Annual Academic Report

Central South Consortium

September 2022- July 23

Published November 2023

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1.0   PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

This annual academic report replaces the previous Effectiveness and Efficiency Report and provides an overview of the work of Central South Consortium (CSC) in the academic year 2022-23 across the region. The report is designed to provide local authorities (LAs), schools, Welsh Government (WG) and other stakeholders with a clear and comprehensive report on the contribution of CSC, working in partnership with local authorities to raise standards in schools across the region.

The report will provide an overview on the progress made within the first six months on the annual business plan (April 2023 to October 2023), as well as progress against recommendations from published reports.

In support of this report, a LA Scrutiny report will be provided to each LA for scrutiny by individual education scrutiny members in the respective LAs in the spring term 2024 and will contain specific information relating the work in the authority.

2.0   BACKGROUND

Since 2012, CSC has delivered aspects of school improvement services on behalf of the five local authorities: Bridgend, Cardiff, Merthyr Tydfil, Rhondda Cynon Taf and the Vale of Glamorgan. This covers 380 schools, around 32% of Wales's 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 25% claiming free school meals.

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.

The consortium Business Plan for April 2022 to March 2025 can be found here.

An annual report on the progress and impact of the Business Plan is presented to the CSC Management Board and Joint Committee each year.

CSC evaluates its performance through self-evaluation processes that form the basis for business planning and monitoring activities. LA meetings are held regularly with the Executive Leadership Team (ELT), Principal Improvement Partners (PIPs) and LA Director/Chief Education Officers, to discuss progress at a more local level and identify any barriers. Reports are presented on a regular basis to Directors via the CSC Management Board and Partnership group as well as the Joint Committee on the progress and performance of the organisation. In addition, reports are presented to WG in accordance with ministerial challenge and review events. Members of the executive leadership team and PIPs attend each council's Education Scrutiny Committee meetings at least once per year and attend other scrutiny meetings on request.

Scrutiny and challenge are undertaken by the members of the CSC Management Board, which meets monthly to challenge performance, to agree strategy and to have an opportunity to challenge findings. A treasurer's report is a standard item on the agenda for the Joint Committee meeting.

3.0 OVERVIEW OF PERFORMANCE

3.1 National data collections and published information

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, Welsh Government (WG) has cancelled most of the statutory data collections for 2020, 2021 and 2022. The collections suspended include:

- Attendance: Primary 2020, 2021 and 2022 data collections
- Attendance: Secondary 2020, 2021 and 2022 data collections
- National Data Collections (NDC): All 2020 and 2021 data collections, and FP and KS2 for 2022

For 2023 however, the following collections have now been resumed:

- Attendance: Primary data collections
- Attendance: Secondary data collections
- National Data Collections (NDC):KS3 only

The majority of national publications were suspended from Summer 2020 reporting, but performance measures for Summer 2023 results will be reintroduced during Autumn Term 2023. At the time of publication of this report no performance measures are available for the final 2023 results, with the provisional information only being made available at national level.

National examination results released in August 2023 were brought back to be around halfway between the 2019 and 2022 results. Comparison of the results for CSC in 2023 to Wales results showed that CSC either matched or exceeded the national proportions for GCSE %A*-A, %A*-C and %A*-G. For A Level results, CSC exceeded the national proportions for the three measures of %A*-A, %A*-C and %A*-E, with CSC also being above the national proportions for AS Levels (%A, %A-C, %A-E).

3.2 Estyn inspections

All Estyn inspections were suspended in March 2020[1]; however, a new pilot framework[2] was introduced in early spring term 2022. The new inspection framework no longer provides judgements for inspection areas as available in previous inspection frameworks. However, information on 'Interesting or Innovative Practice Case Studies' is still identified in the new reports, alongside the recording of any statutory and non-statutory follow-up inspection categories. Details can be found in the individual LA Scrutiny Reports.

In Central South Consortium, 68 schools were inspected between September 2022 and July 2023, with 18 of these schools being identified to produce 'Interesting or Innovative Practice Case Studies' following their inspections. Twenty-two schools were placed in Estyn follow-up categories: thirteen in Estyn Review (19.1%), two in significant improvement (2.9%) and seven in special measures (10.3%).

Nationally, 262 schools were inspected between September 2022 and July 2023, with 76 schools identified to produce 'Interesting or Innovative Practice Cast Studies' following their inspections, this is a slightly higher proportion than seen regionally for 2022/23 (29.0% for Wales in 2022/23 compared to 26.5% for

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[1] https://www.estyn.gov.wales/news/estyn-will-not-inspect-maintained-schools-next-academic-year-statement-meilyr-rowlands-hmci

[2] https://www.estyn.gov.wales/news/owen-evans-her-majestys-chief-inspectors-speech-17-february-2022

the region for 2022/23). However, when this is extended to all inspections that have taken place since inspections restarted during 2021/22, the regional proportion of schools identified for 'Interesting or Innovative Practice Case Studies' of 29.6% exceed the national proportion of 29.2%.

Sixty-two schools were placed in Estyn follow-up categories: 38 schools nationally were placed in the follow-up category of Estyn Review (14.5%), with a further ten schools placed in Significant Improvement (3.8%) and fourteen in Special Measures (5.3%). The regional figures for these proportions of schools in Estyn follow-up categories are higher than those seen nationally for Estyn Review and Special Measures, with the proportion for Significant Improvement being lower than that seen nationally.

Table 1: Number of schools inspected 2021/22 and 2022/23

	Primary		Secondary		Middle		Special		Pupil Referral Units	
	21/22	22/23	21/22	22/23	21/22	22/23	21/22	22/23	21/22	22/23
Bridgend	2	11	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
The Vale of Glamorgan	5	8	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Rhondda Cynon Taf	8	14	0	1	1	2	0	1	0	0
Merthyr Tydfil	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Cardiff	8	18	2	3	0	0	0	4	1	0
CSC	**24**	**54**	**4**	**6**	**1**	**2**	**0**	**5**	**1**	**1**

Estyn resumed their monitoring of schools and Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) in a statutory category (special measures or significant improvement) from autumn 2021. During the academic year 2022/23, one school was removed from Estyn Review, with a further three schools remaining in a follow-up category from previous academic years. The follow-up categories for these schools are: one in Estyn Review, one in Significant Improvement and one in Special Measures.

Nationally, twelve schools were removed from previously reported follow-up categories: six from Estyn Review, one from Significant Improvement and five from Special Measures. However, two schools were moved from Significant Improvement to Special Measures, with a further school moving from Estyn Review to Special Measures. Nineteen schools remain in a follow-up category from inspections taken place in previous academic years. The follow-up categories are: six schools in Estyn Review, two schools are in Significant Improvement and eleven schools are in Special Measures.

3.3   Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEETs)

The latest available "Pupil destinations" figures from Careers Wales, show that over the last couple of years, the percentage of pupils in the CSC region "Known to not to be in Education, Training or Employment" has fluctuated from 1.8% in 2019 and 2020, to 1.5% in 2021 and up to 2.0% in 2022. Similar patterns are seen nationally for this data, and CSC has been slightly below the national figure for five of the last seven academic years.

