



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

PUBLICATION

# National Strategy for Educational Research and Enquiry: endorsements

Endorsements for the Wales National Strategy for Educational Research and Enquiry.

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**Associate Professor Claire Sinemma (the University of Auckland and  
member of the Welsh Government Curriculum and Assessment Group)**

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## **The British Academy and Royal Society**

“ The National Strategy for Educational Research and Enquiry (NSERE) for Wales builds strongly on the British Academy and the Royal Society’s work on how to harness research to improve policy and practice in education. It suggests concrete steps that can be taken to improve coordination, build capacity, and engage the teaching profession. These actions can be expected to result in educational research being used effectively to improve outcomes for children and young people. I am pleased to support the Strategy and encourage its adoption and implementation by the Welsh Government. ”

Professor Charles Hulme, Professor of Psychology and Education, University of Oxford, Fellow of the British Academy and Chair of the British Academy and Royal Society Joint Programme Board for Educational Research.

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## The Atlantic Rim Collaboratory (ARC) (an international network of policymakers, scholars and educators focused on education reform to which the Welsh Government belongs)

“ This excellent document highlights the importance of educational research as part of the policy system. It promotes dialogue between academic researchers and educational systems and emphasises what needs to be done to develop a rich and robust culture of research practice and of research use in schools. The report promotes a positive and practical way forward towards evidence-informed professional judgement in education. The ARC Education Project Secretariat and Advisory Board fully endorse the National Strategy. We support the Welsh government in its continued efforts to convert the National Strategy into structures, processes and funding and look forward to reading future documents as they specify the benefits for students and learning. ”

## The OECD (Dr Beatriz Pont, Senior Policy Analyst, OECD Directorate for Education and Skills)

“ OECD has been working with Wales through its reform efforts since 2014 and has highlighted the need for a stronger research agenda. Its 2020 report '[Achieving the New Curriculum for Wales](#)' suggested the need for a strategic research agenda to strengthen the quality of curriculum design, teaching and learning across schools in Wales, which could also contribute to monitor progress in the realisation of the curriculum. It advised that the research agenda should form an integrated part of the overarching assessment, evaluation and accountability framework. The new NSERE has potential to contribute to raise the availability and quality of research to inform policy and practice by bringing together a national approach, with higher education institutions and the education

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profession. ”

## **Ann Keane (formerly Her Majesty’s Chief Inspector of Education and Training, Estyn)**

“ The NSERE is to be welcomed as an ambitious vision for educational research and enquiry in Wales that clearly sets out the 2 interdependent sides of the coin- consumption and production. It is cogent and persuasive about the role of practitioners who can engage in enquiry and research. ”

## **Professor John Furlong (Emeritus Professor of Education, University of Oxford; former President of the British Educational Research Association and author of 'Teaching Tomorrow’s Teachers: Options for the future of initial teacher education in Wales')**

“ This National Strategy presents a powerful and innovative vision for the future of educational research and enquiry in Wales. Its recognition of the difference between but complementarity of practitioner enquiry and formal academic research are particularly important. Once it is fully implemented, the National Strategy will put Wales at the forefront internationally of research-/evidence-led policy and practice in education. ”

## **Professor Graham Donaldson (Professor of Education, Glasgow University; formerly Chief Inspector of Schools, Scotland and author of 'Successful Futures: Independent Review of Curriculum and Assessment Arrangements in**

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## Wales')

“ This is an important report whose recommendations would further enhance the reform policy of the Welsh Government. It provides a coherent picture of how research can and must contribute to the learning education system that Wales is seeking to become. ”

### **Professor John Gardner (Professor of Education and formerly Deputy Vice- Chancellor The University of Stirling; former President of the British Educational Research Association and Chair of the Welsh Government Teacher Recruitment and Retention Board)**

“ In my view, the NSERE has the appropriate goals and planned actions to ensure the growth of a research-informed, self-improving education system for Wales. The strategy credibly aims to weave the existing multi-level educational resources of Wales into a coherent collaboration between all education sectors and phases, with appropriate stimulation from Welsh Government through focused funding initiatives. Given the many hugely important developments in Welsh education, including the new curriculum for Wales, the maturing of initial teacher education partnerships and the inception of full-career professional learning policy and structures, this strategy can be confidently expected to begin generating the capacity in schools and universities for creating new knowledge and problem-solving that will sustain a successful pan-Wales education system well into the future. ”

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## Sir Alasdair Macdonald (formerly headteacher of Morpeth School, Tower Hamlets and Welsh Government Pupil Development Grant Advocate)

“ I would like to add my support to the NSERE. There is huge strength in recognising and seeing the importance of the 3 domains. Previous attempts at developing educational research have not been as successful as they might have been owing to their not identifying the mutual interdependence of all parts of the ‘ecosystem’.

“ As the Welsh Government’s Advocate for the Pupil Development Grant I have seen over the last few years the importance of research and evidence in the transformation of much of our schools’ pedagogy. In the early days of the Pupil Development Grant the emphasis was largely on interventions aimed specifically at pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds. However, while this is undoubtedly important in raising attainment, there has been a significant shift in the last few years to a realisation that high-quality learning and teaching has a differential impact, with our vulnerable pupils deriving the greatest benefit.

“ The Education Endowment Fund has led this development and our schools have made use of their Toolkit and other resources but, if we want to make serious inroads into raising the attainment of all our pupils, we need now to establish the capacity to develop our own research and create our own evidence-informed teachers and schools. This feels particularly important at this time, when although there is still much to be gained from what is happening in other jurisdictions, we are embarking on major changes in our education system. ”

## **Professor Mark Priestley (Professor of Education, University of Stirling; Lead Editor of The Curriculum Review and Member of the Welsh Government Curriculum and Assessment Group)**

“ Having been a keen observer of the development of the new curriculum in Wales, as well as a participant through my involvement in professional learning with EAS and pioneer teachers, and my membership of the Curriculum and Assessment Group (CAG), I am delighted to see the production of such a cogent and useful set of proposals in the NSERE. I am especially pleased to see the conceptual distinction between research and enquiry, which encapsulates the difference between professional researchers, whose primary role is dissemination of new knowledge, and practitioners, whose core mission is concerned with improvement of their practice, and that of colleagues. This distinction helps ensure clarity about how we develop research capacity, produce new research for various purposes, and mobilise it effectively across the system.

“ I am also pleased to see the provision for developing capacity for independent research, through support for doctoral and post-doctoral researchers, and via the creation of research infrastructure, for example networks to facilitate cross-institutional working. ”

## **Carol Campbell (Associate Professor of Leadership and Educational Change, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto; Member of the International Council of Education Advisers, Scottish Government and formerly Chief Research Officer)**

“ Moving through and beyond a global pandemic, education systems

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around the world are seeking the best evidence to develop professional practice and to advance student learning, equity, and wellbeing. The NSERE is timely and necessary to improve the production, mobilisation, understanding, and use of research to benefit the people of Wales. With this Strategy, Wales has the opportunity to be a global leader in creating a strengthened future education system to support students to be successful. ”

## **Professor Ruth Lupton (Professor of Education, Manchester University and Visiting Professor, London School of Economic and Political Sciences, University of London)**

“ The draft NSERE addresses many of the problems of connection between educational policy-making and educational research and practice that Debra Hayes and I identified in our recent book 'Great Mistakes in Education Policy: and how to avoid them in the future'. Our analysis and recommendations focused on England and Australia, but there are clearly some similarities with the Welsh situation. The 3-pronged approach proposed in the strategy (a national infrastructure, research capacity and volume in HEIs, and an evidence-informed profession) seems to me to be critical. The system needs all of these, and for them to be integrated, as is suggested. I also welcome the emphasis on practitioners being not just consumers of research but producers of professional inquiry: this is something that has been insufficiently recognised in developments of recent years. The HEI-related proposals, both for the national research centre/centres (with their multi-disciplinary focus) and the strengthening of collaborative networks, very much chime with what we recommended for England and Australia. In my view these proposals could make a very significant contribution to building and sustaining the knowledge base needed to inform educational policy and practice in the future, avoiding some of the policy omissions, mistakes and volatility that can arise when high-quality research is not conducted or not marshalled in ways that are

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useful to governments. Overall this strategy is a great example for other countries! ”

## **Associate Professor Claire Sinemma (the University of Auckland and member of the Welsh Government Curriculum and Assessment Group)**

“ Addressing the challenges and opportunities facing the education system in Wales, including those exacerbated by the educational impact of the global pandemic, and to realise the aspirations of a world-leading curriculum, requires a robust strategy for educational research and enquiry. The proposed NSERE is robust in a range of ways; it recognises the potential of the combination of both academic research and professional enquiry. It takes a system perspective of the goal of an evidence-informed profession. It recognises this is not the work of teachers and schools alone, but rather of a complex system working collectively toward that goal. The strategy takes seriously the need for policymakers, researchers, educational leaders, teachers, teacher educators, providers of professional learning, and those in a range of education-related agencies to have access to high-quality fit-for-purpose evidence, opportunities to generate and build capability for using it in ways that support learners in schools and system goals, and conditions conducive to those efforts. The strategy proposed here is commendable for taking a system perspective that recognises the role of evidence in a system that learns, and the unique contributions of those in different roles that can be leveraged to support and strengthen evidence-informed policy, high-quality research capacity and an evidence-informed profession.

“ The strategy is timely. It is also broad and encompassing, coherent and ambitious, and in my view, critical to ongoing improvement of the education system in Wales. ”

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