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CEREDIGION COUNTY COUNCIL – SCHOOLS SERVICE

SCHOOL REORGANISATION STATUTORY IMPACT ASSESSMENT



**PROPOSAL TO
AMEND LANGUAGE MEDIUM OF THE FOUNDATION LEARNING AT
PLASCRUG PRIMARY SCHOOL**

DATE: SEPTEMBER 2023

ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPACT ON THE COMMUNITY AND THE WELSH LANGUAGE

Description of the proposal.

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 requires public bodies across Wales named in the act to work towards seven well-being goals, including 'A Wales of Vibrant Culture and Thriving Welsh Language'. The system for planning Welsh-medium education provision also has a statutory basis. The Welsh Government has a duty to promote and facilitate the use of Welsh and work towards the well-being goals.

Taking Wales Forward 2016-2021 was published in September 2016, and the programme aims to drive forward improvements to the Welsh economy and public services in order to create a Wales which is prosperous and secure, healthy and active, ambitious and learning, and united and connected. This document outlines the Government's priorities for achieving these improvements. They are ambitious measures which will have an impact on everyone at all stages of their lives.

The Welsh Government's ambition for increasing the use of Welsh and the number of people who speak the language is also noted, as is the commitment to work towards securing a million Welsh speakers by 2050 and to continue to encourage more people to use and speak Welsh in their everyday lives.

The Welsh Government's Cymraeg 2050 strategy was published in August 2017. For the first time, a clear vision for a Wales in which the language is thriving was set. One of the strategy's key aims is to create a statutory education system which increases the number of confident speakers. To realise this aim we must considerably increase the number of school pupils who are given the opportunity to develop Welsh language skills in school and the opportunity to use the language in their everyday lives. This is the driver for the Welsh Government's aspiration to strengthen the legislative framework which supports the way in which Welsh and the provision of Welsh is planned within our statutory education system in Wales.

Cymraeg 2050 is the main policy driving the changes to the statutory process around planning Welsh-medium education. The Cymraeg 2050 strategy notes that Welsh-medium immersion education is the principal method for ensuring that children can develop their Welsh

language skills, and for creating new speakers. School data tells us how many children are educated through the medium of Welsh, and is a key indicator of the growth required, and demonstrates the importance of ensuring the commitment of the education system to create a million Welsh speakers. It also highlights the importance of the early years sector as a point of early entry to immersion education, and as a way to increase demand for Welsh-medium education.

It will be necessary to increase the number of learners in English-medium schools who learn Welsh successfully by developing Welsh medium provision in the statutory period up to 7-years-old. The Welsh language will also form an integral part of the new curriculum which will include one continuum for learning it. By introducing the new curriculum from September 2022, the aim is to ensure an increase in the number of confident Welsh speakers within the statutory education system, and ensure that in future, all learners can use Welsh after they have left school.

This proposal will ensure that Ceredigion can carry out its statutory duties in relation to Welsh medium education through its Welsh in Education Strategic Plan. This plan is the long-term language planning tool for local authorities which sets the strategic direction for the planning and delivery of growth in Welsh-medium education. This will allow Ceredigion Local Authority to plan Welsh-medium education in its areas in a way that achieves the aims set out in Cymraeg 2050.

Local targets within the Welsh in Education Strategic Plans will be based on the overall long-term target of ensuring a million speakers. Cymraeg 2050 outlines the commitment to increase the proportion of pupils within each school year who receive Welsh medium-education, from 22% to 30% by 2032, and this national increase of 8% will be the basis for all local authority targets within their Welsh in Education Strategic Plan.

The proposal will also contribute to realising the three strategic aims of the 'Ceredigion Language Strategy', namely:

- To increase the language skills of the people of Ceredigion
- To increase opportunities to use the Welsh language in Ceredigion
- To ensure social conditions that allow the Welsh language to thrive, that also contribute positively towards the well-being aims.

Who will this proposal effect directly?

The proposal will have an impact on pupils up to age 7 in the schools of Ceredigion.

This proposal will have a positive impact on children and young people in Ceredigion by offering additional choices in terms of Welsh-medium and bilingual education and more opportunities and support for all to access it. This in turn will offer children and young people Welsh language skills that they can use in all walks of life and in particular when they leave school and start work. It will also offer an increased opportunity for those categorised as Transition 2 schools to improve their Welsh language skills.

This proposal will also allow Ceredigion Local Authority to increase and improve the provision offered, which will have a positive impact on children and young people across the county, regardless of the community they live in, their background, or language of their family, ensuring that more and more children and young people develop Welsh language skills that can be used in everyday life.

We expect any impact to be positive, due to the following:

- Children and young people can take advantage of Welsh-medium or bilingual education regardless of the community they live in.
- The aims of this proposal will help Ceredigion County Council fulfil its commitments to the Welsh language, Welsh speakers and Welsh speaking communities.
- Most Ceredigion primary school teachers and classroom assistants can speak and communicate in Welsh. Full support will be given to school staff members in line with the increase in the Welsh language provision.

Ceredigion Council's School Language Policy

Ceredigion County Council is committed to supporting the Welsh Government's vision and ambition to see a million people able to enjoy speaking and using Welsh by 2050, in line with 'Cymraeg 2050 : Welsh Language Strategy'. The 'Curriculum for Wales - Curriculum for Life' emphasizes the fact that Welsh will remain compulsory up until the age of 16.

The Area of Learning and Experience for Languages, Literacy and Communication in this curriculum states the following:

- "This Area of Learning and Experience offers ways to take advantage of the links between teaching Welsh, English and modern foreign languages, by encouraging children and young people to apply their knowledge of the way language works in Welsh, for example, to English or modern foreign languages. In doing so, they can understand the structure of languages. This, together with an appreciation of words and their origin, can help children and young people develop enthusiasm and interest in language."

The aim of the Local Authority is to teach pupils to be fully bilingual as they leave the primary school and to develop that ability during their secondary phase in order to become full members of the bilingual society of which they are a part. This aspiration is in line with Ceredigion Council's Corporate Strategy and is one of the Curriculum for Wales statutory four purposes.

Welsh in Education Strategic Plan

Ceredigion County Council's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan 2022-32 is clear in its aim and principle of developing our pupils' ability to use both Welsh and English fluently and confidently in a variety of situations. This will enable them to become full members of the bilingual society of which they are a part, fostering pride in the languages, heritage and culture of Ceredigion and Wales.

Ceredigion Education Authority seeks to ensure appropriate emphasis on the Welsh language and culture and strongly believes in the educational value of being able to communicate fluently in both Welsh and English as a benefit to all pupils. The Education

Authority declares itself firmly in favour of developing pupils who are confidently bilingual in all of Ceredigion's primary and secondary schools.

The Ceredigion Schools' Language Strategy (2008) is key to the success of the bilingual provision and the Ceredigion Schools' Language Policy is a firm and unambiguous basis for the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan 2022-32, and the provision and implementation of practical targets will lead to progress in bilingualism at all levels.

Ceredigion Education Authority seeks to ensure that children and young people are offered rich, relevant and creative contexts (including ICT developments and Digital Competency), enabling them to extend and apply their language skills. Offering opportunities to enhance oral skills (specifically) at all stages of the educational journey is a core element in order to ensure fluent and confident speakers.

The Authority will also ensure that families are aware of, and have access to the support available, as their children and young people develop along the language pathway/continuum. The Authority will continue to focus on strengthening the Welsh language in its primary schools through investment and improvements to the provision, to create firm foundations for learning through the medium of Welsh and other languages in secondary school.

The Authority will work on a regional and cross regional level to share resources and expertise and encourage links between schools to improve the quality of language teaching and learning.

The Authority, through this strategy is contributing to its duty under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 to promote and safeguard the culture and heritage of Wales and the Welsh language. It contributes to the goal of 'a Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language'.

