

# Wales should continue reforms to boost quality and equity of school system

28/02/2017 – Wales should continue its efforts to reform the curriculum and raise the standards of teaching in order to improve the quality and equity of its school system, according to a new OECD report.

[The Welsh Education Reform Journey](#) analyses the reforms adopted since 2014 and notes a shift in the approach to school improvement away from a piecemeal and short-term policy orientation to one with a long-term vision involving key stakeholders.

The commitment to improving the teaching and learning in Wales's schools is visible at all levels of the education system, says the report.

"Sustaining this commitment, deepening investments in key policy areas and strengthening the implementation process will be central to realising the country's ambitions for education and society over the long term," said Andreas Schleicher, OECD Director for Education and Skills, launching the report in Cardiff with Kirsty Williams, Wales' Cabinet Secretary for Education.

The focus of continuing reforms should be on developing a high-quality teaching profession, making leadership a key driver of education reform, ensuring equity in learning opportunities and student well-being, and moving towards a new system of assessment, evaluation and accountability that aligns with the new 21<sup>st</sup> century curriculum.

Among the report's recommendations are that Wales should:

- Continue developing a national approach to professional learning and build capacity for implementation of the new curriculum.
- Move forward with the establishment of the National Academy of Educational Leadership and speed up development of leadership standards.
- Consider moving towards a national needs-based school-funding formula that ensures the effective allocation of funds to schools.
- Continue strengthening Wales' school improvement infrastructure.
- Ensure coherence across the various reform initiatives to prevent fragmentation. The government should clarify how different reforms and policies relate to each other as well as the roles and responsibilities of teachers, school leaders, local authorities and regional consortia.

The report is available at

<http://www.oecd.org/edu/school/thewelsheducationreformjourneyarapidpolicyassessment.htm>

For more information, or to speak to the report's author, journalists should

contact [Spencer Wilson](#) of the [OECD's Media Division](#) (tel. + 33 1 45 24 81 18).

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## Cabinet Secretary to celebrate the best of Wales in Dubai

In addition to a number of engagements to promote Welsh culture and increase business links between Wales, Dubai and the wider United Arab Emirates, the Cabinet Secretary will join a record twenty five of Wales' finest food and drink producers at the Gulfood Trade Show, one of the world's largest annual food and beverage exhibitions.

The Trade Show is an opportunity to promote Wales' food and drink sector on the international stage and help Welsh producers' efforts to establish new business relationships and expand their sales into potentially lucrative new markets.

During the visit, the Cabinet Secretary will announce she is making £2.4million available to ensure Wales remains well-represented at high profile food and drink trade events and visits around the world over the next two years, providing further opportunities to showcase Wales and world class Welsh produce.

The Cabinet Secretary said:

"St David's Day presents us with a fantastic opportunity to celebrate our people, our history, our culture, and, of course, our high quality larder of food and drink produce.

"Wales' food and drinks sector is a success story. We are already more than half way towards achieving our target of 30% growth in the sector by 2020, generating over £260 million from exports.

Almost 90% of these are going to the EU, which is why we strongly advocate, on behalf of Welsh businesses, continued full and unfettered access to the European Single Market.

"It is important we remain an outward focused and welcoming nation. The challenges presented by a "Hard Brexit" are obvious but I am encouraged by the fact Wales' food and drink sector is well placed to tackle the challenges we now face and grasp new opportunities.

"International exhibitions are vital in raising Wales' international profile as they present the opportunity for Welsh businesses to prosper by entering new overseas markets. I am delighted, therefore, to confirm we are investing £2.4m over the

next two years to have a strong presence at a series of important food and drink exhibitions and trade visits both in the UK and overseas including a continuation of our ongoing presence at Gulfood.”

Lesley Griffiths will also support an additional Welsh Government-led trade delegation involving twelve small and medium sized enterprises from Wales aiming to grow their business in Dubai and the wider region. The delegation will visit the site of the next World Expo, taking place in Dubai in 2020.

Expo 2020 offers significant commercial opportunities for Welsh businesses of all sizes and in many sectors.