3.4   PISA

PISA 2022 results information is not available at the time of drafting the report. The focus of PISA 2022 is mathematics, and the results for PISA 2022 are due to be released in December 2023.
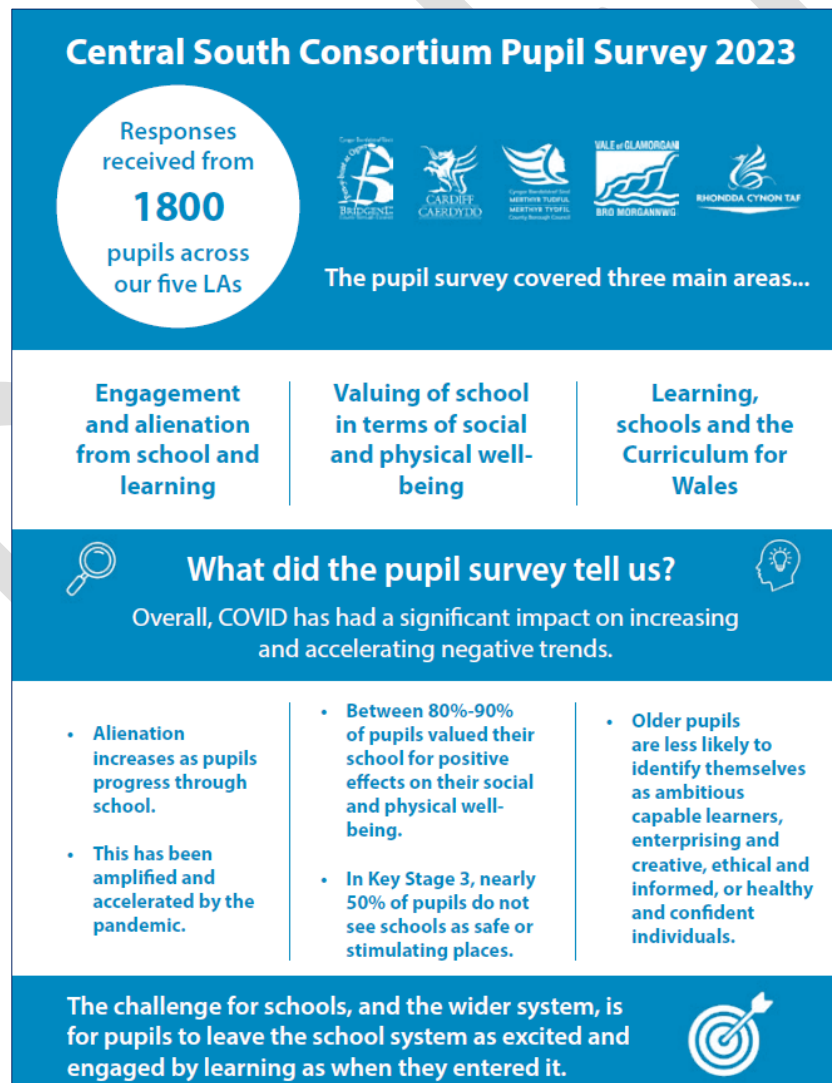
4.0   CSC ANNUAL SURVEY

The Annual School Leaders and Teachers Survey is a key element of the Consortium's overall evaluation of its impact on pupils, staff and schools. The survey is now in its seventh year and sixth iteration; it was paused in 2020 because of the pandemic. The underlying conceptual framework for the survey was re-focused last year the local system's capacity to develop the Curriculum for Wales, see Figure 1. The framework links schools' capacity to develop the Curriculum for Wales, and to improve and be innovative, with becoming learning organisations. High-capacity school's will have sufficient leadership capacity to meet not only their own needs but also to link with other schools and organisations to create a systemic approach to developing the Curriculum for Wales.

4.1   PUPIL SURVEY

This year's annual survey involved 1,800 pupils from 37 schools across the five local authorities within the Central South Consortium.

4.2   STAFF SURVEY

The annual staff survey included 245 school staff from 33 schools across the region.

Executive summaries of both survey reports as well as the full reports will be published shortly.

5.0   PROGRESS WITH CSC BUSINESS PLAN APRIL 2023 – OCTOBER 2023

CSC Business plan for 2022-2025 can be found here

The Business plan appendix for 2023/24 runs from 1st April 2023 until 31st March 2024 and has the following areas of priority:

1. Curriculum
2. Professional Learning Pathways
3. Equity and Well-being
4. School Evaluation and Improvement
5. Leadership and governance of CSC

CSC has a thorough cycle of self-evaluation which includes challenging the impact and progress that has been made with the business plan. Members of the senior leadership team within CSC dive forward the work of each priority areas and are known as 'Drive Teams.' On a half yearly basis, the drive team are challenged on their performance by the ELT within CSC as well as Directors of Education from the LAs. A summary of the progress made against the business plan for April 2023- October 2023 is outlined below.

Table 2: Summary of progress judgement by individual aspect areas

Priority	Actions	Not Yet Started	Limited Progress	Satisfactory Progress	Strong Progress	Very Good Progress
1.1	6	0	0	1	2	3
1.2	22	5	1	12	3	1
1.3	56	14	0	2	27	13
1.4	163	13	6	20	88	36
1.5	21	3	0	4	13	1
1.6	4	0	0	0	3	1
2.1	6	1	0	2	3	0
2.2	2	1	0	0	1	0
2.3	2	0	1	0	1	0
2.4	11	0	0	2	9	0
2.5	6	1	1	3	1	0
2.6	1	0	0	1	0	0
3.1	3	0	2	1	0	0
3.2	8	0	4	4	0	0
3.3	14	0	12	2	0	0
4.1	18	1	15	2	0	0

4.2	19	0	6	12	1	0
4.3	6	0	0	6	0	0
5.1	10	0	2	8	0	0
5.2	3	1	1	1	0	0
5.3	7	2	3	2	0	0
5.4	7	0	0	7	0	0
5.5	6	0	2	3	1	0
5.6	3	0	0	1	2	0
5.7	3	0	2	1	0	0
5.8	1	0	0	1	0	0

(See **Appendix A** for Judgement Matrix)

Table 3 below indicates that between April 2023 and October 2023 there has been:

- Very Good or Strong Progress made in 52% of elements within the business plan.
- Satisfactory Progress made in 24% of elements.
- Limited Progress made in 14% of elements. Some of these elements are in the early stages of development or have been impacted by issues with funding. These elements are being monitored by CSC in line with the risk management policy.
- 10% of elements have Not Yet Started. These elements are based on the timeline of completion being targeted for the Spring term 2024.

Table 3: Cumulative progress judgement

Summer / Autumn Term Summary 2023						
Business Plan Actions	**Elements**	**Not Yet Started**	**Limited Progress**	**Satisfactory Progress**	**Strong Progress**	**Very Good Progress**
Totals	408	42	58	98	155	55
Percentages	100%	10%	14%	24%	38%	14%

5.1 Identification of risks

Following the impact review meetings, operational risks and barriers are identified and shared with members of CSC ELT for consideration. Risk holders review and make recommendations to ELT on how to respond to the risks and the proposed actions for mitigation. Members of ELT then review the corporate risk register to consider making proposals for change to the corporate risk register. CSC Management Board review and make final recommendations to Joint Committee to changes to the CSC risk register at termly meetings.

5.2 April 2023 – October 2023 Impact Evaluation

Following the impact review meetings in October 2023, drive teams have provided the following evidence to support progress and impact of the work undertaken in the first half of the business plan 2023-2024. The detail provided below provides a high-level summary of progress. Detailed progress and impact have been shared with and challenged by members of ELT as well as Directors of Education in the local authorities.

