



A NATIONAL AMBITION: ENTERPRISE EDUCATION, SCHOOLS AND THE WELSH ECONOMY

REPORT

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1. FOREWORD BY JANET JONES, CHAIR, FSB WALES POLICY UNIT

Among the challenges facing Wales, the need to develop the skills required to ensure economic success, promote opportunities to meet the aspirations of young people and increase employability are among the most fundamental. Focussing on these issues allows us to begin to tackle some of the structural weaknesses of the Welsh economy such as low productivity, existing and potential future skills gaps and economic deprivation.

Tackling these challenges however, also requires a systemic approach which utilises all the assets and experience at our disposal including the wealth of smaller businesses across Wales.

It was with this in view that FSB Wales commissioned eminent education expert Professor David Egan of Cardiff Metropolitan University to look at the opportunities of promoting entrepreneurship and enterprise within the education system in Wales to help inspire young people, boost their employability and create the basis for a valuable relationship between small businesses and schools – particularly primary schools – which would add to the richness of that experience.

Smaller businesses and schools share one important facet – both are at the heart of every single community in Wales. However, the links between education and business are often disjointed or in many cases non-existent. This means that neither capitalises on the potential benefit of that relationship and of greater concern, we fail to use this to promote the step-up for the Welsh economy which is so important to us all.

With the opportunity of a review of the curriculum in Wales, renewed approaches to vocational education, new strategic thinking for the Welsh economy and a consideration of improving employability, now is the time to consider what measures are needed to bridge this gap, embed new approaches to learning and mobilise the communities and networks required to allow this to take place.

We are hopeful that such an approach would also help promote a better understanding of the world of work and careers which meet the aspiration of our young people but also more effectively reflect the roles available within Welsh businesses both now and in the future as this landscape continues to shift.

The approach however, inevitably requires tough decision-making and an understanding that many communities have an important part to play. As the largest business organisation in Wales, FSB Wales is ready to play its own part in this conversation.

We therefore offer this important piece of work to begin to engage partners across Wales as we seek to address the needs of young people, business and the wider Welsh economy.

Janet Jones

FSB Wales Policy Chair

June 2017

2. INTRODUCTION

The remit

This report was commissioned by the Federation of Small Businesses in Wales. Initially the focus of the report was the imperative identified by the FSB Wales Policy Unit for Wales' small businesses to strengthen their links with primary schools. The brief has widened to consider this within the broader context of enterprise education in Welsh schools as it is currently and the potential for its future development as part of the changes that are presently taking place to the school curriculum in Wales. 'Enterprise education' has been used as a term to capture the variety of ways in which links between schools and business/industry are currently expressed: such as 'careers and the world of work'; 'links with business and industry'; 'business education', 'entrepreneurship education' etc.

Whilst the focus of this report is on the place which enterprise education could and should have within the school curriculum, the broader context within which education operates is also considered. This includes developments within the Welsh economy and the commitment of civil and political society in Wales to overcome poverty and its effects whilst developing broader national prosperity.

Methodology

The evidence base for the report has drawn upon the following sources:

- An extensive review of literature.
- Interviews with key policymakers and national organisations.
- A survey of FSB Wales members.
- Visits to schools.

Further details of these sources can be found in the reference section of the report.

A logic model approach

The report uses this evidence to develop, in an adapted way, what is known in the field of policy research and evaluation as a 'logic model' or 'theory of change' approach (Nesta and the Alliance for Useful Evidence, 2015).

Drawing on this approach it is suggested that it is a reasonable expectation that as a direct result of their education in schools, young people will become:

- Enterprising and creative.
- Knowledgeable about future career and employment opportunities that are open to them locally, nationally and internationally.
- Employable, through having acquired the right skills and qualifications.

To achieve these outcomes, it is suggested that the following enablers should be available to young people whilst in school:

- Enterprise education is strongly represented in the school curriculum.
- High quality, independent, careers advice is available to young people.
- Fit-for-purpose vocational qualifications and routes are available to young people.

It is also assumed that young people from the most disadvantaged backgrounds and communities—who tend in the main not to do as well in education – will benefit the most from high quality enterprise education being in place, to support their aspirations, offer them attractive opportunities for progression and assist their chances to escape social exclusion and future poverty.

3. ENTERPRISE EDUCATION

Background

Enterprise Education in the UK can be seen to have developed as a response to growing perceptions which came to the fore over half a century ago flowing from the works of the historians Martin Wiener and Corelli Barnett. They pointed to an ambivalence at the heart of British society to industrialism and economic growth, to which they attributed a large part of the country's relative economic decline after 1945, the roots of which they believed could be traced to anti-business and technical attitudes in the UK education system (Barnett, 1972; Wiener, 1981; Sanderson, 1999). Despite progress over the intervening period, these concerns continue to be reflected in the views of most young people in the state sector who in a recent survey reported that their schools prepared them poorly for adult working life (Mann et al, 2017).

Components

The growth of enterprise education – in its various formats and with a variety of nomenclatures – has become an international movement at all levels and phases of education. Whilst its components inevitably vary to some extent from country to country, the core elements set out by the Scottish Government below are representative (Scottish Government, 2015):

- Improving learning and teaching by bringing real-life contexts into the classroom.
- Better understanding of the local labour market.
- More innovative careers information.
- Developing skills for job applications, CV writing and interviews.
- Providing references and recommendations.
- Development and recognition of skills and attributes for employment.
- High quality work placements, work visits or shadowing opportunities.
- Professional learning for teaching staff.
- Reducing barriers for young people with additional support needs.

Impact

Other formulations of enterprise education are more ambitious in claiming positive outcomes for its impact on young people (for example Stanley et al, 2015). The Foundation for Young Australians, for instance, believes that evidence points to the following impacts from enterprise education in schools (Foundation for Young Australians, 2016):

- Improvements in school outcomes: motivation for school, attendance, retention, connectedness (including for students at risk of disengagement).
- Improvements in the skills that make young people enterprising.
- Improvements to employment and learning in later life.
- Increased desirability of, and aspiration, for entrepreneurship as a career.
- Increasing business success later in life including likelihood of starting a business and running a business successfully.

These claims for the impact of enterprise education are supported by other promotional organisations in the field, such as the National Schools Partnership created in the UK by Business in the Community, the Confederation of British Industry and Prudential (National Schools Partnership, 2016). Business in the Community have also developed the Business Class model which attempts to twin schools with a single large local employer to develop sustained engagement. Based on research that it has commissioned, it claims that students who have engaged with Business Class are on average 13% more likely to align their

school work with their career aspirations (Business in the Community, 2015). More independent research-based analyses caution, however, that whilst enterprise education certainly has the potential to influence measurable outcomes such as improved attainment, rigorous evidence of such effects is more difficult to establish (Burge et al, 2012).

The German approach to enterprise education, including what the London regional youth work development unit, Partnership for Young London, describes as its ‘breathtakingly systematic scale of employer engagement’, has long been held up as an example of how high-quality enterprise education can help to sustain national economic growth (Partnership for Young London, 2015; p. 6).

The case study below illustrates some of its work.

In North-Rhine Westphalia a phase of career-orientation in school years 8 and 9 is led in each school by a coordinator appointed by the school’s executive body to anchor the programme in the school. The programme provides standard elements for all pupils and includes interdisciplinary and process-oriented teaching projects for pupils to:

- Make their own decisions about their life plans and their transition into the working world.
- Gain knowledge of the economic, occupational and education and training paths, including universities.
- Have practical experiences and reflect on learning in the classroom.
- Recognise their own career and development opportunities and the transition to formal education course or study.

