



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

[www.cymru.gov.uk](http://www.cymru.gov.uk)

# Promoting linguistic progression between Key Stages 2 and 3



## Guidance

Guidance document no: 065/2012

Date of issue: February 2012

# Promoting linguistic progression between Key Stages 2 and 3

- Audience** Headteachers and governing bodies of Welsh-medium and bilingual maintained schools; local authorities; Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA); Cymdeithas Ysgolion dros Addysg Gymraeg (CYDAG).
- Overview** This document sets out the key messages on supporting linguistic progression between Key Stages 2 and 3.
- Further information** Enquiries about this document should be directed to:  
Welsh in Education Unit  
Department for Education and Skills  
Welsh Government  
Tŷ'r Afon  
Bedwas Road  
Bedwas  
Caerphilly  
CF83 8WT  
  
Tel: 01443 663695  
Fax: 01443 663653  
e-mail: [welsh.education@wales.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:welsh.education@wales.gsi.gov.uk)
- Additional copies** Further copies are available by contacting the Welsh in Education Unit at the above address. This document is also available on the Welsh Government's website at [www.wales.gov.uk/educationandskills](http://www.wales.gov.uk/educationandskills)
- Related documents** *Welsh-medium Education Strategy* (Welsh Assembly Government, 2010)



## Contents

<b>Background</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Core messages for promoting linguistic progression</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>The key factors</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Creating effective practice</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Promoting cooperation between local authorities and schools</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>The role of local authorities</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>The role of primary schools</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>The role of secondary schools</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>The role of governing bodies</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Organising relevant training</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Raising teachers' awareness</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Using the <i>Symud Ymlaen/Moving On</i> DVD</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Raising learners' awareness</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Raising parents'/carers' awareness</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Appendix: The value of a Welsh-medium/bilingual education</b>	<b>24</b>

## Background

Improving linguistic progression is a national priority. Published in April 2010, the Welsh Assembly Government's *Welsh-medium Education Strategy* noted that 'Welsh-medium education from the early years, with robust linguistic progression through every phase of education, offers the best conditions for developing young people who are truly bilingual.' The strategy further states that '... schools, local authorities and other providers need to plan strategically to facilitate linguistic progression in order to increase the numbers achieving fluency in a broad range of Welsh language skills.'

Despite a growing number of learners being taught through the medium of Welsh in our primary schools, the lack of linguistic progression across the educational stages from Key Stage 2 onwards has been of concern to educators in Wales for a number of years and there has been considerable discussion on how best to try to respond to the situation.

In 2007, the Welsh Assembly Government, through the Welsh Language Board, set up a project to improve linguistic progression between the primary and secondary sectors in seven specific areas – the Amman Valley, the Taf Valley, Tregaron, Cardigan, Amlwch, the Conwy Valley and Ystalyfera.

The main focus of the project was to attempt to change schools' and local authorities' practice and policy in terms of improving linguistic progression. To this end, regular meetings were held with headteachers, teachers responsible for transition (primary and secondary), county education officers, governors, parents/carers and learners in an attempt to influence the organisation of the education provision. Following the implementation of the project, the following outcomes were observed.

- An increase in Welsh-medium progression in all areas. The greatest increase was observed in Cardigan (28 per cent), the Amman Valley (20 per cent) and Tregaron (10 per cent). On average, across all areas, an additional 10 per cent of learners had continued with Welsh-medium education than at the start of the project.
- An improvement in all areas in progression in terms of studying Welsh as a first language.
- A change in attitudes among headteachers, governors, parents/carers, learners and education officers and raised awareness of the importance of adopting systems that promote and improve linguistic progression. This led to important changes to policy and procedures in this field in a number of areas.

This document offers guidance for local authorities and individual schools on undertaking such a project. It outlines the main issues to be considered in order to promote linguistic progression together with relevant examples from schools to illustrate the best practice observed. Linguistic progression is defined in the context of this work as learners continuing to study a) Welsh as a first language and b) the majority of their subjects through the medium of Welsh from one key stage to the next.

## Core messages for promoting linguistic progression

To promote linguistic progression, the following important messages need to be highlighted.

