



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

MUNICIPAL YEAR 2023-24

EDUCATION AND INCLUSION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

22ND JANUARY 2024

**THE WORK OF THE CENTRAL SOUTH CONSORTIUM IN THE REGION
AND RHONDDA CYNON TAF LOCAL AUTHORITY 2022 - 2023**

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND INCLUSION SERVICES

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update Members of the contribution of the Central South Consortium (CSC) in the region and Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Authority 2022-2023 to raising standards in schools across Rhondda Cynon Taf (RCT).

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members:

- 2.1 Receive the content of Central South Consortium's report provided in Appendix 1: '*Annual RCT Local Authority Scrutiny Report: Central South Consortium 2022-23*'.
- 2.2 Scrutinise and comment on the information provided.
- 2.3 Consider whether they wish to scrutinise in greater depth any matters contained in Central South Consortium's report.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 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.
- 3.2 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.

- 3.3 Scrutiny Committees in each of the five authorities invite the Principal Improvement Partner/s attached to the authority to report on the performance of the schools and the contribution of the consortium at any stage during the year. An annual report from the consortium relating to progress in the previous academic year and priorities for the year ahead is also provided.

4. UPDATE / CURRENT POSITION

- 4.1 Please refer to the report provided in Appendix 1 for further information.

5. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS/SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY

- 5.1 This is an information report. No Equality Impact Assessment screening form is required.

6. WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Please refer to Section 6.5.5 and Appendix B for further information.

7. CONSULTATION / INVOLVEMENT

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

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The cost of Central South Consortium's service to the Council is £976,904 for the period 2022-23, representing 2.4% of the LA retained budget.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

- 9.1 None at present.

10. LINKS TO THE COUNCILS CORPORATE PLAN/OTHER CORPORATE PRIORITIES / WELLBEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT

- 10.1 Educational performance has a clear link to the Council's priorities of ensuring people are independent, healthy and successful; enabling prosperity, creating the opportunity for people to fulfil their potential and prosper. Improved educational performance will have a positive impact on these priorities.

11. CONCLUSION

- 11.1 Central South Consortium's annual report provides an overview of the school improvement services it has provided on behalf of Rhondda Cynon Taf from 2022-23.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

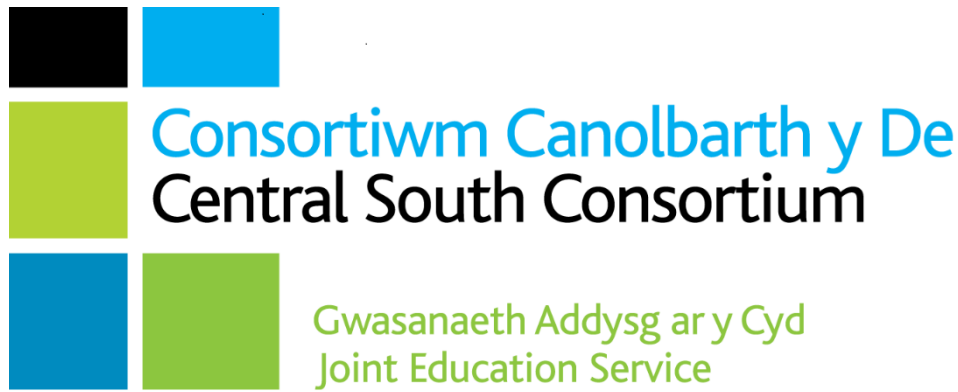
RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

EDUCATION & INCLUSION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

22ND JANUARY 2024

**THE WORK OF THE CENTRAL SOUTH CONSORTIUM IN THE REGION
AND RHONDDA CYNON TAF LOCAL AUTHORITY 2022-2023**

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION
AND INCLUSION SERVICES**



Annual RCT Local Authority Scrutiny Report Central South Consortium

2022-23

(Presentation in January 2024)

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1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

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 (LA) to raising standards in schools across RCT. This report details the work of the consortium for the academic year September 2022/2023 and the financial year April 2022 to April 2023.

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 Business plan for 2022/23 ran from 1st April 2022 until 31st March 2023 and had the following areas of priority:

1. Curriculum, Teaching & Assessment
2. Leadership
3. Equity and Wellbeing
4. School Improvement
5. Effectiveness and efficiency of Central South Consortium

The business plan sets out how CSC aims 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 Challenge¹'.

Drive Teams comprising senior leaders from across the consortium ensured that the operational plans for each priority were implemented and that impact was measured. Half-termly reviews, including an impact review with the Managing Director of CSC, and LA Directors of Education, were held at the end of each term, and ensured that monitoring was robust.

A [report](#) on the progress and impact of the Business Plan 2022 - 23 is presented to the CSC Management Board and Joint Committee.

The consortium Business Plan for April 2022 to March 2025 can be found [here](#).

¹ Central South Wales Challenge information can be found [here](#)

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 2020²; however, a new pilot framework³ 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

² <https://www.estyn.gov.wales/news/estyn-will-not-inspect-maintained-schools-next-academic-year-statement-meilyr-rowlands-hmci>

³ <https://www.estyn.gov.wales/news/owen-evans-her-majestys-chief-inspectors-speech-17-february-2022>

categories: thirteen in Estyn Review (19.1%), two in significant improvement (2.9%) and seven in special measures (10.3%).

In RCT, eighteen schools were inspected between September 2022 and July 2023, with eleven of these not requiring any form of follow-up and one of these schools being identified to produce “Interesting or Innovative Practice Case Studies” following their inspections.

Seven schools were placed in Estyn follow-up categories: five in Estyn Review, one in Significant Improvement and one in Special Measures.

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.

Table 2: Progress of schools in a follow up Estyn category

School	Estyn Category	2021-22 Changes	Current Position (Spring 2023)
Coedpenmaen Primary	Special Measures	Inspected May 2022	Special Measures
Y.G.G. Aberdar	Estyn Review	Inspected September 2022	Estyn Review
Maesgwyn Special	Estyn Review	Inspected February 2023	Estyn Review
Coedylan Primary	Special Measures	Inspected February 2023	Special Measures

Bryncelynnog Comprehensive	Estyn Review	Inspected March 2023	Estyn Review
Llanharan Primary	Estyn Review	Inspected March 2023	Estyn Review
Alaw Primary	Estyn Review	Inspected March 2023	Estyn Review
Ynyshir Primary	Significant Improvement	Inspected June 2023	Significant Improvement

Schools in RCT LA where Innovative Practice Case Studies following Estyn inspections have been requested are:

- Llwydcoed Primary:
Case Study 1 - Reducing the cost of the school day and providing additional support for low-income families in the community.

3.3 Supporting School Development Planning with Performance Data Discussions

The Improvement Partners (IPs) support schools through appropriate challenge to identify clear, manageable improvement priorities as a consequence of effective self-evaluation. The IPs works with school leaders to review first-hand evidence, ensuring that this is rigorous and accurate. In supporting schools in the review of their self-evaluation cycle, IPs work with school leaders to ensure there is coverage of the three overarching areas as referenced in the new framework for school improvement. These are:

- Vision and Leadership
- Curriculum, Learning, and Teaching
- Wellbeing, Equity, and Inclusion

This approach works in conjunction with school systems and will not generate additional work for school leaders. This is in line with the Welsh Government School Improvement Guidance: A Framework for Evaluation, Improvement and Accountability, where it is the intention that these priorities will, in part, replace target setting.

Each school has a unique set of priorities, based on self-evaluation, including the analysis of performance data, needs and improvement journey, ultimately seeking to improve learner outcomes reflecting the bespoke needs of their learners and school community. Therefore, priorities need to ensure a focus on pupil progress. Furthermore, the IPs 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.

In 2023-24, key common focus areas that have been identified by schools include:

- Oracy, Reading, and Writing including Welsh language skills.
- Numeracy
- Digital Competence Skills and learning

- Planning for the development of skills across the curriculum
- Whole School Approach to Mental and Emotional Well-being
- Early Years (Physical Development in Particular)
- Reducing gaps in progress of key groups (EAL, eFSM, MAT learning)
- Attendance and Exclusions
- Engagement and Readiness to Learn
- Dealing with challenging behaviour
- Complex needs and additional learning needs provision
- Independence at age-appropriate levels
- Transition
- Impact of teaching on learning
- Assessment and progression including baseline and mapping pre progression step 1
- Religion, Values and Ethics
- Accuracy of self-evaluation linked to improvement planning.
- Leadership Development
- Curriculum Design and Development

3.4 Alps Analysis

Alps value added performance analysis measures progress against national⁴, aspirational benchmarks for each individual student. For 2023, the analysis identified the following key points:

A Level

- Prior attainment (Centre Assessed Grades) was on average slightly higher for the 2023 cohort than for previous cohorts in the years 2020-2022, particularly in the highest third (58.6% 2023 cohort compared with 44.7% 2020 cohort).
- National results were also higher in 2023 than in 2018 or 2019.
- Overall, the value added in 2023 was lower than in 2022, which matches the position for the LA, with the RCT figures in 2023 falling to below that seen in 2019.
- There was little difference between the value added for boys and girls and for eFSM and non-eFSM students for the LA.
- Replicating the same grades through exams may be challenging in 2024 as results will return to be set in line with 2019 results.

AS Level

- Prior attainment (Examinations with advanced information for some subject) was higher for the 2023 cohort figure than for cohorts in 2020 and 2021 but lower than the 2022 cohort.
- In the second year of transitional grading approaches, the national results were also higher than in 2018 or 2019.

⁴ as defined by Alps for their analysis.

- The cohort achieved higher grades in 2023 AS examinations than cohorts in 2018 and 2019 (counting 40% towards A Level).
- National results were also higher in 2023 than in 2018 or 2019.
- AS value added for the LA, increased significantly between 2019 and 2021, and whilst this has decreased over the last two year, the value added for 2023 matches that seen in 2019.
- Replicating the same grades at A Level in 2024 may still be challenging as results will return to be set in line with 2019 results.

Key Stage 4

- KS4 Results were higher nationally in 2023 than in 2018 or 2019.
- Value added, decreased again in 2023 in RCT and equals that seen in 2019.
- Value added rose for eFSM students in the LA by 2021 and whilst this has decreased over the last two years, it continues to exceed that seen in 2019.
- Replicating the same grades at A Level in 2024 may still be challenging as results will return to be set in line with 2019 results.

3.5 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 SUPPORT AND CHALLENGE

With the significant reform agenda that is in progress across Wales, it is important CSC continues to ensure the support and challenge provided by Improvement Partners (IPs) is holistic, efficient, and effective in line with the national principles and guidance from Welsh Government.

4.1 Improvement Partner Deployment

In 2022/2023, RCT local authority contributed £976,904 (27%) towards the core functions of the consortium. In addition to the core costs of the consortium this has provided funding for IPs (8.08 FTE), and Principal Improvement Partners (PIPs) (2 FTE).

IPs continue to have a relevant educational background and level of experience and provide good quality support and challenge to schools. Many IPs are accredited or are working towards accreditation by Association of Education Advisers (AOEA). 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.

National Categorisation was suspended from September 2020 and a new evolving model for IP deployment was consulted on in the summer term 2020 and implemented from September 2020. It was reviewed and refined during 2021 to support implementation of the Welsh Government Guidance, Improvement, Evaluation and Accountability in September 2022⁵. This guidance is currently (Nov 23) being reviewed and revised by Welsh Government and key stakeholders with the intention of statutory implementation in September 2024.

4.2 Work Programme of Improvement Partners

During the autumn term, IPs worked together with schools to agree appropriate improvement priorities, construct the school development plan (SDP) and broker support. All IPs gathered authentic first-hand evidence to support the school self-evaluation process. IPs joined school meetings and participated in self-evaluation activities as appropriate. The full schedule of activities is contained in the Framework for School Improvement⁶. These are not a 'tick list' but provided a reminder as to key dates when activity should be completed. IPs built an individual work plan with each school to ensure that these activities were built into the school improvement conversations. There were ongoing themes which were a focus of all visits, these included progress of learners, curriculum, learning and teaching, leadership, well-being, equity and inclusion, effectiveness of self-evaluation and improvement planning.

For example, two particular areas of leadership support are listed below:

Improvement Partner Support for Governance

- Attend at least one Governing Body meeting per year
- Encourage Governors to attend mandatory trainings
- Support Governors with sense making of information
- Encourage Governing Bodies to use the self-evaluation tool
- Support Governors to be able to critically support and challenge leaders in schools and them to account
- Support the Governing Body Panel Headteachers Performance Management process for review, objective setting and mid-year review where appropriate.

Improvement Partner Support for Self-Evaluation

- Partnered learning walks
- Involved in Listening to learners' activities
- Support school improvement planning/documentation
- Partner with school leaders to triangulate and validate reviews of teaching and learning
- Support Senior/middle leaders/teachers to prepare for Estyn inspections

⁵ [School improvement guidance: framework for evaluation, improvement and accountability - Hwb \(gov.wales\)](https://www.gov.wales/guidance/school-improvement-guidance-framework-for-evaluation-improvement-and-accountability)

⁶ <https://www.cscjes.org.uk/repository/discovery/resource/97df5386-f46a-4287-a766-20eedd70db27/en?sort=recent&strict=0>

Example: Primary Improvement Partner (IP) working with a peer IP and Headteacher.

- The school's IP worked with a peer IP and Headteacher on school self-evaluation processes, to ensure priorities and associated success criteria were bespoke to the needs of the learners and had a positive impact on outcomes for pupils.
- The IPs and Headteacher undertook a number of self-evaluation activities, including listening to learners, work scrutiny, lesson dips, staff engagement and data analysis.
- This evidence was captured using a 'Google Drive' document, allowing colleagues to update, share and discuss throughout the experience in real-time.
- The outcome of this work enabled the Headteacher and senior leaders to create a School Development Plan for the following academic year.
- The school's IP continued to work with the Headteacher and Governing Body over the course of the year, monitoring effective delivery of the identified priorities.
- Additional support was highlighted and accessed via the IP and CSC's Curriculum and Professional Learning team, using the Bespoke Support Request system.

4.3 Framework for School Improvement

Support for schools 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 days
- Special/PRU - 10 days
- Secondary – 10 days
- 3-16/19 - 16 days

Enhanced support schools will receive additional time to reflect the development needs and monitoring requirements. All 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.

The IP supports schools through appropriate challenge to identify clear, manageable improvement priorities as a consequence of effective self-evaluation. The IP works with school leaders to review first-hand evidence and ensures processes are rigorous and accurate. In supporting schools in the review of their self-evaluation cycle, IPs work with leaders to monitor and evaluate progress against school development plan priorities.

If schools are not demonstrating appropriate rates of progress towards achieving their improvement priorities, this information is discussed with the school, governors, LA and CSC and a decision will then be made as to whether the school may need enhanced support. IPs will then provide a detailed evaluation of progress with a judgement on the rate of progress. If, following discussion between the school, governors, LA, and CSC, it is agreed that progress

is too slow or limited, then the school is moved to enhanced support. The same process exists if a school is making sufficient progress to move from enhanced support.

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.

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.

5.0 SUPPORT FOR SCHOOLS

5.1 Schools Receiving Enhanced Support

During 2022-23 academic year 18 schools were in enhanced support at some stage during the academic year. 8 schools were in enhanced support across the complete academic year.

