



Tuag at Ragoriaeth  
Towards Excellence

# ANNUAL REPORT

## 2018-2019



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## 1. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

### Introduction

GwE continues to look outward and to welcome challenge from both inside and outside Wales whilst making sure that what it is developing is right for its context. This includes continuously listening to the voice of all stakeholders especially those of teachers and leaders in schools across all sectors.

GwE's progress was endorsed by Estyn following their re-visit. The Estyn report concluded that since the core inspection, GwE has conducted an intensive and comprehensive review of its work and its effect on standards, provision and leadership across the region. The report also comments that stakeholders at all levels have increasing confidence in GwE's ability to provide an effective school improvement service and that significant changes have been made to management structures to distribute leadership and ensure clear lines of accountability.

Progress against four of the recommendations were judged to be very good, with strong progress noted for the other two recommendations. Estyn also commented on the significant pace of improvement and acknowledged that much had taken place over a very short period of time. GwE has a clear three-year plan that sets out how, in close collaboration with key stakeholders, it will strengthen leadership, improve teaching and learning and increase aspiration to impact on standards and accelerate the pace of improvement in regional secondary schools.

The focus is now on support and on capacity-building for a self-improving system. Challenge Advisers have become 'Supporting Improvement Advisers' (SIA) and this is more than a name change – it signals a determination to build trust with key stakeholders and to move away from a top-down approach to school improvement, developing a more long-term, supportive and sustainable strategy.

Robust and detailed business plans, based firmly on the findings of self-evaluation processes, contribute significantly to the effective management and development of individuals and teams. GwE's improved planning and performance management model articulates clearly the vision, values, priorities and objectives of the service. The clarity of its strategic direction and robust accountability framework are key strengths in moving forward. This strong focus on accountability, continuous review and a constant emphasis on achieving progress in accordance with priorities is leading to significant improvement in performance of GwE staff, individual schools and regional outcomes. GwE priorities are also clearly aligned to the national priorities as outlined in *Education in Wales: Our National mission*.

GwE is making good progress in delivering on those national priorities. Clear milestones have been identified to support schools on areas of the reform journey such as curriculum and assessment, leadership, professional learning, Welsh in Education, ALN and digital competency. In September 2018, Steve Munby – an education consultant on leadership and system reform - reviewed GwE's current practice and direction of travel and the following were identified as areas of strength:

1. The team has built credibility with schools. Increasingly at secondary level GwE has serving head teachers (either on a secondment basis or as part-time associates). Primary advisers usually have head teacher experience.
2. Relationships with local authorities, including those with the six education portfolio leads are very strong.
3. The professional learning programme is based on need rather than on the interest and specialism of the advisers.

4. The new G6 instrument has the potential to save schools time and to integrate the various scrutiny and monitoring requirements whilst at the same time supporting school self-evaluation. It has very significant potential.
5. Internal business plans are robust and are monitored systematically – they connect activity with impact and with budget monitoring. This is impressive.
6. Some of the clusters are working very well and demonstrating outcome-focused collaboration and collective responsibility; though this is still a minority.
7. GwE is doing impressive work to enable pioneer schools to provide some strong collaborative leadership across their clusters for the new Welsh Curriculum, though this is still patchy.
8. The new proposed system for analysing the expected progress of pupils, linked to value-added and contextual factors, is highly impressive and could help to shift the culture away from competition with other schools and away from focusing on borderline pupils towards focusing on every child and his or her progress.
9. It is very early days but the new emphasis on using small data for school improvement has great potential to increase the confidence of schools towards school-based approaches to improvement and can empower teachers to take greater responsibility for improving teaching and learning and support for children in their classrooms/schools.
10. There is a new approach to creating a directory of successful practice which can be shared electronically. This has the potential to support the dissemination of good practice in a practical way.
11. Very significant progress is being made on leadership development – linked to impressive leadership development programmes and the new direction provided by the NAEL. This is a huge step forward and has great potential to improve the quality of school leadership.

In his report (Appendix 1), Steve Munby concludes that:

*The direction of travel that GwE has adopted is exactly the right one. Much is now in place to move things forward strongly – leadership, clear direction, culture, mission and focus, relationships, credibility with schools and local authorities, systems, quality assurance, data. Above all GwE should hold its nerve and keep doing what it is doing.*

*I am coming away from these two days feeling positive about the prospects for success in North Wales, in spite of the numerous challenges. The quality of the GwE team is high and the strategies are impressive. The direction of travel is the right one and the team are open to external challenge whilst determined to do the right things for the schools and the children in North Wales.*

## **Budget**

We like everybody else are living in very difficult financial climate and have to make some difficult decisions. We are grateful for the support of the Chief Executives across the Region and our Elected Members in the Joint Committee for their advice and support in making the best decisions to support our learners and schools.

In 2019-2020 our core budget is £3,614,596. This is a 3% cut to our core budget from last year which was £3,651,106. Our core budget is now around 25% less than just before GwE was set up. This year our Education Improvement Grant will be £29,064,551 (including match funding). This is nearly an £8million cut on the 2015 budget. At the same time, there has been a 13% increase in staffing costs through introduction of minimum wage, living wage and pension contributions. As we manage these financial challenges, we have continued to

increase our delegation rates to schools. GwE retains around 3% of the EIG to provide support for schools.

			<b>Grant and match Cut (£)</b>	<b>Grant and match Cut (%)</b>
<b>11 Individual Grants</b>	<b>14/15</b>	<b>£37,021,296</b>		
<b>EIG</b>	<b>15/16</b>	<b>£33,549,764</b>	-£3,471,532	-9.38%
<b>EIG</b>	<b>16/17</b>	<b>£31,902,703</b>	-£1,647,061	-4.91%
<b>EIG</b>	<b>17/18</b>	<b>£31,672,444</b>	-£230,259	-0.72%
<b>EIG</b>	<b>18/19</b>	<b>£29,124,247</b>	-£2,548,197	-8.05%
<b>EIG</b>	<b>19/20</b>	<b>£29,064,551</b>	-£59,696	-0.20%
		<b>Cumulative</b>	<b>-£7,956,745</b>	<b>-21.5%</b>

### **Accountability**

There is strong focus on accountability, continuous review and constant emphasis on achieving progress in accordance with the regions priorities. The evaluation processes now in place are cyclical and ongoing and there are clearly defined lines of accountability. Agreed priorities and areas for improvement for 2019-20 are noted in section 7 of the report and are based firmly on the findings of the self-evaluation processes.

GwE is held accountable through various forums throughout the year namely Welsh Government, National Assembly for Wales Children Young People and Education Committee, Estyn link meetings and Local Authority inspections, Local Authority Scrutiny Committees, Local Authority County Quality Boards, GwE Management Board and the Joint Committee, in accordance with the Accountability Framework.

In the Denbighshire inspection report (February 2018), Estyn concluded that:

*the roles and responsibilities of the authority and its regional school improvement consortium (GwE) are defined clearly and understood well by authority officers, the consortium's staff and school leaders. Through senior officers, elected members and GwE staff, schools in Denbighshire are challenged robustly about their performance, including the outcomes for pupils, the quality of teaching, the care they provide, and the quality of leadership. Schools are often supported well and in proportion to their needs following appropriate school categorisation.*

*Schools that are identified as causing concern receive considerable support and, where necessary, intervention. In most cases, this results in schools improving at an appropriate pace.*

*Schools are supported well in aspects of national priorities, for example in improving pupils' literacy and numeracy skills and in preparing for curriculum reform. Aspiring and serving senior and middle leaders in schools have access to good quality professional learning opportunities to develop their leadership skills.*

The Welsh Government annual autumn Challenge and Review meetings are chaired by the Cabinet Secretary for Education focusing on performance, progress, planning and budgets in the context of national priorities. The last meeting was very positive and it was expressed that it had set a high bar, demonstrating the political maturity of the Joint Committee.

### **National context to school data**

The content of this report is different to previous years due to Welsh Government introducing significant changes to how performance measures are reported. Following Welsh Government consultation on future publication of teacher assessments, Welsh Government no longer publish comparative Foundation Phase, Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3 data at school, local authority and consortia level and therefore beyond a comparison with national averages, there is no comparative nor benchmarking information available.

### **Changes to Areas of Learning in the Foundation Phase**

In October 2014 the Foundation Phase Areas of Learning (AoL) for Language, Literacy and Communication Skills and Mathematical Development were revised to align them with the National Literacy and Numeracy Framework (LNF) as well as make them more demanding. In line with this the Foundation Phase outcomes were recalibrated to align with the increased expectations of the revised Areas of Learning.

The revised AoL were introduced on a statutory basis from September 2015. This means that the cohort of children that started Reception in September 2015 were the first children to be formally assessed against the revised outcomes at the end of the Foundation Phase in the summer of 2018. Comparisons of Foundation Phase outcomes with previous years at school level should, therefore, be avoided as they are not measured on a comparable basis.

### **Contextual information for 2018 examinations**

Many GCSE qualifications changed in 2017, and as stipulated by Welsh Government a result based comparisons with previous years is inappropriate. There remains significant volatility in GCSE outcomes, and significant changes to the pattern and numbers of pupils sitting exams in the summer 2018 has had an impact on results as demonstrated in the proportion of grades across all subjects in the A\*-C range in Wales decreasing by 1.2% to 61.6%. GCSEs are being reformed and 15 updated subjects were sat this summer for the first time.

The new GCSE suite of qualifications in Science was examined for the first time in 2018, and coincides with the changes to the performance indications at KS4, to include only GCSE results for Science, as two measures in the capped 9 indicator. As a result, comparison with historical data is not applicable. Schools were able to select pathways from a triple Science route, Double award Science, Double award Applied Science and Single award Applied Science. As the capped 9 indicator includes two Science measures, the majority of schools followed the triple and double award pathways.

Issues with the changes to WJEC grade boundaries and access to early entry opportunities have impacted on performance in GCSE English Language. Schools' outcomes in English have been significantly influenced by individual schools' entry decisions. This has also had an impact on performance at level 2+, where English is a key component of the measure. There were significant change to grade boundaries between the summer and November 2017 examinations and those in the summer of 2018.

## **2. STANDARDS**

### **OVERVIEW OF PERFORMANCE**

#### **Teacher Assessment – Performance in the main indicators**

**Foundation Phase** - Regionally, the success percentage decreased from 87.0% in 2017 to 83.2% in 2018, a fall of 3.8%, but below the national decrease of 4.7%. The success rate is now above the national percentage of 82.6% for the first time since 2013.

The success rates in each core subject were above the national rates, with the exception of Welsh.

**Key Stage 2** - Teacher assessment in KS2 in the region is robust. Performance this year on the expected level corresponds to a large degree to last year's results, and continues to be above the national average for the CSI (90.1% compared to 89.5% nationally). The only exception is the performance of Welsh on the expected level, which is slightly lower. This is due to the fact that the number of learners assessed in Welsh first language has increased. However, the percentage of pupils attaining the expected level in Welsh second language has increased again for the fifth consecutive year.

**Key Stage 3** - The percentage of learners who achieve the core subjects indicator continues to increase, from 88.7% in 2017 to 89.3% in 2018, an increase of 0.6% compared to the national increase of 0.7%. The success percentage is still above the national percentage of 88.1%.

The percentage of pupils who attain the expected level in each core subject has increased, with the exception of science, which fell 0.1%. The increase seen was slightly below the national increase, but the success rates continue to be above the national rates in each subject.

**Key Stage 4** - Significant changes were seen in the grade boundaries in comparison to the previous summer and November 2017, especially so for grade C in English and mathematics where significantly more marks were required to be awarded the grade. Consequently, decisions regarding entry and when pupils sat the examinations have had a significant impact on schools' results. This also made it difficult for schools to ensure that the appropriate pupils were identified to be targeted for intervention.

A smaller percentage of pupils sat examinations early in English Language in the north in comparison to other areas. Consequently, a regional decrease was seen in the percentage of pupils who were successful in English. This had a significant impact on the percentage who attained the L2+, with the percentage falling from 53.6% in 2017 to 52.0% in 2018.

