

New support for education leaders

A new body tasked with inspiring educational leaders of the future is to be launched today (Wednesday, 16 May). The National Academy for Educational Leadership will work with partners across the system to provide strategic support for those in current leadership roles as well as providing encouragement and inspiration for those who wish to pursue a leadership career in education.

Building on the good practice already delivered by inspirational, experienced and effective leaders working within the Welsh system, across the UK and internationally, the new organisation will be led by an independent team and accountable to a Board consisting of people with a range of skills that will support the Academy as it develops. A stakeholder group, representative of all sectors in education, will also be on hand to influence the continuous work of the Academy and ensure its relevance to the day to day work of school leaders.

In making the announcement, Cabinet Secretary for Education, Kirsty Williams AM, emphasised the importance of strong leadership,

“It is crucial that we develop leaders who can inspire, not only our young people, but also their colleagues so we can work collaboratively to raise standards.

“The academy will play a vital role in developing the current and future leadership talent for Wales and ensure all schools can deliver our new curriculum.

“The launch today is an important step in our national mission in delivering an education system that is a source of national pride and public confidence.”

A Shadow Board, led by former Chief Inspector of Schools Ann Keane, has been in place to oversee the instigation of the Academy co-ordinating workshops and consultation events all over Wales to ensure that the voice of practitioners has been a major influencing factor in the Academy's on-going development.

Newly appointed Academy Chair Sue Davies expressed her delight at the launch,

“I believe this is a hugely important step for education in Wales as we recognise the crucial role leaders play in delivering the reform we want within the educational sector. While appreciating the need to nurture future leaders it is also vital that we provide appropriate support for those delivering leadership roles at present, in what can only be described as very challenging times.

“That is why we have ensured that key stakeholders, including school leaders, have been closely involved in developing this Academy and will continue to be involved for the foreseeable future as the work programme is rolled out.”

To further support the organisation and provide practical input for school leaders already in place, a group of 12 associates, made up of head teachers from across Wales, has been established. Gwyn Tudur is head of Ysgol Tryfan in Bangor and explains the role of the associates,

“We see our role as ensuring the National Academy responds to the very real needs of those working in the Welsh educational system and especially those undertaking leadership responsibilities or looking to step up to leadership. We are looking to ensure that there will be very practical and relevant work programmes to help our colleagues feel they are part of a wider support structure, and that avenues of assistance will be on hand at all times.

“As school leaders, we can at times feel isolated, and the establishment of the National Academy for Educational Leadership and its core aims have been greatly appreciated.”

To begin to take forward the work of the Academy, the Cabinet Secretary will make a call for the first programmes to come forward for Endorsement. These initial programmes will be aimed at Acting Headteachers and those new to headship to come forward to seek endorsement from the Academy. Endorsement will ensure that the provision available to our education professionals is high quality and accessible to all.