

Chapter 6. Implementing education policies: Supporting school improvement in Norway and the United Kingdom (Wales)

This chapter presents recent research that has shaped an analytical framework on effective education policy implementation. Following an introduction presenting this framework, it presents two case studies of education systems to which the OECD has provided tailored support: Norway and the United Kingdom (Wales).

The importance of education policy implementation

Policy reforms do not always translate into concrete actions and visible results in schools, however well designed they may be. Failure to produce the desired policy outcomes may come from the gap between the keen attention given to the policy while it is being designed and a lack of attention when it comes to implementing it, as well as resistance against the reforms or lack of capacity to put them in place, among other reasons. Not implementing proposed education policies may result in expectations for education improvement failing to live up to reality, not to mention the erosion of trust in governments, and wasted public resources.

The chapters in this report have presented a selection of education policy priorities and trends across 43 education systems between 2008 and 2019. Through *ex post* policy reform analysis, these chapters presented, when possible, available evidence of the factors that facilitated or hindered the reforms' success in their specific contexts, and according to their objectives.

Indeed, education reforms and policy initiatives involve highly complex processes, which can often fail to translate into concrete actions and visible results in schools. With high investments and high expectations, policies that do not reach schools or contribute to improving education jeopardise public resources, risk eroding public confidence in their government's effectiveness and may create reform fatigue among stakeholders.

Some of the factors that can prevent policies from reaching schools include piecemeal policy making; weak capacity and insufficient support; lack of engagement from key actors; and poor policy alignment. These weakening factors often become visible during what is commonly called the "implementation phase" of an education policy, even if most of them originate from broader policy issues.

The definition of education policy implementation varies from one policy maker to the next, depending on his/her approach to policy making and understanding of the policy cycle. Based on a literature review and experience of OECD work with countries in this area, effective education policy implementation refers to the process that aims to translate specific policy objectives into concrete education changes (Viennet and Pont, 2017^[1]).

Policy makers can tackle most implementation challenges by adopting a strategic, vision-led approach to education policy implementation and policy making in general. Strategic policy making implies considering implementation issues early in the elaboration of a policy to inform its design, engaging key stakeholders, and building on the policy's context. It also involves adapting the implementation strategy throughout the process to stay in line with the policy vision.

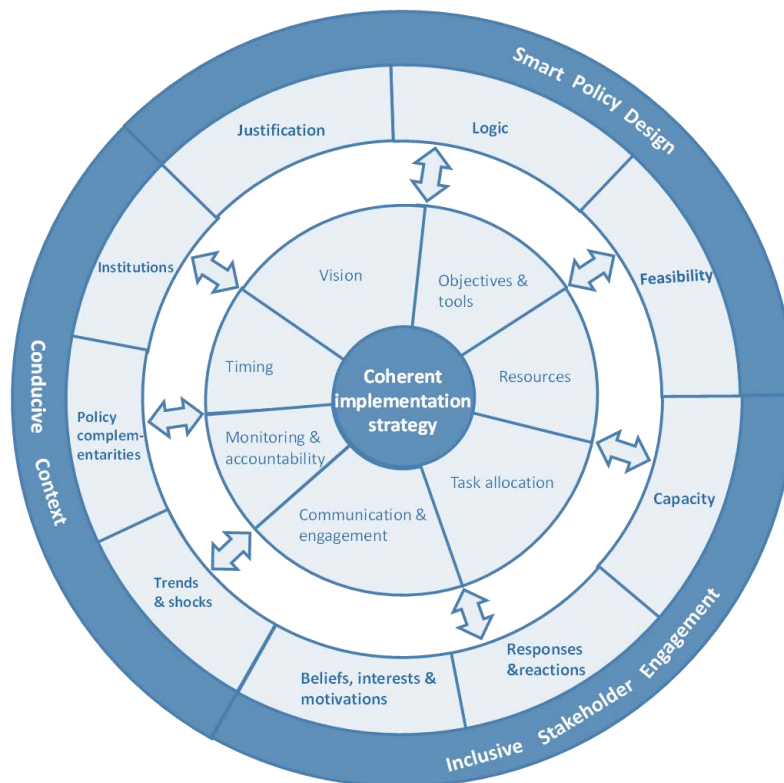
Building on this perspective, the OECD developed a framework to analyse education policy implementation and help countries enhance their processes. The framework (Figure 6.1) categorises the factors of effective implementation by four dimensions that can contribute to bringing effective change in schools:

1. **Smart policy design:** To be "smart", a policy must be justified, logical, feasible and adapted to the context. If a policy is perceived as legitimate by a wide number of actors, if it offers a logical and feasible solution to the educational issue at stake, it is more likely to be implemented.
2. **Inclusive stakeholder engagement:** A policy can only be implemented effectively if key stakeholders are actively engaged throughout the process. It is crucial to

identify their vision of education and their interests, the relationships they have with other stakeholders, and to acknowledge how they can contribute to (or oppose) setting up the policy. To guarantee coherent implementation, policy makers must secure support for the policy, clarify the role of each actor, and regularly engage with all stakeholders.

