

Complete Agenda



Cydweithio · Dysgu · Llwyddo
Collaborating · Learning · Succeeding



Meeting

GWE JOINT COMMITTEE

Date and Time

10.30 am, WEDNESDAY, 24TH MAY, 2023

Location

Virtual Meeting - Zoom

Contact Point

Einir Rh Davies

01286 679868

EinirRhianDavies@gwynedd.llyw.cymru

(DISTRIBUTED 17/05/23)

GWE JOINT COMMITTEE

MEMBERSHIP OF THE JOINT COMMITTEE

Voting Members

Councillors

Councillor Ieuan Williams	Isle of Anglesey County Council
Councillor Gill German	Denbighshire County Council
Councillor Julie Fallon	Conwy County Borough Council
Councillor Mared Eastwood	Flintshire County Council
Councillor Phil Wynn	Wrexham County Borough Council
Councillor Beca Brown	Cyngor Gwynedd

Co-opted Non-voting Members

Dylan Davies	Secondary School Representative
Delyth Roberts	Primary Schools Representative
Alison Fisher	Governor Representative
Jennie Downes	Church in Wales

Non-voting Officers

Dr Lowri Brown	Conwy County Borough Council
Claire Homard	Flintshire County Council
Garem Jackson	Cyngor Gwynedd
Karen Evans	Wrexham County Borough Council
Geraint Davies	Denbighshire County Council
Marc Berw Hughes	Isle of Anglesey County Council

Officers in Attendance

Einir Rh Davies	Host Authority
Dewi Morgan	Host Authority
Sion Huws	Host Authority
Arwyn Thomas	GwE Managing Director
Alwyn Jones	GwE Assistant Director
Bethan Eleri Roberts	GwE Performance Management
Graham Boase	Denbighshire County Council

Observer

A G E N D A

1. APOLOGIES

To receive any apologies for absence.

2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

To receive any declaration of personal interest.

3. URGENT ITEMS

To note any items that are a matter of urgency in the view of the Chairman for consideration.

4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING 5 - 9

The Chairman shall propose that the minutes of the previous meeting of this committee held on 15 February, 2023 be signed as the true record.

5. GWE FINAL ACCOUNTS 2022/23 - REVENUE OUT-TURN 10 - 14

To update Joint Committee Members on the final financial review of GwE' budget for the financial year 2022/23. The report also focuses on the significant financial variances, with Appendix 1 containing the full financial information.

6. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 15 - 40

To present the revised Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) to the Joint Committee for approval.

7. GWE ANNUAL REPORT 2022-23 41 - 99

To present the GwE 2022-2023 Annual Report to the Joint Committee.

8. APPROVE GWE 2023-2026 BUSINESS PLAN 100 - 131

To present the 2023-2026 Regional Business Plan to the Joint Committee members.

9. REVIEW THE RISK REGISTER 132 - 135

To present the latest GwE Risk Register to the Joint Committee.

10. REVIEW CURRENT OPERATING ARRANGEMENTS AND STAFFING STRUCTURE 136 - 143

To present the draft terms of reference to Joint Committee members in

relation to the Review of GwE current operating arrangements and staffing structure.

11. CONSULTATIONS

144 - 164

To share information with Joint Committee members regarding upcoming very pertinent consultations

12. CELEBRATION DAY OF THE REFORM JOURNEY - 22/06/2023

165 - 167

To present information to Joint Committee members regarding the intention to host a 'Curriculum for Wales Marketplace' for regional school leaders on 22 June 2023 at Venue Cymru, Llandudno to celebrate the reform journey thus far.

GWE JOINT COMMITTEE – 15/02/23

Present:

Councillors: Julie Fallon (Chair) (Conwy County Borough Council)
Gill German (Vice-chair) (Denbighshire Council)

Beca Brown (Cyngor Gwynedd), Ieuan Williams (Isle of Anglesey County Council) and Phil Wynn (Wrexham County Borough Council).

Co-opted Members Without a Vote: Dylan Davies (Secondary Schools Representative).

Officers without a vote: Dr Lowri Brown (Conwy County Borough Council), Claire Homard (Flintshire County Council), Marc Berw Hughes (Isle of Anglesey County Council), Garem Jackson (Cyngor Gwynedd) Dafydd Ifans (Wrexham County Borough Council) and Geraint Davies (Denbighshire Council).

Officers in attendance:

GwE – Arwyn Thomas (Managing Director), Alwyn Jones (Assistant Director), Bethan Roberts (Performance Management Manager).

Cyngor Gwynedd, the Host Authority – Dewi Morgan (Head of Finance Department), Siôn Huws (Propriety and Elections Manager), Gwion Jones (Senior Accountant), Rhodri Jones and Einir Davies (Democracy Services Officers).

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillor Ian Roberts (Flintshire County Council).

Condolences were extended to the family of the late Jonathan Morgan, the Headteacher of Ysgol Y Gogarth, Llandudno and an active member of the GwE joint committee, who had died recently. He was thanked for years of commitment throughout his career as a teacher and as a member of this Joint Committee.

2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

No declarations of personal interest were received from any members present.

3. URGENT ITEMS

No urgent matters were raised.

4. MINUTES

It was confirmed that the minutes presented from the meeting held on 23 November, 2022 were correct.

5. 2022-2023 BUDGET: QUARTER 3 MONITORING

The report was submitted by the Head of Finance Department. Attention was drawn to the following main points:

- It was anticipated that the GwE budget would be in a fairly neutral position at the end of the current financial year.
- It was confirmed that there was an underspend of £27,400 from the full budget of £17,993,147 and that GwE was spending in accordance with the budget.
- It was noted that this was substantially lower than the Quarter 2 review, when an underspend of £90,000 had been anticipated for the year. GwE had managed to reduce underspend levels by recruiting staff to vacant posts.

RESOLVED

To accept and approve the report for the Third Quarter of the GwE budget for the 2022/2023 financial year.

6. GwE BUDGET 2023-24 (BASELINE BUDGET)

The report was submitted by the Head of Finance Department. Attention was drawn briefly to the following principal points:

- It was noted that this budget was operational from 1 April 2023 until 31 March 2024.
- A suggestion was made to establish a baseline budget of the same figure as this year's budget. This was a total of £17,993,147.
- It was confirmed that this budget reflected the Councils' decision not to add inflation in full. This meant that there had been a 5.25% cut to the budget compared to 2022/23 following an increase in costs. It was detailed that this was equivalent to £206,000.
- It was explained that the Pension Fund was reviewed every three years and that the results of the latest review would be enforced on 1 April 2023. As the fund was currently in a healthy position, there would be a reduction of £103,964 in GwE's contribution as an employer. It was confirmed that this was half the deficit created by inflation, reducing the cut faced to 2.60%. There would be a need to ensure that savings are made to address the remaining deficit of £102,112 in the budget.
- Reference was made to the contributions from the Councils to the GwE budget. It was stated that the total provided was £3,924,269 between the six Councils. It was confirmed that this was the same figure as the current financial year. Despite this, there would be a minor adjustment in the contribution of individual councils due to changes in population levels.

RESOLVED

To adopt the baseline budget for the 2023/24 budgetary year as submitted in Appendix 1 of the report.

7. 2022-2023 BUSINESS PLAN: QUARTER 3 MONITORING

The report was submitted by the Managing Director of GwE. Attention was drawn to the following points:

- It was explained that this relevant period (October – December 2022) had been a very busy period with many schools witnessing some normality returning following the Covid-19 period.
- It was noted that new procedures had been enforced to ensure that schools reviewed performance and self-assessed accountability.

- Reference was made to an important conference held across the region, which focused on reintroducing systems to bridge primary and secondary education.
- It was confirmed that one of the main risks recently was leadership succession on all levels in the system. It was noted that a quarter of secondary school headteachers in North Wales had retired within the past year. It was also noted that there was currently a shortage of supply teachers and schools had difficulty releasing teachers to attend key training.
- It was emphasised that GwE's relationship with schools was very good despite these staffing issues.

Members of the Joint Committee were given an opportunity to share observations and ask questions:

- Details were provided about the 'Strategy to support parents' involvement in the community' within Objective 4 of the plan: 'Strong and Inclusive Schools' enquiring what work was being undertaken to ensure developments within the strategy.
 - In response to the query, GwE's Managing Director confirmed that there was close collaboration between GwE, parents and learners to ensure that materials were available to them. It was elaborated that work was being carried out with the Welsh Government in an attempt to see how this collaboration would happen socially as it was not yet clear. It was emphasised that good work was being undertaken in schools on an individual level to develop this strategy, but a clear plan was needed for the future on how to implement it on a community and regional level.
- It was proposed that a further discussion was held on the strategy by GwE's Management Board to share good practices and ideas and to ensure that the plan and strategy were strong and effective.
 - In response to this proposal, GwE's Managing Director confirmed that it would be possible to discuss this matter further by the summer period as clearer policies would be available at that time for consideration.
- It was agreed that inequality and attendance were key matters following the Covid period. The safety of children was another factor.
- It was elaborated that one obstacle in terms of planning this strategy was that the budget from the Welsh Government was for a fixed period. It was believed that this caused recruitment difficulties as it was not possible to plan for the long term.
- It was noted that strong measures were needed to protect leaders and it was mentioned that the young workforce were also leaving their posts due to work pressures. It was noted that misconceptions were being shared about careers in the teaching field and that the mindset needed to change.

Gratitude was expressed for the report.

RESOLVED

- **To approve and accept the monitoring report for quarter 3.**
- **Further discussion on the 'Strategy to support parents' involvement in the community' within Objective 4 of the plan: 'Strong and Inclusive Schools' at a future Joint Committee meeting.**

8. WRITTEN STATEMENT: SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT AND THE INFORMATION LANDSCAPE – MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND THE WELSH LANGUAGE

The report was submitted by the Managing Director of GwE. Attention was drawn to the following main points:

- It was confirmed that the Minister for Education and the Welsh Language had issued a written statement: 'School improvement and the information landscape' on 19 January 2023, which outlined the next steps in terms of developing a new data and information ecosystem / landscape. This update was submitted for information to the Members.
- It was explained that the written statement detailed the new information system for schools and shared recommendations on the accountability levels of schools.
- Members were reminded of the unexpected announcement that a 'Capped 9 Points Score' system would return as an accountability measure from summer 2023 onwards. This measure would create a score based on the results of 9 GCSE qualifications or equivalent qualification.
- It was elaborated that the Welsh Government had confirmed that two working groups would be established, with practitioners in schools and local authorities collaborating on a vision of how schools' accountability should look in future.
- Reference was made to a 'sampling' system that would also be implemented. This would be used for schools and officers to share ideas and contribute to improve the system through examples of good practice.
- It was noted that careful action must be taken when accountability measures were introduced as it was possible that schools would compete against each other rather than work together, share ideas and implement good practices.
- It was emphasised that a statement had been released by ESTYN's Chief Inspector, confirming that inspections would operate in the same manner as current processes.

Members of the Joint Committee were given an opportunity to share observations and ask questions:

Disappointment and frustration were expressed that local authorities, schools and the Regional Consortium were not consulted about these updates. It was noted that the timing of the announcement caused concern as it had been issued in the middle of an academic year and soon after the results of early examinations.

It was emphasised that headteachers and teachers had felt pressured recently as a result of matters such as behaviour and attendance, and reintroducing the 'Capped 9 Points Score' arrangement could add to this.

It was confirmed that some members of the Joint Committee would meet the Minister in March and concerns about the situation would be shared at that time. It was proposed to hold an additional meeting of the Joint Committee following this meeting in order to have a further discussion about education in North Wales, and to ensure considerations to improve the system and understand accountability measures, and to invite the Minister to the meeting for observations. Following that meeting, the Joint Committee would be able to share a statement on behalf of the region's schools should members deem it appropriate.

RESOLVED

This item was presented for information to members. Resolved to invite the Minister for the Welsh Language and Education to an extraordinary meeting of the Joint Committee for a discussion on education across the north Wales region.

9. 'EIN LLAIS NI' PROJECT

The report was presented by the Assistant Director of GwE. Attention was drawn briefly to the following principal points:

- It was confirmed that the aim of the project was to assist pupils to develop oracy skills in Welsh by offering ideas and strategies to nurture speaking and reading skills.
- It was noted that a number of schools had stated the need to develop their pupils' oracy skills in Welsh. This was particularly true following the Covid period and specifically in non-Welsh speaking families as pupils had not received the opportunity to practise their skills.
- The Joint Committee was reminded that the project's initial work had been undertaken in consultation with Welsh-medium and bilingual schools and with Professor Enlli Thomas, who was an international expert on bilingual education.
- It was detailed that the project had received support from the Welsh Government by means of a grant in October 2021. It was also noted that a steering group had been established for the project, which included the following members – school headteachers, a representative of the Management Board, GwE's Managing Director, Councillor Ian Roberts on behalf of the Gwe Joint Committee and Professor Enlli Thomas.
- Pride was shared that schools had shared the project's successes in workshops last term. This showed that the strategies introduced as part of the project had been successful in developing the children's skills.
- Following the project's successes, it was noted that an application had been made to extend the project to more Welsh-medium and bilingual schools, as well as English-medium schools. An additional allocation of up to £272,000 from the Welsh Government had been received to further develop and extend the work.

RESOLVED

To approve the content of the report and the plans to develop the project in accordance with the targets set by the Welsh Government.

10. 2023-2024 MEETINGS CALENDAR

The report was submitted by the Managing Director of GwE as an item for information only.

Consideration was given to hold the next meeting of the Joint Committee in multi-locations on May 24.

RESOLVED

To agree on the Joint Committee meetings calendar for the 2023-24 year.

The meeting commenced at 10:30am and concluded at 12:00pm.

CHAIR

Agenda Item 5

GwE: Joint Committee 24/05/23



Cydweithio · Dysgu · Llwyddo
Collaborating · Learning · Succeeding

MEETING	GwE Joint Committee
DATE	24 May 2023
TITLE	GwE Final Accounts 2022/23 – Revenue Out-turn
PURPOSE	• To update Joint Committee Members on the final financial review of GwE' budget for the financial year 2022/23. • The report focuses on the significant financial variances, with Appendix 1 containing the full financial information.
AUTHOR	Gwynedd Council Head of Finance.

1. DECISION

The Joint Committee is asked to:

- 1.1 **Consider and note the Revenue Income and Expenditure Account for 2022/23.**
- 1.2 Approve a transfer from GwE reserves to finance the 2022/23 overspend of £138,871, after considering the main variances between the budget and actual expenditure
- 1.3 Approve the final financial position for 2022/23 which is the basis of the GwE statutory financial statements for the year which have already been produced, certified and published by the host authority's Finance Department before the statutory date of 31 May.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The GwE Joint Committee Revenue Income and Expenditure account for 2022/23 appears in Appendix 1.
- 2.2 A final net overspend position of £138,871 is reported against the budget, mainly due to prioritising specific essential schemes.
- 2.3 At the end of quarter 3, it was estimated that there would be an underspend of (£27,423). This means that a movement of £166,294 can be seen to what was predicted at the end of quarter 3.
- 2.4 Section 3 below explains the reasons for the main variances.

3. FINANCIAL VARIANCES

3.1 **Employees:**

Final Position: Underspend (£23,430) Quarter 3: Overspend £12,711

A slight underspend is reported mainly due to staff turnover including staff on secondment with the schemes being funded through grants. With the value of the budget at £3.4m net, the underspend is very close to the budget

3.2 **Building:**

Final Position: Overspend £46,252 Quarter 3: Overspend £23,787

GwE has a budget for rental income from schools, local authorities and internal use from schemes that are funded through grants, for the use of GwE buildings. These activities restarted in September 2022, and so it was foreseen that the income stream would improve during the year. It was reported in Quarter 3 that a lack of income for the period from April to August would lead to overspending. Unfortunately, the use and consequently the income generated was less than expected. By the end of the year this heading will be reviewed to assess its appropriateness in the new post Covid workplace.

3.3 **Transport:**

Final Position: Underspend (£49,202) Quarter 3: Underspend (£54,046)

No material change to what was reported in Quarter 3. After being suspended during the Covid crisis, visits to schools resumed during the year. We foresee a full year of uninterrupted visits to schools during the 23/24 financial year. However, new ways of working have generally led to more virtual meetings, and therefore less travel. The underspend is not expected to be at the same level in 23/24, and the situation will be nearer to a balanced budget.

3.4 **Specific Projects:**

Final Position: Overspend £206,122 Quarter 3: Overspend £540

The service has purposely prioritised essential schemes during the financial year to give support to schools. The overspend in this heading is financed through the underspend on the other headings noted above as well as the use of the underspend fund.

4. UNDERSPEND FUND

- 4.1 At the beginning of the 2022/23 financial year, the fund (GwE 'general balances') totalled (£437,503).
- 4.2 The net overspend of £138,871 will be financed from the underspend fund, and following other transfers into the fund during the year, the final balance in 2022/23 is (£298,632).

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Revenue Income and Expenditure Account 2022/23.

VIEW OF THE STATUTORY OFFICERS

Monitoring Officer:

Nothing to add from a propriety perspective

Statutory Finance Officer:

Author of report

GwE JOINT COMMITTEE
REVENUE INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT 2022/23

	Budget	Expenditure	Over / (Under) Spend Net
<u>Expenditure</u>	£	£	£
Employees			
Salaries			
- Management, Brokerage, Standards and Administration	970,062	830,424	(139,638)
- Supporting Improvement Advisers	4,168,491	4,292,395	123,904
- Staff on Secondment	229,922	229,922	0
- Transferred against 'Specific Projects'	(2,011,481)	(2,021,711)	(10,230)
Training, advertising and other employee costs	44,070	46,604	2,534
Building			
Rent (includes services)	179,274	186,267	6,993
'Specific Projects' usage of offices recharge	(60,880)	(21,621)	39,259
Travel			
Travel Costs	144,540	95,338	(49,202)
Supplies and Services			
Furniture, equipment, printing, postage, telephone, room hire etc	76,010	73,715	(2,295)
Information Technology (contribution to fund)	17,070	0	(17,070)
Audit Fees	11,853	13,609	1,756
Brokerage	299,367	299,466	99
Gwynedd Council Host Authority Support Service Costs			
Legal	5,925	5,925	0
Human Resources	10,160	10,160	0
Finance	43,933	43,933	0
Information Technology	48,591	48,591	0
National Model Commitments	469,948	469,948	0
Specific Projects			
Regional Consortia School Improvement Grant	10,713,476	10,918,417	204,941
Pupil Deprivation Grant - Looked After Children	1,125,850	1,125,913	63
Pupil Deprivation Grant - Strategic Advisor	100,000	101,118	1,118
Pupil Deprivation Grant - Consortia Led Funding	257,118	257,118	0
Newly Qualified Teachers (NQT)	621,742	621,742	0
Informal use of Welsh program (ages 3-18)	207,353	207,353	0
Ein Llais Ni – Oracy Scheme	113,627	113,627	0
Total Expenditure	17,786,021	17,948,253	162,232

	Budget	Income	Over / (Under) Spend Net
	£	£	£
<u>Income</u>			
Core Service Contributions			
- Anglesey Council (21/22: 10.16% - 22/23: 10.14%)	(445,643)	(445,643)	0
- Gwynedd Council (21/22: 17.63% - 22/23: 17.59%)	(772,960)	(772,960)	0
- Conwy Council (21/22: 15.28% - 22/23: 15.26%)	(670,688)	(670,688)	0
- Denbighshire Council (21/22: 15.36% - 22/23: 15.48%)	(680,010)	(680,010)	0
- Flintshire Council (21/22: 22.72% - 22/23: 22.67%)	(996,049)	(996,049)	0
- Wrexham Council (21/22: 18.86% - 22/23: 18.86%)	(828,867)	(828,867)	0
Specific Projects			
Regional Consortia School Improvement Grant	(10,672,628)	(10,672,628)	0
Pupil Deprivation Grant - Looked After Children	(1,125,850)	(1,125,850)	0
Pupil Deprivation Grant - Strategic Advisor	(100,000)	(100,000)	0
Pupil Deprivation Grant - Consortia Led Funding	(257,118)	(257,118)	0
Newly Qualified Teachers (NQT)	(621,742)	(621,742)	0
Informal use of Welsh program (ages 3-18)	(207,353)	(207,353)	0
Ein Llais Ni – Oracy Scheme	(113,627)	(113,627)	0
Income from Secondments	(229,922)	(229,922)	0
Other Income	(63,564)	(63,564)	0
Interest on Balances	0	(23,361)	(23,361)
Total Income	(17,786,021)	(17,809,382)	(23,361)
Total Income over Expenditure	0	138,871	138,871
<u>Memorandum -</u>			
<u>The General Fund</u>			
	Fund balance as at 1 April 2022		(437,503)
	Add - Information Technology (contribution to fund)		0
	Add/Less - (Under)/Overspend 2022/23		138,871
	Less - Use of the Fund		0
	Fund balance as at 31 March 2023		(298,632)



REPORT TO THE JOINT COMMITTEE

24 MAY 2023

Report by: GwE Managing Director

Subject: Medium Term Financial Plan 2023/24 – 2026/27

1.0 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To present the revised Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) to the Joint Committee for approval.

2.0 Background & Considerations

- 2.1 The MTFP is an overview document which identifies the main financial matters affecting GwE over the coming years. It sets out GwE's strategic approach to the management of its finances and outlines financial issues that will face GwE over the next four years. The delivery of the strategy is dependent on the resources made available through Welsh Government (WG) settlements and on the success of GwE in aligning resources to its service priorities.
- 2.2 The MTFP sets out the overall shape of GwE's budget and outlines a model of the financial requirements for its planned levels of service delivery in the medium term. This provides a framework so as to enable Joint Committee and officers to develop detailed annual budget allocations.
- 2.3 The MTFP is a key tool for proactive financial management. It is used as the basis of the annual budget setting process to ensure that the GwE's resource needs for the forthcoming year are sufficient and aligned to the correct priorities, but also allows for

future projected funding requirements to be identified far enough ahead so as to be able to plan to take appropriate action to deal with the anticipated funding levels.

2.4 The MTFP has been revised following agreement on the core budget for 2023/24.

3.0 Recommendation

3.1 The Joint Committee is asked to approve the report and the identified actions as detailed.

4.0 Financial Implications / Risks

4.1 The MTFP identifies the main financial matters affecting GwE over the coming years. The plan is dependent on factors outside of GwE's control & require close monitoring & consideration to limit the impact.

5.0 Equalities Impact

5.1 There are no new equalities implications arising from this report.

6.0 Personnel Implications

6.1 There are no new personnel implications arising from this report.

7.0 Consultation Undertaken

7.1 This report was prepared in consultation with the host authority's Section 151 Finance Officer following direction from the Chief Executives, who supports the recommendation.

OPINION OF THE STATUTORY OFFICERS

Monitoring Officer:

Nothing to add from a propriety perspective.

Statutory Finance Officer:

I have collaborated with GwE's Managing Director to prepare the Medium-Term Financial Plan 2023/24 – 2026/27, and I confirm that the financial figures included are fair estimates.



Collaborating · Learning · Succeeding

MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN

2023/24 – 2026/27

GwE

MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN: 2023/24 – 2026/27

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 This overview document identifies the main financial matters affecting GwE over the coming years. The document is supported and guided by Gwynedd Council's Section 151 officer.
- 1.2 This document provides a summary position and, specifically, will enable the GwE Joint Committee and staff to gain further understanding in relation to:
 - Modelling scenarios
 - Principles adopted in the allocation of resources
 - Identifying the extent of any financial challenges / opportunities
 - Principles to address funding pressures

2. THE REQUIREMENT FOR A MEDIUM-TERM FINANCIAL PLAN (MTFP)

- 2.1 This Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) sets out GwE's strategic approach to the management of its finances and outlines financial issues that GwE will face over the next four years. The delivery of the strategy is dependent on the resources made available through Welsh Government (WG) settlements and GwE's success in aligning resources to its service priorities.
- 2.2 The MTFP sets out the overall shape of GwE's budget and outlines a model of the financial requirements for its planned levels of service delivery in the medium term. This provides a framework so that the Joint Committee and officers may develop detailed annual budget allocations.
- 2.3 The MTFP will be a key tool for proactive financial management. It will be used as the basis of the annual budget setting process to ensure that GwE's resource needs for the forthcoming year are sufficient and aligned to the correct priorities. It also allows for future projected funding requirements to be identified far enough ahead to enable appropriate action to deal with the anticipated funding levels.
- 2.4 Every year, it is required to prepare an annual budget. The MTFP will be updated every year as part of the annual budget planning cycle. The Joint Committee will be kept informed of developments to the MTFP at the annual GwE meeting in July and services will consider cost and savings and/or income generating options as part of the annual budget planning cycle.

3. GWE'S MID-TERM PRIORITIES AND OBJECTIVES:

3.1 The MTFP will support GwE's vision and values and deliver on GwE's mid to long term priorities and objectives.

3.2 The following are key documents in guiding GwE's direction during this period:

- Our Vision, Values and Behaviours
- Regional Business Plan 2023-2026
- GwE Business Plans
- School Support Plans
- School Improvement Guidance: framework for evaluation, improvement and accountability
- Risk Register

3.3 Additionally, the key objectives of the Minister for Education and Welsh Language, Welsh Government – 'Our national mission: high standards and aspirations for all' is a policy driver that influences GwE's objectives and priorities, together with the 8 contributing factors that have been identified in order to realise the new curriculum successfully. Another element is the Local Authorities' strategic priorities that are within the remit of GwE's work and these are all woven into our strategic objectives and priorities as outlined in the Regional Business Plan 2023-2026.

4. THE FINANCIAL CHALLENGE

4.1 GwE has been operational since April 2013, initially delivering a £883,000 or 20% efficiency saving across the six North Wales Local Authorities compared to their previous equivalent service delivery cost.

4.2 Since April 2013 the service has managed to grow gradually in staffing resource terms through realignment of existing budget resources and through the use of specific grant funding.

4.3 GwE has delivered further efficiency savings of £131,000 (real terms) or 3.48% in 2016/17 by absorbing from within existing resources the management and administration of numerous additional Welsh Government school improvement initiatives, funded via specific grants.

4.4 An efficiency savings target of £36,880 was added for 2018/19, equivalent to 1%.

4.5 A further efficiency savings target of £116,468 was added for 2019/20, equivalent to a 1% cash cut (3.19% in real terms). The 2018/19 and 2019/20 cut was implemented by reducing the number of permanent staff and secondments to GwE and by seconding senior positions to other organisations. A further efficiency savings target of £102,112 has been added for 2023/24, equivalent to a 2.6% in real terms.

4.6 The Welsh Government draft budget

Funding for GwE will be relative to the settlement for the six North Wales local authorities. At the time of writing this document, Welsh Government has provided figures for local government settlement in 2023/24 of 7.9% and indicative figures for local government settlement in 2024/25 of approximately 3%.

4.7 GwE's Baseline budget:

4.7.1 Below is a summary GwE's starting budget position over the last 5 years:

Year	2022/23 £'000	2021/22 £'000	2020/21 £'000	2019/20 £'000	2018/19 £'000
Gross Revenue	17,477	13,776	14,115	14,379	13,135
Expenditure					
Income Revenue	13,083	9,552	9,952	10,294	9,021
Total Original Net Budget	4,394	4,224	4,163	4,085	4,114
Reserves brought forward	438	651	552	346	312

4.8 Annual Financial Pressures on GwE:

Each year there are financial pressures on GwE. These pressures are the cumulative effect of:

- Inflation
- Unavoidable commitments
- Planned Efficiency/Income streams
- LA contributions to core budgets
- Restructuring to deliver National Priorities
- Welsh Government grants

4.10 Unavoidable Pressures:

The following have been estimated as unavoidable pressures on GwE:

- 2017/18 - Staff restructure
- 2018/19 - None identified

- 2019/20 - None identified
- 2020/21 - None identified
- 2021/22 – None identified
- 2022/23 – Restructuring of the Business Team
- 2023/24 – Cuts and the need for restructuring

4.10 Reserves

GwE monitors and reviews the reserves that it holds. The review for this year is included in the Base Revenue Budget 2022/23. As GwE's finance moves to be more dependent on WG grants this particularly exposes GwE to more volatility in terms of financial planning. Hence the need for adequate reserves to assist GwE in coping with any revised grant and inflationary assumptions and volatility in income generation. GwE reviews its reserve funds formally every March to ensure that appropriate resources are made available.

4.11 Cumulative Effects

The following table identifies the cumulative effect of inflationary pressures and unavoidable commitments set against different funding shortfall periods.

	2022/23			2023/24			2024/25		
	Best Scenario	Middle Scenario	Worst Scenario	Best Scenario	Middle Scenario	Worst Scenario	Best Scenario	Middle Scenario	Worst Scenario
<i>Previous year pay budget</i>	£2,964,749	£2,964,749	£2,964,749	£3,132,747	£3,161,726	£3,190,705	£3,148,694	£3,209,438	£3,270,761
Pay inflation (%)	5.7%	6.6%	7.6%	*0.5%	*1.5%	*2.5%	4.0%	5.0%	6.0%
Pay inflation (£)	£167,998	£196,977	£225,956	£15,947	£47,712	£80,056	£125,948	£160,472	£196,246
Other inflation (%)	6.0%	6.0%	6.0%	5.0%	7.5%	10.0%	1.5%	1.8%	3.0%
Other inflation (£)	£47,043	£47,043	£47,043	£41,795	£62,692	£83,589	£13,165	£16,175	£27,584
Total Inflation	£215,041	£244,020	£272,999	£57,742	£110,404	£163,645	£139,113	£176,646	£223,830
Funded by authorities (%)	4.5%	4.5%	4.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	3.5%	0.0%	-4.0%
Funded by authorities (£)	£170,671	£170,671	£170,671	£0	£0	£0	£139,113	£0	-£167,610
Impact on GwE (£)	-£44,370	-£73,349	-£102,328	-£57,742	-£110,404	-£163,645	£0	-£176,646	-£391,440
Cumulative impact (£)	-£44,370	-£73,349	-£102,328	-£102,112	-£183,753	-£265,973	-£102,112	-£360,399	-£657,413

*Pay inflation 2023/24 including a 1.25% National Insurance reduction, and a reduction in the employer's pension contribution from 23.0% to 18.7% (equivalent to approximately 4% on a salary budget)

5. GwE's VISION, VALUES AND BEHAVIOURS

5.1 GwE's Vision:

Our work is driven by genuine ambition to see the schools and organisations we work with achieve their aspirations and to see all learners succeed.

Proudly Welsh and internationally informed, we will support our schools to become successful and confident learning organisations. We will collaborate to provide learners with the climate and education they deserve so that they become capable and resilient individuals to realise their full potential.

5.2 GwE's Values

To achieve the vision and objectives, we have set ourselves minimum expectations.

These expectations are:

- Good leadership and management in our schools
- Good teaching across the region's schools
- Remove variation within a school
- Not one of GwE's schools in Estyn statutory categories
- Pupils' learning and wellbeing are at least good in every school
- CfW in place in every school

To achieve the vision and objectives we have set ourselves personal and service values.

- Respect
- Trust
- Wellbeing
- Innovate and inspire
- Support and collaborate
- Cymru a'r Gymraeg

6. REGIONAL STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES AND PRIORITIES

GwE has set itself a series of strategic objectives and priorities to align with the MTFP. These objectives frame business plans into medium- and long-term targets. This also allows our financial planning to address these objectives as priorities.

The key objectives of the Welsh Government outlined in 'Our national mission: high standards and aspirations for all' together with 8 contributing factors towards realising the curriculum by the Welsh Government are woven into our strategic objectives and priorities.

6.1 Our Strategic Priorities

OUR STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES	
What are we aiming to achieve?	
1	School Improvement - embedding effective school improvement arrangements while implementing the Curriculum for Wales and associated reforms.
2	Curriculum & Assessment - supporting the 4 purposes of the curriculum, ensuring that all learners progress along their own learning pathway gaining a broad range of knowledge, skills and experiences, with equity and excellence at its core.
3	Developing high-quality teaching and learning - improving the teaching and learning in our schools by supporting and developing practitioners' understanding of pedagogic skills to support the success of all learners through ambitious professional learning.
4	Leadership - developing inspirational leaders to work collaboratively to support the success of all learners along their own learning pathway through accurate self-evaluation and robust improvement planning and delivery. Continue to develop a self-improving system, in which the education profession has the skills, capacity and ability to continually learn & improve their practice, working towards being learning organisations.
5	A positive education experience for everyone – committed to excellence, equity and well-being, with learners and staff supported in their wellbeing and resilience, which is essential for improving education outcomes and life chances. Ensure that learners are supported to be healthy, confident individuals, ready to lead fulfilling lives as valued members of society, within places of learning that are supportive, safe, inclusive and free from discrimination and bullying.

	Empowering all learners and communities to have strong relationships with education providers, so that we tackle disadvantage and deliver world-class education locally and nationally.
6	Cymraeg belongs to us all - giving every learner equal access to the language and everyone the opportunity to reach their potential. Encourage the use of Welsh across the education system, as an integral part of Curriculum for Wales, our Cymraeg 2050 ambitions and expanding provision post-16 to study through Welsh and opportunities to learn the language as active and engaged citizens.
7	Business - ensuring that GwE has strong governance, appropriate and effective school improvement and business structures, that provides positive impact and value for money.

6.2 Our Priorities 2023-2024

OBJECTIVE 1: SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT Embedding effective school improvement arrangements while implementing the Curriculum for Wales and associated reforms	
Ref.	Priority
1.1	Ensure all schools are supported to evaluate accurately and to deliver robust improvement plans effectively.
1.2	Supporting leaders working collaboratively to promote high standards and aspirations for all [to include quality of teaching and curriculum provision].
1.3	Support leaders in schools to become familiar with the new school improvement guidance and to be confident in implementing actions.
1.4	Strengthen multi agency and ‘team around the school’ approaches with schools causing concern
1.5	Strengthen partnership working with Local Authorities.

OBJECTIVE 2: CURRICULUM & ASSESSMENT

Supporting the 4 purposes of the curriculum, ensuring that all learners progress along their own learning pathway gaining a broad range of knowledge, skills and experiences, with equity and excellence at its core.

Ref.	Priority
2.1	Realising Curriculum for Wales.
2.2	Assessment, progression and accountability.

OBJECTIVE 3: DEVELOPING HIGH-QUALITY TEACHING AND LEARNING

Improving the teaching and learning in our schools by supporting and developing practitioners' understanding of pedagogic skills to support the success of all learners through ambitious professional learning.

Ref.	Priority
3.1	Improve Teaching.

OBJECTIVE 4: LEADERSHIP

Developing inspirational leaders to work collaboratively to support the success of all learners along their own learning pathway through accurate self-evaluation and robust improvement planning and delivery.

Continue to develop a self-improving system, in which the education profession has the skills, capacity and ability to continually learn and improve their practice working towards being learning organisations.

Ref.	Priority
4.1	Implement Regional and National Leadership Programmes.

OBJECTIVE 5: A POSITIVE EDUCATION EXPERIENCE FOR EVERYONE

Committed to excellence, equity and well-being, with learners and staff supported in their wellbeing and resilience, which is essential for improving education outcomes and life chances.

Ensure that learners are supported to be healthy, confident individuals, ready to lead fulfilling lives as valued members of society, within places of learning that are supportive, safe, inclusive and free from discrimination and bullying.

Empowering all learners and communities to have strong relationships with education providers, so that we tackle disadvantage and deliver world-class education locally and nationally.

Ref.	Priority
5.1	Support staff in their wellbeing and resilience.
5.2	Support schools to ensure that learners are supported to be healthy, confident individuals, ready to lead fulfilling lives as valued members of society, within places of learning that are supportive, safe, inclusive and free from discrimination and bullying.
5.3	Support schools to provide equity for all by tackling disadvantage and to have strong relationships with parents/carers and their communities.

OBJECTIVE 6: CYMRAEG BELONGS TO US ALL

Giving every learner equal access to the language and everyone the opportunity to reach their potential.

Encourage the use of Welsh across the education system, as an integral part of Curriculum for Wales, our Cymraeg 2050 ambitions and expanding provision post-16 to study through Welsh and opportunities to learn the language as active and engaged citizens.

