

Committee	Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee
Title of Report	Progress Report on the Recommendations from the Category 3 Secondary Schools Scrutiny Investigation
Date of meeting	21 March 2024
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IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE CATEGORY 3 SECONDARY SCHOOLS SCRUTINY INVESTIGATION REPORT

RECOMMENDATIONS		ACTIONS IMPLEMENTED
1.	That the Authority makes annual requests to the schools for data on the language medium of their provision and checks the situation.	<p><i>The Department has already been collecting language medium data for secondary schools annually and the data for the current year has been collected and collated.</i></p> <p><i>The Department is not currently in a situation to be able to check the situation, but attention is given to the Welsh language and schools' ethos in each visit held for schools.</i></p>
2.	That the Education Authority sets specific targets to increase the Welsh-medium provision for all secondary schools which are compatible with the county targets, and monitors attainment.	<p><i>The Department has decided not to implement this recommendation until an alternative Education Language Policy has been drawn up for Gwynedd.</i></p> <p><i>In addition, the landscape is unclear in terms of the exact requirements of the categorising procedure when it becomes statutory, as well as the final direction and content of the Welsh Language Bill.</i></p> <p><i>The departmental capacity to monitor detailed individual targets is currently scarce, and as the discussion develops around the language policy in Gwynedd and the Welsh Language Bill, it can be considered to plan, target and monitor on a cluster level.</i></p>

3.	That the Education Authority again asks the WJEC to annually publish the number of candidates who complete examination papers through the medium of Welsh and English for each subject. The figures should be published at national and county levels and individual school figures given to those schools.	<i>A letter has been sent to Ian Morgan, WJEC Chief Executive, by the Head of Education responding to this recommendation and making this request solid.</i>
4.	That the Education Authority adapts the model Language Policy for schools, putting more emphasis on the Welsh language and making it clearer regarding what is meant by "bilingualism".	<p><i>The Education Authority has commissioned Meirion Prys Jones to collaborate with the Department as a freelance consultant to revisit Gwynedd's Education Language Policy as a result of national changes in the field, such as:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Cymraeg 2050</i> - <i>Curriculum for Wales</i> - <i>The procedure of categorising schools according to Welsh-medium provision</i> - <i>The Welsh Language Bill</i> <p><i>The Department, jointly with Meirion Prys Jones, will engage with schools, members and wider stakeholders by revisiting the Language Policy over the next few months.</i></p>
5.	That the Education Authority unequivocally outlines its position in terms of dealing with appeals to requests rejected by schools to change the medium of learning to English for specific learners.	<p><i>It is a requirement to follow the school's complaints procedure, but it is hoped that revisiting the Education Language Policy by commissioning Meirion Prys Jones would offer more clarity in terms of expectations.</i></p> <p><i>It is also hoped that the requirements, in terms of provision through the categorisation procedure, will become statutory.</i></p>
6.	That the Education Authority develops and increases the collaboration with the two Category T3 schools in a way that will speed up their journey to become Category 3 schools.	<p><i>The Department shares the same eagerness to see progress in the transitional schools. The Department acknowledges that leadership is key to this success. The Department also acknowledges that linguistic planning, changing culture, changing behaviours and developing skills is a process that is likely to take time to embed and ensure the desired results for our children and young people, and that in an extremely challenging period in terms of resources to support this change.</i></p> <p><i>It must also be acknowledged that the most linguistically challenging of the two transitional schools has faced immense and unprecedented challenges this year in terms of school leadership, which means that linguistic planning has been difficult.</i></p>

7.	That the Education Authority, in partnership with schools, finds new ways of promoting the benefit of studying through the medium of Welsh.	<p><i>Promoting the advantages of a Welsh medium education is a consistently important field for our schools.</i></p> <p><i>In addition, some secondary schools have been received a visit to promote the Welsh language by Ameer Davies Rana, as part of the Hansh Dim Sbin team, S4C, during the autumn term 2023. There were presentations, a quiz and workshops on creating TikTok videos. The visits were successful, and it was clear that the pupils had enjoyed themselves. The Secondary Language Strategy Coordinator has hosted 'Language Awareness' sessions in some schools - Ysgol Syr Hugh Owen, Ysgol Dyffryn Ogwen, Ysgol Dyffryn Nantlle, Ysgol Bro Idris, Ysgol Uwchradd Tywyn. There was an opportunity to consider the advantages deriving from being bilingual, and specifically when preparing for the world of work. Pamphlets and posters promoting the advantages of bilingualism have been shared with the schools.</i></p>
8.	That the Education Authority strengthens the partnership with the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol and focuses on showing young people and parents that there is a wide range of Welsh-medium courses in higher and further education.	<p><i>All the secondary schools in Arfon (except for Ysgol Friars), Dwyfor schools and Ysgol Godre'r Berwyn have received a visit by the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol during February/March 2024.</i></p> <p><i>The purpose of the visits was to promote the benefit of studying through the medium of Welsh and encourage pride in their Welshness. In addition, there were opportunities to promote the benefit of studying Welsh at A-Levels. There were visual presentations and an opportunity to ask and listen to panellists (some were former pupils of the schools that they visited) discussing the value of studying Welsh at A-Levels to follow various careers. The visits were well-received by the pupils, and considerable attention was given to the events on the Coleg Cymraeg's social media.</i></p>
9.	The Authority should provide more guidelines/training on how to educate latecomers who have no Welsh or English. The Education Authority should also consider using examples of learners' successes, promoting the advantages of Welsh-medium education. Similarly, the advantages of attending a Language Centre should be communicated to latecomers, reporting on specific learners' experience and conveying the perspective of their parents to show other parents	<p><i>The Immersion Education System has welcomed learners who have no Welsh or English to the immersion units and continue to do this e.g., a number of Ukrainian refugees were referred to the units and the learners managed to acquire Welsh very well. Grant funding was received to support them and an ipad was bought for each immersion unit to be able to use the 'Say hi' app. This app translates oral language simultaneously and has proved to be a powerful tool at the beginning of the courses to facilitate understanding and communication with the learners.</i></p> <p><i>By working with the University's Education Department, a podcast was created to advertise the advantages of learning Welsh and share good practices, and this was done, for example,</i></p>

