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Evaluation of the School Based Supply Cluster Model Project

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Evaluation of the School Based Supply Cluster Model Project

Author(s): Brett Duggan, Alison Glover and Tanwen Grover,
Arad Research, and Annalisa Feehan.

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

For further information please contact:

Katy Marrin

Social Research and Information Division

Welsh Government

Cathays Park

Cardiff

CF10 3NQ

Email: SchoolsResearch@Gov.Wales

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Glossary

Acronym/Key word	Definition
ALN	Additional Learning Needs
ASD	Autistic Spectrum Disorder
Cluster lead	Headteacher or senior manager in a school responsible for coordinating Project activity across a cluster.
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
EAL	English as an Additional Language
Estyn	The education and training inspectorate for Wales which provides independent inspection and advice on the quality and standards of education and training provided in Wales.
EWC	Education Workforce Council, the independent regulator in Wales for teachers in maintained schools, Further Education teachers and learning support staff in both school and FE settings, as well as Youth Workers and people involved in work-based learning.
HLTA	Higher Level Teaching Assistant
LSA	Learning Support Assistant
NQT	Newly Qualified Teacher
PE	Physical Education
PPA	Planning, preparation and assessment (time)
QTS	Qualified Teacher Status
SDP	School Development Plan
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
Supernumerary teacher	A floating teacher employed by one school or a cluster of schools to provide cover for absent teachers.
WLGA	Welsh Local Government Association, an organisation which represents the interests and views of local government in Wales.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 In July 2018, Arad Research was appointed by the Welsh Government to evaluate the School Based Supply Cluster Model Project (the Project). The Project provided £2.7 million grant funding for two years for 18 school cluster pilot projects in 15 local authorities to trial approaches to employing recently qualified teachers on a supernumerary basis to manage absence cover (planned or unplanned).
- 1.2 Each cluster pilot project allocated a cluster lead school, where the headteacher or senior manager was responsible for co-ordinating project activity across the cluster; and acted as the main point of contact with the Welsh Government and the local authority, and as the employer for the supernumerary teacher/s. One hundred and three schools were involved in the Project, with 50 supernumerary teacher roles available; 47 of these posts were filled. During the course of the pilot there have been school mergers and in some cases more teachers needed to be recruited as supernumerary teachers secured permanent posts before the end of the Project.
- 1.3 The Project intended to support workforce capacity by employing recently qualified teachers to the posts advertised by clusters. Local authorities and schools are responsible for maintaining effective staffing within schools and making decisions around delegated staffing budgets and this pilot Project supported this approach. The financial support given to clusters was tapered over the project period: during Year 1 (from September 2017) clusters were provided with grant funding to cover 100 per cent of the project's costs; during Year 2 (from September 2018) clusters were provided with grant funding for 75 per cent of costs. Although no grant funding was available to clusters into the third year, the intention was that arrangements would be sustainable, with schools continuing to employ supernumerary teachers on a self-financing basis at either local authority or school cluster level from September 2019.
- 1.4 Although the Project was initially intended to be operational from September 2017, it was decided that the start date would be delayed until after the start of the academic year, later than September 2017, so that the Project would not cause any disruption to the normal job market and work opportunities for recently qualified teachers in securing permanent positions.

1.5 The aims of this evaluation were to:

- Review the implementation and delivery of the Project;
- Assess and provide advice on project monitoring and reporting;
- Assess how the projects have contributed to the broad outcomes of the Project and their own objectives; and
- Make recommendations regarding future models of supply delivery in Wales and whether arrangements for collaborative direct employment model should be extended/ encouraged.

1.6 In recent years, a number of reports¹ have explored issues surrounding the deployment and management of supply teachers and the impact on learner outcomes. In May 2015, in response to the Children, Young People and Education Committee's inquiry into supply teaching², a Supply Model Taskforce was established to consider future delivery options for commissioning supply teachers in Wales. From September 2019, the National Procurement Services Supply Teachers Framework for Wales will apply, with schools encouraged to use agencies complying with the framework, which includes a minimum pay point for supply teachers³.

1.7 The Taskforce was charged with reviewing national and international models of delivery for the supply workforce, engaging with key stakeholders to take evidence with a view to recommending alternative delivery options going forward. The Taskforce reported with recommendations in February 2017⁴. Several of the recommendations advocated greater support for recently qualified teachers who found themselves in short term supply roles and the introduction of a collaborative approach to delivery. The School Based Supply Cluster Model Project was developed in response to these recommendations.

¹ Estyn (2013) [The impact of teacher absence](#); Wales Audit Office (2013) [Covering Teachers' Absence](#); National Assembly for Wales (2014) [Covering Teacher's Absence](#)

² National Assembly for Wales (2015) [Inquiry into Supply Teaching](#)

³ Welsh Government (2019) [The National Procurement Services Supply Teachers Framework for Wales](#)

⁴ Ministerial Supply Model Taskforce (2017) [Report to the Cabinet Secretary for Education](#)

- 1.8 The evaluation addressed the following research questions:
1. What different models of supply delivery have been developed?
 2. Are project monitoring systems appropriate for assessing the progress and outcomes of projects?
 3. How can the cost savings and efficiencies of the Project be assessed?
 4. What barriers and facilitators to collaborative working have been experienced by clusters?
 5. To what extent have clusters delivered against the broad outcomes of the Project?
 6. To what extent have clusters met their own objectives?
 7. To what extent have clusters contributed to school improvement activities?
 8. Are clusters self-sustaining in year three (2019/20)?
 9. Should and how could local authorities and Welsh Government support such initiatives in the future?
- 1.9 The pilot nature of the Project offers significant opportunity for learning both in terms of reforms to the current education system in Wales and impetus for collaborative regional working with schools considering alternative ways of meeting supply needs, which could be sustainable in the longer term. This independent evaluation delivers an assessment of the design, implementation and outcomes of the Project and aims to provide learning for future policy and practice in this area.
- 1.10 The report presents the findings from the research activity conducted from September 2018 to July 2019, and focuses on the implementation and impact of the Project during years 1 and 2. A short follow-up report will be published in September 2020, which will be informed by surveying cluster leads and supernumerary teachers, exploring longer-term impact of the Project, reporting on any changes in the way schools address their supply needs and the impact of the supernumerary role on teachers' employment experience. The follow-up report will also contain a final cost effectiveness analysis, as the final monitoring data submission from clusters was not available for this report.

2. Methodology

- 2.1 A mixed methods approach was undertaken, with opportunities provided for all clusters and key stakeholders to contribute at various points during the evaluation. The evaluation drew on data from multiple sources including monitoring data, primary qualitative data and quantitative data, which provided opportunity for deeper analysis and the corroboration of findings. During the scoping phase of the evaluation all project documentation such as project background information and clusters' applications for the grant funding were examined. As the Project progressed all clusters submitted termly monitoring forms, which included data on the number of supernumerary teachers employed, the total number of absence days that required cover in the cluster, the cost of agency supply cover and the number of days covered by the supernumerary teachers. End of year reports summarised each cluster's delivery of the Project and reported impact; and these were also shared with the research team. Primary data was collected during interviews where the perspectives of senior managers, supernumerary teachers and other relevant stakeholders provided insights into the Project's design, planning and delivery. Table 2.1 provides an overview of all contributors and how the information was collected. More detail of the various stages of data collection is provided below.
- 2.2 As a first stage of the evaluation, a series of stakeholder interviews was carried out, focusing on the policy context and background to the Project, its aims, design and delivery to date. Interviews were carried out with Welsh Government officials (3), Estyn (1), Education Workforce Council (EWC) (2), Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) (1) at the beginning of the evaluation, and with local authority representatives (3), other headteachers and deputy headteachers (8), Newly Qualified Teacher (NQT) mentors (2) and learners (4) later on in the evaluation process. All interviewees invited to participate in the evaluation were given the opportunity to participate in the language of their preference, with interviews conducted by telephone or face to face. The outcomes of the scoping interviews were used to inform the ongoing design and delivery of the evaluation, providing further context to the Project and identifying supplementary questions to be asked

during fieldwork with cluster leads, supernumerary teachers and other participating schools.

- 2.3 The monitoring forms submitted by clusters were used to establish the cost effectiveness of the Project. The total number of cover days needed and the cost of this cover provided by agencies, along with the number of days covered by the supernumerary teacher/s were used to work out the total spend on cover if the cover provided by the supernumerary teachers had been provided by agency supply. The average daily supply cost for the agency cover used by clusters was also calculated (Section 5).
- 2.4 A key aim of the evaluation was to ensure good levels of engagement with participating clusters and to understand their experiences of the Project at different points in time. Cluster leads were invited to take part in interviews in autumn 2018 and interviews were completed with all 18 cluster leads. These discussions focused on project delivery to date, how supernumerary teachers were deployed, collaboration with cluster schools, support for supernumerary teachers' professional development, and any barriers or challenges faced. Further interviews were carried out during summer 2019 with 17 out of the 18 cluster leads: these interviews focused on project management over the course of the Project, and its impact on learners, on supernumerary teachers, on wider school staff and the contribution to wider school priorities. The information collected during these summer 2019 interviews was used to inform all clusters' end of year 2 reports.
- 2.5 Telephone interviews were completed with 25 supernumerary teachers from across 15 clusters. These interviews provided insights into teachers' motivation for applying, recruitment processes, models of deploying teachers, management, professional development, experiences of working across different schools and key stages, benefits, and future plans. The research team gained consent to re-contact the supernumerary teachers by telephone or email for follow-up interviews during the 2019/20 academic year to record whether, and where they are teaching post-Project.

- 2.6 In addition, an online survey was designed to collect the views of other schools involved in the Project. The survey explored similar topics to those discussed with cluster leads. 34 out of 85 schools (excluding cluster leads who were not invited to complete the survey) responded. When appropriate, links to the survey findings are included in the narrative of this report, referenced as supporting data from other cluster schools/headteachers.
- 2.7 Table 2.1 provides a breakdown of the numbers of individuals who contributed to the various stages of the evaluation outlined above. All interview schedules are included in Annex A and a summary of the online survey results are presented in Annex B. Case studies were also developed to present further detail on specific themes to emerge during the evaluation, such as managing a large cluster of schools, recruiting and deploying specialist cover for Welsh-medium schools and Special schools. As a result, the case studies reflect the Project experience across different parts of Wales and in different types of schools. Information for these case studies was collected during half day visits to the cluster lead school and telephone interviews. Cluster leads, other headteachers and other relevant stakeholders such as NQT mentors, and local authority representatives contributed to the development of the case studies. Annex C contains the full case studies, which are also referenced as appropriate throughout the report.

Table 2.1: The pilot school clusters and completed interviews.

Cluster	No. of schools in cluster	No. of SN* teacher roles	Completed interviews				Survey Cluster schools Spring 2019
			Cluster leads		SN* teachers	**Other stakeholders	
			Autumn 2018	Summer 2019	Spring 2019		
Blaenau Gwent A	5	4	1	1	1		
Blaenau Gwent B	6	2	1	1	2		
Caerphilly	7	1	1	1	2	1	4
Cardiff	10	10	1	1	4	3	3
Carmarthen	7	3	1	1			2
Conwy A	6	4	1	1			4
Conwy B	6	3	1	1	3		3
Merthyr Tydfil A	7	1	1	1	1		2
Merthyr Tydfil B	7	1	1	1	1		
Monmouthshire	1	1	1	1	1		
Neath Port Talbot	10	5	1	1	2	1	5
Newport	2	1	1	1	1	3	1
Pembrokeshire	3	3	1		2		
Powys	6	1	1	1	1		4
Rhondda Cynon Taff	2	2	1	1	1		1
Torfaen	4	2	1	1	1		2
Vale of Glamorgan	6	1	1	1		1	
Wrexham	8	2	1	1	2	8	3
	103	47	18	17	25	17	34

Note: Some cluster schools merged during the course of the Project; individual schools have not been named as only the names of the local authorities participating in the pilot Project were announced by the Welsh Government.

*SN – Supernumerary

**includes NQT mentors, headteachers, local authority education officers and learners.

3. Project context

Policy context

- 3.1 In September 2017, the Welsh Government stated in their Action Plan for Education in Wales that ‘Education has never been more important. Education reform is our national mission’⁵. Strengthened teacher training delivery, new professional standards for teachers⁶, the National Academy for Educational Leadership⁷ and the implementation of Successful Futures⁸ with the development of the new curriculum for Wales⁹, all underpin this education reform for Wales. A key objective to be achieved by 2021 is the establishment of more effective workforce planning systems, which includes developing ‘alternative models to ensure the quality and sufficiency of supply teachers for schools’¹⁰.
- 3.2 Collaborative working between schools is also key for progressing professional learning for teachers¹¹ and for schools to develop as learning organisations¹² and this pilot Project contributes to further progress in these areas. The Welsh Government also has responsibility to ensure all employment practices are lawful and ethical¹³, and the introduction of the National Procurement Services Supply Teachers Framework for Wales¹⁴ will be revised on a geographical lot basis and will be active from September 2019. This Framework includes a minimum pay point, transparency of fees and the abolition of particular working practices, with professional learning and induction support required and will provide schools with ‘a greater degree of choice and flexibility in which supply agencies to work with’¹⁵.

⁵ Welsh Government (2017) [Education in Wales: Our national mission Action plan 2017-21](#). p. 2.

⁶ Welsh Government (2019) [Professional standards for teaching and leadership](#).

⁷ [National Academy for Educational Leadership Wales](#)

⁸ Donaldson, G. (2015) [Successful Futures: Independent Review of Curriculum and Assessment Arrangements in Wales](#)

⁹ Welsh Government (2019) [Curriculum for Wales 2022](#)

¹⁰ Welsh Government (2017) [Education in Wales: Our national mission Action plan 2017-21](#). p. 4.

¹¹ University of Wales Trinity Saint David (2018) [The National Approach to professional learning in Wales: Evidence base](#).

¹² OECD (2018) [Developing schools as learning organisations in Wales: highlights](#)

¹³ Welsh Government (2016) [Code of Practice Ethical Employment in Supply Chains](#).

¹⁴ Welsh Government (2019) [The National Procurement Services Supply Teachers Framework for Wales](#)

¹⁵ Welsh Government (2019) [Supply teachers Guidance](#)

Twenty-seven supply agencies are part of this Framework and schools are being encouraged to use it to source supply teachers.

- 3.3 Several challenges have been highlighted regarding the management of supply teachers and the impact on learners in Wales. The collaborative Estyn and Wales Audit Office reports noted the negative impact of supply teaching on learner progress and behaviour and difficulties encountered by supply teachers to establish effective working relationships with learners. The difficulty schools face sourcing Welsh speaking supply teachers, those able to fulfil roles in rural or economically deprived areas, or those able to teach shortage subjects such as mathematics and physics was also reported¹⁶. It was also noted that appropriate professional development was lacking for those engaged as supply teachers, hindering teachers securing a permanent post¹⁷.
- 3.4 In May 2015, a Supply Model Taskforce was established to consider the future delivery options for commissioning supply teachers in Wales. The Taskforce found that supply provision was often variable and inconsistent; with supply teachers paid different rates of pay and experiencing different terms and conditions dependent on how they were employed. These were not always commensurate with the terms of the nationally agreed School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document¹⁸ or the qualifications, skills and experience held by supply teachers. Teachers on short term supply may not be able to access learning and professional development opportunities in the same way that those on longer term supply contracts can and there may be retention issues among NQTs employed as supply teachers. With one in ten of the Welsh teaching workforce working as a supply teacher, and of those a third have been in the profession less than five years, with just over a fifth not having completed their induction year¹⁹, the pilot Project provided opportunity to support NQTs to complete their induction year requirement and deliver ongoing professional development.

¹⁶ Estyn (2013) [The impact of teacher absence](#). p. 3-4.

¹⁷ Estyn (2013) [The impact of teacher absence](#). p. 5.

¹⁸ Department for Education (2018) [School teachers' pay and conditions document 2018 and guidance on teachers' pay and conditions](#).

¹⁹ Education Workforce Council (2016) [An analysis of registered supply school teachers](#). p. 2-5.

- 3.5 The Taskforce report made a number of recommendations in light of the issues highlighted above including one related to the development and trialling of a regional collaborative model for the delivery of supply teaching. Such an approach was viewed as having the potential to address some of the specific difficulties experienced in a number of areas by deploying recently qualified supply teachers in clusters of schools to meet the demand for absence cover (planned and unplanned) often at short notice.
- 3.6 There are also wider policy developments within Wales which run alongside this pilot Project. The powers to determine Teachers' Pay and Conditions were formally transferred to Welsh Ministers in September 2018. In July 2019 the Minister for Education announced an increase in pay for newly qualified school teachers from September 2019, as well as an increase for all other school teachers²⁰. This followed recommendations made by the Independent Welsh Pay Review Body aimed at raising the status of the profession and supporting the recruitment and retention of high-quality teachers and leaders²¹.
- 3.7 Another current priority for the Welsh Government is the work of the Managing Workload and Reducing Bureaucracy Group, which is looking at managing workforce well-being and workload²². This Group's priorities are to develop a workload and well-being toolkit for the school workforce, to promote reducing workload resources, to develop training models and exemplar case studies and to carry out a sector-wide audit.
- 3.8 In May 2019, the Fair Work Commission's report *Fair Work Wales* was published. The report made a number of recommendations relating to Welsh Government's role in the fair work agenda²³. Welsh Government will now be establishing a Social Partnership and Fair Work Directorate to drive forward fair work in Wales.
- 3.9 This pilot Project reflects the ambitions of the above policy developments, working to ensure the education workforce (including supply teachers) is provided with

²⁰ [Announcement of teacher pay rise as teacher pay devolved to Wales - July 2019](#)

²¹ [Independent Welsh Pay Review Body, First Report – 2019](#)

²² [Plenary Statement 11 June 2019](#)

²³ [Plenary Statement 7 May 2019](#)

opportunities for fair work, effective well-being and workload support and a minimum standard for professional learning provided for supply teachers.

Project objectives

3.10 Welsh Government identified broad outcomes of interest relating to the extent to which the pilot Project:

- Implements alternative and innovative arrangements that address school absence cover (planned and unplanned absence);
- Supports NQTs in short term supply roles in terms of professional development and retention;
- Aids efficiencies, evidence added value and potential cost savings against the school;
- Promotes best practice in collaboration and joint working across school clusters.

Approaches used to provide supply cover in cluster schools prior to the Project

3.11 Cluster schools commonly used external supply agencies to address their supply needs. In some cases, cluster schools had built positive relationships with particular supply agencies to facilitate the process. Some cluster schools also commonly used various internal supply options to address their supply needs. In particular, smaller primary schools were more likely to use internal cover exclusively, due to these schools not having a dedicated external supply budget. Internal supply options commonly included the use of cover supervisors and Higher Level Teaching Assistants (HLTAs). Insurance was also available to cluster schools in certain circumstances (such as when staff absence extended beyond five days) and one cluster had developed its own internal insurance mechanism. Yet it is important to note that schools' insurance policies varied. The survey completed by other cluster schools provides an overview of approaches used by some of the schools to cover absence (see Annex B).

- 3.12 Cluster schools reported that, prior to the commencement of the Project, they were facing a number of common challenges linked to supply, most notably: the rising costs of supply cover, particularly when school budgets are under pressure; the reduced quality of teaching provided through supply cover; challenges accessing specialised supply such as Welsh-medium supply teachers or supply teachers experienced in supporting pupils with additional learning needs, (see Case studies 2 and 4 for further discussion on this issue) and the burden of spending time on supply management instead of on other school priorities.
- 3.13 Many clusters were able to build on previous partnership working and collaboration (such as collaboration on transition or school improvement, or a shared attendance officer) however this prior partnership working did not include joint approaches to supply cover.

4. Management and delivery

4.1 This section discusses the management and delivery of the Project, including initial engagement and recruitment; delivery models; and monitoring and evaluation.

