

**National Assembly for Wales**  
Enterprise and Learning Committee

The teaching and acquisition of Welsh as a  
second language

September 2010



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The Enterprise and Learning Committee  
National Assembly for Wales  
Cardiff Bay  
CF99 1NA

Tel: 029 2089 8018  
Fax: 029 2089 8021  
Email: [Enterprise.learning.comm@Wales.gov.uk](mailto:Enterprise.learning.comm@Wales.gov.uk)

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## **Enterprise and Learning Committee**

The Enterprise and Learning Committee is appointed by the National Assembly for Wales to consider and report on issues within the areas of economic development, transport, and education, lifelong learning and skills. In particular, the Committee may examine the expenditure, administration and policy of the Welsh Government and associated public bodies.

### **Powers**

The Committee was established following the National Assembly Elections in May 2007 as one of the National Assembly's scrutiny committees. Its powers are set out in the National Assembly for Wales's Standing Orders, particularly Standing Order 12. The Standing Orders are available at [www.assemblywales.org](http://www.assemblywales.org)

## **Rapporteur Group membership**

<b>Committee Member</b>	<b>Party</b>	<b>Constituency or Region</b>
Gareth Jones (Chair)	Plaid Cymru	Aberconwy
Jeff Cuthbert	Labour	Caerphilly
David Melding	Welsh Conservative Party	South Wales Central
Jenny Randerson	Welsh Liberal Democrats	Cardiff Central

## **Committee membership**

<b>Committee Member</b>	<b>Party</b>	<b>Constituency or Region</b>
Gareth Jones (Chair)	Plaid Cymru	Aberconwy
Christine Chapman	Labour	Cynon Valley
Jeff Cuthbert	Labour	Caerphilly
Andrew Davies	Labour	Swansea West
Paul Davies	Welsh Conservative Party	Preseli Pembrokeshire
Nerys Evans	Plaid Cymru	Mid and West Wales
Brian Gibbons	Labour	Aberavon
David Melding	Welsh Conservative Party	South Wales Central
Jenny Randerson	Welsh Liberal Democrats	Cardiff Central



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## The Committee's Recommendations

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The Committee's recommendations to the Welsh Government are listed below in the order that they appear in this report. Please refer to the relevant pages of the report to see the supporting evidence and conclusions:

**Recommendation 1.** We recommend that the Welsh Assembly Government work closely with local education authorities to implement a clearer definition of the wide range of bilingual schools to ensure a greater consistency across Wales in the planning, development and implementation of bilingual policies. (Page 16)

**Recommendation 2.** We recommend that the Welsh Government consider assessing the languages skills of all pupils earlier in Key Stage 2. We also recommend that the Welsh Government commission research into the current levels of language continuity from one Key Stage to the next and what measures can be taken to address existing problems in transition. (Page 18)

**Recommendation 3.** We recommend that the Welsh Government commission research into the impact of introducing the Welsh second language GCSE as a core subject in the curriculum. (Page 21)

**Recommendation 4.** Given that the A\* - C results of the short course are significantly lower than the full course, we recommend that the Welsh Government work with its partners and schools to make more room in the curriculum for the full Welsh Second Language GCSE course to be taught effectively. (Page 21)

**Recommendation 5.** We recommend that the Welsh Government explore opportunities for further investment into and promotion of more varied Welsh language teaching materials for learners at primary and secondary levels, particularly provision for internet based and Information Technology based learning material. We also recommend that the investment into such resources should not be to the detriment of teaching provision. (Page 22)

**Recommendation 6.** We recommend that the Welsh Government explore the implementation of a more intensive Welsh language course which would prepare post-16 pupils to react to various situations within the work environment. (Page 23)

**Recommendation 7.** We also recommend that the Welsh Government explore ways to implement an accredited Welsh language course in post-16 education, with more focus on using Welsh as a vocational skill. (Page 23)

**Recommendation 8.** We recommend that the Welsh Government commission research into the actions taken by schools to encourage teachers to enrol onto Welsh medium courses. We also recommend that the Welsh Government consider how best it can provide support and advice to schools and teachers on how to carefully manage resources to accommodate teachers' absence for training purposes. (Page 24)

**Recommendation 9.** We recommend that the Welsh Government consider enhancing the provision to deliver training for classroom assistants in the teaching of Welsh as a second language. We recommend that Welsh Language Centres for Adults or the Geiriau Bach pilot be considered to deliver this training. (Page 25)

**Recommendation 10.** We recommend that the Welsh Government consider the establishment of an intensive Welsh language course for non-Welsh speaking teachers and support staff. We recommend that Welsh Language Centres for Adults be considered to deliver these courses. (Page 25)

**Recommendation 11.** We recommend that the Welsh Government consider accrediting the Cynllun Colegau Cymru Welsh-language programme to provide an additional incentive to teachers to learn Welsh. (Page 25)

**Recommendation 12.** We recommend that guidance should be provided to school governing bodies and headteachers on how they can develop a 'bilingual ethos' in their schools. This guidance should focus on increasing the understanding of accountability and responsibility, and co-operation between schools, Local Education Authorities, the Welsh Language Board and the Welsh Government. The Welsh Government may wish to use Treorchy Comprehensive School as a model of good practice. (Page 27)

**Recommendation 13.** We recommend that the Welsh Government consider using the Schools Effectiveness Framework to build bridges between Welsh medium schools and English medium schools to develop professional learning communities and share Welsh language teaching expertise. (Page 27)

**Recommendation 14.** We recommend that the Welsh Government explore ways of working with the Welsh Language Board, the WJEC and the Urdd to promote the benefits of the Welsh language effectively amongst non-Welsh

speaking parents, particularly the significant number of parents who are reluctant to encourage their children to learn Welsh. (Page 29)

**Recommendation 15.** We recommend that the Welsh Government collaborate with S4C and the WJEC to develop new Welsh second language learning programmes which incorporate popular culture and are relevant to modern society. We also recommend that these programmes be broadcast through all media outlets available to S4C to ensure that Welsh second language learners have instant access to learning resources. (Page 30)

**Recommendation 16.** We recommend that the Welsh Government work with the Welsh Language Board to prepare and issue guidance for schools to recognise the different degrees of bilingualism. We also recommend that any guidance issued should include an appropriate inspection grade, in line with those grades provided for sustainable development and international relations. (Page 31)

**Recommendation 17.** We recommend that the Welsh Government consider the feasibility of implementing a Bilingual Friendly Schools Initiative, which would place an emphasis on a whole school approach to bilingualism. (Page 31)

**Recommendation 18.** We recommend that the Welsh Government explore a graduated system of rewarding competence of English-Welsh bilingualism suitable for primary, secondary and tertiary education. (Page 31)

**Recommendation 19.** We recommend that the Welsh Government, in conjunction with its partners, oversee and monitor the development and promotion of local and national bilingual education strategies and ensure that schools across Wales are provided with the necessary support and advice to ensure that all education policies are compatible with bilingual provision. We also recommend that the views of schools in Wales are represented on the proposed Welsh language Commissioner's Advisory Panel. (Page 32)

**Recommendation 20.** We recommend that the Welsh Government commission further research into the practice of employing peripatetic Welsh teachers to help bridge the transition between Key Stages 2 and 3 as used by Treorchy Comprehensive School and explore opportunities to share best practice with English-medium schools throughout Wales. (Page 33)

