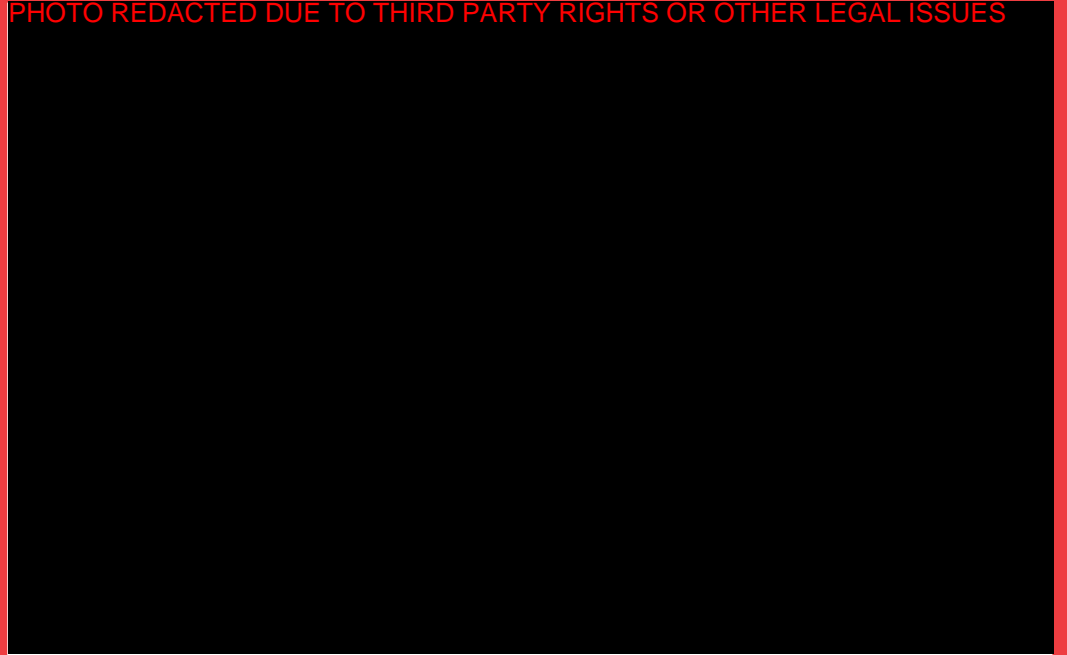


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# The Learning Country: Vision into Action

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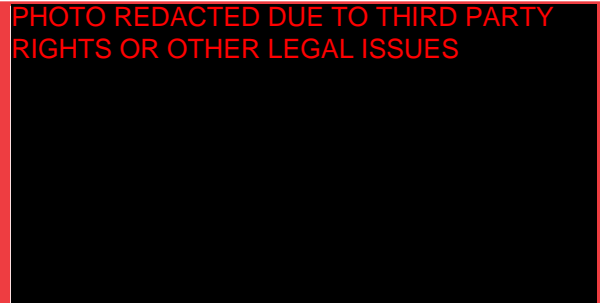
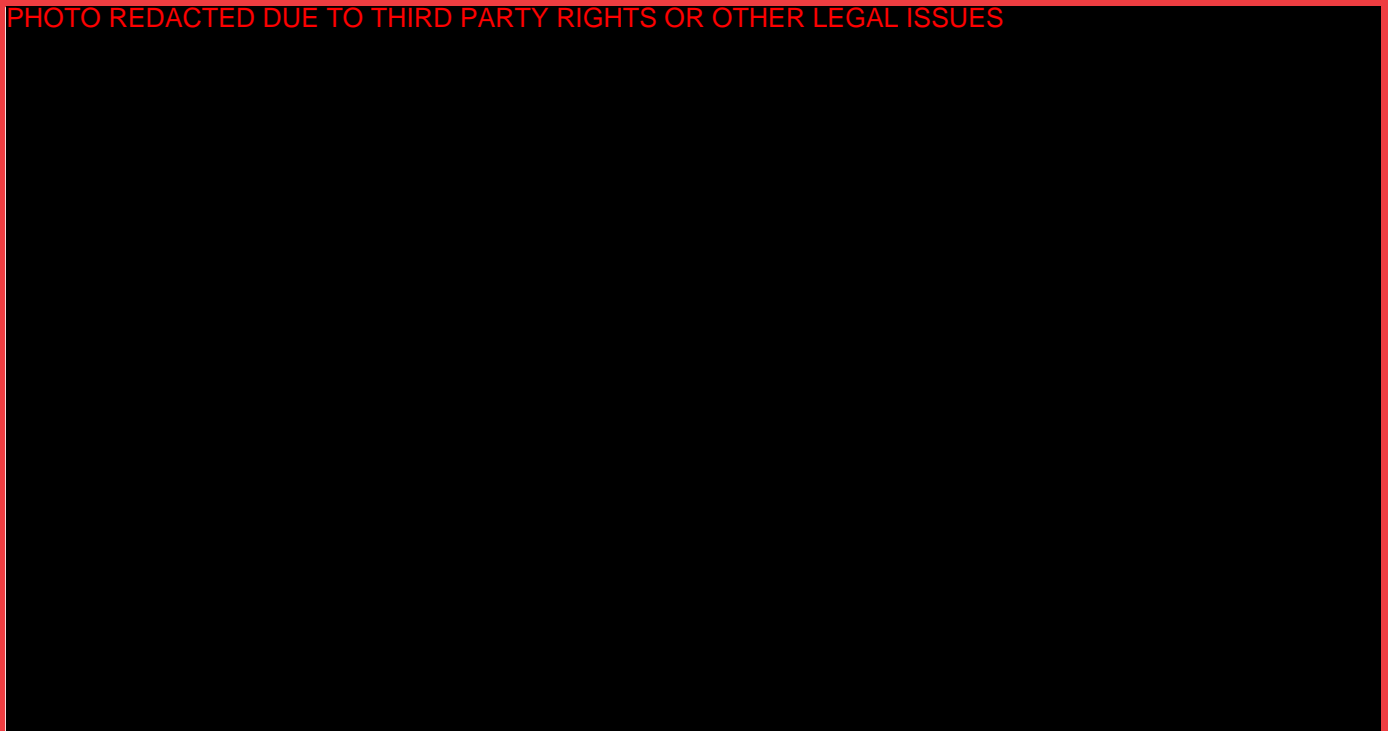


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# Vision into Action

## Minister's foreword

NELSON MANDELA HAS MADE THE FOLLOWING OBSERVATION:

**"Vision without action is merely a dream. Action without vision just passes the time. But with vision and action you can change the world."**

When we published *'The Learning Country'* in 2001 our intention was to provide a ten-year strategy that would embody vision and action, so that we might transform education and lifelong learning in post-devolution Wales. As this successor document demonstrates, the vision remains constant, although we have used the opportunity to both reaffirm and update it. There is much that we have achieved in the way of actions: but there is also much more to do in the period through to 2010 and beyond. This document sets out, in a new way, our future plans so that they are transparent and show our clear sense of purpose.

Our education system here in Wales is undergoing radical change. By 2010, the increased education and training opportunities in Wales will bear very little resemblance to those available at the advent of the Assembly in 1999. Our aim is to ensure the best possible environment to encourage learning at all stages in people's lives. At each step along the way, these changes have been supported by those working within education in Wales, and as we launch our next big step with this document, I hope we can all take pride in developing this agenda together.

