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Bridgend County Borough Council



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Cyfarwyddiaeth y Prif Weithredwr / Chief Executive's Directorate

Deialu uniongyrchol / Direct line /: 01656 643148 / 643147 / 643694

Gofynnwch am / Ask for: Democratic Services

Ein cyf / Our ref:

Eich cyf / Your ref:

Dyddiad/Date: Friday, 10 September 2021

Dear Councillor,

SUBJECT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 1

A meeting of the Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 1 will be held in the remotely - via Microsoft Teams on **Thursday, 16 September 2021 at 09:30.**

AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence
To receive apologies for absence from Members
2. Declarations of Interest
To receive declarations of personal and prejudicial interest (if any) from Members/Officers in accordance with the provisions of the Members Code of Conduct adopted by Council from 1 September 2008 (including whipping declarations)
3. Approval of Minutes 3 - 4
To receive for approval the minutes of the meeting of 14/06/2021
4. How Central South Consortium Supports Bridgend Schools Invitees: 5 - 112

Lindsay Harvey - Corporate Director – Education and Family Support
Cllr Charles Smith - Cabinet Member for Education and Regeneration
Nicola Echanis - Head of Education and Family Support
Susan Roberts - Group Manager School Improvement

Clara Seery - Managing Director - Central South Consortium
Andrew Williams - Assistant Director for Partnerships and Improvement - Central South Consortium
Andy Rothwell - Principal Improvement Partner - Central South Consortium

Hannah Castle - Headteacher, Cynffig Comprehensive School, Vice-Chair of BASH and Chair of Schools Budget Forum)

Kath John - Headteacher, Brackla Primary School and Chair of Primary Federation

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Jeremy Phillips - Headteacher, Litchard Primary School and Vice-Chair of Primary Federation
Helen Ridout - Headteacher of Ysgol Bryn Castell

5. Forward Work Programme Update 113 - 122

6. Urgent Items

To consider any item(s) of business in respect of which notice has been given in accordance with Part 4 (paragraph 4) of the Council Procedure Rules and which the person presiding at the meeting is of the opinion should by reason of special circumstances be transacted at the meeting as a matter of urgency.

Note: Please note: Due to the current requirement for social distancing this meeting will not be held at its usual location. This will be a virtual meeting and Members and Officers will be attending remotely. The meeting will be recorded for subsequent transmission via the Council's internet site which will be available as soon as practicable after the meeting. If you have any queries regarding this, please contact cabinet_committee@bridgend.gov.uk or tel. 01656 643147 / 643148.

Yours faithfully

K Watson

Chief Officer, Legal, HR & Regulatory Services

Councillors:

TH Beedle
JPD Blundell
RJ Collins
PA Davies
SK Dendy
J Gebbie

Councillors

T Giffard
CA Green
DG Howells
M Hughes
M Jones
KL Rowlands

Councillors

B Sedgebeer
RME Stirman
T Thomas
CA Webster

Registered Representatives

Rev Canon Edward Evans
Lyndsay Morris

Church in Wales
Secondary School Sector

Agenda Item 3

SUBJECT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 1 - MONDAY, 14 JUNE 2021

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE SUBJECT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 1
HELD IN REMOTELY - VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS ON MONDAY, 14 JUNE 2021 AT 09:30

Present

Councillor KL Rowlands – Chairperson

TH Beedle
SK Dendy
M Hughes

JPD Blundell
T Giffard
M Jones

RJ Collins
CA Green

PA Davies
DG Howells

Apologies for Absence

J Gebbie, B Sedgebeer, RME Stirman and T Thomas

Registered Representatives

L Morris

Secondary School Sector

Officers:

Meryl Lawrence
Tracy Watson

Senior Democratic Services Officer - Scrutiny
Scrutiny Officer

23. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

24. CORPORATE PARENTING CHAMPION NOMINATION REPORT

The Chief Officer – Legal, HR & Regulatory Services submitted a report, the purpose of which was to request the Committee to nominate one Member as its Corporate Parenting Champion to represent the Committee as an invitee to meetings of the Cabinet Committee Corporate Parenting.

The Chairperson invited nominations, following which it was

RESOLVED: That Councillor Cllr J Gebbie be nominated to represent Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 1 as an Invitee to meetings of the Cabinet Committee Corporate Parenting.

25. NOMINATION TO THE PUBLIC SERVICE BOARD SCRUTINY PANEL

The Chief Officer – Legal, HR & Regulatory Services submitted a report, the purpose of which was to request the Committee to nominate one Member to sit on the Public Service Board Scrutiny Panel.

The Chairperson invited nominations, following which it was

RESOLVED: That Councillor Cllr SK Dendy be nominated to represent Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 1 as an Invitee to meetings of the Public Service Board Scrutiny Panel.

26. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE

The Senior Democratic Services Officer – Scrutiny presented the Committee with the proposed draft outline Forward Work Programme (FWP) (Appendix A) for discussion and consideration, requested any specific information the Committee identified to be included in the items for the next two meetings, including invitees they wished to attend, requested the Committee to identify any further items for consideration on the Forward Work Programme having regard to the selection criteria in paragraph 4.6 and asked the Committee to note that the proposed draft Forward Work Programmes for the Committee would be reported to the next meeting of COSC, with the comments from each respective Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee, following consideration in their June Committee meetings.

Following presentation of the report and discussion, Members of the Committee proposed the following item to be added to the FWP :

- How schools coped with the pandemic (early next year)

Members also requested Invitees for the next meeting for the report upon Additional Learning Needs include:

- An experienced ALN Teacher / ALN Coordinators from a Primary and Secondary School;
- Headteacher representatives from Secondary and Primary schools with ALN knowledge across a geographical spread of the County Borough

In addition Members requested the following:

- Information regarding the Everyone's Invited list of Schools within the County Borough
- Assurance regarding Corporate safeguarding procedures in Bridgend
- Statistics for Child Protection referrals from Schools
- That consideration be given to consulting Schools regarding potential topics for scrutiny.
- That the Minutes of the last two Scrutiny Committee meetings at which Additional Learning Needs (ALN) had been considered, be circulated to Members as background to the report upon ALN for the next meeting on 5th July.

RESOLVED: That the Committee considered and agreed the proposed draft outline Forward Work Programme in Appendix A subject to the above and noted that the Forward Work Programme and any update from the Committee would be reported to the next meeting of COSC.

27. **URGENT ITEMS**

None

The meeting closed at 10:30

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO SUBJECT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 1

16 SEPTEMBER 2021

REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR EDUCATION AND FAMILY SUPPORT

HOW CENTRAL SOUTH CONSORTIUM SUPPORTS BRIDGEND SCHOOLS

1. Purpose of report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to update the Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 1 in respect of how:

- Central South Consortium supports all schools in the local authority;
- Central South Consortium works alongside all schools and the local authority to ensure the support is balanced; and how
- through the 'Team Bridgend' approach, the local authority is working to satisfy expectations and guidance from Welsh Government

2. Connection to corporate well-being objectives/other corporate priorities

2.1 This report assists in the achievement of the following corporate well-being objective/objectives under the **Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015**:

Supporting a successful sustainable economy - taking steps to make the county borough a great place to do business, for people to live, work, study and visit, and to ensure that our schools are focused on raising the skills, qualifications and ambitions for all people in the county borough.

Helping people and communities to be more health and resilient - taking steps to reduce or prevent people from becoming vulnerable or dependent on the Council and its services. Supporting individuals and communities to build resilience, and enable them to develop solutions to have active, healthy and independent lives.

Smarter use of resources - ensure that all resources (financial, physical, ecological, human and technological) are used as effectively and efficiently as possible and support the creation of resources throughout the community that can help to deliver the Council's well-being objectives.

3. Background

- 3.1 The local authority commissions Central South Consortium to provide a school improvement service on behalf of the local authority. The local authority and Central South Consortium have developed a close and effective working relationship which has proved to be extremely beneficial in supporting schools. The effectiveness of this relationship is reflected by positive comments in Estyn's inspection of Bridgend's local government education services in March 2019.
- 3.2 The core focus of all school improvement activity is providing support and challenge to schools to ensure learners across the local authority have the right educational experiences to allow them to make progress and be successful in the next phase of learning or employment.
- 3.3 In 2014, Welsh Government introduced the National School Categorisation System (NSCS) to raise the standard of education across schools in Wales. On behalf of the local authority, Central South Consortium carried out the categorisation process and reported outcomes to both the local authority and Welsh Government.
- 3.4 Through the NSCS process, schools were allocated a fixed number of days of support based on their colour category (eg 'Green' schools received up to 4 days of support and 'Red' schools received 15 days of support).
- 3.5 As part of wider educational reforms that Wales is undertaking, the NSCS was under review prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. In July 2020, Welsh Government announced that the NSCS was to be suspended.
- 3.6 In response to the suspension of the NSCS, in September 2020, Central South Consortium developed, used and refined a new model of support for schools which was closely linked to the emerging new guidance from the Welsh Government: 'School improvement guidance - framework for evaluation, improvement and accountability' (appendix 1).
- 3.7 The most notable difference between the NSCS model and the newer Central South Consortium model is that the NSCS model followed a 'done to schools' approach based on high challenge and linked to narrow, test data points and short-term outcomes. In contrast, the new model is following a 'working alongside schools' approach based on school priorities for improvement and more time allocated for all schools.
- 3.8 It is important to note that, under the new model, the local authority still retains the statutory power to intervene in schools causing concern, where schools are not providing a good enough standard of education for their pupils.

4. Current situation/proposal

4.1 Central South Consortium continues to provide the local authority with effective school improvement services. This includes the following:

- an improvement partner linked to every school;
- A Welsh in Education officer linked with every school;
- the Newly Qualified Teacher (NQT) programme;
- the National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH);
- professional learning for all school-based staff at all stages of their career (including all leadership programmes for middle leaders, senior leaders and experienced leaders);
- extensive professional learning linked to emerging school priorities;
- mandatory training modules for school governors;
- funded collaboration projects;
- a central repository of case studies, research and innovation projects linked to best practice;
- extensive professional learning linked to national priorities (eg intensive support for the development of the Curriculum for Wales); and
- oversight of grant-funded activity.

4.2 The document 'Supporting School Improvement September 2021 and Beyond' (appendix 2) outlines the detailed approach that Central South Consortium, with the approval of the regional Joint Committee, will take to supporting schools.

4.3 This approach builds on the principles set by Welsh Government. They are:

4.3.1 There will be a discussion/collaborative meeting with schools and governing body representative to:

- share and agree school improvement priorities based on self-evaluation and the national reform agenda;
- agree the additional support needs of the school/setting (local authority and regional support) (ie the agreed support should be reference within the school development plan); and

- identify where the school/setting has strengths and its capacity to support others.
- 4.3.2 Regions will collate an overview of school improvement priorities and the support being provided by both the local authority and region.
- 4.3.3 Support provided to schools/settings will be documented.
- 4.3.4 In collaboration with schools, regions and local authorities will provide a termly evaluation on the school's progress towards meeting its priorities, identifying or amending bespoke support as necessary.
- 4.3.5 In collaboration with schools and governing bodies, regions and local authorities will identify and discuss any potential risks to progress, identifying or amending bespoke support as necessary.
- 4.3.6 Work collaboratively with schools to undertake a range of self-evaluation activity where appropriate and facilitate opportunities for school-to-school peer working to support self-evaluation processes.
- 4.4 Each school in the local authority is allocated an improvement partner to work alongside them. With the significant reform agenda that is in progress across Wales, it is important that Central South Consortium continues to ensure the support provided by improvement partners is holistic, efficient and effective in line with the national principles. It is essential the improvement partner forms a strong professional relationship working with the headteacher.
- 4.5 As well as providing support and challenge to schools, the improvement partner also ensures that schools are well prepared and display behaviours that positively support the complete national reform agenda. The complete national reform agenda encompasses five areas:
- Curriculum
 - Assessment and evaluation
 - Equity, excellence and wellbeing
 - Teaching
 - Leadership
- 4.6 Central South Consortium provides schools with excellent professional learning opportunities, resources and guidance to support schools through this transformational reform. School leaders need the time and space to be able to make sense of transformational reform and the plethora of national and regional supporting resources that go with it. The improvement partner role is a hugely significant one in 'signposting' school leaders and other stakeholders to use the pertinent documents (eg Central South Consortium's 'Equity and Excellence' strategy and professional learning that is available in the region, a conduit between policy and practice). This

will enhance the school's ability to develop as a learning organisation and support putting the new curriculum and other reforms into place.

- 4.7 Improvement partners will continue to support the governing body with the headteacher's performance management and will support the governing body to understand its role in school improvement. Improvement partners will also collaborate with the Regional Leads for Governors to support school governors to fulfil their responsibility in holding schools to account.
- 4.8 Support will take the form of 'core' or 'enhanced' support that is provided in a fair way that is inversely proportional to needs of the school. All schools will receive a basic minimum allocation of days and further time will be allocated based on the support needs identified. This minimum is:

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

- 4.9 Enhanced support schools will receive additional time to reflect the development needs and monitoring requirements. This support will be agreed between the school and improvement partner and shared with the local authority when the school improvement priorities are agreed. Specified days might not all be from the same improvement partner but might include work of others that are more specialists in certain areas. The impact of this support will be monitored half termly and will be shared with local authorities in the termly review meetings. Central South Consortium quality assurance processes will ensure that support is targeted and is meeting the needs of the school. Our processes will focus on the impact of support in school and will ensure consistency across the local authority.
- 4.10 The improvement partner will support schools through appropriate challenge to identify clear, manageable, improvement priorities as a consequence of effective self-evaluation. The improvement partner will work with school leaders to review first-hand evidence and ensure that this is rigorous and accurate. This will work in conjunction with the school systems and will not generate additional work for school leaders. This is in line with the Welsh Government guidance where it is the intention that these priorities will in part replace target setting.

- 4.11 Each school will have their own unique set of priorities, based on their own context, self-evaluation, needs and improvement journey, ultimately seeking to improve learner outcomes. Therefore, priorities will need to ensure a focus on pupil progress. Furthermore, the improvement partner will also support schools in ensuring that improvement priorities are drawn together in a single, strategic school development plan, helping to reduce workload, streamline schools' strategic planning processes and avoid unnecessary duplication and bureaucracy. These priorities will be made available to the local authority for its approval. All support will be referenced in the school improvement plan and the improvement partner will work in partnership with local authority colleagues based on a shared understanding of their respective roles in supporting schools, to engage with schools on their respective development plan. It is important that improvement partners also capture strengths and emerging practice worth sharing. This can be shared with school governors and other improvement partners.
- 4.12 The documents found at appendix 2 and appendix 3 offer more detail regarding the typical working programme of an improvement partner in supporting schools.
- 4.13 Maintaining close working relationships and clear communication between Central South Consortium, the local authority and schools is pivotal in ensuring that everyone has a common and consistent understanding. The 'Team Bridgend' approach is central to making this a success and Central South Consortium plays an active role within 'Team Bridgend'. Improvement partners will continue to develop and foster collaborative working partnerships with local authority colleagues. Improvement partners are mindful of the individual systems and process in each local authority and will work accordingly. Joint collaboration will facilitate an effective sharing of information to ensure a mutual understanding to enable effective school improvement. Termly local authority performance meetings provide the opportunity for dialogue and information sharing.
- 4.14 Improvement partners will continue using the successful strategies in place and will work with local authority colleagues to adapt and improve where needs emerge. The principal improvement partner will continue to be a pivotal link with each local authority and will ensure an effective two-way flow of information. Central South Consortium will ensure that local authorities have regular feedback on the quality of provision and impact of support in all of their schools. Further links with local authorities are identified in the 'Framework for School Improvement'.
- 4.15 Schools will continue to have the support they require and this will be monitored by improvement partners and shared with local authorities. Where schools cause significant concern specific support and follow up mechanisms will be in place.

5. Effect upon policy framework and procedure rules

5.1 There is no effect upon the policy framework or procedure rules.

6. Equality Act 2010 implications

6.1 The protected characteristics identified within the Equality Act, Socioeconomic Duty and the impact on the use of the Welsh language have been considered in the preparation of this report. As a public body in Wales, the Council must consider the impact of strategic decisions, such as the development or the review of policies, strategies, services and functions. This is an information report, therefore it is not necessary to carry out an equalities impact assessment in the production of this report. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable equality impacts as a result of this report.

7. Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 implications

7.1 The well-being goals and principles prescribed for within the Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015 connect directly to the approach to supporting schools. The approach to supporting schools is consistent with the five ways of working as defined within the sustainable development principle and more specifically as follows:

Long-term	The approach to school improvement focuses on meeting the needs of children and young people from the age of 0-25.
Prevention	The focus of the school improvement is upon early identification of need and ensuring that there is appropriate learning provision in place to meet individual needs.
Integration	The approach to school improvement addresses the need for a coherent delivery of economic, social, environmental and cultural outcomes.
Collaboration	A fundamental principal of the approach to school improvement focuses on improving collaboration and creating a unified system.
Involvement	Ensuring that children and young people, parents and carers are at the heart of the system and that needs are discussed in a person-centred way.

8. Financial implications

8.1 There are no financial implications linked to this report.

9. Recommendations

9.1 The committee is requested to:

- consider the content of this report; and
- provide feedback.

Lindsay Harvey

CORPORATE DIRECTOR EDUCATION AND FAMILY SUPPORT

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Valleys Innovation Centre,
Abercynon,
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CF45 4SN.

Background documents:

Appendix 1

School improvement guidance: framework for evaluation, improvement and accountability

Draft guidance

Guidance document no: 268/2021

Date of issue: 27 January 2021

Replaces: Draft evaluation and improvement (accountability) arrangements for Wales (February 2019)

School improvement guidance

Audience	This document is aimed at governing bodies of maintained schools (including nurseries and local authority management boards of pupil referral units); headteachers and school staff; regional consortia, local authorities; diocesan authorities; Estyn; education unions and other interested parties.
Overview	This document provides non-statutory guidance on school improvement and sets out the new framework for Evaluation, Improvement and Accountability, and its implementation. The document provides a guide to schools and those who support them in embedding effective improvement arrangements whilst implementing the new curriculum and associated reforms.
Action required	Schools, local authorities, regional consortia and Estyn to have regard to this guidance when dealing with school improvement arrangements.
Further information	Enquiries about this document should be directed to:

School Effectiveness Division
The Education Directorate
Welsh Government
Cathays Park
Cardiff
CF10 3NQ

e-mail: SchoolImprovement@gov.wales



@WG_Education



Facebook/EducationWales

Additional copies This document can be accessed from the Welsh Government's website at <https://gov.wales/school-improvement-guidance>

Related documents Education (School Development Plans) (Wales) Regulations 2014;
The Education (Pupil Referral Units) (Application of Enactments) (Wales) Regulations 2007 – as amended;
The School Governors' Annual Reports (Wales) Regulations 2011 – as amended;
The School Teacher Appraisal (Wales) Regulations 2011 – as amended; Education Act 1996;
School Standards and Framework Act 1998;
Education Act 2005;
Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015;
Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Bill;
Schools causing concern – statutory guidance for schools and local authorities: guidance document no: 222/2017.
The Equality Act 2010
The Equality and Human Rights Commission guidance - What equality law means for you as an education provider: schools
Cymraeg 2050: A million Welsh speakers
The Welsh in education strategic plans (Wales) Regulations 2019
School categories according to Welsh medium provision draft non-statutory guidance

Mae'r ddogfen yma hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg.

This document is also available in Welsh.

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School improvement guidance: framework for evaluation, improvement and accountability

Introduction

Curriculum for Wales

There will be a new curriculum for schools and funded non-maintained settings in Wales from September 2022 known as the Curriculum for Wales (referred to in this guidance as the 'new curriculum'). The new curriculum is designed to prepare young people to thrive in a future where digital skills, adaptability and creativity - alongside knowledge - are crucial.

Fundamental to the new curriculum are the **four purposes**: the shared vision and aspiration for every child and young person. The aim of a school's curriculum is to support its 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
- healthy, confident individuals, ready to lead fulfilling lives as valued members of society.

Another defining feature of the new curriculum framework is the emphasis placed on **learner progression**, supported by assessment arrangements that enable each individual learner to make progress at an appropriate pace, taking into account their diverse needs.

The introduction of the new curriculum contributes to our goals as a nation as set out in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. The underlying importance of **promoting well-being** is a theme that runs through the new curriculum: it is never a secondary consideration. This will be strengthened by the finalisation of an all-Wales framework for a **whole-school approach** to health and well-being. The new curriculum also supports another of the Act's overarching goals, namely 'A Wales of vibrant culture and **thriving Welsh language**'. *Cymraeg 2050: A million Welsh speakers* is our strategy for realising this ambition.

'Robust evaluation and accountability arrangements to support a self-improving system' is one of the four enabling objectives of the new curriculum. To be successful, it is crucial that all aspects of the schools system are aligned with and support the new curriculum and its underlying principles. The OECD's report to Welsh Government, 'Achieving the new curriculum for Wales', emphasised this point. The report is clear that the accountability framework, along with school-leaving qualifications, need to align with the new curriculum principles in order to avert the risk that misaligned accountability and qualification measures undermine the curriculum.

