



School Effectiveness Framework Pilot Programme  
Final Report  
October 2009

South West and Mid Wales Consortium

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## 1. Introduction to the final report

In 2008, the Assembly Government invited the South West and Mid Wales Consortium to develop its own approach to implementing the framework for the School Effectiveness Framework as part of the national pilot programme. The South West and Mid Wales Consortium welcomed the opportunity to develop an approach that would build upon established consortium working and be effective within the local context. This led to a one-year pilot programme with selected schools from across the region.

The purpose of this report is to summarise progress made in the implementation of the pilot across the region, evaluate the impact of the pilot on participating schools and identify key conclusions arising from the pilot programme that may inform further developments both regionally and nationally.

## 2. Evidence base for the report

This report has been compiled on the basis of evidence collected through the monitoring of the programme over the last twelve months. Previous progress reports have also been re-visited as a source of evidence. The main methods of data-collection were as follows:

- **Reporting by Improvement Facilitators (IFs):** the IFs have maintained records throughout their work with schools, partly to inform their own decision-making. They have also submitted reports as the schools have completed each phase of the pilot programme. These reports have been an invaluable source of evidence.
- **Other documentary evidence produced through the pilot:** all of the participating schools worked with the School Effectiveness Profile (SEP) to establish their baseline for progression; in some cases, schools have re-visited the SEP in order to determine progress in relation to their selected 'themes for improvement'. It has also been possible to review some school performance data and records from meetings.
- **Pilot school perception survey:** In September 2009, as the schools approached the completion of their work for the pilot programme, a questionnaire was circulated to all of the participating schools.
- **Collaborative review meetings:** The IFs were asked to lead their schools through two review meetings, one at the mid-term of the pilot, and another at the end. In practice, some of these reviews were not conducted with individual schools, but involved the group of schools working together in the pilot as an 'innovation network'. In addition, the IFs also met together on four occasions during the course of the year to review progress, identify key issues and plan together to address those issues. The records taken through these meetings have also been a useful point of reference for this report.
- **Direct observation of the work of the IFs:** it was also possible to take part in some of the work with schools, particularly the meetings of the networked learning communities.

- **Structured interviews with Improvement Facilitators and other stakeholders:** Towards the end of the pilot, interviews were held with the majority of the IFs to review their involvement with the pilot and gauge their perceptions of what had been achieved with each of the schools they worked with. These interviews also provided some valuable feedback on the key challenges faced by the IFs in their role, and the ways in which enhanced guidance and support could be provided in any future development of the programme.

### **3. Characteristics of the swamwac pilot programme**

The programme piloted in the South West and Mid Wales Consortium was developed through consortium working. A development group was established comprising three headteachers nominated by the Consortium Headteacher Group and a senior officer from each authority, an assistant director, the consortium coordinator and an external consultant.

The group developed an approach that built upon the existing work of schools and local authorities and on current Assembly Government initiatives, and was appropriate to the context and circumstances of all schools across the Consortium. The approach developed was firmly rooted in the principles outlined in the School Effectiveness Framework and referenced to the 'National Purpose for Schools' (School Effectiveness Framework, p 8) set out within the document.

#### **3.1 Key Principles**

The key principles on which the approach was based are derived directly from the School Effectiveness Framework. The core aims were to:

- Improve learning and wellbeing for all children and young people;
- Reduce variations in effectiveness within and between schools across the system as a whole;
- Raise overall levels of attainment and address the differences in outcomes within schools, between schools, between local authorities and between the primary and secondary phases;
- Promote commitment of schools, local authorities and national government to the national purpose for education;
- Align policies and practices through genuine dialogue and system thinking at all levels.

## **3.2 Local Context**

The context in which schools operate varies, and across the consortium we have the full range of contexts that exist across Wales. To achieve improvement and positive change we have to recognise the context (the community and the local authority) in which the schools exist and find solutions that will be achievable within that context.

Across the Consortium we recognise that we have high performing schools. The challenge in the local context is about making 'every school a great school'. However, it is also the case that there are some schools that find themselves in circumstances such that intervention is needed to make them good schools. Recent Estyn Inspections of the local authorities have provided evidence that the local authorities are performing well.

Across the consortium 48% of the schools are bilingual or Welsh medium and 52% are English medium, thus the context of the consortium is bilingual. We also recognise the key contribution that schools and education makes in achieving the Commitment of the Welsh Assembly Government to a truly bilingual Wales.

## **3.3 Collaborative working**

Key to the model is the development of consortium working between the six authorities; this has been developing since the establishment of the consortium in 2000. The Local Authorities have worked together on the leadership and management of this pilot, including the selection and briefing of the schools, and the recruitment, selection and training of the Improvement Facilitators.

# **4. Key findings from the pilot programme**

## **4.1 The Approach**

The programme was intended to support the individual journey each school makes towards becoming more effective in adding value to the learning of all pupils in the school. It is an approach that is about helping good schools get better through building upon and making the most effective use of resources available to the school – at school, local and national level.

It built on existing good practice within individual authorities and schools through effective support and challenge, embracing parallel developments such as community-focused schools, LEA/Schools Partnership Agreements and integrated delivery of services for children, young people and families.

The approach was designed to enable schools to achieve improved effectiveness that impacts positively on standards; as such, it focused on the deeper characteristics and values of the school, including raising the aspirations of the whole school community.

## 4.2 Selecting schools for participation in the pilot

The pilot involved schools from each of the local authorities in the region; they represent a broad range of schools in terms of language, phase, size and location that are found across the consortium. In total, 28 schools (including one Pupil Referral Unit) participated in the pilot.

The intention was that the pilot schools were to be a balanced representation from across the Consortium. The schools needed to be representative in terms of rural/urban; primary/secondary/special; Welsh medium/bilingual/English; Faith; size; performance. Schools may cover more than one e.g. secondary/urban, primary/rural/faith. In line with DCELLS guidance, certain schools were ineligible for the pilot; they were schools that were in Special Measures, were anticipating an inspection in 2008 – 2009, being reorganised or closed by the end of 2008 – 2009, or engaged in other extensive pilot work in 2008 – 2009. Each LA nominated 5 or 6 schools which formed a 'long' list.

The selection criteria used were those provided by WAG and a matrix to ensure that the cohort represented the range of schools found within the consortium. The consortium coordinator in dialogue with the LA lead officers selected the schools to ensure that the profile across the consortium reflected the range of schools in the region. A list of the participating schools is to be found in Appendix 1.

### The final profile of schools

	Primary	Secondary	Special	Total
Bilingual	9	4	0	13
English	7	6	2	15
Total	16	10	2	<b>28</b>

In practice, the Local Authorities differed in the way in they managed this processes and approached schools to invite their participation. Many schools volunteered for the programme, through dialogue with the Local Authority, because they were looking for a new source of challenge and support to help the school move forward. But not all of the schools were entirely 'willing volunteers' for the pilot; however, this is useful in that experience of working with these schools will help to frame approaches with such schools, if and when the programme is rolled-out nationally. In some cases, schools were targeted by the Local Authority to help them prepare for an impending Estyn Inspection. In a small number of cases, schools were identified by the Local Authority and encouraged to take part because they were viewed as 'coasting schools' or reflected key weaknesses in their leadership or management.

The processes through which schools were selected for participation did affect in several cases the eventual impact of the pilot upon the schools. This raises issues about the 'readiness' of schools to benefit from the programme, and the key characteristics of what 'readiness' looks like in terms of school performance and capacity for change. Related to this, is the other contextual forces impacting on the school, for example, impending re-organisation of schools in the area and possible amalgamation/closure. However, the key variable in this seems to be the willingness of the Headteacher to engage with the process and the possibilities for improvement in their school.

### **4.3 Establishing the baseline for development**

The pilot programme was structured around a series of phases of work which the Improvement Facilitators led the schools through. The purpose of the first phase was to begin to establish a partnership between the IF and the school, particularly the headteacher. This was a chance for the IF to get to know the school and to understand the context in which it operated, and for the school to develop its awareness of the School Effectiveness Framework. This was achieved through a school visit and study of documentation provided by the school. It also gave the IF the opportunity to provide the school with some guidance, if needed, on the completion of an initial self-evaluation based on the School Effectiveness Profile (SEP). The first phase led directly to the second, the purpose of which was to discuss the outcomes of the self-evaluation process and agree the 'themes for improvement' which would become the focus for development work over the coming year. Schools were also invited to identify perceived barriers to effectiveness and their key strengths that could be shared with other pilot schools.

### **4.4 The Initial Self-evaluation Process**

All of the schools in the pilot programme conducted an initial self-evaluation against the School Effectiveness Framework. In the school perception survey, all the schools reported that they had engaged in a rigorous self-evaluation that was based on performance data and additional sources of evidence related to the SEP.

However, analysis of the documentary evidence and feedback from the IFs indicates that the quality and depth of the evaluation process was highly variable. Some schools conducted an in-depth evaluation across all of the key elements of the SEF; they involved different groups in the process, identified and reviewed the evidence available, and arrived at shared judgements about potential themes for improvement. In a very few cases, the process was far more cursory, and judgements rested on the assertion of the headteacher or a small group of senior staff at the school. There was limited reference to the underpinning evidence to inform judgements.