5.2.1 Priority 1: Curriculum

Summary of progress / emerging impact and risks

Operational Plan Priority Areas		Progress / Emerging Impact	Risks Identified / Actions to mitigate against risks
1.1	**Curriculum Professional Learning Opportunities & Bespoke Support**	As in previous years this aspect spans all aspects below. **Strong progress** is reported overall in the ongoing development of PL opportunities for curriculum and teaching. PL opportunities are available to support all areas of curriculum development via the CSC website. Bespoke support is available to all schools, clusters, and other groups of schools where the priorities are not fully met by published PL opportunities. Reporting activities for bespoke support have been rationalised to align with SIPL, providing access to all schools and feeding into LA Information and School Summary reports. In response to self-evaluation and stakeholder feedback, a 'PL, Networking and Collaboration' compendium document has been prepared and will be shared with schools ,IPs and the wider CSC team in the coming weeks. **Overall engagement data April 23 – August 23:** • **293** (77%) schools have engaged in regional PL opportunities for curriculum. • **151** (40%) schools have requested bespoke support for curriculum and teaching over and above the regional PL offer.	**Schools' awareness of PL and bespoke support offer** mitigated by production of compendium document and comms process. **School capacity to prioritise PL** mitigated by PL and Collaboration funding. PL offer online or hybrid approaches continue in nearly all areas to ensure availability of asynchronous PL materials. **A very few funded collaboration projects received fewer expressions of interest**. These have either been merged with other project groups with similar

				focus or will proceed as planned with a smaller group.
			• **216** (57%) schools are engaging in regional funded collaboration projects related to curriculum and teaching.	
1.2	**Cymraeg**		**Satisfactory progress** is reported in this aspect overall. 55 schools have achieved progressive levels of the Siarter Iaith / Siarter Iaith Cymraeg Campus Framework since April 2023 with five of these being the gold award. The current position is on track in relation to targets set for 2023/24. A plan is in place to target support towards schools who have not yet started their Siarter Iaith Cymraeg Campus journey and to specifically support progress from bronze to silver. Initial responses from many schools have been positive overall. A range of professional learning opportunities align closely with regional needs as identified in the School Workforce Annual Census (SWAC). Engagement with face-to-face Welsh language professional learning for practitioners is gradually increasing, however, asynchronous is more popular. Practitioner evaluations of Welsh language professional learning are very good and nearly all practitioners who attend state that they have improved language competence and skills. Nearly all practitioners state that the professional learning will improve their practice in the classroom and make strong progress in changing their behaviours which is higher that the success measure set for this objective. Asynchronous Welsh language development assignments at three levels have been updated and subsequently accessed 376 times since August 2023. A new asynchronous advanced level assignment has recently been published and accessed 561 times. CSC Leadership of Welsh Programme has been refined by the cross-regional group and will be available as a national programme from Spring 2024. The programme will be submitted for National Academy for Educational Leadership (NAEL) accreditation imminently.	**Engagement with face-to-face Welsh language development professional learning.** Mitigating actions: • Further promote bespoke Welsh language development for schools/clusters. • Further promote playlist for strategically planning Welsh language professional learning with schools, Improvement Partners and local authorities. • Continue to promote professional learning offer widely. • Collaborate with Improvement Partners regarding schools strategically planning Welsh language professional learning for practitioners and accessing professional learning and support.

			Target numbers, set by Welsh Government were met in recruitment to Welsh Sabbatical for 2023/24. Post sabbatical support is underway for 2022/23 practitioners who returned to school in September 2023. New assessment only route for Welsh medium Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) is making strong progress and will potentially be available from Spring 2024, subject to Education Workforce Council (EWC) approval. **Engagement data April 2023 – August 2023:** • **73** schools have engaged in regional PL opportunities. • **23** schools have requested bespoke support over and above the regional PL offer. • **43** schools are engaging in regional funded collaboration projects	• Provide guidance for schools to accurately report practitioner Welsh language competence in the 2023 School Workforce Annual Census (SWAC).
1.3	**Curriculum Coherence And Teaching**	**Strong progress** is reported in this aspect overall. A comprehensive and adaptive PL offer is in place across all areas that encompass aspects of curriculum design, teaching, and assessment. Bespoke support is available to all schools, clusters, and other groups of schools where the priorities are not fully met by published PL opportunities. There are nine funded project opportunities in this area. All of which have strong engagement. **Engagement data April 23 – August 23:** • **233** schools have engaged in regional PL opportunities. • **82** schools have requested bespoke support over and above the regional PL offer. • A total of **79** schools are engaging in regional funded collaboration projects	None reported
1.4	**Curriculum Areas and Cross-Curricular Skills**	**Strong progress** is reported in this aspect overall. A comprehensive and adaptive PL offer is in place across all six Areas and encompasses the cross-curricular skills.	**Digital: resignation of Welsh medium practitioner:** mitigated by the iteration of

| | | Bespoke support is available to all schools, clusters, and other groups of schools where the priorities are not fully met by published PL opportunities.

There are 17 funded projects running across the curriculum areas and cross curricular skills. Engagement with the projects is strong.

Engagement data April 23 – August 23:

• **206** schools have engaged in regional PL opportunities.
• **94** schools have requested bespoke support over and above the regional PL offer.
• **165** schools engaging in regional funded collaboration projects. | the network meetings to become bilingual.

Humanities: ability to appoint to LP roles - we continue to support schools across the region to address the priorities in these areas and will reflect on the CSWC model further.

Science and Technology: limited practitioner engagement. This is being addressed through partnership working with Technocamps.

LLC: support for British Sign Language. This action is being monitored closely in relation to WG published resources and will be revisited in November following the publication of WG materials. |
| 1.5 | **Post 16 Education** | **Strong progress** is reported in this aspect overall.

PL and bespoke support continue to be available to all schools with sixth forms across the region. Collaborating schools have reported successful improvements in relation to the implementation of VESPA approaches in relation to learner wellbeing, progress, and attainment. | None reported |

		CSC takes a lead role in the cross-regional PL programme. 14 CSC school leaders have enrolled to date for the Post-16 Leadership Development programme. Joint cross-regional events have also been developed to reflect national priorities and collaboration across Wales. The first event, related to learner voice and future inspections attracted 17 CSC schools. The Post-16 Leaders Network continues to be well-attended and supports schools' broader awareness of national and regional priorities in the sector. Schools are encouraged to share approaches and effective practice during the sessions. **Engagement data April 23 – August 23:** • **11** schools have engaged in regional PL opportunities. • **27** schools are engaging in regional funded collaboration projects.	
1.6	**Qualifications & PISA**	CSC continues to contribute to stakeholder groups with Qualifications Wales and WJEC in terms of subject level specification design. This will support ongoing communications and support for schools. CSC also supports a cross regional group to discuss emerging issues in relation to preparedness for PISA 2025 with Science as the major domain. Secondary network meetings support schools with existing qualifications and emerging messages in relation to qualifications reform. **Engagement data April 23 – August 23:** • **16** schools have engaged in regional secondary networking opportunities during the summer term.	**Issues identified in relation to schools planning a 3-year KS4 curriculum**. Revised qualifications are being designed for 2-year programme for Year 10 and Year 11 only. Awaiting clarification from Welsh Government, Qualifications Wales and WJEC in relation to availability of legacy qualifications. **PISA results (December 23) may drive political intervention in schools' curriculum development.**

