



Professional Learning Branch
School Practitioner Division
Education, Culture and Welsh Language Group
Welsh Government

By e-mail: ProfessionalStandardsReview@gov.wales

26/01/2026

Dear Colleague,

Consultation: Revised professional standards for assisting teaching, teaching and leadership

Thank you for the opportunity to take part in the consultation above. Our response concentrates on the professional standards in question in the context of the Welsh language.

As you know, the Welsh Ministers are subject to the policy making standards under the Welsh Language Standards (No. 1) Regulations 2015. These standards require them to give conscientious consideration to the positive and adverse effects of policy decisions on the Welsh language—including their impact on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and on not treating the Welsh language less favourably than the English language. They must also consider how the policy could be formulated or amended in order to increase the positive effects on the language, and how any adverse effects could be avoided or reduced.

We welcome the intention to include the Welsh language in the proposed professional commitments, with reference to supporting the *Cymraeg 2050* strategy by embedding the Welsh language across the curriculum and school culture and giving all learners and professionals the opportunity to become confident Welsh speakers. However, we would have expected to see further references to the Welsh language in the document, including the Welsh Language and Education (Wales) Act 2025 and its implications.

The importance of the Welsh language in the education system is clear in policy and legislation. Ensuring a substantial increase in the numbers who develop into Welsh speakers through the education system is one of the cornerstones of *Cymraeg 2050*. As a

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result of the Welsh Language and Education Act, far-reaching changes are expected in the field of education to achieve the goal that all learners in Wales, by the end of their period of compulsory education, will be independent Welsh language users. To achieve these objectives, it is necessary to create a large increase in the education workforce that can teach through the medium of Welsh.

The focus must be on developing the Welsh language skills of the education workforce in a positive way. To support this, the importance of the Welsh language should be emphasized in the professional standards. At present, it appears that the revised standards have been weakened in the context of the Welsh language as they do not refer to the Welsh language at all. **It is essential to strengthen them, and include specific methods of embedding the Welsh language within the curriculum and culture of schools and enabling learners and professionals to become confident Welsh speakers.**

Unlike the amended standards, the current professional standards, at the level of leaders, teachers and teaching assistants, include specific references to the Welsh language.¹ These can be seen, for leaders and teachers, under the Pedagogy standard, in the sections 'Welsh language skills' and 'Supporting growth in others'. For teaching assistants, they can be seen under the Professional learning standard, in the section 'The Welsh language and culture'. They include:

- leaders extending the use of the Welsh language and setting an example by learning Welsh
- teachers applying and extending their understanding and skills in the Welsh language
- teaching assistants increasing their Welsh language abilities and encouraging enthusiasm among learners.

Targets are set in *Cymraeg 2050* to increase the number of teachers who can teach Welsh or teach through the medium of Welsh. By 2031 the aim is to secure 3,900 primary teachers who can teach through the medium of Welsh and 4,100 secondary teachers who can teach through the medium of Welsh. However, there is a significant gap to be filled if these targets are to be reached in time. According to the [*Cymraeg 2050 annual report*](#) for 2023/24 there were 2,792 primary teachers and 2,549 secondary teachers who were able to teach through the medium of Welsh. The lack of progress in this context has been a concern for the Commissioner for years.²

It is revealing that the School Workforce Annual Census for November 2023 shows that very little positive change had been seen over the previous three years in the Welsh language skills levels of all teachers in Wales. The data also showed that a high number of teachers in some local authorities had no Welsh skills at all, or that they had entry level

¹ [Professional standards - Hwb](#)

² Welsh Language Commissioner: [The Welsh language and the statutory education workforce in Wales](#)



skills.³ According to the Education Workforce Council's statistics for 2025, 33.4% of school teachers speak Welsh and 26.9% can work through the medium of Welsh, and there is not much change from year to year. In terms of school learning support workers, 21.0% can speak Welsh and 17.9% can work through the medium of Welsh.⁴

This statistical picture needs to change substantially if the Welsh Government's ambition is to be realised. Plans will have to be greatly intensified to support these teachers and support workers, and the workforce of the future, to develop their Welsh language skills and to substantially increase the number who use the Welsh language in teaching and assisting teaching. The consultation document states that using the standards when reviewing professional development provides a formal process for recognizing success and focusing on professional growth. It is crucial that developing Welsh language skills is a core part of this process. Welsh language training should be an essential part of the continuing professional development of the education workforce. This message needs to be conveyed in the revised professional standards. By failing to include the Welsh language in the standards, there is a risk that the language will not receive the attention needed to enable professionals and the learners they support to become confident Welsh speakers.

The consultation document states that a consultation will be held in the autumn 2026 on the revised standards for Qualified Teacher Status (QTS). It should be ensured that those standards are also strengthened, emphasizing the importance of the Welsh language for prospective teachers at the start of their career.

I hope that the comments above will be of assistance to the consultation. I very much hope to see these standards strengthened to support the ambition of the Welsh Government, as expressed in the Welsh Language and Education Act and *Cymraeg 2050*.

Yours faithfully,

Efa Gruffudd Jones
Welsh Language Commissioner

³ Welsh Government: [Welsh in education workforce plan: data analysis – 2024 update](#)

⁴ Education Workforce Council: [Annual Education Workforce Statistics for Wales 2025](#)