



# Complete Agenda

Democracy Services  
Swyddfa'r Cyngor  
CAERNARFON  
Gwynedd  
LL55 1SH

Meeting

**EDUCATION AND ECONOMY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Date and Time

**10.30 am, THURSDAY, 8TH DECEMBER, 2022**

Location

**Multi-location Meeting  
Siambwr Hywel Dda, Council Offices, Caernarfon /  
Virtually on Zoom**

**\* NOTE**

**This meeting will be webcast**

**[https://gwynedd.public-i.tv/core//en\\_GB/portal/home](https://gwynedd.public-i.tv/core//en_GB/portal/home)**

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(DISTRIBUTED 30/11/22)

# **EDUCATION AND ECONOMY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

## **MEMBERSHIP (18)**

### **Plaid Cymru (12)**

#### Councillors

Jina Gwyrfai  
Elin Hywel  
Dewi Jones  
Olaf Cai Larsen  
Huw Rowlands  
Rhys Tudur

Iwan Huws  
Dawn Lynne Jones  
Gareth Tudor Jones  
Gwynfor Owen  
Paul John Rowlinson  
Sasha Williams

### **Independent (6)**

#### Councillors

Louise Hughes  
Beth Lawton  
Richard Glyn Roberts

Gwilym Jones  
Dewi Owen  
Gruffydd Williams

### **Ex-officio Members**

Chair and Vice-Chair of the Council

## **CO-OPTED MEMBERS:**

### **With a vote on education matters only**

[vacant seat]	Church in Wales
Colette Owen	The Catholic Church
Ruth Roe	Meirionnydd Parent/Governors Representative
Karen Vaughan Jones	Dwyfor Parent/Governors' Representative
Manon Williams	Arfon Parent/Governors' Representative

### **Without a Vote**

Roger Vaughan	UCAC
Dylan Huw Jones	NASUWT

# AGENDA

## 1. APOLOGIES

To receive any apologies for absence.

## 2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

To receive any declarations of personal interest.

## 3. URGENT BUSINESS

To note any items that are a matter of urgency in the view of the Chair for consideration.

## 4. MINUTES

6 - 17

The Chair shall propose that the minutes of the previous meeting of this committee held on the 20th of October, 2022 be signed as a true record.

## 5. PROGRESS REPORT - KEEPING THE BENEFIT LOCAL

18 - 25

**Cabinet Member – Councillor Menna Jones**

To consider a report on the above.

\*10.30am – 11.30am

## 6. FREE SCHOOL MEALS PROJECT

26 - 30

**Cabinet Member – Councillor Beca Brown**

To consider a report on the above.

\*11.30am – 12.00pm

\*LUNCH BREAK – 12.00pm – 12.45pm

## 7. EDUCATION ANNUAL REPORTS

\*12.45pm – 1.45pm

*\*Estimated times*

## (A) EDUCATION ANNUAL REPORT 2021-22

31 - 64

**Cabinet Member – Councillor Beca Brown**

To consider a report on the above.

**(B) GWE ANNUAL REPORT 2021-22**

65 - 194

To consider a report on the above.

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## EDUCATION AND ECONOMY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 20/10/22

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**Present:** Councillor Beth Lawton (Chair)  
Councillor Cai Larsen (Vice-chair)

**Councillors:** Jina Gwyrfai, Louise Hughes, Iwan Huws, Dawn Lynne Jones, Dewi Jones, Gareth Tudor Jones, Gwilym Jones, Dewi Owen, Gwynfor Owen, Richard Glyn Roberts, Huw Llwyd Rowlands, Paul Rowlinson, Rhys Tudur, Gruffydd Williams and Sasha Williams.

**Officers present:** Vera Jones (Democracy and Language Services Manager), Bethan Adams (Scrutiny Adviser) and Eirian Roberts (Democracy Services Officer).

**Co-opted Members:** Colette Owen (The Catholic Church), Manon Williams (Arfon Parent/Governor Representative) and Roger Vaughan (UCAC).

**Present for item 5:** Councillor Beca Brown (Cabinet Member for Education), Garem Jackson (Head of Education Department), Arwyn Thomas (Managing Director, GwE), Iwan Evans (Monitoring Officer), Debbie Anne Jones (Education Corporate Services Manager) and Gwyn Tudur (Gwynedd Secondary Education Officer).

**Present for item 6:** Councillor Beca Brown (Cabinet Member for Education), Garem Jackson (Head of Education Department), Arwyn Thomas (Managing Director, GwE), Geraint Evans (Core Leader - Primary - GwE) and Ellen Williams (Core Leader - Secondary - GwE) and Gwyn Tudur (Gwynedd Secondary Education Officer).

**Present for item 7:** Geraint Owen (Corporate Director) and Sian Myrddin Gwent (Ffordd Gwynedd Adviser).

The Chair thanked two former members of this Committee, Councillors Elwyn Jones and John Pughe Roberts, for their contribution, and welcomed two new members onto the Committee, Councillors Louise Hughes and Gruffydd Williams. She also thanked Dilwyn Elis Hughes for his service as a co-opted member of the Committee, and welcomed Roger Vaughan, as the new UCAC representative.

### 1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillor Elin Hywel, Ruth Roe (Meirionnydd Parent/Governor Representative), Karen Vaughan Jones (Dwyfor Parent/Governor Representative), and Councillor Menna Jones (Cabinet Member for Corporate Support).

### 2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

No declarations of personal interest were received.

### 3. URGENT ITEMS

None to note.

### 4. MINUTES

The Chair signed the minutes of the previous meeting of this committee held on 14 July 2022 as a true record.

## 5. RELATIONSHIPS AND SEXUALITY EDUCATION

The Cabinet Member and officers from the Education Department and GwE were welcomed to the meeting.

The report of the Cabinet Member for Education was presented in response to a request from the Committee members for an opportunity to examine in more detail relationships and sexuality education, which was a mandatory element of the Curriculum for Wales Framework from September 2022. It was explained that this element had been mandatory in all primary schools in the county since September 2022, and in six of the secondary schools that had chosen to introduce the curriculum to Year 7 in September 2022.

The Cabinet Member set out the context for the report, noting the following:

- That it was early days on the journey of the Relationships and Sexuality Education Code, but that the feedback from the schools had been good and that positive communication had been taking place between schools and parents.
- That she had every faith in the profession to deliver this pluralistic and inclusive education that was appropriate for the child's development, as well as the child's age.
- That she was extremely proud that children were going to receive an education that would keep them safe and happy as they went through life.
- That the Code had received a great deal of attention, and that she had received a lot of correspondence from victims of sexual abuse who were now adults, from parents of victims and from people who worked with victims, all of whom said that they were so glad to see this education being formalised.
- That she very much hoped that this education went a long way towards ensuring that no child would be bullied and insulted for being different from what was regarded as the norm, and that was why it was so important that this education was implemented effectively across the county.

The Head of Education reiterated the Cabinet Member's comments, and noted:

- That school headteachers reported that they had received a positive response to the Code from the majority of parents and carers, and that he also had every faith that school leaders and staff dealt with the matter wisely.
- Because the field was presented in a pluralistic way, there are different views presented so that children and young people had the opportunity to come to their own independent opinion based on facts.
- That it was important to note that the Welsh Government had recognised that development or maturity or developmental relevance was at the heart of the curriculum. Therefore, the schools would deliver the education according to their knowledge of their learners in terms of their maturity and their ability to understand and deal with the matter.

The Head then referred to paragraph 4(iii) of the report which stated, *"when developing the Curriculum for Wales, Gwynedd schools will be supported by GwE"*, noting, in terms of correction, and to make the situation clearer, that the six authorities across the north had commissioned an individual to collaborate with the Healthy Schools movement in order to support schools in this field, and that GwE's Supporting Improvement Advisers were in the process of supporting all the schools to follow the Code.

Members were given an opportunity to ask questions and offer observations. The following matters were raised by individual members:

- It was asked whether it would be possible, in due course, to have input from headteachers and teachers, and possibly parents, by means of a questionnaire, in order to see how

satisfied they were with the new arrangements. In response, the Head of Education noted that a short report could be brought to the members conveying this, after a fairly considerable period of implementing the new curriculum.

- In response to a comment that it was not believed that the new framework was fundamentally different to the way personal education had been taught in the past, the Head of Education stated that this was exactly the comment that came from the profession. What is different, probably, is that the framework is presented cross-curricularly across the areas of learning and experience, and that it is a move that further strengthens children's ability to understand what a healthy relationship is, to understand the boundaries and to understand what was acceptable to them personally, so that this enabled them to make choices in terms of relationships and to safeguard themselves. It was also noted that the Children's Commissioner's Office and the NSPCC had welcomed this move and the advent of the new curriculum.
- It was noted that this matter polarised people. On the one hand, the Department reported that the response had been positive, but there was a group of parents who were dissatisfied. It was also understood that there were teachers who were extremely nervous about the new arrangements, and were asking for more training, and it was asked whether there was an intention to discover their views on the matter too. The importance of gathering negative evidence, as well as positive evidence, was emphasised in order to maintain a balance, and it was also suggested that the implementation of the Code in the schools needed to be scrutinised before, rather than after, the academic year ended. In response, the Head of Education noted that the Department had been finding out the opinion of headteachers on the matter, and that those headteachers represented and voiced the opinions of the staff in their schools. While fully accepting that this field had been the focus of attention, it was noted that some of it was based on a lack of knowledge, and that the reaction the schools got was that parents and staff in general welcomed the new curriculum. It was also confirmed that arrangements were underway to conduct training sessions in this field as in any other curriculum area.
- In response to a question, the Head of Education confirmed that consideration could be given to how the Department and the Council would be able to disseminate some of the positive evidence to the outside world.
- In response to a question, the Head of Education confirmed that no concerns had become evident since starting to implement the new curriculum, and that what had appeared on social media did not in any way reflect the general opinion.

A member expressed her concern about the Code, and noted:

- That the parents were the main legal guardians of their children, and that this right was being blurred here.
- That the law states that no one under the age of 13 could ever give legal consent to any kind of sexual activity.
- Were parents entitled to withdraw their children from Relationships and Sexuality Education lessons?
- Was it appropriate to discuss sexuality with very young children?
- Why change from sex education to sexuality education?
- That the authors of the document were Professor E. J. Renold from Cardiff University and her colleague, Ester McGeeney, and that the development of the document was entirely based on the research work of only the two of them, using fewer than 10 of their own articles and books to justify the document Relationships and Sexuality Education. Was this, then, ethical evidence?
- That the report stated that there was firm evidence - but where was that evidence?
- That the committee could not scrutinise something that was yet to be presented, and we had the right to question the Welsh Government on this.
- That every parent of every child in Gwynedd schools was a stakeholder, and that the Authority was being arrogant in dismissing parents' real concerns as misinformation on the basis that they did not agree with what the Government said was the truth.



- That all of us had the right to protect our children from inappropriate sexual material, and that parents knew their children best.
- That it was difficult to understand why people were so willing to accept this.
- That we could not ignore the protestations coming from Scotland and England.
- Our teachers were not qualified to teach sexuality education.
- That this challenged all the western family culture that was inherent to us, and we had a duty to scrutinise this thoroughly and extensively before it was too late.
- That the objectors could not be dismissed as extremists - they were parents who were very concerned about the welfare of their children.

In response to the comments, the Head of Education noted:

- That the comments were not representative of what was happening in the schools according to his interpretation of the Code.
- That it was correct to say that Senedd Cymru had legislated to remove the right for parents and carers to exclude their children from the curriculum, and Gwynedd, as an Authority, was subject to a mandatory code or statutory curriculum as presented by the Government.
- That the Welsh Government had consulted widely before introducing the curriculum to our schools, and our role as an Authority and the school support service was to ensure that our schools were ready to implement it.

The member asked whether children had the ability to make moral decisions about their sexual behaviour, and whether the Head would agree that this completely undermined the safeguarding of children. The member also noted that it was essential to introduce age-related regulations in order to safeguard children from potential sexual abuse.

In an attempt to alleviate the concerns, the Managing Director of GwE gave a detailed explanation of the support given to schools, putting this part of the curriculum within its wider context.

The Chair asked what resources were available to schools. In response, the Managing Director of GwE noted that the Cross-regional Group looking at this had emphasised the need to make sure that the resources were appropriate. They were not looking for the extreme poles in the discussion, instead they were drawing together a list of resources which, in their professional opinion, were suitable for our pupils across the north. That list could then be shared at school level, and it was then a matter for the school to decide whether those resources were relevant to the school's context. He further noted that he had asked the Group to consider whether they could see gaps in resources in some fields, and if so, how best to meet that. He also noted that thorough information about the resources would be included on the Group's list in due course, and that it could be arranged for that information to be available to members of the scrutiny committee too.

A member noted that he too was completely unhappy with the direction in which the Council was taking the schools with this, stating:

- Were the training courses funded through Stonewall the only training received in this field?
- That the expertise of the person primarily responsible for drawing up the Code, namely Professor E. J. Renold, was '*Posthumanism*' and '*Queer Theory*', and that it was terrible to think that we were considering getting rid of Christian ideology, which had been attached to these areas for almost 2000 years, and replacing it by introducing this baseless ideology, which was being pushed forward by Stonewall and by the Welsh Government.
- That this ideology was highly dangerous for our children, and that when a small child told a teacher that he/she was being abused, using the type of terminology presented as part of this education would not manifest anything. Training was needed so that the teachers could pick up on this, instead of pushing the agenda of transgenderism and gender neutrality, and consequently changing the face of our society through the schools.

- What we would end up discharging from schools would be people who do not owe anything to their parents, or to the state, and that was the ideology that was being pushed forward here.
- It was said that development or maturity or developmental relevance was at the heart of the curriculum, but by misinterpreting that, there were horrendous implications that could affect children for the rest of their lives, and we only had to look at what happened in Tavistock to see the impact of that, with thousands of children butchered in the name of the very ideology that was being driven forward here by our officers and some of the members.
- That the Welsh Government was undermining Article 9 of the Human Rights Act by removing parents' right to withdraw their children from sex education if it was going to impact on their religion or beliefs.
- That 16 was the age of consent, but not according to what was being pushed onto the schools, and the sources that teachers were expected to use were going to lead to the sexualisation of young children.

The Monitoring Officer noted, on a point of propriety, that comparatively serious allegations had been made regarding the nature of the curriculum, along with an implication that comparatively serious and inappropriate elements arose from the implementation of the curriculum, and he reminded the members of their responsibility under the Code of Conduct not to bring the Authority and schools into disrepute without foundation. In response, the member stated that all the evidence was available regarding the nature and background of the research work behind the education curriculum, and that the members did not have the opportunity to discuss the evidence base as the Chair had told him that it was not appropriate to speak about that at this meeting. He further noted that he had not accused any headteacher, and that all he had said was that they needed the necessary education and training to deal with the extremely complex issues that they would be encountering.

The Monitoring Officer again reminded the members of their responsibility under the Code. In response, the member noted that following the introduction of the Code in Scotland, an increase of 1,600% had been witnessed in the cases of children going for treatment relating to transgenderism, and that therefore it resulted directly from the education system.

In response to the member's observations, the Head of Education noted:

- That it would be ensured that the training was appropriate for the staff, as with any other field.
- That this was part of the Curriculum for Wales, not part of the curriculum for Scotland or England.
- That the curriculum stood alone on the basis of research in Wales, and had received the seal of approval of several organisations.
- That what was at the heart of the curriculum was that children received information and made their own choices, based on pluralistic opinions.
- That the schools knew that it was appropriate for them to teach and discuss with children in accordance with their level of maturity.

A member noted:

- That he completely agreed with the Cabinet Member's comments in a recent magazine, which stated *"If we as schools do not give our children appropriate sex education, the pornography industry will step into the gap and what they will learn through that will not be suitable for their age, nor will it be presented within the context of a healthy, equal and happy relationship. Appropriate sex education is an important step towards creating empathetic, respectful, fair, resilient and inclusive and kind citizens."*
- That the key stakeholders in relation to this matter, namely the Welsh Government, Healthy Schools, the NSPCC and the Children's Commissioner's Office, were all supportive of the Code. The vast majority of teachers were also supportive, and it was assumed that the

pupil councils in the schools had also voiced their opinions, and that they were also firmly in favour of the Code.

- That it was recognised that the topic was a complex one, which polarised people, and that parents' fears needed to be allayed, instead of people relying on sweeping statements on social media. Therefore, it was suggested that the Education Department should send a general letter, on behalf of the headteachers, to all parents in an attempt to allay the real fears and nervousness that many parents had. In response, the Head of Education indicated that this was certainly something that could be discussed with the headteachers. The Managing Director of GwE corroborated the comment, stating that the Cross-regional Group had drawn up a leaflet to that effect to be adapted locally, and that the Department and GwE had the information to be shared.

A member noted:

- Until recently, that all the child protection organisations, including the NSPCC and the police, accepted that it was not appropriate for unfamiliar adults to have conversations with children about sexuality, but that this research had changed their opinion.
- Did the Head of Education believe that it was appropriate to talk to young children about sex and sexuality, bearing in mind that the author of the document challenged the concept of childhood innocence?
- That this was consistently recognised as a grooming technique that placed children at risk of being exploited by adults.

The Chair asked the member to quieten down, and the Monitoring Officer noted that he was not sure where this point was going in terms of context, as it referred to child abuse techniques within a criminal context.

For the sake of clarity, the Managing Director of GwE noted that there was a need to separate two things here, namely the curriculum, which offered age-appropriate education for children, and abuse, which had a completely clear and specific path.

A member noted:

- That they did not agree with the comment in the report that it was premature to scrutinise our schools' provision in this field, because, if the provision was to be presented, then there were schemes of work available, together with resources and teacher training, and perhaps it should be noted in the general letter to parents that there would be a task group scrutinising the matter.
- Why ask for the opinion of this meeting, when the members could not see the resources that were already being presented?

The Chair suggested that a request could be made to establish a task group to look at what was actually happening in our schools.

The UCAC representative was asked for his opinion regarding a defence for teachers should some parents complain that the education was inappropriate for their children. In response, it was noted that it was important that the content of any lesson was carefully discussed, and that it was expected that a discussion would take place between teacher and headteacher on the basis of their knowledge of the children, and therefore that it was hoped that this situation would not arise.

A member noted that he would be more comfortable seeing sex education taught in personal and social education lessons on the one hand, and in biology lessons on the other.

In response to a member's request for comments regarding teaching the field cross-curricularly, the Head of Education stated that the essence of the curriculum was that the content was taught across the areas of learning and experience, but in reality, our school leaders and the teachers would know in which area it would be most appropriate to present this type of curriculum. However, the 'relationships' element, for example, could arise in History lessons in order to explain how attitudes have changed over the last decades and centuries. The Managing Director of GwE added that, in terms of provision, it was possible to bring in external people to support specific themes and that the way to meet the requirements of the Code depended on the availability of the expertise within the school, and also the learning model the school wanted to adopt for the local curriculum. Therefore, it would not be one model of presentation, but a model that would be suitable for each school as they saw best.

The member further noted:

- That the tendency of new elements, when presented in a new way, was that they had the ability to take over, and that it would not be desirable to see this field arising in every lesson.
- Although it was fair to refer to ideologies, the essence of the education should be rooted in the basic undeniable biological facts.

In response, the Head of Education noted:

- That a healthy relationship took priority.
- That what was at the heart of the curriculum was the pluralistic element, i.e. that one view/tendency did not dominate another, and that different views were presented so that children and young people had the opportunity to reach their own independent opinion based on facts.

The member suggested that that could be explained clearly, with examples, in the general letter to parents.

In response to a question from a member regarding the response of the governing bodies, the Head of Education stated that there had not been a general audit at this point with the governing bodies, but that it was clear from the discussions with the headteachers that those discussions were ongoing. Also, in cases where schools had received a request, or decided with members of the governing bodies, to explain the new curriculum in its entirety to parents, that had been welcomed.

A member asked how we could protect our children if the curriculum was being changed significantly by the Minister. In response, the Managing Director of GwE noted:

- That all of us, as members, governors and officers, had a responsibility to protect that, and where there was real concern, that there were forums to have those discussions, regardless of the Minister's rights.
- Although the curriculum framework was set centrally by the Government, the difference between a national curriculum and this curriculum was that this curriculum was delivered locally, and therefore there was a responsibility on the school's leadership and the governors to make sure that the content was age-appropriate and appropriate to the maturity of the pupils.

After the Chair stated that she would bring the discussion to a close, the Head of Education noted:

- That following the discussion at this meeting, he wished to have a definition of what exactly the members wished to have scrutinised again, and that this was appropriate as we looked at what was happening in the schools.

- That the schools and governing bodies looked at how to present the new curriculum in accordance with the conditions and circumstances that were local to them, and it was also crucial for the members to consider that.
- As there were differences in how the work was done from one place to another, in relation to the context of children's maturity, etc., it was important to have the definition in order to be able to prepare appropriately for the scrutinisers.

A member noted that the committee had discussed this matter blindly, and as concern had been expressed about resources, it was suggested that the members should receive a very extensive selection of resources the next time the matter was scrutinised, as this was bound to be reassuring.

A member asked whether it was intended to use individual learning plans for the relationships and sexuality education. In response, the Head of Education noted:

- That if there were children open to the special education service, and that the requirements needed to be tailored to them, he was confident that the schools would act accordingly.
- That what was at the heart of this was a strong recognition in our schools of where the children were in terms of their ability and maturity to deal with issues like this maturely, sensitively and intelligently, and that he was confident that the staff knew their children well enough to get this right.

The member noted that it was important to include that too in the general letter to parents.

In her closing comments, the Cabinet Member noted:

- That it was asked why it was necessary to mention sexuality to young children, and that she wished to remind people that there were children in Gwynedd with two mothers, two fathers, a transgender parent, or brothers/sisters who were gay, or transgender.
- That all children were entitled to have themselves and their family reflected in education and educational materials, so that they grew up knowing that they themselves and their family were completely normal.

A registered vote was called for on a motion to accept the report and to note the observations, and to re-scrutinise the matter when appropriate.

According to Procedural Rules, the following vote on the motion was recorded:

In favour	15	Councillors Iwan Huws, Dawn Lynne Jones, Dewi Jones, Gareth Tudor Jones, Gwilym Jones, Cai Larsen, Beth Lawton, Dewi Owen, Gwynfor Owen, Richard Glyn Roberts, Huw Llwyd Rowlands, Paul Rowlinson and Sasha Williams. Co-opted Members: Colette Owen and Manon Williams
Against	3	Councillors Jina Gwyrfai, Louise Hughes and Gruffydd Williams.
Abstentions	1	Councillor Rhys Tudur

**RESOLVED to accept the report and note the observations, and to re-scrutinise the matter when appropriate.**

## 6. PROGRESS REPORT ON THE REFORM JOURNEY IN GWYNEDD SCHOOLS

The progress report of the Cabinet Member for Education was submitted at the request of this Committee, on the preparations of Gwynedd schools for Curriculum for Wales work.

Representatives from GwE were welcomed to the meeting.

Members were given an opportunity to ask questions and offer observations.

Individual members submitted the following observations:

- That it was encouraging to see that all Gwynedd schools ensured that the promotion of the Welsh language and the culture and heritage of Wales was clearly woven into the design of the curriculum.
- That it was essential that we did not lose sight of the importance of the traditional academic disciplines, which were essential in order to ensure fairness in society.
- That it was essential to ensure consistency in standards from school to school in order to ensure fairness, not only between communities, but also at the level of the individual pupil.
- That one page of the report, in particular, was full of references to 'a few', 'many' or 'some' schools, which was completely meaningless without the table, and that the relevant percentages should be included in each case.
- That the new curriculum was welcomed, but that the shortage of staff, especially assistants, was a huge problem.

In response to the observations and questions from members, it was noted:

- That in terms of the training arrangements, a programme was being created, cross-regionally and across Wales, in order to set the framework in terms of curriculum design, taking into account the vision, values and type of local behaviour a school or a local community aspires to, around the four purposes. GwE had been working closely with Professor Graham Donaldson and had created a regional network and local and specific networks in Gwynedd looking at areas of learning and experience individually, and then age-appropriately in relation to the areas of learning and experience. Then, a series of clusters had been created and a series of leagues, and the training permeated down to the level of the clusters. It was also important to note, as the menu progressed, that schools learned from each other and shared experiences.
- That assessment and progression were the greatest challenges for the profession. There was now a much more holistic picture of the child, as well as the academic aspect. Models and systems were created to share with the schools, especially in terms of formative assessment, and work was also underway in terms of the primary/secondary transition in the context of the local curriculum. It was further noted that one of our most important weapons in the wake of the development of the new curriculum would be the clear focus on a local/area curriculum, and it was believed that this was a means of strengthening the transition in a way that was relevant to a curriculum that truly reflected local requirements. It was also believed that it could help remove the perception by some that a period of education ended at the end of year 6, and another period started in year 7.
- That in relation to promoting Welsh culture across the schools, the Curriculum for Wales was a Welsh curriculum, and a curriculum that increasingly upheld and developed the Welsh language. Therefore, those elements were included in the training offer in different ways, and it was noted that GwE would be happy to report back on that to the committee.
- Regarding the intention of most schools to assess and track children's well-being as well as their attitude towards their work, and the fact that there was no single approach/resource available for that, and also the need to further develop the whole school well-being priority, including the development and evaluation of the health and well-being area of learning and experience, it was noted that we were in an unprecedented period for several reasons. Significant changes had been witnessed in the field of education, and it was believed that no one fully realised the impact of the last two years, not only on the children and young people, but also on the adults who teach in the schools. The pupil's voice was important in the midst of all this, but the profession and those supporting the profession had a role to play to mature and gather information as to what exactly was meant by well-being, and making things too generic could mean that it was possible to miss the focus and heart of well-being in a school. It was noted that the attitude of children and young people towards education and schools, especially in the more deprived areas, had become more challenging and needy in nature in the last two years. GwE was working and receiving advice from university leaders on

determining exactly what the needs were locally, and how to meet those needs. We didn't have the answers at the moment, but it was believed that we would have to look back on this period in due course in order to be able to see exactly what the impact had been on children and young people.

- Although there was one brief reference in the report to numeracy and literacy, that the basic skills - literacy, numeracy and digital competence, as well as the well-being of children and young people, were at the core of the curriculum from primary age to 16 years of age. It was noted that GwE would be happy to report back in full to the committee on the provision and support that schools receive in these fields.
- That the classroom assistants had not been included in the areas that needed further development, but it was emphasised that they were key people in our schools who supported front-line teaching in the classrooms. They also had to understand the framework, content and purpose of the curriculum, and be part of any professional development in their local school and local cluster.
- In terms of fairness for individual pupils with regard to academic attainment, especially those from less privileged backgrounds who were less likely to have private lessons, etc., it was noted that there had been an attempt for several years now to move away from categorising and labelling schools. Schools used to be measured very crudely according to the percentage of pupils who gained grades A\* to C in their GCSEs, but a large percentage of the children did not reach this threshold. It was suggested that some schools had narrowed their curriculum far too early, in order to reach the threshold, at the expense of wider experience for the range of children, and it was believed that maintaining the breadth of the curriculum would be a challenge in the secondary sector. As it was not yet clear what the qualifications would look like by 2025, when the new curriculum would reach Year 10, this hampered the schools' plans a little, but it was possible to be quite clear that the GCSE brand and subject disciplines would remain.
- In relation to consistency of standards between schools, it was noted that collaboration between the schools was encouraged, as this was a means of eliminating the competitive element, as well as sharing workload and expertise. In the new Accountability Framework, each school had a responsibility to report to its governors and parents annually on the effectiveness of the curriculum, and how good it was for the experiences of individual pupils. As part of that process, there would be peer moderation on the type of report as envisaged in the proposed document and the guidance that would be in place. It was noted that Professor Donaldson had stated at a recent conference that a child who was happy and learning was a good indicator of the success of the curriculum, but it was probably necessary then to consider what contributed to this happiness and learning, how to capture those two things and how the schools contributed to whatever were the corporate aims, which were much more holistic in nature. This was probably a discussion for the Cabinet Member for Education and the Head of Education, in terms of what constituted a successful education system in Gwynedd.
- With regard to the local aspects of the curriculum, it was explained that there was no complete flexibility in relation to this, and that there were clear mandatory elements in the curriculum. It was also suggested that it might be beneficial to hold a workshop with a few schools in order to show how they implemented the proposed curriculum, thereby alleviating some of the concerns that some schools were disregarding the core elements by focusing on everything else.
- In terms of equality for all and access to the same experiences, it was noted that the curriculum was being presented during an unprecedented period in terms of the current cost of living crisis, etc., and that poverty and equality were never as simple as looking at financial poverty. There was also rural poverty and poverty in the experiences that children and young people received, and it was noted that the Cabinet Member for Education was keen to lead on work with the schools in terms of defining education and well-being and balanced experiences, so that children and young people and families were not excluded on the basis of poverty or any other social aspect. The Cabinet Member corroborated this comment by stating that extensive discussions had been held within the Department regarding the true cost of sending children to school, not just the financial cost, but also the cost in terms of well-being, both emotionally and psychologically. She explained that children would not

leave school with the desired outcomes without being happy in their own skin and having attended school on the same terms as everyone else.

- That there was some concern that the vocational element was not a full part of the Qualifications Wales consultation on new qualifications. That element lay excessively with external bodies outside Wales, and it was believed that political pressure would need to be applied if we wanted to see a menu that gave everyone Welsh-based qualifications. Otherwise, there was a risk of creating a two-tier system once again, and the career element should be part of the full experience so that the young person could have an uninterrupted path to the world of work or to further education.
- That there were two sides to the debate in terms of combining literature and language as one subject in Welsh and in English. When analysing GCSE results, it could be argued in some places that there was too much teaching of literature, and not enough teaching of the specific linguistic skills. The other side of the debate was that literature enriches the individual, not only in terms of language skills, but also as a person. Getting that balance in specification was going to be interesting, and it was believed that this should form part of the Qualifications Wales consultation. It was suggested that there had been a misconception regarding the changes or new trends in the curriculum, with some believing that placing more focus on skills had been at the expense of knowledge. However, skills and knowledge were combined in the new curriculum, with one enriching the other, and it was believed that this was also relevant in the context of literature and language.
- That it was intended to contribute to the Qualifications Wales consultation, either as a local authority, or jointly across the six regional authorities.
- That recruitment difficulties were a national problem, and not confined to the education field alone. In terms of the shortage of assistants, the schools were often fishing in the same pond for the same people with the same skills set as the children and adults sector and the care sector. It was necessary to consider what could be done to attract more people into the profession, and to retain them once they had been brought in. From talking to people, it seemed that the pay rate was not always responsible for that, but rather the number of hours offered, and the Council needed to be more proactive in this area, thinking outside the box, and perhaps combining jobs across sectors that would create a full-time job worth having that was attractive to people, and a means of keeping them in the profession. It was further noted that it was not believed that we fully realised the impact of the last two years on the profession, and that the pressure due to Covid had been more harrowing than we had realised. A lot of staff turnover was also seen, with 13 out of the 54 secondary schools across the region welcoming a new headteacher in September of this year, and the consequences of that trickling down through the system. It was noted that there were additional challenges in the Welsh-medium sector and that it was important to be able to attract people who were proficiently bilingual and were able to support pupils in both languages. Also, in terms of the special needs sector, we were very pleased in Gwynedd to be able to declare a situation where our special education provision was available to all our children across the continuum through the medium of Welsh, and therefore it was even more important that we were able to attract people who were natural Welsh speakers to support all the sectors.
- That some of the secondary schools that decided to postpone the introduction of the new curriculum until next year would have been in a position to introduce it this September, but they made a strategic and prudent decision to use the extra year to learn more about the curriculum.

**RESOLVED to accept the report and to note the observations.**

## **7. FFORDD GWYNEDD WORKING GROUP REVIEW**

The Corporate Director and the Ffordd Gwynedd Adviser were welcomed to the meeting.

The report of the Cabinet Member for Corporate Support was submitted, presenting the conclusions of the Ffordd Gwynedd Working Group Review based on the responses received to a questionnaire which was circulated to the heads in order to:



- get an overview of how the Ffordd Gwynedd principles have embedded within the departments; and
- enable the development of a Ffordd Gwynedd plan that would ensure appropriate support for the coming three years.

Members were given an opportunity to ask questions and offer observations.

Individual members submitted the following observations:

- The new Tidying Teams were thanked for their commendable work.
- It was noted that there was a desire to see Ffordd Gwynedd working, but that the officers' enthusiasm about how things were going at the moment could not be shared.
- It was stated that understanding the true needs of the customer was central to the report, but if Ffordd Gwynedd was not concerned with that, it served no purpose.
- It was suggested that the report was too general, woolly and vague, e.g. there were several references to '*considerable progress*', '*room for improvement*', etc. but no accompanying definition. Similarly, there was a reference to, e.g. '*some departments/teams*', and it was suggested that the departments that succeeded or underachieved should be named, internally within the Council. The report also stated that teams were working innovatively, but it would be beneficial to know which teams were doing that, and what the good practice was.
- Despite accepting that there was a long way to go, it was suggested that Ffordd Gwynedd, as an ideal, was something to aim for, and the vision was congratulated.
- It was noted that the lack of response from some staff/departments to enquiries from elected members and members of the public was a major problem, and that this needed to be prioritised in the short term, Ffordd Gwynedd or not, naming and shaming those who transgressed.
- It was emphasised that if Ffordd Gwynedd was to work, everyone needed to buy into the culture, and disappointment was expressed that it had not been possible to bring the workforce on board with this, especially on the Highways side.
- It was noted that the principles of Ffordd Gwynedd should be shared with external companies that carried out contracts for the Council.

In response to the observations and questions from members, the Corporate Director noted:

- That he was very disappointed to hear some of the comments, but fully accepted that the members wanted more details, and was more than happy to share the information. He also accepted the point about highlighting where efforts needed to be focused.
- That he and the Chief Executive were working together on a piece of work regarding the lack of prompt response to enquiries from some services, and that steps had already been taken, with the situation now having improved in a number of services where there had been problems in the past. He asked members to get in touch if they had any examples of a lack of response. In response to a further comment regarding this matter, the Director noted that he suspected that the evidence suggested that there was a link between a lack of response to enquiries and a lack of commitment to the principles of Ffordd Gwynedd. In response to a further question regarding the need to monitor the performance of the departments, the Director explained that it was expected that members and the public received acknowledgement of any enquiry within seven days at the latest. The Director was asked to share that document with the members.
- In terms of getting everyone to buy into Ffordd Gwynedd, the Director noted that the Council had not seen the development it would have wished to see across the departments. However, the concept had taken root in some services, with much of that due to the guidance given by heads and managers. He emphasised that it was necessary to secure the commitment to embed the mindset and the culture, and it was necessary to invest time in

the recommended actions in order to identify the false steps that existed within some systems and ensure long-term benefit.

- That the concept rooted in the early days of Ffordd Gwynedd regarded any review of the system or service as something that looked at the service in its entirety. Although there was still room for departmental reviews, however, there had now been a shift towards undertaking an increasing number of less intensive reviews, which addressed individual systems in turn.
- That the role of the two Ffordd Gwynedd Advisers had been key in introducing the new techniques to managers in terms of reviewing services, focusing on workflow and providing advice on how to deal with obstacles. As time progressed, and as Ffordd Gwynedd became further embedded, it was expected that all of this would become a natural part of the managers' work.

**RESOLVED to accept the report and to note the observations.**

**8. EDUCATION AND ECONOMY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FORWARD PROGRAMME 2022-23**

Submitted - the Committee's draft forward work programme for 2022-23 for adoption.

**RESOLVED to adopt the forward programme for 2022-23.**

The meeting commenced at 10.30 am and concluded at 2.00 pm

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**CHAIR**

# Agenda Item 5

<b>COMMITTEE</b>	Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee
<b>TITLE</b>	Progress Report – Keeping the Benefit Local
<b>DATE</b>	8th December, 2022
<b>PROJECT LEADER</b>	Ian Jones, Head of Corporate Support
<b>CABINET MEMBER</b>	Councillor Menna Jones

This report is submitted following the Audit Committee's request for an update on the progress of one of the priority projects within the Council Plan, namely the **Keeping the Benefit Local Project**.

### **Purpose of the project:**

The Council is responsible for purchasing a broad range of goods and services and is eager to seek to ensure that local businesses are able to compete for and win those contracts. This in order to ensure that as much of the Council's expenditure as possible stays in Gwynedd for the benefit of the local economy.

To facilitate this we have introduced new procurement arrangements in the Council since April 2016 and have established specific Teams that are responsible for coordinating procurement activities. We call these procurement arrangements 'Category Management'. These Category Teams focus on Procurement activities in three specific areas, which are i) Environment, ii) People and iii) Corporate. These teams are located within the Highways and Municipal, Adults, and Environment Departments, but they are all supported by the central Procurement Service which is located within the Corporate Support Department.

Over the past two and a half years, in response to the challenges posed by the pandemic, the Category Teams and central Procurement Service have been involved in arrangements for securing supplies of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). The three Category Teams have been a key part of these arrangements and continue to be involved with the purchasing, distribution and stock management aspects. The People Category Team also deals directly with older people's homes and wider social services. This has led to a reduction in the overall Procurement activity over that particular period, which will inevitably affect the project's progress in the short-term.

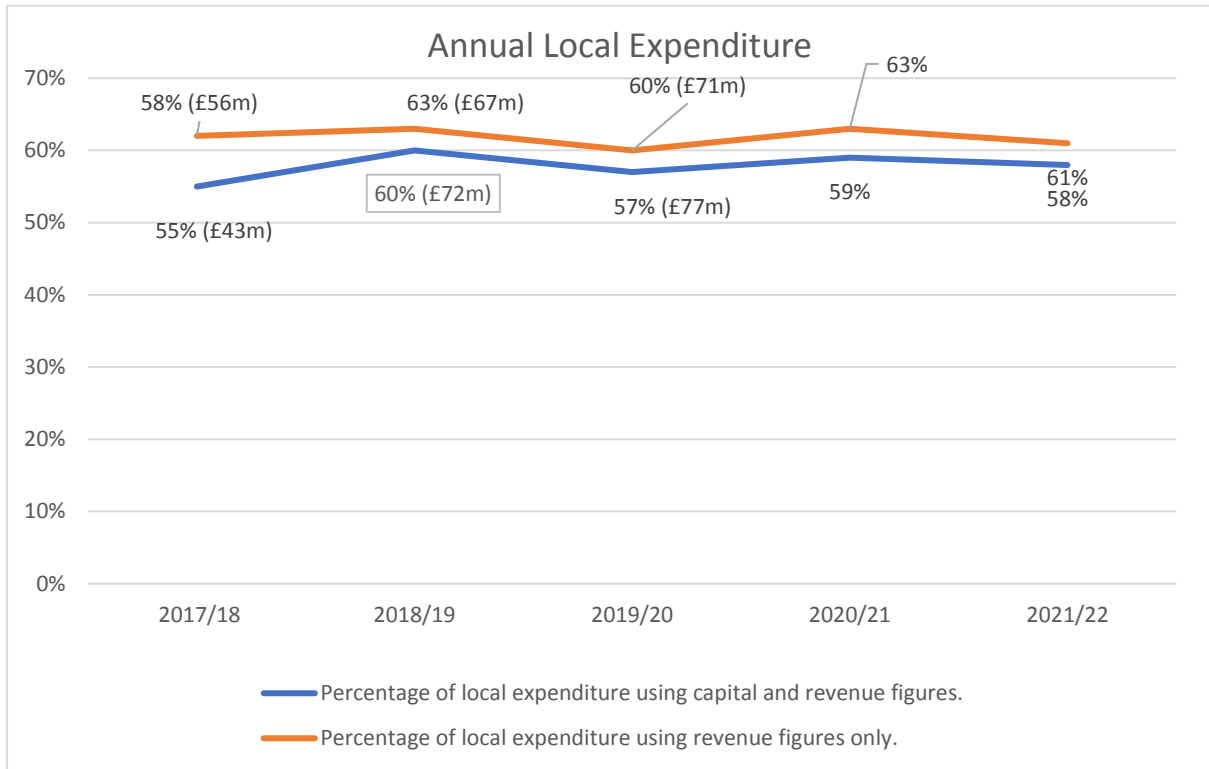
By now, the situation has calmed down, but the need to maintain and distribute PPE continues. The Category Team (H&M) continue to manage the PPE store in Cibyn.

### **Measures of Success: Keeping the Benefit Local:**

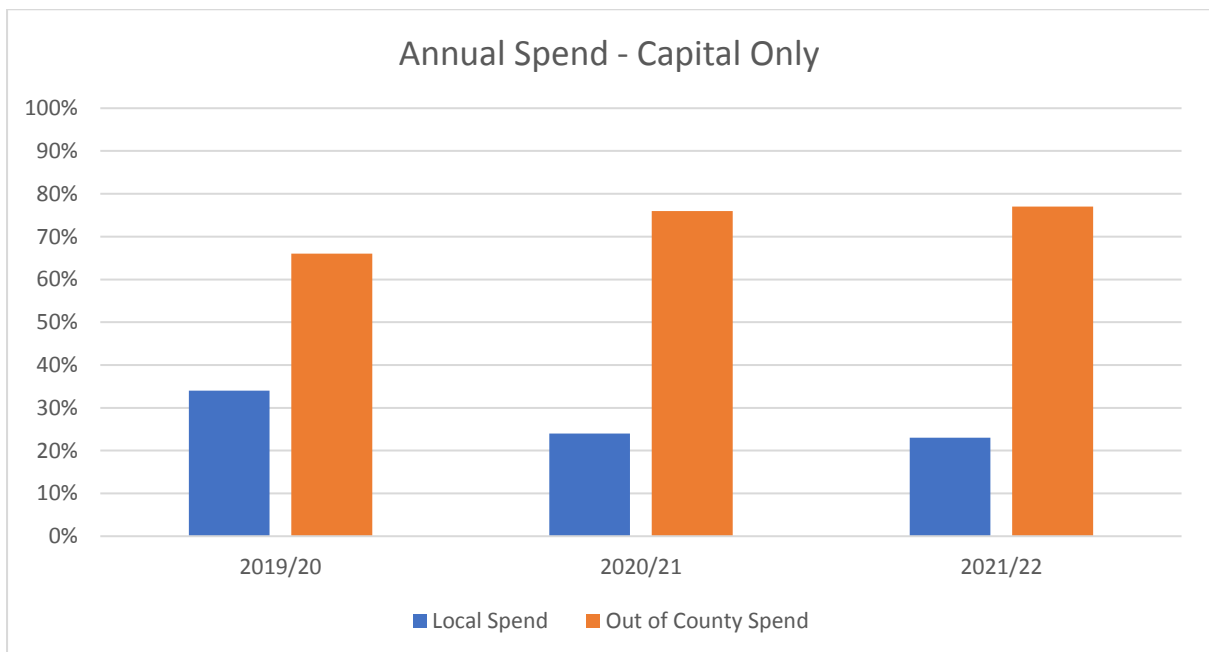
The main measure in order to measure the success of this project is:

- The percentage of local procurement expenditure with businesses within the County (Capital and Revenue Expenditure Plans)

The following graph shows the Council's performance over the last five years:



As can be seen from the above, the percentage has increased by 3% over the period and consequently, our local spending has increased from £56m in 2017/18 to £85m in 2021/22. This is also due to the fact that the total procurement spending has increased from £97m in 2017/18 to £140m in 2021/22.