**Recommendation 21.** We recommend that the Welsh Government continue to provide adequate financial support to the Geiriau Bach project beyond

2011 and that it explore commissioning further pilots across Wales. We also recommend that the Welsh Government be pro-active in providing regular feedback and the necessary support to existing and future projects.(Page 34)

**Recommendation 22.** We recommend that the Welsh Assembly Government ensure that the conclusions and recommendations of our report will be reflected in the implementation of the Welsh-medium Education Strategy. (Page 37)

## **Background to the inquiry**

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### **Purpose of the inquiry**

1. At its meeting on 15 January 2009, the Enterprise and Learning Committee elected a cross party Rapporteur Group to consider different aspects of bilingualism in Wales and report its findings. The membership of the group was: Jeff Cuthbert AM; Gareth Jones AM; David Melding AM; and Jenny Randerson AM.
2. The Rapporteur Group on Bilingualism ('the group') discussed its priorities at its first informal meeting on 5 February 2009. It decided to focus on the following three strategic areas:
  - The teaching and acquisition of Welsh as a second language;
  - Bilingual training and skills in the workplace; and
  - Business interface with the public.
3. This report focuses on the first area of the inquiry to examine the teaching and acquisition of Welsh as a second language. The final two stages of the inquiry will be completed before the end of the third Assembly.
4. The group held seven informal meetings and visits between February 2009 and May 2010, which included five informal meetings in Cardiff Bay with bilingual education professionals and two visits to examples of good practice. A list of the activities undertaken by the Rapporteur Group on Bilingualism is at Annex A.
5. The group are very grateful to everyone who sent information to them about the teaching and acquisition of Welsh as a second language as well as the many people who made time to meet them in person - they are also listed at Annex A.

## **Iaith Pawb**

6. The group worked within the context of Iaith Pawb, the Welsh Government's National Action Plan for the Welsh Language<sup>1</sup>, which was published in 2003. The action plan identifies the following key targets, which are to be met by 2011:

- the percentage of people in Wales able to speak Welsh has increased by 5 percentage points from the figure which emerges from the census of 2001;
- the decline in the number of communities where Welsh is spoken by over 70 per cent of the population is arrested;
- the percentage of children receiving Welsh medium pre-school education has increased;
- the percentage of families where Welsh is the principal language of conversation/communication between adults and children at home has increased;
- more services, by public, private and voluntary organisations are able to be delivered through the medium of Welsh.

## **Welsh-medium Education Strategy**

7. During the course of the inquiry, the Welsh Government published its draft Welsh-medium Education Strategy<sup>2</sup> which was developed in response to the commitment in *One Wales: a Progressive Agenda for the Government of Wales*<sup>3</sup> to 'create a national Welsh-medium Education Strategy to develop effective provision to teach Welsh from nursery through to further and higher education, backed by an implementation programme'.

8. The aim of the Strategy is to ensure that the education system in Wales makes it possible for more learners of all ages to achieve a broader range of Welsh language skills enabling learners to use Welsh socially and in the workplace.

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<sup>1</sup> Welsh Assembly Government – Iaith Pawb: A national action plan for bilingual Wales

<sup>2</sup> Welsh Assembly Government – Welsh-medium Education Strategy, 2009

<sup>3</sup> Welsh Assembly Government – One Wales: a Progressive Agenda for the Government of Wales

9. The main elements of the Strategy 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.

10. The strategy also aims to raise standards in the teaching of Welsh as a second language so that ‘those not opting for Welsh-medium education should [also] have better opportunities to develop Welsh-language skills which enrich their experiences of living in a bilingual country’<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> Welsh Assembly Government – Welsh-medium Education Strategy, 2009

## **Why is bilingualism important for children in Wales?**

11. The group heard from several witnesses that there are many possible advantages of bilingualism from which children and adults can benefit.

12. Written evidence provided by Professor Colin Baker<sup>5</sup> stated that:

‘Research has shown that having two well developed languages can give people particular advantages in thinking. [...] There are four main areas:

‘*Creative thinking* – bilingual children have two or more words for each object and idea. When different meanings are attached to words in the two languages, a bilingual person may develop the ability to think more flexibly;

‘*Sensitivity* – bilingual people have to know which language to speak with whom, and when. They therefore appear to be more sensitive to the needs of listeners than monolingual people;

‘*IQ Test* – research from many different countries of the world shows that bilingual people tend to do better at IQ tests compared with monolingual people of the same socio-economic class;

‘*A head start in reading* – bilingualism, being less fixed on the sound and more centred on the meaning of words, has been shown by Canadian researchers to give a head start in learning to read. This tends to be an advantage for bilingual children around the ages of four to six.’

### **Defining bilingualism**

13. “Welsh speaking” schools are currently defined for the purposes of the school curriculum in Section 105(7) of the Education Act 2002 which states:

“...a school is Welsh-speaking if more than one half of the following subjects are taught (wholly or partly) in Welsh -

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<sup>5</sup> Professor Colin Baker is a leading academic expert on bilingualism and education from Bangor University. He published the third and fourth edition of his book ‘Foundations of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism’ (2001, 2006). The first edition of this book was the 1994 Standing Conference in Education Book Prize-winner (best book of 1993 by an established author).

- (a) religious education, and
- (b) the subjects other than English and Welsh which are foundation subjects in relation to pupils at the school.”

14. The Welsh Assembly Government’s document *Defining schools according to Welsh medium provision* <sup>6</sup> sets out definitions and categories of schools in Wales according to the language which is used as the medium of instruction and the normal business of the school. Welsh medium provision in secondary schools falls into the following categories: Welsh-medium secondary school; Bilingual secondary school; predominantly English-medium secondary school with significant use of Welsh; and predominantly English-medium secondary school. The bilingual secondary school category has four sub-divisions according to the percentage of subjects taught through the medium of Welsh and whether there is parallel provision in English:

‘Category 2A – At least 80 per cent of subjects apart from English and Welsh are taught only through the medium of Welsh to all pupils. One or two subjects are taught to some pupils in English or both languages.

‘Category 2B – At least 80 per cent of subjects (excluding Welsh and English) are taught through the medium of Welsh but are also taught through the medium of English.

‘Category 2C – 50-79 per cent of subjects (excluding Welsh and English) are taught through the medium of Welsh but are also taught through the medium of English.

‘Category 2CH – All subjects, except Welsh and English taught to all pupils using both languages’.

15. In January 2009, Estyn published its Annual Report for 2007/08. A definition of bilingualism and an explanation of the basis for inspection is included in the Report:

“The ability to speak, read and write in two languages. In Wales bilingualism relates to Welsh and English, as the official languages of Wales. When we inspect bilingualism, we look at learners’

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<sup>6</sup> Welsh Assembly Government – Defining schools according to Welsh medium provision, p 12

achievement in Welsh and English and the extent to which providers promote and develop learners' bilingual skills.”<sup>7</sup>

16. The group heard from several witnesses that there are problems in defining bilingualism and it is often interpreted in many different ways across Wales.

17. Written evidence provided by Gareth Wyn Roberts<sup>8</sup> stated that:

“Many schools have a ‘Welsh policy’ and an ‘English policy’ or a language development policy, but no bilingual policy.”

