

## Central South Consortium

### Report for Joint Committee

#### A School to School Model

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#### Purpose of the report

1. At its last meeting the Joint Committee set out their interest in bringing in a very experienced, credible leader of school improvement systems to kick start some school to school work across the region.
2. Prof Mel Ainscow led the Manchester Challenge and was previously an academic and Head. He has been working with a small group of heads in the region to develop a proposal to build school to school system wide improvement capacity across the region.
3. This report covers his draft proposal paper which is for comment and development with local authority colleagues and schools.

#### Summary

4. The paper speaks for itself in setting out the evidence base behind the most successful school led systems work which has taken place predominantly in England. The evidence base is robust on a school led system being the most sustainable form of school improvement. However the delivery and development of proposals, the behaviours and modelling of a school led approach and the corresponding implications for the role of the local authority, and, in Wales, the consortia, are significant and critical to the success of the model.
5. A small group of heads, selected by Directors, have worked with Mel to develop this approach. They are enthusiastic about the approach but would make the following points:
  - a. It's important to get the 'authorising environment' clear between and across schools in introducing and developing this model so that there is transparency about who is leading the model, and how they are engaging all schools;
  - b. It will be important to resource this project properly, with 'seed funding' in the short term to develop proposals which will build practice development and be a resource for improvement and as a way of diverting the major resources around leadership and teacher development in the longer term;
  - c. If the plan is to work it needs to be the 'only plan' i.e. it needs to divert and shape both national and regional initiatives to be coherent and in support of the ambitions of a self improving system;
  - d. The school system in Wales is less used to autonomy and self-improvement than in England and we should be cautious about expectations, behaviour and capacity whilst this model is developing;
  - e. It is very important that the wider parts of the system are adjusted to support this – the role of the consortium in facilitating and brokering the system, that of the local authority in commissioning and holding to account schools for the improvement work that takes place.

- f. Critically it is important that there remains from the local authority and through it, consortium, a focus on the most vulnerable schools, with challenge, support and intervention in place as appropriate.

### **Recommendations**

6. This paper is intended to share progress so far and outline the direction of travel. It is subject to further discussion with directors and schools but we would hope to be in a position to give the approach a 'soft launch' in late January at events to include all schools in the region.