

# Central South Consortium

## Business Plan 2016/17

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## Introduction

**Our aim:** to improve educational outcomes for all pupils, and the outcomes for vulnerable learners fastest. The success of schools in this region is the key to the future economic and social success of Wales. We are improving. We need to do more.

The Central South Consortium (CSC) is a school improvement service which operates on behalf of five local authorities: Bridgend, Cardiff, Merthyr Tydfil, Rhondda Cynon Taff and the Vale of Glamorgan.

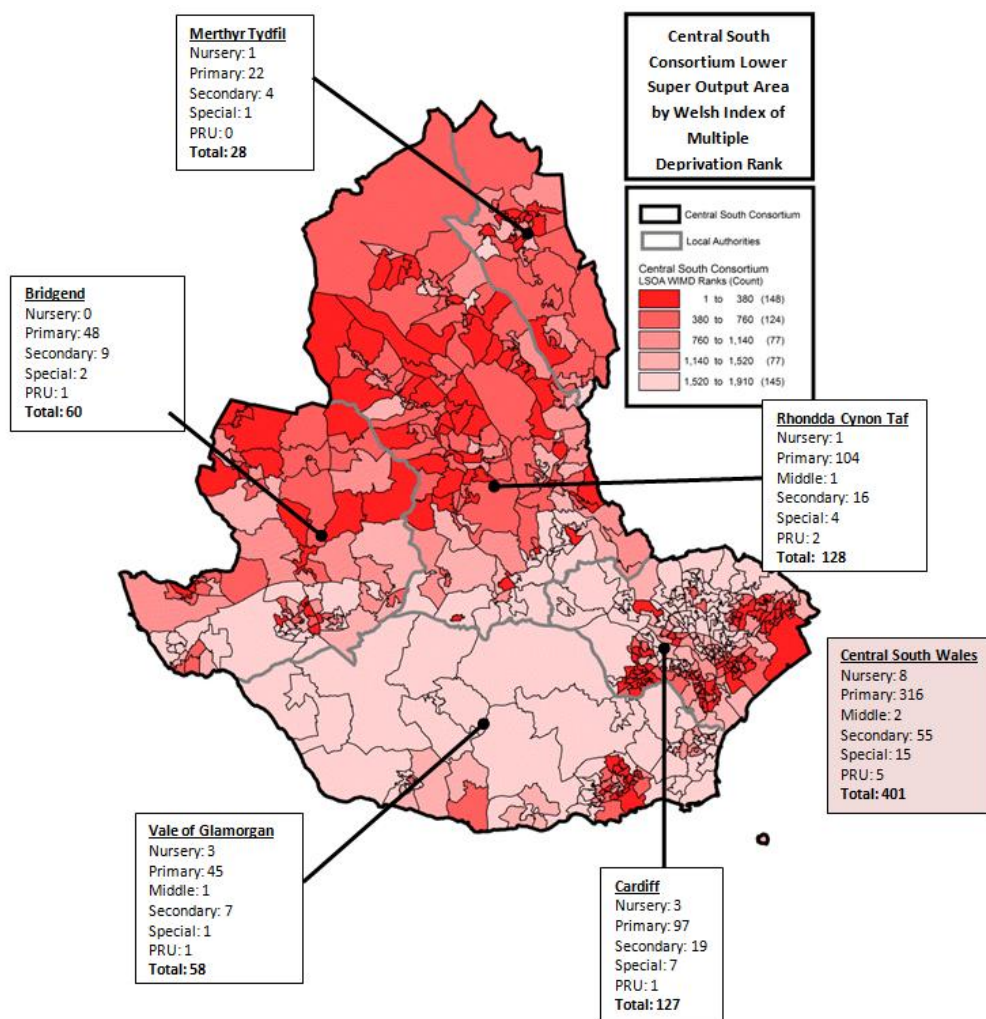
This region is the most populous in Wales. It includes over 400 schools and serves 135,000 learners - a third of the country's school-age children. The region is home to the highest number and the largest proportion of children living in poverty; it is also home to the capital city and the economic, financial, creative and media industries of Wales.

Historically the region has underperformed against schools elsewhere in Wales. Since 2012 it has seen a steep and sustained improvement in learner outcomes at every level and in every local authority area but there is further to go.

Our ambition as a region is that, by 2018:

- our learners achieve the best educational outcomes in Wales, rivalling similar parts of the United Kingdom;
- the poverty-related attainment gap is closing faster here than anywhere else in Wales;
- that the region is known and recognised for its high-quality school-led professional learning.

This document details what we plan to achieve in 2016/17 to help us realise that ambition.



## What the Consortium does – in brief:

The Consortium's role is to challenge and support schools in their work to improve educational outcomes.

The local authorities (through a Joint Committee attended by the Cabinet Member for education in each authority) agree the business plan including targets and budget for the region and hold the Consortium to account for the impact of its work.

The Consortium is funded by the local authorities.

There are over 400 schools in the Central South Consortium region. These are the key to the future educational and economic success of Wales.

How well children and young people, particularly the most vulnerable, achieve in this region significantly influences how the country and its education system are perceived within our borders and beyond.

### **The Consortium's business plan aims to:**

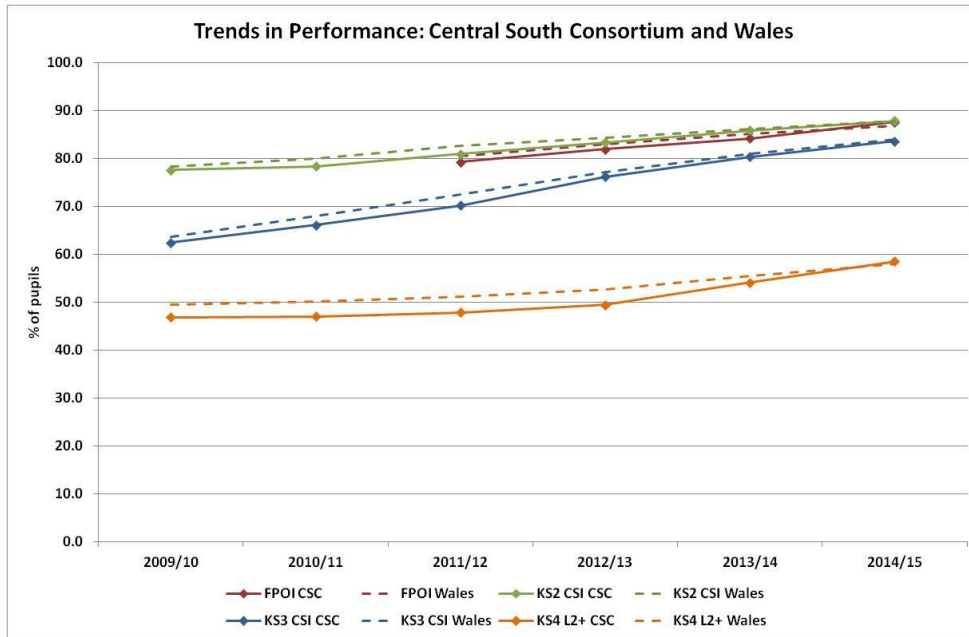
- improve standards for all children and young people in all schools, and for the most vulnerable fastest;
- improve capacity in the school system so that schools work together to support each other to improve;
- develop further the Central South Consortium as a high performing organisation.

### **To do this, the Consortium:**

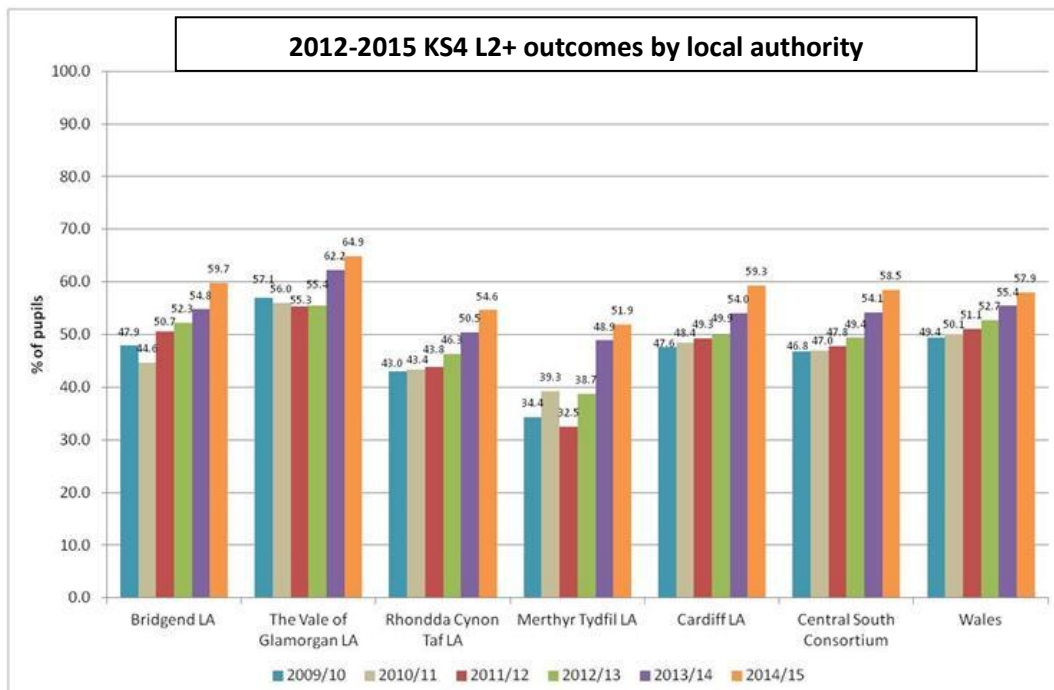
- provides a challenge adviser to each school in the region (with more time allocated to the schools most in need);
- provides timely data analyses to support schools' self evaluation and improvement planning (including school categorisation judgements);
- supports and funds school-to-school improvement partnerships. These enable schools to share good practice and learn from each other to improve teaching and leadership practice and improve outcomes for learners;
- works with the Welsh Government to deliver its priorities in the region;
- allocates grant funding (e.g. the pupil deprivation grant - PDG) to schools in the region along with guidance and advice on how grant funding can be used to drive improvement.

