

In This Issue...

| | |
|----------------------------------|-----|
| Cross Consortia Working | p2 |
| All Change for ALN | p3 |
| CSC Governors Conference | p7 |
| Peer Enquiry | p8 |
| Mindfulness for Senior Leaders | p9 |
| Leadership and L&T Models | p10 |
| Preparing for the New Curriculum | p13 |
| Eisteddfod yr Urdd | p18 |
| Modern Foreign Languages | p20 |
| Building for the Future | p22 |

We have moved premises during the summer break so please make a note our new address:

**Central South Consortium
Valleys Innovation Centre
Navigation Park
Abercynon
CF45 4SN**

All Consortium email addresses remain the same as before but our new telephone number is **01443 744500.**

GCSE & AS/A Level Results 2018

Pupils and Staff Congratulated on their Achievement

The Central South Consortium (CSC) would like to congratulate learners on their achievements in this year's A/AS Level and GCSE examinations. We are delighted that the hard work of staff and learners has paid off.



Pupils celebrate the result of their hard work.

Wales is currently undergoing a period of change in how performance measures are used within the accountability system. One aspect of this change is the way we report on regional and local outcomes. CSC is already working closely with schools to track individual pupil performance over time, which will mean that school leaders and our local authorities are well positioned to gauge where schools are progressing well or where they may need additional support.

As in previous years, there has been effective planning by schools across the region to ensure that learners are given the opportunity to access appropriate pathways following their results.

Councillor Sarah Merry, Chair of the Central South Consortium Joint Committee comments: "I would like to congratulate the pupils, teachers, headteachers, governors and school support staff across Wales. Through their hard work, passion and determination Wales' learners have once again achieved record-breaking results.

Cross-regional working is playing an increasingly important role in Welsh education. By sharing knowledge and expertise, both regionally and nationally, Wales' consortia are able to ensure that all schools have access to the very best information and opportunities. An increasing number of schools are working with colleagues from different schools and regions, whilst significant work is taking place to develop shared national programmes and resources. It is an exciting time for Wales' learners and I look forward to supporting schools and other partners to continually challenge and improve their performance.

Mike Glavin, Central South Consortium Managing Director comments: "We are delighted by today's provisional results, particularly the continuous trend of improvement at the highest grades. As one of Wales's four regional school improvement consortia, our role is to work directly with the headteachers and senior leadership teams to ensure that this early data is fully understood and analysed to identify opportunities for further development.

Schools can learn from each other, and the lessons learned by analysing today's data will be used to support the improvement of schools. By moving this knowledge around the system we will ensure that schools have access to the very best information in order to support their learners to achieve their full potential.

I would like to congratulate all involved in achieving today's results, particularly the learners themselves. We are ambitious and are very much looking forward to continuing our work with schools to achieve further progress."

Cross Regional Development of School Leadership



Consortia Gwella Ysgolion Rhanbarthol
Regional School Improvement Consortia

For the past two years the four regional education consortia have been working together to develop a professional learning offer for school leaders. In July 2016, work started with the creation of an Aspiring Headteachers programme, the new National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH) programme. The introduction of the National Academy for Educational Leadership (NAEL) has served to accelerate this joint working and the regions have responded accordingly with agreement to extend the commonality of leadership programmes on a phased approach.

"Our challenge, as noted by the OECD, is to ensure a national approach to leadership, and make it a prime driver of our education reforms.

The evidence shows leaders in our schools can make a huge difference. I want us to have the right leaders with the right skills to raise standards and set the highest expectations for all our young people"

- Kirsty Williams AM, Cabinet Secretary for Education, May 2017

The regions are committed to the development of professional learning created in partnership with leaders and teachers. The appointment of the 12 NAEL Academy Associates also provides additional support and expertise which is welcomed in the system.

Where are we now?

With educational leadership very much at the forefront of the education development agenda, a cross regional project team has been established and is working to address the identified regional variance in the available professional learning opportunities for school leaders. The project team are focused on:

- Developing uniform, high quality provision for Aspiring Headteachers, Newly Appointed and Acting Headteachers and Experienced Headteachers (in line with the endorsement

timeline from the NAEL) for delivery across the four regions to increase the number of skilled leaders across Wales;

- Developing the next generation of headteachers and senior leaders ensuring they are well prepared for the crucial role of leadership and are offered a sustained professional development programme to support them into post;
- Developing further the skills, expertise and knowledge of the region's existing cadre of successful leaders to enable them to offer wider system leadership as we move towards a school-led system, and new school organisation models such as federations; and
- Providing a coherent development pathway along the professional learning pathway from Initial Teacher Education to Executive Headteacher that offers accreditation options.

To date the cross regional project team have designed a Newly Appointed and Acting Headteacher programme and an Experienced Headteacher Development programme. Detailed content has been developed for both programmes, the programme design validated against an evidence base, uniform facilitation handbooks created and impact capture methodology in place.

Critically, both programmes have been mapped against the recently published Leadership Academy endorsement criteria. The programmes have also been subject to comprehensive consultation with headteacher strategy groups and Local Authority Education Directors across all four regions and headteachers from across the regions have been involved in drafting the programme content.

The programme design and development process highlighted the need for significant coaching support to support the successful delivery of the programmes. These discussions have led the first draft of the Welsh Education High Performance Coaching Programme. This is in the process of being further developed and will ensure a new culture of coaching and mentoring becomes integral in Welsh education.

Accreditation

Accreditation has been a critical element of the leadership programme development with various options comprehensively discussed and evaluated resulting in a joint "invitation to tender" published in March 2018. The rationale for the joint approach to accreditation was to secure a single provider which will be more effective than attempting to manage numerous providers, provide economies of scale and critically will provide standardisation and portability of qualification. Following the formal tender process, University of Wales Trinity St. David's (UWTSD) Yr Athrofa and Bangor University were appointed with the first accredited programme commencing in September 2018.

Next steps

With all these factors in place, the Newly Appointed and Acting Headteacher Programme was recently submitted to the National Academy for Educational Leadership for endorsement, and we were delighted to learn last week, that our submission had been successful, and the programme has been fully endorsed. However, far from resting on our laurels, the team are already working to complete the programme submissions for the experienced headteacher programme due for September. Additionally, the team are simultaneously driving forward the development of accreditation across the leadership professional development continuum from Teaching Assistant to Executive Headteacher. Impact evaluation and leadership research will also remain a key focus going forward, using this information to inform programme developments, ensuring our programmes remain fit for purpose and continue to provide the very highest standard of professional learning for education professionals in Wales.

