

CYMRAEG



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government



Guidance on school categories according to Welsh-medium provision

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Audience

Local authorities; education bodies involved or interested in school categories according to Welsh-medium provision, including schools, regional consortia, teaching unions, Estyn, awarding organisations, practitioners, public bodies; and others with an interest.

Overview

This non-statutory guidance document sets out new arrangements for categorising schools according to the amount of Welsh-medium provision in the school. The categories will be used to collect information on provision nationally and should be used by local authorities and schools to inform parents/carers about the types of school and provision available locally.

The new arrangements for categorising schools according to Welsh-medium provision should help local authorities and schools to plan their Welsh-medium education provision in such a way that supports and prepares the way for Curriculum for Wales as well as our national goal of one million Welsh speakers, as set out in Cymraeg 2050. Local authorities' role in supporting the education targets in Cymraeg 2050 will be set out in their individual statutory Welsh in Education Strategic Plans (WESPs).

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Additional copies

This document is available on the Welsh Government website at gov.wales/welsh-in-education

Related documents

Cymraeg 2050: A million Welsh speakers (2017); Rapid review of the Welsh in Education Strategic Plans - 2017-20 (2017); Improving the Planning of Welsh-Medium Education - Recommendations of the Welsh in Education Strategic Advisory Board (2019); Defining school according to Welsh medium provision (2007); The Independent Review Report to re-define schools according to their Welsh-medium education provision (2020); School categories according to Welsh-medium provision: Consultation - Summary of responses (2021).

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Ministerial foreword



I'm delighted to share with you our new guidance for categorising schools according to Welsh-medium provision.

So many of you have contributed to shaping this final policy so I want to start by saying thank you. Reviewing the way schools are categorised according to the provision of Welsh has been an important step for us to take – it's a key Cymraeg 2050 commitment and one which will also support the Curriculum for Wales.

I'm pleased we embarked on this journey. But publishing this guidance is just the first leg, we need to keep moving and keep adding to the detail to support a strong foundation for delivery. This will include exploring the benefits of making the categories statutory over the coming years. I'm under no illusions that implementation will take time, resilience and even courage on occasion. We need to work together on this.

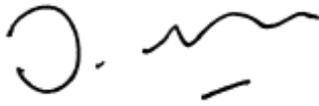
Cymraeg 2050 offers an exciting opportunity to make a real difference in the way we look at creating new Welsh speakers. We all know how important a role the education sector has in achieving our Cymraeg 2050 target of 40% of learners in Welsh-medium education by 2050. We've already made a great start on planning what a 30% increase in learners in Welsh-medium education looks like over the next 10 years through the Welsh in Education Strategic Plans (WESPs). I know that this policy is a key driver for many local authorities in achieving their WESP targets.

It was clear from the consultation that we were on the right track. However, there were areas that needed strengthening. I'm grateful for the constructive comments received during that process which has helped shape this final guidance. I know that COVID-19 has presented the education sector with challenges. It has also offered opportunities to do things differently. Despite the difficult years we've experienced, I'm encouraged by the data showing an increase by just under 1% in reception aged children educated through the medium of Welsh in 2020/21. This to me shows a sector that is growing in confidence and one that will continue to make a huge contribution to our Cymraeg 2050 and Curriculum for Wales objectives.

Looking at the global context – bilingualism is the norm. I'm proud that in Wales we support a truly bilingual system that reflects the bilingual demographic of Wales, the

official status of Welsh alongside English and our national wellbeing goal of ‘a thriving Welsh language’.

I want all learners to have the opportunity of becoming bilingual citizens, but what’s important to me is that we create speakers who use the language. Welsh belongs to us all and I want to make sure that people are not only able to speak the language, but are happy to use it in all walks of life. This is my vision. I’m confident that this policy will help us lay strong foundations so that we can achieve it.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized 'J' followed by a series of wavy lines and a short horizontal stroke at the end.

Jeremy Miles MS
Minister for Education and Welsh Language

Executive Summary

All schools and local authorities in Wales have to tell parents and the Welsh Government in what language they intend to teach. In Wales, this can be through either English or Welsh, or through a combination of both languages. Since the policy for categorising schools in this way was first introduced in 2007, schools and local authorities have taken our lead around how they should categorise their schools according to the amount of the curriculum is delivered through the medium of Welsh.

The publishing of *Cymraeg 2050: A million Welsh speakers in 2017 and more* recently, the Curriculum for Wales, highlighted the need to review our policy around categorising schools according to the Welsh-medium provision. An important principle in reviewing these arrangements was to ensure that information around the type of school models found in Wales was made clearer to parents/carers. In doing so, parents/carers would be better placed to make confident and informed decisions when choosing their child's education pathway.

Publishing this guidance is the first step in achieving that, although further guidance and parent-friendly communication tools will continue to be developed as we implement the category changes.

Since 2013, local authorities have been required to prepare a Welsh in Education Strategic Plan ("WESP"). These (made under sections 84-87 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013) show how the local authority will improve the planning of Welsh-medium education and for improving the standards of that education and of the teaching of Welsh in its area.

New regulations for WESPs came into force in 2020 to better support our national ambition for the Welsh language outlined in our *Cymraeg 2050: A million Welsh speakers* strategy. Increasing the number of Welsh speakers is one of the strategy's key themes and the education sector has an important part to play. To do that, clarity is needed around the definitions used to describe the amount of Welsh language provision in our schools. This has driven the need to review, consult, and now, publish new arrangements for categorising schools according to the provision of Welsh.

The number of school categories are being reduced to three in the primary sector and three in the secondary sector. An English medium school would be a Category 1 school, a dual language school would be a Category 2 school and a Welsh-medium school would be a Category 3 school.

While three categories are introduced for both the primary and secondary sectors, the same criteria isn't used to define the nature of their provision. In primary schools, the language provision offered can be categorised rather than the whole school as an institution, meaning a primary school could be either a Category 1, 2 or 3 or a combination of both Category 1 and 2, or Category 2 and 3 school according to the provision it offers (eg if there are 2 streams operating within the same school). In the secondary sector, schools can be categorised as whole institutions, although it is possible that specific development plans will be necessary for secondary schools which currently have a Welsh language stream.

The categories themselves will be defined by the amount of time made available for learners to learn Welsh. This will include the time allocated to delivering the curriculum through the medium of Welsh as well as other school activities that provide opportunities for learners to use and enrich their Welsh language skills.

Since one of the intentions of the new categorisation system is to encourage more schools to increase their Welsh-medium provision, we will also be introducing two transitional sub-categories in the primary sector and two in the secondary, to facilitate the process for schools moving to the next category. This will allow schools to grow their Welsh language provision over an extended period.

