



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

MUNICIPAL YEAR 2021/2022

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

16TH FEBRUARY 2022

**REPORT ON THE WORK OF THE CENTRAL SOUTH CONSORTIUM
IN THE REGION AND RHONDDA CYNON TAF LOCAL AUTHORITY
DURING APRIL 2020 – SEPTEMBER 2021**

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND INCLUSION SERVICES

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1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide an overview of the work of the Central South Consortium (CSC) and to update Members with the contribution of the CSC, working in partnerships with the local authority to raising standards in schools across Rhondda Cynon Taf (RCT).

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members:

- 2.1 Scrutinise and comment on the information provided.
- 2.2 Consider whether they wish to scrutinise in greater depth any matters considered within the report.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 To offer members the opportunity to scrutinise the work of CSC.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 Since 2012, the CSC has delivered aspects of school improvement services on behalf of the five authorities: Bridgend, Cardiff, Merthyr Tydfil, Rhondda Cynon
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Taf and the Vale of Glamorgan. This covers 380¹ schools, around 32% of Wales' children. It is a growing region with rapidly changing demographic encompassing increasingly diverse communities across the economic sub region. It remains the region with the highest number of children living in poverty, with around one in five children claiming free school meals.

- 4.2 The service delivers challenge and support on behalf of the five local authorities, governed through a Joint Committee of Cabinet Members from each authority. The Joint Committee meets regularly and formally approves the annual business plan and budget for the service, holding the service to account in terms of performance and budgetary control.
- 4.3 This report details the work of the consortium for the academic year September 2020/2021 and the financial year April 2020 to April 2021. The global pandemic caused schools to be repurposed in March 2020 requiring CSC to amend our approach to supporting schools.
- 4.4 Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, WG has cancelled most of the statutory data collections for both 2020 and also for 2021. The collections suspended include:
 - Attendance: Primary 2020 and 2021 data collections
 - Attendance: Secondary 2020 and 2021 data collections
 - National Data Collections (NDC) 2020 and 2021 data collections.
- 4.5 The Minister for Education also confirmed on 21st June 2021² that WG would not be publishing performance measures related to the 2021 summer examinations series, which covers all school and post-16 performance measures for the 2020-21 academic year. In addition, given the clear implications that there will be ongoing disruptions for qualifications awarded next year, WG have suspended Key Stage 4 and legacy sixth form performance measures for 2021-22 academic year also. Therefore, there are no performance measures available for Key Stage 4 or post-16 for summer 2020 and 2021 results, and these will also not be available for results published for summer 2022.
- 4.6 The publication of performance data on My Local School is also suspended, with the publication of the national categorisation³ also being suspended for 2021-22 due to the processes not being held for the academic years 2020-21 and 2021-22. This report does not contain any information for the National Categorisation as this was included in the report published last year.
- 4.7 All Estyn inspections were suspended in March 2020⁴; therefore, no analysis is included in this report as no inspections took place between September 2020 and July 2021. However, the report will reflect on Estyn follow up visits undertaken with RCT schools.

¹ Source: *School census results: as at January 2019*

² <https://gov.wales/written-statement-school-information-improvement-and-inspection-arrangements-supporting-renewal-and>

³ <https://gov.wales/school-categorisations-be-suspended-next-year>

⁴ <https://www.estyn.gov.wales/news/estyn-will-not-inspect-maintained-schools-next-academic-year-statement-meilyr-rowlands-hmci>

5. UPDATE/CURRENT POSITION

CENTRAL SOUTH CONSORTIUM BUSINESS PLAN 2020/2021

- 5.1 The consortium business plan for April 2020 to March 2021 can be found [here](#). It has five priorities:
- Develop a high quality education profession;
 - Develop highly effective leadership to facilitate working collaboratively to raise standards;
 - Develop strong and inclusive schools committed to excellence, equity and wellbeing;
 - Continue to develop robust assessment, evaluation and accountability arrangements supporting a self-improving system;
 - Improve the effectiveness and efficiency of CSC.
- 5.2 The business plan sets out how we aim to deliver these priorities through effective school self-evaluation and improvement planning, underpinned by building capacity in schools to support other schools through the continued development of the 'Central South Wales Challenge'. This is led by schools and has involved the continued development of evidence-based strategies (school improvement groups - SIGs), school improvement hubs and peer engagement models in which schools can be resourced to work together to share practice across the region.
- 5.3 Drive Teams made up from senior leaders from across the consortium ensure that the operational plans for each priority are implemented and that impact is measured. Half-termly reviews, including an impact review with the managing director at the end of each term, ensures that monitoring is robust. Outcomes of this process are reported to Joint Committee found [here](#).
- 5.4 In addition to this LA focused report, CSC has produced a report focusing on the effectiveness and efficiency of its work as a regional organisation. A copy of this report can be found [here](#).

6. COMPARATIVE DATA

6.1 **Extract from minister's statement 21st June 2021:**

"In July 2020, given the implications of ongoing disruption to schools and post-16 providers for qualifications awarded in 2021, the Welsh Government announced that the suspension of performance measures would continue for 2020/21. We find ourselves in a similar situation as we near the end of the current academic year. I, therefore, want to provide early clarity again, by confirming that the suspension of Key Stage 4 and legacy sixth form performance measures will be extended to the 2021/22 academic year. Qualification awards data will not be used to report on attainment outcomes at a school, local authority or regional consortium level and must not be used to hold schools to account for their learners' outcomes.

In the post-16 sector, the range of providers (sixth forms, FE institutions, work-based learning and adult learning) and different types of programmes are affected in different ways. Some outcomes in 2021/22 will reflect a two-year programme for learners, while others are covering a single year of study. We will, therefore, consider the best approach to post-16 performance measures for 2021/22. The sector will be consulted, before any firm decision is taken, in order to consider what would be useful to help their own monitoring and quality assurance processes.”

6.2 **CSC’s Position**

It is important to note and understand that following Welsh Government’s (WG) suspension of statutory data collections and publication of outcomes for 2019/2020 and 2020/21 there will be a reduction in analysis available within CSC. However, schools will have their own internal systems for tracking and analysing pupil performance/outcomes. These form a key focus of discussions with school leaders to enable appropriate support and challenge by CSC to secure school improvement and partnership working in 2021/22.

6.3 **Enable and support schools to access appropriate support to respond to the changing accountability measures**

- The Welsh Government published consultation on the draft guidance for school improvement: framework for evaluation, improvement and accountability in January 2021. The consultation closed on 15th March 2021, with intended implementation in September 2021. The reporting requirements expected for 2019/20 were not available due to the cancellation of National Data Collections by the WG for summer 2020 and the corresponding removal of the publication of these indicators and other performance measures for data for reporting.
- CSC continued to “assess schools’ application” of the online test in line with the Welsh Government guidance for schools and local authorities to “make best effort” in moderation. However, at this period, under the current restrictions, the long-term requirement remains unclear.

7. **CHALLENGE AND SUPPORT**

The Intervention Strategy for Schools Causing Concern has been reviewed, agreed with all directors and shared with schools. This has led to clear processes for intervention being understood and utilised by the local authorities forms the basis of enhanced support work for all settings in the region. The LA Performance Report has been remodelled to provide greater detail regarding schools causing concern.

7.1 National categorisation was suspended from September 2020 and a new evolving model for improvement partner deployment was consulted on in the summer term 2020 and implemented from September 2020. To reflect the changing approach, challenge advisors were renamed IPs. (See Appendix 1 – Improvement & Accountability.)

7.2 In 2020/2021, local authority contributed £982,311 towards the core functions of the consortium. In addition to the core costs of the consortium this has

provided funding for 17 IPs (7.62 FTE), support from two accelerated progress leads and Principal Improvement Partners (PIPs) (2 FTE).

- 7.3 Elected Members will be aware that we used a categorisation process to identify the schools in need of support using both data and judgement of leadership and capacity to improve. During 2020/2021, the consortium continued to work closely on behalf of the local authority to monitor the progress of the schools in need. Of the 115 schools in Rhondda Cynon Taf, 16 schools required enhanced level support (see Appendix 1 Improvement and Accountability – section marked Allocating Support) and 99 schools required core level of support (see table in 7.10 for list of schools).
 - 7.4 IPs continue to have a relevant educational background and level of experience and provide good quality support and challenge to schools. They have continued to work well and in partnership with the local authority to provide effective monitoring, challenge, support and intervention where needed. Improvement partners have continued to commission bespoke support and intervention from the wider support teams within the CSC.
 - 7.5 Support for schools is prioritised following a strategic analysis of regional needs. This is reviewed on a termly basis as information and priorities emerge. Schools receive intensive support for core subjects as agreed with the school's IP and progress is fed back to school through a strategic evaluation for improvement statement and to the local authority director in the termly performance report.
 - 7.6 The regional professional learning (PL) offer provided opportunities for leaders and practitioners to develop curriculum, pedagogy and professional pathways in support of identified school improvement priorities. Live and on-demand PL opportunities were available for schools as appropriate, throughout the pandemic. Lead practitioner networks provided opportunities for schools to collaborate on joint practice development and share effective strategies and resources. 999 practitioners from across 115 RCT schools accessed regional PL opportunities. Details of these opportunities are exemplified throughout sections 8-11, see especially tables in 9.23, 9.33 and 10.8).
 - 7.7 All schools have a bespoke package if needed which is identified on the school development plan. Key improvement objectives are identified, and regular school improvement forums held for all enhanced schools to judge the impact of the support in enabling the school to meet its objectives. A judgement is made on the extent of the progress the schools have made in meeting each objective. This information is provided to directors in termly progress reports.
 - 7.8 Each term CSC prepares a detailed report for directors and then meets with them to discuss the aspects of the report that they select. The report contains a detailed breakdown of the support provided within the previous term.
 - 7.9 Estyn suspended their inspection activity in March 2020. As such, no schools were inspected during 2020/2021. Instead, they undertook a number of desktop reviews with LA officers for schools in Estyn Review. As a
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consequence of timely information and the support of IPs, LA officers and, as appropriate, CSC strategic team or brokered school-to-school work, LAs have been able to appropriately amend the category and status of Estyn follow up for number of schools.

Estyn have returned to follow-up visits from the academic year 2021-22. These up-to-date figures have been added. As a result, only one school in RCT remains in an Estyn category; this school is awaiting their Estyn follow-up visit.

