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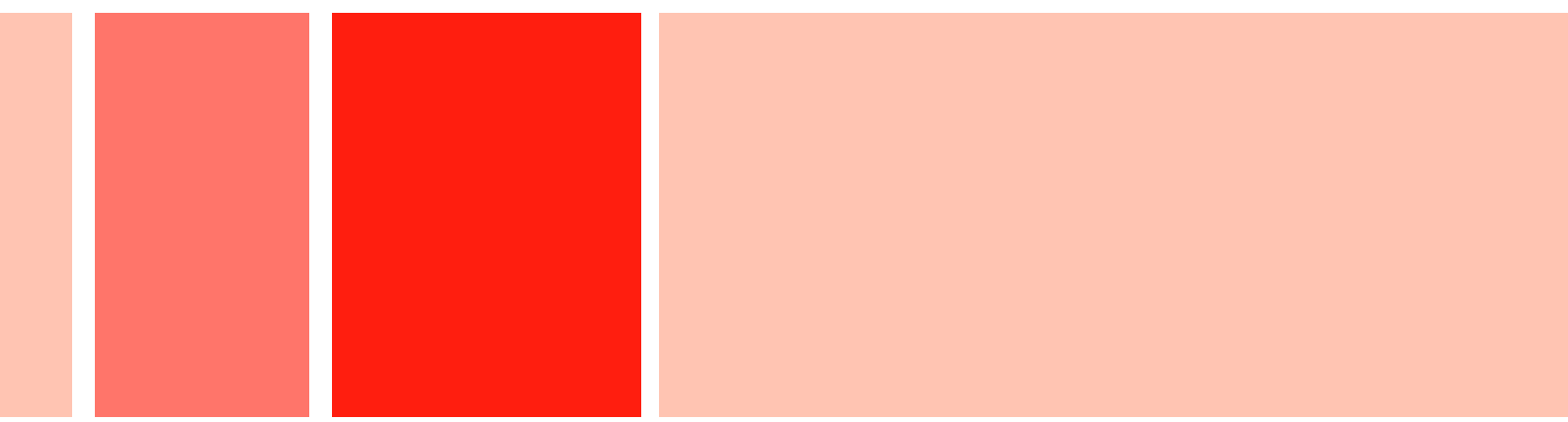


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Evaluation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Programmes

Interim Report



Evaluation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Programmes, Interim Report

December 2015

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Views expressed in this report are those of the researcher and not necessarily those of the Welsh Government

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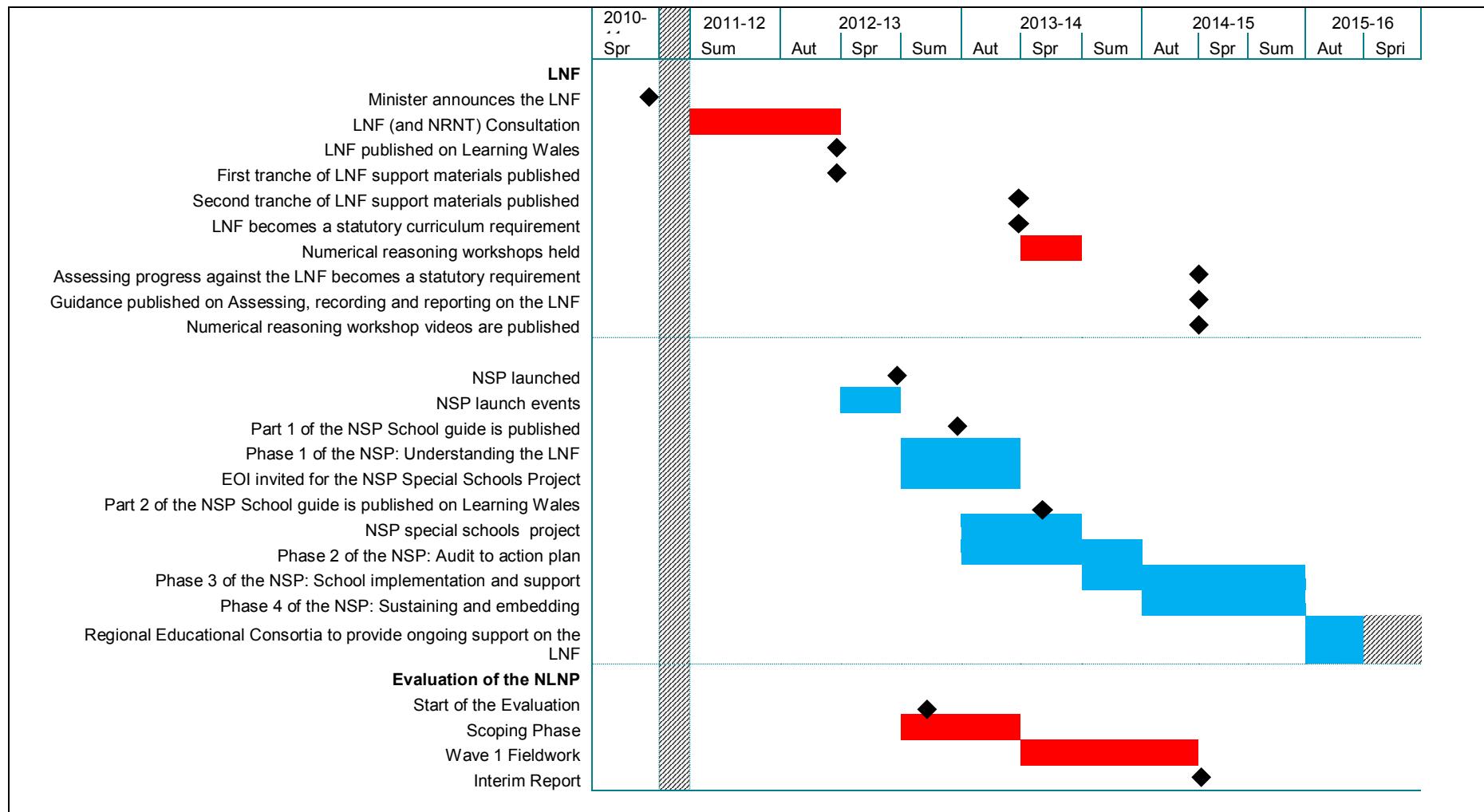
Glossary of terms

CA	Challenge Advisor
Consortium	Regional Education Consortium
ITET	Initial Teacher Education and Training
ITET Centres	Initial Teacher Education and Training Centres
LNF	National Literacy and Numeracy Framework
LA	Local Authority
MEP	Masters in Educational Practice
National Tests	National Reading and Numeracy Tests
NLNP	National Literacy and Numeracy Programmes
NSP	National Support Programme
NQT	Newly Qualified Teacher
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OTLN	Outstanding Teachers of Literacy and Numeracy Programme
OTL	Outstanding Teacher of Literacy
OTN	Outstanding Teacher of Numeracy
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
PLC	Professional Learning Community

1. Introduction

1.1 The National Literacy and Numeracy Programmes (NLNP) form part of the Welsh Government's Programme for Government (Welsh Government, 2013a) and the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) School Improvement Action Plan (Leighton Andrews, 2011) and, more recently, have been included as part of Qualified for Life (Welsh Government, 2014e). The rationale behind the NLNP is the desire to address the issue of low literacy and numeracy levels amongst young people in Wales, and to take steps to ensure that this is addressed. The NLNP seeks to improve achievement and raise educational standards through improved and enhanced teaching practices in literacy and numeracy (supported through initial teacher education and training – ITET, and a range of professional development activities) and improved assessment of progress (through a national programme of testing). This evaluation explores two components of the NLNP in some detail, namely the National Literacy and Numeracy Framework (henceforth referred to as the 'LNF') and the National Reading and Numeracy Tests (hereafter referred to as the 'National Tests'), in addition to a number of other NLNP initiatives.

Figure 1-1: Timeline for the implementation of the NLNP



The LNF

- 1.2 The LNF was developed in partnership with practitioners and phased in over a 2 year period, being first published in January 2013. Since September 2013, schools in Wales have been required to place the LNF at the heart of the school curriculum. The LNF encourages an approach to teaching and learning across the curriculum centred on the development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills from Reception through to Year 9. For literacy the key strands are; oracy, reading and writing skills, and in numeracy; numerical reasoning, number skills, measuring skills, and data handling skills. The LNF is a continuum of learning for all learners including those with additional learning needs. It also supports practitioners in being able to assess the progress of pupils. Since September 2014, assessing the progress of students against the expectation statements of the LNF has been a statutory requirement. (Welsh Government, 2013)

The National Tests

- 1.3 The National Reading Test and a National Numeracy Test (procedural) were introduced in May 2013. In May 2014, the National Numeracy Test (reasoning) was introduced. The Welsh Government adopted a phased approach to the introduction of the national tests to allow schools time to prepare for their introduction and access available support. The National Tests were designed to supplement the formative evidence collected by practitioners through the assessment of pupil progress against the expectation statements set out in the LNF. They represented the Welsh Government's efforts to deliver a consistent approach to the assessment of pupils from Year 2 to Year 9. They provide a basis on which practitioners can diagnose and assess the performance of their pupils against their peers, locally, regionally and at a national level and have been designed to facilitate reporting to parents.

1.4 The NLNP also includes a range of measures designed to improve the quality of literacy and numeracy provision in Wales. In addition to the LNF and the National Tests, it includes:

- **The National Support Programme (NSP):** Commissioned by the Welsh Government in January 2013 and delivered by CfBT Education Trust (CfBT), the NSP has represented perhaps the single greatest investment to support schools in the implementation of the LNF. Following a phased model of delivery, every primary and secondary school in Wales has been able to access a targeted support programme (after a short period at the outset Special schools and Pupil Referral Units also became eligible for support). Launched in February 2013 through a series of national events, the NSP was delivered in four distinct phases:
 - **Phase 1: Understanding the LNF.** Delivered from March 2013 to January 2014, NSP Partners¹ engaged schools, and introduced the LNF to head teachers and senior leaders. Work was also done to establish where schools were in terms of responding to the LNF and to identify immediate priorities for support.
 - **Phase 2: Audit and Direct Partner Support** Completed in April 2014, NSP Partners supported schools in the completion of a self-evaluation or audit of their progress in implementing the LNF and provided advice and information on the initial stages of implementing the LNF. This was used to help the identification of priorities for support.
 - **Phase 3: School Implementation Support.** From April 2014 to July 2015 based on the priorities identified in the school audits, NSP Partners have coordinated a targeted programme of support, including access to subject-specialists.

¹ Every school in Wales was eligible to receive support from an NSP Partner. NSP Partners had been recruited by CfBT and were responsible for supporting schools to introduce the LNF and the National Tests through a tailored programme of support.

- **Phase 4: Sustaining and embedding.** The focus of this phase, is on mainstreaming activity and planning for ongoing support for the LNF as the NSP is phased out and accountability for the delivery of support is transferred to the Consortia. This phase was intended to run between September 2015 and July 2016, however progress made by Consortia and the NSP meant that the phase was delivered alongside phase 3 and the NSP brought to a close in July 2015.
- **The Outstanding Teachers of Literacy and Numeracy Programme (OTLN):** In order to access the School Effectiveness Grant (or the Education Improvement Grant – EIG, from April 2015), regional education Consortia (henceforth referred to as ‘Consortia’) have been required to support *‘sharing of best practice through the use of outstanding teachers of literacy and numeracy to provide coaching and mentoring opportunities for teaching staff who are in need of additional support (Welsh Government, 2013c)*. Considerable latitude in programme-level guidance has enabled the delivery models adopted by the four Consortia to differ, both in terms of the number of OTLs or OTNs recruited, and in the intensity of support.
- **A range of guidance materials and resources housed on the Learning Wales website:** Although not specifically designed solely to support the NLNP when it was launched in September 2013, Learning Wales was developed to provide a one stop shop for practitioners to access the latest statutory guidance and contemporary research. By providing practitioners with access to higher quality resources, particularly around literacy and numeracy, it is hoped that this will support an improvement in the quality of teaching in literacy and numeracy. Specific LNF support made available from 2013 through Learning Wales included guidance documents, training packs and a range of exemplification and classroom resources.
- **Specific guidance developed to support the development of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs):** Initially launched in

2008 to support the implementation of the School Effectiveness Framework, the National Model for PLCs was developed by the Welsh Government to provide practitioners with an effective model of peer-to-peer collaboration. PLCs are based on current research on the effectiveness of different types of peer-to-peer working and the characteristics of effective learning models. Using the National Model, PLCs have the potential enhance the quality of professional learning. (Welsh Government, 2013b).

- In 2014, the Minister for Education and Skills launched the **New Deal for the Education Workforce**, underpinned by a Professional Learning Model (PLM). The PLM is based on professional learning approaches proven to have the most sustainable impact on raising standards of professional practice. One of the four core strands of the PLM is focussed on ‘Effective Collaboration’. With the aim of extending the existing suite of PLC materials, the Welsh Government are in the process of developing new resources and exploring a range of alternative approaches to collaborative working. (Welsh Government 2015).

1.5 In turn, these initiatives are reinforced by:

- **Support offered by the four regional education Consortia (Consortia), principally through linked Challenge Advisers (CA).** As outlined in the National Model for Regional Working, Consortia have taken on a key role in supporting schools to improve the quality of teaching and literacy and numeracy, principally by supporting the implementation of the LNF alongside support offered by the NSP. Although the delivery model adopted by Consortia has differed depending on local circumstance, and the preferences of their constituent Local Authorities (LAs), a key part of this must include provision for each school to have access to a Challenge Advisor (CA). CAs provide a direct link between the Consortia, the appropriate LA and a school, and provide a source of support and challenge. Responsible for taking forward all aspects of school improvement, this includes support around teaching of literacy and

numeracy. Where required, CAs are authorised to broker access to specialist support. In many cases this will mean the provision of funding for access to support from subject specialists.

- **The Masters in Educational Practice (MEP).** In order to support the professional development of Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs), the Welsh Government has supported the development of the MEP. This was developed by an alliance led by Cardiff University alongside Aberystwyth, Bangor and the Institute of Education (University College London), and delivered through a blended learning approach of online learning and learning events both of which are hosted by the University of Cardiff, together with face to face support from an External MEP Mentor. Within the MEP, Cardiff University modules are focussed specifically on literacy and numeracy, with this work being supported by MEP learning packs available online on Learning Wales. The scheme has provided an opportunity for every NQT in Wales who meets the eligibility criteria to study for a Masters level qualification.

Rationale for the National Literacy and Numeracy Programmes

- 1.6 In 2009, a total of 132 schools and 3,720 pupils in Wales took part in the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) (OECD, 2012). This study has taken place internationally every three years since 2000,² and provides countries with a comparative indication as to how their 15 year old pupils perform in a series of tests in the three learning domains. These tests do not look at how well a pupil has mastered a specific curriculum, but explore reading, mathematical and scientific literacy in terms of general competencies (in other words, how well pupils can apply the knowledge and skills they have learned at school to real-life scenarios). The findings from this study alerted the Welsh Government to the need to focus specifically on raising attainment in the fields of

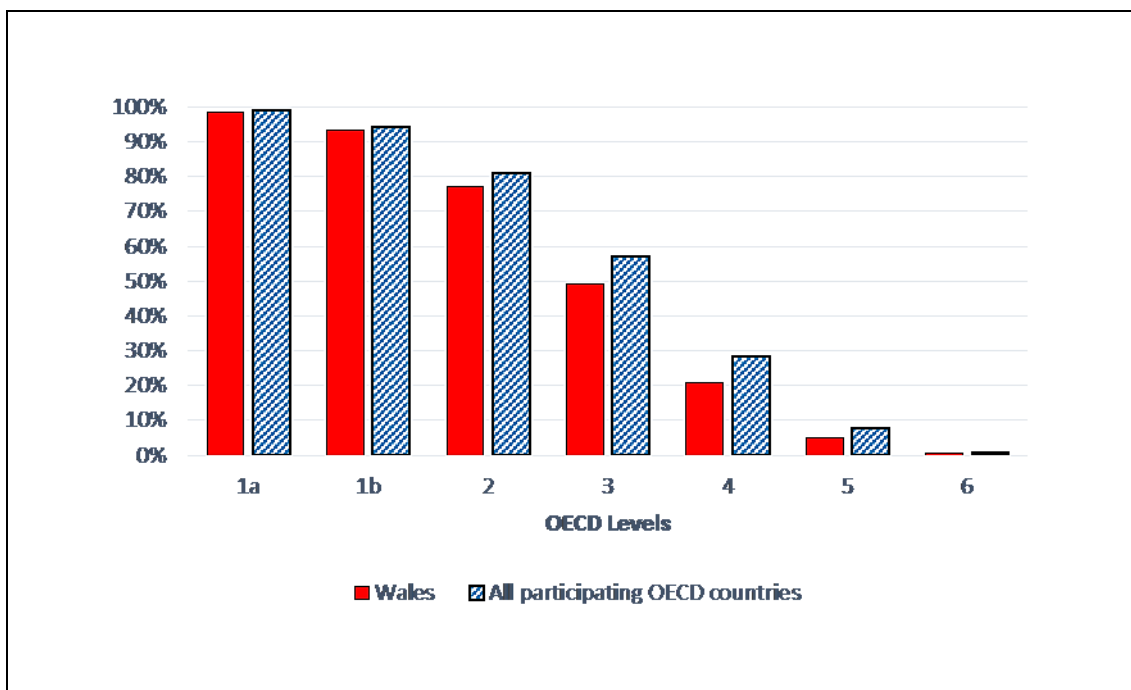
²Wales first took part in 2006.

reading and mathematics, where, as outlined below, Welsh 15-year-olds did not perform as well as many of their international peers.

PISA 2009/12 attainment in reading

- 1.7 The 2009 survey revealed that, in Wales, the mean score for reading (476 points) was below that of the OECD average across the 65 participating countries and economies (493 points), and this had changed little by 2012 (a mean for Wales of 480 compared with an OECD mean of 496). Indeed, 29 countries in 2009 were found to have mean scores that were significantly higher than that of Wales. In both years, the scores in England, Scotland and Northern Ireland were also higher than in Wales.
- 1.8 The overall spread in attainment (from low to high) was similar to the OECD average: a range of 307 points in 2009 in Wales (299 points in 2012) compared to the OECD average of 305 (310 in 2012) and represented scores from below Level 1b to the bottom of Level 6 (the highest OECD level). What is evident from Figure 1-1, however, is that, comparatively speaking; Welsh pupils had a higher proportion of low-scoring pupils than the OECD average, and fewer pupils at the highest levels of attainment than was the mean for OECD countries. Over four fifths of all OECD pupils (81 per cent) in 2009 achieved a mean of Level 2 or above, but in Wales the figure was 77 per cent. Equally, whereas over one third (36.7 per cent) of all pupils attained Level 4 and above, just over one quarter (26.7 per cent) of Welsh pupils did so and the proportion operating at the highest level (Level 6) was, at 0.6 per cent, lower than the mean for all OECD countries (0.8 per cent).

Figure 1-2: Percentage of 15 year olds achieving PISA reading proficiency levels



Source: data sourced from 'PISA2009, Achievement of 15-year-olds in Wales'³

1.9 Wales had (and continues to have) one of the lowest attainment gaps between boys and girls, suggesting that national strategies to improve the reading attainment of boys were having some success and that, therefore, further improvement in reading in both form (continuous and non-continuous texts) and activity (from access and retrieval to reflection and evaluation) was possible. Nonetheless, the outcomes of the PISA tests suggest that there was some intensive work to be done to raise reading levels amongst 15-year-olds to a level comparable with many of their international peers.

PISA 2009/12 attainment in mathematics

1.10 The story of comparatively poor performance was also noted for mathematics, where 35 countries significantly outperformed Welsh pupils (38 in 2012). The mean Welsh score for mathematics (of 472

³ See Bradshaw J et al (2009) PISA 2009 (Online) Available at: <http://www.nfer.ac.uk/publications/npdz02/npdz02.pdf> (Accessed: 05/01/2015)

points – 468 in 2012) was significantly below that of the OCED average (496 points– 494 in 2012). In Wales there was a comparatively small difference between the highest-attaining and the lowest-attaining pupils, but this was because Wales had a higher proportion at Level 1 or below than the OECD average (26.2 per cent compared to 22 per cent) and a lower proportion at the highest level (Level 6 - 0.6 per cent compared to 3.1 per cent). Less than one fifth of Welsh pupils (19.3 per cent) achieved scores that would put them in the top three levels while, across all of the surveyed countries, the average achievement for combined Levels 4 to 6 was 31.6 per cent.

The Welsh Government response

1.11 Following the publication of the outcomes of PISA 2009, the Welsh Government set in motion a number of measures to promote specific improvements in literacy and numeracy amongst children and young people in Wales. These dedicated measures to facilitate school improvement (set out in paragraphs 1.2 to 1.5) were established in the context of a range of ongoing and related strategies and policy developments, including:

- existing targeted policies (such as Cymorth and Flying Start, launched by the Welsh Government in 2006/07) that were intended to reduce existing socio-economic inequalities and narrow gaps in attainment.
- policies intended to enhance the educational experience for all children (including the national roll-out of the Foundation Phase approach), enabling them to become independent learners, with an inclination and propensity to become problem solvers and make connections between subject areas.

1.12 The improvement measures have continued, both in terms of activity that is directly related to the NLNP (a consultation on curriculum reform to align with LNF requirements in key subject areas) and in terms of Initial Teacher Education and Training (ITET), the wider curriculum and the introduction of further large-scale school improvement strategies.

Curriculum Developments

1.13 In March 2014, following a range of practitioner engagement activities, a consultation (Welsh Government, 2014b) was launched on proposed revisions to two Areas of Learning (Language, Literacy and Communication Skills and; Mathematical Development within the Foundation Phase) and three Programmes of Study (Key Stages 2 to 4 for English, Welsh first language, and mathematics) to complement the LNF. In its response (published in October 2014), the Welsh Government indicated that they:

- had made changes to the programmes of study to reflect some concerns about the appropriateness of the challenges in mathematical skills (particularly around Key Stages 3 and 4)
- would be clearer about expected progression, in terms of age and stage (particularly in the Foundation Phase)
- would explore the options for tailoring NSP support to more effectively address the issues about appropriate training support for teachers and practitioners raised during the consultation (Welsh Government, 2014f)
- The new Areas of Learning and programmes of study were published in October 2014 ready to prepare schools for statutory introduction in September 2015.

Developments under the wider education and skills agenda

1.14 In addition to the NLNP specific activities, a number of other advances have been made under the wider education and skills agenda that may have implications for the operation and future direction of elements of the NLNP. The first of these was the **Tabberer review** of ITET in Wales (2013),⁴ which led to a number of recommendations including a specific emphasis on a review of pedagogic models (to *'make sure that trainees receive clear and consistent guidance on how they should organise*

⁴ The recommendations and Welsh Government response are outlined at: Tabberer R (2013) A Review of Initial Teacher Training in Wales (Online) Available at: <http://gov.wales/topics/educationandskills/publications/wagreviews/review-of-initial-teacher-training-in-wales/?lang=en> (Accessed: 05/01/2015)

*teaching and learning in their subject(s) and phase(s)') and an increased focus on continuing professional development in schools. To build on the Tabberer review, Professor John Furlong was appointed as Wales' expert ITET Adviser in order to 'help 'raise the standard, quality and consistency' of teacher training and of assessment in ITET across Wales. The report, '**Teaching Tomorrow's Teachers**' published in March 2015, the outcomes of the review, and the process that was put in place following it, have clear implications for the ways in which ITET Centres and schools liaise about the ways in which the teaching of literacy and numeracy skills are (for example) conceptualised and integrated into classroom practice (and the wider curriculum). It also has implications for the level of support provided by schools to NQTs and those studying for a Masters in Educational Practice (Furlong, 2015).*

1.15 Following the **Hill review** in 2013⁵, the Welsh Government also published a new framework for school improvement in Wales (February 2014) in which **a National Model for Regional Working** (through the Consortia) was outlined (Welsh Government, 2014d). This enshrines the role of the four Consortia working on behalf of LAs to promote improved outcomes for children and young people. A central pillar of the regional working framework is the commitment that every school should be allocated a named Challenge Advisor (CA). CAs have a specific remit to deliver a tiered package of support to schools considered at risk of underperforming, or that already show signs of underperformance. For some schools (such as those taking part in **Schools Challenge Cymru**) this may also provide an opportunity to focus even more closely on the raising of attainment in literacy and numeracy, as well as on the further professional development for teachers.

1.16 More recently, in February 2015, Professor Graham Donaldson published his independent review of curriculum and assessment arrangements in Wales entitled '**Successful Futures**'. This set out 68

⁵ See papers at: Welsh Government (2014) The future delivery of education services in Wales (Online) Available at <http://gov.wales/consultations/education/future-delivery-of-education-services-in-wales/?lang=en> (Accessed: 05/01/2015)

recommendations designed to ‘revisit and reassert the fundamental purposes of education... and to recommend a curriculum and assessment arrangements that can best fulfil those purposes.’

(Donaldson, 2015). Wide ranging in scope, these recommendations (if taken forward) have considerable implications for the nature and scope of the school curriculum in Wales, and the manner in which the performance of schools is assessed. Changes in these areas have the potential to have an impact on the performance of young people (one of the aims of the NLNP) and will need careful alignment with key initiatives such as the LNF and the National Tests.

Evaluation aims and design

1.17 In considering the evaluation design for the NLNP we have had to take cognisance both of the context into which it was launched (in which there were a number of existing strategies to promote attainment and school improvement), and the new interventions (and models of intervention) and education-related developments that have taken place since that date. Given the wealth of different support strategies, opportunities for continuous professional development and collaboration models for schools and teachers that are in operation in Wales at present, we must also acknowledge that the extent to which it will be possible to attribute any future observed increases in pupil attainment directly to the NLNP will be limited. Ascertaining the impact (or perceived impact) of elements of the NLNP (such as the LNF or the National Tests, as well as the support strategies that underpin them) are therefore essential.⁶

Evaluation aims and objectives

1.18 The Welsh Government identified two principal aims for the study. These were the need to evaluate how the NLNP has been interpreted and how the various activities related to the NLNP are being implemented. The

⁶ It should be emphasised that the support strategies, by themselves, are unlikely to lead directly to measurable increases in pupil attainment.

government were particularly interested in exploring and investigating any changes in:

- **teaching practice**, including any changes in teachers' behaviour and approach in classrooms, in relation to pedagogy and the integration of literacy and numeracy in the curriculum, to the preparation of pupils for the National Tests and to their use of test data to inform practice.
- **educational standards**, particularly the extent to which pupil attainment in literacy and numeracy had improved as a result of the implementation of the NLNP.
- **pupils' knowledge**, exploring the extent to which a focus on literacy and numeracy had led (or was likely to lead) to improvements in pupil attainment in other subject areas, as a consequence of enhanced reading and numerical skills.

1.19 Given that the primary beneficiaries of the interventions that were being put in place (particularly in relation to support) would be teachers (hence schools), there was a need to identify what the links might be between the NLNP inputs (including all the mechanisms that were being established to improve subject knowledge and pedagogy) and the anticipated outcomes from the NLNP.

Research Design

1.20 In finalising the research design, we first undertook a scoping study, which included a series of strategic interviews with the central policy team and a range of pertinent stakeholders, and a documentary review, in order to understand the concepts, policies and strategies that underpinned the NLNP. These activities led to the construction of an overarching logic model for the study. As set out in Figure 1-2, this model summarised:

- the underlying theories of change for the NLNP (including the evidence-based view that raising achievement is dependent on raising the quality and consistency of teaching)
- the policy and practice assumptions underlying the intervention (underpinning the level of success of the NLNP are a number of

factors, not least of which are the awareness and engagement of education practitioners, and the support of stakeholders such as ITET Centres)

- the various inputs arising from the introduction of the NLNP (including the LNF, the National Tests, the MEP and OTLN) alongside the support provided by the NSP, Consortia, and emerging changes to ITET)
- the expected relationship between the inputs and the anticipated outputs, such as the number/proportion of schools that have accessed support through the NSP (during each Phase) and the number of OTL/OTNs in receipt of training to support the coaching/mentoring of 'Emerging Practitioners'
- the anticipated outcomes (both short and long term), which for teachers and schools in Wales, might include more effective use of assessment data to support teaching and learning; improved teaching of literacy and numeracy across the curriculum and a stronger culture of collaboration amongst education practitioners to support improved teaching of literacy and numeracy
- the projected impact of the interventions, which were expected to be an improvement in the literacy and numeracy attainment of young people in Wales leading to improved educational outcomes relative to a) earlier cohorts of pupils at Key Stage 4, to b) peers in England and Northern Ireland at Key Stage 4 and to c) international peers (as measured by PISA, for example).

1.21 While the programme, as a whole, is ultimately designed to improve the literacy and numeracy outcomes for children and young people, they are not the primary treatment group for the interventions (as noted in paragraph 1.19). Given that, the evaluation framework that we designed following the construction of the logic model, was set up to enable us to explore:

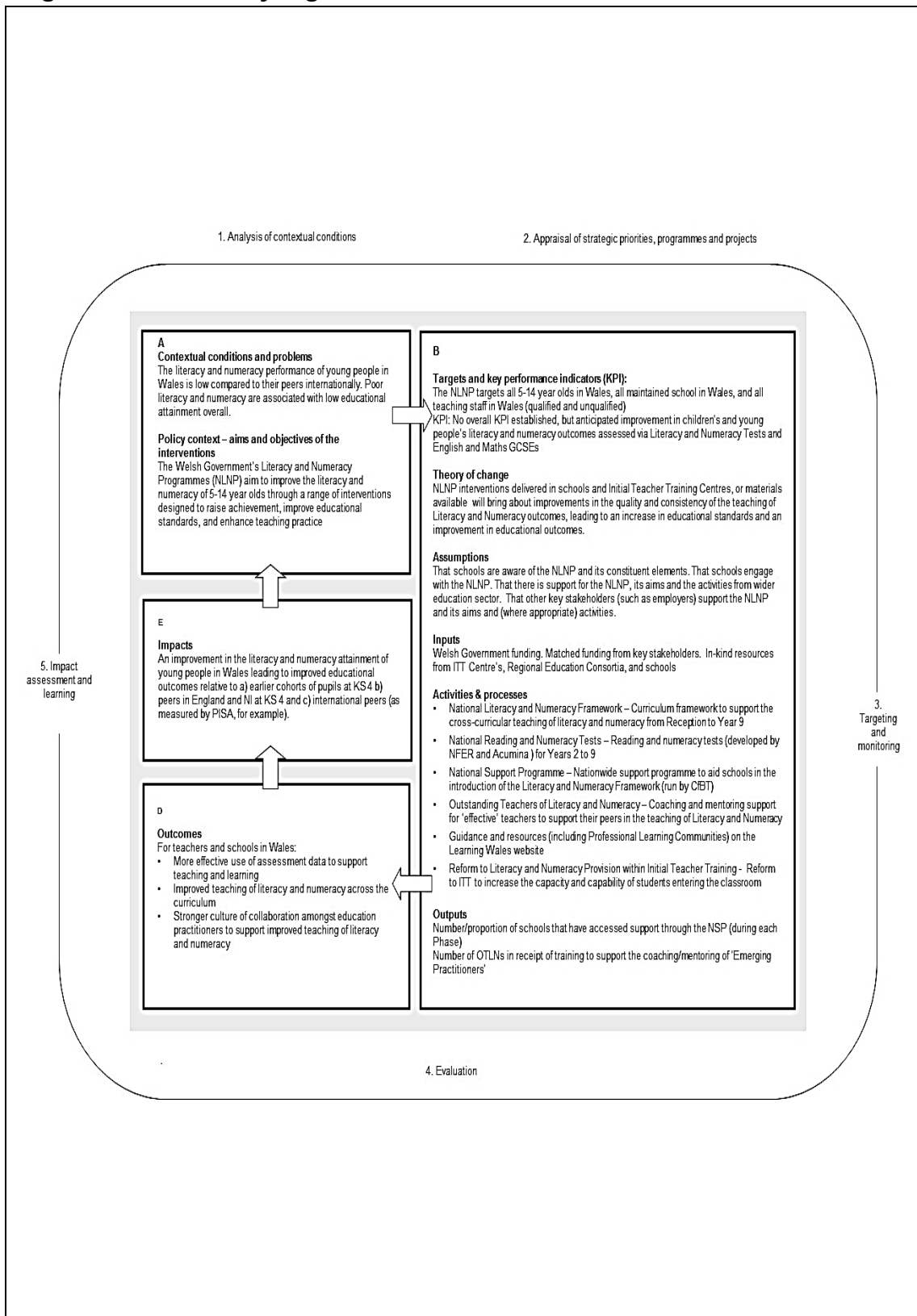
- levels of awareness, understanding and engagement of the NLNP (and, more particularly, of the LNF and the National Tests) amongst

senior leaders and other education practitioners (including ITET Centres and trainee teachers), and amongst pupils and their parents

- the relative effectiveness of the National Support Programme (NSP) and the range of other support strategies (including the Learning Wales website and the Professional Learning Communities) in communicating, promoting and assisting the implementation of the NLNP
- the relative impact of enhanced teacher training (including through the Masters in Educational Practice) and CPD on the ability of teachers to promote effective learning strategies in the classroom.

1.22 In the longer-term, we will also assess the extent to which, based on the perceived direction of travel, the NLNP is likely to achieve its aims (whether now and in the future).

Figure 1-3: Summary logic model for the NLNP



Source: SQW

Sources of evidence

1.23 This report draws on a number of different sources of evidence (full details of which are provided in Annex A). These include:

- interviews with key stakeholders
- an e-survey sent to all senior leaders in primary and secondary schools in Wales (including special schools and pupil referral units)
- an e-survey of all identified Outstanding Teachers of Literacy and/or Numeracy (OTLs and/or OTNs)
- area based case studies involving case-study visits to 20 schools across four LAs
- two thematic case studies.

Interviews with key stakeholders (October 2013 and July-September 2014)

1.24 Interviews with key stakeholders including,

- Project leads at the Welsh Government
- the Literacy and Numeracy Lead at Estyn
- , the Head of the MEP Alliance
- the Expert Advisor to the Welsh Government for ITET
- the Literacy and/or Numeracy Lead in each of the four Consortia
- the Heads of the three ITET Centres in Wales
- staff at the National Foundation for Educational Research (who designed the National Tests) and at CfBT Education Trust (who delivered the NSP).

An e-survey of senior leaders (June-July 2014)

1.25 An e-survey was sent to senior leaders in every primary and secondary school in Wales (including special schools and pupil referral units). The survey provided insight into:

- levels of school engagement with the NLNP
- reasons for accessing support or implementing changes
- reasons for not accessing support or implementing changes

- the challenges faced by schools accessing support and implementing changes
- the perceived impact of the NLNP on the quality and consistency of the teaching of literacy and numeracy.

1.26 Based on a total of 1,575 valid email addresses, in total responses were secured from 352 schools (a response rate of 22 per cent). Such a sample size has the potential to provide reasonably accurate insights into the population as a whole but care must be taken when examining the behaviour of sub-groups.

An e-survey of Outstanding Teachers of Literacy and/or Numeracy (June-July 2014)

1.27 An e-survey was sent to all OTLs/OTNs who had been identified at the time of the survey (N= 162). The survey was designed to understand the:

- types of professional that have taken on the role of an Outstanding Teacher
- reasons that professionals chose to take up the role of an Outstanding Teacher
- extent to which professionals have engaged with the Outstanding Teachers initiative
- extent to which Outstanding Teachers are satisfied with the support/training provided for them
- challenges faced by professionals in delivering the Outstanding Teachers initiative
- effectiveness of the support offered by Outstanding Teachers.

1.28 Due to concerns around data security, the survey tool was sent out by programme leads within the four Consortia. This restricted the extent to which it was possible to undertake an effective reminder strategy. Responses were received from 59 OTLNs (36 per cent). Although a good response rate for an e-survey this placed major constraints on the sophistication of the analysis we were able to conduct.

Area-based case studies (September-December 2014)

- 1.29 We undertook four area-based case studies involving visits to 20 schools across four LAs (one LA located in each Consortia area). Visits were undertaken to explore awareness, engagement and the impact of the NLNP on individual practitioners, schools, and the wider school cluster.
- 1.30 Where possible visits were undertaken in two secondary schools, two primary schools and a special school or Pupil Referral Unit in each LA area (in one area we visited three primary schools rather than the two initially anticipated. See Annex A for more information). Over the course of the fieldwork, interviews were undertaken with a range of stakeholders including senior leaders (23), classroom teachers (40), parents (27) and pupils (116). We also spoke, where possible, to each school's named Challenge Advisor (16) and NSP Partner (12).
- 1.31 Interviews were undertaken using a semi-structured topic guide. Qualitative analysis software was used to code the responses and to support an accurate disaggregation of the views of sub-populations such as school leaders or classroom teachers. The views gathered from these interviews (and the case study interviews) are therefore the participants own self-reported experiences of the programme and should not be seen as representative of the situation across the country. This data does, however, provide robust data illustrating experience of those affected by the implementation of programme.

Thematic case-studies (September-December 2014)

- 1.32 Two thematic case-studies were conducted. These explored the impact of the NLNP on NQTs and the impact of reforms to literacy and numeracy provision within ITET.
- 1.33 The impact of the NLNP on NQTs: Interviews were undertaken with nine recently qualified teachers (who had passed statutory induction within the academic year prior to our visit) and seven school-based mentors.
- 1.34 The impact of reforms to literacy and numeracy provision within ITET: A case study visit was conducted to each of the three ITET Centres. Interviews were undertaken with a range of stakeholders in each Centre

including senior staff (8), lecturers (13), ITET Students (48) and school-based mentors (2).

Report Structure

1.35 The rest of the report is structured as follows:

- **Section 2: Awareness of and confidence of education practitioners in implementing the LNF and the Tests.** This section explores the level of awareness and understanding of the aims of the NLNP amongst education professionals in Wales.
- **Section 3: Engaging with and implementing the LNF and the National Tests.** This section considers the implications arising from the introduction of the LNF and the National Tests for key stakeholder groups.
- **Section 4: Effectiveness of the support provided to schools to help them implement the LNF and the National Tests.** We consider the effectiveness of the support made available to education professionals to help the introduction of the LNF and the National Tests.
- **Section 5: Awareness and understanding of the LNF and the Tests amongst pupils and their parents.** In this section, we consider the effectiveness of the approaches adopted by schools to raise the awareness and understanding of the LNF and the National Tests amongst pupils and their parents
- **Section 6: Emerging Impacts of the LNF and the National Tests.** We consider the perceived impact to date of the NLNP on educational professionals and children and young people in Wales.
- **Section 7: Emerging Findings and Areas for Consideration.** This section looks at the emerging implications of these early findings and presents issues for consideration for key stakeholders, including the Welsh Government, Consortia, ITET Centres, and schools.

2 Awareness of and confidence of education practitioners in implementing the LNF and the National Tests

2.1 To support an improvement in the quality of teaching and learning in Wales, it will be crucial that education professionals in schools and ITET Centres understand the reasons for the implementation of the LNF and the National Tests, and the outcomes that the Welsh Government hope to achieve. It is also important that they are confident about how to go about embedding both initiatives within their practice. To raise awareness of, and confidence in implementing, the LNF and the National Tests the Welsh Government have commissioned a range of different types of support, including the NSP. These have been designed to complement other activities delivered at a regional and a local level, including for example the support provided to schools by Challenge Advisors (CAs). This section will examine the extent to which practitioners have the confidence required to embed the LNF and the National Tests within their practice, and are aware of the support available to them in supporting this outcome. Where appropriate we will differentiate between levels of confidence at a strategic and operational level.

Awareness of the LNF and the National Tests at a strategic level

2.2 In each of the education settings we visited (in September-December 2014), there was evidence that the introduction of the LNF and the National Tests had influenced onward strategic planning. However, that is not to say that the introduction of the LNF and the National Tests was equally prominent in such thinking. In most of the schools and ITET settings that we visited, senior staff felt that the LNF had been more influential in their thinking than the National Tests. A number of factors related to the National Tests appear to have contributed to this outcome:

- School leaders in around one third of the schools (seven of the 20 schools) we visited felt that the introduction of the National Tests had provoked a 'moral dilemma' around the extent to which they felt able to trust the strength of their schemes of work to ensure that pupils

were prepared for tests, or whether changes would be required to support test-specific preparation. In most cases, the schools we spoke to had decided upon the former. However, as noted by a number of the CAs we spoke to, in schools where school leaders felt under pressure to achieve a rapid improvement in pupil outcomes, for instance those that had been placed in Special Measures, a much greater level of 'coaching' was taking place. For example a small number of the CAs we spoke to (three of sixteen) indicated that some schools intended to make changes to their schemes of work to free up more time for pupils to complete practice papers and receive targeted tuition to support them in areas where they had done less well. While it is to be expected that schools will want to prepare their pupils for the National Tests (and indeed, should do so), it was felt that, where such preparations were found to have narrowed the curriculum. This might not be considered a positive outcome.

- While most of the case-study schools we visited were using National Test data to support teaching and learning, a small proportion had actively sought to minimise the effect of the introduction of the National Tests on their practice as they did not feel that the tests supported the development of children and young people or the wider approach of the school. It was felt that younger children, such as those in Years 2 to 4 (i.e. Foundation Phase to Key Stage 2), were too young to perform reliably under test conditions. As such, the data they generated was thought to be of little value to teachers who, school leaders believed, had a much more rounded understanding of the particular ability of individual children.
- Amongst senior staff in ITET Centres it was noted that while it was clearly important that ITET students were aware of the tests, and what would be required of them, operational matters associated with their delivery were primarily a matter for schools. It was therefore trusted that placement schools would provide students with the exposure that they needed. It was noted that most courses included at least one module on assessment, but, only small changes had

been required to these modules in order to support the use of data collected through the National Tests.

Confidence in implementing the LNF at a strategic level

- 2.3 Despite widespread acknowledgement of the importance of the LNF, confidence amongst School Leaders in ensuring that it has been embedded effectively within the classroom environment was more mixed. Only one fifth (20%) of school leaders surveyed in the summer term of 2013/14 considered that their school had curriculum planning and assessment arrangements in place to support the introduction of the LNF. Although the proportion of schools with such arrangements in place is likely to have increased, following the introduction of a statutory requirement for schools to do so in September 2014 (Welsh Government, 2014), this will be re-examined in future fieldwork.
- 2.4 Amongst the school leaders we spoke to during the case study visits, one of the key barriers to making progress in this area was felt to be a lack of guidance supporting the effective implementation of the LNF, and, in particular the assessment of pupil progress.⁷ While most interviewees indicated that they supported the overarching aims of the LNF and had put in place a strategy to support these, there was concern about the absence of clarity on the model(s) of practice that the Welsh Government were seeking to introduce. For example, one school leader noted that *'what we really need is exemplification materials to show us what is required of us'* (School Leader). By that, she meant case studies of how other schools had implemented the framework, in effect, something to indicate what 'good looked like'. From her perspective, therefore, she felt that there was a danger that she was leading the school on a path that was incompatible with what the Welsh Government had intended.
- 2.5 This view was echoed by senior staff and lecturers in the three ITET Centres. In all of the settings we visited staff voiced frustration at what

⁷ This may reflect a lack of awareness of the range of guidance that had been produced by the WG to support the programmes and was made available – see paragraph 2.16 to 2.17

they considered to be the lack of dialogue between the Centres and the Welsh Government around the development and delivery of the NLNP, and a lack of clarity about what type(s) of practice the Welsh Government hoped to see following its introduction. For example, while many of the practitioners we spoke to were strongly of the view that they knew what effective practice looks like, and that the strategies that they were putting in place would support an improvement both in the quality of teaching provided to ITET students, there was concern that such practices might not align with the expectations of the Welsh Government (and/or Estyn). For example one lecturer noted that *'there remains a lack of clarity about the requirement to assess (against the LNF). Some schools have quite well developed tracking systems. [However] reading the guidance I'm not sure this is what is required. I think it distract[s] from the importance of diagnostic assessment'* (ITET Lecturer). Although they remained committed to encouraging students to focus on the quality of diagnostic assessment, they registered concern that they may not be preparing students for the type of approach encouraged by the Welsh Government.

Awareness of, and confidence in, implementing the LNF and the National Tests at an operational level

- 2.6 Given the priority attached by most school leaders to the LNF, the level of awareness amongst classroom teachers, in the schools we visited, was high. Indeed, in all of the schools that we visited every member of staff we interviewed recognised the LNF. The same was true for the National Tests, even where their school had not been required to administer them.

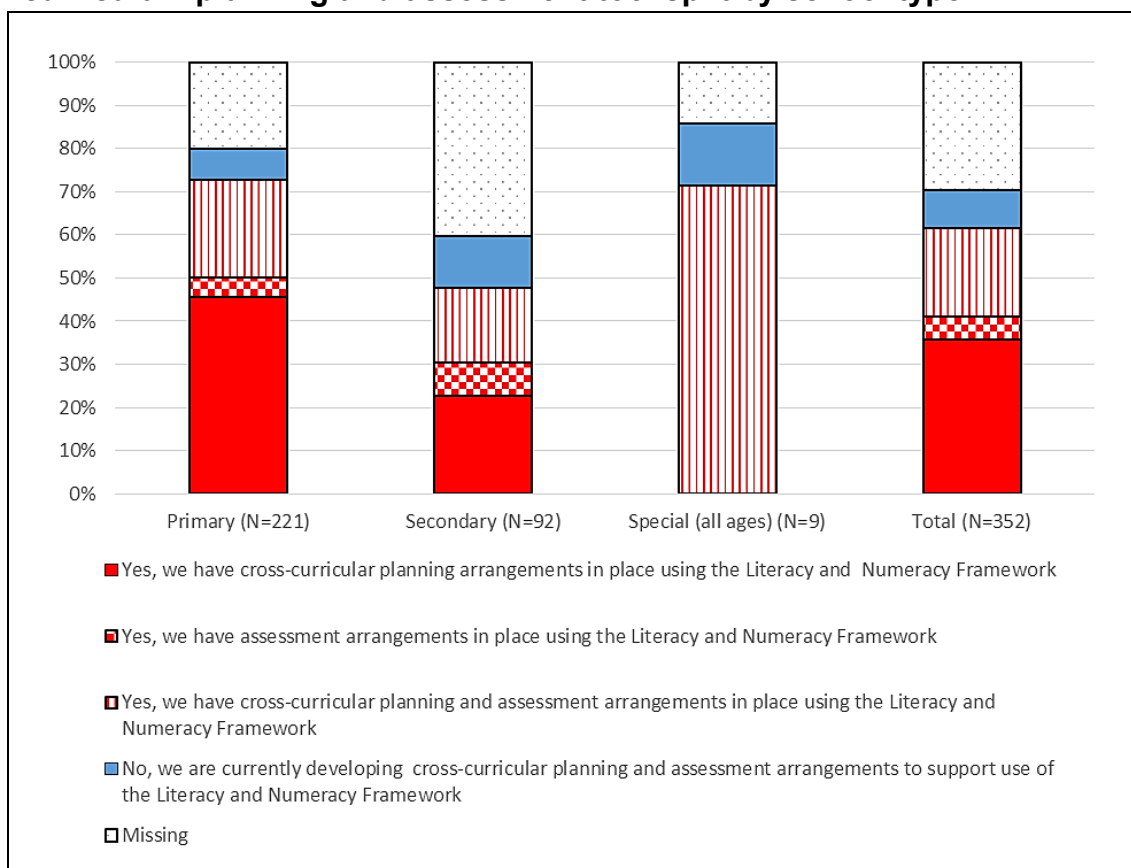
Having said that, confidence in interpreting the LNF, in particular, was more variable. While most if not all of the practitioners we spoke to felt confident, they admitted that understanding amongst some of their colleagues was *'more patchy'* (Secondary Practitioner). Such concerns were found to be particularly prevalent in the secondary schools we visited and amongst staff in departments that may not have traditionally have viewed themselves as *'teachers of literacy or numeracy'* (Primary

Practitioner). That said, in most of the schools we visited there was a feeling that '*they were getting there*' (Primary Practitioner). This view was corroborated through our interviews with the NSP Partners and CAs who took part in the fieldwork. A number of these recognised that the move towards approaches to teaching literacy and numeracy across the curriculum was one that secondary schools on the whole had found more challenging and felt that, as a result, embedding the LNF would require more time.

- 2.7 Such findings go some way to explain feedback received through our survey of school leaders (undertaken in summer 2014). Just under two-thirds (61 per cent) of the school leaders who responded to this question⁸ indicated that they considered their school to have either planning across the curriculum and/or assessment arrangements in place to support the introduction of the LNF. Nearly half of the respondents in a mainstream primary setting (46 per cent) indicated that this was the case, yet just over one tenth (13 per cent) of those school leaders in a mainstream secondary setting were of this view (See Figure 2-1).

⁸ Overall, some 70% of school leaders answered this question.

Figure 2-1: School's use of the Literacy and Numeracy Framework as a curriculum planning and assessment tool split by school type



Source: Survey of School Leaders (June-July 2014)
Type of question: Single-response

Awareness and confidence of recently qualified teachers

2.8 A similar pattern was also evident in our conversations with recently qualified teachers⁹ and their school-based mentors. Amongst teachers who had received their initial-teacher education and training (ITET) since the launch of the LNF there was generally a feeling of confidence that they had been given the tools to embed the LNF in their practice. This was a view endorsed, in most cases, by their mentors. Indeed, a number indicated that due to their training these teachers were better prepared than their colleagues. One noted that *'teachers are only just starting to get to grips with the LNF, to have someone in the staff room who has had a chance to think about what it means can be really helpful'* (School-Based Student Mentor). Those teachers who had not entered the teaching profession immediately on the completion of their ITET, or who

⁹Teachers were targeted who had passed statutory induction within the last 12 months.

had received their ITET outside Wales, generally had much less confidence and felt that they required more support to work with the LNF. This appeared particularly true for non-English/Welsh or maths specialists at a secondary level, who felt that they had little prior exposure to effective pedagogical approaches for teaching literacy and numeracy.

Awareness and confidence of staff in ITET Centres

2.9 As discussed in paragraph 2.3 it was evident that the introduction of the NLNP (particularly the LNF) has had a considerable impact on strategic planning within Wales' three ITET Centres. Strategies were evidently in place to support improvements in the awareness and the confidence of three principle groups: academic staff, school-based mentors and student teachers:

- **Awareness and confidence of lecturers:** As in schools, senior staff acknowledged that, while they were confident that all lecturers were aware of the LNF, and had taken steps to ensure that it was covered as appropriate during their contact time with students, there was still work to do. This picture was confirmed in our discussions with students. As noted by one student at Cardiff University '*In the first week we were told to bring a copy of the LNF to every lecture because you will need it. As promised, literacy and numeracy has been covered in every session we've had*' (Student Teacher). Such comments illustrate the increased prominence that literacy and numeracy have clearly obtained. Indeed, senior staff in all three Centres indicated that their policy was for literacy and numeracy-related objectives to be included in lessons wherever this was appropriate. However, through our interviews with students it was apparent that the practices advocated by some lecturers appeared inconsistent with this. Although most of the students we spoke to felt that they had been steered to use the objectives only where appropriate, a few indicated that academic staff had advocated other approaches including the suggestion that literacy and numeracy objectives should be included in all lessons.

- **Awareness and confidence of school-based mentors:** Across the three ITET Centres there was also broad agreement, amongst senior staff, that in order to achieve the required step-change in the quality of teaching of literacy and numeracy by student teachers, they would need to change the depth of the relationship between ITET settings and school-based student mentors in placement schools. For instance it was noted that while schools continue to be in a position to choose whether to facilitate placements, ITET Centres ‘leverage’ to seek improvements in the quality of support (where required) would remain weak. In one Centre, lecturers noted that, over the preceding year, one of their priorities had been to ensure that the personal literacy and numeracy of students was assessed consistently over their course, including while on placement. While they had felt able to ask school mentors to change the manner in which they assessed the performance of students, they felt that there was little they could do if it was evident that mentors themselves had deficiencies in this area, and this was having an impact on the quality of the support they provided.
- **Awareness and confidence of ITET students:** Given the progress evident in developing awareness and understanding of the LNF amongst academic staff and student mentors, it is perhaps not surprising that, while most of the ITET students we spoke to were aware of it, and considered themselves to have taken steps to embed it within their practice, the manner that they had sought to do so, and the extent to which they had achieved this, was variable. A number of factors appeared influential:

 - There was a perception amongst lecturers that post-graduate students had less time to tackle some of the issues that (they felt) could be explored in greater depth with students on a three or four year course. That said, most post-graduate students (while acknowledging gaps in their understanding around issues such as ‘tracking pupil progress’) felt that their course had ‘*put them on the right track*’ (ITET Student).

- Some students studying Welsh-medium courses in two of the three ITET Centres considered themselves to have been disadvantaged relative to their peers who studied through the medium of English. Although not a view universally held by all of the students studying a Welsh-medium course, these interviewees reported that relevant resources were not always available to them in Welsh. As a result, they said they spent a lot of time translating resources so that they could use them on placement, rather than focussing on enriching their understanding as to they could be used more effectively.
- Generally, primary specialists appeared more secure in their understanding of the LNF than secondary specialists, particularly those secondary trainees looking to qualify in subjects not traditionally associated with the teaching of literacy and numeracy, such as Art or Music. This often appeared symptomatic of the level of understanding of their tutors/lecturers and the feeling of the perceived ease with which literacy and numeracy tasks could be included within lessons in that subject in a meaningful way.

Awareness of education professionals of the support available to them in implementing the LNF and the National Tests

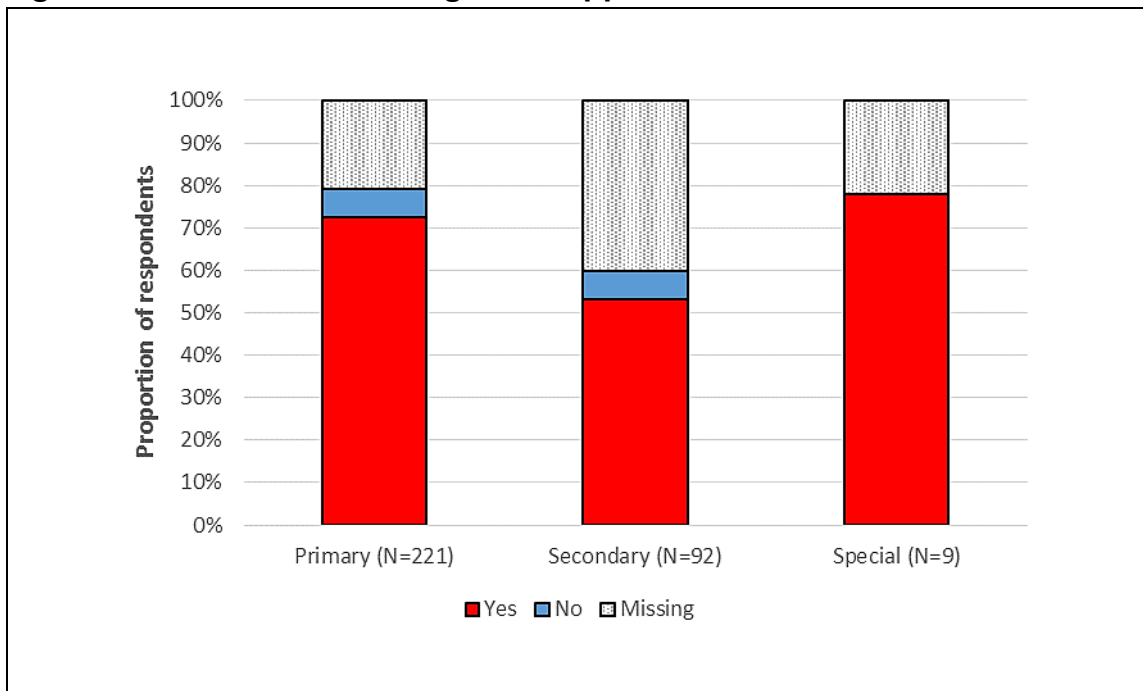
2.10 Given the concern expressed by some education professionals about their confidence in embedding the LNF, administering the National Tests and internally managing the use of the test data in an effective manner, it is important to reflect on the relative levels of awareness and take-up of the support available both through the NLNP and indeed other sources. In doing so we must acknowledge the importance of support activities commissioned at a national and a regional/local level.

The National Support Programme

2.11 Commissioned by the Welsh Government in January 2013, the NSP has represented perhaps the single greatest investment to support schools in the implementation of the LNF. Perhaps unsurprisingly, given the expectation that all those schools that wish to should have gained access to tailored support (Phase 3 of the programme) by July 2014, awareness of the NSP was high amongst school leaders, with most in the mainstream primary and secondary schools to whom we spoke, indicating that their school had been in receipt of some support. Although it was acknowledged that initial lack of clarity around the eligibility of Special Schools and Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) for support from NSP Partners had meant that it had taken longer to access support, school leaders in three of the four such settings we visited knew who their partner was.

2.12 These figures reflect the findings from the survey of school leaders, with nearly three quarters of responding primary schools and special schools and over half of responding secondary schools indicating that they had accessed such support (see Figure 2-2).

Figure 2-2: Schools accessing NSP support



Source: Survey of School Leaders (June-July 2014)
Type of question: Single response

2.13 Nonetheless, it was evident that at the time of the fieldwork awareness of the NSP was not universal amongst school leaders. Amongst those practitioners not in a leadership position awareness of the NSP appeared lower. In only one in seven of the 20 schools we visited were one or more practitioners aware of the NSP, and even fewer knew that their school had an NSP Partner. That said, in three of the schools where some staff indicated that they were not aware of any support, other colleagues indicated that the school had accessed support from the NSP. In such cases, limited awareness of the NSP may be explained, in some part, by the focus of Partners (at least in the initial stages of the NSP) in developing a good relationship with the school leaders, as might be expected in the early stages of the programme.

Guidance and resources developed by the Welsh Government

2.14 To complement the resources developed through the NSP, the Welsh Government has developed a range of materials to support education professionals to implement the LNF and the National Tests. In most cases, these have been published on the Learning Wales website. Despite evidence from the survey of school leaders to suggest that a

high proportion of schools have accessed these resources, feedback from staff at case study schools was more mixed. While over four-fifths (85%) of those school leaders surveyed said they had accessed materials to support the introduction of the National Tests, teaching staff in only around one half of the schools we visited indicated that they were aware of any such resources. Although it is likely that some practitioners may have accessed/are accessing resources developed by the Welsh Government without recognising their provenance, it could also reflect the decision by most schools to prioritise the implementation of the LNF over the National Tests. This is likely to have led teachers to look for resources related to the LNF not the National Tests.

- 2.15 In addition to the new resources developed to support priorities such as the NLNP, the Welsh Government also migrated historic materials, felt to have continued relevance, to the Learning Wales website. As a result, Learning Wales now includes a page dedicated to PLCs. Initially launched in 2008 to support the implementation of the School Effectiveness Framework, guidance produced by the Welsh Government sought to provide education practitioners with an accurate summary of research exploring the effectiveness of different types of peer-to-peer working, and the characteristics of effective learning models. It was this thinking that led to the assertion of the national model. Updated in July 2013, participation in a PLC continues to be one of the ways in which practitioners can address their professional development needs (Welsh Government, 2013b). Given the prominence accorded to the model in the performance management process, it was noticeable that school leaders in only one-quarter of the case study schools we visited (5 schools) indicated that they were aware of the PLC model, although in a number of cases practitioners subsequently indicated that there was a PLC active in their school, with a focus on literacy and/or numeracy.

