

Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru | National Assembly for Wales

Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg | Children, Young People and Education Committee

Ymchwiliad i Gynlluniau Strategol Cymraeg mewn Addysg | Inquiry into Welsh in Education Strategic Plans

WESP 23

Ymateb gan : Grŵp Plaid Cymru ar Gyngor Torfaen

Response from : Plaid Cymru Torfaen Council Group

Question 1

What are your views on whether Welsh in Education Strategic Plans are contributing to the outcomes and targets set out in the Welsh Government's overarching Welsh Medium Education Strategic Plan?

Focussing solely on the Year 2 target for children in Welsh medium education in this instance the WESP in Torfaen has failed to deliver.

If you believe that WESPs are not contributing sufficiently, how do you think this could be resolved?

Only when Welsh Government stipulates actual Year 2 targets for children in Welsh medium education, in terms of numbers and percentages that increase over the life time of the WESP will any progress be made and then only when appropriate sanctions are employed by Welsh Government if targets are not met promptly.

Question 2

What are your views on whether WESPs are (or have the potential) to deliver the required change at a local authority level (for example delivering provision to meet any increased demand for Welsh medium education)?

WESP's will only deliver when Welsh Government is prepared to act decisively and enforce their targets,

If you believe that WESPs are not, or don't have the potential, to deliver change, how do you think this could be resolved?

The Minister with responsibility for Welsh medium education must be held to account through the National Assembly for the WESP's that are approved.

Question 3

What are your views on the arrangements for target setting; monitoring; reviewing; reporting; approving; and ensuring compliance with delivering the requirements for WESPs (and the role of the local authority and the Welsh Government in this regard)?

In Torfaen all of the above are undertaken by Council Officers. This is not satisfactory.

If you believe there are problems in this area, how do you think they could be resolved?

One way to resolve this would be to empower the Welsh in Education Forum to make the arrangements for target setting; monitoring; reviewing; reporting; approving; and ensuring compliance with delivering the requirements for WESPs.

Question 4

What are your views on whether WESPs evidence the effective interaction between the Welsh Government's Welsh-medium education strategy and other relevant policies and legislation*?

(*for example school transport policy; 21st Century Schools programme; A living language: a language for living – Moving forward policy statement; Flying Start; planning policy)

In the case of Year 2 targets for children in Welsh medium education in Torfaen there is no effective interaction with the Welsh Government's Welsh-medium education strategy.

If you believe there are problems in this area, how do you think they could be resolved?

The Minister with responsibility for Welsh medium education must be held to account through the National Assembly for the WESP's that are approved.

Question 5

What are your views on whether the outcomes of WESPs deliver equal outcomes for all pupils, including for example, primary/secondary pupils or children from low income households.

Torfaen's WESP in this regard needs further work.

If you believe that the outcome of WESPs do not deliver equal outcomes, how do you think this could be resolved?

On solution to help ensure that equal outcomes are achieved is for an outreach worker to engage with the local community in the early years segment to help with literacy and numeracy through the medium of Welsh, working in collaboration with the catchment area community Welsh medium school.

Question 6

If you had to make one recommendation to the Welsh Government from all the points you have made, what would that recommendation be?

Make the Local Authority have clear targets for Year 2 children in Welsh medium education and hold them to account for those targets.

Question 7

Do you have any other comments or issues you wish to raise that have not been covered by the specific questions?

Torfaen Welsh in Education Forum recently changed its terms of reference. It will now use a Task and Finish Group to scrutinise the current WESP and then look in more detail at Part 1,2 and 5 of any future WESP. It will make recommendation about the WESP to parties it considers may need to act on those recommendations, at least then there will be a record of the Forums views which may differ significantly from those expressed in the WESP by the Local Authority. Those differing views may help the National Assembly when challenging the Minister with responsibility for Welsh medium education.