The following table analyses the progress judgements made across a wide range of the key priorities in the enhanced support schools. Priorities will often cover several aspects of practice. Judgements are made and agreed in partnership with the school, CSC, and LA officers. The data is based on the 12 schools in enhanced support across the complete year, covering a total of 55 priorities or recommendations.

The priorities have been categorised under five broader headings of:

- Leadership
- Standards and Progress
- Teaching and Learning
- Wellbeing
- Health and Safety.

Table 4: Summary of Progress Against Recommendations

% FIGURES	Progress Autumn 2022		
Aspects of Practice within Priorities	Limited	Satisfactory	Strong +
OVERALL	55.0%	45.0%	0.0%
Curriculum, Learning and Teaching	60.0%	40.0%	0.0%
Standards and Progress	57.1%	42.9%	0.0%
Leadership	66.7%	33.3%	0.0%
Wellbeing	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%
Health and Safety	-	-	-
% FIGURES	Progress Spring 2023		
Aspects of practice within Priorities	Limited	Satisfactory	Strong +
OVERALL	5.9%	85.3%	8.8%

Curriculum, Learning and Teaching	0.0%	88.9%	11.1%
Standards and Progress	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%
Leadership	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%
Wellbeing	33.3%	50.0%	16.7%
Health and Safety	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
% FIGURES	Progress Summer 2023		
Aspects of Practice within Priorities	Limited	Satisfactory	Strong +
OVERALL	11.3%	47.2%	41.2%
Curriculum, Learning and Teaching	6.7%	53.3%	40.0%
Standards and Progress	0.0%	50.0%	50.0%
Leadership	15.8%	52.6%	31.6%
Wellbeing	25.0%	25.0%	50.0%
Health and Safety	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%

During 2022-23, RCT LA held School Improvement Progress meetings for all of the schools receiving enhanced monitoring. The CSC and LA set relevant agendas for these meetings with schools reporting on progress against their SDPs or Post Inspection Action Plans (PIAPs) and CSC and LA support for the schools reviewed, with any necessary additional brokering of support agreed. Many schools receiving enhanced monitoring during 2022-23 made good progress.

5.2 Intervention Strategy for Schools Causing Concern

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 and forms the basis of enhanced support work for all settings in the region.

There were no schools in receipt of a LA Statutory Warning Notice and four schools received a pre-warning notice.

6.0 PROFESSIONAL LEARNING & SUPPORT

Professional learning (PL) is a change process to improve and develop professional knowledge, skills and understanding. PL should focus on changes that impact on learners through a practitioner's own learning, leading to increased understanding, and changes in their behaviours, i.e., policies, provision, and practice.

In line with the [National Professional Learning Entitlement](#), CSC is committed to equity of access to high quality PL for all school leaders, including governors, and practitioners in our region. CSC PL opportunities are guided by the [eight hallmarks for well-led professional learning](#) as defined by the National Academy for Education Leadership Wales (NAEL).

The CSC Curriculum and Professional Learning (C&PL) team continue to provide a comprehensive range of high quality, evidence-informed PL opportunities to all schools in the region to support local, regional, and national improvement priorities.

PL opportunities are continually considered, planned and published. They include:

- Live or synchronous PL – includes events, programmes, networks and conferences – live focused on a specific area.
- On-demand or asynchronous PL– includes assignments and on- demand recordings of PL focused on a specific area.
- Resources – includes guidance documents, toolkits, poster packs, blogs, vlogs, podcasts, etc.
- Regional collaboration projects – funded opportunities for school practitioners from across the CSC region to collaborate on a particular project focus.

A wide variety of data and intelligence is analysed, and research undertaken to identify and inform PL needs in the region. This includes:

- Analysis of improvement priorities of all schools in the region.
- Analysis of the business plan priorities from the 5 local authorities.
- Welsh Government policy, guidance and relevant grant terms and conditions.
- Regional recommendations from external reports, e.g., Welsh Government, OECD, Estyn, Children’s Commissioner, etc.
- Analysis of CSC PL engagement data and PL evaluations.
- Other relevant internal information, e.g., regional reports, SIPLs, all school risk meetings, etc.
- Analysis of other relevant external information, e.g., schools’ Estyn reports, etc.
- Other educational and relevant research.

All CSC PL and support is available at no charge to schools in the region. Most PL opportunities are developed and facilitated in partnership with schools within the regional self-improving system, the Central South Wales Challenge (CSWC). C&PL officers also work in partnership with LAs, other regional consortia and partnerships, Welsh Government (WG) and where appropriate, external consultants in the development and facilitation of PL.

6.1 Central South Wales Challenge

The CSWC is the partnership of all schools and settings across the CSC region working together to develop a self-improving system. The CSWC is evaluated annually to ensure it meets the current and evolving needs of schools and the wider system.

The CSWC includes of several components that support the self-improving school system. Each component plays a key role in ensuring that all schools and settings in the region can access appropriate PL and support. Schools and settings should engage with the components and PL activities that best support their school improvement priorities. The CSWC components are categorised broadly into two areas, namely ‘professional learning collaborations’ and ‘professional learning opportunities’, (see appendix A CSWC model 2022-2023).

Practitioners and school leaders, including governors, can contribute to the CSWC in key roles to support other schools across the region, working in partnership with the CSC school improvement team to provide professional learning and/or bespoke support to schools across the region.

Practitioners and school leaders, including governors, can contribute to the CSWC in key roles to support other schools across the region, working in partnership with the CSC school improvement team to provide professional learning and/or bespoke support to schools across the region. Roles include lead practitioners (LPs), leadership pathway programme mentors/coaches, cluster convenors, system leaders (SLs) and regional leaders of governance (RLGs).

During 2022-2023 the following CSWC contributors were from RCT schools:

- Lead Practitioners = 8
- Leadership pathways programme mentors/coaches = 15
- Cluster convenors = 16
- System Leader = 5
- Regional Leaders of Governance = 2

6.2 Regional Professional Learning Collaborations

All schools in the CSC region receive collaboration funding to support school leaders and practitioners to participate in collaborative school improvement activities, building capacity both within their school, across their cluster and networks, and within the wider system. These collaborative activities must be focused on the curriculum and wider reforms, and the desired outcome of high standards and aspiration aspirations for all.

During 2022-2023, the total collaboration funding to schools in the region was £5.018m. Each school in the region received a £7,000 lump sum plus £300 per FTE teacher. The total collaboration funded for schools in RCT was £1,382,075.

Headteachers in all schools were requested to complete a short multi-choice survey related to collaboration funding activities. This information is used effectively for knowledge, development and evaluation within the region, for example:

- To evaluate the impact of professional learning and support for schools.
- To inform the development of further professional learning opportunities.
- To target bespoke support to individual school, clusters and groups of schools as required.
- To report to Welsh Government, local authorities and CSC governance groups.
- To inform CSC self-evaluation and business planning.

During autumn 2022, 99% schools in the region submitted the survey. However, the undertaking of the survey in the summer term 2023 was significantly affected by action short of strike (ASOS) and the further non-engagement of headteachers across the region due the ongoing discussions regarding managing workload and bureaucracy. Only 40% (151/380) of headteachers in the region completed the summer term survey, 38/115 (33%) from schools in RCT. Therefore, the following information cannot be read as a full or accurate summary of progress of the majority of schools in RCT, but only of those 38 schools where headteachers completed the survey.

6.2.1 Clusters

Supporting collaboration across clusters continues to be a priority. Cluster collaboration is an expectation from Welsh Government and the Curriculum for Wales framework places a strong emphasis on cluster collaborations. Leaders need to create the time and space for staff to work alongside others within their school and with those across cluster schools to develop a shared understanding of progression and to ensure high aspirations for all learners. A wide range of support is provided to enable school leaders and teachers to engage in regular professional dialogue and to identify common priorities for the learners within their locality. This includes bespoke PL and support available to all clusters from the CSC curriculum and PL team to meet their specific improvement needs.

There are 16 clusters in RCT, excluding special schools and the pupil referral unit. Clusters are recommended to identify a named convenor, usually a senior leader from a school within the cluster, who receives £1500 to undertake this role. Cluster convenors are required to complete an SLA at the start of the year stating the focus of the cluster work, and an end of year evaluation of the work. They also facilitate the cluster in their collaborative work. During 2022-2023, all clusters in RCT identified a cluster convenor.

Of the RCT schools who returned the summer term collaboration survey, all who were collaborating with their cluster stated this included work on Curriculum for Wales. Of these, nearly all were focusing on developing a shared understanding of progression to support their curriculum design, planning and development along the 3-16 continuum. A majority were collaborating on the Areas of Learning and Experience (Areas) and teaching, whilst half of RCT clusters stated they have further work to do in developing approaches to incorporating the cross-cutting themes across their respective curricula. A very few stated that they needed to further develop relationships and understanding between secondary and primary practitioners in relation to the 3- 16 learning continuum.

Across the region, primary colleagues continued to report the challenge of secondary schools not being able to release subject specialists to support cluster working due to their need to prioritise current examination classes. Expertise to support all disciplines, subjects and Areas is available through the CSC curriculum and PL team and/or school-based lead practitioners.

Examples of effective cluster working in RCT:

The cluster INSET day facilitated by the CSC curriculum team allowed practitioners from across the cluster to deepen their knowledge and understanding of the Curriculum for Wales framework. The day provided the opportunity for practitioners across the schools to network and collaborate, allowing meaningful discussions to take place within and across all the Areas. The cluster are continuing their collaborative work and will participate in further discussions to ensure practitioners can collectively plan and deliver a high-quality curriculum for all learners.

Schools from the cluster were supported by the CSC curriculum team to help them consolidate their understanding of the Curriculum for Wales framework and further develop a shared understanding of progression amongst the practitioners across the schools. Within AoLE workshops, practitioners were supported to identify concepts and big ideas within the Statements of What Matters and consider the non-negotiables as they began to develop cluster progression maps.

6.2.2 School Improvement Groups (SIGs)

A majority of schools across the region are also collaborating on Curriculum for Wales (CfW) with schools from their sector across local authority areas. These self-facilitating school improvement groups (SIGs) predominately focus on progression, teaching, leadership and well-being.

During 2022-2023, 39 SIGs continued as cross LA school collaborations. Staff from the participating schools worked collaboratively on shared areas of school improvement.

Of the schools who submitted the summer term collaboration survey, 58% of schools in the region stated that they are working within a SIG. This included 29/38 (76%) of schools in RCT.

As with clusters, SIGs are required to identify a convenor who receives £1500 to undertake this role. SIG convenors are required to complete an SLA at the start of the year stating the focus of the group's work, and an end of year evaluation of the work. They also facilitate the group in their collaborative work.¹¹ SIG convenors were from schools in RCT.

SIG Focus Areas 2022-2023

SIG focus area	No of primary SIGs	No of secondary/ all age school SIGs	Total no of SIGs
Leadership	16	1	17
Teaching	13	3	16
Progression	12	4	16
Expressive Arts	3	0	3
Health & Well-being	5	0	5
Humanities	3	0	3
LLC: English	1	0	1
LLC: Cymraeg	2	0	2
Maths and Numeracy	3	0	3
Science & Technology	3	0	3
CCS: Literacy	3	1	4
CCS: Numeracy	4	1	5
CCS: Digital Competence	1	1	2
Whole school approach to mental health and well-being	12	1	13
Other, e.g., RSE, ALN, Diversity, RVE	10	4	14

Examples of effective SIG working:

Sharing best practice and processes related to ALN reform. Working together to establish and refine documentation and communication with stakeholders. SIG working has focussed on an important area for all schools due to new legislation. It is a small SIG but extremely useful to those involved as the schools represent different local authorities who have all provided different support and information for their schools. Therefore, all schools in the group were able to benefit from the support given. The work is linked to current priorities in all schools. Many ALNCoS work in isolation within their schools so being able to discuss their role and difficulties with a wider group outside of their cluster / LA is very useful and highly valued. Learners and families are better supported within the new ALN system. ALNCoS feel more knowledgeable and supported in their role.

To develop standards in the Learning and Teaching of Welsh Second Language. Both teachers and pupils worked together on this project. The most successful part of the project was the Criw Cymraeg from each school working together. The SIG has five schools that have been committed to working together. The meetings of this small group were well attended, the group worked well together and were happy to share resources with each other. The work was linked to the school's priorities, which for some are still ongoing. All staff disseminated practice back at their own school and the Criw Cymraeg taught other pupils in their school the Welsh playground games. The schools are using what they have learned to develop provision of Welsh Second Language throughout their schools, particularly the work of the Criw Cymraeg. The Criw Cymraeg were certainly more enthused in their role and aware of their responsibilities. The teachers involved all felt the sharing of practice was worthwhile and helpful.

6.2.3 School Leader and Practitioner Networks

Networks focus on school improvement related to specific or specific roles. These include regional networks that are facilitated by the CSC curriculum and PL team and/or lead practitioners, National Networks, and self-facilitated networks.

Participation in networks 2022-2023

	CSC		RCT	
	No of delegates	No of schools	No of delegates	No of schools
Regional networks*	1752	325	526	97
National Networks*	220	152	56	40
Self-facilitated networks**	n/a	93	n/a	25

*figures from attendance registers. ** figures from summer term collaboration survey.

CSC provides additional funding to support three focused self-facilitated networks for Welsh medium schools, and special schools and PRUs. During 2022-2023, each of these networks received £30k funding to plan and facilitate PL where their specific needs were not fully met

through the CSC PL offer. Most Welsh medium primary schools participated in 'Y Ffed' and all Welsh medium secondary schools participated in 'Gyda'n Gilydd'. All special schools and PRUs participate in their network.

6.3 Regional and Cross-Regional Professional Learning Opportunities

Engagement in professional learning (PL) events, networks, programmes, assignments, and conferences continues remains high, with school leaders and/or practitioners from nearly all schools in the region participating.

Engagement in CSC and Cross-regional Professional Learning

Year	CSC		RCT	
	No of delegates	% of schools	No of delegates	% of schools
2020-2021	12,117	99.7%	3165	100%
2021-2022	12,190	100%	3410	100%
2022-2023	10,298	99.7%	3018	100%

Summary of evaluations completed by delegates following participation in PL during 2022-2023:

- 94% stated that there would be a change to practice and that the learning would have an impact on pupils in their settings.
- 97% stated that they were confident in the knowledge of the topic following the PL.
- 98% stated that the PL would change their practice, with 95% planning to use what they have learned.
- 75% stated that the PL was linked to their school improvement priorities.
- 94% stated that the PL would impact on learners in their setting.

6.3.1 Bespoke support

Bespoke support is offered to all schools and groups/clusters/SIGs in the region to support priorities that are not fully met by the published PL opportunities. Requests for bespoke support are monitored, tracked and evaluated.

During 2022-2023, CSC received 171 requests for bespoke support. 270 (71%) of schools in the region received bespoke support, either individually, or as part of a group/cluster/SIG. This includes 99 schools in RCT.

Bespoke support is facilitated by the CSC curriculum and PL team and/or lead practitioners. Eight schools from RCT provided bespoke support to other school in the region. Schools are funded for providing this school-to-school support. In all bespoke support there is evidence of impact on the provision at either practitioner or leadership level in the receiving school.

6.3.2 Regional and National Funded Collaboration Projects

During 2022-2023, 65 regional funded collaboration projects were available to all CSC schools to focus on local, regional and national priorities. These included projects relating to curriculum, teaching and assessment.

Regional Collaboration Projects 2022-2023

CSC				RCT			
No of delegates	No of schools	% of schools	Funding to schools	No. delegates	No of schools	% of schools	Funding to schools
607	237	62%	£723,020	186	85	74%	£213,320

During 2022-2023, five national funded projects were available to all schools across the region focused on national priorities. These included projects related to curriculum design, cross-cutting themes, teaching and all Areas of Learning and Experience.

National Funded Projects 2022-2023

CSC				RCT			
No of delegates	No of schools	% of schools	Funding to schools	No. delegates	No of schools	% of schools	Funding to schools
48	38	10%	£261,500	10	9	8%	£52,900

6.3.3 School-led professional learning, enquiry, and research; and professional learning for developing practice and reflection.

During 2022-2023, the focus of this area continued to promote enquiry, research and reflective practice as an integral aspect of school improvement. This supports the development of Schools as Learning Organisations (SLO) and builds capacity in the education system.

Regional resources continue to be available to all schools to support the development and embedding of enquiry approaches. Promoting and developing practitioners' experience, knowledge and skills in research and enquiry is also embedded within regional PL programmes, networks and projects, as appropriate to the specific PL opportunity. Funding is provided to support schools' engagement in the WG-led research and enquiry projects.

During 2022-2023, 7 schools from RCT were engaged in the National Professional Enquiry Project (NPEP):

- Alaw Primary School
- Dolau Primary
- Maesgwyn
- St. John Baptist High School
- Ynyshir Community Primary
- Ysgol Garth Olwg

Y Pant Comprehensive School was part of the Embedding Research & Enquiry in Schools where they worked with HEI partners to share the enquiry model in their school and generate learning around an identified focus area to support the system to understand developing sustainable whole school models to engage with research and enquiry.

The expertise and support from Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) within these projects are valuable to the participating schools. In evaluations, teachers highlighted that HEIs support them with refining research questions, directing them to relevant literature and articles, methodology, data collection and analysis. However, teachers also raised concerns that without enough time that might not be possible, as some schools had not fully embedded their approaches.

During 2022-2023, three school leaders in the region were appointed as regional SLO champions, including leaders from Fern Federation and Ysgol Gynradd Dolau Primary School. During 2023/24 the SLO champions will be funded to support participants from the leadership pathway programmes to further develop their schools as learning organisations.

6.4 Professional Pathways

The Professional Pathways suite of PL and support seeks to equip practitioners at all levels, from teaching assistants through to senior leaders and governors across the region with the knowledge, experiences, skills and confidence to be effective in their roles.

6.4.1 Leadership Development

Developing strong and effective school leadership continues as a key priority for CSC and is essential in realising [Our national mission](#).

Leadership Pathway Programmes

A comprehensive programme of leadership development continues to be offered to all school leaders across the region, aligning to Welsh Government’s Leadership Development Pathway.



These programmes are national programmes that are coordinated and delivered through the region. All programmes have acquired official endorsement from the National Academy for Educational Leadership (NAEL). Middle Leadership Development and Senior Leader Development Programmes have an accreditation option through ILM. They seek to develop the knowledge, skills, experiences and confidence of school leaders, empowering them to maximise their impact on the progress and well-being of all learners.

Engagement in Leadership Pathway Programmes 2022-2023

CSC	Middle leaders	Senior leaders	Aspiring Headteacher	New/Acting Headteachers
No of practitioners	128	59	41	33
No of schools	69	53	40	33

Engagement in Leadership Pathway Programmes 2022-2023

RCT	Middle leaders	Senior leaders	Aspiring Headteacher	New/Acting Headteachers
No of practitioners	25	15	12	6
No of schools	15	13	12	6

All participants in the programmes were supported by an identified mentor/coach. For the middle leadership programme, this is a coach from within their own school. Over 40 headteachers and deputy headteachers from across the region act as coaches to support participants in the other leadership pathway programmes. During 2022-2023, school leaders from 15 schools in RCT undertook this funded role.

Regional networks are established to support middle and senior leaders who are registered on these programmes. Networks for both mentors/coaches and school leaders who facilitate these programmes take place at least termly and ensure consistency in the quality and support for all participants.

The national Experienced Headteacher Programme is aimed at headteachers with five years or more experience in the role to support them to reflect on their leadership journey to date, whilst developing a clear insight into the leadership skills required to create the conditions for change. This programme was due to be piloted during 2020/21 but was postponed due to Covid-19. During 2022-2023 a condensed version of this programme was delivered as a 2-day residential. One headteacher from a school in RCT attended. It provided a valuable opportunity for CSC headteachers to engage with colleagues from across Wales. This programme will be evaluated in March 2024 and will inform the future PL offer for experienced headteachers across Wales.

National Professional Qualification for Headship

During 2022-2023, CSC continued to facilitate assessment for the National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH). All candidates were supported by a CSC leadership mentor/coach, a serving headteacher within the region. These guide candidates through their leadership standards review and leadership experience task, and act as a valuable sounding board in preparation for their assessment centre interviews.

30 of the 44 candidates from schools across the region met the criteria and were awarded NPQH. 10 of the 16 candidates from schools in RCT schools met the criteria and were awarded the NPQH.

System Leaders

This programme has been developed by CSC to extend the leadership pathway. Developing system leadership is critical to support schools in curriculum and wider education reform and achieve equity and excellence for all. The CSC System Leader programme is aimed at experienced headteachers who wish to further develop and support other schools and the wider education system.

A total of 14 headteachers have participated in this pilot programme, including seven headteachers from RCT schools. Upon successful completion of a comprehensive PL

programme, the system leaders were made available for deployment across the region to support schools requiring improvement. Improvement Partners work closely with the system leader to plan, monitor and evaluate the impact of this leadership support. In 2022-2023, one system leader was deployed to support leadership in an RCT schools.

A formal evaluation to analyse the impact of this pilot programme will be completed in Spring 2024.

Other Professional Learning and Support for School Leaders

During 2022-2023, CSC continued to provide high-quality support for school leaders, including governors, via a wide variety of PL events, conferences, assignments, programmes, and networking and collaboration opportunities. This includes providing access to the national coaching and mentoring programme delivered by Results Driven Group, as well as the regional programme of coaching and mentoring (see section 6.4.6).

6.4.2 School Governors

Governors are a crucial part of the leadership of schools. They have an essential role in supporting school improvement and promoting the highest standards and aspirations for all learners. To undertake their strategic role in the school effectively, governors need to ensure they have the relevant up-to-date knowledge and skills.

In partnership with Local Authority Governor Support Services, CSC continues to provide a range of high-quality, evidence-informed PL opportunities, and support and guidance for school governors. CSC facilitates the delivery of mandatory PL for governors. All new governors must attend the understanding data, and new to governors sessions. New chairs of governors must also attend the new chair of governors session.

In addition to the mandatory training, CSC also provides PL sessions for governors in relation to key areas. During 2022-2023, 76 regional PL sessions, 1251 governors engaged with these sessions, including governors from 106 (92%) schools in RCT.

Topics covered included:

- Enabling Equity & Excellence – 3 sessions
- Curriculum for Wales (CfW) – 6 sessions
- Headteacher Performance Management – 2 sessions
- Introduction to Coaching Skills – 6 sessions
- School as Learning Organisations – 3 sessions
- Developing Welsh in Education – 2 sessions
- Introduction to the Self-Evaluation Toolkit – 4 sessions
- Religion, Values and Ethics (RVE) – 2 sessions
- The School Evaluation, Improvement Accountability Framework – 1 session
- Supporting Schools Through Inspection – 2 sessions
- Well-being – 6 sessions

Bespoke support is also available to governing bodies from the CSC Regional Leaders of Governance (RLG). Requests for bespoke support from an RLG must be discussed with the Headteacher, Chair of Governors and Improvement Partner.

The CSC governor self-evaluation toolkit continues to be available to support governing bodies across the region.

Regional Leaders of Governance (RLGs)

Where governance works well, it strengthens school leadership and creates a culture of high ambition where all children and young people are expected to thrive. The best governing bodies have an in-depth knowledge of their schools and provide insightful challenge and support to help drive school performance and ensure that there is robust financial accountability and oversight. Where governance is ineffective, it is important that governing bodies access high quality support and guidance so that they can develop and improve.

CSC RLGs are highly effective governors with extensive experience from schools within the region. RLGs provide strategic and operational support for schools where governance is identified as an area for improvement.

During 2022-2023, 13 RLGs continued to support school improvement across the region. Two RLGs are serving governors from schools in RCT.

CSC LA Principal Improvement Partners, in collaboration with the headteacher, the school's Governing Body and the LA, are responsible for identifying and brokering support by an RLG for a school. In 2022-2023, one governing body of a school in RCT was supported by an RLG.

RLGs also support the facilitation of PL for school governors and other regional school improvement activities related to governors, as appropriate.

A formal evaluation analysing the impact of RLGs will be completed in spring 2024.

6.4.3 Teaching Assistant Learning Pathway (TALP)

CSC continues to offer the three national TALP programmes, providing a learning pathway to support teaching assistants (TAs) throughout their career. This includes TAs who wish to gain Higher Level Teaching Assistant (HLTA) status. Each programme builds on the knowledge, understanding and skills of the TA. All programmes are offered in Welsh and English to all TAs across the region.

During 2022-2023, 139 practitioners engaged in the regional TALP programmes, including 36 TAs from schools in RCT. Of the 64 practitioners from across the region who completed the Aspiring HLTA programme, 50 (78%) were assessed and awarded HLTA status, 13 of these TAs were from schools in RCT.

Bespoke support for TAs was made available to all schools and clusters across the region from summer term 2023. This support is provided by two HLTAs seconded to CSC from schools in the region.

During 2022, CSC launched a TALP online community which is updated regularly with resources to support TAs in their role. To date 92 TAs have joined the community.

Experienced TAs and HLTAs also have the opportunity to become trained HLTA assessors, PL facilitators, and TA coaches, supporting other TAs within their own school and in other schools in the region. There are currently 19 trained assessors, three from schools in RCT.

6.4.4 Initial Teacher Education (ITE)

During 2022-2023, 272 schools across the region, including 72 schools in RCT, supported student teachers in partnership with five ITE providers to deliver a range of ITE programmes and routes.

Of these schools, 12 are Lead Schools across the partnerships and 14 have employer status with the Open University (with salaried students). The remainder are placement schools.

The total number of students across Wales awarded Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) in 2023 was 1,054. Of those, 501 graduates were enrolled with Cardiff Metropolitan University.

Between February and June 2023, a presentation on Newly Qualified Teacher (NQT) Induction was given by the cross-regional team to ITE students in all Welsh universities. To bridge the transition into employment, all QTS graduates were invited to sign up to a region for support and communications over the summer period. By August 2023, 319 QTS graduates joined the CSC QTS team increasing from 223 in 2021-22, and 150 in 2020-21. 89 QTS graduates attended a CSC 'Welcome to the region' session in August 2023.

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6.4.5 Newly Qualified Teacher Induction

Induction is a statutory requirement for all NQTs in Wales who have gained QTS. Schools have a statutory obligation to provide NQTs with induction support. CSC acts as the Appropriate Body (AB) for all NQTs in the region.

CSC works in partnership with schools in the region to ensure that every NQT in the region has the necessary support during their induction period. NQTs work with induction mentors (IMs), external mentors (EMs), external verifiers (EVs) and the CSC team to undertake induction. CSC, as the AB, leads the necessary verification and administrative processes with regards to induction.

During 2022-2023, there were 570 NQTs in the region. The professional learning offer for induction included:

- National events and programmes, facilitated by regional consortia and other partnerships.
- The CSC NQT Aspire programme, developed and facilitated by the 22 Aspire schools across the region.
- Networking opportunities
- Coaching and mentoring PL for IMs, EMs and EVs

The national induction PL programme was offered between September and December 2022.

Engagement in the National Induction PL 2022-2023

CSC			RCT		
EVs	IMs/EMs	NQTs	EVs	IMs/EMs	NQTs
100%	81%	94%	100%	76%	84%

The CSC 'Aspire' programme is facilitated by trained tutors in 22 host schools from across the region, including all phases and sectors. Six schools in RCT facilitate the Aspire programme:

- Hawthorn High School
- Miskin Primary School
- Tonyrefail Community School
- Treorchy Comprehensive school
- Y Pant Comprehensive School
- Ysgol Nantgwyn

The programme consists of high-quality PL, combining discussion, research, sharing, observation, learning walks and time for reflection. During 2022-2023, 363 NQTs, including supply NQTs (88% of all new NQTs), engaged with the programme, including 79 (92%) NQTs from schools RCT.

Over the 5-day programme, between 93-97% of NQTs evaluated that the sessions enhanced their knowledge and were relevant and appropriate for their needs. 85% of NQT profiles that passed assessment in July 2023 specifically referenced regional PL in their evidence and the positive impact the PL had on their practice (an increase from 70% the previous year).

Three schools took part in a pilot project to explore a holistic approach to demonstrating the Professional Standards for Teaching and Leadership in their online profile. NQTs undertook one enquiry per term, rather than 10-20 professional learning experiences and feedback was positive. The pilot has now been adopted as a national pilot across Wales, that may lead to shaping a new approach for all NQTs in the future. Treorchy Comprehensive School was involved in this project.

With the exception of the leadership pathway programmes, NQTs can also engage with all other CSC PL opportunities, support and resources.

A number of regional PL and support activities were made available for all IMs, EMs and EVs throughout 2023-23. These included:

- Monthly updates posted in the CSC online community.
- A coaching and mentoring programme – spring 2023.
- LA cluster meetings – 16 attended RCT cluster hosted at Ysgol Nantgwyn.
- A 'Mentoring Matters' conference held in 2023 July. 15 RCT mentors attended, and the mentor from Ysgol Nantgwyn was invited to present their practice at the event.

All evaluations provided positive feedback and mentors welcomed the continuation of these opportunities to meet and support each other to effectively undertake their role next year.

In July 2023, 325 NQTs passed induction: 316 on contracts and 9 short term supply (STS). These included 57 Welsh Medium and 268 English Medium practitioners, 80 of whom were working in schools in RCT. There were no fails processed.

6.4.6 Coaching and Mentoring

CSC continues to embed its strategy for coaching and mentoring. The strategy aims to build a sustainable culture of coaching and mentoring across the region to support school improvement. During 2022-2023, CSC provided a range of opportunities for schools to access PL in coaching and mentoring.

Engagement in Coaching and Mentoring PL 2022-2023

CSC			RCT		
Regional programme	National Programme	ILM Awards	Regional programme	National Programme	ILM Awards
50	48	17	7	6	2

The regional PL coaching and mentoring programme is aimed at practitioners and school leaders, including governors, who want to develop their knowledge and skills in effective coaching and mentoring. The programme is facilitated regionally by 6 lead practitioners who have attended the national programme, including leaders from Aberdare Town Church in Wales Community School, Ysgol Hen Felin and Gwauncelyn Primary School.

The national coaching and mentoring programme continues to be facilitated by Results Driven Group. This a train the trainer programme and participants can then deliver the training to others in their school and clusters across CSC.

Following the national programme, participants continue to have the opportunity to participate in an ILM L3, 5 or 7 Award in Coaching and Mentoring.