This guidance therefore aims to drive behaviours that positively support and enable our vision for the new curriculum and assessment, including the centrality of the four purposes, the emphasis on learner progression and the importance of well-being.

School improvement guidance¹

The overarching purpose of school improvement is to help schools give learners the best possible learning experiences and outcomes. Within the context of the new curriculum, this guidance aims to foster sustainable school improvement through a clear framework for evaluation, improvement and accountability.

Within this framework, there is a clear distinction between **evaluation and improvement activities** and **accountability**. The majority of the energy and focus in the system should be on delivering school improvement, guided by effective self-evaluation, improvement planning² and support in all schools. As part of evaluation and improvement, practitioners and school leaders should have the support and confidence to learn and improve their practice continually. This will enable them to thrive in a supportive and collaborative environment that will raise standards and ensure every young person can fulfil their potential.

Fundamental to the new arrangements is robust and continuous **self-evaluation** by schools. Our inspectorate, Estyn, have identified that currently self-evaluation is an aspect of school leadership that needs improvement. To this end, we have developed a national evaluation and improvement resource (NEIR) which will support schools in undertaking robust, enquiry-based, self-evaluation.

Effective self-evaluation will be complemented by professional dialogue between schools, local authorities, diocesan authorities where relevant, and regional consortia, to agree on schools' **improvement priorities and support**. Informed by this, all schools will have a single, School Development Plan³ they are working towards. Underpinning the arrangements will be a broad range of high quality information about schools, and other parts of the system, which will need to be used in a timely, intelligent and supportive way.

The **accountability system**, in contrast, is the safety net for when evaluation and improvement is not functioning effectively. It should not drive school improvement activity, although it should ensure that problems are identified and addressed. Therefore, alongside the improvement and support roles played by local authorities and regional consortia, the system requires effective democratic accountability and governance arrangements. Similarly, the role of Estyn in delivering regular, consistent, comprehensive and accurate inspections of schools, local authorities and regional consortia will be crucial to ensure robust accountability within the system.

An important part of both improvement and accountability is clarity and understanding about **roles and responsibilities**. Welsh Government also recognises the importance of an effective school improvement infrastructure, as a

¹ Issued under Section 10 of the Education Act 1996.

² This guidance uses the phrase 'improvement planning'; this is understood to have the same meaning as 'development planning'.

³ This guidance refers to School Development Plans, which is consistent with the School Development Plans Regulations 2014. The term 'School Development Plan' is interchangeable with 'School Improvement Plan'.

key influence to reduce variation in the quality of teaching and learning to support delivery of the new curriculum in schools.

This guidance therefore provides a new point of reference for schools, local authorities, diocesan authorities, regional consortia and Estyn, outlining Welsh Government's expectations of them in contributing to school improvement, in the context of their wider legal duties. It is vital that schools, especially those in need of greater support, are able to receive effective support from peers, regional consortia and local authorities, in order to bring about sustainable improvement.

Overall, the guidance aims to:

- support the principles and practices of the new curriculum, and create the significant system and culture changes necessary for the new curriculum to succeed, helping to raise standards for all;
- develop and encourage a continuous improvement culture across all schools;
- underpin the ongoing development of the self-improving system;
- support collaboration between schools, rather than competition;
- focus school evaluation and improvement on a wider range of evidence, which better captures the whole learning experience, learner progress and well-being;
- clarify how the accountability system should help to increase standards, without having a negative impact on evaluation and improvement; and
- bring clarity to the roles and responsibilities of all parties involved in assisting the improvement of schools.

It is ultimately through the successful implementation of the new curriculum, supported by effective and aligned evaluation, improvement and accountability, that we will raise the standards for all and help to tackle the attainment gap between learners from disadvantaged backgrounds and their peers.

'Our national mission' has been implemented in accordance with the five principles of working set out in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act, 2015 and seeks to support Welsh Government's well-being objectives. Effective and aligned evaluation, improvement and accountability will also contribute to the well-being goals set out in the 2015 Act, most notably the goals of a prosperous, a more equal and a healthier Wales.

A self-improving system, which enables schools to focus evaluation and improvement on a wider range of evidence, will also help and encourage them to consider how they can contribute towards well-being goals when designing, adopting and implementing their curriculum and engaging learners. This will be increasingly important as schools embed a whole-school approach to health and well-being.

By issuing separate, non-statutory, school improvement guidance now, we are providing schools, local authorities, regional consortia, Estyn and diocesan authorities, with time to test the approaches to school improvement and accountability, and to change and embed practice to support the transition to the new curriculum, ready for September 2022.

It is our intention to update the guidance, building on learning in 2021/22, and to issue it as statutory guidance to come into force in September 2022, alongside the new curriculum.

Framework for evaluation, improvement and accountability



What is Welsh Government's vision for each aspect of the framework for evaluation, improvement and accountability?

A) Information and evidence

A broad range of high quality, relevant and timely information and evidence underpins all aspects of the framework for evaluation, improvement and accountability. It is used for three purposes: improvement, accountability and transparency.

For improvement, schools use the widest and richest possible range of evidence available to inform self-evaluation and improvement planning within their own context.

Through an intelligent and sophisticated use of evidence, based on rigorous, enquiry-based approaches, schools can accurately identify their strengths and areas for development as a basis for sustainable school improvement.

B) Evaluation and improvement

1) Self-evaluation

Schools carry out honest and thorough self-evaluation, through rigorous, enquiry-based analysis of the evidence available, as part of a culture of continuous improvement.

The whole school community has the opportunity to contribute appropriately to the process.

2) Improvement priorities and school development plan

Schools identify clear, manageable improvement priorities as a consequence of effective self-evaluation processes.

Improvement priorities are drawn together in a single, strategic school development plan.

3) Support, collaboration and improvement

With schools' self-evaluations and development plans as the starting point, regional consortia and local authorities agree with the school the additional support it needs to improve and to build its own capacity.

Through their engagement with schools, regional consortia also identify where schools have strengths and capacity to support other schools within the region to improve.

C) Accountability

1) Democratic accountability

Governing bodies are the accountable bodies for their schools. They are therefore responsible for strategic leadership of the school, for its effective governance and ultimately for driving improvements in their schools for the benefit of learners.

Local authorities have the power to intervene in 'schools causing concern'. However, for the majority of schools, governing bodies should be free to oversee the evaluation and

improvement process in their schools, supported by advice, resources and services from local authorities and regional consortia.

Alongside clarity about where accountability resides, there is a culture of collective responsibility for the quality of education provided to all children and young people.

2) Inspection

Schools will be inspected more regularly by Estyn. Inspections will provide fair and rigorous evaluations of the quality of leadership, teaching and learning at the school, including the curriculum and well-being of teachers and pupils.

Inspection reports will have sufficient explanatory narrative about the performance of schools, supporting schools' improvement planning in response to inspections, without including summative judgements.

Information and evidence

This guidance sets out the key principles determining the use of information for different purposes and at different tiers of the education system.⁴

These are the three main purposes for the use of information in the new system. Often, different types and levels of information will be relevant and appropriate for the different purposes.

Improvement – is for the learner. A wide range of information supports effective self-evaluation and improvement at all tiers of the system. At school level, it supports schools to continually improve and to give all learners the best possible education. It will therefore include information covering the whole school, as well as at an aggregate and individual pupil level. For other tiers of the system, a wide range of information will be used to support self-evaluation and continuous improvement of service delivery to support the education system.

Accountability – is for governance purposes. Information available and used for this purpose will help governing bodies, local and diocesan authorities and regional consortia to oversee the quality of delivery by their own organisations and, in doing so, to fulfil their democratic accountability functions. While not all of the information that is used to inform accountability processes needs to be publically available, we would expect the outcomes to be. For example, via Governing Body reports or local authority Scrutiny Committee minutes.

Transparency – is for the wider citizen, telling us about how well both individual bodies and the system is doing. It will include national level information (e.g. PISA data), as well as some information at a sub-national and school level (e.g. Estyn inspection outcomes), and be easily accessible. This should build and secure public confidence in the Welsh education system.

Under each of these main purposes for information, the Welsh Government's aim is to:

- Increase the use of the widest and richest possible range of information to inform self-evaluation and improvement within schools' own context;
- Clarify the use of information for accountability purposes, so that this does not inhibit schools' improvement or drive negative behaviours;
- Increase the range and quality of information available publically about schools and the wider system to increase transparency and public confidence;
- Set clear expectations about the ownership and use of information.

While the immediate aims may differ, all three purposes should ultimately contribute to improving the learning experiences and outcomes of pupils.

⁴ The Welsh Government is commissioning independent research, which will include engagement with stakeholders, to consider some of the detail about what additional or different information should be used in the context of this approach.

What are Welsh Government's expectations of schools, local authorities, diocesan authorities, regional consortia and Estyn?

In using information, schools, local authorities, diocesan authorities and regional consortia should:

- Reduce their reliance on narrow measures of student attainment to evaluate schools.
- Use a balanced approach that draws on a coherent and comprehensive set of qualitative and quantitative information, aligned to the new curriculum, in a non-hierarchical manner. This information will be unique to each school.
- Ensure that school leaders, teachers and support staff are not distracted from their work with learners to gather and retain often considerable and unnecessary, quantities of evidence to satisfy different requirements.

Schools should:

- Use a wide range of information to look at the progress of all pupils and the systems that support them, in order to arrive at a holistic view of learner progression.
- Draw on a wide range of different types of information, covering the breadth of school activity – including learner progress, well-being and the realisation of the four purposes – to inform self-evaluation (consistent with the principles in the next chapter)
- Select information used for self-evaluation dependent on their own context, needs and priorities.
- Consider carefully, and within context, the use of comparative information, and consider how it can support increased collaboration between schools and the sharing of effective practice.
- Make effective use of information they hold themselves for the purpose of self-evaluation, as well as using a wide range of evidence either made available to them by others or which they have sourced.

Local authorities and regional consortia, and diocesan authorities (where appropriate), should work in partnership to:

- Make available to schools any information they hold which would be beneficial for schools' self-evaluation (e.g. attendance analyses produced by the local authority), as part of a culture of partnership working.
- Share relevant information and intelligence about schools between each other, reinforcing their professional partnership.
- Consider school level evidence and information to:
 - help determine schools' support needs and capacity to support others; and
 - contribute to their own self-evaluation of their services to support schools (e.g. direct support; professional learning; use of intervention powers). This, in turn, should inform Councils' review of their performance at a corporate, strategic level.

Estyn should ensure that their inspection framework and arrangements are consistent with the principles and expectations set out for the use of information in this guidance.

Use of learner assessment information

Learner assessment information should not be used for accountability purposes. The purpose of assessment is to support individual learner progression. Local authorities and regional consortia must not, therefore, collate and aggregate school level data or create specific local arrangements to gather individual pupil level information.

Information from school's assessment arrangements should, however, inform school self-evaluation arrangements and guide improvement in teaching and learning. It will also support discussions within clusters and wider networks, where appropriate, in order to build collaborative approaches for learner progression within the new curriculum.

For example, assessment information should enable practitioners and leaders within the school to understand whether different groups of learners are making expected progress, and to consider any gap between disadvantaged and their peers. This analysis should be used to identify strengths and areas for improvement in both the school curriculum and teaching practice, thus contributing to self-evaluation and continuous improvement.

While the use of assessment information is not for external reporting and accountability, using it effectively to support learner progression and to help improve teaching practice, is a core professional responsibility of a school's teaching staff. Headteachers should therefore use the [assessment guidance](#) as a basis for professional discussions and learning within their schools.

The responsibility for implementing the assessment guidance is for headteachers and governing bodies of all maintained schools.

External examinations data

To reflect the new curriculum and meet the future needs of learners, qualifications for 14- 16 year olds are being reviewed and reformed. New qualifications will be rolled-out for first teaching from 2025, with the first awards being in 2027. To develop the qualification offer for 14-16 year olds, Qualifications Wales is running a series of public consultations between 2019 and 2022.

The outcomes of independent external qualifications are of legitimate and valid public interest. They have, therefore, routinely featured in the range of information made publicly available about schools, and will continue to do so. This practice is for transparency. It is not for accountability (as outlined in this guidance), though it has previously been perceived and used as such.

This data has previously been described as school performance measures. In reality, it is data about one aspect of a school's performance – the performance in external examinations of specific cohorts of a school's learners - that cannot be understood or analysed in isolation. Therefore, for the purpose of this guidance, we will describe it as 'external examinations data'.

Published external examination indicators are designed for a specific purpose, which is to frame data in a manner appropriate for self-evaluation and as a starting point for analysis and planning. The information is, therefore, limited by design in what it can convey. It should not be used in isolation or out of context, nor presented as evidence of how effective a school is. In this way, the information is useful for self-evaluation, but should not be used in isolation, either for this purpose or for accountability.

There will be cases where external examinations data is relevant for accountability purposes. Where schools fail to use external examinations data, appropriately triangulated and contextualised, to self-evaluate and improve, then they may need support to do so in the first instance; and ultimately to be held account by their governing body and/or Estyn.

However, using external examinations data, out of context, for accountability purposes can lead to perverse behaviours and choices by schools that are not necessarily in the best interests of learners. Instead, it is important for schools, governing bodies, local authorities and regional consortia to consider and engage with the wider policy and new curriculum intentions that sit behind published data and measures. In particular, schools should be mindful of the need to offer a broad and balanced curriculum and to ensure that the progress made by every learner is their priority.

Information for transparency

There is considerable public interest in information about schools. The provision of information to the public is for transparency. It is not for accountability, but has often been perceived as such by the schools sector. As this guidance sets out, accountability is a process underpinned by effective governance within schools, democratic scrutiny and inspection, not simply the release of information into the public arena. The frequent conflation of transparency and accountability has not been helped by the use of the same information for multiple purposes.

Schools

Information should be made publicly available about schools by: the schools themselves (e.g. on their websites and in prospectuses, governors' annual reports and school development plans); local authorities (e.g. in composite school prospectuses); diocesan authorities (e.g. section 50 inspection reports); Welsh Government (e.g. in Official Statistics and on the My Local School website); and Estyn (e.g. in inspection reports).

The information made publicly available should enable a school's context to be understood and appreciated. The Welsh Government ensures that a consistent set of contextual information is available about schools learners (e.g. equalities characteristics, free school meal eligibility, additional learning needs, language category of the school according to Welsh-medium provision) and operations (e.g. teacher numbers, pupil-teacher ratio, budget per pupil). This should help enable the consideration of contextual information alongside that on learner outcomes.

The outcome of a school's ongoing self-evaluation for continuous improvement provides more meaningful transparency about areas of strength and priorities for improvement, which will be reflected in their school development plan, than un-contextualised examination data. To help increase confidence in and commitment to the school and its development plan, the school should publish the summary copy on its website (see 'Summary of improvement priorities and development plan').

In this way, parents and learners will be able to access standardised information that is available for all schools (e.g. contextual information and external examination data), along with information that is specific to their school (e.g. Estyn reports and summary development plans). Importantly, parents and learners should not only be passive recipients of information about their school, but should be able to participate in schools' evaluation and improvement themselves.

Local authorities and regional consortia

Information should be made publicly available by local authorities and regional consortia that is relevant to the services they deliver to support schools and learners. This should not be based on aggregations of school level information.

As for individual school development plans, local authorities and regional consortia should publish their service delivery plans, as these will provide more meaningful information to the public about their strengths and priorities for improvement, with respect to the services they provide.

They should also publish the minutes of their Principal Council and Scrutiny Committee meetings (for local authorities) and of their Joint Committee / Executive Board meetings (for regional consortia), as a public record of their accountability arrangements that relate to schools and the services they provide them. Similarly, the decisions of local authority executives, their committees and individual members of the executive must be made public.

Welsh Government

Information is also made publicly available at a national level that is relevant to the effectiveness of the education system in Wales and Welsh Government policies. This includes Wales' participation in PISA, Estyn's annual report and thematic reviews, independent evaluation of policy reforms (e.g. by the OECD).

Self-evaluation for continuous improvement

What is Welsh Government's vision for the role of self-evaluation in the framework for evaluation, improvement and accountability?

- All schools will have honest, robust, enquiry-based self-evaluation arrangements in place, building on the range of information and evidence available, as part of their strategic improvement process.
- The whole school community – learners, teachers, support staff, governors, parents and the local community – contributes to the process.
- Through high quality self-evaluation, drawing on enquiry-based methods, schools will develop further their learning and teaching to ensure they are effective in supporting learner progression.
- Self-evaluation will also identify a school's strengths, allowing them to contribute to system-wide improvement.
- All parts of the schools system will see self-evaluation as a mechanism for improving individual schools and the wider schools system, rather than as a compliance exercise within an all-encompassing accountability system.

What are Welsh Government's expectations of schools, local authorities, diocesan authorities and regional consortia?

Schools should use self-evaluation to:

- evaluate how well they are performing, covering all aspects of school operations;
- inform the school's improvement planning – both priorities and actions – and improvement processes;
- support sustained improvements in teaching and learning, and leadership, not short-term 'quick fixes';
- identify areas of strength to be shared with others;
- promote professional reflection and discussion; and
- inform professional learning.

Schools should decide which aspects of their operations to evaluate in detail. (The discussion prompts, which form part of the NEIR, can be used to support schools in this process.)⁵ Areas they should consider in doing so include:

- Vision and leadership
 - Leadership capacity (including governing body)
 - Evaluations of the impact and use of existing improvement strategies
 - Evaluations of the impact and use of support received
 - Financial management and use of resources;

⁵ See Annex B

- Curriculum
 - Implementation of the new curriculum (including the planning of Welsh-medium education)
 - Realisation of the Four Purposes
 - Family and community engagement⁶
- Learning and teaching
 - Learner progress, including the progress of different groups e.g. vulnerable and disadvantaged learners, and any gaps between them, and progression in Welsh within school settings other than Welsh-medium
 - Feedback from parents and learners
 - Workforce capacity, professional learning and capability
- Well-being
 - Progress in embedding a whole school approach to mental health and emotional well-being⁷
 - Learner well-being
 - Staff well-being
 - Arrangements to safeguard learners

Schools should take into account the following principles and guidance when designing and carrying out self-evaluation:

- Self-evaluation is most effective when it:
 - is continuous and aligned with improvement planning as an integrated process;
 - is reflective, honest and inclusive, using rigorous enquiry-based approaches that take in a wide range of views from across the school (including learner voice), the wider community and peers;
 - uses evidence-based practice to innovate and improve, while driving the sharing of effective practice within and between schools;
 - is based on a wide range of evidence, using data proportionately alongside first-hand evidence, to evaluate their own strengths and areas for development and improvement; and
 - keeps progress against improvement priorities under review.
- The analysis of data and information is important but should not be valued more highly than other aspects and methods of self-evaluation (e.g. listening to learners; observing teaching). Where it is used, it is most effective for self-evaluation and improvement when it:
 - focuses clearly on learner progress and well-being;
 - takes into account a wide range of evidence, not just one 'narrow' set of data;
 - takes the school's context into consideration;
 - considers the achievement of learners rather than their attainment;
 - is used to evaluate the progress and well-being of all learners and groups of learners; and
 - is based on reliable and accurate assessment.

⁶ <https://www.estyn.gov.wales/system/files/2020-07/Community%2520Schools%2520en.pdf>

⁷ <https://gov.wales/embedding-whole-school-approach-mental-health-and-well-being>

Schools should refer to the national evaluation and improvement resource (see Annex B) for more practical guidance about how to meet the expectations set out in this section and how robust, enquiry-based self-evaluation can be undertaken.

Both local and diocesan authorities and regional consortia should:

- Make available to schools any data and information they hold that could enhance schools' self-evaluation, where it is appropriate to do so.
- Support school leaders and governing bodies to identify areas where they may require additional support without fear that this will count against them for accountability purposes.

Regional consortia should:

- Advise schools on effective self-evaluation based on robust, enquiry-based approaches, and provide support to schools where needed (this might include helping schools to use the national evaluation and improvement resource);
- Facilitate relevant professional learning;
- Promote the culture of open and honest reflection and evaluation for improvement.

Summary of improvement priorities and development plan

What is Welsh Government's vision for the role of improvement planning in the framework for evaluation, improvement and accountability?

- Schools identify clear, manageable improvement priorities as a consequence of effective self-evaluation.
- Each school will have their own unique set of priorities, based on their own context, self-evaluation, needs and improvement journey, which should ultimately seek to have a positive impact on learner outcomes.
- Improvement priorities are drawn together in a single, strategic school development plan, helping to reduce workload, streamline schools' strategic planning processes and avoid unnecessary duplication and bureaucracy.
- Schools' own improvement priorities and development plans are published in summary form for the benefit of learners, parents and other stakeholders. This supports a culture in which schools are open about the support they need, where middle tier partners work with schools in a supportive, non-judgemental way.

What are Welsh Government's expectations of schools, local authorities and regional consortia?