7.10 Table of summary of schools in Estyn category

| School | Estyn category | 2020-21 changes | Current position (autumn 2021) |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|---|--|
| Aberdare Community | Significant improvement | Awaiting Estyn visit | Removed from Estyn category; in core support |
| Abernant Primary | Estyn review | Removed from Estyn review and from enhanced support | In Core support category |
| Cefn Primary | Estyn review | Awaiting Estyn review | Removed from Estyn category |
| Craig Yr Hesg Primary | Estyn review | Awaiting Estyn review | Removed from Estyn category |
| Mountain Ash Comprehensive | Estyn review | Removed from Estyn review | Remains in enhanced support |
| Porth County Community | Significant improvement | Awaiting Estyn visit | Awaiting Estyn visit |
| Ty Gwyn Education Centre | Special measures | Awaiting Estyn visit | Removed from Estyn category |
| Williamstown Primary | Estyn review | Removed from Estyn review and from enhanced support | In Core support category |
| Ynysboeth Primary | Estyn review | Awaiting Estyn review | Removed from Estyn category |

7.11 All 16 schools in receipt of enhanced support are reviewed at least termly to measure the progress being made against their priorities and/or the recommendations from Estyn visits. Progress is measured using the following judgements. (See Appendix 1 – Improvement & Accountability: Monitoring Progress section for definitions of the progress judgements.)

7.12 **Table showing summary of progress against recommendations/priorities**
The following table analyses the progress judgements made across a wide range of the key priorities in our enhanced support schools. Priorities will often cover a number of aspects of practice. Judgements are made and agreed in partnership with the school, CSC and LA officers. The data is based on all 16 schools, covering a total of 79 priorities or recommendations. These have been categorised under three broader headings of Leadership, Teaching and Learning and Wellbeing.

| % FIGURES | Progress Autumn 2020 | | |
|--|----------------------|--------------|--------------|
| Aspects of practice within Recs/Priorities | limited | satisfactory | strong+ |
| OVERALL | 9.2% | 52.8% | 40.6% |
| Teaching and Learning | 11.7% | 54.3% | 37.2% |
| Leadership | 5.0% | 35.0% | 60.0% |
| Wellbeing | 3.6% | 60.7% | 37.0% |
| % FIGURES | Progress Spring 2021 | | |
| Aspects of practice within Recs/Priorities | limited | satisfactory | strong+ |
| OVERALL | 9.6% | 54.1% | 54.4% |
| Teaching and Learning | 12.5% | 48.9% | 38.6% |
| Leadership | 5.3% | 36.8% | 57.9% |
| Wellbeing | 3.6% | 57.1% | 39.3% |
| % FIGURES | Progress Summer 2021 | | |
| Aspects of practice within Recs/Priorities | limited | satisfactory | strong+ |
| OVERALL | 0.0% | 34.3% | 65.7% |
| Teaching and Learning | 0.0% | 38.5% | 61.5% |
| Leadership | 0.0% | 22.2% | 77.8% |
| Wellbeing | 0.0% | 28.6% | 71.4% |

7.13 Table showing changes in progress during 2020-2021

The following table indicates the changes in the number of aspects still showing limited progress and the number of aspects that have improved to strong or better progress. This is broken down by the three broad categories, as above.

| % FIGURES | Change (Autumn to Summer) | |
|--|--|---|
| Aspects of practice within Recs/Priorities | Number of aspects showing Limited Progress | Number of aspects showing Strong Progress |
| OVERALL | -9.2% | +25.1% |
| Teaching and Learning | -11.7% | +24.3% |
| Leadership | -5.0% | +17.8% |
| Wellbeing | -3.6% | +34.4% |

7.14 As a result of the challenge and support, many schools continue to make good progress against a very challenging context. Schools causing concern are well-supported and many make good or better progress against most recommendations or priorities.

8. LEADERSHIP

8.1 Professional development support for current and future leadership

CSC delivers a range of national leadership programmes in order to enhance current and future leadership and to provide a comprehensive pathway.

- First 2 cohorts of Middle Leaders Development Programme (MLDP) (cohort 1: participants from 22 schools), cohort 2 (eight participants from seven schools) have completed the programme, which develops a range of the features of middle leadership. 100% of participants would recommend the programme, 100% of participants stated that the training met their expectations. Cohort 3 (30 participants from 23 schools signed up and were accepted on the programme for 2021-2022).
- The first round of Senior Leaders Development Programme (SLDP) has taken place with 14 participants (one per school) successfully completing the programme. Cohort 2 (12 participants from 11 schools signed up and were accepted on the programme for 2021-2022). The programme has been endorsed by the National Academy for Educational Leadership.
- National Aspiring Heads Programme has started (18 participants, from 17 schools) - cohort 1 and 2 amalgamated (cohort 1 paused due to COVID-19).
- NPQH Assessment centre successfully held online via Teams. Regional and National moderation completed. 7 candidates from RCT met the NPQH standards.
- National New and Acting Headteacher Programme continues to effectively support our headteachers (18 participants). Cohort 2 and 3 amalgamated (cohort 2 paused due to COVID-19).
- The Experienced Headteacher Programme has continued and will run through to autumn 2022 (seven participants).
- 14 new system leaders (seven from RCT) have been established, utilising experienced headteachers to offer support across the region. These leaders have undertaken professional learning ahead of their engagement with other schools.
- 11 headteachers and senior leaders provide coaching support to candidates on the leadership pathway programmes. Coaches that were allocated to support pathway programmes have received training.
- All bespoke coaching sessions have been completed. CSC Coaching 'Team' space created for all coaches to access resources and support.
- 23 coaching and mentoring facilitators from 23 schools, were trained in autumn/spring term 2020-21. The facilitators trained were from CSC schools and central staff. In autumn 2021, 12 coaching and mentoring facilitators were trained from 11 schools.

Facilitator coaches trained as part of cohort 1+2 have begun training three people in their networks, creating 216 in-house coaches across the region.

- 22 candidates across the region (8 in RCT) undertook Institute of Leadership and Management (ILM) level 3 assessment in 2020-21.
- As a result, leadership capacity is being strengthened, with a strong focus on leadership styles, building effective working relationships, developing effective self-evaluation and improvement planning and securing accountability at all levels of leadership. In addition, the capacity for coaching has been improved.

8.2 **Cyfleoedd +**

The Cyfleoedd+ collaboration network consists of 5 Welsh medium secondary schools: Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhondda, Ysgol Garth Olwg, Ysgol Llanhari, Ysgol Gyfun Rhydywaun in RCT and Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Llangynwyd in Bridgend. These schools, supported by CSC, undertake peer review arrangements, acting as each other's IP for many of the functions.

8.3 The consortium has worked with the Cyfleoedd+ network in order to learn about the forms of leadership development and processes that will be required to develop a rigorous Peer Review Model to develop a shared understanding of each other's practice. This included adequate opportunities built-in for joint analysis and reflection both within and between schools. First-hand evidence is used critically throughout the collaboration and there were opportunities for leaders and practitioners to engage in professional dialogue around their understandings of current practices within their own settings, classrooms and schools.

8.4 The work this year has been subject to change because of COVID. The collaboration has been bespoke and flexible to any arising issues. This has been in response to changing circumstances in schools, the evolving role of IPs and requests for information from local authority directors of education.

Collaborative planning and co-design provide all those involved with ownership. Opportunities for practitioners to engage in professional dialogue around their understandings of current practices within their own settings and classrooms has been an integral part of supporting school improvement during COVID.

8.5 **Strengthening the CSC governance model**

CSC strengthened the effectiveness of the existing national governance model/structure through the following measures:

- A revised governance model for CSC has been agreed with Joint Committee which clearly sets out the terms of reference for our governance groups.
 - The WG Implementation Plan outlines the role of consortia. Roles and responsibilities are outlined in the consultation document on the [School Improvement Guidance: framework for evaluation, improvement and accountability](#).
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- There is an open invite to attend RCT headteacher meetings. Representative Stakeholder Group are supporting this with invitations to federation meetings.

8.6 Strengthening governance in schools

CSC has worked to strengthen school governance to provide effective leadership challenge and support through a range of professional learning support and structural developments.

- An extensive governor training offer has been established and continues to evolve. This included 'drop-in' sessions for all governors, focused on Blended Learning, Curriculum for Wales and Additional Learning Needs Readiness (see table below for details).
- A successful appointment process has been completed securing 13 Regional Leaders of Governance (RLGs) to support governing bodies and schools across the consortium. Of these, three are experienced RCT governors.
- An induction process has been undertaken which included piloting the Self-Evaluation Toolkit with their own governing body and a system for matching an RLG's skill set and experience to a particular school context has been established.
- The Governor Leads groups met and planned a consortia wide delivery programme for governors focused on the new curriculum and Additional learning needs requirements. The Leads will explore developing links with Governor Schools Cymru as a means of securing new governors where required on governing bodies across the region.
- The uptake for governors' training by RCT Governors (437) compares to 115 attendees in the previous year 2019-20 which is an increase of 73% and is the highest number compared to the previous five years.

8.7 Table of RCT governor delegates engaged in online training

| Focus of Training | RCT Delegates |
|------------------------------------|---------------|
| New Governor Induction | 145 |
| Understanding Data | 173 |
| New Chair Induction | 9 |
| New Clerk Induction | 1 |
| Headteacher Performance Management | 99 |
| Effective Challenge & Support | 7 |
| Curriculum Reform Update | 3 |
| Total | 437 |

8.8 Table of Regional drop-in sessions

| Focus of Training | Regional Delegates |
|---|--------------------|
| Blended Learning | 195 |
| Additional Learning Needs & Educational Tribunal Act | 507 |
| Curriculum Reform Update | 82 |
| The Cost of the School Day (Child Poverty Action Group) | 146 |
| Total | 930 |

8.9 CSC promotes effective collaboration models to increase leadership capacity. It continues to develop, establish and embed changes to the Central South Wales Challenge (CSWC) to enable schools to be effectively supporting in their progress to improvement. It is the partnership of all schools across the CSC region working together to develop a self-improving system.

