

**SELF EVALUATION: ESTYN THEMATIC REPORT [JANUARY 2015]**

Regional Overview	Number of schools	Number of Welsh medium schools	Number of pupils	FSM 2013	SEN pupils
Primary	379	199	58787	8979 / 15%	11545 / 20%
Secondary	54	24	40805	5460 / 13%	8019 / 20%
Middle	1	0	477	23 / 5%	109 / 23%
Special	9	-	1153	451 / 39%	1153 / 100%

**ASPECT : IMPACT ON PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS' STANDARDS OF ACHIEVEMENT**
**Concise Judgement**

Improving quality and standards is a main priority for GwE and its partners and has a positive impact on experiences and outcomes for children and young people. GwE believes that standards across the FP, KS2, KS3 and KS5 are generally good and that recent trends suggest plateauing at FP and KS2 with further improvements at KS3 and KS4.

**However, it is recognised that 2013>2014 national progress has been greater across the main indicators in all key stages [with the exception of KS3] and that there are still variations in performance between establishments in both sectors, across the region.** Too many individual schools find that their rolling position is typified by performance in the main indicators which is below the median in national FSM benchmarks or in the bottom quartile. Specific strategies have been implemented with establishments with a history of underperformance [including adopting quality improvement plans and agreeing on a tight and regular timetable of monitoring and challenging] which has resulted in good improvements in a substantial percentage of them. With a minority of those schools making inadequate progress, the Authorities, in full cooperation with GwE, have taken action in accordance with the powers and responsibilities as defined in the Authority/School Partnership Agreement [Section 197 Education Act 2007].

**The biggest challenge remains with improving performance in a number of targeted secondary schools and consolidating the recent improvement seen in a number of others as well as securing improvements in standards and leadership across underperforming primary schools.** The intense and focused action in these schools since 2013 reflects the commitment of the authorities and GwE's Senior Management Team to ensuring improvements for every learner, regardless of their location within the region.

**Performance in the main indicator at the end of every key stage:** in comparison with the national situation, the performance of GwE's region in the main indicator is good at KS3 and KS4 [although 2013>2014 KS4 progress at national level surpasses local improvement rate]. Performance at FP and KS2 are below the national average for the first time in three years and further work needs to be undertaken to support assessment, standardisation and moderation across the region.

Indicator	2013		+/-	2014		+/-	Progress 2012>2013		Progress 2013>2014	
	GwE	Wales		GwE	Wales		GwE	Wales	GwE	Wales
	FPI	83.5	83.0	+0.5	84.3	85.2	-0.9	+1.8	+2.5	+0.8
CSI KS2	85.5	84.3	+1.2	85.6	86.1	-0.5	+1.9	+1.7	+0.1	+1.8
CSI KS3	78.7	77.0	+1.7	83.7	81.0	+2.7	+3.0	+4.5	+5.1	+4.0
TL2+	56.0	52.7	+3.3	57.0	55.1	+1.9	+2.8	+1.6	+1.0	+2.4

**Secondary Banding :** for 2013, in comparison with the national situation, the picture is very positive with a substantially higher % of GwE schools in Band 1 and 2 [50.9%] and a significantly lower % in Band 4 and 5. [18.1%]. Between 2012>2013 14 schools in Band 4 or 5 had improved their banding position

**Source of evidence of processes and impact**

Regional performance data for FP, KS2, KS3, KS4; KS5 + national tests [2012/2013/2014]

LA Core Data Set x6 [2012/2013/2014]

2013/2014 MD's Annual Report on Performance to Joint Committee.

2012/2013/2014 LA Annual Report to Elected Members x6

2013 Banding data and 2014 National categorisation data [primary and secondary].

Summary of Estyn judgements for primary/secondary schools x 6 LA between 2012>2014.

and across the region, there has been a significant reduction in the number of schools in Band 5 which reflects the impact of the targeted and brokered support by GwE over the period. In 2013 there was only one school in the lowest Band but there was a +11.5% improvement in their performance in 2014. Overall performance of Band 4 schools for 2014 was also most encouraging and in many cases again reflects the support GwE had brokered on their behalf – examples of improvement include School A Wrexham +7%, School B Wrexham + 11% [although despite overall improvement, the performance of FSM pupils was lower than the previous year]; School C Wrexham +12%; School A Flint +10%, School A Gwynedd +13%. Two schools [one in Wrexham and one in Gwynedd] were the only schools in the bottom two bands to see a slight drop. Intervention strategies for these schools in the coming year are already underway and include the personal input of the respective Senior System Leader. However, whilst there has also been a reduction in the number of schools in Band 4 and 5 [from 17 in 2012 to 10 in 2013], we feel that the % is still too high and we will continue to work with key stakeholders to support, monitor and challenge underperforming schools. An enhanced menu of leadership support and school>school collaboration will be delivered in 2014-15 to help achieve the necessary improvements. The LA with the strongest profile for the banding is Mon where all 5 schools, in 2013, were in Band 1 or 2.

**Secondary National Categorisation** : with the changes in the categorisation process, the reduction in categories/bands from 5 to 4 and additional indicators and differentiated weightings being taken into consideration, the number of schools in the lowest categories [3 and 4] has increased to 38.2%. However, this is significantly lower than the national figure of 48.4% [% is also lower for schools in Category 4 [-8.2%]. The number of schools performing in the highest category is higher than the national average [+5.0%] and significantly higher [+10.2%] when taking into consideration the two highest categories [1 and 2]. Only 4 schools across the region were placed in the lowest category and 4 regional LA's did not have any schools in this category. The strongest LA profiles are seen in Mon, Gwynedd and Denbighshire.

**Secondary National Categorisation Profile 2014-2015 [Stage 1 – Data]**

	Number of schools in Category 1	% C1	Number of schools in Category 2	% C2	Number of schools in Category 3	% C3	Number of schools in Category 4	% C4
Anglesey	2	40.0%	2	40.0%	1	20.0%	0	0.0%
Gwynedd	3	21.4%	8	57.1%	3	21.4%	0	0.0%
Conwy	0	0.0%	4	57.1%	3	42.9%	0	0.0%
Denbighshire	2	25.0%	4	50.0%	2	25.0%	0	0.0%
Flintshire	3	25.0%	4	33.3%	3	25.0%	2	16.7%
Wrexham	1	11.1%	1	11.1%	5	55.6%	2	22.2%
<b>GwE</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>20.0%</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>41.8%</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>30.9%</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>7.3%</b>
<b>Wales</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>15.0%</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>36.6%</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>32.9%</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>15.5%</b>

	Number of schools in Category 1 and 2	% C1 and 2	Number of schools in Category 3 and 4	% C3 and 4
Anglesey	4	80.0%	1	20.0%
Gwynedd	11	78.6%	3	21.4%
Conwy	4	57.1%	3	42.9%
Denbighshire	6	75.0%	2	25.0%
Flintshire	7	58.3%	5	41.7%
Wrexham	2	22.2%	7	77.8%
<b>GwE</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>61.8%</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>38.2%</b>
<b>Wales</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>51.6%</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>48.4%</b>

**Primary National Categorisation** : when compared to local categorisation for 2013, there are significant variations in the placements of some schools [many of these small schools with small cohorts] at Stage 1 of the process. The % of schools in the lowest two categories is too high and further work is needed to improve standards as well as the accuracy of TA at both key stages. Stage 2 has led to the final category being higher, for a number of these schools as a result of good quality leadership, high quality teaching and learning or where very small cohorts impact quartile placement and do not fairly represent standards. Further work needs to be done also to examine the correlation between the outcomes in the national tests and school based assessments of the NC. As with the secondary sector, the % of schools in the highest band/group is also disappointing and we need to address how GwE will support the improvement journey of good schools to become excellent schools.

	Number of schools in Category 1	% C1	Number of schools in Category 2	% C2	Number of schools in Category 3	% C3	Number of schools in Category 4	% C4
Anglesey	11	22.92%	16	33.33%	14	29.17%	7	14.58%
Gwynedd	14	14.43%	32	32.99%	35	36.08%	16	16.49%
Conwy	6	10.17%	21	35.59%	25	42.37%	7	11.86%
Denbighshire	4	8.33%	16	33.33%	24	50.00%	4	8.33%
Flintshire	10	14.71%	21	30.88%	25	36.76%	12	17.65%
Wrexham	6	10.17%	19	32.20%	27	45.76%	7	11.86%
<b>GwE</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>13.46%</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>32.98%</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>39.58%</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>13.98%</b>
<b>Wales</b>	<b>186</b>	<b>13.77%</b>	<b>487</b>	<b>36.05%</b>	<b>503</b>	<b>37.23%</b>	<b>175</b>	<b>12.95%</b>

	Number of schools in Category 1 and 2	% C1 and 2	Number of schools in Category 3 and 4	% C3 and 4
Anglesey	27	56.25%	21	43.75%
Gwynedd	46	47.42%	51	52.58%
Conwy	27	45.76%	32	54.24%
Denbighshire	20	41.67%	28	58.33%
Flintshire	31	45.59%	37	54.41%
Wrexham	25	42.37%	34	57.63%
<b>GwE</b>	<b>176</b>	<b>46.44%</b>	<b>203</b>	<b>53.56%</b>
<b>Wales</b>	<b>673</b>	<b>49.81%</b>	<b>678</b>	<b>50.19%</b>

**Estyn Inspections :**

The regional profile for schools inspected between Summer 2013 and Autumn 2014, is generally positive with only 9 [2.0%] of schools in a statutory category [Significant Improvement or Special Measures]. Individual LA profiles as follows :

<b>Mon school inspections [total of 15 inspections]</b>	<b>Inspection profile</b>	<b>Outcome of follow-up action by GwE</b>
2013>2014 educational year [Summer] : <i>3 primary schools</i>	1 school no follow-up; 2 schools Estyn Monitoring	1 school has made the expected progress and has been removed from follow-up category. The other school is awaiting a visit on 18 November with firm prospects that it will be removed from the category.
2013>2014 educational year [Autumn/Spring/Summer]: <i>8 primary schools and 1 secondary school</i>	4 schools no follow-up; 1 LA monitoring; 4 Estyn Monitoring [the situation of 2 of these schools was historically vulnerable and considerable progress was made in a short space of time to get them into this category].	No revisits have taken place.
2014>2015 educational year [Autumn]: <i>1 primary school, 1 special school and 1 secondary school</i>	Although the reports have not been published, no school was placed in a follow-up category.	NA
Current profile for Mon [all schools] :		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number/% schools in LA monitoring category: 1 [1.8%]</li> <li>• Number/% schools in Estyn monitoring category: 5 [9.2%]</li> <li>• Number/% schools in need of Significant Improvement: 0 [0.0%]</li> <li>• Number/% schools in Special Measures: 0 [0.0%]</li> </ul>		
Judgement profile [of the schools inspected in the period]:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number/% where Good or better was awarded across the 3 Key Questions: 8 [53.3%]</li> <li>• Number% where KQ1 was judged to be Good or better: 11 [73.3%]</li> <li>• Number% where KQ2 was judged to be Good or better: 10 [66.6%]</li> <li>• Number% where KQ3 was judged to be Good or better: 9 [60.0%]</li> <li>• Number% where one of the Key Questions was judged to be unsatisfactory: 0 [0.0%]</li> <li>• Number/% schools where a Key Question/Overall Judgement was judged to be Excellent: 1 [1.8%]</li> </ul>		
<b>Gwynedd school inspections [total of 27 inspections]</b>	<b>Inspection profile</b>	<b>Outcome of follow-up action by GwE</b>
2013>2014 educational year [Summer] : <i>5 primary schools</i>	No follow up in any school	N/A
2013>2014 educational year [Autumn/Spring/Summer]: <i>15 primary schools; 4 secondary and 1 special schools</i>	2 Significant Improvement; 6 Estyn Monitoring; 3 LA Monitoring; 9 schools no follow-up	Estyn have re-visited 2 schools [1 Estyn Monitoring category and 1 Significant Improvement – which had remained in category since 2012] and have removed them from their respective categories
2014>2015 educational year [Autumn]: <i>2 primary schools</i>	1 Estyn Monitoring; 1 school no follow-up	N/A
Current profile for Gwynedd [% based on all schools] :		

- Number/% schools in LA Monitoring : 3 [2.6%]
  - Number/% schools in Estyn Monitoring : 6 [5.3%]
  - Number/% schools in Significant Improvement : 2 [1.7%]
  - Number/% Special Measures : 0 [0.0%]
- Judgement profile [based on the 27 schools which have been inspected during the period in question] :
- Number/% judged Good or better across all 3 key questions : 19 [70.3%]
  - Number/% judged Good or better for KQ1 : 20 [74.0%]
  - Number/% judged Good or better for KQ2 : 21 [77.7%]
  - Number/% judged Good or better for KQ3 : 20 [74.0%]
  - Number/% judged Unsatisfactory for one or more of the key questions : 1 [3.7%]
  - Number/% judged Excellent for one or more of the key questions : 4 [14.8%]

Conwy school inspections [total of 14 inspections]	Inspection profile	Outcome of follow-up action by GwE
2013>2014 educational year [Summer] : <i>3 schools</i>	1 LA Monitoring; 1 Estyn Monitoring; 1 school no follow-up	Both schools out of category
2013>2014 educational year [Autumn/Spring/Summer]: <i>11 schools</i>	4 Estyn Monitoring; 7 schools no follow-up	No revisits have taken place.
2014>2015 educational year [Autumn]: <i>0</i>	N/A	N/A

- Current profile for Conwy [all schools] :
- Number/% schools in LA monitoring category: 0 [%]
  - Number/% schools in Estyn monitoring category: 4 [6.2%]
  - Number/% schools in need of Significant Improvement: 0 [0%]
  - Number/% schools in Special Measures: 0 [0%]
- Judgement profile [of the schools inspected in the period]:
- Number/% where Good or better was awarded across the 3 Key Questions: 9 [64.2%]
  - Number/% where KQ1 was judged to be Good or better: 9 [64.2%]
  - Number/% where KQ2 was judged to be Good or better: 9 [64.2%]
  - Number/% where KQ3 was judged to be Good or better: 10 [71.4%]
  - Number/% where one of the Key Questions was judged to be unsatisfactory: 0 [0%]
  - Number/% schools where a Key Question/Overall Judgement was judged to be Excellent: 1 [7.1%]

Denbighshire school inspections [total of 13 inspections]	Inspection profile	Outcome of follow-up action by GwE
2013>2014 educational year [Summer] : <i>2 schools</i>	1 Estyn Monitoring; 1 school no follow-up	Ou of category
2013>2014 educational year [Autumn/Spring/Summer]: <i>9 schools</i>	2 LA Monitoring; 2 Estyn Monitoring 5 schools no follow-up	One LA Monitoring out of category
2014>2015 educational year [Autumn]: <i>2 schools</i>	1 LA Monitoring; 1 Estyn Monitoring	N/A