All Change for ALN

Liz Jones, ALN Transformation Lead for the Central South Region



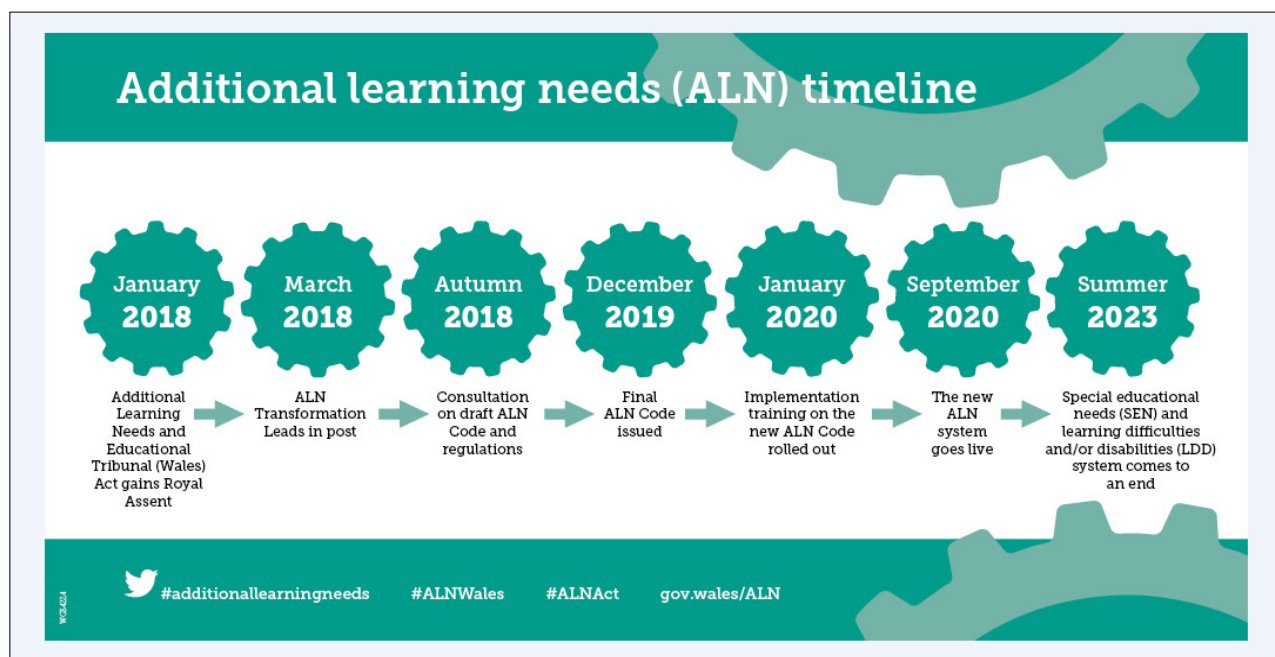
The long-awaited Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Bill was passed by the National Assembly for Wales on 12 December 2017 and after receiving Royal Assent became an Act on 24 January 2018.

The Welsh Government is committed to transforming the expectations, experiences and outcomes for children and young people with ALN and has created an ambitious and wide-ranging Additional Learning Needs Transformation Programme. This revolutionises the separate systems in schools and further education, to create a unified system for supporting learners age 0 to

25 with ALN.

In addition to new legislation and statutory guidance, the Transformation Programme centres on skills development for the education workforce, to deliver effective support to learners with ALN in the classroom, as well as easier access to specialist support, information and advice.

Implementation of the new system should commence in September 2020 with completion expected by the end of 2023.



To support the implementation of the new system, including the Act, the Welsh Government is funding five Additional Learning Needs Transformation Leads. Four of the transformation leads will operate regionally, on the education consortia footprint, and one of the leads will work as a further education transformation lead on a national basis.

In March 2018 I took up post as the ALN Transformation Lead for the Central South region. My responsibilities include supporting the five local authorities, the consortium, schools, early years settings and local health boards to prepare for and implement the new system. By September 2018 I have been tasked with developing an implementation plan for the Central South region, which sets out agreed actions required to ensure the necessary practices and processes are in place prior to roll-out of the Act.

Initial work has already started on gathering information about good practices across the region.

I have had the pleasure of visiting over thirty educational settings to see at first-hand what preparations have been made in anticipation of the new system. I have also received invaluable support and guidance by the Inclusion Leads in each local authority; Sarah Bowen, Merthyr; Ceri Jones, RCT; Michelle Hatcher, Bridgend; Jennie Hughes, Cardiff and Sarah Redrup, Vale of Glamorgan. It is very promising to note that collaborative working on a regional basis is well-established as evidenced in the effective use of the ALN Innovation Grant to prepare for the ALN changes, for example person-centred practice, early years and post 16/19 transition, and specialist outreach support. This augurs well for the co-construction of a regional action plan which will be developed in collaboration with other key statutory bodies who have duties under the Act.

I have been very warmly welcomed by senior leaders within the Central South Consortium and have delivered professional development for staff on the implications of the ALN Act. Further collaboration between the consortium, LA Inclusion Leads and myself is anticipated to identify how best to support schools in preparing for and meeting the requirements of the ALN Act.

Support for Vulnerable Pupils

Siriol Burford, Pupil Development Grant/Children Looked After Lead at Central South Consortium

Over the last twenty-five years, I have had some great experiences as a teacher, including nearly twenty years as a wellbeing and safeguarding lead in schools in Cardiff and Rhondda Cynon Taff. Following this, I was very fortunate to work with a number of organisations for three years as an educational wellbeing consultant. This gave me the opportunity to learn about the way in which organisations can work together with schools to invoke change. During this period, I worked with South Wales Police and the South Wales Police and Crime Commissioner on projects relating to child protection. This included strategies to ensure that children and young people are able to communicate with the police via experts working with Barnados' in order to prevent the sexual abuse of children, and I also led an education project on Adverse Childhood Experiences for South Wales Police and the Health Board.

The above experiences have been of great benefit to me in my current role. After years of listening to children, parents and guardians, staff and other stakeholders, I understand that wellbeing is at the heart of pupils' success at school. Unhappy children and young people cannot learn. It is therefore crucial that we ensure there are safe areas in schools with staff trained to listen and help pupils to develop the right skills to solve problems and develop emotional intelligence. In America, a lot of work has been developed to look after pupils who have had Adverse Childhood Experiences. Over the last two years, great attention has been given to this work in Wales by Professor Mark Bellis. The main finding of the research is that children and young people who have suffered trauma are more likely to experience serious health problems, including mental health problems, it is vital that all members of staff in schools understand how these problems affect children's brain development from a very young age. This means that pupils who have dealt with trauma can experience difficulty in managing the way they react and behave.

School staff should be trained to ensure they understand pupils' emotional needs and are given a safe area in order to try to manage these feelings. The aim is to create schools who understand that all members of staff are individuals they can trust. There is a Designated Person for safeguarding in all schools. This has created a culture where pupils are routinely

referred to the specific person in the school when a problem arises. It is that trust that is key when a child's safety is in the balance. On the other hand, all teachers or members of staff should be prepared to listen to pupils when approached. There is a reason why the pupil has chosen to speak with this person. Being referred to another person can make the pupil feel they've not been listened to appropriately by the person they've chosen to confide in.