One of the core principles in introducing the new arrangements is that schools should not offer less Welsh-medium provision in the future than has been done in the past. In reducing the number of categories, there is the option for schools to grow their Welsh language provision within that category. Any change (reduction or increase) in Welsh-medium provision would constitute a 'regulated alteration' as set out under section 42 of the school Standards and Organisation Act 2013 and trigger a consultation process as outlined in the School Organisation Code 2018.

Developing more Welsh speakers confident in their ability to use their language in as many contexts as possible is at the heart of Cymraeg 2050. This is why, in defining a school language category, we've placed greater emphasis on opportunities to use and enjoy Welsh outside the classroom.

Our policy for school categories according to Welsh-medium provision is part of wider education reforms. The Curriculum for Wales will be phased in from 2022, and we need to ensure alignment across all policy areas. We have developed these categories in accordance with this need.

Part 1 – Categorising schools according to Welsh-medium provision

1.1 Policy background and context

Cymraeg 2050: A million speakers sets out our vision for the Welsh language. We want to increase the number of Welsh speakers from 562,000 in 2011 to 1 million by 2050. We also want to make sure that we increase the opportunities to use the language socially and in the workplace.

The education system plays a key part in achieving this vision. *Cymraeg 2050* states that Welsh-medium immersion education is the principal method for ensuring that children are able to develop their Welsh language skills, and for creating new Welsh speakers. We also need to increase the number of learners in English-medium and bilingual schools who are learning Welsh successfully. It's a particular priority to ensure that more bilingual schools introduce a greater proportion of the curriculum in Welsh to give learners a strong linguistic foundation. We need to see a Welsh language ethos embedded within all areas of school life and more opportunities for learners to use their Welsh language skills outside of the classroom.

The Curriculum for Wales has a renewed focus on tailored learning that works to the strengths of our learners. It offers flexibility for schools to decide how best to ensure their learners make progress in Welsh. Welsh is a mandatory element of the Curriculum. All schools and settings are expected to teach Welsh to all learners from age 3. The area of learning and experience for languages, literacy and communication in the Curriculum for Wales is based on a continuum or framework of progression in languages, starting with little or no language and working towards proficiency. This will enable learners with Welsh language skills, even if it's just a little, to develop and build on their skills and confidence during the course of their statutory education and post-statutory careers.

The Welsh Government, together with teachers and partners, is developing a Welsh Language Framework to support the teaching of Welsh in predominantly English-medium schools and settings. With supporting materials and professional learning, this will support learning and teaching Welsh in English medium schools as part of the Curriculum for Wales. This will be consulted on at during 2022 ready for implementation by September 2022.

1.2 Welsh-medium immersion education

Schools providing Welsh-medium education use Welsh to deliver the curriculum. Learners in these schools come from a variety of linguistic backgrounds – some from homes where Welsh is spoken and others where Welsh is not spoken. Learners receiving their education through the medium of Welsh and who do not speak Welsh at home undergo a process of language immersion (the target language in this case being Welsh). All learners in Welsh-medium education are taught in the same classroom, whether or not they speak Welsh at home.

Examples of schools practising immersion can be found all over the world. The Canadian model for implementing immersion is widely documented as is the model used in the Basque Country. It shows that learners need to be taught predominantly through the target language (with occasional use of the home language) for two to three years to ensure language competence is developed sufficiently, another language is then introduced.

This is the model we use in Wales. It means that learners undergoing immersion learning are taught fully in Welsh up to and including the school year in which the majority of learners turn 7. After that, we introduce English as a subject, and to varying degrees as a medium of instruction although Welsh remains the predominant language of the classroom.

In areas with a high proportion of Welsh speakers and where the community language is often Welsh, learners are more exposed to opportunities to immerse themselves in the Welsh language outside of school and don't, therefore, depend on the school alone to further their language acquisition. In other areas where the school often provides the only context for Welsh immersion, the need to ensure every opportunity is taken to expose learners to as many opportunities to use their Welsh in as many different contexts as possible during the school day is critical to its success. Despite the different contexts, the outcome for learners is similar. Both approaches create Welsh speakers with the skills to further their learning, training or careers through the medium of Welsh.

Some areas with a lower percentage of Welsh speakers have seen an increase in the number of Welsh speakers over recent years, following the growth of Welsh-medium education. Welsh-medium immersion education remains our principal method for ensuring that children can develop their Welsh language skills, and for creating new speakers.

1.3 The need for school language categories

Welsh-medium provision varies between and within local authorities. Whilst Welsh is used as the medium of teaching for all or most subjects in Welsh-medium schools, others use a combination of English and Welsh to a greater or lesser extent, or have separate English-medium and Welsh-medium streams. Often this reflects the way individual local authorities have decided how best to ensure learners educated bilingually achieve fluency in Welsh and English, as well as the linguistic nature of the area concerned.

We first introduced school language categories in 2007 in an attempt to provide a coherent picture of how Welsh immersion education was being implemented as well as provide consistency by grouping schools implementing similar immersion methods. These were first published in the non-statutory guidance¹ *Defining schools according to Welsh medium provision* and included numerous categories – five categories in the primary sector and four in the secondary sector (including four sub-categories).

¹ <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-02/defining-schools-according-to-welsh-medium-provision.pdf>

In practice, categories have not always been used in accordance with the guidance. They are often misinterpreted. This can often cause confusion for parents/carers and inaccurate communicating of the school's provision within school prospectuses/promotion materials. There has also been no formal monitoring process to ensure that the Welsh-medium provision offered by schools reflected the criteria set out in the category and guidance.

This ambiguity around school categories no longer supports commitments made in local authorities' Welsh in Education Strategic Plans (WESPs). Local authorities are now required to set out in their strategic plans how they will increase the amount of Welsh delivered in their schools by the end of the plan's reporting period. Bringing clarity to the arrangements will facilitate this process.

Clarity around the language medium of schools is also important as we roll out the Curriculum for Wales. For the first time, the Curriculum will have a clear continuum of progression and expectations of Welsh Language acquisition across all school settings. The curriculum implementation plan and new national network of teaching professionals will help support progression in Welsh and the achievement of a Welsh language continuum.

Although curriculum design and delivery is the responsibility of individual schools, it should be considered within the overarching policy of categorising schools according to Welsh-medium provision. Schools and local authorities should work together to ensure that school categorisation is aligned with the local authority's commitment to increase the amount of Welsh-medium provision in accordance with its WESP.

