

CEREDIGION COUNTY COUNCIL – SCHOOLS SERVICE

**SCHOOL REORGANISATION
STATUTORY CONSULTATION DOCUMENT**



Cyngor Sir
CEREDIGION
County Council

**PROPOSAL TO
AMEND LANGUAGE MEDIUM OF THE
FOUNDATION LEARNING AND ADMIT
3-YEAR-OLD PUPILS ON A PART TIME
BASIS AT COMINS COCH PRIMARY
SCHOOL**

DATE: SEPTEMBER 2023

1. INTRODUCTION

In accordance with section 84 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 all Local Authorities in Wales are expected to submit a Welsh Language Education Strategic Plan to Welsh Government.

The Welsh Language in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) was adopted by Ceredigion Cabinet on 20 February 2022 and was approved by Welsh Government on 20 July 2022. The WESP complies with the Welsh Government's Welsh Education Strategic Plans 2019 regulations. Strategic plans were created for the following areas in order to develop and strengthen the Welsh language.

Outcome 1: More nursery/three-year-old children being educated through the medium of Welsh

Outcome 2: More reception class/five-year-old children being educated through the medium of Welsh

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

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

Outcome 5: More opportunities for learners to use the Welsh language in different contexts in the School

Outcome 6: Extend the Welsh language education provision for pupils with Additional Learning Needs ("ALN") (in accordance with the duties set out by the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018)

Outcome 7: An increase in the number of teaching staff that can teach Welsh (as a subject) and through the medium of Welsh

Following its approval, under section 85 (7) of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 local authorities must take all reasonable steps to implement their WESP and this proposal aligns with the vision for Ceredigion.

2. BACKGROUND

On 2 May 2023 the Cabinet agreed to:

- i) adopt the Action Plan of the Welsh Language in Education Strategic Plan for 2022-23, and to implement it annually
- ii) that the Action Plan is monitored via meetings of the WESP Language Forum and the Bilingual Futures committee.
- iii) that the annual report on progress against the Welsh Language Education Strategic Plan's Action Plan is presented to the Language Forum, Bilingual Futures committee, Learning Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Cabinet
- iv) in line with the School Organisation Code (2018) that the Local Authority begins the process of changing the language medium in the Foundation Learning at Comins Coch Primary School.
- v) also, a consultation on changing the admission age at Comins Coch Primary school will run concurrently.

As a result of the above decision, the consultation process will commence on 15 September 2023.

3. REASONS FOR FORMULATING THE PROPOSAL

With the introduction of the Curriculum for Wales as a statutory document since September 2022, the four mandatory purposes set out the need to develop *“ambitious, capable learners that can communicate effectively in different forms and settings, using both Welsh and English and are ready to learn throughout their lives”*. Within that curriculum the Welsh language is mandatory from age 3 to 16 . In order to reflect School Categorisation according to Welsh language provision (September 2022) all schools in Ceredigion have agreed on a specific Language category. Comins Coch Primary School and its Governing Body have agreed a Transitional 2 (T2) category and have created an Action Plan showing the language pathway across the school. The Languages, Literacy and Communication Area of learning and experience within the Curriculum for Wales requires schools and practitioners to develop the Welsh language, thus providing consistent guidelines to all organisations.

Changing the school's Foundation Learning Language would be a sound basis for developing the pupils' linguistic skills in accordance with the requirements of the

Curriculum for Wales. It would allow for a more consistent provision and offer linguistic equity to all pupils in Ceredigion.

Offering access to education at 3 years of age on a part-time basis expands the pupils' language attainment opportunities and provides a more equal and consistent provision within schools that have been placed in the T2 category. This proposal supports the Welsh Government Cymraeg 2050 Strategy – A Million Welsh Speakers (2017) as well as the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act (2015).

The table below illustrates the implementation timetable should the proposal be approved:-

Start date	School Year
September 2024	Admitting part time Nursery pupils for the first time
September 2025	Reception
September 2026	Year 1
September 2027	Year 2

By September 2028 the school's Year 3 pupils would have a sound foundation, especially orally, and would be able to build on those skills whilst also developing their skills and education through the medium of English.

