



monmouthshire
sir fynwy

Welsh-medium Immersion Provision

Monmouthshire's Children, Learning, Skills and Economy
Directorate

Introduction

The local authority has a clear and well communicated vision for the growth of Welsh-medium education across the local authority. There is a commitment from the local authority to continue expand Welsh-medium school places to meet our targets in the WESP through the Sustainable Communities School for Learning Programme. The development of late immersion provision is a key driver in supporting the growth of Welsh-medium education across Monmouthshire and increasing the number of pupils in reception to meet the target of 120 pupils by 2032.

As part of this, the Council aims to:

- increase the demand for Welsh-medium education so that the number of pupils receiving their education through the medium of Welsh meet targets in the WESP
- work with headteachers, governors and members of the Welsh Education Forum (WEF) to grow use of the Welsh language
- remove barriers so that all learners are able to access Welsh-medium education

Monmouthshire's WESP 2022-32 is supported by a detailed five-year Plan which outlines the actions that are being undertaken, or are planned, for each of the seven outcomes.

Implementation of the plan started in 2022, and annual progress reports are submitted to Welsh Government at the end of each academic year and areas for improvement are included in actions for the following year.

The (Welsh in Education Forum) WEF, chaired by the Cabinet Member for Education, or in their absence a Senior Officer, provides a formal channel of communication between Monmouthshire County Council, its maintained schools and other partner organisations that have an interest in Welsh-medium education in Monmouthshire, on matters relating to the WESP and the local authority Welsh Language Strategy. A promotion group and seven officer led sub-groups have been established to lead on the outcomes in the WESP. These groups provide feedback to WEF at each meeting to report progress towards targets in the WESP.

Monmouthshire responded swiftly to establish a late immersion class in Ysgol Gymraeg Y Ffin in the south of the county in 2022 and more recently, established a second immersion class in Y Gymraeg Y Fenni to support the anticipated increase in demand in the Abergavenny area when the school moves to its new site. Information in relation to immersion provision and Welsh-medium education is available on the Council website.

Welsh-medium Education Provision in Monmouthshire

Non-maintained settings:

There are two Welsh-medium non-maintained settings in Monmouthshire, both are situated on the sites of Welsh-medium primary schools and offer wrap around childcare for children who attend school nursery provision, as well as Flying Start childcare places for 2 to 3-year-olds. The Early Years team work closely with Mudiad Meithrin and other members of WEF to assess the increasing demand for Welsh-medium provision in across Monmouthshire.

Primary Provision:

There are three Welsh-medium primary schools in Monmouthshire, all with nursery provision on site. Two of these schools are well-established in their community. Ysgol Gymraeg Y Ffin in Caldicot is a one form entry school and Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni is currently just over a one form entry school in Abergavenny, with the capacity to become a two-form entry school when it moves onto a new site in 2026. A third school, Ysgol Gymraeg Trefynwy, opened as a seedling in September 2024 and is temporarily located in Monmouth, on Overmonnow Primary School site. The expectation is the school will, over time, become a 210 school. At present there are 33 learners in the school, including the nursery.

The expansion of Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni and the opening of Ysgol Gymraeg Trefynwy, will increase the capacity of Welsh-medium primary school, reception places in Monmouthshire. When all three schools are a full capacity, we will have school 120 places in each cohort and meet our target of 120 in the WESP. This recognises the Council's commitment to Welsh Government's Cymraeg 2050 strategy and fully meets the targets outlined in our WESP and exceeds the Welsh Government target of 115 places.

Secondary Provision:

We do not have a Welsh-medium secondary school in Monmouthshire. Learners transfer to Ysgol Gyfun Gwent Is Coed in Newport or to Ysgol Gyfun Gwynllyw in Torfaen, both of which can accommodate learners from years 7 to 13.

Establishing Immersion Provision

Monmouthshire had a well-established Welsh-medium primary school in the north of the county. However, pupil numbers in Ysgol Gymraeg Y Ffin had been low for a sustained period of time and as a group one school, struggled to recruit staff, including a substantive headteacher. In order to stimulate growth, the local authority took a strategic decision to open an immersion class in the school and included this as a key priority in the new WESP.

The local authority worked with the headteacher and governors to establish the late immersion class in 2022, for learners from year 2 upwards. Late Immersion Grant funding was used to cover staff costs, provide resources to set up the class, facilitate professional learning for staff and funded non-contact time to observe good practice. The school took the lead in developing a

bespoke programme learners using evidence based strategies, effectively supporting learners to transition into a Welsh-medium school. Since the immersion class opened in 2022, 32 pupils have benefitted from this provision, and most pupils remain in Welsh-medium education. The immersion class has also supported the growth in pupil numbers in reception because, parents can choose a Welsh-medium education for all of their children, and not just those starting school. As a result, reception numbers have increased from 13 in September 2021 to 29 in September 2025, almost at the 2032 target for the school.

