



ASSOCIATION OF DIRECTORS OF **EDUCATION IN WALES**
CYMDEITHAS CYFARWYDDWYR **ADDYSG CYMRU**

Building A Brighter Future Together

Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to build upon the document developed in 2007, '*Investing in People, Investing in Quality, Investing in Wales*'.

This new document briefly analyses education performance and trends across Wales and then considers the impact of the current drive by the Welsh Assembly Government for modernisation and improvements in local authority performance specifically in relation to Education and Children & Young People.

The paper highlights both strengths and areas of concern in the relationship between ADEW and the Welsh Assembly Government and proposes how these could be addressed.

The intention of the document is to provide a focus for discussion so that a jointly agreed approach can emerge where ADEW, the Welsh Assembly Government, and the Department for Children, Education and Lifelong Learning (DCELLS) and other key departments can work together to support the drive to improve outcomes for children, young people and adults and provide challenge and support where developments are failing to achieve this at a local, regional and national level.

Richard Parry
Chair of the Association of Directors of Education in Wales (ADEW)
14th November 2008

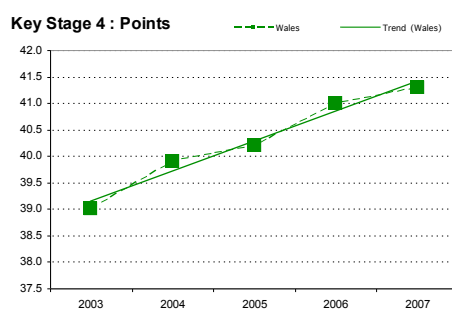
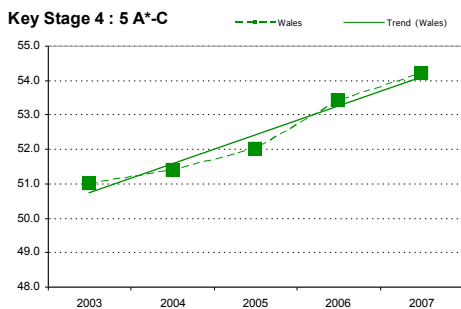
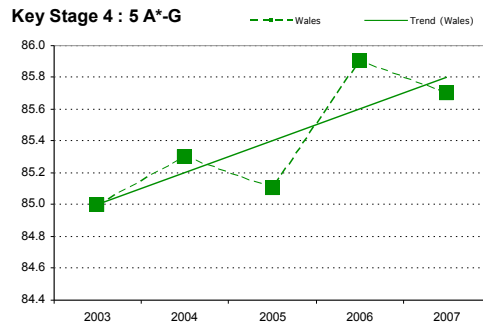
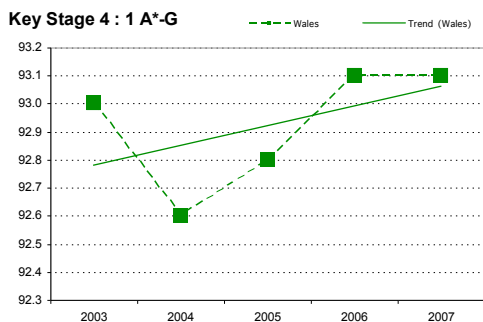
1. Responding To The Challenge To Improve

1.1 Situation Analysis

Key points that help summarise the trends and current situation for Wales:

1.1.1 The positives:

- ✓ Since local government reorganisation in 1996, there has been a general increase in attainment levels as shown by the end of key stage results.
- ✓ This trend is evident over the last 5 years as shown by the graphs below for key stage 4

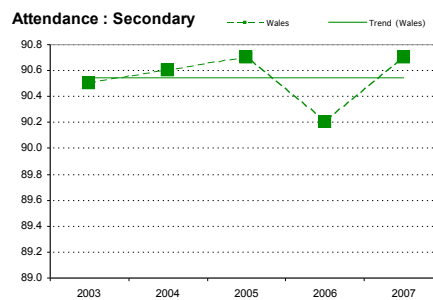
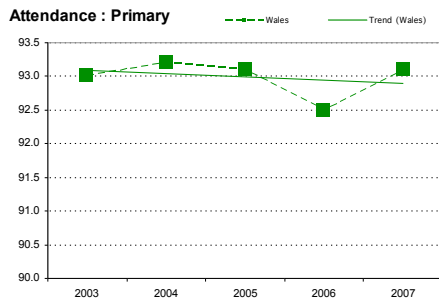


