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Appendices attached:

- Appendix I: Hub profile
- Appendix II: In school support
- Appendix III: Pathfinders and school support days

Issue: Hub Evaluation & Recommendations

Background

The Central South Wales Challenge was launched in 2014 to support the development of a 'self improving school system'. It purported a decentralisation of support in recognition of emerging evidence of the effectiveness of utilising regional professional capital in building greater capacity to meet the needs of schools. Based on six principles commonly found in successful schools, the aims were to develop:

- schools as communities where collaborative enquiry is used to improve practice;
- groupings of schools that engage in joint practice development
- more intensive partnerships to support schools facing difficulties;
- families and community organisations that support the work of schools;
- coordination of the system by school leaders; and,
- local authorities that work together to act as the 'conscience of the system'.

This innovation was backed by the 5 local authorities, who agreed that regionalising and prioritising according to need, rather than equal distribution of support was the best way to raise the whole system.

As part of the Central South Wales Challenge, school 'hubs' were introduced. Their role was to develop regional capacity by contributing to the region's professional learning offer. In acknowledgement of the limited amount of coordinated school to school working seen previously in Wales, and in the region, the model drew largely on models that had a level of evidence of success in England. The hub model is iterative and, in just over three years from the establishment of the first school improvement hub, is in its third phase. Over the three years, the hub model has facilitated increasing proportions of the region's professional learning offer and supported purposeful, planned cross local authority working. Over four thousand days of professional learning have been facilitated by hubs since 2014.

Summary

Phase 1: 2014-2016 saw the introduction of a more formal system of school to school support. The period saw over fifty schools being established as regional support providers and was largely about

contributing to the development of a culture of school to school working. It was successful in facilitating school to school working, outlining practicalities and foundation principles.

Hubs contributed courses and consultancy to the regional offersaw the development of a suite of professional learning programmes with more than 1500 teachers attending full or half day courses. An evaluation undertaken during the latter part of 2015 concluded that while activity levels had been high and there has been positive feedback from course evaluations, there remained areas for improvement. These were:

- matching available support to need;
- addressing areas where take up has been low;
- the need to move towards an impact driven system of professional learning; and,
- streamlining the system, its terminology, to support greater understanding.

Phase 2: 2016-2017 responded to the outcomes of previous evaluations and value for money reviews in its implementation of a 'reset' model. The aim of the reset was to tighten expectations of hub role and regional professional learning.

The strategic aim of the hub reset was to put in place mechanisms to improve the following:

- a keen focus on effective joint practice development;
- making sure regional support is defined by regional need;
- making sure we are brokering support against needs in the work of challenge advisers;
- making sure the support system is as simple and easy to understand as possible;
- focus on impact and value for money; and
- getting the best out of the Welsh Government Pioneer network.

Following a host of consultations, the hub model was re-defined to establish three types of hubs: professional learning, curriculum and lead practitioners. Broadly, their work has been around aspects of the professional learning continuum, core subject development and non-core subject development respectively. During 2016/17, over thirty schools collaborated as a network to:

- Engage with regional areas for development, for example, provision for NQTs.
- Facilitate enquiry led programmes; and
- Provide in school support to schools in red or amber categories.

Guidance communicated expectations for activity and a greater level of consistency across the model has been achieved. The annual survey provides evidence that there is sustained widespread engagement in collaborative joint practice development and inquiry across the region.

Evaluation work conducted over the course of phase two made an assessment of the provision available from the hubs as well as barriers to engagement with hubs. This has informed the model going into phase three.

Phase 3: 2017 – retains the structure implemented in phase 2 and responds to the outcomes of evaluations with further tightening of processes and greater expectations and support for hubs in evaluating the impact of their provision.