All schools in the region are allocated collaboration funding to support participation in collaborative working within and beyond their school. Collaborations include:

- Clusters – All schools in Rhondda Cynon Taff have committed to cluster working on Curriculum for Wales, with 94% completing evaluation of their work, indicating they are developing aspects of the Curriculum for Wales.
- School Improvement Groups (SIGs) – during 2020-21, 87% of schools in RCT were engaged in a SIG, working with schools across the region on the curriculum and/or the wider education reforms. As of autumn 2021, 70% of schools in Rhondda Cynon Taf are engaged in a SIG.
- Networks - There are termly synchronous network meetings focused on Areas of Learning and Experience (AoLEs), pedagogy and enquiry. Networks are co-facilitated by 27 lead practitioners and CSC strategic advisers. Four lead practitioners are from Rhondda Cynon Taf schools. Over 1300 practitioners from 65% of schools across the region have engaged with these networks to date, including from 85 (74%) Rhondda Cynon Taf schools. The networks and related materials are also made available asynchronously for those who are unable to attend the live sessions (see 8.32 for further information).
- The collaboration funding also supports schools to engage with the National Networks, Talk Pedagogy and self-facilitated networks within and beyond their school.

8.10 Develop and strengthen effective leadership through peer engagement

- The collaboration has adapted to working under the current school closures by streamlining support for each other's remote learning offer. This has included developing leadership by sharing of practice in terms of provision and self-evaluation of said provision regarding impact. Value for money evaluation of collaboration continues to be put on hold due to current school operating challenges.
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- A wider group of IPs have further sense checked the Peer Partnership Approach document including a process map leading to revisions and collation of case studies outside of initial pilot schools. The Treorchy Primary cluster and Y Pant cluster of primary schools' partnerships were part of the working party and pilot groups for the “Peer Evaluation and Improvement” phase of the project.
- Case Studies have been published which are available [here](#).
- WG School Improvement Consultation document has been fed into the Approach document. The peer partnership evaluation improvement partner, strategic lead and two IPs who have already brokered self-evaluation partnerships have presented a working draft of Peer Partnership Approach document to CSC internal school improvement briefing.

8.11 **Use the professional teaching awards Cymru to recognise and celebrate highly effective practice:**

- The previous year's ceremony was held virtually in December. RCT school winners from last year were David Jenkins, Ysgol Tŷ Coch Pontypridd as Headteacher of the Year and David Church from Mountain Ash Comprehensive for Pupils' Award for Best Teacher.

8.12 **Consortia as a Learning Organisation (CLO) - Developing an enquiry approach to learning:**

- The Performance Development Proposals and revised Human Resources (HR) Charter has been shared with Unions for comment.
- The final Human Resources (HR) Charter and Performance Development process has been shared with all staff. A briefing for all staff on Appreciative Enquiry has been given.
- School briefing sessions have been added to the CSC Professional Learning Offer for internal staff to support.
- Regular research and evaluation board meetings have shared evaluative information which is has been used to shape organisational strategy and support effectiveness and efficiency.
- Facilitation training to strategic team has been completed. All school facing staff have received coaching conversation training and situational leadership training.

8.13 **Bespoke leadership support for schools requiring enhanced support**

Where required, CSC develops leadership for schools requiring enhanced support. This is done through a variety of means, such as the work of the IP, specific support from colleagues in the strategic team as well as through the Central South Wales Challenge, for example in using leaders from other schools.

8.14 As a result of that support, strong progress has been made in nearly 80% of the recommendation and priorities which include aspects of leadership in our enhanced support schools (see Table in 6.12 for further details).

9. PEDAGOGY, CURRICULUM, ASSESSMENT AND QUALIFICATION SUPPORT

9.1 Schools as Learning Organisations

CSC supports schools to manage change and develop as learning organisations through a range of provision.

- The regional Professional Learning Offer aligns to the National Approach to Professional Learning.
- National programme of change management was delivered and made available to schools asynchronously.
- Schools as Learning Organisations was integrated in the Professional Learning Offer.
- Schools as Learning Organisations survey was available on Hwb - Tonyrefail Community School and Ysgol Ty Coch repeated the survey in 2020-21. Whilst Aberdare Community School newly engaged in 2020-21.

9.2 Hubs and Lead Practitioners

Hubs and lead practitioners work with members of the CSC strategic team to co-construct and plan the professional learning for schools in the region. During 2020-21, there were 15 PLA hubs, five foundation phase hubs and over 50 lead practitioners across the region. Four schools from Rhondda Cynon Taff were PLAs and 11 lead practitioners (see 8.20). For 2021-2022, 17 lead practitioners were from Rhondda Cynon Taff schools. Brynnau Primary School was also a Foundation Phase Hub whose focus was developing Foundation Phase leadership, pedagogy and practice. In addition, CSC supported two specialist networks - Special school PLA and Gyda'n Gilydd. Both focused on Professional Learning and support to meet the specific needs of the sector.

9.3 Welsh medium pedagogy development – Gyda'n Gilydd

CSC has established and supports the development of pedagogy in the Welsh medium sector through Gyda'n Gilydd. This includes regular attendance at Gyda'n Gilydd meetings and offering updates on Professional Learning opportunities. As a result, there is now a well-established and effective group which is characterised by good features.

- A strong climate of integrity and honesty ensures that suitable schools are chosen to lead within their area of expertise in the Gyda'n Gilydd (GG) partnership. As a result, the standard of the provision is excellent from year to year.
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- One of the main successes of 2020/21 is the way GG has adapted due to the pandemic. In response to the new dynamics GG quickly adapted and set about producing a series of Professional Learning seminars. As a result, the concept of seminars has become embedded and there is no doubt that these will be a strong and sustainable element of future provision.
- Other programs that have been hugely successful are the Leadership Programs. GG provides a Middle Leaders and Senior Leaders Program. The key to success is that members gained confidence from these programs and used them as a stepping stone to apply for accredited leadership programs within CSC and had subsequently been promoted to a leadership position within the sector.
- Since the formation of GG in September 2016, a very high number of staff have benefited from professional learning experiences which has included schools working together very successfully to respond to unique challenges.

As a result, all schools are being supported through the Professional Learning Offer to develop in line with the principles of effective improvement as set out in the Schools as Learning Organisations framework.

9.4 **Support for Teacher Assistants, Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) and Initial Teacher Education (ITE) Teacher Assistants**

CSC refined the teaching assistant learning pathway (TALP) which facilitated appropriate learning pathways for practitioners.

- 9.5 The new Aspiring HLTA Programme, Darpar Calu, has been completely transposed from a face to face to a blended online format. The round 1 (Cylch Un) cohort, with 20 participants, from 16 schools, resumed their programme online in November 2020 and the application process for round 2/Cylch Dau that will start in January 2021 has now closed. The programme runs over four days and culminates in participants applying for HLTA status. Experienced HLTAs have the option of applying to become trained assessors or facilitators.

Three English medium facilitators and one Welsh medium facilitator were successfully secured in January 2021 to add capacity to the CSC facilitation team for Cylch 2.

As a result, all 20 TAs have achieved HTLA status, improving capacity within each of their schools.

- 9.6 Induction Teaching Assistant programme module 1 has been accessed and evaluated. Module 2 has been launched and module 3 is in development. There were eight participants, from six schools.

Assessor training materials are complete, and 13 assessors across the region were successful in their application, five of these are from RCT.

Three English medium facilitators and one Welsh medium facilitator were successfully secured in January 2021 to add capacity to the CSC facilitation team for Cylch 2. Treorchy Comprehensive provided the region with one new assessor.

The Special School Teaching Assistant Programme has eight modules of high-quality bespoke resources for teaching assistants to access. Ysgol Ty Coch was a co-producer of the special school programme and will be facilitating the programme in our pre rollout pilot.

- 9.7 Ongoing professional learning also supports teaching assistants through Google Classroom, the Knowledge Bank, Twitter and bulletins.
- 9.8 Welsh medium resources for teaching assistants were published on the CSC website and a Welsh medium Aspiring Higher Level Teaching Assistant programme was facilitated.
- 9.9 **Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs)**
The annual training for all NQTs, induction mentors and external verifiers was written in line with the amended guidance for induction by the regional induction leads and rolled out as a pan-Wales programme. Record numbers of CSC induction stakeholders attended the training this year and received a comprehensive Induction Handbook afterwards. Induction mentors played an essential part in successful induction and further training based around coaching and mentoring and the professional standards was offered in spring 2021.
- 9.10 As a result, 64 practitioners, from 32 RCT schools engaged with the NQT Induction programme, offering important support in difficult circumstances for first year practitioners. The induction team is working well to support NQTs in the region and to contribute to managing system change at a national level.
- 9.11 Synchronous training was completed with 100% attendance from External Verifiers. 48% Induction Mentor attendance (up from 28% last year) and 78% NQT attendance (up from 75% last year). Training sessions have been recorded and will be shared asynchronously with those not attending so far.
- 9.12 'Think Like A Teacher' portfolios were completed by 15 CSC schools. Nantgwyn and Hawthorn wrote sections and created podcasts in the ITE Handbook. Hafod and Treorchy also contributed strongly to the initiative.
- 9.13 All participating NQTs had the first three e-Aspire/e-Anelu sessions and the leading schools have provided additional monthly synchronous tutorials to support NQTs through this challenging period.
- 9.14 Regional and national meetings were held regularly to address a major induction review process. Regional leads are working together to develop a proposal for national professional learning in readiness for induction review over the next year.
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9.15 **Initial Teacher Education (ITE)**

CSC chaired the Quality Assurance group at Open University and continue to contribute to ongoing school selection and the monitoring of student teacher progress.

The Initial Teacher Education handbook was completed and represented collaboration with eight schools across each local authority and four Initial Teacher Education providers.

9.16 The Cardiff Partnership created a series of four webinars for Initial Teacher Education partnership schools, targeting clinical practice schools across all local authorities and the lead partner schools provided focus groups to support the Cardiff Partnership schools and capture impact. 16 schools from RCT were involved with the Cardiff Partnership, including six schools undertaking lead school roles. These webinars were shared with all 43 RCT clinical practice schools to support ITE mentoring.

9.17 A further nine RCT schools, two as lead schools, engaged with Athrofa at University Wales Trinity St David's in initial teacher education. In addition, three RCT schools, two as lead schools worked with Swansea University in the same role.

9.18 **Strategic Team and Lead Practitioner support**

CSC supported the work of school leaders and practitioners through a range of professional learning opportunities to discuss and share practice in network meetings. The Central South Wales Challenge model fosters the development of a school-led, self-improving system in this area through the appointment and engagement of lead practitioners across the region.

9.19 11 applicants from seven RCT schools were successfully appointed to lead practitioner roles. These covered the areas of Languages, Literacy and Communications, STEM, Digital, Expressive Arts and Humanities.

Lead practitioners, as well as Hubs (see 8.2) undertook key work in partnership to:

- a) develop and run programmes of professional learning
- b) facilitate practitioner networks
- c) create resources
- d) develop e-learning activities.

