

# How was school today?

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## Parents' and carers' guide to primary school for children aged 7 to 11



**ADDYSG CYMRU**  
**EDUCATION WALES**  
cenhadaeth ein cenedl | our national mission

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Mae'r ddogfen yma hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg.

This document is also available in Welsh.

## Introduction

The Welsh Government believes that giving young learners a sound foundation for the future will benefit children and Wales as a whole in the long term.

Parents and carers have a vital role to play in helping their children to learn and, more importantly, to enjoy school and learning.

This guide will help explain what your child is learning in primary school.

It will give you some ideas about how to help your child and where to get more information, and will explain how their progress will be measured and reported to you.

Children's education in Wales is divided into four sections or stages.

### Primary school

1

The Foundation Phase caters for children aged between 3 and 7.

2

Key Stage 2 is from 7 to 11 years old.

### Secondary school

3

Key Stage 3 is from 11 to 14 years old.

4

Key Stage 4 takes learners to the age of 16.

This guide describes the curriculum as it applies to children in primary schools aged between 7 and 11 in Key Stage 2.

You can find information about the other phases of your child's learning at [www.gov.wales/educationandskills](http://www.gov.wales/educationandskills)

## The curriculum

### What is my child learning?

Children aged between 7 and 11 will follow programmes of study set out in the national curriculum for Key Stage 2. Their education will build on the experiences and learning gained in the Foundation Phase.

The curriculum in Key Stage 2 is designed around subjects and skills. It is designed to provide a firm foundation in language, mathematics and science, giving children the opportunity to achieve their best within a broad and balanced curriculum.

Supporting children to develop good literacy, numeracy and digital skills is at the core of learning for children in primary schools.

We want all children to be able to have the right skills to support their future choices in learning and life.

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Your child will follow a rich and varied curriculum designed to give them opportunities to learn about:

- English
- Welsh or Welsh second language
- mathematics
- science
- design and technology
- information and communication technology (ICT)
- history
- geography
- music
- art and design
- physical education (PE).

You can find more information about the curriculum in Wales at [learning.gov.wales](https://www.learning.gov.wales)

The curriculum for learners aged 3 to 16 in Wales is changing. From September 2022, starting with Nursery to Year 7 initially, the curriculum will fulfill four purposes of education and be delivered through six Areas of Learning and Experience.

More information on the new curriculum can be found at [gov.wales/curriculumforwales](https://www.gov.wales/curriculumforwales).

## What else will my child learn?

It is the responsibility of schools to plan and deliver a broad, balanced curriculum. Alongside the national curriculum, the subjects schools must also provide are religious education (RE) and personal and social education (PSE).

Primary schools do not have to provide sex education but they can provide a broader sex and relationships programme if the school governing body feel this is appropriate. However, they must have an up-to-date written sex education policy.

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Each school decides the detail of what children will learn and how the school day is organised, taking account of the requirements set out by the Welsh Government. They also organise their own timetable.

Teachers draw up lesson plans and decide which teaching resources and approaches to use. It is up to the school to make sure that its curriculum meets the legal requirements.

Your child's school will be able to provide more information about the way they structure the curriculum, the skills your child will develop and the content your child will cover.

You can find more information about education in Wales at **[www.gov.wales/educationandskills](http://www.gov.wales/educationandskills)**

## What is the National Literacy and Numeracy Framework?

The National Literacy and Numeracy Framework (LNF) was developed to help all learners develop excellent literacy and numeracy skills during their time at school. It provides continued development for 3- to 16-year-olds, clearly setting out expected yearly outcomes for literacy and numeracy.

All children are supported to develop sound literacy and numeracy skills. These skills are not just about learning English, Welsh and mathematics; they are about being able to use skills in different situations and across a wide range of activities.

Literacy describes a set of skills, including speaking, listening, reading and writing, which allow us to make sense of the world around us.

Numeracy describes the use of number, measuring and data skills, and the ability to identify and use these skills to solve problems.

The LNF identifies literacy and numeracy expectations for each year group and will help children develop literacy and numeracy skills through all subjects in the national curriculum and by using a wide range of activities.