In Year 8 each pupil has 3 different practice days offered by local companies. This is a new element of vocational orientation, supported by the chamber of commerce by informing the firms and promoting it.

This process leads to an offer which has been developed throughout the process, arising after considerable discussion involving teachers, students, parents, employers and colleges. There are offers to 3 routes to professional training for young people:

- The dual system combining training in firms and in vocational colleges.
- Professional training in vocational colleges.
- The vocational preparation system, which offers no occupational certificate, but should lead to work.

Partnership for Young London, 2015

Employer engagement

A key element of enterprise education is the engagement of schools with employers. The types of employer engagement have been identified by the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) in their review of UK and international evidence (Burge et al, 2012) as operating at:

- School level including involvement with governing bodies, financial and in-kind support and support for staff development.
- Teacher level including developing and advising on elements of the curriculum and creating curriculum and teaching resources.
- Student level through work experience, school/workplace visits, apprenticeships/training schemes and mentoring.

Research done for the UK Education and Employers Taskforce based on a survey of secondary schools, found that the most effective activities were those that involved real-world workplace experience through employer engagement (Mann et al, 2017). The NFER study mentioned above, point to the work experiences

that were available in Canada, ranging from brief periods of planned activity lasting from 1 to 4 weeks, through to post-school apprenticeships, as representing high quality provision (Burge et al, 2012).

Whilst there are clearly good examples of employer engagement practice in the UK and internationally, there continues to be variations in many education systems, including the UK, in its quality and consistency, with much still depending on the initiative of employers, schools, head-teachers and teachers. Resulting from their international review of evidence, the NFER have produced a checklist of ten features to guide more systematic school-employer relationships and these are included below in Appendix 1.

Small businesses often face barriers in developing links with schools due to capacity issues, practical concerns such as health and safety and insurance requirements and limited networks (Federation of Small Businesses Scotland, 2016; National Schools Partnership, 2016).

For many years enterprise education and employer engagement was confined to secondary schools, but in recent times a growing awareness that older age primary children are already developing strong aspirations about their future lives and careers (Archer, 2015; Le Gallais and Hatcher, 2015), has led to more attention being paid to primary education. In the UK, for example, the National Schools Partnership has developed a strategy for working with primary schools based on five key principles (National Schools Partnership, 2016):

- Understanding the school environment.
- Beginning with school needs.
- Identifying what businesses can offer.
- Building effective relationships.
- Evaluating impact.

Primary Futures enables primary schools to contact volunteers from different professions and sectors who are willing to be invited into schools to talk, work with and inspire children. Teachers can view the profiles of different volunteers in their locality and contact any they would like to come into their school.

Volunteers come from many walks of life and might be apprentices, graduate recruits or Chief Executives from small, medium-sized or multi-national companies. They are committed to providing at least one hour, once a year to a state school in their area.

At Tattlingstone Primary School a visitor spoke with just the girls from Key Stage 2 initially about her work as an engineer. She then spoke with the whole school and the children were amazed at what her job actually involved.

Primary Futures

Curriculum

The NFER study outlined above identified a range of ways in which enterprise education, including employer engagement, informed curriculum practice within schools in different countries (Burge et al, 2012). In Scotland where a new curriculum has been in development in recent years, enterprise education is included within the domain of 'Skills for Learning, Life and Work'. Guidance is provided for teachers on how enterprise and employability skills may be covered within specific areas of the curriculum as 'part of an integrated experience', with examples provided from schools that have achieved this (Scottish Government, 2009). In this instance, as in most countries, the extent to which enterprise education is embedded in the curriculum is, therefore, left to teacher/head-teacher judgement. Inevitably, as pointed out above, this will lead to significant variation in the extent and probably quality of student experience.

Careers education

Careers education is inevitably an important element of enterprise education. A review of evidence drawn from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD) Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) found that the professional input of Careers Advisors was rated by students as the most positive influence upon them in relating their school experiences to the adult workplace, followed by jobs fairs, job shadowing and internships (Kashefpakdel et al, 2016).

In the UK, however, the Careers Service in each of the nations has gone through significant changes in recent years with most of the activity now being devolved to schools supported by web-based professional advice but with limited availability of independent professional careers advisors who can provide face-to-face counselling and support. Researchers have recently found that a large minority (40%) of young people approaching their GCSE examinations said they had not received useful careers advice in schools (St Clair et al, 2015).

Given that, as pointed out above, it is during primary education that children often begin to form their aspirations such that by the age of thirteen, young people 'have thought about the future, are concerned about getting a good job, have some insights into what might be more or less attainable and are strongly ambitious'. It is obviously a weakness that no formal provision is made for professional careers advice in primary schools (St Clair et al, 2015; p120).

Equity

The quality of careers education and advice is known to be at its most effective in supporting the transition of disadvantaged young people into the workforce and avoiding them becoming disengaged and workless (Hodgson and Spours, 2013). In general, evidence suggests that enterprise education has a major part to play in supporting greater equity and social mobility in the education system. A data-based review of social mobility in Britain between 1991 and 2011 concluded that 'if employers, educators and government make concerted efforts to increase the educational take-up and occupational upward mobility of working-class children, through apprenticeships, on-job training programmes and strict enforcement of equality laws, we could make our society less unequal' (Li and Devine, 2015; p.90).

For a long period of time there was a dominant view held at many levels of UK society that young people from disadvantaged backgrounds, living in areas of low economic activity and denied family and community role-models, lacked the aspirations to find successful employment and careers. Extensive research has revealed, however, that the concept of a 'poverty of aspirations' amongst such people is an urban myth and that what they are denied, is the means and the opportunities to realise the high aspirations that they actually possess (Mann et al, 2014).

The reality, however, is that young people from disadvantaged backgrounds, who probably have the most to gain from high quality enterprise education, are confronted by significant inequality. It is known that students in selective and fee-paying schools consistently experience higher levels of enterprise education with considerable employer engagement (Mann et al 2014, Huddleston et al, 2015). The NFER report considered above also noted that there was considerable inequality in the availability of high quality work placements for students from disadvantaged compared to advantaged backgrounds (Burge et al, 2012).

It would, therefore, seem that this is a major area weakness in enterprise education as it currently exists but one with considerable future potential.

Conclusion

The development of enterprise education in schools in the UK and across the world, has been a notable feature of education systems over the last half a century. Whilst it can prove difficult to measure its impact in hard outcome terms, there is general positivity about its effects on student motivation, achievement and progression. A strong element of enterprise education is employer engagement and the way in which it can provide real-world, workplace-based, experiences is seen to be a significant strength. There are, however, weaknesses in enterprise education including variations in its extent and quality across school systems, the barriers faced by small businesses in employer engagement, its lack of presence in primary schools, its tenuous presence in the curriculum and shortcomings in the provision of independent careers advice. Given the potential that it is believed enterprise education could have in supporting education to achieve greater equity of outcomes and social mobility, it is a significant concern that the most disadvantaged students are not guaranteed high quality experiences.



4. ENTERPRISE EDUCATION IN WALES

Background

From the growth of the state education system in England and Wales in the late nineteenth century and throughout much of the twentieth century education, the school curriculum has followed a traditional path. This meant that although that Wales was one of the fulcrums of the industrial revolution, technical education was neglected, with headteachers, school governors and local authorities resisting any suggestions that the curriculum should be adapted to meet the needs of young people, the large majority most of whom did not proceed beyond elementary education and regarding vocational subjects and courses as being for the less able (Jones, 1982 and Jones and Roderick, 2003). In truth some of these attitudes, particularly in relation to vocational education, persist today.

