



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

www.cymru.gov.uk

Schools Challenge Cymru: the Pupil Offer



Information

Information document no: 169/2014

Date of issue: December 2014

Schools Challenge Cymru: the Pupil Offer

Audience	Pathways to Success schools and partner organisations; Schools Challenge Cymru advisers; regional education consortia and local authorities involved in the delivery of the programme.
Overview	This document sets out some further information about the Schools Challenge Cymru 'Pupil Offer'.
Action required	This document should be referred to by Pathways to Success schools, their partner organisations and Schools Challenge Cymru advisers as they participate in the programme.
Further information	Enquiries about this document should be directed to: Schools Challenge Cymru IQUALS Division Department for Education and Skills Welsh Government Cathays Park Cardiff CF10 3NQ Tel: 029 2082 6997 e-mail: SchoolsChallengeCymru@wales.gsi.gov.uk
Additional copies	This document can be accessed from the Welsh Government's website at www.wales.gov.uk/educationandskills
Related documents	<i>National model for regional working</i> (2014) <i>Rewriting the future: Raising ambition and attainment in Welsh schools</i> (2014) <i>Schools Challenge Cymru: introduction for Pathways to Success schools</i> (2014)

Contents

Ministerial foreword	2
Introduction	4
Designing the offer	6
Conclusion	7

Ministerial foreword



Schools Challenge Cymru places the interests of the pupil at the heart of its programme of school improvement. It is based on a belief that **all** children can achieve and this is something that I personally hold true. We must inspire them to succeed by providing experiences that open their eyes to the opportunities that exist beyond the school gates, their homes and their local communities.

In the spirit of encouraging this, I am pleased to announce the Schools Challenge Cymru 'Pupil Offer'. In so doing, I am asking Pathways to Success schools to look closely at their communities of learners and to begin piloting approaches that widen their horizons, creating opportunities to experience meaningful activities that they might not otherwise have been able to access. At the same time, I am asking partner organisations to get involved - Wales is a small country but it has a wide range of organisations that are committed to sharing their skills, knowledge, resources and expertise to secure improved outcomes for our children and young people.

This raising of pupils' personal expectations, aspirations and ambitions is an important aspect of the Challenge. It will ensure that learners are better equipped to succeed in future learning, and later in life. I expect each Pathways to Success school to embed this principle within their journey of accelerated improvement. However, it does not have to be done in isolation and schools have a better chance of success by drawing on the knowledge of others and by working cooperatively for the benefit of their learners. In this way, they can develop a network of partners that share a collective responsibility to deliver opportunities for pupils and ensure their success.

Working together, schools and their partners are well placed to offer a wide range of activities for their learners, helping them to access new experiences in the arts, science, sport, our unique culture and heritage, further learning and even work, to name but a few. By introducing the 'Pupil Offer' at this stage in the programme, I am giving Pathways to Success Schools an opportunity to experiment, in order to discover what works best for them, before consolidating their approaches in the following academic year. And, it doesn't have to stop there – the learning they develop will go on to inform how we might deliver a similar 'Pupil Offer' through all schools in Wales. I, and the education system as a whole, will therefore be looking to

learn from them as they work cooperatively with their partners to enrich the educational experience of their learners.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Huw Lewis". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Huw Lewis AM
Minister for Education and Skills

Introduction

International research indicates that closing the gap in outcomes between those from more and less advantaged backgrounds will only take place when what happens to children *outside* as well as *inside* the school changes. There is encouraging evidence from a range of contexts, including here in Wales, of what can happen when the work of schools is aligned in a coherent strategy with the efforts of other local players – employers, community groups, local and national organisations, universities and public services. This does not necessarily mean schools doing more, but it does imply partnerships beyond the school, where partners multiply the impacts of each other's efforts.

With this in mind, the 'Pupil Offer' sets out to enrich the educational experience of learners in Pathways to Success schools. In order to achieve this, Pathways to Success schools and their partner organisations are encouraged to work together more closely in order to provide a breadth of opportunities and activities that will widen pupils' horizons. These opportunities should focus on the raising of personal expectations, aspirations and ambitions to succeed in future learning, the workplace and later in life.

With the support of their Schools Challenge Cymru Adviser, each school is asked to consider the needs and aspirations of their community of learners, before developing a suite of activities for them to engage with as they progress along their educational journey. In so doing, they should consider working with organisations that can contribute skills, knowledge, resources and expertise to help them secure improved outcomes for their pupils.