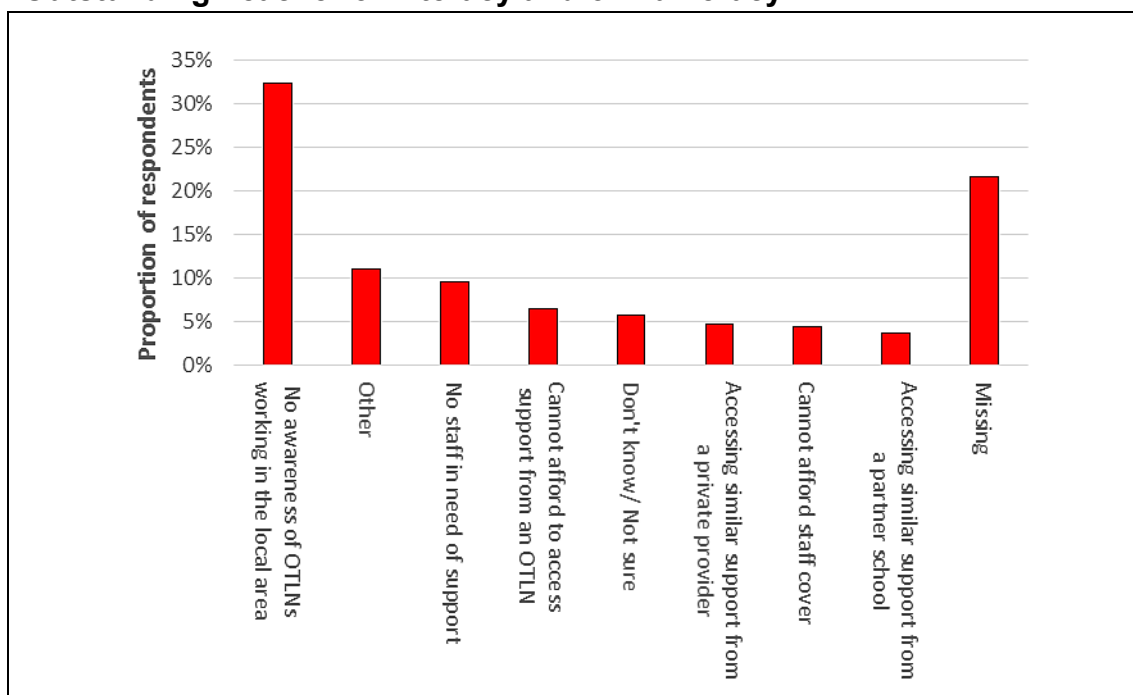
The Outstanding Teacher of Literacy and/or Numeracy Programme

- 2.16 Through the School Effectiveness Grant, Consortia have been required to support the '*sharing of best practice through the use of **outstanding***

teachers of literacy and numeracy to provide coaching and mentoring opportunities for teaching staff who are in need of additional support' (Welsh Government, 2013c). While it is worth noting that the programme was not designed to support every school in Wales, take-up does nonetheless seem limited. Of those school leaders who responded to our survey, just over one-tenth (14 per cent) indicated that staff at their school had accessed support, or were accessing support, from an OTL or an OTN. A similar proportion (13 per cent) reported that staff at their school had received training to support them in delivering support to other practitioners through the initiative.

- 2.17 Just under one third (32 per cent) of the school leaders who said that they were not aware (or didn't know/weren't sure) that any staff at their school had accessed support, also indicated that they were not aware that there were any OTNs or OTLs active in their local area (See Figure 2.3). Such findings were corroborated by our conversations with school leaders in case study schools. Only one-fifth of the schools we spoke to (four of the 20 schools) were either in receipt of support from an OTL or an OTN, or had a member of staff who was delivering support to other schools through the initiative. Given the use of locally specific terminology (for example the use of the term Lead Practitioner rather than Outstanding Teacher) and the range of other initiatives supported by Consortia that have aimed to support peer-to-peer working, this may mean that some schools are aware of or have accessed support funded through SEG without recognising it. As a result, the Welsh Government may wish to consider if the programme is having the desired reach and whether the 'Outstanding Teacher' brand should be reviewed.

Figure 2-3: Reason why schools have not accessed support from an Outstanding Teacher of Literacy and/or Numeracy



Source: Survey of School Leaders (June-July 2014)

Type of question: Multi-response

Number of eligible respondents: 291

Awareness of other forms of support

2.18 As codified in the National Model for Regional Working, Consortia have taken on a key role in supporting schools to improve the quality of teaching and literacy and numeracy, principally by supporting the implementation of the LNF (Welsh Government, 2014g). The delivery model adopted by Consortia has differed depending on local circumstance, and the preferences of their constituent LAs. Despite this, a key part of this must include provision for each school to have access to a Challenge Advisor¹⁰ (CA). In addition to support brokered by CAs, through School Effectiveness Grant (SEG) funding (from April 2015 funding will be provided through the Education Improvement Grant) provided by the Welsh Government, Consortia have been required to support the *'sharing of best practice through the use of outstanding teachers of literacy and numeracy to provide coaching and mentoring opportunities for teaching staff who are in need of additional support'*

¹⁰Pathways 2 Success Schools engaged in Schools Challenge Cymru (SCC) have access to an SCC Advisor, contracted by their local Consortia area but access to additional funding provided by the Welsh Government.

(Welsh Government, 2013b): In this section we will also consider awareness and take-up of this initiative.

2.19 Challenge Advisors provide a direct link between the Consortia, the appropriate LA, and a school, and are responsible for supporting school improvement through support and challenge. Although responsible for all elements of school improvement, their remit includes specific reference to promoting improvements in the quality of teaching of literacy and numeracy. Where required, CAs are authorised to broker access to specialist support, such as access to an Advisory Teacher¹¹. Reflecting the important role that CAs play within the school improvement process, all of the senior leaders we spoke to were aware of their work. However, it was notable that in around one-third of the schools we visited (six schools) school leaders indicated that they had received no support from them. Common reasons given for the lack of support were sickness, ill health and retirement, meaning that a CA had been forced to relinquish their role. In a number of cases, school leaders were unclear who (if anyone) had now taken over their role.

2.20 Identifying awareness amongst practitioners of the support available from CAs was understandably much more difficult. Interestingly, practitioners in over half of the schools we visited (11 schools) indicated that they were aware of, or had accessed external support coordinated, or delivered, at a local level. Of these, staff in five schools indicated that support had been accessed through the Consortia, but did not know whether their schools CA had played a role in assisting with gaining access to this support. While some of this support may have been offered independently, much, in reality, is likely to have been accessed by the school as a consequence of such assistance.

¹¹In some areas these are referred to as Associate Partners.

The Masters in Educational Practice

2.21 In order to support the professional development of NQTs the Welsh Government has supported the development of the Masters in Education Practice. Surprisingly given the overall take-up rate across Wales (data from the MEP Alliance indicates that since 2012 over half of the NQTs employed in Wales have elected to study for the qualification¹²), only a relatively small proportion of the teachers and senior leaders to whom we spoke (teachers and senior leaders in 6 of the 20 schools we visited) indicated that they knew of the scheme. However, this may be a function of their role: in most cases such staff were not responsible for supporting NQTs at the school. Where it is a function, awareness was much higher. It was also notable that all of the recently qualified teachers we spoke to outside of the case study schools knew of the MEP, even if they had subsequently chosen not to enrol.

Awareness of the support available amongst educational professionals within ITET settings

2.22 Contrary to the relatively low level of awareness amongst school leaders in schools of the range of support available to them, the level of awareness of senior staff in ITET Centres was much higher. As noted by one Head of School '*maintaining a good understanding of the prevailing policy environment is vital if we are to adequately support our students*' (Head of School at a Teacher Training Centre). A number went on to note that they or their colleagues had been commissioned by the Welsh Government to support the development of some of the guidance/resources published on Learning Wales to support the implementation of the LNF (including in one case an early draft of the LNF). This was felt to have given them a better insight into the Welsh Governments thinking. That said, there was also frustration that despite the implications of the introduction of the LNF for teacher training, ITET Centres themselves had had a limited opportunity to benefit from the

¹²See MEP Alliance (2014) Masters in Educational Practice (Online) Available at: <http://walesmep.ac.uk/> (Accessed: 05/01/2015)

professional discourse facilitated by initiatives such as the NSP. A number of academic staff indicated that they felt that they would benefit from additional exposure.

Key Findings:

Awareness of, and confidence in implementing the LNF and the National Tests

- The introduction of the LNF and National Tests led to changes in strategic planning in most settings. The LNF appears to have been more influential, with senior leaders in schools resisting the adoption of approaches that might encourage ‘teaching to the tests’.
- In the few cases where senior leaders said they had prioritised the National Tests it was felt that this arose from a lack of confidence in their school’s schemes of work to deliver an improvement in pupil reading and numeracy.
- Practitioners considered a key barrier to the implementation of the LNF and the National Tests (including the use of test data to support teaching and learning) had been what they saw as a lack of initial guidance on how the Welsh Government expected them to put it into practice and support to help them do so.
 - In ITET Centres senior staff were frustrated by a perceived lack of clarity about the types of practice that the Welsh Government hoped to see following the introduction of the NLNP
 - A common concern amongst school leaders was a lack of clear guidance on how they were expected to assess the progress of pupils against the expectation statements set out in the LNF.
- Confidence in implementing the LNF and using the National Test data at an operational level was also mixed. Overall, confidence was found to be higher amongst primary practitioners than amongst secondary practitioners, where the implementation of teaching across the curriculum was reported to be more challenging.

Awareness and take-up by education professionals of the support available to them in implementing the LNF and the National Tests

- Awareness and take-up of the NSP was high amongst surveyed school leaders, although there was a perceived lack of clarity around the eligibility of specialist schools.
- Awareness and take up of guidance and resources to support schools in implementing the National Tests was reasonably high amongst case-study schools. There was however evidence of frustration amongst practitioners around guidance to support them in the implementation of the LNF.
- Awareness of the MEP was high amongst the recently qualified teachers we interviewed, and the schools that employed them, but was low where the school had not recently employed an NQT.
- The level of support available to schools at a regional/local level was seen as variable:
 - Support from CAs to help improve the quality of their teaching of literacy and numeracy was mixed. A few case-study schools indicated that they had received no support from their CA.
 - Awareness and take-up of OTLN appears to have been relatively low. Just over one tenth of the respondents to the school leaders survey indicated that their school had either accessed support from an OTL or OTN or staff at the school had received support to become an OTL or an OTN.

3 Engaging with and implementing the LNF and the National Reading and Numeracy Tests

- 3.1 Explicitly developed to support an improvement in the quality of teaching and learning of literacy and numeracy, both the LNF and the National Tests have the potential to challenge the pedagogical practices and administrative processes of educational professionals. However, ultimately, whether these initiatives will have the desired effect will depend on the choices made by education professionals based on their understanding of what is being required of them, and their willingness to modify their approach. Where professionals seek to modify their practice, depending on their level of understanding, it is likely that a number of different strategies and approaches will be adopted. Based on our interviews with education professionals in schools and ITET Centres (in September-December 2014), and the findings of the survey of school leaders, (undertaken in June-July 2014) in this section we will reflect on the implications arising from the introduction of the LNF and the National Tests at a strategic and operational level, both in terms of pedagogical practice and the administrative systems and processes used by schools to support improvements in teaching and learning.

Implications for Pedagogical practice

- 3.2 As discussed in Section 2, school leaders in case study areas indicated that the introduction of the LNF and the National Tests had led them to make changes at a strategic level. Many of these changes were designed to support developments in pedagogical practice. However, while there was consensus regarding the types of pedagogical practice that the introduction of the LNF and the National Tests were designed to support, such as learning across the curriculum and their value in promoting an improvement in the quality of teaching and learning, there was much less agreement about the types of strategy or approach best suited to support their implementation.

Implications for pedagogical practice in schools arising from the introduction of the LNF

- 3.3 At a strategic level, school leaders in just under three-quarters of the schools we visited (14 of the 20 schools) indicated that following the introduction of the LNF, literacy and numeracy had become a greater priority. This heightened status was demonstrated in a number of ways:
- In eight of the visited schools, school leaders had sought to revisit their schools' development plan (in some cases this was referred to as the school improvement plan), and had ensured that this explicitly made reference to the LNF. Such changes were felt to be particularly important in larger secondary schools, where ensuring that the LNF was mentioned in the school development plan was seen as a key way of prioritising it across the school.
 - In five of the visited schools, school leaders had sought to recruit a literacy and/or a numeracy coordinator (in some cases called the LNF coordinator) where these roles had not already been assigned. In a number of other cases, the roles of literacy and numeracy coordinators had been reassigned to the Head of English/Welsh and the Head of Maths. Such changes were seen as a powerful way both of highlighting to other practitioners the importance placed on it by school leaders and ensuring that progress in implementing the LNF was monitored effectively.
- 3.4 A general consensus around the importance of the LNF was underpinned by an emerging understanding of the pedagogical implications arising from its introduction. Key amongst these was acknowledgement of the potential benefits of using the LNF to support the promotion of '**cross-curricular**' learning of literacy and numeracy as well as the '**learning of literacy and numeracy across the curriculum**'. However, although '**cross-curricular learning**' was a concept widely used by practitioners in the schools we visited, further exploration revealed that there was little shared understanding of the types, strategies and approaches that were effective in promoting the learning of literacy and numeracy skills in this way.

Embedding the LNF within the existing curriculum

- 3.5 Most of the schools we visited had spent time assessing the coverage of the existing scheme of work offered at the school against the LNF. However, the decisions taken as a result had differed markedly, particularly within the mainstream primary schools we visited. In a number of the schools, the level of change required was perceived to be minimal as many of the principles underpinning the LNF were already felt to be in place. As such the emphasis had been placed on ensuring that links across the curriculum were enhanced. In others, the decision had been taken that a much greater degree of change was required. In such cases, the solution was often seen to be the option of buying in a new scheme or programme of work 'off the shelf'. As noted by one of the NSP Partners we spoke to, while neither approach is intrinsically better or worse than the other (indeed it was noted that many of these 'off the shelf' solutions came with the assurance that 'the LNF was covered') there was concern that this approach would lead to complacency in ensuring that the rationale behind the change was understood by practitioners.
- 3.6 In the secondary schools we visited, the issue of 'coverage' had been approached in a different way. Mindful of the duty on schools (from September 2014) to assess pupils' progress against the expectation statements set out in the LNF, many of these schools had looked to develop a school-wide tracking system. In schools adopting this approach, individual departments were commonly required to identify 'expectations' for which they would take responsibility. Individual departments were then accountable for embedding tasks within their schemes of work to support the development of the skills of pupils in these areas, and then monitor the performance of pupils in obtaining them. While the guidance produced by the Welsh Government is potentially a useful tool, a number of the NSP Partners we spoke to (four of twelve), felt that schools were unclear whether such a whole-school approach is required, or if it is conducive to the type of teaching literacy and numeracy across the curriculum that is desired. For example, in a number of the schools we visited it was unclear whether staff saw 'the

expectations' that they were responsible for as the only part of the LNF that they would be required to incorporate within their practice, or whether they would in fact look to support the development of literacy and numeracy skills wherever appropriate. In such instances there were calls for the Welsh Government to provide clearer guidance on how schools were expected to behave.

Embedding the LNF within lesson planning

- 3.7 To support the identification of opportunities for the inclusion of literacy and numeracy tasks within lessons, school leaders in just under half of the schools we visited (nine schools) had issued new guidance to practitioners governing lesson planning, and, in particular, the setting of lesson objectives. Although, in most cases, this guidance appeared to have supported the identification of where literacy and numeracy objectives could be included within lessons in a 'meaningful' way, in a small number of cases there was evidence that staff felt there was a requirement to ensure that each lesson included such tasks. Where such guidance had been issued, practitioners were commonly found to feel that this had narrowed the curriculum available to their pupils. Furthermore, even within schools where staff had been encouraged to include literacy and numeracy tasks within their lessons, there was concern, that in some cases, the link between the task and the rest of the lesson was weak. Having said this, while acknowledging the weaknesses in some of the approaches adopted a number of staff we spoke to felt that 'you have to start somewhere'. For example, in one mainstream secondary school, practitioners had sought to introduce the LNF through the development of starter and plenary exercises for use in non-English and non-maths lessons. While staff recognised that there was more to do, they felt that embedding a cross-curricular approach would take time.

Using 'Rich Tasks' to support cross-curricular learning

- 3.8 Another common device identified by schools to support the introduction of a cross-curricular approach was that of what many schools referred to

as a 'Rich Task', a concept that normally includes a project connecting different subjects, involving a variety of teaching and learning methods and linking to the wider world beyond the classroom. Practitioners in just over one-quarter of the schools we visited indicated that this concept was influencing their thinking.

- 3.9 However, understanding of what made a task 'Rich', and how such tasks could be deployed effectively was mixed. In most cases, staff stressed the importance of ensuring that 'Rich' tasks placed the learning of skills within a 'real-world' context. Some staff felt that such tasks should be deployed in order to support the extension of learning in other subjects. Others, however, appeared to start from the identification of specific literacy and numeracy skills and then sought to find a home for them in their subject curriculum. Practitioners at some schools worried that this latter approach could promote the idea that such tasks were 'add-ons', and so could diminish the quality of the cross-curricular teaching.

Implications for pedagogical practice in ITET Centres arising from the introduction of the LNF

- 3.10 The desire to support the development of approaches to teaching literacy and numeracy across the curriculum was also identified as a priority by staff and students in the ITET settings we visited. This was also underpinned by a strong desire to improve the quality of personal literacy and numeracy amongst staff and students. Undoubtedly influenced by the introduction of the LNF, these priorities also appear to have been driven by recent guidance from Estyn (Estyn, 2013), and the publication of the Tabberer review, (Tabberer, 2013) both of which were felt to have highlighted room for improvement in these areas.
- 3.11 As in most schools, in order to support the implementation of the LNF, and the promotion of approaches to teaching literacy and numeracy across the curriculum, senior staff in all three Centres had looked to make changes to strategic planning documents. In two of the three Centres this had led to wholesale re-validation of all courses delivered by the Centre.

- 3.12 Key actions as part of this change included the appraisal of existing schemes of work, and/or the recruitment of new Literacy and Numeracy Coordinators. In one Centre, the roles of Literacy and Numeracy Coordinators were new and had led to an external recruitment process. In the other two Centres (where these roles had already been filled), the role had been given greater prestige (for instance by being granted additional management time). Amongst the staff we spoke to this process had had a number of implications at an operational level:
- There was commonly perceived to be an expectation that the LNF should underpin all lesson planning, and, as such, should be referenced in most lectures and seminars. There was also broad acceptance that the effectiveness of trainee teachers to teach literacy and numeracy across the curriculum should be central to the way that the progress of trainee teachers would be assessed. In two of the three Centres this had led to explicit consideration of how academic staff are required to interpret the existing Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) standards resulting in the production of new guidance. In one of the Centres, lecturers had also produced a new guide on 'How to Plan for the LNF'. Most staff and students appeared to be using this to inform their practice.
 - There was common acceptance of the need to improve the quality and consistency of support offered to ITET students while on placement. In all three Centres this had led to changes in the guidance given to mentors on how to assess the progress of their students. In two of the three Centres, changes had also been made to the assessment forms used by mentors to ensure more explicit acknowledgement of the ability of students to teach literacy and numeracy.
- 3.13 Concern about the personal literacy and numeracy skills of both ITET staff and students was found to pre-date the introduction of the LNF. Without doubt, however, its introduction had led to a renewed focus in this area. In line with guidance produced by Estyn (Estyn, 2014), in all three Centres there was evidence that students were subject to periodic

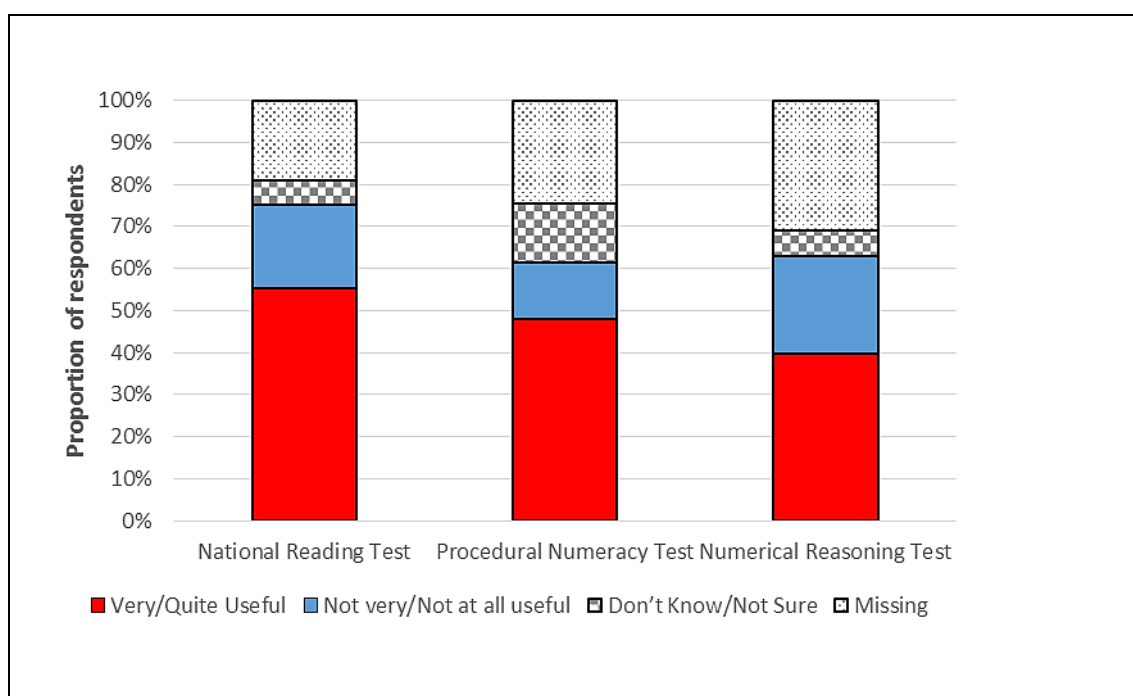
audits of their personal literacy and numeracy skills. Where deficiencies were identified, students were able to access a tailored programme of support, often from a subject specialist. Alongside the support provided for ITET students, staff also indicated that, over the course of the last year, their practice had come under increased scrutiny. In one Centre, all staff had been asked to complete a self-evaluation of their practice. The findings of this review had been used to inform the development of a targeted development programme. Following the training, staff noted that an assessment of the personal literacy and numeracy skills exhibited by staff was likely to form part of the annual auditing process.

