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Context

Since 2015, Welsh Government have embarked on a significant cycle of change to realise a new Curriculum for Wales. The four purposes sit at the heart of the shared vision for every child and young person in Wales and as such, this ambitious programme of reform is far reaching and encompasses all aspects of the education system. Welsh Government recognise that for successful realisation, it is crucial that all aspects of the school system are aligned with, and support, the Curriculum for Wales and its underlying principles.

In June 2022, Welsh Government published the new guidance and information on school improvement and the new framework for evaluation, improvement and accountability. This guidance applies to schools, PRUs, Local Authorities, diocesan authorities, regional consortia and Estyn and outlines expectations of all in contributing to sustainable school improvement. At a national level, Welsh Government have set out the following 8 contributory factors, describing the key attributes that schools will possess to successfully realise the new curriculum:

1. Enabling all learners, and in particular those from disadvantaged backgrounds, to progress along their own learning pathway and raise their aspirations to achieve their full potential; allied to a range of assessment approaches to understand and support this progress.
2. Co-constructing a curriculum, in line with the Curriculum for Wales Framework, which promotes a broad range of knowledge, skills and experiences (including social and interactional experiences) with a clear understanding of why these matters.
3. Ensuring the school environment supports learners' and practitioners' well-being.
4. Supporting practitioners' understanding of what works in curriculum design by investing in the enquiry and pedagogic skills of all staff.
5. Enabling ambitious professional learning for all practitioners in a school dedicated to being a learning organisation.

6. Embedding reflection, self-evaluation and improvement within schools, with good school leadership as a pre-condition for that.
7. Being at the heart of their communities - building better relationships between schools and families, communities and employers, to support and promote educational achievement and excellent employment, next steps education and training.
8. Listening to children and young people as they engage with their learning and supporting

All stakeholders within the Welsh education system will therefore need to work within this new School Improvement Framework for evaluation, improvement and accountability.

Purpose of the Evaluation and Impact Strategy

GwE need to be able to clearly evaluate and capture impact of its work in line with its core school improvement function and to enable it to fully meet the expectations as outlined in the School Improvement Guidance.

The purpose of this strategy is to articulate clearly how GwE captures impact as part of its ongoing evaluation processes in line with its commitment to developing a culture of continuous improvement as a learning organisation. The self-evaluation processes draw upon a range of sources and information that are both qualitative and quantitative which support schools in working towards the national priorities.

Across North Wales, GwE and the 6 Local Authorities have developed strong and effective collaborative partnerships for school improvement. This enables coherence in the way GwE and the Local Authority capture the impact of all school improvement provision and support offered to schools. Consideration will also be given as to how impact at individual school level and system level will be captured across the region, in the short, medium and longer term.

In line with the recommendation within Successful Futures, GwE will employ a sampling methodology as part of this strategy. Careful planning and consideration will be given to ensure that the sampling approaches are appropriate and purposeful, allowing for coverage of settings, learners and practitioners to form a representative regional sample.

A further aim of the strategy is to ensure that information is shared at timely intervals throughout the year to a wide range of stakeholders, giving confidence and clarity on the quality and impact of the wide range of work undertaken. This strategy will allow transparency to stakeholders and the wider public and demonstrate value for money.

The strategy will also enable GwE and Local Authorities to identify and understand effective practice within its own provision. In implementing national policy, the strategy enables GwE to capture impact of practice at both a local and regional level. In this way, self-evaluation findings will feed into regional and local business planning priorities and inform future national policy where appropriate.

Principles within the Evaluation and Impact Strategy

The following key principles underpin the strategy, fully aligning with the behaviours identified in the new school improvement framework and in line with GwE working as a learning organisation. As a service, GwE

will:

- draw upon a wide range of evidence, using data proportionately alongside first-hand evidence, to evaluate strengths of the service and areas for improvement;
- be reflective, honest and inclusive, using rigorous evidence-based approaches that take in a wide range of views from across a number of stakeholders;
- regularly report on progress against the service improvement priorities, continually evaluating the impact of planned actions;
- use the schools' main priorities from across the region to inform its own improvement planning and to review the professional learning and support offer to schools;
- develop and encourage a continuous improvement culture across the system
- support schools to develop their own evaluation processes which may include facilitating and brokering a range of professional learning and promoting opportunities for peer-to-peer working between schools on self-evaluation.

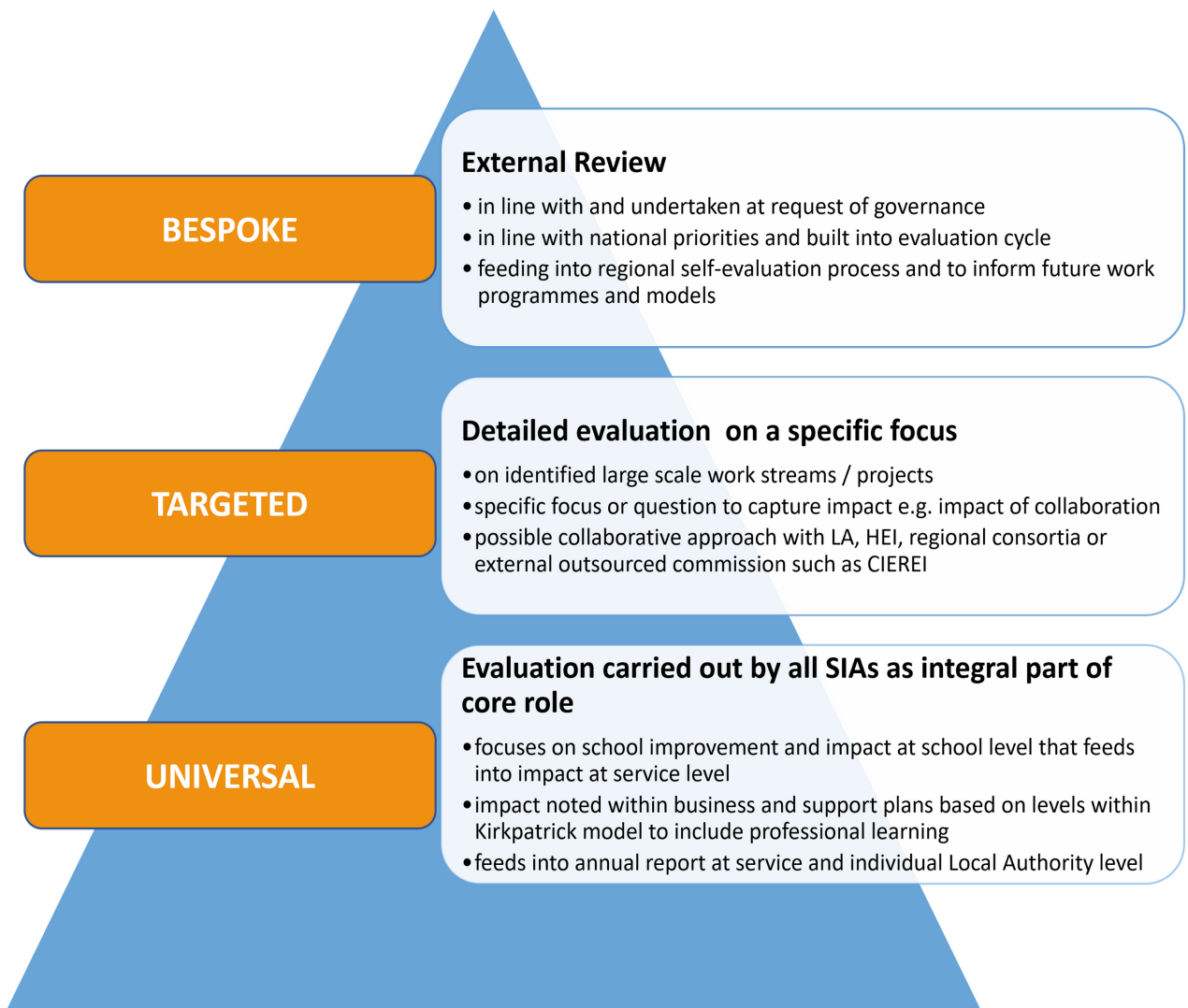
Evaluation Cycle and Processes

Evaluation and improvement planning is central to the work of the service. GwE has a clear cycle of evaluation that is summarised in the following diagram:



Within this evaluation cycle the widest and richest possible range of information and data, both qualitative and quantitative, are used to inform the self-evaluation and improvement planning process. The following

illustration demonstrates the tiered approach that GwE has in place for capturing impact.



Universal encompasses those aspects of evaluation that all Supporting Improvement Advisers engage with and are captured both within support plans at a school and cluster/alliance level and through business plans at a regional and local level. This also includes evaluation of professional learning offered to schools.

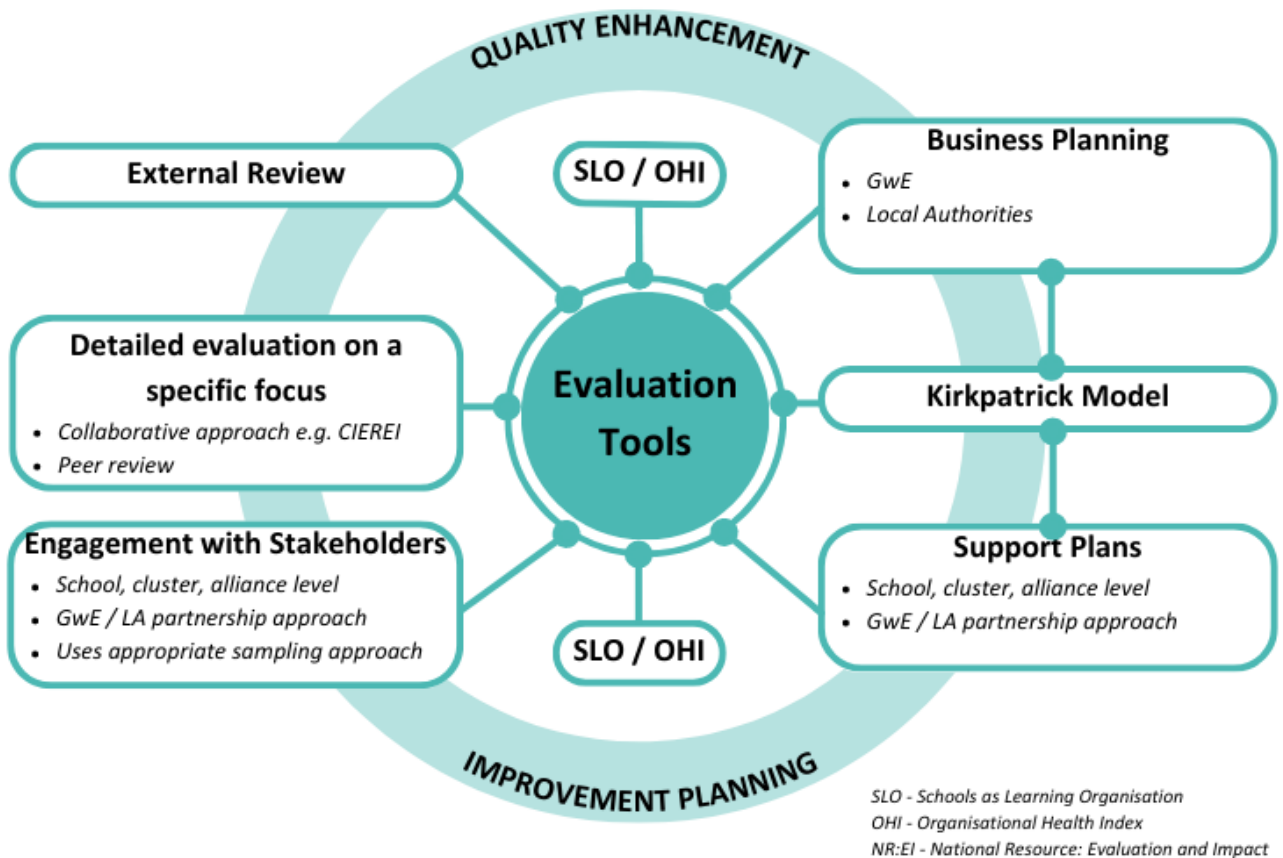
Targeted evaluation processes are planned for and carried out at regular intervals on a specific focus or theme. Evaluation may also be targeted in line with large work streams in line with priorities in order to identify impact and engage with a range of stakeholders as part of this. Within targeted evaluation processes, a collaborative approach with GwE and partners is often employed.

Bespoke evaluation forms the third layer of the approach whereby external reviews are used as part of the evaluation cycle. These evaluations will draw upon the commission of external parties to focus on specific aspects of the service in line with the governance arrangements.

When co-constructing outcomes for the actions and professional learning within business and support plans, Supporting Improvement Advisers consider the expected short-term outputs and longer-term impact. These outcomes should take into account the expected impact in the context of school provision, teaching, learning in schools and on the intended outcomes of the service.

Evaluation Tools

To gather evidence for the evaluation and improvement planning process, GwE draws upon a range of evaluation tools which are used within the tiered approach described above. These tools are used across the universal, targeted and bespoke level as appropriate and relevant to the evaluation focus. An infographic to show the tools used can be seen below, with further detail on each.



● BUSINESS PLANS


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. Progress against each priority in the Business Plan is reported upon quarterly against regional priorities and also providing a local authority specific overview.

● SUPPORT PLANS

As part of the expectations within the new School Improvement Framework, all schools and settings across the region have a support plan in place. Through regular professional dialogue with school leaders, the support plans have been co-constructed to allow for joint ownership. Each plan details the support to be offered by either GwE or Local Authority and expected outcomes and impact are acknowledged and reviewed. Support plans also identify the collaborative work being undertaken across clusters and alliances and again expected outcomes and impact of the support given by GwE and LA are noted. The impact of the support is captured on a sampling basis through detailed case studies.

- **THE GwE MODEL FOR CAPTURING IMPACT BASED ON THE KIRKPATRICK FOUR TIERED APPROACH**

Sitting within both the business and support plans is the GwE model for capturing impact based on the Donald Kirkpatrick Four Level Evaluation Model. The four levels are noted below and recognise that impact can be seen at different levels over time as learning and behaviours become embedded.



	What		When
Level 4	RESULTS	Impact on results	Long term impact
Level 3	BEHAVIOUR	Impact on provision	Long term impact
Level 2	LEARNING	Impact on teachers	Short term impact
Level 1	REACTION	Reaction to Professional Learning	Short term impact

Short-term impact will be captured by evaluating the participants satisfaction and understanding of the professional learning or support provided, and also on a sampling basis, how they are using the learning in their own school or setting. Over longer-term, the impact on provision, teaching and learning is also captured using a sampling approach.

- **NATIONAL RESOURCES: EVALUATION AND IMPACT [NR:EI]**

GwE supports schools to engage with the NR:EI as part of developing effective and robust self-evaluation and improvement processes. The evaluation prompts, interactive resources and case studies are practical tools for schools to engage with as part of self-evaluation.

- **ENGAGEMENT WITH STAKEHOLDERS**

Engaging with stakeholders is an important aspect of the evaluation process across all aspects of the work undertaken by GwE. A variety of approaches are employed across both formal and informal feedback channels.

Formal Feedback

Stakeholder questionnaires, surveys and focus groups are planned to ensure that information can feed into the improvement planning process.

- **DETAILED EVALUATION ON A SPECIFIC FOCUS**

Conducting detailed evaluations on a specific focus is an important aspect of the self-evaluation process across GwE. In line with business plans and large-scale projects and workstreams, these are requested at timely intervals and to focus on key priorities and themes. These evaluations are carried out by GwE colleagues, in partnership with Local Authorities and where appropriate, external partners are commissioned to include HEIs.

Collaborative Institute for Education Research, Evidence and Impact (CIEREI)

CIEREI is a formal strategic collaboration between GwE, Bangor University, schools, and other bodies and institutions interested in education outcomes. The primary aim of CIEREI is to support improving outcomes for children through schools. CIEREI's establishment is the third phase in the development of a regional research and evaluation collaboration in North Wales and has been established.

Through the work of CIEREI, GwE has committed to a number of ongoing formal evaluations which contribute to building research capacity across the region and Wales as a system. Findings from these evaluations play an important role in feeding both into GwE's self-evaluation processes, whilst also capturing impact at school level with those schools engaging.

Peer Review

GwE actively engages with peers within Local Authorities to carry out peer reviews as appropriate. In addition, peer from regional consortia and partnerships also take part in joint reviews to scrutinise aspects of work.

- **EXTERNAL REVIEWS**

GwE engage with and draw upon the commission of external parties to focus on specific aspects of the service in line with the governance arrangements.

- **SCHOOLS AS LEARNING ORGANISATION / ORGANISATIONAL HEALTH INDEX [SLO / OHI]**

GwE also builds in opportunities for engaging with evaluation tools which include Learning Organisation (OECD and Welsh Government) and Organisational Health Index (McKinsey and Company). These surveys offer all staff an opportunity to input and findings of these surveys feed into improvement planning and allows GwE to learn from international practice.

Evaluation Reporting

The evaluation processes and tools detailed above all help inform the work of the service and to allow the impact of the support given to schools and settings to be identified and captured. This provides the evidence base for reporting. There are a variety of reporting formats to meet purpose and audience and in line with transparency to all stakeholders. Formats include:

- Monitoring and impact reports for governance structures, e.g., Management Board, Joint Committee, Local Authority Scrutiny meetings
- In line with expectations, termly reports for Welsh Government are written and shared which review progress made against priorities and in line with grant conditions.
- Additionally, GwE engages with Estyn in providing information for thematic reports as per the schedule set by Welsh Government.
- Through sharing practice with use of case studies:
 - regular communication channels, e.g., GwE bulletin, website, social media
 - network meetings and forums
 - workshops and/or conferences

Monitoring and Review

This policy will be monitored regularly as per the evaluation processes detailed above. Findings will be fed regularly into Management Board and Joint Committee as appropriate. The policy will be reviewed and amendments made as necessary following GwE's governance arrangements.

References

School improvement guidance: framework for evaluation, improvement and accountability - Hwb (gov.wales)

Written Statement: School improvement and the information landscape (19 January 2023) | GOV.WALES

Scoping study for the evaluation of the curriculum and assessment reforms in Wales | GOV.WALES

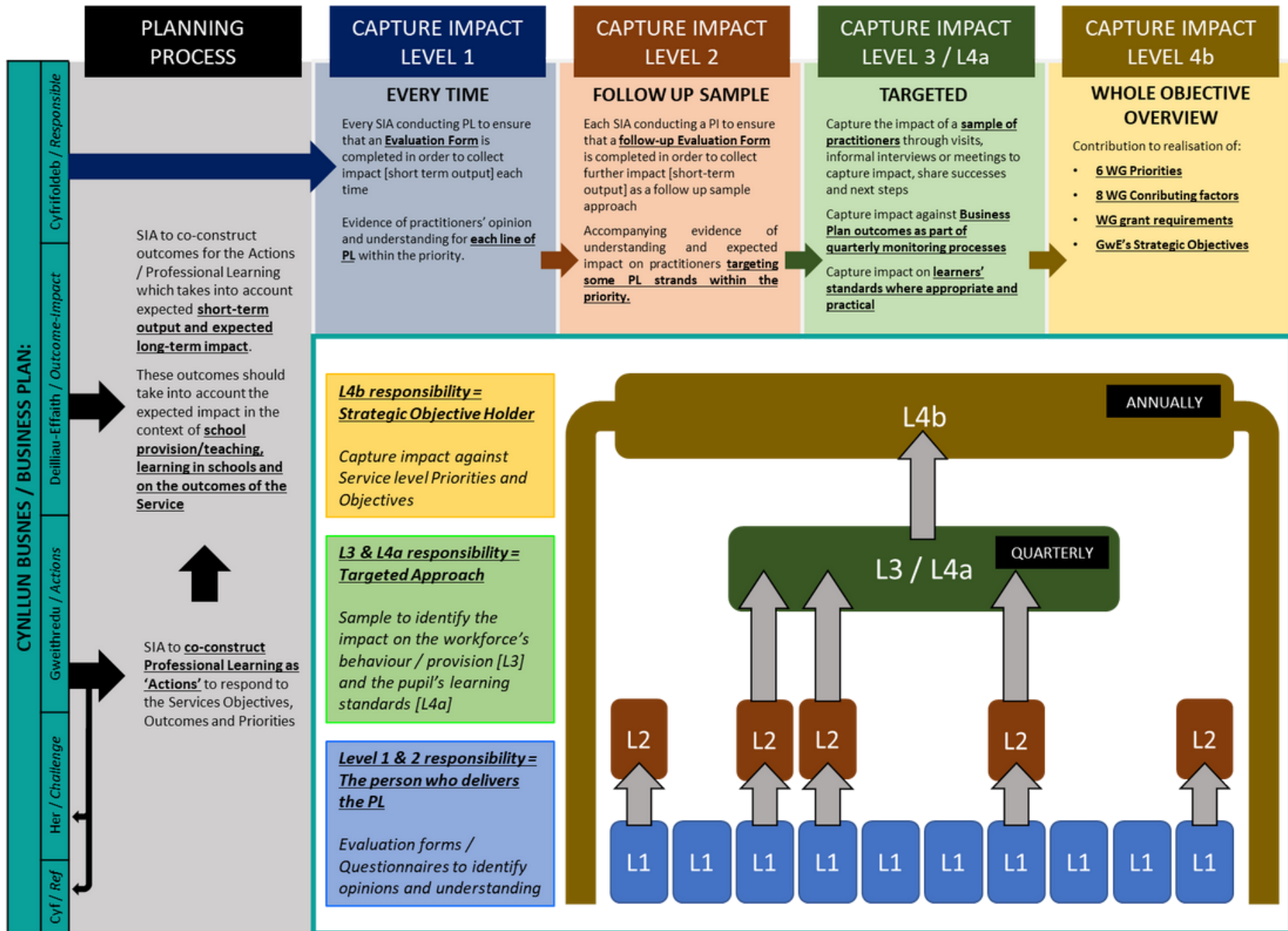
Research exploring a new information system for schools | GOV.WALES

The national resource: evaluation and improvement - Hwb (gov.wales)

<https://www.gov.wales/national-strategy-educational-research-and-enquiry-nsere-vision-document>

Appendix 1:

OVERVIEW OF HOW IMPACT IS CAPTURED ACROSS THE TIERED APPROACH



Appendix 2:

GwE APPROACH TO TARGETED EVALUATION

WHY? Aims of Targeted Evaluation

Targeted evaluation processes are planned for and carried out at regular intervals on a specific focus or theme linked to priorities or large work streams and projects.

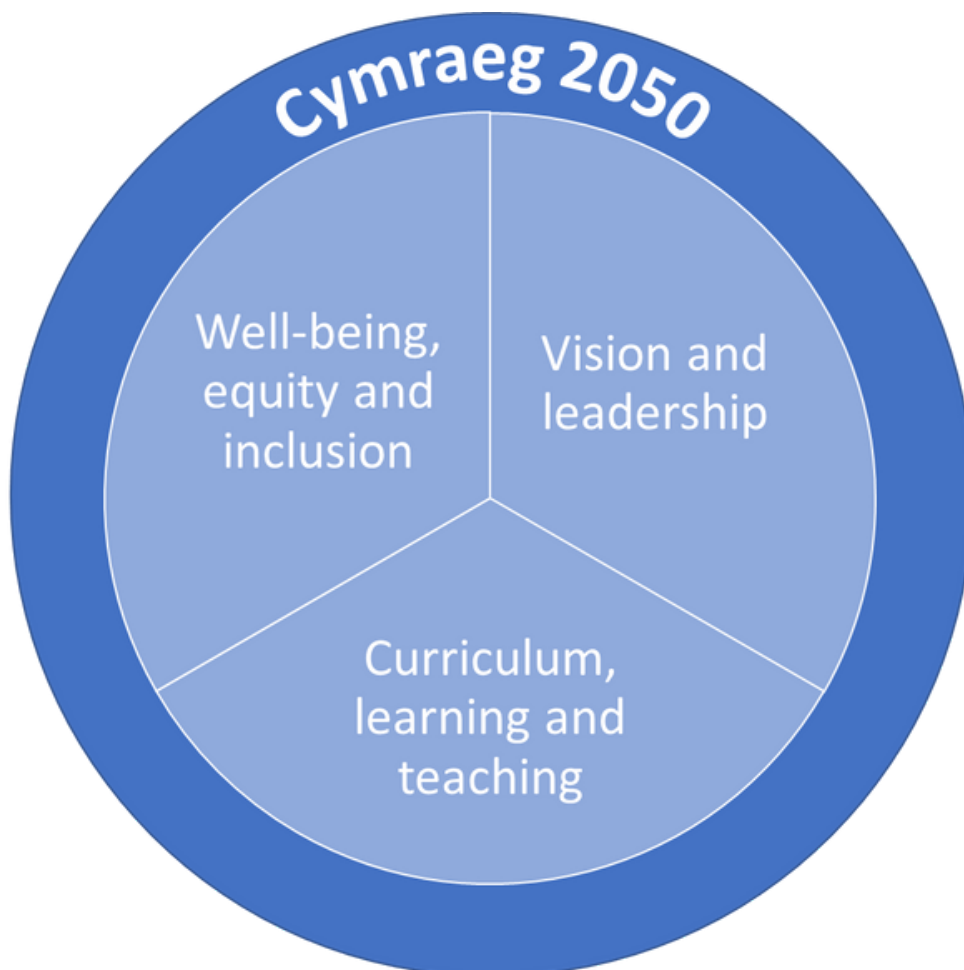
When deciding on the focus of the targeted evaluation, the following sources have also been considered:

- Analysis of schools' high level priorities
- Regional business plan priorities
- Forward plan of scrutiny work programme across 6 Local Authorities
- National documentation including the 8 contributory factors of successful curriculum realisation and the 6 objectives outlined in Our National Mission – High standards and aspirations for all

Areas for specific focused targeted evaluation have been mapped out in a high-level overview (see below).

WHAT? Overview of themes and focus of targeted evaluation

Within the new school improvement guidance, there are 3 overarching areas for self-evaluation for schools to consider as shown in the infographic below. Therefore, to understand the progress that schools are making across these areas, GwE intends to target evaluation within each of these areas throughout the course of an academic year. Our work will fully align with and support the commitment to developing Cymraeg 2050: a million speakers.