A child born today - let's call her Megan - will have unprecedented new opportunities to develop to the limits of her ability, rather than the limits of the system. Let's look at what her

experience might be. If Megan is part of the new Flying Start programme for babies to three year olds, she and her parents will have dedicated health, education and childcare support to prepare her for the new Foundation Phase to be introduced across Wales for 3-7 year olds in 2008 with its emphasis on active learning. She will eat free healthy breakfasts at school in the morning and the school will provide healthy food throughout the school day.

As she moves up through primary school, she will follow a curriculum which will offer her a rich range of opportunities and experiences. She will be assessed by teachers who will use that assessment to inform Megan's learning and ensure she is given the best possible support in the move to secondary school through statutory transition planning. She may choose to stand for election to the school council or to support the school's eco-committee.

Her education will take place in buildings which will have been extensively refurbished or even replaced over the previous decade. The curriculum that she will follow up to the age of 14 will be built with a focus on the skills that she will need for future success in education and employment.

At the age of 14 Megan will have to make



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important choices about her future. She will have the chance to follow high-quality courses that will take her either along a traditional route to GCSEs and A levels, or a new vocational learning route that will be well established by this time. Both could lead to study in further or higher education, as well as to high-skilled employment. Megan has already decided, with the support of her learning coach to undertake the vocational route and hopes to do a Modern Apprenticeship in the field of engineering. Whichever route she takes, her achievements will be captured in the Welsh Bacalaureate which will broaden her learning experience and enable her to demonstrate the right skills for university or the world of work.

Whatever the pathway she follows, Megan will be encouraged to participate in full-time education and training until she is at least 19. This will give her the foundation skills that she will need to succeed in the modern economy. Whether she goes on to university then, or later in her life, hopefully she will have gained a passion for learning that will last her for life and will be as much about her enjoyment and wellbeing as her economic security.

I said in my foreword to the original Learning Country document that education and training are of the first importance for Wales. I remain committed to that view and to making Wales a

place where everyone has the opportunity to learn and to prosper. Wales has begun a revolution in education and lifelong learning. Our vision for the future of learners is clear. *"The Learning Country: Vision into Action"* outlines the strategy and priorities we will be taking forward over the next few years to make that vision a reality.

Vision into Action is also intrinsic to the delivery of our Child Poverty Implementation Plan and we shall drive both strategies with vigour and commitment.

The proposals set out in this document take full account of Making the Connections; and of the strong support that agenda has received from the Beecham Report on public service delivery. Our plans are learner-focused, community oriented and founded upon the collaborative principles which underpin our broader approach to public service improvement for Wales - on which the Assembly Government will be making a further statement shortly in the context of its response to the Beecham Report itself.

**Jane Davidson AM**  
*Minister for Education,  
Lifelong Learning and Skills*

# Early Years and Inclusion

## Outcomes:

- **45 Integrated Children's Centres by 2007**
- **Free breakfast initiative rolled out to all primary schools that want it by 2007**
- **Complete the implementation of the Foundation Phase of education by 2011**
- **Six specialist regional centres for additional learning needs to be established by 2007**

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## WHAT DOES OUR ANALYSIS AND RESEARCH TELL US?

- Early and intensive intervention in education and care produce benefits for the individual and society that are experienced across the lifespan, particularly by the most disadvantaged children
- An early years curriculum based on active learning and including elements of play and assessment for learning, is capable of increasing the engagement, enjoyment and achievement of our youngest children
- All children have the ability to learn and to succeed in education. Through providing for the additional learning needs of pupils, including those with specific learning difficulties and those who are able and talented, we can maximize their achievement
- High levels of health and fitness, including good nutrition, play an important part in the motivation, wellbeing and achievement of learners
- Developing an appropriately qualified and well-trained workforce is critical to the success of early years education and care

## WHAT ARE WE CURRENTLY DOING?

- Taking forward the Flying Start programme for children aged 0-3 living in disadvantaged communities, supported by other complementary programmes including Cymorth, Sure Start, the Basic Skills Strategy, the Parenting Action Plan and the Childcare Strategy – to target the needs of young children and parents and improve outcomes for the most disadvantaged
- Piloting the Foundation Phase for 3-7 year olds in 42 maintained and non-maintained settings across Wales

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- Working with Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin and Trinity College Carmarthen to train early years practitioners to deliver the Foundation Phase through the medium of Welsh. To date 440 have completed their training and a further 300 have enrolled on the programmes
- Developing an Inclusion Policy and Performance Framework for Wales that builds on a whole school and community approach to meeting additional learning needs
- Urging local authorities to use surveys where appropriate to assess the demand from parents for Welsh medium education
- Piloting joint commissioning of services for children and young people with speech, language and communication difficulties
- Promoting regional collaboration to meet the needs of learners with additional learning needs
- Implementing 'Appetite for Life', the proposals of the Assembly Government's Food and Fitness Working Group and seeking to appoint jointly with the WLGA a Nutrition Champion to take forward the agenda
- Supporting all schools to become involved in the Welsh Network of Healthy School Scheme
- Making available free breakfasts to primary school pupils and introducing improvements to food and fitness in schools, such as the introduction of fruit tuck shops, water coolers and playground markings
- Taking forward "Childcare is for Children", our vision of childcare as part of the modern welfare state, available to all parents who

need it and delivered by qualified professionals, dedicated to serving the developmental needs of the children in their care

## OBJECTIVES

### Give young children the best possible start in life

To do this we will:

- Make the services supported by Flying Start available to many more communities over time, based on the evidence of its effectiveness
- From September 2008, roll out the Foundation Phase to all schools and non-maintained early years settings for completion by the end of the 2010/11 school year
- Prepare a workforce development plan with recommendations on actions needed in the next 3-5 years to support the delivery of the Foundation Phase to the quality levels that will be required
- Continue to advocate the take up of the primary school free breakfast initiative
- Ensure that all schools become part of the Welsh Network of Healthy Schools Scheme by March 2010
- Use capital funding from Flying Start to support more integrated centres in disadvantaged areas, bringing together a range of services, including early years education, childcare, play and community development

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## Promote inclusion in education and learning

To do this we will:

- Develop regional provision for children and young people with complex needs, engaging local authorities and Local Health Boards to work more collaboratively to deliver services in accordance with their new duties under the Children Act 2004
- Review the statutory assessment framework for additional learning needs to ensure that individual learners' needs are met effectively
- Ensure that teachers can acquire the necessary skills to work effectively with learners with additional learning needs as part of their initial teaching training and continuing professional development
- Ensure that there is an adequate supply of special needs teachers, educational psychologists, speech and language therapists and other specialists across Wales, working with local authorities to achieve this
- Introduce an action plan in response to the recommendations of the Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills Committee Review of SEN
- Ensure that appropriate quality standards are in place for schools and local authorities to meet a range of additional needs – and take account of the implications for provision in schools, colleges and other settings post-16
- Provide guidance on meeting the needs of pupils with medical needs and on promoting emotional health
- Deliver a strategy for ethnic minority achievement that ensures the needs of all ethnic minority groups, including Gypsies and Travellers, refugee children and asylum seekers are met more effectively
- Deliver an Inclusion Policy and Performance Framework that ensures all learners' needs (including those of disabled children) are met effectively, that teachers and school based support staff have the necessary skills to support a diverse range of needs, that there is equality of access to a range of support services, and that there are robust outcome measures for learners with additional learning needs
- Provide additional support for those learners in the care of the local authority, strengthening the legislative basis for the placement of young people and using the RAISE (Raising Attainment and Individual Standards in Education in Wales) programme to ensure that they are fully supported in their learning, especially during the final two years of compulsory education
- Provide an enriched curriculum and extended learning experiences in recognition that all pupils have a range of abilities, talents and learning needs. In doing so, we will ensure that more able and talented pupils have access to a range of opportunities and challenges to nurture their skills and ensure they reach their full potential

