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# Evaluation of the Welsh Language Charter and associated programmes

## Executive summary

### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report presents the findings of an evaluation of the Welsh Language Charter and associated programmes. In addition to evaluating the programmes, the study presents recommendations in relation to the development of a new national framework that will incorporate the four programmes. Arad Research was commissioned to undertake the evaluation, in partnership with researchers from Iaith Cyf. The research was carried out between January and November 2019.

### 2. Overview of the Welsh Language Charter and associated programmes

#### *The Welsh Language Charter in primary schools*

- 2.1 The aim of the Welsh Language Charter, which is funded by the Welsh Government, is to increase the informal use of Welsh by children and young people in social situations. The Welsh Language Charter was established in Gwynedd in 2011/12. Over time, the programme was introduced in Welsh-medium primary schools throughout Wales, and by the 2019/20 academic year, 423 schools were participating in the Welsh Language Charter.
- 2.2 The Welsh Language Charter requires participation on a whole-school basis. Schools are expected to devise action plans which include priorities and targets based on data collected on pupils' use of the Welsh language. This data is collected through Gwe Iaith (Language Web) questionnaires, which are completed by pupils to record their social use of Welsh in the classroom, on the playground, in the community and at home. As they implement their action plans, schools work towards bronze, silver and gold awards. Awards are given by regional education consortia after they visit schools to validate the evidence collected by schools to demonstrate that they have delivered their Welsh Language Charter plans successfully.

#### *Cymraeg Campus*

- 2.3 *Cymraeg Campus* is delivered in English-medium primary schools and aims to promote and increase the use of Welsh. Following the Welsh Language Charter model, schools work towards bronze, silver and gold awards, aiming towards increasingly challenging targets along the way.

## *The 'Supporting Language Use Project' (PCAI) / Welsh Language Charter in secondary schools*

- 2.4 *PCAI* is delivered in Welsh-medium secondary schools with the aim of increasing the use of Welsh amongst young people. *PCAI* was originally developed by the Welsh Language Board in 2007/08 in order to identify good practice in promoting the social use of Welsh among secondary school pupils. The programme is administered by regional consortia who provide a grant of £1000 to secondary schools in order to support projects or activities to increase the informal and social use of Welsh. Since 2018 there has been a move by consortia towards implementing the Welsh Language Charter in secondary schools, developing activities and a structure which correspond to the Welsh Language Charter in primary schools programme.

### *Cymraeg Bob Dydd*

- 2.5 *Cymraeg Bob Dydd* provides opportunities for pupils in English-medium secondary schools to extend their use of Welsh. The programme is delivered by the Urdd, who arrange activities to foster pupils' confidence in Welsh, increase their use of the language, and encourage them to continue to study Welsh as a subject at AS and A-Level.

### *Funding arrangements and future plans for the four programmes*

- 2.6 In the financial year 2019/20 there was a budget of £772,200 available to deliver the Welsh Language Charter and associated programmes. Most of this sum was distributed by the Welsh Government to regional consortia for the delivery of the Welsh Language Charter in primary schools.
- 2.7 At the time of writing the specification for the evaluation, it was already the intention for the Welsh Government to bring together the programmes within a Welsh Language Charter national framework. The four programmes have not yet transferred to the new combined system. The Welsh Government, alongside partners in the regional consortia and local authorities, are continuing to work towards this arrangement.

## **3. The aim of the evaluation and research methods**

- 3.1 The aim of the evaluation was to provide guidance to the Welsh Government in developing the national framework for the Welsh Language Charter. A mixed-methods approach was adopted for the evaluation, which involved:
- A review of documentation relating to the Welsh Language Charter and associated programmes;
  - Interviews with Welsh Government officers and stakeholders (regional education consortia, local authorities, the Urdd, Estyn, Mentrau Iaith);
  - Visits to primary schools delivering the Welsh Language Charter to interview headteachers, Welsh Language Charter coordinators and pupils. Focus groups were carried out with parents at some of the schools visited, and interviews were completed with a small number of school governors;
  - Interviews with teachers in schools delivering the *Cymraeg Campus*, *PCAI*/Welsh Language Charter in secondary schools and *Cymraeg Bob Dydd* programmes;
  - Online surveys of schools delivering the Welsh Language Charter and *Cymraeg Campus*.