16 clusters in RCT now have a trained facilitator in coaching and mentoring PL.

6.5 Professional Learning and Support for Curriculum, Teaching and Assessment

There are wide-ranging [PL opportunities](#) available to all schools focused on curriculum, teaching and assessment. This includes regional, cross-regional and WG-led PL events, programmes, conferences, networks, projects, guidance and resource.

In line with Welsh Government guidance, CSC has defined a school's curriculum as '*everything a learner experiences in pursuit of the four purposes. It is not simply what we teach, but how we teach and crucially, why we teach it*'. Therefore, CSC curriculum PL and support includes:

- 'the what' - curriculum design and progression
- 'the how' - pedagogy/teaching
- 'the how do you know' - assessment

- underpinned by ‘the why’ - Our national mission and the four purposes.

As such, support for teaching and assessment is embedded throughout CSC’s curriculum PL and support, as well as through dedicated PL opportunities.

Engagement in regional PL focused on curriculum, teaching assessment 2022-2023

	CSC			RCT		
	Regional PL (excl. networks)	Regional networks	Regional funded collaboration projects	Regional PL (excl. networks)	Regional networks	Regional funded collaboration projects
No of delegates	5416	1868	573	1233	511	173
No of schools	370	324	235	108	96	83
% of schools	97%	85%	62%	93.9%	83.5%	72.2%

Over 80 focused regional curriculum networks were available to all schools across the region. These provide opportunities for practitioners and leaders to reflect, share processes and approaches, and critically self-evaluate and improve practice related to all areas of curriculum reform. These included 24 secondary subject discipline networks active across the CSC region to support the development of the level 2 and level 3 qualifications. 99 practitioners across 16 (94%) secondary schools in RCT participated in these networks.

In July 2023, the CSC Curriculum Conference focused on the ‘What, How and How Do We Know’. Nearly 200 practitioners from over a third of schools across the region attended this in-person event, including 41 school leaders from 33 (29%) schools in RCT. Eight schools and clusters from across the region led high-quality workshops, sharing their practice. The workshops focused on progression, teaching, assessment, cluster working, Welsh and the cross-curricular skills. Ysgol Gynradd Dolau Primary School led a workshop on ‘An approach to developing Relationships and Sexuality Education’. [Recordings](#) of all sessions are also available to all schools on the CSC website.

CSC has also developed a [CSC Design Thinking Model](#) that provides a scaffold for schools in curriculum design and refinement. Schools and clusters can engage with this model independently or with bespoke support from the CSC team.

Bespoke support for is available to all schools and clusters/groups of schools, tailored to meet the needs of school leaders and practitioners to support school improvement priorities related to curriculum, teaching and assessment. During 2022-2023, CSC received 171 requests for bespoke support related to these areas. 97 were related to schools in RCT.

6.5.1 Curriculum for Wales (CFW)

Improvement Partners (IPs) continue to support all schools in school improvement related to curriculum and the wider educational reforms. This includes supporting improvement planning and self-evaluation activities related to CfW, signposting relevant CSC PL opportunities, and brokering bespoke support from the CSC curriculum and PL team.

For all primary schools (all year groups), and special schools, the implementation of CfW commenced in September 2022. Mandatory roll-out for secondary schools and PRUs commences with Year 7 and Year 8 in September 2023. However, secondary schools and PRUs were given the option of rolling out to Year 7 in September 2022. Three of the secondary schools in RCT implemented CfW in Year 7 from September 2022.

During 2022-2023, CSC provided detailed reports for each LA related to the school's implementation, PL and support.

Roll-out September 2022

All nursery, primary and all-age schools region have designed, developed and implemented a curriculum considering the CfW framework and the needs of all learners. The curriculum in all these schools will be kept under review and further developed and refined through a range of activities within the school's self-evaluation cycle. All these schools have published their curriculum summaries and nearly all have developed transition plans with their cluster.

Two PRUs and nine secondary schools in RCT designed, developed, and implemented a curriculum for Year 7 considering the CfW framework and the needs of all learners. They also designed, planned and trialled a curriculum for Year 8, with a view to year-on-year roll-out.

These schools continue to further develop their approaches to curriculum, teaching and assessment as appropriate to their school vision, ensuring they are meeting the needs of their pupils in supporting learner progress.

Roll-out September 2023

During the 2022-2023 academic year, seven secondary schools in RCT designed, developed and trialled a curriculum for Years 7 and 8 for implementation in September 2023. During the summer term of 2023 each of the governing bodies (management committee in the case of the PRU) formally adopted their respective curricula and curriculum summaries were published.

The PRU and two of the non-roll-out secondary schools stated they were fully compliant with the mandatory elements of CfW for Years 7 and 8, whilst one secondary school acknowledged that they had further work to do in ensuring compliance with all mandatory elements and were supported in this. Two secondary schools stated they have minor work to do in further developing, trialling and finalising transition planning with their cluster whilst another stated themselves as having significant additional work to develop in this area. This school was further supported by their IP and the curriculum and PL team to achieve full legal compliance of their curriculum for autumn term 2023.

5.2.2 Literacy / Languages, Literacy and Communications: English

The CSC [professional learning offer](#) for Literacy/LLC: English continues to be strong. It supports schools to provide a curriculum that enables learners to be confident and critical receivers of language, through listening and reading, and effective producers of language, in speech and writing, which they can apply across all areas. 747 delegates from 224 (59%) schools in the region engaged in LLC PL programmes, events, conferences, assignments, and networks. This included 198 delegates from 69 (60%) schools in RCT.

Engagement in CSC LLC PL opportunities 2022-2023

RCT	Regional PL (excl. networks)	Regional networks	Regional funded collaboration projects
No of practitioners	133	65	78
No of schools	58	37	65
% of schools	50%	32%	57%

Bespoke support for Literacy/LLC: English is available to all schools and clusters/groups of schools. During 2022-2023, CSC received requests for bespoke support from 33 schools in RCT related to this area.

Whole school approach to oracy and reading.

Engagement with the Welsh Government whole school approach to oracy and reading is strong. Networks and online communities provide the vehicle for sharing the national toolkit and effective practice. In 2018 CSC has developed strategic and comprehensive plan to systematically improve provision for oracy. Since 2018 CSC has funded over 200 teachers to engage in professional learning facilitated by Voice 21. This has meant that each cluster has at least one 'oracy champion' to support oracy development. In addition to this currently CSC is funding 28 schools to work towards becoming an accredited centre of excellence with Voice 21. This includes:

- Ysgol Garth Olwg
- Treorchy Comprehensive School
- Pontypridd High School
- Cwmclydach Primary School
- Darren Park Primary School
- Cwmdar Primary School
- Penrhiwceibr Primary School

In line with CSC's ethos of a self-improving system these schools will be trained to support and develop oracy across the region.

Support for reading has always been central to the CSC professional learning offer. The PL offer has breadth and depth drawing together the different strands that make for effective reading. It not only targets the teaching of reading from early reading through to text comprehension, but also addresses how building progression into a reading curriculum is vital

to develop reading fluency, confidence, and resilience. Central to CSC reading support are a number of PL learning programmes:

- [Effective Teaching of Early Reading Skills](#) - this PL programme supports foundation phase practitioners to strengthen their understanding of how to teach early reading skills in nursery and reception classes.
- [An Introduction to Guided Group Reading](#) - this PL programme focuses on supporting the teaching of guided group reading.
- [Reading Reconsidered](#) - this intensive PL programme comprises three full days of instructional and collaborative sessions to develop rigour, insight and precision in reading. The programme takes practitioners through evidence-informed actionable strategies to develop pedagogy and practice for reading.
- [Developing a Rigorous Reading Curriculum](#) - this PL programme supports practitioners to develop research informed strategies for curriculum planning and the teaching of reading.
- [Words Matter: Supporting the Teaching of Vocabulary](#) - this PL programme includes demonstration of how explicit vocabulary instruction can become part of a repertoire of teaching practice which produces, enhances and accelerates the learning of the lesson.

Practitioner Engagement in CSC Oracy and Reading PL Programmes 2022-2023

Synchronous oracy PL	Asynchronous oracy PL	Synchronous reading PL	Asynchronous reading PL
16	17	15	15

N.B. Synchronous PL is live and may be in-person or online. Asynchronous PL is online and on-demand, which may be pre-recorded sessions or assignments.

In evaluations completed by practitioners upon completion of the programmes, the following was stated:

- As a result of engaging with PL focused on LLC, nearly all (97%) participants considered that their knowledge had improved in some way.
- 98% of practitioners intended to use learning from the programme, and over three quarters (79%) of practitioners reported that the learning from the programmes will result in a more fundamental change to practice. (79%).
- Most participants (96%) anticipated the PL would have an impact on learners in their setting, while many participants (79%) felt the PL would have a significant impact on learners in their setting.

6.5.3 Mathematics and Numeracy

During 2022-2023, CSC continued to offer a [wide range of PL](#) for mathematics & numeracy for schools to engage to meet their improvement needs in this area. PL focused on the developing strategies to enhance the teaching of the Area of mathematics and numeracy, and the cross-curricular skill of numeracy, specifically:

- Developing numeracy through the five proficiencies.
- Using manipulatives to support mathematical understanding.
- Teaching strategies to enhance reasoning and problem solving.
- Strengthening numeracy across the curriculum.
- Enhancing whole school strategic development of numeracy.
- Providing opportunities to share effective practice across the region.

171 delegates from 26.8% (102) schools in the region engaged in PL programmes, events, conferences, assignments, and networks. This included 55 delegates from 32 (28%) schools in RCT.

Engagement in CSC Mathematics and Numeracy PL opportunities 2022-2023

RCT	Regional PL (excl. networks)	Regional networks	Regional funded collaboration projects
No of practitioners	14	41	6
No of schools	9	28	4
% of schools	7.8%	24.3%	3.5%

In evaluations completed by practitioners upon completion of the PL, the following was stated:

- All delegates reported that PL event improved their knowledge of mathematics and numeracy.
- Many delegates (88%) reported that engagement with mathematics and numeracy PL enhanced their knowledge and skills and agreed that it was appropriate to their needs and skill level.
- Many participants (79%) anticipated the PL would have an impact on learners in their setting, and over half (58%) plan to meet with senior leaders to discuss the professional learning.

Bespoke support for mathematics and numeracy is available to all schools and clusters/groups of schools. During 2022-2023, CSC received requests for bespoke support from 37 schools in RCT related to this Area.

A dedicated online community for mathematics and numeracy continues to provide the opportunity for practitioners from across the CSC region to meet and share their practice and to develop their understanding of local, region and national priorities related to mathematics and numeracy.

Cross regional working with the mathematics and numeracy teams from across Wales develops widescale shared understanding of progression and the five proficiencies within mathematics and numeracy and informs the creation of the regional PL offer.

6.5.4 Digital Learning

CSC continues to offer a comprehensive range of [PL opportunities](#) to all schools in enabling learners to be confident users of a range of technologies, from which they can apply and develop digital competence and proficiencies across all Areas.

PL opportunities also supported practitioners to develop the [effective use of technology](#) to enhance learning and teaching.

441 delegates from 143 (37%) schools in the region engaged in digital learning PL programmes, events, conferences, assignments, and networks. This included 133 delegates from 48 (41%) of schools in RCT.

Engagement in CSC Digital Learning PL opportunities 2022-2023

RCT	Regional PL (excl. networks)	Regional networks	Regional funded collaboration projects
No of practitioners	103	30	12
No of schools	35	23	8
% of schools	30.4%	20%	7%

In evaluations completed by practitioners upon completion of the PL, the following was stated:

- Many practitioners (88%) intend to share their PL with colleagues, and many (84%) also state their intention to discuss PL with senior leaders in their schools.
- Most participants (93%) reported the PL enhanced their knowledge of the subject matter. Many (86%) reported that the PL was appropriate to needs and skill level, and that it was relevant to their daily role.
- Many practitioners (77%) planned to use what they had learned in their roles and most (93%) reported that the PL would lead to at least some change in their practice.

Bespoke support for digital learning is available to all schools and clusters/groups of schools. During 2022-2023, CSC received requests for bespoke support from 15 schools in RCT related to this area.

There are two dedicated PL areas on the CSC website for schools to access a wide variety of high-quality PL opportunities, networks, resources and support in [Digital Competence](#) and [Digital Learning](#).

Leaders and practitioners are encouraged to work together through networks and funded projects, leading to peer-to-peer learning, sharing of best practices, resources, and innovative ideas for incorporating cross-curricular digital skills across the curriculum.

Partnerships with external organisations and industry professionals provide valuable opportunities for real-world application of digital skills and the promotion of the Hwb platform.

CSC actively supports the cross-regional digital learning team who have developed collectively a national resource to further support schools plan for progression in cross-curricular digital skills. This strengthens the regional PL offer and promotion of the Hwb platform.

6.5.5 Cymraeg - Welsh in Education

Developing Welsh continues as a key priority for CSC and is essential in realising [Our national mission: High standards and aspirations for all](#); [Cymraeg 2050: A Million Welsh Speakers](#) and the ambitious individual Local Authority Welsh in Education Strategic Plans (WESP) for 2022-2032.

Since September 2022, high-quality PL and support for Welsh at CSC is provided within 3 areas:

- Welsh Development - Leadership of Welsh to include Welsh ethos, heritage and culture in both Welsh and English Medium schools, and special schools/PRUs. Developing the use of informal Welsh through the Siarter Iaith framework and Welsh across the curriculum in English medium schools.
- Welsh Language Professional Learning – Supporting schools to plan Welsh language PL for practitioners strategically, and to report on practitioner Welsh language competence in the School Workforce Annual Census (SWAC) accurately. Developing the Welsh language skills of all practitioners and providing post-sabbatical support.
- Language, Literacy and Communication (LLC): Cymraeg - PL and support for the teaching and learning of oracy, reading, writing along with curriculum development in Welsh and English medium schools. The cross-curricular skill of literacy (Welsh) in Welsh medium schools.
- All Cymraeg PL, support and resources from CSC can be found in this [playlist](#).

Welsh Development

The leadership of Cymraeg is central to the CSC vision which is anchored in the progressive implementation of [Siarter Iaith / Siarter Iaith Cymraeg Campus](#) across all schools. A variety of PL programmes, networks and resources were provided to support schools to implement the [Siarter Iaith Framework](#) in all sectors, including special schools. Collaboration is key and effective practice is recognised and shared. CSC works in partnership with practitioners to enrich the PL opportunities, e.g., creation of [resources](#), sharing schools' practice, etc.

All schools have access to bespoke support to make progress along the Siarter Iaith Framework. Schools work towards progressive bronze, silver and gold awards and there is a clear verification process which is led by CSC officers and/or trained peer verifiers. There are clear [guidelines](#) for the verification process and successes are celebrated in a [Regional Awards Ceremony](#).

A successful [Dragons' Den](#) project was funded with the aim of engaging Criw Cymraeg. An example of the impact of the project can be seen [here](#).

Siarter Iaith / Siarter Iaith Cymraeg Campus Awards 2022-2023

	Bronze	Silver	Gold
CSC	47	28	8
RCT	14	8	5

During 2022-2023, 257 delegates from 155 (41%) schools in the region engaged in Welsh development PL programmes, events, conferences, assignments, and networks. This included 66 delegates from 44 (38%) schools in RCT.

