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Estyn and WAO Bring Welcome Challenge to Consortia

On the 3rd June 2015, the Wales Audit Office (WAO) and Estyn published their reports into regional consortia ('Achieving improvement in support to schools through regional education consortia-WAO' and 'Improving schools through regional education consortia-Estyn'). The Central South Consortium welcomes the findings of both reports and the contribution that Estyn and the WAO are making to supporting improvement in the region.



Since the inception of the Central South Consortium in 2012, schools across the Central South region have demonstrated significant improvement in their outcomes. In particular:

- In 2014 pupil outcomes from all four Key Stage results improved faster in the region than the national average
- At secondary level young people in the region achieved 4.7% improvement at Level 2+ (5 x A*-C GCSEs including English/Welsh and mathematics) against a national improvement of 2.7%
- In mathematics improvement was 3.9% points on average against a national average improvement of 1.4% points
- Attendance also improved in both phases maintaining the regions' position at the national average at secondary level with a 1.5% point improvement in some authorities

In real terms this means 1044 more young people in the Central South region have left school in 2014 with five A*-Cs including English and mathematics compared to in 2012.

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In inspection too, the region is showing improvement with more schools demonstrating good or better performance and receiving a good or excellent judgement on standards compared to 2011/12.

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This improvement is as a result of the hard work of children and young people in the region, school staff, leaders and governors supported by local authorities and the Consortium working together.

Councillor Chris Elmore, who Chairs the Joint Committee of Central South Consortium said: "In the Central South region, schools are improving as demonstrated by outcomes and inspection information. We are determined to develop a 'self-improving school system' where schools work together to develop capacity for improvement. We are pleased that headteachers are leading and positive about this direction of travel. These reports recognise progress in the region, but we are equally realistic that there remain a number of challenges ahead."

CONSORTIUM NEWS

Improving Confidence in Teacher Assessment Across Wales

Teacher Assessment is currently the key means of measuring learners' progress in Wales up to the end of Key Stage 3. However, whilst research evidence tells us that Wales has all the features of a successful assessment system, despite significant investment, the feedback from the education sector is that confidence in the system needs to be improved.

The Welsh Government consulted on policy proposals to improve confidence, and the consultation period closed on 6 March 2015. One of the proposals suggested that there should be an external oversight or verification of the teacher assessment process. This would allow an additional layer of rigour, and provide additional feedback to schools on how the assessment process has been applied. This will lead to an increased understanding of teacher assessment. This proposal was broadly supported.

We are pleased to announce that the Central South Consortium in partnership with the other three regional Consortia (ERW, EAS and GwE) and CDSM Interactive Solutions Ltd, collectively known as the Partnership, have been awarded the contract for carrying out external verification of teacher assessment.

Central to the work of the Partnership will be the need to supply the whole system with information that can be used to improve the reliability of teacher assessment, provide additional rigour, lead to greater confidence in the teacher assessment system. Crucially, the Partnership will follow up with schools on their findings, ensuring that schools and teachers are given professional learning support in applying teacher assessment. This support is essential to ensure that a key benefit of this programme is improving children's education.

The verification programme will start in this academic year, using existing moderation materials for mathematics and science subjects, as an introductory period. Central South Schools who are involved will be contacted in June regarding arrangements.

For any queries regarding the process please contact either ***tim.britton@rctcbc.gov.uk***, ***laura.morris@cscjes.org.uk*** or ***steven.richard-downes@cscjes.org.uk***.

CSC System Improvements

Following engagement with schools we are implementing a series of improvements to the current online systems. Over the coming weeks you may notice some minor changes to the layout of the Portal as we strive to make all of our systems more efficient and user friendly. More details will follow in the next CSC Newsletter, however if in the meantime you have any queries please contact ***Gareth.voyle@cscjes.org.uk***.

Major Evaluation finds Foundation Phase is delivering real improvements

Last month, the Welsh Government published a report which evaluates the impact that the implementation and delivery of the Foundation Phase has had to date.

The evaluation was commissioned by the Welsh Government and undertaken by researchers at Cardiff University and the Wales Institute of Social and Economic Research, Data and Methods (WISERD).

The three year evaluation took place from 2011 – 2014 and the evidence base was drawn from a wide range of stakeholders via a national survey, quantitative and qualitative data from a comprehensive range of sources and was also informed by professional dialogue, observations and evaluations of some 51 schools and non-maintained settings across the country.

The report finds that:

- Pupils in the Foundation Phase are more likely to achieve Level 4 or above in Key Stage 2 English schools using high levels of Foundation Phase pedagogies are more likely to achieve the Foundation Phase Indicator
- Greater use of Foundation Phase pedagogies leads to increased pupil engagement and wellbeing
- The Foundation Phase improves school attendance across the board and delivers improved attainment, including those pupils eligible for free school meals
- Practitioners and key people involved in the delivery of the Foundation Phase believe it is having a positive impact on children and learning and that it delivers improvements in literacy and numeracy

In light of the success of the Foundation Phase, the report encourages the Welsh Government to continue to develop its flagship curriculum. It also encourages schools and other settings to do more to implement the principles and teachings of the Foundation Phase in their classrooms.

The report is a sound basis for further development of the Foundation Phase in our region.

However, the report highlights 29 recommendations which apply to a wide variety of stakeholders including Welsh Government, Estyn, other regional consortia, local authorities, headteachers, practitioners and others to ensure that we deliver the very highest quality of standards and provision for our youngest pupils.

