



WELSH PROVISION

POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Welsh Language Development within the Foundation Phase and the 'active' offer scheme.

Young children in the Foundation Phase in English-medium settings/ schools will be given an opportunity, through play/active learning, as well as story and structured activities, to acquire sufficient familiarity with Welsh to encourage further language learning and positive attitudes towards Welsh.

The Welsh Language Development Area of Learning in the Foundation Phase means:

- Learning the language gradually and naturally through first-hand experiences
- Support and respect
- Sensitivity
- Praise for effort
- A rich and lively environment
- Fun and enthusiasm.

It will consist of the progressive development of children's skills in:

- Speaking and listening
- Reading
- Writing.

Hearing and understanding are the first important building blocks towards acquisition of any language. As a first step children should hear Welsh through incidental Welsh and Welsh rhymes, songs, commands, greetings, and simple stories in informal play situations. There should be interactive displays (including labels) that support the development of familiar concepts such as discussing parts of the body, colours, numbers and so on. Children will develop confidence through practitioner responses: praise, positive reinforcement and supportive gestures.

Children will experience short, structured sessions, where they will hear simple phrases and language patterns. They will, for example, hear basic question patterns, such as 'blew mae?' ('where is?'). These should be introduced into their play. Through structured and spontaneous opportunities and activities children should 'explore' books and listen to a range of Welsh stories, rhymes and poems.

Children should become familiar with Welsh names of letters, their shapes and sounds. Using transferable skills, they will appreciate the phonetic nature of the Welsh language. Further along the learning continuum, they will begin to read on their own, with others and to practitioners. With increasing confidence and familiarity with the language, their stories will develop in complexity, both in the narrative and the language used.

As children become more confident users of the language, they will practise their Welsh in more spontaneous ways, including mark-making. As they develop further along the learning continuum they will, for example, write bilingual signs for their play areas, communicate factual information and write for different audiences and purposes.

Children in the Foundation Phase should acquire and absorb Welsh through a holistic curriculum, through structured play, and through having a specific structured developmental and progressive programme. Language skills learned in one language should support their development of knowledge and skills in another.

Here at Stepping Stones several staff have attended basic Welsh training courses. We offer basic Welsh throughout the nursery and incorporate Welsh according to the foundation phase guidelines.

What is an 'Active Offer'?

An 'Active Offer' simply means providing a service in Welsh without someone having to ask for it. The Welsh language should be as visible as the English language. • It means creating a change in culture that takes the responsibility off the service user to ask for a service through the medium of Welsh. • Providing a service that is service user-centred is fundamental to the 'Active Offer'. What this means in practice is providing a tailor-made service that enables the individual to be assured that he/she is in control and fully understands the services being

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offered. • Making an 'Active Offer' means not making assumptions that all Welsh speakers speak English anyway! It ensures Welsh-speaking service users are treated with dignity and respect by asking them what their preferred language is and acting on it. • What is needed is a proactive approach that ensures language need is identified as an integral part of safe high-quality service provision. • Making an 'Active Offer' is also about creating the right environment where service users feel empowered and confident that their needs will be met.