The schools were not always able to involve a wide range of stakeholders in the self-evaluation; the main barrier to this was reported as the timescale of the pilot, which meant that the time available to complete the self-evaluation did not facilitate the involvement of the wider school staff, governors, parents or partners. Many schools reported involving the SMT who met and considered data and the evidence available in the school to verify the judgements. The timing of the process in the school-year was also identified as a key issue by many schools, and they indicated that the completion of the SEF self-evaluation should be aligned to the school's annual evaluation and improvement planning cycle.

Over half of the schools felt that the self-evaluation process they undertook, based on the SEP, led to valuable discussions about the school's characteristics and capacity for improvement. A number of schools commented that the process involving the SEP reflected their existing approach to self evaluation. They reported that much of the work involved re-visiting existing evidence and identifying gaps which the SEP reveals. In the majority of cases, schools did not consult their Improvement Facilitator over the self-evaluation process and were confident of their ability to manage the process effectively. There were therefore mixed views on the support provided from the Improvement Facilitator on the conduct of the self-evaluation. It was felt that the written

guidance was not as helpful as it could have been in supporting the schools in conducting the self-evaluation against the SEP, with about 70% of the schools reporting this.

There was some discussion of school performance data in completion of the SEP, this was often fairly limited in scope. Whilst there was a delay in the production of the school data profiles by DCELLS, a range of other data was readily available from schools, but these were not extensively used to prepare for the Dialogue Meeting to identify themes for improvement. The perception from the schools was that this data was already known to them, and the key issues in the performance of the school were already being addressed through the school improvement plans. Instead, the focus of the dialogue meeting, and the identification of themes for improvement, was primarily centred on the discussion of the qualitative indicators in the SEP.

Schools and Improvement Facilitators raised a series of important issues for further development of the initial self-evaluation process:

- Further consideration is needed on the timing of the process, to ensure that it fits seamlessly with the cycle of school improvement activities across the school year;
- Improvement Facilitators advocated further consideration of the way in which the use of the SEP linked with schools' existing self-evaluation processes, and of the use of school performance data within this;
- The timescales for the pilot programme made it difficult for schools to involve a range of stakeholders (including other agencies) in the process; it was felt that more time would have made it possible to involve others in the dialogue;
- The written guidance on the self-evaluation and the use of the SEP requires improvement.

#### **4.5 The School Effectiveness Profile (SEP)**

Schools varied in their approach to completion of the SEP. Two schools partially completed selected sections, whilst all the other schools completed all the elements of the SEP. The elements that were chosen for partial completion were Leadership and Curriculum and Teaching; the schools which chose these elements did so because their existing self-evaluation had identified these as priority areas for development. This proved to be an effective strategy, in that it enabled the school to focus quickly on the key areas of need (as previously identified) and consider the selected element in depth.

In the school perception survey, the majority of schools reported that the SEP, as presently constructed, was not a useful tool in supporting their self-evaluation. Whilst schools felt that the key elements of the School Effectiveness Framework reflected important characteristics of effective schools, the design of the SEP was flawed. In the school perception survey, where schools agreed that the SEP was useful, it provided a basis for discussion and dialogue between staff and sometimes wider partners such as governors and parents. Where it was not seen to be useful, the terminology of the SEP was criticised as open to subjective interpretation and did not reflect the stages a school may go through to secure improvement.

The majority of schools did not find that the SEP gave additional insight into the work of the school when compared with self-evaluation based on the Estyn framework. However, a few schools felt

that the SEP provided them with the opportunity to recognise their achievements in 'working with others', and this was particularly relevant for schools with high levels of social deprivation.

Two thirds of the schools felt that the level descriptors were helpful in agreeing the current position of the school with respect to the SEF. However, a few schools commented that the wording of the level descriptors was open to interpretation, some were ambiguous and the levels were not always incremental. Two thirds of the schools felt that the visual representation provided by the swamwac recording form was helpful in providing an overview. However, it was recognised that the online and electronic versions of the recording form need further development and refinement. A minority of schools also used the swamwac review questions as a starting point for the self-evaluation; where the questions were used, they were reported to add value to the process.

Schools and Improvement Facilitators raised a series of important issues for further development of the SEP:

- Schools commented adversely on the size of the School Effectiveness Profile, and often focused down on selected elements that were particularly significant for the school;
- The need for further development of the proforma to record the outcomes of the self-evaluation process was noted;
- Some headteachers felt that there were problems with the wording of level descriptors. They were criticised for being excessively vague, and that they did not represent clear progression in terms of quality;
- Some headteachers of smaller primary schools felt that the content and the design of the SEP made it unsuitable for the settings in which they worked, and questioned whether it had been developed primarily with secondary schools in mind.

#### **4.6 The dialogue meeting and the action planning process**

The school's self evaluation led to a 'dialogue meeting' with the Improvement Facilitator. This was the opportunity for the Improvement Facilitator to meet with the headteacher and others to identify the key focus of the work to be undertaken in the coming year. The purpose of the meeting was to clarify the outcomes of the self-evaluation undertaken by the school and to identify the key themes for improvement. In a majority of cases, the school's LA Link Adviser also attended and contributed to the dialogue meeting by invitation of the headteacher.

All of the schools in the pilot programme agreed themes for improvement and barriers for learning through a dialogue meeting with their Improvement Facilitator. Interviews with the Improvement Facilitators at the end of pilot revealed there had been few disagreements or conflicting views over the selection of appropriate themes for each school. Where the Improvement Facilitators felt that underlying issues (for example, in school leadership and management) were not being addressed, they held their counsel and decided to return to those issues as the opportunity emerged, and as their relationship with the headteacher deepened.

In some cases, several themes for improvement were identified, but most schools focused down on one or two key elements. In many cases, the selected themes were not mapped closely against the level descriptors in the School Effectiveness Profile, and the latter were not overtly

used in setting outcomes in schools' action plans. This indicates a possible need to provide Improvement Facilitators with additional guidance and support on using the SEP to frame themes for improvement, and to work with schools to translate these into concise objectives for action planning.

A full summary of the themes selected by each school during the Pilot Programme is to be found at Appendix 2. The following analysis identifies the overall pattern of themes across the six key elements of the School Effectiveness Framework. It should be noted that this process involved a high level of inference, as the repetition in the design of the SEP meant that specific themes could be located in more than one key element of the framework. However, it does summarise the key areas in which schools were working.

Primary schools: Summary of themes identified		
No. Refs	Key element of SEF	Examples of themes identified
11	Improvement and accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improving systems of classroom observation</li> <li>• Monitoring pupil progress</li> <li>• Analysing assessment data to identify priorities for school improvement</li> <li>• Improving performance management systems</li> <li>• Reducing variation: identifying/sharing good practice</li> <li>• Sharing data, involving parents/carers</li> </ul>
7	Curriculum and teaching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personalised learning</li> <li>• Integrated curriculum</li> <li>• Developing independent learning</li> <li>• Developing creative curriculum</li> <li>• Improving assessment systems</li> <li>• Assessment for learning</li> <li>• Curriculum coordination + planning</li> </ul>
3	Intervention and support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pupil involvement in target setting</li> <li>• Improving quality of data (standardisation)</li> <li>• Developing pupil tracking</li> <li>• Improving use of data</li> </ul>
3	Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developing school's vision for learning</li> <li>• Developing leadership role of Governing body</li> <li>• Setting high expectations for staff</li> <li>• Building leadership capacity</li> <li>• Distributing leadership</li> </ul>
3	Working with others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community-focused schooling</li> <li>• Achieving the 7 core aims (CYPP)</li> <li>• Developing social partnerships and providing additional services</li> <li>• Meeting needs of parents and community</li> </ul>
2	Networks of professional practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developing dialogue about expectations of staff – shared vision for learning</li> <li>• Investigating and improving pedagogy</li> </ul>

Secondary and special education settings: Summary of themes identified		
No. Refs	Key element of SEF	Examples of themes identified
8	Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building leadership capacity</li> <li>• Empowering middle leaders</li> <li>• Distributing leadership</li> <li>• Leadership training programmes</li> </ul>
5	Improvement and accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developing use of classroom observation</li> <li>• Addressing in-school variation</li> <li>• Improving performance management: middle leaders</li> <li>• Using data to improve performance</li> <li>• Setting and achieving targets</li> <li>• Improving pupil/parent involvement in target-setting</li> </ul>
3	Curriculum and teaching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adapting curriculum to learners' needs</li> <li>• Developing learner voice</li> <li>• Tackling underachievement of boys</li> <li>• Curriculum development to increase motivation and achieve potential</li> </ul>
3	Working with others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focusing on community needs</li> <li>• Engaging parents</li> <li>• Aligning/collaborating with other providers – 14-19 provision</li> <li>• Planning responsive curriculum</li> <li>• Community-focused developments</li> </ul>
3	Networks of professional practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deepening collective responsibility</li> <li>• Developing shared understanding: middle leader role</li> <li>• Learning from best practice - in-school variation</li> <li>• Developing enquiry-based approach to school improvement</li> </ul>
1	Intervention and support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improving quality/use of data KS2/3</li> </ul>

The dialogue meeting led to the preparation of action plans for school improvement. This involved partnership working between the school and the Improvement Facilitator to set out a series of objectives relating to the school's selected themes for improvement and agree an action plan (or plans) to address these themes. The majority of the pilot schools prepared an action plan for improvement against selected elements of the School Effectiveness Framework, although these varied in terms of quality and level of detail. In a small number of cases, schools formed innovation networks and negotiated combined action/spending plans for the group, rather than developing their own separate plan.

In the majority of cases, the Improvement Facilitators were not centrally involved in preparing the action plans, but provided guidance and support as required. Once key themes have been identified and discussed in depth, schools tended to draw on existing action planning templates and used these to complete outline action plans. Improvement Facilitators then reviewed these and suggested refinements.

The guidance document for schools suggested key areas for inclusion in action plans, but did not prescribe a particular model. Schools usually included clear success criteria in their action plans, although they were not always measurable. In a minority of cases, anticipated outcomes were directly related to improvement in pupil learning and wellbeing, but more frequently action plans focused on areas which had a tangential (but potentially significant) impact on pupil attainment. Key examples of this were action plans designed to improve systems or build capacity in areas such as assessment, community focus, and personalised learning. It should be noted that much of the school effectiveness framework currently focuses on the developing the characteristics of effective schools: building new structures, cultures and relationships, rather than addressing key performance issues in a more direct manner. There is further scope for linking the development of these key characteristics more directly to securing improvements in the performance of the school.

The dialogue meeting was a critical element in the effectiveness of the approach adopted for the pilot programme in this region. It was clear from the school satisfaction survey that the vast majority of schools felt that the Improvement Facilitator led the dialogue meeting well and helped to facilitate the identification of themes for development. Most schools also reported that the school's Link Adviser made a positive contribution to the dialogue meeting. Importantly, in many cases, the dialogue meeting led to the identification of challenging and purposeful themes for improvement for the school. Schools also felt that the Improvement Facilitators had provided them with the support they needed in preparing the action plan. This support varied from school to school and was focused on supporting the school in building their capacity to plan for further school improvement. The Improvement Facilitators felt that the guidance materials also provided useful support for preparing and conducting the dialogue meeting and with the action planning.

Schools and Improvement Facilitators raised a series of important issues relating to the identification of themes for improvement and planning the action to achieve these:

- The identified themes for improvement and action plans were not closely aligned to the development framework and descriptors contained in the SEP; further consideration should be given to the way in which the SEP can be used to frame improvement objectives more concisely;
- Schools faced difficulties in framing measurable success criteria in many of their action plans.

## 4.7 Creating and supporting networked professional learning communities

A key role of the Improvement Facilitator was to promote the development of professional learning communities both within and across the schools in each network. This is a theme that cuts across the School Effectiveness Framework, and is central to a number of its key elements. The Improvement Facilitators worked with a network of schools providing peer support and challenge. A small amount of funding was identified to enable the innovation networks to be formed; each network produced a spending plan for approval. In most cases, the key element of these plans was the provision of supply cover to enable colleagues to work together on development activities.

All of the pilot schools were clustered into networks based on their characteristics and identified themes for development. A summary of the networked Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) is to be found at appendix 3; in total, 11 communities were created.

A meeting was held with the Improvement Facilitators in November 2008 to identify potential networks, although not all Dialogue Meetings had been completed at that time. From this, a suggested clustering of schools was prepared as a starting-point for negotiation. In practice, some Improvement Facilitators were more proactive than others in negotiating networked PLCs and initiating a meeting to engage in collaborative discussion. This led to delay and frustration in some networks of schools, and in a very few cases, contacts with schools beyond the network of pilot schools were made to provide access to best practice. In some cases, it proved difficult initially to align individual action plans with shared development activity. Individual work with schools continued alongside the collaborative development involving the network of schools.

In terms of the focus of work undertaken by the Professional Learning Communities, amongst the primary schools, the main themes were:

- Embedding assessment for learning across the school;
- Developing pupil tracking systems and the use of performance data to inform improvement planning;
- Personalising learning and developing independent learners;

In the secondary schools, the main focus of work was on:

- Distributing leadership and empowering middle leaders;
- Developing the core role and key accountabilities of middle leaders

Sometimes, particularly for two secondary schools, it was not possible to create a PLC with other schools that was directly focused on their selected themes for improvement (e.g. responding to community needs and raising the aspirations of boys in KS3 and 4). In such cases, it proved useful for the Improvement Facilitator and headteacher to broker visits and contacts with other schools (not in the pilot programme) that were working in similar areas or already demonstrating good practice. However, one pilot school in its evaluation reported that the school selected by the IF for the learning visit was not appropriate, in that it served a very different setting (%FSM). In the school perception survey, most of the schools reported that they were happy with the process used by the consortium in clustering the schools to form networked learning communities. The

Improvement Facilitators, identified key flaws in the processes, however, and it is recognised that this is an area of organisation that needs further development.

To assist the planning process in professional learning communities, guidance was prepared for networks on what would count as eligible areas of expenditure. Each network of schools worked together to produce a shared spending plan for its activities as a professional learning community. In terms of the range of different kinds of collaborative learning activities, networks drew heavily on the guidance provided. These activities have tended to include:

- Collaborative planning meetings;
- Reciprocal learning visits to schools in the network, focused on a selected theme;
- Learning visits to other schools demonstrating effective practice in a selected theme;
- Shared professional learning events – presentations and CPD programmes;
- Collaborative evaluation and review meetings.

In reviewing this range of activities, it is noticeable that few schools purchased additional consultative support from external sources, but preferred to continue to work closely with their Improvement Facilitators. Within the primary schools, involvement in professional learning communities tended initially to involve only senior members of staff, and subsequently have engaged many more colleagues in the process. The secondary schools have engaged a broad range of school stakeholders, including middle leaders and pupils. Feedback from the schools has indicated that, resources permitting, they would wish to extend the involvement of others in their networked professional learning communities. This is clearly something to be encouraged, as research evidence demonstrates that PLCs benefit from the extended knowledge base that can be drawn upon through broader involvement of different stakeholder groups in the learning process (Stoll and Lewis, 2007). Another key feature of the process was that on several occasions, the school of the Improvement Facilitator also participated directly in the networked activities, bringing an additional resource to bear on the collaborative learning of the group. The Professional Learning Communities also proved in some cases to be fairly fluid, linking with other PLCs on the pilot, and involving other schools in the process.

The networked Professional Learning Communities engaged in a range of different learning and development activities. Initially, the most widely used technique was that of the 'learning visit', where one of the schools in the network hosted visitors from the other schools to observe and discuss an area of good practice. This sometimes led to series of learning visits that transformed into an evolving programme of collaborative learning. Increasingly, the visit was used as a stimulus to develop further an ongoing dialogue about opportunities for school improvement. Schools then took the learning from this dialogue, and trialled/adapted approaches in their own school settings. A key lesson from this was that frequently the benefits for participants were unexpected, that collaborative work opened up possibilities for further development which had not been anticipated. In particular, schools which already demonstrated good practice in a specific area still learned from others how to raise their game even further.

It is possible to analyse the networks in terms of three models of knowledge management, as shown in Appendix 4 (adapted from Jackson and Temperley, 2007). These models reflect different

levels of engagement in learning across organisation networks. The first involves a simple model of knowledge transfer through which one school identifies good practice in another which it would wish to replicate or apply in its own setting. The second involves a deeper relationship through which a group of schools form a relationship to share progress and learning around a common theme. The third, and deepest, form of knowledge management involves schools and other agencies working on common enquiry-based projects that involve a high level of peer guidance and support.

The application of this model to the development of the PLCs created through the pilot projects to date suggests that there was significant knowledge transfer, primarily through the use of learning visits (level 1). Networks of schools also built relationships based on dialogue, and engaged in collaborative planning and peer review; these activities reflected a model of knowledge sharing (level 2). There is some evidence that some of the networks also developed more challenging relationships and worked together to tackle issues and seek solutions on a collaborative basis (level 3).

The feedback from the school perception survey indicates that once the networked learning communities were established, the engagement in networked professional learning communities was the most positive aspect of the pilot. The majority of the network learning communities engaged in a broad range of activities, and schools reported that they had experienced 'fantastic learning' which had a positive impact on school practice. The networks provided good peer support and challenge to most of the pilot schools and the Improvement Facilitators were effective in facilitating the networks. The outcome was the majority of networks achieved a high level of collaborative development.

