

Proposal to change the nature of provision at Ysgol Y Felin

Consultation Report



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Executive Summary

The Consultation Period

On the 22nd February 2021 Carmarthenshire County Council published proposals to:

- Change the nature of provision in the Foundation Phase from dual stream to Welsh medium.

The consultation period commenced on the 22nd February 2021 in line with the publication of the proposal and closed on 16th July 2021 with a total of 40 responses received (excluding the responses received from Estyn and the pupils' consultation) in response to the formal consultation.

Responses Received	
Online Survey	Total
40	40

It must be noted that of the 40 responses received, all were received prior to the end of the consultation period.

Consultation Events

Due to the ongoing implications of the Coronavirus pandemic, we were advised to postpone all events where there was interaction between staff, parents, and the wider community and as a result virtual drop-in sessions were held via Microsoft Teams.

Informal

Virtual informal drop-in sessions were held prior to the beginning of the formal consultation period with relevant stakeholders.

Formal

Virtual formal drop-in sessions were held on **Monday 8th March and Wednesday 10th March 2021 at 4:30pm for a period of two hours.** The formal consultation drop-in sessions were attended by 43 stakeholders.

Responses Received

The responses received have been categorised into the following themes:

Supportive

- Theme 1 - Support for the proposal
- Theme 2 - Support for Staff
- Theme 3 - The Pupils’ Education and Later Life Opportunities
- Theme 4 - Increases the number of Welsh speakers and helps preserve the Welsh Language
- Theme 5 - The proposal adheres to Council and Welsh Government policies
- Theme 6 - No reason

Concerns

- Theme 1- Removal of Choice
- Theme 2- The Pupils’ Education and Later Life Opportunities
- Theme 3 - Status Quo is Successful
- Theme 4 – Forcing the Welsh Language
- Theme 5 - Additional Learning Needs (ALN)
- Theme 6 – Coping with the Welsh Language
- Theme 7 - Parents won’t be able to help support their child
- Theme 8 - Transport and Travel to Other Schools
- Theme 9 - Transfer to English Medium Schools
- Theme 10 - Support for staff
- Theme 11 - No Reason /Misrepresentation of Data

Unsure

- Theme 1- Removal of Choice
- Theme 2- Additional Learning Needs (ALN)
- Theme 3 - Parents won’t be able to help support their child

Overall Summary

Supportive	42.5%	Not Supportive	50%	Unsure	7.5%
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Workshops

Following the closure consultation period on the 16th July 2021, a workshop was held to analyse the responses received.

Next Steps

The Consultation Report will be presented to the Cabinet (previously known as the Executive Board) who may decide to publish the proposal as consulted upon with appropriate modifications, to abandon the proposal and retain the status quo or to significantly recast the proposal and reconsult.

Should the Cabinet decide to proceed to publish a Statutory Notice, this will be published in due course.

Summary of Observations received and Local Authority Responses

Point Number	Point Raised	Local Authority Response	Number of responses raising this point	% of responses raising this point
Supportive Comments Raised				
1.	<p><u>Support for the proposal</u></p> <p>Respondents noted that the proposal for Ysgol Y Felin was an excellent idea</p> <p>The proposal for Ysgol Y Felin will provide all pupils with the opportunity to become bilingual with the skills to be able to read, write and speak fluently in both Welsh and English languages. This will also help develop bilingualism within the community.</p> <p>Bilingualism offers many advantages to all pupils and learning through the Welsh language should not be seen as a disadvantage. All pupils should be provided with the opportunity to benefit from the many advantages of being bilingual.</p>	<p>It is the belief of the Local Authority, based upon international evidence and local experience, that children benefit from a truly bilingual education, which provides wider skills development, such as: cognitive ability, task understanding and flexibility, enhanced powers of concentration, etc. and that all children should receive these opportunities. Being bilingual or multilingual also broadens individuals' cultural experiences and can enhance career prospects. Evidence demonstrates that true bilingualism can only be achieved in the local context through children receiving a bilingual education.</p> <p>The Local Authority acknowledges that bilingualism will increasingly over time become an employment skill. For example, all public organisations in Wales are subject to new</p>	7	18%

		<p>statutory Welsh language standards and progressively over time will need to recruit increasing numbers of Welsh speakers to deliver services. Possessing Welsh language skills will increasingly over time give individuals a competitive advantage when seeking employment.</p> <p>The support was noted.</p>		
2.	<p><u>Support for staff</u> Respondents support the proposal but requests that the authority provide free Welsh lessons for non-Welsh speaking staff at the school</p>	<p>The schools have been identified as having the potential to move quickly along the language continuum. Rather than restrict opportunities for staff who do not speak the Welsh language, this proposal will help staff to improve their Welsh language skills. "Athrawon Bro" will provide training to staff members who are less confident in using their Welsh language skills and the Local Authority will also provide training support for any staff members wishing to develop their Welsh language skills. Support will also be given through the National Sabbatical courses as well as Welsh for Adults. Courses have been designed specifically to meet the needs of staff at all linguistic levels. Subject specific, classroom and incidental language courses are now available.</p> <p>The support was noted.</p>	1	3%

