

Improving schools



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Codi Safonau Ysgolion
Raising School Standards

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Improving schools

- Audience** This document is aimed at leaders throughout the education system within Wales, from schools, governing bodies and school staff unions to local authorities, diocesan authorities and regional consortia, through to government and national partners.
- Overview** The document is focused on the schools element of the education system. It sets out plans for improving the education system in Wales incorporating commitments made within the 'Teaching makes a difference' speech presented by the Minister for Education and Skills in February 2011 and the Schools Effectiveness Framework. The plan identifies the roles of all partners in the process of reform.
- Action required** None – for information only.
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- Additional copies** This document can be accessed from the Welsh Government's website at www.wales.gov.uk/educationandskills



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Ministerial foreword

A good education is critical to better life chances and a commitment to achieving this has been an important part of the culture of modern Wales since devolution. Progress has been made in improving examination results at GCSE and A level and ensuring fewer young people leave school without a qualification, but there is still more to do to create an education system that is at least good for all learners. The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) in 2009 was a wake-up call to an education system in Wales that had become complacent, falling short of being consistently good and not delivering the outcomes our learners deserved. GCSE results had not kept up with other parts of the UK and Estyn inspections revealed standards were not as good as they should be in nearly a third of maintained schools. It was time to face up to the harsh truth: the education system in Wales needed reforming. My speech 'Teaching makes a difference' on 2 February 2011 set out these reforms. I stated that by 2015 I wanted Wales to be among the 20 top performing countries in PISA on reading.



We are reforming the system to achieve the three priorities of improving levels of literacy, numeracy and reducing the impact of deprivation on these. Eighteen months on and implementation of some of the reforms is well underway and having an impact. For others, further policy development or legislative work is necessary. I felt the timing was right to pause and set out the course of reform through to 2015 via this implementation plan. The plan details the 'how' and 'when' of implementing the reforms. It is focused on the schools part of our education system: reform of two other critical parts, early years and post-16 via the new Youth Engagement and Progression Framework, will be covered elsewhere.

The plan is written for leaders throughout the system from schools, through local authorities and regional consortia, to government and national partners. A short version of the plan will be published for parents/carers as well as for children and young people. Setting this course will give clarity, provide an overview of all the reforms and set clear expectations. This does not mean that the plan becomes rigid and constraining: the plan will be kept alive and refreshed as we learn lessons from implementation along the way. We will provide updates on progress and changes to the plan via my speeches, national events and further publications. This plan will become the measure for all our performance.

The plan sets the way forward, incorporating within it both my 'Teaching makes a difference' speech and the School Effectiveness Framework. The introduction sets the scene for improvement and the plan starts at Section 1 with a focus on learning and teaching in schools at the heart of the reforms. Section 2 addresses school leadership and its importance

in setting high expectations for all learners and reinforcing the focus on learning and teaching. Section 3 sets out how the system as a whole should support and challenge schools to improve via collective capacity building. Finally, Section 4 clarifies the roles and responsibilities for implementation.

We have set an ambitious reform agenda and it requires everyone in the system to engage in it. If we all play our part, we can ensure that every learner gets the education they deserve, that all learners make the progress that they should and achieve their aspirations.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Leighton Andrews". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

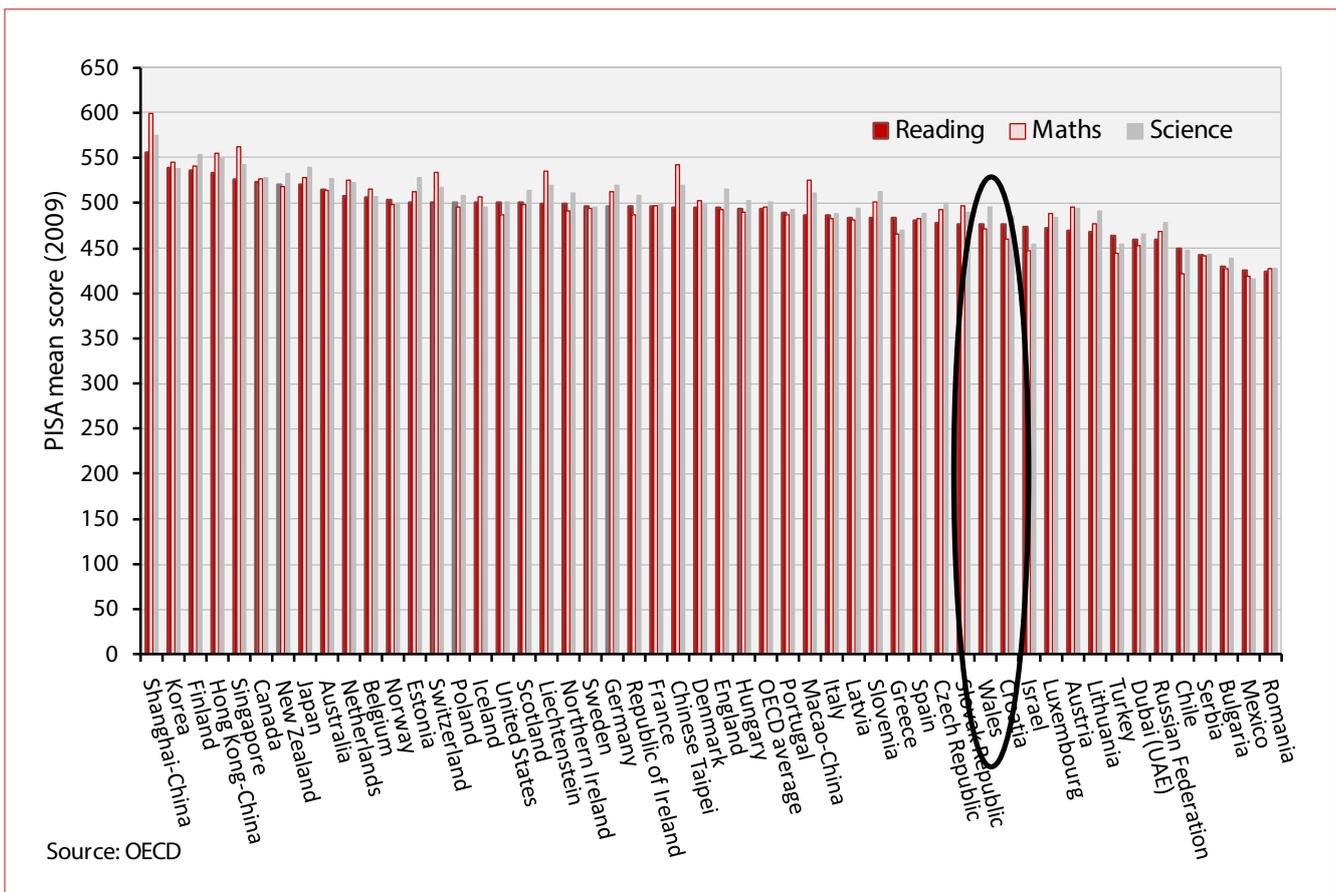
Leighton Andrews AM
Minister for Education and Skills

Introduction

How are we doing internationally?

Progress in Wales alongside other countries is measured by PISA, a worldwide study for evaluating education systems and used by governments to inform policy. Figure 1 shows the 2009 results. These were lower than in 2006 for Wales, lower than the three other UK countries, and Wales dropped down the ranking of countries. In particular, mathematics saw the fifth largest fall across countries. Compared to others, Wales had fewer higher achievers on reading scores and almost none on mathematics. Wales showed relatively low between-school and high within-school variation: consistency within schools was a bigger issue than between them. Less than 10 per cent of the variation between and within schools was explained by socio-economic factors: school-related factors had the greater influence on results.

Figure 1: Performance in reading, mathematics and science by country (2009)



How are we doing nationally?

Progress against the three priority outcomes of improving levels of literacy, numeracy and reducing the impact of deprivation on these levels, is currently measured against learners reaching expected levels of attainment linked to their age. Figure 2 shows that five per cent more learners overall in 2011 reached expected levels of attainment than in 2008 in primary schools and six per cent more learners in secondary schools. This means that four in five (80 per cent) learners by the end of primary school and half of learners by the end of secondary school currently attain the expected levels. At the end of primary school, nearly one in five learners (19.6 per cent) was assessed in Welsh first language, with 82 per cent gaining the expected level. In secondary school, 15 per cent of entries were assessed in Welsh first language, with 73 per cent of learners achieving the expected level (A* to C grade).

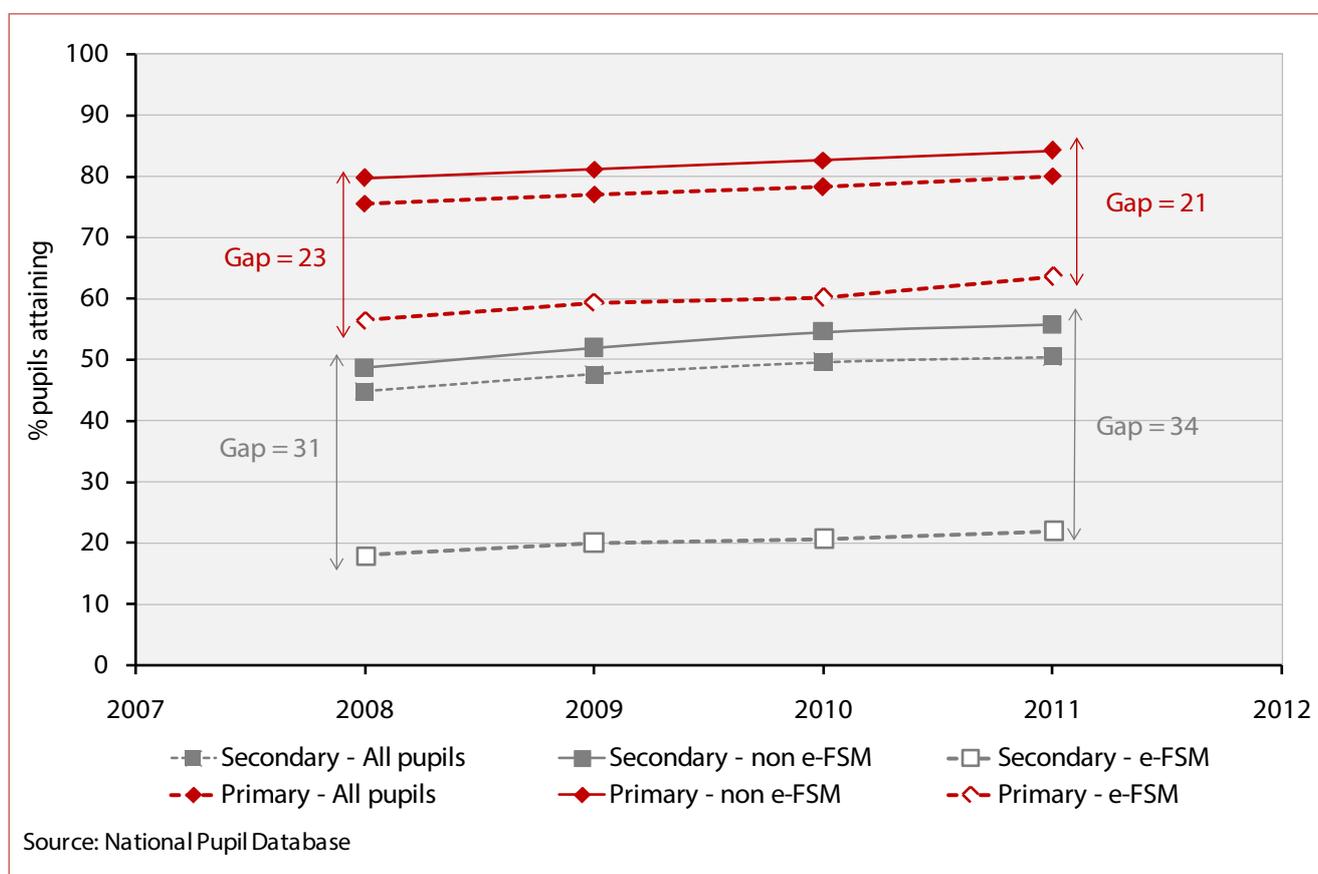
Overall the progress of learners eligible for free school meals (e-FSM) does not compare well with their peers. In primary schools, seven per cent more e-FSM learners now attain the expected level than in 2008 compared to five per cent for their peers. This means that the 'gap' in attainment between learners' e-FSM and their peers has narrowed. In secondary schools, three per cent more e-FSM learners now attain the expected level than in 2008 compared to seven per cent for their peers. This means that the 'gap' in secondary schools has widened. Some important trends underpin the national measures.

