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Appendices attached: Report on the Efficiency & Effectiveness of the Central South Consortium 2017-2018

1. Purpose of the report

To provide Members with an overview of the report on the Efficiency and Effectiveness of the Central South Consortium 2017-2018.

2. Background

- 2.1 The approach taken by the Central South Consortium to evaluating the impact of its work has been guided by the Research and Evaluation Board chaired by a professor from Cardiff University.
- 2.2 A policy logic model is used as a tool across all strands to evaluate the effectiveness of the Central South Consortium.
- 2.3 The framework identifies a hierarchy to the value for money strands, which also cover the headings developed by Welsh Government for their Outcomes Framework for the Education Improvement Grant.
- 2.4 During 2017-2018 six of the Consortium's main areas of work were selected for focused evaluation:-
 - School Improvement Groups (SIGs)
 - Pathfinders
 - Hubs
 - Peer Enquiry
 - Closing The Gap
 - Work of the Challenge Advisers

3. Overview of Performance

- Standards have continued to improve again in the main measures for every key stage, where current data is comparable with previous years, at a regional level in 2017-2018.
- Performance at regional level continues to exceed the national average for all performance measures for all key stages at the expected level, and nearly all performance measures at the above-expected level.
- The gap in performance between eFSM and nFSM pupils has narrowed for performance measures at key stage 2 and for key stage 3 Core Subject Indicator. The gap in performance between these groups of pupils has increased for key stage 4 Level 2+ Threshold, but performance of both groups of pupils has increased in the most recent, with nFSM pupils improving at a faster rate than eFSM pupils.
- During the most recent year, the proportion of schools in the region inspected who are identified for excellent practice case studies exceeds the national proportion.

- There has been a further increase in the proportion of schools requiring “Green” support as part of the National Categorisation model when compared to the previous year. The proportion of schools requiring “Yellow”, “Amber” and “Red” support has decreased again in the most recent year.
- The Year 11 NEET figure for the region has continued to decrease. The figure in 2016/17 was 1.4% whilst the corresponding figure for the region in 2012/13 was 4.1%. Nationally, the figure in 2012/13 was 3.7%, which has reduced to 1.6% in 2016/17. This is the second consecutive year that the region has a lower NEET figure than seen nationally, with the region now being 0.2pp below the national figure.

4. Evidence of Impact

4.1 School Improvement Groups (SIGs)

Through SIG working nearly all schools in the region are able to engage with collaborative school improvement **and** SIGs allow all schools equity of access to school improvement opportunities. All SIGs are able to use the capacity available in their SIG rather than in just their school to bring about improvement. In the convenor survey of work from 17/18 approximately 96% of convenors believe that their SIG has the collective capacity to meet the priorities of the group.

SIG sharing events allow convenors to view the work of others in their group and to share barriers and enablers to specific types of work. Thematic analysis of convenor evaluations from 16/17 and 17/18 show positive qualitative feedback about the impact of SIG work. These thematic evaluations are carried out in addition to the survey and including the following:

- Teacher involvement in SIG work has remains at around 95%
- The involvement of middle leaders in SIG work has increased around 40% from 22% in 16/17 to 63% in 17/18
- Over 50% of SIGs have included joint practice development as an aspect of their SIG work
- Altering practice in school as a result of SIG work has increased from 88% in 16/17 to 94% in 17/18
- 25% of SIGs have involved pupils directly in SIG work with pupils working across schools.

17 convenors were surveyed in 16/17 and 22 in 17/18; the group was not the same sample.

- When asked if SIG work had an impact on pupil standards 36% strongly agreed, which is around a 30% increase from the previous year
- Over 80% of SIG convenors agreed or strongly agreed that SIG work has a positive impact on teaching and learning. This is an increase of over 50% from 2016/17
- There has been a 25% increase in the number of SIGs who strongly agree that they distribute SIG leadership beyond the Headteacher
- There has been an increase of over 10% of the SIG convenors who strongly agree that their SIG has the collective capacity to meet the needs of the group, from 41% in 16/17 to 55% in 17/18. In both years over 90% of SIGs either agree or strongly agree with this

Based on **effectiveness** data submitted by SIGs to date there is also strong quantitative evidence of their impact on school improvement:

- 56% of primary SIGs are able to show positive, measurable impact on standards from their collaborative work
- Of these, approximately 30% show a direct impact of their work
- Approximately 25% of SIGs show a more indirect impact of their work
- Approximately 34% of SIGs show proxy indicators of impact. That is to say that impact of work during 17/18 cannot yet be evidenced but is anticipated in the future.
- Around 84% of SIGs report a direct impact on their provision as a result of collaborative SIG work
- Over 68% of SIGs report a direct impact on their leadership capacity as a result of SIG working

4.2 Pathfinders

All pathfinder activity is monitored and evaluated, and the evidence to date highlights that this strategy is successful. A baseline is established within the costed plan to ensure progress is measured with evaluations required after two terms in order to monitor progress. Evaluation considers impact against the objectives set out in the costed plan.

Collaborative advantage from partnerships in terms of capacity building and leadership:

- Middle leaders have been upskilled in the delivery of training and the mentoring and coaching of other staff. All staff involved in the project reported feeling more confident about leading monitoring activities.
- The Pathfinder work has allowed middle leaders within the school to further develop the school's leadership capacity. During the project, responsibility was passed on to FP Leaders who worked alongside teaching staff in their schools in order to collate work samples for moderation purposes. FP Leaders led the work therefore promoting their middle leadership ability. This was then used back in individual schools where middle leaders were able to reflect on the practices taking place in their own phases, within their school, and further draw upon the work discussed during the pathfinder partnership in order to improve teaching and learning, and the assessment process.
- The senior leadership team provides a clear direction to school improvements. The senior leadership team consists of the headteacher, deputy headteacher and Foundation Phase co-ordinator. Both deputy headteacher and Foundation Phase co-ordinator have been provided with good support from partner schools. As a result, there has been notable progress in strategic leadership. A new TLR post holder is to be appointed before the end of the Spring term. Curriculum leadership teams have outlined tasks

Many pathfinder partnerships can show **added value** and proxy indicators of impact on a number of strategies introduced as a result of partnership working, for example:

- Senior Leaders use a range of strategies (*Professional discussions, phase meetings, peer observations and support programmes*) along with rigorous monitoring and support to manage the performance of all teachers, this is beginning to impact on

learner outcomes. Termly self-evaluation through PPM, PM, IPR ensure all staff are supported and challenged appropriately.

- Overall, there has been good progress in teaching. The challenge advisor has agreed the assessment of teaching undertaken by the SLT. At present teaching is 70% good and 30% adequate. There is more consistency in teaching throughout the school, in particular in planning, the approach to reading and phonics teaching. This has increased from 50/50 adequate good in Nov 16.
- 'The difference in the school since September is tangible. Presentations from key staff and a learning walk showed enthusiasm from both staff and pupils, a culture of learning and strong engagement across the school. Distributed leadership is developing well. There is a clear focus on improving the outcomes of more-able pupils and there is strong impact already. Leaders are clear about the next steps. It is clear that staff are benefitting from newly forged working relationships with other schools and external advisers/consultants and this is impacting on classroom practice'. (Challenge Adviser report)
- As a result, the quality of teaching has improved from 30% good teaching in July 2017, to 55% good teaching in January 2018, to 60% good teaching April 2018.

Quantitative evidence of the effectiveness of partnerships is considered on an individual basis as the focus of the work varies according to the needs of each partnership, considering **sustainability**, the use of challenge advisers to broker and support the work ensures that work within schools can continue to be developed.

For example, Teachers from the supported school have had the opportunity to work alongside teachers from the lead school planning, looking at books and observing each other delivering lessons. Teachers have had the opportunity to reflect on their own practice and make changes to their practice. Teachers from the two schools have worked together to create a 'Teaching Toolkit'. As a result, the quality of teaching has improved from 30% good teaching in July 2017, to 55% good teaching in January 2018, to 60% good teaching April 2018.

4.3 Hub Programmes

In 2017-18:

- over 20% of CSC schools feature as part of the model to build capacity and provide support to others
- 1072 practitioners attended a professional learning programme run by a Hub school.
- At least one practitioner from 73% of schools in the region have engaged with a Hub professional learning programme. A continuing positive trend since the inception of the model
- Over 183 days of direct, in-school support was facilitated by Hub schools

Across the 3 years of the Hub model there has been a 100% increase in the number of practitioners attending collaborative events.