9.20 **Health and Wellbeing AoLE**

Strong progress was made with the health and well-being pilot project. Participating schools effectively engaged with trialling the resources and exploring key considerations in relation to developing a whole-school approach. As a result, these resources and considerations are in place to support all schools in developing their approaches to this area of learning experience.

9.21 **Humanities AoLE**

Practical ideas and strategies for using and developing oracy skills within the Humanities classroom have been discussed within network meetings and shared in community areas.

Work with the WG to produce the Religion, Values and Ethics supporting guidance has continued to be successful. The consultation period will run in the summer term, with planned publication of the guidance in January 2022.

- 9.22 Progress has been made in relation to the development of resources to support political education in schools. All resources have been effectively shared via the CSC communication channels, and in the regular subject specific secondary network meetings.

In consultation with the WG and the four regional consortia, WJEC have successfully produced the 'Political Literacy' teaching and learning resource as part of the Global Citizenship Challenge within the Welsh Baccalaureate Skill Challenge Certificate. The resource has been shared through CSC network meetings and online.

The Association for Citizenship Teaching have been commissioned to produce the professional learning and guidance material to support the teaching of political education in schools. Schools across the four regional consortia have been approached to participate in this phase of the work.

9.23 **Literacy, Languages and Communication AoLE**

Regional oracy and vocabulary strategies and approaches were shared through e-learning programme. Uptake of programmes was high.

| LLC professional learning | Number of attendees |
|---|---------------------|
| Reading Reconsidered open cohort | 14 |
| The Writing Revolution | 20 |
| Words Matter Assignment | 11 |
| Teaching Writing Explicitly | 160 |
| Primary International Language (IL) learning sessions | 4 |
| Expectations in primary languages | 16 |
| IL Network Meeting | 4 |
| Literacy Leaders Network Meeting | 26 |
| Comparative Judgement Network Meeting | 31 |
| Reading Reconsidered open cohort | 14 |

- 9.24 A collaborative pilot project, Comparative Judgement, focusing on the assessment of pupils writing in English successfully led to a professional learning course being developed, Teaching Writing Explicitly.

- 9.25 As a result of this pilot, CSC has engaged 70% of schools in the local authority on a 3-year RCT Writing project, which will support schools through establishing a means of testing the accuracy of pupils' writing but will also enable schools to develop bespoke writing pedagogy focusing on technical accuracy. This project began in the autumn term 2021.

- 9.26 Regional guidance was developed and shared by lead practitioners to support the understating of pedagogy for languages.

E-learning and resources were developed for secondary Spanish, German and French. Webinars and network sessions have been very well attended with some events having over 1000 views. E-learning to support the introduction of languages at Key Stage 2 has been completed with lead practitioners and curriculum pioneers.

Lead practitioners engaged in resourcing the Languages Passport.

Additional lead practitioners were appointed to lead virtual language lessons for Key Stage 2 teachers. CSC were the first of the regional consortia to lead in this way and our innovative approach was praised by the Global Futures Group.

- 9.27 12 RCT teachers signed up to complete the Teachers Learning to Teach Languages (TELT) module through the Open University. A blended learning project with the Language Ambassadors focused on cultural webinars looking at festivals, food and sport. CSC have also engaged Routes Cymru to develop and produce a languages engagement video designed to increase the uptake of languages at Key Stage 4.

9.28 **STEM AoLEs (Science and Technology and Maths and Numeracy)**

Additional professional learning has been developed for foundation phase mathematical pedagogy, outdoor learning and developing mathematical vocabulary.

Additional networking opportunities have been well attended by practitioners for primary and secondary mathematics, primary maths co-ordination and problem solving in mathematics.

- 9.29 Many practitioners have engaged with professional learning opportunities, including newly developed Pupil Referral Unit/Special school professional networking, developing breath in primary science; Science, Technology, Engineering & Maths (STEM) Story time and Outdoor science.

Secondary Applied Science professional material has been completed by lead practitioners, including Understanding Design principles.

Professional networking opportunities for Science, Design Technology and Computer Science were well attended, sharing national directives and best practice.

9.30 **Digital learning (DCF and online learning)**

The 'Digital Competence Framework (DCF) In-depth' professional learning modules were published to support school leaders and practitioners to develop digital skills across the curriculum. DCF network meetings were held to support practitioners to share practice and support planning. RCT practitioners engaged with and contributed to professional learning opportunities. The 'DCF in-depth'

modules were accessed by 107 RCT practitioners during the summer term 2021. Additionally, primary and secondary DCF webinars and DCF in-depth networks were well attended.

Bespoke support was provided to schools to develop the use of technology through the Hwb platform. Schools were supported to develop blended and online learning throughout the pandemic.

Lead practitioners from RCT schools have supported the leadership of digital learning and produced materials to support the development of cross-curricular digital skills across key stage 2.

9.31 **Assessment support and development**

Lead practitioners were appointed to focus on professional learning resources for assessment of progress in remote learning and assessment for learning more broadly in preparation for Curriculum for Wales.

9.32 **Post-16**

The capacity to offer professional learning and support was increased at post-16 with the introduction of two post-16 development officers on part-time secondment. A regional network of post-16 leaders was established. Termly network meetings were facilitated to collaborate, share practice, resources and guidance relating to post-16 education. 7 RCT schools were represented in the network.

The support and professional learning offered, reflected local, regional and national priorities, with the learner experience at heart. Also recognised was the need to support the well-being of all stakeholders through some of the most challenging times in education.

Post-16 leaders were offered guidance on how to use Alps Connect effectively within school, and bespoke 1:1 sessions were offered to support successful implementation of the platform.

The post-16 online community was used widely to communicate collaborative opportunities and share the most up to date information from a range of external stakeholders. This included WG and Qualification Wales updates.

Three RCT schools engaged productively with the cross regional VESPA Growth Mindset pilot project and utilised the resources effectively to support both the academic progress and personal development of learners to achieve success.

Following the success of the VESPA pilot, CSC produced a revised professional learning offer. Three schools from RCT were successful in their application to engage in the VESPA professional enquiry project. Three RCT schools collaborated to create tutorial resources and two schools created subject level transition resources.

Two school leaders from RCT completed the cross-regional Post-16 Leadership Development Programme in 2020-2021 to support their professional development.

Across subject AOLEs termly secondary network meetings incorporated discussions around post-16 issues such as specification and qualification updates and professional learning opportunities. Specific support was offered on request. A-level networks continued to feature as either discrete priority areas or embedded in subject network meetings.

9.33 Table showing engagement levels in Professional Learning opportunities, excluding discrete Curriculum for Wales Professional Learning (covering the period April 2020 to August 2021)

Leadership – Curriculum reform, Governors, Middle Leadership, Senior Leadership, Aspiring Headteacher, Newly Appointed Headteacher, NPQH.

Teaching and Learning – Digital Learning, Expressive Arts, Health and Wellbeing, Humanities, LLC, Maths and Numeracy, Science and Technology, Foundation Phase, Learning and Teaching & Pedagogy, NQT Induction, Post-16, Welsh Language Development.

Wellbeing Course – Equity and Wellbeing – Children Looked After.

| Area of focus | Number of RCT schools engaged | Number of attendees |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------|
| Total | 115 - 100% | 3143 |
| Teaching and Learning | 98% | 1887 |
| Leadership | 97% | 933 |
| Wellbeing | 63% | 323 |

Figures for Curriculum for Wales Professional Learning in the next section (9.7).

9.34 In CSC, all professional learning opportunities (PLO) relates to supporting schools in the realisation of the new curriculum. There are explicit PLO that are focussed specifically on aspects of Curriculum for Wales, but it is also embedded in all PLO. This includes a wide variety of synchronous and asynchronous PL events and programmes across the professional pathway, from induction to leadership. PLO are co-constructed and facilitated by practitioners from across the region in partnership with the CSC strategic team. Between April 2020 and November 2021, a total of 19,000+ practitioners have engaged in CSC professional learning opportunities including 5600+ practitioners from all schools in Rhondda Cynon Taf.

10 CURRICULUM FOR WALES

10.1 The Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Act 2021 became law after receiving Royal Assent in April 2021. The Act stated the new curriculum requirements for all learners aged 3 to 16 in maintained or funded non-maintained nursery education in Wales. It replaces national curriculum and basic curriculum.

10.2 **CSC supported schools to prepare for the implementation of Curriculum for Wales (CfW) through a range of events and support mechanisms:**

- Cross-regionally developed CfW programmes were launched across all four regions: seven Leading Change sessions, 11 Vision sessions, four Making Time and Space for Professional Learning sessions, four Introduction to Curriculum Design sessions, 3 sessions for Curriculum Design Part 2, and 3 sessions for Curriculum Design Part 3. English medium and separate Welsh medium sessions offered.
- Each strategic area aligned their professional learning offers to the phases within the Journey to 2022 document.
- Strategic teams supported the delivery of cross-regional Curriculum for Wales professional learning programme.
- Middle leader asynchronous modules were launched and were available to access as an assignment.

10.3 To support practitioners in curriculum design, CSC developed a specific website. The focus of the website used the design thinking model, aligned to the phases of the shared expectations of curriculum roll-out, to support schools in the process of curriculum design. All regional Curriculum for Wales PL, resources, materials and guidance were also made available through the website. [CSC Curriculum for Wales Website](#)

10.4 **CSC Curriculum for Wales professional learning resources, materials and guidance**

There were a wide variety of resources, materials and guidance to support schools in Curriculum for Wales made available through the CSC website. These include:

| | |
|--|---|
| Curriculum poster pack (3900+) Vision INSET resources (750+) Assessment poster packs (1300+) Progression resources (800+) FAQs (1300+) | Blogs (3305+) Vlogs (430+ views) Sgwrs podcasts (1100+) Governor Resources (1300+) (engagement to date) |
|--|---|

10.5 **CSC Curriculum for Wales Newsletter**

A monthly publication that aims to provide practitioners with regular updates, essential information and links to useful resources and professional learning on Curriculum for Wales. The newsletter also provided guidance on how the content could be used to further support whole-school professional learning. There have been almost 3000 views to date.

10.6 **Cross-regional Curriculum for Wales professional learning programme**

This programme offered professional learning and support related specifically to the journey to curriculum-roll out:

- Over 2100 senior leaders from 81% of schools across the region engaged with the cross-regional Curriculum for Wales senior leaders'

professional learning programme. In RCT, 73% of school engaged in the programme, this is an increase of 11% during autumn 2021;

- 3400 middle leaders from CSC schools engaged with the cross-regional asynchronous Curriculum for Wales middle leaders' professional learning programme;
- Over 1000 governors from CSC schools engaged with the governors' programme.