- In primary schools, English/Welsh is weaker than mathematics and within English/Welsh, writing is weaker than reading and oracy, especially for boys.
- In secondary schools, mathematics is weaker than English/Welsh.
- There are 'gaps' in performance between learner groups such as looked after children compared to all learners: 10 per cent attain the expected level in secondary school compared to 50 per cent for all learners.

Figure 2: Primary and secondary school performance in Wales since 2008

Expected levels of attainment for primary and secondary schools

- Primary – % Year 6 learners attaining at least Level 4 in the core subjects of English/Welsh, mathematics and science and the breakdown by learners eligible for free school meals (e-FSM) and their non-eligible peers.
- Secondary – % Year 11 learners attaining Level 2 including English/Welsh and mathematics and the breakdown of this by e-FSM learners and their non-eligible peers.



How are we doing across our regions?

Figure 3 shows that in 2011, primary and secondary school performance ranged between 73 to 85 per cent and 35 to 58 per cent, respectively, across local authorities. Two regions, North and South West and Mid, and the majority of authorities within them, are above the Wales average. The reverse is the case for the South East and Central South. Progress since 2008 has been greatest in South West and Mid for primary schools and the North for secondary schools.

Figure 3: Overall performance by local authority and region in 2011

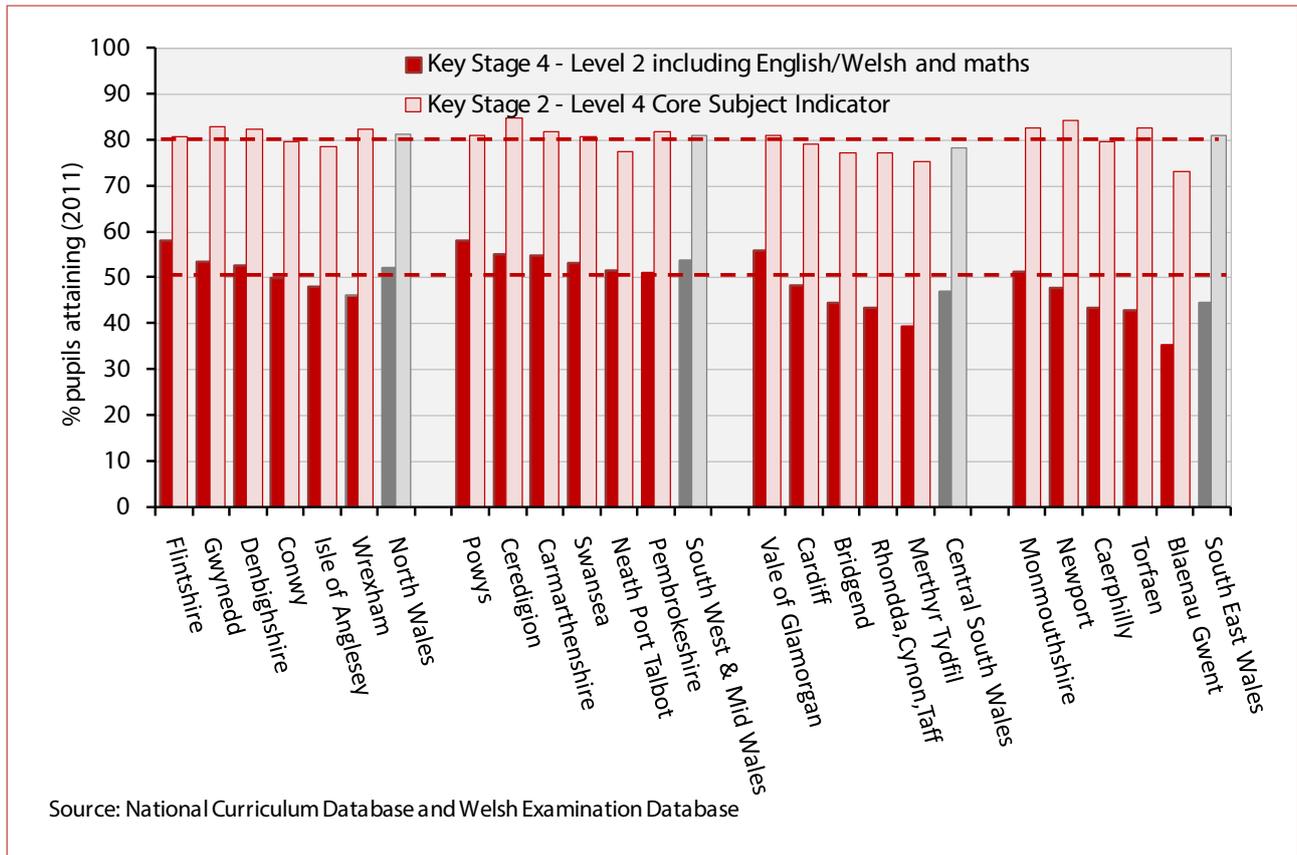
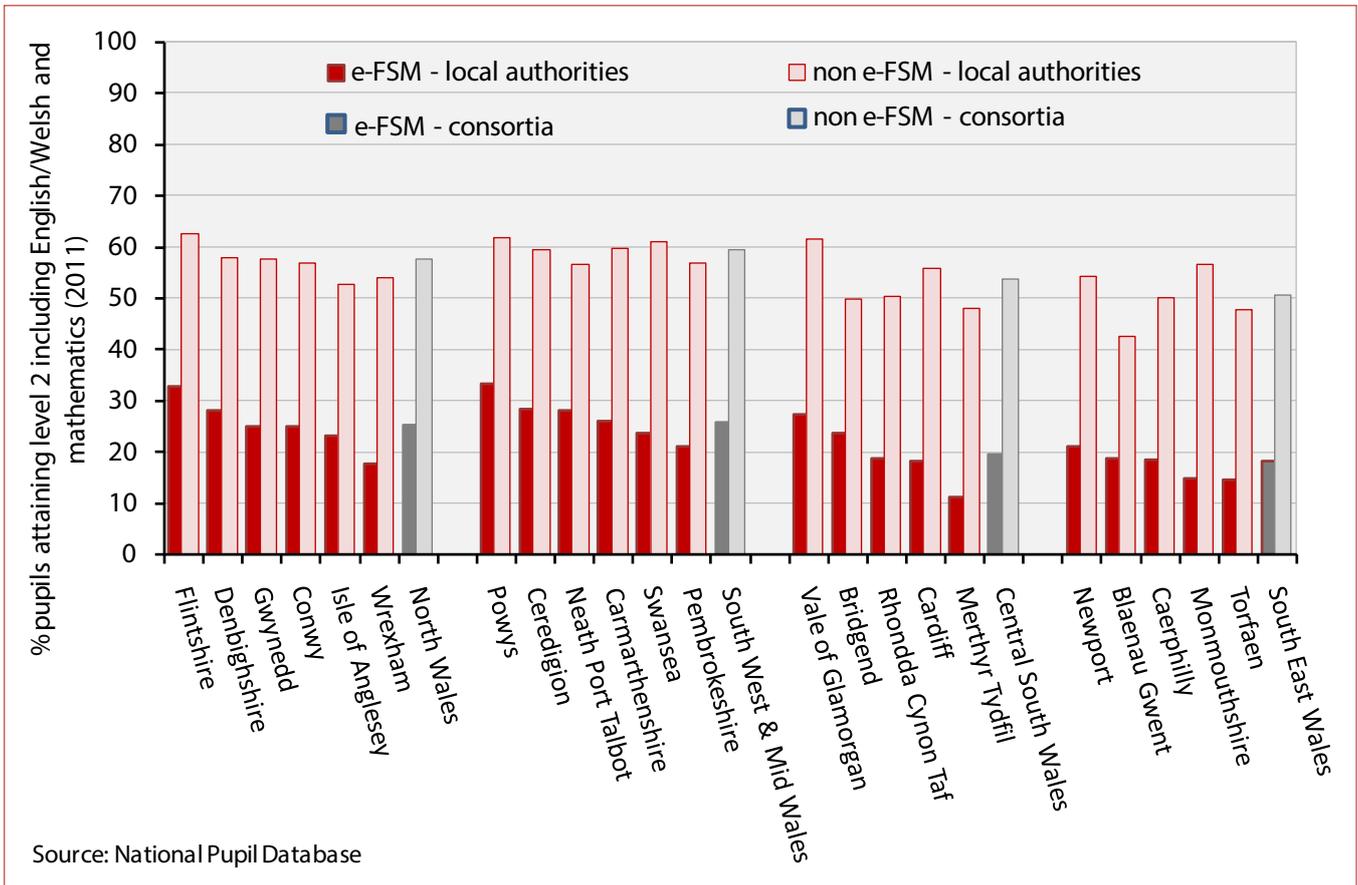


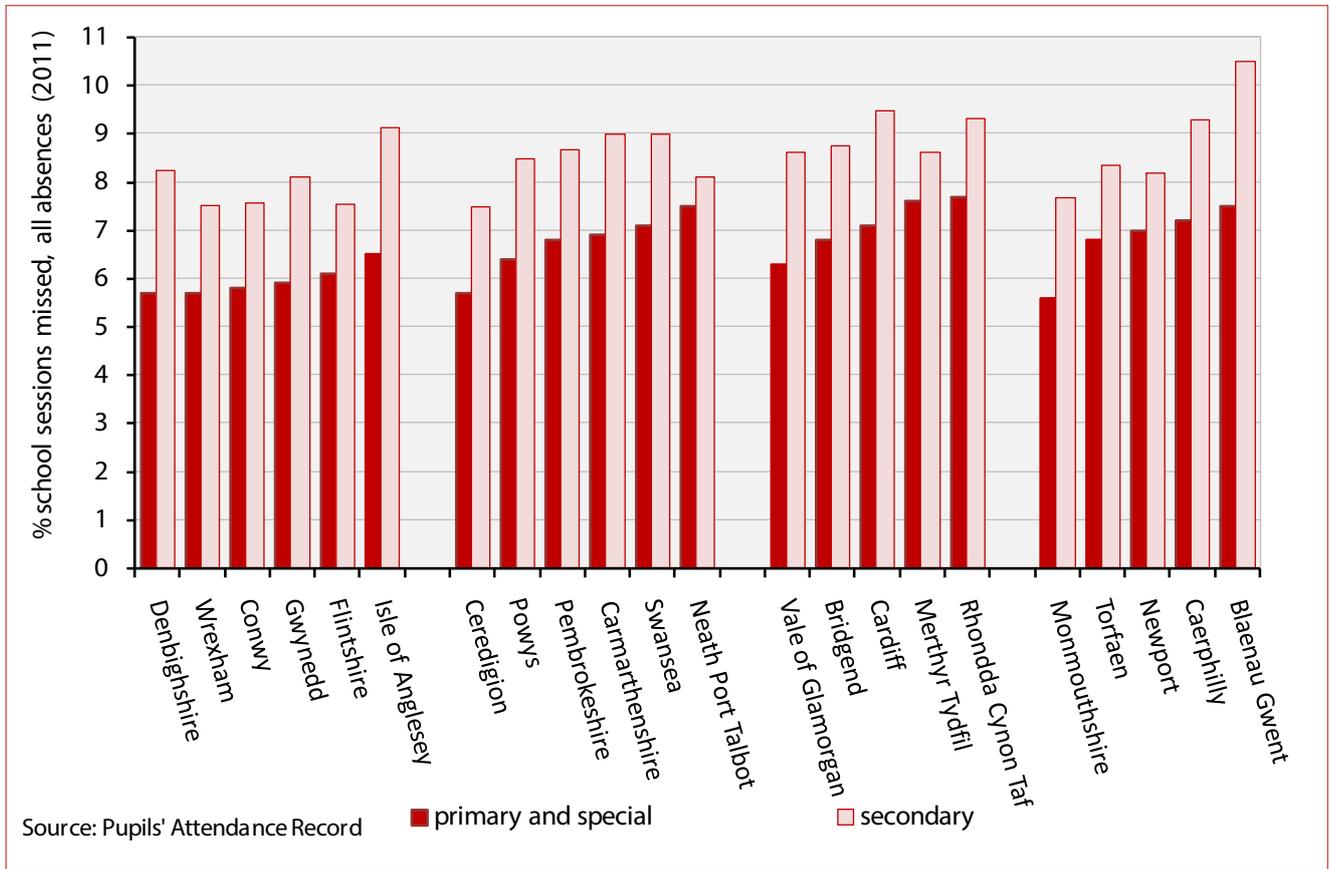
Figure 4 shows that the performance of e-FSM learners at secondary school in 2011 ranged from 11 to 33 per cent across local authorities. This compares to a range of 43 to 63 per cent of their peers. The gap between the attainment of e-FSM learners and their peers (the difference between the light and dark bars) ranges between 24 and 42 per cent across local authorities. At regional consortium level, this gap is less variable ranging between 32 and 34 per cent but, this gap masks the performance in absolute terms of e-FSM learners who are doing better in the North and South West and Mid regions (where more than 25 per cent attain) than in the South East and Central South (where less than 20 per cent attain).

