

Strategy to Support Cyngor Gwynedd's Education Language Policy

1. Cyngor Gwynedd Language Strategy 2023 – 2033

Aim

We intend to create an inclusive strategy, with the primary aim of increasing opportunities for all residents in Gwynedd to see and use the Welsh language in a vast number of different contexts. By working on raising status and increasing people's use of the language in all parts of their lives, we will also hope to increase the motivation for others to learn the language. We will give specific attention to young people's use of the language in coming years, which includes giving particular attention to their use of the Welsh language with technology, showing them the value of the language as a skill for the world of work, and trying to increase the informal opportunities for them to use the Welsh language in their daily lives.

2. Gwynedd Education Language Policy 2024-2034

Background

2021 Census

According to the 2021 Census, **73,560 people** (aged 3 and over) were able to speak Welsh in Gwynedd, which equates to **64.4%**.

In 2011, the number of speakers in Gwynedd was **77,000** and the corresponding percentage was **65.4%**. Therefore, the proportion of people who speak Welsh in Gwynedd between 2011 and 2021 has reduced by 1%.

Cyngor Gwynedd is implementing schemes in a number of national policy and statutory fields, and is implementing schemes on a local level that positively affect communities in the county and are involved in many ways with efforts seeking to maintain and promote Welsh.

These include:

- Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP)
- Gwynedd Housing Action Plan
- Local Development Plan
- Sustainable Visitor Economy Plan
- Our Area Regeneration Schemes

3. Use of the Welsh Language by the residents of Gwynedd

In terms of linguistic planning, there are several key factors affecting the language use of individuals.

- **opportunities to use the Welsh language** – the quality and convenience of opportunities can greatly affect the use of the language and supporting future use of the language.
- **progression in the use of the Welsh language** – the continuation of experiences and opportunities from the home to primary to secondary education; from secondary education to further or higher education; from education to the workplace, leisure, raising families, as well as social and community experiences, together with continuity between learning Welsh and becoming fluent.
- **attitudes towards the Welsh language and bilingualism** – it is important to consider how Welsh speakers feel about their ability and language use and the way in which they act or do not act on this, and how non-Welsh speakers feel about the language and how this is articulated and perceived.
- **confidence to use the Welsh language in a variety of situations** – the confidence of Welsh speakers can vary according to the situation (e.g. formal and informal) and therefore consideration must be given as to how and where to target support effectively.

In terms of the challenges identified in Gwynedd, these are the main challenges at present:

- Transferring the language within the family
- Young people's use of language
- The status of the Welsh language in the community
- Opportunities for people to use the Welsh language in the community
- Creating new speakers
- The influence of technology
- Evidence base and the ability to measure the impact of schemes and interventions
- Demographic and geographical challenges including people's migration
- Opportunities to use the Welsh language in the workplace

Certainly, getting people to use the skills and ability they have to speak Welsh, and doing this in as many contexts as possible, is the key factor for the success of the language in Gwynedd.

4. Development stages of the Council's language strategy in the education field

Target

- Ensure all pupils become fluently bilingual
- General increase in the regular use of the Welsh language
- Many more pupils studying through the medium of Welsh up to external exam level (16yrs)
- 100% of Gwynedd children having the opportunity to speak Welsh and use the language regularly.

5. The Context

In formulating a new Education Language Policy for Cyngor Gwynedd, we must now look at a wider context than the role and work of the Council itself. Cyngor Gwynedd constantly innovated when developing a progressive education system over the last decades, leading much development in the field of providing and promoting Welsh and bilingual education. By building on this innovation for the future, careful consideration should be given to the developments taking place in Welsh and bilingual education at an all-Wales level as a number of statutory and innovative steps are now taking place at that level.

Since the process of devolving powers to the Welsh Government was established, the Welsh Government has played an increasingly key part when drawing up the national legislative context in terms of language and education in Wales. As the first step when the Government undertook its responsibility in the field of education and the Welsh language, the Government published its first **Welsh Education Strategy** in 2010 by setting specific targets to develop the provision.

<https://dera.ioe.ac.uk/id/eprint/11114/14/100420welshmediumstrategy Redacted.pdf>

In 2013, the **School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013**

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/anaw/2013/1/contents/welsh> set the Welsh in Education Strategic Plans (WESP) on a statutory basis and as a follow-up to the Welsh Education Plans that were required by local authorities under the **Welsh Language Act 1993**.