Evaluation: End of phase 2

The evaluation of hubs is an ongoing piece of work. To form a summative view, the following sources have been considered:

- Individual interviews with all hubs (January, 2017)
- Consultation with a range of key stakeholders including Strategy Group, Regional Stakeholders Group, strategic teams, hub leaders and facilitators
- Hub reports
- Practitioner evaluations
- Strategic team notes from hub visits
- Engagement data
- Case studies

Outcomes and progress to date

Progress has been made during 2016-2017 against the first five strategic aims. It is recognised that further refinements and improvements are required during 2017-2018 to increase the effectiveness of hubs.

Strategic aim 1: To have a keen focus on effective joint practice development.

Joint practice development across the model was variable at the point of application and not an expectation of previous iterations. The impact of the reset has been that the model has increased hub engagement with joint practice development, increased the facilitation of joint practice development and improved hub joint practice development. Joint practice development remains variable however is at a higher point than previously.

As part of the greater focus on joint practice development, the reset communicated collaborative working expectations and an enquiry approach for professional learning. All hubs have attended workshops on defining and progressing joint practice development across the region. There is greater collaboration across the hub model than previously with groups of hubs working together to facilitate professional learning. Included in this is the establishment of Gyda'n Gilydd, whereby all Welsh medium secondary schools in the region collaborate to meet the regional needs of practitioners working in this sector.

The reset has been successful in moving away from one off delivery models to a multiple session enquiry model with expectations of attending practitioners. The hub model has also supported well the move away from having 'one expert' in the room. A large body of research supports the effectiveness of this approach on practitioners over time. An enquiry led approach is more evident in the hub model following the reset (5/76 programmes enquiry led in 15/16; 103/156 in 16/17). The following features are now evident across the majority of programmes:

- An expectation to form and conduct an enquiry;
- Inter-sessional tasks; and,
- An expectation to evaluate the impact of that strategy from a baseline.

Also evident, but to lesser extents, are:

- Visits to practitioners and facilitation of practitioners visiting within the network;
- Mechanisms to support networks during the programme;
- Continuation of networks beyond the programme; and,
- Collaboration with other hubs to facilitate professional learning.

To further progress joint practice development across the model, the following are recommended:

- Increased expectations for joint practice development through the SLA;
- Establishment of a wider learning network for facilitators including ongoing support in joint practice development and enquiry led approaches; and,
- Wider communication materials for all schools to explain the enquiry led approach and expectations for attending practitioners.

Strategic aim 2: Making sure regional support is defined by regional need.

The 2016-2017 professional learning offer was well matched to regional needs identified from an analysis of school improvement plan priorities, strategic area priorities and national priorities.

There is a need to improve the effectiveness of the mechanisms in establishing current and anticipated need rather than working with a mix of retrospective information and emerging priorities.

Strategic aim 3: Making sure we are brokering support against needs in the work of challenge advisers

At least one practitioner from 60% of schools in the region have engaged with professional learning programmes facilitated by a hub (52% of schools engaged during 2014-2015, 1500 days of professional learning; 69% of schools engaged in training during 2015-16, 1800 days of professional learning).

Regular sessions have been held with challenge advisers to outline the scope of hub support. Challenge adviser bulletins have also been used as a means of communication. Programme credits have been released to schools categorised as requiring red or amber support to improve both uptake and brokerage through challenge advisers.

Brokerage is most effective where a CSC adviser is familiar with both the hub and the school requiring support.

Further development for brokerage by challenge advisers is required. Mechanisms to support the availability of information of support that can be accessed are needed as is greater exposure to the work of the hub model.

Strategic aim 4: Making sure the support system is as simple and easy to understand as possible

The structure of the model has been frequently communicated across a range of key stakeholders. It continues to be communicated in a variety of formats as part of an ongoing communication plan. Refreshed communication work on 'what hubs do' to supplement earlier work is taking the form of digital clips.

Less well understood is how the hub model interacts with other aspects of the Central South Wales Challenge and other sources of support. Duplication of provision and funding can be seen with Pathfinders and hub provision of in-school support. There is also activity overlap with SIGs. There is a need to ensure that funding is appropriately allocated to different strategies (see appendices III).

