



Welsh in Education

Developing Welsh in Education across the North Wales region 2019-2022

Draft



Tuag at Ragoriaeth
Towards Excellence



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Working document

This is a working document and may be amended as required to meet our priorities.

Version	Date	Amended by

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Foreword

The education system in Wales is in a period of transition, and the Welsh language is an integral part of these reforms.

This strategy was designed to set a direction for the development of the Welsh language in education in the North Wales region over the next three years, in line with the vision set out in [*Cymraeg 2050: A million Welsh speakers \(2017\)*](#), [Education in Wales: Our national mission, Action Plan 2017-21 \(2017\)](#) and [Welsh in education: Action plan 2017-21 \(2017\)](#).

This document supports the Welsh Government's aims and objectives in the above policies, which are to take the necessary steps to increase the number of people who can speak Welsh and to increase the number of people who speak the language on a daily basis.

It is recognised that language planning in the North Wales region will always be a challenge due to the varied linguistic landscape. This linguistic demography means that the North Wales region encompasses Welsh speakers, Welsh learners and a migrant population.

Many believe that education is the most powerful language planning tool for creating language users. However, not only does the language need to be transferred in the education system, there is also a need to ensure that all pupils develop sufficient skills in Welsh that enable them to use the language in their everyday lives. In addition, there is a need to create suitable conditions and an environment where the Welsh language and its speakers can flourish beyond our schools.

The publication of this strategy is timely and exciting in light of preparations for the new Curriculum, the professional development of the education workforce and the way in which learners with additional learning needs are supported. In light of the changes to the authorities' Welsh in Education Strategic Plans (WESPs), this strategy will also support and reinforce these plans.

It needs to be ensured that the Welsh language is central to these educational reforms. One of the aims and objectives of the Curriculum is to develop Welsh-medium provision and improve the teaching and learning of Welsh for all learners. This strategy reinforces this vision.

This strategy refers not only to the curriculum and pedagogy but also to enriching experiences in the Welsh language as well as excellence, equity and wellbeing. In order to maintain this vision, this strategy sets a direction for workforce planning and strategic planning to further develop Welsh in education.

Addressing this challenge, whilst building on the success of the North Wales region, will require a vision and an action plan agreed and implemented to the highest standard by all authorities.



The education system in North Wales has a duty to contribute towards creating and increasing the number of fluent and confident Welsh speakers who have a rich cultural and social capital. This strategy will be a language planning tool to create:

- a Wales/region where people can use the Welsh language in their everyday lives;
- a Wales/region with a vibrant culture in which the Welsh language flourishes;
- principled citizens who are able to use the Welsh language naturally in their everyday lives; and
- learners, who learn about identity and culture through languages, to be citizens of Wales and the world.

For the benefit of learners, GwE's Joint-committee welcomes the strategy for developing Welsh in education in the North Wales region.

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Foreword

This document addresses the new challenge set by the Welsh Government for the education and training system in Wales. The strategy sets out the region's intentions in relation to providing practical support and guidance for pupils, teachers, schools and local authorities along with other partners in education and training. By doing this, the necessary steps can be taken to support the Government's policy aim over the coming decades of ensuring an increase in the numbers who can speak Welsh and increase the number of people who speak the language on a daily basis.

The content of this document is the result of a series of strategy planning meetings. Consultation and planning meetings were held with:

- education sector stakeholders and partners within the region's six local authorities (councillors and LA officers, primary and secondary headteachers, *Mudiad Meithrin*, *Yr Urdd*, *Mentrau Iaith*, Governors, language centres, further education colleges and the North Wales Economic Ambition Board).
- the GwE Welsh Language Strategic Board
- GwE senior officers
- further education colleges and *Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol*.

We are also grateful to the *Urdd* for facilitating input from young people across the region, in first language and second language clubs and forums.

Planning a strategy for the North Wales region presents a considerable challenge, as a significant variation exists within the region in terms of using the Welsh language as a daily medium of learning and communication in schools and their communities. There is a diverse and interesting mix of language and culture in the region, which encompasses Welsh speakers, Welsh learners and a migrant population. This strategy is intended for all pupils, parents and carers in the region, whatever their background, and it sets an ambitious aim of making the Welsh language a central part of every pupil's life in the region.



Introduction

The main aim of this strategy, in line with Welsh Government's aim of increasing the number of Welsh speakers, is to support the planning process to expand Welsh language provision within the education system in the North Wales region. Over the next few years, each Local Authority in North Wales will work together to implement the objectives set out in each local authority's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP). The purpose of this strategy is to support and reinforce these plans. Local Authorities will use the information they have about schools to facilitate the strategic planning process and to share effective practice when planning to increase children and young people's use of Welsh.