6. Agree on Welsh in Education Strategic Plans

As part of the 2013 Legislation, local authorities were required to produce their first statutory Welsh in Education Strategic Plans (WESP) for the 2014-2017 period. In 2018, it was resolved to revise the regulations for these plans and amend them from 3-year strategic plans to 10-year plans. Cyngor Gwynedd's latest WESP was agreed with the Welsh Government in 2022 and is effective for the 2023-2033 period.

It is noted in the Guidelines to formulate the WESP that:

The purpose of these regulations is to improve opportunities for local authorities to plan Welsh-medium education provision in order to support the current and future expectation for growth in Welsh-medium education. Improving the planning of Welsh-medium education will also support our long-term national ambition for the Welsh language as set out in our Cymraeg 2050: A Million Welsh speakers strategy
<https://www.llyw.cymru/sites/default/files/publications/2021-02/canllawiau-gynlluniau-strategol-cymraeg-addysg.pdf>

As a follow-up to this, in 2016 the Welsh Government published its latest strategy for the Welsh language, a language strategy that would cover the next three decades to the year 2050: **Cymraeg 2050: A Million Welsh speakers**
<https://www.llyw.cymru/sites/default/files/publications/2019-03/cymraeg-2050-strategaeth-y-gymraeg-v1-1.pdf>

In this document, specific targets are noted to increase the numbers who speak Welsh along with its use.

The Aims of Cymraeg 2050: A Million Welsh speakers

	Aim	Target
1.	Increase the number of Welsh-speakers	1 million Welsh-speakers by 2050
2.	Increase the use of the Welsh language	Daily use of Welsh increasing from 10% to 20%
3.	Create favourable conditions - infrastructure and context	

Many other specific targets are also noted in the strategy that are relevant to Cyngor Gwynedd's Education Language Policy:

Education:

- ***Increase the proportion of every school year group that receive their education through the medium of Welsh from 22% to 30% by 2031, and then to 40% by 2050.***
- ***Transform how we teach Welsh to all learners so that at least 70% of those learners can state in 2050 that they can speak Welsh by the time they leave school.***
- ***Increase the number of primary school teachers who can teach through the medium of Welsh from 2,900 to 3,900 by 2031 and to 5,200 by 2050;***

- ***Increase the number of secondary school teachers who can teach Welsh from 500 to 900 by 2031 and to 1,200 by 2050; 4***
- ***Increase the number of secondary school teachers who can teach through the medium of Welsh from 1,800 to 3,200 by 2031 and to 4,200 by 2050.***

The strategic document, *Cymraeg 2050: A Million Welsh speakers*, emphasises the importance of increasing the numbers that speak Welsh but it is also emphasised that increasing the daily use of Welsh is as important.

Moving to a position where there are a million speakers is one aspect of our vision for the prosperity of the Welsh language. But a thriving Welsh language is a language that is being used. We want the use of Welsh to be a normal part of daily life, so that speakers at all levels feel confident to use it in formal and informal scenarios... According to the Use of Language Survey 2013-15 (Welsh Government and Welsh Language Commissioner 2015), there is a clear correlation between proficiency and the frequency of the use of Welsh - 84% of fluent Welsh speakers speak Welsh every day.

In all these documents, the local authorities and schools in Wales have a duty to plan appropriately for increasing the number of young people who can speak Welsh and who do so on a daily basis.

7. Welsh Education Bill

Another impending development is the Welsh Government's intention to put on the Statute Book legislation relating to the further development of aspects of Welsh Language Education. It is stated in the White Paper, published by the Government, which is associated with this Bill, that the intention is that:

The Bill will take steps to enable all pupils in Wales to become confident Welsh-speakers through the statutory education system. Key proposals include:

- *Reflecting the target of one million Welsh-speakers in law;*
- *Creating a single Welsh language skills continuum to describe skill levels so that learners, teachers, parents and employers have a common understanding of the journey towards learning Welsh;*
- ***Establishing a statutory system of categorising maintained schools according to language;***
- ***Over time, increasing Welsh language provision in maintained schools that are not already dedicated Welsh-medium schools;***

