. transport, technology, organisational collaboration, management).

## The historical context

1.23 It is important to place this Strategy in its historical context and note the significant milestones in the development of Welsh-medium education. Figure 1 presents a timeline noting significant dates and legislation, as well as key publications since the first Welsh-medium primary school was established in Aberystwyth in 1939.

1.24 It would not be appropriate to discuss in detail in this report the importance and consequences of the developments relating to Welsh-medium education seen during the past 75 years. However, it is useful to consider briefly how Welsh-medium education developed in its early days. Welsh-medium education *‘developed in an unstructured and fragmented manner, with hardly any systematic central planning’*.<sup>7</sup> Early Welsh-medium schools were not established as the result of a national strategy or plan; it was the enthusiasm of parents, local working groups and influential individuals that drove developments. Referring to the development of early Welsh-medium education in south-east Wales, one commentator concluded that *‘people, more than policy, were the biggest influence on the growth of Welsh-*

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<sup>7</sup> Jones, M.P. (2003) ‘*Gwaith Bwrdd yr Iaith Gymraeg ym Maes Addysg Gymraeg*’ in Roberts, G. and Williams, C. *Addysg Gymraeg Addysg Gymreig*: Bangor University.

*medium schools'* (Thomas 2010: 256). This was also true in other parts of Wales, where parents campaigned to establish Welsh-medium schools in the face of reluctance on the part of some local authorities to acknowledge the demand for Welsh-medium education. As a result, the number of schools expanded in an ad-hoc and fragmented manner.

1.25 Over time, national institutions were created which succeeded in supporting and strengthening the status of Welsh-medium education (see Figure 1). Legislative developments gave pupils the right to receive education according to the wishes of their parents (the Education Act 1944), and ensured a more prominent place for Welsh-medium education (Education Reform Act 1988). Between its establishment in 1993 and its dissolution in 2012, the Welsh Language Board played an important role in the development of Welsh-medium education. Amongst other functions, it was responsible for approving and monitoring Welsh Language Schemes and Welsh Education Schemes under the Welsh Language Act 1993, and also for administering a grant scheme to promote Welsh in education. The Qualifications, Curriculum and Assessment Authority for Wales (ACCAC) was also a key institution in the education system. It was responsible for assuring the quality and standards of general and vocational qualifications; overseeing all elements of the curriculum; and commissioning Welsh and Welsh-medium learning resources. ELWa (National Council for Education and Training for Wales) was established under the Learning and Skills Act 2000 with responsibility for post-16 educational provision (with the exception of higher education); training in the workplace; and education for adults. ELWa's Bilingual Learning Unit was responsible for taking a leading and strategic role in developing the post-16 bilingual learning agenda. ACCAC and ELWa were merged with the Welsh Assembly Government's Department for Education and Skills in 2006.

1.26 Since devolution in 1999, the political and administrative landscape has changed in Wales; the Welsh Government is now responsible for creating and implementing national education policy. In its programme for government in 2007, the Welsh Government made a commitment to create a national Welsh-medium Education Strategy.<sup>8</sup> The publication of the Strategy three years later, following a consultation process, was a historic development as the Welsh Government presented a strategic vision and an action plan for ensuring continuing growth in Welsh-medium education and training.

1.27 When viewed in the context of a broader timeframe, the Strategy can be seen as the result of a shift from the unstructured evolution of Welsh-medium education towards more systematic strategic planning. Whereas in the middle of the last century, Welsh-medium education grew from the bottom up, devolution has made it possible to plan at a national level, using a legislative framework where necessary to ‘give shape’ to the process of planning Welsh-medium provision.

*Figure 1: Milestones in the history of the development of Welsh-medium education, 1939-2012*

	<b>Event</b>
1939	Opening of <b>Ysgol yr Urdd, Aberystwyth</b>
1940	Establishment of <b>National Union of Teachers, Wales (UCAC)</b>
1944	<b>Education Act 1944</b> provides the right for pupils to be educated according to their parents’ wishes
1947	Opening of <b>Ysgol Gymraeg Llanelli</b> (Ysgol Dewi Sant in 1953), the first Welsh-medium school to be established by a local education authority
1948	Establishment of the <b>Welsh Joint Education Committee</b>
1949	Opening of <b>Ysgol Gymraeg Ynys-lwyd, Aberdare</b> , the first Welsh-medium school in the South Wales Valleys
1952	Establishment of ‘ <b>Undeb Rhieni Ysgolion Cymraeg</b> ’ (which later became Parents for Welsh-medium Education, RhAG)
1955	By 1955, 30 Welsh schools had been established, with schools in Flintshire, Denbighshire, Caernarfon, Dyfed, Powys, Swansea, Cardiff and Glamorgan
1956	Opening of <b>Ysgol Glan Clwyd</b> , the first Welsh-medium secondary school
1965	Establishment of the <b>Welsh Office</b> , implementing the policies of the UK Government in Wales

<sup>8</sup> *One Wales: A progressive agenda for the government of Wales* (June 2007), An agreement between the Labour and Plaid Cymru Groups in the National Assembly.

1967	<i>The Gittins Report recommends that Welsh should be taught in all primary schools in Wales</i>		
1971	<b>Establishment of <i>Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin (Mudiad Meithrin)</i></b>		
1974	<i>Reorganisation of local government</i>		
1988	<b>Education Reform Act 1988</b> creates the national curriculum with Welsh as a mandatory subject for every pupil in Wales; Curriculum Council for Wales established, later becoming ACCAC		
1993	<i>Welsh Language Act 1993 establishes the <b>Welsh Language Board</b></i>		
1996	<i>Reorganisation of local government creates 22 authorities</i>		
1996	<b>Education Act 1996</b> places a duty on local authorities to ensure that there are enough places in schools, in accordance with the general principle that pupils should be educated according to the wishes of their parents		
1999	<i>Establishment of the <b>National Assembly</b>, with Welsh Ministers responsible for education policy; dissolution of the Welsh Office</i>		
2000	<b>Learning and Skills Act 2000</b> establishes the National Council for Education and Training for Wales, ELWa		
2003	<i>Welsh Language Board's <b>Welsh-medium Education Strategy</b></i>		
2003	<i>Welsh Government publishes <b>laith Pawb: A National Action Plan for a Bilingual Wales</b></i>		
2006	<i>The merging of <b>ELWa, ACCAC and Assembly sponsored public bodies</b> with the <b>Welsh Government</b></i>		
2007	<b>One Wales: A Progressive Programme for the Government of Wales</b> , Welsh Government		
2008	<i>Creation of the Welsh-medium Education Strategy Group to draw up the consultation document</i>		
2009	<i>Publication of the Welsh Government's Welsh-medium Education Strategy consultation document</i>		
2010	<i>Publication of the Welsh Government's <b>Welsh-medium Education Strategy</b></i>		
2012	<i>Publication of the <b>Welsh Language Strategy 2012-2017 A Living Language: A Language for Living</b> Welsh Government</i>		
Key:	Key legislation / policy developments	Creation of national organisations	Opening of schools

## The current policy/legislative context

1.28 The Strategy is being implemented during a period of change across the education system in Wales, including:

- The comprehensive Raising School Standards programme that was announced in February 2011, leading to a number of significant policy developments, including a new system of 'banding' schools.<sup>9</sup>
- Four regional education consortia with responsibility for designing and implementing school improvement plans focussing on raising standards of literacy and numeracy and reducing the effects of poverty on educational attainment.

<sup>9</sup> <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/allsectorpolicies/ourevents/raisingschoolstandards/?skip=1&lang=en>

- ‘*The future delivery of education services in Wales*’ (‘Hill Report’, 2013) which takes a comprehensive view of the efficacy of the education system and recommends steps to raise standards and improve outcomes for learners.<sup>10</sup>
  - The merger of further education organisations.
  - Reforming the post-16 funding and planning framework.
  - Other significant policy reviews in education: a review of qualifications was undertaken in 2012, and a review of Welsh second language<sup>11</sup> and Welsh for Adults in 2013.<sup>12</sup>
  - School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013.
  - More recently in March 2014, the Minister for Education and Skills announced that a review of the curriculum and assessment arrangements would be led by Professor Graham Donaldson.<sup>13</sup>

1.29 Since publishing the Strategy in 2010 there have also been important developments in Welsh language legislation and policy, including:

- the introduction of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 which has created a new legal framework relating to the use of the Welsh language in the provision of public services;
- the publication of *A living language; a language for living* in 2012, the Welsh Government’s five-year strategy to support the Welsh language.

1.30 Much attention has been paid recently to the results of the 2011 census and the data on the number of Welsh speakers. Despite

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<sup>10</sup> <http://wales.gov.uk/consultations/education/future-delivery-of-education-services-in-wales/?skip=1&lang=en>

<sup>11</sup> Welsh Government (2013c), *One language for all: review of Welsh second language at Key Stages 3 and 4* <http://wales.gov.uk/docs/dcells/publications/130926-review-of-welsh-second-lan-en.pdf>

<sup>12</sup> Welsh Government (2013d), *Raising our sights: review of Welsh for Adults* <http://wales.gov.uk/docs/dcells/publications/130712-review-welsh-for-adults-en.pdf>

<sup>13</sup> <http://wales.gov.uk/about/cabinet/cabinetstatements/2014/assessmentcurriculumreview/?skip=1&lang=en>

an increase in the Welsh population, the data shows a reduction in the number of Welsh speakers from 582,000 in 2001 to 562,000 in 2011, a reduction from 20.8 per cent in 2001 to 19.0 per cent in 2011. There was a reduction in the percentage of Welsh speakers in many of the traditional strongholds of the Welsh language. There are variations according to age groups, with a significant increase amongst younger children (3-4 year olds), some increase amongst adults aged 20-44 years, and a reduction in the other age groups. See the Welsh Government's Statistical Bulletin for further data.<sup>14</sup>

- 1.31 The Strategy exists alongside a range of other policies that influence the education system and the priorities of local authorities, schools and education and training providers in Wales. One issue to consider in the context of this evaluation is to what extent the Strategy is sufficiently robust and resilient to withstand numerous and complex external factors and other significant developments.