10.7 Cross-regional curriculum design programme

62 practitioners from 57 schools across the CSC region participated in this cross-regional professional learning (PL) programme. 10 of these practitioners were from Rhondda Cynon Taff schools. All PL resources, materials and guidance developed from the programme have been made available to all schools in Wales.

10.8 Table showing overall engagement with CfW Professional Learning

| Programme | RCT Schools engagement | Overall engagement on CfW programmes for CSC schools |
|--|------------------------|--|
| Asynchronous | 233 | 779 |
| Curriculum Design and Development | 18 | 83 |
| Engagement with the wider reform elements | 23 | 77 |
| Engaging with Areas of Learning | 48 | 140 |
| Engaging with the Curriculum for Wales framework | 84 | 271 |
| Establishing a shared vision | 1 | 4 |
| Leading change | 14 | 57 |
| Making time and space for professional learning | 6 | 22 |
| Thinking about AoLE vision | 39 | 125 |
| Synchronous: e-learning | 204 | 975 |
| Curriculum Design | 153 | 734 |
| Establishing a shared vision | 14 | 50 |
| Leading change | 31 | 148 |
| Making time and space for professional learning | 6 | 43 |
| Grand Total | 437 | 1754 |

10.9 CfW readiness survey

Curriculum realisation is a core focus of all school improvement conversations in all schools undertaken by CSC IPs. During the summer term 2021 IPs worked with school leaders to complete a CfW survey. The purposes of this survey were:

- To report to local authorities on their schools' current readiness in the realisation of Curriculum for Wales.

- To support school self-evaluation and planning related to the realisation of the new curriculum specifically related to the Journey to 2022 document.
- To identify and share emerging practice from schools across the region.
- To inform CSCs professional learning offer and support for schools for the autumn and spring terms.
- To inform discussions with WG and other partners on Curriculum for Wales.

10.10 SWOT analysis reports of the surveys for all schools across the region and for each local authority were published in autumn 2021 (see Appendix 2 - Curriculum for Wales Survey Summary Report – Rhondda Cynon Taf).

Leaders and practitioners reported the pressure of time to engage meaningfully in curriculum reform, particularly linked to additional pressures from COVID. This was most acute in Welsh medium schools due to their inability to secure supply cover for staff.

Very few schools (5%) in the region were less engaged in the journey to curriculum roll-out, with 10 of these being schools in RCT.

As a result, CSC was able to target its support appropriately and offer bespoke support in addition to the wide range of professional learning support.

10.11 **Bespoke support**

CSC provided bespoke support to all schools and clusters across the region as required to support their realisation of curriculum reform. This was particularly targeted at schools who were less engaged. Remote and face-to-face professional learning and support met the specific needs of the school aligned to the shared expectations and priorities. For example, understanding a purpose-led curriculum, understanding of the curriculum model, establishing a shared vision, high-level curriculum design, etc. In RCT, 30 schools and one cluster received bespoke support from the CSC strategic team during autumn 2021.

10.12 **National Professional Enquiry Project (NPEP)**

To support the development of the new curriculum, WG worked with regional consortia and higher education institution (HEI) partners to develop a national programme of teacher professional enquiry. This programme supported a growing network of schools to develop a range of enquiry skills by leading enquiries in their own setting exploring professional learning requirements for the new curriculum. Two schools from RCT were Lead Enquiry schools, Treorchy Comprehensive and Y Pant Comprehensive and a further 13 were partner schools:

- Alaw Primary School
 - Maesgwyn Hawthorn High School
 - Parc Primary School
 - Pengawsi Primary School
 - Penyreglyn Primary School
-

- Pontyclun Primary School
- Pontypridd High School
- Porth Community School
- St Margaret's Catholic Primary School
- Tai Education Centre
- Ton Pentre Junior School
- Tonyrefail Community School
- Treorchy Primary School.

10.13 **Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) programme**

This programme was designed to support schools in preparing for the new curriculum and forthcoming statutory guidance. The action inquiry work undertaken so far across CSC had already enabled researchers to identify some key priorities for developing RSE provision in the future. There was a need for PL to address low confidence, knowledge and skill levels amongst practitioners and for schools to be given better access to high quality research-informed resources and input from expert external providers. YGG Rhydywaun participated in a one-day programme in 2020-21, whilst four RCT schools have been significantly involved in the pilot programme from 2018 to 2021:

- Abercynon Primary
- Mountain Ash Comprehensive
- Tonyrefail Community
- Ysgol Ty Coch.

10.14 **Creative Pedagogy Network**

Schools were invited to be part of a new network designed to train and offer support to schools who previously participated in the Lead Creative Schools scheme across the CSC region. The intention was to ensure sustainability and a legacy to the creative learning work schools did as part of their Lead Creative Schools project. Also, to provide a platform to support and broker coaching opportunities, in how to develop creative learning pedagogies and innovative approaches to each setting's realisation of Curriculum for Wales. 17 schools from RCT were members of the network.

- Coedpenmaen Primary School
 - Ferndale Community School
 - Gwaunmeisgyn Primary School
 - Hawthorn High School
 - Llanharan Primary School
 - Llwynypia Primary School
 - Maesgwyn Special School
 - Miskin Primary School
 - Mountain Ash
 - Pontypridd High School
 - SS Gabriel & Raphael Roman Catholic School
 - St Margaret's Catholic RC School
 - YGG Evan James
 - YGG Llwynycelyn
 - Ynysboeth Community Primary School
-

- Ysgol Nantgwyn
- Ysgol Ty Coch.

10.15 **Health and Well-being pilot project**

Practitioners from five schools in RCT participated in a pilot project in the spring 2021, focused on understanding the key considerations and processes involved in developing a whole-school approach to health and well-being. Through engagement with a range of professional learning modules, participating schools have gained an understanding of how to develop a shared vision for health and well-being, as well as planning for and enacting change in relation to their school's identified priority areas.

10.16 Feedback indicated that their involvement with the pilot project had a positive impact within their schools, including changes to systems, structures, roles and responsibilities, as well as provision and practice. Outcomes from the pilot project helped inform the development of the regional health and well-being curriculum strategy and supported the identification of further regional professional learning needs. In addition, the professional learning modules developed, have been enhanced with high-quality exemplification materials from the pilot schools and shared with all schools across the region. Five schools from Rhondda Cynon Taff were part of the pilot project:

- Aberdare Community,
- Caradog Primary School
- Porth Community,
- Tai Educational Centre
- Ton Pentre Juniors.

10.17 **Remote Asynchronous Learning Design and Synchronous Learning Experiences Project**

CSC worked with practitioners in the region to support the development of professional learning linked to learning design. Forming a firm foundation of knowledge and understanding for practitioners in preparation for curriculum design within Curriculum for Wales. Six schools from Rhondda Cynon Taff were part of the pilot project.

- Alaw Primary
- Pontrhondda Primary
- Porth Community
- Tondu Primary
- Tonyrefail Community
- Trealaw Primary.

10.18 **CSC Curriculum for Wales community**

There are almost 1100 members in this online regional community. Providing an interactive platform for practitioners to access resources, materials, PLO and guidance related to Curriculum for Wales. Members participate in discussions with other members to share ideas and receive peer support.

10.19 **CSC collaborative funded projects**

There were almost 40 regional collaborative funded projects related to supporting schools in their journey to curriculum roll-out. 87 schools in RCT engaged in one or more of these projects. These include all projects focused on: mental health and well-being, curriculum design, all curriculum areas, oracy, reading, writing, digital competence, relationships and sexuality education, Welsh heritage, history, culture and diversity, citizenship, pedagogy, learning design, enquiry, etc.

10.20 **Additional support developed through the Local Authority Annex**

In 2020/2021, £34,385⁵ additional funding was provided to support RCT specific priorities via the Local Authority Annex.

10.21 **Pontypridd Cluster: To plan for a continuum of delivery MFL across a cluster in line with Curriculum for Wales**

Overall aims:

- Focused planning around the new Wales curriculum 2022 on Languages, Literacy and Communication AOLE.
- Prioritised the teaching and learning of International Languages as part of this AOLE.
- Targeted the plan at all Year 4 pupils within cluster primary schools from September 2019.
- Focused on Spanish as the international language, taught in each cluster school by PHS staff.
- Included broader learning opportunities that covered essential skills and link to other AOLES.
- Planned assessments that meet the expectations of the Progression Step 3.

The cluster adapted its work so that the project ran asynchronously with learners, which allowed the development of resources and approaches, which were developed to be available through digital platforms. It remains the case that through the duration of this project, in particular since March 2020 the impact of the COVID pandemic must be considered in evaluating progress through this project. This has and continues to be a frustration for all staff and the pupils in each school as it impacted on:

- attendance of students and staff in schools;
- limited opportunities for school visits and 'face to face' teaching from the PHS specialist staff;
- pressure on primary colleagues to deliver more of a 'recovery' type curriculum which has often altered provision times for Spanish;
- Estyn school visits which have required a focus in other areas of the schools' work.

It is important to report though that there remained a total commitment from all schools to this IL project, in relation to two wider aims:

- The importance of developing and delivering an IL provision within each primary and across the cluster that worked towards the Curriculum 2023 plans.

⁵ Data provided for the financial year (April 2020 - March 2021).

- That an 'online' way of working was developed across the cluster that enabled different specialist teachers to deliver different types of provision. (In this respect the situation with COVID actually gave greater emphasis to the development of this aim).

Curriculum provision

- Due to the factors above, it was agreed that in this autumn term, the project would only focus on the Year 6 cohort in each of our main 7 feeder schools.
- The Year 5 cohort continued in January, 2022 and it was agreed that at this time Year 4 would start the project.

11. WELLBEING AND INCLUSION (EQUITY AND EXCELLENCE)

11.1 CSC's new Teaching and Learning strategy encompasses the wellbeing strategy and reflects the approach of the local authorities including links with attendance and exclusions leads.

11.2 Equity and Excellence strategy has been designed and has been shared and released for consultation. This document is ready and available for schools and will be used by improvement partners to support schools.

11.3 Many examples of good practice have been generated via the Pupil Development Grant Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Development Assessment Committee summaries.

Regular meetings are taking place with local authorities in understanding and aligning professional learning and support for wellbeing.

