



GwE Gogledd Cymru

# GwE ANNUAL REPORT 2022-2023



GwE is the North Wales regional school improvement service working alongside and on behalf of the North Wales local authorities – Wrexham, Flintshire, Denbighshire, Conwy, Gwynedd, Anglesey. Our work is driven by genuine ambition to see the schools and organisations we work with achieve their aspirations and to see all learners succeed.



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## SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS:

**APPENDIX:** Regional Data

**APPENDIX:** GwE Regional Business Plan 2023-2026



## 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.

Almost all schools are on track to realise the steps outlined in the 'Journey to 2022' [Curriculum for Wales] document. There is specific support in place for the very few schools not on track. Nearly all secondary schools are currently on track to deliver the new curriculum for Years 7 and 8 from September 2023.

The COVID-19 pandemic has shown that even in the most challenging of circumstances positive change is possible. During the COVID-19, schools across the Region delivered meaningful teaching and learning experiences through a creative blended learning approach. The pandemic undoubtedly led to an increased focus on well-being and a significant investment in teaching and learning. 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 prior, during and after the Covid-19 period.

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 2022-2023, evaluating impact against actions and outcomes for the whole year:

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

The report also outlines the areas that have been identified as key priorities for further development and improvement which are included in our Business Plan for 2023-2024. These are:

- continue to strengthen leadership at all levels with specific focus on further improving self-evaluation and improvement planning processes.
- further develop the capacity of senior and middle leaders to effectively lead on teaching and learning.
- further strengthen accountability processes across schools to ensure robust and timely interventions to address underperformance.
- ensure that all secondary leaders are actively engage in peer collaboration and peer review.
- strengthen systems for evaluating impact of improvement strategies on standards and pupil progress.
- further strengthen the quality of teaching and assessment to reduce variance both within and across schools.
- further strengthen the quality of provision for development of learners' skills.
- ensure all schools are implementing robust approaches to supporting learners who are vulnerable to learning.
- further develop tracking and intervention programmes to address identified underperformance and in-school variance and especially in relation to vulnerable learners.
- ensure that all secondary schools successfully deliver the new curriculum for Years 7 and 8 from September 2023.
- ensure schools are providing equity to all learners and have an inclusive learning environment to support those who are vulnerable to learning.
- further develop provision in secondary schools to ensure a meaningful and purposeful offer for the ability range in KS4.
- ensure all primary/secondary clusters are implementing effective transition plans.
- ensure that the schools which remain in statutory category are demonstrating an increased pace of improvements and are demonstrating clear improvements in the quality of teaching and learning and in the quality of leadership across the school.

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

The six local authorities and GwE have collectively sought and co-operated to support schools throughout the Covid-19 pandemic and beyond. 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.

Local Authorities and GwE staff have re-purposed their work appropriately over the last few years to continue to deliver effective services and support for all their communities of schools during and after the Covid-19 pandemic. The regional service has redirected energy and resource several times during this period in an attempt to meet the needs of Local Authorities, schools and stakeholders. Flexibility and adaptability and effective collaboration in different teams, often across sectors, have had a significant impact on institutional behaviour. At the core of the redirection was the need to ensure the well-being of school leaders, staff and learners. Stakeholder voice is of the utmost importance, thus ensuring that the service accurately direct the appropriate level of support to where it is most required.

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 within Welsh Government's Journey to 2022. In line with the implementation of the new Curriculum for Wales in September 2022, all primary schools and settings have been supported to meet the new statutory requirements within the expected timeline. Support for secondary settings and

special schools to prepare for implementation of the new curriculum for Years 7 and 8 in September 2023 continues. 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. To facilitate this professional dialogue, GwE continue to provide an infrastructure for Curriculum for Wales networks. Under regular guidance and feedback from Professor Graham Donaldson, schools are developing and sharing effective practice to unpack the potential of the six Areas of Learning and Experiences [AOLEs] and whole school curriculum design and assessment.

The content of the annual report captures progress against the regional strategic objectives and priorities as agreed in our Business Plan for 2022-2023, evaluating impact against actions and outcomes for the whole year:

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The report also outlines the areas that have been identified as key priorities for further development and improvement which are included in our Business Plan for 2023-2024.

### 3. 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.
- all schools are actively engaging in peer collaboration within and across sectors.
- nearly all secondary schools are on track to meet the statutory requirements by the time they deliver their Curriculum for Wales in September 2023.

#### OBJECTIVE 1: CURRICULUM & ASSESSMENT

Supporting a national curriculum with equity & excellence at its core that sets high standards for all learners

#### EDUCATION CONTINUUM 3 TO 16

**Support for schools in commencing the Curriculum for Wales with strong emphasis on the 12 pedagogical principles, evidence-based practice and action research.**

**Further development of formative assessment.**

The GwE Formative Assessment Action Research project [led by Shirley Clarke] has been one of the pillars of the professional learning programme since November 2017 with schools engaging with the project as part of the tier three cohort. An impact evaluation has identified:

- there has been a positive impact on the quality of teaching in classes, standards of attainment, pupil well-being, attitudes to learning and development as independent learners.
- teachers have deepened understanding of effective pedagogy on the basis of wide and current research, both on a local and international level. They have also become leaders of teaching in their schools and beyond.
- teachers have undertaken action research in their schools and have taken part in professional collaboration and become confident pioneers. Consequently, schools that are a part of the project are developing well as learning organisations.
- there has been a sharper focus on effective pedagogy in cluster collaborations.
- there have been explicit inputs to improving schools' readiness and preparations for delivering the new curriculum e.g., increasing focus on the four purposes, 12 pedagogical principles, schools as learning organisations, professional standards for leaders and teachers, assessment purposes and planning principles.
- schools have made good and effective use of formative assessment principles and strategies for distance and blended learning.
- parents have come to understand more about formative assessment in their efforts to support their children at home e.g., learning powers, learning outcomes, success criteria and verbal feedback.

During the GwE 'Inspiring Leadership' Headteacher's conference on 22/09/2022, workshops held by SIAs included two with focus on pedagogy: 'Formative Assessment across the continuum - deepening the roots', and 'Planning for the Principles of Progression using Solo Taxonomy strategies'. Schools who attended the workshops had the opportunity to review formative assessment practices in the light of recent research and messages shared. They also gained an understanding of SOLO taxonomy and its potential for teaching and learner progression. Resources are available to all the region's schools to further develop practices.

### **Support cross- sector collaboration to ensure consistency of effective teaching practice to support learner transition**

#### Transition

Schools and clusters, and ITE teachers, across the region have been upskilled in ways to support successful transition. Clusters are currently continuing to develop new arrangements for cluster collaboration to support 3-16 progression.

Representatives from clusters and LA officers attended two professional learning 'Pontio GwE' workshops focusing upon successful transition in line with Curriculum for Wales [CfW] and successful regional practice. Each cluster planned their next steps collaboratively in order to improve pupils' progression across the learning continuum. This professional learning built upon a regional two-day conference which included updates from Estyn, Welsh Government and educational experts in order to set our shared approach to school improvement. As a result, all primary catchment areas have started working on creating new and joint transition action plan and projects in order to plan curriculum delivery and a consistent approach towards progression. The key messages from workshops have been shared with SIAs and schools including transition planning guidance. The next step is to focus upon ensuring cross cluster professional dialogue for transition.

Cluster collaboration is generally stronger, particularly between sectors and at varying levels of professionals, including head teachers, senior leaders and teachers – this includes relationships consolidated through the Schools Partnership Project.

SIAs continue to support all clusters in developing their approaches to transition throughout this year. This has led to a greater consistency in the quality of curriculum planning within and across schools.

#### Regional Pedagogy Transition Project

One secondary and one primary lead school from 12 clusters across the region declared an interest in participating in the regional pedagogy transition action research project launched in the GwE Transition workshop 07/10/22. A launch meeting for the 24 schools and their SIAs was held 12/12/2022. Action research commenced Spring Term 2023. Project review meetings have been to discuss and share actions and impact, attended by the schools and SIAs. Half termly review meetings have been arranged until the end of the calendar year.

In terms of impact, all the different research projects in the 12 clusters have a clear pedagogical focus and are being actioned efficiently. Review meetings attended by the project schools and SIAs ensures effective sharing of strong practice, research sources, information and experiences. All project schools are fully aware of each other's research focus and successful practices and are actively collaborating. Feedback is very positive and schools and SIAs feel inspired and well supported.

**Ensure support for schools in commencing the Curriculum for Wales with strong emphasis on the 12 pedagogical principles, evidence-based practice and action research.**

**Develop practitioners understanding of how the theory of the 12 pedagogical principles translates into classroom floor practice.**

The regional service has placed a strong focus on developing pedagogy as part of the support for developing the Curriculum for Wales.

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

#### **3-8 regional support package**

Regional 3-8 networks have been delivered for practitioners and SIAs sharing guidance on Enabling Learning [the period of learning leading to Progression step 1] and case studies shared by schools from each LA involved in GwE's informed research projects on 'Woodwork' and 'Communication Friendly Spaces Approach'. Practitioners discussed how they had reflected and reviewed their learning environment, experiences and planning of skills both indoors and outdoors and the impact of their provision on learners in line with Enabling Learning and AOLES guidance. Presentations and case studies have been uploaded on to the GwE Support Centre enabling all school regionally to access them. This 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. The support also improves their understanding of Foundation Learning principles and pedagogy impacting positively on the quality of provision and upon pupils' progress.



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. Practitioners who have attended workshops and network meetings have a secure knowledge and understanding of the three enablers within Enabling Learning, pedagogy and the curriculum to transfer into classroom practice.

Science and Technology workshops have been delivered regionally for teachers and TAs. All practitioners upskilled and deepened their knowledge and understanding of the Science and Technology AOLE, the Developmental Pathways, [Exploration in particular], cross-curricular skills and the integral skills. Practitioners have an increased confidence in planning the development of AOLES and cross-curricular skills from the Developmental Pathways to the AOLES, within developmentally appropriate pedagogy.

Bespoke support 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. Practitioners disseminating and leading cluster training, are sharing good practice and impact of the action research project.

Since 2019, the professional offer has involved Y3 practitioners in order to build on some of the Foundation Principles in KS2 in preparation for Curriculum for Wales. The professional offer continued throughout lockdown with the provision planned to target those aspects identified by schools as needing to be prioritised following Covid-19, e.g., pupils' communication skills and health and well-being. The focus was upon developing these skills within appropriate developmental pedagogy. Evidence of the impact of this support programme includes:

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

### **Secondary-specific support**

Bespoke training has been delivered to secondary schools on request, on specific aspects of pedagogy. Training sessions and workshops have been delivered this year on: challenge for all, success criteria and learning objectives; questioning, differentiation, for example.

A live webinar was held on 20/03/23 for secondary School leaders and teachers on recall and retrieval strategies with a focus on examination preparation for Years 10-13 students. This was well-attended by

schools across all authorities and has been followed up with Access for all to a recording and all resources.

A presentation Resource for supporting learners in preparing for external examination has been widely shared with secondary schools and in some cases delivered by GwE Core Leads to support learners with organisation strategies and research-informed approaches to revision.

Through this provision and support, practitioners have an increased understanding of planning for progression through planned questioning strategies, ensuring learning is both accessible and challenging and methods and tools to ensure learning 'sticks'. Practitioners have accessed a range of strategies and approaches to support learners in becoming more independent in their retrieval and consolidation of learning.

