

## Education Achievement Service response to additional questions\*: The National Assembly for Wales: Children Young People and Education Committee / School improvement and raising standards

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

The EAS supports schools and settings with the tools and /or software they have introduced within their own settings, there is not a preferred method or tool. Our focus is on supporting schools to identify and use a wide range of data effectively to ensure all learners are well supported at the earliest opportunity enabling them to make appropriate progress overtime.

The EAS provides analysis of school level data that can be used to support school self-evaluation processes. This includes analysis of individual pupils from year 2 to year 9 noting the progress they are making overtime. In addition, the EAS facilitates the sharing of effective practice from within and outside of the region where data has been used to facilitate effective teaching and learning enabling learners to make progress overtime. As part of the Equity and Wellbeing agenda the EAS works in partnership with local authorities to support and advise on evaluations that are made on the impact of specific interventions that have been used to support learners.

Along with other regions the EAS uses 'ALPS' (a company who measure and compare progress from GCSE to A level across over 2,000 providers in England and Wales) as a value-added performance analysis for A Level, AS level and BTEC in secondary schools. All 24 schools with 6 forms across the region use this system.

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

There are effective links between the work of each of the local authorities and the EAS to ensure synergy and no duplication of efforts when providing support and challenge to schools in this aspect of work. The work of the region is to promote improved outcomes for all groups of learners and the focus is very much on the quality of teaching and learning to ensure all learners make appropriate progress overtime.

Each of the improvement strands within the current EAS Business Plan has a specific emphasis on the work of the EAS in promoting improved outcomes for vulnerable learners, in particular, those in receipt of Free School Meals (FSM). These strategies are based on a wide range of research evidence. It is important that all other stakeholders, including schools and local authorities, have their own specific strategies to support and promote improved outcomes for vulnerable learners. The EAS endeavours, as appropriate, and within available resources to support local authority strategic plans to maximise the impact on learner outcomes.

There is a regional Equity and Wellbeing Strategy which encompasses all the approaches that are being implemented across the region to support schools in promoting improved outcomes for vulnerable learners. The strategy has been formulated with a wide range of partners (including local authorities, Health Board, Gwent Police) and continues to be reviewed and updated. A summary of some of the areas contained within the regional strategy is noted below:

• A regional

professional panel (including local authorities and EAS) that discusses and approves school grant plans (Pupil Development Grant (PDG), Looked After Children (LAC), Educated other than at school (EOTAS)) with headteachers and chairs of governors. In addition, this encompasses midyear reviews of grant plans and impact capture.

- A regional professional learning offer for schools and settings that covers all aspects of the wellbeing and equity agenda, grant planning and interventions.
- Support for schools to interrogate data on groups of learners to assist with planning for improvement.
- Regional delivery schools for wellbeing and equity, a cluster that delivers professional learning to support the LAC agenda and a Lead Pupil Referral Unit that offers support and professional learning across the region.
- The delivery of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) professional learning with nearly all schools having completed Unit 1 with a target of all schools completing Unit 2 (Emotion Coaching) by July 2020.
- Pilot programme working in partnership with Children's Commissioner on the Rights to Education due to be rolled out to all schools.
- Working in partnership with Young Carers Wales to design lessons for both primary and secondary phases to raise awareness of young carers.
- Created a regional 'Wellbeing Toolkit' which has been used across schools to audit provision and engagement in learning for all vulnerable learners. In addition, all clusters of schools have developed 'Wellbeing Plans' that are bespoke to the priorities within their community.

### **1.1. Between eligible for free school meals (eFSM) pupils and other pupils:**

In addition to the information provided above the region has:

- Completed regional based research on provision and performance of FSM learners which has been shared with all schools to support PDG planning and the provision for pupils eligible for FSM.
- Introduced Professional Panels (including LA and EAS) to discuss with headteachers and chairs of governors their PDG and LAC grant plans. These sessions afford the opportunity to align support needs and apply rigour to the approval and impact capture of grant plans.
- Provided termly sessions, in collaboration with the regional Additional Learning Needs Transformation Lead for governors to assist them in scrutinising school grant plans and to be cognisant of the latest research and effective practice.
- Partially funded a vulnerable learner lead practitioner in every secondary school to engage in a 12-month professional learning programme. Schools will engage in research on the engagement and provision for FSM learners within their own school context enabling them to review and refine their own school strategy for improving the provision for FSM learners.
- Introduced the RADY (Raising attainment of disadvantaged youngsters) programme that has been implemented in 6 secondary schools, this is now running into the 2nd year.
- Engaged with 'Children in Wales' and 'Poverty Proofing' to support schools to review the 'cost of the school day'.
- Engaged with Education Endowment Foundation to host regional research events.

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

The support element for supporting minority ethnic pupils and Gypsy, Roma and Traveller learners is provided through via local authorities, the detail of this is provided below. The approach that is described below has been in place across the south east Wales region for many years.

The EAS supports and challenges schools through bespoke programmes that focus on leadership and pedagogy to ensure that all groups of learners make the appropriate rate of progress overtime. In addition, the EAS has worked collaboratively with schools and GEMS to write a toolkit to support schools who are new to receiving ethnic minority and new to English learners.

**Minority ethnic pupils:** Gwent Education Minority-ethnic Service (GEMS) works to provide strategic support and intervention for minority-ethnic pupils who have English as an Additional Language (EAL) across the South East Wales Consortia (SEWC). A referral process ensures that all new arrivals are known to the service and initial assessments carried out in home language or English. GEMS has the flexibility to assess pupils in a range of languages. GEMS support is provided to pupils in cohorts from Year 2 to Year 11 who may be at risk of underachieving at school and who have a Welsh Government language acquisition stage of A/B. Pupils below Year 2 can be supported if there is capacity and support available.

All supported pupils are assigned a Language Acquisition Record to track their language development. These records are available to all schools and local authority officers. The Language Acquisition Record allows early identification of pupils who are not making the expected rate of language acquisition and allows for allocation of additional intervention. To ensure practice is consistent, training in identifying the correct Language Acquisition stages was carried out across the region in 2018 and will again be offered to all schools in 2019.

**Gypsy, Roma and Traveller learners:** Newport City Council hosts the GEMS service. Torfaen, Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly and Monmouthshire local authorities access support from GEMS through established Service Level Agreements (SLAs). GEMS provides support to schools across the region with the aim of building their capacity to meet the needs of Gypsy, Roma Traveller (GRT) pupils. However, as Torfaen and Blaenau Gwent run their own Traveller Services, GRT does not form part of their SLA.

\*Additional information has been provided in the original evidence that was submitted in December 2019.