

Supplementary guidance for inspecting Learning Pathways 14-19 in secondary schools and special schools

April 2007



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- ▲ independent schools;
- ▲ further education;
- ▲ adult community-based learning;
- ▲ youth support services;
- ▲ LEAs;
- ▲ teacher education and training;
- ▲ work-based learning;
- ▲ careers companies; and
- ▲ the education, guidance and training elements of Jobcentre plus.

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- ▲ provides advice on quality and standards in education and training in Wales to the National Assembly for Wales and others; and
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What is the purpose?

To provide further guidance for inspectors on how to inspect Learning Pathways 14-19 in secondary schools and special schools in Wales. These guidelines should be used in conjunction with the Common Inspection Framework and the Guidance on the Inspection of Secondary Schools and the Guidance on the Inspection of Special Schools and Pupil Referral Units.

For whom is it intended?

Every member of the inspection teams of secondary schools and special schools.

From when should the guidance be used?

With immediate effect.

Date of publication: April 2007

1 Introduction

WAG has published a second edition of the Learning Pathways 14-19 (LP14-19) Guidance that updates the first edition that was published in July 2004. The document can be found on the Welsh Assembly Government website www.wales.gov.uk. The updated pages are shown by the date on the bottom of the page.

We recommend that all inspectors become familiar with this document as LP14-19 it will become increasingly important over the next few years. The main features of the document are that:

- The six Key Elements of LP 14-19 remain the same:
 - **Individual Learning Pathways** to meet the needs of learners;
 - **Wider Choice and Flexibility** of programmes and ways of learning in a collaborative options menu;
 - **Learning Core** that sets out the common knowledge, understanding, skills, attitudes, values and experience;
 - **Learning Coach Support**;
 - **Access to Personal Support**; and
 - **Careers Information, Advice and Guidance**.
- The second edition has no significant changes to the first two Key Elements.
- It looks for more collaboration through the **14-19 Networks**.

- There is new material on managing the **Learning Core**:
 - it is not a curriculum model, but it is specified as outcomes and experiences that can be delivered flexibly;
 - the Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification (WBQ) pilot is seen as delivering 'almost all' of the Learning Core;
 - there is more detail on 'work-focused experience' and 'community participation';
 - Annex G shows how the Learning Core relates to Key Stage 4; and
 - Annex H shows how new developments, such as the revision of the National Curriculum, will have an effect on the Learning Core.

- There is more information on the training and induction of **Learning Coaches** and on the role of the provider. In September 2006, 220 prospective Learning Coaches will start their training.

- The sections on **Access to Personal Support** and **Careers Information, Advice and Guidance** have been updated, including more information on the relationship between the Learning Coach and careers advice and guidance.

- It proposes that there should be some harmonisation between **LP 14-19** and **WBQ**.

- There is a new list of expectations for **14-19 Learning Networks**. It lists what they should have done by September 2006 and what they are expected to do by September 2007 and September 2008 (Annex E).

- The document contains useful information on the **Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales (CFQW)** in Annex K and on the **new Points Score System** in Annex L.

The document sets out an action plan that follows the publication of the Deputy Minister's report on LP 14-19 in November 2005. The summary of the plan is useful as it sets out the timetable of what is to happen over the next few years.

2 Inspecting and reporting on LP 14-19

This guidance is organised around the way that the six Key Elements relate to different key questions. It describes where you might find evidence and suggests some questions that you might use.

You will find evidence for LP14-19 in the school's curriculum plans for key stage 4 and the sixth form. In addition, you will need to ask key stage 4 and sixth form learners about Learning Pathways (see prompts on Listening to Learners on page 5 of this paper). Finally, you will need to discuss with senior managers their plans for Learning Pathways over the next four or five years.

The main opportunities for reporting on LP14-19 will occur in Key Questions 3 and 4, but it can also feature in other key questions.

Key Question 1: How well do learners achieve?

Though it would not be directly evident in this key question, LP14-19 should eventually be influencing the standards that learners achieve. It would therefore have an impact on all three of the left-hand side bullets. LP14-19 is designed to raise standards by ensuring that learners follow appropriate courses that lead to the qualifications that meet their capabilities, interests and needs.

We will be providing separate guidance on how to record attainment in the Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification (WBQ).

Key Question 2: How effective are teaching, training and assessment?

As with Key Question 1, you might not find direct evidence for LP14-19, but it should be influencing teaching and assessment. Of particular relevance is the need to evaluate the extent to which teaching meets learners' needs and gains the active engagement of learners. Assessment also plays a role by ensuring that learners understand their achievements and progress and that they use this understanding in planning and improving their learning.

Key Question 3: How well do the learning experiences meet the needs and interests of learners and the wider community?

Key Question 3 is where you should, where appropriate, inspect and report on the first three Key Elements of LP14-19. The elements are:

- Key Element 1: an Individual Learning Pathway;
- Key Element 2: Wider Choice and Flexibility; and
- Key Element 3: The Learning Core.

