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Research Briefing



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2.2 Welsh-medium, bilingual and English-medium schools

Under Section 105 (7) of the Education Act 2002 D Q G L V W K H O D Q J X D J H R I F R P P X Q L F D W L R Q Z L W K W K H S X S L O V D Q G I R U W K H V F K R R O L V D V I

More than half of the following subjects are taught wholly or partly in Welsh

(a) Religious education, and

(b) The subjects other than English and Welsh which are foundation subjects in relation to pupils at the school

The Welsh Government has published guidance (2007) which sets out the categories of schools in Wales according to the language used as the medium of instruction and the formal business of the school. These definitions have no basis in legislation, and have been devised to provide information to parents, local government and national government about the extent to which pupils are learning through the medium of Welsh.

Primary schools categories and descriptions

According to the 2007 guidance, primary schools fall into the following categories:

Welsh-medium

Pupils in the Foundation Phase are taught through the medium of Welsh and at least 70% of the teaching in Key Stage 2 is through the medium of Welsh. Welsh is the language of the day-to-day business of the school and to communicate with pupils. Welsh is also used to communicate with the school administration.

Dual stream

Mainly Welsh-medium and mainly English-medium provision exist side-by-side. Both Welsh and English are used in the day-to-day business of the school and to communicate with pupils.

Transitional: Welsh-medium with significant use of English

Pupils in the Foundation Phase are taught through the medium of Welsh and both languages are used to teach at Key Stage 2, but with greater emphasis on Welsh, so that it is used to teach over 50%, and up to 70% of the curriculum. Welsh is the language of the day-to-day business of the school and a high priority is given to creating a Welsh ethos in the school.

Predominantly English-medium, with significant use of Welsh

Both the Foundation Phase and Key Stage 2 are taught in both languages, with greater emphasis on English. Welsh is used to teach between 50% of the overall curriculum. The day-to-day language of the school is English. Both languages are used to communicate with pupils. Welsh is also used to communicate with the school administration.

English-medium

The Foundation Phase is taught through the medium of English. English is also the main medium for Key Stage 2, but Welsh is taught as a second language, and some aspects of subjects may be taught in Welsh. English is the language of the day-to-day business of the school, but some Welsh is used to communicate with pupils, with the aim of improving their capacity to use everyday Welsh.

Secondary schools categories and descriptions

Welsh-medium

All subjects apart from English are taught through the medium of Welsh. Welsh is the day-to-day language of the school, and is used as the language of communication with the pupils and for V F K R R O [V D G P L Q L V W U D W L R Q

Bilingual schools

This category has four subdivisions according to the percentage of subjects taught through the medium of Welsh, and whether there is parallel provision in English.

Type A at least 80% of subjects apart from Welsh and English are taught only through the medium of Welsh to all pupils. One or two subjects are taught to some pupils in English or in both languages

Type B at least 80% of subjects (excluding Welsh and English) are taught through the medium of Welsh, but are also taught through the medium of English.

