

# Education Secretary launches new Foundation Phase Excellence Network

The Foundation Phase Excellence Network brings together leading figures from across the education spectrum to ensure a more structured approach to develop Foundation Phase practitioner support for those working with children age three to seven.

With the aim of inspiring young minds together, and supported by £1million Welsh Government funding, the network will include representation from local authority education services, schools and child care settings that deliver the Foundation Phase, regional consortia, Higher Education and third sector organisations which will work together to share expertise, experience, knowledge and best practice.

A new online community learning zone has also been established to facilitate the sharing of information, resources and research between practitioners. The zone will also host 20 new case studies including three short films which showcase effective practice in Foundation Phase.

They have been produced by working collaboratively with schools and settings from across Wales in five key areas of practice: child development, environment experiences, leadership, pedagogy and Welsh language. The case studies will be available on the new zone during March and April.

Welcoming the launch, Kirsty Williams said:

“Building on similar models to our already successful National Network for Excellence in Mathematics and National Network for Excellence Science and Technology, this new Foundation Phase network will support workforce and leadership development, boost the research capacity of the education profession in Wales and ensure that implementation of the Foundation Phase happens in a consistent and effective manner.

“Practitioners in the Foundation Phase are doing an incredible job, one of the toughest but most rewarding jobs around, and they deserve all our support. This network and its supporting online resources are just the start of a new level of professional development in Foundation Phase for school settings.

“This development goes to the heart of what our national mission and the new curriculum is about – raising standards, reducing the attainment gap and delivering an education system that is a source of national pride and confidence.”

The new online community learning zone is hosted on the Welsh Government’s learning platform – Hwb – and can be accessed here: <http://hwb.gov.wales/fpen>