We see capital spending leaving the County since the majority of local providers do not have the capacity to complete the projects. We see an increase and a reduction in the percentage associated with a competition for building and roads maintenance projects.

In terms of the distribution across the Category Teams, this is illustrated in the following table:

		<b>Local Percentage - Revenue Expenditure only</b>			
<b>Category Team</b>		<b>2018/19</b>	<b>2019/20</b>	<b>2020/21</b>	<b>2021/22</b>
<b>Corporate</b>		59% (£22.8m)	55% (£23.3m)	55% (£24.18m)	57% (£26m)
<b>Environment</b>		40% (£6m)	35% (£5.5m)	38% (£5.46m)	35% (£6.4m)
<b>People</b>		74% (£38.2m)	72% (£42.1m)	71% (£48.36m)	69% (£52.5m)
<b>Total Local Expenditure</b>		£67m	£71m	£78m	£85m

As can be seen from the table, the performance varies according to Category Team, but this is because of the nature of the relevant purchasing categories. For example, the majority of the spending within the People Category Team relates to commissioning a care provision and the majority of the providers are based in Gwynedd. But in the Environment Category Team, there are no local suppliers available of core materials for the Highways and Municipal area of work, therefore the local expenditure is lower as a result.

In order to increase this percentage as high as practically possible, the Department has a range of specific work-streams which, on the whole, contribute towards improving the percentage of procurement local spending.

Below is a summary of these work streams:

### **Market Support Schemes**

There are a range of plans being implemented with the aim of supporting the market to submit tenders for work. These include working alongside the Economy and Community Department to identify what support is needed by local suppliers. At present, the teams provide support by:

- Preparing the market by arranging and holding 'meet the buyer' sessions with a variety of construction, highways, transport and care field contracts.
- Supporting businesses to respond to requirements in tenders as a result of any developments in the field, such as gaining accreditations or responding to the requirements of the Well-being Act, such as reducing its carbon footprint and promoting ethical employment and tendering best practice.
- Raising the market's awareness and understanding of the social value procurement method that the Council is currently developing.

Market participation varies from scheme to scheme, but it is generally very difficult to get the market to commit to taking advantage of all the support that is available.

The local market's frustrations to increase the local percentage is mainly due to the lack of desire, expertise and resource to apply for and deliver the Council's contracts.

## **An illustration of the local market**

We have been able to complete an analysis of the type of businesses that exist within the County.

Our main employers include:

- Public Sector (Council, Health Board, Further Education)
- Supermarket and Food Sector
- Tourism Sector

The sectors with the highest number of local businesses include:

- Agriculture
- Construction
- Accommodation and Food

Our intention is to undertake this type of analysis to see whether a pattern emerges over a period of time and whether this endangers the supply risk or identifies further opportunities to buy more locally.

## **Expenditure that leaves the County**

From our analysis of the Council's procurement revenue spending, here is an example of the main fields where procurement spending leaves the County.

<b>Category Name</b>	<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>Local Percentage</b>	<b>Expenditure that leaves the County</b>
Adult Residential Care	£32,328,608	62%	<b>£12,303,927</b>
IT Equipment - Software, Hardware, Telecommunications and Repographics	£4,786,740	0.1%	<b>£4,784,125</b>
Children's Residential Care	£ 2,958,533	0%	<b>£2,958,533</b>
Building Maintenance	£6,579,004	70%	<b>£1,939,671</b>
Environment	£2,054,999	12%	<b>£1,807,772</b>
Vehicle Parts	£1,428,219	4%	<b>£1,364,472</b>
Domiciliary Care	£9,787,793	88%	<b>£1,161,843</b>
Road Maintenance	£1,704,474	36%	<b>£1,087,316</b>
Vehicle Fuel	£2,076,238	53%	<b>£966,609</b>
Engineering Consultants	£709,500	14%	<b>£610,833</b>
Civil Engineering	£2,844,435	80%	<b>£575,469</b>
Buildings and Catering	£2,335,073	76%	<b>£571,068</b>
Waste Management - Recycling	£1,246,506	60%	<b>£497,558</b>
Street and Highway Lighting	£ 451,780	0%	<b>£451,780</b>
Equipment Hire	£1,198,279	69%	<b>£368,790</b>

## **Innovative Procurement - Social Value Procurement Model**

This work stream is new and is currently being piloted. The aim is to introduce a new tender assessment methodology throughout the Council in future that will enable the Council to include social benefit for Gwynedd measures as a basis for assessing the tenders.

In practice, this will involve assessing tenders using a combination of price, quality and social benefits. This introduces a new scoring aspect which means that companies are required to identify what benefits they can deliver to the County beyond achieving the core requirements of the contract e.g. companies can offer employment to staff, provide an apprenticeships scheme or provide work experience opportunities etc. It can also include aspects such as a commitment to reduce the environmental impact of the supplied product.

Using the social benefit clause will mean that local companies will have new opportunities to demonstrate their contribution to the local economy if they are awarded a contract by the Council.

The pilot referred to above has now reached a situation where two contracts have been published and awarded. The first contract has been offered to a supplier by using the new methodology. In this case, the value of the contract was calculated as £181k, but the social benefit to Gwynedd was calculated as being £105k.

As a result, the successful company is committed to:

- employ 3 officers who live in Gwynedd,
- hold 4 training sessions for social care students,
- provide 4 weeks of work experience for 2 students,
- offer 20 hours of voluntary time to support local charities,
- commit 2.5 hours per week to further develop the Welsh language skills of the workforce.

The second pilot contract has been completed but the market's response has not been as good as it was with the first pilot. Nevertheless, the successful company has offered a donation of £1,000 to be shared amongst two Food Banks in the County. This has highlighted the need to do further work to encourage and support the market.

The third and final pilot has been published and is currently being evaluated.

Without a doubt, had the Council not included the Social Benefit clause in the tender, these benefits would not have been available for Gwynedd. This is therefore a sign of the possible potential from applying the new methodology across the Council.

We now intend to continue to run the pilot and identify opportunities across the three Procurement Category Teams.

## **Developing New Measures**

We are attempting to expand upon the performance measures to have a comprehensive picture of the impact of our procurement activity. As well as measuring value for money and the local percentage, we have carried out an analysis in accordance with the national formula. Although the formula is based on expenditure, it highlights where the Council is likely to produce the largest amount of carbon as a result of our procurement activities.



Here is the analysis over the past three years:

	<b>2019-20</b>	<b>2020-21</b>	<b>2021-22</b>
<b>Total CO2</b>	40,639 Tonnes	39,959 Tonnes	49,246 Tonnes

<b>Categories with the highest carbon footprint</b>	<b>2019-20</b>	<b>2020-21</b>	<b>2021-22</b>
Domiciliary Care	14,930 Tonnes	17,033 Tonnes	20,771 Tonnes
Transportation (Taxis and Buses)	6,591 Tonnes	5,130 Tonnes	6,431 Tonnes
Maintenance of Buildings and Landscape	4,125 Tonnes	4,050 Tonnes	4,032 Tonnes

The main increase in the CO2 figures in 2021/22 is due to:

- An increase in the costs of the Care services which loads the carbon total. The fields of Residential Care, Nursing Care and Supported Housing have seen the biggest increase.
- An increase in the purchase of public transport and taxis (school transport) and food purchases. These are fields where the Council spent less over the COVID period due to social distancing rules. The increase is also associated with increasing costs.

Other categories with a substantial carbon footprint include Food (2,288 tonnes) and Information Technology Equipment (1,854 tonnes) a year.

### **The next steps**

#### *Market Support Schemes*

- Continue with the range of plans to support local businesses, seeking to assess the impact of this support.
- Analyse the type of businesses that exist within the County and seek to identify opportunities to buy local.

#### *Innovative Procurement - Social Value Procurement Model*

- Complete the third pilot scheme over the winter and note and consider the lessons learnt.
- Present a recommendation to introduce the procedure and operational steps in order to do this in the new year.
- Carry out an assessment of spending fields in order to attempt to identify opportunities to include social measures.

### *Procurement Performance Measures*

- Develop our procurement measures to include economic, environmental and social matters.

### **Conclusion**

Therefore, to summarise, good progress has been made over the past five years in order to increase the percentage of the Council's spending which stays local. However, the last two years have been very challenging and have hindered the Council's ability to further improve that percentage. The work afoot to recover the economy and day-to-day activities means that opportunities will emerge to improve the situation but taking advantage of that will be subject to the Council's ability to offer those opportunities and whether Gwynedd local businesses will be in a position to respond.

# Agenda Item 6

<b>Committee</b>	Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee
<b>Title of Report</b>	Free School Meals Project
<b>Date of meeting</b>	8 December 2022
<b>Relevant Officer</b>	Owen Owens, Senior Manager, Education Resources Service
<b>Relevant Cabinet Member</b>	Councillor Beca Brown

## 1. Background

- 1.1. In December 2021 Jeremy Miles MS, Welsh Government Minister for the Welsh Language and Education, announced that £25m of capital funding would be invested in kitchen and dining infrastructure in Welsh schools as part of plans to introduce free school meals to all primary school children in Wales over the next three years. The policy is part of the co-operation agreement between the Welsh Government and Plaid Cymru. A grant letter was received in February 2022 allocating £1,121,603 of capital funding to fulfil the requirement to extend the right to free school meals to all primary schools in Gwynedd, to be spent by 31 March 2022.
- 1.2. In August 2022, the Minister for the Welsh Language and Education approved an additional £35 million of capital funding to support the work, with a further allocation of £1,570,244 available to Gwynedd.

## 2. Update

- 2.1. Following the original announcement, kitchens and dining spaces in all primary schools in Gwynedd were inspected in order to identify which kitchens required upgrading of their large appliances such as ovens and dishwashers as well as lighter apparatus.
- 2.2. We gathered parents' opinions to see how many intended to take advantage of the scheme so that we had an overview before making adaptations to our infrastructure.
- 2.3. In terms of the large appliances, 28 new combi-ovens and 17 dishwashers have been installed, with more to be installed before Christmas and early in the new year.
- 2.4. It became clear that several sites would need an extension to cope with the possible increase in the numbers who would be eating a hot meal, as either the kitchen or dining space were unsuitable or too small. The following schools received an extension over the summer holidays / October half term:
  - Ysgol Hendre
  - Ysgol Bethel
  - Ysgol Bro Lleu
  - Ysgol Maenofferen
- 2.5. We have reviewed which schools are able to provide dinner to all their pupils as the situation stands at present, should there be political desire for this to happen in light of the cost-of-living crisis we are facing. At present, 69% of our sites have the capacity to provide dinner to everyone by January 2023. Please see **Appendix A**, a list of the schools that are able / unable to offer hot meals to everyone.
- 2.6. Here are the main reasons why not all schools are currently in a position to be able to provide dinner to everyone:
  - The combi oven / large appliances have not arrived
  - Need to appoint new kitchen staff
  - Need to increase the hours of kitchen staff
  - Extensions to the dining space / kitchen have not been completed

### 3. Next Steps

- 3.1. We will need to install the remainder of the large appliances that are on order over the coming weeks, subject to the schedule for receiving the equipment and completing the preparation work on site.
- 3.2. Extensions to be completed:
- Ysgol Llanrug – an extension to the hall (dining space). This will be done as part of a Phase 2 Condition and Suitability project. The work is expected to be completed by January 2023.
  - Ysgol y Gelli – extension to the canteen. Foundations have been completed, expecting completion of the work by March 2023.
  - Ysgol Waunfawr – a planning application has been submitted and we will need to go out to tender over the coming weeks.
  - Ysgol Chwilog – due to additional funding from WG, an extension will be built to the dining space. The plan has been prepared and a planning application will need to be submitted.
  - Ysgol Felinheli – due to additional funding from WG, an extension will be built to the dining space. In the process of preparing a plan, and a planning application will need to be submitted.

### 4. Benefits of the Scheme

Since September 2022, here is an overview of the eligible numbers who have taken up the free school meals offer (weekly average). ***The data below does not currently include Special Schools or Lifelong Schools.***

Month	Number of Reception and Year 1 pupils	Number of pupils choosing free school meals – UPFSM	Number of pupils choosing free school meals – EFSM	% of pupils taking free school meals under both schemes
September	2243	1305	271	70%
October	2257	1227	257	66%

By rolling out the free school meals scheme to all primary school children in Gwynedd, it will help to contribute towards:

- addressing poverty / the problem of children going hungry
- ensuring the well-being of future generations and reducing inequality
- removing stigma
- healthy eating habits and attitudes.

### 5. Risks

- The timeframe between receiving the combi ovens and dishwashers and installing them before the end of March 2023 is very tight.
- Failing to spend the additional grant before the end of the financial year. *Nevertheless, the grant conditions do state that spending may be slipped to summer 2023 in some circumstances.*
- Inadequate power supply in some of our schools causing a delay in ordering goods. We are still awaiting confirmation from Scottish Power for some sites.
- The Council's electricity providers are very slow updating the electricity meter. A further barrier to installing equipment in some schools.
- An additional revenue cost in meeting the need for more staff during lunch-time.
- Recruitment of additional staff (this is currently challenging)
- Additional food costs – food costs have risen recently

## 6. Timetable

- 6.1. Since September 2022, some of the youngest children in Gwynedd primary schools, namely Reception and Year 1 pupils, have been receiving free school meals as the policy is introduced gradually. The aim is to extend the offer to Year 2 by January 2023, and then to Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 by September 2023.

School Year	Timetable for Providing Free School Meals
Reception Year	September 2022
Year 1	September 2022
Year 2	January 2023
Years 3, 4, 5 and 6	September 2023

## 7. Secondary

- 7.1. The Catering Team have not done specific work to assess kitchens or dining spaces in the secondary sector. The work programme to provide free meals in the primary sector is ambitious, and this will be the Education Department's priority for the coming months in order to ensure that all children in all primary schools will have free school meals by September 2023.
- 7.2. There is currently no capacity or funding to specifically address the secondary sector. Should the Welsh Government announce a review of the situation, the Education Department would welcome the scheme.

**Appendix A – A List of Schools and their ability to provide dinner to the whole school by January 2023**

61 (69%) sites out of our 88 sites are able to provide for everyone by January 2023.

School	The ability to feed every year by January 2023
Gwaun Gynfi	No
Nefyn	No
Llanrug	No
Abererch	No
Beddgelert	✓
Bethel	No
Bodfeurig	✓
Borthygest	✓
Brynaerau	No
Y Gelli	No
Penybryn	✓
Trefferthyr	No
Chwilog	No
Crud y Werin	✓
Dolbadarn	No
Ederm	✓
Felinwnda	NO KITCHEN
Bro Plenydd	No
Garndolbenmaen	✓
Llanbedrog	No
Llangybi	✓
Llanllechid	No
Llanllyfni	No
Morfa Nefyn	NO KITCHEN
Baladeulyn	✓
Nebo	✓ DELIVER
Penisarwaen	✓
Bro Lleu	No
Pentreuchaf	✓
Rhiwlas	✓
Rhosgadfan	✓
Rhostryfan	No
Sarn Bach	✓
Eifion Wyn	✓
Talysarn	No
Y Gorlan	No
Yr Eifl	✓
Tudweiliog	✓
Waunfawr	No
Glancegin	✓
Yr Hendre	No

Bontnewydd	No
Y Garnedd	✓
Cymerau	No
Abercaseg	No
Y Felinheli	✓
Y Traeth	✓
Dyffryn Dulas	✓
Dyffryn Ardudwy	✓
Bro Cynfal	✓
Edmwnd Prys	✓
Llanbedr	✓
Y Garreg	✓
O. M. Edwards	✓
Manod	✓
Pennal	✓
Cefn Coch	✓
Talsarnau	✓
Tanygrisiau	✓
Penybryn, Tywyn	No
Bro Hedd Wyn	✓
Bro Tryweryn	✓
Tan y Castell	✓
Ffridd y Llyn	No
Maenofferen	✓
Hirael	No
Craig y Deryn	✓
Bro Llifon	✓
Pont y Gôf	✓
Maesincla	✓
Y Faenol	✓
Foel Gron	✓
Llandygai	✓
Llandwrog	✓
Llanystumdwy	✓
Tregarth	✓
Cae Top	✓
Santes Helen	✓
Our Lady	✓
BRO IDRIS MAIN SITE	✓
Bro Idris PRIMARY	No
DINAS MAWDDWY	✓
FRIOG	✓
RHYDYMAIN	✓
LLANELLYD	✓
Godre'r Berwyn	✓
Ysgol Pendalar	✓
Ysgol Hafod Lon	✓

<b>Committee</b>	Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee
<b>Title of Report</b>	Education Annual Report 2021-22
<b>Date of meeting</b>	8 December 2022
<b>Author</b>	Garem Jackson, Head of Education
<b>Relevant Cabinet Member</b>	Councillor Beca Brown

## **1. BACKGROUND**

1.1 In accordance with the wishes of the Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee, the Education Department's Annual Report for 2021-22 is submitted before the committee.

1.2 The Education Department acknowledges that it is no easy task to ensure effective scrutiny of a document covering a years work by the Education Department at a committee meeting, and consequently it has attempted to formulate a summary report that highlights the Department's usual main work, positive aspects, along with areas that need addressing over the next period. The Annual Report is to be found in Appendix 1.

1.3 In addition, GwE will detail what they have achieved in the field of school improvement to ensure a complete overview of the area for the committee for 2021-22.

## **2. THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT'S KEY AREAS OF WORK IN 2021-22**

2.1 As a result of the pandemic period which started in March 2020, over the past year, we as a Department along with schools have faced the new 'normal', even though covid continues to affect learners and staff, and continues to create challenges for schools in providing education at times.

2.2 This new 'normal' has meant getting children and young people back to school, to support their physical and mental well-being, together with the well-being of staff, responding to behavioural challenges that are a side effect of the pandemic, with the aim of being able to provide quality education to all learners.

2.3 Certainly, there has been more stability during the past year, and the post-pandemic period has led to normal external assessments (namely GCSE and A Level examinations) for learners at the end of their educational career in years 11, 12 and 13 for the first time in 3 years.

2.4 Below attention is drawn to what has been achieved in some key areas of the Education Department's work during the past year, including:

- Safeguarding
- ALN&I
- Immersion Education System
- The Welsh Language



## **2.5 Safeguarding**

Safeguarding the welfare of Gwynedd children and young people is a key priority for the Department and the Council. The Department has created a new Welsh-medium training package for Child Protection Designated Persons in schools and education centres, in conjunction with the Welsh Government's Safeguarding in Education Group.

The Education Department and the Council's Learning and Development services have also worked together to develop a training package in the field of domestic violence. The Ask and Action pack has been jointly developed and continues to be presented to the staff of the Education Department.

## **2.6 ALN&I Service**

The transition from the old SEN Legislation to the new ALN Legislation continues to keep momentum and on track. The use of new Criteria has been extended further in order to be able to report on children's progress more widely, as showing the progress of children and young people with ALN requires holistic methods.

The number of tribunal cases in Gwynedd remains very low, with tribunals relating to provision within Gwynedd schools having been favorable in terms of the Authority, which has given us confidence during the year that suitable provision is being provided.

The work to adapt the inclusion provision model has taken place and is now active. However, we are aware that the behaviors of some children and young people are causing concern in the post-pandemic period, and we will pay attention to this in the near future in order to support our schools.

The Services will also continue to prioritise the following in order to strengthen the provision:

- o Continue to respond effectively to the demands of the COVID-19 crisis
- o Training in the field of emotional development and well-being continues to strengthen and includes ELSA (Emotional Literacy Support Assistants) training, Grief and Loss Training 'Growing Through the Seasons', strengthening training in the field of Developmental Trauma.

## **2.7 The Gwynedd Language Immersion System**

On 6 July 2021, the Cabinet approved a new vision for the Immersion Education System in Gwynedd. Since then, the Department has been focusing on realizing the new vision, and during the year a new headteacher and deputy were appointed to the Immersion Education System. Following a consultation process a new staffing structure for the system has been confirmed which will become operational in January 2023.

An investment of £1.1m from the Welsh Government's Welsh language education capital grant has created a firstclass learning environment at our immersion education sites in Bangor and Eifionydd during the past year. The Eifionydd and Bangor buildings are now ready for the provision of progressive and contemporary immersion education in strategic areas of the county of linguistic significance.

At the Cabinet meeting on 19 July 2022, unanimous support was received to move forward to submit a full business case to Welsh Government to secure the £1.1m funding from the Welsh-medium Education Capital Grant which has already been pledged in principle to align capacity and improve the learning environment of the remaining primary Language Centres in the county, namely Maesincla, Llangybi and Dolgellau.

In addition, a lot of exciting work has taken place during the year in the context of Welsh Government late immersion revenue funding. Staff at the Immersion System have been working closely with author Anni Llŷn to write a new Immersion Plan for the language units. This new scheme is based on an imaginary village called Aberwla and incorporates appropriate language patterns within the language continuum in Curriculum for Wales. To support the scheme, we in collaboration with Animated Technologies have developed a virtual element to the village. This is an innovative project that enables our newcomers to step into Aberwla on a virtual platform to practice language patterns in the supermarket. This special project was launched in the Science Village at the Tregaron National Eisteddfod Summer 2022 in the company of the Minister for Education, Jeremy Miles. Later in August our application to evolve this project was approved and work is ongoing to develop three further locations in the village of Aberwla, namely Tyddyn Swnllyd Farm, Glampio Field, Garage and Gajets Shop.

Welsh Government officials are very keen to share this resource nationally and discussions are underway to do so in the near future. To this end they are keen to fund the development of all the locations in the village in addition to the original grant. This is recognition of our innovative vision as an Immersion System we are proud of this innovative virtual resource and proud of the opportunity to share it for the benefit of learners and support the Welsh Government's aim in Cymraeg 2050 across Wales.

## **2.8 The Welsh Language**

During the past year, the department has been preparing for the new Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) that came into force on 1 September 2022. The WESP is part of Wales's long-term vision in Cymraeg 2050. In order to support the planning process, the WESP has been arranged around seven outcomes that reflects the learner's education journey and match the Cymraeg 2050 and Our National Mission policy fields.

During Autumn 2021, the department held a full consultation on the draft version of the new WESP that came to an end before Christmas. The WESP was submitted before Cabinet for approval in March 2022, and was presented to the Language Committee at the beginning of the summer. The final version of the WESP was approved by the Minister for Education and the Welsh Language on 24 June 2022.

As the WESP will begin being implemented now, the Welsh Government and the Minister will continue to monitor progress and actions taken annually. However, our aim in Gwynedd is that the WESP is a live and ambitious document that drives our actions in favour of Welsh medium education in the county and reflects the unique position of Gwynedd.

## **3 THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT'S PRIORITY PROJECTS**

- 3.1 During the last year, the education department had a number of priority projects in the Council's strategic Plan which the department was expected to implement during the year.

- 3.2 The plan's priorities address the Department's main risks, together with investment to adapt schools, or build new schools so that the children and young people of Gwynedd are educated in the best possible learning environment.
- 3.3 Although the department's priority projects have been going in the right direction during the year, it must be recognized that there have been challenges in carrying out the department's capital projects during the year due to the challenges of the pandemic and an increase in the costs of building materials. Below, some of the department's priority projects are detailed.

### **3.4 Sustainable Learning Communities Programme**

#### Bangor Catchment Area

Ysgol y Faenol has had a major extension to accommodate 315 pupils. Although the timetable has slipped as a result of the pandemic, the extension was completed during the year, and the pupils can now take advantage of their new learning environment. Nevertheless, discussions continue in relation to land transfers and consequently, it is not possible to complete work on the school's car park at present. The building has also been planned to be a hub for the local area, with a new community centre built as a part of the development.

Initial feasibility work has been completed to identify the needs of Ysgol Ein Harglwyddes, and there is agreement to locate the new school on the site of Ysgol Glanadda (which is now closed) and this location is in accordance with the aspirations of the community.

The department is aware of the poor condition of the building and existing learning environment at Ysgol Tryfan in Bangor, and as a result the department has begun the process of considering possible opportunities to ensure a first-class learning environment there, ensuring suitable progression to the investment already achieved in the primary schools in the Penrhosgarnedd area of the city.

#### Cricieth Catchment Area

Following the support of the Cabinet to increase the capacity of Ysgol Treferthyr to 150 learners and build a new school due to the poor condition of the current building. As part of the process of submitting a planning application to relocate the school to the A497 site, two technical issues have arisen regarding the site, and in response to that, work has been commissioned, and by now the archaeological work has been completed, and a safe route to school survey has also now been completed and a report has been submitted to the Planning Department.

#### Post-16 Education in Arfon

As a result of the varying quality of education and learner experiences across the Post-16 Education System in Arfon, the Cabinet gave permission to the Department to contact stakeholders to discuss the vision for Post-16 education in Arfon. A series of virtual meetings were held with headteachers, Governors, staff, parents, learners and the broader community to present the new vision for post-16 education, as well as gather views and ideas on the best way to realise the vision. We reported on the initial messages from this engagement to the Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee in February last year, and we are now in a position to press on with this project following the delay seen over the past year.

Linked to the post-16 education field, during the year the Council succeeded in abolishing the fee for the post-16 travel ticket for all learners from September 2022 onwards. This is particularly important to ensure that as a Council we do not place any obstacles to enable

our young people to continue their education after the age of 16, and even more important these days considering the tremendous increase in living costs.

#### Condition and Suitability

During the year, as with the previous year, the impact of building materials prices due to Covid and Brexit affected our ability to realize some of our plans to improve the condition and adapt our school buildings. However, we managed to complete the investment in the condition and suitability of Ysgol Bethel, Ysgol Glan y Môr and Ysgol Cymerau with work continuing on the sites of Ysgol Llanrug and Ysgol Botwnnog.

#### Free School Meals

In December 2021 Jeremy Miles MS, Welsh Government Minister for the Welsh Language and Education, announced that £25m of capital funding would be invested in kitchen and dining infrastructure in Welsh schools as part of plans to introduce free school meals to all primary school children in Wales over the next three years. The policy is part of the co-operation agreement between the Welsh Government and Plaid Cymru.

Following the original announcement, from January onwards, kitchens and dining spaces in all primary schools in Gwynedd were inspected in order to identify which kitchens required upgrading of their large appliances such as ovens and dishwashers as well as lighter apparatus. We gathered parents' opinions to see how many intended to take advantage of the scheme so that we had an overview before making adaptations to our infrastructure. In terms of the large appliances, 28 new combi-ovens and 17 dishwashers have been installed, with more to be installed early in the new year.

It became clear that several sites would need an extension to cope with the possible increase in the numbers who would be eating a hot meal, as either the kitchen or dining space were unsuitable or too small. The following schools received an extension over the summer holidays, namely Ysgol Hendre, Ysgol Bethel, Ysgol Bro Lleu and Ysgol Maenofferen.

#### Transforming the ALN & I Provision

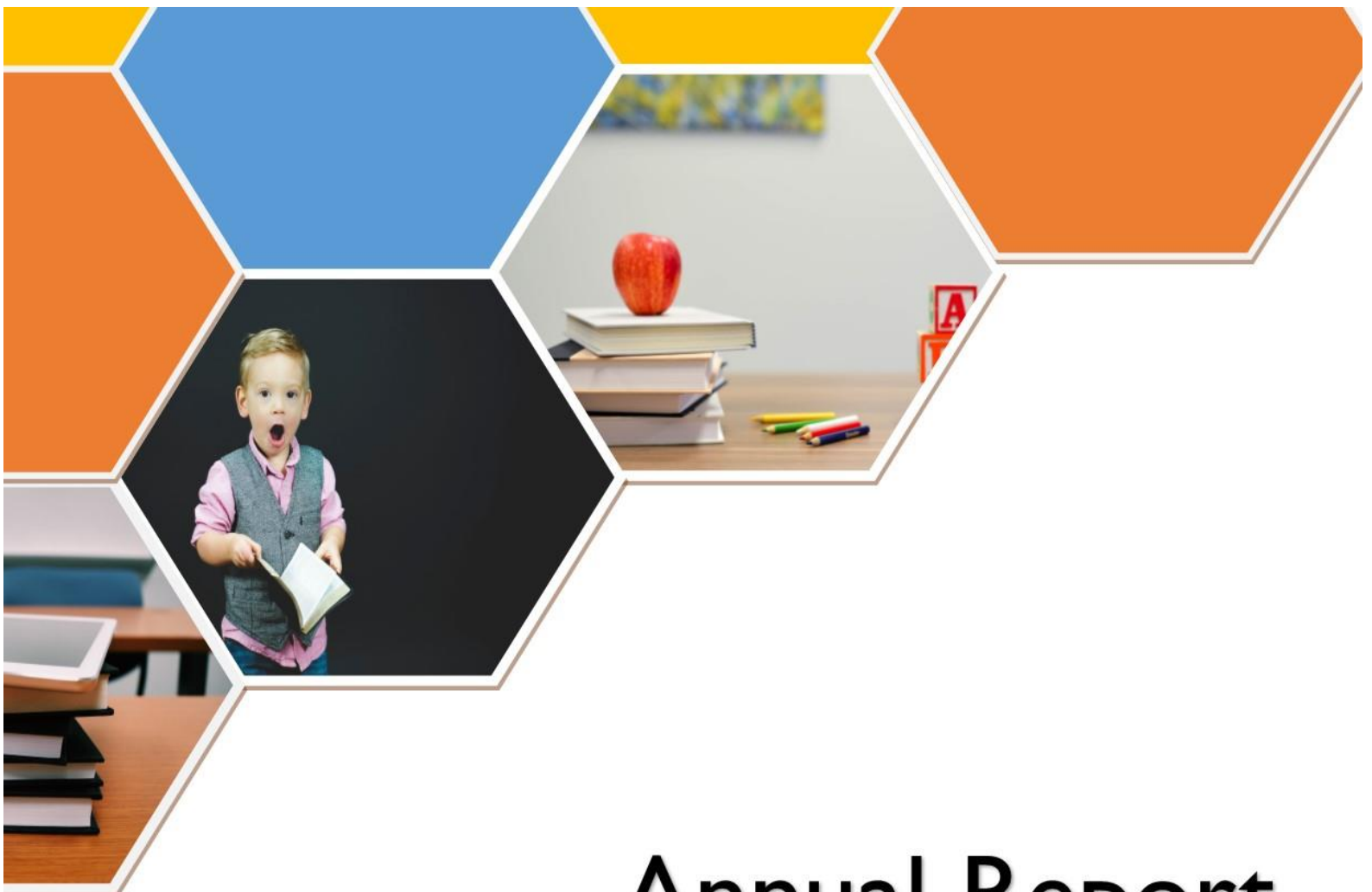
During the past year, this project has focused on preparing for the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018. This Act came into force in September 2021, but with some elements of the Act delayed in the first year e.g. post-16 period.

During the year a Welsh Government ALN Act Readiness Review showed very strong progress in terms of the Authority's preparations for the Legislation, with the requisite statutory posts in place since January 2021 and operating effectively. Collaboration with the Health Board developed well by collaborating with the Designated Education Clinical Lead Officer (DECLO). A number of stakeholder training events were held in order to specify particular aspects of the Final Code. Work on the dispute resolution routes to ensure that they are operational have been completed. In the early years sector the necessary systems for early identification, and establishing clear processes have been completed. Preparatory work in the post-16 sector is continuing. Also, the work of developing a work, curriculum and assessment link between the mainstream and Special Schools has developed and continues to develop.

Innovative work is continuing to be done in terms of the use and continuous development of the on-line Individual Development Plan system, with the system driving the entire process for the schools, parents, external agencies and other education provisions (e.g. the early years).

#### **4 RECOMMENDATIONS**

The members are asked to present any observations on what the Education Department has achieved during the year which is outlined in this covering report and the Annual Report in Appendix 1, together with any observations on the Department's priorities for the next period.



# Annual Report

# Education Department

## 2021-22



## **EDUCATION ANNUAL REPORT 2021-22**

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- 3. THE WELSH LANGUAGE**
- 4. ADDITIONAL LEARNING NEEDS AND INCLUSION**
- 5. SAFEGUARDING**
- 6. EARLY YEARS**
- 7. THE MODERNISING EDUCATION TEAM**
- 8. GWYNEDD AND ISLE OF ANGLESEY POST-16 EDUCATION CONSORTIUM**
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## CONTEXT

**THE VISION OF THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT:** Gwynedd children and young people attaining the highest standards in order to maintain the language, culture and economy locally.

**PURPOSE:** *Promote the achievement and well-being of Gwynedd's children and young people by ensuring effective governance, leadership and management of our schools.*

**SERVICES WE PROVIDE:** Raising Standards, Support Services, School Staff Salaries and Contracts, Teachers' Pensions, School Catering, School Cleaning, School Transport, Health and Safety, School Admissions, Support for Governors, Financial Support for Schools, Information and Communication Technology, Data Unit, Human Resources Support for Schools and the Education Department, Attendance and Behaviour, Education Welfare Service, Additional Learning Needs, Child Protection, Leadership, Management and Training, Modernising Education and the Welsh language.

### WHAT DOES THE DEPARTMENT DO?

- Support children and young people to attain the highest standards.
- Ensure that pupils with Additional Learning Needs receive the most suitable support.
- Ensure that pupils with emotional and behavioural needs are fully included within Gwynedd schools.
- Ensure that pupils within Gwynedd schools are safe.
- Provide appropriate support services for the Gwynedd Education Service.
- Develop leaders and support the workforce in the schools.
- Support for school governing bodies to enable them to act as effective governors.

In 2021-22 there were 79 primary schools, 12 secondary schools, 1 All-through School, 1 Lifelong Learning School and two Special Schools in Gwynedd.

In a statement from the Minister for Education, Jeremy Miles MS, he stated: 'Qualification award data will not be used to report on attainment outcomes at school, local authority or regional consortium level and should not be used to hold schools to account for learner outcomes. '

Therefore, in accordance with the Minister's statement, it is not possible for the Authority to discuss any results in order to measure the performance of schools and compare standards as part of this annual report.



## **PRIORITY PROJECTS OF THE COUNCIL PLAN 2018-23**

During the last year, the education department had a number of priority projects in the Council's strategic Plan which the department was expected to implement during the year.

The plan's priorities address the Department's main risks, together with investment to adapt schools, or build new schools so that the children and young people of Gwynedd are educated in the best possible learning environment.

Although the department's priority projects have been going in the right direction during the year, it must be recognized that there have been challenges in carrying out the department's capital projects during the year due to the challenges of the pandemic and an increase in the costs of building materials.

### **Sustainable Learning Communities Programme**

#### **Bangor Catchment Area**

Ysgol y Faenol has had a major extension to accommodate 315 pupils. Although the timetable has slipped as a result of the pandemic, the extension was completed during the year, and the pupils can now take advantage of their new learning environment. Nevertheless, discussions continue in relation to land transfers and consequently, it is not possible to complete work on the school's car park at present. The building has also been planned to be a hub for the local area, with a new community centre built as a part of the development.

Initial feasibility work has been completed to identify the needs of Ysgol Ein Harglwyddes, and there is agreement to locate the new school on the site of Ysgol Glanadda (which is now closed) and this location is in accordance with the aspirations of the community.

The department is aware of the poor condition of the building and existing learning environment at Ysgol Tryfan in Bangor, and as a result the department has begun the process of considering possible opportunities to ensure a first class learning environment there, ensuring suitable progression to the investment already achieved in the primary schools in the Penrhosgarnedd area of the city.

#### **Cricieth Catchment Area**

Following the support of the Cabinet to increase the capacity of Ysgol Trefferthyr to 150 learners and build a new school due to the poor condition of the current building. As part of the process of submitting a planning application to relocate the school to the A497 site, two technical issues have arisen regarding the site, and in response to that, work has been commissioned, and by now the archaeological work has been completed, and a safe route to school survey has also now been completed and a report has been submitted to the Planning Department.

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Linked to the post-16 education field, during the year the Department succeeded in abolishing the fee for the post-16 travel ticket for all learners from September 2022 onwards. This is particularly important to ensure that as a Council we do not place any obstacles to enable our young people to continue their education after the age of 16, and even more important these days considering the tremendous increase in living costs.

#### Condition and Suitability

During the year, as with the previous year, the impact of building materials prices due to Covid and Brexit affected our ability to realize some of our plans to improve the condition and adapt our school buildings. As a result, during the year the Education Department jointly with the Housing and Property Department re-examined the plans considering what can be practically achieved on a priority basis due to having to address higher costs with the available budget. However, we managed to complete the investment in the condition and suitability of Ysgol Bethel, Ysgol Glan y Môr and Ysgol Cymerau with work continuing on the sites of Ysgol Llanrug and Ysgol Botwnnog.

#### Free School Meals

In December 2021 Jeremy Miles MS, Welsh Government Minister for the Welsh Language and Education, announced that £25m of capital funding would be invested in kitchen and dining infrastructure in Welsh schools as part of plans to introduce free school meals to all primary school children in Wales over the next three years. The policy is part of the co-operation agreement between the Welsh Government and Plaid Cymru.

Following the original announcement, from January onwards, kitchens and dining spaces in all primary schools in Gwynedd were inspected in order to identify which kitchens required upgrading of their large appliances such as ovens and dishwashers as well as lighter apparatus. We gathered parents' opinions to see how many intended to take advantage of the scheme so that we had an overview before making adaptations to our infrastructure. In terms of the large appliances, 28 new combi-ovens and 17 dishwashers have been installed, with more to be installed early in the new year.

It became clear that several sites would need an extension to cope with the possible increase in the numbers who would be eating a hot meal, as either the kitchen or dining space were unsuitable or too small. The following schools received an extension over the summer holidays, namely Ysgol Hendre, Ysgol Bethel, Ysgol Bro Lleu, Ysgol Llanrug and Ysgol Maenofferen.

#### The Well-being and Attainment Gap

The work of supporting the well-being of children and young people over the past year has focused on responding to the challenges and the effects of the pandemic. Since September 2020, all schools in Gwynedd have implemented an Accelerated Learning Programme with funding from the Welsh Government, to respond to the impact of the lockdown on the well-being and attainment of some specific groups of 5-16-year-old learners.

Beyond school, we have identified two stages in a child and young person's life as being a priority in terms of responding to the well-being and attainment gap, namely 0-5 year olds, and young people post-16. Indeed, the lockdown period has highlighted the vulnerability of the early years sector, with inconsistency across the county in terms of the range and availability of services. The range of partners who are involved in the provision along with the strategic direction of the field nationally makes it difficult to structure our services here in Gwynedd. The project group has agreed upon specific work streams and has prioritised conducting a care and education provision adequacy assessment across the authority. At the same time, work is being undertaken on different funding models, as well as the implications of leaseholds between providers and Gwynedd Council.

Also, the 16-24 age group has been disproportionately affected by the pandemic as there are more referrals for well-being, mental health and homelessness assistance among this age group. It is therefore intended to give specific attention to this field in order to mitigate any knock-on effects, ensuring that young people receive appropriate support and provision to enable them to thrive.

#### Transforming the ALN & I Provision

During the past year, this project has focused on preparing for the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018. This Act came into force in September 2021, but with some elements of the Act delayed in the first year e.g. post-16 period.

During the year a Welsh Government ALN Act Readiness Review showed very strong progress in terms of the Authority's preparations for the Legislation, with the requisite statutory posts in place since January 2021 and operating effectively. Collaboration with the Health Board developed well by collaborating with the Designated Education Clinical Lead Officer (DECLLO). A number of stakeholder training events were held in order to specify particular aspects of the Final Code. Work on the dispute resolution routes to ensure that they are operational have been completed. In the early years sector the necessary systems for early identification, and establishing clear processes have been completed. Preparatory work in the post-16 sector is continuing. Also the work of developing a work, curriculum and assessment link between the mainstream and Special Schools has developed and continues to develop.

Innovative work is continuing to be done in terms of the use and continuous development of the on-line Individual Development Plan system, with the system driving the entire process for the schools, parents, external agencies and other education provisions (e.g. the early years).

#### Digital Education Strategy

Over the past two years, a little over £1.3m has been invested in the network. Subsequently, a substantial number of devices have been distributed in accordance with the strategy. Enough ipads have been distributed to provide one to every four learners in the Foundation Phase, and enough Chromebooks have been distributed so that all learners in years 3 to 6 have one device each. Windows 10 devices were also prepared for all pupils in years 7, 10 and 11, and were distributed at the end of the summer term, with a small proportion distributed at the beginning of September 2022. In addition, by September 2022, every teacher in Gwynedd will have received a standard device via the strategy with the hope that this will spark imagination and further stimulate the ingenuity and effectiveness of the aspects of digital learning across the sectors.

#### Meirionnydd Collaboration

Progress on this project has been slow and has been affected as a result of the obvious challenges of the pandemic and the busy nature of secondary schools. Nevertheless, we have sought the opinion of headteachers and representatives of the governing body of every secondary school on the potential challenges they face in terms of providing quality secondary education in the area, such as recruiting teachers, middle managers and leaders. We have also circulated a questionnaire to seek the views of learners, staff, parents and headteachers, that will inform the future direction of the project, and we are currently in the process of analysing messages from those questionnaires.

#### Promoting the Use of the Welsh Language

Following an extended period of home teaching, and the national concern expressed about the adverse effect of Covid on Welsh language standards, during the year the department collected data through various questionnaires in order to get a better overview of the Welsh language skills of our children and young people. The evidence from the questionnaires shows that oral skills are the

biggest concern across the county, and each school has set out to draw up an action plan in response to the situation.

## THE WELSH LANGUAGE

### Purpose

Ensure that Gwynedd's children receive Welsh-medium education and have opportunities to use Welsh in their daily lives.

### Good features:

- **Welsh in Education Strategic Plan**

The Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) is a statutory document for every local authority to plan strategically over a 10-year period to ensure growth in Welsh medium education. The WESP is part of Wales's long-term vision in Cymraeg 2050. In order to support the planning process, the WESP has been arranged around seven outcomes that reflect the learner's education journey and match the Cymraeg 2050 and Our National Mission policy fields.