The Welsh Language Strategic Board was established under the guidance of the GwE Consortium to lead, co-ordinate and manage Welsh in education on a regional basis. The core membership of the Board includes representation from: GwE, Welsh Language Lead Officers from Local Authorities, GwE Advisory Board, GwE's Joint Committee, and schools. The GwE Consortium Management Board will undertake the joint planning across the region. It will then be agreed by a cross-county Joint Committee, which includes the elected members with specific responsibility for education from each Local Authority. The provision will be planned with the intention of making the best possible use of available resources to ensure that the planned language delivery responds to the diverse linguistic needs and situations that exist in the region. It is also intended to work closely with a number of other agencies across the region, that support the work of expanding Welsh language provision.

Background

In July 2017, the Welsh Government published its latest strategy for the Welsh language, *Cymraeg 2050: A million Welsh speakers*. The principal message of this strategy is to set out the Government's policy decision to significantly increase the number of people in Wales who can speak Welsh and use it on a daily basis, in order to reach a million Welsh speakers by 2050. In *Cymraeg 2050: A million Welsh speakers* and *Cymraeg 2050: A million Welsh speakers, Work programme 2017-21*, the Government outlines the practical steps it will take to achieve this goal. As well as securing a million Welsh speakers, the Government clearly states its intention to increase the percentage of the population that speaks Welsh on a daily basis, from **10% currently to 20%** of the population by 2050.

The strategy is ambitious and will require effort and perseverance to implement it. But the vision is one that will inspire and energize everyone who wishes to see the Welsh language and bilingualism flourish. Central to this new vision is our education system. At present, two out of every three children who are considered to be fluent Welsh speakers learn the language within the education system. The numbers doing so will have to increase if we are



to reach the target of a million Welsh speakers by 2050. The challenge will, of course, vary across Wales, especially so in the North Wales region, where some areas have the highest percentage of Welsh speakers in Wales. There is a considerable difference in the numbers of pupils who are taught either through the medium of Welsh or bilingually within schools in the region's counties. Nevertheless, the overall challenge of ensuring an increase in the number of pupils who can speak Welsh, and an increase in the use of the language, will remain the same.

The North Wales region welcomes this challenge set by the Welsh Government to ensure that many more children and young people in the region have an opportunity to become either fluently bilingual, or have a much better command of Welsh. Successful practices already exist within the region and we are well placed to share those practices across all local authorities.

Alongside the targets set by Welsh Government in *Cymraeg 2050*, the document *Education in Wales: Our National Mission* also outlines the plans to develop a new curriculum for every pupil in Wales. This new curriculum will ensure that every pupil benefits from a curriculum of the highest possible standard. All pupils will have the opportunity to enjoy learning and benefit from teaching that inspires them to succeed. All this will take place in an innovative education community where inspiring and effective leadership and management will be a prominent feature of the new curriculum. Developing Welsh-medium provision and improving the teaching and learning of Welsh for all learners are at the heart of these reforms.

Vision

In forming a strategy to develop Welsh language provision within each school's curriculum, our aim is to place the needs of pupils at the heart of the strategy. This will give all pupils in our region the best opportunity to become as fluent as possible in Welsh by the time they leave school. By placing the pupil at the centre of this vision, we underline the advantages for every pupil of being able to speak Welsh and the advantages of being bilingual in a contemporary Wales.

With the child at the centre, the strategy will consider:

- the opportunities available for all pupils to develop their linguistic skills;
- methods of using the new curriculum to promote the process of increasing levels of fluency in both Welsh and English;
- developing the language skills, ability and quality of the education workforce to teach Welsh and through the medium of Welsh;
- developing effective learning approaches that increase all children's levels of confidence



and fluency, and make them comfortable when using both languages;

- creating contexts in schools that give purpose and value to speaking Welsh;
- involving parents and carers in this process of learning and using the Welsh language across the North Wales region; and
- using the best methods of identifying and promoting the advantages of bilingualism and the ability to speak Welsh in training and in the workplace.

In attempting to meet the linguistic needs of young people within the region, all the structures and agencies involved with young people will have to collaborate in supporting this vision. In order to make the experience of being able to speak two or more languages meaningful, aspects of curricular provision will need to be combined with activities outside the educational establishments within the community and in the home. It will therefore be important to include all the elements of children and young people's lives in our strategy.

