



Defining schools according to Welsh medium provision

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Information

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Defining schools according to Welsh medium provision

- Audience** Governing Bodies and Headteachers of Maintained Schools in Wales; Local Authorities; Teacher Unions; Church Diocesan Authorities; National and local bodies in Wales concerned with education.
- Overview** This document sets out descriptions and categories of schools according to the amount of Welsh used in teaching and learning and in the day to day conduct of the school. The categories will be used to collect information on provision nationally and should be used locally by education authorities and schools to inform parents of the types of school available in localities. The information will help local and national government to assess whether provision meets local demand.
- Action required** Categories and descriptions should be incorporated into Local Education Authority Admission documents, and individual school prospectuses from Autumn 2007 onwards. Data collection in January 2008 and 2009 will request information on the basis of the new categories.
- Further information** Enquiries about this document should be made to:
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- Additional copies** Additional copies can be obtained by emailing SMD3@wales.gsi.gov.uk, or by writing to the address above.
- Related documents** Iaith Pawb: A National Action Plan for a Bilingual Wales

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Summary

This information document sets out definitions and categories of schools in Wales according to the language which is used as the medium of instruction and the normal business of the school. Although the new definitions have no basis in legislation they have been devised to provide better information for parents and for local and national government on the extent to which pupils are learning through the medium of Welsh.

The definitions will be used for statistical purposes and schools will need to use the new definitions and decide to which category they belong when completing statistical returns. The School Management Information Software which is used for the provision of PLASC returns will facilitate the collection of the information. The categories are designed to be mutually exclusive and capable of consistent application across Wales.

Data will be collected using the new categories in January 2008 and January 2009 and data will continue to be collected on the same basis as previously so that there is continuity and so that any difficulties with either the categories or definitions can be identified.

The new definitions and categories will be incorporated into the composite admission documents issued annually by Local Education Authorities in due course and will also be incorporated into the prospectus of each school. Regulations will be needed to make this compulsory, but it would be preferable if schools and local authorities take action prior to the regulations being made.

Rationale for the new definitions

Current position and existing definitions of schools

“Welsh speaking” schools are currently defined for the purposes of the school curriculum in Section 105(7) of the Education Act 2002 which states:

“... a school is Welsh-speaking if more than one half of the following subjects are taught (wholly or partly) in Welsh -

(a) religious education, and

(b) the subjects other than English and Welsh which are foundation subjects in relation to pupils at the school”

The purpose of the definition is to identify schools in which Welsh is a core subject and medium of delivery. It does not indicate the nature of the linguistic provision right across the curriculum, and is not designed to do so.

In Welsh Assembly Government statistical publications, secondary schools are categorised as Welsh speaking in accordance with the statutory definition. Welsh medium primary schools are categorised as type A if at least half the pupils are taught wholly or mainly through the medium of Welsh, and categorised as type B if some but less than half of the pupils are in Welsh medium classes or Welsh is used as a medium of teaching for part of the curriculum but not the major part. Assembly Government statistics currently rely on secondary schools themselves to advise the category to which they belong, whilst the categorisation for primary schools is derived by the Assembly Government based on class level information provided by the school.

At January 2006 there were 54 Welsh speaking secondary schools (out of a total of 224), 458 category A Welsh medium primary schools and 42 category B primary schools (out of a total of 1555).

In reality the position is much more complex. Welsh medium school provision varies between and within authorities. While Welsh is used as the medium of teaching for all or most subjects in some Welsh medium schools, others provide lessons in a mixture of English and Welsh to a greater or lesser extent or have separate English medium and Welsh medium streams. A secondary school may be categorised as Welsh speaking if the requisite number of subjects are taught

through the medium of Welsh even if only a small proportion of the pupils on roll actually study through the medium of Welsh. In addition a number of essentially English medium schools are increasing the number of subjects they offer through the medium of Welsh, yet this is not recorded in the statistics. Often this reflects the way individual local education authorities have responded to the aim of ensuring that pupils who are educated bilingually achieve fluency in Welsh and English, as well as the linguistic nature of the areas concerned.

