

Cyngor Sir CEREDIGION County Council

REPORT FOR: Learning Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee

DATE: 8th June 2023

LOCATION: Penmorfa

TITLE: Report on the work and impact of the Mid Wales Education Partners (MWEP)

PURPOSE OF REPORT: For information

REASON WHY THE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HAVE REQUESTED THE INFORMATION:

- a) Understanding and awareness of the work of the Mid Wales Education Partners (MWEP) and the Memorandum of Understanding which sets out the democratic accountability of the work of the MWEP for the period 2023 – 2026.
- b) Update on the impact of the partnership and the progress against 22/23 priorities
- c) The partnership priorities for 2023 - 2024.

BACKGROUND:

- The Mid Wales Education Partners (MWEP) an education partnership between Ceredigion and Powys Local Authorities was formed in September 2021. It is based on a Memorandum of Understanding (Annex A) which sets out the areas and condition the two counties will work together on. They include:
 - Support for curriculum reform / development of the Curriculum for Wales
 - Leadership pathways
 - Support for Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) and early career teachers
 - Professional development for Teaching Assistants
 - Reducing the impact of rural deprivation, ensure equity for all learners and improved well-being.
- The collaborative work of the Mid Wales Education Partners is funded by an annual Regional Consortia Grant (RCG) from Welsh Government. The grant is received individually by both Local Authorities to fund the collaborative work to fulfil the terms and conditions of:
 - Enable all learners, in particular those from disadvantaged backgrounds to progress along their own learning pathway and raise their aspirations to achieve their full potential, allied to a range of assessment approaches to understand and support this progress.
 - Co-construct a curriculum which promotes a broad range of knowledge, skills and experiences (including social and interactional experiences) with a clear

- understanding of why these matter – qualifications are a key part of this.
 - Ensure the school environment supports learners' and practitioners' well-being.
 - Support practitioners' understanding of what works in curriculum design by investing in the enquiry and pedagogic skills of all staff.
 - Enable ambitious professional learning for all practitioners in a school dedicated to being a learning organisation.
 - Embed reflection, self-evaluation and improvement within schools and the importance of good school leadership as a pre-condition for that.
 - Be at the heart of their communities – we want to build better relationships between schools and families, communities and employers, to support and promote educational achievement and excellent employment, next steps education and training.
 - Listen to children and young people as they engage with their learning and supporting them in achieving their aspirations.
- By working collaboratively, it provides direct access to the Welsh Government Regional Consortia grant funding (RCG) and therefore adds valuable capacity to Ceredigion and Powys's education services.
- Annually a Business Plan is submitted to the Welsh Government for approval (Annex B). This is followed by a robust and thorough annual review with the Minister for Education and senior Welsh Government officials. Estyn Inspectors also regularly monitor the progress of the business plan and collaboration.
- MWEF 2022 – 2023 priorities:
 - Ensure that schools are confident in implementing the Curriculum for Wales from 09/22 onwards, and continue to focus on improving T & L
 - Support and develop excellent education professionals.
 - Develop and implement an equity strategy and support pupil and practitioners' wellbeing and emotional needs.
 - Ensure that school support and improvement arrangements are clear, and lead schools to continue to develop as learning organisations that implement the revised arrangements for improvement, evaluation, and accountability.
 - Ensure efficient internal arrangements, and effective communication and engagement with stakeholders.
- Both Local Authorities maintain their own school improvement services, however, by collaborating on the five areas outlined above, it adds significant value, breadth and depth of support for Powys and Ceredigion school services and schools. For example, by sharing the burden on the national forums, sharing resources and co-planning. There are also areas of work specific to Ceredigion and Powys, such as the dedicated support for teachers at the start of their career and the impact of rural deprivations which are key priorities for the partnership.

