



monmouthshire
sir fynwy

Monmouthshire Local Authority

Welsh-medium Late Immersion Policy

**Monmouthshire's Children, Learning, Skills and Economy
Directorate**

This document is available in English and Welsh.

Contents

Contents	Page
Introduction	3
Vision	3
Immersion Provision	3
Welsh language in action	4
Oracy	4
Reading	5
Writing	5
Assessment and pupil progress	5
Themes	6
Welshness/Cynefin	6
Applying for a place in a late immersion class	7
Frequently asked questions	8

Introduction

Language immersion in Welsh-medium education is one of the most successful ways to grow the number of Welsh speakers in Monmouthshire and in doing so, make a contribution to the ambition of Welsh Ministers to have a million Welsh speakers by 2050.

This policy sets out how we support newcomers to Welsh-medium education to develop a high level of competency in the language using a 'linguistic immersive' approach to make a smooth transition into Welsh-medium education. Immersive education is now well established as a successful and effective method of learning Welsh in our school system.

Vision

We believe that every learner can benefit from a tailored, supportive environment that nurtures their development of the Welsh language an appreciation of the culture, tradition and history of Wales, so that they develop their own Welsh identity and value their Welsh heritage.

Immersion Provision

Immersion classes in Ysgol Gynradd Y Ffin and Ysgol Gynradd Y Fenni provide a supportive environment to give English speaking pupils, an opportunity to learn Welsh fluently at any point during their primary years. Learners who attend a late immersion class experience highly focused program of class-based immersion for ten consecutive weeks.

During this time, learners develop their language skills in a structured and purposeful way and guided by experts, before transferring to mainstream within the Welsh-medium school. Vocabulary, linguistic patterns, and language structures are taught daily through methods that have been proven to work such as role play, games, and language drills. This means that pupils develop a basic fluency in the Welsh language, can confidently use the Welsh language in a variety of situations, develop thinking skills and are well prepared for attending a Welsh-medium school.

Both schools can accommodate up to eight learners per cohort, who wish to transfer into Welsh-medium education at any one time. Learners in each cohort start and complete the program at the same time so that they are working on the same themes, at the same times as a class to ensure they develop their skills progressively. This means that learners are unable to join the immersion class midway through the program.

The late immersion classes in Y Ffin and Y Fenni provide a special program on learning the language for learners from year 3 up to year 6. The intensive course is an opportunity to stimulate the learners' basic language skills alongside the education they receive in their Welsh language schools.

After the initial 10 weeks, staff in the late immersion class support learners to make a successful transition into their new Welsh-medium class in the school through visits and collaboration with other staff to provide support and advice on strategies and resources.

There are two late immersion classes in Monmouthshire, one in Ysgol Gynradd Y Ffin in the south, and the second on Ysgol Gynradd Y Fenni in the north. Both schools' welcome learners from English-medium schools who want an opportunity to learn Welsh and transfer to a Welsh-medium school at any point during their primary years. Late immersion classes can accommodate up to 8 learners from year 3 up to year 6 in each term.

Parents/carers and pupil who wish to take advantage of late immersion can find out more about late immersion and Welsh-medium education by following the process below.

Welsh language in Action

Our aim is to support learners to gain the skills and confidence to communicate confidently in Welsh so that they can access the school curriculum fully. This is achieved through a range of worthwhile experiences and activities including:

- role play
- develop an interest in reading material
- develop writing skills
- drill language patterns
- listening to oral stories
- sing and listen to Welsh music and nursery rhymes
- play board games and yard games to reinforce patterns
- visits within the local area to practice the language in other contexts

Oracy

Developing oracy skills is our main aim. We encourage learners to use increasing levels of the Welsh language to communicate their feelings and needs, repeat experiences and use the language when playing and talking with others. Learners are

encouraged to listen to others and respond to them, along with responding to the variety of life experiences that their peers contribute to the learning environment. The learners have the opportunity to respond to a range of stimuli including outdoor experiences, visits to places outside the school, audio materials and interactive software. The 'Tric a Clic' program (phonic scheme) is used to introduce the letters of the alphabet/phonics with an emphasis on pronouncing sounds correctly.

Reading

Learners have regular opportunities to choose, use, and read a range of reading materials. To begin with we use text which are easy to translate, contain repetitive patterns and pictures to support understanding, and contain various themes and real life events.

Writing

During the ten week program, learners will have regular opportunities to develop appropriate writing skills. This will start with constructing simple sentences using familiar language patterns, progressively building on these skills as learner's vocabulary and language skills develop. When learners leave the immersion class, they will continue to develop their writing skills with support and independently if they are ready.