The new WESP came into force on 1st September 2022 and will come to an end on 31 August 2032. During 2021/22 the department prepared the new plan following the timeline and programme set out by the Welsh Government.

During Autumn 2021, a full consultation was held on the draft version of the new WESP that came to an end before Christmas. The WESP was submitted before Cabinet for approval in March 2022, and was presented to the Language Committee at the beginning of the summer. The final version of the WESP was approved by the Minister for Education and the Welsh Language on 24 June 2022.

The Welsh Government and the Minister will continue to monitor progress and actions taken annually. However, our aim in Gwynedd is that the WESP is a live and ambitious document that drives our actions in favour of Welsh medium education in the county and reflects the unique position of Gwynedd.

- **Language Centres**

### Purpose

Promote the achievement and well-being of children and young people to acquire the Welsh language and continue to ensure quality immersion education provision to enable primary and secondary newcomers to benefit fully from the Welsh-medium and bilingual education system in Gwynedd.

During the year a new headteacher and deputy were appointed to the Immersion Education System. Following a consultation process a new staffing structure for the system has been confirmed which will become operational in January 2023.

In collaboration with the Modernising Team, considerable construction has taken place during the year to realise the vision and intention of the Cabinet, including the Welsh Government's capital expenditure of £1.1m to establish new immersion education sites at Bangor, as well as improving resources at the Eifionydd immersion education site. The Eifionydd and Bangor buildings have now been completed and the quality of the sites are excellent and the learning environment is world class, including modern and up-to-date provision e.g. interactive screens and resources to facilitate learning and teaching. They are intended to provide cutting edge and up-to-date immersive education in strategic areas of linguistic significance in the county. The facilities facilitate the delivery of Curriculum for

Wales in the classroom as well as the outside area. They are also within reasonable reach of facilities such as Gwynedd Libraries, Byw'n Iach Centres, shops, clubs and social enterprises. Visiting these places will be a great opportunity to broaden learners' experiences and bring the Welsh language to life for them. Unfortunately, the new language unit on the Ysgol Uwchradd Tywyn site will not be completed in time to welcome learners in January 2023. However, we trust that the centre will be ready during the Summer 2023 term. Meanwhile the centre will be temporarily located at Bro Idris Secondary site.

At the Cabinet meeting on 19 July 2022, unanimous support was received to move forward to submit a full business case to Welsh Government to secure the £1.1m funding from the Welsh-medium Education Capital Grant which has already been pledged in principle to align capacity and improve the learning environment of the remaining primary Language Centres in the county, namely Maesincla, Llangybi and Dolgellau.

In addition, a lot of exciting work has taken place during the year in the context of Welsh Government late immersion revenue funding. Staff at the Immersion System have been working closely with author Anni Llŷn to write a new Immersion Plan for the language units that will bridge learners within the primary and secondary sector. This new scheme is based on an imaginary village called Aberwla and incorporates appropriate language patterns within the language continuum in Curriculum for Wales. It is a scheme relevant to the twenty-first century and reflects contemporary Wales. The scheme will be launched at the National Eisteddfod of Wales Llŷn ac Eifionydd in August 2023 and will replace the current scheme the following September. To support the scheme, we in collaboration with Animated Technologies have developed a virtual element to the village. This is an innovative project that enables our newcomers to step into Aberwla on a virtual platform to practice language patterns in the supermarket. There they have the opportunity to play games with each other while filling their basket by reading instructions and following a shopping list. This special project was launched in the Science Village at the Tregaron National Eisteddfod Summer 2022 in the company of the Minister for Education and the Welsh Language, Jeremy Miles. Later in August our application to evolve this project was approved and work is ongoing to develop three further locations in the village of Aberwla, namely Tyddyn Swnllyd Farm, Glampio Field, Garage and Gajets Shop.

Welsh Government officials are very keen to share this resource nationally and discussions are underway to do so in the near future. To this end they are keen to fund the development of all the locations in the village in addition to the original grant. This is recognition of our innovative vision as an Immersion System we are proud of this innovative virtual resource and proud of the opportunity to share it for the benefit of learners and support the Welsh Government's aim in Cymraeg 2050 across Wales.

- **School categorisation according to Welsh language provision**

Welsh Government has introduced new arrangements for categorising schools according to Welsh medium provision from September 2022. The number of categories is reduced to three in the primary sector, and three in the secondary sector. One of the aims of this new arrangement on categorisation is to encourage schools to increase their Welsh provision, with one of the core principles of the arrangement that no school should offer less Welsh medium provision in the future than they have in the past.

In 2021/22 the education department planned and responded to the new arrangements for the primary and secondary sector and completed that process with the schools and Welsh

Government during the summer term – in order to implement the new arrangements from September 2022 onwards. Follow-up work will continue during the next year to ensure that the regime develops and is embedded in order to fulfil the ambition of Gwynedd in this field.

- **Language Charter & Secondary Welsh Language Strategy**

We have been promoting and increasing the use of Welsh amongst young people within the curriculum and in a social context, by leading on the Language Charter and Secondary Language Strategy so as to increase the social use of the Welsh language by children in our primary and secondary schools.

We have been collaborating with secondary schools to act on specific actions to increase the use of Welsh in formal and informal situations. Attention continues to be paid to the language medium of provision across the curriculum in Key Stage 3, 4 and 5. The intention to re-establish the Language Forums in every secondary school has been agreed to promote and strengthen the use of Welsh by our schools, and respond to the priorities outlined in the WESP. Language and Bilingual Awareness sessions have been held by some pupils across the county.

- **Additional Learning Needs**

All pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) have access to Welsh-medium services. Welsh-medium and bilingual provisions and services are available for the full range and variety of ALN.

- **Language skills of the education workforce**

We have continued to support the language skills of the workforce by cooperating with providers to structure provision that responds to the needs identified across the county. In addition, language and Immersion Methodology training have been held in every secondary school catchment area across the county.

#### **Priorities for the next period:**

- Ensure that the new Welsh in Education Strategic Plan in September 2022 drives the department's work effectively as we plan and implement in favour of Welsh medium education across our schools.
- Ensure that the Categorising Schools according to Welsh medium provision requirements are embedded and sets out Gwynedd's ambition for every school, and ensures continuation in the Welsh language education provision for pupils as they transfer from KS2 to KS4 and beyond.
- Continue to expand and develop the Gwynedd Immersion System to provide quality up-to-date immersion education to all newcomers to the county, focusing on the primary aged language units.
- Plan a series of language immersion principles training workshops for use by all teachers in the county.
- Continue to support learners that need extra support to increase their confidence and skills in the Welsh language.

- Continue to support our schools in completing and implementing their Language Charter and/or Secondary Language Strategy plans to promote and increase Children's informal use of Welsh.
- Continue to support teachers and classroom assistants to develop their skills and confidence in Welsh.



## **ADDITIONAL LEARNING NEEDS AND INCLUSION**

The purpose of the ALN&I service is to:

- Support the development of ALN and Inclusion provision of quality in educational settings.
- Identify additional needs early on in the child's life and ensure appropriate intervention;
- Ensure early and appropriate intervention when problems emerge;
- Work in a more integrated and multi-agency manner, sharing information and undertaking joint planning provision for learners with ALN;
- Ensure that the skills and understanding of the workforce are developed continuously;
- Ensure clear communication with children, young people and families that receive provision.
- The above contributes in conjunction with the education providers, our compliance with the Additional Learning Needs Legislation (2018) which came into effect in September 2021.

The joint partnership with Anglesey Council exists since September 2017.

### **Good features:**

- The transition from the old SEN Legislation to the new ALN Legislation continues to keep momentum and on track.
- The use of a new Criteria System has been extended further in order to enable reporting on children's progress on a wider level, as holistic methods are required to show the progress of children and young people with ALN.
- The number of tribunals remains very low, with tribunals involving provision within Gwynedd schools leading to favourable outcomes for the Authority (i.e. confirming that appropriate provision is in place).
- The work to adapt the inclusion provision model has taken place and is now active.
- The Services will also continue to prioritise the following for strengthening the provision:
  - Continue to respond effectively to the demands of the COVID-19 crisis
  - Training in the field of emotional development and well-being continues to strengthen and includes ELSA (Emotional Literacy Support Assistants) training, Grief and Loss Training 'Growing Through the Seasons', strengthening training in the field of Developmental Trauma.

### **Priorities for the Next Period:**

- With the change in Legislation coming into effect gradually over a three year period (up to September 2024) we are prioritising the following:
  - Undertake conversion work and develop the provision in the Post-16 sector
  - Ensure stakeholder input to a continuous review of what is offered to learners with ALN&I.
  - Continue to develop and build on consistency of provision. This includes reviewing the method of allocating ALN funds to schools in order to ensure the best provision for learners with ALN.
  - Continue to develop the quality of Individual Learning Plans and put learners at the centre of the process.
  - Ensure support for education providers to respond to the new requirements of the legislation.
  - Continue to strengthen and simplify the 0-3 years and 16-25 pathway provision, and respond to the new requirements for these age groups.
  - Strengthen the multi-agency co-operation to ensure effective provision.

## **SAFEGUARDING**

### **Purpose**

- Safeguard the well-being of children and young people.
- Ensure that every child feels safe in the Council's schools and educational centres.
- Ensure that everyone that works in education in the county follows the Wales Safeguarding Children Procedure 2020.

### **Good features:**

- Gwynedd schools have received information about the new Wales Safeguarding Children Procedures that were published by Welsh Government in April 2020.
- The department has ensured attendance at every Part 5 meeting where allegations have been made against staff within Gwynedd schools, case numbers remain low.
- The Education Department has created a new training pack in Welsh for Designated Persons in schools and educational settings in co-operation with the Safeguarding in Schools Group, Welsh Government.
- The Education Department and the Learning and Development service have been collaborating to develop a training pack in the field of domestic abuse. The pack 'Asking and Implementing' has been jointly developed and continues to be presented to staff within the Education Department.

### **Priorities for the next period:**

- Ensure that everybody that works in the education field in Gwynedd has received our new foundation level training package for Designated Persons in schools in response to the new guidelines on safeguarding children in education.
- Agree a new procedure of annual safeguarding quality check visits for all schools in Gwynedd.
- Provide "Ask and Implement" courses for all education and school staff.
- Conduct a review of example policies submitted to the schools with particular attention to safeguarding issues.
- Ensure training for schools that will better prepare them for contributing effectively at case conferences, core group meetings in line with the Safeguarding Children Procedures Wales 2020.

## EARLY YEARS

The Early Years Unit plans to ensure the Authority fulfils the statutory requirement of securing a nursery place for every child from the term after his/her third birthday. From September 2022 the nursery education provision will be offered in 56 locations across the county. All the settings are members of the Mudiad Meithrin and are regularly monitored.

### Good features:

- Senior Advisory Teacher (SAT) has introduced a Friendly Communication Locations strategy to all locations.
  - All locations come together under the care of their advisory teacher to discuss ideas and strategies for ensuring language development in the locations.
  - Cohort of locations attended ELKLAN and MAKATON training
- SAT Attended meetings - early years advisory teachers with ESTYN
- SAT has delivered training on the Curriculum for Wales 2022 to all locations.
- SAT has held training to follow the child's path to nurseries and babysitters.
- SAT has carried out one engagement visit as part of the work for ESTYN
- The teaching team have attended various sessions/training namely professional learning resources in the Foundation Phase (CiG). 'Working with Uncooperative and Hostile parents', Play and Playful Learning Kym Scott, 'Interfering or Interacting', *Sgemau*, 'In the moment planning' and 'Mindfulness in Clinical Practice'
- All locations and advisory teachers have been allowed to attend training
- Health and Mental Wellbeing for Children aged 2 to 4 by Leisa Mererid
  - All locations have received a pack of resources to go with the training
  - All locations receive the support of a consultant teacher to hold ongoing sessions.
- Julie Fisher's 'Interfering or Interacting', offered to all locations.
- Planning Training at the Moment - Anna Ephgrave has been offered every location- a strategy to follow the child's path.
- *Sgemau* by Dr Stella Louis.
- All locations have received a booklet on *sgemau*
- Early Years ALN Lead Officer has delivered training to all settings
- Settings create One Page Profiles for all ALN children and follow the new arrangements attached with the new legislation.
- The advisory teachers supported each location in implementing the requirements of the ALN code including support at targeting level.
- Every location that has received a joint inspection (CIW/Estyn) since January 2021-2022 has received a 'good' opinion for each theme, with occasional reports referring to aspects of excellence within the content of the report.
- Two locations continue to work on receiving 'Hygge in the Early years' accreditation
- A new location 'Lle Chi' has opened in Blaenau Ffestiniog following a long period of failing to secure nursery education provision in the area.
- Early Years capital investment has taken place on the sites of Maenofferen school, old Beuno Sant school, Ysgol Bro Tryweryn, Ysgol yr Hendre, Ysgol Llanllechid, Ysgol Faenol, Ysgol y Garnedd and Ysgol Maesincla.
- Almost £40 thousand of small capital grants were distributed to nine different locations
- All locations have received multicultural dolls (boys and girls) for implementing the Relationship and Sexuality Education Code (training to follow)
- A process was implemented to restructure the team to be an Early Years team with the teachers supporting Flying Start and Foundation Stage settings.
- One other location has been considered for following the Croesi'r Bont strategy by the Mudiad Meithrin.

- Settings now use planning sheets that allow them to follow the child's path and record observations that indicate the teaching that has taken place.

**Priorities for the next period:**

- Re-visit 'Our purpose' following the re-structuring. Our vision as one team and consider performance measures to match.
- Ensuring consistency in every location from 2 upwards be it DD or other.
- Support the locations on the implementation of the 2022 CiG.
- Support the locations on their journey to be Communication Friendly locations.
- Training and Support on the January 2023 Assessment document.
- Look at quality assurance tools by considering – ITERS, STTEW.
- Continue to coordinate the ongoing Early Years capital investment at Cricieth School and Tywyn High School
- Present the Early Years 2022—25 capital plan to the Government
- Distribution of small grant capital to settings
- Implement the Recruitment, Recovery and Raising Standards grant scheme for non-maintained placements
- Review the funding formula for nursery education harmonising with the Childcare Offer and Flying Start
- Implement the priorities of the Early Years transformation work program such as harmonising leases on school sites.

## **MODERNISING EDUCATION TEAM**

### **Purpose**

Some of our school buildings are old and unfit to meet the needs of Curriculum for Wales and learning and teaching in the twenty-first century. The purpose of this service is to design and realise innovative projects to adapt schools or build new schools so that the children and young people of Gwynedd can be educated in the best possible learning environment to enable them to thrive.

The Programme is very ambitious in aiming to transform the way children and young people are able to access high quality schools with a learning environment which supports outstanding education. The Council is also determined to develop an education system which enriches learning experiences.

The Education Department aims to plan strategically to ensure that the appropriate type and number of schools are located in the correct locations, and to also upgrade the standard of school buildings to establish an estate which is suitable for the twenty-first century. The Programme will continue to fully commit to realising the current vision to *"offer education of the highest possible quality that will give the County's children the experiences, skills and confidence that would enable them to develop to be bilingual, successful and full citizens."*

The main aims of the Programme are to ensure that the current work programme continues to reach the agreed criteria to:

- contribute towards realising the aims of education principles which are fit for purpose to ensure a viable secondary school system, increased non-contact time for primary headteachers and that no more than two age ranges are included within the same class in the primary sector;
- implement the consultation process with parents, staff, governors and stakeholders which complies with the requirements of the statutory process, and which communicates clearly;
- implement an effective system to communicate with relevant Council departments, to monitor and evaluate activities;
- deliver the aims of the Programme to ensure a leadership environment which provides sufficient time for headteachers to lead, the best possible learning environment and quality of buildings for children, a reasonable travelling distance for children and a more effective management of educational resources, including reducing the cost per head in order to ensure the best value for money;
- ensure progress to complete the building work and establish schools which are part of the first financial band namely Band A and recently Band B;
- complete background work and update core data to be able to provide the necessary information to senior officers in order to respond proactively to situations as they arise.

The work of modernising education in the County continues to successfully contribute to the education system and has attracted over £73m since 2012.

### **Priorities for the next period:**

- Complete the Bangor project, which includes an investment worth £12.7 million. The new building at Ysgol y Garnedd has opened since November 2020 with a capacity of 420 and able to offer a place for pupils in Coedmawr and Glanadda schools, subject to parental choice. The work to increase the capacity of Ysgol y Faenol to 315 and to improve the suitability and condition of the building while improving the community resources has been completed with learners benefiting fully from the new learning environment.
- Begin the Bangor phase two project, which focuses specifically on the secondary sector and Welsh medium education.

- Following the decision to adopt education principles, which are fit for purpose, assist the work of the Education Department to realise the vision to develop the system to ensure a high-quality education for the children and young people of Gwynedd for the twenty first century.
- Following the Cabinet's decision on 10 March 2020, continue to hold informal discussions on post-16 education in Arfon, so as to ensure fairness and strong support for all young people in the county to enable them to succeed and realise their potential.
- Following the Cabinet's decision in April 2019 continue with the intention to build a new school in Cricieth.
- Continue to implement one of the Band B projects to improve the condition and suitability of 30 school buildings in the County, with the first and second tranche of the project now operational, and continue to develop future proposals.
- Ensure the submission of successful business cases to the Welsh Government to attract matched funding for projects included in Band B.
- Collaborate with relevant departments to prepare additional applications to attract money for early years, community elements and the Welsh language.
- Undertake processes to monitor that the project benefits have been realised and to assess whether they have been completed successfully. There will be a need to ensure that all necessary procedures are in place to monitor benefits and that they are monitored continuously.

## **GWYNEDD AND ANGLESEY POST-16 EDUCATION CONSORTIUM**

Gwynedd Council is a strategic partner in a Consortium framework which has a complete overview of the post-16 education field across the counties of Gwynedd and Anglesey. Together with Gwynedd, which is the lead partner, there are three other full strategic partners, namely the Isle of Anglesey County Council, Grŵp Llandrillo Menai and the secondary schools in the area that have sixth forms. This partnership enables high-level strategic decisions to be made on all aspects affecting post-16 education.

The work of the Consortium encompasses:

- Facilitating a network of good quality post-16 provision and courses at learning settings throughout the Consortium area
- Facilitating transport for the courses
- Managing and co-ordinating the 14-19 network for Gwynedd and Anglesey
- Leading on the Seren scheme to extend experiences for the most able and talented learners in the post-16 cohort and also KS3 on behalf of both Authorities
- Facilitating a professional group of sixth form heads
- Promoting and contributing strategically to the work of STEM Gogledd
- Collaborating with the North Wales Economic Ambition Board in order to identify career paths both locally and throughout the region.

As well as ensuring consistency, clear pathways and excellent quality for the learners while avoiding any duplication in terms of provision and systems, the framework also enables the cost of employing staff to lead on and administrate all relevant elements to be shared.

The work of the Consortium is monitored by a Lead Board which consists of representatives of the Chief Officers of the Partner Organisations.

## **LEADERSHIP**

### **Purpose**

The aim of the leadership plan is to ensure that all Gwynedd leaders have the ability to ensure that each child under their care is able to reach his or her full potential. The Authority has identified the need *"to work jointly to create a culture that enables leaders to thrive; and can inspire and influence children on all levels"*.

The department over this past period has identified leadership as a priority that needs attention to ensure leadership succession at all levels and ensure that skilled and ambitious individuals follow the leadership programmes. In doing this, the aim is to increase the number of qualified and appropriate candidates for leadership positions and specifically therefore school headteachers.

### **Positive features:**

- A particular emphasis is being placed on securing a system which is planned and developed to ensure appropriate leaders to inspire at all levels.
- A particular emphasis is being placed on ensuring a consistency in the best experiences and opportunities for Gwynedd pupils.
- A particular emphasis is being placed on ensuring effective methods that develop existing leaders and equip leaders of the future.
- A particular emphasis is being placed on ensuring that specific conditions enable leaders to thrive.

### **Motivation**

Headteachers were given the opportunity again to be trained to gain a postgraduate qualification in motivating and mentoring. 7 headteachers have taken advantage of this opportunity in the past, and successfully completed the degree and become professional motivators themselves. These motivators are now available to motivate others and their teams within their schools also reap the benefits.

**By now the leadership development programmes for leaders in schools is a continuum of professional learning, which is offered regionally, and includes the following:**

#### **1. Middle Leadership Development Program**

The program promotes very effective leadership through self-evaluation and reflection, exploring the relationship between leadership, successful schools and the wider community. Participants will:

- develop an understanding of the role
- further develop their understanding of the national reform agenda
- develop their practice in line with the formal standards of leadership
- prepare for effective engagement with bespoke elements of specialist knowledge and skills; PLCs, ALN, Welsh, faith schools, small schools etc.

#### **2. National Senior Leadership Development Program**

Again, this programme promotes highly effective leadership with a particular focus on self-evaluation and reflection Participants will:

- further develop their understanding of the role of the senior leader
- develop the knowledge and skills that an effective senior leader should know and be able to adopt
- have the opportunity to develop the leadership behaviours required for an effective senior leader



- further develop their understanding of the national reform agenda
- develop their practice within the formal standards of leadership.

### **3. National Program for Developing aspiring Headteachers - Preparing for the NPQH 2022-2023**

This program is available to all experienced school leaders who believe they demonstrate achievement against the Professional Standards for Learning & Leadership and views headship as a realistic next step in the near future.

This program will build on previous experience, in order to nurture:

- their understanding of the role of an effective headteacher
- their skills and attributes through self-review against the Professional Standards for Teaching and Leadership
- their understanding and ability to apply a variety of leadership skills effectively
- their co-operation skills through effective participation in peer networks
- their knowledge and skills for developing their schools as learning institutions and ensuring the success of the national reform agenda

The Program will enable participants to reflect on their own professional practice, and to ensure that they are well prepared when applying to undertake a formal assessment for the National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH).

### **4. New Appointed and Acting Headteachers Development Program**

This is a program that runs for two years and is available to support all newly appointed headteachers, and temporary headteachers at work. The program:

- is designed in accordance with the Regional Professional Learning Model
- is based on the Professional Standards for Teaching and Leadership, Developing Schools in Wales as Learning and Education Institutions in Wales: Our Nation's Mission
- duration and the progression of learning activities are consistent throughout Wales
- has common expectations about participants' progress and how this will affect their leadership practice

### **5. Experienced Headteachers Development Program**

Again, here is a program that runs over a period of two years, but this time for already experienced headteachers in order to be an even more effective headteacher. Participants will:

- reflect on their own leadership style and how their leadership affects others;
- reflect on the impact of a range of leadership approaches;
- understand the theory of change and reflect on how that affects their leadership on the transformational journey of reform;
- work with others to lead their schools effectively and have a positive impact on leadership across Wales;
- embed an appropriate innovation culture and practice across and beyond its schools.

#### **Priorities for the next period:**

- Ensure that there is appropriate integration between this leadership development plan and the principles adopted by the Cabinet, to ensure that we have suitable arrangements which develop and identify leaders that inspire for our existing system and for the future.

## **EDUCATION DATA UNIT**

### **Purpose**

Ensuring support for the Education Department by providing high quality data and information infrastructure that drives decisions and performance.

### **Good features:**

- Initiate a regional information management system procurement process by scoping the needs of the Council departments.
- Agree and act to change the September 2022 School Census process to be electronic.
- Team leader is part of the Corporate Data Sub-Group and the Covid-19 Investigation Group.
- Develop the Unit's Power BI skills by ensuring that one officer has completed an external training course.
- Development of an Education dashboard at Authority, sector and school level.
- Provide and present an analysis report on GCSE and A Level results.
- Agree on and report on the Unit's performance measures.
- Support the Education Business Centre with PLASC and SWAC responses.
- Complete the statutory responses (PLASC, SWAS Post-16 data collection) within timescale.

### **Priorities over the next period:**

The focus of our work over the next period will be influenced by the Regional Project. Taking this into account these will be our priorities for the next period:

- Appoint a provider for a new Information Management system and start the journey of embedding the system.
- Commissioning a project to look at the transfer of ALN&I reports to Power BI format.
- Continue to develop the School Census process in September.

## **SCHOOL GOVERNANCE SUPPORT SERVICE**

### **Purpose**

Support Gwynedd Schools Governing Bodies to be effective in their work.

### **Good features:**

- Offer assistance and support to Governing Bodies and their schools as required.
- Continue to offer mandatory and additional training in a virtual mode which increases attendance.
- Assist Governing Bodies in fulfilling their statutory role and advise and act as a helpline in governance matters for headteachers and governors including the excess process and complaints etc
- Provide a list of policies and templates where appropriate on the Hwb for Headteachers and Governing Body Clerks.

### **Priorities for the next period:**

- Look again at the way Governance information is collected and kept working in cooperation with IT to develop a new system.
- Develop a package of Statutory Document templates that schools should have.
- Continue to develop resources to support Governing Bodies to deal with specific procedures i.e. excess, complaints, staffing panels

## **CONTRACTS AND PERSONNEL UNIT**

### **Purpose**

Ensure that the schools receive the highest quality support service in the area of salaries and contracts on time and accurately.

### **Good features:**

- Staff in our schools continue to receive their wages correctly and on time every month.
- Adhere to the level of service for schools fairly and consistently for every school, by following the work schedule throughout the academic year.
- All school staff contracts are issued in accordance with statutory requirements, namely within eight weeks of commencing in post.

### **Priorities for the next period:**

- Continue to keep the supply staff list up to date in a spreadsheet for when the Supply Teachers 'hire' App is live. We are in the process of creating Supply Application Forms electronically, with the aim of getting these out as soon as possible to facilitate registration to be on the list.
- Following the creation of a final Employment Statement for teachers, aiming to start sending out the statements by Easter 2023 for new staff.
- Using less paper by sending statements/contracts out electronically.
- Continue to encourage headteachers to make sure all learning staff and learning support assistants are registered with the Education Workforce Council and have completed the DBS process before they start school. The electronic DBS checking system that has been put in place facilitates the process.
- Create electronic work schedules and forms for schools.
- Continue with the task of transferring the paper files of all school staff into electronic files.

## **CATERING AND CLEANING SERVICE**

### **Purpose**

To provide nutritious and healthy food for the pupils of Gwynedd Schools and to keep educational establishments clean and safe to assist pupils to reach their potential.

### **Good features:**

- Plan and implement the ability to provide free school meal to every child in Reception and Year 1 by September 2022.
- The lunchtime menu for primary and special schools complies with the 'Healthy Eating in Schools (Nutritional Standards and Requirements) (Wales) Regulations 2013'.
- The lunchtime menu of Secondary schools is working up towards compliance with the 'Healthy Eating in Schools (Nutritional Standards and Requirements) (Wales) Regulations 2013'.
- Tasting/nutrition sessions are held in schools to encourage more pupils to eat school dinners.
- Parents who provide lunchboxes for their children are asked if they would like a school dinner on some days of the week.
- Thematic lunches are offered to schools on a regular basis.
- An on-line payment system for parents makes it easier to pay for different school services such as school dinners, trips, instrument lessons etc.
- 5 secondary schools have agreed to take part in a free breakfast scheme for Year 7 learners.
- Keeping schools clean and safe.

### **Priorities for the next period:**

- Continue to work on getting the primary schools ready to provide a free school meal for Reception and Year 1 in September 2022, Year 2 in January 2023, and the remaining primary learners by September 2023.
- Cooperate with schools to enable them to become completely cashless
- Continue to encourage parents to choose school dinners for their children
- Assist schools to reduce the school dinners debt levels of parents
- Act on providing packed lunches for school trips
- Continue to support the Secondary Schools in the process of collecting school lunch arrears.

## **TRANSPORT**

### **Purpose**

To arrange transport for Gwynedd pupils to educational establishments, thereby providing them with access to education in order to fulfil their potential.

### **Good features:**

- Transport is arranged for all qualifying pupils.
- Transport is arranged for post-16 learners.
- The ability to purchase a free post-16 travel e-ticket reducing barriers for Gwynedd's young people to further education.
- The Gwynedd Transport Policy complies with the 'Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008'.

### **Priorities for the next period**

- Continue to ensure efficiency of service by constantly reviewing existing criteria and systems.
- Ask the views of Gwynedd's young people about the service.

## **EDUCATION BUSINESS CENTRE**

### **Purpose**

Support the effective management of schools in Gwynedd.

The Centre supports 79 primary schools by providing services in accordance with the Service Level Agreement that exists between the schools and the Centre.

Support is provided for a variety of areas of school management.

### **Positive features:**

- Following the expiration of the small and rural schools grant at the end of March 2022, the Education Business Centre has continued with the additional administrative support service provided to head teachers out in schools as well as providing a school phone answering scheme for some schools with the schools now funding the service.
- Orders from schools for purchasing goods / services through the Education Business Centre credit card continue to increase which shows that schools are benefiting from the service.

### **Priorities for the next period:**

- Continue to roll out credit cards to large secondary and primary schools with school administrators to support the system.
- Continue to work closely with the Procurement Team to provide schools with the best value on Procurement contracts.
- Continue to identify and improve services that will contribute to reducing the workload of head teachers.
- Introduce a new more effective and efficient regime for paying for schools goods and services.
- Introduce the Education Business Centre's new intranet through Hwb to the schools for communication, information sharing and good practice with schools
- Develop the Business Education Centre Team further in different fields.



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# ANNUAL REPORT

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## SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS:

- **APPENDIX 1:** GwE work programme and support to schools during the covid pandemic
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- **APPENDIX 4:** Regional Strategy - Renew and reform: supporting learners' wellbeing and progression
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## 1. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

The response to COVID-19 has dramatically changed our lives. In this challenging context, the education system and schooling has been significantly disrupted. This year's GwE Annual Report outlines how GwE staff have re-purposed their work appropriately over the last two years to continue to deliver effective services and support for all their communities of schools during the Covid-19 pandemic. During this difficult period, GwE has stayed true to its vision and values as an institution that is still learning. At the heart of the work with schools and partners were the OECD's transversal themes of Trust, Thinking Together, Time and Technology.

The regional service, in its entirety, has redirected several times during the Covid-19 period in an attempt to meet the needs of the range of stakeholders. Flexibility and adaptability and effective collaboration in different teams, often across sectors, have had a significant impact on institutional behaviour. At the core of the redirection, the need to ensure the well-being of school leaders, staff and learners was of utmost importance in any decision-making, ensuring that the service can accurately direct the appropriate level of support, be that operational support or professional dialogue. This involved operational discussions on the safe opening of schools, and professional discussions regarding distance and blended learning.

The report also describes how GwE has continued to support schools in their preparations for The Reform Journey and Curriculum for Wales, and in improving the quality of teaching and leadership.

Section 9 outlines GwE governance and accountability arrangements. The Management Board monitors matters of governance continuously and GwE has procedures in place to ensure the Joint Committee meetings are conducted effectively and that decision making is effective. A series of reports have been produced and shared with the Management Board and the Joint Committee during the year. These reports include the views of schools, staff and local authorities on the effectiveness of regional practice. Each report describes the quality of the provision and identifies areas for improvement to drive the learning agenda forward.

The report also identifies strategic and regional priorities for 2022-23. GwE's overall vision is reflected in the 3 year business plan and is further strengthened in the annual business plan.

## 2. GwE WORK PROGRAMME AND SUPPORT TO SCHOOL DURING THE COVID PANDEMIC: MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Appendix 1 outlines how the whole service has been re-purposed several times to meet the revised requirements of our stakeholders during the covid pandemic. Our different roles since the end of March 2020 has consisted of:

- Supporting the wellbeing and development of leaders
- Leading from the middle and lateral leadership
- Meaningful Professional Learning
- Collaborative leadership
- Modelling
- Managing stakeholder expectations

There has been a strong emphasis on modelling appropriate and supportive behaviour throughout the period. This has included very regular contact with headteachers to ensure that they get the appropriate support to operate

effectively and also as a sounding board to support their own well-being. Further support for senior leaders well-being has been provided through a series of workshops and webinars which supported their resilience during this difficult period. GwE staff also conducted face to face pastoral visits on behalf of the Local Authorities and also when schools reopened in spring 2021 after the second lockdown period.

GwE sees itself as a partnership organisation, especially with the Local Authorities and even more so during the pandemic and in moving forward. GwE worked effectively with Welsh Government on policy and continuity of learning. It also worked consistently with the other regions and with Estyn in preparing guidance and resources for distance and blended learning and to provide advice on formative and continuous assessment. It has also strengthened the working relationship between those parties with positive professional exchanges, ensuring that the stakeholders are getting quality advice and resources.

One of the main strengths of work across North Wales has been the consistent messaging from the six local authorities through their political education portfolio holders and directors working with GwE to have one common message for the schools in North Wales. This consistency of messaging has been not only welcomed by schools but also by teacher unions and non-teaching unions who welcomed the clarity of messaging and support for their staff.

The six local authorities and GwE have taken a collegiate and collective regional approach to supporting schools throughout the COVID pandemic. This was clearly demonstrated in the consistent regional approach in developing a supportive framework to ensure that all regional schools had the right policies in place together with a comprehensive risk assessment in order to create a safe environment to welcome the children back into schools.

Teamwork, joint working and collaboration has also been at the heart of the work with schools. All schools in the region are part of a cluster or a forum where they can come together to discuss operational issues as well as sharing best practice regarding distance and blended learning. This joint work facilitated by GwE staff has been very successful and sets a very strong infrastructure in place for future work and working relationship across the region.

One noteworthy aspect of the work has also been the bespoke nature of support for teachers and schools. GwE worked on the strengths of individuals within the team and redeployed them where they provided the maximum impact in their roles in supporting individual local authorities, schools, clusters, subject and phase networks. This bespoke provision of support based on strong principles of collaboration, exchanging and sharing and developing the best practice is a key learning principle that we will continue to develop in the next stages of evolving the service.

Schools who were causing concern prior to the pandemic have had access to clear and targeted support to help them through this difficult period. This has been at several levels including network support, support to senior leadership and middle management in those schools and support with provision of distance and blended learning. Schools that have found the lockdown and post lockdown period difficult due to staff having to self-isolate have been supported in various ways. This has included modelling of exemplar materials, webinars, shared materials and resources. Also, GwE staff directly leading, directly teaching in schools or providing distance learning to learners.

A lot of time and energy was put in place to contact international experts and to research international practice to learn and establish the principles of effective distance and blended learning. GwE provided practical support for leaders to enable them to consider their whole school strategic planning of provision for remote and blended learning, refine and evaluate their evolving provision and planning for various scenarios where pupils may be in school and / or at home during the academic year. This has supported schools to have a better strategic overview of their provision.

Many schools acknowledge that parental engagement was a key factor in securing effective remote/blended learning. GwE and the Local Authorities provided a range of guidance to support school in improving parental engagement, including the sharing of good practice.

Many schools also acknowledge that there were operational challenges that changed on a day-to-day basis, where a range of scenarios had to be planned for including cohorts of learners self-isolating or individual / small groups of learners and staff self-isolating. There are many examples of how schools managed these complex situations well, having clear whole school strategies. GwE and the Local Authorities continued to support schools, using clusters and networks of schools to support each other and share resources and strategies. Schools in the GwE region have a significant collection of resources for each age group and these resources can be accessed through the GwE Support Centre: <http://cefnogaeth.gwegogledd.cymru/?lang=en>

GwE also adopted a regional approach to accelerating learning, working on a tri-level approach which included universal support led by the consortium, targeted support jointly led by the consortia and the local authority, with the acute being the responsibility of the local authority. This work was developed on an evidence base approach working closely with Bangor University and regional staff to ensure a range of high-quality resources to support physical and emotional wellbeing, literacy and numeracy, these being made available to all learners across all age range in all schools.

### 3. EVALUATING THE IMPACT OF OUR WORK

It is important that schools and all partners are clear about their roles and responsibilities. Without such an understanding, the system is unlikely to function efficiently or effectively. There is also a greater likelihood of conflict between the different bodies, drawing energy and focus from the underlying goal of continuous improvement for the benefit of learners. It is ultimately by working in partnerships, based on trust, that GwE, local authorities, governing bodies, headteachers and school staff will have the biggest impact in continuously improving schools.

The learning organisation research indicates that in order for school improvement to make a difference everyone within the organisation has a part to play to bring about positive change in individuals, organisations and learner progress. Impact is seen to be attributable to an intervention, piece of support, or professional learning activity that influences improvement and makes a difference when the conditions are right. This might include changes in the knowledge skills and behaviours of individuals or groups. These changes may occur in the short medium or longer term and should impact on organisational change and outcomes. Impact can be defined as changes that happen to individuals, to defined groups e.g. leaders, practitioners and organisations as a whole, the ultimate impact will be how these changes impact on learner progress.

GwE use a range of models and surveys to consider impact, based on national and international research, e.g., Kirkpatrick model, etc, as well as working collaboratively with our strategic HEI partners. GwE is working closely with Bangor University on the 'Collaborative Institute for Education Research, Evidence and Impact' (CIEREI) Project to establish more effective systems to evaluate the impact of our work.

This evaluative process informs future planning and allows GwE to develop and improve current support for schools and future delivery of professional learning programmes across the region. Measuring impact is an area we are continually strengthening to improve our evaluation and planning processes.

#### MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Effective collegiate relationships and a collective regional leadership approach between the six local authorities and GwE has ensured:

- Effective co-constructed strategic thinking and direction.
- Strong governance, regional consistency in support, messaging and guidance given to schools.
- Strengthened collaboration between school peers at a cluster/forum level
- Approach in place for effective repurposing of both the service and its schools.
- Schools are well informed and confident that effective support is available should any needs arise.

- School leaders' wellbeing supported through professional learning, regular and clear communication.
- Schools provided with coherent guidance and resources to effectively support vulnerable learners with their wellbeing, engagement and learning.
- Best practice being shared between and across schools and clusters, i.e. engaging with reluctant learners and families, digital platforms and communication systems, blended learning models, etc.

In North Wales, we define impact as the difference that we make to:

- Delivering our values and behaviours
- Developing a culture of collaboration and sharing
- Promoting a self-improving system
- Influencing the wellbeing and achievement of learners
- Developing greater resilience and improved Headteacher wellbeing
- Empowering schools to have greater ownership over their direction of travel
- Increasing practical understanding of curriculum design, planning, assessment and progression
- Developing greater understanding and engagement with the 12 pedagogical principles
- Developing greater ability to innovate and deliver teaching practice that is evidence based
- Improving digital skills within the workforce to enhance the pedagogy

The main impact of GwE work during the pandemic is outlined below:

- Joint working has ensured strong governance and regional consistency in support, messaging and guidance given to schools.
- Strengthened collaboration between peers at a cluster/forum level has ensured effective co-constructed strategic thinking and direction.
- Clear regional and local approach in place for effective repurposing of both the service and its schools.
- Schools are well informed and confident that effective support is available should any needs arise.
- School leaders' wellbeing supported through regular and clear communication.
- Clear guidance given on how to prioritise and structure both remote and blended learning.
- Schools provided with coherent guidance and resources to effectively support vulnerable learners with their wellbeing, engagement and learning.
- Best practice being shared across schools and clusters, i.e. engaging with reluctant learners and families, digital platforms and communication systems, blended learning models, etc.
- Schools and settings have built upon several growth points in preparation for the new curriculum and generally have:
  - a more adaptable and skilled teaching profession;
  - greater focus and emphasise on both learner and staff wellbeing;
  - improved digital competency amongst staff, pupils and parents;
  - a more blended approach to teaching and learning;
  - improved partnerships with parents.

Other outcomes and impact include:

- Effective communication provided via single point of contact (Supporting Improvement Adviser) for school leaders and ease of access to support.
- Schools have been able to remain open to key workers in the event of staff shortages.
- Schools are well informed and confident that support is available should any needs arise. School leaders' wellbeing is supported through regular communication.
- Shared understanding of the importance of the welfare of pupils, parents and staff
- Clear guidance given on how to prioritise and structure both Distance and Blended Learning.
- Schools having access to a wealth of quality resources for reference as they plan for and deliver distance and blended learning.
- Comprehensive distance and blended learning models available for schools to adopt, adapt or refer to. This has in turn ensured strengthened leadership and improved balance of work that can be completed at home.
- Co-ordinated approach to supporting schools which has led to greater consistency and quality of remote and



blended learning across the region.

- Best practice being shared across schools i.e. engaging with reluctant learners and families, digital platforms and communication systems etc.
- Strengthened use of ICT to enable effective communication between schools, within schools and with school stakeholders.
- School staff being upskilled through the use of a digital platform for professional development.
- Information shared with the LA is up to date and timely support is given to any School.
- In conjunction with the LA, ensured that the process of appointing school leadership candidates is appropriate and fair.
- Consistent messages disseminated to schools by GwE / LA officers.
- Strengthened collaboration between peers at a cluster level through digital means ensuring co-constructed strategic thinking.
- Strengthened collaboration between local authority officers and GwE.
- Clear regional and local approach in place for adapting schools for different purposes.
- Effective cascading of key messages to school staff to ensure consistency and clarity.
- Increased collaboration between regions and other stakeholders.
- Increased understanding of key messages and work streams.
- Stronger awareness amongst school leaders of effective strategies to ensure continuation of school business.
- Quality Professional Learning developed in readiness for future needs.
- Newly Qualified Teachers having clarity regarding completing their induction year.
- Strong partnership work with Bangor University to ensure initial teacher training students have clarity on the appointment system for next year.
- Strong partnership working with Caban to ensure increased research opportunities and recognition of excellence by School staff.

The impact of our work streams can be seen in Appendix 2.

## 4. SUPPORTING SCHOOLS IN THEIR PREPARATION FOR THE REFORM JOURNEY AND CURRICULUM FOR WALES

### THE REFORM JOURNEY

GwE has continued to support schools in their preparations for The Reform Journey and Curriculum for Wales and has been flexible in its provision in order to meet schools' various needs during the pandemic.

Wales is committed to an ambitious reform agenda to realising a transformational curriculum. The education reform programme in Wales, built around the new Curriculum for Wales (CfW), provides a positive way forward as we emerge from the restrictions of the pandemic. It has at its heart a number of guiding ideas:

- That the curriculum and associated teaching, learning and assessment should flow from four clear purposes agreed nationally and pursued locally.
- That those purposes should encompass helping all of our young people to become: ambitious and capable learners; enterprising and creative contributors; ethical and informed citizens; and healthy and confident individuals.
- That young people's learning should build progressively towards those four purposes across their time in school education.
- That teachers and schools should have greater freedom to realise those purposes in ways that can meet the needs and characteristics of the young people and the communities that they serve.

These basic ideas give rise to a number of important implications:

- That the national curriculum framework should establish necessary national consistency of purpose and

- approach but leave wide scope for local decision making about key aspects of learning and teaching.
- That curriculum making is a process that should involve collaboration amongst teachers, schools and wider interests.
- That accountability should not inhibit the quality or narrow the scope of learning. Wherever possible it should pursue quality enhancement rather than narrow quality assurance.
- The success of the reform programme should be judged against the extent to which it leads to better and more relevant learning for young people and to higher standards of achievement. Both the quality of the learning and the nature of standards should relate to the extent to which the agreed purposes are being realised in practice for all young people.

The impact of the pandemic has naturally influenced how schools and settings can move forward with the reform. They need to re-establish the relevance of its four guiding purposes for Wales's young people. In many ways the pandemic has made those four purposes more relevant than ever as schools seek to build the confidence of their young people and rekindle their desire to learn. Schools have had to think deeply about what matters in learning during periods of interrupted schooling and the four purposes of the new Curriculum for Wales stand up well to that examination. The pandemic has also required changes to the nature of the teaching and learning process, not least in the ways in which digital technologies can enhance possibilities for more independent learning.

GwE have worked with fellow regional consortia, Estyn and Welsh Government to set out the expectations on schools and settings in respect of reform as we move towards implementation of Curriculum for Wales in [Curriculum for Wales: The journey to Curriculum Roll-out](#). This document also acknowledges the challenge that Covid-19 continues to present to all schools within the renew and reform strategy.

The COVID-19 pandemic has shown us that even in the most challenging of circumstances positive change is possible. In North Wales, GwE, the Local Authorities, Schools and PRUs have seized opportunities to explore innovative ways of working. Schools have delivered meaningful teaching and learning experiences through a creative blended learning approach. These experiences need to be built upon to avoid a 'snap back,' keeping the positive learning that has been developed during this time and preparing for the future.

The four transversal themes of the learning organisation of time, trust, thinking together and technology have developed as strong foundations of a collaborative way of working as we move forward with the renew and reform agenda.

The response to COVID-19 has of course had a significant impact on schools and is likely to have disrupted some of their plans for preparation and implementing the new curriculum. The report in Appendix 3 – 'Progress Report on the Reform Journey' outlines where schools and PRUs were during the autumn term 2021 as they addressed the renew and reform agenda and is based on evidence gathered by GwE Supporting Improvement Advisers as part of their work in supporting schools.

As we undertake national reform, it's clear that we are in a different place to the one that we imagined when the guidance for the Curriculum for Wales was published. We recognise that some of the preparation time for the curriculum will have been devoted to managing the impact of the pandemic over the past year. On the other hand, with an even stronger focus on well-being and significant investment in teaching and learning, the values underpinning the curriculum have been at the heart of how schools have been working. GwE is fully committed to supporting schools and PRUs to maintain this momentum to ensure that every learner in north Wales is offered provision of the highest standard.

Attached (Appendix 4) is our 'Regional strategy - Renew and reform: supporting learners' wellbeing and progression', which sets out the strategic direction of our work during the next stage. Through working with partners and key stakeholders and listening to them, we have identified themes to support our aim of ensuring that every pupil in north Wales benefits from provision of the highest possible standard. These themes are noted in our Business Plans and implemented through partnership programmes and an offer of generic and differentiated

bespoke support to our schools and PRUs.

### THE NEW CURRICULUM FOR WALES (CfW)

The Minister for Education has confirmed that the Curriculum for Wales will continue to be implemented in primary schools, maintained nursery schools and non-maintained nursery PRUs from September 2022. The Minister also confirmed that some additional flexibility will be given to secondary schools. In 2022, schools that are ready to roll out the curriculum to year 7 will be able to press ahead with that. However, formal implementation of the new curriculum will not be mandatory until 2023, with roll-out in that year to years 7 and 8 together. This will also be the case in special schools and all-through schools for 3 to 16-year-olds.

GwE have encouraged secondary and special schools who are able to proceed with their current plans to implement the new curriculum with Year 7 from September 2022. We also realise that some secondary schools will continue their path towards curriculum reform from September 2022, and will implement the new curriculum from September 2023 when it will become mandatory for years 7 and 8. However, it is important that the work of reforming the curriculum, and particularly direct engagement between secondary and primary schools, continues in order to support learner transition irrespective of the timeline for implementation adopted by the secondary school.

Beyond 2023, the Curriculum for Wales will be rolled out on a year-by-year basis, and the first qualifications designed specifically for the Curriculum for Wales will be awarded in the 2026-27 academic year, as planned. The reform of qualifications will play a fundamental role in the success of the curriculum and GwE will support the work of Qualifications Wales over the coming year to help shape a set of qualifications of the highest quality that are aligned with the philosophy of the new curriculum.

As part of the support to schools for the new Curriculum for Wales, GwE has worked with the other regional consortia to develop a national professional learning offer that integrates all aspects of the wider reform including Schools as Learning Organisations, Y Gymraeg (towards a million Welsh speakers by 2050) and the Additional Learning Needs Transformational Bill. This cross regional offer is aimed at supporting all school practitioners, and focuses initially on Senior Leaders with the following themes:

- Leading Change
- Leadership for the new curriculum
- Developing a Shared Vision
- Planning for Curriculum Change – to include curriculum design, progression and assessment
- Leading Pedagogy
- Time and Space for Professional Learning

This professional learning offer was originally scheduled to begin in spring term 2020, however was naturally paused due to the priorities of the Covid-19 pandemic. In discussions with Head teachers across GwE, the professional learning resumed virtually in January 2021 with the Leading Change session. These sessions across the region are cluster-based and enable smaller groups of primary schools and their local secondary school to discuss the new Curriculum for Wales across the 3-16 learning continuum. Across the region, 832 Senior Leaders attended these Leading Change sessions. In recognition of the re-opening of schools to all learners in March and April, the Professional Learning sessions were again paused in March 2021.

Following discussions with the Directors of Education through the GwE Management Board, a series of consultative workshops were held in April 2021 in each Local Authority to listen to feedback from Head teachers on the professional learning offer and how best to re-engage. Over 300 Head teachers attended the consultations.

Feedback indicated:

- Head teachers of both primary and secondary sectors recognise the importance of continuing to collaborate across the sectors to support the 3-16 continuum;



- All leaders recognise the importance of maintaining the momentum of the professional learning but acknowledge the challenge of timing given current pressures and challenges;
- Leaders are keen to work with GwE and to draw on the input of external experts where appropriate;
- Leaders recognise that flexibility in engaging with the professional learning offer is key to ensuring effective engagement.

To support re-engaging with the Curriculum for Wales work, a further leadership planning session was held for each individual cluster across the region to build capacity of clusters to collaborate across the requirements of the reform journey as a whole and form an agreed action plan for each cluster. As part of this, Supporting Improvement Advisers facilitated sessions where schools within a cluster had the opportunity to work collaboratively to strategically plan for the implementation of the curriculum. Adopting a flexible and sensitive approach to the timings of these sessions has been a key aspect of the discussions between GwE, the local authority and schools. Activities to support preparations for the new curriculum at school and cluster level have been identified within School Development Plans.

The use of technology to collaboratively develop cluster plans and websites ensure that the dialogue is ongoing and Senior Leaders are able to continue this work, following discussions back at individual school level.

Further support available to schools also includes a series of 'Think-Pieces' which have been written by the GwE team as part of the weekly reform sessions with Professor Graham Donaldson. These papers, which cover key aspects of the curriculum reform journey including leadership, vision, pedagogy, assessment and curriculum design, have been shared and refined through consultation with wider partners in Local Authorities, Estyn and Bangor University.

In addition to the Professional Learning offer, additional support from GwE is available to schools as they prepare for Curriculum for Wales. This support will be accessed at both cluster and individual school level, including tailored bespoke support where needed.

To ensure schools are ready for first teaching in September, all schools should:

- have completed a high-level curriculum design to meet statutory requirements
- developed a shared understanding of what is important in progression of skills and knowledge
- developed whole school shared understanding of progression & assessment
- have examples of planning for trialling to include assessing learners
- have identified increasing opportunities for professional dialogue across the 3-16 continuum

To enable schools to meet expectations, the GwE offer over the Spring and Summer term will include supporting all schools in developing:

- whole school curriculum design and high-level curriculum statement
- effective AOLE planning
- whole school assessment policy and practice

In preparation for the professional learning offer, GwE staff have developed guidance and exemplar models for whole-school curriculum design, curriculum planning and assessment to aid leaders and teachers as they prepare for roll-out. The resources, models and exemplars have been fully endorsed by Professor Graham Donaldson.

Guidance and resources are utilised by both the Regional and Local Curriculum Networks as they continue to promote and instigate partnership working across the system. This will allow all schools access to a rich library of resources and support as they design and plan their own unique local curriculum. Underpinning the work of the networks will be continued input from GwE staff, thus ensuring that this is a truly collaborative venture.

The initial series of workshops have taken place during February and March to support schools through the process of curriculum design. The workshops focused on creating a high-level curriculum statement where the

rationale is based on local context.

The workshops guide school leaders through different models of design and provide a variety of curriculum statement examples. These models will be further built upon by the regional and local curriculum design networks, providing all schools with a wide variety of examples to consider when approaching their high-level curriculum design and statements. Once a school's rationale and statement is in place, a school will be able to start planning the new curriculum.

Once the curriculum design workshops have been delivered, practitioners from across the region will be able to access professional learning on effective Area of Learning Experience (AOLE) planning. These sessions will prepare leaders and teachers for first teaching of the new curriculum in September. The offer will continue throughout 2022/23 building on learning from first teaching.

The workshops will provide an overview of planning principles followed by working through various models of planning. Workshops will look at:

- Inquiry-based statements or questions as a basis to the planning.
- Planning considerations for the teacher
- Activity ideas
- Progression steps and assessment considerations
- Different planning models i.e. disciplinary, multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary, integrated models

Various examples of planning models have been created for all sectors and for all six AOLEs. These models will be shared with schools and will be utilised by the regional and local networks as a basis in ensuring additional models are created. This will add further capacity to the system.

The third area of support that will be provided over the next two terms is for whole school assessment policy and practice. Learner progress is a key aspect that runs through both the design and planning of the new curriculum. A series of workshops will take place providing schools with an overview of the national guidance and exploring the principles of assessment and learner progress. As part of these sessions, schools will have access to models and examples of assessment, including a progress tracker designed and created by GwE staff. The Regional and Local Assessment Network will again build upon this work and provide schools with many reference points to explore while considering assessment policies and practices.

A matrix of GwE support will be provided to all schools, detailing the professional learning offer available to support them in ensuring the new curriculum is realized in their schools. Schools will be able to choose which areas of support are appropriate to them and have access to a wide variety of resources, models and examples.

## CURRICULUM FOR WALES NETWORKS

GwE continues to facilitate Curriculum for Wales networks at both regional and local levels. The Networks work in partnership with Professor Graham Donaldson, GwE and the six North Wales LAs in developing effective AOLE practice which will help schools on the Reform Journey.

In June 2021, schools were invited to express an interest to be part of the regional Curriculum for Wales networks to contribute to GwE's ongoing support programme for schools in the following areas:

- Whole school Curriculum Design
- Progression and Assessment
- Unpacking the potential of one of the AOLEs
- Language, Literacy and Communication (both Welsh and English)
- Mathematics and Numeracy
- Science & Technology
- Humanities

- Health and Wellbeing
- Expressive Arts

During the Summer term 2021, 300 teachers initially expressed an interest in being part of the networks. During September and October 2021, many more schools requested to be part of the local networks and there are now over 700 practitioners from school settings across the region committed to being part of this work.

Through the networks, practitioners are accessing:

- networking opportunities with school colleagues locally and regionally
- a deepening of understanding of the curriculum design process
- co-construction opportunities and the sharing of examples of local curriculum planning
- development and sharing of examples of assessment within Curriculum for Wales

All materials and recordings of regional meetings are available for all schools to access on the GwE support centre along with resources and examples of design and planning work. In addition to this, link Supporting Improvement Officers are available to offer bespoke support at school and cluster/alliance level.

## 5. SUPPORTING AND IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF TEACHING AND LEADERSHIP

GwE and the Local Authorities know their schools very well, and provides a robust and appropriate challenge as well as effective support and intervention for them. There are very clear strategies, policies and processes in place for school improvement that are understood by all stakeholders. There are robust procedures in place both regionally and locally for setting a direction and holding the regional service to account. The specific role of the service in school improvement is explicit and clear to all stakeholders.

GwE evaluates its work regularly and uses qualitative data and information effectively to ensure that areas for improvement are identified swiftly and are firmly addressed via detailed business planning. There is a clear and effective process to ensure that the regional service meets Local Authorities corporate priorities and targets.

### LEADERSHIP

GwE provide a rich array of professional learning to develop leadership at every level, together with targeted focused support for schools as required. In addition, there are robust arrangements in place where school leaders collaborate to support one another in primary clusters and secondary alliances and take ownership and increasing accountability for each other's improvement journey.

During 2021, in response to the national pilot to support schools causing concern through the multi-agency model, procedures and structures for supporting, monitoring and challenging schools were reviewed. The aim was to ensure that all schools could access good-quality support in a timely manner in order to move along the 'desired' pathway at the required pace. A regional Task and Finish Group was established consisting of officers from each authority, together with GwE advisers, to drive the work.

For schools whose performance is consistently strong or strong overall, improvements are addressed through peer collaboration, LA/GwE's generic Professional Learning Programme, courses of action and professional learning programmes noted in the School Development Plan and via GwE's bespoke support plans for the school. This is the approach taken with the secondary schools in 2021-22. However, when Authority/GwE procedures highlight a concern, more intense support is targeted through the multi-agency approach.

Within the revised structure, a multi-agency group of senior officers, lead officers from the relevant services and GwE staff meets regularly to share information and evidence so that concerns are identified at an early stage. Thresholds and triggers have been adopted to ensure consistency in identifying concerns in relation to standards, teaching and learning, assessment, leadership, inclusion or managerial matters. In order to ensure an agreed

understanding and consistency of approach, training was organised for all officers and advisers. Once a school is identified as causing concern, the lead officer, Core Lead and Link Improvement Support Adviser work with the school's leadership team to develop a holistic 360 support plan. The multi-agency group takes responsibility for ensuring that the holistic plan and monitoring are undertaken effectively. There are arrangements in place to review plans on a regular basis and, where appropriate, to amend them. Where concerns arise about lack or pace of progress, these are escalated to the Head of Education through meetings of the Quality Standards Board so that an appropriate decision is taken regarding whether or not to execute statutory powers.

The regular flow of information between officers and GwE advisers has ensured effective implementation within the structures. Regular meetings are held between relevant departments and agencies in order to take into account any other schools approaching the threshold and to consider early intervention.

GwE and Local Authorities have an effective procedure to support schools with their self-evaluation and planning for improvement. Schools are firmly challenged on the quality of their self-evaluation processes, and through their visits the Supporting Improvement Advisers support schools effectively to strengthen their evaluation processes such as scrutiny of work, lesson observations and learning trails.

Almost all schools have managed to continue to evaluate the quality of their provision throughout the Covid-19 period using a variety of useful sources of information and evidence, including regular discussions with other schools and GwE link officer. Most schools have gathered the views of stakeholders effectively via questionnaires for pupils and parents, telephone calls or conversations with individuals. Based on these findings, most adapted and improved their provision considerably.

Effective collaboration takes place between the Local Authorities and GwE to support the development of leaders across the 'Leadership Pathway'. Information regarding their progress is regularly communicated via Regional Leadership Group meetings. This thorough collaboration and communication ensure that Local Authorities can identify developmental needs and target further support if necessary.

All leadership programmes have been adapted for virtual delivery. Teachers have shown a very noble commitment to develop their practice and leadership skills during the Covid-19 period.

Effective collaboration takes place to support new head teachers and acting head teachers. The programme consists of a rich array of regular training throughout the educational year in order to equip head teachers to be able to successfully undertake their work as head teachers, including briefing sessions on finance management, safeguarding, site safety amongst other managerial elements (heads and experienced leaders are also invited to attend). All new heads have access to a mentor who is an experienced and successful head to provide firm support on local managerial matters in relation to their work as head teachers. This means that new heads are provided with timely and punctual support and that they have access to several sources of support, as required, as well as good opportunities to develop their knowledge and deepen their skills in the role.

A rich array of professional development is provided for teaching assistants through the national programmes, i.e. the Teaching Assistants Learning Pathway. TALP includes 'Induction', 'Practicing Assistants' and the 'Aspiring HLTAs' programme, leading up to HLTA status assessment. In the same manner as the Leadership programme for teachers, these programmes encourage individuals to become reflective practitioners who evaluate their practice against the 'Professional standards for assisting teaching'.

All TALP programmes have been adapted for virtual delivery, a change that has been very well-received by teaching assistants. The 'Induction' programme was put in the form of a playlist The 'Practicing Assistants' programme was adapted during 2021-22 for virtual delivery.

A new national Aspiring HLTA programme was created in 2020 which has now been running over four cycles. Upon completion of the new Aspiring HLTA programme, and meeting literacy and numeracy qualification requirements,



teaching assistants can apply for HLTA status assessment.

Focused collaboration between the Local Authorities and GwE saw very inclusive support being provided to school leaders in order to ensure that their settings were safe for return after the first lockdown. A strategic approach was adopted across the region to create a fit for purpose tool in the form of a very manageable dashboard. This dashboard provides leaders with firm guidance on identifying specific risks in their planning for children, staff and other stakeholders upon return to school. In addition to this, this tool provides very thorough guidance to schools on how to minimise identified risks - by collating all relevant guidance documents in one place under headings such as Safety, Site and Facilities, Staffing amongst other headings.

Effective collaboration at a cluster level in the primary and in the secondary alliance is a strength in the region. All Supporting Improvement Advisers working as Link Advisers with the primary schools are experienced and have been supporting specific clusters for an extended period. This means that the regional service and local authorities now have a thorough knowledge of the strengths and needs of specific schools and clusters/groups of schools. There are numerous examples across the primary catchment areas that show that systems and processes for collaboration are maturing amongst schools in order to share expertise and reduce workload in response to the Reform Journey. At best, collaboration involves leaders from all tiers meeting regularly to discuss and share good practice, collaborating in a structured and directed manner and successfully developing a wide variety of areas such as Curriculum for Wales, pedagogy, Additional Learning Needs, digital and primary-secondary transition. This collaboration has resulted in improving learner experiences and outcomes.

Head teachers and staff engaged in the programme all agree that this process has been a firm foundation upon which they have been able to collaborate and share resources over the lockdowns. They also noted that it is a good foundation upon which to develop future leaders amongst the improvement facilitators.

## TEACHING

The quality of teaching is generally robust across the sectors and purposeful action is taken to improve and align where there are anomalies. GwE has been taking positive steps to support leaders and teachers to improve the quality of teaching and learning during and prior to the Covid-19 period. Since the beginning of lockdown, the region has been proactive in their support for schools. A wide range of quality materials and models for distance and blended learning have been provided through digital platforms such as 'Google Classroom' and [GwE Support Centre Canolfan Cefnogaeth GwE](#). The work has drawn on the findings of research into effective international practices.

Collaboration in clusters and alliances to jointly develop and share resources and successful practices in this regard has been a strength and testifies to the strong working relationship between stakeholders. Head teachers have appreciated the input of the Link Supporting Improvement Advisers and Authority officers in terms of providing guidance and support for schools and clusters to develop their provisions. Facilitating cluster and alliance meetings has been instrumental in sharing ideas and good practice for developing their distance and blended learning provision. It was also noted that these meetings have had a positive impact on their mental health and well-being.

We have also provided a range of high-quality guidance and resources to support schools to improve parental engagement, and have also worked with Mike Gershon to facilitate parental access to quality materials so that they also can support their children. 'Helping your Child to Learn' (HYCTL) and 'Helping your Teen to Learn' (HYTTL) materials, and the 'Revise with Mike' resource have been very well-received. The range of revision strategies has also impacted on teachers' classroom floor practices as they prepare KS4 and 5 learners for this year's examinations.

Over the last two and a half years, most schools have made very effective use of guidelines and guidance on delivering distance and blended learning including planning successful recall and learning practices as learners return to face-to-face learning. There has also been an appropriate focus across schools on identifying a baseline upon learners' return and implementing purposeful plans in response to any gaps in learning.

Over the period, GwE has supported schools to evaluate the quality of their blended and distance learning provision, and has shared examples and local case studies of effective provisions to minimise variations. Regular discussions with leaders and teachers over the period, scrutiny of learners' work (both on-site and virtually) and in some instances, learning trails, have all resulted in valuable and focused experiences being provided to the ability range, under very difficult and challenging circumstances. There is also explicit evidence that a higher number of practitioners are now able to use the technology more confidently to support learning. This is one of the key growth points.

The support of the Accelerated Learning Programme had a positive impact on basic skills and well-being once children returned to formal education after lockdown. All schools had ensured that they carried out an internal assessment procedure, whether qualitative or quantitative, in order to identify the impact of lockdown on children's well-being and learning. Although only a small minority of parents and families did not engage in tasks and activities during lockdown, this contributed to a situation where pupils required accelerated support upon returning to the classroom. Teachers' deemed that lockdown affected the confidence and well-being of the majority of pupils, with the behaviour of a few pupils having worsened. The accelerated support work was successfully driven by school leaders once baseline standards had been identified.

All schools have made purposeful use of the various grants and most have employed or extended teachers' or assistants' hours in order to target groups and individuals in literacy, numeracy and well-being. GwE provided guidance and guidelines, with a good number of schools accessing specific training such as Trauma Informed Schools well-being sessions, SAFMEDS, Headsprout and Elklan training.

Overall, schools have risen well to the challenge and can testify to clear improvements and progress in the basic skills of many of the pupils targeted through these accelerated programmes.

Schools are continuing to deliver effective intervention strategies for pupils, e.g. through daily precision teaching sessions, SAMEDS sessions to develop Welsh and English reading/spelling skills, Tric a Chlic sessions to develop literacy skills in the Foundation Phase, specific Trauma Informed Schools activities, conducting Nurture groups, Talkabout, or Mind Mechanics. Schools acknowledge that this precise targeting has a positive impact on pupils' standards, well-being and confidence and a good number note they have seen vulnerable pupils being able to cope well with mainstream classroom challenges and various social challenges.

Schools have been provided with detailed guidance to support their preparations for delivering the new curriculum. The focus on pedagogy and the 12 principles are central to this work. Since September 2021, the service and school representatives have been working effectively with Professor Graham Donaldson in an attempt to deepen understanding of the Curriculum for Wales Framework. This work has involved promoting successful collaboration meaning that schools have been able to jointly-plan examples and models to share across the region.

GwE and Shirley Clarke's Formative Assessment Action Research project has been one of the pillars of the professional learning programme since November 2017 with schools engaging with the project in 3 tiers, over a 4-year period (Tier 3 over 2 years due to Covid-19 complications). According to a direct impact evaluation on the region's schools:

- there has been a positive impact on the quality of teaching in classes, standards of attainment, pupil well-being, attitudes to learning and development as independent learners.
- teachers have deepened understanding of effective pedagogy on the basis of wide and current research, both on a local and international level. They have also become leaders of teaching in their schools and beyond.
- teachers have undertaken action research in their schools, and have taken part in professional collaboration and become confident pioneers. Consequently, schools that are a part of the project are developing well as learning organisations.
- there has been a sharper focus on effective pedagogy in cluster collaborations.
- there have been explicit inputs to improving schools' readiness and preparations for delivering the new

- curriculum e.g. increasing focus on the four purposes, 12 pedagogical principles, schools as learning organisations, professional standards for leaders and teachers, assessment purposes and planning principles.
- schools have made good and effective use of formative assessment principles and strategies for distance and blended learning.
- parents have come to understand more about formative assessment in their efforts to support their children at home e.g. learning powers, learning outcomes, success criteria and verbal feedback.

There has also been a consistent focus on supporting schools to improve the quality of differentiated support across the ability range. Establishing the secondary MAT Coordinators' Network is one specific example of this work. Specific guidance and support have been issued to develop better understanding and confidence amongst coordinators to lead on this across schools and to develop their processes and systems for identifying, tracking and supporting this particular group of learners. There was also input to ensure that they were aware of the national developments in this regard. As a group, they have collaborated to ensure a shared understanding and how to ensure an appropriate level of challenge and how to promote recall and revision strategies. Feedback from the schools involved has been extremely positive and work is ongoing to evaluate the impact on the quality of provision and standards of achievement.

The service has also worked effectively with an external expert to provide first-class professional development to develop effective styles of differentiation and effective use of discussion in classroom. This has equipped staff to make incisive use of various approaches such as taxonomy, effective questioning, modelling and scaffolding to plan effective differentiation in response to the universal needs of the range of learners in class. This programme has been delivered at three tiers - bespoke sessions for Additional Learning Needs co-ordinators so that they can successfully support teachers in their schools; sessions for assistants to empower them to deal with and support learners in class along with sessions for classroom teachers on developing a rich differentiated provision and to improve the use of discussion in support of that.

A range of networks and forums are up and running to support leaders, at every level, to be able to take the lead on pedagogy with increased confidence and effectiveness. At secondary, for example, a Teaching and Learning Network has been set up for senior leaders. There is evidence that this collaboration in the network has been a particular strength and mutual support has been key in order to ensure consistency of teaching and learning approach in the secondary schools. In order to support teaching and learning over lockdown, there was a specific focus on supporting leaders to respond to the impact of the pandemic on teaching and learning. The Network worked within general parameters and principles with the aim of ensuring that the experiences of every child are the best they can be. As part of GwE's support for the network, guidance was provided on Distance and Blended Learning and resources were shared in order to support schools in this regard.

The network was a vehicle to respond to professional learning needs in order to deliver on the principles and digital training was ensured. In addition, resources were developed and successful practices were shared. The impact of this training and collaboration was reflected in teachers' confidence to adapt their teaching to suit different scenarios, in the breadth of experiences available and in the quality and format of resources available for pupils.

The impact of actions taken during the pandemic was evaluated by ensuring leaders had access to Google Classroom to verify the quality of departmental provision; regular virtual meetings between SMT and staff to discuss and adapt any work programmes/lessons; responding to learner voice/questionnaires; pupil forums and councils. Regular phone calls to homes has also been a strong feature of the team approach that has been apparent in schools, and findings lead to subsequent action being taken or teaching and learning being adapted. Throughout the period, schools have invited Supporting Improvement Advisers to partake in scrutiny exercises and learning trails. During lockdowns and blended learning, they were given access to teaching documents and pupils' work. Reports by Supporting Improvement Advisers refer to the positive impact of action on provision.

The network's coverage of teaching and learning is ongoing and the current focus is on developing the 12 pedagogical principles as part of the preparations for the new curriculum.

The subject networks have also been active for the secondary core subjects. The work has focused on supporting middle leaders to take the lead on teaching and learning; on facilitating and supporting peer collaboration and on strengthening evaluation and improvement planning processes and procedures; on promoting a better understanding of planning and pedagogy in the context of the new curriculum; on improving literacy and numeracy interventions as well as supporting specific aspects of KS4 and KS5 preparations and assessments. The work of the networks is much appreciated by secondary leaders who make effective use of the quality resources that have been jointly-developed and hosted on GwE's Support Centre, Tanio websites [Science], MathsCymru [Maths], Y Pair [Welsh] and Herio [English].

The impact of the network's work is clear on several levels and across a range of aspects:

- middle leaders have been up-skilled in their knowledge and understanding of methodology and quality of planning e.g. recall strategies, strategies to improve oral and writing work, use of technical equipment to develop subject skills etc.
- middle leaders have improved their knowledge and understanding of the 12 pedagogical principles and preparations for the new curriculum.
- good practices have been disseminated and are being more widely adopted. A considerable number of leaders have noted their appreciation of the opportunities to share ideas and developments and to support one another professionally.
- increasing use of the digital library resources on GwE's Support Centre and of the subject websites to improve learner experiences, to prepare learners for examinations and to prepare purposeful intervention programmes.
- leaders and teachers are more confident in their digital skills.
- leaders are more confident with pupil predictions, assessment and grading.
- effective targeting to promote Welsh oracy skills e.g. 'Ein Llais Ni' project.

In addition to the networks and forums, specific support is available to all individual secondary schools and this targeting has resulted in clear improvements in several instances. The content of the Support Plan for individual schools is based on the school's specific needs arising from their self-evaluation and which is a priority in the School Development Plan. Support to improve aspects of teaching and learning underpins these plans. They are jointly produced with the senior management teams and Supporting Improvement Adviser. The relationship and collaboration between schools and GwE is very strong and the positive impact of the support is evident in several aspects of schools' work.

In the primary sector all link Supporting Improvement Advisers are very experienced in working with specific schools over an extended period of time. This has led to them having a sound knowledge of strengths and improvement needs - both at an individual school and cluster level. There are numerous examples of purposeful and effective support for schools on improving specific aspects of teaching and learning.

There is robust evidence that the toolkit for 3-8-year-olds at an individual school, cluster or authority level, is effective. In most schools, this has had a positive impact on provision and pupil outcomes as well as reducing variation within schools. The support has also ensured a deeper understanding of Foundation Phase principles and pedagogy, in line with the Curriculum for Wales 'Enabling Learning' and 'Pedagogy' guidance. The toolkit includes a professional offer for SMT, teachers and assistants of 3-8-year-olds in the form of termly networks, a regional training programme and bespoke cluster training. The focus is primarily on developing aspects of pedagogy, teaching and well-being within practical and holistic learning experiences, and training practitioners to develop as effective learning facilitators. All practitioners have access to the professional offer and resources to support learning via GwE's Support Centre. Many schools within the Authority use the webinars in staff meetings and INSET to up-skill the workforce. Evidence from schools note that this has a positive impact on the quality of provision (teaching and learning experiences) and on pupil outcomes.

Since 2019, the professional offer has involved Y3 practitioners in order to build on some of the Foundation Principles in KS2 in preparation for Curriculum for Wales. The professional offer continued throughout lockdown with the provision planned to target those aspects identified by schools as needing to be prioritised following



Covid-19, e.g. pupils' communication skills and health and well-being. The focus was upon developing these skills within appropriate developmental pedagogy. Evidence of the impact of this support programme includes:

- deepening practitioners' understanding of how the pedagogical principles (including 12 CfW principles) link with one another to create productive and effective learning experiences.
- practitioners using a range of developmentally appropriate pedagogical methods that meet the needs of learners (including emotional and social skills).
- practitioners creating effective cross-curricular links to deliver a broad and balanced curriculum, drawing on learners' previous knowledge and experiences.
- practitioners not only considering the physical learning environment, but also the emotional climate that supports learners to reach their potential.
- practitioners' deepening their understanding of the importance of daily practice in order to improve their understanding of pupils' needs, skills and progress; allowing practitioners to find the preferred learning approaches of children and young people and how best to engage them in learning; identifying those pupils who might require extra support to help them reach their full potential.
- practitioners understanding that effective observations enable them to plan an appropriate provision that supports learner commitment and enjoyment within their learning activities, as well as planning to support them to move on to the next stage in their learning.
- practitioners understanding the need for assessment to be an ongoing process rooted in day-to-day practices, invisible within teaching and learning.

Overall, observations by Supporting Improvement Advisers and Estyn inspection findings where relevant, note that the support programme has a positive impact on the quality of provision and pupil outcomes with practitioners making better use of observations and Assessment for Learning strategies to plan the next stages of learning to allow for progress.

When concerns arise about a primary school, a bespoke and focused Support Plan is agreed with the school leaders and Authority. These plans are monitored on a regular basis and adapted accordingly. Historically, these schools make firm progress as a result of the specific intervention.

Across both sectors, quality support and guidance has been provided to improve the quality of planning and provision in literacy, numeracy and digital competence.

In addition to the professional learning menu, individual schools have received specific input and the impact of the interventions can be seen in the quality and standards of skills in several schools, in teachers' confidence levels and in the progress seen in collaboration between schools. The provision of guidance and support provided to schools includes planning guidance for Literacy/Numeracy coordinators/TA; support for NQTs on delivering effective lessons, specific support for developing oracy in order to improve mathematical and scientific skills; guidance to improve the level of challenge in planning; deepening mathematical skills and improving higher-order reading skills. The programme is further enhanced by termly meetings of the relevant networks. Over the Covid-19 period, there has been close collaboration with schools to develop materials and distance learning packs to support schools in developing learners' basic skills. The impact of the work has been captured in several evaluative reports and in the feedback received from school leaders.

In cooperation with Bangor University and research experts, resources, programmes and packs have been developed to support reading proficiency in both languages. Collaboration has also taken place on SAFMEDS materials to support numeracy skills. In several schools, these programmes have had a positive impact on learners' reading fluency and on the confidence of teachers and staff to deliver.

Live briefing sessions were delivered to heads and leaders on how to make effective use of the national assessments in reading and number which improved understanding and confidence when measuring individual learners progress over the period.

In the secondary, there was a specific focus on supporting accelerated learning programmes and providing intervention resources in KS3 and guidance on strategies to improve parental engagement. Moreover, a toolkit was developed for Literacy which supports planning and scaffolding opportunities for reading and writing and assisting with learning and developing vocabulary along with revision and recall materials. These have been shared with schools via the Tanio website and GwE's Support Centre. This has resulted in better quality intervention programmes and schools report improved fluency and confidence in learners and a better understanding amongst staff of how to approach scaffolding and planning.

In Digital Competence, the professional learning offer focuses on making effective use of the services available through Hwb to develop teaching and learning and to develop learners' digital competence. In light of training, there has been increase in the number of learners logging on to Hwb every month.

In response to the pandemic, a series of webinars and on-line training were provided focusing on making effective use of learning platforms to sustain teaching and learning during periods of distance and blended learning.

A Digital Facilitator Programme was recently delivered where every cluster nominated an individual, a Digital Champion, to work closely with the LAs and GwE to develop strategic leadership of the digital domain within the cluster. Clusters have started to re-engage with the programme by nominating a facilitator as representative. The majority of clusters have formed a working party to oversee digital developments and to fully incorporate digital competence as part of the Curriculum for Wales.

Specific support has been provided also to improve the quality of teaching and learning in STEM subjects. STEM Gogledd is an ESF European grant funded project, operational across Anglesey, Conwy and Gwynedd. The project began in 2019 with its main aim being to inspire, encourage and support young people to study STEM subjects at school, and encourage them to study and pursue a career in STEM. The project uses Careers Wales trained mentors to provide STEM guidance and support for students on a 1:1 and group basis, and runs alongside the STEM Gogledd Hub which is also a reference point for careers, apprenticeships and post-16 courses.

Groups of pupils are also engaged to challenge stereotypes and promote equal opportunity for girls in particular, encouraging them to partake in other STEM projects such as Technocamps. STEM Gogledd also works directly with teachers to support STEM in their preparations for Curriculum for Wales and also support them to integrate Careers and Work-Related Experiences in the curriculum. Miller Research Audit is carrying out a full evaluation of the project and the final report will be released later in 2022 after consultation with all stakeholders. Based on our involvement with schools over the period, there is firm evidence of the project's positive impact across a wide-range of aspects. Details have been captured in a comprehensive report.

## 6. Y GYMRAEG

### EIN LLAIS NI

This is a co-operative project (funded by Welsh Government) to develop Welsh oracy teaching and learning strategies between GwE schools, Bangor University and other partners. The aim of the project is to:

- Focus on developing learners' Welsh oracy in a modern context relevant to Wales.
- Integrate traditional strategies for teaching oracy with digital strategies.
- Place emphasis on offering 'real' experiences that are relevant to real life.
- Develop pedagogy that integrates naturally with the planning principles and vision of the Curriculum for Wales.
- Develop teachers as action researchers - reflecting on modern research, modelling strategies and evaluating success.
- Teachers sharing case studies of what has worked well.
- Produce an evaluation of the project and a reference for teachers by Bangor University researchers.
- Develop a supplementary pack for professional learning

All Welsh-medium or bilingual Regional schools were given the opportunity to be involved in the Project, and the

100 schools that applied were accepted. The Authorities and GwE encouraged schools through strategic forums and direct contacts to express an interest.

Teachers who have committed to the project are developing effectively as teachers who undertake action research, and are beginning to share their findings to date. They are all working towards submitting a case study by the end of the summer term 2022, elaborating on the success of strategies to promote oral skills through the medium of Welsh.

Schools that are part of the network have had opportunities to share their experiences, and there is positive feedback in terms of the early impact of trialling the strategies in their classrooms. They have appreciated hearing from other schools, including taking ideas and adapting them for their classes.

GwE and Bangor University have collaborated on developing very comprehensive supplementary resources for teachers to assist them with the research. These include:

- **Ein Llais Ni website** - all presentations from the initial launching conference, research papers and documents, examples of successful practice, suggestions for teaching and learning, access to 'Trysorfa Llais 21'(CSC), case studies, examples of digital programmes and apps to promote oral work etc.
- **Podcasts** - a series of conversations on oracy and bilingualism.
- **Newsletters** - to share updates on any developments with schools, including responding to questions and examples from schools.
- **Webinars** - series of sessions promoting the use of digital tools to support and enrich oral work.
- **Networks** - an opportunity to share information and experiences throughout the year.
- **On Demand sessions** - an informal session for any project school to attend, to discuss their work and receive updates.
- **Research** - input from experienced researchers on the associated research and any useful recommendations to support teachers' options when planning.

From the direct contact with project teachers either via telephone calls/Teams, during on-demand meetings or in breakout rooms in networks, it was noted that being involved in the project has allowed a specific and successful focus on developing speaking and listening skills in Welsh, in which there has been a deterioration following lockdown periods, and that purposeful planning for progress in those skills is beginning to come to fruition, especially in terms of enthusiasm and confidence to use the Welsh language. The project has also improved teachers' confidence to develop digital and more modern methods of developing oral skills, which ties in effectively to the formative assessment process, especially aspects such as reflecting on work and improving the quality of spoken language. Consequently, learners are enthusiastic to complete their tasks through the medium of Welsh.

There is a strong link between the project and preparing for the Curriculum for Wales, and the Welsh aspect, with schools encouraged to provide 'real' experiences, provides a purpose and context with learners seeing the language in use beyond the school gates and at work in their community. Digital webinars have effectively equipped teachers with ideas for planning the enrichment of oral skills using relevant programmes or apps, and have provided suggestions and ideas for improving the quality of speaking and listening.

## CLUSTER WORK

Funding for developing informal Welsh and the Welsh language skills of the workforce has been provided on an annual basis for 3 years, directly to clusters in order to support schools to hold Language Charter activities and support any member of staff to develop language skills on the appropriate level.

Regular and constructive meetings are held with local authority officers in order to collaborate on the support for schools. Consequently, there is agreement on the principles of the cluster co-ordinators' programme of work in order to plan for the grant funding for Welsh. This has successfully led to consistency of action across the north.

Co-ordinators plan purposefully and update a 'dashboard' spreadsheet for Welsh funding in consultation with Local Authority officers in order to collate planning information, costs and report on progress. As a result of close collaboration, the process is progressing smoothly and purposefully with funding allocated to the 54 clusters in 2021-22. Co-ordinators report on progress and impact in meetings during the year and formally at the end of the financial year in order to exemplify good practice and identify next steps for development.

### LANGUAGE CHARTER

In a few clusters planned activities have been adapted during the year due to staffing challenges, or it was not possible to take the intended action. Nevertheless, there are excellent examples where learners have had exciting experiences of planning and preparing for developing the use of the Welsh language e.g. collaborating with many artists to undertake various activities such as composing school anthems, composing new melodies, language games, creating podcasts to celebrate the local area. Consequently, this has led to deepening a sense of pride in Welsh identity and inspiring the use of spoken language. In addition, there are examples of successful collaboration between primary and secondary schools, with one Welsh department in a secondary school setting musical challenges for the primary schools in the cluster. Co-ordinators are in the process of updating the information on progress and impact in their cluster 'dashboard', taking into account next steps for planning for 2022-23 funding.

### DEVELOPING THE LANGUAGE SKILLS OF THE WORKFORCE

Data has been received by the National Language Centre regarding Croeso on-line training. Following discussions with Welsh Government, the Welsh in a Year course has been offered to schools for the next academic year. Monthly meetings are being held with Canolfan Bedwyr and Canolfan Dysgu Cymraeg (Bangor University) to promote courses that are already up-and-running and to collaborate on developing specific courses for Authorities or education practitioners e.g. course for teaching assistants.

## 7. WELLBEING

Our main priority during this time of unprecedented change and disruption has been the safety and well-being of our children and our workforce, doing all we can to support the physical and mental well-being of our children, young people and workforce throughout this period. There has been a focus on a variety of aspects within the wellbeing agenda e.g. resilience, adapting to a changing environment, personal reflection, action learning etc.

All Supporting Improvement Advisers (SIAs) have ensured regular contact with the head teacher of their link schools, to check on their wellbeing and to ensure that they receive the required support. To support this further, a series of workshops was be offered to school leaders and education officers.

### PDG

The regional PDG strategy has been implemented across the region with all school's/settings accessing the digital Thinking Differently professional learning offer in addition to the SIA support. All schools / settings are accessing the PDG grant dashboard as evidence of funds.

There is evidence of effective use of the additional consortia led funding to support the accelerated learning additional projects in line with the research team at CIEREI / health and wellbeing whole school and targeted support. The PDG is aligned to supporting whole school approach to wellbeing and targeted support/interventions. Early Years PDG element of the regional strategy – a number of Talk Boost sessions has been delivered for targeted schools; 8 schools have received the training so far. We have also developed a LA annual monitoring form showing the proposed use of the grant in line with the regional priorities for non-maintained settings.

### LAC PDG & WELLBEING

The main developments are as follows:

- Most schools have started the process of change in school culture/ethos and mindsets via the whole school



framework of Trauma Informed Schools / Restorative Approach and Nurture.

- Nearly all schools have attended the TIS whole school approach PL across the region.
- Nearly all schools have attended at least 1 of our Wellbeing PL sessions.
- Clusters who have high number of LAC have all attended TIS or Observational Checklist PL.
- More Relationship based policies & strategies in schools as a result of the Trauma Informed Schools PL.
- Evidence of developing collaborative practice between schools/clusters/CAMHS and children services.
- More settings confident in using a range of impact and evaluation measures in regards to wellbeing.
- Stronger communication and collaboration in place with local authorities and Health in regards to the targeted and universal support.
- Regional and LA Wellbeing mapping completed.
- Increase in schools using a neuro-science based approach within teaching and learning, with
  - Staff more confident in their approaches
  - Learners more able to self-regulate / reflect on their behaviors and feelings.
  - Changes in Learners Behavior and Exclusions
  - Attitudes to learning changed –both learners/staff
  - Learners happier in school
- Practical TIS Toolkit for Schools to use via the universal approach
- Established Trauma Informed Community network / Mental Health First Aid that brings together education with mental health to support learners.
- Staff accessing Reflective Space and support sessions.
- LAC PDG has been aligned to whole school focus and CfW with nearly all clusters having completed the dashboard.
- All LA/Schools have had access to the Designated Lead PL offer.
- Increase in the schools who have LAC who have engaged with our PLO
- Supported schools/settings to implement the professional learning into the curriculum delivery and pedagogy in addition to additional interventions.
- Delivered 3 PL sessions to NQT's across the region to be trauma informed and embed practice into teaching and learning.
- 3 primary schools in the region have been awarded Trauma Informed Status.
- We have 2 trainers qualified to deliver TIS whole school training in Welsh.
- During the last months SIA's have achieved TIS practitioner status and incorporated their skills and knowledge into the supporting school's role.