18. Bilingualism reflects the learner's ability, at different levels, to switch from one language to another, to receive material in one language and process it and apply it in the other. The group heard that there are different degrees of bilingualism, but this is not generally appreciated or understood outside Welsh speaking areas or outside Welsh medium schools.

19. During the group's inquiry, the Enterprise and Learning Committee undertook an inquiry into the Transformation agenda in post-16 education<sup>9</sup>. The Committee received evidence from UCAC<sup>10</sup> stating that they had concerns that some local authorities have misinterpreted Welsh Government policies and guidance in relation to the language medium of educational provision such as *Defining schools according to Welsh medium provision*<sup>11</sup>. UCAC's oral evidence stated that:

“What has become more and more apparent to us is that local authorities as well as, at times, Assembly Government officials have not understood that difference; namely, that it is important to continue with Welsh-medium provision in institutions where all opportunities are available through the medium of Welsh, not just teaching courses through the medium of Welsh and that there is a

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<sup>7</sup> Estyn, Annual Report 2007/8

[http://www.estyn.gov.uk/publications/Estyn%20Annual%20Report%202007\\_2008\(e\).pdf](http://www.estyn.gov.uk/publications/Estyn%20Annual%20Report%202007_2008(e).pdf)

<sup>8</sup> Gareth Wyn Roberts is an educational consultant, Registered Schools Inspector and Modern Foreign Languages specialist, in respect of the teaching and acquisition of Welsh as a second language in secondary schools.

<sup>9</sup> Enterprise and Learning Committee – Transformation agenda in education

<sup>10</sup> Enterprise and Learning Committee – Written evidence from UCAC – 29 April 2010

<sup>11</sup> Welsh Assembly Government – Defining schools according to Welsh medium provision <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/publications/guidance/definingschools?lang=en>

difference, therefore, between a bilingual institution and a Welsh-medium institution.”<sup>12</sup>

**We recommend that the Welsh Assembly Government work closely with local education authorities to implement a clearer definition of the wide range of bilingual schools to ensure a greater consistency across Wales in the planning, development and implementation of bilingual policies.**

## **Challenges and opportunities**

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### **Teaching Welsh as a second language**

20. Under the Education Act 2002, Welsh second language is a foundation subject of the National Curriculum in Wales. The five years of the secondary phase are divided into two key stages. Key Stage 3 covers the three years from ages 11-14, and Key Stage 4 for the two years from ages 14-16. It is a statutory requirement that all pupils are taught Welsh to the end of Key Stage 4, either as a first or second language. As with all other subjects in the curriculum, the amount of time given to its study is a matter for local determination by schools.

21. The group were concerned by the conclusions of successive Annual Reports of Her Majesty’s Chief Inspector of Education in Wales (Estyn), which highlighted weaknesses in the teaching of Welsh as a second language. Estyn’s 2007/08 Annual Report found that English medium primary and secondary schools provided very few opportunities for learners to use Welsh in other subjects, extra-curricular activities or informal situations. With regard to secondary schools the Estyn report stated:

“The weak performance of Welsh second language continues from previous years, and it is worse now than it was in the past. We reported last year that almost half the work had some important shortcomings. This year, two-thirds of pupils’ work in Welsh second language has important shortcomings. Teaching in Welsh second language is much worse than in other subjects. Eighty-four per cent of secondary pupils in Wales study Welsh as a second language, but the number of pupils studying the full GCSE course in Welsh second language continues to fall. Many pupils are not doing as well as they could in Welsh second language at Key Stage 4 because they do not

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<sup>12</sup> Enterprise and Learning Committee – Record of Proceedings Para 210 and 211, 29 April 2010

receive enough teaching time and the quality of teaching is poor overall. Too many pupils fail to attain a recognised qualification in Welsh second language at the end of Key Stage 4. Only 76 per cent of those studying Welsh as a second language registered for examination in 2007. Most local authorities are not doing enough to help schools to set targets and to develop strategies to improve the provision for Welsh second language at Key Stage 4.”<sup>13</sup>

### ***Transition from primary to secondary***

22. The Estyn Annual report 2008/09 stated that:

“...while Welsh second language in Key Stage 2 was much better than the previous year, it remained the poorest performing subject, and the proportion of schools with good or better work still dropped significantly from 89 per cent in Key Stage 1 to 74 per cent in Key Stage 2.”<sup>14</sup>

23. In his evidence to the group, Gareth Wyn Roberts stated that a significant problem relevant to the secondary sector is a repetition rather than the reinforcement of language skills and knowledge from the primary sector. Similar evidence received from several witnesses who also claimed that many learners coming from a primary school feel that they are taking a step backwards in learning Welsh when entering secondary school and lose motivation.

24. Written evidence provided by the Welsh Assembly Government’s Welsh Language Development Unit<sup>15</sup> stated that there had been “insufficient progression arrangements leading to repetition of the same work and disillusionment amongst pupils, especially between Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3.”

25. Geiriau Bach indicated that the transition from the Foundation Phase to Key Stage 2 was also a key area for concern. They, in respect of an effective cross-over of pupils from primary to secondary level, felt that collaboration between all parties is vital and that those parties must ensure that consistent, robust standards are developed.

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<sup>13</sup> Estyn Annual Report, 2007/08

<sup>14</sup> Estyn Annual report, 2008/09

<sup>15</sup> Written evidence provided by the Welsh Assembly Government, p4

26. In their evidence to the group, ESIS<sup>16</sup> also raised concerns with the transition from primary to secondary education. They claimed that the switch to the focus on the curriculum at secondary level was problematic and that often those teaching Welsh were not language experts<sup>17</sup>.

27. ESIS also felt that the secondary schools sector has not taken sufficient notice of bilingual teaching at primary level. Their evidence stated that although Estyn is monitoring this issue, they believe that secondary schools need to understand that it is not Estyn's responsibility alone and that they must claim some responsibility for bilingual issues in feeder primary schools.

28. The group received the following comments from Cennard Davies, Editor of 'papur bro' for the Upper Rhondda, '*Y Glorian*' and former Head of Welsh at the University of Glamorgan:

"It concerns me that the education of some children who have attended Welsh medium primary schools is compromised because they go on to secondary schools which are essentially English medium schools."<sup>18</sup>

29. He feels that pupils in Treorchy Comprehensive School who have come from Welsh medium primary schools lose the experience of learning a wide range of subjects through the medium of Welsh and the experience of socialising daily with Welsh speaking peers. He informed the group that of the children in Treorchy Comprehensive School who could speak Welsh fluently, each one had been educated in a Welsh medium primary school.

30. Treorchy Comprehensive School is beginning the process of introducing the language early. Cennard Davies stated that the assessment of language skills should be done as early as possible in a child's education in order to see the full potential of the language within the English primary sector.

**We recommend that the Welsh Government consider assessing the languages skills of all pupils earlier in Key Stage 2. We also recommend that the Welsh Government commission research into the current levels of language continuity from one Key Stage to the next and what measures can be taken to address existing problems in transition.**

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<sup>16</sup> ESIS (the Education and Schools Improvement Service) is a joint working arrangement between the county borough councils of Bridgend, Caerphilly, Merthyr Tydfil and Rhondda Cynon Tâf. Nine Athrawon Bro are part of ESIS.