### **Implementing and monitoring the Strategy**

- 1.32 The Welsh in Education Unit, a unit in the Welsh Government's Education and Skills Department, is responsible for overseeing the implementation of the Strategy. The capacity and functions of the Unit have grown in recent years, since it transitioned from being a Unit with responsibility for post-16 Welsh-medium education in ELWa to being part of the Welsh Government. There has also been an increase in the size of the Unit since staff joined from ACCAC and the Welsh Language Board. The Unit is now responsible for developing policy throughout the education phases. The Unit has a dual role in relation to the Strategy. Firstly, it is responsible for implementing and monitoring the Strategy, commissioning projects to support its aims and objectives, and publishing an annual report to report on progress.

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<sup>14</sup> Welsh Government (2012c), *2011 Census: First Results on the Welsh Language*  
<http://wales.gov.uk/docs/statistics/2012/121211sb1182012en.pdf>

Secondly, it is responsible for influencing education policy in order to ensure that the needs of the Welsh-medium sector are mainstreamed.

1.33 A Ministerial Advisory Group on the Strategy was established for the Minister for Education and Skills. The Group meets three times a year and advises the Minister on the implementation of the Strategy and its priorities.

## 2 Assumptions and principles

2.1 This chapter considers the assumptions and principles that form the basis of the Strategy. Discussing and recognising these provides a method of testing the Strategy's underpinning rationale. The chapter also gives an overview of the logic model developed to support the research programme.

### The assumptions of the consultative Strategy

2.2 A consultation document on the Welsh Government's draft Welsh-medium Education Strategy was published in May 2009.<sup>15</sup> A series of assumptions or theories can be found in the draft Strategy, including the following key points:

- i. The growth of Welsh-medium education can be promoted by improving strategic planning (p.1);
- ii. There should be detailed and reliable methods of measuring and foreseeing the demand for Welsh-medium education (p. 46) and provision should be planned in response to increased demand from parents (p.5);
- iii. Further investment in Welsh-medium and bilingual education and skills offers economic advantages to the citizens of Wales (p.30 and 31).

2.3 The draft Strategy includes some information to support the above assumptions. Referring to points (i.) and (ii.), above, it notes that Welsh-medium education has in the past developed without much of a national planning infrastructure, leading to inconsistent provision and insufficient places in Welsh-medium schools to meet demand in some areas. It is assumed, therefore, that a national policy framework (the Strategy) would improve the planning of Welsh-medium education and support more strategic and co-ordinated growth in Welsh-medium education provision.

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<sup>15</sup> Welsh Government (2009), *Welsh-medium Education Strategy Consultation*.  
<http://wales.gov.uk/docs/dcells/consultation/090507wmsen.pdf>

There is no specific evidence to support point (iii.) above; that is, there is no discussion of the economic benefits of Welsh-medium education and bilingual skills.

## The principles of the Strategy

2.4 Alongside the assumptions noted in 2.2, the Strategy itself notes a series of principles that provide further information on the document's conceptual basis. The principles include:

- the need for the Welsh Government to set a clear vision for Welsh-medium education and the need to establish an **integrated and robust planning system** at both local and regional level;
- the need to ensure effective **local implementation** of plans to develop Welsh-medium education. There is recognition of the need to adapt the way in which the Strategy is implemented in order to reflect local circumstances, without losing sight of national principles and outcomes;
- that **quality** is one of the basic principles of the Strategy and that *[improving quality and leadership]* is essential in order to support growth in Welsh-medium education.
- the need to strengthen the **education infrastructure** to ensure:
  - that Welsh-medium education is available *'to every community'*; and
  - *'the sustainability of Welsh-medium education and the progression of learners from one phase to the next'*.

## The Proposed Evaluation Framework

2.5 The Proposed Evaluation Framework for the Welsh-medium Education Strategy (2011) (the Evaluation Framework) includes a

wide range of ‘assumptions or hypotheses’ that underpin the Strategy.<sup>16</sup>

- 2.6 Some of these hypotheses further develop the assumptions that are implicit in both the draft Strategy and final Strategy. They include the direct benefits of speaking more than one language, including expanding social networks and career opportunities and the *‘more general advantages of promoting cognitive skills, increasing mental agility and broadening speakers’ range of cultural experiences’*.
- 2.7 There is a direct link between a number of the Evaluation Framework’s other hypotheses and the aims of the Strategy: there is an emphasis on linguistic progression between education phases and the need to increase the number of practitioners with appropriate Welsh language skills in order to support the expected increase in provision. The Proposed Evaluation Framework helps to identify a number of key themes which form the basis for gathering and analysing evidence as part of this research programme.

### **The evaluation’s logic model**

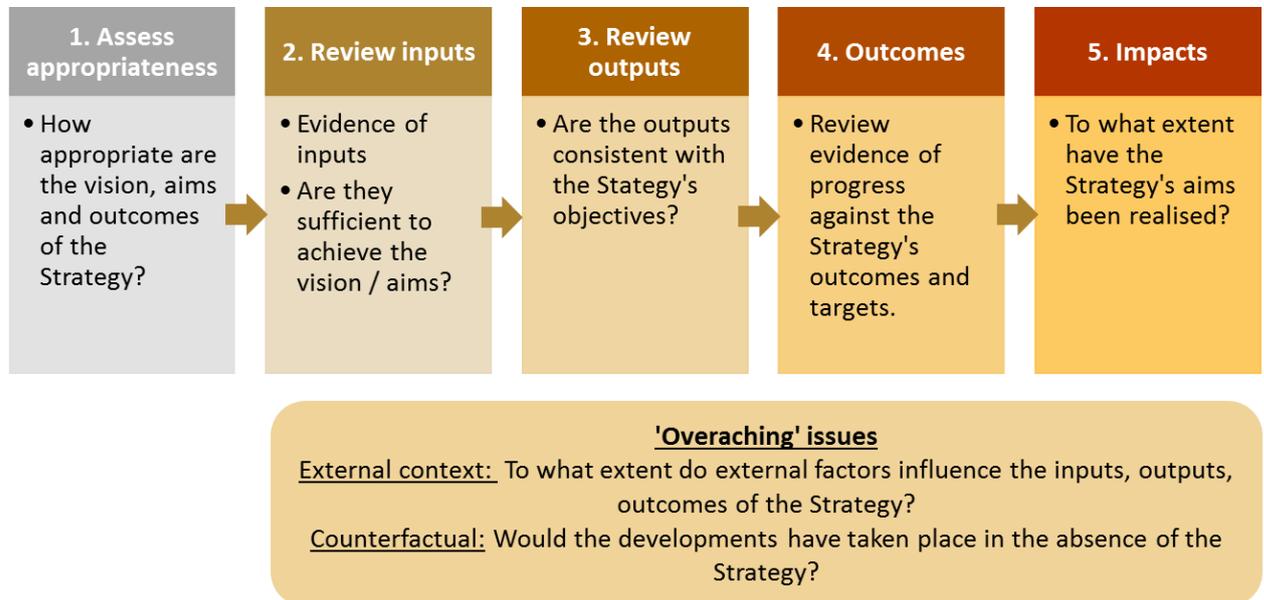
- 2.8 Taking into consideration the assumptions and principles noted in the previous sections, a logic model was developed to inform the evaluation, building on the Proposed Evaluation Framework. One challenge for this evaluation is ensuring links between the theory of change (the conceptual model underpinning the Evaluation Framework), the main evaluation questions (outlined in the research specification), and the various research methods used across the different elements of the study.
- 2.9 It was decided to simplify the logic model by identifying the main elements requiring consideration during the evaluation, without omitting a number of the important research questions highlighted in the Proposed Evaluation Framework (which have, in turn,

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<sup>16</sup> Welsh Government (2011), *Proposed Evaluation Framework for the Welsh-medium Education Strategy* <http://wales.gov.uk/docs/caecd/research/120330welsheducationen.pdf>

informed the research tools used during the research). The matrix below summarises the flow of the logic model.

Figure 2: The main elements of the logic model



2.10 The model broadly consists of two tiers. Firstly, it acknowledges the need for the evaluation to address the Strategy as a document/plan/combination of actions 'in its own right'. That is, to consider the appropriateness or suitability of the Strategy; the inputs and investment to support it; the outputs evidenced as a result of implementing the Strategy; progress against the outcomes; and the impact – the changes arising from the Strategy and its actions.

2.11 Secondly, in order to understand the impact of the Strategy in full, there is a need to consider the wider context and other factors that influence the inputs, outputs and progress. It is necessary to understand the influence of the external contexts (policy, planning, linguistic, economic) and to what extent progress would have been made in the absence of the Strategy, if the evaluation is to measure its impact. In short:

- What has changed? Have the desired aims and changes been achieved?
- Can the changes be attributed to the existence of the Strategy or are other factors responsible for the changes?

2.12 The evidence presented in this report enables an initial discussion of some elements of the logic model. Consideration is given to elements of 1 and aspects of 2, 3 and 4. The final report will present evidence in relation to all elements of the model.

### **3 The vision and aims of the Strategy**

- 3.1 This section presents a summary of the evidence collected from stakeholders regarding the vision, aims and objectives of the Strategy. The comments are based on interviews with representatives of 11 national organisations and with education practitioners in 11 schools during the area study visits.
- 3.2 The Strategy sets out a broad vision that reflects the Welsh Government's ambition for Welsh-medium education. As noted in section 1.5, there is a series of specific strategic aims, objectives and outcomes, supported by indicators and targets for 2015 and 2020 to monitor progress in implementing the Strategy.