Based on the School Development Plans Regulations, governing bodies must:⁸

- prepare a school development plan that covers a period of at least three years and is continuous.
- cover the areas set out in the Schedule (see Annex C) in their school development plan;
- revise the plan at least annually, and following an inspection by Estyn;
- consult the following people when preparing or revising the plan:
 - the headteacher of the school (if that person is not a member of the governing body);
 - registered pupils at the school;
 - parents of registered pupils;
 - school staff; and
 - such other persons as the governing body considers appropriate.
- publish the plan by providing copies to each member of the governing body and school staff. They may also choose to make the whole plan available on request to parents.

⁸ The School Development Plans (Wales) Regulations 2014 came into force in October 2014; all schools were required to comply with their requirements from 1 September 2015. They were accompanied by Welsh Government guidance, *School development plans*, which was intended to 'support schools in embedding a robust strategic planning approach to delivering improvements in learner outcomes'. The Regulations remain in force, but this guidance replaces the October 2014 guidance. It places the requirements of these Regulations in the context of the new framework for evaluation, improvement and accountability.

Overseen by governing bodies, schools should also:

- use its conclusions from self-evaluation arrangements to identify a manageable number of specific improvement priorities, which are designed to deliver sustainable improvement;
- include detailed priorities, targets and strategies for year one of the school development plan;
- capture higher level priorities and targets for years two, three and any further years;
- refresh improvement priorities at least annually, but take account of the impact of self-evaluation and new information on priorities throughout the year;
- plan focused actions to bring about improvements in these areas, identify necessary resources or funding where applicable, agree suitable milestones and success criteria, and set out how and when it will monitor and evaluate progress made;
- consider how they can both build on their existing strengths and learn from those of other schools, being alert to opportunities to work collaboratively and share best practice.
- specify who will provide the support, where this is necessary, to implement the improvements;
- use the school development plan to provide a context for the performance management process for all staff;
- via the accountability arrangements of the governing body, scrutinise and agree the improvement priorities, the outcomes expected, progress made against the school development plan, and support required to deliver the priorities;
- use its self-evaluation processes to evaluate regularly the progress made against its improvement priorities; and
- clearly report on progress against the previous year's priorities at least annually.

To further enhance their improvement planning, schools may:

- engage peers in the self-evaluation process to gain external perspective on improvement priorities - the principles of which will be contained in the guidance (see Annex D).

Local authorities should:

- not set predetermined common priorities for schools;
- work in partnership with their regional consortia, based on a shared understanding of their respective roles in supporting schools, to engage with schools on their development plan. (For example, where schools have improvement priorities around behaviour or attendance, it is likely the local authority will have more involvement than if curriculum or teaching and learning is the focus.)
- agree with schools what support they will provide on Human Resources (HR), Finance, Additional Learning Needs (ALN) , attendance and behaviour, buildings and other areas; and
- communicate any concerns they have about the appropriateness of schools' identified improvement priorities, or schools' judgements on progress against prior improvement priorities, to schools' governing bodies (the accountable body for the school). As above, this should be done in partnership with their regional consortia, and involve the diocesan authority where relevant.

Regional consortia should:

- not set predetermined common priorities for schools.
- provide support, feedback and guidance to schools on the content, quality and impact of their self-evaluation arrangements, the appropriate identification of improvement priorities, and on school development plans;
- agree with schools what support they will provide or broker on teaching and learning, leadership and professional learning, curriculum planning, and any other area.
- work in partnership with local authorities when engaging with schools on their development plans.
- communicate any concerns they have about the appropriateness of schools' identified improvement priorities, or schools' judgements on progress against prior improvement priorities, to schools' governing bodies.

Estyn should:

- rely on the above arrangements in each school, local authority and region in order to use schools' Development Plan as pre-inspection information;

In addition and jointly agreed, local authorities and regional consortia may provide Estyn, by exception, with a short note of any issues which may affect the inspection.

Published summaries

Governing bodies must make a summary copy of their school development plan available via the School Governors Annual Report.⁹

To help increase confidence in and commitment to the school and its development plan, and for transparency, the school should publish the summary copy on its website. The summary should include:

- High level priorities, actions, milestones and planned support for the current academic year
- A report on progress against the previous year's priorities.

Post-inspection

Following a school's inspection, the school development plan must be amended to reflect post-inspection feedback, findings, recommendations and proposed action. This should be done within 20 working days, as set out in the Inspection of the Careers and Related Services (Wales) Regulations 2006 as amended by the Education (Amendments Relating to the Inspection of Education and Training) (Wales) Regulations 2014 and distributed to relevant parties, as specified in the Education Act 2005 and the Education (School Inspection) (Wales) Regulations 2006.

Once the school's development plan has been updated, the summary published on the schools website should also be updated.

⁹ Regulation 11 of the SDP Regulations amended the School Governors' Annual Reports (Wales) Regulations 2001 to include provision to that effect.

Support, collaboration and improvement

What is Welsh Government's vision for the role of improvement planning in the framework for evaluation, improvement and accountability?

- With schools' self-evaluations and development plans as the starting point, regional consortia and local authorities agree with the school the additional support it needs to improve and to build its own capacity.
- The wider range of information being used at school level to evaluate improvement and identify priorities, will support regional consortia and local authorities to identify schools' support needs, as well as helping them to identify their own improvement priorities in order to improve service delivery.
- Schools have access to high quality and timely support from both local authorities and regional consortia, as well as from other schools. This will be enhanced by increased collaboration and communication between schools, local authorities and regional consortia.
- The agreed support schools will receive is incorporated in their development plans, including published summaries, providing an incentive for schools to ask for the help they need and enhancing transparency.
- Through their engagement with schools, regional consortia also identify where schools have strengths and capacity to support other schools to improve.

What are Welsh Government's expectations of schools, local authorities and regional consortia?

The support system described below is underpinned by the following principles:

- The process should be jointly constructed and collaborative, and should draw upon robust, enquiry-based approaches, starting with the school's self-evaluation and school development plan, and responding to feedback from schools and individual school needs. (This should also help to keep requirements for additional school preparatory work to a minimum.)
- Support should be designed to build schools' capacity, with schools making incremental improvements over time; it should not encourage a dependency culture.
- Importance of early identification of schools that are declining and in need of support, to prevent them becoming a 'school causing concern'.
- Support provided to schools is proportionate and flexible to their needs, with more support provided to schools that require it most.
- To focus on improving standards of achievement and attainment and improving learners' progress, well-being, learning, teaching and leadership.
- To promote and encourage peer working, collaboration and support between schools.
- To support the principles of the national evaluation and improvement resource and Schools as Learning Organisations work.

Support to schools from regional consortia and local authorities

Regional consortia will provide feedback and advice to schools on their self-evaluation arrangements, their impact on improvement and on schools' capacity to improve. Working in partnership with the school, using the school's self-evaluation as a foundation, the regional consortia and school will agree what specific support the school needs. The fundamental role of the regional consortia is not primarily to challenge the school, but to be a professional partner in the school's improvement, drawing on external expertise and experience. While there will be an element of challenge in any professional dialogue, it should not be the focus of the relationship.

All schools will be entitled to professional learning from the regional consortia that builds their own capacity to improve. This is likely to include their self-evaluation arrangements, the use of enquiry-based approaches for monitoring and evaluation, curriculum development, and development of leadership capacity.

They will also be entitled to additional bespoke support based on their self-evaluation and improvement priorities, working with regional consortia to determine the type and level of support required, relative to other schools.

The support provided to schools should not be determined by fixed time allocations or rigid, pre-determined professional learning offers.

Schools are also entitled to targeted support from their local authority where required. This may include: HR support for the governing body on recruitment and retention, and performance management; finance support and advice; advice and specialist support on ALN; behaviour and attendance support etc.

Working with the school, the regional consortia will be responsible for brokering support for the school. This is likely to be drawn from both within the consortia and local authority, as well as from other schools in the region, based on consortia's knowledge of their strengths and capacity.

Regional consortia may also, of course, broker support from schools outside of their region, particularly for Welsh Medium schools, schools with a religious character, special schools and Pupil Referral Units (PRU). . When brokering support for schools with a religious character outside of their own region, the relevant Diocesan Directors of Education should be informed.

Overseeing and brokering school-to-school collaboration and cluster working should be an increasingly important role of regional consortia in a collaborative, self-improving system (see 'School to school support' below). Regional consortia will also need to quality assure the support they broker for schools.

The local authority and regional consortia will jointly agree the rationale for the range of support made available for a school, and agree this with the school. The support being provided to schools by regional consortia and local authorities should be integrated in their school development plan, linked to the relevant improvement priorities. This should also form part of the published summary of the school's development plan, which is published as part of the Governors' Annual Report and on its website. In this way, learners, parents and the wider community will be able to see and understand how their school is being helped to improve and by whom. (It also allows regional consortia and local authorities to monitor the effectiveness of their own support.)

School to school support

An important feature of the self-improving system is the central role of schools and teachers in supporting other schools, so that strengths are spread across the system and areas for improvement are addressed through collaboration between peers. While this may happen organically in many cases, through existing relationships and structures, there is an important role for regional consortia in helping to facilitate this.

Both regional consortia and local authorities should champion collaboration between schools, encouraging a new system of collaborative working in which school leaders see their role as improving the whole system, as well as their individual institution.

'*Our national mission*' described how the '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 their own improvement and offer support for others to improve.' It is unlikely to be the case, however, that individual schools know where their strengths can best be deployed to support others.

Therefore, in their engagement with all schools, in addition to brokering them support, regional consortia will also assess what strengths schools have, and in what areas, to provide support to other schools. In order to do so, regional consortia should consider the elements of a school that are 'Leading', 'Improving' or 'Needing more intensive support'. As above, the starting point for this work should be schools' own self-evaluation.

Regional consortia and local authorities should recognise the continuum between these descriptions. The continuum assumes that it is likely that all schools have strengths and good practice to share and contribute to system wide improvement, while the strongest schools will have areas to improve and develop. Leading schools, in particular, will be well placed to provide peer support for others.

For the purpose of internal resource allocation, schools should be identified by regional consortia and local authorities as being on an improvement continuum for different areas of focus e.g. leadership capacity, curriculum design, or learning culture and behaviour. This will also help match those schools that need specific support with those best placed to offer it.

The schools would not be fixed in any given position, but may move when less or greater levels of support are required at any time during the year, for different purposes. The model would be multi-dimensional and allow schools to receive support in-line with a specific area of need.

Given the flexibility of the system, regional consortia would not need to moderate their identification of school strengths and areas for development across regions, nor should the output of this work be published. They should, however, establish an internal quality assurance process for their improvement work with schools, to check that schools are getting a level of support that is proportionate to their needs. Regional consortia should also collaborate and share good practice between each other, in line with the principles of evaluation and continuous improvement set out in this guidance for schools.

What can schools expect from the new system?

All schools:

- are entitled to ongoing professional dialogue and support from a named professional in the regional consortia who can advise and broker support (including on self-evaluation and improvement planning; leadership; curriculum implementation; and other relevant professional learning).
- will include in their school development plan what the local authority, regional consortia and other schools will provide to support them to meet their improvement priorities.

It is anticipated that all schools will:

- have at least one strong area of practice to share, and draw attention to this in the governing body's annual report;
- work with other schools in a supportive and collaborative way, where they have the capacity to do so, in order to raise standards for all learners and to drive system improvement.

Schools needing more intensive support would also:

- be entitled to greater support, focused on key areas identified;
- receive multi agency support through a support plan agreed by all parties (governing body, local authority, diocesan authority where relevant, regional consortia, and, in some cases, Estyn and Welsh Government);
- note the additional support in the governing body's annual report to parents; and
- be discussed through Estyn's local authority link inspector work.

In schools needing more intensive support, local authorities should not reduce or change the levels of support they are providing for ALN, behaviour, finance and HR without discussing and agreeing this with the governing body.

Schools causing concern

One of the objectives of this guidance is to describe the evaluation, improvement and support system that schools, local authorities and regional consortia should work within, in order to prevent schools getting to the point where they are 'causing concern'. There will still, however, be cases where local authorities or Welsh Ministers do need to intervene in schools.

The Welsh Government has issued revised statutory schools causing concern guidance: 'Schools Causing Concern: statutory guidance for schools and local authorities' 222/217. The guidance sets out the legislative requirements and powers available to local authorities and Welsh Ministers for intervening in schools causing concern, as prescribed in the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013. The schools causing concern guidance describes the formal process and various types of intervention available for both local authorities and Welsh Ministers when specific grounds for intervention exist.

Local authorities may determine, through their engagement with schools and regional consortia on evaluation and improvement, that the grounds for issuing a warning notice have been met. (This will include, but not be restricted to, a use of school-level information to inform their judgement of how effectively school governing bodies' are discharging their own duties.) At that point, the powers of intervention and the guidance will become relevant.

The principles and processes set out in this guidance continue to apply for schools causing concern. For example, schools causing concern are very likely to be classed as 'needing more intensive support' for some areas of activity in the support continuum described above.

Accountability

What is Welsh Government's vision for the role of accountability in the framework for evaluation, improvement and accountability?

- Governing bodies are the accountable bodies for their schools. In this role, they take responsibility for strategic leadership of the school, for its effective governance and ultimately for driving improvements in their schools for the benefit of learners.
- For the majority of schools, governing bodies should be free to oversee the evaluation and improvement process, supported by advice, resources and services from local authorities and regional consortia. However, where schools are causing concern, local authorities take swift and effective action, advised and supported by regional consortia.
- Democratic accountability in local authorities (Councils and Scrutiny Committees) and in regional consortia (Joint Committees and Company Board) is critical to strengthening the middle tier's role in supporting schools and to monitor, challenge and improve the work it does as part of this role.
- Alongside clarity about where accountability resides, there is a culture of collective responsibility for the quality of education provided to all children and young people.

What are Welsh Government's expectations of schools, local authorities and regional consortia?

Governing bodies and schools¹⁰

School governing bodies are responsible for the strategic leadership of their school. They decide what they want the school to achieve and set the strategic framework for getting there.

The school development plan, along with the governing body's agreed policies, will generally provide the strategic framework. Governing bodies monitor progress and regularly review the framework for the school in the light of that progress.

Separately, governing bodies must provide an annual report to parents about progress made over the year against the strategic framework, under The School Governors' Annual Reports (Wales) Regulations 2011.

With regards to evaluation and improvement more generally, governing bodies should:

- use the principles and approach to self-evaluation set out in this guidance in order to evaluate their own effectiveness, strengths and areas for improvement;

¹⁰ Detailed information about the roles and responsibilities of PRU Management Committees is set out in 2014 [Statutory Guidance](#). Local authorities should take account of the role of management committees of pupil referral units and to the requirement under the Education (Pupil Referral Units) (Management Committees etc) (Wales) Regulations 2014 for local authorities to delegate functions in those regulations to management committees.

- ensure that the school development plan is a fair and well understood reflection of the strengths and areas for development in the school;
- approve the school's improvement priorities and agree the support expectations proposed by the local authority and regional consortia;
- ensure a summary of the school development plan is published on the school's website, and updated post-inspection.

As the accountable body for a school, governing bodies should:

- Monitor delivery of school development plan and take action where progress against improvement priorities is unsatisfactory.
- Use the school development plan to provide a context for the performance management process for all staff, so that all staff are accountable for their role in delivering against the plan.
- Provide challenge to the headteacher and hold the headteacher to account for the overall performance and effectiveness of the school.

Local authorities

In their role 'maintaining' schools, local authorities provide a range of core services and support to schools. This typically includes: HR; finance; estates and buildings; school organisation and admissions; (including planning of Welsh medium education¹¹ALN.¹²

Scrutiny committees within local authorities oversee the work of the council in delivering statutory functions and wider services. Scrutiny is undertaken by elected Members who do not hold executive positions within the council. Effective scrutiny should enhance both improvement, accountability and transparency within the local authority.

In this context, Councils should:

- put arrangements in place to set expectations and manage the quality and impact of any shared service providing support to schools;
- make arrangements to implement sustainable improvement strategies to support schools, both in delivering their own direct services and in partnership with their regional school improvement consortium;
- use the information it holds about the performance of its Education function to inform the broader strategic level understanding of how the council is operating as a whole, is using its resources, and delivering for the people in its area;
- use a broad range of information to monitor and understand well the performance of schools in their area, rather than a narrow focus on pupil attainment measures;
- build on this broad range of information to support schools and, where necessary, to identify and intervene in schools causing concern, using the full range of statutory powers;

¹¹ Section 84 of *The School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013* requires a local authority to prepare a Welsh in Education Strategic Plan and outlines that a Plan must outline how the local authority will improve the planning of the provision of education through the medium of Welsh and also the standards of Welsh-medium education and of the teaching of Welsh in its area.

¹² In voluntary aided and foundation schools, the governing body employs the staff and sets the admissions criteria.

- not put pressure on schools to make short term gains in KS4 examination outcomes, in a way that may not be sustainable or in the interests of all learners;
- support head teachers to improve their schools and build capacity, taking into account the level of challenge. (They should not, for example, place unrealistic expectations on newly appointed school leaders in schools with longstanding issues.)

Scrutiny committees should:

- hold Cabinet members to account for the quality and impact of the Council's services to support schools;
- scrutinise the work of the Council with regard to the services provided to support schools, rather than using their accountability arrangements to hold schools to account;
- scrutinise how effectively the local authority works with the regional consortium, understanding that accountability for regional consortia is through their Joint Committee or Company Board (see below);
- monitor and scrutinise the use of statutory powers to support and improve schools causing concern, in particular secondary schools.
- consider the impact of decisions to reorganise schools on the improvement of schools.

Regional consortia

The regional consortia governing structures are all comprised of their member local authorities. They therefore carry out activities that derive from local authorities' statutory functions and duties in relation to school improvement. While the consortia have their own governance structures, they are all directly accountable to their constituent local authorities through their structure.¹³

Local authorities and regional consortia should therefore work in partnership to deliver the underlying local authority duties and functions in relation to education. Given the in-built accountability mechanisms described above, local authorities do not need to create additional processes to oversee the work of regional consortia. Instead, regional consortia should be held to account through their governing structure, which includes elected local authority Members.

Regional consortia Joint Committees / Joint Executive Group should:

- lead and monitor the work of regional consortia with regard to the services provided to support schools, and to inform and support local authorities to fulfil their statutory functions and duties; and

¹³ EAS is a not-for-profit company limited by guarantee, that was set up by the five local authorities in the South East Wales regional consortia 'to improve the standard of education' in the regional consortia by providing services to the local authorities and their schools. The voting members of the EAS company board are Cabinet Members from each local authority, who do not hold the education portfolio. The operation of EAS is overseen by the Joint Executive Group which includes the Education Portfolio holders for each local authority.

CSC, ERW and GwE are overseen by a Joint Committee of their constituent local authorities, under section 102 of the Local Government Act 1972. Joint committees are the decision-making body within these regional consortia, and it is the local authority Members (leaders or education portfolio holders) who hold full voting rights.

- monitor and review the quality and timeliness of their advice to local authorities on the use of statutory powers to support and improve schools causing concern, particularly for secondary schools.

Welsh Government

Welsh Government has overall responsibility for the design and operation of the schools system in Wales. One of its main roles is planning and policy-making, through evidence-based collaboration and co-construction with all tiers of the system.

It also has a responsibility to support the framework for evaluation, improvement and accountability through its actions and behaviours. This includes helping to build capacity to support system improvement, and being clear about where accountabilities lie.

While Welsh Government does not have a direct accountability function with regards to individual schools, Welsh Ministers are rightly held to account by the Senedd and the Children, Young People and Education Committee for the overall performance and operation of the schools system. This scrutiny is an important way democratic accountability is discharged within the overall framework, while also enhancing transparency.

Welsh Government will continue to hold termly 'Evaluation and Improvement' meetings with regional consortia and local authorities (one per region). These meetings will allow Welsh Government to interrogate and understand how the evaluation and improvement system is operating in practice, informing what is needed for system-wide improvement. They will also provide Welsh Government with relevant intelligence to inform its own scrutiny in the Senedd. Given the high proportion of secondary schools causing concern, part of the focus of each meeting will be on these schools' progress and the impact of the support being provided to them.

Annex A provides a fuller description of the respective roles and responsibilities of schools, governing bodies, local authorities, regional consortia and Estyn, including their statutory underpinning.

Inspection and advice

The main purpose of inspection is to provide objective, independent, and impartial information. It is a fundamental part of accountability within the system.

At the same time, the information provided through inspections and inspection reports should be used for all three main purposes of information described in this guidance.

- Evaluative inspection reports on schools, local authorities and regional consortia will inform and underpin subsequent **improvement** work.
- At the same time, inspections and reports provide important evidence to governing bodies, local authority councils and regional consortia joint committees / company boards in fulfilling their **accountability** functions within their respective organisations.
- And **transparent**, published inspection reports tell parents and communities about how well individual schools and the wider system is doing.

Estyn's inspection activity must take account of the principles around evaluation, improvement and the use of information set out in this guidance. Schools will be judged within their own context and using their own self-evaluation arrangements and school development plan as a starting point. The quality of schools' curricula, the progress of all learners and well-being will be important elements of all inspections.