Staff training was trialled successfully in schools in Maesteg in dealing with pupils who have been through adverse experiences during childhood when I led on the ACEs

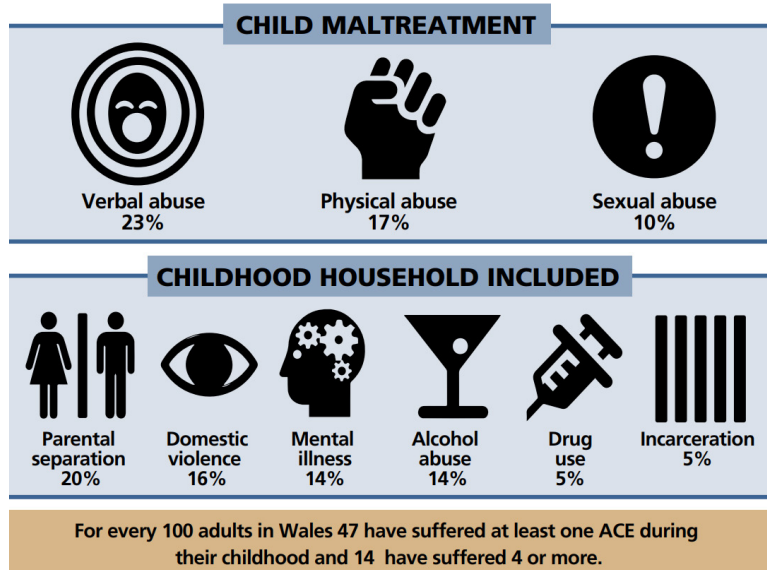
project last year. This training has now been evaluated and I really hope that we will be able to ensure this training is available throughout the Consortium during the coming months.

During recent months, the coordinators working with Children Looked After (LACEs), teachers and myself have been working in collaboration with Andrea Higgins from Cardiff University to ensure that training is available to work with children looked after, children who have been in care and other vulnerable groups in order to help them self-manage the effects of trauma and reach their educational potential according to their ability. Andrea Higgins has produced a booklet with support from LACEs in Merthyr Tydfil and Rhondda Cynon Taf which is a guide on creating a Children Looked After friendly school. Alongside the booklet, a level 1 and 2 training pack is already available and level 3 will be offered next year. Our intention is to ensure that coordinators train the Designated Person in all schools to level 1. As this is a statutory role, we want the Designated Person to train their staff on an annual basis using the resources available (level 1). This will ensure the schools understand the importance of the role and understand the educational and emotional needs of Children Looked After. The coordinators will also teach level 2 centrally through the Consortium and a quality mark is currently being developed. The booklet, training and quality mark together will ensure that schools across the region will formulate consistent strategies and processes. I believe this will help support pupils having to move school or area. If similar processes are used in our schools, pupils will be clear about the expectations and arrangements for them at a very difficult time.

I am particularly pleased that so many schools have used the grant to ensure that staff have had ELSA or Thrive training during recent months. This will help to create the safe school we are aiming for in order to safeguard vulnerable pupils in our schools.

Over the next few months, it will be interesting to see what strategies are being used by schools (with appropriate use of money available through the grant) to ensure that staff who have been trained will be released sufficiently to understand successful outcomes for pupils in their care.

How many adults in Wales have been exposed to each ACE?



CSC Governors' Conference 2018: The National Mission

Tim Fawell, Governor Development Officer at Central South Consortium



Governors from the region attending the recent conference.

Building on the success of last year's conference on Successful Futures, which saw Professor Graham Donaldson as our keynote speaker, the theme of the second annual Governors' Conference was on a topic that is at the forefront of everyone's minds: [The National Mission](#).

A great deal of change is underway in the Welsh education system and school governors have a vital role to play in realising these changes. Keeping governors up

to date with relevant, useful and topical information is essential for them to play this part and the choice of speakers at this year's conference reflected this.

The key areas of focus took on several different, yet equally important, strands of the National Mission: Wellbeing, Teaching & Leadership Standards, ALN, Curriculum Reform and Cymraeg 2050. The speakers not only gave governors a general overview on these highly important topics but critically they gave advice and opinions on what governing bodies themselves could do to help ensure their schools are prepared.

We were also fortunate to have the Children's Commissioner for Wales and the Cabinet Secretary for Education speak at the conference. The Commissioner challenged all schools to put wellbeing and children's rights at the top of their agenda, encouraging all governors to become more familiar with the [Rights of the Child](#) and to find out to what extent these are embedded into everyday school life. The Cabinet Secretary spoke openly and frankly about the challenges ahead and the very real need for us all to work together for the benefit of all learners. She also spoke passionately about the importance of governors and how they will be vital in helping to realise the National Mission.

Governors are key stakeholders in the leadership of schools and yet their contribution can often go unnoticed. To put this in context from a regional perspective, there are 396 schools in the Consortium, with 146,928 pupils, 8,140 qualified teachers and up to 6,000 governors attending at least 1190 meetings every year. If all 6,000 governors attend one 2-hour meeting in each of the three terms in every academic year, 36,000 hours, or 4,500 working days, of voluntary work would be undertaken every year for the betterment of those 396 schools. School governors make up the largest volunteer force in the country and we thank you for all the dedication, the hard work and the time you freely give in service to your schools.



The day featured a wealth of updates for school governors.

All the presentations and resources from the conference can be found on the [CSC Knowledge Bank](#) and the keynote presentation and question and answer session with the Cabinet Secretary for Education is available on the Central South Consortium [YouTube channel](#). You can keep up to date with the latest news from the region in our [weekly e-bulletin](#).

One thing that is clear from feedback is that governors from across the Consortium are now more prepared than ever to challenge and support their schools to fully embrace the changes ahead, providing the best possible start for all children in the region.

Peer Enquiry: A Participant's Insight

Ryan Lewis, Headteacher at Trelewis Primary School



As a Head Teacher, making accurate evaluations and decisions about the direction and performance of a school is vitally important if purposeful and effective school improvement is to take place. I'm sure, like many other Head Teachers, there are those of you who have inherited processes for school improvement in your school that have not necessarily been 'fit for purpose'. Without effective self-evaluation and school-improvement processes in place, involving all stakeholders, it is impossible to establish an accurate picture of your school; and therefore impossible to put in place the improvements required to take your school forward.

Striking the balance between honest and accurate school improvement can be difficult, and establishing robust school improvement processes within a school can be a challenge for Head Teachers. With the various changes taking place in education it can be easy to find yourself at times asking if you are on the right track in your school - or if you're even on the track at all! I have found one of the most effective ways to begin improving the accuracy of judgements on how a school is performing is to gain an external view. To many of us, the process of inviting others in to evaluate the work of our schools can be something that we may not find comfortable - especially when this is done by inspectors who don't wait for an invite! Depending on the culture within your school, it can be a difficult task to get staff to engage fully with this sort of process; though the benefits of carrying out such a task are invaluable.

The age-old term 'critical friend' and the connotations that are associated with this phrase has been something that I have found inhibits staff from engaging in such processes. Many of our staff are proud of their roles as teachers; a vocation that all of us consider to be very personal to us. What staff fear more than anything is the idea of a 'stranger' being critical of them and their practice without any opportunity for dialogue to be established. On the contrary, what schools need are 'constructive friends' – peers who can work alongside them to identify improvements in practice, but also recognise the good practice already taking place in our schools.

A key part of our school improvement journey at Trelewis Primary has been engaging in the Peer Enquiry process, a process that we have found to be very constructive, and a process that all staff felt happy engaging with. The external views provided by the Peer Enquiry team verified many of the judgements that we had been able to make from engaging with stakeholders, as well as providing a platform for us to discuss possible ways in taking the school forward. Any ideas of 'threat' were quickly removed as this process was not about something being done to us but done with us. Throughout the process, all staff felt involved and, as a school, we felt that this process was very much a two-way process, with both sides taking something from the experience.

Having worked with a number of different schools in my own career, one of the key issues I have come across has been the issue of 'familiarity' amongst our staff teams. This can often inhibit the accountability of our school improvement systems as staff that have worked together for many years often find it difficult to truly challenge each other. The Peer Enquiry process ensured that professional dialogue was established, without any issues of familiarity impacting on judgements made. This allowed a much higher level of accountability to be

established, regarding the decisions and practices taking place within the school.

As a Head Teacher, the Peer Enquiry process provided me with an invaluable opportunity to network with other schools, which has been particularly helpful during our recent Estyn inspection where, as a Head, the support of other Head Teachers is vitally important. Drawing on others' experiences, promoting a sharing culture and opening our schools to others is vital if schools are to make the most of a self-improving school system and the Peer Enquiry process is a great way of starting this. I found the Peer Enquiry process to be hugely beneficial to us as a school and would certainly recommend this to any Headteacher looking to further develop their school improvement processes. Following our Peer Enquiry, and having just been visited by Estyn who noted that school improvement processes were 'robust, accurate and highly effective', I can safely say, Trelewis Primary is on the right track and the Peer Enquiry has been a key part in achieving this!

Mindfulness for Senior Leaders

Bev Smith, Deputy Headteacher at The Court School

Modern life is all about doing more and our lives are getting faster and busier all the time. We multi-task to deal with our ever growing to-do lists, constantly thinking about what we need to do or what we have done, instead of fully engaging with our surroundings and other people. Indeed there is a growing body of evidence – psychological, physiological and scientific – that our 24/7 chaotic, pressurised stress-filled lives are doing us immense harm.



I recently attended the Mindfulness for Senior Leaders accredited training programme (.B Foundation Level) which was offered by the Consortium as part of the Community of Leaders Programme. The programme consisted of eight, 90 minute sessions run by an experienced mindfulness teacher. The sessions were very informal and consisted of guided mindfulness meditation practice and discussion. We gradually learnt how to direct our attention to what was actually happening at that moment in time – for example breathing, the sensations in our body, thoughts and feelings and everyday activities such as eating. Alongside these sessions we were encouraged to practise at home.

I would thoroughly recommend this programme to any senior manager. For me it has been the start of a life changing journey. I believe mindfulness can offer us a way of dealing with the stress and challenges we all face in our day to day lives in a calmer and more effective way.

What is mindfulness and how is it beneficial to those in leadership positions?

Mindfulness is a modern practice that has evolved and developed as a result of the fusion of Buddhist practice and Western psychological practices and therapies. It has no religious dimension.

It involves learning to pay full attention to your experience both good and bad. It's about noticing how you feel, what you think and what you want with open minded curiosity and acceptance, rather than worrying about what has happened or what might happen.

There is growing scientific evidence that mindfulness can have a significant impact on well-being even when practised for a short period of time. Research studies have shown that

mindfulness practice can actually alter the structure and the function of the brain and reduce the levels of cortisol, the stress hormone, in the body.

The benefits for me personally have been huge both in my general wellbeing and in my role as Deputy Head of a special school for pupils with B.E.S.D.

I have become more self-aware and focused, less self-critical and better at making difficult decisions.

It has also increased my awareness of situations and my ability to respond with understanding and being open to alternative solutions. I feel more confident, resilient, and generally happier and my sleep has improved!

Mindfulness is not just for adults. As a school we are now looking to support the health and wellbeing of our pupils by including mindfulness as part of the new curriculum.

Distributed Leadership Model

Helen Turner, Headteacher at Pencaerau Primary School

Distributed Leadership is a firmly established feature within the staff and culture at Pencaerau Primary. The established practice to distribute authority and decision making amongst staff has been an ongoing practice at the school for many years. Its practice allows succession planning to develop at all levels. At its core is the opportunity for staff to fully utilize their potential and have a clear focus on the school's vision and strategic direction. In its wider context it creates a perfect opportunity for both professional fulfilment and positive career development.



During the last ten years, many staff, at all levels, have enjoyed fulfilment in their career and been given opportunities to develop. Fourteen teaching staff have progressed to become Headteachers, Deputy Headteachers and advisory personnel, and several teaching assistants have obtained HLTA status or qualified as teachers.

Contributory factors to the success of the team is the open culture, reflective practice and focus on high expectations both on a personal level as well as for the school community as a whole. All staff are given the opportunity to embrace new challenges. They are given strategic support, training and acknowledgement for their input into the bigger picture and development of the school. The culture discourages the attitude of 'we have always done it this way' and builds on the skills and talents of staff to refine and add to best practice so far.

Time was dedicated to evaluating and assessing staff potential, strengths and talents. Each year staff are encouraged to build on these assets as part of the school's developmental plans. Combining staff talents and commitment with an openness and creativity is a powerful vehicle for embracing change; a change that has been unprecedented in recent years in the teaching profession.

The four main contributors to the success of the practice are:

- Clarity of direction and communication;

- Empowering people to try something new but ensuring they are given the support, knowledge and skills to succeed;
- Developing the whole school mind-set where distributed leadership is seen as an opportunity for development – an experience to enjoy in a secure environment;
- Team culture to support, mentor and coach as needs are identified and developed.

The school has benefitted enormously from the distributed leadership model established and although there can be hurdles along the way, all staff who have embraced the opportunities and challenges have, without exception, given positive feedback. Distributive leadership has enhanced the learning culture and demonstrated to all staff the different ways and approaches to finding solutions. It has developed their problem solving skills and opened their minds to different approaches. This has developed an enviable 'can do' culture.

Distributed leadership has generated opportunities for change and built the capacity for improvement. High levels of trust, transparency and mutual respect have been fundamental to this. If we confine leadership just to those in positions of authority then we are wilfully ignoring the leadership talent and capability of many others. Just as with the children, you have to nurture the talent!

For a school to develop its distributed leadership there is no magic formula or step by step guidance notes. All schools are unique and the 'one cap fits all' method contravenes the principles of this approach. For distributive leadership to be authentic, the school leadership must create the climate of trust, teamwork and professional collaboration. Opportunities must be identified beyond random acts. Mutual understanding and flexibility are key components. For it to succeed it requires belief, trust and patience, and opportunities must be given at all levels for successful distributed leadership to evolve.

SRG 7 Teaching and Learning Model

Kelly Barrett, Teacher at St Richard Gwyn R.C. High School

Since September 2015, teaching and learning has been at the core of our school improvement plan. Initially, in order to set the climate for change, all staff were involved in establishing the key features of an excellent lesson. Together we created the 'St Richard Gwyn 7' (SRG 7):

- High expectations for all
- Differentiation: Progress for all
- Best use of time, pace and challenge
- Regularly check student progress
- Independent, paired and group learning
- Positive, Catholic learning environment
- Model 'excellent' outcomes

Our teaching and learning model, as well as having the SRG 7 at its core, creates a cycle of self-improvement which uses activities such as lesson observations, work scrutiny, learning walks and research group outcomes to gather data to identify our strengths and areas for development with regards to the SRG 7. This in turn, informs our decisions about which of the SRG 7 becomes our teaching and learning focus each year. This data also allows us to monitor

and evaluate learning, gather evidence to share as best practice and create, where necessary, individualised interventions and CPD so that the system is self-improving. Furthermore, teaching and learning strategies relating to the termly SRG 7 focus are designed to give teachers time to deliberately practise and refine approaches. For example, last term our peer observation cycle was designed to share and evaluate a variety of teaching approaches centred on challenge, with a specific focus on questioning. Resources which were highlighted by staff as excellent practice were collected and shared via our SRG Excellence Portfolio and our school-based professional learning platform.

In addition to this, we have worked hard to create action research groups which carry out classroom inquiries on an identified aspect of the SRG 7 and other teaching and learning priorities. We use a defined action research cycle to encourage the referencing of academic literature and classroom inquiries which result in measurable outcomes. Group membership and leadership are carefully planned and at present our groups are made up of teaching and non-teaching staff, governors and students from our Future Leaders programme, which encourages discussion about the purpose and outcomes of the research from different viewpoints. To ensure the groups' findings are shared effectively, we have provided a variety of opportunities such as a marketplace-style INSET, departmental seminars and the creation of infographics and Masters-level research posters. Additionally, we have also adapted our meeting cycle in order to enable staff to reflect upon and evaluate the impact of these various teaching and learning activities as part of their ongoing performance management. This is further facilitated by redesigning our timetable to provide staff with an additional 20 hours non-contact time over the course of the year for further collaboration, reflection and development of the teaching and learning focus.



The teaching and learning focus also forms the main part of INSET during each term. Our provision and engagement of INSET is also an area we have concentrated on to ensure staff gain worthwhile training in priority areas. For that reason, we have tried innovative approaches, such as using staff to teach lessons to colleagues and other stakeholders to provide an opportunity to experience teaching and learning strategies from a students' perspective. Additionally, we have used videos of lessons for staff to observe and evaluate a range of practice to highlight the importance of engaging effectively with classroom strategies. Furthermore, governors, feeder primaries and SIG group members are also invited to our internal CPD sessions during which we share our effective practice.

To ensure our model succeeds in improving standards we continuously adapt so that at every opportunity teaching and learning and CPD activities are linked to the SRG 7 focus and primarily to the school vision. Moving forward, we are modifying our school improvement plan to encompass the vision of the Curriculum for Wales and the new professional standards for teaching and leadership. At the same time, we will use our links with Cardiff Metropolitan University, as a Lead Partner for ITE, to collaborate and combine pedagogical theory with our school-based research to further develop the concept of St Richard Gwyn evolving into a learning organisation.

Creating a Climate for Change

Sonja Barnard, Strategic Lead for Curriculum Development at Rhydypenau Primary School



Sonja Barnard

Creating a climate for change has been at the heart of curriculum development at Rhydypenau Primary School. Our journey began back in 2015 when we became a Welsh Government Curriculum and Professional Learning Pioneer School. From the outset, as a leadership team, we felt it was important to consider our vision; not only for our pupils'; in relation to the type of learning experiences we wished for them to encounter throughout their education, but also in regards to our staff and their involvement in curriculum reform.

'Staff voice' has played a crucial role within our journey; enabling the school to fully embrace our staff's creativity, expertise and helping to create a sense of ownership for curriculum change. As with anything new, there was an element of intrepidation and a fear of the unknown. Therefore, as an SLT we ensured that work was carefully linked to our school improvement plan and was not seen as a 'bolt-on' or 'additional work' to be undertaken.

Much of our early work focused upon ensuring that literacy, numeracy and digital competence skills were successfully interwoven across the curriculum, to create rich learning opportunities for all pupils. Staff were given the freedom to work creatively, take risks and had autonomy to make decisions about learning contexts in their age phases. They were encouraged to closely examine what currently worked well and successfully promoted the four purposes and built upon these achievements. Conversely, they reflected upon contexts deemed as less successful and developed, amended, or completely changed them, in light of new thinking to enhance skill-based learning opportunities.

Dedicated time, as well as regular training opportunities have been fundamental for staff to deepen their understanding of the curriculum reform changes, engage with key documentation and participate in action research. A good example of this is where our staff were given full ownership over the creation, trialling and implementation of our new planning. A consistent approach to planning (under AOLE headings) is now employed throughout the school; enabling staff to view learning as a continuum. Learning opportunities are underpinned by the four purposes and staff effectively use their knowledge of these principles to ensure pupils are provided with enriched learning experiences, through a carefully constructed curriculum.

As part of our 12 pedagogical principles school audit, staff identified the need to further develop meaningful and authentic contexts, therefore 'pupil voice' has played an instrumental role in allowing children to see the relevance of their learning and has helped to make learning irresistible. Following a range of stimulating immersion activities, staff closely work with pupils from Nursery through to Year 6, to elicit and develop the children's creative and imaginative ideas. These help to shape learning and engage pupil's interests. Furthermore, the school council is an active body, with a strong pupil voice. They offer invaluable contributions to the planning, reviewing and development of key decisions across the school.

As with any journey, it is inevitable that the path is not always smooth and we have faced a few hurdles along the way. However, our staff have high aspirations and the leadership team have helped to facilitate a climate where, "staff and pupils are secure enough to take risks, make

mistakes and experiment to develop learning in a highly supportive environment” (Estyn 2018). We take pride in sharing our successes and support each other with each step of the journey.

Innovative Approaches to the New Curriculum

Anna Knight, Radyr Comprehensive School

In response to the Donaldson Report and other curriculum changes such as the GCSE reform planned for 2026, Radyr Comprehensive School has started to evaluate its current provision. The Humanities faculty has also seized the opportunity to redesign its provision for the new Year 7 starting in September 2018.