Ref.	Priority
6.1	Support schools to plan purposefully in order to support and develop learners' skills and literacy in Welsh in the context of the Curriculum for Wales.
6.2	Promote the learning of the Welsh language and develop the linguistic skills of the workforce.
6.3	Develop the informal use of Welsh through the 'Siarter iaith' and 'Cymraeg Campus'

OBJECTIVE 7: BUSINESS	
Ensuring that GwE has strong governance, appropriate and effective school improvement and business structures, that provides positive impact and value for money.	
Ref.	Priority
7.1	Review current operating arrangements and staffing structure to ensure that the regional school improvement service is suitably structured to deliver local, regional and national priorities.

6.3 Service Risks

The GwE Risk Register is a live document which is kept under regular review by the Senior Leadership Team and Management Board. It is presented to the Joint Committee on an annual basis and also when new risks are identified, of which the Joint Committee needs to be made aware.

Every Business Plan within the Business Planning Framework identifies potential risks. Via the quarterly monitoring reporting procedure, the holder of the Strategic Objective is informed of any necessary changes.

There are several risks that have been identified as potential barriers to the successful implementation of the Business Plan priorities. These are:

- Cuts in funding to the GwE Core Budget affect strategic long-term planning
- Uncertainty regarding grant funding arrangements from WG hampers strategic long-term planning. Significant delays in confirmation of funding levels affect the implementation of the Strategic Business Plan
- Difficulties in the recruitment and succession planning of Senior Leaders across the region, especially Welsh medium
- Pace of addressing deep-rooted issues in secondary schools placed in Estyn Statutory category
- The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic has made it more difficult for schools to work on engaging with their original Curriculum for Wales preparations
- Uncertainty around accountability and performance measures hampering the pace of the Reform Journey, especially in the secondary sector
- Uncertainty around what 2027 qualifications will look like is a restrictive factor in secondary schools
- Coherence and range of Reform Journey and its impact on systemic leadership between WG, middle tier and schools with an increasing level of funding going directly from WG to schools
- GwE current operating arrangements and staffing structure do not meet Welsh Government or regional direction in going forward
- Difficulties in recruitment and succession planning within the service as salaries are not competitive with similar organisation or with Headteacher and senior leaders' salaries
- Implementing the new school improvement guidance
- Current Union climate

6.4 Financial strategy

The Financial Strategy will identify detailed plans to enable GwE to set a balanced budget for the period identified.

To strengthen the medium-term financial planning process, indicative budgets beyond one year are required.

7. VALUE FOR MONEY, EVALUATING AND CAPTURING IMPACT

7.1 Value for Money

GwE is committed to evaluating, capturing impact and delivering value for money as an integral part of its strategic and operational work. It has a specific responsibility to achieve VFM from its use of core and grant funding. Similarly, the responsibility for pursuing VFM lies with all staff, and not just those with financial duties.

To meet its commitment to achieving VFM GwE has set itself the following objectives:

- To integrate VFM principles within existing management, evaluating, planning and review processes.
- To implement a clear strategy for evaluating and capturing impact.
- To adopt recognised good practice where this makes sense.
- To undertake VFM studies on areas of activity identified as worthy of review.
- To benchmark our activities against other similar activities and organisations where this is considered useful.
- To respond to opportunities to enhance the economy, efficiency and effectiveness of activities.
- To promote a culture of continuous improvement.
- To ensure that all staff recognise their continuing obligation to seek VFM as part of their routine activities.

GwE recognises its responsibility to achieve value for money (VFM) from all its activities, however they may be funded. GwE, in common with other Consortia, is committed to the pursuit of economy, efficiency and effectiveness as part of its strategic and operational work. GwE will seek to adopt good practice and incorporate VFM principles in all its activities and undertake reviews at suitable frequencies to ensure that VFM is demonstrated.

VFM is a term used to assess whether or not an organisation has obtained the maximum benefit from the services it both acquires and provides, within the resources available to it. Some elements may be subjective, difficult to measure, intangible and misunderstood. Judgement is, therefore, required when considering whether VFM has been satisfactorily achieved or not. It not only measures the cost services, but also takes account of the mix of quality, cost, resource use, fitness for purpose, timeliness, and convenience to judge whether or not, together, they constitute good value. Achieving VFM is also often described in terms of the 'three Es' - economy, efficiency and effectiveness:

- (i) economy - minimising the cost of resources for an activity ('doing things at a low price');
- (ii) efficiency - performing tasks with reasonable effort ('doing things the right way'); and
- (iii) effectiveness - the extent to which objectives are met ('doing the right things').

7.2 Principles of Evaluation and Capturing Impact

GwE needs to be able to clearly evaluate and capture impact of its work in line with its core school improvement function and enable the service to fully meet the expectations as outlined in the School Improvement Guidance and demonstrate value for money.

GwE engages in ongoing evaluation processes in line with its commitment to developing a culture of continuous improvement as a learning organisation. Self-evaluation processes draw upon a range of sources and information that are both qualitative and quantitative and which support schools in working towards regional and national priorities.

Across North Wales, GwE and the 6 Local Authorities have developed strong and effective collaborative partnerships for school improvement. This enables coherence in the way GwE and the Local Authority capture the impact of all school improvement provision and support offered to schools. Consideration is also given as to how impact at individual school level and system level is captured across the region, in the short, medium and longer term.

In line with the recommendation within Successful Futures, GwE employs a sampling methodology as part of its Evaluation and Impact Strategy. Careful planning and consideration are given to ensure that the sampling approaches are appropriate and purposeful, allowing for coverage of settings, learners and practitioners to form a representative regional sample.

Information is shared at timely intervals throughout the year with a wide range of stakeholders, giving confidence and clarity on the quality and impact of the wide range of work undertaken. This strategy allows transparency to stakeholders and the wider public and demonstrate value for money.

The following key principles underpin the processes for evaluation and capturing impact. As a service, GwE:

- draws upon a wide range of evidence, using data proportionately alongside first-hand evidence, to evaluate strengths of the service and areas for improvement;
- is reflective, honest and inclusive, using rigorous evidence-based approaches that take in a wide range of views from across a number of stakeholders;
- uses evidence-based practice to innovate and improve, while empowering schools to share effective practice within and between schools;
- regularly report on progress against the service improvement priorities, continually evaluating the impact of planned actions;
- uses the rich information from schools' development plans across the region to inform its own improvement planning and to review their professional learning and support offer to schools;
- develops and encourages a continuous improvement culture across all schools, informed by clear national expectations about what good looks like and embodying the 4 transversal themes of learning organisation: trust, time, thinking together and technology;

- uses information in line with the purposes of improvement, accountability, transparency and to support schools' own evaluation and capturing impact processes with information used and shared at individual school level;
- supports schools to develop their own evaluation processes which may include facilitating and brokering a range of professional learning and promoting opportunities for peer-to-peer working between schools on self-evaluation.

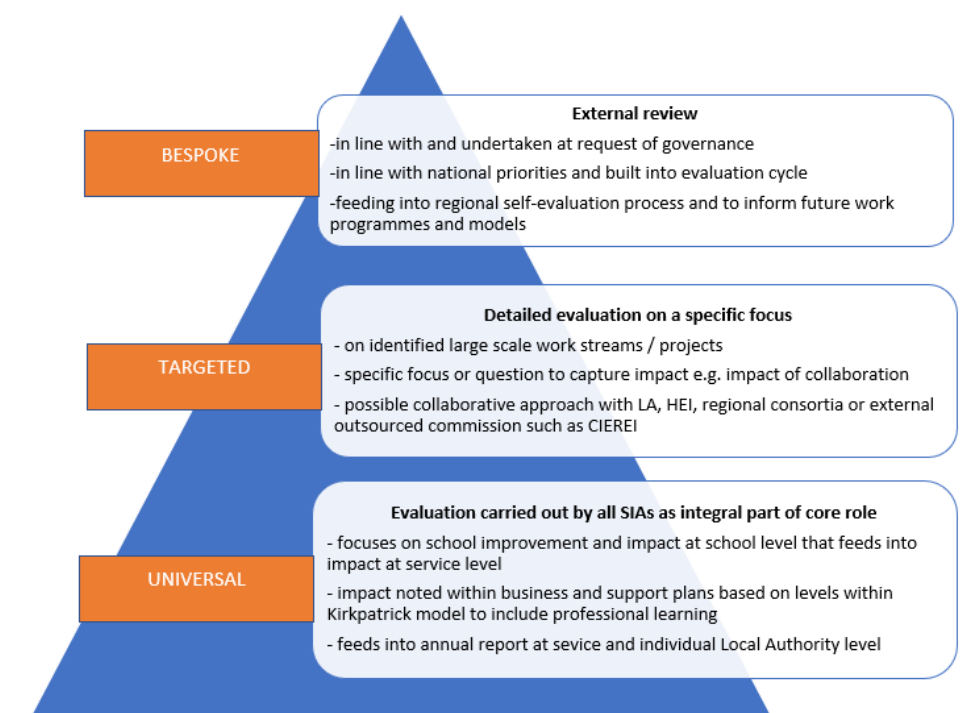
7.3 Evaluation Cycle and Capturing Impact Process

Evaluation and improvement planning is central to the work of the service. GwE uses a clear cycle of evaluation that is summarised in the following diagram:



Within this evaluation cycle, GwE undertakes a series of robust self-evaluation processes. The widest and richest possible range of information and data, both qualitative and quantitative, is used to inform the self-evaluation and improvement planning process.

In recognition of the wide range of work that the service undertakes, and in line with governance arrangements, a variety of evaluation approaches have been developed. The following illustration demonstrates the tiered approach that GwE has in place.



Universal encompasses those aspects of evaluation that all Supporting Improvement Advisers engage with and are captured both within support plans at a school and cluster/alliance level and through business plans at a regional and local level. This also includes evaluation of professional learning offered to schools.

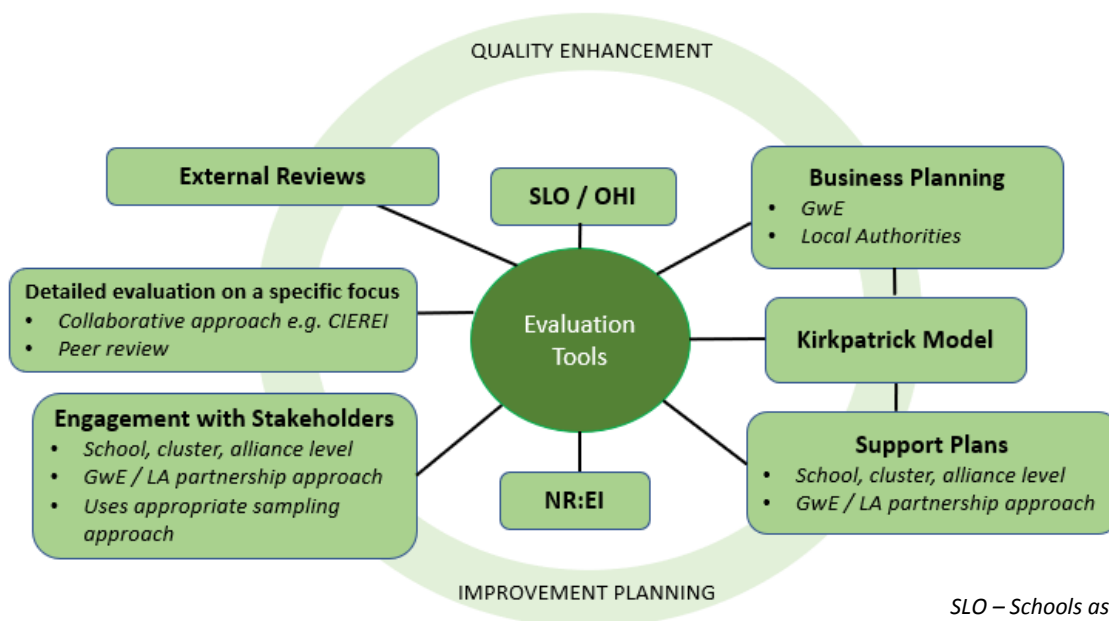
Targeted evaluation processes are planned for and carried out at regular intervals on a specific focus or theme. Evaluation may also be targeted in line with large work streams in line with priorities in order to identify impact and engage with a range of stakeholders as part of this. Within targeted evaluation processes, a collaborative approach with GwE and partners is often employed.

Bespoke evaluation forms the third layer of the approach whereby external reviews are used as part of the evaluation cycle. These evaluations will draw upon the commission of external parties to focus on specific aspects of the service in line with the governance arrangements.

When co-constructing outcomes for the actions and professional learning within business and support plans, Supporting Improvement Advisers consider the expected short-term outputs and longer-term impact. These outcomes should take into account the expected impact in the context of school provision, teaching, learning in schools and on the intended outcomes of the service.

7.4 GwE Capturing Impact Framework

To gather evidence for the evaluation and improvement planning process, GwE draws upon a range of evaluation tools which are used within the tiered approach described above. These tools are used across the universal, targeted and bespoke level (described in Section 6.3) as appropriate and relevant to the evaluation focus. The infographic below shows the tools that are used with a brief description of each one.



SLO – Schools as Learning Organisation

OHI – Organisational Health Index

NR:EI – National Resource: Evaluation and Impact

Business Plans

The GwE Business Planning process ensures clarity, accountability and strategic coordination in the delivery of the priorities on a local, regional and national level, and provides the structure for monitoring progress effectively.

Detailed business plans on all levels of planning address all aspects of the work of GwE, and clearly note the contribution of the service to the transformation agenda. Plans are fully costed, with clear success criteria and milestones for delivering objectives.

Throughout the year, reports associated with the priority streams within the Business Plan are reported through the governance groups. Progress is reported upon quarterly providing a progress report on regional priorities and also providing a local authority specific overview.

Support Plans

As part of the expectations within the new School Improvement Framework, all schools and settings across the region have a support plan in place. Through regular professional dialogue with school leaders, the support plans have been co-constructed to allow for joint ownership. Each plan details the support to be offered by either GwE or Local Authority and expected outcomes and impact are acknowledged. Timescales and monitoring of the support are also identified.

Support plans also identify the collaborative work being undertaken across clusters and alliances and again expected outcomes and impact of the support given by GwE and LA are noted.

The Kirkpatrick Model

Sitting within both the business and support plans is the Donald Kirkpatrick's Four Level Evaluation Model. This model is used to help capture the impact of support over time. The 4 levels are noted below and recognise that impact can be seen at different levels over time as learning and behaviours become embedded.



What			When
Level 4	RESULTS	Impact on results	Long term impact
Level 3	BEHAVIOUR	Impact on provision	Long term impact
Level 2	LEARNING	Impact on teachers	Short term output
Level 1	REACTION	Reaction to Professional Learning	Short term output

Using the Kirkpatrick model approach at a service level allows GwE to identify and capture impact in the short term with reaction and learning against the support and professional learning given to schools and settings. As changes in behaviour and provision over longer term are noted, impact will be captured at practitioner level. Through using the Kirkpatrick model as a service, GwE will support schools to identify where impact beyond provision and on learner outcomes can be captured.

National Resource: Evaluation and Impact (NR:EI)

GwE supports schools to engage with the NR:EI as part of developing effective and robust self-evaluation and improvement processes. The evaluation prompts, interactive resources and case studies are practical tools for schools to engage with as part of self-evaluation.

Engagement with Stakeholders

Engaging with stakeholders is an important aspect of the evaluation process across all aspects of the work undertaken by GwE. A variety of approaches are employed across both formal and informal feedback channels.

Formal Feedback

Stakeholder questionnaires, surveys and focus groups are planned to ensure that information can feed into the improvement planning process, for example, all school leaders are invited to take part in a Headteacher forum in Spring term 2023 to identify areas of strength across the service in addition to areas for further development and future priorities. In line with the Kirkpatrick model, evaluation forms following professional learning activities also capture impact, considering reaction and learning in the first instance.

Detailed evaluation on a specific focus

Conducting detailed evaluations on a specific focus is an important aspect of the self-evaluation process across GwE. In line with business plans and large-scale projects and workstreams, these are requested at timely intervals and to focus on key priorities and themes. These evaluations are carried out by GwE colleagues, in partnership with Local Authorities and where appropriate, external partners are commissioned to include HEIs.

Collaborative Institute for Education Research, Evidence and Impact (CIEREI)

CIEREI is a formal strategic collaboration between GwE, Bangor University, schools, and other bodies and institutions interested in education outcomes. The primary aim of CIEREI is to support improving outcomes for

children through schools. CIEREI's establishment is the third phase in the development of a regional research and evaluation collaboration in North Wales and has been established.

Through the work of CIEREI, GwE has committed to a number of ongoing formal evaluations which contribute to building research capacity across the region and Wales as a system. Findings from these evaluations play an important role in feeding both into GwE's self-evaluation processes, whilst also capturing impact at school level with those schools engaging.

External Reviews

GwE engage with and draw upon the commission of external parties to focus on specific aspects of the service in line with the governance arrangements.

Schools as Learning Organisation / Organisational Health Index (SLO / OHI)

GwE also builds in opportunities for engaging with evaluation tools which include Learning Organisation (OECD and Welsh Government) and Organisational Health Index (McKinsey and Company). These surveys offer all staff an opportunity to input and findings of these surveys feed into improvement planning and allows GwE to learn from international practice.

7.5 Evaluation reports

The evaluation processes and tools detailed above all help inform the work of the service and allow the impact of the support given to schools and settings to be identified and captured. This provides the evidence base for reporting on value for money. There are a variety of reporting formats to meet purpose and audience and in line with transparency to all stakeholders. Formats include:

- Monitoring and impact reports for governance structures, e.g., Management Board, Joint Committee, Local Authority Scrutiny meetings
- In line with expectations, termly reports for Welsh Government are written and shared which review progress made against priorities and in line with grant conditions.
- Additionally, GwE engages with Estyn in providing information for thematic reports as per the schedule set by Welsh Government.
- Through sharing practice with use of case studies:
 - regular communication channels, e.g., GwE bulletin, website, social media
 - network meetings and forums
 - workshops and/or conferences

7.6 Integrating Value for Money, Evaluation and Capturing Impact

- VFM, evaluating and capturing impact must be a routine part of the decision-making process at all levels throughout GwE. This is particularly important in planning or reviewing activities with significant financial implications.
- As part of the integration of VFM into routine decision-making, Business Plan holders are asked to submit a short report or case study on applying the Evaluation Strategy and capturing impact in their business

plans detailing measures to improve economy, efficiency and effectiveness, and quantifying any financial benefits.

- Reports/Case studies should draw attention both to existing activities that demonstrate continuing VFM and to new opportunities for improving VFM.
- Business plan holders are well placed to identify opportunities for achieving greater VFM within their areas of responsibility. They will know what measures are likely to be effective, having regard to their particular circumstances and needs, and how to enlist the support and co-operation of staff.
- Where this has implications for Value for Money, we will promote the sharing of good practice throughout GwE. The adoption of good practice is one way of demonstrating that VFM has been sought and achieved. Where this is identified and potentially applicable to other plan holders, this will be appropriately communicated.

7.7 The benefits of VFM, Evaluation and Capturing Impact

- Rather than acting on assumptions about what is currently carried out and produced, VFM principles provide officers with the opportunity to undertake a proper assessment of the objectives of an activity. This will maximise their chance of achieving the desired ends without unnecessary expenditure and effort. An assessment should also demonstrate that the proposed activity fits in with GwE's objectives and policies. Where this does not happen, an activity is, by definition, not achieving what GwE has set out to do.
- Through properly documented planning and monitoring the adoption of open processes involving all interested parties, staff can publicly demonstrate a commitment to achieving propriety as well as VFM. This is increasingly important in a world of growing accountability and responsibility and is absolutely essential for GwE whilst receiving core funding and grants. GwE has responsibility to show that it operates honestly, fairly and without bias.
- GwE needs to comply with legal and other associated requirements. By adopting and being able to demonstrate good practice, the risk of failing to identify and comply with such requirements is significantly reduced.
- All activities have risks attached. Incorporating risk management principles of identifying, evaluating and putting in place appropriate mitigation can contribute towards VFM. Although it is often not necessary to undertake a full risk assessment for every activity, an inadequate risk assessment, particularly for significant activities, can result in poor VFM.

7.8 Methods

An assessment of VFM can be achieved in a number of ways, for example:

- (i) through benchmarking an activity against similar activities in other organisations or institutions;
- (ii) by using performance indicators;
- (iii) through conducting VFM studies, evaluation and capturing impact (possibly in conjunction with other Consortia);
- (iv) by seeking out and then adopting recognised good practice where this can be adapted to GwE's circumstances;
- (v) through internal audit work; although internal audit has a primary responsibility for assessing the internal control system, the internal auditors are frequently well placed to assess and comment on VFM in the areas reviewed;
- (vi) through retaining documentation that show how an activity has been planned to build in VFM, and evidence of the good practices adopted; and
- (vii) by examining the results or outcomes of an activity.

7.9 Analytical Framework for assessing Value for Money

Definition: Good value for money is the good value use of resources to achieve the intended outcomes

1 Establishing what is 'good value'	2 Capturing the scale of resources	3 Identifying expected and actual outcomes
Establish the criteria against which performance will be assessed by agreeing what good-value arrangements for the priority under scrutiny would look like. 'Good value' is defined as "the most desirable possible given expressed or implied restrictions or constraints." Staff need to consider what reasonable constraints they need to take into account. Good value planning: <i>Being clear about what is wanted.</i> For example: - Well evidence-based initiative with clear objectives, based on appropriate best practice/ benchmarks, agreed targets etc. - Realistic plans taking account of constraints and developed in the light of an understanding of risks - Stakeholder support for plans - Required resources in place to deliver to plan - Clear understanding of what relevant costs should be Good-value implementation. For example: - Having the right expertise and managerial skills - Selecting the best method of delivery - Avoiding false economies - Obtaining economies of scale through targeted work. - Minimum sustainable impact of work - Establishing clear and good VFM risk transfer Good-value monitoring: <i>Being able to assess performance.</i> For example: - Clear performance measures set and monitoring arrangements in place - Sound performance management systems - Sound policy evaluation process in place, with timely feedback - Ability to make operational changes well in light of feedback - Ongoing value testing - VFM assessment methodology in place	Identify the resources involved – initially in the plans and later, as outturn – including (where appropriate): - staff costs - funding streams - buildings - savings	Identify the immediate, intermediate and long-term objectives and (where possible) outcomes. This needs to be done initially in considering the planned achievements and later, when considering actual achievements, including (where appropriate): - performance against targets - delivery record (including quantity and timeliness) - unit costs - economy and efficiency measures - quality of service (including customer satisfaction record) - adverse, perverse or unintended consequences

4 Establishing the consequences for VFM of the identified level of performance (internal comparison)

Establish the consequences of the identified performance for value for money.

For example:

- were more/fewer resources employed than expected?
- was performance in terms of outputs/outcomes greater/less than expected?
- was performance better/worse than expected given the resources employed?
- do the arrangements in place match up to those of the chosen benchmark established at Step 1?
- were the outcomes achieved worth it given:
 - the scale of spend involved
 - the effort involved (and the opportunity cost)
 - their sustainability or otherwise over the medium to long term (e.g., can performance last or is it vulnerable to decline?)
 - the timing of benefits (short, medium or long term)
- does performance suggest there is a problem with VFM?

5 Drawing an overall conclusion on the value for money achieved with these resources (external comparison)

were more/less resources used than expected?

Having identified achieved performance (1-3) and established how it compares with what was or could have been expected (4), finalise the VFM conclusion by comparing performance in this case with, where appropriate, external benchmarks such as:

- with alternative actions (could better VFM have been achieved by doing things differently)
- against accepted good practice or internal/external benchmarks
- comparisons with past years – trend analysis
- against stakeholder expectations

6 Making recommendations to secure improved outcomes

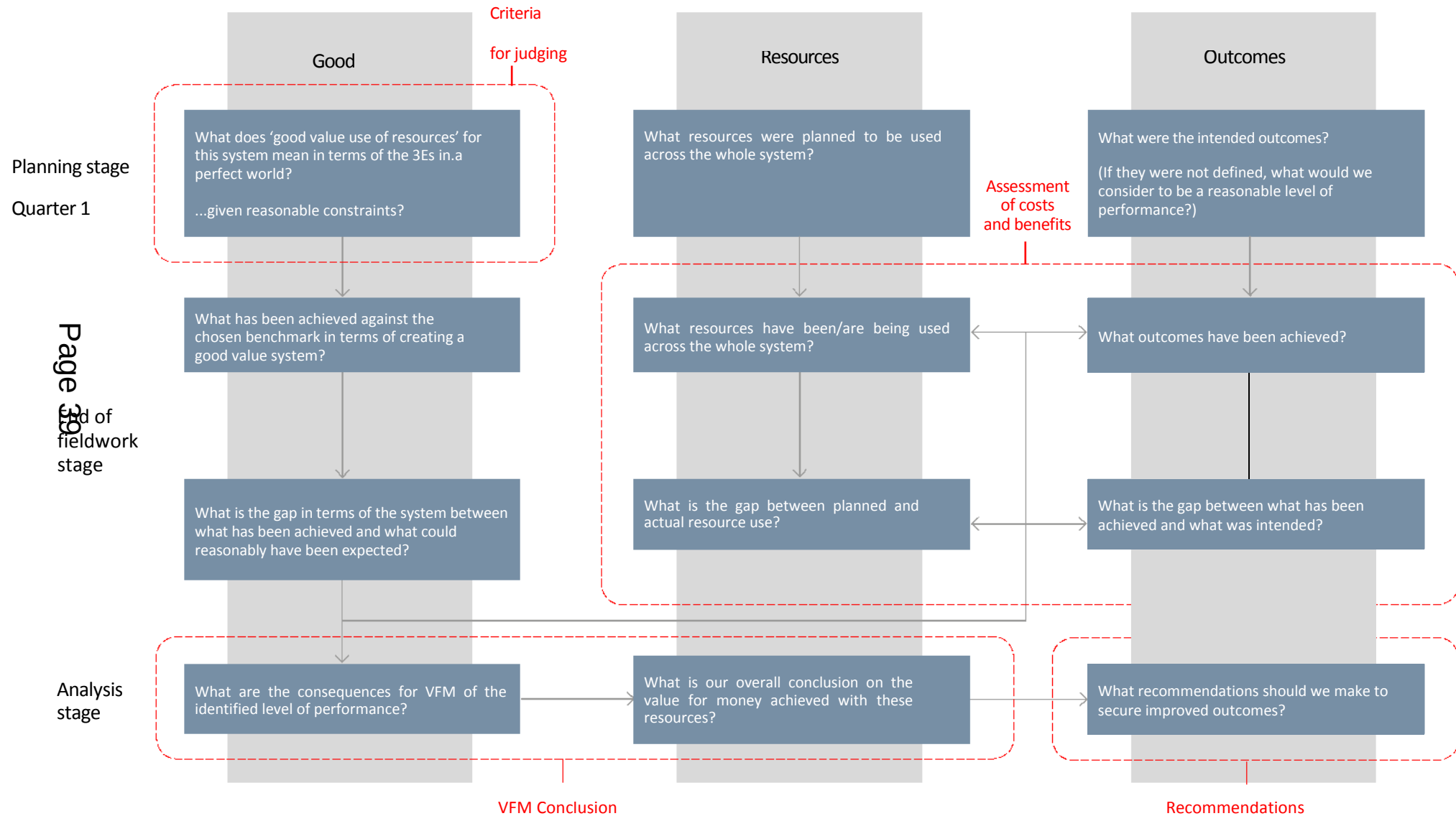
was performance in terms of products/outcomes better or worse than expected?

Having identified shortcomings in performance, make costed and timed recommendations for the individual organisation or for the government system more widely, designed to improve the policy implementation process, and lead to better VFM, by:

- correcting weaknesses
- improving processes and practices
- reducing costs
- improving performance
- securing savings
- raising awareness of policy benefits
- improving management information
- ending activities or policy where necessary
- reorganising processes and practices

Good VFM is the GOOD VALUE USE of RESOURCES to achieve the intended OUTCOMES

Framework of questions for assessing VFM



8 IDENTIFIED ACTIONS:

- Develop a Financial Strategy for 2023/24, including a financial strategy for the medium case scenario. Should the worst-case scenario transpire, this would require revisiting fundamental principles
- Access all activity against GwE's Service Priorities and Operating Principles
- Assess the need for reserves to enable GwE to deliver against its service priorities
- Develop a vision for the provision of services by GwE for the year 2023/24
- Review the MTFP as relevant information is made available to GwE
- Review the present operating model to ensure that there is a clear focus on improving quality across the service
- Work with Welsh Government officials to develop a commitment on future indicative
- Develop clarity between National and Local priorities so that they complement one another and do not compete
- Review GwE's structure and implement restructuring



REPORT TO THE JOINT COMMITTEE

24 MAY 2023

Report by: Alwyn Jones, GwE Assistant Director

Subject: GwE Annual Report 2022-2023

1.0 Purpose of the Report

1.1 To present the GwE 2022-2023 Annual Report to the Joint Committee.

2.0 Background

2.1 As is stated in the GwE Inter Authority Agreement, GwE will report annually on the performance of the service in delivering the service functions and key aims.

2.2 The content of the annual report captures progress against the regional strategic objectives and priorities as agreed in our Business Plan for 2022-2023, evaluating impact against actions and outcomes for the whole year.

3.0 Considerations

3.1 Enclosed is the Regional Annual Report which captures progress against the regional strategic objectives and priorities for 2022-2023:

- Curriculum and Assessment - Supporting a national curriculum with equity and excellence at its core that sets high standards for all learners.
- Developing a high-quality education profession - improving the teaching and learning in our schools.

- Leadership - supporting inspirational leaders working collaboratively to raise standards. Includes future leadership and professional networks.
- Strong and inclusive schools committed to excellence, equity and well-being
- Supporting a self-improving system - supporting a system in which the education profession has the skills, capacity and agency to continually learn and improve their practice
- Business - ensure GwE has strong governance and effective business and operational support that provides value for money.

3.2 The report also outlines the areas that have been identified as key priorities for further development and improvement which are included in our Business Plan for 2023-2024.

3.3 In addition to the Regional Annual Report, each Local Authority will be provided with a detailed report giving a specific local overview, capturing progress against five key areas in addition to identifying the next steps on the improvement trajectory:

- Key Area 1 – Improving Leadership
- Key Area 2 – Improving Teaching and Learning
- Key Area 3 – Curriculum and Provision
- Key Area 4 – Learner Progress and Standards
- Key Area 5 – Support and Challenge for Schools Causing Concern

4.0 Recommendations

4.1 The Joint Committee is asked to approve and accept the Annual Report for 2022-2023.

4.2 Determine if there are any aspects of the report that they wish to discuss further at future meetings.

5.0 Financial Implications

5.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report. GwE will operate within the current financial resources.

6.0 Equalities Impact

6.1 There are no new equalities implications arising from this report.

7.0 Personnel Implications

7.1 There are no new personnel implications arising from this report.

8.0 Consultation Undertaken

8.1 Consultation with Headteachers Strategic Forums, GwE Management Board and Joint Committee.

9.0 Appendices

9.1 GwE Annual Report 2022-23

Regional Data

OPINION OF THE STATUTORY OFFICERS

Monitoring Officer:

Nothing to add from a propriety perspective.

Statutory Finance Officer:

I am satisfied that the update is a fair reflection of the situation. I have no further comments from the perspective of financial propriety.



GwE ANNUAL REPORT 2022-2023



GwE is the North Wales regional school improvement service working alongside and on behalf of the North Wales local authorities – Wrexham, Flintshire, Denbighshire, Conwy, Gwynedd, Anglesey. Our work is driven by genuine ambition to see the schools and organisations we work with achieve their aspirations and to see all learners succeed.



CONTENT

1. Executive Summary
2. Introduction and Context
3. Curriculum and Assessment
4. Developing a High-quality Education Profession
5. Leadership
6. Strong and Inclusive Schools Committed to Excellence, Equity and Well-being
7. Supporting a Self-improving System
8. Business
9. Key Priorities for Further Development and Improvement

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS:

APPENDIX: Regional Data

APPENDIX: GwE Regional Business Plan 2023-2026



1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

GwE and the six north Wales Local Authorities know their schools and settings well and provides robust and appropriate challenge as well as effective support and intervention for them. There are strategies, policies and processes for school improvement that are clear to all stakeholders. There exists a strong working relationship between the Local Authorities and GwE. There are robust procedures in place for holding the regional service to account. The GwE Business Planning Framework that is in place ensures clarity, accountability and strategic coordination in the delivery of the priorities on a local, regional and national level and provides the structure for monitoring progress effectively. Throughout the year, reports associated with our priority streams within the business plan will be reported through our governance groups. Progress against the regional business plan is reported on a quarterly basis to the Joint Committee.

The specific roles of the Local Authorities and the regional school improvement service in school improvement is explicit and clear to all stakeholders and are effectively held to account by local scrutiny procedures.

Almost all schools are on track to realise the steps outlined in the 'Journey to 2022' [Curriculum for Wales] document. There is specific support in place for the very few schools not on track. Nearly all secondary schools are currently on track to deliver the new curriculum for Years 7 and 8 from September 2023.

The COVID-19 pandemic has shown that even in the most challenging of circumstances positive change is possible. During the COVID-19, schools across the Region delivered meaningful teaching and learning experiences through a creative blended learning approach. The pandemic undoubtedly led to an increased focus on well-being and a significant investment in teaching and learning. The quality of teaching is generally strong across most schools in all sectors and purposeful action is taken to address areas of concern and reduce in school variance. The Local Authorities, in partnership with GwE, has been taking positive steps to support leaders and teachers to improve the quality of teaching and learning prior, during and after the Covid-19 period.

Ensuring progression to Headteacher position, and especially in Welsh Medium schools, has been and continues to be a challenge. GwE provides a rich array of professional learning to develop leadership at every level, together with targeted and bespoke support for schools as required, and especially for those schools causing concern. Moreover, there are more robust arrangements in place across the region where school leaders collaborate to support one another in clusters and/or alliances and take increasing ownership and accountability of one another's improvement journey.

The increased focus on supporting schools to improve the quality and consistency of leadership and pedagogy has led to improved standards across the majority of schools. The pace of improvement needs further acceleration in some schools, and this is addressed through each individual school's support plan. Schools are generally making more intelligent use of data and teaching, learning and assessment information to evaluate standards and to identify priorities for further improvement but it is recognised that these processes require further strengthening to ensure a greater focus on pupil progress in some schools. Most schools are effectively delivering tracking and intervention programmes to address identified underperformance and in-school variance. In some schools, these approaches need to be further strengthened and honed.

GwE and the Local Authorities have clear protocols in place to identify Schools Causing Concern. This allows them to respond promptly and firmly in schools causing concern. There are specific examples where intensifying the challenge and support alongside prompt and timely action have directly resulted in changes in

senior leadership personnel. There is strong evidence that processes and actions by GwE and the Local Authorities to support schools causing concern is impacting on the quality of leadership and pedagogy and leading to improved standards in those schools identified. In a few of these schools, the pace of improvement needs further acceleration.

The content of the annual report captures progress against the regional strategic objectives and priorities as agreed in our Business Plan for 2022-2023, evaluating impact against actions and outcomes for the whole year:

1. Curriculum and Assessment - Supporting a national curriculum with equity and excellence at its core that sets high standards for all learners.
2. Developing a high-quality education profession - improving the teaching and learning in our schools.
3. Leadership - supporting inspirational leaders working collaboratively to raise standards. Includes future leadership and professional networks.
4. Strong and inclusive schools committed to excellence, equity and well-being
5. Supporting a self-improving system - supporting a system in which the education profession has the skills, capacity and agency to continually learn and improve their practice
6. Business - ensure GwE has strong governance and effective business and operational support that provides value for money.

