



Welsh-medium Education Strategy



Consultation

Consultation document No: 067/2009

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Action required: Responses by 5 August 2009

Welsh-medium Education Strategy

- Audience** All bodies concerned with education and training in Wales, Headteachers and Governing Bodies of maintained schools, Local Authorities, Welsh Language Board, Higher Education Funding Council for Wales, Higher Education Institutions, Further Education Institutions, Fforwm, work-based learning providers, employer organisations and forums, Estyn, Trade Unions, Welsh for Adults centres, Funky Dragon, Sector Skills Councils, Careers Wales, National Institute of Adult Continuing Education, Welsh Local Government Association, Rhieni dros Addysg Gymraeg, Children and Young People's Partnerships, Mentrau Iaith, voluntary and community organisations.
- Overview** This document consults on the Welsh Assembly Government's draft Welsh-medium Education Strategy.
- Action required** Responses to this consultation document should be sent to Rhiannon Jenkins, by 5 August 2009, at the address below or emailed to welsh.education@wales.gsi.gov.uk
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- Additional copies** Additional copies can be obtained by contacting Rhiannon Jenkins at the address above. This document is also available on the internet at: www.wales.gov.uk/consultations and can be copied from there.
- Related documents** One Wales
Iaith Pawb: A National Action Plan for a Bilingual Wales
The Learning Country: Vision Into Action
Skills That Work for Wales



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MINISTERIAL FOREWORD

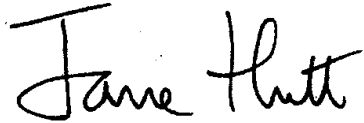
Wales is recognised on the international stage for its success in delivering Welsh-medium education. Welsh-medium primary and secondary schools were first established in the 1950s and 1960s, originally in response to the wishes of Welsh-speaking parents who wanted their children to be educated through the medium of the language. Now, many children who are not from Welsh-speaking homes also attend Welsh-medium and bilingual schools and settings throughout Wales. This Strategy aims to build on the considerable successes of the past and present, and on the good practice that already exists.

I applaud the considerable work that has already been undertaken by local authorities, providers and practitioners, both in terms of increasing access to Welsh-medium provision, and also in terms of consolidating the place of Welsh in the National Curriculum. However, some aspects of Welsh in education require further attention if we are to maintain and build on our successes. Provision has developed in different ways across Wales in response to different demands, and is consequently patchy. There are gaps and challenges requiring particular attention. Our aim is to provide the strategic direction to overcome these challenges, and establish a holistic and sustainable infrastructure to support and develop Welsh-medium education and training. I want to see an inclusive approach which ensures that Welsh-medium provision is available to, and accessed by, our diversity of communities in Wales, including those which are disadvantaged.

This is the first time that the Welsh Assembly Government has developed a national Welsh-medium Education Strategy. It delivers on our commitment in *One Wales: A Progressive Agenda for the Government of Wales* (June 2007) to ‘create a national Welsh-medium Education Strategy to develop effective provision from nursery through to further and higher education, backed up by an implementation programme’. It builds on previous policy documents of the Welsh Assembly Government, in particular *Iaith Pawb: A National Action Plan for a Bilingual Wales* (2003). Whilst *Iaith Pawb* presented an overview of the policy developments contributing towards revitalising Welsh, this Strategy focuses specifically on developing the Welsh-medium education and training infrastructure.

With the growing use of Welsh in the public sector and parts of the private sector, the language is now acquiring an increasingly significant presence in the workplace. Our skills and employment strategy, *Skills that Work for Wales*, addresses the need to create a well-skilled nation; improving and increasing bilingual skills now forms part of our distinctive agenda to improve the skills and employment opportunities of young people and adults in Wales.

This consultation exercise is your opportunity to help shape our agenda for Welsh-medium education and Welsh-language skills over the next 20 years and beyond. Our vision of continuing growth of Welsh-medium education provision in response to demand will only be achieved with the commitment of the Welsh Assembly Government, local authorities, providers and learners in Wales. We welcome all your ideas and views, particularly on those aspects where there is no single clear answer to the challenges.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jane Hutt". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'J' and 'H'.

Jane Hutt
Minister for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills

Summary

This draft Strategy has been developed in response to the commitment in *One Wales: A Progressive Agenda for the Government of Wales* to 'create a national Welsh-medium Education Strategy to develop effective provision from nursery through to further and higher education, backed up by an implementation programme'. The document covers all phases of education and training and includes six Strategic Aims, together with supporting actions which could be marshalled into an implementation programme.

The main elements of the Strategy are laid out in pages 1-24, and include the following aims:

Strategic Aim 1: To improve the planning of Welsh-medium provision in the pre-statutory and statutory phases of education, on the basis of positive response to parental demand

Strategic Aim 2: To improve the planning of Welsh-medium provision in the post-14 phases of education and training, to take account of linguistic progression and continued development of skills

Strategic Aim 3: To ensure that all learners develop their Welsh-language skills to their full potential and encourage sound linguistic progression from one phase of education and training to the next

Strategic Aim 4: To ensure a planned Welsh-medium education workforce that provides sufficient numbers of practitioners for all phases of education and training, with high-quality Welsh-language skills and competence in teaching methodologies

Strategic Aim 5: To improve the central support mechanisms for Welsh-medium education and training

Strategic Aim 6: To contribute to the acquisition and reinforcement of Welsh-language skills in families, in the workplace and in the community

The Context and Considerations section (beginning at page 25) provides more detail on the evidence for, and rationale behind, the main Strategy proposals and draft implementation programme.

The consultation period ends on 5 August 2009. Responses to be sent to Rhiannon Jenkins, Welsh Assembly Government, Tŷ'r Afon, Bedwas Road, Bedwas, Caerphilly CF83 8WT or emailed to welsh.education@wales.gsi.gov.uk. It should be noted that the responses to the consultation will be made public. Normally, the name and address (or part of that address) of the author are published along with the response. If you do not wish to be identified as the author of your response please state this expressly in your response.

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