	<p>the benefit of attending a Language Centre for their children.</p>	<p><i>through interviewing former pupils of language centres and their families to share their experiences of learning the language.</i> <u>Podlediad Am Filiwn (ypod.cymru)</u></p> <p><i>A meeting was also arranged jointly with Hunaniaith, Menter Iaith Gwynedd for the parents of learners who attend the units termly to share the advantages of learning Welsh.</i></p>
<p>10.</p>	<p>That the Education Authority strengthens the linguistic provision/support for latecomers joining in years 10 or 11.</p>	<p><i>The Authority has made a successful application to partake in the Welsh Government's 'Say Something in Welsh' pilot programme. This programme is now in place in the county's secondary schools to support year 10 and 11 learners to learn Welsh.</i></p> <p><i>In addition, the units' staff support school staff by providing resources for this cohort of children that arrive Gwynedd schools in year 10.</i></p>
<p>11.</p>	<p>That the Education Authority collaborates with other organisations and the Gwynedd Language Initiative to increase the provision of Welsh-medium social activities for young people.</p>	<p><i>The Authority works with Menter Iaith Gwynedd to increase the provision of Welsh medium activities. We are trialling a specific workshop with children in Ysgol Pont y Gof in Botwnnog. We have commissioned Anni Llŷn to create a show with the children and perform it to the parents in a community event. The children will perform in Canolfan Congl Meinciau Botwnnog on 20 March. The intention is to then use this model in other target communities in Gwynedd.</i></p> <p><i>Menter Iaith Gwynedd also collaborates with the priority areas - namely Botwnnog, Godre'r Berwyn and Bangor catchment areas. A gig with Tara Bandito will be arranged in Ysgol Botwnnog before the end of the spring term. Tara Bandito will also host workshops on Well-being and Women in Music, if the school wishes. Five other secondary schools would benefit from the journey, that is being arranged jointly with Selar and Golwg 360.</i></p> <p><i>At the request of Ysgol Uwchradd Tywyn, the Menter Iaith will support opportunities for year 7 pupils to attend a day in Gwersyll Glan-llyn to have extra-curricular experiences through the medium of Welsh. The enterprise will contribute £1000 towards the trip.</i></p> <p><i>As part of the choices arranged in catchment areas as part of the Welsh Language Grant plans, numerous opportunities are arranged for pupils to collaborate with various artists.</i></p>

