



(Wrexham.com, 2014).



(University of Birmingham, 2020).



(State of Wales, 2018).

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Navigating Controversy:

The Welsh Language and Access

to Education in

Policy changes.

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(Education UK, 2018).

The Impact of Policy Changes on Welsh Language in education and Access to education.

Changes to educational policy often spark heated debate, particularly on Welsh language education and educational accessibility in the UK (Bartlett & Burton, 2016).

Since 1840, educational policy changes have had a considerable impact on the Welsh language as English has become more prevalent in school. This has resulted in a reduction in Welsh-medium education, which poses difficulties to linguistic heritage and cultural identity. During this time, discrepancies in educational possibilities based on economic status, geography, and language competence have made access to education a controversial subject. These concerns highlight the difficulties in preserving the intended language while guaranteeing fair access to schooling for all students (Bartlett & Burton, 2016).

It is regarded difficult to strike a balance between the need for strong educational standards and the growth of bilingualism, since various opinions add to the controversial character of both topics. Concerns about the possible influence on academic performance abound, although there is support for the construction of more Welsh-medium schools as a tactic to boost cultural pride.

This scrapbook will focus on two major issues: the history of the Welsh language in educational contexts and access to education. This scrapbook will use academic resources from the past, present, and future to demonstrate the importance of these issues' influence on education in the nation throughout the 1800s (Warren, 2009).



(Wales online, 2014).

Welsh language education.

The Welsh language and its role in education are very complicated and have been a major cause of dispute within Wales' educational system. The history of this language is more complicated than it seems, especially when considering the publishing of "Treachery of the Blue Books," the formation of the Welsh Not, and the effect of the Rebecca riots on Welsh culture. Understanding these components is critical because they highlight the difficult historical backdrop of the Welsh language in the educational system.

"Treachery of the Blue Books."

In 1847, the British government formed a committee consisting of Henry Vincent, John Frost, and Zephaniah Williams, three English-speaking persons not of Welsh origin, to study the quality of education in Wales and furthermore published the report known as the "treachery of the blue books." This study criticises the Welsh language as a barrier to learning and makes serious criticisms of the Welsh education system for its perceived shortcomings. Their stance is that English should be taught in schools as the major language, not the local language. The majority of Welsh speakers found this viewpoint insulting, which created a feeling of distrust throughout the community. The aforementioned assertions sparked a campaign to promote English while limiting Welsh use, damaging the Welsh language (Jones, 2020).

Welsh Not.

The Welsh Not was used in educational institutions as a disciplinary tactic in reaction to the critiques made in the Blue Books. The Welsh language was intended to be repressed and used as a case study in the educational system. When a student was captured speaking Welsh, they were given a wooden token, which was usually tied around their neck with a string and then passed on to another person who was also caught speaking Welsh. The student found in possession of the Welsh Not at the end of the day would be punished, usually via physical methods such as caning. This perception was reinforced by the thought that speaking Welsh was undesirable. This sign served as a direct reaction to the criticisms expressed in the Blue Books, cementing the division between Welsh culture and the English-dominated educational system. This had a profound and long-lasting influence on the relationship between language, identity, and education in Wales, since it reflected external societal forces seeking to eradicate Welsh identity and culture (Education-UK, 2007).



(Wrexham.com, 2014).



(Mwy o Stori'r Iaith, 2024).



(History Points, 2024).

Rebecca Riots.

The Rebecca riots were a series of disturbances over tollgate charges in rural Wales that occurred between 1839 and 1843. The protestors, also known as Rebecca's daughters, assaulted tollgates while disguised as women.

The riots, being primarily driven by economic grievances, exposed deeper socioeconomic inequities, such as the undervaluation of the Welsh language in education and culture. The upheaval shows people's worry over the British government's disregard for Welsh identity.

Following the Rebecca riots, there was a revived appreciation for Welsh culture and language, which prompted proposals for its inclusion in the national school curriculum. The riots served as a catalyst for change, uniting Welsh-speaking locals and launching a movement to revive the Welsh language (Davies, 2019).



(Wikipedia, 2009).