We've worked to ensure strategic alignment between the categories and the Descriptions of learning within the Languages, Literacy and Communication Area of Learning and Experience in the Curriculum for Wales².

1.4 The statutory requirements around school language categories

Legislation sets duties and requirements on schools and local authorities to provide parents/carers with information about the language medium in which the curriculum is delivered. *The School Information (Wales) Regulations 2011*³ sets out the information to be published by schools and local authorities in their individual school and authority wide composite prospectus. This includes information about school language categories for the purposes of Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC)⁴. Schedule 2 to the regulations sets out the general information to be published by local authorities in their school prospectus which includes the language category used by the school governing body in the most recent PLASC return which most closely describes the school. PLASC will be changed to reflect the new categories. Until they are replaced, schools and local authorities will be required, in publishing their school or authority wide prospectus, to refer to the categories set out

² The categories have been designed based on when the Curriculum is fully rolled out. Until that time, for the purposes of this guidance schools should substitute the elements of the current curriculum for AoLEs where necessary

³ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/wsi/2011/1944/contents/made>

⁴ PLASC is an electronic collection of pupil and school level data provided by all maintained sector primary, middle, secondary, nursery and special schools in January each year.

in PLASC at the time of publishing. Nonetheless, we would encourage schools and local authorities to use the new categories alongside the old until the changes in PLASC have been made.

Regulations made under the *School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013* ("the 2013 Act"), require local authorities⁵ to prepare a Welsh in Education Strategic Plan ("WESP"). The Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (Wales) Regulations 2019 set out the matters that must be included in a local authority WESP including a requirement to 'set a target outlining the expected increase during the lifespan of the Plan in the amount of Welsh-medium education provided in its maintained schools which provide education through the medium of both English and Welsh'. This is a statutory requirement in which the authority must take a strategic lead.

Section 42 of the 2013 Act provides that a local authority or governing body may make proposals to make a regulated alteration to a school. Schedule 2 to the 2013 Act describes regulated alterations in relation to schools. This includes any alteration to the language medium of the school which falls into table 1 of paragraph 7 or table 2 of paragraph 8 of the Schedule.

Any such changes require compliance with requirements imposed by the School Organisation Code, made under Sections 38 of the 2013 Act.

When consulting on school organisation proposals, local authorities and schools should consider how proposals support the targets in the local authorities' WESP, including how the proposal could expand or reduce Welsh-medium provision. If proposals being consulted on would end up reducing Welsh-medium provision, local authorities and schools must set out the reasons.⁶ Local decisions to change school categories according to Welsh medium provision is driven by the need to meet targets in their individual WESP. To satisfy the statutory requirements set out in the WESP regulations – local authorities are best placed to lead on the initial implementation of these arrangements.

1.5 The current picture regarding school categories?

Since 2007, primary and secondary schools have been categorised using our *Defining schools according to Welsh medium provision, non-statutory guidance*. From 2022, we want schools and local authorities to adopt the new categories, although moving from one system to the other will take time and be undertaken in phases.

⁵ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/anaw/2013/1/part/4/enacted>

⁶ <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-10/school-organisation-code-second-edition.pdf>

Below are the categories according to the 2007 non-statutory guidance. These will be replaced by the new categories introduced in part 2 of this guide:

Primary schools

Primary schools fall into one of the five categories below:

Welsh-medium schools

Foundation phase pupils are taught through the medium of Welsh and at least 70% of the teaching in Key Stage 2 is through the medium of Welsh.

Dual Stream schools

English-medium provision and Welsh-medium provision exist more or less side by side.

Transitional schools: Welsh-medium with significant use of English

Foundation phase pupils are taught through the medium of Welsh and both languages are used to teach Key Stage 2, but more emphasis is given to the Welsh language, so that it's used to teach over 50%, and up to 70% of the curriculum.

Predominantly English-medium schools but with significant use of Welsh

Foundation phase pupils and Key Stage 2 pupils are taught in both languages, but more emphasis is given to the English language. The Welsh language is used to teach between 20%-50% of the curriculum generally.

English-medium schools

Foundation phase pupils are taught through the medium of English. English is the main medium of teaching Key Stage 2, but Welsh is taught as a second language, and perhaps some aspects of some subjects may be taught through the medium of Welsh.

Secondary schools

Secondary schools fall into one of the four groups below.

Welsh-medium schools

Every subject, apart from English, is taught through the medium of Welsh.

Bilingual schools

There are four sub-categories to this category, according to the percentage of subjects taught through the medium of Welsh, and whether or not the same provision is offered in English.

- **Type A:** At least 80% of the subjects (apart from English and Welsh) are taught through the medium of Welsh only to every pupil. One or two subjects may be taught to some pupils through the medium of English or in both languages.
- **Type B:** At least 80% of the subjects (apart from English and Welsh) are taught through the medium of Welsh, but they are also taught through the medium of English

- **Type C:** 50%-79% of the subjects (apart from English and Welsh) are taught through the medium of Welsh, but they are also taught through the medium of English
- **Type D:** Every subject (apart from English and Welsh) is taught to every pupil using both languages.

English-medium schools but with significant use of Welsh

Both languages are used to teach subjects, with 20-49% of the subjects taught through the medium of Welsh. Also, every subject will usually be taught through the medium of English as well.

English-medium schools

The pupils are mainly taught through the medium of English and Welsh is taught as a second language up to Key Stage 4.

Part 2: Introducing the new arrangements

2.1 The main changes

The principle of not reducing provision

One of the core principles in introducing the new arrangements is that schools should not offer less Welsh-medium provision in the future than has been the done in the past. We want to ensure that learners are given as many opportunities as possible to use their Welsh in as many different contexts as possible during the school day. This will mean that we give our learners the best chance of becoming confident Welsh speakers, able to use the language across all walks of life.

The number of categories

We've reduced the overall number of categories across primary and secondary to six. Three in the primary and three in the secondary. The primary and secondary categories will be called the same – Category 1 English-medium, Category 2 Dual language and Category 3 Welsh-medium*⁷ Although the same number of categories exist for both sectors, they don't correspond entirely because the organisational structure of provision and patterns of progression are somewhat different between the two. However, having three categories that are broadly defined in a similar way should make explaining the provision easier to parents/carers considering what education route they would wish to take for their child. This also takes into account the analysis of PLASC data undertaken during review of the current categorisation arrangements, which suggests that schools in Wales broadly fall into three groups.

Schools that are committed to moving to another category will be identified as transitional schools, with the category to which the school is on a journey to move is set out in PLASC, for example T2 or T3.

