

Consortia Gwella Ysgolion Rhanbarthol Regional School Improvement Consortia



The cross regional development of school leadership – July 2018

by Debbie Harteveid (Managing Director, EAS)

Background

For the past two years the four regional education consortia have been working together to develop a professional learning offer for school leaders. In July 2016, work started with the creation of an Aspiring Headteachers programme, the new National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH) programme. The introduction of the National Academy for Educational Leadership (NAEL) has served to accelerate this joint working and the regions have responded accordingly with agreement to extend the commonality of leadership programmes on a phased approach.

“Our challenge, as noted by the OECD, is to ensure a national approach to leadership, and make it a prime driver of our education reforms.

The evidence shows leaders in our schools can make a huge difference. I want us to have the right leaders with the right skills to raise standards and set the highest expectations for all our young people”

Kirsty Williams, Cabinet Secretary May 2017

The regions are committed to the development of professional learning created in partnership with leaders and teachers. The appointment of the 12 NAEL Academy Associates also provides additional support and expertise which is welcomed in the system.

Where are we now?

With educational leadership very much at the forefront of the education development agenda, a cross regional project team has been established and is working to address the identified regional variance in the available professional learning opportunities for school leaders. The project team are focused on:

- Developing uniform, high quality provision for Aspiring Headteachers, Newly Appointed and Acting Headteachers and Experienced Headteachers (in line with the endorsement timeline from the NAEL) for delivery across the four regions to increase the number of skilled leaders across Wales;
- Developing the next generation of headteachers and senior leaders ensuring they are well prepared for the crucial role of leadership and are offered a sustained professional development programme to support them into post;

- Developing further the skills, expertise and knowledge of the region's existing cadre of successful leaders to enable them to offer wider system leadership as we move towards a school-led system, and new school organisation models such as federations; and
- Providing a coherent development pathway along the professional learning pathway from Initial Teacher Education to Executive Headteacher that offers accreditation options.

To date the cross regional project team have designed a Newly Appointed and Acting Headteacher programme and an Experienced Headteacher Development programme. Detailed content has been developed for both programmes, the programme design validated against an evidence base, uniform facilitation handbooks created and impact capture methodology in place. Critically, both programmes have been mapped against the recently published Leadership Academy endorsement criteria. The programmes have also been subject to comprehensive consultation with headteacher strategy groups and Local Authority Education Directors across all four regions and headteachers from across the regions have been involved in drafting the programme content.

The programme design and development process highlighted the need for significant coaching support to support the successful delivery of the programmes. These discussions have led to the first draft of the Welsh Education High Performance Coaching Programme. This is in the process of being further developed and will ensure a new culture of coaching and mentoring becomes integral in Welsh education.

Accreditation

Accreditation has been a critical element of the leadership programme development with various options comprehensively discussed and evaluated resulting in a joint "invitation to tender" published in March 2018. The rationale for the joint approach to accreditation was to secure a single provider which will be more effective than attempting to manage numerous providers, provide economies of scale and critically will provide standardisation and portability of qualification. Following the formal tender process, University of Wales Trinity St. David's (UWTSD) Yr Athrofa and Bangor University were appointed with the first accredited programme commencing in September 2018.

Next steps

With all these factors in place, the Newly Appointed and Acting Headteacher Programme was recently submitted to the National Academy for Educational Leadership for endorsement, and we were delighted to learn last week, that our submission had been successful, and the programme has been fully endorsed. However, far from resting on our laurels, the team are already working to complete the programme submissions for the experienced headteacher programme due for September. Additionally, the team are simultaneously driving forward the development of accreditation across the leadership professional development continuum from Teaching Assistant to Executive Headteacher. Impact evaluation

and leadership research will also remain a key focus going forward, using this information to inform programme developments, ensuring our programmes remain fit for purpose and continue to provide the very highest standard of professional learning for education professionals in Wales.

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