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Meeting

GWE JOINT COMMITTEE

Date and Time

10.30 am, WEDNESDAY, 22ND MAY, 2024

Location

Virtual Meeting - Zoom

Contact Point

Eirian Roberts

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(DISTRIBUTED 15/05/24)

GWE JOINT COMMITTEE

MEMBERSHIP OF THE JOINT COMMITTEE

Voting Members

Councillors

Councillor Dafydd Roberts	Isle of Anglesey County Council
Councillor Gill German	Denbighshire County Council
Councillor Julie Fallon	Conwy County Borough Council
Councillor Mared Eastwood	Flintshire County Council
Councillor Phil Wynn	Wrexham County Borough Council
Councillor Beca Brown	Cyngor Gwynedd

Co-opted Non-voting Members

Manon Williams	Primary Schools Representative
Paul Smith	Secondary Schools Representative
Noel Fitzgerald	Special Schools Representative
Alison Fisher	Governor Representative
Jennie Downes	Church in Wales Representative

Non-voting Officers

Marc Berw Hughes	Isle of Anglesey County Council
Dr Lowri Brown	Conwy County Borough Council
Claire Homard	Flintshire County Council
Karen Evans	Wrexham County Borough Council
Geraint Davies	Denbighshire County Council
Gwern ap Rhisiart	Cyngor Gwynedd

Officers in Attendance

Graham Boase	Denbighshire County Council
Arwyn Thomas	GwE Managing Director
Alwyn Jones	GwE Assistant Director
Bethan Eleri Roberts	Performance Management Manager
Dewi Morgan	Host Authority
Sion Huws	Host Authority

AGENDA

1. CHAIR

To appoint a Chair for 2024/25.

2. VICE-CHAIR

To appoint a Vice-chair for 2024/25.

3. APOLOGIES

To receive any apologies for absence.

4. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

To receive any declarations of personal interest.

5. URGENT ITEMS

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

6. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

5 - 9

The Chair shall propose that the minutes of the previous meeting of this committee held on 20th March, 2024 be signed as a true record.

7. GWE FINAL ACCOUNTS 2023-24 - REVENUE OUT-TURN

10 - 14

To update Joint Committee Members on the final financial review of GwE' budget for the financial year 2023/24.

8. GWE ANNUAL REPORT 2023-24

15 - 91

To present the GwE 2023-2024 Annual Report to the Joint Committee.

9. GWE RISK REGISTER

92 - 97

To present the latest GwE Risk Register to the Joint Committee.

10. GWE PROFESSIONAL LEARNING SUPPORT

98 - 101

To share information with Joint Committee members regarding our Professional Learning Offer for the current financial year.

GWE JOINT COMMITTEE 20/03/2024

Present:

Councillors: Julie Fallon (Chair) (Conwy County Borough Council), Beca Brown (Cyngor Gwynedd), Dafydd Roberts (Isle of Anglesey County Council), Gill German (Denbighshire Council), Mared Eastwood (Flintshire Council) and Phil Wynn (Wrexham County Borough Council).

Co-opted Members Without a Vote: Paul Smith (Secondary Schools' Representative), Manon Williams (Primary Schools' Representative) and Noel Fitzgerald (Special Schools' Representative).

Officers without a vote: Marc Berw Hughes (Isle of Anglesey County Council), Dr Lowri Brown (Conwy County Borough Council), Gwern ap Rhisiart (Cyngor Gwynedd), Claire Homard (Flintshire Council) and Geraint Davies (Denbighshire Council).

Officers present:

GwE - Arwyn Thomas (Managing Director), Alwyn Jones (Assistant Director), Bethan Roberts (Performance Management Manager) and Meleri H. Roberts (Translator).

Cyngor Gwynedd (Host Authority) - Ffion Madog Evans (Assistant Head of Finance), Siôn Huws (Propriety and Elections Manager), Gwion Jones (Senior Accountant) and Sioned Mai Jones (Democracy Services Officer).

At the beginning of the meeting, new members of the Joint Committee, Manon Williams, Paul Smith and Noel Fitzgerald, were welcomed as new Schools' representatives.

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Dewi Morgan (Head of Finance Department), Karen Evans (Wrexham County Borough Council) and Graham Boase (Denbighshire Council).

2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

No declarations of personal interest were received from any members present.

3. URGENT ITEMS

No urgent matters were raised.

4. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

It was confirmed that the minutes of the previous meeting of this committee held on 6 December 2023, were correct.

5. GWE BUDGET 2023-2024 - THIRD QUARTER REVIEW

The report was presented giving a financial update to members of the Joint Committee about GwE's budget until the end of December 2023 and the projections for the end of the financial year. It was noted, based on expenditure and income, that it was anticipated that there would be a net overspend of £59,500 by the end of the 2023/24 financial year. It was confirmed that this information was still current. It was noted that this compared to £37,000 that was anticipated in the review at the end of September, which meant that the overspend had increased.

It was noted that there was an overspend of £46,000 under the heading of Employees; this came about after GwE received a savings target of £102,000 under this heading in 2023/24. It was added that the overspend was being reduced as a result of two permanent jobs that had not been filled, as well as staff turnover. Attention was drawn to the underspend of £16,500 under the heading of Transport, mainly because of the new ways of working. It was added that an overspend of £23,000 was anticipated under the heading of Supplies and Services, with GwE being hit with IT equipment renovation costs this year.

It was expressed that there was an intention to use an available fund to fund the overspend of £59,500 that was anticipated; this would leave £239,000 in the fund.

There were no observations.

RESOLVED

To accept and approve the report on the review of the GwE budget to the end of December 2023.

6. GWE REGIONAL BUSINESS PLAN 2023/2024 - QUARTER 3 MONITORING

GwE's Assistant Director presented the report on progress against the Regional Business Plan and focused on the period from the end of September to December 2023.

He reported that 28 detailed plans existed on the provision available for schools across the Region and that very enriching support had been provided to those schools. He explained that Appendix 2 referred to the regional data and the number that have engaged with the provision.

It was expressed that the report was comprehensive and the staff were thanked for their work to create the report.

RESOLVED

To approve and accept the monitoring report for quarter 3.

7. THE FUTURE OF IMPROVING SCHOOLS IN NORTH WALES

GwE's Managing Director presented the report, noting that substantial change was underway to what had been a regional service. It was expressed that this period was the hardest period that he had experienced in almost 40 years of working in Education and that one of the main challenges was coping with the uncertainty.

Reference was made to the timetable since 18 December and the recommendations received following Dylan Jones' review. It was noted that there would be a new model

of schools' improvement service and there would be a need to look at the capacity within that system; there was no detailed plan about the new system at the moment. It was mentioned that the Local Authorities were facing challenges, and this was highlighted in part 3.2 of the report. The general risks and financial implications were explained.

It was noted that there would be a period of change before the new model came into being and that the impact of a change to grants would have an immediate effect. It was explained that the service would stop being a service shared across north Wales. This meant that there would be a major change from 1 April where the schools' improvement service would become a commission service from different individual Local Authorities. It was highlighted that there was a need for an intensive discussion about the role of the Joint Committee for the future and the role of the Management Board, and that this was an area of governance that would need to be looked at when moving forward.

Reference was made to the possibility that there would be a new Minister for Education following announcing the new First Minister today and that this could lead to a delay. It was noted that the timetable given was April 2025 to have a new schools' improvement model in place. Concern was expressed that the timetable of April 2025 could be challenging to Local Authorities.

Sympathy was expressed with the Host Authority's services, as it would mean additional work for Cyngor Gwynedd's Finance, Legal and Human Resources services, as well as additional costs for everyone, such as closure costs and possible redundancies. In the next meeting of the Joint Committee in May, it was noted that there was a need to look at the team's configuration, considering how the budgets would be by the end of March 2025. There would also be a need to consider which posts could be released at the moment.

It was explained that the budget was tight on every level and that the funding allocated to improve schools would be reduced substantially. It was emphasised that clarity was needed regarding the national professional learning model. Reference was made to staff's low morale due to all the uncertainty and the inability to inform staff of their current options.

To conclude, it was acknowledged that everyone would like more detail and more information, highlighting that Phase 2 of Dylan Jones' inquiry was currently being conducted.

The Chair noted that a meeting had been arranged with the Minister for Education in April. Members of the Joint Committee were given an opportunity to express any specific concerns or questions so that the Chair could convey them in the meeting in April. It was agreed that GwE would collate questions for the Chair.

The members submitted the following observations:

- It was acknowledged that the situation had been difficult especially for GwE staff, and thanks were expressed to them.
- It was noted that the situation had been poorly managed and there was some uncertainty on the way forward.
- The importance of retaining the focus and standards in order to continue to support schools across the region and offer the best education for pupils was emphasised.
- It was reported that there had been meetings among the Chief Officers to try and work through the implications of the changes to the grant funding and the terms and conditions.

- It was noted that the Joint Committee faced a challenge on three levels:
 - o It was noted that the priority was the learners and the schools and that it was important that the best support continued to be offered. It was expressed that it was essential not to destabilise the schools' current performances.
 - o It was noted that there was planning work to be done for the new National Model and that there was a lack of clarity regarding the national focus. It was reiterated that a series of meetings had been arranged. These would include a National Directors Group with many representative directors and colleagues from the Welsh Government to discuss the detail. The first meeting would be held on Friday.
 - o It was noted that the current model would come to an end at the end of March 2025. Additional resources would be needed then and there would be implications in terms of staff redundancies and closure of the service. There would also be costs to establish new partnerships between the Authorities. It was believed that there were limited resources to deal with this.

Headteachers who represented the schools on the Joint Committee were given an opportunity to make observations. Amongst the observations, reference was made to the disappointment and the uncertainty, noting that it was difficult for schools to prioritise when they did not know what they were facing. It was added that the schools had received the best support during the last seven years as a result of the Supporting Improvement Advisers who provided a valuable service. Concerns were expressed about the service for the future. Sympathy was expressed towards GwE staff, reiterating that the staff's attitude and professionalism was to be commended.

It was proposed to add two sentences to the recommendation and it was agreed to add them as (b) and (c) in the Resolution.

Gratitude was expressed to the members for a useful discussion and it was emphasised that collaboration would continue in the hope that more information would be received from the Welsh Government to put a plan in place.

GwE's Managing Director was asked to pass on the Joint Committee's gratitude and appreciation to GwE staff for their professionalism under difficult circumstances.

To conclude, GwE's Managing Director expressed his thanks for the observations, reiterating that any new model would have to be better than what previously existed. He expressed that there was a need to consider where the additional value of any new structure was. It was reiterated that it was important for schools to be aware that the level of support would be significantly reduced from April and over the next financial year because of the cuts to the budget and the grants' implications. This would be communicated more effectively and in more detail with the schools after Easter.

RESOLVED

- a) To note the content of the report and consider risk implications for 2024-25 and beyond.**
- b) That the Management Board submit a report at the meeting of the Joint Committee in May on the way forward which will deal with a timetable and governance matters as well as budgetary implications.**
- c) For the voting members of the Joint Committee to agree to submit a list of questions to be presented to the Minister for Education in the meeting that has been arranged for April.**

8. GWE BUDGET 2024/2025 (BASELINE BUDGET)

The report on the budget was presented explaining that it reflected the change that had followed the Welsh Government's decision to amend the method of allocating Education grants for 2024/25. It was added that the savings target of 10% by the Authorities had been included in the baseline budget.

Reference was made to the Welsh Government's change to arrangements in terms of grants in part 2.1 of the report noting that the Local Authorities' Education grant would be paid directly to the Councils or the schools.

Attention was drawn to the table in part 2.3 of the report which noted the headings that were no longer GwE's responsibility and showed the financial changes as a result of that. It was noted that the funding had been reduced from £6.2 million in 2023/24 to £4.5 million in 2024/25 which was a reduction of £1.7 million. It was explained that the main reason was a cut by the Welsh Government in the amount of grants.

Reference was made to Appendix 2 which gave an overview of the core budget for 2024/25. It was explained that the table summarised the information in terms of the core funding which was a total of £4 million. Furthermore, reference was made to Appendix 1 which noted the budget of £8.46 million that had been set and noted the income that corresponded to the expenditure. It was expressed that a balanced budget had been set for GwE for 2024/25.

In addition, it was explained after considering inflation on all of GwE's spending for 2024/25, as the Education grants were not inflated annually, this meant a cut that was a total of £737,000 instead of the figure of £392,000.

During the ensuing discussion, the members submitted the following observations:

- It was emphasised that GwE's core contribution had reduced by 18% and not 10% considering the inflation referred to in part 3 of the report. It was noted that this would be further explained in the meeting in May where the funding's distribution would be discussed.
- It was expressed that sensitive information would be discussed in the next meeting that related to GwE staff's current posts. It was confirmed that there was a need to look at the exempt information category for some items in the next meeting and produce the agenda in accordance with that.
- Cyngor Gwynedd's Finance staff were thanked for their support and their work whilst producing the budget. It was reiterated that the publication timetable had been very short and appreciation was expressed for their hard work.

RESOLVED

To adopt the baseline budget for the 2024/25 financial year as submitted in Appendix 1 of the report, namely £8,460,971.

9. 2024-2025 MEETINGS CALENDAR

The report was submitted as an item for information to enable members of the Joint Committee to note the dates in their calendars, noting that there may be a need for an element of flexibility from the members. It was explained that more meetings may be needed if urgent decisions needed to be made as a result of the current situation.

The Joint Committee was thanked for its work and contributions.

RESOLVED

To approve the Joint Committee meetings calendar for the 2024-25 year.

The meeting commenced at 10.30am and concluded at 11.30am.

CHAIR



MEETING	GwE Joint Committee
DATE	22 May 2024
TITLE	GwE Final Accounts 2023/24 – Revenue Out-turn
PURPOSE	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To update Joint Committee Members on the final financial review of GwE' budget for the financial year 2023/24.• The report focuses on the significant financial variances, with Appendix 1 containing the full financial information.
AUTHOR	Dewi Morgan, Gwynedd Council Head of Finance.

1. DECISION

The Joint Committee is asked to:

- 1.1 **Consider and note the Revenue Income and Expenditure Account for 2023/24.**
- 1.2 Approve a transfer from GwE reserves to finance the 2023/24 overspend of £77,323, after considering the main variances between the budget and actual expenditure
- 1.3 Approve the final financial position for 2023/24 which is the basis of the GwE statutory financial statements for the year which have already been produced, certified and published by the host authority's Finance Department within the statutory timeframe.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The GwE Joint Committee Revenue Income and Expenditure account for 2023/24 appears in Appendix 1.
- 2.2 A final net overspend position of £77,323 is reported against the budget, mainly due to an overspend on the staffing budget.
- 2.3 In the review to the end of December 2023, an overspend of £59,531 was reported. This means a movement of £17,792 to what was predicted in the previous report.
- 2.4 Section 3 below explains the reasons for the main variations.

3. FINANCIAL VARIANCES

3.1 **Employees:**

Final Position: Overspend £59,884 December 2023: Overspend £46,173

Reporting on an overspend, GwE's staffing budget is based on the ability to fund certain staff members against grants. This year, more grant money has gone to the schools, which means the income target has not been met. The situation is improved by Management and Administration staff turnover, this is mainly due to two unfilled vacancies during the year.

3.2 **Building:**

Final Position: Overspend £35,431 December 2023: Overspend £6,228

Overspending by the end of the financial year, with the main reason for this being a lack of rental income for the use of GwE buildings by schools, local authorities and through the internal use of grant-funded schemes. No income target for this is included as part of the GwE budget for 2024/25.

3.3 **Transport:**

Final Position: Underspend (£21,400) December 2023: Underspend (£16,496)

No substantive change to what was reported in the review to the end of December. New ways of working that have been developed during the Covid period have led to the underspend indicated. Looking ahead to 2024/25, the budget has been reviewed, and adjusted to a more appropriate level.

3.4 **Supplies and Services:**

Final Position: Overspend £22,744 December 2023: Overspend £22,738

No substantive change to what was previously reported. I.T equipment replacement costs have hit GwE this year, an element of the underspend fund has been set aside for this purpose, with GwE contributing an amount annually to the fund.

3.5 **Specific Projects:**

Final Position: Overspend £24,688 December 2023: Neutral

Reporting an overspend of £24,688 against a gross expenditure of £12.8m on grants, the overspend resulting from spending on necessary schemes during the year, to provide support to schools.

4. UNDERSPEND FUND

- 4.1 The total fund at the start of the 2023/24 financial year was £298,633.
- 4.2 The net overspend of £77,323 will be financed from the underspend fund, so the final fund balance at the end of 2023/24 is £221,310.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Revenue Income and Expenditure Account 2023/24.

VIEW OF THE STATUTORY OFFICERS

Monitoring Officer:

Nothing to add from a propriety perspective

Statutory Finance Officer:

Author of the report

**GwE JOINT COMMITTEE
REVENUE INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT 2023/24**

	Budget	Expenditure	Over / (Under) Spend Net
	£	£	£
Expenditure			
Employees			
Salaries			
- Management, Brokerage, Standards and Administration	996,223	898,503	(97,720)
- Supporting Improvement Advisers	4,072,619	4,094,257	21,638
- Staff on Secondment	262,170	262,170	0
- Transferred against 'Specific Projects'	(2,027,531)	(1,889,798)	137,733
Training, advertising and other employee costs	47,384	45,617	(1,767)
Building			
Rent (includes services)	205,880	222,040	16,160
'Specific Projects' usage of offices recharge	(65,458)	(46,188)	19,270
Travel			
Travel Costs	153,095	131,694	(21,400)
Supplies and Services			
Furniture, equipment, printing, postage, telephone, room hire etc	99,553	121,332	21,779
Information Technology (contribution to renewal fund)	0	0	0
Audit Fees	12,744	13,709	965
Commisioning	321,561	322,287	726
Gwynedd Council Host Authority Support Service Costs			
Legal	6,371	6,371	0
Human Resources	10,924	10,924	0
Finance	47,237	47,237	0
Information Technology	52,245	52,245	0
National Model Commitments	469,948	469,948	0
Specific Projects			
Regional Consortia School Improvement Grant	9,967,296	9,987,575	20,278
Pupil Development Grant - Looked After Children	1,145,400	1,146,520	1,120
Pupil Development Grant - Strategic Advisor	100,000	101,983	1,983
Pupil Development Grant - Consortia Led Funding	186,067	186,236	169
Newly Qualified Teachers (NQT)	940,805	940,805	0
Informal use of Welsh program (ages 3-18) (Siarter Iaith)	207,719	207,719	0
Ein Llais Ni – Oracy Scheme	168,036	169,174	1,138
Taith Project	41,056	41,056	0
Total Expenditure	17,421,343	17,543,415	122,072

	Budget	Income	Over / (Under) Spend Net
	£	£	£
Income			
Core Service Contributions			
- Isle of Anglesey County Council (22/23: 10.14% - 23/24: 10.09%)	(443,336)	(443,336)	0
- Cyngor Gwynedd (22/23: 17.59% - 23/24: 17.53%)	(770,232)	(770,232)	0
- Conwy County Borough Council (22/23: 15.26% - 23/24: 15.17%)	(666,666)	(666,666)	0
- Denbighshire County Council (22/23: 15.48% - 23/24: 15.51%)	(681,484)	(681,484)	0
- Flintshire County Council (22/23: 22.67% - 23/24: 22.79%)	(1,001,422)	(1,001,422)	0
- Wrexham County Borough Council (22/23: 18.86% - 23/24: 18.91%)	(831,077)	(831,077)	0
Specific Projects			
Regional Consortia School Improvement Grant	(9,950,610)	(9,950,610)	0
Pupil Development Grant - Looked After Children	(1,145,400)	(1,145,400)	0
Pupil Development Grant - Strategic Advisor	(100,000)	(100,000)	0
Pupil Development Grant - Consortia Led Funding	(186,067)	(186,067)	0
Newly Qualified Teachers (NQT)	(540,812)	(540,812)	0
Informal use of Welsh program (ages 3-18) (Siarter Iaith)	(207,719)	(207,719)	0
Ein Llais Ni – Oracy Scheme	(168,036)	(168,036)	0
Taith Project	(41,056)	(41,056)	0
Income from Secondments	(262,170)	(262,170)	0
Other Income	(25,263)	(25,263)	0
Contribution from reserves (NQT)	(399,993)	(399,993)	0
Interest on balances	0	(44,749)	(44,749)
Total Income	(17,421,343)	(17,466,093)	(44,749)
Total Income over Expenditure	0	77,323	77,323
Memorandum -			
The General Fund			
	Fund balance as at 1 April 2023		(298,633)
	Add/Less - (Under)/Overspend 2023/24		77,323
	Less - Use of the Fund		0
	Fund balance as at 31 March 2024		(221,310)
The Newly Qualified Teachers Fund			
	Fund balance as at 1 April 2023		(855,228)
	Add/Less - (Under)/Overspend 2023/24		0
	Less - Use of the Fund		399,993
	Fund balance as at 31 March 2024		(455,235)



REPORT TO THE JOINT COMMITTEE

22 MAY 2024

Report by: Alwyn Jones - GwE Assistant Director

Subject: GwE Annual Report 2023-2024

1.0 Purpose of the Report

1.1 To present the GwE 2023-2024 Annual Report to the Joint Committee.

2.0 Background

2.1 As is stated in the GwE Inter Authority Agreement, GwE will report annually on the performance of the service in delivering the service functions and key aims.

2.2 The content of the annual report captures progress against the regional strategic objectives and priorities as agreed in our Business Plan for 2023-2024, evaluating impact against actions and outcomes for the whole year.

3.0 Considerations

3.1 Enclosed is the Regional Annual Report which captures progress against the regional strategic objectives and priorities for 2023-2024:

1. **School Improvement** - Embedding effective school improvement arrangements while implementing the Curriculum for Wales and associated reforms.

2. **Curriculum & Assessment** - supporting the 4 purposes of the curriculum, ensuring that all learners progress along their own learning pathway gaining a broad range of knowledge, skills and experiences, with equity and excellence at its core.
3. **Developing high-quality teaching and learning** - improving the teaching and learning in our schools by supporting and developing practitioners' understanding of pedagogic skills to support the success of all learners through ambitious professional learning.
4. **Leadership** - developing inspirational leaders to work collaboratively to support the success of all learners along their own learning pathway through accurate self-evaluation and robust improvement planning and delivery.

Continue to develop a self-improving system, in which the education profession has the skills, capacity & ability to continually learn & improve their practice, working towards being learning organisations.

5. **A positive education experience for everyone** – committed to excellence, equity & well-being, with learners and staff supported in their wellbeing and resilience, which is essential for improving education outcomes and life chances.

Ensure that learners are supported to be healthy, confident individuals, ready to lead fulfilling lives as valued members of society, within places of learning that are supportive, safe, inclusive and free from discrimination and bullying.

Empowering all learners and communities to have strong relationships with education providers, so that we tackle disadvantage and deliver world-class education locally and nationally.

6. **Cymraeg belongs to us all** - giving every learner equal access to the language and everyone the opportunity to reach their potential.

Encourage the use of Welsh across the education system, as an integral part of Curriculum for Wales, our Cymraeg 2050 ambitions and expanding provision post-16 to study through Welsh and opportunities to learn the language as active and engaged citizens.

7. **Business** - ensuring that GwE has strong governance, appropriate and effective school improvement and business structures, that provides positive impact and value for money.

3.2 In addition to the Regional Annual Report, each Local Authority will be provided with a detailed report giving a specific local overview, capturing progress against five key areas in addition to identifying the next steps on the improvement trajectory:

- Key Area 1 – Improving Leadership
- Key Area 2 – Improving Teaching and Learning
- Key Area 3 – Curriculum and Provision
- Key Area 4 – Learner Progress and Standards
- Key Area 5 – Support and Challenge for Schools Causing Concern

4.0 Recommendations

4.1 The Joint Committee is asked to approve and accept the Annual Report for 2023-2024.

5.0 Financial Implications

5.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report. GwE will operate within the current financial resources.

6.0 Equalities Impact

6.1 There are no new equalities implications arising from this report.

7.0 Personnel Implications

7.1 There are no new personnel implications arising from this report.

8.0 Consultation Undertaken

8.1 Consultation with GwE Management Board and Joint Committee.

9.0 Appendices

9.1 Atodiad 1 - GwE Annual Report 2023-24

OPINION OF THE STATUTORY OFFICERS

Monitoring Officer:

Nothing to add from a propriety perspective.

Statutory Finance Officer:

I am satisfied that the update is a fair reflection of the situation. I have no further comments from the perspective of financial propriety.