Differences in categories between primary and secondary sectors

Primary

In the primary sector, we intend to amend PLASC so that primary schools will be able to identify themselves in more than one category. This is most relevant for schools currently categorised as dual stream primary schools with an English-medium and Welsh-medium stream. The ability to record a schools provision in two separate categories will mean that new school models, such as schools with category 2 and category 3 streams can be recognised. Primary schools identifying their provision in two separate categories as referred to above, should clearly outline to parents the nature of provision and expected linguistic outcomes for learners following the different streams.

Primary schools wishing to increase their provision gradually can also categorise streams or classes within a school to reflect this. For example, this could be achieved by delivering Welsh-medium provision up to age 7 (using Welsh as the

⁷ In the secondary sector, there is also a category 3P which recognises a school that delivers at least 90% of its school activities (curricular as well as extra-curricular time) in Welsh.

predominant language of teaching) to begin with, with each year group following suit year on year until the whole school is Welsh medium. Any such change would need to be consulted upon under the School Organisational Code.

Secondary

Linguistic progression in Welsh (in terms of the amount of the curriculum followed through the medium of Welsh) becomes more challenging as learners transfer to the secondary sector, and increases as learners progress through each year group. For this reason, it is proposed that in categorising secondary schools, the following two criteria should be used to support schools and governing bodies to increase progression levels. With this in mind, Category 2 and 3 models should be defined according to an input and output model, namely:

- **Input:** The percentage of Areas of Learning and Experience (AoLEs) as well as extra-curricular activities offered through the medium of Welsh.
- **Output:** The percentage of pupils following those Areas of Learning and Experience (AoLEs) through the medium of Welsh up to the age of 16

Category 3 secondary model

Category 3 in the secondary is sectioned into two parts.

The first identifies schools delivering a wide range of learning experiences through the medium of Welsh and the second identifies schools delivering all learning experiences through the medium of Welsh. Both models will still be categorised as Category 3 Welsh-medium as the majority of the learning is through the medium of Welsh and learners are equally as likely to leave school as bilingual speakers of both English and Welsh. We would expect any Category 3 school to continue to reflect the linguistic context of the area whilst working towards increasing their Welsh medium provision over time.

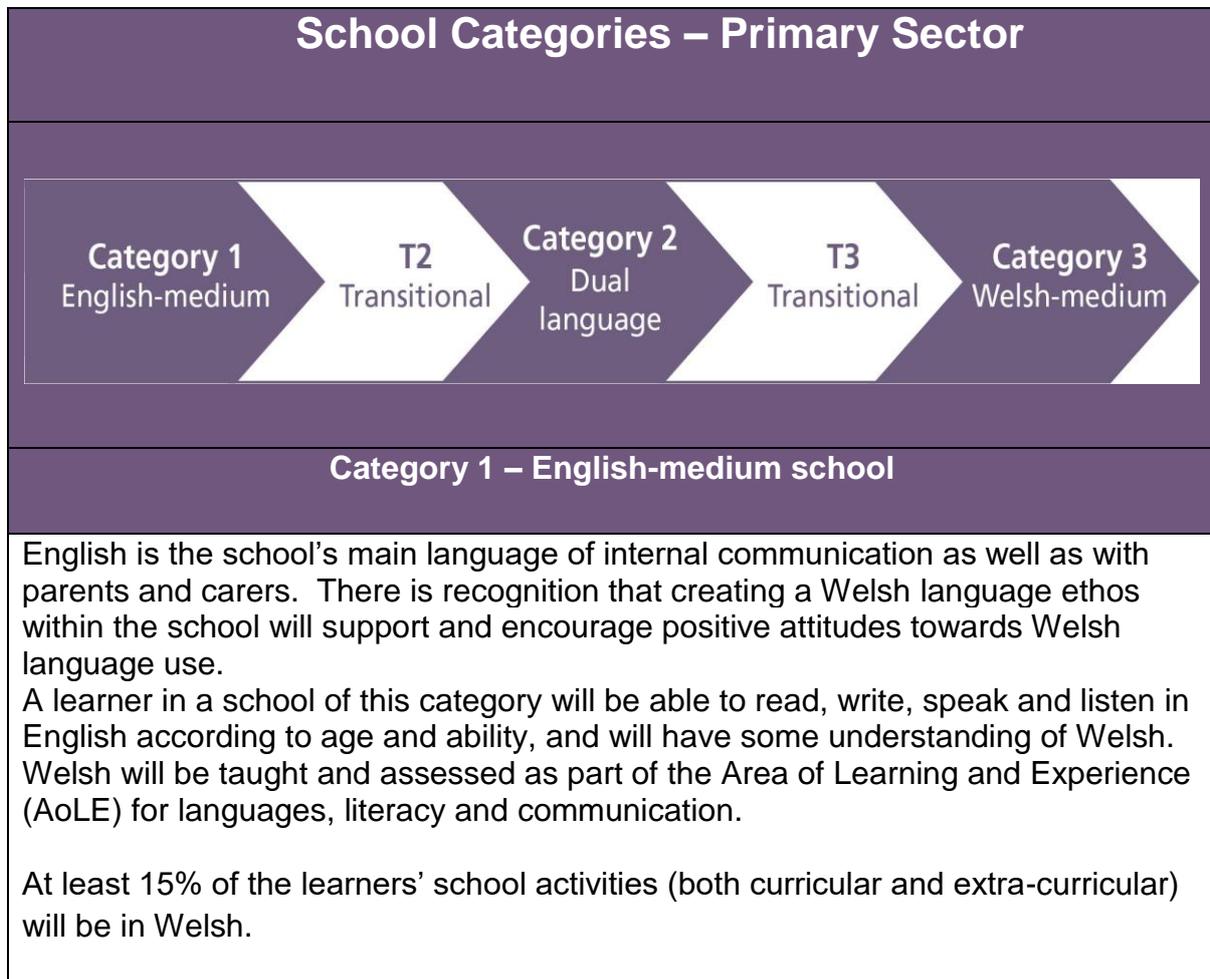
How the categories are defined

Up until now, the definition of a school category was based on the percentage of the curriculum offered through the medium of Welsh in a school. We believe that this demonstrates only part of what schools and settings are able to offer in terms of their Welsh language provision. There are countless school based, authority wide, regional and national activities taking place that are not directly related to the curriculum but provide valuable opportunities to maximise learner exposure to the Welsh language across all schools and settings. Many of these exposure points in assemblies, registration, during lunchtime or after school clubs form part of a school's Siarter Iaith or Cymraeg Campus implementation plan but do not get the recognition they deserve for the important contribution they make in terms of language acquisition. We know that all Welsh-medium and bilingual primary schools are delivering the Siarter Iaith and approximately 60% of English medium primary schools are delivering Cymraeg Campus.