Current profile for Denbighshire [all schools] : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number/% schools in LA monitoring category: 1 [2.1%]</li> <li>• Number/% schools in Estyn monitoring category: 3 [6.4%]</li> <li>• Number/% schools in need of Significant Improvement: 0 [%]</li> <li>• Number/% schools in Special Measures: 0 [%]</li> </ul>														
Judgement profile [of the schools inspected in the period]: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number/% where Good or better was awarded across the 3 Key Questions: 9 [69.2%]</li> <li>• Number/% where KQ1 was judged to be Good or better: 9 [69.2%]</li> <li>• Number/% where KQ2 was judged to be Good or better: 9 [69.2%]</li> <li>• Number/% where KQ3 was judged to be Good or better: 9 [69.2%]</li> <li>• Number/% where one of the Key Questions was judged to be unsatisfactory: 0 [%]</li> <li>• Number/% schools where a Key Question/Overall Judgement was judged to be Excellent: 0 [%]</li> </ul>														
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Current profile for Flintshire [% based on all schools] : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number/% schools in LA Monitoring : 5 [6.2%]</li> <li>• Number/% schools in Estyn Monitoring : 3 [3.7%]</li> <li>• Number/% schools in Significant Improvement : 2 [2.5%]</li> <li>• Number/% Special Measures : 1 [1.2%]</li> </ul>														
Judgement profile [based on the 18 schools which have been inspected during the period in question] : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number/% judged Good or better across all 3 key questions : 13 [72.2%]</li> <li>• Number/% judged Good or better for KQ1 : 14 [77.8%]</li> <li>• Number/% judged Good or better for KQ2 : 14 [77.8%]</li> <li>• Number/% judged Good or better for KQ3 : 15 [83.3%]</li> <li>• Number/% judged Unsatisfactory for one or more of the key questions : 1 [5.6%]</li> <li>• Number/% judged Excellent for one or more of the key questions : 1 [5.6%]</li> </ul>														
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2014>2015 educational year [Autumn]: 2 Primary	1 Estyn Monitoring; 1 school no follow-up	N/A
Current profile for Wrexham [% based on all schools] : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number/% schools in LA Monitoring : 4 [6.0%]</li> <li>• Number/% schools in Estyn Monitoring : 8 [11.9%]</li> <li>• Number/% schools in Significant Improvement : 0 [0.0%]</li> <li>• Number/% Special Measures : 4 [6.0%]</li> </ul>		
Judgement profile [based on the 19 schools which have been inspected during the period in question] : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number/% judged Good or better across all 3 key questions : 8 [42.1%]</li> <li>• Number/% judged Good or better for KQ1 : 11 [57.9%]</li> <li>• Number/% judged Good or better for KQ2 : 13 [68.4%]</li> <li>• Number/% judged Good or better for KQ3 : 13 [68.4%]</li> <li>• Number/% judged Unsatisfactory for one or more of the key questions : 2 [10.5%]</li> <li>• Number/% judged Excellent for one or more of the key questions : 1 [5.3%]</li> </ul>		
<b>Foundation Phase</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• on a regional basis, performance continues to improve with a +1.1% increase from last year and a +2.9% increase from 2012&gt;2014. However, a national increase of 2.2% this year [coupled with a 4.7% increase over rolling period] has meant that the regional performance falls slightly below the national average for the first time. The greatest regional increases was seen in Conwy [+4.6% and +4.1] but for Mon [-1.3%] and Wrexham [-0.6%] the 2014 performance was lower than the corresponding figure for 2013.</li> <li>• LCE 05+ [86.4%] is -0.2% lower than the national average [for the first time in 3 years]. A +2.5% improvements from 2012&gt;2014 and +0.3% between 2013&gt;2014 were lower than the corresponding national figures of +3.2% and +1.4%. The greatest dip was seen in Mon [-2.6% on previous year] while Gwynedd improved by the highest margin [+1.8%]. At 06+ [32.3%], the regions performance was slightly above the national average [+0.1%] as was the improvements over the three year period 2012&gt;2014 [+6.7% in comparison to a national figure of +6.6%]. However, improvements from 2013&gt;2014 were higher nationally [+2.7% in comparison to a regional figure of +2.5%]. On an individual LA basis, only Mon witnessed a dip from 2013 [-2.0%] and the greatest improvements from last year were seen in Gwynedd [+8.0%] and Denbighshire [+6.0%]</li> <li>• LCW 05+ [88.4%] is lower than the national average for the second year in succession [three year improvement of +1.8% compared to national figure of +3.9% and 2013&gt;2014 improvement of +2.3% compared to national +3.1%]. The most significant improvements 2012&gt;2014 and 2013&gt;2014 were seen in Conwy [+6.4% and +8.8%] whilst Wrexham witnessed a corresponding dip of -2.3% and -1.2%. LCW 06+ improved +2.4% to 34.1% [compared to a +3.3% national improvement. However, the regional % is still above the national average for the third year in succession. 2012&gt;2014 improvements were +4.5% compared to +3.7% nationally.</li> <li>• MD 05+ at 88.8% was +0.1% higher than the national average but the improvement rate between 2012&gt;2014 [+1.2%] and 2013&gt;2014 [+0.8%] is less than the corresponding national figures [+2.1%/+1.3%]. Two LA's saw a dip between 2013&gt;2014 [Flintshire -0.7% and Mon -2.1%]. At MD 06+, the regional performance has fallen below the national average for the first time in 3 years [-0.6%]. Wales has seen a +6.1% improvement from 2012&gt;2014 whilst the regional figure is +5.0% [and +0.9% between 2013&gt;2014]. At individual LA level, the biggest increase from 2013 was seen in Gwynedd +4.9%.</li> <li>• PSD 05+ [94.4%] is slightly above the national average. 2012&gt;2014 and 2013&gt;2014 improvements, however, are less than the national improvement rates [GwE +2.6% and + 0.6%/Wales +3.3% and +1.2%]. Mon and Wrexham saw performance dip from 2013 [-1.1% and -1.0% respectively]. PSD 06+ at 52.7% is +1.2% higher than the national average but national improvements from 2012&gt;2014 are +20.9% [compared to +10.6 regionally]. The most significant improvements from 2013&gt;2014 were seen in Gwynedd [+7.2%] and Conwy [+8.1%].</li> <li>• Performance of boys and girls : the gap between boys and girls has closed across all the main indicators with the exception of LCE 06+. The gap is less than the national average for LCE 05+ and 06+ and MD 05+. The performance of boys, when compared to 2013 figures has also improved across all</li> </ul>		

indicators with the exception of MD 06+ [-0.2%]. In the main indicator [FPI], the gap was reduced to -8.6% with a 2.0% improvement for boys [corresponding national figures of -8.5%/+2.1%]. The biggest gap in regional performance was seen in Wrexham -10.0%, Gwynedd -9.3% and Mon -9.0%. For LCE 05+, the gap was reduced to -7.3% [-8.3% nationally] with a 1.4% improvement for boys from 2013 [+1.1% nationally]. There was a significant gap of -37.9% between boys/girls in Gwynedd]. For LCE 06+, the gap increased to -11.9% [-12.1% nationally] but a 2.0% improvement for boys from 2013 [+2.2% nationally]. The gap for LCW 05+ and 06+ was reduced from 2013 [-9.9%/-13.7% compared to national gap of -7.9%/-12.3%]. Boys improved by 2.8% at both levels [+3.9%/+4.6% nationally]. Largest regional gap seen in Wrexham -18.2% for 05+ and Mon for 06+ -17.7%. For Mathematical Development, the gap was reduced between 2013>2014 [to -4.3% for 05+ and -0.2% for 06+ / national figures of -5.0%/+0.9%]. At 05+ boys improved +1.0% from last year [+0.9% nationally] but there was a slight drop at 06+ [-0.2% - +0.8% nationally]. At regional level, the performance of boys was higher in 3 LA's [Conwy +3.8%/Gwynedd +1.3%/Mon +1.1%]. Denbighshire had the largest gap of -4.1%.

- steady progress has been made in challenging TA [most notably within the Conwy/Denbighshire Hub]. Ensuring consistency in approach and a more robust regional standardisation and moderation programme will be prioritised over the current educational year.

### Key Stage 2

- CSI performance for 2014 is 85.6% [a +1.9% improvement over rolling period 2012>2014 and a slight +0.1% 2013>2014 improvement compared to respective national improvements of +3.6% and +1.8%]. The increased focus placed on regional schools to improve standardisation and moderation has resulted in a re-calibration of assessments and thus the increase is lower than the national average. Three of the six LA's improved on their 2013 performance [Conwy, Denbighshire and Flintshire] with the greatest improvement seen in Flintshire [+1.1%]. Gwynedd [-0.6%], Mon [-0.2%] and Wrexham [-1.2%] have seen a decrease in the % attaining the expected level. In Mon, however, results have plateaued following significant increase between 2012 and 2013. The Core Subject Indicator (CSI) has improved year on year for the past three years in Conwy/Denbighshire and Flintshire.
- the region's performance at the expected levels and higher levels for the core subjects appears to have plateaued for many of the indicators and as a result, national 2014 performance and national improvement 2012>2014 and 2013>2014 for almost all indicators are higher the regional improvement rate. Performance for Welsh L5+ and Science L5+ are the only indicators where regional performance is higher than the national average for 2014.
- English L4+ 88.4% matches the national average and is a +2.6% improvement between 2012>2014 and +0.3% improvement from 2013 [respective national figures +3.2% and +1.3%]. Over the rolling period, the greatest improvements were seen in Flintshire [+5.1%] and Mon [+3.4%] whilst 2013 and 2014 results seem to have plateaued. At L5+ [37.5%] there is a +4.5% improvement between 2012>2014 and a 1.1% from 2013 [+5.1% and +2.3% nationally]. Greatest regional improvement rates between 2012>2014 were seen in Denbighshire [+6.9%] and Conwy [+5.3%] whilst results in Mon dipped -3.0% between 2013>2014.
- Welsh L4+ for 2014 was 87.2% and although -0.9% lower than national average, there is a +4.6% improvement between 2012>2014 [+4.1% nationally]. The most significant improvements between 2012>2014 were seen in Mon [+9.2%] and Flintshire [+11.1%] but there was a dip in performance in Denbighshire between 2013>2014 [-2.9%]. At L5+, the regional performance of 34.1% is slightly above the national average [+0.2%] but improvement between 2012>2014 and 2013>2014 [+6.0%/+2.5%] were lower than the corresponding figures for Wales [+7.3%/+3.5%]. The most notably regional improvements between 2012>2014 and 2013>2014 were seen in Conwy [+6.6%/+8.3%] and Flintshire [+6.7%/+5.4%]. Albeit, as noted above for the Foundation Phase, cohort size at regional, national and individual LA level needs to be taken into consideration.
- Mathematics L4+ [88.4%] mirrors the result for 2013 and is slightly below the national average [88.9%] for the first time in three years [2012>2014 improvement of 0.9% is also below the national average of +2.2%]. Performance at L5+ also mirrors the situation at L4+, with the 2014 regional figure slightly below the national average [37.9%/38.0%] for the first time in three years. The most significant regional gains between 2013>2014 were seen in Conwy [+2.9%] and Wrexham [+2.0%]. Mon was the only LA to witness a dip between 2013>2014 [-1.1%]
- Science L4+ [89.9%] mirrors the situation for Mathematics, where the regional performance has fallen below the national average for the first time in three years [by -0.4% in 2014]. The 2014 figure is also -1.1% lower than the 2013 performance [corresponding national improvement of +0.6%] and the dip from 2013>2014 is reflected in the performance of all 6 LA's with the most notable difference in Wrexham [-2.1%]. At L5+ [38.7%], the regional figure continues to be above the national average of 38.4% but the 2012>2014 and 2013>2014 improvements [+5.1%/+0.6%] are lower than the corresponding figures for Wales [+5.3%/+2.3%]. The most notable regional improvement over the respective periods has been in Gwynedd [+5.4%



and +4.1%].

- Performance of boys and girls : CSI performance for both boys [82.5%] and girls [89.0%] improved slightly from 2013 [+0.2% boys and +0.9% girls] but was less than the corresponding improvement [+1.7%/+1.9%]. As a result, the performance of boys and girls has fallen below the national average for the first time in three years. The regional gap in performance between boys/girls, since 2012, has been wider than the national average. In 2012 there was a -6.7% regional gap, -6.6% in 2013 and -6.5% in 2014. In 2014 the most pronounced gap was seen in Gwynedd [-8.5%] and Conwy [-8.2%]. Across the core subjects, at the expected and higher levels, the regional gap for many of the indicators is wider than the national figure. The regional gap is widest for Welsh L5+ [-18.6%] and English L5+ [-11.9%]. The only indicator where the performance of boys is higher than the performance of girls is Mathematics L5+ [+1.0%]. In 2014, the most significant gaps in performance were seen in Wrexham for Welsh L4+ [-22.1%]; Conwy for Welsh L5+ [-15.3%]; Conwy for English L4+ [-11.0%]; Wrexham for English L5+ [-16.1%]; Gwynedd for Mathematics L4+ [-6.0%]; Denbighshire for Mathematics L5+ [+6.3%]; Flintshire for Science L4+ and L5+ [-5.3% and -6.7%].
- as noted above, although some progress has been made in challenging TA, we need to ensure better consistency in approach and a more robust regional standardisation and moderation programme will be prioritised over the current educational year.
- at both key stages in the primary sector, for some schools, the variance between performance and target has been significant and GwE will have to ensure that monitoring visits offer a more robust challenge, not only to the target-setting processes in schools but also to monitoring the progress of individual pupils towards personal targets

**KS3**

- CSI performance for the region in 2014 was 83.8% - an improvement of 8.1% between 2012>2014 and 5.1% between 2013>2014 [in comparison to corresponding national figures of 8.5% and 4.0%]. All individual LA's improved on the 2013 figure but the greatest increases were seen in Denbighshire [11.3% and 8.2%] and Wrexham [8.3% and 6.1%]. In 2014, the only LA below the national average was Wrexham. [78.4%] but the performance was most encouraging and to some extent driven by the coordinated GwE/LA intervention with under-performing secondary schools. Gwynedd has been the highest performing LA in Wales for the last three years
- the region's performance at the expected levels and higher levels for all core subjects improved from 2013 and, with the exception of Science L5+, which matched the national increase [and Welsh L5+], regional improvement excelled on the national average. 2012>2014 improvements were greater at a regional level at L6+ for Welsh, English, Mathematics and Science but were lower than the national improvement rate for all core subjects at the expected level.
- English L5+ 88.4% : the regional figure has been above the national average for the past 3 years with a 6.5% increase between 2012>2014 and 4.1% between 2013>2014. The corresponding national figures are +6.6% and +3.0%. Greatest increases over the three year period were seen in Denbighshire [+10.9%]. At L6+ [50.5%], there has been significant improvement over the rolling period [+11.2% 2012>2014 and +7.3% 2013>2014]. The national improvement has been +10.5% and +5.8% respectively. 2012>2014 improvements have been greatest in Mon [+11.8%]; Denbighshire [+14.4%] and Flintshire [+15.2%]. Denbighshire and Conwy also saw significant 2013>2014 increases [+13.4% and +11.2% respectively]
- Welsh L5+ 89.7% : the 2014 figure sees the region fall below the national figure for the first time in 3 years [albeit only by 0.4%] but the size of the cohort being assessed must be taken into consideration [as it must when looking at individual LA performance]. Increases between 2012>2014 [+5.3%] and 2013>2014 [+1.0%] are lower than the national increases of +5.9% and +2.5%. Greatest increases [2012>2014 and 2013>2014] at individual LA level were seen in Wrexham [+13.0% and +3.4%] and Denbighshire [+8.4% and +5.5%]. Mon saw a slight dip of -0.7% from 2013, Conwy a -1.5% dip, with a significant reduction of -11.7% in Flintshire. At L6+ [55.1%], the region's performance places it 2.4% above the national average with a +12.6% increase between 2012>2014 and a +7.6% increase between 2013>2014 [national corresponding figures of +11.7% and +7.1%]. The greatest 2012>2014 and 2013>2014 increases at LA level were seen in Denbighshire [+26.1% and +15.3%] and Wrexham [+32.0% and +23.2%]. Conwy was the only regional LA to see a 2013>2014 dip [-2.0%].
- Mathematics L5+ 88.3% : 2012>2014 increase of +4.9% was lower than the corresponding national increase of 5.5% but the regional increase between 2013>2014 [+3.0%] was higher than the national increase of +2.7%. Greatest LA increase [2012>2014 and 2013>2014] was seen in Denbighshire [+6.7% and 5.7%] and Wrexham [+5.4% and +3.4%]. At L6+, the regional performance of 59.2% is 3.0% higher than the national average and the increase between 2012>2014 [+6.7%] and 2013>2014 [+3.7%] is also higher than the corresponding national figures of +6.6% and +3.1%.