<sup>17</sup> ESIS – presentation notes

<sup>18</sup> Written evidence provided by Cennard Davies

## *The GCSE short and full course*<sup>19</sup>

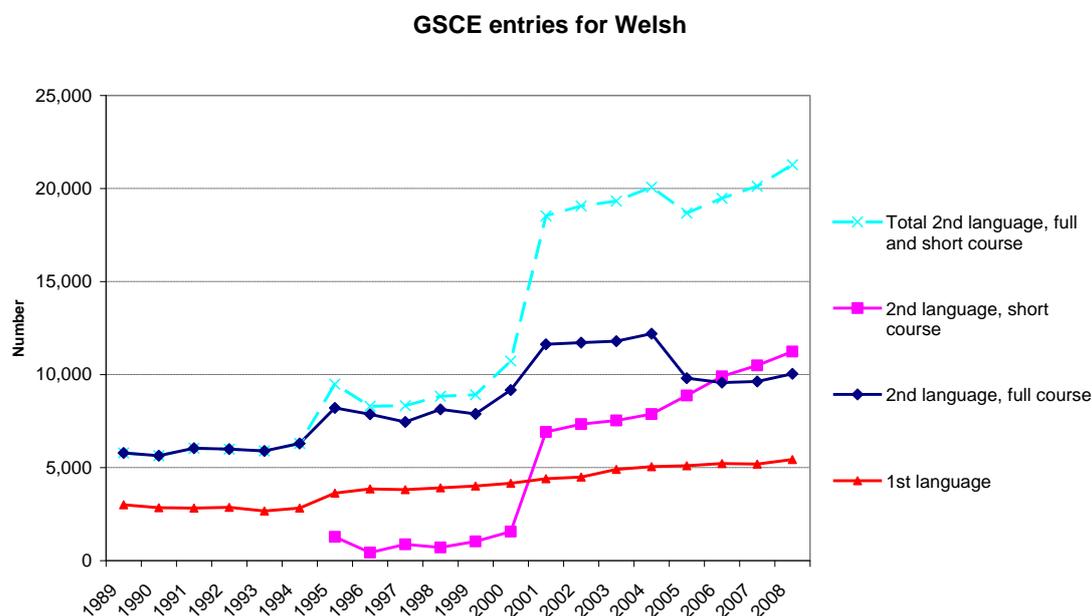
31. In October 2007, Estyn published an evaluation of the GCSE Welsh second language short course and came to the conclusion that:

“There are fundamental shortcomings in the delivery of Welsh as a second language at Key Stage 4 and in the delivery of the short GCSE course in particular. [...] these shortcomings are an obstacle to meeting the target in *laith Pawb* of increasing by 2011 the proportion of Welsh speakers by five percentage points from the 2001 figure.”<sup>20</sup>

32. In their evidence, ESIS stated that the GCSE short course is actually having a “negative rather than positive effect” in the learning of Welsh as a second language.

33. Chart 1 shows how the numbers entering for the Welsh second language GCSE increased following the 1988 Education Reform Act<sup>21</sup>. The group heard from the Welsh Language Board that the large increase in the numbers entering for the GCSE short course’s examination since 2001 is one of the most striking features.

Chart 1



<sup>19</sup> GCSE Short course candidates are required to attain Unit 1: Written paper, Higher and Foundation Tier, and Unit 2: Controlled Assessment.

GCSE Full course candidates are required to attain Unit 1: Written paper, Higher and Foundation Tier, Unit 2: Controlled Assessment, Unit 3: Oral examination, and Unit 4: Written paper, Higher and Foundation Tier.

<sup>20</sup> Estyn, ‘An evaluation of the GCSE Welsh second language short course’ October 2007

<sup>21</sup> Written evidence provided by the Welsh Language Board, p1

Source: WJEC statistics

34. Written evidence provided by WJEC<sup>22</sup> outlined the results for the Welsh second language GCSE short course which are lower than those for the Full course every year. The table below is an example of the cumulative percentages for 2007 - 2009:

<b>Year</b>	<b>Full Course A* - C</b>	<b>Short Course A* - C</b>	<b>Full Course A* - G</b>	<b>Short Course A* - G</b>
<b>2007</b>	<b>70.5%</b>	<b>47.4%</b>	<b>99.2%</b>	<b>97.5%</b>
<b>2008</b>	<b>72.0%</b>	<b>47.9%</b>	<b>99.5%</b>	<b>97.2%</b>
<b>2009</b>	<b>72.8%</b>	<b>49.1%</b>	<b>99.3%</b>	<b>97.5%</b>

35. The group heard that there are several reasons to explain the lower results. The time allocated for the delivery of the short course GCSE in some schools is as little as 30 minutes every week or one hour a fortnight, and it is often non-specialist teachers who happen to speak Welsh that teach the Welsh language course. In response to a teachers' questionnaire in 2007, the WJEC received evidence that schools would not be able to maintain two Welsh Second Language GCSE courses simultaneously because of lack of time within the curriculum and a shortage of specialist teachers.<sup>23</sup>

36. These conclusions, supported by school inspection findings, reflect the pattern that has emerged over several years: standards in Welsh second language at Key Stage 4 are lower than in any other subject with nearly 60 per cent of lessons displaying shortcomings in pupils' achievements.<sup>24</sup>

37. Written evidence provided by the Welsh Assembly Government's Welsh Language Development Unit<sup>25</sup> stated that:

“Welsh second language is a ‘foundation’ subject while Welsh first language, English, Mathematics and Science are ‘core’ subjects in the curriculum. As with all other subjects in the curriculum, the amount of time given to its study is a matter for local determination by schools.”.

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<sup>22</sup> Written evidence provided by WJEC, p2

<sup>23</sup> Written evidence provided by WJEC, p2

<sup>24</sup> Written evidence provided by Dr. W Gwyn Lewis, p3

<sup>25</sup> Written evidence provided by the Welsh Assembly Government, p 1

38. The Welsh Language Development Unit later added that:

“If Welsh second language was made a core subject, the allocation of time may change as senior management teams would approach it differently as results would affect the standing of the school.”

**We recommend that the Welsh Government commission research into the impact of introducing the Welsh second language GCSE as a core subject in the curriculum.**

39. Written evidence provided by the Welsh Assembly Government’s Welsh Language Development Unit stated that:

“the current assessment and accreditation systems are not encouraging all pupils to see the worth and relevance of Welsh second language and not every learner aged 15/16 sits an examination or gains a qualification in the subject. Moreover, the GCSE short course leads to limited expectations.”<sup>26</sup>

40. A new Welsh Second Language GCSE, which was accredited in 2009, will be taught for the first time in September 2010. Two courses will be made available to learners – Welsh Second Language and Welsh Second Language Applied. Both will offer a short course and a full course. Written evidence provided by the WJEC stated that:

“WJEC hopes that school heads will make room in the curriculum for teachers to teach the full course because there is greater value to a full course certificate, which leads to higher status in the subject.”

**Given that the A\* - C results of the short course are significantly lower than the full course, we recommend that the Welsh Government work with its partners and schools to make more room in the curriculum for the full Welsh Second Language GCSE course to be taught effectively.**

### ***Teaching facilities and materials***

41. Written evidence provided by the Welsh Assembly Government’s Welsh Language Development Unit stated that “ensuring the availability of a wide range of learning and teaching resources is key to presenting Welsh second language successfully.”<sup>27</sup> The group heard that approximately £360,000 per year has been invested over the past decade in the development of Welsh second language resources for pupils aged 3-19 and last year, printed materials generated gross sales of over £100,000.

