

Meeting of:	CABINET
Date of Meeting:	22 SEPTEMBER 2026
Report Title:	WELSH IN EDUCATION STRATEGIC PLAN (2022-2032)
Report Owner: Responsible Chief Officer / Cabinet Member	LINDSAY HARVEY CORPORATE DIRECTOR EDUCATION, EARLY YEARS AND YOUNG PEOPLE COUNCILLOR MARTYN JONES CABINET MEMBER FOR EDUCATION AND YOUNG PEOPLE
Responsible Officer:	GAYLE SHENTON HEAD OF LEARNING
Policy Framework and Procedure Rules:	THERE IS NO EFFECT UPON THE POLICY FRAMEWORK OR PROCEDURE RULES.
Executive Summary:	THIS REPORT PROVIDES CABINET WITH AN UPDATE ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WELSH IN EDUCATION STRATEGIC PLAN (WESP) 2022-2032. THE REPORT PROVIDES BACKGROUND INFORMATION, OUTLINING THE STRATEGIC RESPONSIBILITIES AND PROGRESS DURING YEAR 4 OF IMPLEMENTATION. THE WESP ANNUAL REVIEW REPORT IS SENT ANNUALLY TO WELSH GOVERNMENT.

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update Cabinet on the implementation and progress of the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) 2022-2032 during the 2025-2026 reporting period, highlighting key statutory achievements, and capital programme timelines.

2. Background

- 2.1 Section 84 of The School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 (“the 2013 Act”) requires a local authority to prepare a Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (“the Plan”) and outlines that a plan must contain:
- a. a local authority’s proposals on how it will carry out its education functions to:
 - i. improve the planning of the provision of education through the medium of Welsh (“Welsh-medium education”) in its area; and
 - ii. improve the standards of Welsh-medium education and of the teaching of Welsh in its area.

- b. the local authority's targets for improving the planning of the provision of Welsh-medium education in its area and for improving the standards of that education and of the teaching of Welsh in its area; and
- c. an update on the progress made to meet the targets contained in the previous WESP or previous revised WESP.

- 2.2 The first ten-year plan commenced on 1 September 2022 and will expire on 31 August 2032. The Welsh Government has set a target to increase the number of Year 1 learners taught through the medium of Welsh, from approximately 8% of the cohort to between 14% and 18% by 2032. Each subsequent plan will commence on 1 September in the year in which the previous ten-year plan ends (for example, from 1 September 2032 to 31 August 2042) (see **Appendix 1**).
- 2.3 Following the submission of the WESP, Welsh Government requested that the Authority submit a five-year WESP. The WESP five-year plan was presented to Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 1 on 1 December 2022 and was submitted to Welsh Government by the stipulated deadline of 16 December 2022 (see **Appendix 2**).
- 2.4 The WESP Annual Review Report for 2025-2026 was submitted to Welsh Government by the stipulated deadline of 31 July 2026 (see **Appendix 3**).
- 2.5 Bridgend's Local Government Education Services (LGES) was inspected by Estyn in March 2019. Recommendation 4 of the post-inspection action plan (PIAP) was to strengthen the role of the Welsh in Education Forum (WEF) to ensure timely progress in delivering the priorities identified in the WESP.
- 2.6 The WESP was reviewed as part of the Local Authority Link Inspector (LALI) enhanced visit in January 2025, during which positive feedback was received on the strategic approach and progress in delivering Welsh-medium education priorities (see **Appendix 4**).
- 2.7 In March 2026, Estyn's LGES full inspection reported positively on progress against the WESP, recognising the effective implementation of WESP priorities and the progress made towards agreed outcomes (see **Appendix 5**).
- 2.8 The legislative framework has evolved with the [Welsh Language and Education \(Wales\) Act 2025](#), which received Royal Assent on 7 July 2025 after being passed by Senedd Cymru on 13 May 2025.
- 2.9 The 2025 Act supports the Cymraeg 2050 strategy to reach a million Welsh speakers by strengthening the role of Welsh in education, with the general aim of ensuring that all pupils in maintained schools in Wales can use Welsh independently when they leave school.