#### **Impressions and awareness**

- 3.3 The sections below consider stakeholders' general impressions and awareness of the Strategy. It should be noted that measuring awareness of the Strategy systematically is not one of the objectives of this evaluation, mainly because it is to be expected that different groups of stakeholders will have different levels of awareness of the Strategy. However, stakeholders and practitioners were asked about their understanding and impressions of the document in order to provide a basis and context for discussions.
- 3.4 As anticipated, there were different levels of awareness of the Strategy among stakeholders. Awareness was high among representatives of national organisations, with all contributors aware of the Strategy or having used it in the context of their work. Other stakeholders, including representatives of local authorities with responsibility for planning provision (including Welsh-medium provision) were very familiar with the content of the Strategy. School visits so far have shown that awareness among headteachers and senior managers is relatively high: a clear majority of senior managers noted that they were aware of the Strategy. Nevertheless a minority noted that they were 'aware

*but not familiar*’ with the document’s content. A minority of classroom teachers were aware of the Strategy.

- 3.5 Most of the national stakeholders, local authority representatives and practitioners acknowledged that the Strategy is an innovative and significant document. These stakeholders said that the Strategy had, for the first time, created a national policy framework which describes steps to support the growth of Welsh-medium education. Stakeholders stated that the document is significant as it expresses a political commitment to support Welsh-medium education. It was reported that the Strategy has been an important ‘tool’ for organisations who seek to promote Welsh-medium education. Local authority representatives noted that the Strategy has supported the process of planning Welsh-medium provision. A minority of representatives from national organisations noted that the profile of the Strategy is not as high as other policy documents and strategies in the field of education.

## **Vision**

- 3.6 The vision of the Strategy is:

*‘To have an education and training system that responds in a planned way to the growing demand for Welsh-medium education, reaches out to and reflects our diverse communities and enables an increase in the number of people of all ages and backgrounds who are fluent in Welsh and able to use the language with their families, in their communities and in the workplace.’*

- 3.7 All stakeholders who have contributed to the research so far support this vision. A number reported that they were pleased that the Welsh Government had committed to supporting continued growth in Welsh-medium education and training across the different sectors.
- 3.8 A minority of the national organisations noted that they doubted whether the vision could be realised. In the opinion of one of the stakeholders, there is a gap between the vision and the ‘ability or

*desire of some local authorities to support the process of achieving that vision*'. However, other stakeholders acknowledged that this is a long-term vision and that the Strategy creates the planning framework to enable growth in provision.

## **Strategic aims**

3.9 As noted in the introduction to this report (1.5), the Strategy includes six strategic aims. Chapter 4 of this report considers progress against these aims. In considering Strategic Aim 6 in particular, it is important to note the interrelationship between the Strategy and *A living language: a language for living*, the Welsh Language Strategy 2012-2017, published by the Welsh Government in March 2012. Strategic Aim 6 of the Welsh-medium Education Strategy refers to supporting the *acquisition and reinforcement of Welsh-language skills in families and in the community*. However, it is the Welsh Language Strategy that sets the direction for national policy with regard to encouraging the use of the Welsh language across communities in Wales, defining the expected outcomes and indicators for the use of the Welsh language in families. It was agreed during the initial stages of the research programme that Strategic Aim 6 would not be given the same attention as the other strategic aims during this research programme. Nevertheless, Strategic Aim 6 is relevant and the fieldwork (in particular the area studies) provides opportunities to research young people's informal / social use of the Welsh language, and consider the perception of the importance of Welsh language skills in the context of the workplace.

3.10 Based on the evidence collected during interviews and visits, stakeholders and practitioners believe that the Strategy's aims are appropriate. The majority feel that the aims encompass the key issues that need to be given attention in order to support Welsh-medium education, e.g. improving the planning process,

ensuring progression and improving the central support available for Welsh-medium education and training.

3.11 A number of school headteachers and local authority representatives noted that the strategic aims 'set direction' for developments. One headteacher noted that the aims represent a 'statement of intent' at the national level which promotes efforts locally to support Welsh-medium education. This was supported by representatives of one local authority, who stated that the authority used the aims of the Strategy to explain changes in schools' language policies to parents.

3.12 There was a feeling among a minority of stakeholders that the aims are too broad, 'nonspecific' or open to interpretation.

*"Improving planning processes' could mean different things to different people across Wales – in the same way 'proactively responding to demand' strikes me as a nonspecific statement, if not a contradiction.' (National stakeholder)*

3.13 Stakeholders commented on some specific aspects of the strategic aims. For example, stakeholders from a number of national organisations referred to Strategic Aim 3 (*'ensure that all learners develop their Welsh-language skills to their full potential'*) questioning whether it is possible to measure whether this aim is being achieved. A school headteacher expressed a similar view:

*'It reflects good intentions but is less relevant and meaningless on a practical level in schools.'* (Headteacher of a secondary school)

3.14 To what extent are the strategic aims achievable? Some stakeholders noted that measuring progress against the aims was difficult, partly because they refer to improving 'planning processes' and 'support methods'. While there is support for the aims and the principle of improving planning in order to increase provision, a minority of headteachers reported that they were unsure how they would be realised or implemented at a local level.

3.15 The Strategy lists 43 strategic objectives which support the six strategic aims. The action plan gives further details on the methods of implementing these objectives, noting the actions, key partners and bodies and proposed timetables. Stakeholders have not yet been asked for their opinion on the individual objectives. Nevertheless, Chapter 4 presents initial evidence in relation to the objectives, and the implementation of the action plan will be given more detailed attention in the final report.

## Outcomes and targets

3.16 The Strategy includes a series of outcomes and targets that provide a basis for monitoring progress in relation to the implementation of the action plan. The outcomes are:

**Outcome 1:** More seven-year-old children being taught through the medium of Welsh

**Outcome 2:** More learners continuing to improve their language skills on transfer from primary to secondary school

**Outcome 3:** More learners studying for qualifications through the medium of Welsh

**Outcome 4:** More learners aged 16–19 studying subjects through the medium of Welsh, in schools, colleges and work-based learning

**Outcome 5:** More learners with higher-level Welsh-language skills

There are indicators and targets included in the Strategy for each outcome. Outcomes are discussed further in Chapter 4.

3.17 A minority of stakeholders raised questions about the links between the strategic aims and the Strategy's outcomes/targets: it was suggested that the link between the strategic aims and outcomes is indirect. Welsh Government officials noted that the targets were originally drawn up (in the draft Strategy) based on data sets that were available at the time. Progress against targets is presented in the Annual Reports on the Strategy published by Welsh Government.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> See further details on the annual reports here:  
<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/publications/guidance/wmesreport/?lang=en>

## **The Welsh in Education Unit's contribution to supporting the Strategy's aims**

- 3.18 Discussions were held with eight officials from the Department for Education and Skills (including the director of the department and senior officials of the Welsh in Education Unit (the Unit) as part of the fieldwork).<sup>18</sup> The question was asked to what extent the Strategy has provided the Unit with a platform to promote growth in Welsh-medium education. Welsh Government officials (including the Unit's staff and senior officials of the Department for Education and Skills) said that the profile of the Unit has increased in recent years. It was suggested that a combination of factors has influenced this: mainly, that the existence of the Strategy has had a positive effect and that the emphasis placed on developing Welsh-medium education as one of the key elements of the Welsh Government's Programme for Government has also promoted awareness of the Unit's work. No data is, as yet, available from external parties (i.e. officials outside the Unit) to confirm or challenge these comments by staff from the Unit, but it is expected that the final report will include observations by other respondents.
- 3.19 The Unit's officials noted that relationships with other branches or divisions of the Department for Education and Skills have been strengthened. As a result, the Unit is part of wider policy discussions at an earlier point in the policy development process and is able to influence the content of policy documents and strategic plans, referencing the aims and commitments made by Welsh Government in the Strategy. The brief analysis of the policy documents and publications (see Section 3.23 and Annex 2) suggests that the Strategy and the work of the Unit is a consideration during the process of creating and developing the policies of the Department for Education and Skills in general. It

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<sup>18</sup> The Welsh in Education Unit is a part of the Welsh Government's Department of Education and Skills.

was noted that the process of preparing Annual Reports on the Strategy has also contributed to the increase in the profile and attention given to Welsh-medium education. The process of drafting the Annual Report requires consideration of the ways in which different branches of the Department of Education and Skills contribute to the Strategy, a process which in itself raises awareness of the relationship between the Strategy and other areas of work. See Section 3.24 for a further discussion on the links between the Strategy and other education policy documents.

### **Interrelationship between the aims of the Strategy and other Welsh Government policies**

3.20 As part of the research, we have examined the links between the Welsh-medium Education Strategy and other national strategies. This element was explored through a combination of interviews and desk research.

3.21 Welsh Government officials noted that the interrelation between the Strategy and other policies has become clear over time as the programmes implemented to support the Strategy are adapted to reflect new policy developments. For example, the Resources Commissioning Branch in the Unit has responded to the Literacy and Numeracy Framework in order to ensure that the resources commissioned meet the needs of the Framework.

3.22 Examples were given of recent policy documents where officials from the Unit were included in discussions and were able to promote the aims of the Strategy in the context of areas associated with the education of young people, for example the action plan of the Youth Engagement and Progression Framework, published in 2013.<sup>19</sup>

3.23 As part of the desk research, a snapshot analysis was undertaken of the policy documents and reviews published in the

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<sup>19</sup> Welsh Government (2013), Youth Engagaement and Progression Framework Action Plan <http://wales.gov.uk/docs/dcells/publications/131007-ye-framework-implementation-plan-en.pdf>

last two years by the Department for Education and Skills. The documents were selected on the basis of their influence and significance in relation to the development of education policy in Wales, and vary in terms of their nature (e.g. some are Welsh Government policy documents, others are independent review reports).

- 3.24 There are specific references to the Strategy in half of these documents (see Annex 2). Almost all of the documents include objectives, actions or comments that support or are consistent with the Strategy, even though the link to the Strategy is not explicit in some. A number of the documents were published relatively recently and it is difficult to interpret to what extent the Strategy has been embedded and is 'operational', or whether the links are more superficial and the references to the Welsh language are made 'in passing'. This is linked to the question of mainstreaming, an issue to which we will return following further discussions with stakeholders and officials of the Department for Education and Skills.