The local authority planned to open a second immersion class in Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni in September 2024, to increase the demand for Welsh-medium places when the school relocated to its new site in September 2025. However, progress was delayed due to an early September Estyn inspection, closely followed by the headteacher's absence for an extended period of time and a delay in moving to the new site. This work recommenced in spring 2025 with the local authority working with the school to establish the second class. Late Immersion grant funding was used to cover the cost of staffing and an additional amount of £17,000 to set up the class and train staff in the delivery of immersion strategies. In the summer term, Staff from both schools met to review the immersion model in Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni and develop a common offer across both schools. As a result of these discussions, a protocol for admission, a ten week program and the age range of year 3 to 6 for admission to a late immersion class was agreed and formed the basis of the Late Immersion Policy. Existing arrangements for assessment and tracking of pupil progress were adopted by both schools and additional support provided from the school improvement service. Both immersion classes opened in September 2025 with one pupil on roll in Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni and two in Ysgol Gymraeg Y Ffin.

Following the opening of Ysgol Gymraeg Trefynwy in September 2024, and its rapid growth in numbers, it is likely that the school will require immersion provision from September 2026. This being the case, the local authority has taken the decision to work with all three schools to co-construct a sustainable, county wide model for immersion. Although this work is at an early stage of development, the alignment of provision across the two established immersion classes will support any future changes.

Learning along the way

Impact of Covid-19

When pupils returned to school in 2021, it was clear that the extended break from school, particularly for pupils from English speaking homes had inevitably impacted on the linguistic ability of many learners. As the immersion class was established for latecomers entering Welsh-medium education from year 2, the school extended the range to include year 1. This meant that they could provide support to the youngest pupils, and those who needed targeted intervention to improve their language skills, including spending longer in the immersion class, and supporting transition back into a mainstream class.

Extended time spent in the immersion class

Whilst the immersion class runs successfully, immersion staff reported some difficulties in meeting the needs of learners if they start at different times and are there for an extended period of time. For example, a learner joins the immersion class after the start of the programme and needs different vocabulary and sentence patterns. In this case, they need an individual programme so that they can develop their skills systematically. This is difficult to manage if several learners join at different points of the program and opportunities to practice the skills they have in an appropriate context are limited.

Staffing and Funding

Recruitment of staff is a challenge for Welsh-medium schools across Monmouthshire, particularly, those with experience in delivering immersion provision. Allocating immersion funding to Ysgol Gymraeg Y Ffin at the start of each financial year enables the headteacher to maintain immersion provision. When the school has no children accessing immersion, staff may be redirected to other work within the school to enhance the linguistic skills of learners at the discretion of the headteacher.

Benefits of Current Arrangements

- Funding is allocated directly to immersion host schools enabling the headteacher to recruit appropriate staff and ensure that provision is available.
- The relevant headteacher and governing body are responsible for managing immersion provision and adapt resources to meet demand.
- Parents do not have to apply for immersion because an assessment of immersion need is carried out by headteachers after an offer of a school place is made.
- Learners are registered at the school and attend the immersion class for most of the time. They have regular opportunities to meet with the relevant mainstream class.
- Immersion staff continue to support learners who after they make the transition into their mainstream class.
- Home to school transport to immersion provisions in line with its regular Home to School Transport policy and is arranged by the Council.

Use of Welsh Government Grant Funding

The Council has received revenue grant funding from Welsh Government to support late immersion and has used this to support learning environments, linguistic resources, and staffing. An initial grant of £83,720 was claimed in 2021/2022 and spent as outlined in the table below:

Financial Year	Amount	Use
2021/2022	£32,962	Late immersion class set up costs Furniture and equipment Resources to support immersion Peniarh resources to support Welsh language development
	£48,408	Lead teacher (September 21 to March 22) Teacher 0.8 (November 21 to March 22)
	£2,350	Staff training – immersion pedagogy (non-contact) Non-contact time headteacher and Immersion lead (research, observation of good practice, collaboration with local authority, review and development of immersion provision)
Total	£83,720	

When Welsh Government announced a 3-year Welsh-medium Late Immersion Grant for the period April 2022 to March 2025 and invited bids from local authorities. The local authority consulted with the headteacher to review the impact of immersion provision and future needs. Given the investment in resources the previous year, the majority of the bid related to maintaining staffing levels to ensure learners continued to develop their linguistic skills appropriately. The local authority successfully submitted a three-year bid for the amount of £260,579 which was approved and allocated annually to Ysgol Gymraeg Y Ffin. The local authority spent most of the grant funding allocated. However, delays in recruiting staff in 2022/23 meant that the local authority was unable to utilise £31,747 of the grant for that year.

The 24/25 funding became part of the LA Education Grant (LAEG). The local authority received an allocation of £155,679 and allocated this funding between Ysgol Gymraeg Y Ffin (£98,555) to maintain staffing in the immersion class and Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni (£17,124) to set up the immersion class and train staff ready for opening in September 2025. In 2025/26, the local authority received a grant of £115,697 from the LAEG, which has been shared between Ysgol Gymraeg Y Ffin and Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni to cover staff costs and means that the grant will be fully spent.

Next Steps

- Continue to support the growth of Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni and Ysgol Gymraeg Trefynwy so that we reach our target of 120 reception pupils by the end of the current WESP.
- Complete work already started to review and reshape a sustainable model for immersion provision across the county, and this will be completed for implementation in September 2026.
- Ensure that Welsh-medium education and immersion provision are well advertised and publicised to encourage increasing numbers of parents to actively choose a Welsh-medium education for their children.