

A STUDY FOR GWYNEDD COUNCIL

1.0 REMIT OF THE STUDY

The *Scrutiny Investigation into the County Council's Welsh-medium Education Report* into the implementation, consistency and success of Gwynedd County Council's Language Policy in the county's schools concludes, based on a study of three specific areas, that *'there is wide variation in the policy's interpretation and is dependent on schools catchment-areas language demography as well as teachers and headteachers enthusiasm for Welsh'*. It adds *'that there is no consistency or overall understanding of the requirements'*. This is also supported in Cwmni Trywydd report on the situation regarding Welsh as a social language amongst young people in Gwynedd secondary schools.

The Scrutiny Investigation Report considers the matter in detail before concluding with several recommendations to improve consistency of the Policy's implementation. The following recommendations are made:

To strengthen and reconcile the Council's (Education) Language Policy, the Council should define what bilingual learning is and collaborate with schools and teacher training institutions to establish a strong bilingual pedagogy which is appropriate for all the Authority's schools and pupils and to nurture translanguaging skills amongst staff.

In order to strengthen and reconcile the Council's (Education) Language Policy, there is a need to clearly define the linguistic nature of all Gwynedd secondary schools so that it is clear to all stakeholders what is the linguistic nature of schools and by holding the schools and the Governors accountable for its implementation.

This study mainly relates to the second recommendation but that the task of defining the linguistic nature of the county's secondary schools also incorporates an element of the first recommendation, namely what exactly is meant by bilingual education and learning where implemented.

Officers from Gwynedd County Council Education Department are jointly working with an External Adviser to carry out the Study. It involves scrutinizing relevant documentation by Gwynedd County Council and the Welsh Government, interview staff at the schools and focus on any data and associated information. The Study will lead to producing a report containing conclusions and recommendations.

2.0 THE BACKGROUND

2.1 2011 Census

According to any criteria, Gwynedd remains by far the most Welsh County. According to the 2011 Census, 65.4% speak Welsh in Gwynedd, the highest percentage of Welsh speakers of all counties in Wales, as the table below indicates, despite a wide diversity in the percentages in different areas across the county.

Knowledge of Welsh

	Every usual resident 3 years of age and above	No skills in Welsh (%)	Able to understand verbal Welsh only	Able to speak Welsh (%)
Wales	2,955,841	73.35%	5.3%	19.0%
Gwynedd	117,789	26.50%	6.9%	65.4%

The 2011 Census indicates a general reduction in the numbers of children who can speak Welsh but that the percentages are in the 3-4 and 5-15 age groups since the previous Census:

Census	2001	2011	Change
3-4 years	70.9%	73.0%	+2.1%
5-15 years	91.8%	92.3%	+0.5%

Although Gwynedd has the highest percentage of Welsh speakers in Wales, the county does not rest on its laurels. It is very aware of the reduction in the number of Welsh speakers in some areas and shows a will and decision to face the challenge of supporting and strengthening Welsh in its communities across the county.

2.2 Gwynedd Council Language Strategy

Gwynedd Language Strategy 2014-2017, and Action Plan for it, has been developed on the basis of 2011 Census data, as well as initial discussions with principal partners, services and community representatives. The main aim of the Strategy, officially launched on 19 November 2014, was to reach a challenging target, namely: *'Ensure an increase of 5% in the percentage of the population who can speak Welsh in Gwynedd by 2021'*

The Strategy focusses on six implementation fields including the family, children and young people; communities and the groundwork, to ensure that Welsh has space to thrive.

Vision of the second strategy field – 'Children and Young People' – is to *'increase use of Welsh amongst children and young people, improve their awareness of the value of the language, and provide improved access to social activities and Welsh medium services'*.

2.3 Gwynedd Council's Language Policy

Gwynedd Council's Language policy was developed in 1996.

It states that the Language Policy has the same objective throughout all the county's primary schools, to develop every pupil's ability to be confident in both languages by the end of Key Stage (KS) 2. Welsh is the official language of the assessment at the school at the end of the Foundation Phase. At KS2, the objective is to continue to develop pupils grasp of Welsh focussing on developing their skills in both languages.

Secondary schools are required to build on the foundations established in the primary through ensuring that every pupil continues to develop Welsh and English medium skills.

2.4 Defining language categories at the time of the transfer from KS2 to KS3

When the pupils transfer from KS2 to KS3, their language categories are defined in accordance with the following cohorts:

COHORT	DEFINITION OF PUPIL TYPE ACCORDING TO HIS/HER LINGUISTIC ABILITY.
A	Pupils with parallel age-related competence in Welsh and English.
B	Pupils with appropriate competence in Welsh but who need to reinforce some aspects of their linguistic skills in English.
C1	Pupils with appropriate competence in English but who need to reinforce some aspects of their linguistic skills in Welsh.
C2	Pupils with appropriate competence in English but who do not have the appropriate age-related skills in Welsh.
CH	Pupils without appropriate age-related skills in either language.

The Language Policy contains clear guidelines on following Welsh as a First Language path in the secondary sector. Secondary schools receive an assessment of the pupils language ability in Welsh when transferring. This assessment takes account of oracy, reading and writing skills.

