

SUBJECT: WELSH IN EDUCATION STRATEGIC PLAN PROGRESS UPDATE 24/25

MEETING: PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE

DATE: 18th June 2026

DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED: ALL

1. PURPOSE:

To update members on the progress against our targets in the Monmouthshire Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) 2024/25

2. BACKGROUND:

2.1 The WESP is our long-term language planning tool which sets the strategic direction for the planning, delivery, and growth of Welsh medium education in Monmouthshire over the next ten years. The WESP must contain:

The local authority's proposals on how it will carry out its education functions to:

1. Improve the planning of the provision of education through the medium of Welsh ("Welsh-medium education") in its area.
2. Improve the standards of Welsh-medium education and of the teaching of Welsh in its area.
3. The local authority's targets for improving the planning of the provision of Welsh medium education in its area and for improving the standards of that education and of the teaching of Welsh in its area.

2.2 The local authority must produce a WESP five-year action plan setting out the actions it plans to take to meet the targets in the WESP. The local authority has a statutory duty to submit an Annual WESP Review Report to Welsh Ministers on 31st July each year.

2.3 The Monmouthshire Annual Review Report Welsh in Education Strategic Plan 2023/24 (Appendix 1) outlines the progress made against Monmouthshire's five-year action plan. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the start date for WESPs moved from 1st September 2021 to 1st September 2022. As a result, this is the third annual review, covering the period from 1st August 2024 to 31st July 2025.

2.4 The report details the progress made in all seven outcomes as set in the WESP.

Outcome 1: More nursery children/ three-year-olds receive their education through the medium of Welsh

Outcome 2: More reception class children/ five-year-olds receive their education through the medium of Welsh

Outcome 3: More children continue to improve their Welsh language skills when transferring from one stage of their statutory education to another

Outcome 4: More learners study for assessed qualifications in Welsh (as a subject) and subjects through the medium of Welsh

Outcome 5: More opportunities for learners to use Welsh in different contexts in school

Outcome 6: An increase in the provision of Welsh-medium education for pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) in accordance with the duties imposed by the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018

Outcome 7: Increase the number of teaching staff able to teach Welsh (as a subject) and teach through the medium of Welsh

2.5 Welsh Ministers provide feedback to local authorities on their Annual Review Report. However, at the time this report is presented to Members the local authority has not received feedback for the current plan.

3. PROGRESS SUMMARY 2023/24:

3.1 Over the last three years, there has been steady growth in the uptake of Welsh-medium reception places across our Welsh-medium provision. This year, 9.7% of the total cohort of reception pupils attended a Welsh medium school, which is 67% of our 120 Reception learner target for 2030. However, this remains below our in year target of 79.4% because of a decline in applications to Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni.

3.2 We continue to work with our schools, promotion sub-group, and supporting partners to promote the benefits of a Welsh medium education and support for parents through a range of social media campaigns, website updates and engagement with school leaders. Officers and WEF members ensure that Welsh-medium education has a high profile at community events throughout the county such as, the Usk Show and Miri Mynwy. The LA takes every opportunity to engage with parents and carers about the benefits of a Welsh language education, and the Family Information Service regularly signposts

Welsh-medium groups and activities through its social media feed. This approach is having a positive impact on the take up of places at all our Welsh-medium LA nurseries. As a result, the number of children accessing childcare at Welsh-medium Cylch Meithrin settings is increasing. In January PLASC 2025, 77 children attended a Welsh-medium non-maintained setting compared to 63 in the previous year.

