

Events fair celebrates language centre success

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AN events fair was held in Porthmadog to pay tribute to the outstanding work of Gwynedd's language centres.

The centres provide young Welsh learners with an intense language course so that they can go on to take full advantage of complete bilingual education. The pupils follow a carefully constructed course so that they become fluent and also develop their reading and writing skills. Between September 2005 and the summer of 2011, a total of 1,173 children had passed through Gwynedd's language centres.

During the recent event, in Y Ganolfan, there were singing and acting performances by children from all the centres and those attending had the opportunity to speak to children as they took part in various activities with computers, mathematics, reading and board games.

There are four language centres for primary school pupils in Gwynedd (Maesincla, Llangybi, Penrhyndeudraeth and Dolgellau) and one Secondary Language Centre at Porthmadog.

Cllr Sian Gwenllian, Gwynedd Council's Cabinet member for education, said: "This innovative and unique scheme was introduced back in the 80s. Over the years, hundreds of non-Welsh speaking children, who have moved to Gwynedd to live, have had the opportunity to learn the language and also to learn about Welsh traditions at these special centres.

"I was delighted to be able to congratulate staff on their excellent work. These centres set the foundations for a lifetime of bilingualism and enable children to become fluent Welsh speakers."



Cari Lewis, teacher at Eifionydd Language Centre; Dewi R Jones, head of education; Phyllipa, pupil at Ysgol Ardudwy; Carys Lake, Eifionydd Language Centre headteacher; Abigail Carden, pupil at Ysgol y Berwyn, Cllr Siân Gwenllian, education Cabinet member; Cllr Dyfed Edwards, council leader and Tudor Jones, pupil at Ysgol Eifionydd

Each term, around 16 children attend the four language centres and follow an intense course for a twelve-week period. The pupils have the opportunity to enjoy a wide range of interesting and fun lessons through the medium of Welsh. At the end of the course the children can speak Welsh well enough to allow them to follow their education in Welsh.

As well as supporting children to learn Welsh the centres offer an innovative course for parents. 'Blas ar Gymra' introduces parents who are new to the area to the language, the culture and the local area. Parents get a taste of the language

and a chance to learn more about the area which enables them to help and support their children. This course is offered in all four language centres and has been running for five years.