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

## **CURRICULUM REALISATION [CURRICULUM FOR WALES]**

### **Curriculum for Wales [CfW] Professional Learning**

A series of National CfW Professional Learning [PL] online sessions continue to take place to support leaders and teachers to continue their work on CFW. There are positive levels of engagement from schools across Wales with over 668 practitioners attending with the majority of these being members of SLT – GwE schools have over 251 practitioners attending. Evaluation forms of the CfW programme show that of participants who have completed evaluation forms, 100% strongly agree or agree that they are satisfied with the learning experience. There are increasing number of schools across the GwE region contributing to national Professional Learning offer and are being used as examples of effective emerging practice, showing how they are understanding and capturing impact on practice across schools.

Cross regional team work collaboratively to plan and deliver national programme to include school examples and opportunities for schools to discuss practice with other schools across Wales within breakouts. Recordings and resources shared are available on a cross-regional website available through Hwb to all schools and practitioners through Wales. The increased number of 1027 hits [as of 2/3/23] to cross-regional CfW website show that practitioners are accessing the recordings and materials at time most convenient to themselves – have examples of this being used at whole school meeting and individual staff level.

Across GwE, staff continue to work within teams to identify support packs as part of the regional PL programme. In January 2023, this cross-regional professional learning offer was successfully endorsed by the National Academy for Educational Leadership who identified several key strengths including:

- The provision is aligned to the Welsh policy context and supports leaders across Wales in realising the ambition of Our National Mission.
- The provision is national and offered bilingually providing open and appropriate access for target

beneficiaries, making appropriate use of blended learning.

- It is led by high-quality personnel appropriate to the target audience.
- Efficient and effective administrative systems to support delivery.
- Case Studies demonstrate improved leadership practice leading to better outcomes for children and young people.

A successful secondary sharing workshop was held in March 2023 where GwE facilitated school practitioners to share practice and lessons learnt to date in their preparation for Curriculum for Wales [sharing practice of 5 x secondary schools who have started with implementation in September 2022]. Over 80 attended from across 44 secondary and special schools, including representative from Welsh Government. Evaluations show 100% strongly agree/agree that they were satisfied with the learning experience and had acquired knowledge and skills that would support them in their role.

Bespoke cluster and school PL sessions continue to be requested from GwE to support whole school and staff training to support curriculum discussions, and in light of additional INSET day for Summer 2023.

The GwE Support Centre continues to support schools to access professional learning through a blend of approaches. Sessions are recorded and these include examples of schools sharing their practice. Feedback shows these are well received by schools, being used to support professional dialogue within the school. Figures show access to support materials continues to increase - 9021 accessing Curriculum for Wales English medium resources with 8504 Cwricwlwm i Gymru Welsh resources.

## AREAS OF LEARNING AND EXPERIENCE [AoLE] TEAMS

### **Curriculum for Wales Networks**

The regional service has effectively supported leaders in preparation for The Reform Journey and Curriculum for Wales and has been flexible in its provision in order to meet schools' various needs during the pandemic. The profession has an infrastructure across the region to share and discuss emerging practice within the new Curriculum for Wales – this is through the local and regional CfW Networks. The Networks share 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 were 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. Following this professional learning, all primary schools have developed and embedded new or adapted vision and rationale statements, which have helped to ensure consistency within their schools in approaching the curriculum.

Formal evaluation and reflections have taken place to inform newer ways of moving forward with the networks to ensure regional infrastructure remains to support evolving work on Curriculum and to enable full engagement by all sectors and on all levels. The formal evaluation report will be shared in summer term 2023, however headline impact shows:

- Increased number of schools developing and sharing examples of their approaches to whole school design and planning of mandatory elements, including cross-curricular skills and during workshops in regional Conference in September 2022
- Teachers and leaders report that they have a greater level of understanding and knowledge of the CfW

CfW framework and elements within

- All primary schools and settings were able to meet the statutory requirements for implementing the new curriculum in September 2022
- Clear guidance and facilitating schools to see and share practical examples of innovative and creative curriculum summaries/designs – schools report that seeing this range of practice has given them increased confidence to develop their own processes

Formal evaluation of the Curriculum for Wales networks indicates that being a member of the networks has had an impact as within the table below:

	<b>REGIONAL NETWORK MEMBERS</b>	<b>LOCAL NETWORK MEMBERS</b>
A greater understanding and knowledge of the ethos of Curriculum for Wales	92%	69%
A greater understanding of their own AoLE	75%	65%
Increased confidence to lead the work of the networks within their own school setting	81%	58%
Increased confidence to lead network work with other schools	76%	41%
Greater awareness of the other sectors e.g. primary, secondary, special, PRU	78%	63%
Increased understanding of the 3-16 learning continuum	84%	61%
The work of the networks has had a positive impact on their classroom practice	76%	56%
A greater understanding and knowledge of the ethos of Curriculum for Wales	92%	69%

Successful practice across work of regional networks can be seen in increased number of schools sharing their emerging practice in:

- Curriculum design
- Evaluating initial curriculum trials
- Unpacking Statement of What matters
- Developing Shared Vision
- Developing shared understanding of progression and assessment processes

A high-level of engagement has ensured that primary schools are more confident in implementing the Curriculum for Wales. Primary/secondary collaboration has been strengthened significantly and transversal themes such as Schools as Learning Organisations have emerged in their approach - Time, Technology, Trust

and Thinking Together. The Professional Learning presentations to senior leaders have been cascaded to teachers and assistants via staff meetings and/or specific INSET, which means that all staff now have a better understanding of the framework. Effective engagement with wider stakeholders has become apparent in order to collaborate to develop a shared vision. Effective use is made of the resources presented in the leaders' sessions in order to continue with discussions and deepen understanding back at school.

#### 4. DEVELOPING A HIGH-QUALITY EDUCATION PROFESSION

##### Summary of main actions, engagement and impact

Due to the increased focus on support and guidance for improving the teaching and learning through engagement such as in the Shirley Clarke Assessment for Learning [AfL] research programme [Objective 1], 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.

## OBJECTIVE 2: DEVELOPING A HIGH-QUALITY EDUCATION PROFESSION

Improving the teaching & learning in our schools.

### MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES [MFL]

#### Support primary and secondary schools with planning for CfW.

The Global Futures Team continue to plan and provide support to schools. Over 200 primary schools have engaged with the support and various networks. This has led to a greater understanding of aims and expectations of International Languages [IL] in the primary sector in line with CfW framework and guidance. Practitioners are developing an understanding of descriptions of learning and schools are developing and refining the most appropriate IL provision [curriculum design and planning] to suit their school context vision, including embedding IL across the AoLEs.

Sessions have been delivered to address the mandatory elements of CfW and refine planning in IL in the secondary sector. This has led to a greater understanding of mandatory and statutory elements of CfW framework. Support and professional learning plan has been reviewed and refined to suit the needs and priorities of schools and practitioners. Bespoke support is provided to schools on request.

Provide professional learning opportunities, resources, expertise and sharing good practice

Training sessions with guest speakers have been delivered to respond to pedagogy and methodology for IL in the primary sector. Sessions included Talk Pedagogy, Power language, Institut Francais and Cerdd Iaith. A total of 97 primary schools / 110 teachers were involved. Feedback and engagement has been very positive with practitioners gaining greater expertise and confidence in teaching and learning with International Languages being fully integrated in some school's learning plans. Direct support has also been provided to

primary teachers via the Open University Teachers Learning to Teach languages [TELT] programme.

Through the Power language Resources, schools are starting to integrate and continue to embed IL in their curriculum with some schools using the resources and advice to train all staff and provide experience in IL learning. Feedback from 75 schools confirmed quality of the resource and support for practitioners.

### **Provide professional learning opportunities resources, expertise and sharing good practice in primary and secondary**

The GwE support centre for International Languages is updated regularly and all schools can access support and links to resources and examples of good practice. The GwE team continues to support and collaborate alongside Global Futures partners and/or Cross-consortia projects, resulting in the production of relevant and purposeful pedagogical resources suited for primary and secondary teachers, schools, learners and parents. All opportunities and resources are shared with schools to support developments.

The project 'Designing for Languages within LLC: GF GwE/ Jennifer Eddy' has enabled practitioners to develop practice and innovative pedagogical approaches around assessment tasks, curriculum design and planning. This has shifted mindset and developed greater understanding of CfW framework and planning for CfW, deepening understanding and practice around assessment.

The new National Strategy for Supporting MAT Learners is communicated through the IL network meeting including advice and guidance on areas such as identification, tracking, teaching and learning and MAT in the CfW. Practitioners' needs are addressed and schools feel supported. The networking allows better collaboration between schools and practitioners.

## **HIGHER LEVEL TEACHING ASSISTANTS [HLTA] - TEACHING ASSISTANTS LEARNING PATHWAY [TALP]**

### **Higher level teaching assistants [HLTA] - Teaching Assistants Learning Pathway [TALP]**

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

### **Newly appointed teaching assistants**

Sixty-two have registered for the programme during the year, and 30 of these have now completed the four modules. This is slightly below the outcome, but an increase since before the pandemic, and generally good comments have been received via feedback forms. Following completion of the modules new teaching assistants have an awareness of the professional standards for assisting teaching, improved digital skills and they make appropriate use of their Hwb account. Teaching assistants are added to the GwE Induction TEAMS, which serves as a point of contact with the co-ordinator and is an easy way of responding to any enquiries.

### **Practising teaching assistants**

The content of this programme was reviewed nationally with the other Consortia co-ordinators. Six schools were targeted for training per cluster, and during the year 5 clusters have completed the programme and the programme is under way with 2 further clusters. A total of 122 teaching assistants have received training through the cluster model. This is a very good increase on last year and is in line with the outcome. Positive

feedback was received from attendees.

Following feedback from teaching assistants and facilitators on this on-line training during the pandemic, this programme was held regionally during the spring term 2023. Twenty-five teaching assistants attended. Regional face-to-face numbers are significantly lower than numbers prior to the pandemic. A higher number of teaching assistants had registered for each location but there were last minute absences due to lack of staff in schools, meaning teaching assistants could not be released to attend, or due to illness. Following completion of the training practising teaching assistants have a better understanding of the professional standards for assisting teaching and an improved understanding of effective practice, and are eager to develop these practices within their own organisations.

### **Aspiring HLTA**

Training was provided for 30 teaching assistants in Cylch 4 (on-line) and 37 in Cylch 5 (face to face). A 'PLR surgery' was offered to Cylch 4 to discuss their Personal Learning Reflections and assessment arrangements. This had a very positive impact, with many teaching assistants improving their reflections on professional learning following these meetings. A review session was held for Cylch 4 candidates prior to their assessments. 80% of teaching assistants opted for an assessment in Cylch 4, with 20% joining the Cylch 5 assessment.

Comments received by teaching assistants, facilitators and assessors note a much better understanding of Professional Standards and Curriculum for Wales following the training. Teaching assistants have also valued working with other teaching assistants across the region and nationally (on-line), and their digital skills have improved, with the technical session very helpful in this regard. The oral feedback received was that the majority would prefer face to face training.

Following recent face to face Cylch 5 sessions it was evident that participants' engagement and enjoyment is much higher. It is also evident that teaching assistants have a much better understanding of how to write their reflections following face to face training. They collaborate much better with peers and the standard of professional discussions is much higher.

Cylch 6 - 27 teaching assistants commenced Cylch 6 in February 2023.

### **HLTA status**

Cylch 3 and 4 Assessments

Following attending 8 digital sessions for Aspiring HLTAs, 82% of Cylch 3 Aspiring HLTAs and 46% of Cylch 4 Aspiring HLTAs applied for the HLTA status assessment. Each assessment was moderated regionally, and a sample of 6 moderated nationally.

Those who did not go forward with the assessment this time noted they had not secured enough teaching experience in the classroom due to the impact of Covid. These will undergo assessment with Cylch 5, 6 or 7 teaching assistants when appropriate. A number of these teaching assistants have also left education, and assessments were lower than usual across each Consortium.

Cylch 4 evaluation comments are positive and a testament to assistants' appreciation of this opportunity to develop professionally:

*"I really enjoyed the course, and the co-ordinators were engaging and fun. I have been inspired and there are many things I will remember and use eventually to inspire others. It was really useful to be able to listen to*

*the viewpoints of so many other aspiring HLTAs and learn from them."*

*"I have gained confidence in my current role and developed professionally, so that I can continue to support learners in school to the best of my ability."*

### **HLTA assessors**

National refresher training was held on 3/10/22 on TEAMS, and a drop-in session for GwE Assessors on 10/10/2022. HLTA assessors gave very positive feedback regarding the new system of assessing candidates. Five new Assessors were trained in March 2023.

### **Introduction to Curriculum for Wales**

New training has been jointly created with the other Consortia, to give teaching assistants an introduction to the Curriculum for Wales. The training was split into 2 sessions and was available in both Welsh and English. The sessions were delivered nationally at a variety of times, so that teaching assistants may be released.

The training was adapted to create bespoke training for GwE primary schools, and training has now been delivered to 219 teaching assistants.

## **WELSH LANGUAGE**

### **Develop the support for schools to promote the benefits of bilingualism and the advantages of Welsh-medium education.**

There is a strong link with the Language Forums via the SIA, who represents each authority. Regular meetings are held with local authority officers in each authority to ensure clarity of implementation as regards the WESPs, incorporating Welsh language advisory teams' objectives into the GwE business plan. This has strengthened the joint understanding of the offer from GwE and the authorities. A national working group has been established to develop support and specific PL for both English-medium and Welsh-medium schools.

### **Support to develop the growth of Welsh-medium provision in English-medium schools:**

Requests for support from Welsh departments in English-medium secondary schools are addressed. Support is targeted according to schools' needs. During the spring term two Network meetings were held for Welsh leads in English-medium schools, enabling schools to showcase successful practice. This approach to sharing good practice has been welcomed, leading to forging useful links between schools, requests for digital support and an increasing awareness of the effectiveness of Cymraeg Campus to enhance social use of the language. There has been an increase in the number of requests for support for the English-medium secondary sector, in line with support plans via SIAs. There is support for Welsh department leads to maintain and raise standards in teaching and learning and achieve the CfW effectively as well as support to promote Welsh and bilingualism as part of whole school plans. The 'O'r Stordy' newsletter for Welsh departments in English-medium secondary schools is circulated on a termly basis, which provides information and important links to resources, information, events and support networks. This has increased awareness of what is available to help teachers to develop the language further.

Welsh language Strategic Leads agree nationally there is a need to establish a network of representatives from each region, to plan support for assisting schools to use the Welsh language Framework in English-medium education. A national working group has been established to develop support for English-medium



schools. The working group met during the second half of the autumn term, and work is ongoing in terms of planning resources and PL to support the new Framework. This has resulted in producing a resource on 'Y Mabinogion', which will include accompanying national Professional Learning and model effective use in terms of planning and deepening understanding, and improve practitioners' confidence in relation to the non-statutory Framework for Welsh in English-medium education.

**Develop a Welsh language professional offer in preparation for the Curriculum for Wales (3-16) and strengthen the collaboration/transition from primary to secondary:**

A presentation was shared in Headteacher forums, in collaboration with the LAs, to draw attention to Welsh as a statutory element of the CfW. This has been a means of raising the profile of the language among Headteachers and is an opportunity to highlight the need to include Welsh in their curriculum design.

Through network meetings for Welsh leads (in Welsh-medium, bilingual and English-medium schools) support is given to leaders to achieve the CfW effectively, and resources such as the GwE Region Welsh Leads Network Meeting (adobe.com) will share information about regional and national developments. This is an effective and current approach to sharing updates and is convenient for including relevant links to enable HoDs to disseminate further.

Workshops were held in a primary/secondary transition INSET, to work with leaders to consider how the process of assessing learner progress in Welsh contributes to developing a holistic picture of the learner. There has been support and guidance for leaders in Welsh departments in secondary schools across the region to ensure learner progression in Welsh is an integral part of learning activities, leading to an understanding of the Statements of What Matter.

Requests for support for specific schools continue via the LA (English-medium secondary), and any support needs to be incorporated into the school support plan and in consultation with the relevant SIA.

**Developing the skills**

**Ein Llais Ni**

80+ teachers have submitted case studies addressing the impact on teaching and learning when undertaking various themes. A further application to extend 'Ein Llais Ni' to English-medium schools has been submitted, and approved by Welsh Government. Primary and secondary schools across the region have had the opportunity to express an interest in being part of a small pilot of schools to develop this work for the sector. It is intended to further promote the work regionally and nationally, ensure momentum and a high profile for the work and collaborate closely with a group of lead teachers who will exemplify successful practice further. The impact of this work is captured in Estyn reports on both a school and authority level.

A Professional Learning resource has been produced in the form of a website, [www.einllaisni.cymru](http://www.einllaisni.cymru), to collate resources and provide guidance on effective methods of leading the area and planning a prominent place for oracy. This has been shared nationally and will be part of cross-consortia provision available to schools across Wales. A Bangor University research report has been presented, which evaluates the effectiveness of the ELIN project, with a view to identifying specific challenges faced in schools in terms of the best way of getting children to use their Welsh and the skills associated with this. A student from Bangor University has collaborated closely with Professor Enlli Thomas and conducted research in the area leading to preparation of a booklet for practitioners, which is a quick reference for teachers on developing the oracy skills of children and young people - O Enau Plant. Initial feedback for this resource is very positive, and it

has received national attention in various forums.

An event entitled 'Ein Llais Ni:Datblygu Siaradwyr y Dyfodol' was held in November 2022, and schools that were part of the work made a valuable contribution. There was representation from Welsh Government, the 'Ein Llais Ni' Management Board, Bangor University (lecturers and students), Local Authority Officers, teachers from current project schools and others with an interest in the project. Feedback was extremely positive.

Teaching oracy is part of specific cluster collaboration plans which has resulted in valuable discussions on pedagogy, continuity, assessment and rich experiences across the age range and between the primary and secondary.

### **Literacy:**

A presentation was given in a secondary regional network meeting on the mandatory element of developing Literacy when delivering the CfW. This has resulted in a greater awareness of the need to include this in each school's curriculum design.

GwE SIAs have been collaborating on developing and trialling the 'Six Steps Strategy' for strategic planning to promote the cross-curricular skills across the curriculum. As a result of presenting this strategy to co-ordinators and Headteachers a resource has been produced to support and assist Literacy Co-ordinators across the region to map out provision for languages across the curriculum strategically.

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

Regional secondary schools have been invited to join the national project for disseminating Siarter Iaith work to the secondary sector. Regional meetings for Siarter Iaith and Cymraeg Campus co-ordinators have been held, resulting in sharing updates on challenges and developments.

Two national meetings have been held to agree on a strategic direction for the Siarter Iaith Framework. There have been purposeful discussions on recommendations noted in the 2020 evaluation of the Siarter Iaith and national collaboration to make effective use of funding, define the objective of the Siarter Iaith (including Cymraeg Campus), raise the status of the Framework and its promotion and challenges, and possible solutions for using it effectively and purposefully.

There has been support for English-medium schools that have created new roles, such as Bilingualism Co-ordinator or Welsh language Champion, and because of this support schools have received practical guidance on how to implement the principles and recommendations on a local level.

### **Promote the profile of the Welsh language amongst leaders in preparation for the Curriculum of Wales and WG's target of a million Welsh speakers.**

Guidance to support school leaders when planning for developing the Welsh language has been produced and shared in primary and secondary headteacher forums. Consequently, there is a better understanding of the need to plan strategically for Welsh, ensuring a purposeful professional learning programme along with rich experiences to develop skills.

A playlist has been adapted from a resource shared by Central South Consortium. This resource helps 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 plan suitable professional

learning to strategically develop the language competency of all practitioners. The resource has been shared via the Bulletin and brought to the attention of authority officers in regional meetings so that it may be promoted further.

Meetings have been held with associates from the Leadership Academy, the regions' AS, WG officers and Estyn to discuss Welsh language leadership. This has resulted in joint understanding of provision for the variation within this area, across Wales. Consequently, it is agreed there is a need to jointly create a resource to support self-evaluation and develop Welsh language leadership, providing a series of questions for leaders to consider when self-evaluating their journey to develop the language in their schools. The aim is that leaders use these questions alongside 'The national resource: evaluation and improvement' when undertaking self-evaluation to ensure due attention is given to the development of the Welsh language in all schools.

By means of the 'Designing for languages' project (led by Professor Jenny Eddy of Queens College, New York), leaders of several Welsh Departments in regional secondary schools have had an opportunity to use international research to develop their understanding of curriculum design models and produce their own models for Welsh within the LLC AoLE, as part of a whole school curriculum design. An event was held in Venue Cymru for leaders and schools to showcase the fruits of their labours in the above project, and curriculum design models for Welsh and Welsh in English-medium schools will be shared regionally.

As a result of the above project there have been discussions with the University/CaBan on the possibility of incorporating the principles and research into PGCE provision in the future, and the 'Teachers as designers - interdisciplinary planning' event (Venue Cymru) is a means of presenting the research and design models of regional Welsh departments to primary and secondary PGCE students this year.

#### **Develop the Welsh and Welsh-medium workforce - the language skills of the education workforce:**

Cluster work has been ongoing across the region and strong and effective practice shared. A template has been presented to collate and share effective practice, and clusters are starting to share examples of implementation and its impact.

There is a very strong and constructive relationship between GwE, Canolfan Bedwyr, Welsh Government and LAs, resulting in strengthening provision to support practitioners to develop their language skills. There is also a strong link between GwE and the Coleg Dysgu Cymraeg Cenedlaethol ensuring opportunities to promote online courses for practitioners. GwE continues to promote the provision of the National Centre for Learning Welsh, and has received statistics highlighting the commitment of regional schools to the training available. As part of the search facility on its website, the Centre has added an option for education practitioners to note an interest in learning Welsh/developing Welsh skills through the Sabbaticals Scheme. The details of those practitioners who have expressed an interest thus far are received, so that the LA is aware of who they are and is able to assess their suitability or offer alternative support.

### **A LEVEL**

#### **Develop effective leaders**

A Middle Leadership Training Programme (post-16) has been provided, with an option to gain ILM Level 5 accreditation. The first face to face session for all attendees was held on 18/10/22, with subsequent hybrid sessions on 23/11/22, 26/1/23 and 7/3/23. Six regional Heads of Sixth Form have completed the national course.

Heads of Sixth network meetings have been held, where there were opportunities to share successful practice, express and discuss concerns and contribute to the conference agenda. Leaders have welcomed these networks.

A GwE Post-16 Leadership Conference was held on 3/3/23. The programme was based on the requirements of Heads of Sixth and 2022/23 priorities. This included a keynote speech by Vanessa Jenkins (Trauma Informed Schools) on supporting students but also ensuring self-care; VESPA workshops (Creating Independent Learners: Resources, activities and raising expectations); ALPS (effective use of Alps Connect to identify priorities and maximise pupil achievement); TIS (Practical tips for running structured and safe reflection groups for staff and students); E-sgol and regional Heads of Sixth sharing effective practice in broadening pupils' horizons, and Estyn inspection experiences.

#### **Support schools to monitor the progress of post-16 students:**

Seventeen regional schools are making effective use of ALPs to track learner progress during the academic year. Online ALPS training for the region's schools has been provided, 3 consecutive sessions: Introduction to ALPS; Effective use of ALPS to track progress on both a subject and learner level; Effective use of ALPS Connect to analyse results and plan improvements. An ALPs workshop has been held in the post-16 leadership conference to promote termly use of the tool to track internal progress in schools. In addition, there is school-to-school support on effective use of ALPS, as required.

#### **Support schools to provide a range of approaches to promote their learners' well-being.**

Heads of Sixth network meetings have provided opportunities to share good practice in the context of VESPA/Bloom and express any general concerns about learner well-being. Trauma Informed Schools delivered a keynote speech in the conference along with a specific workshop. Arrangements are in place to offer a series of online VESPA training workshops at the beginning of the Summer Term 2023.

## RESEARCH AND EVALUATION

### **KiVa Anti-Bullying Research Project**

As part of GwE's ongoing initiatives to focus policy and practice on more evidence-informed approaches, this project was undertaken with schools in North Wales to evaluate the effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of KiVa anti-bullying programme in reducing child reported bullying in UK schools compared to usual practice. GwE is a co-applicant on this large scale research project to evaluate the impact of the KiVa anti-bullying programme in primary schools. Following a pause due to the COVID-19 pandemic, 30 schools in North Wales have been recruited for the study. The findings indicated that the KiVa intervention schools had statistically significantly lower occurrences of bullying than control schools. This is an internationally important outcome, and is being written up as a paper for The Lancet journal for publication in 2023. The project has already produced a study protocol paper where the research team describe the trial in detail for other researchers. The full study findings can be accessed by downloading the open access paper using this link::



**[The UK stand together trial: protocol for a multicentre cluster randomised controlled trial to evaluate the effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of KiVa to reduce bullying in primary schools](#)** | BMC Public Health | **[Full Text \(biomedcentral.com\)](#)**

Once the main study findings are published, the research team are planning a series of dissemination and school information sessions to help translate these findings into everyday practice. Four GwE schools are currently assisting with this dissemination work.

### **Positive Readiness for Learning (PR4L) Project – Behavioural Scientists in Clusters**

The aim of this project is to provide training and individualised coaching to teachers in the classroom to provide confidence and consistency when addressing disruptive behaviour within the classroom.

Teachers and school staff will be encouraged to identify and acknowledge positive behaviour in students and respond consistently to behavioural challenges. The aim of the project is to focus on schools with persistent issues with either low level disruption and/or staff who want to know more about evidence-informed strategies (preferable the former to show impact). For example, meeting staff to improve their understanding of tier 1 (universal) behaviour management strategies.

The start of this project was delayed due to the appointment of new research staff, and now that staffing has been confirmed we are now planning to invite one large primary school from each LA to begin the project in June 2023 until July 2024. Each of the six partner schools will benefit from a daily visit by a behavioural scientist for one term's duration. The project team will evaluate the impact on learner behaviour and also write a case study impact report.

### **KESS ALN Reading Research**

This is a proposal for up to 4 SEN schools in the KESS East region to collaborate with us on a funded KESS2 East MRes project from October 2022 - June 2023. This will involve Bangor University, GwE, and SEN schools in the region. The MRes student and supervisors will work closely with participating schools to conduct an audit and rapid review of assessment and intervention approaches being used, to explore staff experiences and perceptions of current provision, and to reflect on the findings, current practices, and ideas for further development and evaluation. We hope this collaborative project will enable us to further develop and evaluate areas of strong practice, as well as identifying areas for developing provision to help improve reading outcomes for a wide range of learners.

The start of this project was delayed due to the appointment of the KESS master's student. After two rounds of advertisements, a student was appointed in March 2023 and initial discussions have taken place with GwE core leads to identify schools. The schools will be confirmed in May 2023.

### **Health Economics and PBMA**

This project aims to support and develop headteacher decision making processes using effective decision-making methodology called Programme budgeting and marginal analysis (PBMA). PBMA is a tool for tackling the use of scarce resources in health and education settings and provides a more conceptually clear framework for the challenging task of managing scarce resources with competing demands. The aim of this project has been to investigate if schools produce robust effectiveness and social validity data to support interventions and to help school leaders consider value for money concepts. It also aims to evaluate the impact of the project by tracking changes in provision and to evaluate how headteachers utilise a decision-making tool. Six schools have been participating in the work this year:

The researcher has visited each of the schools to meet the head teacher to collect cost and effectiveness data for a range of interventions and programmes that they wish to interrogate. Each school will now be presented with a PBMA report in May 2023 at which time we will be able to fully evaluate the impact of the PBMA process on head teachers' decision-making processes. A larger, follow-up PBMA process involving additional interventions/programmes in school is planned for the summer term 2023. more interventions.

## ITE

### **Initial Teacher Education (ITE)**

Regional consistency is strengthened through strong collaboration between GwE and CaBan. This ensures a common approach to research, professional learning and improved integration as a learning organisation across the region. As a consequence of the consistent cultural approaches of the organisations, teachers access up to date and impactful upskilling as they progress through their teaching careers, and programmes and learning is personalised to the unique needs of the region, as well as responsive to national priorities. Ultimately this improves teacher retention.

New ITE National accreditation criteria have been rewritten to include ALN ITE. Accreditation meetings have taken place and Education Workforce Council (EWC) have provided further guidance and next steps. Full submission of ITE ALN programmes will take place in July 2023 for accreditation from September 2024; these will be Wales's first accredited ALN ITE programmes. Meetings with WG and EWC continue for relevant advice and to ensure programmes fit with national priorities for vulnerable learners and ALN. Currently documentation in development is focussed upon aligning the pilot programmes to the new accreditation criteria (which now include ALN) and Professional Standards for Teaching and Leadership.

14 GwE staff delivered sessions on the CaBan ITE programmes this term; these have included on-line and face to face lectures and workshops, and a keynote lecture. These have focussed upon pedagogy, curriculum for Wales, Human Rights and RVE, digital skills, curriculum design and planning, literacy and numeracy and transition. Further sessions are planned for summer term. Professional learning is now more consistent from ITE through to NQT and the GwE Professional offer (and ultimately to the National offer).

Further planned shared professional learning and project opportunities continue including Ein Llais Ni – this is planned to include sessions for students to ensure they are familiar with the project and can implement its actions. Collaboration has taken place to develop international languages particularly in the Primary programmes, including developing Research and language pedagogy. New teachers entering the profession are more able to teach and further share their knowledge and understanding of research, Curriculum for Wales, pedagogy and their skills across the Welsh language continuum.

GwE staff have taken part in CaBan quality assurance meetings. There are planned shared quality assurance and enhancement engagement opportunities such as lesson studies and monitoring in lead schools throughout the academic year. These include working with schools as well as with CaBan and GwE staff.

### **Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs)**

NQTs are supported consistently across the region, including through their access to professional learning. A full programme of national NQT training has taken place and this continues to be enhanced further through regional training which builds upon key messages from National training in the autumn term. Consistency and collaboration are ensured through regular meetings with consortia colleagues nationally and key messages are shared regionally through very regular local meetings. 216 NQTs have attended which is approximately 72% of this year's cohort.

Record numbers of NQTs attended the mandatory Session 1 and 2 in September/October 2022 and over 1,000 NQTs attended the online session 1 (70% of the 2022/23 national cohort). Of this group 223 NQTs from the GwE region attended the training, this is 78% of the region's cohort.

There was a significant increase in the number (%) of STS (short term supply) teachers who attended the National Session 1 and 2 professional learning programme. In comparison to previous years, attendance of active STS NQTs who attended session 1 has increased significantly with 51 attending (81%).

The roll-out of the new WG Induction Arrangements for Wales in November 2022 was a success. Working closely with the 6 Local Authority NQT Leads we have disseminated the information and resources from WG around the message in the new regulations. The arrangements looked at roles and responsibilities, funding, Professional Learning and completing Induction in Wales.

Cross-consortium collaboration with the Regional NQT leads continues to improve and grow with the sharing of good practice and resources happening across Wales. Creating closer links with the Supply agencies in North Wales has been a priority and we have met twice to try and ensure that they also fully understand their role with the NQTs.

### **The Open University (OU)**

Collaboration with the OU continues through regular partnership meetings. Provision has been updated and improved to include further funding for Welsh-medium students in secondary settings. Information sharing has taken place and there is planned further activity to update stakeholders. Students have access to a range of different ways of becoming teachers, including work-based programmes through the OU as well as traditional route to ITE.

### **Welsh language provision**

Collaboration to improve Welsh language provision continues strongly, such as through our Ein Llais Ni oracy project. Nearly 100 Welsh-medium schools across the region participated in the first phase of this project, which included some NQTs, and around 20 third year students attended our Ein Llais Ni event in November. Schools have access to up-to-date research and impactful practice in improving Welsh Oracy Pedagogy.

## **DIGITAL**

### **Develop digital leadership in regional schools**

The digital facilitator programme continues to develop. A meeting was held with each facilitator during November to discuss the progress of the programme in each cluster. 79% of the region's clusters have formed a digital learning working group to lead strategic aspects. 67% of clusters have formulated a shared vision for the cluster, reconciling the objectives of each school and establishing a foundation for any collaborative work. 66% of regional clusters have established arrangements whereby the digital facilitator reports back to cluster Headteachers on a regular basis. We are confident the programme has progressed successfully. We will be offering more individual support for clusters/digital facilitators who are experiencing difficulties in establishing a working group, in order to ensure the work is progressing effectively. 77% of clusters note communication has strengthened within the cluster because of the programme, with digital communication channels established to ensure that discussions and sharing of experiences can continue on a regular basis. Several clusters have successfully embedded the programme in their cluster and are examples of working groups that are taking effective action during the first phases of the programme. These clusters have made notable progress and are designing innovative ideas on how to collaborate as a cluster to develop aspects of this area. Many have provided a case study for Welsh Government to discuss their progress. A training day was held for digital facilitators during quarter 4 focusing on identifying growth points in their clusters, with the intention of producing a cluster progress report in relation to these growth points during the next financial year.

### **Provide a programme of professional learning to develop opportunities to raise standards in digital competence via Hwb.**

The digital professional learning offer seems to be a success thus far, with 386 practitioners registered to attend training sessions. During quarter 4 training has been held on data handling, modelling, level 1 Google, retelling a story digitally and digital competence in progression steps 1 and 2. Feedback received following training has been very positive, with several teachers appreciating the opportunity to have time to look at software in depth and receive guidance on effective pedagogy and how to use various software effectively in different curricular contexts. The first day of the training programme for digital leaders was held for a second cohort of teachers during quarter 4, and the second day will consider the impact of work set on the first day. The aim of this programme is to ensure development of leadership capacity within clusters, and that more individuals are upskilled to support the work of the digital facilitators. A Keeping Safe On-line conference was jointly held with Welsh Government in March and 95 practitioners attended.

### **Embed 360 Digi Cymru as the region's main self-evaluation tool for digital learning.**

To date, 283 of the region's schools have registered on the digital learning self-evaluation system, 360 Digi Cymru. 154 schools have revisited the system to update their evaluation. We continue to encourage schools to engage with this review. We have recorded a series of webinars to ensure there is on demand support available so that schools can engage. As part of the digital facilitators programme, the facilitators are responsible for encouraging schools to use the self-evaluation system, asking each school in their cluster to complete the review over the next term. Data will then be discussed on a cluster level to ascertain strengths within the cluster as well as general aspects to be developed. Data inputted into the system shows a score of 2.8 out of 4 on average; 1 being the strongest score and 4 the weakest. This score is in line with levels across Wales.

### **Support for the secondary sector**

During quarter 4, a six steps strategy was launched to support secondary schools with producing and implementing a whole school strategy to develop cross-curricular skills across the school. Twelve secondary schools have now received individual support in relation to this as we trial the strategy. The response to the strategy has been extremely positive thus far, with schools appreciating guidance on a strategic level to embed a whole school strategy to develop this area. Most schools have now completed step 2 of the 6 steps, which is to design their strategy for developing the area. To support this, we have designed a number of progression maps, showing what pupil progress should look like on progression steps 1-5. We have created progression maps for the following aspects thus far: creating podcasts, data handling, animation, creating a video, graphics. The response has been excellent, with many practitioners noting that these resources are valuable in helping teachers to plan ambitious and fit for purpose experiences that build on learners' previous skills.

## **MATHS AND NUMERACY**

A range of networks and forums are operational to support leaders in the secondary sector, at every level, to be able to lead on pedagogy with increased confidence and effectiveness. This includes networks for senior leads on teaching and learning and for core subject heads of department. There is evidence that collaboration within the networks has been a particular strength and mutual support has been key in order to ensure consistency of teaching and learning approach in the secondary schools.

Subject networks have focused on supporting middle leaders to take the lead on teaching and learning; on facilitating and supporting peer collaboration and on strengthening evaluation and improvement planning



processes and procedures; on promoting a better understanding of planning and pedagogy in the context of the new curriculum; on improving literacy and numeracy interventions as well as supporting specific aspects of KS4 and KS5 preparations and assessments. The work of the networks is much appreciated by secondary leaders who make effective use of the quality resources that have been jointly developed and hosted on GwE's Support Centre [Tanio websites [Science], MathsCymru [Maths], Y Pair [Welsh] and Herio [English].

Following Heads of Maths network meetings individual schools have been given further support to implement various approaches that have been discussed.

The impact of the subject networks is clear on several levels and across a range of aspects:

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

### **Bespoke support for schools causing concern**

The Primary and Secondary Mathematics & Numeracy SIAs have provided bespoke support for regional schools as identified from support plans. This has resulted in improved planning for the teaching and learning of Mathematics 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. formative use of the personalised assessments, 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.
- Collaborative support with self-evaluation and improvement planning processes, 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 implement (or trial) planning and teaching the Mathematics & Numeracy AoLE, which has led to improved pedagogical approaches and understanding of the curriculum.

### **Regional support and CfW**

#### **Secondary Heads of Maths network meetings**

Termly local Heads of Maths network meetings have taken place in each local authority and have been well

attended. This has resulted in schools sharing good practice, gaining new ideas and resources to use, being fully familiar with current WJEC guidance, examination reports and the Estyn Inspection framework.

### **Secondary Numeracy Coordinators network meetings**

Numeracy Coordinators local network meetings have taken place in each local authority and have been well attended. This has resulted in schools sharing good practice, gaining new ideas and resources to use and how to create and implement a whole school numeracy strategy

### **Additional Mathematics & Numeracy AoLE specific regional support**

SIAs have delivered 2 online workshops as an introduction to the Mathematics & Numeracy AoLE in the summer 2022 term, as support for unpacking the mandatory elements and planning for progression. Heads of Maths were also invited to a day in the summer 2022 term as further support for CfW. As a result of these sessions, schools were able to share good practice, collaborate on familiarising with the Mathematics & Numeracy AoLE, gain a better understanding of the 5 mathematical proficiencies and the pedagogical implication, and be clearer with their understanding of the next steps needed on the journey to fully implement CfW.

### **AoLE Cluster support**

Primary and Secondary SIA's have received bespoke cluster support requests to develop effective transition in mathematics, ensuring a shared understanding between cluster primaries and feeder secondary schools of the continuum and effective teaching and learning within the Mathematics and Numeracy AOLE.

### **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 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.

### **Basic number skills package**

A 'Basic Number Skills' pack which includes whole class resources and individual resources which can be adapted according to the needs of learners across the continuum has been created. They are written in Welsh and English and include an answer pack. The resources give learners the opportunity to reinforce and revisit skills that are key skills to develop across the continuum, ensuring learners' fluency in this area. The resources have been hosted on a Google Classroom and shared with various schools to trial.

### **MAT Secondary Maths Challenge**

Secondary SIAs organised a GwE MAT Maths challenge for Year 9 learners in March 2023, with schools being invited to enter teams of 4 to one of the heats. 28 secondary schools in the region took part, with 34 teams in total. All schools have voiced their appreciation of the Maths challenge and the resources have been shared with all schools. A final will be organised for the summer term.

### **CABAN/BANGOR UNIVERSITY (September 2022)**

Primary Mathematics and Numeracy SIA delivered four lectures – introduction to Mathematics and Numeracy AOLE/ to Welsh Medium Primary PGCE students. (approx. 27 students). These sessions supported new practitioners to gain a better understanding of the 5 mathematical proficiencies and effective pedagogy in mathematics to deliver CfW in regional classrooms during the academic year.

### **Oracy for Learning Across the Curriculum 2023**

Primary and Secondary Mathematics and Numeracy SIA's delivered a day of training within the Oracy for Learning Across the Curriculum programme. Primary and Secondary school teachers/ leaders of years 5 to 8 attended the session aimed at creating a culture of 'talk for learning' and oracy provision to raise standards across the mathematics curriculum.

### **Bespoke support for individual schools**

Nearly all schools causing concern are making steady progress against agreed actions and all staff and stakeholders upskilled during the process, including schools in Estyn category. The Maths & Numeracy SIAs have developed good relationships with individual schools which has resulted in successful collaboration.

## **ENGLISH AND LITERACY**

### **Secondary**

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

During November 2022 a regional literacy network was offered to all English Medium Secondary schools; the event was well attended. The session focus was on Planning for a strategic approach to Literacy and planning for progression. This has been further supported by the development of the 'Six Stage Approach' to developing a whole school literacy approach, which has been presented to at all 6 regional Heads' forums. Further to this, bespoke support has been given to schools and alliances that required bespoke support to launch.

In December 2022 a Heads of English Forum was organised and attendance was excellent. The session included a briefing from Elan Richards from Qualification Wales and allowed the Subject leads to ask questions directly relating the GCSE English Language and Literature consultation. Delegates were supported to produce a "Planning for progression" working document which was distribute to all secondary English departments and has been used as a starting point for departmental discussion on progression.

A Level English Language Forum Meeting - having attended the WJEC training "Fix it packs" were produced and distributed in order to support schools to give standardised feedback to pupils. Unseen Poetry Unit 1 resources have been produced for the 'Herio' website. A support pack to provide guidance for developing cross-curricular extended writing has also been developed and uploaded to the GwE One Drive.

Tailored support has also been provided by the team across local authorities, including familiarisation with the Six Stage Approach to strategic planning to develop skills and developing a culture of reading for pleasure.

The team has attended a variety of training events to further develop our knowledge and expertise in order to provide effective support for our schools. This has included training from: Voice 21, National Literacy Trust, WJEC (GCSE and A Level) and Qualifications Wales Consultations.

Secondary/Primary - Oracy WG funding has been used to fund a 5-day development programme, which began in February 2023. Three sessions have taken place to date with two more scheduled for Summer Term 2023. The last two sessions are focussed on the sharing of good practice between schools.

Reading for Pleasure/Caru@ddarllen 5-day development programme has been organised/commissioned with nearly full attendance and began in January 2023.

### **Primary**

All bespoke requests from SIAs to schools causing concern, or with specific needs relating to literacy/English, have been met and a range of support has been implemented and reviewed by SIAs. Where needed, continued support has been delivered and nearly all settings, positive impact and progress has been reported.

In November 2022 a whole day Basic Literacy Skills workshop was attended by SIA invitation, to cover needs relating to PIAPs, SDPs or CPD of specific staff. This was reviewed by SIAs for impact back in schools and nearly all attendees put strategies effectively into place back in school. There was increased demand by SIAs and delegates, to hold other sessions and these are now planned in for the coming financial year, to be run by either the Lit SIA or commissioned effective teachers.

Reading for Pleasure/Caru@ddarllen 3-day development programme has been organised/commissioned with nearly full attendance and began in January 2023 (71 teachers). 2 of the 3 days were affected by strike action and had to be postponed until May 2023 and therefore fall into the new Business plan for 2023-24. Nearly all schools responded positively to day 1 through questionnaires and are strategically targeting staff to attend day 2 and 3. Feedback shows nearly all plan to maximise impact in school on standards and provision for reading. All sectors of schools attended, from 3-16 and are booked to continue attending in May. Open University and Bangor University are delivering on days 2 and 3, alongside 3-8 SIAs, 8-11 and Secondary SIAs, both in English and in Welsh language. LA Welsh Language advisors will also be in attendance.

LLC CfW Regional and local networks have been attended and supported, with extra working sessions with regional members, leading to the creation of documentation and support packs/resources to share with local networks and regional schools.

Google classrooms have been established to host and share all resources from PL events and working groups to ensure continued engagement and collaboration.

## **THE WELSH LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

### **Leadership**

The network meetings held this year for Welsh leads in the region (Welsh-medium, bilingual and English-medium schools) were an opportunity to develop an understanding of national developments, share successful practice and work together to maintain and raise standards in teaching and learning. These meetings were held in 'host' schools across the region, and it was a good opportunity for departments, in turn, to welcome other leaders to their department (often for the first time), and it is intended to continue this successful model next year. Leaders gave presentations during every meeting, sharing successful practice in various areas. During the network meetings for Welsh leads in English-medium schools, Welsh department leads of 'host' schools gave presentations on 'Y Gymraeg yn ein hysgol ni' (Welsh in our school). The response to these presentations was very positive and leaders welcomed the opportunity to see and discuss departments' unique and innovative strategies as they promote Welsh and bilingualism skills locally. These presentations from leaders in network meetings stemmed from follow-up work between schools across the region as well as collaboration between individual department leads, and we will develop this model further next year in order to strengthen follow-up collaboration between departments. Three

English-medium schools in the region continue to work in a Support Network, and this model of schools working together in alliances will be further developed in English-medium schools.

### **Consultation workshops and national working groups**

Regional Welsh leads have been involved in national working groups (e.g. Welsh Subject Level Working Group - Qualifications Wales), and the voice of the region is heard in these national discussions. There have been a series of virtual meetings in collaboration with Qualifications Wales to help departments across the region to respond to the 'Qualified for the Future' consultation for new Welsh qualifications, and Qualifications Wales welcomed the opportunity to present the consultation directly to leaders in the above virtual meetings.

### **Effective realisation of the Curriculum for Wales**

There has been collaboration with the SIA for International Languages on a 'Designing for Languages' project led by Professor Jenny Eddy from Queens College, New York with a representation of LLC AoLE departments from across the region, which includes members of Welsh departments from Welsh-medium and bilingual schools as well as English-medium schools (see also 'Collaboration with the University' below).

There have been INSET primary/secondary transition workshops, during which leaders considered how the process of assessing learner progress in Welsh contributes to developing a holistic picture of the learner.

There has been support and guidance for leaders to ensure that continuity for learners in Welsh is an integral part of learning activities, leading to an understanding of the Statements of What Matter (e.g., working with leaders to introduce Extended Processing Instruction).