- Development of a theory of change for the Welsh Language Charter and associated programmes, and consideration of methods to measure the impact of the programmes in the future.

## 4. Findings

### *Welsh Language Charter in Welsh-medium primary schools*

- 4.1 There is a strong commitment to the programme among regional consortium officers, local authority officers and schools. Schools are encouraged to develop action plans for the Welsh Language Charter that reflect their own context and priorities. The evaluation found that schools appreciate the opportunity to deliver the programme in a flexible and tailored way.
- 4.2 Leadership and support at a whole-school level are essential to the delivery of the Welsh Language Charter. Some schools incorporate the Welsh Language Charter into their school-wide planning processes, which encourages ownership of the programme.
- 4.3 Schools reported that the programme requires them to invest significant additional time for planning and delivery. The majority of schools visited as part of the evaluation noted that they do not receive any additional financial support to deliver the Welsh Language Charter.
- 4.4 Pupils are central to the process of determining Welsh Language Charter priorities and deciding on activities in their schools. Members of *Criwiau Cymraeg*, and other pupils involved in the process, enjoy and benefit from the responsibilities associated with being involved in these groups.<sup>1</sup> It is not clear that parents have a strong understanding of the Welsh Language Charter, although schools routinely share information with them about the programme. Practitioners noted that they are aware of the importance of parents' influence on pupils' language use practices and the need for parents to reinforce the messages promoted by the Welsh Language Charter.
- 4.5 The Welsh Language Charter is usually coordinated in schools by one teacher, and most of the schools visited as part of the evaluation reported that other teachers contribute to organising and delivering activities. The evaluation found examples of collaboration between schools. However, there was no evidence that this was a core aspect of the delivery of the programme. In some areas, schools collaborated with external organisations and built on contacts that were already in place. Other schools reported that they had to spend time researching and making new contacts with partners in order to support the delivery of the Charter. The evaluation concludes that there is potential for more structured collaboration and joint planning between schools and external partners.
- 4.6 The Gwe laith questionnaires were welcomed by several practitioners and pupils as a tool to support planning. There are variations in how the purpose of data collected through the Gwe laith is interpreted. Some schools use data from the Gwe laith as a planning tool, to understand language use practices within a cohort or school year at the beginning of an academic year and to set priorities and identify tailored interventions. Other schools consider that the purpose of the Gwe laith data is to measure the progress or impact of the Welsh Language Charter as a programme. The Gwe laith can contribute to understanding how language use practices change (or not) within one cohort of pupils during an academic year. However, there are limitations to the Gwe laith as a method of measuring impact, including the fact that the data collected is self-reported. The evaluation concludes that it is

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<sup>1</sup> A 'Criw Cymraeg' is a group of pupils who meet to discuss and support activities to promote the use of Welsh in school.

not a robust source for measuring progress and demonstrating the programme's impact on language use over time.

- 4.7 Reflecting on the development of the national framework for the Welsh Language Charter, there is a need to arrive at a common understanding of the purpose of the Gwe Iaithe and how schools and regional consortia are expected to use the data. This includes the use of the data to support planning, and the use of the data to understand changes in language use practices within class groups or year groups.
- 4.8 The Welsh Language Charter awards (gold, silver and bronze) motivate schools to continue to work towards increasingly challenging outcomes. The evidence suggests that the awards foster pride and enthusiasm among a number of pupils in relation to the use of the Welsh language.
- 4.9 There is a lack of clarity at present about what is expected of schools after they achieve the gold award. There is a need for guidance on a national level that ensures that schools sustain their progress after they reach the gold award. Alongside this, evidence reveals the need for clear guidance that sets out the expectations on schools when delivering the programme in the context of the new curriculum.
- 4.10 The information schools collect and present to consortia as part of Welsh Language Charter monitoring processes tends to focus on evidence of having carried out activities or events. There is not an emphasis on monitoring the quality of experiences provided, and the data collected does not enable an analysis of the impact of the Welsh Language Charter on the use of Welsh over the longer term. As a result, there are gaps in our understanding of the Welsh Language Charter's contribution to the aim of promoting the social use of Welsh.