In 2018, an increase was seen in the percentage who attained A\*-C in Welsh (+0.5%), Numeracy (+0.7%) and Mathematics (+0.5%). Nevertheless, as expected, with less vocational subjects contributing, the percentage who attained A-C\* in science fell (11.5% in comparison to a fall of 12.6% nationally). Improving performance in English Language and on the higher grades (5A\*-A) is a priority for the region.

**Sixth Form** - The delivery model for Key Stage 5 varies within authorities and across the region. Provision is delivered by individual schools, sixth form colleges, further education colleges or collaboration between schools (and colleges) within the consortium. This deems it difficult to come to a meaningful conclusion regarding Key Stage 5 performance in the region. In 2018, the percentage of 17 year old learners who achieved the Level 3 threshold increased, from 97.3% to 97.7%, which is slightly above the national percentage. The average points score also increased, from 719.7 to 734.3, which is slightly below the 740.1 seen nationally. Schools' performance on the higher A\*-A grades is an aspect for improvement.

**Groups of Learners** - Refer to Appendix 2.

In all sectors, evidence harvested by link School Improvement Advisors and Subject Schools Improvement Advisors following participation with Senior Leadership Team and middle leaders in joint book scrutiny exercises, lesson observations and learning walks have

demonstrated, in many instances, improvements in standards and the quality of learning. Whilst challenges remain, gathered evidence points to a higher level of consistency within and across many schools as a result of focussed support and guidance on:

- developing effective teaching and learning strategies
- deepening the understanding of Assessment for Learning to impact on learner progress
- developing independent learners through ensuring pupils are fully involved in their own learning
- ensuring quality planning for developing skills across the curriculum
- ensuring sharper use of assessment
- developing more robust tracking systems
- identifying and effectively deploying relevant intervention programmes for targeted pupils

Impact of the above was evidenced in many schools and departments over the course of the year. Specifically, a greater percentage of pupils:

- working independently or in small groups to consolidate their knowledge and extend their understanding
- demonstrating resilience and perseverance when faced with more challenging tasks
- deepening their understanding of subject specific topics by more skilful questioning
- developing their verbal and thinking skills
- responding more effectively to teacher feedback
- developing assessment skills through peer and self assessment
- demonstrating clear understanding of what they need to do to make further progress
- effectively applying literacy and numeracy skills in a different context
- more effectively assessing the strengths of options and arguments presented by others

In moving forward, we need to ensure that the effective practice identified above becomes embedded across all schools and departments.

## ESTYN SCHOOL INSPECTION PROFILE

The inspection profile across all sectors in the region is strong.

Combined School inspections Sept 2017- March 2019 (Welsh Averages in brackets)

	No follow up	SI	SM
2017-18 (69)	83% (77)	1.5% (3)	1.5% (3)
2018-19 (42)	73%	3%	3%

Judgements all schools 2017-18 (Welsh Averages in brackets)

	IA1	IA2	IA3	IA4	IA5
Excellent	7 (8)	25 (18)	6 (8)	18 (19)	14 (11)
Good	77 (70)	70 (70)	68 (62)	77 (68)	68 (64)
Adequate	15 (20)	4 (10)	25 (26)	4 (11)	15 (20)
Unsatisfactory	1 (2)	1 (2)	1 (4)	1 (2)	3 (5)

Primary School inspections Sept 2017- March 2019 (Welsh Averages in brackets)

	No follow up	SI	SM
2017-18 (51)	86.4% (81)	1.7% (4)	0% (2)
2018-19 (34)	88%	0%	0%

Secondary School inspections Sept 2017- March 2019 (Welsh Averages in brackets)

	No follow up	SI	SM
2017-18 (7)	57% (52)	0% (7)	14% (7)
2018-19 (8)	12.5%	12.5%	12.5%

Special School / PRU inspections Sept 2017- March 2019

	No follow up	SI	SM
2017-18 (3)	66%	0%	0%
2018-19 (2)	100%	0%	0%

Primary Judgements 2017-18 (Welsh Averages in brackets)

	IA1	IA2	IA3	IA4	IA5
Excellent	7 (8)	24 (18)	5 (7)	15 (18)	15 (12)
Good	81 (76)	71 (75)	73 (68)	80 (72)	71 (69)
Adequate	12 (16)	3 (7)	24 (23)	5 (10)	12 (16)
Unsatisfactory	0 (1)	0 (0)	0 (3)	0 (1)	2 (4)

Primary - In 2017-18, 51 schools (86.4%), it was announced that no follow-up action was needed compared to 77.6% in 2016-17; 13.6% required follow up action compared to 24.2% in 2016-17. 7 (11.9%) were awarded the least intensive follow-up category [Estyn Review] and 1 (1.7%) was placed in the Significant Improvement category. There are currently 12 schools in a follow-up category. Only 2 schools are currently in Statutory Category (one in special measures and one in significant improvement), this equates to 0.5% of primary schools. The percentage of schools receiving excellent judgements increased from 2.4% in 2016/17 to 13.2% in 2017/18.

Thus far in 2018-19 (up to end of March 2019), the Primary inspection profile compares favourably with the 2017-18 profile. No schools were placed in statutory category while four schools were placed in ESTYN review. This equates to 12%. 88% of schools have been judged as Good or Excellent in Standards, Teaching and Learning Experiences and Leadership and Management. 94% of schools received good or excellent in Wellbeing and Attitudes to Learning. Schools who have been judged as having excellence has again increased this year with 15% of schools achieving excellence in at least two areas.

Secondary - of the 8 schools inspected no-follow-up was required in one, five were judged to require the least intensive follow-up [estyn review], whilst two were placed in special measures [one SI and one SM]. Both of these schools had already been identified within our profile as 'high risk'. Five schools were awarded a 'good' judgement for inspection area 2 [wellbeing and attitudes to learning] whilst 6 schools were judged 'good' for inspection area 4 [care, support and guidance]. One school received an 'inadequate' judgement for inspection area 5 [leadership]. No school was awarded an 'excellent' judgement for any of the inspection areas.

The current regional profile sees 7 secondary schools in statutory category with an expectation that one of those schools will be taken out when revisited next term. In 2 schools, progress is limited and further significant improvements are required. Three other schools have only recently been placed in category and their PIAP and the LA support plan have been ratified by estyn. Steady progress has been made in the seventh school under a new leadership team. The respective local authority officers are fully aware of the concerns noted above and detailed support plans for all schools have been agreed and shared with key stakeholders.

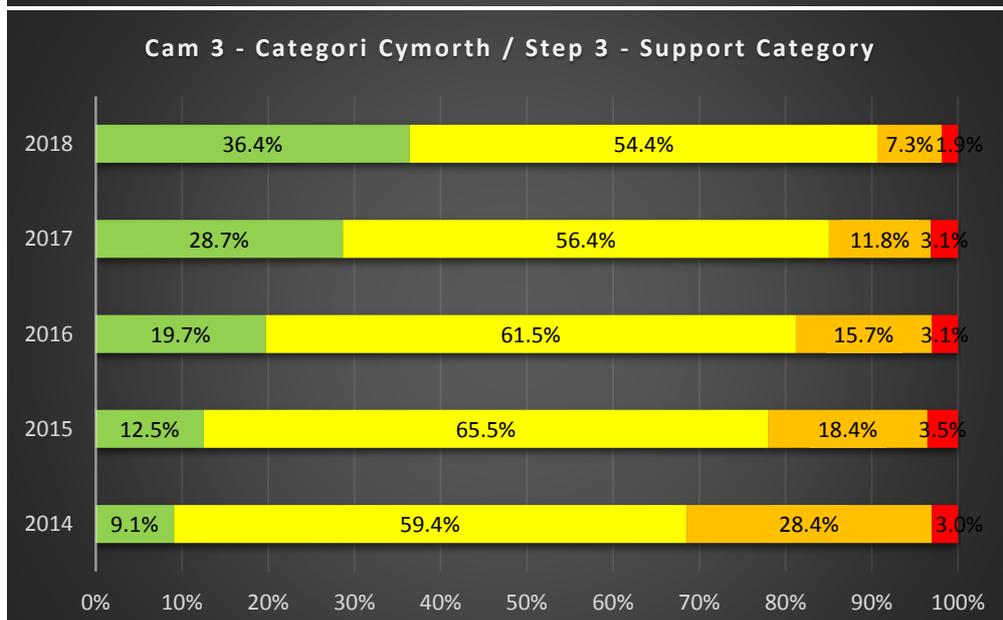
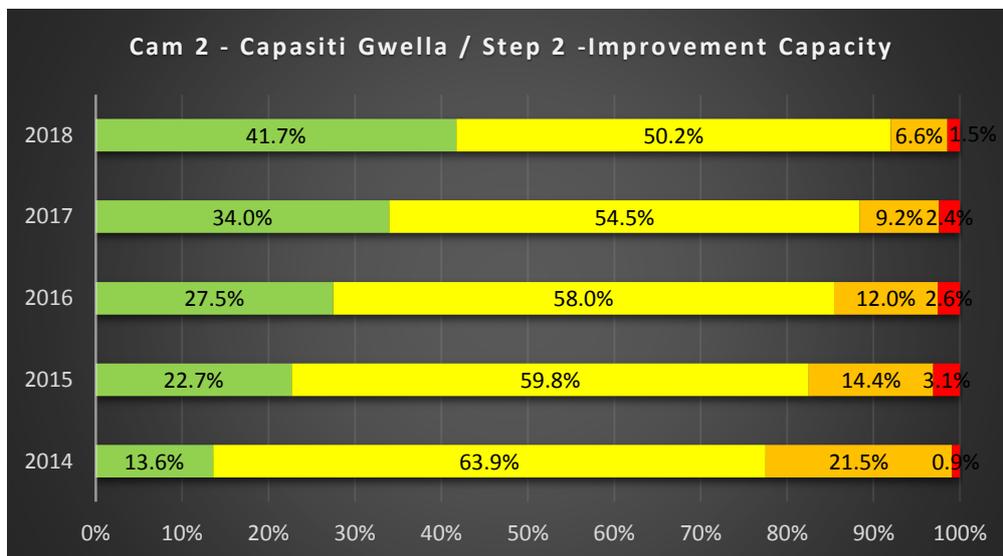
Special – Strong profile across the inspection areas with one school receiving excellent judgments in all inspection areas. Another school was judged good in all inspection areas with another receiving 3 good and 2 adequate judgments and placed in Estyn review.

## NATIONAL CATEGORISATION

### All schools

The percentage of schools categorised as Grade C and D for Step 2 has continued to decrease from 14.6% in 16/17, 11.6% in 17/18 to 8.0% in 18/19. The percentage categorised as a D fell from to 2.4% in 17/18 to 1.5% in 18/19. The percentage categorised as Grade A has increased from 27.5% in 16/17, 34.0% in 17/18 to 41.7% in 18/19.