- *A requirement for Welsh Ministers to create a statutory National Plan for the acquisition and learning of Welsh, and review it in each Senedd term;*
- ***Reforming how local authorities plan Welsh language provision in schools to meet targets set by Welsh Ministers;***
- ***Requirements on local authorities to pro-actively promote Welsh-medium education, including late immersion provision; and***
- *Providing specialist support for schools with Welsh language learning.*

From what is noted in the White Paper, it can therefore be seen that the Welsh Government expects to see an increase in the provision of education through the medium of Welsh over these next few years and that there is a statutory obligation for the local authorities to plan for this growth. It is expected for education authorities to have plans in place to support schools as they increase this provision.

Therefore, when undertaking the reform of the Gwynedd Schools Language Policy, the Welsh Government's laws and strategies have a much greater influence on the content of local authority language policies than they had previously. The government is now setting out clearly enough its desire to see the Welsh Language and Education in Welsh flourish and develop in Wales throughout the period pupils are in statutory education and beyond.

The Welsh Education Bill plays a key role in what is to be included in an Education Language Policy, particularly because of the changes that have taken place to the process of categorising all schools in Wales according to their linguistic nature.

All primary and secondary schools fall into one of three categories. The numbers 1, 2 and 3 are used to designate the categories. In the primary, Category 1 will refer to schools that teach primarily through the medium of English, Category 2 to dual-language schools and Category 3 to schools that teach primarily through the medium of Welsh.

<https://senedd.wales/media/r3cm5xcm/pri-ld16583-w.pdf>

For those schools that do not fully meet the definition of the language category in which they wish to be, a transitional period and a duplication plan will be agreed with the local authority and included as part of the reforms to the WESP agreed with the government. The intention and ambition is that all Gwynedd primary schools will be Category 3 Primary schools.

In the secondary sector, there will also be 3 categories but the definition of these will be slightly different to the definition for the primary sector. The emphasis is now on increasing the number of subjects that are available to be studied through the medium of Welsh and **also an emphasis on increasing the number of pupils who continue to take courses up to the age of 16 through the medium of Welsh.**

In his foreword to the *Guidance on school categories according to Welsh-medium provision* (2021) document, the Minister for Education noted:

Looking at the global context – bilingualism is the norm. I'm proud that in Wales we support a truly bilingual system that reflects the bilingual demographic of Wales, the official status of Welsh alongside English and our national well-being goal of 'a thriving Welsh language'.

I want all learners to have the opportunity of becoming bilingual citizens, but what's important to me is that we create speakers who use the language. Welsh belongs to us all and I want to make sure that people are not only able to speak the language, but are happy to use it in all walks of life. This is my vision.

<https://www.llyw.cymru/sites/default/files/publications/2021-12/canllawiau-ar-gategoreiddio-ysgolion-yn-ol-y-ddarpariaeth-cyfrwng-cymraeg.pdf>

By introducing the new arrangements, it is noted in the above document that one of the main principles will be the principle of not providing less than previously provided:

*One of the core principles when introducing the new arrangements is that schools should not offer less of a Welsh language provision in the future than it did in the past. **We will ensure that learners have as many opportunities as possible to use their Welsh in as many different contexts as possible during the school day. This will mean giving our learners the best opportunity to become confident Welsh speakers who can use the language in all aspects of life.***

8. Curriculum for Wales (2021)

Within the Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Act 2021, which outlines the Curriculum for Wales, **it is noted that the Welsh language is a mandatory requirement.**

The legislation that outlines the regulations relating to the new Curriculum for Wales states that there are (in addition to the four purposes of the curriculum) mandatory elements spanning the 3-to-16-year-old learning continuum, namely:

- The cross-curricular skills of literacy, numeracy and digital competence
- Names of the areas of learning and experience
- Relationships and sexuality education
- Religion, values and ethics
- **Welsh**
- **English – from age 7. Headteachers and funded but non-maintained nursery education providers can exercise their discretion in deciding whether, and to what extent, they will deliver English to learners aged between 3 and 7. This is to facilitate the immersion process of early years learners in Welsh.** Therefore, it is expected that English-medium and bilingual schools will continue to include English in their curriculum.