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# Schools and Learning

The Learning Country vision:

*We shall ensure that the benefits of improvements are enjoyed by all, in a fully comprehensive system of learning that serves all our local communities well.*

## Outcomes:

- All school buildings to be fit for purpose on the basis of target dates agreed with individual local authorities
- Primary class sizes to be maintained at a maximum of 30 pupils
- Percentage of pupils achieving the core subject indicator (Welsh or English, maths and science in combination) through teacher assessment by the age of 11 to be 80% by 2010 (2007 milestone - 75%)
- Percentage of pupils achieving the core subject indicator through teacher assessment by the age of 14 to reach 65% by 2010 (2007 milestone - 60%)
- Attendance in secondary schools to be at least 93% by 2010 (2007 milestone - 92%)

## WHAT DOES OUR ANALYSIS AND RESEARCH TELL US?

- There are already significant numbers of surplus school places and the number of pupils in education will continue to decline into the next decade, raising issues of how to best organise school provision to ensure high-quality education and the best value for money
- Based on the evidence of assessment at 7 and 11, performance at these ages has already reach levels of attainment which are as good or better as other countries in the UK. By the age of 14, however, that level of performance has not been maintained
- In order to maintain the improvement in standards achieved in our schools it will be necessary to focus increasingly on:
  - pupils who experience disadvantage
  - the relative under-achievement of boys compared to girls
  - the relative under-achievement of some black and ethnic minority pupils
  - pupils who through non-attendance, poor behaviour, bullying and other causes, become disengaged or excluded
  - schools with pupil outcomes which are below the levels which might be expected of them
- Schools with a good learning environment, including high standards of buildings, make a positive impact on learning
- Community focused schools have a positive impact on pupils' learning and attainment, as well as securing better value for public expenditure

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ISSUES

- There is a body of knowledge on how schools can transform themselves using the outcomes of research on school effectiveness and improvement, which should be more widely employed
- A skills-based curriculum for 7-14 year olds would enable the philosophy of the Foundation Phase to be built upon and prepare for the diversified learning pathways young people will follow in their 14-19 education and training
- Pupils often lose continuity and progression in their learning during the transition from primary to secondary schooling
- The effectiveness of the partnership between the Assembly Government, local authorities, schools, business and voluntary sector is fundamental to the success of education policies
- An increasing proportion of parents are choosing Welsh medium education with 8 new primary and 2 new secondary schools opened since 2000
- to work together in clusters to provide a suitably broad learning experience and smooth progression between Key Stages 2 and 3
- Implementing our targeted strategy Words Talk, Numbers Count to support pupils who are falling behind in reading, writing or number work
- Developing quality standards for pupils with additional learning needs, including the most able and talented children
- Addressing the issue of pupil non-attendance by improving the quality, accessibility and use of attendance information; giving guidance and support to key stakeholders; and identifying and disseminating good practice
- Reviewing approaches to promoting positive behaviour and high levels of attendance in schools in Wales
- Developing an ICT strategy for schools aimed at realising the potential of ICT to transform teaching and learning and improve organisational effectiveness

## WHAT ARE WE CURRENTLY DOING?

- Introducing targeted and funded programmes such as RAISE to help raise standards of achievement in schools
- Reviewing the curriculum to ensure that appropriate skills development is woven through each Key Stage, so that the curriculum promotes and supports personal development and is responsive to the needs of individual pupils
- Requiring primary and secondary schools

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- Reviewing the education welfare service
- Providing £6m of capital funding to improve electronic attendance management systems
- Providing increased resources to assist local authorities and voluntary-aided schools to make all school buildings fit for delivery of the curriculum and properly maintained
- Requiring local authorities to develop plans for capital investment in schools which take account of the sharp decline in pupil numbers and the need to invest in schools which are viable, can deliver high-quality education and can provide facilities for community use
- Supporting local authorities to work collaboratively on capital investment programmes, sharing expertise and good practice
- Requiring local authorities to assess demand for Welsh medium schools places in order to ensure that provision matches needs
- Piloting late immersion and intensive language teaching projects through the medium of Welsh
- Piloting modern foreign languages in primary schools
- Tackling bullying by ensuring all governing bodies have bullying policies in place which have been drawn up in full consultation with staff, pupils and parents
- Combating racism in education by providing guidance for class teachers and schools in identifying, recording and dealing with racist incidents
- Developing a Minority Ethnic Achievement Strategy to assist local authorities and schools to establish a positive school culture and ethos
- Funding the All Wales Schools Programme to address social welfare issues such as substance misuse, community safety, fire safety and financial literacy. The Programme now operates in 97% of primary and secondary schools and from 2006-07 is extending, particularly to engage with disengaged or excluded pupils
- Requiring all maintained primary (excluding infant and nursery), special and secondary schools to have schools councils by November 2006. School councils in secondary schools can nominate 2 members from years 11-13 inclusive to be associate pupil governors on the school's governing body. The governing body must accept such nominations
- Highlighting in guidance to government bodies and headteachers the need for school councils to engage the wider school population to capture and reflect their ideas, opinions and concerns - through class representatives, dedicated school council business discussion time in each class, suggestion boxes, school council web-page and e-mail address, questionnaires, newsletters, school council notice board or other means
- Recognising the crucial role which education at all levels has in helping us achieve the vision and aspirations of Iaith Pawb, our national action plan for a bilingual Wales. Our education system must serve the needs of both our national languages

## OBJECTIVES

### Tackle poverty of educational opportunity and raise standards in schools

To do this we will:

- Raise levels of attainment at the ages of 11, 14 and 16 through intervention targeted on schools where the core subject indicators, and, at GCSE, the average points score, are below national averages and the levels that would be expected set against benchmark information
- Refocus on school improvement so as to narrow the gap in performance - working with local authorities and schools and taking account of existing capacity and expertise in both; the lessons of the Narrowing the Gap project; and the forthcoming requirement under the Education Act 2002 for partnership agreements between local authorities and schools setting out the framework of support to be provided by the authority and the outcomes expected from the school
- Take forward the RAISE initiative to provide additional support for disadvantaged pupils and help to raise their levels of performance
- Improve peer support and challenge between schools to enhance performance in schools facing the most significant difficulties
- Review current approaches to supply teaching and consult local authorities, schools and Estyn on whether these impact on raising standards in schools
- Target improvements in Basic Skills education
- Enrich non-formal learning and help raise standards in basic and key skills as well as in curriculum areas and personal, social and emotional development by promoting Out of School Hours Learning
- Use the Better Schools Fund to support schools to innovate and develop and share best practice, underpinned by robust evaluation
- Develop an ICT Self Review Framework for Wales which will help schools to assess their own performance in the use of ICT to support teaching and learning against nationally agreed benchmarks
- Use average points score as a wider measure of achievement to support a sharper focus on the needs of the learner and development of skills
- Implement, from September 2008, revised curriculum and assessment arrangements which will promote and support the raising of standards, skills and personal development and assessment for learning
- Review the PSE framework in time for the 2008-09 academic year to strengthen the emphasis on values, rights and responsibilities and personal finance education and to extend the framework to age 16 to 19
- Improve modern foreign language learning in Wales by refreshing the national modern foreign languages strategy "Languages Count" by September 2008, to coincide with the implementation of a revised school curriculum
- Issue guidance to school governing bodies and local authorities under section 176 of the Education Act 2002 which will set out the issues that pupils should be involved in, and how governing bodies and local authorities might go about involving pupils in decisions that affect them