Few schools and units are in special measures Wales 7/1867 (0.37%) and England 256/22734 (1.13%)

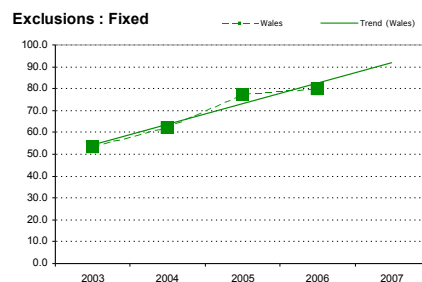
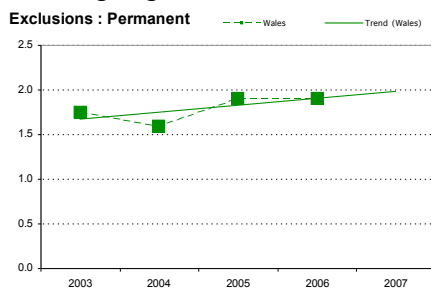
- ✓ The Chief Inspector for Education and Training in Wales in his 2002/2006/07 report indicated that :
 - Primary schools are doing well and have done better than the Welsh Assembly target
 - In secondary schools, standards have improved overall
 - A small but increasing number of schools showed excellence (grade 1) across all seven areas of work inspected
 - Across Wales, the work in the majority of schools is good or better
 - The work in all schools for all key questions in 10 local authorities is satisfactory or better
 - Leadership and management in all schools in 14 of the local authorities is satisfactory or better

1.1.2 The areas for improvement:

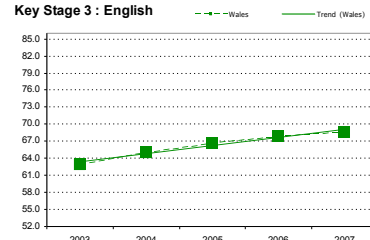
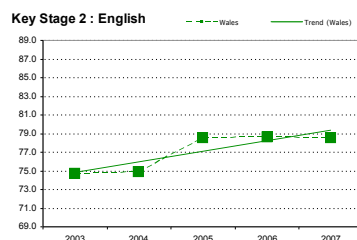
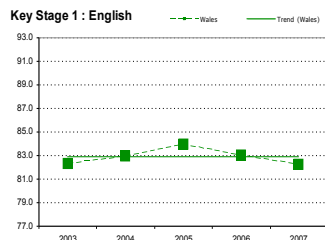
- Attendance trends are slightly on the decline in primary and static in secondary



- Exclusion trends are marginally upwards for permanent exclusions but showing significant increases for fixed term



- End of key stage teacher assessment for English shows an increasing or static trend



- The same trends are evident for end of key stage assessment for both mathematics and science

- The Chief Inspector also reported that :

- The gap between the best and worst schools is getting larger
- Almost one in 10 schools having no outstanding features
- 16 schools in Wales, double the number identified in 2005/06, are causing concern
- The overall rate of improvement in terms of standards is slowing or levelling off
- The quality of education services provided by the sample of local authorities inspected is patchy and, overall, is worse than last year
- The prospects for improvement in the sample inspected were uncertain in two thirds of the local authorities

- Three local authorities have schools whose work has important shortcomings in at least five of the seven key questions
- × The recent PISA international comparisons position Wales poorly in terms of other countries especially some 3rd world. In terms of the 50 countries in the survey, Wales was 27th for reading, 31st for mathematics and 20th for science.

ADEW recognise therefore that there is clear need for a newly energised and focused drive to further improve standards of achievement for all and wider outcomes for children and young people. This must be based upon an evidenced based approach linking the Welsh Assembly, local authorities and schools supported by key agencies such as social services, health, the police, the voluntary sector, probation, youth offending, further and higher education, employers and sector skills councils in terms of delivery and Estyn, CSSIW, WLGA and the Unions as part of the wider infrastructure.

2. Current Areas of Strength And Concerns In Terms Of The Relationship Between The Welsh Assembly And Local Authorities

There are a number of strengths to the working relationships between WLGA, ADEW and DCELLS. However, some aspects of the way Wales is organised and functions seem simple but there are complexities which have recently led to concerns jointly held by the WLGA and ADEW which are creating tensions and dilemmas which need addressing in order to focus on the challenge facing us. These strengths as well as the concerns, tensions and dilemmas tend to fall into two categories – structural and policy.