As a result, CSC and the LA are working this academic year on appreciative enquiries to identify strong practice that can be shared across the local authority.

11.4 Treorchy Cluster project: reducing exclusion rates through building positive relations

Funding for this project was through the LA Annexe (see 10.20 for details)

Cluster model for RAIS to involve Treorchy Comprehensive and all feeder primaries. The work was led by Julia Houlston Clark from WRAP Wales. The following impacts have been reported as this project ends its funding:

- All stakeholders understand they are going to be treated fairly and consistently.
 - All stakeholders' voices are heard.
 - All staff understand what they need to do and how to do it.
 - Ethos of RA is embedding into everyday practice at all levels.
 - Pupils lead the circle with the governors and provide them with progress feedback. Pupils can also use the BMR hand gestures to show governors what they have learnt. Pupils follow this format each time they attend governing body meetings.
-

- Pupils are familiar with the concepts of restorative approaches, circle time and language.
- Staff are changing their way of dealing with situations using a more positive approach.
- Detentions becoming more restorative and equal voice in meetings.
- Restorative ethos set at beginning of meetings allowing everyone opportunity to speak and encourages pupil voice. (Pupils have created videos for shared with governors in some schools.)
- Restorative ethos set at beginning of meetings allowing everyone opportunity to speak.
- Reflection on good practice and evaluations for next steps.
- Reported from school a reduction in behaviour issues. Parent and staff issues more structured and easier to resolve.
- Cluster meetings started with a check-in and ended with a check-out of one positive to be taken from meeting.
- Clear, concise targets consistent throughout cluster, addressing individual needs of each school.
- Designated staff equipped with further expertise to lead RA effectively.
- All staff equipped with strategies to take RA into Teaching and Learning planning as well as circle time and restorative meetings.

The cluster continues to work on the embedding of the practices developed through this project, with the next aims outlined.

- Creating centre of excellence and supporting/coaching other pilot school in their clusters if ready.
- Ensuring consistency of practice across all school areas and multi-agency work modelling and protocols for high end work with children and families.
- Development of all policies to ensure that they reflect restorative processes.
- Modification of HR and performance management process to reflect RA
- Restorative Service Quality Mark status considered.
- Review, evaluate and monitor outcomes and data sets, attend RCT Steering Group.

12. ALN

- 12.1 CSC has supported schools in the preparation for the Additional learning Needs (ALN) and Educational Tribunal Wales Act through effective partnership working.

IPs have had a continued focus on vulnerable learners; IPs have worked with schools to gauge the level of readiness schools have in relation to the act's commencement into law. This information is shared with the regional lead for ALN to align appropriate support and training.

- 12.2 School leaders and additional learning needs co-ordinators have been able to access online courses and professional learning. A self-evaluation audit toolkit has been developed and shared. This has been completed by all schools and
-

has informed both schools and the LA as to the strengths and the support required in effectively applying the new Act at a school level.

13. VULNERABLE LEARNERS

- 13.1 CSC is working to support schools to improve outcomes for vulnerable learners through effective strategic support, ensuring consistency of approach for CSC and the LA in supporting provision for these learners, through a range of measures. As a result, schools have a more consistent opportunity to improve their provision for vulnerable learners.

Information regarding the Pupil Development Grant has been added to the vulnerable learners' playlist.

Over 350 summaries have been collected by the CSC school improvement team. This has been shared with PIPs as well as strategic teams to support their work with schools.

- 13.2 IPs in RCT have gathered information on Pupil Development Grant on the adjustments that schools have made to their spending, the impact on Free School Meal learners and how the school is going to respond to the challenges of their free school meal learners will face in 2021/22. This is in line with the OECD DAC mandate of determining the merit or worth of intervention, policy, strategy, program, project or activity. It focuses on supporting schools to develop schools in supporting poverty eradication.

Examples of strong evaluations include Perthcelyn Community Primary School and Mountain Ash Comprehensive School who provide a comprehensive overview of all work involving the pupil development grant. These outlined how vulnerable learners were well supported in their home learning provision and interventions. Their evaluations enable the schools to have a strategic overview on the impacts of the PDG spend to date and to plan further support appropriately to address any concerns identified.

As a result of evaluations, PDG CLA work has focused on gathering intelligence and providing an overview on how the clusters have allocated the funding and how it has impacted. This has led to the development of a comprehensive toolkit which provides valuable guidance for schools on relational based play, attachment and trauma. An external consultant has been commissioned to deliver this work as part of the 2021/22 business plan.

The completion of Vulnerable Learners Evaluation Strategy & PDG Allocation Evaluative Report was delayed due to WG extension of grant spend closing date to August 2021. Pupil Development Grant summaries shared with Higher Education Institution partner as well as template for appreciative enquiry. Scoping exercise completed. No further work was identified. Cardiff Met Higher Education Institution provided a high-level overview of the Vulnerable Learners Project.

- 13.3 Professional development sessions have continued for IPs and strategic staff as well as school improvement sessions with a focus on vulnerable learners.

The focus of the school improvement briefings and the impact of blended learning on vulnerable learners has been a particular success.

Professional learning was also available to all schools via the PDG focus week which provided a wide variety of sessions including trauma, family engagement, literacy and the EEF.

- 13.4 CSC has identified appropriate professional learning support in regard to mental health issues for stakeholders. This has linked closely to the healthy school's work and the work being undertaken with the Pupil Development Grant Looked After Child Regional Co-ordinator and the whole school approach to mental health.

CSC has highlighted good practice in supporting children looked after (CLA) through appreciative enquiry work. Subsequently, a purposeful and comprehensive Professional Learning program has been put into place this year building on previous 2 years. Professional Learning courses have been well-attended with personal positive comments sent to trainers. 323 participants, from 72 schools registered and attended Professional Learning training across the region. This has increased the intelligence in schools on the best practices in supporting CLA.

- 13.5 Professional Learning Training event on The Role of Key Adults with vulnerable pupils in educational settings took place in March 2021.

- 13.6 An external consultant has worked with five schools within the region. All questionnaires have been completed.

- 13.7 Regular meetings are taking place sharing documentation and good practice amongst the five local authority leads. The group is examining Welsh Government documentation linked to Education Otherwise Than at School responding to updates and working collaboratively with across the region.

14. WELSH

- 14.1 CSC support the implementation of national and regional strategies for developing Welsh in schools through a range of support and initiatives.

- 14.2 A national committee has been established Siarter Iaith regional officers to share resources and best practice and a similar national committee in respect of Cymraeg Campus.

- 14.3 All arrangements are in place with 16 Welsh medium primary schools registered to take part in Darllen Dros Gymru and 13 English medium primary schools registered for Dwlu Darllen. All schools have received associated funding for this project. For RCT in 2020/21, there were 3 for Darllen Dros Gymru (WM)
-

and 1 for Dwlw Darllen (EM). The uptake has risen in the current academic year (21/22).

- 14.4 Welsh medium primary and secondary networks, Y Ffed and Gyda'n Gilydd, and the special schools' network also receive an additional £30,000 funding to facilitate professional learning opportunities to meet the specific needs of their sectors. There are 28 schools in RCT that are part of these networks (see 8.4).
- 14.5 CSC support schools in completing two key developmental initiative, Siarter Iaith and Campus Cymraeg. To date 16 schools have achieved the Bronze Award for Siarter Iaith, with 10 moving on to complete the Silver Award. 59 schools have begun the work on Campus Cymraeg, with a further 26 achieving the Bronze Award. One school, Aberdare Town Church, has gone on to achieve the Silver Award.
- 14.6 CSC's Welsh Language Development Professional learning was extremely well attended, with 361 RCT attendees, from 79 schools. This has increased the capacity within schools to further develop Welsh provision.

15. PARTNERSHIP WORKING

- 15.1 Central South Wales Challenge is reported on termly in LA and Diocesan reports.
- 15.2 Regular and ongoing evaluation of the CSWC is embedded in CSC systems. Each component of the model is considered in terms of engagement, impact and value for money in order to make decisions about shaping the model. This covers school-led, centrally led and collaborative professional learning. This allows the model to be shaped according to school level need and ensures that the Professional Learning Offer is able to respond to emerging needs. For example, webinars have been delivered in response to school requests for sharing current practice.
- 15.3 The evaluative findings and recommendations for refinements to the model are taken to directors to agree future funding. For example, School Improvement Group/cluster mid-year evaluations have been shared with convenors and have helped shape the Central South Wales Challenge for 2021/22 which has been agreed with all stakeholders. In addition, focus groups have supported evaluation in responding to high and low engagement in the Professional Learning Offer.

16. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 16.1 There are no equality or diversity implications emerging from this report.

17. CONSULTATION

- 17.1 There are no consultation implications aligned to this report.

18. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

18.1 There are no financial implications directly arising from this report. The budgets for 2021/22 and 2022/23 have already been set and agreed.

19. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

19.1 No are no legal or legislative implications arising from this report.

20. LINKS TO THE COUNCIL'S CORPORATE PLAN / OTHER CORPORATE PRIORITIES/SIP

20.1 There are links to the Council's Corporate Plan for the period between 2020 to 2024, specifically the priority:

Prosperity – Creating the opportunity for people and businesses to be innovative, entrepreneurial and fulfil their potential and prosper:

- o Ensuring we have good schools, so all children have access to a great education

21. CONCLUSION

21.1 CSC has worked effectively with RCT LA to provide appropriate support to all schools and schools are continuing to improve in the context of continued challenging circumstances. Where concerns are identified, support and interventions are put in place promptly to address them. CSC offers transparent scrutiny of its work to enable the LA to examine further the impact of its work.

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972
AS AMENDED BY
THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985
RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL
CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
16TH FEBRUARY 2022**

**REPORT ON THE WORK OF THE CENTRAL SOUTH CONSORTIUM
IN THE REGION AND RHONDDA CYNON TAF LOCAL AUTHORITY
DURING APRIL 2020 – SEPTEMBER 2021**

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND INCLUSION SERVICES

Author(s): Andy Hurley & Steve Davies (Principal Improvement Partners)

Appendix 1 – Improvement & Accountability

Supporting School Improvement September 2021 and Beyond

Central South Consortium is commissioned by our partner LAs to provide school improvement for the region. This involves providing support and challenge to schools to ensure learners across the region have the right educational experiences to allow them to make progress and be successful in the next phase of learning or employment.

The academic year 2021-22 is a particularly poignant one in the national reform journey with the lead up to a new curriculum in September 2022.

