# Gwynedd councillors debate shifting to Welsh as primary language in schools



Councillors in Gwynedd, North Wales, convened on Thursday, April 10, to discuss a pivotal proposal regarding the future of education in the area. The council's education and economy scrutiny committee reviewed a Draft Revised Education Language Policy, which aims to establish Welsh as the primary language of instruction in county-run schools. This initiative is part of a broader strategy aligned with the Welsh Government's goal of creating a million Welsh speakers by 2050.

Some councillors expressed disappointment with the proposal, arguing that it “doesn't go far enough,” while others viewed it as a “positive step” towards safeguarding the Welsh language. This marks the first significant change to Gwynedd's Welsh language education policy in over four decades.

The initial framework suggests that schools teach 70% of subjects in English, with a plan for this to be gradually adjusted to favour Welsh. Councillor Jones acknowledged the challenges that schools might face in implementing these changes. He stated, “This is an ambition we want them to achieve. We are more than prepared to support schools to meet that ambition. We don't want our children to leave schools without English; we need bilingualism.”

The proposed plan aims not only to enhance Welsh language proficiency among children but also to foster bilingual or multilingual skills within the county’s education system. The council believes that by monitoring and supporting schools, they can ensure an increase in Welsh language instruction over time.

The debate around the proposal has elicited diverse reactions from local residents and online commentators. One commenter, Jnrm, recalled the impact of similar policies in the 1950s and 1960s, noting that many parents at the time ceased using Welsh at home out of concern that their children would be disadvantaged in their educational pursuits in England.

Conversely, some community members expressed concern about the potential negative consequences of implementing such a policy amid the global nature of the English language. Topical23 raised the issue of teacher recruitment, suggesting that making Welsh instruction mandatory could result in lower education standards or drive families to seek education options in surrounding areas, specifically mentioning Conwy.

Other comments highlighted the value of bilingualism while cautioning against prioritising Welsh at the expense of other languages. For instance, Iagollewjones, while supportive of Welsh, questioned the necessity of learning Welsh over other languages such as Spanish or English.

Supporters of the proposal emphasised the importance of cultural identity and heritage in the context of Welsh education. Llinos Haf Pritchard articulated that supporting the Welsh language and culture is fundamental to maintaining a sense of belonging and community. Laura Mills, a new resident of Anglesey, shared positive experiences of her children learning Welsh, asserting, “Being bilingual as a child has so many benefits.”

As the council prepares to move forward with the plan, the discussions reflect a community wrestling with the balance between preserving local culture and ensuring that children are equipped for a globalised world. The diverging opinions reveal a broader debate on education, language, and identity within Gwynedd and beyond.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/en/Council/Strategies-and-policies/Education/Welsh-education-language-policy.aspx> - This URL provides background information on Gwynedd's current Welsh education language policy, which emphasizes bilingualism and special needs support, aligning with the broader theme of enhancing Welsh language instruction in schools.
* <https://nation.cymru/news/first-steps-taken-towards-new-welsh-language-policy-in-schools/> - This article supports the claim of Gwynedd's council proposing a new policy to make Welsh the primary language of instruction in schools, with specific details on phasing out English medium streams and implementing immersion programs for new Welsh speakers.
* <https://www.gov.wales/cymraeg-2050-welsh-language-strategy-action-plan-2025-2026> - This URL provides context on the Welsh Government's goal of achieving a million Welsh speakers by 2050, aligning with Gwynedd's strategy to increase Welsh language instruction in schools as part of this broader national objective.
* <https://democracy.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/documents/s44375/> - This document outlines the draft revised education language policy proposed by Gwynedd's council, specifically mentioning the percentage of teaching time to be conducted in Welsh and addressing concerns about bilingualism and educational standards.
* <https://www.noahwire.com> - Although not directly providing corroborative information, this source is mentioned as the original article source. Direct corroboration from this URL is not available, but it references the initial discussion around Gwynedd's proposed language policy.