This is why school categories will now be defined by the amount of the curriculum offered in Welsh as well as the non-curricular activities provided.

2.2 The categories

Primary Sector Categories



School Categories – Primary Sector

Category 2 – Dual language

Welsh and English will be used for internal communication as well as with parents and carers. There is clear understanding that maintaining a Welsh language ethos within the school will support positive attitudes towards Welsh language use. A learner in a school of this category will be able to speak, read, write and listen in English and Welsh according to age and ability. Welsh language skills will be further strengthened by increasing the amount of learning opportunities (curricular as well as extra-curricular) offered through the medium of Welsh. Where Welsh is used as a medium of learning, occasional English is used at times to reinforce the learners' understanding.

With the right support, learners could progress to a Category 3 Welsh-medium secondary school.

At least 50% of learners' school activities (both curricular and extra-curricular) will be in Welsh. This could be achieved in different ways depending on the school context. It could be by using full Welsh-medium immersion up to age 7 with choice offered in the other year groups, or that 50% of school activities are in Welsh throughout.

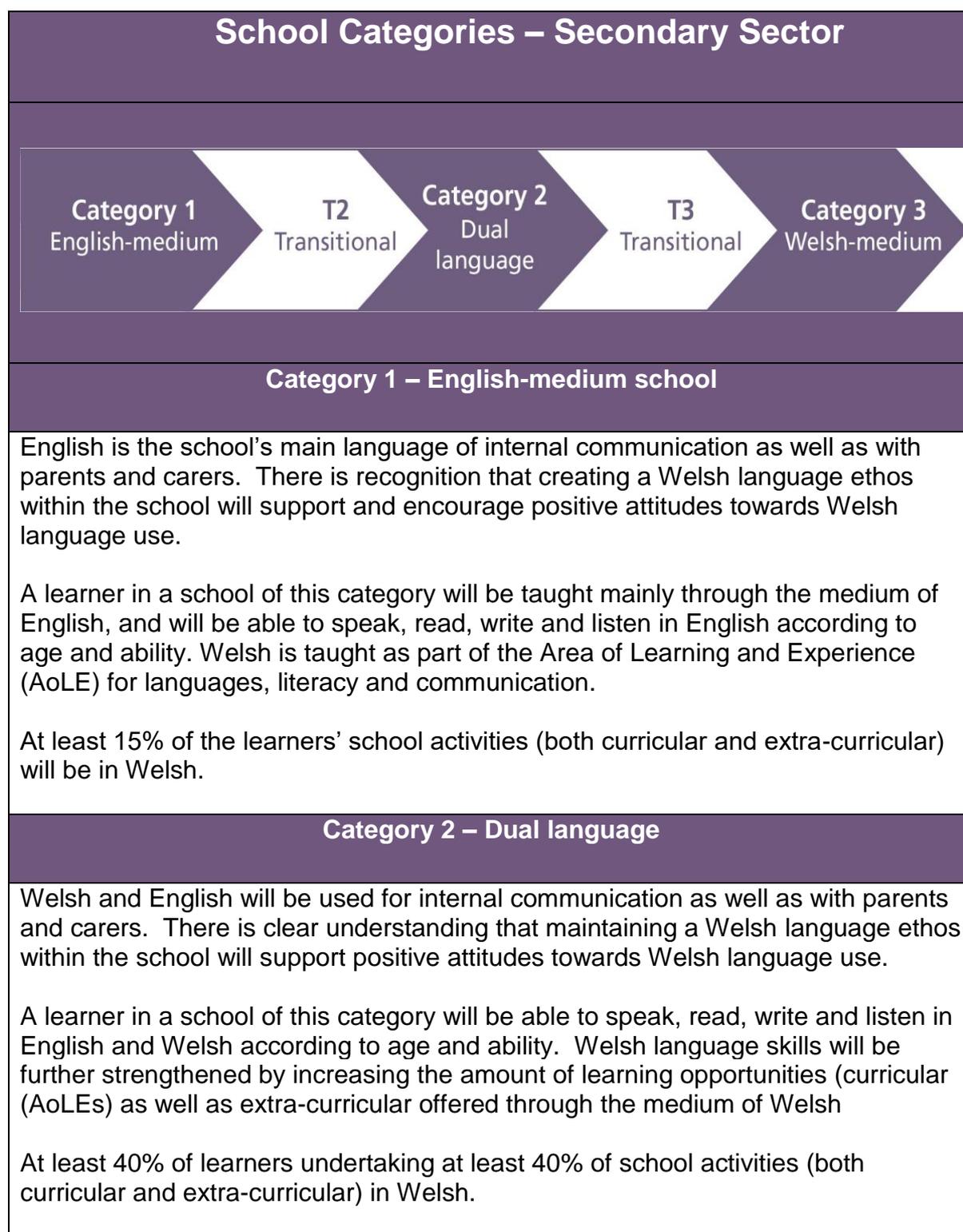
Category 3 – Welsh-medium school

Welsh is the school's main language of internal communication. Communication with parents and carers is in either English, Welsh or bilingually as needed. This is a school with a strong Welsh language ethos at its core, supporting and enabling learners' Welsh language use in all social context in and outside of school.

In a Welsh immersion setting all learners are taught fully in Welsh, with English being used on occasion to ensure understanding during early immersion.

From aged 7 onwards at least 80% of learner's school activities (both curricular and extra-curricular) will be in Welsh.

Secondary Sector Categories



School Categories – Secondary Sector

Category 3 – Welsh-medium school

Schools in this category are sectioned into two parts: Category 3 Welsh-medium and Category 3P designated Welsh-medium.

For all schools in this category Welsh is the main language of internal communication. Communication with parents and carers is in either English, Welsh or bilingually as needed.

These are schools with a strong Welsh language ethos at their core, supporting and enabling learners' Welsh language use in all social contexts in and outside of school. A learner in this category of schools will be able to speak, read, write and listen in both English and Welsh according to age and ability.

Category 3 – Welsh-medium school will offer a wide range of their Areas of Learning and Experience (AoLE) through the medium of Welsh.

At least 60% % of learners undertaking at least 70% of their school activities (curricular and extra-curricular) in Welsh.

