



Ein cyf / Our ref: MA(P)/KW/3712/17

Lynne Neagle AM
Chair
Children, Young People and Education Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Ty Hywel
Cardiff Bay
CF99 1NA

23rd October 2017

Dear Lynne,

Thank you for your letter of 28 September following the Children, Young People and Education Committee's consideration of my letter of 24 July with respect to community focused schools.

You requested clarification of the following areas which I will address in turn:

- Whether Circular 34/03 remains operational and if so, what assessment has been made of the extent to which our delivery partners are following the guidance?

Circular 34/03 is still relevant and will be used when we take forward the commitments outlined in Prosperity for All to establish community learning centres and to ensure that schools take on a more wide-ranging role as community hubs.

The guidance will be a useful point of reference for headteachers, governing bodies and the wider community.

- Whether the definition of community focused schools is still current

This definition is still appropriate. Community focused schools will form a critical part of community learning centres. These new models will not just be about buildings but about service provision delivered from those buildings; for example, providing extended services with childcare, parenting support, family learning and community access to facilities built around the school day.

It is important that schools connect with the community that surrounds them and that the school team of the headteacher, teaching staff and governing body play their part in enabling joined up work to move forward.

- The inclusion of specific criteria within the conditions for 21st Century Schools funding and Estyn's inspection framework.

Investment in our school and college infrastructure through the 21st Century Schools and Education Programme will be one of the levers to enable our plans for community hubs and learning centres to progress. We will draw upon all our budgets across education, in particular 21st Century Schools, to take forward this agenda.

Appropriate measures will be added to the Estyn inspection framework where necessary.

A copy of this letter will be sent to the Chair of the Equalities, Local Government and Communities Committee.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kirsty Williams'.

Kirsty Williams AM/AC
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Addysg
Cabinet Secretary for Education