Engagement in CSC Welsh development PL opportunities in 2022-2023

RCT	Regional PL (excl. networks)	Regional networks	Regional funded collaboration projects
No of practitioners	22	44	13
No of schools	16	35	13
% of schools	14%	30%	11%

Bespoke support for Welsh development is available to all schools and clusters/groups of schools. During 2022-2023, CSC received requests for bespoke support from 20 (11%) schools in RCT related to this area. In addition to this specific bespoke support, CSC provides regular guidance and support for schools to implement and make progress with Siarter Iaith / Siarter Iaith Cymraeg Campus.

The Leadership of Welsh Programme continued to be offered during 2022-2023. It is designed to support senior leaders to develop the Welsh language and culture on a whole school strategic level. 16 schools across the region participated in this programme, four from RCT.

In the programme evaluations,

- Most stated that they have a clear pathway for developing the Welsh Language, heritage and culture appropriate to their context.
- Most graded the degree to which the programme extended their skills and knowledge as 5/5.
- Most rated the professional learning as 5/5.
- Most stated that they have a robust understanding to lead Welsh successfully across their school and report that it will impact upon practice and behaviour.

CSC funds a collaboration project between Welsh and English medium schools focused on the development of pupil's oracy skills and use of incidental and informal Welsh. During 2022-2023, 17 schools in the region participated in this project, including five from RCT. Nearly all schools that participated in the project stated that it supported their PL positively as

practitioners and is beginning to improve pupils' Welsh oracy skills. Many schools report that they plan to continue collaborating beyond this funded project.

Welsh language professional learning

During 2022-2023, CSC continued to provide a [range of Welsh language PL for practitioners](#) in line with the Welsh Language Competency Framework. This included PL programmes, events and assignments.

783 delegates from 186 (49%) schools in the region engaged in Welsh language PL. This included 347 delegates from 51 (44%) schools in RCT.

In programme evaluations, most practitioners state that Welsh language PL will improve their Welsh language competence and skills and will change their behaviours and classroom practice.

Engagement in CSC Welsh language PL opportunities 2022-2023

RCT	Regional PL (excl. networks)	Regional networks	Regional funded collaboration projects
No of practitioners	347	n/a	1
No of schools	51		1
% of schools	44%		1%

Bespoke support for Welsh language PL is available to all schools and clusters/groups of schools. During 2022-2023, CSC received requests for bespoke support from 7 (6%) of schools in RCT related to this area.

CSC works in partnership with the Sabbatical Scheme and Welsh Government to recruit practitioners strategically. During 2022-2023, 22 teachers from the CSC region participated in various sabbatical scheme courses, including nine from schools in RCT. Post sabbatical support is provided by CSC to maximise the impact of practitioners upon their return to school e.g., introduction for headteachers, network meetings, one-to-one sessions, leadership of Welsh programme and collaboration opportunities.

Nearly all practitioners state that the sabbatical scheme has significantly developed their Welsh language competence along with their pedagogical knowledge of effective language teaching.

Languages, Literacy and Communication (LLC): Cymraeg

CSC PL intends to ensure that all learners in English medium schools develop their language skills with a view to speaking Welsh with confidence on completing statutory education. For Welsh medium schools, the intention is to support schools with the provision of Welsh literacy, ensuring that all learners develop their listening, reading, speaking, and writing skills in Welsh to access the breadth of a school's curriculum, and develop communication skills that enable them to adapt and thrive in a modern Wales.

- 39 practitioners from 26 English medium schools in the region engaged in LLC: Cymraeg PL for English medium schools. This included 21 practitioners from 15 schools in RCT. Additionally, 17 schools requested bespoke support.
- 85 practitioners from 31 Welsh medium schools in the region engaged in LLC: Cymraeg PL for Welsh medium schools. This included 18 practitioners from 9 schools in RCT. Additionally, 7 schools requested bespoke support.
- 11 practitioners from 3 schools in the region engaged in LLC: Cymraeg PL for dual language schools. This included 8 practitioners from 2 schools in RCT. Additionally, 1 school requested bespoke support.

The [CSC Continuum of Welsh Language Patterns](#) has been developed in accordance with CfW guidance and offers schools a linguistic foundation for designing their school level curriculum for Welsh in English medium schools. This continuum is a series of progressive and developmental language patterns. It has been divided into Progression Steps 1 to 3 in line with the Curriculum for Wales. Language patterns develop within each progression step as well as from one step to the next.

The continuum was piloted with six schools across the region during 2022-2023. Pontygwaith Primary School participated in this pilot. Feedback on the continuum was very positive, for example:

“ We found it so easy to use. The hyperlinks are genius, and the appendices are so useful for both staff and pupil knowledge. It's going to make teaching & learning Welsh more accessible and improve teacher confidence. Diolch yn fawr”.

“ Although we only used the document for a short period of time towards the end of the year, all staff in PS2 and PS3 were very positive about it and expressed relief, to see a layout and structure that worked for everyday classroom practise with more scaffold for not only children but staff too. A very positive initial response”.

From September 2023, the continuum will be available to support all schools in the region and beyond.

Network meetings for practitioners operate at a regional and cross regional level, designed in partnership with school-based lead practitioners where appropriate. In addition, CSC facilitates support for each local authority's immersion centre through termly network meetings.

Funded regional collaboration projects enabled schools to engage with co-construction of PL, which in turn forms part of the asynchronous offer to all schools in the region. A range of schools from CSC, including Ysgol Dolau Primary School, Pontygwaith Primary School and Y Pant School collaborated to produce exemplified support and guidance for the teaching of Welsh in an English medium school. Participating schools, indicated that they developed an improved understanding of effective curriculum design for pedagogy and language learning. Schools also fed back that the project impacted positively on both standards and engagement, for example:

“The children have developed a much greater passion for learning Welsh, our culture and our country. The children use Welsh naturally around the school and enjoy listening to Welsh music artists. The whole school environment has become passionate about and promotes the development of the Welsh language”.

“Confidence of teachers has grown in using the games and any barriers to playing the yard games have been removed, opportunities to play the games are regularly provided. Noticeable enjoyment of children engaging with the Welsh language through games. Criw Cymraeg enjoyed giving responsibility for the project and then seeing the positive impact on their peers’ enjoyment and Welsh language skills”.

6.5.6 Other Curriculum Areas

During 2022-2023, PL and bespoke support continued to be available from CSC to schools in all other areas of the curriculum, including:

- Expressive arts.
- Humanities.
- Health and well-being.
- Science and technology.
- Relationships and sexuality education.
- Religion, values, and ethics.
- Careers and work-related experiences.

6.5.7 Qualifications and Post-16 Education

Secondary schools are supported to develop their curriculum for current GCSE/level 2 and A-Level/level 3 qualifications through regional networks. Many networks are facilitated by Lead practitioners from across the region and encourage the sharing of practice. Bespoke support is also available to all schools in the region where qualifications improvement priorities are not fully met by the available networks. Qualifications reform updates, opportunities for school participation and consultation communications from Qualifications Wales and WJEC were shared to all schools and cascaded through network conversations. CSC area leads and representatives from schools across the region participated in stakeholder groups to support the development of the new Made-For-Wales GCSEs. This work will continue into the next academic year as specifications are developed. In collaboration with WJEC, CSC will support ongoing PL requirements for leaders and practitioners for the revised specifications.

PL and bespoke support continued to be available to all schools with sixth forms across the region. During 2022-2023, CSC PL focused on a culture of enquiry and collaboration to drive self-improvement in post-16 settings. Key areas included curriculum offer, self-evaluation, transition, retention, well-being, and learner progress.

Engagement in Post-16 PL 2022-2023

RCT	Regional PL Post 16	Regional PL Welsh Bacc.	Regional funded collaboration projects	National PL/Projects Post-16
No of practitioners	19	6	13	5
No of schools	5	3	8	5

Through the funded project work, collaborating schools reported successful improvements in relation to the implementation of VESPA (Vision, Effort, Systems, Practice, Attitude) approaches to improve self-regulation and metacognition strategies and support learner progress and attainment. Bilingual resources were also developed via the project work to support all schools across Wales accessing the VESPA platform. Planning for learner well-being has been supported through the inclusion of the Mental Health UK Bloom project.

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. 51 delegates from 19 schools in the region engaged in this network. This included 14 delegates from four schools in RCT.

The [Welsh Baccalaureate/Skills Challenge Certificate network](#) meetings were available for all qualification levels. 27 delegates from 13 schools in the region engaged in this network. This included six delegates from three schools in RCT. WJEC regional support officers attended CSC meetings to share updates and resources, and support qualification reform. Bespoke support was available in this area through the appointed CSC Welsh Baccalaureate/Skills Challenge Certificate lead practitioner.

The [Post-16 Education: Newly Qualified Teacher Module](#) (NQT) has been created cross regionally as an optional module for the National NQT induction programme. The module highlights how post-16 education differs from other phases of education, the key priorities for this phase of education and the importance of effective transition (post-16 and post-18) to support learner aspiration and destinations. This is hosted on the Welsh Consortia website.

CSC takes a lead role in the cross-regional PL programme. The [National Post-16 Leadership Development Programme](#) attracts aspiring, new and established post-16 leaders from across Wales, where 12 CSC school leaders have enrolled for 2023-24 to date. A joint [Post-16 PL programme](#) has also been developed to reflect national priorities and collaboration across Wales which will begin in the 2023-24 academic year.

7.0 Equity and Vulnerable Learners

Central South Consortium continues to work in partnership with local authorities and other stakeholders to support equity in all schools across the region, with high standards and aspirations for all. A key driver to this work is the fostering of effective partnership with key stakeholders across the local authorities to support schools work on areas including attendance, exclusions, looked after children and well-being.

CSC has also worked effectively with the Implementation Lead for the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Health Board on supporting schools in their work on the 'Framework on embedding a whole-

school approach to emotional and mental wellbeing'. CSC have also delivered professional learning sessions for governors to support the understanding of the requirements for the schools in adopting the statutory framework. 46 governors from RCT attended these sessions.

CSC has facilitated PL sessions focused on equity and vulnerable learners. This included within the professional pathway's programmes, including Aspiring Headteacher and Aspiring Higher Level Teaching Assistant Development programmes.

The Lead for Well-being and Vulnerable Groups continues to provide bespoke support to individual schools and clusters focused on equity and vulnerable learners.

The Lead for Well-being and Vulnerable Groups continues to provide bespoke support to individual schools and clusters focused on equity and vulnerable learners.

CSC receives PDG Grant funding for the following areas:

- Looked after Children aged 3- 15
- PDG Adviser
- Consortia Led Funding

Previously, CSC has provided regional PL opportunities specifically aimed to support Looked After Children. However, since 2022, this funding has been allocated to the individual LAs to provide bespoke professional learning for schools focusing specifically on the needs of that LA. This ensures local knowledge of the needs of schools in LAs is provided and removes any duplication of support.

7.1 Enabling Equity and Excellence

The CSC 'Enabling Equity and Excellence' document aims to promote thought and discussion amongst a school community, to ask pertinent questions as to how equitable the organisation is, and how effective it is in transforming policy into practice to ensure excellence for all learners. All schools must ask:

- Do we know every learner well?
- How do we know about them?
- What experiences, knowledge and skills do they bring?

Over 70% of school in the region have reported engagement with the document to support their school improvement.

During 2022-2023, CSC led a collaboration project involving 11 schools from across the five local authorities focusing on an element of enabling equity and excellence linked to their school improvement priorities. Treorchy Comprehensive School, Alaw Primary School and Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhondda participated in this structured programme which included face-to-face PL sessions, intersessional tasks and some peer reviews. The pilot supported schools to manage change according to their individual contexts, draw on the expertise and support of CSC and the LAs, and learn from the experiences of other schools in the mission to achieve equity and excellence for all learners. The work of the pilot group was also instrumental in supporting and informing the work of CSC in supporting equity in schools and driving transformational change across the organisation.

7.2 Pupil Development Grant (PDG)

April 2022 – March 2023, the PDG was allocated to schools at a rate of £1,150 per learner to support:

- Learners who are eligible for free school meals (e-FSM) and who are educated in maintained schools.
- Eligible learners aged 3 and 4 years old educated in maintained schools.
- Eligible learners who are singly registered in pupil referral units (PRUs) and education other than at school (EOTAS).
- Eligible learners in early years settings where the Foundation Phase is delivered.
- Looked after children, and former looked after children who have been adopted from care or who are subject to a special guardianship or residence order aged 3-15.

The allocations were based on Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC) 2021.

All schools continue to be supported by their Improvement Partner (IP) to ensure that the PDG plan/strategy is appropriate and meets the bespoke needs of their eFSM learners and in accordance with the eight focus areas stated in the Welsh Government Guidance:

- High quality learning and teaching - with a particular focus on the pedagogy used by teachers, the role of support staff and the professional learning provided for practitioners.
- Community schools - with a particular emphasis on the role of Family Engagement Officers, the role of the school within the wider community and work with other children's and family agencies.
- Early childhood education and care, developing the long-term vision to ensure equity and quality for our youngest learners wherever they access education or care which supports their learning and development.
- The health and well-being of children and young people - in line with the Framework on Embedding a Whole-School Approach to Emotional and Mental Well-being.
- Developing high aspirations through strong relationships - aligned to the role of the Careers Service, the Youth Engagement and Progression Framework, the Young Person's Guarantee, and the Seren Network.
- The Curriculum for Wales and qualifications - focusing on the importance of language development, meta-cognition and self-regulation as being key enablers of success within the new curriculum and offering learners a wide range of qualification routes.
- Leadership - focusing on its importance in overcoming the impact of poverty on attainment and the leadership of community schools.
- Post-16 progression- through forging strong partnerships with further education institutions, work-based learning providers and other post-16 providers.

Summary of the analysis of PDG plans/strategies of schools within RCT for 2022-2023 (not including schools who did not engage with their IP due to action short of strike).

- Many schools (75%) have an appropriate PDG plan / strategy that meets the needs of eFSM learners across the school. In a minority (25%), the plans are deemed as developing.

- Most schools (92%) report that the PDG plan resulted in changes in practices or provision. A few schools (8%) report that the grant has not resulted in any changes in practice or provision.
- Many schools in (75%) report that the PDG plan has been effective in improving learner well-being. A minority of schools (25%) report that this aspect is developing.
- Over half (58%) schools report that the PDG funding has been effective in improving achievement of eFSM pupils. In around half of schools (42%), this aspect is developing.
- Many schools (75%) report that their self-evaluation and MER activities support vulnerable learner progress. In a minority (28%) schools, this aspect is developing.
- Many schools (71%) report that the teaching and learning of vulnerable pupils is effective. A minority (29%) report that the teaching and learning of vulnerable pupils is developing.
- A majority of schools (63%) report that they are taking steps to be poverty aware, and a majority (33%) state that these aspects are developing. Very few (4%) are in need of support.
- Many schools (71%) report that they are effective in addressing the attendance and exclusion needs of eFSM pupils. A few (21%) schools report that this aspect is developing. In a very few schools (8%) this aspect is an area that requires support.

Strong practice noted included:

- Effective use of Family Liaison Officers to work with targeted families.
- Graduated systems in place when attendance is below average.
- Bespoke programmes and intervention to avoid excluding vulnerable groups.
- Careful monitoring of pupil attendance.
- Staff accessing professional learning.