Gwynedd's Education Language Policy also takes into account the following Welsh Government documents:

- *Our nation's mission: high standards and aspirations for all Welsh Government (2023)*
- *School improvement guide: a framework for evaluation, improvement and accountability (Statutory in 2024)*

9. The linguistic and educational profile of Gwynedd

2021 census statistics show that **86.2%** of Gwynedd's 3-15-year-olds can speak Welsh. This percentage is significantly higher than the percentage of Welsh-speakers among the general population, which is 64.4%.

There are two ways to increase the number of Welsh speakers, either at home or through the care and education system. These numbers show that Gwynedd schools' Education Language Policy has had a very positive impact by increasing the number of young people who can speak Welsh within the county. Also in Gwynedd is the largest number and percentage of Welsh speakers in Wales according to the 2021 Census. The smallest reduction of all local authorities was seen in this percentage between the 2011 and 2021 censuses.

Looking at a wider platform, and looking at the situation of languages that are not state languages, Gwynedd is among the best in terms of marketing its minority language. It is very likely that it could be stated that Gwynedd is more successful at maintaining its linguistic position in terms of the Welsh language than any other region in the world apart from Catalonia, a language that has approximately 10 million speakers, and across several states. Therefore, Cyngor Gwynedd can take pride in its language policy and education policies over the last decades as they have played a key part in this linguistic success. However, Cyngor Gwynedd believes that there is more room to innovate and improve in its schools' Education Language Policy.

10. Linguistic confidence in two languages

As already noted, improving language skills is one way to measure the success of a policy of promoting bilingualism. But for stable bilingualism to be successful, young people must have the confidence to speak both languages, using Welsh and English with complete fluency in both formal and informal situations.

As society is significantly changing at present and many young people live in households where nobody, or only one parent, speaks Welsh, there are not as many opportunities to speak Welsh in the home or with the extended family as there used to be. Despite this, the education system can present several linguistic skills to children and young people and ensure they are completely fluent in both languages. However, in order for the Welsh language and bilingual skills to thrive and for the confidence among its speakers to increase,

the language must be spoken on a daily basis and in a range of different situations, formally and informally. This is the reason why the second primary target of the *Cymraeg 2050: A Million Welsh speakers* document specifically emphasises the need to increase the practical use of the Welsh language. The importance of increasing social use of the language is noted in the document, its use in the home, in workplaces and in the provision of services in general.

To achieve this, it is clear that the education system alone cannot achieve all of these requirements or expectations. Therefore, a broader strategy must be planned instead of an education policy alone. The education strategy will of course be central to a much more holistic strategy that would consider how the opportunities for people in Gwynedd to use Welsh and English with full confidence in any situation can be expanded.

11. Promoting Bilingualism and Bilingual Education

The aim of this policy is to promote the bilingual skills of every pupil within the authority, and in a county that has the highest percentage and highest numbers of Welsh speakers in Wales. Cyngor Gwynedd has been a very innovative authority in terms of promoting Welsh/bilingual education for decades. The unquestionable success of this policy was seen in the number of young people who can use Welsh and English totally fluently in the county. However, to protect these developments, purposeful planning must be undertaken to continue to maintain and improve the linguistic skills of pupils who live within the county. To maintain and develop the high level of proficiency in both languages that has been developed, it must be ensured that the Welsh language does not lose ground within a context of people's migration and general globalisation.

What is now clear is that planning must be intentional and cautious to maintain the bilingual proficiency of our young people. One of the most effective methods of doing this is to give them more opportunities to receive their education and extra-curricular experiences through the medium of Welsh up to 16 years old. We must therefore continue to plan the process of linguistic immersion that takes place very effectively in the primary sector and extend that process more thoroughly to the secondary sector. To achieve full bilingualism, all the evidence shows that it is extremely beneficial for pupils to continue a high percentage of their education through the medium of Welsh while they are within the statutory and post-statutory education system. The aim of this policy is to contribute to this linguistic maintenance which ensures robust and sustained bilingual proficiency. Following this path will be challenging for some schools, but support will be available from Cyngor Gwynedd in planning and monitoring the success of these developments as they progress and as secondary schools take advantage of the opportunities offered by this new policy.