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<sup>26</sup> Written evidence provided by the Welsh Assembly Government, p4

<sup>27</sup> Written evidence provided by the Welsh Assembly Government, p3

42. Written evidence provided by Gareth Wyn Roberts stated that compared with more widely spoken languages, there is a relatively small range of suitable and varied Welsh language teaching material available at a primary level particularly information technology based material. In his oral evidence to the Committee, however, he stated that although the availability of material was of great importance, the enthusiasm and knowledge of a fully qualified teacher was of greater value.

43. Dr. W Gwyn Lewis<sup>28</sup> conducted research to examine the reasons why the standards of attainment in Welsh second language are so low. His written evidence<sup>29</sup> stated that:

“Both at primary and secondary level it is clear that (Welsh Second language) teachers feel the resources are inadequate; at secondary level, in particular, they invariably compare with Modern Foreign Language (MFL) resources – and Welsh Second Language (WSL) materials always come out as ‘inferior’.

“Good use is made of any resources that are available; the majority of respondents referred to useful materials produced by the Local Education Authorities. A significant number (30 per cent) said that they had to design and produce their own resources and that there was insufficient ICT-related materials available.”

**We recommend that the Welsh Government explore opportunities for further investment into and promotion of more varied Welsh language teaching materials for learners at primary and secondary levels, particularly provision for internet based and Information Technology based learning material. We also recommend that the investment into such resources should not be to the detriment of teaching provision.**

### **Provision for post -16 and adult learners**

44. The Welsh Assembly Government steers the Welsh for Adults programme at a strategic level and co-ordinates it nationally. The programme, which is the largest adult and community learning programme in Wales, had 18,220 learners in 2008/09 in comparison with 17,570 in 2007/08<sup>30</sup>. In 2006, the Welsh Government established six Welsh for Adults Centres to lead on the work of planning, funding and developing provision on the ground in

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<sup>28</sup> Dr. W Gwyn Lewis is a leading researcher in Welsh-medium education in the bilingual context in Wales, both at primary and secondary school level.

<sup>29</sup> Written evidence provided by Dr. W Gwyn Lewis, p7

<sup>30</sup> Written evidence provided by the Welsh Assembly Government, p2

partnership with third party providers. They are also responsible for ensuring quality and providing training for tutors.

45. Written evidence provided by the Welsh Assembly Government's Welsh Language Development Unit outlined how it is working with Sgiliaith and the WJEC to develop Iaith ar Waith units. Iaith ar Waith is a contemporary qualification designed to be studied alongside vocational subjects and enables first and second language learners' competence in providing customer services through the medium of Welsh including elements of bilingualism.<sup>31</sup> Evidence from the WJEC argues that the Welsh Assembly Government should consider the development of units which will enhance the language skills of post-16 pupils, including more intensive courses or units to improve pupils' language skills in preparation for the workplace.

46. The group welcomed news that the Welsh Government has commissioned academic research into how the Welsh language is taught to adults.<sup>32</sup> The group heard that this research will review the teaching methodologies currently used to provide Welsh for Adults courses and will make recommendations for the development of the Welsh for Adults curriculum.

**We recommend that the Welsh Government explore the implementation of a more intensive Welsh language course which would prepare post-16 pupils to react to various situations within the work environment.**

**We also recommend that the Welsh Government explore ways to implement an accredited Welsh language course in post-16 education, with more focus on using Welsh as a vocational skill.**

### **Practitioner training**

47. The group heard evidence from Gareth Wyn Roberts that many school teachers have little Welsh themselves and are teaching to the limits of their ability regardless of their enthusiasm to teach. His written evidence states that "generalist primary school teachers, with a few exceptions, lack the specialist skills to teach a second language – whether they speak Welsh or not."<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Written evidence provided by the Welsh Assembly Government, p7

<sup>32</sup> Written evidence provided by the Welsh Assembly Government, p6

<sup>33</sup> Written evidence provided by Gareth Wyn Roberts, p3

48.ESIS raised concerns about the lack of Welsh Language skills and experience among teachers throughout Wales, particularly at Key Stage 2<sup>34</sup>. The group heard anecdotal evidence that there are serious pressures within the core subjects due to low numbers of Welsh speakers, and that more training courses are required for teachers.

49.The group heard that the three-week courses for teachers Level 1-3<sup>35</sup> are in the highest demand across Wales. However, due to limited resources some Local Education Authorities had provided little funding for teachers to enrol onto the course. The group heard that Bridgend, for example, had halved the number of teachers funded for the course.

50.ESIS provided anecdotal evidence which claimed that some headteachers are reluctant to release teachers for training because of a lack of suitable calibre staff to stand in for them.

51.Written evidence provided by the Welsh Language Development Unit stated that:

“..often teachers are unable to attend the CPD (Continuing Professional Development) courses available to them due to budgetary limitations within schools or difficulties in being released from schools. There is also little overall evidence about the efficacy of such training.”

**We recommend that the Welsh Government commission research into the actions taken by schools to encourage teachers to enrol onto Welsh medium courses. We also recommend that the Welsh Government consider how best it can provide support and advice to schools and teachers on how to carefully manage resources to accommodate teachers’ absence for training purposes.**

52.Although teachers are key to the success of delivering Welsh language lessons and are a priority for training, all those who met with the group emphasised the importance of classroom assistants (LSAs), who play a significant and increasingly important role in delivering lessons. The group heard that there was a need to train those staff to a suitable level and that

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<sup>34</sup> Written evidence provided by ESIS, p3

<sup>35</sup> The main aim of the intensive Welsh course is to enable teachers to have a working knowledge of Welsh so that they can introduce the language in their classrooms to the end of National Curriculum Key Stage 2.This course will focus on: the learning of vocabulary, language functions and phrases (incidental Welsh) useful in various classroom situations; the appropriate methodology required to teach Welsh second language; how to make effective use of the whole range of teaching resources: books, videos, tapes and games.

many classroom assistants prefer to enrol onto the one-week course, which enables participants to gain confidence in promoting bilingualism throughout the school. The classroom assistants often return for refreshers.

**We recommend that the Welsh Government consider enhancing the provision to deliver training for classroom assistants in the teaching of Welsh as a second language. We recommend that Welsh Language Centres for Adults or the Geiriau Bach pilot be considered to deliver this training.**

53. Following the visit to Treorchy Comprehensive School, the group received comments from Cennard Davies, raising concerns about the supply of qualified teachers.<sup>36</sup> He stated that “without an increased supply of qualified teachers, it would not be possible to emulate the good practice being achieved in Treorchy Comprehensive School on a large scale.” He called for the introduction of intensive Welsh language courses for non-Welsh speaking teachers, a provision which he believes is disappearing at a time when the demand for Welsh speaking teachers is growing.

