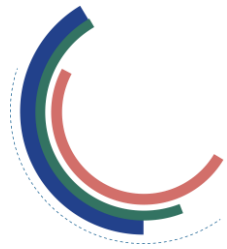




 **PARTNERIAETH**
Gweithio mewn partneriaeth i gyflawni rhagoriaeth i bawb
Partnership working to achieve excellence for all

Scrutiny Councillor Group
Curriculum for Wales Update
October 2023



Overarching Narrative

All schools and settings in Partneriaeth have access to a comprehensive professional learning offer with a range of synchronous and asynchronous opportunities developed for leaders and practitioners with an ongoing focus on the 3-16 continuum. Support has been designed, developed and delivered to ensure schools meet legislative requirements for implementation whilst also supporting schools to develop and refine their curriculum through an ongoing iterative process. Nearly all clusters across the region have undertaken opportunities to engage with this offer in the 2022-23 academic year and the offer has been refined further for 2023-24 to ensure that schools and clusters are supported to focus on reviewing and refining the design and implementation process. The offer is co-constructed and the collaborative approach with LA and school-based colleagues has been beneficial for all to ensure consistency and understanding of key messages from all within the system.

Clusters across Partneriaeth benefit from a named officer to support discussions and broker bespoke support. This has enabled high quality intervention in schools and clusters and an ability to work on priorities at a school and cluster level. Although Partneriaeth does not employ school improvement officers, local authority staff work closely with schools to develop priorities and share these with the region. In the best examples, support is delivered in a timely fashion and in collaboration with school improvement staff. This has enabled a number of case studies to be developed to share emerging practice in areas such as AoLE progression at a cluster level.

Clusters have received significant funding to enable collaboration and to support their shared understanding of progression. A minority have benefitted from joint closure days with a majority committed to engaging in this way in 2023-24.

Professional learning has focused on developing a shared understanding of progression through an understanding of the mandatory elements and requirements within each AoLE and a range of support has been developed to meet these needs. This is delivered through consistent messaging whilst accepting the natural variability between AoLEs. Schools and clusters have been supported to develop an understanding of learner progression along the 3 – 16 continuum through the lens of the mandatory principles of progression and key concepts and ideas from the mandatory statements of what matters and practitioners and leaders have benefited from a range of networks to support collaboration and shared understanding of why specific knowledge, skills and experiences are important for the planning of progress and learning and teaching. Considerations and understanding of the mandatory cross cutting themes of RSE and Diversity have also been delivered to further develop the schools understanding of an equitable and inclusive curriculum alongside our universal offer of developing pedagogical approaches to develop learning in the outdoors. Schools and settings have been supported through specific networks to understand the legal requirements for RVE and how it can be embedded into their curriculum design process.

All schools and settings have had access to high quality cross-curricular skills networks to further understand the relevance and importance of developing a curriculum which enables learners to develop competence and capability in these skills and, where there are opportunities, to extend and apply them across all Areas.

The Professional Learning offer for 23/24 clearly aligns with the National Mission and the school improvement guidance and will continue to build on key messages delivered throughout 22/23.



Section A: Curriculum Requirements

Intent

All schools and settings have access to universal and bespoke, bilingual support for Curriculum for Wales. Schools have been supported with the iterative design process, to plan for delivery of the mandatory elements and requirements and to engage with the regional asynchronous and synchronous professional learning offer. Local Authority support has been well-aligned with regional officer support to deliver high quality provision.

Primary networks for AoLE leads have continued across all AoLEs to ensure knowledge and understanding of key concepts within and to collaborate on key areas, such as progression and assessment and pedagogical approaches. Key messages have been shared with all schools and case studies will be developed. Primary schools have been encouraged to work as a cluster on shared understanding of progression and to share school based examples of their design processes and innovations with each other on a regular basis.

All secondary, all-age, special and PRUs that implemented Curriculum for Wales in September 2022 or will implement in September 2023 have access to universal, bilingual support for Curriculum for Wales. Schools have been supported with the iterative design process, to plan for delivery of the mandatory elements and requirements and to engage with the regional asynchronous and synchronous professional learning offer. Local Authority support has been well-aligned with regional officer support to deliver high quality provision.