Schools and Improvement Facilitators raised a series of important issues relating to the networked professional learning communities:

- Schools should be made aware of the selected themes for improvement and networked development activity of all of the PLCs in the pilot programme, to facilitate further opportunities for collaboration.
- One outcome from the pilot should be the compilation of a database of 'good practice establishments' that could be accessed in the action planning phase, to raise awareness of potential options for school improvement. This would enable schools that have an identified theme for improvement to visit a school where good practice is already embedded; this could lead to a further source of consultative support.
- Further action could be taken at Consortium level to promote higher levels of knowledge management, by raising the awareness of pilot schools and Improvement Facilitators of enquiry-based approaches to shared innovation projects.

## 5. Impact of the pilot programme

### 5.1 The role of the Improvement Facilitator

Improvement Facilitators on the pilot programme were asked to work within a clear set of expectations for their work with schools. This indicated that they should:

- ‘Support the pilot schools to understand the School Effectiveness Framework and its application to the context of the school by engaging in genuine dialogue...
- Be focused on improving the outcomes for all pupils and the many factors which influence pupil attainment, achievement and well being...
- Provide professional challenge and support...
- Respect the school’s autonomy to plan its development...
- Work in partnership with the link adviser in supporting on school improvement issues...
- Carry out their work with integrity, treat others with courtesy and respect and be transparent in their dealings with schools, local authorities and the consortium...
- Support the school in developing professional learning communities within the school and facilitate the development of professional learning communities between schools.’

The Handbook for Improvement Facilitators set out a framework for their work with schools, but within this there was considerable scope to adapt the role and adopt intervention strategies according to the perceived needs of the school. Within their preparatory induction and training programme, the group considered a range of strategies that included coaching, mentoring and facilitation skills. The framework was designed to enable the Improvement Facilitators to provide support and challenge for the school as a whole, and to work with a broad range of school stakeholders. Alongside this was the possibility of more focused and personal work with the headteacher and/or school leadership team. This demanded considerable skills by Improvement Facilitators, who were in effect both serving the broader needs of the school and negotiating a constructive and professional relationship with the headteacher.

The school satisfaction survey confirmed that the schools’ response to the work of the Improvement Facilitator was overwhelmingly positive:

- The majority of schools felt that the Improvement Facilitator had formed a purposeful and sustained professional relationship with the school and in particular with the Headteacher;
- The involvement of the Improvement Facilitator was viewed to have added value to improvement processes in the majority of schools;
- The majority of headteachers felt that they had benefited personally from the professional peer support and challenge provided by their Improvement Facilitator;
- The Improvement Facilitators used a range of coaching and facilitating skills in working with the schools, including leading the mid-term review effectively;

- In most cases, the Improvement Facilitator was successful in brokering appropriate additional support for the school.

Feedback from Improvement Facilitators about their role revealed that a range of different strategies were used to provide challenge and support, and that these were based on a sensitive reading of the needs of the school and headteacher. One Improvement Facilitator described how he found himself re-thinking his role and changing direction during the course of his work with one school; he questioned about how best to approach the role with one 'reluctant' headteacher and shifted from 'supportive professional' to 'rigorous pace-setting'. His key concern was to encourage the headteacher to take more responsibility for school improvement and become more proactive in learning from other schools and working collaboratively.

During the structured interviews with Improvement Facilitators, the subtlety of their reading of the needs of the headteachers became evident. A key aspect of this was the negotiation of the partnership with the headteacher and the shifting balance in terms of their respective roles in leading and managing the school improvement process. Some Improvement Facilitators encountered what they regarded as 'denial' by the headteachers, who were reluctant to address key issues in the leadership and management of the school, or in their own leadership styles and strategies. One described how the agreed theme for improvement in a particular school (the use of data to guide the improvement of learning and teaching) led over time to a focus on what the Improvement Facilitator described as 'the fundamental issue... poor relationships and ways of working'. He said: 'There was a difficult staff, with concerns that had not been recognised. It was good to have the flexibility to respond to different challenges as they developed'.

Improvement Facilitators emphasised the importance of taking time to allow the relationship with the headteacher to develop. This involved some initial 'sussing out' by headteachers who sometimes used their professional networks to learn more about their Improvement Facilitators and establish their credibility. As the relationship developed, it was sometimes possible to address the deeper issues impacting on the school. During the structured interviews with the Improvement Facilitators the question of 'professional credibility' arose very frequently. They often felt that initially their relationship with the headteachers they were working with rested upon their experience of headship and their success in their own schools. Over time, the emphasis shifted towards a relationship built on the trust that developed as the Improvement Facilitator worked together on the selected themes for improvement.

Given that this was a new role, to provide peer support and challenge, there were inevitably some cases where there were uncertainties about the boundaries of the role and the division of labour between the headteacher and the Improvement Facilitator. In some cases, Facilitators felt that heads were insufficiently proactive in leading the improvement process and relied too much on the Facilitator to form plans, prepare sessions and make arrangements; in other cases, Facilitators felt that the heads wished to control the innovation process. However, there also seem to be many examples where headteachers and Improvement Facilitators established a constructive and developmental relationship and managed the boundaries between the two roles to good effect.

The majority of Improvement Facilitators found that they were working in a new capacity as system leaders, and that it extended their professional skills. Only one Improvement Facilitator, currently working as a School Improvement Officer, felt that the role was very similar to his everyday role, 'based on the need to get to know the school in depth and develop the same sort of relationship'.

One Improvement Facilitator emphasised the need to recognise the emotional and physical strain of taking on this additional responsibility alongside the leadership of a school. This involved, on the one hand, the need to maintain a constructive and supportive relationship with the head, and on the other, to do research, make arrangements, set up meetings, broker contacts and manage the PLC.

## **5.2 The Development of Partnership Working in the Pilot Programme**

The approach developed by the South West and Mid Wales Consortium was a collaborative venture between schools, Local Authorities and the Assembly Government. The key to this approach was the partnership between the school, the Improvement Facilitator and the Link Adviser. Each had specific roles and responsibilities in achieving the outcomes of the pilot. The roles of the Improvement Facilitator and the Link Adviser are different but complementary; a professional partnership between the two was essential to the effective implementation of the pilot programme. The Local Authority, through the Link Adviser and other officers, has an accountability role for all schools which includes the setting of targets, monitoring and targeted intervention. The Improvement Facilitator's role with the school was primarily developmental, the aim of which was to facilitate the change required for the school to become a better school, through providing and accessing advice, support and professional challenge. It was intended that the support of the Improvement Facilitator should add value to and enhance any support and intervention from the Local Authority.

Within the pilot, a team of 16 Improvement Facilitators worked in partnership with 24 Local Authority Link Advisers who work with the pilot schools in an advice, support and challenge role. The Consortium monitored the level of engagement between Improvement Facilitators and Link Advisers. During Phase One and Two of the Pilot Programme, Improvement Facilitators met with each of their Pilot schools on two occasions: first, for the Introductory Meeting, and second, for the Dialogue Meeting. It was decided that Link Advisers would be invited to both meetings, although attendance at the Dialogue Meeting was deemed to be more important. The schools could decide not to have their Link Adviser present if they so wished. During Phase One and Two of the Pilot Programme, the Link Adviser was present in 7 out of 28 introductory visits carried out. In some cases, the Improvement Facilitator met separately with the Link Adviser. In 15 out of the 28 Dialogue Meetings completed, the Link Adviser was present (just over half). A small number of schools did not wish their Link Adviser to be present at the Dialogue meeting. However, in the majority of cases the Link Adviser did not attend due to other commitments or lack of response to the Improvement Facilitator. Some Improvement Facilitators met with Link Advisers separately.

Improvement Facilitators kept the Link Advisers up-to-date on activities through email and telephone, and to date, Link Advisers have participated in most of the final reviews for the pilot. There have been several cases where Improvement Facilitators recorded their appreciation of the Link Adviser's involvement in the process and identified the added value they brought to the dialogue with the headteacher. However, this was not always the case; in a minority of schools the participation of the Link Adviser was felt to be a hindrance to open and constructive dialogue.

Schools and Improvement Facilitators raised a series of important issues relating to partnership working with the Local Authority:

- It was vital to gain the Local Authority's view of the school at the outset of the process;

- The participation of the Link Adviser was valuable in the dialogue meeting to identify themes for improvement;
- Link Advisers should be encouraged to join the mid-term review with the agreement of the headteacher;
- The involvement of the Link Adviser in the final review meeting was also vital, to ensure further progression and support on completion of participation in the programme.

### **5.3 The impact of the pilot on participating schools**

At the time of the school perception survey in September 2009, one third of the schools had completed their final review with the Improvement Facilitator. It was decided in agreement with DCELLS that the final review could take place in the Autumn Term, where possible coinciding with the annual LA 'support and challenge' meeting. However, the majority of schools reported that they had achieved the implementation of their Action Plan. Where schools had not achieved all they had planned, they reported that they were well on the way to full implementation and had made satisfactory progression from the initial outcome of the SEP.

It is interesting to note that half of the schools felt that their involvement in the pilot has resulted in measureable improvements in pupil learning, progress and wellbeing. Some schools noted that it is too soon to be able to measure improvements in pupil progress. All schools felt that involvement in the pilot had increased the capacity of the school to secure further improvements in pupil performance in the future. However, although the majority of schools were positive about their involvement in the pilot, a small minority of schools felt that they had reservations about their participation.