- 3.14 Despite the evident progress made by Centres in seeking to put in place the infrastructure required to support the implementation of a cross-curricular approach, there was acknowledgement that there was still some way to go. The greatest challenge was considered to be ensuring consistent practices across the staff body (see paragraph 2.10).

Pedagogical implications arising from the introduction of the National Reading and Numeracy Tests

- 3.15 In order to understand the extent to which the National Tests have supported changes in pedagogical practice, it is important to consider the priority attached to them by education professionals. As will be discussed in Section 4, it was evident that, in the majority of schools, school leaders sought to find a balance between preparing pupils for the tests, and 'teaching to the test'. Given the priority attached to avoiding 'overt coaching', it was perhaps not surprising that few indicated that they had knowingly countenanced changes to their schools approach to teaching and learning prompted solely by the introduction of the National Tests.

Figure 3-1: Extent to which the National Reading and Numeracy Test have been useful in identifying particular groups of pupils for targeted support



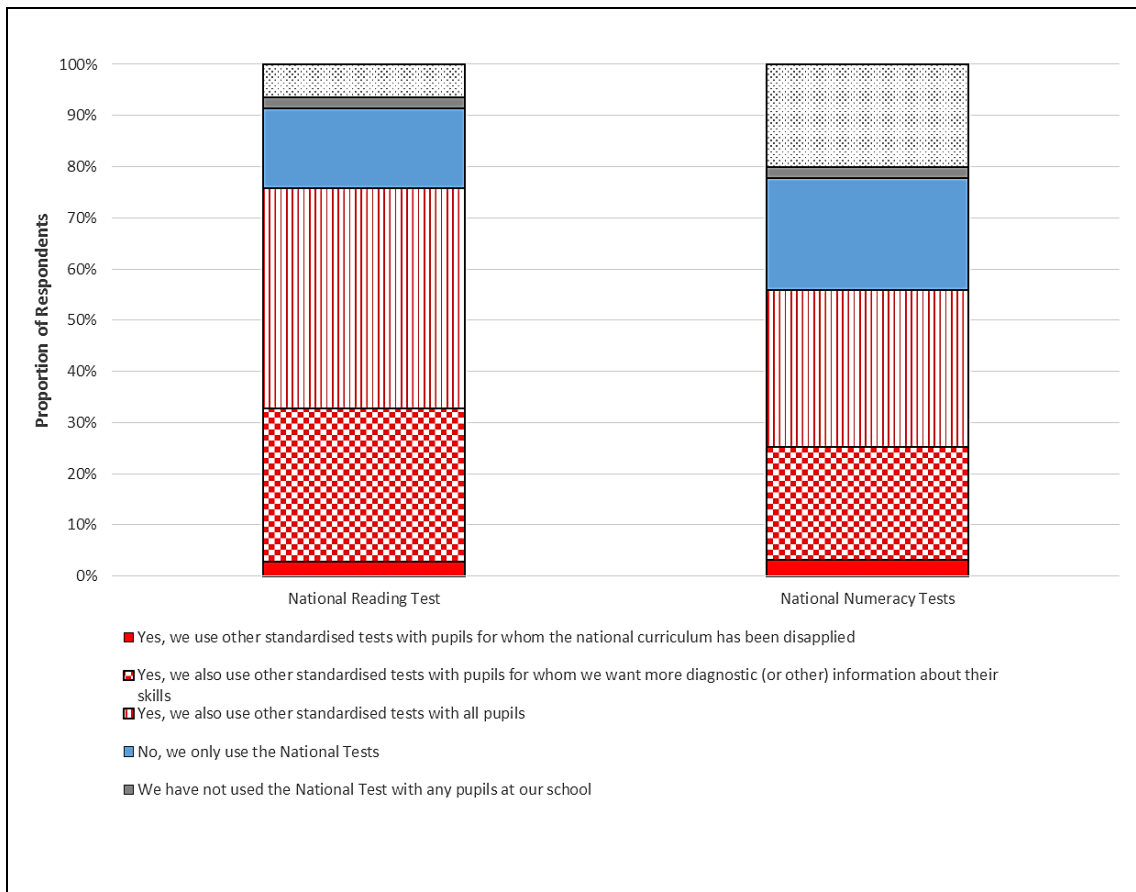
Source: Survey of School Leaders (June-July 2015)
 Type of question: Single-response
 Number of eligible respondents: 352

3.16 In reality, the picture may be more complex. Between two-fifths (39 per cent) and three-fifths (55 per cent) of the school leaders who responded to our survey indicated that they had found the tests to be a useful source of information in identifying the needs of pupils at their school (see Figure 3-1) and in deciding who went on to receive targeted support. During the visits, it was evident that most of the case-study schools had used assessment data collected through the tests to support school development planning.

3.17 Just over half of the survey respondents (56 per cent) indicated that, following the introduction of the National Numeracy Tests, they would be continuing to make use of other standardised tests to support teaching and learning at their school (see Figure 3-2). The proportion doing so following the introduction of the National Reading Tests was even higher, at just under three-quarters (76 per cent) of the respondents (see Figure 3-2). Although staff acknowledged the importance of assessing pupils' skill level in these areas, it was argued that practitioners needed

to develop a much more holistic understanding of their skill level, for instance the strength of a pupil’s spelling, writing skills or oracy skills. As a result, schools indicated that they would continue to use other tests to support teaching and learning in these areas.

Figure 3-2: Use of tests pupils in Years 2 to 9 in addition to the National Tests



Source: Survey of School Leaders (June-July 2014)
 Type of question: Single-response
 Number of eligible respondents: 352

3.18 Further to this, some of the practitioners we spoke to in case-study schools registered concern about the suitability of the tests for a high proportion of the school cohort. In one school it was estimated that ‘50 per cent of each year group were of a sufficient ability to access the content’ (School Leader), though this experience may not represent all schools as the perceived suitability of tests is likely to vary by each school’s cohort. This finding was supported in responses to the survey of schools leaders. Just under two-fifths of all respondents indicated that they felt that the National Tests (the National Reading Test, 42 per cent;

the procedural numeracy test, 39 per cent; and the numerical reasoning test, 39 per cent) did not test the skills of ‘underperforming pupils’¹³ effectively.

3.19 For pupils with additional learning needs, the proportion of school leaders who felt that the tests did not test their skills effectively rose to around half (60 per cent, 52 per cent and 47 per cent respectively). The possible different needs of pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (who constitute a sub-set of the AL population) had been anticipated by the Welsh Government which had issued guidance to schools (and parents) at the time the tests were introduced explaining in what circumstances tests could be disapplied¹⁴ (meaning that a pupil would not sit a particular test). A previous research report commissioned by the Welsh Government showed that, despite some initial uncertainty about the use of the disapplication arrangements, around two-fifths (40%) of schools had made use of the disapplication arrangements after following the Welsh Government guidance materials (BMG, 2014).

3.20 Despite the fact that the Welsh Government has not used National Test data to assess the performance of schools (for example National Test data is not used to support School Categorisation) many of the school leaders we spoke were concerned that they (and Estyn) would do so in the future.

3.21 Further to this they thought that it was likely that they would soon be assessed on the extent to which the analysis of the assessment data produced was being embedded within the schools assessment and planning processes (as will indeed be the case through Stage 2 of the School Categorisation process). As such, these schools were taking

¹³ It should be noted that there was no standard definition of ‘underperforming pupils’ and respondents answered related questions based on their own understanding of the term.

¹⁴ Welsh Government guidance sets out that while most pupils will be expected to be able to access the tests, there may be some pupils that require some additional support to do so. As a result range of access arrangements were put in place to including a suite of modified tests. For the small number of learners who, are unable to participate, notwithstanding these arrangements, procedures are in place to allow the tests to be disapplied. In such cases the pupil would take a test for the appropriate national curriculum year group at which they are operating so that schools could still gain a source of diagnostic information. Decisions on access arrangements and disapplication are made by individual headteachers.

steps to ensure that the analysis of test data was seen to be central to their planning (even for those with concerns about the accuracy of the tests as a measure of pupils' progress) though some often considered other measures as more important. One school leader argued that *'when Estyn next visit us it will be the quality of our paperwork not the quality of our practice which means we don't get [rated as] Excellent'* (Senior Leader). Incorporating National Test data into the school's self-evaluation process was regarded as a key way of demonstrating competence.

3.22 Our discussion with stakeholders also highlighted an issue that was overcome during the initial round of tests. This required the test contractors to use live data for the standardisation process rather than 'age standardised' data during the pre-testing process. This was ascribed to the timescale and deadline for delivery of the tests.

Implications for Administrative Processes

3.23 In response to the introduction of the LNF and the National Tests, it was evident that schools, and, to a lesser extent, ITET Centres had made changes to administrative processes. Such changes were, on the whole, designed to support the embedding of the LNF and the National Tests within the curriculum planning and assessment processes and to support the improvement of the quality of teaching and learning within the school. While most of the education professionals we spoke to felt that the processes that they were putting in place would support this outcome, there was concern that many of these had led to a number of one-off costs (in both time and money) and were likely to increase the overall burden on teaching and support staff.

Implications for schools' administrative processes

3.24 As discussed in paragraph 3.6, many schools sought to invest in, or develop, a school-wide tracking system to support the assessment of pupil progress against the age-related expectations of the LNF. Where such systems had been put in place, it was found to be common practice that practitioners would update this (for pupils taught by them), on a termly basis. In many of the secondary schools we spoke to, and mindful of the potential burden on staff, the decision had been taken (often following an initial exercise mapping the objectives of the LNF against the school curriculum) to make reporting the progress of pupils against particular expectation statements in literacy and numeracy the responsibility of individual departments, so that no one practitioner (or any one department) would need to report against all of the indicators. In most primary schools, however, it was indicated that the responsibility for completing such a tool would fall on the class teacher. Although collecting such data was considered a useful process, in many of these schools it was felt that it was unrealistic to expect practitioners to also continue to assess the progress of pupils against the National Curriculum.

3.25 Most of the schools we visited said that the introduction of the LNF had led to changes to school guidance around lesson planning, incorporating

in particular a requirement to consider the inclusion of literacy and numeracy tasks. Amongst the practitioners we spoke to, there was recognition that planning lessons with a cross-curricular element were more time consuming than standard subject-specific lessons, and often required the development of bespoke resources. It was acknowledged that, as practitioners became more used to this approach, the extra time commitment would lessen, but there was a view that, in the short-term at least, it was important that staff were not overburdened. In this context, a number of practitioners we interviewed expressed concern that the need to react to new Programmes of Study had the potential to distract them from truly getting to grips with the LNF, meaning that the benefits of a truly cross-curricular approach were never fully realised.

3.26 Consistent with research undertaken by BMG Research in 2013 on the 'Implementation of the NRNT' (Welsh Government, 2013f) practitioners in case study schools indicated that the introduction of the National Tests had also had implications for administrative processes at the school, in particular the need for schools to support the marking, and moderation of tests scripts (other than for the Numerical Reasoning Test, for which schools had access to a supported marking service), and the need to incorporate test data into the schools' performance management system. Staff appeared to have taken a number of approaches to responding to these requirements:

- On the whole, the schools we spoke to appear to have found resourcing the marking of test scripts within the timeframe prescribed by the Welsh Government extremely difficult. Despite widespread acknowledgement of the value of marking scripts internally, it was acknowledged in one (of the twenty schools we visited) that grant funding provided by the Welsh Government had been used to pay external markers (in at least one LA, union action had meant that practitioners had refused to mark the scripts). This had meant that the school had not had access to individual results. Other schools had handed responsibility for this task to Learning Support Assistants.

- All of the schools we spoke to had worked to embed the collection and analysis of test data within the school's performance management systems. The approach of schools to this task appeared largely to have depended on their pre-existing approach. In some cases it was evident that schools had also looked to take advantage of preferential commissioning arrangements for new performance management systems brokered by their Consortium. As a result, while some schools continued to use in-house systems, others had bought in to commercial packages. Where schools were already committed to a particular package, school leaders reported that their progress in embedding the data analysis of the National Tests had been limited by the speed of providers developing the required functionality. Bringing this functionality online had also had cost implications. In such circumstances, staff registered concerns that any changes to the approach taken by the Welsh Government would lead to wastage.

Implications for the administrative processes used by ITET Centres

3.27 Within ITET settings the effect of the introduction of the LNF (and the National Tests) on administrative processes has been negligible. This, to a large extent, reflects the fact that raising the quality of provision, including the quality of training available to students in literacy and numeracy, was already considered a strategic priority and resources were already in place to support this. For instance, Centres had already committed to structures designed to support the assessment of the personal literacy and numeracy of students, and recognised the need to change the way in which they worked with placement schools. That said, in all three Centres it was acknowledged that adapting courses to reflect the LNF had been time consuming – particularly where it was felt that such courses required revalidation. In light of this commitment, senior staff were wary of the outcome of the review of curriculum and assessment, and any further changes that might be required in order to ensure that courses prepared students to use new Programmes of Study.

Key Findings:

- There was evidence of a high level of engagement amongst education professionals in seeking to respond to the LNF.
- The introduction of the National Tests appears to have had a greater impact on *administrative processes* in schools than on *pedagogical practice*, although some changes were evident (particularly in terms of school development planning).

Implications for pedagogical practice

- There has been widespread agreement around the need to introduce a more cross-curricular approach to teaching and learning. The strategies taken by primary and secondary schools have varied considerably.
- There is evidence to suggest that many schools have made progress in implementing this approach, although most of the education professionals indicated more work was required before the approach would be fully embedded.
- Common approaches have included:
 - re-mapping the school curriculum to support the LNF
 - changes to lesson planning to promote the inclusion of literacy and/or numeracy tasks across the curriculum
 - an increased focus on the development and delivery of cross-curricular or 'Rich Tasks'.
- While there is evidence that most schools have taken steps to embed the LNF within their school's performance management systems, our findings show that there remain some concerns around the extent to which tracking the progress of pupils against the expectations statements set out in the LNF provides sufficient data to inform changes in classroom practice.
- Within ITET Centres, the desire to encourage ITET students to adopt a more cross-curricular approach to their teaching has been coupled with a perceived need to improve the personal literacy and numeracy skills of staff and students. Centres have responded to these priorities in a number of ways:
 - changes to existing workforce development activities
 - changes to guidance governing the assessment of students, and
 - to prioritise the development of their personal literacy and numeracy skills and the quality of their teaching of literacy and numeracy
- In ITET Centres, as might be expected, the National Tests have had a limited impact on pedagogical practice, although students are expected to be made aware of the tests and how to use assessment data effectively to support teaching and learning as part of their course.

Implications for administrative processes

- All of the schools we spoke to had taken steps to embed the LNF and the National Tests within the administrative processes.
- This had resulted in:
 - 'One off' costs, which included the decision in some schools to buy a new 'off the shelf' performance management systems or a new curriculum.
 - A perception that the overall burden on practitioners would increase. Key factors included the need to mark the test scripts, and the need to assess and record the progress of pupils against the expectation statements set out in the LNF.
- The implications for ITET Centres arising from the introduction of the LNF and the National Tests have been minimal.

4 Effectiveness of the support provided to schools to help them implement the LNF and the National Tests

4.1 If the LNF and the National Tests are to support an improvement in the quality of teaching and learning, particularly of literacy and numeracy, it is important that education professionals (particularly in schools) are supported in the development of a shared understanding of the pedagogical implications of their introduction. As presented in Section 1 the Welsh Government commissioned a range of support activities (at a national and regional level) to support practitioners embed the LNF and the National Tests within their practice. Such support has been designed to complement other sources of support already available to schools, for example, that provided by Consortia. As discussed in Section 2, awareness and take-up of the support available to schools (and individual practitioners) has been mixed. In this section we will reflect on the reasons for this, and the implications of this for effectiveness of the NLNP.

Effectiveness of the National Support Programme

4.2 The NSP was explicitly commissioned by the Welsh Government in January 2013 to support schools implement the LNF. Notwithstanding some initial confusion over the eligibility of special schools, across the schools we visited the level of willingness to engage with an NSP Partner amongst school leaders was reasonably high. This view was corroborated through our discussions with NSP Partners (in September-December 2014 during phase 3 and 4 of the NSP). For instance, one noted that while she was now in active contact with nearly all of her schools. In the few schools that she had not yet managed to engage, she identified the personality of the headteacher, and the current performance of the school, as the key limiting factors. For example, one of her allocated schools was under new leadership and was working towards getting out of Special Measures. As a result, the headteacher

was thought to be reluctant to do anything that could distract staff from implementing his immediate priorities.

- 4.3 While all of the schools we talked to had engaged with their NSP Partner, a more nuanced view emerged. In three of the schools we visited, school leaders indicated that they had been reluctant to engage with the NSP due to dissatisfaction with the quality of provision received at the initiation of the programme (where the LNF had been introduced initially by a series of cluster meetings). This was summarised by one school leader noting that “*I knew it [the training support] was available, but chose not to send anyone because of my own experience*” (School Leader).
- 4.4 Amongst schools that had sought to access later phases of the NSP (in particular access to tailored support), satisfaction with the support on offer appeared mixed. Of those who responded to this question in the school leaders’ survey¹⁵ (63 per cent of respondents), half indicated that they were either ‘quite happy’ or ‘very happy’ with the support provided. Of those who had received support, the most highly satisfied were commonly those who had accessed bespoke or tailored support to help them implement their action plan. Where practitioners were found to be dissatisfied with the support provided, common issues included the timeliness of training and resources, the expertise of Partners, and the quality and scope of the support on offer. These issues are explored below.

Timeliness of training and resources

- 4.5 In 10 of the 20 schools we visited, practitioners criticised the timing of support provided through the NSP. In particular, a number of schools criticised the gap between the completion of their initial partner support visit, which alongside access to guidance and support in some cases included a school audit, and the opportunity to access further support to help them respond to their specific identified needs. A number of the

¹⁵The survey of school leaders was undertaken in June-July 2014.

NSP Partners we spoke to indicated that two main issues may have affected timings in some of the schools they were working with:

- following the introduction of the LNF, discussions with CfBT and the Welsh Government as part of the contract negotiation process had led to the amendment of the format of the Phase 1 and a decision was made to remove the staggered approach to the delivery of this phase. Given that this was at the beginning of the support programme some NSP Partners were still being recruited. This meant that some schools who had engaged at the very start had had to wait slightly longer from their initial contact with the support programme for the beginning of Phase 2 (the opportunity to develop an action plan) than others.
- following the launch of the LNF in January 2013 a number of launch events were held through the NSP (in March 2013). Phase 1 of the support programme (entitled 'Understanding the LNF') began later that year, running from June to December 2013. Phase 2 of the NSP (entitled 'Audit to Action Plan') began in December 2013. As a result, and despite the fact that Welsh Government had produced a range of materials and resources on effective implementation, the initial phase was the sole vehicle by which NSP partners had an opportunity to gain an understanding of what support, in practice, individual schools might require to ensure effective implementation. This meant that some of the resources and guidance materials for the Phase 2 support could not be developed in advance. In some cases NSP partners were sharing best practice with each other and producing tailored support materials to suit particular circumstances in the schools they were working with. For some of the NSP partners we spoke to who were working in the case study schools this, led to a brief hiatus in support for some of the case study schools while the tailored materials that were required were developed.