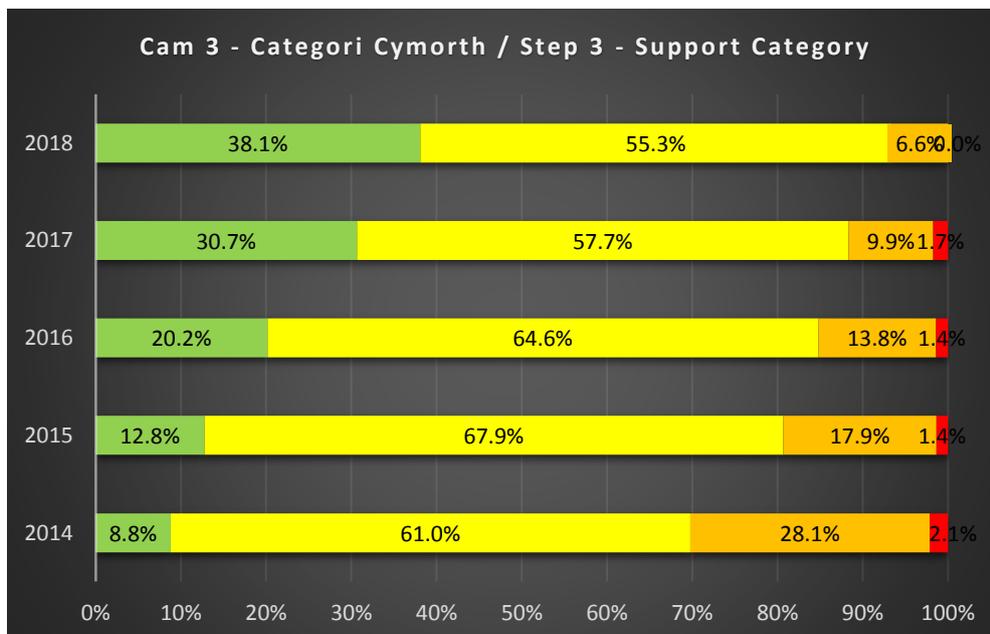
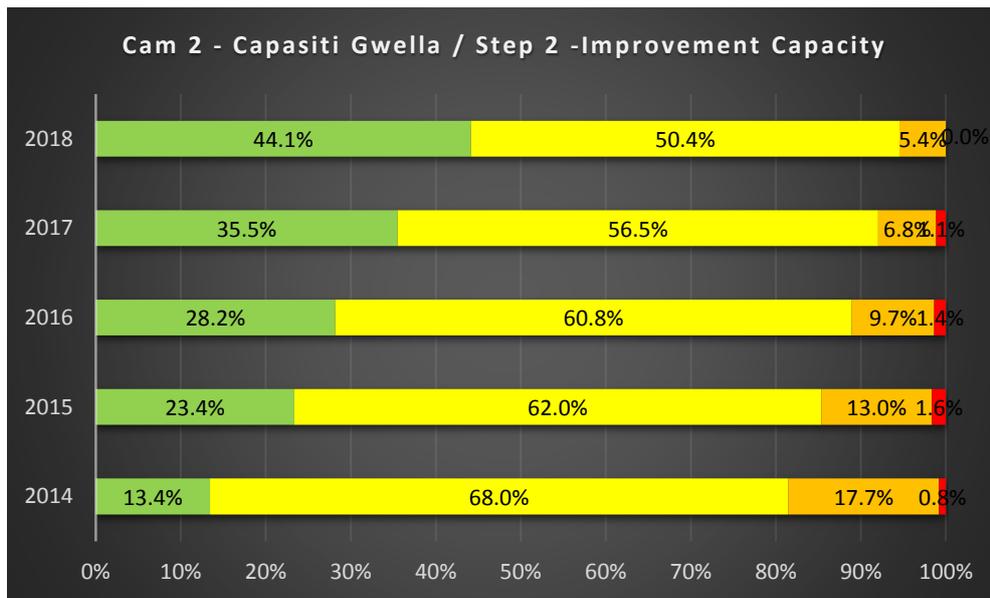
The percentage of schools categorised as red and amber for Step 3 has again decreased from 18.8% in 16/17, 14.9% in 17/18 to 9.2% in 18/19. The percentage categorised as a red fell from 3.1% in 17/18 to 1.9% in 18/19. The percentage categorised as green has continued to increase from 19.7% in 16/17 to 36.4% in 18/19.



## Primary

The percentage of schools categorised as Grade C and D for Step 2 has continued to decrease from 11.0% in 16/17, 8.0% in 17/18 to 5.4% in 18/19. The percentage categorised as a D has fallen from 1.4% in 16/17 to 0% in 18/19. The percentage categorised as Grade A has increased significantly from 28.2% in 16/17, 35.5% in 17/18 to 44.1% in 18/19.

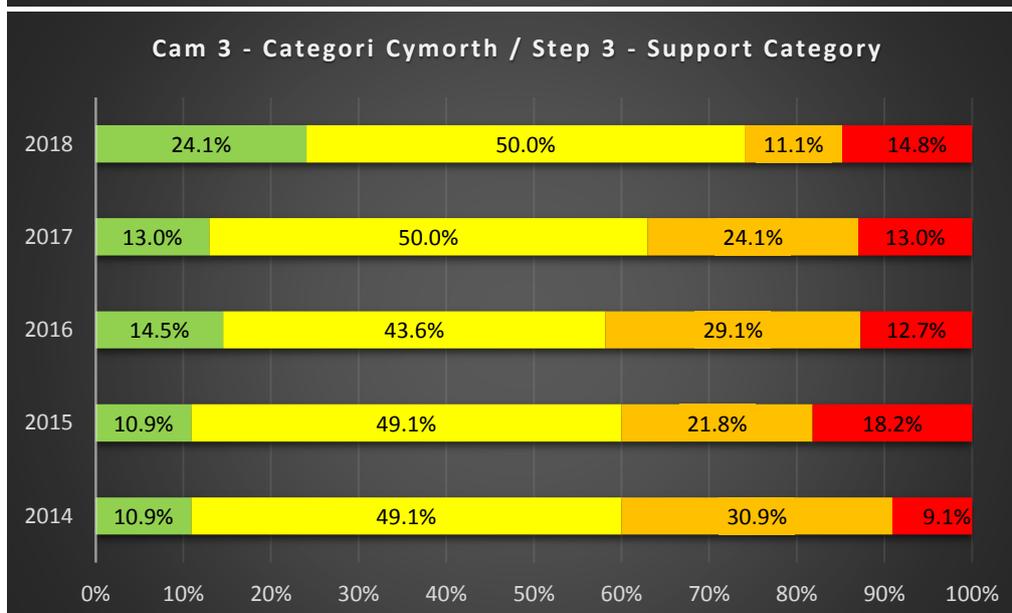
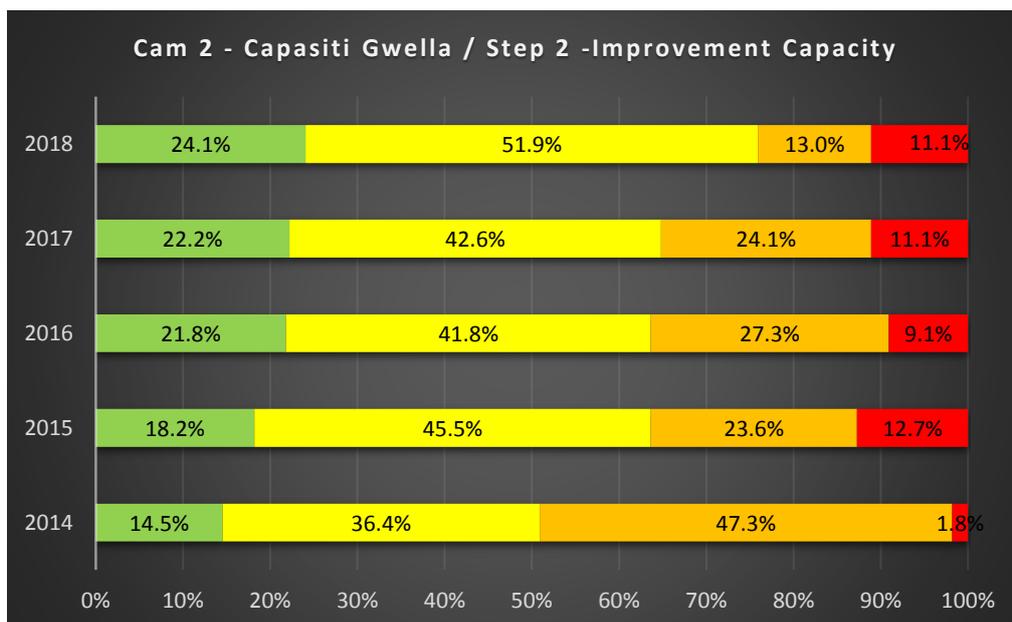
The percentage of schools categorised as red and amber for Step 3 has again decreased from 15.2% in 16/17, 11.6% in 17/18 to 6.6% in 18/19. The percentage categorised as a red decreased from 1.7% in 17/18 to 0.0% in 18/19. The percentage categorised as green has increased significantly from 20.2% in 16/17, 30.7% in 17/18 to 38.1% in 18/19.



## Secondary

The percentage of schools categorised as Grade C and D for Step 2 has decreased from 36.4% in 16/17, 35.2% in 17/18 to 24.1% in 18/19. The percentage categorised as a D has remained fairly constant 9.1% in 16/17 (5 schools), 11.1% (6 schools) in 17/18 and 11.1% (6 schools) in 18/19. The percentage categorised as Grade A has increased from 21.8% in 16/17 to 24.1% in 18/19.

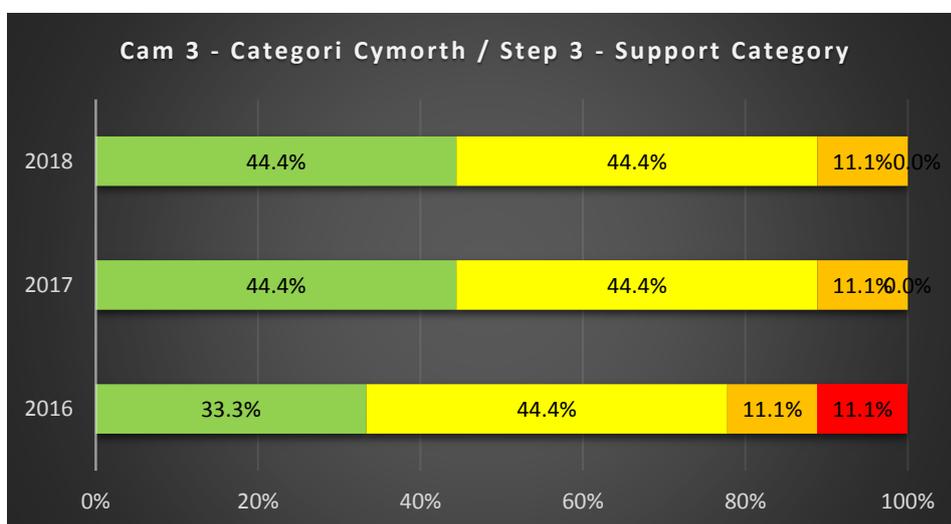
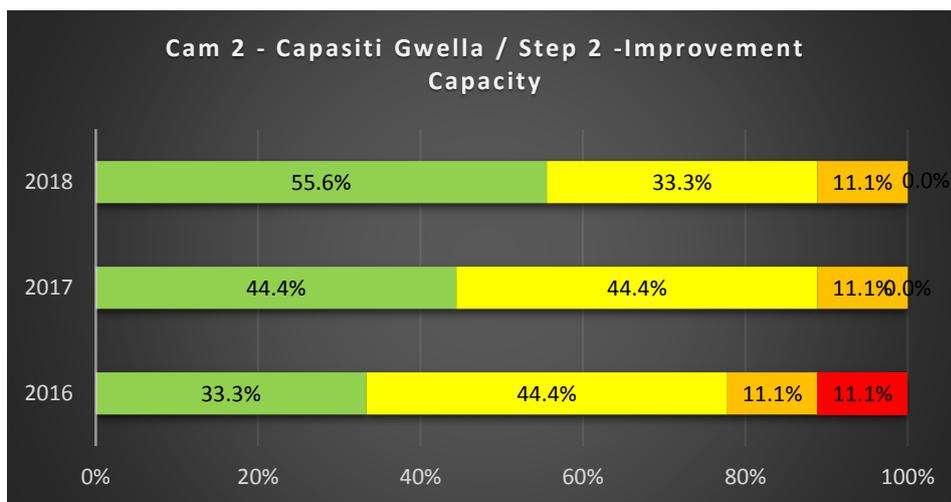
The percentage of schools categorised as red and amber for Step 3 has decreased from 37.0% in 17/18 to 25.9% in 18/19. The percentage categorised as red increased slightly from 13.0% in 17/18 (7 schools) to 14.8% in 18/19 (8 schools). The percentage categorised as green increased significantly from 13.0% (7 schools) in 17/18 to 24.1% (13 schools) in 18/19.



### Special

The percentage of schools categorised as Grade C and D for Step 2 remains at 11.1% (1 school) having decreased from 22.2% (2 schools) in 2016-17. No special school was categorised as a D in 17/18 and in 18/19. The percentage categorised as Grade A has continued to increase from 33.3% (3 schools) in 16/17 to 44.4% (4 schools) in 17/18 to 55.6% (5 schools) in 18/19.

