

Kirsty Williams AC/AM
Y Gweinidog Addysg
Minister for Education



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref: P-05-888
Ein cyf/Our ref: KW/06210/19

Janet Finch-Saunders AM
Assembly Member for Aberconwy
Chair - Petitions committee
National Assembly for Wales
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29 May 2019

Dear Janet

Thank you for your letter dated 22 May on behalf of the Petitions Committee regarding a petition concerning making Welsh Second Language compulsory in all schools in Wales including independent schools with the roll out of the new curriculum.

As the petition notes, Welsh is currently compulsory in all maintained schools in Wales following either the First Language or Second Language programmes of study as appropriate.

In the new curriculum there will be no distinction between first and second language as all learners will be taught Welsh within the Languages, Literacy and Communication Area of Learning and Experience. In this Area of Learning and Experience all learners will follow the same curriculum but expectations will reflect the different pace and depth of learning Welsh for those learners whose education is primarily through the medium of Welsh and those who learn mostly through the medium of English.

However, expectations for Welsh in English-medium Schools will be reviewed and increased over time to reflect learners' changing experience of learning Welsh as the new Curriculum is rolled out and as we work towards the goal of a million Welsh speakers by 2050.

In terms of independent schools, the petitioner acknowledges that independent schools in Wales are not required to follow the National Curriculum and therefore are not required to teach Welsh, either first or second language. This will remain the case when the new curriculum is rolled out.

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

Independent schools are independent in their governance; as such the Welsh Government does not have the powers to insist the teaching of Welsh Language is compulsory in every independent school.

Although the schools are not required to follow the National Curriculum, independent schools must give pupils experience in the following seven areas of learning, and their plans and schemes of work must illustrate how each area is to be woven into the school curriculum:

- Linguistics
- Mathematics
- Science
- Technology
- Humanities and social science
- Physical exercise
- Aesthetic and creative

As part of linguistics independent schools can choose to deliver lessons in Welsh if they wish. However, this is an individual choice for those schools.

I trust this clarifies the position as regards independent schools.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kirsty Williams', written in a cursive style.

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