The recommendation for the secondary sector is as follows:

- At KS3, ensure that every pupil who has achieved level 3+ [in Cohorts A and B] at the end of KS2 continues to follow Welsh as First Language to ensure appropriate progression and continuity.
- At KS4, ensure that every pupil studies Welsh as a subject up to the end of Y11 and is assessed in Welsh at the end of KS4.

Therefore, every pupil who has achieved the required level, namely 3+ , at the end of KS2, is expected to follow Welsh as First Language at KS3 to ensure appropriate progression and continuity. Hopefully, these pupils can study Welsh [First Language] and English as subjects up to the end of Year 11.

2.5 Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) 2014-2017

Since the passing of the Schools Standards and Organization Act (Wales) 2013 and Welsh in Education Strategic Plans Regulations and Assessing the Demand for Welsh Medium Education (Wales) 2013, it is a statutory requirement that counties in Wales prepare a Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP).

Based on guidelines issued by the Welsh Government in 2013, local authorities had to prepare their initial statutory Plans for 2014 to 2017. Gwynedd's Plan was approved as it was presented. Every LEA is expected to annually review their Plans and present any amended plans to Welsh Government Ministers. Following the first three year planning cycle of the WESP's, the authorities are now moving forward to the next planning phase spanning 2017-2020.

The Plan shows how the County seeks to achieve the Language Policy objective of developing Welsh as a subject and learning medium from pre-school age onwards.

It notes that the County does not define primary schools according to language categories as the same Language Policy is implemented at every school. The same emphasis is placed on bilingualism, whereby all pupils in the County have an opportunity to be confident bilingual speakers. This expectation is core to any re-organization plans or new plans presented, as 21stC Schools.

The Plan does not define secondary schools according to language categories either, as there is the same expectation regarding the Language Policy, an opportunity for all the county's pupils to be confidently bilingual.

The following are amongst the County's objectives for Welsh medium education in the secondary sector:

- At KS3 and KS4 use the information on previous achievement [in Welsh as a subject] to ensure that every pupil continues to develop the skills in Welsh and English through using both languages as a learning medium.
- Ensure that pupils who are Welsh learners [at KS2] and KS3 learn Welsh as soon as possible and use Welsh as a learning medium.

2.6 Administration, Social Life and Pastoral Arrangements

As well as developing pupils skills in both languages, all educational establishments in the County are expected to reflect and reinforce the Language Policy in their

administration, social life and pastoral arrangements as well as in their curricular provision.

2.7 Welsh as First Language

It is the County's continual objective to ensure that more learners continue to improve their language skills when transferring from primary to secondary school and then through Key Stages 3 and 4.

Secondary schools receive information on every pupil's language cohorts from a language co-ordinator in the different catchment-areas as they transfer from KS2 to KS3.

The percentage of pupils assessed in Welsh as First Language at the end of Key Stage 2 is as follows:

2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
99.6%	99.6%	99.2%	99.2%	97.5%	98.8%	97.9%

The data indicates progress of 1.3% between 2014 and 2015, following a previous slight drop.

The table below shows the percentage of pupils who have achieved level 3+ at the end of KS2 during 2010-16:

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Level 3+	95.0%	95.0%	95.1%	96.8%	96.9%	97.4%	98.3%

The figure is comparatively stable with a slight variation over the last two years. There was an improvement of 0.5% between 2014 and 2015.

The percentage of pupils assessed in Welsh as First Language at the end of Key Stage 3 is as follows:

2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
81.7%	83.0%	86.1%	82.5%	81.2%	83.2%	83.7%

A reduction has occurred in the percentage over 2012-14 but an improvement of 2.5% occurred between 2014 and 2016. Also, comparison of the percentage assessed at KS3 against the same cohort at KS2, indicates an annual reduction between the key stages.

The table below shows the percentage of pupils who achieved level 3+ at KS2 and who received a Welsh as First Language assessment at the end of KS3 between 2010-16.

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Gwynedd	88.7%	89.9%	91.6%	90.0%	87.4%	89.5%	88.7%

Comparing this table with the previous one showing percentage of pupils who achieved level 3+ at the end of KS2 between 2010-16 shows a reduction in the percentage over each of the years.

The aim is to ensure that every pupil who has achieved level 3+ at the end of KS2, receives an assessment in Welsh as First Language at the end of KS4. Although this percentage is high in comparison with the rest of Wales, there is a way to go to fully achieve the county's objective, as the following table indicates:

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
% who sit Welsh as First Language	78.3%	78.6%	78.7%	80.8%	85.0%	80.6%	76.3%
% A*-C	70.9%	74.4%	76.4%	72.6%	73.3%	78.8%	76.3%

The Gwynedd WESP sets a target of 80% by 2017 to achieve a grade A*-C in Welsh as First Language.

2.7 Welsh as a Medium

The information on language cohorts also assists secondary schools to linguistically plan for use of Welsh as a learning medium.

Data is not included on percentage of pupils who study subjects through the medium of Welsh or bilingually at KS3 in the Gwynedd WESP but it contains information on KS4.

