

I would like to extend a warm welcome to you all here tonight for this special evening. It is nice to see so many of you have come together to discuss this important development in the history of the school.

For those completely new prospective parents, I will start by introducing myself Dr Llinos Jones, Head of the School. We will get to know each other well in the years to come.

Firstly I would like to take the opportunity this evening to welcome the people around me. We have four members of the authority joining us and they are:

Mr Rob Sully - Director of Education and Children's Services

Mr Gareth Morgans – Chief Education Officer

Mr Simon Davies - School Modernisation Manager

and Mrs Catrin Griffiths - Challenge Advisor ERW.

Members of the Senior Leadership Team are also present:

Mr Euryndur Madoc Jones - Deputy Head

Miss Zelda Williams and Mr Jonathan Thomas, the school's Assistant Heads

and Mrs Rhian Carruthers, Senior Teacher, who is also head of the Mathematics Department.

Here too are, Mr Gary Thomas, Head of the Science Faculty and Head of the Physics Department, Mr Tim Hayes, acting Head of the Biology Department and Head of the Sixth Form, Mrs Rhian Williams, Head of the Chemistry Department and Miss Catrin Pritchard, Head of KS3 Science. With us also is Mrs Rhiannon Hammond Head of Year 7 and who is also responsible for transition arrangements.

It is also good to see several members of the governing body here, including the Chair of Governors Mrs Lynwen Roberts.

I would also like to welcome Joseph Peace and Siwan Howell, Head Boy and Head Girl of the school, who are joining us this evening. It is at their own request that they are present and they are very keen to share their personal experiences with you and as pupil voice is very important to us at Bro Myrddin, I was delighted to agree to their request.

So welcome to all of you.

At the end of the evening it will be possible for you to ask questions of any of the team of people in front of you and we will do all our best to answer any inquiry or concern that you may have. I will, however, allow Siwan and Joseph to leave as they are in the middle of some of the most important examinations of their life. In fact Joseph will be back here at 9 o'clock tomorrow morning to sit an A Level Mathematics examination.

I'm sure all of you have now read through the Draft Consultation Document and I hope that that document has answered many of your questions and maybe some of your concerns. However, if you have not seen the Draft Document, a copy is available on the school website in both languages and hard copies are also available here tonight. The document sets out our intention, as a school, to move forward naturally to change the school's language category from September 2016.

To coincide with the Carmarthenshire Welsh in Education Strategic Plan, it is the school's desire to move along the language continuum as a response to the Local Authority's wish to increase the provision of Welsh medium education in the county.

The document sets out all the legal steps which need to be followed carefully in order to realize our vision for this particular school. And this is a very special school believe me. I have been Head teacher of the school for almost a year and a half and as some of you will know my connection with the school goes back over 23 years as a member of

staff. I can confirm openly here tonight that leading a school like this is a privilege and honour. You rarely get a school that works together so successfully - I have an inspiring Senior Leadership Team, caring and hard-working staff; disciplined and talented pupils; governors who work tirelessly on behalf of the school and supportive parents. It really is a privilege to be a member of this family and you, prospective parents, will soon become part of the same community; a community which works together for the benefit of our young people.

I wish to emphasize at the outset, that what we, as a school and Authority, have to offer tonight is no longer a great change. Over the past decade, the school has moved naturally along the language continuum to correspond with the Local Authority's Strategic Plan.

The school's present position is that no pupil currently studies Mathematics in English in years 7 to 10 and only 10 pupils study Mathematics in English in year 11. Five years ago, the Mathematics Department changed the way in which the subject was taught. The Department decided, under the leadership of the Head of Department, Mrs Rhian Carruthers, to offer a bilingual model of learning for the pupils. This meant that mathematical terms are taught and presented in both languages to pupils from the outset. The result is that the pupils are very confident to learn the subject in Welsh and the figures prove this.

In relation to Science, only one group of pupils have chosen to study through the medium of English in year 7 this year. Indeed 75.2% of pupils from years 7 to 11 have chosen to study the subject in Welsh.

A major change has occurred naturally with the support of pupils and parents over a period of years and it makes sense, therefore, to proceed further and establish the first Welsh-medium school category in Carmarthenshire.

In the document the numbers in the table clearly shows us the big change that has occurred over the last four years with regard to both subjects. The table is evidence that the demand from parents to provide the subjects in English has decreased.

	Mathematics		Science	
	Welsh	English	Welsh	English
7	137	0	107	30
8	159	0	105	54
9	128	0	88	40
10	132	0	84	48
11	121	10	77	44
12/13	46	33	48	58

The results also provide evidence that the school's pupils perform better when studying these subjects through the medium of Welsh.

	2014		2013		2012	
	Welsh	English	Welsh	English	Welsh	English
Mathematics CA4 – A* - C %	80.4	41.7	81	63	85.8	52.6
Science CA4 – A* - C %	78.9	78.7	81.1	77.2	89.5	81.9

If you are concerned, however, about how these changes will affect the examination results of English at the school, there is no need to worry. Our GCSE English Language results in 2014 were higher than those of the County and Wales. In addition the GCSE Mathematics results were 20% higher than those for Wales. These results, therefore, speak for themselves.

As organic change has manifested itself in the school during the last five years, it is incumbent on us as a school and the Authority to consider this and to act on the recommendations of the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan.

The recommendation made in the document is that the Local Authority should support any Secondary school wishing to move along the language continuum, in order to ensure growth in Welsh medium education across the county.

Maintaining the status quo, therefore, can no longer be considered a suitable option for Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Bro Myrddin, considering the vision of the Local Authority.

Given the evidence and the subject data moving on to change the school's language category to Welsh Medium is both sensible and reasonable.

