

## UPDATED REPORT ON GWE WORK PROGRAMME SUMMER TERM 2020

### Context and summary

The response to COVID-19 has dramatically changed our lives. In this challenging context, the education system and schooling has been significantly disrupted. On 23<sup>rd</sup> March, schools were re-purposed to support children of key workers and some vulnerable learners whilst also supporting all learners to stay safe and keep learning at home.

On June 3 the Welsh Government (WG) announced that there would be a phased opening of schools from 29<sup>th</sup> June, 2020 to give all pupils the opportunity to “check in, catch up and prepare.” Welsh Government published their Learning Guidance [<https://gov.wales/keep-education-safe-guidance-learning-over-summer-term>] to provide advice on learning and teaching taking place in schools and settings for the remainder of the summer term and to support practitioners as they prepare for the autumn term.

On July 9<sup>th</sup>, the Education Minister confirmed that all pupils will be able to return to school in September, and that schools will return to full capacity by September 14<sup>th</sup>, subject to continuing, steady decline in the presence of COVID-19 in the community. Welsh Government have published further learning guidance [<https://gov.wales/guidance-learning-schools-and-settings-autumn-term-covid-19>] for the autumn term that gives schools and supporting partners a common set of priorities for learning, regardless of the level of operations in response to COVID-19.

GwE staff have adapted their work in order to continue to provide services and support for all our school communities. The most important thing for each school in North Wales at this time of unprecedented change and disruption has been the safety and well-being of their children and their workforce. Schools and settings have been striving to do all they can to support the physical and mental well-being of their children and young people throughout this period to ensure that they return to school with motivation and enthusiasm to learn.

Regulations around the National Curriculum have been relaxed and provision and learning during the summer term did not mirror what schools would offer during normal times. As a result, schools have been able to develop distance and blended learning models that provide opportunities to:

- maintain and develop literacy, numeracy and digital skills;
- build resilience and reflection on personal well-being;
- maintain connections with teaching and support staff and peers during the period of social isolation and the integration back into schools.

### Work programme

During the initial lockdown period, schools were supported to develop effective distance learning models, including engagement with learners and parents practices.

This work included:

- Keeping regular contact with schools in order to ensure health and wellbeing of both staff and pupils.
- Supporting individual schools or Hubs to stay open when there has been a shortage of staff to attend.
- Researching and referencing effective practice internationally when it comes to distance learning.

- Providing a suite of resources, websites and reference points for Foundation Phase, KS2, KS3 and KS4 teachers through Google Classroom.
- Modelling examples of effective distance learning which has been shared nationally, uptake of these models or based on these models has been high across the region.
- Supporting schools on how to best deliver this Distance Learning through a blended method, which includes recorded video, effective use of HwB, populating Google Classrooms, using paper copies when there is no access to internet etc.
- Supporting schools on giving constructive feedback on work presented.
- Supporting schools in their Hubs or individual schools when there has been a shortage of staff to attend.
- Arranging regular 'Teams' contact meetings with every cluster across the region to share regular updates, consider lessons learned to inform preparation and practice and ensure heads have regular contact and time to share any problems that may arise.
- Supporting schools with Digital Learning and produce useful 'How To' videos so that teachers can further develop and vary their distance learning.
- Supporting Teaching Assistants in their role through the development of a Google Classroom for TAs, including a suite professional development opportunities.
- Providing individual support to subject specific teachers in the secondary sector.
- Arranging regular meetings with groups of subject teachers in secondary sector.
- Engaging in own Professional Learning of workforce to develop understanding of distance learning to include research of best practice national and internationally.

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

The framework included resources to support planning for:

1. Health and safety requirements
2. Site and facilities arrangements
3. Transport
4. Staffing arrangements
5. Blended teaching and learning
6. Inclusion and pupil support
7. Key management tasks.

During this period of lockdown as well, the Local Authorities and GwE working collaboratively, also continued to support schools with their distance learning and learner engagement, whilst also supporting schools to develop blended learning models in preparation for welcoming children back into school on June 29<sup>th</sup> and beyond.