## 4 Evidence of progress against the aims of the Strategy

- 4.1 This section presents the evidence gathered so far on progress made against the aims of the Strategy. The evidence is drawn from a number of sources, including desk research, an analysis of the Annual Report data between 2010-11 and 2013-14, school visits, interviews with stakeholders, and research findings of specific elements of the research programme. Consideration is given to each of the six aims in turn, and reference is made to outcomes and progress against the Strategy's targets where appropriate.
- 4.2 Before referring to the evidence gathered so far, we should note one important limitation relating to this chapter. The evidence presented is not complete: there is further fieldwork to be completed as part of the research programme and we will discuss the aims in more detail in the final report. The following sections offer an overview of the evidence presented so far.

### **Strategic Aim 1**

**Strategic Aim 1:** To improve the planning of Welsh-medium provision in the pre-statutory and statutory phases of education, on the basis of proactive response to informed parental demand.

### **Welsh in Education Strategic Plans and the Welsh in Education Grant**

- 4.3 The Strategy's first strategic objective (strategic objective SO1.1) is '*to expect local authorities to plan effectively for Welsh-medium provision*'. It refers to the Welsh Government's responsibility to oversee and monitor the implementation of the local plans. The WESPs build on the previous Welsh-medium Education Schemes under the Welsh Language Act 1993: local authorities were expected to set out in the previous schemes how they intended to promote and develop Welsh-medium education. In December

2011, local authorities presented their first Welsh in Education Strategic Plans to the Welsh Government, on a non-statutory basis, outlining how they would contribute towards the aims of the Strategy. The guidance published by Welsh Government underlines the relationship between the Strategy and the new planning process, noting that the local plans should '*demonstrate progress against the specific targets in the WMES*'.<sup>20</sup>

4.4 The WESPs are now a statutory requirement for local authorities under the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013, with the first statutory plans operational from the 1<sup>st</sup> of April 2014. There is a requirement for local authorities to present their plans to Welsh Ministers, who have the power to approve the plans (with or without adaptations) or reject them, and prepare other plans in their place. The Act also gives Welsh Ministers the power to draft Regulations.<sup>21</sup> The Regulations specify:

- the form and content of the plans;
- arrangements for presenting, publishing and reviewing the plans;
- the requirements in relation to assessing the demand for Welsh-medium education;
- the requirements on local authorities when consulting on the plans.

4.5 Since April 2012, the Welsh in Education Grant (WEG) has combined funding streams previously allocated through a number of grant schemes run by the Welsh Government and the Welsh Language Board. The WEG provides funding to support the implementation of the Strategy, both locally and regionally. Regional consortia apply for the grant, outlining how plans and activities are carried out across the relevant group of authorities.

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<sup>20</sup> Welsh Government (2013g), Welsh in Education Strategic Plans - guidelines <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/publications/guidance/welshstrategicplan/?skip=1&lang=en>

<sup>21</sup> Welsh Government (2013h), Welsh in Education Strategic Plans and Assessing Demand for Welsh Medium Education (Wales) Regulations <http://www.assemblywales.org/cy/bus-home/bus-business-fourth-assembly-laid-docs.htm?act=dis&id=252290&ds=1/2014>

## Evidence in relation to Strategic Aim 1

4.6 An initial analysis of draft plans and feedback from Welsh Ministers was undertaken in order to consider the contribution of the arrangements to improving local authority planning processes and making them more consistent. Welsh Ministers gave careful consideration to 21 Welsh in Education Strategic Plans. The outcome of the process, in short, was as follows:

- three plans were approved as presented; and
- 18 plans were approved with adaptations.

(One authority was given an extension to the timetable for the submission of their final plan.)

4.7 As noted above (4.4), Welsh Ministers have the power to approve WESPs as well as offer feedback and adaptations in order to ensure the local plans for Welsh-medium provision are of a sufficient quality. As part of this study, a sample of draft plans, approval letters and revised plans from four local authorities were reviewed, focussing on the nature of the feedback given by Welsh Government. Feedback was given in relation to a range of issues, including:

- the need for authorities to set specific or more robust targets to support the outcomes of the Strategy;
- methods of assessing demand and planning school places for the forecasted numbers;
- steps to promote the use of Welsh outside school;
- steps to increase provision through the medium of Welsh in English-medium secondary schools.

4.8 There were examples in the plans reviewed of local authorities responding positively to the specific actions included in the feedback letters, leading to further detail on actions and targets in final plans. We will conduct a further detailed analysis of the

monitoring process and the content of the WESPs in the final report.

- 4.9 School and college heads, teachers and other partners were asked for their views on the WESPs as part of the process of planning Welsh-medium provision and obtaining a better understanding of the demand for Welsh-medium education. Heads of institutions, local authority representatives and national stakeholders agreed that WESPs are a central part of the new planning mechanism that stems from the Strategy. They felt that WESPs have made the planning process *'more formal, and have meant that discussions about Welsh-medium education involve a wider audience than in the past'* (local authority representative). One contributor noted that WESPs create better *'accountability'* and the ability to *'challenge local authorities on their plans and actions'* (representative of a national organisation).
- 4.10 Local authorities, Welsh Government officials and schools agree that it is early days in terms of establishing and embedding these plans. The approval process means that Welsh Government officials work regularly alongside authorities to monitor the process of drawing up the plans and ensure that they comply with statutory requirements. Local authority representatives supported this. It is not realistic to expect that the impact of the new planning regime will become clear during the lifetime of this Strategy (2010-2015). A long-term monitoring and evaluation programme will be required in order to understand the progress made and any changes to provision. However, there are a number of issues that will be given further consideration during the remaining phases of this research programme in order to assess progress in relation to Strategic Aim 1. These are summarised below.

#### *The influence of the Strategy on school-level planning*

- 4.11 One issue that merits attention is whether schools, through their own planning and activity, reflect the national vision and priorities

of strengthening bilingual and/or Welsh-medium provision. From the schools visits undertaken so far as part of the area studies (three secondary schools and eight primary schools), it is not clear that the 'spirit' and aims of the Strategy have permeated throughout the system and have influenced schools' planning processes. We will continue to research the extent of the Strategy's influence on schools during the later area studies.

#### *Assessing the demand for Welsh-medium provision*

##### 4.12 The Schools Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013

requires that local authorities, under specific conditions, measure the demand for Welsh-medium education. It is expected that this new legal requirement could affect local planning, and in time, the number of children who are educated through the medium of Welsh. We will consider the different methods of measuring demand for Welsh-medium provision. Desk research and further discussions will provide opportunities to understand the arrangements that are in place to ensure that local authorities are complying with the requirements in relation to assessing demand, as outlined in the *Welsh in Education Strategic Plans and Assessing Demand for Welsh Medium Education (Wales) Regulations 2013*.<sup>22</sup>

#### **Progress in relation to Outcome 1**<sup>23</sup>

4.13 A review of the Strategy's Annual Reports reveals relatively little progress overall against the Strategy's targets so far. The Minister for Education and Skills noted in the 2012-13 Annual Report<sup>24</sup>:

*'we are unlikely to see 25 per cent of seven-year-old children being educated through the medium of Welsh by 2015.'*

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<sup>22</sup> <http://www.assemblywales.org/cy/bus-home/bus-business-fourth-assembly-laid-docs.htm?act=dis&id=252290&ds=1/2014>

<sup>23</sup> The following sections consider progress in relation to the other Strategy outcomes. The outcomes are considered alongside the relevant strategic aims.

4.14 There has been some progress in the number of seven-year-old learners being assessed through the medium of Welsh since the Strategy was published.<sup>25</sup> Numbers increased from 6,560 in 2010 to 7,229 in 2012.<sup>26</sup> Although an increase has been recorded, this cannot be attributed to the influence of the Strategy. The children assessed in 2012 were already in the education system when the Strategy was published.

## **Strategic Aim 2**

**Strategic Aim 2:** To improve the planning of Welsh-medium provision in the post-14 phases of education and training, to take account of linguistic progression and continued development of skills.

### **Increasing opportunities to study through the medium of Welsh in the 14-19 phase**

4.15 The evidence presented in relation to Strategic Aim 2 draws on data from area study school visits so far, as well as the findings of the studies on the Bilingual Champions and Sabbaticals Scheme projects. A further element of the research programme will consider the influence of the implementation of the Learning and Skills (Wales) Measure 2009 in the context of the Strategy. This work will assess the impact of the Learning Pathways 14-19 programme, including the grant funding that forms part of the programme, on Welsh-medium and bilingual provision.

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<sup>25</sup> <http://wales.gov.uk/docs/dcells/publications/130710-welsh-education-strategy-report-en.pdf>

<sup>26</sup> Despite the increase in the number of learners assessed through the medium of Welsh, there has not been an increase in the percentage of Year 2 learners assessed in Welsh as a result of the substantial increase in the total number of pupils during the same period.

### *Joint-working and planning to increase 14-19 Welsh-medium provision*

4.16 Visits to three secondary schools were carried out as part of the first group of area studies. These visits provided an opportunity to collect the views of school representatives on the joint-working and planning led by 14-19 Welsh-medium Forums, which have been charged with supporting provision across a range of subjects. The three schools reported that collaboration between secondary schools and between secondary schools and colleges has improved over recent years, with 14-19 Forums playing an important part in encouraging new working relationships. This was supported by the study of the work of Bilingual Champions, which concluded that there is increasing collaboration between schools and colleges to try and ensure continuity in Welsh-medium education provision from the statutory to the post-16 education phase.

4.17 School headteachers and senior managers reported that new partnerships have expanded the choice of subjects available to learners, including Welsh-medium vocational courses. For example, one school noted that a cluster of three secondary schools in the county share specialist practitioners across different institutions in order to offer a wider range of subjects within the Welsh Baccalaureate qualification.

4.18 One difficulty in planning new Welsh-medium provision, noted by two of the three schools visited, is a lack of assessors with Welsh language skills. School representatives observed that this was a significant problem in vocational courses and business courses.