Need for and purpose of the new definitions

Local Education Authorities use a variety of descriptors for their schools where Welsh is used as a medium of teaching and these are not consistent with each other. Labels such as 'Welsh-medium', 'bilingual', 'traditional Welsh' and 'natural Welsh' are used by schools and LEAs to describe their provision. It is sometimes difficult for parents to obtain a full understanding of the extent to which individual schools teach through the medium of Welsh or English, and the extent to which this is a matter of parental choice in relation to individual pupils. It is also difficult for the Assembly Government to monitor the amount of Welsh medium education which is being delivered.

In its contribution to the comprehensive review of the Welsh language conducted by the National Assembly for Wales in 2001 and 2002, the Assembly's Education and Lifelong Learning Committee confirmed the need for an agreed and easily identifiable set of definitions for the different models of linguistic provision available in schools in Wales. The Committee concluded that this was necessary for the following purposes:

- establishing clear objectives for educators and pupils regarding linguistic outcomes
- providing unambiguous information to parents and their children regarding the options available
- assisting LEAs in developing and co-ordinating their strategy for Welsh-medium and bilingual provision, including resource planning and staff recruitment; and
- allowing systematic evaluation of the relative strengths and weaknesses of different models of language teaching.

The Committee referred to work which began by a group of experts chaired by the Welsh Language Board, as a starting point.

The Welsh Assembly Government, in its 2003 policy document “Iaith Pawb” indicated that defining Welsh medium provision in schools was a priority. It set out the intention of consulting with LEAs and others with a view to reaching agreement on definitions which could be used consistently across Wales.

Following the publication of “Iaith Pawb”, using the work of the group of experts as a starting point, several consultation meetings were held, led by the Welsh Assembly Government and the Welsh Language Board. Meetings involved a number of Local Education Authorities, Estyn and the former ELWa. These discussions produced two possible models which could be used to define schools according to the language medium of teaching. A wide consultation exercise was held in 2006.

Responses were received from schools, local education authorities, teacher associations and Welsh language interest groups, including the Welsh Language Board.

Having considered the responses to consultation carefully, the Minister for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills decided that new definitions should be trialled alongside the existing statistical definitions for a period of 2 years.

Defining schools according to Welsh medium provision

Introduction to the new categories

1. The categories set out below define primary and secondary schools (for the compulsory phase of schooling) according to the following:

- i. the medium of teaching in each key stage: i.e. the percentage of the curriculum (primary) and percentages of subjects (secondary) taught through the medium of Welsh and English;
- ii. the language/languages used to communicate with pupils outside the curriculum, the ethos of the school, the language used in the day to day business, and the language/languages used to communicate with parents; and
- iii. the expected normal outcome for pupils attending each type of provision in terms of educational progression.

2. The definitions do not attempt to specify exactly what an individual pupil may receive in a school. The definitions may be used by Local Education Authorities in the composite admission prospectuses issued to parents each Autumn term as soon as possible after September **2007**. In order to inform parents fully of the options for individual pupils, governing bodies should provide more detail in the individual school prospectus. For schools where there is provision in English and Welsh and where pupils may opt for one or the other, prospectuses should explain the extent to which there are any pre-conditions for options, and the numbers of pupils who take up each language option. The Regulations which govern what must appear in the composite prospectus and the individual school prospectus will be amended in order to bring this change into force from **2008** but it would be helpful if schools and local authorities adopt the new practice in **2007** if possible.

3. Five categories are defined for primary schools with a distinction between Key Stages within the definitions where appropriate. The 3rd category (transitional), which is predominantly Welsh medium but with significant use of English, is not regarded as an appropriate model for securing pupil proficiency in Welsh and English. It is not therefore expected to apply to many schools, although there may be schools making the transition to Category 1 or 2 and seeking to increase the amount of provision through the medium of Welsh which find themselves in this category on a temporary basis.

4. Four categories are proposed for secondary schools, with one category (bilingual school) comprising 4 sub-groups.

5. It is expected that Welsh language provision in schools will normally reflect the obligations of approved Welsh Education Schemes.

6. Schools will be required to identify which category **most appropriately** describes them in their annual PLASC return from January 2008 onwards. Schools should primarily seek to identify themselves in relation to the curriculum aspects of the definition. The “language of school” and “outcomes” aspects may not always match. Commentary about these aspects may be added to the return if necessary, and should also be noted in the school prospectus. Infant and junior schools will use the appropriate KS1 (Foundation Phase) or KS2 elements of the primary school definitions to determine their category.

