

ANNUAL REPORT 2015-2016

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



GwE ANNUAL REPORT 2015-16 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

STANDARDS

Strengths in performance

- Standards are improving well in the primary sector;
- Performance of Denbighshire is better or as expected in the main indicator in all key stages;
- Performance of Gwynedd is good at Key Stage 3 and 4;
- Performance in the CSI at KS3 continues to be the highest of the four consortia;
- Significant progress is seen in the percentage of FSM pupils achieving the CSI at KS3;
- Percentage of pupils achieving the Level 2 inclusive [L2+] is significantly higher this year [+2.0% or +3.0% without 'Other Eotas'] compared to the progress seen in 2015 [0.4%];
- Percentage achieving A*-C in GCSE Welsh first language is good over a rolling period;
- Estyn inspection profile for the GwE region compares favourably with the national profile;
- GwE knows its schools well and categorises its schools appropriately;
- Increase in the percentage of schools categorised as green in all Local Authorities; and
- Percentage of schools categorised as amber and red have decreased in four of the six Local Authorities.

Aspects for development

- Improve performance in the L2+, Maths and English at KS4
- introduce a coherent targeted programme in around half of our secondary schools to improve standards and leadership;
- match national initiatives closely to the need of schools and group of schools to accelerate the development of a self-improving school system;
- improve performance of Wrexham local authority at KS3 and individual schools across the region;
- improve school performance at KS2 in Conwy and Wrexham;
- improve the performance of key authorities and the region with respect to expected proportions in the National Reading Tests;
- improve the performance of key authorities and the region with respect to expected proportions in the National Numeracy tests;
- develop a consistent approach to numerical reasoning and the understanding of a systematic reasoning process to solve problems in a range of contexts
- improve performance post 16 at the higher grades;
- increase standards of Welsh against the language continuum;
- ensure that all schools implement effective strategies to improve performance of FSM learners;
- ensure effective provision, support and intervention, where appropriate, for all vulnerable learners;
- strengthen and develop the links between GwE and local authority services to improve the standards achieved by ALN pupils; and
- ensure that improving the achievement MAT pupils is a priority in each school.

PROVISION

How well do we provide support, monitoring, challenge and support intervention in our schools?

Strengths

- following a period of consultation with stakeholders, the operating model has adapted and evolved – this has led to improvements in outcomes within the primary sector and in some secondary schools;
- support requirements for all Amber & Red schools defined clearly to stakeholders within support plans;
- better consistency in the quality of support and guidance for schools across the 3 hubs;

- schools have access to leadership programmes at a regional level, hub level and that are specific to the needs of their own School;
- in the primary sector, marked improvements in the quality of leadership – an increase in the percentage of schools in the Green and Yellow categories from 80.7% in 2015-16 to 84.8% in 2016-17 and an increase in the % of schools that have received the highest judgement [A or B] in Step 2 of the Process [rising from 85.3% in 2015-16 to 89.0% in 2016-17];
- in the primary, Estyn inspection profiles are positive and highlight strong improvements with 75% of the schools inspected in 2015-16 [48 schools] receiving a good or better judgement for quality of leadership and for inspections already conducted in 2016-17 [20 schools], the figure has risen further to 80%;
- challenge & monitoring procedures are aligned across the 3 hubs and expectations are clearly defined and identified to stakeholders;
- Senior Challenge & Support Advisers within each hub becoming more effective in ensuring the quality of work undertaken by every Challenge Adviser within their teams;
- implementation empowered by the contributions of successful Headteachers who have joined on secondment;
- alignment and empowerment arrangements for challenging and collating individual school targets and progress towards them
- more effective collaboration with officers from the authorities to target further action in schools where there is a lack or slowness in making progress;
- establishing a regional forum, School Improvement Forum, chaired by one of the Directors of Education has led to consistency of practice and expectations across the six authorities.

Aspects for development

- empower and align the operating model with secondary schools through further evolution of the support model and ensuring better use of heads on secondment to enrich the work of the team;
- increase the % of secondary schools that are in the Green/Yellow support category and that receive the highest judgement [A or B] in Step 2 of the Process;
- improve inspection outcomes in the secondary sector and particularly in the Flintshire / Wrexham hub;
- ensuring L3 business plans that respond more acutely to the development needs of authorities and individual schools and that have been discussed and agreed with stakeholders
- ensuring more unrestricted access to a wider range of data through the Data Unit and effective use of it by individual challenge advisers
- ensuring that schools have access to a richer range of developmental programmes at specific regional and hub level;
- ensuring that schools act on the regional guidance regarding what is expected in terms of ‘best fit’ for teacher assessments;
- targeting guidance for leaders in key strategic areas [self evaluation, improvement planning, challenging assessments etc.]
- working with authorities and peers to hold *Review and Support* visits in order to sharpen the content of support plans.

How well do we support the delivery of a focused curriculum, good teaching and learning and raising standards in priority aspects?