Central South Consortium is committed to working with all appropriate partners to ensure that we further build on the positive findings of this evaluation.

A full copy of the Foundation Phase evaluation which includes the 29 recommendations for future development can be found here:

<http://gov.wales/statistics-and-research/evaluation-foundation-phase/?lang=en>

Foundation Phase Audit Tool

The Consortium Foundation Phase Team are pleased to share their Foundation Phase Audit Tool. The audit tool has been developed in response to an identified need to support schools in the self-evaluation process for the Foundation Phase.

It has been scrutinised by headteachers from the Foundation Phase Steering Group and trialled in a number of schools in the region with positive outcomes in terms of helping to identify good practice and provision and to highlight areas for improvement.

The audit has been designed to provide:

- Action research for schools to support the identification of priorities for School Improvement Plans (SIPs)
- A consistent approach to self-evaluation in the Foundation Phase
- A means to identify variation within school practice and provision
- A benchmark for current Foundation Phase practice and provision from which to develop action plans for improvement
- Identification of good practice and provision that can be shared with other schools
- An overview of Foundation Phase practice and provision for local authorities within the region
- A means for challenge advisers to evaluate and monitor Foundation Phase practice and provision

The audit will also assist schools to:

- Identify training needs
- Support the performance management cycle of professional development
- Support the establishment of specific networks

The full audit tool along with supporting documentation can now be found on the CSC website here:

<http://www.cscjes.org.uk/News/2015/June/Foundation-Phase-Audit-Tool.aspx>

Inspirational Teaching Awards 2015

Congratulations to:

- Susan Esseen (Evenlode Primary)
- Colin Skinner (Roath Primary School)
- Rebecca Porter (Bryn Celyn Primary School)
- Stephen Jones (Cardiff High)
- Lauren Mackie (Bishop Hedley)
- Kevin Tansley (Ty Gwyn)
- Nicola Brinning (Grangetown Nursery)

From the Central South Wales region who all received awards in the New Directions 'Inspirational Teaching Awards 2015'.

Central South Wales Challenge Strategy Group

The CSWC Strategy Group is holding a review. We would welcome expressions of interest from heads who are interested in system leadership of a self improving school system and have capacity in their school to play a leading role. Please contact Kim Eley on Kim.Eley@cscjes.org.uk for details

CRITICAL INFORMATION

Key Documents

Schools should have received hard copies of the following by the end of term. Please visit the links to download digital copies.



CSC Autumn Prospectus: Professional Learning Opportunities for School Staff in the Central South Wales Region

<http://www.cscjes.org.uk/News/2015/July/Professional-Learning-Opportunities-for-School-Sta.aspx>

Central South Wales Challenge Update: Taking our work into a second year

<http://www.cscjes.org.uk/Central-South-Wales-Challenge.aspx>



Central South Consortium Business Plan 2015/16

<http://www.cscjes.org.uk/Knowledge-Bank/Business-Plan.aspx>

Pupil Deprivation Grant Guidance

<http://www.cscjes.org.uk/Knowledge-Bank/Grants.aspx>



School Improvement Plan Guidance

<http://www.cscjes.org.uk/Knowledge-Bank/School-Improvement-Plans.aspx>

If you have not received your hard copy of these, please let us know via communications@cscjes.org.uk.

Development of Peer Enquiry in Central South

The overarching aim of a Peer Enquiry is to use the expertise of a team of serving headteachers and senior leaders with proven leadership credentials to visit a 'host school' in order to celebrate its best practices and open up lines of enquiry regarding areas that might warrant further development. It fits into the self-improving schools model perfectly in that it offers credible peer support to enhance a school's self-evaluation process.

During 2014, 18 schools participated in a pilot Peer Review programme (Phase 1), resulting in 6 reviews taking place. The findings of these reviews, together with a consideration of other review models are currently being finalised into a CSC Peer Enquiry Model (Phase 2).

Comments we have received regarding Peer Enquiry include:

- *"Possibly the best CPD a Head could have"*
- *"Unlike an Estyn inspection or LEA type review this is an opportunity for some real honesty and reflection between peer professionals"*

Throughout the academic year 2015 – 2016 it is anticipated that 40 Peer Enquiries will take place and headteachers will shortly be invited both to commission a Peer Enquiry and to undertake training to become Lead Peer Enquirers in readiness.

For any queries please contact mandy.esseen@cscjes.org.uk.

Qualifications Update

The Minister for Education and Skills has recently agreed that the science suite of qualifications should include a GCSE Applied Science (Single Award). Our expectation remains that most learners will take at least two science GCSEs or the revised GCSE Science (Double Award) with only a minority of learners being entered for the Single Award qualification.

The Welsh Government, in collaboration with WJEC and other stakeholders, has begun the process of reforming the suite of GCSEs in the field of ICT and Computer Science and developing a revised model for GCSE Welsh Second Language (full course) for first teaching in Wales in September 2017. The Welsh Government will be publishing online surveys over the next few months to seek the views of the wider stakeholder community on its proposals for these qualifications.

The GCSE Welsh Second Language and GCSE Applied Welsh Second Language short courses will be withdrawn once the revised full course model is introduced, with the last assessment opportunity for the short courses in summer 2018.

The Welsh Government is also working with WJEC and other stakeholders to make decisions about which other qualifications will be revised for first teaching in 2017. Further details will be published in due course.