3. **A conducive context:** An effective policy implementation process is adapted to the political, socio-economic and institutional environment that surrounds the education system. It recognises the existing policy environment and takes advantage of policy complementarities. As much as possible, it comes up with measures that are aligned with the existing educational governance and institutional settings. The process should also take into account what is happening in politics, in the economy and in society in general, as these factors can have a strong influence on how the policy unfolds on the ground.
4. **A coherent implementation strategy:** The strategy outlines concrete measures to address all the determinants in a coherent manner to make the policy operational at the school level. A coherent strategy is essential to structure the implementation process properly and to guarantee that the policy impacts educational practices on the ground. It is a central tool for policy makers to co-ordinate the process, and it must be flexible enough to take into account variations in the context and among the key stakeholders.

Figure 6.1. An analytical framework for effective education policy implementation



Source: Updated from Viennet, R. and B. Pont (2017^[11]), “Education policy implementation: A literature review and proposed framework”, *OECD Education Working Papers*, No. 162, OECD Publishing, Paris, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/fc467a64-en>.

Given the need to increasingly focus on implementation for success in education policy, a new OECD Implementing Education Policies project has been supporting education systems in their efforts, offering peer-learning opportunities and tailored support. This consists of three complementary strands: a policy assessment to take stock of reforms, policies and change strategies; strategic advice to support the policy leaders and main actors of implementation; and implementation seminars to bring together key stakeholders, for them to discuss, engage and shape the development of education policies and implementation strategies (OECD, 2019^[2]).

This chapter presents two case studies drawn from OECD collaboration with the Norwegian Government, and the Welsh Government in the United Kingdom. Implementation is dynamic, and as such, the assessment and recommendations provided for each case study are valid for the timeframe when the assessments were conducted: 2018-19 for Norway, and 2016-17 for Wales (United Kingdom).

Norway: Implementing a new competence development model

Norway introduced a new competence development model for schools in which national funding for collaborative, continuous professional development is based on school and local analysis of needs, and decision making in networks (White Paper No. 21, “Desire to learn: Early intervention and quality in schools”, 2017).

This case study reviews the implementation of the competence development model in terms of its design, stakeholder engagement, whole-of-system approach, and the coherence of its implementation strategy. It builds on the collaboration between Norway and the OECD Implementing Education Policies and Strategic Education Governance teams, which has included country visits, stakeholder events and exchanges with a Reference Group to provide implementation support for the model since 2018. The detail of the analysis and recommendations can be found in *Improving School Quality in Norway: The New Competence Development Model* (OECD, 2019^[3]).

Policy background

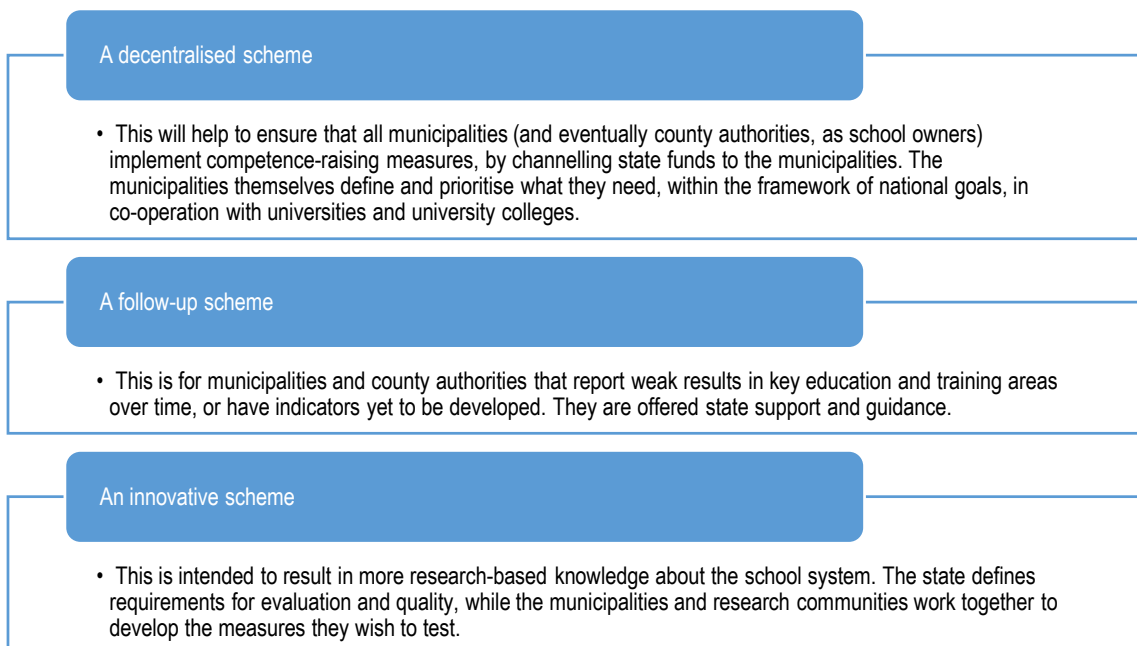
The new Norwegian competence development model for schools (Government of Norway, 2017^[4]) complements individual professional development, and aims to establish a sustainable approach for school improvement that responds to local contexts and the diversity of needs among Norwegian schools. The new model relies on three complementary pillars that cater to any school’s needs: a decentralised scheme; a follow-up scheme; and an innovative scheme (Figure 6.2).

