

Case Study: Boomerang Playgroup

Boomerang Playgroup is a welcoming, community-based provision in Cardiff which caters to a diverse range of families — many of whom have relocated to Wales from other parts of the UK. The playgroup's ethos aligns strongly with inclusive, family-led development, making it an ideal setting for the delivery of the **Cydweith Cymraeg** programme.

Over a number of weeks, the programme engaged a consistent group of **5 children and 4 parents**, with additional families attending on a drop-in basis. Weekly attendance averaged **6 parents**, creating a small but committed group who quickly formed a supportive learning community.

Starting Points and Parent Motivation

Most parents who attended the programme had **limited or no prior Welsh language experience**. Many openly shared their initial anxieties about how they would support their children in school, especially if they chose Welsh-medium education. The desire to better support their child's development was a powerful motivator.

For these families, the programme offered more than language instruction — it offered reassurance. It provided a welcoming space where parents could **learn alongside their child**, with no judgement and no pressure to “get it right.” Through song, play, and repetition, parents began to recognise patterns in the language and feel more comfortable using simple phrases both in and beyond the sessions. One father reflected:

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I've gained confidence because I've pretty much doubled the number of Welsh words I know — not including numbers. Before I could count to three, and now you've taught me to count to 99!

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His testimony speaks not only to learning outcomes, but to **self-perception and confidence**, which are critical in shaping whether Welsh continues to be used at home.

Session Design and Child Engagement

The sessions at Boomerang were designed to be age-appropriate, playful, and responsive to children's developmental stages. Activities included singing, movement, simple parachute games, and bilingual stories. A strong emphasis was placed on **modelling language** in meaningful, interactive contexts allowing both children and adults to learn organically.

One child, Ben, particularly enjoyed rhyme time. Though developmentally still working on his attention span, the session rhythm, repetition and positive energy supported his engagement. His joy visibly influenced the adults around him, creating a shared learning atmosphere that felt natural and collaborative.

Children quickly began to respond to key Welsh words, phrases and songs. Parents noted that Welsh was beginning to emerge at home through greetings, naming colours, and counting. These spontaneous uses outside the setting were some of the clearest indicators of impact.



Ben has absolutely loved rhyme time. Obviously, with a developmentally appropriate attention span! Thank you so much for running the sessions.



Cultural and Intergenerational Reach

A particularly powerful story emerged from one family who invited a grandmother from London to attend a session. Although she had no background in Welsh, her experience was so positive that she returned home and began **learning Welsh herself** to better connect with her son and grandson's language journey.

This anecdote speaks to the **intergenerational and cultural resonance** of the programme. When the Welsh language is introduced in a fun, accessible and inclusive way, it becomes a point of shared interest — not only between parent and child, but across families and generations.

Key Insights and Learning

1. **Parents are more engaged when learning is collaborative.**

Programmes that model interaction rather than instruct it help parents feel more confident using Welsh at home. The act of joining in songs, copying simple instructions, and observing their children respond gives adults the assurance they need to keep going.

2. **Children act as language champions.**

In this setting, children often led the way — singing songs at home, prompting Welsh greetings, and taking pride in what they had learned. Their enthusiasm encouraged their

parents and reinforced the idea that Welsh wasn't "hard," just different — and worth embracing.

3. Consistency breeds confidence.

Parents who attended multiple sessions were far more likely to report using Welsh outside of the sessions. The informal, low-pressure nature of the programme supported gradual growth and created space for reflection and celebration of small wins.

4. Welsh-medium education became more tangible.

Several parents who had previously been unsure about Welsh-medium education expressed increased confidence in choosing it, now that they had been given a foundation and better understood the benefits and day-to-day realities of using Welsh.

5. Supportive settings enhance sustainability.

The Boomerang staff's encouragement and openness contributed greatly to the success of the programme. By welcoming Welsh into the existing rhythms of the playgroup, they ensured that families felt safe, curious, and supported all of which helped Welsh take root.

Conclusion and Outcomes

Boomerang Playgroup's delivery of Cydweith Cymraeg was a strong example of how child-parent collaboration, delivered in an accessible and inclusive environment, can lay the foundation for long-term Welsh language development. Families left with more than vocabulary; they left with belief in their children's abilities, in their own, and in Welsh as something they could now be part of.

From hearing Welsh songs at the breakfast table to exploring Welsh-medium schooling options, the impact of the programme extended far beyond the sessions themselves. By focusing on connection over correction, play over pressure, and shared joy in learning, Cydweith Cymraeg helped families at Boomerang take their first steps into Welsh together.

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