This is about each school creating a bespoke offer to their pupils and defining a 'Pupil Offer' will become a requirement in Pathways to Success Schools' Single Development Plans for the 2015/16 Academic year. As such, the Spring and Summer terms of 2014/15 provide a period of time in which schools can develop and test their approaches. No blueprint is being provided and schools are asked to experiment, piloting activities before finding out what works best for them and for the pupils that they serve. There are, however, two overall expectations:

First, schools should be looking towards the development of whole school provision so that experiences can be built on and momentum, once created, can be maintained. Approaches piloted in the 2014/15 academic year should therefore span a range of ages, including, as a minimum, year 6 pupils in their cluster primaries.

Second, given the programme's focus on creating sustainable improvement, schools should look to explore and develop low cost or no cost options, or identify approaches that are more likely to be embedded within their core work as the programme moves forward.

Ownership

Pathways to Success schools and Partner Organisations are asked to take ownership of a shared commitment to work together in order to provide a rich and enriching programme of activity for their learners, helping them to realise their potential by broadening horizons and raising aspirations. This programme should be

bespoke to each school, depending on their needs, and should be co-constructed with their learners where possible to do so – it is, after all, *their* offer.

Activities should be identified based on their ability to contribute towards delivery against the purpose of the Pupil Offer and to support the school to improve provision. The school, with their partners, will then be expected to communicate their shared commitment to the delivery of the offer to their learners.

Pupils are asked to actively engage with the offer made by the school, including in its design where appropriate.

The **Schools Challenge Cymru Adviser** will continue to support and challenge their appointed schools. In so doing they will have a key role to play in ensuring Pupil Offer activity is integrated within the school's Single Development Plan, so that it forms part of a wider coherent package of support.

To support the schools and their partners to deliver their offer to their pupils, the **Welsh Government** will take responsibility for driving forward this work at the national level. This will include:

- the ongoing development of guidance for Schools Challenge Cymru and the 'Pupil Offer';
- identification and sharing of examples of best practice;
- encouraging and coordinating work with partners at the national level;
- the sponsoring of national events for schools and their partners; and
- monitoring and evaluation at a national level, including the impact and delivery of the offer within the schools.

Designing the offer

It is likely that the 'Pupil Offer' in each Pathways to Success school will be different and for that reason the Welsh Government has decided not to prescribe a one-size-fits-all approach. In this sense, this document is an invitation to innovate.

In designing an offer it will be important for schools and partner organisations to think about the aspirations and range of experiences already available to learners in each school community and consider how they can be best applied, built on and improved. Each school is encouraged to start with their local communities and work out from there, as it is likely that there will be a number of opportunities available to work with partners at a local level, delivering experiences that are immediately relevant to their learners, especially those that have value for their learning and development as young adults.

As a starter for ten, schools may want to think about how they can support their learners' engagement with the following areas*:

- **The Arts** (including literature, media, visual, performing and culinary)
- **Music** (including opportunities for learning instruments and watching/taking part in performances)
- **Science** (including inreach and outreach activities which bring the curriculum to life for learners)
- **Local and national culture and heritage** (including museums, galleries, historical sites, national parks, libraries and archives)
- **Sports** (both within the school and more widely)
- **Clubs, associations and groups** (including cadet forces, scouts & guides, brigades, hobbies and areas of personal interest)
- **Higher and Further Education** (ensuring that learners are aware of future routes for learning and how they contribute towards the achieving of career ambitions)
- **Businesses and entrepreneurship** (to learn about the wide range of career options available to them)
- **The third sector** (including volunteering opportunities or access to direct support from organisations)
- **Other cultures** (including learning new languages, foreign exchange trips, visits to faith sites)
- **Personal Development**

*this list is not exhaustive!

As set out, this is not about Welsh Government prescribing a top down approach to the delivery of the offer. This is about providing schools with the opportunity and flexibility to identify their own solutions to the challenges that they face. In so doing, they should think about how they can foster a learning culture that:

- communicates high expectations for learners;
- increases motivation to succeed;
- raises aspirations and develops personal ambition;
- encourages exploration and nurtures the development of personal interests;
- delivers opportunities to try new things; and
- unlocks each learner's potential.

Conclusion

The Welsh Government remains actively engaged with partner organisations across Wales in order to identify opportunities that Pathways to Success schools and their pupils can access. It will also continue to meet its commitments to support the delivery of a Pupil Offer within each school by hosting national events where schools and partners can meet to explore the process of creating mutually beneficial partnerships that are grounded in the common interest of improved pupil outcomes. In addition, it will actively identify and share examples of best practice as they develop, and circulate resources that schools and partners can draw on to support the planning and delivery of their offer to their pupils.

Further details will be circulated to the schools via a monthly newsletter, with learning being made available over the course of the Schools Challenge Cymru programme via Welsh Government communication channels including Learning Wales, Hwb, Dysg and Twitter.

If you would like to learn more about how you as an organisation can support the development of a 'Pupil Offer' to any of the Pathways to Success schools, please get in touch at the following address:

SchoolsChallengeCymru@Wales.gsi.gov.uk