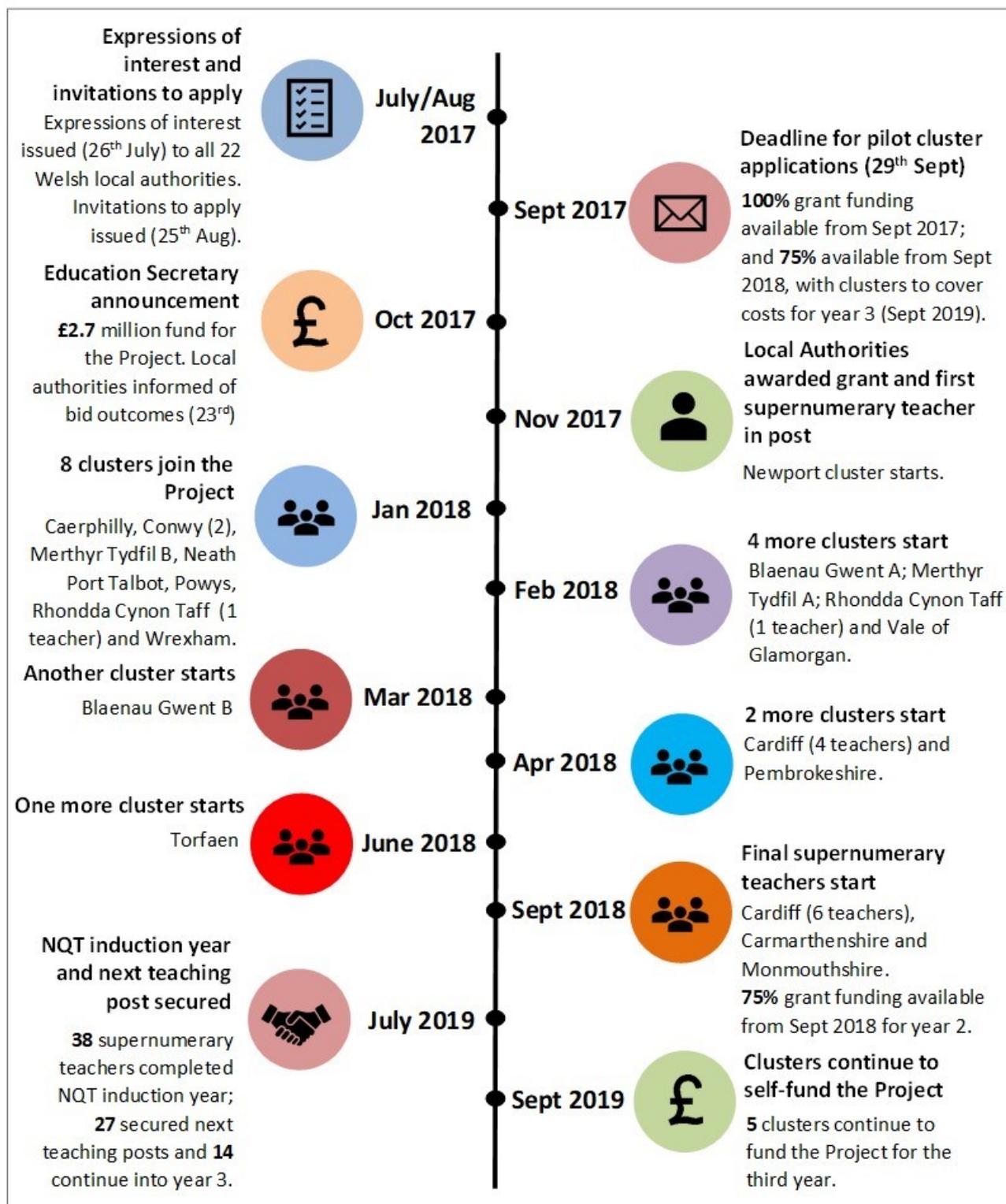
Engagement and recruitment

Key findings

- Local authorities were informed about the Project in July 2017.
- Some schools facing particular supply challenges were targeted.
- Recruitment of supernumerary teachers took longer than anticipated for some clusters.
- Some clusters were unable to access the full 100 per cent funding for the full first year, due to delayed start.
- Some supernumerary posts required re-advertising when teachers secured permanent jobs during the Project.

4.2 The timeline for the announcement and implementation of the Project is summarised in Figure 4.1. The Welsh Government invited local authorities to submit expressions of interest in taking part in July 2017. Subsequently, local authorities informed clusters about the Project, in some cases targeting schools they were aware faced particular supply challenges (e.g. accessing Welsh-medium supply cover) or identifying clusters deemed to be well-placed to deliver the Project. However, an initial delay to the start date of the Project (with schools able to start recruiting only in the autumn) resulted in clusters initiating recruitment processes a few months into the 2017-18 academic year. As a result some clusters were unable to access the full 100 per cent grant funding for the full first year of the Project.

Figure 4.1: Timeline of cluster engagement with the Project



- 4.3 Recruitment took longer than some cluster lead schools had anticipated, with repeated rounds of advertising before appointing supernumerary teachers in some cases. Schools reported receiving fewer applications than expected for the supernumerary posts (based on previous recruitment experience), which some attributed to the time of year. In some cases this led to delayed start dates. Cluster lead schools reported that greater lead-in time would have been helpful, as well as the opportunity to recruit for the start of the academic year.
- 4.4 A minority of supernumerary teachers secured permanent positions (either within the cluster or elsewhere) during the pilot period. In each case, clusters have re-advertised and have not faced many challenges in replacing these supernumerary teachers. Although clusters report that re-advertising and recruit anew to these posts has disrupted project delivery, schools also recognise that providing a route into full-time teaching posts is a measure of the Project's success.
- 4.5 All clusters outlined their anticipated outcomes for the Project, with some clusters identifying national/regional priorities that the Project would help support, including:
- The development of the Curriculum for Wales²⁴;
 - Contributing towards establishing a self-improving school system;
 - ALN transformation programme²⁵;
 - Providing support for More Able and Talented learners;
 - Reducing the attainment gap.
- 4.6 For other clusters, proposed outcomes supported school-based or cluster-wide priorities, such as:
- Building capacity across the cluster;
 - Cost savings for supply cover;
 - Continuity of provision through the deployment of supernumerary teachers;
 - Improved learner outcomes – progress, attainment, literacy/numeracy/digital;
 - Improved school-to-school working – collaboration, sharing good practice;
 - Improved quality of teaching;

²⁴ Welsh Government (2019) [Curriculum for Wales 2022](#)

²⁵ Welsh Government (2017) [Additional learning needs \(ALN\) transformation programme](#)

- Enhanced professional development of supply teachers;
- School Development Plan (SDP) priorities;
- Staff wellbeing;
- Sustainability.

Delivery models adopted by the clusters

Key findings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The number of schools and supernumerary teachers in each cluster ranged from one to ten. • Clusters welcomed the flexibility and autonomy they had to design and implement the Project. • The different delivery models adopted by clusters; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Block timetable (half or whole term in each school) ○ Fixed weekly/fortnightly timetable in several schools ○ Flexible timetable according to demand ○ Combination of flexible and fixed

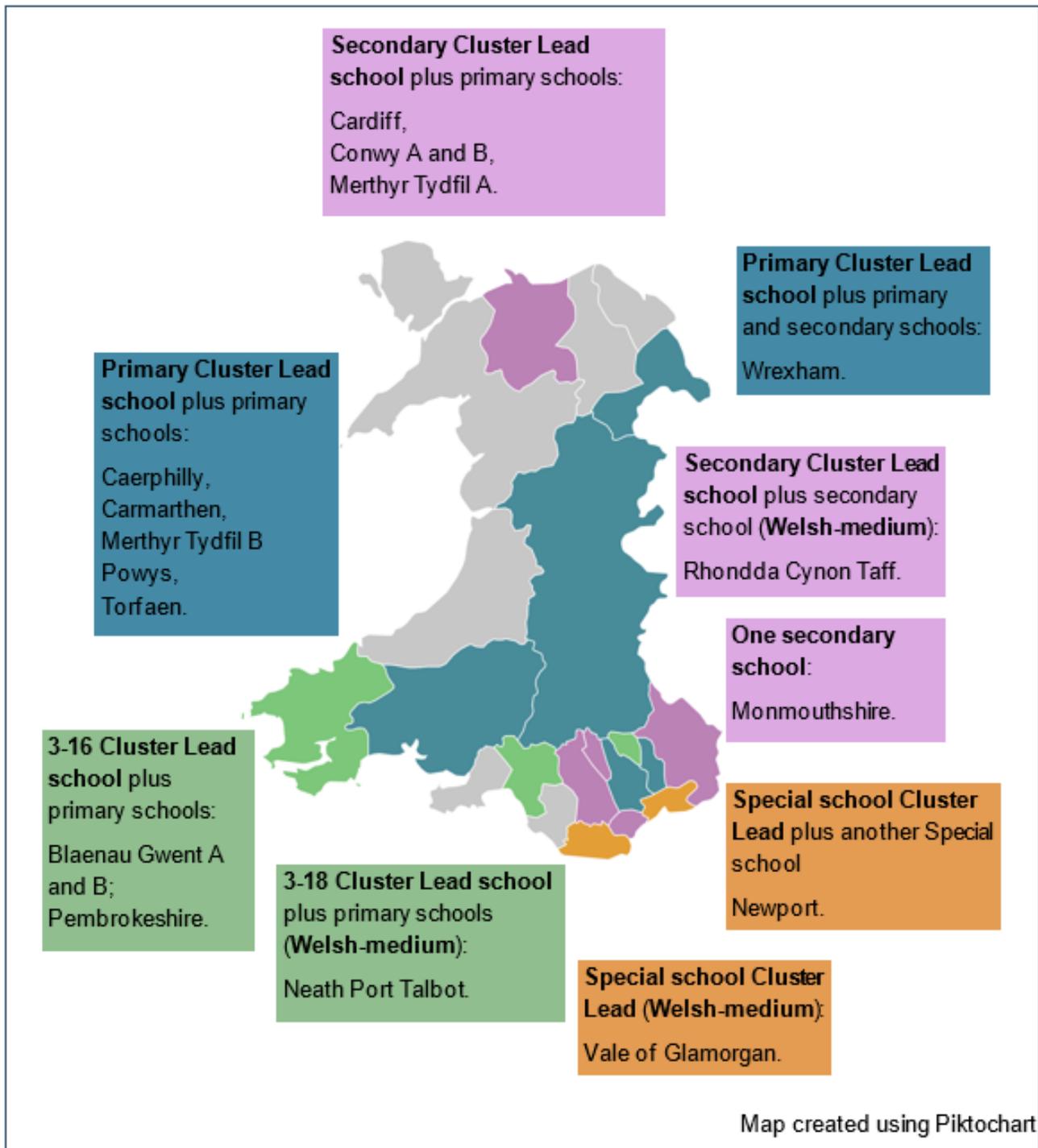
4.7 A range of delivery models was adopted by clusters, with a range in the type of school that have served as cluster leads (i.e. clusters have been led by primary, secondary, middle and special schools). As illustrated in Table 2.1 the configuration and structure of each cluster also varied. The number of both the schools and the supernumerary teachers in each cluster ranged from one to ten. Figure 4.2 provides an overview of the structure of each pilot cluster.

4.8 Welsh Government gave clusters flexibility regarding the approach they took for the Project, the number of supernumerary teachers to be employed and the number of schools which would form the cluster. This autonomy was welcomed by cluster leads and the other headteachers in the clusters, with the diversity of approaches adopted by clusters reflecting this. The delivery model of each pilot cluster was decided by cluster leads and other cluster headteachers during the design stage. Key decisions included:

- Who would manage and mentor the supernumerary teacher/s;

- How would the supernumerary teacher/s be shared between the cluster schools (proportion of time in each school and timetabling approach e.g. set blocks in each school or weekly timetable); and
- What type of cover would the supernumerary teacher/s be providing (e.g. sickness or for planning, preparation and assessment time (PPA)).

Figure 4.2: The structure of each of the pilot clusters



- 4.9 Clusters adopted a range of approaches and, following feedback from supernumerary teachers and cluster schools, a couple of clusters altered their approach for the second year. It is possible to identify four different models based on the timetabling approach clusters used for the supernumerary teachers;
1. A block timetable, based on supernumerary teachers spending a half term or whole term in each cluster school
 2. Fixed weekly or fortnightly timetable in several cluster schools
 3. Flexible deployment, led by demand from the cluster schools
 4. Combination of fixed and flexible approaches
- 4.10 Block – half or whole term timetable. Some of the clusters allocated the supernumerary teacher to each of their cluster schools for a term, with the teacher teaching in the smaller cluster schools for half a term. This approach proved useful for one cluster (see Figure 4.3), as the supernumerary teacher was able to observe teaching and behaviour management in the larger cluster school at the beginning of the process, before spending at least a half term in each of the other cluster schools. Another cluster only applied this approach at the beginning; following a week of preparation time, the supernumerary teacher taught each Year 7 class for a week, using more of a 'primary teaching approach' to support learners' transition to secondary school. This meant that the secondary school received their full allocation of supernumerary hours at the beginning of the Project. However, as movement between the cluster schools was less frequent for the supernumerary teacher, sharing of practice and collaborative work was less apparent over the short term.

Figure 4.3: Example of block timetable

Powys Cluster	Allocation	Management
 <p data-bbox="277 562 405 589">6 schools</p>  <p data-bbox="272 719 394 745">1 teacher</p>	<p data-bbox="469 365 927 392">All rural/semi-rural primary schools</p> <p data-bbox="469 443 991 779">The teacher was allocated to each school in the cluster for a full term each, but with the two smaller schools sharing over a term. The first term was spent in the larger school, observing teaching and behaviour management to ‘develop ground rules as to what was acceptable’, this was then transferable to the other cluster schools.</p>	<p data-bbox="1054 443 1362 741"><i>For her first staff meeting at each school we wanted to learn about what she had been doing, what had she seen? And what did she think worked well? (Cluster lead)</i></p>

- 4.11 Fixed weekly or fortnightly timetable. Pilot clusters that allocated supernumerary teachers using a fixed timetable assigned teachers to cluster schools for an agreed number of days each week or fortnight. The teacher’s role at a school could vary; teaching the same class each week or covering some regular classes with other time allocated according to the need in the school at the time (e.g. sickness cover, staff professional development). Adopting this format allowed clusters to release staff on a regular timetable to work on school-level priorities or for PPA time. This model also allowed the supernumerary teachers to deliver specific projects to all cluster schools on a regular basis e.g. STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) or PE (Physical Education) focused cluster projects. Even where clusters adopted a more flexible approach based on demand, some cluster schools chose to request the teacher for the same day each week (or similar), to help them maintain momentum and consistency in classroom teaching. An example of this approach is provided in Figure 4.4.

Figure 4.4: Example of fixed timetable

Carmarthenshire Cluster	Allocation and role	Benefit of the model
 <p>7 schools</p>  <p>3 teachers</p>	<p>Each teacher had a regular timetable, teaching in two or three schools each week. Cover was provided for management duties, INSET, transition projects, triad working and sickness absence. For example one teacher focused on PE, and delivered sessions in the primary schools and organised events at the secondary school.</p>	<p><i>Without the project we would have had much less school self-evaluation and monitoring going on; this year we have been able to do more than we usually do. (Cluster lead)</i></p>

4.12 Flexible according to demand from the cluster schools. A further model used less frequently by clusters was a flexible model, allowing cluster schools to book supernumerary teachers' time as and when they were needed to provide cover. This model was usually administered either through an online booking calendar (see Figure 4.5) or through a central administrator in the cluster lead school. This model lent itself to short-notice cover (such as sickness absence) but was also used to book supernumerary teachers' time ahead of time and/or on a regular basis. As such, this flexible model could still be used in much the same way as a fixed timetable if cluster schools chose to book supernumerary teachers' time on a regular schedule. Clusters found that this approach could effectively meet the needs of cluster schools as they arose but could potentially be more burdensome to administer. Equitable division of the supernumerary teachers' time between cluster schools needed to be monitored within this model.

Figure 4.5: Example of flexible timetable

Pembrokeshire Cluster	Allocation and role
 <p>3 schools</p>  <p>3 teachers</p>	<p>The secondary school had the administrative capacity to manage the project. Time between the schools was allocated according to pupil numbers. An online booking calendar through Hwb was used for planned cover, with teachers re-allocated when an emergency cover was needed.</p>

4.13 Combination of fixed and flexible. Pilot clusters which used a combination of both a fixed and a flexible timetable usually took one of two approaches: allocating each of the supernumerary teachers a partial fixed timetable, with the remaining time allocated flexibly to meet demands; and/or allocating a fixed timetable to one supernumerary teacher and a more flexible timetable to another supernumerary teacher. This model allowed regular release of staff to focus on school priorities and/or PPA while maintaining an element of responsiveness to school needs. An example of this model is provided in Figure 4.6.

Figure 4.6: Example of combination timetable

Blaenau Gwent Cluster	Allocation and role
  5 schools 4 teachers	<p>Within the learning community, teachers were used to cover sickness absence and cross-phase activity in the primary phase, and the teacher in the secondary phase was allocated a partial fixed timetable in the learning resource base (with the remaining time dedicated to sickness and CPD (Continuing Professional Development) cover). In other cluster schools, teachers covered for sickness absence, PPA and transition activities.</p>

4.14 Table 4.1 provides an overview of the common strengths and challenges associated with the different models of delivery. Other strengths and challenges associated with Project delivery relate more specifically to the nature of individual cluster projects; for example, the teaching background of supernumerary teachers may dictate which key stages they are comfortable covering, or a cluster school may wish to use the supernumerary teachers primarily for sickness absence cover, which may not be possible if the cluster as a whole is using a fixed timetable to allocate their time. The survey of other cluster schools (see Annex B) also found that the majority of schools found the deployment of the supernumerary teachers to be satisfactory; for example, *‘all schools got a fair allocation of the supply teachers and were able to build up good professional relationships with them’* (headteacher).

Table 4.1: The strengths and challenges of the different delivery models

Delivery model	Strengths	Challenges
Block timetable	Working relationships with staff and learners developed quickly. Consistent procedures for supernumerary teacher.	Less opportunity to share practice between schools on an ongoing basis.
Fixed weekly/fortnightly timetable	Class teachers released regularly to focus on school priorities. Consistency for supernumerary teachers and learners.	Less flexibility to respond to short-notice / emergency cover needs. Opportunity for NQT observation/assessment with regular classes.
Flexible timetable	Cover could be provided at short notice.	Can be burdensome to administer. Monitoring of equitable share needed. Difficult to ensure NQT induction requirements were met.
Combination timetable	Regular PPA cover provided. Flexibility for emergency cover available.	Ensuring opportunities for NQT observations were fulfilled.

Monitoring and evaluation

Key findings

- Cluster leads reported the monitoring of the grant by the Welsh Government was flexible.
- Cluster leads reported that the monitoring requirements were proportionate to the amount of financial support received.
- Occasionally there were some challenges experienced by clusters in collating monitoring data.
- The end of year one reports varied in the level of detail provided by clusters.
- A template and support were provided for the end of year two report.

- 4.15 Cluster lead schools were generally positive about the flexibility with which the Welsh Government had approached the monitoring of the grant. While regular monitoring was required, cluster lead schools generally reported that they and the Welsh Government had approached the Project as a pilot, allowing clusters to act flexibly and trial approaches while maintaining overall general monitoring.
- 4.16 On the whole, cluster lead schools found the monitoring requirements (in particular, claim forms) proportionate to the amount of financial support received as part of the Project. Clusters did face some challenges in collating and submitting monitoring data on occasion, such as: ensuring data was gathered consistently from all cluster schools; ensuring the way in which supernumerary teachers had been deployed was logged appropriately; and ensuring school-level data could be translated into claim form sections correctly.
- 4.17 Clusters were also required to submit end-of-year reports summarising the progress and impact of their pilot project. There was no specific template for these reports and so reports at the end of the first year were varied, with some clusters providing a greater level of detail than others. Arad Research supported clusters with this process (including providing a template) for the second end-of-year report.

5. Project outcomes

5.1 This section discusses the outcomes and impact of the Project. Specifically, it reports on key findings relating to teaching and learning; wider school improvement; cluster collaboration; impact on supernumerary teachers; and efficiencies and cost savings.