Refinements to the model in 2017-18 have increased the focus on joint practice development and inquiry-led activity. As more practitioners participate in programmes of joint practice

development, the evidence of the effectiveness of this approach increases. Practitioner feedback following sessions demonstrate the value they place in working collaboratively with other schools to develop their practice.

Evaluation of the work identified that:

- nearly all practitioners reported that the actions they had undertaken as a result of the programme had impacted on standards and pupil outcomes
- nearly all practitioners reported that the programme had impacted positively on their own teaching practice
- nearly all practitioners attending leadership programmes facilitated by professional learning hubs reported that it had impacted positively on their leadership skills
- around a half of practitioners reported having undertaken activity to build in school capacity

Feedback from practitioner session evaluations welcomed the opportunity to work collaboratively to develop their practice in support of identified priorities.

Extended opportunities for networks of practitioners to develop practice over a period of time and enhance school-to-school working is a strong feature of the hub model.

4.4 Peer Enquiry

Collaborative advantage from partnerships is evidenced where schools report impact in terms of capacity building and leadership:

- Senior leaders and headteachers becoming part of enquiry teams are all been trained in data analysis, interview techniques, observation protocols and school self-evaluation as well as the lead being trained to coach/mentor host headteachers. Members of enquiry teams report feeling more confident about leading enquiries and analysing school processes.
- The enquiry team and the host school SLT work in close collaboration throughout the process resulting in high calibre discussions about effective practice and two-way sharing of ideas and systems. The nature of the dialogue between experienced, credible school leaders is of immense value to all participants. In the context of trust and openness - and without judgement - any school SLT must benefit from having fresh eyes looking at the school.
- Peer enquiry offers specific lines of enquiry linked to school improvement and an action plan so that the host school has an immediate starting point for improvement. The very act of deciding those lines of enquiry also builds the professional skills of the enquiry team
- All the way along there was this dialogue-it was very positive it was very challenging-it certainly wasn't light touch
- All senior leaders involved in the process focus their attention on school improvements and this contributes to the development and strengthening of a school-led self-improving system.

- The people who undertake the enquiry have credibility straight away. They are doing the job and hopefully will have a track record in securing improvement.
- The enquiry gives concrete suggestions and practical ideas. It is not just identifying strengths and weaknesses like an inspection. There is also likely to be an ongoing dialogue and contacts built. I have taken part in three peer enquiries and have made valuable links that continue.

In line with **added value**, peer enquiries demonstrate impact and proxy indicators of impact on a number of strategies introduced as a result of serving headteachers and senior leaders working in partnership with host schools. For example:

- Just over 50% of all schools in the region have engaged with the peer enquiry model to date since 2015*.
- Between 2015 – 2018, 77% of all primary schools who have hosted a peer enquiry improved their categorisation, compared to a regional average of 57.4% for all other primary schools. 83.3% of secondary schools who had hosted a peer enquiry improved their categorisation compared with a regional average of 64.7% for all other secondary schools.
- Even if this is a proxy indicator, it still represents a significant increase on the regional average. When we look at Key Performance indicators, in primary, 81% of those schools had improved their key stage 2 core subject indicators against a regional average improvement of 60.5%. When we look at Key Performance indicators, in secondary, 82% of those schools had improved their key stage 4 level 2 plus against a regional average of 70%.
- Action plans focusing on school improvement are reflected in school SER documentation with quantitative and qualitative targets attached to expected outcomes
- Some challenge advisers conduct reflective conversations with host headteachers upon receipt of the report and Evaluation Framework improvement (EFI) reflect the robust specificity of those conversations
- Many participating headteachers and senior school leaders describe the process as being excellent for professional development and for networking / collaboration. Leaders have gained a wider perspective of how other schools are run and speak of increased confidence to make changes in their own practice. We have evidence from focus groups, surveys and interviews with senior school leaders to support this.

*The overall percentage of schools engaged in the peer enquiry process is cited here from its inception in 2015. Engagement of schools/headteachers/senior school leaders is much lower for the year 2017 – 2018.