To benefit from national funding through the decentralised scheme, school owners have to contribute 30% of the grant to ensure that funds from national, municipal and county authorities contribute to the same end. The two other schemes are designed to ensure that the system is responsive to all schools, and caters to equity.

This policy adopts a new implementation approach: municipalities are encouraged to participate in collaboration forums and jointly agree on how the public funds will be used, and what measures will be prioritised. While designed from the centre, the model ultimately aims to empower those at the school level to change their practices and deliver better education through training and collaborative work, in partnership with universities at the local level. This implies a structural shift of responsibilities from the Directorate for Education and Training at the national level to county governors and municipalities, and

requires a careful process of ownership and allocation of responsibilities by different key players.

Figure 6.2. The three pillars of the Norwegian competence development model for schools



Source: Based on Government of Norway (2017^[4]), “Desire to learn: Early intervention and quality in schools”, *White Paper No. 21*, Government of Norway, Oslo.

However, if the policy is not realised in full, this will likely result in no change to the current situation, at best, or an increase in inequalities, at worst. This implies either a waste of public resources, or unintended consequences.

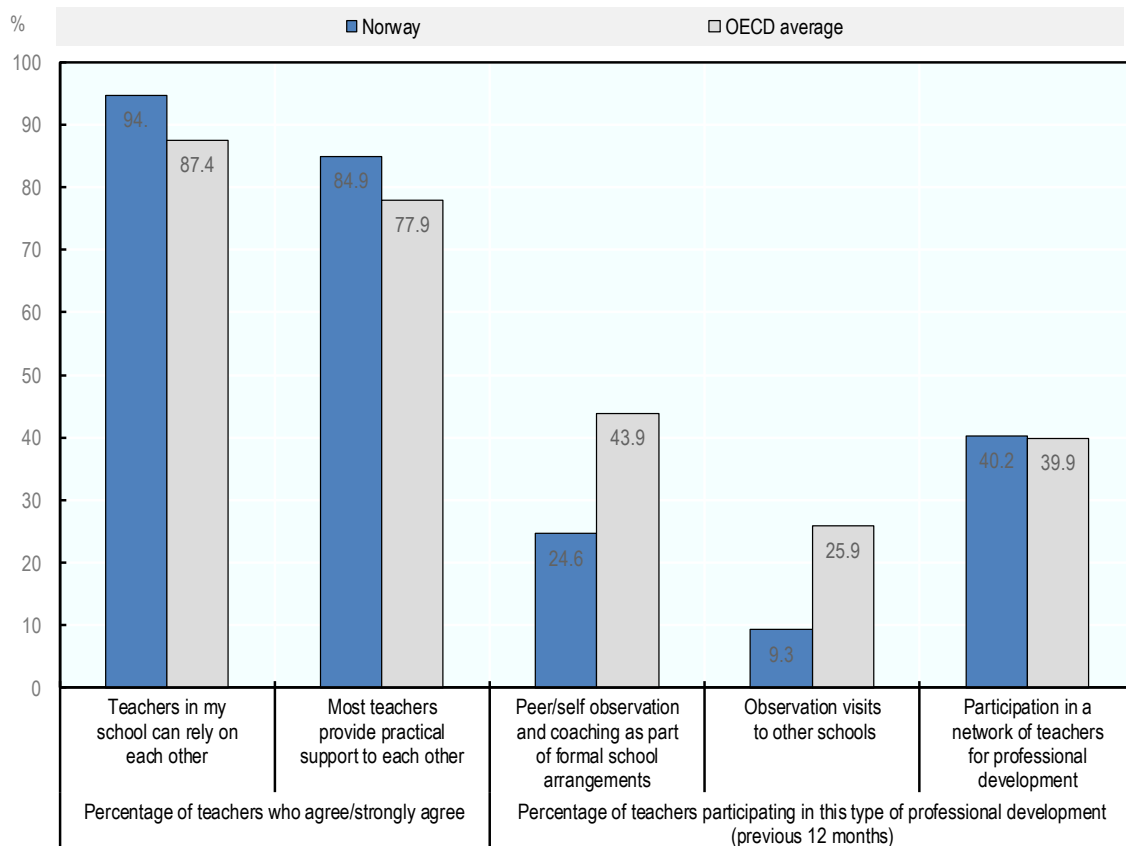
As the new competence development model ambitiously aims to change the roles of many different actors, it requires a careful implementation strategy for all stakeholders to achieve the expected objectives. Some elements have been already disseminated in the White Paper (Government of Norway, 2017^[4]), but overall, the implementation strategy is loosely developed with the engagement of stakeholders, who are expected to shape it along the way, and using the room for county and regional adaptation that is deliberately built-in.