Teaching and learning

Key findings

- Cluster leads and other cluster headteachers reported that the Project has had a positive effect on teaching and learning.
- Cluster leads and other cluster headteachers reported that the positive impact of the Project on teaching and learning stems from supernumerary teachers being integrated into staff teams and providing consistency in teaching and learning.
- Over time supernumerary teachers have increasingly been given fixed timetables or have taken on responsibility for classes on a more regular basis, making a positive difference to pupil progress.
- The Project has led to greater consistency of teaching, supporting the emotional well-being of learners and providing a more stable and better quality learning experience for pupils.
- Supernumerary teachers have helped support effective transition and progression of teaching and learning between key stages.
- Clusters felt that having teachers work across primary and secondary schools encouraged them to plan more strategically across phases, leading to benefits to teaching and learning.
- Supernumerary teachers have made a positive difference to behaviour by becoming familiar with and applying schools' behaviour management approaches.
- The Project has been used by some clusters to support ALN provision, impacting positively on learners.

- 5.2 Cluster leads and other cluster school headteachers reported that the Project has had a positive effect on teaching and learning. By becoming immersed in school life, supernumerary teachers have come to understand schools' teaching and learning strategies and have supported their delivery. Cluster leads reported, quite early in the Project, that the pilot Project had led to increased quality of teaching, compared with supply teachers sourced through traditional supply routes. One school reported that this had resulted in fewer complaints from parents about the impact of supply cover on their children's learning. Teachers whose classes were frequently covered by supernumerary teachers were reassured that experienced teachers who understood their pupils were delivering their lessons. One cluster lead noted: *'Without this Project classes may have been covered by HLTAs or cover teachers who are not familiar with the school, the learners or the data tracking systems. The consistency has been hugely valuable'*.
- 5.3 Cluster leads and other cluster school headteachers reported that the positive impact of the Project on teaching and learning stems from supernumerary teachers being integrated into staff teams and providing consistency in teaching and learning. It was also reported that as supernumerary teachers become established in a school or in several schools, their lesson planning and pedagogy improve. *'The most successful aspect of the Project has been the quality of teaching and learning across the phases and standards as a whole'* (Cluster lead). Cluster leads valued the fact that supernumerary teachers came to understand exactly what was expected of them to become well-prepared and independent teachers. Cluster lead schools also reported that the Project helped alleviate pressure on other teachers, knowing that when they had to be away from their class that *'learners were in safe hands because the teacher had built relationships with the children, which is first and foremost the most important thing'* (Cluster lead). Invariably, cluster leads and headteachers in other schools compared the model favourably with other supply cover arrangements.
- 5.4 During the second year of the Project, in particular, many supernumerary teachers were given fixed timetables or took on responsibility for classes on a more regular basis. Some clusters planned to use supernumerary teachers' subject specialisms, which has impacted positively on the quality of teaching and on learners' progress.

This includes in Welsh-medium secondary schools, where supernumerary teachers brought skills in specialist subject areas where there has traditionally been a shortage of teachers. Indeed headteachers in participating Welsh-medium schools – primary and secondary – reported continuing challenges in sourcing good quality supply teachers. The Project has contributed towards filling a gap in this sector. The Project has been seen as an investment in the quality of supply teachers, as well as in capacity.

- 5.5 The Project has led to greater consistency of teaching, supporting the emotional well-being of learners and providing a more stable and better quality learning experience for pupils. On balance, evidence from across the clusters indicates that the increased quality of provision delivered by supernumerary teachers has made a difference to learners. This observation by cluster leads was provided early on in the Pilot Project. A number of cluster leads recognised, however, that it is not possible to make a direct link between the Project and learning attainment given the range of other factors that impact on learner progress and outcomes. In some clusters supernumerary teachers provided support for vulnerable learners and learners with additional learning needs. This has made a difference as learners transition into the next phase of education or as they prepare to transition into adulthood and their lives after school. As a result of the additional capacity provided through the Project, schools have been able reduce the student: staff ratio.

Importance of consistency for quality of teaching and learning

One cluster lead commented on the positive impact of having a consistent supply teacher for the learners and other teaching staff in the school;

'When we have had to have supply to supplement it [the cluster supply model], the children's learning hasn't been as good. The children are happy to see a familiar face and the children respond really well. When children are told that a cluster teacher is covering a class they can go home settled as they know who they have got. For children who find change stressful preparing them the day before regarding who the cover teacher is, is very useful. Easy communication between the class teacher and the cluster teacher means the cover teacher is fully informed on issues that could impact the emotional well-being of the children. The standard of work that children produce is much improved to regular supply teaching and it is marked appropriately.' (Cluster lead)

- 5.6 Supernumerary teachers have helped support effective transition and progression of teaching and learning between key stages. Supernumerary teachers who have worked in primary and secondary schools within a cluster have supported improved planning of provision in Year 7 to enable better progression and avoiding duplication of learning at the beginning of Key Stage 3. This has been achieved through shared teaching and learning approaches and collaborative planning involving supernumerary teachers and core staff teams.

Positive impact on transition: One supernumerary teacher was delivering year 7 Science and discussed with one of the primary headteachers the skills that the learners would need in year 7. As a result, some of the Year 6 curriculum was altered, this was welcomed in the primary school, particularly when the relevance for learners' progress to year 7 was taken into account. (Cluster lead)

- 5.7 Cluster leads felt that having teachers work across primary and secondary schools encouraged them to plan more strategically across phases, leading to benefits to teaching and learning. In one example, some of the more vulnerable learners in

year 6 were identified and allocated to a supernumerary teacher's tutor group for year 7 the following year. *'Parents were delighted when they saw that the member of staff their child was going to be with was a teacher who already knew their child. The learners were also delighted they were to have her as their tutor'*. (Cluster lead)

- 5.8 Supernumerary teachers have made a positive difference to behaviour by becoming familiar with and applying schools' behaviour management approaches. Cluster leads and other cluster school headteachers reported that the relationships formed between supernumerary teachers and learners led to a reduction in instances of poor behaviour. This was noted during the early stages of the pilot Project. Cluster leads also reported that often pupils – particularly older pupils – will 'test the boundaries' when agency-sourced supply teachers are brought in to cover lessons. This has been less of an issue with supernumerary teachers: schools report there is greater accountability built into the model (as a result of the teacher being based in the cluster) and lessons have been more focused and beneficial.
- 5.9 The Project has been used by some clusters to support ALN provision, impacting positively on learners. In some clusters, there was a specific focus on supporting ALN provision. Case study 2 discusses the difficulties Special schools experience when trying to recruit skilled personnel. Supernumerary teachers have been used to provide additional capacity to support learners with ALN, both in mainstream schools and in Special schools involved in the pilot. One Special school used the Project to cover long-term sickness, providing 'enormous stability and continuity to a group of students who would have had rolling supply'. The headteacher in this school noted the difficulties in finding a teacher through a supply agency with the right skillset would have been 'almost impossible'.
- 5.10 The Project has also led to increased capacity to deliver Welsh-medium ALN provision in mainstream schools. Through the Project a specialist Welsh-medium teacher has been released to work across Welsh-medium primary schools, delivering targeted support to learners. The cluster lead estimates that, as a direct result of this support, facilitated through the supply clusters pilot, six learners have been retained in mainstream education who would otherwise have transferred to special schools. The Project has therefore delivered cost savings by retaining

children in mainstream education²⁶ and enhancing Welsh-medium ALN in designated Welsh-medium schools, supporting wider policy priorities set out in the Welsh Government's additional learning needs (ALN) transformation programme.

Wider school improvement

Key findings

- It was common for cluster leads and other cluster school headteachers to report that without this Project, they would have been unable to release staff to the same degree.
- Some cluster schools chose to release members of staff to focus on progressing school improvement priorities.
- Cluster schools also reported using supernumerary teachers to release staff for planning / PPA purposes (particularly to support new curriculum and assessment arrangements).
- It was common for cluster schools to use supernumerary teachers to release staff for professional development (either training courses or school-based professional learning activities).
- Cluster leads were often able to provide examples of the improvements they had seen within their schools as a result of releasing staff for school improvement purposes.
- There were examples of the supernumerary teacher role directly supporting school improvement priorities to a greater extent than external supply agency teachers are able to do.
- Cluster leads emphasised the positive impact such additional supply cover can have on wider staff well-being.

5.11 Rather than using supernumerary teachers to cover short-notice sickness absence, many cluster schools have tried to make purposeful use of the supernumerary teachers' time to gain added value from the Project. This has meant releasing staff from classrooms to work on more strategic, whole-school improvement activities. It

²⁶ It has been estimated that educating a child in a special school costs approximately £25,000 per annum.

was common for cluster schools to report that without this Project, they would have been unable to release staff to the same degree.

5.12 It was usual for teachers who were released to be allocated particular tasks or activities to focus upon, relating closely to priorities identified in the school development plan. Other teachers were released to focus on particular projects, such as regional collaborative projects. The Project thus provided added supply capacity and the following are some examples of the ways in which cluster schools released staff to focus on school improvement priorities include:

- Allowing the literacy coordinator to review the school's literacy provision;
- Undertaking learning walks with a particular focus, such as on assessment for learning;
- Undertaking action research relating to school improvement areas;
- Planning for improved moderation across the school;
- Allowing senior managers to focus on improving evaluation and monitoring systems across the school;
- Allowing senior managers to focus on transition planning;
- Establishing school-wide behaviour approaches; and
- Supporting a regional formative assessment project.

Addressing school priorities

One cluster lead provided an example of how the Project supported the school to improve standards; *'As a school we have found the Project invaluable in allowing us to provide quality cover immediately for staff illness. However, the greatest value of the Project has been the ability for school to regularly (e.g. weekly for [our school]) utilise [the supernumerary teacher] for internal moderation and standardisation of work within school. This has allowed SLT and subject leaders to continually monitor and raise standards of teaching and learning.'* (Cluster lead)

5.13 Cluster schools also reported using supernumerary teachers to release staff for planning / PPA purposes. This was highlighted as a particularly important element of preparing the teachers and the school for the new curriculum and assessment

arrangements. Examples of the type of activities undertaken by teachers released for this purpose included cross-curricular planning to meet the requirements of the new curriculum and planning collaboratively with colleagues (for instance planning in triads). This type of cross-curricular planning was reported as being challenging to achieve when teachers are not able to be released from the classroom.

Supernumerary teachers also provided cover for wider PPA requirements which would ordinarily have been covered through other supply mechanisms.

- 5.14 In addition, it was common for cluster schools to use supernumerary teachers to release staff for professional development. This included releasing staff to attend particular courses (such as training on ALN) as well as to allow them to focus on their own professional development and professional standards. Examples of the type of professional development available to teachers released in this way include: Releasing teachers to address the new professional standards by working collaboratively with colleagues; observing practice in areas where improvement is needed; ensuring senior members of staff (such as headteachers) are not called in to cover PPA time on a regular basis.
- 5.15 Cluster schools provided examples of the improvements they had seen within their schools as a result of releasing staff for school improvement purposes. Such examples include improved self-evaluation processes; establishing monitoring and assessment processes ahead of time; improved planning for delivering the new curriculum requirements; improvement in standards following an Estyn inspection; and consistent leadership to progress key priorities.

Impact of the availability of additional cover

One cluster school had invested in 'Thrive' (a well-being support programme). *'Well-being is a big agenda in our school, and there is a lot of work associated with it and being able to release a member of staff to move those things forward and knowing we have got scope to do that in an organised way – that we can do it without there being a negative impact on the class – has been very important for us'.*

The staff were trained during the first year, but there was limited opportunity to put into practice what staff had learnt from the training. The well-being lead has been able to focus on that this year, and there is now a comprehensive package available for pupils. As a result, the school *'is getting the value out of the money invested in the training and our pupils are getting the benefit of the expertise that staff have developed'.* (Cluster lead)

- 5.16 There are also examples of the supernumerary teacher role directly supporting school improvement priorities to a greater extent than external supply agency teachers are able to. For example, cluster schools on occasion have been able to make best use of supernumerary teachers' existing skillset and expertise to address particular improvement areas (such as supporting nurture activities). On other occasions, supernumerary teachers have been able to support extra-curricular activities (such as residential trips), when external supply agency teachers are usually unable to do so. Case study 3 provides an example of supernumerary teachers supporting such priorities. Supernumerary teachers have also been able to share learning with colleagues in different schools to support professional learning, having observed teaching and learning in different settings. However, a minority of headteachers responding to the cluster school survey noted that some supernumerary teachers were unable to teach Foundation Phase, which limited the cluster's ability to meet their intended aims for the Project.
- 5.17 On occasion, cluster schools emphasised the positive impact such additional supply cover can have on wider staff well-being. Without such supply cover, cluster schools reported that teachers would commonly complete school improvement activities

(including evaluation activities) in their own time. This is seen to place an additional burden on teachers who already face a heavy workload; *‘the most successful part of the Project has been having a spare teacher to release the senior management team to carry out their role more effectively. In the past, and next year, teachers will be writing these monitoring reports in their own time, because I can’t afford to release them – that has been the greatest benefit’* (cluster lead). The survey of cluster schools also found that the Project had resulted in a positive impact on workload for staff and other school priorities in some, but not all, cluster schools (Annex B). Cluster leads and headteachers from other cluster schools also occasionally commented during interviews that classroom teachers have also benefitted from increased confidence in the cover available, knowing that they can take time away from their classroom without detriment to learners’ education.

Cluster collaboration

Key findings

- The Project has been effective in strengthening cluster collaboration.
- Cluster schools shared effective management approaches.
- Supernumerary teachers shared teaching and learning approaches between cluster schools.
- Successful collaborative cluster school projects were completed.
- Teachers have been able to lead developments, and take on ownership and responsibility for initiatives.
- There has been a positive impact on transition processes for schools and learners.
- Increased motivation to engage in future collaborative working between cluster schools.

5.18 The Project has been effective in strengthening collaboration between cluster schools. Some cluster leads who commented that there was strong collaborative cluster working before the Project reported improved collaboration. Effective collaboration was evident from the planning stage; for example, once all the headteachers in one cluster had agreed to apply for the grant funding, a smaller cluster sub-group developed the submission. Occasionally cluster leads reported

that their collaborative working was strong prior to the Project and the Project had not had any impact on this. A collaborative approach was undertaken to allocate the supernumerary teachers' timetables, and three quarters of the other cluster schools responding to the survey agreed that the supernumerary teachers had been deployed fairly, with the feedback they provided during cluster meetings informing this. Having flexibility in the allocation of the supernumerary teachers was viewed positively, with some clusters able to accommodate individual school requests to alter when they received their share of the supernumerary teacher's time.

- 5.19 Cluster leads and other cluster school headteachers reported that the clusters discussed the management and delivery of the Project regularly and communication between schools was effective. The frequency of meetings between cluster schools varied widely, with some arranging meetings every half term and others meeting termly. In some cases, the Project was an agenda item on monthly cluster meetings. One cluster lead commented that even though they work with other schools *'unless you have a specific reason to meet, sometimes you can go weeks without meeting and this [the Project] has almost created an official calendar that we have to meet as we have to fulfil certain obligations and as a result other things are added to the agenda and discussed'*.
- 5.20 Some cluster leads reported that cluster schools shared effective management approaches and tools throughout the Project. For example, an online calendar was used to oversee the allocation of the supernumerary teachers, with the calendar easy for the supernumerary teachers and the different schools to access, the cluster discussed in Case study 1 used this tool effectively. This approach also meant that supernumerary teachers had access to their timetable in advance. Having a single member of staff, usually at the cluster lead school, as the main point of contact for supernumerary teachers was also effective and ensured clear communication. The approach used to share information online during the Project has been used to share other collaborative documents within one cluster. For example, School Development Plans, and the Cluster Improvement Plan was developed collaboratively using the same online platform.

5.21 Supernumerary teachers shared teaching and learning approaches between cluster schools. The sharing of practice and ideas, such as approaches to the new curriculum, behaviour management strategies, approaches to support learners or specific curriculum delivery ideas were viewed by headteachers as positive outcomes to emerge from the Project. One cluster school headteacher commented that the supernumerary had taken *'best practice and strategies back to the other school and added value to them'*.

Sharing effective practice

One cluster lead commented on an example where the supernumerary teacher observed a child struggling to build sentences independently. The teacher recalled seeing a programme delivered at one of the other cluster schools on building sentences in a systematic way; this was then used to support the child. It proved successful, and the child is continuing to use the programme. (Cluster lead)

5.22 Successful collaborative cluster school projects were completed during the Project. Cluster projects have been directly supported by supernumerary teachers delivering activities across cluster schools, or by the supernumerary teachers providing the cover of lessons needed for other teachers to complete such activities, attend meetings or training in order to progress a cluster project. Examples of such projects include:

- Areas of Learning and Experience meetings to inform the development of the new curriculum.
- Humanities – main class teachers taught alongside the supernumerary teachers for a term, also providing the opportunity to withdraw small groups of learners to focus on specific elements of the project.
- Maths curriculum development – all supernumerary teachers attended training and have had input across all cluster schools into the development of a consistent maths curriculum across one cluster
- More Able and Talented training
- Restorative Justice training

- Shared attendance officer
- Shared Welsh teacher
- Sharing behaviour and learning management approaches across phases resulted in a better understanding of the approaches for one cluster
- STEM – the supernumerary teachers assisted class teachers to deliver a half term project, which culminated in a presentation attended by all the cluster schools

5.23 Activities initiated by the Project have helped ensure that collaborative working is becoming an increasingly integrated part of how schools plan and deliver, supporting wider school-to-school working. Teachers have had the time to lead on developments and take on ownership and responsibility. However, one supernumerary teacher's poor attendance record limited the progress one cluster was able to make against the cluster's objectives.

5.24 The Project has had a positive impact on transition processes for schools and learners. The Project has enabled collaboration between schools that has supported schools' transition activities. Supernumerary teachers working across phases were able to develop longer term relationships with year 6 learners and the 'familiar face', and consistency in approach to behaviour and learning supported effective transition to the secondary phase. A couple of clusters reported specific transition projects developed as a result of the grant funding; for example, PE lessons were delivered to all primary cluster schools, with activities also held at the secondary school.

Future collaborative working – Having established a shared behaviour officer for the cluster recently, the Project has meant that the cluster schools are talking more about their teaching and the structure of their schools. Discussions are taking place about the possibility of ‘pooling HLTAs’ – this would not have happened without the Project. (Cluster lead)

As a result of the Project the cluster is sharing teaching assistants, this means experience, expertise and teaching methods are shared between schools. For example, one completes all the English as an Additional Language (EAL) assessments for the cluster and experienced Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) staff from across the cluster came together to develop a consistent approach for all the cluster schools – *‘all the capacity to be able to lead and manage this has come from being able to release some of the staff in the primary schools to focus on these priorities’*. (Cluster lead)

‘If it can work with supply, why can’t it work with ALN? Why could it not work with PE or attendance?’ (Cluster lead)

- 5.25 The motivation to engage in future collaborative working between cluster schools has increased. One cluster lead noted that the Project has helped to increase the pace of development for the cluster to work collaboratively, with another reporting that delivering the Project had instigated more discussion regarding *‘what the cluster want to do [collaboratively] and how they can achieve it’*. This particular cluster confirmed that there is now an effort to deliver joint staff training, and opportunities such as proposed visitors into schools, are shared more with other cluster schools now.

Supernumerary teachers

Key findings

- The Supernumerary teachers benefitted from the development of their skills, competence and confidence.
- A range of professional development opportunities were delivered to supernumerary teachers.
- Supernumerary teachers benefitted from the consistent mentor support received for their NQT induction.
- Many supernumerary teachers completed their NQT induction.
- Occasionally, a lack of consistent, regular teaching in classes to allow for the preparation/evaluation element required to achieve the NQT induction was a barrier.
- Several teachers gained permanent employment.
- The pay and conditions associated with the role were considered better than for regular supply work.
- Several supernumerary teachers' contracts were extended.
- Development of positive relationships with the wider school community has been an additional outcome.