5.2.2 Priority 2: Professional Learning Pathways

Summary of progress / emerging impact and risks

Priority Themes		Progress / Emerging Impact	Risks Identified / Actions to mitigate against risks
2.1	Leadership Pathways	**Strong progress** has been made in ensuring all leaders have access to a range of high quality and relevant professional learning pathway national and regional programmes, coaching and mentoring, collaboration, and support. For those that engage this has led to a positive impact on leadership skills development and accreditation where applicable. Availability of programmes through the medium of Welsh is positively supporting the teaching and learning of Welsh. CSC national leadership pathway programmes are promoted on our website. **Middle Leader Development Programme -** Six facilitator schools worked with 133 participants from CSC schools on this programme as part of our Central South Wales Challenge model. 20 participants accessed the programme through the medium of Welsh. The facilitator network met to reflect and review the content and delivery approaches of all programme modules during the summer term. As a result, the programme content continues to closely align with the national reform agenda and school improvement framework for accountability. The range of positive participant evaluation comments indicates that the MLDP Programme has been highly effective in achieving its aims. The programme has successfully improved nearly all participants' understanding of the roles and responsibilities of a middle leader. All participants indicated they felt more confident in their understanding with many indicating they were very confident. **Senior Leader Development Programme -** Three facilitator schools worked with 57 participants from 48 CSC schools. 10 participants are accessing the programme through the medium of Welsh. 14	**The Aspiring headteacher programme has ceased to be offered in line with the recommendations for change from Prof Mick Waters 'Learning to be a headteacher for Wales.' This is resulting in period of 10 months without recruitment to an Aspiring headteacher** CSC are working closely with the national working party to develop a new development programme from autumn 2024. **Ensuring adequate funding and sufficient capacity is protected to match the increase in school demand for leadership development professional programmes at all levels.** CSC consider funding requests more frequently to match demand.

Priority Themes	Progress / Emerging Impact	Risks Identified / Actions to mitigate against risks
	external leadership coaches, who are experienced headteachers from our region, support participants throughout the duration of this programme. The facilitator network met to reflect and review the content and delivery approaches of all programme modules during the summer term. As a result, the programme content continues to closely align with the national reform agenda and school improvement framework for accountability. This network also provided a valuable opportunity to train new facilitators to deliver the programme for the academic year 2023/24. All participants were able to identify the most valuable aspects of the programme to them. The range of positive comments from participants indicates the SLDP programme has been highly effective in achieving its aims. **Aspiring Headteacher Development Programme -** 41 participants from 38 CSC schools are engaged with this 18-month development programme, completing the final module in October 2023. 7 of these are from Welsh medium schools. 4 headteachers facilitated on the programme during this period, ensuring effective and current practice is shared. 13 external leadership coaches are providing valuable support to these candidates throughout the programme leading into NPQH assessment. **New and Acting Leader Development Programme -** 33 new and acting headteachers enrolled on the above programme and benefitted from modules that developed their understanding of measuring and evaluating impact during this period. Supported by 10 leadership coaches, participants were encouraged to reflect on their first year in headship, their personal growth and identify areas for development and future targets. **System Leaders** 11 experienced System Leaders continue to be available for deployment as part of the extended pilot. 5 System Leaders have been deployed over this period and are	

Priority Themes		Progress / Emerging Impact	Risks Identified / Actions to mitigate against risks
		supporting schools in developing distributed leadership and robust self-evaluation systems and processes that focus on improving pupil progress and outcomes.	**Demand for system leader support is increasing and capacity may become a challenge.**
2.2	**Governors**	**Strong progress** has been made in ensuring all governors have access to a range of high quality and relevant professional learning pathway national and regional programmes, coaching and mentoring, collaboration, and support. 399 governors attended professional learning sessions during the summer term and 47 of these sessions were delivered through the medium of Welsh. Evaluations from those who have engaged indicate the PL has led to a positive impact on their skills development. 9 experienced Regional Leaders of Governance (RLGs) continue to be available for deployment across the region. 7 RLGs have supported 10 schools during this period. They are providing valuable support to governing bodies in self-evaluation and in implementing effective governance processes that successfully support their school to achieve its strategic priorities.	
2.3	**Coaching and Mentoring**	**Strong progress** has been made in providing a range of opportunities for school staff and governors to access the coaching and mentoring programmes. Programmes are available for learners at all levels who want to develop their knowledge and skills in effective coaching and mentoring. 10 school staff attended national RDG Coaching and Mentoring training during this period. Following completion of the programme, they are equipped to deliver the training to other staff in their school and clusters across CSC. 18 school leaders also attended CSC's Lead Practitioner led coaching and mentoring sessions which further supports our commitment to developing a coaching culture across CSC schools.	

	Priority Themes	Progress / Emerging Impact	Risks Identified / Actions to mitigate against risks
		In addition, 37 headteachers and deputy headteachers from schools across our region act as coaches to support participants in the leadership pathway programmes. Positive participant feedback identifies that this programme has been very worthwhile. In addition: • The range of coaching techniques and strategies shared were relevant to different scenarios in school. • The facilitator's commitment to the programme and teaching/organisation of the sessions was excellent and really inspired participants to put into practice the new skills in own school. • Importantly, the programme gave participants the ability to be more confident in challenging situations but also shared how to get the best out of staff.	
2.4	**Early Career Pathway**	**Strong progress** is reported overall towards providing access for all early career practitioners across the region to high quality national and regional professional learning (PL), and mentor support. Early reporting indicates evidence that many (85%) of those engaged in the PL are effectively supported to demonstrate the professional standards for teaching and leadership at Induction level. Early career practitioners engage strongly with the professional learning offer and support provided by CSC. In July 2023, 325 NQTs successfully completed Induction and 214 NQTs will continue with their induction journey into the new academic year 2023-24. There were no fails processed. Evaluations illustrate a high rate of satisfaction with the professional learning provided. For example, most NQTs involved in CSC's regional well attended 'Aspire' programme state the sessions enhanced their knowledge and were relevant and appropriate for their needs.	**External Verifier (EV) funding for last term has not been released to the consortium.** CSC needs to retain and recruit more EVs and External Mentors (EMs), which will be a challenge if funding is not secure. This is not a normal occurrence. Due to the variety of difficulties schools face, i**nconsistent attendance at professional learning** is a potential challenge for the region. This is mitigated by considering moving to a hybrid delivery model.

Priority Themes		Progress / Emerging Impact	Risks Identified / Actions to mitigate against risks
		CSC provide a range of support to IMs, EMs and EVs including in person cluster network meetings in each Local Authority (LA). Evaluations provided positive feedback and welcomed the continuation of these opportunities to meet and support each other to effectively undertake the role of IM/EM. Strong collaboration with universities is valued by CSC to ensure the early career pathway is coherent. Four developmental projects have been awarded funding following a bidding process and these will produce models/frameworks and resources to support mentors, students and NQTs both in ITE and NQT induction. Positive and valued relationships with ITE providers ensure that QTS graduates are also well supported by CSC. For example, QTS graduates were invited to sign up to a region for support and communications over the summer period, to bridge the transition into employment. 319 QTS graduates joined the CSC QTS team by August. 89 QTS graduates attended a CSC 'Welcome to the region' session (31-8-23) and all members in the regional team have access to the PL offer and other CSC developed resources. Based on a successful pilot undertaken by CSC schools last year, the cross-regional group are conducting an exciting National pilot to explore an enquiry approach to professional learning experiences (PLEs). Six CSC schools have been secured to take part in the pilot and have attended a national training session, as well as being provided with drop-in support sessions and a useful playlist for guidance and support.	
2.5	TALP	**Satisfactory** progress has been made in providing all teaching assistants in the region access to high quality professional learning, guidance and resources, and those who have engaged feel more confident in their roles. CSC offer the three National Programmes to teaching assistants (TAs): The current Induction playlists are available on the CSC website for all new TAs (31 completed the programme between April-July 2023 and another 56 signed up and started the playlists). Updated National Induction materials are being developed by the cross-	**Release of all TAs from schools across the region to access the PL and support.** This is being mitigated by CSC continuing to develop their communications strategy to ensure the professional learning offer is

