



Partnerships with employers in secondary
and special schools.

Report title:

Partnerships with employers in secondary and special schools.

Report details

Estyn was asked to review the range of partnerships and links that secondary and special schools across Wales have with employers, examining a range of factors including, the types of engagement links schools have with employers, the range of learner experiences, the characteristics of effective links between schools and employers, how schools are starting to consider how to plan for the cross-cutting theme of careers and work-related experiences in the new Curriculum, and the challenges for schools and employers.

Summary of main findings.

Where schools engage well and work closely with employers, learners have a better understanding of the world of work and the skills and attributes they require to be successful in the job market. Employers can also use initiatives to promote their apprenticeship programmes. The effectiveness of this partnership work usually depends on the vision and drive of the Headteacher, senior managers and school staff.

Schools engage with employers in a variety of ways. Many schools offer learners a suitable range of **work-related experiences**, including;

- experiences that are part of the curriculum
- themed days
- extra-curricular activities
- visits to places of work; and
- visiting speakers.

Only a minority of schools now offer **work experience** for learners. Where schools have maintained a member of staff responsible for careers, they often still provide learners with opportunities to participate in work experience. Generally, learners are expected to arrange their own work placements, with some support from the school for learners who struggle to achieve this.

Many of the schools Estyn visited engage with the **Education Business Exchange** database, facilitated by Careers Wales and invite employers to visit their school to talk to learners about their careers. These visits often include completing mock application forms and taking part in interview role play.

Many schools offer a wide variety of **enterprise activities** through the Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification. A few schools provide work-related experiences within the community.

Nearly all schools Estyn visited hold an **annual careers fair**, often facilitated

and organised by Careers Wales. However, many schools do not measure the impact of these careers fairs well enough.

Recommendation 1.

Schools should - Consider carefully the cross-cutting theme of careers and work-related experiences, and how learners can develop as enterprising, creative contributors, when they design their new curriculum

Welsh Government Response: Accept
Careers and Work Related Experiences (CWRE) will be a cross cutting element of the new curriculum. This highlights its importance in supporting learners to achieve the four purposes and the need for delivery throughout the curriculum.

To support schools in being able to design and deliver CWRE in a comprehensive and embedded manner, it is an integral part of the overarching Area of Learning and Experience (AoLE) Guidance which was published on 28 January, as well as within the AoLE's themselves.

To further support the design and implementation of CWRE in the new curriculum, guidance will be developed. As with the CWRE curriculum content, we envisage that the guidance will be developed using the co-construction model, which brings together a range of specialists and experts, to ensure it is fit for purpose and deliverable within a range of education settings. We will also work with Careers Wales to develop resources for primary schools and case studies for primary schools.

The Welsh Government is currently funding a pilot of the Gatsby Good Career Guidance Benchmarks across all secondary and some primary schools in RCT. The benchmarks outline the key elements for a robust career programme in schools, including; a stable careers programme, linking curriculum learning to careers, encounters with employers and employees, experiences of workplaces, and learning from career and labour market information. An interim evaluation of the Gatsby pilot will be completed summer 2020, this will allow us to consider if and how Gatsby can support the delivery of Careers and Work Related Education in the new curriculum.

Recommendation 2

Schools should consider how they can enhance learners' understanding of the work place by providing a wider range of real experiences in partnership with employers

Welsh Government Response: Accept
The Welsh Government also notes the response as set out in recommendation 1.

The Welsh Government is committed to supporting schools in understanding the benefits to learners of providing meaningful, well

planned and embedded work-related experiences and employer partnerships. As such, it is to be included, along with best practice exemplars and case studies, in the forthcoming Careers and Work Related Experiences guidance.

Careers Wales plays a fundamental role in inspiring, motivating and informing learners, supporting them to make well informed choices about; qualifications, training and ultimately relevant career and job opportunities. In schools Careers Wales supports their programme planning through The Career Discovery Model, the model enables schools to identify learner's interests and motivation, and address individual needs.

Recommendation 3

Schools should evaluate the impact of partnerships with employers and of work-related experiences on learners' understanding of the world of work

Welsh Government Response: Accept
The Welsh Government also notes the response as set out in recommendation 1.

Recommendation 4.

Local authorities and regional consortia should ensure that local curriculum planning takes good account of careers and work-related experiences and involves employers

Welsh Government Response: Accept
Regional consortia were involved in in the co-construction of the curriculum and will continue to do so during the development of the CWRE guidance (see recommendations 1 and 2).

Careers Wales will continue to ensure young people have access to age appropriate Labour Market Information (LMI).

Recommendation 5.

The Welsh Government should work with Careers Wales and other partners to evaluate the impact of the Education Business Exchange, Business Class, and Big Ideas Wales programmes

Welsh Government Response: Accept
The Welsh Government accepts this recommendation to work with Careers Wales and other partners. Impact evaluations are conducted at programme and organisational level as noted below.

In 2019 Careers Wales asked Beaufort Research to evaluate the delivery of their Education Business Partnership service with mainstream secondary schools in Wales, this research included the Education

Business Exchange. The findings from this research will inform Careers Wales future planning and their new 2021 strategy, to ensure that they provide the most relevant, up to date and impactful service to meet the needs of learners and schools.

In 2019 Swansea University undertook a review into the establishment of Business Class in Wales, commissioned by Business in the Community Cymru, to enable an in-depth understanding of the key features and impacts of Business Class in a Welsh context. The review assessed the benefits for schools and businesses, critical success factors and areas for improvement.

A mid-term evaluation of the Business Wales including entrepreneurship awareness through Big Ideas Wales was undertaken in 2018 to assess impact of the programme’s delivery against the business plan and ERDF objectives.

Recommendation 6.

The Welsh Government should work with Careers Wales and other partners to produce guidance to support school staff in making links with employers

Welsh Government Response: Accept

The Welsh Government also notes the response as set out in recommendation 5.

The Welsh Government accepts this recommendation, internally this will bring together divisions from curriculum, careers policy, entrepreneurship, youth engagement and employability, to work with Careers Wales and other partners. Together we will undertake a holistic review of the impact, drawing together the evidence base, to then inform future approaches and guidance, to build a more cohesive supporting environment for schools and employers. We will develop Careers and Work Related Experiences guidance for school staff.

Publication details.

The report will be published on or after 12 February 2020, and may be accessed on the Estyn website: <https://www.estyn.gov.wales/>

Mae'r ddogfen yma hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg.
This document is also available in Welsh.



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