Figure 4: e-FSM performance by local authority and region in 2011



Attendance at school is obviously an important foundation for improving attainment. Figure 5 shows the overall absence rates in primary and special schools (dark bars) and in secondary schools (lighter bars). Across local authorities, these rates range from 5.6 to 7.7 per cent and from 7.5 to 10.6 per cent in primary and secondary schools, respectively.

Figure 5: Absence in schools by local authority (2011)

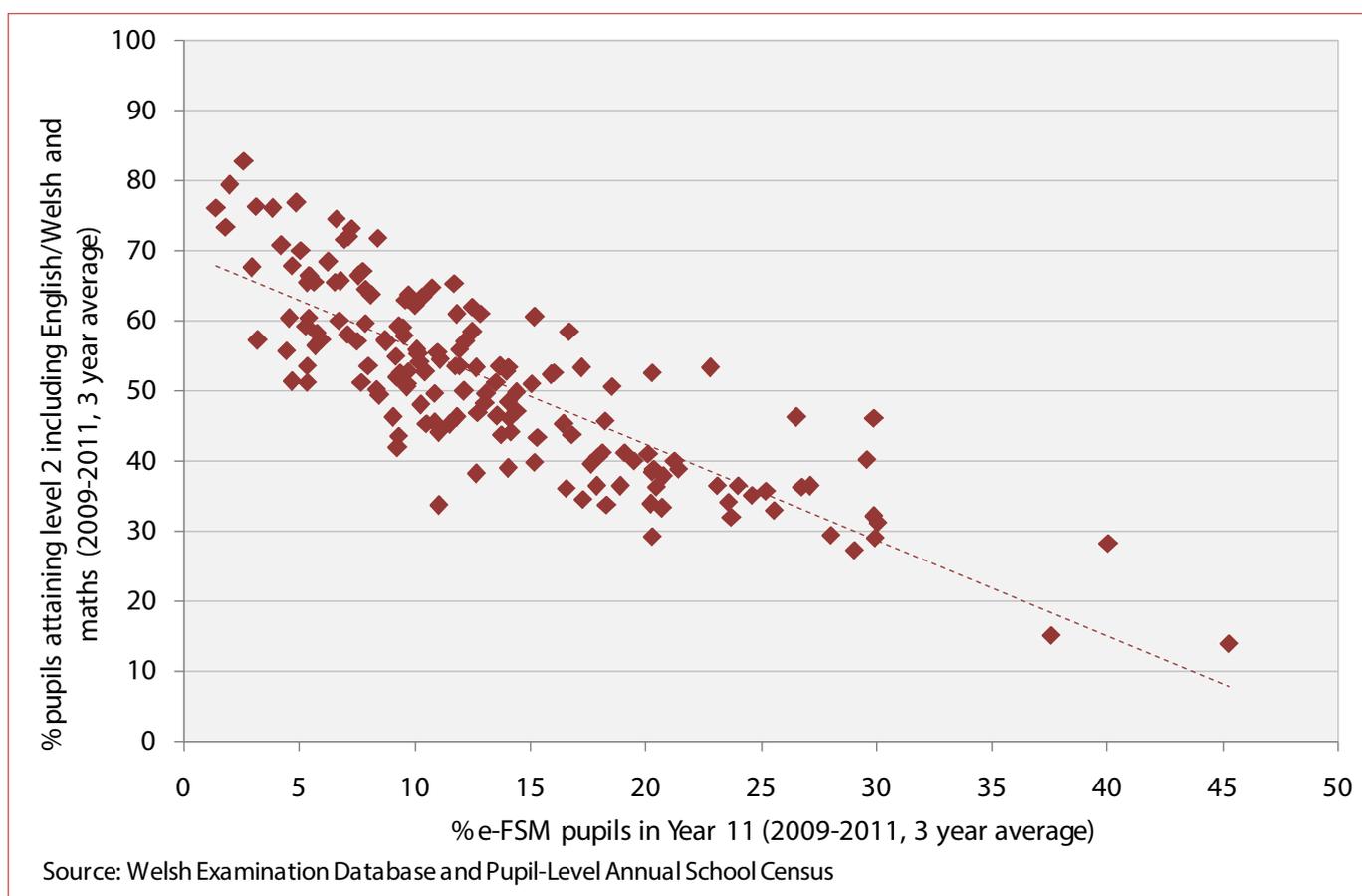


How are we doing across our schools?

Figure 6 shows that the percentage of Year 11 learners attaining the expected level at secondary school typically decreases as the proportion of e-FSM learners in the school increases (when looking left to right across the chart). Schools with less than five percent e-FSM learners typically have over 70 per cent of their learners attaining the expected level. For schools with more than 30 per cent e-FSM learners, the percentage of learners attaining this level is below 40 per cent. For any given percentage of e-FSM learners, performance varies between schools (looking up and down the chart). For example, the performance of schools with 15 per cent e-FSM learners ranges from 40 per cent to 60 per cent: that is, schools with similar levels of challenge can have differences of up to 20 percentage points in learners attaining the expected level. The equivalent analysis for primary schools shows a similar pattern, albeit not as strong, with the percentage of Year 6 learners attaining the expected level typically decreasing as the proportion of e-FSM learners in the school increases.

Under the new common inspection framework, Estyn inspected 238 primary schools in 2010–2011 and found 80 per cent had at least good overall performance and 75 per cent had good overall prospects. In secondary schools, 31 were inspected with 65 per cent found to have at least good overall performance and 84 per cent with at least good overall prospects. Notwithstanding these outcomes, 44 per cent of the schools inspected required some form of follow-up intervention or monitoring either by Estyn or the local authority.

Figure 6: Performance by secondary school (2009–2011 average)



Main points from the evidence

The analysis underpins the focus on the three priorities of literacy, numeracy and breaking the link between deprivation and educational outcomes, and highlights performance challenges:

- in writing, especially for boys, in primary schools
- in English/Welsh and especially mathematics in secondary schools
- for all e-FSM learners in all schools
- in the South and South East regions
- in ensuring programme for all learners, both lower and higher achievers
- in reducing within-schools as well as between-school variation.

Summary

The three priorities for improving educational outcomes for learners in Wales are to: improve literacy, improve numeracy and reduce the impact of deprivation on educational outcomes. Success against these priorities and this implementation plan will be measured by the proportion of 15-year-olds, regardless of whether they are e-FSM, who leave secondary school with Level 2 including English/Welsh and mathematics. Figure 7 shows data up to 2012, against the ambition to get to 65 per cent by 2015. To achieve our aim to be in the top 20 countries in PISA on reading by 2015 means aiming for this 65 per cent ambition and learners achieving the highest possible grades. Figure 7 shows a shortfall against this ambition and the reforms in this plan are intended to bridge the 'gap'. It will take the efforts of everyone in the system to help achieve this.

Figure 7: Secondary school performance up to 2012

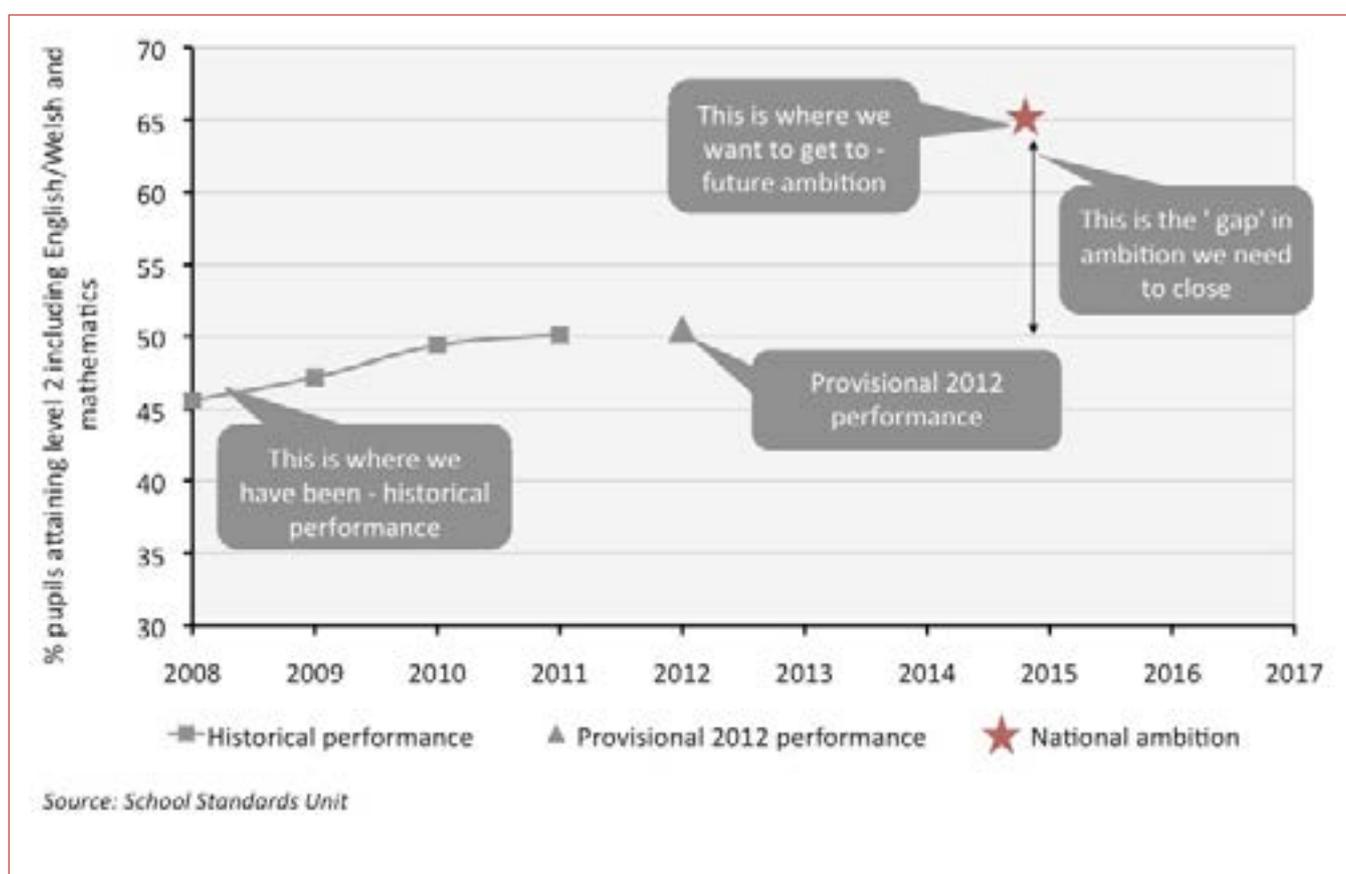


Figure 8 sets out the approach to reforming the school system, starting with the teacher, being the single most important factor in determining how much is learnt in the classroom. There are three main areas of priority **for improving the quality of learning and teaching**.

- **Improving the quality of teaching in literacy and numeracy** – the National Literacy and Numeracy Programmes will set high expectations for what teachers and support staff should know, be able to do and what learners should learn in the core subjects. They will help make every teacher a teacher of literacy and numeracy. The investment in ICT will further support the sharing of good practice and innovation.
- **Supporting teacher professional development** – we will improve the quality of future teachers entering the profession through changes to teacher induction and a new Masters in Educational Practice (MEP) qualification. New training and practice development opportunities will support teachers and support staff to progress throughout their careers.
- **Strengthening our approaches to inclusion and safeguarding** – we will support vulnerable learners, learners from deprived backgrounds and those with additional needs so that all learners achieve their potential. These programmes will also have a particular focus on improving behaviour and attendance.