Strengths

- access to training and development programmes has improved significantly and especially at Foundation Phase. Provided, for the first time, a regional support programme targeting planning, teaching, assessment and leadership in the Foundation Phase in order to improve provision and raise standards of achievement.
- Literacy and Numeracy Challenge and Support Advisor team have provided a broad range of development programmes to ensure quality planning and provision in both the primary and

secondary sector. There has been a high level of engagement in development programmes delivered across the region;

- support for secondary schools to successfully implement the revised GCSE specifications and revised Welsh Baccalaureate has ensured access to specialist subject support in mathematics, English, Welsh 1st Language and science via Subject Challenge Advisors and local networks;
- processes put in place over the past two years has led to a more consistent approach to assessment across the region and the standard of cluster moderation has improved through upskilling of assessment leads and training of practitioners;
- issuing a regional statement regarding teacher assessment to ensure clarity and consistency amongst schools and LAs when applying end of key stage assessments.

Aspects for development

- ensure that the planning and development of the curriculum is aligned within KS3 and the new specifications for GCSE at KS4;
- ensure that all schools are appropriately prepared to respond to the needs of the new Digital Competency Framework and the forthcoming new curriculum;
- continue with collaborative planning, assessment and intervention training for end of key stage teachers to ensure a more consistent approach to levelling and standardisation of work across the region;
- ensure that all schools use the GwE regional statement as part of schools' own assessment processes and during cluster moderation.

How do we support groups of learners including vulnerable learners?

Strengths

- better identification of best practice and developing a research programme with both Cardiff University and Bangor University on the most effective interventions in Literacy Numeracy and Well Being which have the biggest impact in schools;
- bespoke training programme for the development of Middle and Senior Leaders in the special school sector;
- provided training for leaders and teachers on effective strategies to support vulnerable learners, such as training to promote positive behaviour, training on mental health, attachment and grief and trauma;
- Ensured that every school has a 'champion' for vulnerable learners, with meetings taking place in every LA for these individuals;
- Designated a section of the website for successful case studies [both locally and nationally]; guidance and research on what works best to raise the achievement of vulnerable learners;
- Established a regional network consisting of Challenge Advisors, LA officers, a representative from Bangor University and WG officers by invitation, to meet to set a strategic direction to the work.

Aspects for development

- continue working with schools to ensure that their improvement plans have clear and challenging targets for improving outcomes for deprived learners, supported by coherent professional development plans;
- provide greater focus on facilitating joint, cross phase planning so that vulnerable learners are well supported at key transition points;
- encourage schools to incorporate community and family engagement in their SDP where appropriate;
- continue to embed strategies to reduce the gap between e-FSM and n-FSM pupils across all key stages;
- further share effective practice across the region.

How effective is the support for leadership, management and governance?

Strengths

- development programmes operational for practitioners ranging from Higher Level Teaching Assistants (HLTA) to experienced Headteachers and further supportive development programmes operational at a hub level. To date over 1,000 practitioners across North Wales have participated in GwE development programmes.

Aspects for development

- Continue to ensure an effective link & integration with national priorities to support local developments;
- Investigate the possibility of accreditation of the development programmes needs further consideration.

How well do we promote the Welsh Government's initiatives?

Strengths

- GwE work well to promote Welsh Government's priorities and have made good progress against the Successful Futures agenda;
- GwE are well placed to continue to promote and deliver against national priorities;
- the number of Pioneer schools across GwE working to develop the new curriculum has increased significantly from 12 schools to 25 schools and there is now a well-planned timely approach to engage with all schools using a range of effective communication channels;
- The work of the Digital Pioneer schools has also progressed very well and has been supported by the appointment of 4 x Digital Leads through the ICT regional network;
- GwE are continuing to work closely with WG regarding leadership developments, in particular the developments and the priorities noted by the new Welsh Education Leadership Academy;
- all schools have had access to support provided by Lead Schools in the core subjects and the Lead Practitioners in the non-core subjects. Evaluations of workshops and Conferences have been consistently positive across the range of subjects;
- the GCSE support programme has led to increased collaboration and the production and sharing of resources during the last 18 months;
- all schools have had access to the support provided by the Welsh Bac Lead Practitioners. Evaluations of workshops have been consistently positive;
- the Welsh Bac support programme has led to increased confidence in the implementation of the elements comprising the Skills Challenge Certificate.