The report also outlines the areas that have been identified as key priorities for further development and improvement which are included in our Business Plan for 2023-2024. These are:

- continue to strengthen leadership at all levels with specific focus on further improving self-evaluation and improvement planning processes.
- further develop the capacity of senior and middle leaders to effectively lead on teaching and learning.
- further strengthen accountability processes across schools to ensure robust and timely interventions to address underperformance.
- ensure that all secondary leaders are actively engage in peer collaboration and peer review.
- strengthen systems for evaluating impact of improvement strategies on standards and pupil progress.
- further strengthen the quality of teaching and assessment to reduce variance both within and across schools.
- further strengthen the quality of provision for development of learners' skills.
- ensure all schools are implementing robust approaches to supporting learners who are vulnerable to learning.
- further develop tracking and intervention programmes to address identified underperformance and in-school variance and especially in relation to vulnerable learners.
- ensure that all secondary schools successfully deliver the new curriculum for Years 7 and 8 from September 2023.
- ensure schools are providing equity to all learners and have an inclusive learning environment to support those who are vulnerable to learning.
- further develop provision in secondary schools to ensure a meaningful and purposeful offer for the ability range in KS4.
- ensure all primary/secondary clusters are implementing effective transition plans.
- ensure that the schools which remain in statutory category are demonstrating an increased pace of improvements and are demonstrating clear improvements in the quality of teaching and learning and in the quality of leadership across the school.

In addition to the Regional Annual Report, each Local Authority will be provided with a detailed report giving a specific local overview, capturing progress against five key areas in addition to identifying the next steps on the improvement trajectory:

- Key Area 1 – Improving Leadership
- Key Area 2 – Improving Teaching and Learning
- Key Area 3 – Curriculum and Provision
- Key Area 4 – Learner Progress and Standards
- Key Area 5 – Support and Challenge for Schools Causing Concern

2. INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

The six local authorities and GwE have collectively sought and co-operated to support schools throughout the Covid-19 pandemic and beyond. One of the main strengths of the work across North Wales has been the clear and consistent messaging from the six local authorities through their political education portfolio holders, and directors working with GwE to ensure a common message for the schools in North Wales. Not only are these consistent messages welcomed by school leaders and staff, but also by teaching unions, all appreciating the clarity and support for their members.

Local Authorities and GwE staff have re-purposed their work appropriately over the last few years to continue to deliver effective services and support for all their communities of schools during and after the Covid-19 pandemic. The regional service has redirected energy and resource several times during this period in an attempt to meet the needs of Local Authorities, schools and stakeholders. Flexibility and adaptability and effective collaboration in different teams, often across sectors, have had a significant impact on institutional behaviour. At the core of the redirection was the need to ensure the well-being of school leaders, staff and learners. Stakeholder voice is of the utmost importance, thus ensuring that the service accurately direct the appropriate level of support to where it is most required.

GwE and the Local Authorities know their schools and settings well and provide a robust and appropriate challenge as well as effective support and intervention. There are strategies, policies and processes for school improvement that are clear to all stakeholders. There is a strong working relationship between the Local Authorities and GwE. There are robust procedures in place for setting a direction and holding the regional service to account. The specific roles of the Local Authorities and the regional school improvement service in school improvement is explicit and clear to all stakeholders and are effectively held to account by local scrutiny procedures.

The regional service evaluates its work regularly and uses quantitative and qualitative data and information effectively to ensure that areas for improvement are identified swiftly and are firmly addressed via detailed business planning. There is a clear and effective process in place to ensure the regional service meets the Local Authorities' corporate priorities and targets.

Curriculum for Wales is a significant programme of reform with effective teaching and learning and realising the Four Purposes central to its success. GwE has ensured that all curriculum support aligns to the expectations and principles within Welsh Government's Journey to 2022. In line with the implementation of the new Curriculum for Wales in September 2022, all primary schools and settings have been supported to meet the new statutory requirements within the timeline. Support for secondary settings and

special schools to prepare for implementation of the new curriculum for Years 7 and 8 in September 2023 continues. It is imperative that the work of reforming the curriculum, and particularly direct engagement between secondary and primary schools, continues in order to support learner transition. To facilitate this professional dialogue, GwE continue to provide an infrastructure for Curriculum for Wales networks. Under regular guidance and feedback from Professor Graham Donaldson, schools are developing and sharing effective practice to unpack the potential of the six Areas of Learning and Experiences [AOLEs] and whole school curriculum design and assessment.

The content of the annual report captures progress against the regional strategic objectives and priorities as agreed in our Business Plan for 2022-2023, evaluating impact against actions and outcomes for the whole year:

1. Curriculum and Assessment - Supporting a national curriculum with equity and excellence at its core that sets high standards for all learners.
2. Developing a high-quality education profession - improving the teaching and learning in our schools.
3. Leadership - supporting inspirational leaders working collaboratively to raise standards. Includes future leadership and professional networks.
4. Strong and inclusive schools committed to excellence, equity and well-being
5. Supporting a self-improving system - supporting a system in which the education profession has the skills, capacity and agency to continually learn and improve their practice
6. Business - ensure GwE has strong governance and effective business and operational support that provides value for money.

The report also outlines the areas that have been identified as key priorities for further development and improvement which are included in our Business Plan for 2023-2024.

3. CURRICULUM & ASSESSMENT

Summary of main actions, engagement and impact

Due to effective collaboration and engagement between GwE and schools:

- all schools are implementing plans to deliver against the four purposes of the new curriculum.
- all schools are working to develop a balanced curriculum offer to meet the needs of their learners including the more able.
- all clusters are implementing transition plans.
- all schools are actively engaging in peer collaboration within and across sectors.
- nearly all secondary schools are on track to meet the statutory requirements by the time they deliver their Curriculum for Wales in September 2023.

OBJECTIVE 1: CURRICULUM & ASSESSMENT

Supporting a national curriculum with equity & excellence at its core that sets high standards for all learners

EDUCATION CONTINUUM 3 TO 16

Support for schools in commencing the Curriculum for Wales with strong emphasis on the 12 pedagogical principles, evidence-based practice and action research.

Further development of formative assessment. Page 49

The GwE Formative Assessment Action Research project [led by Shirley Clarke] has been one of the pillars of the professional learning programme since November 2017 with schools engaging with the project as part of the tier three cohort. An impact evaluation has identified:

- there has been a positive impact on the quality of teaching in classes, standards of attainment, pupil well-being, attitudes to learning and development as independent learners.
- teachers have deepened understanding of effective pedagogy on the basis of wide and current research, both on a local and international level. They have also become leaders of teaching in their schools and beyond.
- teachers have undertaken action research in their schools and have taken part in professional collaboration and become confident pioneers. Consequently, schools that are a part of the project are developing well as learning organisations.
- there has been a sharper focus on effective pedagogy in cluster collaborations.
- there have been explicit inputs to improving schools' readiness and preparations for delivering the new curriculum e.g., increasing focus on the four purposes, 12 pedagogical principles, schools as learning organisations, professional standards for leaders and teachers, assessment purposes and planning principles.
- schools have made good and effective use of formative assessment principles and strategies for distance and blended learning.
- parents have come to understand more about formative assessment in their efforts to support their children at home e.g., learning powers, learning outcomes, success criteria and verbal feedback.

During the GwE 'Inspiring Leadership' Headteacher's conference on 22/09/2022, workshops held by SIAs included two with focus on pedagogy: 'Formative Assessment across the continuum - deepening the roots', and 'Planning for the Principles of Progression using Solo Taxonomy strategies'. Schools who attended the workshops had the opportunity to review formative assessment practices in the light of recent research and messages shared. They also gained an understanding of SOLO taxonomy and its potential for teaching and learner progression. Resources are available to all the region's schools to further develop practices.

Support cross- sector collaboration to ensure consistency of effective teaching practice to support learner transition

Transition

Schools and clusters, and ITE teachers, across the region have been upskilled in ways to support successful transition. Clusters are currently continuing to develop new arrangements for cluster collaboration to support 3-16 progression.

Representatives from clusters and LA officers attended two professional learning 'Pontio GwE' workshops focusing upon successful transition in line with Curriculum for Wales [CfW] and successful regional practice. Each cluster planned their next steps collaboratively in order to improve pupils' progression across the learning continuum. This professional learning built upon a regional two-day conference which included updates from Estyn, Welsh Government and educational experts in order to set our shared approach to school improvement. As a result, all primary catchment areas have started working on creating new and joint transition action plan and projects in order to plan curriculum delivery and a consistent approach towards progression. The key messages from workshops have been shared with SIAs and schools including transition planning guidance. The next step is to focus upon ensuring cross cluster professional dialogue for transition.

Cluster collaboration is generally stronger, particularly between sectors and at varying levels of professionals, including head teachers, senior leaders and teachers – this includes relationships consolidated through the Schools Partnership Project.

SIAs continue to support all clusters in developing their approaches to transition throughout this year. This has led to a greater consistency in the quality of curriculum planning within and across schools.

Regional Pedagogy Transition Project

One secondary and one primary lead school from 12 clusters across the region declared an interest in participating in the regional pedagogy transition action research project launched in the GwE Transition workshop 07/10/22. A launch meeting for the 24 schools and their SIAs was held 12/12/2022. Action research commenced Spring Term 2023. Project review meetings have been to discuss and share actions and impact, attended by the schools and SIAs. Half termly review meetings have been arranged until the end of the calendar year.

In terms of impact, all the different research projects in the 12 clusters have a clear pedagogical focus and are being actioned efficiently. Review meetings attended by the project schools and SIAs ensures effective sharing of strong practice, research sources, information and experiences. All project schools are fully aware of each other's research focus and successful practices and are actively collaborating. Feedback is very positive and schools and SIAs feel inspired and well supported.

Ensure support for schools in commencing the Curriculum for Wales with strong emphasis on the 12 pedagogical principles, evidence-based practice and action research.

Develop practitioners understanding of how the theory of the 12 pedagogical principles translates into classroom floor practice.

The regional service has placed a strong focus on developing pedagogy as part of the support for developing the Curriculum for Wales.

Schools have been provided with detailed guidance to support their preparations for delivering the new curriculum. The focus on pedagogy and the 12 principles are central to this work. Since September 2021, the service and school representatives have been working effectively with Professor Graham Donaldson in an attempt to deepen understanding of the Curriculum for Wales Framework. This work has involved promoting successful collaboration meaning that teachers have been able to jointly-plan examples and models to share across schools.

3-8 regional support package

Regional 3-8 networks have been delivered for practitioners and SIAs sharing guidance on Enabling Learning [the period of learning leading to Progression step 1] and case studies shared by schools from each LA involved in GwE's informed research projects on 'Woodwork' and 'Communication Friendly Spaces Approach'. Practitioners discussed how they had reflected and reviewed their learning environment, experiences and planning of skills both indoors and outdoors and the impact of their provision on learners in line with Enabling Learning and AOEs guidance. Presentations and case studies have been uploaded on to the GwE Support Centre enabling all school regionally to access them. This is developing practitioners' understanding of progression across the developmental pathways of Enabling Learning to the end of PS2 in all AOEs, cross curricular and integral skills. The support also improves their understanding of Foundation Learning principles and pedagogy impacting positively on the quality of provision and upon pupils' progress.

Regional workshops have been delivered for teachers and TAs new to the 3-8 age group focusing on the principles of Enabling Learning and AOEs within this age group and effective pedagogy. Practitioners who have attended workshops and network meetings have a secure knowledge and understanding of the three enablers within Enabling Learning, pedagogy and the curriculum to transfer into classroom practice.

Science and Technology workshops have been delivered regionally for teachers and TAs. All practitioners upskilled and deepened their knowledge and understanding of the Science and Technology AOE, the Developmental Pathways, [Exploration in particular], cross-curricular skills and the integral skills. Practitioners have an increased confidence in planning the development of AOE and cross-curricular skills from the Developmental Pathways to the AOEs, within developmentally appropriate pedagogy.

Bespoke support delivered to individual schools and clusters on specific aspects of the Curriculum e.g. early reading and higher order reading skills, authentic and purposeful learning, role of the adults, numeracy, planning and outdoor learning. Practitioners disseminating and leading cluster training, are sharing good practice and impact of the action research project.

Since 2019, the professional offer has involved Y3 practitioners in order to build on some of the Foundation Principles in KS2 in preparation for Curriculum for Wales. The professional offer continued throughout lockdown with the provision planned to target those aspects identified by schools as needing to be prioritised following Covid-19, e.g., pupils' communication skills and health and well-being. The focus was upon developing these skills within appropriate developmental pedagogy. Evidence of the impact of this support programme includes:

- deepening practitioners' understanding of how the pedagogical principles [including 12 CfW principles] link with one another to create productive and effective learning experiences.
- practitioners using a range of developmentally appropriate pedagogical methods that meet the needs of learners [including emotional and social skills].
- practitioners creating effective cross-curricular links to deliver a broad and balanced curriculum, drawing on learners' previous knowledge and experiences.
- practitioners not only considering the physical learning environment, but also the emotional climate that supports learners to reach their potential.
- practitioners' deepening their understanding of the importance of daily practice in order to improve their understanding of pupils' needs, skills and progress; allowing practitioners to find the preferred learning approaches of children and young people and how best to engage them in learning; identifying those pupils who might require extra support to help them reach their full potential.
- practitioners understanding that effective observations enable them to plan an appropriate provision that supports learner commitment and enjoyment within their learning activities, as well as planning to support them to move on to the next stage in their learning.
- practitioners understanding the need for assessment to be an ongoing process rooted in day-to-day practices, invisible within teaching and learning.

Secondary-specific support

Bespoke training has been delivered to secondary schools on request, on specific aspects of pedagogy. Training sessions and workshops have been delivered this year on: challenge for all, success criteria and learning objectives; questioning, differentiation, for example.

A live webinar was held on 20/03/23 for secondary School leaders and teachers on recall and retrieval strategies with a focus on examination preparation for Years 10-13 students. This was well-attended by

schools across all authorities and has been followed up with Access for all to a recording and all resources.

A presentation Resource for supporting learners in preparing for external examination has been widely shared with secondary schools and in some cases delivered by GwE Core Leads to support learners with organisation strategies and research-informed approaches to revision.

Through this provision and support, practitioners have an increased understanding of planning for progression through planned questioning strategies, ensuring learning is both accessible and challenging and methods and tools to ensure learning 'sticks'. Practitioners have accessed a range of strategies and approaches to support learners in becoming more independent in their retrieval and consolidation of learning.

There has also been a consistent focus on supporting schools to improve the quality of differentiated support across the ability range. Establishing the secondary More Able and Talented [MAT] Coordinators' Network is one specific example of this work. Specific guidance and support have been issued to develop better understanding and confidence amongst coordinators to lead on this across schools and to develop their processes and systems for identifying, tracking and supporting this particular group of learners. There was also input to ensure that they were aware of the national developments in this regard. As a group, they have collaborated to ensure a shared understanding and how to ensure an appropriate level of challenge and how to promote recall and revision strategies.

CURRICULUM REALISATION [CURRICULUM FOR WALES]

Curriculum for Wales [CfW] Professional Learning

A series of National CfW Professional Learning [PL] online sessions continue to take place to support leaders and teachers to continue their work on CFW. There are positive levels of engagement from schools across Wales with over 668 practitioners attending with the majority of these being members of SLT – GwE schools have over 251 practitioners attending. Evaluation forms of the CfW programme show that of participants who have completed evaluation forms, 100% strongly agree or agree that they are satisfied with the learning experience. There are increasing number of schools across the GwE region contributing to national Professional Learning offer and are being used as examples of effective emerging practice, showing how they are understanding and capturing impact on practice across schools.

Cross regional team work collaboratively to plan and deliver national programme to include school examples and opportunities for schools to discuss practice with other schools across Wales within breakouts. Recordings and resources shared are available on a cross-regional website available through Hwb to all schools and practitioners through Wales. The increased number of 1027 hits [as of 2/3/23] to cross-regional CfW website show that practitioners are accessing the recordings and materials at time most convenient to themselves – have examples of this being used at whole school meeting and individual staff level.

Across GwE, staff continue to work within teams to identify support packs as part of the regional PL programme. In January 2023, this cross-regional professional learning offer was successfully endorsed by the National Academy for Educational Leadership who identified several key strengths including:

- The provision is aligned to the Welsh policy context and supports leaders across Wales in realising the ambition of Our National Mission.
- The provision is national and offered bilingually providing open and appropriate access for target

beneficiaries, making appropriate use of blended learning.

- It is led by high-quality personnel appropriate to the target audience.
- Efficient and effective administrative systems to support delivery.
- Case Studies demonstrate improved leadership practice leading to better outcomes for children and young people.

A successful secondary sharing workshop was held in March 2023 where GwE facilitated school practitioners to share practice and lessons learnt to date in their preparation for Curriculum for Wales [sharing practice of 5 x secondary schools who have started with implementation in September 2022]. Over 80 attended from across 44 secondary and special schools, including representative from Welsh Government. Evaluations show 100% strongly agree/agree that they were satisfied with the learning experience and had acquired knowledge and skills that would support them in their role.

Bespoke cluster and school PL sessions continue to be requested from GwE to support whole school and staff training to support curriculum discussions, and in light of additional INSET day for Summer 2023.

The GwE Support Centre continues to support schools to access professional learning through a blend of approaches. Sessions are recorded and these include examples of schools sharing their practice. Feedback shows these are well received by schools, being used to support professional dialogue within the school. Figures show access to support materials continues to increase - 9021 accessing Curriculum for Wales English medium resources with 8504 Cwricwlwm i Gymru Welsh resources.

AREAS OF LEARNING AND EXPERIENCE [AoLE] TEAMS

Curriculum for Wales Networks

The regional service has effectively supported leaders in preparation for The Reform Journey and Curriculum for Wales and has been flexible in its provision in order to meet schools' various needs during the pandemic. The profession has an infrastructure across the region to share and discuss emerging practice within the new Curriculum for Wales – this is through the local and regional CfW Networks. The Networks share the fruits of their labour with all schools via GwE Support Centre providing an opportunity for practitioners to disseminate regional messaging and share local practice. Led by the networks, effective webinars were held for all school leaders on curriculum design, assessment and progression and planning principles. Schools have noted that the presentations have boosted their confidence to develop their High-level Curriculum Design to include their vision, principles and to incorporate the four purposes. All schools have accessed these workshops either via a live recording or through subsequent discussions with the Link Supporting Improvement Adviser. Following this professional learning, all primary schools have developed and embedded new or adapted vision and rationale statements, which have helped to ensure consistency within their schools in approaching the curriculum.

Formal evaluation and reflections have taken place to inform newer ways of moving forward with the networks to ensure regional infrastructure remains to support evolving work on Curriculum and to enable full engagement by all sectors and on all levels. The formal evaluation report will be shared in summer term 2023, however headline impact shows:

- Increased number of schools developing and sharing examples of their approaches to whole school design and planning of mandatory elements, including cross-curricular skills and during workshops in regional Conference in September 2022
- Teachers and leaders report that they have a greater level of understanding and knowledge of the CfW

CfW framework and elements within

- All primary schools and settings were able to meet the statutory requirements for implementing the new curriculum in September 2022
- Clear guidance and facilitating schools to see and share practical examples of innovative and creative curriculum summaries/designs – schools report that seeing this range of practice has given them increased confidence to develop their own processes

Formal evaluation of the Curriculum for Wales networks indicates that being a member of the networks has had an impact as within the table below:

	REGIONAL NETWORK MEMBERS	LOCAL NETWORK MEMBERS
A greater understanding and knowledge of the ethos of Curriculum for Wales	92%	69%
A greater understanding of their own AoLE	75%	65%
Increased confidence to lead the work of the networks within their own school setting	81%	58%
Increased confidence to lead network work with other schools	76%	41%
Greater awareness of the other sectors e.g. primary, secondary, special, PRU	78%	63%
Increased understanding of the 3-16 learning continuum	84%	61%
The work of the networks has had a positive impact on their classroom practice	76%	56%
A greater understanding and knowledge of the ethos of Curriculum for Wales	92%	69%

Successful practice across work of regional networks can be seen in increased number of schools sharing their emerging practice in:

- Curriculum design
- Evaluating initial curriculum trials
- Unpacking Statement of What matters
- Developing Shared Vision
- Developing shared understanding of progression and assessment processes

A high-level of engagement has ensured that primary schools are more confident in implementing the Curriculum for Wales. Primary/secondary collaboration has been strengthened significantly and transversal themes such as Schools as Learning Organisations have been embedded in their approach - Time, Technology, Trust

and Thinking Together. The Professional Learning presentations to senior leaders have been cascaded to teachers and assistants via staff meetings and/or specific INSET, which means that all staff now have a better understanding of the framework. Effective engagement with wider stakeholders has become apparent in order to collaborate to develop a shared vision. Effective use is made of the resources presented in the leaders' sessions in order to continue with discussions and deepen understanding back at school.

4. DEVELOPING A HIGH-QUALITY EDUCATION PROFESSION

Summary of main actions, engagement and impact

Due to the increased focus on support and guidance for improving the teaching and learning through engagement such as in the Shirley Clarke Assessment for Learning [AfL] research programme [Objective 1], through networks for teaching and learning leads, networks for core subject and the work of the 'team around the school' for Schools Causing Concern:

- nearly all school are demonstrating improvements in specific aspects of pedagogy. However, the pace and scale of improvements require further attention in a few schools.
- nearly all schools are taking appropriate action to further strengthen pedagogy and raise standards.
- high quality targeted subject specific support for pedagogy is improving standards of teaching and learning across many subjects and specifically in English and Mathematics and improving both depth and breadth of understanding.
- nearly all schools have appropriate literacy and numeracy interventions in place and can demonstrate the progress made by groups of pupils.

OBJECTIVE 2: DEVELOPING A HIGH-QUALITY EDUCATION PROFESSION

Improving the teaching & learning in our schools.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES [MFL]

Support primary and secondary schools with planning for CfW.

The Global Futures Team continue to plan and provide support to schools. Over 200 primary schools have engaged with the support and various networks. This has led to a greater understanding of aims and expectations of International Languages [IL] in the primary sector in line with CfW framework and guidance. Practitioners are developing an understanding of descriptions of learning and schools are developing and refining the most appropriate IL provision [curriculum design and planning] to suit their school context vision, including embedding IL across the AoLEs.

Sessions have been delivered to address the mandatory elements of CfW and refine planning in IL in the secondary sector. This has led to a greater understanding of mandatory and statutory elements of CfW framework. Support and professional learning plan has been reviewed and refined to suit the needs and priorities of schools and practitioners. Bespoke support is provided to schools on request.

Provide professional learning opportunities, resources, expertise and sharing good practice

Training sessions with guest speakers have been delivered to respond to pedagogy and methodology for IL in the primary sector. Sessions included Talk Pedagogy, Power language, Institut Francais and Cerdd Iaith. A total of 97 primary schools / 110 teachers were involved. Feedback and engagement has been very positive with practitioners gaining greater expertise and confidence in teaching and learning with International Languages being fully integrated in some school learning plans. Direct support has also been provided to

primary teachers via the Open University Teachers Learning to Teach languages [TELT] programme.

Through the Power language Resources, schools are starting to integrate and continue to embed IL in their curriculum with some schools using the resources and advice to train all staff and provide experience in IL learning. Feedback from 75 schools confirmed quality of the resource and support for practitioners.

Provide professional learning opportunities resources, expertise and sharing good practice in primary and secondary

The GwE support centre for International Languages is updated regularly and all schools can access support and links to resources and examples of good practice. The GwE team continues to support and collaborate alongside Global Futures partners and/or Cross-consortia projects, resulting in the production of relevant and purposeful pedagogical resources suited for primary and secondary teachers, schools, learners and parents. All opportunities and resources are shared with schools to support developments.

The project 'Designing for Languages within LLC: GF GwE/ Jennifer Eddy' has enabled practitioners to develop practice and innovative pedagogical approaches around assessment tasks, curriculum design and planning. This has shifted mindset and developed greater understanding of CfW framework and planning for CfW, deepening understanding and practice around assessment.

The new National Strategy for Supporting MAT Learners is communicated through the IL network meeting including advice and guidance on areas such as identification, tracking, teaching and learning and MAT in the CfW. Practitioners' needs are addressed and schools feel supported. The networking allows better collaboration between schools and practitioners.

HIGHER LEVEL TEACHING ASSISTANTS [HLTA] - TEACHING ASSISTANTS LEARNING PATHWAY [TALP]

Higher level teaching assistants [HLTA] - Teaching Assistants Learning Pathway [TALP]

A rich array of professional development is provided for teaching assistants through the national programmes, i.e., the Teaching Assistants Learning Pathway [TALP]. This includes 'Induction', 'Practicing Assistants' and the 'Aspiring HLTAs' programme, leading up to HLTA status assessment. In the same manner as the Leadership programme for teachers, these encourage individuals to become reflective practitioners who evaluate their practice against the 'Professional Standards for Assisting Teaching'.

Newly appointed teaching assistants

Sixty-two have registered for the programme during the year, and 30 of these have now completed the four modules. This is slightly below the outcome, but an increase since before the pandemic, and generally good comments have been received via feedback forms. Following completion of the modules new teaching assistants have an awareness of the professional standards for assisting teaching, improved digital skills and they make appropriate use of their Hwb account. Teaching assistants are added to the GwE Induction TEAMS, which serves as a point of contact with the co-ordinator and is an easy way of responding to any enquiries.

Practising teaching assistants

The content of this programme was reviewed nationally with the other Consortia co-ordinators. Six schools were targeted for training per cluster, and during the year 5 clusters have completed the programme and the programme is under way with 2 further clusters. A total of 122 teaching assistants have received training through the cluster model. This is a very good increase on last year and is in line with the outcome. Positive

feedback was received from attendees.

Following feedback from teaching assistants and facilitators on this on-line training during the pandemic, this programme was held regionally during the spring term 2023. Twenty-five teaching assistants attended. Regional face-to-face numbers are significantly lower than numbers prior to the pandemic. A higher number of teaching assistants had registered for each location but there were last minute absences due to lack of staff in schools, meaning teaching assistants could not be released to attend, or due to illness. Following completion of the training practising teaching assistants have a better understanding of the professional standards for assisting teaching and an improved understanding of effective practice, and are eager to develop these practices within their own organisations.

Aspiring HLTA

Training was provided for 30 teaching assistants in Cylch 4 (on-line) and 37 in Cylch 5 (face to face). A 'PLR surgery' was offered to Cylch 4 to discuss their Personal Learning Reflections and assessment arrangements. This had a very positive impact, with many teaching assistants improving their reflections on professional learning following these meetings. A review session was held for Cylch 4 candidates prior to their assessments. 80% of teaching assistants opted for an assessment in Cylch 4, with 20% joining the Cylch 5 assessment.

Comments received by teaching assistants, facilitators and assessors note a much better understanding of Professional Standards and Curriculum for Wales following the training. Teaching assistants have also valued working with other teaching assistants across the region and nationally (on-line), and their digital skills have improved, with the technical session very helpful in this regard. The oral feedback received was that the majority would prefer face to face training.

Following recent face to face Cylch 5 sessions it was evident that participants' engagement and enjoyment is much higher. It is also evident that teaching assistants have a much better understanding of how to write their reflections following face to face training. They collaborate much better with peers and the standard of professional discussions is much higher.

Cylch 6 - 27 teaching assistants commenced Cylch 6 in February 2023.

HLTA status

Cylch 3 and 4 Assessments

Following attending 8 digital sessions for Aspiring HLTAs, 82% of Cylch 3 Aspiring HLTAs and 46% of Cylch 4 Aspiring HLTAs applied for the HLTA status assessment. Each assessment was moderated regionally, and a sample of 6 moderated nationally.

Those who did not go forward with the assessment this time noted they had not secured enough teaching experience in the classroom due to the impact of Covid. These will undergo assessment with Cylch 5, 6 or 7 teaching assistants when appropriate. A number of these teaching assistants have also left education, and assessments were lower than usual across each Consortium.

Cylch 4 evaluation comments are positive and a testament to assistants' appreciation of this opportunity to develop professionally:

"I really enjoyed the course, and the co-ordinators were engaging and fun. I have been inspired and there are many things I will remember and use eventually to inspire others. It was really useful to be able to listen to

the viewpoints of so many other aspiring HLTAs and learn from them."

"I have gained confidence in my current role and developed professionally, so that I can continue to support learners in school to the best of my ability."

HLTA assessors

National refresher training was held on 3/10/22 on TEAMS, and a drop-in session for GwE Assessors on 10/10/2022. HLTA assessors gave very positive feedback regarding the new system of assessing candidates. Five new Assessors were trained in March 2023.

Introduction to Curriculum for Wales

New training has been jointly created with the other Consortia, to give teaching assistants an introduction to the Curriculum for Wales. The training was split into 2 sessions and was available in both Welsh and English. The sessions were delivered nationally at a variety of times, so that teaching assistants may be released.

The training was adapted to create bespoke training for GwE primary schools, and training has now been delivered to 219 teaching assistants.

WELSH LANGUAGE

Develop the support for schools to promote the benefits of bilingualism and the advantages of Welsh-medium education.

There is a strong link with the Language Forums via the SIA, who represents each authority. Regular meetings are held with local authority officers in each authority to ensure clarity of implementation as regards the WESPs, incorporating Welsh language advisory teams' objectives into the GwE business plan. This has strengthened the joint understanding of the offer from GwE and the authorities. A national working group has been established to develop support and specific PL for both English-medium and Welsh-medium schools.

Support to develop the growth of Welsh-medium provision in English-medium schools:

Requests for support from Welsh departments in English-medium secondary schools are addressed. Support is targeted according to schools' needs. During the spring term two Network meetings were held for Welsh leads in English-medium schools, enabling schools to showcase successful practice. This approach to sharing good practice has been welcomed, leading to forging useful links between schools, requests for digital support and an increasing awareness of the effectiveness of Cymraeg Campus to enhance social use of the language. There has been an increase in the number of requests for support for the English-medium secondary sector, in line with support plans via SIAs. There is support for Welsh department leads to maintain and raise standards in teaching and learning and achieve the CfW effectively as well as support to promote Welsh and bilingualism as part of whole school plans. The 'O'r Stordy' newsletter for Welsh departments in English-medium secondary schools is circulated on a termly basis, which provides information and important links to resources, information, events and support networks. This has increased awareness of what is available to help teachers to develop the language further.

Welsh language Strategic Leads agree nationally there is a need to establish a network of representatives from each region, to plan support for assisting schools to use the Welsh language Framework in English-medium education. A national working group has been established to develop support for English-medium

schools. The working group met during the second half of the autumn term, and work is ongoing in terms of planning resources and PL to support the new Framework. This has resulted in producing a resource on 'Y Mabinogion', which will include accompanying national Professional Learning and model effective use in terms of planning and deepening understanding, and improve practitioners' confidence in relation to the non-statutory Framework for Welsh in English-medium education.

Develop a Welsh language professional offer in preparation for the Curriculum for Wales (3-16) and strengthen the collaboration/transition from primary to secondary:

A presentation was shared in Headteacher forums, in collaboration with the LAs, to draw attention to Welsh as a statutory element of the CfW. This has been a means of raising the profile of the language among Headteachers and is an opportunity to highlight the need to include Welsh in their curriculum design.

Through network meetings for Welsh leads (in Welsh-medium, bilingual and English-medium schools) support is given to leaders to achieve the CfW effectively, and resources such as the GwE Region Welsh Leads Network Meeting (adobe.com) will share information about regional and national developments. This is an effective and current approach to sharing updates and is convenient for including relevant links to enable HoDs to disseminate further.

Workshops were held in a primary/secondary transition INSET, to work with leaders to consider how the process of assessing learner progress in Welsh contributes to developing a holistic picture of the learner. There has been support and guidance for leaders in Welsh departments in secondary schools across the region to ensure learner progression in Welsh is an integral part of learning activities, leading to an understanding of the Statements of What Matter.

Requests for support for specific schools continue via the LA (English-medium secondary), and any support needs to be incorporated into the school support plan and in consultation with the relevant SIA.

Developing the skills

Ein Llais Ni

80+ teachers have submitted case studies addressing the impact on teaching and learning when undertaking various themes. A further application to extend 'Ein Llais Ni' to English-medium schools has been submitted, and approved by Welsh Government. Primary and secondary schools across the region have had the opportunity to express an interest in being part of a small pilot of schools to develop this work for the sector. It is intended to further promote the work regionally and nationally, ensure momentum and a high profile for the work and collaborate closely with a group of lead teachers who will exemplify successful practice further. The impact of this work is captured in Estyn reports on both a school and authority level.

A Professional Learning resource has been produced in the form of a website, www.einllaisni.cymru, to collate resources and provide guidance on effective methods of leading the area and planning a prominent place for oracy. This has been shared nationally and will be part of cross-consortia provision available to schools across Wales. A Bangor University research report has been presented, which evaluates the effectiveness of the ELIN project, with a view to identifying specific challenges faced in schools in terms of the best way of getting children to use their Welsh and the skills associated with this. A student from Bangor University has collaborated closely with Professor Enlli Thomas and conducted research in the area leading to preparation of a booklet for practitioners, which is a quick reference for teachers on developing the oracy skills of children and young people - O Enau Plant a Gwlad. Feedback for this resource is very positive, and it

has received national attention in various forums.

An event entitled 'Ein Llais Ni:Datblygu Siaradwyr y Dyfodol' was held in November 2022, and schools that were part of the work made a valuable contribution. There was representation from Welsh Government, the 'Ein Llais Ni' Management Board, Bangor University (lecturers and students), Local Authority Officers, teachers from current project schools and others with an interest in the project. Feedback was extremely positive.

Teaching oracy is part of specific cluster collaboration plans which has resulted in valuable discussions on pedagogy, continuity, assessment and rich experiences across the age range and between the primary and secondary.

Literacy:

A presentation was given in a secondary regional network meeting on the mandatory element of developing Literacy when delivering the CfW. This has resulted in a greater awareness of the need to include this in each school's curriculum design.

GwE SIAs have been collaborating on developing and trialling the 'Six Steps Strategy' for strategic planning to promote the cross-curricular skills across the curriculum. As a result of presenting this strategy to co-ordinators and Headteachers a resource has been produced to support and assist Literacy Co-ordinators across the region to map out provision for languages across the curriculum strategically.

Develop informal use of the Welsh language - 'Siarter Iaith' and 'Cymraeg Campus':

Regional secondary schools have been invited to join the national project for disseminating Siarter Iaith work to the secondary sector. Regional meetings for Siarter Iaith and Cymraeg Campus co-ordinators have been held, resulting in sharing updates on challenges and developments.

Two national meetings have been held to agree on a strategic direction for the Siarter Iaith Framework. There have been purposeful discussions on recommendations noted in the 2020 evaluation of the Siarter Iaith and national collaboration to make effective use of funding, define the objective of the Siarter Iaith (including Cymraeg Campus), raise the status of the Framework and its promotion and challenges, and possible solutions for using it effectively and purposefully.

There has been support for English-medium schools that have created new roles, such as Bilingualism Co-ordinator or Welsh language Champion, and because of this support schools have received practical guidance on how to implement the principles and recommendations on a local level.

Promote the profile of the Welsh language amongst leaders in preparation for the Curriculum of Wales and WG's target of a million Welsh speakers.

Guidance to support school leaders when planning for developing the Welsh language has been produced and shared in primary and secondary headteacher forums. Consequently, there is a better understanding of the need to plan strategically for Welsh, ensuring a purposeful professional learning programme along with rich experiences to develop skills.

A playlist has been adapted from a resource shared by Central South Consortium. This resource helps school leaders to report accurately on practitioners' Welsh language skills against the Welsh Language Competency Framework when completing the School Workforce Census (SWAC) and plan suitable professional

learning to strategically develop the language competency of all practitioners. The resource has been shared via the Bulletin and brought to the attention of authority officers in regional meetings so that it may be promoted further.

Meetings have been held with associates from the Leadership Academy, the regions' AS, WG officers and Estyn to discuss Welsh language leadership. This has resulted in joint understanding of provision for the variation within this area, across Wales. Consequently, it is agreed there is a need to jointly create a resource to support self-evaluation and develop Welsh language leadership, providing a series of questions for leaders to consider when self-evaluating their journey to develop the language in their schools. The aim is that leaders use these questions alongside 'The national resource: evaluation and improvement' when undertaking self-evaluation to ensure due attention is given to the development of the Welsh language in all schools.

By means of the 'Designing for languages' project (led by Professor Jenny Eddy of Queens College, New York), leaders of several Welsh Departments in regional secondary schools have had an opportunity to use international research to develop their understanding of curriculum design models and produce their own models for Welsh within the LLC AoLE, as part of a whole school curriculum design. An event was held in Venue Cymru for leaders and schools to showcase the fruits of their labours in the above project, and curriculum design models for Welsh and Welsh in English-medium schools will be shared regionally.