This scheme is intertwined with the Welsh Government Language Strategy of creating one million Welsh speakers by 2050. Ceredigion Education Authority agrees with the view that the education system is the main method of ensuring that children develop their Welsh language skills, and of creating new Welsh speakers.

Relevant information about the school

Impact on the community	
Proportion of pupils from the catchment area attending the school	As there is no specific catchment area for schools in Ceredigion, parents can choose a school for their children in line with the local authority's admission policy. Currently, approximately 70% of pupils are from the town of Aberystwyth and its vicinity. This proposal will not have an impact on the proportion of pupils attending the school.
Proportion of pupils from outside the catchment area attending the school	As there is no specific catchment area for schools in Ceredigion, parents can choose a school for their children in line with the local authority's admission policy. Currently, approximately 30% of pupils are from outside of the town of Aberystwyth and its vicinity. This proposal will not have an impact on the proportion of pupils attending the school.
Information about any other facilities provided at the school e.g. youth club/playgroup	The school provides a Breakfast and After School Club for its pupils.
Information about any other facilities or services that the school provides e.g. after-school clubs, community library	The school provides a range of extracurricular activities throughout the year for the pupils, e.g., sports clubs, chess club. Currently there are no community activities at the school, therefore there will be no impact from this proposal.

Impact on the Welsh language	
The school's Language Category	According to Welsh Government guidelines on the categorisation of schools with regard to Welsh-medium provision, from September 2022 Plascrug Primary School will be in Transitional Category 2 .
Information about Welsh language standards at the school	<p>The Estyn inspection, in 2019 noted that 'Nearly all pupils in the foundation phase listen attentively and speak confidently. They have a wide-ranging English vocabulary and develop a sound understanding of the Welsh language quickly. Most of them use the Welsh language confidently when discussing everyday practices. At KS2 most pupils have an excellent understanding of the Welsh language and express themselves naturally and with increasing confidence, responding sensibly to instructions.</p> <p>The school's Welsh ethos continues to be promoted and Welsh language development is prioritised in the school's development plans. All the school's teachers, including two who recently attended a sabbatical course, use Welsh confidently within the classroom daily. The school actively supports the development of its support staff's Welsh language skills by releasing them to attend Welsh lessons during the school day. Several parents attend Welsh lessons so they can support their children to speak Welsh at home. The proactive 'Cryw Cymraeg' celebrates the language in weekly assemblies and encourage pupils to speak Welsh around the school. As a result, most pupils develop a more positive attitude towards the Welsh language as they become more confidence in using the language in and out of the classroom. The school's younger pupils take Welsh reading books home, and a weekly newsletter contains a short article in Welsh. They are currently working towards receiving the Campus Cymraeg Gold Award.</p>

<p>Information about after-school activities which provide additional opportunities to use the Welsh language at school e.g Urdd clubs</p>	<p>The school regularly competes in activities organised by the Urdd and have been successful at county and national level on the sporting field and at the Eisteddfod. Over the years the school has been very successful at the Urdd National Eisteddfod in competitions for learners, winning the C�n Actol, annually for nearly twenty years and winning the Ymgom and Cerdd Dant Party on numerous occasions. Teachers who provide extracurricular clubs, such as football, hockey and rugby use a lot of Welsh to reinforce the children's Welsh skills. The school's oldest pupils attend the Urdd Centres in Cardiff and Llangrannog every other year where they have valuable opportunities to develop and use their spoken Welsh skills.</p> <p>This proposal will further develop pupils' confidence to use the language outside school and in the local community.</p>
<p>Information about whether the school provides facilities for members of the community to learn Welsh, or facilities for them to engage in activities through the medium of Welsh</p>	<p>The school supports the staff's language development by ensuring that they have access to sabbatical courses and appropriate training. Three teachers have so far attended these sabbatical courses and 4 assistants have attended a 10-week Taster course provided by the Authority. This has had a positive impact on their ability and confidence to use the language.</p> <p>As part of the support provided by the school to promote the Welsh language, they are collaborating with Aberystwyth University and Ceredigion's Education Department on an exciting, innovative, scheme that provides an asset for parents supporting their children on their journey towards bilingualism. A tutor visits the school every week to provide Welsh language lessons for parents at different levels. Parents benefit from the provision and can support their children with their work and develop confidence to learn and use the work. During the year, many parents and governors have attended the lessons, see table below. This proposal will continue during the next year and will support parents with regard to developing the language medium and ensuring school admission for pupils at 3 years of age.</p>