There is a need to ensure that the similarities and differences of all CSC facilitated support are clearly communicated and well understood by those who have a role in brokerage. Further developments should include a central bank of information so that schools, challenge and strategic advisers.

Strategic aim 5: Increasing the focus on impact and value for money

The overarching principle of CSC is to build in school capacity which is both sustainable and efficient. The hub model is one example of how Central South Consortium has changed its way of working in order to maximise the impact of resources. Other examples within or linked to the hub model include the Foundation Phase Alliance and the reduction of the central support team.

By implementing a cross local authority model, the consortium has been able to add value by aligning the resources available in the hub model to better meet the needs of schools across the region. However, there is further work to do to adjust the model/s (Central South Wales Challenge, Pioneer network and the hub model itself) to ensure that supply and demand are better matched and also support schools in their transition to the Curriculum for Wales.

Regional engagement with hub provision has increased:

- 2014-2015 – almost 700 days (52% of schools)
- 2015-2016 – almost 1500 days (59% of schools)
- 2016-2017 – almost 1900 days (62% of schools).

At organisation level, through the improved self evaluation processes and the increased capacity provided by the research and evaluation board, evidence of impact and value for money can be identified in the following areas:

- Raised standards in literacy / English / Welsh, numeracy and mathematics;
- Improved outcomes for eFSM pupils (with a closing of the gap at all phases);
- Overall improvement in school categorisation profiles; and
- Increased engagement in professional learning across career phases.

The annual survey will also be able to provide evidence of the following:

- Increased pupil satisfaction with curriculum offer and expectations;
- Sustained widespread engagement in collaborative joint practice development and inquiry; based approaches to meet the demands of Donaldson;
- Improvement in teachers' classroom practice, morale and self efficacy; and
- Improved leadership (of learning) at all levels.

Reports submitted by hubs at the conclusion of programmes state that nearly all practitioners report improvements in pupil outcomes, teaching and leadership (where appropriate to the programme) and that around half have undertaken capacity building activities in their school.

There is a need to further develop the quality of reporting from hubs to better capture the impact that practitioner engagement has had both during the course of the programme but also over the longer term.

Strategic aim 6: Getting the best out of the Welsh Government Pioneer network.

There is considerable overlap between the schools that are Pioneers and those that are CSC hubs. To date, the two programmes have operated independently. However, there remains a need to consider how to best align the regional programme with national programme to their best effect.

Factors that have impacted on progress

CSC capacity

The capacity within the Central South Consortium team has been significantly reduced during 2016/17. In addition to this, the responsibility for professional learning hubs has changed each term. Collaborative planning and evaluation has therefore not been a feature of this area of the hub programme. For 2017/18, a CSC link has been attached to each hub. It will be their responsibility, overseen by the professional learning lead, to ensure that professional learning hubs are aligning their work with the regional needs, undertake their role in line with their Service Level Agreement and Hub Guidance and ensure quality throughout the range of provision.

The appointment of a project manager to post at the start of the spring term has created some additional capacity to support the strategic aims of the project.

Recommendations

- To retain a focus on the overarching principles of the self-improving system as well as the six strategic aims of the hub model and monitor progress by:
 - establishing an operational board; and
 - aligning the work within the Research and Evaluation Project.

- To further build capacity for facilitation of the hub model as a school to school support structure by:
 - ensuring a sound understanding of all roles within the model;
 - removing all charging associated with non accredited or non branded programmes; and
 - placing an increasing emphasis on hub leadership of the model.

- To improve both the rigour of the system around evaluating and reporting impact and the regional capacity for doing so by:
 - further engaging hubs in the review of other hubs and the model;
 - evaluating the impact of specific regional approaches, for example, the Outstanding Teacher Programme;
 - working developmentally with hubs to improve the quality of reporting from hubs;
 - clarifying the role of challenge advisers; and
 - developing the evaluation forms to allow easier collection of information.

- To consider the hub model, along with other aspects of the Central South Wales Challenge and Pioneer schools, to ensure coherent regional professional learning that supports schools in their improvement and transition to the new curriculum.