Priority Themes	Progress / Emerging Impact	Risks Identified / Actions to mitigate against risks
	regional group, for use after November. The National Practising Programme and Aspiring HLTA Programme are both widely advertised and offered in-person in Welsh and English. The CSC team provide high quality support and guidance to all delegates signed up to our programmes. Since April, 38 have completed the Aspiring HLTA programme and 31 have gone forward for assessment (2 Bridgend, 14 Cardiff, 6 Merthyr, 6 RCT, 3 Vale) and been awarded HLTA status. CSC have just begun an exciting pilot using the PLP with Aspiring HLTA candidates for collating their assessment evidence (PLRs). Feedback on this development will be provided to EWC and Welsh Government later in the year. To support the WESP, the Welsh Language Competency Framework is being added to the Aspiring HLTA programme materials and all TAs on our programmes are signposted to resources produced by our Welsh team at CSC. This is an area CSC will be looking to develop further. CSC are receiving school requests for bespoke support. These are carefully scoped to ensure the school's needs are met. Further cluster requests have also been received, which will allow the TALP team to reach a larger number of TAs. All TAs in the region are invited to join a TALP Community (currently containing 92 members) which is regularly updated with resources to support TAs to be effective and confident in their role.	widely available and publicised to all schools/TAs through the CSC website, CSC school bulletin, Twitter, TA Community, and Improvement Partner's visits to schools. In addition, CSC will a provide a different model of delivery e.g., delivery existing PL to clusters of schools or through bespoke support. **All elements of the PL are quality assured to ensure fitness for purpose.** This is being mitigated by more consistent processes this year. **All TAs having access to the electronic TALP Community**. This is mitigated by promoting access to our community, resources and materials and links to register for professional learning at all PL events.
2.6	**Schools as Learning Organisations**	**Schools As Learning Organisations** A focus on the 7 dimensions of the SLO model are a strong feature in all leadership pathway programme and participants are encouraged to reflect on how these are reflected in their school's strategic improvement planning, their self-evaluation processes and the formal professional leadership standards. The external coaches are required to pick up on these important points during their group coaching sessions and encourage sharing of effective practice. SLO champions have been recruited to support schools and capture good practice.	

5.2.3 Priority 3: Equity & Well-being

Summary of progress / emerging impact and risks

	Priority Themes	Progress / Emerging Impact	Risks Identified / Actions to mitigate against risks
3.1	**Equity & Excellence**	• The Enabling Equity and Excellence implementation plan is in place; however, **limited progress** for quarter 1 and 2 as work as not due to start until September. • Work ongoing in capturing effective practice with a case study drafted in relation to the use of the Enabling Equity and Excellence in one primary school in the region. • Key messages regarding equity project shared by Managing Director with all staff during CSC Professional Learning and Development programme. As a result, all staff have a developing understanding of the importance and expectations of this work. • Meetings ongoing to identify actions and to plan a way forward to address equity in CSC. This has resulted in the development of Enabling Equity and Excellence project brief.	**Risk:** • Proposals regarding Pupil Development Grant (PDG) funding presented to directors in September 2023 but work not approved. As a result, no funding available to support planned school workshops. **Actions to mitigate**: • To undertake further discussion with lead director • To amend the Enabling Equity and Excellence implementation plan considering funding restrictions
3.2	**Vulnerable Learners**	• A well-received session on Equity, PDG and Poverty held for all school facing staff during the CSC professional learning and development week. To complement this session, a comprehensive bank of resources shared with staff to support their engagement with schools. • Session delivered to many improvement partners on Equity and Excellence as part of the new Governor Accreditation Programme. Consequently, staff are increasingly engaging with the fundamentals of Equity and Excellence. • A further session delivered to the CSC curriculum and professional learning team to increase the team's knowledge and understanding of poverty in the context of equity	**Risk:** • PDG funding uncertainty; as a result, the planned Raising Achievement of Disadvantaged Youngsters (RADY) work may not take place this financial year. • Action short of strike impacting on discussions

		and excellence (related to Welsh education policy and Our National Mission) and for all staff to consider how their roles and responsibilities supports this agenda. • Ongoing discussions with stakeholders across the organisations to amend programmes and to highlight how Equity and Excellence can be embedded in all professional learning programmes. As a result, there is increasing promotion of key messages relation to the PDG and poverty such as in the Aspiring Headteacher Conference in June 2023. • Thinking Differently resources continue to be available for schools, staff, CSC and LA officers. • Findings of discussions between IPs and schools on the use and impact of the PDG collated for 2022-23. Regional PDG evaluation presented to Welsh Government with a visit to a CSC school to exemplify effective practice. LA reports are currently under development. • Increasing engagement and school requests for support from the CSC Lead for Wellbeing and Vulnerable Groups. Bespoke support ongoing in six schools in relation to vulnerable learners. • Ongoing discussions held between Improvement Partners and school leaders on progress of vulnerable leaders. An evaluation of progress for each school in place at the end of the summer term. • All relevant information regarding PDG LAC shared with all clusters. Funding approved by directors September 2023. PDG support plan forwarded to Welsh Government including relevant information regarding Looked After Children.	between Improvement Partners and schools on the use and impact of the PDG. **Actions to mitigate**: • Discuss the way forward regarding PDG funding with Lead Director and local authorities.	
3.3	**Well-being**	• CSC school facing staff continue to align schools to LA led wellbeing provision and signpost schools to relevant support. • Regular regional meetings continue to take place involving LA Attendance and Exclusion Leads with the CSC Lead for Wellbeing and Vulnerable Groups. Strong focus on sharing common challenges and identifying solutions. • CSC Lead for Wellbeing and Vulnerable Groups taking an active role in the Bridgend task and finish group looking at attendance. This has led to the development of an attendance campaign in Bridgend LA. • One appreciative inquiry has been undertaken during the summer term linked to the Whole School Approach for Mental Health and Wellbeing. Findings collated in a report and disseminated via school and LA.	**Risks:** • Impact of LA wellbeing, attendance and exclusion strategies / processes are not always shared systematically with CSC e.g., no regional overview available of attendance. **Actions to mitigate**: • Discuss the way forward regarding PDG funding with	

| | | • Wellbeing also a focus in the professional learning programme for governors. For example, a session held with 20 governors from across the region on the Whole School Approach to Mental Health and Wellbeing during the summer term.
• Improvement Partners continue to have a regular focus on well-being, attendance and exclusions, regularly supported by LA Principal Improvement Partners. | Lead Director and local authorities.
• LA and CSC to discuss the way forward regarding feedback of impact for attendance, exclusions, and wellbeing strategies. |