3. Current situation/proposal

- 3.1 The WEF has been strategically strengthened and is now composed of 33 members representing a partnership of local authority officers, school leaders, and external delivery partners.
- 3.2 The sub-groups have been restructured from their previous five-group model into four dedicated, outcome-focused sub-groups:
- Outcomes 1 and 2;
 - Outcomes 3, 4, and 5;
 - Outcomes 6 and 7; and
 - Promotion, marketing, and celebrating.
- 3.3 Each sub-group consists of carefully selected partners, elects its own chairperson and vice-chairperson, and meets in-person once per term prior to the full WEF meeting. The full WEF meets online each term to discuss strategic updates.
- 3.4 The Authority established a permanent WESP Co-ordinator post in September 2024.
- 3.5 The WESP is monitored and evaluated in the following ways:
- Progress updates are reported monthly to the senior management team (SMT) of the Education, Early Years and Young People (EEYYP) Directorate.
 - The WESP is embedded as a core priority within the EEYYP Directorate Strategic Plan (2023–2026). Progress is tracked and reported monthly via the directorate's internal performance management system (STORI).
 - School capital schemes are reported bi-monthly to the School Modernisation Strategic Programme Board.
 - The Head of Learning serves as the Authority's Strategic Lead for the WESP and receives regular operational updates from the WESP Co-ordinator.
 - The WESP Co-ordinator meets with the chairs of the sub-groups prior to each termly meeting to align agendas and review progress.
 - The WESP Co-ordinator continues to meet regularly with Welsh Government representatives throughout the year to monitor national alignment.
 - Each of the four sub-groups implements an annual sub-group development plan derived directly from the WESP.

- During termly in-person sub-group meetings, development plans are updated and each action is RAYG (red, amber, yellow, green) rated to monitor delivery timescales.
- During the termly online WEF meetings, the WESP Co-ordinator presents a comprehensive progress update, inviting sub-group chairs and vice-chairs to present findings, followed by questions and comments.
- Key updates are provided to Bridgend Association of Secondary and Special Headteachers (BASSH) and the Bridgend Primary Federation.

3.6 The WESP Annual Review Report demonstrates progress across the seven statutory outcomes contained within Bridgend's WESP. The main developments during the reporting period are summarised below, with further detail provided under each outcome.

- Reception applications increased from 98 in 2024 to 136 for September 2025.
- 100% of schools are engaged with Siarter Iaith (with 12 schools winning awards).
- The transition rate increased to 100% with all Year 6 pupils attending Welsh-medium primary schools progressing to a Welsh-medium secondary school in September 2025.
- There has been an increase in the number of pupils studying A level Welsh in September 2025 (increased from 16 to 31 pupils) following co-ordinated network promotion.
- 10 pupils have accessed Pont Iaith, our late immersion provision since September 2025.

Outcome 1: More Nursery children/three-year-olds receive their education through the medium of Welsh

- The proportion of three-year-olds receiving Welsh-medium education increased to 10.32% (164 children) in 2025-26, compared with 9.74% (153 children) in the previous year. Demand for Welsh-medium education remains strong, with 158 nursery applications received for the 2026-27 academic year to date, exceeding the 157 applications received for 2025-26, while the application window remains open.
- In direct response to increased demand, the Authority collaborated closely with Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Ogwr to strategically expand its capacity, successfully making 71 nursery places available from September 2026.

- Progress has been made with the Welsh-medium childcare hubs. The Bettws Childcare Hub, Blodeuol is due to open in September 2026, offering highly anticipated full-day Welsh-medium childcare. Additionally, the lease for the Blackmill Childcare Hub was successfully awarded to Mudiad Meithrin, with legal processes and lease negotiations underway to support its planned opening during the 2026–2027 school year.
- To support linguistic continuity, the Welsh-medium cluster secured a £1,700 Mentrau Iaith grant to establish the Cylch i Ysgol transition pilot. Led by Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Calon y Cymoedd, this initiative creates a seamless path from early years to primary education through collaborative visits, bespoke transition storybooks, and targeted parental engagement.
- To meet growing demand, a £158k capital bid was submitted to the Welsh Government to build a nursery extension at Ysgol Cynwyd Sant, which will increase capacity from 43 to 60 places. Alongside this, an options paper has been presented to the Corporate Management Team to evaluate opportunities for expanding nursery capacity in the Maesteg area.
- The Authority is actively preparing to transition one of its Flying Start childcare settings to a fully Welsh-medium provision in early 2027, offering both morning and afternoon sessions to families.
- A new Cylch Meithrin in Porthcawl is due to open in September 2026 and has appointed a committee and staff. This provision is supported by the Porthcawl Cylch Ti a Fi and Cymraeg i Blant groups to establish a pipeline of learners ahead of the opening of the Welsh-medium seedling school in Porthcawl.
- Utilising the Cymraeg 2050 grant, the Authority has funded a peripatetic Ti a Fi Officer post until March 2027 to establish and lead new parent-and-toddler groups in high-demand areas.
- Local childcare options have been strengthened by registering a new Welsh-medium childminder in the Brynmenyn area, who is currently being supported to become an approved Flying Start provider.