**We recommend that the Welsh Government consider the establishment of an intensive Welsh language course for non-Welsh speaking teachers and support staff. We recommend that Welsh Language Centres for Adults be considered to deliver these courses.**

54. Written evidence provided by the Welsh Language Development Unit stated that:

“There is some provision to enhance Welsh second language within basic initial teacher training (ITT). *Cynllun Colegau Cymru* is a Welsh-language programme that is used to teach Welsh as a second language in ITT centres, and is appropriate for trainees who wish to teach in English-medium primary schools. This programme is additional to the standard ITT course and is unaccredited.”<sup>37</sup>

55. The group heard from Gareth Roberts and from the Geiriau Bach project at Trinity Carmarthen that accrediting courses provides an important incentive to teachers to take up training opportunities.

**We recommend that the Welsh Government consider accrediting the Cynllun Colegau Cymru Welsh-language programme to provide an additional incentive to teachers to learn Welsh.**

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<sup>36</sup> Written evidence provided by Cennard Davies

<sup>37</sup> Written evidence provided by the Welsh Assembly Government, p2

## ***Strong leadership***

56. The group heard from several witnesses that leadership was a crucial element in creating a bilingual environment and ensuring the effective teaching of Welsh as a second language. Evidence provided by ESIS claimed that there is a need for bilingualism to be mainstreamed into the strategy of the school rather than being seen as a ‘tick-box’ exercise<sup>38</sup>.

57. The group heard that there was a direct correlation between the attitude of the headteacher and the head of the Welsh department as to whether pupils took the long or short GCSE course. Elsewhere in this report we mention that evidence was heard that Welsh should be a core subject in the English medium curriculum. It was suggested to the group that headteachers would then see it as a priority.

58. Following the visit to Treorchy Comprehensive School, it was clear to the group that the drive and commitment of the headteacher and the Senior Management Team, as well as an established, effective Welsh department were imperative to the success of the Welsh language teaching and the strong ethos of bilingualism in the school. Well trained teachers at the school ensured that there was “encouragement, not compulsion” to learn the Welsh language.

59. The group heard from Geiriau Bach that their course was most effective when a school as a whole ‘bought in’ and that the full engagement of the headteacher was vital to the success of the course. The group heard that it was important that schools ‘owned’ bilingualism rather than ‘drafting in’ Welsh speaking staff once a week. The group heard an example of one school where all the staff had passed the course, including the headteacher.

60. The Enterprise and Learning Committee’s report on *‘The Role of School Governors’* emphasised the important leadership role that school Governors play and how an effective relationship with the Headteacher is essential:

“An effective governing body helps shape the future direction of the school. It has a clear vision that emphasises the school’s distinctive character and ethos, and it engages in robust and challenging conversations about how to deliver high standards of pupil achievement and excellence for all.”<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Written evidence provided by ESIS, p2

<sup>39</sup> Enterprise and Learning Committee - ‘The Role of School Governors’ 2009

**We recommend that guidance should be provided to school governing bodies and headteachers on how they can develop a ‘bilingual ethos’ in their schools. This guidance should focus on increasing the understanding of accountability and responsibility, and co-operation between schools, Local Education Authorities, the Welsh Language Board and the Welsh Government. The Welsh Government may wish to use Treorchy Comprehensive School as a model of good practice.**

### ***Building bridges***

61. The group heard from the Welsh Language Development Unit that there is a need to “build bridges” between Welsh-medium schools and English-medium schools that wish to develop robust bilingual policies. The group heard that a pilot project to develop professional learning communities was being considered and looked forward to seeing the analysis of its work.

62. The group heard evidence from a number of witnesses stating that expertise in Welsh-medium schools and English-medium schools could be shared, possibly with Welsh teachers teaching at both schools. The group also heard that the Schools Effectiveness Framework, which provides the overarching policy for joint working between the Welsh Assembly Government and local authorities, could make it possible to assess variations within a school, between schools and the performance of the local authority.

**We recommend that the Welsh Government consider using the Schools Effectiveness Framework to build bridges between Welsh medium schools and English medium schools to develop professional learning communities and share Welsh language teaching expertise.**

### **Bilingual extra-curricular activities**

63. The group heard evidence from several witnesses explaining that education and training play a major role in creating a bilingual Wales and the group acknowledge that language acquisition cannot be fully achieved within the sphere of formal education alone.

64. During the visit to Treorchy Comprehensive School, the group heard that the school had implemented a wide range of extra curricular activities including ‘Clwb Siarad’, which encourages all students to use their Welsh language skills outside the classroom.

65. The group recognise that pupils are products of their communities as well as their schools. Written evidence provided by Professor Colin Baker<sup>40</sup> stated that:

“Being bilingual creates a bridge between generations, with grandparents, for example, or with other family members. This helps to build a sense of belonging to the extended family.”

66. The group received written evidence from Dr. W Gwyn Lewis<sup>41</sup> stating that:

“It appears that proficiency is at its lowest amongst those pupils with very little contact with the language outside the classroom.”

67. Written evidence provided by Gareth Wyn Roberts<sup>42</sup> stated that:

“Even when pupils have learnt some Welsh, there are relatively few opportunities for them to apply their newly-learnt skills outside the classroom. Where these opportunities do occur, they are limited and have not been developed sufficiently e.g. from the Foundation Phase/ Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2.”

68. ESIS argued that it is not sufficient to have Welsh taught simply as a second language subject but for it to be used in other parts of school life, and for Welsh and an awareness of Wales to permeate the whole ethos of the school. ESIS employs one teacher who is responsible for promoting bilingualism across the board. The group heard that it is also undertaking a project with Merthyr Local Education Authority, developing bilingualism throughout the schools, which is intended to be widened and shared with other local authorities.

69. The group heard that many people in Wales have the ability to regularly speak Welsh in a social context or even in a work environment, although they are reluctant to use the language as they lack the confidence or consider themselves to be too shy.<sup>43</sup> The group also heard that the confidence of young people using Welsh varied depending on the topic – young people would use Welsh when discussing topics relating to school or college education. However, they would often use English when discussing popular culture.

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<sup>40</sup> Written evidence provided by Professor Colin Baker, p1

<sup>41</sup> Written evidence provided by Dr. W Gwyn Lewis, p4

<sup>42</sup> Written evidence provided by Gareth Wyn Roberts, p3

<sup>43</sup> Written evidence provided by Gareth Wyn Roberts, p3

## **Language acquisition planning**

70. In his written evidence, Professor Colin Baker argued that for Welsh to survive long-term and be revitalised in the short and medium term, language planning is essential.<sup>44</sup> He identified acquisition planning as the bedrock of language planning in addition to the inter-generational transmission of a language (parents passing their language onto their children) and second language learning in education.

71. His evidence states that a lack of family language reproduction is the direct cause of a language shift, which often results in the minority language fading out over two or three generations. He also stated that language acquisition planning is partly about encouraging parents to raise their children bilingually.

72. In his written evidence, Dr. W Gwyn Lewis highlighted the findings of research which was carried out to examine the reasons why the standards of attainment in Welsh second language are low. His evidence states that “parents were fairly supportive of their children learning Welsh: in the Primary sector nine per cent were very supportive, 50 per cent fairly supportive, and 41 per cent not supportive; in the secondary sector, the corresponding percentages were: 22 per cent very supportive, 57 per cent fairly supportive; and 21 per cent not supportive. Ten per cent of parents saw no point in learning Welsh and would not be supportive of their children following a compulsory GCSE course.”