3.	<p><u>The pupil's education and later life opportunities</u></p> <p>Respondents believe that learning through the medium of Welsh will have a detrimental effect on the pupils' education and English language skills, and will disadvantage children from entering further or higher education and later in life when applying for job vacancies etc. It is believed that not all pupils will be able to reach their full potential by learning through the medium of Welsh. It must also be noted that the most common language used in day-to-day life, working life and the business world is English – therefore pupils' understanding of the English language must be secure to ensure maximum success within the real world.</p>	<p>It is the belief of the Local Authority, based upon international evidence and research and local experience, that children benefit from a truly bilingual education, which provides wider skills developments, such as cognitive ability, task understanding and flexibility, enhanced powers of concentration, etc. and that all children should receive these opportunities. Being bilingual or multilingual also broadens individuals' cultural experiences and can enhance career prospects. Evidence demonstrates that true bilingualism can only be achieved in the local context through children receiving a Welsh medium education.</p> <p>The Local Authority notes that on average, bilingual children achieve higher grades in the English language. It should also be noted that on average, about 80% of Carmarthenshire pupils who receive Welsh medium education receive an A*-C grades in both Welsh and English languages.</p> <p>Bilingualism will increasingly over time become an employment skill. For example, all public organisations in Wales are subject to new statutory Welsh language standards and progressively over time will need to recruit increasing numbers of Welsh speakers to deliver services. Possessing Welsh language skills will increasingly over time give individuals</p>	2	5%
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		<p>a competitive advantage when seeking employment.</p> <p>Schools prepare young people with the skills to attend universities around the world and the Welsh language should not be seen as a disadvantage. Rather than being an impediment, possessing skills in the Welsh language is seen by many universities, inside and outside Wales, as an additional skill, which can offer benefits when a young person is competing for a place to study.</p> <p>The support was noted.</p>		
4	<p><u>Increases the number of Welsh speakers and helps preserve the Welsh Language</u> Respondents support the proposal as it will increase the number of Welsh Speakers within the community and Carmarthenshire, in line with the Welsh Government's aim of reaching 1 million Welsh speakers by 2050. This is the right way forward for the school and will help to secure the return of Cymraeg to our communities.</p>	<p>There is a national priority in Wales, shared by Carmarthenshire County Council, to increase the number of people in our communities who are able to speak Welsh and use it in their everyday lives. Schools are regarded to be a critically important component in developing children so that they are fully bilingual by the time they leave primary school. This proposal seeks to provide all community members with the opportunity to develop their Welsh language skills.</p> <p>The support was noted.</p>	1	3%

5.	<p><u>The proposal adheres to Council and Welsh Government policies</u></p> <p>Respondents support the proposal as it is in line with the Local Authority's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan and Welsh Government's "Cymraeg 2050: A million Welsh Speakers" the proposal ensures that the Local Authority is adhering to Council and Welsh Government policies with the explicit aim of improving planning of the provision of education through the medium of Welsh, for improving the standards of that education and of the teaching of Welsh. The proposal ensures that the Local Authority meet their aim of increasing the provision of Welsh medium education in Carmarthenshire and ensure linguistic continuity from the nursery sector along the key stages to the secondary sector so that every pupil becomes fluent and confident in both Welsh and English languages.</p>	<p>The Local Authority is promoting the current proposal for primary education in the area as it firmly believes that this is in the best interests of the children's education. However, the Local Authority also has a responsibility to follow its own policies along with Welsh Government policies.</p> <p>Carmarthenshire County Council has a statutory responsibility under Part 4 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 to prepare a Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) for its area with the explicit aim of improving planning of the provision of education through the medium of Welsh, from improving the standards of that education and of the teaching of Welsh.</p> <p>In April 2014 the County Council formally adopted a comprehensive strategy for the development of the Welsh language in Carmarthenshire, endorsing the recommendations of a politically balanced group of elected members that had examined in depth the status of the Welsh language in the county in the wake of the 2011 census of the population. The strategy required action on 73 points, 21 of which applied to the education service. All relevant recommendations and actions from the strategy have been incorporated within Carmarthenshire's WESP.</p>	2	5%
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		<p>On 25th June 2018, the Local Authority launched Carmarthenshire’s most recent Welsh in Education Strategic Plan which seeks to achieve the following outcomes relevant to the proposal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outcome 1 - More seven-year-old children being taught through the medium of Welsh. • Outcome 2 - More learners continuing to improve their language skills on transfer from primary to secondary school. • Outcome 5 – More students who have higher language skills in Welsh. • Outcome 6 – Welsh medium provision for learner with additional learning needs (ALN); and • Outcome 7 – Workforce planning and continuing professional development. <p>The proposal is adhering to the recommendations as set out in Carmarthenshire’s WESP.</p> <p>The support was noted.</p>		
6.	<p><u>No Reason</u> Respondents did not provide a reason for their support.</p>	<p>The support was noted.</p>	7	18%

Concerns Raised				
1.	<p><u>Removal of Choice</u></p> <p>Respondents have concerns regarding the removal of choice of English medium education at the school and those parents should have the choice of which language their children should be educated through.</p>	<p>Carmarthenshire County Council has a statutory responsibility under Part 4 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 to prepare a Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) for its area with the explicit aim of improving planning of the provision of education through the medium of Welsh, for improving the standards of that education and of the teaching of Welsh.</p> <p>In April 2014 the County Council formally adopted a comprehensive strategy for the development of the Welsh language in Carmarthenshire, endorsing the recommendations of a politically balanced group of elected members that had examined in depth the status of the Welsh language in the county in the wake of the 2011 census of the population. The strategy required action on</p>	3	8%