2.1 Structural

2.1.1. Strengths:

- √ The distinct nature of local authorities in Wales and its compactness supported by close pan-Wales strategies and working and the relationship to the Welsh Assembly compared to England is a strength
- √ Historically there has been a good and close professional working relationship between the way that ADEW and the WLGA have worked with DCELLS, the wider Assembly and other organisations such as the Teacher Unions and Estyn.
- √ Local government in Wales is totally signed up to the requirements of the Children Act and the Welsh Assembly expectations in terms of improving outcomes for children and young people.
- √ Similarly local government is totally signed up to addressing the challenges identified in the PISA report, to raising standards and to school improvement. This links closely to the tri-level reform agenda and the school effectiveness framework
- √ To deliver on all these agendas we require a joined-up approach across Wales
 - √ ADEW has worked in five consortia across the 22 local authorities since 2000 through Consortia Cymru. This initially focused on the

need to manage threshold management for teachers in a coherent way but subsequently it focused on other national performance management requirements and initiatives. More recently the consortia have remodelled to four consortia – north, central south, south west and south east. Each has become a key driver for current and future national and regional developments and in support of the 'Making The Connections' agenda.

- √ In 2004 ADEW remodelled to work through a constitution with a chair and vice chair for two years, an Executive meeting every 6 weeks made up of the chair, vice chair, past chair and the Lead Directors for Consortia Cymru and the standing groups for School Improvement; Inclusion; Children & Young People; 14 to 19, Adult & Community Learning and Finance. Full ADEW meetings and conferences are held 6 times a year including one with the Minister and Cabinet Members and a second attended by key officers from each of the standing groups and their sub-groups This framework, which is reviewed biannually, enables ADEW to respond flexibly in a range of different ways depending upon the regional and national agenda and certainly to any modernisation agenda that emerges from the Assembly
- √ We require an approach which breaks down traditional barriers between key providers at a local, regional and national level such as Social Services, Regeneration, Education, Health, the police and the voluntary sector and provides focused support to individual children and young people. This success of this approach will become more evident as the Single Children Plans require a more strategic approach at a local level.
- √ ADEW already has a close working relationship with ADSS with a national joint strategic group which meets on a regular basis.

2.1.2 Areas of concern and dilemmas:

- × A joined up approach is essential between the Welsh Assembly and local authorities. The need for a joined up approach has been recognised and implemented in local authorities through, for instance, the development of the single children and young people plan. A similar approach is needed across DCELLS and at a cross-departmental level in the Assembly
- × Currently there is an unhelpful level of uncertainty for ADEW in terms of the future relationship between local authorities and the Welsh Assembly and their respective roles within this.
- × The development of area teams by DCELLS, initially termed 'area improvement teams', was vehemently opposed by the Leaders, by Members generally, by the WLGA and by ADEW. The main reasons for this are :
 - There is no clear justification for area teams
 - The area teams seem to have been populated by Assembly staff who failed to secure posts following the DCELLS restructuring
 - The area teams do not add value to what already exists

- The area teams are unlikely to add capacity and at worse add another layer of bureaucracy
- There is in fact a real possibility of unhelpful conflict, duplication, unnecessary intervention and even competition in what is already the domain of ADEW within the local authority context
- Consortia Cymru already provide a framework upon which to build so that there can be a regional approach
- The use of public funding for area teams when there are other alternatives flies in the face of Making the Connections and the need to modernise and achieve efficiencies
- The expectations placed upon the teams, the members of whom are often well known to ADEW, are well beyond the expertise, experience and knowledge of many of the individuals. This experience, expertise and knowledge is already evident in local authorities
- × There is a continuing level of frustration between local authorities and the Welsh Assembly in terms of a range of structural arrangements which make managing change and securing improvements difficult for ADEW and local government. For example :
 - The recent very unhelpful tensions between ADEW and the Assembly on the Foundation Phase funding requirements could have easily been avoided if those developing models and advising the Minister in 2006 had discussed the issues with the appropriate ADEW Executive members. Instead they chose to work through Early Years Advisers rather than Finance officers in local authorities. The recent problems during 2007/08 in terms of securing data and information could also have been avoided if the same individuals advising the Minister had talked to key ADEW officers who network across Wales at an early stage. ADEW has the knowledge of how local government works and can advise as to whether a model will work. This expertise very rarely lies with Assembly officials.
 - We have a similar concern emerging over one of the most significant curriculum, management and financial challenges we currently face in the introduction of the 14 to 19 Measure from 2009. This issue, which is of major strategic and policy importance, is being discussed primarily between local authority 14 to 19 co-ordinators (often 3rd or 4th tier officers) and Assembly officials including the area teams. A recent example of this is the announcement of the nature of the local curriculum and the rolling programme of implementation between 2009 and 2012. Members of the ADEW Executive are being denied an opportunity to influence the strategic direction of the 14 to 19 development and more importantly Assembly officials are not getting the benefit of our advice on what is, and is not, deliverable.
 - Whilst the Welsh Assembly Government recognises the role of local authorities, there is a tendency for some DCELLS staff to fail

to recognise, or possibly understand, some of the basics of local government and in particular the statutory role that local authorities have

- The ADEW consortia arrangements are sometimes used but with no recognition of the additional load on local authority staff and on other occasions subverted. Recent Assembly conferences were organised by an externally procured company but could have been done as well if not better by the four consortia with the funding provided to them.
- In a time when the public sector should be reducing bureaucracy, the Welsh Assembly, and DCELLS in particular, are increasing it through the use of grants. This is no more evident than in the recent Foundation Phase data collection exercise requiring a level of information which left schools and local authorities extremely frustrated at trying to deal with difficult forms which asked for information some of which in itself was based upon incorrect assertions by the Welsh Assembly. When multiplied up the bureaucratic burden on both the Welsh Assembly and the local authorities with the application of different grant conditions distributed across a large number of Assembly priorities and grants is significant and has to be reduced.
- There is an in-built tension between the important but potentially narrow focus the school effectiveness framework provides set against the reality of strategic management in local authorities which is increasingly based around the wider children and young people's agenda.
- × Various national bodies are key to the current modernisation debate and need to be drawn into the discussion between the Welsh Assembly, ADEW and the WLGA and given more direction. For instance
 - Estyn are carrying out a large number of single inspections in local authorities (eg Education, Youth Services, Adult & Community Learning, Youth Offending, CYP Plan) without the benefit of a more joined-up approach and economies of scale. Similarly Estyn and other inspectorates do not always configure their inspections to ensure a joined-up approach and economies of scale as well.
 - The GTC(W) is prioritising and distributing funding on aspects which do not necessarily link to the wider Assembly and ADEW Children & Young People agendas.
 - The British Council international funded developments need to be used to secure what we need for Wales, for example, what PISA countries are really bucking the trend and what can we learn ?.
- × There are problems with current funding arrangements in Wales and ADEW has two fundamental issues :

- We believe that local authorities should be enabled to direct funding to areas of greatest need, rather than a regime which funds schools directly.
- Currently much of the direct funding is through a large number of specific grants. These should be pared back to a very small number of strategic grants with a small number of consistent aims, objectives and timescales attached.

2.2 Policy

ADEW recognise that the key children and young people and education policy challenges facing the Assembly, WLGA, the local authorities and ADEW over the next ten years are essentially :

- ✓ The Children Act implementation and improving outcomes for children and young people. In contrast to England this is being implemented without the requirement for Children Services.
- ✓ The importance of an improved base of basic and high level skills across Wales for all children, young people and adults
- ✓ The implementation of the Flying Start initiative targeting 0 to 3 year olds in areas of significant deprivation
- ✓ The implementation of the Foundation Phase from September 2008
- ✓ The implementation of the 14 to 19 Learning Pathways Measure from September 2009
- ✓ The review of the implementation of the School Effectiveness Framework following the initial pilots in 2008/09
- ✓ Planning of school places and the potential for rationalisation
- ✓ The need for capital investment to address the serious backlog of maintenance and to secure learning environments which are fit for purpose
- ✓ The development of community focused schools
- It is recognised that successful implementation of these policies will support the drive to improve the standing of Wales compared to other countries and to increase the GDP of the country

3. The Role Of ADEW & The Welsh Assembly Government In Securing The Policies

The Association of Directors in Wales (ADEW) is totally supportive of the overarching priorities of the Welsh Assembly Government as they relate to the well being of children and young people, improving outcomes for children and young people, raising standards of achievement and attainment and ensuring that people have the necessary skills to contribute to the economic and community regeneration of Wales

Education and schools are a part of the diverse functions of the local authority and are subject to the same efficiency programme as other public sector services. Thus, education works within the same, increasingly tight, financial

constraints as other services. This paper outlines a number of areas within education and children's services that will continue to require additional or refocused resource. It is recognised, however, that schools also have a responsibility, with the support of the local authority, to work towards greater efficiency within their own delegated budgets.