The percentage of schools categorised as red and amber for Step 3 remains at 11.1% having decreased from 22.2% (2 schools) in 16/17. No special school was categorised red in 18/19 and in 17/18. The percentage categorised as green remains at 44.4% (4 schools) having increased from 33.3% (3 schools) in 16/17.



### 3. PROVISION

#### Curriculum and Assessment

##### Foundation Phase

Training and Foundation Phase Networks for Senior Leadership Teams, Teachers and Teaching Assistants have been delivered bilingually across the region where national, regional and local messages have been disseminated, and good practice shared. As a result, the majority of schools inspected during last financial year have been judged as good or excellent for Foundation Phase provision.

Training sessions have evolved where follow up sessions showcase how schools have implemented key messages disseminated on training. Generally, the majority of schools share good practice during these sessions. Schools which cause concern are discussed with the relevant Supporting Improvement Advisers and monitored.

7 out of 8 schools supported by the Foundation Phase Team have been removed from category and nearly all schools identified as high risk have made expected or better progress against areas of improvement. No schools have been judged as unsatisfactory by Estyn for standards and provision, with most schools inspected judged as good or excellent. There has been reduction in the variance in the teaching and learning in Foundation Phase.

Bespoke training has been delivered to clusters who have similar priorities identified by Supporting Improvement Advisers. All Supporting Improvement Advisers, leaders and teachers who attended baseline training have a better understanding and a more robust system of assessment.

Workshops and network meetings are aligned with the new curriculum for Wales, focusing on the four purposes, 12 pedagogical principles and based on a creative, holistic and cross-curricular approach, promoting problem solving through experiential learning.

### **Literacy and Numeracy**

Nearly all schools engaged in development programmes have reported:

- significant positive impact on attitudes to learning from learners;
- attitudes to subject pedagogy and increased knowledge in staff; and
- positive impact on standards of progress and attainment of learners in numerical reasoning, numeracy, mathematics, oracy, reading and writing in KS2 and FPh.

There is now a body of evidence held centrally, produced by delegates of the development programmes, that shows pupil progress in terms of learner outcomes/progress data, pupil work, schemes of work and effective practice teaching strategies. This can be shared with schools across the region to support and cascade effective practice as needed. Teachers within some of these schools also now have capacity to share their development with other regional schools and offer support for them to implement similar developments in their settings.

Throughout every area of development, the 12 pedagogical principles, Four Purposes and cross curricular requirements of literacy, numeracy and DCF feature centrally. Many schools have reported that the underlying development of oracy in their schools, is not only allowing children to more successfully access other areas of the curriculum, but has impacted positively on well-being, engagement and attitudes to learning. Oracy has been a central factor in most of the above develop programmes, for both literacy and numeracy.

Mid to long term development programmes have centred on inquiry based practice. As a result, the schools involved have ownership of findings, learning and outcomes. This has dramatically enhanced the progress in subject knowledge and efficacy based practice within these schools. This is as opposed to one off training events.

Teachers involved are now much more knowledgeable about the development of literacy and numeracy, how to influence and advance learning for all groups of learners, lead the subject effectively in school and offer support to other schools, with regard to their own development journey. Quality Assurance visits to schools show that nearly all have made sustainable change and that new pedagogies are being cascaded and embedded across the school and often intertwined with other development activities.

A few schools have independently developed working links with other delegate schools and are beginning to work collaboratively in the further development of planning and teaching in their schools. This has also been facilitated further by the Literacy and Numeracy Supporting Improvement Advisers to further develop a culture of collaboration and make improvements more sustainable into the future.

### **Primary Curriculum**

Schools who have engaged in the following programmes have implemented effective pedagogical approaches, which is paramount to developing a high-quality education profession, upskilling teachers as reflective practitioners, ensuring that they are well prepared to deliver the new curriculum, and how to plan across all areas of learning and experience.

- **Creative Curriculum Planning:** Cohort 1/2: QA visits to majority of schools in each of the LAs, impact reports from each school and teacher questionnaires showed positive impact on teacher attitudes towards new approaches to planning, incorporating the four purposes and 12 pedagogical principles, beyond current curriculum restrictions. All schools had engaged with Mantle of the Expert and 91% reported that they felt better informed in how to use Mantle in school. Initial inquiry into the impact on children's attitudes to learning were positive, with majority of teachers also reporting raised attainment in KS2 writing, oracy, numeracy, and DCF through more exciting learning experiences in the classroom and more relevant real life and local area opportunities for numeracy, literacy and DCF. All schools have reported increase in learner independence and mixed ability pupils more willing to work collaboratively. All schools have reported positive collaboration between themselves and other delegate schools and that this has had positive impact on the outcomes and provision for learners in their schools.
- **Mantle of the Expert:** Over 150 teachers have attended MOE training, led by GwE, to develop teacher skills and confidence in this pedagogical approach with 97% stating that they found the training beneficial and plan to use the approach back in school. 86% of staff agreed that they felt better informed about how to use MOE approaches with at least 3 clusters having already booked follow up sessions.

### **Secondary Curriculum**

Seven curriculum networks meet on a regular basis across the region, which ensure that school leaders receive regular updates and guidance on curriculum planning and accountability.

Each group in every authority has received support and guidance on Curriculum for Wales, which ensures that leaders' knowledge is strengthened and more incisive.

For the first time, it was agreed to hold a regional curriculum meeting to convene all the region's curricular leaders to work together and engage.

The PISA Project and promoting the Skills agenda have been very successful in GwE, influencing the National agenda.

The most vulnerable schools are given specific support on curriculum planning and timetabling.

### **Modern Foreign Languages (MFL)**

The Global Futures Team and the MFL departments across the region have worked collaboratively and effectively with various partners such as Routes Into Languages, Student Mentoring, British Council, Goethe Institute, Confucius Institute, Institut français, Bangor University etc. to promote languages in both, primary and secondary sector, across the consortium.

Through close monitoring from Global Futures Team and effective promotion of initiatives available, we have seen a significant increase in participation of MFL departments in the various activities aiming at promoting languages. This year, all schools have taken part in one or more of the available activities, which is a significant improvement compared with previous years, especially in the east part of the consortium.

71% of schools in GwE consortium had invited Tim Penn and Student Language Ambassadors from Bangor University to deliver a career talk. Teacher and student feedback was very positive. Following this input, take up has increased in a number of schools.

There has been a consistent increase in the number of MFL departments taking part in the Pupil Language Ambassadors training (year 8 and year 9 pupils) and in the number of pupils being trained to promote languages within their school communities in order to increase interest and take up in languages at KS4.

The Global Futures team has successfully promoted the teaching and learning of International languages in the primary sector:

- Pilot: Twenty-two primary schools across the consortium are involved in the pilot. They are developing possible models of delivery within their school.
- Effective collaboration with a number of partners such as Power Language, Institut français, Bangor University and Open University has helped to promote and introduce International Languages in the primary curriculum in more than 30 primary schools across the region.
- Effective and innovative collaboration between 3 secondary MFL departments and their feeder schools has taken place which has led to the introduction of international languages in these schools with the view of continuing to deliver international languages more independently in the future.

The team works successfully to bring coherence, clarity and a shared commitment to realising the vision for pedagogy, learners, colleagues and the wider community. They have very good knowledge of MFL departments across the region and is able to target individual teachers and departments effectively to improve or develop professional standards for teachers and heads of departments.

The team has provided regular opportunities for teachers to extend their knowledge, skill and understanding as regard to teaching, learning and effective planning of MFL. The training provided has been carefully planned to respond to Estyn's recommendation for MFL and to provide high quality inset.

### **Core Subjects**

Secondary schools have access to specialist support in all core subjects across the region. There is a comprehensive strategy in place for improving standards in English, mathematics, science and Welsh across the region. A support programme has been put in place between

secondary schools for Core Subjects via local networks for Heads of Department. The 'Wave' system has been used effectively to review levels of support. Item level data from all schools has been collated and used to inform planning at departmental level. The main priorities for 2018-19 are outlined below.

### **Science**

- The Science Support Programme – 63% of science departments have received individual support from the GwE team and through commissioned support. This has been welcomed by both Senior Leadership Teams and Heads of Science and has improved leadership within the departments, curriculum planning and will impact on pupil outcomes.
- Network meetings, subject support and collaboration – 78% of schools attended the Heads of Science network meeting in the Autumn term. This improved their understanding of the changes to the Key Stage 4 performance measures in Science/school and the progress of the new curriculum for Wales. It also increased collaboration across school / LA / region and developed teacher knowledge and understanding of the Key Stage 4 and Key Stgs 5 specifications. It provides opportunities for subject teachers to network, enhance their understanding of the GCSE and A level specifications, share best practice and collaborate on resource production.
- Hub school programme – 54% of schools have accessed support from the hub school programme. This has been specific addressing school/departmental/individual teacher development priorities. The professional learning events delivered through the Hub school programme was very well received, with subsequent requests for follow up visits.
- Science specific Continuing Professional Development (CPD) – 41% of schools have accessed one or more of the CPD events within the professional learning programme (excluding the Developing Leaders programme). All attendees have been tasked with cascading the information to their departments (running CPD internally), and setting follow up individual action plans.
- Leadership – 16 teachers registered on the Science specific CPD Developing leaders in Science programme. The programme is developing their understanding of the role of the middle leader in leading a successful team and is improving their practice and effectiveness. They have been able to demonstrate the impact of the strategies they have adopted, and have produced action plans for continued professional development. (5 day programme targeting the key areas for successful middle leadership).
- Assessment and tracking – the GwE data team has produced a comprehensive Key Stage 4 assessment tracker, which has been presented during the Head of Science forum Autumn meeting. The tracker enables schools to analysis pupil performance across teacher groups, GCSE pathways and identify underperformance. This is enabling departments to identify focus groups and provided targeted intervention on the journey towards the examinations.

### **Mathematics**

- A Heads of Mathematics Forum has been established across the region. The focus has been on developing departmental pedagogy, follow-up work with departments to develop regional collaboration, developing Heads of Departments' knowledge of Curriculum for Wales, presentations by the region's Pioneer schools and developing departmental tracking. Teacher engagement in forums for heads of department, numeracy co-ordinators and A level is good.
- Effective support was delivered to Mathematics and Numeracy tier 1 schools. The main focus of support is KS4 pedagogy and the impact of early entry on learners. Support

has improved teachers' ability in terms of planning and pedagogy with examination groups.

- Departmental open days were held to share successful practice.
- Forum and Numeracy Regional Meetings have been established. The focus has been on developing leadership, developing schools' understanding of changes in the procedural tests and developing understanding of cross-curricular numeracy and intervention approaches.
- A collaboration project has been undertaken to explore approaches to developing reasoning skills in KS3.
- Significant work has been carried out to develop pedagogy at Key Stage 3. This has included sharing knowledge of the new curriculum with Key Stage 3 coordinators. There has been a focus on working with pilot schools to find ways that have worked within the region, with the aim of sharing this model regionally in the autumn term. Developments are on-going in these specific schools. Impact on the learners is yet to be measured but learner voice is positive to the change in pedagogy.
- Increasing use is made of the GwE Mathematics network on HWB in order to share resources and good practice. Model sessions are held in schools (to develop examination techniques, for example) to upskill staff and help learners to improve their learning.

### **Welsh**

- Using the 'wave' system to identify appropriate levels of support for individual schools has ensured that the appropriate schools are receiving support. In those schools, Heads of Department have received incisive courses of action on G6 to provide a strong direction to secure improvement. Through book scrutiny, gathering views and lesson observations, an appropriate response to actions was seen in those schools.
- Additional support has been provided to schools in specific areas such as preparing for inspection or looking at standards in Year 11.
- A new Hwb network, 'Cymraeg GwE', has been established, which has been successful. There are over 140 members and high quality new resources are uploaded on a regular basis.
- Attendance in network meetings has been good. Good practice is shared and materials are available electronically.
- GwE Offer courses have been successful with nearly all schools attending. 100% of attendees agreed that courses were valuable and that information would be disseminated to departments.