GwE Annual Report

2023-2024

Content

- 1 Executive summary
- 2 Introduction and context
- 3 School Improvement
- 4 Curriculum and Assessment
- 5 Developing high-quality teaching and learning
- 6 Leadership
- 7 A positive education experience for everyone
- 8 Cymraeg belongs to us all
- 9 Business
- 10 Strategic Objectives and priorities for 2024-25

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS:

APPENDIX: Regional Data

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

GwE and the six north Wales Local Authorities know their schools and settings well and provides robust and appropriate challenge as well as effective support and intervention for them. There are strategies, policies and processes for school improvement that are clear to all stakeholders. There exists a strong working relationship between the Local Authorities and GwE. There are robust procedures in place for holding the regional service to account. 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. Throughout the year, reports associated with our priority streams within the business plan will be reported through our governance groups. Progress against the regional business plan is reported on a quarterly basis to the Joint Committee.

The specific roles of the Local Authorities and the regional school improvement service in school improvement is explicit and clear to all stakeholders and are effectively held to account by local scrutiny procedures.

The quality of teaching is generally strong across most schools in all sectors and purposeful action is taken to address areas of concern and reduce in school variance. The Local Authorities, in partnership with GwE, has been taking positive steps to support leaders and teachers to improve the quality of teaching and learning.

Ensuring progression to Headteacher position, and especially in Welsh Medium schools, has been and continues to be a challenge. GwE provides a rich array of professional learning to develop leadership at every level, together with targeted and bespoke support for schools as required, and especially for those schools causing concern. Moreover, there are more robust arrangements in place across the region where school leaders collaborate to support one another in clusters and/or alliances and take increasing ownership and accountability of one another's improvement journey.

The increased focus on supporting schools to improve the quality and consistency of leadership and pedagogy has led to improved standards across the majority of schools. The pace of improvement needs further acceleration in some schools, and this is addressed through each individual school's support plan. Schools are generally making more intelligent use of data and teaching, learning and assessment information to evaluate standards and to identify priorities for further improvement but it is recognised that these processes require further strengthening to ensure a greater focus on pupil progress in some schools. Most schools are effectively delivering tracking and intervention programmes to address identified underperformance and in-school variance. In some schools, these approaches need to be further strengthened and honed.

GwE and the Local Authorities have clear protocols in place to identify Schools Causing Concern. This allows them to respond promptly and firmly in schools causing concern. There are specific examples where intensifying the challenge and support alongside robust and timely action have directly resulted in changes in senior leadership personnel. There is strong evidence that processes and actions by GwE and the Local Authorities to support schools causing concern is impacting on the quality of leadership and pedagogy and leading to improved standards in those schools identified. In a few of these schools, the pace of improvement needs further acceleration.

The content of the annual report captures progress against the regional strategic objectives and priorities as agreed in our Business Plan for 2023-2024, evaluating impact against actions and outcomes for the whole year:

1. **School Improvement** - Embedding effective school improvement arrangements while implementing the Curriculum for Wales and associated reforms.
2. **Curriculum & Assessment** - supporting the 4 purposes of the curriculum, ensuring that all learners progress along their own learning pathway gaining a broad range of knowledge, skills and experiences, with equity and excellence at its core.
3. **Developing high-quality teaching and learning** - improving the teaching and learning in our schools by supporting and developing practitioners' understanding of pedagogic skills to support the success of all learners through ambitious professional learning.
4. **Leadership** - developing inspirational leaders to work collaboratively to support the success of all learners along their own learning pathway through accurate self-evaluation and robust improvement planning and delivery.

Continue to develop a self-improving system, in which the education profession has the skills, capacity & ability to continually learn & improve their practice, working towards being learning organisations.

5. **A positive education experience for everyone** – committed to excellence, equity & well-being, with learners and staff supported in their wellbeing and resilience, which is essential for improving education outcomes and life chances.

Ensure that learners are supported to be healthy, confident individuals, ready to lead fulfilling lives as valued members of society, within places of learning that are supportive, safe, inclusive and free from discrimination and bullying.

Empowering all learners and communities to have strong relationships with education providers, so that we tackle disadvantage and deliver world-class education locally and nationally.

6. **Cymraeg belongs to us all** - giving every learner equal access to the language and everyone the opportunity to reach their potential.

Encourage the use of Welsh across the education system, as an integral part of Curriculum for Wales, our Cymraeg 2050 ambitions and expanding provision post-16 to study through Welsh and opportunities to learn the language as active and engaged citizens.

7. **Business** - ensuring that GwE has strong governance, appropriate and effective school improvement and business structures, that provides positive impact and value for money.

In addition to the Regional Annual Report, each Local Authority will be provided with a detailed report giving a specific local overview, capturing progress against five key areas in addition to identifying the next steps on the improvement trajectory:

- Key Area 1 – Improving Leadership
- Key Area 2 – Improving Teaching and Learning
- Key Area 3 – Curriculum and Provision
- Key Area 4 – Learner Progress and Standards
- Key Area 5 – Support and Challenge for Schools Causing Concern

2. INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

One of the main strengths of the work across North Wales has been the clear and consistent messaging from the six local authorities through their political education portfolio holders, and directors working with GwE to ensure a common message for the schools in North Wales. Not only are these consistent messages welcomed by school leaders and staff, but also by teaching unions, all appreciating the clarity and support for their members.

GwE and the Local Authorities know their schools and settings well and provide a robust and appropriate challenge as well as effective support and intervention. There are strategies, policies and processes for school improvement that are clear to all stakeholders. There is a strong working relationship between the Local Authorities and GwE. There are robust procedures in place for setting a direction and holding the regional service to account. The specific roles of the Local Authorities and the regional school improvement service in school improvement is explicit and clear to all stakeholders and are effectively held to account by local scrutiny procedures.

The regional service evaluates its work regularly and uses quantitative and 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 in place to ensure the regional service meets the Local Authorities' corporate priorities and targets.

Curriculum for Wales is a significant programme of reform with effective teaching and learning and realising the Four Purposes central to its success. GwE has ensured that all curriculum support aligns to the expectations and principles from Welsh Government policy. It is imperative that the work of reforming the curriculum, and particularly direct engagement between secondary and primary schools, continues in order to support learner transition.

The content of the annual report captures progress against the regional strategic objectives and priorities as agreed in our Business Plan for 2023-2024, evaluating impact against actions and outcomes for the whole year.

3. SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

Summary of main actions, engagement and impact

Due to effective collaboration and engagement between GwE and schools:

- Across the majority of schools, a deepened understanding of requirements and expectations of the new School Improvement Guidance.
- Nearly all schools are engaging with an extensive range of evaluation processes and in most schools evaluative judgements are thorough and based on a sound knowledge of pupil progress and draw on extensive qualitative and quantitative information
- Some schools are demonstrating really effective evaluation processes which are impacting strongly on standards and the quality of provision.
- Some schools have very sharp and purposeful improvement plans with robust processes in place for monitoring and measuring progress and impact.
- Many schools are demonstrating specific strengths within and across the 4 areas of focus - Leadership, Teaching, Curriculum and Provision and Standards and Progress [detail captured within case studies on OneDrive and in Progress Reports].

OBJECTIVE 1 – SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

Priorities:

- 1.1 Ensure all schools are supported to evaluate accurately and deliver robust improvement plans effectively.
- 1.2 Supporting leadership working collaboratively to promote high standards and aspirations for all.
- 1.3 Support leadership in schools to become familiar and ready to implement the new school improvement guidance.
- 1.4 Strengthening multi agency approaches to schools causing concern.
- 1.5 Strengthening partnership working with Local Authorities.



SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

The main focus over the year has been in supporting schools to be ‘framework ready’ in terms of the School Improvement Framework/Guidance. Task and Finish Group of regional headteachers and GwE staff have developed guidance and exemplar materials for schools regarding the requirement to publish a summary of self-evaluation findings, progress against prior School Improvement Plan (SIP) priorities, high-level improvement priorities for the forthcoming year and the external support the school will require to achieve those priorities. Four virtual twilight sessions have been delivered with recordings made available to those schools who were unable to attend. This area will need to remain a key focus once the revised School Improvement Guidance (SIG) has been launched.

As part of being ‘*framework ready*’, Link School Improvement Advisors (SIAs) have supported schools with their self-evaluation and improvement planning processes – via workshops and follow-up bespoke support. General feedback from schools has been extremely positive with many noting strongly that it has deepened their understanding of requirements and expectations of the SIG. However, there remains some inconsistencies in the quality of improvement planning and specifically around the sharpness of the wording of priorities and expected outcomes.

Support Plans have been operational in the majority of schools and the impact of support has been captured in case studies for all schools/clusters. However, ASOS (Action short of stike) restrictions has led to non-engagement by a minority of primary schools for a significant part of the year.

The vast majority of Link SIAs have been effectively engaged in scrutiny exercises with their schools and have been able to verify the veracity and accuracy of judgements. ASOS restrictions has meant that a minority of primary schools have not invited their Link SIA to participate. Link SIA engagement and network/forum agendas has focussed on ensuring that school-based evaluation processes have an increased central focus on learner progress and standards. It will remain a key focus for 2024-25 to ensure effective practice becomes embedded.

Additional engagement with schools over the three terms has led to a comprehensive evaluation of impact and progress in 4 key areas: Leadership, Teaching, Curriculum and Provision and Standards and Progress. These reports have fed into the Local Authority Annual Progress Report and shared with scrutiny. For a minority of primary schools, reports did not include a comprehensive coverage for each area because of ASOS restrictions. Key aspects for further sector development within each Local Authority have been identified within each report.

Many schools continue to make effective use of peer engagement. However, whilst support and developmental work within alliances/clusters is impacting positively on provision and standards in many instances, the level of challenge offered by peer leaders as part of self-evaluation and planning improvement processes is not robust enough across some alliances/clusters. As a result, valuable opportunities for additional challenge to the accuracy and veracity of findings are lost. Progress has been very slow in some clusters/alliances and especially around ensuring an appropriate level of challenge. This will need to be a key focus for 2024-25.

Processes and systems around supporting Schools Causing Concern (SCC) and early identification of schools which demonstrate a downward trajectory, have been strengthened. Revised templates for reporting to Level 1 and Level 2 Local Authority quality groups are operational and have been welcomed by officers. Local Authority officers, who form part of the LA/GwE Task Group, noted that the reporting template has led to sharper discussions around identified concerns and on agreeing next steps.

The current sector profile identifies:

- 9 schools in statutory category [3 secondary / 6 primary];
- 14 schools causing concern [0 secondary / 14 primary];
- 46 schools which are kept under review [22 secondary / 24 primary].

4. CURRICULUM & ASSESSMENT

Summary of main actions, engagement and impact

Due to effective collaboration and engagement between GwE and schools:

- all schools are implementing plans to deliver against the four purposes of the new curriculum.
- all schools are working to develop a balanced curriculum offer to meet the needs of their learners including the more able.
- all clusters are implementing transition plans.
- The Professional Learning sessions encourage schools to identify the next steps in order to further develop their provision and contribute towards the mindset of Schools as Learning Organisations.

OBJECTIVE 2- CURRICULUM & ASSESSMENT

Priorities:

- 2.1 Realising Curriculum for Wales
- 2.2 Assessment, progression and accountability



DEVELOPING THE CURRICULUM AND NETWORKS (CfW)

Curriculum for Wales is a significant programme of reform with effective teaching and learning and realising the Four Purposes central to its success. GwE has ensured that all curriculum support aligns to the expectations and principles within Welsh Government’s Journey to 2022 and the updated Curriculum for Wales framework. In line with the implementation of the new Curriculum for Wales, all schools and

settings have been supported to meet the new statutory requirements within the expected timeline. It is imperative that the work of reforming the curriculum, and particularly direct engagement between secondary and primary schools, continues to support learner transition.

Regional CfW Networks

To facilitate professional dialogue, GwE provided an infrastructure for Curriculum for Wales networks. Under regular guidance and feedback from Professor Graham Donaldson, schools developed and shared effective practice to unpack the potential of the six Areas of Learning and Experiences (AoLEs) and whole school curriculum design and assessment. The regional service has effectively supported leaders in preparation for The Reform Journey and Curriculum for Wales and has been flexible in its provision to meet schools' various needs during the pandemic. The profession had an infrastructure across the region to share and discuss emerging practice within the new Curriculum for Wales. The regional networks shared the fruits of their labour with all schools via GwE Support Centre providing an opportunity for practitioners to disseminate regional messaging and share local practice. Led by the networks, effective webinars have been held for all school leaders on curriculum design, assessment and progression and planning principles. Schools have noted that the presentations have boosted their confidence to develop their high-level Curriculum Design to include their vision, principles and to incorporate the four purposes. All schools have accessed these workshops either via a live recording or through subsequent discussions with the Link Supporting Improvement Adviser.

An event was held on 22/06/2023 to celebrate emerging practice across the education system for regional school leaders, staff and other stakeholders. Members of the Regional CfW Network and other stakeholders held joint workshops and stalls to share practice and there were also speeches by guest speakers. This event was an opportunity to celebrate and share practice so that practitioners may contribute to best emerging practice within the system and across the Region and develop a better understanding of how to effectively realise the CfW.

A number of attendees noted that they had benefited greatly from the wide range of what was on offer. Also, people had benefited from the informal networking and the opportunities to exchange experiences and resources. There was positive feedback from attendees and constructive comments for further development. Nearly all of those who responded have identified next steps following the event. Most of the comments noted that they will adapt/refine what they are already doing in schools as they have learned more or had inspiration from ideas in the various sessions. The workshops proved to be a popular approach. Practitioners appreciated seeing examples from schools to develop their own ideas based on the presentations, taking into account their approaches in the future.

However, there are no specific CfW Networks in operation across the Region. The service intended to evolve and revise this structure to ensure that we facilitated and developed further Professional Learning Networks that met the demand and needs in schools in order to encourage collaboration, information sharing, and successful practices among educators and staff. It was intended to continue the annual conference to share emerging practice and highlight effective and successful work. Following the Government's announcement at the end of January 2024 and guidance on the terms and conditions of the Local Authority Education Grant, this work is now under threat and is reliant on the Service being commissioned by schools/clusters/individual authorities if they wish for us to facilitate this in future.

Cross-regional CfW Networks

All Regional Areas of Learning and Experience (AoLE) SIA groups held a training day in October/November 2023, with the intention of holding a follow-up session in June/July 2024.

Feedback from these sessions is positive overall:

- 94% agree/strongly agree that sessions have met requirements;
- 87% report they would recommend this Professional Learning to others;
- 85% report that the session/sessions have provided them with new knowledge and skills to assist in leading further improvements.

Each AoLE group also meet at least every half term, facilitated by the National Professional Learning group. The meetings also serve as an opportunity to share successful practice from the different Regions across Wales.

Nearly all of those who have attended a session/sessions have identified next steps in order to further develop their provision.



EXPRESSIVE ARTS

Ensure support for the principles and practice of curriculum design.

Establish Expressive Arts Networks at the request of schools/clusters/alliances/SIAs/Core Leads.

A whole day session was delivered by GwE on 11/05/23 to facilitate an Expressive Arts Cluster Meeting with Primary and Secondary practitioners. This enabled practitioners to deepen their confidence in knowledge and understating of the Expressive Arts AOLE which in turn will develop their planning. It has also increased collaboration within and across the cluster. Practitioners' feedback noted that 100% of those in attendance found the session beneficial.

Two virtual Expressive Arts Network meetings were held in the Autumn Term 27/11/23 Welsh Medium and 28/11/23 English Medium and two meetings were held in the Spring Term 12/03/24 Welsh Medium and 14/03/24 English Medium. Attendees received information about key messages, resources, made links with outside agencies (Arts Council Wales and Charanga Cymru) and had the opportunity to collaborate, discuss and share emerging practice.

Practitioners have access to GwE's Professional Learning Presentations linked to curriculum design:

- Unpacking and understanding the Expressive Arts AOLE
- Progression in learning in the Expressive Arts AOLE
- Integral Skills in the Curriculum for Wales
- What is Creativity?

All of the above presentations have been uploaded to the GwE website. This has enabled nearly all practitioners to access all relevant documentation to have sound knowledge and understanding of the mandatory and statutory requirements for Expressive Arts curriculum design. This has also enabled nearly all practitioners to have raised confidence to plan effective, authentic, and exciting experiences for the Expressive Arts AOLE.

Nearly all practitioners who access the presentations will have thorough knowledge and understanding of the creative process and meaning of the terminology. Nearly all practitioners will have more confidence to deliver their curriculum through a creative approach.

Practitioners have access to a wide range of resources and presentations on the GwE website to ensure they have the relevant knowledge and skills to effectively realise the Expressive Arts AOLE in their setting

for example:

- Unpacking the Discipline Specific Considerations
- Progression across the disciplines
- Emerging Practice in the Expressive Arts
- Emerging Practice-Expressive Arts and other AOLES

Five Secondary Practitioners and 3 Secondary Special Schools Practitioners were identified to be members of two small Expressive Arts working parties who regularly met with the link SIA. As a result, a wealth of documents, evidence of emerging practice and case studies of the above have been received and uploaded to the Expressive Arts section on GwE Website for all practitioners to access. Nearly all practitioners will have good knowledge of the meaning of the discipline specific terminology in all 5 disciplines and having purposeful knowledge of what progression looks like from 3 to 16 years of age in each of the 5 disciplines.

Nearly all practitioners who will have accessed the resources will have sound knowledge, skills, and possible experiences to realise the Expressive Arts AOLE in their own settings. They will also have developed confidence to deliver the Expressive Arts through a multidisciplinary approach.

Nearly all practitioners will have sound knowledge, skills and possible experiences to realise the Curriculum for Wales in their own settings and will have developed confidence to deliver the Expressive Arts through an interdisciplinary approach.

Regional Workshops were delivered for SMT, Teachers and TAs on developing a deeper understanding of the Expressive Art AOLE. This has enabled practitioners to develop their understanding of the five disciplines within the AOLE and planning progression within the 3-8 age Group within rich and purposeful learning experiences. Practitioners feedback note that they have a better understanding of the importance of process and development of skills rather the focus being on the end product.



HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

Support development of the CfW in schools and PRUs to ensure all practitioners receive the relevant knowledge and skills to effectively realise the CfW in their setting.

Bespoke support has been delivered to schools across the region giving support for either whole school well-being or Health and Well-being AOLE curriculum and implementation or the whole school wellbeing audit and planning for change. Good progress has been made against agreed actions and staff have been upskilled during the process.

The Supporting Improvement Advisers work with their link schools to ensure that all schools understand and undertake their duties, with a particular focus on preparing for the Health and Well-being Area of Learning and Experience in Curriculum for Wales. New Networks to support collaboration, training and support, sharing key messages and good practice are also being established.

A Secondary/Special/PRU Health & Wellbeing Teachers Network has been established. Those who have joined the network have a more secure knowledge and understanding of the new initiatives, ideas and resources available to them. The impact of this information will be evident in the AOLE curriculum content delivered in schools.

A Secondary/Special/PRU Wellbeing Leaders Network has been established. A TEAMS channel is now available to share news and information of events and webinars etc. Face to face network meetings have taken place and presentations were delivered on topics which many members had previously requested.

Feedback was very positive. Members were grateful for the time to make new contacts and networking opportunities as well as to have inform discussion. Those who have joined the network have a more secure knowledge and understanding of the new initiatives, ideas and resources available to them.

Positive feedback has been received following the Health and Wellbeing Workshops and Networks with practitioners having an increased confidence in planning the development of AOLES and cross-curricular skills. Some individual comments received are:

- Informative and gave me many ideas to take back to other members of staff. Shown excellent ways to incorporate and adapt exercise/skills into lots of activities.
- Understanding the meaning and importance of physical literacy. Knowing where to find the resources. Valuable listening and discussion opportunities.
- Very interesting listening to what everybody else is offering and the systems they have in place.

A Health and Well-being newsletter has been created and circulated across all schools in the region and Local Authority staff who are responsible for Health and Well-being. Positive feedback was received for the newsletters.

Task and Finish group 'Assessment for Progression in Health and Well-being' – a second meeting has taken place focusing on whole school assessment emphasising Health and Well-being AOLE. This created discussion and further requests for School-to-School collaboration.

Supporting Vulnerable Learners Resource Case Studies – visits have taken place to the secondary schools enrolled, with first steps completed ready to record the journey as a podcast in March. The final written report will include how impact will be measured.

GwE Digital Skills SIA colleague presented an interactive workshop on 'digital skills in the Health & Well being AOLE'. Hands-on work with micro-bit to demonstrate how this can be used effectively with Health and Wellbeing lessons.

Meetings have been held with Healthy Schools LA Co-ordinators to establish work streams, national priorities and local priorities. Sharing information and plans will allow for non-duplication of PL whilst supporting each others initiatives.

Childrens' University Graduation ceremonies attended which showed GwEs support for the value of Experiential Learning which can evoke a lifelong love of engaging in learning. 51 schools across the region have engaged in the pilot. Over 600 learners have achieved more than 30 hours or more of additional learning and attended the graduation ceremony with their parents, carers and teachers to celebrate their achievements.



HUMANITIES

Questionnaire for secondary Humanities teachers

A questionnaire for secondary Humanities teachers was developed to gather information about how schools are responding to the new CfW. We also hoped to identify good practice and teachers' professional learning needs as we prepare for the Secondary Humanities Conference on 19/11/2023.

As of 31/03/2024, we have received 40 responses from teachers across the 6 local authorities The teachers were responsible for teaching Geography, History and RVE; we had no responses from teachers responsible

for teaching business studies and social studies to Y7 and Y8 learners. 90% of the responses came from teachers who were responsible for planning and teaching a Y7 curriculum for the Humanities or for a Humanities discipline.

- Business studies and social studies are included in Y7 planning in 38% of schools.
- 45% of schools provide an integrated Humanities curriculum to Y7 pupils, 40% teach disciplinary lessons and 15% provide a combination of disciplinary and integrated lessons.
- Many are confident that the 4 Purposes, the statements of what matters in the humanities and the descriptions of learning are influencing their planning.
- A few teachers noted that they had been involved in local discussions on the Humanities, e.g. book looks, transition days, preliminary talks.
- Currently, the majority of Humanities teachers think that their disciplinary planning and provision of valuable learning experiences are working well.
- The majority of teachers have not received any professional learning to support their planning in the Humanities, and would like further support, e.g. planning for progression in the Humanities, seeing examples of schemes of work, working with external partners.
- From the questionnaire 6 schools provided examples of their emerging practice at the Humanities Conference 16th November 2023.

Humanities Curriculum for Wales Conference for Secondary Teachers 16/11/2023

The conference was an opportunity for teachers to hear key note speakers taking about Cynefin and Diversity, to listen to the emerging practice from 6 schools in the region and an opportunity to network in both LA and disciplines.

Market Place activity: External partners from 10 external attended the event. Teachers were provided with an opportunity to discuss how these agencies could work with schools to enhance the curriculum offer.

30 of the region's secondary schools were represented at the conference:

22 of the 33 attendees completed a level one evaluation form:

- 100% said the conference good or very good

Attendees commented positively on

- The quality of the presentations
- The opportunity to share ideas with colleagues
- Hearing from teachers sharing about their experiences

Schools were asked to contribute to a Humanities Digital Network. There are currently 36 teachers part of the Humanities Digital network.

The conference was the First of its kind for teachers of Humanities disciplines. It was warmly received:

I liked the important messages which they gave and the feeling in the room - and the way it was delivered too and the interactivity - it really helped with the key messages. I've had a look at the resources and they're really helpful for schools.

Online professional learning sessions were very valuable to set context for this work. The whole day and all presentations were excellent in raising awareness of racism within society and in sharing practical strategies that can be shared with schools.

Humanities Google Classroom

38 teachers have joined the Humanities Google Classroom. All the presentation material from the conference is available. Contact details and website information from the 10 external partners are available to all schools on the classroom. This include:

- Amgueddfa Cymru
- Canolfan Materion Rhyngwladol Cymru / Welsh Centre for International Affairs
- Casgliad y Werin Cymru / People's Collection Wales
- Comisiwn Brenhinol Henebion Cymru / Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments Wales
- Cystadleuaeth Dreftadaeth (MYDG) / Heritage Competition (WHSI)
- Gyrfau Cymru / Careers Wales
- Keystone Heritage
- Llyfrgell Genedlaethol Cymru / National Library of Wales
- Prosiect Llan Project (Esgobaeth Bangor Diocese)
- Senedd Cymru / Welsh Parliament

Working with External Partnership Case Studies

3 schools were commissioned during the Spring Term '24 to submit a case study exploring the impact of working with external partners to provide engaging learning experiences for learners linked to the development of the new curriculum. The Case Studies have been made available on the Humanities Google Classroom



LANGUAGES, LITERACY AND COMMUNICATION



ENGLISH AND LITERACY

PRIMARY

Cross-regional LLC PL offer (English, Welsh, MFL - Primary and Secondary) has been created and GwE are using CfW LLC network members to repeat presentations made at the regional CfW Marketplace (June 2023) to cross-regional delegates in both Autumn and Spring terms.

Bespoke support for schools

All referrals for bespoke support for schools causing concern / who have specific provision improvements to be made in literacy and English have been met, with either support completed or continuing. A bank of Literacy Commissioned Teachers, managed by the Literacy SIA, have supported schools who required individual support for English and Literacy, carried out whole School or cluster-based PL, held open day events or have hosted visiting Teachers to their schools to share/mentor effective practice. Literacy SIA has also supported schools.

Resource Packs

Commissioned schools have continued to create resource packs that are uploaded into one-drive for the use of SIAs and school.

Professional Learning and collaborations

Science and Technology (with cross-curricular skills) – 3-day cross curricular skills through Science & Techcnolog event cohort 1 – Literacy SIA collaboratively participated in days -3, alongside numeracy and digital colleagues. This was designed to embed literacy skills in context to enable progression in subject based learning, in a cost effective and collaborative model.

Shirley Clarke Assessment for Learning (AfL) for Writing ages 8-11 – single event to support further AfL and writing developments for learners in classrooms for ages 8-11.

Open Professional Learning (PL) events in schools: hosted multiple open PL events focusing on **Basic Literacy skills** in context and the **Reading for Pleasure** journey.

SECONDARY

Bespoke support for schools

All bespoke requests from schools have been fulfilled and schools have been supported through a range of departmental and whole school training which has been delivered by the team.

Literacy Leaders

Across the year there were three separate literacy leader events. These events allowed for literacy leaders to maintain momentum and accountability for their work in relation to the 'Six Step Approach'.

29.06.23 – Launch event for the six-step strategy. The session ensured familiarisation with the 6-stage approach to developing a literacy strategy was delivered in Literacy leaders forum. All those in attendance (21 schools) expressed an interest in becoming members of local working parties to collaboratively support each other to embed the strategy. The event was held on the same day as the Welsh medium literacy leader's forum and allowed for the same message to be given to all the schools in the region.

17.10.2023 – A regional network session was held for English medium secondary schools attended by 20 schools. The focus of the session was on strategy development, progression of skills and developing working parties. 77% of attendees awarded the PL 5/5 in their evaluations. 23% of attendees awarded the PL 4/5 in their evaluations. All attendees expressed that they found the PL useful, and all selected a feature of the PL to inform the next steps that they would implement within their schools, based upon the literacy strand that the school has prioritised as their initial focus for literacy skill development.

26.01.2024 – Working party support (1/2 day) - Schools were invited to join select a literacy strand for their school to focus on. This session facilitated an opportunity to monitor the impact of the previous training sessions. Each strand attended a half-day session that allowed SSAs to deliver bespoke training for the reading, writing and oracy. It enabled literacy leaders to network and collaborate with other schools. Each school in attendance were able to apply for a grant to support the development of resources and training for their staff. 17 schools attended. All those in attendance found the sessions useful with 88% of schools giving the session a 5/5 in their evaluation of the sessions.

Building reading power

Following a positive review of impact of the building reading power programme, we were able to offer the original pilot schools additional funding to expand the project within their schools. We were also able to run a second phase of the programme. A further 8 schools have been funded and training will be given in the new financial year. All resources are now up to date on Herio and phase one schools will be adding additional resources as part of their funding agreement.

HEADS OF ENGLISH

13.06.2023 - Curriculum design and sequencing in response to the Curriculum for Wales (CfW) was the focus of the June 2023 Heads of English (HoE) Forum. David Didau provided professional learning for 50 HoEs from across the region. Feedback from the HoEs indicated that they found the professional learning useful. This work was followed up with discussion in regional HoE meetings in February 2024, where HoEs discussed their progress and shared emerging/good practice.

13.11.2023 - A regional network was held which was attended by Heads of English from 33 schools, as well as a range of International Language and Cymraeg Heads of Dept. Shirley Clarke launched our focus on Formative assessment which followed on from the guest speaking in the network in June – the feedback from the session was positive. 78% awarded a score of 5/5 for the PL. 19% awarded a score of 4/5. There have been bespoke follow up support for some schools. A regional follow took place in February when schools discussed the progress they had made to date with the development of formative assessment practice within their departments.

Week beginning 26.02.2024 – A series of regional meetings were held to give HoEs the opportunity to discuss how they have sequenced the development of skills and knowledge in their CfW planning to ensure progression. Including discussion of the vehicles that they selected to achieve their learning intentions, how they have developed (or plan to develop) the use of formative assessment to support learner progress and their next steps for CfW development.

Literacy Festival Spring Term 2 2024

The team organised a series of professional learning workshops for literacy leaders and their line managers across all the regions' schools. These workshops were delivered online, once a week, throughout February/March 2024. Each workshop focussed upon one element of developing effective cross-curricular literacy skills including, disciplinary literacy, developing reading, supporting writing and developing learner oracy skills. The sessions were delivered online and recorded, so that schools could access the professional learning at their convenience if unable to attend and could also use the recordings to support professional learning within their own schools. Registration for the sessions was popular and attendance to each session was good. Feedback given by attendees was positive and illustrated that they valued the workshops and the practical strategies that were provided.

New Heads of English network

An online event targeting new and aspiring Heads of English aimed to share essential information including GCSE and A Level important dates, navigating the WJEC secure website, sample deadlines, and curriculum planning. Discussions were held on evaluating Schemes of Learning (SoLs) and quality enhancement processes, strategies supporting day-to-day department operations, and approaches to handling difficult conversations. Reference was made to valuable resources/websites such as "The Confident Teacher" and "Learning Spy". The event also featured a brief question and answer session, which attracted a good attendance from both new and aspiring Heads of English. 8 schools attended with 50% of participants leaving a 4/5 in their evaluations and 50% leaving 5/5 in their evaluations.

Non-Specialists Workshops

Non-specialist workshops have been developed in response to a surge in demand from schools throughout the region seeking guidance to empower non-specialist staff in elevating their curriculum delivery. The focus lies on enhancing the pace, implementing effective assessment for learning (AfL), and employing strategies to challenge students to fulfil their maximum potential. The primary goal of these crafted sessions is to cultivate a profound comprehension of exemplary teaching practices in English amongst the staff, providing them with a diverse array of tools to augment their confidence in instructing English, and crafting a seamless progression of pedagogical strategies and methodologies. The feedback from participants has been overwhelmingly positive, with every session receiving a 5-star rating from all participants.

Alliance support to raise English Language standards

The meetings have included sharing approaches to the higher tariff reading questions, facilitating the standardisation of GCSE NEAs, approaches to feedback and support for increasing A/A* attainment. These

meetings have been well attended with all sessions receiving a 100% 5/5 evaluations. Furthermore, the success of these sessions has prompted specific schools to seek tailored support.

A-Level support meetings

All three online sessions provided a comprehensive review of the essential topics related to the courses and the summer series examinations. The discussions delved into best practices, highlighted exemplary demonstrations, and reinforced critical elements of the curriculum. 11 out of 14 registered participants in attendance for the English Literature session, demonstrating a strong engagement with the subject matter. Additionally, the English Language session saw 4 attendees, whilst the English Language and Literature session boasted a good turnout, with 4 out of 6 registered students present. Importantly, feedback from all participants indicated that they found the sessions to be incredibly valuable, with 100% expressing satisfaction with the content covered.

The team delivered a detailed presentation to the Bangor University PGCE cohort, focusing on the three A-Level courses currently available in the region. The presentation utilised a diverse range of teaching methodologies and practical strategies, equipping educators with tools that could be seamlessly integrated into their classroom practices. Moreover, the session provided students with crucial information that could be pivotal in their future academic pursuits, emphasising the dual-purpose nature of the presentation in enhancing both teaching and learning experiences.

Newsletters

Monthly newsletters have been distributed to both Heads of English and Literacy Leads. Each newsletter focuses on specific themes each month. For example, Newsletter 2 addressed reading literacy and the English Language GCSE. The newsletters include important dates for upcoming PL events and other dates useful for practitioners. Additionally, they guide teachers to relevant resources and websites to enhance their provision. The newsletters have received positive feedback, with teachers finding them beneficial for both literacy and Heads of English networks.

CROSS PHASE

Completed the oracy across the curriculum

Oracy Voice 21 programme was completed in Quarter 1. This was attended by both Primary and Secondary, Welsh and English medium schools. Nearly all delegates feedback on day 5 sharing their improvement activity and findings to their fellow delegates. As a result, the dedicated google classroom has many useful presentations and resources to share and use between the cohort. Nearly all requested that further support and activity continues into the new academic year and plans have been drafted for a cohort 2, supported by findings from cohort 1. Cohort 1 to continue their work through termly network mtgs/workshops, etc. Nearly all schools reported positive impact on provision and pedagogy and pupil engagement, through their initial reviews. Nearly all delegates feedback on day 5 sharing their improvement activity and findings to their fellow delegates. As a result, the dedicated google classroom has many useful presentations and resources to share and use between the cohort.

CARIAD@DDARLLEN

Cariad@ddarllen / Reading for Pleasure (RfP) – Ongoing network following on from 3 day RfP programme, Spring 2023. First return event: on 5/12/2023 half day follow on RfP network meeting; second return event 13/03/2024. Schools attended from both primary and secondary, Welsh and English medium, forming a cost effective and positive environment for transition and collaboration across a wide range of school settings and for receiving support an input from a broad range of experts.

The programme featured a variety of esteemed guest speakers, including Professor Manon Jones and Dr Sarah Olive, who shared their research on supporting readers with neurodivergent conditions and selecting

diverse literature texts. Schools also had the opportunity to exchange their experiences in fostering a reading culture for pleasure throughout the entire school. Recently, following a course by the National Literacy Trust, a session was held to explore the potential of utilising digital platforms to launch a campaign promoting reading for pleasure. The programme has attracted a healthy attendance from both primary and secondary schools. The feedback received has been remarkably positive, indicating that the sessions have not only been well-received but have also sparked inspiration among educators to implement new approaches in their respective schools.

Combining Literacy and Digital Skills

A 3-day course designed to inspire educators to effectively combine digital and literacy skills for overall improvement. The first day is focused on utilising podcasts to enhance oracy skills. The second day was dedicated to synthesising information and creating websites, with a discussion on effective reading strategies to promote active reading habits. The third day concentrated on integrating the acquired skills to produce persuasive videos, thereby reinforcing speaking, reading, and writing abilities. These courses catered to both primary and secondary educators. Feedback from all 3 days indicates that participants valued the sessions and now feel confident and motivated to utilise digital skills to enhance literacy abilities.



WELSH AND LITERACY

Leadership

Following regional network meetings e.g. [GwE Welsh Leads' Network Meeting](#) and [GwE Welsh Leads' EMS Network Meeting](#), it was organised for leaders to meet in their alliances during Quarter 4 and for leads to decide on the focus of these meetings (in consultation with the SIA for Welsh) with the emphasis on developing professional dialogue between Welsh language leaders across the region in order to develop a shared understanding of progression. See also [Welsh Leads' Network- Secondary – Capturing impact 2023-24.docx](#) and [Welsh Leads EMS Networks – Secondary – Capturing Impact 2023-24.docx](#)

Welsh departments in English-medium secondary schools have been supporting each other in a School Support Network, and have established networks on digital platforms to share resources and provide practical support e.g. resources to support the administration of GCSE oral assessments.

Teams and Google Classroom digital platforms have been used - 'GwE - Y Gymraeg - Uwchradd' and 'GwE - Y Gymraeg YCS - Uwchradd YCS' - to share resources and continue to remind leaders of the main messages following the above regional meetings (with leaders occasionally contributing to these platforms).

The digital newsletter 'O'r Stordy', a Welsh language newsletter, has been used to share information and messages following the above meetings and inform Headteachers and leaders of planned events. Two versions of the 'O'r Stordy' newsletter were shared, one for Welsh-medium and dual language schools and another with the content adapted and made bilingual for English-medium schools.

Effective realisation of the Curriculum for Wales

Sessions were delivered as part of the above regional network meetings providing practical support for leaders to respond to specific challenges noted in the Business Plan. Subsequent alliance meetings considered and discussed in more detail a more localised approach to these challenges by individual departments and schools.

There was collaboration with one Welsh language leader on sessions for a cross-regional national event sharing successful practice in planning for introducing the cross-linguistic skill of mediating and principles of

progression in Welsh within the LLC AoLE. These sessions and resources were shared in the [Curriculum for Wales Professional Learning](#) section on the [Welsh Education Consortia](#) website.

There was collaboration with Welsh language Leaders in two regional schools on applying the principles of promoting 'Ein Llais Ni' speaking and listening skills when preparing learners for GCSE Literature Unit 3 (Visual Literature). Leaders gave presentations during a regional network meeting and the resources were shared via the ['Ein Llais Ni - Dewch i ni drafod - Llunyddiaeth' website](#).

The above resources were shared cross-regionally on a website of authentic resources produced by schools across Wales to support teachers with the changes to the GCSE Literature Unit 3 specification (Visual Literature). The resources on this [cross-regional website](#) have been shared and trialled with Welsh language Leaders during Quarter 4.

Training has been held for Phase 2 lead schools (English-medium schools) of the 'Ein Llais Ni' project, collaborating with Phase 2 secondary schools on producing case studies and adapting resources on the 'Ein Llais Ni' website to specifically promote Welsh speaking and listening skills within the 'Welsh in English-medium settings' description of learning in the LLC AoLE.

There has been collaboration with 'Ein Llais Ni' Project Officers to deliver training for a cluster of primary and secondary schools in order to promote professional dialogue across sectors and foster a shared understanding of progression in speaking and listening skills across the continuum.

Welsh language Leaders (Welsh-medium, dual language and English-medium schools) were invited to attend Shirley Clarke training on formative assessment arranged for regional English Leaders. Four secondary schools' Welsh departments (Welsh-medium, dual language and English-medium) involved in last year's 'CfW Designing for languages' project (arranged in collaboration with the SIA for International Languages) have continued to work with the IL SIA and Welsh SIA to refine their curriculum design for Welsh within the LLC AoLE. This will be shared regionally and nationally in due course.

Welsh Departments from three secondary schools (Welsh-medium, dual language and English-medium schools) have collaborated with Careers Wales to produce original resources to promote Welsh and bilingualism skills in a Careers Fair in their schools following the 'Literacy in the Workplace' project. They integrated the cross-curricular CWRE theme into their curriculum design for Welsh within the LLC AoLE.

Cross-curricular literacy

Sessions were delivered as part of GwE's Literacy Coordinators' Network Meeting (Welsh medium and dual language schools) providing practical support for coordinators to respond to specific challenges noted in the Business Plan and bespoke follow-up support for individual schools. Subsequent alliance meetings considered and discussed in more detail a more localised approach to these challenges by individual departments and schools. See also [Literacy Coordinators' Networks – Welsh Medium and dual language schools – Capturing impact 2023-24.docx](#)

The Literacy Co-ordinators working group met, which is part of the 'Cau'r Bwlch Darllen' project (Closing the Reading Gap), in order to share successful practice and the training delivered after attending Alex Quigley's course 'Closing the Reading Gap'.

Work took place with three co-ordinators on the content of a series of digital workshops promoting higher-order reading skills, which will be shared on a regional digital platform in due course.

The Welsh side of the [Six-stage strategy – Literacy](#) website was constructed and populated in order to make

it a bilingual website of original resources to assist leaders to develop the '6 Step Strategy' (GwE) successfully for Welsh in their schools.

An interactive digital resource was created and trialled to assist Literacy Co-ordinators to map provision in order to target Literacy skills across the curriculum.

Training days entitled 'Cyfuno Sgiliau Digidol a Llythrennedd' (Combining Digital and Literacy Skills) were organised. There was collaboration with the Digital Competence and English SIAs on a series of training days for practitioners to address progression in literacy skills with a planned activity to develop digital skills. Attention was given to promoting Welsh literacy skills alongside progression in digital skills over the course of the 3 training days.

Developing the Welsh language

An English-medium secondary school in the region was awarded the Bronze Award of the Cymraeg Campus Language Charter, the first secondary school in the region to have received this award.

There was collaboration with 3 regional secondary schools (English-medium and dual language) on a strategy to develop the Welsh language in their schools alongside the [Resource to support self-evaluation of Welsh - Hwb \(gov.wales\)](#) which is part of the 'National evaluation and improvement resource (NEIR)'. An [Estyn Inspection report](#) referenced the 'strongest examples' of this collaboration'.

'Language Charter Activities Forum' meetings were attended in order to be 'in the loop' in national discussions regarding how Language Charter and Cymraeg Campus awards will be accredited in future. Collaboration with lead schools has been sustained in order to exemplify successful practices in developing Welsh in English-medium schools alongside national developments.



INTERNATIONAL LANGUAGES / MFL

Ensure that all schools and PRUs support the learners and the Global Futures (GF) action plan by reflecting the importance of International Languages (IL) in Curriculum for Wales as part of their offer to all learners.

All schools in the region have had the opportunity to engage in the various offers to raise profile of languages: Creating Across Languages, EDL competitions and initiatives, Business language Champions, Pupil Language Ambassadors, Student Language Ambassadors.

Good practice from schools with good uptake has been shared in the GF GwE Emerging practices in IL within CfW Google website launched in October 2023.

GwE liaised and agreed details with Business Language Champion to offer language days for year 9 learners on 12 & 13 December 2023. Practical and linked to the world of work, it is hoped to raise motivation and uptake at KS4 and KS5. 16 schools took part in the three events in December and February: 91 year 9 pupils from 8 schools and 80 Year 10 pupils from 7 schools. The three days were very successful with learner, teacher and parental feedback clearly showing the positive impact of such learning experiences on the pupils' perception of languages and their use in the real world. A higher proportion of the participating pupils were considering opting for a language at GCSE or A level, following the event. All schools can access more details about the events and a survey analysis for more insight on the Designing Languages to raise uptake page of our Global Futures GwE emerging practice website: GwE IRh-IL - Dylunio ieithoedd i godi niferoedd-Designing Languages to raise uptake (google.com)

GwE SIA has presented key information about the Global Future GwE team, contacts, offer, key messages about IL in the primary and links to useful resources. Following the presentations, additional schools contacted the GF team or accessed some of the offer.

Primary Rapid review (Audit 1): 50 responses were received in first half-term. This initial response shows a positive outlook to introducing IL with most schools welcoming the reform. The majority of schools are still at very early stages of their journey and require more support to develop this aspect further. Many highlight a positive impact on learners. This picture reflects the conversations we have with teachers and schools. More responses would enable to draw an accurate picture across the region. A survey is to be sent again to schools in the summer term as schools may feel more confident in their provision.

Following collaboration with GwE SIA in 2022-23, the Caban ITE has been amended to include elements of IL teaching and learning in their BA and PGCE programmes from Sept 2024. The practice has been discussed in the evidence for the EWC and Estyn inspection with CaBan. The positive collaboration continues. The GwE SIA was asked to present to the secondary LLC Associate Teachers on the Articulated Assessment Transfer Tasks carried out by some of our schools. The presentation was followed by some practical work on designing following the principles of the model and their alignment with CfW.

Links to useful website and resources are a permanent feature on GF GwE Newsletters, with contacts and useful links which are sent to all schools on a half-termly basis and available from the GwE website.

“Languages Connect us”: Plurilingualism, and collaboration across English, Welsh, and IL.” Due to unfortunate circumstances, the October event was cancelled event. To provide an interim support, the three researchers produced short videos which give an up to date definition of the terms and a brief introduction into their work. These videos will be shared across the region in the summer.

The GwE LLC team presented their work on Languages Connect us to the region in July 2023 and cross-regionally in November 2023. Many examples of how schools have benefitted from the GF GwE offer and support in developing IL within their settings and developing their LLC approach further were included and very well received by the various audiences.

The Global Futures Team has liaised, organised and led the planned events to date successfully across sectors and in line with the agreed and reviewed business plan.

All Leads continue to support schools and/or clusters on request. Regular Team discussions have taken place and ensured the business plan actions are monitored, reviewed and implemented efficiently and appropriately.

Network meetings were organised and held in November per hub and per sector and a full day training session focused on International Languages Teaching and Learning in January.

Network meetings and training sessions: 22- 28 secondary schools; 16 - 28 primary schools with attendance subject to school capacity to release staff. Attendees’ feedback during the meetings was very positive. Teachers felt supported in their practice and contributed to discussions to inform further agenda to meetings. All attendees would like further meetings. The January training session with guest speaker was very well attended by both sectors. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive from both sectors and further similar sessions in demand.

The Global Futures GwE IL Google website has been accessible to all schools since October 2023. Feedback has been very positive, stating it has been of great support in developing planning in their own settings. It

has also been useful to refer to as support and exemplifications of current practice in schools.

Regional and Cross-Regional Professional Learning Network Presentation: LLC Languages Connect US. Presentation of work in Llandudno in June 2023 was delivered at the GwE Marketplace, with many IL examples available and cross-regionally in November 2023.

Articulated Assessment Transfer Tasks (AATT) project in collaboration with Professor Jennifer Eddy (Associate Professor and Program Director of World Language Education at Queens College, City University of New York, USA). The write up of narrative and material for publication in progress and on schedule. All schools involved in sharing their work have contributed to the narrative and agreed on the work to be shared. Their understanding of the model has increased and all have said the process has enabled a very much needed change of mindset for planning. They have welcome and shared the immediate impact on their work and schemes of learning; this will be included in the publication.

Sanako Connect pilot: The 15 pilot schools involved have completed the pilot to experiment with the technology and report on the impact. The two rapid reviews and a full report give positive feedback on the potential of the software as a tool to enhance oracy skills and the learners' language learning experience. Most schools would welcome continued access to the technology. GF GwE has renewed the licences contract to allow schools more time to further embed if they wish to.

Creating Across Languages: Successful creative writing workshops were attended by practitioners and were followed up by a workshop for pupils in the summer 2023. These had a direct impact on teachers' mindset and the pupils' creative skills development.

The Global Futures Team attended a range of Professional Learning events during the year which were invaluable in helping guide and develop support and business plan offer. The GF Team also contributed to some of the events, such as sharing practice at the Language World conference in March 2024. This is also testimony of the impact such opportunities to attend these events have created for us in North Wales: wide networking contacts, regionally, nationally, UK-wide and internationally. Our offer is constantly evolving, keeping up to date with latest evidence-based research and local as well as national priorities and school needs in terms of IL and Languages in general.

153 primary schools are benefitting from the funded subscription to the Power Language Schools platform and accessing and using the resources effectively to suit their setting and context. The creative and very well-crafted resources and accompanying teachers' notes are giving staff more confidence in delivering the teaching and learning of IL. They feel supported with quality and various materials which can be easily used by non-specialist and which allow for IL to be embedded in the rest of the curriculum, helping planning and relevance for learners. Provision for IL in these schools is developing well and support is requested as needed.

The PL offer for 23-24 in place was successfully delivered and well received.

- 63 teachers have signed up and accessing the Power Language upskilling on-line courses for beginners in Spanish/ French. Interest and applications continues to grow. 18 teachers attended the optional live "Meet the trainer" sessions in November and January. Attendees felt the sessions were useful and motivational as well as instructive.
- 14 primary teachers attended the Cerdd Iaith on-line training- primary course to teach French, German or Spanish together with Welsh, English, Music and Drama. Feedback was very positive and schools are now exploring and developing these new approaches.
- 18 International Languages teachers benefitted from attending the morning with Shirley Clarke: Assessment for Learning strategies to monitor and support learner progress. Teachers welcomed the

important messages and key reminders of positive and effective AfL and feedback for greater progress. The key ideas were discussed in the following IL network meetings.

- 56 teachers (primary and secondary) attended the Training day session with guest speaker Jennifer Wozniak - Rush on Planning in International Languages for CFW for effective quality Teaching and Learning. Feedback was unanimously positive with teachers in both sectors feeling much more confident in taking IL further in their own setting. More similar days were requested to continue to develop expertise, confidence and aligning approaches for smooth transition across sectors.

Funded Immersion training week in France or Spain: the successful Taith grant application has enabled the GF team to organise a 1-week immersion language and cultural training in France and Spain for 29 teachers from both sectors: 16 Spain / 13 France. Links with our partners abroad and activities with teachers and schools in the two countries have been confirmed. All teachers have attended or accessed the recording and notes to the preparation meeting where all information was shared, including expectations and actions to be carried out by teachers before during and after the course to respond to the Taith application requirements and progress report.

Bespoke or regional events and opportunities have been developed through active collaboration with partners and language-promoting institutes and promoted: i.e. Environmental awareness through language learning and creativity: school workshops with award-winning French graphic artist Anne Defréville. All workshops have been fully booked throughout the week by schools in the primary and secondary and for all levels.

Wales-Brittany partnership: Through our long-lasting collaboration with our Scottish partners, Power Language also involved in delivering the immersion training in May 2024, links with the international links Lead in the Brittany academy in France enabled the GF GwE to establish a strong link and partnership between schools in North Wales and Brittany. 27 schools from both sectors are now fully engaged in the partnership. Pairing with French schools has been made and projects are starting to develop. Guidance and direction have been agreed and provided by the two countries for projects to develop and partnerships to flourish long term.

TELT: Open University Teachers Learning to Teach languages: The 6 primary teachers applicants have now completed their second term of the upskilling OU course. Since 2018, 66 teachers in North Wales schools have benefitted from the fully-funded programme.

MFL Mentoring: 21 schools have been engaging in different aspects of the scheme since September. Feedback from teachers is very positive and pupils have enjoyed the content of the sessions. This is having a positive impact on their perception of languages, their importance and the benefit of learning a language. Support is provided in reflecting back on current trends and informing future policy.



MATHEMATICS AND NUMERACY

Bespoke support for schools causing concern

The Primary and Secondary Mathematics & Numeracy SIAs provided bespoke support for regional schools, as identified from schools SIA support plans. This has resulted in improved planning for the teaching and learning of Mathematics & Numeracy, and a greater understanding of how numeracy supports learning across the curriculum. Nearly all schools causing concern are making steady progress against agreed actions and all staff and stakeholders upskilled during the process.

Repeated, regular visits/meetings with schools have involved:

- Bespoke professional development sessions which have led to improvements in knowledge and confidence of staff within specific areas. e.g developing a Numeracy strategy (i.e. 6- stage), Numeracy across the Curriculum, formative use of the personalised assessments, raising standards, effective questioning, revision strategies, non-specialist/early career teachers support.
- Collaborative support in planning and assessing learner progress, which has led to a greater understanding of how to track progress and use data effectively.
- Supporting the development of Numeracy across the curriculum by collaborating with other key departments/teachers to plan authentic, effective and appropriate Numeracy related activities in their subjects.
- Collaborating with Numeracy Leaders and Heads of Mathematics with quality assurance procedures to identify strengths and specific areas for improvement, strengthening their confidence and understanding of effective self-evaluation and improvement planning, which has led to more accurate analysis and identification of specific needs and areas for improvement.
- Sharing resources and professional development pertinent to school/learner needs within the setting as they plan and teach the Mathematics & Numeracy AoLE, which has led to improved pedagogical approaches and understanding of the curriculum.
- Bespoke follow up support after regional workshops.

TO PROVIDE SUPPORT FOR LEADERS OF MATHEMATICS & NUMERACY, ENABLING THEM TO DRIVE THEIR OWN IMPROVEMENT JOURNEY.

Heads of Maths network meetings

Nearly all Heads of Mathematics attended the network meetings, which resulted in Mathematics leaders gaining a better understanding and confidence in what it means to effectively analyse GCSE results and use this to inform planning, strengthening their understanding of effective self-evaluation and improvement planning, and strengthening their understanding of progression and assessments within CfW. Meetings also included opportunities for Mathematics leaders to share ideas and good/emerging practices in relation to their CfW developments. 100% of attendees evaluated the meetings as useful or very useful on the feedback form, with most stating very useful.

Mathematic and Numeracy SIAs have continued to collaborate with Further Maths Support Programme Wales (FMSPW), with FMSPW contributing positively to Heads of Maths local network meetings by sharing teaching and learning resources and revision materials.

In addition to local network meetings, a Heads of Mathematics regional meeting was held in June 2023 with 48 attendees. This has resulted in Mathematics leaders gaining a better understanding of ESTYN expectations with 100% of attendees evaluating the session as useful or very useful on the feedback form. A workshop on developing self-evaluation and improvement planning processes was also delivered on this day which has had a positive impact, with 75% of attendees evaluating the session as useful or very useful on the feedback form. Heads of Mathematics worked collaboratively on identifying strengths, sharing good practices and next steps for their departments.

Numeracy Leaders network meetings (Secondary)

Nearly all Numeracy leaders attended the network meetings, which resulted in Numeracy Leaders gaining a better understanding of how to make effective use of the personalised assessments, progression and strengthening their understanding of planning strategically for Numeracy. Numeracy Leaders shared their progress with planning strategically and gained further ideas and support for their next steps. 100% of attendees evaluated the meetings as useful or very useful on the feedback form, with most stating very useful.

Cluster & Alliance support

Upon requests, clusters have received bespoke support to develop effective transition in Mathematics, ensuring a shared understanding of the continuum, progression and effective teaching and learning within the Mathematics and Numeracy AoLE. Under the guidance of the Mathematics and Numeracy SIA's (primary and /or secondary), individual clusters across the region have worked on developing a joint understanding of progression of Mathematics and Numeracy skills across the continuum, producing progression maps to use within their schools/cluster that address the core principles of the Mathematics and Numeracy AoLE.

Feedback from all these sessions have been very positive, with all supported clusters organising further meetings to collaborate and continue Professional Dialogue around progression in Mathematics and Numeracy.

Mathematics secondary SIA has supported to raise Mathematics standards within an alliance. The meetings have focused on; raising GCSE standards, developing effective and coherent schemes of work and strategies to ensure pupils gain secure mathematical skills which will lead to raising standards in the long term. Mathematics leaders have engaged positively with the alliance work and positive feedback has been received following these sessions.

Personalised Assessments

SIA's have continued to support regional Primary, Secondary and Special schools with the effective use of the Online Personalised Assessments. This has included bespoke and cluster training and sharing of Welsh Government guidance as well as creating and sharing a relevant support pack. This has ensured schools have been up to date with current guidance and effective practice. This has also resulted in schools being identified to share their effective practice Nationally.

TO IMPROVE AND ENHANCE THE TEACHING AND LEARNING OF MATHEMATICS**Primary/Secondary Mathematics Workshop**

Following the success of the joint Primary/Secondary workshop last year led by Craig Barton, 21 secondary schools created resources based on the strategies learnt from the workshop, these have now been shared regionally. As a follow up to last year's workshop, another regional Primary/Secondary Mathematics workshop was delivered in February 2024 (led by Craig Barton again) which focused on developing further effective T&L strategies for Mathematics across the learning continuum, specifically looking at practical strategies for assessing prior knowledge, how to explain and model new ideas, and effective AfL strategies. 100% of the attendees rated the workshop 3 or 4 out of 4 for its usefulness, with 79% rating it 4 out of 4.

Mathematics Education Innovation (MEI) Programme

A regional programme ran to support early-career and non-specialists teachers of Mathematics. Day 1 of the MEI programme ran in September 2023, with 29 attendees from across the region, Day 2 of the programme as well as the 3 online sessions ran during Quartile 3. The objectives of the programme were to develop teachers' confidence and competence with the subject content, up to, and including intermediate tier GCSE, learn more about the principles of effective pedagogy in Mathematics teaching, apply these principles in the classroom with practical strategies and resources, provide opportunities for reflection upon creating effective and engaging environments for learning mathematics. When asked on the evaluation form how valuable the programme has been, 100% of attendees rated the 'face to face' full days as 4 or 5 out of 5, with 68% rating the days 5 out of 5. The online sessions have not seem to have been as effective, with 60% of attendees having rated these as 4 or 5 out of 5, and 40% rating the sessions 3 out of 5. Reason given for not being as effective was mainly the difficulty of discussing and collaborating on an online platform. A follow-up session to reflect upon the impact of the programme in its entirety and share

experiences to date was held in February 2024 with 100% of attendees stating that this session was useful or very useful. In this session, all attendees shared their experiences so far and shared what they have learnt from the sessions. Follow up discussions took place with Mathematics leaders during local network meetings as well as during supporting visits to a few individual schools, all noted that they have seen a positive development in the confidence and pedagogical approaches of the teachers who took part in the programme.

Effective use of manipulatives – 8-11

Regional workshop on the ‘Effective use of manipulatives and representations to support learners conceptual understanding’ was delivered March 2024. Feedback from the session was very positive, with most teachers noting that the Professional Learning was valuable for developing their own classroom practice.

Effective use of manipulatives programme for Secondary teachers

A 3-day regional programme to develop ‘Effective use of manipulatives’ was delivered across quarter 2 and 3. Practitioners were given training on how to use algebra tiles effectively on day 1 and asked to complete action-research back in their faculty/school/cluster/alliance and share feedback/impact on day 3. Day 3 also consisted of further training on using other manipulatives effectively. 44 schools took part in the programme and 100% of attendees rated the programme as useful or very useful.

MAT Secondary Maths Challenge

Secondary Mathematics and Numeracy SIAs organised the GwE MAT Maths challenge final for Year 9 learners in the summer 2023 term, with the top three teams from the initial rounds across the region invited. All schools have voiced their appreciation of the Maths challenge and the resources have been shared with all schools. 48 teams from secondary schools across the region have registered to take part for the 2024 MAT competition which will be held in April 2024.

A Level Workshops

3 A-level workshops ran in January/February focusing on supporting Mathematics teachers to develop their confidence and pedagogy when teaching AS Mathematics, including raising awareness of practical, specific strategies and resources available. The attendees gained confidence and improved their understanding of effective strategies for teaching the core, mechanics, and statistics elements of the AS Mathematics course. 100% of attendees noted that the workshops were useful or very useful.

TO IMPROVE AND ENHANCE THE TEACHING AND LEARNING OF NUMERACY ACROSS THE CURRICULUM (AS A CROSS CURRICULAR SKILL).

Science and Technology

Two days of the three-day programme for teachers (8-11) focusing on the development of cross curricular skills within the Science and Technology AoLE have been delivered in both Welsh and English. The evaluations from the first day of the programme note 98% of the delegates believed the first day of the programme to be valuable to support the development of the Science and Technology AoLE and cross-curricular skills in their own class/ settings. Due to demand across the region for this programme, a second cohort started Spring 2024 onwards. (Welsh and English medium).

Humanities

Primary Mathematics and Numeracy SIA had planned to deliver a two-day programme for teachers focusing on the development of Numeracy skills within the Humanities AoLE. This will feed into the 2024-2025 Professional Learning offer.

Health and Wellbeing

Developing a whole school approach to Financial Education was planned to be delivered regionally in Numeracy Leaders Network meetings. This will feed into the 2024-2025 Professional Learning offer.

CABAN/Bangor University

Secondary Mathematics and Numeracy SIA delivered a lecture (introduction to Numeracy across the curriculum) to Welsh Medium Primary PGCE students. (approx. 25 students). This session supported new practitioners to gain a better understanding of numeracy and planning for progression within their AOLE.



SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY



SCIENCE

Science & Technology Network Meetings

Termly regional network meetings and training are provided for leaders and teachers of the Science and Technology AoLE with clear guidance on:

- curriculum design
- planning
- cross-curricular and integral skills
- cross-cutting themes
- assessment
- progression

In Q1, three Heads of Science & Technology Network meetings took place representing all 6 local authorities and were well attended (74 teachers).

In Q3, two Heads of Science network meetings took place in November 2023, and were attended by leaders from 36 schools.

The meetings reviewed examples of emerging practice in schools and focused on:

1. Developing leadership skills, including effective Self-Evaluation, planning for improvement and curriculum planning
2. Developing an understanding of progression within the Science curriculum
3. Developing and understanding of planning for progression of cross-curricular skills in science (numeracy focus)
4. Facilitated opportunities for professional dialogue on progression between leaders from different schools.
5. Developing Integral Skills through project-based learning
6. Co-construction of a science & technology context/project approach to learning
7. Collaboration between leaders in identifying authentic contexts for learning within Science and Technology
8. Supporting teachers to effectively use AI to enhance provision.
9. Developing Coding across the AOLE

Feedback from the evaluation forms was positive and several schools have purchased the crumble kits or are using the microbit kits following the training and are embedding digital technologies into their curriculum etc.

In March 2024, a professional learning event for Teachers of Technology took place. The event was attended by 29 Teachers from 25 schools. The agenda for this event included:

1. The importance and relevance of Technology/D&T teaching and learning within CfW.
2. The evolution and development of Technology/D&T teaching practices to support learner needs and progression.
3. How to use the statements of What Matter for Science and Technology to build a purposeful curriculum.
4. Exploring ways to work alongside (or with) science and computer science which supports progression equally across all disciplines.
5. Examining resources which will support you in building your school-based curriculum for technology/science and technology.

Feedback following the event was extremely positive with an average rating of 4.8 out of 5, and teachers said that the training was very useful and informative and provided multiple ideas to trial.

Curriculum for Wales Development – Video Diaries

Schools were approached to share their CfW emerging practice:

- **Science project** applications were accepted from 4 schools.
- **Technology project** applications were accepted from 4 schools,
- **Computation project** applications were accepted from 3 schools.

Following the completion of their proposed projects, these schools will produce case studies in the form of video diaries, that will be shared with school across the region (July 2024).

Curriculum for Wales Development – Integral Skills & Learner Efficacy - Project based learning.

Work is continuing to research and develop understanding of the importance of project-based learning and enquiry approaches to the development of integral skills and learner efficacy. GwE SIAs attended a professional learning day at XP East school in Doncaster. This PL day included further training/guidance on:

- The role of 'Crew' – importance of pupils having shared sense of belonging and collective accountability for their behaviour, actions and progress, within the learning process
- The learning expeditions – how they structure their curriculum to provide holistic learning.
- The structure, evaluation, and construction of all units of work (Jeff's Law)
- The importance of beautiful work – presentation of learning, student led conferences, performing for an audience (collective and public accountability)
- The role of experts and experiences to enhance the curriculum.
- Staff induction – how they get buy in from staff and the professional learning they provide.

The knowledge gained will feed into the PL provided by the Science team and will inform school support visits.

Developing cross-curricular skills within the Science & Technology AOLE

Collaboration with the GwE Literacy and Numeracy SIAs has begun to ensure that skill development is appropriate for each progression step.

Coding workshops using Crumble and Microbit with additional support from Technocamps have been delivered in the Science and Technology network meetings in Q1,2 and 3. There will be a continued focus on this in 2024. The meetings were well received with some teachers reporting that they were more confident with using Crumble and Microbit microcontrollers in class. Some schools have recently purchased Crumble microcontrollers.

Online Learning – TANIO

Resources continue to be developed and updated for students and teachers on the TANIO website:

- PPTs, HTML's, Flash Cards for the separate sciences have been developed and uploaded onto the TANIO website
- Resources can be accessed by mobile devices.
- Resource use monitored via cookies and hit counts – Google Analytics
- work has continued to develop resources to support the Triple Science units.

Research driven professional learning for Science & Technology teachers: to include effective teaching and learning within science and technology, with strong emphasis on pedagogy, challenge, differentiation, effective teaching, and action research.

In Q3 GwE Science subject SIAs worked with cross-Wales consortia to provide online professional learning guidance on developing the curriculum for Wales.

This guidance was used to inform part of the content of November 2023 network meetings.

Due to the need to provide support for teachers/leaders of Technology an event took place in March 2024 to support and deliver professional learning for technology teachers. This was open to all secondary and through schools and included a focus on:

- The importance and relevance of Technology/D&T teaching and learning within CfW
- The evolution and development of Technology/D&T teaching practices to support learner needs and progression.
- Exploring ways to work alongside (or with) science and computer science which supports progression equally across all disciplines.
- How to use the statements of What Matter for Science and Technology to build a purposeful curriculum.
- Examining resources which will support you in building your school-based curriculum for technology/science and technology.

Developing Careers & Work-Related Experiences within the Science & Technology AOLE

Work is in progress with Regional Skills Partnership, Anglesey Education Department and Careers Wales with an initial CWRE “Pathways” project. It is hoped that this will be a template for other authorities within the GwE region.

As a result of support, teachers should:

- Know how to contact their Careers Wales Business Engagement Adviser (BEA)
- Know how to plan visits to employers – and visits from employers where appropriate in the curriculum.
- Know how to book or organize STEM ambassadors to talk to students about their work
- Plan to include CWRE in their curriculum development and schemes of work
- Develop their LMI (Labour Market Information)

Guidance booklet for practitioners has been created and is currently in translation.

Professional Learning, Training & Support

Training opportunities have been advertised in the professional offer and in the science newsletter. All requests from schools / link SIAs have been actioned in-house by the GwE team without the need for externally commissioned support.

Science Action Research Project for 3-8 year old practitioners

Collaboration and professional learning took place led by Kathy Schofield (PSTT fellow) and GwE 3 – 8 Team on 26/09/2023 for 3- 8 years old practitioners. 21 out of 24 invited schools attended; a follow up session has been arranged for those schools who did not attend due to ESTYN inspections.

Kathy Schofield has begun to visit invited schools across the region to support improving provision and case study examples. 24 schools across the region have produced presentations and high-quality teaching packs following the Play, Observe, Ask strategy developed by PSTT supported by Kathy Schofield and working collaboratively with schools and GwE's 3 – 8 team. Presentations and Teaching Packs will be shared across the region in the Summer Term 2024 and shared online.

Science Action Research Project for 8-11 year old practitioners (Support 12 pilot schools to make effective use of Research)

11 Schools received two days from support from GwE Literacy, Numeracy and Digital 8 – 11 Team, external agencies e.g., Natural Resources Wales, PSTT. Collaborative planning sessions have taken place with GwE's 8 - 11 Team, project group of schools and supportive/planning meetings on school sites and online. Teaching Packs will be presented across the region and shared online during Summer/Autumn Term 2024.



DIGITAL

During 2023-2024, a series of resources were launched to help schools plan for progression in learners' digital skills. This was in response to school visits, Estyn inspection recommendations and frequent discussions with school leaders. These resources can be used to plan for progression in individual lessons, whole-school progression planning or as a framework to review, evaluate and monitor schools' provision for improving learners' skills. All progression maps analyse the skills learners need to develop in every progression step and also suggest activities practitioners could use to develop the skill. 14 progression maps have been produced this year alongside the other regions. The response has been extremely positive with over 27,000 website hits. All professional learning sessions to develop digital skills used one of the progression maps as a basis for training, with frequent references made to the resources in order to ensure that progression in skills is central to our provision.

Our professional learning programme was successful during 2023-24, with 1350 practitioners being trained on digital learning either by registering on training from the universal offer, INSET training session or via the network. Training programmes were held during the year, either over 2 or 3 days. This ensured more depth to professional learning and the impact of our training was more evident with practitioners completing inter-sessional tasks. An example of this was the programme to develop the use of cross-curricular skills in Science and Technology. This was a 3-day programme where practitioners undertook scientific enquiries between contact days in order to apply the techniques and skills shown before returning to present their work and discuss their experiences with other practitioners.

The digital facilitators programme ran again in 2023-24 with 88% of the region's clusters engaging. Some clusters' approach to collaboration was seen to have matured over the year. A digital fair took place where learners showed parents how to use digital services. A number of clusters developed arrangements for joint monitoring, where the digital lead from every school would meet to share samples of work within a specific aspect of the area in order to review and evaluate work. This was a new approach in many clusters and therefore a constructive development for the cluster and digital leads within the cluster. Several learning trails were held in schools over the year to review and evaluate the impact of our work on these schools. Schools' use of the progression maps to plan experiences and develop provision was evident in

most schools. For example, in a learning trail in a particular school, progression maps were seen to be used to plan data handling activities across the school, which ensured gradual development of learners' skills. Another school used the progression maps to ensure that learners in every class were challenged to develop their skills, rather than repeatedly applying the same skills. Overall, this programme has resulted in strategic discussions at a cluster level on how to develop schools' provision to lead to higher standards. The programme has also strengthened the role of the digital lead in schools ensuring that they are developed in order to undertake the strategic and managerial duties of the role.



EDUCATION CONTINUUM 3 TO 16



TRANSITION

Support schools, PRUs, clusters and alliances across and beyond the 3-16 continuum to improve transition through: Improving curriculum provision, collaboration and standards of progression, improving transition for vulnerable learners, undertaking curriculum design and implementation, including developing and embedding learning progression.

The SIA team have been upskilled in the requirements of transition planning and the statutory content of transition plans. Relevant resources have been shared with SIAs and schools, including information on the requirements of transition plans. Schools have shared relevant plans. A further update took place in order to ensure consistency in transition planning and that all plans meet the WG requirements.

All clusters have plans for transition, however, many clusters regionally are in need of further support in ensuring their transition plans are up to date with all requirements of the curriculum for Wales and reflect these requirements fully. These clusters are being supported by their SIAs and further professional learning is in place. An exemplar transition plan which meets the statutory requirements under the curriculum for Wales has been created and sent to all SIAs for clusters which require this. As a result, some clusters have adapted and improved their transition plans working alongside their SIA.

Universal and bespoke professional learning has taken place during the autumn term 2023 to include collaboration and professional dialogue between clusters to ensure clarity and consistency in self-evaluation, and support schools and clusters to further embed and develop successful practice in ensuring 3-16 progression, commencing on 20/10/23 and running until 20/11/23, with 4 sessions which were held regionally in different locations. These included sharing of key messages, up to date mandatory guidance and sharing of successful practice from local clusters to exemplify key messages. As a result, clusters from across the region have adapted their planning for transition, for example, several have now planned in regular sessions sharing pupils' work across the cluster.

During the regional curriculum for Wales conference in June 2023, successful practice on developing 3-16 transition was shared from 2 clusters and one special 6-19 school. Key messages included the importance of focusing upon pupils and their progress and targets, and what each individual pupil can achieve, and the central importance of collaboration, collective accountability and positive relationships in order to support these pupils to achieve.

Identified clusters continue to progress well within the Pedagogy Transition Project. Successful practice has been shared across the 12 clusters including staff at a variety of levels which has enabled further strategies to be implemented across the region within the cluster schools. Further sharing took place during the

autumn 2023 and spring 2024 terms. There is a planned sharing of impact meeting of these clusters in April 2024.

GwE officers have met with Estyn inspectors in January 2024 in order to share impactful practice in transition from clusters from across the region.

WG mandatory information including in the Continuing the Journey guidance outlines to centrality of improving transition in order to achieve 3-16 progression. There is a further need for schools and clusters to continue to develop a shared understanding of progression in order to ensure successful 3-16 progression, particularly to ensure consistency in skills, resources are available to continue to support this. There is a further need to develop a system of cross-cluster collaboration once an internal understanding is mature enough.



ASSESSMENT

Primary

Twelve whole day sessions on the Three Purposes of Assessment have been delivered across the region during the year. The main focus was:

- Supporting individual learners on an ongoing, day-to-day basis
- Identifying, capturing and reflecting on individual learner progress over time
- Understanding group progress in order to reflect on practice

Further follow up sessions held in clusters and schools were delivered as required. For example, three whole cluster sessions were held based on presentations made in previous training sessions across the region.

Feedback from the whole day sessions on the Three purposes of Assessment held in Spring 2024 indicate that 85% who responded expressed that the training was very valuable and 15% of those who responded stated that it was valuable.

Nine half day sessions were delivered across the region on 'On entry' assessments during the year.

Michael Chiles effective feedback conference was held for primary and secondary practitioners at Kinmel Manor, Abergele in February 2024. Main objectives were:

- An increased knowledge and understanding of effective use of feedback to improve teaching and learning
- An increased awareness of effective practice and how to adapt and implement in your own settings

Feedback from the Michael Chiles feedback conference indicate that 80% of the attendees found the training useful with comments including:

Some interesting and valuable examples to try in School. We all had a couple of light bulb moments about the rationale behind some of the strategies

Good current up to date ideas that are easy to implement without adding to workload, but will have big impact on progress



Michael Chiles shared very valuable and effective strategies that I can transfer on to the classroom floor and share with my co-workers



and



A very sensible, clearly research informed approach to feedback and assessment. Really liked the fact that he tied curriculum, teaching and assessment together.



Secondary

5 secondary schools have been commissioned to complete a school-based project on a small scale to develop an aspect of assessment, with a focus on progression. The schools have been selected following an application process, and have produced a plan taking them up to July when they will showcase their journey in a case study and webinar. Their work will be shared widely with all regional secondary schools in the summer term. The project has realised its intention of attracting applications, forming school-based projects and planning for a sharing regionally in July 2024.

Michael Chiles Conference on assessment took place in February 2024 (see above). As keynote speaker he focused on the centrality of assessment within the new curriculum and schools will share details of successes to date, and emerging practice.

Bespoke professional learning has been delivered in a number of regional schools to support their work in developing assessment, planning for progress and formative assessment for learning practice within the classroom. A number of separate presentations/INSET day support programmes involving aspects of assessment planning have been delivered and the resources used are being made available to all SIAs to use with schools; this has been made available across all authorities.

A professional learning and information sharing resource has been prepared for, and presented and explained to, all secondary core leads and SIAs, to inform head teachers and senior leaders of the requirements for reporting to parents. This has been fully contextualized into the continuum of planning for the new curriculum, and the legislation for reporting.

A professional learning and information sharing resource has been prepared for all Core Leads to support headteachers and leaders in planning for dialogues to develop a shared understanding of progression at school, cluster and secondary peer alliance level. This will inform all schools of the legal requirement and will support them in formulating their plans.

5. DEVELOPING HIGH-QUALITY TEACHING AND LEARNING

Summary of main actions, engagement and impact

Due to the increased focus on support and guidance for improving the teaching and learning through networks for teaching and learning leads, networks for core subject and the work of the 'team around the school' for Schools Causing Concern:

- nearly all school are demonstrating improvements in specific aspects of pedagogy. However, the pace and scale of improvements require further attention in a few schools.
- nearly all schools are taking appropriate action to further strengthen pedagogy and raise standards.
- high quality targeted subject specific support for pedagogy is improving standards of teaching and learning across many subjects and specifically in English and Mathematics and improving both depth and breadth of understanding.

- nearly all schools have appropriate literacy and numeracy interventions in place and can demonstrate the progress made by groups of pupils.
- Impact of NQT support and professional learning on improving retention, wellbeing and skills amongst early career teachers

OBJECTIVE 3 – DEVELOPING HIGH-QUALITY TEACHING AND LEARNING

Priority:

3.1 Improve Teaching



CONTRIBUTION OF AOLE AND SUBJECT NETWORKS TO IMPROVE TEACHING

IMPROVING TEACHING AND LEARNING

Facilitate relevant universal professional learning offer or commissioned and bespoke targeted support.

Commissioned by GwE, Mark Burns, the author of 'Teaching Backwards' provided a valuable insight into how to design and deliver effective lessons that engage and inspire pupils at a workshop on 29/06/2023. The workshop focused explicitly on the careful sequencing of the curriculum to ensure progression in learning. Mark's idea of 'backwards design' has proven to have a significant impact on student achievement and motivation over the years. The workshop focused on teaching backwards, starting with the end goal in mind. The training offered a practical, hands-on approach for staff to further their attitudes, skills and habits of excellence both for themselves and for their learners. Discussions are ongoing with him for a follow up workshop concentrating on differentiation and level of challenge. Further professional learning opportunities will be facilitated during the next academic year to develop:

- planning for progression
- differentiation (making learning accessible)
- increasing the level of challenge

Following the summer workshop, some schools have organised INSET days with Mark Burns to support their PL further.

Establish a Teaching and Learning Network for Secondary Teaching & Learning leads to ensure that best practices are being developed and to support each other to develop a consistent pedagogical approach.

The first Network meeting was held on 21/09/2023 focusing on Metacognition and Leadership. 41 out of 54 schools attended. Since the first meeting, there have been numerous requests from the Teaching & Learning Leads for our training resources for the to be used with staff in their own school. Feedback from meeting was positive and a Teaching & Learning Team has been established to communicate messages and support with fortnightly “drop in” sessions. The first newsletter has been emailed to all Heads, Teaching & Learning Leads, SIAs + Subject SIAs. The priority for the next Network meeting will be a session on effective questioning. This was a priority that was identified following the first Network meeting, along with effective feedback.

A second Network meeting took place on 17/11/2023 focusing on Feedback and Questioning. 37 out of 54 schools attended the meeting. Feedback from meeting was positive.

A third network meeting took place on the 21/02/24 focusing on:

- Part 1: T&L sharing effective practice and reflect on impact to date
- Part 2: Sharing key ESTYN T&L messages
- Part 3: The relationship between provision and impact

Nearly all feedback received from meeting was positive.

A Teaching and Learning Team has been established to communicate messages and support with their priorities and for fortnightly “drop in” sessions. The first newsletter has been e-mailed to all Heads, Teaching & Learning Leads, SIAs + Subject SIAs.

Following contact via Link SIAs and as outlined in Support Plans, bespoke support has been facilitated for identified schools.

In preparation for the next Network meeting, Teaching & Learning Leads have been asked to share what impact the network has had thus far.



RESEARCH AND EVALUATION (RESEARCH AND ENQUIRY) (RILL)

Remote Instruction of Language and Literacy (RILL) – Phase 3 (Projects 1 and 2)

Phase 2 funding of RILL is provided by Welsh Government over two years as follows: May 2022 to May 2023, and May 2023 to May 2024. In 2022-23, Project 1 in this phase aimed to expand RILL to provide a 15-week tech-based language and literacy Welsh programme to disadvantaged children (i.e., non-Welsh-at-home, low SES and ability) and to test its effectiveness in improving Welsh language and reading skills.

During the autumn term 2022 RILL focused on developing 30 new Welsh and English lessons and offering in-person training to schools to implement the programme. We created a new website that information and support materials for schools, teachers, and parents: <https://sites.google.com/view/rillcymraeg/am-rill>

In October 2022 we recruited 28 schools and 39 teachers to receive RILL Cymraeg training and a further 60 schools from across Wales to receive RILL training in the spring and summer terms 2023. We have also developed a battery of online assessments to capture impact data for RILL. Over 250 children enrolled on the RILL Cymraeg programme have since been tested. Half of these children are now undergoing the RILL lessons twice weekly with their teacher or TA and were tested again in the summer term 2023. The second half of these children will begin the RILL lessons in September 2023. We recruited a further 60 schools from across Wales to receive RILL training in the spring and summer term 2023.

In the Spring term 2023 we have focused on supporting schools participating in the evaluation of RILL and amending the lessons in response to feedback from these schools. Additionally, we have started creating whole class materials to complement the existing RILL lessons. During the summer term we organised a co-creating workshop in which headteachers, teachers and TAs provided feedback on the draft whole-class materials as well as offer their own ideas for new activities. We will now combine this information to create the whole class materials over the summer months. These educators also participated in a focus group reflecting on their experience on the project.

By October 2023, 92 schools have been trained in RILL Cymraeg for Project 1: 47 in North Wales and 45 in other regions as part of our contract with Welsh Government to deliver training in each region. In the summer term 2023 training sessions were organised in Bangor, as well as Wrexham, Powys, Pembrokeshire, south east and south central Wales. Project 2 will focus on expanding RILL to the whole-class level and testing the effects of complementary, whole-class instruction on all children’s literacy skills. In September 2023 ten schools (20 teachers) were recruited to participate in the training for RILL English version.

By January 2024, we have completed the 'whole class materials' (Project 2). These are now being proofed by a translator before being piloted in 5 primary schools already taking part in the project. Early analysis of the data from Project 1 shows that pupils completing RILL made educationally significant gains in Welsh Vocabulary Knowledge, and Welsh and English Reading fluency. The gains in Welsh vocabulary were particularly large. There are 13 schools now completing the RILL English version with a further 6 due to begin completing it by the end of February. An evaluation of the initial RILL programme delivered remotely in English during the pandemic has been published in Reading and Writing: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11145-023-10502-7>

By April 2024, 'Whole Class Materials' (Project 2) are being rolled out to schools. As an adjunct to this project, we are trialing the Welsh language version of Reading Screen (developed by OxEEd and Assessment). The materials for 'Home Learning' (Project 3) are being finalised. There are now 15 North Wales schools (out of 27) completing the RILL English version of RILL.

Improving fluency in Oral Reading (iFOR)

Since 2018, GwE has been working collaboratively with researchers from the Collaborative Institute for Education Research, Evidence and Impact (CIEREI), Bangor University to create a suite of evidence-informed reading fluency interventions: Repeated Reading (RR), and High Frequency Words fluency (HFW). This project will focus on the roll out of our updated English and Welsh language RR intervention materials with schools. We plan to work with schools to evaluate the impact of the updated RR intervention following an 8-week intervention period in the spring term 2024.

- All schools will receive access to training and RR intervention resources in English and Welsh.
- The research team will work with staff to identify target learners and plan for the intervention in the spring term 2024.
- The research team will help schools gather pupil progress data and evaluate the impact of the RR intervention.

10 schools were recruited to the project, and post-test data collection following an 8-week intervention is currently underway. All schools were provided with access to the RR training and intervention resources in English and Welsh, in December 2023. Schools were also invited to a training/Q&A session on the 10/01/2024. The RR implementation phase began in late January/early February. During the 8-week implementation phase, all participating schools were offered three implementation support visits in which a trained research officer (RO) supported the lead teacher in the successful implementation of the RR intervention. All schools facilitated at least 2 of these visits, and the majority facilitated all 3 visits. During at least one of the visits, the RO observed a teacher-learner RR session and provided feedback to the teacher.

Post-test data will be collated and analysed over the summer term for preliminary findings to be shared by the end of the summer.

Inclusive Teaching of Early Numeracy (i-TEN) in mainstream primary schools.

The i-TEN programme is adapted from Mathematics Recovery (MR). MR is a comprehensive evidence-informed programme for teaching numeracy to younger learners struggling with early mathematics skills. In this project we aim to work with schools to evaluate i-TEN with disadvantaged children in mainstream settings to provide an inclusive approach to early numeracy teaching and learning. This is a collaborative project between GwE and the University of Warwick, and also contains a strong element of numeracy CPD for teachers as follows:

Interviews were held on 18/07/2023 and a PhD research student was appointed.

- In the first phase we will train staff in interested schools to use and evaluate the impact of the first three developmental stages for learners in Foundation Learning classes.
- During the Autumn Term, 2023, researchers from the University of Warwick have developed lesson plans for the fourth and fifth developmental stages of MR. The main adaptations from the original MR plans have included: breaking down the original teaching steps further into smaller steps, ensuring the verbal instructions for students are clear, succinct and accessible; and providing extra ideas for generalisation opportunities and to support struggling learners. This development has included regular meetings with the developers of the plans for the first three developmental stages to ensure consistency throughout the plans. To support these adaptations, the PhD research student (University of Warwick) has attended courses including the Cross-Regional Professional Learning AoLE Mathematics and Numeracy session in December looking at the Curriculum for Wales and a MR masterclass.
- During January-February 2024 these plans were shared with a group of teachers to gain initial feedback and incorporate this into the plans before implementation in school. An ethics application was submitted in January 2024 and approval granted for a feasibility study to pilot the use of these plans in a primary school in North Wales with 10-20 KS2 children in the summer terms of 2024.
- The study will involve an initial training session for school staff in one confirmed primary school in April 2024 and regular support sessions to contribute to their ongoing numeracy CPD and enable them to deliver the intervention as intended.
- In the second phase (from 2025) we are interested in working with schools to co-develop the lesson plans for the fourth and fifth developmental stage of MR in KS2 settings.
- We will also work with Welsh language settings to help the research team to create bilingual MR programme materials.

Developing and Evaluating Mainstream Spelling Instruction (DEMSI).

The Science of Reading (SoR) approach describes key reading and related skills that are critical for readers of all ability. In this project we plan to evaluate how the SoR approach may be applied to spelling instruction in mainstream classroom settings. Here, we propose a two-phase study in developing and evaluating mainstream spelling instruction for early writers. First, this DEMSI project seeks to understand the landscape of current spelling instructional practices for early writers (7-year-old children) in North Wales via a regional survey. Second, we plan to pilot a model to help train teachers to adapt and improve their own spelling provision to ensure it aligns with the SoR. This is a collaborative project between GwE and Leeds Trinity University.

- We aim to examine the feasibility and effectiveness of co-creation workshops to implement a SoR spelling curriculum in North Wales.
- We will evaluate if a co-created SoR-adapted spelling curriculum be implemented successfully by classroom teachers? And, does a co-created SoR-adapted spelling curriculum improve learner outcomes?
- We plan to develop a series of four one-day workshops for Year 2 and Year 3 teachers alongside an experienced teacher familiar with the SoR. The workshops will focus on background SoR research, co-developing the curriculum, and assessing spelling progress.

We have created and shared the spelling questionnaire via the GwE Bulletin in July 2023 as part of Phase 1. The questionnaire will be promoted again in September 2023, and we have recruited ten primary schools to participate in the first stage of Phase 2. At the end of Phase 2 (summer term 2023), we plan to invite ten primary schools from LAs to receive feedback from project outcomes.

By January 2024, Phase 2 is underway, and 11 schools have been recruited and they have completed the administration and assessment of baseline testing (N ~ 400 pupils). We have delivered a four-day workshop to five of the schools (11 teachers). All schools are now currently being visited individually to discuss their current spelling provision and receive support. Monthly drop-ins are underway.

Phase 3 of DEMSI was planned to include the dissemination of the findings via a regional conference alongside an open invitation for schools from the other LAs to access a So-adapted spelling curriculum. This was scheduled to take place in 2024-25, pending ongoing reorganisation of Tier 2.

By April 2024, baseline scoring is complete. All schools have been visited once. Two schools are already considering implementing a whole school approach. Monthly drop-ins are continuing. We are due to re-release the questionnaire.



PEDAGOGY AND LEARNING DESIGN

Towards 2024

Work is continuing in collaboration with 8-11 age range teachers to further strengthen and support self-evaluation and school improvement towards realising the Curriculum for Wales through evaluating and developing current Curriculum approaches, Pedagogy and Progression.

Meetings have been held with Headteachers in November 2023 along with Professional Learning events 'Developing high quality teaching and learning'. A review day will be held on 18 March 2024. All materials are available bilingually and a handbook will be available in the March 2024 event. Content includes review of actions completed, Principles of Progression- Learner Effectiveness and new impact cycle.

Evaluation forms completed showed that the teachers had a much-improved understanding of how pedagogy, process orientated curriculum and assessment and progression are linked to ensure positive outcomes against the Four Purposes. This enabled them to go back to school to do a small case study in their own classes based on qualitative and/or quantitative data to evaluate impact.

The professional learning included what is a process orientated curriculum which will give schools a strong starting point with the national Camau professional learning in future. It also included research informed approaches. The teachers feedback showed that this has given them a good starting point when designing learning and overall feedback was very positive and will be impactful back in their schools. Schools were able to network with each other after the event through a shared teams.

Welsh Curriculum Learning Design

Meeting have been held with Regional Leads to discuss the Learning Design Project for this year. This will support the Schools Partnership Project Collaboration. Schools have been identified to participate in the 5-day project.

The schools attended the launch day on 23/01/2024, including two headteachers to support the programme and take strategies back to use whole schools. All schools decided to focus on digital supporting reading. One school used digital to support reading through the teachers recording decodable phonics books and sending them home for the parents to reinforce the phonics learned. The latest parents' evening feedback was that it was an overall success and was accelerating the pupils' reading skills. One school focused collaboratively on older pupils supporting younger pupils reading through Google classroom apps. There has been positive feedback about attitudes to reading, the older pupils particularly benefitted from building relationships with the younger pupils. The lecture on the launch day was very impactful for the headteachers as it made them rethink their whole approach in using digital to support pedagogy rather than using digital as a stand alone. Schools will meet again in June 2024 to share impact of project and ways of sharing further.

Talk Pedagogy Research Project (2023-26) – Year 1 (2023-24)

This project has been commissioned, and funded, by Welsh Government for three years from 2023. Interviews took place in the spring term 2023 to appoint a PhD research student to carry out the work, and a secondary teacher was appointed. The new student started work on September 1st. In 2023-24 the student is focussing on two key research questions (informed by Welsh Government) as follows:

1. How is the term 'pedagogy' used in education publications in Wales? The student has completed a content analysis of key government, consortia, Estyn and other stakeholder publications and is currently evaluating these data into emerging findings. Initial results have been shared with Welsh Government.
2. How can we more clearly define some of the key terminology and nomenclature associated with Curriculum for Wales? The student has started the process of setting up a Delphi study to use key stakeholders and experts to help identify and improve the definitions, and understanding of, more contentious terminology.

Research question 1 has been completed and provisional findings have been reported back to Welsh Government's Talk Pedagogy Middle Tier group in February and March 2024. This is now being written up for an academic publication, and will inform national approaches to supporting reform of curriculum and pedagogy in schools. Research question 2 is currently in progress based on a Delphi study design (where groups of experts work provide rounds of feedback to work towards an agreed definition of contentious terminology related to CfW). A pilot group of experts drawn from GwE and Bangor University are currently trialling the Delphi method, with the larger Delphi stakeholder group due to begin work in the later summer term 2024.



REALISING POTENTIAL – CHALLENGE FOR ALL (MAT)

GwE representatives have written and delivered two of the four Realising Potential webinars on 'Developing a MAT Strategy' and 'Metacognition.' These are available as recordings to be used by regional schools, outlining practical strategies to develop provision and leadership to support Realising Potential: Challenge for all. The impact of these is to better inform School leaders and practitioners about the available support for the RP/MAT agenda, and to better engage practitioners in Research and practical trialling of particular approaches to improving standards such as metacognition strategies and learning approaches. GwE staff update the Regional Consortia Realising Potential Website.

Links to the Realising Potential professional learning offer and resources have been shared with regional schools through the GwE Bulletin to support their work in this area.

A cross – regional Primary Realising Potential project has begun working with five schools to support their work in developing planning, assessment and provision to meet the needs of all learners. Schools will share good practice, which can be accessed by other regional schools from autumn term 2024. Schools were offered the opportunity to apply for funding to support a small-scale project focussing on one approach to the Realising Potential agenda.

Resources developed to support schools are available on Regional Consortia Website:

- [10.11.2023 - Consortia MAT Strategy Meeting \(youtube.com\)](#)
- [Welsh Education Consortia - Challenge for All Professional Learning \(google.com\)](#)
- [Consortia Addysg Cymru - Her i Bawb Dysgu Proffesiynol \(google.com\)](#)

Realising Potential webinars and presentations:

[10.11.2023 - Consortia MAT Strategy Meeting.\(youtube.com\)](#)

[21.02.2024 - Differentiation \(youtube.com\)](#)

[21.03.2024 - Metacognition - YouTube](#)



3-8 EDUCATION

Bespoke support has been delivered to schools causing concern across the region. Overall, nearly all schools causing concern are making steady or good progress against agreed actions and all staff and stakeholders upskilled during the process. Support is developing practitioners' understanding of progression across the developmental pathways of Enabling Learning to the end of PS2 in all AOLEs, cross curricular and integral skills. Support also improves their understanding of Foundation Learning principles and pedagogy impacting positively on the quality of provision and upon pupils' progress.

Regional 3-8 networks have been delivered for practitioners and SIAs sharing guidance on 'Pre-reading skills, Early reading skills and Higher order skills', 'Outdoor Learning' and 'Developing Digital skills'. This has enabled practitioners to receive up to date information eg. Digital progression maps, to collaborate with each other and to implement strategies within their planning and teaching. This is impacting positively on provision and learning.

Schools from each LA have been involved in GwEs informed research projects on 'Play, Observe, Ask' approach to scientific exploration and enquiry skills. Practitioners discussed how they had reflected and reviewed their approach to planning and teaching scientific concepts and enquiry skills through a developmentally appropriate curriculum. This has had a positive impact on pupils engagement and motivation and progression in their learning. Presentations and case studies will be shared in the regional Summer 2024 3-8 network and uploaded on to the GwE Support Centre enabling all school regionally to access them.

Regional workshops have been delivered for teachers and TAs new to the 3-8 age group focusing on the principles of Enabling Learning and AOLEs within this age group and effective pedagogy. Those who attended have a secure knowledge and understanding of the three enablers within Enabling Learning, pedagogy and the curriculum to transfer into classroom practice.

Regional digital workshop co-delivered on developing skills within 3-8 age group (see Digital Business Plan monitoring report).

Expressive Arts and Humanities workshops have been delivered regionally for teachers and TAs. All practitioners upskilled and deepened their knowledge and understanding of the Expressive Arts and Humanities AOLEs, the Developmental Pathways, cross-curricular skills and the integral skills. Following workshops, practitioners have an increased confidence in planning the development of AOLEs and cross-curricular skills from the Developmental Pathways to the AOLEs, within developmental appropriate pedagogy.

Regional sessions have been delivered on developing effective reading strategies to promote lifelong readers. Many practitioners have reflected on their own provision and have made changes to improve the opportunities for pupils to hear and develop their reading and comprehension skills and parental engagement.

Regional sessions delivered on 'On-Entry Assessment' WG guidance for SLT and practitioners during the Summer and September 2023. This has increased their knowledge and understanding of the guidance and

the importance of observations and transition arrangements.

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Bespoke support has been delivered to individual schools and clusters on specific aspects of the Curriculum e.g. early reading and higher order reading skills, authentic and purposeful learning, role of the adults, numeracy, planning and outdoor learning. This has upskilled staff on the 3-11 continuum regarding

expanding and deepening skills within a developmentally appropriate learning experiences and environment.



Support schools in monitoring the progress of post-16 students

The ALPs programme of software has proved to be a very useful tool in the monitoring of progress of post 16 learners. The software is used by all schools with sixth forms across the region. The outputs of the results of the examination analysis and standards across the region have informed actions around:

Analysis of AS and A2 question styles and subject specific specification changes

2022/23 saw a general decrease in performance as shown by T scores and Quality Indicator measures, likely a reflection of the return to pre-pandemic outcomes, however the profile is less positive than 2018. Question analysis reveals a significant shift towards PISA style questioning approaches and greater expectations of higher order thinking are evident in A level specifications. This has been disseminated to the GwE Assessment and Progression team, included in Heads of Sixth agenda items and communicated at subject networks.

Strategies to ensure continued focus on literacy and numeracy provision post 16.

The regional ALPs profile reveals a mixed picture of outcomes for high literacy demand subjects. Progress in post-16 high literacy demand subjects necessitates and supports the provision of a high-quality literacy provision 11-16; these messages have been shared and discussed in latest round of Heads of Sixth meetings. Also, communications around ensuring that school priorities reflect skills development post 16 as well as pre-16.

Opportunities for subject networks in those subjects where performance is more variable.

Subjects with ALPs 'blue' designation include Mathematics, Criminology, Psychology, RS, History, WBQ, Geography and English Literature. As a response to this, we have set up subject specific networks in Criminology, Psychology, WBQ and Business Studies.

Discussions with Heads of Sixth around wider issues that are affecting performance, progress and standards in the Sixth Form.

Messages around the changing profile of learner accessing Sixth Form provision – the impact of the pandemic and associated issues with wellbeing and resilience have been discussed in Heads of Sixth meetings across the region. Sixth form leaders have been invited to contribute ideas towards a Heads of Sixth event in the summer term. The focus likely to be on aspects of wellbeing and barriers to progress.

Ensuring that schools set priorities that focus on narrowing the attainment gap post 16 as well as pre-16.

ALPs analysis reveals that in 2023 eFSM learners made less progress than nFSM learners, to the magnitude of 0.25 of a grades progress.

In 2023 eFSM students made less progress than non-eFSM students in all six of the most popular subjects by entries (WBQ, Maths, Biology, Psychology, History and Chemistry).

Although FSM (like gender) is not universally submitted by schools, the attainment gap continues into post-16 learning – shared and discussed in latest round of Heads meetings, particularly with regards to ensuring that school priorities reflect attainment gap post 16 as well as pre-16.

Support Post 16 Leaders in schools to provide strong and effective direction in all aspects of their role.

All three joint Local Authority Networks have convened on two occasions. These have been well attended. All post 16 leaders have been offered the opportunity to participate in the post 16 leadership development programme. 9 GwE schools have booked onto the programme. All leaders registered on this programme have now completed the four day course. Feedback received from the delegates has been excellent. One delegate from the GwE region has successfully secured a position as a Head of Sixth. All post 16 leaders have been offered the opportunity to attend events within the post 16 cross -regional Professional Learning programme.

Deliver high quality networks.

Various networks have been hosted by different schools and resource sharing has taken place and agreement to meet again. These networks include Criminology, Business Studies and Psychology.

To provide support to improve teaching and learning of A Levels and the Advanced Welsh Baccalaureate in school sixth forms.

The Advanced WBQ subject network has met on two occasions; this has resulted in three schools taking the lead to share their delivery plans and models for the Challenge tasks. The creation of a Teams space has also facilitated the sharing of resources. The 15 attendees all report that this opportunity to network has been extremely beneficial. Further sessions are planned for the Summer term.

To provide schools with a range of approaches to supporting the wellbeing of their students

Discussion and sharing of practice around wellbeing strategies has taken place in all Heads of Sixth meetings. All Heads of Sixth leaders have been consulted with to shape the agenda of a summer term network meeting/conference with a focus on wellbeing and barriers to progress.



DEVELOP A NATIONAL EARLY CAREER SUPPORT PACKAGE TO SUPPORT TEACHERS IN THE FIRST 4-YEARS OF THEIR TEACHING CAREERS IN COLLABORATION WITH ITE AND MASTERS PROVIDERS AND WELSH GOVERNMENT (WG).

Further align ITE and early career teaching

Collaboration with Bangor University – GwE SIA is part of the Steering Board of the RILL programme and promotes the work regionally and nationally. As a result there is very sound awareness of the developments. There are beneficial discussions with Bangor University regarding the provision for AGA students. All Welsh and English medium students were invited to attend the 'Ein Llais Ni' conference. This was very well received and attended by students. Recognition of the role of a language mentor in a school that has been part of the original 'Ein Llais Ni' project through the partnership with CaBan in an Estyn report - [Support for Welsh in Initial Teacher Education: How initial teacher education partnerships support student teachers to improve their Welsh language skills, including teaching through the medium of Welsh | Estyn \(gov.wales\)](#). Collaboration on the 'Ein Llais Ni' programme continues with Professor Enlli Thomas. A joint working agreement has been shared and the support method needs to be confirmed.

Progress continues with accrediting new ITE ALN programmes. New WG accreditation criteria have been published which include a recognition for the need for ALN pathways due to stakeholder pressure from the GwE region. Programmes are currently being co-constructed with special school and mainstream ALN partners across the region. Applications to the new pathway are now open via UCAS for a pilot programme with limited numbers, pending accreditation (programmes are due to commence in September 2024,

including a one-year employment-based pathway). Weekly steering group meetings take place and there are termly wider stakeholder group meetings. The accreditation meetings take place with the EWC on April 23rd and 24th; this will be potentially Wales's first ITE ALN pathway.