Assessment and pupil progress tracking

Each week, learner's progress is assessed against key vocabulary in six different categories. For example, in Unit 3: The Café, the following sets of vocabulary are assessed to track language acquisition:

1. Cafe Vocabulary
2. Fruit, Vegetable and General Food Vocabulary
3. Culinary Vocabulary
4. Vocabulary Faces
5. Mathematical Vocabulary and Money
6. Slim Vocabulary

Learners are assessed in each set of vocabulary through observation and discussion using the following four terms to help us understand learner's current language skills and their progress over time.

- **Emerging** Learners are beginning use the Welsh language. They need support or prompting to be able to use the language.
- **Developing** Learners are becoming more confident with this language and with a little prompting or they are growing in confidence and becoming more independent in its use.
- **Secure** Learners use the Welsh language independently.
- **Embedded** Learners use Welsh vocabulary confidently, without support, in a variety of different contexts.

Learners are supported with each set of language patterns and vocabulary until they are at the embedded stage. Learner progress across the curriculum is also monitored in the immersion class to ensure pupils continue to make progress in all areas of learning.

Themes

- Me myself
- The Park
- The cafe
- The surgery
- The laundry
- Senses/Seasons
- Homes
- The town
- Animals in Wales
- Animals of the World

Welshness/Cynefin

Developing learner's Welsh language skills is the primary aim of our immersion provision. However, we recognise the need to develop our learners' appreciation of the culture, tradition, and history of our country if they are to develop their own Welsh identity, value their Welsh heritage and be passionate about developing a modern Wales by playing a key role as individuals in its future.

Learners in the immersion class celebrate Welsh days and participate in events throughout the year such as Shwmae Day, Welsh Music Day, St David's Day, Sparc a Seren Day, Eisteddfodau and Urdd activities.

Applying for a place in a late immersion class

1. Contact your local Welsh medium school and ask for a visit.

- The parent/carers of the learner (s) will meet with the headteacher of the school to ensure that they understand what the late immersion class offers, and the expectations of them as parent/carers and as pupils.
- The headteacher ensures that parent/carers have valid and appropriate reason(s) to make the right decision and in the best interest of their child/ren.

2. Applying for a place

- Apply for a place at the school using the local authority online application system.
- The school will allocate a place in the late immersion class
- The family will have the opportunity to visit the immersion class and meet the staff.

3. Start in the immersion class

- Learners will attend the late immersion class for 10 weeks. Although most of their time will be in the late immersion group, they will spend some time in their new class and have opportunities to make friends and use their Welsh-language skills in a social context.
- After the ten week period, learners will begin to transition into their new class in the Welsh-medium school.
- A staff member from the immersion class will collaborate with school staff to further support the learner(s) by holding transition sessions, providing advice and targeted support.

Frequently Asked Questions

We are not Welsh; would it be strange for us to choose Welsh-medium education?

- Not at all. You do not have to be Welsh to speak Welsh. Parents of children in Welsh-medium schools have come from all over the world: Wales, the rest of the UK, Europe, Asia, Africa, North and South America.
- While some might consider themselves to be Welsh, others might not - the key point is that learning Welsh is open to all.

Does Welsh medium education have lower standards for English?

- No this is not the case. Pupils leaving Welsh-medium primary schools are expected to reach exactly the same standard of English as those in English-medium primary schools.
- In secondary schools, pupils in Welsh-medium education sit exactly the same English language GCSE and A level as those in English-medium schools (the reverse is not true: pupils in English-medium education do not reach the same standards or sit the same level of exams in Welsh as those in Welsh-medium education).

How can I help my child with homework if I do not speak Welsh?

- Most children do not speak Welsh at home and Welsh-medium schools are very experienced in supporting both pupils and parents.
- For younger pupils, homework instructions will be given in both Welsh and English.
- At a later age, children will be able to explain their work to parents themselves. In fact, research suggests that dealing with their work in two languages can actually help children better understand the subject that they are studying.
- The education website Hwb also gives access to a range of nationally provided digital learning tools and resources. www.hwb.gov.wales

Will learning Welsh make it harder to learn another language?

- Quite the opposite. There is almost no limit to a child's ability to learn languages. In most European countries, young children can commonly speak two or three languages.

- Speaking one language can help reinforce the other, making it easier for the child to learn more languages later on.

Can I learn Welsh alongside my child?

- Some parents, after choosing a Welsh-medium school for their child, decide to learn Welsh as well.
- It is a great opportunity to learn together, to practice your language skills with each other and spend quality time together.
- There are also opportunities for parents/carers to be introduced to and learn Welsh from when the child is born up to school age.

<https://meithrin.cymru/?lang=en>

How do I start Welsh language education?

- The application procedure is the same for all schools – neither the child's home language, religion, or national identity, are taken into account in the application process

<https://www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/applying-for-a-school-place/>