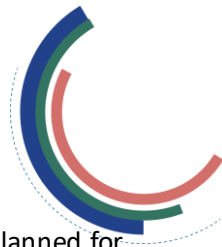
Secondary subject specific networks have continued across most AoLEs to ensure knowledge and understanding of key concepts within and to collaborate on key areas, such as progression and assessment and pedagogical approaches. Secondary schools have been encouraged to work with primary feeder schools and with other secondary schools to ensure a shared understanding of progression and to share school based examples of their design processes and innovations with each other on a regular basis.

Implementation

Nearly all primary schools in the Partneriaeth region have published their curriculum summary. Schools have shared their curriculum summaries using a variety of means including parent mail, school websites and social media ensuring that requirements are met. Through discussions within the primary networks and through bespoke cluster work, schools have a good understanding of the Curriculum for Wales framework, the mandatory elements and requirements and that these are embedded in the design process. Significant time has been invested in supporting this process with school improvement staff and school leaders to ensure a consistent message and to establish school-wide understanding of Curriculum for Wales framework in order to develop a high-quality curriculum that fully embeds the principles of the Curriculum for Wales. Asynchronous support can be accessed through our Curriculum for Wales website and schools are signposted to the cross regional website to access further support.

Across the Partneriaeth region 12 Secondary, and 2 all-age schools implemented Curriculum for Wales in September 2022 and all remaining secondary, all-age, special and PRU will implement from September 2023. All are in the process of developing their curriculum summaries this term and all will have published and adopted the summaries by autumn 2023. As part of on-going school improvement and evaluation procedures, all schools are reminded of the requirement to re-publish a summary following any changes made. Asynchronous resources have been available for all schools with regards to curriculum summaries. Regular discussions with LA school improvement partners detailing the requirements of a published summary has supported this process for our schools and settings.

Schools and settings have been supported through a range of synchronous and asynchronous professional learning this term to further understand the cyclical nature of the design process and there is an emerging understanding of



how curriculum, pedagogy and progression and assessment are interlinked and can't be thought of or planned for in isolation. This has included a continuation of workshops to develop a shared understanding of progression at an AoLE level across the 3-16 continuum; curriculum design – organising the learning (curriculum models to evaluate when and where specific learning is best) AoLE organising the learning (the importance of sequencing learning to ensure progression), cross-cutting themes CWRE, RSE and AoLE specific primary networks. Our offer is completely bilingual and has been reviewed and refined for the start of the academic year 23-24 to support all schools and settings wherever they may be on their design journey. A range of workshops on assessment approaches and pedagogical knowledge has also supported the curriculum conversations with opportunities to engage with experts such as Mike Gershon, Prof. Andy Penaluna and a range of HEI partners.

Schools from Partneriaeth are involved in range of national collaboration opportunities such as UBD, National Pedagogy Project, the NPEP and the National Networks where practitioners from the region provide planning and facilitation support for these sessions alongside regional staff. Schools from the region have been key contributor to the Camau i'r Dyfodol work and we are committed to supporting the next steps in this process through the dissemination and understanding of materials, resources and research.

Partneriaeth has a close working relationship with local authority school improvement officers in most cases. This has allowed bespoke support to be developed and delivered to meet the local needs as well as through the strong universal offer. In the best cases, joint visits have enabled school to identify their needs based on their self-evaluation and improvement priorities and therefore access to appropriate level of support. Partneriaeth has supported all 3 local authorities to deliver additional curriculum sessions to their schools and develop training for school improvement advisers.

In Partneriaeth, school improvement advisers are employed locally and three advisers monitor the use of the professional learning grant. The use of the PL grant will be discussed during autumn term visits. However, in the best cases, it is clear that schools are innovative and prioritise a collaborative approach with schools in their cluster or network of schools.

Impact

The PL offer for schools in the summer term has been well received by our schools and clusters. Primary settings have clearly benefitted from having newly established networks for AoLE leads to collaborate and prioritise CfW discussions.