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## What is the Digital Competence Framework?

Our children are entering a fast-moving digital world. We want them to have the skills to be confident, creative and critical when they use technology.

Digital competence is one of three cross-curricular responsibilities, alongside literacy and numeracy, which will be applied across the curriculum for all children aged 3 to 16.

The Digital Competence Framework (DCF) encapsulates the skills that will help children thrive in an increasingly digital world. It has four strands of equal importance – Citizenship; Interacting and collaborating; Producing; and Data and computational thinking. The strands are then further sub-divided into elements as shown in the box on the right.

### Citizenship

- Identity, image and reputation
- Health and well-being
- Digital rights, licensing and ownership
- Online behaviour and cyberbullying

### Interacting and collaborating

- Communication
- Collaboration
- Storing and sharing

### Producing

- Planning, sourcing and searching
- Creating
- Evaluating and improving

### Data and computational thinking

- Problem solving and modelling
- Data and information literacy

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Schools have now had over a year to familiarise themselves with the DCF and to develop their digital vision, and are now using it in their teaching across Wales.



## Do children with special educational needs follow the national curriculum?

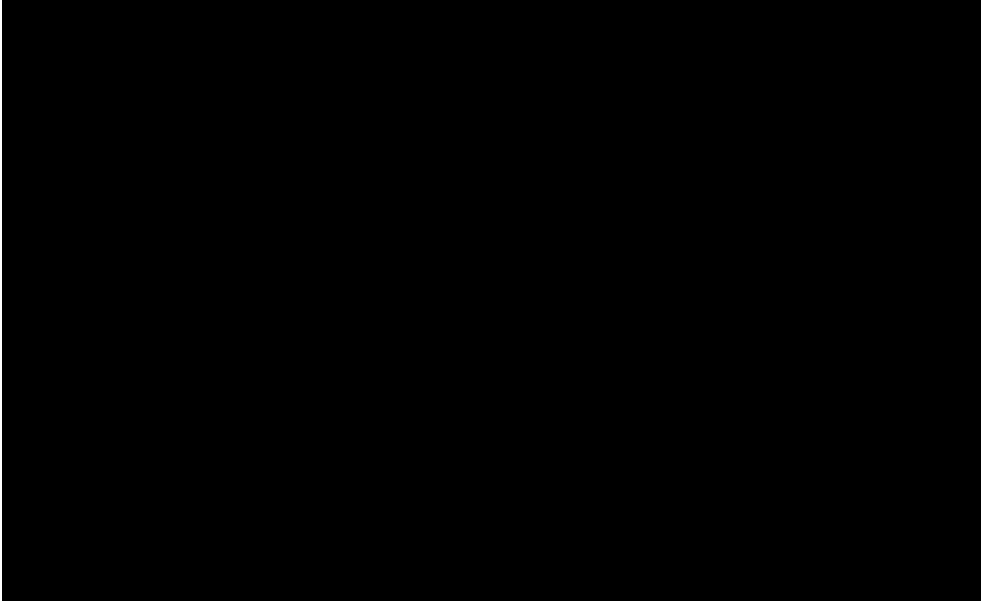
Most children, including those with special educational needs, will be able to follow the national curriculum. However, at times, a headteacher may decide that all or part of the national curriculum should not apply, temporarily, to a child with special educational needs. In very exceptional cases for some children, such as those with Statements of Special Educational Needs issued by the local authority, it may be decided that the national curriculum should not apply on a permanent basis. This is known as 'disapplication'.

Find out more about what is provided for children with special educational needs by going to **learning.gov.wales** and searching for 'Information for carers of young people'.

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## Can I withdraw my child from the national curriculum?

There is no parental right to withdraw children from national curriculum subjects, or from the arrangements to assess children's progress in these subjects. However, you do have the right to withdraw your child from religious education and sex and relationships education which may be provided.

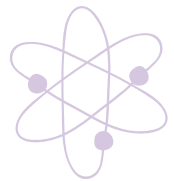


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## How is my child assessed?