Both the left-hand side bullets are concerned with the intentions of LP14-19:

- the extent to which learning experiences meet learners' needs and interests; and
- the extent to which learning experiences respond to the needs of employers and the wider community.

You should comment on the quality or development of the options menu and the impact of the 14-19 Network and the school's involvement in it. In doing this you should consider how the school is working with partners in order to provide the full range of courses that are capable of meeting learners' interests and needs.

If the school is not developing LP14-19 and, in particular, it is not developing an options menu that enables learners to follow their individual learning pathways, then you should consider this to be a significant shortcoming and it could influence the overall grade you award for Key Question 3.

Questions to consider:

- 1 What plans does the school have to introduce LP14-19 and how effective are these?
- 2 Does the current curriculum provide:
 - options that meet learners' interests, abilities and learning styles;
 - a broad and balanced range of experiences;
 - a combination of formal, non-formal and informal elements¹; and
 - the Learning Core?
- 3 Does the school:
 - recognise experiences from all aspects of a learner's life; and
 - provide support to overcome barriers to learning?
- 4 What impact is the development of the options menu having on the school?
- 5 How well placed is the school to provide or enable access to programmes from entry to level 4 in the five domains²?

¹ **Formal:** organised learning opportunities leading to approved qualifications and/pr CGFW credit achievements.

Non-formal: organised programme that may lead to accreditation but typically outside the National Qualifications Framework.

Informal: wider experiences normally without formal recognition.

² The five domains are: mathematics, science and all aspects of technology; business and management; services to people; creative arts and culture; and humanities and languages.

- 6 Where appropriate, how effective is provision for learners working through the medium of Welsh?
- 7 What impact is the prospectus of activities³ having on the school?
- 8 How well placed is the school to provide the minimum requirements and enhancements of the Learning Core, including work-focused experience and community participation?
- 9 In what way and how well is the school working with partners to develop its curriculum so that it meets the requirements of Learning Pathways?

Key Question 4: How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?

Once again, you should, where appropriate, inspect and report on the second three elements of LP14-19 in this key question:

- Key Element 4: Learning Coach Support;
- Key Element 5: Access to Personal Support; and
- Key Element 6: Careers Information, Advice and Guidance.

Questions to consider:

- 1 Is the school providing high quality impartial information, advice and guidance (remember that you do not inspect the provision of Careers Wales)?⁴
- 2 How effective are the school's plans to ensure that all learners receive their basic entitlement to a Learning Coach? How will they ensure that the Learning Coach is impartial?
- 3 How effective is the support and/or access to support in order to meet the needs of individuals, especially in helping them to develop solutions to personal, social, emotional and physical problems? What role is played by partners within the Young People's Partnerships?

Listening to learners

For both Key Question 3 and Key Question 4, you will gain a great deal from talking to learners in key stage 4 and the sixth form. Some possible questions to ask them:

- 1 What is their overall satisfaction with their courses?
- 2 What was the quality of guidance they received before starting their courses? Was it comprehensive and impartial?

³ The prospectus of activities is produced by the 14-19 Network and covers the range of non-formal and informal opportunities within an area.

⁴ Estyn's report on collaboration between school sixth forms and FE colleges stated that around a third of learners had received inadequate information and some felt that the advice was biased.

- 3 What is the quality of guidance and support they are receiving during their courses? If they have worked with a learning coach, how successful has it been?
- 4 While they have been in key stage 4/sixth form, have they had any problems or difficulties and how well were these addressed?
- 5 How satisfied are they with the choices they made?
- 6 What is their view of the overall quality of teaching in key stage 4/sixth form?
- 7 What do they feel about the standard/level of work?
- 8 Overall what are good features and shortcomings about key stage 4/sixth form?

There will also be an opportunity to comment on LP14-19 when looking at Key Questions 5, 6 and 7.

Key Question 5: How effective are leadership and strategic management?

In **Key Question 5**, you should comment on how well the school includes LP14-19 in setting out its priorities and strategic direction. In particular, you will need to consider how well the school looks at LP14-19 from the learners' point of view rather than simply looking at how it affects the school itself. This means that the school should look at how it can contribute to expanding learner's choice, whether this is through their own provision, provision that is the result of collaboration with other providers, or provision from elsewhere. There may be an opportunity here to comment on how well the school works in partnership with others, especially as part of the 14-19 Network. You should be able to evaluate the impact of the local 14-19 Network on the school and how well the school contributes to it.

Key Question 6: How well do leaders and managers evaluate and improve quality and standards?

Similarly in **Key Question 6**, you should look at how the school is evaluating its current provision in the light of the LP14-19 requirements and how well it is planning for these over both the short and the long term.

Key Question 7: How efficient are leaders and managers in using resources?

In schools with sixth forms, you should consider in **Key Question 7**, whether the school is gaining value for money from its sixth form. You will need to judge whether the provision is cost-effective, particularly where teaching groups are small. You should investigate whether the provision of the sixth form, especially where there are small teaching groups, is taking resources away from key stages 3 and 4. You will need to consider the extent to which the school works with partners in order to increase its cost effectiveness.