Refining the policy design

The new model is designed to develop collaborative professionalism between teachers, and better reflect local needs in terms of continuous professional development. In the OECD’s Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) 2013, while teachers in Norway reported higher than average levels of co-operation in schools, they participated less than average in collaborative professional learning (OECD, 2014^[5]). Evidence from the following TALIS cycle, in 2018, suggests this discrepancy has persisted: although Norwegian teachers more commonly reported a collaborative culture among teachers in their school, they took part considerably less frequently in certain forms of collaborative professional development approaches, such as peer observation, according to their reports. Although they appear to participate in professional development networks at a similar rate to teachers on average across the OECD, less than half of Norwegian teachers reported

experiencing this type of collaborative learning (Figure 6.4). The OECD considers that this gives the new competence development model room to improve the situation, under the condition that network collaboration and partnerships with the many different players effectively reflect teachers' needs for competence development.

Figure 6.3. Teacher co-operation among lower secondary teachers in Norway, 2018



Source: OECD (2019_[6]), *TALIS 2018 Results (Volume I): Teachers and School Leaders as Lifelong Learners*, TALIS, OECD Publishing, Paris <https://doi.org/10.1787/1d0bc92a-en>.

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Teachers in lower secondary education in Norway reported lower participation in professional development and lower satisfaction with their experiences than the OECD averages (OECD, 2019_[6]). According to Norway, identifying priorities at the school level through the new model can increase the relevance of professional development delivered by universities. The OECD team noted the importance to link school evaluation with development processes for the new model to support adequately teachers' continuous professional development.

The OECD team also highlighted that the success of the model will rely on many education stakeholders adopting new practices. For instance, teachers and school leaders are expected to recognise their capacity development needs and translate them to the model, and municipalities to take ownership of school improvement. This implies improving professional development at numerous system levels.

Other critical success factors suggested by the OECD included ensuring that stakeholders engage and shape the overall vision, play their agreed role, and collaborate according to the new scheme. Otherwise, there are high risks that the model will not have the intended effect. Participants in a stakeholder seminar for the project pointed to the complexity of the model. Some asked for examples of good practice, shared information, and priority-setting processes.

The OECD considered that for the policy design to have an impact, the new model has to be strategically prioritised, and a vision needs to be developed. Clear incentives should be communicated to the different stakeholders, and a systematic assessment and monitoring of the implementation and realisation of objectives should be established.

Promoting inclusive stakeholder engagement

In line with the tradition of stakeholder participation in Norwegian policy making (Directorate for Education and Training, 2015^[7]), the Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research consulted a broad array of stakeholders while preparing the policy.

In the first stage of the implementation, the Directorate for Education and Training engaged key stakeholders, such as the county governors and the universities, while leaving room for counties to organise regional networks according to regional contexts and needs. During the OECD Norway Seminar, participants discussed the need to clarify the existing roles; to consider students' and parents' views when the school defines its priorities for competence development; and to clarify the decision-making process for selecting the training delivered by universities.

However, the OECD team noticed that stakeholder involvement at the national level was narrowed down as the model started to be implemented. It seemed that the Directorate was concentrating its efforts on what were perceived to be the essential stakeholders, while communication with teachers, school leaders and other stakeholders was more passive.

To strengthen the support and ownership of the stakeholders of the model, the OECD team recommended that the roles of the different stakeholders (especially of the government, counties, municipalities and representative organisations) have to be clarified and communicated clearly, while developing capacity at every level so key players can act as intended. The OECD also signalled that transparency about the available resources and their deployment should be integral to the communication strategy.

Shaping a conducive context

The OECD found that the competence development model for schools fits the Norwegian decentralised context. It recognises the highly complex policy environment in Norwegian education and supports political legitimacy and democratic values with its aim to boost local development processes. The model also builds on experience with municipal and school networks, but recognises the reality that capacities vary among different municipalities and schools. The model can be aligned with broader policies and strategies to develop the teaching profession and promote partnerships between schools and teacher education providers.

However, while the model is designed based on the knowledge of the current context, the OECD team considered the need to continuously gather feedback on how well key aspects of the model work in the varying contexts among municipalities and counties. If not adequately addressed, contextual factors may provide barriers to the longer-term success of the model (Table 6.1).

In particular, for the decentralised scheme, it will be critical to evaluate the effectiveness of regional partnerships, and to plan for university provision within the collaboration forum, both locally and nationally. For the follow-up scheme, it will be essential to gauge how well the support delivered by an Advisory Team reaches the municipalities in greatest need and meets their local school development needs.

Thus, the OECD found that the conditions for long-term planning require that universities broaden their offer to meet identified local priorities. A whole-of-system approach would help position the new model in relation to complementary policies and should be mainstreamed in collaboration forums. The responsiveness to schools and municipalities, with identified capacity, needs to be strengthened.

Table 6.1. Implementing the Norwegian competence development model for schools: Barriers and suggestions for addressing them

Main barriers	Suggestions for addressing the barriers
Competition between continuous professional development schemes, and lack of coherence	Strategic dialogue including all levels to ensure policy coherence
Lack of strategic planning capacity at the municipal level	Build strategic capacity at the municipal level (at least): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Major action: County governors raising this as a priority during the next collaboration forum. Use current networks/capacity-building platforms (e.g. KS' seminars).
Lack of feedback on money use and change in the classroom	Integrate this to school and municipal quality development processes and establish new feedback mechanisms where necessary, e.g. classroom observations
Lack of shared understanding (language) among actors (e.g. owners vs. universities)	Develop a common language based on scientific terms to facilitate dialogue between school owners and universities

Source: Stakeholder seminar, Oslo, 18 October 2018.

Adapting the implementation strategy for impact

Analysing the implementation strategy and understanding how its components are developed and aligned coherently can help ensure that it will be effective over the long run. This can include a range of actions, such as defining actors' roles, allocating tasks, and setting a clear calendar and pace. Following widespread consultations and engagement with education stakeholders across Norway, the OECD team proposed concrete actions to enhance the implementation strategy of the competence development for schools and to improve its local anchoring:

- **Refine the objectives of the new model:** Set a clear vision and associated operational objectives with the involvement of all stakeholders, while clarifying the position of the new model compared to other professional development strategies and the new curriculum.
- **Review the policy tools and align them with the broader policy context:** Review incentives to maximise the take-up and impact of the new model, such as embedding the new model in the assessment framework. Communicate the expectation that the prioritisation of school-based competence development flows naturally from regular school evaluation and planning processes.
- **Clarify roles and responsibilities:** Clearly define task allocation and enhance transparency at every layer on the actions undertaken by the different stakeholders

as an accountability mechanism. Focus in the county forum on how to safeguard the full participation of municipalities with limited capacity.

- **Gather data for improvement:** Translate objectives into indicators to monitor the implementation process and the new model. Ensure that local data are fed back to the Directorate so it can help county governors and school owners, and monitor the take-up of the model. Publicly release information and data on inputs, processes, and outcomes of the model at the municipal, county, and national levels.
- **Design a communications and engagement plan:** Design a targeted communications strategy for the different stakeholders that aligns with the agreed role expectations. Organise feedback loops to encourage ownership of the model among the different stakeholders, and include information on accountability relationships, data and indicators to measure progress and information on the evaluation of the model in the communications strategy.
- **Secure financial and human resources:** Ensure long-term resources and consider linking the level of required co-funding requirements to the municipality level of deprivation. Encourage capacity development at every level by allocating sufficient time and funding resources to enable stakeholders to fully endorse their agreed roles in the new model.
- **Clarify expectations on timing and pace:** Within a central framework allowing county variation, each county governor needs to work with stakeholders to set objectives linked to the phasing in of the new model and offer a clear timeline to stakeholders.

United Kingdom (Wales): Developing schools as learning organisations

In 2011, Wales embarked on a large-scale school improvement reform that has become increasingly comprehensive and focused on the ongoing development and implementation of a new 21st-century school curriculum (Donaldson, 2015_[8]). This case study analyses the implementation of the school as a learning organisation policy in Wales in terms of its design, approach to stakeholder engagement, its context and the coherence of its implementation strategy. The detail of the analysis and recommendations can be found in *Developing Schools as Learning Organisations in Wales* (OECD, 2018_[9]).

Policy background

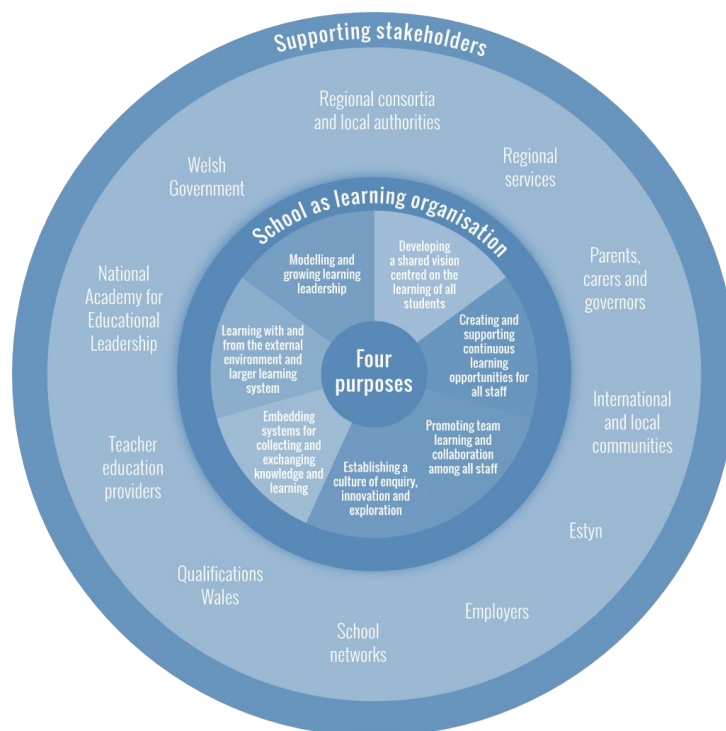
Wales has considered the development of schools as learning organisations (SLOs) a key means for realising the new curriculum (Government of Wales, 2019_[10]; Government of Wales, 2017_[11]). A SLO can change and adapt routinely to new environments and circumstances as its members, individually and together, learn their way to realising their vision. Collective working and learning, expanding skills and learning new ones by many teachers, teaching support staff, school leaders and others involved is believed essential for bringing Wales' new curriculum to life (Kools and Stoll, 2016_[12]; Senge et al., 2012_[13]; Giles and Hargreaves, 2006_[14]).

The SLO model for Wales (Figure 6.4) aims to focus efforts from school leaders, teachers, support staff, parents, (local) policy makers and all others involved in realising its seven dimensions in schools. These seven action-oriented dimensions and their underlying elements highlight both what a school should aspire to and the processes it goes through as it transforms itself into a learning organisation.

The realisation of the “four purposes” of the new school curriculum is placed at the heart of the model. These refer to developing children and young people into “ambitious, capable and lifelong learners, enterprising and creative, informed citizens and healthy and confident individuals.”

Wales’ SLO model was designed through a process of co-construction with key stakeholders and was shaped through a series of workshops and meetings that were facilitated by the OECD between November 2016 and July 2017. The result of this collective effort is Wales’ SLO model, released in November 2017 and implemented in schools across Wales since then. The OECD has been supporting Wales in this effort to help schools develop into learning organisations.

Figure 6.4. The schools as learning organisations model for the United Kingdom (Wales)



Source: (OECD, 2018^[15]) *Developing Schools as Learning Organisations in Wales*, Implementing Education Policies, OECD Publishing, Paris. <https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264307193-en>.

Note: Estyn is the education and training inspectorate for Wales.

An OECD study revealed that in 2017, the majority of schools in Wales seemed on their way towards developing as learning organisations. However, a considerable proportion was still far from realising this objective: 42% of schools seemed to have put in practice four or less of the seven SLO dimensions, and 30% of schools reported the realisation of only two or fewer. The survey and other sources of information showed that schools were engaging unequally with the seven dimensions that make up Wales’ SLO model. Two dimensions were less well developed: “developing a shared vision centred on the learning of all students” and “establishing a culture of enquiry, innovation and exploration”. Many schools could also do more to “learn with and from the external environment and larger system.”

The study also showed that secondary schools found it more challenging to develop as learning organisations and that more critical reflections were needed for deep learning and sustained progress to take place. High-stakes assessment, evaluation and accountability arrangements may have been a factor influencing people’s willingness to critically reflect on their own behaviour, that of their peers and the school organisation at large (OECD, 2018^[9]).

The study found that although Welsh schools need to be adequately supported to develop as learning organisations, many actions remain within their control. School leaders play a vital role in creating a trusting and respectful climate that allows for open discussions and sharing of knowledge. Teachers and learning support workers also need to do their part to work and learn with colleagues beyond their department, subject area or school.