The table below shows percentage of Y11 pupils who study for 2 or more qualifications through the medium of Welsh:

2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
78.1%	78.8%	79.1%	82.0%	87.5%	82%	79.4%

The following table shows the percentage of Y11 pupils who study for 5 or more qualifications through the medium of Welsh:

2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016

60.8%	64.7%	67%	71.3%	73.3%	74.9%	69.4%
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2.8 Welsh as a second language

The table below indicates that the percentage of pupils in Gwynedd who follow Welsh as Second Language courses and sit Welsh as Second Language examination is comparatively few but that considerable progress has been made between 2014-15:

Year	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
% who have sat Welsh as second language.	17.6%	16.5%	15.2%	15.1%	11.9%	16.7%	16.7%

2.9 Immersion Schemes

Over the years, the county has been prominent at developing language centres to assist latecomers to enable them to immerse in their bilingual community and to fully gain bilingual education experiences at the schools. At the same time, the centres are essential to assist schools to fully implement the Language Policy. The county has four primary centres and a secondary Centre at Porthmadog, the only one of its kind in Wales.

Gwynedd WESP notes that there is 'space for up to a maximum of 16 pupils for eight week periods, initially focussing on Y7 pupils and then Y8 with small numbers from Y9 if there was room. The Centre teachers also provide after care for every pupil on their return to their schools.

According to Gwynedd WESP 'Between 2005 and October 2016 a total of 1628 primary pupils and 510 secondary pupils have attended the centres.

2.10 Use of Language outside the Class

The county's interest in pupils use of Welsh is not confined to curricular matters only and there is a huge emphasis on their use of the language outside the classroom in the communities around them. It is this that led to the development of *Gwynedd Primary Schools Welsh Language Charter* and Cwmni Trywydd was commissioned to review the situation of Welsh as a social language amongst the Young people in the county's secondary schools.

2.11 The Secondary Schools

There are 14 secondary schools in the three Gwynedd sub-areas as follows:

ARFON

Ysgol Brynrefail (11-18)
Ysgol Dyffryn Nantlle (11-18)
Ysgol Dyffryn Ogwen (11-18)
Ysgol Friars (11-18)
Ysgol Syr Hugh Owen (11-18)
Ysgol Tryfan (11-18)

DWYFOR

Ysgol Botwnnog (11-16)
Ysgol Eifionnydd (11-16)
Ysgol Glan-y-môr (11-16)

MEIRION

Ysgol Y Gader (11-16)
Ysgol Tywyn (11-16)
Ysgol y Moelwyn (1-16)
Ysgol y Berwyn (11-18)
Ysgol Dyffryn Ardudwy (11-16)

The huge diversity in the ability to speak the language across the different areas in Gwynedd is reflected in the different catchment-areas of the county's secondary schools. The County Council Scrutiny Investigation report to Welsh Education provides a glance of this variation when discussing three areas:

It was found that Ardudwy, Bangor and Botwnnog catchment-areas differed greatly as regards language. There is also a diversity within the catchment-areas, e.g. the north of the Ardudwy catchment-area is a Welsh area with the southern area being more Anglicized. The Botwnnog catchment-area is the most Welsh of the catchment-areas in question. There are other variations in Bangor, with Welsh areas, English areas and areas that are feeders for the University and Ysbyty Gwynedd.

In the WESP, attention is also drawn to different circumstances at both schools in Bangor, namely Ysgol Tryfan and Ysgol Friars. In one of them, Ysgol Friars, the pupils do not follow Welsh as a First Language unless they have achieved Level 4 or better at the end of KS2. And whilst all the subjects are offered through the medium of Welsh at Ysgol Tryfan, the long term aim at Ysgol Friars is to ensure that more aspects of the curriculum are bilingually available.

The county states that the same is expected regarding the Language Policy in all of the secondary schools. Of course, some of the schools face a greater challenge to meet this expectation.

3.0 DEFINITION OF SCHOOL CATEGORIES

Defining schools according to Welsh medium provision (October 2007), a document produced by the Welsh Assembly Government, outlines school descriptions and

categories according to how much Welsh is used when teaching and learning, and at the school from day to day. The categories are used to gather information on national and local provision by education authorities and schools to provide parents with information on what types of schools are available in different neighbourhoods. The document states that the information should assist local and national government to assess whether the provision meets the local demand. The Government document states as follows: *'Although the definitions have no legal basis, their purpose is to provide better information for parents and local and national government as to what extent pupils are taught through the medium of Welsh.'* Regulations would be required to make this mandatory.

The following categories are in the secondary sector:

- Welsh Medium Secondary School
- Bilingual Secondary School (and the category divided into 4 sub-sections).
- Mainly English Medium Secondary School but with substantial use of Welsh
- Mainly English Medium Secondary School

A detailed explanation of each category is provided in Annex 1.

It has already been noted that it is not the practice of Gwynedd secondary schools to define their schools in the manner outlined above as the same Language Policy is implemented in all of them.

But despite that, *My Local School*, a very popular website developed by the Welsh Government, to make it easier for parents and everybody else who is interested in seeing data about schools, contains a section on Schools Categorization in Gwynedd. It is based on the document *Defining schools according to Welsh medium provision* (October 2007).

