

**Central South Consortium response to additional questions: The National Assembly for Wales: Children Young People and Education Committee / School improvement and raising standards**

**In our 2018 inquiry on the PDG and schools causing concern, we heard that schools use a number of different tracking tools to monitor pupils' progress, including 'Alps'. Do the consortia favour or promote a particular tool in their region or is there quite a lot of variation in the methods used by different schools?**

Fischer Family Trust analysis is available to all schools in the Central South Consortium region via the local authorities. This provides analysis for Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4 for both estimates and self-evaluation of estimates vs actuals.

Currently there is not a national evaluation of pupil progress available and this means CSC supports schools and settings with the tracking systems within individual schools but does not support any particular tool or method of tracking. Challenge advisers work with schools to ensure tracking is effectively used to support the progress of individual learners.

Along with other regions the CSC uses 'ALPS' (a company who measure and compare progress from GCSE to A level across over 2,000 providers in England and Wales) as a value-added performance analysis for GCSE, A Level, AS level and BTEC in secondary schools.

CSC provide analysis to every school in the region that details pupil progress between consecutive key stages/phases e.g. Foundation Phase to Key Stage 2. This analysis is provided for each area of learning or core subject where comparisons are available from the previous key stage/phase and is available for the whole school and also for specific groups of pupils e.g. gender and free school meal eligibility.

CSC collect the currently secure data across Year 11 for Secondary and Middle schools to monitor progress towards the end of the academic year and external qualifications/performance measures, with an additional collection for Year 10 in June for a similar purpose for the following academic year.

**How much progress is being made in reducing the attainment gap between pupils eligible for free school meals (eFSM) and their peers in your region?**

Strands within the current CSC Business Plan has a specific emphasis in promoting improved outcomes for vulnerable learners. In addition, school improvement staff in CSC have a performance management target in relation to the achievement of reducing the attainment gap between pupils eligible for free school meals (eFSM) and their peers.

The regional Teaching and Learning Strategy is under development and being co-constructed with a wide variety of stakeholders and incorporates the strategy for Equity

and Wellbeing. This strategy will encompass all the approaches that are being implemented across the region to support schools in promoting improved outcomes for vulnerable learners.

A summary of some of the aspects within the regional strategy include:

- Closer challenge and monitoring schools' use of the Pupil Development Grant (PDG). Two hundred schools across the region submitted an evaluation of the PDG in the summer term of 2019. Currently schools are submitting their PDG plans electronically. An evaluation of all secondary schools and a sample of primary PDG plans to be conducted in February 2020.
- A pilot in collaboration with the "Inclusion Expert" led by Daniel Sobell (as part of the school-led hub programme) is underway with a good level of engagement by twenty schools across the region. The pilot which has seen impressive gains in schools in England involves identifying successful practice in supporting vulnerable learners as well as gathering information about the wellbeing support schools are offering. The pilot includes looking at the effectiveness of how vulnerable pupils are tracked as well as initiatives or other interventions that are being undertaken. Effective wellbeing assessment tools are being identified as part of the Inclusion Expert pilot. Evaluating this information in conjunction with an evaluation of all of the schools PDG plans and wellbeing tools will identify how CSC can support schools in improving outcomes for vulnerable learners. This will then determine the professional learning offer being delivered by CSC
- The professional learning offer to all schools will be structured around the results of the pilots that are taking place this year. The evaluations of the PDG plans as well as evaluating effective equity and wellbeing support taking place in the pilot schools will result in co-constructing an ongoing professional learning offer based on sound research
- CSC will work with schools in refining systems of monitoring, evaluating and reviewing. This will involve providing guidance in how these systems can effectively determine the progress of vulnerable learners. It will look at listening to learners, book looks as well as learning walks and will work in collaboration with the work that is going on with the work of the Learning Collaborative, led by Dr Lyn Sharratt.
- The provision for groups of vulnerable learners is at the heart of the ALN transformation work and will look to identify what is effective teaching and learning for vulnerable learners. The transformation lead in CSC is working in partnership in the development of the business plan for 2020/2021.
- In some areas within this region many children start school with deficit speaking skills. We are working with Voice 21 to raise the state of oracy in schools across Wales. In 2018-19 116 schools in CSC were invited to take part. All secondary schools and one primary from each cluster. Also 6 special schools. In 2019-20 a further 124 schools invited to take part.

- As part of the PDG LAC and MAT work clusters have been established to ensure that true reciprocity exists, and schools are effectively sharing strong practice. This will allow for projects to be developed, cluster training to be shared and improved outcomes for more able and children looked after
- Effective research is at the heart of all project evaluations. CSC are working in collaboration with Cardiff Metropolitan University to ensure that robust evaluation of the impact of all school improvement work that is taking place is effectively documented allowing the identification and sharing of successful practice
- Partnership working with other local authority services is on-going for example working with the attendance and exclusion leads across the 5 authorities. Projects involve identifying and sharing effective practice in schools, sharing effective protocols and working with improving outcomes for free school meal pupils

In addition to the information provided above the region has:

- A regional professional panel (including local authorities and CSC) that discusses and approves school grant plans for Looked After Children (LAC), with headteachers from across the region. Plans are reviewed for evidence of impact at the end of the year.
- A regional professional learning offer for schools and settings that covers aspects of the wellbeing and equity agenda.
- Support for governors to interrogate data on groups of learners to assist in their role.
- Developed a Wellbeing tool – PERMA in Bridgend, Cardiff, Merthyr Tydfil and Rhondda Cynon Taf as well as providing ongoing support for the Wellbeing Tool used in the Vale of Glamorgan (SELFIE).
- Engaged with Education Endowment Foundation to host regional research events.
- Further development and implementation of the consortia's PDG Strategic Adviser Role across the region with focus on regional objectives/outcomes and national collaboration and consistency of role via the All Wales PDG project group.

**How much of a role do the consortia have in supporting minority ethnic pupils and Gypsy, Roma and Traveller learners? How has the approach changed in recent years? Is this work led by a lead authority in the region rather the consortium?**

The support element for minority ethnic pupils and Gypsy, Roma and Traveller learners is provided through via local authorities. Since 2017, the Minority Ethnic Achievement, and Gypsy and Traveller Children Education Grants are passported directly from Welsh Government to Local Authorities.

As at PLASC in January 2019 approximately 17% of the school population across the region are from backgrounds other than White British, this includes 0.2% pupils classed as Traveller or Gypsy.

Of the pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL) 1.7% are at acquisition levels A-C % 6.7% at levels D-E. The region includes Cardiff which has the highest EAL population across Wales. Both Vale of Glamorgan and Merthyr Tydfil have comparatively high percentages of EAL/Gypsy, Roma & Traveller pupils. Each local authority has managed support for these pupils in similar ways but driven by local needs. The attainment of these pupils is discussed through the regular CA meetings with schools although direct support is managed through Local Authority services. Support includes direct allocation to schools to allow the employment of additional staff, the use of inclusion classes (Merthyr Tydfil) for both EAL and Gypsy, Roma & Traveller pupils, a central team for specific support (Cardiff) and support towards Traveller Education Services.