- Linguistic progression makes the change from primary to secondary much easier for the learner.
- Research shows that the valuable language skills learned at primary school are quickly lost if the medium of instruction is changed – this is especially true for children from non-Welsh speaking families.
- Children’s bilingual skills develop best if used daily, and Welsh-medium or bilingual education gives a child a daily opportunity to develop his/her language skills, becoming increasingly fluent and confident.

### The key factors

The starting point for improving linguistic progression is to recognise that every local authority and school catchment area is different. As a result, a number of features can contribute to the variation which exists between areas, e.g. the linguistic context, demographic patterns, guidance from local authorities, support from headteachers and teachers responsible for transition, the attitudes of parents/carers and learners, governors’ views, the condition of buildings and the ‘reputation’ of schools.

Although every area and catchment is unique, there are a number of factors common to successful linguistic progression. These include:

- a commitment by headteachers and teachers responsible for transition to the principle of progression – in terms of Welsh as a subject and of studying subjects through the medium of Welsh
- an awareness among headteachers and teachers responsible for transition of the benefits of Welsh-medium education and bilingualism as a skill
- an understanding between the primary and secondary sectors that a strategic plan is needed to facilitate progression which includes a clear streaming policy and data on attainment levels, the language spoken in the home, parental choice, etc.
- guidance and support from the local authority to ensure that robust linguistic progression occurs across all key stages
- support from governors for Welsh-medium education and the opportunity for learners to develop their skills along the language continuum

- an awareness among parents/carers and learners of the benefits of bilingualism in the world of work and community life of the area
- the detail of the information provided by the local authority or the local secondary school(s) regarding the benefits of continuing with Welsh-medium education across all key stages.

This list of factors can be used as a self-assessment tool for your local authority or for individual schools.

### Creating effective practice

To support linguistic progression, specific activity needs to be undertaken on a number of levels. Below are suggestions for some of the most crucial activities which should be considered for support in your area and the individual groups which should be targeted.

Local authority examines data and identifies needs at individual school level



Discussions held with individual schools and action plan drawn up including relevant training



Schools agree to undertake activity including running training for teachers and identifying activities



#### **Activity to promote continuity**

Teacher with responsibility  
Sessions to equip teachers  
Workshops for learners  
Presentations for parents/carers

## **Promoting cooperation between local authorities and schools**

In order to create good practice in linguistic progression, good cooperation and understanding between local authorities and schools is needed. The various tiers need to be brought together to aim for the same objective. It would therefore be useful for the key groups to give particular consideration to the following issues.



## The role of local authorities

To create an effective model in terms of linguistic progression, local authorities need to give careful consideration to implementing the following:

- adopting a clear and unambiguous policy to promote and improve linguistic progression across all educational stages
- including a statement in the *Parents'/Carers' Handbook* about the authority's progression policy in terms of Welsh as a subject and a medium – reference should also be made in the document to the priority given to progression in the Welsh Government's Welsh-medium Education Strategy
- giving primary schools guidelines on the appropriate threshold in terms of attainment level in Welsh for continuing with Welsh-medium education, e.g. Level 3 – this should not of course prevent any learner who has not achieved this level from continuing to study subjects through the medium of Welsh at secondary school
- appointing a Catchment Language Coordinator (a headteacher or teacher responsible for transition) to work with primary schools to promote progression in all secondary catchments
- giving School Improvement Officers specific responsibility for monitoring progression
- collating county data on attainment levels in Welsh (end of Key Stage 2) and transition patterns, and publishing it in an annual report on progression
- giving primary schools support (where appropriate) to move towards teaching mathematics and science through the medium of Welsh at Key Stage 2 in order to facilitate progression to Welsh-medium secondary education
- holding meetings for parents/carers in areas that need advice and support in terms of progression
- providing language awareness courses for primary teachers as part of an in-service training programme to enable them to present the benefits of bilingualism to learners and parents/carers in a confident and informed manner

- encouraging teachers to hold language-awareness sessions as part of the curriculum. The *Symud Ymlaen/Moving On* DVD issued by the Welsh Language Board outlining the benefits of Welsh-medium education could be used as an appropriate resource. The DVD confirms that a Welsh-medium or bilingual education is the best option from the point of view of developing skills, the world of work and social opportunities.