### *Formalising planning processes*

4.19 There is an emphasis in the Strategy on ensuring that Welsh-medium provision is an integral part of the process of planning and introducing provision in the post-16 phase. WESPs and 14-19 Welsh-medium Forums are developments that have ensured there are processes in place to support the planning of Welsh-medium provision. There have been specific challenges for FE

colleges where traditionally there has not been much infrastructure to encourage Welsh-medium and bilingual provision.

- 4.20 The existence of Bilingual Champions has meant that further education institutions have taken steps towards formalising the process of planning Welsh-medium provision. Nevertheless, progress towards developing clear and robust institutional action plans has varied. The colleges with the clearest and most developed plans are those where the functions of the Champions have been embedded or mainstreamed as an integral part of colleges' planning processes.

*Leadership and strategic, integrated planning*

- 4.21 The above point is linked to another finding that emerged from the Bilingual Champions study, and also arose during discussions with stakeholders and school representatives. In order for mainstreaming (or integrated planning) to happen, it is imperative that principals and senior management teams give full support and drive developments. The evidence gathered so far suggests that the quality of leadership on all levels – politically (local and national) and institutionally – influences the quality of the planning. The Strategy, as well as the individual projects that support it, places an emphasis on planning mechanisms and structures. Stakeholders noted that it is important to ensure that relevant individuals have the appropriate skills and the commitment to implement the changes needed in order to strengthen the planning arrangements.

*It appears that a clear and strong commitment by senior managers is an important factor behind any progress (in improving the planning of Welsh-medium provision). The evidence suggests that making the Welsh language and Welsh-medium provision a strategic priority at an institutional level drives forward the development of Welsh-medium provision. (Report on the Review of the Bilingual Champions in further education project, p.75)*

- 4.22 Heads of some institutions see the connections across different activities and projects and draw those elements together in a purposeful and strategic way. There were examples in the review of the Sabbaticals Scheme of headteachers using that scheme as a way of supporting their school development plans. In some cases, the Sabbaticals courses led to the development of new Welsh-medium provision in priority subjects.
- 4.23 The messages in relation to planning Welsh-medium education are consistent to some extent. Headteachers, senior management and education authority representatives agreed that there is now a greater emphasis on planning to support Welsh-medium education than ever before. The challenge is to ensure that there is integrated and effective planning and implementation across the different elements that feed into the Strategy.

*Responding to demand and encouraging post-14 demand*

- 4.24 The wording of Strategic Aim 2 acknowledges that demand from parents is not the main influence or ‘driver’ in the context of post-statutory education and training. Learners make their own choices, with a wide range of options available to them and the language of provision they choose is one consideration among many others.
- 4.25 Schools and colleges report that there are challenges in planning or developing new post-16 Welsh-medium provision. Surveys conducted by further education institutions to measure demand have shown that levels of demand are not high in many institutions across Wales. In general, there is more demand for bilingual courses or modules than for Welsh-medium provision, findings which support Learner Voice Survey data.<sup>27</sup> Similarly, a senior manager of one further education institution noted that the biggest challenge at the end of Key Stage 4 is:

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<sup>27</sup> <http://wales.gov.uk/statistics-and-research/learner-voice-survey/?lang=en>

*'persuading learners of the importance and advantages of continuing with Welsh [provision] and building on their skills'.  
(Senior manager of a further education institution)*

- 4.26 Bilingual Champions use various methods of promoting Welsh-medium provision and encouraging more demand for Welsh-medium and bilingual courses. For example, they use role models during college activities and events to promote the advantages of bilingualism, emphasising the advantages of Welsh language skills for employment and the world of work.
- 4.27 The evidence gathered so far underlines the need to consider the way in which the planning of post-14 provision is supported by efforts to promote new provision proactively and encourage demand among learners for Welsh-medium education. Indeed, the Strategy notes that *'proactive planning on the basis of improving access to Welsh-medium and bilingual provision should be a guiding principle'*.

### **Progress in relation to Outcome 3**

- 4.28 Outcome 3 of the Strategy is *'more students studying for qualifications through the medium of Welsh'*. The Strategy's Annual Report over the last two years notes that progress against the targets linked to this outcome has been affected by the increasing number of learners choosing to study vocational courses, where there is a lack of Welsh-medium provision.<sup>28</sup> This is a result of the implementation of the Learning and Skills (Wales) Measure 2009. The increase in the number of learners studying for BTEC courses, in particular, is a factor that influences the latest data. Between 2012 and 2013, there was a drop in the percentage of learners registered for first language Welsh GCSE who registered for at least two subjects through the medium of Welsh: 81.6 per cent in 2013 compared with 85.3 per

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<sup>28</sup> <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/publications/guidance/wmesreport/?lang=en>

cent in 2012. The Strategy's targets are 84 percent by 2015 and 88 per cent by 2020.

#### **Progress in relation to Outcome 4**

4.29 Outcome 4 of the Strategy is '*more 16-19 year old students studying subjects through the medium of Welsh, in schools, colleges and work-based learning*'. On the whole, the evidence presented in the Annual Report paints a positive picture in relation to this outcome. The schools target for 2020 has already been met and there has been an increase against the baseline data for further education and work-based learning. It is not clear, however, whether the Strategy's targets for further education and work-based learning will be met by 2015. This is discussed further in the Bilingual Champions project evaluation report.

#### **Strategic Aim 3**

**Strategic Aim 3:** To ensure that all learners develop their Welsh-language skills to their full potential and encourage sound linguistic progression from one phase of education and training to the next.

#### *Increase in Welsh-language skills*

- 4.30 Some qualitative data was gathered during visits to schools and interviews with national stakeholders in relation to the development of Welsh language skills. The evidence has enabled us to identify a series of early findings that need further careful consideration during the remaining phases of the research.
- 4.31 Practitioners acknowledge that there is room for improvement in the development of language skills among learners. Taking a long-term view, both primary and secondary school teachers referred to the fact that the quality of the language skills developed through the education system is essential in order to

support *A living language: a language for living's* aim of increasing the use of the language across Wales.

4.32 A number of headteachers and national stakeholders referred to the fundamental challenges facing schools. According to one:

*'What we have is a system that's trying to develop bilingual young people, a high proportion of whom come from non-Welsh-speaking backgrounds, and who live in communities where there are no 'natural' opportunities to use the language. Sometimes, we need to take a step back and remind ourselves of the significant expectations that are placed on Welsh schools.'* (Representative of a national organisation)

#### *Language standards and linguistic progression*

4.33 Some headteachers expressed concern about the lack of progress in language skills as pupils transition from primary to secondary school. Headteachers suggested that (first language) Welsh provision in year 7 does not sufficiently *'drive progress'* but rather focusses to some extent on provision that allows pupils with lower level skills to keep up. Pupils provided examples of year 7 lessons repeating primary school themes or lesson content. One secondary school reported that their cluster had tried to standardise learners' levels in core subjects following teachers' assessments at the end of key stage 2.

4.34 Despite some signs of progress, the evidence raises wider questions about the level of collaboration and communication between primary and secondary schools in supporting Welsh language skills during this transitional phase. Some practitioners stated that there is room for improvement in the leadership offered to schools by local authorities on how to improve the transition between Key Stages 2 and 3.

4.35 Most of the primary and secondary practitioners expressed concerns that learners' use of the language in social and informal settings decreases as they move from Key Stage 3 to Key Stage 4. Many practitioners believe that, as a result, the language standards of a large proportion of learners do not develop to the

expected standard. This presents challenges for schools, especially given the aim of ensuring that every learner develops their language skills to their ‘full potential’.

4.36 One stakeholder stated that they did not believe that there are enough opportunities for pupils to use their Welsh language skills in schools. It was suggested that this was more of a problem in schools where a large proportion of pupils come from non-Welsh speaking families and do not have the opportunity to speak Welsh at home.

### **Progress in relation to Outcome 2**

4.37 The Strategy places an emphasis on supporting progression in Welsh-medium education. It was noted that *‘ensuring that there are opportunities for suitable linguistic progression is one of the cornerstones of the Strategy’*. Within the WESPs, local authorities set targets for improving linguistic progression between education phases, with special attention given to progression between key stage 2 and 3. The data presented in the 2013-14 Annual Report in relation to Outcome 2 of the Strategy underlines the challenge in different areas of Wales. For example, in the South-west and mid-Wales consortium, 430 learners who were assessed in Welsh in Year 6 in 2010 transitioned to a Welsh second language programme of study by the time they reached Year 9 in 2013 – this represents around 18 per cent of learners changing their medium of learning in that region over a three-year period (page 30).<sup>29</sup>

### **Progress in relation to Outcome 5**

4.38 Outcome 5 of the Strategy, which refers to ‘high-quality language skills in Welsh’ also provides a means of measuring progress

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<sup>29</sup> <http://wales.gov.uk/docs/dcells/publications/140711-welsh-education-strategy-report-en1.pdf>

against Strategic Aim 3 and is relevant to the discussion in the previous sections.

4.39 The 2012-13 Annual Report revealed a fall in the number and percentage of students studying first and second language Welsh A-Level.<sup>30</sup> The Minister for Education and Skills acknowledged in the 2012-13 Annual Report that it will be a challenge to meet the targets set:

*Outcome 5, which aims to sustain the number of learners choosing first language Welsh or Welsh second language A Level, is still a cause for concern.*

4.40 The implementation of the Learning and Skills (Wales) Measure 2009, which has led to an increase in the number of options for 16-19 students, is one external factor that could (unintentionally) influence progress against the outcomes of the Strategy, including Outcome 5. Further research is planned in order to understand the influence of the implementation of the Measure on the Strategy's aims, and these findings will be presented in the final report.