12. Cyngor Gwynedd's Revised Education Language Policy

The main aim of this Policy is to ensure that schools and Governors are aware of the expectations of Cyngor Gwynedd for schools to comply with the expectations noted in the new system of categorising schools according to their linguistic provision. Schools and governing bodies are expected to be fully aware of the definitions included in the document when planning their educational provision.

<https://www.llyw.cymru/sites/default/files/publications/2021-12/canllawiau-ar-gategoreiddio-ysgolion-yn-ol-y-ddarpariaeth-cyfrwng-cymraeg.pdf>

This policy is part of a wider strategy by Cyngor Gwynedd to maintain the Welsh language and to promote bilingualism within the county.

As part of this policy, school Headteachers and Governors will be expected to intentionally plan to use and promote Welsh in all parts of the operation of schools in the county.

Objectives:

In implementing this policy, the school and governing body will ensure:

- that their school complies with the current Welsh Government definition of a Category 3 school and that the relevant information about the teaching medium in the school is clearly conveyed to the school's parents and prospective parents.
- that every pupil has the appropriate language skills in both Welsh and English by the time they reach the end of their statutory education period.
- that appropriate provision is available to enable every pupil to develop bilingual proficiency. In this context, schools are expected to continue to foster the skills of those pupils who are Welsh first language, and introduce Welsh to those who receive immersion education during whichever period this takes place.
- that every pupil who is a latecomer and a new Welsh speaker is encouraged to attend Gwynedd's Immersion Education System.
- that all of the county's education establishments reflect and reinforce the Language Policy and Language Standards where relevant, in their administration, social life and pastoral arrangements, as well as in their curricular **and extra-curricular** provision.

Pre-school education provision

All pre-school education settings will provide through the medium of Welsh.

Primary

Every primary school in Gwynedd is a Category 3 School or is working to achieve Category 3 School status in accordance with Welsh Government definitions for primary schools.

<https://www.llyw.cymru/sites/default/files/publications/2021-12/canllawiau-ar-gategoreiddio-ysgolion-yn-ol-y-ddarpariaeth-cyfrwng-cymraeg.pdf>

The aim of the Education Language Policy in the primary sector is to develop the ability of all pupils to be confident in both languages by the time they reach 11 years old, developing the linguistic skills of pupils and providing opportunities **to use** the language in real and meaningful situations.

Welsh is the main medium of pupils' education and internal communication in Gwynedd's primary schools. Communication with parents and guardians will either be in Welsh or English, or bilingually, as required. Every school will have a strong Welsh ethos, which will support and enable the learners to use the Welsh language in all contexts in and outside the school.

Foundation Phase until the end of Year 2

Every pupil is taught **and assessed** through the medium of Welsh until the end of Year 2. **Schools will provide opportunities for pupils to use the Welsh language regularly, inside and outside the classroom, in a curricular and extra-curricular manner.**

Year 3 - Year 6

From year 3 onwards, in a context of fostering skills that are associated with full bilingualism, at least 80% of the pupil's educational activities (both curricular and extra-curricular) will be in Welsh.

The pupils' grasp of Welsh should continue to be developed giving attention to the development of their skills in both languages. From year 3 onwards, English will be introduced as a subject and cross-curricular learning medium.

Pupils' progress in Welsh and in English are assessed during and at the end of their primary school period.

Cyngor Gwynedd is committed to providing an Intensive Immersion Course within the Immersion Education System. Schools are expected to ensure that all pupils (Years 2-6) who are latecomers and new Welsh speakers are referred to attend Gwynedd's Immersion Education System, for them to be able to follow the curriculum in full in accordance with Cyngor Gwynedd's Education Language Policy.

Secondary

Every secondary school in Gwynedd is a Category 3 School or is working to achieve Category 3 School status in accordance with Welsh Government definitions for secondary schools.

<https://www.llyw.cymru/sites/default/files/publications/2021-12/canllawiau-ar-gategoreiddio-ysgolion-yn-ol-y-ddarpariaeth-cyfrwng-cymraeg.pdf>

For every school in this category, Welsh will be the main language of education for all pupils, in the context of fully developing the bilingual skills of all pupils. Welsh will also be the main language for internal communication. The school will communicate with parents and guardians either in Welsh, English or bilingually, as required. Every school will have a strong Welsh ethos, supporting and allowing the learners to use the Welsh language in every social context in the school and outside the school.