## 8. PEER ENGAGEMENT

The support for individual schools from GwE is ongoing and is strengthened by the alliances between schools and the Partnership Programme that reflect their quality enhancement processes.

Prior to the COVID pandemic agreement was reached on a regional set of principles for peer engagement. For this purpose, a peer review model was distributed (the Schools Partnership Programme [SPP]) to stakeholders, approved by the Management Board and Joint Committee.

Continuous training and support were provided for all GwE SIAs on peer review, facilitation, mentoring and coaching. By March 2022, twenty-nine SIAs have been trained as peer reviewers and improvement facilitators as part of the SPP. All GwE staff members received SPP refresher training on 17 September, 2021. On 4 October 2021, thirteen SIAs were trained to deliver the Programme, and following a programme of observing training they can now deliver SPP training to schools and clusters. This means that by March 2022 twenty-one SIAs have the capacity to deliver the Programme successfully.

By March 2022, eighteen clusters/alliances (105 schools) have received SPP training, and they have already undertaken peer review, or are preparing to undertake peer review during the summer term / beginning of the

autumn term 2022. One hundred and sixty-one Headteachers / senior leaders have been trained as peer reviewers across the region. One hundred and fifty-four senior leaders / middle leaders and proficient teachers have been trained as 'improvement facilitators'. This enabled leaders and teachers to benefit from professional education of a high standard and it will contribute to improving leadership capacity across the region. The first tier of primary schools and clusters involved in the Programme received training at the beginning of the summer term 2021. Due to the impact of the pandemic additional training was offered for those schools to train additional staff and increase their capacity to complete the work in January 2022. The latest training for secondary schools / clusters involved in the Programme was delivered during March 2022. All special schools in the region completed the full training during the summer term 2021.

There is a programme in place to offer SPP training to all 407 regional schools and Referral Units. The intention is to train approximately 15 clusters every term during the 2021-22 academic year, and in 2022-23. The Programme will be aligned to developing a new curriculum in order to support schools and clusters to evaluate their progress towards the reform journey. To this end a series of reflection questions with a focus on the reform journey have been created in alignment with the peer process.

In September 2021, schools and clusters were asked to express an interest in participating in SPP training. A total of 33 clusters across the region expressed interest, which included 193 regional schools. During March 2022, thirty-three schools received training and it has now been arranged for the remaining clusters to receive training during the summer/autumn term 2022. Three clusters / alliances have been identified to be included in a case study on research into the impact of the Programme in 2022-23.

## 9. BUSINESS MATTERS

### STAFF DEVELOPMENT

The consistency and quality of challenge and support to schools is good. Regular training, support and discussions ensure that Supporting Improvement Advisers' knowledge and understanding of national and local developments, and the implications of this on their roles, is good.

Quality Assurance processes continue to develop and evolve in line with national developments and principles. Messages and information are communicated clearly and on a regular basis to all employees. Generic, purposeful and effective support programmes are offered. Full and sector team meetings offer regular opportunities for collaboration, consultation and contributing to discussions and decisions regarding GwE's direction of work during a period of considerable change.

### PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

The clear and robust accountability framework is a key strength in GwE. Detailed business plans on all levels of planning address all aspects of the work of GwE, and clearly note the contribution of the service to the transformation agenda. Plans are fully costed, with clear success criteria and milestones for delivering objectives.

There are detailed self-evaluation arrangements. Plans are reviewed on a quarterly basis, evaluating progress and impact. Staff on all levels fully understand their responsibility for continued improvement and accountability.

Each Local Authority has a detailed business plan agreed upon by the head of service and the core adviser. Progress towards agreed outcomes on a local authority level is monitored on a quarterly basis and discussed regularly in meetings between the lead adviser and Local Authority. Ongoing issues are referred to GwE Senior leaders in a timely manner.

Self-evaluation is a strong feature in GwE and the self-evaluation process is cyclical and ongoing. Great emphasis is placed on accountability and continuous review, and there is consistent emphasis on progress in line with priorities. Consequently, GwE leaders accurately identify areas of good performance and areas for development, or areas

where there is an element of risk in terms of improving experiences and educational outcomes for learners.

### VALUE FOR MONEY

The consortium has effective financial management processes in place. Communication and consultation on financial arrangements is effective, and GwE staff, the host local authority and Joint Committee all review the core funding and grant expenditure on a regular basis.

A robust financial analysis supports the work of delivering the business plan. A medium term financial plan and workforce plan are both aligned with the business plan. Through increasingly effective use of data to identify key priorities, the link between the business planning process and decisions regarding financial planning is strengthened as the work streams that underpin the business plan clearly note the resources to be used.

A formal framework was produced to assess the wider value for money provided by GwE. The judgement is now consistent across all stakeholders on how to measure the value for money of GwE activities within the structure and objectives of the business plan.

### RISK REGISTER

There are rigorous and comprehensive arrangements in place to accurately identify and manage risks on a local, regional and national level. The risk register is a live document, which is updated on a regular basis in order to identify increasing risks or risks which are no longer deemed as high level. It is reviewed every month in a senior leadership meeting and the Management Board and the Joint Committee review the register on a quarterly basis.

Through effective management of risks to the region, GwE is able to support the region's objectives, make effective use of resources and meet the outcomes as intended.

## 10. BUSINESS PLAN PRIORITIES 2022-2023

The regional priorities and areas for improvement are based firmly on the findings of our internal self-evaluation processes, external reviews on our current practice and direction of travel, and through consultation with headteachers and the Local Authorities. The Business Plan also addresses Welsh Government and the Local Authorities strategic priorities that fall within the remit of the work of GwE.

Additionally, GwE will work in partnership with Local Authorities to support additional local priorities, as appropriate. It also takes into consideration the views and priorities of other middle tier partners such as Estyn, Qualifications Wales, WJEC, National Academy for Educational Leadership (NAEL), Initial Teacher Education (ITE) and Education Workforce Council (EWC).

Our priorities are a combination of improving school provision, leadership and outcomes, as well as delivering the reform journey. Our approach to the reform journey has been integrated in all aspects of our work from the beginning. Not one element of the reform journey can stand alone. It is viewed from the need of learners and the baseline of individual schools and clusters to deliver change according to agreed expectations.

GwE has encouraged schools to collaborate through sharing practice and co-constructing areas that need improving and the challenges of the reform journey. We have invested in various cluster models and encouraged schools to find a range of appropriate partners to deliver improvement and changes. The region has also looked outward for good practice in terms of identifying effective peer review models as well as encouraging our schools to develop and evolve their own practice. GwE believe that peer engagement should closely complement the dimensions identified within the OECD publication 'What Makes a School a Learning Organisation'.

Our focus is on support and on capacity-building for a self-improving system. Challenge Advisers have become 'Supporting Improvement Advisers' and this is more than a name change – it signals a determination to build trust

with key stakeholders and to move away from a top-down approach to school improvement, developing a more long-term, supportive and sustainable strategy.

In partnership with stakeholders, GwE has developed a long-term supportive and sustainable strategy which is successfully building capacity across the region to meet the challenges of the wider reform. The integrated approach has focused on developing collaborative opportunities across clusters of schools. To further support schools, GwE has developed the concept of creating termly milestones through the information management system G6. These offer all schools an opportunity to reflect and through continuous professional dialogue with SIAs, activity and its impact along with identification of next steps are shared.

Professional learning will be central to ensuring that all school staff have the professional knowledge and skills to deliver on the education reforms that are well underway in Wales. Taking into consideration the system expectations and working in collaboration with partners, a clear framework for themes for professional learning has been identified for practitioners within schools.

Our **strategic priorities** for improvement for 2022-2023 are:

## OUR STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

- 1. Curriculum & Assessment** - Supporting a national curriculum with equity & excellence at its core that sets high standards for all learners
- 2. Developing a high-quality education profession** - improving the teaching & learning in our schools
- 3. Leadership** - supporting inspirational leaders working collaboratively to raise standards. Includes future leadership & professional networks
- 4. Strong & inclusive schools** committed to excellence, equity & well-being
- 5. Supporting a self improving system** - supporting a system in which the education profession have the skills, capacity & agency to continually learn & improve their practice
- 6. Business** - ensure that GwE has strong governance and effective business and operational support that provides value for money.

The four purposes as outlined in the *Curriculum for Wales* guidance should be the starting point and aspiration for schools as they prepare to design the new curriculum and support their learners to become:

- Ambitious, capable learners, ready to learn throughout their lives;
- Enterprising, creative contributors, ready to play a full part in life and work;
- Ethical, informed citizens of Wales and the world; and
- Healthy, confident individuals, ready to lead fulfilling lives as valued members of society.

Our **regional priorities for 2022-23** are outlined below are aimed to support schools as they work towards those four purposes (Appendix 6 – GwE Regional Business Plan 2022-2023).

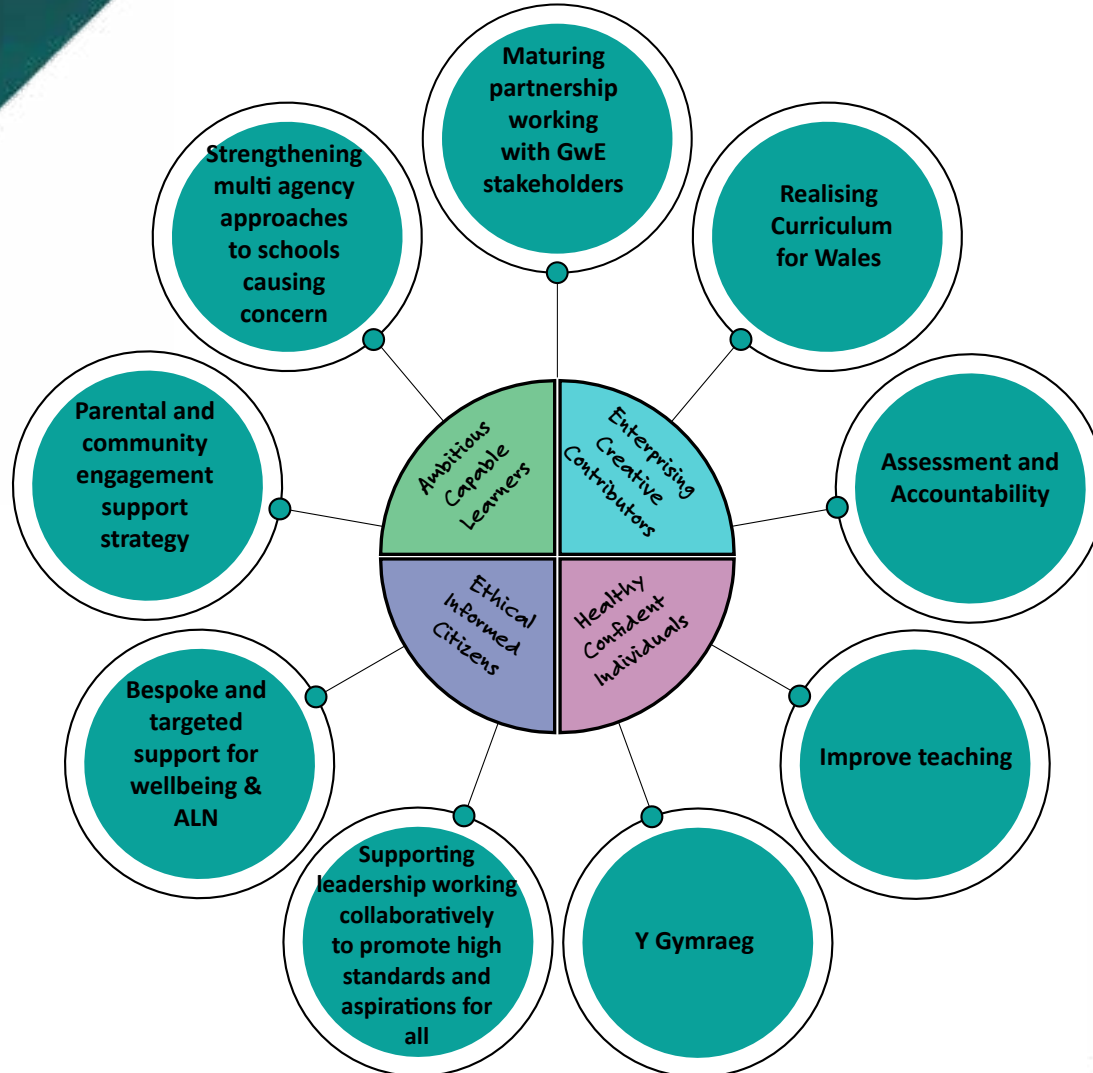
These priorities are supported by the service's detailed plans, outlining how and when the aspects of each priority will be delivered and setting expectations for the next steps in delivering the reform journey. Also, each Local Authority has a detailed business plan agreed upon by the head of service and the core adviser.



# OUR HIGH LEVEL PRIORITIES 2022-2023

## PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

GROWTH  
POINTS



Collaboration

Learning Organisation

Quality Enhancement

Developing leadership and supporting workforce wellbeing

ENHANCEMENT



Collaborating • Learning • Succeeding

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# RHAGLEN WAITH GWE A CHEFNOGAETH I YSGOLION YN YSTOD PANDEMIG COVID

## GWE WORK PROGRAMME AND SUPPORT TO SCHOOLS DURING THE COVID PANDEMIC



- Gwasanaeth yn ei gyfanrwydd wedi ailbwrpasu sawl gwaith er mwyn diwallu gofynion diwygiedig y rhanddeiliaid.
- Whole service has been repurposed several times to meet the revised requirements of stakeholders.



## **Gwahanol rolau ers diwedd mis Mawrth 2020**

- **Cefnogi lles a datblygiad arweinwyr – Atebolrwydd a monitro**
- **Arwain o'r canol ac arweinyddiaeth ar draws**
- **Dysgu proffesiynol ystyrlon**
- **Arweinyddiaeth gydweithredol**
- **Modelu**
- **Rheoli disgwyliadau rhanddeiliaid**

## **Our different roles since the end of March 2020**

- **Supporting the wellbeing and development of leaders - Accountability and monitoring**
- **Leading from the middle and lateral leadership**
- **Meaningful Professional Learning**
- **Collaborative leadership**
- **Modelling**
- **Managing stakeholder expectations**

## Gwaith a wnaed ers mis Mawrth 2020

### Cam 1: Cyn y cyfnod clo

- Cytuno ar strategaeth gyfathrebu â Chyfarwyddwyr y chwe awdurdod lleol.
- Cyswllt ffôn rheolaidd â phob ysgol drwy'r YCG i gefnogi penaethiaid i gadw ysgolion ar agor a lleddfu pryderon.
- Lleoli staff GwE mewn ysgolion ac UCD, ble roedd angen, i'w cefnogi i aros ar agor.
- Lleoli staff GwE yn yr awdurdodau i'w cefnogi gyda gwasanaethau hanfodol.
- Timau GwE yn llwytho adnoddau cychwynnol ar Google Classroom penodol i gefnogi ysgolion ddechrau cynllunio ar gyfer dysgu o bell.

## Work undertaken between March 2020 – present

### Phase 1: Pre-lockdown

- Communication strategy agreed with Directors of six local authorities.
- Regular phone contact with each school through SIA to support head teachers to keep schools open and assuage concerns.
- Deploy GwE staff in schools and PRUs where identified to support them to stay open.
- Deploy GwE staff in the authorities to support them with essential services.
- GwE teams upload initial resources to a designated Google classroom to support schools with initial planning for distance learning.

## Cam 2: Cefnogi ysgolion ar ddechrau'r cyfnod clo

- Cadw mewn cysylltiad rheolaidd ag ysgolion er mwyn sicrhau iechyd a lles y staff a'r disgyblion.
- Parhau i gefnogi ysgolion neu Hybiau unigol ble roedd prinder staff yno.
  - Uwch sgilio staff GwE o ran dysgu'n ddigidol.
  - Datblygu canllawiau, cymorth ac adnoddau dysgu i ysgolion ddechrau cefnogi dysgu o bell mewn ysgolion.
- Cefnogi ysgolion gyda Dysgu o Bell a chynhyrchu fideos defnyddiol ar 'Sut i....' fel bod athrawon yn gallu datblygu ac amrywio eu dulliau dysgu o bell.

## Phase 2: Supporting schools at the beginning of lockdown

- Keeping regular contact with schools in order to ensure health and wellbeing of both staff and pupils.
- Continuing to support individual schools or Hubs when there was a shortage of staff to attend.
- Upskilling of GwE staff for digital learning.
- Developing guidance, support and learning resources for schools to begin to support distance learning in schools.
- Supporting schools with Digital Learning and producing useful 'How To' videos so that teachers can develop and vary their distance learning methodology.

### Cam 3: Dysgu o Bell

- Datblygu **canllawiau dysgu o bell** i ysgolion ar y cyd â rhanbarthau eraill.
- Ar y cychwyn, llwytho deunyddiau a syniadau priodol ar Google Classrooms ar gyfer pob Cyfnod Allweddol.
- Cymorth fel bod athrawon ac arweinwyr yn gallu gweithredu yn unol â'r arferion gorau wrth greu a defnyddio adnoddau dysgu ar-lein.
- Datblygu modelau DP effeithiol o fewn GwE a'u rhannu'n genedlaethol a'u mabwysiadu gan bob rhanbarth.
- Annog ysgolion, arweinwyr ac athrawon i rannu adnodau ar draws y gyfundrefn ac annog ysgolion i ddefnyddio Hwb i rannu eu dulliau gweithredu, eu cynlluniau a'u hadnoddau dysgu.
- Sicrhau bod gan bob dysgwr fynediad cyfartal at ddysgu ac adnoddau dysgu.
- Pob YCG wedi cael DP priodol ar yr hyn yw DP effeithiol.

### Phase 3: Distance Learning

- Developed **distance learning guidance** for schools in collaboration with other regions.
- Initially, google classrooms populated with appropriate materials and ideas for all Key Stages to refer to.
- Support to enable leaders and teachers to act in line with best practice in creating and using online learning resources.
- Effective DL Models were developed in GwE and were shared nationally and adopted by all regions.
- Schools, leaders and teachers were encouraged to share resources across the system and to encourage schools to use Hwb to share their approaches, plans and learning resources.
- Ensured all learners have an equitable access to learning and learning resources.
- All SIAs to have appropriate PL as to what makes effective DL.



## Cam 4: Cefnogi ysgolion i ail agor

- Cydweithio â'r chwe Awdurdod Lleol.
- Sefydlu trefn gyfathrebu glir efo rhanddeiliaid allweddol.
- Cyfarfod yn wythnosol â'r Cyfarwyddwyr a'r Deilyddion Portffolio Addysg.
- Creu Fframwaith Polisi a Dangosfwrdd.
- Modelu asesiad risg i bob sector.
- Adnabod rolau rhanbarthol a lleol o ran cefnogi dysgwyr bregus.
- Uwch sgilio staff GwE i gefnogi arweinwyr ysgolion yn y meysydd hyn.

## Phase 4: Supporting schools to re-open

- Joint work with 6 Local Authorities.
- Establish clear lines of communication with key stakeholders.
- Weekly meetings with Directors and Education portfolio holders.
- Created a Policy Framework and Dashboard.
- Modelled risk assessment for each sector.
- Regional and local roles identified in supporting Vulnerable learners.
- Upskilled GwE staff to support school leadership in these areas.

## Cam 5: Dysgu Cyfunol

- Uwch sgilio tîm GwE gyda gwaith ymchwil rhyngwladol ar ddysgu cyfunol.
- Plethu'r Cwricwlwm i Gymru yn naturiol â'r arferion presennol.
- Unedau aml-ddisgyblaethol i atgyfnerthu a datblygu sgiliau.
- GAC/Cymwysterau/Arholiadau

## Phase 5: Blended Learning

- Upskilling of GwE team with international research on blended learning.
- Naturally blending CfW into current practice.
- Multi disciplinary units to consolidate and develop skills.
- CAGs / Qualifications / Exams

## Cam 6 Dysgu ar Garlam

- Triongl o angen;
- Lles corfforol;
- Lles emosiynol;
- Llythrennedd a rhifedd;
- Sail y dystiolaeth.

## Phase 6 Accelerated Learning

- Triangle of need;
- Physical well being;
- Emotional well being;
- Literacy and numeracy;
- Evidence base.

## Cam 7

### Cymorth cyfunol i ysgolion ac ALL

- Canolfan Cefnogaeth GwE
- Adborth o'r 'cyfnod gweithredol' gan ysgolion. Rhannu arferion gorau.
- Cynllunio ar gyfer gwahanol sefyllfaoedd, ar wahanol lefelau.
- Symud yr agenda dysgu yn y cyfnod nesaf. Cefnogi ysgolion o ran DC – cynllunio a'r ddarpariaeth
- Cefnogi Arweinyddiaeth / Penaethiaid – atgyfnerthu hyder ac adeiladu gwytnwch i'r system.
- Dysgu Proffesiynol
- Cefnogi ALL (cynhwysedd)
- Lles dysgwyr
- Cyfathrebu a chydweithio

## Phase 7

### Blended support to schools and LAs

- GwE Support Centre
- Feedback from 'operational period' from schools. Shared good practice.
- Planning for different scenarios, on several levels.
- Moving the learning agenda forwards in the next phase. Support schools as regards BL – planning and provision.
- Support for Leadership/Head teachers – restoring confidence and resilience building within the system.
- Professional Learning
- LA Support (capacity)
- Pupil wellbeing
- Communication and collaboration

## Cydweithio â Chymheiriaid

- Datblygu ar fuddsoddiad cryf mewn gwaith a chydweithio clwstwr.
- Hwyluso cydweithio clwstwr o fewn sector, ac ar draws sector, i gefnogi ysgolion drwy'r pedwar cam.
- Hwyluso cyfarfodydd i arweinwyr dysgu ac addysgu a rhwydweithiau pynciol i drafod dulliau dysgu o bell a chyfunol (math PISA).
- Cydweithio â phenaethiaid a Swyddogion yr ALL drwy gyfarfodydd fforymau strategol.
- Cydweithio â swyddogion yr ALL drwy grŵp safonau lleol.
- Hwyluso gwaith i gyd-lunio modelau dysgu cyfunol.
- Cydweithio â phartneriaid yn yr haen ganol.
- Arwyddo Memorandwm Dealltwriaeth rhwng GwE a Phrifysgol Bangor.

## Peer Collaboration

- Building on strong investment in cluster working and collaboration.
- Facilitation of sector and cross-sector cluster collaboration to support schools through the four phases.
- Facilitation of meetings for teaching and learning leads and subject networks to discuss distance and blended learning approaches (PISA style).
- Collaboration with head teachers and LA Officers via strategic forum meetings.
- Collaboration with LA officers via local standards group.
- Facilitation of co-construction of blended learning models.
- Collaboration with middle tier partners.
- MoU between GwE and Bangor University signed off.

## Ein rôl ni wrth symud ymlaen:

- **Cefnogi lles a datblygiad arweinwyr – Atebolrwydd a monitro**
- **Arwain o’r canol ac arweinyddiaeth ar draws**
- **Dysgu proffesiynol ystyrlon**
- **Arweinyddiaeth gydweithredol**
- **Modelu**
- **Rheoli disgwyliadau rhanddeiliaid**

## Our role in going forward:

- **Supporting the wellbeing and development of leaders - Accountability and monitoring**
- **Leading from the middle and lateral leadership**
- **Meaningful Professional Learning**
- **Collaborative leadership**
- **Modelling**
- **Managing stakeholder expectations**

## Canllawiau ac adnoddau

- Google Classroom
- Cymorthyddion
- Grŵp Dychwelyd i'r Ysgol rhanbarthol
  - Aseidiadau Risg
  - Dangosfwrdd
  - Lles
  - AD
  - Cyfathrebu
- Weminarau
- Gwefan DC
- Dysgu Carlam

## Guidance and resources

- Google Classroom
- Support staff;
- Regional return to School Group;
  - Risk assessments;
  - Dashboard;
  - Well being;
  - HR
  - Communication
- Webinars;
- BL Website
- ALP

# Dysgu Proffesiynol

- Canllawiau DC a DoB
- Rhaglen waith GwE
- Rhwydweithiau Dysgu ac Addysgu a phynciol
- Hyfforddiant i'r Clystyrau
- Cwricwlwm i Gymru

# Professional Learning

- DL and BL guidance;
- GwE work programme;
- Teaching and Learning and subject Networks;
- Training for clusters
- Curriculum for Wales



# Cyfathrebu

- Un i un gyda phennaeth;
- Clwstwr;
- Bwrdd Rheoli;
- Fforymau Penaethiaid;
- BAS;
- Aelodau Etholedig;
- Cyd Bwyllgor;
- Bwletin a'r wefan.

# Communication

- One to one with HT;
- Cluster;
- Management Board;
- HT fora;
- LAQB;
- Elected members;
- Joint Committee;
- Bulletin and website.

# Workstream - The 12 Pedagogical Principles

## Difference made

- Schools are developing further as self-improving schools with a deepened understanding of a collegiate approach to improving teaching and learning
- Schools are developing as learning organisations by collaborating in research and to implement shared understanding, consistency in planning and delivering the pedagogical principles in schools across the 3-16 continuum within the clusters
- Raising standards of teaching and learning in schools and a solid foundation for Curriculum for Wales
- An agreed vision for pedagogy in place in the clusters that contributes to realising the 4 Purposes
- Deepen practitioners understanding of how the pedagogical principles relate with each other in the creation of productive, effective learning experiences.
- Practitioners using a blend of developmentally appropriate pedagogical approaches that responds to learner needs( including emotional and social skills)
- Practitioners creating effective cross-curricular connections to deliver a broad and balanced curriculum, drawing on learners' previous knowledge and experiences.
- Practitioners to consider not only the physical spaces but also the emotional climate that support learners to achieve their potential.
- Pupils taking responsibility for their own learning and developing their metacognitive skills.
- Pupil voice having a more integral role in the teaching and learning.
- Pupils can make connections to solve rich, authentic real-life problems by using their critical and creative thinking skills.

# Workstream - Formative Assessment

## Difference made

- Participating schools have developed well as learning organisations, undertaken action research , and have had valuable opportunities to collaborate with schools across the region
- Teachers have deepened their understanding of effective pedagogy based on extensive and current local and international research
- Consistency of messages on effective teaching principles
- Positive impact on learner independence, wellbeing and attitude to learning
- Positive impact on learning climate, teaching and learning quality
- Has made a significant contribution to schools' readiness and preparations for the Reform Journey and the CfW

# Workstream - Formative Assessment and Assessment

## Difference made

- Deepening practitioners understanding of the importance of observation in their everyday practice to:
  - gain a greater understanding of the needs, skills and progress of pupils
  - allows practitioners to identify the ways in which children and young people prefer to learn, and how best to motivate them to participate in the learning process.
  - identify those learners who might need extra support to help them reach their full potential.
- Practitioners have a clearer understanding that effective observations enable them to plan appropriate provision that supports learners' involvement and enjoyment in their learning, as well as planning to support them in moving to the next stage of learning.
- Greater understanding that assessment needs to be an ongoing process embedded into day-to-day practice, in a way that is indistinguishable from teaching and learning



# GwE and Shirley Clarke Formative Assessment Action Research Implementation, Impact and Evolving Practice



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GwE

Cychwethlo - Dysgu - Llwyddo  
Collaborating - Learning - Succeeding

# Aims

- ▶ Build expertise across the region to collaborate on pedagogy and self-improvement
- ▶ Raise teaching standards and ensure consistently high quality teaching across and within schools
- ▶ Develop teams of teachers to be active researchers
- ▶ Update teachers with current research findings
- ▶ Support teachers as they review and adapt their practice, develop their confidence and expertise to lead others.
- ▶ Share and celebrate successes and passion for teaching
- ▶ All this in preparation for Curriculum for Wales and the national reform journey

## The vision/ the plan

### **Tier 1 ( October 2017 - Nov 2018)**

27 schools - 54 teachers

Formative Assessment Action Research Teams led by Shirley Clarke

### **Tier 2 (Sept 2018- Sept 2019)**

Formative Assessment Action Research Teams led by Tier 1 and GwE following Shirley Clarke's work

### **Tier 3 (Sept 2019- Sept 2020)**

The remainder of the schools in the region.

Formative Assessment Action Research Teams led by Tiers 1, 2 and GwE following Shirley Clarke's work

## Numbers

89% of the region's schools

- 96% Primary
- 80% Secondary
- 70% Special

	Schools	Teachers
<b>Tier 1</b>	27	54
<b>Tier 2</b>	193	386
<b>Tier 3</b>	140	261
<b>TOTAL</b>	360	701

# Research Areas - over a year

Growth mindset ,learning powers, Learning zone 'bullseye' diagram

Talk Partners

Prior Knowledge Questioning

Learning Intentions - out of context, when to present, recording, Open and closed

Success Criteria - pupils co- constructing, closed (compulsory) and open (choice) SC, exemplification of 'excellence

Feedback - oral and written, before, during and after a lesson.

Eliminate ability grouping

Eliminate comparative reward

Reducing cognitive load



# Measuring Impact

Used both qualitative and quantitative data to evaluate the impact of teacher's action research

## **Project teachers;**

Discussion in structured review meetings,

Discussions with their schools' Supporting Improvement Adviser

Questionnaires

## **Collaboration with Bangor University:**

Administered 3 questionnaires

- Teachers' Evidence Informed Practice
- Teachers' understanding and confidence with Formative assessment strategies
- Pupils feedback questionnaire

PhD Student Research - Tier 2 schools - using a health economics perspective to evaluate the regional action research

**Estyn** - for Tiers 1 and 2. Inspection Area 2 (Wellbeing and Attitudes to Learning) and Inspection Area 3 (Teaching and Learning Experiences).

# Workstream - Developing Pedagogy during the lockdown (Digital Learning)

## Difference made

Increased number of schools using a range of digital services to support teaching and learning and early evidence shows that the enhanced usage during the lockdown period has been sustained since returning to school.

In response to the pandemic we hosted a series of webinars and produced online training that focused on making effective use of learning platforms to support teaching and learning through periods of distance and blended learning. Following the training offered, there has been an average increase of 326% in the number of learners logging in to Hwb monthly. There is a 341% increase in the number of times each learner engages with Hwb on average each month compared to pre covid months. In 2021 'Google Workspace for Education' login data increased by 904% through Hwb. In 2022 to date the average remains 771% above pre-pandemic levels suggesting that these platforms continue to be used regularly within schools.

- Total number of asynchronous support videos views - 9,693 views
- Total number of users participated on online asynchronous courses – 948
- Regional Hwb engagement average for Quarter 3 – 98.3%

## Number of effective examples uploaded to GSC (School to School) - [GwE Support Centre - School to School](#)

- Total number of page views of effective examples uploaded to GSC (School to School) - 27,576

## Number of useful resources uploaded to GSC – [GwE Support Centre](#)

- Total number of page views - 123,690
- Total number of downloads - 23,067

## Workstream - Assessment

### Difference made

- Most schools in the region are part of an emerging dialogue on revising and developing assessment processes
- Small number of schools trialling a progress record

## Workstream - MAT

### Difference made

- Increased focus on needs of MAT pupils
- Schools adopting T and L approaches suited to MAT and useful for all pupils.
- Increased precision in pedagogical approaches in schools.
- Refined understanding of what challenge in T and L is – and isn't
- Providing teachers with practical teaching strategies based on recent research
- Ensuring the issue of challenge and high aspiration feeds into development of CfW

## Workstream - Differentiation

### Difference made

- Schools had access to bilingual resources on differentiation covering a range of learning needs
- Schools had ongoing support to embed and develop according to own school needs
- Additional support for English and Welsh departments provided a depth and focus on application

## Workstream - Developing Pedagogy during the lockdown (Distance Learning, Blended Learning and Live Learning)

### Difference made

- A greater understanding of how adaptations to the school day structures can be further developed to support learning within the new curriculum
- Pupil and parent voice have contributed to monitoring of engagement and wellbeing. Schools have responded better to feedback and adapted their provision appropriately.
- An effective blended approach to remote learning including live learning adopted in most schools. A variety of methods used including recorded video presentations, use of breakout rooms, online quizzes and opportunities for independent study time to apply new knowledge and skills. Schools continue to build upon this to further develop their teaching and learning.
- SIAs have supported all schools to evaluate their provision and with planning to build on successes to develop CfW.
- Evolved GwE PL offer - recordings of all PL virtual sessions has offered flexibility and access to all members of staff in schools

## Workstream – Evolving and Strengthening Peer Engagement

### Difference made

- Strengthened collaboration at all levels across the region
- Greater ownership within partnerships of the improvement journey for each school
- Increasing readiness and confidence to share practice between schools, clusters and alliances
  
- Number of schools / clusters participating in the program: 105/18
- Number of trained Peer Reviewers: 161
- Number of Improvement Facilitators trained: 154
- Number of schools / clusters for the next tier: 154/20

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## Workstream - ALN

### Difference made

- Develops effective collaboration between ALNcos
- Schools fully aware of the Transformation requirements.
- Schools able to identify effectively areas for further development with implementation of the transformation.

## Workstream – Trauma Informed Practice (Wellbeing)

### Difference made

- Nearly all schools/settings have accessed 1-day whole school training on TIS practice. Over 120 schools have gone on to complete the 11-day Diploma. As a result, schools are now using a neuro-science based approach within teaching and learning. Staff are more confidence tin their approaches and pupils are more able to self-regulate and reflect on their behaviours and feelings (a key element to reducing toxic stress and mitigating a life-long trajectory of mental ill-health).
- We are the first region in the country to develop a Trauma Informed Community network that brings together education with other sectors who work holistically with children.
- Networks of practitioners built and offering both formal and peer supervision and support building well-being and capacity of staff.
- We have teachers training as trainers to further develop capacity and embed a common language and practice across the region and Wales. We also have 16 short films showcasing effective practise and impact.

## Workstream – Wellbeing of Leaders/Staff

### Difference made

- All leaders who have taken part in the pilot have embraced the opportunity to access 6 x reflective sessions.
- Nearly all, 17 out of 20 colleagues in the initial phase of the offer have requested continuing sessions and the offer now has a waiting list.

## Workstream – Universal Wellbeing Support

### Difference made

- Aligned funding to develop better collaborative practice
- More settings confident in using a range of Impact and evaluation measures regarding wellbeing.
- Stronger communication and collaboration in place with local authorities and key stakeholders
- A range of evidence-based resources/ guidance is available to support schools with wellbeing models and professional learning offer

## Workstream - Supporting Parents

### Difference made

- Enables parents to play a critical role in providing learning opportunities at home and in linking what children learn at school with what happens elsewhere.
- Builds upon increased parental engagement that developed during COVID pandemic and provides a valuable tool for schools if there are further lockdown.

## Workstream – Supporting Teaching Assistants with their teaching

### Difference made

- Increase in engagement of teaching assistants in professional development.
- Google Classroom has raised the awareness of teaching assistants of the training available to them and led to an increase in numbers on the national programmes within the region. It is also a valuable tool for schools for INSET days and should a further lockdown arise.
- Improved awareness of the new curriculum and the ability to support pupils.
- Induction – changing the delivery of this training has resulted in numbers doubling during 2020-21 to over 100.
- Aspiring HLTA – raising professional skills leading towards HLTA status, with 85% achieving the status at the end of Cylch 1.

### Difference made

- As a result of establishing and delivering the collaborative 'Ein Llais Ni' project (between GwE and Bangor University), teachers involved in the project now have a better understanding of the importance of purposeful planning to improve opportunities and the quality of learners' speaking and listening skills. This has also resulted in developing teachers' action research skills and increasing their use of evidence in order to select successful and specific teaching methods for their learners.
- Partnership working with Bangor University, amongst others, has resulted in Welsh-medium evidence-based intervention programmes being compiled and evaluated (reading, language comprehension and vocabulary recognition).
- By empowering discussions and collaborations with local authorities, arrangements and activities involving the cluster plans to support Welsh have deepened and developed effectively. There is robust evidence that collaboration and joint-development have resulted in strengthening the provision for learners across sectors and in every linguistic context.
- Full commitment to the Sabbatical courses has been successful and has further built teachers' confidence to speak Welsh and inspired them to continue to develop their skills.
- GwE staff continue to receive weekly Welsh lessons and are becoming more confident and are fully committed to attending a week-long course at Nant Gwrtheyrn at the beginning of April.



# Workstream - Recruit, Recover, Raise Standards: The Accelerating Learning Programme

## RRRS projects:

- **Improving Fluency in Oral Reading (iFOR) Project:** These resources are focused on the use of evidence-informed teaching and fluency-building strategies to help pupils improve basic reading skills. 42 schools signed up for training in spring term 2021-22. All schools will now be invited to attend four remote implementation support sessions in November 2021, January, March and May 2022, and will be able to contact the research team for any support in the meantime. Further development of the Welsh medium materials is also underway, bringing them in line with the more recent developments of the English medium resources. Schools are also being invited to get involved in measuring progress in Oral Reading Fluency using the DIBELS screening test as well as trailing the use of these fluency materials by parents at home. 103 teachers that have accessed the bilingual Google Classroom resources.
- **Remote Instruction of Language and Literacy (RILL) Project:** RILL is an 8-week teaching programme that can be delivered either remotely or in school. It is designed to help maintain and/or improve reading and spelling skills for children with and without literacy difficulties, and targets core skills for word-level literacy (phonological awareness, vocabulary, word reading and spelling). In 2021 we developed a bilingual version of RILL. 54 schools have signed up for training in September 2021, the majority being Welsh medium schools. 31 schools and 55 teachers have been trained in RILL so far. In addition to a full day training, we currently offer weekly drop-in sessions to support teachers. We have also developed a Hwb network where teachers can access information and training materials (e.g., tutorials and how to videos), ask questions, and reflect on their experience with the research team/other teachers.
- **Keeping Pupils Reading (KPR) Project:** This is a continuation of our longstanding Headsprout implementation projects. Headsprout Early reading and comprehension programme is an evidence-based intervention to help struggling readers in primary schools. This project is designed to support schools and parents make effective use of Headsprout programmes. 63 schools have engaged with this support since 2020. This includes over 700 views of the teacher and parent support videos and resource centre. 74 teachers have joined the Hwb support network, and many of these are literacy and/or ALN specialists.

# Workstream - Recruit, Recover, Raise Standards: The Accelerating Learning Programme

## RRRS projects:

- **Evidence Reviews:** These four reviews provide a summary of the current evidence for a range of commonly used programmes and interventions. For each programme, a range of practical information useful for school leaders is presented, including information on efficacy, cost, training requirements and curriculum links. These are hosted on the GwE Support Centre. These reviews are on the GwE Support Centre and have been promoted as part of Welsh Government's Evidence Informed Profession Project (EIPP).
- **SAFMEDS numeracy support:** Say All Fast Minute Every Day Shuffled (SAFMEDS) is an evidence-based teaching strategy designed to help pupils improve their fluency and progress in mathematics. This resource is focused on the use of evidence-informed teaching and fluency-building strategies to help pupils improve basic number skills. The strategies have been identified as having a strong theoretical research base and alongside positive evidence from efficacy trials. The strategy can be used in class, online and at home. The following SAFMEDS resources have been created and shared with schools: Monthly 'drop-in' sessions have been accessible to all regional schools; Bespoke training delivered to regional schools and PRUs; Promotion of SAFMEDS through the Bulletin and GwE Support Centre; Creation of bilingual resources; SAFMEDS online tutorial; SAFMEDS bespoke online website; Introduction to Precision Teaching training; Additional Phase SAFMEDS hand-held cards to extend breadth of coverage from the Numeracy Framework; Commissioned creation of new Learning materials – these can be used as targeted and universal provision, targeting regular retrieval practice and fluency development.

- **Evidence-Informed Profession Project (EIPP):** We have recruited 11 clusters (41 schools) to this project from all six LAs. The launch meeting took place in December 2022, and the research team are now distributing the baseline survey to schools before we commence the school input sessions from February to June 2022. We have delivered two 'active ingredient' evidence sessions for schools in 2022, namely 'using logic models' and using evidence reviews'.
- **National Professional Enquiry Project (NPEP):** We currently have 42 schools participating in the NPEP project, comprising 11 lead and 31 partner schools across all LAs. GwE continue to work with Bangor and Glyndwr university staff to support these schools via half termly meetings and input on research and evaluation methods. We meet these schools regularly to support their enquiry and evaluation work.
- **Developing a model for collaborative research with schools:** Two research papers accepted for publication this year:
  - Owen, K., Watkins, R. C. and Hughes, J. C. (2022). From Evidence-Informed to Evidence-Based: An Evidence Building Framework for Education. *Review of Education*
  - Pegram, J., Watkins, R. C., Hoerger, M. and Hughes, J. C. (2022). Assessing the Range and Evidence-Base of Interventions in a Typical School Cluster. *Review of Education*

## Brief Overview

- All schools invited to be part of regional and local Curriculum for Wales networks. **300+** expressions of interest in July 2021, rising to **700+** expressions of interest by October 2021.
- March 2022, currently have **733** members from schools, GwE SIAs, LA colleagues, CABAN staff
- **49** networks have been established - 6 x AOLEs, curriculum design, progression & assessment
- Infrastructure established with monthly regional meetings with Professor Graham Donaldson attending and offering guidance / feedback - focus of meetings based on expectations within **Journey to Rollout**
- All local meetings across all 6 LAs meet monthly in between the regional meetings
- Communication key aspect in sharing work with all schools through GwE SIAs, website, regular updates at Headteacher forums
- Established a TEAMS infrastructure where regional and all local networks have dedicated TEAMS to share work and collaborate
- Realises GwE strategy to support both leaders and teachers to engage in professional learning and collaboration

### Difference made

- Between **117-130** Regional group members meeting monthly has enabled understanding of the Curriculum for Wales framework and principles of working to **deepen significantly**
- Regional chairs, who are school practitioners report they have **increased confidence and ownership** to establish local communication channels, leading discussions in local forums and across clusters of schools
- **Increased number of schools** developing and sharing examples of their approaches to curriculum design and planning
- **Increased number of website hits** accessing **greater number of materials and examples** shared by networks & schools – 3923 hits on the Networks page within Curriculum for Wales Jan - March 2022
- **Increased usage and communication across TEAMS** areas where Individuals within networks share key messages and examples of further sharing within their clusters and secondary alliances.
- **Confidence in the system** that there is a clear and transparent strategy to respond to the statutory requirements of September 2022.