A Wales strategy

In more recent times, however, a growth took place in enterprise education in the curriculum in Wales that reflected the wider developments set out in the previous section of this report. In 2004, the Welsh Government published its Youth Entrepreneurship Strategy (**YES**) and this was renewed in 2010 (Welsh Government, 2010). It aimed to equip young people between the ages of five and twenty-five with enterprising skills and attitudes that would hopefully raise their aspirations and influence their future careers. The work of **YES** included the development of well-regarded curriculum materials, professional development opportunities for teachers, the identification of local role-models and the activities of **Big Ideas Wales**¹ which provides a support and guidance service for young people who wish to develop enterprising ideas and activities.

The **YES** strategy has been widely complimented as representing innovative practice in the field of enterprise education (European Commission, 2012; FSB, 2012; Pennycook, 2014). A report by the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor in 2011 (Bonner et al, 2011) suggested that early stage entrepreneurship by young people between the ages of 18 and 29 in Wales increased steadily between 2002 and 2011 and was high by comparison with the other UK nations.

The **YES** strategy ended in 2015 and the Welsh Government is now considering how to take enterprise education forward alongside the new school curriculum which is currently being developed in Wales. In 2015, Wales was selected by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology to participate in its Regional Entrepreneurship Acceleration Programme (REAP). This is designed to assist regional economic growth and

job creation through innovation-driven entrepreneurship. Participation in REAP is likely to strongly influence the new strategy being developed by the Welsh Government and will require a range of parties to be brought together to take it forward.

Employer engagement

Despite the regard in which **YES** is held, employer engagement in enterprise education in Wales does not appear to be as extensive as in some parts of the UK. The most prominent initiative in Wales is the Business Class partnership developed between the Welsh Government and Business in the Community. Partnerships have been set up with 80 secondary schools throughout Wales (about 40 per cent of the total number of schools) and provide a flexible model which allows for the context in which the school is located and the availability of suitable business partners.

1. <https://businesswales.gov.wales/bigideas>

Bishop Hedley Catholic High School have been working with Welsh Water through Business Class for the last two years.

Four Welsh Water representatives assisted with a Dragon's Den activity for Year 9 pupils. The winning group went to the grand final where they went on to win the competition, in which over 550 Year 9 pupils had taken part. Year 9 and 19 girls attended a 'females in Science' role model activity and talk at Welsh Water's Glaslyn Laboratories in Newport. Year 8 and 9 more able and talented pupils participated in a 'Give and Gain' day, painting a mural.

Year 10 more able and talented pupils participated in workshops about CVs, job applications and interview techniques, before Welsh Water held formal job interviews for the pupils. Year 9 were involved in a collaborative employability skills day. Year 10 pupils went to visit Welsh Water in Dinas Powys, to participate in a team building skills day.

Welsh Water held a 'drop in and discuss' day with apprentices for Year 10 and Year 11 pupils to find out more about graduate and apprenticeship schemes.

Middle Leaders at Bishop Hedley were invited to a Middle Leaders Inspirational Day with Welsh Water.

Partnerships are grouped together in local and regional clusters to share effective practice and allow for networking. In Newport, for example, a cluster meeting of all the secondary schools and their business partners (including the Intellectual Property Office, Lloyds Bank, Wales and West Utilities, Costain, Newport City Homes and the Government Statistics Office), shared information on the activities they were undertaking which included workplace visits, inputs into the curriculum, careers advice to students and discussed joint events.

Some of the secondary schools are working with their local primary schools and Business Class hopes to develop this area of work in future. The **YES** programme has also since 2013 developed some work with primary schools in the form of an annual competition **Enterprise Troopers**² where schools bring forward a business idea for enterprise activity in their school. In 2015, 54 of Wales' 1600 primary schools entered submissions.

As is the case elsewhere in the UK, SMEs are less involved in employer engagement with schools. A survey of FSB members in Wales undertaken for this report which elicited 151 responses, revealed that 54% had no existing links with schools although 85% supported the idea of employer engagement.

As one might expect, the nature of involvement by businesses in their local schools varied. For some businesses involvement was primarily through offering work experience. Others were involved as governors, often as a result of their own children's attendance at the school, or provided guest lessons on issues relating to their sector or business. Only a handful of respondents highlighted **Big Ideas Wales** as the mechanism by which they engaged with schools.

When asked about the value of such links, respondents focused largely on their desire to inspire others to become entrepreneurs or to reflect social obligations they felt businesses had in their local community. For instance, one respondent stated; "There is no value, it is a service to the community." A number of respondents also highlighted the need to inform young people about the world of work and saw the links with schools as a means of developing future customers. Indeed, one respondent included a number of these reasons, stating:

2. <http://enterprisetroopers.com>

“To offer work experience to young people, to gain insight and skills from young people that might be missing from our business. To share the real experience of work and business with schools. To inspire young people into a career in enterprise.”

It is clear from these responses that businesses engage in a variety of ways and do so for a number of reasons. There is little consistency in this engagement and it relies significantly on the motivations of the owner of the business.

Given the importance of SMEs in the Welsh economy, there is, therefore, considerable potential for this area of employer engagement to be developed.

One of lowest aspects of employer engagement reported in this survey was the provision of work experience, with only 6% of respondents providing this opportunity for young people. This reflects the significant decline in work experience in the schools of Wales in recent years resulting from changes in Careers Wales and the removal of the requirement on schools to provide work experience for all 14 – 16 year olds. Given the evidence presented in the previous section of this report on the high impact value of work experience, this is a concern.

“We began engaging with the construction department of a school local to our Brunel Wood, Swansea development in the first instance with a view to satisfying our social responsibility targets. We started by providing visiting pupils (under the supervision of an accompanying teacher) with an insight into the development process. As initial feedback was positive, we were encouraged to expand the scope of our programme by including contributions from our various sub-contractors on site to enable the pupils to gain a practical understanding of what a career in a specific trade would entail.

The construction industry is facing a national shortage of skilled workers and therefore participation in such a programme enabled us the opportunity to “fly the flag” to prospective entrants in a way that school career departments were not able.

As our relationship with the local school developed, we agreed to enter into a formal partnership under the Careers Wales “Business Class” initiative. This provided us with an opportunity to expand the ways in which we were able to work with the school, by enabling us to participate in the provision of enterprise experience.

Ultimately, engaging with the local school exceeded our expectations. Furthermore, it has assisted greatly in achieving a key objective of ours in establishing our reputation as a community-focused company that contributes positively to the areas in which we work, to the extent that we will aim to roll-out similar partnership programmes at schools local to all of our future developments (as we have done with our Brunel Wood, Swansea and latterly our Llys Daniel Pontarddulais projects)”.

Ben Francis, Hygrove Homes

The School Curriculum

The place of enterprise education within the school curriculum can be seen to have been in flux since the development of the National Curriculum in 1988. Initially, enterprise education in Wales found its explicit place within the Careers and World of Work area of the 5 – 16 curriculum as well as being reflected in subject areas and courses being studied by older students such as Business Studies, Economics, vocational subjects and the work-related area of the Welsh Baccalaureate (the Welsh Bac).

Since 2010, however, the school curriculum has come under pressure because of increased external accountability on schools including more emphasis on the teaching of literacy and numeracy and the outcomes of national tests and examinations. In the report that he prepared in 2015 on the curriculum in Wales, this situation led Graham Donaldson to suggest (Donaldson, 2015; p.10):

“For many teachers and schools the key task has become to implement external expectations faithfully, with a consequent diminution of local creativity and responsiveness to the needs of children and young people. Partly as a consequence, much of the curriculum as experienced by children and young people has become detached from its avowed aims and too focused on the short-term. At its most extreme, the mission of primary schools can almost be reduced to the teaching of literacy and numeracy and of secondary schools to preparation for qualifications.”

