



**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**MUNICIPAL YEAR 2023-24**

**EDUCATION AND INCLUSION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**13<sup>th</sup> MARCH 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 7.5.5 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**

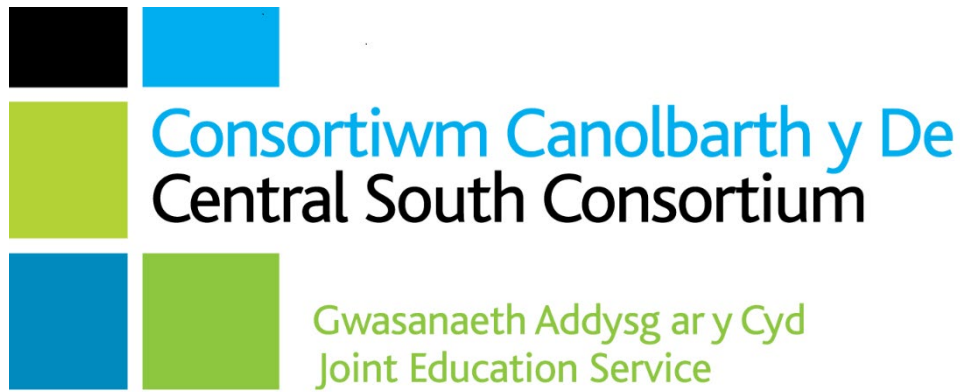
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**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION  
AND INCLUSION SERVICES**



# **Annual RCT Local Authority Scrutiny Report Central South Consortium**

**2022-23**

**(Presentation in March 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 Rhondda Cynon Taf (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 CONCLUSIONS

CSC has developed a framework for self-evaluation based upon the guidance provided by Estyn's local authority inspection of RCT.

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.

### 2.1 Leadership and Safeguarding within CSC as an organisation.

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

**Table 22: Summary of areas of focus informing self-evaluation activity in CSC in respect of Leadership & Safeguarding within CSC**

Area	Sources of Evidence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Quality and effectiveness of leaders and managers</li><li>• Self-Evaluation processes and improvement planning</li><li>• Professional learning</li><li>• Safeguarding</li><li>• Use of resources</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Suite of Reports</li><li>• Governance Reports</li><li>• Consortium as a Learning Organisation / Annual Survey</li><li>• Analysis of data</li><li>• HR Policies</li><li>• CSC PL Programmes &amp; Evaluation</li><li>• Risk Management</li><li>• Internal / External Audit Reports</li><li>• Managing Director meetings with RCT's Director of Education</li><li>• RCT HoAs, LA officers and LA PIPs meetings</li></ul>

#### Strengths included:

- Leaders / Managers have established a clear vision involving all stakeholders over time, which encompasses partnership working.
- RCT priorities embedded into the CSC Business Plan.
- Strong strategic partnerships with RCT stakeholders.
- Leaders incorporate feedback to improve quality of provision and processes to support schools and RCT practitioners.

- Effective induction programme results in staff being well placed to work effectively with RCT schools.
- High expectations to engage in Professional Learning developed to support individual and RCT LA 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 RCT
- 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

**2.2 Professional Learning**

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

**Table 23: Summary of areas of focus informing self-evaluation activity in CSC in respect of Professional Learning**

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

**Strengths included:**

- A broad range of relevant, evidence-informed PL opportunities responds to RCT, 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 RCT and 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.
- 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.
- CSC provide strong support to local authorities as a key partner to delivering Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) targets.
- All eligible NQTs passed induction in the local authority in 2020/21, with 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 RCT.
- 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.



### 2.3 Support for School Improvement

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

**Table 23: Summary of areas of focus informing self-evaluation activity in CSC in respect of School Improvement in RCT**

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

#### Strengths included:

- Skills, expertise and knowledge of CSC team.
- IPs develop strong relationships with schools to challenge and support, in partnership with RCT LA.
- First-hand evidence gathering is aligned with school MER processes.
- Strong systems and processes to monitor 'schools causing concern'.
- An improved approach to progress reviews in RCT, that is consistent across primary, all-age and secondary schools.
- Sharing of school level intelligence and information with LA partners identifying significant risks, concerns by exception and agreeing actions for challenge and support, for example, RCT's ASR information sharing meetings.
- An agile approach is used to support the needs of individual schools.
- CSC have a clear regional approach for equity and excellence.
- All schools in RCT 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.

### **3.0 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:

#### **3.1 Leadership and Safeguarding within CSC as an organisation.**

- Further develop professional relationships with elected members / officers in RCT LA.
- 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.

