

Report of the Education Department on the implementation of the Language Policy and contribution towards the realisation of the Welsh Language Strategy 2023-2033

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| Department | Education |
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1. What policies and plans are in place within your department to contribute to the objectives of the language strategy? Identify the priority area (early years, learning, work and service, the community or research and technology)

Relevant policies and strategic plans

Cyngor Gwynedd's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan:

Gwynedd's WESP sets out the purpose, objectives and actions of the Council and reflects the Council's vision to create a Welsh and bilingual education system that puts the needs of all learners in the county at the centre. The plan sets out a clear direction for ensuring that learners in Gwynedd achieve the highest standards in order to maintain the language, culture and economy locally.

Gwynedd Education Language Policy:

The aim of the Gwynedd Education Language Policy is to ensure that all pupils in the county have appropriate language skills in both Welsh and English. The provision is expected to be suitable so as to enable all pupils to develop their bilingual proficiency. Gwynedd schools are expected to nurture the skills of those pupils who are Welsh speakers, and to introduce the Welsh language to those who are new to the county. All education institutions in the county are also expected to reflect and reinforce the policy in their administration, social life and pastoral procedure as well as in their curricular and extra-curricular provision. A Revised Education Language Policy in draft form has been submitted to the Cabinet in December 2025, and engagement takes place during January and February 2026 before a Draft Policy is submitted to Governing Bodies before September 2026.

National Strategy Cymraeg 2050 - A Million Welsh Speakers:

The Welsh Government wants to see the number of Welsh speakers rise to one million by the year 2050.

National Welsh Language Charter Framework:

The Welsh Language Charter programme contributes to Cymraeg 2050 by aiming to inspire children and young people to use and enjoy the Welsh language in all aspects of their lives. The Welsh Language Charter is part of a series of Welsh Government programmes that aim to increase children's and young people's use of the Welsh language in informal situations.

Curriculum for Wales:

The Welsh Language Charter programme supports the Curriculum for Wales, with the principles of the programme supporting the four purposes in order to create ambitious learners, enterprising contributors, ethical citizens and healthy, confident individuals who are ready to lead fulfilling lives as valued members of society. The Charter is an integrated part of the Curriculum for Wales, bridging between elements of the curriculum and adding to educational experiences as well as enriching extra-curricular experiences and informal playtime.

The Welsh Language and Education (Wales) Act 2025 which has now been placed on the Statute Book is the new legislative framework for the development and strengthening of Welsh language education in Wales. The Act places statutory duties on the Welsh Government, local authorities and schools to plan and increase the provision of education through the medium of Welsh, with the aim of enabling all pupils to make meaningful progress in the Welsh language and become confident speakers by the end of their statutory education. The new duties on local authorities and schools will come into force in stages over the next few years, to ensure an orderly and sustainable future transition.

The Well-being of Future Generations Act:

The Well-being of Future Generations Act requires public bodies in Wales to consider the long-term impact of their decisions. Included in the act are seven Well-being Goals, the purpose of which is to ensure that everyone is working towards achieving the same goals. One of those goals is to work towards a Wales with a vibrant culture where the Welsh language thrives.

Projects in the Council Plan:

Gwynedd Yfory (Tomorrow's Gwynedd) - Extending play and socialising opportunities for children and young people in the county

A joint project between Gwynedd Youth Service and the Urdd is aimed at increasing opportunities for young people to take part in activities through the medium of Welsh. This includes the joint employment of a Youth Officer, who organises activities through the medium of Welsh during and after school hours and aims to encourage young people to use the language in social and informal situations, helping to strengthen the use of the language outside the classroom. In addition, Gwynedd Youth Service continues to offer a range of opportunities for young people aged 11-25 to develop language, personal, social and educational skills in places where the use of Welsh is not as widespread. Five Community 'Aelwydydd' have been developed in Felinheli, Bangor, Caernarfon, Ardudwy and Bala where various sessions are held outside the school timetable in six secondary schools in the county.

This year 3754 sessions have been organised through the medium of Welsh by the Youth Service, offering a wide range of activities. Community youth clubs, outings, occasional trips, workshops in schools, small group work, one-to-one work and commissioned provision for partners are offered.