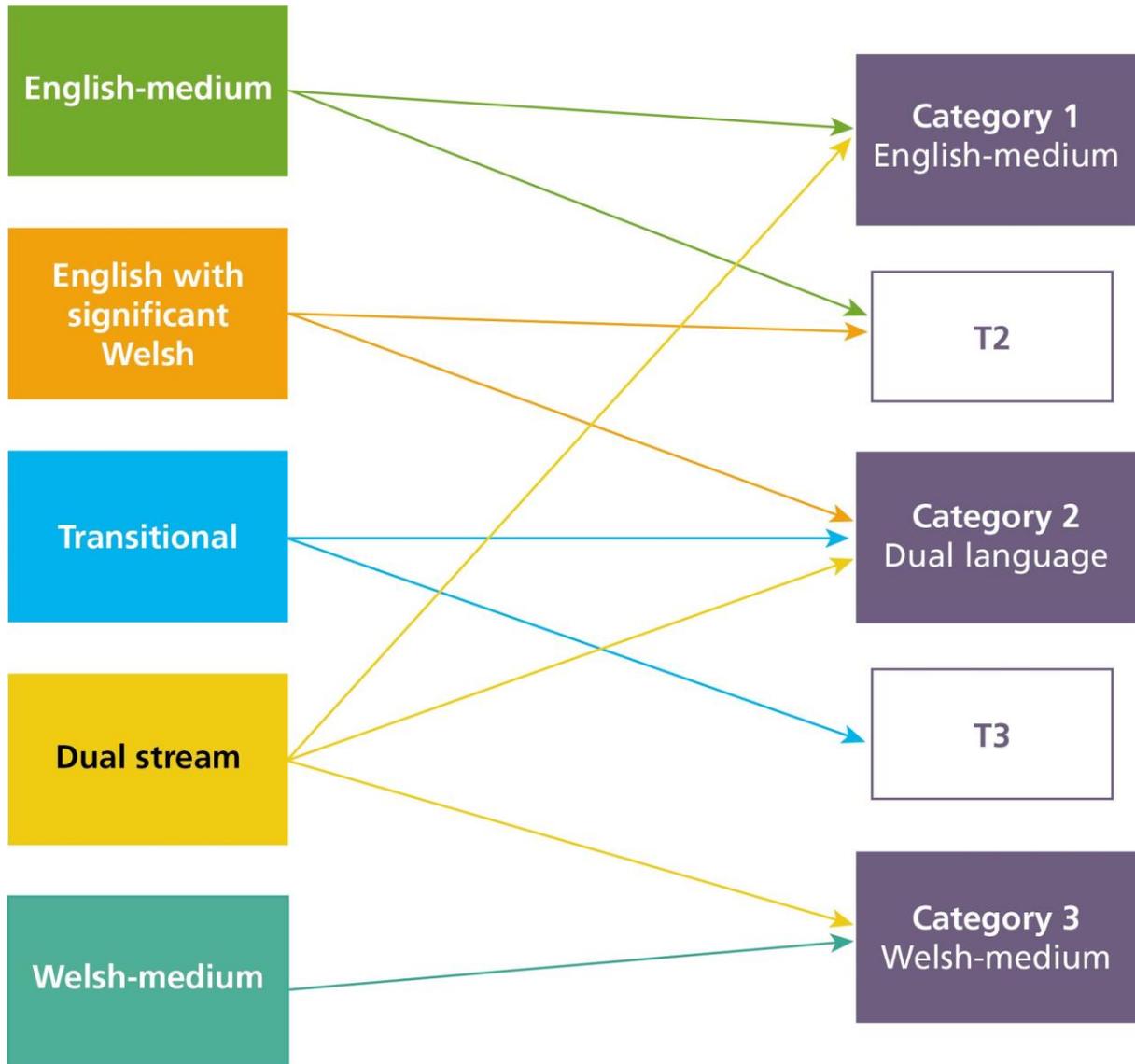
Category 3 schools are expected to continue to reflect the linguistic context of the area whilst working towards increasing their Welsh medium provision over time.

Category 3P – Designated Welsh-medium school will deliver all Areas of Learning and Experience (AoLE) through the medium of Welsh.

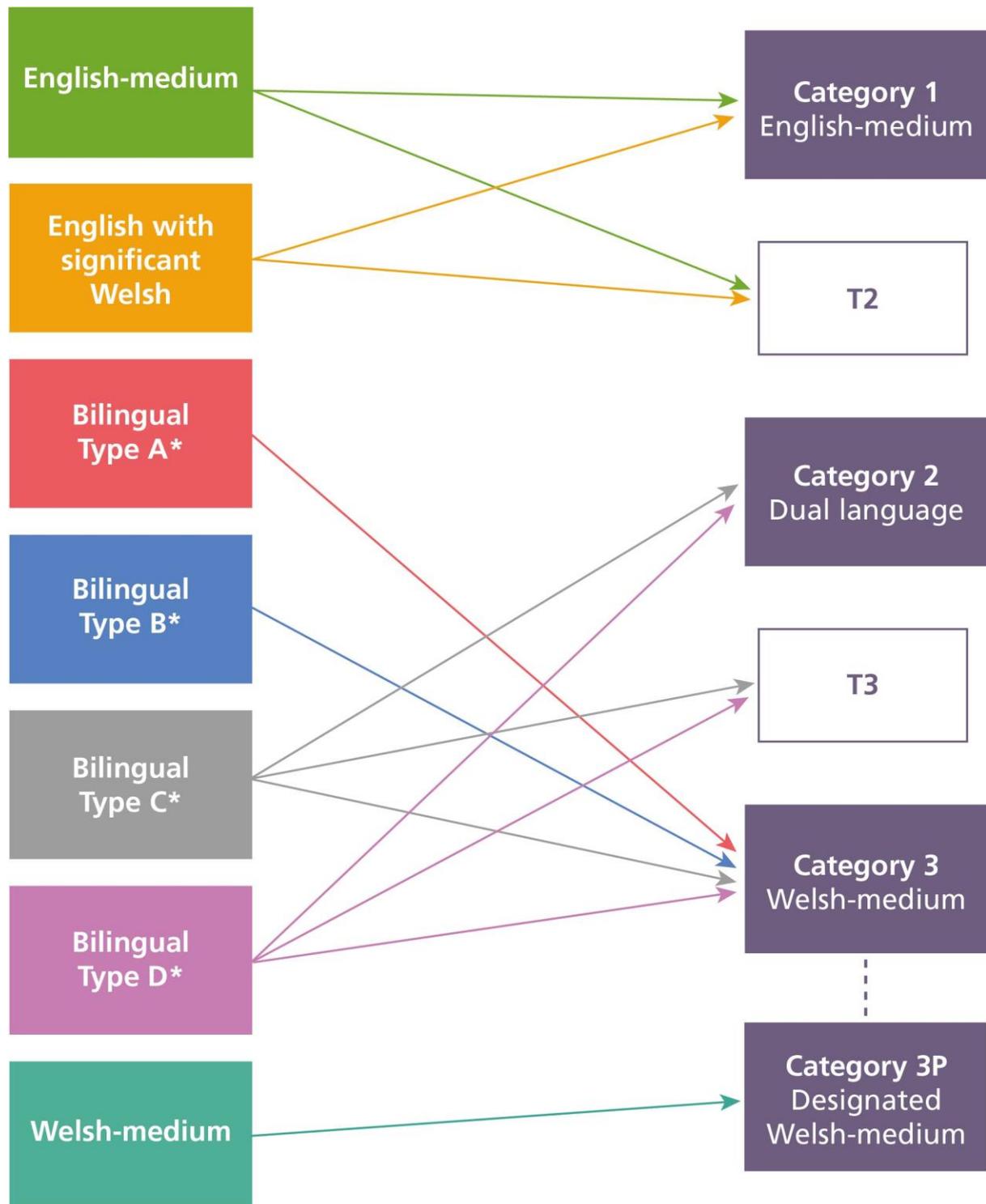
100% of learners undertaking at least 90% of their school activities (curricular and extra-curricular) in Welsh.