**We recommend that the Welsh Government explore ways of working with the Welsh Language Board, the WJEC and the Urdd to promote the benefits of the Welsh language effectively amongst non-Welsh speaking parents, particularly the significant number of parents who are reluctant to encourage their children to learn Welsh.**

73. The group supported the belief that language acquisition is at its most effective when it is used as a medium for the teaching of other subjects. The group heard from a number of witnesses that better levels of achievement in Welsh second language could be attained if greater attention were focused on an interactive use of the language, mainly oral work through appropriate subjects such as Physical Education, art, drama and music.

74. The group heard from the WJEC that Welsh teachers often encourage pupils to watch S4C to develop their Welsh medium skills. This point was also emphasised by the Welsh Language Unit who stated that although S4C

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<sup>44</sup> Written evidence provided by Professor Colin Baker, p4

provides Welsh language learning DVDs which consists of short clips of programmes specifically for schools, the television station can often be inaccessible to young people learning Welsh and that some programmes do not have the cultural popularity to attract young people. They also argued that S4C should provide more opportunities for those under 18 to learn Welsh through the television channel and that more opportunities should be created for Welsh second language learners at all levels.

75. The group heard that the Welsh Assembly Government worked closely with the BBC to develop the 'Bitesize' Welsh first and second language course, which provides a free on-line study resource for school age students.

**We recommend that the Welsh Government collaborate with S4C and the WJEC to develop new Welsh second language learning programmes which incorporate popular culture and are relevant to modern society. We also recommend that these programmes be broadcast through all media outlets available to S4C to ensure that Welsh second language learners have instant access to learning resources.**

## **Rewarding bilingualism**

### ***Bilingual friendly schools and colleges***

76. The group heard evidence from Gareth Wyn Roberts stating that: "The first impressions on entering a bilingual school would be bilingual signage, someone with the ability to greet in both languages, and an example of Welsh being used in a range of different classes such as Physical Education and Music."

77. The aim of the scheme at Treorchy Comprehensive School was to promote, support and improve the linguistic performance of second language pupils at Key Stage 3 by offering them the opportunity to study a limited number of subjects through the medium of Welsh.

78. Schools and colleges often receive recognition for different aspects of their work, which includes awards for healthy eating, ecology and international relations. However, the group heard that there was no graduated reward for the different stages of bilingualism in educational institutions.

79. Written evidence provided by Gareth Wyn Roberts stated that:

“At the lowest level, schools need a model policy, a helpful list of correctly spelt words and items, day to day phrases and polite conversation and more importantly detailed guidance on how this is related to the development of English and Welsh throughout the school.

“At the highest level, institutions would develop students and pupils to be competent bilinguals who are completely happy to work through the medium of one language or the other.”<sup>45</sup>

**We recommend that the Welsh Government work with the Welsh Language Board to prepare and issue guidance for schools to recognise the different degrees of bilingualism. We also recommend that any guidance issued should include an appropriate inspection grade, in line with those grades provided for sustainable development and international relations.**

**We recommend that the Welsh Government consider the feasibility of implementing a Bilingual Friendly Schools Initiative, which would place an emphasis on a whole school approach to bilingualism.**

80. Written evidence provided by Gareth Wyn Roberts stated that:

“Our education system recognises competence in English and Welsh (first or second language). It also gives credit for ‘communication’ through key skills qualifications and as an element within the Welsh Baccalaureate but there is no recognition of bilingual competence.”<sup>46</sup>

**We recommend that the Welsh Government explore a graduated system of rewarding competence of English-Welsh bilingualism suitable for primary, secondary and tertiary education.**

### **The need to champion bilingualism**

81. The group heard that although there was enthusiasm by professionals across Wales to develop bilingualism in the education sector, there is no single person or organisation with an overview of all the initiatives to share best practice and evaluate programmes appropriately.

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<sup>45</sup> Written evidence provided by Gareth Wyn Roberts, p1

<sup>46</sup> Written evidence provided by Gareth Wyn Roberts, p2

82. Written evidence provided by Gareth Wyn Roberts<sup>47</sup> stated that:

“In England, the Westminster Government have appointed a foreign language ‘Tsar’, to coordinate foreign language learning. We could do with similar ‘joined up’ thinking in Wales to encourage and harness enthusiasm for the language and make it more effective.”

83. On 4 March 2010, the Minister for Heritage introduced a proposed Welsh Language (Wales) Measure, which is intended to modernise the existing legal framework regarding the use of the Welsh language in the delivery of public services. Amongst other things, this proposed Measure seeks to provide for an Advisory Panel to a Welsh Language Commissioner, appointed by the Welsh Ministers. This proposed Panel will have an important role in advising the Commissioner on wider policy issues.

**We recommend that the Welsh Government, in conjunction with its partners, oversee and monitor the development and promotion of local and national bilingual education strategies and ensure that schools across Wales are provided with the necessary support and advice to ensure that all education policies are compatible with bilingual provision. We also recommend that the views of schools in Wales are represented on the proposed Welsh Language Commissioner’s Advisory Panel.**

### **Good practice in teaching Welsh as a second language**

84. The group were encouraged by the amount of good practice that was being undertaken by bilingual education professionals across Wales.

#### ***Peripatetic Welsh teacher***

85. Following a wide consultation, Treorchy Comprehensive School appointed a peripatetic Welsh teacher to develop a Welsh language ethos in the school’s culture and play a significant role in enhancing relationships with a cluster of primary feeder schools.

86. In 2006 Estyn found the development of bilingualism at Treorchy Comprehensive School “outstanding” and awarded top grades for the language at both Key Stages 3 and 4. Approximately 30 new pupils a year join two fast-track classes in Year 7, and usually sit their GCSE second-language Welsh 12 months early in Year 10.

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<sup>47</sup> Written evidence provided by Gareth Wyn Roberts, p2

87. The group heard that Treorchy Comprehensive School had a very strong strategic commitment to the development of the Welsh language in what is predominantly an English-medium school. School Governors played a key role in the appointment of the peripatetic teacher.

88. As well as the good practice shown by Treorchy Comprehensive school, the group heard that Porth School had funded a teacher through 'Better Schools' Funding' to work with feeder schools, both infant and primary to develop the language. It is hoped that all students will then take their Welsh GCSE examination in Year 9 enabling them to study the Welsh element of the Welsh Baccalaureate in Years 10 and 11.

**We recommend that the Welsh Government commission further research into the practice of employing peripatetic Welsh teachers to help bridge the transition between Key Stages 2 and 3 as used by Treorchy Comprehensive School and explore opportunities to share best practice with English-medium schools throughout Wales.**

### ***Geiriau Bach project***

89. The group visited the Geiriau Bach project, which is run by the School of Early Years Education at Trinity University College. It is aimed at staff delivering the 3-7 years Foundation Phase which includes a bilingual element and a key aim of the course is to 'normalise' the use of the Welsh language in the non-Welsh medium sector.

90. The course is delivered in local groups which meet for two hours a week over a two year period. Geiriau Bach students are taught and supported by trained and experienced tutors. The group heard that the course is delivered by early years specialists not second language teachers.

91. The programme has been validated by the University of Wales as the Certificate in Welsh and Bilingual Practice in the Early Years (Level 4). It offers skills immediately transferable to the workplace as all of the students work closely with young children. Students that are currently enrolled onto the course include playgroup leaders, teachers, childminders, Learning Support Assistants, and day nursery staff.