In a minority of cases, anticipated outcomes were directly related to improvement in pupil learning and wellbeing, but more frequently action plans focused on areas which had a tangential (but potentially significant) impact on pupil attainment. Key examples of this were action plans designed to improve systems or build capacity in areas such as assessment, community focus, and personalised learning. It should be noted that much of the school effectiveness framework currently focuses on the developing the characteristics of effective schools: building new structures, cultures and relationships, rather than addressing key performance issues in a more direct manner. There is further scope for linking the development of these key characteristics more directly to securing improvements in the performance of the school.

The impact of participation on the schools fell into four broad categories:

- Where there had been a direct impact on an aspect of school performance, in terms of the standards achieved by learners or their wellbeing;

- Where the school had 'built capacity' for further improvement, for example, by developing the professional awareness and role of middle leaders;
- Where the school had engaged in 'systems development' and established new processes and procedures for doing things, for example, in terms of managing attendance or assessment for learning;
- Where the themes were 'values-driven' and focused on improving the professional culture of the school and relationships between key stakeholders, for example, in terms of building a shared commitment to a new way of working or developing the capacity of the school to empower pupils and listen to learner voice.

Whereas many schools identified clear progression from their baseline and felt they had met the outcomes identified in their action plans, there was also often a sense of unfinished business. This was partly related to the truncated development timescales in the pilot programme; many schools and Improvement Facilitators felt that lasting and profound changes could not be effected in what amounted in most cases to two school terms of development activity. This led some to question the design of an 'entitlement' model which gives access to peer challenge and support for one year.

#### **5.4 Leadership and Management of the Pilot Programme**

As has been seen above, the approach developed by the consortium was structured around five distinct phases of activity, each of which had a focus point where the activity of the school and improvement facilitator were reviewed against agreed outcomes for the phase.

The phases were:

- Phase One     Understanding the School Context
- Phase Two     Agreeing Themes for Improvement and Barriers to Effectiveness
- Phase Three    Action Planning
- Phase Four     Implementation
- Phase Five     Review and Planning for Sustainability

This structured approach to the pilot project and work with schools was also underpinned by a series of guidance documents, including a detailed Improvement Facilitator Handbook. This led in some quarters nationally to the criticism that the model was too prescriptive and sought to 'micro-manage' the work of the Improvement Facilitators. However, feedback from the Improvement Facilitators themselves has indicated that they found this to be an invaluable resource. It was regarded as a key reference-point that could be used to guide further actions; it was not seen as an inflexible framework, but that one that enabled them to make choices according to the needs of the school. Many Facilitators commented that it had also been a useful resource informing other areas of their professional practice (for example the guidance on learning visits, innovation networks and professional learning communities).

An aspect of the management of pilot that proved to be more contentious was the reporting requirements placed on the Improvement Facilitators. This was partly to ensure that the pilot

generated evidence of what had been achieved to inform future practice, and partly to meet accountability needs and audit requirements. However, the onus of reporting did fall on the shoulders of the Improvement Facilitators, many of whom found the demands to be excessive. There is clearly a place for streamlining these reporting requirements in any further initiatives.

In terms of guidance and support, several Improvement Facilitators consulted with the consortium coordinators as the pilot progressed. There was also much evidence of peer support between the Facilitators, particularly those involved in working together to support professional learning communities. A series of review meetings also provided the Facilitators with the opportunity to discuss areas of concern and identify potential solutions. Nonetheless, some Facilitators (including those who were new to this kind of consultative role) did comment that they felt isolated at times and would have welcomed more opportunities for feedback and support. Where there were opportunities for the observation of the Facilitators at work, this gave scope for supportive guidance. Review meetings with individual Facilitators also provided the chance to affirm their action and discuss potential options for action.

Guidance materials and briefing sessions were also provided for participating schools and headteachers. These sometimes proved to be less successful, and a number of Facilitators felt that schools had not always been prepared properly for their participation in the pilot. They advocated additional sessions led by themselves with the schools they would work with to raise awareness of the School Effectiveness Framework and its underlying thinking.

Schools and Improvement Facilitators raised a series of important issues relating to the leadership and management of the pilot programme:

- The guidance materials were welcomed by Improvement Facilitators, who did not regard them as inflexible, but as a useful resource to be adapted according to need;
- The reporting requirements on Improvement Facilitators proved to be onerous and should be reviewed to make them more streamlined;
- Increasing use of monitoring visits and formative feedback would enhance the management of the project and support for Facilitators;
- One-to-one review sessions and structured interviews with Facilitators proved to be an effective way to capture complementary evidence of their work in schools (and thereby reduce the reporting burden on them).

## **5.5 Alignment of LA policies and procedures with the School Effectiveness Framework**

From the outset, it was recognised that the pilot involved both local authorities and schools and that the local authorities would also begin to identify ways to align their procedures as part of the approach. This builds upon Michael Fullan's proposition that in order to achieve successful and sustainable improvement it is essential that what happens at school level also needs to occur at district level and national level. The key areas for alignment were identified as the annual LA monitoring and target setting meeting with schools and the process for support and challenge. It was also seen as important that the pilot process added value to the relationship and support

provided by the local authority. For this to happen, there needed to be a common understanding of the relative roles of the IF and the Local Authority Link Adviser.

All the schools were committed to the principle of integrating the Autumn Term 'support and challenge' visit with the dialogue meeting for the schools in the pilot programme, so that there was a single conversation based upon the same criteria and using the same evidence base. Two of the LAs were able to change their timing and processes to integrate the dialogue visit. The main barrier to achieving an integrated visit reported by the schools, IFs and LA link advisers was the timescale and the timing of the pilot.

The impact of the pilot experience is that the LAs have agreed to develop a core 'Challenge and Intervention' framework across the consortium, with agreed procedures that will be used in all authorities.

## **6. Conclusions arising from the swamwac approach to the SEF pilot programme**

### **6.1**

The schools varied in their willingness and 'readiness' for participation in the programme, and there was evidence that the way in which schools were selected impacted upon the benefits they gained.

### **6.2**

Participating schools were initially sceptical about the use of the School Effectiveness Profile and doubted whether it added value to the existing Estyn Inspection Framework.

### **6.3**

The framing of 'themes for improvement' was primarily shaped by the SEP, and its descriptors of the characteristics of effective schools; few schools overtly drew upon the analysis of school performance data.

### **6.4**

However, half of the schools reported that they had achieved measurable improvements in terms of standards or wellbeing. The majority of schools achieved outcomes in terms of building capacity, developing systems and deepening commitment to core vision and values.

### **6.5**

In the participating secondary schools the primary focus of work was on distributed leadership, empowering middle leaders and improving accountability systems; in the primary schools it was on curriculum innovation and improving systems of classroom observation, monitoring pupil progress and using assessment data.

### **6.6**

The Improvement Facilitators worked within a consistent framework for the pilot programme, but adapted their intervention strategies according to the needs of the schools and headteachers with which they were working.

### **6.7**

Some of the pilot schools involved a broad range of stakeholders in the development process, although there was limited engagement with other agencies and community groups.

## **6.8**

There were wide variations in the level and form of participation by Local Authority Link Advisers.

## **6.9**

The pilot demonstrated the potential contribution of headteachers (and others with recent headship experience) as providers of system leadership in the form of consultative support for their peers.

## **6.10**

The headteachers fulfilling this role found it to be a challenging one that extended their professional expertise; they also reported that there were clear benefits for themselves and for their own schools.

## **6.11**

There are limitations on the potential capacity of the deployment of headteachers in systems leader role, both in terms of the number of headteachers capable of fulfilling this role effectively, and on the number of heads who could potentially support such activity without jeopardising their own school leadership role and their school's effectiveness.

## **6.12**

Participating schools felt that their participation in the networked professional learning community provided the greatest benefits for their school, and were most keen to see such opportunities developed in the future.

## **6.13**

The professional learning and capacity building that occurred within these innovation networks was often unanticipated, with valuable opportunities for further development in those schools which were already regarded as demonstrating good practice in a specific area.

## **6.14**

The most effective innovation networks moved beyond a model based on the transfer of good practice to another towards deeper models of collaborative development.

## **6.15**

The pilot brought together three different ways of building lateral capacity:

- through a structured programme work to secure improvement in relation to a new school self-evaluation framework;
- through the consultative support of a peer headteacher,
- through participation in an innovation network

## **6.16**

In the future, it would be possible to disaggregate these different ways of building lateral capacity and generate a range of opportunities for peer support and challenge.

## **6.17**

However, the further development of new strategies for building lateral capacity and providing peer support and challenge should be based upon a thorough review of the current national and local arrangements for holding schools to account and promoting improved effectiveness.

### 6.18

Such a review should focus on the degree of fit – or integration – between the various elements of the system, at both national and local levels, and also take capacity issues into account.