### **'Ein Llais Ni' Project**

A website, [einllaisni.cymru](http://einllaisni.cymru), has been created, where phase 1 project schools' resources and case studies are housed. A successful application was made to Welsh Government for funding to continue the project next year. As part of this application, several regional secondary schools involved in the original project agreed to be lead schools, with Welsh department staff in those schools specifically promoting the next phase. Welsh departments in regional English-medium secondary schools have applied to join the next phase of the project, at the end of Quarter 4.

### **Cross-curricular literacy**

Collaborate on developing and trialling the 'Six Steps Strategy' for strategic planning to promote Literacy skills across the curriculum. GwE are working with Literacy Co-ordinators across the region to map out provision, creating and developing a tool to support and assist co-ordinators with this work. The 'Cau'r Bwlch Darllen' project (in collaboration with a working group of Literacy Co-ordinators in Welsh-medium and bilingual schools) is a direct result of the need to target higher order reading skills, which was highlighted following a Literacy Co-ordinators network meeting.

The 'Holi Heriol' project (in collaboration with the Welsh Head of Department and Literacy Co-ordinator in one regional school) stems from a presentation given in a network meeting, and will link to the regional work of supporting schools to effectively realise the CfW by assisting leaders and Literacy Co-ordinators to plan for pupil progression through developing an understanding of the Principles of Progression.

The 'Llythrennedd y Gweithle 2023' project is an opportunity to deliver the cross-curricular themes as part of a curriculum design for languages, targeting this mandatory element through the LLC AoLE.

### **Collaboration with the University and support for NQTs**

There have been discussions with Bangor University/CaBan during Quarter 3 to incorporate the work of Professor Jenny Eddy into PGCE courses and include the above 'Designing for languages' project.

An event has been held in Venue Cymru for NQT students (primary and secondary), in collaboration with Bangor University/CaBan, entitled 'Athrawon fel dylunwyr CiG' (Teachers as CfW designers), with presentations from members of Welsh departments across the region who were part of the 'Designing for languages' project.

Secondary and primary PGCE students attended the 'Ein Llais Ni – Datblygu siaradwyr y dyfodol' event, and students this year referred to 'Ein Llais Ni' in their research thesis as part of a specific unit in the course.

A presentation was delivered in the University to secondary and primary PGCE students (Welsh and English) on GwE's work and regional support (Quarter 4).

### **GwE Support Centre**

Work continues with developing the Welsh pages on GwE's Support Centre, and the aim is for this platform to run alongside the 'live' Teams and Google Classroom digital platforms, with the former a permanent base and the latter a developmental platform.

The newsletter 'O'r Stordy' is an additional tool for sharing information with leaders across the region. Two versions of the newsletter are now shared with schools, one for Welsh-medium and bilingual schools and another version for English-medium schools.

## **SCIENCE**

### **Realising Curriculum for Wales**

Bespoke support has been provided to all departments that have requested CfW support. The schools that have received support, and who are adopting CfW in September 2023, are planning, and developing units of work.

### **Provide regional and local networks for leaders and teachers of Science and Technology AoLE with clear guidance on curriculum design, planning, assessment, and progression**

In the Autumn term, 3 Heads of Science Network meetings representing all 6 local authorities ran and were well attended. The meetings provide an opportunity for discussions and activities on planning, delivering and evaluating their new CfW activities, GCSE schemes of work, examples of assessments and pedagogical approaches that are working well in their schools. The focus of these Autumn networks was planning and design for CfW. The focus was to look at disciplinary/multi-disciplinary and thematic approaches, and bringing the Sciences, Computation and Technology together to solve problems. Exemplars and resources produced by the working groups during these meetings were shared after the meetings and are available for other schools (including non-network schools) to view online bilingually.

During the Spring term, a second round of Heads of Science and Technology Network meetings took place. Again, the focus was on CfW – looking at progression and progression mapping, developing integral skills, cross-cutting themes (with presentations from Careers Wales) and computational programming/algorithms.

**Support schools and their science and technology departments to ensure develop their understanding of the elements of the curriculum for Wales including the application and development of the cross-**

### **curricular skills, the integral skills, and cross-cutting themes within Science.**

The Science and Technology AoLE website has been developed and translated into Welsh – the website is supporting schools and departments to consider big ideas/themes in Science and Technology and different methods of planning for learning. This link to the website has been shared with all schools. We are currently developing exemplars of a thematic approach to develop cross curricular and integral skills. The intention during 2023-2024, is to further develop the website and share examples and good practice from schools as they become available.

### **Support schools and leaders of science to evaluate and enhance their provision for the Curriculum for Wales**

Supporting resources available on the Science and Technology website have enabled teachers to further develop their understanding of progression in learning and the role of the descriptions of learning in planning for learning. In the Spring term network meetings, questionnaires completed by Heads of Science & Technology evaluated their current CfW provision in their own schools.

### **Improve Teaching**

Collaboration and school to school-working and sharing of best practice continues to be developed through the Science and Technology AOLE network meetings. Schools involved have gained valuable experience and understanding through working together and sharing ideas for planning for learning and pedagogical considerations. The Tanio website has recorded a significant number of hits (>190,000) and downloads over 2022-2023, demonstrating that the resources are being widely used.

### **Schools causing concern**

Following requests from SIAs, bespoke and targeted support continues for leaders, teachers, NQTs and for schools causing concern.

### **Supporting Leadership**

School visits continue to support Middle Leaders with self-evaluation, identifying priorities for improvement, evaluating the quality of provision and teaching and learning.

## **AGES 3-8**

### **Support to schools causing concern**

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 have been 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**

Regional 3-8 networks have been delivered for practitioners and SIAs, sharing guidance on Enabling Learning (the period of learning leading to Progression step 1) and case studies shared by schools from each LA involved in GwEs informed research projects on 'Woodwork' and 'Communication Friendly Spaces Approach'. Practitioners discussed how they had reflected and reviewed their learning environment, experiences and planning of skills both indoors and outdoors and the impact of their provision on learners in line with Enabling Learning and AOLEs guidance. Presentations and case studies have been uploaded on to the GwE Support Centre enabling all school regionally to access them. This has led to practitioners

disseminating and leading cluster training, sharing good practice and impact of the action research project.

Regional workshops have been delivered regionally for teachers and Teaching Assistants (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.

Science and Technology workshops have been delivered regionally for teachers and TAs. All practitioners have been upskilled and have deepened their knowledge and understanding of the Science and Technology AOLE, the Developmental Pathways, (Exploration in particular), cross-curricular skills and the integral skills. Following both workshops, practitioners have an increased confidence in planning the development of AOLE and cross-curricular skills from the Developmental Pathways to the AOLE's, within developmentally appropriate pedagogy.

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.

This has resulted in:

- Practitioners gaining deeper understanding of Foundation Phase principles and pedagogy, in line with the Curriculum for Wales 'Enabling Learning' and 'Pedagogy' guidance.
- All practitioners having access to the support package e.g., assessment, pedagogy, skill development within purposeful authentic learning experiences.
- Practitioners are upskilled to facilitate and lead training across the region.
- Same professional offer for both teachers and TAs, upskilling the whole workforce.
- Practitioners able to share learning experiences through the use of Google classroom, providing a network for collaboration.
- Promoted projects based on action research which has enabled practitioners to evaluate impact on pupil progress and provision.
- Increasing practitioner's understanding of the teaching and learning continuum from the developmental pathways, across the AOLE's and the 3 enablers and pedagogy.

## 5. 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 3: LEADERSHIP

Supporting inspirational leaders working collaboratively to raise standards. Includes future leadership & professional networks

#### LEADERSHIP

**Provide access to a range of regional and national professional learning, including access to coaching and mentoring, for all educational practitioners in schools and settings that is appropriate to their role and responsibility in line with professional standard.**

The Local Authority and GwE provide 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 arrangements in place where school leaders collaborate to support one another in primary clusters and secondary alliances taking increasing ownership and accountability for one another's improvement journey.

A substantial number of practitioners across the region have followed the National Leadership Programmes for professional development (refer to Appendix 1 – regional data) and the 2021-22 cohorts have completed their development programmes. This includes middle leaders, senior leaders, new head teachers and experienced head teachers. Effective collaboration takes place between the Local Authorities and GwE to support the development of leaders across the 'Leadership Pathway'. Information regarding their progress is regularly communicated via Regional Leadership Group meetings. This collaboration and communication ensure that the Local Authorities can identify developmental needs and target further support if necessary. The team have recruited healthy numbers of appropriately experienced applicants from across the region for the 2022-23 cohorts.

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

With regard to the changes to the New and Acting Headteacher Programme, the induction provision for new Headteachers from across the region is now more consistent, supportive and effective.

Informal monitoring and evaluation based on delivery team discussions, indicate that all programmes continue to have a positive effect on leaders' confidence and ability to contribute to a self-improving and collaborative system. Discussions with participants, their line managers and SIAs following the Leadership Experience Task (LET) presentations indicate that the programmes are consistently contributing to the

development of self-reflecting practitioners. They are taking greater responsibility for their own professional learning, career development and are further developing their understanding of their leadership role, particularly with regard to the successful implementation of CfW.

The programmes are continuing to ensure that delegates across all programmes reflect successfully on their own professional practice as school leaders against the National Leadership Standards.

Participants have been upskilled and empowered to lead and support colleagues in their settings, strengthening the leadership capacity in their schools.

The Leadership Pathway facilitates appropriate professional learning for leaders at all levels, supporting their development to the next stage of their career.

Both the Middle Leadership Development Programme (MLDP) and Senior Leadership Development Programme (SLDP) have been updated accordingly to reflect the national agenda. This has happened on a national level. On a regional level, both Modules 1 and 2 from both MLDP and SLDP has been adapted so that it can be delivered face to face. Evaluations following the delivery of these Modules have been extremely positive.

Those that have demonstrated the necessary evidence, knowledge and experience of whole school leadership have been endorsed following completion of the Aspiring Headteacher Development Programme (AHDP). They will now move onto the next stage in readying evidence for headship in the National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH) Assessment Centre held in February 2023.

## GOVERNORS

### Support for school governing bodies

An inclusive development and training programme for governors is available, partly produced through consultation and engagement with governors in order for them to identify their own developmental needs. Feedback from governors on the programme has been very positive. The regional service has a diverse provision of training to enrich that of the Authority.

Support has been provided for school governing bodies in making appointments at senior level. Support has been provided for local authorities to ensure that governing bodies have access to high quality learning opportunities. The 2021 – 2022 programme of professional learning opportunities was updated for 2022 – 2023 and shared with the GwE team and the six Governor Support officers. The offer has been extended to include the 2022 School Improvement Guidance. It also includes Support for schools requiring improvement, Curriculum for Wales, Schools as Learning Organisations, Teaching and Learning, Digital Competency, Cymraeg, Skills Challenge and Leadership. Uptake across the six Local Authorities varies according to the individual programmes organised by the six Governor Support Officers (GSOs). The impact is that Governors who attend the sessions are aware of the most recent developments and better able to support their schools as a result.

Support has been provided for LAs in their provision of training for governing bodies to support school improvement. Support has also 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. Governors who have taken advantage of the support are well prepared for inspection. The resources created by the GwE team for use in governor support sessions

have been curated and uploaded as a shared resource on the GwE Support Packs site.

A recent WG funded initiative provides opportunities for governors to apply for training in mentoring and coaching. The training takes place in April (Welsh-medium) and later in the year for the English medium cohort. A total of 20 governors have shown an interest so far.