The overarching purpose of school improvement is to support schools to give learners the best possible learning experiences and outcomes. In October 2020 the OECD's report to Welsh Government 'Achieving the new curriculum for Wales' emphasised the point that all aspects of the schools' system are aligned with and support the new curriculum and its underlying principles. To support such alignment, a draft document 'School improvement guidance - framework for evaluation, improvement and accountability' was published by the Welsh Government in January 2021. This guidance provides a new point of reference for schools, local authorities, diocesan authorities, regional consortia and Estyn and the expectations of them in contributing to school improvement. It is the intention of WG that this guidance will become statutory in September 2022. The changes set out in the guidance are not too far removed from the model that CSC adopted and trialled in 2020-21 academic year given the suspension of categorisation. A national evaluation and improvement resource (NEIR) is also being produced which will support schools in undertaking robust self-evaluation. CSC is therefore, in a very strong position to make further refinements to the way we support and challenge our schools and deliver national principles in a local manner bespoke to the needs of our schools.

CSC will continue to provide:

- An IP linked to every school;
- A Welsh in Education officer to every school;
- The Newly Qualified Teacher (NQT) programme;
- The National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH);
- Professional learning for all school-based staff at all stages of their career (including all leadership programmes);
- Extensive professional learning linked to emerging school priorities;
- Extensive professional learning linked to national priorities, e.g. intensive support for the development of the Curriculum for Wales; and
- Oversight of grant funded activity.

National Principles

This set of national principles will be applied through local approaches to meet the requirements of the national guidance. This is a cyclical process to support school improvement. The set of national principles are:

1. There will be a discussion/collaborative meeting with schools and governing body representative to:
 - Share and agree school improvement priorities based on self-evaluation and the national reform agenda.
 - Agree the additional support needs of the school/setting (LA and regional support). The agreed support should be reference within the SDP.
 - Identify where the school/setting has strengths and its capacity to support others.
2. Regions will collate an overview of school improvement priorities and the support being provided by both the LA and region.
3. Support provided to schools/settings will be documented.
4. In collaboration with schools, regions and LAs, will provide a termly evaluation on the school's progress towards meeting its priorities, identifying or amending bespoke support as necessary.
5. In collaboration with schools and governing bodies, regions and LAs will identify and discuss any potential risks to progress, identifying or amending bespoke support as necessary.
6. Work collaboratively with schools to undertake a range of self-evaluation activity where appropriate and facilitate opportunities for school-to-school peer working to support self-evaluation processes.

The role of the Improvement Partner (IP)

With the significant reform agenda that is in progress across Wales, it is important CSC continues to ensure the support provided by IPs is holistic, efficient and effective in line with the national principles. It is essential the IP forms a strong professional relationship with the headteacher.

As well as providing support and challenge to schools, the IP also ensures that schools are well prepared and display behaviours that positively support the complete national reform agenda. The complete national reform agenda encompasses five areas:

- Curriculum
- Assessment and Evaluation
- Equity, Excellence and Wellbeing
- Teaching
- Leadership.

CSC provide schools with excellent professional learning opportunities, resources and guidance to support schools through this transformational reform. School leaders need the time and space to be able to make sense of transformational reform and the plethora of national and regional supporting resource's that go with it. The IP role is a hugely significant one in 'signposting' school leaders and other stakeholders to use

the pertinent documents, e.g. CSC 'Equity and Excellence' strategy and professional learning that is available in the region, a conduit between policy and practice. This will enhance the school's ability to develop as a learning organisation and support putting the new curriculum and other reforms into place.

IPs will continue to support the governing body with the headteachers performance management and will support the governing body to understand their role in school improvement. IPs will also collaborate with the regional leads for governors in order to support school governors to fulfil their responsibility in holding schools to account.

In addition, IPs will continue to:

- agree eFSM allocation of spend and regularly monitoring impact;
- review monitoring cycle;
- collaborate with LA & CSC colleagues.

Allocation of Support

Support will take the form of 'core' or 'enhanced' support that is provided in a fair way that is inversely proportional to needs of the school.

All schools will receive a basic minimum allocation of days and further time will be allocated based on the support needs identified. This minimum is:

| | |
|-----------------|----|
| Primary/Nursery | 7 |
| Special/PRU | 10 |
| Secondary | 10 |
| 3-16/19 | 16 |

Enhanced support schools will receive additional time to reflect the development needs and monitoring requirements. This support will be agreed between the school and IP and shared with the LA when the School Improvement Priorities are agreed. Specified days might not all be from the same IP but might include work of others more specialists in certain areas. The impact of this support will be monitored half termly and will be shared with LAs in the termly review meetings. CSC quality assurance processes will ensure that support is targeted and is meeting the needs of the school. Our processes will focus on the impact of support in school and will ensure consistency across the region.

Support and Challenge Functions

The IP will support schools through appropriate challenge to identify clear, manageable improvement priorities as a consequence of effective self-evaluation. The IP will work with school leaders to review first-hand evidence and ensure that this is rigorous and accurate. This will work in conjunction with the school systems and will not generate additional work for school leaders. This is in line with the WG guidance where it is the intention that these priorities will in part replace target setting.

Each school will have their own unique set of priorities, based on their own context, self-evaluation, needs and improvement journey, ultimately seeking to improve learner outcomes. Therefore, priorities will need to ensure a focus on pupil progress. Furthermore, the IP will also support schools in ensuring that improvement priorities are drawn together in a single, strategic school development plan, helping to reduce workload, streamline schools' strategic planning processes and avoid unnecessary duplication and bureaucracy. These priorities will be made available to the LA for their approval. All support will be referenced in the SDP and the IP will work in partnership with LA colleagues based on a shared understanding of their respective roles in supporting schools, to engage with schools on their development plan. It is important that IPs also capture strengths and emerging practice worth sharing. This can be shared with governors, other IPs and LAs.

Based on the needs of the school the IP will identify the support needs, and broker support required. Support will be tightly focused on the actions in the SDP and brokerage will be co-ordinated by the IP and overseen by the PIP. This will be internally quality assured by PIPs and our intention is that all support is provided based on need.

Once the support programme is agreed the IP is responsible for quality assuring the impact of this support with the headteacher and governors as appropriate. This will include regular discussions with the support team. This information will be shared with the LA.

Moving between Core and Enhanced Support

If schools are not demonstrating appropriate rates of progress towards achieving their improvement priorities then the IP will share this information with the school, governors, LA and CSC and a decision will then be made as to whether the school may need enhanced support. Similarly concerns raised by the LA will follow a similar process to enable the school to receive enhanced support. This reinforces the partnership approach to providing the best support for schools. IPs will then provide a detailed evaluation of progress with a judgement on the rate of progress. If the school, governors, LA and CSC agree that progress is appropriate, a discussion can then take place about moving the school to enhanced support. The same process exists if a school is making sufficient progress to move from Enhanced support.

Monitoring Progress

The IP will be providing challenge on behalf of the LA to ensure support is appropriate and that there is a measurable impact against the improvement priorities. IPs will provide termly progress evaluations on the school's progress in meeting its improvement priorities and identify or amend support as necessary. These evaluations will be captured in the School Improvement Partnership Log (SIPL) for the school. IPs will consider schools to be either 'on track' or 'off track'. For those schools who are in receipt of enhanced support, progress will be monitored more regularly, usually on a

half termly basis via progress review meetings. The IP will also provide a more detailed summative judgement on the rate of progress the school is making towards meeting its improvement priorities. Such judgements will be contained in the SIPL. The LA has access to the summative judgements contained within the individual school SIPLs. PIPs and IPs will share this information with LAs during the existing information sharing meetings. The judgements made fall into four categories and are assigned colours as indicated in the following table:

| | |
|-----------------------|---|
| Very good progress | The school addresses the priority/recommendation in all respects. No aspects require further attention. There is very good impact on pupils' standards and progress/quality of provision/aspects of leadership. The school's capacity to maintain and build on this improved practice is very good. |
| Strong progress | The school addresses the priority/recommendation in most respects. Only minor aspects require attention. There is a positive impact on pupils' standards and progress/quality of provision/aspects of leadership. Most aspects have been covered already and there is little significant work left to do. The school's capacity to maintain and build on this improved practice is good. |
| Satisfactory progress | The school addresses the priority/recommendation in many respects. A few important aspects still require significant attention. The impact on pupils' standards and progress/quality of provision/aspects of leadership is not yet strong enough. Many aspects are addressed but there is still significant work to do in important areas. |
| Limited progress | The school does not meet the requirements of the priority/recommendation. All or many important aspects are awaiting attention. There is little or no discernible impact on pupils' standards and progress/quality of provision/ aspects of leadership. There is still much work to do and many aspects still to address. The school is not yet demonstrating strongly enough the capacity to secure the necessary improvement. |

A CSC report will also be produced by IPs for the governing bodies of all schools and will be shared in the summer term. The report will capture the progress the school has made during the year and will provide a summary of the support the school has received as well as the impact of professional learning.

Links with Local Authorities

IPs will continue to develop and foster collaborative working partnerships with LA colleagues. IPs are mindful of the individual systems and process in each LA and will work accordingly. Joint collaboration will facilitate an effective sharing of information to ensure a mutual understanding to enable effective school improvement. Termly LA performance meetings provide the opportunity for dialogue and information sharing.

IPs will continue using the successful strategies in place and will work with LA colleagues to adapt and improve where needs emerge. The PIP will continue to be a pivotal link with each LA and will ensure an effective two-way flow of information. We will ensure that LAs have regular feedback on the quality of provision and impact of support in all of their schools. Further links with LAs are identified in Framework for School Improvement.

Schools will continue to have the support they require and this will be monitored by IPs and shared with LAs. Where schools cause significant concern specific support and follow up mechanisms will be in place.

Deployment

All IPs are allocated up to 14-20 schools pro rata based on the need and characteristics of the schools. IPs work with the PIPs to allocate schools based on prior knowledge of these schools. An IP is responsible for the accurate understanding of the performance and needs of schools. It is the IPs responsibility to get to know schools well, establish and secure effective professional relationships and broker the correct support.

Deploying a range of professionals into a school would ensure effective and efficient use of resources and excellent value for money for the consortium and for the schools in the region.

A blended approach using a range of school improvement professionals and peer support schools will enable best support. No school is limited to the amount of support it receives. Support is allocated on a needs basis tightly linked to the SIP. The PIPs will ensure that this is reviewed and will be key in ensuring consistency is applied across each LA and the region. This also provides the opportunity to share effective and best practice across the CSC region.

