



INFORMATION REPORT FOR EDUCATION AND SOCIAL SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 20TH MAY 2024

SUBJECT: AN EVALUATION OF THE PROGRESS AND IMPACT OF THE REGIONAL GLOBAL FUTURES STRATEGY - INTERNATIONAL LANGUAGES (MFL) IN CAERPHILLY LOCAL AUTHORITY

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1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To inform members of the progress made by Caerphilly schools in this Welsh Government policy area.
- 1.2 To seek members' views on this policy area and implementation of support for schools.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 Global Futures is a plan to improve and promote modern foreign languages in Wales. The EAS has been working with the Welsh Government Global Futures MFL Steering Group and implementing the Welsh Government's Global Futures strategy for the past eight years. The strategy 2022 – 2025 closely aligns with the Curriculum for Wales and has a multilingual focus for primary and secondary Welsh learners, as well as increasing the number of learners studying languages.
- 2.2 The EAS Curriculum Partner for International Languages has engaged with Caerphilly schools since the first Global Futures pilot in 2015 to develop the strategic aims and objectives outlined in the strategy and support Modern Foreign Languages (MFL) now International Languages (IL) in the Curriculum for Wales. Through the strategy, Caerphilly secondary Heads of Department and teachers benefit from a range of opportunities facilitated, coordinated, and arranged by the EAS in collaboration with partner schools. Since 2019, Caerphilly primary schools have also benefitted from the opportunities on offer, to support the development of international languages in their settings through EAS coordination.
- 2.3 Where schools and clusters have engaged with the EAS, practitioners have a better understanding of International Languages in the Curriculum for Wales and have developed the confidence and capacity to implement innovative, impactful, and purposeful approaches to international languages curriculum design. EAS

Professional learning and networking opportunities has evidenced improved learning and teaching and, in some cases, take-up at GCSE; whilst outreach and enrichment provided by the EAS through the Global Futures strategy have had impact on pupils by providing potentially life changing aspirational opportunities.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Members are asked to note the content of this report.

4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 The Local Authority has a statutory responsibility for monitoring education outcomes within its schools and members should be made aware of the strategies for supporting Caerphilly schools.

5. THE REPORT

Background and Context

- 5.1 The EAS has been working with the Welsh Government Global Futures MFL Steering Group and implementing the Welsh Government's Global Futures strategy in South East Wales for the past eight years. Global Futures is a plan to improve and promote modern foreign languages in Wales, in response to the significant decline in the take-up of Modern Foreign Languages (MFL) at levels 2 and 3 and in higher education across Wales.
- 5.2 The first iteration of the Global Futures strategy in 2015 – 2020 focused on developing secondary uptake as part of a 'Bilingual + 1' approach, improving the teaching and learning experience and maintaining and improving attainment levels.
- 5.3 The Global Futures strategy 2020 – 2022 and currently 2022 – 2025 aligns more closely with the Curriculum for Wales and has a multilingual focus for primary and secondary Welsh learners as well as increasing the number of learners studying languages, whatever their background or needs. International languages are for the first time, included in the Curriculum 3 to 16 under the Languages, Literacy and Communication Area of Learning and Experience.
- 5.4 From the outset, the EAS Curriculum Partner for International Languages has engaged with Caerphilly schools since the first Global Futures pilot in 2015 to develop the strategic aims and objectives outlined in the strategy and support Modern Foreign Languages (MFL) now International Languages (IL) in the Curriculum for Wales.
- 5.5 In 2015, the Welsh Government asked regional consortia to identify secondary 'centres of excellence' for MFL. The EAS was the only region to put forward two schools to ensure that the needs of Welsh as well as English medium schools were considered in identifying schools across the region. The EAS implemented a robust and transparent process based on an EAS criteria for selection. As a result, two Caerphilly schools, Blackwood Comprehensive school for English medium and Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymini for Welsh medium, became the region's first Global Futures Learning Network Schools (LNS) for MFL. The EAS designated a secondary MFL teacher, with experience of working across primary and secondary sectors in Wales and internationally, from within the EAS Welsh in Education team to lead, manage and coordinate the Global Futures strategy and work with the LNS for MFL. Please

note that from 2023 LNS are called Partner Schools.