- Bespoke support and professional learning opportunities are brokered through the School Support Advisers, with individual school priorities shared with officers to inform their support plan. In 2022 – 2023, 66 schools from across the MWEF identified the Curriculum for Wales as a whole school priority and 37 a priority on assessment and progression. For these schools, dedicated support was provided to allow for individual conversations on whole school curriculum planning and bespoke progression and assessment plans. In September 2022, all primary schools / phases and six secondary schools, all-age and special schools (one in Ceredigion and five in Powys) adopted the Curriculum for Wales. In line with mandatory requirements, with support and guidance from the MWEF, each of these schools have developed a bespoke school vision. In many MWEF schools, the vision has been developed in collaboration with key stakeholders to incorporate valuable opportunities for learners to successfully explore the historical, cultural and social features of their locality / ‘cynefin’ and Wales. In the most effective schools, the school’s vision has also been successful in incorporating opportunities to learn about the diversity of society in Wales and the wider world. For example, in May 2022, Estyn inspected Penglais school and asked them to prepare a case study on its work implementing the Curriculum for Wales as they noted that *“curriculum design is research based and beneficially linked to the development of teaching.”* In addition, at Ysgol Uwchradd Aberteifi the inspection report of March 2022 noted *“Work on curriculum design, coupled with a focus on improving teaching, has led to a strong, clear vision for the Curriculum for Wales”*.
- Universal national and bespoke support for all MWEF practitioners (regardless of their stage in career) is provided to improve their practice and develop as future leaders. For example, essential regular support, guidance and networking for new and acting headteachers in their roles in leading and managing a school such as health and safety, property aspects, finance and HR; or support for early career teachers in years 2 to 5 of their teaching careers through a pilot undertaken by the MWEF.
- The positive impact of the partnership’s work on practitioners and the development of Ceredigion and Powys leaders is also evident. For example, following successful completion of the National Aspiring Headteacher development programme, 14 leaders from the MWEF succeeded in gaining the National Professional Qualification for Headteachers (NPQH) in 2023 (13 from Powys and 1 from Ceredigion). A further 21 practitioners from the MWEF have successfully completed the middle leadership development programme, 12 the senior leaders development programme and 8 the programme for aspiring headteachers, allowing them to contribute positively to their school improvement and provision.

- In 2022 – 2023 all MWEP schools had access to ‘Raising the Attainment of Disadvantaged Youngsters’ (RADY) resources and support which focuses on realising the potential of all young people. There is a tiered approach to support, that aligns with school needs, school priorities and local authority recommendations. Phase 1 rollout (2022 – 2023):

		Ceredigion	Powys
In-School RADY	Highest level of support ↓	2	2
Keep in Touch RADY		1	-
Remote Coached RADY		4	4
Supported Recorded RADY		10	22 (2 groups)
Recorded RADY	Lowest level of support	26	20

Many schools engaging with In-School, Remote Coached and Supported Recorded are carefully considering all aspects of the programme and are beginning to realise the ‘untapped potential’ of disadvantaged young people. There is successful initial work around proportional representation and having a ‘Golden Thread’ through their development plans in relation to effective academic and pastoral support. The work of schools to improve equity in provision and to reduce the impact of poverty and deprivation on learners has been identified in recent Estyn inspections. For example, following the inspection of Ysgol Uwchradd Aberteifi in March 2022, Estyn noted *“Leaders at all levels have provided secure leadership on promoting national and local priorities. Following the lockdown periods, leaders have focused strongly on improving the provision for developing pupils’ literacy and numeracy skills. In addition, they have prioritised support for vulnerable pupils to reduce the impact of poverty on educational attainment. There is comprehensive provision to ensure that these pupils are in school and ready to learn.”*

- Following close collaboration between Ceredigion and Powys officers and in line with national and local priorities the following five priorities have been identified in the business plan (Annex B) for the 2023 – 2024 financial year:
 - i. Support all MWEP schools to develop effective approaches to learning and teaching to ensure learners make progress in line with expectations.
 - ii. Support all MWEP schools in ensuring high quality curriculum design and implementation, building effective practices in pedagogy, progression and assessment with a particular focus on literacy, numeracy and digital competence skills.
 - iii. Develop further support for schools to establish a whole school approach that supports the well-being of learners and practitioners and ensures equity of experiences to alleviate the impact of poverty and deprivation on learner progress.
 - iv. Support MWEP practitioners to follow national and local leadership and development pathways so that the practices of all MWEP practitioners are strong and effective with a positive influence on learners’ well-being and progress.
 - v. Further develop strong communications, stakeholder engagement and governance arrangements of the MWEP.

- Officers will monitor progress against the above priorities each quarter in addition to the termly reporting to the Chief Executives and Elected Members of Ceredigion and Powys.

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RECOMMENDATION

1. Note the Memorandum of Understanding for 2023 – 2026.
2. Note Mid Wales Education Partners 2023 – 2024 Business Plan (Annex B)

REASON BEHIND THE RECOMMENDATION:

- Implement the priorities identified in the 2023 – 2024 Business Plan
- Agree the Memorandum of Understanding between Powys and Ceredigion for the period 2023 – 2026.

Contact Names & Role:

- Clive Williams - Corporate Lead Officer: Schools
- Anwen Orrells – Mid Wales Education Partners Strategic Lead
- Mary Davies – Corporate Manager: School Improvement

Date of report:

09.05.2023

Acronyms:

- MWEP: Mid Wales Education Partners
- RCG: Regional Consortia Grant
- NPQH: National professional qualification for headteachers
- RADY: Raising the Attainment of Disadvantaged Youngsters'