Targeted Evaluation Overview - draft for consideration for approval by governance bodies

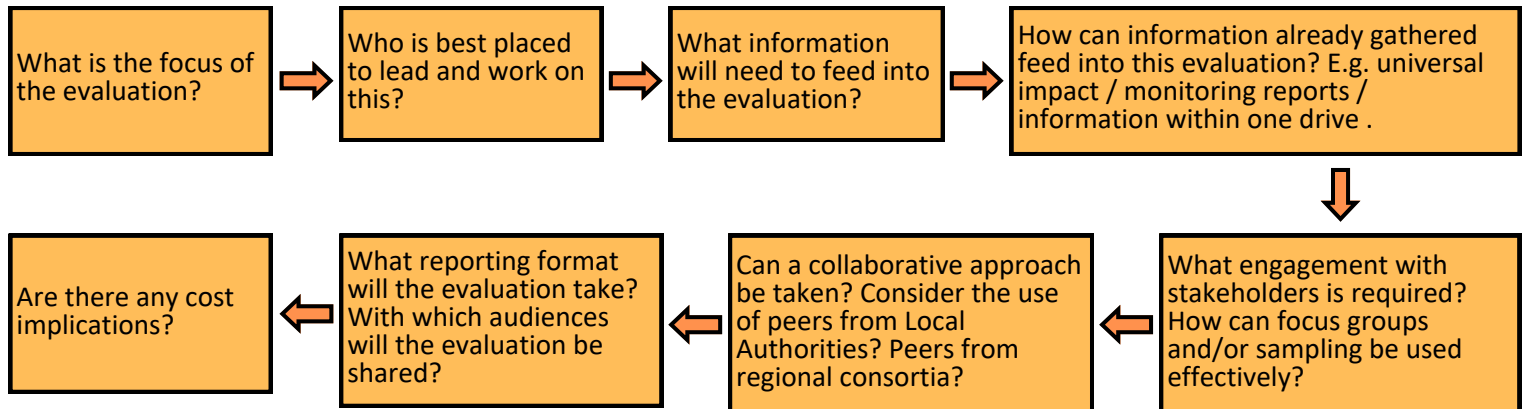
2023-2024		
Focus	Timescale	Personnel
<u>Strategic Objective 1 : School Improvement</u> GwE's impact supporting school improvement in addressing the following challenges only: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> improving leadership (including succession planning) supporting collaboration schools causing concern strengthening partnership with LAs 	Sept 2023 – July 2024	ISOS
Ein Llais Ni – improving Welsh oracy skills	Spring Term 2024	GwE Bangor Uni
School Partnership Programme – peer review supporting leadership and collaboration at all levels	Summer Term 2024	GwE EDT
Any further aspects/themes identified through Regional/Local scrutiny processes	TBC	TBC

2024-2025		
Focus	Timescale	Personnel
<u>Strategic Objective 1 : School Improvement</u> GwE's impact supporting school improvement in addressing the following challenges only: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> teaching and learning curriculum and assessment improving learner standards and progress 	Sept 2024 – July 2025	ISOS
A positive educational experience for everyone - supporting vulnerable learners and ensuring equity for all.	Summer Term 2025	GwE LA
Any further aspects/themes identified through Regional/Local scrutiny processes	TBC	TBC

2025-2026		
Focus	Timescale	Personnel
Staff well-being and resilience	Spring Term 2026	External TBC
Cymraeg belongs to us all – progress towards supporting 1m Welsh speakers by 2050	Summer Term 2026	GwE Bangor Uni
Any further aspects/themes identified through Regional/Local scrutiny processes	TBC	TBC

HOW? Practical guidance on scoping the targeted evaluation

When considering the approaches for conducting a targeted evaluation, it is important to consider the information that is already within the system. In order to streamline work and not to increase workload, the following process should help in the planning and scoping stage.



HOW? Practical guidance on scoping the targeted evaluation

Target evaluation will be based on a sampling approach. This is an efficient way of getting data about a large group (population) from a small group (sample). It allows you to understand a broader impact based on the experiences and outcomes of a smaller group. The benefits of sampling include keeping workload and costs to a minimum.