

This document provides a translation of correspondence received

Dear Jeremy Miles,

Thank you for meeting with us recently to discuss the Welsh Language Education Bill, and how you and Lynne Neagle will be sharing your responsibilities in the new Cabinet, along with other issues.

As we mentioned during the meeting, we are pleased and appreciate the fact that you remain responsible for steering the Welsh Language Education Bill, which will ensure consistency, moving forward, and will mean that your experience, expertise and enthusiasm will be retained. We also appreciate the commitment that you made during the meeting to introducing the Welsh Language Education Bill before the Senedd's summer recess in July this year.

However, we are concerned about your comment that the target of ensuring that 50 per cent of Welsh children are in Welsh-medium education by 2050 will not be a statutory target, and that it will only be a target for the "most ambitious trajectory".

You will understand our concern that this target – like the Government's previous targets – will be missed if there is no legal obligation on the Welsh Government, over the next 25 years, to fund and plan the progress that must be seen by 2050.

If the Government really wants *"all pupils in Wales to become confident Welsh speakers through the statutory education system"*, as is stated on the front page of the White Paper on the Welsh Language Education Bill, conditions must be created and plans must be made for a significant increase in the number of children receiving Welsh-medium education, through statutory targets at a national and local authority level. We will continue to press for these things during scrutiny of the Bill.

During the meeting, we agreed that a single continuum is the ideal vehicle for learning and assessing the Welsh language in our schools, with the attainment of young people in Wales subject to a unified qualification. This

also reflects public opinion. According to the data in the consultation report on the White Paper, 93 per cent of organisations and 59 per cent of individuals are in favour of creating a single continuum. Contrary to the suggestion made during the meeting, none of the responses that were opposed to a single continuum cited the workforce as a reason for not introducing a single learning and assessment continuum for GCSE Welsh, and none of the responses were opposed to the principle of creating a single continuum. Such strong support for the establishment of a single continuum suggests that there is a need to move immediately to ensure a single learning and assessment continuum, and equal opportunity for all pupils in Wales to learn the Welsh language. We welcome the suggestion that you made during the meeting that action should be taken in respect of this recommendation.

However, contrary to what was said at the meeting, we feel that it would be possible to achieve this ideal by reforming the curriculum in 2027, rather than waiting until 2032. Through the establishment of a working group of teachers and experts over the next six to nine months, it would be possible to introduce plans for the creation of a single continuum early in 2025. It would be possible to undertake a consultation and pilot the recommendations in 2025–26, so that they could be fully implemented in 2027. Sioned Davies' 2013 report, 'One Language for All' ('Un Iaith i Bawb'), concluded that this would be academically possible, following full consultation with teachers, parents, young people and experts:

"Consideration should be given to developing a dual award whereby pupils in English-medium schools would receive an additional grade to show what comparative grade they would have achieved in the Welsh (first language) examination. This would not only assist employers to understand the difference in Welsh-language skill levels, but could also support the Welsh Government aim to ensure that learners who have received Welsh-medium education in primary schools continue to progress on transfer to secondary school."

One Language for All: Review of Welsh second language at Key Stages 3 and 4 (Welsh Government: 2013), p. 29.

This is, therefore, a practical timetable that could be implemented if the will is there. Continuing with a system in which there is no overlap between the

two GCSE Welsh assessments, as is the case at present, is entirely unacceptable.

The short-term goal is a swift public statement regarding the timetable and work plan for creating a single continuum and a single assessment pathway, so as to raise expectations and to ensure that every single pupil can have an opportunity to attain the highest standards. You mentioned during the meeting that you would contact Qualifications Wales and press the body for a statement regarding a public timetable for starting the planning work on that. We hope for – indeed, we expect – a swift announcement on that. According to our research, 142,351 children have received a GCSE Welsh Second Language grade since the publication of Sioned Davies's report in 2013. As a result, they have been deprived of the opportunity to learn Welsh confidently. Further delays would mean that more and more children would lose their Welsh skills through the education system.

We look forward to hearing your response, and we hope that we can meet again in the future.

We will be sending a copy of this letter to the Children, Young People and Education Committee.

Sincerely

Josef Gnagbo, National Chair, Cymdeithas yr Iaith

Toni Schiavone, Chair, Cymdeithas yr Iaith Education Group

Mabli Siriol, Vice-chair, Cymdeithas yr Iaith Education Group