## Make all school buildings fit for purpose

To do this we will:

- Promote sustainability and security in the design of new schools and significant refurbishments by requiring local authorities to have regard to the BREEAM standards and to incorporate sprinklers when using Assembly Government grant
- Promote effective procurement and strong project management in the provision of school buildings through collaborative action between local authorities supported by Value Wales
- Provide on average funding of £150m a year to 2009-10 for school buildings; keep under review the progress made by local authorities; consult authorities on the need for investment beyond 2010 and set target dates for individual authorities to reach the fitness target
- Consider developing a link between allocation of funding for capital investment in schools and effective strategic planning by local authorities, based on their asset management plans and their assessment of demand for school places
- Promote schools as a focus for the local community, providing opportunities for out of school hours activities (educational and otherwise) for pupils, their families and the local community, including local voluntary groups; and as a base for other services

## Ensure that all children are safe at school

To do this we will:

- Introduce legislation to make Criminal Records Checks compulsory across the school workforce in Wales
- Act on the findings of the Estyn survey of vetting practices within schools in Wales
- Introduce new legislation to enable the General Teaching Council for Wales to undertake suitability checks on teachers
- Ensure that the endorsed recommendations of the Children's Commissioner's Clywch Inquiry are implemented including the development of a pupil counselling strategy for schools
- Encourage effective action against bullying, including racially motivated bullying and that which may be motivated by the stigma of poverty and disadvantage, building on the guidance set out in "Respecting Others"
- Ensure that children and young people are able to use the Internet safely and appropriately in schools and raise awareness of good practice in the use of online tools in teaching and learning
- Agree the role of school nurses and develop a flexible model of school nursing in Wales
- Require secondary and primary schools to put Transition Plans in place from September 2007 onwards to promote continuity and progression in learning for pupils moving from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3

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## Encourage good nutrition and healthier lifestyles

To do this we will:

- Commission Estyn to examine the extent to which schools and local authorities are taking action to improve health, nutrition and fitness as an adjunct to lifting educational attainment overall
- Appoint jointly with the WLGA a Champion to ensure that the recommendations of the report by the Food in Schools Working Group – Appetite for Life – are fully implemented

## Promote the Welsh Language

To do this we will:

- Extend immersion and intensive language teaching pilot projects which will give pupils access to a greater range of subjects through the medium of Welsh
- Develop targeted measures to address the challenges associated with issues of linguistic continuity
- Continue to support the development of Welsh-medium and bilingual classroom resources
- Work with awarding bodies and others to extend the range of qualifications, particularly vocational qualifications, available through the medium of Welsh
- Address the drift from Welsh first language to Welsh second language in the transition from primary to secondary school
- Increase the proportion of NGfL Cymru resources available in Welsh

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# 14-19 Learning Pathways and Beyond

The Learning Country vision:

*We want to transform provision for 14 to 19 year olds, so that within an overall curriculum entitlement, artificial barriers are broken down to meet the demands of learning in a new century.*

## Outcomes:

- The average points score per 15-year-old pupil for all qualifications approved for pre-16 use in Wales to improve year on year
- The percentage of 15 year olds achieving the equivalent of GCSE grade A\* to C to reach 60% by 2010 (2007 milestone 53%)
- By 2010, no pupil to leave full-time education without an approved qualification
- The percentage of 16-18 year olds in employment, education or training to reach 93% by 2010 (2007 milestone - 90%)
- 95% of young people, by the age of 25, to be ready for high skilled employment and/or further or higher education by 2015

## WHAT DOES OUR ANALYSIS AND RESEARCH TELL US?

- Nearly 50% of our young people who do not attain a level 2 qualification (GCSEs at \*A-C) at the age of 15 often feel that they have 'failed' in education and do not participate in any additional education or training in their immediate futures
- A lower percentage of our 15 year olds attain level 1 (GCSEs at D-G) or level 2 qualifications at the age of 15 than in other areas of the UK
- Young people who are not in education, employment or training at the age of 16 or 18, become disengaged and attain poorly during their education: in the future they are likely to be economically inactive and in danger of exclusion from society
- Young offenders aged 11-17 are 3 times more likely to have very poor basic skills than young people of this age in the population as a whole
- Education is the single most important protective factor in preventing offending and re-offending
- One of the major reasons why young people become disengaged from education before the age of 16 and do not stay in education or training after 16, is because of personal problems and/or a lack of advice on their learning and career options
- The availability and take-up by young people of all aptitudes and abilities in vocational learning is very limited
- Collaboration in 14-19 education and training between schools, further education colleges and work-based learning providers is weak

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- The external evaluation of the Welsh Baccalaureate has recommended the implementation of a staged roll-out at Advanced and Intermediate levels in post-16 education from September 2007
- Professionals other than teachers or FE lecturers, particularly Youth Workers, have a valuable role to play in supporting young people during their 14-19 education and training

### What are we currently doing?

- Introducing new opportunities for 14-19 year olds as part of our Learning Pathways programme, to provide them with enhanced choice and flexibility, including attractive vocational offers for all abilities and participation in a wide variety of experiences, with accreditation of learning wherever possible
  - Reviewing existing qualifications and developing new qualifications to meet needs of learners, employers and higher education in the 21st century
  - Developing the role of Learning Coaches - adults who have been trained to help young people understand and develop their study skills and learning styles and make choices which reflect their aptitudes and potential
  - Raising the capacity of Learning Coaches to use Welsh as a medium
  - Piloting the use of video conferencing between schools and colleges to promote subject specific collaboration, including proficiency in Welsh and teaching other subjects through the medium of Welsh
- Rolling out the Welsh Baccalaureate at Advanced and Intermediate levels in post-16 education and piloting a Foundation level model, alongside the Intermediate model, with 14-19 year olds from September 2007
  - Piloting work-focused learning pathways, working very closely with Sector Skills Councils
  - Promoting the effective participation of children and young people in decision making on issues which affect their lives
  - Working with the Youth Justice Board for England and Wales and other partners to ensure more young people in the criminal justice system can access and benefit from the learning opportunities they need
  - Supporting the effective delivery of Extending Entitlement for all 11-25 year olds across Wales
  - Piloting counselling approaches to ensure that young people who may be facing difficulties continue with their studies

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- Complementing support for learners through specialist, impartial advice and guidance from Careers Wales, working closely with the learning providers and with Learning Coaches
- Developing an education and training system that offers young people between the ages of 14-19 the highest possible quality provision, whether in schools, further education colleges and work-based learning, or through some combination of these