From September 2021, Estyn will introduce a revised school inspection framework that closely aligns with schools' implementation of the new curriculum. Following the recommendations from '*A Learning Inspectorate*', summative judgements will be removed from inspection reports. Headline judgements too often over-simplify and mask areas and findings that are important. Instead, summative judgements will be replaced with deeper evaluation of a school's work within reports, providing better information for parents, governors and schools about the performance of a school, its strengths and areas for improvement. Schools judged to be in the statutory categories of special measures or significant improvement, however, will continue to be clearly identified.

The academic year 2021-22 will be an opportunity for Estyn to test the new framework and to make any improvements and revisions ahead of the introduction of the new curriculum in September 2022.

It is likely that the Estyn school inspection framework will continue to evolve over time as schools' implementation of curriculum reform develops. From 2024, we anticipate that more real time inspection intelligence will be available in the education system to inform improvement and support plans, to give regular assurances and to ensure robust accountability to parents and other stakeholders, including schools themselves, about the standards being achieved and priorities for further improvement.

The intention is that Estyn will inspect schools more frequently within a six-year inspection period from 2024, on average twice within a cycle, at times determined by Estyn. Inspections will have a stronger focus on schools' capacity to self-evaluate effectively and self-improve, and on how they are implementing curriculum reform.

Estyn's inspections of local authorities and regional consortia will also be regular. The focus should be on the quality and impact of governance and accountability arrangements with regard to schools and the effectiveness of local authority and consortia services to support schools and learners. This will include evaluating the effectiveness of democratic accountability arrangements in supporting school improvement.

Estyn will continue to produce annual reports and thematic reports. They will also produce a state of the nation report every three years, which will provide national overviews of various parts of the education system. These will be available publicly.

Section 50 inspections of schools with a religious character

The Education Act 2005 states that the governing body of any voluntary aided, voluntary controlled or foundation school in Wales, which has been designated as having a religious character, must arrange for the inspection of the content of the school's act of collective worship and any denominational religious education provided for learners.

The inspection must report on the content of the school's act of collective worship and any denominational religious education provided for learners. It may also report on the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of learners at the school.

As for inspections by Estyn, section 50 inspections fulfil an accountability function for voluntary and foundation schools in Wales, although their scope is considerably narrower. The inspection reports will also be used by schools as a source of evidence for their self-evaluation and improvement planning.

Annex A –

Roles and responsibilities in a self-improving system

Within a self-improving school system, it is important that the different bodies – principally schools and governing bodies, local authorities, and regional consortia – understand their own roles and responsibilities, those of others, and the relationship between them. Without such an understanding, the system is unlikely to function efficiently or effectively. There is also a greater likelihood of conflict between the different bodies, drawing energy and focus from the underlying goal of continuous improvement for the benefit of learners.

Governing bodies and schools

Schools have the central role in driving improvements in the quality of learning and the standards and well-being achieved by young people. They also have a responsibility to drive their own improvement through self-evaluation, performance management and improvement planning, and for making the best use of the support available to them.

School governing bodies are responsible for the conduct of their school; and the Education Act 2002 states that ‘the governing body shall conduct the school with a view to promoting high standards of educational achievement at the school’. Their role therefore includes ensuring that the school has an effective process for reviewing performance in relation to their aims and objectives, identifying improvement priorities, taking action and monitoring process with a view to raising standards and improving well-being. The relationship between the local authority and the governing body should support this role.

In general, the governing body should carry out its functions with the aim of taking a broadly strategic role in the running of the school.

A strategic role means the governing body decides what they want the school to achieve and set the strategic framework for getting there. It should establish the strategic framework by:

- setting aims and objectives for the school;
- adopting policies for achieving those aims and objectives;
- setting targets for achieving those aims and objectives; and
- reviewing progress towards achieving the aims and objectives.

The headteacher, with other senior members of staff, has responsibility for leadership, direction and management of the school within the strategic framework established by the governing body. The headteacher is responsible for the internal organisation, management and control of the school; and for advising on and implementing the governing body’s strategic framework. In particular, headteachers formulate aims and objectives, policies and targets with the governing body, for them to consider adopting; and report to the governing body on progress each term.

Local authorities

Local authorities have broad duties in respect of education. They have a general duty to maintain relevant maintained schools under section 22 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998. They also have a variety of oversight functions, which include:

- A 'general responsibility for education' in their area by contributing 'towards the spiritual, moral, mental and physical development of the community by securing that efficient primary education, and secondary education... are available to meet the needs of the population of their area'. [Section 13, Education Act 1996]
- A duty to promote high standards, and the fulfilment of learning potential, in the exercise of their education functions. [Section 13A, Education Act 1996]

While governing bodies are responsible for the leadership of schools, local authorities 'maintain' schools, which means they have an interest in them being managed well and that, as a whole, schools in the authority area deliver effective and efficient provision. Local authorities should therefore support governing bodies' leadership of schools through advice and resources.

The relationship between an authority and school is captured in a partnership agreement, which sets how a local authority and the governing body of a school will act to discharge their functions in relation to the school. Local authorities are required, by The Maintained Schools (Partnership Agreements) (Wales) Regulations 2007, to enter into an individual partnership agreement with each governing body.

Regional consortia

Regional consortia were established by local authorities, with the encouragement of Welsh Government. Their fundamental role is to provide services on behalf of local authorities to support schools, helping to create a self-improving school system, with collaboration between all elements of the system at its heart.

The National Model for Regional Working, first established in 2013, was intended as a document to guide developments in the school improvement system by articulating the activities that regional consortia would deliver on behalf of local authorities, as well as the necessary governance and accountability arrangements. It acknowledged that there would be 'both structural and operational variations between the four regions, and that this flexibility is necessary to ensure that consortia are able to meet the distinct needs of their own regions'.

Because regional consortia are non-statutory bodies, no statutory education functions or duties have been passed to them from local authorities. For example, local authorities retain the duty 'to promote high standards' referred to above. This has created some tensions in the system – although not necessarily in all regions – exacerbated by a culture of high stakes accountability that we want to leave behind. This is not helpful to schools and, more importantly, to children and young people.

This guidance intends to move beyond the National Model to provide clarity to local authorities and regions about their role in supporting improvement in our schools, as well as the operation of accountability within the system.

Our national mission was clear that to be successful, we need a commitment to effective collaboration and honest engagement by all parts of the education system. While this does

not require uniformity of approaches in every local authority in Wales, it does require openness and clarity with schools about who will do what, in accordance with the principles in this guidance.

We know that regional consortia, local authorities, governing bodies and head teachers working in partnership can have a powerful impact in improving schools. But, to succeed, such partnership must be based on a mutual recognition of the functions and contributions of each party, as well as trust.¹⁴

Diocesan authorities

Diocesan authorities oversee and support schools with a religious character to ensure they are acting in conformity with the teachings and regulations of their Church. They support their schools' professional learning, for example in areas relating to well-being, spirituality and curriculum development. In addition, diocesan authorities have an important role in appointing foundation governors, giving them a good understanding of the effectiveness of leadership and governance in their schools.

Given the range of their involvement with schools with a religious character, diocesan authorities should therefore play a role in supporting their evaluation and improvement, working in partnership with both the school, local authorities and regional consortia.

Estyn

Estyn is a crown body, independent of the Welsh Government, led by Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales (HMCI).

Estyn has three main objectives.

- Providing public accountability to service users on the quality and standards of education and training in Wales through inspection activity. It inspects a number of different sectors, including schools and local authorities.
- Informing the development of national policy by providing advice and guidance to the Welsh Government on quality and standards in education and training in Wales through a variety of ways. These include commissioned thematic reports; the HMCI's Annual Report; and, involvement in education reforms and policy development.
- Building capacity in the improvement and delivery of education and training in Wales through inspection evidence; promoting the spread of best practice through case studies; information sharing; and celebrating excellent practice.

¹⁴ The current Local Government and Elections (Wales) Bill provides for a consistent mechanism and governance structure to facilitate regional working amongst local authorities: Corporate Joint Committees. Unlike existing regional consortia, Corporate Joint Committees will have a legal personality, enabling them to have functions vested in them through legislation, to employ staff directly and to manage and hold budgets. The Bill provides an opportunity for local authorities to place their existing regional arrangements for school improvement on a statutory footing should they wish to do so. It also allows them to bring wider education activities in scope of regional working where there are clear benefits to doing so. Any proposals by local authorities would need to be agreed by Welsh Ministers.

The Bill will also give Welsh Ministers a power to seek to establish Corporate Joint Committees with responsibility for 'improving education'. A Corporate Joint Committee with the responsibility for 'improving education' would provide greater clarity of accountability for different functions at the regional and local level. Ministers might exercise this power in order to provide more consistency in the delivery of regional support for schools, particularly where this might help improve the effectiveness of the regional support itself.

Annex B

National evaluation and improvement resource

The national evaluation and improvement resource (NEIR) has been developed by schools, Estyn, regional consortia, local authorities in Wales, with input from the OECD. It provides schools with a range of principles and approaches, as well as practical case studies and resources, to support effective self-evaluation for improvement in line with the wider principles set out in this guidance. Schools are encouraged to make use of the NEIR to develop their approaches to self-evaluation.

The resource shows that there are different ways that a school can structure its self-evaluation processes depending on its context and that there is no one prescribed way of doing things. Critically it moves self-evaluation from a process that is undertaken for an external audience (e.g. Estyn) to showing that it is the process that is important, leading to improved outcomes for learners, not the documentation.

The NEIR has not been developed as a stand-alone resource. There are significant links across self-evaluation relating to curriculum development, pedagogy, professional learning and the schools as learning organisations model. As such the NEIR will support schools in developing the new curriculum and as they develop to become [learning organisations](#)

It also provides additional detail to support self-evaluation processes that underpin the [professional learning journey](#) and incorporates the Professional Standards for Teaching and Leadership and for assisting teaching throughout. Effective evaluation of teaching and learning, at the core of the NEIR, will also support schools in engaging with the pedagogy conversation through the national pedagogy project.

Note: At time of consultation, the NEIR is still under beta testing and development with a selection of pilot schools. There will be a phased release throughout the 2020-21 academic year, with it being made more widely available in summer 2021. Further information will be released with some exemplar resources during the spring term 2021.

Annex C -

The Education (School Development Plans) (Wales) Regulations 2014 – Schedule

(<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/wsi/2014/2677/schedule/made>)

Contents of a school development plan

School improvement priorities

- 1.—(1) The school improvement priorities for the current school year.
- (2) The school improvement priorities for the two school years immediately proceeding the current school year.
- (3) In setting the school improvement priorities the governing body must take account of the national priorities.

School improvement targets, expected outcomes and strategy

2. A brief statement setting out the school improvement targets and expected outcomes and the governing body's strategy to meet those targets.

Professional development strategy

3. Details of the governing body's strategy for the current school year as to how it will further the professional development of staff at the school in order to meet the school improvement targets.

Working with the community

4. Details of how the governing body will seek to meet the school improvement targets for the current school year by working with—
 - (a) pupils at the school and their families; and
 - (b) people who live and work in the locality in which the school is situated.

School staff and school resources

5. Details of how the governing body will make best use of the—
 - (a) current school staff and school resources (including its financial resources) to meet the school improvement targets for the current school year; and
 - (b) school staff and school resources (including financial resources) the governing body anticipates will be available to it to meet the school improvement targets for the next two school years immediately proceeding the current school year.

Previous targets

6. A brief statement setting out the extent to which the school improvement targets for the previous school year beginning with school year 2015 to 2016 were met and where they were not met fully a brief explanation as to the reasons for that failure.

Annex D

Principles of peer review

Peer review is the partnership and active involvement of current practitioners in a school's self-evaluation and improvement process supported by the school's Challenge Adviser/Improvement Adviser. It provides an additional perspective and engages partners in a constructive dialogue to support continuous improvement for learners.

The purpose of peer review is to improve outcomes for all learners through:

- improving the accuracy of the self-evaluation utilising the national evaluation and improvement resource
- accurately identify strengths, weaknesses and areas for improvement
- contributing to the sharpening (identification of support requirements) of support/actions
- aiding collaboration across the school system
- improving the capacity and ability of leaders across the system to accurately self-evaluate.

Peer review is.....	Peer review is not.....
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A collaborative process • Evaluative, supportive and developmental • An external perspective from fellow practitioners • An opportunity for meaningful continual professional learning and enquiry • A process for all schools • An integral part of the evaluation and improvement cycle • A process focused on planning and delivering for improvement • Responsive to the needs of the school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A process done to the school • Judgmental • An inspection • A directive model of improvement • For a selected number of schools • An isolated process • A time consuming bureaucratic process • A one size fits all process

There are important key principles for effective peer review:

- Peer review needs to be an on-going commitment to continuously improving practice and systems through cycles of collaborative enquiry (as the system matures);

- Peer review should be evaluative but non-judgemental;
- Peer review should be a robust process supported by constructive professional dialogue;
- The peer review process should go beyond school leaders, to include the whole school community;
- Within the peer review process, transparency, trust and honesty are a professional obligation;
- All involved work together with each participant feeling valued, motivated, responsible and having the opportunity to contribute to the collective outcomes of the process;
- A willingness and commitment to learn from a range of critical perspectives.

Expected behaviours:

- The process will be conducted with integrity and trust and should support the school to identify its priorities for improvement.
- All discussions will be confidential, and any documentation created will be owned by the school.
- All partners should come to the process with a commitment to learn from the process.

Supporting School Improvement September 2021 and Beyond

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

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

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

CSC will continue to provide

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

National Principles

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

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

The role of the Improvement Partner

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

As well as providing support and challenge to schools, the improvement partner also ensures that schools are well prepared and display behaviours that positively support the complete national reform agenda. The complete national reform agenda encompasses 5 areas:

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

CSC provide schools with excellent professional learning opportunities, resources and guidance to support schools through this transformational reform. School leaders need the time and space to be able to make sense of transformational reform and the plethora of national and regional supporting resource's that go with it. The Improvement Partner role is a hugely significant one in 'signposting' school leaders and other stakeholders to use the pertinent documents e.g. CSC 'Equity and Excellence' strategy and professional learning that is available in the region, a conduit between policy and practice. This will enhance the school's ability to develop as a learning organisation and support putting the new curriculum and other reforms into place.

Improvement Partners will continue to support the Governing Body with the Headteachers performance management and will support the governing body to understand their role in school improvement. Improvement Partners will also collaborate with the Regional Leads for Governors in order to support school governors to fulfil their responsibility in holding schools to account.

In addition, Improvement Partners will continue to:

- Agree eFSM allocation of spend and regularly monitoring impact
- Review monitoring cycle
- Collaborate with LA & CSC colleagues

Allocation of Support

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

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

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

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

Support and Challenge Functions

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

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

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

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

Moving between Core and Enhanced Support

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

support. The same process exists if a school is making sufficient progress to move from Enhanced support.

Monitoring Progress

The Improvement Partner will be providing challenge on behalf of the LA to ensure support is appropriate and that there is a measurable impact against the improvement priorities. Improvement Partners will provide termly progress evaluations on the school's progress in meeting its improvement priorities and identify or amend support as necessary. These evaluations will be captured in the School Improvement Partnership Log (SIPL) for the school. Improvement Partners will consider schools to be either 'on track' or 'off track'. For those schools who are in receipt of enhanced support, progress will be monitored more regularly, usually on a half termly basis via progress review meetings. The Improvement Partner will also provide a more detailed summative judgement on the rate of progress the school is making towards meeting its improvement priorities. Such judgements will be contained in the SIPL. The LA has access to the summative judgements contained within the individual school SIPLs. PiPs and IPs will share this information with LAs during the existing information sharing meetings. The judgements made fall into four categories and are assigned colours as indicated in the table below:

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

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

Links with Local Authorities

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

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

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

Deployment

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

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

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

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

Appendix A

Improvement Partner's Schedule of Key Tasks

The framework below has an ongoing theme on pupils' learning, wellbeing and themes that will be discussed throughout the year. Our work will identify the schools starting point and ensure that support and challenge is appropriate to ensure all schools make progress. This schedule is not used as a 'tick list' but will remind staff and leaders as to key days when activity should be completed by. i.e HT PM needs to be completed by December 31st however many schools have moved this into the first half term to ensure that the staff targets can flow from the HT targets.

Dialogue to be structured around 5 fundamental questions for enquiry:

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

Annual Activities

School Improvement Focus	Meeting the needs of the priorities Developing strong relationships Influencing strategic direction of the school Capturing first hand evidence
Autumn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree the school improvement priorities and share with LA for approval • co-construct a SIP identifying support • Broker support for priorities
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate Peer Partnerships • Discuss use of the Equity and Excellence strategy • Support GB to review headteacher's performance objectives and agree objectives for the current academic year • Collaboration funding
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review monitoring cycle and self-evaluation • VL progress check focusing on participation, engagement and learning. Attendance and exclusion • CfW
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress towards priorities • Progress of all learners

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact of PL • Quality assure the impact of brokered support with the HT and governors as appropriate • PDG evaluation
Spring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion to focus on moving towards quality and effectiveness of Wellbeing, Learning and Teaching and Leadership. Signposting where appropriate to local, regional and national programmes and initiatives.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate impact of the PLG and PDG spend • Evaluate the effectiveness of the new ALNCo role as described in the ALN reform Act • Review monitoring cycle and self-evaluation • Well-being progress check linked to self-evaluation
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress of learners • Impact of PL • Review impact of PDG spend • Discuss and QA plans for new PDG
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring of progress against agreed priorities in school improvement plan • CfW • Quality assure the impact of brokered support with the HT and governors as appropriate. • Support Governing Body in reviewing progress against headteacher's performance objectives
Summer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate effectiveness of school self-evaluation • review PDG spend • Impact of PL • Discuss PDG LAC cluster plans (Siriol)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What PL is planned that will support vulnerable learners for 2021-22 • effectiveness of the new ALNCo role as described in the ALN reform Act • Quality assure the impact of brokered support with the HT and governors as appropriate • Progress of all learners
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Governing Body Report • GB Meeting • Complete review of impact of current priorities and agree future priorities including identification of possible support

Enhanced Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Half-termly progress report and review of position agreed with the school, principal improvement partner and LA representatives • Regular discussions and information sharing with the support team and the LA.
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Other Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Estyn pre inspection reports / Estyn follow up • Senior Appointments in Schools • RRRS Spending plans/ Impact • Reporting on KS4/5 Curriculum Offer meeting the Learning and Skills measure • EOTAS reporting/Attendance • Collaboration funding • LA Priorities • Wellbeing support / conversations
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Consortiwm Canolbarth y De
Central South Consortium



Gwasanaeth Addysg ar y Cyd
Joint Education Service

September 2021

Appendix 3

Framework for School Improvement

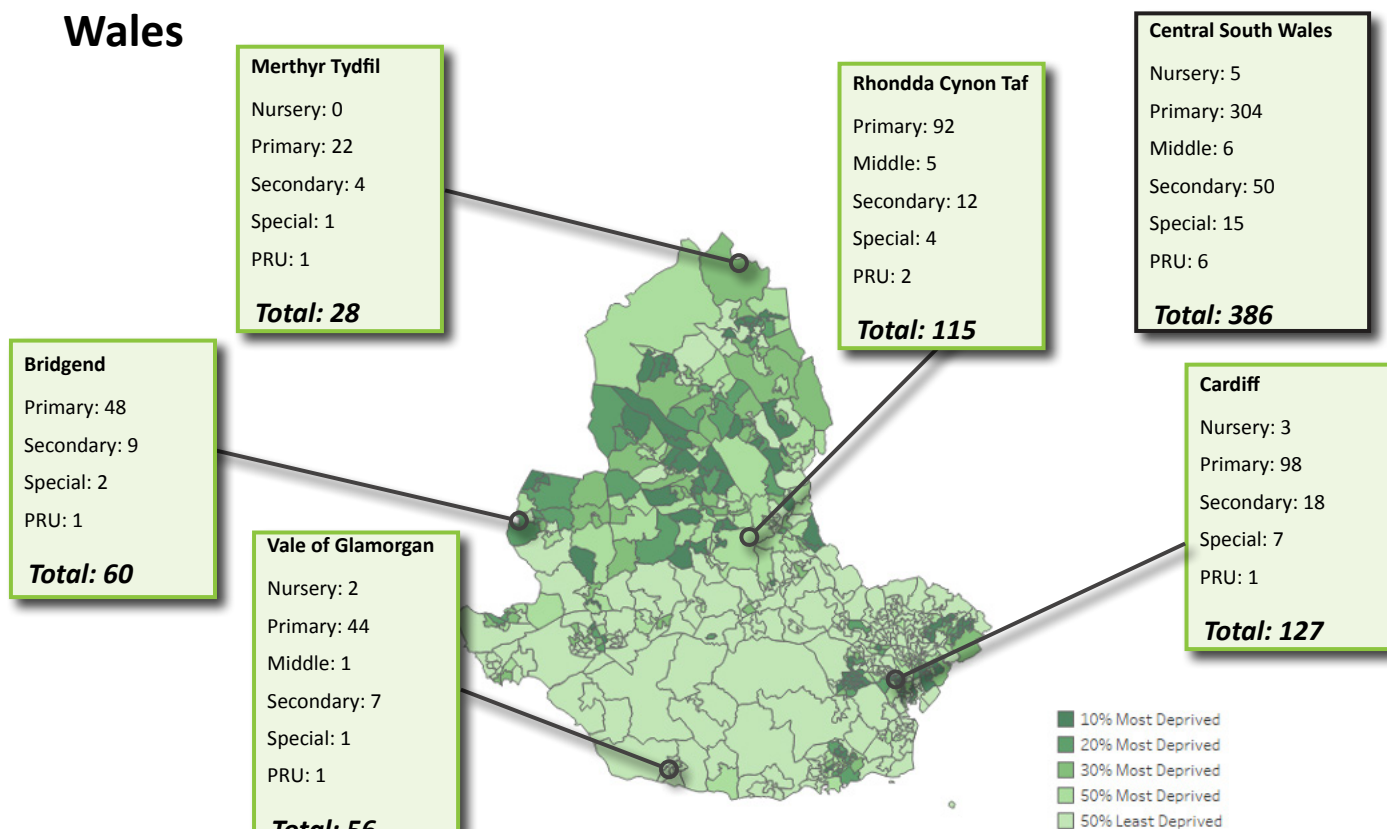
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Section 1: How the Central South Consortium Supports School Improvement across the Region

1.1 Context and Educational Outcomes across Central South Wales



Updated: September 2020

The Central South Wales region is very diverse both economically and socially with areas of significant socio-economic disadvantage as well as areas of relative prosperity. In Central South Consortium, the 2020 Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC¹) data shows that:

	Central South Consortium*	Wales
Pupil Numbers	149624 (31.9%)	469176
Number of qualified teachers	8115 (31.4%)	25844
Number of support staff	8001 (29.8%)	26844
Eligible for Free School Meals	21.3%	19.9%
Statement of Educational Need: School Action	14995 (29.5%)	50749
Statement of Educational Need: School Action Plus	8851 (26.6%)	33289
Statement of Educational Need: Statemented	4176 (30.9%)	13513
Ethnicity – White British	82.2%	87.6%
Ethnicity – any other ethnic background	17.5%	11.8%

*The figure in brackets indicates the CSC figure as a proportion of the Wales population.