School Improvement Groups (SIGs) Across Central South

The first year of SIG working has been a very encouraging. Levels of engagement and commitment are high across the region. Headteachers, staff and children have benefited from the opportunity to work with, and learn from, each other.

The foci of SIG working has been varied, including moving teaching from good to excellent, improving learning environments, numerical reasoning provision, co-coaching and developing teaching of reading strategies. The composition of SIGs has enabled headteachers and staff to build up relationships with colleagues from across the different local authorities within the region, Welsh and English medium, special and faith schools.

In one instance a special school has provided training for their school colleagues regarding behaviour management. Also Welsh medium Y6 practitioners worked with their English medium counterparts moderating English and Welsh writing. This was considered to be a positive experience by those involved, raising awareness of standards that could be achieved in both languages.

A school that had sector leading practice in provision for MAT pupils held a 'Thinking Skills' day which was attended by pupils from their SIG partner. This allowed both pupils and teachers to access activities that could be used in their home schools.

Convenors have played a crucial role in the success of the initiative and their hard work is appreciated. A compendium of activities, including case studies will be available by the end of the year. Schools will be able to access the work of other SIGs, thus promoting future school to school and SIG to SIG working.



Reading Diagnostic Tests

The Consortium in collaboration with the EAS and NSP have worked with Gary Morgan of Cwmtawe Comprehensive to produce a reading diagnostic tool for the 2015 reading tests. Links have been made to the Literacy and Numeracy Framework statements from the new 'Areas of Learning' (AoLs) and 'Programmes of Study' (PoS) for Year 2 to Year 9 to aid teachers in analysing which skills pupils need to develop further.

To access the tool, please follow the link below:

<http://1drv.ms/1SYIU2e>

Great Debate on Welsh Education

The consultation period for Professor Graham Donaldson's Review of Curriculum and Assessment arrangements in Wales, Successful Futures, has now ended. However a series of resources in the form of an online toolkit can be found on the Welsh Government's website. Resources include powerpoint presentations, videos and key questions. Footage from the webinar following the publication of the review can also be found on the same webpage here:

<http://gov.wales/topics/educationandskills/great-debate/?lang=en>

NPQH Assessment Programme 2015/15

Full details and arrangements for NPQH Assessment Programme applications will be announced shortly.

Programme content will continue to build on the success of previous years and remain wholly focused on assessment of a candidate's practice, measured against the Leadership Standards.

All prospective applicants should ensure that they are familiar with current guidance and resources available on Learning Wales.

Key messages and actions for prospective applicants:

- The NPQH is not a course of training but is a rigorous assessment of practitioners against the Leadership Standards. The focus is on the required skills and attributes of headship as articulated in the Standards. Practitioners will need to show how their professional practice to date meets the Standards in order to receive the Qualification.
- You should only consider applying for the NPQH if you are serious about becoming a head teacher and can answer 'yes' to the following two questions:
 1. Is headship the next stage in my career?
 2. Do I want to become a head teacher within the next three years?
- Undertake a rigorous assessment of your current leadership experience and practice. The 'Individual Leadership Review' document is an excellent starting point to support you with this key action. Copies are readily available on the Learning Wales website, including exemplar material
- Share and discuss your intentions, including the content of your 'ILR' with your line-manager / Head teacher at the earliest opportunity. Application endorsement procedures for the 2015-16 NPQH Round will be rigorous therefore early discussion with your professional colleagues is strongly advised.

2015-16 Briefing Sessions:

- July 2015: Electronic NPQH Briefing Session available on Learning Wales and Consortia websites (this will provide you with full application details and timescales).
- September 2015: National NPQH Briefing Sessions held regionally (full details to follow).

For any queries please contact abigail.fant@cscjes.org.uk.



CSC Primary Literacy Team

Supporting schools in improving standards in literacy: 2014–15

“The literacy support package has been of a very high standard and the school has benefited as a whole.”

Headteacher, RCT

In 2014 – 15 the CSC primary literacy team successfully supported 41 schools across the consortium in improving standards in literacy. Each school is unique, and subsequently the literacy support brokered was bespoke. Working in partnership with the school an effective literacy support programme was put in place directly linked to each school's improvement planning. Head teachers surveyed fed back that the support programmes undertaken had supported their school in meeting its priorities.

Support programmes ranged from; undertaking reading and writing audits and developing subsequent action plans, to providing in-school training and support for reading interventions, guided reading, phonics teaching, developing independent literacy learning, literacy rich learning environments and the effective teaching of extended fiction and non-fiction writing. Many (89%) head teachers rated the in-school support and training they received from the primary literacy team as good or better with over half rating it as excellent.

In order to facilitate building capacity within the school structure, the literacy team worked with the literacy leader in a mentoring and/or coaching role. Many (81%) of the heads surveyed rated the support provided to their literacy leader as excellent, and nearly all (95%) agreed that it had a positive impact upon developing subsequent leadership skills.

Overall, the data collected across all of the schools supported has identified that the literacy support provided has had a positive impact on the achievement and attainment of most pupils, but in particular for groups of learners, such as MAT, boys, e-FSM, EAL pupils etc. Nearly all of the head teachers surveyed agreed that the literacy support had a positive impact upon pupil progress, the quality of the literacy teaching, the learning environment, literacy planning, AFL and the delivery of literacy across the curriculum.

“The Primary Literacy team has been flexible, met specific school needs and delivered excellent support.”