In drawing up this comprehensive strategy the following principles will also set a sound foundation for our work:

- Recognising and appreciating that the teaching and learning of Welsh is an integral part of Wales' teaching system from the early years through to post-compulsory provision.
- Inclusive planning to ensure that children and young people between 3-19 years old receive the best possible education from organisations that learn and work together continuously.
- Recognising and appreciating the diversity of Welsh speakers and school categories that exist across the region and the different starting points for different areas in developing Welsh in education.
- Establishing joint working between educational establishments with different age ranges and a different medium of education, at local and regional level, in order to enrich linguistic and cultural experiences in Welsh within and beyond the new curriculum.
- Through the new curriculum, all children and young people in Wales will be ambitious and capable learners who can communicate effectively in different forms and settings, and through digital platforms, in both Welsh and English.
- Learning through the medium of Welsh reinforces the process of learning the Welsh language and enables children and young people to develop their confidence to use the language in a wide range of contexts.
- In developing their skills in Welsh and English, children and young people can develop a foundation for learning additional languages, ready to be citizens of Wales and the world.
- All practitioners, leaders and governors develop their Welsh language skills and also their wider understanding of the Welsh language and its historical and cultural context.
- Research into language acquisition, bilingualism and effective Welsh language teaching underpins the best teaching and learning practices.



- Ensure that there is a sufficient number of teachers and teaching assistants to provide Welsh-medium education, and develop the Welsh language skills of school practitioners to improve the teaching and learning of Welsh for all learners.
- Ensure sound progression between the different phases of education, promoting the Welsh language from the *Cylch Meithrin* through to school and then on to the post-compulsory phase, collaborating with the relevant agencies and providers in doing so.

Key objectives and actions

In order to achieve our objectives, we have identified six areas for implementation. These are the areas that will guide our work on Welsh in education over the next three years. The Welsh Language Strategic Board will set a strategic direction to support the Welsh language in order to ensure that the authorities and the region respond to and reflect the Welsh Government's policy direction. The partners of the regional service will develop work plans with clear time-frames in order to achieve these objectives in such a way that meets their own specific requirements.

1 Curriculum, assessment and pedagogy

Our aim is to ensure inspirational teaching and learning so that all pupils in the region can become confident Welsh speakers who are able to use the language in their daily life and appreciate the value of the language.

In order to achieve this we will:

- maintain and improve the Welsh language standards of children and young people across the region
- support the whole education workforce in familiarising itself with the requirements of the new curriculum and developing a curriculum that is suitable for pupils in the context of the education setting, blending the Welsh language and learning through the medium of Welsh into all the themes of the new curriculum
- ensure effective formative and summative methods of assessing and recording progress, that encourage higher quality teaching and learning and match the new curriculum and the methods of introducing and assessing Welsh
- link Welsh and Welsh medium teaching methods with the most innovative teaching and learning approaches, taking advantage of the full breadth of opportunities to communicate and access information through digital and technological means
- identify the most effective methods of language acquisition and develop Welsh language immersion education (which encompasses early, intermediate and late



immersion, including recent arrivals to Welsh-medium education) and ensure a better understanding amongst the education workforce of the most appropriate methods of introducing immersion education, given that pupils in the region come from different backgrounds and cultures

- take advantage of the opportunities presented in the new curriculum to increase the use of technology to teach through the medium of Welsh
- ensure that a Welsh ethos and environment are adopted and implemented in each sector across the region, and that the Siarter Iaith Framework (Language Charter / Cymraeg Campus) is integrated in the four purposes of the new curriculum

2 Enrichment and experiences in the Welsh language

Children and young people need to have broad experiences of connecting with the Welsh language if they are to see Welsh as an everyday language. Therefore, language use practices must be increased from an early age as part of their everyday lives. The new curriculum brings opportunities to place more emphasis on this element.

In order to achieve this we will:

- map out the work of the main agencies and organisations that promote the Welsh language in order to strategically expand opportunities to use the language both inside and outside the teaching setting
- collaborate to provide strategic guidance regionally and locally between education providers and language agencies, pre-school societies and community groups, school, further and higher education, together with bodies that are not educational bodies as such but who offer a range of good experiences for young people in relation to the Welsh language
- ensure that the Siarter Iaith Framework (Siarter Iaith / Cymraeg Campus) is integrated into the four purposes of the new curriculum in order to successfully promote the use of Welsh outside the classroom and in the wider community as an effective means of improving confidence and increasing the desire of children and young people of all ages across the region to use the language
- plan and deliver youth work so that learners can take advantage of opportunities to use and develop Welsh language skills outside educational establishments.
- make effective use of the media and social media to direct children and young people and their families to opportunities to use the Welsh language



3 Excellence, equity and wellbeing

For pupils with additional learning needs, the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018 places duties on responsible bodies within the region. In terms of the Welsh language, it must be ensured that all young people have equal access to the experience of developing their skills in the language, and that full and consistent planning takes place to ensure this.