### **Guidance from a local authority**

The Ceredigion County Council Education Plan (2010–2015) includes a robust commitment to improving linguistic progression from one educational stage to the next. All secondary schools are expected to ensure suitable and quality linguistic continuity and progression for all learners. The Transition Plans which exist in each area are based on the principle of linguistic continuity and progression and are implemented after discussions between the primary and secondary sectors. All learners assessed in accordance with national curriculum first language criteria continue to study Welsh as a first language in secondary school. Linguistic progression is also expected in the learners' other curricular experiences as they move from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3. This clear guidance has enabled secondary headteachers to implement the policy confidently and enthusiastically. As a result, the number of learners studying Welsh as a first language in Ceredigion secondary schools has risen from 83 per cent in 2010/11 to 93 per cent in 2011/12.

## The role of primary schools

The most successful elements in terms of a model of good practice at primary school level include the following.

- Headteachers of primary schools and the local secondary school take responsibility for locating learners within streams during the transfer to Year 7 and agree on criteria for achieving this.
- Primary headteachers provide a clear focus and guidance on the issue of progression in catchment discussions and are aware of relevant Welsh Government policy on this issue.
- Schools deliver consistent messages to Key Stage 2 learners on the importance of progression and encourage them to follow linguistic pathways in order to develop and refine their language skills.
- Plans are implemented to raise parents'/carers' awareness (particularly in Key Stage 2) of the importance of linguistic progression and the value of bilingual skills in contemporary Wales.
- Schools distribute information leaflets to Key Stage 2 learners and parents/carers on the value of Welsh-medium education and the benefits of bilingualism.
- Language-awareness sessions are introduced across the curriculum from the Foundation Phase onwards.
- Schools submit data to the Catchment Language Officer or local authority officers on issues such as attainment levels in Welsh at the end of Key Stage 2, the medium of the assessment, destinations, language cohorts, language of the home, etc.
- Collaboration takes place with local language organisations such as the Urdd and the Mentrau Iaith to develop opportunities for children and their parents/carers to use or practise their Welsh in social activities.

## Catchment Language Officer

For several years, Gwynedd and Anglesey local authorities have appointed a Language Coordinator through Cynnal, to support schools in each secondary catchment to implement the language policy of both counties. The Catchment Language Officer is usually an experienced language teacher who is released for 10 days a year to coordinate linguistic progression from primary to secondary.

### Responsibilities

- Collating information from a county databank on the linguistic situation of the primary and secondary schools in order to discuss the language cohorts\* identified in the authority's language policy, with the schools.
- Visiting the primary schools to discuss issues relating to the implementation of the language policy, discussing the language cohorts of the learners transferring to secondary, and sharing good practice.
- Visiting the secondary school annually with a Welsh Language Adviser to discuss issues relating to Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3 progression, including the tracking of individual learners according to the language cohorts.
- Assisting in the process of grouping learners in Year 7, under the guidance of the Welsh Language Adviser, by producing a list, to be handed over to the secondary school, noting the linguistic cohorts.
- Leading discussions on language development and the promotion of good teaching and learning practices among the catchment's teachers.
- Being a member of the catchment's primary–secondary liaison meeting.
- Evaluating the success of the language policy in the catchment, through discussions with the Welsh Language Advisor and the secondary school's Language Coordinator, and producing an annual report.

\* All learners are assessed against a number of criteria and placed in a language cohort according to the following categories.

Cohort A – competently bilingual

Cohort B – stronger skills in Welsh

Cohort C1 – stronger skills in English, need to reinforce skills in Welsh

Cohort C2 – complete learners/latecomers – without appropriate skills in Welsh

Cohort CH – weak skills in both languages

Other areas, with the support of the project, received funding to employ a 'Moving On' Officer. The type of role undertaken is outlined below.

### **Role of 'Moving On' Officer**

- Producing a report that includes data on learners' attainment levels in Welsh at the end of Key Stage 2 and data on their choice of stream in Year 7.
- Visiting all primary schools within the catchment to discuss issues relating to linguistic progression with the headteacher and Year 6 teacher.
- Assisting in the process of streaming learners in Year 7 with the cooperation of primary teachers, secondary transition teacher, local authority officer.
- Attending liaison meetings between teachers at the primary schools which feed the secondary school and the secondary teachers responsible for transition in the catchment area.
- Establishing procedures to track and monitor the linguistic progression of learners transferring to Year 7 throughout Key Stage 3.