#### **3.2 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 RCT.
- 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 RCT LA approach for coaching and mentoring.
- Continue to develop reporting on the outcomes of PL in school improvement.

#### **3.3 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.

## 4.0 OVERVIEW OF PERFORMANCE

### 4.1 Estyn Inspections

All Estyn inspections were suspended in March 2020<sup>1</sup>; however, a new pilot framework<sup>2</sup> 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.

In RCT LA, 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 an “Interesting or Innovative Practice Case Study” 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: 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

Llwydcoed Primary School was requested to produce an Innovative Practice Case Study following their Estyn inspection based on ‘*Reducing the cost of the school day and providing additional support for low-income families in the community*’.

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.

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

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

As a result of these schools remaining, or being placed into an Estyn category, they have close monitoring, support and challenge via the joint LA and CSC 'Schools Causing Concern' process of progress reviews. *See section 5.1 for further information on this process.*

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

## **4.2 Alps Analysis**

Alps value added performance analysis measures progress against national<sup>3</sup>, aspirational benchmarks for each individual student. For 2023, the analysis identified the following key points:

### **A Level**

- Two schools matched to top 25% (performance of pupils is within or exceeds the top 25% of the national benchmark)
- Five schools matched to middle 50% (performance of pupils is within the middle 50% of the national benchmark)
- Four schools matched to bottom 25% (performance of pupils is within or below the bottom 25% of the national benchmark)
- Student outperformed in Drama & theatre Studies and under performed in Art, Economics, English Language, Eng Literature and Government & Politics. All other subjects were in the middle 50% when benchmarked.
- All bar two of the eleven prior attainment bands were in the middle 50% when benchmarked. However, broadly the higher prior attaining students didn't achieve the valued added that the lower attaining students achieved.
- A Level results are overall similar to 2019 and decreased from 20/21 and 21/22 due to Teacher assessed grades.

### **AS Level**

- No schools matched to top 25% (performance of pupils is within or exceeds the top 25% of the national benchmark)
- Five schools matched to middle 50% (performance of pupils is within the middle 50% of the national benchmark)
- Four schools matched to bottom 25% (performance of pupils is within or below the bottom 25% of the national benchmark)
- Student outperformed in Drama & theatre Studies, English Lit, History and Physical Education and under performed in Art, Business Studies, Government & Politics and Law. All other subjects were in the middle 50% when benchmarked.

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<sup>3</sup> as defined by Alps for their analysis.

- All but four prior attainment bands were in the middle 50% when benchmarked. However, broadly the higher prior attaining students didn't achieve the value added that the lower attaining students achieved.
- AS Level results are overall similar to 2019 and decreased from 20/21 and 21/22 due to Teacher assessed grades.
- High ability student made more progress than low ability pupils. The top two bands progressed in line with the top 25% of students nationally. Key Stage 4

## **GCSE**

Of the schools that we have ALPS data for.

- Two schools matched to top 25% (performance of pupils is within or exceeds the top 25% of the national benchmark)
- Four schools matched to middle 50% (performance of pupils is within the middle 50% of the national benchmark)
- One school matched to bottom 25% (performance of pupils is within or below the bottom 25% of the national benchmark)
- Students outperformed in Art & Design, French, Geography, History, Home Economics, PE, Polish and Spanish and under performed in Textiles, Some D&T subjects, Eng Lang, Hospitality, Media Studies and Additional Science. All other subjects were in the middle 50% when benchmarked nationally.

## **5.0 Support and Challenge**

### **5.1 Improvement Partner Deployment**

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

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. IPs have continued to commission bespoke support and intervention from the wider support teams within the CSC.

### **5.2 Work Programme of Improvement Partners and Principal Improvement Partners**

Throughout the 2022-23 academic year, IPs worked collegiately with RCT 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 Improvement<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.cscjes.org.uk/repository/discovery/resource/97df5386-f46a-4287-a766-20eedd70db27/en?sort=recent&strict=0>

IPs built an individual work plan with each school to ensure these activities were built into the school improvement conversations. There were ongoing themes which were a focus of all visits, this included progress of learners, curriculum development, quality of learning and teaching, leadership, well-being, equity and inclusion, effectiveness of self-evaluation and improvement planning. In addition to this workstream, IPs undertook bespoke support for school leaders (middle and senior) and governing bodies. For example, RCT IPs supported governing bodies develop their skill set through the introduction of CSC's Governing Body Self Evaluation Toolkit, supported newly appointed CoGB/VCoGB or provided support as they prepared for interviews with Estyn inspectors.

All IPs and LA PIPs are experienced, high-functioning senior leaders. They undergo a rigorous interview process prior to employment. Working alongside LA officers and LA PIPs, CSC's quality assurance processes have been strengthened, which includes:

- 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 undertake 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 meets 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. These meetings are solution focussed and are valued by LA PIPs.
- LA PIPs quality assure progress review reports written by the IP and then share with relevant HTs, CoGB, HoA and DoE.
- All work undertaken by CSC and external partners in support of RCT schools is now fed directly into the SIPL, this allows SMT and LA officers direct access to the work being undertaken within the school and its impact.

Both LA PIPs, are invited to attend RCT's Education Directorate's Senior Management Team meetings, ensuring officers work collegiately and proactively to support RCT schools. To further strengthen this partnership, LA PIPs and IPs join RCT's Education Directorate officers each term to discuss vulnerable schools as part of the 'All School Review' (ASR) process. Again, these solution focussed meetings are highly valued and ensure schools receive appropriate and timely support.

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

- *An IP supporting a school in the Ferndale cluster 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.*

## **6.0 SUPPORT FOR SCHOOLS**

### **6.1 Schools Receiving Enhanced monitoring**

During the 2022-23 academic year, 18 RCT schools were in enhanced monitoring at some stage. 8 schools were in enhanced monitoring across the complete academic year.

During 2022-23, RCT LA and CSC jointly held progress reviews for all of the schools receiving enhanced monitoring. CSC and LA officers agree and set relevant agendas for these meetings, with schools reporting on progress against their SDPs or Post Inspection Action Plans (PIAPs). CSC and LA support for the school is reviewed, evidence is scrutinised, and any necessary additional brokering of support agreed. Progress is agreed, captured via a RAYG system and formal minutes shared. Many schools receiving enhanced monitoring during 2022-23 made good progress.

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

## **7.0 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.

All CSC PL and support is available at no charge to schools in the region. Details of CSC's professional learning and support available to schools in the region can be found in Appendix A.

In addition, section 11.0 demonstrates the number of RCT practitioners that have taken part in CSC's professional learning opportunities, collaboration projects and shared their practice with the wider region and beyond.

### **7.1 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 includes of several components that support the self-improving school system. categorised broadly into two areas, namely 'professional learning collaborations' and 'professional learning opportunities', (see Appendix B - 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.

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

This contribution towards the CSWC mode allowed practitioners from RCT schools to share their knowledge (as part of the SLO model) and refine their leadership skills to further enhance their own schools.

### **7.2 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. During 2022-2023, the total collaboration funded for schools in RCT was £1,382,075.

#### **7.2.1 Clusters**

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.

There are 16 clusters in RCT, excluding special schools and the pupil referral unit (PRU).



Examples of effective cluster working in RCT:

*A number of cluster INSET days have been facilitated by the CSC curriculum team, allowing practitioners from across the cluster to deepen their knowledge and understanding of the Curriculum for Wales framework. At one such INSET day arranged to support a secondary school and its cluster of feeder primary schools, CSC 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 Area 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.*

### 7.2.2 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.

**Table 2: 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

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.

### 7.3 Regional and Cross-Regional Professional Learning Opportunities

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

**Table 3: 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 from RCT schools following participation in PL during 2022-2023:

- 95% 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.
- 95% stated that the PL would change their practice, and that they plan to use what they have learned.
- 73% stated that the PL was linked to their school improvement priorities.

#### 7.3.1 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, this included 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 schools in the region. In all bespoke support there is evidence of impact on the provision at either practitioner or leadership level in the receiving school.

#### 7.3.2 Regional and National Funded Collaboration Projects

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

**Table 4: 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 RCT Schools focused on national priorities. These included projects related to curriculum design, cross-cutting themes, teaching and all Areas of Learning and Experience.

**Table 5: 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

## 7.4 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 in RCT with the knowledge, experiences, skills and confidence to be effective in their roles.

### 7.4.1 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 in RCT, aligning to Welsh Government’s Leadership Development Pathway.



**Table 6: 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

For the middle leadership programme, all participants are allocated 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.

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. 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 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.

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

### **System Leaders**

The CSC System Leader programme is aimed at experienced headteachers who wish to further develop and support other schools and the wider education system. Seven headteachers from RCT schools, out of 14 across the region, have participated in this pilot programme. 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 a RCT schools, this deployment rate has grown substantially since 22-23.

### **7.4.2 School Governors**

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.