The focus on learning and teaching is reinforced through **effective leadership at all levels in schools** (the middle oval). Effective leadership at all levels in schools is essential to ensure that learning and teaching is of a consistently high quality and that the reforms in this plan are implemented successfully. Excellent leadership in schools requires a focus on priorities; setting high expectations for all learners; creating the right culture for improvement; communicating the vision and successes along the way; and building capacity and maintaining the focus on improving the quality of learning and teaching. To build leadership capacity across the system, this plan sets out three key priorities for improvement.

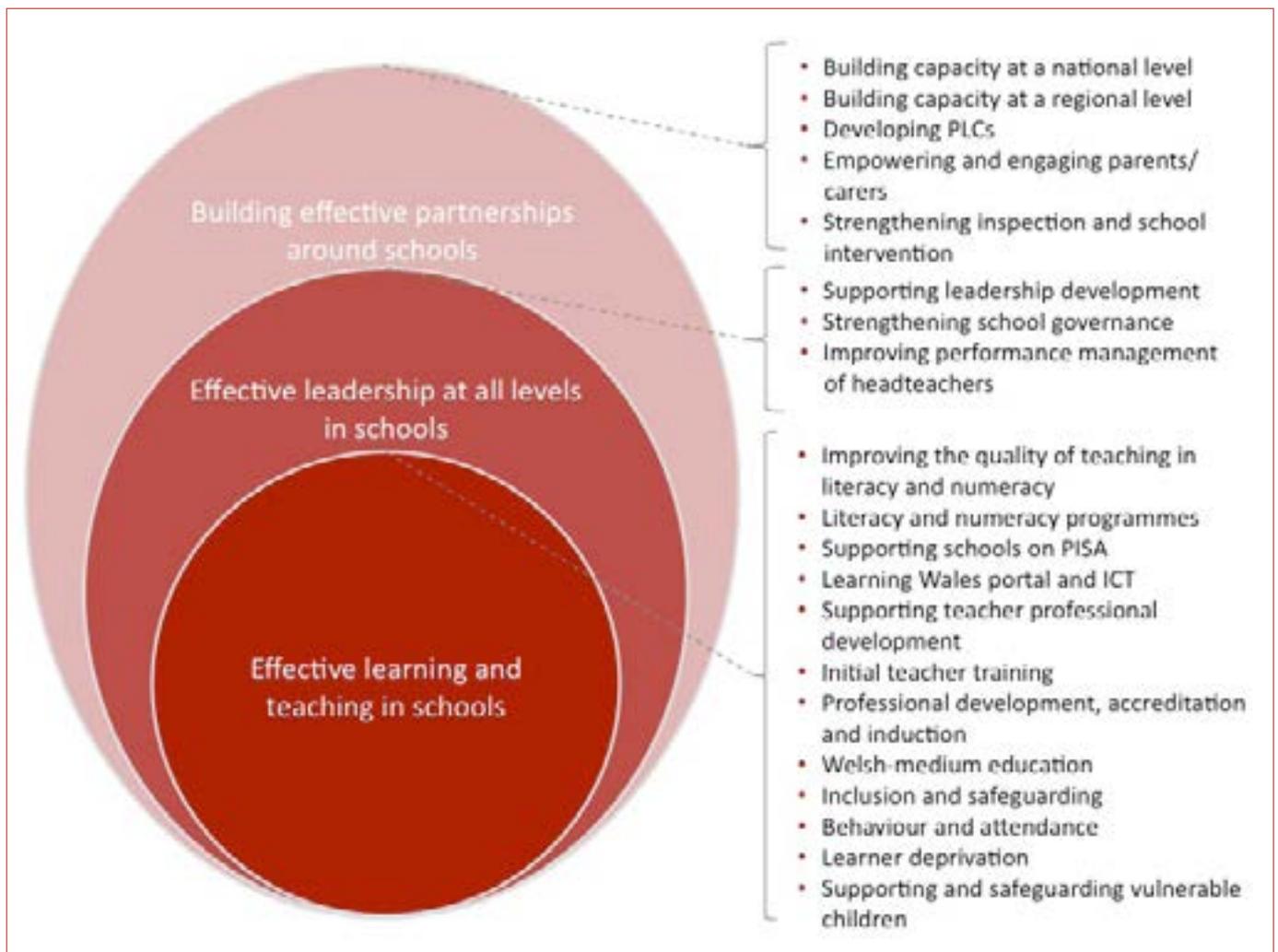
- **Supporting leadership development** – we will provide a more coherent and stretching programme of professional development for school leaders and ensure that this is integrated in the school development plan.
- **Strengthening school governance** – we will ensure governing bodies have the skills they need to be effective, and enable local authorities and school governing bodies to take forward structural options such as federation where this would strengthen schools and support good governance.
- **Improving the performance management of headteachers** – we will set high expectations for leadership roles through new standards.

Schools are the heart of the system and obviously the most important part of it. But **the relationships between schools, other local partners, local authorities, regional consortia, government and national partners are important for enabling all schools to improve and the whole system to work effectively**. Actions set out in this plan are therefore aimed at strengthening the effectiveness of the key partnerships and relationships between schools and other partners engaged in leading school improvement, and cover five key priorities.

- **Building capacity at a national level** – we will continue to build capacity within the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) and have created the School Standards Delivery Division to help keep the focus on school improvement.
- **Building capacity at a regional level** – we will bring together resources and expertise in consortia and strengthen capacity to create an effective ‘middle tier’.
- **Developing professional learning communities** – we will support professional learning communities (PLCs) to focus on the key priorities and embed best practice.
- **Empowering and engaging with parents/carers** – we will improve the flow of information on school performance and support schools to engage with and develop strong partnerships with parents/carers.
- **Strengthening inspection and school intervention** – we will amend current legislation around school intervention and with Estyn explore options for the future inspection of regional consortia.

The approach to implementation in Wales is system-wide. Its effectiveness depends on being clear about roles and responsibilities and, importantly, creating strong links between them. DfES plays a system leader role in this approach to implementation, sets the priority and ambition, the policy framework, high expectations for implementation and the associated accountability mechanisms. Responsibility for implementation of the reforms to drive school improvement rests with schools themselves and schools working together. Regional consortia and local authorities, the ‘middle tier’, have the main role in enabling or supporting implementation and making the connections between DfES through to the classroom. DfES will only be hands-on with implementation and commission support where there is a national policy that might require new expertise, pace or standardisation across Wales or where there is an obvious need for building capacity or local provision is weak.

Figure 8: Reform at all levels of the school system

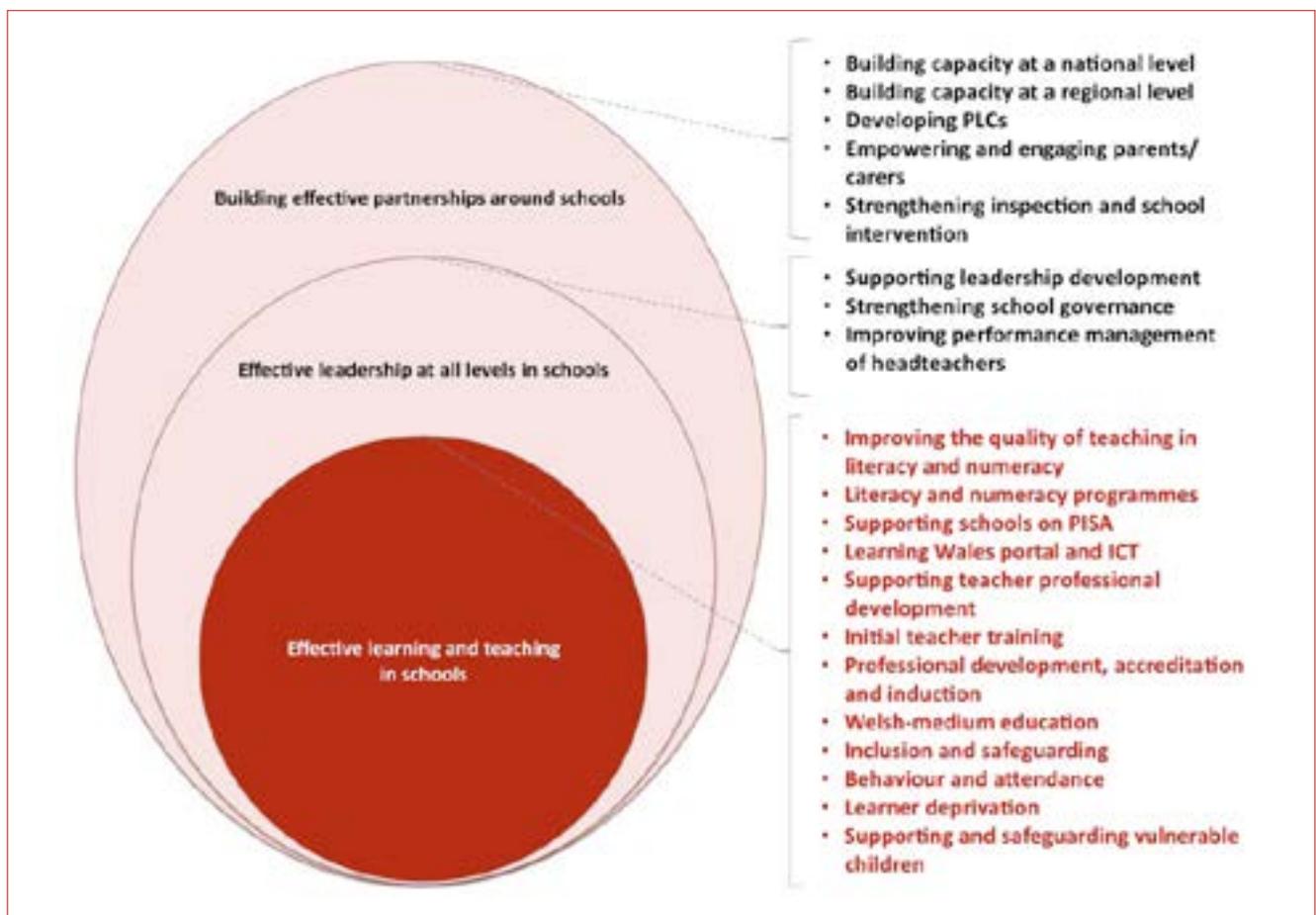


1. Schools – effective learning and teaching in schools

Effective learning and teaching is at the heart of educational reform in Wales as the quality of teachers is the single most important factor in determining how much is learnt in the classroom. There are three key priorities for improving the quality of learning and teaching.

- **Improving the quality of teaching in literacy and numeracy** – the National Literacy and Numeracy Programmes will set high expectations for what teachers should know, be able to do and what learners should learn via the medium of English and Welsh. They will help make every teacher a teacher of literacy and numeracy. Investment in ICT will further support innovation in the classroom.
- **Supporting teacher and support staff professional development** – we will improve the quality of future teachers entering the profession and their progression through changes to induction, a new MEP qualification and new practice development opportunities, and a new national induction programme for school support staff as well as more opportunities for structured development.
- **Strengthening our approaches to inclusion and safeguarding** – we will implement support for attendance and behaviour, vulnerable learners, those from deprived backgrounds and with additional needs so that all learners achieve.

Figure 9: Priority action to achieve effective learning and teaching in schools



Improving the quality of teaching in literacy and numeracy

National Literacy and Numeracy Programmes

We have published the National Literacy and Numeracy Programmes for Wales which set out the actions that will be taken forward by the Welsh Government and partners to achieve a step-change in standards of literacy and numeracy by 2017. The core elements of both the literacy and numeracy programmes include:

- a framework to provide clarity about the skills learners need to master each year, along with annual national expectations and performance indicators, to support curriculum planning and to monitor learning. It also gives all teachers clarity about opportunities for learners to apply literacy and numeracy across the curriculum
- new bespoke, national tests in reading and numeracy to generate robust data enabling teachers to monitor learner progress and respond accordingly and for progress to be monitored more widely across the system and analysed
- early targeted catch-up interventions, using nationally evaluated approaches, and high-quality materials and resources to ensure that learners who fall behind their peers and do not make sufficient progress are identified and receive support.