### **English**

- Support resources to teach writing has been developed and shared regionally - evidence in book scrutinies show raised attainment and significant improvement where the resources were used. The summer term regional network (every English department represented) meeting focused on improving teaching and learning.
- Intensive support, as well as producing structured resources for all schools on the delivery of Oracy provision has resulted in departments reporting a significant increase in pupils gaining Band 4+ on their NEAs compared to 2018.
- Weaknesses in exam performance has been addressed through the development of high quality teaching resources which are modelled on Hwb. Standardization training on Unit 2 delivered to all Heads of English in Forum meetings and offered as a twilight to classroom teachers.
- Regional tracking system has been developed and is being used effectively by the majority of schools. This has allowed all participants to fully track at classroom, departmental and regional level enabling them to identify immediately on individual needs.

- Regional and local networks for Heads of Department have focused on improving tracking and assessment; middle leadership; teaching and learning and collaboration and peer review.
- Work with targeted Heads of Departments has been effective to improve tracking and provision for eFSM learners at A\*-C
- Commissioned expertise has been used successfully to develop a Literacy Intervention Programme aimed at improving the Literacy skills of targeted FSM learners.
- There has been an increased focus on improving the quality of English departmental leadership in identified schools.

## Post 16

The support post-16 for schools has strengthened. Work is continuing to develop across the region to look at provision in all areas to ensure continuing strength and breadth at post-16.

The skills of heads of Sixth Form continue to be augmented by consortia planning. Good cross-consortia work is continuing, particularly around the development of the Sixth Form Leadership development course to ensure that all leaders and potential leaders have the skills, understanding of national and local contexts and tools to support pupils to the best outcomes.

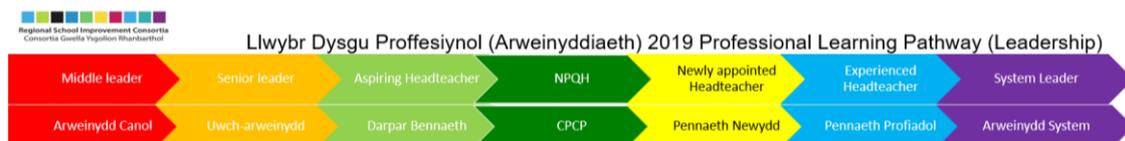
A Sixth Form Conference was held successfully again with excellent presentation from Martin Griffin on independent learning skills.

The Subject Networks which have been established across 8 subjects are becoming a useful forum for ideas and sharing of practice.

ALPS training has been disseminated across schools with the use of the system increasing across schools.

## Leadership

GwE provides consistent, equitable and high-quality development programmes at each stage of the leadership professional learning development pathway, from middle leadership through to experienced Headteachers. These programmes enable practitioners to develop their schools as learning organisations so they are able to “react more quickly to changing environments, embrace innovations in internal organisation, and ultimately improve student outcomes.’ The programmes secure professional leadership development at each career stage of educational leadership to ensure sustained highly effective practice set against the formal leadership standards. The development programmes promote collaborative leadership aspects with effective practitioners from schools and Local Authorities co-delivering sessions with GwE staff. This further develops the notion of developing a self-improving system and developing peer to peer engagement across North Wales. The establishment of the Regional Leadership Group, which includes representatives from GwE and the six local authorities, ensures that needs are identified and that programmes meet the needs of the profession.



Through the programmes, GwE has ensured that senior leaders have been kept updated on key developments regarding the reform journey. There is a clear leadership development pathway for future senior leaders, and as a result, the region is developing competent, skilled school leaders and an increase can be seen in the number of quality applications for leadership positions received across sectors in the region.

School leaders have been encouraged to engage in school to school collaboration and inquiry based projects. Middle and Senior leaders have been upskilled to more effectively lead on the implementation of the Curriculum for Wales in their schools. All School leaders have raised awareness of the new Professional Standards for Teaching and Leadership.

GwE plays a key role in communicating, promoting and co-ordinating a variety of programmes which meet the needs of staff at various levels. The programmes offered are as follows (Appendix 6):

- **Middle Leadership Development Programme (MLDP)** – To date over 450 middle leaders across North Wales have benefited from attending this cross sector programme. SIAs have been proactive in encouraging their link schools to identify potential candidates for the MLDP. The GwE Leadership Group monitored uptake for the programme and this year targeted secondary and Welsh medium primary schools, from which there had initially been a lower number of applicants. By mid September there were a total of 61 English medium applicants and 23 Welsh medium applicants. The GwE Leadership Group promoted the monitoring of participants by link SIAs. Feedback from the participants are extremely positive. The evaluations will be shared with the LA in the regional leadership group meetings. The facilitator will also provide feedback on the programme.

*“...the results indicate that the MLDP is a highly effective leadership development programme which has a positive impact on the teachers and their respective schools.”*

Impact Evaluation Report by the School of Sport, Health and Exercise Sciences  
Bangor University

Two additional programmes have also been offered to middle leaders:

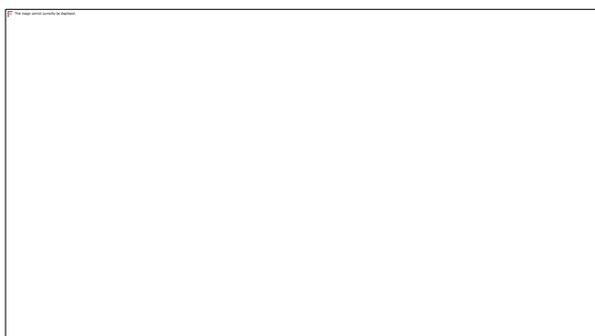
- for aspiring middle leaders and those new to their role;
- to improve the practices of existing middle leaders.

The programmes have not yet been completed but initial feedback is positive.

- **MLDP Literacy and Numeracy** - Participants engaged in inquiry based projects to develop pedagogy. Reflective practice and mentoring / coaching raised their awareness and understanding of the new Professional Standards for Teaching and Leadership. Class teachers have been upskilled with practical advice on how to lead the curriculum effectively and how to ensure more able pupils are appropriately challenged.  
Literacy: Each delegate reported strong improvement in their subject knowledge and efficacy-based pedagogy in their own classrooms. All are implementing their leadership skills, leading on whole school focused improvement in oracy and reading. All leaders have reported initial positive impact on teacher knowledge across the school and improved pedagogy in most other classes in school.  
Numeracy: Each participant reported a positive impact on their subject knowledge, efficacy-based pedagogy, readiness for new curriculum and understanding of high expectations within their subject.  
All participants have developed their own leadership skills, reflecting upon and self-evaluating their current strengths and weaknesses to drive improvements.  
All participants have focused on specific areas of development bespoke to the needs of their setting, leading on whole school focused improvement in Numerical Reasoning and Numeracy. All leaders have reported initial positive impact on teacher knowledge across the school and influencing pedagogy in most other classes in school.
- **Aspiring Headteacher Development Programme (AHTDP)** – During the 2017 / 2018 and 2019 / 2020 educational years 119 aspiring headteachers across North Wales have

benefited from attending this cross sector programme. 56 candidates from across the region attended cohort 1 and 2 of the development programme (30 Welsh medium and 26 English medium). Evaluations following the development days indicate that all participants have gained a deeper understanding of the range of leadership skills required to be an effective headteacher. Feedback from the participants are extremely positive. The evaluations will be shared with the local authorities during the regional leadership group meetings. The facilitators will also provide feedback on the programme. Currently 63 candidates are attending cohort 3 and 4 of the programme, (30 Welsh medium and 33 English medium).

- **National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH)** – Over the past three years 150 individuals have been accepted on the programme. 69 practitioners accepted this year (compared to 30 in 2016 – 2017 and 51 in 2017 – 2018) from primary, secondary, special, PRUs and GwE staff. A National Development Programme, commenced in September. A National Conference was held in Swansea with an inspirational key note speaker, Sir John Jones. This was followed up with an additional regional development day focusing on developing leadership styles and resilience. By mid October a leadership coach had been allocated for each candidate focusing on developing their leadership task and preparing for the Assessment Centre. Nearly all the formal feedback on the development days was positive, with nearly all candidates confirming that they had a deeper understanding of the need to adopt differing leadership styles in different contexts and situations. The rigor of the Assessment Centre ensured that only candidates who have proved to be ready for headship have gained the qualification. Moderation of assessments ensured greater consistency. A higher number of candidates than previous years from across the region have evidenced their readiness for Headship against the Professional Standards for Leadership.



- **New and Acting Headteacher Development Programme** - A new National Development Programme, endorsed by the National Academy for Educational Leadership (NAEL) commenced in November with 46 individuals from GwE attending. All local authorities in the region provided GwE with details of newly appointed and acting headteachers. There is now a central database of all newly appointed and acting Headteachers. By mid October a leadership coach had been allocated for each newly appointed and acting headteacher. A National Conference was held in Swansea with an inspirational key note speaker, Sir John Jones. This was followed up with two additional regional development days. The days focused on developing leadership styles, resilience, vision, pedagogy and culture of enquiry, with specific input on research from the Universities of Bangor and Trinity Saint David. Feedback from evaluation forms has been consistently positive. Many of the headteachers developed effective networks and valued the opportunity to reflect upon their leadership styles.
- **Experienced Headteacher Development** - Headteachers from across the region have attended the conferences and workshops provided to raise their awareness of national

priorities and to develop their expertise in leadership e.g. a conference on professional learning was held at Bangor University in November for headteachers from across the region. GwE, Welsh Government and CABAN held a conference to prepare headteachers for curriculum reform. Headteachers have been kept informed of national priorities and of the most current best practice in pedagogy and curriculum reform e.g. ALN reform and curriculum innovation. Headteachers across the region have been invited to attend presentations from GwE on the Curriculum for Wales and the new Professional Standards for Teaching and Leadership. As part of the leadership development programmes, newly appointed and acting headteachers have received presentations on successful practice. A new National Experienced Headteacher Development Programme has recently been designed and been endorsed by the National Academy for Educational Leadership (NAEL). This programme will begin in September 2019.

Through collaboration with Bangor University and Yr Athrofa: Institute of Education, University of Wales Trinity Saint David (UWTSD) the consortia have ensured that an opportunity is provided for practitioners attending leadership programmes for Middle Leaders through to Experienced Head Teachers to gain specific accreditation. Jointly validated by the two Universities, these programmes can lead to higher-level qualifications, such as Masters degrees and Doctorates. It is the practitioners' decision if they wish to pursue the accreditation route or not.

In addition to the formal leadership aspects specific attention had been given to developing a professional learning pathway for Teaching Assistants, the "Teaching Assistants' Learning Pathway" (TALP).

- **Teaching Assistants' Learning Pathway (TALP)** - Over 1000 support assistants from across the region have participated in the programmes between September 2018 - March 2019. Over 98% of evaluation feedback has been positive and over 50% of attendees have expressed an interest in further Professional Learning provided in the region. The most recent numbers for new cohort of HLTAs has risen by a quarter. Evaluations have demonstrated an increased interest in pursuing the HLTA programme. 18 new trainers have been trained from across the region. By providing a national model of training for all teaching assistants, GwE is ensuring equity and quality professional development for all. The National TALP training has supported schools' self-improvement journeys through recognition of roles of support staff in a more formalised way. The teaching assistants have responded positively to the national and regional professional learning opportunities provided by GwE. The development has impacted positively on professional practice in schools, including aspects of school improvement, teaching and learning, interventions and appreciation of roles. Evidence has been presented through evaluations and continuous feedback during the programmes.

### **Governor Support**

All governors who have received guidance within their schools from an individual Supporting Improvement Adviser and/or in catchment area training have received guidance of a high standard from experts in their field. Consequently, governors are in a better position to be a Critical Friend to their schools.

Local Authorities have received a programme of training (see below) in order to support governors in specific aspects and/or the reform journey.

A training programme has now been agreed with the 6 LAs in terms of the guidance that governors require in order to upskill them and enable them to undertake the reform journey confidently. This includes:

- Curriculum for Wales

- Additional Learning Needs
- Welsh
- Foundation Phase
- Digital Competence Framework
- Schools as Learning Organisations

Individual Local Authorities are at liberty to identify training needs for their governors and they will receive training once a term on any of the above aspects in two locations across the region.

### **Small schools**

A conference was held for Headteachers of small schools and 50 schools attended. Headteachers from similar schools gave presentations. This deepened their presentation skills, creating a pool for similar activities.