Your child's teacher will use a variety of assessment techniques throughout the year as part of a combined approach to learning, teaching, planning and assessment. The teacher will assess what your child knows and can do and they will use this information to support your child's learning.

At the end of Key Stage 2, the teacher will decide which national curriculum level best reflects your child's progress in each of the core subjects. In English, Welsh (either as a first or second language), mathematics and science, your child will be assessed on standards set out in the national curriculum programmes of study. These are set out as nine level descriptions, with one above Level 8 indicating Exceptional Performance.

## What are the National Reading and Numeracy Tests?

The National Reading and Numeracy Tests, for all children in Years 2 to 9, help schools across Wales assess their learners' reading and numeracy skills and gain a clearer understanding of learners' development and progress. The information from the tests is used alongside other forms of assessment to allow teachers to identify strengths and areas for improvement.

The Welsh Government is introducing new online personalised assessments from the academic year 2018/19, starting with numeracy procedural, which will replace the paper tests over three years.

For more information about the National Reading and Numeracy Tests, and online personalised assessments, search for 'National Reading and Numeracy Tests' at **learning.gov.wales**

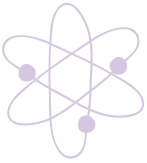
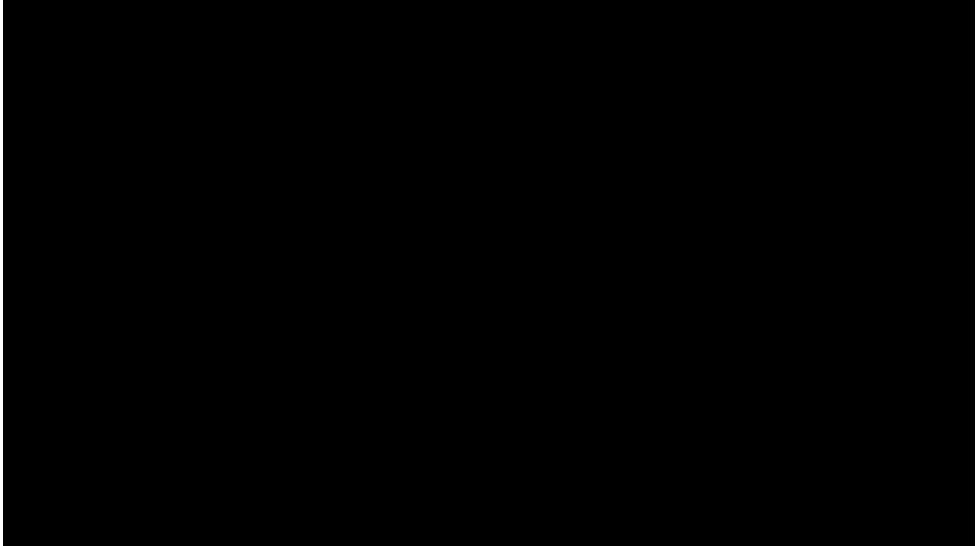


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## How will I know how my child is getting on?

You will receive a written report about your child's progress at least once a year. You will also have the opportunity to meet your child's teacher, but you can contact the school at any time to discuss your child's progress and how you can help your child to do even better.

Information from the national curriculum assessment will form part of the yearly report, along with information on how your child is progressing with literacy and numeracy across all subjects. The yearly report will also include feedback from your child's teacher about strengths and areas for improvement, attendance and achievements. The report will form the basis for a discussion about your child's learning needs and next steps.

At the end of primary school, your child's report will include a national curriculum level for each core subject. This will give you information about your child's progress and level of achievement against national curriculum standards.

For more information about school reports, see [www.gov.wales/educationandskills](http://www.gov.wales/educationandskills)

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## Health and well-being

### Well-being

It is very important that children are happy at school so they can learn and flourish. As part of the school community, you as parents and carers also have a role to play. Nurturing positive behaviour (in and out of school), encouraging your child to show kindness and respect to all members of the community, and making sure your child makes the most of their education by being in school are all ways of giving your child the best possible start in life.