How schools can transfer into the new categories

Primary sector



Secondary Sector



* Please refer to Page 10 for Bilingual Schools type

2.3 Transitional sub categories

To help encourage an increase in Welsh-medium provision, we have included what we call, 'transitional sub-categories' which are created as bridging categories. These transitional arrangements enable schools to plan how they will realise an increase in Welsh medium provision over time. We emphasise here that the aim of the transitional sub-category is to increase the Welsh-medium provision in order to facilitate schools moving to the next category.

A transitional category should not be permanent. Local authorities' plans for categorising schools according to Welsh-medium provision should be agreed between schools and local authorities and thereafter, outlined in the local authority's WESP. Local authorities are expected to plan intensively during the first five years of their Plan. Similarly it is expected that decisions that will move a school along the continuum will be made during the first five years. A transitional category should not exceed a maximum period of 10 years.

A school may transfer directly to the transitional sub-category if the school and the local authority have identified the potential for the school to move to another category. It will be necessary to ensure that a plan is agreed between the local authority and the school in preparing for an increase in the provision of the Welsh language. Any school in a transitional sub-category should indicate this in their school prospectus. With regard to local authorities, this must be outlined in their authority wide composite prospectus. When the co-planning between the school and the local authority identifies the potential and desire to move the school to category 2 or 3, the process to consult on the regulated alteration should begin, as outlined in the School Organisation Code 2018.

2.4 How this will work in practice

Primary and secondary categories ⁸

The number of categories for primary and secondary sector will be the same, three categories and three transitional sub categories in each sector. This will offer the same opportunity for schools within both sectors to move from one category to another through the transitional sub categories. However, the descriptions which define each category will vary to reflect the differences in curriculum design and delivery between the primary and secondary sector.

Most schools will fall into category 1 English-medium or category 3 Welsh-medium. Others, currently categorised as bilingual schools: 2A, 2B, 2C or 2D, or English with significant use of Welsh or Welsh with significant English use, could fall into category 2, or transfer straight away into one of the transitional sub-groups. A small number of schools may need to be newly categorised.

⁸ Middle schools are subject to the arrangements of categorising provision. Therefore if there is a variation in the category between the primary and secondary, this will be recorded in management information systems and reported in PLASC data if necessary when systems have been updated with the new category arrangements

Learners moving from primary to secondary

For the majority of learners, subject to local admission procedures, it will be a matter of transferring to the secondary school equivalent category. However, it could also be possible for a learner who has attended an English-medium primary school to transfer to a category 2 or 3 secondary school. Late immersion provision is offered in many areas to support learners wishing to access this. Local authorities should ensure that the options available locally to support these learners is clearly outlined in their Composite Prospectuses.

Additionally, where bilingual provision is situated in a dual stream school where the other stream is Welsh-medium, learners could be given the option to transfer to the Welsh medium stream during their primary education if they wish to continue their secondary school learning in Welsh medium.

Monitoring arrangements

Schools identified, by the local authority and school governing body, as having the potential to increase their provision of Welsh should discuss and agree a plan on how they will get there. Any milestone targets agreed should align with the Welsh Government's new framework on evaluation and improvement and should be included in the School Development Plan.

A review of school evaluation and improvement has been underway in preparation for the phased introduction of Curriculum for Wales. The revised School Improvement Guidance: framework for evaluation, improvement and accountability, will set out what a school should include in their School Development Plan. In accordance with its principles, local authorities should work in partnership with schools which are increasing the amount of Welsh-medium provision offered to learners, to support progression along a Welsh language continuum. This is also in line with statutory requirements set out in local authority Welsh in Education Strategic Plans. Local authorities and schools should also agree what support is needed in order to increase Welsh medium provision.

Individual School development plans are used by Estyn to provide background context prior to inspection and monitoring visits. Ensuring that school plans to increase Welsh medium provision are included in the School Development Plan will mean that the linguistic context of the school and its development is correctly identified as part of Estyn's monitoring processes. It will also align with Estyn's increasing focus on capturing learners' full breadth of experiences through the medium of Welsh.

Part 3: Implementing the new school categorisation arrangements

3.1 What schools and local authorities should include in prospectuses

Individual school prospectuses should include the new categories (as well as the PLASC categories, if different) and ensure that the information offered is clear for parents/carers.

The School Information Regulations require that school prospectuses and local authority Composite Prospectus reference the PLASC categories in its area as outlined in Part 1 above. Moving to the new arrangements will mean that for a while, the new categories set out in this guidance and the category codes currently used in school and local authority management information systems and reported in PLASC won't correspond. As work continues to ensure that systems reflect the new categories, there is no reason why schools shouldn't proceed with using the categories in this guidance, in addition to those required by the School Information Regulations, to describe their school in the school prospectus from September 2022 onwards. This way, the work of better communicating the school provision with regard to the amount of Welsh can begin without delay. We'll be publishing further technical advice around what schools will need to do once the new codes in PLASC become operational.

We've prepared an information sheet for parents/carers so that the new arrangements are clear and easy to understand.⁹

3.2 Moving from current categorisation arrangements to the new arrangements

Local authorities are best placed to undertake the initial mapping exercise to place schools into the new categories. This will be done in partnership with school governing bodies. Consultation is not necessary where there is a clear correlation between the amount of Welsh medium provision delivered within the current categories and the new categories. Local Authorities are encouraged to discuss the process with individual schools.