Nearly all of the questionnaires completed by attendees gave good, or better, feedback. According to responses, one of the main impacts was an opportunity for Headteachers of similar schools to convene and create networks. Many networks created on the day have continued with schools sharing experiences. There was also good feedback on presentations on Estyn inspections in terms of small schools, and Headteachers have reported they are more 'Estyn ready'.

Headteachers of smaller schools welcomed the opportunity to meet and discuss the reform journey and its challenges in a situation where the Headteacher is also teaching.

## **Teaching**

### **Teaching and Learning**

Many exciting and far-reaching projects have been implemented during the last year, and it is hoped that these will have a significant influence on the quality of teaching in regional schools. These projects offer teachers the opportunity to collaborate, share their expertise and passion for teaching and to get to know new professional colleagues. They also enable all teachers in the region to develop and deepen their teaching skills and their understanding of the principles of formative assessment and excellent pedagogy. Ultimately, our pupils will become the independent and confident learners they deserve to be.

### Formative Assessment Action Research Project

The Formative Assessment Action Research project (GwE and Shirley Clarke) has been operational in the region since October 2017. The project is developing effectively and is implemented in a pattern of tiers, putting pedagogical principles in action in classrooms on the basis of robust evidence.

The commitment of regional schools to the project:

- Tier 1: 27 schools 54 teachers
- Tier 2: 193 schools 386 teachers
- Total: 220 schools 440 teachers

It can be seen therefore that the impact of the project reaches at least 11,000 pupils across the region (based on an average class size of 25 pupils).

Significant action research is being undertaken in classroom across the region, with good or very good progress seen against the following outcomes:

- Raising standards in teaching and reducing variation in teaching standards across the region
- Strong emphasis on pedagogy, effective teaching and action research

- Ensuring good, or better, use of formative assessment strategies in all schools in order to raise standards
- Developing schools as learning organisations that undertake effective action research
- Developing the sustainability of schools for self-improvement and to support school-to-school networking.
- Responding to the national agenda of reducing teachers' workload by using Formative Assessment strategies effectively
- Estyn judgements on IA2 and IA3 in primary schools this year are good, at least, with judgements and narrative making reference to excellence.

Teachers' feedback is very positive, with the project demonstrating a positive impact, not only on the quality of teaching in classrooms but on standards in wellbeing and pupils' attitudes to learning.

#### Training on Feedback and Questioning

3 half-day 'Work smarter not harder' sessions were presented across the region. The focus was on feedback and questioning and aspects of the national agenda for reducing workload.

The training has deepened teachers' understanding of the national agenda and the feedback on the questionnaire for teachers was extremely positive.

#### Implementing the 'Outstanding Teacher Programme – Olevi' (OTP), led by Ysgol Y Creuddyn

14 teachers from 4 secondary schools have completed the OTP programme. Feedback to the training and its impact on teaching in schools was positive. The programme develops individuals to be able to lead on developing teaching in their schools, and thus:

- Raise standards in teaching from good to excellent
- Teaching standards in participating schools are good, at least, with excellent features
- Schools are disseminating training successfully, further raising teaching standards in their own schools and in the schools they are training.
- Increased ability and capacity in schools/classroom to further improve and sustain progress
- Increased capacity across the region in terms of support and school-to-school collaboration

#### Project led by Ysgol Eirias (for secondary schools)

10 teachers attended the pilot course in November 2018. The aim of the project was to:

- Support individuals/departments in which the quality of teaching is inconsistent or weak;
- Develop a team of effective practitioners who are able to provide a 2-day professional learning programme and a guidance pack for teachers/secondary departments. The focus is on responding to the pedagogical recommendations of 'Successful Futures' (WG, 2015) and the new professional standards for teachers.

Responses to the questionnaire were very positive, with teachers noting that the training and resources are very good, giving them very good opportunities to reflect on personal practice.

Provision by means of the above projects has made a significant contribution to the readiness of schools and to preparations for the Reform Journey and Curriculum for Wales – the 4 purposes, the 12 pedagogical principals, schools as learning organisations, professional standards for leaders and teachers along with the agenda for reducing teachers' workload.

Schools part of the regional Formative Assessment project are developing well as learning organisations and have useful opportunities to collaborate with schools across the region and cross-sector.

They are also deepening their understanding of effective pedagogy on the basis of current and extensive local and international research. They are undertaking active research in their schools, collaborating professionally and developing confidence and innovation.

### Wellbeing

A clear and robust PDG Support Plan for both FSM and Looked After Children (LAC) has been implemented across the region with clear communication plans. Processes for monitoring and evaluating the impact of the LAC PDG has been developed and trialled with a number of schools this year.

Regional, cluster and school based bids with focus on evidence based interventions were implemented during the year and successful practise has been captured via one page profile. The One Page Evaluation has received positive feedback and now forms part of the 2019-20 grant guidance along with a sample individual tracking tool.

The LAC PDG has been utilised effectively by schools / Local Authorities to further develop an inclusive and supportive ethos that has a beneficial impact on pupils' wellbeing and personal development. Schools have worked collaboratively with GwE and an independent mentor to create a programme for a targeted group of Key Stage 4 pupils in order to build resilience, self-awareness, mindfulness and personal skills that has started to have an impact on attendance and behaviour. Schools have noticed an increase in the pupil's attitudes to learning at this initial stage. In addition staff are very much part of the programme and this builds sustainability into the work with a focus on whole school approach to care and support.

The majority of secondary and primary schools have accessed trauma/attachment training for looked after children which has resulted in teaching staff being more confident in dealing with learners and identifying suitable support and provision.

Authorities have made good use of the LAC PDG to support schools to identify the additional learning needs of LAC and vulnerable learners via the roll out of the Boxall Online Profile. This has been implemented effectively in some schools / LA staff to assess, track and monitor progress of LAC.

Collaboration between the Wellbeing SIA / LAC Co-ordinator and the Lead School Improvement Advisor has resulted in a bespoke support package to schools. Discussions with all Local Authorities have taken place to identify CPD in relation to supporting LAC and Vulnerable learners across the region. Workshop have been delivered on the curriculum and provision support in relation to LAC PDG / FSM / vulnerable learners. GwE works closely with the LA officers to target early intervention support via the LAC PDG for schools who have significant challenges in regard to the behaviour / attitude to learning of some looked after children who are at risk of permanent exclusion. Schools have worked with GwE/LA to develop a support package implemented during break / lunch time that has resulted in less behaviour incidents within schools, supported the children in terms of self-regulation that has impacted on their ability to participate within the classroom.

Around half of LAC have accessed additional tuition in year 10/11 to support with exam practice, study skills and revision that has impacted on their overall achievement. More schools are monitoring and evaluating the impact of the distance travelled / achievement of LAC and using case studies, data, evaluation sheets and wellbeing surveys along with Boxall, Motional, PASS and other existing methods of tracking

### **Pupil Referral Units**

A regional conference was arranged for all who work in a PRU in the region, with guest speakers and relevant workshops for leaders, class teachers and teaching assistants.

The conference ensured support and opportunities for joint planning and sharing good practice in the region.

Meetings for leaders have been held every half term, which have ensured more strategic and effective joint planning across the region. They are also an effective method of sharing good practice, for example, systems for tracking pupils' progress.

## **4. THE REFORM JOURNEY**

GwE is working with all local authority schools to ensure a clear and systematic approach to support and reflect on their engagement with all aspects of the reform journey. Each school cluster has two designated leads to facilitate the change management process and planning that schools have undertaken when developing the new curriculum and implementing new professional standards. SIAs effectively disseminate consistent key messages, including examples of successful practice regarding the national reform agenda with all schools. The national reform journey is embedded in regional and local authority priorities where SIAs provide thorough and informed support to all clusters on key aspects of the reform journey.

### **Curriculum Development**

Curriculum for Wales reform work continues with pace across the region, using the structures of cluster networks. All 53 cluster networks continue to meet and Curriculum for Wales reform is a regular agenda item for updates. Supporting Improvement Advisers are in regular attendance in these meetings and are key in allowing clear channels of two-way communication to share and feedback consistent messages.

All 53 clusters proposals for next steps to develop the curriculum awareness have been agreed in principle and success criteria include:

- Transparent shared objectives to improve learner outcomes
- Increased number of staff aware of the new curriculum developments
- Increased number of all schools staff working collaboratively
- Increased number of opportunities to plan and prepare for the continuum of learning from 3-16
- Provide opportunities for teachers to reflect and to be innovative with pedagogical approaches

Full funding has been allocated to support this and Supporting Improvement Advisers will support this work as the schools work through these plans.

A full Headteachers' day was held on 22 January 2019 which was attended by all Supporting Improvement Advisers, Local Authority representatives and all 400+ schools were represented. The aim of the day was to share key messaging about the wider reform. Feedback is clear that at this point, schools feel they are on track with their staff awareness of the information currently available on the curriculum developments, in particular 4 purposes and 12 pedagogical principles.

### **Professional Learning**

GwE's professional offer is broad and comprehensive, offering professional learning opportunities for all school staff, from class assistants who wish to gain the Higher Level

Teaching Assistant qualification to the Aspiring Leaders Development Programme, Middle Leadership Development Programme and NPQH qualification for aspiring headteachers. It also includes various other Professional Learning opportunities, for example, Literacy and Numeracy in the primary sector, core subjects in the secondary sector, curriculum planning and wellbeing.

GwE priorities are at the heart of the Professional Offer. Curriculum for Wales principles are embedded in the offer. They are the golden thread, linking together everything that it offered. The 4 purposes are a priority for presenters as they plan relevant, current and exciting training.

Each GwE professional learning offer has a Logic Model that underpins it, which identifies the need for training along with inputs and outputs, including any external threats that could impact professional learning.

It is an ambition in Wales that every school develops as a learning organisation, in line with OECD principles. The service has evolved to offer training on the basis of these principles and works to ensure that all professional learning offered promotes the dimensions of a learning organisation, providing opportunities for schools to explore new approaches and adapt to the changing environment. The focus is on professional learning that provides support in various forms, including off-site specific professional learning programmes, remote learning, mentoring and effective school-to-school collaboration. This all promotes self-improvement and pedagogy with the aim of disseminating good practice.

The offer is designed to develop individuals in classrooms and whole school aspects, support clusters of schools and respond to LA needs. Provision is based on Supporting Improvement Advisers' robust knowledge and understanding of their individual schools, on the needs of specific clusters, the aspirations of LAs and national priorities.

The professional standards for teaching and leadership focus on the essential elements of the work of every teacher – pedagogy, collaboration, leadership, innovation and professional learning. GwE's professional offer supports the development of the professional standards.

### Accountability - the new evaluation and improvement arrangements

Welsh Government have been developing new evaluation and improvement arrangements to replace parts of the current accountability system. This will require significant changes to culture and behaviours across the whole system. At the heart of the evaluation and improvement arrangements is robust and continuous self-evaluation. This, along with peer engagement will support learning and improvement, embed collaboration, build trust, drive self-improvement and raise standards for all our learners.

The arrangements are based on the following four key principles.

They will be:

- **fair** – they will promote equity, inclusion, choice, individual pathways to learning and never losing sight of the learner
- **coherent** – allowing each part of the system to work together without overlapping, with clear roles and responsibilities
- **proportionate** – ensuring that the implementation of the new arrangements and process is manageable and makes a difference. They will be underpinned by the principle of subsidiarity, allowing responsibility for accountability for schools to be local, led by self-aware schools
- **transparent** – recognising the breadth of learning experience across schools and the value added by teachers in class.

Rigorous data rich self-evaluation will be a strong feature of future arrangements. This will be supported through a new national self-evaluation for improvement toolkit which is being developed by the OECD, Estyn and the profession (see below). The outcome of the self-evaluation process will be the identification of priorities for improvement. Schools will continue to be required to publish their improvement priorities, in line with school development plan regulations. It is expected that schools will include peers to support their self-evaluation arrangements.

National school categorisation, which indicates the level of support schools need from the system to improve, will need to evolve into a more sophisticated process that looks at a broader range of indicators, such as learner well-being. It is expected that this will evolve into an ongoing process of authentication of a school's self-evaluation and priorities for development. For schools this process of authentication will be undertaken by regional consortia. The consortia will continue to provide support to schools in proportion to need, and in line with the improvement priorities identified.