## Social and emotional learning

Many schools use specific programmes to promote learners' emotional well-being by developing their personal, emotional and social skills. Some programmes may be aimed at all learners, others may be for specific learners who, due to social, emotional or behavioural difficulties (or a combination of any of these), find school difficult and need extra support.

## Counselling

Counselling services are available to support learners in Year 6. Within schools, counselling is used alongside the different approaches already in place to support the health, emotional and social needs of learners.



## Bullying

If your child is being bullied or is bullying you should discuss the matter with the school as soon as possible. For more help and support visit [www.gov.wales](http://www.gov.wales) and search for 'Is your child being bullied?'.

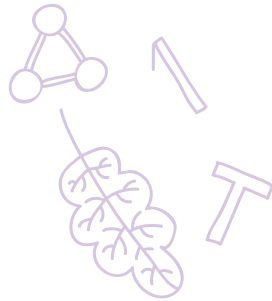
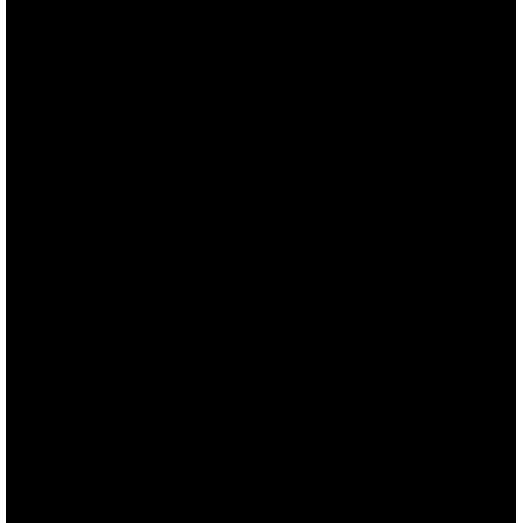


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## Healthy breakfasts

Children in primary schools can have a free healthy breakfast at school before the start of the school day. If your school does not run the free breakfast scheme, and there is demand for free breakfasts, the school governing body should write to the local authority to ask for free breakfasts to be provided. Free breakfast in primary schools is intended to help improve the health and concentration of children by providing them with a healthy start to the school day.

## Free school meals

If you receive certain benefits, your child may be eligible for free school meals as long as you meet certain eligibility conditions. If you feel you meet these conditions, you can collect a form from your child's school or apply to your local authority. If you claim free school meals for your child, the school can claim extra funding to provide further support to your child.

To find out if you are eligible, go to **www.gov.wales** and search for 'Free school meals'.

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## How can I support my child's learning?

Parental involvement is vitally important in helping children to learn. You can talk to the school about how to help your child's development and learning by getting actively involved, not just at home but in the garden, in the park and at the shops.

Schools can also work together with families to help them support their children's learning.

### Ideas for learning together at home

- Spending time reading with your child, even just 10 minutes a day, can make a real difference. Choose reading material that they enjoy such as books, magazines, websites, packaging and leaflets – any text, anywhere.
- Look for opportunities in daily life to use numbers, whether it's at the shops, talking about the football scores, looking up the times of favourite TV programmes in the TV guide or using the bus or train timetable to plan a trip.
- Encourage your child to write and design things for a range of different purposes such as invitations, thank-you notes, e-mails, shopping or 'to do' lists.

### Talk about the text, words and numbers that you see around you

- Encourage your child to talk about mathematical concepts such as how much, how big and how many.
- Look for shapes and patterns in everyday objects and the world around you.
- Talk about and involve your child in everyday tasks that involve literacy and numeracy – cooking, playing or watching sports, paying for the shopping, planning a trip or playing a board game with the family or with friends.
- Visit museums and galleries, if you have the chance, and use your local library where you'll find a lot of information, support, computer access, and activities and events.