My Local School contains the following information on the categories of the county's secondary schools:

SCHOOL	DEFINITION OF A LANGUAGE CATEGORY
Ysgol Ardudwy	Welsh Medium
Ysgol Botwnnog	Bilingual (Category A)
Ysgol Brynrefail	Bilingual (Category A)
Ysgol Dyffryn Nantlle	Bilingual (Category B)
Ysgol Dyffryn Ogwen	Bilingual (Category Ch)
Ysgol Eifionydd	Welsh Medium

Ysgol Friars	Mainly English medium but with substantial use of Welsh
Ysgol Glan-y-môr	Welsh Medium
Ysgol Syr Hugh Owen	Bilingual (Category Ch)
Ysgol Tryfan	Welsh Medium
Ysgol Tywyn	Bilingual (Category A)
Ysgol Y Berwyn	Welsh Medium
Ysgol Y Gader	Bilingual (Category Ch)
Ysgol Y Moelwyn	Welsh Medium

These definitions tend to confirm one of the conclusions in the County Council's Scrutiny Investigation Report into Welsh Education, namely lack of consistency in how the Language Policy is interpreted throughout the county. The Report also notes that the 'uncertainty about the schools linguistic nature is also found amongst the stakeholders - *'is the school a naturally Welsh School, a Bilingual School, or an English School (in some instances)'*.

Information like the above will also need to be amended once the two follow through schools to be established in the county, the one at Dolgellau (3-16) and the other at Bala (3-19) are open.

4.0 THE STUDY AND ITS CONCLUSIONS

The study and its conclusions are based on discussions with headteachers and senior staff of the county's secondary schools as well as brief questionnaires that they have completed and county and national documentation mentioned when discussing the remit and background.

5.0 LINGUISTIC DEFINITION OF SECONDARY SCHOOLS

5.1 The current situation

Although the county does not define secondary schools according to language categories, definitions of this kind are used, e.g. *My Local School*, as already noted (See 3.0). They are also used by Estyn, Her Majesty's Inspectorate Office for Education and Training in Wales, when discussing the background of individual schools in inspection reports.

What characterises the use of definitions, where implemented, is a lack of consistency. Often, various categories, e.g. 'Welsh', 'bilingual' and 'naturally bilingual' are noted for secondary schools that are very similar linguistically. Even when defining the same school, the Welsh Government and Estyn category can vary. The definitions used do not necessarily fully profile the schools language situations, certainly not in detail. To sum up, the lack of consistent and clear action can cause quite a bit of confusion.

5.2 Laying the Foundations

It is encouraging that the pupils percentage who are assessed in Welsh as First Language at the end of KS2 are in the high nineties. Also the percentage of pupils who achieve Level 3+ in Welsh as First Language. (See 2.6). There will sometimes be a variation in the pupils attainment in both languages, and in the different language modes, but, overall, the level of their bilingualism facilitates the secondary schools arrangements at the time of the transfer from the primary to further progress bilingual education.

This is also a major step forward towards achieving one of the county's aims, namely that there is the same expectation of the Language Policy in all of the secondary schools, although there is a way to go to ensure smooth progression during the transition phase between KS2 and 3. The reduction between the percentage assessed in Welsh as First Language at the end of KS2 and at the end of KS3 and between the percentage who achieve L3+ at the end of KS2 and the percentage assessed at the end of KS3 (See 2.6) is a matter that requires further focus as it may lead to under-attainment and impair progression in Welsh as a subject and as a teaching and learning medium.

5.3 Introducing experiences in Both Languages

Gwynedd Language Policy sets out quite clear guidelines for introducing experiences in both languages in the secondary sector:

In the instance of pupils who have appropriate skills in Welsh but who need to further develop their grasp of Welsh and improve specific skills in English [A and B cohorts], a substantial proportion of their curriculum will be through the Welsh medium. In addition, specific experiences are planned cross-curricularly to enable them to develop and improve their English medium skills. In such instances, the time allocated for experiences in Welsh and English will roughly correspond to 70%:30%.

Accepting that there will be some variation in the curricular time allocated for experiences in Welsh and English, it is appropriate that the Language Policy notes 70% as a minimum for Welsh medium work. This principle is supported in the document *Welsh-Medium Education Strategy (Welsh Government, April 2010)*, that states as follows:

It is generally accepted that at least 70% of the curriculum time should be through the medium of Welsh to enable learners to master the language robustly enough to

use in a wide variety of contexts confidently and fluently. The Welsh Assembly Government accepts this central principle for Welsh medium schools at a primary and secondary level.

However, situations are not as simple as that in the county's secondary schools, as they also contain pupils who are in Cohorts C1-Ch and can be in the same classes as Cohorts A and B pupils. Therefore, naturally enough, as outlined in the Language Policy, the balance allocated for experiences in Welsh and English for these pupils will differentiate, at least for a period, depending on how rapidly they acquire Welsh medium skills:

In the case of learners who need to develop and reinforce their skills in Welsh [C1 cohort], the curriculum is planned in a manner that allows them to practice and develop Welsh cross-curricularly. In such instances, the time allocated for Welsh medium experiences will be at least 50%.