As a result of the above project there have been discussions with the University/CaBan on the possibility of incorporating the principles and research into PGCE provision in the future, and the 'Teachers as designers - interdisciplinary planning' event (Venue Cymru) is a means of presenting the research and design models of regional Welsh departments to primary and secondary PGCE students this year.

Develop the Welsh and Welsh-medium workforce - the language skills of the education workforce:

Cluster work has been ongoing across the region and strong and effective practice shared. A template has been presented to collate and share effective practice, and clusters are starting to share examples of implementation and its impact.

There is a very strong and constructive relationship between GwE, Canolfan Bedwyr, Welsh Government and LAs, resulting in strengthening provision to support practitioners to develop their language skills. There is also a strong link between GwE and the Coleg Dysgu Cymraeg Cenedlaethol ensuring opportunities to promote online courses for practitioners. GwE continues to promote the provision of the National Centre for Learning Welsh, and has received statistics highlighting the commitment of regional schools to the training available. As part of the search facility on its website, the Centre has added an option for education practitioners to note an interest in learning Welsh/developing Welsh skills through the Sabbaticals Scheme. The details of those practitioners who have expressed an interest thus far are received, so that the LA is aware of who they are and is able to assess their suitability or offer alternative support.

A LEVEL

Develop effective leaders

A Middle Leadership Training Programme (post-16) has been provided, with an option to gain ILM Level 5 accreditation. The first face to face session for all attendees was held on 18/10/22, with subsequent hybrid sessions on 23/11/22, 26/1/23 and 7/3/23. Six regional Heads of Sixth Form have completed the national course.

Heads of Sixth network meetings have been held, where there were opportunities to share successful practice, express and discuss concerns and contribute to the conference agenda. Leaders have welcomed these networks.

A GwE Post-16 Leadership Conference was held on 3/3/23. The programme was based on the requirements of Heads of Sixth and 2022/23 priorities. This included a keynote speech by Vanessa Jenkins (Trauma Informed Schools) on supporting students but also ensuring self-care; VESPA workshops (Creating Independent Learners: Resources, activities and raising expectations); ALPS (effective use of Alps Connect to identify priorities and maximise pupil achievement); TIS (Practical tips for running structured and safe reflection groups for staff and students); E-sgol and regional Heads of Sixth sharing effective practice in broadening pupils' horizons, and Estyn inspection experiences.

Support schools to monitor the progress of post-16 students:

Seventeen regional schools are making effective use of ALPs to track learner progress during the academic year. Online ALPS training for the region's schools has been provided, 3 consecutive sessions: Introduction to ALPS; Effective use of ALPS to track progress on both a subject and learner level; Effective use of ALPS Connect to analyse results and plan improvements. An ALPs workshop has been held in the post-16 leadership conference to promote termly use of the tool to track internal progress in schools. In addition, there is school-to-school support on effective use of ALPS, as required.

Support schools to provide a range of approaches to promote their learners' well-being.

Heads of Sixth network meetings have provided opportunities to share good practice in the context of VESPA/Bloom and express any general concerns about learner well-being. Trauma Informed Schools delivered a keynote speech in the conference along with a specific workshop. Arrangements are in place to offer a series of online VESPA training workshops at the beginning of the Summer Term 2023.

RESEARCH AND EVALUATION

KiVa Anti-Bullying Research Project

As part of GwE's ongoing initiatives to focus policy and practice on more evidence-informed approaches, this project was undertaken with schools in North Wales to evaluate the effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of KiVa anti-bullying programme in reducing child reported bullying in UK schools compared to usual practice. GwE is a co-applicant on this large scale research project to evaluate the impact of the KiVa anti-bullying programme in primary schools. Following a pause due to the COVID-19 pandemic, 30 schools in North Wales have been recruited for the study. The findings indicated that the KiVa intervention schools had statistically significantly lower occurrences of bullying than control schools. This is an internationally important outcome, and is being written up as a paper for The Lancet journal for publication in 2023. The project has already produced a study protocol paper where the research team describe the trial in detail for other researchers. The full study findings can be accessed by downloading the open access paper using this link::



[The UK stand together trial: protocol for a multicentre cluster randomised controlled trial to evaluate the effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of KiVa to reduce bullying in primary schools | BMC Public Health | Full Text \(biomedcentral.com\)](#)

Once the main study findings are published, the research team are planning a series of dissemination and school information sessions to help translate these findings into everyday practice. Four GwE schools are currently assisting with this dissemination work. **Page 63**

Positive Readiness for Learning (PR4L) Project – Behavioural Scientists in Clusters

The aim of this project is to provide training and individualised coaching to teachers in the classroom to provide confidence and consistency when addressing disruptive behaviour within the classroom.

Teachers and school staff will be encouraged to identify and acknowledge positive behaviour in students and respond consistently to behavioural challenges. The aim of the project is to focus on schools with persistent issues with either low level disruption and/or staff who want to know more about evidence-informed strategies (preferable the former to show impact). For example, meeting staff to improve their understanding of tier 1 (universal) behaviour management strategies.

The start of this project was delayed due to the appointment of new research staff, and now that staffing has been confirmed we are now planning to invite one large primary school from each LA to begin the project in June 2023 until July 2024. Each of the six partner schools will benefit from a daily visit by a behavioural scientist for one term's duration. The project team will evaluate the impact on learner behaviour and also write a case study impact report.

KESS ALN Reading Research

This is a proposal for up to 4 SEN schools in the KESS East region to collaborate with us on a funded KESS2 East MRes project from October 2022 - June 2023. This will involve Bangor University, GwE, and SEN schools in the region. The MRes student and supervisors will work closely with participating schools to conduct an audit and rapid review of assessment and intervention approaches being used, to explore staff experiences and perceptions of current provision, and to reflect on the findings, current practices, and ideas for further development and evaluation. We hope this collaborative project will enable us to further develop and evaluate areas of strong practice, as well as identifying areas for developing provision to help improve reading outcomes for a wide range of learners.

The start of this project was delayed due to the appointment of the KESS master's student. After two rounds of advertisements, a student was appointed in March 2023 and initial discussions have taken place with GwE core leads to identify schools. The schools will be confirmed in May 2023.

Health Economics and PBMA

This project aims to support and develop headteacher decision making processes using effective decision-making methodology called Programme budgeting and marginal analysis (PBMA). PBMA is a tool for tackling the use of scarce resources in health and education settings and provides a more conceptually clear framework for the challenging task of managing scarce resources with competing demands. The aim of this project has been to investigate if schools produce robust effectiveness and social validity data to support interventions and to help school leaders consider value for money concepts. It also aims to evaluate the impact of the project by tracking changes in provision and to evaluate how headteachers utilise a decision-making tool. Six schools have been participating in the work this year:

The researcher has visited each of the schools to meet the head teacher to collect cost and effectiveness data for a range of interventions and programmes that they wish to interrogate. Each school will now be presented with a PBMA report in May 2023 at which time we will be able to fully evaluate the impact of the PBMA process on head teachers' decision-making processes. A larger, follow-up PBMA process involving additional interventions/programmes in school is planned for the summer term 2023. more interventions.

ITE

Initial Teacher Education (ITE)

Regional consistency is strengthened through strong collaboration between GwE and CaBan. This ensures a common approach to research, professional learning and improved integration as a learning organisation across the region. As a consequence of the consistent cultural approaches of the organisations, teachers access up to date and impactful upskilling as they progress through their teaching careers, and programmes and learning is personalised to the unique needs of the region, as well as responsive to national priorities. Ultimately this improves teacher retention.

New ITE National accreditation criteria have been rewritten to include ALN ITE. Accreditation meetings have taken place and Education Workforce Council (EWC) have provided further guidance and next steps. Full submission of ITE ALN programmes will take place in July 2023 for accreditation from September 2024; these will be Wales's first accredited ALN ITE programmes. Meetings with WG and EWC continue for relevant advice and to ensure programmes fit with national priorities for vulnerable learners and ALN. Currently documentation in development is focussed upon aligning the pilot programmes to the new accreditation criteria (which now include ALN) and Professional Standards for Teaching and Leadership.

14 GwE staff delivered sessions on the CaBan ITE programmes this term; these have included on-line and face to face lectures and workshops, and a keynote lecture. These have focussed upon pedagogy, curriculum for Wales, Human Rights and RVE, digital skills, curriculum design and planning, literacy and numeracy and transition. Further sessions are planned for summer term. Professional learning is now more consistent from ITE through to NQT and the GwE Professional offer (and ultimately to the National offer).

Further planned shared professional learning and project opportunities continue including Ein Llais Ni – this is planned to include sessions for students to ensure they are familiar with the project and can implement its actions. Collaboration has taken place to develop international languages particularly in the Primary programmes, including developing Research and language pedagogy. New teachers entering the profession are more able to teach and further share their knowledge and understanding of research, Curriculum for Wales, pedagogy and their skills across the Welsh language continuum.

GwE staff have taken part in CaBan quality assurance meetings. There are planned shared quality assurance and enhancement engagement opportunities such as lesson studies and monitoring in lead schools throughout the academic year. These include working with schools as well as with CaBan and GwE staff.

Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs)

NQTs are supported consistently across the region, including through their access to professional learning. A full programme of national NQT training has taken place and this continues to be enhanced further through regional training which builds upon key messages from National training in the autumn term. Consistency and collaboration are ensured through regular meetings with consortia colleagues nationally and key messages are shared regionally through very regular local meetings. 216 NQTs have attended which is approximately 72% of this year's cohort.

Record numbers of NQTs attended the mandatory Session 1 and 2 in September/October 2022 and over 1,000 NQTs attended the online session 1 (70% of the 2022/23 national cohort). Of this group 223 NQTs from the GwE region attended the training, this is 78% of the region's cohort.

There was a significant increase in the number (%) of STS (short term supply) teachers who attended the National Session 1 and 2 professional learning programme. In comparison to previous years, attendance of active STS NQTs who attended session 1 has increased significantly with 51 attending (81%).

The roll-out of the new WG Induction Arrangements for Wales in November 2022 was a success. Working closely with the 6 Local Authority NQT Leads we have disseminated the information and resources from WG around the message in the new regulations. The arrangements looked at roles and responsibilities, funding, Professional Learning and completing Induction in Wales.

Cross-consortium collaboration with the Regional NQT leads continues to improve and grow with the sharing of good practice and resources happening across Wales. Creating closer links with the Supply agencies in North Wales has been a priority and we have met twice to try and ensure that they also fully understand their role with the NQTs.

The Open University (OU)

Collaboration with the OU continues through regular partnership meetings. Provision has been updated and improved to include further funding for Welsh-medium students in secondary settings. Information sharing has taken place and there is planned further activity to update stakeholders. Students have access to a range of different ways of becoming teachers, including work-based programmes through the OU as well as traditional route to ITE.

Welsh language provision

Collaboration to improve Welsh language provision continues strongly, such as through our Ein Llais Ni oracy project. Nearly 100 Welsh-medium schools across the region participated in the first phase of this project, which included some NQTs, and around 20 third year students attended our Ein Llais Ni event in November. Schools have access to up-to-date research and impactful practice in improving Welsh Oracy Pedagogy.

DIGITAL

Develop digital leadership in regional schools

The digital facilitator programme continues to develop. A meeting was held with each facilitator during November to discuss the progress of the programme in each cluster. 79% of the region's clusters have formed a digital learning working group to lead strategic aspects. 67% of clusters have formulated a shared vision for the cluster, reconciling the objectives of each school and establishing a foundation for any collaborative work. 66% of regional clusters have established arrangements whereby the digital facilitator reports back to cluster Headteachers on a regular basis. We are confident the programme has progressed successfully. We will be offering more individual support for clusters/digital facilitators who are experiencing difficulties in establishing a working group, in order to ensure the work is progressing effectively. 77% of clusters note communication has strengthened within the cluster because of the programme, with digital communication channels established to ensure that discussions and sharing of experiences can continue on a regular basis. Several clusters have successfully embedded the programme in their cluster and are examples of working groups that are taking effective action during the first phases of the programme. These clusters have made notable progress and are designing innovative ideas on how to collaborate as a cluster to develop aspects of this area. Many have provided a case study for Welsh Government to discuss their progress. A training day was held for digital facilitators during quarter 4 focusing on identifying growth points in their clusters, with the intention of producing a cluster progress report in relation to these growth points during the next financial year.

Provide a programme of professional learning to develop opportunities to raise standards in digital competence via Hwb.

The digital professional learning offer seems to be a success thus far, with 386 practitioners registered to attend training sessions. During quarter 4 training has been held on data handling, modelling, level 1 Google, retelling a story digitally and digital competence in progression steps 1 and 2. Feedback received following training has been very positive, with several teachers appreciating the opportunity to have time to look at software in depth and receive guidance on effective pedagogy and how to use various software effectively in different curricular contexts. The first day of the training programme for digital leaders was held for a second cohort of teachers during quarter 4, and the second day will consider the impact of work set on the first day. The aim of this programme is to ensure development of leadership capacity within clusters, and that more individuals are upskilled to support the work of the digital facilitators. A Keeping Safe On-line conference was jointly held with Welsh Government in March and 95 practitioners attended.

Embed 360 Digi Cymru as the region's main self-evaluation tool for digital learning.

To date, 283 of the region's schools have registered on the digital learning self-evaluation system, 360 Digi Cymru. 154 schools have revisited the system to update their evaluation. We continue to encourage schools to engage with this review. We have recorded a series of webinars to ensure there is on demand support available so that schools can engage. As part of the digital facilitators programme, the facilitators are responsible for encouraging schools to use the self-evaluation system, asking each school in their cluster to complete the review over the next term. Data will then be discussed on a cluster level to ascertain strengths within the cluster as well as general aspects to be developed. Data inputted into the system shows a score of 2.8 out of 4 on average; 1 being the strongest score and 4 the weakest. This score is in line with levels across Wales.

Support for the secondary sector

During quarter 4, a six steps strategy was launched to support secondary schools with producing and implementing a whole school strategy to develop cross-curricular skills across the school. Twelve secondary schools have now received individual support in relation to this as we trial the strategy. The response to the strategy has been extremely positive thus far, with schools appreciating guidance on a strategic level to embed a whole school strategy to develop this area. Most schools have now completed step 2 of the 6 steps, which is to design their strategy for developing the area. To support this, we have designed a number of progression maps, showing what pupil progress should look like on progression steps 1-5. We have created progression maps for the following aspects thus far: creating podcasts, data handling, animation, creating a video, graphics. The response has been excellent, with many practitioners noting that these resources are valuable in helping teachers to plan ambitious and fit for purpose experiences that build on learners' previous skills.

MATHS AND NUMERACY

A range of networks and forums are operational to support leaders in the secondary sector, at every level, to be able to lead on pedagogy with increased confidence and effectiveness. This includes networks for senior leads on teaching and learning and for core subject heads of department. There is evidence that collaboration within the networks has been a particular strength and mutual support has been key in order to ensure consistency of teaching and learning approach in the secondary schools.

Subject networks have focused on supporting middle leaders to take the lead on teaching and learning; on facilitating and supporting peer collaboration and on strengthening evaluation and improvement planning

processes and procedures; on promoting a better understanding of planning and pedagogy in the context of the new curriculum; on improving literacy and numeracy interventions as well as supporting specific aspects of KS4 and KS5 preparations and assessments. The work of the networks is much appreciated by secondary leaders who make effective use of the quality resources that have been jointly developed and hosted on GwE's Support Centre [Tanio websites [Science], MathsCymru [Maths], Y Pair [Welsh] and Herio [English].

Following Heads of Maths network meetings individual schools have been given further support to implement various approaches that have been discussed.

The impact of the subject networks is clear on several levels and across a range of aspects:

- middle leaders have been upskilled in their knowledge and understanding of methodology and quality of planning e.g., recall strategies, strategies to improve oral and writing work, use of technical equipment to develop subject skills etc.
- middle leaders have improved their knowledge and understanding of the 12 pedagogical principles and preparations for the new curriculum.
- good practices have been disseminated and are being more widely adopted. A considerable number of leaders have noted their appreciation of the opportunities to share ideas and developments and to support one another professionally.
- increasing use of the digital library resources on GwE's Support Centre and of the subject websites to improve learner experiences, to prepare learners for examinations and to prepare purposeful intervention programmes.
- leaders and teachers are more confident in their digital skills.
- leaders are more confident with pupil predictions, assessment and grading.

Bespoke support for schools causing concern

The Primary and Secondary Mathematics & Numeracy SIAs have provided bespoke support for regional schools as identified from support plans. This has resulted in improved planning for the teaching and learning of Mathematics and a greater understanding of how numeracy supports learning across the curriculum. Nearly all schools causing concern are making steady progress against agreed actions and all staff and stakeholders upskilled during the process.

Repeated, regular visits/meetings with schools have involved:

- Bespoke professional development sessions which have led to improvements in knowledge and confidence of staff within specific areas. e.g. formative use of the personalised assessments, effective questioning, revision strategies, non-specialist/early career teachers support.
- Collaborative support in planning and assessing learner progress, which has led to a greater understanding of how to track progress and use data effectively.
- Collaborative support with self-evaluation and improvement planning processes, which has led to more accurate analysis and identification of specific needs and areas for improvement.
- Sharing resources and professional development pertinent to school/learner needs within the setting as they implement (or trial) planning and teaching the Mathematics & Numeracy AoLE, which has led to improved pedagogical approaches and understanding of the curriculum.

Regional support and CfW

Secondary Heads of Maths network meetings

Termly local Heads of Maths network meetings have taken place in each local authority and have been well

attended. This has resulted in schools sharing good practice, gaining new ideas and resources to use, being fully familiar with current WJEC guidance, examination reports and the Estyn Inspection framework.

Secondary Numeracy Coordinators network meetings

Numeracy Coordinators local network meetings have taken place in each local authority and have been well attended. This has resulted in schools sharing good practice, gaining new ideas and resources to use and how to create and implement a whole school numeracy strategy

Additional Mathematics & Numeracy AoLE specific regional support

SIAs have delivered 2 online workshops as an introduction to the Mathematics & Numeracy AoLE in the summer 2022 term, as support for unpacking the mandatory elements and planning for progression. Heads of Maths were also invited to a day in the summer 2022 term as further support for CfW. As a result of these sessions, schools were able to share good practice, collaborate on familiarising with the Mathematics & Numeracy AoLE, gain a better understanding of the 5 mathematical proficiencies and the pedagogical implication, and be clearer with their understanding of the next steps needed on the journey to fully implement CfW.

AoLE Cluster support

Primary and Secondary SIA's have received bespoke cluster support requests to develop effective transition in mathematics, ensuring a shared understanding between cluster primaries and feeder secondary schools of the continuum and effective teaching and learning within the Mathematics and Numeracy AOLE.

Personalised Assessments

SIA's have continued to support regional Primary, Secondary and Special schools with the effective use of the Online Personalised Assessments. This has included bespoke training and sharing of Welsh Government guidance as well as creating and sharing a relevant support pack. This has ensured schools have been up to date with current guidance and effective practice.

Basic number skills package

A 'Basic Number Skills' pack which includes whole class resources and individual resources which can be adapted according to the needs of learners across the continuum has been created. They are written in Welsh and English and include an answer pack. The resources give learners the opportunity to reinforce and revisit skills that are key skills to develop across the continuum, ensuring learners' fluency in this area. The resources have been hosted on a Google Classroom and shared with various schools to trial.

MAT Secondary Maths Challenge

Secondary SIAs organised a GwE MAT Maths challenge for Year 9 learners in March 2023, with schools being invited to enter teams of 4 to one of the heats. 28 secondary schools in the region took part, with 34 teams in total. All schools have voiced their appreciation of the Maths challenge and the resources have been shared with all schools. A final will be organised for the summer term.

CABAN/BANGOR UNIVERSITY (September 2022)

Primary Mathematics and Numeracy SIA delivered four lectures – introduction to Mathematics and Numeracy AOLE/ to Welsh Medium Primary PGCE students. (approx. 27 students). These sessions supported new practitioners to gain a better understanding of the 5 mathematical proficiencies and effective pedagogy in mathematics to deliver CfW in regional classrooms during the academic year.

Oracy for Learning Across the Curriculum 2023

Primary and Secondary Mathematics and Numeracy SIA's delivered a day of training within the Oracy for Learning Across the Curriculum programme. Primary and Secondary school teachers/ leaders of years 5 to 8 attended the session aimed at creating a culture of 'talk for learning' and oracy provision to raise standards across the mathematics curriculum.

Bespoke support for individual schools

Nearly all schools causing concern are making steady progress against agreed actions and all staff and stakeholders upskilled during the process, including schools in Estyn category. The Maths & Numeracy SIAs have developed good relationships with individual schools which has resulted in successful collaboration.

ENGLISH AND LITERACY

Secondary

All bespoke requests from schools have been supported and range of departmental and whole schools training has been delivered by the team.

During November 2022 a regional literacy network was offered to all English Medium Secondary schools; the event was well attended. The session focus was on Planning for a strategic approach to Literacy and planning for progression. This has been further supported by the development of the 'Six Stage Approach' to developing a whole school literacy approach, which has been presented to at all 6 regional Heads' forums. Further to this, bespoke support has been given to schools and alliances that required bespoke support to launch.

In December 2022 a Heads of English Forum was organised and attendance was excellent. The session included a briefing from Elan Richards from Qualification Wales and allowed the Subject leads to ask questions directly relating the GCSE English Language and Literature consultation. Delegates were supported to produce a "Planning for progression" working document which was distribute to all secondary English departments and has been used as a starting point for departmental discussion on progression.

A Level English Language Forum Meeting - having attended the WJEC training "Fix it packs" were produced and distributed in order to support schools to give standardised feedback to pupils. Unseen Poetry Unit 1 resources have been produced for the 'Herio' website. A support pack to provide guidance for developing cross-curricular extended writing has also been developed and uploaded to the GwE One Drive.

Tailored support has also been provided by the team across local authorities, including familiarisation with the Six Stage Approach to strategic planning to develop skills and developing a culture of reading for pleasure.

The team has attended a variety of training events to further develop our knowledge and expertise in order to provide effective support for our schools. This has included training from: Voice 21, National Literacy Trust, WJEC (GCSE and A Level) and Qualifications Wales Consultations.

Secondary/Primary - Oracy WG funding has been used to fund a 5-day development programme, which began in February 2023. Three sessions have taken place to date with two more scheduled for Summer Term 2023. The last two sessions are focussed on the sharing of good practice between schools.

Reading for Pleasure/Caru@ddarllen 5-day development programme has been organised/commissioned with nearly full attendance and began in January 2023.

Primary

All bespoke requests from SIAs to schools causing concern, or with specific needs relating to literacy/English, have been met and a range of support has been implemented and reviewed by SIAs. Where needed, continued support has been delivered and nearly all settings, positive impact and progress has been reported.

In November 2022 a whole day Basic Literacy Skills workshop was attended by SIA invitation, to cover needs relating to PIAPs, SDPs or CPD of specific staff. This was reviewed by SIAs for impact back in schools and nearly all attendees put strategies effectively into place back in school. There was increased demand by SIAs and delegates, to hold other sessions and these are now planned in for the coming financial year, to be run by either the Lit SIA or commissioned effective teachers.

Reading for Pleasure/Caru@ddarllen 3-day development programme has been organised/commissioned with nearly full attendance and began in January 2023 (71 teachers). 2 of the 3 days were affected by strike action and had to be postponed until May 2023 and therefore fall into the new Business plan for 2023-24. Nearly all schools responded positively to day 1 through questionnaires and are strategically targeting staff to attend day 2 and 3. Feedback shows nearly all plan to maximise impact in school on standards and provision for reading. All sectors of schools attended, from 3-16 and are booked to continue attending in May. Open University and Bangor University are delivering on days 2 and 3, alongside 3-8 SIAs, 8-11 and Secondary SIAs, both in English and in Welsh language. LA Welsh Language advisors will also be in attendance.

LLC CfW Regional and local networks have been attended and supported, with extra working sessions with regional members, leading to the creation of documentation and support packs/resources to share with local networks and regional schools.

Google classrooms have been established to host and share all resources from PL events and working groups to ensure continued engagement and collaboration.

THE WELSH LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Leadership

The network meetings held this year for Welsh leads in the region (Welsh-medium, bilingual and English-medium schools) were an opportunity to develop an understanding of national developments, share successful practice and work together to maintain and raise standards in teaching and learning. These meetings were held in 'host' schools across the region, and it was a good opportunity for departments, in turn, to welcome other leaders to their department (often for the first time), and it is intended to continue this successful model next year. Leaders gave presentations during every meeting, sharing successful practice in various areas. During the network meetings for Welsh leads in English-medium schools, Welsh department leads of 'host' schools gave presentations on 'Y Gymraeg yn ein hysgol ni' (Welsh in our school). The response to these presentations was very positive and leaders welcomed the opportunity to see and discuss departments' unique and innovative strategies as they promote Welsh and bilingualism skills locally. These presentations from leaders in network meetings stemmed from follow-up work between schools across the region as well as collaboration between individual department leads, and we will develop this model further next year in order to strengthen follow-up collaboration between departments. Three

English-medium schools in the region continue to work in a Support Network, and this model of schools working together in alliances will be further developed in English-medium schools.

Consultation workshops and national working groups

Regional Welsh leads have been involved in national working groups (e.g. Welsh Subject Level Working Group - Qualifications Wales), and the voice of the region is heard in these national discussions. There have been a series of virtual meetings in collaboration with Qualifications Wales to help departments across the region to respond to the 'Qualified for the Future' consultation for new Welsh qualifications, and Qualifications Wales welcomed the opportunity to present the consultation directly to leaders in the above virtual meetings.

Effective realisation of the Curriculum for Wales

There has been collaboration with the SIA for International Languages on a 'Designing for Languages' project led by Professor Jenny Eddy from Queens College, New York with a representation of LLC AoLE departments from across the region, which includes members of Welsh departments from Welsh-medium and bilingual schools as well as English-medium schools (see also 'Collaboration with the University' below).

There have been INSET primary/secondary transition workshops, during which leaders considered how the process of assessing learner progress in Welsh contributes to developing a holistic picture of the learner.

There has been support and guidance for leaders to ensure that continuity for learners in Welsh is an integral part of learning activities, leading to an understanding of the Statements of What Matter (e.g., working with leaders to introduce Extended Processing Instruction).

'Ein Llais Ni' Project

A website, einllaisni.cymru, has been created, where phase 1 project schools' resources and case studies are housed. A successful application was made to Welsh Government for funding to continue the project next year. As part of this application, several regional secondary schools involved in the original project agreed to be lead schools, with Welsh department staff in those schools specifically promoting the next phase. Welsh departments in regional English-medium secondary schools have applied to join the next phase of the project, at the end of Quarter 4.

Cross-curricular literacy

Collaborate on developing and trialling the 'Six Steps Strategy' for strategic planning to promote Literacy skills across the curriculum. GwE are working with Literacy Co-ordinators across the region to map out provision, creating and developing a tool to support and assist co-ordinators with this work. The 'Cau'r Bwlch Darllen' project (in collaboration with a working group of Literacy Co-ordinators in Welsh-medium and bilingual schools) is a direct result of the need to target higher order reading skills, which was highlighted following a Literacy Co-ordinators network meeting.

The 'Holi Heriol' project (in collaboration with the Welsh Head of Department and Literacy Co-ordinator in one regional school) stems from a presentation given in a network meeting, and will link to the regional work of supporting schools to effectively realise the CfW by assisting leaders and Literacy Co-ordinators to plan for pupil progression through developing an understanding of the Principles of Progression.

The 'Llythrennedd y Gweithle 2023' project is an opportunity to deliver the cross-curricular themes as part of a curriculum design for languages, targeting the mandatory element through the LLC AoLE.

Collaboration with the University and support for NQTs

There have been discussions with Bangor University/CaBan during Quarter 3 to incorporate the work of Professor Jenny Eddy into PGCE courses and include the above 'Designing for languages' project.

An event has been held in Venue Cymru for NQT students (primary and secondary), in collaboration with Bangor University/CaBan, entitled 'Athrawon fel dylunwyr CiG' (Teachers as CfW designers), with presentations from members of Welsh departments across the region who were part of the 'Designing for languages' project.

Secondary and primary PGCE students attended the 'Ein Llais Ni – Datblygu siaradwyr y dyfodol' event, and students this year referred to 'Ein Llais Ni' in their research thesis as part of a specific unit in the course.

A presentation was delivered in the University to secondary and primary PGCE students (Welsh and English) on GwE's work and regional support (Quarter 4).

GwE Support Centre

Work continues with developing the Welsh pages on GwE's Support Centre, and the aim is for this platform to run alongside the 'live' Teams and Google Classroom digital platforms, with the former a permanent base and the latter a developmental platform.

The newsletter 'O'r Stordy' is an additional tool for sharing information with leaders across the region. Two versions of the newsletter are now shared with schools, one for Welsh-medium and bilingual schools and another version for English-medium schools.

SCIENCE

Realising Curriculum for Wales

Bespoke support has been provided to all departments that have requested CfW support. The schools that have received support, and who are adopting CfW in September 2023, are planning, and developing units of work.

Provide regional and local networks for leaders and teachers of Science and Technology AoLE with clear guidance on curriculum design, planning, assessment, and progression

In the Autumn term, 3 Heads of Science Network meetings representing all 6 local authorities ran and were well attended. The meetings provide an opportunity for discussions and activities on planning, delivering and evaluating their new CfW activities, GCSE schemes of work, examples of assessments and pedagogical approaches that are working well in their schools. The focus of these Autumn networks was planning and design for CfW. The focus was to look at disciplinary/multi-disciplinary and thematic approaches, and bringing the Sciences, Computation and Technology together to solve problems. Exemplars and resources produced by the working groups during these meetings were shared after the meetings and are available for other schools (including non-network schools) to view online bilingually.

During the Spring term, a second round of Heads of Science and Technology Network meetings took place. Again, the focus was on CfW – looking at progression and progression mapping, developing integral skills, cross-cutting themes (with presentations from Careers Wales) and computational programming/algorithms.

Support schools and their science and technology departments to ensure develop their understanding of the elements of the curriculum for Wales including the application and development of the cross-

curricular skills, the integral skills, and cross-cutting themes within Science.

The Science and Technology AoLE website has been developed and translated into Welsh – the website is supporting schools and departments to consider big ideas/themes in Science and Technology and different methods of planning for learning. This link to the website has been shared with all schools. We are currently developing exemplars of a thematic approach to develop cross curricular and integral skills. The intention during 2023-2024, is to further develop the website and share examples and good practice from schools as they become available.

Support schools and leaders of science to evaluate and enhance their provision for the Curriculum for Wales

Supporting resources available on the Science and Technology website have enabled teachers to further develop their understanding of progression in learning and the role of the descriptions of learning in planning for learning. In the Spring term network meetings, questionnaires completed by Heads of Science & Technology evaluated their current CfW provision in their own schools.

Improve Teaching

Collaboration and school to school-working and sharing of best practice continues to be developed through the Science and Technology AOLE network meetings. Schools involved have gained valuable experience and understanding through working together and sharing ideas for planning for learning and pedagogical considerations. The Tanio website has recorded a significant number of hits (>190,000) and downloads over 2022-2023, demonstrating that the resources are being widely used.

Schools causing concern

Following requests from SIAs, bespoke and targeted support continues for leaders, teachers, NQTs and for schools causing concern.

Supporting Leadership

School visits continue to support Middle Leaders with self-evaluation, identifying priorities for improvement, evaluating the quality of provision and teaching and learning.

AGES 3-8

Support to schools causing concern

Bespoke support has been delivered to schools causing concern across the region. Overall, nearly all schools causing concern are making steady or good progress against agreed actions and all staff and stakeholders have been upskilled during the process. Support is developing practitioners' understanding of progression across the developmental pathways of Enabling Learning to the end of PS2 in all AOLEs, cross curricular and integral skills. Support also improves their understanding of Foundation Learning principles and pedagogy impacting positively on the quality of provision and upon pupils' progress

Regional 3-8 networks

Regional 3-8 networks have been delivered for practitioners and SIAs, sharing guidance on Enabling Learning (the period of learning leading to Progression step 1) and case studies shared by schools from each LA involved in GwEs informed research projects on 'Woodwork' and 'Communication Friendly Spaces Approach'. Practitioners discussed how they had reflected and reviewed their learning environment, experiences and planning of skills both indoors and outdoors and the impact of their provision on learners in line with Enabling Learning and AOLEs guidance. Presentations and case studies have been uploaded on to the GwE Support Centre enabling all school regionally to access them. This has led to practitioners

disseminating and leading cluster training, sharing good practice and impact of the action research project.

Regional workshops have been delivered regionally for teachers and Teaching Assistants (TAs) new to the 3-8 age group focusing on the principles of Enabling Learning and AOLEs within this age group and effective pedagogy. Those who attended have a secure knowledge and understanding of the three enablers within Enabling Learning, pedagogy and the curriculum to transfer into classroom practice.

Science and Technology workshops have been delivered regionally for teachers and TAs. All practitioners have been upskilled and have deepened their knowledge and understanding of the Science and Technology AOLE, the Developmental Pathways, (Exploration in particular), cross-curricular skills and the integral skills. Following both workshops, practitioners have an increased confidence in planning the development of AOLE and cross-curricular skills from the Developmental Pathways to the AOLE's, within developmentally appropriate pedagogy.

Bespoke support has been delivered to individual schools and clusters on specific aspects of the Curriculum e.g., early reading and higher order reading skills, authentic and purposeful learning, role of the adults, numeracy, planning and outdoor learning. This has upskilled staff on the 3-11 continuum regarding expanding and deepening skills within a developmentally appropriate learning experiences and environment.

This has resulted in:

- Practitioners gaining deeper understanding of Foundation Phase principles and pedagogy, in line with the Curriculum for Wales 'Enabling Learning' and 'Pedagogy' guidance.
- All practitioners having access to the support package e.g., assessment, pedagogy, skill development within purposeful authentic learning experiences.
- Practitioners are upskilled to facilitate and lead training across the region.
- Same professional offer for both teachers and TAs, upskilling the whole workforce.
- Practitioners able to share learning experiences through the use of Google classroom, providing a network for collaboration.
- Promoted projects based on action research which has enabled practitioners to evaluate impact on pupil progress and provision.
- Increasing practitioner's understanding of the teaching and learning continuum from the developmental pathways, across the AOLE's and the 3 enablers and pedagogy.

5. LEADERSHIP

Summary of main actions, engagement and impact

Ensuring progression to Headteacher position, and especially in Welsh Medium schools, has been and continues to be a challenge. GwE provides a rich array of professional learning to develop leadership at every level, together with targeted and bespoke support for schools as required, and especially for those schools causing concern. Moreover, there are more robust arrangements in place across the region where school leaders collaborate to support one another in clusters and/or alliances and take increasing ownership and accountability of one another's improvement journey.

Due to the focus on support and guidance for leadership:

- nearly all schools are taking action to further strengthen leadership within their school with specific focus on further honing and improving evaluation and improvement planning at all levels.

- nearly all schools are prioritising guidance and support to further develop the capacity of senior and middle leaders to effectively lead and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning.
- there is an increase in the number of leaders accessing high quality training and leadership development programmes.

OBJECTIVE 3: LEADERSHIP

Supporting inspirational leaders working collaboratively to raise standards. Includes future leadership & professional networks

LEADERSHIP

Provide access to a range of regional and national professional learning, including access to coaching and mentoring, for all educational practitioners in schools and settings that is appropriate to their role and responsibility in line with professional standard.

The Local Authority and GwE provide a rich array of professional learning to develop leadership at every level, together with targeted and bespoke support for schools as required, and especially for those schools causing concern. Moreover, there are arrangements in place where school leaders collaborate to support one another in primary clusters and secondary alliances taking increasing ownership and accountability for one another's improvement journey.

A substantial number of practitioners across the region have followed the National Leadership Programmes for professional development (refer to Appendix 1 – regional data) and the 2021-22 cohorts have completed their development programmes. This includes middle leaders, senior leaders, new head teachers and experienced head teachers. Effective collaboration takes place between the Local Authorities and GwE to support the development of leaders across the 'Leadership Pathway'. Information regarding their progress is regularly communicated via Regional Leadership Group meetings. This collaboration and communication ensure that the Local Authorities can identify developmental needs and target further support if necessary. The team have recruited healthy numbers of appropriately experienced applicants from across the region for the 2022-23 cohorts.