		<p>73 points, 21 of which applied to the education service.</p> <p>The language strategy received cross-party support from elected members when it was adopted at a meeting of the full County Council. On 25th June 2018, the Local Authority launched Carmarthenshire’s most recent Welsh in Education Strategic Plan. The WESP has been subject to public consultation during its preparation and subsequent review. Its contents have, therefore, been subject to a test of public opinion in line with statutory requirements. It has also been approved by the Welsh Government in accordance with the requirements of the Act.</p> <p>The plan seeks to achieve the following outcomes relevant to the proposal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outcome 1 - More seven year old children being taught through the medium of Welsh. • Outcome 2 - More learners continuing to improve their language skills on transfer from primary to secondary school. • Outcome 5 – More students who have higher language skills in Welsh. • Outcome 6 – Welsh medium provision for learner with additional learning needs (ALN); and 		
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outcome 7 – Workforce planning and continuing professional development. <p>The proposal is adhering to the recommendations as set out in Carmarthenshire’s WESP.</p> <p>Choice is an important issue in the consideration of this proposal, with the most important aspect of choice being that which is available to children as they progress through their education and early lives. This proposal provides all pupils with the opportunity to become fully bilingual with the skills to read, write and speak in both Welsh and English languages by the time they leave primary school. The Local Authority’s proposal to develop bilingual children by the time they leave primary school gives children a choice as they move along the education sector. The most effective way of developing bilingual children in the primary sector is to immerse them in Welsh medium education. It is generally accepted in the education profession that studying Welsh as a second language does not develop truly bilingual young people and the schools has been identified as having the potential to move quickly along the language continuum.</p>		
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2.	<p><u>The Pupils' Education and Later Life Opportunities</u></p> <p>Respondents are concerned that learning through the medium of Welsh will have a detrimental effect on the pupils' education and English language skills, and will disadvantage children from entering further or higher education and later in life when applying for job vacancies etc. It is believed that not all pupils will be able to reach their full potential by learning through the medium of Welsh. It must also be noted that the most common language used in day-to-day life, working life and the business world is English – therefore pupils' understanding of the English language must be secure to ensure maximum success within the real world.</p>	<p>It is the belief of the Local Authority, based upon international evidence and research and local experience, that children benefit from a truly bilingual education, which provides wider skills developments, such as cognitive ability, task understanding and flexibility, enhanced powers of concentration, etc. and that all children should receive these opportunities. Being bilingual or multilingual also broadens individuals' cultural experiences and can enhance career prospects. Evidence demonstrates that true bilingualism can only be achieved in the local context through children receiving a Welsh medium education.</p> <p>The Local Authority notes that on average, bilingual children achieve higher grades in the English language. It should also be noted that on average, about 80% of Carmarthenshire pupils who receive Welsh medium education receive an A*-C grades in both Welsh and English languages.</p> <p>Bilingualism will increasingly over time become an employment skill. For example, all public organisations in Wales are subject to new statutory Welsh language standards and progressively over time will need to recruit increasing numbers of Welsh speakers to deliver services. Possessing Welsh language skills will increasingly over time give individuals</p>	1	3%
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		<p>a competitive advantage when seeking employment.</p> <p>Schools prepare young people with the skills to attend universities around the world and the Welsh language should not be seen as a disadvantage. Rather than being an impediment, possessing skills in the Welsh language is seen by many universities, inside and outside Wales, as an additional skill, which can offer benefits when a young person is competing for a place to study.</p>		
3.	<p><u>Status Quo is Successful</u></p> <p>Respondents noted that the current linguistic arrangements at the school are working well and there is no need for change.</p> <p>Respondents noted that the school should remain as dual stream as it gives the local community a choice in which language, they wish their children to be taught in and benefits the county as those who study through the medium of English are able to speak to more children who speak Welsh.</p>	<p>The Local Authority acknowledge that the school is performing well and is successful. This proposal seeks to improve even further the opportunity for children attending the school to secure continually improving outcomes. Carmarthenshire County Council has a statutory responsibility under Part 4 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 to prepare a Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) for its area with the explicit aim of improving planning of the provision of education through the medium of Welsh, from improving the standards of that education and of the teaching of Welsh.</p> <p>In April 2014 the County Council formally adopted a comprehensive strategy for the development of the Welsh language in</p>	6	15%

		<p>Carmarthenshire, endorsing the recommendations of a politically balanced group of elected members that had examined in depth the status of the Welsh language in the county in the wake of the 2011 census of the population. The strategy required action on 73 points, 21 of which applied to the education service.</p> <p>The language strategy received cross-party support from elected members when it was adopted at a meeting of the full County Council. On 25th June 2018, the Local Authority launched Carmarthenshire’s most recent Welsh in Education Strategic Plan. The WESP has been subject to public consultation during its preparation and subsequent review. Its contents have, therefore, been subject to a test of public opinion in line with statutory requirements. It has also been approved by the Welsh Government in accordance with the requirements of the Act.</p> <p>The plan seeks to achieve the following outcomes relevant to the proposal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outcome 1 - More seven year old children being taught through the medium of Welsh. • Outcome 2 - More learners continuing to improve their language skills on transfer from primary to secondary school. 		
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outcome 5 – More students who have higher language skills in Welsh. • Outcome 6 – Welsh medium provision for learner with additional learning needs (ALN); and • Outcome 7 – Workforce planning and continuing professional development. <p>The proposal is adhering to the recommendations as set out in Carmarthenshire’s WESP.</p> <p>It is important to note that the WESP requires all primary schools in Carmarthenshire, including English medium schools, to move along the language continuum, progressively expanding the proportion of education that is delivered through the medium of Welsh, with a view to ensuring that in time all children leaving primary school are fully bilingual.</p> <p>The pace at which schools will be able to expand bilingualism and Welsh medium education will depend upon local circumstances but the expectation for progress applies to all schools. The school has been identified as having the potential to move quickly along the language continuum.</p>		
4.	<p><u>Forcing the Welsh Language</u></p> <p>Respondents are concerned that the community should have a choice of whether</p>	<p>The proposal is consistent with national policy to expand Welsh medium education in order to</p>	2	5%

	<p>to learn through the medium of Welsh or English and the Welsh language should not be forced on anyone. It is important to learn the Welsh language and some pupils may want to use the language in their day-to-day life; however, not all pupils will want to receive their education through the medium of Welsh. Forcing the Welsh language will not create more Welsh speakers, in fact it will have the opposite effect.</p> <p>Implementing the proposal will force pupils to seek English medium education at other English medium schools which will deny pupils exposure to the Welsh language.</p>	<p>develop increasing numbers of fully bilingual young people and to enable more children to benefit from the advantages of bilingualism, gathered through international research.</p> <p>It is the Local Authority's intention that all current pupils remain at the school and continue to receive their education through the current language arrangements. The proposals will not therefore, affect current pupils. The school will continue to provide sufficient support for all current pupils through the medium in which they currently receive their education so there is, consequently, no need for any child to be moved from the school. Similarly, it is the Local Authority's desire that in the future local children attend their local school.</p> <p>It is important to remember that the teaching and the development of the English language still occurs in Welsh medium schools to the highest of standards, as a statutory part of the curriculum.</p> <p>International evidence, cited by the Welsh Government, confirms that the most effective way of developing bilingual children is to immerse them in the less common language whilst also developing their skills in the more common language. The Welsh Government also promotes those children who are from</p>		
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		non-Welsh speaking families that immersion in Welsh in school is particularly important in embedding the language.		
5.	<p><u>Additional Learning Needs (ALN)</u></p> <p>Respondents are concerned that children with special education needs, or additional learning needs may not be able to cope with learning through the medium of Welsh and may require English medium education. It is unfair to assume that all children with SEN/ALN will be able to learn through the medium of Welsh.</p>	<p>Carmarthenshire County Council's policy is that all its schools should be inclusive, with children with additional learning needs being educated in a mainstream setting alongside their peers wherever possible.</p> <p>For this proposal, the support provided to children currently in the schools with additional needs will continue through the medium in which they currently receive their education. Should the proposal be implemented, all future pupils will receive support which is individually tailored to their needs.</p> <p>All pupils with additional learning needs have specific individual plans based on their circumstances and a tailored support programme is provided according to need.</p> <p>Generally, an additional learning need is not a barrier to learning two languages. It is important to assess and monitor progress in each or all the languages that a child is using or learning, including sign and visually supported communication systems required for some pupils, particularly as the stronger developed language can be used to support and build learning through a lesser developed language medium. Staff are required to</p>	2	5%

		<p>differentiate the curriculum and make reasonable adjustments to the language of instruction and response to accommodate additional needs and ensure access to the curriculum and learning progress. At times it may be appropriate to target additional support in one language for a period to consolidate and accelerate learning, e.g., in literacy. There will be rare instances, however, where a child may be diagnosed with a condition that is not conducive to a fully bilingual education. In these circumstances a package of support is identified by professional practitioners and discussed with parents.</p> <p>Whilst the system is designed to meet the needs of learners through a universal and inclusive approach, for a small number of children with significant and complex additional needs this is not always possible and specialised provision offers a more appropriate learning setting.</p> <p>To make sure that the needs of all learners are met the school's system in Carmarthenshire includes a range of provision for children with additional needs. A specialised school or unit offer education to children with the most profound or complex needs where a mainstream setting is either not suitable for the children's needs or where parents prefer an alternative setting. Selected secondary and</p>		
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		<p>primary schools across the county include specialised units for children with particular needs, such as autism, sensory impairment or speech and language delay. The Department for Education and Children provides specific additional support in schools wherever practicable so that as many children as possible remain in their local school. Whilst the Council's preference is to meet the needs of all children in a mainstream setting wherever possible, this is not always practicable. It is this Council's experience that the vast majority of pupils with a wide range of additional learning needs and abilities are successful in our schools irrespective of the language of instruction, but the Council does acknowledge that there will be a very few children whose needs cannot be met other than through provision at a specialist unit.</p> <p>It should be noted that this proposal does not affect the current arrangements at the special Unit at Ysgol Y Felin.</p>		
6.	<p><u>Coping with the Welsh Language</u> Respondents are concerned that not all children will be able to cope with learning through the medium of Welsh, especially pupils from non-Welsh backgrounds. In addition, there are concerns that non-Welsh speaking parents may find it hard to support</p>	<p>The school will continue to provide support for current pupils through the medium of which they currently receive their education. Should the proposal be implemented, sufficient support will be provided to all new pupils in accordance with the needs of each individual. It is also important to note that staff are</p>	3	8%

	<p>and help their children with their schoolwork and homework should the school the proposal be implemented.</p>	<p>required to differentiate the curriculum and make reasonable adjustments when required to meet the needs of every pupil. “Athrawon Bro” who provide support to the schools around the county will also be supporting the school. Welsh Language Immersion Centres will also be available for those pupils who may need extra input linguistically.</p> <p>The schools currently offer a range of support to pupils and parents from non-Welsh speaking families and are committed to increasing provision as necessary to meet the future needs of individual families.</p> <p>Several organisations who attended the formal drop-in session during the consultation period have also offered their help and support to the community with the development of the Welsh language.</p>		
7.	<p><u>Parents won’t be able to help support their child</u></p> <p>Respondents are concerned that parents will no longer be able to play an active role in their child’s education.</p>	<p>Welsh schools set homework instruction in Welsh and in English so there will be no problem in understanding what children are being asked to do at home. Work set will be appropriate to the pupil’s age and ability level and therefore should be within reach. Developing increasingly as independent learners, parents may find that children are happy to progress without extra parental guidance as they get older.</p>	3	8%