Benefits experienced by supernumerary teachers

- 5.26 Supernumerary teachers have benefitted from the development of their skills, competence and confidence whilst undertaking their role in the Project, particularly through the experience of teaching different age groups, in a range of schools with varying pedagogical approaches. One cluster lead commented *'the supernumerary teacher's confidence has grown, although she was always confident about planning lessons, this has definitely improved. She has taught across all years and covered for sickness, PPA and moderation. She has built a strong skill base, due to the experience in the different schools and she is able to address any challenges regarding ALN/ behaviour with a lot less support now'*.

5.27 A range of professional development opportunities have been delivered to supernumerary teachers during the Project. CPD has been provided within the lead school and also in schools across the cluster. The frequency of training varied and has included: specific NQT training; weekly PPA sessions at the lead school; weekly twilight INSET sessions; whole school staff training days (where supernumerary teachers have felt included as part of the staff team); opportunities to observe other members of staff; and individual training courses booked to support NQT induction. The range of training provided has addressed both individual teacher requirements as well as school development targets such as pedagogy / teaching approaches / implementation of the new curriculum. Supernumerary teachers considered that the professional development opportunities were an important aspect and benefit of the role, particularly having a consistent school mentor. Headteachers also underlined the importance of having a designated mentor working across the cluster able to organise and coordinate CPD activities and support for NQT supernumerary teachers. The evaluation found that it was perceived by cluster leads and supernumerary teachers that the regular and structured CPD had a positive impact on the quality of teaching and professionalism of supernumerary teachers. In a small minority of cases, supernumerary teachers felt that the support available from mentors was less consistent and attributable to poor communication between schools across the cluster.

Positive professional development experience

One supernumerary teacher described the varied professional development opportunities they had received. This included training during regular PPA periods on differentiation in teaching methods, supporting EAL learners and well-being. This differed greatly from their experience of working as a supply teacher as they now feel well supported and ‘there is someone to ask’.

‘There’s a whole group of people you are going through your NQT stuff together and that wasn’t the case before – you were on your own. In addition to the team of supernumerary teachers there are also all the other NQTs at the school.’

(Supernumerary teacher)

‘It would be good for every teacher coming out of college to do this or have a similar experience (to that of supernumerary teachers through this Project) – I think it almost provides an apprenticeship experience for new teachers and gives teachers an insight into four, five, six different schools. It gives a rich experience and dovetails well with what people are trying to achieve through the curriculum and the emphasis on school-to-school working.’ (Cluster lead)

- 5.28 Supernumerary teachers have benefitted from experiencing a range of approaches to CPD across clusters. This has enabled them to draw on and apply different strategies and methods across the schools they’re working in. Case studies 1 and 4 illustrate the sharing of practice between cluster schools. As one supernumerary teacher commented; *‘I have been given a range of opportunities throughout this role and across the three schools within the cluster. I have a greater depth of understanding of ways of implementing the four purposes of the curriculum for learners through undertaking a wide range of cross-curricular lessons based on real-life authentic contexts’.*

5.29 Thirty-eight supernumerary teachers²⁷ completed their NQT induction while employed in schools as part of the Project. Supernumerary teachers explained they often received additional support from the school to provide them with opportunities to address the necessary elements to complete the induction. For example, enabling the teacher to undertake several lessons within the same class to plan a sequence of lessons. NQTs have also benefitted from experiencing strategies and policies that are common across the cluster with opportunities in some instances for supernumerary teachers to share planning, preparation and assessment time with other members of staff/supernumerary teachers. Teachers also highlighted the challenge of access to CPD and NQT support when working as a daily supply teacher and the difficulty in addressing required elements of the practising teacher standards (such as planning a sequence of lessons or discussing pupil progress with parents) in contrast with the support received in their supernumerary role.

Facilitators and barriers experienced by supernumerary teachers during the Project

5.30 Supernumerary teachers benefitted from the consistent mentor support they received for their NQT induction, and the facilitated opportunities to complete the required lesson planning/preparation/evaluation. Cluster leads attributed improvement in the quality of teaching from supernumerary teachers during the Project to the consistent support and monitoring of progress they received from school and external mentors. Cluster schools noted the higher standard of experience and quality of teaching provided by the NQTs improved during the course of the Project supported by the consistent monitoring of progress by school and external mentors. One supernumerary teacher noted, that in addition to CPD there is the '*support from the mentor to complete NQT information required by the EWC*'. The teacher was very positive about the whole experience and struggled '*to see a downside*' other than aspiring to have their own class to teach.

²⁷ Note that the pilot Project was for teachers in the first three years of their career, as a result some had already completed their NQT induction year prior to being employed as a supernumerary teacher. Only one teacher failed to complete the induction year, due to a poor attendance record and the resulting lack of observation opportunities.

- 5.31 Adequate NQT and PPA time was provided in most instances but on occasion it was difficult for clusters to ensure an appropriate workload for NQTs to meet the induction standards. A lack of consistent, regular teaching in classes to allow for the preparation/evaluation element required to complete their NQT induction was also a barrier on occasion. Some supernumerary teachers had reported this as a barrier to completing their NQT induction year while on supply, resulting in NQTs taking longer to complete this due to the lack of opportunities to plan, prepare and evaluate when working for supply agencies on daily supply. Also, a minority of teachers reported that their time and skills could have been used more effectively e.g. if they had a particular subject specialism. It was also noted that some schools found it a challenge to provide additional NQT support for the supernumerary teacher (such as NQT time and CPD) which was considered an additional demand on schools not ordinarily required when employing a supply teacher on a day to day basis: *'Even though NQTs are supported in schools by a mentor it is really hard to give the NQT the amount of time that they need.'* (Cluster lead)
- 5.32 NQT requirements and induction support could be built into the model e.g. plan for blocks of teaching when allocating the supernumerary teacher's timetable class support /deliver a specific intervention/ work on a specific school priority. One cluster lead commented that *'It is important that there is some element of teaching responsibility on their timetable, so that they are able to fulfil planning, feedback to parents etc. requirements for their NQT year.'*

Mentor support

One supernumerary teacher commented on the important role their mentors had on their opportunities, activities and success;

'Personally, I have had excellent mentors throughout the process who have always been supportive and have allowed me to develop the areas we both felt needed to be developed such as developing my use of Welsh in all lessons. We researched ways to do this together and I developed Welsh mats with phrases, and I was able to observe other teachers. I was encouraged to go on the NQT courses run by the local authority and attended the ones I felt would develop my practice further. I have had two mentors throughout my NQT year, one who was a primary specialist and one who was a secondary specialist. This has given a breadth of knowledge across phases.' (Supernumerary teacher)

- 5.33 Twenty-seven teachers gained permanent employment while undertaking the supernumerary role and commented that they had increased confidence due to the experience of teaching a range of age groups in different schools alongside their CPD. Schools have consequently had to re-advertise the supernumerary role. However, one headteacher viewed this as a positive outcome and a measure of the Project's success as it demonstrated *'the calibre of the supernumerary's teaching to have moved on to a permanent position'*.
- 5.34 Supernumerary teachers were positive about the pay and conditions associated with the supernumerary role, and welcomed the recognition of their professional status, with the consistency and stability of the role regarded better than day to day supply teaching.
- 5.35 The supernumerary teachers have benefitted from the variety of experiences provided within each different delivery model. Part of their day-to-day roles has involved teaching in multiple schools in varying catchments across the cluster and a range of different classes/subjects within the school, as well as teaching a specific class regularly and experiencing the benefits of independent planning, progression, differentiation and assessment. Supernumerary teachers have also had experience of implementing school policies such as behaviour management strategies; working

and sharing their skills/practice with colleagues helping them develop versatility of approach while also demonstrating their attainment of professional teacher standards.

- 5.36 Many supernumerary teachers have taught across phases; Foundation Phase/Key Stage 2/Key Stage 3, and have had the opportunity to support transition between primary and secondary schools seeing progression between year groups and experiencing a different pedagogical approach to subjects. One supernumerary teacher commented *'working across the key stages is such a massive benefit, being able to teach across all the key stages and understand what happens in the infant, junior and secondary school. I think that is such a massive experience and I think every teacher should have the opportunity to know that'*.

The future for supernumerary teachers and additional outcomes for the Project

- 5.37 Some teachers wanted to continue working within their current/lead school or within the cluster and felt they were in a better position to apply for these jobs knowing the pedagogical approaches across the cluster as well as the experience and training gained to support their application. One supernumerary teacher commented that she intended to find a permanent role either in this cluster or another cluster and felt she would be in a good position to gain a permanent role as she was able to network with other schools and members of staff as a supernumerary teacher.
- 5.38 The supernumerary contract was extended for 14 teachers and they will continue in the role until 2020, reasons for this included clusters that decided to self-fund the Project for the third year and others where they have been provided with financial support from the local authority (Section 6 discusses the future sustainability of the Project in more detail). Other teachers noted that they would have welcomed the opportunity to be able to continue in the role. Nevertheless, some teachers explained they would like to move on to experience teaching their own class and felt they had developed the skills to do so as part of the supernumerary role, adding that their opinion of teaching was more positive since undertaking the role.

Employment

One cluster lead reported on the success of the Project with four supernumerary teachers completing their NQT induction process and the employment opportunities secured by the supernumerary teachers.

'The secondary school supernumerary has gained a one year fixed-term post at the school. Another supernumerary has gained a job in another school and another has gained a job in a [third sector] community engagement project, supported by their experience of working across the cluster. Only one supernumerary has yet to find a new role. They have benefitted from regular work within the classroom, experience of engaging with parents, participating in regular trips, accessing relevant CPD.' (Cluster lead)

- 5.39 Development of positive relationships has been an additional outcome of the Project with supernumerary teachers commenting that the regular work in schools enabled them to *'get to build a relationship with'* the school and feel part of the school team including teachers and pupils. Teachers had opportunities during PPA/NQT time to collaborate with other supernumerary teachers or NQTs and share continuity of approaches and good practice experienced across the cluster. *'Since the supernumerary teachers are permanently based in the cluster, they have been able to develop an understanding of key improvement areas within the [cluster], school-level objectives and policies, have been party to school-level reviews, have experienced an Estyn visit and have benefitted from appropriate CPD.'* (Cluster lead)
- 5.40 The consistency of the role enabled supernumerary teachers to feel part of a school community, provided recognition of professional status as a teacher and they felt they were a valued member of a wider team of staff, pupils, parents and the wider community. One cluster lead explained *'she is noticing how the respect of the children towards her has improved in the cluster schools as they know her, so she feels this has a positive impact on children with behavioural difficulties and for her personally. Also members of staff such as LSAs (Learning Support Assistants) have*

said how pleased they are when she has returned to the class – she feels accepted as part of the school team.'

Efficiencies and financial benefits

Key findings

- There is some evidence that the Project has supported efficiencies in supply management.
- Using supernumerary teachers placed fewer demands on colleagues' time.
- £2.7 million grant fund was available, with £1,296,294 grant claimed (Nov 2017 - March 2019).
- Teachers employed through the Project have covered just under **30 per cent of all teacher absence across participating clusters**: 22,242 was the total number days requiring cover in cluster schools, with 6,539 of these days covered by supernumerary teachers.
- There are inconsistencies and gaps in data schools provided.
- Alongside cost savings, the pilot Project has provided added value to cluster schools which is challenging to quantify; allowing them to release staff to work on school improvement priorities.

5.41 There is some evidence that the Project has supported efficiency in supply management. Clusters who normally use external supply agencies to provide some of their supply cover were able to reflect on the time and resource benefits to using regular supernumerary teachers. Cluster schools reported that using supernumerary teachers reduced the time that their regular staff spend on administrative tasks. For example, staff would normally need to commit time to introducing external supply teachers to the school environment (including basic steps such as giving directions) and explaining school policies (such as behaviour policies), whereas supernumerary teachers are familiar with these policies. Teachers would normally need to commit time to preparing work to leave for external supply teachers to use with their classes (occasionally leading to less meaningful activities being led by the supply teachers) whereas supernumerary teachers are familiar with lesson plans and/or can deliver their own lessons.

- 5.42 One approach to identifying the cost efficiency of the Project is to compare the total Welsh Government grant amount claimed by clusters to date, with estimates of the financial value of the number of supply days covered by supernumerary teachers. A total of £2.7m was available from the Welsh Government for this pilot Project; the actual total is likely to be lower than this by the end of the Project, partly due to the fact that the Project could only start in most clusters from the second term of the first year, due to the decision to not disrupt the normal job market. When the Project grant was calculated it was based on a projected spend which assumed all teachers recruited would have three years' teaching experience, which would result in them being higher on the teacher pay scale, but in effect many were recruited directly from their teacher training course and paid at a lower grade. In addition, some clusters faced challenges in recruiting the anticipated number of supernumerary teachers.
- 5.43 Table 5.1 provides an overview of the comparison of cost to deliver the supply cover from the start of the Project until the end of March 2019.

Table 5.1. Overview of the cost comparison to provide supply cover

Total grant available	£2,700,000
Amount claimed (Nov 2017-March 2019)	£1,296,294
Total number of absence days requiring cover	22,242
Days covered by supernumerary teachers	6,539
Estimated cost of using external supply agencies to cover the absences covered by Project supernumerary days	£902,382 – £1,078,935 ²⁸

This comparison suggests that the grant funding has been used fairly effectively for supply cover, but that there will also be other overheads, such as the requirement

²⁸ The lower figure is based on the average day rate clusters pay for supply agency teachers, based on information provided in Project claim forms - £138. The higher figure is based on a Welsh Government rate paid to release teachers for the Welsh Language Sabbatical Scheme, a national teacher training programme for Welsh language - £165.

for non-teaching time (PPA) associated with the employment of a supernumerary teacher. These figures will be updated for the follow-up evaluation report to be produced in 2020, using figures provided by clusters in claim form 6 (April – August 2019), which at the time of writing have not all been submitted to the Welsh Government.

- 5.44 However, these figures do not necessarily provide a full account of the way in which supernumerary teachers have been allocated during the Project. Firstly, there are some weaknesses and gaps in the data provided within cluster claim forms; for example, some clusters have interpreted the requirements of particular questions a little differently, leading to some inconsistency in data. Secondly, not all cluster schools would have been paying for external supply agency teachers to meet their cover needs, instead using internal supply options instead (such as HLTAs). Thirdly, the Project has provided added value to cluster schools by allowing them to release staff to work on school improvement priorities; releasing these staff so regularly would have otherwise been difficult or impossible, without the funding to cover staff. However, this also means that there are limitations to any conclusions relating directly to the overall value of supply cover provided by the supernumerary teachers compared to Welsh Government and cluster financial input, and previous supply systems. This means that the Project has allowed cluster schools to benefit from additional supply cover which they would not necessarily have accessed without the project; their use of supernumerary teachers does not therefore necessarily reflect usual supply requirements. The supernumerary teachers have, in other words, provided additional capacity for schools to undertake desired activities. One cluster lead summarised this added value within their Project claim form:

'In essence, because [the supernumerary teacher] has worked for 71 days across the two schools covering absent staff, the total...equates to 71 days multiplied by £150 daily rate as both schools use a recruitment agency which charges this daily rate. However, neither school has had any sickness absence and it is questionable whether the activities that [the supernumerary teacher] has covered staff to perform, though incredibly valuable, would have been covered in this way without the project due to tight budgets. Historically schools have found other ways to cover staff or alternatively, there has been an expectation that staff

engage with these activities at the end of the teaching day. This will detract from the quality of the work and this has been noted in previous reports.' (Cluster claim form)

5.45 As a closing point, it is important to note that the Project has delivered efficiencies and improvements to teaching and learning that cannot easily be quantified but which, nonetheless, are important to bear in mind. These include investments in the quality of the supply teaching workforce, recognised by cluster leads and other cluster school headteachers as a key outcome of the Project. The Project has resulted in enhanced capacity to deliver provision to a number of target groups, including learners with ALN providing evidence that targeted approaches in the future may result in similar outcomes. As noted in an earlier section of this report, Project activity has enhanced ALN provision in Welsh-medium schools in one local authority area, resulting in learners being retained in mainstream education as a result, according to cluster representatives. There are substantial financial savings through such outcomes. The Project's impact on teacher workload and morale has also been noted and although this is also impossible to quantify it demonstrates the Project's wider impact.

6. Sustainability

Key findings

- The management and administration of school clusters would have been sustainable in the long-term should funding have continued.
- The administration of the Project was not overly burdensome or time-consuming.
- Around a third of clusters are either continuing or considering continuing some elements of their project into the third year.
- Cluster lead schools reported significant disappointment with their inability to continue with the Project.
- Cluster lead schools not continuing their projects are likely to return to their previous supply models in the short term.
- In the long-term, some willingness to re-consider running a similar supply project was expressed.

6.1 Cluster lead schools reported that the management and administration of their project would have been sustainable in the long-term. Clusters had not found the administration of the project overly burdensome or time-consuming once they had established appropriate processes. As discussed in section 4, clusters adopted a variety of different models for managing and deploying supernumerary teachers and, on the whole, cluster lead schools reported that the final administrative model adopted suited their needs well.

6.2 Around a third of clusters are either continuing or considering continuing some elements of their project into the third year, following the end of Welsh Government funding.

- One cluster reported that, since their project was a little late starting and the local authority is also financially supporting the project, they are continuing the project for a whole two years, running into 2020. See Case study 1 for a description of this project.

- One cluster lead school reported that they will aim to use supernumerary teachers instead of traditional internal or external supply cover but only within the school's primary phase. This was still to be confirmed.
- One cluster is continuing into the third year as the cluster considered the project to be a three-year Project; all schools therefore recognised that they were required to continue for another year following the end of Welsh Government funding.
- Another cluster is funding the project into its third year. The cluster lead school is expanding and they hope the supernumerary teacher will remain at the school once the project finishes. The same pattern of allocation is expected for the third year.
- One local authority has adjusted school budgets to continue the employment of a seconded teacher (released through the Project) into the third year.

Example of a cluster's decision to continue

– One cluster intend to pool a group of around four or five staff from across the schools (including the supernumerary who secured a post at the secondary school and HLTAs). The supply cluster model will be replicated. The original plan was to continue the project with exactly the same model (employ more NQTs, share them across the schools, meeting the costs between the schools), but decreasing budgets has prevented this.

The schools will continue to use agency supply, but the project has made the schools realise that there is potential for them to negotiate a group of staff (four/five) from the agencies, who would know the cluster well.

6.3 The remaining clusters are not planning on continuing the project into the third year. Clusters did hold discussions on the possibility of continuing and cluster lead schools reported a clear desire amongst almost all schools to continue if possible. Considering the perceived benefits of the project (for example on teaching and learning) as discussed in section 5, cluster lead schools reported significant disappointment with their inability to continue their project.

6.4 There were a few key barriers to sustainability identified by cluster schools:

- The higher costs associated with employing permanent supernumerary teachers in a salaried position compared to the ad hoc costs of recruiting supply teachers through external supply agencies. Though cluster schools maintained that there were clear benefits to teaching and learning from employing supernumerary teachers, the difference in cost was significant enough to dissuade clusters from being able to continue with their project.
- The higher costs associated with employing permanent supernumerary teachers compared to the limited costs of using internal supply cover (such as HLTAs, existing cover supervisors and supply insurance schemes). Smaller primary schools in particular tended to report limited or no budget for external supply provision, which means limited or no budget to continue with this project.
- Inability to realise cost savings in a climate of financial deficit. While cluster lead schools did recognise that the Project has led to cost savings for individual clusters by providing external funding for supply cover, schools are often facing a financial deficit; cost savings are not therefore realised in practice and cannot be used to fund the Project going forward.
- The potential for wasted resources associated with employing permanent supernumerary teachers compared to accessing other internal or external supply cover as and when needed. Cluster schools reported that it would be a financial risk to employ a full-time member of staff when, in practice, supply needs might be particularly low that academic year.
- In addition, as discussed earlier, in many cases clusters have been able to use the supernumerary teacher cover to release staff which they would not ordinarily have been able to release. Following the end of the Welsh Government funding, most of these clusters will need to revert back to using supply cover less frequently.