At the system level, the OECD explored which policies enable or hinder schools’ development as learning organisations, and which steps Wales could take to ensure effective implementation – or “realisation” as it is often referred to in Wales – of its SLO policy (OECD, 2018^[9]). This section reviews the determinants of implementation: smart policy design, stakeholder engagement, a conducive context and an effective implementation strategy.

Refining the policy design

The OECD found that promoting a shared vision centred on learning and well-being of all students was key to realising the SLO model. The development of an inclusive and shared vision that promotes equity and well-being was central to the first dimension of Wales’ SLO model. Set at the heart of the model, the realisation of the “four purposes” of the curriculum was also a strength of the reform effort. The evidence suggested Wales’ SLO policy had been well received by the education profession. Its justification, logic and its place in the larger curriculum reform effort had started to be understood by parts of the education profession and other stakeholders in Wales, although there was more work to be done in this respect. Progress was also being made to strengthen the system infrastructure supporting schools in developing as learning organisations.

Three issues called for further attention, however: first, there was a need for better communication on the “why” and “how” of the SLO model. The OECD highlighted the importance of the Welsh government having developed an easy-to-understand narrative that explains how Wales’ SLO model can guide schools in their development, forms an integrated part of the curriculum reform and relates to other policies. This narrative was to be shared widely through various means. The SLO model would be more likely to be implemented if accompanied by careful monitoring of the education budget and a review of the school funding model to ensure adequate funding for all schools to develop as learning organisations. What’s more, the Welsh government was advised to continue strengthening the system support infrastructure.

Maintaining the inclusive engagement of stakeholders

According to evidence identified by the OECD, the process of co-construction which characterises the reform approach in Wales has played a pivotal role in ensuring strong ownership of policies and has helped bring about greater policy coherence. But despite the progress made, the OECD team identified several examples where there was scope for greater policy coherence. One such example was the ongoing development of the assessment, evaluation and accountability framework, which did not seem to be sufficiently connected to the work on the development of the curriculum. There was also a need to

better co-ordinate the ongoing work on the development of system-level key performance indicators with the development of the school self-evaluation and development planning toolkit. Failing to co-ordinate and align these strands of work may have resulted in a lack of coherence between the curriculum and the assessment, evaluation and accountability arrangements which in turn puts the whole curriculum reform effort at risk. The Welsh government and other stakeholders recognised the initial lack of coherence between the SLO policy and related policy areas, and started enhancing policy coherence, for example, by integrating the SLO model into leadership development programmes.

The OECD team also found significant differences in the extent and ways in which regional consortia had engaged with schools in their regions to disseminate the model and support them in putting it in practice. Therefore, continuing the work of the SLO Implementation Group may help ensure co-ordination and collaboration between the regional consortia and other stakeholders, to collectively look for the best ways to support schools in developing as learning organisations. Although room needed to be left for regional variance, one important step forward the OECD identified was the joint formulation of a national SLO implementation plan. It was also suggested that the Implementation Group should have a clearer role in supporting the Welsh government's efforts for greater policy coherence to realise the curriculum in schools throughout Wales. This included, for instance, co-ordinating and collaborating with those working on the establishment of a national professional learning model, the development of a school self-evaluation and development planning toolkit, and other related working groups.

To continue Wales' fruitful efforts to engage key stakeholders, the OECD recommended continuing to strengthen the capacity of the regional consortia to support schools developing as learning organisations. It was also advised that Estyn (the office of Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales) should monitor the progress of consortia in enhancing and streamlining their services to schools, and that the SLO Implementation Group be continued in support of the realisation of Wales' SLO policy, while striving for greater policy coherence.

Shaping a conducive context

In Wales, the institutional, policy and societal context has been conducive to large-scale education reform, and a wide range of stakeholders from all levels of the system have been engaged in shaping the process. The involvement of schools and other stakeholders in the development of Wales' SLO model supported its ownership by the education profession. This fertile ground for reform also contributed to schools' willingness to engage with Wales' SLO model.

Some contextual issues remained to be addressed, however. First, there was a need to expand the public dialogue generated by the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) results so as to align it with the ambitions of the new curriculum. Second, Wales had to ensure that its governance arrangements enabled all schools to develop as learning organisations, and that as such they responded to the learning and other needs of all its students.

Increasing alignment with and integration into other policies helped place the SLO on the agenda of regional consortia and Education Directorate governance bodies like the Change Board. In line with the vision that promotes equity and well-being, Wales' school system had expressed a strong commitment to equity and student well-being and had implemented various policies such as the Pupil Deprivation Grant and free school meals to target equity challenges in the school system. However, two policy issues called for further attention:

the school funding model and the lack of a common understanding of what student well-being entails.