5.2.4 Priority 4: School Evaluation & Improvement

Summary of progress / emerging impact and risks

Priority Themes	Progress / Emerging Impact	Risks Identified / Actions to mitigate against risks
4.1 **School Self-Evaluation and Development Planning**	**CSC Framework for School Improvement published early Autumn Term**. • Following considerable consultation and discussion with the relevant CSC teams during the summer term 2023, Principal Improvement Partners (PIPs) reviewed and updated the CSC Framework for School Improvement. This document now also encompasses the previous CSC Evaluation, Improvement and Accountability framework. The CSC Framework for School Improvement is a key document at CSC and underpins and directs the work of our teams. It also sets out the supportive approach we adopt when working in partnership with schools to form strong and trusting professional relationships with schools. PIPs met several times during the summer terms to discuss in detail this framework and the additions/revisions required, for example in relation to the section focused on working with schools who are identified as needing enhanced monitoring and are covered by the intervention strategy for schools causing concern. • The CSC Framework for School Improvement was identified as a key document for CSC staff to read prior to the September 2023 Professional Learning and Development weeks. There was also time devoted to reading such documents during the PL weeks and time for discussion to ensure staff had a comprehensive understanding of this document. • In their team and during 1:1 meetings with IPs, LA PIPs are also ensured they refer to, and signposted to, this document to ensure consistency of approach. • **As part of Summer and early autumn term visits, Improvement Partners have supported the development of draft SDPs and self-evaluation processes.** • Where schools have been happy to engage with IPs during this time of ASOS, there have been productive meetings regarding self-evaluation evidence and processes and school improvement priorities. In these instances, Improvement Partners have been able to view and discuss the school's various self-evaluation evidence gathered through the academic year through processes such as learning walks, work scrutinies, listening to learner activities and work with leaders.	Yet to obtain LA approach to attendance. Further clarification required to best support schools in this area. LA PIPs and MD to request this information is shared when they meet with Directors/LA officers in the autumn term. Action Short of Strike (ASOS) impacted on engagement with regional schools.

- Through careful questioning and discussion, Improvement Partners have been able to ascertain if there is a strong and coherent link between the school's discussion of self-evidence and findings and the draft priorities for 2023-24. For example, in one of the 3-16 all through schools in the region, the Headteacher, in her draft SDP shared with the Improvement Partner, there is a priority on professional learning and cross campus collaboration-through discussions between the IP and the Headteacher it has been clear that this is an entirely appropriate SDP priority in this relatively new school to ensure all campuses are working closely together for the benefit of the learners.
- Due to ASOS, however, there are a number of schools where IPs have not been able to have such fruitful discussions with Headteachers about SDPs and self-evaluation evidence and so knowledge is limited and out of date in relation to these schools. In one LA, the Director has arranged for individual SDP meetings to be conducted with Headteachers, their Chairs of Governors, the LA Lead for School Improvement and the IP/PIP. For autumn 2023 there is a mixed picture because of ASOS with many primary Headteachers declining the meetings.
- However, in instances where the SDP meetings have taken place (as of 29/9/23), mainly in the secondary schools, the discussion around the school's self-evaluation base, how they arrived at their new SDP priorities and the support they require for 2023-24, has been valuable.
- The discussion and agreement of priorities and support by all the key stakeholders at this meeting also aligns well with the national framework for improvement, evaluation and accountability.
- **During Autumn term visits, Improvement Partners will work alongside school leaders to plan and stress test self-evaluation activities**.
- Again, this is dependent on levels of engagement due to ASOS. During the summer term where schools have engaged, IPs have been able to work alongside leaders and staff, fitting in with schools' own monitoring, evaluation and review cycles. Where there is good engagement, positive feedback has been received in terms of how the IP, through bringing an external perspective to evaluative activities, is supporting schools well in these processes. For schools in Estyn statutory categories, IPs have continued to work alongside leaders in conducting self-evaluation activities in relation to priorities in the school's PIAP (post inspection action plan). In these schools, considerable joint working between the IP and school leaders is being conducted in terms of self-evaluation activity linked to the PIAP priorities. In some of these instances there is evidence to

		show that leaders in these schools are gradually improving in their own capacity to conduct robust and accurate self-evaluation activity which informs valuable next steps.	
4.2	**Support for School Improvement**	• **CSC processes have been reviewed and aligned within CSC School Improvement Framework.** • **Schools requiring additional support have been identified with appropriate PL brokered.** • **CSC intervention strategy reviewed, renamed, presented and accepted by Directors.** • **Where appropriate, conversations have taken place to support PL for Welsh language development**. • **Summer evaluative information has been gathered and quality assured and will be submitted to LAs in the Autumn term**. • Improvement Partners worked in July 2023 to complete the evaluative commentaries. Principal Improvement Partners also ensured that all evaluative summaries written by Improvement Partners on leadership and management, teaching, learning and curriculum and progress of vulnerable learners were quality assured, checking that they were well written, honest and reflected the conversations PIPs had had with IPs in 1:1 meetings about their schools. In the very few cases where there seemed to be some discrepancy or where improvements needed to be made, PIPs conducted discrete and supportive conversations with the relevant IPs. • Across the region however, because of ASOS there is a varied picture in terms of Improvement Partner knowledge about their schools as for some, IP visits have not been permitted by Headteachers because of ASOS since Autumn 2022; hence knowledge about those schools is out of date. In these instances, IPs have ensured that it is indicated in the evaluative summary document that these schools are following ASOS. In the cases of these schools, IPs continue to offer their support and collaboration.	Action Short of Strike (ASOS) impacted on engagement with regional schools.
4.3	**Accountability**	• **CSC documentation reviewed to ensure it aligns with Welsh Government guidance**. • All relevant documentation has been reviewed in consultation with stakeholders and made available to all stakeholders. Staff have received PL to ensure it is implemented appropriately and can be disseminated through the system.	Action Short Of Strike (ASOS) impacted on engagement with schools.

| | | Information is shared through a variety of channels, for example, the CSC website, X/Twitter, shared directly with senior leaders via email, highlighted by IPs during school visits or during PL sessions. CSC staff are actively engaged with WG consultations on amending guidance and preparing the service for any amendments. **Summer evaluative information has been gathered and quality assured and will be submitted to LAs in the Autumn term.** Improvement Partners, in collaboration with schools, summarise termly progress evaluations on the school's progress in meeting its improvement priorities and identify or amend support, as necessary. These evaluations are captured in the School Improvement Partnership Log (SIPL) for the school. Improvement Partners consider progress against priorities to be either 'on track' or 'off track.' Improvement partners regularly update a comment about the effectiveness of monitoring and self-evaluation for all schools (SOAP). Progress is monitored more regularly in schools subject to enhanced monitoring, usually on a termly or half termly basis via internal IP and PIP one to one meetings, 'Information Sharing Meetings' involving colleagues from across the organisation, one to one meetings between Assistant Directors and PIPs and formal progress review meetings with the LA and school leaders. The Improvement Partner will also provide a more detailed summary of strengths and areas to improve in relation to the rate of progress the school is making towards meeting its improvement priorities. The LA has access to the summative judgements contained within the individual school SIPLs. PIPs and IPs share this information with local authorities during the existing information sharing meetings. | |

5.2.5 Priority 5: Leadership & Governance of CSC

Summary of progress / emerging impact and risks

	Priority Themes	Progress / Emerging Impact	Risks Identified / Actions to mitigate against risks
5.1	**Leadership of CSC (Policy Logic, Quality Assurance Processes, Stakeholder Voice, CLO, WESPs and SACRE)**	• The iterative development of the 'CSC explained model' ensures that CSC's vision, aims, values and services are clearly articulated, and CSC continues to challenge itself to operate as a learning organisation. • This has been co-constructed through a robust evidence base and engagement with the majority of stakeholder groups over a period of time. • The model will lead to further clarity of function and a robust evaluative framework against which progress can be measured. • The revised Framework for School Improvement integrates systems, processes, and ensures effective quality assurance. This aligns to the WG School improvement guidance: framework for evaluation, improvement and accountability • (Further evidence of progress in this area can be found in priority 4) • All WESPs are supported and monitored by a Principal Improvement Partner. • A CSC lead for SACRE supports, guides and advises work though this remains a Local Authority statutory function.	Engagement in the stakeholder survey has been low, different approaches to gathering the same level of intelligence will be trialled through the evaluation project plan. Review with Business Intelligence Team to agree next steps for the CLO survey.
5.2	**CSC Self-Evaluation, Research and Business Planning**	• CSC are developing a project management approach across the organisation, one of the priorities of this work in 23/24 is an evaluation plan. This plan ensures that improvement is being driven to both provide development for the organisation and learning for the system. Effective mechanisms to share information will be developed aligned to audience and purpose. • Self- evaluation systems and processes have been refined to ensure that outcomes better inform CSC business planning. • Business planning 2023/24 incorporates all LA priorities (with exceptions) as well as the regional recommendations and outcomes from self-evaluation. The business plan appendix has been developed and will be shared with Management Board in October which incorporates the outcomes from self-evaluation. The annual Financial Year report was shared with Management board in June and JC in October 2023	Business plan project plan is under development, which will need to be expediated to meet the new cycle.