Background Details of the School

Comins Coch Primary School	
Proposed Number of Admissions	26
Admission arrangements	Details in section 12 The Admissions process
PLASC January 2023	144
Percentage speaking Welsh at home (January 2023)	8%
Age range	4-11
Capacity	185
Number of Nursery Places	-
Location	Comins Coch, Aberystwyth
Category	Community
Language Category	Transitional 2

4. THE CONSULTATION PROCESS

The consultation on this recommendation will follow the guidelines set out by the Welsh Government.

This document has been sent to the following stakeholders:

Staff (Teaching and Ancillary) of Comins Coch Primary School and Ceredigion primary and secondary headteachers	Governors and Parents/Guardians Comins Coch Primary School
Ceredigion Children and Young People Partnership	Welsh Government
Local County Councillors	Welsh Language Commissioner
Constituency and Regional Assembly Member/Member of Parliament	Adjoining local authority Director of Education
Mid Wales Education Partnership (MWEP)	The Church in Wales – Diocese of St Davids Roman Catholic Diocesan Authority
Regional Transport Consortium	Estyn
Police and Crime Commissioner	Local Community Councils
Teachers' Trade Unions and Staff representing teachers and other staff at schools affected by the proposal	Education Providers for 3-year-olds and private childcare providers

The Consultation Period

The consultation period, when views may be expressed on the proposal, will take place between 15 September and 30 October 2023. Responses to the consultation will not be counted as objections to the proposal.

Date	Activity
15 September – 30 October 2023	Publish Consultation Document
9 January 2024	Cabinet
22 January – 19 February 2024	Publish statutory notice
4 June 2024	Cabinet

Opinions may be expressed, or further questions asked, either by writing a letter or completing the response form at the end of this document, which should be sent by no later than **30 October 2023, to:**

WESP Consultation
Ceredigion County Council
Canolfan Rheidol
Rhodfa Padarn
Aberystwyth
Ceredigion
SY23 3UE

Or e-mail: cysgacominscoch@ceredigion.llyw.cymru or
wespcominscoch@ceredigion.gov.uk

Pupil Consultation

There will be an opportunity for the pupils of Comins Coch Primary School to participate in the consultation process. A supplementary pupil-friendly version of this formal consultation document will be provided, and the Welsh Government has produced an information document for pupils entitled 'School Organisation Proposals'.

The information provided will be presented in a way that is relevant to their age and level of understanding, ensuring they can express an informed opinion.

5. DESCRIPTION AND BENEFITS

The Current Situation

Strengths	Weaknesses
Maintaining the schools' identity and presence in the local community	A lack of linguistic equity leading to a lack of consistency across the County
No disruption to pupils or staff	A number of current staff are able to teach through the medium of Welsh but have no opportunity to refine their skills
	The current situation does not meet the needs and aspirations of the Curriculum for Wales to produce pupils that are confident in both Welsh and English thereby creating bilingual citizens
	There is no nursery provision at the school
	It does not contribute positively to the Welsh Government's vision of A Million Welsh Speakers

Advantages and disadvantages of amending the Welsh language in the Foundation Phase and changing admission age compared to the current situation.

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The pupils will benefit from attending a school that can deliver the curriculum in a wider social and linguistic context • Pupil outcomes and standards will be higher and will meet the needs and vision of the Curriculum for Wales to develop "ambitious, capable learners that can communicate effectively in different forms and settings, using both Welsh and English" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The implications of training certain members of staff • Possibility that the Sabbatical scheme does not meet the demand • Capacity to provide appropriate methodology and pedagogy training • The cost to the education authority of providing a 0.5 teacher for the nursery provision

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three-year-old pupils will have access to formal education at school on a part-time basis • The pupils will learn the Welsh Language during their early education, ensuring bilingualism from the outset • Linguistic equity across the county in terms of schools and pupils up to 7-years-old • Offers a sound basis to expand skills across the Foundation Learning period • Increases staffing capacity equivalent to 0.5 • Proper engagement in the bilingual communities the pupils are part of • The development of staff's personal linguistic skills in line with professional standards for active teachers • Assists schools to become a category T2 school 	
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The risks associated with changing the medium of Foundation Learning and the measures needed to manage them

- The need for close engagement with pupils, parents and the community will be essential to reduce and manage the risk
- Support will be needed for vulnerable pupils or pupils with additional learning needs
- Staff and pupils will need to be supported by providing suitable training and dedicated resources

Impact on the Community

It is anticipated that there would be no impact on the community as the proposal will strengthen the use of the Welsh language.

