

Kirsty Williams AC/AM  
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Addysg  
Cabinet Secretary for Education



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref: P-05-760  
Ein cyf/Our ref: KW/00696/17

Mike Hedges AM  
Chair - Petitions Committee  
National Assembly for Wales  
Ty Hywel  
Cardiff Bay  
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[government.committee.business@wales.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:government.committee.business@wales.gsi.gov.uk)

9 May 2017

Dear Mike

I am replying to your letter of 26 April regarding a petition received by the Petitions Committee, which is seeking support to ask the Welsh Government to stop the compulsory study of the Welsh Language at Key Stage 4.

Our education system has contained requirements in terms of learners' study at Key Stage 4 for some time. For example, Welsh was phased in as a compulsory subject for pupils aged 5–14 from 1990, and has been compulsory at ages 14-16 for over 17 years. This is established Welsh Government policy and I have no plans to change this position.

Schools must continue to ensure continuity and progression in learning and that all learners have access to the whole programme of study for whichever course they are studying. However, there is no Welsh Government requirement that learners be entered for a particular qualification, rather an expectation that schools will enter learners for qualifications appropriate to the course being followed at the end of Key Stage 4. It is a matter for schools to determine which qualifications they make available to their learners, provided they are approved for use in Wales.

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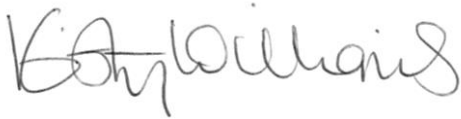
Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

There are clear benefits to learners in developing the ability to use the Welsh language, not least through the growth in demand for Welsh language skills by employers. Our education system needs to ensure our young people are equipped with the skills they need to take up such opportunities.

The process of education reform on which we are embarked will ensure young people have a better, more meaningful experience of the language. That is my priority going forward.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Kirsty Williams". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'K'.

**Kirsty Williams AC/AM**

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Cabinet Secretary for Education