Example of a cluster's decision not to continue

Despite the very positive outcomes arising from the Project, the cluster has no plans to continue to employ a supernumerary teacher following the end of Welsh Government funding. The cluster sees this as a shame, but many of the schools involved are facing financial deficits. The cluster lead school already employs HLTAs who are competent to provide supply cover and insurance is available. As such, there is no budget for external supply agencies which could be allocated to recruiting supernumerary teachers. Cluster schools are uncertain how they will be able to maintain the same level of progress made to date on school improvement priorities as a result of non-contact time allocated to staff.

'We're devastated the project can't continue...we're devastated because we feel we're losing a member of staff, the ability to keep standards as high and the ability to monitor as regularly as we have done.' (Cluster lead)

- 6.5 Cluster lead schools who are not continuing their projects into the third year reported that they are likely to return to their previous supply models in the short term. This includes reverting to using internal supply cover (such as HLTAs and cover supervisors who are already employed and able to provide cover) and external supply (such as reverting to the usual supply agencies). Nevertheless, the Project provided the participating schools with an opportunity to explore alternative solutions to cover their teacher absence and potentially deploy their budgets in a different way.
- 6.6 In the long-term, clusters expressed some willingness to re-consider running a similar supply project within their cluster but only under certain circumstances. Examples of circumstances under which clusters may be able to reconsider running another project include: a reduction in the financial deficit currently facing schools; changes to teacher pay and conditions to take into account the new supernumerary role; opportunities to establish paid-for supply cluster models similar to existing local authority-level supply pools.

7. Conclusions and issues for future consideration

Conclusions

7.1 The evaluation of the School Based Supply Cluster Model Project has examined the benefits and challenges associated with the design, implementation and outcomes for the Project. This section outlines the main conclusions regarding the Project's level of success to;

- implement alternative and innovative arrangements that address school absence cover (planned and unplanned absence);
- support NQT teachers in short term supply roles in terms of professional development and retention;
- aid efficiencies, evidence added value and potential cost savings against the school;
- promote best practice in collaboration and joint working across school clusters.

The implementation of alternative and innovative arrangements to address school absence cover

7.2 The pilot Project has been successful in designing and implementing a range of alternative and innovative arrangements to address teacher absence cover. The number of schools and supernumerary teachers in each cluster varied from 1-10; with varying structures created and different types of schools taking on the role of the cluster lead.

7.3 Different approaches to managing and timetabling the supernumerary teachers were employed; ranging from specific blocks of time in each school (e.g. a half term or whole term) to an entirely flexible timetable according to the demand from schools for cover. The strengths and challenges reported for each of the approaches focused on the opportunities to build working relationships with staff and learners, the ability to deliver consistent procedures in schools, the ability to release staff to fulfil school priorities, opportunities for supernumerary teachers to complete NQT requirements and other training, and the administrative burden required to allocate and monitor the Project. The embedded professional learning opportunities for the supernumerary teachers aligns with the new National

Procurement Service Framework requirements for induction and professional learning.

- 7.4 As a result of the different approaches to timetabling and using the additional capacity, supernumerary teachers were deployed to address a range of tasks; including emergency supply cover, regular PPA cover; which could include the delivery of consistent cluster-wide projects; set regular class/subject lessons and transition project work. Online calendars were used to book and monitor the deployment of supernumerary teachers. This access to a shared online calendar was also used to support joint-planning and the delivery of other cluster activities. The autonomy and flexibility the Project allowed meant clusters were able to assess the effectiveness of the design and delivery model they used, and a small number adapted their model for the second year following feedback from cluster school headteachers and their supernumerary teachers.

The support for NQT teachers in short term supply roles in terms of professional development and retention

- 7.5 The pilot Project has supported a range of professional development opportunities for supernumerary teachers, providing training to address individual teacher requirements and school development targets such as pedagogy / teaching approaches / implementation of the new curriculum. Supernumerary teachers also benefitted from the development of their skills, competence and confidence, particularly through the experience of teaching across different phases in a range of schools. They were also positive about the pay and conditions associated with the role, and welcomed the recognition of their professional status, with the consistency and stability of the role regarded better than day to day supply teaching.
- 7.6 The pilot Project has supported many supernumerary teachers to successfully complete their NQT induction and they often received additional support to provide them with opportunities to address the required elements needed. Some supernumerary teachers highlighted the challenge of access to CPD and NQT support they had experienced when working as a daily supply teacher previously, and the difficulty in addressing the required elements of the practising teacher standards in contrast with the support they received in their supernumerary role.

The consistent mentor support supernumerary teachers received also helped their progress. However, for some supernumerary teachers there was a lack of regular teaching in classes to allow for the preparation/ evaluation element required to complete the NQT induction and this was a barrier on occasion.

- 7.7 The pilot Project has supported several teachers to secure permanent employment while undertaking the supernumerary role, and some wanted to continue working in their current role or within one of their cluster schools. They believed that they are now in a better position to apply for these jobs knowing the pedagogical approaches across the cluster as well as the experience and training gained. For other supernumerary teachers, they would continue in the role until 2020, and other teachers noted that they would have welcomed the opportunity to be able to continue in the role, with others reporting that the role had prepared them well to move onto taking on their own teaching class. This demonstrates the potential for similar future projects to improve the retention of teaching staff. Aligned with this is the additional outcome reported, that the supernumerary teachers had built positive relationships within the school and wider community.

Efficiencies, evidence of added value and potential cost savings

- 7.8 There is some evidence that the pilot Project has supported efficiency in supply management. Clusters who normally use external supply agencies to provide some of their supply cover were able to reflect on the time and resource benefits of using regular supernumerary teachers. Teachers would normally need to commit time to preparing work to leave for external supply teachers to use with their classes whereas supernumerary teachers were familiar with lesson plans and/or could deliver their own lessons. Cluster schools reported that using supernumerary teachers reduced the time that their regular staff spend on administrative tasks.
- 7.9 Although £2.7 million was available for this Project; the actual total is likely to be lower than this by the end of the Project, partly due to the fact that the Project could only start in most clusters from the second term of the first year. The amount claimed (Nov 2017-March 2019) by clusters was £1,296,294; the total number of absence days requiring cover for this period was 22,242, with 6,539 of these covered by supernumerary teachers. The estimated cost of covering these

supernumerary days using external supply agencies is between £902,382 – £1,078,935. This suggests that the grant funding has been used fairly effectively, but that there will also be other overheads associated with the employment of a supernumerary teacher, such as the time required for the supernumerary teachers to complete CPD and induction training requirements.

- 7.10 However, these figures do not necessarily provide an accurate portrayal of the way in which supernumerary teachers have been allocated. Firstly, there were some weaknesses and gaps in the data provided within cluster claim forms with some inconsistencies in data due to differing interpretations of the requirements by clusters. Secondly, not all cluster schools would have paid for external supply agency teachers to meet their cover needs, but instead would have used internal supply options such as HLTAs. Thirdly, the Project has provided added value to cluster schools by allowing them to release staff to work on school improvement priorities; releasing these staff so regularly would have otherwise been difficult or impossible, without the funding for cover.
- 7.11 Consequently, this means that there are limitations to any conclusions relating directly to the overall value of supply cover provided by the supernumerary teachers compared to Welsh Government and cluster financial input, and previous supply systems. The Project has allowed cluster schools to benefit from additional supply cover which they would not necessarily have accessed without the Project; their use of supernumerary teachers does not therefore necessarily reflect usual supply requirements. The supernumerary teachers have, in other words, provided additional capacity for schools to undertake desired activities.
- 7.12 Potential exists for a similar project in future, as the management and administration of clusters was reported to be sustainable in the longer-term. Clusters had not found the administration of the project overly burdensome or time-consuming once they had established appropriate processes. Around a third of clusters are either continuing or considering continuing elements of their project into the third year. The remaining clusters held discussions on the possibility of continuing and cluster lead schools reported a clear desire amongst almost all schools to continue if possible. Cluster lead schools reported significant disappointment with their inability to

continue their project. A few key barriers to sustainability identified by cluster schools included:

- The higher costs associated with employing permanent supernumerary teachers in a salaried position compared to the ad hoc costs of recruiting supply teachers through external supply agencies or using internal supply cover such as HLTAs;
- The inability to realise cost savings in a climate of financial deficit;
- The level of risk associated with employing permanent supernumerary teachers compared to accessing other internal or external supply cover as and when needed.

7.13 In the long-term, clusters expressed some willingness to re-consider running a similar supply project within their cluster but only under certain circumstances. Such circumstances include: a reduction in the financial deficit currently facing schools; changes to teacher pay and conditions to reflect the new supernumerary teacher role; and opportunities to establish a paid-for supply cluster models similar to existing local authority-level supply pools.

The promotion of best practice in collaboration and joint working across school clusters

7.14 Cluster collaboration has been strengthened and promoted across clusters during the Project. The management and delivery of the Project was regularly discussed by schools and communication was effective between the schools involved.

Effective management approaches were shared and built upon during the Project, with some clusters using an online calendar to oversee the allocation of the supernumerary teachers.

7.15 The promotion of best practice was evident as supernumerary teachers shared teaching and learning approaches between cluster schools. The sharing of practices such as approaches to the new curriculum, behaviour management strategies, approaches to support learners or specific curriculum delivery ideas resulted during the Project.

7.16 Collaborative cluster school projects were also successfully completed during the pilot Project with supernumerary teachers delivering activities across cluster

schools, or providing cover for lessons for other teachers to complete cross-cluster activities, attend meetings or training in order to progress a cluster project.

Teachers released by supernumerary teachers have had the time to lead on and take ownership of school-level developments. This approach links closely to the intentions for the Welsh Government's priority to manage workforce well-being and workload for the sector; as teachers were facilitated to undertake such tasks during their normal working day, due to the cover provided by the Project, as opposed to completing such tasks in their own time.

- 7.17 Joint working to support effective transition processes was also positive for clusters, with supernumerary teachers working across phases being able to develop longer term relationships with year 6 learners and be the 'familiar face', providing consistency in approach to behaviour and learning to support effective transition to the secondary phase.

Future considerations

- 7.18 Although in most cases clusters have not committed to the joint funding of supernumerary posts, the evaluation has found a range of positive impacts to emerge from the Project, as has been highlighted in this report.
- 7.19 Drawing on the conclusions of the evaluation, it is unlikely that any other school clusters would initiate joint approaches to addressing the issue of supply cover without there being grant funding in place to incentivise cluster working in this area and to mitigate the risks involved.
- 7.20 One important question is whether there is a case to consider delivering a similar project in future, drawing on the learning from the pilot clusters. Firstly it could be argued that the Project has not been fully 'tested' for several reasons:
- In all cases, clusters operated the Project for less than two years and it took some time for many to settle on an agreed delivery model;
 - The fact that clusters did not benefit fully from the 100 per cent grant funding support during year 1 meant that the financial savings were not fully realised or appreciated by participating schools;

- Despite not being sustained in its current form, the Project will continue to deliver legacy outcomes to clusters and schools (by having moved supply teachers into permanent teaching posts; through the increased quality of teaching; through the processes in place to share knowledge between schools; transition activities trialled through the Project and sustained).

7.21 The Project's impacts will therefore continue to ripple outwards and at this stage it is not possible to capture these fully. The follow-up evaluation work to be completed in 2020 will seek to identify any such sustained impacts beyond the end of the Welsh Government funding period.

7.22 The evaluation team considers that there is sufficient evidence of successful outcomes from the Project for the Welsh Government to consider supporting a second phase of the School Based Supply Cluster Project. There are clear learning points to consider in planning and designing a second phase. These are summarised below:

- i. Ensure sufficient lead-in time to allow for widespread advertising of posts and recruitment of suitable candidates to start at the time most appropriate for each school. There is potential to target NQTs, from a central register; working with EWC and universities.
- ii. Aim to ensure that clusters are operational from the beginning of an academic year, having had opportunity in advance to agree on their model of delivery.
- iii. Consider alternative options for the provision of grant funding in a tapered way over a three-year period, allowing clusters to embed the process effectively, examples are presented in Table 7.1.

Table 7.1. Examples of potential tapered intervention support

	Intervention rate: support for costs of project		
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Current model	100 per cent	75 per cent	0 per cent
Alternative A	100 per cent	50 per cent	25 per cent
Alternative B	80 per cent	60 per cent	40 per cent

- iv. Continue to take a flexible approach, encouraging clusters to devise and implement models of working that work best for them (in terms of numbers of schools, numbers of supernumerary teachers and how the supernumerary teachers are deployed). Yet the Welsh Government could continue to ensure that support is clear for monitoring and reporting requirements, with templates and structure provided as appropriate.
- v. Invite applications from clusters to participate in the Project, requiring clusters to specify how the Project would be used to support wider school improvement priorities; how CPD will be delivered to NQTs; how the Project links to wider activities to support the new curriculum.
- vi. Conditions should be attached to the funding to ensure that the Project is not used for long-term supply cover in a single school, ensuring that supernumerary teachers are given experience of teaching in a range of schools and Key Stages, where possible.
- vii. Clusters should commit to making use of supernumerary teachers' specialist skills (with subject specialism or expertise in delivering support to specific groups of learners such as ALN support used effectively).
- viii. It is important that clusters and supernumerary teachers are clear regarding the line management system and accountability, and who has responsibility

for organising NQT support and training. Completion of the NQT induction requires teachers to plan a sequence of lessons and future similar projects could ensure that opportunities for this are established with set classes on the timetable for some of the time.

- ix. If a similar initiative is delivered in future and continues to target NQTs, there is potential to establish and facilitate a network to provide those in the role with peer support.
- x. For similar future projects, clusters could be provided with examples and guidance regarding advertising for posts, and the allocation of the supernumerary teacher/s within their cluster e.g. the different possible timetabling approaches and ensure there is a balance between the needs of the cluster and the expectation for professional development for the supernumerary teacher. The four case studies included in this report could be considered by schools as they explore the possibilities for alternative models and their potential benefits.

Annex A: Research tools

Topic guide for stakeholder interviews (Autumn 2018)

Arad Research has been commissioned by Welsh Government to evaluate the School Based Supply Cluster Model Project. As part of the evaluation, we are interviewing stakeholders who have engaged with the Project in some way.

During the interview, we will ask you for your views on: The policy and educational context for the Project; its aims, design and delivery; and views on the impact on learners, supply teachers and schools to date.

The information gathered through the evaluation will be used to inform the future design and delivery of the Project.

Participation in the research is voluntary. All information collected from stakeholders across Wales will be reported anonymously. The evidence gathered during the project will be included in a report, and possibly in other publications, by the Welsh Government.

If you wish to view the privacy notice, a copy has been circulated to you via e-mail and is available to you from the researcher.

Note to researcher: Ask the stakeholder to verbally consent to participate in the research and make a note of their consent.

Note to researcher: The stakeholders' knowledge of and engagement with the Project will vary, so the researcher is to use those questions below which are suitable.

Background

1. Please provide an overview of your own responsibilities in [name of organisation].
2. Please provide an overview of your knowledge / experience relating to:
 - Education workforce and/or issues impacting on and the management of supply teachers.
 - The school based supply cluster model pilot project.

Policy context and challenges

3. What are the key national policy considerations or developments relevant to the Project? And why are these considerations or developments relevant to the Project?
 - Prompts: Education strategies, curriculum reform, Professional Standards, pay and conditions.
4. What are the key developments or challenges currently facing the education workforce with regard to a) teacher absence and sufficiency and quality of supply, and b) opportunities for NQTs and newly qualified teachers?
5. Are you aware of any other possible alternative interventions to address these challenges? What are these interventions?
 - Prompts: Best practice elsewhere, private sector models, centralised supply options.

Project design and objectives

6. What do you think are the key aims and objectives of the Project?
 - Prompts: Cross-cluster working, support for supply teachers and absence management, professional development, learner outcomes, cost efficiency.
7. Is the Project an appropriate response to the recommendations of the Supply Cluster taskforce report?
 - Prompt: Why or why not?
8. What is your view on the rationale for how the Project was designed?
 - Prompts: Support for supply teachers, Focus on NQTs / recently-qualified teachers, scope of the pilot, types of individual projects funded, the trial nature of the Project, variation across cluster model design and processes.
9. To what extent does the Project support school-level or local priorities or strategies?

Project delivery to date

10. How effective has the process of recruiting supernumerary teachers been across the cluster projects?
 - OR: Some projects have found it challenging to recruit supernumerary teachers. Can you provide any insight on why this may be the case?
 - Prompt: impact on supply teachers unable to apply.
11. How effective has the collaboration between schools (lead schools and other schools) within a cluster been as part of the Project?
 - Prompts: impact on existing supply teachers employed /working relationships within the pool of supply teachers.
12. What has worked well and what have been the challenges for cluster schools delivering the projects?
 - Prompt: Organising and managing CPD (impact on supply teachers not part of the project).
13. What benefits or added value has been achieved to date – for supply teachers, the school, the cluster, learners?

Learning points

14. Do you have any recommendations regarding future Welsh Government policy or support for supply teachers and absence management?
 - Prompt: Policy or support focused on a cluster-based approach or alternative approach.

Topic guide for Cluster lead interviews (Autumn 2018)

Arad Research has been commissioned by Welsh Government to evaluate the School Based Supply Cluster Model Project. We are interviewing cluster leads to gather your views on the process of establishing your cluster, recruitment, implementation and early impact of the model's delivery. We are interested in your expectations for the project, and learning points to date regarding design and delivery – this will inform the project's future delivery.

We have viewed your cluster's monitoring data /claim forms and may refer to this during the interview.

Participation in the research is voluntary. All information collected from cluster leads across Wales will be reported anonymously. The evidence gathered during the project will be included in a report, and possibly in other publications, by the Welsh Government.

If you wish to view the privacy notice, a copy has been circulated to you via e-mail and is available to you from the researcher.

Note to researcher: Ask the cluster lead to verbally consent to participate in the research and make a note of their consent and gain consent to contact other senior school managers (if required) and supernumerary teachers. Also gain consent to re-contact next year to follow up on progress.

Background

1. Please provide an overview of how you became involved in the School based supply model, and as the cluster lead.
 - a. Why did you decide to become involved? What challenges was the school facing relating to supply management?
 - b. Is your role as cluster lead clear? Explanation of tasks/role.
2. What was the approach to the supply delivery across the cluster before the project started?
 - a. Please provide an overview of the type of supply cover used in the school e.g. the use of HLTAs and supply agencies.
 - b. What were the challenges other schools in the cluster faced regarding supply?
 - c. Did the schools in the cluster collaborate (for supply cover and/or on other issues) before this project? please explain.

Project design

3. How is the school based model designed in your cluster?
 - a. *Prompts:* decision on which school would be cluster lead, role of cluster lead, focus for cluster (ALN/STEM/Welsh Medium).
 - b. How does the model support schools' priorities?
 - c. Did you receive guidance/support from consortia/LA?
4. How effective was communication and collaboration between the cluster schools during the planning stage?
 - *Prompts:* challenges/agreeing focus for cluster/ determining the cluster lead.
5. How easy are the claim forms to complete?

- *Prompts:* are they collecting the right data? How much time do they take (who completes them (name/role)? Is this less/more/same as the time needed to address supply cover before the model?

Project delivery to date

- How did you recruit your supernumerary teachers?
 - Prompts:* advertising, existing supply teachers, support from LA/consortia
 - How effective was your recruitment process? Any challenges?
 - If possible provide an overview of timing /number of applications/ calibre of applicants.
- How is the deployment of the supernumerary teachers managed within your cluster?
 - Prompts:* how is their time allocated across the cluster schools?
 - How do you, as a lead school, administer the deployment?
 - How effective has this deployment process been in terms of managing supply requirements?
- How effective has the collaboration between the cluster schools been since the employment of the supernumerary teachers?
 - Prompts:* What has worked well? Any challenges?
 - Are all cluster schools involved in elements of managing the supernumerary teachers? Explore role of lead school compared to other cluster schools.
 - Has the cluster needed any additional support from consortia/LA to implement the project?
- Please can you explain the process to determine the professional development requirements to be delivered to the supernumerary teachers?
 - Prompts:* Existing arrangements/ anything new?
 - Has there been any additional support from consortia/LA to plan/deliver the professional development?
 - Provide an overview of the professional development to be delivered.
- Are there any barriers/challenges hindering the model's progress?
 - Prompts:* continued high absence rates across the cluster, quality of supernumerary teachers.
 - How have these or could these be overcome?