A Community Impact Assessment is available as a separate document.

The likely impact of different travel arrangements

There will be no change to the current travel arrangements.

6. DETAILS OF AFFECTED SCHOOL

The following school may be affected:

- Ysgol Gynradd Rhydypennau
- Ysgol Gynradd Penrhyncoch

Rhydypennau Primary School	
Proposed Number of Admissions	27
Admission arrangements	Details in section 12
PLASC January 2023 (without Nursery)	165
Percentage speaking Welsh at home (January 2023)	14%
Age range	3-11
Capacity	190
Number of Nursery Places	27
Location	Bow Street, Aberystwyth
Category	Community
Language Category	Category 3
Transport Arrangements between Home and School	Details in Section 13

Penrhyncoch Primary School	
Proposed Number of Admissions	15
Admission arrangements	Details in section 12
PLASC January 2023 (without Nursery)	94
Percentage speaking Welsh at home (January 2023)	41%
Age range	4-11
Capacity	110
Number of Nursery Places	n/a
Location	Penrhyncoch, Aberystwyth
Category	Community
Language Category	Category 3
Transport Arrangements between Home and School	Details in Section 13

7. QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF EDUCATION

Estyn’s findings in its thematic report on Language Acquisition identified the immersion and drilling method as the most effective way of producing Welsh language speakers.

See Estyn thematic report on language acquisition [here](#)

Estyn – Welsh language standards – Comins Coch - 2017

The 2017 Estyn inspection noted that ‘nearly all pupils across the school achieve very good standards in the Welsh language.

Nearly all pupils across the school achieve excellent standards in the Welsh language. They enjoy learning the language in a variety of subjects across the curriculum. In the Foundation Phase, pupils respond well to instructions and, by the end of Year 2, they hold simple conversations confidently, with adults and each other. At Key Stage 2, nearly all pupils develop a wide range of vocabulary and speak confidently in and outside the classroom. By the end of Key Stage 2, the pronunciation and intonation of many pupils is generally good’.

The likely impact of the proposal on the school’s ability to deliver the full curriculum at Foundation Learning.

It is not anticipated that the proposal will have a negative impact on the ability to deliver the full curriculum, as the school will be able to deliver the curriculum in an appropriate, differentiated, broad and varied way. The Foundation Learning will implement the Welsh language immersion system, and English language reading will be introduced towards the end of the Foundation Phase if appropriate.

The school’s ability to deliver the full curriculum through the medium of Welsh at Foundation Learning

School Name	Ability to deliver the full curriculum
Comins Coch Primary School	The full curriculum will be delivered in an appropriate, differentiated, broad and varied way at Comins Coch Primary School It is not anticipated that the proposal will have a negative impact on the ability to deliver the full curriculum.

8. WELSH LANGUAGE IN EDUCATION STRATEGIC PLAN (WESP)

The extent to which the proposal supports the targets outlined in the approved Welsh Language in Education Strategic Plan

The school and Board of Governors have placed the school in the Transitional 2 category in accordance with the definition in “Guidelines on categories according to Welsh-medium provision” 2021 document. The proposal supports the targets outlined in the local Welsh Language in Education Strategic Plan

How the proposal would expand the Welsh language provision

Pupils would learn the Welsh language from an early age, ensuring continuity and progress in their language skills.

A wider social context would offer formal and informal linguistic opportunities to the pupils.

9. ADDITIONAL LEARNING NEEDS

Although the change will affect all pupils, the Authority nevertheless acknowledges that it may be more challenging for some pupils with additional learning needs (ALN). Every practical step will be taken to ensure as little disruption as possible, and to assist any pupils with any changes.