Improvements between 2012>2014 and 2013>2014 were most significant in Mon [+10.3% and +7.3%], Gwynedd [+8.6% and +5.5%] and Denbighshire [+8.4% and +6.1%].

- Science L5+ 92.1% : the regional figure has been above the national average for the past 3 years with a +6.0% increase between 2012>2014 and +3.4% between 2013>2014. The corresponding national figures are +6.8% and +3.4%. Greatest increases between 2012>2014 and 2013>2014 were seen in Denbighshire [+8.2% and +7.5%], Gwynedd [+8.4% and +4.6%] and Wrexham [+7.4% and +4.2%]. At L6+ [57.5%], there has been significant improvement over the rolling period [+11.0% 2012>2014 and +7.5% 2013>2014]. The national improvement has been +10.8% and +6.0% respectively. 2012>2014 and 2013>2014 improvements have been greatest in Denbighshire [+11.0% and +12.1%] and Flintshire [+12.9% and +11.1%].
- Performance of boys/girls : CSI performance for both boys [79.2%] and girls [88.5%] improved from 2013>2014 [an increase of +4.9% and +5.2% respectively]. This is in comparison with a national increase of +4.4% for boys and +3.6% for girls. The regional gap has increased by 0.3% from 2013>2014 to 9.3% whilst the national figure has decreased by 0.8% to 8.7%. At LA level, the biggest gap in performance in 2014 was in Wrexham and Mon [13.6% and 11.9% respectively]. Across the core subjects [with the exception of English at L5+], the gap between boys/girls has increased from 2013. The most significant gap is seen in English and Welsh at the higher levels [-20.1% and -21.4% respectively]. At individual LA level, the greatest gaps in performance across the core subjects were as follows : Welsh L5+ [Flintshire -29.9% and Wrexham -16.9%]; Welsh L6+ [Gwynedd -23.7% and Denbighshire -24.5%]; English L5+ [Mon -11.7% and Wrexham -15.4%]; English L6+ [Gwynedd -25.7%, Flintshire -21.3% and Wrexham and Conwy -20.0%]; Mathematics L5+ [Mon -8.1% and Gwynedd -5.9%]; Mathematics L6+ [Gwynedd -9.7% and Wrexham -8.5%]; Science L5+ [Mon -8.8% and Wrexham -7.6%]; Science L6+ [Mon -15.5% and Conwy -12.4%].
- as with FP and KS2 there is variance in the rigour, quality and consistency of TA and GwE will need a clear strategy in place for improving local and regional standardisation and moderation

#### KS4

- L2+ : the region's performance increased 1.0% from 2013 to 57.0% in comparison to a 2.3% national increase. Between 2012>2014 the figure has increased by 3.8% [compared to a national increase of 4.0%]. Between 2013>2014, 3 regional LA's saw an improvement in their performance – Gwynedd +3.3%; Denbighshire +2.1% and Wrexham +2.9%, whilst Mon, Conwy and Flintshire witnessed a slight dip of -0.3%, -0.6% and -0.7% respectively. Between 2012>2014 all 6 regional LA's have seen an increase in their average with the greatest improvements in Gwynedd [+6.3%] and Wrexham [+6.0%]. The gap between the highest and lowest performing LA in the region was reduced from 13.8% in 2013 to 10.2%. The increase at individual LA level, and in particular Gwynedd and Wrexham, is directly linked to the coordinated GwE/LA intervention with the under-performing secondary schools [Gwynedd : School A +10.1%; School B +10.7%; School C +10.3%; Wrexham : School A +6.2%; School B +9.7%; School C +11.5%; School D +13.4%]. However, the gains made in some of these schools is not always reflected in the performance of their FSM cohort [in School D in Gwynedd only 3.8% of FSM pupils gained the L2+ Threshold and the corresponding figure at School B in Wrexham was 15.7%]. Performance at School E in Wrexham, was especially disappointing where only 11.1% of FSM pupils gained the threshold indicator. The lack of improvement from 2013>2014 at School D in Gwynedd [-0.7%] is frustrating when considering the significant investment made. For Flintshire [61.5%], there has been a 0.7% decrease from 2013, with significant decreases seen in School A [-10.6%] and School B [-9.3%]. Denbighshire saw a +2.0% increase and there were significant gains in School A [+7.7%] and School B [+7.1%]. However, performance at School C was down by -8.4% from the corresponding figure for last year. The performance of their FSM pupils is also disappointing at 10.8%. In Conwy, there were disappointing performances at School A [-10.9%] and School B [-8.0%] whilst School A in Mon was down -9.0%. These performances have had a visible impact on this year's outcomes for the respective LA's. In Conwy, especially disappointing is the performance of FSM at School B with only 12.9% of the FSM pupils gaining the L2+ Threshold. Further analysis of the performance of the FSM cohort across all schools has been undertaken during our termly monitoring visits to gauge levels of underperformance against agreed targets and to ensure that more robust interventions are applied for the current Y11 cohort. There were also notable variations between targets and performance in some individual schools across the region and a robust challenge on variance was made during the GwE termly monitoring visit. We also scrutinise progress towards 2015 targets in all termly visits. Across many of the region's schools, there were significant differences between performance in Maths and English/Welsh which implies that further attention must be given to the effective use of read-across data scrutiny and individual pupil tracking.

- L2 performance also increased 2.9% to 84.0% from 81.1% in 2013 [in comparison with a +4.2% national increase]. The regional figure is still 2.0% above the national average. All 6 regional LA's saw an improvement from 2013, with the most notable increases in Gwynedd [+6.8%] and Mon [+3.2%]. Between 2012>2014 Gwynedd and Mon have seen increases of +13.2% and +12.5% respectively. At individual school level, there were significant 2013>2014 improvements : Mon School A [+16.2%]; Gwynedd School A [+15.5%]; School B [+14.9%]; School C [+12.2%]; School D [+15.0%]; Conwy School A [+10.1%]; Denbighshire School A [+13.4%] and Wrexham School A [+11.4%].
- L1 performance at 95.5% is 1.7% higher than the national average and improvements were seen in 4 regional LA's [slight -0.5% and -0.2% dip seen in Mon and Flint respectively]. Between 2012>2014 there has been a regional improvement of +1.9% and +0.9% between 2013>2014 [corresponding national figures are +2.1% and +0.7%]. The greatest gains at individual LA level over the rolling period can be seen in Mon [+4.3%] and Gwynedd [+5.1%]. The greatest improvements from 2013>2014 was seen in Wrexham [+2.5%].
- CSI [54.4%] has improved by 1.5% from 2013 and is 2.5% higher than the national average [albeit national improvement from 2013>2014 is higher at +2.7%]. Performance between 2012>2014 has improved by +3.2% [+3.0% nationally] with the greatest improvements seen in Gwynedd [+7.1%] and Conwy [+5.8%]. 2013>2014 improvements were greatest in Denbighshire [+3.6%] and Wrexham [+3.1%] whilst Conwy and Flintshire witnessed slight dips of -0.5% and -0.9% respectively.
- CPS has improved from 332.8 in 2012 to 348.2 in 2014 [+15.4 compared to a national improvement of +16.5 – from 323.5>340.0]. At individual LA level the greatest improvements over the three year period were seen in Mon [+25.1] and Gwynedd [+30.3]. All 6 regional LA's improved their CPS between 2013>2014 with the greatest improvements in Gwynedd [+11.9] and Wrexham [+9.2]
- English A\*-C has improved +2.1% from 2013 to 67.5% and +5.0% over the three year rolling period [in comparison with a 2013>2014 national increase of +3.3% to 66.1% and a + 3.9% increase from 2012]. In 2014 the highest performing LA in the region was Flintshire with 73.3% but the greatest improvements from 2013 and over the three year period were seen in Mon [+8.1% and +3.8%] and Wrexham [+6.5% and +3.5%].
- Welsh First Language A\*-C has improved by +1.5% from 2013 to 72.7% [and by +1.2% over the three year period]. The national average for 2014 was 73.7% [+0.2% from 2013] but one has to take into account the number of entries to make any meaningful comparisons. 2014 performance was strongest in Mon [71.6%] and Gwynedd [73.3%] and in Mon the performance demonstrated an increase of + 5.3% from 2013 and +9.2% from 2012. 2013>2014 improvements was also seen in Denbighshire [+3.3] whilst Flintshire and Wrexham saw a -11.0% decrease in their average. Whilst the number of pupils being entered for Welsh First Language has increased in the region since 2012, it is predominantly because of an increase in Gwynedd. A drop in numbers between 2013>2014 across all LA's [with the exception of Wrexham], highlights the need for a continued drive by GwE to ensure increased participation and performance.
- Mathematics improved +2.5% between 2012>2014 to 63.4% but saw a slight dip between 2013>2014 [-0.1%]. The national average for 2014 was 61.7% with a +1.4% improvement from 2013 and a +3.4% improvement from 2012. In 2014 the highest performance was in Flintshire [68.4%] and Gwynedd [65.1%] with a +3.0% increase seen in Gwynedd from 2013. There was a -3.4% dip in Conwy over the corresponding period [63.0%]. Between 2012>2014 the performance in Gwynedd improved by +6.5%, Conwy by +5.5% and Wrexham by +4.9%.
- Performance of boys/girls : across all indicators, the performance of regional boys and girls was higher than the national average. For the L2+, the gap was lower than the national average in 2014 [-8.1% compared to -8.4%]. In 2012 and 2013 the regional/national corresponding figures were -10.1%/-8.5% and -7.8%/-8.3%. In 2014 the gap was narrowest in Mon [-1.0%] and widest in Gwynedd [-10.2%] and Wrexham [-10.7%]. The performance of boys improved +0.8% from 2013 [+2.3% nationally] whilst the percentage of girls gaining the L2+ increased +1.1% [+2.4% nationally]. Over the rolling period 2012>2014, however, the performance of boys has improved +4.8% [+4.1% nationally]. At individual LA level the greatest increases in the performance of boys were seen in Denbighshire +2.0% and Wrexham +2.5%. At L2, the gap has gradually decreased by 4.1% over the rolling period 2012>2014 [-10.4%>-7.7%>-6.3%] compared to a 2.0% national decrease. Between 2013>2014 the performance of boys improved +3.6% [compared to +4.5% nationally] whilst the performance of girls improved by +2.2% [+3.9% nationally]. At individual LA level the greatest increases in the performance of boys were seen in Mon +4.3% and Gwynedd +7.1%. At L1 the gap has gradually decreased by 1.7% over the rolling period 2012>2014 [-3.1%>-2.2%>-1.4%] compared to a 0.9% national decrease. Between 2013>2014 the performance of boys improved +1.3% [compared to +0.7% nationally] whilst the performance of girls improved by +0.5% [+0.6% nationally]. At individual LA level the greatest increases in the performance of boys were seen in Denbighshire [+2.2%] and Wrexham [+3.4%]. For the CSI, the gap between boys/girls has gradually decreased by 2.5% over the rolling period 2012>2014 [-9.4%>-7.1%>-6.9%] in comparison to a national increase of +0.2%. In 2014, at individual LA level, the gap

was narrowest in Mon [-0.4%] and widest in Gwynedd at -9.3%. Between 2013>2014, the performance of boys increased by +1.6% [compared to a +2.5% national increase]. Performance of girls improved by +1.4% regionally and +2.8% nationally. For the CPS the gap has closed by 7.6 over a three year period whilst the corresponding national figure is 1.3. At individual LA level, in 2014 the gap was greatest in Wrexham [-28.5] and Mon [23.9]. From 2013, the performance of boys has improved by 7.7 compared to 6.8 nationally and improvements can be seen across all 6 regional LA's with the greatest improvement in Gwynedd [+12.5].

**Post-16**

- The percentage attaining Level 3 Threshold for 2014 was 97.0% [-0.1% below the national average]. Over the rolling period 2012>2014, the highest performing LA has been Ynys Mon. Between 2013>2014, performance in Wrexham dipped -4.3% to 90.3%, whilst Denbighshire saw an increase of 1.3% to 98.1%. The regional Average Wider Points Score for 2014 has been calculated at 804.3 with Gwynedd and Ynys Mon the highest performing LA's [883.6 and 875.9 respectively]. The only regional LA to witness a 2013>2014 increase was Conwy [+25.2] with a score of 829.4, whilst Wrexham dropped -45.0 to 695.4.
- Welsh Bac : the percentage of 17 year old learners gaining the Welsh BAC in 2013-14 was 56.2%, but there being inconsistencies in the percentages between Local Education Authorities and within Local Educational Authorities [Mon 89.4%; Gwynedd 63.1%; Conwy 53.8%; Denbighshire 34.4%; Flintshire 53.5% and Wrexham 64.4%]. Two secondary schools throughout the region had no 17 year old learners registered for the Welsh BAC. GwE is currently working with schools to manage a three year transition phase for change and to ensure high quality delivery and initial suggested target percentages [based on full-time cohort] are as follows :2015-16: maintain 2014-15 percentage or 40%, whichever is the higher; 2016-17: maintain 2014-15 percentage or 60%, whichever is the higher; 2017-18: maintain 2014-15 percentage or 80%, whichever is the higher; 2018-19: 100%

**Post 16 Participation in education :**

- % has steadily improved from 85.8% 2011>87.2% 2012>87.9% 2013 [+2.1% increase in comparison to a 1.3% national increase over same period]. The 2013 figure is 2.8% above the national average and the most significant increase in an individual LA between 2012>2013 was in Wrexham [+2.0%] although their % still remains below the national average.
- The % of regional NEET's has fluctuated over the same period [3.3% 2011>2.9% 2012>3.4% 2013] whilst the national average has been steadily decreasing [from 4.4%>3.7%]. Gwynedd is the only LA in the region to have seen a decrease in the number of NEET's between 2012>2013.

**Attendance**

Attendance in primary schools increased by +0.6% from 2013 to 94.8% [national average in 2013 was 93.7%]. The % increased across all 6 regional LA's from 2013 [Mon and Conwy +0.6%; Gwynedd +0.8%; Flintshire and Wrexham +0.7% and Denbighshire + 0.4%]. Half day sessions missed due to authorised and unauthorised absences also decreased from 2013. Unauthorised absences decreased regionally by -0.1% to 0.5% and a decrease was witnessed in all LA's with the exception of Denbighshire where performance plateaued from 2013 at 0.6%. In secondary schools, regional attendance increased from 2013 by +0.9% to 93.6% [national average for 2013 was 92.6%]. Improvements were seen across all 6 regional LA's with the greatest gains in Mon [+1.1%], Gwynedd [+2.1%] and Conwy [+1.2%]. Half day sessions missed due to authorised absences decreased from 2013 by -0.6% to 5.3% [improvement in % across all 6 LA's with greatest improvement in Conwy at -1.0%]. Half day sessions missed due to unauthorised absences also dipped slightly from 2013 [-0.1% to 1.0%]. However, there were slight increases in 2 LA's [Mon +0.2% to 0.9% and Flintshire +0.1% to 0.5%]. Conwy's performance plateaued at 1.4%.

**FSM Performance**

We need to bear in mind that, in the vast majority of schools, the cohort consists of only a very small number of FSM learners. This applies to both primary and secondary schools. If a high number of these individuals are also ALN learners, this can have a significant impact on the % achieving.

**Foundation Phase :**

In the main indicator, performance of FSM pupils has improved +1.2% across the region from 2013>2014 [compared to an increase of 1.0% for non FSM]

with the most notable gains in Conwy [+4.4%], Wrexham [+1.3%] and Flintshire [+1.8%]. The gap with non-FSM has been reduced to -16.7%. The largest gap at LA level was seen in Mon [-21.3%]. The performance of FSM pupils who are not SEN also increased this year by +0.5% and in 4 LA's over 90%+ of this group of pupils gained the main indicator. The greatest increase was seen in Wrexham [+3.8%] and Flintshire [+2.4%] but Denbighshire and Mon saw a fall in their %. Discussion around why individual pupils failed to succeed are ongoing as part of challenge visits. On a regional level, across the other indicators, the performance of FSM pupils dipped slightly by -0.1% for LCE 05+ [in comparison to a +0.3% for non-FSM]. The largest gap was seen in Mon at -22.1%. FSM performance at LCE 06+ improved from 2013 by +1.8% [+2.4% for non-FSM] and the gap increased to -19.3% in 2014. At LA level, Flintshire had the largest gap at -26.2%. FSM performance for LCW 05+ increased +3.0% [+2.1% increase for non-FSM] and the gap was reduced to -13.2% [at LA level the biggest gap was seen in Mon -19.8%]. LCW 06+ dipped slightly from 2013 by -0.7% [compared to an increase of +2.9% for non-FSM]. This led to a widening of the gap to -22.5% [at LA level widest in Wrexham -34.4% and Flintshire -24.0%]. MD 05+ for FSM pupils improved by +1.4% [+0.6% for non-FSM] and the gap was reduced to -12.4% in 2014. At LA level both Gwynedd and Mon had gaps of +16.0%. For 06+, performance of FSM pupils plateaued, whilst non-FSM increased by +1.0% leading to a 2014 gap of -17.1%. There was a slight dip for FSM pupils in 2014 for PSD 05+ [-0.7% compared to an increase of +0.8% for non-FSM]. The gap increased to -9.0% in 2014 and this was widest in Gwynedd at -12.4%. At 06+, FSM performance plateaued, whilst non-FSM pupils increased their performance by +4.5%. The gap has now increased to -25.7% and is -20.0%+ in all 6 LA's.

**Key Stage 2 :**

In the main indicator, performance of FSM pupils has dropped -1.5% [70.7%] across the region from 2013>2014 with the most notable differences in Denbighshire [-5.0%]. Gwynedd [+5.9%] and Mon [+0.7%] were the only regional LA's which saw an improvement for this group of pupils from 2013. However, the gap between FSM and non-FSM was reduced to -16.1% [-20.4% in 2013] and is lower than the national gap of -18.3%. At individual LA level the gap was most prominent in Wrexham [-20.6%]. Mon had the highest performance % for FSM pupils [78.5%] but the gap between FSM and non-FSM was least in Denbighshire [-11.3%]. The performance of FSM pupils who are not SEN also dropped this year by -0.9% but in all 6 LA's the performance for the group was over 91%+ and above 94.0% for 4 LA's. The greatest drop from 2013 was seen in Mon [-2.2%] and Denbighshire [-2.6%] and discussion around why individual pupils failed to succeed are ongoing as part of challenge visit. On a regional level, across the other indicators, the performance of FSM pupils, in comparison with 2013 figures is patchy. Welsh, at both expected and higher level improved [+4.3% and +5.7% respectively] with the gap between FSM and non-FSM narrowing to -16.4% and -19.9% [gap was widest in Denbighshire for L4+ and L5+ -41.1% and -31.0%]; English improved at the higher level [+1.1%] but dropped for the expected level [-0.8%]. For English the gap with non-FSM pupils widened to -15.7% at L4+ but closed to -21.5% at the higher level. At individual LA level the gap was widest for both levels in Wrexham [-20.1% and -25.5%]. Maths dropped for expected level [-1.1%] but improved at higher level [+0.3%] but the gap with non-FSM widened at both expected and higher levels [-15.1% and -20.3%]. At LA level, the widest gap for L4+ was in Conwy -20.9% and for L5+ Wrexham at -23.4%. For the expected level, Science dropped -2.7% and 0.8% for the higher level. The gap between FSM and non-FSM widened at both levels [-14.8% and -23.1%] with the largest gap for L4+ in Conwy -18.7% and in Wrexham for L5+ -27.7%. When comparing 2013>2014, the greatest improvement for FSM pupils at individual LA level was as follows : English L4+ Gwynedd [+5.1%]; English L5+ Flintshire [+4.9%] and Gwynedd [+9.9%]; Welsh L4+ Flintshire [+11.4%]; Welsh L5+ Gwynedd [+9.5%], Conwy [+12.1%], Flintshire [+14.3%] and Wrexham [+12.2%]; Mathematics L4+ and L5+ Gwynedd [+4.5% and +8.0% respectively].

**Key Stage 3 :**

In the main indicator [CSI], the performance of FSM pupils has increased by +10.8% [65.2%] across the region from 2013>2014 in comparison to a +4.3% increase for non-FSM pupils [87.1%]. The gap between FSM and non-FSM pupils has also been significantly reduced from 28.4% in 2013 to 21.8% in 2014. The only LA where the gap increased from 2013 was Wrexham [increase of 0.8% to 33.4%]. The most significant 2013>2014 increase for FSM performance at individual LA level was in Conwy [+14.5%] and Denbighshire [+18.6%]. The performance of FSM pupils who are not SEN also increased this year by a significant +11.5% with increases of +10.0% in all LA's with the exception of Mon which saw a +2.9% improvement from 2013. On a regional level, across all core subjects, at expected and higher levels, FSM pupils improved significantly on their 2013 performance [L5+ and L6+ improvements as follows : English +9.8%/+9.8%; Welsh +7.4%/+2.4%; Mathematics +7.6%/+4.1%; Science +11.0%/+11.4%] and the gap between FSM and non-FSM closed for all indicators with the exception of Welsh and Mathematics L6+. For both levels in Welsh, the largest gap between FSM and non-FSM was in Flintshire [-51.0% and -40.9%]. In English, the gap at both levels were 17.55 and -25.2% [most prominent at individual LA level in Wrexham -

25.4% and -31.6%]. In Mathematics, the gap at L5+ was reduced to -17.4% but widened at L6+ to -30.0% [again, at LA level, the gap was widest in Wrexham -25.8% and -38.0%]. For Science, the gap reduced at both levels [-11.5%/-27.0%]. Wrexham also had the largest gap between FSM and non-FSM at both levels [-16.5% and -34.0%]. When comparing 2013>2014, the greatest improvement for FSM pupils at individual LA level was as follows : English L5+ Conwy [+16.4%]; English L6+ Conwy [+23.5%] and Denbighshire [+19.3%]; Welsh L5+ Mon [+13.4%], Denbighshire [+28.0%] and Wrexham [+16.7%]; Welsh L6+ Denbighshire [+20.3%]; Mathematics L5+ and L6+ Conwy [+13.3% and +12.7%] and Denbighshire [+14.7% and +14.4%]; Science L5+ and L6+ Conwy [+16.4% and +17.9%] and Denbighshire [+17.5% and +19.3%]. As a result of this improved performance, the gap between FSM and non-FSM pupils also closed across all indicators with the exception of Welsh and Mathematics at L6+. Whilst the nature of FSM cohorts can vary significantly from year to year, the improvements seen this year for FSM pupils is heartening - albeit further work is required to narrow and eventually close the gap with non-FSM pupils.

**Key Stage 4 :**

When analysing the performance of individual LA's from 2013>2014, the gap between FSM and non-FSM pupils has been narrowed across the majority of indicators. In 2014, 30.4% of FSM pupils gained L2+ Threshold [68.8% non-FSM] with Mon the highest performing regional LA [41.8%]. All regional LA's, with the exception of Conwy, saw an improvement from 2013>2014 for FSM pupils with the greatest gains in Wrexham [+4.2%]. The gap between FSM and non-FSM was lowest in Mon [-14.3%] and highest in Conwy and Denbighshire [-34.8%]. Performance at L2 was 67.2% [86.4% non-FSM] with Mon again the highest performing regional LA [75.5%]. The gap between FSM and non-FSM was lowest in Mon [-12.8%] and highest in Wrexham [-26.2%]. At L1, the regional average was 91.7% and the highest performing LA was Conwy with 97.0%. The gap between FSM and non-FSM was lowest in Conwy where FSM performed 0.8% higher than non-FSM pupils and highest in Wrexham [-11.1%]. The CSI regional average for FSM pupils was 29.3% but performance was significantly higher in Mon [40.8%] and higher in Flintshire [35.4%]. The gap between FSM and non-FSM was lowest in Mon [-14.0%] and highest in Gwynedd [-33.5%]. The gap between FSM and non-FSM pupils in the CPS, in comparison with 2013 figures, has been narrowed across all 6 LA's with a -46.1 point gap at regional level in 2014.

**Performance of Pupils with ALN**

The performance in the Foundation Phase for the FPI improved +3.1% from 2013 to 49.6%. Performance across the range of indicators at the expected and higher levels also demonstrate improvements from last year : LCE05+ 53.2% [+1.6%], LCE 06+ 6.2% [+1.9%], LCW05+ 62.4% [+6.6%], LCW 06+ 4.3% [+0.4%], MD 05+ 61.6% [+1.8%], MD 06+ 6.4% [+1.2%], PSD 05+ 79.1% [+1.3%] and PSD 06+ 17.4% [+2.1%]. In KS2, there was a dip in the CSI from 2013 [down -1.7% from 54.3% to 52.6%]. With the exception of Mathematics L4+ [61.3% and -1.0% down from 2013] and Science L4+ [65.7% and -3.6% from 2013] all core subjects at expected and higher levels demonstrated an improvement from 2013 : Welsh L4+ 60.0% [+2.6%], Welsh L5+ 4.2% [+0.4%], English L4+ 60.0% [+0.2%], English L5+ 6.0% [+1.4%], Mathematics L5+ 8.6% [+1.1%] and Science L5+ 8.8% [+1.7%]. In KS3, the CSI improved significantly by +10.1% from 2013 to 48.9%. Improvements were also seen across the range of core subjects at the expected and higher levels : Welsh L5+ 65.5% [+7.5%], Welsh L6+ 13.7% [+2.5%], English L5+ 60.6% [+10.3%], English L6+ 13.1% [+3.7%], Mathematics L5+ 61.9% [+7.5%], Mathematics L6+ 20.8% [+3.1%], Science L5+ 72.5% [+11.2%] and Science L6+ 19.0% [+3.9%].

**Performance of Looked After Children**

When analysing the percentages, we need to bear in mind that the cohort consists of only a very small number of learners. In the Foundation Phase, the percentage gaining the FPI was down -5.0% from the corresponding figure in 2013 [51.8%>46.8%] The highest performance was seen in Denbighshire with 83.3% and Wrexham with 75.0%. For the other indicators, performance was as follows [2013>2014 difference in brackets] : LCE 05+ 57.1% [-4.0%]; LCE 06+ 21.4% [+10.3%]; LCW 05+ 57.9% [-7.1%], LCW 06+ 10.5% [+5.5%], MD 05+ 59.6% [-8.3%], MD 06+ 8.5% [-0.4%], PSD 05+ 72.3% [-6.9%] and PSD 06+ 19.1% [+4.8%]. In KS2 the 2014 CSI was 65.2% [+12.5%] with the highest percentage in Gwynedd [70.0%], Denbighshire [85.7%] and Flintshire [87.5%]. Performance across the core subjects was as follows : Welsh L4+ 73.7% [+11.2%], Welsh L5+ 5.3% [-7.2%], English L4+ 68.1% [+6.3%], English L5+ 10.1% [+1.0%], Mathematics L4+ 72.5% [+19.8%], Mathematics L5+ 10.1% [+2.8%], Science L4+ 71.0% [+9.2%] and Science L5+ 13.0% [+2.1%]. In KS3 55.2% [+16.1%] gained the CSI with the highest regional performance in Mon [83.3%]. Across all the core subjects performance improved on 2013 at the expected level : Welsh 92.3% [+12.3%], English 68.7% [+20.2%], Mathematics 61.2% [+15.5%], Science 71.6%

[+19.4%]. At the higher levels, performance was lower than the corresponding 2013 figure for Welsh 7.7% [-22.3%] and Mathematics 17.9% [-8.2%] but higher for English 19.4% [+2.0%] and Science 16.4% [+1.2%]. Data for performance in KS4 was not available at time of analyses.

### Reading Tests

As last year's tests were restandardised, there is little to be gained from making comparisons between the 2013 and 2014 data. GwE's performance in the English Reading test (SS >85) was above the Wales average in 2014 – GwE 83.7% Wales average 83.2. In two LAs (Denbighshire and Wrexham) performance fell below the Wales and GwE average. In the >115 indicator, however, the region's performance was below the Wales average – GwE 16.1% Wales 16.5%. Performance in three LAs was below the Wales and GwE average (Conwy, Denbighshire and Wrexham). The region's strongest performing LA was Mon with 84.8% achieving a SS over 85 and 17.5% achieving a SS over 115. In the region's lowest performing 50 schools there were only 3 from Mon – Llanddona (where only 7 pupils sat the test), Amlwch and Llangoed, whilst there were 9 schools amongst the region's highest performing 50. The region's lowest performing LA was Wrexham with 82.1% achieving a SS over 85 and 15.6% achieving a SS over 115. Amongst the region's lowest performing 50 schools there were 6 from Wrexham (2 of these were PRUs) and 4 in the highest performing 50. Caution is needed when analysing the results of the Welsh reading tests as cohort size varies significantly, both within the region and at a national level. Across GwE 18,552 pupils sat the test in 2014 – a similar size cohort to Erw's and substantially larger than CS and EAS. Within GwE cohort size varied from 732 in Flintshire to 9,083 in Gwynedd. Linguistic context within the region is also diverse. GwE's performance in 2014 was marginally below the Wales average of 84.4% (GwE 84.3%). Similarly with SS>115 GwE's performance trailed behind the Wales average of 17.5% (GwE 17.1%). Performance in 2 LAs was below the Wales and GwE average (Mon and Wrexham). The region's strongest performing LA was Denbighshire with 87.4% achieving a SS over 85 and 20.5% achieving a score over 115. There were 5 Denbighshire schools amongst the region's lowest performing 50 schools and 6 in the highest performing. The region's lowest performing LA was Mon (SS >85 – 81.1% and SS>115 – 16%), whose performance was the region's highest in the English Reading test. This is an area which will be investigated in detail by GwE's literacy Associate Partners during the year. 13 schools from Mon were amongst the region's lowest performing schools but 9 were amongst the region's highest performing.

