

**1. Has the current statutory framework for Welsh in Education Strategic Plans (WESPs) improved since the recommendations published in December 2015 in the report of the 'Inquiry into Welsh in Education Strategic Plans' by the Children, Young People and Education Committee of the Fourth Senedd?**

- It has improved since publication of the Children, Young People and Education Committee's report in December 2015.
- Extending the WESPs' implementation period to 10 years is an example of improvement.
- We welcome the inclusion of specific targets for early years as part of the 2022-2032 WESPs.
- When looking at the bigger picture nationally, it is not always clear what the quantitative targets and outcomes are as part of the 2022-2032 WESPs.
- Establishing a national stakeholder group with representation across a number of organisations would facilitate discussions on the big picture and the national umbrella targets.

**2. To what extent do Welsh in Education Strategic Plans contribute to the outcomes and targets set out in the Welsh Government's Welsh Language Strategy - Cymraeg 2050?**

- One of the key aims of the Welsh Government's *Cymraeg 2050* strategy is to create a statutory education system that increases the number of confident Welsh speakers. Outcome 1 contributes to these targets.
- To normalise and mainstream the availability of Welsh-medium early years care and education services across Wales.
- The importance of collaboration with Mudiad Meithrin and other Cwlwm organisations in order to plan to ensure provision of Welsh-medium early years care and education that is within easy reach of all communities in Wales.
- Currently, a minority of children in Wales receive their care and education in Welsh and finish their education (at whatever point) as Welsh speakers.
- The trajectory targets for 2050 have not yet been reached for the majority of age groups - apart from children of Cylch Meithrin age.
- High-level health board representation on the local WESP boards is needed to ensure provision in accordance with the requirements of the ALN and Education Tribunal Act.
- To encourage the use of Early Welsh/Welsh for Work courses at the National Centre for Learning Welsh in order to encourage the development of Welsh skills among existing staff.
- Clarity is needed as to the status of the current WESPs within the system in the proposed Welsh Language Education Bill.

**3. How are local authorities responding to changes to guidance on school categories according to Welsh-medium provision, and are they meeting the Welsh Government's ambition to increase Welsh-medium provision in English-medium and dual-stream schools?**

- There is concern that the *Guidance on School categories according to Welsh-medium provision* published in 2021 is a non-statutory system.
- We welcome the policy's aim to increase Welsh language provision in schools in Wales and to facilitate the process of rising up the linguistic categories.
- Certain counties' historical needs and arrangements need to be considered. Would dual-stream schools be a step forward or a step back with regard to provision of Welsh medium education in the county?
- The importance of collaborating with the local authorities to ensure that the school category system does not have a deleterious effect on the how they create demand for Welsh-medium education.
- The need to provide local authorities and governing bodies with simple guidance that highlights and explains how the language medium of school education contributes to the vision of a million Welsh speakers.

**4. What challenges lie ahead in the planning and development of Welsh-medium provision, ahead of a proposed Welsh Language Education Bill?**

- The importance of ensuring that the descriptions of expected linguistic outputs for Welsh are clear and understandable to all stakeholders in accordance with *Guidance on School categories according to Welsh-medium provision*.
- The need to ensure that parents and carers understand the difference between immersion education for children who come from households where Welsh is not spoken and learning Welsh in formal lessons.
- To ensure that a clear and consistent description of 'immersion education' and 'Welsh-medium education' is used across Welsh Government policies and departments.
- To conduct a Welsh language skills audit for all staff who work and support schools and early years education and care settings, not just teachers.
- To ensure a sufficient supply of practitioners who have the necessary professional skills, together with Welsh language skills of the highest possible standard for the Child Care, Early Years and Playwork workforce.
- To ensure that opportunities exist for individuals to follow the relevant vocational courses through the medium of Welsh, within a reasonable distance from their home.
- To increase the number of people able to work in Welsh in a number of areas and specialist services, such as speech and language therapists, health visitors, and children and youth workers, concurrently with any plans to increase the capacity and provision of Welsh-medium education throughout the different stages of education.