### *Cymraeg Campus*

- 4.11 Practitioners who contributed to the evaluation welcomed the structured approach of the *Cymraeg Campus* programme. Schools reported that the programme's structure provided a focus for Welsh language coordinators as they delivered activities to promote Welsh. Teachers reported that pupils were also enthusiastic about the programme.
- 4.12 Guidance from regional and local officers is essential to the delivery of *Cymraeg Campus*. There was demand from practitioners for more support and guidance in some areas in order to improve programme delivery: there is a need for appropriate training and support to ensure that schools are in a position to implement *Cymraeg Campus* and achieve the programme's aims.
- 4.13 Welsh language coordinators in schools face challenges in finding time to arrange activities and work towards the criteria for each target. There is a need to establish arrangements to share resources, activities and good practice to support the delivery of the programme. Schools wish to receive more information about how to make contact with businesses or associations who may be able to support the programme in their school.
- 4.14 Practitioners noted that the awards that are part of the programme, along with the associated targets, have provided a 'framework' and 'focus' (in teachers' words) for activities to promote Welsh in English-medium schools. However, practitioners noted that the targets and criteria are too numerous and challenging for schools, especially as they work towards the silver and gold awards, and that this demotivates some teachers.

### *PCAI / Welsh Language Charter in secondary schools*

- 4.15 Practitioners in secondary schools welcome the programme and recognise the need for activities to promote the use of Welsh among pupils in the secondary sector.
- 4.16 The evidence collected during the evaluation showed that some collaboration takes place between schools to discuss planning and delivery within their region. Some secondary and primary schools incorporate the Welsh Language Charter within their transition activities between Key Stages 2 and 3. Schools also shared examples of activities that included collaboration with other schools and the wider community in planning summer fairs and concerts.
- 4.17 This evaluation has taken place at a time when the programme of activities in Welsh-medium secondary schools is shifting from *PCAI*, a programme that the Welsh Government inherited from the Welsh Language Board, to the Welsh Language Charter in secondary schools. As a result of this, there is no consistency in terms of what is delivered across schools, and regional arrangements for supporting schools vary between consortia.
- 4.18 There is currently no national guidance for the delivery of the Welsh Language Charter in secondary schools. Evidence suggests that the greatest challenge in delivering the Welsh Language Charter in secondary schools is lack of time. Welsh language coordinators in secondary schools would also appreciate more resources to support programme delivery.

### *Cymraeg Bob Dydd*

- 4.19 The partnership between Urdd officers and teachers is a key element of the project's design, and both officers and school practitioners interviewed reported that there is effective collaboration in delivering the programme.
- 4.20 Schools can arrange for pupils to attend residential courses in one of the Urdd's camps. Urdd officers also arrange for artists and musicians to attend schools to hold workshops in Welsh, including music, art, drama and dance sessions. Schools reported that they welcome the freedom to choose activities as part of the project in order to support and enhance activities carried out by the school.
- 4.21 Schools and Urdd officers reported that there are some challenges involved in implementing *Cymraeg Bob Dydd*, particularly in finding convenient times to undertake activities with pupils and ensuring that information reaches all target groups. Schools noted that they would appreciate opportunities to work closely with their consortia, with other schools and with representatives from businesses.
- 4.22 Schools are not required to collect and record evidence for the programme, and the project data available is limited to monitoring data. As this is a relatively small project providing support to schools, project officers and practitioners feel that current data collection arrangements are appropriate.
- 4.23 Urdd officers record the number of activities undertaken and collect feedback forms from pupils. There are no processes to monitor progress or assure quality beyond these arrangements. Based on the annual reports reviewed during the evaluation, monitoring arrangements and data collection methods currently in place do not enable a detailed understanding of the programme's effects. The reports do not demonstrate the connection between the programme's activities and any increase in pupils' confidence in Welsh, or any increase in the number of pupils who choose to study Welsh as a subject.

