



Academi Genedlaethol ar gyfer
Arweinyddiaeth Addysgol Cymru
National Academy for
Educational Leadership Wales

The power of collaboration



Meet our Stakeholders

Matthew Goulding was appointed as Deputy Headteacher at Ysgol Pentrehafod, Swansea in 2017. Matthew is currently undertaking an Education Doctorate with his most recent area of work focusing on the impact of mentoring and coaching on teacher development.

Since the very early days of the Covid-19 outbreak we have observed the benefits of collaboration across all walks of life. For example, the construction of the field hospitals across the country, community groups providing services to members of society classified as 'at-risk' and schools working collaboratively across their respective hubs the length and breadth of Wales to distribute supplies to key families week in, week out

“No one can whistle a symphony. It takes a whole orchestra to play it”

H.E. Luccock

Check in, Catch Up, Prepare

The announcement of the “Check in, Catch Up, Prepare” phase of Covid-19 education provision gave us approximately three weeks to prepare. No doubt many leaders across the country faced similar questions from all members of their school community, seeking clarity during times of uncertainty. Whilst these preparations offered various challenges e.g. adhering to social distancing measures during entry and exit, a clear benefit was that our collegiate and transparent approach recommitted and reconnected the school community enabling us to galvanise the trust, confidence and assurance to move forward.

During this time speculation was mounting as to what September may look like for schools in Wales. Consequently, we established 3 different plans for September, albeit in draft form! These were shared with the middle leadership team which provided an opportunity to discuss and evaluate what had gone before and what we needed to deliver for our students going forward. We had already identified a programme of professional learning for colleagues: planning for blended learning, improving the quality of modelling & instruction and using ICT to enhance learning.

Fast forward to Thursday 9th July and Welsh Government announce that students will return to school full time with a number of provisos to ensure that this is achieved. For a split-second there was a feeling of disquietude: the sheer volume of the planning that we implemented for just one year group per day, would leave us very little time to ensure that the school was ready for the return of all students in September before we broke up for the Summer break. This was an important factor for us as a leadership team. We felt it was imperative that all staff, including caretakers, administrative staff, teachers and teaching assistants had a chance to recharge their batteries ready for the 'new normal' in September. However, the operational guidance took longer than anticipated to be released and as such time was ebbing away.

5 days to go...the FINAL week!

The engine in a rocket ship does not fire without a small spark. We all need small sparks, small accomplishments in our lives to fuel the big ones. If our ambitious plan were to come to fruition, staff would need to be flexible and build upon the smaller victories of their past as they navigated the challenges throughout the week. Colleagues came together within their area teams to reimagine the curriculum for the opening weeks of the term. They identified key threshold concepts within their subjects, engaged in the co-planning of lessons as they identified the most suitable pedagogical approaches for their asynchronous lessons and modified their assessment models to ensure that students have the best possible learning experience, even if it is blended during the initial weeks of the year.

Final words

The uncertainty of this pandemic has had an era-defining impact on the whole education system and no doubt there are many surprises still ahead of us. In the long-run, we are a product of the environment that we operate within. It is clear that for many colleagues, they have found it easier to modify their approaches to teaching and learning within the climate of mutual support that has been established at the micro, meso and macro level of the organisation. It is this power of collaboration, often, but not always, on a face-to face level, that has led to an ambitious, finalised plan, whatever the challenges ahead.

Further information and resources can be found at
www.nael.cymru