### Curriculum for Wales Workshops:

- Leading Change sessions took place in Feb 2021 with 30 sessions and 732 SLT practitioners attending
- 54 sessions during June – July 2021 based on shared vision, planning for curriculum change sessions (108 hours of PL)
- % who've attended 1 session or more in June/July was 80.3%
- 1155 attended the sessions = 2310 hours of Professional Learning for school leaders
- All clusters have access to bespoke website link with padlets and collaborative documents which act as central resource base for PL work, capture discussions and identify areas for further local discussions (examples available)

### Curriculum Design Workshops

- Target audience was SLT members and 10 sessions run virtually over a week period in March 2022
- 101 Secondary SLT members, 504 primary SLT members, Special schools/PRUs 16 and 8 other consortia/Estyn attended
- Many SLTs used these sessions to have wider staff join the webinar for discussions
- All schools have had access to this material and follow up sessions with SIAs taking place in most schools/clusters
- CFW regional and local networks able to feed into PL with examples of high level curriculum summaries and principles of design in line with Journey to Rollout expectations

### Progression & Assessment Workshops

- Target audience was SLT members and 10 sessions run virtually over a week period in March 2022
- 141 Secondary SLT members, 620 primary SLT members, Special schools/PRUs 18 and 11 other consortia/Estyn attended
- CFW networks feeding into examples shared on the purposes of assessment, along with Heads sharing their experiences
- Very positive feedback received 'the session was spot on! Excellent messages presented in a clear and simple way.'
- All materials and recordings available on GwE CFW support centre – xxx hits

**Principles of planning workshops to follow in April 2022 (rearranged due to feedback from schools on their capacity)**

**Next phases of cross-regional national PL programme for CFW to be shared in April.**

# Workstream – PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

## Difference made

1. **Increased levels of engagement** across the region by SLT members and teachers since Summer 2021 – **all schools** engaging with PL offer
2. **Increased confidence** of SLT members and teachers in understanding the principles of CFW framework and their planning to reach new statutory requirements
3. All SIAs engaged in regular professional dialogue with SLT members across all schools as follow up to the local PL offer and offering bespoke PL to individual school needs where appropriate
4. **Increased number of schools** on track to meet new statutory requirements by September 2022 (6 steps report)
5. Increasing number of examples of Senior Leaders in schools using PL resources to engage wider with all staff e.g. leading change
6. Clear programme in place for SIAs regular professional learning with input from Graham Donaldson has led to increased understanding and confidence across the team – bringing secondary and primary colleagues to better understand the 3-16 continuum (#sessions & hours).
7. **Sharing integrated messages** across team allows all SIAs to follow up in classrooms and staffrooms e.g. CFW PL – many examples of schools sharing developing their vision and using road map to plan implementation priorities for 2020-21, high level curriculum design follow up work



# Workstream – PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

**Next phases of cross-regional national PL programme for CFW to be shared in April – e.g. focus on progression, strategic planning 2022 and beyond**

## Senior Leaders

## Middle Leaders, Teachers

What do we mean by progression?

Understanding the CFW framework / AOLEs

How do we design high level progression / different models

What do we mean by progression?

Strategic planning for curriculum development Sept 2022 and beyond

Planning for progression within disciplines / AOLEs

Designing mandatory and wider elements

Planning different curriculum models

Curriculum design across 3-16 continuum

Planning for cross-curricular skills

Purposes of assessment within CfW

Planning for integral skills

The role of assessment within accountability

Planning for cross-cutting themes

Evaluating CfW within your schools

Planning for increasing breadth & depth across 3-16

CFW within a smaller school setting

Planning for the Principles of Progression within AOLEs

Purposes of assessment

Role of research & enquiry in curriculum planning



## Workstream – PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Data that shows the engagement during Summer term 2021 – vision / planning for curriculum change 1 & 2

Cod ALI	Awdurdod Lleol	Nifer o Ysgolion	Nifer wedi Mynychu 3 sesiwn	% wedi Mynychu 3 sesiwn	Nifer heb fynychu dim un sesiwn	% heb fynychu sesiwn	Nifer wedi Mynychu 1 neu fwy o sesiynau	%wedi Mynychu 1 neu fwy o sesiynau	Nifer wedi Mynychu 2 neu fwy o sesiynau	%wedi Mynychu 2 neu fwy o sesiynau
660	Ynys Môn	<b>46</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>73.9%</b>	4	8.7%	42	91.3%	37	80.4%
661	Gwynedd	<b>96</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>51.0%</b>	10	10.4%	86	89.6%	69	71.9%
662	Conwy	<b>60</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>51.7%</b>	5	8.3%	55	91.7%	49	81.7%
663	Sir Ddinbych	<b>54</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>33.3%</b>	16	29.6%	38	70.4%	26	48.1%
664	Sir y Fflint	<b>77</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>33.8%</b>	15	19.5%	62	80.5%	45	58.4%
665	Wrecsam	<b>68</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>41.2%</b>	14	20.6%	54	79.4%	43	63.2%
	Cyfanswm	<b>401</b>	<b>186</b>	<b>46.4%</b>	64	16.0%	337	84.0%	269	67.1%

# Workstream – Leadership Development

## Difference made

- School leaders on all levels participating in the Leadership programmes are showing a general increased confidence and understanding of effective leadership. Delegates are developing into self-reflecting leaders who demonstrate competence, innovation, high expectations, clearly articulated goals and the ability to develop and influence others.
  - All Programmes lead delegates to develop close professional peer to peer collaboration networks which will help them contribute on cluster and regional levels to the national reform agenda.
  - By undertaking whole school 'Leadership Development Tasks' to improve aspects of the work of their schools, delegates have developed their leadership skills and have a specific responsibility within their organisations to drive whole school improvement.
  - By contributing to driving priorities within their schools the individuals on the programmes are accountable for improvement activity. In addition, they are able to self-evaluate their personal actions against the Professional Standards for Leadership, adopting personal responsibility for their own professional development.
  - Through critical reflection and consideration of the impact of their actions, individuals are able to exemplify how following the programmes not only help develop their organisations but also how they themselves have grown and developed as leaders.
- 
- Middle Leadership Development Programme: 98
  - Senior Leaders Development Programme: 61
  - Aspiring Headteacher Development Programme (preparing for NPQH): 72
  - New and Acting Headteacher Development Programme: 37
  - Experienced Headteacher Development Programme: 17
- TOTAL: 285

# Progress Report on the Reform Journey

## AUTUMN TERM 2021







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## PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

The COVID-19 pandemic has shown us that even in the most challenging of circumstances positive change is possible. In North Wales, GwE, the Local Authorities, Schools and PRUs have seized opportunities to explore innovative ways of working. Schools have delivered meaningful teaching and learning experiences through a creative blended learning approach. These experiences need to be built upon to avoid a 'snap back,' keeping the positive learning that has been developed during this time and preparing for the future. The four transversal themes of the learning organisation of time, trust, thinking together and technology have developed as strong foundations of a collaborative way of working as we move forward with the renew and reform agenda.

The response to COVID-19 has of course had a significant impact on schools and is likely to have disrupted some of their plans for preparation and implementing the new curriculum. This report provides an outline of where schools and PRUs are currently at as they address the renew and reform agenda and is based on evidence gathered by GwE Supporting Improvement Advisers as part of their work in supporting schools during the autumn term 2021.

For each school and PRU, Supporting Improvement Adviser reported on:

### Pupil Progress

#### Primary and special sectors

- *How does the school capture and measure progress in areas such as literacy, numeracy, basic skills, well-being, learners who are vulnerable to learning?*
- *What is the information that comes out of this summative or qualitative data?*

#### Secondary sector including relevant special schools and PRUs

- *How have secondary schools used 2021 Centre Determined Grades for GCSE and A level to undertake self-evaluation to support continuous improvement?*

#### Curriculum for Wales (CfW)

- *What are your school priorities for CfW during the Autumn term?*
- *What are your cluster priorities for CfW during the Autumn term?*
- *How are you engaging further with the resources from the CfW professional learning offer?*
  - *Leading change*
  - *Developing a shared vision*
  - *Curriculum reform*
- *What will be the role and contribution of your SIA and extended GwE team members in supporting this work?*
- *What are your initial approaches to developing curriculum design within your school and across your cluster?*

#### ALN Reform and Progress Towards Implementation

- *How will the regional and local networks support your school/cluster?*
- *What are your priorities for ALN Transformation as a school/cluster for the Autumn term?*

#### Professional Learning

- *Have you identified further areas/aspects for professional learning?*



## Accountability

- *What should accountability look like?*
- *How will you measure progress and the impact of your work?*
- *What will reporting look like?*

The report also summarises the **GwE Professional Learning Offer and support provided to schools.**

The **areas for further development and support** and the **high-level regional priorities** are summarised below:

## AREAS THAT NEEDED FURTHER DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORT

School across all sectors have identified the following areas where they would like further support for development:

- Curriculum for Wales implementation - especially curriculum design and planning the Areas of Learning and Experience;
- Approaches to assessments and the concept of progression in preparation for the new curriculum;
- Implementing the 12 pedagogical principles to improve teaching and learning, differentiation and formative assessment;
- Using quality enhancement processes including the use of qualitative and quantitative data as evidence to support improvement;
- Further strengthen primary cluster collaboration and continue establishing and facilitating secondary alliances to agree on the principles and functions of their collaborative work;
- Further establishing and developing peer review through the School Partnership Programme
- Improving Welsh Language skills and especially oracy;
- Strengthening transition arrangements and provision between primary and secondary/ special and developing a 3-16 continuum;
- Developing parental engagement to support the learning;
- Supporting secondary school to prepare for the 2022 summer examination and their contingency arrangements should there be further disruptions.

## REGIONAL PRIORITIES IDENTIFIED

The evaluation process has identified the following high-level regional priorities:

1. Ensure that all school will be ready to roll out the curriculum and are addressing mandatory/statutory requirements for planned delivery in 2022 or 2023 (secondary sector option).

The rollout will be supported by:

- Providing regional and local networks with clear guidance on curriculum design, planning, assessment and progression through modelling and exemplifying curriculum practice;
- Promoting learner transition by ensuring effective direct engagement between secondary and primary schools;
- Working in tandem with leaders to ensure that all settings have a clear plan to effectively respond to the guidance delivered in the Curriculum for Wales Professional Learning Programme;
- Ensuring all settings adopt and publish a summary for key stakeholders of their curriculum and assessment arrangements as outlined by the 'Journey to Rollout' guidance.

2. Implement processes addressing schools causing concern and work with Local Authorities to ensure



schools have the appropriate level of support and challenge for their improvement.

3. Further strengthen and embed peer review especially within secondary alliances to strengthen self-evaluation and the improvement planning.
4. Support the Local Authorities in the delivery of ALN Transformation by providing Professional Learning to improve teaching and learning.



## MAIN FINDINGS

### PRIMARY AND SPECIAL SECTORS INCLUDING RELEVANT PRUs

#### MEASURING LEARNER PROGRESS

- *How does the school capture and measure progress in areas such as literacy, numeracy, basic skills, well-being, learners who are vulnerable to learning?*
- *What is the information that comes out of this summative or qualitative data?*

Nearly all primary and special schools have prioritised pupil wellbeing engaging with several schemes/ activities such as 'Trauma Informed Schools', 'PASS', 'Nurture Groups', 'Talkabout', 'Mind Mechanics', 'Lego Therapy' and 'Seasons for Growth'. This has enabled them to better support and track their pupils' wellbeing. There are many examples of good practise across the region where an effective approach to monitoring well-being has been developed. These include schools who have carried out a baseline assessment for learners' well-being to identify those vulnerable to learning on return to school. Some schools have been supported by Universities to carry research on how best to identify wellbeing needs. This has allowed them to identify Individuals and groups of learners for the most appropriate intervention such as 'ELSA'. Teachers and school staff have been trained in a variety of specialist interventions, e.g., mental health practitioners, 'Seasons for Growth' and 'Mindfulness' while school-based counselling, 'NICOS' and Educational Psychologist input is also being used effectively within many schools. There is no doubt that pupil wellbeing remains a high priority for most schools as they continue to address the impact of COVID on their pupils.

Over the last year, almost all schools have continued with their internal assessment systems to track progress. These tracking and assessment systems include:

- Tracking of performance following individual interventions;
- Using standardised scores from national tests;
- Using reading and spelling tests such as 'Salford reading tests' and 'Youngs spelling tests';
- Undertaking 'CAT 4 tests';
- Undertaking 'White Rose' maths assessments to inform planning;
- Undertaking baseline assessments with both nursery and reception;
- Using 'Incerts' to track levels from baseline onwards;
- Individual teachers' using tracking notes effectively;
- Teachers keeping 'Read Write Inc' records;
- Leaders using 'Building Blocks', 'Maestro' and 'Taith 360';
- Schools beginning to trial the GwE tracker for tracking Curriculum for Wales Areas of Learning and Experience progress'
- Using wellbeing questionnaires such as 'PASS' and 'Boxhall';
- Using pupil portfolios for standardising and moderation.

Many schools stated that the support and close rapport with families ensured that most pupils returned to education ready for learning after the lockdown. However, they also acknowledged challenges with the school's youngest pupils and the most vulnerable individuals.

There is therefore a significant variation reported by schools regarding pupil progress. Many primary schools report that good progress is being made overall whilst others identify limited progress by cohorts of pupils. Many schools have focused targeted schemes to support groups of pupils as deemed necessary. For example, there is a consensus that lockdown has impacted more at the lower end of the school. Most schools have identified the need to prioritise support in foundation phase to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills. Key Stage 2 pupils have tended to 'catch-up' sooner after returning from lockdown.





However, most schools have identified the need to maintain a focus on improving pupils' fine motor skills, including presentation of their work, social interaction, writing stamina and perseverance. Most schools, including Welsh medium schools, acknowledge the need to improve pupils' Welsh oracy skills.

Nearly all schools are continuing to deliver effective intervention strategies for pupils, e.g. through daily precision teaching sessions, 'SAFMEDS' sessions to develop Welsh and English reading/spelling skills, 'Tric a Chlic' sessions to develop literacy skills in the Foundation Phase. Nearly all schools report that this focused targeting has had a positive impact on standards.

Most schools are continuing to monitor the progress made by learners from different groups such as vulnerable learners, entitlement to Free School Meals (eFSM), ALN pupils, Black Asian and Minority Ethnic Communities. Most schools provide appropriate and purposeful support for these pupils and are seeing the impact of this work through their assessment processes and are reporting that vulnerable pupils can then deal much better in mainstream class and with various social challenges.

## CURRICULUM FOR WALES (CfW)

### • *What are your school priorities for Curriculum for Wales during the Autumn term?*

All primary schools have School Development Plan priorities linked to the Curriculum for Wales in 2021-22, and these are linked to head teachers' performance management. These priorities are in line with the national professional learning journey and journey to roll-out, and include aspects of developing vision, familiarisation with content and planning and trialling.

Throughout the autumn term, examples of areas implemented by our regional primary and special schools include:

- Focussing upon the Four Purposes of the new curriculum, e.g., pupils describing what they mean to them, staff auditing where current provision addresses these. All primary schools now have access to GwE's 'Quality Assessment Framework' which supports primary schools in this audit, a minority of primary schools have already begun to use this tool effectively.
- Trialling with planning, e.g., referring to Areas of Learning and Experience in the planning and highlighting coverage;
- Developing parents' information sheets/ communications to inform them about the Curriculum for Wales;
- Teaching subjects and relabelling books around the Areas of Learning and Experience;
- Trialling with the progression statements in planning;
- Staff are attending relevant professional learning;
- Leaders are considering ways to track and assess the Curriculum for Wales;
- Regular updates to governors and governor monitoring of progress in the Curriculum for Wales;
- Developing appropriate whole school themes and topics;
- Including more pupil voice in planning;
- Auditing against the GwE Pedagogical Principles tracker;
- Revisiting feedback and formative assessment work;
- Continuing to develop outdoor learning – embedding wellbeing through exciting and engaging outdoor experiences;
- Continuing to focus upon wellbeing including learners, their families and staff wellbeing;
- Implementing physical fitness initiatives;
- Continuing to develop digital skills.

Nearly all schools have made initial preparations for the implementation of the new curriculum, i.e., the Four Purposes and 12 Pedagogical Principles have received appropriate consideration and are now



becoming a natural part of their teaching and learning provision.

Across the region, there are numerous examples of innovative practice with various approaches to planning themes, tasks and activities to meet the requirements of the new curriculum. Many schools are also collaborating well and are sharing successful practice.

Most schools are planning a suitable Professional Learning provision to develop effective teaching and learning considering Curriculum for Wales principles and requirements. Schools have arranged a variety of professional learning opportunities to enrich teaching, learning and pedagogy to further support Curriculum for Wales development.

Nearly all schools have planned their grant expenditure to support their work in meeting September 2022 statutory requirements. In general, this expenditure has been earmarked to improve staffing ratios, to target pupils, purchase additional resources and to release staff to attend training.

- **What are your cluster priorities for Curriculum for Wales during the Autumn term?**

Most clusters across the region work well together and genuinely collaborate. This collaboration strengthened during lockdown when the clusters met regularly on-line.

Clusters across the region have agreed on a variety of priorities. These include:

- Ensuring all staff in all schools within the cluster have a good understanding of Curriculum for Wales and the principles that underpin it;
- Further developing the pedagogical aspects and how that transfers itself into classroom practice;
- Developing high level curriculum design;
- Exploring pedagogy and enquiry-based learning model for the Gymraeg aspect Language Learning and Communication Area of Learning and Experience;
- Building on Outdoor Learning Experiences training and putting the principles and methodology into practice.

Nearly all school leaders have collaborated to co-create priorities and to set a direction for the Curriculum for Wales developments. The work is progressing well and is beginning to show impact e.g. a cluster planning format is in place, common cluster visioning sessions, cluster newsletters etc.

Primary/Secondary collaboration is also developing well in some areas; however, this currently varies in effectiveness from cluster to cluster. Further work remains to be done by leaders in some clusters to create and agree a vision and specific direction for the cluster. In general, the clusters are only just beginning to plan for a shared, 3-16 curriculum which includes strengthening transition. This is a next step for many clusters. Many have planned next term to:

- Share ideas and models for curriculum design including links to the local Curriculum for Wales networks;
- Share planning of similar age groups between schools;
- Share topics/themes to support 3-16 transition work, including work on integral and cross curriculum skills;
- Begin to develop a shared approach to assessment;
- Begin to develop modern languages 3-16;

Twelve primary clusters and all special schools have engaged in peer review training to support their improvement journey. During the autumn term 33 additional clusters, comprising 193 regional schools and 6 PRUs, have applied to participate in peer review through the Schools Partnership Programme.



- **How are you engaging further with the resources from the Curriculum for Wales professional learning offer?**
  - **Leading change**
  - **Developing a shared vision**
  - **Curriculum reform**

In most primary and special schools, leaders have made effective use of these resources to develop staff skills in planning for the curriculum for Wales. In other schools, SIAs have re-familiarised leaders with the resources and they plan to use them in the spring term. Where the resources have been used effectively, leaders have planned practical and engaging ways to utilise the regional Curriculum for Wales resources, such as think pieces, PowerPoints, and webinars, through regular weekly staff meetings, often supported by the Supporting Improvement Advisers.

Most Head teachers attended all the Curriculum for Wales workshops and engaged very well with the process, providing thoughtful insights. Many are implementing the approach from this professional learning with their schools, e.g., writing to stakeholders to develop a truly local curriculum vision; and holding stakeholder groups to participate in developing a shared vision. Governors are very much part of this process and in general very well informed and beginning to lead curriculum change in their schools.

- **What will be the role and contribution of your Supporting Improvement Adviser (SIA) and extended GwE team members in supporting this work?**

Across the region, school leaders have requested the following from their SIAs:

- Staff meeting support on the GwE resources and support centre;
- Self-evaluation and improvement planning support;
- Support for monitoring curriculum developments;
- Support and advice on assessment and progression and how to plan for these;
- Bespoke support where appropriate for staff;
- Support to develop the cluster's Curriculum for Wales plan;
- Support for 3-16 planning and transition;
- Facilitating School Partnership Programme projects;
- Sharing examples and models of how to design the curriculum;
- Disseminating information and resources from the regional networks and raise awareness of the programme;
- Continued pastoral care.

- **What are your initial approaches to developing curriculum design**
  - **within your school?**
  - **across your cluster?**

Most schools across the region have plans in place to develop curriculum design through the academic year through their School Development Plans. These are linked to the regional and national reform journey stages. Staff will continue to redesign their curriculum in line with these as the year progresses. However, curriculum design remains a key area for support and guidance.

Schools noted that teachers have trialled planning approaches to support the Curriculum for Wales and are continuing to do so through:

- Planning on new formats including references to Areas of Learning and Experience and the Four Purposes;



- Whole school topics have been planned including the local curriculum;
- Topics and themes include pupil voice planning – especially at the start of topics;
- Immersion activities to engage learners in their new topics and themes;
- Planning taking consideration of the cross-curricular and integral skills and cross cutting themes;
- Developing the learning environment to support work in the Curriculum for Wales, which includes significantly developing outdoor learning, relevant to the locality;
- Continuing to build upon digital learning.

Most clusters are planning to develop a shared approach to planning for 3-16 progression during the spring term.

Many schools have already developed systems for collaborating within teams and jointly experimenting with and sharing successful practices in planning for the arrival of the new curriculum. Work undertaken to evaluate the use of the 12 Pedagogical Principles is also effective groundwork for this work.

- **How will the regional and local networks support your school/cluster?**

There are 228 primary and special schools with 533 practitioners involved in the Regional and Local Networks. The networks have established a system for sharing the work at a regional and local authority level. Through these and through collaborating with cluster colleagues in other Areas of learning and Experience areas, schools are already improving their knowledge of specific areas of the Curriculum for Wales and are already beginning to share ideas and planning. Throughout the term they have been involved in the development of shared resources and approaches and have developed learning through working with other colleagues in other Areas of learning and Experience areas within the authority and across the region.

## ADDITIONAL LEARNING NEEDS

- **What are your priorities for ALN Transformation as a school/cluster for the Autumn term?**

Cluster area priorities to develop ALN have been compiled in every cluster, and schools are currently refining and taking ownership of these priorities.

Most schools appear to be responding successfully to the act and statutory requirements overall across the region and regularly updating members of staff on developments.

The ALN Coordinator (ALNCO) role in schools is developing. Most schools have used G6 milestones to review the school's progress and to see whether there are further aspects that need attention, with the remainder in the process of completing this work before the end of the autumn term.

Key ALN staff have received 'Eclipse' training and are ready to develop the system across the school. Examples of School priorities for this term include:

- Policies will be updated to reflect ALN reform once these become available from the Local Authority;
- Trialling with Individual Development Plans (IDPs) is taking place – new learners will have an IDP;
- All children will have a one-page profile by the end of term
- ALNCo, governors and teachers to undertake relevant professional learning, including whole school Pupil Centred Training (PCP) training and 'Eliesha'.
- Schools will update families on their rights to appeal and tribunal;
- Continue to implement universal and targeted provision working in clusters;



- Develop practice of children planning and co-constructing their own IDP style review meetings.

## PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

- *Have you identified further areas/aspects for professional learning?*

All schools are committed to professional learning for developing staff on the journey towards Curriculum for Wales and are following a national and regional timescale. Regional and local networks will be a key driver for this work.

Overall, schools' Professional Learning plans have been purposefully aligned with their Performance Management processes. This ensures that they provide developmental opportunities that respond to the requirements of the school's priorities in an effective and structured manner.

There are numerous examples of Professional Learning opportunities in schools across the region to develop and upskill staff. Some specific examples involve upskilling the workforce to support pupil wellbeing through the 'Trauma Informed Schools' diploma, 'Seasons for Growth', 'ELSA' and 'MAPA'. Most schools are continuing to address the development of Assessment for Learning aspects too by attending Shirley Clarke training. Over a hundred schools are committed to developing the Welsh language oracy skills via the 'Ein Llais Ni' project. Leadership development remains a priority through the GwE's Leadership Programmes.

Most leaders, teachers and staff participate well in professional learning and, in most schools, information is shared with colleagues following training opportunities. Professional learning is clearly identified in nearly all schools through the School Development Plan. Many leaders have requested support to plan and develop their own and staff skills through:

- SIA input in staff meetings, especially for Curriculum for Wales developments;
- Continued staff development through national and regional programmes, e.g., Teaching Assistants, Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs), Leadership, etc;
- Cluster and joint collaborative working;
- Regional and local networks;
- Input for developing 3-16 planning across the cluster.

## ACCOUNTABILITY

- *What should accountability look like?*
- *How will you measure progress and the impact of your work?*
- *What will reporting look like?*

Nearly all primary head teachers produce regular, detailed reports for governors, these are created through whole school self-evaluation. Accountability procedures include a variety of stakeholders including children and parents. Many schools have a draft monitoring timetable in place, linked to School Development Plans' priorities, which include a range of monitoring strategies such as:

- Pupil and staff learning walks;
- Book looks;
- Interviews and questionnaires;
- Lesson observations in line with performance management;
- Peer observations and triads.

Clusters' working with the School's Partnership Programme will further develop cluster monitoring,



contributing towards developing joint accountability across the cluster. ALN provision is monitored through self-evaluation against the 'G6' milestones and through the ALN cluster group.

Leaders' capacity to develop monitoring and accountability has been hindered by the pandemic during the term, and many have not yet fully implemented book scrutiny and performance management processes across their schools.

Curriculum for Wales is a key priority for all schools this year and will be monitored through self-evaluation and monitoring systems. In addition, the cluster aspects of these priorities will be monitored in regular cluster meetings with the link SIA involved in discussions.

Most school leaders ensure that their teachers are accountable for adapting, fine tuning and experimenting with their teaching while considering Curriculum for Wales principles and requirements through regular staff meetings and lesson monitoring procedures. In doing so, leaders ensure consistency of pace in responding to the reform journey across their schools whilst encouraging individuals to experiment and trial new teaching and learning strategies.

A large number of schools ensure opportunities for staff to share their work through focused professional dialogue, e.g., in staff meetings. This helps when ensuring consistency and identifying best practice.

All schools report to governors and stakeholders on the reform journey, including the impact of any actions or trialling over the coming year.





## SECONDARY SECTOR INCLUDING RELEVANT SPECIAL SCHOOLS AND PRUs

### 2021 CENTRE DETERMINED GRADES FOR GCSE AND A LEVEL

*In his written statement (dated 21 June 2021) the Education Minister confirmed 'that the suspension of Key Stage 4 and legacy sixth form performance measures will be extended to the 2021/22 academic year. Qualification awards data will not be used to report on attainment outcomes at a school, local authority or regional consortium level and must not be used to hold schools to account for their learners' outcomes.' He also confirmed that 'all schools and post-16 providers will continue to be required to undertake effective self-evaluation to support continuous improvement. Our evaluation, improvement and accountability arrangements require consideration of a broad range of information, relevant to a school's own context, when undertaking self-evaluation and identifying improvement priorities. This will involve schools, with support from local authorities and regional consortia, using the learner level information they have to reflect on and improve their existing arrangements.'*

All schools and settings ensured internal procedures met the requirements for the awarding of qualifications set out by Qualifications Wales and WJEC in 2021 for the Centre-Determined Grade process. Assessment plans were submitted and – following amendments in some cases – all accepted by the awarding body. All schools and settings engaged in pre-preparatory sessions run by the region with Qualifications Wales and WJEC.

Many schools reported that Headteachers and staff benefited from working in collaboration within their secondary Alliance to respond to national expectations and develop school level policies and processes. This ensured consistency and shared understanding.

All schools ensured that guidance from awarding bodies was shared quickly and clearly with teaching staff and that clarification was sought when needed. Schools – for the most part- made full use of the recommended WJEC assessments and mark schemes to provide the base of evidence for the Centre Determined Grades. All schools ensured there were appropriate access arrangements in place for learners with ALN and special consideration was considered where applicable. All schools used internal moderation procedures exercises to support the moderation and standardisation of assessments. Several schools built on their work through local alliances and used cross-school moderation to support internal standardisation. This was particularly the case where subjects were taught by one teacher or where subject teams were small; it was less necessary in larger teams within larger schools.

During the process schools were generally strong at communicating and sharing policies and expectations with parents (via written communication and virtual briefing sessions). This was a particular strength of the schools' processes and provided transparency to parents on current performance against targets and expected outcomes.

Effective remote learning assisted the transition back to school for most learners in exam years in April 2021. There were some issues with the engagement of specific groups of learners. Learners from low-income families had been identified as a 'concern' group in relation to engagement and progress. The performance of groups of learners and especially those in receipt of FSM remains a priority area for a number of schools.

A\*-A grades increased significantly. Many schools reported this was due to the diligence of the learners and from making effective use of national resources available to them to prepare for the assessments. In addition, many learners had generally benefitted from having less materials and content to revise, shorter time scales between revision and assessment thus fostering a greater degree of retention of learning, fewer



assessments and assessments that had been presented beforehand to pupils via WJEC website.

Most schools analysed in-school variance using Information Technology platforms and developed an overall review of individual students' grades against their previous year profiles. Many schools looked closely at their target-setting and data collection points to ensure consistency in practice. Target-setting was often based around 'FFT' projections / 'CATS scores' and internal assessments. 'ALPS' was also used to support data collection and evaluation at Sixth Form level. In many schools, actions are being undertaken to address issues that have arisen in specific departments where the base for establishing grades was not as strong or where inconsistencies were identified. Most are working to ensure that departments will be ready to present a strong evidence base of assessments if required to undertake similar processes this year.

Several schools have identified the low levels of literacy among groups of learners and are taking steps to support and further improve this. The Welsh language skills of learners, especially those from non-Welsh speaking homes and in Welsh medium education has clearly been affected by the lockdown periods.

## CURRICULUM FOR WALES (CfW)

### • *What are your school priorities for Curriculum for Wales during the Autumn term?*

At the beginning of the Autumn Term, nearly all 54 secondary/all-through schools indicated their intention to embed Curriculum for Wales from September 2022. However, many secondary schools are finding it increasingly difficult to adhere to the timelines they have set themselves due to the pandemic. Many have struggled during this term due to staff absence and a lack of supply cover. Arrangements for the summer examination series may also further hamper their ability to engage with the new curriculum from September 2022. If the pandemic continues to blight the work of schools post-Christmas, we would envisage an increasing percentage of secondary schools reviewing their position and possibly deferring until 2023. Schools need to confirm arrangements with Welsh Government by April 8th 2022. Ensuring the effective prioritisation of Curriculum for Wales planning has been a challenge for most schools which are in an Estyn statutory follow-up category. Effectively supporting these schools will continue to be prioritised.

In nearly all schools, the Curriculum for Wales is a whole school priority and actions for the autumn term align with the national expectations as set out in the amended document 'Curriculum for Wales: the journey to 2022'. All schools have identified the need for staff in the autumn term to further develop their knowledge and understanding of Curriculum for Wales framework and ensure that teachers are planning for progression within / across AOLES and cross-curriculum skills. Much of the focus this term is on developing their curriculum design, unpacking the statements of what matters and developing a shared understanding of progression within and across the progression steps. Possible processes exemplified in the regional and local Curriculum for Wales networks have been shared with staff in most schools to support their planning.

Amongst the priorities for Curriculum for Wales identified by secondary schools are:

- planning for progression in cross curricular skills and cross-cutting themes;
- high level curriculum design;
- planning and implementing the AOLES;
- assessment and progression;
- further developing the 12 pedagogical principles and digital learning;
- community engagement, particularly around outdoor learning
- pupil voice activities feeding into development planning;
- developing a coherent vision to underpin the new curriculum and share this with stakeholders;





- building on cluster work with partner primary schools and working towards a seamless transition in learning.
- ***What are your cluster priorities for Curriculum for Wales during the Autumn term?***

This term nearly all secondary schools have worked in collaboration with their primary clusters to plan for Curriculum for Wales. Most clusters have revisited their vision and shared their experiences with the GwE regional and local networks. In others, secondary teachers are working closely with cluster primaries to develop a common understanding around pedagogy or working effectively together focusing on how to articulate a curriculum that is seamless and where progression is understood and underpinned in their learning plans.

Primary/Secondary collaboration is developing well in many clusters; however, this is not consistent across the region and further targeted support will be required to ensure effective engagement at all levels. Further work remains to be done by secondary leaders in some clusters to better engage in creating and agreeing a joint vision and specific direction for the cluster.

Amongst the cluster priorities for Curriculum for Wales identified by secondary schools are:

- Developing effective transition plans;
  - Plan transition activities that fit in with Areas of Learning and Experience design;
  - Focusing on Progression Steps 2 to 4 and a 3-16 continuum;
  - Looking at data and information transfer around learners – what needs to be passed on and understood;
  - Where engagement is as yet under-developed, take steps to move this forward;
  - Sharing and developing a common element to vision, values and behaviours;
  - Looking at assessment methods that can be used as part of teaching and learning; how progression can be evaluated;
  - Joint training day to share plans and progress;
  - Developing work around shared areas within the context of Curriculum for Wales. For example, joint work around trauma-informed schools; pedagogical approaches around Modern Foreign Languages; common approaches to literacy, numeracy and digital skills;
  - Planning for a curriculum focussed joint-cluster training day;
  - Developing a cluster enquiry-based research approach supported by the School Partnership Programme.
- ***How are you engaging further with the resources from the Curriculum for Wales professional learning offer?***
    - ***Leading change***
    - ***Developing a shared vision***
    - ***Curriculum reform***

These sessions were run during a very busy period for secondary schools who were preparing to award Centre Determined Grades. Thus, the level of engagement varied across the region. Most schools attended at least one of these sessions and many accessed recordings of the training at a later date. Many schools shared the resources with SLT members; some found this challenging and re-engaged during the autumn term with support from their SIAs and the recorded sessions. Some resources, e.g., those around the vision or curriculum design, have been effectively used in schools. In one school, for example, each member of the senior staff led a workshop with the whole teaching body; in another, findings were shared and discussed around senior leadership teams to inform decisions. Many schools are continuing to make use of elements of this support, such as for example using the route planner app, and using the visioning ideas



about evaluating current provision against the vision.

- ***What will be the role and contribution of your Supporting Improvement Adviser (SIA) and extended GwE team members in supporting this work?***
- Supporting Improvement Advisers (SIAs) have encouraged designated staff to be part of the Curriculum for Wales regional/local networks and have supported and facilitated the work.
- SIAs have supported school based bespoke Curriculum for Wales developments with guidance and input to training and meetings as per school's needs and capacity.
- Core Lead / SIAs support developments and curriculum design in the secondary schools and the clusters.
- Subject SIAs have supported Heads of Core Subjects with Areas of Learning and Experience (AOLE) planning. As a result, middle leaders have improved their knowledge and understanding of the Curriculum for Wales framework and considerations for planning;
- SIA teams continue to deliver staff professional learning, contributing to professional development days and to support the work of Areas of Learning and Experience teams in designing and delivering the new curriculum.
- SIAs are supporting senior leaders and Governors in updating whole school plans for implementing the new curriculum from 2022.
- SIAs are raising awareness of the available resources that have been and are being developed and shared through the GwE Support Centre.
- ***What are your initial approaches to developing curriculum design***
  - *within your school?*
  - *across your cluster?*

Schools are taking a variety of approaches to 'designing' the new curriculum. For example, some schools are looking closely at the development of a clear vision; some have looked at curriculum planning tools and asked departments to plan new schemes with authentic contexts and skills as key elements; others are tackling the curriculum through revised approaches to pedagogy. Some have made changes to staffing structures or made additional appointments to support key initiatives. Some have focussed strongly on developing local and authentic contexts to support learning. During the past few years, many schools have developed and embedded effective pedagogical approaches and progression of skills. Learning in new technologies and digital pedagogies can also be built on and developed to support learning within the new curriculum.

Some schools are building on the work of the consortium workshops delivered in the summer and looking at curriculum design closely, trialling more work in multi-disciplinary areas, across Science and Technology or integrated outcomes in Expressive Arts. One school has appointed a teacher for wellbeing and are developing a bespoke curriculum for the school in that area. Others are looking at curriculum allocations through a critical lens and asking what is fit for purpose for learners moving forward. Some schools now have specific Curriculum for Wales meetings to replace historical departmental meetings. There is an increasing focus in schools on cross-departmental working. Some schools have moved to restructure their staffing based on the AOLE's.

Some schools are also looking at other curriculum elements, e.g., cross curricular skills, integral skills, cross-cutting themes and mapping links across the curriculum.

Many schools are taking advantage of the GwE offer to make use of consortium expertise in supporting this. Ideas are being shared across schools through regional and local networks. However, curriculum design



remains a key area for support and guidance.

- *How will the regional and local networks support your school/cluster?*

All schools are engaged with consortium-led training and development activities. Currently there are 44 secondary schools (88%) and 197 secondary teachers involved in the networks. All four of the 3-16 all-through schools are involved with 22 practitioners participating.

## ADDITIONAL LEARNING NEEDS

- *What are your priorities for ALN Transformation as a school/cluster for the Autumn term?*

Most schools reported that they are progressing well towards implementation. In most, there is a good awareness of the reforms and the changes they will bring across staff and governors.

Priorities for ALN Wales Transformation in secondary schools include:

- Developing the role of the ALN Coordinator (ALNCo) as a strategic lead;
- Revising and finalising relevant policies;
- Establishing and confirming rights of appeal procedures and sharing with parents;
- Further developing expertise and training capacity amongst teaching and support staff;
- Developing universal and targeted provision which enables learners to make progress regardless of their starting point;
- Improving differentiation and the universal provision;
- Continuing to develop Person Centred Practice (PCP);
- Undertaking a systematic evaluation of the quality of leaders' and practitioners' knowledge and use of PCP to identify how well it is used to inform teaching and learning;
- Ensuring smooth transition from primary to secondary and that robust transitional plans are in **place**;
- Developing strategies to provide additional learning provision in Welsh (in some Local Authorities).

## PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

- *Have you identified further areas/aspects for professional learning?*

Professional learning needs identified in secondary schools include:

- Curriculum for Wales: deepening understanding; 'unpicking' curriculum design; promoting good teaching and learning; building and understanding assessment and progression;
- Understanding how to develop the skills underpinning the new curriculum, e.g. numeracy, literacy and digital competency;
- Implementing ALN reforms, including further Person Centred Planning (PCP)/ provision mapping work and looking at transition across a cluster;
- ALN reform – regular updates for staff and governors and targeted PL for ALN Coordinators and relevant staff;
- Effective differentiation strategies;
- Further developing current and future leaders through national leadership programmes, e.g., Preparing for NPQH, Senior leaders, Middle leaders, post-16 leaders;
- Supporting effective teaching and learning (pedagogical principles);
- Developing coaching and mentoring for middle leaders;
- Provide training & support for new Core Subject leads;
- Governors – whole school evaluation and improvement planning;
- Support for self-evaluation, monitoring process and improvement planning;



- Support for developing and restoring Welsh Language skills;
- Specialised support to develop wellbeing and attitudes to learning.

## ACCOUNTABILITY

- *What should accountability look like?*
- *How will you measure progress and the impact of your work?*
- *What will reporting look like?*

Most schools are concerned about the lack of clarity that remains around the use of national performance measure for accountability and the uncertainty around the design and content of the new suite of qualifications linked to the new curriculum. Support and guidance with understanding the assessment requirements and capturing pupil progress for the new curriculum is a priority for most schools.

Some schools, especially those with a higher eFSM number are uncomfortable with the 'vacuum' created by the removal of benchmarking data and are concerned that the school's performance could be exposed misinterpretation if contextual factors are not duly taken into consideration.

Overall, secondary schools are comfortable with moving to a more intelligent model of accountability, with a focus on 'improving' rather than 'proving'. The schools' use of robust processes to track the progress of individuals and groups of pupils is key as is identifying and addressing in-school variation.

Schools are well aware of the need to re-establish quality enhancement processes and are aware of the current challenges in doing this. Many schools have maintained a degree of quality enhancement activities in remote learning during periods of lockdown. Some schools have invited GwE link SIAs and subject SIAs to support senior and middle leaders with quality enhancement activities, e.g., lesson observations, review documentation, book scrutiny, attend and support internal pastoral and subject review meetings. Most schools are by now moving back to a more robust system of Quality Assurance processes and have a clearer picture of the quality of provision and outcomes.

Nearly all schools are in discussions with partners to establish Alliances and all are eager to engage or re-engage with peer review through the School Partnership Programme. The role of and contribution of robust peer challenge and verification is accepted as crucial in moving forward.

Listening to learner voice have generally been strengthened during the pandemic and it remain an important and impactful element of internal measures for nearly all schools.

The Governing Body in nearly all schools have been updated on developments relating to various areas of school improvement including teaching and learning, Curriculum for Wales and its impact on the quality of provision and standards.



## SUMMARY OF GWE PROFESSIONAL LEARNING OFFER AND SUPPORT TO SCHOOLS

The delivery of effective professional learning programmes has supported schools across all sectors with developing their initial curriculum plans. Leaders and teachers across the vast majority of schools are experimenting with approaches to developing a broad range of knowledge, skills and experiences of their pupils. Planning at individual school and cluster levels are supporting a clearer understanding of the 'what matters' statements and how the 12 pedagogical principles should underpin approaches to teaching.

Regional and local networks and forums are effectively supporting practitioners' understanding of what works in curriculum design. Over 700 regional staff and school practitioners are working closely together to address this at whole school and AOLE level. GwE are working in collaboration with partners in Higher Education Institutes in supporting schools to develop the role of enquiry in preparation for the Curriculum for Wales. This work is an important aspect of the wider work on developing effective teaching and learning, which in turn builds on the work of developing assessment for learning. For this purpose, GwE have worked with schools across the region over the last three years to develop and share effective practice in formative assessment using evidence-based learning. There are 360 schools across the region participating in this work.