Head teacher, Cardiff

We are delighted that most headteachers surveyed would recommend the literacy support to other schools.

For any queries regarding primary literacy please contact ruth.best@cscjes.org.uk.

Modern Foreign Languages (MFL) in Welsh Schools

Global Futures—a plan to improve and promote MFL in Wales will come into effect from September and will be supported by up to £480,000 of Welsh Government funding in the first academic year.

Under the plan one secondary school in each of Wales' four regional consortia will be appointed as a Centre of Excellence for Modern Foreign Languages.

Teachers at the appointed Centre for Excellence will receive targeted Continuing Professional Development and benefit from new partnership arrangements with language institutes (Alliance Française, Institut Français, Goethe Institut, Confucius Institute and the education departments of the Spanish Embassy and the office of the Italian Consulate General in London) and Welsh universities to help them develop high level language teaching skills.

We are pleased to confirm that Bryn Hafren School has been designated the MFL Centre of Excellence for the Central South Consortium region.

Further information regarding their work will be shared shortly.

Minister endorses ‘radical plan’ to transform teacher training in Wales

Following the publication of Professor John Furlong’s ‘Teaching Tomorrow’s Teachers’ report earlier this year, the Education Minister, Huw Lewis, has outlined plans to transform teacher education and training in Wales. The plan aims to prepare a ‘new generation of professionals’ skilled to deliver radical curriculum change in Wales, as a result of the Donaldson review.

As part of these plans, the Minister has commissioned an internal reference group which will engage with the teaching profession and build revised professional standards. He has also asked Professor Furlong to chair a task and finish group which will review training providers’ accreditation criteria, in order to ensure the very highest standards of delivery of training.

Changes to teacher education include extending undergraduate provision for primary trainee teachers from three to four years, with the possibility of a Masters element and enhanced subject knowledge relevant to primary teaching. Furthermore, financial incentives will be reviewed, in order to ensure their effectiveness in attracting high calibre candidates into the profession. Similarly, the Minister is considering introducing a targeted trainee scholarship programme to support recruitment in STEM subjects, digital competency, literacy and numeracy. The Welsh Government will also review the Graduate Teaching Programme, to ensure that it is geared to meet demand in areas where recruitment is difficult.

Read the full report here:
<http://hwba.ch/4Tpfo>

Research Corner: Glen Gilchrist

Mobile phone ban “improves school exam results” – (BBC News, 17 May 2015)

According to the article, schools that banned mobile phones, increased test scores by more than 6%. Apparently the research substantiates that low-income students increased the most, and cites less “distractions” as the reason results increased.

The BBC also reports that banning phones was equivalent to “one extra hour” or “increasing the school year by five days”.

The Guardian, 15 May reported that the “net effect was a 2% higher GCSE pass rate” for schools that banned phones, rising to 4% for those learners with “poor prior achievement, who where on free school meals”.

Before turning to a fuller discussion – consider the numbers presented by the press. 2% higher GCSE pass rate; for a school with a cohort of 200 – that’s about 4 additional learners getting a “C” grade. Even in the most improved category, 4% – that’s 8 additional learners getting a “C”. The impact on individual learners aside, implementing a policy based on at best, improving successful outcomes for 4 to 8 learners needs to be weighed against other interventions such as improved teaching and learning, assessment and feedback.

In the introduction to the paper itself the authors are clear to establish that they are “estimating” the effect of such a ban, using a data model based in part on a qualitative survey. They acknowledge, that they have no way of linking students actual mobile phone ownership (or bringing to school) to examination results. Hence, for any school implementing a ban, it is impossible to track which pupils are affected and ascribe any increase in attainment to removal of a phone.

To finalise the survey, headteachers were asked to self assess the compliance with any mobile phone banning policy within their schools, on a scale of 1 (No compliance) to 7 (Complete compliance) – the study then grouped responses 1-4 as “Low Compliance” and 5-7 as “High” compliance.

Using the data in the paper, an effect size of $d=0.10$ is found for “banning” mobile phones. This rises to $d=0.15$ for FSM learners. Well below Hattie’s $d=0.4$ “hinge point” – in essence, what this means is that, even though the results are “statistically significant” the magnitude of the effect when compared to standard deviations is small.

When the impact of High vs Low compliance is looked at, we see an effect size of $d=0.55$ – above the hinge point.

What this exercise demonstrates is the necessity of looking directly at the research compared to distilled media sound bites. Would I implement a mobile phone ban based on the data ($d=0.15$)? – Probably not. But if I did, I’d ensure that I went for a full on, high compliance model ($d=0.55$) to maximise the impact.

Download the full paper here: <http://cep.lse.ac.uk/pubs/download/dp1350.pdf>

Research Corner: Glen Gilchrist

Hattie: What Works. The politics of collaborative expertise

Stephen Covey (The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People) introduces the concept of “sharpening the saw” to mean the process of self renewal and challenge needed to develop the coveted characteristic of “effectiveness”. The work of Hattie (Visible Learning) constantly sharpens our pedagogical saw – even if you don’t agree fully with his reasoning, discovering why you don’t agree can be enlightening.

Under the title “**What doesn’t work in education: the politics of distraction?**” Hattie introduces the top 5 activities that distract schools from making real and sustained progress. Helpfully, he provides an immediate solution:

Distraction 1: Appeasing with small class size and choice in school.