This work included:

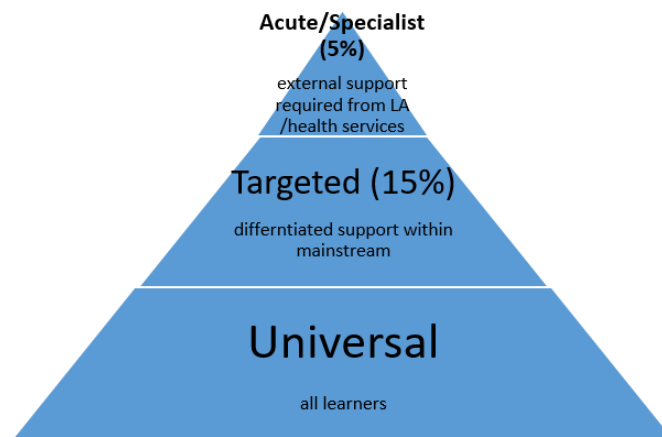
- Sharing of successful practice across the region with regard to distance learning and learner engagement.
- Facilitating cluster working and peer to peer support across the region.
- Supporting those schools that were finding engaging with specific learners challenging.
- Supporting teachers in the transition from consolidating previous learning to teaching of new aspects.
- Learning from national and international models on how to develop blended learning.

- Publishing a blended learning guidance that was co-constructed with Estyn and the other regional consortia.
- Developing exemplar blended learning models in collaboration with Estyn and the other regional consortia.
- Providing professional learning to schools on effective blended learning models and pedagogy.
- Continuing to support the health and wellbeing of teachers (who may be teaching several age groups) when they need to teach some learners in schools and continue to support others at home.
- Continuing to support schools in ensuring the health and wellbeing of learners who are returning to a very different classroom during the phased return.
- Providing further Professional Learning to teachers and classroom assistants on how to best model this 'mixed economy' of provision.

The Local Authorities and GwE have also worked on issues that need to be addressed around the fitness for learning of learners in preparation for when they are fully integrated back into schools in September. The region is of the firm belief that schools' preparedness or approach to ensure learning for all pupils will need to initially focus on three inter-related components that would assess pupils' fitness for learning:

- Emotional and mental well-being;
- Health and physical fitness; and
- Core skills of numeracy and literacy, learning to learn, independence skills.

The three components can be divided into the three categories of need as shown in the triangle below:



Schools will need to ensure that they can offer provision for their learners against each area to ensure equity and equality. In moving forward, responsibility for supporting schools to deliver each element will be agreed between LAs, GwE and other agencies such as health.

The six local authorities and GwE have worked tirelessly to address the educational needs of its learners during the pandemic lockdown. There is a clear collegiate commitment in the region to ensure that all individual learners are given the best possible opportunities to be supported and receive the most appropriate level of intervention to enable them to thrive and continue on their educational journey.

Documented activities and time spent, together with a summary of activities, outcomes and impact are outlined in the appendices.

## Next Steps – work programme for autumn term

Supporting Improvement Advisers (SIAs) will have a crucial role over the coming months in supporting schools as all learners are fully integrated back into schools from September 14<sup>th</sup>. Outlined below is a work programme for GwE officers for the autumn term. All aspects noted must be in accordance with the 'Health Protection (Coronavirus Restrictions) (No. 2) (Wales) (Amendment) (No. 5) Regulations 2020' issued by Welsh Government. The current version came into force on August 17<sup>th</sup>, 2020. The work programme will be reviewed continually to respond to the Covid-19 situation and government guidance and regulations and agreed with the GwE Management Board and Joint Committee. The work programme and its mode of delivery will also be discussed and agreed with Head teachers and schools.

Work programme outline is as follows:

- Contact schools for initial discussion around staff and pupil wellbeing and to identify any immediate support that is required. Familiarise with school context and standards (read up on school background via G6 and discussions with Core Lead and agree on any differentiated approach with Schools Causing Concern).
- Reflect with schools on lessons learnt from the lockdown period and scenario planning for a further lockdown:
  - Health and well-being: learning should support learners' mental, emotional, physical and social well-being as well as recognising the importance of outdoor learning and play
  - Purpose: all learning should have a clear purpose in mind, focused around what is important for learners now and in the longer-term
  - Literacy, numeracy and digital competence: learners should have opportunities to develop and apply these skills across the curriculum
  - Broad and balanced: learners should have learning experiences which span a broad curriculum and which includes opportunities to develop a breadth of understanding and a range of knowledge and skills
  - Progression and assessment: learners should make meaningful progress throughout this period. Learning should be designed to support increasing depth and sophistication of learning over time. Encourage the use of assessments to help learners move to the next steps in their learning
  - Partnership with governors, parents, carers and learners: schools should develop a common understanding and language with parents, carers and learners, this can help underpin learning and support learning experiences
- Support improvement planning [subject to peer engagement approach]:
  - identification of priorities
  - identification of staff Professional Learning
  - developing and ensuring effective delivery of termly support plan
  - developing and delivering effective accelerated learning programmes
  - reviewing progress against priorities within the School Development Plan / Post-Inspection Action Plan including progress against Curriculum For Wales and Additional Learning Needs reform preparations
  - identification of what can be offered to others
- Support self-evaluation and engagement with the National Evaluation and Improvement Resource [subject to peer engagement approach]:
  - joint-scrutiny of pupil progress at whole school and classroom level

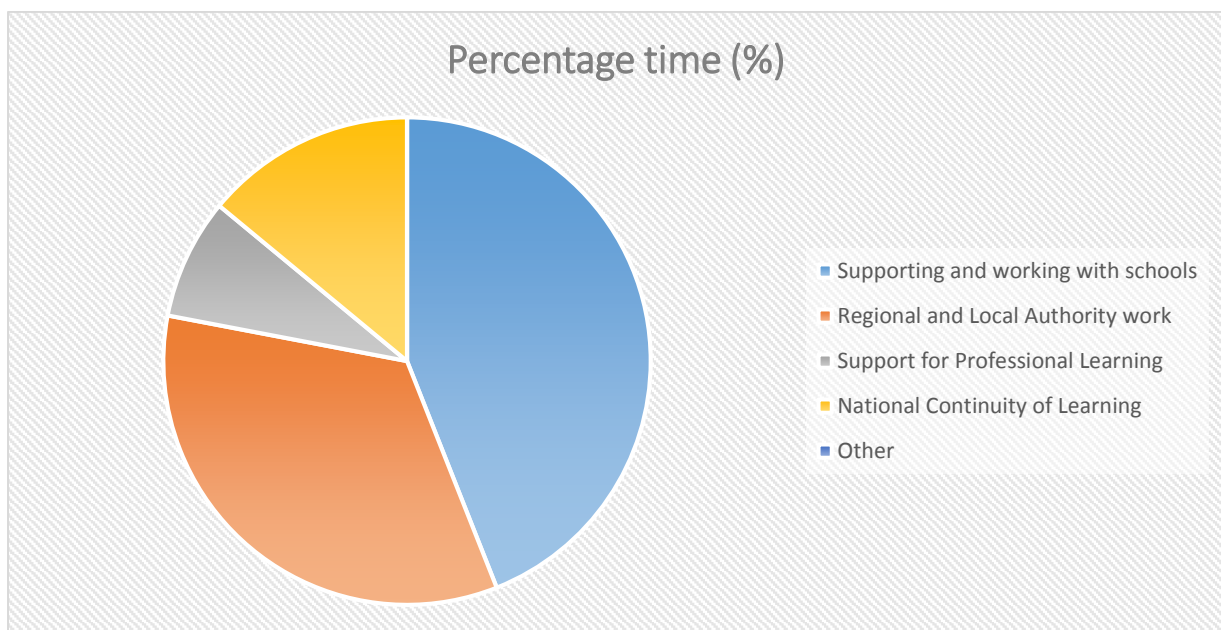
- modelling robust and accurate self-assessment procedures and recording
- Ensure appropriate use of grants:
  - Pupil Development Grant (PDG) and suitability of provision for all vulnerable learners.
  - Education Improvement Grant
  - Professional Learning
  - Accelerated Learning Programme
  - Cluster allocations
  
- Promote peer to peer collaboration including Peer Review (EDT and local) – supporting/facilitating peer meetings as and when required by partnership.
  
- Deliver professional learning programme on identified aspects of need:
  - individual schools e.g. subject specific support
  - cluster
  - peer collaboration
  
- Agree and deliver GwE Leadership professional learning offer.
  
- Facilitate GwE subject/aspect specific networks.
  
- Support Head teacher's performance management meetings.
  
- Assist with school appointments.

## Appendix 1: Documented activities and time spent

All Supporting Improvement Advisers (SIAs) 'check-in' with their line manager each morning and a list of their daily tasks is documented in their calendars. Below is a summary, of the activities that have been undertaken by GwE staff since the lockdown and during the Summer Term:

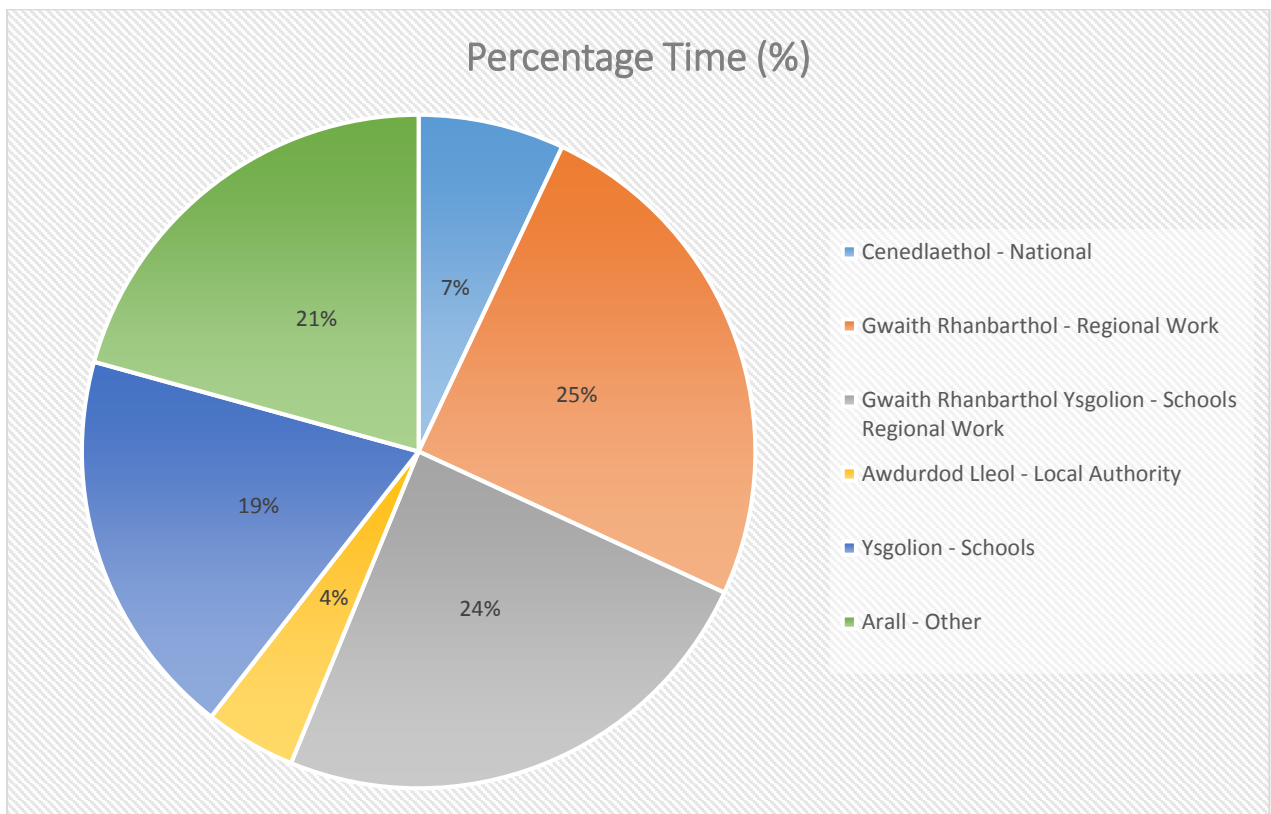
### 1. Covering the period between March 23<sup>rd</sup> and May 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2020.

Category	Hours	%
Supporting and working with schools	9049	44%
Regional and Local Authority work	6992	34%
Support for Professional Learning	1645	8%
National Continuity of Learning	2879	14%
Other	45	<1%



**2. Covering the period between June 1<sup>st</sup> and July 17<sup>th</sup>, 2020.**

Category	Hours	%
National	1044	7%
Regional Work	3704	25%
Schools - Regional work in supporting schools	3619	24%
Local Authority meetings	653	4%
Schools – bespoke/cluster support	2788	19%
Other, e.g., preparing, developing guidance/resources, researching, reading, improving digital skills (webinars), etc	3084	21%



## Appendix 2: Summary of activities, outcomes and impact

### ACTIVITIES

#### Supporting and working with schools

- Supporting individual schools or Hubs when there has been a shortage of staff to attend.
- Keeping regular contact with schools in order to ensure health and wellbeing of both staff and pupils.
- Supporting schools with the health and wellbeing of learners who are returning to a very different classroom during the phased return/autumn term.
- Developing guidance, support and resources for schools to support effective distance learning in schools
- Referencing effective practice internationally when it comes to distance learning.
- Providing a suite of Websites and reference points for Foundation Phase, KS2, KS3 and KS4 teachers.
- Modelling examples of effective distance and blended learning and also sharing nationally.
- Supporting schools on how to best deliver this Distance Learning through a blended method which includes recorded video, effective use of HwB, populating Google Classrooms, using paper copies when there's no access to internet etc.
- Arrange regular 'Teams' contact meetings with 100% of clusters (primary, secondary, special schools and PRUs) to share regular updates and ensure heads have regular contact and time to share any problems that may arise.
- Support schools with Digital Learning and produce useful 'How To' videos so that teachers can further develop and vary their distance learning.
- Support for schools when moving to monitoring and giving constructive feedback on work presented.
- Individual support to subject specific teachers in the secondary.
- Regular meetings with groups of subject teachers in secondary.
- Ensuring guidance and support on relevant issues for HT forums across all 6 LAs. Present updates at meetings and answering questions that arise.
- Provide support to schools in relation to Qualifications – summer 2020 and 2021 examination series.
- Support for schools in their preparation for the repurposing of learners back into school at various stages of lockdown easing.
- To identify good practice, need for support and pupil/parent engagement with schools.

#### Regional and Local Authority work

- Sharing of information, key messages and work streams with LA Officers.
- Updating LA officers on schools and various GwE matters
- Attend County Quality Board meetings, addressing subsequent actions.
- Discuss initial strategies, engagement and obstacles.
- Supporting Headteacher interviews - meetings with the appointment panel to support their discussion shortlisting, interview arrangements and questions.
- Attend and contribute to Head teachers' conference calls.
- Support with distance learning and engagement/ supporting vulnerable learners.
- Developing checklist on universal wellbeing.
- Ensuring support and guidance to Core Leads.
- Feeding back on schools and cluster work.
- Disseminating regional information and ensuring consistency of message.



- Supporting schools to re-open - GwE's SIAs have worked collegiately and collaboratively with local authority representatives to formulate a robust return to school plan which will support all schools in the region to ensure they have the right policies in place and a comprehensive risk assessment which they can tailor to their own particular school.
- Transition of learners back into schools - developing risk assessment and guidance.
- Generic policies agreed with LAs which schools can adopt and adapt with their Governors to respond to the numerous health and safety complications caused by COVID-19.
- Working in partnership with the wider team of LA colleagues for example, inclusion, HR, transport, GwE will consider practical, well-being and training needs of school staff and ensure these are appropriately supported, to include professional learning where appropriate
- Developing regional guidance, support and resources for schools.
- Development of resources and approaches to implement a skills based approach to distance and blended learning and ensuring quality assurance of developed materials.
- Ensuring consistency of national and regional information
- Ensuring effective communication to all team members through weekly Full Team meetings, Local team meetings etc.
- Carrying out Performance Management reviews.
- Collating information regarding distance learning and learner engagement.
- Identifying and sharing good practice, need for support and pupil/parent engagement with schools
- Preparation and attending regional meetings – Management Board and Joint Committee
- Reviewing business plan, annual reports.
- Co-ordinate regional and local response to national consultation.
- Liaise with key stakeholders, e.g., Estyn LALI visits, FE Colleges, HEI, etc

#### **Support for Professional Learning**

- Sharing national and international models on how to best develop effective distance learning.
- Developing and providing models for effective distance and blended learning for the schools to adopt and adjust as they seem fit
- Reflecting on pedagogy – for current practice and for the new curriculum.
- Providing guidance and advice from Local Authorities and GwE for the repurposing of learners back into schools
- A comprehensive catalogue of PL that has been identified for Teaching Assistants (TAs) to follow. A dedicated Google Classroom has been set up for these TAs which has already oversubscribed with well over a 1,500 members.
- A walk through guide with raising awareness activities for teachers on the Curriculum for Wales
- Webinars tailor made for head teachers around Change Management, developing a school vision, creating time and space for PL, Planning for Curriculum Change and Leading Pedagogy which will include some face to face interaction, group discussions, think pieces and video clips for reflection.
- Contribute to the national strategy of supporting NQTs during this period where their focus will be on pedagogy and research due to not being able to have class access.