Expertise of NSP Partners

- 4.6 Perhaps of more concern, staff in eight of the schools we spoke to criticised the relevant expertise of their NSP Partner. For example two

school leaders in secondary schools indicated that they had been given a Partner from a primary background with no expertise at secondary level. Amongst the special schools we spoke to, it was noted that, even where schools had a Partner, few had taught in a special school environment. This was felt to be particularly problematic where schools had sought clarity on what effective teaching of literacy and numeracy across the curriculum would look like in their environment and noted that their Partner did not have a clear frame of reference.

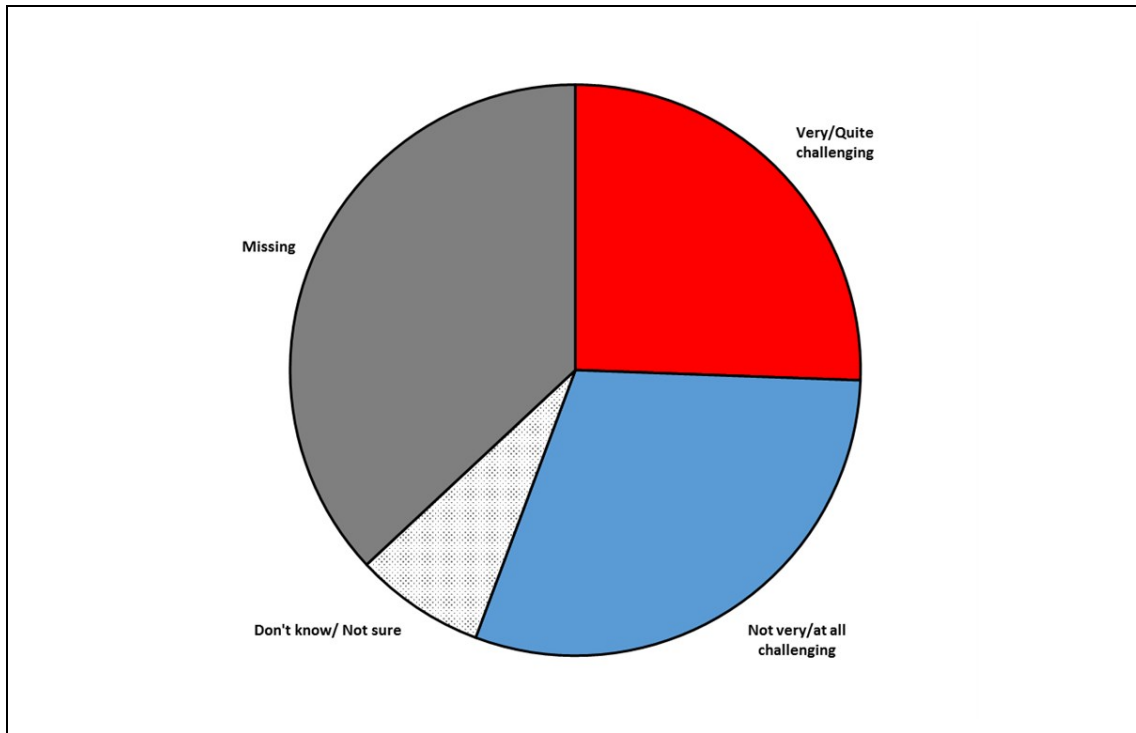
- 4.7 Understandably, the NSP Partners we spoke to did not feel that this was a valid concern. A number noted that the '*speed at which they had been required to engage schools... [had meant that they had often been asked questions] before appropriate guidance... [and resources on an identified issue] had been signed off... [centrally]*' (NSP Partner), and recognised that this could be seen to have given an impression of lack of confidence and credibility. Further to this, Partners felt that the manner in which they had been contracted (most appeared to be on short-term contracts) had meant that the turnover of Partners had been higher than might have been desirable (albeit that given the short term over which the contract was delivered this was considered the most appropriate way in which to contract staff). Where Partners were new to the Programme it was felt that this may have also led to the impression that Partners had insufficient expertise.

Quality and scope of the support on offer

- 4.8 In our survey of school leaders, feedback on the ease of assessing support from an NSP partner was mixed. While 30% of respondents indicated that they had not found accessing the support they needed from their partner to be challenging, a similar proportion, 26% did (see Figure 4-1). In most cases, where schools were dissatisfied with the support provided this appears to have been an issue of expectation management. As noted by one of the Challenge Advisors to whom we spoke '*there was clear expectation from schools that they would receive a lot of specialist support*' (Challenge Advisor). In reality, a number of NSP Partners registered concern about whether given the number of

schools allocated to each Partner they had sufficient capacity to meet this demand.

Figure 4-1: Challenges to the school in accessing support from the National Support Programme (NSP)



Source: Survey of School Leaders (June-July 2014)
Type of Question: Single Response
Number of Respondents: 352

Effectiveness of the guidance and resources produced by the Welsh Government

4.9 As summarised in Section 2, awareness of the resources developed by the Welsh Government was high amongst school leaders but more mixed amongst classroom practitioners. In some cases, practitioners in case-study schools were using resources produced by the Welsh Government, but were unaware of their provenance. Such findings draw into question whether the existing marketing strategy is working in terms of teaching staff being able to understand where support and guidance is available. This is also true for recognising the source of any support and guidance they may access, and whether the potential benefits of the guidance materials and resources are being fully recognised. As noted by one school leader in a case study school: *'to expect teachers to*

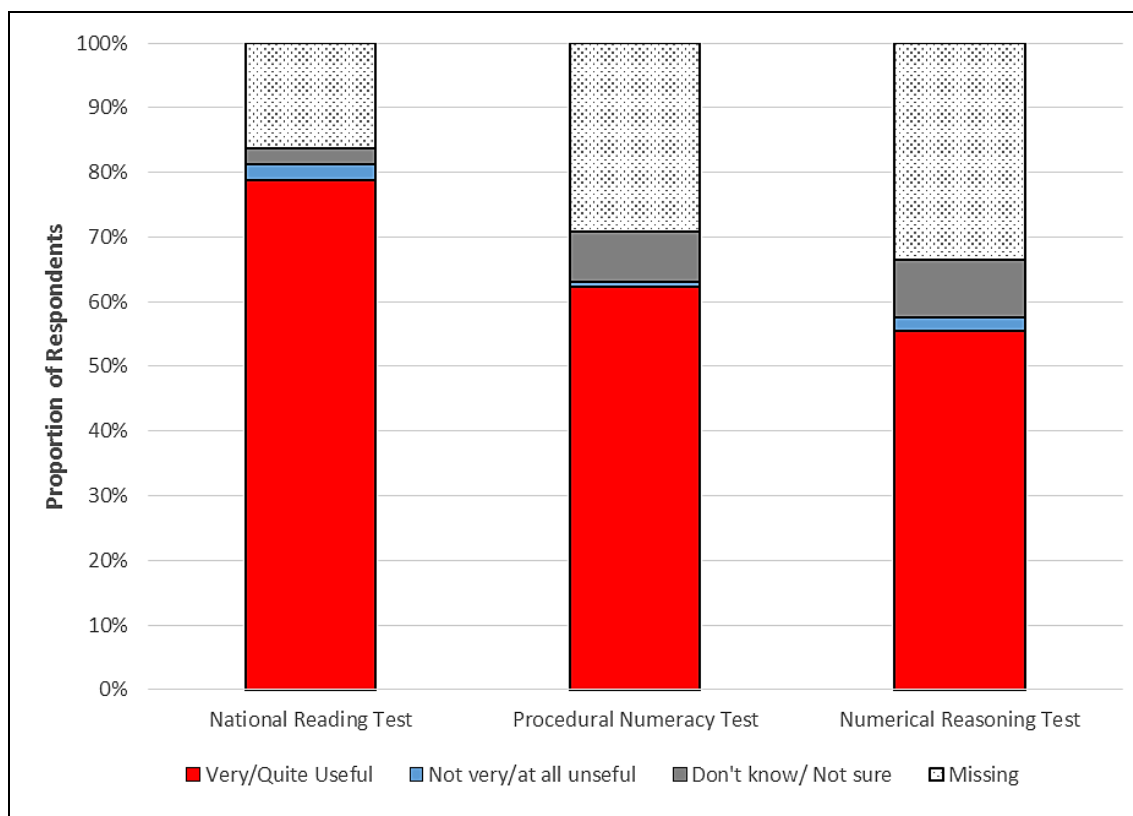
regularly go online to access resources is to mistake the pressures that we are under' (School Leader). Further to this a practitioner noted that the financial pressure that their school was under, meant that staff had been asked to be careful about what resources they printed off in school. She felt that this had led to a reduction in the amount of material that was shared across the staff cohort and that *'if the Welsh Government wishes their resources to be widely used, then they should avoid passing the costs of dissemination onto schools'* (Primary Practitioner).

4.10 Where practitioners had accessed resources produced by the Welsh Government, satisfaction was mixed. Although staff in a number of the case study schools¹⁶ indicated that they had found that the exemplification materials produced by the Welsh Government were useful in crystallising their thinking, other staff were more critical and felt that they were too generic and encouraged a superficial approach. Some practitioners indicated that guidance produced to support the implementation of the National Tests had been instructive, but others indicated that they had found this *'vague and confusing'* (Secondary Practitioner). At a glance such critical findings appear contrary to those of the survey of school leaders which showed that nearly four-fifths of respondents to the survey (79 per cent) indicated that they had found the test handbook for the National Reading Test to be either a quite useful, or a very useful resource. However, just under three-fifths (56 per cent) said the same about the test handbook for the Numerical Reasoning Test (see Figure 4-2).

4.11 Such differences highlight a more nuanced picture. Alongside the LNF, the Numerical Reasoning test was commonly viewed as the more challenging to implement. As such, the Welsh Government may wish to consider what additional support can be provided to support schools in embedding these elements within their practice, or if schools simply require more time to get used to what is now required of them.

¹⁶ Case study visits were undertaken in September-December 2014

Figure 4-2: Usefulness of Test Handbook in supporting the delivery of the National Tests



Source: Survey of School Leaders (June-July 2014)
 Type of Question: Single Response
 Number of Respondents: 352

4.12 When asked what additional support they would welcome, some clear messages were evident. For instance, even though around half of the surveyed school leaders said that they had found the diagnostic tools for the various tests helpful, the proportions who indicated that they would welcome more support in using the diagnostic tools was the same (or, in some cases) even higher. The Welsh Government may need to consider this in prioritising the development of guidance materials and resources. Although the needs of schools are likely to change over time, in further work it will be important to consider the extent to which a clearer picture has emerged.

Effectiveness of the PLC Model

4.13 Relatively low levels of awareness and take-up of the PLC model (see paragraph 2.15) inhibited any robust analysis of its effectiveness. Even where case-study schools indicated that they had engaged in a PLC, it

was unclear whether the composition of this group met the criteria set out in the national model. For example, few teachers in this group considered adherence to the 'cycle of action enquiry model' to be important (Welsh Government, 2014i). Nonetheless, regardless of the fidelity of the approach, where PLCs had been developed, feedback from practitioners was positive, particularly where the community comprised of teachers from other schools (often from schools within the cluster). In such instances, these groupings were considered to have been important in improving the frequency and quality of collaboration.

Effectiveness of the Outstanding Teacher of Literacy and Numeracy Programme

- 4.14 Supported by the Welsh Government in order to support an improvement in the quality of teaching of literacy and numeracy in Wales it is important to consider the relative contribution of the Outstanding Teachers of Literacy and Numeracy Programme. Even taking account of the limited scope of the Programme, take-up seems low (see Section 1). Such low take-up makes assessing the effectiveness of the Programme extremely difficult. Under 50 respondents to the survey of school leaders indicated that staff at their school had either taken on the role of an OTL and/or OTN or had accessed support (48 and 47 respectively). Consideration of responses to the survey of OTs also provided limited insight, out of a total of 162 OTLs and OTNs, responses were received from just over one-third (59) (see Table 4-1). This has made any analysis at the level of the individual Consortium extremely challenging. For instance, no respondents active in the South West and Mid Wales responded with any detail of how much time they had spent working with Emerging Practitioners in their school.

Table 4-1: Local Authority in which respondent works

Consortia	Local authority	Number of respondents (OTL/OTNs)
South East Wales	Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council	4
	Newport City Council	8
	Monmouthshire County Council	4
Central South	Bridgend County Borough Council	1
	Vale of Glamorgan Council	2
	Cardiff Council	6
South East Wales	Caerphilly County Borough Council	5
	Torfaen County Borough Council	6
North Wales	Denbighshire County Council	4
	Flintshire County Council	4
	Wrexham County Borough Council	4
	Missing	11
	Total	59

Source: Survey of Outstanding Teachers of Literacy and/or Numeracy (June-July 20140
Type of question: Single-response

The contribution of other forms of support in supporting the introduction of the LNF and the National Tests

4.15 As discussed in Section 2, through the National Model for Regional Working, Consortia have taken on primary responsibility for supporting the school improvement agenda. Within this structure, the role of the Challenge Advisor (CA) is central in providing the gateway through which schools can access specialist support. Despite the importance of this role, one third of the 20 schools we spoke to indicated that they hadn't received any support (specialised or otherwise) to support them to implement the LNF or the National Tests. In most cases this was felt to arise from a focus on other issues such as the effectiveness of school self-evaluation processes. Where this was the case, such schools were understandably critical of their Consortium. In schools where a

relationship between the schools and their CA had been developed, the feedback was much more positive. Nonetheless, a number of limitations in the support provided were observed:

- Although it was recognised that the National Model for Regional Working was still being embedded, there was a concern amongst school leader interviewees that the overall capacity of Consortia to deliver school improvement services had diminished relative to the support historically offered by Local School Improvement Services. Such a view was partially endorsed by a number of the CAs to whom we spoke. One noted that she felt that the emphasis of her role had shifted as a CA from a System Leader to '*challenging rather than supporting*' (Challenge Advisor). She indicated that this was largely down to a lack of resource. In a 'good' school, she noted that support would be confined to a termly visit, that is, three a year and only one of which would focus on literacy and numeracy provision.¹⁷ At a time when schools were being asked to respond to profound changes in curriculum and assessment there was concern that this could undermine progress, even in 'good' schools.
- Where schools met the threshold for access to specialist support from the Consortia (for example a legacy of historic underperformance), staff indicated that they felt that they had really benefited from this. However, where support had been used, explicitly, to support the introduction of the LNF, there was concern that this had had the potential to duplicate that delivered by the NSP. In response to this concern, Consortia appear to have sought to strengthen relationships between CAs and NSP Partners. For instance, in one Consortium, NSP Partners indicated that they were required to gain approval from a CA *prior* to offering support for schools. While, on the whole, it was felt that progress was being made in improving the level of coordination between NSP Partners

¹⁷ The focus of each visit is largely dependent on what is identified as a priority in the School Development Plan. Most tended to be centred on the use of assessment data and/or pupil tracking and teaching and learning strategies or book scrutiny.

and CA, it was felt that more could be done to ensure that services were offered to schools in a coordinated way.

- School leaders valued the increasing focus on supporting collaborative working, particularly between secondary schools and their primary feeder schools. It was noted that CAs, and indeed their NSP Partners, increasingly sought to communicate with schools at 'cluster meetings' and to explore how joint-working could support a coordinated response to the introduction of the LNF. In a number of the schools we visited it was evident that they had sought to do so. In one cluster, for instance, the tracking tool developed by the secondary school to monitor the progress of students against the expectation statements set out in the LNF had been refined for use across all of its feeder schools. It was hoped that this would support the development of a shared language around pupil-progress that would transition from Year 6 to Year 7.
- Despite this, there was concern that this model neglected specialist institutions such as Special Schools and Pupil Referral Units, and did not meet the needs of secondary schools which might benefit more from dialogue with other secondary colleagues. Although support was available for both Special Schools and Pupil Referral Units, both were found to have developed structures in place to support the sharing of good-practice independent of this model, the situation in a number of the secondary schools we visited was mixed. School leaders in these schools, particularly those in rural locations, indicated that finding opportunities to develop effective collaborative structures with other secondary schools was extremely difficult and would require additional investment from the Welsh Government.

Effectiveness of the Masters in Educational Practice

4.16 Through our interviews with recently qualified teachers and the School Based NQT Mentor, we also considered views on the MEP¹⁸ (please

¹⁸ A detailed evaluation of the MEP is not within the scope of this evaluation. Due to the limited resource available to support the thematic it was decided not to interview External MEP Mentors.

note we have not interviewed any External MEP mentors at this time). Although far from definitive, based on the relatively small sample size, take-up appeared mixed. Even amongst those who had chosen to register for the course, a number had subsequently chosen to drop-out due to the pressure of work. In line with this feedback, the targeting of the programme was criticised by some of the school leaders we spoke to. For example, one noted that, of the two NQTs at his school that had chosen to study towards the qualification, he had noted that, as the course had progressed, so their performance in the classroom had diminished because of the additional pressure this put them under. While he noted that he would still support NQTs to enrol on the course, he indicated that he would now make sure that they understood the demands of the course, and also make it clear that he would not think any less of them if they decided to drop-out (if and when they found that it distracted them from their role at the school). Many NQTs and their School Based Mentors felt that the scheme would work better if it was targeted at teachers in their second or third year of practice. One School Based Mentor summed up this position arguing that *'I really can't understand why the course is targeted at NQTs, [where] the primary purpose is to get them to put into practice what they've learnt through their training. They have no room to reflect'* (NQT School Based Mentor). That said, where teachers had sought to persevere with the course, they said that they had found the resources to be invaluable.

Key Findings:

Effectiveness of support provided through the NSP

- Most schools welcomed support from the NSP, but felt that it had not fully met their expectations. Particular reservations were expressed around the quantity, quality and timeliness of some of the support provided. Key factors in influencing the effectiveness of the support provided were found to include:
 - The perception amongst those developing and delivering the NSP that the amendments to Phase 1 of the programme (Introducing the LNF), slightly elongated the length of time between when the NSP was launched and when schools started to receive support – or in some cases between their initial support meeting and subsequently receiving tailored support materials.
 - Many of the school leaders we spoke to felt that this gave the impression that schools' NSP Partners had insufficient capacity/expertise to provide the bespoke programme of support that schools had expected from them.
 - There was perceived to be a relatively high turn-over in NSP Partners. As a result, many schools felt that the support provided to them lacked continuity. There was also some uncertainty around the expertise of some Partners to support the schools to which they had been matched.
- Views on the effectiveness of the guidance materials and resources produced by the Welsh Government to support the implementation of the NLNP were mixed. Such mixed views appear underpinned by a lack of a clear understanding amongst practitioners of what is required to support them.

The contribution of other forms of support

- The capacity of Challenge Advisors to support schools to improve the quality of their teaching of literacy and numeracy appears heavily constrained, not least in terms of the time that they can spend in individual schools.
- Where schools have accessed support from NSP subject specialists, this is perceived to have been of a good quality and has been effective in helping them respond to the introduction of the LNF in particular.
- Although based on interviews with a relatively small number of practitioners many had concerns that, while studying towards the MEP offers NQTs access to high quality resources that can support their development, the level of commitment needed can also have a negative impact on their performance in the classroom.

5 Awareness and understanding of the LNF and the National Tests amongst pupils and their parents

5.1 As discussed in Section 1, a key staging post in the successful implementation of the LNF and the National Tests is likely to be an increasing awareness and understanding of the importance of developing literacy and numeracy skills amongst pupils and their parents. This comes at a time in which the Welsh Government has sought to encourage schools to recognise the potential impact that effective community engagement could have on pupil outcomes (for example through *'Rewriting the future'* [Welsh Government, 2014h]). However, in conducting analyses at this stage, it is important to set expectations commensurate with the time involved since the launch of the NLNP.

Awareness of pupils

5.2 In deepening our understanding of what might constitute a successful outcome in this context, it was interesting to note that practitioners in mainstream schools were confident that most, if not all, of their pupils were aware of the National Tests, even where they were not due to sit them within that academic year. Such confidence appeared largely well placed. Most of the pupils we spoke to (in September-December 2014) talked about the new tests they would have to sit, even if they didn't understand the terminology associated with them, for instance the concept of a standardised score. Such a high level of awareness appeared irrespective of the age of the pupils being interviewed. Further to this, at two of the secondary schools we visited pupils, when asked about the Welsh Government's rationale for introducing the NLNP, noted that this was to do with Wales' recent performance in 'PISA'. Awareness and understanding of the National Tests was much lower amongst pupils who attended a special school or PRU. None of these pupils had sat a test or (according to their teachers) was likely to sit one.