- 3.3 As a result of the actions taken, it is pleasing to note that the percentage of the school cohort of learners being taught through the medium of Welsh continues to grow with 58 Reception aged learners registered in one of our three Welsh-medium schools in 2024/25, and based on our projections, we expect to maintain this growth into the next academic year, 2025/26. To maintain this momentum, we will continue to increase capacity through the relocation of Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni to a significantly larger site in Abergavenny, support Ysgol Gymraeg Y Ffin to maintain its growth throughout the school and at the same time continue, to grow Ysgol Gymraeg Trefynwy so that it achieves its planned capacity of 210 pupils.
- 3.4 Late immersion provision is well-established in Ysgol Y Ffin, in the south of the county. Most pupils who have benefitted from attending the immersion class have made good progress in developing their Welsh language skills, and most make a successful transition into mainstream Welsh-medium provision. This provision continues to have a positive impact on the number of parents choosing Welsh-medium education. For example, numbers in the Cylch Meithrin show an increasing trend and this year there are 29 pupils in reception, which is the highest since the school opened. A second late immersion class is due to open in Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni in September to support an increase in demand for places as the school increases its capacity.
- 3.5 GCSE Welsh second language is offered in all four of Monmouthshire's secondary schools, with nearly all pupils being assessed in the subject with many achieving a GCSE. Pupils within Pupil Referral Services such as the Pupil Referral Unit and EOTAS, and those following a range of alternative provisions are generally not entered for this examination.
- 3.6 The overall percentage of pupils transferring from a Welsh-medium primary school in Monmouthshire to a Welsh-medium secondary school increased to 62% in 24/25. Most year 6 pupils in Ysgol Gymraeg Y Ffin transfer to Ysgol Gyfun Gwent Is Coed. The school has close links with the cluster, which support transition well. A range of targeted events for learners in year 5 ensure there are consistent messages to support progression into secondary Welsh-medium school. Nearly all year 6 pupils school engage positively a well-established six-week transition programme led by our youth service, which ensures a successful transition for many pupils. However, a minority of pupils transferred from Ysgol Gymraeg Fenni to Ysgol Gyfun Gwynllyw where transition arrangements are less well developed.

- 3.7 The LA regularly works with the Principal School Improvement Partner (PSIP) for Welsh medium schools, to support quality assurance of provision and learner progress of Monmouthshire learners across the 3 -19 age range. All schools have a School Improvement Partner (SIP) and in Welsh medium schools, support is provided through the medium of Welsh. The SIP work programme includes termly supported self-evaluation (SSE) activity focused on the quality of teaching and leadership, and its impact on the progress of all pupils. During 2024/25 one Welsh-medium school in Monmouthshire was inspected by Estyn. Strengths in the wide range of beneficial learning methods and experiences used by the promote oracy well and most pupils use the Welsh language confidently and with increasing accuracy.
- 3.8 The school improvement service provides an extensive professional learning offer for English-medium schools to support headteachers raise the profile of Welsh in their schools, set high expectations and lead the strategic development of Welsh language and culture. Of the three English-medium primary and two secondary schools inspected by Estyn in 2024/25. No schools had a recommendation to improve Welsh language skills or pupils; understanding of Welsh culture. However, on secondary school had a spotlight on the promotion and celebration of the Welsh language and culture.
- 3.9 GCSE Welsh second language is offered in all four of Monmouthshire's secondary schools, with most pupils being registered for, and assessed in, the subject. In 2024/25, 87.4% of the Year 11 cohort gained a Welsh Second Language GCSE, this is an improvement on the previous year when 86.6% gained the qualification.
- 3.10 Expertise in the teaching of Welsh Second Language at A level has been further developed through the collaborative delivery of the A Level across the county. Expertise in the teaching of Welsh Second Language at A level is being further developed through the collaborative delivery of the AS and A Level across the county and an E-sgol supported professional learning group. A Level Second Language Welsh is at the core of the Monmouthshire universal-sgol offer with three of the four schools having learners in the first cohort who will progress into Year 13. Currently, twenty-five learners have expressed an interest in studying for this qualification on September 2025.
- 3.11 Officers have engaged with directorates across Monmouthshire County Council, our schools, and further stakeholders, to develop post 16 'Pathways to Employment' programmes in sport, leisure, play and childcare. These innovative courses, based both in schools and in the workplace, will be offered as part of the sixth form curriculum for 2025-26m including a childcare course based in King Henry VIII 3-19 School. Students following this childcare programme have the opportunity to be

placed in Welsh speaking settings as part of their course, a few learners have expressed an interest intaking up these placements.