CSC continues to work with the LA leads for looked after children (LAC), including the virtual headteachers and the LAC Coordinators, to support the planning and evaluation of the PDG LAC grant. Looked After Children in Education (LACE) meetings have taken place regularly. In response to feedback from cluster leads, amendments have been made to LAC cluster plans and evaluations.

CSC facilitated LA cluster leads meetings within each LA to identify PL needs. As part of the quality assurance processes the CSC Lead ensured that all cluster plans had been received and approved. This process will continue in 2023-24.

7.3 Raising the Attainment of Disadvantaged Youngsters (RADY)

A significant number of disadvantaged learners in the region are not realising their potential outcomes. In 2021/22, following discussions with the local authority, CSC engaged Challenging Education to facilitate the RADY Programme in targeted schools. Ferndale Community School and Treorchy Comprehensive School have participated in this programme.

RADY is a support programme for schools to mitigate the impact of poverty and disadvantage for identified learners through an equity approach. The principles of RADY support the

regional approach to achieving equity as set out in CSC's Enabling Equity and Excellence document, and links to the Equity and Well-being priority area of CSC's business plan.

The RADY programme has also supported RCT's improvement priority, 'ensuring equity and support for vulnerable learners and their families'.

RADY is a long-term school improvement strategy. It facilitates cultural change, a hearts and minds approach. It focuses on supporting schools to become equitable in all aspects of the education they provide, ensuring that those learners who need it most get the extra support required to succeed.

RADY consists of a range of strategies which focus on disadvantage and disadvantaged pupils in schools. These start with what Challenging Education term the 'uplift', a mechanism for raising the targets, and subsequently the aspirations, set for pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds. This catalyst is applied at the start of a phase of education, supporting long-term strategies to ensure the 'extra' makes life-changing differences to these pupils.

After applying the catalyst, schools on their RADY journey integrate the RADY principles as a 'golden thread' through their school development plan. This is to ensure that equity is embedded in all aspects of school life, ensuring every member of staff has an understanding and commitment to an equitable approach.

All participating schools have received visits from RADY consultants. The consultants work with senior leaders in each school to develop the conditions required for effective cultural, policy and practice change to affect equitable provision and outcomes for all learners.

All schools in the RADY programme also have access to an online suite of practical resources, 'Thinking Differently'. These resources on the areas of pedagogy, metacognition, and family and community engagement aimed specifically at eFSM learners. These resources are also available to all schools across the authority.

To date, impact has been recognised in the participating schools where the school leadership is strong and stable. In these schools, leaders have demonstrated the vision, drive, commitment, and capacity to engage purposefully with RADY, and enact the RADY principles to provide equitable experiences for disadvantaged learners. It is reported that as a result, the culture and ethos of the school has been affected powerfully by the RADY programme.

8.0 CSC CONTRIBUTION TO SUPPORTING LA PRIORITIES (APRIL 2022 – OCTOBER 2022)

As part of CSC's business planning process, RCT provides CSC with their priorities in the Spring Term 2021, and these were built into CSC's business plan for 2022/23. As agreed by CSC's Joint Committee, CSC provide an update on progress supporting RCT's priorities on a twice-yearly basis.

(See Appendix B for a detailed evaluation of the progress that has been made towards RCT's priorities)

9.0 VALUE FOR MONEY

The consortium's funding is made up of two principal sources:

- Core LA Funding with individual LA contributions.
- Dedicated funding for schools and school improvement activities routed through consortia by WG. Major WG grants, such as the Regional Consortia School Improvement grant (RCSIG), are administered by consortia and delegated to schools via LAs. Consortia retain elements of the grants (amounts set in the terms and conditions of each grant) on a regional basis to support local and national school improvement priorities.

9.1 Efficient Use of Core Contributions

In line with the legal agreement between the five local authorities making up Central South Consortium, LAs commission CSC to provide a school improvement service predominantly funding Improvement Partners to work with schools.

In 2022-23, the consortium received £3,624,875 contributions from the five LAs across the region. The funding was used to support the core function of school improvement. The budget provided to CSC by RCT represents 0.4 % of RCT's total education budget in 2022/23 and 2.4% of the budget retained by the LA.

During 2022/23 RCT LA contributed £976,904 core funding to CSC. This core funding is determined using the Indicator Based Assessment for education (IBA) and agreed by Joint Committee. In 2022/23, RCT contributed 27% of CSC's core budget.

For every £1 of core budget received from LAs, 71 pence is spent on front-line delivery.

To realise our joint ambitions for the region's learners, the core funding provided by LAs is used to provide:

- Principal Improvement Partners (LA)
- Improvement Partners
- Business Intelligence Unit (BIU)
- Information Management
- Communications Team
- Governor Support
- Finance Team
- Outdoor Education
- SACRE (Standing Advisory Councils for Religious Education)
- Project Management

Summaries of the work provided in the areas listed above to support Cardiff and Cardiff schools, can be found [here](#).

9.2 Local Authority Annex

During the 2022-23 financial year, the RCT LA Annex Total Budget of £33,957 was used for the following priorities:

- To strengthen and further consolidate CfW development across RCT schools through exemplification of strong practice.

Evaluation of Impact

The impact of this work led to strengthened collaborative working between the eight schools involved in the CfW project which was shared more widely at a 'good practice' conference for RCT's Primary Headteachers. It also positively impacted upon curriculum planning, pedagogy, and practice and the second year of this project will give further opportunity for the development of assessment approaches involving both primary and secondary schools.

For the 2023-24 financial year, the RCT LA Annex Total Budget of £26,117 is targeted to meet the following priority:

'Supporting Educational settings to deliver a transformational curriculum, high quality teaching and learning and improved outcomes for all for the AoLE of Health and Wellbeing.'

Outcome Measures

- Strong collaboration, planning and partnership working to provide a clear evidence base for sharing the impact of the schools' work more widely.
- Models of strong emerging practice are disseminated across all schools within the cluster, enabling school leaders to apply principles and processes to influence, shape and refine their approaches to the Health and Wellbeing AOLE.
- To develop the curriculum planning at across the schools including strengthening the skills of the AoLE Leads.
- To share good practice across LA, to improve awareness and understanding that informs better lifestyle choices.
- Development of a provision plan related to health literacy that compliments school programme and includes contributions from different health / education partners and agencies.

9.3 Added Value: Grant Funding

LAs fund the core budget for CSC and this represents less than 4% of the total budget available to CSC in 2022-2023. Additional funding is received from Welsh Government via specific grant funding streams. With the launch of the national strategy, 'Education for Wales: Our National Mission', WG streamlined the grant funding processes. During 2022-2023, only three grants were received by consortia: Regional Consortia School Improvement Grant (RCSIG), Pupil Development Grant (PDG), and Siarter Iaith.

CSC adds value to the school improvement service commissioned by LAs by using elements of the above grants to fund CSC's delivery strategy of the Central South Wales Challenge as well as commission work and support packages for schools across the region. These funds are allocated according to the needs of individual schools, LAs, the region and nationally (as outlined in section 6.0 above) and are provided by the curriculum and professional learning team.

In 2022-23, the following funding was received:

Table 6: WG Grant Funding

Grant	Total	Delegated to LAs/schools	Centrally retained
	£	£	£
RCSIG	48,891	43,687	5,204
Siarter Iaith	43,484	43,174	310
PDG	78	0	78
Total	92,453	86,861	5,592

Elements of the above grants were used to commission work and support packages for schools across the region. These funds were allocated according to the needs of individual schools, LAs, the region and nationally. Initiatives have been split below across the key enabling objectives included in the WG 'Education in Wales: Our National Mission' report:

Table 7: Expenditure of the Regional Consortia School Improvement Grant by LA in 2022-23

Cost Category	Outturn 2022-23	City & County of Cardiff	Bridgend CBC	Vale of Glam CBC	Merthyr CBC	RCT CBC
		£	£	£	£	£
		36.59	15.29	14.83	6.33	26.96
Curriculum & assessment	0	0	0	0	0	0
Developing a high-quality education profession	38,301	12,917	4,827	5,914	4,829	9,815
Leadership	172	27	36	39	22	48
Strong and inclusive schools committed to excellence equity & wellbeing	43,174	19,795	5,889	3,350	2,071	12,069

Supporting a self-improving system	5,214	1,784	826	788	344	1,471
Total	86,861	24,524	11,578	10,090	7,266	23,403
% spend received		39.75	13.33	11.62	8.37	26.94

Bespoke Support Budget

An additional bespoke support budget has been created to provide supplementary support to schools. Improvement Partners are able to coordinate support for schools that are most in need, examples of support may include a Regional Leader for Governance or a System Leader for a specific number of days, supply cover to release staff for professional learning or funding for a lead practitioner.

During 2022/2023 a budget of just over £145k was available to support schools across the region. Schools within RCT LA received £67,336 of the available budgets representing 46.2% of the total budget available.

The impact of the activities funded by this budget is evaluated by the school and the individual Improvement Partner, and, where appropriate, included within local authority information reports.

An example of the additional support provided by CSC in this regard is the deployment of a Regional Leader for Governance (RLG) for one of RCT's primary schools. An experienced chair of Governors acting as an RLG worked with the school's governing body to:

- *Support an overall review of process and practice of the governing body.*
- *Develop the governing body's role in the processes of self-evaluation and improvement planning.*
- *Support the recently appointed chair of governors.*

As part of responding to Estyn's Inspection recommendation to, "R1 Improve the effectiveness of leadership at all levels, including that of the governing body", the support provided by the RLG empowered the school to develop its capacity over a period of a year forming clear designated sub committees that rationalised and prioritised areas of the post inspection action plan. These sub committees and the full governing body have met across several times across the academic year. The structures and the impact of the governing body continues to improve and add effective challenge and support to the school leadership.

As a result, the staff are now supported and challenged by a stronger governing body who have strengthened their own systems to allow the wider identification of members strengths to further support the school. These actions at a strategic level have positively impacted on pupil outcomes through clear self-evaluation processes that have allowed identification and planning for the pupils needs.

Curriculum Reform and Development

CSC supports schools in all areas of curriculum reform with the aim of realising our National Mission of 'strong and inclusive schools committed to excellence equity and wellbeing'. This includes working with the other regional consortia and partnerships, local authorities,

external agencies, and schools to develop national and regional events, programmes, support and guidance for practitioners and school, leaders, including governors.

The PL opportunities are wide ranging and comprehensive, with Curriculum for Wales embedded throughout. The CSC team provide and broker specialist bespoke support to clusters, groups of schools and individual schools to meet their specific improvement needs.

9.4 Collaborative Advantage

This can be defined as the additional benefits of working as a region when compared to working at either local authority or individual school level. By working collectively, schools have been able to build capacity within the system by training staff and sharing practice.

The [Central South Wales Challenge](#) (CSWC) is a partnership of all schools in the region working together to develop a self-improving system. This is based on improvement being driven for schools by schools. It provides delivery structures and networks through which most regional professional learning opportunities are offered.

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.

Specific details regarding the engagement of RCT schools with the CSWC can be found in section 6.0.

9.5 Additional Examples of Value for Money

In addition to how CSC provides evidence of the efficient use of resources as well as how added value and collaborative advantage are supported, CSC is also able to provide evidence of value for money in several other areas.

In addition to how CSC provides evidence of the efficient use of resources as well as how added value and collaborative advantage are supported, CSC is also able to provide evidence of value for money in several other areas.

Equity

CSC provides a universal service to all schools which includes:

- A named Improvement Partner who monitors and reviews the progress of each individual school against their agreed evidence-based improvement criteria.
- All schools will be identified as needing core or enhance support. Enhanced support offers additional monitoring and review for schools that have specific challenges.
- IPs broker and monitor any additional support ensuring that all schools have the right support to address their needs as well and prevent any potential issues from impacting on learners.
- Support for governors to carry out HT performance management in line with national guidance.
- Governors have access to all mandatory training, and this is supported by additional training and support. The role of Governors across CSC has been enhanced with the reestablishment of the Governors Steering Group on our governance structure and the establishment of Regional Leaders of Governance.
- Additional support and training is provided to IPs to ensure they can reach the internationally recognised AOEA standards, demonstrating that our staff have the skills, knowledge, and experience to support schools.
- In addition, where further support is required (either identified by CSC, the LA or Estyn, a tiered package of further improvement challenge and monitoring will be provided depending on the level of concern registered. This additional intervention will be focused on schools in most need of support irrespective of in which authority they reside.
- IPs coordinate and broker the support going into schools ensuring that it is appropriate to need and that it is addressing a key school/departmental priority.
- School progress is monitored termly in all schools and half termly in schools with additional concerns.

Economy

The national model of regional working was published in 2015 and recommended CSC receive £5.4m to fund the school improvement serviced on behalf of the five LAs. In 2022/23 CSC budget was £3.6m

CSC have worked to ensure that costs are minimised without reducing the quality of service provided. Over the period since the inception of CSC, further efficiency savings have been identified, enabling core contributions to CSC to be reduced without affecting the quality of service provided.

All curriculum & professional learning 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.

Sustainability

The definition of sustainable is something that can be continued or a practice that can be maintained over time once the resource from CSC (whether financial or leadership) is removed. CSC has developed a sustainable strategy for collaboration in the Central South Wales Challenge (CSWC).

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.

Efficiency

As a region, CSC is able to take advantage of economies of scale and can therefore provide a full and comprehensive professional learning offer across all areas of school improvement. In addition, CSC is provided with Welsh Government grant funding to ensure full coverage of support across all AoLEs within the new curriculum.

The [website](#) developed by CSC ensures schools have access to resources and a comprehensive professional learning offer in one site. This is complemented by the [website](#) specifically for Curriculum for Wales which can be accessed from the main CSC website.

A comprehensive communication strategy is also in place to ensure schools receive timely and appropriate communications aligned to need.

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. A summary of the support provided to the region can also be found in the [professional learning compendium](#).

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.

Effectiveness

Within the 2022-23 Annual Financial Year Report, CSC provided evidence to support the achievement of outcomes and the impact of the work. During recent LA inspections of LAs, Estyn reported that:

“The local authority has established strong working relationships with principal improvement partners from the regional consortium and there are robust processes for the support and challenge to schools causing concern.”

“...improvement partners provide a sound evaluation of progress based on first-hand evidence of provision and leadership in these schools...”

In addition, there were 592 school improvement priorities across all schools in the local authority for 2022-23.

Progress judgements for 268 priorities were not available for the Summer term 2023, with 232 progress judgements not available due to the impact of ASOS, and a further 36 priorities with no progress judgements due to these priorities no longer being applicable to the school.

300 priorities were judged to be “On-track”, with 24 priorities judged as “Not on track”. Of the 324 priorities with a progress judgement, 92.6% were “On-Track”, with 7.4% of priorities being “Not on track”.

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.

Quality

All CSC school improvement colleagues have a depth of knowledge and expertise which is supplemented with extensive professional learning to ensure the highest quality of support to schools.

In addition, all IPs are working towards an internationally recognised AoEA standard demonstrating that CSC staff have the skills, knowledge, and experience to support schools.

To ensure the ongoing quality of this service, a comprehensive professional learning offer is in place to ensure school improvement professionals are well trained (as well as experienced) and able to support schools across the region. This is supported by an extensive quality assurance programme which feeds into the performance development or probation arrangements for individual IPs.

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.

Added Value

Curriculum 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.