5.3 Generally, practitioners, while confident that their pupils would consider leaving school with strong literacy and numeracy skills to be important, did not think that pupils would recognise the concept of the LNF, or understand why the LNF had been introduced. Through our discussions with pupils this view was broadly upheld. Of the 113 pupils who completed a brief paper survey exploring their views of literacy/numeracy over four-fifths indicated that they either 'strongly agreed', or 'agreed' with the statements 'English is useful for me' or 'Maths is useful for me'. Such findings were corroborated in our discussions with pupils as noted by one pupil in a Special School '*while maths can be boring, I do my best as I know I'll need it for the future*' (Year 10 Pupil). A number went on to note that they understood that such skills underpinned their progress in other subjects. That said, pupils in only three of the schools we visited knew of the 'LNF'. In these schools there was a clear policy in place where literacy and numeracy tasks were explicitly identified over the course of the school day. For example, in one school pupils were required to identify when they use literacy or numeracy skills by marking their work with a coloured dot. Furthermore, in these schools pupils clearly identified one of the reasons that the Welsh Government had introduced the LNF was to support an increase in cross-curricular learning.

Awareness of parents

5.4 In our discussions with practitioners in mainstream schools, it was clear that despite the logistical challenges that many schools had felt in posting the results of the National Tests out to parents in the last week of the summer 2014 school term, they had regarded this as a useful awareness raising exercise. Beyond this, however, few schools had sought to undertake any additional awareness-raising activities. While this can be explained to a degree by the reluctance of some schools for philosophical reasons to make the tests '*a big deal*' (School Leader), it was interesting to note that, in cases where schools that had sought to deliver engagement activities, these were found to align with an active community engagement strategy. Furthermore, most of these schools

(six of the seven schools) were located in an urban area suffering from an above average level of deprivation.

- 5.5 In such schools, school leaders spoke of the challenging home-environment that many of their pupils experienced on a daily basis. Engaging and supporting parents, in these circumstances, was seen as crucial if pupils were to reach their potential. Although it was felt that there was no magic bullet, successful strategies appeared to be based on creating frequent low-stakes opportunities for parents to engage with the school, for example, a monthly open door parental group. In such schools it was felt that there was evidence (although anecdotal) to suggest that awareness of the National Tests was higher. That said, despite the guidance produced by schools in addition to that published by the Welsh Government¹⁹, few of the parents we spoke to could talk with any confidence about what a 'standardised score' was or how to interpret their child's performance. If this metric is to be used in future, then further support for parents is likely to be required.
- 5.6 On the whole, awareness amongst parents of the LNF was perceived as more variable. Levels of awareness seemed largely dependent on the approach of individual schools. Practitioners in nine of the 20 schools we spoke to indicated that activities had been undertaken in their school to raise parental awareness of the LNF (although in most cases these would also include reference to the National Tests). In these schools, it was felt to be particularly important that parents understood what the expectation statements for their child were and how much progress they were making. This view, however, was not universal. Indeed a small number of practitioners argued that the LNF was very much something for a school to deal with. One noted, for example, that '*parents have little time for 'education jargon'*' (Primary Practitioner). It will be interesting to see if this view persists as schools begin to embed the LNF more fully into the assessment cycle.

¹⁹ A parents guide to understanding the tests and scores was produced by Welsh Government and issued in March 2014, an updated version and animated guide was released in March 2015 – after the fieldwork was conducted <http://learning.gov.wales/resources/browse-all/animated-explainer/?lang=en>.

- 5.7 Judging the success of these activities at this stage proved difficult. While the parents we spoke to in these schools were aware of and also appeared to understand the LNF, they were much less confident that awareness and understanding had spread across the parent body as a whole. After all, in most cases the very reason that such schools had prioritised such activities was acknowledgement of the challenges they faced in engaging such parents. In schools, the general view was that it would take much longer before awareness and understanding of the importance of literacy and numeracy was widely shared – notwithstanding the LNF.

Key findings:

Awareness of pupils

- Awareness of the National Tests is high amongst pupils in mainstream schools (even amongst the age-groups who have yet to sit them), and even if they didn't understand what the terminology meant, such as the concept of a standardised score.
- Pupils considered developing good literacy and numeracy skills to be a key priority. However, few were aware of the LNF. In most schools practitioners did not feel that this would be beneficial. In those schools where pupils were aware of the LNF, there was a clear policy in place to support pupils to identify where learning across the curriculum was taking place.

Awareness of parents

- Awareness of the National Tests amongst parents was mixed. This was found to be largely dependent on the approach adopted by the school to which their child belonged. Where schools had taken a proactive approach to promoting awareness amongst parents, this aligned (in most cases) with their existing community outreach strategy.
- Awareness of the LNF was also considered variable. In a number of the schools we visited, staff doubted whether making parents aware of the LNF as a concept was beneficial. It was felt to be much more important to concentrate on raising the profile of literacy and numeracy skills in their own right.

6 Emerging Impacts of the LNF and the National Tests

- 6.1 In this section we will consider the evidence that the introduction of the LNF and the National Tests is contributing to an improvement in the attainment of children and young people. In doing so, we are mindful of a number of factors, principally the realistic timeframe over which ‘hard’ outcomes such as changes in the number of pupils achieving Level 2 Inclusive at Key Stage 4, can be identified. It is likely that it will be a number of years before the impact of the LNF can be seen on improvements in pupil outcomes at age 16. Instead, it is prudent to focus on those outcomes most likely to indicate progress towards the longer term aspiration of raised attainment. In doing so we have modelled our approach in line with the logic model set out in Section 1 (Figure 1-2).
- 6.2 The principle assumption is that improvements in the quality of teaching and learning in literacy and numeracy supports an improvement in pupil outcomes, but it is important to recognise that there are also a number of other assumptions. First among these is that an improvement in the quality and frequency of collaboration between practitioners will support changes in the quality of practice, and that an improvement in the use of assessment data will support more effective teaching and learning. Using the evidence gathered through our fieldwork we will test these assumptions in the following sub-sections.

Impact on the quality of collaboration between education professionals

- 6.3 At this stage, evidence that the NLNP has supported an improvement in the quality and frequency of collaboration between practitioners in education settings was weak. In four of the twenty schools we visited (in September-December 2014) staff indicated that they felt that the introduction of the LNF and the National Tests had made a demonstrable difference to levels of collaboration between practitioners within their school. It was interesting to note that all but one of these four were secondary schools. In such schools it was noticeable that real benefit was felt to have been derived from the focus of the LNF on approaches to teaching literacy and numeracy across the curriculum. This was reported to have led to much more frequent dialogue between departments (often facilitated by English/Welsh and Maths specialists). In the remaining 16 schools, staff felt that the NLNP had not made any difference at this stage. Indeed, in many of the primary/specialist schools we visited, it was felt that staff already collaborated internally, and the focus was now on developing links with other local schools. In most cases it was felt that the introduction of the LNF (in particular) had primarily provided a topic for discussion, but was not the catalyst for collaboration.
- 6.4 In order to support collaboration between different schools, practitioners felt that the Welsh Government should explore the potential to provide direct funding to schools to support this type of endeavour. For example, it was acknowledged by those schools which were aware of, and had chosen to participate in the Outstanding Teachers of Literacy and Numeracy Programme, that, while such a programme had the potential to be beneficial, it would always have the disadvantage of not being owned by schools themselves. As a consequence, they indicated that they would welcome further consideration of whether different funding or support mechanisms might be introduced to promote joint working between different schools, for example through headteacher networks; even in addition to those freedoms set out in Welsh Government

guidelines for schools to instigate any new joint working practices they deem appropriate.

- 6.5 This view was echoed by staff in ITET Centres. As discussed in Section 2, all three Centres had taken steps to improve the quality of their interaction with schools. Although lecturers felt that this work would be beneficial in leading to better outcomes for students, it was acknowledged that there was more to do. A key barrier to progress was considered to be the lack of incentives to encourage schools to engage with ITET Centres in a meaningful way. This was reiterated by many of the mentors of trainee teachers that we spoke to, with most indicating that they felt constrained in the amount of time that they could spend on working with students on placement, where their priority continued to be ensuring that pupils at their school received a high quality of education. While it was recognised by a number of the senior staff in the ITET Centres that there was more that they could do to deepen relationships with schools (for instance through closer joint working with the appropriate Consortia), they felt that to achieve a step-change in the quality of collaboration would require systemic change.

Impact on the use of assessment data

- 6.6 As discussed in Section 4, staff in the ITET Centres we visited (in September-December 2014) accepted the importance of giving ITET students the skills to use assessment data to support their teaching. They noted, however, that the introduction of the LNF and the National Tests had led to the updating, rather than re-writing, of their courses. As such it was not expected that the NLNP would have a discernible impact on ITET practice. We have therefore, focussed our consideration of the impact of the NLNP on the use of assessment data on feedback from schools.
- 6.7 Despite the scale of the changes to their administrative processes made by many of the schools we visited, staff, for the most part, were hesitant about claiming any impact on practice at this stage. In all but two of the schools we visited, they felt that it was far too early to make such judgements. Nonetheless in most cases, schools were hopeful that the

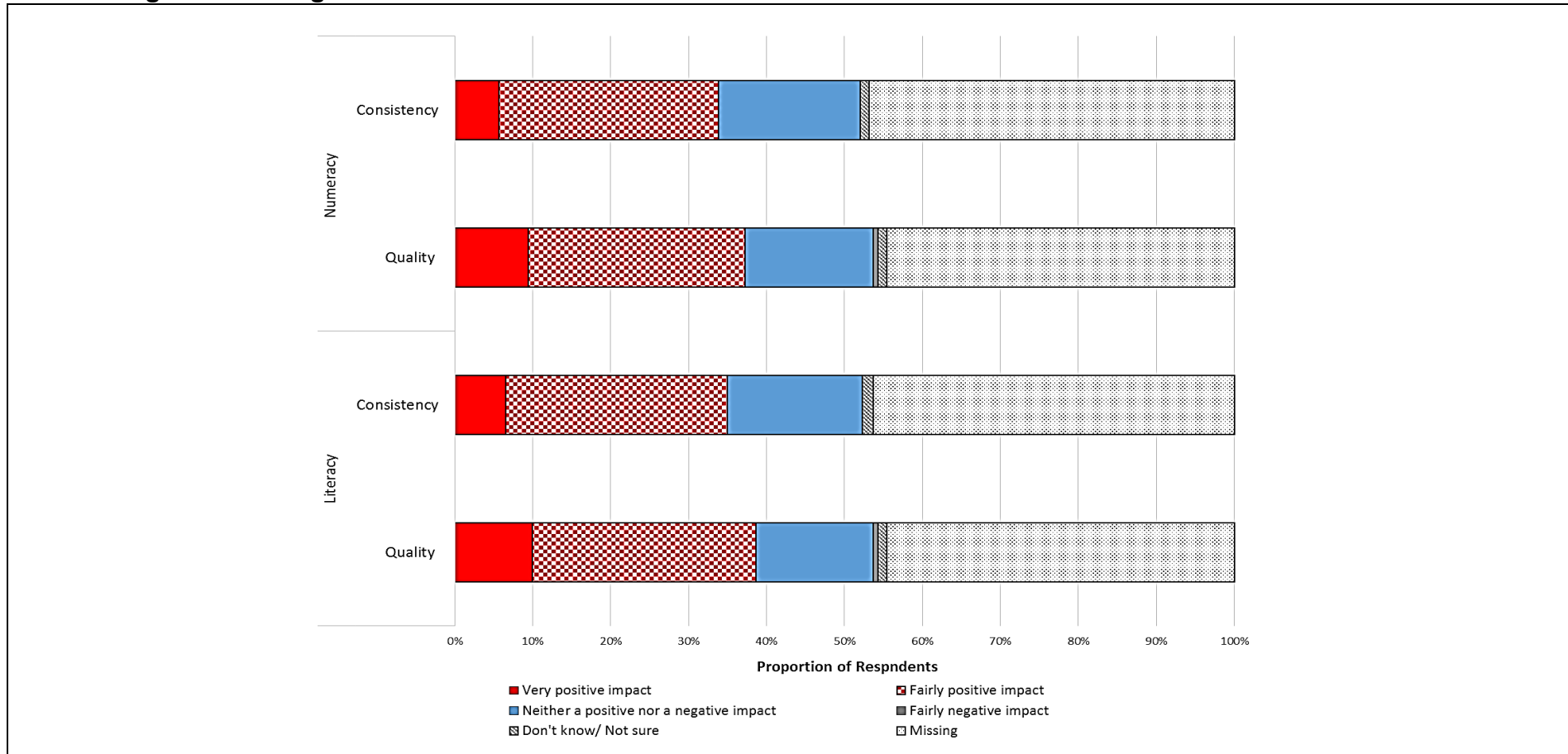
introduction of the LNF would lead to an improvement in the use of assessment data to inform teachers about pupil needs, identify curriculum gaps and so support teaching and learning.

- 6.8 Feedback on the impact of the introduction of the National Tests was more mixed. That said, even where staff continued to have reservations about the utility of the tests (see Section 3), it was felt that the data would be more useful once a true baseline had been established and schools were able to track progress over time.

Impact on the quality and consistency of teaching and learning of literacy and numeracy

- 6.9 Given these findings, it is not surprising that the education professionals we spoke to found it difficult, in the main, to support any claims to date regarding the impact of the LNF and the National Tests on the quality of teaching and learning. Staff in 15 of the schools we visited were however of the opinion that the NLNP was likely to contribute to these outcomes in the future as it became more established.

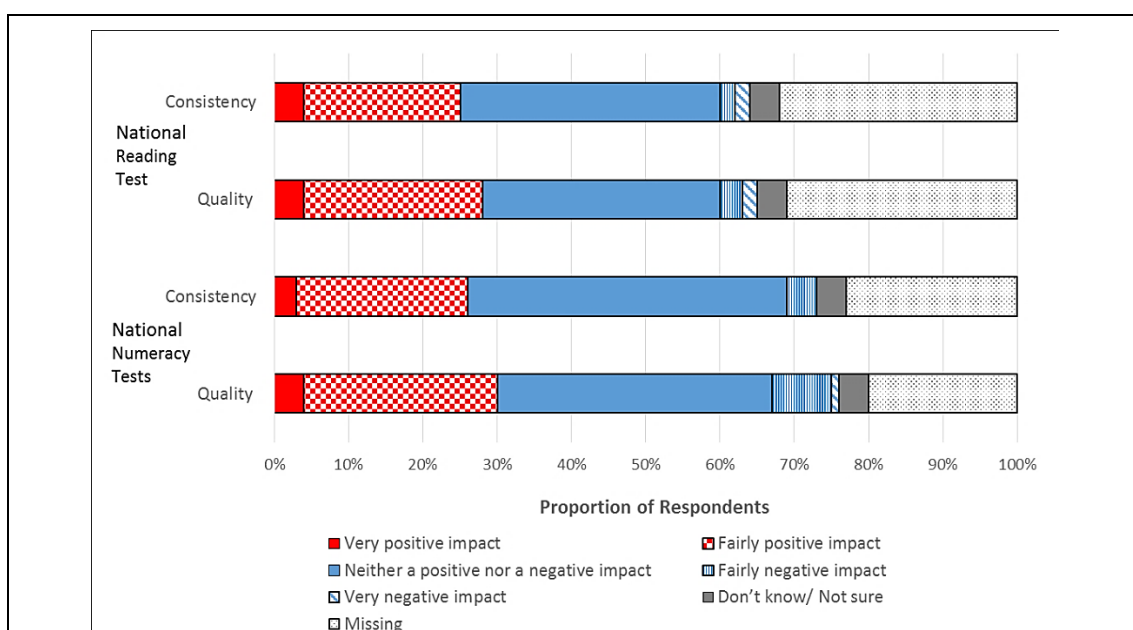
Figure 6-1: Perceived impact of the introduction of the Literacy and Numeracy Framework on the quality and consistency of teaching and learning



Source: Survey of School Leaders (June-July 2014)
 Type of question: Single-response
 Number of respondents: 352

6.10 Nonetheless, the findings from the school leaders' survey indicated a perception that the LNF and the National Tests were helping to steer things in the right direction. Over one-quarter of the 352 respondents indicated that they felt that the introduction of the LNF had led to a fairly positive impact on the quality (29 per cent) and consistency (28 per cent) of teaching in literacy and numeracy (28 per cent in terms of both quality and consistency). In line with more mixed feedback about the National Tests (see Section 4 and 5), around one-third of respondents indicated that they felt that the National Reading Test, and the National Numeracy Tests, had not yet had either a positive or a negative impact on the quality (37 per cent for the National Reading Test and 32 per cent for the National Numeracy Tests), and consistency of learning (43 per cent and 35 per cent respectively). However, since less than one-tenth felt that the tests had had either a 'fairly negative', or 'very negative' impact on these indicators (see Figure 6-2), over time one might expect that more senior leaders will feel able to reach a more positive view.

Figure 6-2: Perceived impact of the availability of pupil level data from the National Reading and Numeracy Tests on the quality and consistency of teaching and learning



Source: Survey of School Leaders (June-July 2014)
 Type of question: Single-response
 Number of respondents: 352

6.11 Amongst the staff we spoke to in ITET Centres, it was felt that, although there was evidence to support the claim that ITET students in the last year or so had graduated with much greater confidence in the teaching of literacy and numeracy, it was acknowledged that many of the initiatives responsible for improving the aptitude of students had pre-dated the introduction of the LNF and the NLNP. In this context the true impact of the LNF and the National Tests would only be measurable over time.

Impact on the attainment of children and young people

6.12 Staff in the 20 case study schools indicated that at this early stage of the programme, there was no robust evidence showing any change in the attainment of children and young people as a result of the introduction of the NLNP. This is not surprising, and while the evaluation will explore this in future years, it should be acknowledged that the impact of any intervention on pupil outcomes takes time; it will be a number of years before a significant and measurable impact may be identified.

Interviewees felt that the true impact of the changes would only be seen once a year group had followed a curriculum based on the LNF from Reception through to Year 9. That said, individual members of staff provided some anecdotal evidence to suggest that the introduction of the LNF (in particular) was having a positive effect. One practitioner noted that this year it had been noticeable to her that pupils entering Year 8 had much more developed numerical reasoning skills (one of the foci of the numeracy element of the LNF). As a result she had to change her lesson plans in order to increase the level of challenge. Elsewhere, a science teacher noted that her Year 9 classes had been much more willing to engage with extended writing tasks (a focus of the LNF) than previous cohorts.

Key Findings:

- At this early stage, it is perhaps unsurprising that we found no robust evidence to suggest that the introduction of the LNF and the National Tests has supported an improvement in pupil outcomes.
- Although senior staff in education settings were unable to quantify a measurable improvement in the quality of teaching of literacy and numeracy at their school arising from the introduction of the LNF and the National Tests, there was a perception that they had encouraged schools to take steps that would lead to an improvement over time.
- There is limited evidence at this stage that the introduction of the LNF and the National Tests has led to an improvement in the use of assessment data. However, over time, practitioners felt that the introduction of the LNF would support improvements in the approaches used by staff to assess the progress of pupils.

7 Emerging Findings and Areas for Consideration

7.1 It is evident that the introduction of the NLNP had had an impact on practice in both ITET and schools, although it is too early to assess the impact of such change on achievement and on raising educational standards. To date, it appears that

- The value of the **LNF** was recognised by staff in ITET Centres and schools, with survey respondents and interviewees in both sectors and across each phase indicating that, following the introduction of the LNF, literacy and numeracy had become a greater priority:
 - Prompted partly by the LNF, but also by recent guidance from Estyn and the publication of the Tabberer review, staff in ITET Centres had made notable changes to their strategic planning (including the wholesale re-validation by two Centres, of all of the courses delivered by them), appraising existing schemes of work, and/or the recruitment of new Literacy and Numeracy Coordinators.
 - In schools, the concepts of integrating literacy and numeracy strategies across the curriculum underpinning the LNF appear to have been more easily assimilated by primary schools (where a cross-curricula approach is more traditional) than by secondary schools, where the integration has proved more challenging and where it was felt that the embedding of the LNF would take longer.
 - Nonetheless, school leaders in secondary schools acknowledged the importance of the LNF and many had taken active steps to incorporate literacy and numeracy more widely, making explicit reference to it in the school development plan, and appointing literacy and numeracy coordinators, or a LNF coordinator, or assigning such roles to the Head of English and the Head of Maths.
 - Some concerns were still apparent, particularly in relation to the assessment of a pupils' progress against expectation statements in secondary schools, with some schools dividing up such

responsibility across curriculum areas, and in terms of the expectations placed on individual subject teachers, with some confusion as to the extent to which they had responsibility for teaching all or only some of the elements of the LNF.