Rebecca's riots are particularly crucial for promoting the Welsh language in school, considering the Blue Books' long-term impact. These events not only emphasise the need of addressing economic difficulties, but they also serve as a potent symbol of cultural identity for Welsh speakers. The relationship between the riots and the campaign to resuscitate the Welsh language reveals how social instability resulted in significant advancements in education, strengthening community pride in its heritage. Language and cultural identity are inextricably linked, emphasising the ongoing fight for minority language acceptance and respect (Davies, 2019).

Analysis of perspectives against the use of Welsh language in education.

Several significant influences and institutions opposed the use of the Welsh language throughout the 1800s. The writers of the papers, notably Henry R. W. Jones, contended that teaching Welsh hampered children's ability to learn English and integrate into British culture. This claim contradicts the debate in this scrapbook on the negative impact of blue books on the Welsh language, particularly in educational settings (Davies, 2019).

Lord John Russell, the British Prime Minister at the time, also had a considerable effect. He handled the Blue Books and was a strong champion for teaching English in schools rather than Welsh in order to foster economic progress and national harmony. The Welsh language is seen as substandard, while English is regarded as critical for success in a fast industrialising society (University of Wales, 2016). Welsh Methodist preacher Thomas Charles had similar views, pushing for education while stating that English teaching was required for pupils to flourish in a primarily English-speaking culture (Davies, 2019). Sir Hugh Owen, who was originally an advocate for English as the dominant language in education, subsequently changed his mind and became a proponent of Welsh, a substantial departure from his earlier attitude (University of Wales, 2016). These viewpoints resulted in policies and practices that marginalised Welsh in educational contexts, reflecting a larger cultural conviction in the perceived superiority of English language and culture over Welsh (Davies, 2019).

Analysis of perspectives promoting the use of Welsh language in education.



(WalesOnline, 2014).

In the 1800s, there were a number of significant individuals who fought for the teaching of Welsh in schools. This was due to the fact that they understood the significance of Welsh culture and identity towards the nation's preference for the original language. According to Davies (2014), the preservation of the Welsh language throughout this time period was closely related to the nation's sense of pride and identity.

Lolo Morganwg, a well-known Welsh poet and antiquarian, campaigned for the teaching of the Welsh language as a means of preserving Wales' past.

Evan James, in a similar manner, advocated for the culture and identity of Wales. He is well recognised for the lyrics that he wrote for the Welsh national song, which is called "Hen wlad fy hadau." It was his contention that the teaching of Welsh in schools would foster a sense of national unity (Davies, 2014).

Sir John Rhys was a patron of Welsh language education and a proponent of its implementation in educational institutions. (Davies, 2014) David Hughes was of the opinion that teaching Welsh in schools might potentially improve the educational performance and literacy levels of pupils who speak both Welsh and English. Their concerted efforts led to the establishment of Welsh language schools and the incorporation of Welsh into the curriculum, so ensuring the language's survival for future generations (Davies, 2014).

In spite of the difficulties that Wales encountered in the 1800s, the support of these individuals paved the way for more acceptance and revitalisation initiatives for subsequent generations of Welsh speakers. They took steps that contributed to the continuation of Welsh instruction in educational institutions. Their perspectives highlight the importance of bilingual education, which enables children who speak Welsh to acquire knowledge in their native language while simultaneously enhancing their proficiency in the English language (Davies, 2014).

(BBC News, 2015).



(Wikipedia, 2020).



ARDWYN SCHOOL,

(BBC News, 2015).

Context, Controversial Issues, and Foundational Values of the Education Act.

One of the most significant reforms in UK educational history was the Education Act of 1870, often referred to as the Forster Act. With this law, the government made its first effort to make primary education universal in England and Wales. The Industrial Revolution, when the Act was passed, was a period of profound social and economic change. As society became more urbanised and industrialised, it became necessary for workers to be more numerate and literate (Lowe, 1997).

Prior to 1870, Wales and England had uneven and mostly uncontrolled educational systems. Attendance was not required nor ubiquitous, and schools were mostly controlled by religious institutions, especially the Church of England (Stephens, 1998). Since 1833, the government has been involved only in minor contributions to voluntary schools. However, the need for a better organised and accessible educational system was highlighted by growing public demand and social reform groups that were inspired by liberal political principles and utilitarian philosophies (Simon, 1965).