7. So that the new method can be trialled for statistical use without risk to data continuity, schools will also continue to report on their provision in the previous manner for the next 2 years (i.e. in January 2008 and 2009). This will allow time for any serious problems with the new method of categorisation to be resolved prior to its replacing the current statistical categories, if that is deemed appropriate following monitoring of the trial period.

Action Checklist

| Action | Who is to take the action | Date required |
|---|-------------------------------------|--|
| Incorporate categories and definitions into composite admission documents | Local Authorities | From September 2007 onwards |
| Incorporate categories and definitions into school prospectuses | Governors of all maintained schools | From September 2007 onwards |
| Support schools in identifying correct category for data collection | Local Authorities | From September 2007 |
| Enter data in revised format on the school MIS prior to annual data collection exercise | All Maintained schools | From September 2007 (January PLASC 2008 will be 15 January 2008) |

Defining schools according to Welsh medium provision: Primary School Categories

1. Welsh-Medium Primary School

Curriculum - all Pupils in the Foundation Phase experience the areas of learning through the medium of Welsh. Welsh is the main teaching medium at KS2 with at least 70% of the teaching through the medium of Welsh. English is introduced formally as a subject at Key Stage 2 and is taught through the medium of English, and English may occasionally be used for some aspects of some subjects.

Language of the School - Welsh is the language of the day to day business of the school. Welsh is used as the language of communication with the pupils and for the school's administration. The school communicates with parents in both languages.

Outcomes - The normal expectation is that pupils, regardless of home language, will be able to transfer easily to Welsh medium secondary provision and by the end of Key Stage 2 will have reached a standard in English equivalent to that reached by pupils in predominantly English medium schools.

2. Dual Stream Primary School

Curriculum - Two types of provision exist side-by-side in these schools. Parents/pupils opt either for the mainly Welsh-medium or mainly English-medium provision which is usually delivered as in categories 1 and 5 respectively.

Language of the School - Both Welsh and English are used in the day to day business of the school. The language of communication with the pupils is determined by the nature of the curricular provision, but in some schools high priority is given to creating a Welsh-language ethos throughout the school. The school communicates with parents in both languages.

Outcomes - for pupils in the Welsh stream, normal expectations are as for category 1. For pupils in the English medium stream, normal expectations are as for category 5.

3. Transitional primary school: Welsh medium with significant use of English

Curriculum - Pupils in the Foundation Phase experience the areas of learning mainly through the medium of Welsh. Both languages are used in teaching at Key Stage 2 but with greater emphasis on Welsh,

so that Welsh is used as the medium of instruction for over half and up to 70% of the curriculum.

(Schools would usually only be in this category on a temporary basis)

Language of the School - Welsh is the language of the day to day business of the school. A high priority is given to creating a Welsh ethos. The school communicates with parents in both languages.

Outcomes - The normal expectation is that some pupils, particularly from Welsh speaking homes may be able to transfer to Welsh medium secondary provision and by the end of Key Stage 2 all pupils will have reached a standard in English equivalent to that reached by pupils in predominantly English medium schools.

4. Predominantly English Medium primary school but with significant use of Welsh

Curriculum - Pupils in the Foundation Phase experience the areas of learning in both languages but with greater emphasis on English. In Key Stage 2, both Welsh and English is used in teaching but there is greater emphasis on English. Welsh is used as the medium of teaching or learning for between 20% and 50% of the primary curriculum overall.

Language of the School - The day to day language or languages of the school are determined by the school's linguistic context. Both languages are used as languages of communication with the pupils and for the school's administration. A high priority is given to creating a Welsh ethos. The school communicates with parents in both languages.

Outcomes - The normal expectation is that pupils will transfer to English medium secondary provision, but will have attained enhanced Welsh second language skills. Some pupils may be able to pursue a limited number of subjects through the medium of Welsh at secondary level where these are offered.

5. Predominantly English medium primary school

Curriculum - All pupils in the Foundation Phase experience the areas of learning mainly through the medium of English. English is the main teaching medium at KS2. Welsh is taught as a second language in KS2, and some aspects of some subjects may be taught in Welsh. Less than 20% of the teaching is through the medium of Welsh.

Language of the School - English is the language of the day to day business of the school, but some Welsh is also used as a language of communication with the pupils with the aim of improving their capacity to use everyday Welsh. The school communicates with parents either in English or in both languages.