In addition, promoting the development of professional capital and a thriving learning culture was also found as a key enabler for the SLO model. SLOs reflect a central focus on the professional learning of all staff, aimed at creating a sustainable learning culture in the organisation and other parts of the (learning) system. Wales had made good progress in several areas in recent years, including the promotion of school-to-school collaboration and the clarification of professional expectations through its teaching the need for:

- basing selection into initial teacher education on a mix of criteria and methods
- promoting strong collaboration between schools and teacher education institutions
- prioritising certain areas for professional learning in enquiry-based approaches to teaching and learning, strengthening inductions and promoting mentoring and coaching, observations and peer review
- developing a coherent leadership strategy to promote learning organisations across the system
- increasing support for secondary school leaders.

Another important enabler (or barrier) identified for schools developing as learning organisations were assessment, evaluation and accountability arrangements. Major improvements can be achieved when schools and school systems increase their collective capacity to engage in ongoing “assessment for learning”, and regularly evaluate their interventions.

At the time of finalising this study of Wales’ assessment, evaluation and accountability arrangements were currently undergoing review; this process is still ongoing in 2019. This review is essential, as these arrangements lacked coherence and were driven by accountability demands, rather than serving the purpose of learning and improvement. As a result, they did little to encourage schools to engage in enquiry, innovation and exploration and develop as SLOs more generally – a particular area for improvement for many schools in Wales.

The OECD suggested the Welsh government continue the review of its assessment, evaluation and accountability arrangements by:

- **Developing national criteria for guiding school self-evaluations and Estyn inspections/external evaluations.** These criteria or quality indicators should promote Wales’ SLO model, monitor student learning and well-being across the curriculum, and recognise staff learning needs and their well-being in staff development plans. These and potentially other criteria should encourage schools to assess their own strengths and priorities for improvement.
- **Promoting a participatory self-evaluation process.** Peer reviews among schools should complement this process.
- **Using Estyn evaluations for safeguarding school quality,** while focusing more on the rigour of self-evaluation processes.
- **Providing clarity to schools and other stakeholders on the transition to the new system of school self-evaluation and Estyn evaluations.**

- **Refining performance measures to go beyond the key subjects of English/Welsh, mathematics and science** – also in the transition period. The Welsh government could consider performance measures (indicators) on student well-being and staff well-being to align assessment, evaluation and accountability with the ambitions of the new curriculum and Wales’ SLO model. National monitoring of student learning and well-being should be informed by a rolling programme of sample-based assessments and Estyn reports, as well as research.

Developing a coherent implementation plan

At the time of finalising this study, work had started on the development of an SLO implementation plan intended to form an integrated part of a larger reform effort. Several activities had been undertaken already, were planned or were ongoing, that should be part of this plan:

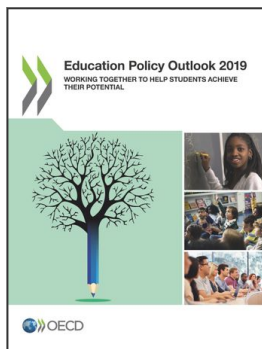
- The objective to develop all schools and other parts of the system into learning organisations was included in the education strategic action plan, “Education in Wales: Our National Mission” (September 2017) (Government of Wales, 2017_[11]).
- Wales’ SLO model was co-constructed and released in November 2017.
- The SLO model was integrated into leadership development programmes (autumn 2018).
- The school self-evaluation and development planning toolkit was developed, in which the model is likely to be integrated (started in May 2018).
- An online SLO self-assessment survey will be free for school staff to use (scheduled to be launched in May 2019).
- In addition, the Welsh government’s Education Directorate and several middle-tier organisations have committed themselves to develop as learning organisations.

The OECD provided several recommendations to strengthen the implementation of Wales’ SLO model.

- **Developing and putting into practice a national SLO implementation plan:** The SLO Implementation Group should lead the development and realisation of a national SLO implementation plan to empower schools across Wales in developing as learning organisations.
- **Setting and monitoring objectives holistically to progress towards the vision:** Wales should ensure that the setting of objectives and monitoring of progress did not become a high-stakes exercise for schools. One option could be to regularly mine the anonymised data that will be collected through the online SLO self-assessment survey.
- **Prioritising the timing and sequencing of actions:** Phasing in actions allows efforts to be focused, bearing in mind schools’ capacity to develop as learning organisations and to realise the new curriculum. One action requiring immediate attention is to clarify the transition period to new approaches to self-evaluation and Estyn evaluations.
- **Strengthening the communication and engagement strategy:** Wales should establish a clear communications and engagement strategy with all stakeholders so as to share the SLO narrative widely and guide and support schools in their development.

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