One of the casualties of this perceived ‘hollowing-out’ of the curriculum has undoubtedly been enterprise education which now is not nearly so strongly represented as it was before 2010. By 2013 an enquiry carried out by the Enterprise and Business Committee of the National Assembly for Wales was concerned enough to call for entrepreneurship to be embedded into the primary and secondary curriculum so that ‘enterprise skills were at the very heart of the Welsh education system’ (National Assembly for Wales, 2013).

There are of course some exceptions to this general situation. A rare example in primary education is set out in the case study below:

The school adopted Business Enterprise as a vehicle for securing improvements – in Literacy, Numeracy, Thinking Skills, ICT and developing aspects of personal and social education – in addition to improving pupils’ independent learning skills. The development of Business Enterprise projects fully supports the school’s mission statement.

Business enterprise takes place in all year groups and provides opportunities for pupils to apply and develop their skills in real and meaningful contexts. Pupils have the opportunity to participate in business enterprise several times during their time in school which encourages pupils to build on their previous experiences. Over the last eight years, projects have enabled the school to develop very good links with the local community through visits from local businesses and entrepreneurs.

Pupils:

- Handle budgets; negotiate loans and interest rates with adults.
- Procure products.
- Use formal letter writing to apply for positions within a company.
- Use ICT as a real context to present business plans/e-mail companies.
- Work together to plan marketing strategies.
- Use creative skills to advertise and promote their products.
- Participate in job interviews.

Estyn Effective Practice Case Study on Llanyrafon Primary School, Torfaen

In secondary schools the situation post-14 is more promising resulting from the new version of the Welsh Bac which began in September 2015. At each of its three levels (Foundation, National and Advanced) it provides opportunities for 14 to 19 years olds to participate in an Enterprise and Employability Challenge

(one of the four elements of the Bac core). This requires learners to demonstrate the entrepreneurial skills often required by employers and which, therefore, should enhance their employability. The ‘challenges’ are designed by employers and national organisations and examples can be found on the Welsh Government Hwb website³.

Whilst the changes that took place after 2010 were to a large extent premised on the need for Wales to improve its performance in the OECD PISA tests as these outcomes were said to be so influential with employers, it is perverse that at least some evidence from employers suggests that what took place may have had the opposite effect. The South-East Wales Learning, Skills and Innovation Partnership (2016; pp.16 – 17) reports that whilst employers find that 32% of job applicants lacked appropriate literacy and numeracy skills, a half were deficient in self-management and task prioritisation, 40% in team-working and customer-handling skills and 69% in specialist skills. Their equivalent in North Wales noted the ‘lack of awareness or understanding of teachers of the business world’ as a challenge to future recruitment for employers in their part of the world (North Wales Learning, Skills and Innovation Partnership, 2016; p.50).

Vocational qualifications and routes

The 69 per cent deficit in specialist skills noted by employers in South-East Wales would almost certainly reflect the lack of specific vocational qualifications possessed by applicants. Despite the high profile 14 – 19 Learning Pathways Programme developed by the Welsh Government in the first decade of devolution, vocational courses, qualifications and routes are still very weakly represented within Welsh secondary schools. This flows from an historic negativity to technical and vocational qualifications in the Welsh education system which is still current in Welsh schools whereby such options are viewed as being unsuited to ‘clever’ children. This is particularly the case in schools with sixth-forms where there would be a concern that if these options are available to 14 – 16 year olds, this may lead to them progressing post-16 to further education with a consequent loss of funding and jobs to the school (Edge, 2012; National Assembly for Wales, 2017).

The 14 – 19 Learning Pathways Programme and the legislation that resulted from this, did lead to some progress being made up to 2010 in improving the availability of vocational options for young people. Estyn in a report in 2010 whilst noting this also, however, pointed to variations between schools and a concern over students being offered impartial advice (Estyn, 2010). Since this time, however, there has been a steady decline in the vocational options offered by schools to 14 year olds in Year 9 and 15 years olds following their GCSEs.

The reasons for this include the continuing negativity towards vocationalism inherent in the system, the ending of additional funding for schools to broaden their 14 – 19 curriculum (which was always actually intended to be transitional), changes in the way in which the performance of schools is measured by the Welsh Government (influenced again by the reaction to the PISA results in 2010) and a lack of emphasis on progression to employment or employment-based routes, by comparison to examination performance and progression to higher education.

This situation is particularly perverse in relation to the recent growth in apprenticeship opportunities in Wales. In the 1960s approximately 30% of boys leaving school (but only 3% of girls), proceeded to apprenticeships in Wales, mainly in the still relatively buoyant industrial economy. As elsewhere in the UK, however, by the dawn of the new millennium, apprenticeships were in significant decline. In recent years, the Welsh Government has halted and reversed that decline and is now investing heavily in all-age apprenticeships (Jones and Roderick, 2003; National Assembly for Wales, 2011; National Training Federation for Wales, 2015).

3. <http://hwb.wales.gov.uk/resources/tree?sort=created&language=welsh%20Baccalaureate&nodeId-4bb3785d-c2ac-4770-98ac-76202d6d0ff8>

Ben is currently working at Get Wet – a company based in Bala, Gwynedd, which delivers outdoor adventure activities including a high ropes course, gorge walking, paintballing and white-water rafting. In 2013 – 14, Ben completed an Outdoor Programmes Level 3 Apprenticeship. The apprenticeship was delivered by Grwp Llandrillo Menai which aims to support the economy of North Wales by equipping local people with the skills and qualifications needed for success in the region.

Ben began the apprenticeship following a period of being employed with Get Wet through the Jobs Growth Wales scheme. He felt it was a great way to keep working with Get Wet and have a chance of a getting a qualification, to work while you learn.

Throughout the period of working at Get Wet, the apprenticeship has enabled Ben to progress, taking on further responsibilities and enhancing his career prospects. The apprenticeship contributed to him progressing to a position as Non-Executive Director within the company. This also meant taking on some additional responsibility. Having completed his apprenticeship, Ben intends to stay with Get Wet which is currently growing and expanding the range of activities they offer.

National Training Federation for Wales – 2015.

It is, therefore, of great concern that the Regional Learning, Skills and Innovation Partnerships in Wales are reporting no increase in interest in apprenticeships in Welsh schools. The North Wales partnership has seen no significant increase in the 16 – 24 age group proceeding to apprenticeships over the last three years (North Wales Learning, Skills and Innovation Partnership, 2016). The South West and Mid Wales Partnership notes an absence of pathways and routes into local employment opportunities (South West and Mid-Wales Learning, Skills and Innovation Partnership, 2016). Most damningly the South-East Wales partnership reports as follows (South East Wales Learning, Skills and Innovation Partnership, 2016; pp7 – 8):

“There is an under-supply of school leavers with ambition to continue in education taking subjects in our prioritised sectors. There is clear evidence of a careers mismatch amongst young people who are 16+ in South-East Wales. Careers Wales research reveals a worryingly small number, 5%, of 14 – 16 year olds, are even considering an apprenticeship route.”

Given this situation it is not surprising that the Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee of the National Assembly for Wales were told in May 2017 that for the most recent year for which records are held only 1.6% of school leavers in Wales proceeded into some form of work-based learning including apprenticeships. Neither should it be surprising – although equally concerning – that initially the percentage was 7% prior to them receiving careers advice in their schools! (National Assembly for Wales, 2017).

Careers education

Issues relating to the quality of the careers advice that young people receive during their education have long been a matter of concern in Wales and came to a head during the 14-19 Learning Pathways Programme. Although, as was pointed out in the previous section of this report, there is increasing evidence that pupils’ aspirations about their future develop in the later years of primary education, other than the informal mentoring and aspirational work that some primary schools undertake, careers advice is not offered to primary age pupils.