Aspects for development

- continued support for all Pioneer schools to work on developing the new curriculum;
- continued development of communication and engagement strategy to include all schools;
- further develop wider partnerships to ensure all have opportunity to feed into needs of new curriculum e.g. North Wales Economic Ambition Board for skills and Local Authority partners for wellbeing agenda;
- embed regular Pioneer work at LA / Hub level and ensure Challenge Advisers have the opportunity to keep abreast of national developments so that they can continue to support schools effectively.
- continue to work collaboratively with the new Welsh Education Leadership Academy;
- continue support for schools to implement new GCSE's;
- to embed regular subject forum meetings at LA / Hub level and ensure continued collaboration, co-operation and the sharing of resources; and
- ensure continued support for the elements of the Skills Challenge Certificate;
- ensure continued support for the e-portfolio and digital competency elements of the Skills Challenge Certificate;
- to embed regular Welsh Bac forum meetings at LA / Hub level and ensure continued collaboration, co-operation and the sharing of resources; and

- to ensure smooth transition from School Challenge Cymru (SCC) Challenge Advisers to GwE as the SCC programme draws to an end;
- ensure appropriate challenge and support to the schools post SCC programme.

LEADERSHIP

Strengths

- over the last three years GwE relationship with schools has improved as the organisation has found a better balance between the need to support and challenge schools;
- primary support and challenge is generally good and access to training and development programmes has improved and become clearer;
- a thorough knowledge of schools at leadership level has developed well over time;
- a regional protocol for appointing school staff has recently been approved by Joint Committee. This gives greater clarity to GwE's role in partnership with the LA to ensure that appointments are effective;
- generally, there is now a good working relationship between all hub leads and individual LAs;
- the Challenge and Support Senior Adviser and deputy model is generally effective and provides a good balance to each hub;
- there is now a better flow of information being exchanged between GwE and the Local Authorities and in the best instances a clear understanding of one another's role in driving the improvement agenda;
- the Regional Quality Assurance Board is beginning to bring regional consistency to individual hub practice through identifying best practice and sharing this across the Region;
- individual LA plans previously referred to as Annexes have improved and are generally good;
- the scrutiny function has matured across the Region. Local scrutiny members have a better understanding of what is GwE's purpose and what it is trying to achieve;
- in the best instances members of a scrutiny committee have been out in schools seeking headteachers views about how well GwE is supporting and challenging schools. They have brought their findings back to the Committee and held a triangulation meeting with GwE hub lead and LA officers to identify strengths and areas to develop;
- the business planning process has recently been greatly improved and is now much more robust. Senior leaders from within the consortium and the Local Authorities have greater responsibility and ownership over the process. The accountability structure is clearer and the monitoring processes more robust;
- the working relationship between GwE and Welsh Government has been strengthened further during this year as part of much of the Successful Futures work;
- all 4 regional consortia have worked collaboratively to offer a joint proposal to Welsh Government to work closely with the developments of the curriculum, in particular the new Areas of Learning and Experience where regional leads are working effectively with Welsh Government leads to strengthen the process; and
- Professional Learning opportunities have also developed the working relationship with Welsh Government further.

Aspects for Improvement

- change the present operating model to ensure that there is a clear focus on improving performance in secondary schools especially at Key Stage 4;
- individual LAs to review their present capacity and ability to work in partnership with GwE to ensure performance is improved;
- review the Governance structures alongside the next review of the National Model;
- implement a service and individual performance management model that will help address the Estyn recommendations;
- develop a distributive leadership model that will give more staff leadership roles and give them opportunities to develop their own skills;
- develop clarity between National and Local priorities so that they complement one another and do not compete;
- develop consistency across the three hubs to ensure equity of provision across the Region;
- review the business plan so that GwE priorities are understood by all;
- clarify the roles of staff especially senior staff so that priorities are delivered;
- review the operational business support model of GwE; and

- continue to develop working relationship with partners to align local and national priorities

PRIORITIES FOR 2017-18

1. **Standards** – to ensure the highest standards at all key stages and that all learners make appropriate progress in literacy and numeracy from one key stage to another. That all learners achieve qualifications relevant to their ability and potential and are working towards being bilingual by the age of sixteen.
2. **Curriculum and assessment** – to ensure that all schools deliver an engaging curriculum which responds to the statutory requirements of the national curriculum. Ensure that all learners are supported to achieve qualifications which enable them to be ambitious capable learners that reach their potential. Ensure all schools have robust assessment processes in place with strong targeting, tracking and intervention procedures.
3. **Leadership** – to ensure that all leaders have a clear educational vision and can plan strategically to achieve this. Ensure that all learning organisations have the leadership capacity at all levels to inspire, coach, support, share practice and collaborate at all levels to ensure all learners' achieve their potential. Ensure that the principles of distributive leaderships are embedded in all learning organisations across the region.
4. **Wellbeing** – create the conditions to ensure that learners develop as healthy, resilient and globally responsible individuals and provide an inclusive, aspirational education system, committed to tackling inequality so that young people achieve their full potential.
5. **Teaching** – to ensure that all teachers and support staff are equipped to have a clear understanding of what constitutes effective teaching, based on reliable evidence. In addition, the ability to deliver a range of approaches, effectively matching the needs of the learners with the context, to ensure positive impact on learning and achievement is paramount.
6. **Business** – to ensure that GwE has strong governance and effective business and operational support that provides resource for money.
7. **Estyn recommendations** – to ensure that necessary progress is made against all recommendations within the expected timeframe.