The Assistant Director for Partnership and Improvement will work with the PIPs to monitor workload of staff and can allocate additional tasks to ensure efficiency. Local authorities are responsible for school improvement and this service is commissioned from CSC, directors in each LA will be responsible for holding CSC leaders to account for the progress in their schools. There is a collective responsibility across the consortium to ensure that children and young people have the best possible outcomes and all schools are supported in line with WG guidance.

IPs Schedule of Key Tasks

The framework below has an ongoing theme on pupils' learning, wellbeing and themes that will be discussed throughout the year. Our work will identify the schools starting point and ensure that support and challenge is appropriate to ensure all schools make progress. This schedule is not used as a 'tick list' but will remind staff and leaders as to key days when activity should be completed by, e.g. headteacher PM needs to be

completed by 31st December; however many schools have moved this into the first half- term to ensure that the staff targets can flow from the headteachers targets.

Dialogue to be structured around 5 fundamental questions for enquiry:

- What is the school's evaluation of this aspect?
- How do they know?
- What are they doing/planning to do to address any issues?
- How are they evaluating the success of their plans?
- What support do they require?

Annual Activities

| | |
|--------------------------|--|
| School Improvement Focus | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting the needs of the priorities • Developing strong relationships • Influencing strategic direction of the school • Capturing first-hand evidence |
| Autumn Term | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree the school improvement priorities and share with LA for approval • Co-construct a SDP identifying support • Broker support for priorities • Allocation of PDG, PL & RRRS |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate Peer Partnerships • Discuss use of the Equity and Excellence strategy • Support GB to review headteacher's performance objectives and agree objectives for the current academic year • Collaboration funding |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review monitoring cycle and self-evaluation • Vulnerable Learners progress check focusing on participation, engagement and learning • Attendance and exclusion • CfW |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress towards priorities • Progress of all learners • Impact of PL • Quality assure the impact of brokered support with the HT and governors as appropriate • PDG evaluation |
| Spring Term | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion to focus on moving towards quality and effectiveness of Wellbeing, Learning and Teaching and Leadership. Signposting where appropriate to local, regional and national programmes and initiatives |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate impact of the PLG and PDG spend • Evaluate the effectiveness of the new ALNCo role as described in the ALN reform Act • Review monitoring cycle and self-evaluation |

| | |
|------------------|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Well-being progress check linked to self-evaluation |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Progress of learners Impact of PL Review impact of PDG spend Discuss and QA plans for new PDG |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring of progress against agreed priorities in school improvement plan CfW Quality assure the impact of brokered support with the HT and governors as appropriate. Support Governing Body in reviewing progress against headteacher's performance objectives |
| Summer Term | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate effectiveness of school self-evaluation Review PDG spend Impact of PL Discuss PDG LAC cluster plans CfW |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What PL is planned that will support vulnerable learners for 2021-22 Effectiveness of the new ALNCo role as described in the ALN reform Act Quality assure the impact of brokered support with the HT and governors as appropriate Progress of all learners |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual Governing Body Report GB Meeting Complete review of impact of current priorities and agree future priorities including identification of possible support |
| Enhanced Support | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Half-termly progress report and review of position agreed with the school, Principal Improvement Partner and LA representatives Regular discussions and information sharing with the support team and the LA |
| Other Tasks | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Estyn pre inspection reports/Estyn follow up Senior Appointments in Schools RRRS Spending plans/Impact Reporting on KS4/5 Curriculum Offer meeting the Learning and Skills measure EOTAS reporting/Attendance Collaboration funding LA Priorities Wellbeing support/conversations |

Appendix 2: Curriculum for Wales Survey Summary Report – RCT

Date written: October 2021

Report authors: Natalie Gould & Louise Muteham

Purpose:

- To share the findings of the CSC Curriculum for Wales survey undertaken in the summer term 2021.
- To outline the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats suggested through the survey in the region for Curriculum for Wales and other intelligence from the region.
- To share the next steps of the CSC professional learning opportunities and support for schools in the realisation of Curriculum for Wales (CfW).

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) of Curriculum Implementation

- This report is a SWOT analysis of the survey of all schools in Rhondda Cynon Taf (RCT).
- Since designing and sharing the survey with schools, Welsh Government have stated that numerical data on school readiness should not be collected, shared or used for any scrutiny or comparison. Therefore, percentage numbers have not been included in this report.
Future versions of the survey will focus on a narrative account of activity which will then be analysed to consider core themes, identify schools to share practice and schools that require focused support.
- The quantities generated for each statement are based on those schools that scored themselves 4 or 5 on a scale of 1 (not at all) to 5 (fully).

Strengths

- Professional learning:
 - A majority of schools in RCT are engaged with the cross regional CfW professional learning programme.
 - Engagement phase:
 - A majority of schools report they have developed a whole school understanding of a purpose led curriculum.
 - Many schools report they have considered how the four purposes drive all school priorities.
 - Over half of schools report they have developed a vision of curriculum and the learning and teaching that supports it.
 - A majority of schools report they have made connections to wider reforms (Additional Learning Needs and Educational Tribunal Act and Welsh in Education) to ensure activity is mutually reinforced.
-

- A majority of schools report they have developed an agreed view of priorities for and strategic approach to developing teaching in the school.
- A majority of schools report they have led a culture for change with ongoing conversations at all levels and time to understand and engage with changes.
- A majority of schools report they have understood the importance and value of knowledge, skills and experiences and the role each plays in enabling learning, as set out in the CfW guidance.
- Many schools report they have evaluated current practice and learning from responding to COVID-19.
- Designing, planning and trialling phase:
 - A majority of schools report they are ensuring engagement with professional learning and that it supports the development of teaching.

Weaknesses

- Subjectivity: Judgements made are subjective according to a school and/or IP perception.
- Engagement phase:
 - A minority of schools report they have built understanding of the curriculum model and approach to assessment set out in the CfW guidance amongst all staff.
- Designing, planning and trialling phase.
 - A minority of schools report engaging with their cluster on designing the curriculum.
 - A minority of schools report engaging with another networks of schools on designing the curriculum.
 - A minority of schools report beginning the design process involving all stakeholders - including learners, all practitioners and governors - and involving parents/carers and the local community.
 - A minority of schools report ensuring there are arrangements in place to secure engagement of key groups, including governors, and developing their understanding of the curriculum.

Opportunities

- Designing, planning and trialling phase. Around half of schools report that they are:
 - Setting out design principles to ensure high standards and enable at least good progress for all learners.
 - Engaging in professional dialogue with networks to identify and solve school curriculum challenges.
 - Demonstrating an integrated approach to implementation of wider education reform.
 - Developing approaches for the mandatory elements of the curriculum.
-

- Many schools report that they have considered their current practice as a result of COVID, whilst just over half have considered their vision for curriculum and the learning and teaching that supports it. 'Curriculum for Wales: The journey to curriculum roll-out' (September 2021) gives guidance to schools on both responding to the impacts of COVID-19 on learners and preparing for reform. The guidance states that it: 'aims to give a clear set of expectations for what curriculum design and learning should focus on for both:
 - 'renew' - adapting and reprioritising learning and teaching to ensure learners progress in light of COVID-19 and
 - 'reform' - preparing for the roll out of Curriculum for Wales.
 This recognises that the same principles for curriculum design, learning and teaching are critical for both.'
- Through the aspirations of curriculum reform, and the Curriculum for Wales framework and guidance:
 - Four Purposes: All learners in RCT to have access to a broad and balanced curriculum.
 - Equity: All learners in RCT to have access to a curriculum and the pedagogy that meets their needs.
 - Workforce: All practitioners in RCT are enabled to function as part of a high-quality workforce through professional learning.
 - Leadership: Empowered in RCT can make informed school improvement decisions to meet the needs of their school.
 - Accountability: An improved system of accountability will drive more appropriate behaviour in the system.
 - Schools as Learning Organisations (SLO): Through the SLO model, all schools in RCT are enabled to respond to changes.
 - National Strategy for Educational Research and Enquiry (NSERE): All schools in RCT to be evidence informed and able to engage with research.

Threats

- There is a difference between the majority of RCT schools who report they have understood the importance and value of knowledge, skills and experiences and the role each plays in enabling learning as set out in the CfW guidance, when compared to the minority who report to have built an understanding of the curriculum model. Knowledge, skills and experience are integral to curriculum design as they will enable learning, support learners to progress in the concepts set out within the statements of what matters, and embody the four purposes, (Welsh Government, 2021).
 - Few schools are engaging with their cluster on designing the curriculum. This will need to be considered more carefully if a 3–16 continuum is to be realised.
 - COVID: The capacity of schools to engage in planning and preparations for CfW and the related professional learning and support available.
-

- Variability: The variability of standards that are planned for and achieved across schools with regard to both outcomes and well-being.
- Standardisation: Without an agreed national standard of expectations/outcomes for learners there is a risk that schools may not accurately plan their curriculum appropriately challenging or will remain aligned to prior systems that do not reflect the learning in their school level curriculum.
- Summative assessments: Without agreed summative assessments there is uncertainty in the system.
- Qualifications: Without the revised qualifications there is uncertainty in the system and a reluctance by many schools to plan the secondary curriculum.

Next steps in CSC to support RCT schools

- CSC is committed to supporting all schools in RCT as required in their journey of curriculum roll-out through the Central South Wales Challenge and brokered support.
 - The CSC Strategic Lead and Associate Advisers for curriculum will continue to work with the CSC school improvement team to visit schools in RCT to capture examples of practice to share locally, regionally and nationally.
 - Schools in RCT identified as less fully advanced in their journey to curriculum roll-out will receive focussed, targeted support.
 - CSC officers will continue to work with RCT officers to support schools in the journey to curriculum roll-out, including the partnership working on a number of local authority curriculum focused projects.
 - CSC officers will work with regional colleagues, Estyn, trade unions and Welsh Government to agree the system's expectations of schools and reporting arrangements.
 - Further development of the CSC website and the new CSC Curriculum for Wales website to ensure that all information, guidance, resources and professional learning to support schools in the journey to curriculum roll-out is easily accessible and available. This will include sharing of school practice.
 - Professional learning continues to be a priority at both a regional and national level. The CSC team will continue to work with stakeholders to identify needs and use this to inform the professional learning offer.
 - A cross-regional project is being developed of working parties of practitioners to co-construct models of high-level curriculum design. RCT schools will be invited to apply to participate in the project.
-