Pupils with current additional learning needs will continue to receive the level of support they need to meet their individual educational needs. Additional arrangements currently in place for pupils, such as access to one-to-one support, will be reviewed and provided as needed.

Ceredigion County Council will provide appropriate help and support to pupils with additional learning needs. If the parents of any pupils who are on the ALN register have any questions about the support offered, individual meetings can be arranged with ALN Education Officers.

10. FUNDING INFORMATION

The Authority will provide 0.5 FTE nursery teacher funding for the school.

11. STAFFING CONSIDERATIONS

If the proposal is approved, the staffing implications could lead to staff being released for Sabbatical schemes and specific training. As part of the consultation, discussions will be held specifically with staff and Trade Union representatives.

12. THE ADMISSIONS PROCESS

All applications should be made to the LA and not the School as the LA is the only body that can offer school places. The contact details for the Admission Authority are as follows:

Admissions Team
Schools Service
Canolfan Rheidol
Rhodfa Padarn
Llanbadarn Fawr
Aberystwyth
Ceredigion
SY23 3UE

Applications should be made using the on-line admission form, accessed via the Ceredigion website (www.ceredigion.gov.uk).

13. TRANSPORT

The school's current arrangements will not be affected.

14. WALKING ROUTES

The school's current situation will not be affected.

15. IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Community, Welsh Language and Equality Impact Assessment

As set out in the Welsh Government School Organisation Code, impact assessments are required to be published in relation to the above. This has been produced as a separate document to include information provided by the school and is available on our website.

16. DETAILS OF THE STATUTORY CONSULTATION

In order to implement the proposal, the following provides a summary of the procedures as confirmed in the statutory code:

- Publication of the consultation report, confirming the details of the proposal – this will be published on the Council's website, as well as being sent to all stakeholders.
- There will be a period of 42 days to respond to the proposal, and at the end of the consultation period, a report will be published summarising the comments received. This will be published on the Council's website.
- If the proposal is accepted, a statutory notice will be published with details such as the proposed implementation date, how to obtain a copy of the consultation report, and how to object:
 - On the Council's website:
 - Placed on, or near the school's main entrance; and
 - By providing the affected school with copies to distribute to parents.
- An objection period of 28 days from the date of publication allows anyone who wishes to object to the proposal to do so.
- The Council decides on the proposal; when it is possible, subject to the above process, to make a decision to implement the proposal. The

proposal should be implemented by the date set out in the statutory notice, or any other appropriate date.

Detailed below is the anticipated timeline for this process:

Date	Activity
15 September 2023	Formal consultation period begins: A period of formal consultation will take place, during this time interested parties can make their views known regarding the proposal.
30 October 2023	Formal Consultation Ends
9 January 2024	Formal Consultation Report: At the end of the formal consultation period, responses will be collated and presented to Cabinet in the form of a Formal Consultation Report including a recommendation from Officers. This will be published on the Ceredigion website.
22 January 2024	Statutory Notice period begins: If the proposal is accepted by Cabinet, a Statutory Notice is issued. During the statutory Objection period, objections must be made in writing and sent to the proposer within 28 days of the date on which the proposal was published.
19 February 2024	Statutory Notice period ends
4 June 2024	Cabinet: Report the number of objections received and decision as to whether to implement the proposal

17. FEEDBACK FORM – COMINS COCH PRIMARY SCHOOL

The following feedback form allows stakeholders to comment on the proposal i.e amend language medium of the Foundation Learning and to admit 3-year-old pupils on a part-time basis.

COMMENT:

Signature:	
Print your Name:	
E-mail:	
Address:	
Date:	
Please indicate if you would like to be notified when the consultation report is published: <input type="checkbox"/>	

Please note, unless you state otherwise, that your comments will be available to the public as part of the formal records of the consultation.

Return by 30 October 2023 at the latest to:

WESP Consultation, Ceredigion County Council, Canolfan Rheidol, Rhodfa Padarn, Llanbadarn Fawr, Aberystwyth, SY23 3UE

Or e-mail: cysgacominscoch@ceredigion.llyw.cymru or wespcominscoch@ceredigion.gov.uk