In order to achieve this we will:

- ensure that practitioners and the wider education workforce can access Welsh language support resources in order to help learners with additional learning needs, those who are most vulnerable and the most talented to fulfil their potential
- assist workers and carers in the field of additional learning needs to ensure that children and young people are aware that they are living in Wales and are part of a Welsh community
- promote effective practice in using the Welsh language across the region, in order to reduce duplication and ensure quality (specifically within the mainstream)

4 Planning the workforce, professional learning and leadership

We must have leaders and practitioners of the highest calibre who have the necessary knowledge and skills to deliver a curriculum through the medium of Welsh and Welsh as a subject, and who continue to learn throughout their career.

In order to achieve this we will:

- use workforce data to establish a robust baseline and to outline the potential for growth in terms of Welsh language provision, based on the data gathered
- ensure collaboration between schools, LAs and GwE, to identify staffing needs and professional learning needs that correspond to the requirements in terms of increasing Welsh-medium education and learning the language more effectively, both formally and informally
- plan and implement a professional learning development plan for all aspects of the education workforce in order to increase and strengthen the skills associated with providing effective education through the medium of Welsh
- in partnership with initial teacher education providers and Welsh Government, increase the number of individuals in the education workforce who are able to teach



through the medium of Welsh and support the use of Welsh in all phases of education between 3 and 19 years of age

- offer more support to the teachers who teach Welsh outside the current Welsh-medium sector, and plan how Welsh-medium provision can be extended in that sector
- ensure that leaders at all levels (e.g. head teachers, management team, governors) support bilingualism and the expectations for the Welsh language within the context of their educational settings. Collaborate with the National Academy for Educational Leadership Wales and the Welsh Government to ensure that leadership programmes include modules for language awareness, language acquisition and understanding bilingualism, as well as increasing Welsh-medium training provision for leaders
- collaborate with initial teacher education providers, the Welsh Government and *Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol* to plan the workforce and attract more bilingual teachers to the teaching profession, providing language training where appropriate.

5 Strategic planning to grow Welsh in education

In order to increase the number of children and young people who are able to use the Welsh language, it will be necessary to plan strategically in order to significantly increase the number who receive Welsh-medium education and those who are improving their Welsh language skills. Our local authorities will be instrumental in ensuring a co-ordinated approach to planning Welsh provision in education, working with a wide range of other local stakeholders.

In order to achieve this we will:

- ensure that Welsh language provision is maintained and strengthened in areas of the region where there are high numbers and percentages of Welsh speakers
- identify the potential to increase Welsh provision across the region and disseminate successful practice in order to increase support for the proposed growth
- ensure that regional strategic plans support and contribute to realising the priorities and targets of each regional authority's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan
- collaborate with key partners to ensure linguistic progression in Areas of Learning and Experience and subjects offered through the medium of Welsh from 3-19 years old
- ensure that resources, expertise and good practice are disseminated across the four education consortia
- integrate the Welsh language into all elements of the reform journey



6 Communication and engagement

Taking action to ensure that all stakeholders are involved in the development of Welsh in education, with the aim of including children and young people, their parents/carers, governors as well as the education workforce to be part of the exciting journey to develop Welsh education and Welsh-medium education within our region.

In order to achieve this we will:

- ensure that there is a clear and effective communication strategy in place to promote the Welsh language in education at all levels
- produce and implement a regional communication plan to promote bilingualism and share information about the educational, cognitive, economic and cultural benefits of being bilingual and multilingual
- work continuously with leaders at all levels to train them how to present the benefits of a Welsh or bilingual curriculum and how to persuade parents and governors of those benefits
- make effective use of the media and social media to raise stakeholders' awareness of Welsh in Education
- raise awareness among the education workforce of: the Reform Journey and Estyn's expectations, the requirements of the standards in relation to the Welsh language, the commitments of the local WESP and the objectives of Welsh Government as laid out in its document *Welsh in education: Action plan 2017-21*



Implementing this strategy

In the North Wales region, we will work in partnership with all stakeholders in the education sector to implement this strategy. The statutory responsibility for Welsh in Education rests with Local Authorities, and each authority's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) sets out its priorities and objectives. Local authorities will consult with the regional consortium when developing their WESPs. GwE's primary duty is to fulfil the statutory functions of the six Local Authorities in relation to school effectiveness and school improvement. In this respect, the GwE Regional Consortium will work with the Local Authorities to realise the ambition of each authority's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP), in line with Government priorities.