In secondary schools, careers advice has traditionally been provided by designated 'Careers Teachers'. Whilst not being careers professionals, these were often long-serving, undertook some professional development and built good links with the professional Careers Service. This would have provided expert support to pupils at critical points such as choosing Year 10/Year 11 options in Year 9, helping to arrange work experience placements in Year 10 and in post GCSE destination routes.

In reports prepared in 2012 and 2014, Estyn noted the following deficiencies in the careers work of schools through this joint activity (Estyn, 2012; Estyn, 2014a; Estyn, 2014b):

- A limited use of labour market information to help pupils make subject choices after Year 9.
- A lack of evidence on whether pupils were meeting the objectives of the Careers and World of Work curriculum.
- Variations in the quality and input of the external support received.
- A significant reduction in the level of resources allocated by schools to careers work.
- The provision of careers advice and guidance being the weakest aspect of support for learners during their 14-19 education with some being given inaccurate or partial information.

It is perhaps, therefore, unsurprising that when a survey of secondary schools was carried out for the FSB in Wales in 2012 that it found that none of the students could recall any discussions they had had with teachers or career advisers that were based around entrepreneurship or business start-up (FSB, 2012). More recently the South-East Wales Learning, Skills and Innovation Partnership have noted a 'clear mismatch between employer skills demand and expectations and pupil capability arising from choice of subject areas, careers knowledge, basic and essential skills' (South-East Wales Learning, Skills and Innovation Partnership, 2016; p.27).

Whilst the quality of careers education in schools has, therefore, long been an area of concern, the recent reorganisation of the careers service in Wales had undoubtedly made the situation far worse with Careers Wales having lost over 600 staff in recent years. Its current capacity means that each careers officer has responsibility for six secondary schools in Wales where they are only able to focus upon 14 – 16 year olds who have been identified as being at risk of becoming NEETs (not in education, employment or training). This is despite the growing body of evidence that by this age young people may have both formed and lost career and life aspirations. Very few secondary schools now seem to have a dedicated member of staff for careers education and, therefore a contact point for Careers Wales, there is very limited focus in the current Estyn inspection approach on careers guidance and there appears to be no strong evidence base for suggesting that the availability of information on a website can compensate for the loss of personalised, professional and impartial careers advice (Careers Wales, 2017).

Conclusion

Despite the in-built bias in the Welsh education system against vocationalism, after devolution of government to Wales an innovative and well-regarded approach to enterprise education was developed by the Welsh Government. The implementation of this policy strategy has been significantly hampered, however, by:

- The limitation of employer engagement in schools to Business Class and some work with primary schools, the lack of engagement with SMEs, the significant reduction in work experience and a lack of evidence on impact.
- Aside from promising developments in the new Welsh Baccalaureate, the diminution of enterprise education in the school curriculum since 2010 as an unintended, but too be expected, effect of a change in policy direction by the Welsh Government.
- An ongoing decline in vocational education in Wales at a time when opportunities for apprenticeships have been growing, with the result that only 1.6% of school leavers in Wales are entering some form of work-based learning.
- A worrying decline in careers advice in Welsh schools especially in impartial professional advice.

5. AN ENTERPRISE EDUCATION STRATEGY FOR WALES

Introduction

The logic model approach which formed the basis for the research undertaken in preparing this report was premised on the belief that strengthening the place of enterprise education in Welsh schools would have the potential to provide our young people with greater interest and engagement in their education and better chances of a successful transition from school to employment. In turn, this could help to grow the Welsh economy and create a more equitable and fair society in Wales. The evidence assembled and analysed by the report suggests that these aims could be achieved through a new enterprise education strategy for Wales made up of the following elements:

- A holistic strategy for enterprise education that is developed by the Welsh Government, employers and stakeholder organisations.
- A high-profile approach to employer engagement with schools.
- The embedding of enterprise education into the new curriculum for Wales.
- A much stronger place for vocational education within our schools.
- High quality impartial careers advice for young people.

Whilst these elements of enterprise education should be available to all young people, in order that they can contribute to overcoming the impact of poverty on educational achievement and progression in Wales, they should be most strongly represented in our most disadvantaged schools and communities.

A Wales Enterprise Education Strategy

The Welsh Government, following the ending of the **YES** programme and its planned involvement in the REAP initiative, is currently considering its future strategy for enterprise education. Building upon the achievements of the last decade in this area, it would seem sensible for the work currently being undertaken in various parts of the Welsh Government – in the Department of Business and the Economy on REAP, the Department of Education and Skills on enterprise education in the new curriculum and in the Department of People and Communities to develop an employability strategy as part of its work to combat poverty and grow prosperity, to be brought together into a single strategy. Organisations external to the Welsh Government with a vested interest in this area including employers, the Regional Learning and Skills Partnerships and the various education sectors in Wales should also be centrally involved in developing the strategy so that it is broadly owned.

The strategy should reflect the diverse and developing nature of the Welsh economy. Whilst the corporate sector is and will remain important to Wales, SMEs now account for almost two-thirds of total employment in Wales (Welsh Government, 2015). Despite this it has been argued that the Welsh Government has a continuing preoccupation with attracting inward investment from mobile firms and thereby mimicking other Western European countries (Brill et al, 2015). It has been suggested, therefore, that what Wales requires is a new economic approach which in the words of the FSB in Wales ‘build on the foundations of SMEs in every part of Wales and places a greater emphasis on economies of place – allowing more localised approaches to economic development’ informed by recent thinking on what is known as ‘the foundational economy’ (FSB Wales, 2015; Brill et al, 2015; Jones, 2015; Adamson and Lang, 2014; Lang, 2016; Adamson and Lang, 2017).

A new enterprise education strategy should be premised on the need that Wales needs to improve its educational performance and the skills of its population. Experts agree that whilst there are no silver bullets for stimulating the economic performance of lagging economies such as Wales, that one of the key actions that can be taken to address this situation is to reduce the proportion of individuals with very low skills and qualifications. They also agree that this should focus on achievement at a range of levels and not be overly focused on the higher end of the spectrum (PPIW, 2016).

Wales as part of the wider UK economy reflects what labour economists describe as the ‘hour-glass’ nature of the labour market. Most people are now employed either in high skill/high pay or low skill/low pay jobs. Twenty-two per cent of our employees are in low skilled jobs, one of the highest proportions in the OECD and compared to a figure of 5 – 8% for our competitors (Keep, 2015; Cheese, 2015). Given that middle-skilled level jobs are thereby disappearing, the implications for the progression of our young people in the labour market and for social mobility are serious. This situation also calls into question the assumption that it is employers who are particularly interested in external assessments such as the PISA results, which, as pointed out in the previous section of this report, has led to considerable changes to the education system in Wales since 2010 that have contributed to the marginalisation of enterprise education. The way that employers operate in the labour market appears to completely contradict this.

As Peter Cheese, Chief Executive of the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development points out we live in an era of ‘portfolio careers, zero hours contracts, part-time and self-employment and growth in small rather than large employers’ (Cheese, 2015). The challenges faced by young people confronted by these changing parameters requires an ambitious and fit-or-purpose new strategy for enterprise education in Wales so that we can narrow the ‘distance between the classroom and the workplace’ (Mann and Huddleston, 2015; p.6).

Employer engagement

Building on the work of Business Class and other forms of employer engagement currently taking place in Wales, employer engagement should be a central aspect of this new enterprise education strategy. Reflecting the nature of the Welsh economy, the SME sector should be strongly involved in employer engagement work and arrangements would, therefore, need to reflect the nature of the SME sector and its capacity issues. Far greater emphasis than present should be placed on engagement with primary schools reflecting the knowledge that we have that this is the optimum time to begin to engage with young people about their aspirations and futures. Given the community-based location of many SMEs, they may be particularly well placed to take a lead on this.