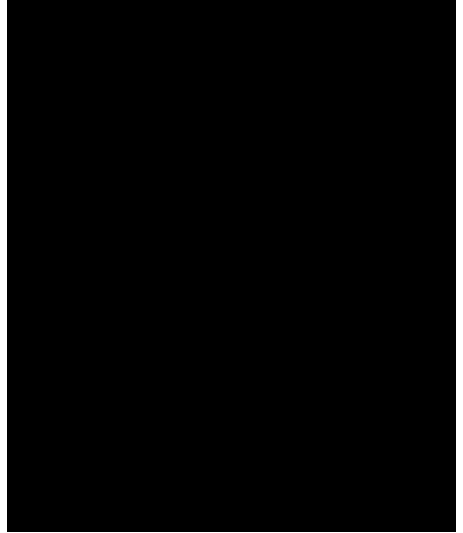


## Who can I talk to if I have concerns?

If you have concerns you should talk to your child's teacher first. If your child's school has a person chosen to be the first point of contact for concerns or complaints, you could also speak to this person.

If you are still concerned, you can raise your concern as a complaint. The school's policy on handling complaints will tell you how to do this.

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## Need more information?

You can get more information from the following sources.

- Your school – speak to your child's teacher, the headteacher or a member of the governing body.
- Your local authority.
- By visiting our websites at:  
[www.gov.wales/educationandskills](http://www.gov.wales/educationandskills)  
[www.gov.wales/schoolsinfo4parents](http://www.gov.wales/schoolsinfo4parents)

If your child has special educational needs and you need advice and information about matters relating to those needs, contact your local authority who will be able to direct you to their parent partnership service.

## A smooth move into secondary school

Children generally move into secondary school in the September before they become 12 years old.

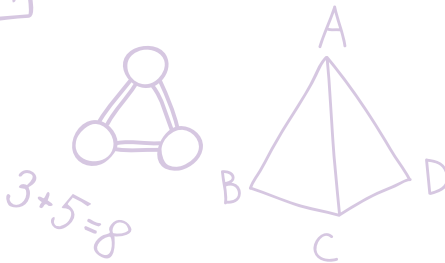
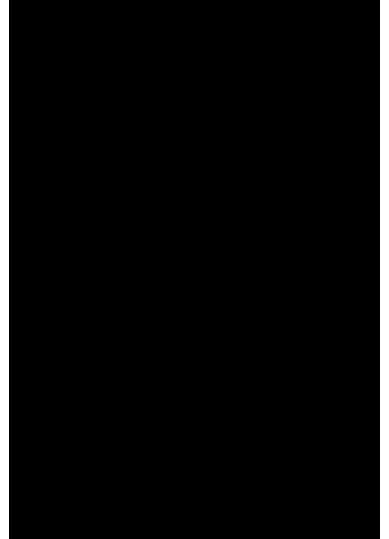
When your child is in the final year of primary school, the local authority will send you information setting out how to apply for a secondary school place. This usually happens during the first term of children's last year in primary school.

Schools in Wales must have a transition plan in place which sets out how they work with local secondary schools to make the move to secondary school as smooth as possible.

Arrangements between your child's school and the local secondary schools might include visits to the secondary school for children to have a look around and meet the main members of staff, information sessions, and visits from secondary school teachers to the primary school.



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## Useful resources

This list of useful resources will help you as a parent/carer to gain more information to help you support the children in your life.

### **Bitesize**

The BBC's free online resource to help children in the UK with their school work. (This website is only available in English.)

**[www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize](http://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize)**

### **ChildLine**

A 24-hour confidential service for children and young people in the UK dealing with any concerns from child abuse to drugs. (This website is only available in English.)

**[www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)**

### **Lovereading4kids**

Will help you to explore books that will excite children and help them to fall in love with reading. (This website is only available in English.)

**[www.lovereading4kids.co.uk](http://www.lovereading4kids.co.uk)**

### **Welsh in Education Resources Branch, Welsh Government**

The Welsh in Education Resources Branch commissions Welsh and bilingual educational resources to support all national curriculum subjects. You can get resources in a digital format through Hwb at **[hwb.gov.wales](http://hwb.gov.wales)** and those in a print format are available from **[www.gwales.com](http://www.gwales.com)**. For more information please contact **[welshresources@gov.wales](mailto:welshresources@gov.wales)**

### **Education begins at home**

Gives helpful tips on how to help children with learning.