	Plascrug Primary School	Autumn Term	Spring Term	Summer Term
	Taster sessions	15	3	5
	Entry	-	15	7
	Zoom	2	2	5
	Total	17	20	17
Comments provided by the authority's Welsh language forum	The WESP Forum will support the WESP's outcomes and actions and will meet regularly to monitor the Action Plan.			
Information on how the proposal aligns with the Authority's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan and any steps that may need to be taken in the future as a result of the change to continue to comply with the plan or achieve the plan's targets.	<p>Welsh Government has approved Ceredigion County Council's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan 2022-32. It sets out the authority's vision, aim and objectives for developing Welsh-medium education over the next ten years.</p> <p>The proposal is fully aligned with the authority's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan. By changing the school's language medium up to age 7 and providing education for 3-year-old pupils at the school, the plans in place to support the proposal give children the opportunity to learn and develop Welsh language skills from the age of 3, and ensure that they are supported to do so throughout their educational journey. An action plan is in place to support the school to develop its Welsh language provision in line with WESP requirements for the first 5 years, up to 2026-27. This will be regularly monitored and adapted in line with the school's requirements and in order to achieve the plan's targets.</p>			

Equality Impact Assessment

The Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 (the Act) brings together and replaces the previous anti-discrimination laws with a single Act. It simplifies and strengthens the law, removes inconsistencies and makes it easier for people to understand and comply with it. The majority of the Act came into force on the 1 October 2010.

The Act includes a new public sector equality duty (the 'general duty') replacing the separate duties on race, disability and gender equality. This came into force on the 5 April 2011.

What is the general duty?

The aim of the general duty is to ensure that the public authorities and those carrying out a public function consider how they can positively contribute to a fairer society through advancing equality and good relations in their day-to-day activities. The duty ensures that equality considerations are built into the design of policies and the delivery of the services and that they are kept under review. This will achieve better outcomes for all.

Under the legislation, public authorities have legal duties to pay 'due regard' to the need to eliminate discrimination and promote equality with regard to race, disability and gender, including gender reassignment, as well as to promote good race relations. The Equality Act 2010 introduces a new public sector duty which extends the coverage to age, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity, and religion or belief. The law requires that the duty to pay 'due regard' be demonstrated in the decision-making process. It is also important to note that the public authorities subject to the equality duties are also likely to be subject to the obligations under the Human Rights Act and is therefore wise also to consider the potential impact that decisions could have on human rights as part of the same process.

Ceredigion's approach to Equality Impact



In order to ensure that the council is considering the potential equality impact of its proposed policies and practices, and in order to evidence that we have done so, this proposal is supported by the Local Authority's Integrated Impact Assessment.




Protected Characteristics	Impact			Details of the nature of the impact
	Positive	Negative	Neither	
Age	<input type="checkbox"/>			<p>The school currently admits 3-year-old pupils on a part-time basis. The Children's Commissioner for Wales has stated that the Welsh language and the provision of Welsh-medium services is a matter of rights, and relevant to a number of articles in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. The Commissioner also stated that there is a clear link between language and identity, and that no article of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child can be separated from linguistic considerations.</p> <p>All staff employed at the school will be treated equitably regardless of their status within this protected characteristic.</p>
Disability	<input type="checkbox"/>			<p>This proposal will give children and young people the opportunity to learn and develop Welsh language skills and ensure they receive support to do so throughout their educational journey.</p> <p>One of the outcomes in the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan is to improve the provision and support for additional learning needs, allowing more of those who need that specific support to take advantage of it through the medium of Welsh.</p>