Effective collaboration takes place between the Local Authorities and GwE to support new head teachers and acting head teachers. The programme consists of a rich array of regular training throughout the educational year in order to equip headteachers to be able to successfully undertake their work, including briefing sessions on finance management, safeguarding, site safety amongst other managerial elements (heads and experienced leaders are also invited to attend). All new heads have access to a Leadership Coach who is an experienced and successful head to provide firm support on local managerial matters in relation to their work. This means that new heads are provided with timely and appropriate support as well as access to opportunities to develop their knowledge and deepen their skills in the role.

With regard to the changes to the New and Acting Headteacher Programme, the induction provision for new Headteachers from across the region is now more consistent, supportive and effective.

Informal monitoring and evaluation based on delivery team discussions, indicate that all programmes continue to have a positive effect on leaders' confidence and ability to contribute to a self-improving and collaborative system. Discussions with participants, their line managers and SIAs following the Leadership Experience Task (LET) presentations indicate that the programmes are consistently contributing to the

development of self-reflecting practitioners. They are taking greater responsibility for their own professional learning, career development and are further developing their understanding of their leadership role, particularly with regard to the successful implementation of CfW.

The programmes are continuing to ensure that delegates across all programmes reflect successfully on their own professional practice as school leaders against the National Leadership Standards.

Participants have been upskilled and empowered to lead and support colleagues in their settings, strengthening the leadership capacity in their schools.

The Leadership Pathway facilitates appropriate professional learning for leaders at all levels, supporting their development to the next stage of their career.

Both the Middle Leadership Development Programme (MLDP) and Senior Leadership Development Programme (SLDP) have been updated accordingly to reflect the national agenda. This has happened on a national level. On a regional level, both Modules 1 and 2 from both MLDP and SLDP has been adapted so that it can be delivered face to face. Evaluations following the delivery of these Modules have been extremely positive.

Those that have demonstrated the necessary evidence, knowledge and experience of whole school leadership have been endorsed following completion of the Aspiring Headteacher Development Programme (AHDP). They will now move onto the next stage in readying evidence for headship in the National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH) Assessment Centre held in February 2023.

GOVERNORS

Support for school governing bodies

An inclusive development and training programme for governors is available, partly produced through consultation and engagement with governors in order for them to identify their own developmental needs. Feedback from governors on the programme has been very positive. The regional service has a diverse provision of training to enrich that of the Authority.

Support has been provided for school governing bodies in making appointments at senior level. Support has been provided for local authorities to ensure that governing bodies have access to high quality learning opportunities. The 2021 – 2022 programme of professional learning opportunities was updated for 2022 – 2023 and shared with the GwE team and the six Governor Support officers. The offer has been extended to include the 2022 School Improvement Guidance. It also includes Support for schools requiring improvement, Curriculum for Wales, Schools as Learning Organisations, Teaching and Learning, Digital Competency, Cymraeg, Skills Challenge and Leadership. Uptake across the six Local Authorities varies according to the individual programmes organised by the six Governor Support Officers (GSOs). The impact is that Governors who attend the sessions are aware of the most recent developments and better able to support their schools as a result.

Support has been provided for LAs in their provision of training for governing bodies to support school improvement. Support has also been provided for Local Authorities to ensure that governing bodies have support in self-evaluation and development planning, including pre-inspection support for Governors on Estyn's expectations prior to and during inspection. Governors who have taken advantage of the support are well prepared for inspection. The resources created by the GwE team for use in governor support sessions

have been curated and uploaded as a shared resource on the GwE Support Packs site.

A recent WG funded initiative provides opportunities for governors to apply for training in mentoring and coaching. The training takes place in April (Welsh-medium) and later in the year for the English medium cohort. A total of 20 governors have shown an interest so far.

ALLIANCES / NETWORKS / CLUSTERS

Collaborate with school leaders at all levels to further embed the contribution of primary/secondary clusters, secondary alliances and regional networks in addressing national and regional priorities

Facilitating and supporting the work of clusters and alliances has been central to the work of GwE Advisers over the past 12 months. One of the key strands of the recently published *School-Improvement Guidance: Framework for Evaluation, Improvement and Accountability* gives added impetus to the collaborative work we have undertaken with school leaders.

Generally, schools have effectively engaged with peers. The focus of collaboration has included joint planning for CfW delivery, evaluation and improvement planning activities and promoting the sharing of practice. In the most successful practice, collaboration has been promoted at all levels of school life. The work of clusters and alliances has also been augmented by the contributions of the AoLE, Assessment and Curriculum Design Networks at a regional and local level and also by the subject specific Networks within the secondary sector. There are numerous examples of excellent practice where peer engagement has been embedded in the work of alliances and clusters and is making a difference to the quality, veracity and accuracy of evaluation and improvement planning and delivery. Actions have been captured within cluster, alliance and individual school plans. EDT/SPP training has continued over the year, introducing new clusters and alliances to the model in addition to offering a refresher for those who wanted to re-engage post Covid or who had appointed new staff.

A number of clusters and alliances are developing strong practice around planning collaborative activities to support the reform journey and aspects of school improvement, and primary clusters have been able to work on developing cluster priorities around CfW for their SDP. In addition, leaders are demonstrating an increased level of confidence with curriculum roll-out.

More recently, the main thrust of collaboration has been on planning to meet the requirements of the new School Improvement Framework, on developing quality Professional Development e.g., activities to share successful practice within and beyond the cluster, on further strengthening the quality and capacity of leadership across the school and cluster/alliance and on developing approaches to improve the quality of teaching and learning and assessment. Transition plans are also utilised to ensure a continuity in primary-secondary transition for teaching and learning.

Successful practice identified across numerous clusters and alliance included:

- improved veracity and accuracy of evaluation
- jointly planned and supported improvement activities
- leader collaborating to identify 'cluster priorities' and pooling of resources to address actions
- joint development of teaching resources
- secondary/primary clusters moving away from historical 'induction' collaboration to ensuring a more honed focus on teaching and progress within their transition plans
- Numerous conferences and workshops have been arranged over the year to allow a showcasing of successful practice.

6. STRONG & INCLUSIVE SCHOOLS

Summary of main actions, engagement and impact

At the core of the redirection was the need to ensure the well-being of school leaders, staff and learners was the main priority. Local Authorities and GwE staff have re-purposed their work appropriately over the last few years to continue to deliver effective services and support for all their communities of schools during and after the Covid-19 pandemic. This has led to:

- Increased support for the Accelerated Learning Programme which has had a positive impact on basic skills and well-being.
- nearly all schools making purposeful use of the various grants and most have employed or extended teachers' or assistants' hours in order to target groups and individuals in literacy, numeracy and well-being.
- good number of schools accessing specific training such as Trauma Informed Schools well-being sessions, SAFMEDS, Headsprout etc.
- a range of high-quality guidance and resources to support schools to improve parental engagement.

OBJECTIVE 4: STRONG & INCLUSIVE SCHOOLS

Committed to excellence, equity & well-being

PDG LAC

To further develop & implement the national PDG strategy across the region.

Embed the PDG LAC cluster/alliance model across the region.

The GwE PDG support plan for 2022-2023 submitted to Welsh Government focused on the following areas: Pupils Eligible for Free School Meals, Looked After Children, Early Years Pupil Development Grant and Pupils Eligible for free school meals who are educated in PRUs and EOTAS.

The LAC lead continues to work closely with Welsh Government colleagues, attending both the PDG and the Equity in Education meeting. The Welsh Government supporting vulnerable learners Resource has been launched. The Supporting Improvement Advisers also work with their link schools to ensure that all schools understand and undertake their duties, with a particular focus on preparing for the Health and Well-being Area of Learning and Experience in Curriculum for Wales.

GwE has developed an overall PDG framework model that is been implemented in schools/LAs across the region. The focus has been on supporting targeted schools within specific LAs to raise the standards of FSM learners and ensuring a strategic steer to supporting SIAs to implement evidence-based interventions.

Our focus in 2022/23 was to ensure all clusters / SEN schools /PRUs received the PDG LAC funds with focus on supporting effective teaching and learning, emotional health and wellbeing, Professional Learning in regard to a whole school approach to trauma informed practice and in addition targeted support in line with the PEP. Trauma informed schools continues to be rolled out across the region and an additional 60 diploma places have been funded with 2 sessions of the Power of Positive Play which supports and develop the PACE element of Trauma Informed Schools.

We will continue to work closely with the 6 LAs to ensure clear communication and collaboration in regard to additional support and interventions with the LAC PDG and that all cluster plans are approved by both GwE and the LA.

Effective collaboration and engagement between the LA, GwE and schools during and post-COVID further developed approaches to supporting learners who are vulnerable to learning. As a result, nearly all schools are developing their provision to provide educational equity to all learners and have an inclusive learning environment to support children and young people who are vulnerable to learning so that they achieve more positive outcomes.

WORKFORCE WELL-BEING (GWE AND SCHOOLS)

Support leaders' wellbeing

'Reflective Spaces' continue to have a positive impact across the region. Mike Armiger and Coral Harper are running at full and increased capacity as we continue to see an increase in demand for this kind of support. A group session is also confirmed for all ALNCOs across the region. The session will allow colleagues the opportunity to reflect openly with other ALNCOs on the challenges, successes and specific impact on ALNCOs across the region. The session is facilitated through break out rooms with a specific reflection and listening model to follow. This allows colleagues the safety of a structure to follow, whilst also allowing them to listen and reflect with their peers.

GwE have had recent conversations with an organisation called 'Student Breakthrough' to explore coaching for young people. They are delivering a train the trainer model so adults have an accreditation to coach with young people, using a 4I System: Instruct, Inspire, Impact and Instigate. A Student Breakthrough pilot started with 5 Special Schools in January 2023 and feedback is positive with delegates noting and gives a clear difference between coaching and counselling. There are 18 modules in total and the group are currently on Module 8. They use a platform called Mighty Networks, so messaging, resources, modules etc is all accessible anytime and anywhere as it's web-based and has an app too. The pilot group are paired up with 'buddies' and members both in live sessions and in organised buddy meetings.

Almost all head teachers have appreciated the input of the Link Supporting Improvement Advisers and Local Authority officers in terms of providing guidance and support for schools and clusters to develop their provision. Almost all heads noted that facilitating cluster meetings has been instrumental in sharing ideas and good practice for developing their distance and blended learning provision. It was also noted that these meetings have had a positive impact on their mental health and well-being.

WHOLE SCHOOL WELL-BEING (AoLE)

Promoting 'Ethically Informed Citizens of Wales' by building on the momentum of our successful TEDxGwE.

Planning is in progress for us to work in collaboration with Glyndwr University and the North Wales Public Service Boards to run a 'Future Leaders Pilot' to enable young people (aged 14-16) to directly contribute to the development of regional Well-being Plans, sharing their views and ideas on how well-being can actively be improved for them and people like them in their local area. This is linked to the Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, building an increased understanding, developing 'global and ethical informed citizens' and building a sense of self-efficacy and potential as future (and current) leaders. The intention is to hold TEDxGWE in the Summer Term 2023 across each LA – planning meetings are ongoing.

STRATEGY TO SUPPORT PARENTS / CARERS

Improve parental engagement

The Local Authorities and GwE have provided a range of high-quality guidance and resources to support schools to improve parental engagement and have worked with Mike Gershon to facilitate parental access

to quality materials so that they also can support their children. 'Helping your Child to Learn' (HYCTL) and 'Helping your Teen to Learn' (HYTTL) materials, and the 'Revise with Mike' resource have been very well-received. The range of revision strategies has also impacted on teachers' classroom floor practices as they prepare learners for end of year examinations.

A regional group has been established with representation from GwE and each LA to lead, manage and co-ordinate the field of supporting parents and carers with their child's learning. The main developments are as follows:

- The Research developer has created Help Your Child to Learn (HYCTL) Primary and Years 7 & 8.
- The Research developer has created Help Your Teen to Learn (HYTTL) for year 9, 10 & 11.
- Bilingual Communication packs for HYCTL and HYTTL have been shared with schools.
- Training packages for TAs to use with parents (HYCTL & HYTTL) have been developed.
- A platform was created on the GwE website with information for Parents, Carers & Schools – this ensures easy access for all.
- There is now a Parent/Carer tab on the GwE website where both parents and schools can access the HYCTL and HYTTL resources easily and schools can Access the promotion materials.
- Both resources have been well received by the parents of the schools who have trialled them with feedback leading to the idea creating parental workshop packs.
- Work has started on the development of 4 packs of Parental workshops using the resources. GwE have met with a variety of schools to pilot the introductory session. From those that fed back we asked 3 schools (4 TAs) to help to develop a series of Resources that use and promote the HYCTL programme. These are almost complete and will be trialled during the summer term.

REIGNITE LEARNING

In cooperation with Bangor University and research experts, resources, programmes and packs have been developed to support reading proficiency in both languages. In several schools, these programmes have had a positive impact on learners' numeracy and reading fluency and on the confidence of teachers and staff to deliver.

High Frequency Word/Repeated Reading (HFW/RR) & Headsprout Implementation Support

This work stream consists of two aspects: **Improving fluency in Oral Reading (iFOR)** using HFW and RR strategies, and the continued provision for schools to use Headsprout reading programmes, known as the **Keeping Pupils Reading (KPR)** project. Both of these projects are continuation of work started in the previous year. Updates are as follows:

Improving fluency in Oral Reading (iFOR)

Fifty two schools and 66 teachers have signed up and had access to online training videos, and intervention resources to download for use in their schools. The number of teachers that have accessed the Google classroom is as follows:

- 63 have accessed the English resources
- 41 have accessed the Welsh resources.

Fourteen schools have attended follow-up Q&A support sessions online, and have had access to a member of the research team for implementation support. The support sessions took place in September 2021 and January 2022. Schools have also been invited to measure progress in Oral Reading Fluency using the DIBELS screening test. Two schools have measured progress using DIBELS pre-post screening resources and one school is monitoring progress. Another six schools expressed interest in measuring pupil progress using

DIBELS. The Repeated Reading fluency materials have been further developed for use at home and in school (additional practice opportunities). Schools have been invited to trial the use of the materials at home and in school. Four schools have expressed interest. Throughout 2021-22, we have continued to update the Repeated Reading and High Frequency Word interventions to make them more accessible and usable. We are also in the process of designing an iFOR manual and creating simple short training videos.

Adverts were placed on the GwE Bulletin in September 2022 for schools to sign up to the November 2022 iFOR training sessions. The Repeated Reading intervention resources have been updated to make them more accessible and usable. We now have a Repeated Reading pdf manual, with a series of accompanying short and simple training videos all hosted on an open access Google Classroom.

Following the GwE Bulletin in September 2022, 28 schools and 32 teachers signed up to access the reading fluency interventions (Repeated Reading and High Frequency Word interventions).

Twenty-three teachers signed up to attend a training session in November 2022 and 11 teachers attended. In addition, we have gained ethical approval for, and planned, a randomised controlled trial to measure the impact of the Repeated Reading fluency intervention on pupils reading rate, accuracy and comprehension. Eight schools have expressed interest in participating in the study, which we plan to conduct throughout 2023. An additional five schools signed up to access the reading fluency intervention training resources and materials and two schools attended a training session in March 2023.

The Repeated Reading intervention resources have been updated to make them more accessible and usable. We now have a Repeated Reading pdf manual, with a series of accompanying short and simple training videos all hosted on an open access Google Classroom.

Keeping Pupils Reading (KPR)

This project has successfully engaged high numbers of schools over recent years (see table above), and has developed a very useful range of high quality implementation support materials that are available online for teachers. This is a good example of how CIEREI research has been able to support schools' use of an evidence-based instructional programme.

A breakdown of the numbers of teachers, parents and online resource views is as follows:

	07/2021	07/2022	04/2023
Number of schools who have renewed licence(s) directly with SR since September	30	15	17
Number of pupils joined Google Classroom	40	40	40
Number of staff joined Hwb	71	73	73
Video Guide views: Headsprout at home (Parents and staff)	399	513	537
Video Guide views: How to use Headsprout stories (Parents)	106	363	486
Video Guide views: How to conduct Benchmarks (Parents)	18	46	59
Video Guide views: How to conduct Fluency Building (Parents)	13	54	65

Video Guide views: How to set up a free trial/buy or renew a licence (School Staff)	65	77	91
Video Guide views: How to add pupils to the programme (School Staff)	84	135	160
Video Guide views: How to check scores (School Staff)	39	85	93
Video Guide views: How to input Benchmark scores (School Staff)	16	25	27
Video guide views: How to access Google Classroom (Parents)	33	50	52
Webinar 1 Getting started with Headsprout	-	2	4
Webinar 2 Progress monitoring when using Headsprout	-	0	0

Adverts were placed on October 26th Bulletin for schools to sign up to the November KPR webinar sessions. There were two webinars available to school staff; Webinar 1: Getting started with Headsprout and Webinar 2: Progress monitoring when using Headsprout. Webinars and resources were updated to fit the changes with the Headsprout programme and how schools are able to fit in the provision to fit the new ALN policy. Eight schools and 16 teachers signed up to access Webinar 1 and 1 schools and 1 teacher signed up to access Webinar 2.

All attendees to webinars over recent years are being offered on-going support in the form of check-in emails and online meetings as and when required to ensure they receive the support their setting needs throughout the year. The support is also open to all schools who continue to use Headsprout or have an interest in beginning to use Headsprout throughout the year. The support is for getting started with the programme including correspondence with Headsprout, implementation support, progress monitoring and helping to solve technical difficulties. Time is also being spent on becoming familiar with the programme which is to replace Headsprout and planning how best to support schools who want to continue delivering early reading interventions to pupils.

Remote Instruction of Language and Literacy (RILL) – Phase 2

This project has been very successful this year and has produced a very high quality Welsh and English language instructional programme for primary schools. Feedback has been very positive, and the website provides a snapshot of the quality of the programme: <https://www.rillresearch.org/>

The RILL research team commenced Phase 2 work at the start of May 2021. They have now completed the adaptations to the original asynchronous/synchronous version of RILL initially developed in 2020 during lockdown.

During 2021-22 RILL focused on training new schools to implement the programme. Training consisted of asynchronous tasks, a live full-day training session with the RILL team (max 5 teachers per online session), and a short follow-up discussion. Weekly drop-in sessions were also available to those who required further and continuous support. We also conducted some in person training within participating schools.

In addition to a Hwb network where teachers can access information and training materials, ask questions, and reflect on their experience, a new website has been created that includes information and support

materials for schools, teachers, and parents. The website also contains materials for parents to use with children at home – including two new vocabulary words, a story, and discussion points to encourage interaction and the use of oral language. These materials complement the Welsh medium RILL materials and are intended to be set as homework by the teacher prior to the lesson. For non-Welsh speaking parents, English descriptions/translations are included, as well as videos to support low confident readers. We have also developed and piloted a battery of online assessments to capture impact data for RILL.

In 2022-23, the first objective was to expand RILL to provide a 15-week tech-based language and literacy Welsh programme to disadvantaged children and to test its effectiveness in improving Welsh language and reading skills. We successfully recruited 20 schools. We are currently recruiting a further 60 schools from across Wales to receive RILL training in the spring term 2023.

During the autumn term 2022 RILL focused on developing 30 new Welsh and English lessons and offering in-person training to schools to implement the programme. We created a new website that information and support materials for schools, teachers, and parents <https://sites.google.com/view/rillcymraeg/am-rill>.

In the Spring term 2023 we have focused on supporting schools participating in the evaluation of RILL and amending the lessons in response to feedback from these schools. Additionally, we have started creating whole class materials to complement the existing RILL lessons. During the summer term we will organise a workshop in which headteachers, teachers and TAs will provide feedback on the draft materials as well as offer their own ideas for new activities.

We have also made contact with consortia across Wales with the aim of organising at least one training day in each county before the end of the academic year; 11 schools have already been trained in Ceredigion. We currently have three additional training sessions organised. In addition to training pan Wales, our focus during the summer term will be to run follow-up assessments with the evaluation children between May-July.

7. SUPPORTING A SELF-IMPROVING SYSTEM

Summary of main actions, engagement and impact

At the core of the redirection was the need to ensure the well-being of school leaders, staff and learners was the main priority. Local Authorities and GwE staff have re-purposed their work appropriately over the last few years to continue to deliver effective services and support for all their communities of schools during and after the Covid-19 pandemic. This has led to:

- Increased support for the Accelerated Learning Programme which has had a positive impact on basic skills and well-being.
- nearly all schools making purposeful use of the various grants and most have employed or extended teachers' or assistants' hours in order to target groups and individuals in literacy, numeracy and well-being.
- good number of schools accessing specific training such as Trauma Informed Schools well-being sessions, SAFMEDS, Headsprout etc.
- a range of high-quality guidance and resources to support schools to improve parental engagement.

OBJECTIVE 5: SUPPORTING A SELF-IMPROVING SYSTEM

Supporting a system in which the education profession has the skills, capacity and agency to continually learn and improve practice

PEER ENGAGEMENT

Continue to further develop peer review processes in schools to support robust self-evaluation actions and improvement planning on all levels.

Continue to develop leadership capacity across the system.

Embed peer review as a key aspect of school improvement across the region.

For the last 5 years there has been agreement with Headteachers on a series of regional principles for peer engagement. A model of peer review and improvement planning was agreed (the Schools Partnership Programme [SPP]), approved by the Management Board and Joint Committee.

All GwE SIAs have received continuous training and support on peer review, facilitation, mentoring and coaching. By March 2023, twenty-nine SIAs have been trained as peer reviewers and improvement facilitators as part of the SPP. All new staff members have received SPP refresher training.

Initially, 13 SIAs were trained during October 2021 to deliver the programme and following a programme of observing training during April 2022 the first SPP training programme entirely facilitated by GwE staff was delivered to cohort 3b during May 2022. By March 2023, twenty additional SIAs have received training to deliver the programme. This means that 33 SIAs can now deliver the SPP programme successfully. Following this increased capacity to deliver the programme initial training was provided for 90 schools in cohort 3C by a team of GwE facilitators.

By March 2023, forty-three clusters/alliances (254 schools) have received SPP training, and they have already undertaken peer review, or are preparing to undertake peer review during the summer term 2023. Across the region, 271 Headteachers / senior leaders have been trained as peer reviewers; 233 senior leaders / middle leaders and proficient teachers have been trained as 'improvement facilitators'. This has enabled leaders and teachers to benefit from professional education of a high standard and it will contribute to improving leadership capacity across the region. By March 2023 both the first and second tier of primary schools and clusters involved in the programme have received extended training for improvement facilitators, with the focus on developing increasing and effective use of research in their improvement workshops. In addition, opportunities were provided across the region for schools and partnerships to scale up their capacity to implement the programme by training additional improvement facilitators.

The main objective of the scheme is to offer SPP training to all 407 regional schools and the Referral Units. The intention is to train approximately 15 clusters every term during the 2021-22 academic year, and in 2022-23. The Programme will be aligned to work on developing a new curriculum, to support schools and clusters to evaluate their progress towards the reform journey. To this end a series of reflection questions with a focus on the reform journey have been created in alignment with the peer process, and schools receiving the training are signposted to the curriculum prompts that are part of the National Resource for Evaluation and Improvement.

In January 2023, schools and clusters not already involved in the programme were invited to express an interest in participating in SPP training as part of cohort 4. A total of 43 schools expressed an interest.

Therefore, by the end of March 2023, half of the region's schools have received initial training and are starting, or have started, their peer review and improvement planning work.

As part of our partnership with the Education Development Trust initial questionnaires have been shared with all schools involved in the SPP. A researcher from the EDT will analyse the results in order to measure the impact of the programme on peer collaboration and leadership across the region. In addition, 4 clusters / alliances have been identified to be included in a case study and research into the impact of the programme in 2022-23.

COACHING AND MENTORING

Provide access to a range of professional learning regionally and nationally, including access to coaching and mentoring for all education practitioners in schools and settings, which is appropriate for their role and responsibilities, in line with professional standards.

Leaders from secondary, primary and special schools, as well as GwE staff have followed the national programme for coaching and mentoring. Feedback was received noting that the programme had a positive impact on individuals in schools and also on the work of the regional service in supporting schools and clusters.

Information about the level 3 qualification has been shared following national sessions, and information about level 5 and 7 qualifications has been shared with schools and GwE staff. Invitations to attend supervision sessions have been shared and Space to Reflect sessions shared with schools and GwE staff at the beginning of the year.

SCHOOLS CAUSING CONCERN (SCC)

Further strengthen regional structures and processes to support and challenge primary and secondary SCC.

Collaboration with Welsh Government, Estyn and the regional LAs are continuing the national multi-agency approach for secondary schools in Special Measures and on Stage 3 support for those schools recently taken out of category.

Collaboration with LA Officers is also continuing to further strengthen and ensure a higher level of consistency in regional structures and processes to support and challenge primary and secondary SCC. A clear school causing concern strategy is in place and all schools identified have a holistic support plan clearly articulating the nature and intensity of the support provided and the improvements needed. A multi-agency group of senior officers, lead officers from the relevant services and GwE staff meets regularly to share information and evidence so that concerns are identified at an early stage. Thresholds and triggers have been adopted to ensure consistency in identifying concerns in relation to standards, teaching and learning, assessment, leadership, inclusion or managerial matters.

Currently there are 3 secondary schools in Special Measures with an expectation that one of those schools will be removed during the next monitoring visit. Work is continuing with a Stage 3 'sustainable exit' support for the two schools recently taken out of statutory category.

In the Primary sector there are 2 schools in Special Measures. Robust arrangements are in place to support the schools through a detailed 360 plan which is aligned closely to the Post Inspection Action Plan. One School has only recently inspected therefore the initial impact of this support on standards will be limited.

The other School is in the Process of developing their PIAP with support from GwE and the LA. For 2022-23 bespoke 'holistic' support plans were in place for all the schools noted above. In each case, progress is monitored via the work of local MAG and Quality Board Groups. Plans also ensure that all schools are effectively engaging with key partners as they plan, deliver and evolve their new curriculum. Focus has also been on ensuring a continued engagement with alliance/cluster and wider networking for improving leadership, provision and the quality of teaching and learning.

Strong and timely action has been undertaken in several regional schools which were a cause for concern leading to successful inspection outcomes where no follow-up action was required. Purposeful and effective Support has led to 4 schools taken out of category between Autumn 2021 and Spring 2023. The team around the school approach is leading to marked improvements in the quality of leadership and teaching in a number of SCC.

SCHOOLS AND SERVICE AS LEARNING ORGANISATIONS (SLO)

Ensure that GwE and its workforce continue to respond to all the requirements and values of Learning Organisations.

Regional schools have made great strides in developing the 4 transversal themes of Time, Technology, Trust and Thinking Together during Covid, and this has provided a strong foundation for schools to continue to develop their collaboration and communication approaches.

The SLO culture is clearly evident in most schools, although perhaps they are not using the vocabulary of the 7 dimensions. Where SLO culture is at its best it occurs naturally in schools, without it feeling like an additional burden. The School Improvement Framework and its priorities has also helped to set a clear direction for schools in terms of the need to work together for the benefit of pupils and catchment areas. In the most successful schools, leaders have identified SLO as a vehicle to drive the Curriculum and have been able to do this unhindered.

Support schools across the region to gain a deeper understanding of what constitutes a Learning Organisation, so that it is a natural part of the culture of schools.

An understanding of what constitutes a SLO has developed in many schools, but lockdown has meant that some schools, especially where there has been a change in leadership, need a refresher on the importance of this work, so that the culture is known to all school stakeholders. In the best practice, the authority has held refresher training for all its schools and provided guidance in this area for governors. There is some work to be done to update schools on SLO, and it is intended to do this through a series of optional workshops across the region.

Further strengthen our partnership with HEIs and develop students' awareness of SLO.

Further development work needs to be done with our HEI partners to look at Schools as Learning Organisations and ensure that our students have a deeper understanding of SLO and their values.

8. BUSINESS

Summary of main actions, engagement and impact

Due to the clear and robust accountability framework in GwE:

- the planning and performance management model clearly articulates the vision, values, priorities and

priorities and objectives of the service.

- there is a strong focus on accountability, continuous review, and a constant emphasis on achieving progress in accordance with priorities.
- value for money, evaluation and capturing impact are strongly incorporated throughout the work of GwE.
- a robust financial analysis supports the work of delivering the business plan.

OBJECTIVE 6: BUSINESS

Ensure that GwE has strong governance and effective business and operational support that provides value for money.

Performance Management and Accountability

The clear and robust accountability framework is a key strength in GwE. The Business Planning Framework that is in place, with detailed business plans on all levels of planning, ensures clarity, accountability and strategic coordination in the delivery of the priorities on a local, regional and national level and provides the structure for monitoring progress effectively. Plans are fully costed, with clear success criteria and milestones for delivering objectives.

There are detailed self-evaluation arrangements. Plans are reviewed on a quarterly basis, evaluating progress and impact. Staff on all levels fully understand their responsibility for continued improvement and accountability. Throughout the year, reports associated with our priority streams within the business plan are reported through our governance groups. Progress against the regional business plan is reported on a quarterly basis to the Joint Committee.

Each Local Authority has a detailed business plan agreed upon by the head of service and the core adviser. Progress towards agreed outcomes on a local authority level is monitored on a quarterly basis and discussed regularly in meetings between the lead adviser and Local Authority. Ongoing issues are referred to GwE Senior leaders in a timely manner.

Self-evaluation is a strong feature in GwE and the self-evaluation process is cyclical and ongoing. Great emphasis is placed on accountability and continuous review, and there is consistent emphasis on progress in line with priorities. Consequently, GwE leaders accurately identify areas of good performance and areas for development, or areas where there is an element of risk in terms of improving experiences and educational outcomes for learners.

The Management Board monitors matters of governance continuously and GwE has procedures in place to ensure the Joint Committee meetings are conducted effectively and that decision making is effective. A series of reports have been produced and shared with the Management Board and the Joint Committee during the year. These reports include the views of schools, staff and local authorities on the effectiveness of regional practice. Each report describes the quality of the provision and identifies areas for improvement to drive the learning agenda forward.

Value for Money

The consortium has effective financial management processes in place. Communication and consultation on financial arrangements is effective, and GwE staff, the host local authority and Joint Committee all review the core funding and grant expenditure on a regular basis.

A robust financial analysis supports the work of delivering the business plan. A medium-term financial plan and workforce plan are both aligned with the business plan. Through the self-evaluation process, the link between the business planning process and decision making regarding financial planning is strengthened as the

work streams that underpin the business plan clearly note the resources to be used.

A formal framework was produced to assess the wider value for money provided by GwE. The judgement is now consistent across all stakeholders on how to measure the value for money of GwE activities within the structure and objectives of the business plan.

Risk Register

There are rigorous and comprehensive arrangements in place to accurately identify and manage risks on a local, regional and national level. The risk register is a live document, which is kept under regular review to identify increasing risks or risks which are no longer deemed as high level. It is presented to the Joint Committee on an annual basis and when new risks are identified, of which the Joint Committee needs to be made aware.

Through effective management of risks to the region, GwE is able to support the region's objectives, make effective use of resources and meet outcomes as intended.

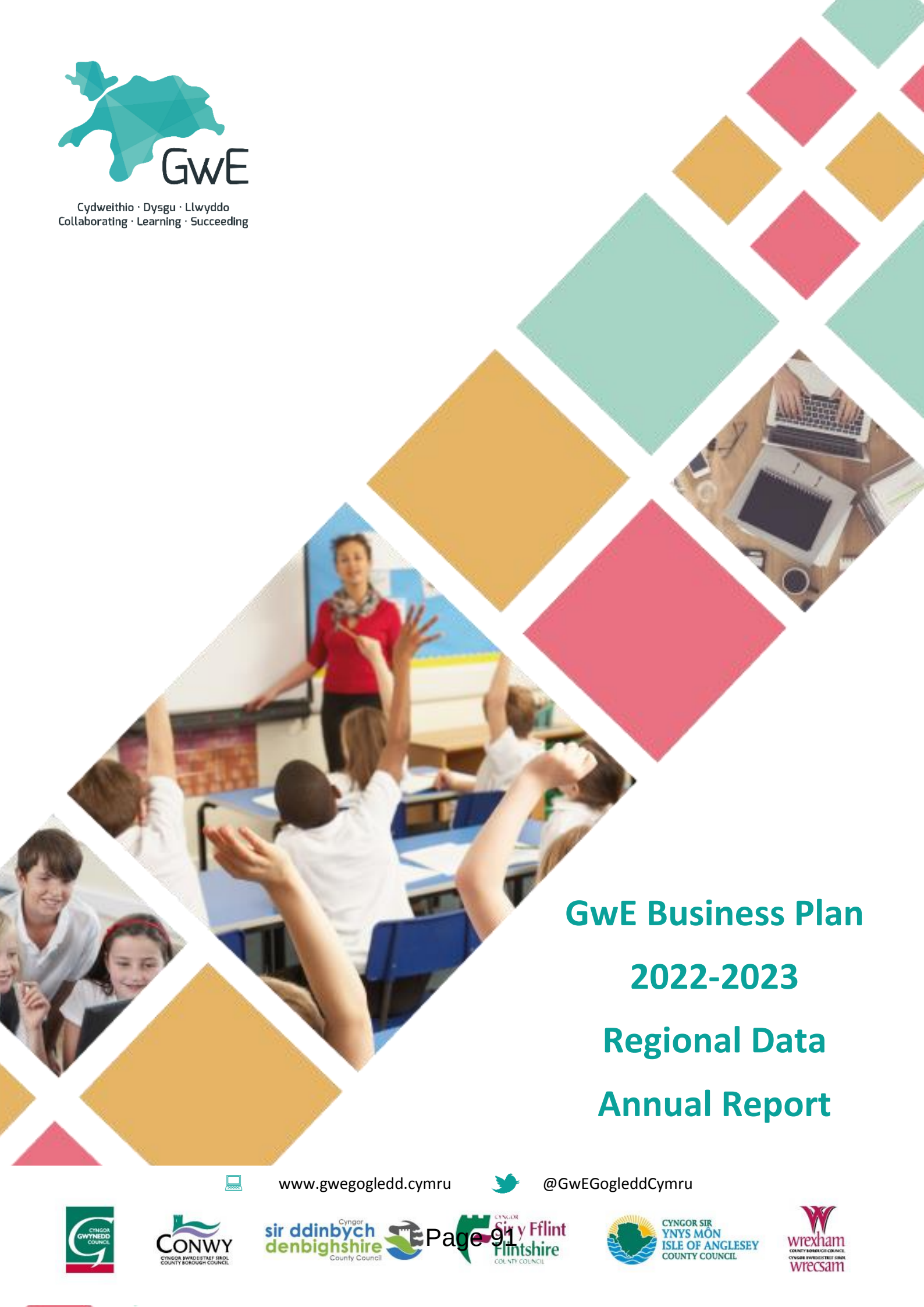
9. KEY PRIORITIES FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENT AND IMPROVEMENT

The following areas have been identified as key priorities for further development and improvement and are included in our Business Plan for 2023-2024:

- continue to strengthen leadership at all levels with specific focus on further improving self-evaluation and improvement planning processes.
- further develop the capacity of senior and middle leaders to effectively lead on teaching and learning.
- further strengthen accountability processes across schools to ensure robust and timely interventions to address underperformance.
- ensure that all secondary leaders are actively engage in peer collaboration and peer review.
- strengthen systems for evaluating impact of improvement strategies on standards and pupil progress.
- further strengthen the quality of teaching and assessment to reduce variance both within and across schools.
- further strengthen the quality of provision for development of learners' skills.
- ensure all schools are implementing robust approaches to supporting learners who are vulnerable to learning.
- further develop tracking and intervention programmes to address identified underperformance and in-school variance and especially in relation to vulnerable learners.
- ensure that all secondary schools successfully deliver the new curriculum for Years 7 and 8 from September 2023.
- ensure schools are providing equity to all learners and have an inclusive learning environment to support those who are vulnerable to learning.
- further develop provision in secondary schools to ensure a meaningful and purposeful offer for the ability range in KS4.
- ensure all primary/secondary clusters are implementing effective transition plans.
- ensure that the schools which remain in statutory category are demonstrating an increased pace of improvements and are demonstrating clear improvements in the quality of teaching and learning and in the quality of leadership across the school.



