



Rhys ab Owen
Rhys.abOwen@senedd.wales

5 July 2021

Dear Rhys ab Owen,

In my reply to your recent written questions (WQ82545, WQ82546, and WQ82547) I committed to write to you as soon as possible with a substantive response to your queries. The three questions covered the national tutoring programme that exists in England, what discussions I have had about securing tutoring for schools in Wales, and what action is being taking to ensure that economically disadvantaged children in Wales are able to catch up with their learning following the coronavirus pandemic.

During the crisis, it has become clear that many learners have not progressed as much as they might have in terms of their progress in learning, some having been impacted more seriously than others. Evidence from a range of reliable sources (OECD, ARC, Estyn, the regions, Sutton Trust, Children's Commissioner, Barnardo's, International Intelligence Updates), including those focusing closely on Wales, suggests that most or all learners have been affected, and that the most vulnerable have been affected the most.

In response to this evidence through our "Recruit, Recover, Raise Standards" - Accelerating Learning Programme (RRRS) we are providing additional funding to schools to boost support for learners at crucial stages in their education. We have not pursued the English approach of a national tutoring service, instead developing a distinct Welsh response to supporting recovery.

The RRRS programme has been operational throughout the 2020/21 academic year providing £29million extra funding to increase capacity in schools and enable them to being to address the impact of the pandemic. This was augmented by a further £72m that the previous government invested in schools in March, part of which will fund RRRS in the new academic year from September 2021.

Our response to the situation was to dedicate financial resources to the creation of new capacity in the system rather than creating a tutoring service. We did not want to place restrictions on head teachers in how they went about appointing and deploying this new

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

capacity, so we recognised that they might appoint teachers, teaching assistants and other roles in the school, in line with the school's understanding of its learners.

The combination of our investment in all learners through RRRS, with a focus on vulnerable and disadvantaged learners, is a comprehensive package to support teaching and learning: this takes us to over £150m investment in teaching in the last year.

These interventions are bespoke to meet the different needs and learners – we are seeking to maximise their impact and recognise and respond to the wide variety of experiences learners have had over the pandemic period. In Wales, we are also committed to supporting learner wellbeing and confidence as the basis for the development of knowledge, skills and experiences.

The tuition-based approach in England may help motivated learners to catch up, but it is less likely to be able to support those who have disengaged from learning and are lacking motivation. In Wales, we do not think it is helpful to address it as a matter of 'catching up' we believe instead that our approach needs to address the foundations of learning as well as supporting learners' progression – focusing on their well-being, motivation, and confidence. As such our published principles for the RRRS programme place decision making in the hands of school leaders, empowering them to make the right decisions based on their communities and their learners cohorts, rather than investing in a national tutoring services.

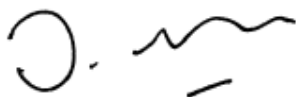
The funding formula for the RRRS programme has been driven by a focus on the most vulnerable learners including weightings for areas such as deprivation (defined by Eligibility for Free School Meals (EFSM)), learners from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic and Gypsy Roma Traveller communities, and those in Welsh medium education.

Throughout the programme we have reviewed these weightings and taken on board feedback from the education system. We have further refined the formula for the coming academic year, including weightings for children with ALN statements, refining our approach to the Welsh Medium weightings and including weightings for specific year groups including our youngest learners.

As highlighted in the Education Policy Institute (EPI) report on "catch up" approaches across the four nations, the RRRS programme in Wales is far better targeted at the most disadvantaged pupils, who according to research, have seen their education suffer the most over the course of the pandemic.

While the English approach is to support tuition based catch up we believe that our approach allowing leaders in schools to determine the right approach to support the needs of their learners is most likely to address the needs of those most disadvantaged and impacted by the pandemic and those potentially disengaged learners.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized 'J' followed by a series of loops and a horizontal line.

Jeremy Miles AS/MS

Gweinidog y Gymraeg ac Addysg
Minister for Education and Welsh Language