		The school currently offers a range of support to pupils and parents from non-Welsh speaking families and are committed to increasing provision as necessary to meet the future needs of families.		
8.	<p><u>Transport and Travel to Other Schools</u></p> <p>Respondents believe that it is unfair to expect parents to transport pupils to other schools to receive English medium education. This will have time and financial impact on families.</p>	<p>As there will be no change for current pupils attending the schools, there is consequently, no need for any child to be moved from the school. Similarly, it is the Local Authority's desire that all future pupils will attend their local school.</p> <p>The Local Authority are not proposing alternative English medium schools as part of the proposal. Should parents elect to place their children in alternative schools they will do so in full consideration of all the factors that apply, including transport implications. If any parents elect to place their children in alternative schools that are neither the designated nor nearest school, these parents will assume full responsibility for transporting their children to school.</p>	1	3%
9.	<p><u>Transfer to English Medium schools</u></p> <p>Respondents believe that it is unfair for pupils who desire/require an English medium education to have to transfer to another school outside of their catchment. In</p>	<p>It is the Local Authority's intention that all current pupils remain at the school and continue to receive their education through the current language arrangements. The proposals will not therefore, affect current pupils. The</p>	2	5%

	<p>addition, it is felt that pupils who struggle with the Welsh language will also have to transfer to another school.</p>	<p>school will continue to provide sufficient support for all current pupils through the medium in which they currently receive their education so there is, consequently, no need for any child to be moved from the school. Similarly, it is the Local Authority's desire that in the future local children attend their local school. Sufficient support will be provided for all future pupils in accordance with each individual's needs.</p> <p>Please see point 6 which refers to the help and support which is currently and will continue to be provided to all pupils and parents with regards to the Welsh language.</p> <p>Please see point 5 which refers to pupils with additional learning needs, special educational needs and the help and support which is and will continue to be provided to these pupils.</p>		
10.	<p><u>Support for staff</u> Respondents support the proposal but requests that the authority provide free Welsh lessons for non-Welsh speaking staff at the school</p>	<p>The schools have been identified as having the potential to move quickly along the language continuum. Rather than restrict opportunities for staff who do not speak the Welsh language, this proposal will help staff to improve their Welsh language skills. "Athrawon Bro" will provide training to staff members who are less confident in using their Welsh language skills and the Local Authority will also provide</p>	1	3%

		<p>training support for any staff members wishing to develop their Welsh language skills. Support will also be given through the National Sabbatical courses as well as Welsh for Adults. Courses have been designed specifically to meet the needs of staff at all linguistic levels. Subject specific, classroom and incidental language courses are now available.</p> <p>The support was noted.</p>		
11.	<p><u>No Reason</u> Some respondents did not provide a reason for their objection.</p>		6	15%
Unsure				
1.	<p><u>Removal of Choice</u> Respondents have concerns regarding the removal of choice of English medium education at the school and those parents should have the choice of which language their children should be educated through.</p>	<p>Carmarthenshire County Council has a statutory responsibility under Part 4 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 to prepare a Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) for its area with the explicit aim of improving planning of the provision of education through the medium of Welsh, for improving the standards of that education and of the teaching of Welsh.</p>	1	2.5%

		<p>In April 2014 the County Council formally adopted a comprehensive strategy for the development of the Welsh language in Carmarthenshire, endorsing the recommendations of a politically balanced group of elected members that had examined in depth the status of the Welsh language in the county in the wake of the 2011 census of the population. The strategy required action on 73 points, 21 of which applied to the education service.</p> <p>The language strategy received cross-party support from elected members when it was adopted at a meeting of the full County Council. On 25th June 2018, the Local Authority launched Carmarthenshire's most recent Welsh in Education Strategic Plan. The WESP has been subject to public consultation during its preparation and subsequent review. Its contents have, therefore, been subject to a test of public opinion in line with statutory requirements. It has also been approved by the Welsh Government in accordance with the requirements of the Act.</p> <p>The plan seeks to achieve the following outcomes relevant to the proposal:</p>		
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outcome 1 - More seven year old children being taught through the medium of Welsh. • Outcome 2 - More learners continuing to improve their language skills on transfer from primary to secondary school. • Outcome 5 – More students who have higher language skills in Welsh. • Outcome 6 – Welsh medium provision for learner with additional learning needs (ALN); and • Outcome 7 – Workforce planning and continuing professional development. <p>The proposal is adhering to the recommendations as set out in Carmarthenshire’s WESP.</p> <p>Choice is an important issue in the consideration of this proposal, with the most important aspect of choice being that which is available to children as they progress through their education and early lives. This proposal provides all pupils with the opportunity to become fully bilingual with the skills to read, write and speak in both Welsh and English languages by the time they leave primary school. The Local Authority’s proposal to develop bilingual children by the time they leave primary school gives children a choice as they move along the education sector. The most effective way of developing bilingual</p>		
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		<p>children in the primary sector is to immerse them in Welsh medium education. It is generally accepted in the education profession that studying Welsh as a second language does not develop truly bilingual young people and the schools has been identified as having the potential to move quickly along the language continuum.</p>		
2.	<p><u>Additional Learning Needs (ALN)</u> Respondents are unsure about the proposal and are concerned what effect this will have on children with learning difficulties and speech delays or autism that attend Ysgol Y Felin. The school is known and well run for children with learning difficulties</p>	<p>Carmarthenshire County Council's policy is that all its schools should be inclusive, with children with additional learning needs being educated in a mainstream setting alongside their peers wherever possible.</p> <p>For this proposal, the support provided to children currently in the schools with additional needs will continue through the medium in which they currently receive their education. Should the proposal be implemented, all future pupils will receive support which is individually tailored to their needs.</p> <p>All pupils with additional learning needs have specific individual plans based on their circumstances and a tailored support programme is provided according to need. Generally, an additional learning need is not a barrier to learning two languages. It is important to assess and monitor progress in each or all the languages that a child is using or learning, including sign and visually</p>	1	2.5%