As regards the minority of pupils who possess appropriate skills in English but who lack the appropriate skills in Welsh [C2 cohort], an emphasis is placed on planning cross-curriculum opportunities to develop their verbal skills in Welsh. In such instances, the time allocated for Welsh medium experiences will be at least 30%.

The purpose of the Language Policy guidelines is not to limit but rather assist schools to effectively plan to promote bilingualism and wholly appropriately. At the same time, it should be borne in mind that much more important than measuring time exactly to the letter is to consider the nature and quality of the language experiences provided in both languages in the periods allocated for that.

Another influence on the process of setting a strategic direction for the school as regards developing education through the medium of Welsh or bilingually is the governing body. Several schools noted how governors support and their function as critical friends in this regard, assists them to fulfil their language and educational aims.

5.4 Working towards the Objective

Most of the secondary schools work towards the direction of a language balance recommended in the Language Policy, some closer than others. Excellent progress is observed in this direction as regards quite challenging aspects, e.g. at KS3 at Ysgol Ardudwy, Ysgol Uwchradd Tywyn and Ysgol y Gader in the Meirion sub-area where major strides have been taken to provide a more robust role for Welsh as a medium and to establish firm foundations for further developments.

There is some variation in some schools arrangements. Encouraging rather than compulsion, for example, is the emphasis at one secondary school in a Welsh area. At that school, pupils are expected to follow three subjects through the medium of Welsh at KS3 but that many, in reality, follow all in that language.

A factor that facilitates the secondary school arrangements is the substantial contribution of the Gwynedd Secondary Language Centre at Porthmadog where

many latecomers and overseas pupils (for whom English is not always their first language), at KS3, learn the Welsh language through immersion methods. That enables them to integrate as they return to their schools and also follow elements of the curriculum through the medium of Welsh or bilingually. Secondary schools also appreciate the Centre's post-care visits following the pupils return as part of the process of monitoring progress and benefit from them.

Whilst schools in general develop bilingualism, following the Language Policy pattern at KS3, the situation is slightly more mixed at KS4 where there is greater variation between schools. Some schools, where a minority of the pupils come from Welsh homes, insist that pupils sit their external examinations in at least 80% of subjects through the medium of Welsh. At other school, however, the situation is more open and pupils have permission to follow a course or courses for an outside examination through their chosen language.

The situation is inconsistent as regards vocational courses jointly organized with local colleges. In those instances, candidates can sit their examinations through the medium of Welsh on the condition that the facility is offered by the awarding establishment. This facility is not available through the medium of Welsh in every instance and that, in turn, can impact the language nature of the teaching and learning at the colleges.

There is a need to look as to whether better progression can be obtained between KS3 and KS4 and greater consistency of practice at KS4, especially as the current predictions are slightly down as regards pupils who study for two or more qualifications through the medium of Welsh and five or more qualifications through the medium of Welsh (See p.5). These registrations do not in themselves correctly highlight how much work is sat through the medium of Welsh as pupils who registered for a qualification through the medium of Welsh are entitled to sit parts of that qualification through the medium of Welsh or English to reflect the language in which they were taught. (See. Examination Provision 2016, WJEC.11.2).

At KS5, at the schools, the language provision, to a large extent, reflects the pattern established at KS4. By then as well, several schools as a rule will give individuals a greater say on choice of medium.

5.5 Situation in Bangor

Whilst secondary bilingual schools in Gwynedd, with some variations, act comparatively similar to one another linguistically and increasingly so, especially at KS3, the situation is contrary to the pattern in the Bangor area where both secondary schools provide considerably different provision to each other. That can be traced back to the practice established at the time of education re-organization in the city in 1978.

Ysgol Tryfan almost entirely teaches and learns through the medium of Welsh, following a language pattern for specific Welsh schools established in other parts of Wales. Ysgol Friars almost completely leans towards teaching and learning through

the medium of English, except for Welsh as First Language and some Welsh medium input for some classes only at KS3.

The 2011 Census (in comparison with the 2001 Census) shows a fall in the numbers who can speak Welsh in every ward in Bangor. A reduction of 10% has occurred in the number of Welsh speakers in the city in a decade - from 45% in 2001 to 35% by 2011. As part of the campaign to restore Welsh following the fall in number of speakers, Menter Iaith Bangor was established with the objective of *'promoting and expanding the Welsh language at a community level across the city'* so that the language *'becomes a central and natural part of everyday life... on the streets, in the shops, and indeed everywhere, with all the residents sharing responsibility for its future and prosperity'*. Also recently, Canolfan Popdy was opened as an office for Menter Iaith Bangor and Eryri regional staff of Urdd Gobaith Cymru, and it is intended to hire out part of the building to other establishments and organizations who work through the medium of Welsh.

Both secondary schools in the city have an important contribution to make, not only to maintain standards of education and ensure that every pupil fully achieves his potential but also to promote Welsh and bilingualism, building on the progress made in the primary sector. As is known, the education system for children is the most important pathway in creating and developing Welsh speakers and the Welsh Government wishes everybody to have an opportunity to learn through the medium of Welsh from the early years to higher education, as noted at the time of the official announcement of the proposals for increasing the number of Welsh speakers to a million by 2050 at Eisteddfod Genedlaethol Cymru – Y Fenni 2016.