## The role of secondary schools

Secondary schools should consider:

- taking responsibility, jointly with primary headteachers and teachers responsible for transition, for streaming learners as they transfer to Year 7 – the primary and secondary sectors should agree on criteria for achieving this and explain the decisions to learners and parents/carers
- ensuring clear focus is given to promoting linguistic progression in primary to secondary transition activities
- producing a language policy for the school which includes a commitment to improve progression and information on the benefits of bilingualism
- including a specific section in the school's prospectus on linguistic progression and the criteria used to stream learners in Year 7
- appointing a support teacher (Welsh Language Champion) to be a contact point with:
  - learners, in terms of giving them linguistic support with various aspects of the curriculum
  - teachers, in terms of developing their skills and confidence to teach through the medium of Welsh

### **Role of Welsh Language Champion**

- Being a point of contact for Year 7 learners who want additional support with linguistic elements of the curriculum in Welsh.
  - Being available to offer support to learners.
  - Assisting teachers who teach subjects through the medium of Welsh to employ appropriate techniques to support learners who need an additional linguistic boost.
  - Working with the secondary transition teacher to run taster sessions for learners from the primary schools which feed the secondary school.
  - Attending parents'/carers' evenings with the transition teacher.
- ensuring that language-awareness sessions are provided for learners as part of the curriculum at all key stages, starting with the Foundation Phase

- submitting data to the Catchment Language Coordinator or local authority officers on issues such as the Welsh-medium provision, numbers studying through the medium of Welsh, primary to secondary transition patterns, first/second language progression patterns, end of Key Stage 3 assessments.

### **Good practice in terms of streaming learners**

Ysgol Dyffryn Aman has recently changed its policy on streaming learners who transfer from the catchment's primary schools. With the full cooperation of the primary sector headteachers and teachers responsible for transition, learners are now placed in classes that offer the best linguistic progression for the development of their bilingual skills. Over a short period of time, this has led to a significant increase in the number of Key Stage 3 learners receiving 60 per cent or 80 per cent of their education through the medium of Welsh. This change has generally been welcomed by parents/carers, who view it as a natural extension of the primary school's medium of education. The learners have reacted positively to the change of policy and the staff have also welcomed the changes. The fact that Ysgol Dyffryn Aman has started offering mathematics through the medium of Welsh at Key Stage 3 has also influenced the teaching medium of the subject in some of the catchment's primary schools.

## The role of governing bodies

The important role of school governing bodies includes:

- approving policy to ensure effective linguistic progression occurs between Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3
- approving policy to promote the use of Welsh in all aspects of the school's life and to contribute to the development of the language in the local community
- ensuring that the policy on Welsh language progression and promotion is given prominence in the school prospectus
- adopting a purposeful recruitment policy in order to increase the school's capacity to teach through the medium of Welsh and provide relevant in-service training to develop teachers' confidence and language skills
- planning to extend the Welsh-medium provision (including mathematics, science and other subjects if relevant)
- providing advice for learners and parents/carers on possible language pathways available in the secondary school and outlining the benefits of continuing with a Welsh-medium education
- receiving data on progression patterns, the current provision, numbers studying through the medium of Welsh, first/second language Welsh progression, and using the data to plan for improvement.

### **Support from governors**

Two years ago, the governing body of Ysgol Dyffryn Conwy approved a recommendation to change the school's streaming pattern. Where previously there had been Welsh, bilingual and English streams, all streams are now either Welsh or bilingual. This means that all learners receive at least 20 per cent of their education through the medium of Welsh. The vast majority of learners (around 70 per cent) access at least 70 per cent of the curriculum through the medium of Welsh. The fact that primary headteachers now also give their input to the streaming process has strengthened linguistic progression in the school.



## Organising relevant training

It is important that relevant training exists to convey key messages to parents/carers and learners. Several key points which should be presented in specific sessions for teachers to enable them to offer learners and parents/carers the relevant information are noted in the following sections.

