
Ymateb i Ymgynghoriad / Consultation Response

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| Dyddiad / Date: | 28.10.22 |
| Pwnc / Subject: | Additional national INSET days 2022 to 2025 |

Background information about Estyn

Estyn is the Office of Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales. As a Crown body, we are independent of the Welsh Government.

Our principal aim is to raise the standards and quality education and training in Wales. This is primarily set out in the Learning and Skills Act 2000 and the Education Act 2005. In exercising its functions, we must give regard to the:

- Quality of education and training in Wales;
- Extent to which education and training meets the needs of learners;
- Educational standards achieved by education and training providers in Wales;
- Quality of leadership and management of those education and training providers;
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of learners; and,
- Contribution made to the well-being of learners.

Our remit includes (but is not exclusive to) nurseries and non-maintained settings, primary schools, secondary schools, independent schools, pupil referrals units, further education, adult community learning, local government education services, work-based learning, and teacher education and training.

We may give advice to the Welsh Parliament on any matter connected to education and training in Wales. To achieve excellence for learners, we have set three strategic objectives:

- Provide accountability to service users on the quality and standards of education and training in Wales;
- Inform the development of national policy by the Welsh Government;
- Build capacity for improvement of the education and training system in Wales.

This response is not confidential.

Response

Introduction

It is Estyn's view that the proposal of providing additional national inset days 2022 to 2025 is likely to have a positive impact enabling the education profession to have more time to engage with professional learning while changes to the education system are rolled out and embedded.

However, we feel that it is worth considering the following points:

- The timing of INSET days generally should consider carefully the impact on learners and their learning.
- The timing of the INSET day should avoid extending the summer holiday as this would extend an already long break from school for pupils.
- Ensuring that this extra day is taken as an INSET **day** rather than a series of twilight sessions to ensure a focused approach on the key priorities.
- The proposed 6 INSET days should be spread throughout the academic year
- All parents are well informed, in a timely manner of the INSET dates to organise childcare needs. Schools should publish their programme of INSET days in the summer term for the following academic year.
- School leaders should ensure that the INSET day is planned effectively to ensure purposeful activities support key priorities and their the needs of the school.

Consultation questions

Question 1 – Do you agree that there should be an additional national professional learning INSET day during the 2022 to 2023, 2023 to 2024 and 2024 to 2025 academic years, to enable the education profession to have more time to engage with professional learning while changes to the education system (including relating to the Curriculum for Wales and additional learning needs (ALN) reforms) are rolled out and embedded ?

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|--------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Agree | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Disagree | <input type="checkbox"/> | Neither agree nor disagree | <input type="checkbox"/> |
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Supporting comments

The changes to the education system such as Curriculum for Wales, the additional learning needs (ALN) reforms and ensuring equity in education are changes that schools continue to embed, develop and evaluate. Effective development and evaluation require time for the education profession to carry out their work to ensure the best possible outcomes for pupils. During inspections, engagement visits and thematic work, leaders and teachers highlight the benefits of additional time to ensure that the current changes in education in Wales can develop effectively. The additional day has been in place since 2019, however the disruption as a result of COVID-19 may have led schools to use the additional time to adapt to the demands of the pandemic rather than focus on changes in the education system. The proposal will ensure a continuation of the time already allocated and will help schools to ensure the changes are embedded successfully.

Question 2 – Do you agree that we should provide flexibility to schools on the timing of the additional INSET day to be taken during the 2022 to 2023, 2023 to 2024 and 2024 to 2025 academic years ? If not, please provide details in the supporting comments section.

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|--------------|---|-----------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Agree | ✓ | Disagree | <input type="checkbox"/> | Neither agree nor disagree | <input type="checkbox"/> |
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Supporting comments

We think that schools should be provided some flexibility on the timing of the additional INSET day to be taken. This will allow schools to plan and ensure the INSET day is used effectively whilst addressing the key priorities in the context of the needs of each individual school. Such flexibility should also provide schools with opportunities to access external support and work closely with other partners. However, we feel that, although it is important to provide flexibility for schools around the timing of the INSET day, leaders need to consider carefully the actual timing of the INSET day. We feel that schools should avoid extending the summer holiday as this extends an already long break from school. We also believe that the day should be taken as an INSET **day** rather than a series of twilight sessions to ensure a focused approach on the key priorities. Twilight sessions have potential to dilute the focus on the key priorities. We think that the proposed 6 INSET days should be spread throughout the academic year to ensure that the days are used effectively by leaders to plan, develop and evaluate. They should not be grouped together leading to extended breaks away from school for pupils, for example 2 or 3 days in September after a lengthy summer break. We also feel that schools should ensure that their parents are well informed, in a timely manner of the INSET dates to allow them to organise childcare needs.

Question 3 – Do you agree that it should be mandated that any additional INSET day is used wholly or mainly to deliver professional learning to support our key priorities of implementing the Curriculum for Wales and ALN reforms, and ensuring equity in our education system ? If not, please provide further details in the supporting comments section.

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| Agree | ✓ | Disagree | <input type="checkbox"/> | Neither agree nor disagree | <input type="checkbox"/> |
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Supporting comments

We feel that it is sensible to mandate that any additional INSET day is used to deliver professional learning to support key priorities. This will ensure that schools have a focus for the additional day. It is however important to allow leaders flexibility within these arrangements to plan effectively for the professional learning needs of staff within the schools particular context. We also believe that it would be beneficial for schools to share the focus of their INSET days with parents. Schools should publish their programme of INSET days in the summer term for the following academic year and provide information of how this links to the school development plan priorities.

Question 4 – We would like to know your views on the effects that an additional national professional learning INSET day would have on the Welsh language, specifically on opportunities for people to use Welsh and on treating the Welsh

language no less favorably than English.

What effects do you think there would be? How could positive effects be increased, or negative effects be mitigated?

Supporting comments

We feel that it would be beneficial to include Welsh as part of the national priorities in line with the vision for Cymraeg 2050. We think that schools could use the INSET day to audit staff needs and support them on developing their Welsh language skills. It may require support for schools in delivering training on the Welsh language as needs will vary from school to school. It will be important that this support is tailored to individual needs, for example developing basic conversational Welsh, building confidence in Welsh for others and supporting others to develop resources.

Question 5 – Please also explain how you believe the proposed policy could be formulated or changed to have positive effects or increased positive effects on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and on treating the Welsh language no less favorably than the English language, and no adverse effects on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and on treating the Welsh language no less favorably than the English language.

Supporting comments

As above, we believe that it would be beneficial to include Welsh as another priority for the INSET day. This would have a particular positive effect on developing areas of Curriculum for Wales. During inspections, we find that where there are issues with Welsh language skills and the provision for Welsh, that the Welsh language is not always developed systematically and at an appropriate level to enable pupils to use the language as a part of daily life. This is often due to lack of planning and staff confidence in using the language. Therefore, it may be beneficial for schools to use the additional focus to developing the Welsh language skills of staff and provision in the school. This would also align strongly with the development of Curriculum for Wales.

Question 6 – We have asked a number of specific questions. If you have any related issues which we have not specifically addressed, please use this space to report them:

Supporting comments

We believe that it is important that schools ensure that all parents are well informed, in a timely manner of the INSET dates in order to organise childcare needs. It would also be beneficial for them to inform parents of the focus of any INSET days and how that meets the individual needs of the school. The arrangements for INSET days should normally be made available to parents the term prior to the new academic year or at the least a term in advance.

Responses to consultations are likely to be made public, on the internet or in a report. If you would prefer your response to remain anonymous, please tick here: