



9 July 2026

Dear Headteacher,

I hope this letter finds you well and that you and your staff are looking forward to a well-earned summer break. Thank you for your continued hard work in supporting learners throughout this academic year.

It was encouraging to see improvements in the latest statistical release based on Personalised Assessments data, reflecting the profession's commitment during challenging times. Raising standards in literacy and numeracy remains central to our shared ambition; as you know better than anyone, these skills underpin success across the curriculum and in later life.

As promised, I am writing to outline the next steps in our collective approach to our new **Foundational Literacy and Numeracy Plan** ("the Plan") and to seek your support in taking this forward from the start of the 2026/27 academic year.

The Plan will be published in September and will focus on the following:

A shared ambition and national indicators

We will set out a clear national ambition: sustained improvement in literacy and numeracy outcomes for all learners, with more making secure progress, inequalities in attainment and progression narrowing over time, more learners achieving relevant qualifications, and more learners leaving secondary education as independent Welsh speakers.

Nationally, we will publish a small set of literacy and numeracy indicators to help us understand system performance and focus support. These will be based on national data only and will not identify local authorities or schools individually. They should inform local priorities, not distract from them. They are not intended to judge schools, create league tables or drive narrow performance behaviours - approaches we must avoid if we are to maintain a focus on

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn yr iaith honno 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.

genuine improvement. Our initial proposals are set out in the Annex, but they will form only one part of a much broader range of information used to understand system performance nationally

A collective endeavour

The Plan represents a collective, system-wide approach to improvement, building on existing strengths and practitioner expertise. It is not about adding pressure, workload or bureaucracy, but about focusing effort on the things that make the greatest difference for learners.

While there is much effective practice across Wales, reducing variation remains a key challenge. Collaboration at all levels will be essential to develop consistent expectations, share expertise and strengthen capacity across the system

Curriculum and assessment

I remain committed to the Curriculum for Wales and supporting schools to realise its full potential. The Plan will set out the clear support we will put in place for schools around literacy and numeracy. This coherent package of support and expectations will include:

- draft additional year on year detail to provide clarity on what children need to learn and when, supporting understanding of progression in literacy and numeracy (this will be published early in the autumn for consultation with a view to simplifying the Curriculum for Wales framework);
- support for teachers in curriculum design, learning, teaching and assessment;
- approaches to targeting support for learners who need it;
- clearer guidance on Systematic Synthetic Phonics and foundational reading skills – we will also review of current practice and resources;
- support to improve transition between primary and secondary education;

A crucial next step for the system is to strengthen our shared understanding of learner progression from ages 3 to 16, supporting greater continuity in learning and earlier identification of need. This includes:

- developing a clearer picture of learners' starting points on entry to school
- ongoing teacher assessment of progress, including early identification of need and appropriate support for learners with ALN
- a more consistent approach to transition between schools, particularly from primary to secondary (including the sharing of data and information), and
- ensuring a clear line of sight to the 14–16 Learner Entitlement.

The Plan represents our immediate next steps in this, but we will continue to refine this, working with the sector, over the course of the academic year ahead. The plan will take a 0-16 approach, recognising that children's literacy and numeracy development begins before school and is supported by parents, carers, practitioners, schools and early years settings, along with wider services.

Please also be aware that we have already started work to support literacy and numeracy through the curriculum grants and the ongoing professional learning available through Dysgu. In particular, you should be aware of the [work of CAL:ON](#) which is key to supporting literacy and will play an important role moving forward.

Expectations from September 2026

From the start of the next academic year, I am asking all schools, with the support of their local authority, to focus on the following:

- Working collaboratively with other schools and your local authority to strengthen self-evaluation and teaching, build a shared understanding of standards and support transition, particularly around literacy and numeracy;
- Ensuring that clear and ambitious literacy and numeracy targets are in place for all learners focused on their next steps and based on their starting points, progress and needs; and
- Set specific and stretching school improvement targets for literacy and numeracy through your existing self-evaluation and development planning processes.

Most schools already have these elements in place. The priority now is to strengthen their consistency, clarity and impact, with a continued focus on improving leadership, teaching and learning. This will require an open and trusting culture in which information and evidence are shared to support effective collaboration and greater consistency. This will typically include sharing improvement priorities with local authority partners.

Local authorities will play an important role in drawing together this information to develop an informed view of progress and priorities across their schools. This will inform their engagement with Welsh Government's Education Improvement Team, ensuring a clear line of sight between local improvement activity and our shared national understanding.

A new Year 6 indicator within the Personalised Assessments

During the 2026–27 academic year, a new Year 6 age-related indicator for reading and numeracy will be introduced through personalised assessments as a shared national reference point, sitting alongside existing learner progress reports. It will initially be provided to schools as a group report for practitioner use to support teaching, learning and transition, and will not be shared with learners or parents. We intend to develop an individual learner report for future use and, in time, explore similar indicators for other year groups, in partnership with the sector.

This school-level information should not be published and will not be used to compare schools or make judgements about performance; its purpose is to support understanding of learner progress and inform improvement. Personalised assessments remain an important source of evidence; many schools already share this information with local authorities and partner schools, and I encourage schools to share any relevant assessment information in this way to support learner progress, self-evaluation and collaborative improvement.

Looking ahead

This is the first step in a longer-term approach. The Plan will provide further clarity, support and sequencing over the course of the academic year, and we will continue to work closely with the profession and partners to refine and strengthen implementation, including an assessment of workload impact.

This is a shared national endeavour to improve outcomes for all learners. I am grateful for your continued leadership and commitment to this work.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anna Brychan', written in a cursive style.

Anna Brychan AS/MS

Gweinidog Cabinet dros Addysg a'r Gymraeg

Cabinet Minister for Education and the Welsh Language

Annex

National Ambition

By the end of the Senedd term, Wales should see sustained improvement in literacy and numeracy outcomes for all learners, with more making secure progress and inequalities in attainment and progression narrowing over time.

It should also include more learners achieving relevant qualifications and a sustained increase in the proportion of learners leaving secondary education as independent Welsh speakers.

Proposed National Indicators

Supporting national indicators, (with relevant breakdowns for different groups of learners) could include:

- increasing the proportion of Year 6 learners meeting the agreed age-related indicator for Welsh and English Reading (personalised assessments)*;
- increasing the proportion of Year 6 learners meeting the agreed age-related indicator for Numeracy (Procedural) (personalised assessments)*;
- reducing the proportion of Year 3/6/9 learners significantly below expectations in reading and numeracy personalised assessments (those below a particular age-standardised score). This indicator is subject to statistical feasibility.
- increasing the proportions of the Year 11 cohort who achieve Maths/English/Welsh GCSEs at A*-A, A*-C and A*-G (precise combination of qualifications to be confirmed)
- A target related to the Welsh in Education Strategic Plans (WESPs) (to be agreed)
- A national attendance target (to be agreed).

* We will continue to work with the sector to explore an age-related indicator for other year groups as appropriate.

Please note: we will explore developing a nationally consistent baseline or learning readiness indicator to help the system understand learners' starting points and judge progress more fairly over time. In time, this could help better inform our national indicators above.