ERW

Ein Rhanbarth ar Waith
Education through Regional Working

Sesiwn Werthuso a Gwella Llywodraeth Cymru

21.11.19

Welsh Government Evaluation and Improvement Session

Cynghrair o 6 awdurdod lleol yw ERW a reolir gan gyd-bwyllgor cyfansoddiadol cyfreithiol.
Y nod yw gweithredu strategaeth a chynllun busnes rhanbarthol cytunedig a chefnogi gwelliant ysgolion.

ERW is an alliance of 6 local authorities governed by a legally constituted joint committee.
Its aim is to implement the agreed regional strategy and business plan to support school improvement.

City and County of Swansea · Dinas a Sir Abertawe
Neath Port Talbot County Borough · Bwrdeistref Sirol Castell-nedd Port Talbot
Cyngor Sir Gâr · Carmarthenshire County Council
Powys

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Purpose of the report:
To provide Joint Committee members with an overview of the annual Regional Evaluation and Improvement Session (Challenge and Review) undertaken in partnership with Welsh Government.

Section 1: Context
All Consortia have worked collaboratively with Welsh Government on the School Improvement Agenda overtime. These annual engagement sessions are designed to provide the opportunity to evaluate and review our work as a region in the company of the Minister for Education, Kirsty Williams AM and Steve Davies, Director of Education, Welsh Government.

In summary, the main emphasis and purpose of the session is to share an overview of our work and progress as a region, along with details of our key future priorities.

Appendix 1 below provides details of the content of the agenda items discussed during the session. Our ERW attendees were Cllr. Ellen ap Gwynn, ERW Joint Committee Chair, Phil Roberts, Lead CEO, Kate Evan-Hughes, Lead Director, Andi Morgan, Interim MD and Yan James, Assistant MD.

Section 2: General feedback:
The session commenced with the Minister welcoming all to the session along with an outline of its purpose. We were then invited to share our presentation (for the agreed period of 15 minutes) and proceeded to present the content of the attached document 'Evaluation and Improvement Pack' in Powerpoint style.
Following this, the Minister continued to open the session for follow-up questions and a range of discussion areas.

The following summary provides a brief overview of the issues raised and discussed:

1. ERW arrangements for supporting the new curriculum and links with Challenge Adviser (CA) activity.

   Response: we referred back to the presentation pack elements which highlighted the series of Curriculum Engagement Events. In addition, we emphasised the close and effective nature of collaboration between our CAs and their role in supporting the advent of the Curriculum for Wales. We praised the effectiveness of our Senior Challenge Adviser Network and additional elements such as CA Update Training events.

2. Quality Assurance and Performance Management of CAs:

   Response: we reassured the Minister that ongoing quality assurance activities are undertaken e.g. joint Core Support Visits and report scrutiny. In addition, we confirmed that performance management of CAs is undertaken by individual LAs.

3. Duplication of LA Advisory staff and ERW functions:

   Response: we reassured the Minister that no levels of duplication exist due to the benefits of additional capacity provided by the small number of officers involved and the overriding need for provision through the medium of Welsh.

4. Key regional risks:

   Response: we discussed the content of our identified risks (noted below) in further detail and addressed elements pertaining to the ERW footprint.

   - Further develop and finalise content of the Senior Leadership Profile with a focus on the roles of the MD and 'Heads of Service'
   - Implement the revised and agreed Governance Structure in support of effective business planning and service delivery
   - Continue to support schools with the successful implementation of Curriculum Reform and Our National Mission
   - Continue to collaborate with Estyn (sharing further evidence of the ongoing progress and impact of our work)

5. How is ERW adding additional value?
   Response: we explained the context and purpose of the revised team structure in greater depth, highlighting the services provided by the KS4 Subject Specialist Team, School Support Group and Curriculum Team.

6. ERW support for schools in need of additional support:
   Response: we provided further evidence of the work and impact of the Secondary Support Group. We noted our thanks for WG's agreement to include six schools within the newly launched National Evaluation and Improvement Resource self-evaluation pilot along with our two nominated schools working within the Schools Causing Concern aspect.

7. ERW Support for English departments:
   Response: we explained the nature of the support work undertaken by our KS4 Subject Specialist Team placing much emphasis on collaborative links with CAs and school leaders. In addition, we shared information with regard to the KS4 Team's work across the subject networks.

8. How do we measure schools' readiness for the new curriculum?
   Response: we further discussed the content and purpose of the recent Curriculum Engagement Events. We emphasised the crucial role of the Senior Challenge Adviser Network and CAs in general as conduits within this process. We explained the ongoing partnership working between the CA Network and Curriculum Team (via the Head of Curriculum Review & Innovation).

9. Questions focusing on ALN transformation and LA responsibilities:
   Response: we discussed the work of the ERW ALN Transformation Group, appointment and direction of our Head of Special Schools along with provision for schools and how ERW activity dovetails with LA support services.

Summing up: The Minister noted her thanks for our contributions and the opportunity to engage in an open and productive dialogue at such a key point within the national reform journey.

Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Section 3: Appendices

Appendix 1: Evaluation and Improvement Agenda

Review and Challenge Meeting: ERW

***Venue*: The Liberty Stadium, Swansea** ***Date*: 21 November 2019**

***Time*: 11:00 – 12:30**

(Invited attendees only)

Agenda

11:00	**Chair's welcome and introductions (5 minutes)** – Minister for Education
11:05	**Presentation by Consortium (15 minutes)** • Analysis of a range of evidence and data and information reviewed to inform this year's business planning priorities
11:20	**Group discussion and questions (60 minutes)** • Top three risks to delivery against business planning priorities • Update of regional delivery of Education in Wales: our National Mission – identify the top risk for each objective in the National Mission • Consortia funding priorities for 2020/21 Business Planning Cycle • How does the region monitor the impact of their support for schools on the implementation of the new curriculum in all of the schools in the region
12:20	**Summary of actions and next steps (10 minutes)**
12:30	**Close**