## Consistent upward trend of improvement

In 2015 pupils in schools across the Central South region again improved their outcomes significantly. The graph below shows a three-year consistent upward trend of improvement at rates faster than the national rates of improvement. This is particularly evident at the KS4 L2+ indicator (pupils achieving A\*- C grades at GCSE in five subjects including English/Welsh and mathematics).



This pattern of improvement is evident in the region as a whole and in each of its local authorities:



Inspections conducted by the schools' inspectorate, Estyn are also indicating improvement including in judgements on leadership and teaching, the outcomes of vulnerable children and the outcomes of children living in poverty.

**The region, previously amongst the lowest performing in Wales, now sits at or above the national average at every indicator for the first time.**

## Building a self-improving school system

We are moving increasingly from a school improvement model dependent on central support to a more sustainable by-schools-for-schools model which builds capacity for collective improvement across the system. This is a system where all schools care as much about the improvement of other schools as they do about their own. This strategy is built on what is known about successful school systems worldwide.

## Our model: The Central South Wales Challenge

In January 2014, backed by the five authorities and drawing on international research, schools across the region led the way in launching a strategy to develop a 'self-improving' school system. The strategy is based on six principles commonly found in successful school systems:

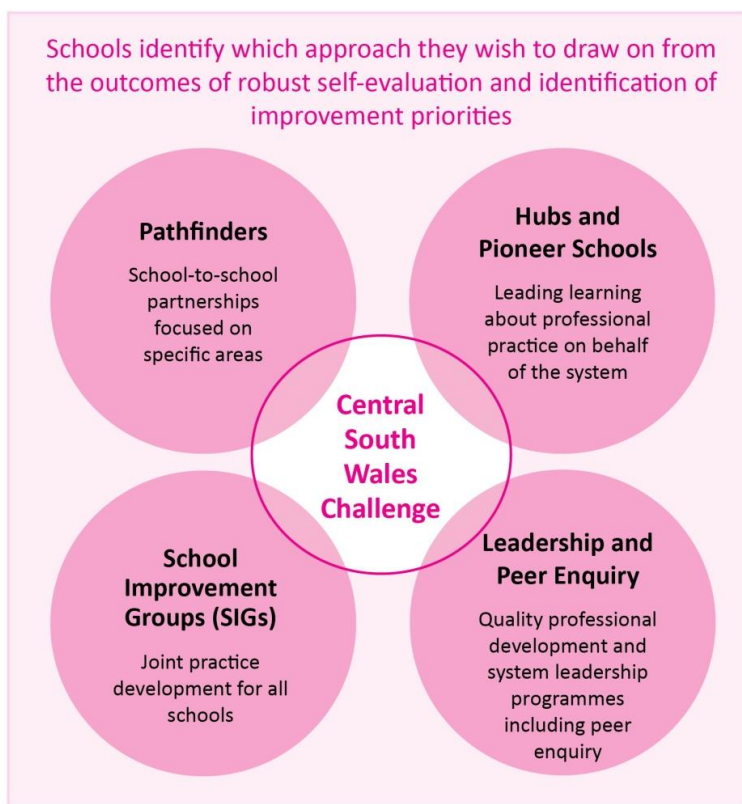
- **Schools are communities where collaborative enquiry is used to improve practice.**
- **Groupings of schools engage in joint practice development.**
- **Where necessary, more intensive partnerships are formed to support schools facing difficulties.**
- **Families and Community organisations support the work of schools and reinforce community aspiration.**
- **Coordination of the system is provided by school leaders themselves.**
- **Local authorities work together to act as the 'conscience' of the system.**

This work is led by the Central South Wales Strategy group. The strategy group is largely made up of headteachers but also draws on the expertise of universities and external experts in school-improvement.

Aspects of the model:

- **All schools are part of School Improvement Groups (SIGs) which determine improvement priorities and work together to secure progress on these.**
- **Pathfinder pairs. Brokered partnerships between two schools where one school supports another to improve. Improvement impact on both schools is measured.**
- **School improvement hubs provide professional learning and support to all schools in line with regional improvement priorities.**
- **Peer enquiry. Usually a grouping of three schools working together. Schools' leaders conduct an enquiry into an aspect of another school's practice *with* the leadership of the other school in order to identify areas of good practice and improvement.**

We have seen significant progress in engagement with, and understanding of, a self-improving school system based around a model which is now very familiar to schools and stakeholders across the region:



## Taking our strategy forward

There are a number of areas we need to develop further if we are to create a sustainable system of school improvement which can support our schools to be the best in Wales and beyond. These are:

- More explicit opportunities to build sustainable leadership capacity - offering the best headteachers the opportunity, and the incentives, to operate at a system leadership level; a system to spot and develop talent for future system leadership.
- Systematic, deeper professional learning opportunities at all levels of the system established as the norm for teachers across the region, ensuring a tight focus on impact and disciplined routes for sharing learning across schools.
- A drive towards harder forms of collaboration (including federations) to build leadership, teaching and learning capacity in the system and increase efficiency in the use of services by schools.
- Further progress towards ensuring effective consistent and timely challenge and intervention to drive change rapidly and robustly where it is most needed.
- Significant work with governors and local elected members to improve the wider understanding about the benefits of hard collaborative school systems.

## What will this look like for children, young people and their families?

- Children and young people achieve outcomes that are the highest performing in Wales at most levels in 2016/17.
- Schools show sustained improvement at all levels rivalling the best in the UK by 2018.
- Vulnerable children increasingly close the gap on their peers and do so faster than elsewhere in Wales, reducing the gap by a further third by 2018.
- Inspection outcomes show increased levels of excellence in teaching and leadership and in judgements on schools' capacity to improve;
- The region is recognised for the quality of its school-led professional learning and leadership and its work with the higher education sector and initial teacher training providers.
- There are wider partnerships involving business, the community and parents working with schools to reinforce aspiration.
- The region works with others to drive up standards and capacity for improving teaching and leadership as part of delivering the new *Successful Futures* curriculum.

## What will this look like for schools?

By 2018 we expect the school improvement system to be radically transformed. We want to see a system of school improvement explicitly led, organised and provided by schools.

A Central South Wales networked learning community run by schools for schools which includes:

- all schools as part of an accredited school improvement group (SIG) or network which sets priorities each year, provides most school improvement support and evidences impact in capacity and pupil attainment across schools.
- expert teachers working at subject level across and within the system from lead subject specialist schools providing subject level support to all schools focused on need.
- lead schools commissioned to develop professional learning programmes for all school staff including initial teacher training, with joint practice development the predominant learning model.
- all lead schools working as part of the *Successful Futures* development model building the new curriculum into their practice.
- all schools able to commission a formal peer enquiry from experienced trained peer enquirers (current headteachers) as part their self-evaluation and improvement planning.
- high quality leadership programmes for all heads, a future leaders programme and a 'system leadership' model identifying and funding experienced heads empowered to work swiftly and rapidly with vulnerable schools with clear priorities for improvement.



## What underpins the strategy for transformation?

- Governors and local Elected Members engaged in and sharing the principles of system level improvement as well as improvement in local school outcomes.
- Authorities working together to drive a rapid increase in the number of hard forms of collaboration (including federations) and develop learning about the variety of models for achieving economies of scale between schools.
- The consortium, on behalf of authorities, using the Challenge Framework to identify the needs of schools and quality assuring the support provided across the system. The consortium will refine its focus and reduce staffing to work only with the most vulnerable schools to support effective self-evaluation and improvement planning, intervening rapidly and robustly where needed.
- A strong emphasis on evaluation and research to support the strategy and inform the model and measure impact.

## Priorities for improvement in 2016/17

As we move towards the delivery of our vision in 2018, we continue to review the impact of our work in schools across the region. Our self-evaluation report (SER) provides analysis of strengths and improvement priorities for the region.

**In order to realise our ambition for 2018, we will focus on three improvement priorities in 2016/17:**

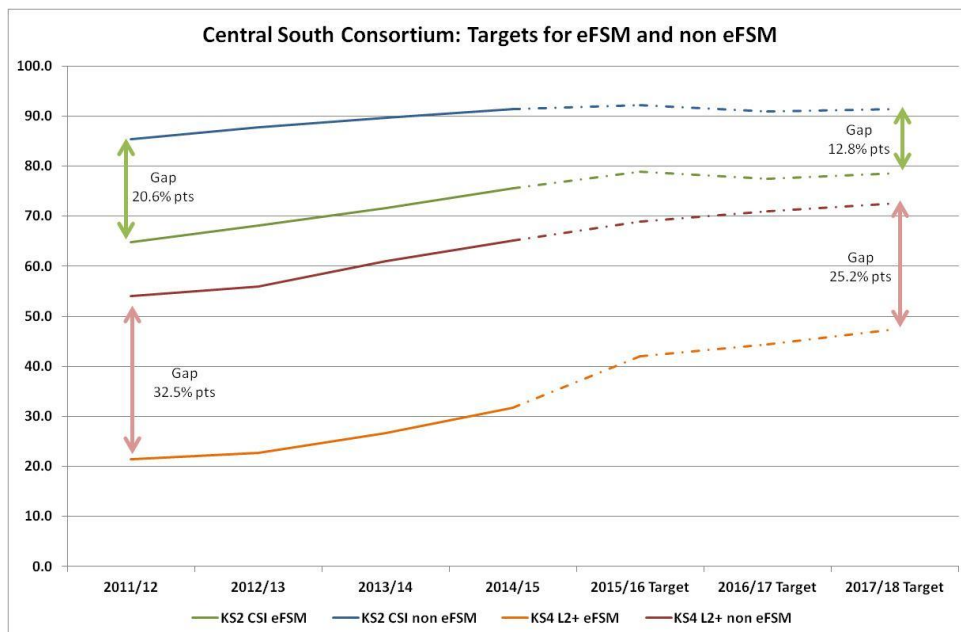
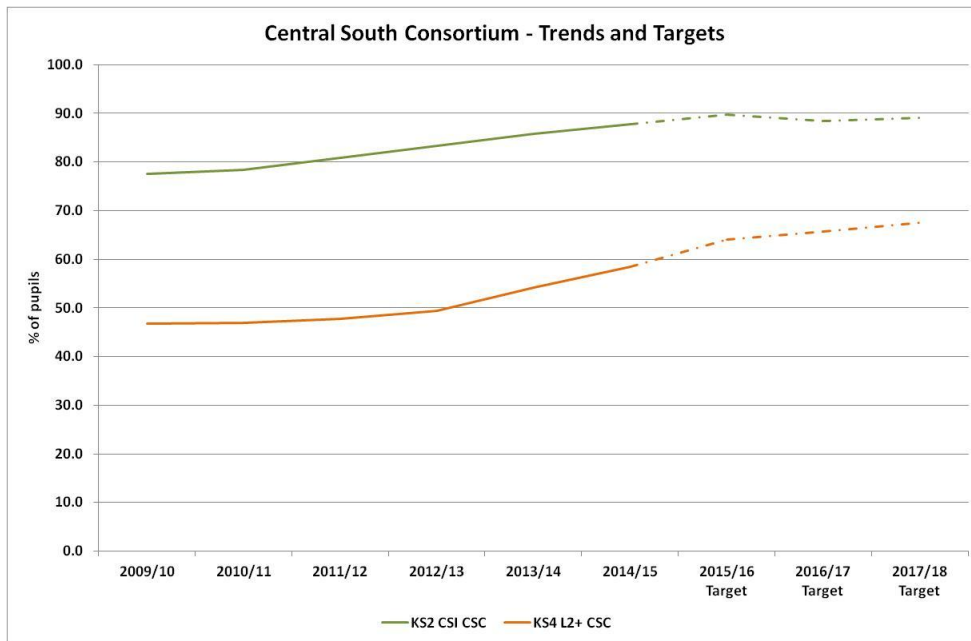
- **Raising standards particularly in literacy/Welsh/English, numeracy/mathematics and improving the outcomes of vulnerable learners fastest.**
- **Improving the capacity of the system to be self improving.**
- **Further developing the Central South Consortium to be a high performing organisation.**

## Targets for 2016/17

The success of our delivery plan is measured through our targets. These are based on schools' own targets incorporating benchmark measures and informed by additional challenge from the region's challenge adviser workforce.

**\* Targets as of 8<sup>th</sup> March 2016. Targets for 2016/17 and 2017/18 are provisional and are subject to further challenge as part of the target setting process with schools.**

### Performance Measures



Key Measure	2014/15 Actual	2015/16 Target	2016/17 Target	2017/18 Target
Foundation Phase – FPOI	87.6%	87.8%	87.4%	N/A
Key Stage 2 - CSI	87.8%	89.7%	88.4%	89.0%
Key Stage 3 - CSI	83.6%	87.4%	87.5%	83.5%
Level 2 Threshold including English/Welsh and Mathematics	58.5%	64.1%	65.7%	67.5%
Level 1 Threshold	94.5%	96.1%	96.5%	96.7%

#### Performance in English, Welsh First Language and Mathematics at the Expected Level

Key Measure	2014/15 Actual	2015/16 Target	2016/17 Target	2017/18 Target
FPOI – LCE	88.7%	89.4%	88.6%	-
FPOI – LCW	94.0%	93.7%	93.5%	-
FPOI – Mathematical Development	90.2%	91.2%	89.8%	-
KS2 – English	89.8%	90.9%	89.8%	89.2%
KS2 – Cymraeg	93.6%	95.7%	93.2%	93.8%
KS2 – Mathematics	90.2%	91.8%	90.7%	90.3%
KS3 – English	87.7%	90.2%	90.8%	91.2%
KS3 – Cymraeg	92.0%	92.4%	93.3%	95.1%
KS3 – Mathematics	88.7%	90.8%	91.2%	91.4%
KS4 Level 2 English	70.2%	71.6%	72.3%	73.1%
KS4 Level 2 Cymraeg	77.9%	78.4%	78.0%	77.6%
KS4 Level 2 Mathematics	63.6%	69.1%	71.5%	72.6%

#### Performance in English, Welsh First Language and Mathematics at the Expected Level +1

Key Measure	2014/15 Actual	2015/16 Target	2016/17 Target	2017/18 Target
FPOI – LCE	33.8%	36.3%	34.6%	-
FPOI – LCW	37.9%	41.2%	42.0%	-
FPOI – Mathematical Development	34.4%	36.7%	35.3%	-
KS2 – English	40.7%	42.2%	43.0%	41.4%
KS2 – Cymraeg	42.0%	43.7%	43.9%	42.7%
KS2 – Mathematics	42.2%	43.0%	43.5%	42.7%
KS3 – English	53.4%	59.2%	61.1%	62.8%
KS3 – Cymraeg	58.3%	64.3%	60.7%	70.3%
KS3 – Mathematics	59.6%	64.6%	65.9%	66.5%