Project-level outcomes

- What are the key benefits or added value your cluster was hoping to achieve through this project?
 - Prompts:* for supply teachers? Learners? Other teaching staff? For the school as a whole?
 - Cost savings? Comparison of use of other source of supply before and now. How have any savings or efficiencies benefitted the school e.g. additional resources for other school priorities?
- [May be less relevant to schools with newly recruited teachers]* What wider benefits or added value has been achieved to date across the cluster and for your own school?
 - Prompts:* for supply teachers? Learners? Other teaching staff?

b. Cost savings? Comparison of use of other source of supply before and now.

13. Do you think the model can be self-sustaining in the long term?

a. *Prompts:* What is the cluster doing to ensure this? How can it be achieved?

Learning points

14. Do you have any recommendations regarding the future design and delivery of the Project or any views on an alternative supply delivery model?

- *Prompts:* Changes to aims or focus of Project/ level of funding needed to prime the model?

15. What have been the most important learning points to date regarding the delivery of the Project?

- *Prompts:* Timely recruitment/calibre of teachers/ co-operation across the cluster/ support from LA / clear lead cluster role?

Annex C: Topic guide for Supernumerary teacher interviews (Spring 2019)

Arad Research has been commissioned by Welsh Government to evaluate the School Based Supply Cluster Model Project. We are interviewing the recruited supernumerary teachers to gather your views on the process of being recruited and employed across a cluster. We are interested in your expectations for the project, and learning points to date regarding views on the professional development planned/received and the overall implementation/management of the project – this will inform the project's future delivery.

Participation in the research is voluntary. All information collected from teachers across Wales will be reported anonymously. The evidence gathered during the project will be included in a report, and possibly in other publications, by the Welsh Government.

If you wish to view the privacy notice, a copy has been circulated to you via e-mail and is available to you from the researcher.

Note to researcher: Ask the supernumerary to verbally consent to participate in the research and make a note of their consent and gain consent to re-contact next year as a follow up and record contact details.

Background

1. Please provide an overview of how you became recruited to the School based supply model.
 - Do you think the recruitment/selection process was adequate? [*Note to researcher: Some may have experience of applying for teaching posts and may be able to compare*]
 - Please provide a brief overview of teaching/supply experience before (engaged with schools in the cluster previously? Is this your NQT induction year? previous CPD/experiences with supply agencies)
2. What do you understand the aims of the Project to be?
 - Were the aims of the Project explained to you during the application process (in the job advert)?
3. Were there any elements of this role that appealed to you in particular? If so, what were these?
 - Motivation for applying?
 - How important was the professional development element of the project (opportunity to complete NQT induction year) to you during the recruitment stage?
 - How important was the consistency of employment?

Project design

4. What is your role across the cluster and in each school?
 - *Prompts:* e.g. sickness cover only/ planned CPD cover / focus of cover-e.g. ALN/STEM/Welsh Medium /other – please specify.
 - Set allocation of days for each school stays the same/changes? Collect detail of working patterns/allocation to different schools and views on the model used. (years/subjects/ type of cover/length of advance notice received for allocation)

- How are you managed? One overall line manager/ mentor in the lead school and/or individual school managers – views on this and how your allocation is communicated (weekly/daily/ online calendar)?
5. What are you expected to do if you are not needed to cover a lesson?
- *Prompts:* e.g. class support /deliver a specific intervention / work on a specific school priority.
 - Was this element clear from the start or has it changed over time?

Project delivery to date

6. How effective is communication and collaboration between the cluster schools?
- *Prompts:* challenges/agreeing priorities/allocation. Any impact on your working day/week? (clarity of role/job/ time to move between schools/phases)
 - What works well?
7. Is your cluster using your time and skills as effectively as it could?
- *Prompts:* allocated cover matching your strengths, tasks when cover not required.
8. **[NQT induction year only]** Please explain how you managed to complete the required lesson planning/preparation /evaluation to achieve NQT status
- *Prompts:* e.g. school allocated specific PPA cover that you planned/ long term sickness cover
 - Have you always received NQT and PPA time (equivalent to 1 day week) as required during the NQT induction year?
9. Do you input any monitoring data for the project, e.g. hours at each school and role? How easy is this for you to do?
- *Prompts:* How much time does this take?
10. Please can you explain the professional development planned /already received?
- *Prompts:* specific pedagogy /teaching approaches, leadership /management. Role of your mentor, support from fellow supernumerary teachers, LA, consortia.
 - [NQT induction year] How were your (external and internal) mentors allocated?
 - Have you been able to attend all the training you wanted to?
 - [If relevant] how does this professional development offer differ from professional development provided in previous supply roles?
11. What are your views on the quality of training (and for NQT induction year particularly) support received from mentors?
- How effective has the CPD received been in meeting your needs and expectations? Please explain/ suggested improvements.
 - How effective has the support you receive from your mentor/s been? Please explain.

12. Have you encountered any barriers/challenges to working in this role?

- *Prompts:* continued high absence rates across the cluster, high demand placed on you across the schools, expectations to undertake extensive planning /marking work, classroom management /behavioural issues.
- [If relevant] Are these barriers/challenges similar to those experienced in previous supply roles, or do they differ?
- [NQT induction year only] Any barriers /challenges to success? (workload, lack of consistency in classes to allow for preparation/evaluation element)

Project-level outcomes

13. Have you been set any particular performance objectives? If so, what are these?

- *Prompts:* Objectives relating to classroom teaching or school-wide priorities?
- Specific to NQT induction year

14. What are the key benefits you hope to achieve/ have achieved by being employed as a supernumerary teacher?

- For you? *Prompts:* pay and conditions, professional development, permanent employment opportunity.
- For Learners? For other teaching staff? Any wider benefits?
- [If relevant] How do the benefits available within this role compare to benefits from working in a supply role?

15. [May be less relevant to newly recruited teachers] What benefits have you seen so far of being employed as a supernumerary teacher?

- For you? For Learners? For other teaching staff? Any wider benefits?
- Depending on previous experience they may be able to make comparisons to previous supply working.

16. Do you think the model can be self-sustaining in the long term?

- *Prompts:* cluster working /number of schools involved /timetable allocation / CPD/ retention of supernumerary teacher?

Learning points

17. Do you have any recommendations regarding the future design and delivery of the Project or any views on an alternative supply delivery model?

- *Prompts:* what has worked well? What has been more challenging? What would you change?

18. What have been the most important learning points to date regarding the Project?

- *Prompts:* Timely recruitment/ co-operation across the schools/ mentor's support / effective line management /allocation across schools?

19. What are your plans for the coming year, and following completion of your role as a supernumerary teacher?

Thank you and reminder about re-contacting during phase 2.

Online survey for cluster schools (not including Cluster lead schools) (Spring 2019)

School Based Supply Cluster Model – School Survey

Introduction

Arad Research has been commissioned by Welsh Government to evaluate the School Based Supply Cluster Model Project. As part of this work, we are gathering evidence from cluster schools who have taken part in the project.

Participating in the evaluation is voluntary and you can withdraw your consent at any point without giving a reason for doing so. All the information gathered will be reported anonymously. The evidence gathered during the evaluation will be included in a report, and possibly in other publications, by Arad Research and Welsh Government.

More information about your data and your rights is available in the privacy notice. [Click here to read the privacy notice.](#)

If you are happy to give your consent, please continue with the survey by clicking next. If you wish to complete the survey in Welsh, please [click here](#).

If you would like to receive further information about the evaluation, or if you have any comments about any elements of the work, please contact: Alison Glover on alison@arad.wales or 02920 440552.

School Based Supply Cluster Model – School Survey

Background

Please provide some background information about your school. [This information will not be linked to individual responses and is solely to monitor survey completion]

* 1. Type of school

* 2. Please select your cluster

3. Before this project how did your school meet its supply needs?

	Always	Sometimes	Occasionally	Rarely	Never
Agency supply teachers					
Agency Higher Level Teaching Assistants (HLTAs)					
Own established supply teachers					
Other teachers employed at the school					
HLTAs employed at the school					
School senior managers					
headteacher					
Other (please specify)					

School Based Supply Cluster Model – School Survey

Planning

4. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about planning and communication for the school based supply cluster model?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	N/A
My school worked with all/most of the other schools in the cluster before the project						
My school helped to write the bid for the project						
My school is involved in decisions about how the supernumerary teacher/s in our cluster is/are deployed						

There is good ongoing communication between the cluster schools

5. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the recruitment and interview stages?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
My school was involved in writing the job advert					
My school contributed to shortlisting candidate/s for interview					
My school observed candidate/s teaching at interview stage					
My school was involved in interviewing candidates					

Please comment in the number and calibre of candidates that applied for the supernumerary role/s

School Based Supply Cluster Model – School Survey

Allocation and role of the supernumerary teacher/s

6. How is/are the supernumerary teacher/s allocated in your cluster? (select all that apply)

Each school has the supernumerary teacher/s for a set period of weeks/months in a block.

The supernumerary teacher/s are in different schools across the cluster over the course of a week/fortnight depending on demand.

The supernumerary teacher has some ongoing timetabled lessons/classes, while the remainder of their time is used to cover teacher absence.

An online calendar is used to request cover.

The supernumerary teacher/s is/are contacted directly to request cover.

The supernumerary teacher/s report to the cover manager on a daily basis for their lesson allocation.

Please provide additional comment to explain the allocation in your school.

School Based Supply Cluster Model – School Survey

The effectiveness of the model

7. Deployment of the supernumerary teacher/s

Very effective Effective Satisfactory Not effective

The arrangements used in our cluster to deploy the supernumerary teacher/s are:

Please provide additional comment:

8. How does the cluster model compare with previous arrangements to address supply needs?

More effective About the same Less effective

The cluster model is:

Please provide additional comment:

School Based Supply Cluster Model – School Survey

The effectiveness of the model

9. Meeting the cluster needs

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree or disagree Disagree Strongly disagree

The role of the supernumerary teacher/s in our cluster has met the cluster's aims for the project.

Please provide additional comment

10. Deployment of the supernumerary teacher/s across the cluster

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree or disagree Disagree Strongly disagree

The supernumerary teacher has been deployed equitably across all the cluster schools.

Please provide additional comment.

School Based Supply Cluster Model – School Survey

Impact of the supernumerary teacher/s

11. What has been the impact of the supernumerary teacher/s on learners?

Very positive impact Positive impact Limited positive Impact Negative impact N/A

Attitude of learners

Quality of work

produce by learners

Behaviour of learners

Consistency for learners

Please note any further impact on learners.

School Based Supply Cluster Model – School Survey

Sustainability of the model

12. What has been the impact of the supernumerary teacher/s on staff and the wider school?

	Very positive impact	Positive impact	Limited positive Impact	Negative impact	N/A
Workload of other teachers in the school					
Workload of other teaching/support staff (e.g. HLTAs)					
Sharing teaching and learning practice between cluster schools					
Transition between primary and secondary phases					
Introducing new and/or supporting existing extra-curricular activities					
Contribution to school development priorities					
Collaboration on wider school issues with other schools in the cluster					
Please note any other wider impact in staff and the wider school (e.g. which school development priorities have been supported?)					

13. Is there anything that has worked particularly well? Or that would be improved when delivering this project?

Worked well:

Suggested improvements:

14. What are your intentions for the future?

	Highly likely	Likely	Not decided yet	Unlikely	Highly unlikely
Will be employing the supernumerary teacher/s on a permanent contract					
Will be employing the supernumerary teacher/s on a temporary contract					
Will continue to work collaboratively with the other cluster schools to address supply needs					
Will return to the supply cover arrangements in place before the cluster model project					
Will revert to using private supply agencies					
Please provide further comment					

School Based Supply Cluster Model – School Survey

THANK YOU

*

Thank you for completing this questionnaire, your response is appreciated. Click 'Done' below and your responses will be saved automatically.

Topic guide for Cluster lead interviews and case studies (Summer 2019)

Note: Year 2 is to be the main focus for responses.

Cluster schools will have completed survey but not the cluster leads.

Each case study has a particular focus – more detail will be needed surrounding the selected focus for that cluster’s case study and examples to support feedback.

Template report to be completed by Arad and shared with all Cluster Leads, for additional contributions and information check.

Background

To be completed before interview

Cluster name:

Cluster lead school:

Other schools in cluster:

Project start date:

Number of supernumerary teachers (number of NQTs and completions):

Key aim for the cluster’s bid:

Project management and delivery

1. Has the approach to managing and delivering the project remained the same for the second year?
 - a. Have supernumerary teacher/s found permanent posts and further recruitment been needed?
 - b. Any changes in the allocation to each cluster school different for year 2? (Why?)
 - c. Have there been more fixed timetabled lessons for the second year? (Why?)
 - d. If NQT/s achieved during the first year – what has this meant for the second year of the project?

Impact

2. What impact has the project had on the learners during the second year?
 - a. Consistency (e.g. ALN)
 - b. Quality of work produced during cover sessions
 - c. Attitude and behaviour
 - d. Is this impact different to year 1?
3. What impact has there been on transition between school phases?

Prompts: E.g. new joint phase activities; other examples of the impact; comparison to year 1?
4. What impact has the project had on the supernumerary teacher/s employed?

Prompts: Completion of NQT; Training attended; Permanent employment; progress and quality of the teacher

5. What impact has the project had on other school staff, (teaching and support)?
Prompts: lessened workload, time for other school priorities (e.g.?)
6. What progress has there been to achieve the original objectives for the cluster project?
Prompts: School priorities addressed; differing levels of progress in years 1 and 2; release of other staff to achieve progress?
7. Please describe the impact the project has had on the collaboration of schools in the cluster.
Prompts: new initiatives developed? Strengthened working relationships; collaboration would have continued and strengthened anyway?
8. Please can you summarise the costs of supply cover over years 1 and 2 of the project.
Prompts: continued to use agencies throughout? Comparison of sickness/absence rates during the project compared to other years?

The next steps

9. How will the supply needs for the cluster be addressed next year?
Prompts: sustainability of project? continue collaboration for supply cover? Rationale for approach and funding implications?
10. What has been the most successful part of the project?
11. What has been the most challenging part of the project?
12. Any suggestions to improve similar projects in future?

Topic guide for stakeholder interviews (Summer 2019)

Arad Research has been commissioned by Welsh Government to evaluate the School Based Supply Cluster Model Project. As part of the evaluation, we are interviewing stakeholders who have engaged with the Project in some way.

During the interview, we will ask you for your views on: Your involvement in the Project; its aims, design and delivery; and views on the impact on learners, supply teachers and schools to date.

The information gathered through the evaluation will be used to inform the future design and delivery of the Project.

Participation in the research is voluntary. All information collected from stakeholders across Wales will be reported anonymously. The evidence gathered during the project will be included in a report, and possibly in other publications, by the Welsh Government.

If you wish to view the privacy notice, a copy has been circulated to you via e-mail and is available to you from the researcher.

Note to researcher: Ask the stakeholder to verbally consent to participate in the research and make a note of their consent.

Note to researcher: The stakeholders' knowledge of and engagement with the Project will vary, the researcher is to use the questions below which are suitable.

[Some stakeholders were interviewed during the scoping phase and will be providing an update on their experience of the project to date].

Background

1. Please provide an overview of your own responsibilities in [name of organisation].
2. Please provide an overview of your knowledge / experience relating to:
 - a. Education workforce and/or issues impacting on and the management of supply teachers.
 - b. Involvement in the school based supply cluster model pilot project. (e.g. development of project and since operational e.g. allocating cluster schools /support)

Project design and objectives

3. What do you think are the key aims and objectives of the Project?
 - a. Prompts: Cross-cluster working (collaboration), support for supply teachers and absence management, professional development, learner outcomes, cost efficiency, recommendations of the Supply Cluster Taskforce Report.
4. [New interviewees only] What is your view on the rationale for how the Project was designed?
 - a. Prompts: Support for supply teachers, Focus on NQTs / recently-qualified teachers, scope of the pilot, types of individual projects funded, the trial nature of the Project, variation across cluster model design and processes.

Project delivery to date

5. How effective was the process of recruiting supernumerary teachers been across the cluster project/s?
 - a. What approach was used?
 - b. Prompt: number and calibre of applicants, impact on supply teachers unable to apply / uncertainty of being able to complete NQT status in the role.
6. To what extent do you think the project is achieving its aims and objectives?
 - a. Prompts: improved cluster working, completion of NQT status, training for supply teachers, lower teacher absence, cost efficiency, consistency for learners
7. What has worked well and what have been the challenges for cluster schools delivering the project/s?
 - Prompt: Organising allocation between cluster schools; organising and managing CPD /NQT training (e.g. impact on supply teachers not part of the project).
8. What has your role been in providing the data for the claims?
 - Prompt views on the monitoring and scrutineering procedures.
9. What has been the impact of the project to date?
 - Prompts: staffing and demand for supply? benefits or added value achieved to date – for supply teachers, the school/s (collaboration), the cluster/s, learners?

Learning points

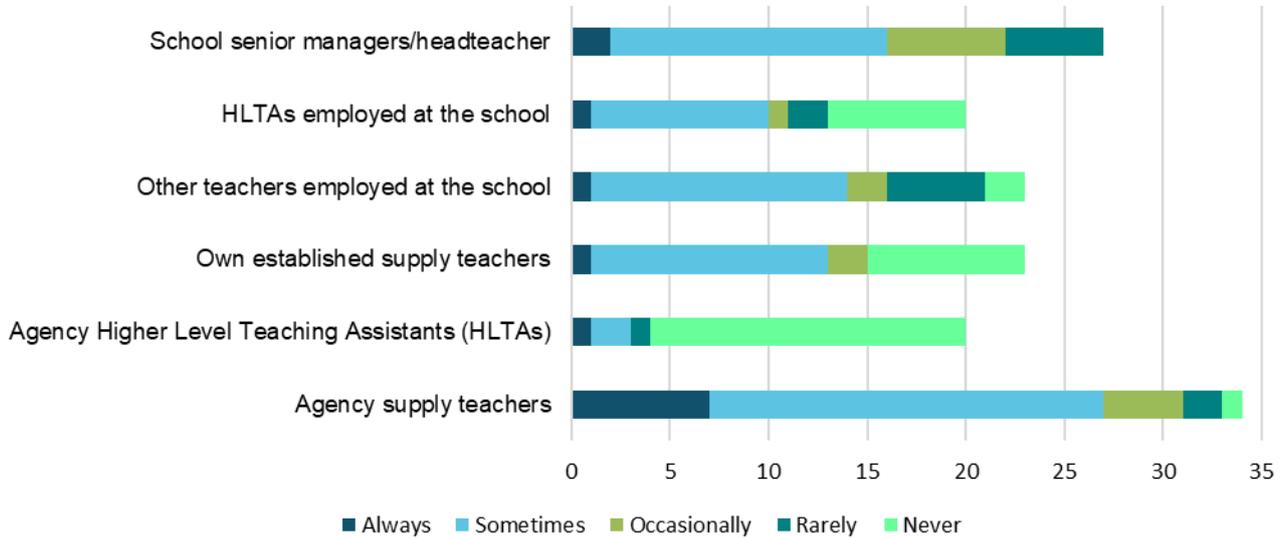
10. What is the sustainability potential for this project?
 - Or is there an alternative format which would address future supply demand? Any recommendations for future Welsh Government policy?
 - Explore in depth with LA representatives; examples of good practice; strengths and challenges of different models.