4.41 In 2012, the Welsh Government commissioned two reviews with recommendations relevant to Outcome 5.<sup>31</sup> The *One language for all* report, a review of Welsh second language in Key Stages 3 and 4, was published in September 2013. This report outlined a series of recommendations aimed at addressing low standards and levels of attainment in the subject.<sup>32</sup> Since that report was published, the Minister for Education and Skills has appointed Professor Graham Donaldson to conduct a review of curriculum and assessment arrangements in Wales. That review will address

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<sup>30</sup> There has been a fall in the number of First Language registrations from 346 in 2009 to 303 in 2012, representing a fall of 6.7 percent to 5.6 percent of the First Language Welsh GCSE registrations, two years earlier. There has been a fall from 595 to 556 in the Second Language registrations between 2009-12 representing a fall of 3.0 percent to 2.4 percent of Welsh Second Language GCSE registrations, two years earlier.

<sup>31</sup> In July 2012, the former Minister for Education and Skills, Leighton Andrews AM, established a group to review Welsh second language in Key Stages 3 and 4 and to consider how to raise standards and levels of attainment in the subject. Also in July 2012, the former Minister announced that he would establish a group to review Welsh for Adults.

<sup>32</sup> <http://wales.gov.uk/docs/dcells/publications/130926-review-of-welsh-second-lan-en.pdf>

the recommendations of *One language for all*. As part of this research programme, we will consider progress in implementing some of the projects that form part of the Welsh second language action plan.

4.42 In July 2013, *Raising our sights*, a review of Welsh for Adults, was published. The report made recommendations with the aim of ensuring sufficient opportunities for people to become Welsh speakers. This evaluation will not look closely at this area; however, the final report will consider progress in implementing the review's recommendations, and the relationship between them and the Strategy.

#### **Strategic Aim 4**

**Strategic Aim 4:** To ensure a planned Welsh-medium education workforce that provides sufficient numbers of practitioners for all phases of education and training, with high-quality Welsh-language skills and competence in teaching methodologies.

4.43 The fieldwork completed thus far has collected evidence in relation to:

- methods of supporting the development of the workforce in schools;
- challenges associated with recruiting practitioners with Welsh language skills; and
- the Sabbaticals Scheme to develop the Welsh language skills of educational practitioners.

It should be acknowledged that the evidence presented in relation to Strategic Aim 4 is mainly based on the perceptions and experiences of various groups of respondents. The final report will provide an opportunity to compare this qualitative evidence with administrative data and wider data on the workforce. There

is a reference to the type of quantitative data available in relation to the Welsh-medium education workforce in Section 5.12.

### *Supporting the skills of the current workforce*

4.44 Evidence reveals that schools and further education institutions are aware of the challenges associated with ensuring a workforce that is able to offer high-quality provision in a wide range of subjects through the medium of Welsh. Schools senior managers listed a number of examples of methods that they employ to make the best use of the current workforce's skills. These methods include:

- secondary: training teachers from the Welsh department to teach humanities to Year 7. As well as using the current workforce in a flexible way, it strengthens the language patterns across the range of curriculum subjects.
- secondary: literacy co-ordinators providing training to colleagues on language use.
- primary and secondary: language training sessions for staff to improve their confidence so that they can deliver some Welsh-medium or bilingual provision – sessions organised internally by schools.
- all sectors: headteachers encouraging practitioners to attend the Sabbaticals Scheme courses.

### *Challenges*

4.45 Headteachers and local authority representatives reported that the limited number of practitioners with Welsh language skills makes it difficult to appoint high quality practitioners to some posts. Local authorities noted that appointing headteachers had been difficult in a number of areas, with great difficulty in filling headteacher vacancies in some Welsh primary schools in rural areas. In the Welsh-medium secondary sector, it was reported that there is a lack of science and English teachers.

4.46 Secondary and primary school headteachers noted that some candidates' standard of Welsh is a cause for concern.

*'The pool is small and within that small pool, the standard of language skills narrows the pool even further.'* (Secondary school headteacher)

4.47 This underlines the need to ensure that attention is given to the standard of language in initial teacher training and that there is continuous intervention to improve the language skills of those practitioners already within the education system.

#### *The Sabbaticals Scheme*

4.48 The views of participants, colleges and schools senior managers and local authorities were sought as part of the review of the Sabbaticals Scheme, with the aim of understanding the Scheme's influence on practitioners' ability to teach through the medium of Welsh after they return to their schools and colleges.<sup>33</sup> It was concluded that the Sabbaticals Scheme had strengthened participants' Welsh language skills and developed their confidence.

4.49 The report notes a number of positive factors that have contributed to the effectiveness of the Scheme. Participants and their line managers in their schools/colleges believe that the Scheme offers high-quality training. The Welsh Government has identified opportunities to adapt and refine the Scheme, introducing new methods of delivering provision as well as courses for different target groups (e.g. an entry level course for classroom assistants). In this way, the Sabbaticals Scheme has evolved and its appeal has expanded. It is also an acknowledgement of the need to respond to the requirements of the workforce along the different phases of education and training in different ways and through different models of provision.

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<sup>33</sup> Welsh Government (January 2014), *Evaluation of the Welsh-medium Education Strategy: Review of the Welsh-language Sabbaticals Scheme for practitioners: participant experiences 2011-2012*

4.50 However, the report suggests that there is a need to refine the process of planning and recruiting to the Sabbaticals Scheme, and make it a requirement for authorities and regional consortia to make a connection between those who attend the courses and how they are expected to contribute to local strategic priorities.

4.51 The above underlines the need for better coordination between the local planning process and the programmes implemented in the name of the wider Strategy.

### **Strategic Aim 5**

**Strategic Aim 5:** To improve the central support mechanisms for Welsh-medium education and training.

4.52 The following sub-sections discuss two elements that are relevant to this Strategic Aim, namely Welsh-medium qualifications and the resources commissioning programme reviewed as part of the research programme.

#### *Welsh-medium and bilingual qualifications*

4.53 The availability of Welsh-medium qualifications was considered as part of the *Review of Qualifications for 14-19 year olds in Wales* (Welsh Government, 2012) published in November 2012.<sup>34</sup> The report concluded that there was a need to ‘ensure clear progression paths through the medium of Welsh’ and that GCSE and A-Level qualifications should be available in English and in Welsh at the same time by 2015. The report noted that a lack of staff, assessors and moderators had contributed to a restricted choice of vocational qualifications, and that awarding bodies needed constant support in order to continue expanding provision and opportunities for learners.

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<sup>34</sup> Welsh Government (November 2012), *Review of Qualifications for 14-19 year olds in Wales* <http://wales.gov.uk/docs/dcells/publications/121127reviewofqualificationsen.pdf>

4.54 The above messages were reinforced during the fieldwork undertaken as part of this evaluation. Schools and stakeholders believe that it is essential for learners to be offered the same opportunities in Welsh as in English, especially given the emphasis placed on equal opportunities by Welsh Government, including in the Welsh-medium Education Strategy.

4.55 Secondary school representatives noted that vocational qualifications presented specific challenges. These representatives acknowledged the need to prioritise developments in order to ensure that new qualifications introduced are likely to offer the best value for learners. In order to support this, schools and colleges are gathering information about learner demand for courses or vocational qualifications which can feed into the process of identifying priority areas. It was reported that closer collaboration between schools has enabled the identification of a critical mass of demand from learners in some subjects, and this has created a basis for developing new bilingual qualifications.

#### *Welsh-medium and bilingual resources*

4.56 *The Review of Use and Quality of Resources Commissioned by the Welsh in Education Unit, Welsh Government* (Review of Resources) was undertaken as part of the research programme to support the evaluation of the Strategy. A survey was conducted with primary, secondary and further education practitioners, seeking their opinion on the choice of resources across the different subjects, methods of sharing information and quality.

4.57 Evidence from the review demonstrates that practitioners have mixed views about the choice of Welsh-medium resources that are available. They acknowledge that the choice of resources has developed substantially over the years and that there have been improvements in the quality of resources and the breadth of

choice. Nevertheless, it was reported that there was a lack of choice in a number of areas: in the further education sector, in interactive resources and in Welsh-medium resources for some subjects in Key Stage 3.

4.58 The Review's conclusions suggest that there is scope to simplify the process of sharing information about resources. Practitioners were of the opinion that one comprehensive central source of information on all available Welsh-medium educational resources would be beneficial.

4.59 The study concludes that the resources commissioning programme is a valuable contribution to the effort to *'improve the central support mechanisms for Welsh-medium education and training'*. Whilst the process of identifying needs, commissioning projects and publishing resources takes time, the programme nevertheless enables the Resources Commissioning Branch to respond to national strategic priorities.

4.60 The evidence gathered through the review clearly demonstrates that there is a continuing demand for a Welsh-medium and bilingual educational resource commissioning programme in order to satisfy the needs of both practitioners and learners. The review concludes that the commissioning programme is a central part of the work to support Strategic Aim 5.

#### *Central support by local authorities*

4.61 Schools noted that the support available locally from school improvement officers has reduced. It was also reported that schools have found it difficult to access support from educational psychologists and behavioural experts who can work in Welsh. These are issues that we will explore further during the later area studies.

## Strategic Aim 6

**Strategic Aim 6:** To contribute to the acquisition and reinforcement of Welsh-language skills in families and in the community.

4.62 It was agreed that this evaluation would not focus in detail on Strategic Aim 6. Since the publication of the Welsh-medium Education Strategy, *A living language: a language for living* has been published, which outlines a series of actions to encourage and support Welsh within families and strengthen the Welsh language within communities. The *Welsh Language Strategy Evaluation Framework* has also been published, which offers a basis for future research, data collection and analysis in order to evaluate the Strategy.<sup>35</sup> It is expected that further research will consider the impacts of the Welsh Language Strategy in detail.

### *Overview of the evidence collected*

- 4.63 The area studies offer an opportunity to seek views on some issues that are relevant to this aim. A summary is provided below of the points put forward by practitioners and learners during interviews with primary and secondary schools.
- 4.64 Headteachers and practitioners acknowledged that *'the mission of Welsh schools goes beyond offering quality Welsh-medium education'* (Headteacher of a secondary school). It was reported during school visits that embedding the Welsh language as part of pupils' sense of identity and encouraging the use of Welsh outside formal situations demands additional effort on the part of teachers. It is interesting to note that practitioners in different areas referred to schools' 'responsibility' to encourage the use of Welsh on the schoolyard and beyond the school gates. The Strategy acknowledges the need for Welsh language skills to be

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<sup>35</sup> <http://wales.gov.uk/docs/caecd/research/130225-welsh-language-strategy-evaluation-framework-cy.pdf>

reinforced in the community or within families. However, it does not refer directly to a *responsibility* on schools to support this. One headteacher noted that he doubted whether the national policy gave sufficient acknowledgement to the '*added value that teachers in Welsh schools offer*' in order to support the Welsh language.