**Performance in English, Welsh First Language and Mathematics at the Expected Level +2**

Key Measure	2014/15 Actual	2015/16 Target	2016/17 Target	2017/18 Target
KS3 – English	17.3%	19.3%	21.3%	23.1%
KS3 – Cymraeg	17.6%	18.5%	19.6%	23.4%
KS3 – Mathematics	26.6%	26.0%	27.0%	28.5%

**The poverty-related attainment gap**

Key Measure	2014/15 Actual	2015/16 Target	2016/17 Target	2017/18 Target
FSM Gap FP FPOI	-15.1%	-11.3%	-13.0%	
FSM Gap KS2 CSI	-15.8%	-13.3%	-13.5%	-12.8%
FSM Gap KS3 CSI	-20.7%	-17.2%	-15.6%	-12.3%
FSM Gap KS4 L2 inc EWM	-33.4%	-27.0%	-26.6%	-25.2%
FSM Gap KS4 L1 Threshold	-10.3%	-9.1%	-6.7%	-6.4%

**Primary and Secondary Attendance**

Key Measure	2014/15 Actual	2015/16 Target	2016/17 Target	2017/18 Target
Primary Attendance	95.0%	95.5%	95.7%	96.0%
Secondary Attendance	94.0%	94.5%	94.8%	95.0%

## Improvement priority ONE

To transform the outcomes of learners across the region so that schools in the region are the best performing in Wales and rival schools across the UK with a particular focus on:

1.1 Improving standards in literacy/English/Welsh and in numeracy and mathematics

1.2 Improving standards for specific groups of learners

Improvement objectives	What will we do in 2016/17
<b>1.1</b> <b>To raise standards in literacy/ English/ Welsh; numeracy and mathematics</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Raise standards for all learners (particularly boys' literacy and outcomes for girls and boys in mathematics), monitoring progress regularly against detailed targets set out in the underpinning action plans.</li> <li>• Improve the quality of teaching in these areas using support from the relevant hub school programmes; support schools leaders to meet the requirements of changes to the curriculum and external qualifications.</li> <li>• Provide professional development programmes to improve the impact of subject leadership through the curriculum hub schools.</li> <li>• Increase the supply of secondary mathematics teachers in the region through a dedicated recruitment drive.</li> </ul>
<b>1.2</b> <b>To improve the outcomes achieved by specific groups of learners</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build schools' capacity to improve the outcomes achieved by pupils eligible for free school meals (eFSM) through the regional Closing the Gap Strategy, promoting high expectations, sharing effective practice and monitoring progress against detailed targets in the underpinning action plans.</li> <li>• Improve the outcomes of pupils with English as an additional language (EAL), pupils with a special educational need (SEN) and more able and talented pupils (MAT) by identifying and sharing best practice and working with schools where the need for support is greatest.</li> <li>• Improve the outcomes achieved by Looked After Children (LAC ) by providing effective support for individual pupils and tracking their progress, by sharing best practice and developing the skills of all those providing support for these learners.</li> </ul>

## Improvement Priority TWO

To achieve improvement by further developing the capacity of the school system to be self-improving through the Central South Wales Challenge, in particular by:

- 2.1 Improving the quality of leadership and governance
- 2.2 Improving the quality of teaching and learning
- 2.3 Raising expectations further in a self-improving system

Improvement objectives	What we will do in 2016/17
<b>2.1</b> <b>To improve the quality of leadership and governance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish a leadership strategy which reflects the needs of the region with a particular focus on closing the poverty-related attainment gap.</li> <li>• Deliver, accredit and evaluate the leadership programmes and commission a Future Leaders programme.</li> <li>• Develop a strategic approach with local authorities to learn from and support the expansion of hard collaborative models of school leadership and organisation.</li> <li>• Use joint practice development and collaboration between schools – accredited school improvement groups (SIGs) and pathfinder partnerships – to improve system leadership at all levels including sector-led strategies in Welsh medium and special schools to address sector-specific priorities.</li> <li>• Improve the quality of governance through the establishment of a single governor training service and deployment of consultant governors.</li> <li>• Improve support for headteachers from Human Resources (HR) Services.</li> </ul>
<b>2.2</b> <b>To improve the quality of learning and teaching</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support the development of good and excellent teaching and share effective practice across the region through the regional hub schools.</li> <li>• Develop a continuum of professional learning pathways for all school-based staff – headteachers, senior leaders, teachers and support staff – through hub schools linked to the New Deal Pioneer schools,.</li> <li>• Continue work with Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to provide classroom-based initial teacher training.</li> <li>• Develop learning and teaching at subject level in line with regional needs, working to the regional teaching and learning strategy.</li> </ul>
<b>2.3</b> <b>To raise expectations further in a self-improving system</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop further the provision of high quality and timely school and pupil level data.</li> <li>• Strengthen challenge and support of teacher assessment to promote greater accuracy and consistency.</li> <li>• Develop further the work of challenge advisers in challenging and supporting schools to raise standards and reduce the variations in outcomes, particularly in the secondary sector, concentrating resources increasingly on the most vulnerable schools.</li> <li>• Promote high expectations and improve performance across the region post-sixteen.</li> <li>• Promote high expectations and secure further improvement in attendance rates</li> </ul>

## Improvement Priority THREE:

To develop as a high performing organisation, by:

- 3.1 Improving performance management
- 3.2 Reviewing and sharpening governance and accountability
- 3.3 Evidencing effective use of resources.