10.0 SHARING OF PRACTICE

Sharing of practice



RHONDDA CYNON TAF
Consortium Canolbarth y De
Central South Consortium
Cwmortholing a'r Cyl
Joint Education Service

Estyn Inspection Reports

No. of inspections: Sept 2022 - Sept 2023	18
No. of inspections: Sept 2021 - Sept 2022	9
No. of Estyn good practice case studies: Sept 2022 - Sept 2023	2
No. of Estyn good practice case studies: Sept 2021 - Sept 2022	3

Leadership

No. of participants engaged in MLDP (Middle Leaders Development Programme)	33
No. of participants engaged in SLDP (Senior Leaders Development Programme)	15
No. of participants engaged in Aspiring Headteacher Programme	27
No. of participants engaged in New and Acting Headteacher	6
No. of system leaders available from deployment from within RCT LA	6
No. of Governors engaged in Governor training (at least 1 event)	343
Total number of Governors in RCT LA	1434
No of RLGs available from deployment from within RCT LA	1

Professional Learning - Sept 2022 - Aug 2023

No. of schools engaged with PL	Proportion of schools engaged with PL	No. of practitioners engaged with PL	No. of schools engaged with regional networks	Proportion of schools engaged with regional networks	No of practitioners engaged with regional networks	No of Lead Practitioners
115	100%	3018	97	84%	526	12

General Context Data

No. of schools in RCT LA (January PLASC 2023 & EOTAS 2023)	115
No. of teachers in RCT LA (January PLASC 2023)	2119
No. of clusters within RCT LA	18

Collaborations

No of schools engaged in funded collaboration projects (inc. Regional and National)	85
No of practitioners engaged in funded collaboration projects (inc. Regional and National)	196

Curriculum, Teaching & Assessment PL and Support

	Regional PL (excl.networks)	Regional Networks	Regional Funded Projects	National Networks / Camau Project	Bespoke Support Requests
Practitioners	1233	511	173	56	
No of schools	108	96	83	40	99
% of schools	93.9%	83.5%	72.2%	34.8%	86.1

Sharing Practice - Sept 2022 - Sept 2023

No. of RCT schools with at least one Snippet of Success	51
No. of times RCT schools featured in Snippets of Success - our half termly celebration of news and success stories from schools in CSC	79
No. of podcasts produced: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dwlu Darllen Mindful Teaching and Teaching Mindfulness Den y Dreigiau Richard Price Tercentenary Celebration 	4
No. of podcasts produced: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data and Information Literacy Project 	4

Coaching & Mentoring

No. of facilitators trained (RDG)	6
No. of teaching staff trained in coaching & mentoring (Lead Practitioner)	11

11.0 CONCLUSIONS

CSC has developed a framework for self-evaluation based upon the guidance provided by Estyn on the Inspection of Local Authorities.

As a result of extensive self-evaluation activity, including engagement with stakeholders, strengths and areas of development have been identified. From this analysis, a series of focus areas have been identified for inclusion within the planning for 2023-24.

Self-evaluation activity has continued across the organisation to ensure any areas of development identified because of evaluation activity, is incorporated into the planning cycles.

11.1 Leadership and Safeguarding within CSC as an organisation.

This area focused on the following themes and sources of evidence:

Area	Sources of Evidence
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Quality and effectiveness of leaders and manager• Self-Evaluation processes and improvement planning• Professional learning• Safeguarding• Use of resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Suite of Reports• Governance Reports• Consortium as a Learning Organisation / Annual Survey• Analysis of data• HR Policies• CSC PL Programmes & Evaluation• Risk Management• Internal / External Audit Reports

Strengths included:

- Leaders / Managers have established a clear vision involving all stakeholders over time, which encompasses partnership working.
- Local Authority priorities embedded into the CSC Business Plan.
- Strong strategic partnerships with stakeholders.
- Leaders incorporate feedback to improve quality of provision and processes.
- Effective induction programme results in staff being well placed to work effectively with schools.
- High expectations to engage in Professional Learning developed to support individual and regional priorities.
- Transparent robust financial management (as confirmed by Audit Wales)
- Maximisation of grant funding to schools / Regional formula for distribution of grant funding to schools.

Areas to develop included:

- Further developing professional relationships with elected members / officers in local authorities
- Embedding the evaluation framework
- Rationalisation of reporting

- Embedding risk management processes
- Promotion of equality diversity & inclusion
- Staff wellbeing & healthy cultures
- Embedding working practices and quality assurance programmes
- Evaluation, outcome and impact of internal Professional Learning and Performance Development
- Safer recruitment practices

11.2 Professional Learning

This area focused on the following themes and sources of evidence:

Area	Sources of Evidence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support for school improvement • Support for vulnerable learners • Design of the professional learning offer • Impact of professional learning • Support for Welsh in Education Strategic Plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional learning offer- website • Engagement spreadsheet and analysis • Bespoke support analysis and evaluations • Evaluation data summary • LA information reports / scrutiny reports • Area leads evaluations / reports • School improvement priorities • LA business plan priorities • Welsh Government policy, guidance and relevant grant terms and conditions • Recommendations from external stakeholder reports, e.g., Welsh Government, OECD, Estyn, Children’s Commissioner

Strengths included:

- A broad range of relevant, evidence-informed PL opportunities responds to local, regional and national needs and along all milestones of the professional pathway.
- Bespoke support opportunities for all schools in the region to supplement available PL opportunities.
- Robust quality assurance of PL opportunities and bespoke support.
- Enabling Equity and Excellence (EEE) provides a clear regional approach with 75% reporting the document has increased their understanding of equity and excellence in the school and that it was being used to support school improvement conversations.
- Work with HEI partners ensures learning from the wider system add academic rigour to the EEE.
- Since April 2022, over 98% of schools in the region have engaged in the professional learning programme for curriculum including the wider reforms.
- CfW bespoke support for schools, clusters and individual drop-in sessions offer increased capacity for tailored support for schools.
- PL evaluations strong, with 95% of delegates already using or planning to use the learning in their current role.

- Evaluations from all leadership programmes demonstrates the positive impact on developing the leadership skills of participants and the impact on learners through the practical leadership experience tasks undertaken.
- Engagement with Welsh language development PL has increased by 20% from the previous year.
- Since April 2022, 101 schools have progressed levels for Siarter Iaith and Siarter Iaith Cymraeg Campus awards, an increase of 15% from the previous year. Since April 2020 there has been 301 progressive levels awarded.
- CSC provide strong support to local authorities as a key partner to delivering Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) targets.
- 93% of all eligible NQTs passed induction in the region in 2020/21, with 7% being given an extension and 0% failures.

Areas to develop included:

- Analysing the volume of PL available for schools and ensure effective communication of the offer.
- Ensuring coherence of PL in curriculum design, teaching and assessment.
- Developing the cluster convenor role to further support the 3 – 16 curriculum.
- Improving participation of delegates in evaluation of PL programmes and events.
- Redeveloping PL and support for Teaching Assistants across the region.
- Further development of higher-level Welsh language professional learning (gloywi iaith).
- Ensure PL opportunities are available to support all elements of the Enabling Equity and Excellence document.
- Further develop PL and support for leadership beyond the national pathway programmes.
- Develop and implement a tiered approach to governor PL that builds on knowledge, experiences and skills.
- Further develop the regional approach for coaching and mentoring.
- Continue to develop reporting on the outcomes of PL in school improvement.

11.3 Support for School Improvement

This area focused on the following themes and sources of evidence:

Area	Sources of Evidence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring and reporting schools' progress • Providing bespoke support • Intervention in schools causing concern • Supporting vulnerable learners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QA processes and feedback from schools • IP knowledge / SIPL entries • Estyn reports and case studies / LALI • LA reports / feedback • Suite of reports • Schools causing concern / All school risk reports. • Bespoke support plans • PDG / PDG LAC evaluations • RADY evaluation

- | | |
|--|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• EEE pilot evaluation |
|--|--|

Strengths included:

- Skills, expertise and knowledge of CSC team.
- IPs develop strong relationships with schools to challenge and support, in partnership with local authorities.
- First-hand evidence gathering is aligned with school MER processes.
- Strong systems and processes to monitor 'schools causing concern'.
- Sharing of school level intelligence and information with LA partners identifying significant risks, concerns by exception and agreeing actions for challenge and support.
- An agile approach is used to support the needs of individual schools.
- CSC have a clear regional approach for equity and excellence.
- Nearly all schools have engaged in collaborations and/or PL for CfW.
- CSC staff engagement with schools supported schools' readiness and implementation of CfW.
- Quality of CSWC strategy supports a self-improving system across the region.

Areas to develop included:

- Continue to evaluate and refine reporting arrangements.
- Continued roll-out of the agreed EEE implementation plan.
- Continue to support schools to develop effective cluster working arrangements.
- Follow up aspects arising from quality assurance processes.
- Widen the profile of CPAG to reduce the impact of poverty across more schools.
- Further embed Welsh as part of school improvement conversations.

12.0 NEXT STEPS

As a result of all self-evaluation activity across the organisation and with stakeholders, the following areas were identified for inclusion within the Business Plan for 2023/24:

12.1 Leadership and Safeguarding within CSC as an organisation.

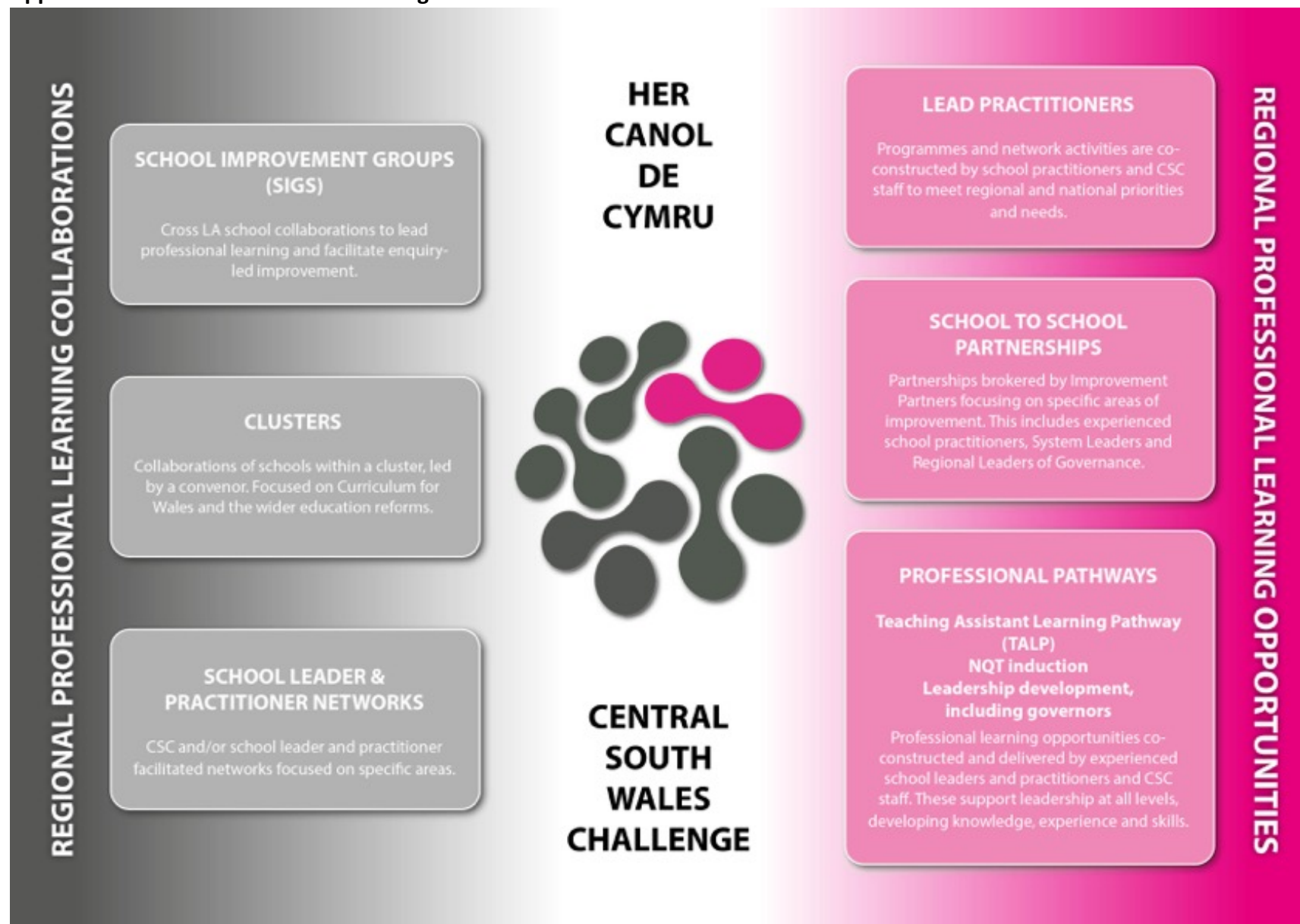
- Further develop professional relationships with elected members / officers in local authorities
- Embed the CSC evaluation framework.
- Rationalisation of reporting.
- Embedding risk management processes.
- Promotion of equality diversity & inclusion.
- Staff wellbeing & healthy cultures.
- Embedding working practices and QA programme.
- Evaluate the outcome and impact of internal Professional Learning and Performance Development.
- Further develop safe recruitment practices.

12.2 Professional Learning

- Analyse the volume of PL available for schools and ensure effective communication of the offer.
- Ensure coherence of PL in curriculum design, teaching and assessment.
- Develop the cluster convenor role to further support the 3 – 16 curriculums.
- Improve participation of delegates in evaluation of PL programmes and events.
- Redevelop PL and support for Teaching Assistants across the region.
- Further development of higher-level Welsh language professional learning (gloywi iaith).
- Ensure PL opportunities are available to support all elements of the Enabling Equity and Excellence document.
- Further develop PL and support for leadership beyond the national pathway programmes.
- Develop and implement a tiered approach to Governor PL that builds on knowledge, experiences, and skills.
- Further develop the regional approach for coaching and mentoring.
- Continue to develop reporting on the outcomes of PL in school improvement.

12.3 Support for School Improvement

- Continue to evaluate and refine reporting arrangements.
- Continued roll-out of the agreed EEE implementation plan.
- Continue to support schools to develop effective cluster working arrangements.
- Follow up aspects arising from quality assurance processes.
- Widen the profile of CPAG to reduce the impact of poverty across more schools.
- Further embed Welsh as part of school improvement conversations.