**Table 7: Engagement in CSC Professional Learning Sessions for Governors 2022-2023**

	Number of governors from RCT schools			
	Middle	Primary	Secondary	Special
Mandatory PL sessions	15	136	21	9
Non-mandatory PL sessions	13	117	26	6

In evaluations completed by governors from RCT schools upon completion of the sessions, the following was stated:

- As a result of engaging with the PL, many (82%) governors stated good or very good knowledge on the topic and 86% stated it would have an impact on their role.
- 84% of governors stated their intention to use the learning from the session in their role.

### 7.4.3 Regional Leaders of Governance (RLGs)

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, two RLGs were serving governors from schools in RCT. In 2022-2023, one governing body of a school in RCT was supported by an RLG, this has expanded significantly since 2022/23.

### 7.4.4 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. During 2022-2023, 36 TAs from schools in RCT engaged in the regional TALP programmes. 13 practitioners from RCT successfully completed the Aspiring HLTA programme.

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 three from schools in RCT.

### 7.4.5 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 and regional PL events and programmes, networking opportunities for both NQTs and the staff working to support them. With the exception of the leadership pathway programmes, NQTs can also engage with all other CSC PL opportunities, support and resources.

**Table 8: 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, 79 NQTs from RCT engaged with the programme.

In evaluations completed by RCT NQTs following the Aspire programme, the following was stated:

- 86% rated the programme as fit for purpose in meeting their needs.
- 86% rated the online PL materials for their usefulness in their role.
- 100% said the programme assisted them in making progress towards the Professional Standards for Teaching and Leadership.

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. 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.

16 mentors attended RCT cluster network meetings hosted at Ysgol Nantgwyn. 15 RCT mentors attended the CSC Mentoring Matters Conference, and the mentor from Ysgol Nantgwyn was invited to present their practice at the event.

In July 2023, 80 RCT NQTs passed induction. There were no fails processed.

#### 7.4.6 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.

**Table 9: 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 is a train the trainer programme and participants can then deliver the training to others in their school and clusters across CSC.

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

## 7.5 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.

**Table 10: 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 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.

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 97 requests from schools in RCT for bespoke support related to these areas.

### **7.5.1 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 a detailed reports to RCT LA related to the school's implementation, PL and support.

#### **Roll-out September 2022**

All nursery, primary and all-age schools in RCT 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 of 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.



## 7.5.2 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. 198 delegates from 69 (60%) schools in RCT engaged in LLC PL programmes, events, conferences, assignments, and networks. This included:

**Table 11: 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 developed a 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. The following RCT schools are included:

- 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 (see Appendix 2).

**Table 12: RCT 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 maybe pre-recorded sessions or assignments.

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

- As a result of engaging with PL focused on LLC, all participants considered that their knowledge had improved in some way.
- 96% 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. (78%).
- Nearly all participants (98%) anticipated the PL would have an impact on learners in their setting, while many participants (78%) felt the PL would have a significant impact on learners in their setting.

### 7.5.3 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.

55 delegates from 32 (28%) schools in RCT engaged in PL programmes, events, conferences, assignments, and networks.

**Table 13: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 from RCT schools upon completion of the PL, the following was stated:

- All delegates reported that PL event improved their knowledge of mathematics and numeracy.
- Many delegates (85%) 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.
- All participants anticipated the PL would have an impact on learners in their setting with 76% expecting a more profound impact, and a majority (62%) 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.

#### 7.5.4 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.

133 delegates from 48 (41%) of schools in RCT engaged in digital learning PL programmes, events, conferences, assignments, and networks.

**Table 14: 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 from RCT schools upon completion of the PL, the following was stated:

- Many practitioners (80%) intend to share their PL with colleagues, and a majority (67%) 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 (83%) reported that the PL was appropriate to needs and skill level, and that it was relevant to their daily role (73%).
- Nearly all practitioners (97%) 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.

#### 7.5.5 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
- Welsh Language Professional Learning
- Language, Literacy and Communication (LLC): Cymraeg

## 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.

**Table 15: Siarter Iaith / Siarter Iaith Cymraeg Campus Awards 2022-2023**

	Bronze	Silver	Gold
CSC	47	28	8
RCT	14	8	5

During 2022-2023, 66 delegates from 44 (38%) schools in RCT engaged in Welsh development PL programmes, events, conferences, assignments, and networks.

**Table 16: 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.

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 from delegates from the RCT schools:

- 3 out of 4 schools stated that they have a clear pathway for developing the Welsh Language, heritage and culture appropriate to their context.
- 4 out of 4 schools graded the degree to which the programme extended their skills and knowledge as 5/5.
- 3 out of 4 schools rated the professional learning as 5/5.
- 3 out of 4 schools 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.