Solution: Reduce “within-school” variation first

Distraction 2: Fixing the infrastructure

Solution: New buildings, “learning spaces” and technologies only work if educators are guided on how to utilise them more effectively

Distraction 3: Fixing the students

Solution: Abandon notions of learning styles and never hold a learner back a year

Distraction 4: Fixing the school

Solution: Focus on what happens in the classroom, each and every lesson. Tinkering with the school day (for example) doesn’t work

Distraction 5: Fixing the teacher

Solution: Studies show that the ITT/PGCE process is less important than the NQT year and that forcing teachers to use technology without supporting pedagogy is counter productive

Hattie goes on to discuss 8 “**tasks**” incumbent on schools to ensure students make appropriate levels of progress. Given the emergence of school-school and teacher-teacher collaborative practises as the de facto approach to self improvement, of particular resonance are:

Task 7: Stop ignoring what we know and scale up success

Don’t reinvent the wheel, and never change what’s already proving successful

Task 8: Link autonomy to a year’s progress

Don’t force successful teachers to adopt new strategies for the sake of it – give them the autonomy to share with their peers their successful approaches and to improve the expertise of the whole profession.

As we reflect on this academic year and prepare for 2015-16 have you experienced any of Hattie’s “**distractions**” and do you recognise the importance of his “**tasks**” – either way, does Hattie “sharpen your saw?”

Source links

- <https://www.pearson.com/hattie/distractions.html>
- <https://www.pearson.com/hattie/solutions.html>

Curriculum Pioneer and New Deal Pioneer Schools

As you will be aware the consultation on the Donaldson report and Successful Futures has now ended. As part of taking forward the work in developing the curriculum, Welsh Government is asking schools and consortia to play key roles in the development of the new curriculum.

Welsh Government has taken the next step in the development process of the new curriculum and has asked the consortia to nominate successful futures pioneer practitioners, and the schools that they work in, to work with Welsh Government, consortia and networks of schools in the design and production of the new curriculum.

There are two types of pioneer school:

- Curriculum Pioneer Schools will focus on the design and development of the curriculum framework. Expressions of interest for Curriculum Pioneers schools are invited by the end of term and successful schools will be announced in autumn 2015.
- New Deal Pioneer Schools will focus on laying the foundations for change by ensuring all practitioners have access to effective professional learning, supporting them to realise the new curriculum. We will be putting forward our Hubs and Specialist Schools for this.

Please see the specification via the link below for further information regarding the requirements for becoming a Successful Pioneer practitioner/school.

<http://gov.wales/topics/educationandskills/schoolshome/curriculuminwales/reform/pioneer-schools/?skip=1&lang=en>

Please contact Steven Richards-Downes (primary) on Steven.Richard-Downes@cscjes.org.uk or Laura Morris (secondary) Laura.Morris@cscjes.org.uk for more information.

School Bulletins— Have You Received Yours?

Every Friday all headteachers in the Central South region are sent an e-bulletin from the Consortium. The bulletin contains key information and updates from the region and nationally. If you haven't received the bulletin please contact communications@cscjes.org.uk. Previous bulletins can be found here:

[http://www.cscjes.org.uk/
Communications/School-Bulletins.aspx](http://www.cscjes.org.uk/Communications/School-Bulletins.aspx)

Qualified for Life Newsletter

The Consortium's latest Newsletter for Qualified for Life (Q4L) can now be found here, along with previous editions:

[http://www.cscjes.org.uk/
Communications/Newsletters.aspx](http://www.cscjes.org.uk/Communications/Newsletters.aspx)

The newsletter features updates from each of the Q4L teams (English, Mathematics, Welsh and Science), including qualification updates, dates for the diary and useful resources.

For any queries regarding Qualified for Life please contact laura.morris@cscjes.org.uk.

Summer Conference Series

Closing The Gap - Low Cost, High Impact Maesteg School, 3rd July



Maesteg School's Closing the Gap conference, held on 3rd July, brought over 200 teachers and leaders at all levels from across Wales to share best practice that exists on closing the gap and the commitment to reducing the impact of poverty on attainment. Delegates heard from keynote speaker Sir Alasdair Macdonald, recognised as a pupil deprivation 'champion' across Wales, who made significant impact while headteacher at Morpeth Secondary School. Hub schools presented best practice and support opportunities available to schools, and a wide variety of workshops gave delegates the opportunity to hear successful case studies regarding engaging FSM pupils.

Creative Learning Conference Stanwell School, 9th July



Stanwell School hosted the Creative Learning Conference on 9th July, attended by both teacher and pupil delegates. In his independent review of the curriculum in Wales, Professor Donaldson provided a clear endorsement of the value of putting creativity at the heart of the curriculum, being one of the

newly identified six areas of learning and experience. The conference demonstrated how the arts can be used to raise standards of literacy, numeracy and digital competence, with pupils and teachers attending a range of workshops, bringing creativity across the curriculum.

Make Your Mark! Student MAT Conference Ferndale Community School, 14th July



The Make Your Mark! Student MAT Conference was held on 14th July at Ferndale Community School. Over 120 pupils identified as 'more able and talented' from years 5 – 8 attended the conference, where they had the opportunity to make new friends and work in teams to generate ideas, solve problems and create words and images on the

theme of forging ambition and dreaming big dreams. Pupils attended a range of workshops and all contributed to a collaborative piece of artwork to 'make their mark' on Ferndale.

Estyn: Education other than at school - a good practice survey

Estyn has published a report of provision for children and young people educated other than at school (EOTAS), which has identified examples of good practice in EOTAS provision, including four examples from the Central South region.