Most attendees at the Curriculum for Wales PL sessions would strongly recommend the sessions to colleagues and access additional bespoke support following these sessions. Most schools have made significant progress in their implementation of Curriculum for Wales and are now reviewing and refining their process. Further work is needed in establishing a consistent flow of information between Partneriaeth and improvement advisers in local authorities although, in most cases, this works effectively.

Most schools have made significant progress in their implementation of Curriculum for Wales and are now reviewing and refining their process. Evidence of this is apparent as the region has secondary or all-age schools from all three local authorities that we represent share effective practice during the cross-regional AoLE sessions across four different AoLEs. Further impact of our effective, high quality universal offer has led to an increase in bespoke requests, especially to support curriculum development at a cluster level.



Section B: Progression and Assessment Challenges

Intent

Progression and assessment has been and continues to be a key focus for school development and professional learning in the summer term of 2023. Partneriaeth continued their 3 part programme of developing a shared understanding of progression along the 3-16 continuum within AoLEs in the summer term. Asynchronous resources were also made available to all schools and settings and these have been well-received.

The cross-regional team have also developed a range of resources and PL sessions to support in this area and joint working and collaboration continues to be strong between regions and partnerships.

Implementation

Professional learning has focussed on the Principles of Progression and developing a shared understanding of progression across the 3-16 continuum and understanding how knowledge, skills and experiences need to be sequenced in a coherent manner in order for learners to make progress towards the four purposes.

Partneriaeth has supported clusters from all three local authorities during the summer term, however, we acknowledge that finding opportunities for collaboration between all clusters has been challenging. Moving forward the additional INSET day and guidance from Welsh Government as to how to use this time has been helpful alongside the need for schools to outline in a plan how they are working with schools from within and beyond their clusters.

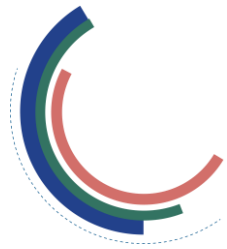
Partneriaeth has quite complex cluster set ups where learners from primaries may not necessarily attend the official secondary due to language preference; this has been a considerable barrier for many schools as they make arrangements to collaborate with other schools on developing an understanding of progression for their learners. Shared vocabulary and terminology is key when discussing progression and this has been challenging due to inconsistencies within WG documents – especially through the medium of Welsh: *cynnydd* and *dilyniant* are used interchangeably even though they have significant differences when discussed through the lens of curriculum design and learner progression.

Discussions around accountability remain challenging for some schools and settings. Even though some schools are moving away considerably from summative assessment of learner progression as the only way of assessing learner progress, concerns around external accountability and expectations remain. This remains more of a challenge for secondary schools as they establish a way of sharing messages around progression with parents and cares that are not aligned to qualification grades.

Where the principles of Curriculum for Wales are truly understood and time has been given to engage with the framework and with professional learning from a regional or national perspective, schools are moving towards the development of more effective, formative assessments. Partneriaeth officers have supported local authority school improvement partners to understand how the personalised assessments can be used as part of the assessment arrangements used within schools.

The uncertainty around examinations for 2025 remain following the publication of the Made for Wales GCSEs by Qualifications Wales. Concerns remain for secondary practitioners who feel extremely responsible for the successful examination outcomes of their learners and this in turn has impact on any cluster decisions and discussions around disciplinary progression. Opportunities for discussions around current and future qualifications are built into the secondary subject networks.

Concerns around national expectations and alignment with regards to learner progression remain significantly high.



Impact

Partneriaeth continues to meet the needs of our schools through a range of universal and bespoke PL. Evaluation suggests that these sessions have a positive impact on leader and practitioner understanding of progression and assessment although significant challenges remain in terms of implementation. Professional learning in autumn and spring term 23-24 will continue to focus on these challenges.

Partneriaeth colleagues will support WJEC with professional learning and are involved in a range of stakeholder groups. However, Partneriaeth no longer has a dedicated secondary team of advisers so this does present capacity challenges.