The following data was collected:

- 21305 participations
- 1228 accreditations completed
- 97% reported enjoying the sessions
- 96% reported feeling that their well-being had improved
- 98% had learned a new skill/had a new experience
- 96% wanted to continue attending.

The Youth Service receives £20,000 annually from the Welsh Government to address increasing Welsh language provision for young people. All activities offered in Gwynedd are in Welsh or are bilingual. A Youth Worker is based in all secondary and special schools and works by bridging with the community. Community projects are taking place across Gwynedd.

Gwynedd Gymraeg (A Welsh Gwynedd): Modernising and extending the immersion provision to teach Welsh to children

Since the establishment of the revamped Immersion Education System in January 2023, six strategic locations across Gwynedd provide a service for new speakers to acquire Welsh. Work has taken place to realise the vision of the Council's Cabinet, including Welsh Government capital expenditure of £1.1m to establish new immersion education sites for years 5–9 pupils in Bangor and Tywyn, as well as improving

resources at the Eifionydd immersion education site. Following further expenditure of £1.1m of Welsh Government capital funding, three primary centres have been opened for pupils in years 2–4. A new centre was opened at the Ysgol Cymerau site in Pwllheli in April 2025, and new purpose-built centres were opened on the Maesincla and Bro Idris Dolgellau schools sites in September 2025.

The centres have been purposefully designed to provide an innovative and contemporary immersion education in strategic areas of the county that are of linguistic significance. They are within reasonable reach of facilities such as Gwynedd Libraries, Byw'n Iach Centres, shops, clubs and social enterprises.

This provision ensures the best opportunity for all our learners to become confident Welsh speakers who can use the language in all aspects of life.

Other projects and schemes

Revising Gwynedd's Education Language Policy:

During 2024-25, under the leadership of the Language Consultant, Meirion Prys Jones, Cyngor Gwynedd held a series of comprehensive engagement sessions with key stakeholders including Gwynedd school headteachers, pupils and members of Language Forums, representatives of Language organisations and representatives of the Welsh Language Commissioner in order to inform the development of Gwynedd's Language Education Policy. On 16 December 2025, the Cabinet was invited to approve a draft of Gwynedd's Language Education Policy to be presented as a model policy for the purpose of public engagement. The engagement period opened in January 2026, and will close on 25 February 2026. Afterwards, a further report will be submitted to the Cabinet in order to report back on the outcomes of the engagement. The Cabinet will then have to consider the outcomes of the engagement, and decide whether to adopt the Exemplar Education Language Policy or not.

Evaluating the Immersion Education System:

Following the implementation of the new Immersion Education System since January 2023, Bangor University was commissioned to undertake an Impact Study to evaluate its effectiveness. The aim of the study was to assess whether the provision succeeds in providing a solid foundation for Gwynedd pupils to learn Welsh. Stakeholder views were gathered through meetings, observations in the immersion units and in the schools, and during the transition periods. The final report of the evaluation was submitted to the Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee on 16 October 2025, providing research evidence and making recommendations for further developments. The System is implementing a number of the recommendations in terms of addressing the need for provision for older learners, improving communication with schools and ensuring that immersion staff work more effectively in schools on Fridays.

Schools Strategy 2026–2036

A draft Strategy was submitted to the Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee on 11 December 2025. Following a period of engagement, the Gwynedd Schools Strategy will be considered by the Cabinet in February 2026. The purpose of the Strategy is to set out the county's vision and ambition for an inclusive, sustainable education system of the highest quality, enabling all learners to realise their full potential. The Strategy confirms Gwynedd's commitment to ensuring access to a Welsh-medium and bilingual education throughout every child's educational journey, contributing directly to the national vision *Cymraeg 2050*.

2. What else needs to be addressed in the next year to raise the status of the Welsh language and ensure opportunities for people to use Welsh?

Implement recommendations following the public engagement process on the **Language Policy**. Submit a draft of Gwynedd's Exemplar Education Language Policy to all governing bodies before September 2026.

Following engagement, respond to observations and submit the **Schools Strategy** for consideration by the Cyngor Gwynedd Cabinet, February 2026.

3. Has the development of technology impaired your ability to provide opportunities to use Welsh? If applicable, please provide an example. How do you ensure that the development of technology does not affect your ability to provide opportunities to use the Welsh language?