Gwynedd secondary schools ensure progression and continuation to develop skills in both Welsh and English. Every pupil will continue to follow courses through the medium of Welsh in the secondary sector up to 16 years old (in accordance with the Welsh Government's definition of the statutory expectations on Category 3 Secondary schools), with the exception of pupils who are included within the Council's Exceptions Policy.

Cyngor Gwynedd is committed to providing an Intensive Immersion Course within the Immersion Education System. Schools are expected to ensure that all pupils (Years 7-9) who are latecomers and new Welsh speakers are referred to attend Gwynedd's Immersion Education System, for them to be able to follow the curriculum in full in accordance with Cyngor Gwynedd's Education Language Policy.

13. Additional Learning Needs in the Mainstream and Special Schools

Children and young people with additional learning needs (ALN) receive equal linguistic opportunities in accordance with this policy.

The ALN and Tribunal Wales Act (2018) must be considered when interpreting this policy. Where Additional Learning Provision is noted within an Individual Development Plan with use of a specific method of communication and intervention, this provision must be secured, in keeping with any specialist advice. The Equality Act must also be considered.

14. Individual School Development Plans (The Welsh Language)

Each school and governing body will be expected to present their Welsh language development priorities in the Welsh Language Progress Plan. This Plan will be agreed with Cyngor Gwynedd and the Welsh Government in accordance with the WESP Outcomes.

It is emphasised in the Government's documentation that the percentages noted in the definition of Category 3 Schools are a minimum.

15. Definition of Language Cohorts

To ensure progression and continuation on the linguistic continuum, primary schools will assess the linguistic ability of pupils in accordance with the definitions of the Language Cohorts. Secondary schools are responsible for providing appropriate progression and continuation so that pupils develop bilingually proficient.

A	The Welsh and English skills of these pupils are robust, and they are confident to complete their classwork through the medium of both languages.
B	The Welsh skills of these pupils are stronger than their English skills. Their English skills are weak.
C1	Although the English skills of these pupils are stronger than their Welsh skills, they have the ability to complete their classwork through the medium of Welsh.
C2	The Welsh skills of these pupils are limited. It is very likely that they are latecomers / new speakers.
CH	These pupils' use of Welsh and English is limited.

16. Transitional Sub-categories

There are three schools in a transitional category in Gwynedd. An action plan as a consequence of that decision will then be agreed between the authority and the school to move the individual school along the linguistic continuum so that more Welsh-medium provision is provided, in a specific and reasonable manner.

The Government's documentation emphasises that the intention with transitional periods is to encourage an increase in the Welsh-medium provision. It is noted:

We emphasise here that the aim of the transitional sub-categories is to increase Welsh provision, to be able to proceed to the next category. Transitional categories should not be permanent. Schools and local authorities should agree on plans to categorise schools according to their Welsh-medium provision, and incorporate this in their WESP. Local authorities are expected to undertake intensive planning during the first five years of their Plan. Similarly, decisions that will move the school along the linguistic continuum are expected to be made during the first five years. No transitional category should last for more than 10 years.

It is also noted:

There will be a need to ensure that a plan is agreed between the local authority and the school to prepare for an increase in their Welsh provision. Any school in a transitional sub-

category should note this in their school prospectus. Also, in terms of local authorities, this must be outlined in their county composite prospectus.

Therefore, Cyngor Gwynedd will hold a discussion with those three transitional schools that currently offer less Welsh and Welsh-medium provision than what is noted in the thresholds for Category 3 Schools, and draw up and agree on a plan spanning between 5-10 years to ensure that they offer the type of provision that aligns with the requirements of the definition of Category 3 Schools.

17. Bangor Area Development Plan

Due to the nature of the educational/linguistic provision offered in the Bangor area, and as a result of the different nature of the area in terms of people's migration to the area compared to the rest of the county, it is intended to undertake a strategic review of Cyngor Gwynedd's Education Language Policy in the Bangor area. This review will consider the next possible steps to address the intentions of the Welsh Government to ensure that as many pupils as possible become confidently bilingual in all Cyngor Gwynedd areas over the next decade.

18. Information for parents

Schools will be expected to provide information in their handbooks for parents regarding the new system of categorising schools, ensuring that the information is clear and easy to understand. From 2024 onwards, schools will also include this information in their PLASC forms.