Improvement objectives	What we will do in 2016/17
<b>3.1</b> <b>To improve performance management</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve procedures to evaluate the impact of school-to-school working on standards, teaching and leadership and systems to monitor progress against operational plans.</li> <li>• Strengthen performance management through the development of an evaluation and research programme.</li> <li>• Procure a new IT information management system.</li> <li>• Develop further procedures for individuals' performance management.</li> <li>• Embed processes for assuring quality and evaluating teaching and leadership in written reports.</li> </ul>
<b>3.2</b> <b>To strengthen governance and accountability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with local authorities to improve further the reporting to scrutiny committees and the sharing of effective practice between committees to promote consistency.</li> <li>• Strengthen further the arrangements for governance and accountability through the Joint Committee and Advisory Board.</li> <li>• Continue work to identify and report the effect of measures to mitigate risk.</li> </ul>
<b>3.3</b> <b>To strengthen further the management of resources and improve efficiency</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to develop arrangements for monitoring the use and impact of financial resources against regional priorities.</li> <li>• Maintain a systematic focus on value for money that demonstrates the link between the deployment of resources and the impact on outcomes.</li> </ul>

## Accountability for impact

This business plan is underpinned by more detailed plans against each improvement priority which include measurable outcomes and milestones. We evaluate progress against each area monthly at our Senior Leadership Team (SLT) meetings and at Joint Committee meetings which provide termly monitoring and challenge against the agreed targets and milestones.

In addition we:

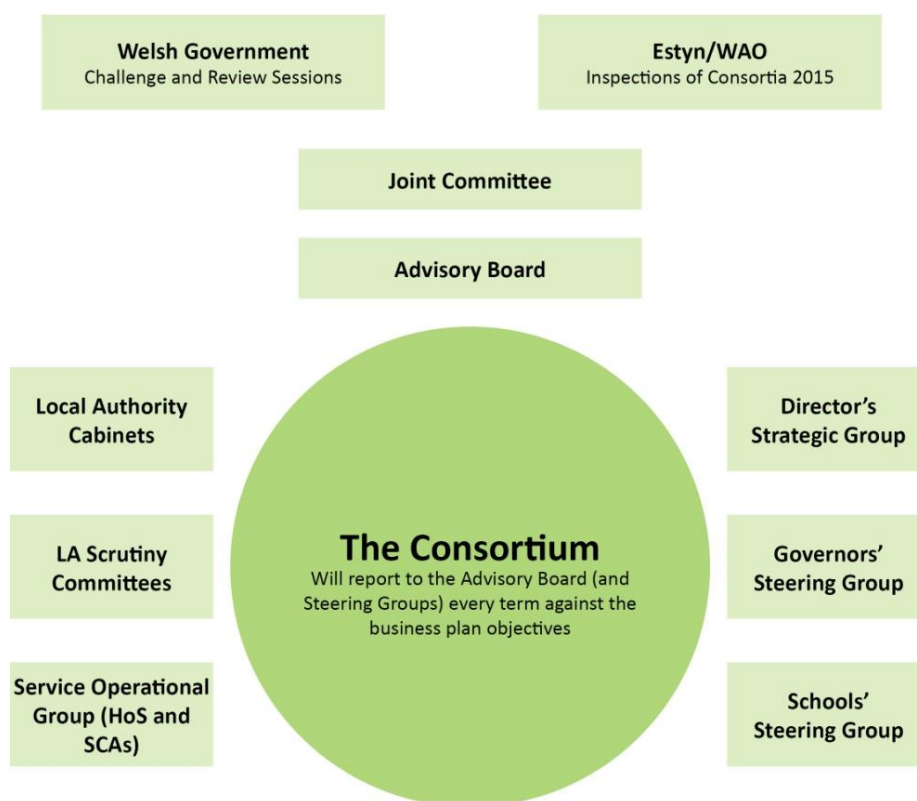
- Provide a self-evaluation report (SER) to the Joint Committee each year and at least one performance report to local authority scrutiny committees every year.
- Support the Advisory Board's role in leading our research and evaluation strategy, collating live in-year data evaluating activity.
- Monitor progress against a performance dashboard on a monthly basis. This includes monitoring against agreed action plans, in-year data collection and the results of school inspections.
- Review the performance of red and amber schools termly with local authorities and provide a termly progress report to each authority ahead of a formal minuted progress review.
- Report regularly on progress to the Welsh Government's Challenge and Review sessions.

## Local authority annexes

This business plan describes our core business which has been agreed with the five authorities and which will be resourced according to need as set out in our framework of Challenge and Support. Alongside this business plan we produce annual Local Authority (LA) Annexes which set out the support or dedicated work required in each LA which will be funded, led or resourced by the Consortium. This is agreed during the summer progress review process and reviewed following the confirmed examination results in the early autumn term. We produce LA progress reports to report progress against the agreed actions in the annexes.



