

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE LEARNING AND SKILLS SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE HELD AT BY ZOOM ON WEDNESDAY, 16 JUNE 2021**

PRESENT: County Councillor P Roberts (Chairman)
County Councillors B Davies, S C Davies, D R Jones, E Roderick, L Roberts,
R G Thomas, K M Roberts-Jones, J Berriman, A Jenner, DW Meredith, C Mills,
T J Van-Rees, J M Williams.
Co-Opted Member: M Evitts

Officers: Lynette Lovell (Interim Chief Education Officer), Wyn Richards (Scrutiny
Manager and Head of Democratic Services), Sarah Astley (Strategic Programme
Manager - Schools Transformation), Marianne Evans (Senior Manager - Education
Services), Emma Palmer (Head of Transformation and Communication) and
Huw Foster Evans (Education Consultant)

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Co-Opted Members A. Davies, S. Davies and G. Robson.

2. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR

RESOLVED that County Councillor D.R. Jones be elected Vice-Chair for the ensuing year.

The Chair thanked Angela Davies, Co-Opted Member for her support and work as Vice-Chair over the past two years.

The Chair also welcomed the new Members of the Committee.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest from Members relating to items for consideration on the agenda.

4. DECLARATIONS OF PARTY WHIP

The Committee did not receive any disclosures of prohibited party whips which a Member has been given in relation to the meeting in accordance with Section 78(3) of the Local Government Measure 2011.

5. YSGOL DYFFRYN TRANNON LANGUAGE CATEGORY

Documents Considered:

- Report of the Leader – Ysgol Dyffryn Trannon Language Category.

Issues Discussed:

- Ysgol Dyffryn Trannon is a dual stream primary school. When the report was written, there were 109 pupils on the school roll, 12 in the English Stream, no pupils in reception or year 1 and 97 in the Welsh Stream.
- There have been discussions with governors over a number of years regarding concerns about the sustainability of the English Stream.

- There were 71 responses to the online consultation together with nine written responses which included from Estyn.
- Questions:

<p>Bearing in mind the number of youngsters at lower end of school who wish to be taught through the medium of English, there is no indication how many pupils will join the school and wish to be taught through the medium of English from September as this change will not commence until 2022.</p>	<p>The change will come in on a phased basis commencing in September 2022. Currently as of today the school has 89 in the Welsh Stream and 15 in the English Stream. There is no information available as to whether any new pupils have applied to be taught through the English Medium from September.</p>
<p>Therefore at the bottom end of the school there will be three years where there will be no new pupils in the English medium Stream. Will this speed up the process for the school becoming Welsh Medium.</p>	<p>It depends on how the numbers work out. If current pupils in the English Medium Stream want to remain there, then this will be honoured until they leave the school. If they want to transfer to the Welsh Stream then additional support would be provided to those pupils.</p>
<p>If there are no pupils joining the English Stream this year will it be possible to move to Welsh Medium only for years 1, 2 and 3 or would the school still be accepting English Stream pupils into those years.</p>	<p>If proposal is approved it would continue to be a regulated change – i.e. on a phased basis from 2022. Therefore the school would not accept any pupils into the English Stream from that date forwards.</p>
<p>Looking at the numbers, by Sept 2025 there will only be one or two pupils in the English Stream by then. What will the plans be for those children.</p>	<p>If parents have chosen the English Stream for their children then this will be honoured to the end of their education at the school. The school will be aware of small numbers in these year groups and will work with parents to discuss whether it is more appropriate for pupils to join the Welsh Stream with support.</p>
<p>If a pupil wants to remain in the English Stream would there be transport to the nearest English Medium school. This could apply to new families moving into the area.</p>	<p>First of all the Council would provide Trochi (immersion) support so they could attend that school. However parents can choose whichever school that they want. However as Ysgol Dyffryn Trannon is the nearest school then transport to another school would not be provided and parents would need to make their own arrangements for</p>

	pupils to attend other schools.
It would be helpful to know how many pupils are moving into school for Welsh Medium education and how many English speaking pupils are moving out of catchment to obtain English Medium education.	This information is available and can be circulated to the Committee. It can also be included in the report to the Cabinet.
Having low English Stream numbers is challenging. It is cited in the report that more pupils will be more fluent in Welsh and English equally. Is this a realistic or generic reason.	<p>In Welsh Medium schools pupils leave with a fluency in both languages. This is not the same in an English medium or English Stream school where pupils' fluency is in English only. The aspiration of Welsh Government and the Council is that all pupils leave school being fully bilingual, with the added skills that this brings.</p> <p>In a Welsh Medium school, English is taught as a first language as it would in an English Medium School. In an English Medium school Welsh is taught as a second language. In a bilingual school pupils are learning both languages at same pace and are therefore fluently bilingual at the end.</p>
Is the understanding correct that due to immersion, a pupil wishing to attend an English Medium School outside the area, which was not the closest school would not be eligible for free school transport.	That is correct.
The document does not explain clearly enough that the aim is to improve educational provision and to develop a broad curriculum to meet the needs of pupils. This could imply that the school is not currently offering a broad curriculum which is not what the document is trying to say, it is making the case for a bilingual school. There are some things in the document which could be explained better such as a link to how a Welsh Medium school will allow a broader curriculum to be developed.	In this particular case its the small numbers in the English Stream which inhibits group work and collaboration across phases, so that provision is more challenging when numbers are low. Bilingualism provides greater opportunities across both languages.
Trochi and Trochi support for parents.	Improving provision also makes