Section C: Cluster working

Intent

Clusters across Partneriaeth benefit from a named officer to support discussions and broker bespoke support. This has enabled high quality intervention in schools and clusters and an ability to work on priorities at a school and cluster level. The professional learning offer can be tailored to the needs of different clusters and bespoke support provided dependent on cluster priorities. Partneriaeth officers consistently share a common message around supporting learners to make progress as a fundamental driver of Curriculum for Wales and that schools within and across clusters should have joint expectations for how learners should progress and how knowledge, skills and experiences should contribute to this in a schools' and settings' curricula.

Implementation

Cluster link officers co-ordinate and facilitate opportunities for cluster working by building strong relationships with school leaders from within their cluster. We promote, broker and oversee school-to-school collaboration and cluster working, including professional dialogue, to develop a shared understanding of progression. Partneriaeth support during cluster INSET days, often designing, developing and delivering in collaboration with the schools, other instances as a knowledgeable other in the room to support with discussions and to move thinking forward. Partneriaeth officers support with whole school approaches to learner progression alongside discipline specialists within AoLEs.

Partneriaeth officers have discussed and shared resources and materials with local authority school improvement partners with regard to the Section 57 ministerial direction using the narrative provided by Welsh Government in order to disseminate further to their individual schools. Plans to develop a shared understanding of progression are being developed in conjunction with school improvement plans and transition plans. Every cluster in Partneriaeth has been supported to have a transition plan in place that has been agreed by the cluster.

Impact

Where cluster working is effective and strategically planned, schools are beginning to develop a more coherent appreciation of the learning continuum, to ensure smooth transitions and appropriate pace and challenge of expectations. Most clusters are developing their own strategic vision for developing a shared understanding of progression and are truly deepening their knowledge and understanding how learners progress within and across AoLEs. Clusters working effectively and where we are supporting on a regular basis really understand why learner



progress and not attainment is critical to learning and teaching and should inform curriculum design, classroom planning and assessment. Working within a cluster support model has strengthened relationships between and within schools and there is a continued commitment to working in this way with our clusters as we progress through 2023-24.

It should be acknowledged that, for a minority of clusters, working in this way is relatively new and will take time to become established. However, nearly all schools are committed to using curriculum funding to develop shared understanding of Curriculum for Wales as a cluster.

Section D: Schools Receiving Most Support

Intent

Partneriaeth works in collaboration with local authority officers to support schools who are at various stages of their curriculum reform journey. School priorities are identified through robust self-evaluation and in partnership with local authority school improvement partners or through Estyn recommendations. Schools and local authority officers broker additional bespoke support from Partneriaeth to address specific priorities. Where necessary, the local authority and Partneriaeth have jointly agreed the rationale for the range of support being made available.

Implementation

The nature of support requested by schools and delivered by Partneriaeth officers has varied during the Summer term from basic understanding of the Curriculum for Wales framework to specificities around curriculum design. Curriculum for Wales support for schools in Estyn category have focused on developing and deepening knowledge and understanding of the mandatory elements and requirements whilst developing pedagogical approaches to support change and improvement. Support has ranged from INSET planning with school leaders on developing a vision for Curriculum for Wales to professional learning sessions with practitioners on ensuring effective challenge and pace for all learners through effective pedagogy. Supporting with skills progression has been a priority for schools in Estyn category with regular input from Partneriaeth officers to enable practitioners to plan for progression with regards to the cross-curricular skills.

Impact

Even though the process of supporting schools with furthest to go with regards to Curriculum for Wales is a lengthy process, supporting schools with engaging and re-engaging with the principles of the curriculum is key in developing a high-quality curriculum that fully embeds the principles of the Curriculum for Wales as stated in the Journey to rollout. Immediate impact of any PL delivered on curriculum design with schools during the summer term cannot yet be evaluated as the process involved takes time to embed. However, the nature of professional discussions with these schools are moving from requesting generic planning templates etc. to discussions around effective means of realising Curriculum for Wales for their learners through considerations of approaches to how the Areas, statements of what matters, principles of progression and disciplines are used to inform curriculum and assessment design.