SIAAs have undertaken various Professional Development activities to ensure up to date knowledge and understanding:

- Understanding of effective Distance and Blended Learning to provide guidance and create models.
- Increasing knowledge base for effective teaching and learning in literacy from research/writings across the world.
- Use of ICT for Distance/Blended Learning/working.
- Understanding how best to support wellbeing both physical and emotional.

See also **report on Professional Learning** and details of support provided for:

- Digital Learning
- Teaching and Learning
- Wellbeing
- Leadership
- Teaching Assistants
- Y Gymraeg
- Early PL Pathway

### **National**

- National Continuity of Learning Strategy - Regional contribution to WG national workstreams.
- Guidance and strategy for distance learning: Development of national strategy and guidelines related to the Continuity of Learning deliverables with regions
- Develop guidance, support and resources for teachers, schools and stakeholders
- Providing models and resources to be issued to regional/national schools. Consider local approach to include models, planning, assessment and monitoring progress
- Ensuring quality assurance of developed materials.
- Develop digital learning.
- Attend meetings with Estyn, WG and the other Consortia
- Contribute to ongoing projects, e.g., MAT, Post-16
- Supporting the follow up to the Wales PISA Project 2020.
- Preparing a new HLTA programme
- Support Welsh Government with information to inform the Bill on the new Curriculum

### **Other**

- Support for Newly Qualified Teachers and ensuring clarity regarding completing their induction year.
- Strong partnership work with Bangor University to ensure initial teacher training students have clarity on the appointment system for next year.
- Strong partnership working with Caban to ensure increased research opportunities and recognition of excellence by School staff.

### **OUTCOMES AND IMPACT**

- Effective communication provided via single point of contact (SIA) for school leaders and ease of access to support.
- Schools have been able to remain open to key workers in the event of staff shortages.
- Schools are well informed and confident that support is available should any needs arise. School leaders' wellbeing is supported through regular communication.
- Shared understanding of the importance of the welfare of pupils, parents and staff
- Clear guidance given on how to prioritise and structure both Distance and Blended Learning.

- Consistency in support, messaging and guidance given to schools
- Schools having access to a wealth of quality resources for reference as they plan for and deliver distance and blended learning.
- All regional schools are compliant with Welsh Government guidance and most schools adopted the GwE DL/PL models and adapted practice to be in line with the guidance and shared exemplar models
- Comprehensive distance and blended learning models available for schools to adopt, adapt or refer to. This has in turn ensured strengthened leadership and improved balance of work that can be completed at home.
- Senior and middle leaders in schools better able to plan for the opportunities and challenges of distance and blended learning.
- Co-ordinated approach to supporting schools which has led to greater consistency and quality of distance and blended learning across the region.
- Best practice being shared across schools i.e. engaging with reluctant learners and families, digital platforms and communication systems etc.
- Strengthened use of ICT to enable effective communication between schools, within schools and with school stakeholders.
- School staff being upskilled through the use of a digital platform for professional development.
- Information shared with the LA is up to date and timely support is given to any School.
- In conjunction with the LA, ensured that the process of appointing school leadership candidates is appropriate and fair.
- Consistent messages disseminated to schools by GwE / LA officers.
- Strengthened collaboration between peers at a cluster level through digital means ensuring co-constructed strategic thinking.
- Strengthened collaboration between local authority officers and GwE.
- Clear regional and local approach in place for the repurposing of schools.
- Regional approach in place for developing a supportive framework to ensure that all regional schools had the right policies in place together with a comprehensive risk assessment in order to create a safe environment to reopen schools
- Effective collegiate and collective regional approach between the six local authorities and GwE to support schools during the pandemic lockdown
- All GwE staff upskilled and confident to provide training and bespoke support for schools/clusters
- Effective cascading of key messages to school staff to ensure consistency and clarity.
- Increased collaboration between regions and other stakeholders.
- Increased understanding of key messages and work streams.
- Stronger awareness amongst school leaders of effective strategies to ensure continuation of school business.
- Quality Professional Learning developed in readiness for future needs.
- Newly Qualified Teachers having clarity regarding completing their induction year.
- Strong partnership work with Bangor University to ensure initial teacher training students have clarity on the appointment system for next year.
- Strong partnership working with Caban to ensure increased research opportunities and recognition of excellence by School staff.
- GwE staff have gained a better understanding of accelerated learning strategies and best practice in planning for teaching discrete skills and are upskilled and informed to support schools during the autumn term.