3.1 What ADEW Will Deliver

Over the next three years, ADEW working with the WLGA, SOLACE and schools, will :

- (i) Support policy delivery by adopting a strategic and community leadership role
- (ii) Enable the strength of multipurpose authorities to act as commissioners of services
- (iii) Take an approach which leads to transformational change and lean systems thinking
- (iv) Work with other organisations and agencies so that outcomes for children and young people across Wales are improved
- (v) Focus on the needs of the individual
- (vi) Significantly improve standards of attainment and achievement of individuals and schools
- (vii) Work with schools and the Assembly to deliver the tri-level reform agenda
- (viii) Develop and deliver the school effectiveness framework
- (ix) Work with schools and other partners to deliver the priorities of the Assembly, particularly :
 - Flying Start
 - Foundation Phase
 - Skill development 8 to 13
 - 14 to 19 learning pathways
 - Skills that work for Wales
 - Community-focused schools
 - Planning of school places
 - Securing fit for purpose learning environments
- (x) Work with schools to build their capacity so that groups of schools are more autonomous and take greater responsibility within communities for raising standards, promote social cohesion and improved health

- (xi) Develop a self-regulating process whereby local authorities can help each other by identifying and disseminating effective practice and avoiding failure
- (xii) Work in four consortia to develop efficient and effective services set within a commissioning framework
- (xiii) Where additional funding becomes available for raising standards, similar to RAISE, this will be targeted through an evidence-based approach using local information and data.
- (xiv) Share and build upon effective practice both from England and Wales within the UK context and from other countries

3.2 What ADEW Requires From The Assembly

In delivering these challenges, ADEW needs the Assembly and its officials to :

- (i) Recognise, support and work with Directors through ADEW for developing key initiatives and ADEW Consortia Cymru for planning, commissioning and delivery of services
- (ii) Provide a level of funding for 3 years to each Consortia to match the level of funding provided by the consortia itself so that strategies for improved service delivery can be developed and delivered
- (iii) As much as possible provide an integrated message and joined-up approaches within the Assembly and through the regulatory and inspection services taking the opportunity of the Children Act requirements to streamline service delivery in these areas
- (iv) Discuss and negotiate key strategic and policy changes with the ADEW Executive at every stage of inception and development
- (v) Move to a mechanism whereby, where grants are provided, this is done in a more coherent and consolidated way as was achieved with Cymorth a few years ago. This means significantly reducing the number of grants and distributing them through local authorities to meet national requirements to improve outcomes at a local level
- (vi) Reduce the bureaucracy for both the Assembly and local authorities associated with each individual grant by significantly reducing the number of grants but not the amount of funding.
- (vii) Develop a strategy of providing some or all of these additional grants to Consortia Cymru so that greater efficiencies and economies of scale can operate and a commissioning model be adopted. Some consortia already pool grants to achieve economies of scale and commission services on the basis of identified need

- (viii) Provide greater discretion about the deployment of these additional grants so that the funding can be targeted to greatest need within the overarching criteria provided by the Assembly
- (ix) Where additional grants are provided, these should be for raising standards (similar to RAISE) and be directed to addressing the impact of poverty, deprivation and under-achievement.
- (x) Given the significantly improving condition of many English schools compared to those in Wales and that Wales is still lagging behind England (and other countries) in terms of performance and overall GDP, if the Assembly is to achieve the targets in *Learning Country : Vision Into Action* there must be a serious attempt to narrow the funding gap between England and Wales.
- (xi) Provide an appropriate level of funding to deliver the Foundation Phase which is based upon accurate data and information through a process negotiated through the ADEW Executive
- (xii) Provide an appropriate level of funding to deliver the 14 to 19 Learning Pathways taking into account the revenue implications of courses especially those with vocational elements, the capital requirements of adaptations needed to ensure the appropriate learning environment and the likely transport costs to enable young people to access the entitlement
- (xiii) In order to begin to meet the 'fit for purpose' requirement, provide an appropriate level of capital funding targeted to the needs of each individual authority as agreed with the Assembly which at least matches that provided in England
- (xiv) Work with local authorities, the WLGA and Value Wales to find cost effective approaches to procurement, the delivery of school building developments and school organisation across and within local authorities.