The report's main findings have highlighted the importance of local authorities, schools and PRUs working together, and the need for regional consortia to involve PRUs in support and challenge activities. The most effective PRUs have been recognised as having teachers who are skilled leaders and managers, with appropriate expertise and experience in teaching and learning as well as behaviour management. The quality of education in PRUs varies significantly, as does the range of subjects on offer in KS3 and KS4. The importance of developing a curriculum in secondary schools which engages pupils at risk of disengagement has also been recognised, along with the need for close working between schools and other agencies to provide support for pupils at risk of disengagement and their families.

Estyn's recommendations state that LAs, schools and PRUs should:

- have a locally agreed strategy to support all vulnerable pupils so that they remain in full-time education
- identify pupils at risk of disengagement early and put in place appropriate, timely interventions
- work together to increase the range of learning options and experiences available to EOTAS pupils.

Local authorities should:

- ensure that all stakeholders have a clear understanding of the role of PRUs and other forms of EOTAS within a continuum of provision, and that these provisions have clear entry and exit criteria
- appoint PRU staff with appropriate experience and expertise in leadership, teaching and learning as well as behaviour management
- ensure that all PRU staff have access to the same training and development opportunities as staff in mainstream schools
- work with regional consortia to provide robust support and challenge for PRU managers and management committees

Welsh Government should:

- provide framework guidance on the role of PRUs as part of a continuum of provision
- consider introducing a national professional qualification for teachers-in-charge of PRUs
- ensure that PRU staff benefit from national strategies to improve the quality of teaching and leadership in education

Read the full report here: <http://www.estyn.gov.uk/english/docViewer/361424.7/education-other-than-at-school-a-good-practice-survey-june-2015>

New Hub Schools from September 2015

We are pleased to announce that the following schools will be offering school-to-school support via the Hub Schools programme from September 2015.

- Bishop Hedley Catholic High School
- Bryntirion Comprehensive School
- Cowbridge Comprehensive School
- Ferndale Community School
- Oldcastle Primary School
- Pencoed Primary School
- Stanwell School
- The Fern Federation (Ysgol Craig yr Hesg and Cefn Primary School)
- Tongwynlais Primary School

Schools in the region will be able to browse and book support from the new Hub Schools via the DevelopmentDeck (<http://developmentdeck.cscjes.org.uk>) or via the CSC Business Desk (01443 827523).



Central South Wales Business Challenge

“We need schools that prepare young people for employment, work with businesses to address skill shortages and equip the next generation to start and sustain the enterprises of tomorrow.”

On the 1st July, a number of headteachers from the region came together in Cardiff Bay with some leading business figures, including representatives from the South Wales Chamber, Business in the Community, the Prince's Trust and banks such as HSBC and Lloyds.

The breakfast event opened with presentations outlining good practice already existing in the region, regarding schools and businesses working together. Attendees then brainstormed actions that we can support to get more schools and businesses working together for the future of the region, and we developed a set of action points going forwards.

We thank those who participated in the event and are looking forward to working with schools and businesses to help support them working together.



Estyn: Best practice in leadership development report

Estyn has published a report of effective leadership development within schools, focusing on how effective school leaders create a leadership development culture and build leadership capacity. Case studies of best practice include examples from the Central South region.

The report shows that successful schools develop the leadership skills of all their staff as part of their professional and career development, and that in schools with a strong culture of professional learning, staff work as a team to ensure that pupils achieve well. Succession planning at all levels is often a significant strength and successful schools are characterised by distributed leadership, with staff at different levels showing strong leadership behaviours. Furthermore, more effective schools have performance management procedures in place where senior leaders have objectives relating specifically to developing staff as potential leaders. The report notes weaknesses in mentoring support for new-to-post headteachers and the lack of Welsh medium provision for leadership development. Similarly, it highlights a need for early intervention to help headteachers not focusing well enough on improving the quality of teaching, and not providing appropriate professional development activities.

Estyn's recommendations state that school leaders should:

- develop a strong culture of professional learning for all staff at all levels in their school
- improve succession planning and the transfer of corporate knowledge
- identify leadership potential of staff early and support their career development
- ensure that performance management structures pay proper attention to developing potential future leaders
- use the leadership standards as the basis for evaluation their own leadership skills and for developing staff as future leaders

LAs and regional consortia should:

- provide guidance for experienced school leaders on developing their staff as future leaders
- provide opportunities for senior leaders to develop their skills in key areas such as challenging underperformance, deploying strategies to improve teaching, and implementing new initiatives
- provide or source effective Welsh and English medium training for leaders at all levels
- promote the use of the leadership standards and the individual leadership review to all school leaders

Welsh Government should:

- implement a strategy for the development of leadership skills for aspiring and experienced senior leaders
- include the development of leadership skills as a strand in the professional standards for Higher Level Teaching Assistants, teachers and middle leaders

Read the full report here: <http://www.estyn.gov.uk/english/docViewer/360878.7/best-practice-in-leadership-development-in-schools-june-2015/?navmap=30,163>.

Estyn: School-to-school support and collaboration report

Estyn has published a report of school-to-school support, discussing the impact, success factors and obstacles facing school-to-school initiatives and identifying case studies of best practice in this area.