Implementation:

- 5.6 As a first step, the EAS Curriculum Partner and the two Caerphilly Heads of MFL formulated an action plan for each lead school to implement the Global Futures strategic aims and objectives. School based action research focused on developing digital learning in MFL 'to improve the teaching and learning experience of MFL' and a Head of Departments' MFL network was set up by the EAS to disseminate and share good practice, action research findings and resources. A digital network for EAS MFL was created on the brand new Hwb digital platform network. EAS Professional Learning focused on working with the learning network schools and the Languages Institutes to support MFL Heads of Department from across the region with the new GCSE and A/S A Level specification implementation in 2016 and beyond. Nearly all schools across the region engage with Professional Learning, networking, or bespoke provision in line with school/departmental/faculty priorities.
- 5.7 Both EAS and lead schools were also involved in the first wave of Student Mentoring with Cardiff University and Routes Cymru language initiatives such as the Pupil Language Ambassadors scheme.
- 5.8 The development of pilot initiatives in the Primary were undertaken in 2017 by the two secondary schools with their cluster primaries as part of the Global Futures aims and objectives. The 'PowerLanguage' digital language platform resource for primary non-specialist teachers was implemented by Blackwood cluster and subsequently evaluated and identified by the EAS as a positive resource to support non-specialist primary practitioners in developing international languages in their setting. The EAS and Blackwood Head of Department presented the initiative to cluster Headteachers, and they agreed to pilot the scheme within the schools. Blackwood cluster schools attended the training with the EAS, the comprehensive and PowerLanguage in September 2017 and practitioners implemented the approach within their schools.
- 5.9 Since the third LNS application cycle in 2019, Caerphilly schools, Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymni and Lewis Girls' school continue to make up half of the LNS secondary schools for MFL within the region. During the cycle, the EAS extended the offer to primary schools to become 'Lead Multilingual schools' for the region. St Gwladys Bargoed and Blackwood Primary are two of five partner primary schools sharing practice. Please note that from 2023 the term Partner School is used rather than LNS.
- 5.10 In 2019, Lewis Girls' School also became a partner school in the EAS Erasmus + Key Action 2 project 'Innovative Languages teaching in Bilingual Countries' with Spain and Ireland and continues to disseminate action research in mediation and Translanguaging from this project through EAS networks, Professional Learning, and events locally and nationally.
- 5.11 The EAS Curriculum Partner offers bespoke cluster support and individual school support and staff meetings and has supported cluster workshop days with Bedwas, Blackwood and Heolddu clusters. These cluster days encouraged primary and secondary colleagues to work in collaboration with the EAS to understand expectations and develop discussions around progression in international languages from Progression Step 3 onwards. The EAS has also funded and supported the Idris Davies primary work with the Head of French across the 3 – 16 continuum with a view to develop this further as a cluster during the next academic year.

- 5.12 Partner schools such as Cwm Rhymni support their own clusters e.g., Cwm Rhymni developing practice as a cluster on multilingual literacy. Practice and resources developed are then shared with schools across the region.
- 5.13 Through the Global Futures strategy, Caerphilly secondary Heads of Department and teachers benefit from a range of opportunities facilitated, coordinated, and arranged by the EAS in collaboration with LNS (Partner) schools including:
- Termly recorded EAS network meetings where teachers can discuss relevant Curriculum for Wales considerations and issues in learning and teaching and share good practice from LNS (Partner) and other schools and Global Futures stakeholders.
 - Membership of the EAS International Languages Head of Department space on Hwb Teams to access PL and network recordings, resources, and opportunities.
 - Termly EAS professional learning to support improving the teaching and learning of skills development in key stage 3, GCSE, A/S and A Level, including innovative digital approaches.
 - Sharing opportunities to engage in innovative approaches for Curriculum for Wales development (Dr. Gianfranco Conti's EPI and GWE / Dr. Jennifer Eddy's Designing World Language Curriculum for Intercultural Communicative Competence) and primary to secondary school transition design.
 - Offer to participate in the Award-Winning Student Mentoring Project with Cardiff University (2016 +) and other associated initiatives.
 - Offer to participate and engage in Routes into Languages Cymru initiatives such as Pupils and Student Languages Ambassador schemes, Master classes and Seren initiatives with Oxford University.
 - Participation in Language Institutes competitions and PL opportunities
 - Participation in wider initiatives such as GCHQ outreach for Welsh schools and Stephen Spender Trust competition
- 5.14 Since 2019, Caerphilly Primary schools have also benefitted from the following opportunities on offer to support the development of international languages in their settings through EAS coordination:
- Recorded and in-person EAS Primary PL to support the development of international languages in the primary with good practice shared by EAS lead multilingual primary schools (2019 +)
 - Bespoke EAS professional learning, staff meetings and support offered to clusters and individual schools.
 - Membership of the Primary International Languages Teams space on Hwb for all recorded sessions, resources, latest information, and opportunities
 - EAS Language session for Beginners (French and Spanish) June 2023 led by EAS OU TELT primary practitioner graduates.
 - Open University TELT (Teaching Languages in the Primary) fully funded online self-study for one year opportunity 2018 +
 - EAS 'Come to See' good practice in international languages at 3 lead multilingual primary schools March and May 2023
 - Free PL, enrichment/outreach opportunities and competitions with the Languages Institutes (Institut Français, Goethe Institut, Confucius Institute Cardiff University / Wales China Schools, Italian Consulate, Spanish Embassy)
 - Funded provided for all EAS primary schools March 2022 for a one-year subscription to the PowerLanguage platform or an international languages resource of their choice to support the development of International Languages in their setting.