Cydweithio · Dysgu · Llwyddo
Collaborating · Learning · Succeeding



GwE Business Plan 2022-2023 Regional Data Annual Report



www.gwegogledd.cymru



@GwEGogleddCymru



Page 91



2022-2023 BUSINESS PLAN

REGIONAL PRIORITIES & PROVISION 2022-2023

Regional Data

OBJECTIVE 1 - CURRICULUM & ASSESSMENT

Supporting a national curriculum with equity & excellence at its core that sets high standards for all learners

EDUCATION CONTINUUM 3 to 16

Regional data:

Pedagogy transition project

- Schools: 25

Pontio Workshops:

- Schools: 284

3-8 support package

- School support: 74
- No. of visits: 184
- Cluster support (no of schools): 132
- 3-8 Network: 735 attended regionally
- Workshops for Teachers and TAs new to the 3-8age group: 778 attended regionally

CURRICULUM REALISATION (CURRICULUM FOR WALES)

Regional data:

Numbers attending the national CfW Professional Learning sessions online

- 668 in total across Wales – 251 from GwE.

AOLE TEAMS

Regional data:

Increased number of website hits accessing greater number of materials and examples shared by networks & schools:

- Between 1/9/21 & 20/1/23:
 - 8418 CfW GwE Support Centre
 - 8100 CiG Canolfan Cefnogaeth GwE
- Between 1/9/21 a 30/3/23:
 - 9021 CfW GwE Support Centre
 - 8504 CiG Canolfan Cefnogaeth GwE

OBJECTIVE 2- DEVELOPING A HIGH-QUALITY EDUCATION PROFESSION

Improving the teaching & learning in our schools

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Regional data:

Webinars primary

- Power Language + Institut français: May - June 2022: 35 schools (41 teachers)

Upskilling primary:

- June - July 2022- 3 sessions - 8 schools (13 teachers)
- Nov 2023 - 1 session - 7 schools - (9 teachers)
- January 2023 - 2 sessions - 8 schools (10 teachers)

Power language Training primary

- 16.11.22 - 28 schools (30 teachers)
- 21.3.23 - 31 schools (36 teachers)

Network Meeting Primary

- February- March 2023 - Number of schools: 25

Cerdd Iaith German

- 29/11/22 - Number of schools :3

Sharing Successful practice Primary February 2023

- Number of schools :6

Designing for languages pro-gramme

October 2022- March 2023

- International Languages + Welsh: 26 schools

Network Meeting Secondary

- November 22: Number of schools :29
- Sharing successful practice Feb 2023: 15 schools

HLTA - TALP

Regional data:

Newly appointed teaching assistants:

- 62

Practising teaching assistants:

- 137

Aspiring HLTS Cylch 4, 5 a 6:

- 88

HLTA Status Cylch 3 & 4:

- 38

Training new HLTA Assessors:

- 5

Introduction to Curriculum for Wales:

- 219

Y Gymraeg (PL)

Regional data:

Sabbatical Course 2022-2023:

- 27

GwE attendance at Strategic Headteacher Forums:

- 7

Ein Llais Ni:

- case studies presented: 65
- schools committed to the project: 81

Access to National Learning Centre courses

- Total learning activities: 54
- Number that continues and the learning activities: 23

A LEVEL**Regional data:****Attendance at the Conference for Post-16 Leaders:**

- 35

RESEARCH AND EVALUATION**Regional data:****KiVa Anti-Bullying Research Project**

- The number of participating schools: 30

ITE**Regional data:**

- A significant increase in the number (%) of STS (*short term Supply*) Teachers who attended the National Session 1 and 2 PL programme. In comparison to previous year's the attendance of the active STS NQT's who attended the session 1 has increased significantly with 51 attending (81%)
- External Verifier programme - 100% of the GwE External Verifiers (83) and the External Mentors attended the National training workshop and have a solid understanding of the Induction NQT Process.
- Number of NQT's who attended the mandatory PL sessions: 172

DIGITAL**Regional data:****Number registered for Digital Training:**

- 386

MATHS AND NUMERACY**Regional data:**

	Number of schools	Number of visits
Primary Individual subject school support	6	18
Secondary Individual school support	32	79
Secondary Heads of Maths network meetings	47	N/A

Primary & Secondary Bespoke Cluster Support Requests	5 clusters	5
Secondary Numeracy Coordinators network meetings	41	N/A
Primary & Secondary Maths workshop	270 (No. of attendees)	N/A

ENGLISH AND LITERACY

Regional data:

Primary Individual subject school support:

- 145

Secondary Individual school support:

- 50

WELSH AND LITERACY

Regional data:

Meetings of the Welsh Language Leaders Network (English medium schools):

- 19

Meetings of the Welsh Language Leaders Network (Welsh-medium and bilingual schools):

- 18

Welsh Language Support Network (English Medium Schools):

- 3

'Ein Llais Ni' Project (GwE)

- Number of secondary schools involved in the project: 12

'Design for Languages' CfW project

- Welsh departments of secondary schools that are part of the project: 6

Members of the Teams / Google Classroom 'GwE:

- Y Gymraeg - 27
- Secondary English Medium Schools: 20

SCIENCE

Regional data:

Attendance: Heads of Science Network Meeting Autumn 2022:

- 37

Technology Development Group network:

- 6 schools

Attendance: Heads of Science Spring 2023 networks.

- 38

Individual subject school support:

- 22

AGES 3-8

Regional data:

School support:

- Number of schools: 74
- Number of visits: 184
- Cluster support (no of schools): 132

3-8 Network:

- 735 attended regionally

Workshops for Teachers and TAs new to the 3-8age group:

- 778 attended regionally

OBJECTIVE 3 - LEADERSHIP

Supporting inspirational leaders working collaboratively to raise standards. Includes future leadership & professional networks

LEADERSHIP**Regional data:**

	2021-22
1.Middle Leadership Development Programme	102
2.Senior Leaders Development Programme	72
3.Aspiring Headteacher Development Programme (preparing for NPQH)	35
4.New and Acting Headteacher Development Programme	32
5.Experienced Headteacher Development Programme	17
TOTAL	258

Numbers following Leadership Programmes

<u>Rhaglen / Programme</u>	<u>2021-22</u>	<u>2022-23</u>	<u>Differential</u>
Middle Leadership Development Programme (English medium)	74	86	+14%
Middle Leadership Development Programme (Welsh medium)	29	41	+30%
Senior Leaders Development Programme (English medium)	44	74	+40%
Senior Leaders Development Programme (Welsh medium)	27	30	+10%
Total	174	231	+25%

<u>Rhaglen / Programme</u>	<u>2021-22</u>	<u>2022-23</u>
AHT (NPQH) RhDDB (CPCP)	35	*35 cais / applicant
New and Acting Headteachers /	15	30

Penaethiaid Newydd a Mewn Gofal		
Experienced Headteachers / Penaethiaid Profiadol	17	6

OBJECTIVE 4 - STRONG & INCLUSIVE SCHOOLS

Committed to excellence, equity & well-being

RE-IGNITE LEARNING

Regional data:

Improving fluency in Oral Reading (iFOR)

- 52 schools and 66 teachers have signed up and had access to online training videos.

The number of teachers that have accessed the Google classroom is as follows:

- 63 have accessed the English resources
- 41 have accessed the Welsh resources.
- Schools signed up to access the training videos and intervention resources in (2021/22): 52
- Schools signed up to access the training videos and intervention resources (Sept 2022): 31

iFOR training sessions

- 28 schools and 32 teachers signed up to access the reading fluency interventions (Repeated Reading and High Frequency Word interventions).

Keeping Pupils Reading (KPR)

- The total number of GwE schools engaged: 45

Keeping Pupils Reading (KPR)

A breakdown of the numbers of teachers, parents and online resource views is as follows:

	07/2021	07/2022
Number of schools who have renewed licence(s) directly with SR since September 2021	30	15
Number of pupils joined Google Classroom	40	40
Number of staff joined Hwb	71	73
Video Guide views: Headsprout at home (Parents and staff)	399	513
Video Guide views: How to use Headsprout stories (Parents)	106	363
Video Guide views: How to conduct Benchmarks (Parents)	18	46
Video Guide views: How to conduct Fluency Building (Parents)	13	54
Video Guide views: How to set up a free trial/buy or renew a licence (School Staff)	65	77
Video Guide views: How to add pupils to the programme (School Staff)	84	135
Video Guide views: How to check scores (School Staff)	39	85
Video Guide views: How to input Benchmark scores (School Staff)	16	25
Video guide views: How to access Google Classroom (Parents)	33	50
Webinar 1 Getting started with Headsprout	-	2

Webinar 2 Progress monitoring when using Headsprout	-	0
---	---	---

KPR webinar sessions:

- No. who attended: 9

Keeping Pupils Reading (KPR)

- The total number of GwE schools engaged: 45
- Eight schools and 16 teachers signed up to access Webinar 1 and 1 school and 1 teacher signed up to access Webinar 2.

Remote Instruction of Language and Literacy (RILL) – Phase 2

- Thirty-three schools have been trained in RILL (58 teachers) during the 2021-22 school year, with the majority being Welsh medium.
- Sixty-one schools have been trained in RILL during the Autumn term 2022 (RILL Cymraeg = 27 schools, 39 teachers; RILL English = 34 schools, 60 teachers).

STRATEGY TO SUPPORT PARENTS / CARERS

Regional Data:

Registered users across the region:

- Help Your Child to Learn: 378
- Help Your Teen to Learn: 451

OBJECTIVE 5 - SUPPORTING A SELF-IMPROVING SYSTEM

Supporting a system in which the education profession has the skills, capacity and agency to continually learn & improve their practice

PEER ENGAGEMENT

Regional Data:

Number of schools/clusters/alliances involved in the programme:

- 206 / 37

Number of trained Peer Reviewers:

- 266

Number of trained Improvement Facilitators

- 226

SCHOOLS CAUSING CONCERN

Regional data:

Secondary schools

- Special Measures: 3
- Significant Improvement: 1

Primary schools

- Special Measures: 2
- Significant Improvement: 2

COACHING AND MENTORING

Regional data:**Welsh Training Train the Trainer:**

- 21 (56% of the whole Wales Welsh cohort)

English Training Train the Trainer:

- 32

Level 3 Coaching Accreditation

- 2 GwE staff, 4 schools

CfW Training Train the Trainer

- 6 GwE staff

Attend Level 7 Incentive Training

- 11 GwE staff, 6 schools

Level 7 Coaching Accreditation

- 5 GwE staff, 1 school

Attended Level 7 Mental Health and wellbeing Training

- 11 GwE staff, 1 school

Attended Level 7 Coaching Supervision Training

- 5 GwE staff



REPORT TO THE JOINT COMMITTEE

24 MAY 2023

Report by: GwE Managing Director & GwE Lead Director / Chair of Management Board

Subject: GwE Business Plan 2023 – 2026

1.0 Purpose of the Report

1.1 To present the 2023-2026 Regional Business Plan to the Joint Committee members.

2.0 Background

2.1 This Business Plan spans a three-year period between 2023-2026, and also contains a detailed 12-month Business Plan for 2023-2024. It sets out GwE's vision, values and behaviours, our strategic objectives for 2023-2026, and the priorities for improvement and the work programmes to be undertaken over the following 12 months. It also includes a high-level strategic risk register.

2.2 GwE has a clear plan that sets out how, in close collaboration with key stakeholders, it will strengthen leadership, improve teaching and learning, increase aspiration to impact on standards, ensuring the school environment supports learners' and practitioners' well-being.

- 2.3 The regional priorities and areas for improvement are strongly embedded in the findings of internal self-evaluation processes, external reviews of our current practice and direction of travel and consultation with Headteachers and Local Authorities.
- 2.4 It addresses Welsh Government and the Local Authorities strategic priorities that fall within the remit of the work of GwE. These are captured and are interwoven into our strategic objectives and priorities. GwE will also work in partnership with the Local Authorities to support additional local priorities, as appropriate.
- 2.5 The plan incorporates how GwE will respond to the impact of post-Covid in the context of education and also considers how schools and educational settings continue to face the challenges of the pandemic.
- 2.6 Consideration is also given to the viewpoints and priorities of other middle tier partners such as Estyn, Qualifications Wales, WJEC, the National Academy for Educational Leadership (NEAL), Initial Teacher Education (ITE) and the Education Workforce Council (EWC).

3.0 Considerations

- 3.1 Our strategic priorities recognise present regional and national priorities. They are:
 - 1. School Improvement
 - 2. Curriculum & Assessment
 - 3. Developing high-quality teaching and learning
 - 4. Leadership
 - 5. A positive education experience for everyone
 - 6. Cymraeg belongs to us all
 - 7. Business
- 3.2 The four purposes of the Curriculum for Wales should be the starting point and aspiration for schools as they prepare to design the new curriculum. The aim of our priorities is to support schools as they are working towards these four purposes.

3.3 The Business Plan details the activities that will take place during 2023-2024. Each priority outlines how we will contribute to the delivery of Welsh Government's objectives and contributory factors. These priorities are supported by the service's detailed delivery plans, outlining how and when the aspects of each priority will be delivered and setting expectations for the next steps. The plans note the support and provision available to all schools in the region. Progress in terms of implementation, outcome/impact and the expenditure profile will be reported on a quarterly basis.

3.4 The GwE Business Planning Framework ensures clarity, accountability and strategic coordination in the delivery of the priorities locally, regionally and nationally. Throughout the year, reports associated with our priority streams within the Business Plan will be reported through our governance groups. Progress against the Regional Business Plan will be reported on a quarterly basis to the Joint Committee.

3.5 Also, each Local Authority has a detailed business plan agreed upon by the head of service and the core adviser. The support and provision available to each school in the region is outlined and how they contribute to local authority priorities, in line with their Corporate Plans and scrutiny programmes. GwE will work in partnership with the Local Authorities to support additional local priorities, as appropriate, and that are within the remit of GwE. Progress against regional priorities will be reported on a quarterly basis to the Local Authorities, along with a specific local authority overview.

4.0 Recommendations

4.1 The Joint Committee is asked to approve the Regional Business Plan for 2023 – 2026.

5.0 Financial Implications

5.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report. GwE will operate within the current financial resources.

6.0 Equalities Impact

6.1 There are no new equalities implications arising from this report.

7.0 Personnel Implications

7.1 There are no new personnel implications arising from this report.

8.0 Consultation Undertaken

8.1 Consultation with GwE Team, Headteachers, GwE Management Board and Joint Committee.

9.0 Appendices

9.1 Appendix 1 – GwE Regional Business Plan 2023 - 2026

OPINION OF THE STATUTORY OFFICERS

Monitoring Officer:

Nothing to add from a propriety perspective.

Statutory Finance Officer:

The Business Plan sets out a clear responsibility for the proper operation of business, risk, and value for money, inter alia. The Plan outlines how GwE will make use of its budget during 2023/24 and I confirm the comment in paragraph 5 of the covering report which states that GwE will fund any financial implications arising from the Business Plan within its current budget.

GwE Regional Business Plan



April 2023 - March 2026

[Including Annual Plan 2023-2024]





C O N T E N T

01 OUR VISION, VALUES
AND BEHAVIOUR

05 GOVERNANCE:
MONITORING AND
EVALUATING

02 REGIONAL CONTEXT

06 RISK REGISTER

03 INTRODUCTION AND
NATIONAL CONTEXT

07 GwE BUDGET AND
FUNDING

04 GwE REGIONAL
BUSINESS PLAN:

- Strategic Objectives
- Priority Areas for Improvement
- GwE Business Plan 2023-2024

08 ADDITIONAL
SUPPORTING
DOCUMENTS

1. Our Vision, Values and Behaviour

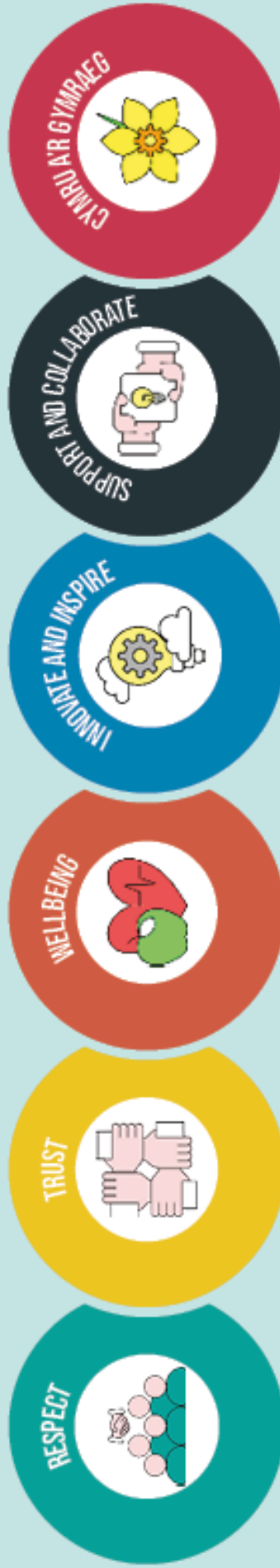
Collaborating, Learning, Succeeding



OUR VISION

- Our work is driven by genuine ambition to see the schools and organisations we work with achieve their aspirations and to see all learners succeed.
- Proudly Welsh and internationally informed, we will support our schools to become successful and confident learning organisations. We will collaborate to provide learners with the climate and education they deserve so that they become capable and resilient individuals who realise their full potential.

OUR VALUES



OUR BEHAVIOUR

We will be consistent, objective and fair in our work, valuing everybody's effort, contribution and achievement.

We will be professional, honest and open in our work with everybody. This is the core of successful collaboration.

We will show care, empathy and concern for the wellbeing of all.

We will be ready to take risks with our schools, embracing challenge, curiosity, perseverance and the willingness to learn from successes and failures. By being knowledgeable and sharing good practice we aim to empower and motivate schools to research and develop.

We will be dependable, flexible and sensitive in our support. We will be ready to collaborate and encourage working in partnership with others, recognising that there is room for us all to improve, develop and learn.

We will embrace and celebrate the Welsh language and culture in all aspects of our work.

2. Regional Context

GwE is the North Wales regional school improvement service working alongside and on behalf of the North Wales local authorities – Wrexham, Flintshire, Denbighshire, Conwy, Gwynedd, Anglesey.

The number of pupils of compulsory school age in 2022 was 82,410. This represents 21.6% of all pupils in Wales. There are 399 maintained schools in the region, 27.1% of all maintained schools in Wales (School Census Results, 2022).

20.4% of pupils of compulsory school age are eligible to receive school meals across the region which is comparable to the % in 2021 and lower than the national figure of 23.3%. This level of eligibility is still the lowest of the four regional consortia (School Census Results, 2022).

In the region, 42.3% of people aged three and over say that they can speak Welsh compared to the Wales average of 29.7% (Annual Population Survey, Office for National Statistics).

As of the 30 June 2022, ethnic minorities account for 2.0% of the population in the region and this is below the Wales average of 5.1%. (Annual Population Survey/Office for National Statistics (ONS)).

As of the 31 March 2022, approximately 1,425 children in the region are looked after by a local authority and this represents 20.1% of looked-after children in Wales. (Children Receiving Care and Support Census)

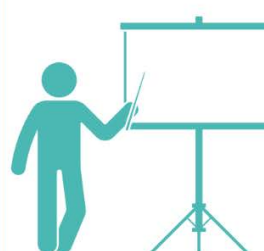
Overview of School Numbers in the Region

OVERVIEW OF SCHOOLS / ESTABLISHMENTS:

GwE



Number of schools / establishments >>> **405**



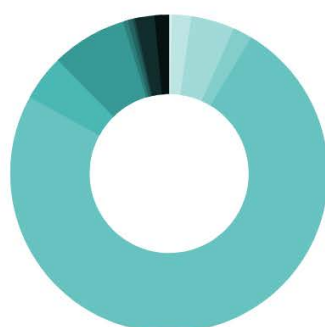
Number of staff

10,714

Teaching staff: **5,479**

Support staff: **5,235**

Type of schools / establishment



Nursery	1
Juniors [ages 7/8-11]	8
Infants & Juniors [ages 5-11]	18
Infant & Nursery	8
Nursery, Infant & Junior	301
Secondary [ages 11-16]	19
Secondary [ages 11-18]	31
Middle School [ages 3-16]	2
Middle School [ages 3-19]	2
Special [without Post-16 provision]	1
Special [with Post-16 provision]	8
Pupil Referral Units	6



Free School Meals 2022

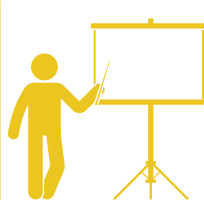
20.4%

Local Authorities

OVERVIEW OF SCHOOLS / ESTABLISHMENTS:

ANGLESEY

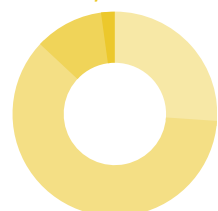

Number of schools / establishments >>> **46**



Number of staff
1,023

Teaching staff: 520
Support staff: 503

Type of schools / establishment



Infants & Juniors [ages 5-11]	12
Nursery, Infant & Junior	28
Secondary [ages 11-18]	5
Special [with Post-16 provision]	1



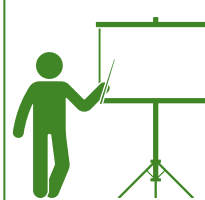
Free School Meals 2022

16.9%

OVERVIEW OF SCHOOLS / ESTABLISHMENTS:

GWYNEDD

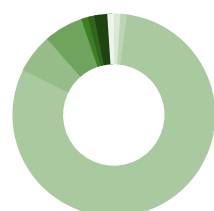

Number of schools / establishments >>> **96**



Number of staff
1,863

Teaching staff: 975
Support staff: 888

Type of schools / establishment



Juniors [ages 7/8 - 11]	1
Infant & Nursery	1
Nursery, Infant & Junior	77
Secondary [ages 11-16]	6
Secondary [ages 11-18]	6
Middle School [ages 3-16]	1
Middle School [ages 3-19]	1
Special [with Post-16 provision]	2
Pupil Referral Units	1



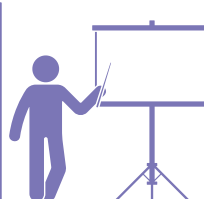
Free School Meals 2022

14.3%

OVERVIEW OF SCHOOLS / ESTABLISHMENTS:

CONWY

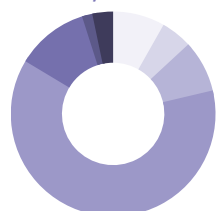

Number of schools / establishments >>> **61**



Number of staff
1,577

Teaching staff: 873
Support staff: 704

Type of schools / establishment



Juniors [ages 7/8 - 11]	5
Infant & Juniors [ages 5-11]	3
Infant & Nursery	5
Nursery, Infant & Junior	38
Secondary [ages 11-18]	7
Special [with Post-16 provision]	1
Pupil Referral Units	2



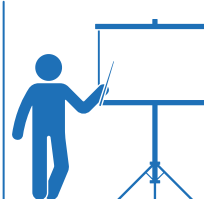
Free School Meals 2022

20.8%

OVERVIEW OF SCHOOLS / ESTABLISHMENTS:

DENBIGHSHIRE

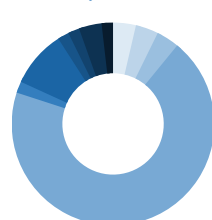

Number of schools / establishments >>> **55**



Number of staff
1,695

Teaching staff: 855
Support staff: 840

Type of schools / establishment



Juniors [ages 7/8-11]	2
Infants & Juniors [ages 5-11]	2
Infant & Nursery	2
Nursery, Infant & Junior	38
Secondary [ages 11-16]	1
Secondary [ages 11-18]	5
Middle School [ages 3-16]	1
Middle School [ages 3-19]	1
Special [with Post-16 provision]	2
Pupil Referral Units	1



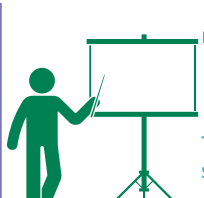
Free School Meals 2022

21.5%

OVERVIEW OF SCHOOLS / ESTABLISHMENTS:

FLINTSHIRE

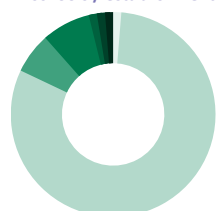

Number of schools / establishments >>> **78**



Number of staff
2,442

Teaching staff: 1,240
Support staff: 1,202

Type of schools / establishment



Infants & Juniors [ages 5-11]	1
Nursery, Infant & Junior	63
Secondary [ages 11-16]	5
Secondary [ages 11-18]	6
Special [without Post-16 provision]	1
Special [with Post-16 provision]	1
Pupil Referral Units	1



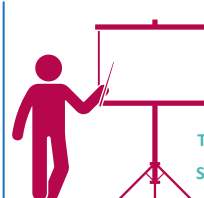
Free School Meals 2022

23.1%

OVERVIEW OF SCHOOLS / ESTABLISHMENTS:

WREXHAM

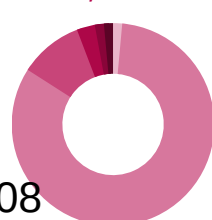

Number of schools / establishments >>> **69**



Number of staff
2,113

Teaching staff: 1,016
Support staff: 1,097

Type of schools / establishment



Nursery	1
Nursery, Infant & Junior	57
Secondary [ages 11-16]	7
Secondary [ages 11-18]	2
Special [with Post-16 provision]	1
Pupil Referral Units	1



Free School Meals 2022

23.1%

3. Introduction & National Context

This Business Plan spans a three-year period between 2023-2026 and also contains a detailed 12 month Business Plan for 2023-2024. It sets out GwE's strategic objectives for 2023-2026, the priorities for improvement and the work programmes to be undertaken over the following 12 months.

The regional priorities and areas for improvement are based firmly on the findings of our internal self-evaluation processes, external reviews on our current practice and direction of travel, and through consultation with headteachers and the Local Authorities. Our priorities are a combination of improving school provision, leadership and outcomes, as well as delivering The Reform Journey and Curriculum for Wales.

GwE continues to look outward and to welcome challenge from both inside and outside Wales whilst making sure that what it is developing is right for its context. This includes continuously listening to the voice of all stakeholders especially those of teachers and leaders in schools across all sectors and listen to children and young people as they engage with their learning and supporting them in achieving their aspirations.

GwE has a clear plan that sets out how, in close collaboration with key stakeholders, it will strengthen leadership, improve teaching and learning, increase aspiration to impact on standards, ensuring the school environment supports learners' and practitioners' well-being.

The Business Plan also addresses Welsh Government and the Local Authorities strategic priorities that fall within the remit of the work of GwE. The plan also considers how schools and educational settings continue to face the challenges of the pandemic.

NATIONAL CONTEXT AND PRIORITIES

In North Wales, GwE and the six Local Authorities are committed to working in partnership with schools to ensure that we have robust and purposeful systems and processes in place to adhere to national expectations. Our approach will ensure that we have the confidence and support of all key stakeholders and that each partner will take full accountability for undertaking their role and contribution with transparency, effectiveness and efficiency.

Since 2015, Welsh Government have embarked on a significant cycle of change to realise a new Curriculum for Wales. The four purposes sit at the heart of the shared vision for every child and young person in Wales and as such, this ambitious programme of reform is far reaching and encompasses all aspects of the education system. Welsh Government recognise that for successful realisation, it is crucial that all aspects of the school system are aligned with, and support, the Curriculum for Wales and its underlying principles. Our approach to the reform journey has been integrated in all aspects of our work from the beginning. It is viewed from the need of learners and the baseline of individual schools and clusters to deliver change according to agreed expectations.

At a national level, Welsh Government have set out the following, describing the key attributes that schools will possess to successfully realise the curriculum:

1. Enabling all learners, and in particular those from disadvantaged backgrounds, to progress along their own learning pathway and raise their aspirations to achieve their full potential; allied to a range of assessment approaches to understand and support this progress

2. Co-constructing a curriculum, in line with the Curriculum for Wales Framework, which promotes a broad range of knowledge, skills and experiences (including social and interactional experiences) with a clear understanding of why these matters.
3. Ensuring the school environment supports learners' and practitioners' well-being.
4. Supporting practitioners' understanding of what works in curriculum design by investing in the enquiry and pedagogic skills of all staff.
5. Enabling ambitious professional learning for all practitioners in a school dedicated to being a learning organisation.
6. Embedding reflection, self-evaluation and improvement within schools, with good school leadership as a pre-condition for that.
7. Being at the heart of their communities - building better relationships between schools and families, communities and employers, to support and promote educational achievement and excellent employment, next steps education and training.
8. Listening to children and young people as they engage with their learning and supporting them in achieving their aspiration.

These factors are captured and are interwoven into our strategic objectives and priorities.

Our Business Plan will also contribute to the delivery of six objectives shared by the Education and Welsh Language Minister, namely:

OBJECTIVE	DESCRIPTOR
Learning for life so that everyone in Wales learns, and continues to learn, developing their knowledge and skills, and engaging in experiences that are relevant to their lives today and into the future.	All learning guided by the four purposes of the curriculum, through collaboration across providers and with industries and employers.
Breaking down barriers so that excellent education opportunities and outcomes can be achieved by all learners, at all ages, in classrooms, online, and in work.	Through early identification, support and targeted actions, ensure that all learners gain the knowledge, skills and experiences to be an active citizen, including the cross-curricular skills of literacy, numeracy and digital competence.
A positive education experience for everyone , with learners and staff supported in their wellbeing and resilience, which is essential for improving education outcomes and life chances	Ensure that learners are supported to be healthy, confident individuals, ready to lead fulfilling lives as valued members of society, within places of learning that are supportive, safe, inclusive and free from discrimination and bullying.
High-quality teaching and leadership , where everyone benefits from the best professional learning so that they can support the success of all learners, particularly those who are socio-economically disadvantaged.	Guaranteed career-long professional learning and support for all staff, from initial training through to leadership, focused on realising the four purposes of the curriculum, and capacity and capability to support success of all learners.

Community based learning , with strong institutions engaging, integrating and being empowered by their communities.	Empowering all learners and communities to have strong relationships with education providers, so that we tackle disadvantage and deliver world-class education locally and nationally.
Cymraeg belongs to us all , giving every learner equal access to the language and everyone the opportunity to reach their potential.	Encourage the use of Welsh across the education system, as an integral part of Curriculum for Wales, our Cymraeg 2050 ambitions and expanding provision post-16 to study through Welsh and opportunities to learn the language as active and engaged citizens.

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT GUIDANCE

In June 2022, Welsh Government published the new guidance and information on school improvement and the new framework for evaluation, improvement and accountability. This guidance applies to schools, PRUS, Local Authorities, diocesan authorities, regional consortia and Estyn and outlines expectations of all in contributing to sustainable school improvement. The framework is intended to drive behaviours and practices that are required by the Curriculum for Wales and the new assessment arrangements.

Within the School Improvement guidance, Welsh Government recognise the new national priorities which schools must have regard to when setting their improvement priorities which are:

- Improving pupils' progression by ensuring their learning is supported by a range of knowledge, skills and experience;
- Reducing the impact of poverty on learners' progression and attainment.

With the school's self-evaluation and development plan as the starting point, regional consortia and local authorities will need to agree with each school the additional support it needs to improve and to build its own capacity. The agreed support schools will receive from regional consortia and the local authority is incorporated in their development plans, including published summaries, providing an incentive for schools to ask for the help they need and enhancing transparency.

GwE and the Local Authorities are collaborating closely together and have established a regional School Improvement Guidance Task and Finish Group to develop a regional approach to identify, create, deliver and monitor Schools Support Plans. The group are exploring potential avenues for stronger collaboration across LAs to build capacity and ensure greater consistency of support and ensuring that we adopt a holistic and transparent approach in term of reporting and sharing of information.

The self-evaluation and improvement cycle is central in enabling schools to continually develop and improve their practice: to give all learners the best possible learning experiences and outcomes, whatever their background or circumstance, and in order to achieve high standards and aspirations for all. Welsh Government have co-constructed the National Resource: Evaluation and Improvement to support schools in undertaking robust, evidence-based self-evaluation.

Working within the new framework for evaluation, improvement and accountability will enable newer ways of working for all stakeholders. As a service, GwE will:

- continue to work collaboratively with all schools and settings to develop and refine schools' self-evaluation processes as part of their strategic improvement process. Self-evaluation will be honest, robust and evidence-based, using a wide range of information effectively to consider the progress of all learners;

- continue to work in strong partnership with Local Authorities, engaging in focused collaborative approaches to develop appropriate 3600 holistic support plans for all schools and settings;
- continue to engage in a range of self-evaluation processes as part of the continuous improvement cycle of the service. These self-evaluation processes will enable the service to understand and capture impact of the work, drawing upon a range of sources and approaches to inform business planning and priorities;
- continue to work with Welsh Government to implement the new framework for evaluation, improvement and accountability and to realise the 8 contributory factors of the new Curriculum for Wales. This will involve supporting schools in their self-evaluation processes, promoting a balanced approach that draws upon a coherent and comprehensive set of qualitative and quantitative information to evaluate learners' progress in all schools and settings;
- continue to work collaboratively with partners, for example Estyn, to enable continuous professional dialogue and to support schools with consistent, coherent messaging within the expectations of the new framework for evaluation, improvement and accountability.

As the reform continues to develop, GwE will continue to engage with all stakeholders to ensure that national developments feed into regional work and are fully evaluated and impact captured.

SUPPORT AND CHALLENGE FOR SCHOOLS CAUSING CONCERN

As part of the regional approach, GwE and the Local Authorities have further strengthened their support and challenge procedures. In response to the national pilot to support schools causing concern through the multi-agency model, procedures and structures for supporting, monitoring and challenging schools were reviewed. The aim was to ensure that all schools could access good-quality support in a timely manner in order to move along the 'desired' pathway at the required pace. A regional Task and Finish Group was established consisting of officers from each authority, together with GwE advisers, to drive the work.

A clear school causing concern strategy is in place and all schools identified have a holistic support plan clearly articulating the nature and intensity of the support provided and the improvements needed.

For schools whose performance is consistently strong or strong overall, improvements are addressed through peer collaboration, Local Authorities and GwE generic Professional Learning Programme and the bespoke support plan for the school. However, when Local Authority/GwE procedures highlight a concern, more intense support is targeted through the local multi-agency approach.

Within the revised structure, a multi-agency group of senior officers, lead officers from the relevant services and GwE staff meets regularly to share information and evidence so that concerns are identified at an early stage. Thresholds and triggers have been adopted to ensure consistency in identifying concerns in relation to standards, teaching and learning, assessment, leadership, inclusion or managerial matters. The multi-agency group takes responsibility for ensuring that the holistic plan is developed, delivered and monitored.

The evolved structures and processes ensures a more comprehensive and holistic approach to supporting schools causing concern. A joint approach between GwE and the LA services will be taken to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the revised approach.

LEARNING ORGANSATION

GwE has encouraged schools to collaborate through sharing practice and co-constructing areas that need improving. We have invested in various cluster models, alliances and networks, and encouraged schools to find a range of appropriate partners to deliver improvement and changes. The region has also looked outward

for good practice in terms of identifying effective peer review models as well as encouraging our schools to develop and evolve their own practice. GwE believe that peer engagement should closely complement the dimensions identified within the OECD publication *'What Makes a School a Learning Organisation'*.

At the heart of the work developed by GwE, is the commitment to the work of Schools as Learning Organisations as stated by the OECD:

'Today's schools must equip students with the knowledge and skills they'll need to succeed in an uncertain, constantly changing tomorrow. But many schools look much the same today as they did a generation ago, and too many teachers are not developing the pedagogies and practices required to meet the diverse needs of 21st-century learners.

In response, a growing body of scholars, educators and policy makers is making the case that schools should be reconceptualised as "learning organisations" that can react more quickly to changing external environments, embrace innovations in internal organisation, and ultimately improve student outcomes.'

The principles within sit within all Professional Learning and across GwE. This work has been undertaken at dual levels:



- to develop GwE as a learning organisation to include sustainable development
- to support schools to learn more to continually develop as learning organisations

Critical to the development of the learning organisation work, there are four transversal themes which run throughout to include Trust, Time, Technology and Thinking Together. These have been fundamental in developing GwE's approach to developing strong partnerships as trust underpins the relationships needed internally and externally for learning organisations to thrive.

Over recent years schools have become better at sharing their best practice for the benefit of all learners. Our Welsh self-improving system needs every professional and institution to become aware of their own strengths and areas for improvement, and with this knowledge seek support for their own improvement and offer support for others to improve.

It is Welsh Government's ambition and expectation that all parts of the education system are dedicated to being a learning organisation, so that strengths are spread across the system, and areas for improvement are tackled through peer engagement and support. In achieving this, we will ensure that our education professionals can thrive in a supportive and collaborative environment to raise standards and ensure that every young person can fulfil their potential.

GwE and the six Local Authorities firmly believe that peer review should be the key driver as schools effectively deliver on the national reform and become a self-improving system. Our vision is to have outstanding schools that are naturally collaborating and jointly identifying direction for improvement.

Therefore in moving forward, and in line with the national direction of travel, implementing an effective peer review process is integral to the delivery of the GwE Business Plan 2023-26. We therefore aim to strengthen and build upon current practice to fully embed a rigorous and robust peer review process that will become an integral part of school improvement in moving to a self-improving system whilst also supporting those schools that are causing concern.

LOCAL AUTHORITY STRATEGIC PRIORITIES FOR 2023 ONWARDS

GwE will work in partnership with Local Authorities to support additional local priorities that fall within the remit of the work of GwE as appropriate. It also takes into consideration the views and priorities of other middle tier partners such as Estyn, Qualifications Wales, WJEC, National Academy for Educational Leadership (NAEL), Initial Teacher Education (ITE) and Education Workforce Council (EWC).

LOCAL AUTHORITY	CORPORATE PRIORITIES *
Anglesey	The Welsh Language - increasing opportunities to learn and use the language. Education - ensuring an effective provision for today and for future generations.
Gwynedd	Tomorrow's Gwynedd - Giving our children and young people the best possible start in life. A Welsh Gwynedd - Ensuring that we give our residents every possible opportunity to use the Welsh language in the community.
Conwy	Education and skills - People in Conwy are educated and skilled A thriving Welsh language - People in Conwy live in a county where Welsh is thriving, and people can participate in all parts of community life in Welsh
Denbighshire	A learning and growing Denbighshire - we want to support the provision of quality learning and training that enables people of all ages to fulfil their potential, both personally and professionally. A Denbighshire of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language - we want to be a county where Welsh is a living, thriving language. The county will also maximise its rich cultural heritage and natural assets to support economic prosperity, skills development, and community cohesion.

Flintshire	Education and Skills - Enabling and Supporting Learning Communities • Educational Engagement and Achievement • Digital Learning Opportunities • Learning Environments • Learning Community Networks • Specialist Educational Provision • Welsh Education Strategic Plan (WESP) • Well-being
Wrexham	Improving Education and Learning (with a focus on secondary education)

** Local authority corporate priorities as provided at the time of the completion of the final GwE Business Plan (2023-2026)*

4. GwE Business Plan

Our business plan incorporates how GwE will respond to the impact of post-Covid in the context of education and reflects the current regional and national priorities. Through working with partners and key stakeholders and listening to them, we have identified specific themes to support our aim of ensuring that every pupil in north Wales benefits from provision of the highest possible standard.

This Business Plan has been formally agreed by the Chief Education Officers of each Local Authority, the Joint Committee and the Lead Chief Executive on xxxxx.

OUR STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

WHAT ARE WE AIMING TO ACHIEVE?	
1.	School Improvement - embedding effective school improvement arrangements while implementing the Curriculum for Wales and associated reforms.
2.	Curriculum & Assessment - supporting the 4 purposes of the curriculum, ensuring that all learners progress along their own learning pathway gaining a broad range of knowledge, skills and experiences, with equity and excellence at its core.
3.	Developing high-quality teaching and learning - improving the teaching and learning in our schools by supporting and developing practitioners' understanding of pedagogic skills to support the success of all learners through ambitious professional learning.
4.	Leadership - developing inspirational leaders to work collaboratively to support the success of all learners along their own learning pathway through accurate self-evaluation and robust improvement planning and delivery. Continue to develop a self-improving system, in which the education profession have the skills, capacity and ability to continually learn & improve their practice, working towards being learning organisations.
5.	A positive education experience for everyone – committed to excellence, equity and well-being, with learners and staff supported in their wellbeing and resilience, which is essential for improving education outcomes and life chances. Ensure that learners are supported to be healthy, confident individuals, ready to lead fulfilling lives as valued members of society, within places of learning that are supportive, safe, inclusive and free from discrimination and bullying. Empowering all learners and communities to have strong relationships with education providers, so that we tackle disadvantage and deliver world-class education locally and nationally.
6.	Cymraeg belongs to us all - giving every learner equal access to the language and everyone the opportunity to reach their potential. Encourage the use of Welsh across the education system, as an integral part of Curriculum for Wales, our Cymraeg 2050 ambitions and expanding provision post-16 to study through Welsh and opportunities to learn the language as active and engaged citizens.

7.	Business - ensuring that GwE has strong governance, appropriate and effective school improvement and business structures, that provides positive impact and value for money.
-----------	---

REGIONAL PRIORITIES

The four purposes is the starting point and aspiration for schools as they realise the new curriculum and support their learners to become:

- ambitious, capable learners, ready to learn throughout their lives;
- enterprising, creative contributors, ready to play a full part in life and work;
- ethical, informed citizens of Wales and the world; and
- healthy, confident individuals, ready to lead fulfilling lives as valued members of society.

Our priorities outlined below are aimed to support schools as they work towards those four purposes.

OUR HIGH-LEVEL PRIORITIES

Our regional priorities for improvement are:

OBJECTIVE 1: SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

Embedding effective school improvement arrangements while implementing the Curriculum for Wales and associated reforms.

Ref.	Priority
1.1	Ensure all schools are supported to evaluate accurately and to deliver robust improvement plans effectively.
1.2	Supporting leaders working collaboratively to promote high standards and aspirations for all [to include quality of teaching and curriculum provision].
1.3	Support leaders in schools to become familiar with the new school improvement guidance and to be confident in implementing actions.
1.4	Strengthen multi agency and 'team around the school' approaches with schools causing concern.
1.5	Strengthen partnership working with Local Authorities.

OBJECTIVE 2: CURRICULUM & ASSESSMENT

Supporting the 4 purposes of the curriculum, ensuring that all learners progress along their own learning pathway gaining a broad range of knowledge, skills and experiences, with equity and excellence at its core.

Ref.	Priority
2.1	Realising Curriculum for Wales.
2.2	Assessment, progression and accountability

OBJECTIVE 3: DEVELOPING HIGH-QUALITY TEACHING AND LEARNING

Improving the teaching and learning in our schools by supporting and developing practitioners' understanding of pedagogic skills to support the success of all learners through ambitious professional learning.

Ref.	Priority
3.1	Improve Teaching.

OBJECTIVE 4: LEADERSHIP

Developing inspirational leaders to work collaboratively to support the success of all learners along their own learning pathway through accurate self-evaluation and robust improvement planning and delivery.

Continue to develop a self-improving system, in which the education profession have the skills, capacity and ability to continually learn and improve their practice working towards being learning organisations.

Ref.	Priority
4.1	Implement Regional and National Leadership Programmes.

OBJECTIVE 5: A POSITIVE EDUCATION EXPERIENCE FOR EVERYONE

Committed to excellence, equity and well-being, with learners and staff supported in their wellbeing and resilience, which is essential for improving education outcomes and life chances.

Ensure that learners are supported to be healthy, confident individuals, ready to lead fulfilling lives as valued members of society, within places of learning that are supportive, safe, inclusive and free from discrimination and bullying.

Empowering all learners and communities to have strong relationships with education providers, so that we tackle disadvantage and deliver world-class education locally and nationally.

Ref.	Priority
5.1	Support staff in their wellbeing and resilience.
5.2	Support schools to ensure that learners are supported to be healthy, confident individuals, ready to lead fulfilling lives as valued members of society, within places of learning that are supportive, safe, inclusive and free from discrimination and bullying.
5.3	Support schools to provide equity for all by tackling disadvantage and to have strong relationships with parents/carers and their communities.

OBJECTIVE 6: CYMRAEG BELONGS TO US ALL

Giving every learner equal access to the language and everyone the opportunity to reach their potential.

Encourage the use of Welsh across the education system, as an integral part of Curriculum for Wales, our Cymraeg 2050 ambitions and expanding provision post-16 to study through Welsh and opportunities to learn the language as active and engaged citizens.

Ref.	Priority
6.1	Support schools to plan purposefully in order to support and develop learners' skills and literacy in Welsh in the context of the Curriculum for Wales.
6.2	Promote the learning of the Welsh language and develop the linguistic skills of the workforce.
6.3	Develop the informal use of Welsh through the 'Siarter iaith' and 'Cymraeg Campus'.

OBJECTIVE 7: BUSINESS

Ensuring that GwE has strong governance, appropriate and effective school improvement and business structures, that provides positive impact and value for money.

Ref.	Priority
7.1	Review current operating arrangements and staffing structure to ensure that the regional school improvement service is suitably structured to deliver local, regional and national priorities.

GwE Business Plan 2023-2024

The Business Plan details the activities that will take place during 2023-2024. Each priority outlines how we will contribute to the delivery of Welsh Government's objectives and contributory factors. These priorities are supported by the service's detailed delivery plans, outlining how and when the aspects of each priority will be delivered and setting expectations for the next steps. Also, each Local Authority has a detailed business plan agreed upon by the head of service and the core adviser.

OBJECTIVE 1: SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

Ref.	Priority	Aims & Activities
1.1	Ensure all schools are supported to evaluate accurately and to deliver robust improvement plans effectively.	• Improve leadership at all levels by: ◦ Supporting all schools to further hone and strengthen their self-evaluation processes and improvement planning. ◦ Supporting leaders to further develop a culture of collective responsibility within their school. ◦ Ensuring that all SIAs and Core Leads have a clear overview of quality of leadership across their link schools and specifically around self-evaluation, improvement planning and accountability processes. ◦ Ensuring that all SIAs and Core Leads have identified and addressed appropriate support for leadership development within the Support Plan for their link schools and have facilitated relevant professional learning [delivered via universal GwE offer or commissioned as bespoke and targeted support].
1.2	Supporting leaders working collaboratively to promote high standards and aspirations for all [to include quality of teaching and curriculum provision].	• Ensure that all SIAs and Core Leads support all schools to develop a clear and accurate evaluation of the quality of teaching and curriculum provision and progress and how they are positively impacting on standards and progress across regional schools. • Supporting school leaders and staff to ensure that they effectively engage with the professional learning offer for teaching and learning, curriculum and assessment as captured within Objectives 2, 3, 4 and 5 of the Business Plan and engage with various GwE networks. • Ensuring that all SIAs and Core Leads have identified and addressed appropriate support for improving the priorities identified within the Support Plan for their link schools and have facilitated relevant professional learning [delivered via universal GwE offer or commissioned as bespoke and targeted support].

1.3	Support leaders in schools to become familiar with the new school improvement guidance and to be confident in implementing actions.	• Support leaders to make effective use of the guidelines and guidance set out in the School Improvement Guidance and the national resource NR:EI. • Ensure appropriate focus on curriculum development, assessment and progression within cluster and alliance collaboration so that school leaders have an increasing awareness of the 8 contributory factors within the School Improvement Guidance. • Further embed school-to-school collaboration.
1.4	Strengthen multi agency and 'team around the school' approaches with schools causing concern.	• In partnership with the Local Authorities, further strengthen and develop the processes for supporting and challenging schools causing concern. • Ensure that all schools in statutory category or which have been identified locally as SCC have access to an agreed comprehensive support plan to help them on their improvement trajectory. • Ensure the support package is effectively delivered in a timely manner and is robustly monitored to ensure impact on standards and provision. • Continue with multi-agency panel for the 3 secondary schools which will be part of the programme.
11 Page 121	Strengthen partnership working with Local Authorities.	• Management Board as the overarching regional strategic group continues to have a cohesive approach to identifying and implementing national, regional and local priorities as identified within the respective business plans. • Further evolve and strengthen the role and focus of the Management Board Task Group. • Local Authorities and GwE to commission a review of current process and practices which could lead to an organisational restructure.

OBJECTIVE 2: CURRICULUM & ASSESSMENT

Ref.	Priority	Aims & Activities
2.1	Realising Curriculum for Wales	Continue to support: - the development of Curriculum for Wales in schools and PRUS to ensure all practitioners have a deepening knowledge and understanding of the Curriculum for Wales framework. - Support practitioners to develop principles and practice of curriculum design across all schools and settings to meet the mandatory requirements. - collaboration and enable opportunities for schools to share emerging practice - all secondary settings to meet the needs of the Curriculum of Wales for Years 7 and 8 in September 2023, whilst supporting teaching and learning for GCSE and A level in current system.
2.2	Assessment, progression, and accountability	Work in partnership with schools and PRUs across the 3-16 continuum to: - engage in practice to develop a shared understanding of progression and regular opportunities for professional dialogue within and between schools across the breadth of the curriculum - enable practitioners to develop their understanding of assessment arrangements as an integral part of curriculum design and for the purpose of supporting individual learner progression through identifying, capturing and reflecting on learner progress over time. - gain a better understanding of the purpose, rationale and use of assessment information to inform learning and teaching, as well as wider self-evaluation, improvement, and accountability to various stakeholder as identified in the School Improvement Framework (including reporting to parents/carers) - Support schools, PRUs, clusters and alliances across and beyond the 3-16 continuum to improve transition.

OBJECTIVE 3: DEVELOPING HIGH-QUALITY TEACHING AND LEARNING

Ref.	Priority	Aims & Activities
3.1	Improve Teaching	• Support regional leads on Teaching and Learning with developing high quality pedagogy at all levels. • Promote and facilitate cross sector collaboration to ensure consistency of effective teaching practice to support learner transition. • Support schools to effectively engage with enquiry and action research and with the national pedagogy programme. • Support the effective and consistent implementation of formative assessment principles and strategies across and within schools and support schools to implement the key principles of the assessment guidance. • Support schools to enhance and further improve their delivery of literacy, numeracy and MAT. • Continue to support key partners with ITE by building on the CIEREI collaboration with Welsh Government and the School of Educational Sciences, Bangor University. • Provide high quality bespoke support to improve teaching and learning in SCC.

OBJECTIVE 4: LEADERSHIP

Ref.	Priority	Aims & Activities
4.1	Implement Regional and National Leadership Programmes.	• To facilitate the delivery of all elements of the leadership development pathway, offering a range of national programmes for middle, senior and experienced leaders. • Support LAs with AHDP (NPQH) endorsement processes to ensure they are consistent and robust. • Promote and raise awareness of the national leadership development programmes to ensure a robust recruitment process for future cohorts. • Revise contents of the HLTA programme nationally to align with Welsh Government Priorities. • Deliver a National Coaching & Mentoring Train the Trainer Programme. • Work with the Governor Support Officers from the six LAs to ensure that the requirements of the new School Improvement Guidance are understood and met by providing high quality professional learning opportunities and support for governing bodies on topics including self-evaluation, planning for improvement and guidance on effective governing bodies.

OBJECTIVE 5: A POSITIVE EDUCATION EXPERIENCE FOR EVERYONE

Ref.	Priority	Aims & Activities
5.1	Support staff in their wellbeing and resilience.	- Ensuring that all SIAs and Core Leads adhere to working practices which maintains and promotes the positive wellbeing of leaders and school staff. - To provide appropriate support for both identified individuals and groups of senior leaders that positively impacts their wellbeing. - To promote and develop awareness of a coaching and mentoring culture in schools across the region in order that practitioners demonstrate greater resilience and wellbeing.
5.2	Support schools to ensure that learners are supported to be healthy, confident individuals, ready to lead fulfilling lives as valued members of society, within places of learning that are supportive, safe, inclusive and free from discrimination and bullying.	- Support schools to develop a trauma informed approach leading to a whole school strategy based on trauma informed practice. - Support schools to make effective use of the National 'Teaching and Learning to Support Vulnerable and Disadvantaged Learners' Resource (SVL) in order to improve the skills of classroom practitioners to deliver effective teaching and learning strategies that support vulnerable learners.
5.3	Support schools to provide equity for all by tackling disadvantage and to have strong relationships with parents/carers and their communities.	- Continue to provide support to school leaders on the identification, engagement and support for specific groups of disadvantaged and vulnerable learners including those who have been disproportionality affected by the pandemic. - Further develop and implement the national PDG strategy across the region. - Support schools to embed a whole-school approach to family and community engagement. - Encourage schools to develop community partnerships and multi-agency working in order to strengthen family engagement, improve standards and have a positive impact on learning outcomes for those learners from poorer backgrounds.

OBJECTIVE 6: CYMRAEG BELONGS TO US ALL

Ref.	Priority	Aims & Activities
6.1	Support schools to plan purposefully in order to support and develop learners' skills and literacy in Welsh in the context of the Curriculum for Wales.	• Develop a professional learning offer for the Welsh Language to support the implementation of Curriculum for Wales (3-16) and strengthen collaboration / transition from primary to secondary sector to ensure progress across the 3-16 education continuum. • Support leaders to plan deliberately for increasing and enriching the provision for the Welsh language • Support and improve the quality of teaching, learning and planning for the Welsh language within the curriculum in schools and PRUs to improve learners' standards and progress. • Provide support to develop the skills in the Welsh language - listening, reading, speaking and writing (including Ein Llais Ni). • Collaborate with Bangor University to provide support for the Welsh language for Initial Teacher Education students and in developing literacy in the Welsh language through intervention programmes.
Page 125	Promote the learning of the Welsh language and develop the linguistic skills of the workforce.	In collaboration with the Local Authorities: • Develop the language skills of the education workforce to expand the proportion who can teach and work through the medium of Welsh. • Develop, promote and coordinate a Professional Learning Programme to ensure that the education workforce has the opportunity to continually improve their Welsh language skills including the Sabbatical Schemes, the provision of the Cymraeg Cenedlaethol Learning Centre and local provision. • Support schools to promote the benefits of bilingualism and the benefits of Welsh-medium education. • Promote the profile of the Welsh language amongst leaders in implementing the Curriculum for Wales and the Welsh Government target for a million Welsh speakers.
6.3	Develop the informal use of Welsh through the 'Siarter iaith' and 'Cymraeg Campus'	• In collaboration with the Local Authorities continue to develop the informal use of Welsh through the 'Siarter iaith' and 'Cymraeg Campus'. • Ensure that successful and effective practices for developing the informal use of the Welsh language are shared across the region. • Support schools to promote the benefits of bilingualism for the pupils.

OBJECTIVE 7: BUSINESS

Ref.	Priority	Aims & Activities
7.1	Review current operating arrangements and staffing structure to ensure that the regional school improvement service is suitably structured to deliver local, regional and national priorities.	Undertake a review of the current operating arrangements and staffing structure to ensure that the regional school improvement service is suitably structured to: • ensure that schools are effectively supported post COVID to address the impact of the pandemic on learners' progress and wellbeing; • ensure that schools are effectively supported to implement the new curriculum and all aspects of the reform journey; • address national expectations for school improvement as outlined in the recently published 'School Improvement Guidance (June 2022)'; and to • build upon the strong foundations of a collaborative way of working that has been established regionally as we move towards a self-improving system.

5. Governance: Monitoring and Evaluation

GWE BUSINESS PLANNING FRAMEWORK

There is a clear and robust accountability framework in GwE. The GwE Business Planning Framework that is in place ensures clarity, accountability and strategic coordination in the delivery of the priorities on a local, regional and national level and provides the structure for monitoring progress effectively.

Through our detailed business plans, progress is reported upon quarterly which provides a progress report on:

- Impact against actions and outcomes (including quantitative and qualitative success criteria, and statistical data)
- Issues or new risks identified for the reporting period
- Regional data
- Local Authority data
- Expenditure profile

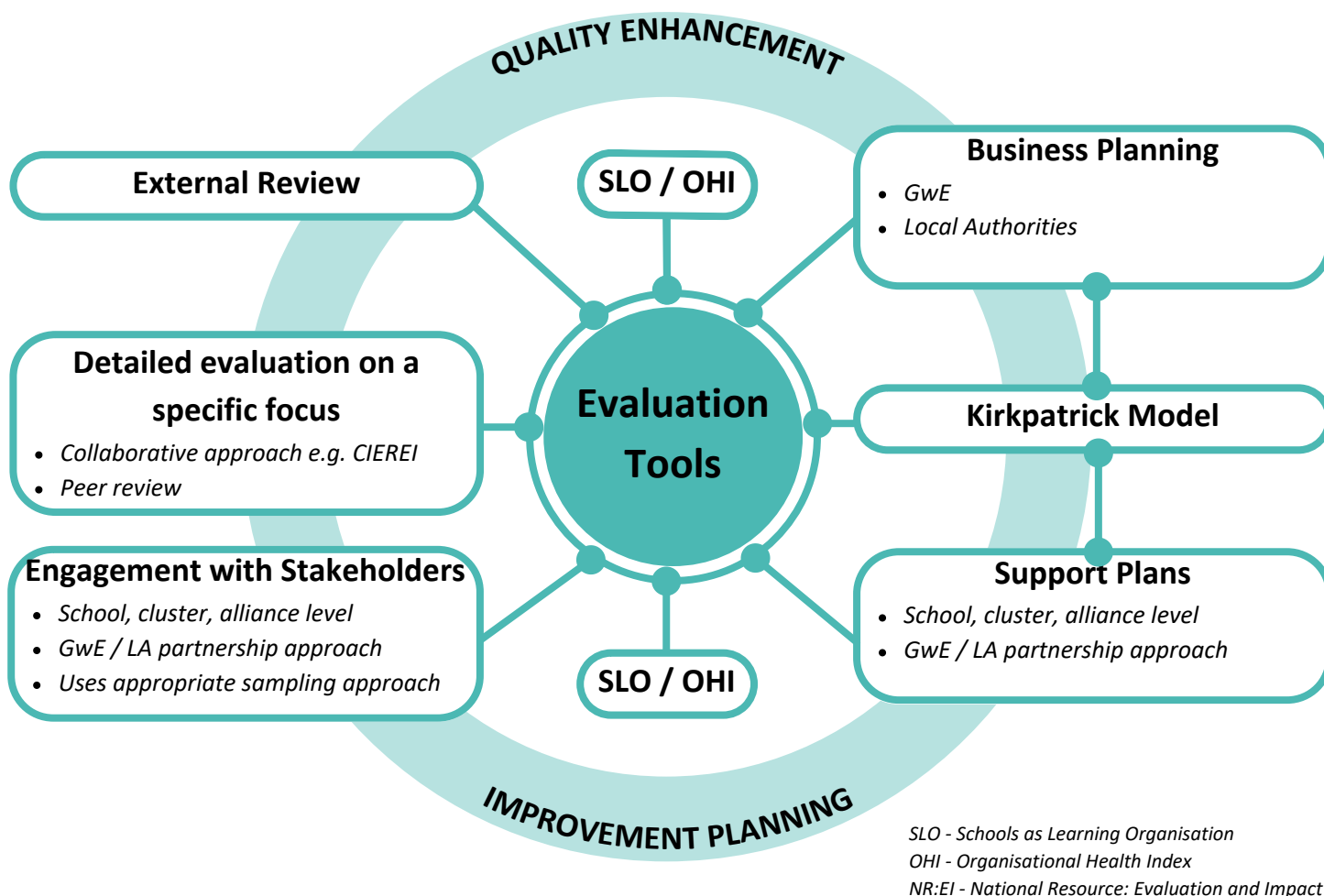
Throughout the year, reports associated with our priority streams within the business plan will be reported through our governance groups. Progress against the regional business plan is reported on a quarterly basis to the Joint Committee. Progress against the Local Authority business plan is reported on a quarterly basis through meetings between GwE and each local authority.



EVALUATION AND IMPACT STRATEGY

GwE have also developed an Evaluation and Impact Strategy so that it can clearly evaluate and capture impact of its work in line with its core school improvement function and to enable it to fully meet the expectations as outlined in the School Improvement Guidance.

The purpose of the strategy is to articulate clearly how GwE will engage in ongoing evaluation processes in line with its commitment to developing a culture of continuous improvement as a learning organisation. The self-evaluation processes will draw upon a range of sources that are both qualitative and quantitative which support schools in working towards the national priorities.



Across North Wales, GwE and the 6 Local Authorities have developed strong and effective collaborative partnerships for school improvement. This enables coherence in the way GwE and the Local Authority capture the impact of all school improvement provision and support offered to schools. Consideration will also be given as to how impact at individual school level and system level will be captured across the region, in the short, medium and longer term.

In line with the recommendation within Successful Futures, GwE will employ a sampling methodology as part of this strategy. Careful planning and consideration will be given to ensure that the sampling approaches are appropriate and purposeful, allowing for coverage of settings, learners and practitioners to form a representative regional sample.

A further aim of the strategy is to ensure that information is shared at timely intervals throughout the year to a wide range of stakeholders, giving confidence and clarity on the quality and impact of the wide range of work undertaken. This strategy will allow transparency to stakeholders and the wider public and demonstrate value for money.

The strategy will also enable GwE and Local Authorities to identify and understand effective practice within its own provision. In implementing national policy, the strategy enables GwE to capture impact of practice at both a local and regional level. In this way, self-evaluation findings will feed into regional and local business planning priorities and inform future national policy where appropriate.

6. Risk Register

The GwE Risk Register is a live document which is kept under regular review. It is presented to the Joint Committee on an annual basis and also when new risks are identified where the Joint Committee needs to be made aware.

There are several risks that have been identified as potential barriers to the successful implementation of the Business Plan priorities. These are:

- Cuts in funding to the GwE Core Budget affect strategic long-term planning.
- Uncertainty regarding grant funding arrangements from WG hampers strategic long-term planning. Significant delays in confirmation of funding levels affect the implementation of the Strategic Business Plan.
- Difficulties in the recruitment and succession planning of Senior Leaders across the region especially Welsh medium.
- Pace of moving deep-rooted issues in secondary schools placed in Estyn Statutory category.
- The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic has made it more difficult for schools to work on engaging with their original Curriculum for Wales preparations.
- Uncertainty around accountability and performance measures hampering the pace of the Reform Journey especially in the secondary sector
- Uncertainty around what 2027 qualifications will look like is a restrictive factor in secondary schools.
- Coherence and range of Reform Journey and its impact on systemic leadership between WG, middle tier and schools with an increasing level of funding going directly from WG to schools.
- GwE current operating arrangements and staffing structure do not meet Welsh Government or regional direction in going forward.
- Difficulties in recruitment and succession planning within the service as salaries are not competitive with similar organisation or with Headteacher and senior leaders' salaries.
- Implementing the new school improvement guidance.
- Current Union climate.

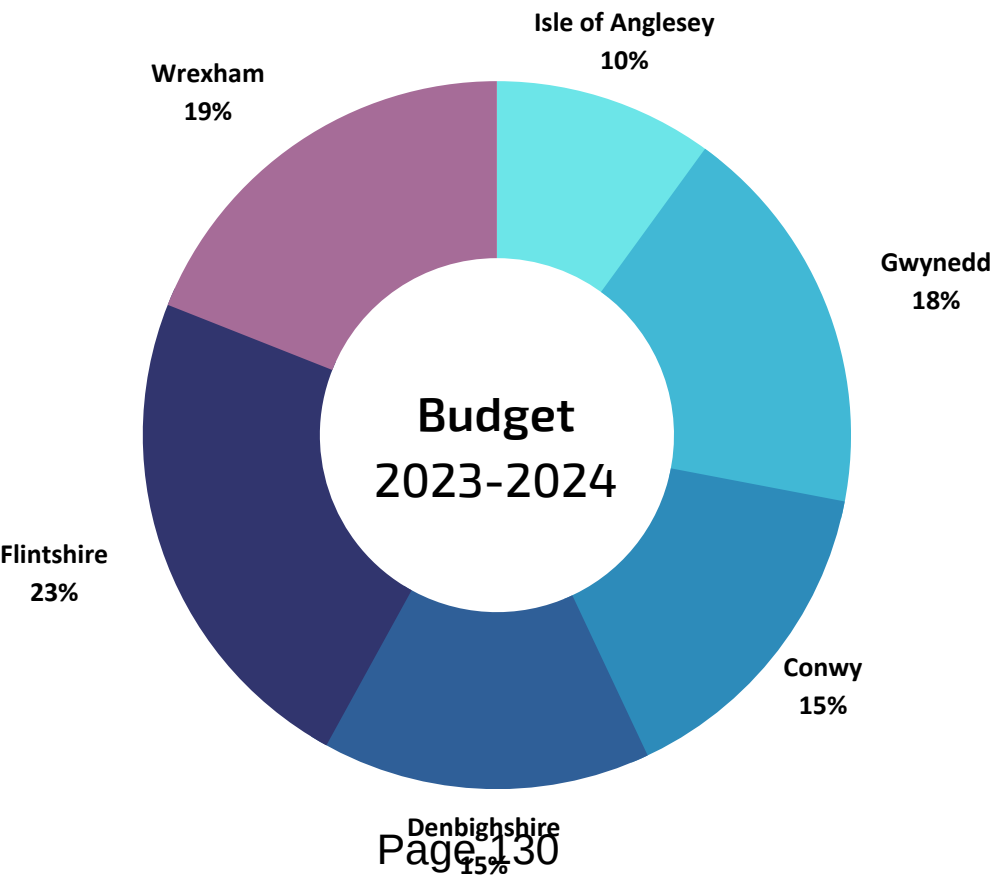
7. GwE Budget & Funding

We like everybody else are living in very difficult financial climate and have to make some difficult decisions. We are grateful for the support of the Chief Executives across the Region and our Elected Members in the Joint Committee for their advice and support in making the best decisions to support our learners and schools.

In 2023-2024 our core budget is £3,924,269.

The local authorities’ indicative figures for 2023-2024 are as follows:

BUDGET - 2023-2024		
	£	%
Isle of Anglesey	395,923	10.09%
Gwynedd	687,858	17.53%
Conwy	595,368	15.17%
Denbighshire	608,601	15.51%
Flintshire	894,323	22.79%
Wrexham	742,196	18.91%
TOTAL	3,924,269	100%



This year our Education Improvement Grant will be £27,451,618 (indicative allocation - including match funding). This is a £9.6 million cut on the 2015 budget. At the same time, there has been a 25% increase in costs through introduction of minimum wage, living wage and pension contributions. As we manage these financial challenges, we have continued to increase our delegation rates to schools. GwE retains 3.91% of the EIG to provide support for schools.

		Grant and match	Grant and match
		Grant and match	Cut [%]
11 Individual Grants	2014/2015	£37,021,296	
EIG	2015/2016	£33,549,764	-9.38%
EIG	2016/2017	£31,902,703	-4.91%
EIG	2017/2018	£31,672,444	-0.72%
EIG	2018/2019	£29,124,247	-8.05%
EIG	2019/2020	£29,064,551	-0.20%
EIG	2020/2021	£28,776,349	-0.99%
EIG	2021/2022	£29,397,227	2.16%
EIG	2022/2023	£29,259,041	-0.47%
EIG	2023/2024	£27,451,618	-6.18%
Cumulative		-£9,569,678	-25.8%

8. Additional Supporting Documents

- Detailed Business Plans 2023–2024
- GwE Risk Register
- GwE Annual Report
- Local Authority Strategic Education Plans
- Evaluation and Impact Strategy



Cydweithio · Dysgu · Llwyddo
Collaborating · Learning · Succeeding

REPORT TO THE JOINT COMMITTEE

24 MAY 2023

Report by: GwE Managing Director

Subject: GwE Risk Register

1.0 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To present the latest GwE Risk Register to the Joint Committee.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 The purpose of the risk register is to formalise the process of identifying risks and consequently taking action to mitigate the risk.
- 2.2 Effective management of the region's risks will enable GwE to support the region's strategic objectives and priorities, make effective use of resources, and deliver outcomes as intended.

3.0 Considerations

- 3.1 The GwE Risk Register is a live document which is kept under regular review. It is presented to the Joint Committee on an annual basis & also when new risks are identified where the Joint Committee needs to be made aware.
- 3.2 All of the risks have been reviewed and updated. Amendments to the Register have been highlighted in red.
- 3.3 It is suggested that risks 9,10,11 and 12 should be added to the register. No risks have been removed.

3.4 The following risk matrix has been followed in determining the risk status.

Risk Matrix						
		4	3	2	1	
Likelihood	Almost Certain	Low (4)	Medium (8)	High (12)	High (16)	A
	Likely	Low (3)	Medium (6)	Medium (9)	High (12)	B
	Possible	Low (2)	Low (4)	Medium (6)	Medium (8)	C
	Unlikely	Low (1)	Low (2)	Low (3)	Low (4)	D
		Low	Medium	High	Extreme	
Impact						

4.0 Recommendations

- 4.1 The Joint Committee is asked to review and approve the content of the register.
- 4.2 Determine whether there are any risks that the Joint Committee wish to bring to the attention of their respective Cabinet's etc.

5.0 Financial Implications

- 5.1 Effective management of risks and financial controls help to monitor costs and enable value for money.

6.0 Equalities Impact

- 6.1 There are no new equalities implications arising from this report.

7.0 Personnel Implications

- 7.1 There are no new personnel implications arising from this report.

8.0 Consultation Undertaken

- 8.1 The GwE Senior Leadership Team and the GwE Management Board have discussed the content of the register and have amended the risks as appropriate.

9.0 Appendices

- 9.1 GwE Risk Register.

OPINION OF THE STATUTORY OFFICERS

Monitoring Officer:

A risk review system is a fundamental element in effective governance. It is essential that the Joint Committee gives detailed consideration to the assessment and responses.

Statutory Finance Officer:

GwE's risk register is in a standard format and includes appropriate information. I am satisfied that the contents of the register are a fair reflection of the situation, and I will support GwE's Managing Director in managing the risks that GwE faces.