Ysgol Tryfan educates and teaches Welsh to its pupils and successfully develops bilingualism in a robust and supportive environment to the language and culture. Close collaboration also occurs between the school and the Menter Iaith.

There is small percentage (around 4%) of pupils from Welsh speaking homes at Ysgol Friars. In comparison, there is a high percentage of pupils who learn English as an additional language. A substantial number of pupils attend the school from outside the usual catchment-area - from other areas in the county and from areas outside the county, e.g. Conwy and Isle of Anglesey - and for various reasons. Welsh as First Language is taught at the school through KS3 and KS4 but the majority of the pupils follow Welsh as Second Language. A comparatively small cohort of pupils are registered for GCSE Welsh as First Language at KS4 following consultation with the parents – these are more often than not pupils from a Welsh background. The school makes little use of the Secondary Centre at Porthmadog but appreciates staff's input when they come to the school. Travelling back and forth to the Ganolfan is not always convenient, especially for pupils who travel a considerable distance to the school in the first place. The school suggests that this type of provision would be used if it was available on the school campus. There is element of bilingual teaching across the curriculum for the Welsh as First Language classes at KS3 only, but this provision is very fragmented.

There are factors to consider so as to progress bilingualism at the school and strengthen the language progression between KS3 and KS4 including how Welsh as First Language could be made more inclusive at the start of the secondary period as it is confined to pupils who achieve Level 4 in Welsh assessment at the end of KS2 currently. Another factor is to consider how the provision for teaching and learning can be extended through the medium of Welsh or bilingually at the school in a more structured method, not only at KS3 but also through to KS4. According to the school, a major current difficulty in this regard is the number of staff who can teach through the medium of Welsh. This demands continuous professional development for staff to improve their skills and needs and, possibly, at least temporarily, more innovative methods, where practical, such as sharing staff specialization with other schools.

There is no quick fix to the complex language and educational situation in Bangor and will need to be reviewed at a later stage when further information and plans are obtained about the Welsh Government's ultimate aim to establish a single stream for Welsh when everybody will learn the language on the same continuum.

Recently, the school has established and uses strategies to promote Welsh – the school should further develop these good practices. A detailed action plan should be prepared for the Bangor area that sets the steps to take to extend the percentage of pupils who follow the path of Welsh as First Language at KS3 and on to KS4 and that are taught through the medium of Welsh or bilingually.

5.6 One Category

There is some difference of opinion at the secondary schools regarding suitability of the concept of defining schools according to language category, with some seeing this as a tool mainly to facilitate discussion and data analysis etc. However, it is fair to say that there is a general demand for greater consistency in defining secondary schools linguistically as the current situation can be so confusing, especially for the public and prospective parents.

In particular, what the current language definitions and categories used fail to do successfully, is reflect *to what extent* and *how* the secondary schools educate and teach through the medium of Welsh or English or bilingually.

Bilingual education and teaching to various degrees are a feature of every secondary school in the county. The balance between the use of both languages can vary from one school to another and significantly at some schools. So also the range of bilingual teaching and learning methods, even between schools similar linguistically. Bilingual teaching and learning does not necessarily imply that the pupils should be introduced to both languages all the time either. The methods can vary from teaching and learning subjects, or complete units of work within specific subjects, in Welsh or English up to presenting subjects mainly through the medium of Welsh with some input in English, dependent on the schools language circumstances and occasionally classes within those schools. The aim is certainly to ensure fluency in both

languages in their different modes and not undermine in any way the progress made in Welsh through doing so.

The county's schools should be clearly defined linguistically so as to resolve the current confusion. One category is considered appropriate for the schools and the most appropriate core term for that is 'bilingual schools'. However, that description on its own is incomplete to clearly show exactly what the pattern of teaching and learning they adopt.

When focussing on the term 'bilingual school' and to show the language balance of the teaching and learning medium, it is more compatible to think in terms of experiences than subjects as this more often than not better ties in with the presentation methods implemented in the majority of lessons. There is also a need to show whether there are differences in the balance between KS3 and 4 and, where applicable, KS5.

The two new follow through schools to be established in the county, the one at Dolgellau (3-16) and the other at Y Bala (3-19) also require language definition.

The Welsh Government also needs to further consider the situation in Gwynedd when it is time to amend the document *Defining schools according to Welsh medium provision*.

5.7 BILINGUAL TEACHING AND LEARNING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT.

Bilingual planning and presentation of education in the classroom requires continual attention. The challenge that schools face cannot be over-emphasised, especially in those situations where pupils represent various language cohorts, sometimes within the same classes. Whilst use of the languages as a teaching medium is a topic for discussion and planning at a whole school scale, at some schools, that has not developed in a structured manner to the same extent in others.