Outcomes - The normal expectation is that pupils will transfer to English medium secondary provision and continue to learn predominantly through the medium of English, learning Welsh as a second language.

Uses for the Primary Categories

(i) Collection of Data

The categories will be used for data collection from January 2008. The data categories for the collection of primary school based information correspond to the primary categories. School Management Information Software (MIS) used for the provision of PLASC returns will include the ability to record information about linguistic characteristics of schools. Primary schools will select from 5 possible categories, corresponding to the descriptions on the previous pages. The corresponding categories are shown in square brackets alongside the titles which will be shown in schools MIS. No additional action will be required on the part of primary schools, when completing the PLASC return. Categories are as follows:

Welsh Medium [WM] [Welsh medium primary school]

Dual stream [DS] [Dual Stream Primary school]

Transitional [TR] [Transitional primary school: Welsh medium with significant use of English]

English (with significant Welsh) [EW] [Predominantly English medium primary school but with significant use of Welsh]

English medium [EM] [Predominantly English medium primary school]

(ii) School and LEA prospectuses

Governors of schools should use the categories and definitions to describe the school in the school prospectus as soon as is practicably possible.

For primary schools, the individual prospectus should use the definitions and give extra explanation where necessary, especially in the case of schools where there are 2 streams of provision. The prospectus should set out in more detail what proportion of the curriculum is taught in Welsh, and to what extent there is a choice on medium of instruction or flexibility. For dual stream schools, the numbers of pupils in each stream should be given as this will often influence the general ethos of the school and day to day language. The recording of this information could assist in the monitoring of growth in Welsh medium provision within a school over time.

LEAs should ensure that the categories, definitions and information provided by governors on individual schools are reflected in composite admission documents as soon as practicably possible. Information provided by governors should assist authorities in monitoring growth and demand.

It can be expected that the School Information Regulations will be amended so that the use of the definitions within prospectuses and composite admission documents will be compulsory from 2008 onwards.

Defining schools according to Welsh medium provision: Secondary School Categories

1. Welsh-Medium Secondary School

Curriculum - All subjects (including RE and PSE) apart from English are taught through the medium of Welsh to all pupils, although some schools may introduce English terminology in one or two subjects.

Language of the School - Welsh is the day to day language of the school. Welsh is used as the language of communication with the pupils and for the school's administration. The school communicates with parents in both languages.

Outcomes - For all pupils the normal expectation is that assessment at KS3 and KS4 will be through the medium of Welsh in all subjects apart from English or other languages, and that pupils will be able to progress easily to Welsh medium Post 16 provision.

2. Bilingual Secondary School

Curriculum - This category has 4 sub-divisions according to the percentage of subjects taught through the medium of Welsh and whether there is parallel provision in English. The categories and definitions do not reflect the number or proportion of pupils taking advantage of provision in Welsh in a school. Governing bodies will be expected to provide information in the school prospectus on the extent to which choice of provision is available and whether access to Welsh medium provision is conditional on the level of competence the pupil has in Welsh. The prospectus should also indicate the number of pupils taking up choices of provision.

Category 2A - At least 80% of subjects apart from English and Welsh are taught only through the medium of Welsh to all pupils. One or two subjects are taught to some pupils in English or in both languages.

Category 2B - At least 80% of subjects (excluding Welsh and English) are taught through the medium of Welsh but are also taught through the medium of English.

Category 2C - 50 - 79% of subjects (excluding Welsh and English) are taught through the medium of Welsh but are also taught through the medium of English.

Category 2CH - All subjects, except Welsh and English taught to all pupils using both languages.

Language of the School - The day to day language or languages of the school will be determined by its linguistic context. Both languages are used to communicate with pupils and for the school's administration. A high priority is given to creating a Welsh ethos. The school communicates with parents in both languages.

Outcomes - For pupils in 2A, 2B and 2C following the maximum number of courses through the medium of Welsh, the normal expectation is that assessment at KS3 and KS4 would be through the medium of Welsh in those subjects and that they would be able to progress easily to post 16 provision through the medium of Welsh in chosen subjects. For pupils in Category 2Ch the normal expectation is that assessment at KS3 and KS4 would be through the medium of Welsh in all subjects except English and that they would normally be able to progress easily to study at post 16 through the medium of Welsh in chosen subjects.

