



Ein cyf/Our ref PO/302/2024

Cefin Campbell MS

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Dear Cefin,

Following my oral statement on Welsh-medium education through late immersion, and the subsequent discussion, I committed to writing to you in response to two specific questions asked.

1. Evidence of the most effective late immersion model

Since 2020, we have commissioned and published 3 research papers on late immersion practices and methodologies based on our own context here in Wales, as well as internationally. We've published a [review on late immersion and intensive language provision](#); [a mapping of the provision in Wales](#); and more recently a [rapid evidence assessment on effective approaches and methods in immersion education](#).

The aim of these reports was not to say which delivery model – centre, unit or peripatetic provision – is most effective, but rather to highlight and consider common themes. The main findings of the reports have already been discussed in Immersion Support Network meetings and the academics involved in the research are also now part of that group. The Network is facilitated by the Welsh Government and includes representation from all local authorities and the immersion practitioners. From my discussions with local authorities and practitioners it's clear to me that we cannot take a one size fits all approach. Some local authorities, for example, have adopted a hybrid approach with support offered by peripatetic teachers as well as, or, in a dedicated centre if that is the best approach for the child.

As I mentioned in my statement, each local authority is at a different stage in their late immersion journey and the variations in how late immersion is provided in different areas reflects that. What I think is interesting is the desire among local authorities and late immersion practitioners to learn from each other. That's not limited to just areas at the beginning of their journey in late immersion. The most experienced local authorities such as Gwynedd, Ceredigion and Carmarthenshire are also benefiting from the experiences of the

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

south-east, particularly in supporting learners identified as those that would benefit from having an additional linguistic boost.

Given the increasing role that Late Immersion provisions have in supporting access to our Welsh-medium schools, as well as learners already in the system, we have asked Estyn to develop and consult on proposals for the inspection of local authority Welsh late immersion arrangements. This is the first time this has happened and I'm looking forward to seeing what we can learn from that process.

I assure you, therefore, that we are investing in research, reports and listening exercises to inform our thinking around late immersion.

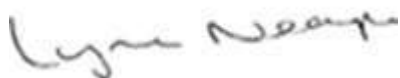
2. Support with transportation for late immersion provisions

The £8.8 million already invested in late immersion provisions goes primarily towards supporting the late immersion workforce. The late immersion grant supports over 60 practitioners – a combination of coordinators, immersion teachers and support teachers. This grant has now transferred to the Cymraeg 2050 element of the Local Authority Education Grant. The Cymraeg 2050 element of the Local Authority Education Grant is a combination of other grants to support the introduction of Welsh in Education, and should provide local authorities more flexibility to plan and implement their late immersion provision to meet their local needs. Funding for school transport is distributed amongst local authorities through the Revenue Support Grant, to enable local authorities to prioritise their expenditure in line with local need.

As you know, a review of the Learner Travel Bill was published in 2022 and a further Recommendations Report was published in March this year outlining a modest path to improving learner travel provision in Wales. One of the steps to be taken is a strengthening of the guidance to improve and expand the existing legislative framework to promote the Welsh language and access to education and training through the medium of Welsh in accordance with the duty set out under section 10 of the Learner Travel (Wales) Bill 2008.

To close, I want to see local authority late immersion provisions across Wales grow and evolve to provide a pathway for more children, of all abilities and backgrounds to acquire the Welsh language. There's no doubt that there's a sense of excitement about the potential within our late immersion provision to support our learners in Wales. With late immersion now a part of each Local authority education offer, we're seeing innovative approaches being developed and new partnerships forming within and across local governments. This is something I hope the provisions in the Welsh Language and Education Bill relating to late immersion can build on.

Yours sincerely,



Lynne Neagle MS
Cabinet Secretary for Education