A matter that receives considerable focus at a school level at several secondary schools where there is a high percentage of Welsh-speaking Welsh, for example, is how best to develop and fine-tune the pupils English skills so that they fluently communicate in that language. They see advantages in using English for some experiences in the wider curriculum so as to provide their pupils with more opportunities to use their language skills in contexts separate from the language lessons and thus reinforce the work of the English departments. Detailed planning has been done. The literacy skills have been carefully mapped through the English that can be incorporated in the learning experiences across the subjects with the objective of assisting the pupils to purposefully use that language, especially when writing. Where that occurs, there is collaboration at a school level as to how to implement and ensure appropriate follow-up to the work over key stage/s. At those

schools, the language planning continues to provide the pupils with as robust and useful opportunities to use and develop their literacy skills through the medium of Welsh in various contexts. This type of planning provides an example of good practice.

It is currently timely to revisit bilingual teaching and learning techniques whilst the Welsh Government makes basic changes to teaching and learning in Wales and develops the new curriculum *A Curriculum for life*, based on ‘*Successful Future*’ the Independent Review of the Curriculum and the Assessment in Wales Arrangements by Prof Graham Donaldson in February 2015. The Literacy and Numeracy Framework (LNF) sets oracy, reading and writing skills that pupils are expected to be skilful in cross-curricularly and teachers are required to integrate literacy (and numeracy) in their teaching, whatever the subject. Digital competence is also a cross-curricular responsibility in the new Curriculum for Wales, alongside literacy and numeracy and the Digital Competence Framework (DCF) outlines the skills and knowledge that learners are expected to develop. Policies in these fields are key to a school’s development. It is also important that bilingual teaching and learning techniques go hand in hand with all these developments and that the staff are immersed in the skills required.

Training should consider matters such as the following when teaching bilingually:

- planning bilingualism;
- language models;
- purposeful concurrent use of language;
- questioning techniques;
- communicate with latecomers after they have attended Immersion Welsh Courses;
- facilitate literacy skills in Welsh and English, within subjects;
- contribution of technologies and subject-based resources;
- use of vocabulary and language handbooks;
- readability level of teaching material;
- assessment and bilingualism.

Examples should be used of existing good practice in schools when developing the training, especially the collaboration and joint planning and modelling that occurs between a cluster of schools, e.g. in an area when presenting experiences in mathematics.

6.0 STAFFING

With progress in pupils ability when transferring from primary to secondary to follow subjects cross-curricularly bilingually, it is a weakness at some secondary schools that the entire staff do not possess the Welsh skills required to extend use of that language as a learning and teaching medium. That is especially true of two secondary schools in the county.

A plan should be established to assist teachers who need to increase and improve upon their language skills up to teaching standard.

In the short term plans should be considered such as teacher exchange to other school/s where practical, to support and develop teaching and learning through the medium of Welsh or bilingually where that is currently difficult.

7.0 LANGUAGE CHARTER

The secondary schools welcome the Primary Language Charter that was launched by Gwynedd in 2012 to impact pupils use of Welsh not only in the classroom but in all aspects of their lives. They note that the Charter has had a positive impact on the pupils practices and has led to an improvement in the pupils use of Welsh socially. It is also a sign of the Language Charter's success that the Welsh Government has commissioned Gwynedd Council to lead on extending the Welsh Language Charter throughout the North Wales counties and it is intended to extend throughout Wales over the coming years.

The secondary schools are aware of the risk of a slight slippage at the start of the secondary period unless there is an effort to prevent that. Consequently, several schools have launched several innovative initiatives to maintain the momentum over the bridging phase.

The secondary schools in general welcome the next step in the county's plans, to focus attention on the secondary sector, not only to the social use of the language amongst pupils but also to language use and the curriculum. The ultimate aim is to eliminate inconsistency in these matters throughout the county through strategic planning and appropriate implementation.

Fulfilling the Secondary Language Charter should proceed, implement it and regularly monitor progress in its implementation.

8.0 ADVANTAGES OF BILINGUALISM

Several schools mentioned the importance of drawing attention to the advantages of bilingualism, especially to show how Welsh and bilingualism can lead to several new opportunities in life. The schools also recognize the advantages of presenting information (even at KS4) about the National Welsh College that provide so many more study opportunities for Welsh medium students by now. Promoting pupils understanding of the linguistic nature of Wales and the possibilities provided by bilingualism can strengthen motivation to use Welsh when studying and socializing and inspire them to persevere throughout their lives.

Every opportunity should be taken at the schools to promote information about the benefits of bilingualism and draw attention to the National Welsh College provision and other establishments that provide courses in Welsh or bilingually.

9.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations for improvements are made:

9.1 Define Gwynedd secondary schools in accordance with the language of the teaching and learning medium under one category - bilingual schools. Think in terms of experiences rather than subjects when establishing a balance between use of Welsh and English as learning and teaching mediums at KS3 and 4. Consider 70% as the minimum contact time with Welsh as a medium for A and B cohorts pupils.

9.2 Define the language provision for the post-16 period at the schools where appropriate. Define the language provision for new all through or Lifelong schools to be established in the county as bilingual.

9.3 Encourage Welsh Assembly Government to further consider Gwynedd's particular situation when amending the document *Defining schools according to Welsh medium provision*.

9.4 Maintain and promote Continuous Professional Development that supports training for secondary teachers in the methodologies of bilingual teaching and learning, using examples of existing good practice in a number of schools and using recent research.