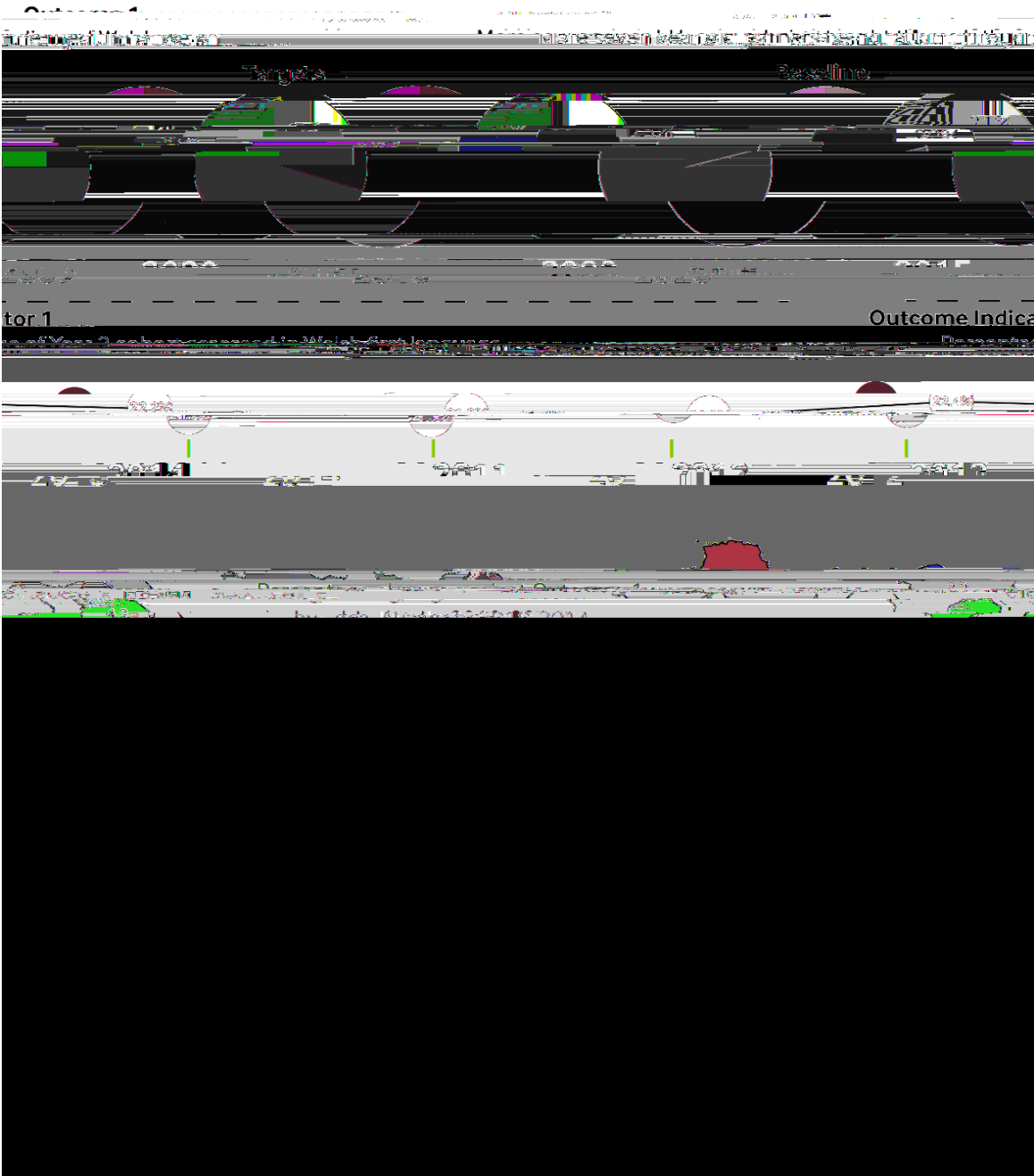
Type C 50-79% of subjects (excluding Welsh and English) are taught through the medium of Welsh, but are also taught through the medium of English.

Type Ch all subjects, except Welsh and English, are taught to all pupils using both languages.

The day-to-day language of the school will be determined by its linguistic context.

2.3 Welsh-medium Education Strategy

The Welsh Government launched its



Source: latest published Welsh Government Welsh Medium Education Strategy Annual Report, July 2015

Evaluation and next steps

In March 2016 the Welsh Government published *Welsh-medium Education Strategy: Next Steps* which outlined its three main objectives for developing Welsh medium and Welsh language education over the following 12 months:

The need to embed processes for planning Welsh medium provision: strengthening strategic planning processes for all phases of education and training continues to be a priority;

The need for improved workforce planning and support for practitioners: ensuring a sufficient workforce for Welsh medium education and training is vital; and

The need to ensure that young people have the confidence to use their Welsh language skills in all walks of life: education attainment alone cannot guarantee that speakers become fluent in Welsh, or choose to use the language in their everyday lives.