		<p><i>There were also opportunities, as a result of the Llŷn and Eifionydd National Eisteddfod 2023, for schools to attend gigs organised as part of Taith Maes B.</i></p>
<p>12.</p>	<p>The Education Authority should promote the offer from the Welsh Government to provide free Welsh lessons for teachers who wish to develop their Welsh skills.</p>	<p><i>The Authority has received confirmation that the Welsh Government will fund parents to attend Cymraeg Mewn Blwyddyn courses. This is part of the transitional schools' plans to increase their Welsh language provision. Similar plans will also be released soon for assistants' courses. These courses will start in September 2024. The schools have received the application forms to be completed by the end of March</i></p>
<p>13.</p>	<p>That the Education Authority promotes the opportunities/benefits that derive from teaching in the county to attract more Welsh-medium teachers to work in Gwynedd. It should also support the efforts to increase the number of bilingual teachers available for the whole of Wales.</p>	<p><i>The education department is actively consistent when recruiting as wide as possible and promoting our key education posts.</i></p> <p><i>Also, a key priority project has been included in the Council's Plan regarding the Workforce Planning. The main aim of the project is to ensure that the Council has an adequate supply of qualified staff to enable it to provide services to the county's residents, and that we can ensure that that supply is in place for the long term. We will address specific staff recruitment issues in key fields such as in the social care and education field. This year, for example, support has been given to fill two Learning Support Apprenticeships in the Additional Educational Needs field, which is of course a key area where there is high demand for expertise.</i></p> <p><i>Discussions are also already underway with the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol to collaborate on two relevant projects:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Dysgu'r Dyfodol</i> <p><i>The aim of the Dysgu'r Dyfodol plan is to increase the numbers joining the Welsh education workforce. The plan offers mentoring sessions and work experience for university students who speak Welsh on any degree plan and who is interested in knowing more about a career as a schoolteacher. The mentoring sessions are an opportunity for students to understand more about how to train to become a teacher, the experience of being a teacher in Wales, and what is available for teachers early on in their careers. The intention is to inspire students to take a step towards a career in Wales' world of education, and specifically to follow a Welsh-medium Teacher Initial Education course.</i></p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cadw Cyswllt <p><i>The aim of the Cadw Cyswllt plan is to create and keep in contact with students who speak Welsh and study in a university outside of Wales - in Northern Ireland, Scotland and England. The intention is to create a community of students outside of Wales to inform them of every possible opportunity - events, resources, training, grants and scholarships, jobs, studying opportunities (including Teacher Initial Education) and research in Wales, to try and attract them back after they graduate.</i></p>
14.	That the Education Authority requests that Secondary Schools' Senior Management Teams pay specific attention to their Welsh-medium provision by regularly putting it on meeting agendas.	<p><i>There is a member of every secondary school in Gwynedd's Senior Management Team with a specific responsibility for the Welsh language in that school and the application to ensure that the field of Welsh is discussed on an appropriate level.</i></p> <p>The Strategy Group of the Secondary headteachers have recently discussed the Welsh language and they will be included in detail in the process when reviewing the Language Policy.</p> <p><i>There is close contact between the senior designated manager and the Language Strategy Coordinator. Any opportunities that arise for pupils to undertake any activities or competitions within the County will be cascaded with the schools.</i></p> <p><i>The strategy implementation is evaluated annually, and targets are set for schools to implement during the academic year.</i></p>
15.	That the Education Authority requests that the Secondary Headteachers' Forum places the Welsh-medium provision as an item on the Forum's meeting agendas at least once a year.	<p><i>The Department already acts in accordance with this recommendation.</i></p>
16.	The Welsh Government should tackle the lack of study resources in Welsh, especially on-line.	<p><i>All our secondary schools, except for one, are active members of CYDAG and regularly put pressure nationally for resources and education through the medium of Welsh. In fairness, an improvement has been in this field over the last year and we draw attention here to three key stages:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Welsh Joint Education Committee, as the national examining board in Wales, is publishing all its resources bilingually and, by now, they also develop study and</i>

		<p>support resources that are also available completely bilingually: WJEC Educational Resources Website (wjec.co.uk)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Welsh Government, for years, has developed a HWB stage to host all its resources and digital tools - and all of these resources are obviously available in Welsh: Hwb (gov.wales) • The Welsh Government has also, fairly recently, established the company Adnodd to commission standard resources to support Curriculum for Wales with Emyr George, who is now Chief Executive. Once again, there would not be a resource on Adnodd that is not completely bilingual: Adnodd - dyfodol adnoddau i gefnogi'r Cwricwlwm i Gymru Addysg Cymru (llyw.cymru)
17.	<p>That the Education Authority holds discussions with GwE in relation to support on issues that are specific/unique to the County.</p>	<p>The Welsh Government published its intention to review the roles and responsibilities of education partners in Wales on 12 July.</p> <p>Professor Dylan Jones was commissioned to lead on the work and he had a meeting with a representative of Gwynedd's Headteachers and officers of the Education Department during the autumn term.</p> <p>Professor Dylan Jones' letter is available here.</p> <p>On 31 January, the Minister for Education, following a meeting with the review team in December, published the main findings of the review, and that being a few months early, by noting that there are consistent messages in each part of the education system.</p> <p>According to the Minister, the feedback was clear regarding the preferred direction amongst school leaders and the majority of local authorities. Considering the fact that these messages correspond with the wider evidence, he came to an agreement with the review team that continuing to discuss the features of the current system and people's viewpoints across the system is not the best way to benefit from the review.</p> <p>He moved the review forward to a new step and decided to use this step to examine the best ways of supporting the work of improving schools on three levels:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Support work between schools on a local level 2. Support collaboration and networking between schools across local authorities and on a national level 3. Support the work of improving schools on a national level

		<p><i><u>From this point forward, it was clear that the Government does not intend to continue with the Consortium arrangements or Regional Partnerships.</u></i></p> <p><i>Considering that the landscape will change substantially over the next few months and the next year in the context of schools improvement support and the role of local authorities, the Department will also give specific attention to the support given to the Welsh language in those discussions.</i></p>
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