92. The group heard that the course has also been useful for up-skilling Learning Support Assistants and has enabled many students to gain a better understanding of all aspects of the Foundation Phase.

93. Geiriau Bach began as a pilot project in 2007. The funding for the project runs until July 2011. The group heard that there was an increasing demand for the course and that the planning process for enrolment onto the 2011 was due to begin. There was uncertainty however that funding would be provided by the Welsh Assembly Government beyond 2011.

94. The group heard that although Geiriau Bach had provided regular feedback of the course's success to the Welsh Assembly Government, although there was no confirmation from Welsh Assembly Government officials that the Minister had directly received that feedback.

**We recommend that the Welsh Government continue to provide adequate financial support to the Geiriau Bach project beyond 2011 and that it explore commissioning further pilots across Wales. We also recommend that the Welsh Government be pro-active in providing regular feedback and the necessary support to existing and future projects.**

### ***SaysomethinginWelsh.com***

95. The group received written evidence from SaysomethinginWelsh (SSiW), which is a course developed from the organisers' individual experiences of learning a language aiming to make recent improvements in language learning available to Welsh learners. Their written evidence outlined their plans to develop courses on higher levels and to specifically make the courses available for every child in Wales and people learning Welsh in the workplace.

96. At our request, the Minister for Children, Education and Lifelong Learning responded to the written evidence by SSiW and stated that:

“SSiW courses are designed to develop oral skill only in the Welsh language. This is an important skill, in the context of the Iaith Pawb aim of increasing the number of Welsh speakers. Indeed, this is also the main approach taken by the Welsh for Adults Centres. However, writing skills are vitally important, particularly as the learner progresses and especially in a school and workplace environment.”<sup>48</sup>

### ***Athrawon Bro***

97. The group heard that the *Athrawon Bro* represent a key aspect of the language support service for pupils and their teachers, offering classroom

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<sup>48</sup> Letter from Minister for Children, Education and Lifelong Learning – 21 April 2010

support, teaching materials and assistance with policy matters. The group noted that the *Athrawon Bro* also have an important role to play in the bridging projects designed to ensure continuity of linguistic provision between Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3.

98. Since April 1997 the Welsh Language Board has funded the work undertaken by teams of *Athrawon bro* through grants. The main priority areas of the grants are the *Athrawon bro* service, language centres, residential courses and innovative projects.

99. The Welsh Language Board's Operational Plan for 2008-9 committed it to contributing to the support of 144 *Athrawon bro* posts throughout Wales. It aimed also to ensure 26,000 school visits by *Athrawon bro* and contribute to the support of 26 teachers in centres for 'latecomers'. These are pupils who move to Welsh speaking areas whose only language is English.

100. A survey carried out by Estyn in 2003<sup>49</sup> found that '*Athrawon bro*' are instrumental in helping schools in Welsh-speaking areas to develop the bilingualism of late-arrivals who only speak English. Their survey found that they help late-arrivals make the linguistic transition to their new environment. This is achieved mainly, but not exclusively, in the Welsh language centres.

101. The group heard that the *Athrawon bro* were instrumental in the development of the bilingual policy at Treorchy Comprehensive School and had a significant influence on disseminating good methods of teaching Welsh. Their contribution was particularly effective where classroom teachers played an active part in the lessons and in setting targets.

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<sup>49</sup> Estyn, [Survey of the work of Athrawon Bro in Wales](#), 2003

## Conclusion

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102. In 2002 the National Assembly for Wales's Education and Lifelong Learning Committee published a joint report with the Culture Committee 'Our language: Its future - Policy review of the Welsh language'. The report endorsed the following vision of the Education and Lifelong Learning Committee for the development of bilingual and Welsh-medium education:

"The Committee wants to see a progressive, substantial increase in provision over the next ten years, in response to the rising demand for bilingual and Welsh-medium education. Good quality Welsh-medium and bilingual education should be readily accessible throughout Wales. Opportunities should be increased for people to develop and apply these linguistic skills in everyday life. Bilingualism is an opportunity, to be nurtured and prized."

103. Many of those findings bear similarities to the conclusions of this inquiry. It is disappointing to see that the same concerns are being raised eight years later. The group hope that the Welsh Medium Education Strategy will address these points to ensure that these issues will not be raised by future Committees.

104. The group were encouraged by the amount of good practice that has been undertaken and were particularly impressed by the commitment and drive of the individuals that it met while compiling evidence. The group were also encouraged to hear that attitudes towards the Welsh language have become much more positive in recent years and that the attitude of people in Wales towards Welsh is very supportive indeed.

105. It is important that the Welsh Government continue to exploit these trends to ensure that the Welsh Education Strategy is effective and that all learners at all Key Stages are provided with opportunities to practice and learn Welsh. The Welsh Government must also ensure that informal networks at community level are sustained and that opportunities to use the language, in education, leisure and social situations in particular, are enhanced as these are essential to ensure that young people feel a sense of ownership of the language and to ensure that they can feel more confident to use their Welsh language skills in every aspect of their lives.

**We recommend that the Welsh Assembly Government ensure that the conclusions and recommendations of our report will be reflected in the implementation of the Welsh-medium Education Strategy.**

## **Annex A – Witnesses, evidence and activities**

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The Committee is grateful to the following witnesses who provided oral and written evidence to the rapporteur group on bilingualism. Written evidence may be viewed in full by clicking on the attached links.

<i>Date</i>	<i>Evidence</i>
5 February 2009	<a href="#"><u>Welsh Language Board</u></a> Sali Wyn Islwyn – Community Development Director Ifan Evans – Director, Private Sector and Business
19 March 2009	<a href="#"><u>Welsh Language Board</u></a> Hywel Jones, Statistician Gari Lewis, Director of Children and Young People
14 May 2009	<b>Visit to Treorchy Comprehensive School</b> Bethan Guilfoyle – Headteacher Pupils, parents and supporters of Treorchy Comprehensive School
18 June 2009	<a href="#"><u>ESIS (Education and Schools Improvement Service)</u></a> Mererid Morgan, Welsh Adviser for ESIS Huw F. Lewis, Senior Athro Bro, ESIS
28 January 2010	<a href="#"><u>Visit to Geiriau Bach</u></a> Siân Wyn Siencyn, Head of the School of Early Years Education at Trinity University College, Carmarthen Eileen Merriman, Senior Lecturer of the School of Early Years Education at Trinity College, Carmarthen Sharon Lewis, Senior tutor and trainer of the Geiriau Bach project Glenda Jones, Senior tutor and trainer of the

Geiriau Bach project  
Eira Jones, Field tutor for Geiriau Bach  
Delyth Kenny, Field tutor for Geiriau Bach

25 March 2010

[Gareth Wyn Roberts](#)

27 May 2010

[Welsh Assembly Government's Welsh Language Development Unit](#)

Jo Knell, Subject Specialist: Welsh Second Language  
Nia Jones, Subject Specialist: Welsh 11-19  
Awen Penri, Senior Development Manager

[WJEC](#)

Siân Llewellyn, Principal Manager, Welsh medium

**Written evidence  
provided to the  
group**

[SaysomethinginWelsh.com](#)

[Professor Colin Baker](#)

[Dr. W Gwyn Lewis](#)

[Cennard Davies](#)

**Correspondence**

[Letter from Minister for Children, Education,  
Lifelong Learning and Skills - 9 December 2009](#)