

Huw Lewis AC / AM
Y Gweinidog Addysg a Sgiliau
Minister for Education and Skills



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref OAQ(4)0490(ESK)

Antoinette Sandbach AM
Assembly Member for North Wales
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay

17 December 2014

Dear Antoinette,

During Oral Questions to the Minister for Education and Skills on 19 November I promised to write to you about an issue which you raised with me, namely the difference in outcomes at Key Stage 2 between pupils whose first language is Welsh and those whose first language is English in Welsh-medium schools. The matter had been drawn to your attention by a constituent who had requested data from the Department. As I told you in the Chamber I was not aware of the request but I believe that we have now identified it.

I think some care needs to be taken in seeking to draw firm conclusions from the data that was requested, since it only provides a snapshot of performance at the end of Key Stage 2. A number of factors will influence individual performance over time, but maintaining linguistic continuity into Welsh-medium secondary provision is regarded as key in limiting any possible effects of different starting points in terms of facility in the language. The data also raises some interesting questions about the relative performance of pupils described as not speaking Welsh at home in Welsh-medium schools and those in English-medium schools; some of the figures show that pupils from non-Welsh-speaking homes perform at least as well as their counterparts in English-medium schools.

The thrust of the Government's Welsh-medium Education Strategy is to seek to improve the planning and accessibility of Welsh-medium education, allied to improved communication about the options, so that parents are in a position to make informed choices about the education of their children. In the final analysis, parents will make a choice about their preferred medium of education but I cannot believe that the increase in demand for Welsh-medium provision over recent years would have happened if the situation were as presented by your constituent. I would add that pupils emerging from Welsh-medium

schools are far better placed to take full advantage of the kind of bilingual society to which we aspire than those who have had a predominantly English-medium education.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Huw Lewis', written in dark ink on a white background.

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Minister for Education and Skills