

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:Estyn | Response from:Estyn

Cyfieithiad I'r Saesneg gan Gomisiwn y Senedd
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Background information on Estyn

Estyn is the Office of His Majesty's Inspectorate of Education and Training in Wales. As a Crown body, we are independent of the Welsh Government.

Our main aim is to raise standards and improve the quality of education and training in Wales. This is mainly set out in the Tertiary Education and Research Act 2022 and the Education Act 2005. In carrying out its functions, the Inspectorate must consider:

- The quality of education and training in Wales;
- The extent to which education and training meet the needs of learners;
- The educational standards achieved by education and training providers in Wales;
- The quality of leadership and management of those education and training providers;
- The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of learners; and
- The contribution made to the wellbeing of learners.

Our remit includes (but is not limited to) nurseries and non-maintained settings, primary schools, all-age schools, secondary schools, independent schools, pupil referral units, further education, adult community learning, local government education services, work-based learning, and initial teacher training.

We can give advice to the Welsh Parliament on any matter related to education and training in Wales. In order to achieve excellence for learners, we have set three strategic objectives:

- To provide accountability to service users on the quality and standards of education and training in Wales;
- To inform the development of national policy by the Welsh Government;

- To build capacity to improve the education and training system in Wales.

This response is not confidential.

Response

Consultation questions

What challenges does the decrease in the number of Welsh speakers pose for local authority delivery of the Welsh in Education Strategic Plans?

Providing non-maintained education, Welsh-medium primary and secondary schools, and language immersion centers that are locally accessible to learners from various starting points in each sector is very important when considering fairness and equity.

Collaboration between local authorities is rare in general, for example when ensuring the provision of consistent additional learning needs education through the medium of Welsh, and when expanding and co-ordinating Welsh-medium courses for post-16 learners. Ensuring support for young people to develop their Welsh skills with increasing confidence as they mature into adults is an integral part of the challenge.

The provision of an education support service for providers regarding the Welsh language and by officers that are confident in communicating in Welsh about areas of learning and experience and other subjects by regional consortia or authorities varies across Wales.

What challenges lie ahead in the planning and development of Welsh-medium education provision in light of the Census data, and more specifically, the challenge of ensuring pupils in the English-medium sector are fluent as they leave school?

In core inspections, there is an increase in the number of recommendations that inspectors give in relation to the Welsh language.

In general, practitioners' methodology and methods of teaching and learning in terms early immersion and late immersion of the Welsh language are ambiguous, especially when considering the progress of pupils in Welsh in English-medium schools. The professional learning provision is not sufficiently comprehensive and coherent to meet the needs of practitioners who have varying levels of proficiency in teaching the Welsh language.

The [Guidance on School categories according to Welsh-medium provision](#) provides support for schools to transfer from one linguistic category to another. In the majority of authorities, the plans do not refer to moving schools along the linguistic continuum. In addition, in general, authorities face a challenge as they provide opportunities for children and young people to use Welsh unprompted in situations outside of formal education hours.

It is a challenge for local authorities to develop the Welsh skills of pupils receiving their education in English-medium schools as they continue with their post-16 education in order to strengthen the continuous provision, while empowering learners to further develop their Welsh skills as a foundation for them to use the language increasingly confidently and proficiently in the workplace, and as part of their everyday lives.

The [Welsh in education workforce plan](#) outlines the challenge in terms of the small number of leaders and practitioners who can teach Welsh as an area or subject, and teach through the medium of Welsh in each sector. This is a concern in consideration of the level of proficiency of practitioners who are subject experts in the secondary sector, as they teach through the medium of Welsh.

The document [Increasing the number of Welsh-speakers in the education workforce](#) is a case study resulting from an inspection of Welsh for Adults in Ceredigion, Powys and Carmarthenshire. It outlines good practice in the way that providers' officials plan and deliver valuable professional learning opportunities for school practitioners.

What funding considerations might be needed going forward to support the full development of the WESPs given the decrease in the number of Welsh speakers?

Funding implications are critically important to consider in order to support the development of the WESP aims, for example in providing professional learning opportunities for practitioners, and in refining the transport policy in line with the [School Organization Code \(2018\)](#).

In addition, the financial challenge is a relevant consideration in terms of attracting and retaining practitioners who are experts in the Welsh language while developing immersion provision for latecomers as they gain access to Welsh language education later in their school career.