¹ Please note that due to the Coronavirus pandemic not all validation processes were applied to the PLASC 2020 collection data and therefore analysis of pupil and staff characteristic data should be treated with an element of caution for January 2020 figures.

1.2 The Role of the Consortium: To Provide School Improvement Services on Behalf of Local Authorities

Schools have the prime responsibility for the educational outcomes achieved by their children and young people.

Local authorities have a statutory responsibility to promote high standards and to ensure that every child in their area experiences an education of the highest quality.

The local authority communicates these expectations to schools, provides each school with a budget and holds the headteacher and governing body to account for the school's performance. It also supports schools with aspects of their work such as attendance, behaviour, financial management and provision for pupils with additional learning needs.

The Central South Consortium (CSC) works in partnership with the five local authorities (Bridgend, Cardiff, Merthyr Tydfil, Rhondda Cynon Taf and the Vale of Glamorgan) to provide a school improvement service that challenges and supports schools in their work to raise standards. This service enables the local authorities to deliver their statutory responsibilities with regard to schools' standards.

The consortium is committed to the development of a school self-improving system. Excellence from within schools, together with research outcomes, is used effectively to help all schools improve.

Our Vision: Empowering schools to improve outcomes for all learners



Our shared objective, developed in partnership with local authorities and schools in the region, is to continue to transform educational outcomes through improving leadership and teaching and through eradicating the impact of poverty on educational outcomes.

We are doing this by building the capacity of schools to be self-improving. We are developing a culture that embraces innovation and enables teachers and leaders to work together to improve practice in ways that are informed by research and have a positive impact on pupils' achievement and progress.

Our vision is to enable schools themselves to lead this work by increasingly delegating the responsibility and resources backed by a robust system of accountability. We believe that this is vital in order to secure sustainable long-term improvement in the achievement of all children and young people in the region.

We are developing this system through the Central South Wales Challenge. This means:

- effective school self-evaluation and improvement planning within a robust and confident framework of accountability are at the heart of an improving system;
- every school is part of a well-functioning school improvement group (SIG);
- collaborative activity, including peer partnerships, where schools actively involve current practitioners from outside the school in their self-evaluation and improvement process, supported by the school's

Improvement Partner. It provides an additional perspective and engages partners in a constructive dialogue to support continuous improvement for all learners.

- improving teaching and learning remains the focus of all our work in schools, with professional development provided through Lead Practitioners and the Professional Learning Alliance schools where schools act as a resource for the region;
- high quality leadership development programmes for aspiring, new and experienced senior and middle leaders;
- opportunities for personal development throughout a teacher’s career; and
- schools increasingly draw on, and are supported by, their communities and families in partnership with their local authority.

KEY DOCUMENTS AND LINKS

Peer Partnership Model

1.3 The Core Tasks of the Consortium

Highly effective school self-evaluation and improvement planning are critical to the development of a self-improving system. The core tasks of the consortium are:

1. To work with all schools, headteachers and governing bodies, to improve outcomes for learners, working more intensively with those where the need to improve is greatest.
2. To support every school in its work to carry out self-evaluation, improvement planning and to put in place the right support to improve learning, teaching and leadership.
3. To supply sharp and appropriate data and intelligence to schools to support self-evaluation and target setting.
4. To develop and broker high quality support, increasingly using peer review as well as the resources such as the school improvement groups, Lead Practitioners and Professional Learning Alliance schools, and consultant governors.
5. To support the local authority's capacity for statutory intervention where needed.
6. To support local authorities and their schools to deliver key Welsh Government priorities that focus on school improvement.

The development of a self-improving school system occurs when all partners embrace the accountability which is necessary to deliver sustainable improvement across the system.

1.4 Our Priorities for Improvement

The business plan for 2021-2022 has five overarching priorities. Action plans have been established in key areas associated with each of the priorities and these will be the principal means by which the priorities will be achieved. The five overarching priorities and the focuses of the associated action plans are set out below:

Improvement Priority One

Develop a high-quality education profession:

1.1	The professional learning offer responds to the evolving needs of practitioners and leaders across the region in support of national and regional priorities and the impact of COVID-19.
1.2	Schools are supported to manage change and develop as learning organisations.
1.3	Schools are supported to prepare for the implementation of Curriculum for Wales and wider reforms.
1.4	Support the implementation of national and regional strategies for developing Welsh in all sectors.
1.5	The Teaching Assistant Learning Pathway (TALP) provides effective pathways for all assisting teachers as part of a national and regional programme.
1.6	Entry into the teaching profession through Initial Teacher Education (ITE) and into NQT Induction is supported. Professional learning opportunities respond to the challenges presented by COVID-19.

Improvement Priority Two

Develop highly effective leadership to facilitate working collaboratively to raise standards:

2.1	Enhance current and future leadership through a comprehensive pathway of professional development.
2.2	Develop effective collaboration models to increase leadership capacity.
2.3	Strengthen school governance to provide effective leadership, challenge and support.
2.4	Improve the use of coaches and mentors to further develop school leaders.
2.5	Develop and strengthen effective leadership through peer partnership.
2.6	Use the Professional Teaching Awards Cymru to recognise and celebrate highly effective practice.

Improvement Priority Three

Develop strong and inclusive schools committed to excellence, equity and wellbeing:

3.1	Continue to develop CSC's Strategy for Equity and Excellence and further promote with schools and partners in order to drive school improvement
3.2	Improve outcomes for vulnerable learners and mitigate impact of COVID-19 through effective strategic support.
3.3	Work with local authorities, external partners and schools to:

- ensure a consistency of approach for supporting provision for vulnerable learners
- address the impact of COVID-19 on vulnerable learners
- address the well-being of staff particularly during the current prevailing conditions

Improvement Priority Four

Continue to develop robust assessment, evaluation and accountability arrangements supporting a self-improving system:

4.1

Nearly all schools have timely, broadly evidenced and robust self-evaluation processes as part of a culture of continuous improvement. These productively inform school improvement priorities and development plans and respond to the challenges and opportunities of learning and wellbeing as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

4.2

Nearly all schools have effective evaluation and improvement processes, which address external and internal accountability measures.

Improvement Priority Five

Improve the effectiveness and efficiency of Central South Consortium (CSC):

5.1

Align the business planning and self-evaluation processes, focussing on value for money in relation to both progress and impact.

5.2

Increase awareness of CSC key messages and communication channels.

5.3

Wider accountability of CSC improved through appreciative enquiry protocol, developed for effective performance development.

5.4

Realise the value and relevance of research and evaluation on key aspects of CSC work.

For each of the priorities there is a detailed operational plan that outlines how and when the aspects of each priority will be delivered. These include key quantitative and qualitative success criteria against which progress is measured.

KEY DOCUMENTS AND LINKS

Business Plan 2021-22

1.5 How We Work

The consortium's role is to challenge and support schools in their work to improve educational outcomes.

The local authorities (through a Joint Committee attended by the Cabinet Member for education in each authority) agree the business plan including targets and budget for the region and hold the consortium to account for the impact of its work.

The Consortium is funded by the local authorities.

There are 386 schools in the Central South Consortium region. These are the key to the future educational and economic success of Wales.

How well children and young people, particularly the most vulnerable, achieve in this region significantly influences how the country and its education system are perceived within our borders and beyond.

The Consortium's business plan aims to:

- to develop a high-quality education profession;
- to develop inspirational leaders and to facilitate them working collaboratively to raise standards;
- to develop strong and inclusive schools that are committed to excellence and wellbeing; and
- to develop robust assessment, evaluation and accountability processes that support a self-improving system.

To do this, the consortium:

- provides an Improvement Partner (IP) to each school in the region;
- provides timely data analysis to support schools' self-evaluation and improvement planning;
- supports and funds school-to-school improvement partnerships. These enable schools to share good practice and learn from each other to improve teaching and leadership practice and improve outcomes for learners;
- works with the Welsh Government to deliver its priorities in the region;
- allocates grant funding (e.g. the pupil development grant - PDG) to schools in the region along with guidance and advice on how grant funding can be used to drive improvement.

1.6 Roles and Responsibilities in the Consortium

Key Functions

There are six functions that are key to the work of the consortium's school improvement service in partnership with schools:

1. Increased capacity for an excellent data and intelligence function.
2. A sharper challenge framework led by a smaller number of Improvement Partners focused on effective school self- evaluation and improvement planning.
3. A significant role in the brokerage and commissioning of support.
4. The development of a knowledge database including case studies of effective practice available to all schools.
5. A strategic approach to developing professional learning opportunities for schools by schools and through the central teams concerning: equity and well-being; digital learning, expressive arts, health and well-being, science and technology; literacy and numeracy; leadership development; pedagogy; Welsh and Welsh second language and bilingualism; the foundation phase; and professional development for newly qualified teachers.
6. The provision of a service of high quality to support each local authority in fulfilling its statutory responsibility for school improvement.

KEY DOCUMENTS AND LINKS

[CSC Teams and Responsibilities](#)

1.7 Accountability, Funding and Grants

The consortium is accountable to the five local authorities in the first instance and through the local authorities to the Welsh Government. The five local authorities agree the intended outcomes from the business plan and the resources to fund the plan annually. The plan contains an annex for each local authority that sets out particular priorities and any additional requirements and resource implications.

The Central South Consortium is governed by a Joint Committee underpinned by a legal agreement between the five local authorities. The organisation is advised by an Advisory Board, which includes headteachers and other experts. Steering groups involving Directors of Education, governors and headteachers' representatives contribute to policy and decision making. In addition a group of delegate headteachers lead the development of key consortium strategies working alongside members of the senior management team.

The consortium reports regularly on performance to the five local authorities, their Cabinets and Scrutiny Committees as well as to the Cabinet Secretary through termly challenge and review meetings with the Welsh Government.

The consortium is funded at a level recommended by the Welsh Government through the National Model For School Improvement and involves a contribution from each of the local authorities that is proportionate to their size.

In the financial year 2021-2022 the total funding received by the organisation from the five local authorities is £3.6 million. In addition, some £84.9 million (excluding LA match funding) Welsh Government grant funding is administered by the organisation on behalf of schools and the local authorities.

The Regional Consortia School Improvement Grant (RCSIG) and Pupil Development Grant (PDG) is made available to consortia to support delivery of strategic objectives as identified in the Welsh Government Award of Funding letters.

The funding relates to the period 1st April 2021 to 31st March 2022 and must be claimed in full by 31st March 2022 otherwise any unclaimed part of the funding will cease to be available.

A formal agreement exists between the consortium and its partner Local Authorities which sets out respective obligations relating to the provision of the Regional Consortia School Improvement Grant and Pupil Development Grant. The Agreement details the responsibilities of the consortia and partner Local Authorities relating to service standards and financial management.

Regional Consortia School Improvement Grant

Grant funding is made available to support the regional consortium and the related authorities within the consortium in delivering national aspirations and priorities for schools and education outlined within "Ambitious and Learning from our national strategy, Prosperity for All, and our plan of action for education, Education in Wales: Our national mission".

Regional consortia in Wales and their related local authorities have a significant role to play in improving educational outcomes for all learners in Wales and in delivering the educational reform agenda.

Outcomes will be supported by a range of measures and key performance indicators, as outlined in the consortium business plan.

Pupil Development Grant

The funding must be used to make a lasting impact on outcomes for disadvantaged learners, to include a plan, with focused and quantifiable targets for achievement, and detailed operational proposals. PDG may only fund provision of personalised support when it is disproportionately directed towards pupils who are eligible for free school meals or who are children looked after, and former children looked after who have been adopted from care or who are subject to special guardianship or residence order aged 3-15.

All initiatives supported by grant must be sustainable and in line with the Well-Being of Future Generations Act.

Grant funding direct to Local Authority

Recruit, Recover, Raise Standards: Accelerating Learning (RRRS)

During the pandemic, it has become clear that many learners have not progressed as much as they might in terms of their progress in learning, some learners having been impacted more seriously than others have. RRRS funding enables investment in schools to allow them to recruit and deploy additional human capacity to support learners in addressing their needs following the initial COVID-19 crisis and period of school closure.

Although this funding is administered by local authority there is a requirement that schools plan should be agreed by the school's Improvement Partner in the case of schools currently designated as requiring red and amber levels of support from their regional educational consortia.

Section 2: Key School Improvement Processes

2.1 Knowledge about schools

The 7 years of national categorisation has enabled CSC to:

- ensure that the right, timely support, challenge and intervention secure improvement in outcomes for all learners;
- build the capacity and resilience of a school to improve itself and to facilitate school-to-school support;
- be a reliable, intelligent and objective profile of schools across Wales;
- be a collaborative process starting with the school's self-evaluation;
- be an effective tool for improving standards and a diagnostic tool to improve leadership, learning and teaching; and
- have clear accountability arrangements at school, local authority and consortium levels.

The system has supported us in identifying schools that are most in need of support.

The process of categorisation has enabled us to move to a new approach, confident there is:

- accurate and clear identification of those aspects that need the greatest improvement;
- provision of support in inverse proportion to the capacity of schools to improve by themselves;
- help to build the capacity of schools' to be self-improving;
- improvement secured at pace; and
- action to ensure that all pupils receive the best possible education irrespective of where they go to school.

When identifying the support required, the school's leaders, governors and the Improvement Partner must consider:

- the school's vision and strategy for improving pupils' achievement;
- the capacity to plan and implement change successfully and the impact of leadership at all levels on outcomes;
- the rigour and accuracy of the school's self-evaluation process and use of data to identify strengths and set improvement priorities;
- the appropriateness of the school's targets and expectations for pupils' future achievement;
- the school's track record in improving outcomes for pupils, implementing priorities for improvement, including national and regional priorities, and meeting the recommendations for inspection and from the consortium;
- the effectiveness with which work with other schools and partners enhances the capacity to bring about

improvement;

- the extent to which school-to-school support is planned, implemented and evaluated as part of the school's improvement strategy, including collaborative activity through SIGs, improvement hubs and peer partnership;
- the extent to which the school has demonstrated the capacity to support other schools;
- the quality of governance and how effectively governors support and challenge the school's performance;
- the clarity of roles and responsibilities and the extent to which professional standards are met;
- the quality of teaching;
- the quality and accuracy of teachers' assessment;
- the effectiveness with which pupils' progress is tracked and support provided.

In addition, consideration will need to be given to other risks that may trigger additional support.

The standards achieved by pupils and the progress they make are the key measures of the quality of education they have received and of the effectiveness of the leadership and management of the school. Therefore, the key driver for any judgement about the school's ability to improve and the level of support it requires will be the standards achieved by the school's pupils. Where leadership is effective this should be reflected in the standards achieved by pupils and the quality of educational provision.

Effective leadership at all levels drives effective schools and improved performance by all learners. Where there is underperformance the school's leaders should have clear plans to bring about improvement. When identifying any support required to develop the quality of leadership, a key determining factor will be the quality, frequency and impact of the school's self-evaluation, including the use of performance data, and its improvement planning processes.

The quality of teaching is a key element in a school's capacity to improve standards and the quality of education. Schools should have clear and effective policies and procedures for supporting teachers' professional development and for performance management in order to develop practice, secure accountability and address underperformance. Clear processes for evaluating learning and teaching are an essential part of effective self-evaluation. Where these processes are lacking and where, as a result, self-evaluation does not identify areas for improvement well enough, these identify increased levels of support required.

Attention should be given to the performance of all groups of learners. In particular, the performance of pupils who are eligible for free school meals (eFSM) must be analysed to determine whether a school is making progress in breaking the link between socio-economic disadvantage and educational attainment.

KEY DOCUMENTS AND LINKS

Accountability and Evaluation

2.2 Support Functions

Although categorisation continues to be suspended for the new academic year 2021-22, it is essential that schools receive the support they need to improve. CSC, in consultation, have interpreted the Welsh Government Guidance for Improvement, Accountability and Evaluation

The new guidance ensures Improvement Partners continue to support schools to develop effective School Development Plans (SDP) and to ensure that there is an appropriate evaluation of the impact of school improvement strategies. This will work in conjunction with the school systems and will not generate additional work for school leaders. Improvement Partners will continue to support the governing body with the headteachers' performance management and will support the governing body to understand their role in school improvement.

As well as providing support and challenge to schools, the Improvement Partner also ensures that schools are well prepared and display behaviours that positively support the complete national reform agenda. The complete national reform agenda encompasses 5 areas:

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

CSC provide schools with excellent professional learning opportunities, resources and guidance to support schools through this transformational reform. School leaders need the time and space to be able to make sense of transformational reform and the plethora of national and regional supporting resources that go with it. The Improvement Partner role is a hugely significant one in 'signposting' school leaders and other stakeholders to use the pertinent documents, e.g. CSC 'Enabling Equity and Excellence' document and professional learning that is available in the region, a conduit between policy and practice. This will enhance the school's ability to develop as a learning organisation and support putting the new curriculum and other reforms into place.

Improvement Partners will continue to support the Governing Body with the headteachers performance management and will support the governing body to understand their role in school improvement. Improvement Partners will also collaborate with the Regional Leads for Governors in order to support school governors to fulfil their responsibility in holding schools to account

In addition, Improvement Partners will continue to:

- Agree Pupil Development Grant allocation of spend and regularly monitoring impact
- Review monitoring cycle
- Collaborate with LA & CSC colleagues
- Agree RRRS spend for enhanced support schools. IP discuss spend with all schools.

Based on the needs of the school the Improvement Partner will identify the support needs, and broker support required. Support will be tightly focused on the actions in the School Development Plan (SDP) and brokerage will be coordinated by the Principal Improvement Partner.

Once the support programme is agreed the Improvement Partner is responsible for quality assuring the impact of this support with the headteacher and governors as appropriate. This will include regular discussions with the support team. There is also an expectation the Improvement Partner shares information with the LA and attends any school focused LA meetings as necessary.

Links with Local Authorities

Improvement Partners will continue to develop and foster collaborative working partnerships with LA colleagues. Improvement Partners are mindful of the individual systems and process in each LA and will work accordingly. Joint collaboration will facilitate an effective sharing of information to ensure a mutual understanding to enable effective school improvement.

Improvement Partners will continue using the successful strategies in place and will work with LA colleagues to adapt and improve where needs emerge. The Principal Improvement Partners will continue to be a pivotal link with each LA and will ensure an effective two way flow of information.

Improvement Partner

It is essential the Improvement Partner forms a strong professional relationship with the headteacher. One of the key roles of the Improvement Partner is to broker support that will help build capacity and empower the school to achieve the outcomes identified in the School Development Plan (SDP).

As Improvement Partners work with schools, they will need to be aware of the current position the school is in as part of their recovery from the effects of the pandemic.

KEY DOCUMENTS AND LINKS

Guidance to Support School Development Planning

2.3 Engaging in Conversations with Schools

Adaptive Capacity

The CSC adaptive capacity model is designed to support school improvement conversations. It is not designed to be used as a measure, or an assessment.

Adaptive capacity is the capacity of a school to adapt to changes that are both planned and unplanned. It is based on the premise that within every school there will be areas of expertise where making iterative changes to policy and practice are executed confidently due to the available capacity. It is likely there will also be areas that are less developed where the school may have less capacity to bring about those changes. It does not create an extra framework or layer as it uses existing models in the system.