Outcome 2: More Reception class children/five-year-olds receive their education through the medium of Welsh

- The proportion of Reception-aged pupils educated through the medium of Welsh increased from 6.96% (98 pupils) in 2025 to 10.08% (137 pupils) in 2026. This increase was achieved despite a 12.5% decline in the overall Reception population across Bridgend schools since 2021-2022, indicating that Welsh-medium education continues to attract a growing share of learners.

- 100% per cent of Welsh-medium applicants for Reception, Year 7, or full-time nursery were offered a place at their first-preference school. This growth is further supported by Cabinet's approval of the new Home-to-School Transport Policy 2025, which introduced more generous free transport provisions for Welsh-medium nursery and sixth-form pupils.
- The proportion of Black, Asian, and minority ethnic learners in Welsh-medium schools has increased from 36 pupils (0.16%) in PLASC 2025 to 42 pupils (2.5%) in PLASC 2026.
- Analysis of admissions data has identified continued interest in Welsh-medium education, with 20 parents selecting Welsh-medium education as their second preference and 29 as their third preference when their first preference was English-medium education. Work is underway to build a stronger evidence base on parental preferences, helping to inform future promotion, planning and the continued development of Welsh-medium education.
- The late immersion provision has been branded as 'Pont laith', operating with a dedicated name and logo from its base at Ysgol y Ferch o'r Sgêr under a permanently appointed leader, and supported by the Cymraeg 2050 grant for late immersion of £113,078. Pont laith welcomed 10 newcomers this year (7 primary and 3 secondary, including 4 Black, Asian, and minority ethnic learners) who attend the Pont laith from Monday to Thursday and transition to their registered school on Fridays. To support resettling and asylum-seeking families, Pont laith collaborated with Oasis Cardiff and the Authority's Resettlement Team, whilst wider community outreach was achieved through case studies in the Residents' Bulletin and a dedicated stall at Gŵyl Ogi Ogwr.
- Significant progress has been made across Welsh-medium capital projects, starting with the completion of the £493k double mobile classroom at Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Ogwr in October 2025 to accommodate immediate early years growth. The £5.4m Welsh-medium seedling school in Porthcawl and co-located £971k childcare hub scheme has secured planning approval, with construction progressing towards a June 2027 completion date. For the £48.5m Bridgend West primary project (replacement Ysgol y Ferch o'r Sgêr), planning approval was obtained in July 2025, and a variation request has been submitted to the Welsh Government to address contractor cost increases arising from complex land swap negotiations for the Marlas site. To address secondary capacity, the Welsh Government approved the inclusion of a 10-form-entry Welsh-medium secondary provision in the Strategic Outline Programme, with Cabinet approving the acquisition of a central site in Bridgend to enable the scheme.
- To secure further educational infrastructure, the Authority submitted a £1.65m Welsh-medium Capital Grant expression of interest to Welsh Government. This bid outlines three priority schemes: a nursery extension at Ysgol Cynwyd Sant (£810,968), a dedicated Pont laith late immersion centre at Ysgol Gynradd

Gymraeg Calon y Cymoedd (£689,780), and an innovative mobile Welsh promotion vehicle, 'Y Bws Iaith ar Daith' (£150k).

- Preparations are underway for the implementation of the Welsh Language and Education (Wales) Act 2025, with Welsh Government representatives invited to join the Directorate's Extended Management Team meeting and Team Bridgend which consists of EEYYP officers and headteachers

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

- Bridgend continues to achieve excellent transition rates with 100% of Year 6 learners (109 pupils) successfully progressed into Year 7 Welsh-medium education at Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Llangynwyd in September 2025.
- The high retention rate is driven collaborative transition planning of 'Teulu Llan' Welsh-medium cluster. Joint planning, annual transition updates, and secondary transition from Year 5 ensuring pupils transition between key educational phases with confidence.

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

- The number of learners enrolled in Welsh AS and A-Level courses increased from 16 in 2024–2025 to 25 by the end of the reporting period.
- The increase has been supported through the local authority's e-sgol hybrid learning model. This model aims to maintain the availability of A level courses with smaller class sizes; schools collaborate by delivering courses remotely.
- Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Llangynwyd continues to offer a broad range of qualifications, including GCSEs, A levels and vocational programmes in Sports, Criminology, Public Services and Childcare.