## OBJECTIVES

### **Provide engaging, stimulating, and flexible learning programmes and pathways**

To do this we will:

- Offer a wider range of relevant courses and qualifications and, in particular, a high-quality, employer informed, vocational learning route targeted at young people of all abilities, whilst maintaining GCSE, AS/A level and other established courses
- Provide a Learning Core aligned with the Welsh Baccalaureate where wider skills and experiences will be developed, whichever pathway young people follow
- Use the Credit and Qualification Framework for Wales as a tool to ensure that learning achievement is recognised in 'bite sized' chunks where appropriate
- Offer 14-19 year olds a unique blend of support mechanisms to help them in their

learning, their personal lives and in their career choices

- Develop a collaborative approach between providers, supported by robust financial mechanisms to enable our 14-19 Learning Pathways policies to be delivered
- Ensure 14-19 Networks, including local authorities and other learning providers, work together to develop strategic planning and local implementation
- Ensure that a range of learning opportunities, including those of a vocational nature, and access to a Learning Coach are available through the medium of Welsh
- Develop more and better opportunities for young people to access valuable apprenticeship opportunities to create attractive options for individuals

### **Equip young people to be able to respond to changing employment markets**

To do this we will:

- Enable all learners to acquire the essential skills needed for employment, working with providers and stakeholders particularly the Sector Skills Councils
- Extend the Welsh Baccalaureate, which brings breadth to studies and develops the Key Skills that are important in employment and learning, to be available to 14-19 year olds from September 2007

- Implement revised A levels from 2008 and revised GCSEs from 2009
  - Ensure that Careers Wales continues to provide an all-age service and works with partners to extend services to under-represented groups – and sets new benchmark requirements to upgrade the quality, relevance, and rigour of its services
  - Further enhance Careers Wales Online ([www.careerswales.com](http://www.careerswales.com)) as a flexible, all-age, fully bilingual, interactive web-based support service to individuals that will enable them to take more control in planning and recording their learning
  - Overhaul the partnership systems and arrangements that link Education and Business, taking full account of recommendations from the Vocational Skills Champion for Wales
- Ensure that services meet the needs of young people**
- To do this we will:
- Encourage all partners to evaluate their provision, planning and expenditure for young people in the light of their awareness and understanding of young people's needs, gained through each Young People's Partnership, and through the genuine participation of young people in these decisions
  - Develop a national youth service strategy to set out our vision for youth work in Wales
  - Implement a training and development strategy for youth workers and others working with young people to ensure that the workforce possesses the necessary skills and competencies to work most effectively with young people
  - Ensure that young people have the services, support and opportunities to which they are entitled
  - Encourage children and young people to participate in decisions about services and provision which affect their lives and more generally in the life and work of their schools and communities
  - Ensure that every primary, secondary and special school has a school council in place by November 2006; support adults, children and young people to develop schools which are truly participative, and support Associate Pupil Governors to make an effective contribution to the work of school governing bodies
  - Listen to learners and take account of the messages they give us in designing and refining future provision
  - Encourage learners and staff to make more use of bilingual learning and coaching materials
  - Engage a range of statutory and non statutory agencies in developing opportunities for young people to use the Welsh language outside educational settings



# Supporting Practitioners

The Learning Country vision:

*We want to drive up standards of teaching and attainment in all learning settings, valuing and supporting practitioners to achieve this.*

## WHAT DOES OUR ANALYSIS AND RESEARCH TELL US?

- We should utilise the vastly increased knowledge we have of how learning takes place and what makes for successful learning and teaching
- Improving the quality of initial training, induction and continuous professional development of teachers and post-16 education and training staff has an important part to play in achieving our goals
- Improvements in learning and teaching pedagogy and in the sharing of good practice can contribute significantly to the raising of standards in education and training
- Effective leadership, at all levels, plays a key role in improving the quality of all education and training
- There has been an exponential growth in the number of staff other than teachers and lecturers, who are involved in supporting learners in education and training
- Improvements are needed in the training, qualifications and continuous professional development of this wider educational workforce

## What are we currently doing?

- Introduced a Statutory Induction period for all newly qualified teachers in September 2003
- Introduced an Early Professional Development programme for teachers in September 2004
- Providing funding, since 2001/02, through the General Teaching Council for Wales, to support the individual professional development of teachers
- Developing, with the General Teaching Council for Wales, a professional development framework for teachers that will help identify individual development needs by providing guidance on the skills and competencies that can be expected of teachers at different stages and paths in their careers
- Launched the National Headship Development Programme in 2001
- Made the National Professional Qualification for Headship mandatory for teachers aspiring to the role of headship in Wales to recognise and promote effective leadership
- Introduced the School Workload Agreement to help ensure that teachers in maintained schools are able to focus their time on the teaching and learning of their pupils and that the role of school support staff is properly recognised and supported
- Sharing innovative practice in learning and teaching, through the Pedagogy Initiative, launched in November 2005, to enable

practitioners to learn from each other by sharing experience

- Providing a range of Basic and Key Skills support to practitioners through Words Talk, Numbers Count and the key skills Support Programmes
- Using technological and traditional methods to support the sharing and development of innovative practice and collaboration in learning and teaching across Work Based Learning, Community Learning, Further Education and Schools

## OBJECTIVES

### Extend and enhance the capabilities of our learning workforce

To do this we will:

#### SCHOOLS

- Implement changes in Initial Teacher Training (ITT) provision via the ITT Change Plan (following the Furlong review of ITT Provision in Wales)
- Task the General Teaching Council for Wales with the continued development of the Professional Development Framework, exploring the concept and applicability of Chartered Teacher status
- Refresh the National Headship Development Programme in Wales, taking into account the outcomes of the five-yearly review and the possibility of introducing structured leadership programmes for those beyond the school setting

## ALL SETTINGS

- Develop and improve flexibility of deployment within and across sector boundaries
- Explore ways of paralleling developments on Induction and Early Professional Development that have been introduced for teachers for other staff within and beyond the school setting

## Develop the skills and knowledge of our learning workforce

To do this we will:

### SCHOOLS

- Encourage local authorities to increase their collaborative working to provide high-quality advisory, school improvement and support services for the school workforce
- Provide a bilingual e-learning course for teachers to develop their skills in working with pupils with additional learning needs, working with Higher Education Institutions across Wales to do so
- Ensure a steady supply of specialist staff working with pupils with additional learning needs through the Better Schools Fund
- Support NGfL Cymru to provide online resources for teachers in Welsh and English which are focused on the needs of the Curriculum Cymreig

## ALL SETTINGS

- Develop a five-year strategic plan, based on our pedagogy initiative, to create the expectation that all practitioners in Wales will engage in the most effective learning and teaching, including leading edge research in this important area
- Strengthen the practitioner base in knowledge and application of embedding Key Skills through collaborative student centred learning
- Encourage the development of programmes to accredit and recognise the skills of the wider school workforce beyond teachers and lecturers
- Strengthen the practitioner base in the vital area of literacy and numeracy through our Basic Skills Strategy *Words Talk, Numbers Count*
- Continue work on enhancing the Welsh Medium Incentive Supplement Scheme and consult on a revised scheme offering greater support for the trainees, institutions and schools involved
- Promote a Welsh Language Sabbaticals scheme for primary and secondary school teachers and for FE practitioners and providers and consider its application to school support staff. We will develop a similar scheme for practitioners who are engaged with the Foundation Phase