## **5. Theory of change for the Welsh Language Charter and associated programmes**

- 5.1 The high-level theory that underpins the programmes is that it is possible to influence children's social use of Welsh through a series of school-based interventions and activities. The theory notes a series of assumptions that are implicit within the programmes. It is assumed that intervention is needed in order to increase the use of Welsh among children and young people. There is also an assumption that headteachers and their staff can find the time and resources to deliver the programmes, without additional financial support in most cases. It is assumed that teachers can plan for and understand the types of intervention that are likely to influence language use.
- 5.2 The programmes are dependent on the fact that there are opportunities available for pupils to use the language socially, and that the programmes – which are delivered throughout Wales – are relevant to communities in a range of linguistic contexts. The language context of the family, including how much Welsh is spoken at home, is likely to influence pupils' social use of Welsh. Evidence from the evaluation suggests that social attitudes to Welsh, and the importance placed on Welsh by parents in particular, influences pupils' response to the programmes.
- 5.3 The evaluation was carried out at a time when the four programmes were being brought together under the banner of the national framework for the Welsh Language Charter. However, it is not entirely clear how the programmes will be adapted in order 'to ensure continuity and a seamless pathway of support for learners'. As no action plan had been developed specifying how schools will be required to deliver the programmes differently as part of the combined national framework it has not been possible to interpret a full theory of change for the new framework.
- 5.4 In looking towards a future evaluation of the impact of the Welsh Language Charter and associated programmes, there is a need for a research and evaluation plan to explore the assumptions and external factors noted above in a detailed and meaningful way. The evaluation concludes that further work is needed before planning an evaluation of the national framework for the Welsh Language Charter. The rationale behind the design of the framework should be re-examined, and consideration should be given to the other factors that influence the programmes' ability to achieve their aims.

## **6. Conclusions and recommendations**

- 6.1 The support and commitment seen for the programmes among all stakeholders (consortia and local authority officers, headteachers, teachers and pupils) suggest that there is continuing demand for interventions that support the social use of Welsh. Teachers (particularly Welsh Language Charter coordinators and those who lead the other programmes in schools) invest substantial amounts of time to organise, deliver and report on a range of activities, without additional funding being allocated to schools to support this activity in most cases. Teachers consider that the programmes are valuable and that they enrich pupils' experiences of the language.
- 6.2 Consortium officers and practitioners raised questions about the expectations on schools in terms of delivering and sustaining the programmes in the longer term. They noted that more robust guidance in relation to the requirements for delivering the programmes under the national framework should be developed.

**Recommendation 1:** Welsh Government should continue to deliver programmes to support the informal use of Welsh in schools, building on the Welsh Language Charter and associated programmes.

**Recommendation 2:** Welsh Government should ensure that it develops and refines its plans for the national framework and ensure that the aims, objectives and expectations are clearly communicated to regional consortia, local authorities, schools and relevant delivery partners.

- 6.3 Owing to the way in which the programmes are funded, no specific funding is allocated for each of the individual programmes. With the exception of *Cymraeg Bob Dydd* the funding for the programmes is incorporated within the Education Improvement Grant, and education consortia have discretion on how to allocate the amounts they receive. There is scope to strengthen and formalise arrangements for monitoring and reporting on progress to support a better understanding of the changes and impacts that derive from the funding.

**Recommendation 3:** As part of the process of refining plans for the national framework, Welsh Government should review funding arrangements for the four programmes and ensure:

- a. That the amount of funding allocated to regional consortia is sufficient to deliver the Welsh Language Charter and associated programmes;
- b. Clarity on the requirements and expectations on regional consortia and delivery partners in relation to funding the four programmes in the context of the new national framework;
- c. That robust arrangements are in place for data collection, monitoring and progress reporting in relation to funding allocations.