		<p>supported communication systems required for some pupils, particularly as the stronger developed language can be used to support and build learning through a lesser developed language medium. Staff are required to differentiate the curriculum and make reasonable adjustments to the language of instruction and response to accommodate additional needs and ensure access to the curriculum and learning progress. At times it may be appropriate to target additional support in one language for a period to consolidate and accelerate learning, e.g., in literacy. There will be rare instances, however, where a child may be diagnosed with a condition that is not conducive to a fully bilingual education. In these circumstances a package of support is identified by professional practitioners and discussed with parents.</p> <p>Whilst the system is designed to meet the needs of learners through a universal and inclusive approach, for a small number of children with significant and complex additional needs this is not always possible and specialised provision offers a more appropriate learning setting.</p> <p>To make sure that the needs of all learners are met the school's system in Carmarthenshire includes a range of provision for children with additional needs. A specialised school or unit</p>		
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		<p>offer education to children with the most profound or complex needs where a mainstream setting is either not suitable for the children's needs or where parents prefer an alternative setting. Selected secondary and primary schools across the county include specialised units for children with particular needs, such as autism, sensory impairment or speech and language delay. The Department for Education and Children provides specific additional support in schools wherever practicable so that as many children as possible remain in their local school. Whilst the Council's preference is to meet the needs of all children in a mainstream setting wherever possible, this is not always practicable. It is this Council's experience that the vast majority of pupils with a wide range of additional learning needs and abilities are successful in our schools irrespective of the language of instruction, but the Council does acknowledge that there will be a very few children whose needs cannot be met other than through provision at a specialist unit.</p> <p>It should be noted that this proposal does not affect the current arrangements at the special Unit at Ysgol Y Felin.</p>		
3.	<u>Parents won't be able to help support their child</u>	Welsh schools set homework instruction in Welsh and in English so there will be no	1	2.5%

	<p>Respondents are concerned that parents will no longer be able to play an active role in their child's education.</p>	<p>problem in understanding what children are being asked to do at home. Work set will be appropriate to the pupil's age and ability level and therefore should be within reach. Developing increasingly as independent learners, parents may find that children are happy to progress without extra parental guidance as they get older.</p> <p>The school currently offers a range of support to pupils and parents from non-Welsh speaking families and are committed to increasing provision as necessary to meet the future needs of families.</p>		
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Estyn's Observations regarding the Proposal

Estyn response to the proposal by Carmarthenshire County Council's consultation on changing the nature of provision in the Foundation Phase from dual stream to Welsh medium at Ysgol Y Felin.

This report has been prepared by Her Majesty's Inspectors of Education and Training in Wales.

Under the terms of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 and its associated Code, proposers are required to send consultation documents to Estyn. However, Estyn is not a body which is required to act in accordance with the Code and the Act places no statutory requirements on Estyn in respect of school organisation matters. Therefore, as a body being consulted, Estyn will provide their opinion only on the overall merits of school organisation proposals.

Estyn has considered the educational aspects of the proposal and has produced the following response to the information provided by the proposer and other additional information such as data from Welsh Government and the views of the Regional Consortia, which deliver school improvement services to the schools within the proposal.

Summary/ Conclusion

Overall, the proposal is likely to maintain or improve the standard of education provision in the area.

Description and benefits

Carmarthenshire local authority propose to change the nature of the foundation phase provision at Ysgol Y Felin, in Felinfoel, Llanelli. The school is a dual stream primary school providing education to pupils between the ages of 4 and 11 years old. It provides education through the medium of Welsh and English across two language streams. Parents currently choose a language stream for their children from Reception onwards. At the time of the proposal, there are four Welsh medium classes and five English medium classes at the school. The pupils in the English classes are taught Welsh as a second language whilst the Welsh classes are taught through the medium of Welsh.

Carmarthenshire local authority propose that from 1 September 2022 the nature of the foundation phase provision at Ysgol Y Felin will change to Welsh medium education, rather than a dual stream option. The authority propose that this will only affect pupils starting in the foundation phase at the school from September 2022 onwards and that current pupils attending the school will be unaffected. Overall, the authority has set out an appropriate rationale for the proposal and have generally considered the expected benefits and disadvantages in comparison to the status quo. The authority has specifically considered the extent to which the proposal would support the targets in their approved Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) and how the proposal would expand Welsh language provision. It has also appropriately included a community impact assessment and a Welsh impact assessment as part

of the consultation document. However, the proposer does not identify how it will address risks it identifies, such as the potential loss of pupils to other schools.

The proposal does not identify or address well enough the issue of parents within the school's catchment who may choose to send their child to another school if the proposal goes ahead. For example, it does not identify the distance to other local schools, how pupils' travel time to school may be affected or how the Council's policy regarding home to school transport provision will apply.

The proposal seems to address the growing call for Welsh medium provision at the foundation phase within the school. The proposer has outlined how in recent years the number of pupils attending the English stream within the foundation phase at Ysgol Y Felin has been decreasing and those attending the Welsh stream foundation phase has increased. However, the local authority offers no information on pupil numbers at the school beyond 2020 to show whether these trends are likely to continue.

The local authority has sensibly stated that it will review the language provision within key stage 2 in the future in order to address the potential increased demand for places. It is important the authority continue to monitor the demand for Welsh and English medium places within the school so that the provision continues to meet the demand.

The consultation document provides useful guidance to parents and others about the benefits of Welsh medium education and outlines appropriately how the change reflects the local authority's ambitions within its Welsh in Education Strategic Plan.