# Beyond Compulsory Education

## Outcomes:

- The percentage of working age adults with level 1 or above basic skills in literacy to be 80% by 2010
- The percentage of working age adults with level 1 or above basic skills in numeracy to be 55% by 2010
- The percentage of adults of working age with a qualification equivalent to level 2 or above to be 70% by 2010 (2007 milestone - 67%)
- The percentage of adults of working age with a qualification equivalent to level 3 or above to be 50% by 2010 (2007 milestone - 48%)
- The percentage of adults of working age with a qualification equivalent to level 4 to be 30% by 2010 (2007 milestone - 27%)

## WHAT DOES OUR ANALYSIS AND RESEARCH TELL US?

- We are out-performing other countries in the UK in the achievement of Key Skills awards
- Despite improvements, skills and qualifications of working-age adults are still too low
- In certain key growth areas of the Welsh economy there are insufficient workers with the required skills
- Workers who move from level 1 to level 3 qualifications can gain significant improvements in salary levels.
- Improvements are needed in the overall quality of work-based learning
- The overall quality of further education provision is variable
- Provision of post-16 education and training does not always provide young people with an appropriate range of courses and, thereby, contribute to improving participation rates

## What are we currently doing?

- Delivering the *Skills and Employment Action Plan* to improve the levels of skills in Wales and the levels of employment
- Responding effectively to the requirements of the Sector Skills Councils by working to improve skill levels by sector
- Identifying the needs of employers, addressing skills gaps and shortages, identifying barriers to learning and enabling learners and workforces to develop generic skills including basic skills

- Targeting weaknesses and strengths that are specific to Wales through strategic sector programmes developed jointly with the Department for Enterprise, Innovation and Networks
- Ensuring greater collaboration in the post-16 sector to develop networks of provision embracing sixth forms and other providers
- Taking forward an improvement plan for work-based learning to improve the quality and range of provision, thereby helping to lift families out of poverty and combat in-work poverty
- Developing a strategy for community and adult learning
- Addressing economic inactivity through close joint working with the Department for Work and Pensions, Job Centre Plus and Wales Employment Advisory Panel
- Delivering the three-year, all-age basic skills strategy *Words Talk, Numbers Count*, launched in April 2005 and supported by funding of more than £40m
- Developing vocational opportunities, teaching and learning resources, e-learning and video conferencing opportunities and increasing capacity in Welsh medium and bilingual provision
- Appointed a Vocational Skills Champion (until April 2007) to work with employers, learning providers and other partners to identify and help tackle the key barriers that are preventing many learners from obtaining the skills and qualifications that employers really need
- Developing integrated 14-19 provider networks to offer a full range of academic and vocational learning
- Undertaking in-depth reviews of provision, through Geographical and Sectoral Pathfinder projects identifying options for structural reconfiguration, new investment and better partnership working
- Promoting Modern Apprenticeships as a key pathway enabling learners to progress from general education towards their chosen occupation or to higher education
- Seeking to increase the numbers progressing to Modern Apprenticeships through Skillbuild and Foundation Modern Apprenticeships, linking these programmes to the “Combined Apprenticeship” route being developed under 14-19 Learning Pathways
- Introduced a new Workforce Development Programme which provides in-depth support to business, supported by action plans to improve Leadership and Management and to assist more organisations to become Investors in People

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- Introducing a new, consistent Provider Performance Review in further education, work-based learning and community learning
- Implementing the Credit and Qualification Framework for Wales (CQFW)
- Implementing a new demand-led National Planning and Funding System for post-16 provision
- Reforming vocational qualifications to ensure that they meet the needs of Wales, improve levels of skill and educational achievement and command public confidence

## OBJECTIVES

### Improve skills and add value to the Welsh economy

To do this we will:

- Review the strategic mission of the FE sector in Wales. The review will consider the extent to which FE institutions should focus more clearly on economically useful skills; the extent to which they should specialise; efforts to improve quality; the place of self-regulation and other measures to streamline governance; the diverse nature of the sector; workforce development initiatives; and how best to monitor the views of students on a regular basis and to publish the results
- Develop new products – such as the Workforce Development Programme – that will be comprehensive in scope and flexible enough to cover the requirements of individual businesses, jointly with the Department for Enterprise, Innovation and Networks
- Pursue an approach to workforce development which is differentiated by sector, working closely with Sector Skills Councils (SSCs) in the development of their respective Sector Skills Agreements and Sector Qualification Strategies, and taking account of the needs of different types of business
- Ensure that vocational learning routes are clearly informed by the needs of employers and based on National Occupational Standards and robust Sector Qualification Strategies
- Strengthen our policy to become more demand led by working with SSCs, and the Sector Skills Development Agency, to articulate skills demands at a sector level, which will inform prioritisation of delivery through the National Planning and Funding System
- Deliver innovative approaches to create more and better opportunities for high-quality apprenticeships, to meet the skills demand of employers, and offer a credible career path for individuals of all ages
- Develop new approaches to reduce gender stereotyping in learning
- Support Leadership and Management Development training for organisations to help drive forward economic development

- Enable learning at all levels to be acquired in 'bite-sized' episodes and accredited towards whole qualifications by continuing to implement the Credit and Qualification Framework for Wales (CQFW)
- Develop the Welsh for Adults curriculum by unitising the suite of programmes, promoting both participation and progress toward recognition of learning achievements
- Work with partners to establish effective mechanisms for the accreditation of prior learning
- Continue the installation of video conferencing equipment to facilitate e-learning, including linking learners and tutors between schools and colleges learning in and through the Welsh language
- Strengthen union-led learning, building on the successful Wales Union Learning Fund, as part of our wider strategy to tackle basic and other skills in the workplace
- Promote still further the benefits of the Investors in People standard and help organisations to achieve it
- Support the Department of Work and Pensions' welfare-to-work programmes and ensure they meet the needs of Wales as part of a wider drive to raise economic activity rates and help people out of inactivity
- Develop a Wales Offender Learning Journey, setting out the standards of service and delivery of learning for those serving custodial or community sentences, in collaboration with the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) Wales. This will help offenders in Wales move into

sustainable employment, thereby reducing re-offending and helping create safer communities

- Explore the introduction of Foundation Degrees through HE/FE partnerships, linked to our agenda for skills and vocational learning
- Promote the benefits of gaining skills to people of all ages
- Develop skills strategies for specific groups of people such as offenders

## Improve the quality of post-16 learning

To do this we will:

- Drive up the quality of post-16 provision for work-based learning in partnership with Estyn, Fforwm, local authorities, the National Training Federation and the Association of Learning Providers. Our improvement plan for work-based learning will identify additional ways to make these routes more effective
- Develop a suite of indicators against which FE institutions and work-based learning providers in Wales might benchmark their performance, as an essential element of moving towards a greater degree of self-regulation by the sector of its management and governance
- Explore the scope for the establishment of a professional body to set and safeguard professional standards relating to Principals and lecturers within the FE sector and other post-compulsory providers in Wales

