

# Wales should continue reforms to boost quality and equity of school system

28/02/2017 – Wales should continue its efforts to reform the curriculum and raise the standards of teaching in order to improve the quality and equity of its school system, according to a new OECD report.

[The Welsh Education Reform Journey](#) analyses the reforms adopted since 2014 and notes a shift in the approach to school improvement away from a piecemeal and short-term policy orientation to one with a long-term vision involving key stakeholders.

The commitment to improving the teaching and learning in Wales's schools is visible at all levels of the education system, says the report.

"Sustaining this commitment, deepening investments in key policy areas and strengthening the implementation process will be central to realising the country's ambitions for education and society over the long term," said Andreas Schleicher, OECD Director for Education and Skills, launching the report in Cardiff with Kirsty Williams, Wales' Cabinet Secretary for Education.

The focus of continuing reforms should be on developing a high-quality teaching profession, making leadership a key driver of education reform, ensuring equity in learning opportunities and student well-being, and moving towards a new system of assessment, evaluation and accountability that aligns with the new 21<sup>st</sup> century curriculum.

Among the report's recommendations are that Wales should:

- Continue developing a national approach to professional learning and build capacity for implementation of the new curriculum.
- Move forward with the establishment of the National Academy of Educational Leadership and speed up development of leadership standards.
- Consider moving towards a national needs-based school-funding formula that ensures the effective allocation of funds to schools.
- Continue strengthening Wales' school improvement infrastructure.
- Ensure coherence across the various reform initiatives to prevent fragmentation. The government should clarify how different reforms and policies relate to each other as well as the roles and responsibilities of teachers, school leaders, local authorities and regional consortia.

The report is available at

<http://www.oecd.org/edu/school/thewelshededucationreformjourneyarapidpolicyassessment.htm>

For more information, or to speak to the report's author, journalists should

contact [Spencer Wilson](#) of the [OECD's Media Division](#) (tel. + 33 1 45 24 81 18).

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## [Xi stresses stability, progress in China's economic work](#)

China will stick to the basic tone of “seeking progress while maintaining stability” in this year’s economic work to ensure stable and healthy development, Chinese President Xi Jinping said Tuesday.

“China will strive to improve the quality and efficiency of the economy and deepen supply-side structural reform,” Xi said at a meeting of the Central Leading Group on Finance and Economic Affairs.

It was the 15th conference of the leading group, which is headed by Xi. Premier Li Keqiang, the deputy head, also attended the meeting.

The country’s economic regulators reported their work plans in excess capacity cutting, financial risk control, property market regulation and the revival of the manufacturing sector.

After hearing the reports, Xi highlighted the handling of loss-making “zombie companies” in excess capacity cutting.

“The government should make more efforts to guarantee subsistence allowance and re-employment for those laid-off, and grab effective methods to dissolve corporate debts and prevent moral hazard,” Xi said. “China will accelerate building a supervision coordination mechanism and strengthen macro-prudential regulation to prevent systemic risks.”

He also pointed out the role that financial supervision could play in improving the economy.

“Financial supervisors should fix weak links and act hard against illegal activities,” he said, calling for reform and innovation to help the financial sector better serve the real economy.

“Houses are built to be lived in, not for speculation,” Xi said, when making instructions on house market regulation.

“A long-term mechanism will be established to ensure market stability, with improved policies to stabilize home buying, guide market expectations and enhance land supply systems,” Xi said.

Xi stressed quality in reviving the manufacturing sector, saying the sector should shift from the expansion of quantity to the improvement of quality.

“China will channel more energy into reducing prices and administrative fees in monopolized sectors, and strive to lower business burdens,” Xi added.

During the meeting, policymakers discussed the work report of the leading group, which has rolled out more than 400 measures to improve economic regulation since 2012.

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## [Cabinet Secretary to celebrate the best of Wales in Dubai](#)

In addition to a number of engagements to promote Welsh culture and increase business links between Wales, Dubai and the wider United Arab Emirates, the Cabinet Secretary will join a record twenty five of Wales’ finest food and drink producers at the Gulfood Trade Show, one of the world’s largest annual food and beverage exhibitions.

The Trade Show is an opportunity to promote Wales’ food and drink sector on the international stage and help Welsh producers’ efforts to establish new business relationships and expand their sales into potentially lucrative new markets.

During the visit, the Cabinet Secretary will announce she is making £2.4million available to ensure Wales remains well-represented at high profile food and drink trade events and visits around the world over the next two years, providing further opportunities to showcase Wales and world class Welsh produce.

The Cabinet Secretary said:

“St David’s Day presents us with a fantastic opportunity to celebrate our people, our history, our culture, and, of course, our high quality larder of food and drink produce.

“Wales’ food and drinks sector is a success story. We are already more than half way towards achieving our target of 30% growth in the sector by 2020, generating over £260 million from exports.

Almost 90% of these are going to the EU, which is why we strongly advocate, on behalf of Welsh businesses, continued full and unfettered access to the European Single Market.

“It is important we remain an outward focused and welcoming nation. The challenges presented by a “Hard Brexit” are obvious but I am encouraged by the fact Wales’ food and drink sector is well placed to tackle the challenges we now face and grasp new opportunities.

“International exhibitions are vital in raising Wales’ international profile as they present the opportunity for Welsh businesses to prosper by entering new overseas markets. I am delighted, therefore, to confirm we are investing £2.4m over the next two years to have a strong presence at a series of important food and drink exhibitions and trade visits both in the UK and overseas including a continuation of our ongoing presence at Gulfood.”

Lesley Griffiths will also support an additional Welsh Government-led trade delegation involving twelve small and medium sized enterprises from Wales aiming to grow their business in Dubai and the wider region. The delegation will visit the site of the next World Expo, taking place in Dubai in 2020.

Expo 2020 offers significant commercial opportunities for Welsh businesses of all sizes and in many sectors.

Wales’ cultural excellence will be showcased in Dubai by the presence of the Welsh National Opera who will be performing Puccini’s Madame Butterfly and La boheme over the first two weeks of March. In addition, during the evening of St David’s Day itself, Lesley Griffiths will attend a special performance by a trio of Welsh National Opera performers at a ‘Wales – Business and Culture’ reception at the British Embassy in Dubai. The event will also provide a high profile opportunity to show Wales’ strengths as a place to visit, study and do business.

To end her visit, the Cabinet Secretary will speak at a celebratory St. David’s Day Ball organised by the local Welsh Club.

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## **National Statistics: Local authority municipal waste management: July to September 2016**

Data on waste management are collected in order to monitor progress towards national and local targets; in particular against the requirements of the EU Landfill Directive.

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# News story: Animal medicines improvement notice: Diatom Retail Limited

This Notice was issued as Diatom Retail Limited were placing on the market Diatomaceous Earth based products for use in the worming of animals contrary to Regulation 4 of the Veterinary Medicines Regulations (VMR).

The improvements required are for:

- the highlighted medicinal claims, as identified in supplied sample documents, to be removed from all Diatom Retail Ltd marketing material
- Diatom Retail Ltd to provide written confirmation to the VMD that no further attempts will be made to market their products for the purpose of worming animals without proper authorisation