Increasing the provision in terms of increasing of the number of pupils taught through the medium of Welsh will not in itself transform the linguistic situation in Wales. In order to ensure the necessary change, GwE's work in partnership with the Local Authorities will ensure that the best possible standards, methods and materials are available in terms of teaching Welsh as a subject and using Welsh as a medium. The region will continue to strongly support the principle of collaboration between schools and across local authorities in order to share expertise, strongly promoting the 'schools as learning organisations' model, in line with the intentions at the heart of the new curriculum in Wales. To reinforce this, it is intended to introduce a system of working within clusters as is already happening with the Curriculum and also with Additional Learning Needs.

Local Authorities

The role of Local Authorities will be to:

- work together to implement the objectives and priorities contained in each local authority's Welsh in Education Strategic Plans (WESP) in accordance with the Government's priorities
- consult with the regional consortium in developing their Welsh in Education Strategic Plans (WESP)
- work with the schools and GwE to ensure that the school has the appropriate support to develop their Welsh provision
- work with the schools and GwE to increase awareness of the Siarter Iaith Framework (Siarter Iaith Charter / Cymraeg Campus) and to support this work
- collaborate with non-statutory providers to ensure that the Welsh language is successfully taught in a meaningful context beyond school from the early years to the post-16 phase.
- manage provision of schools places and accessibility



School plans

The expected role of every school will be to consider carefully, and with ingenuity, how to:

- increase and expand their Welsh language experiences and provision, and
- enable learners to become confident users of Welsh.

There will be close collaboration between individual schools and LEAs in this respect. As part of this planning process, individual schools will:

- develop a clear vision for the Welsh language and promote the development of whole school plans in order to improve the learning experiences and outcomes for all learners, in response to the Welsh Government's strategy *Cymraeg 2050: A million Welsh speakers*
- work with the LA and GwE to ensure that the school has the appropriate support to produce suitable and robust plans for developing their provision in Welsh
- develop the new curriculum and establish a baseline, and subsequently, plan to raise standards and increase the use of Welsh
- ensure that there is purposeful planning to provide appropriate opportunities for pupils to develop their Welsh language skills in both formal and informal situations within the four purposes of the new curriculum and the Siarter Iaith Framework (Siarter Iaith Charter / Cymraeg Campus)
- increase awareness of the requirements of the new Siarter Iaith Framework (Siarter Iaith Charter / Cymraeg Campus) and plan to ensure that specific and specialist support is available to support work in this respect
- collaborate, learn and exchange information with others through networks and/or school collaboration systems in relation to the Welsh language
- draw up a programme of professional learning to ensure that practitioners are able to continually develop their Welsh language skills, in line with professional expectations
- ensure that language training provided in the region has a significant impact on Welsh-medium education within the school. This could be done by looking specifically at the percentage of Welsh-medium provision in schools, the standard of teaching and pupils' linguistic attainment

Support for schools from GwE

The role of GwE will be to:

- maintain and raise standards in Welsh across the region
- In conjunction with LAs, plan, prepare and maintain a strategic programme of professional learning for leaders, teachers and support staff in partnership with local



networks by:

- employing a co-ordinator to deliver the regional strategy for Welsh in education
- promoting the objectives of the Welsh in education Strategic Plans (WESPs)
- working with ITE centres to identify and meet specific local recruiting needs
- introducing a programme of professional learning to develop the Welsh language skills of all practitioners and an effective methodology for Welsh-medium and bilingual teaching
- developing informal use of the language in Welsh-medium and English-medium schools, in line accordance with the Siarter Iaith Framework (Siarter Iaith Charter / Cymraeg Campus)

Support of non-statutory providers

Working with other bodies and agencies that deliver the Welsh language, either in the pre-school phase, post-16 or outside the scope of schools' work, will be essential to ensure that the language is taught in a meaningful context. Therefore, it is intended to:

- work with *Mudiad Meithrin* to identify areas of increasing demand and potential for Welsh-medium education, and thus determine where there is a need to support the provision of new *cylchoedd* and schools
- ensure better progression from the non-statutory early years care and education sector to the Foundation Phase by working with *Mudiad Meithrin*
- ensure better linguistic progression between the statutory education sector and the non-statutory post-16 sector in terms of continuing to learn Welsh and through the medium of Welsh
- establish strong links between schools and post-16 education and training establishments, working closely together to ensure that provision in the post-16 sectors can build on the innovative work undertaken in delivering Welsh in *cylchoedd meithrin* and in schools.