## VISION INTO ACTION

### Beyond Compulsory Education: Skills, Further Education and Lifelong Learning

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- Build capacity, improve skills and raise standards for staff in all sectors in order to improve the quality of delivery. We will do this by developing a comprehensive workforce planning strategy (including an enhanced leadership programme)
- Improve the quality of delivery and access to a wider range of learning opportunities by facilitating increased collaboration between FE institutions, so that institutions which develop specialties in particular subject areas can more readily lead in delivering or in organising the delivery of such subjects by arrangement with other institutions. We would expect similar arrangements to develop locally with maintained schools as opportunities for enhancing the range of 14-19 learning opportunities are explored and taken forward
- Facilitate collaboration by supporting more Pathfinder studies and pursuing this outcome by working with local authorities and other partners, including the voluntary sector, to deliver appropriate reconfiguration and change. We will support existing Pathfinder areas in taking forward the recommendations
- Put statutory provisions in place to permit maintained schools and FE institutions to form joint committees in order to formalise governance arrangements for collaborative arrangements
- Encourage formal partnership arrangements including mergers between institutions where they offer clear benefits to learners in terms of the range and quality of learning opportunities to be made available, and the wider access to those opportunities which may thus result
- Develop integrated local learning networks wherever practicable - commissioning Estyn area reviews as appropriate
- Apply the Provider Performance Review in further education, work-based learning and community learning to improve quality, raise standards and share best practice. By 2008 we will not fund provision which, post Estyn inspection, does not have as a minimum grade 3 (acceptable) in all areas of delivery
- Fully implement the National Planning and Funding System for post-16 provision, using information from Future Skills Wales surveys and demand intelligence from the Sector Skills Councils and others to steer future funding decisions. The National Planning and Funding System will work alongside the CQFW - credit will become the basis for funding across all sectors of post-16 provision

### Support the Welsh Language

To do this we will:

- Revitalise Welsh for Adults provision by continuing to strengthen national coordination through the six established, dedicated language centres to help develop learning networks which can deliver high-quality opportunities for people to learn Welsh
- Support staff training in schools, FE and training providers, in the development of Welsh-medium and bilingual provision to increase opportunities for learning through the medium of Welsh
- Commission the development of further teaching and learning resources through the medium of Welsh



# The Future of Higher Education

## The Learning Country vision:

*We want to modernise the collaborative efforts of higher education in Wales, to widen access significantly; improve income generation; lift research activity; and exploit knowledge transfer to the benefit of the economy in Wales.*

### Outcomes:

- The percentage of Research Council funding attracted by HEIs in Wales to rise from 3.3% to 4.5% by 2010
- Research income from resources other than the Research Councils to increase by 100% by 2010 (2007 milestone - 60%)
- The percentage of full time HE students enrolled at HEIs in Wales who are Welsh domiciled to increase from 60% to 70% by 2010 in order to encourage more graduates to work in Wales
- The proportion of Welsh domiciled students in Welsh HEIs undertaking some element of their courses through the medium of Welsh to increase to 7% by 2010
- The percentage of new entrants to undergraduate courses at UK universities from our most disadvantaged communities to rise from 8.9% to 11.4% by 2010

### WHAT DOES OUR ANALYSIS AND RESEARCH TELL US?

- The rate of participation in higher education by 19 year olds from our most disadvantaged communities whilst higher than the UK average, is still to low
- We should aim to retain in Wales more of our 19 year olds who enter higher education in order to improve the percentage of students who after graduation stay in Wales to work
- The employability rates of graduates from our higher education institutions are extremely high
- There is a clear wage premium for those holding graduate qualifications
- We need to grow further the research base of the higher education sector in Wales
- Higher education institutions in Wales are generally smaller than in similar sized countries
- Virtually all young people in Wales who have the appropriate qualifications and wish to access HE, are able to do so. We therefore need to increase the number of young people in our most disadvantaged areas who attain such qualifications

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## What are we currently doing?

- Enhancing partnership working and collaboration between sectors in order to develop a research base which builds on the considerable strengths of the HE sector in Wales and is commercially viable
- Developing the relationship between higher education and the other parts of the education and training sector to secure a much closer alignment of schools, further and higher education, allowing a continuum of lifelong learning
- Introducing a new tuition fee regime from 2007-08 to strengthen the financial base of higher education institutions and enable them to improve access from disadvantaged or under-represented groups through strong outreach activities
- Providing effective financial support tailored to the needs of Welsh students through Student Finance Wales
- Strengthening the capacity of higher education institutions to offer opportunities for students to study through the medium of Welsh. We will also continue to develop our suite of fully bilingual Student Finance Wales services
- Higher education is taking account of credit developments and wishes to ensure that learners on full-time programmes, part-time and access provision can achieve credits at the appropriate level
- Following the Graham Review, developing plans to promote and support part-time higher education
- Reviewing current strategies for promoting access to higher education, in the light of the Rees Report and in partnership with the sector and other key stakeholders

## OBJECTIVES

### Promote reconfiguration and collaboration within the HE sector to improve quality and strengthen research

To do this we will:

- Use *Reaching Higher* funds not simply to support collaboration but more strategically - through the development of world class research groups that will attract the best students and world-class academic talent
- Promote reconfiguration and collaboration in higher education, particularly in relation to the merger of our post-92 institutions in South-East Wales
- Support the developments that will result in Merthyr Tydfil and Ebbw Vale becoming university towns
- Continue to work with the Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales, taking account of developments elsewhere in the UK and beyond

### Improve knowledge exploitation and maximise the contribution of HE to the development of a knowledge economy

To do this we will:

- Use *Reaching Higher* and other funding sources to ensure that the strengths of the higher education sector in science are matched with the strengths in the Welsh economy and other sectors such as health to secure the maximum benefit to Wales

- Take forward the recommendations of the “Nexus Report” in collaboration with the HE sector, and use reconfiguration and collaboration funds more strategically to help deliver the objectives set out in “Wales: A Vibrant Economy

## Enhance Welsh Medium Provision

To do this we will:

- Provide support for expanded marketing initiatives on an all-Wales basis and take action to widen access and progression routes for Welsh-medium provision
- Expect all Welsh HEIs to access the expertise of the UK-wide Higher Education Academy which supports quality enhancement in teaching and the student experience in higher education and excellence in teaching through the medium of Welsh
- Introduce training programmes for new and existing staff

## Support the needs of Welsh students and enable them to participate in higher education

To do this we will:

- Take forward the recommendations of the second Rees Report on the funding of higher education and student support arrangements in Wales, including proposals for subjects not available in Wales
- Develop a National Bursary Scheme for Wales in partnership with the HE sector. The additional income generated by higher tuition fees will enable HEIs to provide

additional, targeted support for students from disadvantaged backgrounds and widen participation by under-represented groups

- Consider the needs of under-represented groups in designing student support mechanisms
- Enhance opportunities for studying part time and the support provided for part-time learners in response to the recommendations of the Graham Review
- Review the ‘Student Finance Wales’ service delivery model to ensure that it is fit for purpose, customer focused and continues to provide value for money
- Evaluate the extent to which the new package of support for Welsh domiciled students studying in the HEIs of Wales encourages more of them to stay, and indeed to start their own businesses here