Annex B: Summary of cluster school online survey responses (Spring 2019)

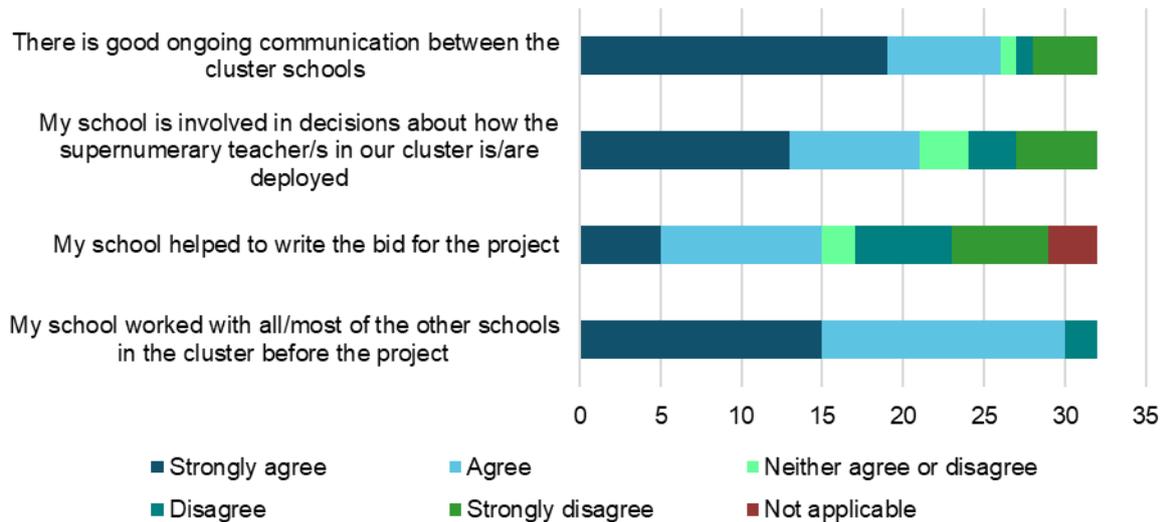
Q1	
Type of school	Number of respondents
Infant	3
Primary	25
Junior	2
Secondary	3
Special	1

Q2	
Local Authority	Number of respondents
Caerphilly	4
Cardiff	3
Carmarthen	2
Conwy A	4
Conwy B	3
Merthyr Tydfil A	2
Neath Port Talbot	5
Newport	1
Powys	4
Rhondda Cynon Taff	1
Torfaen	2
Wrexham	3
Total	34

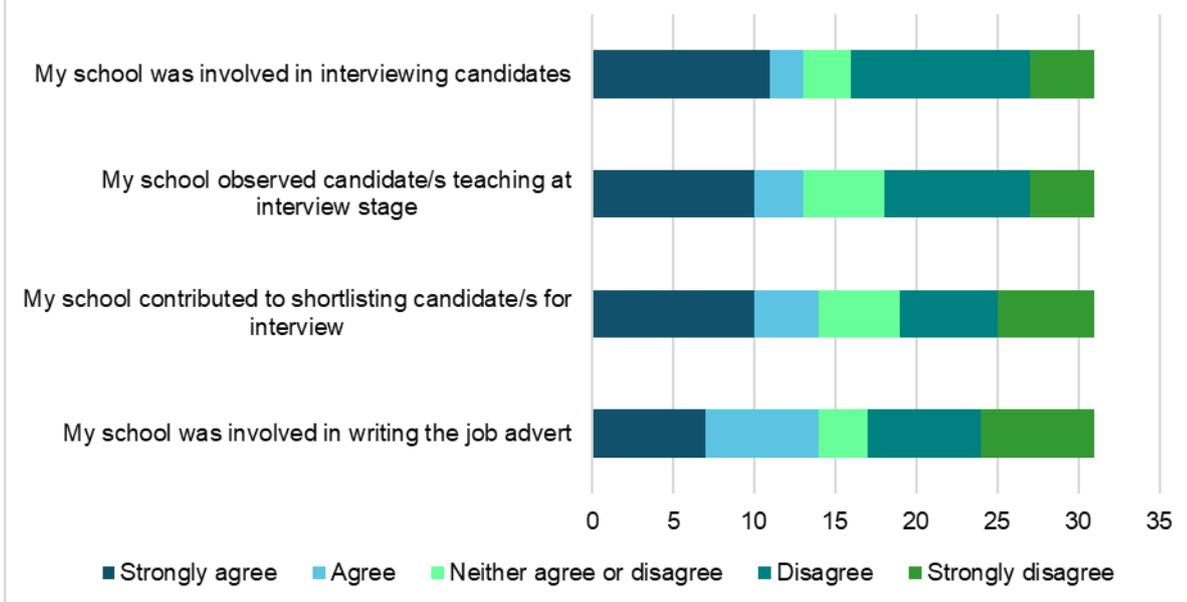
Q3. Before this project how did your school meet its supply needs? *n*=35



Q4. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about planning and communication for the school based supply cluster model? *n*=33



Q5. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the recruitment and interview stages? n=32



Additional comments:

- It was difficult to find candidates at times.
- As a cluster, an appointment sub-committee was organised.
- Many NQTs applied for the job each time they were advertised.
- Limited applications. Calibre varied.
- There were over 15 applicants. There were few outstanding on paper; the field/calibre may well have been restricted, as a high standard of Welsh was cited as an essential criterion, despite ours being a cluster of English-medium schools. Of the 3 appointed, one was an outstanding candidate.
- As a very small school, it wasn't possible to assist the progress in terms of interviewing and observation.
- Apparently the job advert was placed on the [Cluster lead] website, which would not attract most primary NQTs, as the website is that of a secondary school. Our school was not involved at all in any discussions prior to the appointments being made, we did not have a say in what our requirements were or the strengths or skills that we would be looking for in successful candidates.
- There were very few candidates applying for the role – some who were too experienced and therefore we were unable to meet the budgetary requirements long term.
- The second time we had to advertise the post, the quality of applicants seemed poor. The second advert came about as a result of the person who originally secured the post taking a teaching post after completing the first year. I was not involved in the selection process the first time around.
- Not all known, but some were Foundation Phase trained yet appointed to a ks2/3 post.
- Not all know, but some were Foundation Phase trained.

Q7. Deployment of the supernumerary teacher/s.

The arrangements used in our cluster to deploy the supernumerary teacher/s are:

Very effective	Effective	Satisfactory	Not effective
8	12	5	5

n=31

Additional comments:

Very effective.

- The model has proved extremely effective in releasing staff to carry out monitoring procedures, observing good practice in other schools and attending courses regularly.
- At the heart of this is effective communication – but our school and the other school are part of a co-operation between us where we achieve mutual accountability.
- All schools got a fair allocation of the supply teachers and were able to build up good professional relationships with them.

Effective.

- We have used the role to develop good practice. It has not worked as a means for sickness.

Satisfactory.

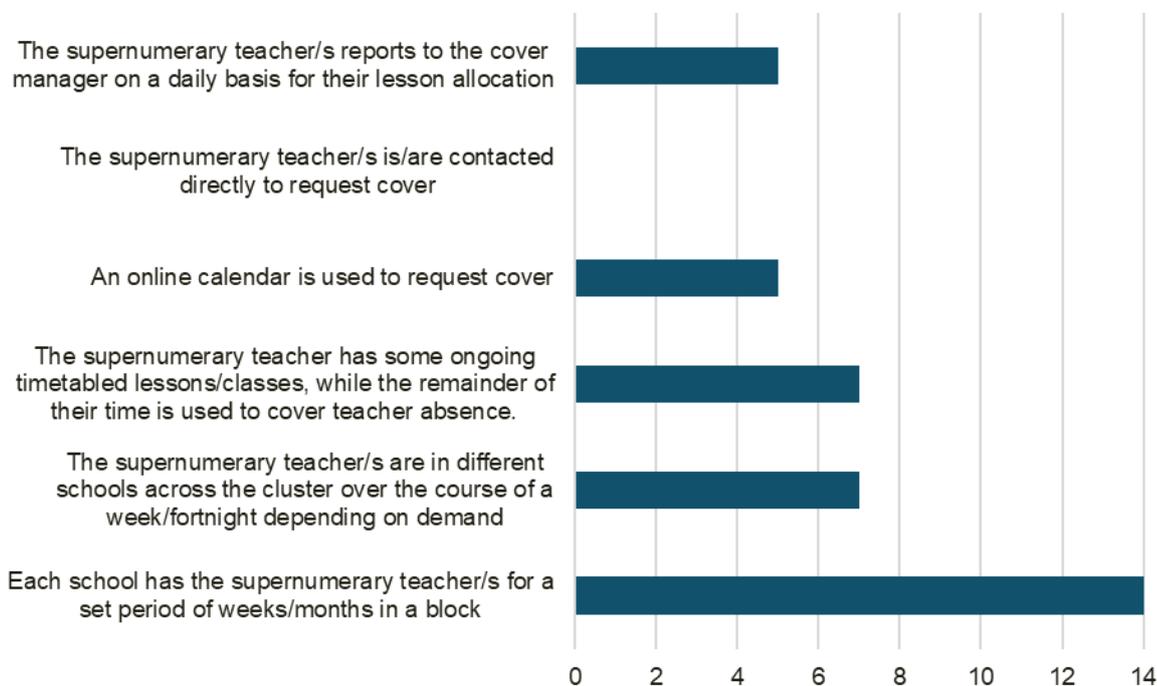
- Due to the nature of the timetabling the teacher cannot be used for sickness cover or other cover needs when allocated to another school.
- Unable to predict staff absences due to illness so can only use the teacher for planned absences such as training.

Not effective.

- Although our school has benefited greatly from having 2 teachers here, the system has not been effective and only 1 other school within the cluster has benefited.
- We were not prepared to pay a daily rate of £150 when the school already contributed to a [Local authority] pool of arrangements for paid cover.

- 2 candidates were interviewed and both were of high calibre and either could have been appointed.

Q6. How is/are the supernumerary teacher/s allocated in your cluster? n=29



Q8. How does the cluster model compare with previous arrangements to address supply needs?

More effective	About the same	Less effective
14	5	10

n=31

Additional comments:

More effective.

- Having a fortnightly timetable was extremely helpful in organising procedures.
- Because the teacher is here at school, and takes responsibility for teaching one or two classes, we can ensure the teacher's development. This is facilitated by the fact that pupils get to know the teacher and regard him as a member of the school community, rather than someone who joins in from time to time. This also means that the teacher's confidence is nurtured, he feels a member of the school community, has an opportunity to contribute more widely to school life in terms of extra-curricular events, and the teacher is also familiar with procedures and policies. This is true for both schools in the cluster. As a result, standards are being raised across both – in terms of pupils and teachers.
- The cluster supply teachers were able to provide consistent cover for releasing senior leaders to carry out their responsibilities.

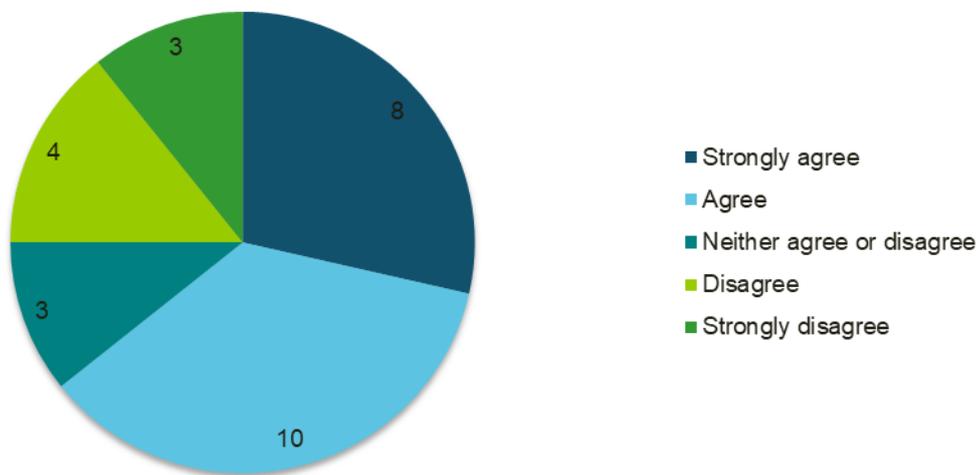
About the same.

- There is still a need for supply cover as you cannot determine when a person is going to be sick. What happens when the teacher is needed in school A due to sickness, but school B also requires them for cover. We have used it for planned management activities mostly this year.

Less effective.

- Set days does not facilitate this. Needs to be greater flexibility.
- It has been fantastic in terms of developing good practice, providing cover for performance management tasks and self-evaluation tasks. It has not helped 'sickness' cover at all.
- The model could have worked if the cluster lead had consulted with the primary schools prior to appointing. The cluster lead should also have consulted with the LA with regards to using the LA sickness scheme to pay for the NQTs to cover sickness.
- It hasn't eased the supply needs in either of my schools.
- Unfortunately, it didn't work as we couldn't claim from our sickness insurance to pay for sickness supply as it was felt these were already paid for by the grant and as such the insurance would not pay twice.

Q9. The role of the supernumerary teacher/s in our cluster has met the cluster's aims for the project. n=30



Additional comments:

Strongly agree.

- To reduce the cost of supply to the school. It has also enabled 3 NQTs to secure fixed term/permanent contracts.

Agree.

- Always difficult to arrange staff time to be available in an emergency.
- Our aims matched how we saw it working; we adapted in order to make it effective.

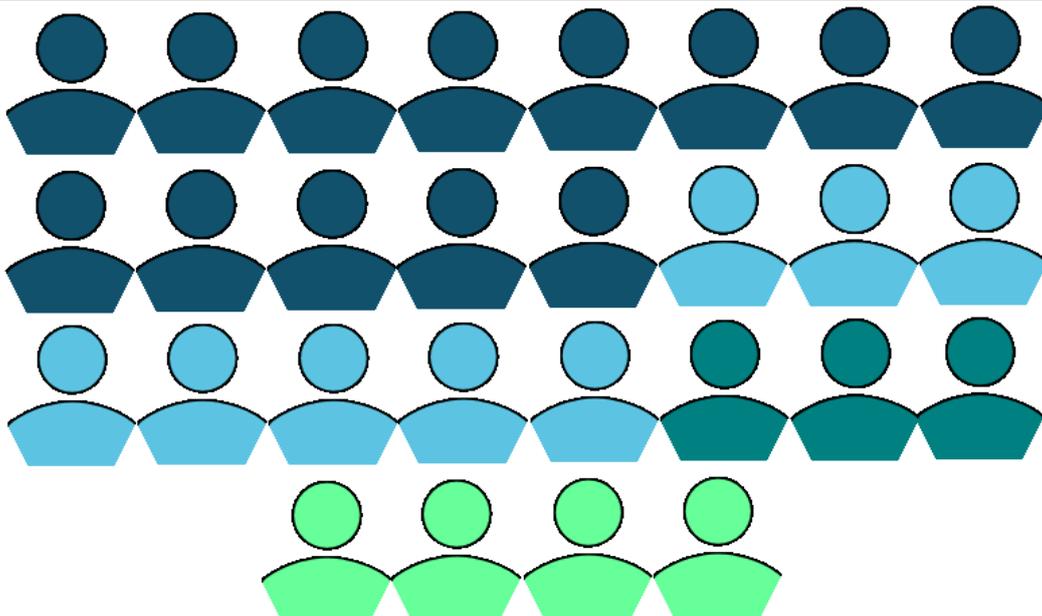
Disagree.

- Our first teacher secured a permanent post and there have been performance issues with our second appointment.
- Not able to cover Foundation Phase.
- Unable to cover our Foundation Phase year groups.

Q10. Deployment of the supernumerary teacher/s across the cluster.

"The supernumerary teacher has been deployed equitably across all the cluster schools." *n=28*

 = Strongly agree  = Agree  = Disagree  = Strongly disagree



Additional comments:

Strongly agree.

- Staff are fairly divided according to the size of the schools within the cluster.
- Deployment was timetabled half termly based on feedback from the headteachers within the cluster.

Agree.

- This has been fairly distributed.
- See previous comment about allocation.

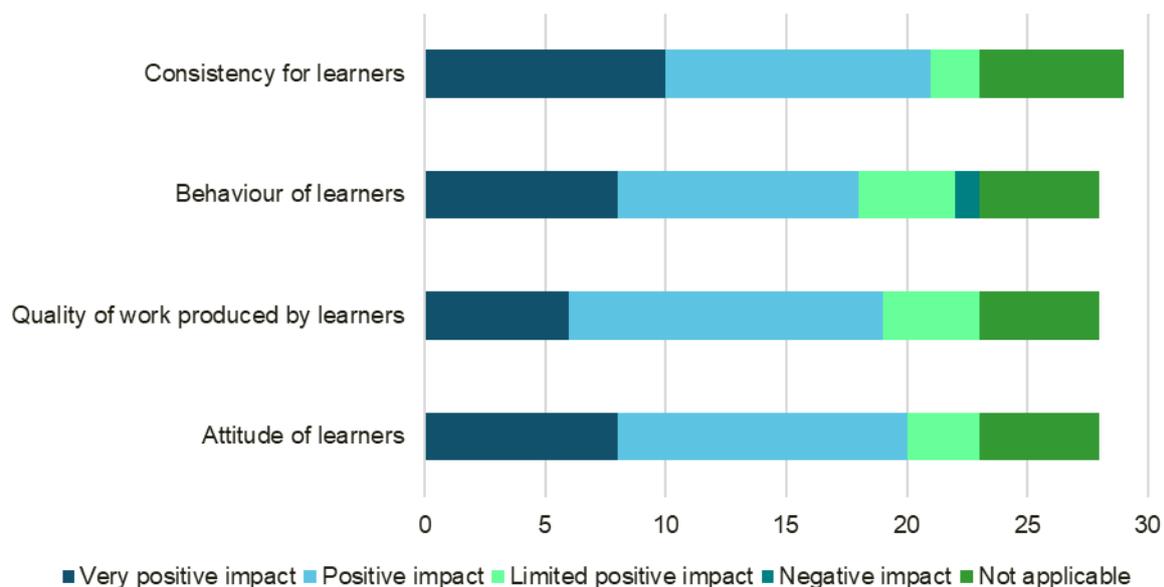
Disagree.

- Only 2 schools within the cluster benefited from the supernumerary teachers. One of the teachers was used in a school outside of the cluster.

Strongly disagree.

- Supernumerary staff not always to cluster primaries only, even when these staff had not been deployed by secondary school.

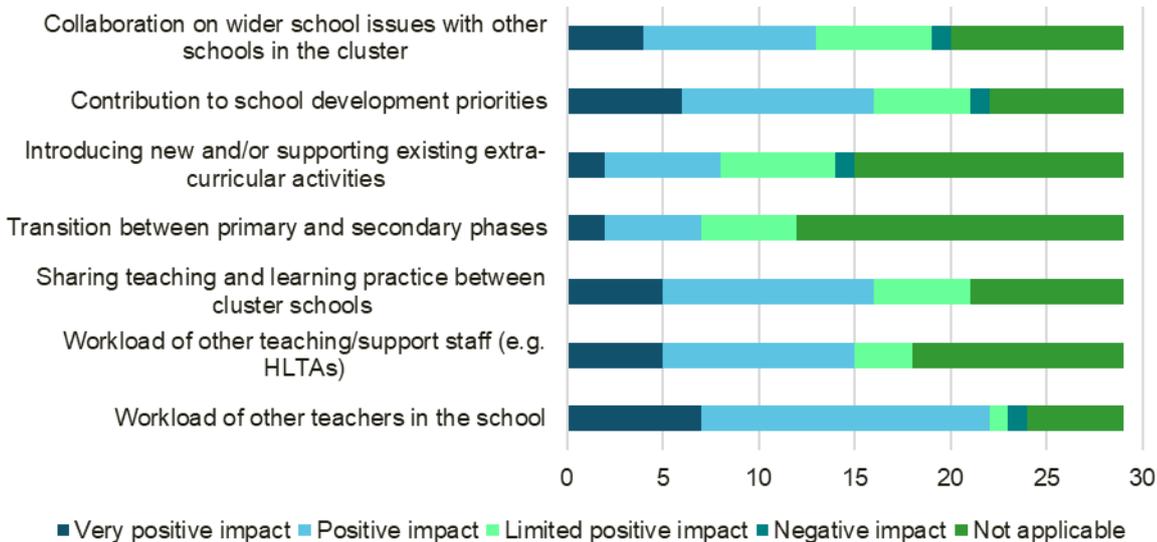
Q11. What has been the impact of the supernumerary teacher/s on learners? n=30



Additional comments:

- Much better than other supply methods as the supernumerary teachers become part of the staff team and are well respected by pupils.
- We have benefited as 2 of the teachers were based here. They have been used across the school to release teachers for CPD activities, meetings, headteacher cover, sickness, ALN support.
- The continuity and familiarity have improved behaviour and provided consistency for all learners – quality of work has not been disrupted.
- So far, I have only experienced the teacher for half of one term across my two schools. There is no way I can answer any of these questions with any validity.