## ALLIANCES / NETWORKS / CLUSTERS

### **Collaborate with school leaders at all levels to further embed the contribution of primary/secondary clusters, secondary alliances and regional networks in addressing national and regional priorities**

Facilitating and supporting the work of clusters and alliances has been central to the work of GwE Advisers over the past 12 months. One of the key strands of the recently published *School-Improvement Guidance: Framework for Evaluation, Improvement and Accountability* gives added impetus to the collaborative work we have undertaken with school leaders.

Generally, schools have effectively engaged with peers. The focus of collaboration has included joint planning for CfW delivery, evaluation and improvement planning activities and promoting the sharing of practice. In the most successful practice, collaboration has been promoted at all levels of school life. The work of clusters and alliances has also been augmented by the contributions of the AoLE, Assessment and Curriculum Design Networks at a regional and local level and also by the subject specific Networks within the secondary sector. There are numerous examples of excellent practice where peer engagement has been embedded in the work of alliances and clusters and is making a difference to the quality, veracity and accuracy of evaluation and improvement planning and delivery. Actions have been captured within cluster, alliance and individual school plans. EDT/SPP training has continued over the year, introducing new clusters and alliances to the model in addition to offering a refresher for those who wanted to re-engage post Covid or who had appointed new staff.

A number of clusters and alliances are developing strong practice around planning collaborative activities to support the reform journey and aspects of school improvement, and primary clusters have been able to work on developing cluster priorities around CfW for their SDP. In addition, leaders are demonstrating an increased level of confidence with curriculum roll-out.

More recently, the main thrust of collaboration has been on planning to meet the requirements of the new School Improvement Framework, on developing quality Professional Development e.g., activities to share successful practice within and beyond the cluster, on further strengthening the quality and capacity of leadership across the school and cluster/alliance and on developing approaches to improve the quality of teaching and learning and assessment. Transition plans are also utilised to ensure a continuity in primary-secondary transition for teaching and learning.

Successful practice identified across numerous clusters and alliance included:

- improved veracity and accuracy of evaluation
- jointly planned and supported improvement activities
- leader collaborating to identify 'cluster priorities' and pooling of resources to address actions
- joint development of teaching resources
- secondary/primary clusters moving away from historical 'induction' collaboration to ensuring a more honed focus on teaching and progress within their transition plans
- Numerous conferences and workshops have been arranged over the year to allow a showcasing of successful practice.

## 6. STRONG & INCLUSIVE SCHOOLS

### Summary of main actions, engagement and impact

At the core of the redirection was the need to ensure the well-being of school leaders, staff and learners was the main priority. Local Authorities and GwE staff have re-purposed their work appropriately over the last few years to continue to deliver effective services and support for all their communities of schools during and after the Covid-19 pandemic. This has led to:

- Increased support for the Accelerated Learning Programme which has had a positive impact on basic skills and well-being.
- 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, SAFMEDS, Headsprout etc.
- a range of high-quality guidance and resources to support schools to improve parental engagement.

### OBJECTIVE 4: STRONG & INCLUSIVE SCHOOLS

Committed to excellence, equity & well-being

#### PDG LAC

**To further develop & implement the national PDG strategy across the region.**

**Embed the PDG LAC cluster/alliance model across the region.**

The GwE PDG support plan for 2022-2023 submitted to Welsh Government focused on the following areas: Pupils Eligible for Free School Meals, Looked After Children, Early Years Pupil Development Grant and Pupils Eligible for free school meals who are educated in PRUs and EOTAS.

The LAC lead continues to work closely with Welsh Government colleagues, attending both the PDG and the Equity in Education meeting. The Welsh Government supporting vulnerable learners Resource has been launched. The Supporting Improvement Advisers also 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.

GwE has developed an overall PDG framework model that is been implemented in schools/LAs across the region. The focus has been on supporting targeted schools within specific LAs to raise the standards of FSM learners and ensuring a strategic steer to supporting SIAs to implement evidence-based interventions.

Our focus in 2022/23 was to ensure all clusters / SEN schools /PRUs received the PDG LAC funds with focus on supporting effective teaching and learning, emotional health and wellbeing, Professional Learning in regard to a whole school approach to trauma informed practice and in addition targeted support in line with the PEP. Trauma informed schools continues to be rolled out across the region and an additional 60 diploma places have been funded with 2 sessions of the Power of Positive Play which supports and develop the PACE element of Trauma Informed Schools.

We will continue to work closely with the 6 LAs to ensure clear communication and collaboration in regard to additional support and interventions with the LAC PDG and that all cluster plans are approved by both GwE and the LA.

Effective collaboration and engagement between the LA, GwE and schools during and post-COVID further developed approaches to supporting learners who are vulnerable to learning. As a result, nearly all schools are developing their provision to provide educational equity to all learners and have an inclusive learning environment to support children and young people who are vulnerable to learning so that they achieve more positive outcomes.

### WORKFORCE WELL-BEING (GWE AND SCHOOLS)

#### **Support leaders' wellbeing**

'Reflective Spaces' continue to have a positive impact across the region. Mike Armiger and Coral Harper are running at full and increased capacity as we continue to see an increase in demand for this kind of support. A group session is also confirmed for all ALNCOs across the region. The session will allow colleagues the opportunity to reflect openly with other ALNCOs on the challenges, successes and specific impact on ALNCOs across the region. 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.

GwE have had recent conversations with an organisation called 'Student Breakthrough' to explore coaching for young people. They are delivering a train the trainer model so adults have an accreditation to coach with young people, using a 4I System: Instruct, Inspire, Impact and Instigate. A Student Breakthrough pilot started with 5 Special Schools in January 2023 and feedback is positive with delegates noting and gives a clear difference between coaching and counselling. There are 18 modules in total and the group are currently on Module 8. They use a platform called Mighty Networks, so messaging, resources, modules etc is all accessible anytime and anywhere as it's web-based and has an app too. The pilot group are paired up with 'buddies' and members both in live sessions and in organised buddy meetings.

Almost all head teachers have appreciated the input of the Link Supporting Improvement Advisers and Local Authority officers 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 for developing their distance and blended learning provision. It was also noted that these meetings have had a positive impact on their mental health and well-being.

### WHOLE SCHOOL WELL-BEING (AoLE)

#### **Promoting 'Ethically Informed Citizens of Wales' by building on the momentum of our successful TEDxGwE.**

Planning is in progress for us to work in collaboration with Glyndwr University and the North Wales Public Service Boards to run a 'Future Leaders Pilot' to enable young people (aged 14-16) to directly contribute to the development of regional Well-being Plans, sharing their views and ideas on how well-being can actively be improved for them and people like them in their local area. This is linked to the Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, building an increased understanding, developing 'global and ethical informed citizens' and building a sense of self-efficacy and potential as future (and current) leaders. The intention is to hold TEDxGWE in the Summer Term 2023 across each LA – planning meetings are ongoing.

### 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. The main developments are as follows:

- The Research developer has created Help Your Child to Learn (HYCTL) Primary and Years 7 & 8.
- The Research developer has created Help Your Teen to Learn (HYTTL) for year 9, 10 & 11.
- Bilingual Communication packs for HYCTL and HYTTL have been shared with schools.
- Training packages for TAs to use with parents (HYCTL & HYTTL) have been developed.
- A platform was created on the GwE website with information for Parents, Carers & Schools – this ensures easy access for all.
- There is now a Parent/Carer tab on the GwE website where both parents and schools can access the HYCTL and HYTTL resources easily and schools can Access the promotion materials.
- Both resources have been well received by the parents of the schools who have trialled them with feedback leading to the idea creating parental workshop packs.
- Work has started on the development of 4 packs of Parental workshops using the resources. GwE have met with a variety of schools to pilot the introductory session. From those that fed back we asked 3 schools (4 TAs) to help to develop a series of Resources that use and promote the HYCTL programme. These are almost complete and will be trialled during the summer term.

## REIGNITE LEARNING

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

### **High Frequency Word/Repeated Reading (HFW/RR) & Headsprout Implementation Support**

This work stream consists of two aspects: *Improving fluency in Oral Reading (iFOR)* using HFW and RR strategies, and the continued provision for schools to use Headsprout reading programmes, known as the *Keeping Pupils Reading (KPR)* project. Both of these projects are continuation of work started in the previous year. Updates are as follows:

#### **Improving fluency in Oral Reading (iFOR)**

Fifty two schools and 66 teachers have signed up and had access to online training videos, and intervention resources to download for use in their schools. The number of teachers that have accessed the Google classroom is as follows:

- 63 have accessed the English resources
- 41 have accessed the Welsh resources.

Fourteen schools have attended follow-up Q&A support sessions online, and have had access to a member of the research team for implementation support. The support sessions took place in September 2021 and January 2022. Schools have also been invited to measure progress in Oral Reading Fluency using the DIBELS screening test. Two schools have measured progress using DIBELS pre-post screening resources and one school is monitoring progress. Another six schools expressed interest in measuring pupil progress using

DIBELS. The Repeated Reading fluency materials have been further developed for use at home and in school (additional practice opportunities). Schools have been invited to trial the use of the materials at home and in school. Four schools have expressed interest. Throughout 2021-22, we have continued to update the Repeated Reading and High Frequency Word interventions to make them more accessible and usable. We are also in the process of designing an iFOR manual and creating simple short training videos.

Adverts were placed on the GwE Bulletin in September 2022 for schools to sign up to the November 2022 iFOR training sessions. The Repeated Reading intervention resources have been updated to make them more accessible and usable. We now have a Repeated Reading pdf manual, with a series of accompanying short and simple training videos all hosted on an open access Google Classroom.

Following the GwE Bulletin in September 2022, 28 schools and 32 teachers signed up to access the reading fluency interventions (Repeated Reading and High Frequency Word interventions).

Twenty-three teachers signed up to attend a training session in November 2022 and 11 teachers attended. In addition, we have gained ethical approval for, and planned, a randomised controlled trial to measure the impact of the Repeated Reading fluency intervention on pupils reading rate, accuracy and comprehension. Eight schools have expressed interest in participating in the study, which we plan to conduct throughout 2023. An additional five schools signed up to access the reading fluency intervention training resources and materials and two schools attended a training session in March 2023.

The Repeated Reading intervention resources have been updated to make them more accessible and usable. We now have a Repeated Reading pdf manual, with a series of accompanying short and simple training videos all hosted on an open access Google Classroom.

### **Keeping Pupils Reading (KPR)**

This project has successfully engaged high numbers of schools over recent years (see table above), and has developed a very useful range of high quality implementation support materials that are available online for teachers. This is a good example of how CIEREI research has been able to support schools' use of an evidence-based instructional programme.

A breakdown of the numbers of teachers, parents and online resource views is as follows:

	07/2021	07/2022	04/2023
Number of schools who have renewed licence(s) directly with SR since September	30	15	17
Number of pupils joined Google Classroom	40	40	40
Number of staff joined Hwb	71	73	73
Video Guide views: Headsprout at home (Parents and staff)	399	513	537
Video Guide views: How to use Headsprout stories (Parents)	106	363	486
Video Guide views: How to conduct Benchmarks (Parents)	18	46	59
Video Guide views: How to conduct Fluency Building (Parents)	13	54	65

Video Guide views: How to set up a free trial/buy or renew a licence (School Staff)	65	77	91
Video Guide views: How to add pupils to the programme (School Staff)	84	135	160
Video Guide views: How to check scores (School Staff)	39	85	93
Video Guide views: How to input Benchmark scores (School Staff)	16	25	27
Video guide views: How to access Google Classroom (Parents)	33	50	52
Webinar 1 Getting started with Headsprout	-	2	4
Webinar 2 Progress monitoring when using Headsprout	-	0	0

Adverts were placed on October 26th Bulletin for schools to sign up to the November KPR webinar sessions. There were two webinars available to school staff; Webinar 1: Getting started with Headsprout and Webinar 2: Progress monitoring when using Headsprout. Webinars and resources were updated to fit the changes with the Headsprout programme and how schools are able to fit in the provision to fit the new ALN policy. Eight schools and 16 teachers signed up to access Webinar 1 and 1 schools and 1 teacher signed up to access Webinar 2.