Wales’ cultural excellence will be showcased in Dubai by the presence of the Welsh National Opera who will be performing Puccini’s Madame Butterfly and La boheme over the first two weeks of March. In addition, during the evening of St David’s Day itself, Lesley Griffiths will attend a special performance by a trio of Welsh National Opera performers at a ‘Wales – Business and Culture’ reception at the British Embassy in Dubai. The event will also provide a high profile opportunity to show Wales’ strengths as a place to visit, study and do business.

To end her visit, the Cabinet Secretary will speak at a celebratory St. David’s Day Ball organised by the local Welsh Club.

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## **News story: Animal medicines improvement notice: Diatom Retail Limited**

This Notice was issued as Diatom Retail Limited were placing on the market Diatomaceous Earth based products for use in the worming of animals contrary to Regulation 4 of the Veterinary Medicines Regulations (VMR).

The improvements required are for:

- the highlighted medicinal claims, as identified in supplied sample documents, to be removed from all Diatom Retail Ltd marketing material
  - Diatom Retail Ltd to provide written confirmation to the VMD that no further attempts will be made to market their products for the purpose of worming animals without proper authorisation
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## News story: Worm bait returns for trial period at Exmoor fishery

The Environment Agency is continuing conservation measures on its Watersmeet and Glenthorne Fishery for the coming season.

Restrictions have been in place on this popular Exmoor fishery since 2014 in response to disease problems affecting adult salmon and sea trout returning to the East Lyn to spawn. Recent monitoring also revealed reduced numbers of young salmon.

Anglers have been allowed to continue fishing for salmon and sea trout on a 'catch and release' basis throughout the season and have been limited to fishing with a fly or spinner only. The use of worms was traditionally allowed from 16 June. However, this method of fishing can be very effective and has been prohibited in recent years to limit the number of fish caught while stocks have been under pressure.

Following discussions with the Lyn Riparian Owners Association and local interest groups, worming is being allowed again on a trial basis this year from 16 June, subject to strict conditions.

Worms will only be allowed when fished on a single circle-patterned hook, no larger than Size 4. A circle hook increases the likelihood a fish is hooked in the jaw where it can be safely removed. This type of hook reduces the risk of 'deep hooking' which can sometimes occur when worming. It also reduces the chances of accidentally catching trout and salmon parr on this method.

All salmon and sea trout must still be released throughout the 2017 season, irrespective of the method used to catch them. As a further conservation measure, anglers will not be allowed to fish with worm at any time in Long Pool.

Mike Holland of the Environment Agency said:

We want fishermen to continue to enjoy their sport on the Watersmeet and Glenthorne Fishery, but at the same time ensure suitable measures are in place to safeguard migratory fish returning to the river to spawn.

By allowing only circle hooks to be used for worming we hope to maximise the survival chances of any salmon and sea trout caught and released by this method. We'll review the success of this trial at the end of the season.

The brown trout fishery regulations remain unchanged. The full list of

fishery regulations can be found printed on the reverse of the permits, purchasable from local agents.

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## Kirsty Williams welcomes new OECD report on Welsh education reform

In November 2016, after an invite from the Education Secretary, the highly-respected Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) visited Wales to examine the work underway on education reforms to make sure they are on track.

The [independent findings](#) (external link) published today state that

“the OECD has witnessed progress in several policy areas and a shift in the Welsh approach to school improvement away from a piece meal and short term policy orientation towards one that is guided by a long term vision.”

The report also found Wales’ reforms were characterised by close working between government and the education sector with a commitment to improvement “visible at all levels of the education system.”

Kirsty Williams said:

“I invited the OECD to come to Wales to challenge what we are doing to reform our education system and I welcome their findings. They have concluded that we are making progress and we have a long term vision in place to keep improving.

“We are already taking action on many of their recommendations, from creating a new national academy for leadership, transforming initial teacher education, launching new professional standards, and introducing a national approach to professional learning.

“Our job is to continue our national mission of education reform focused on driving up standards and helping every learner in Wales, whatever their background, fulfil their potential.

“As the OECD recommends, our focus must be on making sure we continue to properly implement our vision for reform. I am committed to raising standards, reducing the attainment gap and delivering an education system that is a source of national pride and confidence.”

Both the Education Secretary and Andreas Schleicher, Director for Education and Skills for the OECD, will today address representatives from all of Wales' 205 state secondary schools at a special event in Cardiff.