To achieve this, it would be sensible to bring together all those with an interest in employer engagement. Extending the work of The Education and Employer Taskforce to Wales might be an appropriate way to achieve this⁴:

The Education and Employers Taskforce is a UK charity which works with national partners representing schools, colleges and employers to provide programmes for schools (including the Primary Futures programme), networking activities and undertaking research and publications. Its aim is to ensure that every school and college has an effective partnership with employers. The Charity runs the Inspiring the Future programme which connects state schools and colleges with employers and people from the world of work. Teachers can easily and at no cost invite volunteers to visit and speak to young people about their job, career and the education route they took.

This organisation does not appear to operate in Wales presently, but there appears to be no reason why it could not be asked to lead a new employer engagement strategy in Wales potentially working with Careers Wales which is currently developing an employer database (National Assembly for Wales, 2017).

A new approach to employer engagement should include re-introducing the work experiences for young people in Wales which have been lost in recent years. As has been pointed out above enterprise education is far more effective if it gives young people the experience of real workplaces (Husband, 2015) and the loss

4. <http://educationandemployers.org>



of this in recent years due to changes in Careers Wales has been a major setback. Whilst the impact of the work experience undertaken in the past is probably open to question, if it were to become a planned and integrated aspect of the new curriculum and include much greater involvement with local SMEs in Wales, its considerable potential could be realised.

An employer perspective of what might also be included in a new approach to employer engagement in Wales is provided by this proposal from the North Wales Regional Learning, Skills and Innovation Partnership (2016; p.19):

“Specific targeting needs to happen within schools at an earlier age and addressing the deficit in careers guidance and work experience. To complement the developments nationally on the Welsh Bac, we need to consider working with regional employers to develop a North Wales Toolkit of ‘Employability Skills’. Successful completion of the toolkit by participants would assist their meeting agreed labour market expectations and future employer demands within our growth sectors”.

The School Curriculum

Given the tenuous position of enterprise education in the current school curriculum, the current development of a new school curriculum in Wales provides a timely opportunity to address this situation. Following Graham Donaldson’s review for the Welsh Government was decided to adopt all his recommendations and begin the process of developing a new curriculum that would be introduced between 2018 and 2021 (Donaldson, 2015).

One of the four purposes of the new curriculum is the development of ‘enterprising, creative contributors, ready to play a full part in life and work’. Enterprising and creative young people should be able to:

- Apply knowledge and skills to create ideas and products.
- Think creatively to solve problems.
- Identify and grasp opportunities.
- Take measured risks.
- Lead and play different roles in teams.

The report fully recognised that the needs of employers and the workplace are important influences on the school curriculum and if young people are to move smoothly and successfully into employment, they should be reflected in the new curriculum. Creativity and enterprise are viewed as central features of modern life that should be developed and extended throughout schooling. Young people need ‘to be ready to enter the adult world with the ‘softer’ skills, dispositions and attitudes that will be essential in their future lives’ (Donaldson, 2015; p.28).

The new curriculum framework will be made up of 4 cross-cutting areas (assessment and progression, enrichment and experience, cross-curricular skills and wider skills) and six Areas of Learning and Experience (AOLEs), which replace the existing subject-based structure of the curriculum. Initial development work in 2016 and into 2017 has focused on the cross-cutting areas so that these can influence the development of the AOLEs which began in 2017 and is currently ongoing.

The development of the new curriculum has been influenced by the experience of the Curriculum for Excellence in Scotland. The strategy for enterprise education in Scotland is set out in the Youth Employment Strategy which the Scottish Government developed following the work of its Commission for Developing Scotland’s Young Workforce (Scottish Government, 2014). It requires the education system and employers

to work closely together to equip young people with the skills and knowledge they will need to flourish in work. Guidance has been provided for School and Employer Partnerships (Scottish Government, 2015). These developments have been aligned to the development of the new curriculum in Scotland (the Curriculum for Excellence) which has been underway since 2009. The curriculum has as one of its key aims the development of 'skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work'. This encourages schools and their partners to offer a wide range of pathways, including vocational qualifications, in line with modern labour market demands (Scottish Government, 2009).

It would appear, however, that despite the vaunted ambitions of the Curriculum for Excellence and the Youth Employment Strategy that limited progress has been made up to this point in strongly embedding enterprise education in Scottish schools. It seems that having ambitious strategies and innovative curriculum proposals are insufficient, in themselves, to change the experience of young people.

The only aspects of the new curriculum developments in Wales which are currently in the public domain are the brief reports of the groups which have been working on the cross-cutting themes⁵. Whilst the wider skills report references 'entrepreneurship education' and notes that evidence on this area has influenced their thinking, this is the only specific mention of enterprise education in the four documents which are intended to influence the development of the AOLES.

Whilst of course the development of the new curriculum is an ongoing process, this situation does not provide confidence in relation to the future place and role of enterprise education within the new curriculum. It might have been hoped that there would be much stronger statements about the importance of this aspect of the curriculum in the cross-cutting themes of wider skills, cross-curricular skills and enrichment/experience where in each case there could be considerable potential. This would then provide a strong steer to the AOLE development reflecting the recommendations of the OECD and the National Assembly for Wales Business and Enterprise Committee that enterprise education should be embedded throughout the curriculum (National Assembly for Wales, 2013; Mann and Huddleston, 2015).

It is also not clear how vocational education will be represented in the new curriculum (National Training Federation of Wales, 2015) in a way that builds upon the new Maths GCSE in Wales which has been held up as being a good example of how a qualification can be made relevant to the workplace (Pollard, 2015). The interesting practice being developed in the new Welsh Bac might also serve as a model for how enterprise education could be built into the curriculum at earlier phases, reflecting the work that some schools are already engaged in whereby the curriculum and pedagogy of the Bac is being used to influence curriculum provision at Key Stages 3 and 2 through what schools sometimes refer to as the 'baby Bac'.

One of the key principles set out for the curriculum in the Donaldson report was that of 'subsidiarity, whereby the Welsh Government having set the overall direction of the new curriculum, would place trust in schools and teachers 'to follow that lead in ways that will serve their children and young people well' (Donaldson, 2015; p99). Research on education and training eco-systems has suggested that the 'local economy and geography, young people's perceptions of the opportunities available to them, the norms and traditions of their parents and communities' combine together to influence how young people see their future and how their education will influence this (Hodgson and Spours, 2013; p.214; see also James and Unwin, 2016)). Enterprise education might, therefore, provide an excellent opportunity to strengthen subsidiarity through reflecting different labour market contexts which exist across Wales.

It was argued in the previous section of this report that the high promise of the enterprise education strategy developed in Wales after 2004 has not been fulfilled for various reasons including its marginalisation in

5. <http://curriculumforwales.gov.wales/2017/03/08/welsh-dimension-international-perspectives-and-wider-skills-findings-from-the-strategic-design-group> <https://curriculumforwales.gov.wales/2017/03/08/enrichment-and-experiences-findings-from-the-strategic-design-group> <https://curriculumforwales.gov.wales/2017/03/07/cross-curriculum-responsibilities-findings-from-the-strategic-design-group>

the school curriculum. If this is to be successfully addressed in the new curriculum there would seem to be some critically important questions to be considered if this opportunity is not to be missed.

