

ITEM 6

MEETING	COUNCIL LANGUAGE COMMITTEE
DATE	7 April 2014
TITLE	Pupils progress at the Language Centres
REMIT	To consider the contents of the report and the presentation, and submit comments
RECOMMENDATION	For approval
REPORT BY	Dewi R Jones, Head of Education
CABINET MEMBER	Cllr Sian Gwenllian

BACKGROUND

The objective of the Language Centres is to provide an intensive course in Welsh for latecomers to enable them to immerse into the bilingual community and fully participate in bilingual educational experiences. This provision has a core role in assisting primary and secondary schools to implement the Language Policy and establish latecomers with a firm grounding in Welsh. Good contact has been established between the schools and the centres, and their success is evident when pupils return to their schools and communities with a firm grounding in Welsh following a term of intensive learning.

There are by now four primary centres, and one secondary centre that is wholly unique in Wales. The primary centres are at Caernarfon, Dolgellau, Llangybi and Penrhyndeudraeth, and the secondary centre is at Porthmadog.

PRIMARY LANGUAGE CENTRES

Extensive use is made of the Language Centres provision where 7–11 year old pupils (KS2) who are latecomers to the County attend an intensive course for a term (12 weeks – subject to length of term) to immerse and equip them to receive most of their education through the medium of Welsh or bilingually on their return to school. This is a multi-medium and cross-curricular course on which the teachers scheme of work is based. Verbal work, of necessity, features prominently and play and music activities are used as well as an increasing use of Information Technology. The scheme enables pupils to return to schools in their area and follow their curriculum in Welsh.

At the end of term, as is the practice, every pupil's progress is recorded in a report where the three Attainment Targets are focussed upon, relating the comments to National Curriculum Level Descriptors. The set target is for every pupil to achieve at least Level 2/3 in Welsh.

PRESENTATION ON LEVELLING PUPILS ORACY

To demonstrate progress made by pupils who attend the Language Centres, **a presentation is given at the Language Committee meeting** on levelling pupils oracy, displaying examples of the various levels, which is the work done by Gwynedd, Môn and Conwy Language Centres.

See attached (Appendix 1) a paper outlining interpretation of Level 1, 2 and 3 as regards:

- Welsh as First Language National Curriculum

- Interpretation of Gwynedd Language Centres Oracy Levelling
- Second Language Curriculum

Attention is specifically drawn to the following points:

- As any test or assessment in Gwynedd is conducted through Welsh as first language , the pupils must be levelled in accordance with Welsh in the National Curriculum requirements.
- During the first few weeks, the learner has limited knowledge of the language. As they have not been exposed to years of diverse linguistic experiences, level 1 and 2 requirements had to be adjusted and matched to children’s language experiences at the Centres.
- Activities tied in with **learning from memory** that correspond to level 1 requirements for the learner.
- Level 2 corresponds to the ‘iaith ar waith’ clause where the learner starts to purposefully use his memorised Language. There is bridging here between certain Welsh as first language level descriptor clauses and Language Centres levels interpretation e.g. increasing use of correct vocabulary and language patterns, begin to demonstrate confidence etc.
- A child who has reached level 3 is not regarded as a ‘learner’. The level descriptors at the Language Centres consequently correspond with Welsh as First Language requirements. The child will speak freely using language that shows an awareness of conjunctions, phrases and a wide range of sentence patterns etc.
- Every centre convene to moderate and reach an agreement on pupils attainment and levels so as to ensure consistency throughout the county.
- A copy of the reports will be sent to the headteachers of the pupils’ home school, together with an invite to visit them at the end of their period spent at the centres so as to observe the pupils progress prior to returning to their schools.
- Examples are kept of the pupils written work as well as a record of their verbal work filmed with a video camera. The teachers provide an opportunity for primary school teachers or the parents to see some of these during their visit to the centre.

So as to ensure appropriate progression at the schools, the centre’s teachers will provide after-care for every pupil on their return to their schools, as well as provide teachers with guidance on appropriate training for the pupils.

RECOMMENDATION

That members give seal of approval.