

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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