The immediate priority now is to implement the National Literacy and Numeracy Programmes. We will:

- work with experienced practitioners and leading experts to quality assure **a range of high-quality teaching materials and resources** and make those available through the Learning Wales portal from September 2012 onwards
- review **teacher assessment** as part of an exercise to streamline and simplify the whole assessment landscape. The review will respond to concerns about the reliability of teacher assessment highlighted by Estyn, consider whether standards/levels of attainment contained within our curriculum are sufficiently stretching and explore the impact of changing assessment on the wider curriculum. The review will commence in the autumn 2012
- ask regional consortia to lead the identification and deployment by September 2012 of **outstanding teachers of literacy and numeracy who will be used to coach and mentor their peers** to raise the skills of the workforce across each region
- by March 2013 commission and implement **a National Support Programme** to help ensure that the literacy and numeracy framework is implemented effectively across Wales and to offer direct training and skills development
- continue development and trialling of **the reading tests**, to achieve standardisation in the autumn term and implementation in May 2013

- progress with the development of **numeracy tests**. These will be delivered as two complementary tests, one looking at numerical processing and the other exploring learner ability to reason numerically. The introduction of a reasoning test will put Wales at the leading edge of numeracy testing internationally. Process tests will be introduced in summer 2013 alongside piloting of the reasoning tests which will be introduced in summer 2014. Standardisation will be undertaken as part of the first test rounds in summer 2013 and 2014.

Support for schools in understanding the PISA assessment

We have introduced a programme of activities in direct response to the weaknesses identified in previous PISA rounds. This work is not about 'practising for PISA'. Rather it is about providing practical advice and support for teachers in understanding the style, purpose and level of challenge in the PISA assessments. Workshops have a heavy practical element, drawing on strategies for learning and problem solving, thinking skills and assessment for learning approaches. We encourage the use of PISA and PISA-style materials, as part of everyday learning and teaching, to better prepare learners to be able to apply their skills and knowledge in novel contexts. We believe this will prepare them well for PISA-style assessments, GCSEs, further learning and adult life and the workplace.

Building on this and as part of the focus on ensuring progress for all learners, we will now:

- **develop a suite of INSET materials** that focus on the types of skills that PISA assesses for use in both primary and secondary schools by spring 2013. The materials will be presented as a set of short 'modules' that can be used individually or grouped to form longer sessions
- **ensure more able and talented learners form part of the focus of the MEP** qualification (from September 2013 onwards), actively promote the use of *Meeting the Challenge: Quality Standards in Education for More Able and Talented Pupils*, and disseminate the training pack for NACE coordinators by September 2012.

Hwb portal and ICT

In September 2011, a Task and Finish Group was set-up to consider which 'digital classroom' delivery aspects should be adopted to transform learning and teaching for 3 to 19-year-olds. The group's report 'Find it, make it, use it, share it: learning in digital Wales' was published in March 2012. Within this report, 10 headline recommendations were made. The Welsh Government response to the recommendations in the Digital Classroom Teaching Task and Finish Group's report can be found in the Minister's written statement which was published on 22 June 2012.

To ensure that there is an integrated and coherent ICT strategy to underpin learning and teaching in Wales, we will now:

- **launch Hwb, the all Wales online learning portal**, in December 2012. This will enable learners and teachers to access online resources anywhere, at any time, from any device. Hwb will be served by an iTunes U Wales channel which will be used to showcase best practice and host a range of high-quality online resources
- ready for December 2012 appoint **a new professional advisor to work with Welsh Government officials on the development of Hwb**. The professional advisor's work will include developing policies for Hwb including a policy on the safe use of the social media which will be incorporated into Hwb (e.g. Twitter feeds)
- make available a **new digital content repository** from April 2013 which will build on the work of NGfL Cymru
- convene the **National Digital Learning Council to act as a steering group for the digital learning programme** from September 2012. Membership of the Council will be drawn from education professionals in the school, further education and higher education sectors, representation from local authorities and ADEW. The Council will be supported by a team of professional experts as well as 'associate members' (i.e. learners) to represent the student voice
- **deploy a team of eight Digital Leaders** from January 2013. The Digital Leaders will act as online champions of digital technology in learning and teaching. The Digital Leader Team will be provided free of charge to consortia, local authorities and schools and will be accessed via an online booking system
- **hold a National Digital Learning Event in June 2013**. Together with regular updates via #addcym, the Dysg newsletter, Hwb and monthly 'TeachMeet' events, this will enable best practice to be shared and celebrated effectively
- **introduce a centrally-funded professional development** programme for teachers and associate staff from September 2013. This will provide further support to enhance computer science, ICT and digital literacy in Wales.

Supporting teacher and support staff professional development

Initial teacher training

We have initiated a consultation into options for increasing the minimum qualification for entry into initial teacher training courses. This is to ensure that all those entering the profession have strong literacy and numeracy skills themselves to provide a robust basis for the support they give to their learners.

The priority now is to make the proposed reforms a reality. We will:

- **implement an increase in the minimum qualification for entry** to courses of initial teacher training for all courses recruiting from September 2012 and for teacher training courses commencing in September 2013, subject to the outcome of consultation
- encourage initial teacher training providers to work together to **develop a robust and consistent system for testing the practical literacy and numeracy skills of those entering initial teacher training**. These tests will be implemented consistently across Wales from September 2013
- **conduct a review of initial teacher training** to determine whether its current content and approaches continues to meet the needs of teachers in Wales. The review will start in this autumn term and report in July 2013
- **introduce a new Additional Training Graduate Programme** to recruit outstanding graduates to work in schools facing challenging circumstances as part of the priority to reduce the impact of deprivation on educational outcomes. Graduate trainees will be employed to teach on a reduced timetable while following an approved teacher training programme to enable them to meet the Qualified Teacher Status Standards. The first participants will be working under this scheme by September 2013.

Professional development, accreditation and induction

Following consultation with practitioners and stakeholders, we have developed the Practice, review and development process – an integrated system of professional standards, continuing professional development and performance management. The aim is to develop a more collaborative approach to professional development with all practitioners (teachers and support staff) regularly participating in activity such as coaching and mentoring, and professional learning communities to focus on improving their learning and teaching in partnership with their colleagues. Financial support for professional development has been subsumed within the School Effectiveness Grant in order to streamline the number of grants provided to schools, to provide schools with greater flexibility on determining their own priorities and spend and to reduce the administrative bureaucracy. This funding is also available to support the development of school support staff alongside teachers.

In order to strengthen teachers' and support staff professional development, we will:

- **develop a suite of resources for practitioners** that will give them access to the latest thinking and research on a number of key priorities. These include literacy and numeracy, reducing the impact of poverty and also additional needs, behaviour management, child and adolescent development, leadership and reflective practice and will be available via the Learning Wales portal from September 2012 onwards

- **ensure schools implement the new performance management regulations**, which come into effect in January 2012, so that professional development objectives are related to school development priorities and learner outcomes. We are encouraging these arrangements to be applied to the whole school, including support staff. We plan to take powers to make performance management for support staff mandatory alongside our proposals to extend registration to the wider school work force
- from September 2012 ask schools to use the new **Practising Teacher Standard** and the **Practice, Review and Development Record** to evaluate professional development experience. The record will be updated annually to satisfy the performance management regulations
- **strengthen induction arrangements** to ensure greater consistency across Wales and ensure that Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) meet new Practising Teacher Standards by the end of their induction, from September 2012. Supply teachers will also now be able to count periods of supply teaching towards completion of their induction period. We also plan to introduce a national induction programme for school support staff in April 2013
- offer NQTs the opportunity to follow a **Masters in Educational Practice (MEP)** programme, from September 2012. This will be funded by the DfES, will be highly practical, and will draw on teachers' own experiences in their classroom. The programme will be focused on the three national priorities together with additional needs, behaviour management and reflective practice.

Welsh-medium education

The Welsh-medium Education Strategy, launched in April 2010, highlights specific challenges which relate to Welsh-medium schools and the planning, delivery and performance of Welsh-medium education. These include leadership for Welsh-medium schools; dual literacy; linguistic continuity; expansion of teaching through the medium of Welsh; the availability of school improvement services in Welsh and the relevance of their work for the Welsh-medium schools; appropriate ITT and continuing professional development; the commissioning of suitable materials for learning and teaching and the development of strategies to support the use of informal Welsh by learners.

In addition, the Welsh-medium Education Strategy emphasises the need to improve standards in the learning and teaching of Welsh second language in English-medium schools. Welsh second language is one of the worst performing subjects in the national curriculum and DfES has recently announced a four-year action plan to address the shortcomings (May 2012–April 2016).

To continue to improve the quality of Welsh-medium education, we will:

- ask local authorities to submit revised **Welsh in Education Strategic Plans** to DfES in December 2012 for implementation from April 2013. Plans become statutory from April 2014 under provisions in the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Bill

- publish guidelines for the 2013–14 **Welsh in Education Grant** in October 2012, with an expectation that the Grant will move to a consortia basis from April 2013
- continue to offer the **Sabbaticals Scheme** to provide Welsh-language and methodology training to practitioners.

Strengthening our approaches to inclusion and safeguarding

Behaviour and attendance

A new behaviour and attendance action plan was developed in March 2011. Implementation has focused mainly on the development of an Analysis Framework, for use by local authorities. Using the Analysis Framework, DfES have been working closely with local authorities to extensively analyse local data on behaviour and attendance which is used as the basis for in-depth meetings and dialogue about performance.

Building on the good progress already made, we will:

- work with consortia to **identify good practice and areas for improvement**, through the robust use of attendance data with a focus on persistent absentees and specifically to identify reasons for absence, from January 2013 onwards
- make **high-quality materials on restorative practice** available on the Learning Wales portal by November 2012
- with consortia, organise events to disseminate the findings of the behaviour pilots and provide opportunity for professional development by March 2013
- include **attendance data analysis as part of core data packs** for both schools and local authorities by January 2013
- **consult on legislation for the introduction of fixed penalty notices** for non-school attendance by November 2012
- include the **training modules for newly qualified teachers in behaviour management as part of the MEP programme** by April 2013
- **introduce national collection of data on exclusions** at learner and school level to be used for benchmarking by January 2013.

Learner deprivation

We have drawn together a range of initiatives that are designed to improve the educational progress of learners from deprived backgrounds in the Tackling Poverty Action Plan. Schools have an important role to play in helping to improve the outcomes for children from deprived backgrounds independently of other initiatives designed to tackle the root causes of deprivation. We have therefore also introduced the £32.4 million Pupil Deprivation Grant, fully delegated to schools, to invest in effective approaches for tackling the impact of deprivation.

The key priority is to ensure that the investment made through the Pupil Deprivation Grant makes a lasting impact on outcomes for vulnerable learners. To achieve this, we will:

- **develop the Sutton Trust Toolkit for use by schools** in Wales by October 2012
- **require schools to apply the Sutton Trust toolkit, other evidence-based approaches or evidence the use of alternatives** by December 2012
- undertake a national analysis by March 2013 **to identify emerging lead practice in use of the Pupil Deprivation Grant**, present this on the Learning Wales portal, and prompt PLCs to focus rigorously on closing gaps in attainment
- **further develop thinking skills and strategies for learning or problem solving**, and use of assessment for learning and their implementation on a whole school basis by September 2013
- ensure the **national training and developmental framework for system leaders** (see Section 3) will equip them with the latest skills and knowledge in relation to reducing the impact of poverty on educational attainment by September 2012.

Supporting and safeguarding vulnerable children or those with particular learning needs

The current system of assessing and statementing children with special educational needs has been described by Estyn and others as complex, bureaucratic, costly and insufficiently child-centred or user-friendly. Work is underway to review current legislation and replace it with new arrangements which are more fit-for-purpose. An evaluation of the exclusions process and delivery, planning and commissioning of education provision for children and young people educated outside the school setting has also been commissioned.