During the last three years, the regional consortia has invested heavily in delivering an ambitious professional learning for all practitioners. The core principle of the offer has been on developing institutional capacity as a 'learning organisation' and allowing leaders to more effectively reflect on the challenges of leading change. Prior to lockdown, in many schools across the GwE region, teachers began trialling with the Curriculum for Wales, initially familiarising themselves with its content. In many primary schools, teachers have begun to experiment with new ways of planning, teaching and learning. During the pandemic, teachers across most schools have supported learners to develop a variety of skills linked to the 4 purposes. For example, an emphasis on skills and wellbeing was strongly continued throughout the lockdown period and learners, parents and school staff's digital skills were revolutionised. Leaders across the region have already made use of resources available via the GwE Resource Centre to develop staff skills in planning for the Curriculum for Wales. Where these resources have been used effectively, leaders have planned practical and engaging ways to utilise them, e.g., Think Pieces, PowerPoints and webinars stimulating discussions in weekly staff meetings and often supported by the link Supporting Improvement Advisor. Across the region, many teachers attended GwE Curriculum for Wales workshops with several schools now implementing the shared ideas and approaches. These professional learning opportunities have also been attended by colleagues from other regions and by north Wales local authority officers.

Below is a brief outline of the GwE Professional Offer to schools and clusters:

- principles of Curriculum for Wales are embedded in all training and the four curriculum purposes are always at the forefront of presenters' minds, as they set about planning relevant, up-to-date and engaging training.
- we have integrated all aspects of the wider reform into our PL offer, including Schools as Learning Organisations, Y Gymraeg (towards a million Welsh speakers by 2050) and the Additional Learning Needs Transformational Bill.
- resources and areas of professional learning includes the 12 Pedagogical Principles within the broader context of teaching and learning, assessment, regional Areas of Learning and Experience networks and curriculum design and planning at school level.
- cross regional offer aims to support all school practitioners, but focused initially on Senior Leaders with the following themes: Leading Change; Leadership for the new curriculum; Developing a Shared Vision; Planning for Curriculum Change – to include curriculum design, progression and assessment; Leading Pedagogy; Time and Space for Professional Learning. These sessions are cluster-based and enable smaller groups of primary schools and their local secondary school to discuss the new curriculum across





the 3-16 learning continuum. Across the region, 832 Senior Leaders attended the Leading Change sessions. During June and July 2021, GwE ran a series of sessions over a three-week period for senior leaders, focused on the themes of developing a shared vision and planning for curriculum change, to include curriculum design. These sessions were hosted digitally on a cluster basis and allowed for breakout opportunities for schools to discuss this work within their local networks. Over 1150 senior leaders attended the sessions across the region.

- as part of the preparations, all Supporting Improvement Advisers have facilitated sessions where schools within a cluster have the opportunity to work collaboratively to strategically plan for the implementation of the curriculum. Activities to support preparations for the new curriculum at school and cluster level have been identified within School Development Plans. Many of the clusters have also developed a Cluster Development Plan for implementing the reform journey.
- in addition to the Professional Learning offer defined above, additional bespoke support from GwE is being made available to schools as they prepare for Curriculum for Wales. This support can be accessed at both cluster and individual school level and tailored according to need.
- supporting resources include a series of 'Think-Pieces' which have been developed by the GwE team as part of the weekly reform sessions with Professor Graham Donaldson. These papers, which cover key aspects of the curriculum reform journey including leadership, vision, pedagogy, assessment and curriculum design, have been shared and refined through consultation with wider partners in Local Authorities, Estyn and Bangor University. All senior leaders were invited to attend a webinar in May 2021 to explain and share this work on the 'Think Pieces'.
- a key aspect of the support offer is the Curriculum for Wales networks established at both a regional and local level. School based practitioners and wider partners from across the region are working collaboratively with a network of peers supporting development of the six Areas of Learning and Experience, assessment and curriculum design. Practitioners communicate and cascade learning and successful practice across the schools within each local authority and contribute to developing planning and design models to support schools in trialling, evaluating and preparing the workforce for first teaching. A regional strategic group, made up of cross-sector representatives from the eight LA groups provides direction and an overview of the work. Networks have access to Professional Learning and work in partnership with Professor Graham Donaldson, GwE and the six North Wales LAs. During the Autumn Term 2021, there have been four regional and over 80 local network meetings involving 272 schools and well over 700 practitioners. All resources produced are shared with all schools through the GwE Support Centre and information cascaded to each secondary/primary cluster group.
- GwE are also working in collaboration with partners in Higher Education Institutes in supporting schools to develop the role of enquiry in preparation for the Curriculum for Wales. This work is an important aspect of the wider work on developing effective teaching and learning, which in turn builds on the work of developing assessment for learning. For this purpose, GwE have worked with schools across the region over the last three years to develop and share effective practice in formative assessment using evidence-based learning. There are 360 schools across the region participating in this work.
- schools have access to a series of milestones within the GwE information management system that allows them to reflect on their progress on the reform journey. These milestones have been warmly welcomed by schools
- the GwE Support Centre continues to be a point of referral for all settings and we are currently working to further enhance and enrich the resource bank. By the end of the Autumn Term 2021 there have been over 75,000 'hits' on the site.
- GwE has also worked with practitioners and wider partners to develop a framework of qualitative indicators which will allow schools to reflect and evaluate how they are implementing the four purposes of the new curriculum.





Collaborating · Learning · Succeeding

## REGIONAL STRATEGY

### Renew and reform: supporting learners' wellbeing and progression

#### CONTEXT

The COVID-19 pandemic has shown us that even in the most challenging of circumstances positive change is possible. In North Wales, GwE, the Local Authorities, Schools and PRUs have seized opportunities to explore innovative ways of working. Schools have delivered meaningful teaching and learning experiences through a creative blended learning approach. These experiences need to be built upon to avoid a 'snap back,' keeping the positive learning that has been developed during this time and preparing for the future. The four transversal themes of the learning organisation of time, trust, thinking together and technology have developed as strong foundations of a collaborative way of working as we move forward with the reform agenda.

As we undertake national reform, it's clear that we are in a different place to the one that we imagined when the guidance for the Curriculum for Wales was published 18 months ago. We recognise that some of the preparation time for the curriculum will have been devoted to managing the impact of the pandemic over the past year. On the other hand, with an even stronger focus on well-being and significant investment in teaching and learning, the values under-pinning the curriculum have been at the heart of how schools have been working. GwE is fully committed to supporting schools and PRUs to maintain this momentum to ensure that every learner in North Wales is offered provision of the highest quality.

We will ensure that all learners in North Wales are able to learn effectively. Their mental health and emotional wellbeing, their relationships and their physical health are all critical enablers of good learning. We will support schools to focus on these areas and also to develop the key enabling skills which include oracy, literacy, numeracy, planning, organising and critical thinking.

We will support schools to ensure that learners are making meaningful progression in their learning. Focusing on progression is forward-looking, emphasising what learners need to make the next steps in their education. This avoids a deficit based model focused on 'catching up' on everything that has been missed. Appropriate assessment arrangements support this progression, helping to identify, capture and reflect on individual learners' progress over time. We will support schools to develop both formative and summative assessment as they plan to implement the new curriculum.

The Minister for Education, has confirmed that the Curriculum for Wales will continue to be implemented in primary schools, maintained nursery schools and non-maintained nursery PRUs from September 2022. The Minister has also confirmed that some additional flexibility will be given to secondary schools. In 2022, schools that are ready to roll out the curriculum to year 7 will be able to press ahead with that. However, formal implementation of the new curriculum will not be mandatory until 2023, with roll-out in that year to years 7 and 8 together. This will also be the case in special schools and all-through schools for 3 to 16-year-olds.



GwE will encourage secondary and special schools who are able to proceed with their current plans to implement the new curriculum with Year 7 from September 2022. We also realise that some secondary schools will continue their path towards curriculum reform from September 2022, and will implement the new curriculum from September 2023 when it will become mandatory for years 7 and 8. However, it is important that the work of reforming the curriculum, and particularly direct engagement between secondary and primary schools, continues in order to support learner transition irrespective of the timeline for implementation adopted by the secondary school.

Beyond 2023, the Curriculum for Wales will be rolled out on a year-by-year basis, and the first qualifications designed specifically for the Curriculum for Wales will be awarded in the 2026-27 academic year, as planned. The reform of qualifications will play a fundamental role in the success of the curriculum and GwE will support the work of Qualifications Wales over the coming year to help shape a set of qualifications of the highest quality that are aligned with the philosophy of the new curriculum.

In North Wales, GwE and the six Local Authorities firmly believe that it is of the utmost importance, that leaders and staff in every establishment are encouraged and supported in the work of forging strong and effective partnerships within and across the education system. Our regional approach has already adopted a cluster/alliance working model to implement key transformational reform areas such as curriculum development, ALN and Welsh Language. It has also been used effectively to share resources and effective practice during the COVID-19 pandemic. GwE is fully committed to continue this work and also to develop and embed structured and planned partnership programmes that will be evidence informed. GwE and the six Local Authorities, will continue to support schools and PRUs to ensure that peer engagement and collaboration becomes a mainstay of our approach in developing a robust, sustainable and effective self-improving system.

We fully support the Minister's vision, as outlined in the '*Cymraeg 2050: our plan for 2021 to 2026*' strategy, to create bilingual citizens who are confident to use Welsh in all aspects of everyday life. GwE will work in partnership with the six Local Authorities to ensure that schools and PRUs are fully supported to develop the Welsh language skills of the workforce and the learners.

The Welsh Government have updated the document '*Curriculum for Wales: the journey to 2022*' which sets out the expectations on schools to reform the curriculum. GwE will support both regional and national networks for curriculum implementation from the autumn onwards. Regional schools will work in partnership with Professor Graham Donaldson, GwE and the six Local Authorities in developing effective practice to unpack the potential of the six Areas of Learning and Experiences (AOLEs) and to develop whole school curriculum design and assessment.

Structures and processes for identifying and supporting schools causing concern will ensure that intervention is timely and appropriate to the context of the school. All schools identified as a school causing concern will have a holistic 360 support plan clearly articulating the nature and intensity of the support provided by either GwE or the Local Authority service that is

responsible for the delivery. This process is outlined in the Partnership Agreement between each Local Authority and its schools. All schools causing concern will be involved in cluster/alliance working that will also contribute to their improvement journey.

GwE and the six Local Authorities, will work closely with key partners such as Welsh Government, Estyn and Qualifications Wales to influence policy, the new Estyn Framework and the reform of qualifications to ensure that we contribute to implementing the Minister's priorities.

## **THEMES**

Through working and listening to partners and key stakeholders, we have identified the following themes to support our aim of ensuring that every learner in North Wales is offered provision of the highest quality. These themes will be actioned by our Business Plans and will be implemented through partnership programmes and an offer of differentiated generic and bespoke support for our schools and PRUs.

### **The Reform Journey / Curriculum Realisation**

- Ensure support for schools in responding to the education reform journey, with strong emphasis on pedagogy, effective teaching and action research.
- Ensure good or better use of formative assessment strategies in all schools.
- Ensure support for all schools in responding to the education reform journey, with strong emphasis on the 12 pedagogical principles and action research.
- Ensure consistency in schools' understanding of the key principles of the new assessment guidance.
- Ensure support for schools in relation to whole-school Curriculum Design and within AOEs.

### **Re-ignite learning (RRRS)**

- Implement programmes which aims to mitigate the effects of school closures on pupils' reading and writing attainment in both English and Welsh.
- Evidence-based teaching strategy designed to help pupils improve their fluency and progress in mathematics.
- Develop online resources suitable for both school staff and parents to enable use of these interventions to assist the reading development of children.
- Continue to develop and produce a suite of universal support materials for secondary numeracy and literacy.

### **Strategy to support parents / carers to help their children to learn**

- Develop a holistic package that supports and helps parents and carers to transform their understanding of learning and what they can do to help their child.
- Develop a comprehensive course for parents and carers, giving them all the tools, knowledge and confidence they need to help their children to learn while they are at home.
- Provide written guidance containing strategies and techniques that parents/carers can use to support their child's learning.

- Provide practical strategies, activities and techniques that can be used by parents and carers to help their children to learn.
- Develop and adapt resources appropriately to meet the needs of specific groups of parents and carers.
- Review the provision that is offered across the region in order to ensure that current resources fully and effectively support and meet local and regional needs.

### **Learners and whole school wellbeing**

- Continue to work closely in partnership with Local Authorities to provide wellbeing support for learners in schools and settings.
- Continue to provide support to school leaders on the identification, engagement and support for specific groups of disadvantaged and vulnerable learners including those who have been disproportionately affected by school closures.
- To further develop & implement the national PDG strategy across the region.
- Develop a Whole School Approach to wellbeing, promoting 'Ethically Informed Citizens of Wales'.
- Co-create Whole School Wellbeing resources with schools from across the region.

### **Workforce wellbeing (GwE and schools)**

- Continue to work closely in partnership with Local Authorities to provide wellbeing support for practitioners in schools and settings.
- Support the emotional well-being of the individual in the context of their professional role.
- Placing health and wellbeing at the heart of everything we do.
- Use a coaching framework in conversations, meetings and everyday leadership to unlock potential and encourage individual growth.

### **Additional Learning Needs (ALN)**

In collaboration with the Local Authorities:

- Support the process of reviewing the quality of ALN provision.
- Develop a professional learning offer that meets the needs of the workforce.
- Continue to support clusters to develop innovative plans to achieve ALN transformation goals.
- Continue to support the delivery of the schools support and training programme.

### **Y Gymraeg**

In collaboration with the Local Authorities we will work to implement the Welsh Government '*Cymraeg 2050: our plan for 2021 to 2026*':

- Develop the informal use of Welsh through 'Siarter iaith' and 'Cymraeg Campus'.
- Provide a professional offer for the Welsh language which is part of the region's Accelerated Learning Strategy.
- Offer professional learning to develop the Welsh language skills of the workforce.
- Promote the profile of the Welsh language amongst leaders in preparation for the Curriculum for Wales and the Welsh Government target of achieving a million Welsh Speakers by 2050.

- Provide support for schools and settings who teach through the medium of Welsh as their first language to improve the Welsh First Language skills of their learners, and especially those from non-Welsh speaking homes.
- Work in partnership to support each Local Authorities with their WESP priorities.

### **Developing leadership**

- Ensure that all learning organisations have the leadership capacity at all levels to inspire, coach, support, share practice and collaborate at all levels to ensure all learners' achieve their potential.
- Ensure that the principles of distributive leaderships are embedded in all learning organisations across the region.
- Continue to offer a wide range of Professional Learning opportunities in relation to leadership developmental programmes in order to develop present and future leaders:
  - Middle Leaders
  - Senior Leaders
  - National Professional Qualification for Headteachers (NPQH)
  - New and Acting Headteachers
  - Experienced Headteachers:

### **Digital**

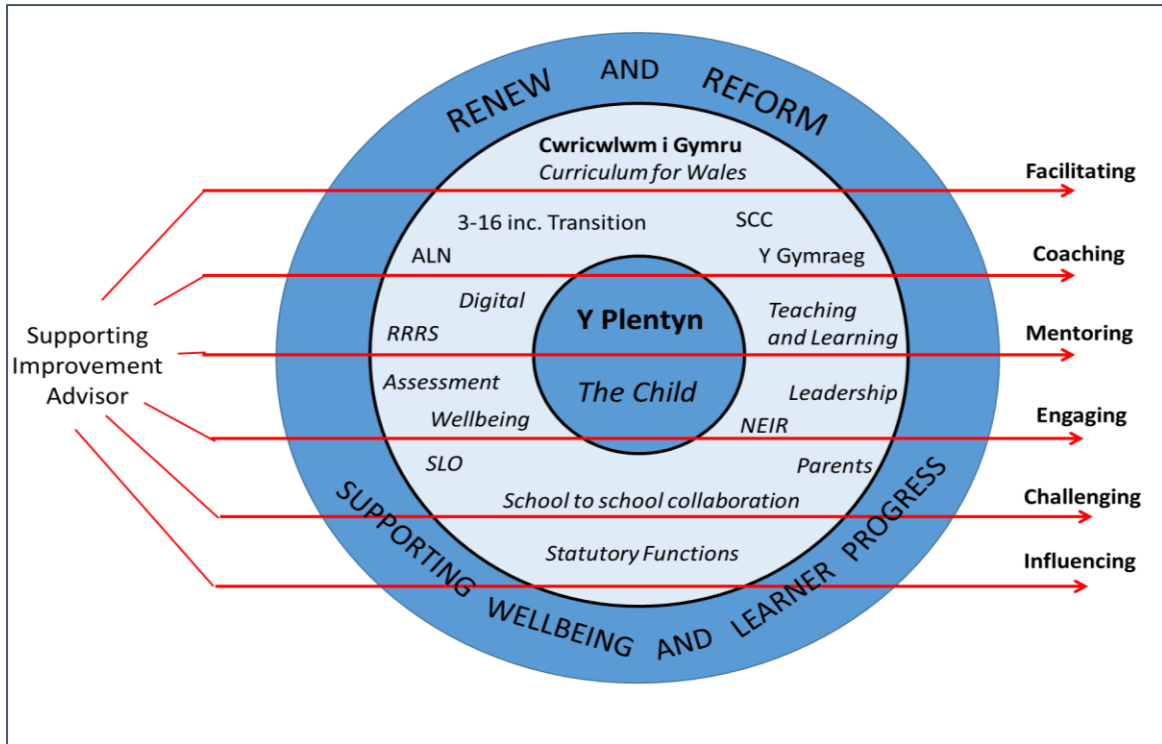
- Ensure that the region's schools' understanding of digital resilience is current and that the teaching and learning of digital security issues is purposeful and effective.
- Develop effective digital leadership within the region's schools to strengthen strategic approaches to improvement planning, change management and impact monitoring.
- Ensure professional learning opportunities are available to all school staff to train them how to use the tools available through *Hwb* and how to make effective use of the tools to improve the quality of learning.

### **Professional Learning**

- Provide professional learning and bespoke support and guidance to schools and settings to help them realise the Reform Journey and prepare for the new curriculum.
- Provide access to a range of regional and national professional learning, including access to coaching and mentoring, for all educational practitioners in schools and settings that is appropriate to their role and responsibility in line with professional standards.

## **EVOLVING THE REGIONAL MODEL**

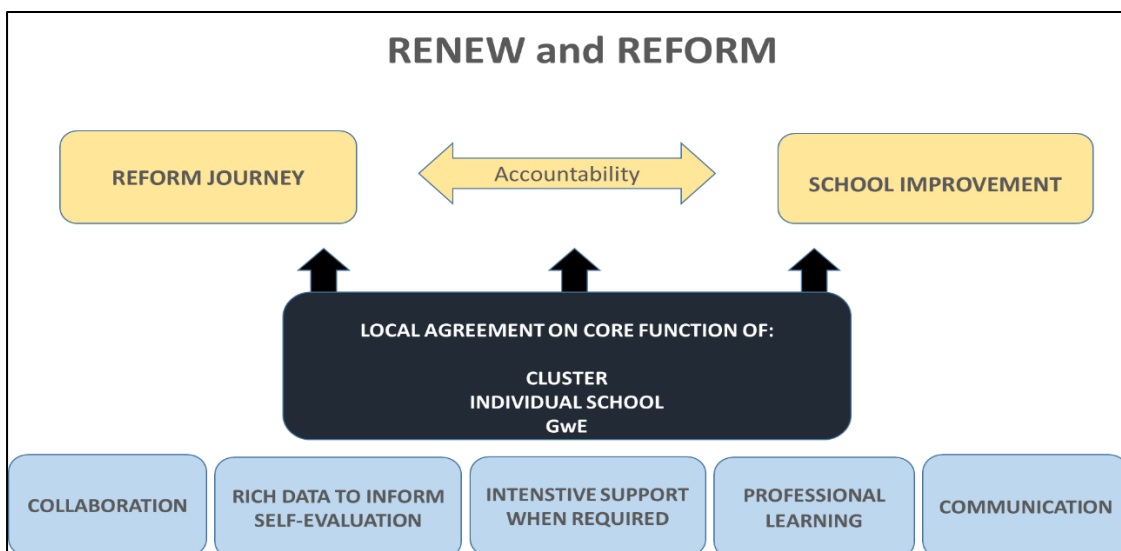
The role of the Supporting Improvement Advisor (SIA) is continuing to evolve as we continue to meet the needs and expectations of all our stakeholders. Our approach will be to support wellbeing and learner progress through working in partnership across the system to enable renewal and reform. With the learner at the centre of everything we do, advisors will use a variety of approaches to support Welsh Government in renewing education post pandemic and ensuring the reform journey remains on track.



The two core aspects of our work moving forward; the reform journey and school improvement will be underpinned by five areas of work:

- Collaboration
- Rich Data to inform Self-evaluation
- Intensive Support when required
- Professional Learning
- Communication

The Core Function of the work will involve a regional partnership approach with collaborations of schools and individual schools. This will give local flexibility regarding the model of delivery.



To ensure that we continue to meet the requirements and expectations of stakeholders, our schools partnership model will need to further evolve. With schools, clusters and alliances at differing points on the self-improving continuum, a nuanced approach will need to be adopted.

Primary focus is on enabling schools to improve by developing a high quality self-improving system which ensures the best for every child.

Arrangements at all levels will be rigorous, robust and coherent and underpinned by the principle of encouraging and supporting schools, clusters and alliances to take increasing ownership and accountability for their improvement journey.

We will ensure that the regional approach for schools partnership is:

- Fair: where we promote equity and inclusion and never lose sight of the learner.
- Coherent: where schools and GwE work together with locally determined core functions, roles and expectations.
- Proportionate: where we ensure that we have a manageable model which makes a difference to all schools. Our approach will support greater autonomy for those schools, clusters and alliances who have the capacity for self-improvement, whilst also allowing for a more comprehensive and intensive support package to be agreed with schools who face specific challenges at a certain point in time and for a specific period of time.
- Collegiate: where no school sees itself as an island. By working together in a structured way, schools can improve faster and more sustainably. Peer collaboration and engagement will be a central feature of our model. All key partners will engage in developing collective efficacy based on high trust, transparency, openness and honesty. It is about partners working together to build capacity into the system through quality enhancement processes and activities.
- Transparent: where we recognise the breadth of learning experience across the region and the value added by schools, leaders, teachers, support staff and advisers working together to an agreed common purpose.

As we move forward with the planning and delivery of the reform journey, our school partnership approach will allow flexibility for schools, clusters and alliances to agree core functions for:

- collaborative developmental work
- approaches to supporting improvements in individual schools within their cluster/alliance
- reporting and accountability processes

Clusters and alliances will also be given the flexibility to agree what the core function and contribution of GwE should be to the three aspects identified above. Where a cluster/alliance determines it has the capacity to undertake many of the core functions, it will be given resources to support with the work and the contribution of GwE will be proportionate. Where a cluster/alliance determines that they require GwE to undertake a greater percentage of the

core functions, the level of resources allocated will be proportionate. GwE contribution could include:

- Leading on or participating in quality assurance or quality enhancing opportunities
- Leading or contributing to developmental work
- Coaching or mentoring groups or individuals
- Facilitating cluster/alliance collaborative activities
- Leading on whole school or cluster/alliance professional development
- Delivering a more intensive support package to individual schools within a cluster/alliance
- Specialist role contributions
- Supporting the professional development of the workforce
- Signposting and sharing best practice

Roles and contributions will be defined within a cluster/alliance ‘*partnership agreement*’ which will be reviewed and evaluated at the end of the year (see Infographic below).

<b>SCHOOLS PARTNERSHIP PROGRAMME</b>						
CORE FUNCTIONS	CO-DEVELOPING		SUPPORTING IMPROVEMENTS		REPORTING AND ACCOUNTABILITY	
	<i>What?</i>	<i>How?</i>	<i>What?</i>	<i>How?</i>	<i>What?</i>	<i>How?</i>
Cluster						
Individual Schools						
GwE						
<b>IDENTIFIED EXPECTED OUTCOMES OF SCHOOLS PARTNERSHIP PROGRAMME</b>						
<b>AGREED ALLOCATED RESOURCE BY GwE FOR CLUSTER</b>						
£XXXXX						

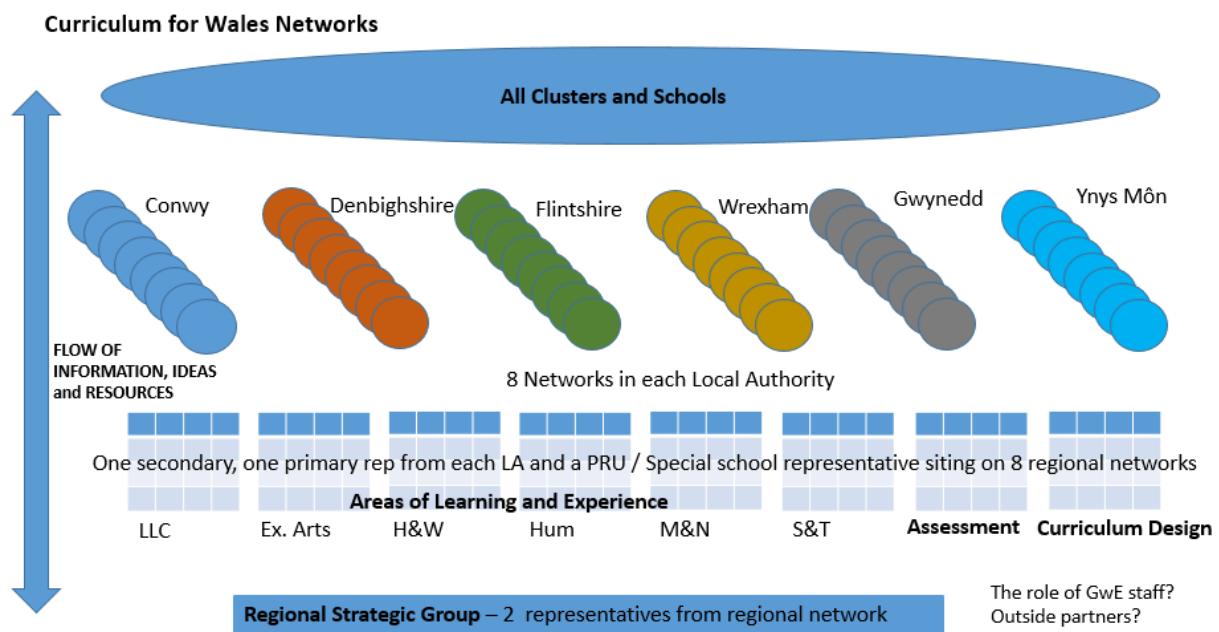
To strengthen the development of the new curriculum, AOLE development networks will be established at regional and a local level. School leaders and practitioners will collaborate to unpack the potential of each AOLE through modelling, designing and sharing curriculum practice.

Collaborative networks will work on the following areas:

1. Unpacking the potential of one of the AOLES
  - Language, Literacy and Communication (both Welsh and English)
  - Mathematics and Numeracy
  - Science & Technology
  - Humanities
  - Health and Wellbeing
  - Expressive Arts

2. Assessment
3. Whole school Curriculum Design

School based practitioners and wider partners from across the region will have the opportunity to work collaboratively with a network of peers supporting curriculum design and AOLE development on a local and regional level. Practitioners will communicate and cascade learning and successful practice across the schools within each local authority and contribute to developing planning and design models to support schools in trialling, evaluating and preparing the workforce for first teaching. The principle of subsidiarity will ensure a local context to this work.



Eight local AOLE networks will be established in each Local Authority, one for each of the areas noted above. Individuals from these local groups will represent the LA in eight regional AOLE networks, ensuring consistency of approach across the region. A regional strategic group, made up of cross-sector representatives from the eight LA groups will provide direction and an overview of the work.

Networks will have access to Professional Learning and work in partnership with Professor Graham Donaldson, GwE and the six North Wales LAs in developing effective AOLE practice which will support all schools on their Reform Journey.

### Peer review and school to school support

In North Wales, we firmly believe that peer review and school to school support should be a key driver for continuous improvement in schools as they plan to deliver the new curriculum and national reform. We will work with schools and PRUs to embed a programme of peer review that is based on the following processes:



- **Self-review:** effective peer review should start with how well the school knows itself and be led by the school being reviewed. Self-evaluation should focus on the learner, their achievements, progress and experiences in school and focus on learning and teaching, leadership, the development of a learning organisation culture, well-being of pupils and staff, equity and inclusion. In moving forward, the self-evaluation should also focus on the four purposes of the new curriculum and evaluate the progress the school is making towards realising the new curriculum. The self-evaluation processes should allow the school to identify areas of strengths and priorities for improvement. It should also identify aspects of their improvement journey that require peer support to aid improvement.
- **Peer-review:** the most effective peer reviews have an agreed focus. The purpose of the collaboration must be to improve outcomes and any agreed focus should be based on strong evidence of what's needed to improve and what outcomes would be most benefit to the school. Peer reviewers working as a team or trio work best where they can triangulate evidence and jointly analyse their findings. They are not there to pass judgement but to seek evidence and agree findings to be shared with the school. The partnership must be founded on a clearly articulated shared moral purpose with transparency, trust and honesty crucial and integral to the process. The peer review should also provide professional development opportunities and include leaders at all levels.
- **School-to-school support:** if peer review is going to be a vehicle for ongoing improvement in school systems, then it must go further than the review itself and involve school to school or cluster support. Where the outcomes are owned by the staff, the long-term and sustainable impact will be greater. This helps to further build capacity and increased resilience within a self-improving system. The partnerships built should therefore go beyond school leaders and engage with students, teachers, families and communities.

### Schools Causing Concern

Structures and processes for identifying and supporting schools causing concern will ensure that intervention is timely and appropriate to the context of the school.

A **Multi-agency Group** will meet on a regular basis (monthly or as appropriate) to:

- Identify those schools at risk of causing concern
- Agree with the school the bespoke 360 support plan. Plans will clearly identify which service will provide support and resources against identified actions
- Agree the monitoring arrangements of the 360 support plans
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the 360 support plans and work with schools to monitor progress and impact
- Share any effective practice within and across regional local authorities
- Where concerns escalate, the Multi-agency Group will report to the Quality Board so that Directors/Heads of Service can make informed and timely decision regarding the use of statutory powers of intervention

The **LA Quality Board** will meet on a half termly basis and will be chaired by the Chief Education Officer. Decisions for action by the Board should be recorded and shared with the Multi-agency group or supporting service as appropriate.

The Board's main focus will be on:

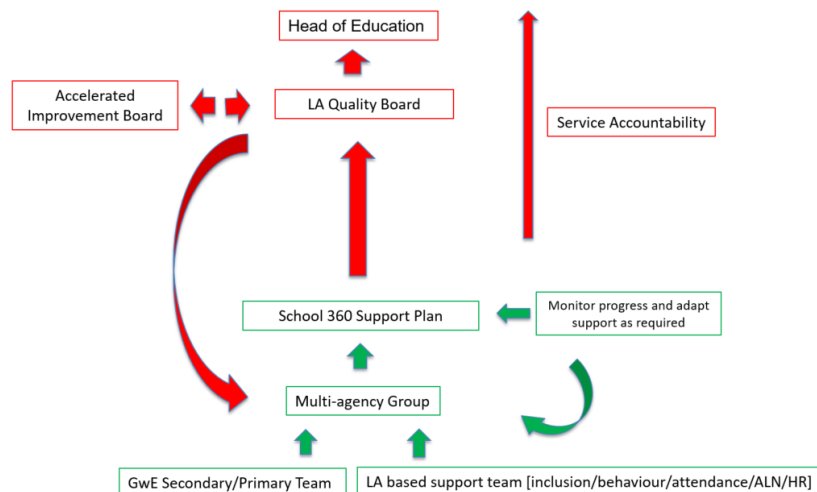
- assessing the progress of those schools causing concern that have been identified by Estyn or by local processes
- assessing the quality of the support planning for schools causing concern undertaken by the Multi-agency Group
- ensuring the Multi-agency Group undertakes its monitoring functions effectively
- taking required actions when escalation of concerns are shared by the Multi-agency Group and specifically around ability of school leadership and governance to improve at sufficient pace
- considering use of statutory powers of intervention when there are concerns around progress or pace of progress
- identifying best practice to share within and across local authorities

Where required, the local authority could also establish an **Accelerated Improvement Board** to support individual schools on their improvement journey. Membership will include representatives from the local authority, GwE, the head teacher and the governing body of the school. The purpose of the AIB will be to:

- Provide support for school improvement
- Provide an internal and external challenge forum
- To identify any concerns
- To identify any actions to be prioritised
- To further inform the Head of Education as to whether it is necessary for the LA to use its powers of intervention

The regional structures and processes for supporting and challenging schools causing concerns are summarised below:

**Regional structures and process for supporting and challenging SCC.**



## **Statutory Functions and Accountability**

The GwE Core Lead and the Supporting Improvement Advisers will work in partnership with Local Authority officers to implement the *Local Authority-School Partnership Agreement*. Monitoring and evaluation of overall standards, quality of teaching, learning and leadership will be undertaken by GwE's Core Lead and Supporting Improvement Advisers working in partnership with schools and clusters. However, GwE and the six Local Authorities will work with schools to evolve the current accountability system to allow schools and clusters to become more autonomous. Peer review will be a key element in supporting schools to evaluate their strengths areas for improvement and in helping them focus on specific improvement areas as they plan and deliver the new curriculum.

In moving towards a self-improving system, there will be a greater emphasis on moral and professional accountabilities. Accountability relationships for school will include those with pupils, parents, colleagues and the local community. The challenge for us over the next few years will be to create a culture where schools feel greater ownership of accountability and shift the perception that accountability is based just on data and inspection and imposed from above.

In North Wales, GwE and the six Local Authorities are committed to work in partnership with schools to develop a robust accountability system that has the confidence of all key stakeholders and holds each partner fully accountable for their role in developing our learners to become:

- Ambitious, capable learners, ready to learn throughout their lives;
- Enterprising, creative contributors, ready to play a full part in life and work;
- Ethical, informed citizens of Wales and the world; and
- Healthy, confident individuals, ready to lead fulfilling lives as valued members of society.

## **System expectations in North Wales**

By September 2024:

- All schools will meet the statutory requirements of the *Curriculum for Wales* and each school will have a strong relationship with their community and are developing a broad range of learner skills that will make them ready for further education, training and employment.
- Planning around the four purposes of the new curriculum will provide a balanced offer to meet the needs of all learners.
- A basic skills strategy comprising literacy, numeracy and digital competency will underpin the curriculum in every school.

- A strategy for children who are vulnerable to learning, concentrating on their inclusion, emotional wellbeing, attendance and any additional learning needs will be operational and impacting positively on their progress and wellbeing.
- We will have worked with schools and local authorities to adopt a new accountability model, which will include robust quality assurance processes, to ensure that there are clear and appropriate lines of accountability at all levels for regional school improvement and developments.
- An effective school causing concern strategy will be in place with the right capacity to identify and address need.
- Improving teaching will be at the heart of all improvements.
- Mature school collaborations through clusters and alliances will be in place across the region and a more collegiate approach to school improvement will be firmly established in order to secure better outcomes for learners.
- A robust regional Welsh in Education Strategic Plan will be operational to fully support both local and national priorities for improving the Welsh Language skills of both learners and the workforce.
- There will be a robust professional learning offer in place that meet the needs of all leaders and teaching staff to help each school implement all aspects of the reform journey and enable their learners to develop towards the four purposes of the new curriculum.
- GwE will effectively operate as a learning organisation in line with the seven 'action-orientated' dimensions identified by the OECD, and will have strong mature partnerships with its key stakeholders that will include a clear communication strategy.



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Collaborating · Learning · Succeeding



# GwE Business Plan 2021-2022 Regional and Gwynedd LA Data Quarter 4



[www.gwegogledd.cymru](http://www.gwegogledd.cymru)

@GwEGogleddCymru



**BUSINESS PLAN 2021-2022**

**REGIONAL PRIORITIES AND PROVISION 2021-2022**

**Regional and Local Authority Data**

**OBJECTIVE 1 - CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT**

**Supporting a national curriculum with equity and excellence at its core that sets high standards for all learners.**

**3-16 EDUCATION CONTINUUM**

<p><b>Regional data:</b></p> <p><b>GwE and Shirley Clarke project</b> Total number of schools across the region that have taken part in Tiers 1, 2 and 3</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Schools</th> <th>Teachers</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Tier 1</td> <td>27</td> <td>54</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Tier 2</td> <td>193</td> <td>386</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Tier 3</td> <td>140</td> <td>261</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Total</b></td> <td><b>260</b></td> <td><b>701</b></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 89% of regional schools</li> <li>• 96% Primary</li> <li>• 80% Secondary</li> <li>• 70% Special</li> </ul> <p>Over 1000 teachers from across the region attended the Shirley Clarke twilight session on 12/10/2022. Unable to obtain specific numbers as whole schools attended under one name, in order to ensure everyone could attend on Zoom.</p>		Schools	Teachers	Tier 1	27	54	Tier 2	193	386	Tier 3	140	261	<b>Total</b>	<b>260</b>	<b>701</b>	<p><b>Local Authority Data:</b></p> <p>Shirley Clarke twilight session on 12/10/2022. Percentage on an individual LA basis</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Gwynedd</td> <td>34%</td> </tr> </table>	Gwynedd	34%
	Schools	Teachers																
Tier 1	27	54																
Tier 2	193	386																
Tier 3	140	261																
<b>Total</b>	<b>260</b>	<b>701</b>																
Gwynedd	34%																	

**CURRICULUM REALISATION (CURRICULUM FOR WALES)**

<p><b>Regional data:</b></p> <p><b>Number of attendees in Curriculum Design sessions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Secondary: 101</li> <li>• Primary: 504</li> <li>• Special and PRU: 1</li> <li>• Others e.g. Estyn, Consortia: 8</li> </ul> <p><b>Number of attendees in Primary and assessment sessions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Secondary: 141</li> <li>• Primary: 620</li> <li>• Special and PRU: 18</li> <li>• Others e.g. Estyn, Consortia: 11</li> </ul>	<p><b>Local Authority Data:</b></p> <table border="1"> <tr> <th colspan="2">% who have attended 1 session or more</th> </tr> <tr> <td>Gwynedd:</td> <td>90%</td> </tr> </table>	% who have attended 1 session or more		Gwynedd:	90%
% who have attended 1 session or more					
Gwynedd:	90%				

**Sessions on Principles of Planning**

- after Easter.