## Raising teachers' awareness

Raising teachers' awareness of the benefits of Welsh-medium education and bilingualism is key to improving linguistic progression. Teachers can lack confidence when facing questions from parents/carers on the value of continuing with Welsh-medium education and their doubts about their children's ability to cope with Welsh-medium education. A list of the benefits of Welsh-medium education can be seen in the appendix on page 24.

It is worth giving consideration to running specific training courses for headteachers and teachers responsible for transition in order to tackle the demand for robust information, data and facts on the benefits of Welsh-medium education. An outline for a course based on a similar course run by the project is given here.

### **Language-awareness-raising course**

The language-awareness-raising course will be very beneficial for primary headteachers and teachers responsible for transition who have to discuss with parents/carers options regarding destinations and linguistic medium in the secondary school.

A one-day course could include the following.

- An introduction to the benefits of bilingualism based on international research and research undertaken specifically in Wales – with particular emphasis given to the cognitive, educational, economic, social and cultural benefits.
- An introduction to the benefits of continuing with Welsh-medium education – in terms of developing language skills and benefiting from two worlds of experience.
- Sharing ideas on language-awareness activities for learners in Years 4, 5 and 6 that emphasise the importance of linguistic progression.
- Advising teachers on how to respond to parents'/carers' concerns about Welsh-medium education and provide them with guidance on how to deal with such challenges intelligently and sensitively. The concerns include:
  - English is the language spoken at home so the child is at a disadvantage
  - helping with homework
  - the effect of Welsh-medium education on the standard of the child's English
  - the child has done enough Welsh already
  - it's best to concentrate on learning other languages.

- Giving teachers the opportunity to practise the arguments in favour of linguistic progression in interactive sessions and provide them with relevant data and facts to reinforce their viewpoints.
- Sharing information on the support resources available to help teachers to promote progression in the classroom. These include books, CDs, software, websites, DVDs and social media.
- Showing the *Symud Ymlaen/Moving On* DVD issued by the Welsh Language Board which communicates the benefits of continuing to learn in Welsh.
- A question and answer session and general discussion on the day's main findings.

As noted above, it would be worth showing sections of the *Symud Ymlaen/Moving On* DVD.

### **The *Symud Ymlaen/Moving On* DVD**

The *Symud Ymlaen/Moving On* DVD shows that Welsh-medium or bilingual education offers learners the best choice in terms of developing skills, competing for jobs and contributing to social life.

Evidence of the importance of continuing to study through the medium of Welsh is provided by Professor Colin Baker, a world expert on bilingual education. He states that language skills develop better when used every day and warns that learners could lose confidence in their use of Welsh and lose the language completely should they turn to English-medium education at secondary school.

The DVD also includes contributions from people in education and business who emphasise the benefits of possessing bilingual skills in contemporary Wales.

An employer who features on the DVD gives the opinion that young people who are able to speak and write Welsh fluently are needed, particularly as Wales develops into a bilingual country. Teachers believe the best way of achieving this is for learners to study Welsh as a first language at secondary school.

**Children who go through Welsh-medium education have a better chance in the jobs market, particularly where there is a customer interface.**

Professor Colin Baker

## Using the *Symud Ymlaen/Moving On* DVD

The *Symud Ymlaen/Moving On* DVD is a helpful resource for use in specific sessions for learners and parents/carers. The DVD is divided into six sections.

- **Moving On:** an explanation of the main principles.
- **Developing skills:** teachers, parents/carers and learners talk about the importance of Welsh language skills, and there is also a useful contribution from Professor Colin Baker.
- **Welsh means Business:** the message emphasised in this section is that there is more choice of employment in Wales if you speak both languages. There are contributions from people working for the NatWest Bank and the Fire and Emergency Service, as well as the Antur Insurance Company. This message is reinforced by learners and parents/carers and there is another contribution from Professor Colin Baker.
- **Social opportunities:** in this section the benefits of speaking English and Welsh with regard to accessing local social opportunities are emphasised.
- **The best option:** responses to some parents'/carers' concerns about homework, the challenges of studying subjects through the medium of Welsh and also the value of studying Welsh as a first rather than a second language.
- **Summary:** re-emphasising the main messages.

