

Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru
Y Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg

National Assembly for Wales
Children, Young People and Education Committee

Kirsty Williams AM
Cabinet Secretary for Education
Welsh Government

28 September 2017

Dear Kirsty

Community Focused Schools

Thank you for your letter of 24 July which updated the Committee on action the Welsh Government is taking to encourage and promote community focused schools. The Committee discussed your response at its meeting on 20 September and agreed to seek clarification on a few specific areas.

We would be grateful if you could clarify whether Circular 34/03: Community Focused Schools remains operational and, if so, what assessment has the Welsh Government made of the extent to which local authorities, schools and other partners are following it?

Furthermore, please could you confirm if the Welsh Government retains the following definition of community focused schools contained in paragraph 1.2 of 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. Across Wales many schools already provide some community services including adult education, study support, ICT facilities and community sports programmes.

The Committee notes with interest that your officials are currently considering how to take forward the Public Policy Institute for Wales' recommendations and looks forward to a further update on this in due course. We also note the reference to this agenda in *Rewriting the Future* and the Family and Community Engagement (FaCE) guidance.



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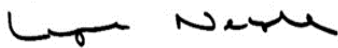
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However, it appears to us that there needs to be a clearer, more specific mechanism for ensuring that every maintained school is a truly community focused school. As the PPIW report, and indeed your letter, allude to, this could include specific criteria within 21st Century Schools funding and Estyn's inspection framework.

Resources inevitably play a significant part in helping a school become, and continue to be, community focused, which is why historically specific funding was allocated to this purpose through the Community Focused Schools Grant. From the Committee's work on Gypsy Roma and Traveller, and Minority Ethnic educational outcomes, you will be aware of our concerns that some of the individual purposes of the un-hypothecated Education Improvement Grant (EIG) get overlooked, which is compounded by a lack of monitoring. In your letter, you state that expenditure relating to community focused and school projects 'remain eligible' under the EIG 'where it supports improved outcomes for learners'. The information the Committee has requested for draft budget scrutiny includes details of how the EIG is used to support community focused school initiatives and any other relevant Welsh Government budget provision. We look forward to receiving this in due course, in conjunction with a reply to this letter.

A copy of this letter will be sent to the Chair of the Equalities, Local Government and Communities Committee given its relevance to the Committee's portfolio.

Yours sincerely



Lynne Neagle AC / AM
Cadeirydd / Chair

