

A new approach to language learning in Wales. The importance of celebrating and underlining the strength of home languages for many of our multilingual pupils.

Pupils in Wales already have the opportunity of a bilingual foundation at nursery and primary level. Close connections at transition between primary and secondary language departments and HoDs is crucial so that these foundations are built upon, valued and utilised to ensure continued progress. The aim is for pupils to use their language skills (multi-, pluri- and translanguaging) to develop as good linguists, developing a resilient, methodical and strategic approach based on their language, literacy and communication skills, coupled with a 'have a go' confidence and of course enjoyment and a positive attitude towards language learning. Welsh and English are core subjects in Wales.

In the 'New Curriculum for Wales' being introduced in 2022, the Welsh Government shows full support for multilingualism by unifying International Languages, Welsh and English into one curriculum area, LLC (Languages, Literacy and Communication). This creates a language learning pathway from Primary to Secondary, ensuring that immersion is key to student development in language. One of the four key purposes of the new curriculum is to enable learners to develop as "ethical, informed citizens of Wales and the world", which supports the ethos of language learning. This is a huge step forward in underlining the connections between languages and recognising how multilingual we are as Welsh citizens, and builds on the 'Global Futures' Initiative to raise the profile of languages and to support schools in being innovative, collaborative and creative.

However, we cannot ignore the fact that despite these aspirations language uptake in Wales is still very low. Many schools only offer one International Language and, as it is a non-compulsory subject, many schools will be put under pressure to consider the financial viability of small group sizes.

The breadth of languages offered and their accessibility is key to an inclusive education fully embracing the vision of the LLC. Creative timetabling and multilingual practices should create a new opportunity for schools as three different subjects work as one, focusing on connections, multilingual patterns and identity in language. Collaboration with the University and Primary sectors will also be central to the development of these approaches and methodology. Transition between Primary and Secondary is the key to sustaining the progression of students through opportunities to experience multiple languages and continue the processes of immersion, and by recognising links between languages and an inquiring thought technique.

We are looking forward with great passion and excitement to developing this curriculum which supports multilingualism. To ensure its success, the support of all sectors embracing this new opportunity is vital.

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