9.5 Ensure that staff who cannot communicate in Welsh but who teach in secondary schools where bilingual teaching and learning is increasing, receive encouragement and support to develop their bilingual skills up to teaching standard.

9.6 Ensure greater consistency across the county so that pupils who achieve Level 3+ at the end of KS2, in accordance with the county's recommendation, continue to follow Welsh as First Language course and Welsh medium subjects in the secondary sector.

9.7 Further increase percentage of pupils who continue to study their subjects in Welsh or bilingually at KS4 up to sitting external examinations, cutting down on the various practices between similar schools.

9.8 Eliminate any obstacles that prevent pupils at KS4 on vocational courses from being registered to sit outside examinations through the medium of Welsh.

9.9 Provide an Action Plan for the Bangor area with implementation measures, specific targets, deadlines and evaluation criteria to extend the percentage of pupils who follow Welsh as First Language at KS3 and 4 and who are taught through the medium of Welsh or bilingually.

9.10 Continue to develop the Secondary Language Charter as an effective planning tool, building on the success of the Primary Language Charter, to lead on further progress in pupils social and curricular use of Welsh.

9.11 Remain active in showing value and advantages and usefulness of bilingualism to strengthen pupils motivation to develop fluency in both languages.

Annexe 1

Defining schools according to Welsh medium provision (Welsh Local Government, October 2007)

The Categories for Secondary Schools

1. Welsh Medium Secondary School

The curriculum

Every subject (including RE and PSE) except for English is taught through the medium of Welsh to every pupil, although some schools, possibly, present English terminology in one or two subjects.

School Language Medium

Welsh is the school's day to day language medium. Welsh is used to communicate with the pupils and in the school's administration. The school communicates with the parents in both languages.

The results

As a rule, it is expected that every pupil will be assessed in every subject except for English through the medium of Welsh at KS3 and KS4 and that the pupils will be able to easily proceed to Welsh medium post-16 provision.

2. Bilingual Secondary School

The curriculum

This category is divided into 4 sub-sections, in accordance with the subjects taught through the medium of Welsh and depending as to whether it provides the same provision in English. The categories and definitions do not reflect the number or proportion of pupils who use the Welsh medium provision at a school. The governing bodies will be expected to provide information in the school prospectus on to what extent the provision can be selected and is use of Welsh medium provision subject to the pupil's competence in Welsh. The prospectus should also note how many pupils use the available options.

Category 2A

At least 80% of the subjects except for Welsh and English are taught through the medium of Welsh only to each pupil. One or two subjects are taught to some of the pupils in English or in either language.

Category 2B

At least 80% of the subjects are taught (except for Welsh and English) through the medium of Welsh but they are also taught through the medium of English.

Category 2C

50 - 79% of subjects are taught (except for Welsh and English) through the medium of Welsh but they are also taught through the medium of English.

Category 2CH

Each subject is taught (except for Welsh and English) to every pupil using both languages.

School Language Medium

The language context will determine the school's language or languages from day to day. Both languages are used to communicate with the pupils and also in the school's administration. A Welsh ethos receives a high priority. The school communicates with the parents in both languages.

The results

For pupils in categories 2A, 2B and 2C who follow the highest possible number of courses through the medium of Welsh, as a rule, it is expected that they will be assessed through the medium of Welsh in those subjects at KS3 and KS4 and that they can easily proceed to post-16 provision through the medium of Welsh in their selected subjects. For pupils in category 2Ch, as a rule it is expected that they will be assessed through the medium of Welsh in every subject except for English At KS3 and KS4, and that they will, as a rule, be able to easily proceed to post-16 provision through the medium of Welsh in the subjects of their choice.

3. Mainly English medium Secondary School but with substantial use of Welsh

The curriculum

Teaching occurs in both languages, and 20 - 49% of the subjects are taught through the medium of Welsh. As a rule, every subject would also be taught through the medium of English.

School Language Medium

The language context will determine the school's language or languages from day to day. Both languages are used to communicate with the pupils and also in the school's administration. Creating a Welsh ethos receives a high priority. The school communicates with the parents either in both languages, or in English.

The results

As a rule, it is expected that those pupils who select the Welsh medium provision are assessed through the medium of Welsh in those subjects at every level and that they will, possibly, be able to proceed to study through the Welsh medium in those subjects post-16.

4. Secondary School mainly English medium

The curriculum

The pupils are mainly taught through the medium of English. Welsh is taught as a second language up to KS4. It is possible to select to learn one or two subjects (that could include Welsh as first language) through the medium of Welsh or through presenting both languages.

School language medium

English is the school's day to day language medium, but some Welsh is also used to communicate with the pupils, with the aim of improving their ability to use Welsh from day to day. The school communicates with the parents either in English or in both languages.

The results

As a rule, it is expected that any pupils who opt to study subjects through the medium of Welsh be assessed through the medium of Welsh in those subjects at

every level and it is possible that they can proceed to study those subjects through the medium of Welsh post 16. Most of the pupils would be assessed through the medium of English in most subjects and will proceed to study through the medium of English post 16.