Outcome 5: More opportunities for learners to use Welsh in different contexts in school

- 100% of primary schools, secondary schools, special schools and the pupil referral unit (PRU) are engaged in the Siarter Iaith and Cymraeg Campus frameworks during the reporting period.
- Validation visits continued during the year, with 12 schools achieving awards through the Siarter Iaith and Cymraeg Campus frameworks.
- Partnership working continued with Urdd Gobaith Cymru and Menter Bro Ogwr to provide Welsh-medium enrichment opportunities outside the classroom.

During the reporting period, 556 pupils participated in the Urdd Jambori, alongside participation in residential camps, after-school Clwb Bananas provision, lunchtime Clwb Sbot a Sbri sessions, and community projects including the Mari Lwyd Trail and Prosiect 170 Gwlad Gwlad.

Outcome 6: An increase in the provision of Welsh-medium education for pupils with ALN in accordance with the duties imposed by the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018

- Comprehensive, specialist support is available for pupils in Welsh-medium education. This includes the primary Communication and Autism Resource Education (CARE) base at Ysgol Calon y Cymoedd, the MLD Learning Resource Centre (LRC) at Ysgol Cynwyd Sant, and dedicated secondary CARE base and MLD provisions at Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Llangynwyd.
- To mitigate the construction delays of the new Bro Ogwr Observation Class, the Authority offers bespoke interim ALN support packages to support pupils to remain in Welsh-medium education.

Outcome 7: Increase the number of teaching staff able to teach Welsh (as a subject) and teach through the medium of Welsh

- An analysis of School Workforce Annual Census (SWAC) data identified 76 qualified teachers who are proficient in Welsh and currently employed in English-medium settings, comprising 37 primary school teachers and 39 secondary school teachers. These teachers' Welsh language skills enable them to teach in a Welsh-medium school.
- Workforce language development continued during the reporting period, with 32 practitioners enrolled on National Centre for Learning Welsh courses. These courses ranged from entry-level provision to advanced sabbatical and residential programmes at Nant Gwrtheyrn.
- Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Llangynwyd secured funding through the Welsh in Education Workforce Scheme. Funding awarded during the reporting period included £19,500 for a Mathematics Development Grant, £5,000 for Core Subject Upskilling, £20,000 for a Childcare Programme grant and £45,000 for an Early Years Project grant.
- The following activities took place during the reporting period to promote Welsh-medium education and support awareness of Welsh-language opportunities across the county borough.
 - Promotional banners and posters were displayed at local train stations, and Welsh-medium education webpages were regularly updated.
 - The Comms Cymraeg Schedule was delivered through social media activity every Tuesday and Thursday, alongside promotion through the

weekly Residents' Bulletin, which reaches approximately 20,000 to 25,000 residents.

- Siarter Iaith and Cymraeg Campus awards achieved by schools were promoted through the Residents' Bulletin.
- In partnership with Swansea Council and Cymraeg i Bawb, case studies and promotional materials were developed to highlight experiences of Welsh-medium education.
- Pont Iaith was promoted and case studies published in the Residents' Bulletin, Seaside News and Yr Hogwr. Dedicated social media accounts are scheduled to launch in September 2026.

4. Equality implications (including Socio-economic Duty and Welsh Language)

- 4.1 The protected characteristics identified within the Equality Act, Socio-economic Duty, and the impact on the use of the Welsh Language have been considered in the preparation of this report. As a public body in Wales, the Council must consider the impact of strategic decisions, such as the development or the review of policies, strategies, services, and functions. This is an information report, therefore, it is not necessary to carry out an Equality Impact Assessment in the production of this report. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable equality impacts as a result of this report.

5. Well-being of Future Generations implications and connection to Corporate Well-being Objectives

- 5.1 The report contributes to the following goals within the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015:

- a prosperous Wales;
- a resilient Wales;
- a Wales of cohesive communities; and
- a globally responsible Wales.

Long term	Supports the statutory duty to provide sufficient pupil places and support the Welsh language.
Prevention	The Council has a statutory duty to promote the Welsh language. The plan will ensure that children and young people will be able to follow a Welsh-medium education.
Integration	The plan supports the promotion of Welsh education in the communities in which the children and young people live.
Collaboration	The Council will continue to work in collaboration to ensure that it achieves its vision as set out in the WESP (2022-2032).
Involvement	Key stakeholders are involved in implementing and monitoring the progress of the WESP (2022-2032).

6. Climate Change and Nature Implications

6.1 There are no climate change and nature implications arising from this report.

7. Safeguarding and Corporate Parent Implications

7.1 There are no safeguarding or corporate parent implications arising from this report.

8. Financial Implications

8.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

9. Recommendation

9.1 It is recommended that Cabinet notes the progress made in implementing the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (2022-2032).

Background documents

None