### Numeracy Tests

GwE's performance in the Procedural Numeracy test (SS>85) was above the Wales average of 82.8% in 2014 – GwE 83.6%. Performance in 2 of the region's LAs fell below the Wales average (Denbighshire and Wrexham). In the >115 indicator too GwE's performance was marginally above the Wales average, although this masks the fact that in 4/6 LAs it was below. Strong performance on this indicator in Mon and Gwynedd compensated for the region's weakest performing LAs in this indicator – Denbighshire, Flintshire and Conwy. The region's highest performing LA was Gwynedd with 86.8% of learners achieving a SS above 85 and the lowest was Wrexham with 81.1% achieving this indicator. Amongst the region's highest performing 20 schools, 17 of them were in Gwynedd, and only 3 (including 1 PRU) in the lowest performing 20. The region's performance in the Numerical Reasoning test was stronger than in the Procedural test, with the % of learners scoring <85 lower in all LAs (apart from Mon) and the % scoring >115 higher in all LAs (apart from Gwynedd, which was 0.1% lower). With 84.3% of the region's learners achieving a SS>85, GwE's performance was above the Wales average of 82.2%. Only one of the region's LAs fell below the Wales average (Wrexham 0.2% below). Performance on the >115 indicator was also positive with Gwynedd and Mon well above the Wales average and Wrexham and Flintshire only 0.1% below. The region's highest performing LA was Gwynedd with 87.3% of learners achieving a SS above 85 and the lowest was Wrexham achieving 82%. The same Gwynedd schools that were in the highest performing 20 schools in the region on the Procedural test also did well in the Reasoning test. WG did not issue progress scores in 2014 so comparison with 2013 data for the procedural test is also unsound. Disapplication rates fell in GwE in 2014, whilst the national % of disapplying learners rose slightly. With GwE taking responsibility for giving consistent advice and guidance about disapplying pupils there was less variation in the % of disapplications across the region too. In 2013 the difference between the LA with the highest and lowest disapplication rates in the region was 1.0% - 2.6% in the numeracy test and 1.2% and 2.9% in the reading tests. In 2014 the difference was reduced to 1.0% - 2.1% in the numeracy tests and 1.1% - 2.2% in the reading tests.

### KEY STRENGTHS :

- Performance in main indicators at FP, KS3 and KS4 [TBC] above national average.
- Performance of FSM pupils [and especially FSM non-SEN] at FP and KS3.

- Reduction in variance between performance of individual LA's in main indicator [difference between highest and lowest performing LA in region - FP reduced from 5.4%>2.4%; KS2 from 4.9%>3.7% ; KS3 from 13.2%>10.7%; KS4 from 13.8%>11.6% \*unverified].
- Improvement of several under-performing secondary schools at KS4 directly linked to the coordinated GwE/LA intervention.
- Performance in the Numerical Reasoning test in Gwynedd and Mon schools

**KEY AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT:**

- Improve performance in main indicators at KS2 and raise performance above the national average.
- Improve performance in L2+ Threshold and ensure increase is greater than the national improvement in 2015.
- Ensure sustainability of the recent improvements seen in the lowest performing schools at KS4.
- Further improve achievement of FSM pupils and increase the % who gain the L2+ Threshold [with specific focus on individual schools]
- Close the gap in performance between boys/girls in KS3 across all core subjects and especially at higher levels in both languages.
- Ensure that all the schools across the region have more robust systems for target setting and that they make more effective use of data/assessments to track/challenge and target intervention.
- Increase the number of pupils entered for GCSE Welsh First Language at KS4.
- Ensure that schools make effective use of read-across data scrutiny and individual pupil tracking to address the significant differences between performance in Maths and English/Welsh at KS4 [where applicable].
- Support and work with LA's to implement their intervention powers to tackle schools which continue to underperform.
- Ensure that LA's/GwE robustly challenge the target setting processes in schools and that effective and timely monitoring of progress towards targets is implemented.
- Ensure that coasting 'good' schools [and individual departments] are challenged and supported to aim for excellence.
- Collaborate effectively with key stakeholders to implement a range of strategies to reduce % of NEET's across region
- Challenge the variance in the rigour, quality and consistency of TA across the FP, KS2 and KS3, and develop a clear strategy to improve local and regional standardisation and moderation.
- Increase the % of learners achieving a SS above 115 in all 4 national tests
- Ensure that Associate Partner support is targeted towards the schools and LAs performance in the National Tests is below the regional/Wales average.

**ASPECT : EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE OF LEADERSHIP PROCEDURES**

**Concise Judgement**

It is judged that leadership is sound in the 6 councils/authorities; GwE Joint Committee and within GwE's SLT which is starting to have an impact on the quality of provision, challenge and support available to schools, and on outcomes for learners. The Councils are fully committed to this high level of collaboration across the region and there is a strong political will across the 6 authorities to support and promote GwE's work. This is supported by the fact that the 6 councils have agreed to safeguard the level of financial contributions to GwE for 3 years in the first instance, and to ensure an annual commissioning budget of £250,000 in order to target 'at risk' schools.

*Internal Management of GwE :*

A significant concern over the last 12 months has been the lack of dedicated leadership support around the Managing Director. This was largely because of the role that GwE had designed for itself prior to the agreement around the National Model i.e. prior to the expectations laid out by Welsh Government, it was intended that GwE would be far smaller and less universal in its provision than the requirements of the National Model. Key players within the GwE SLT were expected to work with a significant number of contact schools and as such were allocated minimal leadership time to contribute to and execute wider responsibilities. These matters became a significant concern during Spring 2014 as Welsh Government considerably raised the expectations for regional services to deliver national initiatives of purport.

**Source of evidence of processes and impact**

Documents relating to 6 LA commitment to GwE partnership working [?].

Documents related to financial contributions from 6 LA's.

Documents related to GwE governance and leadership structures + Joint Committee/Advisory Board and User Group Membership.

Business Plan 2013-2014 and 2014-2015.

GwE Financial Accounts for 2013-2104 and 2014-2015 [balance sheets].



Since September 2014, specific action has been taken to increase capacity within GwE's SLT in an attempt to ensure that the service can respond effectively and early to both national and local requirements. The current leadership structure comprises of a Managing Director, Head of Support and Brokerage, Head of Standards [from January 2015 onwards], three Senior Challenge Advisers, Senior Challenge Adviser for Literacy/Numeracy and a Business Manager. Due to the geographical and cultural diversity of the region, the service comprises of 3 hubs [Gwynedd/Anglesey + Conwy/Denbighshire + Flintshire/Wrexham]. The team of Challenge Advisers in every hub are effectively led and quality assured by the relevant Senior Challenge Adviser. The central SMT and the 3 hubs are effectively supported by the business/administrative team.

GwE's brief Business Plan for March 2014 was clearly aligned with the requirements of the national model and national and regional priorities reflected in the Business Plans for the respective LA's and work has been completed to transpose the intentions into meaningful programmes of work that will drive the work across the 3 Hubs. Further work has been done during September 2014 to build a more robust plan, to include the appropriate level of financial detail and to ensure differentiation between commissions at a regional level and individual authority level.

From October 2014 onwards, the regional service has established self-evaluation structures and Performance Management procedures [based on National Standards for Challenge Advisers and requirements of the national model], and these have been used appropriately to identify staff training and developmental needs. A regional training programme has been implemented to augment the national programme. This will allow for a sharper accountability structure and a better system for identifying and meeting individual training and development needs, as well as the needs of the wider service. However, there is a need to further hone self-evaluation structures and develop ways of measuring the impact of our actions whilst ensuring that the findings of those processes are used effectively to set appropriate and challenging targets and quality indicators to improve the performance of the service and schools.

When establishing GwE, emphasis was put on appointing individuals who could demonstrate strength in delivering the statutory requirements of monitoring and challenging school performance. An 'assessment centre' style approach was employed to ensure that the most suitable individuals were appointed and those exact mature recruitment procedures have meant that the regional service boasts a very high percentage of staff with the expertise and appropriate understanding to ensure challenge and quality support for schools. A high % of Challenge Advisers are very experienced and a good number have wide-ranging experience of high level leadership; of working as facilitators of change, and of inspecting alongside/accompanying Estyn on second visits. Those experiences and expertise are further enriched by an extended team of part-time and temporary seconded Headteachers and SMT members from successful schools. This has ensured a more flexible and manageable team to respond to the range of requirements by stakeholders. From September 2014 onwards, the contributions of successful practising Headteachers has further developed the capacity, expertise and profile of GwE with stakeholders and has allowed for an effective process of upskilling to the small number of full-time team member with no previous senior management experience in schools. Commissioning practitioners reflects GwE's commitment to immersing schools in developments and ensuring that institutional capacity and expertise are developed appropriately [need to refer to examples where there has been a positive impact]. Nevertheless, it is acknowledged that there is a need to continue to upskill Challenge Advisers across the 3 hubs to ensure an even higher level of consistency in challenge. This is currently done via team training sessions; by sharing good practice and modelling reports; by issuing clear guidance and quality documents prior to visits and by agreeing on common criteria for visits. Shadow visits are also organised. There are robust arrangements for verifying and assuring quality which include monitoring a sample of visits across the region by the SMT and a number of specific internal visits in each hub by the Senior Challenge Adviser. A high percentage of reports are checked by the Senior Challenge Adviser and hub/team meetings are used to disseminate and share good practice. A stakeholder questionnaire and meetings of the User Group are also used to seek the opinions of schools on several aspects of the visits, which have been extremely well-received. For all termly monitoring visits undertaken, there has been a 90.0%+ positive response to questions related to the level of challenge, usefulness of meeting in moving school forward and in the quality of guidance and support. The extremely high level of positive responses from both questionnaire and User Group feedback, testifies to the effectiveness of the work carried out by Challenge Advisers. The national training programme also serves as a platform for driving this agenda forward even further. However we need to be proactive in relation to planning regional training programmes which complement the national programme and which are tailored and differentiated to accommodate the level of existing expertise within the team.

Financial Reports to Joint Committee.

ISA260 Financial Report by Wales Audit Office.

Documents related to use of 2013-2014 underspend.

Document outlining revised delegated decision making powers to MD/SMT and Lead Director.

Documents related to option appraisals re: delivering on full National Model expectations from April 2015.

Scrutiny reports to individual LA's

Examples of :

- i. minutes from LA SMT and/or Quality Group meetings
- ii. Gwe SMT meetings
- iii. pre termly monitoring visit briefing documents for Challenge Advisers
- iv. agenda for GwE Team Meetings
- v. termly monitoring visit reports [Visit 1/2/3 for 2013-14 and 2014-15 – primary and secondary]
- vi. quality assurance monitoring reports by SMT for termly visits
- vii. analysis of feedback from stakeholder survey following all termly visits
- viii. Performance Management objectives for GwE SMT and Challenge Advisers [anonymised]

LA>School Partnership Agreement x6

Analysis of 2014-15 categorisation of regional schools.

Details of national and regional training programme for CA's.

*Governance of GwE : Structures for Decision Making and Accountability :*

GwE was established with a Joint Committee of portfolio holders providing the key decision making and accountability, and the organisation being hosted by Gwynedd LA as a host authority. At present, governance and leadership procedures and structures are in the process of being fully aligned with the requirements of the national model. A Joint Committee has been established since 2013 which comprises of appropriate membership and which operates effectively in its responsibilities for developing a strategic overview and holding GwE officers to account. However, it is recognised that there is a need to adopt a more manageable and streamlined system for making some executive decisions which will lead to a more effective and efficient response to needs. The accountability framework for GwE will build on and further enrich the existing current agreement between the authorities, and will clarify the arrangements with regard to decision making at the various levels i.e. GwE Joint Committee/Advisory Board/SLT and which will highlight 'authorisation limits' for GwE's SLT. The establishment of an Advisory Executive Board to ensure high quality and professional guidance and challenge to the GwE MD/SLT has also been agreed by the Joint Committee and by early November 2014, GwE will have a fully formed Advisory Board and a clarity of roles between the Joint Committee, Advisory Board, the six LA education leads and the GwE Leadership Team and its Headteacher and Governor representative group.

In response to the additional responsibilities brought about by the requirements of the national model, a Project Plan has been established to identify different options for the remit areas. Representatives from the 6 authorities and Joint Committee will consider the selected options and decide on the most effective approach by December 2014 with plans for a phased approach from April 2015. The service is confident that accessing grants will allow for improved targeting to promote initiatives at a regional, authority and individual school level. There is a firm basis for ensuring success in these areas due to the mature models of collaborating and sharing resources that are already in place either across the region, or sub-region e.g. collaborating on aspects of SEN child support service; 14-19 collaboration; SEG collaboration etc. As there are cross-regional structures for managing these projects and developments, leaders at every level are confident that the proposed provision will be of the highest possible standard from April 2015 onwards.

There exists an extremely positive and effective working relationship between the representatives of the 6 authorities and GwE's SLT and expectations and responsibilities have been clearly highlighted and defined by the Business Plan and SLA. This avoids any unnecessary duplication between LA officers and Challenge Advisers. Termly visits to schools evaluate standards and the quality of leadership and management and this allows for more effective targeting of resources, and identification of situations that require an alternative solution. All monitoring visits to every school are followed up by written reports by the Challenge Advisers which inform officers, elected members and governors of the standards and the issues which need further addressing and on the required support level to cluster/individual schools. Through the management team and quality group meetings of the 6 authorities, GwE's SLT is held accountable and the meetings are used to set appropriate and challenging targets and quality indicators for improving the performance of the authority and its schools; to discuss the content of GwE monitoring reports [individual link Challenge Advisers are included when required], to identify, manage and minimise risks in the context of specific schools and to decide on a school's risk category. As a result of the regional work undertaken to standardise the Partnership Agreement [and its use], there is better consistency of approach in the use of categorisation processes across the 6 authorities. It is also fair to note that schools across the region now have a better understanding of why they are in a specific category. Further work remains to be done to ensure that GwE effectively supports the authorities to make timely use of their statutory intervention powers. There are a few examples of where intervention should have been instigated sooner.

*Governance of GwE : Supervision of Leadership and Resource Allocation :*

The commissioning budget are both managed effectively by the Business Manager and, from September 2014 onwards, the management element will be further enriched with the appointment of a Head of Support and Brokerage. This has had an impact on achievement in a very high percentage of schools and particularly so in amber/red category schools and Estyn category schools. However, during GwE's first year, an unsatisfactory situation unveiled in that there was a very high percentage of under expenditure [£776,662]. A breakdown of expenditure shows that there were several contributing factors, namely an underspend on salaries where salary scales had been set lower than the allocation in the full business case and a significant number of staff appointed on lower spines; phased movement towards appointments, some appointments being completed over the year and some post having to remain vacant for a considerable period; eligibility of SEG funding for aspects of targeted support and inability to re-direct commissioning budget; lower office rental fees

Details re: lead roles for GwE SLT.