- Funded British Council 'Cerdd Iaith' Languages through the Expressive Arts training and offer for an EAS funded bespoke cluster workshop summer / autumn 2023.
- 5.15 The EAS manages, facilitates, and coordinates all Global Futures opportunities and communicates these through various communication outlets: the EAS bulletin, EAS Supporting our Schools, EAS PL calendar, social media (@EASInt_Language) and the Primary International languages network on Hwb Teams space to keep abreast of the latest developments and opportunities.
- 5.16 As part of the Global Futures strategy, all networks, PL and wider opportunities and resources are continually evaluated. As well as meeting with Heads of Department and teachers, the EAS requests feedback from all participants during events to inform impact capture and strategic planning of PL. FADE /EIR reports are provided for EAS internal evaluation and in person and written quarterly reports are provided to the Welsh Government MFL Steering Group every four months.

Impact

- 5.17 Overall, many schools in Caerphilly respond well to EAS support facilitated through the Global Futures strategy. This is especially in terms of the international languages Head of Departments' network, professional learning and wider enrichment and outreach opportunities offered. This is because the EAS have a designated Curriculum partner leading on Global Futures for the region, who manages and coordinates the strategy effectively and efficiently and shares the information with the appropriate settings. This is from knowledge gained through building positive relationships with Heads of International Languages departments within the Caerphilly Local Authority.
- 5.18 In best-case schools (around half of Caerphilly secondary schools), where the Global Futures strategy has had a positive impact, these are the common features: Leadership behaviours exhibit a value for languages and ensures that the subject lead has consistent opportunity to engage in EAS professional learning to build on expertise in practitioner knowledge, skills, and effective implementation. Practitioners have opportunity to engage and collaborate in knowledge exchange and practice sharing with colleagues, cluster primary colleagues and other stakeholders within and across the region and there is sufficient time allocation and resources to ensure an equitable pathway across phases for learners. Learner behaviour exhibits progress and enjoyment of international languages through purposeful and authentic experiences as well as engaging learning and teaching. In the majority of these schools, uptake of international languages for GCSE in on the increase after the Covid Pandemic.
- 5.19 Heolddu Comprehensive for example, has successfully re-introduced French GCSE and A Level on their Curriculum. There is a steadily increasing trend at GCSE and A Level, thanks to the support of Senior Leadership Team and engagement with Global Futures initiatives. The Head of French regularly engages with the cluster primaries and in Y7 has developed a multilingual transition project, adapted from resources relating to a multilingualism, evaluated, and shared by the EAS, to their context. These resources have also been adapted to Y8 and Y9 learners who reported in listening to learners, that they now perceive themselves as multilingual and are aware of the relevance and importance of learning languages and communication skills to their future careers. When asked for highlights from the year, pupils spoke of the Cardiff University Student Mentoring project, GCHQ outreach and writing / receiving pen pal letters. In both Heolddu and Bedwas Comprehensive schools, pupils speak

positively about their French lessons and how the language activities used to develop their skills make the lessons enjoyable and interesting. All pupils from Y8 and Y9 feel that they were making progress in the international languages.