- 6.4 Implementing and embedding the Welsh Language Charter and associated programmes is dependent on leadership at the school level, and it is essential that schools take ownership of programme aims. Schools should be encouraged to embed strategies and activities to support the informal use of Welsh in a sustainable way over the longer term as part of their School Development Plans. It is also important to ensure clarity in relation to the role of the national framework within the new curriculum.

**Recommendation 4:** Welsh Government, working with regional consortia and local authorities, should ensure that schools incorporate the Welsh Language Charter and associated programmes as part of their School Development Plans as a means of embedding activities to promote the social use of Welsh at a whole-school level.

**Recommendation 5:** Welsh Government should, with the support of regional consortia, encourage schools to embed the Welsh Language Charter and associated programmes as part of the delivery of the new curriculum.

- 6.5 Practitioners are content with the design and flexibility of the Welsh Language Charter in primary schools, in particular the fact that schools are encouraged to develop action plans that reflect their priorities and are owned by staff and pupils.

**Recommendation 6:** When developing plans for the national framework, the Welsh Government should ensure that schools have the flexibility to tailor their delivery of the Welsh Language Charter in ways that are suited to their needs and individual circumstances.

- 6.6 The awards that form part of the Welsh Language Charter in primary schools (and *Cymraeg Campus*) serve as an incentive for schools to build on their activities to promote the social use of Welsh over time. There are questions about how the model for rewarding schools (and associated validation processes) will be delivered as part of the national framework, including arrangements for schools after they have reached the gold award.

**Recommendation 7:** Welsh Government and regional consortia should agree on the requirements for primary schools participating in the Welsh Language Charter once they have achieved the gold award, and communicate this to schools.

**Recommendation 8:** Welsh Government should pilot new quality assurance and reporting arrangements for those Welsh Language Charter primary schools that have reached the gold award, moving from a validation system to an alternative model, for example self-evaluation.

(Note: The findings of this exercise could also be useful in the context of delivering *Cymraeg Campus*.)

- 6.7 Welsh Language Charter coordinators – and teachers who lead on associated programmes – work individually to create resources, arrange events, and make contact with community partners. The evaluation shows that teachers spend time researching local contacts and organising events, which leads to considerable duplication across schools in the delivery of the Welsh Language Charter.

**Recommendation 9:** Welsh Government, in partnership with regional consortia, should develop a bank of resources and a list of contacts to support schools to collaborate with organisations and partners in the community.

(Note: This could also be useful in the context of supporting the delivery of associated programmes.)

- 6.8 There is potential for schools to work more closely with community organisations and partners, including Mentrau Iaith. Such organisations could be a valuable link to the wider community for schools.

**Recommendation 10:** Welsh Government should ensure alignment between the objectives of the national framework for the Welsh Language Charter and the aims and objectives of community organisations that support the Welsh language and are funded by the Welsh Government.

(Note: Joint planning and more strategic collaboration with external organisations could also help schools delivering associated programmes.)

- 6.9 In the view of teachers who contributed to the evaluation, there are limitations to what the Welsh Language Charter can change, without the support of parents to reinforce the messages that the Welsh Language Charter promotes.



**Recommendation 11:** In developing further detail and an action plan for the national framework for the Welsh Language Charter, the Welsh Government should explore whether there is a need to introduce methods to strengthen the link between the Welsh Language Charter and parents.

(Note: This recommendation is also applicable to the delivery of the Welsh Language Charter in secondary schools.)

- 6.10 The guidance provided by regional and local authority officers to schools to support *Cymraeg Campus* was viewed as essential to the implementation of the programme. However, they also indicated that they would like more support. The evaluation provided evidence that a large number of practitioners in the English-medium sector lack the confidence to deliver activities in Welsh, particularly in informal situations. More structured arrangements for sharing resources and good practice are needed to support the implementation of the programme.
- 6.11 Evaluation evidence showed that schools find it challenging to meet all of the criteria for each award, and that there is no consistency in officers' and practitioners' understanding about whether all criteria must be met under each target.

**Recommendation 12:** In continuing to support schools delivering *Cymraeg Campus*, the Welsh Government and regional consortia should re-examine the targets for the various awards and associated criteria, paying particular attention to: (i) reducing the number of targets and criteria for the various awards; and (ii) allowing schools to show progress against a selection of criteria rather than each criterion under each target.