Current mainstream programmes (BA Primary, PGCE Primary, PGCE secondary – range of subjects) have been monitored by the EWC in December 2023 during a 2 day visit to both the university and to regional schools. There was full compliance and strong and positive feedback provided by the EWC. All recommendations identified were part of current improvement actions and plans and further sessions have been planned to continue to develop actions against these. Recommendations included continuing to build upon and jointly quality assure fixed networks of schools. Further shared QAQE processes continue. Student pass rate this year has been high. Student satisfaction has been higher than in previous years. All areas of improvement are planned through the self-evaluation into the Improvement Plan for 2023-24. Student recruitment has been considerably higher this year than in the previous 2 years.

Continued partnership working is strengthening ITE provision, including shared professional learning such as regional curriculum for Wales marketplace 22/06/23 and on-going GwE CaBan lectures. Visit from Minister for Education and Welsh Language took place on 18/05/23, to launch a national recruitment video and take questions from students. Speakers included the Vice Chancellor, GwE MD, Head of School and ITE Director. Shared programme construction includes research-linked work on Cymraeg, and on modern languages in a primary setting. GwE staff continue to contribute sessions to the CaBan on-campus taught programmes, for example, in May 2023 GwE staff co-delivered a session to students on the legal responsibilities of being a teacher. In October 2023 3 members of the GwE team led sessions to BA students on curriculum design within the curriculum for Wales, and in December and January 2024 2 GwE SIAs have delivered sessions to students on all programmes on Humanities and Religion, Values and Ethics. QAQE processes are showing that students in general are progressing well in their programmes. A member of the GwE team met them as part of their induction in their first week, and there is a planned session with the GwE NQT mentor in summer term 2024.

Applications to Open University Programmes have been supported for 2023-25 - numbers of applicants within the region are increasing. Initial applications to the OU PGCE for Sept 23 have increased and GwE has a forecast of 28 students for the programme, up from 21 last year. This includes 12 students who have been offered places on the training through the medium of Welsh which represents almost a third of all applications across Wales. Recruitment is currently projected to be just as strong for September 2024 now schools have been recruited to the OU partnership in order to support this increase. The OU's support from GwE within schools is very strong. New areas of subsidised study have been agreed for applications for these are currently open. OU PGCE programmes have been re-accredited this year for another full 5 years.

Recruitment information is shared regularly for regional ITE programmes, for example through the GwE bulletin, through bespoke recruitment meetings and at the March 2024 HLTA regional conference.

NQT

There are regular very effective regional LA representatives meetings. September 2023 NQTs are now receiving support through the national professional learning programme. Initial modules have been completed in the autumn term and regional NQTs now have access to the local offer, which includes many up to date and relevant sessions to improve teaching and learning and also for the NQTs to network and share practice and experiences in their informative year.

In September 2023 we had 187 full/part time and 54 short term supply (STS) NQT's registered with the EWC (241) and of those 226 attended the national NQT session 1 and 2. A very positive aspect of this data is that 91% of the cohort attended the training, this is the highest % we have had in the last five years. We are very pleased with the fact that the % of STS NQT's who attended training has risen by 25% in the last

year. Work still to be done but it is a significant improvement.

NQT engagement with regional professional learning, such as in universal provision for improving behaviour and on formative assessment is very strong. There were 916 responses to the 6 NQT sessions by 8/4/24.

- 90.4% of the NQT who responded agreed that the professional learning programme 'improved my knowledge of the subject/field.'
- 91.1% of the NQT who responded agreed that the professional learning program was 'appropriate to my needs and my skill level'.
- 94.1% of the NQT who responded agreed that the professional learning program 'provides content that is relevant to my role.'
- 89.8% of the NQT who responded agreed that 'we would recommend the professional learning to others.'

An average score of 4.2/5 was obtained from the NQT who responded to the question 'To what extent do you anticipate that the learning will have a positive effect on your practice?' The NQT noted that the most effective part of the programme was:

- Very informative, lots of information, all valid and useful. Looking forward to starting my NQT journey.*
- *Being from England, it was very useful to hear how the Welsh NQT support system works. Also, having not used pebble pad before, it was reassuring to have an introduction.*
 - *The information relating to what the induction involves as there was not much information regarding this during university.*
 - *The information around writing PLEs was very useful. The step-by-step walkthrough was very helpful, and I now feel confident to write a PLE.*
 - *It anticipated all of the questions we had and was very clearly laid out. The examples were so helpful! Thank you so much for putting that together.*
 - *The breakout rooms were very useful. Sharing expertise was very beneficial.*
 - *The Scenarios link, and NQT Top Tips Video. Discussing Leadership opportunities and suggestions for PLE's.*
 - *I found the discussion based around Cynefin really useful as I have found this aspect difficult to understand. This gave me a detailed but specific overview.*

6. LEADERSHIP

Summary of main actions, engagement and impact

Ensuring progression to Headteacher position, and especially in Welsh Medium schools, has been and continues to be a challenge. GwE provides a rich array of professional learning to develop leadership at every level, together with targeted and bespoke support for schools as required, and especially for those schools causing concern. Moreover, there are more robust arrangements in place across the region where school leaders collaborate to support one another in clusters and/or alliances and take increasing ownership and accountability of one another's improvement journey.

Due to the focus on support and guidance for leadership:

- nearly all schools are taking action to further strengthen leadership within their school with specific focus on further honing and improving evaluation and improvement planning at all levels.
- nearly all schools are prioritising guidance and support to further develop the capacity of senior and middle leaders to effectively lead and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning.

- there is an increase in the number of leaders accessing high quality training and leadership development programmes

OBJECTIVE 4 - LEADERSHIP

Priorities:

4.1 Implement Regional and National Leadership Programmes



LEADERSHIP PROGRAMMES

Middle Leadership Development programme (MLDP) and Senior Leadership Development Programme (SLDP) cohorts have completed the programme. Feedback during the presentation sessions was extremely positive with SIA chairs praising the quality and calibre of participants and their presentations. Face-to face delivery enabled presenters to provide more bespoke support and guidance to participants on an individual level, as well as opportunities for networking and sharing of good practice. Participants who were unable to attend Module 5 were given the opportunity to make their presentations in the Spring term. This is now complete.

The content of MLDP and SLDP continues to be updated to ensure it remains relevant and incorporates current changes in education for all programmes. For example, The School Improvement Guidance.

The location for the delivery of MLDP/SLDP modules have varied in order to ensure fair geographical accessibility.

For all programmes, participants have been encouraged to access the Professional Learning Passport (PLP) and have been guided on its use. Participants have been encouraged to use the resource to record and reflect on their progress across the leadership pathway. Participants have the freedom to use the resource according to their needs in line with the principles of the programme.

There have been two opportunities for endorsed National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH) candidates to undergo assessment. The May assessment will be the final opportunity to demonstrate readiness for headship under the current arrangements. This includes existing acting heads, nominated by the Local Authority.

GwE staff are part of a working group currently in the process of co-constructing the new NPQH programme for its anticipated launch in Autumn 2024.

In response to feedback from the 2021-23 cohort, the timing of the regional aspect of the New and Acting Headteacher Programme has been modified in order to encourage better attendance and provide opportunities for leaders across all authorities to network more effectively. As a result, regional modules have been combined for face-to-face delivery in full day rather than half day sessions with attendance improving significantly.

The Experienced Headteacher Programme has been paused while the NPQH is co-constructed.

The co-construction of the System Leadership Development Programme has been paused while decisions

regarding the NPQH are prioritised.

MLDP and SLDP participants for 2023-24 have been supported by an effective network of facilitators, school-based mentors (MLDP), leadership coaches (SLDP), school leaders and SIAs. This support has been facilitated by the regional business team.

The programmes have deepened participants' understanding of their role in a self-improving system. I.e. through carrying out a Leadership Experience Task based on the cycle of improvement and the new framework for evaluation, improvement and accountability.

All participants in the 23-24 cohorts have been encouraged where appropriate to aspire to the next level on the leadership pathway.

All practitioners have gained an enhanced knowledge of the leadership standards, how those standards can support self-reflection and more focused professional development.



HLTA - TALP

Support the professional development of teaching assistants.

National evaluation forms have been used for each programme, based on the Kirkpatrick model. This approach has made it easier to ascertain the impact of training and has facilitated discussions on reviewing the content of every programme nationally.

The new Induction programme was launched nationally on 6 November. The training is advertised in the Bulletin, on Google Classroom for Teaching Assistants and in the GwE Offer. Teaching assistants who have registered for the programme are invited to attend a half-day session every term on TEAMS for support to complete each module - 12 assistants attended. Feedback was very positive from these sessions. All teaching assistants who completed the modules noted that the content was appropriate to their needs and level of skills, and that they had gained new knowledge and skills to develop in their role. All teaching assistants also noted they would recommend the training to others.

Following a national review of the format and content of the Practising Teaching Assistants' programme in line with Welsh Government priorities, the new programme has been used with clusters of schools. This year, 8 clusters have completed the training, and 2 clusters are mid-training due for completion during the summer term. Nearly all noted they have gained new knowledge and skills to develop in their role while all noted that the content is appropriate to their needs and level of skills, and that they would recommend the training to others.

A total of 25 assistants completed Cylch 6 of the Aspiring HLTA programme, and 20 teaching assistants gained HLTA status in December 2023. Twenty-nine teaching assistants completed the **Aspiring HLTA (Cylch 7)** and will be assessed for HLTA status during the summer term.

A total of 27 assistants embarked on **Aspiring HLTA Cylch 8**, which will they complete during the summer term 2024.

A mandatory refresher session was held for **assessors** prior to undertaking Cylch 5 and 6, upskilling and empowering HLTAs and teachers who are guiding and supporting colleagues in their settings. Cylch 5 assessments have been completed for candidates with 34 meeting the national standards for HLTA status, i.e. 100% of candidates. Cylch 6 assessments have been completed for candidates with 20 meeting the

national standards for HLTA status, i.e. 100% of candidates. Robust regional and national moderation sessions have been held for quality assurance purposes, and it was noted that the overall standard of reflections was higher than previous years due to the standard of face-to-face discussions and professional interaction during the programme. Feedback in initial evaluation forms and following the assessment process is very positive, with nearly all participants stating that they either 'agree' or 'strongly agree' with the statements.

A specific school was commissioned to host OLEVI '**Outstanding Teaching Assistants**' training. Five sessions were held at the school with 10 teaching assistants in attendance. Teaching assistants' school-based mentors were invited to session 5, to see the teaching assistants presenting their work. All teaching assistants who attended the training said that it would have a moderate or significant impact on their future practice, and their comments were very positive.

The Miles Dyslexia Centre, Bangor University was commissioned to deliver **Dyslexia Training** to 15 assistants, leading to an Accredited Dyslexia Practitioner Status. Training was delivered over the autumn and spring terms. Two whole days and 12 half-day sessions have already been delivered.

Two special schools were commissioned to hold sessions to share effective practice with mainstream assistants. These sessions focused on Autism, behaviour, communication methods and sensory learning. A session was held for 59 teaching assistants in a cluster where members of staff from one of the schools shared effective practice on Autism Acceptance and Self-regulation and Positive Behaviour. Nearly all teaching assistants noted that the training would have a moderate or significant impact on their practice. In terms of future training, the majority said they would like to receive more training on ALN and Interventions, with a minority saying they would like training on behaviour.

Termly network for assistants and senior assistants - the first session was held on TEAMS on 7 November, 3.30-4.00pm. A presentation was had on the Professional Standards for Assisting Teaching, and assistants were asked what they would like to see being covered in future networks. A second session was run, delivered by a member of the GwE digital team.

A National HLTA Development Day was held at Venue Cymru on 11/3/2024. One hundred senior assistants across the region attended the day. There were various stalls with HLTAs sharing their good practice e.g. Forest School sessions with parents, TIS, Seasons for Growth, ALN Interventions, Library Ambassador, initial teacher training, digital resources. An award ceremony was held for Cylch 5 and 6 HLTAs. During the afternoon, Lee Parkinson shared useful apps. Feedback from the day showed how much our HLTAs appreciated a day to interact and celebrate their professional development.

HLTA Case Study Booklet - case studies were collated around 9 successful HLTAs from different sectors across the region. A HLTA assessor was commissioned to visit the HLTAs to produce the case studies. Booklets will be shared with the region's schools either as a hard or digital copy in order to promote various professional development pathways for assistants once they have received HLTA status.



COACHING AND MENTORING

Continue to develop and embed a coaching and mentoring culture throughout the Welsh education system which provides a toolkit to assist in improving standards of education in Wales.

A National Programme has been delivered through the medium of Welsh and English for SLT members, ALN Co-coordinators and HLTAs.

An email has been sent to all attendees who have received training in the GwE region over the last two and a half years asking them to complete a questionnaire in order to collect information on the true impact of the training.

Information about the level 3 qualification has been shared following the national sessions and information about level 5 and 7 qualifications has been shared with schools and GwE staff.



GOVERNOR SUPPORT

High quality professional learning opportunities and support for governing bodies has been provided on topics including self-evaluation, data and information, curriculum for Wales, planning for improvement, Welsh in Education, Schools as Learning Organisations and guidance on effective governing bodies.

Support has been provided for school governing bodies in making good appointments at senior level. Furthermore, governing bodies have been supported the headteachers' performance management process.

Support has been provided for local authorities to ensure that governing bodies have support in self-evaluation and development planning, including pre-inspection support for Governors on Estyn's expectations prior to and during inspection. Furthermore, bespoke support has been provided to governing bodies of schools in Estyn review and statutory categories where relevant.

Support has been provided to facilitate effective communication and information-sharing between GwE, LA and GSO. All stakeholders benefit from shared information.

GwE was represented at the regional and national Governors Support Officers (GSO) meetings.

Support has been provided for all the 6 LAs of the region in their provision of training for governors to support school improvement. This represents an increase in take-up compared to 2022-23. Support and guidance for governors of the six LAs has included preparation for the introduction of the School Improvement Framework in September 2024 and WG governor competency framework.

With GwE's support, the 2023 – 2024 programmes of support were agreed in advance with the GSOs of all 6 LAs, including bespoke provision for each LA. This was an improvement on previous years when support programmes were negotiated and agreed after the start the school year. Improved planning has enabled the GSOs to publish their programmes in advance and encourage governors to attend. The number of governors attending has also increased since 2022 – 2023.

Governor training sessions have been provided online in five of the six LAs. Sessions have also been held face to face. Feedback from these sessions has been positive, with governors appreciating the opportunity to meet one another face to face once again. The impact of improved planning has been clear in 2023 – 2024, with an increase in the number of sessions provided across the LAs and increased attendance.



SCHOOLS & SERVICE AS LEARNING ORGANISATIONS

GwE have engaged in cross consortia SLO meetings along with WG representatives. Ongoing dialogue is being held with these partners in relation to the SLO National Strategy Action Plan and against the

following identified aims:

- Schools and settings development plans are informed by self-critical use of self-evaluation, enquiry and the SLO survey. Schools consistently challenge themselves to improve as learning organisations
- All education professionals are able to access well designed professional learning that includes a blend of approaches and opportunities for reflection, enquiry and collaboration for learning.

To promote the SLO model and encourage engagement with the SLO survey a GwE team member delivered the first of a series of professional learning sessions across the region to raise workforce awareness in relation to SLO. This included;

- How the SLO enables schools to meet the school improvement guidance
- Preparation for Estyn's inspecting the future 24-30
- Governance and the new accountability framework
- Professional learning and distributed leadership
- Academic and evidence-based research to inform pedagogy.
- The culture of trust and thinking together
- The use of technology and time to inform self-evaluation, professional development and drive school improvement.
- Introduction to the SLO questionnaire and its use to inform strategy.
- Opportunity to explore and complete the SLO questionnaire.

Presentations were organised and been delivered to promote SLO to Members of the GwE Joint Committee. These sessions detailed the SLO model in context with the current educational landscape and informed a broader range of stakeholders with the intention of raising awareness and engagement numbers.

SLO engagement data has been received from Welsh Government for the academic year up to 04/03/2024. The data identifies the following:

- Engagement of Teachers since September.
Sep – Oct = 24
Sep – Mar = 33
- Increase in numbers of Schools engaging
Sep – Oct = 8
Sep – Dec = 10
Sep- Mar = 12
- Increase in number of newly engaged schools
Sep – Oct = 4
Sep – Mar = 7
- Number of schools who completed the survey in 22/23 repeating the questionnaire in 23/24
Sep – Dec = 4
Sep - Mar = 5
- Non repeat schools 23/24
Sep – Dec = 15
Sep-Mar = 14

The GwE SIA with responsibility for promoting SLO has consulted with headteachers to complete a survey evaluating their experience of the SLO survey and its impact on practice. This will be fed back to the Cross

Regional and WG Group to inform possible amendments to the SLO questionnaire and resources on HWB.



SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP PROGRAMME

All GwE Supporting Improvement Advisers (SIAs) have received continuous training and support on peer review, facilitation, mentoring and coaching. Initially, 13 SIAs were trained during October 2021 to deliver the programme, and following a programme of observing training during April 2022 the first SPP training programme entirely facilitated by GwE staff was delivered to cohort 3b during May 2022. By the end of March 2024, 20 additional SIAs have received training to deliver the programme. This means that 33 SIAs can now deliver the SPP programme successfully. Following this increased capacity to deliver the programme, initial training was delivered to 90 schools in cohort 3C by a team of GwE facilitators.

By the end of March 2024, 46 clusters/alliances (255 schools) have received SPP training and have already undertaken or are preparing to undertake peer review work. 329 Headteachers/senior leaders have been trained as peer reviewers across the region. 290 senior leaders/middle leaders and proficient teachers have been trained as 'improvement facilitators'. This has enabled leaders and teachers to benefit from high-quality professional education which will contribute to improving leadership capacity across the region. The first three tiers of schools involved in the programme received extended training for their improvement facilitators and training to develop collaborative leadership by March 2024, with the focus on developing increased and effective use of research in their improvement workshops. In addition, opportunities were provided across the region for schools and partnerships to scale up their capacity to implement the programme by training additional improvement facilitators.

The programme is aligned to the development of a new curriculum in order to support schools and clusters to evaluate their progress towards realising 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, and schools receiving the training are signposted to the curriculum prompts that are part of the National Resource for Evaluation and Improvement.

In January 2023, schools and clusters not already engaged in the programme were invited to express interest in participating in the Schools Partnership Programme training as part of cohort 4. A total of 43 schools expressed interest. Therefore, by the end of March 2024, more than half of the region's schools have received initial training and are now starting, or have started, their peer review and improvement planning work.

As part of our partnership with the Education Development Trust, initial questionnaires have been shared with all schools involved in the Schools Partnership Programme. Analysis of responses by an EDT researcher shows that 77% of Headteachers state their experience of the programme is good or excellent, while 100% of teachers state their partnership with other schools is strong or very strong following the programme. Four clusters/alliances have been identified to take part in comprehensive interviews with the researcher, which will lead to developing case studies to further scrutinise the impact of the programme in 2023-24.

The region's agreement with the Education Development Trust draws to a close at the end of December 2023. A senior EDT researcher will continue with the task of evaluating the impact of the Programme. In line with the original agreement the SPP regional lead and a few GwE facilitators have scrutinised the training and adapted it to respond directly to the requirements of the WG School Improvement Guidance. The aim of this work was to target schools in the region who have not received SPP training to date, including the new training, as part of the region's provision for the Guidance in 2024.

Discussions with one of the authorities have resulted in planning to deliver improvement facilitator training for Additional Learning Needs leads in every cluster.

Over half of the region's schools have been trained in SPP approaches and can therefore use peer review and improvement facilitation skills with confidence.

According to a survey of schools, a very high percentage appreciate the training and report that this has had a positive impact on their peer collaboration.

7. A POSITIVE EDUCATION EXPERIENCE FOR EVERYONE

Summary of main actions, engagement and impact

- nearly all schools making 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.
- good number of schools accessing specific training such as Trauma Informed Schools well-being sessions, etc.
- a range of high-quality guidance and resources to support schools to improve parental engagement.

OBJECTIVE 5 – A POSITIVE EDUCATION EXPERIENCE FOR EVERYONE

Priorities:

- 5.1 Support staff in their wellbeing and resilience.
- 5.2 Support schools to ensure that learners are supported to be healthy, confident individuals, ready to lead fulfilling lives as valued members of society, within places of learning that are supportive, safe, inclusive and free from discrimination and bullying.
- 5.3 Support schools to provide equity for all by tackling disadvantage and to have strong relationships with parents/carers and their communities.



PDG / LAC

Support the continued delivery of professional learning to support disadvantaged and vulnerable learners.

GwE continues to provide Trauma Informed Schools (TIS) Training across the region to support disadvantaged and vulnerable learners. TIS diploma GwE 14 and 15 finished at the end of the quarter and GwE 16 on-line has commenced which is now training an additional 24 practitioners. Through the training, schools will have an awareness and understanding of Trauma Informed practice and how it can support vulnerable and disadvantaged learners. 14 further practitioners have started the training face to face and online.

The new PDG/LAC-PDG guidance has been shared with SIAs to support their work in school and conversations around the use of PDG and PDG-LAC grants. As part of the SIA visits there is an increased focus on how schools support all their vulnerable learners and how the school monitors the progress the learners make.

Discussions with one of the authorities have resulted in planning to deliver improvement facilitator training for Additional Learning Needs leads in every cluster.

Over half of the region's schools have been trained in SPP approaches and can therefore use peer review and improvement facilitation skills with confidence.

According to a survey of schools, a very high percentage appreciate the training and report that this has had a positive impact on their peer collaboration.

A member of the GwE team attends termly meetings with Looked After Children Education Co-ordinators, Early Entitlement and Pupil Referral Units (PRU) and Education Other Than At School (EOTAS) leads. This ensures that everybody knows what each is offering and will help prevent duplication of work and Professional Learning offers. It will also support evaluating the impact of the work that is being carried out and the impact of school plans for their PDG-LAC spend and how that is captured. Meetings with LACEs are being arranged to review PDG-LAC spend.

The cluster model of working with PDG-LAC is enabling clusters to be more creative with how the grant is used to support pupils across the catchment area.

Bangor University are beginning a trial of the Coping on-line parenting strategy that works with the carers of looked after children and school. An initial questionnaire has gone out to schools for parents to respond to. This will support parents with developing their parenting skills in a variety of ways.

Continue the implementation of Raising Attainment in Disadvantaged Youngsters (RADY) across the region. RADY (Raising Achievement for Disadvantaged Youngsters) is presented by GwE, in partnership with its creators Challenging Education. This long-term programme is designed to support schools to address the impact of disadvantage on their learners through an 'equity not equality' approach. An initial RADY online meeting has taken place and is part of GwE's commitment to the National Priority for Health, Well-being and Equity.

The principles and approaches of RADY will suit all learners. The RADY principles are focussed on 'doing something different' by:

- Raising Awareness of Disadvantaged Youngsters
- Raising Aspirations of Disadvantaged Learners
- Raising Expectations of Disadvantaged Youngsters

There is a tiered approach to participating in the RADY programme. The programme is a long-term commitment and schools should not expect to see impact on outcomes for disadvantaged learners immediately. However, schools will swiftly see impact on learner and staff behaviours, understanding some of the consequences of disadvantage on learners, and on perceptions and relationships. This then contributes to changing cultures in schools which in turn impacts on learner outcomes. Fourteen schools have signed up for the first phase of the RADY roll-out, working with Senior leaders to embed a system of high-quality teaching and learning and expectation. The schools participating are seeing early signs of improvement with an approach that weaves vulnerable pupils through school development and improvement. During the Spring and Summer term there is a need to measure the impact of the support on the quality of the provision and on the pupils' well-being. This information will be gathered through school visits and the impact will be recorded within the next and final Health and Well-being Business Plan monitoring reports. The impact of this programme will be in the longer term. Full impact assessment will take time and guidance from other consortia report that 3 to 5 years is the most likely time frame for seeing the real results and impact. The RADY resources have now been translated into Welsh and can now be rolled out across the region.

Teaching and Learning to Support Vulnerable and Disadvantaged Learners (SVL) - developing a highly skilled workforce with a focus on quality teaching and learning to support vulnerable learners through a National on-line learning platform

The Welsh Government supporting vulnerable learners Resource has been launched. This programme is open to staff from Schools and Local Authorities in North Wales. The programme focuses on 'How do you deliver classroom-based equity for Disadvantaged and Vulnerable Learners?'. Commissioned by the Consortia, for the exclusive use of all schools and settings in Wales, Supporting Vulnerable and Disadvantaged Learners Through Effective Teaching Learning, is a bespoke, comprehensive professional support programme, drawing together evidence-based strategies that will help practitioners enhance and embed effective classroom practice. Following the launch of the materials in February, Mike Gershon delivered 3 sessions in May 2023 giving Senior Leaders a guided tour through the programme

The benefits of the programme have been identified as follows:

- Support vulnerable and disadvantaged learners by developing and enhancing teaching and learning.
- Keep teaching and learning at the top of the agenda.
- Inspire teachers to think critically and creatively about their practice.
- Give teachers the tools they can use to develop their practice.
- Facilitate and sustain innovative practice within classrooms.