Vocational education

The parlous current state of vocational education in schools in Wales will also need to be urgently addressed if enterprise education is to be progressed. The in-built bias which exists against vocationalism, supported by an accountability regime which privileges traditional qualifications and progression routes will need to be challenged as being obstructive to offering young people a wide range of opportunities to suit their interests and aptitudes, their progression into attractive career routes and the growth of the Welsh economy.

It might be argued that for too long – including during the period of the 14 – 19 Learning Pathways Programme in Wales – that vocational education has suffered from seeking a false equivalence with ‘academic’ education rather than establishing its own distinctive character. This and the very limited knowledge that teachers and headteachers – not to mention local authority staff and many Estyn inspectors – have of the contemporary workplace and the changing nature of work, have probably been the major factors leading to negative perceptions of vocational education (James and Unwin, 2016).

The tragedy of this situation is that international research evidence makes clear that young people who are in danger of disengaging from education prefer and respond better to more vocational and practical qualifications and pathways and this also contributes to their successful transition into post-16 education and training and eventually employment (Bielby et al, 2012). Ewart Keep argues that to address this situation, we need to see nothing less than a revolution in the provision of work-based learning routes at Level 3 for young people as part of their transition into employment which in turn can influence progression routes at levels 1 and 2 (Keep, 2015).

In England, following a major review of technical education (The Independent Panel on Technical Education, 2016) it has been decided to introduce fifteen new technical routes (T levels) for young people, endorsed by employers and available through licensed Awarding Bodies. These will be available from Level 2 through to Level 5 and will aim to develop the technical skills they require to enter skilled employment. Alison Wolf who carried out a major review of vocational qualifications in 2011 (Wolf, 2011) that challenged the worth and rigour of many that were then being offered to young people, believes that the new qualifications will provide ‘a proper alternative to A level, one that has its own rationale and prestige’ so that the high quality vocational education she recommended in her report would now become a reality (Times Educational Supplement, 18 November, 2016).

This development does indeed appear to meet the requirements of leading experts in this area who have long argued that what the UK needed was high quality vocational routes that offered broad career pathways rather than occupational routes to young people and thereby reflected the successful European vocational systems such as the German example that was presented in section 2 of this report (Keep, 2015).

It would seem highly sensible that the development of this new generation of vocational qualifications in England is mirrored by a similar development in Wales. Given the work that they are currently doing to rationalise sector based vocational qualifications as part of their overall vocational qualifications strategy, Qualifications Wales might be well placed to undertake this development (Qualifications Wales, 2016 a and b). There might also be the potential to integrate such qualifications in Wales into the Welsh Baccaalaureate to provide a ‘Tech Baccaalaureate’.

The disappointing take-up of apprenticeship opportunities in Wales identified in the previous section of this report would also need to be addressed as part of a new approach to vocational education. As the 2017 inquiry by the National Assembly for Wales Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee heard in evidence, there are various issues to consider here. More employers need to be persuaded to offer apprenticeships with only 13% currently doing so in Wales. There could be significant potential here for the SME sector if the requirements of apprenticeships could be flexed to meet the capacity issues involved with small businesses. Improvements are clearly required in the current Apprenticeship Matching Service so that more become available during the periods when young people are actively looking to enter the labour market (National Assembly for Wales, 2017).

In the view of the National Training Federation for Wales (2015) making junior or pre-apprenticeships available from the age of 14 as part of the progression of young people into their pre-training/employment years is also worth considering. Challenging the perception that apprenticeships are only suitable for low-achieving pupils or those who are not suited for higher education is now possible through the availability of high-level apprenticeships, which are unique to Wales. Although these are probably not yet well known enough, their numbers have grown significantly in recent years (National Assembly for Wales, 2017).

Developing new vocational qualifications in Wales and making existing ones more available and attractive, would seem, therefore, to be the way forward. Will it be enough, however, to overcome the negative perceptions that have blighted vocationalism in Wales and the competition which traditionally has existed between post-14 and post-16 education providers? The recent National Assembly enquiry has mooted the possibility that there should be apprenticeship/work-based learning targets for schools in Wales and there has also been speculation in the past that schools might be held accountable or even inspected in relation to the destination targets of their students. These may seem like drastic measures and it would be much better to hope that they could be avoided, but when currently only 1.6% of students leaving school proceed to work-based learning routes including apprenticeships, there is clearly an urgent need to strengthen vocational education as part of developing enterprise education in Wales.

Careers advice

There seems to be general agreement that all young people need to experience high quality and impartial careers advice if they are to achieve their potential. In the view of the Chief Executive of the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development 'unrealistic aspirations, ignorance of labour market demands and opportunities and poorly developed personal resilience and work skills' currently place young people at a huge disadvantage when they enter the job market (Cheese, 2015; p.14). In Ewart Keep's view if we can't overcome this situation 'we might as well give up' (Keep, 2015, p.6).

The importance of this advice being impartial can be seen in relation to the growing perception that the only worthy progression for young people after school is into higher education. The Chief Executive of the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development points out that the level of student fees is now so high that the likelihood that students will be penalised through making the wrong career choice is higher than ever and that in any event opting for work-based training is likely to provide both the individual and the employer with greater economic value (Cheese, 2015). Noting that most graduates are now entering employment at a level that will mean they will never be able to repay their loans, Ewart Keep points to 'our national obsession with higher education at the expense of the majority of young people who do not go to University' (Keep, 2015; p.18).

Given this situation, the current parlous state of careers education in Wales as described in the previous section of this report is a major area of concern. What is needed to address this situation? In 2014 the

Gatsby Foundation undertook a major review of careers education in the UK (Gatsby, 2014). They identified eight benchmarks for good careers guidance:

- A stable careers programme in every school that is known and understood by pupils, parents, teachers, governors and employers.
- Learning from career and labour market information provided by an informed adviser.
- An advice and support system tailored to meet the needs of all pupils.
- All teachers should link curriculum learning to careers.
- Every pupil should have multiple opportunities to learn from employers about work, employment and the skills that are valued in the workplace.
- Every pupil should have first-hand experiences of the workplace through work visits, work shadowing and work experience.
- All pupils should understand the full range of learning opportunities open to them including both academic and vocational routes.
- Every pupil should have opportunities for guidance interviews with a careers adviser trained to an appropriate level.

Currently in Wales we are very far adrift from meeting these expectations. This has always been the case for primary pupils and increasingly this seems unacceptable. Resulting from the changes in recent years, this is also now the case in secondary education. How can this be addressed as part of a new enterprise education strategy for Wales?

In the times that we are living through it would seem unrealistic to expect that the money removed from Careers Wales could be easily restored and it might be asked if this was either the right thing to do or whether it would be sufficient to meet the challenges we face. The recent National Assembly for Wales enquiry on apprenticeships has heard evidence suggesting that we should take careers advice for young people forward through schools and colleges working together with employers and the remaining capacity provided by the Careers Service to find a way forward (National Assembly for Wales, 2017). How this can be brought about at a systemic level will present a challenge, but it is clearly one that must be faced.

As a means of ensuring that all young people receive this entitlement the proposition that it should be made mandatory for schools to provide careers education as part of the new curriculum arrangements and that Estyn should be asked to inspect against this requirement, may be a necessary first step.

Enterprise education and educational equity

It can be argued that the major challenge faced by the education system in Wales is the relatively low achievement levels of its most disadvantaged children and the consequences this has for Welsh society and its economy. Approximately one-third of our children live in child poverty and many more families live close to that line. Although good progress has been made in recent years through more attention being placed upon this area, children from our most disadvantaged families and communities achieve well below more privileged children in every age group, with the biggest gap being at GCSE where approximately 70 per cent of students from disadvantaged backgrounds do not achieve 5 'good' GCSE pass grades including English and Mathematics. Whilst poverty is distributed across Wales, in the most disadvantaged communities to be found in the post-industrial valleys and parts of our cities, levels of achievement are even lower (Egan, 2016 and 2017).