347 delegates from 51 (44%) schools in RCT engaged in Welsh language PL.

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. Of the delegates who completed evaluations following face to face events:

- 100% stated that they plan to use what they have learned.
- 83% stated that the PL enhanced their knowledge of the subject.
- 67% gave 4 or 5, on a scale of 1 to 5, on how confident they felt following the PL.

**Table 17: 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**

[LLC: Cymraeg 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.

**Table 18: Engagement in CSC LLC Cymraeg PL opportunities 2022-2023**

RCT	Regional PL (excl. networks)	Regional networks	Regional funded collaboration projects
No of practitioners	23	17	1
No of schools	18	12	1
% of schools	16%	10%	1%

During 2022-2023, 40 practitioners from 30 (26%) schools in RCT either attended LLC: Cymraeg professional learning or an LLC: Cymraeg network meeting. These included all four (100%) Welsh medium secondary schools in the local authority. Of the delegates who attended professional learning and completed evaluations:

- Nearly all practitioners (96%) stated that they plan to use what they have learned and nearly all (96% reported that the PL would lead to at least some change in their practice.
- Nearly all practitioners (96%) reported that the PL enhanced their knowledge of the subject matter, with all practitioners (100%) giving 4 or 5 on a scale of 1-5, on how confident they felt following the PL.
- Many (83%) reported that the PL was appropriate to needs and skill level, and that it was relevant to their daily role (73%).

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 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.

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 Comprehensive School collaborated to produce exemplified support and guidance for the teaching of Welsh in an English medium context. 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.

### **7.5.6 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.

### 7.5.7 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.

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.

**Table 19: 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

[Post-16 leaders network](#) continues to be well-attended and supports schools' broader awareness of national and regional priorities in the sector. delegates from 14 delegates from four schools in RCT engaged in this network.

[Welsh Baccaulatee/Skills Challenge Certificate network](#) meetings were available for all qualification levels. Six delegates from three schools in RCT engaged in this network.

### 8.0 Equity and Vulnerable Learners

Central South Consortium continues to work in partnership with RCT and other stakeholders to support equity in all schools across the LA, with high standards and aspirations for all. A key driver to this work is the fostering of effective partnership with key stakeholders across RCT 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.

## **8.1 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?

Autumn 2022, 70% of schools in RCT 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. Three schools from RCT, 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.

## **8.2 Pupil Development Grant (PDG)**

April 2022 – March 2023, the PDG was allocated to schools at a rate of £1,150 per learner based on Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC) 2021. For further information, see Appendix A.

All RCT 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, (see Appendix A).

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).

Strong practice 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.



### **8.3 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. Cardinal Newman RC School and Hawthorn High School have been highlighted to engage in the RADY programme in 2023/24. For further information, see Appendix A.

### **9.0 CSC CONTRIBUTION TO SUPPORTING LA PRIORITIES**

As part of CSC's business planning process, RCT provides CSC with their priorities in the Spring Term, these are built into CSC's business plan for the following academic year. 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)*

### **10.0 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.

#### **10.1 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 RCT and RCT schools, can be found [here](#).

## **10.2 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.

### 10.3 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 20: 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
<b>Total</b>	<b>92,453</b>	<b>86,861</b>	<b>5,592</b>

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 21: 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
<b>Total</b>	<b>86,861</b>	<b>24,524</b>	<b>11,578</b>	<b>10,090</b>	<b>7,266</b>	<b>23,403</b>
<b>% spend received</b>		<b>39.75</b>	<b>13.33</b>	<b>11.62</b>	<b>8.37</b>	<b>26.94</b>

### 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.*

*Following an inspection at a primary school in the Pontypridd area, it needed to respond to Estyn's Inspection recommendation to, " 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.*

#### **10.4 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 of recognised indicators of value for money (in relation to the impact of the professional learning offer). A detailed analysis of this can be found in the Annual Academic Report for 2022/2023 which was presented to Joint Committee Members in December 2023. A link to the report can be found [here](#).

## 11.0 SHARING OF PRACTICE

### Sharing of practice



RHONDDA CYNON TAF  
Consortium Canolbarth y De  
Central South Consortium  
Gwasgirthys Addysg a'r Yd  
Joint Education Service

#### Estyn Inspection Reports

No. of inspections: Sept 2022 - Sept 2023	<b>18</b>
No. of inspections: Sept 2021 - Sept 2022	<b>9</b>
No. of Estyn good practice case studies: Sept 2022 - Sept 2023	<b>1</b>
No. of Estyn good practice case studies: Sept 2021 - Sept 2022	<b>3</b>

#### ★ Leadership

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

#### 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
<b>115</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>3018</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>84%</b>	<b>526</b>	<b>12</b>

#### General Context Data

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

#### Collaborations

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

#### Curriculum, Teaching & Assessment PL and Support

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

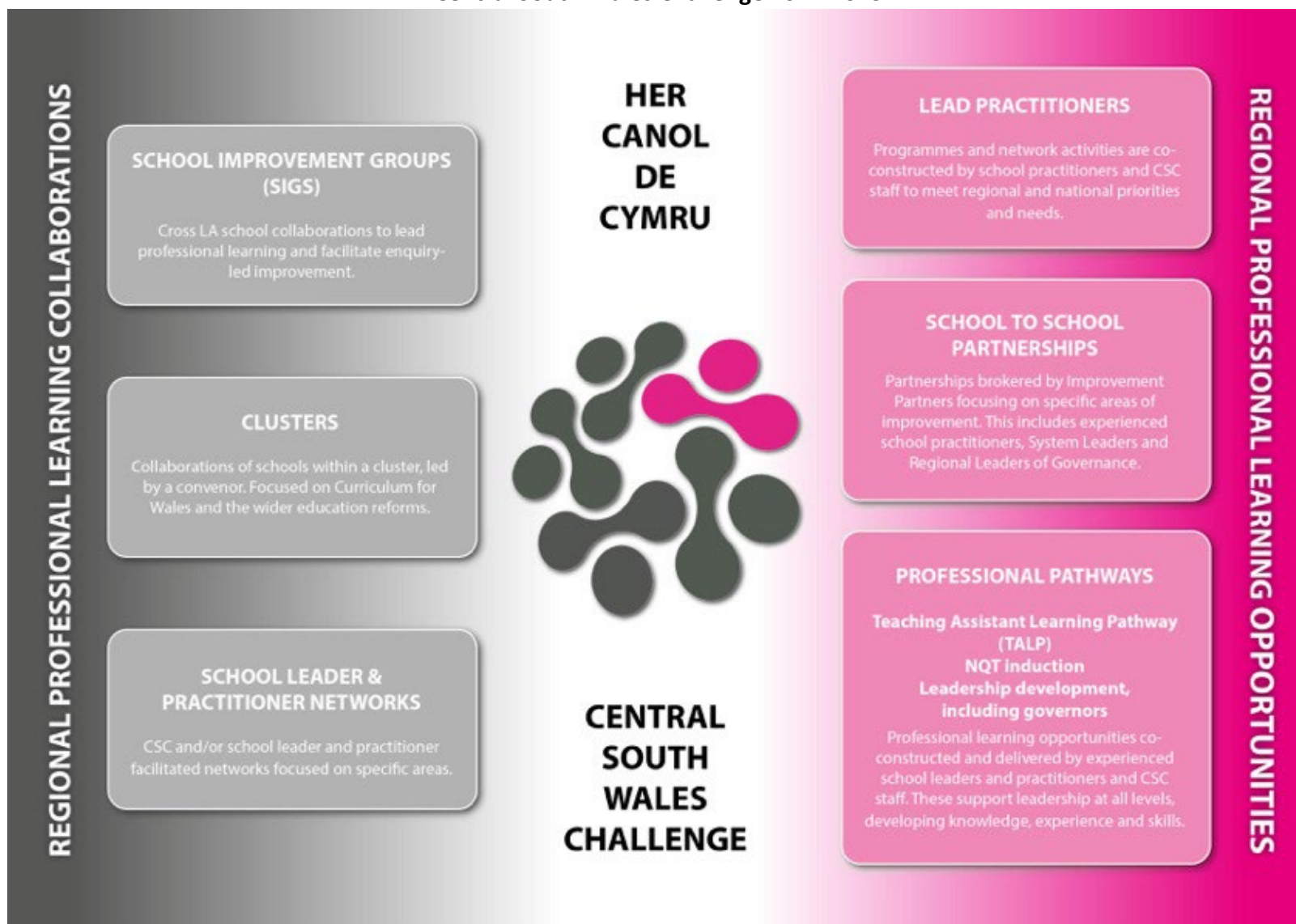
#### Sharing Practice - Sept 2022 - Sept 2023

No. of RCT schools with at least one Snippet of Success	<b>51</b>
No. of times RCT schools featured in Snippets of Success - our half termly celebration of news and success stories from schools in CSC	<b>79</b>
No. of podcasts produced:	
• Dwlw Darllen	<b>4</b>
• Mindful Teaching and Teaching Mindfulness	
• Den y Dreigiau	
• Richard Price Tercentenary Celebration	
No. of podcasts produced:	
• Data and Information Literacy Project	<b>4</b>

#### Coaching & Mentoring

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

Central South Wales Challenge 2022-2023



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><b>Delivering a high quality skilled educational workforce and excellent leadership at all levels</b></p>	<p>To sharpen self-evaluation and improvement planning to drive improvement.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>During Autumn term visits, Improvement Partners (IPs) work alongside school leaders to plan and undertake self-evaluation activities. Due to the impact of ASOS, this was in different stages of development across RCT schools.</li> </ul>	<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"> <li>IPs are work with Headteachers, SLT and governing bodies to ensure a shared understanding of progression exists within their own schools. In the best cases they work effectively within their clusters, collaborating with other schools to ensure a wider, shared understanding of progression and sharing ideas and practices with each other.</li> <li>PIPs work with LA officers on RCT’s SMT to provide challenge and further evidence demonstrating impact in the LA’s delivery plan priorities.</li> </ul>	<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"> <li>This is a Local Authority area of responsibility.</li> </ul>	
	<p>Deliver the Strategic Priorities within the WESP.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All Welsh medium and special schools along with most English medium schools in RCT are engaged with the <a href="#">Siarter Iaith</a> Cymraeg Campus Framework (Welsh Language Charter). Since April 2023, 18 schools have made progressive levels of progress within the Siarter Iaith Framework.</li> <li><b>Siarter Iaith (Welsh Medium) Data – November 2023</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Primary – 3 bronze, 9 silver and 5 gold.</li> <li>Secondary – 1 bronze and 1 silver.</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>Siarter Iaith Cymraeg Campus (English Medium) Data – November 2023</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Primary – 42 bronze, 10 silver and 2 gold.</li> <li>Secondary – 3 bronze and 2 silver.</li> <li>Special – 3 bronze.</li> </ul> </li> <li>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 <a href="#">awards ceremony</a> was held at The All Nations Centre in Cardiff in spring 2023 to celebrate successes of schools receiving awards since March 2020.</li> <li><a href="#">Llwyfan Llafar</a> 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</li> <li>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.</li> <li>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.</li> <li>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.</li> <li>CSC provides a range of Welsh language development professional learning (PL) for practitioners at no cost to schools. The PL is mapped against the <a href="#">Welsh Language Competency Framework</a> 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</li> </ul>	<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>



		<p>or clusters. All asynchronous assignments have been revised and updated and a higher level (Gloywi laith) introduced as an <a href="#">assignment</a> and <a href="#">face to face event</a>.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 205 practitioners from Rhondda Cynon Taf have engaged in Welsh language professional learning since April 2023.</li> <li>• Most practitioners state that the professional learning will improve their practice in the classroom and will make strong progress in changing their behaviours.</li> <li>• CSC has created and published a <a href="#">playlist</a> 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.</li> <li>• 2 RCT practitioners are undertaking the two-term foundation/intermediate level Welsh Sabbatical Schemes course in 2023/24 (Dolau and Hendreforgan).</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• All professional learning, bespoke support and resources from CSC Cymraeg can be found in this <a href="#">playlist</a>.</li> </ul>	
	<p>Ensuring effective leadership and management arrangements.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• IPs support Governing Bodies undertake the statutory Headteacher Performance Management process which includes establishing and reviewing targets throughout the year.</li> </ul>	<p>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.</p>

