

September 2021



Consortiwm Canolbarth y De
Central South Consortium



Gwasanaeth Addysg ar y Cyd
Joint Education Service

Framework for School Improvement

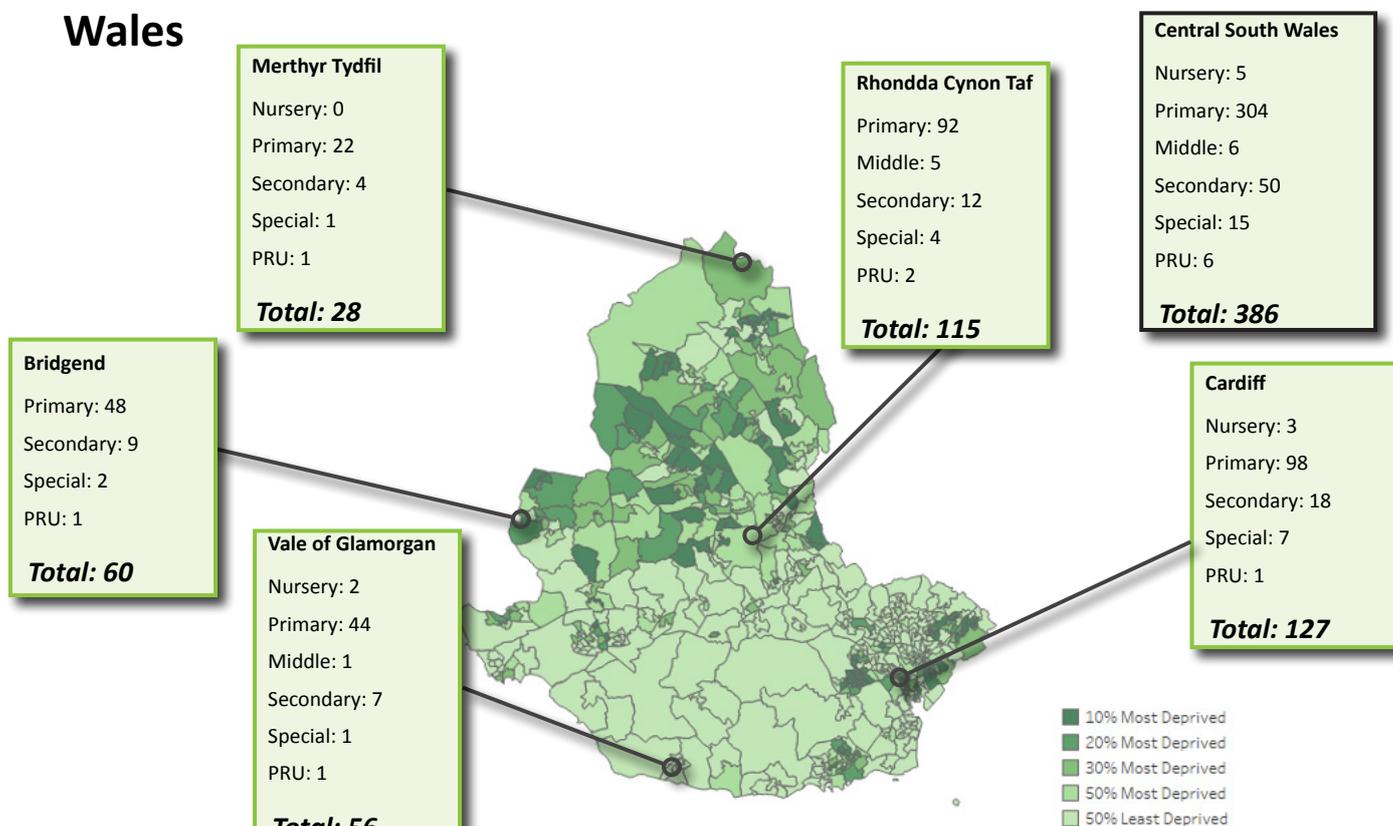
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Section 1: How the Central South Consortium Supports School Improvement across the Region

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:

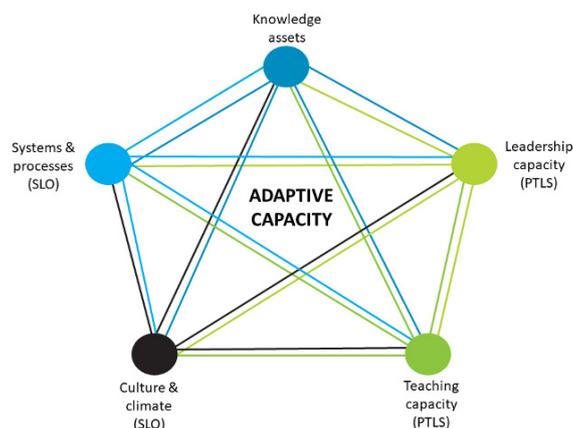
- Do all teachers know their role within the area being developed?
- Are there professional learning opportunities for teachers to engage with the area being developed?
- *The Professional Standards for Teaching and Leadership can be helpful in supporting this.*

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.

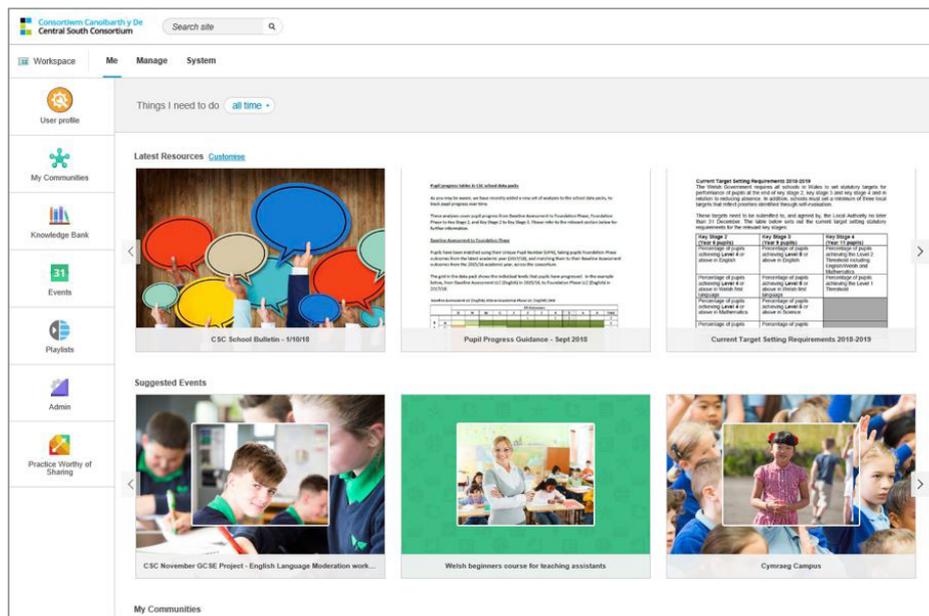
In line with the National Approach to Professional Learning, there is a commitment of equity of access for all practitioners. In CSC, the professional learning offer ensures that all schools in our region are able to engage with developing all aspects of learning, teaching and leadership. As in 2019-2020, 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

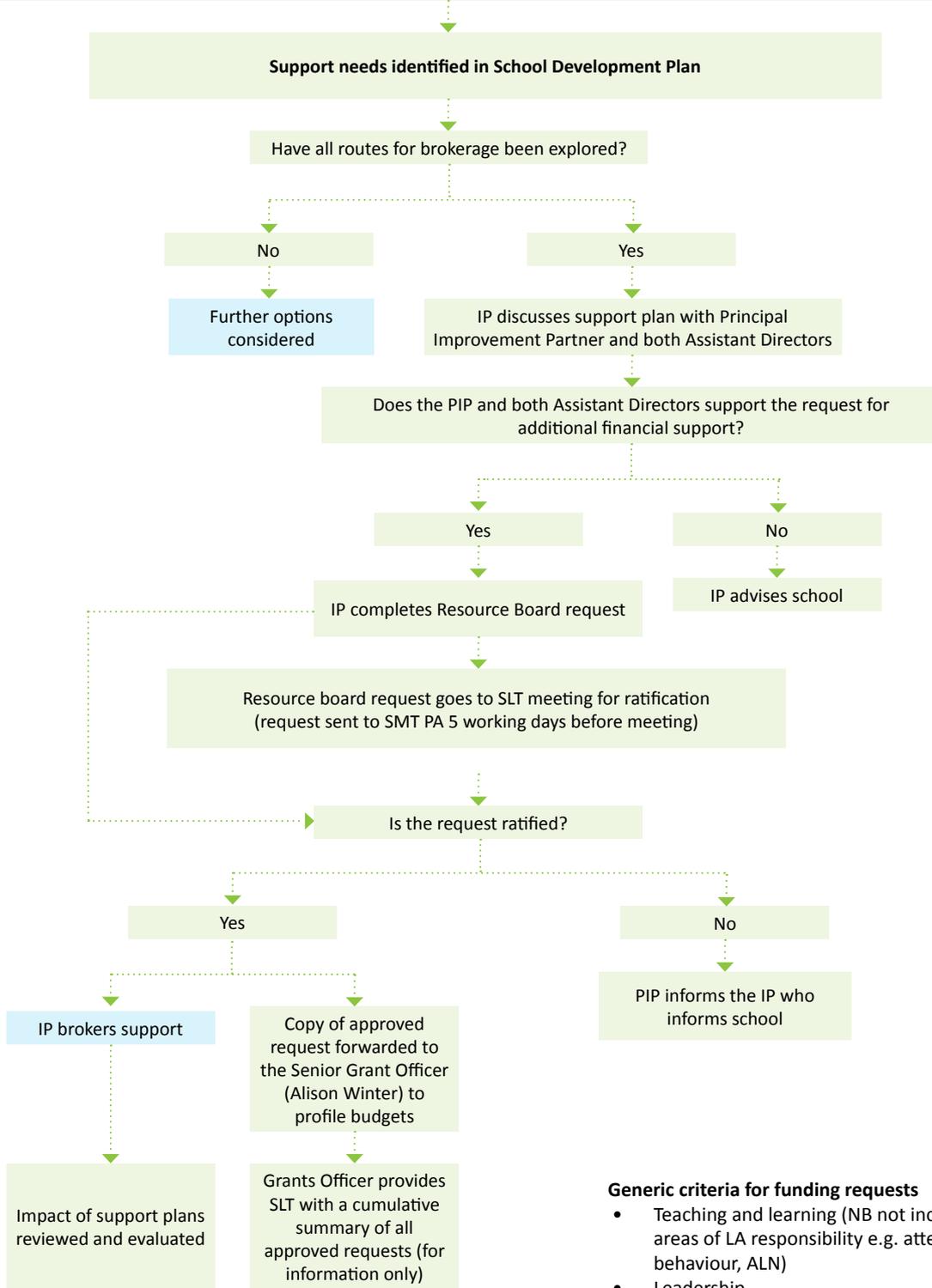
Spring Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion to focus on moving towards quality and effectiveness of Wellbeing, Learning and Teaching and Leadership. Signposting where appropriate to local, regional and national programmes and initiatives.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate 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?