The report's main findings note that nearly all schools in Wales are involved in some form of partnership working, however, most collaborative arrangements are relatively new, and it is too early to fully evaluate their impact on standards. It notes the importance of identifying strategic objectives and precise success criteria for collaboration working, and highlights the importance of school leaders committing a significant investment of staff time for research development and collaboration, in order to be successful. The report identifies factors which contribute to the success of school-to-school support: it must arise from a clear identification of need, must focus on improving outcomes for pupils, and the participants must experience it as mutually beneficial. School-to-school support works best when schools are at similar stages of their improvement journeys, and the relationships between schools must be equal, trusting, open and transparent. The report highlights barriers to effective school-to-school working, including lack of commitment by school leadership, lack of shared interests, lack of trust and openness and a belief that others have nothing useful to offer.

Estyn's recommendations state that school leaders should:

- be very clear about what they want to achieve from taking part in school-to-school support activity
- identify specific success criteria for the activity
- make sure that the focus is on raising standards and improving outcomes
- evaluate the impact, costs and benefits

LAs and regional consortia should:

- have a clear strategy for matching schools to work together
- set expectations about how groupings will operate
- make sure that resources are available to support school-to-school work
- identify and disseminate information about practice worthy of emulation

Welsh Government should:

- consider ways of allowing federations to register as a single school
- co-ordinate a national database of practice worthy of emulation that brings together Estyn best-practice case studies and those identified by consortia and local authorities

Read the full report here: <http://www.estyn.gov.uk/english/docViewer/362544/school-to-school-support-and-collaboration-june-2015/?navmap=30,163>.

Welsh Second Language Scheme of Work

The 'Welsh Second Language Scheme of Work' produced by the Welsh in Education Team has received praise in a recent Estyn inspection report:

"The newly introduced scheme of work for Welsh is beginning to be effective in developing pupils' oral skills, in engaging their interests and in fostering positive attitudes."

The Scheme has been designed to support the Consortium's 'Continuum of Welsh Language Patterns'; it allows for the successful delivery of the Continuum's language patterns. The Scheme also represents a whole school approach to teaching Welsh.

The team has received extremely positive feedback on the Scheme which is now used by nearly all schools.

The Scheme, as well as a wealth of resources, are available via the following link:

<http://www.cscjes.org.uk/Knowledge-Bank/Welsh/News-Newyddion/Welsh-Scheme-of-Work.aspx>

Central South Wales “Nomination” Challenge!

Do you know a school in Central South Wales that is undertaking effective practice?

We know that the schools in Central South Wales have many examples of effective practice and we are calling for all educational professionals in the region to nominate at least one school in the region where they have seen this practice.

A key element of creating a self improving school system is to ensure that all schools have the ability to access information about the most effective practice that is taking place. The schools in Central South Wales have many examples of effective practice and through the creation of a ‘Knowledge Database’ we hope to share this practice in as wide and accessible way as possible.

If you know a school with effective practice—no matter how large or small—then we want to hear from you! Simply e-mail sian.r.johnson@cscjes.org.uk with the name of the school and the practice that you would like to nominate and we’ll do the rest!

Best Practice in the Creative Arts Key Stage 2

Estyn have released their latest thematic report entitled ‘Best practice in the creative arts at key stage 2’. Five Central South Consortium schools took part in the study: Ysgol Y Wern, Treganna and Rumney Primary School in Cardiff, and Ysgol Cynwyd Sant and Llangewydd in Bridgend. Y Wern, Treganna and Cynwyd Sant also appear in the case study video. The full report can be found here:

<http://goo.gl/a8nJPT>

SCHOOL NEWS

Pen Pych Primary is Breathing Fire into Storytelling to Raise Standards

The Dragon’s Tale Trail represents many things to Pen Pych Primary; it’s storytelling, community engagement, business engagement, expressive arts, culture, well-being, literacy, attendance, history, the environment and much more, all rolled into one magical experience for pupils, teachers, parents and the local community.



To showcase the ‘Dragon’s Tail Trail’ Pen Pych Primary held an event on Monday 22nd May, where pupils took parents, governors and members of the community on a journey through their school and its surrounding grounds to bring the Dragon’s story to life. The journey began at the ‘Sacred Stones’ by the river’s edge (alternatively known as giant stones from the Rhigos Mountain—kindly laid into place outside the school reception by Balfour Beatty!) where Pen Pych Pupils who are part of the Pen Pych Shining Star Theatre Company began their recital and performance.

Led through the school and its grounds by the pupils of the Theatre Company, visitors were encouraged to follow the dragon ‘graffiti’ trail, featuring a tail here, a foot there and even dragon footprints walking down the school’s drive. Drawn by a local graffiti artist, the images collectively produce a dragon poem which had been written by pupils of the school.

The conclusion of the event saw pupils knocking on the door of the school’s Yurt tent, where they were greeted by their Chair of Governors. The Yurt acts as a storytelling venue for Pen Pych’s pupils, providing an inviting and cosy space for young imaginations to bring stories to life.

The Dragon’s Tale Trail is one of many examples of work taking place in Pen Pych Primary to raise standards, and with the number of pupils attending the school raising from 82 in 2013 to 181 in 2015, the demand for pupils to be part of this changing school is clear.

Patricia Price, Acting Headteacher comments, “We felt that our children were beginning to make good progress in literacy and maths – but there were still the issues around coming to school and a big one self-belief and self-esteem, so I invested money in an artist in residence who worked with the children through the arts—trying to help them deal with family and life situations.