In addition to the curriculum reform, there has also been the introduction of the five new professional standards for teaching and leadership. The standards concentrate on the essential elements of every teacher’s work:

- Pedagogy
- Collaboration
- Leadership
- Innovation
- Professional learning

The new standards intend to underpin the development of the teaching profession as it leads the transformation of our education system in Wales. In order for students to benefit from the intended changes to professional standards, it was clear that we needed to change our curriculum.



As a school, we felt that the learning community would benefit by taking a progressive approach to introducing the new curriculum. The Humanities faculty should roll out the new curriculum provision in the first instance. The Assistant Headteacher responsible for the Curriculum and Humanities Area of Learning collaborated to design a bespoke curriculum, which has the four purposes at its core, integrates key skills and develops the transition experience for students.

The Humanities curriculum will be taught over 8 lessons per fortnight. The delivery team is comprised of Year 7 form tutors. This will allow for a smoother transition between primary and secondary, greater support for students well-being and improved communication between parents and staff.

Our journey ...

Our continuous reading of the literature on curriculum reform led to us concluding that we needed to develop a flexible curriculum that will involve a greater focus on our role within the community.

In order to ensure that we developed a well-designed curriculum we spent several months conducting action research.

Our initial step was to evaluate our current provision. Through a rigorous evaluation of our current practice, we were able to identify our strengths and develop a greater understanding of areas in need of development.

We then sought to look for a school which was already on a pathway to success with curriculum reform. Despite struggling to identify a curriculum pioneer school who had started to develop a new curriculum in our region, we were fortunate to create links with Olchfa Comprehensive School in Swansea. This collaboration has been central to our success in developing the new curriculum, the partnership is ongoing and our links help us to share good practice in other areas of education.

At Olchfa we were able to have open and honest discussions with the school's SLT, middle leaders and lead practitioners into the benefits and pitfalls of a new curriculum. During our visits, we could see a curriculum, which reflected the characteristics of the local area, engaged with the local community and developed students' capabilities in the four purposes.

In order to develop an 'enabling ethos' where staff have a positive attitude to change and innovation, we revisited Olchfa with our curriculum leaders for History, Geography, Religious Studies and Social Sciences. During the visit, we benefitted from observing lessons, enabling staff to voice concerns and ask any questions about integrating a new curriculum. The team were inspired and further research on the new curriculum started immediately.

We also encourage staff to develop their understanding of changes to education in Wales by sharing reports released by Welsh Government and Estyn. Through sharing case studies and reports outlining the importance of the new curriculum, staff were able to see the importance of embracing the proposed changes and consequently, the benefits of designing our own curriculum. The team was particularly reassured by Estyn's endorsement of embracing curriculum change, encouraging schools to develop pedagogical thinking by taking risks.

A key aspect of the new curriculum is the 'learning continuum'. Previous visits to primary schools had made it evident that the transition between Key Stage 2 and 3 did not flow effectively. Cluster primary schools conducted a Humanities audit; this was used to assess students' exposure to the Humanities subjects and benchmark student's skills. We wanted to make sure that our curriculum built on the skills that students had already developed as well, as being fresh and exciting to enthuse our learners about Humanities in the secondary school setting. We were also aware that it is our role as practitioners to develop digital competency and so we were able to establish the skills that we could cultivate.

In addition to the audits, several teachers from the Humanities Area of Learning visited our feeder primary schools to observe lessons. This was an essential part of the action research as it made staff reconsider how we approach the concept of a learning continuum. Involving all of our practitioners in the development of the new curriculum has secured their support thus making the processes of planning and delivery far easier.

We have also ensured that the students will have the opportunity to develop links with the local community by joining local community groups such as the Historical Society. Students will be displaying their outcomes at a community exhibition in the local Armistice Festival in November.

Subsequently, we developed our vision for the curriculum. Our vision is to facilitate our students to become informed and ethical citizens who have an understanding of the people and events that have shaped our lives today. Skills development is at the core of our curriculum. We hope that the changes that we have made will have a positive impact on students' expertise and improve outcomes at the end of Key Stage 4.

Throughout this process we have benefitted from the full support of our Senior Leadership Team. They recognised that in order to make this a success we would require sufficient curriculum planning time. In light of this, we have benefited from blocked meetings with the Humanities curriculum leads and have managed to develop a curriculum plan for the year. We have used the expertise of our pedagogical leaders to ensure that each lesson is planned effectively. Sharing of excellent pedagogical practice will develop teaching across the Area of Learning. Effective use of our gain time means that all lessons are planned for the next academic year.

Involving the learning community into these changes is a central theme in the Donaldson report. We have presented our work internally to our pedagogical leads, governing body and externally to our School Improvement Group and Challenge Adviser. So far, the responses have been positive. We hope that we can showcase our curriculum planning to more schools in the future. Our simplified Donaldson readiness audit has already been shared and utilised in schools within our School Improvement Group.

Our next steps will include greater involvement of parents and the community. At the end of the academic year, we presented to parents at the new intake meeting and visited the cluster primary schools to talk to Year 5 students about our new curriculum.

We will evaluate our curriculum in October with the view that if it is successful, it will be continued throughout Year 8.

Other Areas of Learning within the school have just completed their Donaldson readiness tool. We will be hoping to support other Areas of Learning in their curriculum design throughout the next academic year.

Putting on a Pioneering Performance around the Four Purposes

Damion Jewitt, Headteacher at Abercynon Community Primary School

Abercynon Community Primary School is a curriculum pioneer, with 350 pupils.

The Rationale

Since working on the new curriculum for Wales, many changes have taken place at Abercynon. Everything we do is centered around the four purposes of the new Curriculum for Wales, with pupils actively involved in planning their learning through multi sensory immersion days. We wondered whether our pupils could rise to the challenge of putting on Disney's Lion King Junior? Did we have ambitious capable learners who would be able to take part in such a performance? Would our pupils rise to the challenge and be able to put on a musical of this calibre? The topic of Lion King was to be for the whole of the junior department, but how would we ensure progression?

The Planning

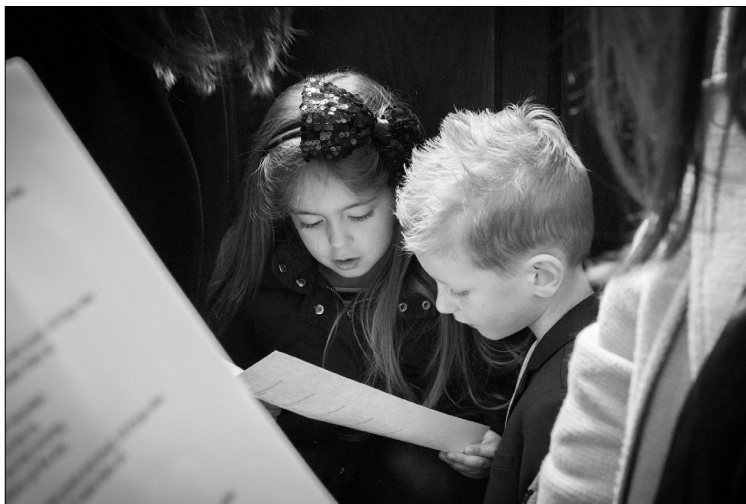
As with all successful projects, a lot of planning took place before the project began. The license was applied for and obtained in Spring 2017, and we searched for professional actors to come into school and work with the children. Fortunately, we discovered <http://www.forget-me-not-productions.co.uk>, and Clary Saddler agreed to share her expertise with us and the children. We also hired sound and lighting equipment.