RISK NUMBER	SUMMARY	GwE STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE	RISK IDENTIFIED	LIKELIHOOD OF RISK	IMPACT OF RISK	LIKELIHOOD X IMPACT	CURRENT ACTIVITIES / MITIGATION	RESIDUAL RISK / OVERALL RISK	LIKELIHOOD X IMPACT	RISK OWNER	FUTURE ACTIONS
1	Financial	ALL	Cuts in funding to the GwE Core Budget affects strategic long term planning.	M	M/H	2A	Medium Term Financial Plan & VFM Policy & Framework in place. Plans were developed in conjunction with the Local Authority's Section 151 Officer. The Medium Term Financial Plan includes details regarding the financial pressure on GwE and models scenarios. Assumptions are made regarding the future financial position. Some staff are appointed on secondment to ensure flexibility within the service to react quickly to any changes. The Welsh Government's draft grant settlement was announced this year with a 3 year budget outline. The outline suggests cuts to the grant budget are imminent.	M	2B	MD / PM	Following the Westminster Government's comprehensive spending review and identification of the new Welsh Government's priorities, we will work with Section 151 Officer to review possible budgetary pressures for 2023/24 and beyond. Work with Section 151 Officer to review possible future budgetary pressures (given to the potential impact of Covid-19). Work with the Section 151 Officer to review the MTFP & consult with chief officers from constituent authorities regarding the impact of any potential funding cuts. Undertake a budget and workforce review to ensure GwE plans flexibly for a wide range of outcomes.
2	Financial	ALL	Uncertainty regarding grant funding arrangements from WG hampers strategic long term planning. Significant delays in confirmation of funding levels affects the implementation of the Strategic Business Plan.	M/H	H	2A	Assumptions made regarding future funding situation. A number of appointments made on secondment basis to ensure flexibility within the service to respond quickly to any changes, but this places pressure on the budget. Medium Term Financial Plan in place. The plan was developed in conjunction with the Section 151 Officer. The medium term financial plan includes the financial pressures on GwE and models various situations. Financial modelling work being implemented to steer decisions. Indicative grant allocations for the financial year 2023/24 were received from the Welsh Government in March 2023. However, the offer letter with final allocations and terms & conditions are expected by the end of May 2023.	M	2C	MD / PM / Management Board	Work with Section 151 Officer to review Medium Term Financial Plan & Value for Money Policy & Framework to be reviewed periodically. Liaise with WG officials, constituent authorities' education Cabinet members and heads of education, to seek greater transparency and certainty regarding specific grant funding.
3	Leadership Development	1, 4 & 6	Difficulties in the recruitment and succession planning of Senior Leaders across the region especially Welsh medium.	M	M	2C	The National Leadership Development Programmes support the development of practitioners' leadership skills at each milestone of the professional learning pathway. The Leadership Group has worked with other regions to deliver effective workforce development programmes to ensure high quality leadership. The Group has successfully overcome challenges as a result of the constraints of the pandemic and has continued to ensure equity of access to all leadership development programs - ie a blended / virtual approach and updating the content virutaly to meet the needs of leaders where those needs are constantly changing. Working with the Authorities, we will ensure access to a range of training to improve the Welsh language skills of the education workforce in order to increase the number of teaching staff able to teach Welsh (as a subject) and through the medium of Welsh. Collaborate with Bangor University, National College of Learning Welsh, Welsh Government, Authorities to provide rich programme for developing language skills and staff confidence. Collaborate with CABAN / Bangor University to secure Welsh medium placements for ITE students. Identify the workforce that provides Welsh-medium education - plan for further development (assistants, teachers, leaders) through collaboration with the LAs.	M / L	2D	MD / AD	Continue to offer a wide range of Professional Learning opportunities in relation to leadership developmental programmes and developing workforce language skills in order to develop present and future leaders.
4	School Improvement	1	Pace of moving deep routed issues in secondary schools placed in Estyn Statutory category.	H	H	2A	There are currently 4 secondary schools in the statutory category. Intensive intervention and support programs are in place in these schools that focus on improving learning and teaching; developing tracking and assessment systems; improve leadership at all levels and further develop accountability arrangements and processes for robust self-evaluation and improvement planning. GwE will work closely with the LAs, Estyn and Welsh Government to drive the necessary improvements	M/H	2B/C	MD/AD/ Senior Secondary Lead	From Autumn 2023, WG will once again publish key performance indicators for secondary schools. Evaluation processes in schools for determining progress against key recommendations need to capture a broad range of evidence in line with expectations of new SIG. the effectiveness of regional structure and processes for schools causing concern need to be kept under constant review by the Management Board Task Group.
5	Preparations for the Reform Journey and Curriculum for Wales	ALL	The impact of Covid-19 pandemic has made it more difficult for schools to work on engaging with their original Curriculum for Wales preparations.	H	H	2A	GwE has continued to support schools in their preparations for the Reform Journey and Curriculum for Wales and has been flexible in its provision to meet the diverse needs of schools during the pandemic. GwE has worked with the regional consortia, Estyn and the Welsh Government to identify the expectations on schools and settings for reform as implementation of Curriculum for Wales begins. GwE continues to work in close partnership with the other regional consortia to develop a national professional learning offer that integrates all aspects of the wider reform journey including Schools as Learning Organisations, Welsh Language and the Additional Learning Needs Transformation Bill . This cross-regional offer is aimed at supporting all school practitioners through a range of online workshops, and includes an increasing number of case studies from schools sharing their emerging practice and a focus on developing progression within and across AOLES. GwE staff have also developed guidance and exemplar models for whole school curriculum design, curriculum planning and assessment to support leaders and teachers. Secondary schools have reflected on their preparations and a sharing event in March 2023 enabled practitioners to share their practice and lessons learnt from implementing Curriculum for Wales in Year 7. Since September 2021, the regional Curriculum for Wales network has been established enabling practitioners across the region as part of GwE's ongoing programme of support for schools. Over 100 school practitioners across the region are committed to being involved in this work and will be sharing their emerging practice of local curriculum in a regional Market Place sharing event in June 2023.	M	2B	Senior Lead CFW	Continue to support all secondary schools to prepare for the new curriculum for Years 7 and 8 in line with the national system expectations highlighted in the 'The Journey to 2022'. Continue to support all settings to evaluate and refine their curriculum in line with school improvement guidance and to reflect upon shared understanding of progression of all learners. Continue to facilitate regional Curriculum for Wales network working in partnership with Professor Graham Donaldson, GwE and the six North Wales LAs to develop effective AOLE practice that will help schools on the Reform Journey. All regional meeting resources and recordings available on the GwE website along with resources and examples of design and planning work. Supporting Improvement Advisors continue to offer bespoke support at school and cluster / alliance level as identified in support plans. Continue to engage with all schools through the regional PL proposal and facilitate collaboration across the 3-16 continuum in line with the school and cluster action plan. Continue with GwE team meetings to support the making sense of the Curriculum for Wales. Develop consistent messages across all networks by collecting key messages, support resources, examples of how schools can engage and misconceptions. Continue to work with Bangor University and Lead Professional Inquiry schools to develop a professional inquiry role within learning and teaching.
6	Standards	ALL	Uncertainty around accountability and performance measures hampering the pace of the Reform Journey especially in the secondary sector.	H	M/H	2A	Regular discussions with Welsh Government and Estyn have taken place over the period to influence national intentions regarding the development of a new accountability framework.	M	2B/2C	AD / Senior Secondary Lead	Continue to work closely with Welsh Government, other consortia, local authorities and Estyn to ensure that schools fully understand the direction of travel outlined in the new SIG and that regional accountability processes and structures support schools to effectively address the requirements of the reform journey.
7	Standards	ALL	Uncertainty around what 2027 qualifications will look like is a restrictive factor in secondary schools.	H	M/H	2A	Regular discussions with Welsh Government, Qualifications Wales and WJEC held over the period to influence direction.	M	2B/2C	AD / Senior Secondary Lead	Continue to contribute to consultation sessions and to the work of relevant networks and forums to influence direction.
8	Standards	ALL	Coherence and range of Reform Journey and its impact on systemic leadership between WG, middle tier and schools with an increasing level of funding going directly from WG to schools.	H	M/H	2A	Regular discussions with Welsh Government and middle tier held to influence direction.	M	2B	MD/AD	Continue to work closely with Welsh Government, other regions, local authorities and Estyn to influence direction.
9	GwE operating arrangements and staffing structure	ALL	GwE current operating arrangements and staffing structure do not meet Welsh Government or regional direction in going forward.	H	M/H	2A	MB, JC and Chief Executives have agreed to review current operating arrangements and staffing structure to ensure that it meets Welsh Government and Regional direction in going forward. Work ongoing to further evolve and strengthen the current partnership working with Local Authorities to provide clarity, reduce duplication and bureaucracy, and to further improve effectiveness of delivery.	M / L	2C	MD/ MB/JC	Undertake review of the current operating arrangements and staffing structure during Summer / Autumn 2023 to ensure that the regional school improvement service is suitably structured. Ensure that the Welsh Government and GwE reviews are closely aligned and complementary.
10	Recruitment and succession planning	ALL	Difficulties in recruitment and succession planning within the service as salaries are not competitive with similar organisation or with Headteacher and senior leaders' salaries.	H	M/H	2A	Need to ensure that the organisational structures' accompanying salaries are competitive with similar organisations to allow future successful succession planning and attract high quality staff.	M	2B/2C	MD/MB/JC	Include as part of review of current operating arrangements and staffing structure (as outlined under Risk Number 9).
11	School Improvement	ALL	Implementing the School improvement guidance	M/H	M	2B	Working within the new SIG will enable newer ways of working for all stakeholders. GwE 2023 26 business plan sets out how, in close collaboration with key stakeholders, it will strengthen leadership, improve teaching and learning, and increase aspiration to impact on standards. As a service, we will: ensure all schools are supported to evaluate accurately and to deliver robust improvement plans effectively; support leaders working collaboratively to promote high standards and aspirations for all; support leaders in schools to become familiar with the new school improvement guidance and to be confident in implementing action; strengthen multi agency and 'team around the school' approaches with schools causing concern and strengthen partnership working with Local Authorities.	M / L	2C	MD/MB/JC	Continue to engage with all stakeholders to ensure that national developments feed into regional work and are fully evaluated and impact captured. GwE and the Local Authorities via the Management Board and their Task Group will continue to monitor the effectiveness of regional approaches to identify, create, deliver and monitor Schools Support Plans. The Task Group will explore potential avenues for stronger collaboration across LAs to build capacity and ensure greater consistency of support whilst ensuring that we adopt a holistic and transparent approach in term of reporting and sharing of information.
12	Union climate	ALL	Current Union climate.	H	H	2A	Continue to communicate and work with Welsh Government and Unions on how best to support schools with implementing non-statutory School Improvement Guidance under current Union climate.	M	2B	MD/AD	Continue to work with Welsh Governemnt and Unions to ensure effective and successful working relationship.

Agenda Item 10

GwE Joint Committee 24/05/2023



REPORT TO THE JOINT COMMITTEE

24 MAY 2023

Report by: Arwyn Thomas, GwE Managing Director

Subject: Review of GwE current operating arrangements and staffing structure

1.0 Purpose of the Report

1.1 To present the draft terms of reference to Joint Committee members in relation to the Review of GwE current operating arrangements and staffing structure.

2.0 Background

2.1 On 23 November 2022, Joint Committee members permitted the service to move forward to review its current operating arrangements and staffing structure.

2.2 As GwE continues to support schools in the wake of the pandemic, it is timely to review the current operating arrangements and staffing structure to ensure that we continue to evolve and develop in order to effectively support schools post COVID.

3.0 Matters for consideration

3.1 Attached are the draft terms of reference outlining the:

- background and context
 - rationale
 - aims and objectives
 - issues to explore
 - sources of information to inform the review
 - timing; and
 - proposed team to undertake the review.
-

4.0 Recommendations

4.1 The Joint Committee is asked to approve the terms of reference.

5.0 Financial implications

5.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report. Any new operating model will be funded via existing and future resources.

6.0 Equalities Impact

6.1 There are no new equalities implications arising from this report.

7.0 Personnel Implications

7.1 GwE will follow Host Authority procedures in any restructuring of the service.

8.0 Consultation undertaken

8.1 GwE staff will be fully consulted during the review process.

9.0 Appendices

9.1 Appendix 1 – Draft Terms of Reference

OPINION OF STATUTORY OFFICERS

Monitoring Officer:

The intention to review the staffing structure is noted and I confirm that approving the GwE staffing structure is one of the functions of the Joint Committee itself.

Statutory Finance Officer:

I welcome the intention to review GwE's operating arrangements and staffing structure in the context of an ever-changing situation. Officers from Finance services will assist GwE with this work as required and will ensure that GwE. I note that part 5 of the report confirms that there are no financial implications arising from the report, and that GwE continues to operate within the resources available to it.



Review of GwE current operating arrangements and staffing structure

Draft Terms of Reference

Background and context

Staff in the Local Authorities and GwE adapted their work in order to continue to provide effective services and support for all their school communities during the COVID pandemic. During this time, GwE in close partnership with the North Wales Local Authorities kept true to their vision and values as an organisation that is continually learning. The OECD's transversal themes of Trust, Thinking Together, Time and Technology remained at the heart of the work with schools and partners. The service in its entirety had to re-focus several times during the COVID period to meet the needs of the range of stakeholders. The ability to be flexible and agile and to work effectively together in different teams, often cross sector, had significant impact on organisational behaviour and external perception. As we continue to support schools in the wake of the pandemic, it is timely to review the current operating arrangements and staffing structure to ensure that we continue to evolve and develop in order to effectively support schools post COVID.

As we undertake national reform and continue to support schools to implement the new curriculum, it's clear that we are in a different place to the one that we imagined when the guidance for the Curriculum for Wales was published. We recognise that some of the preparation time for the curriculum will have been devoted to managing the impact of the pandemic over the past few years. On the other hand, with an even stronger focus on well-being and significant investment in teaching and learning, the values under-pinning the

curriculum have been at the heart of how schools have been working. GwE is fully committed to supporting schools and PRUs to maintain this momentum to ensure that every learner in North Wales is offered provision of the highest quality. We have recognised that our Professional Learning will need to evolve to offer a more limited centrally delivered provision with an enhanced school to school (and cluster to cluster) professional learning offer. We see the following areas as our key regional Professional Learning Offer over the next few years: Improving Learner Skills; Improving the Learner Experience; Pedagogy; Equity and Wellbeing; '*Y Gymraeg*'; Assessment and Learner Progression and Leadership Development. Professional learning will be key in supporting schools to implement and move forward their School Development Plan priorities. A support plan will be agreed with every school and setting in line with the requirements of the School Improvement Guidance (June 2022).

The new national 'School Improvement Guidance (June 2022)' provides a point of reference for schools, pupil referral units, local authorities, diocesan authorities, regional consortia and Estyn, which outlines the Welsh Government's expectations of them in contributing to school improvement, in the context of their wider legal duties. The overarching purpose of school improvement is to help schools give learners the best possible learning experiences and outcomes, whatever their background, to achieve high standards and aspirations for all. Under the Curriculum for Wales, a fundamental part of this will be ensuring that schools support every learner to make progress, contributing to the four purposes. The guidance supports that objective by setting out a framework for evaluation, improvement and accountability that will deliver sustainable school improvement and drive behaviours and practices that are required by the new curriculum and assessment arrangements. To be successful, it is crucial that all aspects of the school system are aligned with and support the new curriculum and its underlying principles. The Welsh Government plans to update the guidance, building on learning in 2022/23 and 2023/24, and to issue it as statutory guidance to come into force in September 2024. It is therefore timely that GwE reviews its operational arrangements and staffing structure to ensure that it can effectively address the requirements of the guidance.

Welsh Government have proposed to undertake a 'Review of roles and responsibilities of education partners in Wales and delivery of school improvement arrangements'. All education partners at every level have a role to play in supporting schools in achieving our national mission. Within this context, a review of the future direction, roles and responsibilities of education partners in Wales - the 'middle-tier' - and how they should evolve and develop school improvement arrangements is proposed. The review should show how we can best support our common purpose and shared goals within the context of a self-improving system.

The middle-tier includes the Local Authorities, Regional Consortia and Partnerships, Diocesan Authorities, Estyn, Qualifications Wales, the National Academy for Educational Leadership, the Education Workforce Council, further and higher education and examination boards.

RATIONALE

A review of the current operating arrangements and staffing structure is needed to ensure that the regional school improvement service is suitably structured to:

- ensure that schools are effectively supported post COVID to address the impact of the pandemic on learners' progress and wellbeing;
- ensure that schools are effectively supported to implement the new curriculum and all aspects of the reform journey;
- address national expectations for school improvement as outlined in the recently published 'School Improvement Guidance (June 2022)'; and to
- build upon the strong foundations of a collaborative way of working that has been established regionally as we move towards a self-improving system.
- to set out what an effective school improvement service and self-improving system should look like for the future.
- evolve and develop school improvement arrangements as proposed in Welsh Government review.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

1. Review current structure to ensure that statutory and accountability duties are met.
2. Review current structure to ensure that it meets Welsh Government and Regional direction in going forward.
3. To clarify the roles and responsibilities of the GwE and partners; identifying areas of shared endeavour and any gaps in provision and providing unambiguous descriptions of responsibility and accountability for each organisation and partner.
4. To establish in clear terms the roles, responsibilities and accountability in relation to areas such as ALN, Y Gymraeg, Governors, staff and learner wellbeing.
5. Further evolve and strengthen the current partnership working with Local Authorities to provide clarity, reduce duplication and bureaucracy, and to further improve effectiveness of delivery.
6. Ensure that the service is suitably structured to focus on support and on capacity-building for a self-improving system.
7. Continue to promote and facilitate collaboration within and between clusters/alliances of schools and with wider networking.
8. Ensure effective and early identification of a school in decline and in need of support to prevent it becoming SCC. Ensure that processes and systems for supporting and challenging SCC are aligned with expectations in school improvement guidance.
9. Ensure effective communication and sharing of information and successful practice across the region to ensure appropriate support and challenge.
10. Ensure that the Regional School Improvement Service is best placed to contribute at local, regional and national level.
11. To ensure that the Welsh Government and GwE reviews are closely aligned and complementary.
12. Ensure that the organisational structures' accompanying salaries are competitive with similar organisations to allow future successful succession planning and attract high quality staff.

ISSUES TO EXPLORE

Consideration will also need to be given to other matters in the review. These could include:

- Review the Inter Authority Agreement (IAA) to ensure delivery of functions collectively and effectively.
- Creating a succession plan for the service to ensure that GwE has appropriate and effective school improvement and business structures, that provides positive impact and value for money.
- GwE salary structure has not been reviewed since being established in 2013. In light of this, and following the recent school staffing salary settlement, there is a need to review regional salary structures to ensure that it is competitive and current.
- To consider how the current regional structure is fit for purpose to effectively support the reform programme - particularly in relation to the Curriculum for Wales, changes to school improvement guidance and the ALN transformation programme -, to ensure what is needed is delivered effectively.
- Review joint working with other agencies and partnerships.
- Ensure flexible and agile working model to respond urgently to potential reduction in grants and core budget.
- To consider how resources and expertise within the service may be used to generate income

SOURCES OF INFORMATION TO INFORM THE REVIEW

- Current published roles and responsibilities
- Existing legislation, policy and guidance documents, and Estyn inspection information
- Local Authority arrangements with Regional Consortia and Partnerships
- Governance and host authority arrangements and support within other similar organisations.
- Organisational structures, succession planning and comparative salaries across similar organisations.
- Regional Consortia and Partnerships
- Welsh Government arrangements with every organisation
- Latest research relating to school improvement services
- School / practitioner experiences and insights
- Views of / evidence from key partners from within the Welsh education system

- Local, regional, national and international successful practice.

TIMING

To commence in the summer term 2023 with initial findings in July and final report in the Autumn term of 2024.

UNDERTAKING THE REVIEW

Team to consist of:

- Lead / Author
- Project Manager
- Local Authority representatives
- Independent Finance expert
- GwE link officer
- School representatives to challenge early findings



REPORT TO THE JOINT COMMITTEE

24 MAY 2023

Report by: Arwyn Thomas, GwE Managing Director

Subject: Consultations

1.0 Purpose of the Report

1.1 To share information with Joint Committee members regarding upcoming very pertinent consultations, namely:

- Welsh Government - Review of roles and responsibilities of education partners in Wales and delivery of school improvement arrangements
- Estyn - Local government education services inspections 2024
- Welsh Government – Welsh Language Education Bill: White Paper

2.0 Background

2.1 Welsh Government Review: Welsh Government have proposed to undertake a 'Review of roles and responsibilities of education partners in Wales and delivery of school improvement arrangements'. All education partners at every level have a role to play in supporting schools in achieving our national mission. Within this context, a review of the future direction, roles and responsibilities of education partners in Wales - the 'middle-tier' - and how they should evolve and develop school improvement arrangements is proposed. The review should show how education partners in Wales can best support the common purpose and shared goals within the context of a self-improving system.

2.2 The middle-tier includes the Local Authorities, Regional Consortia and Partnerships, Diocesan Authorities, Estyn, Qualifications Wales, the National Academy for Educational

Leadership, the Education Workforce Council, further and higher education and examination boards.

2.3 Estyn: Estyn are currently consulting on key proposals in relation to Local government education services (LGES) inspections 2024, where there will be two guidance documents for 2024: 'What we inspect' and 'How we inspect'.

2.4 Welsh Language Education Bill: The White Paper proposals outline the direction for the following areas:

- Focus on linguistic outcomes so that all pupils leaving statutory education can speak Welsh confidently
- Strengthen the system for planning growth in the number of Welsh-medium schools, and the number of pupils attending those schools
- Over time, increase the requirements in terms of the portion of each week devoted to provision by language category
- Increase our Welsh language workforce in the education sector

3.0 **Matters for consideration**

3.1 Welsh Government Review: Attached is a copy of the draft Terms of Reference outlining the context, rationale, aims and objectives (Appendix 1) of the review. In addition to identifying what an effective future school improvement service would look like, consideration will also need to be given to other matters in the review (refer to terms of reference).

3.2 It is proposed that the review could commence in the summer term with initial findings in the autumn and final report in the Spring term of 2024. A document outlining roles and responsibilities for each organisation, with clear definitions for organisations previously termed the 'middle-tier' and identification of areas for possible action will be published.

3.3 At their meeting on 22 November 2022, Joint Committee members permitted GwE to move forward to review the current operating arrangements and staffing structure to ensure that statutory and accountability duties are met and that it meets Welsh Government and Regional direction in going forward. In light of this, the external team who will be undertaking the review will ensure the Welsh Government and GwE reviews are closely aligned and complementary.

3.4 Estyn: Attached (Appendix 2) is a copy of the key proposals by Estyn, outlining the steps as follows:

- Consult on the proposals – Summer Term
- Training peer inspectors – Autumn term
- Pilot – Spring Term
- Final tweaks to the guidance following feedback – Summer term 2024.

3.5 The Welsh Government is consulting on proposals upon which the Welsh Language Education Bill will be based. The Bill will take steps to enable all pupils in Wales to become confident Welsh speakers through the statutory education system. Key proposals include:

- Reflecting the target of a million Welsh speakers in law
- Creating a single Welsh language skills continuum to describe skill levels so that learners, teachers, parents and employers have a common understanding of the journey towards learning Welsh
- Establishing a statutory system of categorising maintained schools according to language-medium
- Over time, enhance Welsh language provision in maintained schools that are not already designated Welsh-medium schools
- A requirement for the Welsh Ministers to create a statutory National Plan for the acquisition and learning of Welsh, and review it in each Senedd term
- Reform how local authorities plan Welsh language provision in schools in order to meet targets set by the Welsh Ministers
- Requirements on local authorities to proactively promote Welsh-medium education, including late immersion provision; and
- Providing specialist support for schools with Welsh language learning

Responses to the consultation are requested by 16 June 2023.

4.0 Recommendations

4.1 The Joint Committee is asked to note the consultations, and for GwE and Local Authority officers to prepare a response on behalf of the Joint Committee.

5.0 Financial implications

5.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

6.0 Equalities Impact

6.1 There are no new equalities implications arising from this report.

7.0 Personnel Implications

7.1 There are no new personnel implications arising from this report.

8.0 Consultation undertaken

8.1 Consultation with usual key stakeholders.

9.0 Appendices

9.1 Appendix 1 – Welsh Government Review draft Terms of Reference

Appendix 2 – Estyn key proposals

OPINION OF STATUTORY OFFICERS

Monitoring Officer:

Nothing to add from a propriety perspective.

Statutory Finance Officer:

No comments to add to the report from the perspective of financial propriety

REVIEW OF ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF EDUCATION PARTNERS IN WALES AND DELIVERY OF SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

Draft Terms of Reference

Context

Our national mission is that by working together we will achieve high standards and aspirations for all by tackling the impact of poverty on educational attainment and supporting every learner to be healthy, educated and enterprising citizens. Realising this shared ambition depends on all parts of the education system continuing to work collectively and resolutely to best effect; building on progress already made, learning from effective practice, and ensuring that the knowledge and resources available are targeted to deliver the outcomes we all want to see.

Our public and equitable education system is a source of national pride and confidence. We reject selection and writing off places and people. But we also know that there is too much variation between schools and between geographical areas. This is a collective challenge and one we will tackle as a shared endeavour. That means all parts of the system pulling together – the improvement needs of schools being met through access to high-quality support tailored to their needs, with schools also increasingly drawing on other schools for support. A truly self-improving system, based on a spirit of collaboration not competition, and with learner progression and wellbeing as a mainstay.

All education partners at every level have a role to play in supporting schools in achieving our national mission. Within this context, a review of the future direction, roles and responsibilities of education partners in Wales - the 'middle-tier' - and how we should evolve and develop school improvement arrangements is proposed. This review should show how we can best support our common purpose and shared goals within the context of a self-improving system.

The middle-tier includes the Local Authorities, Regional Consortia and Partnerships, Diocesan Authorities, Estyn, Qualifications Wales, the National Academy for Educational Leadership, the Education Workforce Council, further and higher education and examination boards.

Over the past ten years, ways of working across the middle-tier have developed as expectations and requirements have evolved to deliver reforms in our education system. Delivery models have changed but the collective and shared purpose of the middle-tier has remained as:

“Using their knowledge of schools and research to facilitate and support the sharing of best practice and collaboration to improve learner outcomes, within a self-improving school system.”

Rationale

Our ambition to achieve high standards and aspirations for all requires that we continuously improve standards in our education system. We have already commenced this journey through rolling out the new curriculum, the publication of new school improvement guidance to frame evaluation, improvement, and

accountability arrangements and the Additional Learning Needs (ALN) transformation programme. The review will consider what more we need to do to achieve further progress so that we can realise our ambitions.

The overarching purpose of school improvement is to help schools give learners the best possible learning experiences and outcomes, whatever their background or circumstance, in order to achieve high standards and aspirations for all. Under the [Curriculum for Wales](#), a fundamental part of this will be ensuring that schools support every learner to make progress, contributing to [the four purposes of the curriculum](#).

Aims

1. To clarify the roles and responsibilities of the organisations and partners currently termed the middle-tier; identifying areas of shared endeavour and any gaps in provision and providing unambiguous descriptions of responsibility and accountability for each organisation and partner.
2. To ensure that the school improvement arrangements in place in the Welsh education system are designed to best enable all learners to realise their potential within a system that achieves both excellence and equity.
3. To agree and clearly set expectations for school improvement arrangements for the Welsh education system which build upon current effective practice, reflect international evidence in this area and respond to current and future challenges.
4. To ensure that the work of the organisations and partners involved in school improvement in Wales are closely aligned and complementary, so that the maximum benefit can be achieved for teachers, school leaders, support staff and ultimately learners.
5. To consider how the current reform programme - particularly in relation to the Curriculum for Wales, changes to school improvement guidance and the ALN transformation programme - are effectively supported through revised/ remodelled school improvement arrangements, to ensure what is needed is delivered effectively.

Objectives

1. To establish in clear terms the individual roles and responsibilities of each of the partner organisations (referred to sometimes as the 'middle-tier') in the broadest sense, and where they have roles and responsibilities in supporting the improvement of education in Wales' schools and settings.
2. To consider how best the following organisations within the Welsh education system, in particular, can work together collaboratively and on a sustainable footing to support learners, educational professionals and leaders in achieving our national mission:
 - Local Authorities

- Regional Consortia and Partnerships
 - The National Academy for Educational Leadership
 - Higher Education Institutions.
3. To set out what an effective school improvement service and self-improving system should look like for the future. Consideration should be given to:
- a. The vision and ambitions for education in Wales
 - b. International best practice and policy developments in other education systems alongside exemplars from within Wales
 - c. Scaling-up effective practice that has already been identified by Estyn
 - d. The role of school-to-school learning, clusters, federations and other forms of collaboration which enhance capacity in schools to develop and improve
 - e. System leadership, and opportunities to enhance that further through collaboration
 - f. The specific areas of improving learning, teaching and leadership practices
 - g. The scope and scale of external catalysts to support improvement, including the importance of contemporary, leading and applied research and intelligence/ insights gathered through Estyn activity
 - h. Ways in which effective early interventions could take place to avoid schools entering into statutory categories, and the efficacy of current arrangements
 - i. Approaches to embedding and sustaining school and system improvements following initial progress
 - j. Engaging school leaders and practitioners across the system to identify how school improvement arrangements might best evolve to meet their needs and support improvement journeys.

Issues to explore

In addition to identifying what an effective future school improvement service would look like - reflecting the matters identified in objective 3 above - consideration will also need to be given to other matters in the review. These could include:

- How the Welsh Government's vision for successful schools under the Curriculum for Wales - as articulated in the school improvement guidance - might be better realised through arrangements and ways of working
- The extent to which there is consistency of understanding and language used in relation to 'school improvement' and 'a self-improving system'
- How current school improvement arrangements help schools with effective self-evaluation and whether changes would help strengthen this and the shared ambition for a self-improving system
- Identifying what support schools require in terms of improvement services, how their needs are identified and addressed, and any gaps in current provision and how these could be met
- Looking at the unique role each organisation plays (if any) in the middle-tier - with specific reference to school improvement - including current

responsibilities, perceived expectations and any contested space between organisations resulting from ambiguity or other factors

- Identifying what future role each organisation could play, if any, in the delivery of school improvement arrangements, including an expectation to collaborate and any perceived barriers to doing so
- The extent to which the pandemic has impacted on, and should contribute to thinking in relation to, school improvement arrangements.

Sources of information to inform the review

There are different ways in which the review could be undertaken, and a key requirement from the outset will be to scope and assimilate information which enables robust and objective findings and recommendations. As a minimum, sources of information and evidence will include:

- Current published roles and responsibilities
- Existing policy and guidance documents, and Estyn inspection information
- Local Authority arrangements with Regional Consortia and Partnerships
- Regional Consortia and Partnerships
- Welsh Government arrangements with every organisation
- Latest research relating to school improvement services
- School/ practitioner experiences and insights
- Views of/ evidence from key partners from within the Welsh education system
- Local, regional, national and international good practice.

Timing

The review could commence in the summer term with initial findings in the autumn and final report in the Spring term of 2024. NB. timings will depend on the approach taken to the review.

Outcomes and deliverables

- A published document outlining roles and responsibilities for each organisation, with clear definitions for organisations previously termed the 'middle-tier' and identification of areas for possible action
- A vision for school improvement services and a self-improving system in Wales and the scope/ need for changes to support a shared understanding for the future
- Identification of shared endeavours, gaps and duplication with a clear pathway to resolve these.



Arolygiadau gwasanaethau
addysg llywodraeth leol 2024

Local government education
services inspections 2024

CYNIGION ALLWEDDOL
KEY PROPOSALS

‘Beth’ a ‘Sut’ The ‘What’ and the ‘How’

Dwy ddogfen arweiniad ar gyfer
2024:

‘Beth rydym yn ei arolygu’

a

‘Sut rydym yn arolygu’

Two guidance documents for 2024:

‘What we inspect’

and

‘How we inspect’

Sut rydym yn arolygu

How we inspect

Arolygiadau GAALI:

- awdurdod lleol
- un agwedd ar wasanaethau addysg mewn awdurdod lleol (arolygiad â ffocws)
- darparwyr gwasanaethau addysg eraill (gwasanaeth addysg rhanbarthol, partneriaeth neu wedi'i gomisiynu)

LGES inspections:

- a local authority
- one aspect of education services in a local authority (a focused inspection)
- other education services providers (a regional, partnership or commissioned education service)

Sut rydym yn arolygu

How we inspect

Cyfnod hysbysu:

- Ar gyfer awdurdodau lleol a darparwyr gwasanaethau addysg eraill, aros yn 10 wythnos neu gwtogi i 8 wythnos?
- Ar gyfer arolygiadau â ffocws, o bosibl yn fyrrach ond dim llai na 4 wythnos

Notification period:

- For local authorities and other education services providers, to remain at 10 weeks or shorten to 8 weeks?
- For focused inspections, potentially shorter but no less than 4 weeks

Sut rydym yn arolygu

How we inspect

Arolwg cyn-arolygiad:

- Un arolwg sy'n addasu'n ddynamig i rôl ymatebwr neu ffocws yr arolygiad

Pre-inspection survey:

- Single survey that dynamically adapts to respondent's role or the focus of the inspection

Sut rydym yn arolygu

How we inspect

Proses adborth:

- Mae'r adroddiad drafft yn cymryd amser hir i'w ddarllen ar goedd ac mae'n cynnwys llawer o wybodaeth i'w dirnad. Unrhyw syniadau am sut gallem ni wella'r broses adborth?

Feedback process:

- The draft report takes a long time to read out and is a lot to take in. Any ideas about how we could improve the feedback process?

Sut rydym yn arolygu

How we inspect

Dyddiad cyhoeddi'r adroddiad:

- Lleihau o 45 i 30 diwrnod ar ôl arolygiad

Report publication date:

- Reduced from 45 to 30 days following inspection

Sut rydym yn arolygu

How we inspect

Gweithgarwch dilynol:

- cynhadledd gwelliant gychwynnol
- ymweliadau monitro gydag adroddiadau cynnydd (ddim yn ymdrin â'r holl argymhellion bob tro, o reidrwydd)

Follow-up:

- an initial improvement conference
- monitoring visits with progress reports (not necessarily covering all recommendations each time)

Sut rydym yn arolygu

How we inspect

Dim newidiadau mawr i'r canlynol:

- Cwestiynau arolygu lleol
- Gweithgareddau rhagarweiniol
- Gweithgareddau yn ystod wythnos yr arolygiad
- Cyfansoddiad y tîm (ond defnyddio arolygydd cymheiriaid ychwanegol o bosibl?)

No major changes to:

- Local inspection questions
- Preliminary activities
- Inspection week activities
- Team composition (but possibly use an extra peer inspector?)

Beth rydym yn ei arolygu

What we inspect

Newid mawr:

MA1: 'Gwasanaethau addysg a'u heffaith'

MA2: Arwain a gwella

Major change:

IA1: Education services and their impact'

IA2: Leading and Improving

Sut rydym yn arolygu

How we inspect

Rhaid i adroddiadau ymdrin â'r canlynol:

- MA1: effaith gwasanaethau ar ddysgwyr
- MA2: deilliannau ar gyfer dysgwyr
- tegwch yn y system addysg
- y Gymraeg
- diogelu

Reports **must** cover:

- IA1: the impact of services on learners
- IA2: outcomes for learners
- equity in the education system
- Welsh language
- safeguarding

Beth rydym yn ei arolygu

What we inspect

Mân addasiadau drwyddi draw, yn aml i ystyried datblygiadau a blaenoriaethau cenedlaethol.



Minor tweaks throughout, often to take account of national developments and priorities.



Beth yw'r camau nesaf?

What are the next steps?

Page 164

Ymgynghori ar y cynigion- Tymor yr Hâf

Hyfforddiant ar gyfer arolygwyr cymheiriaid – Tymor yr Hydref

Peilot – Tymor y Gwanwyn 2024

Mireinio'r arweiniad yn dilyn adborth – Tymor yr Hâf 2024

Consult on the proposals – Summer Term

Training peer inspectors – Autumn term

Pilot – Spring Term

Final tweaks to the guidance following feedback – Summer term 2024.



REPORT TO THE JOINT COMMITTEE

24 MAY 2023

Report by: Arwyn Thomas, GwE Managing Director

Subject: Reform journey celebration event

1.0 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To present information to Joint Committee members regarding the intention to host a 'Curriculum for Wales Marketplace' for regional school leaders on 22 June 2023 at Venue Cymru, Llandudno to celebrate the reform journey thus far.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 The aim of the event is to provide an opportunity to share Curriculum for Wales (CfW) developments and celebrate achievements, with the aim of sharing emerging practice across the Areas of Learning and Experience.
- 2.2 The day will involve watching and listening to schools sharing their experiences of the reform journey thus far, in the form of workshops and market stalls. There will also be opportunity to listen to experts sharing their experiences and describing the international backdrop.

3.0 Matters for consideration

- 3.1 There will be opportunity to listen to presentations from first-class guest speakers and discuss with colleagues during the day. Guest speakers include Professor Graham Donaldson, Director of Education and the Welsh Language – Welsh Government, and DARPL (Diversity and Anti-Racist Professional Learning).

3.2 Delegates will be able to attend a selection of workshops and stands, or alternatively, delegates may choose to attend a session to hear speakers on the main stage.

3.3 The workshops will be an opportunity to listen to practitioners sharing their experiences, with presentations outlining:

- collaboration by Regional CfW Network members
- how specific schools have responded to CfW
- collaboration by schools in response to CfW

3.4 The wide range of workshops will focus on the following areas:

- Health and Wellbeing
- Humanities
- Expressive Arts
- Science and Technology
- Maths and Numeracy
- Languages, Literacy and Communication
- Curriculum Design
- Assessment
- Transition
- Mandatory and Statutory Element
- 2050 Cymraeg

3.5 There will also be up to 24 market stalls to share emerging practice in a less formal approach to share ideas, practice, and messages. There will be opportunity for a wide cross-section of stakeholders to contribute to the day.

4.0 Recommendations

4.1 The Joint Committee is asked to note the content of the report.

5.0 Financial implications

5.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report. GwE will operate within current financial resources.

6.0 Equalities Impact

6.1 There are no new equalities implications arising from this report.

7.0 Personnel Implications

7.1 There are no new personnel implications arising from this report.

8.0 Consultation undertaken

8.1 Consultation with usual key stakeholders.

OPINION OF STATUTORY OFFICERS

Monitoring Officer:

Nothing to add from a propriety perspective.

Statutory Finance Officer:

I note that part 5 of the report confirms that there are no financial implications arising from the report, and that the event will be funded within their existing resources. Therefore, I have nothing to add to the report from the perspective of financial propriety.