4.5 Closing The Gap

The CTG Hubs offer a range of programmes across the region and have been well attended and the end of course evaluations demonstrate impact in the schools of participants. Success of the programme was evident in presentations delivered by delegates during the day of the

course. All delegates who attended the course have implemented strategies and are now in a position to develop the programme across their schools.

There have been four meetings of the eFSM network at which delegates were provided with advice and support in relation to effective PDG spending and examples of good practice.

For the previous three years CSC has closed the gap at a higher rate than the national average. 'There has been improvement in the performance of eFSM pupils since 2012, albeit from a low baseline. The gaps in performance have narrowed in each of the four key stages, with foundation phase having the narrowest gap and key stage 3 evidencing the greatest reduction in the gap since 2012. For every key stage, the performance of eFSM pupils has improved at a faster rate than non eFSM pupils at the expected level, and for most performance measures at key stage 4(*). In the Foundation Phase, the gap has narrowed to 12.6 pp in 2017 (a reduction from 19.5pp in 2012), whilst in key stage 2 the core subject indicator (CSI) gap has closed to 13.8pp (from 20.6pp in 2012). However, in the most recent academic year at key stage 3, the gap widened slightly to 20.8pp.' (2017/18 Highlight Report: Quarter 3)

There will now no longer be CTG focused hubs however, CSC will implement a Hub and Lead Practitioner model with high quality teaching and learning to be a focus of all of the hubs.

4.6 Challenge Advisers

- Overall inspection outcomes have improved
- Reduction in need for support
- Increase in green category schools

The table below summarises the movement of schools between categories in the last year:

No of Schools	Support	Movement
4	Red	2 schools have been red for 2 consecutive years
9	amber	increase of 3 schools on previous year
2	red	moved from amber to red
5	Amber	moved from yellow to amber
3	Yellow	moved from green to yellow
6	Green	moved from yellow to green
2	Yellow	moved from amber to yellow
1	amber	moved from red to amber

Working closely with LAs we have improved our processes for identifying schools who have received appropriate support but progress remains poor. Termly discussions are part of LA performance meetings about LA statutory powers being used in red and amber schools.

5. Conclusions

5.1 Despite the reduced funding there were further improvement in many key performance indicators across schools in the region.

5.2 The Annual Surveys from October 2018 report that:-

- 60% of classroom teachers, up from 50% last year, indicated a greater willingness to lead professional learning
- Some 76% of staff felt that working collaboratively with other schools had improved pupil learning and attainment and 80% of staff felt that working collaboratively with other schools had enhanced classroom practice
- Approximately two thirds of primary staff and just over two thirds of secondary staff who had worked on cross-school projects felt it had improved their overall leadership skills, had helped them lead learning, and provided them with support.
- Two thirds of staff stated they had involvement in action research
- The use of research evidence was reported by three quarters of staff

- Pupils were generally positive about school, with over 80% indicating that 'for some' or 'most of the time' they felt positive about learning and their relationships with teachers and classmates
- Of the three aspects covered in the survey (teachers, learning and peers) pupils indicated the highest level of alienation from learning
- There was a positive correlation between social well-being and pupils' level of alienation. Pupils' who stated they rarely or never felt alienated from learning, were more likely to value school in terms of it providing them with social status and approval
- If pupils valued school in terms of their physical well-being, that is as a friendly and welcoming place, they were more likely to be comfortable in taking risks, not worry when they made a mistake and to persevere even when work was difficult
- Overall, primary school pupils were more positive than secondary school pupils about their teachers' ability to support their learning, in respect of finding out what they already know.
- The vast majority of pupils agreed or strongly agreed that they kept on working until they finished even when they found their work was difficult
- Students who agreed or strongly agreed that they have a say in what they learn about in lessons and how they are taught in school were less likely to report that they found it hard to concentrate or were easily distracted. As school years progress, pupils feel they have increasingly less influence over what and how they are taught.

5.3 Further work is need to :-

- Improve the way in which we demonstrate the impact of our work
- Quality assurance provision and ensure that professional learning programmes have clear success criteria to measure impact
- Align fully with the national model for professional learning

- Ensure provision fully meets local, regional and national needs
- Recognise the changing national context and ensure a comprehensive programme of professional learning to prepare all schools for all aspects of education reform
- Further develop and embed a cluster approach
- Refine the Peer Enquiry Model
- Further review the role of Challenge Advisers