The new arrangements for categorising schools can start to be introduced from September 2022. This will need to be done in phases. The first phase will be for the local authority to map out and agree with schools which category best fits their schools. The second phase will be for school governing bodies to include the school's new category in their prospectus. The third phase will be for schools to identify their new category(ies) in their management information system and report it in the PLASC data collection return once systems have been amended to reflect the new categories (this is likely to be during 2023).

We will issue further technical guidance on what schools will need to do when new category codes in PLASC become operational.

⁹ <https://gov.wales/school-categories-according-welsh-medium-provision-information-parents-and-carers>

3.3 When a school doesn't wholly align with a category

The in-depth analysis of 2018 PLASC data undertaken as part of the review into existing arrangements confirmed that of the 1261 primary and 194 secondary schools in Wales, the vast majority of schools fitted neatly into one or more of these new categories. However, if a school doesn't initially align with one of the three categories, local authorities can provisionally categorise them into one, or suggest moving directly into a transitional sub-category. This should be based on specific criteria and the outcomes set out within the categories. This means for example that when placing a school into the new categories, if that school currently classed as category 2 but is very close to achieving category 3, the local authority and school can agree on a short term plan for the school to move to the next category.

3.4 When a school doesn't agree with its category

A school would need to provide evidence to the local authority why it doesn't fit in a category.

3.5 The expectation on schools to move category

We expect all schools, whatever their category to develop their Welsh-medium provision according to the Curriculum for Wales. The new emphasis on creating a Welsh ethos and opportunities to use Welsh outside the classroom within all category descriptions will offer all schools an opportunity to increase their provision. However, there is no requirement for schools to move between categories. If there is a desire to move to another category, this guidance could be the vehicle to help schools achieve their curriculum's aims with regards to the delivery of Welsh, whether by moving to a new category or increasing capacity within their current category.

3.6 Transitional sub-categories

As part of the process of moving to a transitional category, the governing body will be expected to agree a transitional plan with the local authority. Once consultation on changes to the amount of Welsh medium provision has concluded, we would expect a transitional plan to then become part of the school's Development Plan and will also be a key component of the local authority's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan.

The purpose of these transitional periods is to:

- Offer practical support to schools and local authorities who want to increase Welsh medium provision.
- Plan and agree a suitable transition period that gives schools a specific timetable, with the flexibility to respond to the opportunities that moving category will offer them.
- Offer schools the opportunity to develop both the curriculum and workforce so that they can respond fully to the linguistic and pedagogic requirements of the new category.

- Work with parents/carers to ensure their understanding and support of the developments.
- Allow for the change to take place gradually, ensuring ample opportunities to support the work of learners' and teachers as the provision is increased.
- Plan and implement effective monitoring and evaluation process that will ensure that all learners' receive a level playing field of support within this period of change.

3.7 What local authorities and schools need to do to implement this policy

Some schools may already be on the journey towards the next category. For others, this guidance will mark the first step in discussions between local authorities and schools.

Local authorities will drive the process as part of their statutory duties under the WESPs. There are a number of conditions that need to be in place for schools to successfully undertake this process and local authorities will already be aware of where schools are in terms of ensuring the necessary conditions are in place. In addition, the Welsh Government will publish a 10 year plan for the school education workforce. This 10 year period will coincide with the 10 year period for the WESPs. This plan will get to grips with increasing the number of Welsh teachers and teachers able to teach through the medium of Welsh, develop Welsh medium leadership capacity to plan strategically for growing Welsh medium provision in schools and develop the Welsh language skills of education practitioners.

Leadership and commitment is key to the entire process. This leadership needs to come from the school governing body, head teacher and senior management team, and the local authority must support this leadership throughout the school's journey. Schools and local authorities will want to work hard to ensure that parents are supportive, engaged and understand the process fully from the outset.

3.8 Workforce planning and development

Governing bodies will need to plan their workforce to ensure the successful implementation of this policy. This aligns with the objective set out within their local authority's WESP to increase the number of teaching staff able to teach Welsh as a subject and teach through the medium of Welsh. Schools who wish to move to the next category will need a core number of staff who are able to teach through the medium of Welsh. Schools will need to plan to increase provision over time, which will also mean planning the development of the workforce at the same time. We would expect this to form part of a school's development plan.

The data collected via the School Workforce Annual Census on the Welsh language skills of practitioners and their ability to teach through the medium of Welsh should be used to inform this workforce planning at a school, local authority or regional level. This may lead to the school appointing new members of staff who are able to teach through the medium of Welsh and English and / or supporting teachers to develop their Welsh language skills in order to teach through the medium of both

languages. The latter is in accordance with the Professional Standards for Teaching and Leadership that requires all practicing teachers to “actively seek opportunities to apply and extend their understanding and skills in the use of the Welsh language” throughout their careers.

We encourage schools to make use of the professional learning available for practitioners. This includes the Welsh Government’s Sabbatical Scheme, which is designed to develop and improve practitioners’ Welsh language skills and improve their confidence to teach through the medium of Welsh. Welsh language professional learning is also delivered by the regional consortia, and there is some provision for teachers available via the National Centre for Learning Welsh.

Secondary schools could also use the Welsh Government’s E-sgol project which uses video technology to connect classrooms so learners from one school can join classes at other schools remotely, enabling students to access a greater range of subjects at GCSE and A level through the medium of Welsh.

3.9 Moving forward

This guidance is intended to help schools and local authorities move from the old system for categorising schools according to the Welsh-medium provision to the new. It’s important to remember, however, that this can’t be done in isolation. There are a number of contributing policies already being developed which will have a part to play in its success.

The revised School Improvement Guidance, which will be our framework for evaluation, improvement and accountability will soon be published. To support this work, we recently launched the all Wales pilot of the national resource: evaluation and improvement on Hwb, with full roll out due from April 2022. The national resource has been developed in partnership with schools, Estyn, consortia and local authorities to provide practical guidance to help schools use a range of approaches to self-evaluation and improvement.

We’ve also been working with a network of teachers and other partners to develop a framework for Welsh which, with supporting materials and professional learning, will support learning and teaching Welsh in English medium schools as part of the Curriculum for Wales. This will be closely aligned with the Literacy Framework available for Welsh in Welsh-medium and English in English medium schools and settings, the learning descriptions for Welsh in English-medium schools/settings and the CEFR (the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages).

In addition, work is also continuing on our 10 year workforce plan to help us to grow our Welsh medium workforce capacity in this sector. This will be published in 2022.

Each of these developments has an important role to play as we go about implementing this policy. We will ensure alignment between these work streams and update this guidance as necessary.