WALES: TOWARDS BILINGUALISM

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BWRDD YR IAITH GYMRAEG
WELSH LANGUAGE BOARD

2nd European Conference on Language Planning
2n Congrés Europeu sobre Planificació Lingüística
Welsh: history and domain of the language

6th Century:
Welsh spoken here
Welsh: history and domain of the language
WELSH SPEAKERS

1600-1871
1871-1981
1981-1991
1991-2001

POPULATION


2.9m

508k

1871-1991

1991-2001

2001

?
Reduction in the number of Welsh Speaking Communities

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Increase in the number and percentage of young people speaking Welsh

5-9 year olds: 1981: 17.8%
  1991: 24.7%
  2001: ?

10-14 year olds: 1981: 18.5%
  1991: 26.9%
  2001: ?
Legislation – a key factor

Education Reform Act 1988

• 1988 – inclusion of Welsh in the National Curriculum

• Welsh is now taught in every school in Wales
Legislation – a key factor


- establishment in 1982 of S4C
- broadcasts 34 hours of Welsh language programmes per week
Welsh Language Act 1993

An Act to establish a Board having the function of promoting and facilitating the use of the Welsh language, to provide for the preparation by public bodies of schemes giving effect to the principle that in the conduct of public business and the administration of justice in Wales the English and Welsh languages should be treated on a basis of equality, to make further provision relating to the Welsh language, to repeal certain spent enactments relating to Wales, and for connected purposes.

[21st October 1993]
Welsh Language Act 1993

- Established the Welsh Language Board
- Gave the Board specific functions
- Placed a duty on public sector to treat Welsh and English on an equal basis
Government of Wales Act 1998 (c. 38)

An Act to establish and make provision about the National Assembly for Wales and the offices of Auditor General for Wales and Welsh Administration Ombudsman; to reform certain Welsh public bodies and abolish certain other Welsh public bodies; and for connected purposes.
European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages

- ratified by UK in March 2001
- commitment to 52 paragraphs or sub-paragraphs
The Welsh Language Board

www.bwrdd-yr-iaith.org.uk
Welsh Language Board

Main duties:

• offering advice and information on language use

• ensuring that public bodies work towards treating Welsh and English equally

• reviewing all aspects of Welsh language education
Welsh Language Board

Main duties:

• encouraging private companies and voluntary organisations to use more Welsh

• giving grants to promote and facilitate the use of Welsh

• reviewing all aspects of Welsh language education

• marketing the use of Welsh
Welsh Language Board: Internal teams

Chairman and Board members

Chief Executive

- Marketing and Public Relations
- Public Sector and Language Schemes
- Central support services
- Language Planning
www.bwrdd-yr-iaith.org.uk
Welsh language services

A quality service is a bilingual service
Businesses
A strategy for the language

• Increasing the number of people who are able to speak Welsh

• Providing opportunities to use the language

• Changing habits of language use, and encouraging people to take advantage of the opportunities provided

• Strengthening Welsh as a community language
‘A major contribution to the task of drawing up a strategy for the continued revitalisation of the Welsh language’,

National Assembly for Wales Post 16 Education and Training Committee (Feb 2000)
Essential components of language survival:

- Public goodwill
- investment by our institutions
- purposeful language planning
Bilingualism: concrete steps for promotion

Mentrau Iaith – local community language planning agencies

Welsh in the Workplace

Language Transmission Scheme

Area development projects
The aim: to create a bilingual Wales

Bilingualism is a cross-cutting issue in Wales
Achieving the aim will mean putting bilingual policies into practice across the board.

How do we achieve a constant state of bilingualism?
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