

Kirsty Williams, AM
Cabinet Secretary for Education
Welsh Government

26 June 2017

Dear Kirsty

Community Focussed Schools

The Children, Young People and Education Committee recently considered its forward work programme. As part of that work programme, Members agreed to write to you to seek information on the current position regarding community focused schools in Wales.

You may be aware that this is an area that the Committee discussed with HM Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales during its consideration of his 2015/16 annual report on 15 February 2017. Estyn subsequently provided a [note to the Committee](#) on what makes a good community focussed school.

The use of schools as wider community facilities was a particular feature of policy in the early years of the Assembly and devolution. In 2001, the National Assembly's (the Welsh Government's) [‘The Learning Country’](#) strategy document stated:

We want to see a much closer relationship between schools and the communities they serve. We want schools to act as a community resource - not just in school hours but out of hours and in vacations as well. We see them as being integral to community capacity building - providing a base for delivering, not just education and training (with links to FE and HE institutions), but also a range of other services like family support, health and enterprise promotion. We want to see them rooted in a wide community context; capable of taking genuine pride in their achievements, and able to ensure they are publicly recognised.

Between 2005 and 2011, the Welsh Government provided the Communities Focused Schools Grant to local authorities for them to develop community focused school approaches in their areas. The funding was subsequently incorporated into other, broader funding streams. It is our understanding that the first aspect, support for school/community projects, was transferred into the School Effectiveness Grant which was in turn amalgamated into the Education Improvement Grant in 2015-16. We



understand that the second aspect, relating to childcare provision, was allocated to Families First budgets.

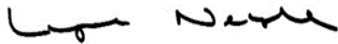
The Committee would be grateful for information on the Welsh Government's position regarding community focused schools, details of relevant policies and how any such initiatives are supported and funded. Could you also clarify whether Circular 34/03: [Community Focused Schools](#) (2003), which provides advice to schools, local authorities and other partners on how they can develop services associated with community focused schools, is still applicable and the extent to which it is used? Does the Welsh Government retain the following definition of community focused schools contained in the 2003 Circular?

A community focused school is one that provides a range of services and activities, often beyond the school day, to help meet the needs of its pupils, their families and the wider community.

The Committee would appreciate any other comments you have on community focused schools and action being undertaken in this regard.

This correspondence has been copied to John Griffiths, Chair of the Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee.

Yours sincerely



Lynne Neagle AC / AM
Cadeirydd / Chair