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We are in a very deprived area of high unemployment, high alcohol and substance misuse and thus difficulty in raising the want or need to be loved let alone be in school – so my mission was to get these children to school in a safe loving and most importantly a ‘fun’ environment where nobody shouts and where everyone is valued as an individual. Numbers in the school have doubled in 2 years and attendance is now over and above the local authority and Wales target.”

Write a Book in One Day? No Problem for the Year 6 Pupils in Central South Wales!

60 pupils from 10 primary schools across the region have been challenged by the Central South Consortium and Dragonfly Training to produce a book in a day.

The event was held in Stanwell School on the 3rd June and was attended by Llysfaen Primary, Thornhill Primary, Evenlode Primary, Ysgol Pen-y-Garth, Trelales Primary, Maes-Yr-Haul Primary, Tonysguboriau Primary, Cwmlai Primary, Ysgol Rhyd-y-Grug and Trelewis Primary.



Pupils were given a single line of text upon which to base their ‘section’ and were encouraged to locate and speak to the person who was writing the section before and after their own.

Supported by Year 8 pupils from Stanwell School and teachers from their own schools, the pupils are now ready for the Stanwell School 6th Form pupils to begin the editing process in readiness for the e-book to be published in the Autumn Term!



A Year 6 pupil from Evenlode Primary commented, “This has been great fun and I have loved interacting with pupils from other schools, I know a few from various clubs, but this is the first time I’ve even heard of some of these schools! It has been great learning new writing techniques and it will

be very exciting to see it all coming together as one!”

A Year 8 pupil from Stanwell, who was supporting the pupils to write the book commented, “I’m surprised by how good the Year 6’s work has been, their vocabulary is amazing. I can’t believe how much they have managed to write in such a short space of time”.

Further information about the journey of creating a ‘book in a day’ will be shared shortly. In the meantime for any queries please contact **ruth.best@cscjes.org.uk**.

STAFF NEWS

Congratulations to the following members of staff who have been appointed to the team:

- Mandy Esseen who has been appointed as the Strategic Lead for Leadership and Teaching
- Dr Jude Brigley who has been appointed as the Consortium’s Consultant for Learning and Teaching
- Huw Duggan who has been appointed to the permanent position of Strategic Lead for Closing the Gap
- Richard George who has been appointed to the permanent position of Strategy Lead for Technology
- Anne Carhart (Maesteg School) who has been appointed as the Consortium’s Strategic Leadership Adviser
- Louise Muteham (Whitchurch Primary) who has been appointed as the Policy Lead in Developing Capacity and Best Practice
- Martin Silezin who has been appointed as the Consortium’s 14-19 Adviser
- Subject Development Specialists:
 - James Murphy (Primary Numeracy)
 - Jody Evans (Primary Literacy)
 - Nicola LoCelso (Secondary Literacy)
- Jane Grubb who has been seconded from Rhydyphenau Primary as the Consortium’s Hwb+ Development Officer

Our best wishes go to Phil Peddle (Senior Statistician) who recently left the Consortium and Bethan Davies (Hwb+ Development Officer) whose secondment will be ending this term. We have also said goodbye to Karen Owen (Conference Manager) who has worked for both ESIS and the Consortium for 9 years, along with Siân John (PA), Karen Olds (CSW Challenge) who will be returning to her school role at Rumney Primary and Ann Samuel (Strategic Adviser for Welsh) who will be leaving in August.

We will also be saying farewell to the following Challenge Advisers at the end of this term. Both Hywel Jones and Karen Newby-Jones will be joining Estyn, Andrea May will be returning to her role as Assistant Head at Brynteg Comprehensive and finally Rayner Rees who will be beginning her well deserved retirement. A big thank you to you all for your hard work and commitment and best wishes for the future from all at the Consortium.

International Professional Learning Communities

The British Council offers groups of up to five teachers to attend an International Professional Learning Community (IPLC) visit. An IPLC will be visiting Hong Kong between the 24th and 30th October, to focus on Digital Competence; one of the world's top performing countries within this focus area according to recent PISA surveys. The closing date for applications is 10th July. Find out more here:

<http://wales.britishcouncil.org/en/educational-resources/school-teacher/international-professional-learning-committee>.

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OPPORTUNITIES

Autumn Term Support from the Consortium and the Hub Schools

The new Consortium and Hubs Prospectus for Central South Wales schools has now been published and hard copies and electronic copies will be sent to schools before the end of term. In the meantime, please keep browsing the DevelopmentDeck (<http://developmentdeck.cscjes.org.uk>) to access the latest support. Support currently available to be booked can be found below:

Date	Provider	Name of Support	Cost
10/9/2015	Herbert Thompson Primary	Outstanding Teacher Programme	£650
15/9/2015	Cadoxton Community Primary	Improving Teaching Programme	£650
16/9/2015	Romilly Primary School	Outstanding Teaching Programme	£650
16/9/2015	Ysgol Bro Morgannwg	Rhaglen Athrawon Eithriadol HWB OLEVI	£420
21/9/2015	Cardiff High School	Outstanding Teacher Programme	£650
22/9/2015	Treorchy Comprehensive School	Outstanding Teaching Programme	£650
23/9/2015	Cadoxton Community Primary	Outstanding Teaching Assistant Programme	£450
23/9/2015	Cardiff High School	Outstanding Teaching Programme	£650
24/9/2015	Treorchy Comprehensive School	Improving Teacher Programme	£650
13/10/2015	Cardiff High School	Improving Teachers Programme	£650