School level target setting expectations will remain as will the need for local authorities to approve the process of target setting. It will evolve however, to give schools more flexibility to identify improvement targets appropriate to the school's context.

Welsh Government will develop system-wide measures to help nationally judge progress in policy implementation and will avoid the aggregation of school level data.

Inspection will continue to provide rigour and clear evidence on the quality and standards of education and training provided in Wales. There will be a partial suspension of inspection from September 2020 to August 2021 to enable the inspectorate to work more closely with schools and consortia on the curriculum reform.

Schools that continue to give cause for concern will still be monitored by Estyn during this time and will continue to receive support from their regional consortia and local authorities.

Moving forward Estyn will change the way they undertake their inspections. This will involve the validation of the school's self-evaluation and improvement processes and will take place more regularly than in the current cycle. Estyn will shortly begin a process of consulting with stakeholders on the new arrangements from 2021. This will include inspecting schools more than once within a seven year cycle.

### **Estyn / OECD Self-evaluation Toolkit**

As part of the national arrangements to develop a revised evaluation and improvement accountability arrangement, Estyn and the OECD have been working with key stakeholders to develop a 'toolkit' with the aim of increasing rigour and consistency in self-evaluation and improvement planning processes whilst promoting and fostering the culture and behaviours required to support the implementation of the new curriculum and the wider agenda of the 'reform journey'. Key stakeholders, including GwE representation, have been contributing to the discussions and the work programmes of both the stakeholder group and the working group. The toolkit will be based on 5 themes [Leadership, Teaching and Learning Experiences, Well-being and Inclusion, the 4 purposes of the curriculum and schools as learning organisations] and will include a mixture of exemplars and signposting to successful practice. Rough draft sections have been shared with headteachers at various events with the aim of ensuring availability of the full draft, version to schools for piloting by September 2019. Whilst the general layout, level of detail and direction of the document has received a mixed reception to date, some concerns still remain. GwE representatives have shared the following issues with Welsh Government, Estyn and the OECD on a regular basis:

- a central theme underpinning the whole project is the importance of developing the right culture and behaviours across the education system to enable the self-evaluation for improvement toolkit and approaches to be implemented successfully. Discussions around this area remain in its infancy within the project. Addressing this area robustly and effectively is crucial in terms of moving the project forward
- Estyn will need to modify its inspection approaches to align with the direction the project is taking.
- the 'toolkit' remains 'inspectorial' in its guidance and support to schools, i.e., it is being developed as a 'measuring' tool rather than as an 'improvement' toolkit. As a result, principles, purpose and ownership are still unclear.

## Digital

An essential part of the national mission is ensuring that all learners have high level digital skills so that they are digitally competent to be critical, creative and enterprising thinkers.

GwE has produced a digital professional learning programme to support teachers and leaders to develop effective and sustainable digital learning experiences for learners so as to ensure that our young people have high level digital skills.

In order to ensure that pupils develop their digital competence in line with recommendations in the Successful Futures report, GwE offers professional advice, guidance, training and support in the following key areas:

- Improving the digital skills and confidence of teachers and support staff – over 800 members of staff have received training during the year. Progress and improved consistency was seen across the region in the use of Hwb data, and wider use of Hwb in terms of sharing resources and communication with schools/teachers/clusters. Six schools in Estyn category with recommendations pertaining directly to digital learning were supported to make progress. Their provision was revamped to include rich digital tasks and developing understanding of effective digital pedagogy.
- Rich Digital Teaching and Learning – ensuring improved regional understanding of digital pedagogy through network/cluster support. Seven digital learning networks have been established to focus on developing leadership and promoting digital pedagogy in schools. Training courses were held to exemplify rich digital tasks and address how the tasks meet the requirements of several elements of the Digital Competence Framework. Sessions were held for NQTs to discuss and exemplify effective digital pedagogy and rich digital tasks.
- Developing an understanding of effective digital leadership in schools – many clusters have made good progress. Seven new networks have been formed with the aim of developing middle leadership skills. Discussions in networks demonstrate a better understanding of processes for monitoring and gathering information. Sessions were held for literacy and numeracy leaders to highlight the links between digital learning and these specific areas.
- Improving understanding and teachers' coding skills – 121 Coding clubs have been established across the region with more teachers engaging in coding activities. An increase was seen in the number of applications for the all Wales coding competition. 40 clubs have further engaged with the scheme and received more equipment and training. 12 lead teachers have been identified to be part of a development programme to upskill them to support clubs and teachers in the region in the future.

## Welsh in Education

The education system in Wales is in a period of transformation, and the Welsh language is an integral part of these reforms. The contribution of the education system is key, and the region has committed to respond to and to deliver on the policy and vision of Welsh Government.

The Welsh Strategic Board was established to lead, co-ordinate and manage this area regionally, under the strategic leadership of GwE. In addition, project teams were established to scrutinise the priorities of the Business Plan. Outlined below are the main developments during the year:

- In response to the workforce Welsh Language Skills Survey, two conferences were held in collaboration with Bangor University, - 'Welsh in Education and Bilingualism – an introduction to the complex and interesting world of the bilingual speaker'. A booklet, 'Bilingual Teaching Methods', was launched, which notes research-informed evidence at the heart of bilingual teaching methods, and good practice was shared in Immersion, Translingual skills, everyday Welsh and improving the Welsh skills of the workforce (Sabbaticals schemes). Feedback was very positive.
- Project team meetings have strengthened the collaboration and links between GwE, LA Advisory Teachers/Welsh teams and a number of different organisations such as Sabbaticals scheme providers (Canolfan Bedwyr), Bangor University, *Mudiad Meithrin*, *Mentrau Iaith Cymru*, *Urdd Gobaith Cymru*, *Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol*, *Grŵp Llandrillo Menai a Choleg Cambria*.
- The Secondary Welsh Continuum SIAs have increased the understanding of Headteachers, Heads of Department and Welsh teachers of aspects pertaining to the Welsh continuum. A number of Heads of Welsh and teachers have been upskilled in the methodology of teaching Welsh as a second language and in the essentials of the Welsh second language GCSE. Many schools have received advice and guidance on curricular planning for Welsh.
- Developmental work has taken place to prepare for the proposed Combined Framework through supporting the work of the Language Charter and the 3 co-ordinators, striving to increase the collaboration between the Language Charter and Cymraeg Campus.
- *Rhoi'r Iaith ar Waith* plans are supported, which are specific projects in schools or in clusters of schools to pilot different training approaches, raise awareness and promote the language.
- Following completion of the language skills survey, 8 GwE staff have received Welsh lessons during 2018-19 as part of the *Cymraeg Gwaith* project, and so increasing the language skills of the GwE workforce.
- There is stronger collaboration between GwE, Canolfan Bedwyr, LAs and Welsh Government when recruiting for the Sabbaticals courses. Recruiting arrangements were jointly established with Canolfan Bedwyr and the language advisers in each LA. A pilot was held for the Follow-up Course to Welsh in a Year - the first of its kind to provide support and follow-up for learners. It will be monitored during the summer term in order to measure impact and the possibility of it continuing.

## Additional Learning Needs (ALN)

ALN transformation cluster work has been established across North Wales, providing a consistent approach to supporting school readiness to implement the ALN reform. As a result, all schools have an awareness of the reform, have worked with their cluster to identify joint priorities and submitted a cluster action plan. The model ensures that all schools across the region receive accurate, timely and consistent advice and support as we move towards the end of the transformation journey to implementation.

In addition, all senior leaders and clusters have identified their own professional learning needs to support the implementation which have fed into the 2019-2020 professional learning offer for ALN transformation.

Innovative work at cluster level has been successful including defining universal provision, defining high quality teaching and implementing strategies to communicate with parents and carers.

Clusters have been encouraged to develop their work on the transformation of ALN collaboratively and in a cohesive way, where possible, supporting learners as they move between phases of their education.

Work will continue to support to ensure that all clusters are pro-active in working together, identifying priorities and developing an action plan.

### Assessment and tracking

The impact of the data summary and tracking schools can be seen in many schools. This includes:

- Schools focusing on individual pupil progress from baseline to end of primary education, by both teachers and school leaders.
- Schools focusing on progress of groups of learners.
- Better consistency throughout schools in teacher assessment and target setting which leads to a more robust self-evaluation and improvement planning.
- Using a variety of ways to interrogate pupil data and present the findings e.g. through graphs and charts

Many schools who have adopted the tool as their main progress tracker have been identified by ESTYN as effectively tracking learner progress and used as good practice case studies.

In primary schools, there is clear focus on tracking pupil progress across the region:

- Whole School Tracker - Primary Whole School Tracker has been created from the previous Foundation Phase version. Over 70% of the region's primary schools have attended training on the tracker.
- Data Summary Spreadsheet: Year 2 and Year 6 pupil data summary has been provided for all primary Schools. Headteachers have praised this for the information provided and reducing workload. An updated version to include progress of e-FSM and Boys/Girls progress data has been drafted – this includes charts and a narrative report that will reduce schools' workload further. Clear messages about moderating baseline assessments to ensure accuracy and consistency has been shared across the region in Foundation Phase and data training sessions.
- KS2 and 3 moderation: Of the 403 schools across the region, more than 95% attended the moderation meetings, 97% attended Welsh Language meetings, 95% attended English Language and 96% attended mathematics and science meetings. Throughout the region, there was an agreement on the best-fit levels of most schools.

Support for regional schools to confidently operate in an 'earned autonomy' climate has focussed on developing their ability to manage data against an increasingly diverse, defuse and rapidly changing set of parameters. Within the evolving climate, schools are expected to operate more effectively across three levels: projections based on personal, socio and economic profiling; reduction of in-school variance and question level analysis at a peer-to-peer and a regional level to generate appropriate challenge.

Action taken by GwE this year has been threefold.

Following a successful visit to the Scottish Government to review their data management Insights programme GwE were able to draw down best practice against the national and regional parameters of a rapidly dynamic landscapes of KPIs. Subsequently, securing support from the Welsh Government and the backing of the other consortias has been essential to test our model and produce statistical confidence in the core parameters required to show individual pupil potential within a school-based context. Each parameter has been evaluated against the most contemporary academic research. A project board has been established to ensure progress against the Gantt Chart project Schedule, two post-doctorate researchers from the University of Warwick and Glyndwr University are developing the statistical models and a post-doctorate researcher from the University of Bangor is researching the evidence to support the use of key parameters. GwE Head of Research is overseeing the project board and the lead Academic Professor Richard Hastings is acting in a governance role.

In addition to the above, twenty seven secondary schools are piloting a data management system that focuses on highlighting in-school variance. As in-school variance is four times more significant than school-to-school variance, effectively addressing this issue is central to improving performance across the region. A regional conference was also held to develop awareness of the work being undertaken and this was attended by 36 schools. Another smaller pilot programme is running to review and develop schools' awareness and tracking of question level analysis.

The third strand of our work programme within this area involved supporting School Based Action research which focused more forensically on school approaches to data management and the research that supports these strategies. The participating schools are required to submit a 2500 word assignment that will act as a library of research informed actions. Each school will present their findings, highlight elements they consider have transferable leadership potential in managing data. The research is focused on the transferable leadership skills required in managing data and moves data management from a dark art of a 'done to' system to an evidence informed system.

The 3 work streams noted above will be further prioritised within our 2019-20 Business Plan and a full evaluation of impact undertaken before the end of the educational year.

## G6

The development of G6 (the regional management information system) has helped support schools to reflect on their preparation for the ongoing transformation agenda. It also gives clear direction on how GwE will implement a clear and systematic approach to support all schools across the LA in reflecting on their readiness for a new curriculum and supporting schools with their preparation for reform journey.

The system provides a structure to capture school improvement processes and priorities and collates quantitative evidence of a schools improvement journey. Schools make effective use of the milestones provided in the Curriculum for Wales and Additional Learning needs modules. This allows schools to reflect on their current position with regards to the reform journey and provides clear next steps for their consideration. The system also captures and shares best practice within and between schools. Cluster work is enhanced through sharing of priorities on G6 and dialogue helps capture the level of support required by schools and collaborations of schools. Schools access LA Professional Learning through the system and can identify links between whole school priorities and professional learning needs.