In terms of Gwynedd schools, the focus at the moment is to support schools to use the Hwb platform to its full potential and to monitor the impact of that on standards in our schools. The impact is already being seen in schools in terms of digital inclusion. All learners have equal access to digital devices which reduces the digital divide and ensures that the equipment is already configured to support learners in relation to the Welsh language, e.g. user interface in Welsh, and applications and configurations to support the Welsh language.

In our immersion centres, Aberwla is an innovative virtual ICT platform that simulates a digital village full of interactive locations, enabling learners to practise and reinforce their vocabulary and Welsh language patterns through play.

During the Estyn inspection in March 2025, it was noted that teacher collaboration on the development and implementation of the Aberwla scheme had supported a contemporary immersion provision that systematically builds on the principles of language acquisition. Through consistent, entertaining activities and innovative virtual resources, pupils are given bespoke and inclusive opportunities to develop their vocabulary, sentence patterns and Welsh language skills in real-life contexts. This has had a positive impact on the pupils' confidence and enjoyment in using Welsh in their community.

The resource is now being used successfully in immersion centres and units across Wales, offering a high-quality up-to-date immersion provision that supports the development of speaking, listening and reading skills. By normalising the Welsh language on an appealing digital platform, Aberwla fosters positive attitudes towards the Welsh language as an everyday language. The platform has now been launched nationally on Hwb through the support of Adnodd.

4. How do you keep a record of the people who use your service through the medium of Welsh? Can you share relevant data?

Any other relevant data,

e.g. Early years 1. The reach data of WESP in terms of the number of childcare placements and the number of children receiving Welsh-medium education. 2. Number of Ti a Fi groups, Parent and Child groups that are supported/maintained. 3. Number of activities specifically targeted towards young families/parents and infants by Council services. 4. Number of family activities arranged by the language initiative. 5. Number of campaigns to share resources and information. Learning 1. WESP monitoring statistics. 2. Number of Council staff receiving training to improve skills. 3. Number of apprenticeships being offered by the Council. 4. Number of training/accreditation opportunities being offered by the youth service. Work and service 1. Number of businesses receiving financial support through the Arfor scheme. 2. Number of staff supported to learn Welsh or develop skills. 3. Number of staff participating in buddy/champion schemes. The community 1. Number of activities held by Council services and the language initiative for different groups. 2. Number of enterprises supported by means of Regeneration and Economy schemes. Research and Technology 1. Number of research projects carried out or commissioned by the Council. Any other relevant data.

Early Years

There is a specific target within the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2022-27 for 'Ensuring Welsh/Bilingual Language provision for all children in the county'.

The 2025 Progress Report states that, in line with the information DEWIS retains in relation to the language of our provision, 36% of our provision is monolingual Welsh with 56% providing bilingually and 7% providing in English with bilingual elements. (The information counts all the services listed on Dewis because one provision may be offering more than one service, e.g. cylch meithrin and after-school club.)

Below is our current situation regarding the percentage of nursery/three-year-olds educated through the medium of Welsh.

Number and percentage of three-year-olds receiving their education through the medium of Welsh (PLASC data):

| Year | Number | Percentage |
|---------|--------|------------|
| 2024-25 | 466 | 100% |

Cylchoedd Meithrin data (provided by Mudiad Meithrin):

| Year | Number of venues | Number of children | Number transferring to school | Number transferring to a Welsh-medium school | Percentage transferring to a Welsh-medium school |
|---------|------------------|--------------------|-------------------------------|--|--|
| 2023-24 | 63 | 1957 | 853 | 852 | 99.88% |

Welsh Medium Flying Start data:

| Year | Number of venues | Number of children |
|---------|------------------|--------------------|
| 2024-25 | 34 | 319 |

Other Welsh Medium Provisions:

| Nature of Provision | Number of Provisions |
|---------------------|--|
| Nurseries | 10 Welsh 9 Bilingual |
| After-school Clubs | 7 Welsh 21 Bilingual |
| Holiday Clubs | 4 Welsh 15 Bilingual |
| Carers | 10 Welsh 28 Bilingual 7 English with elements of Welsh |

Reception Class and Year 1

98.56% of the county's Reception Class learners and 98.47% of Year 1 learners receive their education through the medium of Welsh. Effective practical support is in place to increase provision in one transitional primary school in order to achieve the target of 100% within the lifetime of the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan.