Teaching staff met to discuss and deliberate approaches to the topic, and each decided upon an African country to focus on. They also decided on class songs and costume ideas.

The Project

Our immersion day consisted of watching the Lion King, complete with popcorn, in the school hall! Staff explained the goal, and pupils then started to think about characters they would like to audition for, and began to plan their learning journeys. We were extremely lucky to be contacted by Google Expeditions – and used the power of virtual reality to show the children the plains of the savannah.

Work started on learning the songs straight away – this may have been a junior version of the musical – but the songs were very technical and had many parts! All pupils took part in African drumming workshops with Dan Phelps <http://www.phelpsmusic.com>. The RCT Music Service provided a percussion club who performed at the show and whole class lessons were also organised for all lower key stage 2 children in recorders and violins. Auditions took place, the cast was chosen. Although the main acting roles went to Year 6, all pupils were involved. Clary Saddler came in each week to work with the main characters, and later on we also had the expertise of Sue Lewis, a choreographer.



Art Club was set up for pupils to be involved with creating the puppets, all the set and scenery. Pupils were tasked with creating the background PowerPoint for the show. Pupils who were reluctant to perform had jobs as stage and technical crew. Tickets were sold and two evening performances took place including invitations to parents, community members, feeder comprehensive school staff and local governors and council members who all came and thoroughly enjoyed the experience.

The Result

The production was a complete success! The pupils benefited hugely from the experience, the staff and parents were so proud of the pupils and all they accomplished. This approach is one that will be a central part of our curriculum as many aspects of the four purposes were successfully achieved.

Teach First Participant Insights

Emyr Myers, NQT at Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhondda



Emyr Myers

The Teach First Cymru Leadership Development Programme was always a desired route of mine since looking up to an older brother and seeing the passion he had towards making a difference to the lives of young people. I joined the programme not only with the motivation to improve the education of pupils, but also to motivate others to do the same. That is why I desire to be a Head Teacher one day.

From the first day on the programme, my leadership skills have been developing. I have to be consistent, I have to be persistent and I have to think of alternative routes very quickly within lessons. However, thanks to a supportive Head Teacher with the same vision as myself, I have been able to work towards developing high expectations through education

and developing a healthy environment for both academic and non-academic learning. By that I mean not every pupil is a scientist or a mathematician, and even those who you see as a scientist or a mathematician may have a different dream entirely. They may want to sing... be an athlete... or even have a plan to open their own business. I find it rewarding to have 50 minutes each day with each pupil to improve their scientific skills.

However, nothing is as rewarding as having the opportunity to develop a true passion within pupils towards new interests.

As Deputy Head of House, I had several duties such as assessing behaviour and encouraging pupils in their morning singing rehearsals for the school Eisteddfod. Before the programme, I thought that encouraging an athlete to try their best in science was going to be difficult and trying to motivate a group of 50 boys with the stigma against singing would be near to impossible. However, due to my own personal beliefs of leading by example by: standing in front of them and singing every morning (even singing a solo in the school Christmas concert); being persistent on pushing them and breaking down the stereotype; being consistent on behaviour whether it was a boy or girl not contributing and most importantly making it fun for them, the pupils bought into the Eisteddfod and competed to their best ability. They accomplished my vision as a leader and even won the school Eisteddfod. This is the most rewarding moment I have had as a teacher, and I know that with the support of the school, there will be many of these moments to come during my career.

This experience within my first year of teaching has increased my motivation and passion to be a Head Teacher. I will continue to display these traits throughout my career and hope to motivate others within the profession to develop these traits. I have learnt that the most important trait of a good leader is to lead by example. If you have a passion towards a vision, take every opportunity to show your passion to others. Eventually, others will follow.

Additionally, I would like to take the opportunity to thank all the staff who contributed to making my vision of the Eisteddfod come true, but most importantly I would like to thank the pupils of Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhondda for a great experience so far.

Diolch! Gobeithiaf fwynhau llawer o brofiadau tebyg fel rhan o'n teulu (I hope to share many more of these moments as part of our family).

Eisteddfod yr Urdd 2019, Cardiff and Vale

Richard Carbis, Welsh Language Policy and Standards Officer at Central South Consortium

It was a huge pleasure to see so many schools from our region competing and winning some of the main awards at the Urdd Eisteddfod this year. The list of successes was vast and is a sure sign that the language is alive in our schools.

I would like to raise awareness in all schools in the region of the Urdd Eisteddfod being held in Cardiff and the Vale in May 2019. The Eisteddfod is held on an annual basis during Whitsun half term and is a golden opportunity to see and hear the language at work and join in the excitement of celebrating one of our country's most important traditions. Unless you take part every year, you might not be aware that the Urdd Eisteddfod is Europe's largest youth festival.

But what is the Eisteddfod? For those schools who have never visited or competed in the Eisteddfod before, it is a well-established tradition but these days I would describe it as a cultural festival celebrating young people's talents in several areas, including art, design, cooking, dancing, animation, rock music, writing, playing instruments, acting, singing and recitation. There is a wide variety of categories, as you might imagine.



What talents do your pupils have? Do they like painting? Do they like designing? Do they like producing animated films? Whatever their talent, there will be an opportunity to take part in the festival in some way. There are competitions more suited to learners and those more suited to pupils in Welsh medium schools, but as there is so much choice for primary and secondary schools there should be a competition which appeals to most pupils.

In order to take part in the main festival, schools will need to participate in the Eisteddfod Cylch at a local level and then in the Eisteddfod Sir at a county level and will need to become members of the Urdd in order to compete. Usually, the Eisteddfodau take place in March but you should check the timescales with the Urdd officers for your area. Their contact details are below:

- Geraint Scott – Cardiff and Vale geraint@urdd.org
- Jordan Morgan-Hughes – Mid Glamorgan jordan@urdd.org
- Delyth Southall – Glamorgan Valleys delyths@urdd.org

Beyond the competitions, the Eisteddfod offers much more. There will be the opportunity to watch events on stage on the 'maes' (the Eisteddfod field) where there will be free performances and youth shows involving primary and secondary pupils performing in the evenings. For those who enjoy shopping, there are stands selling clothes, books, unique gifts, jewellery and more. For those who enjoy sampling the food choices on offer, there is also a wide variety of options available.

With the Government's mission to increase the number of people speaking and using Welsh, the Urdd Eisteddfod is the largest major festival for children and young people in Wales. It comes as no surprise that the Urdd plays a huge role in supporting the Government's ambition. We not only need to increase numbers of Welsh speakers but also the numbers of those who use the language.