Details re: level/quality of experience of extended team [seconded headteachers].

Minutes from LA scrutiny committees

incurred and significantly lower than expected travel costs for Challenge Advisers due to reduced number in team. These matters have been reported to the Joint Committee and to Chief Officers within the authorities, as well as to members of the User Group with specific action taken to minimise balances and avoid a similar situation arising in future. In September 2014 the Joint Committee discussed the proposed use of the underspend carried forward from the 2013/14 budget and agreed that 64.0% of the total [£500,000] be delegated to schools to promote and facilitate school>school collaboration as part of the implementation of a wider strategy by GwE. A further sum of £51,000 was allocated to deliver a regional showcase event to share best practice and to support schools to participate in a national pilot for PISA style tests. It is intended that this event ensures that every school in the GwE Region should be aware of the key components required to deliver the new GCSEs effectively, and should be provided with the tools to do so. Additionally, schools from the rest of Wales will be invited, in order to encourage them to share their practice and benefit from what is going on within GwE.

*Governance of GwE : Scrutiny functions and informing forward planning by the Local Authorities :*

The commitment of the 6 councils and the decision to safeguard the budget as we deliver the national model is a clear statement of intent and of the region's commitment to the school improvement agenda. This is particularly true given the current financial climate. There are appropriate arrangements across the 6 councils with regard to scrutinising performance and holding the regional service to account for standards of achievement.

GwE, since September 2014, has been fully resourced with 3 Hub Leaders who have been given the time to focus on work within their respective hubs. This will involve developing very close relationship with the Local Authority to ensure that they are well informed about their schools, and can make well-informed decisions with GwE to support school improvement. A key component of this work will be their contribution to each LA's scrutiny function. It is expected that the relevant Director in each authority will be able to call upon the GwE Senior Challenge Adviser to play a full part in the LA's education scrutiny function. Alongside this development, GwE will need to develop an effective feedback loop to influence corporate planning and decision making. In essence, GwE will be held to account at scrutiny processes, and the feedback from scrutiny members in each LA will be brought back to GwE's SLT, the Director's forum, the Advisory Board and Joint Committee.

*Governance of GwE : Schools, Headteachers and Governors*

GwE, from the outset has facilitated a representative Headteachers and Governors' Forum [User Group]. These meetings have provided GwE with a very useful feedback loop so that planning can benefit from a clear *user voice*. Meetings are held frequently, and increasingly the group is able to influence the direction of travel. All development in GwE have been communicated with the Forum and they have helped form policy on matters such as defining the nature of termly visits and the associated documentation to be deployed. In the vast majority of instances, schools understand the scope of the support available to them, and GwE's approach to monitoring and challenging progress. This is clearly reflected in the overwhelming positive responses via the stakeholder surveys. Appropriate use is made of Headteacher Performance Management procedures to drive the programme of desired improvements, however it needs to be ensured that the guidance and support issued facilitates the work of leaders in schools to make more effective and timely use of capability procedures. Overall, there is a high level of satisfaction in the quality of the service provided [see analysis of stakeholder survey below]. However, whilst there is firm evidence that there is a higher degree of consistency of approach, that the gap is closing and that the more flexible approach adopted has allowed for a swifter and more effective response to specific risks, we acknowledge that further work is required within and across every hub

*Regional Strategic Sub-group*

Six sub-groups, under the strategic leadership of one of the Directors of Education have been established to drive improvements. The sub-groups are as follows:

- *Performance and Sustainability Sub-Group* : established to monitor and take oversight of the performance of the Consortium against its objectives, to ensure adequate capacity to deliver its programmes and to ensure that the region is addressing the requirements of Welsh Government and regulators in its management of the education agenda at regional level.
- *School Effectiveness Sub-Group* : monitoring the effectiveness of the Regional School Effectiveness and Improvement Service and developing policies and practices to meet the demands of raising standards and improving school performance at regional level [comprises school improvement client officers from the six authorities].

- *Wellbeing and Partnerships Sub-Group* : addressing issues relating to enabling pupils to partake fully and equitably of the education service’s provision in order to improve standards [comprises the identified specialists in these areas of activity from each authority and partnership representation to ensure coherence].
- *Finance and Resources Sub-Group* : addressing issues relating to school finances, provision of places, capital programmes etc in the context of developing value for money joint-working arrangements, coherence in policies and practices, and joint-commissioning cost agreements [comprises the six heads of service].
- *ICT and Data Sub-Group* : established to oversee the creation of common software platforms and databases for the education service in the region with a view to enhancing and sustaining joint-working [comprises the identified specialists in these areas of activities from each authority].
- *Welsh-Medium and Capacity Building Sub-Group* : to promote greater collaboration and sharing of expertise in Welsh-medium education to meet the diverse needs of the region and improve equality of provision and coherence together with developing policies and practices to share specialisms in other activity areas as demanded by the authorities individually and collectively.

**KEY STRENGTHS :**

- the six authorities have played their full part in the creation of GwE and its alignment with the National Model – at both political and officer level
- an effective relationship has enabled the key leads [Chair, Lead Director, Lead CEX, to work well with the Managing Director in developing GwE.
- a strong leadership team is now in place to ensure that GwE is able to move ahead with its enhanced role more effectively
- links with Welsh Government have been good, and GwE has been able to work to a manageable time-scale whilst giving full attention to supporting school improvement
- a strong group of individuals with expertise have been attracted to the Advisory Board
- Headteachers and Governors have expressed their views clearly throughout the development of GwE.

**KEY AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT:**

- adopt a more manageable and streamlined system for making executive decisions which will lead to a more effective and efficient response to needs
- ensure that the business support function is fully staffed so that the budget is deployed more fully.
- ensure that GwE effectively supports the authorities so that they are able to make more timely use of statutory intervention powers
- ensure that the guidance and support issued to schools facilitates the work of leaders to make more effective and timely use of capability procedures
- ensure higher degree of consistency of approach in level of challenge and support within and across every hub
- ensure the appropriate level of financial detail in Business Plan and appropriate differentiation between commissioning at regional and individual authority level
- further hone self-evaluation structures and develop ways of measuring the impact of actions [whilst also ensuring that the findings of those processes are used effectively to set appropriate and challenging targets and quality indicators to improve performance of the service and schools]
- ensure effective use of national and regional training programme to upskill Challenge Advisors

**ASPECT : QUALITY OF PROVISION AND SERVICES**

**Concise Judgement**

**Source of evidence of processes and impact**

There are processes in place to gather stakeholder opinions via an annual survey on the quality of service and a termly questionnaire where we gather judgements and opinions on the quality and impact of our termly monitoring visits. The stakeholder response has been extremely positive. The annual survey was conducted during November 2014 and based on responses obtained from 180 schools [31 secondary, 145 primary, 2 Special Schools + 2 unknown], judgements were as follows :

LA>School Partnership Agreement x6

Examples of :

- i. Gwe SMT meetings
- ii. Hub meetings
- iii. pre termly monitoring visit briefing

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/A
As a Headteacher, I'm aware of the strategic direction and priorities of the school improvement service	32.2%	64.4%	2.2%	0	1.1%
I am confident that I understand the respective roles of the LA and GwE	28.3%	62.8%	7.2%	0	1.7%
GwE listens and responds to our needs	33.9%	55.6%	8.3%	1.1%	1.1%
GwE visits are conducted in a professional manner	82.2%	15.6%	0.5%	0.5%	1.1%
GwE's communications with the school is good	52.8%	43.3%	2.8%	0	1.1%
The details given on the services provided by GwE are clear to the school	20.0%	60.6%	16.7%	1.1%	1.6%
GwE is well-informed about the school's standards	58.3%	36.7%	2.8%	0.5%	1.7%
After the school was placed in an Estyn monitoring category and/or local amber/red category (if applicable), GwE's support helped us to improve.	17.2%	19.4%	2.8%	1.7%	58.9%
Directions, requirements and expectations prior to a visit(s) from GwE Advisers are clear	61.2%	34.4%	3.3%	0	1.1%
GwE visits set appropriate challenges for the school	51.7%	42.8%	3.3%	1.1%	1.1%
The discussion and recommendations for improvement during visits help to move the school forward	56.7%	36.1%	4.4%	1.7%	1.1%
The timetable for receiving a report following a visit is good	60.6%	36.1%	2.2%	0	1.1%
Good support is available for analysing and challenging pupil performance data in order to ensure school improvement	40.0%	50.0%	8.9%	0	1.1%
Good support is available for improving the school's self-evaluation & school development plan	43.9%	43.9%	9.4%	1.1%	1.7%
The support for management and leadership in your school is good	37.2%	49.4%	10.6%	1.7%	1.1%
The support for teachers' continuous professional development is good	12.2%	51.7%	30.6%	4.4%	1.1%
The support for continuous professional development for middle leaders is good	12.8%	46.7%	35.5%	3.9%	1.1%
Targeted support (if applicable) for literacy and numeracy is effective	10.0%	41.1%	17.2%	2.2%	29.4%
GwE has effectively facilitated school>school support	16.1%	54.4%	25.6%	1.7%	2.2%
Overall, GwE provides a good service	34.4%	53.9%	8.3%	1.7%	1.7%

The positive feedback [*strongly agree/agree*] received across the range of questions, is heartening and particularly so where 91.1% of stakeholders were confident in their understanding of the respective roles of GwE and the LA's; 89.5% noted that GwE listened and responded to their needs; an extremely high 97.8% noted that GwE visits were conducted in a professional manner and where 94.5% believed that an appropriate challenge was set. 92.8% also felt that the discussions and challenge by GwE helped to move the school forward. 90.0% believed that GwE offered good support for analysing and challenging performance data whilst 87.9% felt that good support was available for improving the school's self-evaluation & school development plan. The % who disagreed [or strongly disagreed] is low over many of the aspects related to challenge but is more noteworthy in relation to questions about levels of support. The aspect where the highest levels of concerns were raised were about the clarity of details given to schools on the services provided by GwE; about the support for CPD to teachers and middle leaders and the role of GwE in promoting and facilitating school>school support. GwE SLT fully accept the criticism and concerns and robust steps have been taken to address the related issues within our Business Plan for 2014-15.

Responses to the three termly meetings have also been overwhelming positive :

- iv. documents for Challenge Advisers termly monitoring visit reports [Visit 1/2/3 for 2013-14 and 2014-15 – primary and secondary]
  - v. quality assurance monitoring reports by SMT for termly visits
  - vi. Performance Management objectives for GwE SMT and Challenge Advisers [anonymised]
- Analysis of stakeholder survey conducted for s/e purposes
- Analysis of feedback from stakeholder survey following all termly visits.
- Analysis of impact with targeted amber/red schools.
- Case studies showing impact of targeted work with individual schools
- RMIS Business Case.
- Prospectus of GwE Development Programme for Leadership.
- School>School Regional Strategy
- Action Plan re: deployment of underspend to support S>S Strategy
- Regional Literacy and Numeracy Strategy
- Case studies of successful School>School collaboration
- Analysis of Reading/Numeracy Tests.
- Documents related to NSP/GwE support.
- Evaluation of catch-up programmes.

AUTUMN TERM MONITORING VISIT					
	Strongly agree	Agree	Strongly disagree	Disagree	N/C
Head teacher and school benefited from the process	58.6%	36.3%	3.2%	1.9%	0
Directions and requirements prior to visit were clear	46.5%	48.4%	5.1%	0	0
Discussion and recommendations helped move the school forwards	57.3%	36.3%	4.5%	1.9%	0
Appropriate level of challenge	52.2%	41.4%	5.1%	1.3%	0
SPRING TERM MONITORING VISIT					
	Strongly agree	Agree	Strongly disagree	Disagree	N/C
Head teacher and school benefited from the process	64.9%	31.4%	2.9%	0	0.8%
Directions and requirements prior to visit were clear	56.2%	38.7%	4.4%	0	0.7%
Discussion and recommendations helped move the school forwards	62.0%	32.8%	4.4%	0	0.7%
Appropriate level of challenge	59.8%	38.0%	0.7%	0.7%	0.7%
SUMMER TERM MONITORING VISIT					
	Strongly agree	Agree	Strongly disagree	Disagree	N/C
Head teacher and school benefited from the process	62.7%	35.7%	1.6%	0	0
Directions and requirements prior to visit were clear	55.5%	42.9%	1.6%	0	0
Discussion and recommendations helped move the school forwards	59.5%	37.3%	2.4%	0.8%	0
Appropriate level of challenge	52.8%	44.8%	0.8%	1.6%	0

**Monitoring and Challenging and Supporting :**

Under the guidance of the management teams and quality groups of the 6 authorities, and through Partnership Agreement arrangements [with common elements across the 6 authorities], action taken is much more effective to support, monitor, challenge and intervene in schools [including moving schools demonstrating unsatisfactory progress earlier on through intervention processes]. These arrangements have been set out clearly for schools in the LA>School Partnership Agreement and work with specific schools in amber and red categories has been characterised by clear timetables for action and definitive agreed targets and outcomes. As the service which undertakes termly monitoring visits on behalf of the authorities, GwE is well-informed about standards of achievement in schools, and this is supported by the judgements of the institutions themselves in a recent stakeholder survey [see above] of those who responded either strongly agreed or agreed with the statement. In addition to the annual survey, GwE collates stakeholder response after each termly visit and for all three termly visits, stakeholder surveys have shown that well over 90% of schools strongly agreed or agreed that Headteachers and schools had benefited from the process, that the discussion and recommendations helped to move the school forward and that the visit offered an appropriate level of challenge. Both data and contextual information are used forensically to categorise schools and to agree on an appropriate level of intervention and support. GwE internal quality assurance procedures has improved the quality of challenge and support across the three hubs and has also led to higher quality reporting and evidence base for local categorisation. Challenge Advisers know their link schools well which has also resulted in better quality pre-inspection reports for Estyn, and better relevancy of judgements to the findings of the regulatory body. There has been a relentless focus on standards in those schools which have been targeted and there is evidence from a number of sources, including Estyn inspection and end of key stage performance that a high percentage of those schools have improved radically since 2012/2013. It is judged that GwE's strategies and procedures for challenging and supporting schools which were significantly underperforming have been very effective and have resulted in firm improvements. Although there are strengths in the support element of GwE's work with amber/red category school e.g. developing more robust self-evaluation procedures and more effective use of data, which has resulted in improvements across both sectors, it is judged that further work remains to be done to ensure that a more

Case studies of impact re: Literacy and Numeracy [see evaluative comments]

Case studies of impact re: Standardisation and Moderation of TA [see evaluative comments]

SCC Capacity Building Bid

SCC Action Plans for regional schools

Case studies of impact re: SCC Programme [see evaluative comments]

appropriate balance is struck between challenging and supporting so that all schools can easily access quality guidance, across a range of aspects and priorities. **Involvement with and impact on ‘coasting’ good schools has been much less significant and is being addressed as part of our work programme for 2014-2015.**

***Use of data:***

To further enable the school improvement service to more effectively meet priorities agreed with the individual authorities, work is currently undertaken by the 6 Directors of Education and GwE to improve the ability of the regional service to collect and collate data from local authorities and schools on pupil performance and progress and on using that data to benchmark and challenge school performance and pupil progress and, with LA’s and schools, to set challenging targets for improvements. This will also allow for a more robust examination of performance with school leaders and chairs of governors at whole-school level; different subjects/year groups and sub-categories of pupils and to identify areas of underperformance and achievement gap. Effective use has made of a vast range of data on standards and quality of education to monitor and evaluate performance and to challenge schools and individual subject departments but the impact of the work has been more significant in underperforming schools where a high percentage have made more mature use of data when evaluating and findings trends, when identifying areas for improvement and when prioritising courses of action in relation to standards. A more mature level of approach is also evident in these schools re: target setting procedures e.g. more intelligent use of assessments, FFT data, FSM family performance thresholds and lines of regression etc. However, a more consistent approach must be taken to ensure that schools across the performance range are challenged on their performance and specifically on the achievements of individual pupils/groups of pupils.