- 3.12 Nearly all schools are engaged with Siarter Iaith and Cymraeg Campus initiatives. Leaders have access to a range of networking opportunities to support implementation and development of practice, as well as dedicated network sessions for both English-medium and Welsh-medium schools, which include opportunities to receive information from partners such as the Urdd. During 2024-2025, 1244 contacts with young people were made through provision provided by the Urdd (commissioned through Monmouthshire Youth Service) which includes two Welsh speaking Youth Clubs (one for Year 6 pupils, and one for Year 7+) in Caldicot, one lunchtime club and the delivery of the year 6 Transition project in Ysgol Gymraeg Y Ffin. Overall, these programmes and events provide beneficial opportunities for children and young people to practice and improve their Welsh-language skills in authentic contexts.
- 3.13 A senior officer for ALN and a Welsh speaking specialist teacher are active members of Monmouthshire's Welsh in Education Forum (WEF). Progress towards outcome 6, is monitored through termly meetings which feed into the WEF. Most children with ALN in Monmouthshire are educated in mainstream provision, this includes within our three Welsh medium primary schools. The expectation is that schools appropriately identify any barriers to learning and ALN, providing an appropriate graduated response and additional learning provision through the medium of Welsh. A Welsh speaking specialist teacher delivers literacy interventions to learners and support staff and professional learning to these schools. On-going collaborative work with all three Welsh-medium primary schools is in place to allow for the sharing of best practice around developing effective provision and ensuring progress for children and young people with ALN.
- 3.14 The commitment to support learners and their families through the medium of the Welsh is illustrated well through the Monmouthshire Autism in Schools and Settings programme, developed in partnership with the Autism Education Trust and the National Autistic Society. This pioneering partnership work into Wales has meant that Monmouthshire were central to the development of this extensive programme in both languages.
- 3.15 Partnership working provides professional learning opportunities to develop Welsh-medium leaders at all levels. Monmouthshire schools have access to Welsh-medium professional learning for TAs/HLTAs, middle leaders, senior leaders, preparing for headship, new and acting headteacher programme. Schools have access to a range of professional learning opportunities for the teaching of Welsh and through the medium of Welsh. 85 Monmouthshire school-based staff engaged with the professional learning offer for Welsh during 24-25. The LA and school improvement service continues to promote and recruit to the sabbatical scheme, targeting schools and clusters to build capacity, and signs-off applications on behalf of the local authority through the National Centre portal. It also provides follow-up support and opportunities for

practitioners in schools post sabbatical, so that the impact of this professional learning is maximised for the benefit of learners. Since the start of the scheme, a total of forty-one practitioners have accessed sabbatical provision. This is beginning to have a positive impact on standards of Welsh language in our English-medium schools.

3.16 Overall, progress towards our five-year plan is on track in most areas and in the few areas where it is not, firm plans are in place to accelerate progress in the following areas:

1. Secure Cylch Meithrin provision in Monmouth to support growth in Ysgol Gymraeg Trefynwy.
2. Secure a permanent location to meet the demand for a Welsh-medium education in Monmouth.
3. Continue to embed late immersion provision in Monmouthshire
4. Improved rates of transition from a Welsh-medium primary school to a Welsh-medium secondary school.
5. Continue to improve pupils' Welsh language skills they can confidently apply in a wide range of situations and contexts. t

4. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

4.1 The on-going cost of staffing and resources in the new school is an additional revenue pressure for the local authority. This is expected to remain a pressure in Ysgol Gymraeg Trefynwy until pupil numbers increase to reflect school budget formula funding.

4.2 The on-going cost of staffing for immersion provision to support latecomers to Welsh is included in the Local Government Education Grant from September 2024. Currently, the grant is sufficient to meet the costs for two immersion classes. However, as the grant is a fixed amount, increased staffing costs may mean that the costs will become an additional revenue pressure for the local authority in future years.

5. WELLBEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS IMPLICATIONS (INCORPORATING EQUALITIES, SUSTAINABILITY, SAFEGUARDING AND CORPORATE PARENTING)

5.1 The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 requires public bodies to work towards seven well-being goals, one of which is 'A Wales of Vibrant Culture and Thriving Welsh Language'. The Local Authority has a duty to promote and facilitate the use of Welsh and work towards the well-being goals. Education, through the WESP, has a significant role in supporting the development of Welsh language and culture.

6. SAFEGUARDING AND CORPORATE PARENTING IMPLICATIONS:

- 6.1 Safeguarding arrangements and access to support from Local Authority services apply equally to children and pupils in Welsh medium settings and schools.
- 6.2 Officers from Education, Inclusion and Children's services work in close partnership with all schools and settings, to ensure that learners are kept safe.

7. CONSULTEES:

- RhAg
- Urdd
- Coleg Gwent
- Menter Iaith
- Mudiad Meithrin
- Education Achievement Service
- DMT

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

- The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015
- Prosperity for All: the national strategy
- Cymraeg 2050: A million Welsh speakers 2017
- Education in Wales: Our National Mission, Action Plan 2017-21
- The Welsh in Education, Action Plan 2017- 21
- Taking Wales Forward 2016-2021
- Guidance on Welsh in Education Strategic Plans
- Monmouthshire Welsh Language Strategy 2017 -2022
- Welsh-medium Education Strategy: next steps

9. AUTHOR:

Sharon Randall-Smith

Head of Service Children and Young People Directorate

10. CONTACT DETAILS:

Tel: 01633644208/ 07973884461

E-mail: SharonRandall-Smith@monmouthshire.gov.uk