## Raising learners' awareness

Learners have increasing influence on their educational options. It is beneficial to run workshops for Years 5 and 6 learners to raise their awareness of the value of Welsh-medium education. This is best undertaken by means of fun activities that underline the economic, cultural and social benefits of being bilingual in contemporary Wales.

### **Awareness-raising activities**

During the project, a number of fun activities were created for use with Years 5 and 6 learners to raise their awareness of the benefits of bilingual skills, including the social, educational and economic benefits.

One example is to have two dolls that are similar in appearance, and present a story about the dolls to the learners. They are twins who have been brought up as Welsh speakers. Both had a Welsh-medium education at primary school. One went on to receive a Welsh-medium education at secondary school, but the other followed her friends and chose an English-medium education. One went to college in Wales while the other went to college in England. One of them retained her Welsh while the other lost the language after spending years working in London. By coincidence, years later both applied for the same job – a senior job with a good salary in an area of Wales with a high number of Welsh speakers.

The learners are told that one twin has bilingual skills, and is therefore able to speak to everyone, in either English or Welsh. The other twin can only speak English. There is a discussion on the importance of giving customers a choice of language and on the rights of Welsh speakers. Learners are asked to choose which candidate should be given the job. In all cases, without exception, the learners chose the twin with bilingual skills. The result of the exercise is that the learners themselves realise the benefits of having bilingual skills.

Showing sections of the *Symud Ymlaen/Moving On* DVD is also beneficial at the sessions for primary learners, particularly the sections discussing 'Moving on', 'Developing skills' and 'Welsh means Business'.

## Raising parents'/carers' awareness

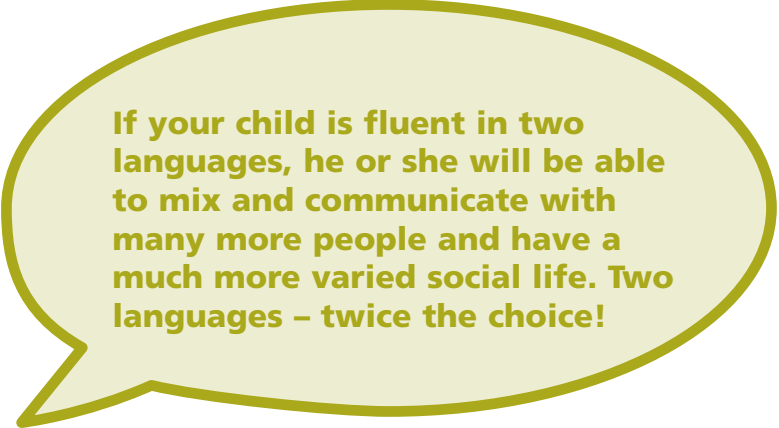
Raising parents'/carers' awareness of the benefits of continuing with a Welsh-medium education is central to successful linguistic progression. It is therefore worth referring to the list of benefits of Welsh-medium education in the appendix. In general, the increase observed in all areas in linguistic progression (as a subject and as a medium) can be attributed to support from parents/carers. There can be no change to an education system or policy without having convinced parents/carers of the benefits of bilingualism. This can be achieved by investing time in meeting parents/carers and training teachers to discuss the benefits of bilingualism and the value of Welsh-medium education.

### **Parents'/carers' evenings**

Either for individual schools or a cluster of neighbouring primary schools. Years 4, 5, and 6 parents/carers were usually invited to attend. The evening followed a similar pattern, as below.

- A short introduction to the aims and objectives of the Symud Ymlaen/Moving On Project.
- Setting the strategic context – county and national policies.
- A short description of the linguistic situation in each area.
- An outline of the benefits of bilingualism.
- Discussing parents'/carers' concerns (based on the project's experience).
- Showing the *Symud Ymlaen/Moving On* DVD.
- Question-and-answer session.
- Distributing information packs.
- Chat over tea or coffee.

The main focus at the parents'/carers' evenings was on presenting the benefits of bilingualism, i.e. the cognitive, economic, social and cultural benefits.