***Termly monitoring visits:***

Termly visits are conducted to every school to monitor and challenge standards and quality of leadership. Those schools of concern locally or/and in an Estyn follow-up category are visited more frequently. The findings of these visits are used to help authorities determine a risk category for their schools and to target additional support. In each instance, a report is sent to the Head teacher and Chair of Governors. As a result of this additional support and the intensified scrutiny and accountability, the majority of schools have made good progress. In specific instances, the Challenge Adviser attends meetings of the Governing Body [or relevant Sub-groups] to present their reports. Each monitoring visit has a focus area however standards of achievement and progress towards priorities and targets are a common thread. Self-evaluations and School Development Plans are crucial to driving improvements within institutions and are therefore central to all discussions with schools.

The autumn visit focuses additionally on outcomes; the spring visit on standards of achievement in learners’ books; and the summer visit on quality of leadership at all levels. In an attempt to ensure consistency and transparency of visits, a matrix is used to reach a judgement on the quality of the various elements. This ensures that regional themes are operational, that good practices are identified and shared, and that further support is targeted on a risk basis. As a result of the above action [and specific focus on joint observation and scrutiny], the capacity of the Senior Management Teams and Middle Leaders to evaluate quality of teaching and learning in schools, has improved dramatically. However, a minority of schools need further support to evaluate standards in specific departments.

***RESPONDING TO NATIONAL INITIATIVES***

***Developing Leadership :***

The 6 authorities and GwE firmly believe that improving quality of leadership, at every level, is fundamental to ensuring the sustainability of recent improvements and ensuring that high risk category schools make the necessary progress. As well as prioritising the area as part of termly monitoring visits, GwE has intensified the work with a number of schools and individuals using a targeted approach. There are several examples of Challenge Advisers working with ‘good practice’ school head teachers to provide target schools with guidance and support – in the form of individual sessions or group workshops. Good practice in SDPs and self-evaluations has been shared in strategic forums and presented directly to category schools too. Across the 3 Hubs, a range of training or guidance sessions have been delivered by either the LA or GwE for senior and middle leaders across a range of developmental work. However, it has not been a coherent delivery across the region and it is acknowledged that there is a need to move to adopting a universal approach to

ensure consistency in the quality of provision. Work is in progress to address this and, during the autumn term, an audit and evaluation of current practice was undertaken before formulating a regional offer of GwE services/training. GwE have considered the priorities noted by the NLDB and will, therefore, firstly offer an effective development programme across the region for middle leaders from January/February 2015 onwards focusing on developing the key skills required to be an effective middle leader in the respective sector. It is intended to utilise existing GwE staff to deliver the development training, in partnership with external individuals/organisations and successful regional practitioners. The GwE Middle Leadership Development Programme, delivered over 6 days [and will include taught days; link visits to schools to identify excellent practice; job shadowing; the support of an identified 'mentor' to support/challenge the candidate; action led research in school] is intended to be a broader and more enriching experience than just a training session. Participants will be supported to develop personal skills against the Leadership standards and the Leadership Development Pathway priorities eg mentoring/coaching. Reflective practice and action research will be a key feature of the programme and alongside personal development, participants must be able to display impact and outcomes in relation to their work back at their school. ie: improved standards in learner achievement or improved behaviour/attendance and action research will form an essential part of the programme.

The intention is to progress to offer effective developmental packages for senior leader development from September 2015 onwards. GwE currently provides a variety of effective support and guidance for Headteachers, with the existing support for new Headteachers progressing effectively. GwE has also given attention to the development of the Executive Head role, aligning with the key priorities noted by the NLDB. A jointly arranged *Executive Head Conference* between the NLDB, GwE and ERW will be held in January 2015 in order to showcase and share effective practice across the regions. An initial Phase 1 Prospectus/brochure of middle leadership development training offered across the region by GwE will be published in January 2015, with Phase 2 and 3 included when appropriate. This will also focus on senior leadership development training [Deputy Headteacher, Headteacher, Executive Headteacher]. Since September 2014 GwE is the Strategic Project Manager of the North Wales NPQH programme. Effective NPQH selection, support and assessment processes are operational with GwE utilising current recognised effective leaders within the education sector in North Wales as part of the GwE NPQH team.

GwE also has a central and pivotal role to play in Head teachers' Performance Management procedures and all Challenge Advisers have been trained to act as a member of the relevant Governing Body panel. Effective use is made of the Autumn Term Monitoring Visit to collate evidence for determining possible objectives and progress is monitored in subsequent meetings. GwE regards that governors are central to developing and challenging schools and **there is a need to further strengthen their role as a 'critical friend' in schools**. Work has been undertaken in some areas, in collaboration with the authorities, to upskill Governors and Elected Members with priority given to improving their understanding of data and of the requirements of challenging Head teachers. As above, there is a need to ensure that the guidance is consistent across the region and that there is a high level of commitment.

#### ***School>School Collaboration:***

When developing a collaborative school>school model, GwE has taken, as its building blocks, the content of the recent report by Robert Hill Consulting, *The National Model for Regional Working* and the priorities outlined by the NLDB. GwE is fully committed to developing what is recognised globally as a *self-improving school system* and we fully acknowledge that to establish such a system requires all partners and education stakeholders in North Wales to fully undertake an active role. All 6 Authorities and GwE recognise that effective leadership has to come from within schools and that schools must take shared responsibility for their own improvement. Thus, our adopted approach to promoting effective collaboration, does not enforce a single method or model on schools, but rather, builds on effective local practice which was already operational. GwE also accepts that there has to be a multi-dimensional and multi-layered approach, because not all schools are starting from the same solid base of effective partnership working and not all schools have the capacity and understanding to effectively challenge peer performance. For most of our schools, our input is one of promoting, facilitating, monitoring, evaluating and ensuring that lessons from best practice are actively cascaded and that all partners are placed in a *win-win* situation. For a minority of our targeted schools, GwE takes a more proactive and, at times, prescriptive approach. When facilitating and promoting collaboration for such schools, we are always mindful of the *ladders-of-learning* principle.

GwE Challenge Advisors monitor and evaluate progress on a termly basis to ensure accountability and effective progress across the region and



school>school collaboration is now included as a line of inquiry in all termly monitoring visits.

During the 2014 Autumn Term, GwE used a significant percentage of its previous underspend to promote school>school collaboration. Based on an agreed formula all schools received a financial contribution to support developments [with specific agreed engagement conditions]. Primary schools were also given an opportunity to apply for further funding to support cross-border [LA and/or region] collaboration. Developments and progress will be monitored during the 2015 Spring Term and evaluated in the 2015 Summer Term.

As part of the wider strategy, and the multi-layered approach, GwE and the Local Authorities, in partnership with Headteachers, have identified [and kit-marked] best practice relating to leadership and teaching and learning. Schools/departments and individuals, supported by GwE funding, will operate as lead practitioners to support peers. The established model will ensure that we will have ease of access to a wider support package for schools and that the support is rooted in best regional practice. The model also allows for capacity building at our best performing schools. Plans are currently in place to arrange a regional showcase conference in June / July 2015. Also, during the 2014-15 educational year, we will develop an online compendium [to be accessed via GwE website] which will allow practitioners across the region to see where scheduled opportunities for accessing best practice are available. The model also builds on the approach taken by GwE to ensure regional support for GCSE 2015/Pisa developments. National grant funding and GwE core funding, has been used effectively to establish a central team of 7 lead personnel [including 2 members from SLT] which is further supported by 6 lead regional schools [Ysgol yr Alun for Science; Ysgol Eirias for Mathematics; Ysgol Bryn Elian for English and Ysgolion Tryfan/Dyffryn Ogwen/Botwnnog for Welsh. The Welsh dimension for Science is further enriched by the lead from the 5 secondary schools on Ynys Mon, whilst Ysgol Glan Clwyd supports the delivery in Mathematics]. Schools have warmly welcome the opportunity to take this lead role and the project has allowed us to work with our best practitioners in undertaking action research.

The NTEN Teacher Development Programme and the HeadSprouts Reading Initiative Programme are two examples of effective collaboration facilitated by GwE. As part of our school improvement programme, the Teacher Development Trust (TDT) agreed to work with GwE to deliver a regional equivalent of their successful National Teacher Enquiry Network (NTEN). This would enable schools to develop more effective CPD provision through a greater focus on evidence-based professional development and sustainable peer-to-peer support systems. As well as offering schools an initial CPD audit and access to a library of education research journals, a key principle of the GwE model is the use of the lesson study approach characterized by a teacher-led, collaborative approach to lesson observations building on feedback and advice from colleagues using evidence-based strategies. The main focus of the GwE NTEN project is to help schools improve the quality of learning in a specific – and measurable – aspect of provision. In this regard the model has been shown to be both supportive and very effective. Our NTEN project is supported by the use of IRIS Connect video technology to record evidence as part of lesson study. We have 12 schools on our pilot NTEN project for 2014-15. Within each school, nominated teachers undertake an initial CPD audit of provision in their school; assist in the audit of CPD provision in a partner school; identify an aspect of learning that the school wishes to improve (measurable and standards-linked); identify possible evidence-based solutions for the identified area of improvement; commence the Lesson Study/action research as identified and evaluate the outcomes of the project and share with schools. In September 2014 an introductory event was held, delivered by CUREE (Centre for the Use of Research and Evidence in Education) coupled with an introduction to NTEN lesson study, delivered by Teacher Development Trust (TDT). The introductory workshops helped teachers identify workable, practical aims and ‘*research questions*’ to take forward through the lesson study process; understand the idea of collecting pupil evidence at classroom level (and to give them some diagnostic examples and activities to practice on); recognize the features of lesson study in the classroom related to key aspects of teaching and learning; and plan for their own aims and foci, and to refine them for lesson study (in the sense of testing the scope and practicality and identifying the evidence they might collect and use). They also underpinned the project’s clear focus on improving the quality of teaching through the evaluative use of performance data. A full evaluation of impact will be undertaken at the end of the period.

*HeadSprout Reading Intervention Project* : GwE has formed a partnership with Bangor University to provide training and support for schools who wish to use the HeadSprout evidence-based reading intervention. HeadSprout is an online reading intervention that provides pupils with individualized teaching that can be delivered either by teachers or teaching assistants. HeadSprout Early Reading comprises 80 lessons and is designed to take beginning readers to the

equivalent of Year 3 reading standard in around 30 hours of instruction. The programme has undergone extensive research analysis that has demonstrated its effectiveness from Year 2 to Year 7 (including mainstream pupils and those with intellectual disabilities and autism). HeadSprout has been successfully trialled across a number of schools (both mainstream and special) in Conwy and Gwynedd over recent years. In June 2014 GwE and Bangor University offered a range of implementation and support packages for additional schools who wish to use the programme and a further nine schools joined the 2014-15 project. The current HeadSprout schools have used the intervention on pupils deemed to be at risk of not making appropriate progress in the standard of their reading and/or comprehension skills. GwE, Bangor and Warwick University have a proposal for a new regional study that would be focused on evaluating the wider impact of the HeadSprout programmes on the attainment of disadvantaged pupils across North Wales. All participating schools have received initial setup training and support with administering placement tests for each pupil and have commenced HeadSprout interventions from November 2014. A full evaluation will be undertaken at the end of the year.

GwE has also facilitated and supported several collaborative cross region and LA based projects. Best examples include supporting the development of KS2 science in Conwy schools : a GwE facilitated science workshop was arranged for 11 targeted primary schools - chosen on the basis of either static or declining trends in Level 4 and/or Level 5 attainment over the past 3 years, or where there was a significantly low percentage of Level 5 attainment over recent years. The aim of the workshop was to help teachers improve provision for Level 4 and Level 5 skills, and assessment and to make accurate and robust end-of-key stage moderated judgements. The session focused on establishing an accurate understanding of higher order science enquiry skills at Level 4 and Level 5 (standardization); improving the quality of curriculum planning and associated provision; applying this knowledge to a range of learners' work from your school (moderation); reviewing the standard of LNF skills (and also the provision for these skills) in pupils' science work; and providing teachers with the opportunity to network with other schools to share good practice/strategies. Each teacher who attended the first session was allocated an additional day to improve identified areas of provision. 10 out of 11 schools engaged fully with the support on offer; 4 out of the 10 schools achieved significant increases in either Level 4 and/or Level 5 data in summer 2014 (from +10 to +25% improvement); 4 out of the 11 schools achieved an improved benchmark position by +1 quartile place for either Level 4 and/or Level 5; 2 of the schools benefitted from the successful 2013-14 moderation programme.

Other examples include : Welsh Second Language + Literacy support via Ysgol Dyffryn Conwy for 6 other secondary schools; PLC established to look at action research, use of effect size, secondary groups to share good practice; GwE leading 3 training days for schools leaders in the Caernarfon catchment area [based on categorisation needs]; partnerships developed with the Teacher Development Network and 10 schools in Conwy looking at developing cross sector pedagogy [*Iris Connect* is involved in this scheme]; cross sector leadership and middle manager development network for 20 middle leaders from Conwy/Denbighshire [16 primary head teachers and secondary deputies looking at developing personal skills and self-perception]; funding a Mentoring Scheme in Flintshire where effective Headteachers are supporting less effective Heads. GwE have also facilitated the iNet Lead Practitioner project in Flintshire and we undertaken a key role within the steering group and the provision for the North Wales Strategic Heads Group for bilingual/Welsh medium schools.