- 4.65 The comments raise interesting questions about the functions of schools and colleges in providing opportunities to use the language within communities. In some mainly non-Welsh speaking areas, schools and colleges are, to all intents and purposes, the 'Welsh community'. Headteachers in one area of Wales report that there are '*very few extracurricular or social activities*' held through the medium of Welsh (headteacher of a primary school). Because of this, it is the school that arranges after-school clubs and extra-curricular activities in order to encourage the use of Welsh in informal situations.
- 4.66 The relationship between schools and external bodies such as the *Urdd*, *Mentrau Iaith* and Young Farmers Clubs provide opportunities to show that the Welsh language is relevant in different social and cultural contexts. Based on the evidence gathered so far, schools are keen to foster these relationships in order to offer a wider range of opportunities and social activities to learners so that they can use their Welsh skills.
- 4.67 Finally, secondary school practitioners noted that the availability of employment opportunities where the Welsh language is an important skill is a factor that influences the likelihood of young people maintaining and using their Welsh language skills after leaving statutory education. One headteacher stressed that there is a need to strengthen the relationship between Welsh-medium education and the workplace, in order to ensure that Welsh is seen as a '*strength in terms of employability*'.

4.68 Although we will not look closely at this strategic aim, we will research further the issues raised above during school and college visits.

## 5 Interim conclusions

5.1 This chapter summarises the interim conclusions of the research process. The conclusions are based on a series of themes and key issues that have arisen consistently during the process of collecting evidence to support the evaluation. The chapter presents the research team's interpretation and conclusions, drawing on the available evidence, and also presents questions to be investigated and tested further during the remainder of the research programme.

### The influence of the Strategy

5.2 The evidence does not allow us to arrive at final conclusions on the influence of the Strategy in this report. However, the research so far demonstrates the influence of the Strategy in a number of ways, including:

- formalising planning processes on a local level;
- focussing on the use of the Welsh in Education Grant to support the implementation of the Strategy;
- encouraging collaboration between organisations to support Welsh-medium provision; and
- supporting the development of a Welsh-medium education infrastructure, including:
  - workforce development programmes;
  - the Welsh-medium resources commissioning programme;
  - supporting language skills in the workplace.

5.3 While the Strategy has led to a wide range of activities that support schools and the development of the education infrastructure, evidence suggests that the Strategy is not as much of a priority to organisations as some other 'policy drivers'. The

education system is complex, of course, and influenced by multiple factors, including the mainstream policies of the national education system; budgetary arrangements (and restrictions); local political priorities; the expectations of parents and governors; and the influence of headteachers and governing bodies. These factors influence and affect Welsh-medium and bilingual schools as much as they do English-medium schools.

## **Strategic leadership**

5.4 Strong leadership by individuals and senior management teams is essential as a means of supporting planning processes and operating effectively. One emerging critical question is the level of ownership of the Strategy amongst:

- officials across the Welsh Government Department for Education and Skills (i.e. beyond the Welsh Language Unit)
- senior officials in local authorities and consortia
- school headteachers and college principals

5.5 The responsibility for formulating, overseeing and monitoring the Strategy on a (national) policy level is clear. Leadership (in delivering the Strategy's objectives) on an operational and organisational level will be considered in the remaining area studies and during further discussions with national stakeholders. Lead organisations are named in the Strategy's implementation plan and it will be important to test to what extent these organisations are clear about their roles and responsibilities in relation to relevant strategic objectives.<sup>36</sup>

## **Accountability**

5.6 The introduction of WESPs has created a more robust planning and monitoring framework and a new system of accountability between local authorities and Welsh Government. The new arrangements will lead to greater scrutiny of authorities' plans to

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<sup>36</sup> See page 27 of the Welsh-medium Education Strategy  
<http://wales.gov.uk/docs/dcells/publications/100420welshmediumstrategyen.pdf>

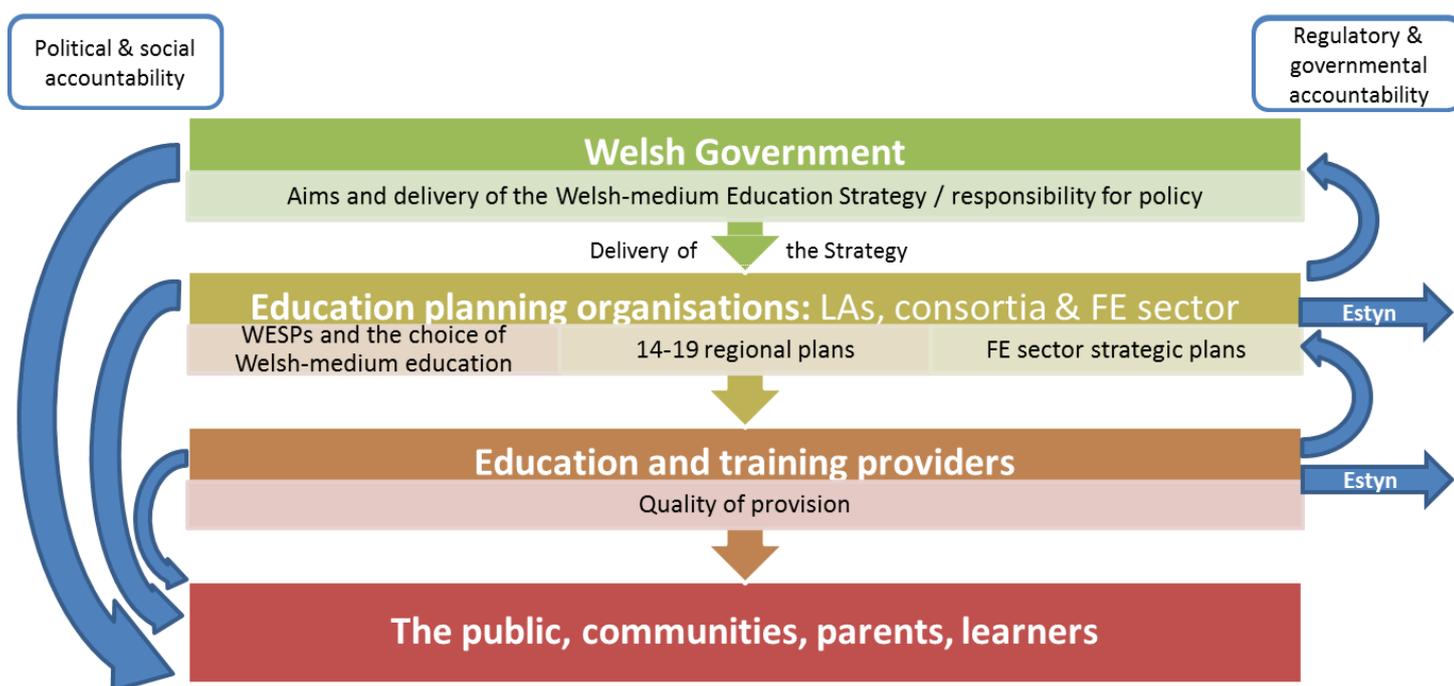
support Welsh-medium provision, as well as the implementation of these plans. The fact that Ministers have the power to intervene and require improvements to the WESPs has helped formalise the process. The Minister for Education and Skills' letter to the further education sector, *Priorities for the further education sector*, places clear expectations on colleges and adds to the 'framework of accountability'. The implementation of the new planning system is in its early days and its ability to ensure accountability has yet to be tested fully.

- 5.7 We refer in section 5.6, above, to the accountability of local authorities to the Welsh Government. There are a number of other lines of accountability in relation to Welsh-medium education provision and the implementation of the Strategy. Figure 3 presents an overview of these. One question to consider in the final report is whether these lines of accountability are strong enough to ensure that there are robust plans in place to realise the growth in Welsh-medium education that is central to the Strategy's vision.

## **Planning provision**

- 5.1 Evidence demonstrates that progress against the Strategy's outcomes and targets has been slower than expected. Nevertheless, stakeholders report that the existence of the outcomes and the requirement for local authorities to plan provision in a way that supports the national outcomes have been valuable in supporting more systematic planning arrangements.

**Figure 3: Accountability in relation to the implementation of the Strategy: the connections between Welsh Government, education planning bodies, providers and the public**



5.2 One question to ask as we look towards the future is whether the steps taken to improve the process of planning Welsh-medium provision will be sufficient to ensure growth on the scale desired by the Welsh Government. Local authorities will need to agree challenging targets in their WESPs in order to reach the 2020 targets. Introducing such targets may not be entirely consistent with the principle of planning provision on the basis of ‘responding to informed demand by parents’ as noted in the Strategy. This underlines the difference between:

- i. planning in response to demand (assuming that there will be a growing demand for Welsh-medium education); and
- ii. purposeful planning with the clear intention of increasing provision and encouraging growth in demand.

5.3 The Strategy aims to create growth in Welsh-medium provision by means of the first scenario, above. However, this method of

planning does not necessarily ensure a growth in provision. Neither is it necessarily a suitable basis for planning in every sector, including the further education sector where the level of demand for Welsh-medium provision has been historically weak. Evidence collected has included examples of some further education organisations actively seeking to create demand for Welsh-medium and bilingual provision, rather than using demand from students as a basis for planning provision.

## **Quality of provision**

5.4 The Strategy refers to supporting consistent improvement in the quality of Welsh-medium provision (p.11). However, quality is a relatively marginal consideration in the context of the aims and objectives of the Strategy. The quality of provision and the quality of the learner's experience of the education system are likely to influence a wide range of the themes and priorities that form part of the Strategy's aims, including:

- progression and continuity in Welsh-medium provision throughout all stages of education;
- the level of demand for Welsh-medium education (demand among learners in post-14 education and training);
- Welsh language skills; and
- academic attainment in general.