It does not see the school as having capacity or not, it considers an improvement area and asks:

Knowledge assets:

- Does the school have the knowledge base to evaluate their current performance and bring about any changes needed?
- What professional learning is available to support the development of knowledge in this area?
- What reading and research can be accessed to further support the development of knowledge in this area?

Leadership capacity:

- Does the school have a lead for the area being developed who has the skills to lead improvement?
- Are there robust systems and processes to allow for information sharing?
- *The Professional Standards for Teaching and Leadership can be helpful in supporting this.*

Teaching capacity:

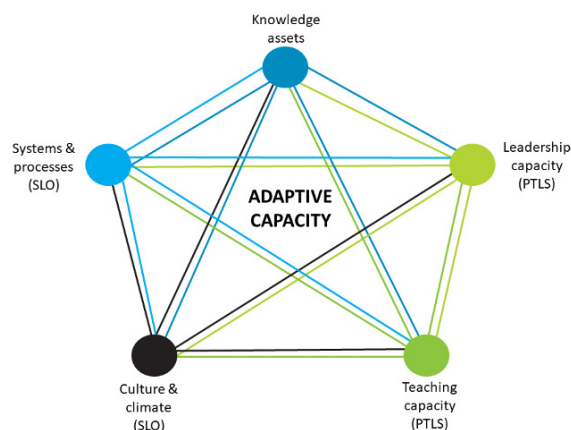
- Do all teachers know their role within the area being developed?
- Are there professional learning opportunities for teachers to engage with the area being developed?
- *The Professional Standards for Teaching and Leadership can be helpful in supporting this.*

Culture and climate:

- Does the culture and climate of the school allow and support development in this area?
- *Schools as Learning Organisations provides dimensions that focus on culture and climate.*

Systems and processes:

- Are there systems and processes in school to allow and support development in this area?
- *Schools as Learning Organisations provides dimensions that focus on systems and processes.*



2.4 System Leaders

A small pool of trained system leaders recruited from across the region with a proven track record of excellent leadership are available for deployment across the CSC region. They are deployed to support school leaders requiring improvement and support.

The system leaders receive professional learning and support to ensure they have a comprehensive understanding of the educational reforms Wales, school improvement, and reflect the values and vision of CSC.

System leaders will be deployed on a needs basis. Deployment would include, but not exclusive to:

- Support for school leaders on areas of strategic school improvement on a short-term basis through Resource Board requests.
- Provide coaching and mentoring for school leaders where needed.
- Support professional learning on strategic school improvement and leadership development.
- Contribute to CSC focus groups at policy development stage.
- Participate in regional and national working groups and conferences as appropriate.

2.5 Working with Schools who are identified as needing Enhanced Support and are Covered by the Intervention Strategy for Schools Causing Concern

It will be vital that there is an unambiguous and agreed view of the school's key priorities from the outset and a strong focus in the school's improvement plan on raising achievement. The plan will contain the detail of the additional support provided to the school, by whom, the timescales, its intended impact and resource requirements. The consortium's intervention strategy contains a number of resources that Improvement Partners should consider when determining the strategies for improvement to be implemented in schools. A link to the intervention strategy can be found at the end of this section.

For schools requiring significant improvement or in special measures, the Improvement Partner will work closely with the Principal Improvement Partner and local authority's senior officers to prepare a statement of action setting out how the local authority will support the school.

The Improvement Partner will agree with the headteacher and chair of governors the arrangements for monitoring and reporting the school's progress during the academic year. This will include:

- the expectations of the headteacher and chair of governors for providing evidence of progress at the planned meetings to review progress
- the arrangements for carrying out these meetings in conjunction with the local authority
- how progress will be monitored and recorded by the Improvement Partner and other personnel supporting the school.

Use of the local authority's statutory intervention powers

The School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 strengthens the local authority's power to intervene in schools. The legislation and related guidance set out the grounds for intervention and the nature of the powers available to the local authority.

The local authority retains the responsibility for determining when its statutory intervention powers should be used when a school becomes a cause for concern.

The local authority will decide whether to inform a school in writing of its concerns or whether it is necessary to issue a formal warning notice in the following circumstances:

- there are concerns about a school's standards and ability to improve based on progress to improvement priorities
- monitoring reports raise concerns about a school's progress
- other work undertaken in, or information about a school highlight concerns
- one or more of the grounds for intervention in the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act are met.

The role of the Central South Consortium is to provide the local authority with relevant evidence to inform the decision making process. The local authority may also draw on evidence from within the authority itself as well as other forms of evidence, for example, inspection.

When a school becomes a cause for concern, the local authority will arrange to discuss its concerns with the headteacher and chair of governors. The local authority will then put in writing:

- the nature of the concerns, the action the governing body should take and the timescale
- actions to be undertaken to support the school and to monitor progress
- actions of the local authority, which may include issuing a warning notice, if there is still insufficient progress at the end of the agreed period.

Where the local authority determines that the concerns are such that a warning notice is required, the authority will discuss the concerns with the headteacher and chair of governors. The warning notice will set out:

- the grounds for intervention and the circumstances giving cause for concern
- the action which the governing body is required to take
- guidance on how the governing body might comply
- the period within which the action must be taken
- the further action the local authority is minded to take if the governing body does not take the required action or there is insufficient progress.

Where a school requires enhanced support, the Improvement Partner will provide progress reports, detailing the actions the school is taking and progress made to achieve its priorities.

In all cases, the local authority reserves the right to raise its concerns in writing or to issue a warning notice at an early stage where there are concerns about a school relating to standards, the quality of learning and its leadership and management in accordance with the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013.

KEY DOCUMENTS AND LINKS

[Intervention Strategy for Schools Causing Concern](#)

2.6 Monitoring and Reporting the Progress of Schools – Key Purposes

The monitoring of schools' progress has the following key purposes:

- To maintain momentum and to support the school so that improvement occurs at a good rate.
- To help the school assess the extent to which improvement work is on track.
- To strengthen the school's capacity to identify and use appropriate evidence to evaluate the impact on standards and pupils' progress derived from work done by the school itself and by those supporting the school.
- To make amendments to the development plan, including the support provided, at the earliest opportunity where necessary.
- To celebrate the school's success in making progress and to meet effectively the requirement for accountability. When monitoring progress, first-hand contact with classrooms is essential because:
 - » it provides important evidence about a school's progress and helps with decisions about next steps; and
 - » constructive feedback and dialogue with teachers is an important contributor to professional development.
- To ensure the school is engaging with the culture of reform as outlined in the National Model and the four purposes are embedded in the school's vision and aims.
- To support the school's capacity to function as a learning organisation.
- To strengthen the school's self-evaluation of their readiness in relation to the new curriculum.
- To ensure curriculum reform is evident in the school development plan and appropriate professional learning is accessed.
- To place high quality teaching and learning at core of all curriculum reform and agree what this looks like for the learners in each school in order to develop that continuity of learning for 3 to 16 year olds in your geographical context.

In most circumstances observation of learning and teaching should be undertaken collaboratively with the school's leaders. This provides an opportunity for reflection and discussion which of themselves are developmental.

KEY DOCUMENTS AND LINKS

School Visits Protocol

Lesson Observation Proforma

Intervention Strategy

2.7 Monitoring and Reporting the Progress of Schools receiving Enhanced Support

The minimum requirements are as follows:

1. The Improvement Partner will undertake monitoring visits to monitor and evaluate progress and will record outcomes using the School Improvement Partnership Log (SIPL). The frequency of these monitoring visits and progress meetings will be agreed in consultation with the LA. They are a minimum of termly and a maximum of half termly.
2. In all cases the Improvement Partner will discuss with the school:
 - » the extent to which all pupils are on track to achieve their targets, not just those at the end of the relevant phase or key stage but also those at the end of each year
 - » the action the school is taking to intervene to support pupils whose progress gives cause for concern.
3. The Improvement Partner will prepare the progress report prior to the half- termly or termly progress review meeting and complete the report following the meeting.
4. There will be a half-termly meeting between the Improvement Partner, Principal Improvement Partner and representative of the director of education with the headteacher and chair of governors. The latter will present their view of the school's progress with evidence and this will be validated or challenged by the Principal Improvement Partner and next steps agreed. In Church in Wales and Roman Catholic schools, the diocesan officer would also be invited to the meeting.
5. The meeting will record key action points on the progress report.
6. The Improvement Partner will work with the Principal Improvement Partner to ensure that other professionals supporting the school are informed of the school's progress and next steps.

The above process is the minimum required, but the process will need to be flexible to accommodate particular circumstances in individual schools. The following may also be necessary:

- More frequent monitoring during each half-term by the Improvement Partner.
- Attendance at one or both of the progress review meetings by other professionals who are involved in supporting the school.
- A progress review meeting earlier than that dictated by the half-term periods where there are concerns about the rate of progress and/or the school's capacity to improve.
- Attendance at the meeting by the director of education or her/his representative.
- A recommendation that the local authority considers using its statutory intervention powers where the concerns warrant this.

KEY DOCUMENTS AND LINKS

Intervention Strategy

2.8 Where Schools Make Insufficient Progress

Target timescales for securing improvement in enhanced support schools will be specified at the start. Where a school does not make sufficient progress in addressing the agreed areas for improvement in its School Development Plan (SDP), these concerns will be discussed with the headteacher who will inform the chair of governors prior to the progress review meeting.

The Improvement Partner will consult with the Principal Improvement Partner attached to the local authority in which the school is located and the local authority's head of service about the appropriate next steps. This may involve the following:

- a review to establish more clearly the reasons for the lack of progress
- a recommendation by the consortium's school improvement service to the local authority that it considers using its statutory intervention powers.

The three stages of the process are:

Stage 1: Diagnosis

- Assessing the seriousness and scale of the challenges facing an individual school and diagnosing needs.

Stage 2: Intervention

- Planning and implementing intervention, providing the support required to meet needs, monitoring and reporting progress.

Stage 3: Review

- Judging the progress a school has made and its capacity to sustain improvement

The effectiveness of leadership at all levels is critical to a school's capacity to improve. Where there are concerns about the overall leadership of the school, these will be discussed with the headteacher as part of the strategy for securing improvement. Where there are particular concerns about the leadership of the headteacher, as distinct from the overall leadership of the school, these will be discussed with the headteacher and the director of education's representative. The local authority will record these in writing in a letter to the headteacher. The letter will set out the areas of concern and a copy will be sent to the chair of governors. In these circumstances the local authority may recommend to the governing body that it implements the local authority's agreed capability and performance management procedures as they apply to the headteacher and/or senior leaders.

Full details concerning capability and performance policy and procedures can be obtained at the end of this section.

Where there are concerns about governance the Improvement Partner will raise these concerns in the first instance with the Principal Improvement Partner and director's representative for the local authority in which the school is located. The concerns will then be communicated to the chair of governors and headteacher.

Follow-up action may involve:

- carrying out a self-review with the governing body to establish strengths and areas for improvement

- bespoke training or other forms of support to build the capacity of the governing body in order to fulfil aspects of its work more effectively. Please refer to Section 3.2 for information on Regional Leaders of Governance.

Where concerns persist they will be brought to the attention of the chair of governors and the headteacher by the local authority in a written statement. The statement will make clear the nature of the concerns, the improvement that is needed and the timescale within which improvement should occur. Where support may be needed this will be agreed, recorded and its impact monitored within the agreed timescale.

Where evidence from a range of sources indicates that insufficient improvement has occurred, the Improvement Partner will discuss this with the Principal Improvement Partner and director’s representative. The local authority in which the school is located will consider issuing a formal warning notice if it has not already done so.

If improvement is not made within the agreed timescale the local authority will consider using its additional statutory powers of intervention in line with agreed procedures. The statutory powers include:

- requiring the governing body to secure advice or collaborate
- giving directions to the governing body or headteacher and taking any other steps
- the appointment of additional governors
- the suspension of delegated authority of the governing body to manage a school’s budget
- the replacement of the governing body with an interim executive board
- putting a complaint to the Welsh Ministers in respect of the governing body acting unreasonably in failing to comply
- seeking a direction from Welsh Ministers to the governing body under section 17 of the 2013 Act.

KEY DOCUMENTS AND LINKS

Statutory Powers of Intervention

Welsh Government Guidance: Schools Causing Concern

Intervention Strategy

CSC Capability Procedure for Teachers and Headteachers

Model Performance Management Policy for Teachers and Headteachers

Headteacher Performance Management Aide Memoire

Performance Management for Headteachers Template

2.9 Recording the Outcomes of Activity to Monitor and Evaluate Progress

For schools requiring progress reviews or school improvement forums it is important to record in writing the outcomes of activity to monitor and evaluate progress. This will provide:

- evidence of the extent to which suitable progress is being made by the school
- the means to judge whether the support provided is having an impact on standards and pupils' progress, the quality of provision or leadership
- a reference point when determining future action.

Recording in writing should be done using the School Improvement Partnership Log.

At half-termly or termly intervals the Improvement Partner should record a summary judgement status against each of the priorities. The possible four judgements should follow those provided by Estyn (please refer to appendix 1 of this framework). This should reflect the assessment of the school's progress at that point.

Where reference is made to the actions taken by, or in support of, the school these should be related to their impact on standards, pupils' progress, quality of provision or leadership. The balance of the report should be towards evaluation as opposed to description.

The half-termly or termly evaluation for improvement reports should draw on the evidence provided by the school itself and those providing support.

The progress should contain the following against each of the priorities:

- Whether the progress report to date is very good/ strong/satisfactory/limited
- The reasons for the judgement focusing on the impact of the improvement work to date on pupils' standards/progress, provision and leadership
- Next steps that the school needs to take to secure further improvement
- The evidence underpinning the evaluation.

The half-termly or termly report should be prepared before the progress review meeting with the headteacher and chair of governors and completed following the meeting. Key action points from the meeting should be recorded in the agreed actions section of the half-termly or termly report.

Section 3: Brokering and Commissioning Support

3.1 The Process as it Applies to All Schools

1. IP, in discussion with the school, identifies the priorities for improvement and the support required.
2. IP refers to the Professional Learning Offer (PLO) for appropriate support to meet the identified needs of the school.
3. If needs not fully met through the PLO, IP discusses informally with strategic team colleagues regarding appropriate support. No agreement about officers providing support can be made informally.
4. IP discusses support requirements for school with PIP who can advise on most appropriate route.
5. PIP discusses support requirements with Senior Strategic Lead for Curriculum, Assessment and Qualifications. Support is planned and implemented.
6. If support requires additional funding and/or school-to-school brokerage, PIP submits a Resource Board to Assistant Directors for consideration and approval.
7. Internal information sharing sessions provide opportunities to discuss and review support each term.

3.2 Regional Leaders of Governance

We currently have our first cohort of 13 Regional Leaders of Governance actively supporting school improvement across the region. The skills profile of the RLG team is immense with a broad range of experience across different phases, school settings, governance and professional backgrounds.

School governance is crucial to the success of our education system, perhaps more so now than ever before. Where governance works well, it strengthens school leadership and creates a culture of high ambition where all children and young people are expected to thrive. We all know that the best governing bodies have an in depth knowledge of their schools and provide insightful challenge help drive up school performance and ensure that there is robust financial accountability and oversight.

Where governance is not effective, it is important that governing bodies are able to access support and guidance so that they can develop and improve. New chairs will also benefit from having the opportunity to lean on the expertise of an RLG as they hone their skills.

Important to the success of this programme is the engagement with other professionals, especially the Improvement Partners who will work closely with RLGs and schools to ensure that there is a holistic approach to providing support where it is most needed in our schools. The RLG/IP partnership will enable collaboration and cohesion within the school improvement system and will also inform quality assurance as the programme evolves.

The RLG Handbook contains full information and an overview of the deployment process.

KEY DOCUMENTS AND LINKS

[RLG Handbook](#)

Section 4: Supporting Development Across All Schools

4.1 Professional Learning Offer

“Together we are responsible for ensuring that every young person in Wales has an equal opportunity to reach the highest standards.”

Education in Wales: Our national mission

With the current climate and scale of educational reform in Wales, there has never been a more important time for teachers and leaders to engage in professional learning. The changes to the curriculum are central to both work in schools and other aspects of the reform agenda, and they are supporting the wider cultural shift in the education sector. Through their ‘schools as learning organisations’ work and increasingly, by developing reflective practitioners engaged with their professional standards, school leaders are able to ensure that the system remains focussed on high quality learning and teaching that has learners at its heart.

Central South Consortium (CSC) firmly believes in a self-improving system that is designed and led by schools for schools. Since its inception, the Central South Wales Challenge has sought to provide structures to enable schools to facilitate high quality professional learning across our region. Through hubs, lead practitioners, SIGs, partnerships, peer review and clusters, headteachers have collaborative advantage in accessing professional learning according to their current improvement priorities. CSC also provide professional learning opportunities in support of leadership, career pathways and equity and wellbeing. Through their engagement, schools can ensure that they are able to realise the ambition of the four enabling objectives as set out in Our National Mission.

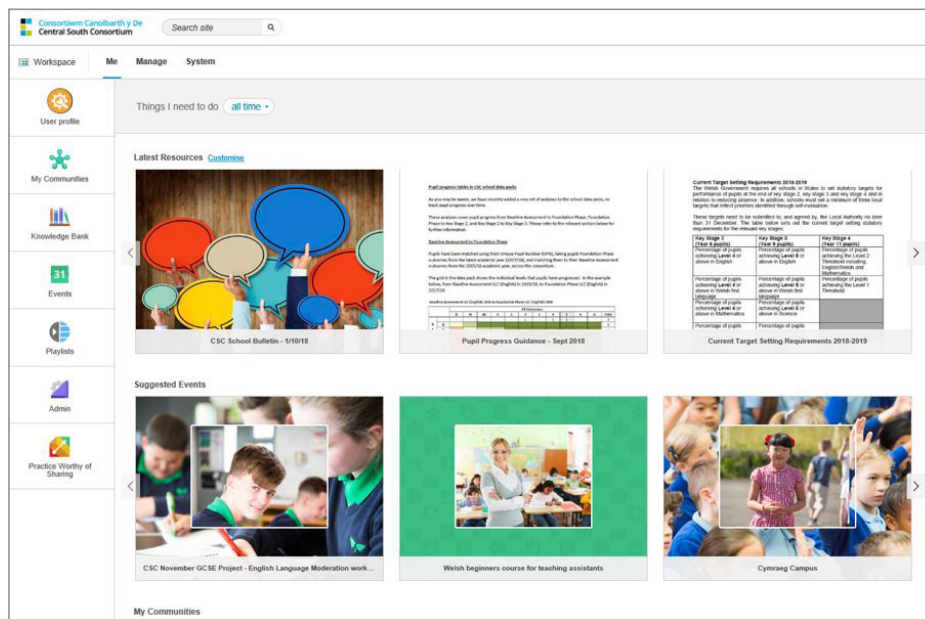
In line with the National Approach to Professional Learning, there is a commitment of equity of access for all practitioners. In CSC, the professional learning offer ensures that all schools in our region are able to engage with developing all aspects of learning, teaching and leadership. As in 2019-2020, there will be no charges for any of the activities outlined in this offer.

Further professional learning programmes and networking opportunities are being co-constructed and will be published throughout the year.

KEY DOCUMENTS AND LINKS

[Professional Learning Offer](#)

4.2 CSC Website



Launched in June 2016, the CSC website, www.cscjes.org.uk, is easily accessible using any internet-enabled device and browsed by users at their convenience.

The system has been developed to support users to select their preferences/interests. The CSC website will send updates on events, resources and best practice materials tailored to each user's unique preferences. These can relate to school improvement priorities or subject specialisms.

The CSC website is an online tool to support school improvement across the region. This is facilitated by smart search facilities which support users to identify and find best practice materials.

In addition, the system houses all school improvement information in a dedicated community; within which all school level data, reports and supporting information are held.

Users are also able to browse all events related to our [professional learning offer](#) through the events tool on the system. Events can be accessed from the login page where users can browse without the need to be logged in to the system. Users can then add their username and password within this view to book.

In order to request a place simply click 'book' and the system will notify the business desk of the booking request. Most requests for support are not confirmed until two weeks before the support is due to take place to ensure that the minimum number of delegates is reached.

Users will receive a notification once the booking has been registered and can browse the 'my booked' and 'pending events' tabs to view the status of their requests

To make bookings outside of the website please contact the consortium's Business Desk Officer. Telephone: 01443 281404. E-mail: businessdesk@cscjes.org.uk.

General queries regarding the system should be directed to: communications@cscjes.org.uk.

Section 5: Headteachers' Performance Management

Extensive guidance for Improvement Partners concerning the process for headteachers' performance management is contained in the following document: Headteacher Performance Management: Aide Memoire.

In summary the process involves:

- An annual review of the headteacher's performance against objectives and the setting of new objectives.
- Continuing support from the Improvement Partner for governors' panels in the production of appraisal statements and objectives and encouragement to panels who are well placed to do so to take on more responsibility for the production of the appraisal statement and objectives.
- One monitoring meeting during the year for schools requiring core support, unless there are concerns about progress expressed by any panel member.
- For schools where the level of support is enhanced, monitoring at least twice in line with the more regular monitoring of progress in these schools. This involvement should be seen as part of any wider support and professional development to improve governance at the school.