Consider the opportunities available to your school and start planning to take part in the Cardiff and Vale Urdd Eisteddfod taking place in May 2019!

Primary Pupils Showcase Multilingualism

Amy Walters-Bresner, MFL Lead at Central South Consortium

Llansannor & Llanharry C/W Primary School recently held a Modern Foreign Language Showcase to celebrate the launch of the multilingual teaching initiative. The celebration was shared with the Cabinet Secretary for Education, Kirsty Williams AM, many guests from the Welsh Government Global Futures steering group, governors and parents. The day commenced with a speech from the Cabinet Secretary who outlined Welsh Government's vision to introduce additional languages into Key Stage 2 and congratulated the school for their achievement in launching Modern Foreign Languages.



Following this, guests were entertained with a concert celebrating the diverse range of languages and cultures being taught across the school. The children were keen to demonstrate their learning through songs, dance and poetry in Italian, French, German, Spanish and Welsh. With the support of CSC and Routes Cymru, Tim Riley of Primo School Music and Canela Fina provided lessons and CPD opportunities, which were celebrated and enjoyed by all.

Following the concert, some Year 6 pupils led guests through a learning walk through all classrooms to see the multilingual approach first-hand. Lessons showed the cross-curricular approach adopted by the school, including strong elements of ICT, including coding a German weather report and writing to French pen pals. In addition, Cardiff City Foundation showcased the Cymraeg gyda'r Adar Gleision initiative that was co-created to enhance engagement in Year 6 with Welsh. The project involved having Welsh lessons using football language followed by football coaching using the Welsh language.

Following the success of the languages day, the children have further developed their intercultural understanding during an inaugural visit from the Japanese Foundation. Their first visit to Wales brought the Paralympian Noel Thatcher to school to hold workshops and an assembly with the children.

The school is very proud of the success of its language development and looks forward to further developing its global project and sharing the exemplar practice with others in the future.

Mentoring for MFL Teachers at Oxford

Rhian Hopkins, Joint Head of French at Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Plasmawr

In the final week of the Spring term, I was very fortunate to be able to attend a fully-funded CPD opportunity for MFL teachers at Lady Margaret Hall College in Oxford. The CPD was organised by the award-winning MFL Mentoring Project and Cardiff University and was facilitated by Amy Walters-Bresner of CSC. Having studied French and English at Somerville College in the nineties, I was excited to return to Oxford as a teacher rather than a student of French!

Along with several other MFL teachers from Wales, I participated in workshops led by Professor Claire Gorrara of Cardiff University and Siân Brooks, MFL PGCE tutor at Swansea

University. We discussed the best ways to integrate grammar into MFL lessons and how to prepare Year 11 students for the challenging new oral exam. The sessions were thought-provoking and inspiring and I came home feeling very excited about the future of language teaching in Wales. Lady Margaret Hall was a wonderful setting for the CPD. We were given a welcome address by the college principal, Alan Rusbridger (Former Editor of the Guardian). We had a question and answer session with LMH French tutor, Dr Marie-Chantal Killeen, about how to prepare students hoping to study at Oxford. We were also inspired by the portraits of female alumni at Oxford's first women's college.



MFL teachers from the region during their trip to Oxford

As MFL teachers we were particularly interested to hear that Nigella Lawson studied French and Italian at LMH in the late seventies. Who knows where languages will take our own students in the future?

Primary Pupils Shine at National Reading Competition

Rhian Andrew, Headteacher at Sant Baruc Primary School

A team of avid readers from Sant Baruc Primary School, Vale of Glamorgan, have been crowned the 2018 Champions of BookSlam, the Welsh Books Council's annual reading competition for children.

The national round, held recently at Aberystwyth Arts Centre, saw hundreds of pupils from primary schools throughout Wales competing for the national championship. Their task was to impress the judges in two rounds, namely a 10-minute discussion and an 8-minute dramatic presentation based on their chosen books.



At the end of an exciting day, Sant Baruc Primary School, Vale of Glamorgan, was crowned the overall BookSlam Champions, having impressed the discussion judge with their knowledge of *The Shiver Stone*, by Sharon Tregenza. In the presentation round they performed their own interpretation of *The Black Chair* by Phil Carradice.

Helgard Krause, Chief Executive of the Welsh Books Council, said: 'The aim of BookSlam is to get children from all over Wales reading. By discussing and performing what they have read, the pupils gain a deeper understanding of some of the wonderful children's books we have here in Wales. It was a great pleasure to see the youngsters brimming with enthusiasm during the national round of BookSlam, and our thanks go to the dedicated and hard-working county organisers, teachers and other supporters that make these events possible.'

The 2018 runners-up were Saundersfoot Primary School, Pembrokeshire and Cyfarthfa Primary School, Merthyr, came third.

Pupils Building for their Future

Matthew Worth, Headteacher at Ffynnon Taf Primary School



Pupils laying out their designs

More than 700 pupils from 24 primary school classes have worked with Cardiff University's School of Architecture to design their ideal neighbourhoods.

The Shape My Street competition, supported by the Design Commission for Wales and the Royal Society of Architects in Wales (RSAW), was won by Ffynnon Taf Primary School in Taff's Well, RCT. Marlborough and Christ the King Primary Schools in Cardiff were runners up.

The pilot competition, launched in January, aimed to help young learners aged seven to eleven to understand what makes a successful home and community, while also raising awareness of careers in the creative design industries.

Ed Green, from Cardiff University's School of Architecture, said: "The competition activities are intended to develop understanding of the importance of design and quality in the built environment. All of the schools that participated produced fantastic work, full of ideas, demonstrating the potential of all of the children involved to design independently and creatively, but also to work collaboratively."

A particular aim of the programme was to encourage participation from schools in remote geographic locations and economically disadvantaged communities, to raise awareness around careers in the creative industries, both within Wales and more widely.

Carole-Anne Davies, Chief Executive of the Design Commission for Wales, said the judging panel was impressed by the quality and diversity of the submissions, and by the way the children were thinking about what is needed to make a positive community.

The three winning schools were invited to a 'celebration day' at St Fagan's National Museum of History. There, the three classes were asked to design a future house for the National Museum of Wales site, each with the help of two professional designers.

RSAW President, Carolyn Merrifield, who judged this stage of the competition, said: "Once again the quality of the work was fantastic with all of the children producing really creative responses to both the brief and the place," she said.

Matt Worth, Head Teacher of the winning school Ffynnon Taf Primary, said: "I was particularly impressed with the children's work when collaborating on creating their street. They showed much empathy and social understanding when debating what amenities the community would require, who should have access to the best views and in their determination to design quality public spaces. Staff and pupils have been so engaged in the project, it is being developed into a full curriculum topic and possible blueprint for the Curriculum for Wales approach within our school. We are currently in talks with a large firm of architects in Cardiff to assist in running this as a full curriculum theme in Key Stage 2 next autumn."



The winning street design

Organisers are looking to expand 'Shape My Street' into a national competition open to all primary schools in Wales next year.