5.5 During interviews, stakeholders and practitioners referred to the specific challenges that face Welsh-medium schools as they work to raise standards of provision. In general, the Welsh-medium education system is perceived to be poorer in terms of resources and general 'infrastructure'. The workforce is smaller: data reveals that there are fewer applicants for vacant posts in Welsh-medium schools (primary and secondary) than in English-medium

schools.<sup>37</sup> There are other challenges associated with teaching through the medium of a language that is not the mother tongue of a significant proportion of learners. The final report will consider to what extent the Strategy acknowledges these challenges openly and ensures that support is available to ensure provision of the highest possible quality.

### **Young people's language skills and their use of language skills**

- 5.6 One of the Strategy's aims is to create a Welsh-medium education system that produces truly bilingual young people. However, measuring success against this aim is problematic. A range of factors influence the development of young people's language skills that are largely beyond schools' sphere of influence. These include the use of Welsh in the home, the availability of informal opportunities to use Welsh, social practices of peers, and essentially, the will to use the language.
- 5.7 Some evidence collected during the area studies suggests that young people's attitudes towards the Welsh language change as they move through different stages of education. A more complete evidence base is needed in order to understand young people's attitude towards their Welsh language skills, including former pupils. This would allow schools and other partners to support and strengthen their skills in the most effective way.

### **Further issues to consider**

- 5.8 During the process of drafting this interim report, the research team has identified gaps in the evidence which will be addressed during the remaining phases of the research. Some of these gaps are issues that relate to strategic objectives or elements of the

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<sup>37</sup> Advisory Group to the Minister for Education and Skills on the Welsh-medium Education Strategy – Paper on Initial Training for Welsh-medium Teachers (April 2014). *Unpublished*.

action plan that have not yet been given full attention in interviews or desk research:

#### Planning provision

- Increasing access to provision in the **early years**. What evidence is there of steps taken by local authorities to increase access to Welsh-medium early years and primary provision in their communities?
- The influence of the Strategy in the context of services and the support given to learners with **additional learning needs**.
- Consideration of the effectiveness of the different models of providing opportunities for **latecomers** to benefit from Welsh-medium provision. Have any latecomer centres or immersion programmes been established since the publication of the Strategy / as a result of its implementation, and what evidence is there of their effectiveness?
- The influence of the implementation of the **Learning and Skills (Wales) Measure 2009** on the Strategy's aims.

#### Welsh language skills

- Progress in implementing projects which form part of the **Welsh second language action plan**.
- Development of **Welsh skills in the workplace**, including evidence collected through interviews with stakeholders to discuss work-based learning through the medium of Welsh.

#### Central support

- The effect of **technological developments** on Welsh-medium education, including the specific actions identified in the Strategy e.g. the development of the education glossary (*Termiadur addysg*).

#### Workforce

- Developments in the field of **initial training and early professional development** for practitioners.

### Welsh language skills in the community

- Evidence of purposeful planning for **social and informal use** of the Welsh language.

5.9 The research programme has also introduced questions that extend beyond the specific aims and objectives of the Strategy.

- i. Does the Strategy reflect the other policy priorities that are at the forefront of the minds of school headteachers and college principals?
- ii. How effective is the Welsh Government's legislative framework and its statutory powers in ensuring that robust planning processes are in place at local level?
- iii. Is 'responding to demand' a sufficient basis for planning provision to ensure a growth in provision at the rate desired across the different education phases?
- iv. What difference has the Strategy made to learners' experience of Welsh-medium education?
- v. Is there enough recognition of the additional requirements or expectations of Welsh-medium schools in supporting the development of Welsh language skills?

5.10 The answers to these questions will provide recommendations for the future implementation of the Strategy.

## Annex 1: National stakeholders who have contributed to the evaluation so far

Organisation	Representatives
CollegesWales	X 3
The <i>Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol</i>	X 1
Welsh Language Commissioner	X 1
CYDAG	X 2
Estyn	X 4
<i>Mudiad Meithrin</i>	X 1
Network to Promote Linguistic Diversity (NPLD)	X 1
Niace Dysgu Cymru	X 1
Welsh Government	X 8
Parents for Welsh-medium education	X 2
UCAC	X 2

## Annex 2: Links between a sample of reviews and policy documents published by the Welsh Government Department for Education and Skills and the Welsh-medium Education Strategy<sup>38</sup>

Name of the document / policy (publication date)  Description of the document	Does it refer specifically to the Strategy?	Does it include objectives, actions or comments that support the Strategy (examples given of the relevant text)
<b>National model for regional working (February 2014)</b>  Welsh Government policy document	Yes	Yes <i>The consortia will co-ordinate and quality assure the delivery of the aims of the Welsh-medium Education Strategy by ensuring the alignment of the Welsh in Education Strategic Plans (WESP) and the Welsh in Education Grant (WEG) across each of the local authorities within the regional consortia, so that there is consistency in the development of excellence in pedagogy, and the meeting of agreed targets, not only across both the Welsh-medium and bilingual sectors, but also in the delivery of Welsh as a second language.</i>
<b>A Review of Initial Teacher Training in Wales (Tabberer Report) (July 2013)</b>  Independent report	No	Yes, to an extent <i>Wales has a relatively small ITT sector that is required not only to supply new teachers of quality but also to serve the regions, which are diverse both in terms of population density and Welsh language and cultural traditions”</i>  The report acknowledges the importance of the additional incentives that are available to those training through the medium of Welsh, under the Welsh Medium Improvement Scheme, as a way of increasing the number of teachers who can teach through the medium of Welsh.
<b>Review of Initial Teachers Training in Wales (November 2013)</b>  Welsh Government’s response to the independent review	No	Yes, to an extent <i>Additional incentives are made available for those undertaking their training through the medium of Welsh, under the Welsh Medium Improvement Scheme. The Scheme is important in increasing the number of teachers available to teach through the medium of Welsh. The competition for talented graduates in this area of the market makes a compelling case to continue with these incentives.</i>
<b>Youth Engagement and Progression Framework: Implementation plan (November 2013)</b>	Yes	Yes <i>Welsh Government is also committed to seeing the Welsh language thrive. The Welsh Language Strategy and the Welsh-medium Education Strategy sets out our ambition to ‘strengthen the use of the</i>

<sup>38</sup> This annex summarises the analysis conducted to consider references to the Welsh-medium Education Strategy in policy reviews and reports published by the Welsh Government’s Department of Education and Skills. See Section 3.19 of the report for more information.

Welsh Government policy document		<i>Welsh language in everyday life'. We will expect local areas to consider the importance of the linguistic needs of young people in implementing the framework.</i>
<b>The future delivery of education services in Wales (Hill Report) (June 2013)</b>  Independent report	Yes (page 33)	Yes, there are a number of references to supporting Welsh-medium provision, including <i>Access to a sufficient range of materials and resources in Welsh to support both the application of the National Literacy and Numeracy Framework across the curriculum and the teaching of other subjects.</i>  <i>Welsh-medium and English-speaking schools to work extensively together on professional development programmes that foster generic pedagogical skills and learning across the respective types of school. (AS4.3)</i>  <i>Consortia should apply this framework to five key areas: the implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Framework, support for Welsh language teaching, Foundation Phase support, 14–19 learning and ICT for learning.</i>
<b>Building a Brighter Future: Early Years and Childcare Plan (August 2013)</b>  Welsh Government policy document	No (a reference in an annex which lists Welsh Government policies)	Yes, to some extent <i>Improve the accessibility of early education and childcare:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>work with Mudiad Meithrin and other providers through a range of grants to increase the quality and amount of Welsh-medium childcare provision so that parents have a choice in terms of the first language of the childcare and education setting their child attends</i></li> </ul>
<b>School Effectiveness Grant and Pupil Deprivation Grant: Guidance (April 2013)</b>  Welsh Government policy document	Yes	Yes, there are comments explaining the relationship between the grant and the Strategy. <i>The Welsh Government provides SEG funding to improve standards in literacy, numeracy and reduce the impact of poverty on educational achievement in all schools, which includes support for Welsh-medium activities in Welsh-medium schools.</i>  <i>WEG funding should be used to supplement rather than replace SEG funding for activities in support of these priorities in Welsh-medium settings.</i>
<b>Review of Qualifications for 14 to 19-year-olds in Wales (November 2012)</b>  Independent report	No	Yes <i>As a bilingual nation, Wales needs qualifications and progression pathways to be available through both English and Welsh, something which the qualifications market does not deliver unaided.</i>  <i>The Welsh Government should ensure clear pathways for progression through the medium of Welsh. GCSEs and A levels should continue to be available, as they are now, in English and Welsh, at the same cost to providers. (Recommendation 6)</i>
<b>National Literacy Programme (October 2012)</b>	No	Yes <i>Learners will focus on the development of first language literacy in either English or Welsh with the</i>

Welsh Government curriculum document		<i>expectation that learners attending Welsh-medium schools are equally literate in both languages by the end of Key Stage 2.</i>
<b>Policy Statement on Higher Education (June 2012)</b>  Welsh Government policy document	Yes	Yes <i>Closer links now need to be forged [by the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol] with schools and the FE sector in order to enhance progression into higher education and to underpin the Welsh-medium Education Strategy.</i>
<b>Improving Schools action plan (2012)</b>  Welsh Government policy document	Yes	Yes <i>To continue to improve the quality of Welsh-medium education, we will:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>ask local authorities to submit revised Welsh in Education Strategic Plans to DfES in December 2012 for implementation from April 2013.</i></li> <li>• <i>publish guidelines for the 2013–14 Welsh in Education Grant in October 2012, with an expectation that the Grant will move to a consortia basis from April 2013</i></li> <li>• <i>continue to offer the Sabbaticals Scheme to provide Welsh-language and methodology training to practitioners.</i></li> </ul>

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