

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 08

Ymateb gan : Grŵp Plaid Cymru Rhondda Cynon Taf

Response from : Rhondda Cynon Taf Plaid Cymru Group

*The aim of the **statutory** Welsh in Education Strategic Plan is to increase the number of Welsh speakers of all ages and promote the use of Welsh within families, in the community and workplace.*

To encourage improved planning for Welsh-medium education. WESPs will enable WAG to monitor LEA's response and the extent to which the language is being used throughout the education system.

1. Is WESP contributing to outcomes and targets set out in WAG Strategic Plan?

It should, in theory, concentrate the mind on this specific problem, but success depends on the interest and involvement of senior officers and political leaders coming together with local partners to drive the WESP forward. [Flintshire has a Welsh Education Forum, chaired by the Chief Education Officer, that includes the lead member for education]

No attempt in RCT to fill in the obvious gaps in provision e.g. Mountain Ash / mid-Rhondda

The WESP is hampered inasmuch as there isn't any specific funding at a time of so many cuts. WAG to provide additional funding!!

2. Do WESPs deliver change at LEA level [e.g. delivering provision to meet demand for Welsh-medium education.]

Method of forecasting demand is at present unreliable and distance from school makes Welsh-medium education unattractive to some families.

Too much delivered by non-maintained agencies whose standards vary.

Need to set up satellite classes that can develop further if there is demand. [e.g. Deeside experiment: 2014 - 11 pupils; 2015 - 24]

Need to involve other movements working in the field to a greater degree - MYM, Twf, Menter Iaith, Urdd.

3. What are your views on the arrangements for target setting, monitoring, reviewing, responding, approving and ensuring compliance with the delivery of WESPs' requirements. [role of LEA and WAG]

Need for external involvement, particularly in case of RCT who haven't established one new Welsh-medium school since 1996.

Targets should be reasonable and reporting schedules shouldn't be too tight.

4. Do WESPs evidence effective interaction between WAG education policy and other policies such as school transport, 21st Century Schools, A Living Language, Flying Start etc?

School transport policy changes could have a devastating effect on Welsh-medium education. To implement WAG policy, it must be accessible to all.

Essential that parents are aware of availability of Welsh-medium early years provision and that the percentage of children in the Flying Start programme reflects the percentage receiving Welsh-medium education [[In 2013 while 20.5% of RCT Children were in Welsh medium schools, there were only 11% receiving FS sessions in Welsh]

Need to monitor standard of provision by outside agencies and their capacity to deliver in the face of increasing cuts.

5. Do WESPs outcomes deliver equally for all pupils e.g primary / secondary; pupils from low income households?

Creating groups of LEAs with a similar socio-economic background would make comparison of outcomes more realistic. Gwynedd and RCT, for example, are too different in character for meaningful comparisons to be made.

Need for WAG to look at supply of teachers at all levels. National strategy necessary.

6. Do you have one recommendation to make?

- i) A powerful LEA Forum essential to co-ordinate internal and external activity.
- ii) Improve links with parents of pre-school children.
- iii) Give schools a period of stability without constant change.