

IOCD 04

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: Cymdeithas yr Iaith | Response from: Cymdeithas yr Iaith

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

Dear Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee,
There is no doubt that education is key to increasing the number of Welsh speakers.

We emphasised, in our original response, the importance of the education system to the Government's language strategy of creating one million Welsh speakers by 2050 and creating more speakers in general.

According to the 2021 Census, the greatest fall in the number of Welsh speakers was among young people, so it's clear that there is even more work to be done.

It is a cause for great concern that the Census figures also show that the percentage of children receiving Welsh education has decreased since the last Census. The WESP system was in operation throughout that period, which is further proof that it isn't effective.

We would therefore like to back up our comments that the WESPs need to be replaced with a national statutory framework per local authority which sets targets and an action plan to achieve that.

Since submitting our response to the inquiry into the legislative framework that supports the provision of Welsh-medium education, we published a Welsh-medium Education Act that the Government could implement in order to ensure that all children receive Welsh-medium education by 2050. [The Act can be found here](#), but there are three main things that need to be included in the proposed Education Act:

1. The statutory aim that all schools are on a journey to becoming Welsh medium over the next 27 years.

International evidence shows that it is the medium of education that leads to the creation of fluent speakers. This wouldn't be an overnight change, but a process of purposeful planning in order to take the workforce and our schools on a journey over time.

2. One Welsh continuum of learning and assessment.

Currently, there is a significant gap between the attainment of those studying Welsh as a second language and those studying Welsh as a first language. In September 2013, the Welsh Government commissioned research into second language education, which was carried out by an independent group chaired by Professor Sioned Davies. One of the key recommendations of the research report was to replace Welsh as a second language with a single continuum of Welsh learning and assessment.

Although the Government agreed to get rid of Welsh as a second language and move to create a single language continuum, it has gone against this by allowing a different Welsh curriculum for English-medium secondary schools. Qualifications Wales has also presented proposals for two GCSE Welsh qualifications that do not overlap. The continuation of a failed assessment system that deprives 80% of Welsh pupils of the ability to speak Welsh is completely unacceptable.

3. A national framework with targets for all local authorities.

Although each local Authority creates a WESP which is supposed to indicate how it will increase Welsh provision, in some cases the targets are low, and there are no implications if the targets are not reached.

In the new act, the Welsh Government can create a national framework that sets targets for each local authority to achieve the aim.

There is an opportunity in the Welsh Education Act to ensure that all children receive an education in Welsh

- but purposeful planning is needed for that, by setting the statutory aim that all children receive an education in Welsh in a specific period.

Education Group, Cymdeithas yr Iaith
January 2023