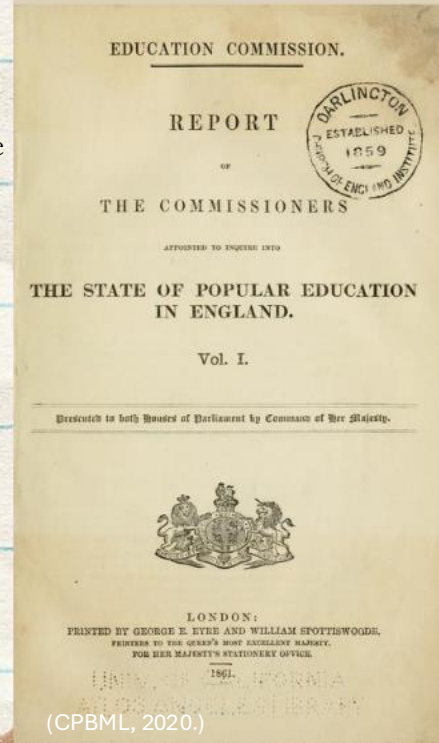
The Reform and How It Was Put Into Practice.

In the Liberal administration of Prime Minister William Gladstone, William Forster, the Vice-President of the Committee of the Council on Education, sponsored the Education Act 1870. The Act gave School Boards the authority to construct and run new schools in regions where the voluntary service that was already in place was inadequate. Although compulsory education was not imposed until the 1880s, it also included provisions for school attendance and permitted the imposition of municipal charges to finance education (Gillard, 2018).

Liberal ideologies that placed a strong emphasis on education as a means of advancing society and improving individuals served as the foundation for this transformation. Thinkers like John Stuart Mill had an impact on the Act, which demonstrated a conviction in the transformational potential of education to alleviate poverty, foster civic engagement, and bolster economic expansion. These principles, however, often ran counter to the conservative opinions of those who were concerned about the decline of religious influence in education (Lowe, 1997).



Cove Collective (n.d.)



(CPBML, 2020.)

Contentious Matters Concerning the Education Act of 1870

Deep rifts in political, religious, and social beliefs were reflected in the debated Education Act of 1870. The conflict between secular and religious education was one of the main problems. The formation of state-funded schools was feared by the Church of England, which had controlled the provision of education, to weaken its position (Aldrich, 2006). Conversely, nonconformists backed the Act because they saw it as a step towards breaking the Church's educational monopoly. The "Cowper-Temple Clause," which forbade religious education in Board Schools that mirrored the beliefs of any one religion, was the result of this dispute (Gillard, 2018).

The idea of local governance and finance was another contentious topic. Taxpayers opposed the implementation of rates to fund schools, especially in rural regions where there was less of a demand for new schools (Stephens, 1998). The quality of education offered under the Act was another topic of discussion. Critics said that the emphasis on fundamental reading and numeracy, motivated by practical economic requirements, disregarded more general educational objectives like encouraging critical thinking and creativity (Simon, 1965).

The Act's partial provisions were also criticised. It established a dual system that maintained disparities in quality and access by maintaining voluntary schools while only adding Board Schools. Although this compromise was criticised for not creating a fully global system, it was seen as a political necessity to appease religious organisations' resistance (Lowe, 1997).

The Education Act of 1870's Significance.

There were several reasons why the Education Act of 1870 was important. It set the stage for further changes that eventually resulted in the implementation of free and mandatory education. A change in community beliefs towards seeing education as a public benefit rather than a private or charity endeavour was signaled by the recognition of the state's involvement in education (Aldrich, 2006).

The fundamental principles that still influence education in England and Wales were also brought to light by the Act. These include the need of education to promote social and economic advancement, the significance of striking a balance between secular and religious values, and a dedication to equality of opportunity. These principles continue to be crucial in discussions about the function and delivery of education today.

Critical evaluation of Education Act 1870.

The complexity of the values in education policy and the balancing of competing interests are rooted in the education act of 1870. The Cowper-Temple clause is a prime example of this, as it was a compromise that aimed to reconcile religious and secular interests but still allowed for ongoing debates regarding the role of religion in education. Similar to this, the dual system ensures equality within a system that is based on historical inequalities. This is significant because, before to the act, education was mostly governed by the Church of England, resulting in access to school being often contingent upon religious teaching (Gillard, 2018). This section forbade religious instruction at Board Schools that represented the principles of certain faiths, thereby guaranteeing a more inclusive educational environment in these institutions. Nevertheless, a compromise persisted that permitted religious influences on priests, resulting in continued discussions over religion in education. This provision was crucial since it signified a transition towards secularisation in public education, enhancing accessibility for those outside the Church's authority, particularly Nonconformists and working-class families (Bartlett, 2019).