**[www.facebook.com/beginsathome](https://www.facebook.com/beginsathome)**

### **Sumdog**

A site that offers games to make mathematics fun. They are all free to play, with the option to subscribe for extra features. (This website is only available in English.)

**[www.sumdog.com](http://www.sumdog.com)**

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## **Our national mission**

*Education in Wales: Our national mission, Action plan 2017–21* builds on *Qualified for Life*, which was published in 2014, and *Successful Futures* the 2015 review of the curriculum. Our national mission sets out how the school system will move forward between 2017 and 2021 securing implementation of the new curriculum with a focus on leadership, professional learning, and excellence and equity within a self-improving system. The action plan focuses on raising standards for all, reducing the attainment gap, and delivering an education system that is a source of national pride and public confidence.

**[gov.wales/topics/  
educationandskills/  
allsectorpolicies/  
educationinwales/?lang=en](http://gov.wales/topics/educationandskills/allsectorpolicies/educationinwales/?lang=en)**

## **How is your child's school doing?**

A website that provides information on schools' performance across Wales.

**[mylocalschool.gov.wales](http://mylocalschool.gov.wales)**

## **Learning Wales**

Learning Wales is a web-based resource, designed to meet the needs of educators and practitioners and improve the standards of learning providers across Wales.

**[learning.gov.wales](http://learning.gov.wales)**

## **Hwb**

The National Digital Learning Platform and content repository provides access to a range of high-quality digital learning tools and thousands of high-quality digital classroom resources to support digital transformation in the classroom.

**[hwb.gov.wales](http://hwb.gov.wales)**

## **Creative Learning Zone**

A zone on Hwb with information and inspiration to help make creative skills an established part of the curriculum.

**[hwb.gov.wales/creativity](http://hwb.gov.wales/creativity)**

## **Online Safety Zone**

A zone on Hwb containing a range of resources and links to access support and guidance to help keep children safe online.

**[hwb.gov.wales/onlinesafety](http://hwb.gov.wales/onlinesafety)**

## **Meic**

A confidential helpline service for children and young people in Wales. From finding out what's going on in your local area to helping deal with bullying.

**[www.meiccymru.org](http://www.meiccymru.org)**

## **Estyn**

Find out more about how your child's school is performing.

**[www.estyn.gov.wales](http://www.estyn.gov.wales)**

## **Education Workforce Council (EWC)**

EWC regulates education practitioners in Wales in the interests of learners, parents/carers, and the public. You can check online that teachers and support staff at your child's school are registered.

**[www.ewc.wales](http://www.ewc.wales)**

## **Free school meals**

To find out if you are eligible, search for 'Free school meals' online.

**[www.gov.wales](http://www.gov.wales)**

## **Change4life**

Gives you ideas and recipes to help you and your family be healthier and happier.

**[www.change4lifewales.org.uk](http://www.change4lifewales.org.uk)**

## **Family and Community Engagement (FaCE) Toolkit**

This is a collection of resources for schools that encourage and support parents and carers to become effective partners in their child's learning and attainment. Search for 'Family and Community Engagement Toolkit' online.

**[learning.gov.wales](http://learning.gov.wales)**

## **The Fostering Network**

Established in 1974, this is the UK's leading charity for everyone involved in fostering, bringing together all those who provide, plan and deliver foster care. (This website is only available in English.)

**[www.thefosteringnetwork.org.uk](http://www.thefosteringnetwork.org.uk)**

## **Children's Rights**

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) is a list of rights for all children and young people, no matter who they are or where they live. These rights are the things that they need to be safe, healthy and happy.

**[www.childrensrights.wales](http://www.childrensrights.wales)**

## **Children 4–11**

### **(Cymraeg – Live, Learn, Enjoy)**

Whatever language you speak at home, Welsh-medium education can give children extra skills and more opportunities for the future. So even if you don't speak Welsh yourself, why not consider Welsh-medium education for your child?

Search for 'Children 4–11' online.

**[cymraeg.gov.wales](http://cymraeg.gov.wales)**

# Notes