



Cyfieithiad I'r Saesneg gan Gomisiwn y Senedd
English Translation by Senedd Commission

IOCD 01

Goblygiadau data y Cyfrifiad i'r fframwaith deddfwriaethol sy'n cefnogi'r Ddarpariaeth
Addysg Cyfrwng Cymraeg / Implications of the Census data for the legislative framework
that supports Welsh-Medium Education Provision
Ymateb gan Cyngor Sir Gar / Response from Carmarthenshire County Council

Dear Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to share evidence on the implications of Census data for the legislative framework supporting Welsh-medium Education Provision

This response is submitted on behalf of Carmarthenshire Council. Obviously the recent results of the 2021 Census have been a disappointment and there is a lot of work to be done in order to analyse these results, and those that are to be published.

We need an understanding of the population groups and the geographical locations that have been most affected, in order to consider which factors have contributed to this, and to develop interventions that will address the situation. It will be vitally important for us as a Council to work together with the many stakeholders that can contribute to a response to the situation and the Welsh Government will obviously be one of those key stakeholders.

What challenges are posed by the decline in the number of Welsh speakers for local authority provision in terms of the Welsh in Education Strategic Plans?

- The decline gives an opportunity to those who are not supportive of the WESPs to question their value and to challenge the policy of creating bilingual learners. This will need to be countered using the Census figures as further justification to persevere with the plans across the whole of Wales and convey positive messages about Welsh education nationally.
- In a situation of financial austerity, there is a risk that the public will raise the question of the value of promotion of the Welsh language/bilingualism as part of our WESP.
- Regarding plans to move schools along the linguistic continuum - the decline in numbers can be used as an argument against the need to move provision along the continuum.
- The decline in the % of the population aged 0-14 is a wider factor in terms of a possible reduction in smaller schools, which tend to be Welsh-medium. We must consider whether this creates uncertainty in terms of the sustainability of such schools?
- However, the success of Welsh education in the county means that the Welsh language is holding its ground relatively well among younger people.
This will need to be built upon and continue in the same direction if we want to have a positive impact on future numbers and use of the Welsh language in the county.

What challenges lie ahead in designing and developing Welsh-medium education provision in light of Census data, and more specifically, the challenge of ensuring that pupils in the English-medium sector are fluent upon leaving school?

- There has been an increase in the % of the population in Carmarthenshire born outside of Wales (further analysis is needed but we understand that this is mainly among the older population). This can have an impact on household language and create additional demands in terms of latecomers – an influx is certainly a challenge for some schools and challenges the capacity of our language centres. Efforts to assimilate in-migrants will need to be strengthened and encourage / facilitate later access for young people to Welsh education.
- The expectation for pupils in the English-medium sector to be fluent when they leave school will need to be considered very carefully. One of the aims of our WESP is for all learners to be bilingual when leaving the primary sector, but we are aware that some English-medium schools do not do the minimum in terms of Welsh lessons, and there will be a further challenge when re-categorising.
- We could lose the support of a group of parents that will question the value of the Welsh language and perhaps want to promote the learning of another language.

What funding considerations might be necessary in the future to fully support the development of the Welsh in Education Strategic Plans, given the decline in the number of Welsh speakers?

- Financial support is needed to maintain a staffing model as Welsh schools/streams establish/develop and specifically if the numbers are small to begin with but then increasing.
- The local authority resource to support learners/schools/the process in increasing the Welsh provision needs to be increased
- Support is needed to develop the language skills of teaching and support staff in order to increase the Welsh-medium provision
– specific funding to support specific training is essential for maintaining a comprehensive and effective training strategy.
- The need to generate capacity in order to respond to the challenge as a whole system – the link needs to be strengthened and Welsh needs to be normalised in the pre-school period in order to support the intention of the scheme and then develop the support to promote use of Welsh outside the school in order to normalise the language of the classroom as the language of the community. Increasing capacity and confidence in the early years sector is also key to this.

We hope this information is useful – please get in touch if you have any further queries. Sincerely,



Cynghorydd | Councillor

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