Whilst overcoming the impact of poverty on educational achievement is a complex issue, increasingly research in this field points to three areas which need to be addressed if a sustained step-change is to be made. The first of these is to invest in early years education, both before children arrive at school and in the early years of schooling: indeed, the evidence suggests that this is where the biggest and most

cost-effective gains can be made. The second area, early intervention, is to ensure that at whatever point or age young people are on their educational journey interventions are made as soon as they become disengaged and fall behind in their learning. Successful strategies here include ensuring that their wellbeing is supported so they have the resilience and confidence to succeed, that they are exposed to outstanding teachers and teaching, that their voice is heard in relation to their interests and needs and that their parents and families are engaged by schools in supporting their learning.

The third factor is critically important if the investments made in the early years and throughout the education journey are to result in disadvantaged young people having the opportunity to move out of poverty and thereby contributing to their families and communities also progressing. It is employability: unless young people are given the opportunities to progress to reasonably secure and well-paid employment they will not be able to escape poverty and the investments that have been made in their earlier development will have been wasted.

As has been highlighted earlier in this report, enterprise education including employer engagement, a balanced curriculum offer including strong vocational routes and high-quality careers advice will be particularly important to the most disadvantaged in our society. It will be important, therefore, that any new enterprise education strategy for Wales is strongly targeted at our most disadvantaged young people, schools and communities. Their needs from primary education where aspiration building is so important, through a school curriculum which provides them with good awareness of opportunities in the local and wider labour markets, top quality careers advice and strong vocational as well as academic routes, should result in them developing strong employability skills ready to take employment opportunities where they are available.

As well as ensuring that this 'social justice' aspect is reflected in a new enterprise education strategy and in appropriate areas of education policy in Wales, consideration should be given as to how at the level of schools within our most disadvantaged areas this can be acted upon. The suggestion made by Chris Husband that there should be funded co-ordinators in these areas working between schools, colleges and employers to ensure that more structured pathways are in place for our most vulnerable students would be worth exploring (Husband, 2015).

Conclusion

A new Enterprise Education Strategy for Wales should be developed and should include a new approach to employer engagement, a stronger place for enterprise education on the curriculum and a strengthening of the place of vocational education in Welsh schools. The strategy should also consider the future and quality of careers advice and its role in delivering opportunities for engagement with disadvantaged young people, schools and communities.

6. CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1** It can reasonably be expected that through their school education young people in Wales will become:
- Enterprising and creative.
 - Knowledgeable about future career and employment opportunities.
 - Employable through having acquired the right skills and qualifications.
- 6.2** The development of enterprise education in school systems has led to positive effects on student motivation, achievement and progression. Its full impact has, however, been limited by variations in its extent and quality within school systems, the lack of involvement of SMEs in employer engagement, its lack of presence in primary schools, its limited presence within school curricula, shortcomings in careers advice and the fact that disadvantaged students often do not enjoy quality experiences.
- 6.3** Since devolution the Welsh Government has developed a well-regarded approach to enterprise education in Wales. Its impact has, however, been hampered by:
- Limited employer engagement with schools.
 - Its diminished place within the school curriculum.
 - The weakness of vocational education in Welsh schools.
 - The extent and quality of careers advice.
- 6.4** A holistic and broadly-owned new strategy for enterprise education in Wales should be developed and include the following elements:
- A new approach to employer engagement which includes primary schools and much greater involvement of SMEs.
 - A much stronger place for enterprise education in the new school curriculum for Wales than is currently being planned for.
 - Significant strengthening of vocational education in Welsh schools.
 - The provision of high quality careers advice for all primary and secondary pupils.
 - An especial focus on the above being in place for our most disadvantaged young people, schools and communities.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1** The Welsh Government should take the lead in bringing together employers, the Regional Learning, Skills and Innovation Partnerships and representatives of the various education sectors in Wales to develop a new and jointly-owned enterprise education strategy for Wales.
- 7.2** The strategy should be developed around the following elements:
- An employer engagement pledge which enables the corporate sector and SMEs to develop a partnership with every primary and secondary school in Wales.
 - The embedding of enterprise education into each Area of Learning and Experience in the new curriculum in Wales.
 - The development of a new vocational pathway for students in Welsh schools based upon a suite of technical qualifications and more easily accessible routes to apprenticeships.
 - High quality careers advice being available to all primary and secondary pupils in Wales.
 - An offer to all young people from disadvantaged backgrounds in Wales of high quality employer engagement, appropriate vocational courses and high quality, impartial, careers advice.
- 7.3** Given the nature of the Welsh economy and the importance of localised labour markets, there should be a significantly increased role for SMEs within the enterprise education strategy.
- 7.4** The Welsh Government should consider making careers education a mandatory aspect of the revised national curriculum in Wales and ask Estyn to inspect this in future.
- 7.5** The Welsh Government should undertake an exercise to scope existing employer engagement programmes operating across Wales with a view to extending or creating a framework suitable for smaller businesses and primary schools.

8. APPENDIX

FEATURES OF SUCCESSFUL SCHOOL-EMPLOYER RELATIONSHIPS	
1. Vision	Have a clear of vision of what your school-employer relationship wants to achieve and how it will improve outcome for young people.
2. Communication	Develop a good communication among partners.
3. Partnerships and connections	<p>Relationships should be strong, mutually beneficial and well connected to parents, communities, youth services and other educators.</p> <p>Partners should understand their roles, and goals should be specific and achievable – policies should support their implementation.</p> <p>Partners should have compatible vales and approaches, and should share a sense of ownership of the relationship.</p> <p>Schools should work with wide range of industries to ensure training options match students' interests.</p>
4. Leadership	School-employer relationships require a high level of commitment, cooperation and leadership across all stakeholders groups.
5. Time and capacity	Allow adequate time for relationships to strengthen and for professional development to take place.
6. Flexibility	Be flexible so that your school-employer relationship can evolve and you can respond to unanticipated challenges.
7. Curriculum	Connect learning in the classroom with 'real world' applications outside of school. Integrate academic learning with field-based learning.
8. Programme design	<p>Work experience should be well instructed and widely available – students should 'sign up' beforehand to show commitment.</p> <p>Vocational qualifications should be nationally recognised and credible with industry.</p> <p>Motivate students to learn by answering the question 'Why do I need to learn this?'</p> <p>Provide opportunities for students to 'learn and earn'.</p> <p>Listen and respond to students' career interests.</p> <p>Encourage businesses to offer work experience/internships – these will give students a direct opportunity to experience the work environment first-hand and learn the types of job skills needed in the workplace.</p>
9. Needs-based	Consider regional economic and workforce development priorities (that is, local needs and opportunities) when helping young people develop their careers.
10. Early intervention	Start building student awareness of careers early.

Source: Burge, B., Wilson, R. and Smith-Crallan, K. (2012). Employer involvement in schools: a rapid review of UK and international evidence. Slough: National Foundation for Educational Research.

9. REFERENCES

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Interviews

Business in the Community Wales

Careers Wales

Colegau Cymru

National Association of Headteachers Wales

Qualifications Wales

Welsh Joint Education Committee

Welsh Government

School visits

Bishop Hedley High School, Merthyr Tydfil

Brynmawr Community School, Blaenau Gwent

Chepstow Comprehensive School, Monmouth

Deighton Primary School, Blaenau Gwent

John Frost School, Newport

Millbrook Primary School, Newport

Risca Community School, Caerphilly

Tredeggar Comprehensive School, Blaenau Gwent

West Mon School, Pontypool