### 6.19

A tri-level system of accountability and improvement must have the capability to respond to the diverse needs of schools, their current effectiveness, improvement trajectories and capacity for improvement.

### 6.20

It should be possible to map these trajectories and adapt the mode of intervention and support to their specific needs and circumstances. A broader range of different strategies are needed, including action learning partnerships for high-performing schools, the brokerage of specialist support for schools working on particular areas of development, and school-to-school support federations for schools requiring improvement (see for example: Hill, 2008).

## References

Hill, R. (2008) *Achieving more together: adding value through partnership*. Leicester: ASCL (Association of School and College Leaders).

People and Work Unit (2009) *School Effectiveness Framework Pilots: An interim evaluation*. Welsh Assembly Government Research Document 040/2009

Stoll, L. And Louis, K. S. (2007) *Professional Learning Communities: elaborating new approaches*. In Stoll, L and Louis, K. S. (eds) *Professional Learning Communities: divergence, depth and dilemmas*. Maidenhead: McGraw-Hill Education.

Jackson, D. And Temperley, J. (2007) *From professional learning community to networked learning community*. In Stoll, L and Louis, K. S. (eds) *Professional Learning Communities: divergence, depth and dilemmas*. Maidenhead: McGraw-Hill Education.

## Appendix 1: School Effectiveness Pilot Programme: South West and Mid Wales Consortium Schools Participating in the Pilot: 2008-9

Name of School	Local Authority	Language	Phase
Ysgol Gyfun Maes Yr Yrfa	Carmarthenshire	Bilingual	Sec
Ysgol Gynradd Gwynfryn	Carmarthenshire	Bilingual	Pr
Ysgol Gynradd Llanddarog	Carmarthenshire	Bilingual	Pr
Ysgol Gynradd Teilo Sant	Carmarthenshire	Welsh	Pr
Ysgol Gyfun Y Gwendraeth	Carmarthenshire	Bilingual	Sec
Ysgol Gynradd Felinfach	Ceredigion	Bilingual	Pr
Ysgol Gyfun Penglais	Ceredigion	English	Sec
Ysgol Gyfun Ddwyieithog Dyffryn Teifi	Ceredigion	Welsh	Sec
Ysgol Gynradd Cei Newydd	Ceredigion	Bilingual	Pr
Creunant Primary	Neath Port Talbot	English	Pr
Coedffranc Primary	Neath Port Talbot	English	Pr
Baglan Primary	Neath Port Talbot	English	Pr
Sandfields Comprehensive	Neath Port Talbot	English	Sec
Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Blaenddulais	Neath Port Talbot	Welsh	Pr
Tenby Junior	Pembrokeshire	Bilingual	Pr
Pembroke School	Pembrokeshire	English	Sec
Ysgol Gynradd Ger Y Llan	Pembrokeshire	Welsh	Pr
Greenhill School	Pembrokeshire	English	Sec
St Mark's Church in Wales Primary	Pembrokeshire	English	Pr
Hafren Junior	Powys	English	Pr
Newtown High	Powys	English	Sec
St Michael's Church in Wales Primary	Powys	English	Pr
Ysgol Dafydd Llwyd	Powys	Welsh	Pr
Brynllwarch Hall Special	Powys	English	Special
Ysgol Gyfun Gwyr	Swansea	Welsh	Sec
KS4 Education Centre	Swansea	English	Special
Gowerton Comprehensive	Swansea	English	Sec
Cwmglas Primary	Swansea	English	Pr

## Appendix 2: Results from School Satisfaction Survey September 2009

1 = Strongly agree

2 = Agree

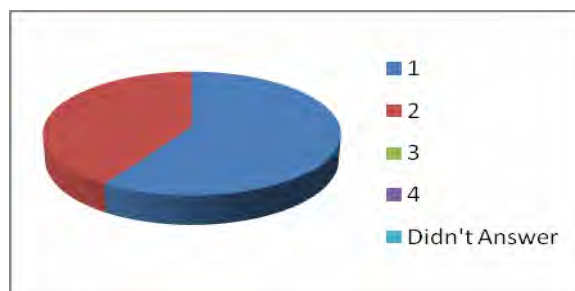
3 = Disagree

4 = Strongly disagree

5 Nil response

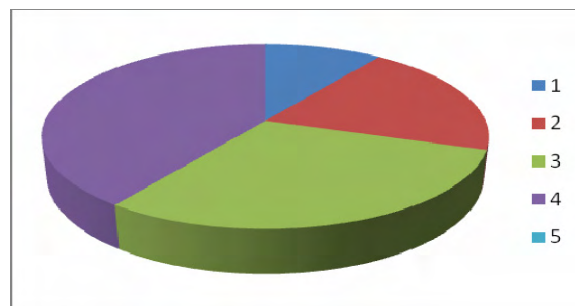
A1

The school engaged in a rigorous self-evaluation based on performance data and sources of evidence.



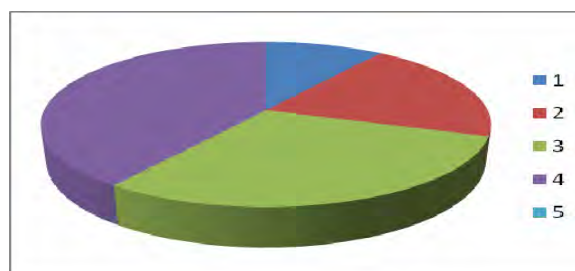
A2

The school was able to involve a wide range of stakeholders in the self-evaluation process.



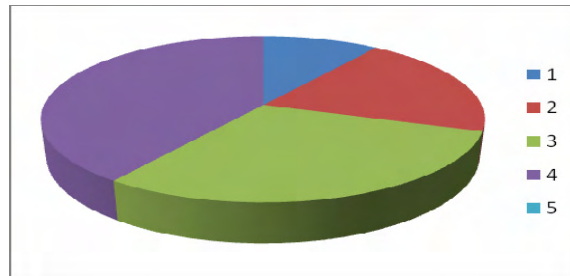
A3

The self-evaluation process led to valuable discussion about the school's current characteristics and capacity for improvement.



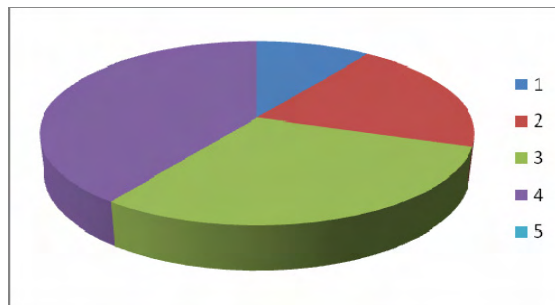
A4

The Improvement Facilitator gave the school the support it needed in conducting the self-evaluation process.



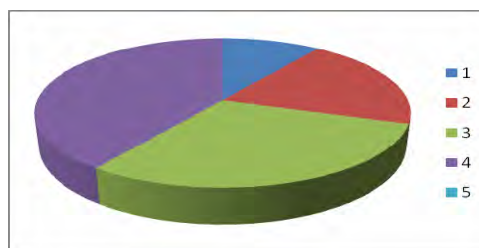
A5

The written guidance for schools on how to conduct the self-evaluation process was helpful.



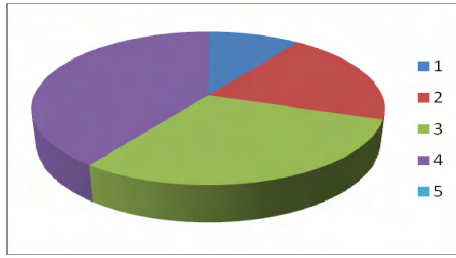
B1

The school effectiveness profile was a useful document in conducting the self-evaluation process.



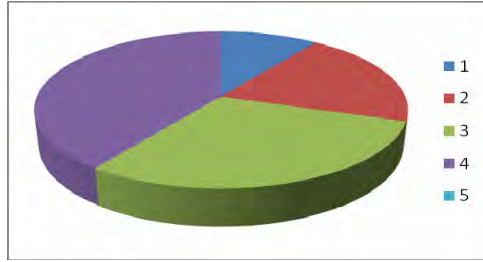
B2

The school effectiveness profile gave additional insights into the work of the school to those covered within the Estyn framework.



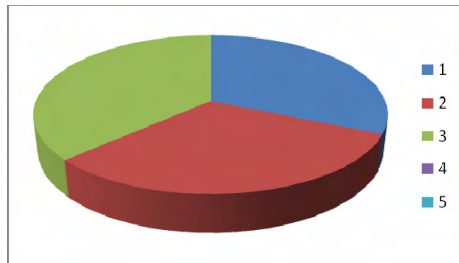
**B3**

The school found the SWAMWAC SEF review questions useful alongside the school effectiveness profile.



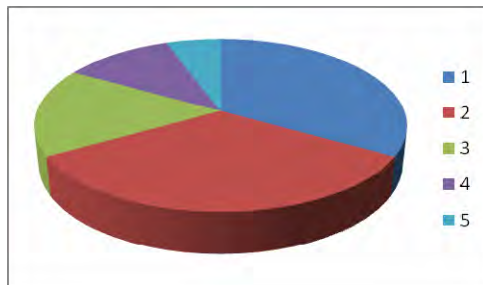
**B5**

The level descriptors in the school effectiveness profile ('expected', etc) were helpful in agreeing the current position of the school.