From a critical standpoint, the act's emphasis on fundamental education is a reflection of its economic imperatives, which can be interpreted as both a strength and a limitation. Although it addressed immediate societal requirements, it also perpetuated a restricted viewpoint on education that overlooked more expansive developmental objectives. The act increased educational access for adolescents with limited prior education; however, it perpetuated disparities, as voluntary schools, often underfunded and inconsistent in quality, coexisted with better-funded Board schools. Although this approach balanced competing interests, it did not achieve complete equality (Jackson, 2017).

This tension reflects the ongoing debates regarding the purpose of education—whether it should be predominantly focused on economic, social, or individual objectives (Evans, 2020).

The Education Act of 1870 expanded educational access and responded to economic and social needs, representing both a significant milestone and a compromise in the evolution of education. The tensions between competing values, such as religious versus secular interests and equity versus tradition, were embedded within the Cowper-Temple Clause and the dual system. These elements exemplified compromises that facilitated the Act's implementation while leaving unresolved debates regarding the purpose of education, which continue to influence contemporary policy (Gillard, 2018; Jackson, 2017).





Opposition to the Education Act 1870: Key Figures and Their Impact.

Figures such as John Bright, Edward Baines, Charles Newdigate, and Henry Richard predicted that the Act would lead to a variety of crises, including religious inequality, financial load, and the role of state vs voluntary institutions in education. Their opposition illustrates the conflicts and compromises that have created the educational system to this day.

John Bright, a Radical Politician and Nonconformist Leader at the time, held the contrary view that schools should not receive coercive financing via local taxes since it creates a financial burden on taxpayers. He advocated for voluntary education, believing that governmental involvement harmed human responsibility and compassion (JSTOR, 1907).

Charles Newgate, a conservative MP, supported the Church of England's position in education. He opposed elements of the Act that restricted the Church's power, notably the establishment of secular Board Schools, which he felt would weaken the impact of religious education (Hansard, 1873).

Henry Richard, a nonconformist MP and supporter for secular education, condemned the Act because it strengthened the Church's privileged position by subsidising voluntary schools. He saw the Cowper-Temple Clause as insufficient, feeling it still permitted too much religious influence in schools (JSTOR, 1907).

Together, these influences created a complex dialogue that balanced the need for universal education with concerns about government intervention, religious influence, and community values. Their combined impact helped lay the groundwork for the educational reforms that followed, influencing how education is perceived and structured today.

Policy Changes: Welsh Language and Education Access.

Education policy in Wales and the UK has evolved and been a hot topic, particularly over Welsh language education and school access. Both show how difficult it is to execute widely approved reforms due to social, political, and cultural opposition. Despite attempts to eradicate Welsh, such as the "Welsh Not" and "Treachery of the Blue Books," (1847), disadvantaged Welsh speakers prioritised English for teaching. These projects questioned Wales' language and culture because English was apparently more economically beneficial (Jones, n.d.). The Rebecca Riots (1839–1843) revived Welsh-medium education. Welsh language champions Sir John Rhys and David Hughes advocated bilingualism to retain identity and boost academic success (Davies, 2014).

The Education Act of 1870 highlighted gaps in access to basic education, including conflicts between state and voluntary power, secular and religious ideals, and equity vs. tradition. The Act built parallel voluntary and Board schools, preserving inequities. Although lauded and criticised for its concessions, the Cowper-Temple Clause opposed ecclesiastical power (Gillard, 2018). Political figures like John Bright opposed school taxation, while Henry Richard opposed the Act's Church

Authority growth (JSTOR, 1907). Welsh language education and school access, like other education policy challenges, present economic needs vs cultural preservation and inclusivity versus established power structures. These initiatives sometimes marginalised minority voices or exacerbated inequality,

leaving unresolved challenges pertinent in present policy debates even if they met immediate social demands. This scrapbook takes a

historical and scholarly perspective to examine the impact of educational reforms on Welsh identity and access.

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