At the school there are teachers of Mathematics and Science of the highest quality, which ensures consistently excellent results in external examinations. They are fully dedicated to their work and both departments are confident in teaching through the medium of Welsh. Moreover, both departments are fully convinced that teaching should be through the medium of Welsh only in order to maintain and improve standards within the departments. This is already happening in the Mathematics Department and the excellent results produced are proof that teaching in one language is certainly an advantage. Both departments are also of the opinion that teaching the subjects through the medium of one language is fairer to the pupils and the department.

It is proposed that, from 1 September 2016, all pupils who join Ysgol Bro Myrddin will be taught through the medium of Welsh in all subjects apart for English. Current school students will be unaffected by the changes.

In the new mode, Welsh will be the teaching medium in Mathematics and Science. However, lists of terms and subject vocabulary will be provided in both English and Welsh. In addition English medium as well as Welsh medium resources, books and information technology will be used regularly to enrich the development of pupils' language, mathematical and scientific skills. We are keen to develop the bilingual model used very successfully by the Mathematics Department and the Science Department is already preparing for the challenge. This year, all prospective parents of year 6 pupils, have already received the leaflet which explains how we are now teaching the two subjects.

Each 60 minute lesson will be organized using the same format. For the first 5 minutes there will be a presentation in Welsh and English of all the mathematical and scientific terms and concepts used during the lesson. For the following 50 minutes, Welsh will be the main medium of the lesson in terms of teaching and learning. At the end of the lesson, for a period of 5 minutes, there will be a bilingual summing up to ensure that all pupils have understood the content of the lesson. This will, therefore, ensure that all pupils are able to discuss the subject through the medium of both languages. This model will lead to the development of completely bilingual pupils who are confident in both languages.

In terms of this arrangement, there will be a strong element of the concurrent use of language where pupils will be expected to consider the subject content in both languages, and this will serve to reinforce their understanding of mathematical and scientific concepts.

On the screen there are examples of how the Science Department introduces terms to year 8 pupils. In every scheme of work key vocabulary is explained in Welsh and English and activities presenting information will be delivered bilingually. The terms also are reinforced orally during the lessons.

Miss Catrin Pritchard, Head of KS3 Science, has already prepared the materials and, over the past year, used them with pupils. As a pupil at Ysgol Gyfun Rhydywaun, Miss Pritchard studied Science and Mathematics through the medium of Welsh. In Rhydywaun, like other schools in Cardiff and the surrounding areas, Science and Mathematics have always been taught in one language only, Welsh; and the results of schools such as Glantaf, Llanhari, Bro Morgannwg and Plasmawr is proof of the success of the teaching.

The practice of introducing terminology bilingually will be developed throughout the school as pupils move from year 7 onwards. In preparation for external GCSE and A-level examinations, pupils will have access to all terms in both languages. That is our promise as a school. The pupils will certainly benefit from this bilingual model.

Another advantage of this model is that establishing Welsh medium groups only will ensure that pupils are placed in groups of the similar ability and, therefore, this will be academically beneficial. These groups will reflect pupils' ability across the whole cohort, rather than just across the language medium of teaching. English language sets are more likely to include pupils of very mixed ability.

We are all aware of the benefits of bilingualism and many educators have noted that bilingual children are linguistically more capable and more flexible. Less able children do not suffer in any way by receiving their education mainly in Welsh. We also know that children who have two languages can learn other languages more easily, can take full advantage of living in a bilingual community and possess a positive qualification in the market for jobs. Analysis of examination results in Wales shows us that the performance of children who are taught in Welsh medium schools are consistently higher than the performance of their English medium counterparts.

I know that many are concerned that the study of Science and Mathematics in Welsh reduces access to higher education, especially in England. No proof of that exists. Many of our former pupils who are doctors, vets and dentists have studied science at this school through the medium of Welsh. Every year pupils from Welsh medium schools such as Glantaf, Plasmawr, Bro Morgannwg, Llanhari, Y Cymer, Morgan Llwyd, Rhydywaun and Gartholwg enter universities in England and Wales to study medical courses, and there is no proof that the fact that they have received their education through the medium of Welsh only has ruined their chances. It must be remembered, of course, that some of the world's greatest scientists, Marie Curie, Einstein and Pasteur, did not study science in English at school.

When introducing everyone at the beginning of the evening I made special mention of this year's Head Girl and Head Boy, Siwan Howell and Joseph Peace. I also mentioned that the two had asked to speak tonight. I therefore invite Siwan and Joseph to speak now...

Thank you both for your comments and for sharing your experiences with us tonight. I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for all your work as Head Girl and Head Boy this year and to wish you well in your future.

The consultation is, of course, a long complicated and legal process, and the timetable and arrangements have all been explained to you in the document. The purpose of this evening is to present the draft document to you. If the Local Authority decides to proceed with this change then you can express your views from October 19th to December 4th. You can express your opinions by writing a letter or by completing the response form set out in Appendix C of the document by December 4th, 2015 at the latest. The rest of the arrangements will all be explained in detail in the document.

I am confident that having listened to my words and those of the pupils tonight, that you can see that there is no need to worry or fear the school changing its language category. The change has already taken place naturally and we as a school will ensure that no child will be at a disadvantage. Many of our students are already studying science through the medium of Welsh in the primary, and it is a natural step for them to continue to do so in their secondary education. They will not be learning terms through one language only but the 'bilingual model' will be developed further - a model from which all children will benefit enormously.

This is an opportunity for us in Carmarthenshire to lead the way in West Wales and for Ysgol Bro Myrddin to create history by becoming the first Welsh medium school in Carmarthenshire.

I ask all of you who wish to ask questions or express any concern to remain in the hall to discuss with any one of us who is seated in front of you. We will do our best to answer your concerns.

May I once again thank you all for attending this evening and wish you a safe journey home.