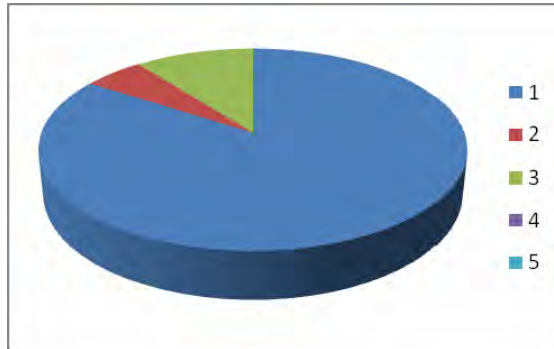
**B6**

The SWAMAC SEP recording form was helpful in giving a visual representation of the current position of the school.



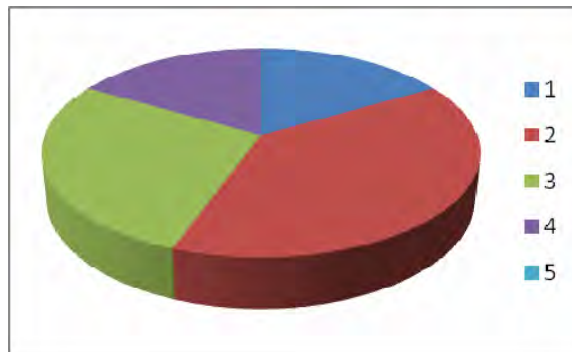
**C1**

The Improvement Facilitator led the dialogue meeting well to agree themes for improvement and barriers to learning.



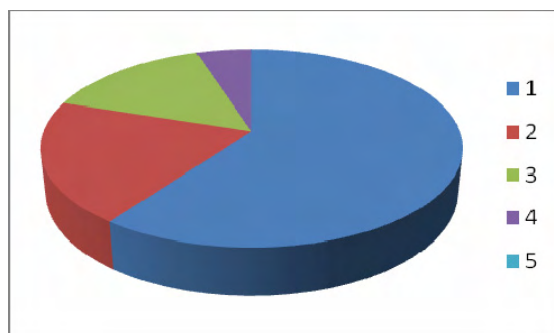
**C2**

The school's LA Link Adviser/School Improvement Officer made a positive contribution to the dialogue meeting.



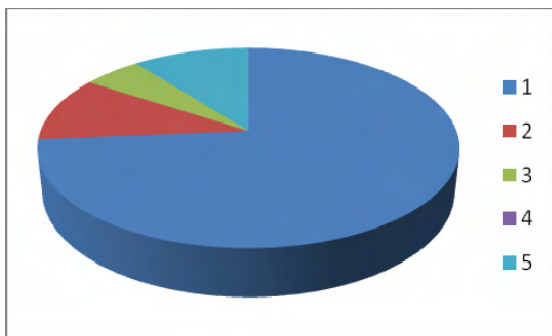
**C3**

The dialogue meeting led to the identification of challenging and purposeful themes for improvement for the school



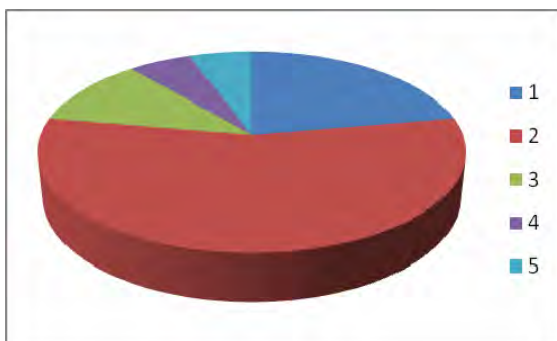
**C4**

The Improvement Facilitator gave the school the support it needed in preparing the action plan.



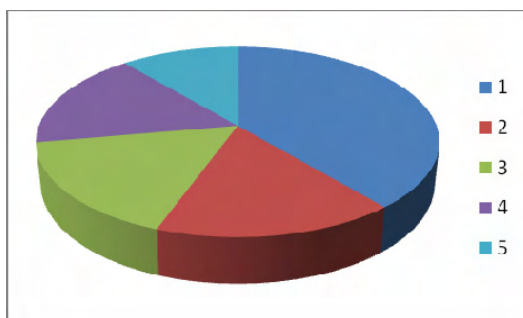
**C5**

The written guidance for schools on the dialogue meeting and the action planning process was helpful.



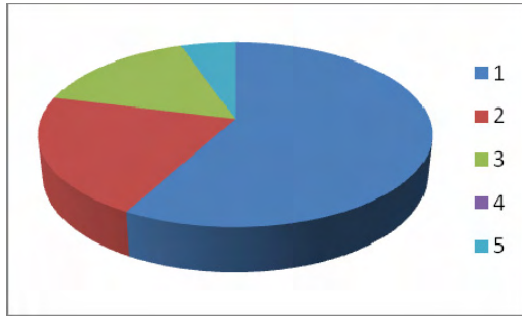
**D1**

I was happy with the process used to cluster my school into a networked professional learning community with other schools.



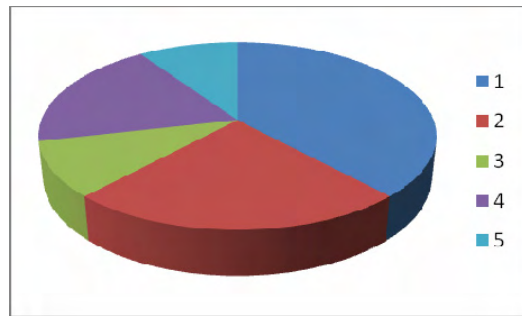
**D2**

The schools in our network engaged in a broad range of networked professional learning activities.



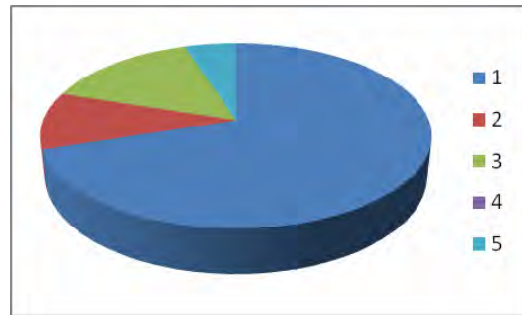
**D3**

The schools in our network provided good peer support and challenge to one another in pursuit of our improvement objectives.



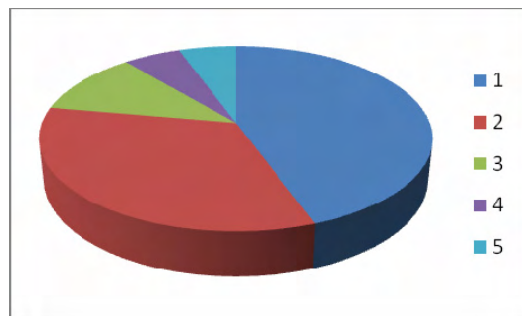
**D4**

The Improvement Facilitators have been effective in facilitating our network of schools.



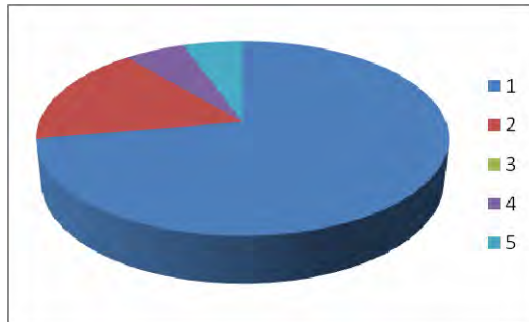
**D5**

Our network of schools has achieved high levels of collaborative development.



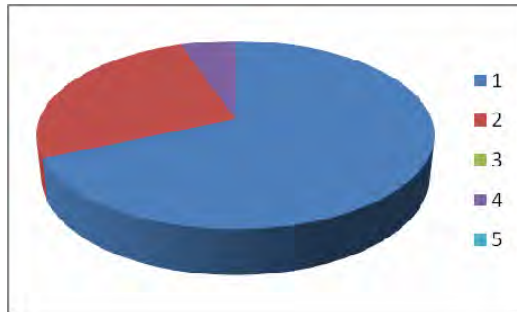
**E1**

The Improvement Facilitator has formed and sustained a purposeful and constructive relationship with our school.



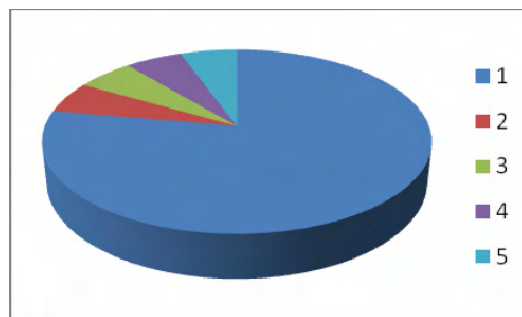
**E2**

The involvement of the Improvement Facilitator has added value to the improvement process in my school.