## Governance



Our governance model:

- The Joint Committee agrees the strategy and business plan, agrees and monitors the budget and performance.
- Directors of Education meet monthly and have a strategic decision making role.
- The Advisory Board reviews aspects of the model in line with a rolling programme of research, evaluation and value for money reports commissioned to look at the impact of discrete aspects of the region's improvement model.
- We report to each authority's Scrutiny Committee at least annually as part of an agreed scrutiny plan.
- Our SLT meets fortnightly with an alternate focus on operational performance and strategy.
- Our Operational Board includes senior challenge advisers, strategic advisers and heads of service from each local authority. It looks at operational activity for the coming period. It meets monthly.

## Resources

Our revenue assumptions incorporate a 5% efficiency saving each year of the next two years which may be used to recycle resources into bringing together regional services.

The budget for the organisation for 2016/2017 is outlined below. Local Authorities' contributions have been reduced by 5% from 2015/2016 levels. The actual apportionment by local authorities is based on the appropriate Indicator Based Assessments (IBAs) published by Welsh Government as part of the 2015/2016 revenue budget settlement.

Category	Proposed Budget 2016 – 2017 £
<b>Expenditure</b>	
<b>Employees (including secondments and school led capacity building)</b>	3,582,396
<b>Premises</b>	550,744
<b>Transport</b>	40,000
<b>Supplies and Services</b>	515,618
<b>Repayment of Redundancy Costs</b>	100,000
<b>Commissioning (Additional Support to Schools)</b>	43,804
<b>Support Services</b>	111,100
<b>GROSS EXPENDITURE</b>	4,943,662

Income	Proposed Budget 2016 – 2017 £
<b>LA Contributions</b>	4,195,662
<b>Ty Dysgu Income</b>	400,000
<b>Grants &amp; Other income</b>	348,000
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	4,943,662
<b>NET EXPENDITURE</b>	0
<i>Budget to be confirmed at Joint Committee March 2016</i>	

## Education Improvement Grant

### Delegation Principles

In agreement with the five local authorities, the consortium applies the following principles:

- There will be an increase in the percentage of funds delegated to schools.
- The Consortium will continue to apply a protection mechanism (on a sliding scale) to all schools to prevent significant winners and losers.

### Centrally Retained Funding

Retention of the Education Improvement Grant (EIG) by the Consortium and local authorities continues to reduce. However, there is still a need to provide some time-limited support from the consortium and local authorities in certain areas.

Examples of this include:

- provision of resource to support the drive towards a school-led, self improving system;
- provision of specific support for vulnerable schools and for the development of a headship development as a strategic priority;
- provision of high quality literacy and numeracy support on a match funded basis to vulnerable schools.

### Delegation to Local Authorities

Funding will be released to some of the local authorities to fund the Foundation Phase non-maintained settings and contribute to funding the administration support in authorities.

### Delegation to Schools via local authorities for specific circumstances

Funding associated with the Minority Ethnic Achievement Grant (MEAG) and to meet the needs of the Gypsy/Traveller pupils will be delegated to the local authorities.

### Delegation to Schools

The balance will be delegated to schools as a single grant in line with a formula agreed with the local authorities. An allocation for the administration of the reading and numeracy tests will be included. The consortium has applied a protection mechanism (on a sliding scale) to all schools to prevent significant winners and losers. This will be removed from 2017-18.

### Grant Assumptions

We will seek to increase our delegation to schools which last year reached 86% and will provide brief monitoring reports to the Welsh Government against grant terms and conditions.

Education Improvement Grant	Proposed Budget 2016 – 2017 £
<b>Centrally retained funding including literacy and numeracy support, Welsh in Education and Foundation Phase provision</b>	<b>2,472,946</b>
<b>Funding held to support vulnerable schools</b>	<b>400,000</b>
<b>School Improvement Groups</b>	<b>618,150</b>
<b>Funding for specific School Improvement Initiatives (according to need)</b>	<b>901,800</b>
<b>Delegated to local authorities for non maintained settings</b>	<b>225,720</b>
<b>Delegated to local authorities for administration of grant</b>	<b>69,079</b>
<b><i>Delegated to schools via local authorities for specific circumstances – MEAG, Gypsy and Traveller Grant and 14-19</i></b>	<b>5,204,756</b>
<b><i>Delegated to Schools</i></b>	<b>34,550,936</b>
<b>Total Grant (to be confirmed)</b>	<b>44,443,387</b>

### Pupil Deprivation Grant

The total amount of the Pupil Deprivation Grant for the Region is £26,438,500 (indicative). In line with our key priorities, schools will be required to complete their school development plan highlighting the use of the Pupil Deprivation Grant. Challenge advisors will work with schools to ensure that schools are adopting an evidence based approach to reducing the impact of poverty on educational achievement.

### Additional Grants

Additional grant funding will be allocated to the consortium in 2016 -2017 such as Schools Challenge Cymru, Pioneer School funding, Learning in Digital Wales, but these are yet to be confirmed.