- 5.20 The progression of learning across the 3 – 16 continuum in international languages is currently in its infancy but the Blackwood cluster primary PowerLanguages project implementation and subsequent evaluation was used as evidence to affect a national funding roll out to support primary schools in 2022.
- 5.21 The EAS Global Futures professional learning has also had reported impact on teaching and learning in secondary schools. In Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymni, the Head of the International Languages department attributes the implementation of a new approach to language learning, gained through EAS Global Futures facilitated professional learning, as one of the reasons for an increase in pupils taking international languages at GCSE. Lewis Girls' school Head of Department reports being involved in the Global Futures strategy has provided impactful opportunities for professional development in language education for the department's staff and that this has enhanced the department's language instruction and improved the overall quality of language learning experiences.
- 5.22 The Global Futures strategy opportunities have also impacted on pupils' future goals. For example, a pupil from Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymni who participated in the Student Mentoring project visited Cardiff University as part of the award ceremony. This pupil went on to recently graduate in languages and translation. Without this original opportunity, the pupil would have never had the confidence, aspiration, or awareness of possibilities to apply to university, let alone to study languages. Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymni and St Cenydd comprehensive, are the only two schools in the region who hold Confucius Classroom status. Pupils have opportunity to study Mandarin and Chinese culture and sit examinations in the Chinese HSK and YCT qualifications. This impacts positively on pupils' confidence and enriches the pupils' profiles for the future, as well as opening their horizons culturally as well as linguistically.
- 5.23 Newbridge school international languages department has engaged with free tuition provided by the Italian Consulate through Global Futures for the past eight years. They provide extra-curricular Italian for pupils who opt for French GCSE. A pupil from Newbridge now studying medicine at Oxford, reported that during the initial application interview, the Professors on the panel were impressed that the applicant had studied Italian as an extra-curricular activity and homed in on this. This opportunity had set the applicant apart from other similar candidates in a very competitive field, to their advantage.
- 5.24 Features within schools where Global Futures has less impact are Leadership level decisions do not demonstrate a value for international languages as Curriculum level decision and design do not support or understand the conditions that enable international languages to flourish. In some cases, pupils must opt for GCSEs in early spring term of Y8. Emerging evidence suggests that pupils are less likely to opt for an international language at this early stage, as pupils have not yet gained confidence in their knowledge and skills in the international language and regularly compare it to their English or Welsh language proficiency. In other examples, International Languages departments must adopt the common theme or topic led by English department, which is not always suitable for learners' progression along the international language continuum and impedes the exploration and development of cultural elements and competency.

5.25 In a few Caerphilly schools, there is little knowledge about the Global Futures strategy impact and the picture of international languages in general. The features within these schools are that the International Languages Head of Department does not engage with the EAS for professional learning or networking to build on expertise in practitioner knowledge, skills, and effective implementation, especially in understanding International Languages Curriculum design within and across the Curriculum for Wales LLC Areas of Learning and Experience. Subject leads and practitioners do not engage nor collaborate in knowledge exchange and practice sharing with colleagues within and across the region or nationally through EAS networks or professional learning.

Next steps:

5.26 The next steps to further develop this area of work include:

- Continue to support clusters, schools, and practitioners to develop IL within their settings and share International Languages good practice with schools who engage.
- Facilitate 'Come to See' visits to secondary Partner Schools International Languages departments as well as primary schools this year,
- Support ongoing cluster partnerships.
- Audit provision for international languages in secondary schools.
- Encourage equal multilingual opportunities for Caerphilly pupils by allowing access to languages qualification pathways of their choice in their school whatever the numbers.
- Engage school senior leadership teams, link Governors and school improvement partners to appreciate the value of International Languages as a subject within the LLC Area of Learning and Experience.

Conclusion

5.27 Where Caerphilly secondary, primary schools and clusters have engaged with the EAS, practitioners have a better understanding of International Languages in the Curriculum for Wales and have developed the confidence and capacity to implement innovative, impactful, and purposeful approaches to international languages curriculum design. EAS Professional learning and networking opportunities has evidenced improved learning and teaching and, in some cases, take-up at GCSE; whilst outreach and enrichment provided by the EAS through the Global Futures strategy have had impact on pupils by providing potentially life changing aspirational opportunities.

6. ASSUMPTIONS

6.1. There are no specific assumptions.

7. SUMMARY OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

7.1 This report is for information only therefore no Integrated Impact Assessment is required.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 This work is funded through the EAS Business Plan, therefore there are no specific financial implications.

9. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 There are no personnel implications.

10. CONSULTATIONS

- 10.1 There are no consultation responses that have not been reflected in this report.

11. STATUTORY POWER

- 11.1 Local Government Acts 1972 and 2000, Children's Act 2004, Standards and Framework Act 1998

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- Councillor Teresa Parry, Chair of Education and Social Services Scrutiny Committee
- Councillor Brenda Miles, Vice Chair of Education and Social Services Scrutiny Committee
- Steve Harris, Head of Financial Services and S151 Officer
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Appendices: None