#### ***Literacy and Numeracy:***

A regional Literacy and Numeracy Strategy is being developed during the autumn term 2014, in collaboration with key partners including representatives from schools, LA teams, who are still delivering support on specific aspects of this agenda (e.g. Welsh Advisory Teams, Foundation Phase) and the National Support Programme. In December 2014 the strategy will be shared for consultation with stakeholders before being finalised and published in January 2015. This will ensure wider ownership of the agenda and guarantee that individual LA and schools' priorities have been fully incorporated and that there is no unnecessary duplication, either locally, between GwE and LAs, or nationally between GwE and the NSP. Once the strategy has been finalised a Regional Literacy and Numeracy Strategic group will be convened who will have overall responsibility for monitoring the implementation and effectiveness of the strategy. This group will include a range of stakeholders from schools, GwE, the LA and the NSP. Currently GwE does not have a sufficiently comprehensive overview of the provision for literacy and numeracy across the whole region and this is an area that needs further development. The L/N SSL reports to the user group on a regular basis who then report back to headteachers' federations in each of the LAs through their representatives. She also currently meets separately with representatives from the LAs to align priorities and work programmes, although it is anticipated that the Regional

Strategic Group meetings will be sufficient in the future. Generally, in the 2014 National Tests GwE's performance was above the Wales average on the SS>85 indicator in all except the Welsh Reading test. Performance was strongest in the Numerical Reasoning test. A common area for development in 3 of the 4 tests is the % of GwE learners achieving the higher score indicator of >115. During the coming year the analysis of the National Tests will be used to support the targeting of specific schools and LAs e.g. Welsh Reading in Mon, English Reading in Denbighshire, Numeracy (both Procedural and Reasoning) in Wrexham, with a particular focus on reducing the % of learners scoring SS>85. During the financial year 2013/14 GwE were given £350,000 of the regional SEG to fund a small team of 6.6 FTE literacy and numeracy Associate Partners. These individuals were identified as outstanding classroom practitioners and are seconded to GwE from schools within the region. During the academic year 2013/14 their support was allocated in response to requests from System Leaders and NSP Partners, and was focussed on individual teachers with regards to planning and delivery of the LNF. During the year the team made 509 support visits to 123 primary schools. Around half those visits were single visits to reassure schools that they were implementing the LNF appropriately and that their planning was in line with expectations. However, in the case of around 25 schools, the visits were sustained for a longer period of time, supporting schools in Estyn follow-up, or schools that did not have the leadership capacity to implement the LNF without additional help. This worked well and evidence is available from heads' questionnaire and CA visit reports, as well as 2014 performance data in a few schools where there has been more intense support, and in Estyn reports where schools have been removed from monitoring. In the schools where the support was most effective, the APs input, as part of a wider team including the Challenge Advisor, led to an improvement in the quality of teaching, as noted by Estyn or GwE reviews. Where the support was less effective it has led to competency procedures subsequently being initiated with the teachers who received the support. GwE has increased capacity and broadened the remit of this team from September 2014 until August 2015, as a few LAs have used an increased percentage of their retained SEG to commission additional literacy and numeracy support for their schools. Four additional full time secondments have been made, including a secondary practitioner. The total capacity now is 10.6 FTE. The secondary Associate Partner visits secondary schools literacy and numeracy co-ordinators, support where necessary, establish networks of practitioners and facilitate the sharing of good practice. She does not have the capacity to deliver this support through the medium of Welsh, but has developed contacts with lead practitioners in Welsh medium schools to ensure equal access to provision. Primary colleagues have also extended their brief, under the leadership and direction of the Head of Brokerage and Support, and are now able to offer training, with follow-up support being targeted according to need. Training on Numerical Reasoning for Numeracy Co-ordinators, offered to the region's primary schools in November 2014, was over-subscribed. 270 places were available on 9 sessions in venues across the region. A further training event on Extended Writing is being offered in Flintshire LA only, in response to a request from the LA, in November. This will be rolled out to other LAs as required in the Spring and Summer terms. All training will be followed-up by practical class-based support in targeted schools. This supports individual teachers' and teaching assistants' Performance Management and aligns with the Literacy and Numeracy Strategy which will have been shared and agreed by stakeholders. More comprehensive and cohesive training and support for secondary schools is at an early stage of development. Schools started on Phase 3 of the NSP in September 2014 which means that they have therefore spent over a year on Stage 1 and 2 [i.e. completing the audit to determine their priorities]. This has caused frustration for many schools at both ends of the scale – the better ones being held back and not able to forge ahead, and the ones who needed more support not receiving it soon enough. In October 2014 GwE and the NSP came to an agreement about support for the region's schools as part of the rollout of the NSP into Phase 3 of their programme. It was agreed that NSP Partners would offer support to schools on strategic, whole school issues relating to the implementation of the LNF, whilst GwE's Associate Partners would offer support on teaching and learning. This approach was shared with, and approved by WG officials. This was communicated to schools in October, as previously there was a high level of confusion amongst teachers about the roles and responsibilities of the various partners. The L/N SSL meets on a fortnightly basis with the NSP's Senior Partner in the north and as a result, communication between GwE and the NSP has improved this year. Schools' requests for support from the NSP, as part of their progress trackers, have been shared with GwE and this supports the targeting of support, along with information from Challenge Advisers. There is a need to further improve collaboration and communication between the NSP and GwE at a national level. GwE have secured a regional agreement with Catch Up, which is supported by the 6 Directors. As the L/N SSL, 2 other SLs and 1 associate partner have been trained to deliver this training, schools are able to access the training at a reduced cost. The intervention is one recommended by WG to support struggling learners. Between April 2013 and December 2014 GwE will have facilitated 15 Catch Up/Dyfal Donc literacy and numeracy training sessions. 5 Welsh medium literacy sessions and 2 English medium have been organised and delivered, and 5 Welsh medium and 3 English medium numeracy sessions. In total 387 teachers and teaching assistants have been trained to deliver this intervention to learners. At present, pupil level data is not collated centrally [as used to happen with individual LAs in past] but, as a regional tracking system is developed, this should become possible. The monitoring and evaluation of the impact of these

programmes on learner achievement are part of schools' plans and, as such, are monitored and challenged by Challenge Advisors during their termly focus visits. NQT support and training already takes place at a regional level under the leadership of a specific member of part-time staff. However, the Associate Partners have developed a support package for NQTs on literacy and numeracy, and discussions are ongoing about how best to deliver this across the region.

**Standardisation/Moderation/Assessment:**

GwE acknowledges that there is inconsistency in the standardisation and moderation of learners' work across the LAs of North Wales and that there is a need for a regional steer to allow for a more systematic approach to quality assurance and to facilitate the sharing and dissemination of best practice. During 2012-2013, best practice involved internal standardisation being monitored by Challenge Advisor as part of termly monitoring visits; moderation by the SMT/Heads of Department leading to follow-up training and support for those requiring further development and secondary teachers meeting with primary counterparts to moderate samples. GwE was actively involved in a number of cases, including the moderation of KS3 work in Denbighshire where each school was asked to submit a portfolio of level 5, 6 and 7 literacy work which was scrutinised and moderated by a panel of literacy expert practitioners and a GwE Challenge Advisor lead. A report was written for each school which was shared with the Headteacher and LA. Other cases of best practice involves GwE facilitated and supported projects at Ysgol Emrys ap Iwan, Ysgol Uwchradd Dinbych and Ysgol Uwchradd Rhyl [cross hub working to improve aspects of assessment]; cross region [Conwy, Denbigh and Gwynedd] Science MAT research group looking at teaching and learning of science with a view to increase the numbers of learners gaining level 5 and 6; Denbighshire secondary schools PLC for moderation of English at KS3 which led to increased consistency and reliability of TA at KS3 in portfolios and learner profiles; cross region collaborative working where Ysgol Cerrigydrudion, Ysbyty Ifan (Conwy), Prion (Denbigh) and Brithdir (Gwynedd) moderated core subject teacher assessment as a family group. The pilot work undertaken last year has allowed for a more focused approach from 2014 onwards and is acknowledged as one of our main priorities within the Business Plan. GwE has SMT representation on the National Steering Group for TA Standardisation and Moderation under the leadership of David Heath and have contributed extensively to national discussions and direction for moving the agenda forward. As a result of those discussions, we have established a strategy for roll out during 2014-15 where a *GwE Teacher Assessment Working Group* has been established [incorporating secondary and primary specialist for each of the core subjects]. These practitioners are developing a set of guidelines on best practice and expected cluster actions with regard to standardisation and moderation of teacher assessment. They will also develop a levelled portfolio with commentary to support the professional dialogue and to serve as exemplars in cluster meetings. Guidelines and portfolios are to be distributed and discussed at the relevant SMT strategic forums across the region and will outline the expectations re: moderation practice for each cluster. A quality assurance process will be agreed where Challenge Advisors will be required to participate in around 20% of cluster moderation meetings and will include a cross section of core subjects and LAs. At the end of the year, a report will be written by the GwE SMT regarding the region's practices. During 2015-16, following an evaluation of this year's processes, a plan for a training package for all schools will be developed which will be rolled out in Autumn 2015.

**Schools Challenge Cymru :**

Five schools within the Consortium are part of the Schools Challenge Cymru programme (Ysgol Caergybi, Anglesey; Ysgol Bryn Alyn, Wrexham; Ysgol Clywedog, Wrexham; Ysgol Rhosnesni, Wrexham and Holywell High School, Flint) and all five have worked effectively with their SCC Advisers to produce their '*Single School Development Plan*' to the SCC team at Welsh Government by the July deadline. During the period of their compilation, SCC Advisers kept GwE SMT updated on progress and advice was provided where appropriate to ensure consistency across the region. The '*Single School Development Plan*' for each of the five schools have been approved by Welsh Government, and funding identified to support the priorities within the plans. All five schools have been allocated revenue and capital funding.

GwE management of the SCC project : in September 2015 a seconded Headteacher was appointed as SCC Consortium Link Officer to co-ordinate and over-see the work of the SCC Advisers and to take responsibility of the Consortium SCC grant. He also advises GwE SMT on developmental work and ensures appropriate administrative support. He meets regularly with the SCC Advisers, and liaises with SCC SMT's, the partner schools and SCC Business Managers, leading to the establishment of common protocols for the management of the SCC funding. The core purpose is to maximise the impact of the SCC project by providing high quality support for schools through both the deployment and maximisation of funding. Although in its initial phase, it is already evident that the school to school support being brokered by SCC schools aligns well with GwE's objective of building regional capacity. Between

SCC and the PISA project there is already clear evidence of the engagement of significant numbers of our secondary schools with this important agenda.

The GwE central capacity-building funding had previously been approved and therefore all plans presented to the SCC team contained links to that central GwE funding where clearly identified elements of GwE capacity-building funding would be accessed. Grant funding includes an allocation of £513,000 to support capacity building within the five schools. Within this allocation are two themes, ‘*Leadership and Management*’ and ‘*Teaching and Learning*’ and the allocation is being used to develop school-to-school collaboration opportunities which were identified during the production of the ‘Single School Development Plan’. Leadership and Management funding is being used to release members of SMT of other identified schools to work with the Schools Challenge Cymru schools - to share expertise in leadership, support improvement strategies, offer specialist support with assessment/tracking/learner outcomes in specific departments and promoting promoting cross sector collaboration. This work will build leadership capacity within SCC schools. Teaching and Learning funding is being used to release experienced and effective teachers (including Heads of Department) to work with SCC schools to share plans, to observe teaching and learning and to mentor staff – the priority being to develop internal capacity building in core subjects.

All SCC schools have established their AIBs and the first meetings have taken place. Leadership and management support by partner schools is developing at whole-school and departmental level. Although still in its early stages, each SCC school has a plan that initially includes at least one lead partner school and other management support will be sourced as identified in their capacity-building bids to GwE. Cross-phase working is developing within clusters during this term. Taken together, this work will build leadership capacity both within SCC schools and more widely across the region. Teaching and learning support has been tailored to the needs of each school. In some cases the priority has been internal capacity building in core subjects, whilst in others an integrated approach to the involvement of the lead school has meant that sharing of expertise has begun. The impact upon SCC schools will be more immediately evident, but the longer-term legacy of the development of coaching and leadership skills in subject leaders across the region is in line with one of GwE’s wider objectives.

**Promoting and developing the Welsh Language :**

A full evaluation of regional standards in Welsh is included as part of the commentary and evidence section for the first aspect [see above – *Impact on primary and secondary schools’ standards of achievement*]. 2014 Welsh First Language assessment data for key indicators across all phases and against cohort and candidates are summarised below :

2014: Welsh First Language Outcomes – GwE region				
KS	Cohort	% of cohort assessed Welsh 1 <sup>st</sup> language	% of cohort achieved expected level	% of candidates achieved expected level
FP	7537	34.5%	30.5% (LCW5+)	88.4% (LCW5+)
KS2	6880	33.4%	29.1% (L4+)	87.2% (L4+)
KS3	7137	29.4%	26.4% (L5+)	89.7% (L5+)
KS4	7408	29.6%	21.2% (GCSE A*-C)	71.6% (GCSE A*-C)

The numbers of learners sitting GCSE Welsh First Language have risen over the last three years and statistics from individual LA’s, such as Wrexham, also show an increase in KS2>KS3 numbers as a result of the success of their immersion course. A *Welsh-Medium and Capacity Building Sub-Group* has been established, and is chaired by a representative from ADEW. The group aims to promote greater collaboration and sharing of expertise in Welsh-medium education and to improve the equality of provision. Their work has focused on joint-scrutiny of national and LA policies, strategic plans and practices to ensure better understanding and collaboration across the region [specifically in relation to the document *One Language for All*, the *WESP* and the effective use of the WEG. It has also promoted and supported the *Welsh Language Sabbatical Scheme* across the region and has recently commissioned GwE to undertake an audit and evaluation of provision and ethos for the development of Welsh across the region. Effective collaboration between GwE and the respective LA’s has also led to joint-evaluative exercises beign conducted in targeted schools and a full time two-term secondment has been advertised for a SMT member to lead on further regional developments. There are currently many strengths across the region in relation to the promotion, the development and the standards in Welsh First Language with excellent practice identified in Gwynedd [and corroborated in recent Estyn Thematic Inspection] and Ynys

Mon eg Language Charter.

***Developing 14-19 provision :***

An effective regional infrastructure has been operational for a number of years and an experienced steering group, under the lead of a regional co-ordinator, oversees all developments related to the phase. As a result, the region has ensured that all maintained secondary schools and FE colleges within North Wales have met their statutory local curriculum requirements at pre and post 16. Numerous aspects of their work has led to national recognition and specifically in relation to collaboration between FE Colleges and schools to enhance the vocational curriculum; the training, development and deployment of Learning Coaching; and the role of the Welsh Medium Education Forum.

***Developing the Foundation Phase :***

A full evaluation of regional standards for the Foundation Phase is included as part of the commentary for the first aspect [see above – *Impact on primary and secondary schools' standards of achievement*]. LA's Foundation Phase Officers meet regularly at a regional level to standardise practices across the region, and on a termly basis with Challenge Advisers as part of LA/GwE meetings in order to share information. The Challenge Advisers have collaborated with the LA's to effectively deploy the Foundation Phase officers in target schools as required. GwE and Foundation Phase Officers have also conducted end of phase moderation sessions with target schools.

**KEY STRENGTHS :**

- impact on performance and outcomes
- impact on performance and quality of leadership in the majority of targeted schools
- effective literacy and numeracy targeted support via GwE Associate Partners
- effective cross-region and cross-phase collaboration to develop 14-19 provision
- effective facilitation and promotion of school-to-school collaboration in specific clusters

**KEY AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT:**

- further enable the school improvement service to more effectively meet priorities agreed with the individual authorities by developing the regional data collation/analysis service
- further develop our school-to-school model so that all schools are actively and effectively engaged in collaborative working
- establish robust programmes for developing leadership across the region
- increase level of challenge and support for good '*coasting*' good schools so that they become great schools
- further strengthen the role of the Governing Body as a '*critical friend*' in schools
- further improve the quality of support to improve self-evaluation and improvement planning in schools
- further develop work done by Gwynedd and Ynys Mon re: use of Language Charter to promote the development of the Welsh language across the region