The involvement of Improvement Partners in the review and objective setting and monitoring of progress meetings is an important source of professional development for governors as they discharge their statutory duties. This is particularly important in schools where the capacity of the governing body to carry out its responsibilities effectively requires support.

The Improvement Partner will continue to attend the annual meeting with the governors' panel to review progress against objectives and to set new objectives. The recording remains the responsibility of the Governing Body and will ensure that the content of the appraisal statement is agreed at the meeting prior to leaving the school.

The chair of the governors' panel will take responsibility for the appraisal statement in line with the statutory requirements but with continued support from the Improvement Partner. The Improvement Partner will continue to quality assure the accuracy of the final documentation.

Wherever possible the review of the headteacher's performance objectives and the setting of new objectives will be planned to coincide with the meeting to discuss improvement priorities in the autumn term or as near as possible to this meeting.

KEY DOCUMENTS AND LINKS

[Headteacher Performance Management - Aide Memoire](#)

[Performance Management Template](#)

[Model Performance Management Policy for Teachers and Headteachers](#)

[CSC Capability Procedure for Teachers and Headteachers](#)

Appendix 1: Questions to Support Preparation for Autumn Term Meetings with Schools

Standards

National Position 2020-21

Performance measures for 2020/21 for KS4 and Post-16 will not be published. This was announced by the Minister on 21st of June 2021 as part of a series of measures designed to create capacity and ease potential pressures within the Welsh education system and to provide clarity on what the next academic year will look like. Publication of external examinations data will be suspended for 2021/22. The publication of other performance measures in 2021/22 is yet to be confirmed. Further details can be seen in the [WG data release update document from June 2021](#).

Furthermore, in 2021/22 as is the case in 2020/21, qualification awards data will not be used to report on attainment outcomes at a school, local authority or regional consortium level and must not be used to hold schools to account for their learners' outcomes.

The series of measures announced by the Minister include:

- The suspension of Estyn's core inspection programme for schools and pupil referral units (PRUs) to be extended to include the autumn term 2021 and to pilot a new approach to inspections with schools' agreement in the spring term
- The suspension of school performance measures will be extended to 2021/22
- School categorisation will not take place in the next academic year
- New regulations that relax a range of school reporting requirements for 2020/21, supporting the assurances previously provided around the use of school data affected by the coronavirus pandemic

In June 2021, Welsh Government also published an update on their data release document. In it, Welsh Government confirms that the following are suspended for 2020/21:

- Statistical bulletin for Teacher Assessments – Baseline Assessment, Foundation Phase, Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3
- Statistical bulletin - Non-core teacher assessments KS3
- Statistical bulletin – attendance in secondary schools
- SSSP reports – Provisional, 2nd Provisional and Final
- All Wales Core Data Sets – KS4 and Post 16 (all releases) including attendance packs
- Value added analysis – Provisional and Final
- Statistical bulletin – Attainment by FSM/non-FSM
- Statistical bulletin – attendance in primary schools

- My Local School – not updated with National Categorisation data, attendance data or performance data for FP-Post-16 inc FSM/non-FSM
- Statistical bulletin – Achievement by pupil characteristics
- Statistical bulletin – Absenteeism by pupil characteristics

The responsibility of all schools to undertake effective self-evaluation to support continuous improvement is essential. Evaluation and improvement arrangements require consideration of a broad range of information relevant to a school's own context when undertaking self-evaluation and identifying improvement priorities. This will involve schools, with support from local authorities and regional consortia, using the learner level information they have on attainment and other outcomes to reflect on and improve their existing arrangements. The following questions and prompts may be used by Improvement Partners in discussion with school leaders to inform CSC support for school improvement and partnership working in 2021-22.

Overall

1. What does the data analysis indicate about strengths and areas for improvement?
2. What main indicator(s) improved last year? Why/ how?
3. What main indicators let the school down last year and what plans have been put in place to address this?
4. Over a three year period, what are the trends in performance in the main indicators?
5. Is performance higher, the same as, or lower than, expected in the main indicators (a little/a lot)? If there is a notable difference, what might have caused this?
6. Are there any contextual factors that have affected performance for this indicator / subject?
7. How well have EOTAS pupils performed and how does this compare to previous years?
8. What data does the school collect to analyse pupil performance in literacy and numeracy? What does the school's data suggest about the strength of literacy and numeracy skills of pupils over time?
9. Are there trends over time to grade distributions? How do the grade distributions compare across subjects within the school?
10. How well do pupils achieve at the higher grades? Is there a noticeable difference between core subjects? How does the percentage of pupils gaining grades D/E and grades A/A* compare with previous years?
11. How does performance in non-core subjects compare to performance in the core subjects? In which subjects do students do best/worse?
12. How does the percentage of pupils gaining a recognised qualification in Welsh second language compare with previous years?
13. Performance of particular groups – how have particular groups of pupils performed in the main indicators and how does this compare with previous years? (Boys/Girls, eFSM/non eFSM, BME, Young

Carers, ALN, MAT, Gypsy traveller, EAL, LAC, EOTAS).

14. How many students remain in full-time education at the end of key stage 4 (not just those that stay on in the sixth form) and how does that compare to previous years? Similarly, how many students moved on to appropriate higher or further education courses at the end of the sixth form and how does that compare with previous years?

Pandemic Recovery

1. Which groups of learners have been most affected by disruption to teaching and learning over the last academic year?
2. What strategies has the school deployed to address underachievement and what impact has this had on 'closing the gap'? Is there any practice worth sharing?
3. What strategies has the school utilised to improve standards of well-being for learners and how successful has this been? Is there any practice worth sharing?
4. What impact has any additional funding had on improving rates of progression for learners?
5. How will the school build on the success of the 'Blended Learning' approach to teaching and learning?

Groups of learners who are vulnerable to underachievement

1. Given that inclusion is a process, could you tell me how you have developed policies and practices to remove barriers to education and improve access, participation and engagement for all children?
2. How does the school identify vulnerable learners?
3. How effective is the school in monitoring the progress of vulnerable learners?
4. How well does the school meet the needs of all learners? What is the quality of differentiation in lessons each day that make teaching and learning accessible to all pupils and how does the school know?
5. How does the school capture the opinions of vulnerable pupils about their everyday experiences in school and how is this used to inform improvements?
6. How cognisant are all teachers of the content and recommendations in pupil's Individual Development Plans? How do you know that all teachers are using IEPs to inform teaching and learning for ALN pupils?
7. How do the participation rates of vulnerable pupils in extra - curricular activities and after school clubs compare to non-vulnerable pupils?
8. How does the school support and track the progress of those pupils who are EOTAS and how does the school evaluate the quality of provision they receive off site?
9. How effective is the school in supporting the transition of pupils from the PRU back into school or pupils who are part of a managed move?

10. How effective is provision in raising standards of eFSM pupils and how do you know?
11. How effective is the school's additional learning provision in accelerating the progress of learners with ALN?
12. How does the school monitor the quality of provision for vulnerable learners and how is this captured?
13. How well does the school deploy additional adults to support vulnerable pupils? What impact has this had over time?
14. How have eFSM pupils benefitted from PDG? What was the impact? What evidence does the school hold to show value for money in relation to PDG spend?
15. How are governors provided with first hand evidence as to standards of teaching, learning and progress of vulnerable groups? How often does this occur? How are governors kept informed of the impact of PDG spend on eFSM pupils and how do they challenge the school?
16. What is the frequency of communication between the school and the parents/carers of vulnerable pupils and has it led to improved outcomes?
17. What interventions are in place for vulnerable groups? How effective are they, do they provide value for money and how does the school know? Have they led to sustainable improvements over time?
18. Which of last year's cohort (Y2/6/11) pupils were looked after, young carers, BME, Gypsy Traveller, boys, girls, eFSM, EOTAS, EAL? How far did their outcomes meet expectations?

Attendance and Behaviour

1. What are the trends in attendance data over the last three years?
2. How effective is the school's approach to behaviour management? (for example decreasing the number of days lost to exclusion; the number of children on reduced timetable; number of children on EOTAS; mid-year transfers and managed moves)
3. Does the school's curriculum offer impact on attendance levels? In other words, is it engaging, exciting and personalised to the needs of pupils so that they want to come to school?
4. Is the school monitoring the attendance of groups who are vulnerable to underachievement? What use is being made of this information to raise levels of attendance?

Expectations

1. How does the school demonstrate ambition for pupils?
2. How does the school combat low aspirations? Does the school engage the use of role models for learners? How/How effectively? When does the school start mapping career pathways? How/How effectively? How effectively does the school engage with higher education providers, employers and the wider community to raise aspirations?

3. How targets are for pupils generated and how is progress towards targets monitored and by who?
4. What is the quality of local targets and what impact has setting local targets had on improving outcomes for pupils over time?
5. What is the correlation over the last three years between the targets that have been set for pupils and actual outcomes? Does the school evaluate the rigour and accuracy of its target setting processes? How?
6. How is the information on pupil progress towards targets used by all staff to amend teaching and learning or secure additional support for those pupils who may need it?
7. Do all staff know what expected standards and progress are for pupils at all levels and provide activities that are well matched for their ability?
8. Do the school's overall targets represent and aggregation of targets for individual pupils?
9. Are targets amended upwards when better than expected progress is made?
10. Does the school provide opportunities for pupils to apply previously taught literacy and numeracy skills at the appropriate level?
11. Do pupils write to the same standard in other subjects as they do in English (or Welsh) lessons?
12. Does the school provide opportunities for pupils to apply previously taught skills such as bilingualism, DCF and problem solving skills?
13. How involved are pupils in reviewing their own learning? How does the school involve pupils in target setting and do pupils understand the rationale behind it?
14. How well do parents understand the purpose of target setting and how does the school keep parents informed of pupil progress?

Assessment

1. Who writes the school's marking and assessment policy? How well do all staff understand the principles of the policy and ensure that they adhere to it? Has the policy had a positive impact on the quality of summative and formative assessment in the school over time?
2. What professional learning does the school provide to staff regarding assessment of and assessment for learning? Does the school encourage staff to carry out action research in this area?
3. How secure is teacher assessment at the school? What processes are in place to ensure reliability? How do leaders know?
4. What tracking systems does the school utilise and what impact have they had to date? Are they used effectively to inform pupils' next steps and progression routes? Are there too many systems that over burden staff, lack clarity and have had no impact on raising standards over time?
5. What type of summative and formative data is collected?

6. How do teachers use summative and formative pupil information to plan for progression, ensure high quality differentiation in all classes and that all pupils make good progress from their starting points?
7. Does the school take into consideration the views of all adults involved with teaching the pupil when assessing pupil progress and next steps?
8. How effective is written feedback/marking? How often does the school capture this and how? How are the findings then relayed to staff and what impact has this had to date?
9. What is the quality of verbal feedback and questioning in lessons and does it move learning on? How does the school know?
10. Has the school developed robust self and peer assessment process for pupils that are well embedded and have had a positive impact on learning or is it tokenistic and has had very little impact on learning?
11. Do pupils have a clear understanding about their next steps in learning and what they need to do to make further progress? How does the school know?

Teaching

1. What is the school's understanding of what excellent teaching and learning looks like? How this collective understanding this arrived at? How are these expectations shared with staff and pupils?
2. How does the school evaluate the quality of teaching and learning? How does the school know? How can the school demonstrate it and where is the evidence? What actions have the school taken? What impact have these actions had? What's next?
3. Is the school's view on the standards of teaching and learning accurate? How do you know as an Improvement Partner? Do you regularly see first-hand evidence as to the standards of teaching and learning?
4. What is the quality of the learning environment and how effectively are time resources used to support teaching and learning?
5. How does the school evaluate the effectiveness of additional adults in lessons and the impact they have on standards of teaching and learning?
6. How are pupils used to inform improvements to teaching and learning?
7. Where is the strongest teaching in the school? What features make this practice strong? How is this best practice shared?
8. Where is the weakest teaching in the school? What features make this practice weak?
9. How are weaker teachers supported to improve their practice?
10. What resources does the school use to inform improvements to teaching and learning e.g. e.g. Estyn, [CSC's Enabling Equity and Excellence' Strategy](#), Education Endowment Fund, Research, Sutton Trust information etc.
11. Does the school have any links with Higher Education Institutions to improve researched-based

practice?

Leadership

Self-Evaluation

1. Does the school have a clear focus on the link between the achievement of pupils, the quality of provision and the effectiveness of leadership and management?
2. How effective are the school's processes for self-evaluation over time? What impact has thus had on improving standards of teaching, leadership and pupil outcomes?
3. Can the school demonstrate examples where self-evaluation has led to a need for change in systems, practices or culture?
4. Does the school have a culture of leading sustainable change through quality self-evaluation and do all leaders understand the part they play in supporting this culture?
5. Does the self-evaluation report (SER) give an accurate, balanced view of standards, provision and leadership?
6. What is degree of focus on literacy and numeracy in the SER?
7. What is the quality of the school's self-evaluation? Is it honest, evaluative, and comprehensive with a focus on impact? Does self-evaluation reflect progress towards any recommendations from Estyn or CSC?
8. Is there a calendar of self-evaluation activities (book scrutiny, listening to learners, learning walks, planning scrutiny etc.) that take place? Are all leaders of learning involved? How the outcomes of monitoring are captured? If monitoring activities identify areas for improvement how does the school make sure that these are acted upon and the impact captured? (Closing the loop).
9. Do self-evaluation processes involve all stakeholders?
10. How are pupils used in self-evaluation?
11. Do identified areas for improvement from the SER feature in the School Development Plan?

Governance

1. How does the governing body hold the school to account? Where is the evidence?
2. Does the governing body evaluate its effectiveness in holding the school to account?
3. What data does the governing body receive and how is this challenged?
4. Does the governing body play an active role in the self-evaluation process and in strategic planning?

Does the governing body monitor progress in implementing the SDP during the year? How/ how effectively?

5. How/ what does the governing body know about standards, the quality of teaching, the impact of leadership at the school?

School Development Planning

1. Is the SDP clearly based upon the outcomes of self-evaluation and the review of the previous SDP?
2. Does the SDP link to national, regional and local priorities?
3. Does the SDP contain details of the support that the school will receive from the CSC Improvement Team and Local Authority colleagues?
4. What are the school's key priorities for this year? And over the next three years? How appropriate are these? What are they based on?
5. What are the main barriers to further improvement in the school?
6. Have leaders evaluated the impact of last year's SDP? Did it achieve intended outcomes?
7. If this school needed to improve quickly what would it take?
8. If I were a teacher at this school, would the SDP be clear to me as a road map for improvement?
9. How successful is the Foundation Phase, implementation of the literacy and numeracy framework, assessment for learning, Pisa Skills, Welsh Baccaalaureate, DCF, GCSEs, A levels?
10. Are targets/ success criteria in the SDP linked to learners' outcomes?
11. Does the SDP meet statutory requirements?
12. Are actions within the SDP clear and precise? Are they likely to secure the necessary improvement? Does the plan refer to responsibilities, timescales, milestones, resource requirements?
13. Is the school's use of grants clear within the plan? Has the school made use of research and good practice when deciding how best to deploy the PDG in particular?
14. What is the quality of professional learning plans?
15. How is the school planning to secure improvement that is sustainable?
16. Are arrangements for monitoring and evaluation clear and appropriate?
17. Are statutory policies up to date? Is the school aware of these?
18. How are leaders preparing for budgetary pressures?
19. Is the school aware of relevant guidance and reports from Estyn?

Capacity Building

1. How successful is senior leadership, governance and middle leadership in the school? How do you know?
2. What use has the school made of the Professional Standards for teaching and Leadership and what impact has this had to date?
3. How does the school identify and grow leaders of the future and succession manage?
4. How does the school develop governors?
5. How many colleagues have enrolled and successfully completed leadership programmes (Middle Leaders, NPQH, and Aspiring Headteacher etc.) over the last three years? What is the impact been and where are they now?
6. How do senior leaders motivate staff? What feedback do they get about their performance? How do senior and middle leaders hold people to account?
7. How does the school celebrate success?
8. Are there any staff who are examiners for exam boards or have completed Estyn peer inspector training? How does the school utilise these skills?

Curriculum Reform

1. What is the school's progress to date in preparing for 'Curriculum for Wales'? As an Improvement Partner, what role will you play in supporting the school's next steps? How does the school want you to be involved?
2. How well prepared is the school in implementing the ALN Act? Is the school aware of the document 'ALN: A Journey to Fully Inclusive Education and the Design and Delivery of Additional Learning Provision, Guidance for Mainstream Schools on the Expectations of the ALN Code' that has been produced by the ALN Transformational Lead for the CSC region? (link to document needed)
3. Has the school completed the 'Schools as Learning Organisations' survey? <https://hwb.gov.wales/go/e4qk2i> How much progress has the school demonstrated against each of the seven dimensions? Is there any practice worth sharing? PDF <https://hwb.gov.wales/api/storage/f87e720f-8568-4a60-9383-55e20b9a1bb7/schools-in-wales-as-learning-organisations.pdf>
4. Is the school aware of the '[CSC Enabling Equity and Excellence](#)' document? How will it be used by the school and what role will you play as an Improvement Partner in supporting the school towards the National Mission goal of 'Equity and Excellence' for all?
5. How well does the school provided opportunities for professional learning for all staff so that they are well-informed and equipped to meet the demands of national reforms?

School to School Support

1. How has the school engaged collaboratively with other schools, how effective has it been and what difference has it made to learner outcomes? What evidence do you have to show this?
2. Has the school evaluated the impact of collaboration and improvement work in the SER?
3. Is collaborative working part of the school's future improvement plans?
4. Has the school shared its practice with other schools and how beneficial is this?
5. Is collaborative working part of the improvement strategy if the school is an enhanced support school? Has the Improvement Partner provided updates as to the impact of collaborative working in school progress meetings?

Appendix 2: Guidance when Applying a RAG Status and Making Judgements about Progress in Schools Requiring Progress Review and SIF Meetings

Time invested in working with a school to ensure that its self-evaluation and improvement planning processes are as strong as possible is time well spent and will lead to more meaningful monitoring and reporting of progress. In particular, the Improvement Partner should feel confident that the targets set for pupils and the outcomes they should achieve reflect high expectations on the part of all teachers (see guidance on target setting).

It is important that the judgements underpinning the RAG status, monitoring reports and half-termly or termly progress report are informed by:

- the extent to which key agreed actions have been implemented;
- the effectiveness and impact of the actions taken by the school in relation to each priority;
- the evidence underpinning the evaluation and judgements especially that relating to pupils' progress; and
- the gap between current performance and progress and the intended outcomes as set out in targets and success criteria in the school's improvement plan.

A judgement should be made in each progress report concerning the progress the school is making towards the targets and success criteria in the School Development Plan (SDP) and set out in the monitoring template.

In all cases the Improvement Partner should be satisfied that the school is clear about:

- those pupils who are on track to achieve the expected foundation phase outcomes, National Curriculum levels or examinations grades;
- those pupils who are not on track; and
- the action taken to help these pupils make more rapid progress.

There is a difference between taking action and improving provision and the impact of these on outcomes. A school's leaders may well be taking action appropriately and this action may well be well on track. If this is the case this should be stated. However, it will be important that a school does more than demonstrate that action is being taken or that provision is in place. The key test will be "What impact is this having and what is the evidence for this?" The school will need to have evidence that the work undertaken is having a discernible impact on securing the improvement intended in the plan. The improvement will relate especially to pupils' progress and standards of achievement and may also concern other aspects such as the quality of teaching, attendance, aspects of governance and leadership.

A RAG status should be applied against each of the targets or success criteria highlighted on the front page of the monitoring template. The use of the judgements very good, strong, satisfactory or limited progress should relate to the impact of the school's work on securing improvement and should be used in the evaluation section of the progress report.

In order to judge that progress is very good (green) Improvement Partners would need to have hard evidence of impact derived from relevant sources which would include:

- robust and reliable evidence from the school's and assessment about pupils' levels of progress in year against the outcomes they are expected to achieve which should reflect high expectations and should be adjusted upwards where pupils are making better than expected progress;
- evidence about improvements in the quality of teaching from lesson observation and scrutiny of pupils' work both by the school and in partnership;
- evidence about attendance or exclusion in year;
- evidence from senior and middle leadership meetings and from triangulated discussion with staff; and
- evidence from contact with governing bodies.

However, in all cases Improvement Partners should err on the side of caution before committing to a judgement that progress is very good (green) or strong (yellow). For schools requiring amber or red levels of support it is likely that some time will be required to demonstrate impact that is convincing and sustained. End of key stage data and final in-year assessment data will be important in making final judgements about impact on achievement outcomes.

The judgement that progress is satisfactory (amber) allows the Improvement Partner to reflect the fact that the school is taking appropriate action and there may be emerging evidence of impact also. However, this also allows scope to point out the need to develop more evidence of impact and to make this central to the school's work.

Where the judgement is that progress is limited (red) this is likely to be because action is not being taken with enough vigour or pace, or there is a lack of clarity, or there is a lack of follow through or weak monitoring. Evidence about impact is likely to need more work and the need to provide this may not be prominent enough in the school's thinking. In all cases the Improvement Partner should ensure that the commentary in the progress report provides an explanation for the judgement used.