**GwE Support Centre (on 24/3/22)**

- The number of website visits - 122k
- File downloads 23k

The number of visits to the Curriculum for Wales section on the website (on 24/3/22)

- Curriculum for Wales - 2,845
- Cwricwlwm i Gymru - 2,674
- Curriculum Design - 856
- Dylunio Cwricwlwm - 1002

**AoLE TEAMS****Regional data (13/10/2021)**

Numbers who have expressed an interest in contributing to the ongoing support programme for schools in relation to the Reform Journey:

Description	Number
Assessment	120
Curriculum Planning	153
Science and Technology	89
Health and Well-being	88
Languages, Literacy and Communication	118
Mathematics and Numeracy	86
The Expressive Arts	81
Humanities	69

**Attendance in regional meeting**

21/9/21 – 132  
 6/10/21- 115  
 16/11/21 – 117  
 14/12/21 – 130  
 2/3/22 – 116  
 5/4/22 – 112

**Local Authority Data:**

Numbers who have expressed an interest in contributing to the ongoing support programme for schools in relation to the Reform Journey:

LA	Number
Gwynedd	111

**OBJECTIVE 2 - DEVELOPING A HIGH-QUALITY EDUCATION PROFESSION**

**Improving the teaching and learning in our schools**

**MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

**Regional data:**

<b>Cerdd laith - Primary schools: 5</b>	<b>22.6.21</b>
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**New subscriptions to Power Language resources 2021-2022:**

- October - 35 primary schools
- March - 69 primary schools

<b>Primary webinar Power Language Number of schools: 23</b>	<b>22/11/21</b>
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<b>Anthea Bell Prize - Translation competition - Secondary</b>	<b>18</b>
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<b>Year 8/9 Mentoring Programme: number of schools: 18</b>	<b>October 21- March 22</b>
<b>Turbo Tutoring</b>	

**Local Authority Data:**

<b>Cerdd laith</b>	<b>22.6.21</b>
Gwynedd:	1

**Power Language / number of new schools: 35 2021-2022**

	October	March
Gwynedd:	2	15

<b>Primary webinar Power Language</b>	<b>22/11/21</b>
Gwynedd:	1

<b>Anthea Bell Prize - Translation competition - Secondary</b>	
Gwynedd:	6

<b>Year 8/9 Mentoring Programme: number of schools: 18 Turbo Tutoring</b>	<b>October 21- March 22</b>
Gwynedd:	5

**HLTA - TALP**

**Regional data:**

**Newly appointed teaching assistants**

	<b>2021-22</b>
Regional	<b>77</b>

**Aspiring HLTA Cylch 3**

Regional	<b>39</b>
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**Aspiring HLTA Cylch 4**

Regional	<b>33</b>
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**Local Authority Data:**

**Newly appointed teaching assistants**

Gwynedd:	<b>8</b>
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**Aspiring HLTA Cylch 3**

Gwynedd:	<b>3</b>
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**Aspiring HLTA Cylch 4**

Gwynedd:	<b>6</b>
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<p>HLTA Status assessments Cylch 2</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Regional</td> <td>30</td> </tr> </table> <p>HLTA assessors</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Regional</td> <td>35</td> </tr> </table>	Regional	30	Regional	35	<p>HLTA Status assessments Cylch 2</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Gwynedd:</td> <td>3</td> </tr> </table> <p>HLTA assessors</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Gwynedd:</td> <td>2</td> </tr> </table>	Gwynedd:	3	Gwynedd:	2
Regional	30								
Regional	35								
Gwynedd:	3								
Gwynedd:	2								

**Y Gymraeg**

<p><b>Regional data:</b></p> <p><b>Ein Llais Ni - 100 schools are involved in the project</b></p> <p><b>Autumn term provision for schools involved in the project:</b>  <b>Conference: 111</b>  <b>On Demand 1: 41</b>  <b>Network: 67</b></p> <p><b>Sabbaticals Scheme - Regional: 12</b></p> <p><b>'Cymraeg mewn Gwaith' course - intermediate for GwE staff: 8</b></p>	<p><b>Local Authority Data:</b></p> <p><b>'Ein Llais Ni' schools</b></p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Gwynedd:</td> <td>54</td> </tr> </table> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>20/10 Conference</th> <th>On demand 9/11</th> <th>Network 23/11</th> <th>On demand 7/12</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Gwynedd:</td> <td>56</td> <td>15</td> <td>21</td> <td>21</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Gwynedd:	54		20/10 Conference	On demand 9/11	Network 23/11	On demand 7/12	Gwynedd:	56	15	21	21
Gwynedd:	54												
	20/10 Conference	On demand 9/11	Network 23/11	On demand 7/12									
Gwynedd:	56	15	21	21									

**A LEVEL**

<p><b>Regional data:</b></p> <p><b>Network and share practice across Heads of Sixth: 17</b></p>	<p><b>Local Authority Data:</b></p> <p><b>Network and share practice across Heads of Sixth - networks across joint authorities:</b></p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Gwynedd:</td> <td>3</td> </tr> </table>	Gwynedd:	3
Gwynedd:	3		

**DIGITAL**

<p><b>Regional data:</b></p> <p><b>Hwb</b></p> <p>Data on the use of Hwb in the region remains high. The average number of regional schools engaging with Hwb during quarter 4 is 98.06%. The average for each month is as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>January - 98.17%</li> <li>February - 98%</li> <li>March - 98%</li> </ul>	<p><b>Local Authority Data:</b></p> <p><b>Data for Quarter 4 Hub use</b></p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Gwynedd:</td> <td>96%</td> </tr> </table> <p>The number of individuals who have engaged in an activity in the digital facilitators programme to date</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Gwynedd:</td> <td>39</td> </tr> </table>	Gwynedd:	96%	Gwynedd:	39
Gwynedd:	96%				
Gwynedd:	39				

## MATHEMATICS AND NUMERACY

<p><b>Regional data:</b></p> <p><b>Introduction to Mathematics and Numeracy AoLE</b>  <b>Regionally - primary practitioners</b>  <b>Welsh-medium session - 39</b>  <b>English-medium session - 56</b></p> <p><b><u>Heads of Mathematics network meeting (March 2022)</u></b></p> <p><b><u>Number of attendees: 34</u></b></p>	<p><b>Local Authority Data:</b></p> <p><b><u>Mathematics / Literacy support</u></b></p> <p><b>Introduction to Mathematics and Numeracy AoLE</b></p> <table border="1" style="margin-left: auto; margin-right: auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px;">Primary - Welsh-medium</td> <td colspan="2" style="padding: 2px;">15/11/21</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px;">Number of schools</td> <td style="padding: 2px;">Number of attendees</td> <td style="padding: 2px;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px;">Gwynedd</td> <td style="padding: 2px;">10</td> <td style="padding: 2px;">17</td> </tr> </table> <p><b><u>Heads of Mathematics network meeting (March 2022)</u></b></p> <table border="1" style="margin-left: auto; margin-right: auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px;"></td> <td style="padding: 2px;">Schools</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px;">Gwynedd</td> <td style="padding: 2px;">10</td> </tr> </table>	Primary - Welsh-medium	15/11/21		Number of schools	Number of attendees		Gwynedd	10	17		Schools	Gwynedd	10
Primary - Welsh-medium	15/11/21													
Number of schools	Number of attendees													
Gwynedd	10	17												
	Schools													
Gwynedd	10													

## ENGLISH AND LITERACY

<p><b>Regional data:</b></p> <p><b>Literacy support for schools who are either in Estyn category/Special Measures, are SCC or require guidance.</b></p> <p><b>Secondary = 20 schools have received individual support</b></p> <p><b>All secondary schools have attended a Heads of English forum</b></p>	<p><b>Local Authority Data:</b></p> <table border="1" style="margin-left: auto; margin-right: auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px;">Gwynedd:</td> <td style="padding: 2px;">0</td> </tr> </table>	Gwynedd:	0
Gwynedd:	0		

## WELSH AND LITERACY

<p><b>Regional data:</b></p> <p>Network meetings and 'On demand' (February 2022) = 14</p>	<p><b>Local Authority Data:</b></p> <table border="1" style="margin-left: auto; margin-right: auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px;">Gwynedd:</td> <td style="padding: 2px;">8</td> </tr> </table>	Gwynedd:	8
Gwynedd:	8		
<p>The number of HoDs who attended WJEC CPD (individual schools funding this training) - February 2022 and March 2022 = 16</p>	<table border="1" style="margin-left: auto; margin-right: auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px;">Gwynedd:</td> <td style="padding: 2px;">9 + 1 training</td> </tr> </table>	Gwynedd:	9 + 1 training
Gwynedd:	9 + 1 training		
<p>Members of 'GwE - Y Gymraeg - Uwchradd' Teams/Google Classroom = 27</p>	<p>Welsh language Leaders in each LA are members of this digital network: Gwynedd = 514</p>		
<p>Members of 'GwE - Y Gymraeg - Uwchradd YCS' Teams/Google Classroom = 18</p>	<p>Membership of this digital network continues to grow:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gwynedd = 1</li> </ul>		

A Level Y Gymraeg Conference (GwE/Partnership) = 10	Gwynedd: 4
'Ein Llais Ni' Project (GwE) - number of secondary schools in the project = 13	Gwynedd: 6
'Creu ar draws ieithoedd' project - Languages, Literacy and Communication AoLE project (in conjunction with the SIAs for International Languages and English, and Bangor University) = 2	Welsh Departments in two regional schools are part of this project: Gwynedd = 0

### SCIENCE

<b>Regional data:</b>  <b>Specific networks for Science were not held due to the development of the regional and local networks for Science and Technology AoLE.</b>  <b>The number of schools that have received specific support: 27</b>	<b>Local Authority Data:</b>  <b>The number of secondary schools that have received specific school support:</b> Gwynedd: 7
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### FOUNDATION PHASE

<b>Regional data:</b>  <b>The number of schools receiving specific support: 32</b>  <b>Woodwork Project: 26</b>  <b>Spring term Network Meeting: 303</b>	<b>Local Authority Data:</b>  <b>Woodwork Project</b> Gwynedd: 5  <b>Spring term Network Meeting:</b> Gwynedd: 55
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## OBJECTIVE 3 - LEADERSHIP

Supporting inspirational leaders working collaboratively to raise standards. Including prospective leaders and professional networks

### LEADERSHIP

<b>Regional data:</b>  1. <b>Middle Leadership Development Programme: 102</b> 2. <b>Senior Leaders' Development Programme: 72</b> 3. <b>Prospective Heads' Development Programme (preparing for NPQH): 35</b> 4. <b>Acting/New Headteacher Development Programme: 35</b> 5. <b>Development Programme for Experienced Headteachers: 17</b>  <b>TOTAL: 258</b>	<b>Local Authority Data:</b>  <table border="1"> <tr> <td>2020-21</td> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> <td>4</td> <td>5</td> <td>T</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Gwynedd:</td> <td>9</td> <td>10</td> <td>12</td> <td>11</td> <td>1</td> <td>43</td> </tr> </table>  <table border="1"> <tr> <td>2021-22</td> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> <td>4</td> <td>5</td> <td>T</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Gwynedd:</td> <td>10</td> <td>17</td> <td>8</td> <td>5</td> <td>1</td> <td>41</td> </tr> </table>	2020-21	1	2	3	4	5	T	Gwynedd:	9	10	12	11	1	43	2021-22	1	2	3	4	5	T	Gwynedd:	10	17	8	5	1	41
2020-21	1	2	3	4	5	T																							
Gwynedd:	9	10	12	11	1	43																							
2021-22	1	2	3	4	5	T																							
Gwynedd:	10	17	8	5	1	41																							

## GOVERNORS

<p><b>Regional data:</b></p> <p>A representative from GwE has attended four meetings during Quarters 2 and 3:</p> <p>ADEW/GSO meeting on 18/06/21 (national) GwE region GSO meeting 23/06/21 (regional)</p> <p>ADEW/GSO meeting on 14/10/21 (national) GwE region GSO meeting 21/10/21 (regional)</p>	<p><b>Local Authority Data:</b></p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 30%;">Gwynedd:</td> <td>A total of 70 Governors in a Zoom session - 23/6/21 and 29/6/21</td> </tr> </table>	Gwynedd:	A total of 70 Governors in a Zoom session - 23/6/21 and 29/6/21
Gwynedd:	A total of 70 Governors in a Zoom session - 23/6/21 and 29/6/21		

## ALLIANCES/NETWORKS/CLUSTERS

<p><b>Regional data:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The number of secondary schools taking part in alliance collaborative work: 53</li> <li>• The number of primary schools taking part in cluster collaborative work: 331</li> <li>• The number of secondary schools taking part in CfW cluster collaborative work: 54</li> <li>• The number of primary schools taking part in CfW cluster collaborative work: 331</li> </ul>	<p><b>Local Authority Data:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The number of secondary schools taking part in alliance collaborative work: Gwynedd = 13</li> <li>• The number of primary schools taking part in cluster collaborative work: Gwynedd = 78</li> <li>• The number of secondary schools taking part in CfW cluster collaborative work: Gwynedd = 14</li> <li>• The number of primary schools taking part in CfW cluster collaborative work: Gwynedd = 78</li> </ul>
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## OBJECTIVE 4 - STRONG AND INCLUSIVE SCHOOLS

Committed to excellence, equity and well-being

### LAC PDG

<p><b>Regional data:</b></p> <p>School Visits/Individual Support x 32</p> <p>Lead Person within Clusters x 10</p> <p><b>Professional Learning:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction to Protective Behaviours to Support Wellbeing = 68</li> <li>• TIS PACE MODEL = 45</li> <li>• Trauma Informed Schools Early Years = 700 And non-maintained EY settings = 15</li> <li>• Whole School Approach Trauma Informed = 91</li> </ul>	<p><b>Local Authority Data:</b></p> <p><b>Professional Learning:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction to Protective Behaviours to Support Wellbeing Gwynedd = 5</li> <li>• TIS PACE MODEL Gwynedd = 3</li> <li>• Trauma Informed Schools Early Years – Gwynedd = 12</li> <li>• Whole School Approach Trauma Informed Gwynedd = 8</li> </ul>
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- SLT TIS = 25
- Biophilia = 90
- Talk Boost = 9
- Drawing and Talking = 20
- LAC dedicated person training Gwynedd = 25
- LAC training for Governors = 10

- SLT TIS  
Gwynedd = 9
- Biophilia  
Gwynedd = 5
- Talk Boost  
Gwynedd = 0
- Drawing and Talking  
Gwynedd = 1
- LAC dedicated person training Gwynedd: = 0
- LAC training for Gwynedd Governors = 0

### REIGNITING LEARNING

#### Regional data:

**Remote Instruction of Language and Literacy (RILL) - PHASE 2:** 54 schools have registered for training between September 2021 and spring term 2022.

**Precision Teaching and SAFMEDS:** 7 regional training sessions were held in the autumn term 2021, and all GwE schools now have access to a live SAFMEDS website for pupils, webinars and on-line resources.

- *English: There were 1023 views for the reigniting learning webinar, and 391 for the SAFMEDS training.*
- *Cymraeg: 474 for the webinar, and 70 for the SAFMEDS training.*
- *Pupils completing approximately 677 mathematics activities during the first launch week.*

**Improving Fluency in Oral Reading (iFOR):** 42 schools have registered for training between September 2021 and spring term 2022.

The number of teachers who have used Google Classroom:

- 62 have used the English resources
- 41 have used the Welsh resources

#### Warwick Collaborative Well-being Project

In January 2022, 33 primary schools were recruited to take part in the two language strands of our well-being study, Connect

#### Local Authority Data:

**Remote Instruction of Language and Literacy (RILL) - PHASE 2:**

Gwynedd:	15
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**Precision Teaching and SAFMEDS:**

Gwynedd:	1
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**Improving Fluency in Oral Reading (iFOR):**

Gwynedd:	5
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**Warwick Collaborative Well-being Project**

Gwynedd:	4
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<p><b>NIHR KiVa Anti-bullying Study</b></p> <p>Since 2020 we have been working with over 29 primary schools to evaluate the impact of KiVa.</p> <p><b>Evidence Informed Profession Project (EIPP)</b></p> <p>We are supporting 40 primary and secondary schools.</p> <p><b>NPEP project</b></p> <p>40 primary and secondary schools.</p>	<p><b>NIHR KiVa Anti-bullying Study</b></p> <table border="1" data-bbox="778 159 1366 197"> <tr> <td>Gwynedd:</td> <td>4</td> </tr> </table> <p><b>Evidence Informed Profession Project (EIPP)</b></p> <table border="1" data-bbox="778 360 1366 398"> <tr> <td>Gwynedd:</td> <td>10</td> </tr> </table> <p><b>NPEP project</b></p> <table border="1" data-bbox="778 533 1366 571"> <tr> <td>Gwynedd:</td> <td>20</td> </tr> </table>	Gwynedd:	4	Gwynedd:	10	Gwynedd:	20
Gwynedd:	4						
Gwynedd:	10						
Gwynedd:	20						

**OBJECTIVE 5 - SUPPORTING A SELF-IMPROVING SYSTEM**

**Supporting a system in which the education profession has the skills, capacity and agency to continually learn and improve their practice**

**PEER ENGAGEMENT**

<p><b>Regional data:</b></p> <p><b>Number of schools/clusters in the programme: 105/ 18</b></p> <p><b>Number of Peer Reviewers trained: 161</b></p> <p><b>Number of Improvement Facilitators trained: 154</b></p> <p><b>Number of schools/clusters earmarked for the next tier: 154 / 20</b></p>	<p><b>Local Authority data:</b></p> <p><b>Number of schools that have committed:</b></p> <table border="1" data-bbox="778 981 1366 1019"> <tr> <td>Gwynedd:</td> <td>16</td> </tr> </table> <p><b>Peer Reviewers trained:</b></p> <table border="1" data-bbox="778 1131 1302 1169"> <tr> <td>Gwynedd:</td> <td>130</td> </tr> </table> <p><b>Improvement Facilitators trained:</b></p> <table border="1" data-bbox="778 1288 1302 1326"> <tr> <td>Gwynedd:</td> <td>26</td> </tr> </table> <p><b>Number of schools to be trained in the summer and autumn terms 2022:</b></p> <table border="1" data-bbox="778 1460 1302 1498"> <tr> <td>Gwynedd:</td> <td>29</td> </tr> </table>	Gwynedd:	16	Gwynedd:	130	Gwynedd:	26	Gwynedd:	29
Gwynedd:	16								
Gwynedd:	130								
Gwynedd:	26								
Gwynedd:	29								

**SCHOOLS CAUSING CONCERN**

<p><b>Regional data:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The number of regional secondary SCC: 11</li> <li>• The number of regional primary SCC: 2</li> <li>• The number of secondary schools involved in the national SCC pilot [Special Measures]: 4</li> <li>• The number of regional secondary SCC involved in the SPP: 5</li> <li>• The number of regional primary SCC involved in the SPP: 0</li> </ul>	<p><b>Local Authority Data:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The number of regional secondary SCC: Gwynedd = 0</li> <li>• The number of regional primary SCC: Gwynedd = 0</li> </ul>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>The number of regional secondary SCC involved in alliance collaborative work: 11</b></li><li>• <b>The number of regional primary SCC involved in cluster collaborative work: 2</b></li></ul>	
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Collaborating · Learning · Succeeding

# GwE Regional Business Plan

## 2022-2023





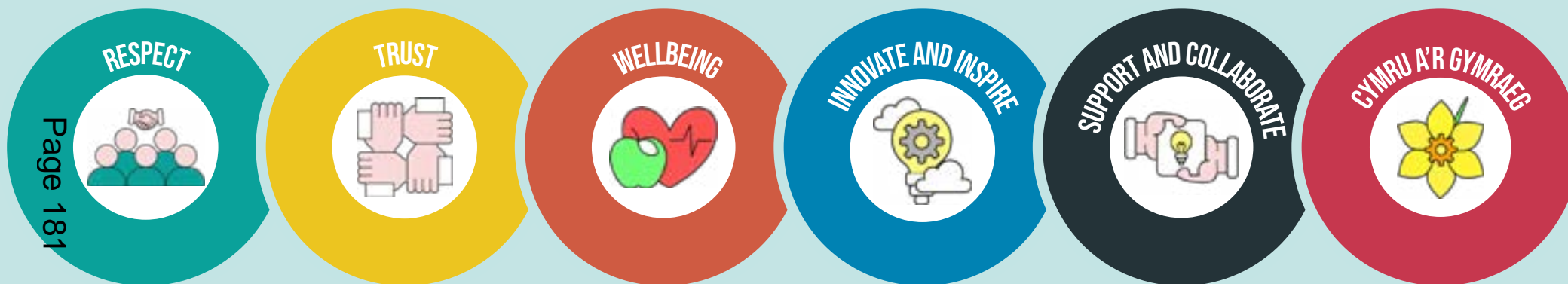
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1. Our vision, values and behaviour
2. Regional context
3. Introduction
4. GwE Regional Business Plan:
  - Strategic Objectives 2022-2023
  - Regional Priorities 2022-2023
5. Governance: Monitoring and Evaluation
6. Risk Register
7. Funding
8. Additional Supporting Documents

## OUR VISION

- Our work is driven by genuine ambition to see the schools and organisations we work with achieve their aspirations and to see all learners succeed.
- Proudly Welsh and internationally informed, we will support our schools to become successful and confident learning organisations. We will collaborate to provide learners with the climate and education they deserve so that they become capable and resilient individuals who realise their full potential.

## OUR VALUES



## OUR BEHAVIOUR

We will be consistent, objective and fair in our work, valuing everybody's effort, contribution and achievement.

We will be professional, honest and open in our work with everybody. This is the core of successful collaboration.

We will show care, empathy and concern for the wellbeing of all.

We will be ready to take risks with our schools, embracing challenge, curiosity, perseverance and the willingness to learn from successes and failures. By being knowledgeable and sharing good practice we aim to empower and motivate schools to research and develop.

We will be dependable, flexible and sensitive in our support. We will be ready to collaborate and encourage working in partnership with others, recognising that there is room for us all to improve, develop and learn.

We will embrace and celebrate the Welsh language and culture in all aspects of our work.

## 2. REGIONAL CONTEXT

GwE provides school improvement services for a region of six local authorities: Conwy, Denbighshire, Flintshire, Gwynedd, Wrexham and Anglesey.

The number of pupils of compulsory school age in 2021 was 82,432. This represents 21.7% of all pupils in Wales. There are 401 maintained schools in the region, 27.2% of all maintained schools in Wales (School Census Results, 2021).

The percentage of pupils of compulsory school age who are eligible for free school meals increased yet again from 18.2% in 2020 to 20.4%, which is lower than the national figure of 22.9%. This level of eligibility is still the lowest of the four regional consortia (School Census Results, 2021).

In the region, 41.6% of people aged three and over say that they can speak Welsh compared to the Wales average of 29.5% (Annual Population Survey, Office for National Statistics).

As of the 30th of September 2021, ethnic minorities account for 2.2% of the population in the region and this is below the Wales average of 4.8%. (Annual Population Survey/Office for National Statistics (ONS)).

As of the 31st March 2021, 1,465 children in the region are looked after by a local authority and this represents 20.2% of looked-after children in Wales. (Children Receiving Care and Support Census)

GwE continues to look outward and to welcome challenge from both inside and outside Wales whilst making sure that what it is developing is right for its context. This includes continuously listening to the voice of all stakeholders especially those of teachers and leaders in schools across all sectors.

GwE has a clear plan that sets out how, in close collaboration with key stakeholders, it will strengthen leadership, improve teaching and learning and increase aspiration to impact on standards.

## 3. INTRODUCTION

Our regional business plan sets out the priority areas for improvement across the region.

The regional priorities and areas for improvement are based firmly on the findings of our internal self-evaluation processes, external reviews on our current practice and direction of travel, and through consultation with headteachers and the Local Authorities. The business plan also addresses Welsh Government and the Local Authorities strategic priorities that fall within the remit of the work of GwE.

Additionally, GwE will work in partnership with Local Authorities to support additional local priorities, as appropriate. It also takes into consideration the views and priorities of other middle tier partners such as Estyn, Qualifications Wales, WJEC, National Academy for Educational Leadership (NAEL), Initial Teacher Education (ITE) and Education Workforce Council (EWC).

In North Wales, GwE and the six Local Authorities are committed to working in partnership with schools to ensure that we have robust and purposeful systems and processes in place to adhere to national expectations in relation to the 'National School Improvement Guidance: Framework for Evaluation, Improvement and Accountability'. Our approach will ensure that we have the confidence and support of all key stakeholders and that each partner will take full accountability for undertaking their role and contribution with transparency, effectiveness and efficiency.

Our priorities are a combination of improving school provision, leadership and outcomes, as well as delivering the reform journey. Our approach to the reform journey has been integrated in all aspects of our work from the beginning. Not one element of the reform journey can stand alone. It is viewed from the need of learners and the baseline of individual schools and clusters to deliver change according to agreed expectations.

GwE has encouraged schools to collaborate through sharing practice and co-constructing areas that need improving and the challenges of the reform journey. We have invested in various cluster models and encouraged schools to find a range of appropriate partners to deliver improvement and changes. The region has also looked outward for good practice in terms of identifying effective peer review models as well as encouraging our schools to develop and evolve their own practice. GwE believe that peer engagement should closely complement the dimensions identified within the OECD publication 'What Makes a School a Learning Organisation'.

Our focus is on support and on capacity-building for a self-improving system. Challenge Advisers have become 'Supporting Improvement Advisers' and this is more than a name change – it signals a determination to build trust with key stakeholders and to move away from a top-down approach to school improvement, developing a more long-term, supportive and sustainable strategy.

In partnership with stakeholders, GwE has developed a long-term supportive and sustainable strategy which is successfully building capacity across the region to meet the challenges of the wider reform. The integrated approach has focused on developing collaborative opportunities across clusters of schools.

Professional learning will be central to ensuring that all school staff have the professional knowledge and skills to deliver on the education reforms that are well underway in Wales. Taking into consideration the system expectations and working in collaboration with partners, a clear framework for themes for professional learning has been identified for practitioners within schools.

## 4. GwE REGIONAL BUSINESS PLAN

Our business plan, along with the Regional Strategy 'Renew and reform: supporting learners' wellbeing and progression' incorporates how GwE will respond to the impact of post-Covid in the context of education. Through working with partners and key stakeholders and listening to them, we have identified specific themes to support our aim of ensuring that every pupil in north Wales benefits from provision of the highest possible standard. Their mental health and emotional well-being, their relationships and physical health are all essential enablers of good learning. We will support schools to focus on these areas as well as developing the key enabling skills, which include oracy, literacy, numeracy, planning, organising and critical thinking. In addition, the Supporting Improvement Advisers' initial visit to schools at the beginning of the year have focused on the needs of schools, taking into consideration the impact of Covid. Compound information arising from these visits inform schools' support plans, and we have refined our business plan to reflect this.

The high level priorities for 2022-2023 were agreed with the Joint Committee on 16 February 2022. The Business Plan for 2022-2023 has been formally agreed by the Chief Education Officers of each Local Authority, the Joint Committee and the Lead Chief Executive on xxxxx.

## STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

Our strategic objectives reflects the current regional and national priorities.

### OUR STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES FOR 2022-2023

- 1 Curriculum & Assessment** - Supporting a national curriculum with equity & excellence at its core that sets high standards for all learners.
- 2 Developing a high-quality education profession** - improving the teaching & learning in our schools.
- 3 Leadership** - supporting inspirational leaders working collaboratively to raise standards. Includes future leadership & professional networks.
- 4 Strong & inclusive schools** committed to excellence, equity & well-being
- 5 Supporting a self improving system** - supporting a system in which the education profession have the skills, capacity & agency to continually learn & improve their practice
- 6 Business** - ensure that GwE has strong governance and effective business and operational support that provides value for money.

## REGIONAL PRIORITIES 2022 - 2023

The four purposes is the starting point and aspiration for schools as they prepare to design the new curriculum and support their learners to become:

- ambitious, capable learners, ready to learn throughout their lives;
- enterprising, creative contributors, ready to play a full part in life and work;
- ethical, informed citizens of Wales and the world; and
- healthy, confident individuals, ready to lead fulfilling lives as valued members of society.

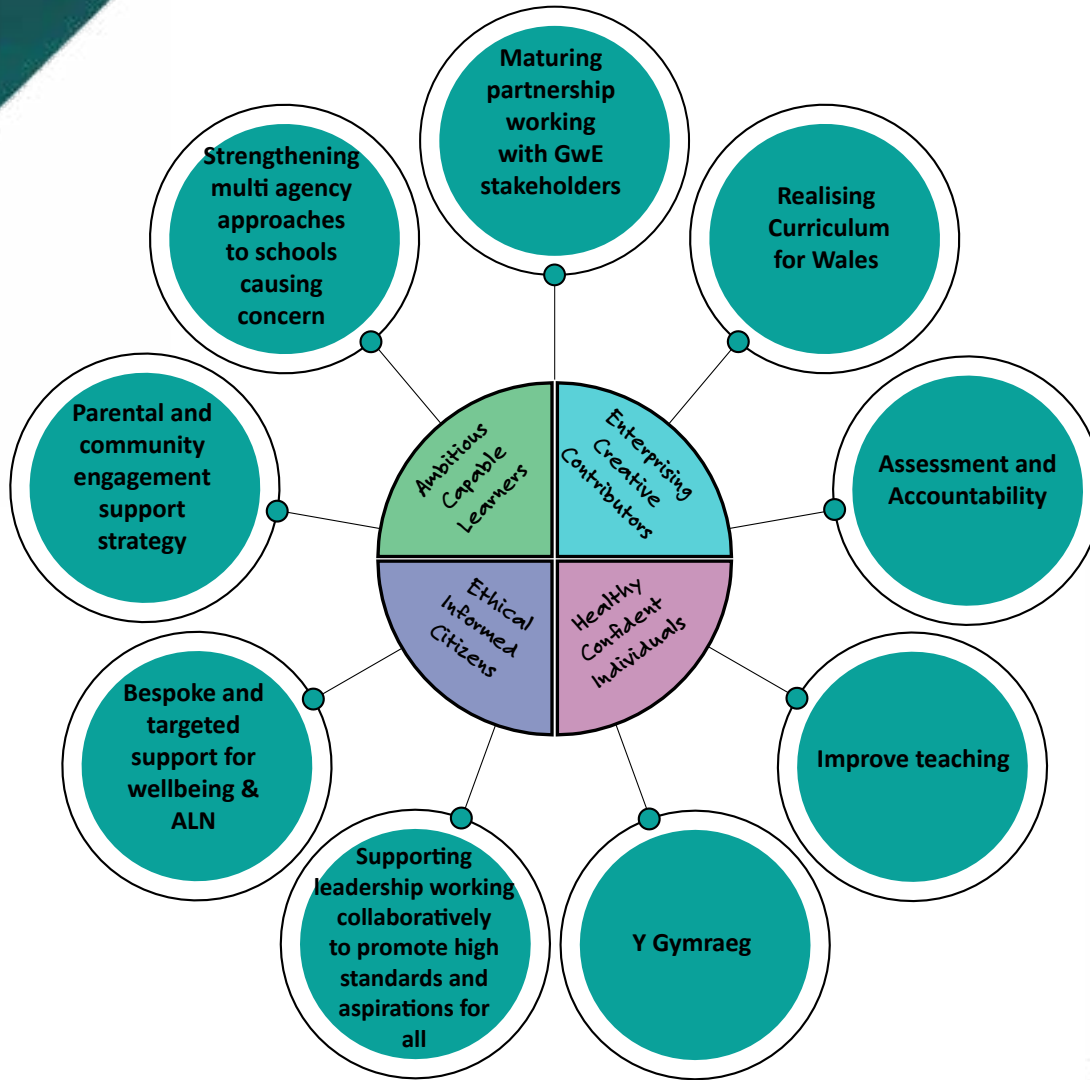
Our priorities outlined below are aimed to support schools as they work towards those four purposes.

These priorities are supported by the service's detailed operational plans, outlining how and when the aspects of each priority will be delivered and setting expectations for the next steps in delivering the reform journey. Also, each Local Authority has a detailed business plan agreed upon by the head of service and the core adviser.

# OUR HIGH LEVEL PRIORITIES 2022-2023

## PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

GROWTH  
POINTS



ENHANCEMENT

Collaboration

Learning Organisation

Quality Enhancement

Developing leadership and supporting workforce wellbeing

## OUR HIGH LEVEL PRIORITIES 2022-2023

### OBJECTIVE 1: CURRICULUM & ASSESSMENT

Supporting a national curriculum with equity & excellence at its core that sets high standards for all learners

- 1.1 **Realising Curriculum for Wales**
- » Provide professional learning and bespoke support and guidance to schools and settings to help them realise all aspects of the Reform Journey and implement the new curriculum.
  - » Support all staff and governors to realise Curriculum for Wales through ensuring that all schools are ready for first teaching of the new curriculum and meet mandatory requirements for September 2022
  - » Provide support for secondary schools and settings in preparing for the new curriculum in Years 7 and 8 in September 2023 by:
    - Providing regional and local networks with clear guidance on curriculum design, planning, assessment and progression through modelling and exemplifying curriculum practice;
    - Supporting schools to ensure that learners have the opportunity to use, apply and extend the mandatory cross-curricular skills of literacy, numeracy and digital competence in a range of authentic contexts;
    - Promoting learner transition by ensuring effective direct engagement between secondary and primary schools;
    - Working collaboratively with leaders to ensure that all settings have a clear plan to effectively respond to the guidance delivered in the Curriculum for Wales and plan effectively for Professional Learning;
    - Ensuring all settings adopt and publish a summary for key stakeholders
    - Continuing to encourage schools to develop and refine their curriculum and assessment arrangements as part of continuous evaluation
  - » Encourage schools to develop methods of holistically capturing and evaluating progress and success of all learners towards an agreed end that encompass the Four Purposes within their school community.
- 
- 1.2 **Assessment and Accountability**
- » Work in partnership with schools to support the development of effective assessment rationale that addresses the reasons of why and what is assessed and identifies the requirements of different stakeholders for relevant assessment information
  - » Support the principles and practices of the Curriculum for Wales, and create the significant system and culture change necessary for the Curriculum to succeed.
  - » Work in partnership with schools to facilitate effective professional dialogue within and between schools to develop a shared understanding of progression across the breadth of the curriculum, allowing practitioners to identify, capture and reflect on



learner progress over time.

- » Support schools to effectively report on learner progress to parents/carers.
- » Work in partnership with schools and local authorities to develop performance indicators, both quantitative and qualitative, which effectively captures the progress of schools and settings against the four purposes of the new curriculum.
- » Work in partnership with schools and local authorities to adopt a revised accountability model, which will include robust quality assurance processes, to ensure that there are clear and appropriate lines of accountability at all levels for regional school improvement.

## OBJECTIVE 2: DEVELOPING A HIGH-QUALITY EDUCATION PROFESSION

### Improving the teaching & learning in our schools

#### 2.1 Improve Teaching

- » Support schools in responding to the education reform journey, with strong emphasis on pedagogy, effective teaching and action research
- » Ensure effective and consistent implementation of formative assessment principles and strategies across and within all schools
- » Ensure consistency of messages in GwE Professional Learning and support for schools regarding the 4 purposes and pedagogy, including the 12 pedagogical principles
- » Support schools to implement the key principles of the assessment guidance
- » Support cross sector collaboration to ensure consistency of effective teaching practice to support learner transition

#### 2.2 Y Gymraeg

- In collaboration with the Local Authorities:
- » Support schools to promote the benefits of bilingualism and the benefits of Welsh-medium education;
  - » Support and incentivise the development of the growth of Welsh-medium provision in the English-medium schools;
  - » Develop a professional learning offer for the Welsh Language in preparation for the Curriculum for Wales (3-16) and strengthen collaboration / transition from primary to secondary sector;
  - » Promote the profile of the Welsh language amongst leaders in preparation for the Curriculum for Wales and the Welsh Government target for a million Welsh speakers;
  - » Develop the informal use of Welsh through the 'Siarter iaith' and 'Cymraeg Campus';
  - » Develop the language skills of the education workforce to expand the proportion who can teach and work through the medium of Welsh.



## OBJECTIVE 3: LEADERSHIP

Supporting inspirational leaders working collaboratively to raise standards. Includes future leadership & professional networks

- 3.1 **Supporting leadership working collaboratively to promote high standards and aspirations for all**
- » Continue to support collaboration at all levels of leadership to ensure all learners achieve their potential. Specifically:
    - Ensuring that all clusters and alliances are effectively engaging in developmental work within and across sectors.
    - Further strengthen and embed peer review in all clusters and alliances to ensure robust and rigorous self-evaluation and improvement planning.
    - Support leaders in clusters and alliances with Quality Enhancement processes which evaluate the quality of provision and pupil progress as we move to the new curriculum.
    - Ensuring that the principles of distributive leaderships are embedded in all learning organisations across the region.
  - » Provide access to a range of regional and national professional learning, including access to coaching and mentoring, for all educational practitioners in schools and settings that is appropriate to their role and responsibility in line with professional standards.

## OBJECTIVE 4: STRONG & INCLUSIVE SCHOOLS

Committed to excellence, equity & well-being

- 4.1 **Bespoke and targeted support for wellbeing & ALN**
- » Continue to work closely in partnership with Local Authorities to provide wellbeing support for practitioners and learners in schools and settings.
  - » Continue to implement regional strategies for children who are vulnerable to learning, concentrating on their inclusion, emotional wellbeing, attendance and any additional learning needs to impact positively on their progress and wellbeing.
  - » Develop a Whole School Approach to wellbeing, promoting 'Ethically Informed Citizens of Wales'.
  - » Support the Local Authorities in the delivery of ALN Transformation by providing Professional Learning to improve teaching and learning.
- 4.2 **Support schools to tackle the impact of poverty on educational attainment and set high standard for all**
- » Support schools to deliver the long-term programme of education reform, and ensure educational inequalities narrow and standards rise.
  - » Continue to provide support to school leaders on the identification, engagement and support for specific groups of disadvantaged and vulnerable learners including those who have been disproportionality affected by the pandemic.

- » Further develop and implement the national PDG strategy across the region.

- 4.3 Parental and community engagement support strategy**
- » Develop a parental and community support strategy to help parents and carers on how to best support their child’s learning. Encourage schools to listen to children and young people as they engage with their learning and supporting them in achieving their aspirations.
  - » Support schools to embed a whole-school approach to family and community engagement;
  - » Encourage schools to develop community partnerships and multi-agency working in order to strengthen family engagement, improve standards and have a positive impact on learning outcomes for those learners from poorer backgrounds;
  - » Support schools and Local Authorities to invest in the learning environment of community schools to secure stronger engagement with parents and carers outside traditional hours.

## OBJECTIVE 5: SUPPORTING A SELF-IMPROVING SYSTEM

### Supporting a system in which the education profession have the skills, capacity & agency to continually learn & improve their practice

- Page 189
- Strengthening multi agency approaches to schools causing concern**
- » In partnership with the Local Authorities, further strengthen and develop the processes for supporting and challenging schools causing concern.
  - » Ensure that all schools in statutory category or which have been identified locally as SCC have access to an agreed comprehensive support plan to help them on their improvement trajectory.
  - » Ensure the support package is effectively delivered in a timely manner and is robustly monitored to ensure impact on standards and provision.
- 
- 5.2 Maturing partnership working with GwE stakeholders**
- Strengthen our collegiate approach to school improvement by:
- » Continuing to work closely with schools and settings to deepen the peer work already established to plan, develop and evaluate their priorities and share the professional Learning gleaned.
  - » Providing professional learning to further develop peer review.
  - » Continuing to develop our work in clusters, alliances and sector transition to improve quality and develop the Curriculum for Wales agenda.
  - » Continuing to implement our memorandum of understanding with Bangor University to further develop our evidence-based practice.
  - » Continuing to work collaboratively with other Regions to bring a more consistent approach to deliver national priorities.

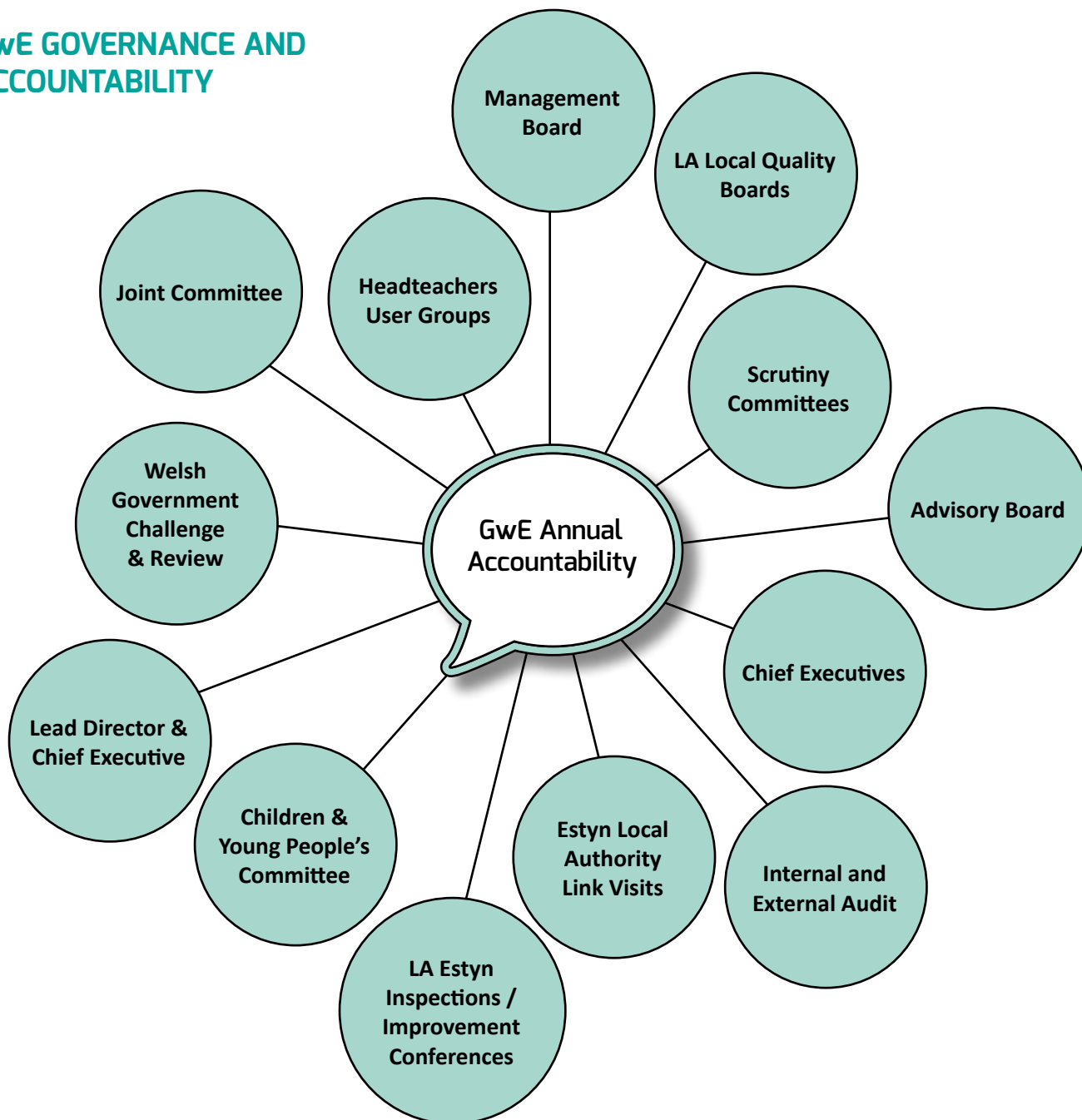
## OBJECTIVE 6: BUSINESS

6.1 **Business** » Ensure that GwE has strong governance and effective business and operational support that provides value for money.

# 5. GOVERNANCE: MONITORING AND EVALUATION

There is a clear and robust accountability framework in GwE.

## GwE GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY



The GwE Business Planning Framework that is in place ensures clarity, accountability and strategic coordination in the delivery of the priorities on a local, regional and national level and provides the structure for monitoring progress effectively.

Through our detailed business plans, progress is reported upon quarterly which provides a progress report on:

- Impact against actions and outcomes
- Issues or new risks identified for the reporting period
- Regional data

- Local Authority data
- Expenditure profile

Throughout the year, reports associated with our priority streams within the business plan will be reported through our governance groups as outlined above. Progress against the regional business plan is reported on a quarterly basis to the Joint Committee.

## 6. RISK REGISTER

The GwE Risk Register is a live document which is kept under regular review. It is presented to the Joint Committee on an annual basis and also when new risks are identified where the Joint Committee needs to be made aware.

There are several risks that have been identified as potential barriers to the successful implementation of the Business Plan priorities. These are:

- Cuts in funding to the GwE Core Budget affects strategic long term planning.
- Uncertainty regarding grant cuts and funding arrangements from WG hampers strategic long term planning. Significant delays in confirmation of funding levels affects the implementation of the Strategic Business Plan.
- Uncertainty around accountability and performance measures hampering the pace of the Reform Journey especially in the secondary sector.
- Uncertainty around what 2027 qualifications will look like is a restrictive factor in secondary schools.
- The impact of Covid-19 pandemic has made it more difficult for schools to work on engaging with their original Curriculum for Wales preparations.
- Difficulties in the recruitment and succession planning of Senior Leaders across the region especially Welsh medium.
- Pace of moving deep rooted issues in secondary schools placed in Estyn Statutory category.
- Coherence and range of Reform Journey and its impact on systemic leadership between WG, middle tier and schools with an increasing level of funding going directly from WG to schools.

## 7. FUNDING

We like everybody else are living in very difficult financial climate and have to make some difficult decisions. We are grateful for the support of the Chief Executives across the Region and our Elected Members in the Joint Committee for their advice and support in making the best decisions to support our learners and schools.

In 2022-2023 our core budget is £3,924,269. Our core budget is now around 25% less than just before GwE was set up. This year our Education Improvement Grant will be £29,309,224 (including match funding). This is a £7.5million cut on the 2015 budget. At the same time, there has been a 22% increase in costs through introduction of minimum wage, living wage and pension contributions. As we manage these financial challenges, we have continued to increase our delegation rates to schools. GwE retains around 3% of the EIG to provide support for schools.

		Grant and match	Grant and match	
		Grant and match	Cut (£)	Cut (%)
<b>11 Individual Grants</b>	14/15	£37,021,296		
<b>EIG</b>	15/16	£33,549,764	-£3,471,532	-9.38%
<b>EIG</b>	16/17	£31,902,703	-£1,647,061	-4.91%
<b>EIG</b>	17/18	£31,672,444	-£230,259	-0.72%
<b>EIG</b>	18/19	£29,124,247	-£2,548,197	-8.05%
<b>EIG</b>	19/20	£29,064,551	-£59,696	-0.20%
<b>EIG</b>	20/21	£28,776,349	-£288,202	-0.99%
<b>EIG</b>	21/22	£29,397,227	£620,878	2.16%
<b>EIG</b>	22/23	£29,309,224	-£88,003	-0.30%
		<b>Cumulative</b>	<b>-£7,712,072</b>	<b>-22.39%</b>

## 8. ADDITIONAL SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

- Detailed Business Plans 2022-2023
- GwE Risk Register
- Regional Professional Learning Offer
- Strategic Priorities of Local Authorities 2022-2023
- Reform Journey Think Pieces



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