

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 40

Ymateb gan : Clwstwr Ysgolion Ysgol Gyfun Ystalyfera

Response from : Ysgol Gyfun Ystalyfera Cluster Schools

### 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?

Strongly agree.

The outcomes of the plans are appropriate, fit for purpose and focus LEAs on linguistic priorities.

Some outcomes are difficult to measure because of their long-term nature (e.g. increasing the number of 7 year-old / 13 year-old learners - the 7 year target is too far away to measure the impact). How can short-term / mid-term progress be measured? Should we measure the number of 4 year-old learners to answer this?

Strategic planning has been weak in LEAs and this has led to pressure in terms of numbers or lack of provision. In some cases, it's led to lack of growth while other LEAs have made progress towards the targets.

Unfortunately, as there isn't a clear outcome when targets aren't met, it can mean that a situation develops where the plans don't intervene at strategic level to develop the sector.

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

Targets should be monitored more thoroughly.

There should be accountability for shortcomings in terms of low progress.

### 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)?
The main problem with the plans is that they aren't monitored closely enough – the targets set out in the plans focus on long-term progress.
WG should conduct an audit of where there is progress in terms of provision / numbers across Wales and whether that is reflected in the plans. If there are areas where there's a lack of progress / provision – there should be a system of accountability for the LEAs in charge of those areas.
As the Welsh in Education grant has now been merged with the School Effectiveness grant (SEG) – how exactly will the plans be funded? The lack of contact is going to lead to a lack of accountability. As SEG finance is allocated to consortia – how does this tie in with the Welsh plans of individual LEAs?
If you believe that WESPs are not, or don't have the potential, to deliver change, how do you think this could be resolved?
See above.

### 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)?
There isn't a sufficiently strict monitoring role.
There's no strategic link between the grant money (SEG) and the WESPs, Consortia and LEAs.
If you believe there are problems in this area, how do you think they could be resolved?
There should be separate arrangements to ensure the sufficient funding of plans.
There are concerns that some LEAs aren't funding Welsh-medium Education to the same level or to the sector requirements.
Should the growth of Welsh-medium education (Nursery / Reception age) be funded more generously in order to ensure growth?

## 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)

There is some disagreement here.

Policy on post-16 transport?

Policy on free transport for children under 4?

'Dechrau'n Deg' (Flying Start) Welsh-medium uptake – very low in some LEAs.

21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools funding – ensuring growth from the right / young age?

Informal promotion of the Welsh language – cross-sector funding.

Access / inclusion policies – Welsh-medium ALN provision is low – do the WESPs highlight this under their outcomes? If not, why not? And what is done with this information?

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

ALN / Inclusion – Welsh-medium provision across Wales – are the plans challenging enough in this area?

## 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.

How many Welsh Flying Start sites are there?

Does charging for transport to pre-school education reduce and restrict growth?

Does the lack of local provision for young children reduce / restrict growth?

Does charging for transport to post-16 education prevent / restrict pupils from accessing post-16 provision and continuing within the sector?

Are the plans robust enough to meet this demand?

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

Fund Welsh-medium Flying Start places separately for each LEA.

Research into funding free transport for children under 4 in the sector.

Research into the impact of charging for post-16 transport in areas of Wales.

## 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?

1. Ensure more careful monitoring plans and accountability for short / medium term targets (as well as long-term targets).
2. Fair funding of Welsh-medium education – consistent formula / consistent recommendations by WG (with an end to the Welsh in Education grant and ring-fenced funding for Welsh-medium education – this might affect Welsh-medium planning and provision).

## Question 7

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

Establishing the plans with the recommendation to establish Welsh-medium Education Forums locally has been an important step by WG. It has sparked an important strategic discussion within LEAs – the next step is to ensure that the discussion leads to an impact on policy / strategic planning.

There needs to be high level leadership within LEAs regarding plans.

Appointed members of LEA cabinets should be responsible for plans.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond.