

## WAMG response to report by Estyn on the 'Evaluation of the extent and impact of remodelling on learning and the school workforce', March 2009

The WAMG social partnership signed up to the National Agreement and workforce reform to benefit all members of the school workforce and in order to raise standards for learners. Evidence collected by the social partnership over a period of six years has confirmed that where schools have remodelled effectively, there are substantial teaching and learning benefits, improved teacher recruitment and retention, and more effective practice within schools.

WAMG is pleased to note the overarching findings by Estyn that the National Agreement is having a very positive effect in schools and that, increasingly, schools are taking steps to examine the link between workforce deployment and educational standards. WAMG believes that transforming educational standards in Wales can only be accomplished by accelerating the engagement of all schools in workforce remodelling.

Whilst the Estyn report is based primarily on a questionnaire survey in just 40 schools and detailed interviews in 12 schools, it provides further helpful evidence about the impact of workforce remodelling. However, it would be inappropriate to reach firm conclusions about the value for money of the workforce reforms on the basis of the limited evidence available to Estyn.

Nevertheless, the Estyn report provides further confirmation of the importance of workforce remodelling in the context of raising educational standards for children and young people throughout Wales.

WAMG hopes that Estyn's findings will encourage more schools to develop sustainable strategies in order to raise educational standards, whilst ensuring that all staff - head teachers, teachers and support staff - are appropriately and effectively deployed.


The report by Estyn highlights the need for school leaders to be given appropriate time to discharge fully their responsibilities for leading and managing teaching and learning. WAMG supports Estyn's confirmation that where schools have remodelled effectively, there are positive benefits in terms of workload reduction for head teachers and other senior staff.

However, the Estyn evidence points to a continuing reluctance by some schools to the deployment of support staff in supporting pupils' learning and helping to reduce burdens on head teachers and teachers. WAMG believes that school support staff, working as part of the education team, make a real and substantial difference to the progress and achievement of all groups of pupils; however, this is dependent upon support staff being deployed appropriately, where they enjoy appropriate pay and rewards, and where they benefit from high quality induction, professional training and development. WAMG supports Estyn's



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suggestion that more needs to be done to secure a coherent strategy to support the recruitment and deployment of support staff in schools.

WAMG notes that many schools in Wales are continuing to utilise qualified teachers to undertake tasks that could otherwise be undertaken by appropriately trained and qualified support staff. This suggests that there is more to do to encourage all schools to implement a wider range of remodelling approaches which would provide a continuing basis for raising standards and tackling excessive workload whilst enabling schools to do so in a cost-effective way, recognising the financial constraints that exist. However, WAMG welcomes the finding by Estyn that many schools, particularly primary schools, are now benefiting from the implementation of innovative remodelling approaches, including the deployment of specialist teaching and coaching support for pupils.

WAMG endorses Estyn's confirmation of the important role of local authorities in supporting effective workforce deployment practice in schools. However, WAMG is concerned that the delivery of effective and consistent support to schools in Wales needs to be made more consistent and accessible. Local authority change coordinators and local social partnerships have a key role in monitoring practice across schools and in advising and supporting schools on the use of remodelling techniques and approaches. However, we also recognise that schools could benefit further from access to training, development and change management expertise and resources provided nationally to support remodelling.

The Estyn evaluation makes clear that many schools in Wales are responding well to a demanding educational reform agenda. WAMG believes that the delivery of these reforms is contingent upon creating capacity for effective practice in teaching, leadership and management in schools, and where schools are supported fully at local level in doing so. The implementation of contractual workforce entitlements for head teachers and teachers, together with the extension of opportunities for appropriate support staff deployment, will continue to be an essential component of the agenda of raising educational standards in Wales.

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