<p>In another example looked at recently there are large community support networks which could support parents and pupils (Ysgol Bro Hyddgen). How will monoglot English parents be supported to be involved in their child's education.</p>	<p>links to successful futures, new curriculum where the aim is to make links between schools and outside agencies. There would be opportunities for the school to work with organisations such as Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin, Menter Iaith and the Urdd. This also links to the school ethos which will be predominantly Welsh.</p> <p>Trochi (immersion) - for parents of pupils moving into the area from a non Welsh Speaking school then immersion will be offered to pupils. It will also be offered to English Medium Stream pupils. Trochi provision has been trialled online which has been successful. The aim is to develop immersion centres. For parents there are courses through bodies such as Aberystwyth University, lessons for parents in the community, apps, and other agencies have a network of support for parents. It is also the role of the school to support parents.</p>
<p>Financial saving £122k – the figure is not explained. Where is the financial saving coming from and over what timeframe it will be realised</p>	<p>The savings have been modelled by the finance team based on pupil numbers, projections and set against the funding formula. It also takes account of not running an English Stream at the school.</p>
<p>Has the Council undertaken research or have we got evidence that pupils with special needs are not disadvantaged by being taught through the medium of Welsh if Welsh is not their first language. Is there the capacity to research this within the County or on a wider perspective.</p>	<p>This should be considered when the Committee considers ALN provision, focussing on changes in provision through medium of Welsh as well as through other languages.</p>
<p>With the Machynlleth proposal there was concern about ALN provision through medium of Welsh and the support that could be provided. What is the plan for supporting ALN through the medium of Welsh in this school and is it just expanding existing provision.</p>	<p>With the new Act coming into force in September, its clear that ALN will be the responsibility of the school. There are very low numbers of pupils with ALN in this school. The school will provide an universal provision and individual additional support if required through the</p>

	authority or networking with other agencies should the child need this through the medium of Welsh.
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Comments:

- The proposals before Cabinet are welcomed, and other schools need to move in this direction as well. The understanding of what is meant by bilingual education is not clearly understood. Welsh Medium and English Medium are believed to be the same but they are not equal in meaning.
- The additional evidence being sought by the Committee is clear when presented but is not always available or clear in the report as written. Simplifying the language in reports might assist the Council in the way it communicates these issues with the wider community.
- It would be helpful to include more detail about financial plans and when savings likely to materialise, in future reports.
- Concern in the report that in the past a number of pupils had transferred back from the Welsh Stream to the English Stream. It would be helpful to emphasise that additional support would be available so they would not need to transfer back to a different stream.
- It is pupils' learning experience through their school life which is important. Provision of robust ALN is essential for pupils to progress through school and for their future lives.

Scrutiny made the following observations to Cabinet:

- The Scrutiny Committee supports the proposals, as the case for change is set out in the document.
- The Committee welcomed the immersion support which would be available to pupils through the school as well as available to parents from a variety of sources.
- The Committee requested that numbers of pupils moving into the Welsh Medium stream and also moving out of the catchment to receive English Medium education be included in the Cabinet report.
- The Committee suggested that further detail be included in future reports regarding the financial savings and the timescale for those to be achieved.

Scrutiny's Recommendations to Cabinet:

- 1 that the numbers of pupils moving into the Welsh Medium stream and also moving out of the catchment to receive English Medium education be included in the Cabinet report**
- 2 that further detail be included in future reports regarding the financial savings and the timescale for those to be achieved**

6.	WORK PROGRAMME
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The Committee noted that future meetings are scheduled as follows:

08-07-21 14.00 - 16.00 Zoom	Castle Caereinion (Cabinet 13-07-21)
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14-07-21 14.00 - 16.00 Zoom	School Budgets 2021-22 School Budgets out-turn 2020-21 Poverty Report
09-21 TBC	Items to be Confirmed
15-09-21 14.00 - 16.00 Zoom	Mount Street / Cradoc (Cabinet 21-09-21) Llanbedr (Cabinet 21-09-21) Churchstoke (Cabinet 21-09-21)
08-12-21 14.00 - 16.00 Zoom	Llangedwyn / Llanfechain / Bro Cynllaith (Cabinet 14-12-21) Llanfyllin - Phase 2 (Cabinet 14-12-21) Ysgol Calon Cymru (Cabinet 14-12-21)
12-01-22 14.00 - 16.00 Zoom	WESP - post consultation (Cabinet 18-01-22)

It was noted that the items for consideration could be subject to change.

County Councillor P Roberts (Chairman)