- Views on the **National Tests** were more mixed.
 - For ITET Centres, the advent of the tests appears to have prompted little change in the ways they approached teaching trainees to carry out assessment tasks, with ITET staff concentrating on imparting the skills required for assessment rather than needing to focus on test-specific skills.
 - Schools appeared to be using assessment data collected through the tests to support school development planning, but were divided as to the value of the tests in helping them identify the learning or support needs of pupils.
 - Indeed, and contrary to Welsh Government guidance, the majority of surveyed schools indicated that they would continue to make use of other standardised tests to support the teaching and learning of maths (56 per cent) and literacy (76 per cent) at their school. These views were informed by a belief that the National Tests did not test effectively the skills of pupils with additional needs or who were underperforming.
 - Most schools were clear that they did not endorse teaching to the tests, although there was evidence that, where teachers lacked the confidence that their schemes of work would meet the needs of the LNF, an element of such teaching was apparent.

Enabling and constraining factors

- 7.2 The extent to which ITET Centres and schools have been able to implement the LNF and learn from the National Tests, as well as the extent to which the supporting strategies have been successful appear to have been supported by a number of factors. In turn, other factors have acted as barriers to progress, constraining the extent to which the LNF has been embedded or the National Tests have informed pupil support.

Facilitators

- 7.3 The implementation and embedding of the LNF appears to have been particularly supported by:
- The view in ITET Centres that raising the quality of provision, including the quality of training available to students in literacy and numeracy was regarded as a strategic priority prior to the introduction of the LNF, so that resources were already in place to support it.
 - Senior staff in schools and ITET Centres taking steps to raise the visibility of literacy and numeracy across the curriculum and highlighting an expectation that the LNF should underpin (though not constrain) all lesson planning.
 - Improvements in the quality and consistency of support offered to ITET students while on placements and a recognition of the need to ascertain the ability of all trainees (not just English and maths specialists) to teach literacy and numeracy.
 - The focus by the NSP and CAs on supporting collaborative working, particularly between secondary schools and their primary feeder schools, which had also led to more coordinated responses (across phases) to the introduction of the LNF.

Barriers

- 7.4 Progress in implementing and embedding the LNF and the National Tests appears to have been impeded by:
- A perceived lack of guidance materials and resources to support practitioners to implement the LNF and, in particular, how to assess the progress of pupils (though this may reflect a lack of awareness of what guidance and support materials were in fact available).
 - The timing and resourcing of support initiatives, which led to:
 - Low levels of awareness in many schools and particularly at classroom level of the various support initiatives, such as the NSP, CAs, PLCs and OTLs/OTNs
 - Concerns about the capacity of the NSP, CAs and OTLs/OTNs to actively support schools.

- A perception of limited opportunities, amongst ITET staff, to benefit from the professional discourse facilitated by initiatives such as the NSP.
- A lack of confidence in the comprehensive utility for schools of the data generated, as well as worries about the ways this data would be used by the Welsh Government and Estyn.
- Different approaches adopted by schools to the marking and recording of test data, which meant that some schools thought that the data was not always available in a form that could be best used to help with identifying the needs of individual pupils.

Areas for consideration

7.5 In considering the ways in which the NLNP could best be taken forward in order to meet the Welsh Government's aims, we suggest the following areas for consideration:

For the Welsh Government

7.6 The Welsh Government may wish to consider

- Whether there is scope to produce additional exemplification materials to support schools and ITET Centres in ensuring that their individual approaches best facilitate the delivery of the LNF.
- Whether support (particularly specialist support) is available (at a national and a regional level) for implementation of the LNF and the National Tests (at a national and regional level) is sufficient, at this stage, to enable schools to fully understand, implement and integrate all aspects of these initiatives into their practice.
- Whether the launch of the Professional Learning Model in 2014 could lead to further resources on effective collaboration, encompassing approaches such as the PLC model and OTLs/OTNs.

For Regional Education Consortia

7.7 Consortia should consider

- Whether Challenge Advisors have sufficient time to support the implementation of the LNF and the National Tests, particularly at a

time at which Consortia will take on full responsibility for supporting literacy and numeracy development in schools from September 2015.

- Ways in which they can support improvements in the collaboration between schools and ITET Centres to support students on placement

For ITET Centres

7.8 The ITET Centres may wish to consider

- Whether all resource materials for students (where this is not already the case) should be developed in both English and Welsh to aid those working through the medium of Welsh.
- Whether there is more scope to prioritise liaison with schools in order to support them in facilitating placements for ITET students.
- How to ensure that their ITET lecturers take a more consistent approach to the way in which they convey different pedagogical approaches to literacy and numeracy to ITET students.

For schools

7.9 Schools should consider

- Ways in which they could make more effective use of the data generated by the National Tests through (for instance) discussion about the outcomes for individual children and with individual children.
- Whether the profile of literacy and numeracy could be raised further with pupils, including enabling them to identify their use of specific literacy and numeracy skills in non-English/Welsh and maths subjects.
- Whether there is scope to widen their outreach activities with parents to support understanding of and engagement in the pedagogical practices being used to support the advancement of literacy and numeracy under the LNF.
- Whether the school can better operationalise approaches to the teaching of literacy and numeracy across the curriculum.

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Annex A: Research Design

This section discusses the approach adopted by the evaluation team in order to meet the aims of the study. The key research activities by strand are summarised in Table A-1.

Table A-1: Key research activities by strand

Evaluation Strand	Evaluation Activities	Description
Process Evaluation	Stakeholder consultations	Interviews with key stakeholders in September-October 2013, and July-September 2014 and 2015
	E-survey of school leaders	An e-survey of school leaders in primary and secondary schools (including specialist schools) in June-July 2014 and 2015
	E-survey of Outstanding Teachers of Literacy and/or Numeracy	An e-survey of Outstanding Teachers of Literacy and Numeracy in June-July 2014 and 2015.
	Area-based studies	case Visits to twenty schools in four local authority areas in September to December 2014 and January to March 2016
	Thematic studies	case Two thematic studies in September to December 2014 and January to March 2016. One exploring the impact of the NLNP on NQTs, another on the impact of reforms to Literacy and Numeracy Provision within ITE. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The impact of the NLNP on NQTs:</i> Interviews recently qualified teachers and school-based mentors. • <i>The impact of reforms to Literacy and Numeracy Provision within ITE:</i> Interviews with senior staff, lecturers, ITE students and school-bases mentors
Impact Evaluation	Baseline and trend analysis of pupil attainment data	Analysis of baseline and pupil attainment data from the Schools Census

Source: SQW

Process Evaluation

Through the process evaluation we have undertaken a number of activities to support and assess the impact (to date) of the introduction of the LNF and the National Tests, and the effectiveness of the support provided through the wider NLNP. Key activities have included:

- Stakeholder consultations
- E-survey of school leaders
- E-survey of Outstanding Teachers of Literacy and/or Numeracy
- School Case Study Visits
- Thematic Case Studies

Stakeholder consultations

Initial stakeholder consultations, which took place in September-October 2013, were followed up by a further round of meetings in July-September 2014. We will undertake a further round of consultations in July-September 2015. Interviews were targeted at those with strategic oversight of key elements of the NLNP. These have included:

- Project Leads at the Welsh Government for each element of the NLNP
- Literacy and/or Numeracy Lead at Estyn
- The Head of the MEP Alliance
- The Expert Advisor to the Welsh Government for ITET
- The Literacy and/or Numeracy Lead in each of the four Consortia
- The accountable officer for the delivery of the National Reading and Numeracy Tests at the National Foundation for Educational Research.
- The accountable officer for the delivery of the NSP at CfBT Education Trust
- The Heads of the three ITET Centres in Wales

Consultations were conducted using a semi-structured topic guide. Where possible, meetings were undertaken face-to-face, but, in some cases, were undertaken by telephone. A total of 15 consultations took place in September-October 2013. Thirteen consultees contributed to discussions in July-September 2014.

Consultations were used to enrich our understanding of each element of the NLNP, and its impact on educational professionals. We have also looked to understand the barriers and enablers encountered by stakeholders in

implementing the NLNP, and how this has been perceived to have had an impact on the performance of the Programmes.

E-survey of school leaders

We undertook an e-survey of school leaders in Wales in July-October 2014. The survey will be launched for a second time in May-July 2015. Targeted at school leaders in Primary and Secondary schools (including senior leaders in specialist settings) this survey has aimed to provide an insight into:

- Levels of school engagement with the National Literacy and Numeracy Programmes
- Reasons for accessing support or implementing changes
- Reasons for not accessing support or implementing changes
- The challenges faced by schools accessing support and implementing changes
- The perceived impact of the National Literacy and Numeracy Programmes on the quality and consistency of the teaching of literacy and numeracy.

Using contact information provided by the Literacy and/or Numeracy Leads in each of the four Consortia, the survey was sent out to a total of 1,605 email addresses in July 2014. Of these 1,575 were confirmed as valid addresses. To maximise the response rate to the survey, a number of techniques have been adopted by the evaluation team in partnership with the Welsh Government:

- The survey was advertised in the Welsh Government's weekly newsletter. This introduced the evaluation team and discussed how the findings would be used.
- Where possible, SQW sent a personalised link to the survey to each senior leader for whom we had contact information. This set out the purpose of the survey and invited them to respond. An email address for one of the evaluation team was also provided, this enabled potential respondents to provide feedback on the survey and/or ask any questions about its purpose and use.
- Respondents were invited to respond to the survey in either English or Welsh, depending on their personal preference. The introductory email was also provided in both languages.

- A reminder strategy was put in place to encourage completion by non-respondents. A reminder email, with a direct link to the survey, was sent out on a bi-monthly basis between July and October 2014.

In total responses were secured from 352 schools (a response rate of 22 per cent). Given the approach adopted (an online survey), this was considered a fair result (our experience has shown that a response rate of 10-20 per cent is normally achieved using an e-survey), this nonetheless has a number of implications for our analysis. Primarily, although a sample size of 352 has the potential to provide a reasonably accurate insights into the population as a whole, care must be taken when examining any sub-populations within this.

In determining the extent to which findings derived from the survey are likely to provide a reliable insight into the population, it is important to consider how the characteristics of respondents compare to those of the whole population. For instance, responses comprised of school leaders from 221 primary (63 per cent of the respondents) and 92 (26 per cent of the respondents) secondary schools. As of January 2014, the Schools Census indicates that there were a total of 1,357 (84 per cent of the population) primary schools, and 213 secondary schools (13 per cent of the population). (Welsh Government, 2014g) This indicates that we had a proportionately higher response from secondary schools and a proportionately lower response from primary schools than might be anticipated from the national profile. As such, in interpreting our results it will be important that we consider the extent to which this respondent profile might have influenced our results. That said, by obtaining responses from 43 per cent of all secondary schools in Wales (if broken down by school-type) the results obtained by secondary school leaders have the potential to provide a more accurate picture of the views of that population as a whole.

As of January 2014 a total of 498 (31 per cent) schools in Wales are classified as Welsh Medium (including Dual Stream, Bilingual and Transitional schools as appropriate). (Welsh Government, 2014g) School leaders from 108 Welsh-medium schools (33 per cent of the population of such schools) responded to

the survey. This response rate gives us confidence that the views of Welsh-medium practitioners are being taken into account.

Despite the broadly representative break-down of respondents, it was notable, however, that the number of respondents to individual questions was variable. For instance, the minimum number of none-responses to questions pertaining to the National Reading Test was 23 school leaders (7 per cent of the total number of respondents). Conversely, a minimum of 113 respondents (32 per cent of the total number of respondents) to the survey did not answer questions pertaining to the Outstanding Teachers of Literacy and Numeracy Programme. This proportion of item non-responses has been taken into account in the survey analysis.

In any future rounds of this survey it will be important to consider the extent to which the survey design has contributed to this outcome. For instance, the survey was designed to take an average of 20-25mins to complete (most online surveys are designed for completion in no more than 15 minutes). Given that the number of respondents to particular questions was found to decrease over the course of the survey, as we look to refine the survey for use in 2015, it will be important to consider if the survey could be shortened without compromising on the level of insight provided unduly.

E-survey of Outstanding Teachers

We undertook an e-survey of Outstanding Teachers of Literacy and/or Numeracy in July-October 2014. The survey will be launched for a second time in May-July 2015. Targeted at those teachers identified by the four Consortia as engaged in the programme the survey has aimed to understand:

- The types of professional that have taken on the role of an OTL/OTN
- The reasons that professionals chose to take up the role of an OTL/OTN
The extent to which professionals have engaged with the OTLN
- The extent to which OTLs/OTNs are satisfied with the support/training provided for them
- The challenges faced by professionals in delivering the OTLN

- The effectiveness of the support offered by OTLs/OTNs

Recipients were identified by programme leads. However, due to their concerns around data security, a generic link to the survey was sent out by programme leads within each of the four Consortia, rather than by SQW to named OTL/OTNs. This had a number of implications:

- It was not possible to introduce a tailored reminder strategy and generic reminders had to be sent out by Programme leads at the consortia. It is unclear how many such reminders were sent out over the course of the survey window.
- The inclusion criteria for OTL/OTNs indifferent Consortia differed depending on their delivery model. This has the potential to influence the nature of the responses.

In total an invitation to participate in the survey was sent out to 162 teachers. And a total of 59 responses were received to the survey. Although this is a relatively high response rate for an e-survey (36 per cent) it places major constraints on the extent and sophistication of any analysis that can be conducted.

A further challenge is posed by the uneven distribution of OTL/OTNs across Wales:

- A total of 77 emails were sent out by EAS (South East Wales)
- A total of 20 emails were sent out by Central South (CSCJES)
- A total of 25 emails were sent out by North Wales (GWE)
- A total of 40 emails were sent out by ERW (South West and Mid Wales)

Given the clear differences between the models adopted by each Consortium, and their progress in implementing the programme, consideration of the views of respondents by area is likely to be crucial. However, given the overall number of responses to the survey as a whole our scope for doing so in any meaningful way is heavily constrained. For instance despite EAS sending the survey out to all identified 77 OTL/OTNs, only 16 responses were received (a 21 per cent response).

Area-based case studies

We conducted 20 school case study visits in four LA areas in September-November 2014. We will undertake another 20 such visits in January-March 2016. Visits were undertaken in order to understand the awareness, engagement and impact of key elements of the NLNP on individual practitioners, schools, and the wider school cluster.

To support this approach we took into account a number of considerations in the selection of case study schools:

- **The Consortia area to which the school belonged;** In order to take account of differences in the approach adopted in each Consortium, five schools were selected within each area. Another five schools will be selected in each Consortia area in 2016.
- **The historic performance of each LA:** Within Consortia areas, historically, pupil outcomes have differed considerably. Using data pertaining to the progress made by disadvantaged pupils, and feedback from the Literacy and/or Numeracy Lead in each area, we identified two LAs representing those with the most favourable and least favourable results. The first set of visits took place in one of the LAs, with visits to the second LA planned for 2015.
- **The nature of the local education ecosystem:** In order to develop an understanding of the impact of the NLNP on the culture of education within specific localities, and in consultation with the Literacy and Numeracy Lead in each Consortium we initially identified two secondary schools within a 10-15 mile radius of each other within the target LA. To give us a good cross-section of different levels of historic performance schools, where possible schools were selected at a variety of different stages in their school improvement journey. Once engaged, and with the support of the appropriate CA we recruited a further two primary schools (in most cases one feeder for each secondary school) and a local Special School or Pupil Referral Unit (PRU). This gave us a total of five schools in each case-study area.
- **The primary language medium of sample schools:** Steps were taken to ensure that a number of Welsh-medium schools were included within the sample.

Consistent with the approach set out above between September and November 2014 we undertook a total of 20 school visits in four LAs (one in

each Consortium area). Although we had initially planned visits to eight secondary schools and eight primary schools, visits were undertaken in seven secondary schools, nine primary schools, three special schools and one PRU. The decision to recruit the additional primary school in one of the four areas was taken following the decision by one secondary school to pull out due to a change in senior leadership, and the reluctance of other local secondary schools to engage at short notice. Faced with the alternative of looking at a different geographic area, the decision was taken to recruit an additional feeder primary school.

In each case study school interviews were undertaken with a range of different stakeholders including; school leaders, practitioners, parents and pupils. Interviews were undertaken both singularly in a discussion group format. The number of interviews undertaken with each stakeholder group is summarised in Table A-2 below.

Table A-2: Number of interviews undertaken in 2014

Stakeholder group	Number of Interviews
School Leaders	23
Practitioners	40
Parents	27
Pupils	116

Source: SQW

Interviews were undertaken using a semi-structured topic guide and, where possible, recorded. Qualitative analysis software was used to code the responses and to support an accurate disaggregation of the views of sub-populations such as school leaders or practitioners.

In order to support us in gaining a holistic understanding of each school, and its engagement in the NLNP, where possible we also undertook interviews with each schools named Challenge Advisor (CA), and their National Support Programme Partner. In total we undertook interviews with a total of 16 CAs (and in some cases Senior CAs) and with 12 NSP Partners. In a number of cases schools shared the same CA and NSP Partner. However in other cases

schools indicated that they either did not know who their CA was (and this could not be confirmed by the appropriate Consortia), or did not have an NSP Partner. In such cases no interviews were undertaken.

Thematic Case Studies

We conducted two thematic case studies in September-November 2014.

These were set up to explore:

- The impact of the NLNP on NQTs
- The impact of reforms to Literacy and Numeracy Provision within ITE

We will complete two further thematic studies in January to March 2016.

The impact of the NLNP on NQTs: Interviews recently qualified teachers and school-based mentors.

We deepened our understanding of the impact of the NLNP on NQTs (and recently qualified teachers) within case study area through interviews with recently qualified teachers (who had passed statutory induction within the academic year prior to our visit), and the named NQT mentor in their school. Interviews were undertaken using a semi-structured topic guide and were undertaken by telephone and face to face.

In total we completed a total of nine interviews with recently qualified teachers, and seven school-based mentors. In order to identify potential interviewees, we liaised, where possible with local CAs. However, in a number of areas such intelligence could not be obtained resulting in a less targeted approach, which was less successful. In future conversations with the Consortia we will look to clarify who could support us better in this task in order to secure greater buy-in.

The impact of reforms to Literacy and Numeracy Provision within ITET: Interviews with senior staff, lecturers, ITE students and school-based mentors

In order to deepen our understanding of the impact of the introduction of the LNF and the NLNP on ITET we conducted a case study visit in each of the three ITET Centres. Visits were undertaken, where possible in one HEI location. HEIs were selected following discussions with the Head of Centre on

the understanding that any subsequent activity would be undertaken elsewhere. In two of the three Centres, senior staff kindly facilitated access to staff and students from a number of linked HEIs. In such cases, steps were taken to ensure that discussion groups were not mixed, so that any differences between the practices of different settings could be established.

To enable us to understand the strategic and operational implications of the introduction of the LNF and the National Tests, interviews were undertaken with a number of different stakeholder groups including senior staff, lecturers, ITET students and school-based mentors. Interviews were undertaken using a semi-structured topic guide and were undertaken by telephone and face to face. The number of interviews undertaken with each stakeholder group is summarised in Table A-3.

Table A-3: Number of interviews undertaken in 2014

Stakeholder group	Number of Interviews
Senior Staff	8
Lecturers	13
ITT Students	48
School-based mentors	2

Source: SQW

Impact Evaluation

Our final approach to the full impact evaluation will be the subject of discussions with the Welsh Government, once the focus, data sources and appropriate metrics have been clarified. The intention is to conduct a longitudinal quantitative analysis of relevant pupil level data to explore the impact of the NLNP on the attainment of children and young people in Wales.