5.3	Systems, Processes & Communication (inc. Evaluation Framework)	• Business Intelligence project has scoped the current state of data storage, access, and usage. A project plan is under development to develop a coherent approach to data management to provide intelligence at an appropriate level of granularity. This will support the evaluation plan in ensuing that intelligence is well interpreted and used to best inform evaluation. • To further develop evaluation in CSC the monitoring and reporting cycle has been reviewed. This is iteratively improving to ensure that activity aligns to and supports reporting to make systems and processes proactive rather than reactive to reporting requests.	Business intelligence Digital strategy
5.4	Reporting	• The CSC suite of reports is developing in line with stakeholder feedback. Reporting design and CSC PL is focussed on ensuring that the reports move further beyond accountability and provide development and knowledge for the system. • For example, developing a 'breadcrumb' approach to reporting which provides increasing levels of detail to each audience layer of the system and supporting them to reflect on it. • Reporting is increasingly proportional and ensures that any funding requirements are fulfilled.	Stakeholders remain unclear on the audience, purpose and use of reports following publication of 'Suite of Reports'
5.5	CSC Workforce (Equality, Diversity, Professional Learning, Wellbeing)	• The internal professional learning programme timetable included opportunities for all staff to engage in equity, diversity and wellbeing. The future calendar also includes development opportunities for these areas. • The development of a wellbeing strategy is being supported by an internal group with agreed terms of reference. The focus for 2023/24 is fully understanding the experience of staff groups in all CSC processes, for example, professional learning. • All CSC staff have access to and are encouraged to use the Cari survey which is a tool to measure wellbeing and where possible signpost available support. On completion of the tool CSC will also gain an organisational picture to be able to explore trends. • The CSC internal professional learning calendar has planned activity led by internal and external experts to focus on personal, team and organisational development. Clear audience and purpose are centrally published to ensure that attendance maximises use of staff time and is pertinent in supporting school improvement.	CSC capacity to engage with each aspect.

5.6	Safeguarding in CSC (inc. safer recruitment)	All CSC staff and designated officers have received update training as required. The CSC policy has been updated and shared with staff during the Internal Professional Learning Programme.	Inability to secure PL for safer recruitment regionally. May have to consider individual LA PL.
5.7	CSC Governance (inc. Risk Management)	• Terms of reference for all governance groups have been revised and accepted by JC. However, attendance at JC meetings remains a concern. • Risk Management policy revised and approved by Management Board and JC. Project management approaches are being developed to ensure the management of project risk. However, this is in early development and the impact of this approach is yet to be realised.	Develop PL programme for risk management for SLT members Diarise drop-in sessions to review risk management. Middle tier review – many led to CSC legal agreement requiring further revision.
5.8	Use of Resources	• The CSC value for money (VfM) framework has been used to structure the area reports of the curriculum and professional learning team. • The annual FY as well as annual academic report includes analysis of VfM. Feedback from stakeholders has been positive to this approach. • The academic report published to JC in March 2023, and this received positive feedback from members (evidence in the minutes of the meeting) • Audit Wales are currently auditing the CSC final accounts. Interim feedback is positive with only final payroll checks to be undertaken. • Regional audit reports have been presented to JC for both internal processes and grant claims. Substantial assurance has been given on the processes of CSC.	Uncertainty of future funding (core & grant)

6.0   PROGRESS WITH RECOMMENDATIONS FROM PUBLISHED REPORTS[3]

As reports are published, CSC have developed a process for ensuring any recommendations relating to the work of CSC are incorporated into the business planning process. As agreed in the CSC Monitoring and Reporting Framework at the Joint Committee meeting on the 25th October 2022, progress with recommendations will be reported twice yearly.

In this report we will be providing a progress update with recommendations from the following reports:

Table 4: Published reports with recommendations for CSC

Report title	Author	Published
Effective approaches to assessment that improve teaching and learning (October 2022).	Estyn	October 2022

6.1   Effective approaches to assessment that improve teaching & learning.

This report is written in response to a request for advice from the Minister for Education and the Welsh Language in his remit letter to Estyn for 2021-2022. It focuses on how maintained primary, secondary, all-age and special schools are developing effective approaches to assessment that improve teaching and learning.

The report is intended for the Welsh Government, headteachers and staff in schools, local authorities and regional consortia. It is part of a series of reports providing guidance during this period of change in education. Previous reports include Improving Teaching (Estyn, 2018b), Curriculum innovation in primary schools (Estyn, 2018a), Preparing for the Digital Competence Framework (Estyn, 2018c), Preparing for the Curriculum for Wales – case studies and cameos from secondary, all-age and special schools (Estyn 2020b), Leadership development – case studies of professional learning for school leadership (Estyn, 2020a).

This report draws on evidence from visits to a selection of primary, secondary, all age and special schools across Wales, including those delivering education primarily through the medium of Welsh. It includes evidence from schools who worked with the Welsh Government on developing the Curriculum for Wales as pioneer schools, quality improvement or innovation schools and evidence from partner (non-pioneer) schools. It also draws on information gained from our engagement visits and from inspections.

6.1.2   Progress against recommendations

R5 Develop constructive professional learning opportunities for schools to improve their understanding and use of formative assessment practices.

Strong progress has been made with a range of high quality, evidence informed professional learning events, resources, networks, funded projects and bespoke support available for all schools. This PL and support focuses on developing and deepening an understanding of how to plan for formative approaches to assessment – within the Areas of Learning and Experience (Areas), subject and

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[3] As of October 2022

disciplines, and across cross-curricular skills and cross-cutting themes. School leaders and practitioners have been supported to know how to enact assessment approaches most effectively with specific strategies and techniques to use in the classroom. The Curriculum for Wales assessment guidance Great Teaching Toolkit and education research have underpinned CSC's support within this area.

R6 Facilitate and support collaboration across schools to develop leaders' and teachers' understanding of progression and share effective practice in formative assessment.

CSC has made strong progress in supporting collaboration within and across schools, supporting leaders and practitioners in their understanding of progression and assessment. Effective practice has been shared widely across the region through regional networks, funded projects, PL events and conferences, resources and bespoke support. CSC have drawn on the expertise of existing practitioners from schools in the region, appointed as CSC Lead Practitioners, in relation to progression and assessment. The two primary and two secondary practitioners have collaborated to design and deliver professional learning events and trialling, refining and sharing their approaches.

Bespoke support is available to all CSC schools, tailored to meet the needs of school leaders and practitioners, to support school improvement priorities. Since September 2022, 305 schools have requested support from the CSC curriculum and professional learning team. Of these, 153 schools requested support related to progression and assessment.

