

# Primary school categorisation guidance: Information for parents and carers



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

**The policy on school categories according to Welsh-medium provision is changing.** Schools are put into categories so you know which type of school works best for your child. Your local authority has to let you and the Welsh Government know what these categories are so you can decide where to send your child. Welsh-medium provision can vary from area to area, so putting schools in categories is an easy way to make sure everyone understands which language is used where.

**Cymraeg 2050: A million Welsh speakers** sets out our vision for the Welsh language. At the moment, there are 562,000 Welsh speakers in Wales, and our aim is to reach 1 million by 2050. Education is key to our success, and we believe every child should have the same opportunity to learn Welsh. We want to create confident Welsh speakers from every background and area of Wales.



**Immersion education in Welsh-medium schools** is a great way of achieving this. It's also important we increase the number of successful Welsh learners in English-medium and bilingual schools so we want all our children to have a chance to use Welsh inside and outside the classroom. We're also encouraging schools to embrace the language and encourage the use of Welsh when they define their language category.



**Curriculum for Wales** clearly shows how our schools can develop Welsh language learning across all settings, starting with little or no language and working towards proficiency. All children will be introduced to Welsh from age three. This will help our learners to develop and build on their Welsh language skills.



You can choose Welsh-medium education for your child at any time, even at a later entry point. Our **late immersion centres** can help children learn Welsh in a short amount of time then your child will be ready to continue their education in Welsh. Contact your local authority for details as there are centres across Wales.



Your child's school will be in one of **three categories**.

**Category 1: English-medium** The main language of these schools is English, and contact with parents and carers will be in English. Category 1 schools recognise that creating a Welsh language ethos within the school will support and encourage positive attitudes towards Welsh language use.

If your child attends a category 1 school, they'll learn to speak, read, write and listen in English according to age and ability. They'll learn Welsh as part of the Languages, Literacy and Communication Area of Learning and Experience, and at least 15% of your child's school activities (both inside and outside the classroom) will be in Welsh.

**Category 2: Dual language** These schools use both Welsh and English, and contact with parents and carers will be in both languages. Category 2 schools will have a clear understanding that maintaining a Welsh language ethos within the school will support positive attitudes towards Welsh language use.

If your child attends a category 2 school, they'll learn to speak, read, write and listen in English and Welsh according to age and ability. Welsh language skills will be further strengthened by increasing how much time is spent learning in Welsh. Teachers may use some English to ensure understanding.

At least 50% of your child's school's activities (both inside and outside the classroom) will be in Welsh. Schools may either choose to deliver everything in Welsh up to age seven with choice offered thereafter, or that 50% of school activities are in Welsh throughout.

**Category 3: Welsh-medium** The main language of these schools is Welsh, and contact with parents and carers will be in Welsh, English or bilingually. Category 3 schools will have a strong Welsh language ethos at their core, and they'll help and support your child to use Welsh in every situation inside and outside the classroom. All lessons will be in Welsh, until children are seven-years-old, and teachers will use some English to make sure children understand everything.

If your child attends a category 3 school, they'll be able to speak, read, write and listen in both Welsh and English according to age and ability. All learners in Welsh-medium education are taught in the same classroom, whether they speak Welsh at home or not.

Children will start English lessons when they're aged seven, and from then onwards, at least 80% of your child's activities (both inside and outside the classroom) will be in Welsh.