**If your child is fluent in two languages, he or she will be able to mix and communicate with many more people and have a much more varied social life. Two languages – twice the choice!**

*Symud Ymlaen/Moving On DVD*

They also drew attention to the educational advantages by highlighting the fact that research shows that:

- using both languages develops the ability to translanguage, i.e. receiving information in one language and presenting it in another, which promotes skills and ability in both English and Welsh
- bilingual people are more able to learn a third language and display more tolerance of other cultures
- bilingualism or multilingualism are the norm in Europe, so the situation in Wales is not uncommon – around 65 per cent of Europeans speak at least two languages.

The main concerns included:

- being unable to help with homework
- believing that the child's Welsh is not good enough to study subjects through the medium of Welsh
- that the child is from a non-Welsh speaking family and is therefore at a disadvantage
- that Welsh-medium education has a detrimental effect on the development of English language skills
- the belief that studying through the medium of Welsh is too difficult, particularly subjects such as mathematics and science
- the assumption that Welsh is studied at the expense of learning other languages such as French, German or Spanish
- insufficient Welsh-language books and resources available

- the terminology is too difficult in Welsh
- that there is no way of continuing with a Welsh-medium education in the further or higher education sectors, so changing to learning through the medium of English would cause complications
- attaining the best possible results is what matters – an A\* in Welsh Second Language is better for example than a C in Welsh First Language
- studying through the medium of Welsh closes doors and restricts life choices.

### **Response to parents'/carers' concerns**

**Homework:** Work is usually an extension of class work, so should not include anything unfamiliar. Although there is a need to be sensitive towards parents'/carers' desire to help, one should be realistic about their ability to contribute as subjects become increasingly difficult and specialised. Parents/carers should also be reminded that it is not their homework anyway!

**My child's Welsh isn't good enough:** It is suggested that parents/carers should have faith in the opinion of the headteacher or class teacher who are often better placed than parents/carers to assess the standard of a child's language, particularly if the parents/carers do not speak Welsh.

**Effect on the child's development in English:** Statistics show that learners studying courses through the medium of Welsh achieve good results in tests and examinations, including in English as a subject. Welsh-medium education is an effective way of improving a child's bilingual skills.

**Studying through the medium of Welsh is too difficult:** There is no evidence to prove this. On the contrary, learners in bilingual schools consistently achieve results as good as those in English-medium schools.

**Insufficient Welsh-language books and resources:** There are more Welsh-language resources available today than ever before including software, computer games, interactive books and DVDs.



**No continuity in the further or higher education sectors:** The situation has improved in recent years. Many courses and modules can now be studied through the medium of Welsh in the Post-16 sector. The establishment of the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol is an important development in terms of expanding Welsh-medium provision.

**An A\* in Welsh Second Language is better than a C in Welsh First Language:** Moving from studying Welsh First Language to Welsh Second Language is a step backwards. Parents/carers would not let this happen in any other subject. Employers now seek robust bilingual skills – having a Welsh-medium education is an effective way of improving skills and confidence in the language. More jobs require bilingual skills today than ever before.

**Studying through the medium of Welsh closes doors:** Being bilingual gives young people the opportunity to experience two different cultures and two worlds of experience. Two languages – twice the choice!

Showing sections of the *Symud Ymlaen/Moving On* DVD is also beneficial at the sessions for parents/carers, particularly the sections discussing 'Moving On', 'Developing skills' and 'Welsh means Business'.

## Appendix: The value of a Welsh-medium/bilingual education

### **Key messages regarding Welsh-medium/bilingual education**

- Learners who understand more than one language can think more creatively and flexibly and tend to do better in IQ tests.
- Learners who operate in two languages in the curriculum can achieve good results in tests and examinations.
- Bilingual children's results in tests and examinations in English as a subject are higher on average than those of monolingual children.
- Bilingual learners can communicate with family members, neighbours and friends in either English or Welsh and contribute fully to community life in their local area.
- The economic benefits of being proficient in both English and Welsh are obvious as more jobs than ever in Wales require bilingual skills.
- Bilingual people are more able to learn a third language and display more tolerance towards other cultures.
- Being bilingual or multilingual is the norm in Europe, so the situation in Wales is not uncommon. Over 65 per cent of Europeans speak at least two languages.
- Being bilingual offers learners the opportunity to experience two different cultures and two worlds of experience.
- Being bilingual helps people to be part of Wales and increases the sense of belonging.