

# Sabbatical scheme contributing to one million Welsh speakers

Launched in 2005, the scheme aims to increase the number of bilingual teachers and teaching assistants in Wales. £3.13m was announced last year to support the expansion of the Welsh language Sabbatical Scheme in line with the recently launched Welsh in Education plan which outlines the role education will play in achieving the one million target.

The minister sat in on part of a teaching session and met teachers taking part in the year-long course, aimed at teachers in English-medium primary schools to help them significantly develop their Welsh-language skills.

Other courses available include 25 day and 5 week immersion courses, again aimed at those in English-medium primary schools and a range of part-time courses to practitioners working in Welsh-medium schools or teaching Welsh as a subject in English-medium secondary schools.

The Minister said:

“Education is vital if we are to reach one million speakers, both in terms of increasing the number of Welsh medium schools and in improving and increasing the teaching of Welsh in English medium schools. The sabbatical scheme plays a very important role in this by improving the ability of teachers already in the system to help meet the increased demand.

“It was very interesting to watch some of the session and to speak with the participants, in Welsh, to learn about their experiences on the course and their plans to implement strategies to raise standards in Welsh on return to their schools. I thank them for their commitment to the language and I hope this course gives them the confidence to make a difference once they’re back in the classroom.”

Dr Lowri Lloyd, Director of the University’s Welsh Language Services Centre said:

“It was a pleasure to welcome the Minister to the university to see the course in action. It’s an investment which shows the Welsh Government is serious about reaching one million Welsh speakers by 2050 and contributes directly towards implementing the new curriculum. It was also an opportunity and a privilege for the teachers to show the Minister the progress they have made so far.”