To strengthen support and safeguarding for vulnerable children further, we will:

- **bring forward legislation to replace the current arrangements for assessment and statements of children with special educational needs** with a new person-centred approach of integrated individual development plans and better provision pathways to improve outcomes for those with specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia. Formal consultation on these reforms ends in October 2012
- establish a Task Group in September 2012 to assess existing resources in relation to specific learning difficulties, **develop new resources for dyslexia in English and Welsh** as required and also ensure that links are made with policy across government. Specific documents/tools will be published on Learning Wales and other websites as and when they are quality assured or developed starting in September 2013
- **develop a multi-agency approach to training and provision for disabled children and their families**, by March 2013, with Children in Wales undertaking the training

- draw together **a range of guidance to be published by the end of March 2013** in to one source. This will cover for example bullying, alternative education, Pupil Referral Units, more able and talented, Gypsy, Traveller, Roma and ethnic minority learners
- work with Health and Social Services colleagues to develop a framework for September 2013 to ensure a coherent and **strategic approach to improving the educational outcomes for looked after children**
- produce minimum **standards and a benchmarking framework for young people educated other than at school** by December 2013
- establish an **all Wales Standing Committee to improve the education provision for the education of children in Wales whose parents/carers are in the armed forces**. By March 2013 it will organise a funding panel to provide grant aid to schools supporting service children and to disseminate best practice
- implement a **National Strategy for school-based counselling**. Funding will be transferred to the Revenue Support Grant in April 2013 and underpinned by legislation to ensure that local authorities continue to provide a counselling service at each secondary school it maintains, to Year 6 learners and 16 to 18-year-olds
- **extend *Unlocking the Potential of Special Schools*** to allow special schools to work with the further education (FE) sector, from September 2012 to 2013
- publish **new guidance on safeguarding in schools** in the spring term 2013. This will respond to recent legislative changes, and will be developed in consultation with the UK government to ensure consistency of approach
- bring forward regulations to bring the current dated **legislation governing children engaged in professional performances and children in employment** up to date. Guidance will be issued following consultation and once the regulations are enacted.

Figure 10: High level timeline for achieving effective learning and teaching in schools

	Autumn 2012	Spring 2013	Summer 2013	Autumn 2013	Spring 2014
Literacy and numeracy programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Oct – Framework and test consultation ends ● Sep – National Numeracy Programme launched ● Sep – Disseminate catch-up guidance ● Sep – High-quality materials and resources launched on Learning Wales ● Oct – Publication of review of teacher assessment with policy development to follow 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Jan – Framework and tests available ● Jan – Trial of numeracy tests ends 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● May – Tests distributed to all schools and administered 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sep – Literacy framework becomes statutory 	
PISA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Nov – Publish INSET materials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Mar – Publish INSET materials 			
Learning Wales portal and ICT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sep – National Digital Learning Council starts ● Sep – Learning Wales launched 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Jan – Digital leaders start 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Apr – Digital content repository in place 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sep – ICT professional development for teachers launches 	
Initial teacher training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sep – Induction guidance and Masters is launched ● Sep – Regulations in place for induction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Nov – Review of Initial Teacher Training 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Jul – Review ends and implementation of recommendations 	
Professional development			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Apr – Induction for support staff 		
Welsh-medium education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Oct – Introduction of the annual Welsh in Education grant to support implementation ● Sep – Review of Welsh Second Language in Key Stage 4 and new Ministerial Advice Group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Dec – Welsh in Education strategic plans introduced on voluntary basis 			
Behaviour and attendance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sep – Identify effective practice for reducing exclusions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Jan – Revised regulations for attendance data 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Apr – Regulations for fixed penalty notices introduced 	
Pupil deprivation		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Jan – Issue PDG guidance 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Oct – Individual development plan consultation ends 	
Safeguarding (and support)			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Mar – Range of guidance published 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sep – New resources for dyslexia on Learning Wales portal 	

2. Schools – effective leadership at all levels in schools

Effective leadership at all levels in schools is essential to ensure that learning and teaching is of a consistently high quality and that the reforms in this plan are implemented successfully. Excellent leadership in schools requires a focus on priorities; setting high expectations for all learners; creating the right culture for improvement; communicating the vision and successes along the way; and building capacity and maintaining the focus on improving the quality of teaching and learning. To build leadership capacity across the system, this plan sets out three key priorities.

- **Supporting leadership development** – we will provide a more coherent and stretching programme of professional development for school leaders and ensure that this is integrated in the school development plan.
- **Strengthening school governance** – we will ensure governing bodies have the skills they need to be effective, and enable local authorities and school governing bodies to take forward structural options such as federation where this would strengthen schools and support good governance.
- **Improving the performance management of headteachers** – we will set high expectations for leadership roles through new standards.

Figure 11: Effective leadership at all levels in schools



Supporting leadership development

The most effective school systems emphasise the importance of good leadership at all levels and the best leaders have a very strong focus on leading improvements in learning and teaching and supporting their staff to improve their own skills. We have drawn together the practice, review and development approach for practitioner development, outlined in Section 1, to encourage progressive, career-long development of leadership skills. This has been piloted with a range of school leaders including bursars and school business managers. We have also introduced a new approach to gaining the National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH). The new approach is a practice based assessment against Leadership Standards and is designed to address weaknesses highlighted by Estyn and other stakeholders with the former 'taught' model. The new approach is being implemented in partnership with regional education consortia, so that the national model for assessment is delivered locally and conducted by experienced headteachers and local practitioners.

To further support high-quality leadership development, we will:

- create an online module, the **Leadership Development Framework**, available from January 2013 through the Learning Wales portal, to support all teachers and support staff to consider their own leadership skills and behaviours through their career and develop a plan to enhance these skills
- establish **national networks for school leaders across Wales** from September 2012, targeted to meet the needs of different groups (such as new heads, or those from specific sectors, such as business managers). Networks will be operational by September 2013 and build on those most valued by headteachers, making use of the best online approaches as well as developing opportunities for face to face meetings
- **require schools to plan for staff development in the new regulations for the content of School Development Plans**, in order to grow the leaders of the future. This will help ensure that professional development for all school staff is considered alongside the school's priorities for improvement in learning and teaching. Schools will also be required to identify what use they are making of PLCs as part of continuing professional development to raise standards. A section of the school development plan must identify how the school is identifying and nurturing potential middle and senior leaders. Consultation in January 2013, implementation September 2013
- ask consortia to **ensure that system leaders are supporting and challenging schools** to identify potential leaders as part of the School Development Plan and provide opportunities for these individuals to build and extend their skills by working on school improvement projects outside their own school
- work with schools and consortia to **establish a system for better matching of NPQH holders with potential vacancies** as some sectors and areas are experiencing more difficulties in recruiting heads than others, completed annually from April 2013

- work with experienced and aspiring school leaders to **identify the best leadership programmes available**, starting in October 2012 and online from January 2013
- develop the concept of **National Lead Practitioner Schools**: these schools would be paired with other schools to provide additional support, coaching and mentoring for the headteacher and leadership team, February 2013 onwards.

Strengthening school governance

To achieve sustained improvement in educational outcomes in Wales it is essential that we have in place competent, well-trained governing bodies supported by a fit-for-purpose governance framework in which all parties play an appropriate role. In the 2011 Education (Wales) Measure, powers were introduced to make certain training mandatory for school governors in Wales, to require governing body clerks to be properly trained, and to require local authorities to provide a clerking service when schools ask for it.

Federation and looser forms of collaboration between governing bodies can be a powerful way to strengthen leadership and governance. School governing bodies have had the power to federate since 2010. There appears, however, to have been some reluctance to take advantage of this opportunity. To address this, a series of pilots in five local authority areas across Wales were funded, testing the federation concept in a range of school contexts. The good practice identified by federation practitioners during these pilots has been compiled and published in a guide to federation published in May 2012. In recognition of the key importance of governors, this action plan takes forward three complementary work strands, seeking to ensure that:

- governors are well equipped, through targeted training, for the roles they undertake
- there are the right number of governing bodies in the right places to manage the schools of Wales
- the evolved framework within which governors and others undertake the governance of schools is fit for purpose in the present day.

Specifically, we will:

- publish regulations in November 2012 to bring **mandatory training for school governors and clerks** into operation by January 2013, including induction training for new governors, chair training, and training for all governors on the use of performance data, and triggering the requirement for governing bodies to be provided with a clerking service on request
- continue to work with stakeholders, led by Governors Wales, to develop the scope of the training and with The All Wales Centre for Governor Training and Research to **develop free-to-use training materials** by November 2012 for local authorities, who will be the primary deliverers of the training, building on the training they already offer

- in September 2012 establish a task and finish group, led by an experienced school governor, to consider the **governance framework** in which schools operate. Specifically they will look at whether the respective responsibilities of headteachers, governing bodies and local authorities are properly delineated and correctly apportioned, and will make recommendations by March 2013 for reform of the system in time to make legislative proposals in response, should that be appropriate, in the current Assembly Term
- publish regulations in October 2012 that enable local authorities to exercise their power to propose the **federation of school governing bodies**, in line with the best practice guide from March 2013
- introduce regulations in November 2013 which will **restate and consolidate current powers of schools and further education institutions to form joint committees** with delegated powers for collaboration purposes, and extend the power to form and join joint committees to local authorities, thus allowing them to formally collaborate with schools and further education institutions on an equal basis.

Improving the performance management of headteachers

We have revised the performance management arrangements for headteachers to include a stronger focus on overall school performance informed by the use of relevant school performance data against the backdrop of the Leadership Standards, introduced in September 2011. The headteacher's Appraisal Panel will include representation from governors and the local authority who will consider a range of performance data and ensure that the headteacher's objectives are focused on national priorities as well as school improvement priorities identified through analysis of the school's data. The performance management arrangements also enable other practitioners to choose to use one or more of their performance management objectives to support their leadership development.

The key priority is now to put the revised performance management arrangements into effect. We will:

- **require schools to move to the revised arrangements** by 31 December 2012.

Figure 12: High level timeline for action to support effective leadership at all levels in schools

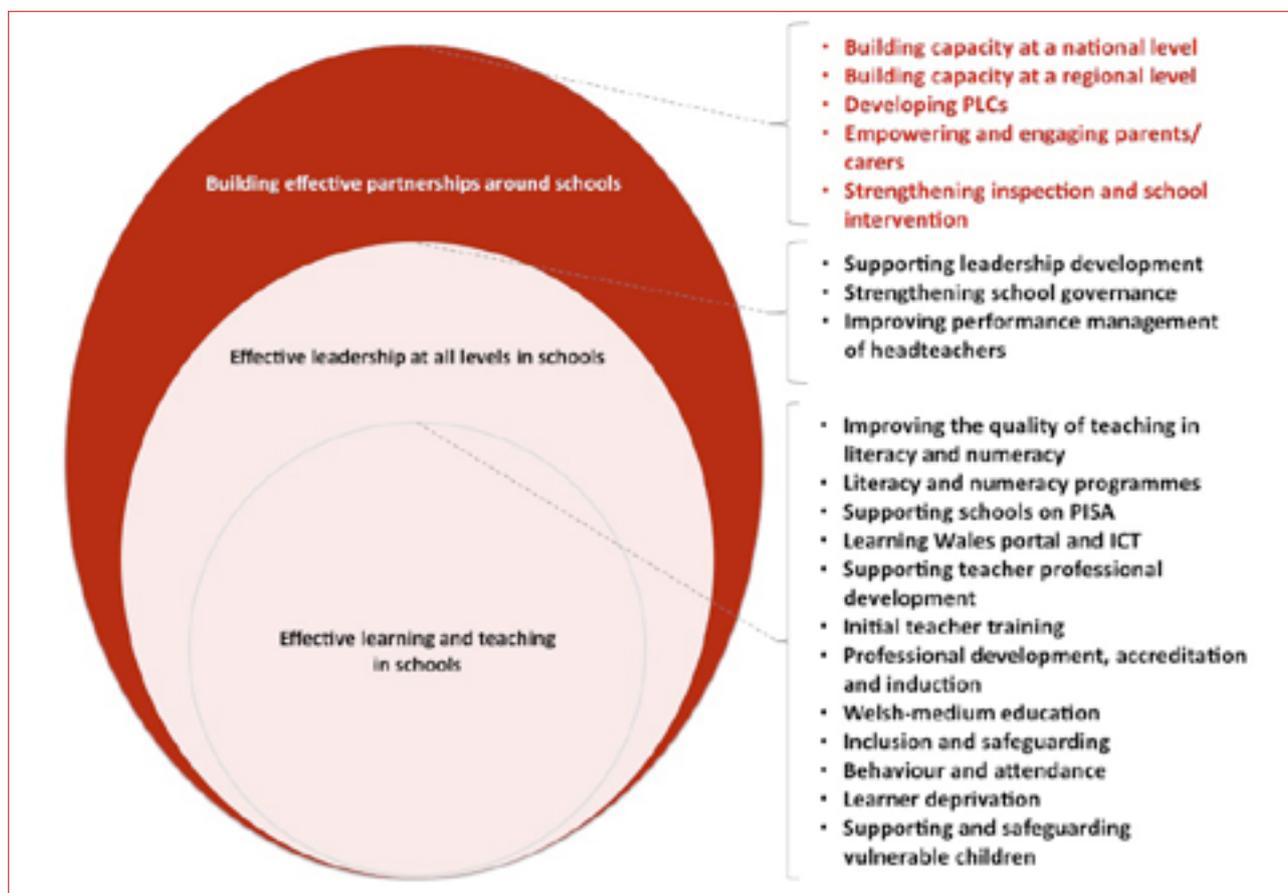
	Autumn 2012	Spring 2013	Summer 2013	Autumn 2013	Spring 2014
Leadership development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sep – Second round NPQH starts ● Oct – Leadership self-evaluation framework and support needs developed with school leaders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Feb – Lead practitioner schools launched ● Jan – Consultation on leadership component of school development plans 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sep – Third round NPQH starts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sep – Implement component in school development plans
Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sep – Review the role of governors starts ● Oct – Consultation on regulations for federation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Nov – Guidance published and regulations introduced for mandatory training ● Jan – Training starts ● Nov – Introduction of collaboration regulations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Mar – Report on review and preparation for any legislation needed ● Mar – Regulations introduced 		
Performance management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sep – New regulations in use ● Sep – Training pack and model forms issued ● Sep to Jan – School leaders and system leaders implementing new arrangements 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Jun to Oct – School leaders and system leaders reviewing progress and planning next year's cycle 		