Cluster collaborations are strong across the CSC region. Since September 2022, 22 clusters have received bespoke support from the CSC curriculum and professional learning team in developing a shared understanding of progression, working within Areas, subjects and disciplines, and across the curriculum to ensure progression and assessment across the 3-16 continuum. This support has included facilitation of cluster-wide INSET days and sessions, with groups of practitioners and focused support for senior leadership teams.

In July 2023, CSC hosted an in-person curriculum conference focused on the 'what' (curriculum content and design), the 'how' (pedagogy and teaching) and the 'how do we know' (assessment) of CfW. Nearly 200 practitioners attended from over a third of schools across the region. Eight schools and clusters from the region led high-quality workshops, sharing their emerging practice. These workshops were focused on progression, cluster working, teaching and assessment, Welsh and the cross-curricular skills. Recordings were made of all sessions and [are available to view here.](#)

Sharing of practice:

- Lead Practitioners presented to CSC schools on their findings after trialling the Camau I'r Dyfodol assessment materials: [Link to recording of the PL event](#).
- **[CSC curriculum conference workshops July 2023 - teaching and assessment](#)**
- Resources shared with schools to support their engagement with the Camau workshops: [Camau progression and assessment key messages and take-aways](#)
- Lead Practitioners trialled Understanding by Design as an approach to planning for teaching and assessing against their school curricula. Feedback presented to CSC curriculum and PL team has led to co-construction of materials to be shared with schools (for publication December 2023).

- **Resource to support schools to consider formative assessment strategies**
- **CSC assessment in CfW poster pack**
- **CSC schools sharing practice on collaboration of progression, CSC guidance on how schools can collaborate on progression.**

7.0   VALUE FOR MONEY: CSC PROFESSIONAL LEARNING OFFER 2022/2023

7.1   Effectiveness

The CSC professional learning opportunities available to all schools across the region is comprehensive and is consistently of good quality according to the National Academy for Educational Leadership (NAEL) hallmarks for professional learning. This demonstrates that the component parts of the PL offer are effective.

Evaluation from a wide variety of feedback confirms strongly that the PL opportunities provide significant school improvement opportunities through a structured and comprehensive approach. Many PL resources developed by the team across all areas well received by schools and used to good effect, promoting efficient sharing of learning. There is more evidence of impact in the more intensive programmes of PL and bespoke support than in some of the less intensive PL opportunities (e.g. one-off events etc.). This is attributable to the proportional approach to support and evaluation in each activity. Overall, the quality of the cluster bespoke support is reported to have a significant impact on curriculum development.

CSC offers high quality PL and support, however, for this to effect school improvement, the conditions of the school need to allow this learning to be implemented by practitioners. Also, where appropriate, the learning taken to scale across departments, phases and the whole school. There is an appetite from practitioners for less intensive episodes of PL which are more time efficient to engage with but may lack depth of knowledge and skill development. This does not align to the indicators of effective professional learning.

7.2   Efficiency

A strength of the PL offered to schools is the wide range of PL and support opportunities - programmes, projects, networks and bespoke support - available to all practitioners and school leaders across the region. In addition, the breadth of topics on offer receives positive feedback. Practitioners report that they value the range and breadth of PL that they can engage with which implies efficiency in terms of scope and scale.

All CSC areas can clearly articulate their approach to PL, and why they have selected each aspect they have included in the offer. Strong examples of CSC self-evaluation shaping the PL offer are evident. In nearly all areas, there is clear thought about how the PL is designed to be taken to scale, either by a practitioner within a school or regionally.

However, there needs to be further consideration and evaluation on the efficiency of each type of PL and support activity.

7.3   Sustainability

There is a significant amount of high-quality PL and support at the point of delivery, both in intensive and less intensive forms. All areas can detail strong examples of intensive forms of PL and support that have developed capacity of practitioners and groups of practitioners within a school or cluster. In the bespoke support, coaching or mentoring ensures that action is taken as a result of the professional

learning, though this is either less developed in the less intensive forms or less known about. When practitioners are supported to apply their learning, the feedback is consistently positive.

Leadership is often the main development need and relies upon middle leaders operating in a wider learning organisation for changes to be realised. To ensure sustainability, a further focus on the development of knowledge and skills of middle leaders is required to lead change following their engagement in PL and support.

7.4   Economy

All areas can offer assurance of their financial spend and a clear rationale for decisions. These spends are carefully monitored through CSC area operational plans and robust financial processes. All area leads carefully manage their resources to balance the needs of the system, to be as strategic and proactive as possible whilst ensuring the ability to be agile to respond to PL and support needs as they arise.

Some recurrent bespoke support has been shaped into programmes demonstrating that evaluation is being used to shape future work and best manage human resource to create greater economy. There are many examples where regional collaboration projects have offered highly effective professional learning and provided learning and resource for the system suggesting effective spend of resource to provide greater economy.
However, significant budgetary pressures may become a barrier to delivery of a comprehensive offer and funding for regional collaborative activities.

7.5   Added Value

Areas enact their work as part of a longer-term strategic plan which may span multiple years as part of a coherent theory of change. For any new or innovative activity that has been developed, leads can explain how these fit within their vision and priorities for improvement. In the majority of cases there are clear examples of new strategies being used to accelerate school improvement.

However, the pressures to demonstrate significant impact on school improvement within one year can influence the planned activities. One year is often not enough time of a measure of value if work is sitting in a longer-term strategic plan.

7.6   Collaborative Advantage

Collaborative working underpins the CSWC. Cluster working has formed a significant workstream for all area this year in line with the requirements of the Curriculum for Wales. This has facilitated collaborations between schools and built significant capacity within those clusters that have engaged. There are multiple examples of where lead practitioners have been used effectively to support the system and provide additional capacity. In nearly all cases, projects have led to improvements for at least the practitioners/schools involved, and in the best cases, offered resource to the region overall.

However, significant budgetary pressures and capacity of schools are becoming an increasing barrier to collaborative working.

7.7   Quality

All PL and support is of high quality according to the NAEL hallmarks. All areas are able to demonstrate how the PL and support in their area aligns to the professional standards for teaching and leadership. Also, how the PL and support promotes and enables schools to develop as learning organisations. Academic research, coupled with organisational experience and expertise, underpins all decisions, aligned to national policy in their plans. Learning from activities is shared with practitioners who are interested and engaged in the focus areas.

However, it is not always apparent how CSC shares learning from PL and support, e.g. projects, more widely across the region and with the wider system.

Next steps:
- Further consideration of evaluation of CSC PL and support within effective school improvement in schools. Define roles and responsibilities, systems and processes to support this.
- Consider the implementation gap and how practitioners and schools can be supported to overcome barriers related to this.
- Full review of CSWC to inform revised model in 2024/25 to maximise return on investment.
- Focussed refinement of CSC business planning and evaluation.
- Further development and embedding of quality assurance across all of the CSWC PL and support to ensure quality and consistency expectations and met.

APPENDIX A: Judgement Matrices

Very Good Progress	The priority action has been addressed in all respects. No aspects require further attention. This has resulted in measurable positive impact to the priority area.
Strong Progress	The priority action has been addressed in most respects. Only minor aspects require attention. It is expected that the work will result in measurable, positive impact to the priority area.
Satisfactory Progress	The priority action has been addressed in many respects. A few important aspects still require significant attention. The impact of the work is not yet strong enough. Many aspects are addressed but there is still significant work to do in important areas.
Limited Progress	The priority action has not been addressed. All or many important aspects are awaiting attention, or the original planned activity is no longer appropriate.
Not Yet Started	The priority action has not been started.