Immersion

A proportion of the late immersion grant is used to employ an experienced teacher to collaborate with Reception and Year 1 classes staff and learners at a transitional school in Bangor to model successful immersion methods and the teacher is also supporting in two other schools in Bangor to embed early immersion methods in the Reception Class. She works with Foundation Phase staff to map learners' Welsh

language development along the language continuum and prepare regular opportunities to reinforce the Welsh language within the principles of the Foundation Phase in areas within the classroom. She encourages the learners to assimilate their language skills in a cross-curricular context, e.g. role play, café, shop. Information Technology is increasingly used in an attempt to normalise the Welsh language in a school where over 71% of pupils have moved to Wales from abroad.

In the transitional school, important days such as St David's Day and St Dwynwen's Day are celebrated, and once again this year a school eisteddfod was held through the medium of Welsh. Each class also presented two Welsh songs at the school's Christmas concert at Pontio. There is also an effort to develop the principles of 'Cymraeg Campus' throughout the school with the intention of building on this foundation to implement the Welsh Language Charter Framework in the next academic year.

The Estyn report of the Immersion System in Gwynedd noted that: "The peripatetic Welsh teacher, who teaches the youngest pupils in three schools in a particular area of the county, supports pupils beneficially when introducing the language. A range of purposeful activities are provided to encourage pupils to use vocabulary and simple sentence patterns with increasing confidence. This contributes firmly to their confidence as they learn and play through the medium of Welsh."

During the 2024-25 academic year, 202 learners in years 2-9 were provided with support and access on an intensive 10-week immersion course in the immersion units across the three regions within the county, which is an average of 67 pupils each term. In addition, 198 learners were provided with aftercare support during the academic year in 23 primary and five secondary schools in the autumn term, 27 primary and six secondary schools in the spring term, and 28 primary and seven secondary schools in the summer term. 46 learners in years 7, 8 and 9 attended a short course to regain confidence over three weeks in the secondary schools that host the Primary/Secondary Transition immersion units. We prioritise access to the Regaining Confidence course for learners who have been assessed as cohort C1 by primary school teachers.

32% of all Primary learners, and 21% of all Secondary learners who have accessed late immersion education in Gwynedd this year are Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic learners.

73.57% of all learners in one transitional primary school in Bangor are learners from Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic backgrounds, and all Reception and Year 1 pupils at that school have access to a teacher who introduces early immersion principles. Pupils at that school, like all other pupils between Year 2 and Year 9, have access to an Immersion Centre to receive late immersion provision.

Transition

In Gwynedd we have a robust staffing structure to monitor linguistic progression in the primary and secondary including transition. The Language Charter Coordinator leads in the primary, the Language Strategy Coordinator is responsible for the secondary, and the Catchment Language Coordinators operate in each cluster. This means that it is possible to track the linguistic development of our learners along the language continuum and to plan ahead to ensure that appropriate provision is in place so that our learners make appropriate progress when transferring from one sector to another.

The pupils' Language Cohorts are gathered at the end of year 6 and transferred to secondary schools to ensure continuity and progression. We also gather, collate and analyse 'Gwe Iaith' (language web) data in the primary and secondary sectors in order to identify strengths and areas for improvement in the context of learners' social use of the Welsh language and their confidence and habits when using Welsh within the school. This is the baseline for planning the activity of the Language Charter.

In the Bangor and Tywyn catchment areas, additional input into transition activity was provided through the Late Immersion Grant. Creative workshops were held for years 5 and 6 learners with artists at Nyth in Bangor, to encourage the learners to get creative and set about, with help, to create a production of their choice

through the medium of Welsh. A combination of workshops was organised in the primary schools as well as sessions with other schools within the cluster in the Nyth building in Bangor.

Once again this year, a show by Hywel Pitts and Gareth the Orangutan was commissioned for schools in the Dwyfor, Arfon and Ogwen catchment areas, which promoted the Welsh language. All pupils in years 6 and 7 in the catchment areas were invited to attend. The financial contribution from Menter Iaith Gwynedd to ensure the success of the tour is appreciated.