3. Building effective partnerships around schools

International evidence clearly shows that it is a 'system thing, not a single thing' that enables widespread and long-lasting improvement. Schools are at the heart of the system and obviously the most important part of it. But, the relationships between schools, other local partners, local authorities, regional consortia, government and national partners are important for enabling all schools to improve and the whole system to work effectively. In creating this plan acknowledgement must be given to the broad range of partners who have provided contribution and who are vital to delivery. These include Estyn, local authorities, regional consortia, schools, representatives of Diocesan authorities in Wales, Governors Wales, Trade Unions and further and higher education institutions together with an extensive range of community organisations. The actions set out in this chapter are aimed at strengthening the key partnerships and relationships of those engaged in leading school improvement, and cover five priorities.

- **Building capacity at a national level** – we will continue to build capacity within DfES and have created the School Standards Delivery Division to keep the focus on school improvement.
- **Building capacity at a regional level** – we will bring together resources and expertise in consortia and strengthen capacity to create an effective 'middle tier'.
- **Developing professional learning communities** – we will support PLCs to focus on the key priorities and embed best practice.
- **Empowering and engaging with parents/carers** – we will improve the flow of information on school performance and support schools to engage with and develop strong partnerships with parents/carers.
- **Strengthening inspection and school intervention** – we will amend legislation on school intervention and with Estyn explore options for inspection of consortia.

Figure 13: Building effective partnerships around schools



Building capacity at a national level

The School Standards Delivery Division, introduced in spring 2011, is designed to be a catalyst to school improvement at all levels of the system. It is intended to address three important needs in the system, such as to:

- support and evaluate the 'how' of policy implementation rather than the 'what' of policy development
- challenge performance through sharpening the use of data and strengthening accountability mechanisms
- facilitate the sharing and joint-development of high-impact practice.

The Division is resourced from a combination of DfES officials, data/research experts, practitioner experts seconded from their roles across the system in Wales, and school improvement experts used on an advisory basis.

Over the next year, through the new Division, we will:

- continue to implement the routine of **regional and national stocktakes** to challenge progress and identify priority actions for improvement, including the continued monitoring of lower-performing schools
- carry out **fast-paced reviews to understand performance challenges in more depth, to evaluate implementation of policy and to understand the capacity of consortia to support their schools**
- **develop an approach for the national banding of primary schools** for the academic year 2014–15. This will build on the national banding of secondary schools and bring transparency and accountability into a system which did not previously openly compare the performance of individual schools or local authorities.

Building capacity at a regional level

International evidence shows that the impact of system-wide school improvement initiatives is more effective if mediated at a point in the system between government and individual schools. This point is often referred to as the 'middle tier' and plays an important part in enabling and sustaining school improvement. The 'middle tier' in Wales has been the 22 local authorities, but the local authority role is changing following on from the series of reports underpinning the Front Line Resources Review (May 2010) and the Review of the Structure of Education Services in Wales (March 2011). It is changing in two important ways. Firstly, local authorities are handing over more of their resources and responsibilities for school improvement to schools or networks of schools. In turn this will give schools more control over how they lead their own improvement and more opportunity for collaboration between schools. Secondly, the local authorities' remaining school improvement resources and responsibilities will be delivered on a regional geographical basis via four consortia from September 2012. This change is designed to:

- reduce variation in performance between local authorities by enabling consistent and rigorous implementation of the best approaches to school improvement within each region
- simplify the implementation of national policy via four rather than 22 mediators
- give breadth and depth to expertise by coordinating links across local authorities to more schools or networks of schools and aligning efforts to lead improvement across the region
- make best use of resources by streamlining approaches to school improvement and ensuring effective commissioning of services on a regional basis.

One of the main ways in which regional consortia will carry out their school improvement role is through system leaders, especially on monitoring school performance, challenging improvement and providing targeted support. System leaders will be drawn from either a local authority or school background, including current serving school leaders. They will be credible experts in the eyes of schools and will be able to support and challenge a range of

school improvement challenges from 'turnaround' of an underperforming school, tackling 'coasting' schools and helping schools on their journey from 'good to excellent'. Each region has led their own recruitment process, using a national specification of the role, and is providing local training and induction.

In order to ensure the transition to consortium working is as effective as possible, we will:

- **work with each consortium in the autumn term to test their readiness to deliver** from September 2012 onwards, and broker in additional support where this may be required. This will form a routine part of regional stocktakes
- **continue to support and drive the progress of those local authorities facing performance challenges** and subject to Estyn monitoring via Improvement Boards or Recovery Boards
- subject to the progress made by consortia, **provide an update on the future policy direction for regional service delivery** in March 2013
- deliver a **national training and development programme for system leaders**, which includes Estyn inspection training, from September 2012 to complement regional approaches. This national training and development is being designed in partnership with consortia to ensure a common set of high expectations, core skills and knowledge for the system leader role across Wales
- from January 2013 **reflect on the implementation of system leaders** to date and consider whether there needs to be national accreditation of both the training and the system leaders themselves to ensure high standards are met and secondly whether there is a need for some system leader capacity to be deployed on a national basis, across regional consortia boundaries, to tackle national challenges.

Developing professional learning communities (PLCs)

International evidence is clear that practitioners learn best when they are part of a collaborative and supportive network, can 'test' their learning within a practical setting, learn from the practice of expert teachers and reflect on the outcomes achieved.

This evidence has informed the development of PLCs in Wales. It is important, going forward, that PLCs demonstrate both focus and rigour. On focus, the development of PLCs should be based on the three key priorities of literacy, numeracy and reducing the impact of deprivation on education outcomes. On rigour, they should be set up based on the evidence of what makes an effective PLC which has been captured by DfES in its interactive guidance 'PLC Online'. This interactive guidance describes a national model to PLC and an interactive site which enables schools to register online, access the guidance on the model and also to record the progress of their PLC in a way that enables them to link and share ideas, progress and outcomes with other schools working on similar issues.

To support the rigour and focus of PLCs we will:

- make the '**PLC Online**' system available to access through the Learning Wales portal in November 2012. All schools will be able to access this system via the Learning Wales portal to share practice and experience
- provide **four local coordinators** to work with schools from the autumn term 2012 to provide training, support and guidance on running PLCs and embedding practice in schools.

Empowering and engaging with parents/carers

Where parents/carers, teachers and the wider community work together to improve learning, the gains in achievement are significant. Schools that offer bespoke forms of support to parents/carers (i.e. literacy classes, parenting skills support) are more likely to engage them in their children's learning. Schools that successfully engage parents/carers in learning, consistently reinforce the fact that 'parents/carers matter'. They develop a two way relationship with parents/carers based on mutual trust, respect and a commitment to improving learning outcomes.

We have already established a requirement for governors to publish data on schools performance in their school's annual report and this provides an important source of information for parents/carers.

To further improve the flow of information and engagement with parents/carers, we will:

- develop an **online portal targeted at parents/carers** to provide them with information about schools, including performance by February 2013. This will help to engage parents/carers in the process of school improvement. There is a requirement for governors to publish data on school performance in their school's annual report
- develop further work on the parents'/carers' guide ***How was school today?*** based on feedback from parents and carers, to include vital information on the curriculum, end of key stage assessment and how they can help their child's learning
- prepare guidance, **best practice and case studies to schools on parental engagement** and their wider communities. Guidance to be published in September 2013.

Strengthening inspection and school intervention

A strong system of inspection, which is seen to be fair but challenging, is a critical component in holding schools to account, in helping schools to know how to improve, and in giving information to parents/carers about school performance. Estyn has recently raised the bar for performance via the current inspection frameworks and has undertaken a mid cycle review of these inspection frameworks. This is stimulating fresh and necessary conversations about improvements needed in the system.

There is now a range of policy development on inspection and intervention underway which has informed the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Bill 2012. Specifically, we will:

- consolidate and clarify the law in relation to **powers for intervention in schools and local authorities** to come into force at the end of 2013 and develop new statutory guidance on a similar timetable
- look to develop new regulations on the **transition from an interim executive board (IEB) to a normally constituted governing body** from September 2012
- consult on proposals to amend regulations in relation to inspection in order to **reduce the time that schools and local authorities have to respond to Estyn reports**. If agreed the amended regulations would come into force in autumn of 2013
- based on the forthcoming recommendations of Estyn's task and finish group (due to report by March 2013), consider options for the **inspection of consortia** from 2014.

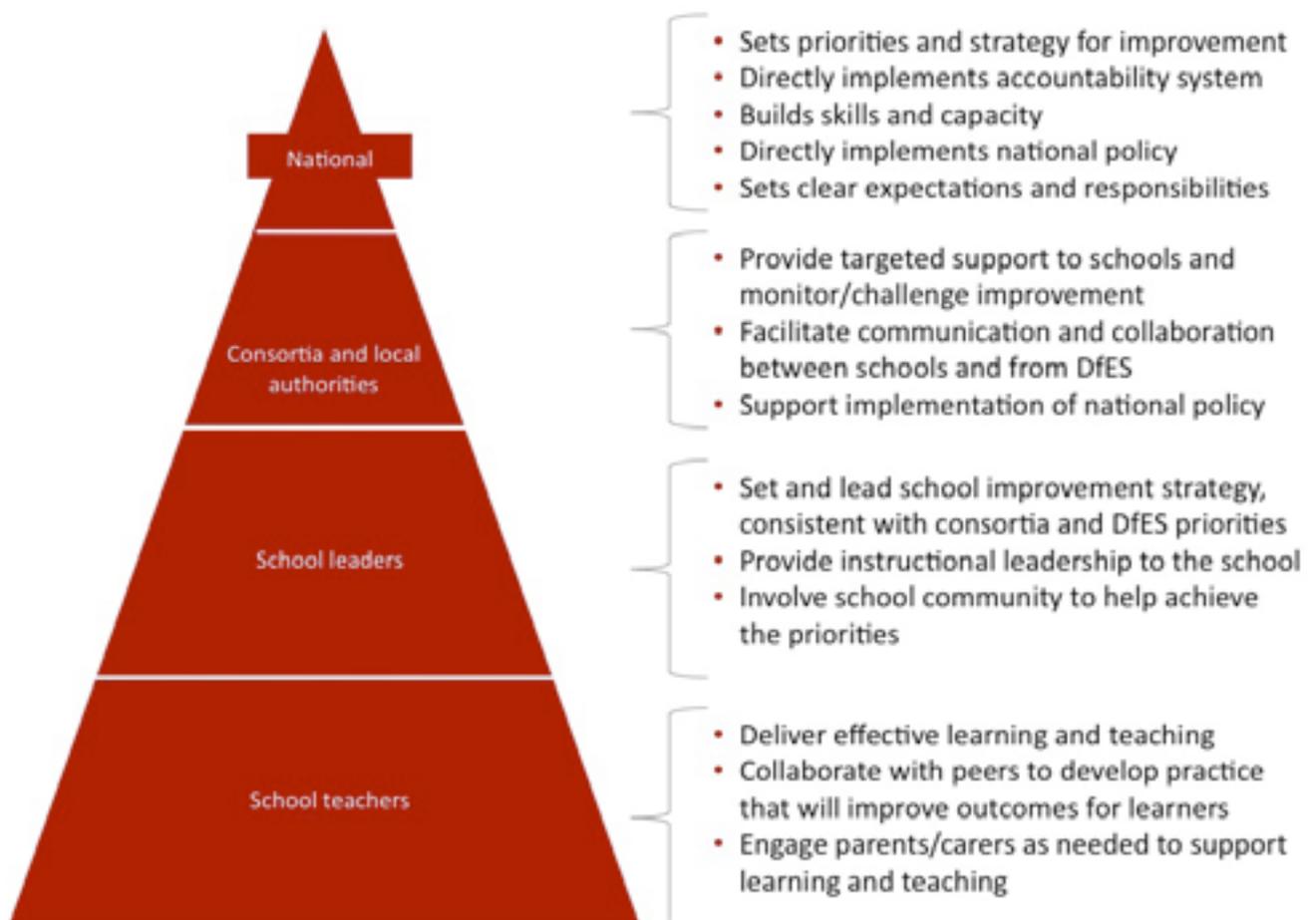
Figure 14: High level timeline for action to build effective partnerships around schools