This

The Committee made 17 recommendations, including:

The Welsh Government must ensure that Welsh medium Education Strategy targets are reflected in WESPs and be more ambitious;
* R E X V W L Q L W V D S S U R Y D O R I : (6 3 V W R H Q V X U

The Welsh Government must clarify how it intends to work in partnership with local authorities to deliver its Welsh medium Education Strategy;

The Welsh Government should be clearer with local authorities about its expectations in relation to the promotion of growth of Welsh medium education so that all local authorities buy into the Welsh
* R Y H U Q P H Q W [V D P E L W L R Q V D Q G

The Welsh Government should develop and publish a strateg

2 Q H R I W K H V W U D W H J L F R E M H E W E L S H M E D I U M E D U C A T I O N S T R A T E G I C P L A N S
develop improved planning of Welsh medium education for learners with additional learning needs
(ALN). The term additional learning needs (ALN) is often used interchangeably with special
educational needs (SEN). The Welsh Government plans to legislate to eventually replace SEN with ALN.
FR U I X U W K H U L Q I R U P D W L R Q V I N R E W O R K I N G T H E S P E C I A L E D U C A T I O N A L
Needs System (June 2016)

In December 2015 W K H 1 D W L R Q D O \$ V V H P E O \ I R U : D C U A T I O N & K L O G U H Q
Committee W W H H [V U H S H E I N Q U I R Y I N T O W E L S H M E D I U M E D U C A T I O N S T R A T E G I C P L A N S
stated:

There appears to be significant gaps in provision for pupils with additional learning needs who wish to be educated through the medium of Welsh. There is also regional variation in levels of provision. Welsh Government should consider how to address these issues, including whether it may be appropriate to introduce regional organisation of additional learning needs provision.

The report recommended that the Welsh Government should outline how it will address Welsh medium provision for pupils with additional learning needs and whether the forthcoming Additional Learning Needs Bill would be an appropriate vehicle to do so.

The Welsh Government accepted this recommendation, stating:

The Welsh Government recognises the importance of supporting those with special educational needs (SEN) within Welsh medium education. However, it is the responsibility of local authorities to ensure there is suitable educational provision for all learners including those with SEN who receive their education through the medium of Welsh [c]

Through our approach for the New Deal Pioneer Schools, we are ensuring our workforce will develop the knowledge and skills needed to better support all learners with SEN, including those within Welsh-medium education. In addition we are working with key stakeholders to develop a national workforce planning system for SEN specialist support services to improve the capacity of services to support learners and schools across Wales. This workforce planning system will take into consideration the Welsh language capacity of specialist support services.

In July 2015, the Welsh Government published the Draft Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Bill and followed this with an initial working draft of a proposed Additional Learning Needs Code in September 2015. The Draft Code states that:

[The] Welsh language is supported by the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure
c 5 H O H Y D Q W E R G L H V Z L O O K D Y H W R H Q V X U H W K H L
Z L W K U H O H Y D Q W : H O V K 6 W D Q G D U G V c / R F D O D X W K R U
language aspects of provision for learners with ALN in their statutory Welsh in
Education Strategic Plans, which are submitted to Welsh Ministers for approval.

Following the publication of the Draft Bill and Draft Code, the W L R Q D O \$ V V H P E O \ [V & K
People and Education Committee undertook pre-legislative scrutiny of the proposed changes to
W K H \$ / 1 V \ V W H P 7 K H & R P P L W W H H [V O H W W H U W R W K H W K H
stated that:

A number of concerns were raised in written submissions to the Committee in UHODWLRQ WR WKH GUDIW %LOO[V JHQHUDO WUHDW F concern is that there appears to be inadequate provision for improving Welsh medium ALN services and the draft Bill fails to take account of the bilingual nature of Wales.

The Welsh language impact assessment, included within the draft Explanatory Memorandum, gives weight to the protection provided by the statutory Welsh language standards. However, the standards do not apply to schools, and the committee is concerned that the impact assessment could be misleading in this regard.

7KH LP SDFW DVVHV VPHQW DOVR UHIHUV WR D QXPEH LQFOXGH[EYXHOSEJREOHLBDD By these are omitted within the working draft Code that has been published. Stakeholders found the lack of reference to communicating with families in their preferred language in Chapter 4 of the draft Code, to be surprising and disappointing.