# Quality Education Service

## WHAT DOES OUR ANALYSIS AND RESEARCH TELL US?

- Achieving at least a minimum level of educational attainment is critical to the happiness, success and wellbeing of individuals in our society
- Early and intensive intervention in education and care produce benefits for the individual and society that are experienced across the lifespan, particularly by the most disadvantaged children
- Reducing levels of child poverty and ensuring that we safeguard our most vulnerable children are important for educational success
- Lifelong learning is crucial for securing employment, personal wellbeing and the participation of individuals in society
- A focus on all of the needs of children, and a unified system of providing for those needs, are important factors in achieving successful outcomes
- Providing children and young people with the opportunity to influence their education and training not only promotes democracy and citizenship but also increases their motivation and achievement

## What are we currently doing?

- Delivering our seven core aims for children and young people, themselves developed from the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Supporting local authorities and the voluntary sector in developing local

partnerships and plans for delivery of service for all children and young people

- Enabling children and young people to participate at all levels through Funky Dragon (the Children and Young People's Assembly for Wales), Youth Forums and Schools Councils
- Taking forward '*Extending Entitlement*' for all young people between the ages of 11 and 25 in Wales to ensure that they can:
  - participate effectively in learning;
  - take advantage of opportunities for employment; and
  - participate effectively and responsibly in their communities

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- Implementing the *National Service Framework for Children, Young People and Maternity Services* which sets out standards that children, young people and their families have a right to receive in Wales in health and social services and related aspects of other services, such as education
- Implementing a range of initiatives under the *Iaith Pawb* banner, our national action plan for a bilingual Wales, which extends from early years through to adult learning
- Implementing the all-age Basic Skills Strategy *Words Talk, Numbers Count* which aims to get the maximum number of people of all ages up to a minimum of Level 1 literacy and numeracy
- Ensuring that adults and older people can benefit from lifelong learning through our Strategy for Older People
- Ensuring that minority and disadvantaged groups benefit from our strategies to tackle inequality and underachievement in schools and other settings
- Removing barriers and providing improved advice and guidance services to help more people into learning and employment
- Ensuring that children and young people are properly safeguarded within learning environments
- Consulting on a youth work strategy

## OBJECTIVES

### Improve services and protection for children and young people

To do this, we will:

- Increase the opportunities for children and young people to participate in all aspects of policy and decision making which impact on their lives, in particular by requiring all primary (excluding nursery and infant), special and secondary schools to have schools councils by November 2006 and supporting the continuing development of local youth forums
- Promote collaboration under the Children Act 2004 to improve the delivery of services for children and young people through partnerships for joint planning, commissioning and delivery, so as to secure effective multi-agency working and information sharing based on the needs of the child
- Give guidance to Children and Young People's Partnerships on the development of Children and Young People's Plans covering all services, including education, which will be required from 2008
- Secure the 10 entitlements we have established for all 11-25 year olds through Young People's Partnerships
- Implement the standards set out in the draft National Service Framework for Children, Young People and Maternity Services

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- Ensure that high-quality early years education and care provision is available to provide the best possible start in life for all our children, including improvements for preventative interventions; parenting; play; childcare; and safeguarding children
  - Provide additional support for those learners in the care of the local authority, using the RAISE programme to ensure that they are fully supported in their learning, especially during the final two years of compulsory education
  - Improve the tools, frameworks, and methodologies that facilitate contact between professionals who support individual children or who have concerns about their development, well-being or welfare to secure early, coherent interventions
  - Implement the Play Policy Implementation Plan, which takes forward children's right to play as set out in the Assembly Government's core aims
  - Develop Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship (ESDGC) by implementing the Action Plan launched in September 2006, which provides a comprehensive agenda for education and training in Wales; implementation to be taken forward by an ESDGC Champion appointed by the Assembly Government
- Respond to the recommendations within the Safeguarding Vulnerable Children Review and the endorsed recommendations of the Clywch Inquiry undertaken by the Children's Commissioner to ensure children and young people are educated within safe learning environments, identifying children and young people who may be in need or at risk and enabling an appropriate partnership response
  - Revise arrangements to prevent unsuitable people from working with children and young people
  - Deliver on the outcomes of the youth work strategy consultation

## Promote equality of opportunity for all learners

To do this we will:

- Help to eradicate child poverty by 2020 through the Assembly Government's Child Poverty Implementation Plan
- Remove barriers to learning for pupils with additional learning needs and re-engage those who are disaffected by implementing an Inclusion Policy and Performance Framework
- Ensure that the Commissioner for Older People gives close attention to matters of access to learning and skills development to encourage more people to remain economically active for longer

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- Ensure that regardless of race, disability, social circumstances, ethnicity, age or gender all learners have access to education and learning opportunities which address their individual needs
- Implement the Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales to enable all learners to climb the learning ladder and to support the development of an inclusive society where everyone has the opportunity to fulfil their potential
- Ensure that learners in Wales are guaranteed high-quality qualifications and have sufficient information to make informed choices about the qualifications that best suit their needs
- Develop a Wales Offender Learning Strategy that provides more appropriate and relevant learning to those serving custodial or community sentences and leads to sustained employment as a means of reducing re-offending and building safer communities

## Improve opportunities and support for Welsh speakers and learners

To do this we will:

- Help to create a bilingual Wales through Iaith Pawb, reviewing progress and developing further action to ensure that our goals are achieved
- Address the drift from Welsh first language to Welsh second language in the transition from primary to secondary school
- Seek to turn the positive initial outcomes of the immersion and intensive language teaching pilot projects into mainstream provision
- Extend the range of qualifications, particularly vocational qualifications, available through the medium of Welsh
- Continue to develop national coordination for the Welsh for Adults programme through the language centres, by improved planning, quality assurance, tutor training, marketing data collection, development of teaching and learning courses and advice to adult learners

THE LEARNING COUNTRY:

## Vision into Action

The Welsh Assembly Government wants Wales to be a place where high quality, lifelong learning liberates talent, extends opportunities, empowers communities, provides better jobs and skills to enable people to prosper in the new economy and creates a sustainable future for our country. Through our education and training policies, we aim to raise levels of achievement and empower children, young people and adults to achieve social and economic well being.

We are taking forward a far-sighted, ambitious agenda for education and lifelong learning. We want to rival the best in the world. We therefore need to learn from the best by sharing experience and expertise. We are positioning Wales within the context of European and global reforms.

Wales is committed to the Lisbon Agenda, which aims to deliver stronger, lasting growth and create more and better jobs. Modernisation of Europe's education and training system is needed to achieve this. Wales is also one of the founder members (and Vice President) of the European Association of Regional and Local Authorities for Lifelong Learning – EARLALL – a network of 20 regions, spread across 9 European countries.

Beyond Europe, we are working alongside UNESCO to develop important initiatives in the fields of education, culture, natural science and

communications. We are helping to establish UNESCO Chairs in the University sector and teacher exchanges, especially with Sub-Saharan Africa. Through Dolen Cymru, we are developing and sustaining the special relationship that has been growing between Wales and Lesotho since 1985, including key education links.

The Assembly Government is a key contributor to the international debate on education reform. Wales is acknowledged on the world stage and our achievements applauded by other countries. We are building the lessons learned from these exchanges into our policies and delivery strategies, developing active and ongoing partnerships with other countries in doing so.

We approach the future with confidence, therefore. I believe the strategy we have in place is the right one for Wales. We have the support and commitment of our partners. And in pursuit of our goals, we are seeking out and applying best practice from across the world. We are well on our way to making Wales a learning country and by 2010 I believe we will have achieved truly great things.



**Jane Davidson AM**  
*Minister for Education,  
Lifelong Learning and Skills*