

1. National Context

1.1 Definition of an equal society

An equal society protects and promotes equal, real freedom and substantive opportunity to live in the ways people value and would choose, so that everyone can flourish.

An equal society recognises people's different needs, situations and goals and removes the barriers that limit what people can do and can be.

Equalities Review, 2007

1.2 Inclusive Education: The National Context

Inclusive education is a process concerned with breaking down barriers to learning and increasing the participation of children and young people in their school community. It is built on inclusive policies, practices and cultures. It requires active involvement from all concerned.

The essential principles are:

- inclusion is a process by which schools, LEAs and others develop their cultures, policies and practices to include children and young people;
- all children and young people should have access to an appropriate education that affords them the opportunity to achieve their personal potential;
- schools, LEAs and others should actively seek to remove barriers to learning and participation;
- an inclusive education service offers excellence and choice and incorporates the views of parents, carers, and children and young people;
- the interests of all children and young people must be safeguarded;
- with the right training, strategies and support, nearly all children and young people..... can be successfully included in mainstream education;
- mainstream education will not always be right for every child or young person all of the time. However, even if mainstream education is not right at a particular stage this does not prevent the child or young person from being included successfully at a later stage.

Effective inclusive schools and LEAs have:

- coherent plans for the development of inclusion;
- a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum for all pupils;
- high expectations and inclusive whole school targets;
- strategies to address the training and development needs of staff.

The Welsh Assembly Government and ADEW have highlighted the importance of developing a Quality Mark award which recognises inclusive schools in Wales. The award will provide schools with a process by which they can improve the quality of policy and provision in inclusion. This links closely with the School Effectiveness Framework (SEF) (WAG, 2008) which requires an ethos where children and young people are expected to succeed and achieve a personal standard of excellence. The ethos should reflect the values inherent in Wales, including the importance of the Welsh language within the context of a bilingual country with its unique culture and traditions.

As part of the SEF, WAG and its partners have developed a statement of national purpose for schools. It describes the purpose of schools as being to:

- enable all children and young people to develop their full potential by acquiring skills, knowledge, understanding and attitudes, including personal, social and emotional skills, to enable them to become economically, socially and personally active citizens and lifelong learners;
- promote a culture of social inclusion and respect for diversity, particularly through developing the wellbeing of learners and personalising their learning;
- establish strong professional learning communities in schools where practitioners can develop and share their professional knowledge on learning and teaching;
- offer children and young people a curriculum that engages and motivates them to learn and to achieve their potential;
- provide a learning community for all engaged in school life, with children and young people and their families at the centre, and including governors, teachers, other school staff and adults training to work in schools;
- be a key player with other schools and partner service providers in planning and delivering integrated services for children and young people to improve their well-being; and
- provide or facilitate education so that schools contribute to meeting the needs of the community and engage the community as partners to ensure that all schools are community focused.

1.3 Inclusive Schools Award *for* Wales

The School Effectiveness Framework (SEF) draws from the Learning Country: Vision into Action (WAG, 2006) document to drive a commitment towards improving outcomes for children and young people. The Welsh Assembly Government's sets out seven core aims in a rights-based approach to meeting pupil needs in Children and Young People: Rights into Action (2004). The SEF identifies six elements for effective working:

- Leadership
- Working with Others
- Networks of Professional Practice
- Intervention and Support
- Improvement and Accountability
- Curriculum and Teaching

The **Inclusive Schools Award *for* Wales (ISAW)** builds on these to provide a process by which schools can develop, co-ordinate and manage provision for all children and young people with a wide range of diverse needs.

1.4 Addressing the Diverse Needs of Children and Young People

In order for all children and young people to benefit fully from inclusive education provision, their individual identities, capabilities, experiences and circumstances need to be taken into account and their needs addressed. There are many pupil groups who could be identified as having additional needs which need to be addressed, including

- minority ethnic (ME) groups including pupils learning English (and/or Welsh) as an additional language (EAL);
- children of families seeking asylum of who have refugee status/unaccompanied asylum seeking children;
- Gypsies and Travellers;
- pupils with identifies Special Educational Needs (SEN);
- disabled pupils;
- more able and talented pupils;
- those who are looked after by the local authority;
- pupils with medical needs;
- young parents and pregnant young women;
- young offenders;
- children of families in difficult circumstances;
- young carers;
- lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender pupils;
- school phobics and school refusers;
- pupils who perform or who have employment.

1.5 Children and Young People: Rights to Action (WAG 2004)

UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

The Assembly Government has adopted the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child as the basis of all work for children and young people in Wales. The Assembly has translated this into seven Core Aims through which will ensure that all children and young people:

- have a flying start in life;
- have a comprehensive range of education and learning opportunities;
- enjoy the best possible health and are free from abuse, victimisation and exploitation;
- have access to play, leisure, sporting and cultural activities;
- are listened to, treated with respect, and have their race and cultural identity recognised;
- have a safe home and a community which supports physical and emotional wellbeing;
- are not disadvantaged by poverty.

The UK's Second Report to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child was considered in September 2002. The UN Committee's response made 3 specific references to Wales, welcoming:

- that the Convention had been used as a basis for the Strategy for Children and Young People developed by the Welsh Assembly Government;
- the establishment of an independent Children's Commissioner for Wales;
- the adoption by the Assembly of regulations prohibiting corporal punishment in all forms of day-care, including childminding.

2. Local Context

2.1 Overview of the Approach

The Assembly Government has designed the Inclusive Schools Award *for* Wales (ISAW), to be awarded to schools and other learning settings in recognition of their inclusive cultures, policies and practices. The Award links closely with the School Effectiveness Framework (SEF) which sets out the Welsh Assembly Government's (WAG) vision for improving outcomes in learning and wellbeing for the children and young people of Wales.

The model for the ISAWSED has been developed through consortium working, building on the existing work of schools and local authorities. A key principle is that the model will be developmental in that it seeks to support the individual journey each school makes towards becoming more effective in adding value to the learning of all pupils in the school. The model is about helping good schools get better through building upon and making the most effective use of resources available to the school – at school, local, regional and national level. If the model is to enable schools to achieve improved effectiveness in inclusive practices that impacts positively on standards it should focus on the deeper characteristics and values, including raising the aspirations of the whole school community.

2.2 The Model

The model sees the Inclusive Schools Award as part of a five phase process which is described below.

Phase	Action	Outcome	Timeline
One Evaluating the school's inclusive practices	School prepares the ISAWSED	Draft ISAWSED	
Two Moderating the school's self-evaluation	Working with Local Authority Moderator (Home LEA)	Action plan developed	
Three Action planning and development	School addresses areas for further development identified in Action Plan	Revised ISAWSED	
Four Application and assessment	Application for ISAW and assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Submission of ISAWSED• External Moderator assessment	
Five External moderation	Moderation committee consider ISAWSED and External Moderator's recommendations	Decision of Award Committee	

ISAW Inclusive Schools Award

SED Self Evaluation Document

2.3 The Elements of the School Effectiveness Framework and the ISAW

The **Inclusive Schools Award for Wales** builds on the SEF's six elements for effective working to provide a process by which schools can develop, co-ordinate and manage. It adopts the six elements of the SEF which and describes them within an inclusive focus.

Leadership

*Providing a learning community for **all** engaged in school life, with children and young people and their families at the centre.*

Working with Others

Working in partnership with all stakeholders so that schools contribute to meeting the needs of the community by providing a high quality inclusive learning environment, promoting a culture of social inclusion and respect for diversity.

Networks of Professional Practice

*All practitioners working with children and young people work collaboratively to develop strong networks, ensuring that **all** are included, free from harm and where well being is secured.*

Intervention and Support

*Schools and partner providers plan and deliver integrated services which secure the right support and intervention, to ensure **all** children and young people improve their well being and achieve their potential.*

Improvement and Accountability

*Enable **all** children and young people to develop their potential by acquiring skills, knowledge, understanding and attitudes, including personal, social and emotional skills, so that they improve their educational experiences and life chances.*

Curriculum and Teaching

*Offer **all** children and young people an appropriate curriculum that engages and motivates them to learn and enables them to achieve their potential.*

2.4 The Phases

2.4.1 Phase One: Evaluating the School's Inclusive Practices

The school completes the Inclusive Schools Award *for* Wales, Self Evaluation Document (ISAWSED). The ISAWSED includes a contextual overview of the school and its community. This is a school-led process using existing evidence from school self-evaluation processes including relevant quality standards such as The Basic Skills Quality Mark and Healthy Schools Award. The Local Authority Support and Challenge Framework and associated awards will also provide evidence for meeting the criteria of the Inclusive Schools Award *for* Wales. These ongoing self-evaluation systems provide a great deal of evidence that is directly relevant to the consideration of the key elements of the Inclusive Schools Award *for* Wales. The criteria of the ISAWSED are designed to look deep into the life and work of the school and focus upon those key systems and values that are central inclusion and to sustained school improvement.

Schools are asked to convene a collaborative review process that will enable them to consider this existing evidence against the evaluation criteria within the ISAWSED. This focuses upon six key elements of school effectiveness, which are:

- Leadership
- Curriculum and teaching
- Working with others
- Networks of professional practice
- Intervention and support
- Improvement and accountability

Schools are responsible for managing this first stage of the process, based upon their individual circumstances and ongoing systems for self-evaluation and review. Schools, however, will be encouraged to ensure that their review process does reflect best practice as identified by Estyn in terms of the leadership and management of self-evaluation.

It should be noted that many of the criteria within the ISAWSED are qualitative; they involve making informed judgements about the characteristics of the school. It appears that schools can only be evaluated effectively against this framework if they ensure a high level of stakeholder involvement that provides feedback on their perceptions of the school and its effectiveness.

Schools should provide a clear evidence base that shows how they meet the criteria. Whilst it is recognised that many of the criteria are qualitative, quantitative evidence of performance and outcomes will also be essential elements of the evidence base.

A key feature of the School Effectiveness Framework and the ISAWSED is its recognition that there are areas where the school will share responsibility with other agencies and organisations to provide for the learning and wellbeing of children and young people. Schools are therefore encouraged to consider how they can involve representatives from these organisations in their review process.

2.4.2 Phase Two: Moderating the school's self-evaluation

The next phase in the cycle is for the school to have a dialogue with the Local Authority Consultant Moderator on the self-evaluation.

This is an opportunity for the school to present its self-evaluation findings and development proposals to the Consultant Moderator for moderation. This discussion will be based upon prior scrutiny of written outcomes of the 'ISAW Self Evaluation Document' and sampling of the relevant supporting evidence during an onsite visit.

The guiding principles for this discussion are that it should be:

- A developmental and constructive process, based upon professional dialogue;
- Focused directly upon pupils' learning and well-being, and the complex factors that influence this;
- Informed by both quantitative and qualitative evidence related to the key elements of the 'ISAW Self Evaluation Document';
- Based upon respect for the school's achievements and its right to determine appropriate direction for inclusive practices and for school improvement

2.4.3 Phase Three: Action planning and development

The responsibility for this phase lies with the school. Following the dialogue meeting with the Local Authority Moderator, the school will draw up an Action Plan describing

- areas which needs addressing
- objectives and intended outcomes
- specific tasks to meet objectives
- sources of evidence

The school will revise the ISAWSED following the implementation of the Action Plan.

2.4.4 Phase Four: Application and assessment

The school is responsible for submitting the completed ISAWSED and preparing for the assessment. The completed ISAWSED will identify the level of award for which the school wishes to apply. The ISAWSED will be accompanied by

- an application form
- school's context statement

The school will also prepare for the assessment visit and engage in dialogue with the lead assessor to set an agenda. The assessment and dialogue meeting will explore the following

1. Outcomes of the self evaluation process
2. Evidence base supporting the judgements
3. Key strengths

The assessors will complete their assessment grid and make recommendation for the External Award Board

2.4.5 Phase Five: External moderation

The purpose of this phase is to undertake an external moderation of the applications and recommendations of External Assessors, and to confirm the level of award for the participating schools.

The external board is made up of External Assessors, Consortium Representatives, Consultant specialist and WAG (DCELLS)

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