It will be important for future versions of the Bill and Code to address these concerns, ensuring the new ALN system fully accounts for the bilingual nature of Wales and meets the needs of children and young people with ALN who learn through the medium of Welsh.

The then Minister said in response that the Welsh Government noted the comments made during the pre-legislative scrutiny and would ZSD \ G X Ho these as the draft Bill and Code are further developed.

2.6 School transport to Welsh-medium provision

Local authorities must provide free home to school transport if a pupil lives either at, or further than, distances specified in the [Learner Travel \(Wales\) Measure 2008](#) from the nearest, suitable school. For primary school pupils this distance is two miles and for secondary school pupils is three miles.

The [Operational Guidance](#) (2014) accompanying the Measure states that neither the [Child Support Regulations](#) nor [Section 10 of the Measure](#) does place a duty on Q OR FDO DXWKRULWLHV WR ZSURPRWH WKURXJK WKH PHGLXP RI :HOVK[

Many local authorities provide transport to pupils who are not owed a statutory duty under the Measure. This can include providing transport to [post-16 education provision](#), Welsh medium schools and faith schools. Such provision is made under [Section 6 of the Measure](#) which provides local authorities with the power to make any arrangements they think fit to facilitate the travel of learners

3. Welsh as a subject

Following the introduction of the Education Reform Act 1988, Welsh was phased in as a compulsory subject for pupils aged 5-14 (Key Stages 1, 2 and 3) from 1990. From September 1999 onwards, Welsh also became compulsory ages 14-16 (Key Stage 4). With the introduction of the Foundation Phase in 2011, Welsh or Welsh Language Development is also taught to 3-5 year olds.

3.1 Core and foundation subjects

The National Curriculum for Wales is made up of core and foundation subjects, which are listed in the Education Act 2002.

The core subjects for Key Stages 1-3 are Mathematics, Science, English; and Welsh first language (in relation to Welsh speaking schools, as stated in the Education Act 2002). The foundation subjects are Technology; Physical education; History; Geography; Art; Music; Welsh second language (if the schools not a Welsh speaking school, as stated in the Education Act 2002) and for Key Stage 3, a Modern foreign language.

The core subjects at Key Stage 4 are Welsh first language, Mathematics, English; and Science. The foundation subjects are Physical education; and Welsh second language.

The Welsh Government prepares a programme of study for each subject, which includes the opportunities that learners should be given at each key stage, along with the knowledge, skills and understanding that pupils are expected to have at the end of a key stage. It is for schools to determine how they meet the requirements of the curriculum. There are no prescribed hours set for any specific subjects. Therefore, as with every other subject in the curriculum, the amount of time allocated to studying Welsh is a matter to be decided locally by schools.

3.2 GCSE Welsh

Although the study of Welsh first language or Welsh second language as a subject is compulsory, making a decision on the type of qualification is a matter for schools and is done at a local level.

Give equal status to Welsh second language within the National Curriculum, ensuring that the subject has the same prominence as the core subjects in performance measures;

Revise the Welsh programme of study, over a three to five year period, and the National Literacy Framework for Welsh as a basis for a revised curriculum, including one continuum of learning for Welsh with clear expectations for pupils learning Welsh in English, bilingual and Welsh medium settings;

Develop, within a three to five year timetable, a new full GCSE (or equivalent) qualification based on the revised curriculum and remove the short course GCSE.

Develop in partnership with regional consortia a national, regional and local training strategy to provide continuous professional development training to practitioners.

The report stated that it would ask Professor Donaldson to consider those recommendations relating to the curriculum as part of his independent review of the curriculum and assessment arrangements. All other recommendations were either accepted or accepted in principle by the Education and Skills Minister, Huw Lewis.

The then Minister provided further update on the progress made towards the implementation of these recommendations in October 2015. [Independent Review of Curriculum and Assessment Arrangements in Wales report X Successful Futures.](#)

The Minister stated that Successful Futures makes 10 recommendations relating to the Welsh language in the curriculum, and that these respond directly to the key recommendations made by the Welsh Second Language Review Group. All these recommendations have been accepted by the Minister, including that Welsh will remain compulsory in all schools up to the age of 16.