All materials are available via www.supportingvulnerablelearners.cymru and are fully bilingual. A video has been created to promote the SVL Resource, this has just been launched and will be shared across Wales on social media platforms and bulletins.

Seven schools are currently trialling this resource as part of their school development planning. They have had the opportunity to discuss these with the Resource creator, guiding them on the most effective way of using the resource. The 7 schools will be creating a video case study to share nationally. 3 podcasts are completed and the rest will be done by the end of April 2024. A video has been created to promote the SVL Resource, this has been shared across Wales.

**WORKFORCE WELLBEING (GwE AND SCHOOLS)****To support well-being for school staff across the region**

The well-being of our children and our workforce continues to be a priority, and doing all we can to support the well-being of our school staff, children and young people across the region. Head teachers appreciate the input of the Link Supporting Improvement Advisers in terms of providing guidance and support for schools and clusters to develop their provision. Almost all Heads noted that facilitating cluster meetings has been instrumental in sharing ideas and good practice. It was also noted that these meetings have had a positive impact on their mental health and well-being.

To support the well-being of senior leaders in schools - To provide 'Reflective Spaces', individual and group meetings for senior leaders as needed.

Sessions of 'Reflective Spaces' have been organised for schools and is continuing to have a positive impact across the region as we continue to see a demand for this kind of support. The session is facilitated through break out rooms with a specific reflection and listening model to follow. This allows colleagues the safety of a structure to follow, whilst also allowing them to listen and reflect with their peers.



STRATEGY TO SUPPORT PARENTS / CARERS

Improve parental engagement.

The Local Authorities and GwE have provided a range of high-quality guidance and resources to support schools to improve parental engagement and have 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 learners for end of year examinations. A regional group has been established with representation from GwE and each LA to lead, manage and co-ordinate the field of supporting parents and carers with their child's learning.

Family engagement resources have been created by a small Group of 5 Teaching Assistants (TAs). These resources consist of 4 x 1-to-1.5-hour sessions that can be delivered by TAs with parents and their children in school. They are based on the Mike Gershon 'Help Your Child to Learn' resources. The packs are designed to be picked up and used with only a small amount of preparation. A meeting was arranged for November to develop a case study from the schools who have created the Resource. The schools who developed the resource and will be invited to share the resources their experiences in Network meetings. The Group are now considering how to make the pack more accessible to parents. They are working on a set of audio files with a QR code to make them even more accessible for all parents. Packs were shared at the HLTA conference and the immediate feedback was good. A case study will be completed from this to share with other schools and used to promote the resources. The schools who developed the resource and will be invited to share the resources their experiences in Network meetings.

A case study has been written by a school who have increased family engagement through the work of the family engagement officer. Their practice has been identified as excellent and this will be promoted through GwE, but also shared with the National Equity Group and TIS UK.

A network to support Family engagement workers is in the process of being arranged. This will be to share good practice and to have time to discuss any common issues and suggest training for future events.

Bangor University are beginning a trial of the Coping on-line parenting strategy that works with the carers of looked after children and school. An initial questionnaire has gone out to schools for parents to respond to. This will support parents with developing their parenting skills in a variety of ways.

Investors in Families is being promoted in the region as a tool to support the development of Community Focused Schools and how this supports the most vulnerable pupils. A meeting with CFS leads for each LA is planned. An existing network of Family Engagement workers is in place. We will be meeting with them shortly to see how we can support in promoting their work and developing a Professional Learning Community with them.

A National programme on developing a poverty strategy is being devised by the National Equity Group, to be delivered to Senior leaders across the region. This will include a parental engagement element.

8. CYMRAEG BELONGS TO US ALL

Summary of main actions, engagement and impact

- The 'Ein Llais Ni' website continues to be developed and is now a national resource for promoting

- speaking and listening skills in Welsh in Welsh medium and bilingual schools.
- Network meetings have led to networking between individual schools, within their alliance and across the region.
- Cross-regional working groups - there are robust collaborative partnerships in place which have a clear direction and purpose to ensure an agreed provision across Wales.

OBJECTIVE 6 – CYMRAEG BELONGS TO US ALL

Priorities:

- 6.1 Support schools to plan purposefully in order to support and develop learners' skills and literacy in Welsh in the context of the Curriculum for Wales.
- 6.2 Promote the learning of the Welsh language and develop the linguistic skills of the workforce.
- 6.3 Develop the informal use of Welsh through the '*Siarter iaith*' and '*Cymraeg Campus*'



WELSH IN EDUCATION (PL / SIARTER IAITH / CYMRAEG CAMPUS)

Assist schools to undertake purposeful planning to support and develop learners' Welsh skills in the context of the Curriculum for Wales.

A programme for English-medium primary school leads for accreditation was presented in a meeting with the NAEL panel, and the Academy approved the provision. The programme is also relevant to Transitional 2 schools increasing their Welsh provision to become dual language schools. One session has been delivered nationally with feedback being extremely positive. Following the session, a virtual session was held for Authority Officers to further highlight the programme and its content. A national agreement is needed on the delivery of this programme during 2024-25 and in future as a similar programme for Welsh-medium and dual language primary and secondary schools has been developed and for English-medium secondary schools.

In addition to the national programmes for school leaders, Welsh language Strategic Leads nationally have developed support and guidance for Governors and SIAs - GwE SIAs have conducted two virtual sessions for Governors in North Wales during the spring term, and feedback has been good. Here are a few of the comments shared:



- It was really good to connect with other governors and the facilitators of the online training, to gain information and understanding about what resources are available for the promotion of the Welsh language in our schools and to view current practice.
- I have been reminded that much good work is currently being done and pupils are generally very receptive to and enthusiastic about how enjoyable learning languages can be and that it is important to know and understand the language and culture of the country we live in. I am more aware of the help and resources which are available to me as a governor.



PL Offer for Welsh

- The Offer has been drawn up and is available to schools (2023-24).
- The 'Ein Llais Ni' conference was held for over 100 practitioners and school leaders across the region. Practitioners following the Sabbatical Welsh in a Year course were invited along with 46 Welsh-medium and English-medium ITE students from Bangor University.

- Networks for secondary Welsh Leaders and networks for secondary literacy co-ordinators and Welsh leaders are held on a termly basis.
- A termly *cariad@ddarllen* (reading for pleasure) network has been held with valuable feedback collated following the session. The SIA for Welsh and Literacy has been invited to support schools to provide guidance on engaging parents in the process of promoting reading and successful practices are shared.

Cross-regional working groups

There are robust collaborative partnerships in place which have a clear direction and purpose to ensure an agreed provision across Wales. The cross-regional website has been populated for the first phase of the work by working parties with the aim of sharing content live on the Regions' website in the summer term. As there is some uncertainty regarding the next step in terms of support for schools, it is not possible to forward plan any further development at present.

'Ein Llais Ni' is included in a cross-regional website. '[Llunyddiaeth](#)' (January 2024) is a national website of resources to support the discussion of new films in the Welsh Visual Literature GCSE specification (Unit 3 - Oral Examination).

Sharing successful practice

Sharing successful practice includes:

- an open morning in schools sharing the vision of heads of Welsh and English-medium schools.
- Y Gymraeg in the Bulletin - there is a specific section in the Bulletin to promote support, information and provision related to all aspects of the Welsh language, which is populated regularly. This heightens awareness of the provision available to develop the language. The national provision is also promoted.
- Collaboration with Bangor University - GwE SIA is on the RILL Steering Group and is promoting the work regionally and nationally. A very strong awareness of developments.

Promoting the learning of Welsh and developing the language skills of the workforce

A bilingual Playlist [PLANNING THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE WELSH LANGUAGE FOR PRACTITIONERS](#) has been shared via GwE's Bulletin to support school leaders to report accurately on practitioners' Welsh language skills against the Welsh Language Competency Framework when completing the School Workforce Annual Census (SWAC) and to plan suitable professional learning to strategically develop the language competency of all practitioners.

Information for practitioners regarding strengthening their Welsh language skills or regarding Sabbatical Welsh language courses is a regular item in the Bulletin. Fourteen participants (maximum number) are following the Welsh in a Year course in 2023-24. Various sources will be used to advertise and promote in the new year.

The Welsh in a Year Course has been promoted for 2024-25 and has attracted a remarkably high number with 38 having applied for 14 places. The Local Authorities are responsible for prioritising applications from the authority and interviews will take place during April 2024.

Develop informal use of the Welsh language - 'Siarter Iaith' and 'Cymraeg Campus'

A secondary school has received the Bronze Award of the Cymraeg Campus Language Charter - the first secondary school in the region to have achieved this award. An award ceremony took place and a tour was had of the school highlighting all the laudable work towards achieving the accreditation. After promoting the event, secondary schools are expressing interest in embarking on their Language Charter journey. A further open day is being planned for the summer term. National meetings are held on a regular basis led by Welsh Government in order to formulate national implementation guidance.



The purpose of 'Ein Llais Ni' is to highlight the importance of oracy in the school curriculum in the context of the Welsh language (across the entire age range) and to suggest ideas for strategies that schools/teachers can develop to encourage and promote the speaking and listening skills of learners. The work has been developed in collaboration with schools across the north Wales region and Bangor University, with Professor Enlli Thomas (Deputy Assistant Vice Chancellor – Welsh Language), an international expert on promoting oracy skills and bilingual teaching strategies, leading the practical research. The [Ein Llais Ni](#) website is publicly available.

Project Officers continue to engage and visit Welsh-medium primary and secondary schools, including continuing to support the network and supporting clusters. Consequently, the support is fine-tuned and the quality of Professional Learning sessions is praised and aligns with what schools wish to develop.

Planning for national workshops to be held in the other 4 regions in the summer term is also well underway.

Project Officers continue to promote the support, website and successful oracy teaching approaches in various forums, for example, language co-ordinator meetings, cluster INSET sessions. Workshops have been offered across the region to further promote. Planning is underway to lead teachers across Wales to make effective use of the website including signposting to the site map and sections of relevance to different audiences e.g. practitioners and leaders.

There is a national agreement through the Welsh Strategic Leads' collaboration programme to designate Ein Llais Ni as the resource to include on the national school support website which is available to Welsh-medium and dual language primary and secondary schools.

Training continues to be delivered on various aspects of developing oracy skills at the request of SIAs, either to clusters or via the GwE Professional Learning Offer. Feedback following these sessions has been very positive, with all practitioners reporting that the training had been useful or very useful.

Differentiated support for subject/primary and secondary teachers/non-specialists is available as part of the provision to support teachers by:

- planning and holding INSET for STEM subject teachers on the importance of developing pupils' oracy in subjects beyond Welsh and introducing Ein Llais Ni strategies for specific STEM tasks.
- staff meeting to look at schemes of work and identify opportunities to incorporate oracy tasks to enhance the STEM subject in question.
- present ideas on how to roll out Ein Llais Ni strategies across the whole school and how to adapt it to work in STEM subjects during a network.

Positive feedback is received from the networks/INSET sessions/visits with schools or clusters:

- All attendees valued or highly valued the training
- Attendees appreciated the opportunity to look at strategies, discuss their use, apply strategies to their plans and apply some during the training itself.
- All attendees valued or highly valued the website.
- The next steps after the training will be to trial strategies in class, make further use of the Ein Llais Ni website, roll out the principles of Ein Llais Ni across the school and plan to include strategies within their plans.

There are plans underway to publish an academic report at the end of the project. A survey has been compiled and is currently being checked before being shared during the summer term 2024.

The Steering Group continues to meet every quarter and has amended the membership of the Board to reflect the direction for the next phase of the project.

Sub-project 1: extend the support to develop speaking and listening skills in Welsh-medium and dual language schools

A second network session was held to continue with the support for schools on 22/01/24. The focus was upon developing learner and teacher reflection skills using a new resource - Llafaredd Llwyddiannus (Successful Oracy). Feedback was very positive with every teacher appreciating the value of developing oracy.

Project Officers continue to support lead teachers as they prepare and share the impact of their work in order to model successful practice. They have visited schools to offer support to lead teachers and set dates for submitting examples of good practice. These examples will appear on the website, to populate the Examples from Schools section.

Three dates have been determined to roll out Ein Llais Ni nationally in June/July. 24/06/24 - CCD & EAS. 08/07/24 - Partneriaeth. 09/07/24 - Ceredigion and Powys. An accompanying handbook for the programme has been produced to provide further support.

Project Officers have mapped out the schools that have prioritised Welsh or Welsh oracy in 2023-24 in order to promote the work further. Many of the schools have been contacted to arrange support and further collaboration. A total of 18 professional development sessions have been offered since the beginning of January. Seventeen additional schools and three clusters of primary-secondary schools received additional support. Bangor University Welsh students (4) were given a presentation on Ein Llais Ni and an opportunity to create oral tasks. A specific cluster is working on creating a booklet of Tier 2 vocabulary across all progression steps and a current PGCE Student there is exemplifying Ein Llais Ni in Health and Wellbeing lessons. Ein Llais Ni has been chosen as a line of enquiry for her PGCE studies.

Workshops have been offered to promote the support available to develop 'Ein Llais Ni' in Welsh-medium primary schools which served as an opportunity to share information about the website, supporting resources and practical strategies.

'Ein Llais Ni' is a heading within the GwE Professional Learning Offer and is available to all Welsh-medium and dual language primary schools - support is available by attending a conference, network, cluster and to individual schools (leadership level and practitioner level).

A seminar and stall have been organised for the National Education Show to further promote the work. During the day, attendees will have the opportunity to attend a seminar by Project Officers on the resource and we will be able to reach a wide audience with the stall.

The website includes Professional Learning and support resources for various audiences e.g. leaders, teachers, learners. Professional Learning resources are now on the website and have been shown to two clusters of schools. The response to these resources has been positive and some schools are already using them with learners:

- Guidance on introducing strategies
- Developing oracy in science lessons
- Effective questioning
- Developing learners' vocabulary
- Developing reflection techniques: Learners and Teacher

This [Document](#) serves as a guide for leaders and practitioners on the strategic process to follow for the effective delivery and embedding of the Ein Llais Ni programme as part of the support resources available on the website. _

The booklet is currently being developed to provide concise and useful information regarding effective delivery of the programme. It includes an overview of the website and courses of action to establish Ein Llais Ni in school. We will share copies of the booklets at [the National Education Show](#) and [National Workshops](#).

Sub-project 2: support to develop speaking and listening skills in English-medium schools.

The [overview infographic](#) has been adapted to include element '7. Linguistic progression' for the ELIN Programme, and this element has been added to the supporting documents e.g. '[Ein Llais Ni EMS – Exemplar steps DRAFT0324](#)'. By including this element when introducing the programme to English-medium schools, the aim is to place emphasis on the importance of building knowledge about learners' progress in their speaking and listening skills as they move along the continuum in schools, especially in the transition phase between primary and secondary. The significance of including the above element was discussed with lead schools (February 2024) and an agreement was reached regarding a suggested approach to support schools to evaluate the element. This element will be a core part of lead schools' contribution in moving forward, and their findings and evidence of progress will be reflected in schools' final case studies in due course.

Individual lead schools have been trialling and adapting as necessary, specific strategies with their learners. A list of these strategies has been compiled ('The Top 20') following presentations from lead schools on their baseline case studies.

Schools will agree on which of the above strategies ('The Top 20') to target in order to evaluate their impact across sectors. Trialling the same strategy in the primary and secondary will enable schools to develop a shared understanding of progression, as well as a discussion on linguistic continuity and how strategies will develop as pupils' confidence and language skills increase.

Secondary lead schools have been trialling specific strategies in preparing GCSE examination classes for oral assessments in the summer series 2023-24 (February/March 2024).

A number of the supporting resources on the current website have been adapted and translated, placing emphasis on promoting Welsh speaking and listening skills in English-medium schools.

Project work has been promoted during the network meetings of Welsh leads in EMS e.g. [GwE Welsh Leads' Network Meeting for English-medium schools - 161123](#). There were discussions around developing a shared understanding of progression when planning tasks to promote speaking and listening skills, encouraging leaders to browse the professional learning resources on the website. Examples were shared of resources on the current website that have been adapted to promote Welsh speaking and listening skills in English-medium schools, explaining that work on adapting and translating resources on the current website is underway.

March 2024 - a presentation was delivered to the Welsh-language cross-regional working party (English-medium schools) on the latest developments as a result of including 'Language progression' in one of the core elements of the 'Ein Llais Ni' programme for English-medium schools, and support resources were shared for evaluation by this cross-regional working party.

Sub-project 3: collaborate with Bangor University / CaBan to strengthen the link with ITE

The Project Officer has met with the University to arrange 'Ein Llais Ni' training for associate Welsh-medium teachers. Training was held on 18/1/2024. [Evaluate Bangor University Feedback](#).

9. BUSINESS

Summary of main actions, engagement and impact

Due to the clear and robust accountability framework in GwE:

- the planning and performance management model clearly articulates the vision, values, priorities and objectives of the service.
- there is a strong focus on accountability, continuous review, and a constant emphasis on achieving progress in accordance with priorities.
- value for money, evaluation and capturing impact are strongly incorporated throughout the work of GwE.
- a robust financial analysis supports the work of delivering the business plan.

OBJECTIVE 7 – BUSINESS

Ensure that GwE has strong governance and effective business and operational support that provides value for money.

Performance Management and Accountability

The clear and robust accountability framework is a key strength in GwE. The Business Planning Framework that is in place, with detailed business plans on all levels of planning, 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. 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. Throughout the year, reports associated with our priority streams within the business plan are reported through our governance groups. Progress against the regional business plan is reported on a quarterly basis to the Joint Committee.

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.

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.

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 the self-evaluation process, 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 kept under regular review to identify increasing risks or risks which are no longer deemed as high level. It is presented to the Joint Committee on an annual basis and when new risks are identified, of which the Joint Committee needs to be made aware. Through effective management of risks to the region, GwE is able to support the region's objectives, make effective use of resources and meet outcomes as intended.

10. STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES AND PRIORITIES FOR 2024-2025

On December 18th, 2023, Jeremy Miles, then Minister for Education and Welsh Language halted the Middle Tier Review accepting the interim findings as final. On December 19th, 2023, the Welsh Government rationalised pre-16 education grants that were allocated to Local Authorities and Regional Consortia into the Local Authority Education Grant (LAEG). On January 31st, 2024, Jeremy Miles, Minister for Education and Welsh Language published a written statement: [The next stage in the review of school improvement - the roles and responsibilities of education partners in Wales](#). This statement outlined changes to school improvements arrangement in Wales with the regional consortia model being replaced by a partnership model between two or more Local Authorities from April 1st, 2025.

Following the Welsh Government decision to amalgamate the main education grants under one heading, the Local Authority Education Grant (LAEG) from 2024/25 onwards, the grant has been paid to the Local Authorities to manage and delegate funding directly to schools. The requirements, risks, terms and conditions of the grant are now the sole responsibility of the individual Local Authorities. To ensure continuity of support to schools while the review progresses, Welsh Government indicated that they expected any current regional working arrangements to continue during this time and be facilitated through the specific grant funding to support curriculum and professional learning in schools.

The funding passed to GwE from the LAEG varies across the Local Authorities under the following headings:

- The Curriculum and Professional Learning

- No equity funding has been passported to GwE
- Standards element of the LAEG
- Most of the funding to support Welsh 2050 has been retained by the Local Authority with a percentage passported to GwE

The GwE Budget for 2024-25 also reflects a decision by the six Local Authorities to reduce their contribution to the core service by 10%, and therefore to implement a cut in 2024/25 of £392k, as well as not to add inflation in full. This means a cut in real terms of an additional £345k to the core funding, totalling £737k.


These decisions have had a significant impact on the service provided by GwE and school improvement arrangements in North Wales from April 1st, 2024. Specifically:

- GwE has changed from being a 'regional joint service' to a commissioned service.
- GwE is a client providing a differentiated commission to the Local Authority.
- The strategic direction for school improvement is provided by the Chief Education Officers who are held accountable by local scrutiny arrangements.
- GwE must strictly adhere to the commission defined by the Local Authority and captured in the agreement Commissioning Agreement between individual Local Authorities and GwE for the financial year 2024-25.
- The conditions of the grants have a different focus.
- Local Authority Education Grant (LAEG) Terms and Conditions dictate our Professional Learning.
- Our Professional Learning Offer aligned with the financial year.

Our Strategic Objectives and priorities for improvement for 2024-25 are therefore based on the Local Authority Education Grant (LAEG) Terms and Conditions and Local Authorities priorities, and our Business Planning Framework has been amended to:

- meet Core Local Authorities contribution and School Standards funding
- meet the grant Terms and Conditions for Reform
- meet the grant Terms and Conditions for Cymraeg 2050

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

 WHAT ARE WE AIMING TO ACHIEVE?	
1.	School Improvement and Standards Embedding effective school improvement arrangements while implementing the Curriculum for Wales and associated reforms.
2.	Reform <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Curriculum for Wales - Support schools and PRUs' understanding and approaches in working with the Curriculum for Wales, enabling practitioners to undertake a range of activities to realise the Curriculum for Wales, to develop their skills, knowledge and practice. • Professional Learning and Leadership – develop and deliver professional learning to enable schools and PRUs to develop reflective, enquiring and collaborative education professionals.

3. Cymraeg 2050

- Support the delivery of the aims of Cymraeg 2050 and to give every learner equal access to the language and the opportunity to reach their potential.

PRIORITIES

Our priorities for improvement are:

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 1: SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT & STANDARDS

Embedding effective school improvement arrangements while implementing the Curriculum for Wales and associated reforms

Ref.	Priority
1.1	Ensure all schools are supported to evaluate accurately and to deliver robust improvement plans effectively.
1.2	Supporting leaders to promote high standards and aspirations for all [to include quality of teaching and curriculum provision].
1.3	Support leaders in schools to become familiar with the new school improvement guidance and to be confident in implementing actions.
1.4	Strengthen multi agency and 'team around the school' approaches with schools causing concern.
1.5	Strengthen partnership working with Local Authorities.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 2: REFORM

The Curriculum for Wales - Support schools and PRUs' understanding and approaches in working with the Curriculum for Wales, enabling practitioners to undertake a range of activities to realise the Curriculum for Wales, to develop their skills, knowledge and practice.

Professional Learning and Leadership – develop and deliver professional learning to enable schools and PRUs to develop reflective, enquiring and collaborative education professionals.

Ref.	Priority
2.1	Support schools and practitioners to realise the Curriculum for Wales.

2.2	Support schools and PRUs in their work in ensuring learner progression across the curriculum in the mandatory cross-curricular skills of literacy, numeracy and digital competence.
2.3	Implement Regional and National Leadership Programmes.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 3: CYMRAEG 2050

Support the delivery of the aims of Cymraeg 2050 and to give every learner equal access to the language and the opportunity to reach their potential.

Ref.	Priority

** Cymraeg 2050 - to be confirmed following discussions with individual LAs*

Supporting Documents



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GwE Business Plan 2023 - 2024

Appendix 1: Regional Data



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2023 - 2024 BUSINESS PLAN

REGIONAL PRIORITIES & PROVISION 2023 - 2024

Regional and Local Authority Data

OBJECTIVE 1 – SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

Regional data:

The current sector profile identifies:

- 9 schools in statutory category [3 secondary / 6 primary];
- 14 schools causing concern [0 secondary / 14 primary];
- 46 schools which are kept under review [22 secondary / 24 primary].

OBJECTIVE 2- CURRICULUM & ASSESSMENT

DEVELOPING THE CURRICULUM AND NETWORKS (CfW)

Regional data:

Number of GwE practitioners who have registered on the National sessions below:

- Assessment Session 1 = 22
- Assessment Session 2 = 42
- Assessment Session 3 = 4
- Assessment Session 4 = 7

AOLE Sessions:

- Language and Literacy = 6
- Mathematics and Numeracy = 11
- Science and Technology = 9
- Expressive Arts = 15
- Humanities = 15
- Health and Wellbeing = 36

TOTAL: 167

EXPRESSIVE ARTS

Regional data:

- 3-8 Expressive Arts Workshop, attendance to the Expressive Arts cluster meeting & Expressive Arts Network meeting attendance: 293

HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Regional data:

- Total school visits: 43
- Wellbeing Leaders Network meeting on-line Secondary/Special/PRU: 24
- Health and Wellbeing Network meeting on-line Secondary/Special/PRU: 22

- Health and Wellbeing Play to Learn – Primary Workshops (3-8): 58
- Health and Wellbeing – Physical Literacy/Food and Nutrition Primary Workshops (3-8): 23
- Wellbeing Network Leaders meeting 20/03/2024 (West): 13
- Wellbeing Network Leaders meeting 21/03/2024 (East): 13

HUMANITIES

Regional data:

- 30 of the regions secondary school attended the Humanities Curriculum for Wales Conference for Secondary Teachers 16/11/2023.
- 3 schools have provided case studies demonstrating the impact of working with external partners on improving learning experiences for learners.

