

Progressing from primary to secondary education during the Covid-19 pandemic: qualitative study of the experiences of learners in Welsh-medium education and families where Welsh is not spoken

Siân Lloyd Williams, Enlli Môn Thomas, Rhodri Aled Evans, Lowri Jones, Delyth Jones, Rhian Tomos, Natalie Joseph-Williams, Abubakar Sha'aban, Adrian Edwards

Background

COVID-19 pandemic impact: Lockdowns and school closures disrupted education in 2020 and 2021.

Impact on Welsh-medium schools: Learners from non-Welsh-speaking families in Welsh-medium schools faced particular challenges.

Aim

Aim: To understand the experiences of parent-child pairs in non-Welsh-speaking families with children in Welsh-medium education.

Context: Study examines progression from primary to secondary school during the pandemic.

Methodology

Study timeline: Data collection and analysis: Jan - Jun 2023.

Design: Qualitative study; purposive sampling; semi-structured interviews.

Participants: Pupils in Welsh-medium education and non-Welsh-speaking parents.

Interview focus: Home education experiences, progression to secondary school, post-lockdown school return, parents' support experiences and needs.

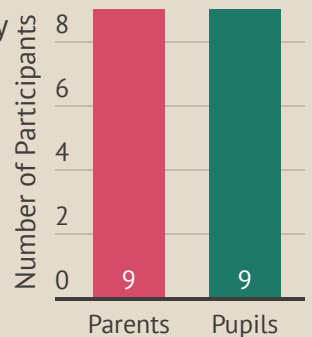
Key findings



Welsh language engagement | During lockdown, both pupils and parents had fewer opportunities to actively engage and use the Welsh language.



Value of assessing language skills | At progression stage to identify support needs for secondary school.



Value of strengthening links | Between primary and secondary settings to support progression



Ensuring effective home-school communication | Improve communication between home and school through apps like Seesaw and School Gateway.



Enhancing bilingual communication | Providing lists of key terminology to aid parents in accessing and understanding feedback in bilingual formats.



Increasing language opportunities | Creating more opportunities for using the Welsh language in and out of school.

Policy and practice implications

Supporting policy:

- Increase Welsh language opportunities
- Support parents' Welsh language skills

Supporting LEAs and schools:

- Streamline primary to secondary progression
- Adopt similar feedback strategies across school clusters
- Supporting translanguaging



Supporting schools to assist parents:

- Ensure awareness of home linguistic nature
- Designate contact persons for Welsh language support
- Ensure effective bilingual communication



A full study report can be accessed via the link or QR code:

<https://doi.org/10.35542/osf.io/4m3k6>