Through regular concise communication between schools and GwE, the system focuses on the transfer of live data to support the progress of current pupils. With increased professional dialogue between the SIA and School, it allows for a quicker response from SIAs to assist Schools with areas that need support.

Following a successful regional and cross sector rollout of the system, an effective programme of region wide training and support was offered for all School based leaders and GwE users to ensure further embedding of the system.

Nearly all phase 2 developments of the system were completed on time and further system developments in response to direct user feedback or tier 1 developments were completed. For example the creation of a Local Targets module that captures information without increasing the workload for schools.

Effective use has been made of existing Primary and Secondary stakeholder groups to garner feedback on the system. In addition a dedicated G6 stakeholder / SDP Group was formed. The group in addition to providing direct feedback have trialled effectively developmetns in the system including governor Access.

The number of quality assured & published case studies in the successful practice module has doubled with further work needed to develop the range and sector wide balance of case studies shared.

Region wide figures for engagement with G6 in December 2018 showed that:

- 95% of all Primary Schools had set their priorities in G6 during the Autumn term 2018.
- 85% of all Secondary Schools had set their priorities in G6 during the Autumn term 2018.
- Region wide figures for the ALN Wales module in March 2019 showed that:
- 64% of Schools state they are either partly on track or on track for the Awareness & engagement milestone.
- 66% of Schools state they are either partly on track or on track for the Person Centred Approach milestone.

## 5. PARTNERSHIP WORKING

### Schools as Learning Organisations (SLO)

GwE is working with the OECD on developing the Consortia and LAs as learning organisations. Findings from this work are shared with other regions, and internationally, as we further strive to develop a vivacious and healthy organisation.

During 2018-19, 50 regional schools were randomly selected by Welsh Government to respond to a survey focusing on the seven dimensions of Schools as Learning Organisations (SLOs). Schools received a snapshot of their results. This was a quick overview of aspects for further development.

These schools have received support from GwE to develop these aspects through regular meetings, visiting effective practice in a national conference, along with looking at specific aspects of action research by attending a presentation on 'Spiral of Enquiry'.

Several GwE schools have been working on developing a resource to convey Schools as Learning Organisations to our pupils. Seven schools collaborated to develop an animation with pupils and young people, which is now to be seen on Welsh Government's website. Regional schools have also developed a community version of the presentation, which is to be included in a national resource jointly developed with the other regions.

All schools who took part in the survey have held various activities to further develop SLO in their schools, and have produced case studies to this purpose.

The region has been requested by Welsh Government to produce a resource to raise the awareness of schools in Wales of what it means to be a SLO. This resource has been jointly developed with the other regions in Wales, and is now used by 20 GwE schools to raise awareness of SLOs in their catchment areas and beyond.

A national plan has been jointly developed with the other regions on how we will develop each school in Wales to be a learning organisation. Even though it is a national plan, there will be a local flavour when presented regionally.

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

The relationship between GwE, University of Bangor and the University of Chester has developed effectively with the Initial Teacher Education (ITE) partnership in North Wales, namely CaBan. GwE has played a key role in the planning and preparation of new ITE programs as CaBan responds to the requirements of Welsh Government and the John Furlong report - "Teaching Tomorrow's Teachers":

- Collaboration with Bangor University and University of Chester to develop the CaBan partnership through accreditation.
- Increased collaboration with partner schools to co-construct CaBan programmes – partner schools beginning to plan for increased role in ITE delivery.
- GwE contribution to quality assurance of partner schools, and support for the development of SER / SDP exemplification materials and use of G6 to evaluate impact of ITE.
- GwE support for schools' ITE school improvement and self evaluation of
- Beginning to develop effective links between GwE professional learning and CaBan staff to ensure consistent approaches to the development of pedagogy.

GwE will continue to work collaboratively with CaBan and school partners to:

- develop the provision for Initial Teacher Education, to ensure high quality teachers entering the profession.
- Support work to attract and retain more high-quality applicants and high-calibre mature graduates into teaching through the new Open University / Welsh Government flexible routes into teaching.
- Support the development of a national approach to career long professional learning

### **Research and Evaluation**

GwE is working closely with Bangor University on the 'Collaborative Institute for Education Research, Evidence and Impact' (CIEREI) Project to ensure robust evaluation systems for their development programmes and to measure their impact in schools as part of a regional approach. The aims of the various projects are:

- iCAM Project – working with experts from Warwick and Bangor Universities to develop an individual child attainment model (iCAM) to predict attainment and inform child-driven priorities for secondary schools in Wales. The model will be based on historical data from across Wales and, if successful, would dispense with need for arbitrary between-school comparisons for cohorts of children and instead model expectations about individual children's attainment at KS4.
- North Wales Online Reading Trial Study – Trans Regional Implementation Project (NorthWORTS-TRIP) – to improve provision of evidence-based teaching strategies for primary schools across all LAs (Foundation Phase and key stage 2)
- North Wales Repeated Reading (NWRRP) project - to evaluate the effectiveness of a Repeated Reading intervention to improve reading fluency of children in primary school.
- Improving Wellbeing and Behaviour (iWaB-RLC) project - evaluate the impact of behavioural strategies and wellbeing programmes.

- Positive Readiness for Learning (PR4L) Project - to improve standards of attainment, behaviour and pupil engagement.

Nearly all of the projects above focus on the use of research-informed ideas and strategies to improve outcomes. All of the projects involve research students working with schools to train, deliver and assess the impact of effective strategies and ideas. They are also providing schools with practical ideas and strategies to improve behaviour and wellbeing through the use of evidence-informed ideas. This work will inform schools as they look towards curriculum reform and the health and wellbeing AoLE.

## **6. BUSINESS**

### **Staff Development**

The consistency and quality of challenge and support to schools is good. Regular training, support and discussions ensure that Supporting Improvement Advisers' knowledge and understanding of national and local developments, and the implications of this on their roles, is good.

Quality Assurance processes continue to develop and evolve in line with national developments and principles. Messages and information are communicated clearly and on a regular basis to all employees. Generic, purposeful and effective support programmes are offered. Full and sector team meetings offer regular opportunities for collaboration, consultation and contributing to discussions and decisions regarding GwE's direction of work during a period of considerable change.

### **Performance Management and Accountability**

The clear and robust accountability framework is a key strength in GwE. Detailed business plans on all levels of planning address all aspects of the work of GwE, and clearly note the contribution of the service to the transformation agenda. Plans are fully costed, with clear success criteria and milestones for delivering objectives.

There are detailed self-evaluation arrangements. Plans are reviewed on a quarterly basis, evaluating progress and impact. Staff on all levels fully understand their responsibility for continued improvement and accountability.

Each Local Authority has a detailed business plan agreed upon by the head of service and the core adviser. Progress towards agreed outcomes on a local authority level is reviewed regularly in meetings between the lead adviser and Local Authority. Ongoing issues are referred to GwE Senior leaders in a timely manner.

Self-evaluation is a strong feature in GwE and the self-evaluation process is cyclical and ongoing. Great emphasis is placed on accountability and continuous review, and there is consistent emphasis on progress in line with priorities. Consequently, GwE leaders accurately identify areas of good performance and areas for development, or areas where there is an element of risk in terms of improving experiences and educational outcomes for learners.

### **Value for Money**

The consortium has effective financial management processes in place. Communication and consultation on financial arrangements is effective, and GwE staff, the host local authority and Joint Committee all review the core funding and grant expenditure on a regular basis.

A robust financial analysis supports the work of delivering the business plan. A medium term financial plan and workforce plan are both aligned with the business plan. Through

increasingly effective use of data to identify key priorities, the link between the business planning process and decisions regarding financial planning is strengthened as the work streams that underpin the business plan clearly note the resources to be used.

A formal framework was produced to assess the wider value for money provided by GwE. The judgement is now consistent across all stakeholders on how to measure the value for money of GwE activities within the structure and objectives of the business plan.

### **Risk Register**

There are rigorous and comprehensive arrangements in place to accurately identify and manage risks on a local, regional and national level. The risk register is a live document, which is updated on a regular basis in order to identify increasing risks or risks which are no longer deemed as high level. It is reviewed every month in a senior leadership meeting and the Management Board and the Joint Committee review the register on a quarterly basis.

Through effective management of risks to the region, GwE is able to support the region's objectives, make effective use of resources and meet the outcomes as intended.

## **7. 2019-20 BUSINESS PLAN PRIORITIES**

The main areas for development, identified from self-evaluation, are priorities in our Business Plan for 2019-2020.

The Management Board and the GwE Joint Committee have approved our strategic objectives and priorities for improvement for 2019-20. The Business Plan is in 6 sections and is aligned with 'Education in Wales: Our national mission', clearly noting the contribution of the service to the transformation agenda.

The Business Plan links with more detailed service plans, with measurable targets for improvement and clear success criteria in order to accurately measure the region's progress. Progress against the Business Plan is reported on a quarterly basis, in line with the Accountability Framework (Appendix 7).

Each Local Authority has a detailed business plan which has been agreed upon by the head of service and the lead Core Advisers. In each plan, there are details about key issues pertaining to the local authority along with a unique improvement plan to address specific challenges. Progress towards meeting agreed outcomes on a local authority level is reviewed on a regular basis.

Our strategic objectives for 2019-20 are:

### **1: Developing a high-quality education profession:**

- Ensure that all teachers and support staff are equipped to have a clear understanding of what constitutes effective teaching, based on reliable evidence. In addition, the ability to deliver a range of approaches, effectively matching the needs of the learners with the context, to ensure positive impact on learning and achievement is paramount.

### **2: Inspirational leaders working collaboratively to raise standards:**

- Ensure that all leaders have a clear educational vision and can plan strategically to achieve this. Ensure that all learning organisations have the leadership capacity at all levels to inspire, coach, support, share practice and collaborate at all levels to ensure

all learners' achieve their potential. Ensure that the principles of distributive leaderships are embedded in all learning organisations across the region.

**3: Strong and inclusive schools committed to excellence, equity and well-being:**

- Create the conditions to ensure that learners develop as healthy, resilient and globally responsible individuals and provide an inclusive, aspirational education system, committed to tackling inequality so that young people achieve their full potential.

**4: Robust assessment, evaluation and accountability arrangements supporting a self-improving system:**

- Ensure all schools have robust assessment processes in place with strong targeting, tracking and intervention procedures. Ensure that school leaders and teachers have the skills, capacity and commitment to continually learn and improve their practice so that every child achieves their potential.

**5: Transformational Curriculum**

- To ensure that all schools deliver an engaging curriculum which responds to the statutory requirements of the national curriculum. Ensure that all learners are supported to achieve qualifications which enable them to be ambitious capable learners that reach their potential.

**6: Business**

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

Our main priorities for improvement for 2019-20 are:

**1: Developing a high-quality education profession:**

- 1.1 Support schools to improve performance in the secondary sector
- 1.2 Cymraeg 2050 – A million Welsh speakers
- 1.3 Support Bangor and Chester University to develop high quality ITE provision

**2: Inspirational leaders working collaboratively to raise standards:**

- 2.1 Provide development programmes across the work force to ensure high quality leadership
- 2.2 Support secondary schools to improve middle leadership performance
- 2.3 Develop peer engagement model and processes with schools to ensure robust self-evaluation and improvement planning at all levels

**3: Strong and inclusive schools committed to excellence, equity and well-being:**

- 3.1 Supporting vulnerable learner's strategy
- 3.2 Further develop LAC strategy
- 3.3 Work with LA and Schools to best prepare for Additional Learning Needs transformation

**4: Robust assessment, evaluation and accountability arrangements supporting a self-improving system:**

Support schools to improve performance in the secondary sector:

- 4.1 Develop tracking and assessment systems
- 4.2 Develop accountability and management systems
- 4.3 Further develop accountability arrangements and processes for robust self-evaluation and improvement planning

**5: Transformational Curriculum:**

- 5.1 Preparing a Transformational Curriculum
- 5.2 Improve the quality of teaching, taking account of the 12 pedagogical principles (Successful Futures)

**6: Business:**

- 6.1 Undertake a budget and workforce review.