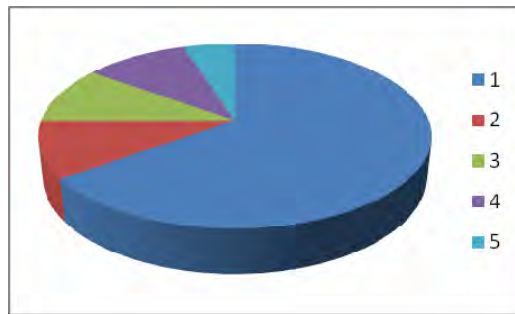
**E3**

As a headteacher, I have benefited professionally from the peer support and challenge provided by my Improvement Facilitator.

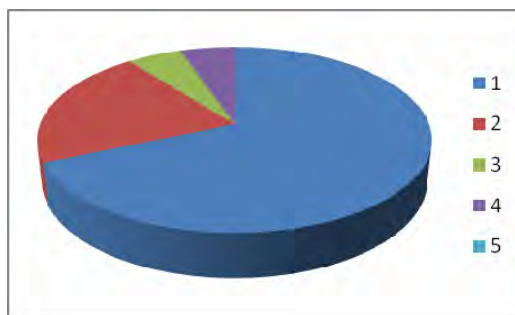


**E4**

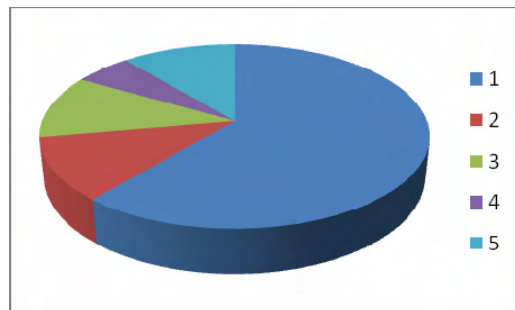
The Improvement Facilitator has used a range of coaching and facilitation skills in working with the school.



**E5** The Improvement Facilitator led the mid-term review effectively.

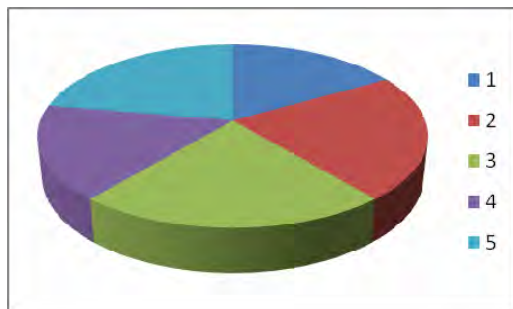


**E6** The Improvement Facilitator was effective in brokering additional support for my school.



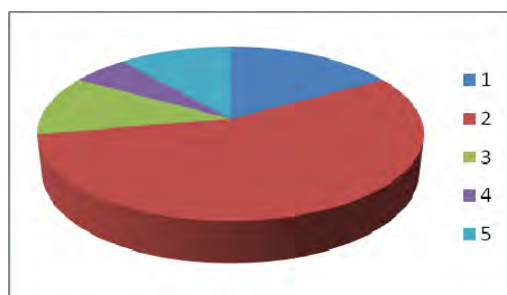
**F1**

The school has formally completed a final review of its progress with the Improvement Facilitator.



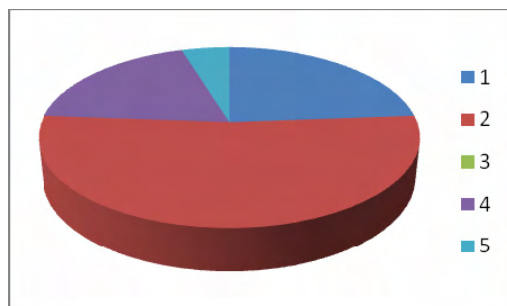
**F2**

The school has achieved full implementation of its SEF action plan.



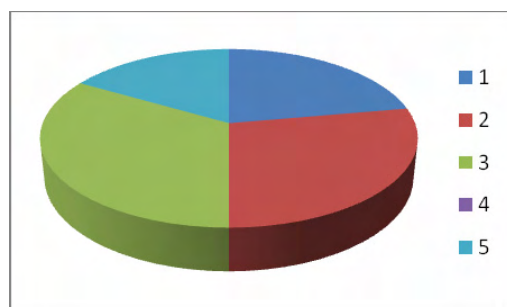
**F3**

The school has achieved satisfactory progression through the pilot from our initial 'School Effectiveness Profile'.



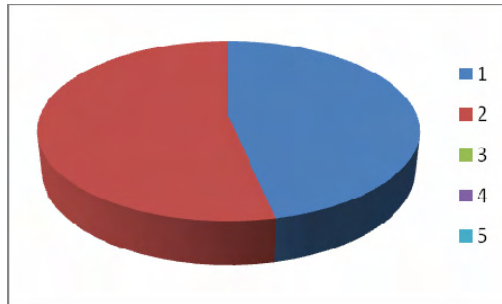
**F4**

The school's involvement in the pilot has resulted in measurable improvements in pupil learning, progress and wellbeing, based on progression from baseline data.



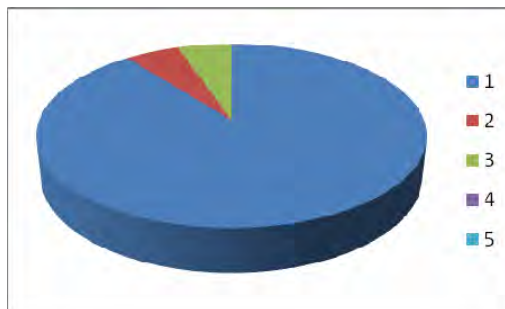
**F5**

The school's involvement in the pilot has increased the capacity of school to secure further improvements in pupil performance in the future.



**F6**

I am glad that the school decided to get involved in the SEF pilot programme.



Appendix 3: Schedule of Professional Learning Communities – SEF Pilot programme

Participating schools	Focus of community	Range of learning activities	Budgeted expenditure
Network of 4 rural welsh-medium primary schools	Assessment for learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning meeting</li> <li>• Presentation: good practice</li> <li>• Learning visit: Nantgaredig</li> <li>• Review meeting: sharing experience</li> </ul>	£4,956
Network of 4 primary schools	Personalised Learning Developing Independent Learners Assessment for learning Pupil tracking: skills development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaborative planning</li> <li>• Learning Visits (x 2)</li> <li>• Visit to Cwm Glass</li> <li>• Visit to Brynteg, Llanelli</li> <li>• PLC review meeting</li> </ul>	£5,092
Network of 3 primary schools	Developing Synchronised and Integrated Curriculum – The Leonardo Effect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introductory training</li> <li>• Learning visits x 2</li> <li>• Evaluation Meeting</li> <li>• Belfast visit: Leonardo schools</li> <li>• Planning meeting</li> </ul>	n/a
Secondary School	Focusing on community needs and engaging parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reciprocal school visits with Gwernyfed High School, Brecon, Powys</li> </ul>	£1,250
Network of 4 Secondary schools	Distributed Leadership – Empowering middle managers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning visit: Brecon High School</li> <li>• Series of learning visits + development time for HTs and middle leaders.</li> <li>• Review/good practice exchange</li> </ul>	£5,402
Secondary School	Raising achievement and aspirations of boys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School visits to other schools demonstrating good practice (not pilot school) + other costed activities in school</li> </ul>	£1,250

<b>Network of 5 primary schools</b>	Developing Independent Learning at Key Stage 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning meeting</li> <li>• Reciprocal learning visits x 5</li> <li>• Visit to Cadle (Foundation phase – good practice)</li> <li>• Sharing outcomes and review meeting</li> </ul>	£8,250
<b>Secondary School</b>	Devolved leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Working group: learning visits to schools identified with good practice via Estyn website</li> <li>• (4 x half-day visits)</li> <li>• Review + evaluation + planning</li> <li>• (1.5 days x 4 members of staff)</li> <li>• Feedback to whole school</li> </ul>	£1,480
<b>Network of 2 secondary schools</b>	Use of data to inform transition from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning meeting</li> <li>• Learning visit to school demonstrating good practice</li> <li>• Reflection and planning meeting (2 teachers)</li> <li>• Sharing outcomes and problem-solving (4 teachers)</li> </ul>	£2,500
<b>Network of 2 secondary schools</b>	Distributed leadership programme: clarification of core role and key accountabilities of middle leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning meeting – Welsh-medium schools</li> <li>• Broader plc programme: support and challenge programme for middle leaders</li> </ul>	£2,300
<b>Network of 2 secondary schools</b>	Distributive leadership, listening to pupils and key skills across transition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conference event</li> </ul>	£3,660

Appendix 4: Sharing Good Practice: Three models of knowledge management