Strategic Priority 2:	Teaching & Learning																
Aim	Delivery Requirements	Evaluation of Progress of CSC activity to support LA Priorities	Next Steps														
<b>Supporting Educational settings to deliver a transformational curriculum, high quality teaching and learning and improved outcomes for all</b>	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"> <li>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.</li> <li>In addition, practitioners working within Foundation Learning are able to access additional professional learning via CSC’s professional learning compendium.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To continue liaising with the directorate in support of this priority.</li> </ul>														
	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"> <li>The Framework for School Improvement has been updated for September ‘23, to reflect the strengthening of processes and improved consistency.</li> <li>All IPs LA PIPs are experienced, high-functioning senior leaders. They undergo a rigorous interview process prior to employment.</li> <li>CSC’s quality assurance processes have been strengthened, including:</li> <li>CSC provide professional learning to all IPs and LA PIPs, ensuring high expectations and protocols are shared.</li> <li>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).</li> <li>LA PIPs monitor the School Improvement Partnership Logs (SIPLs) and undertaken joint activities alongside IPs throughout the year.</li> <li>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.</li> <li>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.</li> <li>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).</li> <li>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.</li> <li>LA PIPs quality assure progress review reports that are written by the IP and shared with relevant HTs, CoGB, HoA and DoE.</li> <li>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.</li> <li>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.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CSC to continue reviewing and evaluating the impact of the QA processes via established systems.</li> </ul>														
	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"> <li>PL, support and guidance is available to all schools and clusters to develop curriculum, teaching and assessment.</li> <li>Bespoke support is available to all schools and clusters to develop curriculum, teaching and assessment.</li> </ul> <p>RCT schools’ engagement in Curriculum, Teaching and Assessment PL opportunities April 2023- October 2023</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="1199 1661 2246 1787"> <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"> <li>IPs support Headteachers and senior leaders quality assure the school’s self-evaluation processes and its impact.</li> </ul>		Regional PL (excl. networks)	Regional Networks	Regional Funded Projects	Bespoke Support Requests	Practitioners	328	205	114	x	Schools	102	77	76	70
	Regional PL (excl. networks)	Regional Networks	Regional Funded Projects	Bespoke Support Requests													
Practitioners	328	205	114	x													
Schools	102	77	76	70													

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IPs are able to access focussed bespoke support from AOLE colleagues in the Curriculum and Professional learning team via the Bespoke Support Request system.</li> <li>• IPs promote collaborative work of clusters and SIGs to share good practice and moderate work.</li> </ul>	
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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"> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Cluster leads meetings planned in collaboration with LA staff for September 2023. RCT Cluster leads meeting was scheduled on 29.9.23.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Share findings from cluster leads meetings with relevant stakeholders.</li> <li>• Work with clusters to plan effectively in relation to the PDG LAC.</li> <li>• Respond to bespoke needs of cluster leads.</li> </ul>
	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"> <li>• IPs support Headteachers and senior leaders quality assure the school's self-evaluation processes and its impact.</li> <li>• IPs are able to access focussed bespoke support from AOLE colleagues in the Curriculum and Professional Learning team via the Bespoke Support Request system.</li> <li>• IPs promote collaborative work of clusters and SIGs to share good practice and moderate work.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• 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</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CSC to continue reviewing and evaluating the impact of the QA processes via established systems.</li> </ul>
	To promote equality and diversity to enable vulnerable & disadvantaged learners to achieve improved outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• See above</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CSC to continue reviewing and evaluating the impact of the QA processes via established systems.</li> </ul>

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"> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undertake twilight session with Cardinal Newman - October 2023</li> <li>• Establish links with other RCT schools to provide support.</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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.</li> </ul>	
	Ensure approaches relating to children's rights are embedded across all schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>IPs work with schools in support of embedding UNCRC's Rights of the Child approaches if applicable to their school improvement priorities.</li> <li>IPs work with senior leaders to review and monitor impact across all elements of the school.</li> </ul>	
	Further improve attendance rates, particularly for those persistent absentees, learners with SEN/ALN and eFSM learners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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.</li> <li>Improvement Partners continue to have a regular focus on well-being, attendance and exclusions, regularly supported by LA PIPs for Rhondda Cynon Taf.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>LA PIPs and IPs to continue attending All School Reviews, Progress Reviews and liaising with LA leads to further support in this area.</li> </ul>
	Reduce the number of exclusions across schools within the LA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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.</li> <li>Improvement Partners continue to have a regular focus on well-being, attendance and exclusions, regularly supported by LA PIPs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>See above</li> </ul>
	Ensure there are robust approaches to enhancing learner wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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.</li> <li>Improvement Partners continue to have a regular focus on well-being, attendance and exclusions, regularly supported by LA Principal Improvement Partners.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>See above</li> </ul>

<b>Strategic Priority 5:</b>		<b>21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools</b>	
<b>Aim</b>	<b>Delivery Requirements</b>	<b>Evaluation of Progress of CSC activity to support LA Priorities</b>	<b>Next Steps</b>
<b>Delivering 21st Century learning environments and innovative services for our learners and communities</b>	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"> <li>This is a Local Authority area of responsibility.</li> </ul>	
	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**

	<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Evaluation of progress of CSC actions to support recommendations</b>	<b>Next Steps</b>
<b>R1</b>	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	
<b>R2</b>	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	
<b>R3</b>	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	