Collaboration took place with the Menter Iaith to hold language awareness sessions in Tregarth, Manod and Eifion Wyn schools.

The expertise of Urdd staff was drawn on to collaborate on projects, as part of the Welsh Language Grant schemes, in some catchment areas in Gwynedd.

A St David's Day parade took place in Tywyn, with primary and secondary schools taking part.

There was collaboration with the Books Council to hold the county rounds of the 'Gornest Lyfrau' (bookslam). Seven schools in Gwynedd competed this year, and Ysgol Waunfawr and Ysgol y Gelli went on to represent Gwynedd in the national round in Aberystwyth.

Several schools are enthusiastically involved in celebrating key events in the Welsh calendar, such as 'Shwmae/Su'mae' Day, St Dwynwen's Day, and Welsh Language Music Day. Various activities are held for St David's Day and 'Cymru Cŵl' Week, and schools take part in eisteddfodau and attend Urdd camps. A significant number of schools pay prominent attention to these activities by sharing them very extensively on their social media.

Pamphlets and posters promoting the benefits of bilingualism were produced, and these were shared with all primary and secondary schools within the county.

'Seren a Sbarc' visited a number of primary schools, receiving a very warm welcome!

By the end of this academic year, all secondary schools in Gwynedd will have received a visit from the Coleg Cymraeg to promote the benefits of bilingualism. A visit was secured to all schools in the last two years. These visits were very successful.

Talks were held with two Special Schools in Gwynedd to discuss how the criteria of the Language Charter could be adapted to be more inclusive. Amendments to the existing guidance were drafted, and were submitted to the Welsh Government for discussion. A meeting was held in July 2025 to discuss the adjustments made.

GCSE

There were 1267 learners in Year 11 and 1330 in Year 10 in Gwynedd secondary schools in October 2024.

Here is the current data against the three indicators of Welsh language qualifications at the end of the statutory age period of 16 – which includes all pupils in the county:

| INDICATOR | PERCENTAGE |
|---|------------|
| Percentage of year 11 pupils who study at least three KS4 subjects through the medium of Welsh as well as GCSE Welsh First Language | 73.95% |
| Percentage of year 11 pupils who study at least five KS4 subjects through the medium of Welsh as well as GCSE Welsh First Language | 73.4% |
| Percentage of year 11 pupils who sit the GCSE Welsh First Language exam | 86.82% |
| Percentage of year 11 pupils who sit the GCSE Welsh Second Language exam | 11.84% |
| Did not register for GCSE Welsh | 1.34% |

5. What are the language skills of your staff?

99.5% of primary teachers and 89% of secondary teachers are confident to teach through the medium of Welsh. Based on the Education Workforce Language Census data we are targeting and supporting some schools across the county to ensure that they are able to respond to the linguistic needs of their staff by

promoting access to opportunities to learn Welsh or to increase their confidence in Welsh, as well as respond in full to the language policy of Gwynedd schools in terms of the teaching medium and the administrative language of the school. Our two transitional secondary schools are aware of the support available to them through the National Centre for Learning Welsh and there are tutors and projects in place at those schools to support staff.

The authority and the county's secondary schools have been an integral part of developing Welsh-medium training in collaboration with CYDAG and the WJEC on the new qualifications. The county's schools are part of a new CYDAG North Wales forum promoting Welsh-medium education across the north.

6. Please provide examples of any obstacles, complaints and commendations associated with the provision and promotion of Welsh-medium services.

Following the completion of the Education Workforce Language Skills Questionnaire, work has been undertaken to examine the findings, and to consider what linguistic training and support is needed for our schools' workforce. Courses and training have been organised to respond to the needs highlighted by the implementation of the questionnaire to ensure that appropriate Welsh language learning courses are available for the education workforce at Foundation, Intermediate and Higher level or for language improvement and confidence building. The entire education workforce is expected to update the Language Skills Questionnaire annually at the beginning of the academic year to ensure that the data is up to date, and to allow for the planning of appropriate training and support for them.

The linguistic situation of teaching staff in our schools in Gwynedd remains healthy. The positions do not remain vacant as a result of linguistic challenges – our recruitment challenges are more specific to the field of leadership and in specialist curriculum areas.