3. Predominantly English medium secondary school with significant use of Welsh

Curriculum - Both languages are used in teaching with 20 - 49% of subjects taught through the medium of Welsh. All subjects would normally also be taught through the medium of English.

Language of the School - The day to day language or languages of the school will be determined by its linguistic context. Both languages are used for communication with the pupils and for the school's administration. A high priority is given to creating a Welsh ethos. The school communicates with parents either in both languages or in English.

Outcomes - The normal expectation is that pupils choosing Welsh medium options could be assessed through the medium of Welsh in those subjects at all levels and may be capable of progressing to study at post 16 through the medium of Welsh for those subjects.

4. Predominantly English Medium secondary school

Curriculum - Pupils are mainly taught through the medium of English. Welsh is taught as a second language up to KS4. One or two subjects (which would include Welsh first language) may be taught as an option through the medium of Welsh or using both languages.

Language of the School - English is the day to day language of the school, but some Welsh is also used as a language of communication with the pupils, with the aim of improving their capacity to use everyday Welsh. The school communicates with parents either in English or in both languages.

Outcomes - The normal expectation is that any pupils choosing Welsh medium options could be assessed through the medium of Welsh in those subjects at all levels and may be capable of progression to study at post 16 through the medium of Welsh for those subjects. Most pupils would be assessed in English in most subjects and would progress to English medium post 16 study.

Uses for the Secondary Categories

(i) Collection of Data

The categories will be used for PLASC data collection from January 2008. The data categories for the collection of secondary school based information correspond to the secondary categories, with the bilingual category divided into 4 for data collections. School MIS used for the provision of PLASC returns will include the ability to record information about linguistic characteristics of schools. Secondary schools will select from 7 possible categories, corresponding to the descriptions on the previous pages. The corresponding categories are shown in square brackets alongside the titles which will be shown on the data collection form. Secondary schools will have to identify themselves according to both the existing and the new categories. The new categories are as follows:

| | |
|-------------------|--|
| Welsh Medium [WM] | [Welsh-Medium Secondary School] |
| A Bilingual [AB] | [Bilingual Secondary School Category 2A - At least 80% of subjects apart from English and Welsh are taught only through the medium of Welsh to all pupils. One or two subjects are taught to some pupils in English or in both languages.] |
| B Bilingual [BB] | [Bilingual Secondary School Category 2B - At least 80% of subjects (excluding Welsh and English) are taught through the medium of Welsh but are also taught through the medium of English.] |

| | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| C Bilingual [CB] | [Bilingual Secondary School Category 2C - 50 - 79% of subjects (excluding Welsh and English) are taught through the medium of Welsh but are also taught through the medium of English.] |
| Ch Bilingual [CH] | [Bilingual Secondary School Category 2Ch - All subjects, except Welsh and English taught to all pupils using both languages.] |
| English (with Significant Welsh) [EW] | [Predominantly English medium secondary school with significant use of Welsh: 20-49 % of subjects are taught through the medium of Welsh but are also taught in English.] |
| English medium [EM] | [Predominantly English medium secondary school where 1 or 2 subjects may be taught through the medium of Welsh as an option.] |

(iii) School and LEA prospectuses

Governors of schools should use the categories and definitions to describe the school in the school prospectus as soon as is practicably possible.

For secondary schools, the individual prospectus should use the definitions and give extra explanation where necessary, especially in the case of bilingual schools. In all cases the prospectus should set out in detail which subjects are taught in Welsh, and to what extent these are also available in English. The prospectus should indicate unambiguously to what extent there is choice on medium of instruction, whether there are pre-conditions, and information about the number of pupils taking options. For bi-lingual schools where pupils are streamed the numbers of pupils in each stream should be given as this will often influence the general ethos of the school and day to day language. The recording of this information could assist in the monitoring of growth in Welsh medium provision within a school over time.

LEAs should ensure that the categories, definitions and information provided by governors on individual schools are reflected in composite admission documents as soon as practicably possible. Information provided by governors should assist authorities in monitoring growth and demand. The acquisition of timetabling information should also assist authorities in monitoring growth in Welsh medium provision.

It can be expected that the School Information Regulations will be amended so that the use of the definitions within prospectuses and composite admission documents will be compulsory from 2008 onwards.