When commenting on strengths and areas of weakness in notes of school visit and evaluation for improvement reports the improvement partner and personnel providing support should be as specific as possible. For example, it is more helpful to state "more able pupils' skills in persuasive writing are underdeveloped" than to say "there are weaknesses in English".

"Pupils in sets 2 and 3 still display weaknesses in understanding ratio and using Pythagoras's Theorem" is more useful than "there are continuing weaknesses in mathematics". It is also helpful to give an indication of the number/ proportion of pupils who are secure/ not secure in reaching expected outcomes to act as a record for future monitoring. Together these provide a clearer agenda for future action, responsibilities and timescales.

The RAG status should reflect the judgements made in the evaluation section of the progress report.



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

Appendix 3: Improvement Partners' Schedule Of Key Tasks

The framework below has an ongoing theme on pupils' learning, wellbeing and themes that will be discussed throughout the year. Our work will identify the schools starting point and ensure that support and challenge is appropriate to ensure all schools make progress. This schedule is not used as a 'tick list' but will remind staff and leaders as to key days when activity should be completed by. For example, HT PM needs to be completed by December 31st; however many schools have moved this into the first half term to ensure that the staff targets can flow from the HT targets.

Dialogue to be structured around 5 fundamental questions for enquiry:

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

Annual Activities

School Improvement Focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting the needs of the priorities • Developing strong relationships • Influencing strategic direction of the school • Capturing first-hand evidence
Autumn Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree the school improvement priorities and share with LA for approval • Co-construct a SDP identifying support • Broker support for priorities • Allocation of PDG, PL & RRRS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate Peer Partnerships • Discuss use of the Equity and Excellence strategy • Support GB to review headteacher's performance objectives and agree objectives for the current academic year • Collaboration funding
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review monitoring cycle and self-evaluation • Vulnerable Learners progress check focusing on participation, engagement and learning. Attendance and exclusion • CfW
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress towards priorities • Progress of all learners • Impact of PL • Quality assure the impact of brokered support with the HT and governors as appropriate • PDG evaluation

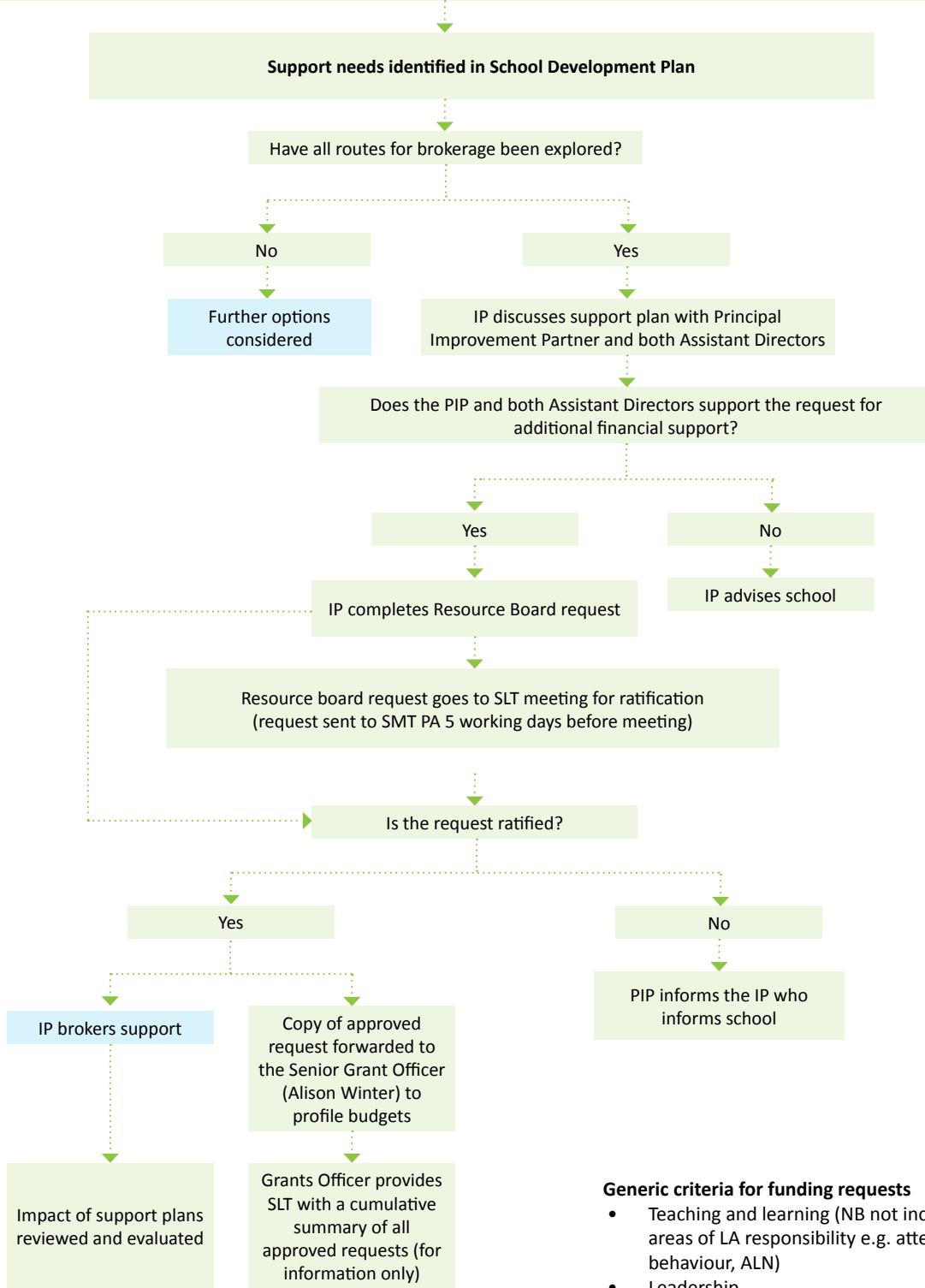
Spring Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion to focus on moving towards quality and effectiveness of Wellbeing, Learning and Teaching and Leadership. Signposting where appropriate to local, regional and national programmes and initiatives.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate impact of the PLG and PDG spend • Evaluate the effectiveness of the new ALNCo role as described in the ALN reform Act • Review monitoring cycle and self-evaluation • Well-being progress check linked to self-evaluation
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress of learners • Impact of PL • Review impact of PDG spend • Discuss and QA plans for new PDG
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring of progress against agreed priorities in school improvement plan • CfW • Quality assure the impact of brokered support with the HT and governors as appropriate. • Support Governing Body in reviewing progress against headteacher's performance objectives
Summer Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate effectiveness of school self-evaluation • review PDG spend • Impact of PL • CfW
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What PL is planned that will support vulnerable learners for 2021-22 • Effectiveness of the new ALNCo role as described in the ALN reform Act • Quality assure the impact of brokered support with the HT and governors as appropriate • Progress of all learners
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Governing Body Report • GB Meeting
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete review of impact of current priorities and agree future priorities including identification of possible support

Enhanced Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Termly or half-termly progress report and review of position agreed with the school, Principal Improvement Partner and LA representatives • Regular discussions and information sharing with the support team and the LA.
Other Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Estyn pre inspection reports / Estyn follow up • Senior Appointments in Schools • RRRS Spending plans/ Impact • Reporting on KS4/5 Curriculum Offer meeting the Learning and Skills measure • EOTAS reporting/Attendance • Collaboration funding • LA Priorities • Wellbeing support / conversations

Appendix 4: Requests for Bespoke Funding to Support Schools

Identification of Support: Improvement Partner (IP) or Strategic Adviser (SA) identifies the need for additional support for the school. This may be through intelligence of the IP, SA, local authorities or following discussions with agencies engaged with the school. Need may also be identified following:

- Estyn inspection, Estyn follow up visit
- Review findings
- Local Authority (LA) performance meetings



- Generic criteria for funding requests**
- Teaching and learning (NB not including areas of LA responsibility e.g. attendance, behaviour, ALN)
 - Leadership
 - Governance

Appendix 5: Reviewing, Identifying and Evidencing Impact

1. Identifying the need for improvement

- School Development Plan: are they the correct priorities?
- Is MER useful and accurate?
- What evidence has informed the priorities?
- Are identified priorities specific and SMART?

2. What are the expected outcomes of support to address the priorities?

- Are we clear about what outcomes will look like?

3. What needs to be done?

- Does CSC broker and co-ordinate or deliver the support?
- Are the actions to address the priorities appropriate?
- Is there a need for milestones?

4. Ongoing evidence gathering

- How do we ensure work is on track?
- Will PIPs discuss and record progress during 1:1 meetings with IPs?
- LA Performance Reports
- SIPL

5. Have the expected outcomes been achieved?

- Are we able to evidence impact?
- How? Through ongoing monitoring?
- Is our evaluation a cumulation of progress reviews and on-going monitoring information?

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BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO SUBJECT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 1

16 SEPTEMBER 2021

REPORT OF THE CHIEF OFFICER - LEGAL, HR & REGULATORY SERVICES

FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE

1. Purpose of report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to:

- a) Present the Committee with the Forward Work Programme (**Appendix A**) for consideration and approval;
- b) Request any specific information the Committee identifies to be included in the items for the next two meetings, including invitees they wish to attend;
- c) Request the Committee to identify whether there are presently any further items for consideration on the Forward Work Programme having regard to the selection criteria in paragraph 4.3 of this report;
- d) Note that the Forward Work Programme and any feedback from the Committee will be reported to the next meeting of Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee (COSC).
- e) Present the Recommendations Monitoring Action Sheet (**Appendix B**) to track responses to the Committee's recommendations made at the previous meetings.

2. Connection to corporate well-being objectives / other corporate priorities

2.1 This report assists in the achievement of the following corporate well-being objectives under the **Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015**:

- **Supporting a successful sustainable economy** – taking steps to make the county borough a great place to do business, for people to live, work, study and visit, and to ensure that our schools are focussed on raising the skills, qualifications and ambitions for all people in the county borough.
- **Helping people and communities to be more healthy and resilient** - taking steps to reduce or prevent people from becoming vulnerable or dependent on the Council and its services. Supporting individuals and communities to build resilience, and enable them to develop solutions to have active, healthy and independent lives.
- **Smarter use of resources** – ensure that all resources (financial, physical, ecological, human and technological) are used as effectively and efficiently as possible and support the creation of resources throughout the community that can help to deliver the Council's well-being objectives.

3. Background

- 3.1 The Council's Constitution requires the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee to develop and implement a Forward Work Programme for the Committee.
- 3.2 The Council's Constitution also provides for each Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee to propose items for the Forward Work Programme having regard for the Council's Corporate Priorities and Risk Management framework, for the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee to then prioritise and schedule.

Best Practice / Guidance

- 3.3 The Centre for Governance and Scrutiny's Good Scrutiny Guide recognises the importance of the forward work programme. In order to 'lead and own the process', it states that Councillors should have ownership of their Committee's work programme, and be involved in developing, monitoring and evaluating it. The Good Scrutiny Guide also states that, in order to make an impact, the scrutiny workload should be coordinated and integrated into corporate processes, to ensure that it contributes to the delivery of corporate objectives, and that work can be undertaken in a timely and well-planned manner.
- 3.4 Forward Work Programmes need to be manageable to maximise the effective use of the limited time and resources of Scrutiny Committees. It is not possible to include every topic proposed. Successful Scrutiny is about looking at the right topic in the right way and Members need to be selective, while also being able to demonstrate clear arguments for including or excluding topics.
- 3.5 The Centre for Governance and Scrutiny (CfGS) guide to work effective work programming 'A Cunning Plan?' makes the following reference to the importance of good work programming:

'Effective work programming is the bedrock of an effective scrutiny function. Done well it can help lay the foundations for targeted, incisive and timely work on issues of local importance, where scrutiny can add value. Done badly, scrutiny can end up wasting time and resources on issues where the impact of any work done is likely to be minimal.'

Forward Work Programme

- 3.6 Following the approval of the schedule of Scrutiny Committee meeting dates at the Annual Meeting of Council on 19th May 2021, the scheduling of standing statutory reports to Scrutiny Committees upon: the Medium Term Financial Strategy, Performance, the Corporate Plan, Budget Monitoring, etc. were mapped to the appropriate COSC meeting dates into a draft Forward Work Programme.
- 3.7 The draft Forward work programme for each Scrutiny Committee has been prepared using a number of difference sources, including:
- Corporate Risk Assessment;
 - Directorate Business Plans;
 - Previous Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme report topics / Minutes;

- Committee / Member proposed topics;
- Policy Framework;
- Cabinet Work Programme;
- Discussions with Corporate Directors;
- Performance Team regarding the timing of performance information.

3.8 There are items where there is a statutory duty for Policy Framework documents to be considered by Scrutiny, e.g. the MTFs including draft budget proposals scheduled for consideration in December 2021, following which the COSC will coordinate the conclusions and recommendations from each of the Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committees in a report on the overall strategic overview of Cabinet's draft Budget proposals to the meeting of Cabinet in February 2022.

3.9 An effective FWP identifies the issues that the Committee wishes to focus on during the year and provide a clear plan. However, at each meeting the Committee will have an opportunity to review this as the Forward Work Programme Update will be a standing item on the Agenda, detailing which items are scheduled for future meetings and be requested to clarify any information to be included in reports and the list of invitees. The FWP will remain flexible and will be revisited at each COSC meeting with updates from each SOSC FWP and any updated information gathered from FWP meetings with Scrutiny Chairs and Corporate Directors.

4. Current situation/proposal

4.1 The Committee approved its Forward Work Programme at its previous meeting.

4.2 The Committee's Forward Work Programme has also been reported to the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee, for coordination and oversight of the overall FWP.

Identification of Further Items

4.3 The Committee are reminded of the Criteria Form which Members can use to propose further items for the FWP which the Committee can then consider for prioritisation at a future meeting. The Criteria Form emphasises the need to consider issues such as impact, risk, performance, budget and community perception when identifying topics for investigation and to ensure a strategic responsibility for Scrutiny and that its work benefits the Authority. There are a number of questions and processes that can help the Committee come to a decision on whether to include a referred topic, some of which are set out below:

Recommended Criteria for Selecting Scrutiny Topics:

PUBLIC INTEREST: The concerns of local people should influence the issues chosen for scrutiny;

ABILITY TO CHANGE: Priority should be given to issues that the Committee can realistically influence, and which will result in a Cabinet decision being taken;

PERFORMANCE:	Priority should be given to the areas in which the Council, and other agencies, are not performing well;
EXTENT:	Priority should be given to issues that are relevant to all or large parts of the County Borough;
REPLICATION:	Work programmes must take account of what else is happening in the areas being considered to avoid duplication or wasted effort.

Reasons to Reject Scrutiny Topics:

- The issue is already being addressed / being examined elsewhere and change is imminent.
- The topic would be better addressed elsewhere (and can be referred there).
- Scrutiny involvement would have limited / no impact upon outcomes.
- The topic may be sub-judice or prejudicial to the Council's interest.
- The topic is too broad to make a review realistic.
- New legislation or guidance relating to the topic is expected within the next year.
- The topic area is currently subject to inspection or has recently undergone substantial change.

Corporate Parenting

- 4.4 Corporate Parenting is the term used to describe the responsibility of a Local Authority towards looked after children and young people. This is a legal responsibility given to local authorities by the Children Act 1989 and the Children Act 2004. The role of the Corporate Parent is to seek for children in public care the outcomes every good parent would want for their own children. The Council as a whole is the 'corporate parent', therefore all Members have a level of responsibility for the children and young people looked after by Bridgend.
- 4.5 In this role, it is suggested that Members consider how each item they consider affects children in care and care leavers, and in what way can the Committee assist in these areas.
- 4.6 Scrutiny Champions can greatly support the Committee in this by advising them of the ongoing work of the Cabinet-Committee and particularly any decisions or changes which they should be aware of as Corporate Parents.
- 4.7 The Forward Work Programme for this Committee is attached as **Appendix A** for consideration.
- 4.8 The Recommendations Monitoring Action Sheet for the previous meetings is attached as **Appendix B**, to track responses to the Committee's recommendations at the previous meetings.

5. Effect upon policy framework and procedure rules

- 5.1 The work of the Overview & Scrutiny Committees relates to the review and development of plans, policy or strategy that form part of the Council's Policy Framework and consideration of plans, policy or strategy relating to the power to promote or improve economic, social or environmental wellbeing in the County Borough of Bridgend.

6. Equality Act 2010 implications

- 6.1 The protected characteristics identified within the Equality Act, Socio-economic Duty and the impact on the use of the Welsh language have been considered in the preparation of this report. As a public body in Wales, the Council must consider the impact of strategic decisions, such as the development or the review of policies, strategies, services and functions. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable equality impacts as a result of this report.

7. Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 implications

- 7.1 The Act provides the basis for driving a different kind of public service in Wales, with 5 ways of working to guide how public services should work to deliver for people. The following is a summary to show how the 5 ways of working to achieve the well-being goals have been used to formulate the recommendations within this report:

- Long-term - The approval of this report will assist in the planning of Scrutiny business in both the short-term and in the long-term on its policies, budget and service delivery.
- Prevention - The early preparation of the Forward Work Programme allows for the advance planning of Scrutiny business where Members are provided an opportunity to influence and improve decisions before they are made by Cabinet.
- Integration - The report supports all the wellbeing objectives.
- Collaboration - Consultation on the content of the Forward Work Programme has taken place with the Corporate Management Board, Heads of Service, Elected Members and members of the public.
- Involvement - Advanced publication of the Forward Work Programme ensures that the public and stakeholders can view topics that will be discussed in Committee meetings and are provided with the opportunity to engage.

8. Financial implications

- 8.1 There are no financial implications directly associated with this report.

9. Recommendations

9.1 The Committee is recommended to:

- a) Consider and approve the Forward Work Programme attached as **Appendix A**;
- b) Identify any specific information the Committee wishes to be included in the items for the next two meetings, including invitees they wish to attend;
- c) Identify any further items for consideration on the Forward Work Programme having regard to the selection criteria in paragraph 4.3 of this report.
- d) Note that the Forward Work Programme and any updates from the Committee will be reported to the next meeting of COSC.
- e) Note the Recommendations Monitoring Action Sheet to track responses to the Committee's recommendations made at the previous meetings as **Appendix B**.

Kelly Watson

CHIEF OFFICER – LEGAL, HR & REGULATORY SERVICES

10 September 2021

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Angel Street,
Bridgend
CF31 4WB

Background documents: None.

**Forward Work Programme
Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 1:**

APPENDIX A

<u>Date of Meeting:</u>	<u>Report Topics:</u>
Mon 14 th June 9.30am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Corporate Parenting Champion Nomination report; - Nomination to the Public Service Board Scrutiny Panel report; - Draft Outline Forward Work Programme
Mon 12 th July 2.30pm	Additional Learning Needs and Educational Tribunal (ALNET) Act 2018
Thurs 16 th Sep 9.30am	How Central South Consortium supports Bridgend Schools.
Mon 18 th Oct 2.30pm	New Curriculum for Wales
	School Governing Bodies
Wed 8 th Dec 9.30am	Medium Term Financial Strategy and Budget Proposals
Mon 17 th Jan 2:30pm	How Schools coped with the Pandemic
	Youth Justice Service
Mon 14 th Mar 9.30am	Post Inspection Action Plan

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Subject Overview & Scrutiny Committee 1

RECOMMENDATIONS MONITORING ACTION SHEET

Date of Meeting	Agenda Item	Action	Responsibility	Outcome
15 March 2021	Blended Learning in Bridgend Schools since March 2020	The Committee concluded by making a number of recommendations.	Scrutiny	ACTIONED – response and information circulated to Committee Members.
9 June 2021	Forward Work Programme	Proposed report upon How schools coped with the Pandemic to be added to Forward Work Programme.	Scrutiny	ACTIONED – added to FWP (Appendix A)
		The Committee requested that the Minutes of the last two meetings that Additional Learning Needs (ALN) had been considered, be circulated to Members as background to the report upon ALN for the next meeting on 5 th July.	Scrutiny	ACTIONED – Circulated to Members before July meeting for consideration of report upon Additional Learning Needs.
		The Committee requested assurance regarding Corporate safeguarding procedures in Bridgend.	Scrutiny / Corporate Director EFS	A Member briefing on safeguarding procedures in Bridgend Schools to be arranged in November.

		The Committee requested the statistics for child protection referrals from schools	Scrutiny / Corporate Director EFS	The data is subject to General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR), however assurance will be provided in the above Briefing.
		The Committee requested information regarding the Everyone's Invited list of schools within the County Borough.	Scrutiny / Corporate Director EFS	Response to be provided.
		The Committee proposed that consideration be given to schools being consulted about potential topics for scrutiny.	Scrutiny / Corporate Director EFS	Response to be provided.
12 July 2021	Additional Learning Needs and Educational Tribunal (ALNET) Act 2018	The Committee concluded by making a number of recommendations.	Scrutiny	ACTIONED – response and information circulated to Committee Members.