Educational aspects of the proposal

The consultation document provides a commentary about the quality of the outcomes, provision and leadership and management at the school, mostly based on Estyn's inspection report from September 2016. Although there are a few more recent comments in the text, it is overly reliant on that provided in the inspection report five years ago. In addition, the consultation document lacks detail on how the proposal would strengthen or change the effectiveness of provision or standards within the school. For example, although the consultation document refers to the benefits of the 'Early Welsh Medium Immersive Provision' it does not provide enough detail about the effect this might have at this particular school. In addition, the document lacks enough information on how providing learning predominately through the medium of Welsh at the foundation phase would improve the provision and learning for pupils at this school.

The consultation document refers to a special educational needs (SEN) centre comprising of two foundation phase assessment and observation classes, a language unit and a key stage 2 class for pupils with severe learning difficulties (SLD Centre). The Centre is a purpose-built unit attached to the school building that houses the Language Unit class and the Observation and Assessment classes. However, the consultation document does not explicitly outline if the language provision for these pupils will change, and if so, what impact this may have on pupils. The authority has considered carefully how to minimise the disruption to learners and will implement the change for pupils starting at the foundation phase from September 2022. Pupils currently in the foundation phase will be unaffected.

Local Authority Response to Estyn's Observations

As can be seen from Estyn's observations they are of the opinion that the proposal is likely to at least maintain the current standard of education and provision in the area. Their observations include supporting statements as noted below.

Statements of support for this proposal by Estyn

Overall, the authority has set out an appropriate rationale for the proposal and have generally considered the expected benefits and disadvantages in comparison to the status quo. The authority has specifically considered the extent to which the proposal would support the targets in their approved Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) and how the proposal would expand Welsh language provision. It has also appropriately included a community impact assessment and a Welsh impact assessment as part of the consultation document.

The local authority has sensibly stated that it will review the language provision within key stage 2 in the future in order to address the potential increased demand for places.

The consultation document provides useful guidance to parents and others about the benefits of Welsh medium education and outlines appropriately how the change reflects the local authority's ambitions within its Welsh in Education Strategic Plan.

Issues raised by Estyn and LA Response

1. *The proposer does not identify how it will address risks it identifies, such as the potential loss of pupils to other schools.*

LA Response

It is the Local Authority's intention that all current pupils remain at the school and continue to receive their education through the current language arrangements. The proposals will not therefore, affect current pupils. The school will continue to provide sufficient support for all current pupils through the medium in which they currently receive their education so there is, consequently, no need for any child to be moved from the school. Similarly, it is the Local Authority's desire that in the future local children attend their local school. Sufficient support will be provided for all future pupils in accordance with each individual's needs.

Please see **point 6, page 20 above** which refers to the help and support which is currently and will continue to be provided to all pupils and parents with regards to the Welsh language.

Please see **point 5, page 17 above** which refers to pupils with additional learning needs, special educational needs and the help and support which is and will continue to be provided to these pupils.

2. The proposal does not identify or address well enough the issue of parents within the school's catchment who may choose to send their child to another school if the proposal goes ahead. For example, it does not identify the distance to other local schools, how pupils' travel time to school may be affected or how the Council's policy regarding home to school transport provision will apply.

LA Response

The movement of pupils between school catchment areas is a common circumstance across the country in both urban and rural areas. Children living within catchment areas receive preference to attend their catchment schools before children living outside the catchment area. However, parents can state a preference for a school, which is not the designated catchment area school, and they do this for several reasons, e.g., access to extended family for working parents, ease of transporting children, proximity of the home to schools, reputation, provision, faith character, etc. When parents elect to place their children in a particular school, they will do so in full consideration of all the factors that apply, including the nature of provision.

It is the Local Authority's intention that all current pupils remain at the school and continue to receive their education through the current language arrangements. The proposals will not therefore, affect current pupils at the school. Ysgol Y Felin will continue to provide sufficient support for all current pupils through the medium in which they currently receive their education so there is, consequently, no need for any child to be moved from the school. Similarly, it is the Local Authority's desire that in the future local children attend their local school.

The Local Authority are not proposing alternative English medium schools as part of the proposal. Should parents elect to place their children in alternative schools they will do so in full consideration of all the factors that apply, including transport implications. If any parents elect to place their children in alternative schools that are neither the designated nor nearest school, these parents will assume full responsibility for transporting their children to school.

3. The local authority offers no information on pupil numbers at the school beyond 2020 to show whether these trends are likely to continue.

LA Response

Projections are based on the PLASC numbers which we receive from all our schools in January of each year. Unfortunately, this past year due to Covid, PLASC day was delayed until April. This information is used for calculating the averages for each school to obtain the projected figures for the next 5 years. The projected figures do not provide us with a linguistic split.

PUPIL PROJECTIONS based on January 2020 data (Excluding all Nursery Pupils)

School	ACTUAL Pupil Total (Head Count) Jan 20	Projected Pupil Total (Head Count) Jan 21	Projected Pupil Total (Head Count) Jan 22	Projected Pupil Total (Head Count) Jan 23	Projected Pupil Total (Head Count) Jan 24	Projected Pupil Total (Head Count) Jan 25
Ysgol Y Felin	222	218	220	217	217	215

4. *The consultation document lacks detail on how the proposal would strengthen or change the effectiveness of provision or standards within the school. For example, although the consultation document refers to the benefits of the ‘Early Welsh Medium Immersive Provision’ it does not provide enough detail about the effect this might have at this particular school. In addition, the document lacks enough information on how providing learning predominately through the medium of Welsh at the foundation phase would improve the provision and learning for pupils at this school.*

LA Response

This proposal seeks to improve further the opportunity for children attending the school to secure continually improving outcomes. Carmarthenshire County Council has a statutory responsibility under Part 4 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 to prepare a Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) for its area with the explicit aim of improving planning of the provision of education through the medium of Welsh. This also falls in line with Welsh Government outcomes as well as the WG target for Carmarthenshire.