	Autumn 2012	Spring 2013	Summer 2013	Autumn 2013	Spring 2014
National capacity – DfES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sep – Policy proposals on floor targets ● Dec – Stocktakes each term with consortia get underway and secondary banding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Mar – School profiles launched 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sep – Workshops on primary banding ● Dec – Secondary banding 	
Regional capacity Consortia and LAs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sep – Consortia in place ● Sep – Recruitment complete and national/Estyn training starts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Dec – DfES work with consortia to test ‘readiness’ to implement new arrangements and provide support to build capacity ● Jan – Develop proposals for accreditation of the training and role 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Mar – Clarify policy direction for future regional service delivery ● Jul – Develop proposals for some national deployment of system leaders 	
Professional learning communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sep – PLC coordinators in place ● Nov – Schools access PLC online through the Learning Wales portal 				
Parents/carers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sep – Model forms and policies developed and issued ● Sep – Test portal design for public data access 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Dec – All Wales data sets and underpinning raw data available ● Mar – Refine and launch portal 			
Inspection and intervention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sep – Ongoing policy development to inform the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Bill 2012 ● Sep – Interim Executive Board regulations come into force 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sep – New statutory guidance on intervention consultation ● Sep – Regulations on timescale for response to Estyn reports 	

4. Roles, responsibilities and resources

The approach to implementation in Wales is set-out in Figure 15. It is a system approach and its effectiveness depends on being clear about respective roles and responsibilities of different education partners and, importantly, creating strong links between them to build collective capacity focussed on shared priorities. Responsibility for implementation of the reforms to drive school improvement rests with schools themselves and schools working together. Regional consortia and local authorities, the 'middle tier', are responsible for enabling and supporting implementation at school level and making the connections between DfES through to the classroom. DfES sets the priority and ambition, the policy framework, high expectations for implementation and oversees the associated accountability mechanisms. DfES will only be hands-on with implementation in two ways. Firstly, where there is a national policy that might require new expertise, pace or standardisation across Wales (like the National Literacy and Numeracy Programmes), DfES will commission support for implementation and work with consortia on how best to do this. Secondly, where there is an obvious need for building capacity or local provision is weak, DfES will again commission support to help fill gaps.

Figure 15: Approach to school improvement at each point in the system



Summary of actions

The four key partners in the education system – schools, consortia, local authorities and the DfES, all need to work together to deliver the vision set out in this implementation plan. Figure 16 summarises the key actions that each of these partners needs to take in order to ensure successful implementation.

Figure 16: Summary of key actions that are needed to implement this plan

	Schools	Local authorities and regional consortia (working closely with Diocesan Authorities)	DfES
Effective learning and teaching in schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use the literacy and numeracy frameworks, tests and available support, to plan their curriculum and to monitor learner progress, inform self-evaluation, report to parents/carers and to identify where support for learning is needed. Administer the reading and numeracy tests, analyse and use the data at individual learner and group level to outline the next learning steps and to address learning gaps and problems creatively and proactively to raise standards. Use the new tests at whole school level to identify strengths and weaknesses in learning and teaching. Work with consortia to develop learners' thinking skills, using the new INSET materials, alongside the improvement of literacy and numeracy and to facilitate greater confidence in their ability to learn. Use the tests and other learner data to inform school self-evaluation and development planning and identify whole-school resourcing and individual staff CPD needs. Access resources online through Hwb. Consider sourcing new teachers through the Additional Graduate Training programme. Carry out new performance management regulations in line with the practising teacher standard. Encourage and support NQTs to take up the new Masters qualification. Analyse data on exclusions and persistent absentees and focus on reducing these. Make the most of published resources to support behaviour and attendance and inclusion. Use the Sutton Trust toolkit, and other available resources, to increase the impact of the Pupil Deprivation Grant. Follow the provisions in the new guidance on safeguarding in schools. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Place literacy and numeracy at the heart of support and challenge for school improvement. Lead the identification and deployment of outstanding teachers of literacy and numeracy. Monitor schools' progress in reading and numeracy tests and provide support and challenge appropriately. Signpost schools to the support and advice available to improve digital learning. Ensure that schools are using the new performance management regulations and practising teacher standard. Submit revised Welsh in education strategic plans and respond to the revised guidelines for the Welsh in Education Grant. Identify good practice and areas for improvement in supporting behaviour and attendance, particular in relation to the use of data. Organise events to disseminate the findings of the behaviour pilots regionally. Focus challenge on persistent absenteeism and high levels of exclusions. Respond to the consultation on the introduction of fixed penalty notices. Ensure system leaders are equipped to support and challenge schools on the effective use of school deprivation grants. Signpost schools to the revised advice and guidance on safeguarding and inclusion. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Publish high-quality resources and teaching materials in literacy and numeracy. Commission a programme of national support for literacy and numeracy. Refine the reading tests and develop numeracy tests. Publish a suite of online materials to support schools' understanding of PISA. Launch Hwb – the all-wales online platform. Secure expert advice to guide the digital learning strategy and commission support for schools. Increase minimum qualifications for entry to ITT courses. Launch the Additional Training Graduate programme. Develop online professional development resources for teachers. Strengthen induction arrangements for teachers. Launch the new Masters in Educational programme for NQTs Practice. Publish new guidelines for the Welsh in Education Grant for 2013. Consult on legislation for the introduction of fixed penalty notices. Publish high-quality online materials on restorative practice. Develop the Sutton Trust tool kit for use in Wales and identify leading practice in the use of the Pupil Deprivation Grant. Work with Estyn to ensure the use of the Pupil Deprivation Grant forms a focus in inspections. Ensure national system leader training equips them to support and challenge on use of the Pupil Deprivation Grant. Legislate to amend current arrangements for statementing and assessment of learners with SEN. Provide comprehensive new guidance and regulations in relation to inclusion and safeguarding.

	Schools	Local authorities and regional consortia (working closely with Diocesan Authorities)	DfES
Effective leadership in schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set ambitious trajectories for improvement, focus resources on underperforming learners and groups, those with additional needs and stretch the most able. Consider opportunities to enter into federations or collaborative arrangements with other schools to strengthen leadership/governance. Implement the new headteacher performance management arrangements. Use the online leadership development framework to support all teachers to consider their leadership skills. Access support via leader networks. Identify and develop potential middle and senior leaders, making this a part of the annual school development plan. Consider becoming a future National Lead Practitioner School. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refresh training for governors in light of new regulations and the published free-to-use nationally developed training materials. Consider options to exercise powers to federate governing bodies, in line with the good practice guide. Consider opportunities to formally collaborate with schools under the new regulations. Ensure that schools are implementing the new performance management arrangements and support this process through consortia. Ensure that system leaders are supporting and challenging schools to identify potential leaders as part of the School Development Plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Publish regulations on mandatory training for school governors. Develop free-to-use training modules for governor training. Publish regulations which provide for local authorities to federate governing bodies and formally collaborate with schools. Create an online leadership development framework. Establish national networks of school leaders. Publish regulations on the content of school development plans so that they include a focus on leadership development. Refine the NPQH process. Develop the concept of National Lead Practitioner Schools. Make the best school leadership programmes available in Wales.
Effective partnerships around schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take part in a professional learning community (PLC). Access the support available online and through coordinators to ensure the activity of the PLC is focused and has impact. Work closely with parents/carers and the immediate school community to support learning through, for example, focussed homework and providing homework support facilities for learners and parents/carers. Develop a strategy for engaging parents/carers and the wider community in learning, including improving the flow of information to parents/carers about school performance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage constructively with regional stocktakes and use them as an opportunity to drive improved performance. Work with the DfES to evaluate each consortium's readiness to deliver. Respond proactively to areas for improvement identified through inspection. Monitor the impact of early implementation of system leaders regionally and locally. Work with PLCs to ensure their activity is focused and having an impact. Work with schools to strengthen their approaches to parental engagement and signpost them to nationally available guidance and resources. Engage with Estyn on the development of arrangements for the future inspection of consortia. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue the routine of regional and national stocktakes through the school standards unit. Carry out reviews of key policy areas. Develop an approach for the national banding of primary schools. Provide challenge and support to consortia based on their readiness to deliver. Continue to support LAs subject to Estyn follow-up through Improvement and Recovery Board. Develop a national training programme for system leaders. Publish online guidance and make available face to face support for PLCs to ensure their activity has focus and impact. Provide an online portal for parents/carers. Prepare guidance and resources to help schools to engage parents/carers more effectively in learning. Clarify regulations relating to school interventions. Work with Estyn to develop proposals for future inspection of consortia.

Resources

Twenty out of the 22 local authorities achieved the 80 per cent delegation target by 2012 and the average total gross schools budgeted expenditure delegated directly to schools in 2012–13 was 81 per cent. This amounts to £2.021 billion, an increase from the previous year of £135 million.

The Welsh Government has protected education budgets and provided an uplift of one per cent per annum. This protection has been extended into 2014–15 with an additional £80 million per annum for schools by 2014–15 compared to the 2010–11 local government settlement.

Welsh Government Revenue funding of education in Wales can be broken down in the following way for the 2012–13 financial year.

- The total Welsh Government funding for Education and Skills is £1.675 billion.
- A further £2.202 billion is identified within the local government settlement for education.
- The current funding for the School Effectiveness Grant is £25.5 million, and the Pupil Deprivation Grant (PDG) £32.4 million.

The level of surplus places in schools across Wales remains a significant challenge. Managing the provision of school places rests with local authorities through the removal of surplus places (principally by school re-organisation and closure), the dedication of surplus capacity to other suitable purposes and through the admissions system (by the adjustment of catchment areas to reduce over-subscription at popular schools). There is a similar range of opportunities available to local authorities where demand requires the development of additional provision, but given the overall over-supply of school places, the principal concern of a number of local authorities in Wales in the forthcoming years will be on reducing surplus places. In order to assist local authorities and other proposers, three complementary programmes of work are underway, focusing on:

- making the system for school re-organisation more streamlined and more locally-focused
- helping local authorities to think more creatively about the use of their surplus estate
- encouraging local authorities to review school catchment areas, supported by the development of revised codes of practice on admissions and admissions appeals.

The School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Bill (2012) will transfer the responsibility for determining school organisation proposals in most cases to either the proposer or to new, locally-based panels. At the same time stringent new requirements on proposers, modelled on best practice, on how to go about developing and consulting on school reorganisation proposals will be introduced. Local authorities will need to demonstrate to their local communities that proposals are efficient, and will deliver benefits: to do this effectively they will need to identify and draw upon the most effective models for school organisation.

To assist them, DfES is working with the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) and the authorities themselves to develop robust costing methodologies based on research by Estyn, and to embed evaluation into future proposals.

The Association of Directors of Education in Wales (ADEW) Planning of School Places network is identifying examples of good practice in the reallocation of school accommodation and will publish these in a reference guide. Local authorities will be invited to revisit this and redraw catchment areas so the competition for places in some schools is reduced and admissions are more evenly spread across the schools in a given area. This work will be supported by a modernised statutory code on school admissions, developed in consultation with stakeholders and taking into account policy developments and lessons learnt since the publication of the current version.

Monitoring and evaluating the plan

Throughout this plan we have stressed that it is an implementation plan and it is about ensuring improvement in learner achievement. Rigorous monitoring, evaluation and reporting of progress in implementation is therefore essential across the whole system. A new monitoring, evaluation and reporting framework is being agreed with stakeholders and will appear late in the autumn term as a separate succinct document.