All attendees to webinars over recent years are being offered on-going support in the form of check-in emails and online meetings as and when required to ensure they receive the support their setting needs throughout the year. The support is also open to all schools who continue to use Headsprout or have an interest in beginning to use Headsprout throughout the year. The support is for getting started with the programme including correspondence with Headsprout, implementation support, progress monitoring and helping to solve technical difficulties. Time is also being spent on becoming familiar with the programme which is to replace Headsprout and planning how best to support schools who want to continue delivering early reading interventions to pupils.

### **Remote Instruction of Language and Literacy (RILL) – Phase 2**

This project has been very successful this year and has produced a very high quality Welsh and English language instructional programme for primary schools. Feedback has been very positive, and the website provides a snapshot of the quality of the programme: <https://www.rillresearch.org/>

The RILL research team commenced Phase 2 work at the start of May 2021. They have now completed the adaptations to the original asynchronous/synchronous version of RILL initially developed in 2020 during lockdown.

During 2021-22 RILL focused on training new schools to implement the programme. Training consisted of asynchronous tasks, a live full-day training session with the RILL team (max 5 teachers per online session), and a short follow-up discussion. Weekly drop-in sessions were also available to those who required further and continuous support. We also conducted some in person training within participating schools.

In addition to a Hwb network where teachers can access information and training materials, ask questions, and reflect on their experience, a new website has been created that includes information and support



materials for schools, teachers, and parents. The website also contains materials for parents to use with children at home – including two new vocabulary words, a story, and discussion points to encourage interaction and the use of oral language. These materials complement the Welsh medium RILL materials and are intended to be set as homework by the teacher prior to the lesson. For non-Welsh speaking parents, English descriptions/translations are included, as well as videos to support low confident readers. We have also developed and piloted a battery of online assessments to capture impact data for RILL.

In 2022-23, the first objective was to expand RILL to provide a 15-week tech-based language and literacy Welsh programme to disadvantaged children and to test its effectiveness in improving Welsh language and reading skills. We successfully recruited 20 schools. We are currently recruiting a further 60 schools from across Wales to receive RILL training in the spring term 2023.

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 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 will organise a workshop in which headteachers, teachers and TAs will provide feedback on the draft materials as well as offer their own ideas for new activities.

We have also made contact with consortia across Wales with the aim of organising at least one training day in each county before the end of the academic year; 11 schools have already been trained in Ceredigion. We currently have three additional training sessions organised. In addition to training pan Wales, our focus during the summer term will be to run follow-up assessments with the evaluation children between May-July.

## 7. SUPPORTING A SELF-IMPROVING SYSTEM

### Summary of main actions, engagement and impact

At the core of the redirection was the need to ensure the well-being of school leaders, staff and learners was the main priority. Local Authorities and GwE staff have re-purposed their work appropriately over the last few years to continue to deliver effective services and support for all their communities of schools during and after the Covid-19 pandemic. This has led to:

- Increased support for the Accelerated Learning Programme which has had a positive impact on basic skills and well-being.
- 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, SAFMEDS, Headsprout etc.
- a range of high-quality guidance and resources to support schools to improve parental engagement.

## OBJECTIVE 5: SUPPORTING A SELF-IMPROVING SYSTEM

Supporting a system in which the education profession has the skills, capacity and agency to continually learn and improve practice

### PEER ENGAGEMENT

**Continue to further develop peer review processes in schools to support robust self-evaluation actions and improvement planning on all levels.**

**Continue to develop leadership capacity across the system.**

**Embed peer review as a key aspect of school improvement across the region.**

For the last 5 years there has been agreement with Headteachers on a series of regional principles for peer engagement. A model of peer review and improvement planning was agreed (the Schools Partnership Programme [SPP]), approved by the Management Board and Joint Committee.

All GwE SIAs have received continuous training and support on peer review, facilitation, mentoring and coaching. By March 2023, twenty-nine SIAs have been trained as peer reviewers and improvement facilitators as part of the SPP. All new staff members have received SPP refresher training.

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 March 2023, twenty 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 provided for 90 schools in cohort 3C by a team of GwE facilitators.

By March 2023, forty-three clusters/alliances (254 schools) have received SPP training, and they have already undertaken peer review, or are preparing to undertake peer review during the summer term 2023. Across the region, 271 Headteachers / senior leaders have been trained as peer reviewers; 233 senior leaders / middle leaders and proficient teachers have been trained as 'improvement facilitators'. This has enabled leaders and teachers to benefit from professional education of a high standard and it will contribute to improving leadership capacity across the region. By March 2023 both the first and second tier of primary schools and clusters involved in the programme have received extended training for improvement facilitators, with the focus on developing increasing 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 main objective of the scheme is to offer SPP training to all 407 regional schools and the Referral Units. The intention is to train approximately 15 clusters every term during the 2021-22 academic year, and in 2022-23. The Programme will be aligned to work on developing a new curriculum, to support schools and clusters to evaluate their progress towards the reform journey. To this end a series of reflection questions with a focus on the reform journey have been created in alignment with the peer process, 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 involved in the programme were invited to express an interest in participating in SPP training as part of cohort 4. A total of 43 schools expressed an interest.

Therefore, by the end of March 2023, half of the region's schools have received initial training and are 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 SPP. A researcher from the EDT will analyse the results in order to measure the impact of the programme on peer collaboration and leadership across the region. In addition, 4 clusters / alliances have been identified to be included in a case study and research into the impact of the programme in 2022-23.

### COACHING AND MENTORING

**Provide access to a range of professional learning regionally and nationally, including access to coaching and mentoring for all education practitioners in schools and settings, which is appropriate for their role and responsibilities, in line with professional standards.**

Leaders from secondary, primary and special schools, as well as GwE staff have followed the national programme for coaching and mentoring. Feedback was received noting that the programme had a positive impact on individuals in schools and also on the work of the regional service in supporting schools and clusters.

Information about the level 3 qualification has been shared following national sessions, and information about level 5 and 7 qualifications has been shared with schools and GwE staff. Invitations to attend supervision sessions have been shared and Space to Reflect sessions shared with schools and GwE staff at the beginning of the year.

### SCHOOLS CAUSING CONCERN (SCC)

**Further strengthen regional structures and processes to support and challenge primary and secondary SCC.**

Collaboration with Welsh Government, Estyn and the regional LAs are continuing the national multi-agency approach for secondary schools in Special Measures and on Stage 3 support for those schools recently taken out of category.

Collaboration with LA Officers is also continuing to further strengthen and ensure a higher level of consistency in regional structures and processes to support and challenge primary and secondary SCC. A clear school causing concern strategy is in place and all schools identified have a holistic support plan clearly articulating the nature and intensity of the support provided and the improvements needed. A multi-agency group of senior officers, lead officers from the relevant services and GwE staff meets regularly to share information and evidence so that concerns are identified at an early stage. Thresholds and triggers have been adopted to ensure consistency in identifying concerns in relation to standards, teaching and learning, assessment, leadership, inclusion or managerial matters.

Currently there are 3 secondary schools in Special Measures with an expectation that one of those schools will be removed during the next monitoring visit. Work is continuing with a Stage 3 'sustainable exit' support for the two schools recently taken out of statutory category.

In the Primary sector there are 2 schools in Special Measures. Robust arrangements are in place to support the schools through a detailed 360 plan which is aligned closely to the Post Inspection Action Plan. One School has only recently inspected therefore the initial impact of this support on standards will be limited.

The other School is in the Process of developing their PIAP with support from GwE and the LA. For 2022-23 bespoke 'holistic' support plans were in place for all the schools noted above. In each case, progress is monitored via the work of local MAG and Quality Board Groups. Plans also ensure that all schools are effectively engaging with key partners as they plan, deliver and evolve their new curriculum. Focus has also been on ensuring a continued engagement with alliance/cluster and wider networking for improving leadership, provision and the quality of teaching and learning.

Strong and timely action has been undertaken in several regional schools which were a cause for concern leading to successful inspection outcomes where no follow-up action was required. Purposeful and effective Support has led to 4 schools taken out of category between Autumn 2021 and Spring 2023. The team around the school approach is leading to marked improvements in the quality of leadership and teaching in a number of SCC.

## SCHOOLS AND SERVICE AS LEARNING ORGANISATIONS (SLO)

### **Ensure that GwE and its workforce continue to respond to all the requirements and values of Learning Organisations.**

Regional schools have made great strides in developing the 4 transversal themes of Time, Technology, Trust and Thinking Together during Covid, and this has provided a strong foundation for schools to continue to develop their collaboration and communication approaches.

The SLO culture is clearly evident in most schools, although perhaps they are not using the vocabulary of the 7 dimensions. Where SLO culture is at its best it occurs naturally in schools, without it feeling like an additional burden. The School Improvement Framework and its priorities has also helped to set a clear direction for schools in terms of the need to work together for the benefit of pupils and catchment areas. In the most successful schools, leaders have identified SLO as a vehicle to drive the Curriculum and have been able to do this unhindered.

### **Support schools across the region to gain a deeper understanding of what constitutes a Learning Organisation, so that it is a natural part of the culture of schools.**

An understanding of what constitutes a SLO has developed in many schools, but lockdown has meant that some schools, especially where there has been a change in leadership, need a refresher on the importance of this work, so that the culture is known to all school stakeholders. In the best practice, the authority has held refresher training for all its schools and provided guidance in this area for governors. There is some work to be done to update schools on SLO, and it is intended to do this through a series of optional workshops across the region.

### **Further strengthen our partnership with HEIs and develop students' awareness of SLO.**

Further development work needs to be done with our HEI partners to look at Schools as Learning Organisations and ensure that our students have a deeper understanding of SLO and their values.

## 8. 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

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 6: 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.

## **9. KEY PRIORITIES FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENT AND IMPROVEMENT**

The following areas have been identified as key priorities for further development and improvement and are included in our Business Plan for 2023-2024:

- continue to strengthen leadership at all levels with specific focus on further improving self-evaluation and improvement planning processes.
- further develop the capacity of senior and middle leaders to effectively lead on teaching and learning.
- further strengthen accountability processes across schools to ensure robust and timely interventions to address underperformance.
- ensure that all secondary leaders are actively engage in peer collaboration and peer review.
- strengthen systems for evaluating impact of improvement strategies on standards and pupil progress.
- further strengthen the quality of teaching and assessment to reduce variance both within and across schools.
- further strengthen the quality of provision for development of learners' skills.
- ensure all schools are implementing robust approaches to supporting learners who are vulnerable to learning.
- further develop tracking and intervention programmes to address identified underperformance and in-school variance and especially in relation to vulnerable learners.
- ensure that all secondary schools successfully deliver the new curriculum for Years 7 and 8 from September 2023.
- ensure schools are providing equity to all learners and have an inclusive learning environment to support those who are vulnerable to learning.
- further develop provision in secondary schools to ensure a meaningful and purposeful offer for the ability range in KS4.
- ensure all primary/secondary clusters are implementing effective transition plans.
- ensure that the schools which remain in statutory category are demonstrating an increased pace of improvements and are demonstrating clear improvements in the quality of teaching and learning and in the quality of leadership across the school.

For further details, please refer to the GwE 2023-2026 Business Plan.