LANGUAGES, LITERACY AND COMMUNICATION

ENGLISH AND LITERACY

Regional data:

- Support for primary schools: 339
- Support for secondary schools: 50

WELSH AND LITERACY

Regional data:

Networks:

- Leadership: 36
- Effective realisation of the Curriculum for Wales: 15
- Cross-curricular Literacy: 14
- Developing the Welsh language: 4

INTERNATIONAL LANGUAGES / MFL

Regional data:

- Power Language up-skilling course registrations: 30 schools / 56 teachers -
- Power Language – subscription: 27/09/2023 - 148 schools
- OU 2023-2024 TELT Course: 6
- Cerdd Iaith 19/10/2023 & 15/11/2023: 14 schools / 14 teachers
- Sanako Project (Secondary) – 7 schools
- CAL: Creative writing approaches – 15 schools / 16 teachers

- CAL: Learner’s event: 17.7.23: Creative multilingualism in the context of the natural world - 2 schools / 30 learners
- School to school support – support plan: 5
- MFL Mentoring-Recruitment 23-24: 21 schools
- Immersion training 2024: 23 schools / 29 teachers
- Wales-Brittany partnership: 16 primary school / 4 secondary schools
- BLC Event Year 9 – 8 schools / 91 learners; Year 10 – 7 schools / 80 learners
- AATT working group 23-24: 6/7 Schools - 7/8 teachers
- Shirley Clarke 13/11/2023 – 19 schools
- Jennifer Wozniak-Rush 26/01/2024 – 56 schools / 56 teachers
- Network Meetings Novembers 2023 Secondary sector – 22 schools
- Forum Meetings November 2023 Primary sector – 16 schools
- Environmental awareness through language learning and creativity: school workshops with award-winning French graphic artist Anne Defréville: 30th April-3rd May 2024, Bangor – 4 schools registered

MATHEMATICS AND NUMERACY

Regional data:

	Number of visits
Primary Individual subject school support	39
Secondary Individual school support	168
Primary & Secondary Bespoke Cluster/Alliance Support	34

	Total attendees
Primary & Secondary Maths workshop (Craig Barton)	149
Secondary Heads of Maths network meetings (Q4)	33
Secondary Numeracy leaders network meetings (Q4)	30
Secondary MEI programme (whole programme)	29
Secondary ‘Effective use of manipulatives’ programme (whole programme)	41

Primary Science & Tech/Numeracy programme (Cohort 1 &2)	85	
Primary 'Effective use of manipulatives' programme	37	

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

SCIENCE

Regional data:

- Number of schools that have received bespoke school visits Q1-4 – Secondary: 26
- Science Network meetings attended – Q1-4 Secondary: 36
- Technology training attended Q1-4 – Secondary: 25

DIGITAL

Regional data:

- Number of practitioners who have received digital professional training / learning during 23-24: 1350

EDUCATION CONTINUUM 3 TO 16

TRANSITION

Regional data:

- Pedagogy transition project – 12 clusters across all 6 LAs
- Attendance at Transition workshops in Curriculum for Wales marketplace showcase, 22/06/23 – 61 across all 6 LAs
- Cluster visits by SIAs – continuous across region – all 53 clusters and discussed in regional secondary alliances
- Attendance at transition workshops - 159

ASSESSMENT

Regional data:

- Michael Chiles Feedback Conference: 233

OBJECTIVE 3 – DEVELOPING HIGH-QUALITY TEACHING AND LEARNING

CONTRIBUTION OF AOLE AND SUBJECT NETWORKS TO IMPROVE TEACHING

Regional data:

- Teaching & Learning Network: 28

RESEARCH AND EVALUATION (RESEARCH AND ENQUIRY) (RILL)

Regional data:

- Remote Instruction of Language and Literacy (RILL) – Phase 3 (Projects 1 and 2): 39

- Improving fluency in Oral Reading (iFOR): 9
- Inclusive Teaching of Early Numeracy (i-TEN) in mainstream primary schools: TBC
- Developing and Evaluating Mainstream Spelling Instruction (DEMSI): 61 TBC

PEDAGOGY AND LEARNING DESIGN

Regional data:

- Towards 2024 – 23 primary schools
- Welsh Curriculum Learning Design – 3 schools

REALISING POTENTIAL – CHALLENGE FOR ALL (MAT)

Regional data:

- Cross – regional Primary Realising Potential project – 5 schools

3-8 EDUCATION

Regional data:

- School support visits: 239
- Cluster support (no of schools over the year): 208 schools
- 3-8 Network: 635 (Summer and Autumn 2023)
- Workshops for Teachers and TAs new to the 3-8age group: 71 schools
- On-Entry Assessment training: 374
- Regional reading training: 439 practitioners
- Expressive Arts workshop: 258
- Humanities workshop: 146

POST 16

Regional data:

- Post 16 Joint Local Authority Networks: 32

ITE

Regional data:

- NQT: 224

OBJECTIVE 4 - LEADERSHIP

LEADERSHIP PROGRAMMES

Regional data:

1. Middle Leadership Development Programme	127
2. Senior Leaders Development Programme	117
3. New and Acting Headteacher Development Programme	34

HLTA – TALP

Regional data:

- Newly appointed teaching assistants: 34
- Practising teaching assistants: 247
- Aspiring HLTA Cylch 6: 25
- Aspiring HLTA Cylch 7: 29
- Aspiring HLTA Cylch 8: 27
- HLTA Status assessments Cylch 5: 34
- HLTA Status assessments Cylch 6: 20
- HLTA assessors: 24
- Outstanding Teaching Assistants: 11
- Dyslexia Training: 14
- ALN – sharing effective practice: 92
- HLTA Development Day: 100
- Termly Network: 28

COACHING AND MENTORING

Regional data:

- Numbers in the Coaching and Mentoring Group: 3

GOVERNOR SUPPORT

Regional data:

- 500 attendees have attended various sessions for Governor Support across the region

SCHOOLS & SERVICE AS LEARNING ORGANISATIONS

Regional data:

- Response to the Experience of the SLO Survey: 8

SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP PROGRAMME

Regional data:

- Number of schools / clusters / alliances in the programme: 255 / 46
- A number of Peer Reviewers trained: 329
- A number of Improvement Facilitators trained: 290

OBJECTIVE 5 – A POSITIVE EDUCATION EXPERIENCE FOR EVERYONE

PDG / LAC

Regional data:

- TIS Diploma candidates: 38

OBJECTIVE 6 – CYMRAEG BELONGS TO US ALL

WELSH IN EDUCATION (PL / SIARTER IAITH / CYMRAEG CAMPUS)

Regional data:

- CMB 2023-24: 14
- Ein Llais Ni cluster or individual support for Welsh medium schools: 13
- Ein Llais Ni Project for English medium schools: 8
- cariad@ddarllen Network: 23



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REPORT TO THE JOINT COMMITTEE

22 MAY 2024

Report by: Arwyn Thomas - GwE Managing Director

Subject: GwE Risk Register

1.0 Purpose of the Report

1.1 To present the latest GwE Risk Register to the Joint Committee.

2.0 Background

2.1 The purpose of the risk register is to formalise the process of identifying risks and consequently taking action to mitigate the risk.

2.2 Effective management of the risks will enable GwE to support the strategic objectives and priorities, make effective use of resources, and deliver outcomes as intended.

3.0 Considerations

3.1 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.

3.2 The risk register has been reviewed following the findings of the Middle Tier Review and amalgamation of the main education grants under one heading, the Local Authority Education Grant (LAEG) from 2024/25 onwards.

3.3 As GwE has changed from being a ‘joint service’ to a commissioned service, it is suggested to remove the previous risks, and add four new risks – see Appendix 1.

3.4 The following risk matrix has been followed in determining the risk status.

Risk Matrix						
		4	3	2	1	
Likelihood	Almost Certain	Low (4)	Medium (8)	High (12)	High (16)	A
	Likely	Low (3)	Medium (6)	Medium (9)	High (12)	B
	Possible	Low (2)	Low (4)	Medium (6)	Medium (8)	C
	Unlikely	Low (1)	Low (2)	Low (3)	Low (4)	D
		Low	Medium	High	Extreme	
		Impact				

4.0 Recommendations

4.1 The Joint Committee is asked to review and approve the content of the register.

4.2 Determine whether there are any risks that the Joint Committee wish to bring to the attention of their respective Cabinet’s etc.

5.0 Financial Implications

5.1 It is unclear how much this significant change in policy will cost in difficult budgetary times.

6.0 Equalities Impact

6.1 No assessment has been undertaken by WG to assess the potential impact of these changes.

7.0 Personnel Implications

- 7.1 GwE staff morale is extremely low.
- 7.2 There is no clarity regarding alternative job options for school improvement staff post March 2025.
- 7.3 Redundancies will be required to meet the significant cut to the core budget from Local Authorities and significant reductions in grants which are now held by the Local Authorities.
- 7.4 Reduction in secondments and redundancies will affect team configuration and cause an imbalance in the support for different sectors.

8.0 Consultation Undertaken

- 8.1 Risk Register - the GwE Senior Leadership Team and the GwE Management Board.
- 8.2 No formal consultation carried out by Welsh Government.

9.0 Appendices

- 9.1 Appendix 1 - GwE Risk Register.

OPINION OF THE STATUTORY OFFICERS

Monitoring Officer:

The register sets out the new risks resulting from recent developments, and support and advice will be provided to address the repercussions of these developments, including from the governance perspective.

Statutory Finance Officer:

Members will see that the contents of the risk register have completely changed since the last time it was presented to the Joint Committee. That is expected in the current circumstances in terms of the future of GwE. I will continue to support GwE's Managing Director in managing the risks that GwE faces.



New risks

RISK NUMBER	SUMMARY	GwE STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE	RISK IDENTIFIED	LIKELIHOOD OF RISK	IMPACT OF RISK	LIKELIHOOD X IMPACT	CURRENT ACTIVITIES / MITIGATION	RESIDUAL RISK / OVERALL RISK	LIKELIHOOD X IMPACT	RISK OWNER	FUTURE ACTIONS
1	Financial	ALL	18% cut to the GwE Core Budget and significant cuts to grant funding. Welsh Government new model for grant distribution for 2024/25 leading to a differentiated allocation by Local Authorities. Very limited conditions on how schools should spend their allocations.	H	H	1A	Change from joint service to a commissioned service with each Local Authority accountable for how grants are spent at service and school level.	H	1A	6 LAs	Individual Local Authorities to communicate their own local commission, accountability and governance.
2	Financial	ALL	WG vision for future School Improvement is yet to be determined. Timelines are yet to be confirmed and unclear. Cost of closing regional consortium and opening new models is yet to be determined .	H	H	1A	Local Authorities to establish clarity from Welsh Government.	H	1A	6 LAs	Local Authorities to inform GwE Joint Committee.
3	HR	ALL	Lack of capacity with staff leaving with potential exodus since no clarity of options available for future employment. This may lead to low morale, reduced motivation and a diminished service in some areas.	H	H	1A	None.	H	1A	6 LAs	Local Authorities to inform GwE Joint Committee of future plans.
4	Governance	ALL	Role of Joint Committee is unclear and needs re-defining in terms of reporting, accountability and governance.	H	H	1A	Local Authorities to seek legal advice from Host Authority.	H	1A	6 LAs	Host Authority to produce advice to inform GwE Joint Committee.



Risks Removed

RISK NUMBER	SUMMARY	GwE STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE	RISK IDENTIFIED	LIKELIHOOD OF RISK	IMPACT OF RISK	LIKELIHOOD X IMPACT	CURRENT ACTIVITIES / MITIGATION	RESIDUAL RISK / OVERALL RISK	LIKELIHOOD X IMPACT	RISK OWNER	FUTURE ACTIONS
1	Financial	ALL	Cuts in funding to the GwE Core Budget affects strategic long term planning.	M	M/H	2A	Medium Term Financial Plan & VFM Policy & Framework in place. Plans were developed in conjunction with the Local Authority's Section 151 Officer. The Medium Term Financial Plan includes details regarding the financial pressure on GwE and models scenarios. Assumptions are made regarding the future financial position. Some staff are appointed on secondment to ensure flexibility within the service to react quickly to any changes. The Welsh Government's draft grant settlement was announced this year with a 3 year budget outline. The outline suggests cuts to the grant budget are imminent.	M	2B	MD / PM	Following the Westminster Government's comprehensive spending review and identification of the new Welsh Government's priorities, GwE has, and is continuing to work with Section 151 Officer to review possible budgetary pressures for 2023/24 and beyond. Work with Section 151 Officer to review possible future budgetary pressures (given to the potential impact of Covid-19). Work with the Section 151 Officer to review the MTFP & consult with chief officers from constituent authorities regarding the impact of any potential funding cuts. GwE has undertaken a review of the budget and the workforce to ensure that flexible planning can be done for a wide range of outcomes, and is awaiting the decision of the Chief Executives. Main findings and recommendations will be available following clarification on the 2024/25 budget, and the findings of the 'Review of school improvement: roles and responsibilities of education partners in Wales'.
2	Financial	ALL	Uncertainty regarding grant funding arrangements from WG hampers strategic long term planning. Significant delays in confirmation of funding levels affects the implementation of the Strategic Business Plan.	H	H	1A	Assumptions made regarding future funding situation. A number of appointments made on secondment basis to ensure flexibility within the service to respond quickly to any changes, but this places pressure on the budget. Medium Term Financial Plan in place. The plan was developed in conjunction with the Section 151 Officer. The medium term financial plan includes the financial pressures on GwE and models various situations. Financial modelling work being implemented to steer decisions. No information has yet been shared regarding the 2024/25 grants budget.	H	2A	MD / PM / Management Board	Work with Section 151 Officer to review Medium Term Financial Plan & Value for Money Policy & Framework to be reviewed periodically. Liaise with WG officials, constituent authorities' education Cabinet members and heads of education, to seek greater transparency and certainty regarding specific grant funding.
3	GwE operating arrangements and staffing structure	ALL	GwE current operating arrangements and staffing structure do not meet Welsh Government or regional direction in going forward.	H	M/H	2A	MB, JC and Chief Executives have agreed to review current operating arrangements and staffing structure to ensure that it meets Welsh Government and Regional direction in going forward. Work ongoing to further evolve and strengthen the current partnership working with Local Authorities to provide clarity, reduce duplication and bureaucracy, and to further improve effectiveness of delivery.	M / L	2C	MD/ MB/JC	Undertake review of the current operating arrangements and staffing structure during Summer / Autumn 2023 to ensure that the regional school improvement service is suitably structured. Ensure that the Welsh Government and GwE reviews are closely aligned and complementary. GwE has undertaken a review of the budget and the workforce to ensure that flexible planning can be done for a wide range of outcomes, and is awaiting the decision of the Chief Executives. Main findings and recommendations will be available following receipt of information on the 2024/25 budget, and the findings of the 'Review of school improvement: roles and responsibilities of education partners in Wales'.
4	Recruitment and succession planning	ALL	Difficulties in recruitment and succession planning within the service as salaries are not competitive with similar organisation or with Headteacher and senior leaders' salaries.	H	M/H	2A	Need to ensure that the organisational structures' accompanying salaries are competitive with similar organisations to allow future successful succession planning and attract high quality staff. Discussions are ongoing with Cyngor Gwynedd in order to align GwE salaries with the salary increases of officers within the Host Authority.	M	2B/2C	MD/MB/JC	Include as part of review of current operating arrangements and staffing structure (as outlined under Risk Number 3).
5	Leadership Development	1, 4 & 6	Difficulties in the recruitment and succession planning of Senior Leaders across the region especially Welsh medium. Factors that contribute to this are issues relating to budgets, support for attendance and behavior issues, and constant action by Teachers' Unions.	M/H	M/H	2A	The National Leadership Development Programmes support the development of practitioners' leadership skills at each milestone of the professional learning pathway. The Leadership Group has worked with other regions to deliver effective workforce development programmes to ensure high quality leadership. The Group has successfully overcome challenges as a result of the constraints of the pandemic and has continued to ensure equity of access to all leadership development programs - ie a blended / virtual approach and updating the content virtually to meet the needs of leaders where those needs are constantly changing. Working with the Authorities, we will ensure access to a range of training to improve the Welsh language skills of the education workforce in order to increase the number of teaching staff able to teach Welsh (as a subject) and through the medium of Welsh. Collaborate with Bangor University, National College of Learning Welsh, Welsh Government, Authorities to provide rich programme for developing language skills and staff confidence. Collaborate with CABAN / Bangor University to secure Welsh medium placements for ITE students. Identify the workforce that provides Welsh-medium education - plan for further development (assistants, teachers, leaders) through collaboration with the LAs. Continue to share messages through LA / GwE forums to identify recruitment and succession planning problems.	M	2B	MD / AD	Continue to offer a wide range of Professional Learning opportunities in relation to leadership developmental programmes and developing workforce language skills in order to develop present and future leaders.

6	School Improvement	1	Pace of moving deep routed issues in secondary schools placed in Estyn Statutory category.	H	H	2A	Intensive intervention and support programs are in place in these schools that focus on improving learning and teaching; developing tracking and assessment systems; improve leadership at all levels and further develop accountability arrangements and processes for robust self-evaluation and improvement planning. GwE will work closely with the LAs, Estyn and Welsh Government to drive the necessary improvements	M/H	2B/C	MD/AD/ Senior Secondary Lead	Evaluation processes in schools for determining progress against key recommendations need to capture a broad range of evidence in line with expectations of new SIG. the effectiveness of regional structure and processes for schools causing concern need to be kept under constant review by the Management Board Task Group.
8	Standards	ALL	Uncertainty around accountability and performance measures hampering the pace of the Reform Journey especially in the secondary sector.	H	M/H	2A	Regular discussions with Welsh Government and Estyn have taken place over the period to influence national intentions regarding the development of a new accountability framework.	M	2B/2C	AD / Senior Secondary Lead	Continue to work closely with Welsh Government, other consortia, local authorities and Estyn to ensure that schools fully understand the direction of travel outlined in the new SIG and that regional accountability processes and structures support schools to effectively address the requirements of the reform journey.
9	Standards	ALL	Uncertainty around what 2027 qualifications will look like is a restrictive factor in secondary schools.	H	M/H	2A	Regular discussions with Welsh Government, Qualifications Wales and WJEC held over the period to influence direction.	M	2B/2C	AD / Senior Secondary Lead	Continue to contribute to consultation sessions and to the work of relevant networks and forums to influence direction.
11	School Improvement	ALL	Implementing the School improvement guidance	M/H	M	2B	Working within the new SIG will enable newer ways of working for all stakeholders. GwE 2023-26 business plan sets out how, in close collaboration with key stakeholders, it will strengthen leadership, improve teaching and learning, and increase aspiration to impact on standards. As a service, we will: ensure all schools are supported to evaluate accurately and to deliver robust improvement plans effectively; support leaders working collaboratively to promote high standards and aspirations for all; support leaders in schools to become familiar with the new school improvement guidance and to be confident in implementing action; strengthen multi agency and 'team around the school' approaches with schools causing concern and strengthen partnership working with Local Authorities.	M / L	2C	MD/MB/JC	Continue to engage with all stakeholders to ensure that national developments feed into regional work and are fully evaluated and impact captured. GwE and the Local Authorities via the Management Board and their Task Group will continue to monitor the effectiveness of regional approaches to identify, create, deliver and monitor Schools Support Plans. The Task Group will explore potential avenues for stronger collaboration across LAs to build capacity and ensure greater consistency of support whilst ensuring that we adopt a holistic and transparent approach in term of reporting and sharing of information. Continue to collaborate with WG to prepare to consult on the School Improvement Framework.
12	Union climate	ALL	Current Union climate.	H	H	2A	Continue to communicate and work with Welsh Government and Unions on how best to support schools with implementing non-statutory School Improvement Guidance under current Union climate.	M	2B	MD/AD	Continue to work with Welsh Governemnt and Unions to ensure effective and successful working relationship.
13	School Improvement	ALL	Continuous inspection and monitoring of the service's work having impact on GwE's core work and on the welfare and morale of staff.	M/H	M	2B	There is a clear and robust accountability framework in GwE. The 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. It provides a structure for monitoring progress effectively. Throughout the year, reports associated with our priority streams within the Business Plan will be reported through our governance groups. The regional service evaluates its work regularly and uses 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 Welsh Government and Local Authorities corporate priorities and targets. Supporting the well-being and resilience of staff has been identified as one of the service's priorities.	M	2B/C	MD/MB/JC	Hold discussions with the Welsh Government, Estyn and Local Authorities to try to reduce the frequency of visits and avoid duplication.



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REPORT TO THE JOINT COMMITTEE

22 MAY 2024

Report by: Arwyn Thomas - GwE Managing Director

Subject: GwE Professional Learning Support

1.0 Purpose of the Report

1.1 To share information with Joint Committee members regarding our Professional Learning Offer for the current financial year.

2.0 Background

2.1 GwE produces a comprehensive Professional Learning offer that is varied and fit for purpose. Schools appreciate this Offer and it supports our other support streams.

2.2 In accordance with the statement from the former Minister for Education and Welsh Language on 31 January 2024, local authorities continue to support and fund the regional consortia to provide a professional learning offer for this academic year via the Local Authority Education Grant (LAEG). GwE's Professional Learning Offer will respond specifically to the terms and conditions of this grant; we will therefore offer provision to support the following aspects:

- Reform - support for Curriculum Reform
- Reform - support for Professional Learning and Leadership
- Cymraeg 2050

2.3 This new Professional Learning offer replaces the previous offer, which was to continue until the end of the summer term originally.

2.4 The Offer is free to all practitioners in north Wales in the form of a catalogue that is updated on a regular basis. Schools receive a Bulletin every fortnight to remind them of current Professional Learning and provide information regarding registration. The Professional Learning Offer may be accessed from our website: [GwE Professional Offer](#)

3.0 **Matters for consideration**

3.1 In accordance with the expectation of the Grant, the offer has been created to support schools in two parts:

- 1. Regional Professional Learning Offer - support for Curriculum Reform - with a specific focus on supporting learners to make progress across the curriculum in the mandatory cross-curricular skills (literacy, numeracy and digital competence) and support for multilingualism through developing provision for international languages.
- 2. National Professional Learning Offer - Professional Learning and Leadership. Practitioners will be able to access National Professional Learning Programmes via any methods agreed nationally. We will continue to encourage schools and signpost them to national projects and programmes.

3.2 In line with schools' wishes it was intended to scale back the next Professional Learning Offer in order to ensure support for schools that is more incisive and focused. With the change to a service commissioned by the authorities, to meet the terms and conditions of the grant, this has occurred naturally with this new Offer.

3.3 It is intended to run these sessions more frequently on a more local level, and developing networks is a core part of this. Practitioners will also be expected to take responsibility for their own Professional Learning by completing inter-sessional tasks.

3.4 We will evaluate the effectiveness of our Offer by means of our Business Plan biannual monitoring processes. We have evolved our monitoring processes to capture the overall impact of our Offer on different levels, noting an expectation, as noted above, that individuals who attend implement what they have learned from the support.

3.5 With professional learning funding now released directly to schools, it is also intended to provide an opportunity for a school, or schools, to commission GwE to provide additional professional learning or support.

3.6 Through this commissioning process, it is intended to offer focused support that is tailored to specific needs. It is anticipated we can offer focused support for different:

- Sectors: Secondary, Primary, Special
- Organisations: Individual schools, Catchment area/Cluster/Alliance, group of schools
- Audiences: Headteachers, Senior Leaders, Middle Leaders, Practitioners
- Timings: Full day, half day, twilight session/staff meeting, INSET

3.7 There is a clear process for schools to follow to request a commission from GwE. The process has been created to ensure that schools receive support that is specifically tailored to their needs and that they get good value for money. GwE will draw up a contract with any school that requests a commission so that accountability is clear.

4.0 **Recommendations**

4.1 The Joint Committee is asked to approve the content of the report and the new Professional Learning Plan.

5.0 Financial implications

5.1 GwE will operate within current financial resources.

6.0 Equalities Impact

6.1 There are no new equalities implications arising from this report.

7.0 Personnel Implications

7.1 There are no new personnel implications arising from this report.

8.0 Consultation undertaken

8.1 Consultation with GwE Management Board.

VIEW OF THE STATUTORY OFFICERS

Monitoring Officer:

Nothing to add from a propriety perspective.

Statutory Finance Officer:

I note that part 5 of the report confirms that GwE will operate within their existing resources. Therefore, I have nothing to add to the report from the perspective of financial propriety.