19. Latecomers to Welsh Education

In order for Gwynedd's Education language policy to be inclusive, a specialist service is provided within the county, namely the Immersion Education System. The immersion system for newcomers is a strength here in Gwynedd. Since its establishment in its new form in January 2023 there are six strategic locations across the county providing an excellent service for latecomers to acquire the Welsh language.

Arfon Region:

Maesincla Primary Immersion Unit, Caernarfon (yrs 2-4 learners)

Tryfan Primary/Secondary Transition Immersion Unit (yrs 5-9 learners)

Dwyfor Region:

Cymerau Primary Immersion Unit, Pwllheli (yrs 2-4 learners)

Eifionydd Primary/Secondary Transition Immersion Unit (yrs 5-9 learners)

Meirion Region:

Bro Idris Primary Immersion Unit, Dolgellau (yrs 2-4 learners)

Tywyn Primary/Secondary Transition Immersion Unit (yrs 5-9 learners)

Gwynedd has been pioneering in the field of language immersion for decades when the first language unit was established forty years ago and generations of children have developed as new speakers as a result of the successful immersion courses at the language immersion centres. Taking an intensive immersion course for a period of ten weeks equips learners with the skills necessary to enable them to integrate and thrive back in mainstream schools in a formal and informal context within Gwynedd's Welsh and bilingual education system.

20. Exceptions

Exceptions to the Education Language Policy will mainly involve Secondary school pupils who are latecomers to the Gwynedd schools' education system, or who have additional learning needs.

21. Monitoring the provision

It is the responsibility of school governing bodies to ensure that they comply with the Welsh Government's policies and strategies and, where relevant, the policies of Cyngor Gwynedd in the field of education. Cyngor Gwynedd will gather data from schools regarding their compliance with this policy annually. Each school and governing body will present their Welsh language development priorities to the Primary/Secondary Cluster Development Plan. This Plan will be agreed with Cyngor Gwynedd and the Welsh Government in accordance with the WESP Outcomes, and it will be monitored.

Cyngor Gwynedd will have a particular interest in the number and percentage of pupils who sit external examinations when they are 16 years old through the medium of Welsh.

In this context, and when considering the Government's wider plans to monitor these developments, it is noted in the Government's guidance:

Individual school development plans are used by Estyn to provide context before inspection and monitoring visits. Ensuring that school plans to increase the Welsh language provision are included in the School Development Plan means that the school's linguistic context and development can be noted and considered correctly as part of Estyn's monitoring processes. This will become even more relevant as Estyn tries to give more attention to assessing the full range of experiences available for learners in Welsh as part of its assessment framework.

22. Training

In order to realise the principles of Cyngor Gwynedd's Education Language policy, training and professional learning opportunities will be provided for the workforce.

23. The Welsh Language Charter/Secondary Language Strategy

The National Language Charter Framework is a statutory plan for schools in all sectors. The aim of the Language Charter is to ensure that the Welsh language thrives as a living language inside and outside the class. Through these activities, Gwynedd's children become more

confident when using both languages socially and professionally at school and once they leave school. With the new school categorisation system, there will now be an opportunity to integrate the work of the Language Charter into the core activity of every school and to view the Charter as an essential part of promoting the bilingual skills of pupils.

Therefore, schools are expected to:

- incorporate the requirements of the Welsh Language Charter and the Secondary Language Strategy as an integral part of the school Curriculum to achieve the requirements of the county language strategy.
- ensure that every learner develops their Welsh language skills for socialising, to prepare for the world of work, and to show positive attitudes towards the language.
- plan to embed and expand the informal use of Welsh as an integral and core part of the Areas of Learning and Experience within the new curriculum.

Cyngor Gwynedd will also closely collaborate with other organisations and the Gwynedd Language Initiative to increase the provision of Welsh-medium social activities for school-aged pupils.

24. Post-16 Education and Training

Although post-16 education and training is non-statutory, Cyngor Gwynedd's aspiration is that the same commitment in terms of promoting Welsh-medium teaching and facilitating bilingualism will continue in the post-statutory sector. Cyngor Gwynedd, together with schools and colleges and apprenticeship providers within the authority, will discuss their plans to build on this education language policy in the context of maintaining and developing the bilingual skills of all pupils.