Gender reassignment / transgender			<input type="checkbox"/>	Any pupils, parents/carers and staff will be treated equitably and in line with the relevant policies.
Marriage or civil partnership			<input type="checkbox"/>	All staff employed at the school will be treated equitably regardless of their status within this protected characteristic.
Pregnancy or maternity			<input type="checkbox"/>	All staff employed at the school will be treated equitably regardless of their status within this protected characteristic.
Race			<input type="checkbox"/>	This proposal will give children and young people the opportunity to learn and develop Welsh language skills and ensure they receive support to do so throughout their educational journey. Integration support will be provided where necessary in an appropriate manner
Religion or Belief or non-belief			<input type="checkbox"/>	The school will follow all aspects of the national curriculum as at present.
Sex/Gender identity			<input type="checkbox"/>	This will not have any detrimental impact on the provision provided. All stakeholders falling into this protected characteristic will be treated equitably in line with relevant policies and procedures.
Sexual Orientation			<input type="checkbox"/>	Any stakeholders falling into this protected characteristic will be treated equitably in line with relevant policies and procedures

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 gives a legally-binding common purpose of seven Well-being Goals and five Ways of Working designed to support and deliver a public service that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs,

<p>Long Term</p> 	<p>Ceredigion’s WESP 2022-32 will be a document that sets out actions to achieve the aim of increasing the number of Welsh language speakers within the county by 2032. Short and long-term targets and clear short- and long-term actions will be set out over the 10-year period.</p>	<p>By building on the 2014-17 WESP and the 2017-20 WESP this 10-year WESP sets a definite timetable which will be active, practical and sustainable to achieve the goal. We do not anticipate that the actions taken will have any negative impact. Positive engagement with all our partners and stakeholders, throughout the period, will be extremely important as the developments are implemented.</p>
<p>Prevention</p> 	<p>The actions that will prevent any problems that may arise or worsen throughout the plan’s lifetime will be noted within it.</p>	<p>The resources needed to prevent problems from arising are clearly noted in the actions throughout the plan. Any concerns that arise are responded to through continuous and clear engagement with stakeholders and partners throughout the planning and consultation period.</p>
<p>Integration</p>	<p>It is essentially a proposal that supports Ceredigion County Council’s aspiration to strengthen the position of the Welsh language through its Language Strategy. The proposal also supports the Council’s Strategic</p>	<p>The Welsh language is central to the operation of Ceredigion County Council and its strategic objectives. Community integration is central to all schools, creating an environment that supports culture, heritage and the</p>

	<p>Objectives and the Welsh Government's Cymraeg 2050: a million Welsh speakers Strategy.</p>	<p>Welsh language. It is anticipated that the proposal will have no negative impact.</p>
<p>Collaboration</p> 	<p>Collaboration between partners and stakeholders will be a core part of the plan. The main collaboration will be between authority officials and the schools and their governing bodies, as well as parents.</p>	<p>This is the core purpose of the proposal – examples of collaboration will be identified throughout the plan to ensure positive, consistent and sustained collaboration through the actions specified.</p>
<p>Involvement</p> 	<p>The importance of involving people who have an interest in achieving the well-being goals, and ensuring that those people reflect the diversity of the area they serve. Stakeholders and partners will be included throughout the consultation period. The consultation period itself (Autumn 2023) will engage with people with protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 through the statutory public consultation. There will be an opportunity for all members of the public to express an opinion on the proposal at that time.</p>	<p>The proposal's timetable and the need to respond to the democratic process throughout will ensure that the views of partners and stakeholders are included. The proposal is subject to formal statutory consultation, and follows the 'National Principles for Public Engagement in Wales'.</p>