

Report to:	Communities Scrutiny Committee
Date of Meeting:	12th March 2015
Lead Member/Officer:	Lead Member for Education/ Head of Education
Report Author:	Head of Education
Title:	Language Categorisation of all Denbighshire Schools

1. What is the report about?

The language categorisation of schools in Denbighshire.

2. What is the reason for making this report?

It was resolved by Cabinet on 30 September 2014 to request that the Welsh in Education Strategic Group review the language categorisation of all schools during the autumn term and present a report to Scrutiny in early spring 2015

3. What are the Recommendations?

That the Committee:

- 3.1. considers the information provided regarding the review of language categories; and
- 3.2. determines whether further monitoring of the review's implementation is required.

4. The context of categorisation

Defining schools according to Welsh medium provision, October 2007 (doc. No. 023/2007) 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 are used to collect information on provision nationally and are used locally by education authorities and schools to inform parents of the types of school available in localities. The document states that the information should help local and national government to assess whether provision meets local demand.

In accordance with the requirement set out in this document, categories and descriptions have been incorporated into the Denbighshire Schools Information for parents, guardians and carers information booklet which is published annually.

It is important to note that the document states the 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.' Defining schools according to Welsh medium provision, October 2007, page 2.

The categories (for the compulsory phase of schooling) define primary and secondary schools according to the following:

- 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;
- 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 the expected normal outcome for pupils attending each type of provision in terms of educational progression.

The definitions do not attempt to specify exactly what an individual pupil may receive in school.

4.1 Criteria for categorisation

In the primary sector there are the following categories:

1. Welsh-Medium Primary School
2. Dual Stream Primary School
3. Transitional Primary School (Welsh medium with significant use of English)
4. Predominately English Medium Primary School with significant use of Welsh
5. English Medium primary School

In the secondary sector there are the following categories:

1. Welsh-Medium Secondary School
2. Bilingual Secondary School (within this category there are four sub-categories)
3. Predominately English Medium secondary school with significant use of Welsh
4. English Medium secondary school

Please note there is no language category framework for special schools. Welsh is mainly taught as a second language in Denbighshire special schools.

Please refer to Appendix 1 for detailed explanation of each category.

4.2 Categorisation Questionnaire

The Welsh in Education Strategic Plan has a clear aspiration for bilingual skills and has adopted a long term aspiration that all children and young people in the County will leave full-time education being competent and confident in using both Welsh and English languages. The Council recognises that this is a long term aspirational aim that will not be achieved for a number of years. In

order to meet this aspiration the Council will continue to expand Welsh medium provision throughout the County to reflect and capitalise on the increased demand for Welsh medium education. The Council will work with our Welsh Medium and Bilingual schools to increase the number of pupils receiving their education through the medium of Welsh and to ensure that those pupils who receive Welsh medium primary education continue to do so in the secondary sector. (Welsh in Education Strategic Plan 2014-17 pg.2)

In 2014 the Welsh in Education Strategic Group (WESG) which is the group which monitors the delivery of Denbighshire’s Welsh in Education Plan agreed in accordance with the objectives of the Plan that an evaluation of current delivery against the criteria for categorisation across all schools in Denbighshire was required. This was further supported by the request made by Cabinet on 30 September 2014 to request that the Welsh in Education Strategic Group review the language categorisation of all schools during the autumn term and present a report to Scrutiny in early spring 2015.

A questionnaire was circulated to all primary schools and the two bilingual secondary schools, Ysgol Dinas Bran and Ysgol Brynhyfryd.

Please refer to Appendix 2.

4.3 Results of the questionnaire

Primary

On the basis of the evidence presented through the questionnaire all the primary schools have been compared to their current category which are as follows:

1 Welsh Medium: Betws GG, Carreg Emlyn, Bro Dyfrdwy, Twm o’r Nant, Bro Elwern, Henllan, Gwernant, Bro Cinmeirch, Pentrecelyn, Y Llys, Pant Pastynog, Dewi Sant, Pen Barras, Tremeirchion
2 Dual Stream: Llanfair, Rhewl
3 Transitional: No Schools
4 Predominately English Medium Primary School with significant use of Welsh: Carrog, Caer Drewyn, Bryn Clwyd, Dyffryn Ial, Llywelyn
5 English Medium Primary School: Y Faenol, Bodfari, Cefn Meiriadog, St Brigid’s, Frongoch, Pendref, Y Parc, Hiraddug, Gellifor, Bro Famau, Llanbedr, Bryn Collen, Melyd, Bodnant, Clawdd Offa, Penmorfa, Y Castell, Bryn Hedydd, Emmanuel, Mair, Christchurch, Borthyn, Rhos Street, St Asaph VP, Esgob Morgan, Trefnant,.

Please refer to Appendix 3 for the detailed breakdown of the responses.

The responses have been checked against current educational outcomes. For example:

Ysgol Dewi Sant Category 1) – all pupils are assessed through the medium of Welsh at the end of Key Stages.

Ysgol Llanfair (Category 2) – In 2014, 73% of pupils were assessed through the medium of Welsh at the end of Key stage 2.

Ysgol Carrog (Category 4) – all pupils are assessed through the medium of English.

Ysgol Emmanuel (Category 5) – all pupils are assessed through the medium of English.

Secondary Schools

Ysgol Brynhyfryd offers the required number of courses through the medium of Welsh in accordance with the requirement of category 2B. This has been confirmed by the school.

On the basis of the information provided by the school, Ysgol Dinas Bran does not offer the required number of courses through the medium of Welsh, to meet the requirement of the Welsh Government definition for category 2B. The information suggests that the school is meeting the requirement of category 2C.

Please refer to Appendix 4 for the detailed response.

4.4 Summary

In accordance with the categories recorded in the book to parents for there are 47 primary schools in Denbighshire. 14 are classed as Welsh–Medium, 2 are classed as Dual Stream, 5 are classed as English Medium with significant use of Welsh and 26 are classed as English medium.

On the basis of results collated from the questionnaires and the attainment data there are currently schools which do not wholly meet the criteria of their current category.

Ysgol Rhewl - the school recorded that there is some Welsh medium delivery and although no pupils in the last few years have been assessed through the medium of Welsh it is anticipated that in 2015 two pupils will be assessed through the medium of Welsh.

Ysgol Llywelyn – the school acknowledged that it does not provide a sufficient percentage of Welsh medium delivery to remain in category 4. It has indicated that the provision there is category 5.

Ysgol Dyffryn Iâl – the school indicated that it offers more than one language stream. 4 pupils have been assessed through the medium of Welsh in the last 3 years.

In the secondary sector, on the basis of the results collated Ysgol Brynhyfryd is meeting the requirements of a Category 2B school. Ysgol Dinas Bran meets the criteria of Category 2C School.

5 How does the decision contribute to the Corporate Priorities?

This report contributes to the Corporate Priority of improving performance in education and the quality of our school buildings.

6. What will it cost and how will it affect other services?

N/A

7. What are the main conclusions of the Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) undertaken on the decision?

The requirement to undertake an Equality Impact Assessment would be reassessed at the point when a schools language category changes as part of a statutory process. See Appendix 5.

8. What consultations have been carried out with Scrutiny and others?

N/A

9. Chief Finance Officer Statement

N/A

10. What risks are there and is there anything we can do to reduce them?

N/A

11. Power to make the Decision

Article 6.3.2(d) stipulates that “scrutiny committees may consider any matters referred to it by the Council or the Cabinet”.

Contact Officer:
Head of Education
Tel: 01824 708009