Links to CSC Business Plan and Risks

Improvement Priority 2: Develop the capacity of school-to-school working in order to implement curriculum reform in particular by:

- 2.1 Improving the quality of teaching and learning and assessment
- 2.2 Build capacity for improvement through school improvement hubs
- 2.3 Support curriculum reform across all school through school-to- school networks

Improvement Priority 5: To develop effectiveness and efficiency in Central South Consortium by:

- 5.1 Using research and evaluation effectively to provide evidence of value for money

Background papers

- Hub Guidance & SLA Documentation
- Annual Survey Analysis

Appendix I: Hub profile

Five schools from the 2016-17 hub programme did not proceed to the programme for 2017-18. Where this has been the case, it has been for one or more of the following reasons:

- Fall in school standards;
- Failure to meet targets agreed with local authority and challenge adviser;
- Change of category;
- Change of ESTYN category;
- Poor feedback/evaluations;
- Not able to offer support aligned to regional needs; and
- Not able to offer provision in line with the CSC model.

HUBs 2016/17	Primary	Secondary	Special
Professional learning	11	13	2
Curriculum	21	17	0
Lead practitioner	7	7	0
HUBs 2017/18	Primary	Secondary	Special
Professional learning	10	12	2
Curriculum	21	15	0
Lead practitioner			

Appendix II: In school support

Just over 20% of available days used (166.5 days of an available 823).

Total Red/Amber Support

Primary (ALL LAs)			
Curriculum Area	No. Hubs in Curriculum Area	Days Used	Days Remaining
English/ Literacy	4	21	19
Maths/ Numeracy	5	3	47
Science	1	1.5	8.5
Digital Competence	2	8.5	11.5
FPA	9	28.5	61.5
Welsh 1st Language	2	0	20
Welsh 2nd Language	1	0	10
PLH	9	0	90
LP	4	8.5	31.5
TOTAL	37	71	299

Secondary			
Curriculum Area	No. Hubs in Curriculum Area	Days Used	Days Remaining
English/ Literacy	5	38	12
Maths/ Numeracy	4	19.5	20.5
Science	2	4.5	15.5
Welsh 1st Language	1	0	10
Welsh 2nd Language	3	3	30
Digital Competence	1	2	8

MFL	3	17	13
PLH	13	11.5	118.5
LP	13	0	130
TOTAL	45	95.5	357.5

Appendix III: Pathfinders and school support days

School/challenge adviser identifies the need for support



Which strategy best meets the needs of the school?

?	(Red and Amber) support days Builds and adds capacity in school in an identified improvement area.	Pathfinder partnerships Builds and unleashes capacity in school in an identified improvement area.
Who is it for?	Any red or amber school where a support need is identified	Any school where a specific support need is identified
Who provides support?	Curriculum hubs (core subjects), Lead practioners (non core subjects) and professional learning hubs (leadership and teaching and learning)	A green or yellow school in the system with proven expertise in the improvement area identified by a challenge adviser
Who approves support?	Hub lead associated with the identified area	Senior challenge advisers
How long does the support run?	Each hub can provide up to 10 days support. Support package can be long or short term.	2 terms of collaboration – can be extended for 2 further terms if the work is impactful
Planning?	Scoping visit takes place from the strategic adviser and challenge adviser. From this a programme of support is drawn up on an EFIS (evaluation for improvement statement)	An SLA providing a baseline against which progress can be measured is required
Reporting?	Hub schools providing support produce a note of visit at agreed intervals. This information is used to track progress against the original EFIS form	An evaluation focussed on the impact of the pathfinder on standards, provision, leadership and building capacity is required
Contact?	Project Manager: Dawn McGowan Dawn.McGowan@cscjes.org.uk	CSWC Development Officer: Louise Muteham Louise.Muteham@cscjes.org.uk
Funding?	Support days are provided without charge	£2000 is available per school.

		If a pathfinder involves a hub school the strategic lead for hubs will determine if funding is allocated or support days are used
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Appropriate support is brokered for the school