

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

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

“...[T]he effectiveness of any [teaching] method or approach is less influential than the skill and competence of the teacher delivering it”

(Fitzpatrick et al., 2018, p.59)

One of the main challenges within the education system (Welsh medium and English medium) is ensuring the availability of a knowledgeable workforce to tackle the challenges highlighted by the census results. This calls for an ambitious plan (and adequate funding) to:

- i. undertake a thorough survey of what is currently happening in the classroom (Welsh-medium and English-medium schools);
- ii. upskill the existing workforce based on the aforementioned survey's results;
- iii. provide a mandatory continuing professional development scheme – throughout an individual's career – for newly qualified teachers, which would have a specific workstream for continuously upskilling staff with regard to effective methods of producing confident bilingual speakers;
- iv. reforming initial teacher training programmes to ensure that students have a sufficient knowledge base regarding the context and purpose of immersive education, language acquisition versus language learning, the needs of new speakers, the importance of incentivisation et cetera, so that they can effectively meet the requirements of the new curriculum.

In the wake of wide-ranging education reforms here in Wales over the past decade, introducing another level of change, specifically to deliver an increase in the numbers and preparedness of pupils to speak Welsh and to consider themselves as Welsh speakers – in the Welsh-medium and English-medium sectors – is a challenge. However, not adapting the current arrangements would come at a cost to the language's future. One of the challenges is that there is a tendency to favour monolingual models of teaching – monolingually in Welsh in the Welsh-medium sector, without deliberately differentiating according to linguistic background (with English and international languages as subjects), and monolingually in English (with Welsh and international languages as subjects) in the English-medium sector. However, the Welsh language is a medium and a subject. With Welsh-speaking heartlands decreasing in number, and with a decline in the transmission of Welsh in the home, it is crucial that schools create the conditions so that children can acquire the Welsh language naturally – the basis of immersive education – while also learning the language's different forms. This is more challenging in the Welsh-medium sector than in the English-medium sector due to teachers' language skills, but it is clear that the current model for the Welsh-medium sector is not leading to the creation of individuals who are necessarily content to speak Welsh. If we are to achieve the aims of the Cymraeg 2050 strategy, current teaching methods must be reformed, in the Welsh-medium and English-medium sectors, to consider different needs, attitudes, contexts and the role of Welsh in children's lives in the 2020s.

Developing the Welsh language skills of non-Welsh-speaking teachers is an important step, but is not the only solution. We must be innovative and offer the experience of acquiring the Welsh language to every pupil – in Welsh-medium and English-medium sectors alike – by designing appropriate language immersion programmes. As a result of major developments in the digital realm, digital resources can be produced and schools can be twinned virtually to share the expertise of Welsh-speaking teachers. Schools can also be twinned so that native Welsh speakers and new speakers can benefit from opportunities to come together to take pride in being part of the bilingual world.