Appendix B

RCT Strategic Priorities 2023 – 2024 (Progress against Priorities)

Strategic Priority 1:	Leadership		
Aim	Delivery Requirements	Evaluation of Progress of CSC activity to support LA Priorities	Next Steps
<p>Delivering a high quality skilled educational workforce and excellent leadership at all levels</p>	<p>To sharpen self-evaluation and improvement planning to drive improvement.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> During Autumn term visits, Improvement Partners (IPs) are working alongside school leaders to plan and undertake self-evaluation activities. Due to the impact of ASOS, this is in different stages of development across RCT schools. 	<p>Improvement Partners to continue working alongside school leaders and staff, carrying out supported self-evaluation activity to support schools in improving standards for all learners.</p>
	<p>Improve the consistency and quality of delivery plans.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IPs are working with Headteachers, SLT and governing bodies to ensure a shared understanding of progression exists within their own schools. In the best cases they are working effectively within their clusters, collaborating with other schools to ensure a wider, shared understanding of progression and sharing ideas and practices with each other. PIPs work with LA officers on RCT’s SMT to provide challenge and further evidence demonstrating impact in the LA’s delivery plan priorities. 	<p>For schools to continue to review and refine their approaches to progression and their shared understanding.</p>
	<p>Ensure effective safeguarding arrangements.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is a Local Authority area of responsibility. 	
	<p>Deliver the Strategic Priorities within the WESP.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All Welsh medium and special schools along with most English medium schools in RCT are engaged with the Siarter Iaith Cymraeg Campus Framework (Welsh Language Charter). Since April 2023, 18 schools have made progressive levels of progress within the Siarter Iaith Framework. Siarter Iaith (Welsh Medium) Data – November 2023 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Primary – 3 bronze, 9 silver and 5 gold. Secondary – 1 bronze and 1 silver. Siarter Iaith Cymraeg Campus (English Medium) Data – November 2023 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Primary – 42 bronze, 10 silver and 2 gold. Secondary – 3 bronze and 2 silver. Special – 3 bronze. A wide range of resources have been produced for both Welsh medium, English medium and special schools to support progression towards various Siarter Iaith / Siarter Iaith Cymraeg Campus awards. The resources include examples of best practice, case studies, podcasts as well as practical resources to use with pupils. An awards ceremony was held at The All Nations Centre in Cardiff in spring 2023 to celebrate successes of schools receiving awards since March 2020. Llwyfan Llafar resource with associated professional learning has been produced to support Welsh Medium schools to develop pupil’s Welsh oracy skills from 3-16. Most schools state that this resource is beginning to have a positive impact on pupil’s oracy skills Most Welsh medium schools state that the CSC Standardised Reading Test is supporting the school’s diagnostics and enabling practitioners to accurately plan teaching and interventions. Rhondda Cynon Taf’s Welsh language immersion provision utilises the primary resource for teaching late-comers to Welsh medium education. This is proving beneficial to support teaching and learning of Welsh. A new CSC Continuum of Welsh language patterns was launched for English-medium schools in autumn 2023 along with associated professional learning. The continuum has been very well received by schools and early feedback is very positive. CSC provides a range of Welsh language development professional learning (PL) for practitioners at no cost to schools. The PL is mapped against the Welsh Language Competency Framework and can be accessed in a variety of ways e.g. on demand/asynchronous and face to face. Bespoke PL is also available to individual schools or clusters. All asynchronous assignments have been revised and updated and a higher level (Gloywi Iaith) introduced as an assignment and face to face event. 	<p>Cymraeg Strategic Advisors, Improvement Partners and Local Authority Principal Improvement Partners (LA PIPs) to continue working alongside school leaders, governors and LA officers to support schools in improving standards of Cymraeg for all learners.</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 205 practitioners from Rhondda Cynon Taf have engaged in Welsh language professional learning since April 2023. • Most practitioners state that the professional learning will improve their practice in the classroom and will make strong progress in changing their behaviours. • CSC has created and published a playlist incorporating an explanatory video which focuses on schools' procedures for planning professional learning and accurately reporting on practitioner development in the SWAC. As of November 2023, the resource has been viewed 877 times and provides leaders with a clear understanding of the professional learning offer to support their staff's language competency development. • 2 RCT practitioners are undertaking the two-term foundation/intermediate level Welsh Sabbatical Schemes course in 2023/24 (Dolau and Hendreforgan). • 13 schools in RCT have engaged with bespoke Welsh language professional learning for practitioners at various levels of the Welsh Language Competency Framework since June 2023. • CSC has funded collaboration between Welsh medium secondary schools to develop Level 2 and 3 vocational qualifications through the medium of Welsh. Vocational qualifications are now available for business, uniform protected services, medical sciences, sports coaching, leadership through sport, preparing for public services and a Level 3 childcare qualification. • All professional learning, bespoke support and resources from CSC Cymraeg can be found in this playlist. 	
	Ensuring effective leadership and management arrangements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IPs and LA PIPs support the recruitment of senior leaders within RCT schools, for example, they support governing body members and LA officers shortlist candidates, plan for and provide interview questions and tasks. IPs and LA PIPs attend interviews, leading the professional interview elements of the process, and advise governing body members throughout the process. • IPs coach and mentor school senior leaders and signpost to relevant professional learning opportunities, for example, the national pathway programme for senior and middle leaders. • IPs support governing bodies undertake CSC's 'Self-Evaluation Toolkit for Governing Bodies' and develop an action plan following, including providing bespoke PL for governors. • IPs and LA PIPs provide additional, bespoke, support for Headteachers and governing bodies through the recruitment of System Leaders or Regional Lead Governors through CSC's Bespoke Support Request system. • IPs support Governing Bodies undertake the statutory Headteacher Performance Management process which includes establishing and reviewing targets throughout the year. 	Improvement Partners and Local Authority Principal Improvement Partners (LA PIPs) to continue working alongside school leaders and governors, carrying out supported self-evaluation activities to support schools in improving standards for all learners.

Strategic Priority 2:	Teaching & Learning																
Aim	Delivery Requirements	Evaluation of Progress of CSC activity to support LA Priorities	Next Steps														
Supporting Educational settings to deliver a transformational curriculum, high quality teaching and learning and improved outcomes for all	Deliver a fully integrated cross directorate early years plan for 0–7-year-olds that ensures that learners access the right support at the right time.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CSC’s Curriculum and Professional Learning team support the development of Foundation Learning in RCT via the work of the Foundation Learning Strategic Advisor and Lead Practitioners. In addition, practitioners working within Foundation Learning are able to access additional professional learning via CSC’s professional learning compendium. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To continue liaising with the directorate in support of this priority. 														
	Improve the consistency and quality of support and information provided by CSC on Leadership and Progress of all learners, to include vulnerable groups of learners.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Framework for School Improvement has been updated for September ‘23, to reflect the strengthening of processes and improved consistency. All IPs LA PIPs are experienced, high-functioning senior leaders. They undergo a rigorous interview process prior to employment. CSC’s quality assurance processes have been strengthened, including: CSC provide professional learning to all IPs and LA PIPs, ensuring high expectations and protocols are shared. LA PIPs organise face to face RCT IP professional learning sessions once every half term. This is used to identify and share good practice and emerging priorities identified from across RCT and the wider national context (including Estyn reports/findings). LA PIPs monitor the School Improvement Partnership Logs (SIPLs) and undertaken joint activities alongside IPs throughout the year. LA PIPs undertake joint visits with IPs they line manage, enabling the LA PIP to quality assure the work of the IP, identify good practice and strengthen performance development processes. LA PIPs hold 1:1 meetings with RCT IPs every half term and undertake internal meetings with all members of CSC working in support of specific schools. In turn, this information is shared with the Assistant Director of CSC. The LA PIPs quality assure all LA pre-inspection reports before sharing with the LA’s Head of Achievement (HoA) and Director for Education (DoE). The LA PIP regularly meetings with the HoA and DoE to discuss vulnerable schools and emerging priorities. Both LA PIPs and HoA have agreed dates to meet throughout the academic year to share intelligence and emerging priorities for RCT schools. LA PIPs quality assure progress review reports that are written by the IP and shared with relevant HTs, CoGB, HoA and DoE. The development of the All-School Review have developed the IPs and LA PIPs knowledge of the work of the wider directorate in support of schools in RCT, this has strengthened the partnership. All work undertaken by CSC and external partners in support of RCT schools is now feed directly into the SIPL, this allows SMT and LA officers direct access to the work being undertaken and its impact. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CSC to continue reviewing and evaluating the impact of the QA processes via established systems. 														
	Ensure that teaching and learning in all schools and PRUs is improved and aligned with the new requirements of the AOLES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PL, support and guidance is available to all schools and clusters to develop curriculum, teaching and assessment. Bespoke support is available to all schools and clusters to develop curriculum, teaching and assessment. <p>RCT schools’ engagement in Curriculum, Teaching and Assessment PL opportunities April 2023- October 2023</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Regional PL (excl. networks)</th> <th>Regional Networks</th> <th>Regional Funded Projects</th> <th>Bespoke Support Requests</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Practitioners</td> <td>328</td> <td>205</td> <td>114</td> <td>x</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Schools</td> <td>102</td> <td>77</td> <td>76</td> <td>70</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> IPs support Headteachers and senior leaders quality assure the school’s self-evaluation processes and its impact. IPs are able to access focussed bespoke support from AOLE colleagues in the Curriculum and Professional learning team via the Bespoke Support Request system. IPs promote collaborative work of clusters and SIGs to share good practice and moderate work. 		Regional PL (excl. networks)	Regional Networks	Regional Funded Projects	Bespoke Support Requests	Practitioners	328	205	114	x	Schools	102	77	76	70
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Strategic Priority 3:		Vulnerable Learners		
Aim	Delivery Requirements	Evaluation of Progress of CSC activity to support LA Priorities	Next Steps	
Ensuring equity and support for vulnerable learners and their families	Develop the Virtual School Model for Children Looked After and evaluate its Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. Cluster leads meetings planned in collaboration with LA staff for September 2023. RCT Cluster leads meeting was scheduled on 29.9.23. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share findings from cluster leads meetings with relevant stakeholders. Work with clusters to plan effectively in relation to the PDG LAC. Respond to bespoke needs of cluster leads. 	
	Provide effective support to schools to enable them to comply with new ALN legislation and ensure learners receive high quality additional learning provision. Ensure Alternative provision is meeting the needs of learners across the Local Authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IPs support Headteachers and senior leaders quality assure the school's self-evaluation processes and its impact. IPs are able to access focussed bespoke support from AOLE colleagues in the Curriculum and Professional Learning team via the Bespoke Support Request system. IPs promote collaborative work of clusters and SIGs to share good practice and moderate work. IPs support Headteachers and senior leaders review the impact of the teaching and learning on ALN and vulnerable learners, this is further supported through bespoke support from CSC's Curriculum Reform and Pedagogy teams. Attendance at the All-School Review alongside LA colleagues, enable IPs to better understand the wider work being undertaken in support of schools and ALN / vulnerable learners and therefore complement this work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CSC to continue reviewing and evaluating the impact of the QA processes via established systems. 	
	To promote equality and diversity to enable vulnerable & disadvantaged learners to achieve improved outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See above 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CSC to continue reviewing and evaluating the impact of the QA processes via established systems. 	

Strategic Priority 4:		Well-being		
Aim	Delivery Requirements	Evaluation of Progress of CSC activity to support LA Priorities	Next Steps	
Enhancing the wellbeing of our learners and the workforce	Develop strategic approaches to supporting children and families in poverty.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Findings of discussions between Improvement Partners and schools on the use and impact of the Pupil Development Grant (PDG) collated for 2022-23. Regional PDG evaluation presented to Welsh Government with a visit to a CSC school to exemplify effective practice. One LA report developed and disseminated with others in draft format. Bespoke support ongoing with six schools supported across the region by the CSC Lead for Well-being and Vulnerable Learners. Support for Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive took place during summer 2023 and this resulted in a whole school twilight session planned for October 2023. Connections made with other RCT secondary schools for further support visits to be planned. Key messages about the PDG and Poverty shared at the Aspiring Headteachers Conference in July 2023. Attendance from 11 schools from RCT: Oaklands Primary School, Tai Educational Centre, Ysgol Gymraeg Evan James, Llantrisant Primary School, Caradog Primary School, Aberdare Community School, Hawthorn High School, Alaw Primary School, Ferndale Community School, Our Lady's R.C and Ysgol Nantgwyn. Professional learning sessions delivered for all school facing staff on terms of conditions and expectations of PDG grant for 2023-24. Comprehensive bank of resources also shared with school facing staff to support engagement and discussions with schools. Ongoing discussions held between Improvement Partners and school leaders on progress of vulnerable leaders with a record of progress noted at the end of the summer term and shared with Rhondda Cynon Taf in September 2023. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake twilight session with Cardinal Newman - October 2023 Establish links with other RCT schools to provide support. 	
	Ensure approaches relating to children's rights are embedded across all schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IPs work with schools in support of embedding UNCRC's Rights of the Child approaches if applicable to their school improvement priorities. IPs work with senior leaders to review and monitor impact across all elements of the school. 		
	Further improve attendance rates, particularly for those persistent absentees, learners with SEN/ALN and eFSM learners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular regional meetings continue to take place involving LA Attendance and Exclusion Leads with the CSC Lead for Well-being and Vulnerable Groups. Strong focus on sharing common challenges and identifying common solutions. Improvement Partners continue to have a regular focus on well-being, attendance and exclusions, regularly supported by LA PIPs for Rhondda Cynon Taf. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LA PIPs and IPs to continue attending All School Reviews, Progress Reviews and liaising with LA leads to further support in this area. 	

	Reduce the number of exclusions across schools within the LA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular regional meetings continue to take place involving LA Attendance, Exclusion and Well-being Leads with the CSC Lead for Well-being and Vulnerable Groups. Strong focus on sharing common challenges and identifying common solutions. Improvement Partners continue to have a regular focus on well-being, attendance and exclusions, regularly supported by LA PIPs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See above
	Ensure there are robust approaches to enhancing learner wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular regional meetings continue to take place involving LA Attendance, Exclusion and Well-being Leads with the CSC Lead for Well-being and Vulnerable Groups. Strong focus on sharing common challenges and identifying common solutions. Improvement Partners continue to have a regular focus on well-being, attendance and exclusions, regularly supported by LA Principal Improvement Partners. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See above

Strategic Priority 5:		21st Century Schools		
Aim	Delivery Requirements	Evaluation of Progress of CSC activity to support LA Priorities		Next Steps
Delivering 21st Century learning environments and innovative services for our learners and communities	Deliver Band B of the Council's ambitious Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme, removing surplus places, delivering net zero carbon new school buildings, improving the quality of learning environments and school buildings, increasing special school capacity, and increasing access to high quality teaching and learning opportunities for all	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is a Local Authority area of responsibility. 		
	Develop proposals for the new primary school at Glyncoch in accordance with the funding terms and conditions			
	Progress proposals for the provision of a new primary school at Llanillud.			
	Evaluate and further develop our community schools to extend early years provision, wrap around care, sporting facilities, extended and family learning, family engagement and the co-location of services on school sites right in the heart of our communities.			
	Deliver capital investment to develop, extend and improve childcare and early years provision.			
	Ensure we have sufficient specialist pupil places in our community for our children who require additional support.			
	Evaluate the impact of the school reorganisation programme on the school community and identify areas for learning and improvement			

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM RCT LGES INSPECTION

	Recommendation	Evaluation of progress of CSC actions to support recommendations	Next Steps
R1	Sharpen approaches to self-evaluation and improvement planning	For information on how CSC have supported RCT LA in this recommendation, please see strategic priority 1 and 2	
R2	Strengthen approaches to Welsh-medium education, for example by improving access and support for learners with additional learning needs and providing opportunities for late immersion for learners	For information on how CSC have supported RCT LA in this recommendation, please see strategic priority 1, 2 and 3	
R3	Work closely with schools, pupil referral units and the regional consortium to build on the local authority's work to further improve attendance and reduce exclusions	For information on how CSC have supported RCT LA in this recommendation, please see strategic priority 1, 2, 3 and 4	