The school has been identified as having the potential to move quickly along the language continuum from 4 years of age building upon the education in the Cylch. Thus, ensuring that all Foundation Phase children in the future, become bilingual by the age of 7.

The Curriculum Bill also lays the foundation for the new curriculum in that Welsh is a mandated element of a school curriculum or setting for children or pupils from 3 years and English will be mandated from 7 years

The question of the advantages both educationally and cognitively of immersion teaching are not in question. In the words of Prof. Colin Baker

“Language among young children is caught rather than taught. The process is not learning but acquisition”

The Cymraeg 2050 strategy also states clearly that full Welsh immersion education is the most reliable way to create individuals with the skills and confidence to use the language in their daily lives.

Our vision is to enable all learners to develop their Welsh language skills and to use the language confidently in everyday life. Immersion teaching in the early years makes this possible. Pupils within Ysgol y Felin will then have the opportunity to continue their education through the medium of Welsh or English to the end of KS2.

5. *The consultation document does not explicitly outline if the language provision for these pupils will change, and if so, what impact this may have on SEN pupils.*

LA Response

As noted on **point 5, page 20** above this proposal does not affect the current arrangements at the Special Unit at Ysgol Y Felin.

Carmarthenshire County Council's policy is that all its schools should be inclusive, with children with additional learning needs being educated in a mainstream setting alongside their peers wherever possible.

For this proposal, the support provided to children currently in the schools with additional needs will continue through the medium in which they currently receive their education. Should the proposal be implemented, all future pupils will receive support which is individually tailored to their needs.

All pupils with additional learning needs have specific individual plans based on their circumstances and a tailored support programme is provided according to need. Generally, an additional learning need is not a barrier to learning two languages. It is important to assess and monitor progress in each or all the languages that a child is using or learning, including sign and visually supported communication systems required for some pupils, particularly as the stronger developed language can be used to support and build learning through a lesser developed language medium. Staff are required to differentiate the curriculum and make reasonable adjustments to the language of instruction and response to accommodate additional needs and ensure access to the curriculum and learning progress. At times it may be appropriate to target additional support in one language for a period to consolidate and accelerate learning, e.g., in literacy. There will be rare instances, however, where a child may be diagnosed with a condition that is not conducive to a fully bilingual education. In these circumstances a package of support is identified by professional practitioners and discussed with parents.

Whilst the system is designed to meet the needs of learners through a universal and inclusive approach, for a small number of children with significant and complex additional needs this is not always possible and specialised provision offers a more appropriate learning setting.

To make sure that the needs of all learners are met the school's system in Carmarthenshire includes a range of provision for children with additional needs. A specialised school or unit offer education to children with the most profound or complex needs where a mainstream setting is either not suitable for the children's needs or where parents prefer an alternative setting. Selected secondary and primary schools across the county include specialised units for children with needs, such as autism, sensory impairment or speech and language delay. The Department

for Education and Children provides specific additional support in schools wherever practicable so that as many children as possible remain in their local school. Whilst the Council's preference is to meet the needs of all children in a mainstream setting wherever possible, this is not always practicable.

It is this Council's experience that most pupils with a wide range of additional learning needs and abilities are successful in our schools irrespective of the language of instruction, but the Council does acknowledge that there will be a very few children whose needs cannot be met other than through provision at a specialist unit.

Consultation with the Pupils

Children and Young People Consultation Document

A Children and Young People' version of the Consultation Document was provided to the school to distribute to all pupils

Pupil Consultation

School: Ysgol Y Felin

Date: 18/05/21

Consultation undertaken by: Educational Support Advisor (ESA)

Interviewed: 14 pupils (Conducted online due to Coronavirus)

Observations noted during the Pupil Consultation Event:

1. Do you know there could be changes to your school?

Yes: 14	No: 0
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2. Is there anything you are looking forward/ worried about?

Looking forward	Worried
All pupils agreed that this change is for the better and welcomed the change	Concern regarding the support for children at home with their Welsh – for non-Welsh speaking families
Being able to speak two languages at a young age makes it easier to learn other languages e.g., when you attend secondary school. (<i>'My sister now speaks French and Spanish too'</i>) – becoming multilingual is easier if you're bilingual	What happened in history might happen again – i.e., the Welsh Not. However, another pupil replied, noting

Everyone gets the chance to learn Welsh

A reference to the new Curriculum was noted and how this consultation supports the 'Cynefin' and belonging concept. (*This is good timing*)

Being able to speak Welsh gets you a better job

Being able to speak Welsh gets you a job easier in Wales. It is important in the world of work

A long time ago children were not allowed to speak Welsh that's why not many speak Welsh now. We don't want that to happen again

Pupils currently in the 'Ffrwd Gymraeg' noted that they were very happy

It is a good opportunity to get all 3-year-olds to speak Welsh. Then they will always be able to speak Welsh.

Welsh stream pupils noted how lucky they have been to have attended the Welsh stream as they are now bilingual and very happy.

Very happy that all pupils will have the opportunity to speak Welsh

that it won't happen again because too many can speak Welsh now

3. What would you like to keep the same?

Keep the same classes i.e., keep children together in their current classes

Teachers to stay the same

Continue to reward the children that try their best to speak Welsh

All school posters to be bilingual

1. What would you like to be different?

- No responses to note

Further comments:

- Polish students can help teach Polish to pupils
- Concerned for the children that can't speak Welsh

Alternative Options

During the formal consultation period stakeholders were provided with the opportunity to submit alternative options for consideration. The only alternative options received were in relation to the Status Quo as documented within the consultation document.