- 6.12 This evaluation took place at a time when the programme of activities in Welsh-medium secondary schools was transferring from the *PCAI* programme to the Welsh Language Charter in the secondary sector. However, there is no description of the expectations on schools in delivering the programme in the secondary sector. As a result, there is no consistency in what is currently delivered at school level and the support provided to schools by regional consortia also varies. Evidence suggests that some elements of the design of the primary school Welsh Language Charter are not relevant for pupils in secondary schools, and that the programme should be tailored to suit young people in Key Stages 3 and above. Consideration should be given to the focus of the programme and to reviewing the evidence of the types of messages that are most likely to be relevant to young people in secondary schools.

**Recommendation 13:** In designing and developing a Welsh Language Charter programme for the secondary sector, the Welsh Government and regional consortia should give careful consideration to the needs and characteristics of the age groups involved, ensuring that the content and objectives of the programme are appropriate for them.

- 6.13 For many pupils in English-medium secondary schools, opportunities to use the Welsh language outside the classroom are limited. Practitioners reported that there is demand for a programme such as *Cymraeg Bob Dydd* which offers such opportunities for pupils. Practitioners expressed the view that *Cymraeg Bob Dydd* activities, along with the opportunity to attend residential courses, influenced some pupils' decisions to continue to

study Welsh. Some teachers suggested broadening the range of activities delivered through the programme to include the use of Welsh in the world of work.

- 6.14 Based on the documentation reviewed during the course of the evaluation, the current monitoring arrangements and data collection methods do not enable an analysis of the impact of *Cymraeg Bob Dydd*. Methods of data collection and analysis should be established that provide a meaningful insight into the programme's contribution to increasing the use of the Welsh language, or to increasing the number of pupils who choose to study Welsh as a subject.

**Recommendation 14:** Welsh Government should review the list of activities delivered as part of *Cymraeg Bob Dydd* to see whether they can be made more engaging for pupils, including exploring activities relating to themes of business, the labour market and employability.

**Recommendation 15:** Welsh Government should review the monitoring and reporting arrangements that are part of *Cymraeg Bob Dydd* so that there is less of a focus on numbers and a greater emphasis on understanding how activities contribute to achieving the programme's aims.

- 6.15 The findings of the evaluation, and the process of interpreting theories of change, have raised questions about the nature and quality of the evidence in relation to programme effects. The factors that influence the social use of Welsh are numerous and complex. While the four programmes examined as part of this evaluation can contribute to increasing use and fostering positive attitudes towards the Welsh language, it is unclear to what extent they contribute to these aims in the face of other influences. The evaluation has concluded that there is a need for a clearer understanding of why certain cohorts of children do not use Welsh before an evaluation of the true contribution of the Welsh Language Charter is possible.
- 6.16 One key element of the process of developing a theory of change will be to consider the current availability of data. Although a considerable amount of monitoring data is collected as part of the implementation of the programmes (in particular the Welsh Language Charter in primary schools and *Cymraeg Campus*) the data does not provide a robust basis for reporting on changes in language practices or changes in attitude.

**Recommendation 16:** As a matter of priority, the Welsh Government should ensure that interpreting and refining a theory of change is a key next step in the process of developing the national framework for the Welsh Language Charter. In partnership with education and language planning stakeholders, Welsh Government should address the following:

- a) Examine what data sources are already available, and what gaps in the evidence should be addressed in order to inform any future evaluation of the outcomes of the framework;
- b) Explore options for future research in order to gain a better understanding of the assumptions and external factors that influence the delivery and expected outcomes of the national framework.

Full Research Report: Duggan, B., Lewis, S. and Glyn, E. (2020). Evaluation of the Welsh Language Charter and associated programmes. Cardiff: Welsh Government, GSR report number 43/2020.  
Available at: <https://gov.wales/evaluation-welsh-language-charter>

Views expressed in this report are those of the researcher and not necessarily those of the Welsh Government.

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This document is also available in Welsh.  
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