Q12. What has been the impact of the supernumerary teacher/s on staff and the wider school? n=29

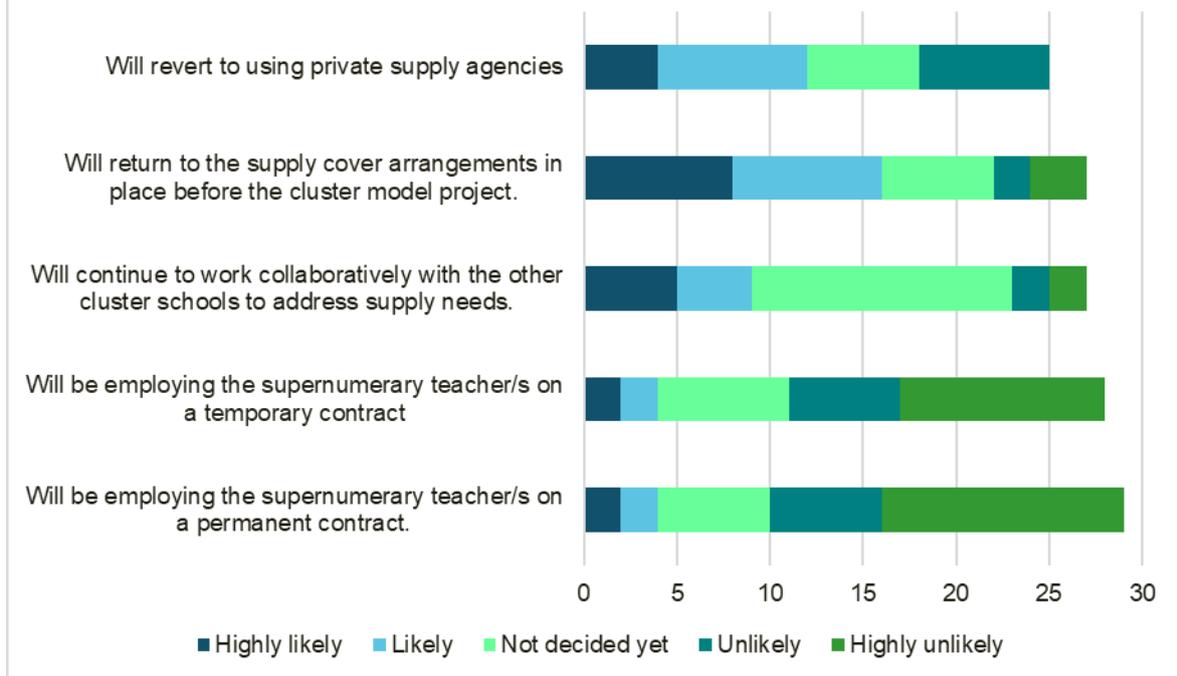


Additional comments:

- Supernumerary teachers brought positive practice that they had seen in other schools. They significantly reduced the number of times interventions were interrupted due to HLTAs going to cover classes.
- As the model did not work in the way intended, we have not seen these additional benefits. However, as a school with very limited budget and hardly any PDG it has been invaluable as we would have struggled tremendously due to increased numbers in September who are not financed until April. Many of these new pupils had ALN and have benefitted from being in smaller classes due to having the 2 teachers here. We are grateful to [the cluster lead school] for allowing them to complete their NQT sessions here.

Q13. Is there anything that has worked particularly well? Or that could be improved when delivering this project? <i>n=13</i> <i>[Each row signifies an individual's response]</i>	
Worked well:	Suggested improvements:
Consistency for pupils	-
Consistency – same person knows the children and understands the school	Allocated to a school for a fixed period e.g. half a term.
Consistency for the pupils and a well-planned programme of CPD support for the teachers.	-
The first teacher we appointed was a music specialist, which we were able to utilise effectively to support standards of teaching and learning.	It is difficult to ensure that all the schools' needs are met with this model, and I'm unsure of how this can be improved.
Whole project.	-
Shared project amongst cluster of schools.	Flexibility of deployment of staff.
Blocks of time / ability to provide quality non-contact time for staff with increased workloads.	To remove the expectation that this could work to cover 'sickness'; not practical at all.
The fact that the colleague concerned has been able to share effective practice, in an ongoing operational manner, across the phases.	-
-	Include all schools from the start who are part of the cluster. Transparency from cluster lead.
Opportunity for NQT to develop with others in the cluster.	To be more effective you really need 1 teacher per school.
Nothing of which I'm aware.	I do not believe that this model is workable in its current format, and provides an exceptional challenge for any teacher, let alone an NQT.
-	Full involvement in the process from the beginning.
-	Greater transparency in the project.

Q14. What are your intentions for the future? n=29



Additional comments:

- The lack of funding in schools is a very worrying issue to continue with this model unfortunately.
- No vacancies exist in the school. Supply can be purchased on a day to day basis. Budget constraints will not allow the luxury of employing a member of staff.
- Budget constraints affect the employment of staff.
- Due to the issues we have experienced, I would prefer to use a supply agency so that the cover we need is in place at the most appropriate times.
- This project worked because it was part funded by WAG. If the schools within the cluster have to fully pay the costs, current budgets do not allow for this.
- With massive cuts and tighter budgets, the decision to use agencies is purely financial. It can be as much as half the cost per day.
- If budget allowed, we would certainly employ a supernumerary teacher for continuity and stability.
- My schools' involvement with this project has not reduced the supply teachers required at all, as we had the teacher for a set block of time that did not coincide with any particular set of training etc. The teacher was used, for example, to allow other staff to work on areas of school self-review and school development that would otherwise not have been possible.

Annex C: Pilot cluster case studies

Case study 1: A large training focused school cluster; Cardiff cluster, lead school Fitzalan High School

Case study 2: Special Educational Needs cover; Newport cluster, lead school Maes Ebbw, other cluster school Ysgol Bryn Derw

Case study 3: A large cluster with a smaller number of supernumerary teachers; Wrexham cluster, lead school Ysgol Heulfan

Case study 4: A Welsh-medium cluster; Neath Port Talbot cluster, lead school Ysgol Gymraeg Ystalyfera Bro Dur

Case study 1: A large training focused school cluster

Background

The first supernumerary teacher started working across the Cardiff cluster in April 2018, with another nine teachers starting in September 2018 – all were undertaking their NQT (newly-qualified teacher) year, all successfully completed this by July 2019.

The management and delivery model adopted remained the same for both years of the Project, with additional local authority funding supporting the absence management procedures, this post has been the main point of contact for the supernumerary teachers.

A shared Outlook calendar was used to manage the teachers allocation between schools, deployed by Fitzalan High School (the cluster lead school). The primary trained teachers were allocated according to their skillset and the 'best fit' for a particular school, but if another school needed cover there was capacity to be able to allocate a teacher. All supernumerary teachers also received a booklet containing the procedures for each of the primary schools. This positively impacted consistency across the cluster.

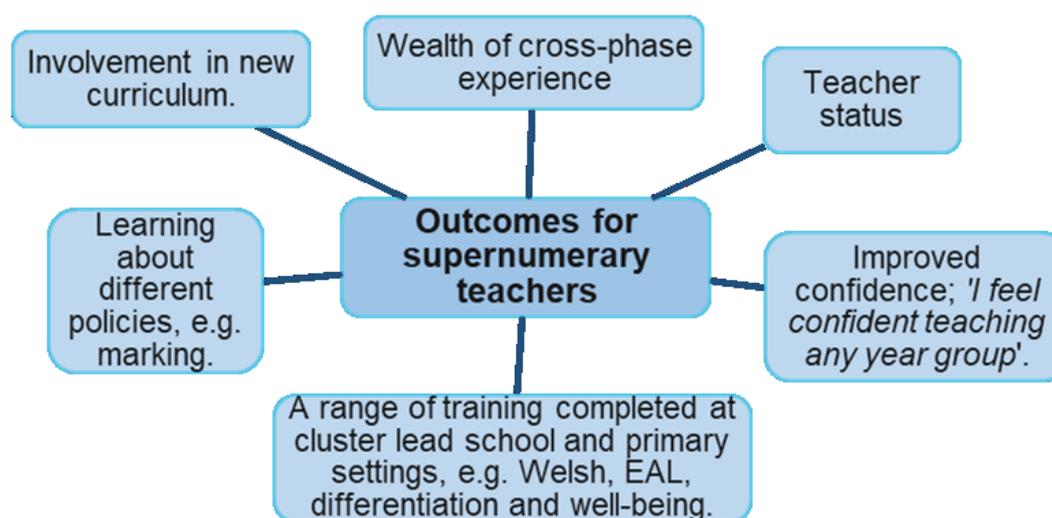
Cardiff cluster	Allocation and role	Impact
 10 schools  10 teachers Cluster lead large city secondary school	<p>Each teacher worked across 3 schools each term; experiencing all 10 schools (1 secondary and 9 primaries) during the project.</p> <p>Teachers primarily covered teachers to work on school improvement plans, secondly school cluster events, thirdly sickness.</p> <p>One afternoon each week all cluster teachers trained together at Fitzalan High School (the cluster lead school).</p>	<p>Having consistency with the same people worked well, the cluster schools were keen to employ the cluster teachers. It worked well because the cluster teachers <i>'mark the work and deliver any follow up work'</i>; they liaise with the class teacher – <i>'whereas someone from an agency, would just appear and go again'</i>.</p> <p><i>'The most successful aspect of the project has been the quality of teaching and learning across the phases, and standards as a whole.'</i> (Cluster lead)</p>

Training delivered

- There is a strong teacher training ethos in the cluster lead school with training delivered across the cluster; there are opportunities for NQTs and teaching assistants to lead workshops or training in their area of expertise.
- The cluster lead school is an NQT Aspire school, with a team delivering to primary and secondary staff.
- All supernumerary teachers participated in training every Wednesday afternoon at the cluster lead school, this contributed to them *'feeling part of the school'*.
- The supernumerary teachers also participated in all the inset training at the cluster lead school.

- They have also been able to attend a range of CPD (continuing professional development) opportunities offered by the cluster primary schools.

Strengths	Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training together means all supernumerary teachers received <i>‘the same message in terms of expectations, and quality of teaching and learning and that has been really impactful’</i>. • They all understand the new curriculum - the philosophy behind it and how different schools are implementing it. • The supernumerary teachers have had opportunities to share and collaborate with each other during training. • Training is regular and planned, and not ad hoc as opposed to agency supply teachers who receive very little training. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In order to provide opportunity for supernumerary teachers to complete medium term planning and assessment, they needed to be allocated to schools on longer term projects.



This project has been a more ‘supportive way for these NQTs to start their career; teaching in a range of schools, meeting all sorts of different children. The cluster teachers have been able to teach across phases in one year – some teachers have never done that in a career’.

(cluster school headteacher)

‘There’s a whole group of people you are going through your NQT stuff together and that wasn’t the case before – you were on your own.’

(supernumerary teacher)

Case study 2: Special Educational Needs cover

Background

One supernumerary teacher started working across the cluster in Nov 2017. The teacher completed their NQT (newly qualified teacher) induction during the first year of the Project.

The management and delivery model adopted remained very similar for both years of the Project. The teacher provided cover for a long-term absence for four days at the cluster lead school (Maes Ebbw School), spending the fifth day at the other cluster school (Ysgol Bryn Derw) (the allocation was determined by the size of the schools). The supernumerary teacher's role at the cluster school varied; PPA (planning, preparation and assessment) cover for the same class at the beginning changing to covering a range of classes for PPA from Spring 2019.

Newport cluster	Allocation and role	Impact
 <p>2 schools</p>  <p>1 teacher</p>	<p>Four days a week in the larger cluster lead school covering a long-term sickness.</p> <p>The fifth day in the smaller school – releasing a range of teachers to complete reviews and to allow for the expertise of the cluster teacher to be shared with more staff.</p>	<p>It has been possible to plan ahead – with the specific curriculum focus that is needed, this has allowed the main teacher to hand over some responsibility for a particular subject area.</p> <div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; padding: 10px; margin-top: 10px;"> <p><i>The young people have had a massively good deal out of having access to [the supernumerary teacher]. This would not have been the case with a supply, as [the teacher] has planned for the future.</i></p> <p><i>(Cluster lead)</i></p> </div>

Contrasting staffing requirements between mainstream and Special schools

Agency supply teachers are not indemnified to be able to use specific training qualifications such as 'team teach, handling' in the Special school. As a result there can be supply teachers in classes **unable to 'move and handle'**, even though they are trained; this means there is **more workload** on the other members of staff in the class.

Such an issue would not be so pressing for a mainstream school, but for a Special school, there is a greater demand to move pupils, toilet visits etc., such **'demands on staff can be draining'**. In this cluster the supernumerary teacher has been signed off by the headteacher to use such techniques, as she is employed by the school.

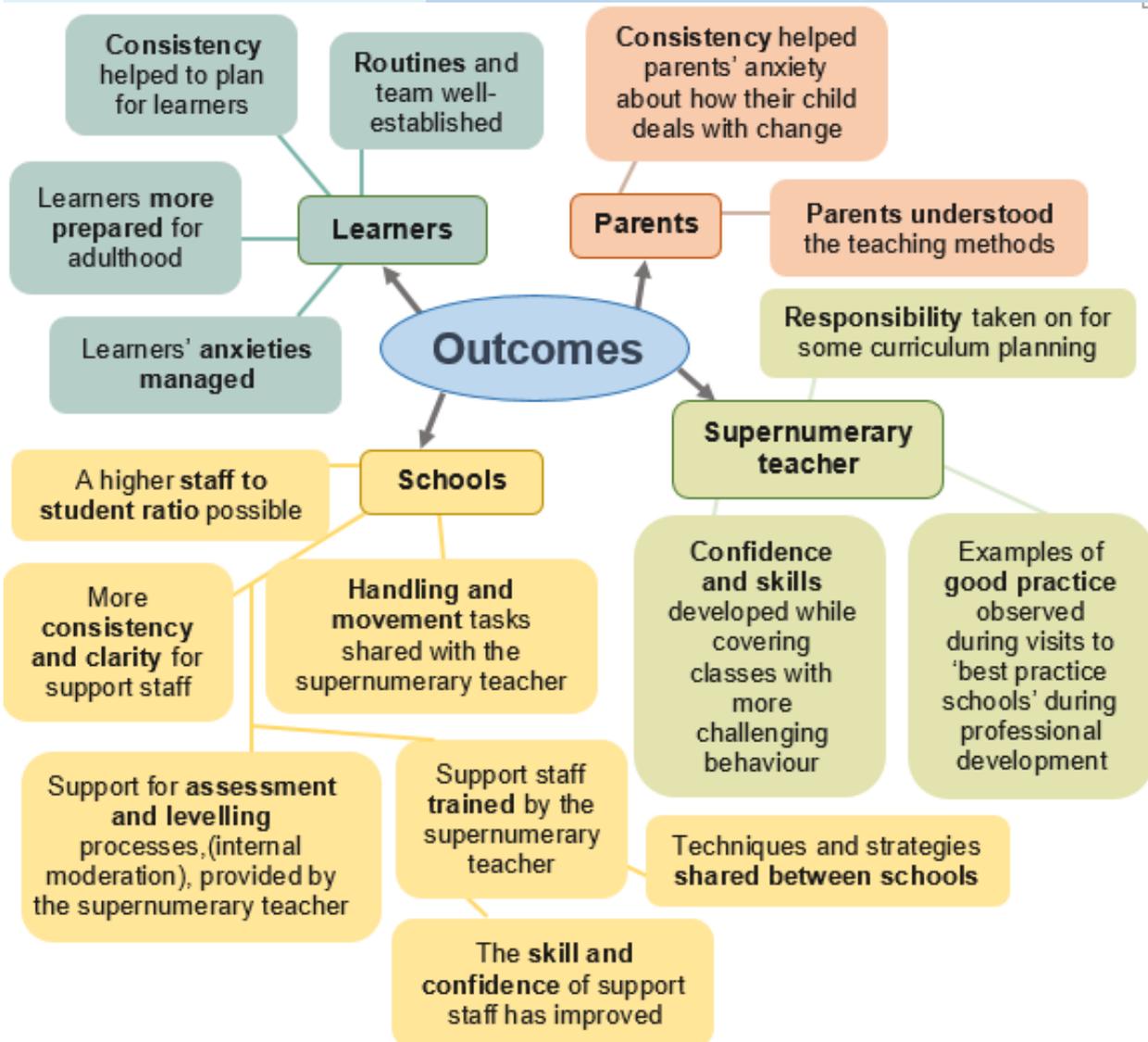
The teaching assistants (TAs) **understand the routines and systems** better than an irregular supply cover teacher would, with the teacher needing to take the lead from them as they know the children. Unless a teacher is in a classroom consistently as the 'teacher' in a Special school, the teacher has to take the lead from the TAs as they know the children.

Staffing challenges

*'The challenge for the sector is **knowledge of the individual children** and the knowledge of the way a school works – this is more important than whether you have a certificate that says you are a qualified teacher. Parents want to know that someone who knows their child and **understands the needs of their child** is in front of their child'.*
(cluster school headteacher)

A teacher's ability to *'step in and click with a class'* is different in a Special school. For example, the supernumerary teacher spent a two week block at the other cluster school. There was a negative impact on the pupils and class team at the cluster lead school - it is difficult to explain the situation to the learners. A more regular weekly pattern can suit learners better; with the supernumerary teacher spending the same day each week at the other cluster school, and the lessons delivered in their absence by a Level 4 HLTA (Higher Level Teaching Assistant) each week.

However, on the other hand consistency may not be as critical as in mainstream, when there is only one adult in a class – a Special school class can have eight children and four adults, if there is a change in the teacher there can still be a level of consistency from the support staff.



Case study 3: A large cluster with a smaller number of supernumerary teachers

Background

There are two supernumerary teachers working in the Wrexham cluster. The cluster schools initially looked at the number of children on role in each school in the cluster and worked out a percentage allocation which equated to a number of days of supply cover to which each school was entitled per term; there was some flexibility within this allocation. All of the NQT (newly-qualified teacher)'s observations were completed in Ysgol Heulfan (the cluster lead school), where they were most familiar with pupils and school policies such as behaviour management routines. Often, the supernumerary teachers were used to release staff to focus on school-level priorities such as professional development and particular projects. Some of the cluster schools have used the supernumerary teachers' time on a regular basis e.g. the same day per week. The supernumerary teachers have also been involved in extra-curricular activities. The cluster finds that it is not particularly practical to use the supernumerary teachers for sickness cover, which is too ad hoc. The supernumerary teachers have been in high demand within the cluster.

Wrexham cluster	Allocation and role	Impact
 <p data-bbox="191 1187 327 1220">8 schools</p>  <p data-bbox="183 1377 327 1411">2 teachers</p>	<p data-bbox="422 996 925 1444">An online calendar is used to book the teachers' time, with allocation roughly decided by pupil numbers. Schools tend to book their supply cover weeks in advance and in most cases, the teachers are used to release staff to focus on school-level priorities such as professional development and particular projects. Some schools book a teacher on a regular schedule. Teachers are also involved in extra-curricular activities.</p>	<p data-bbox="957 996 1396 1444">The project has allowed cluster schools to raise standards within schools, focusing on school improvement priorities to a greater extent than they might otherwise manage. The teachers have built good relationships with colleagues and have benefitted from a wider range of professional learning, observing good practice and experience of extra-curricular activities.</p>

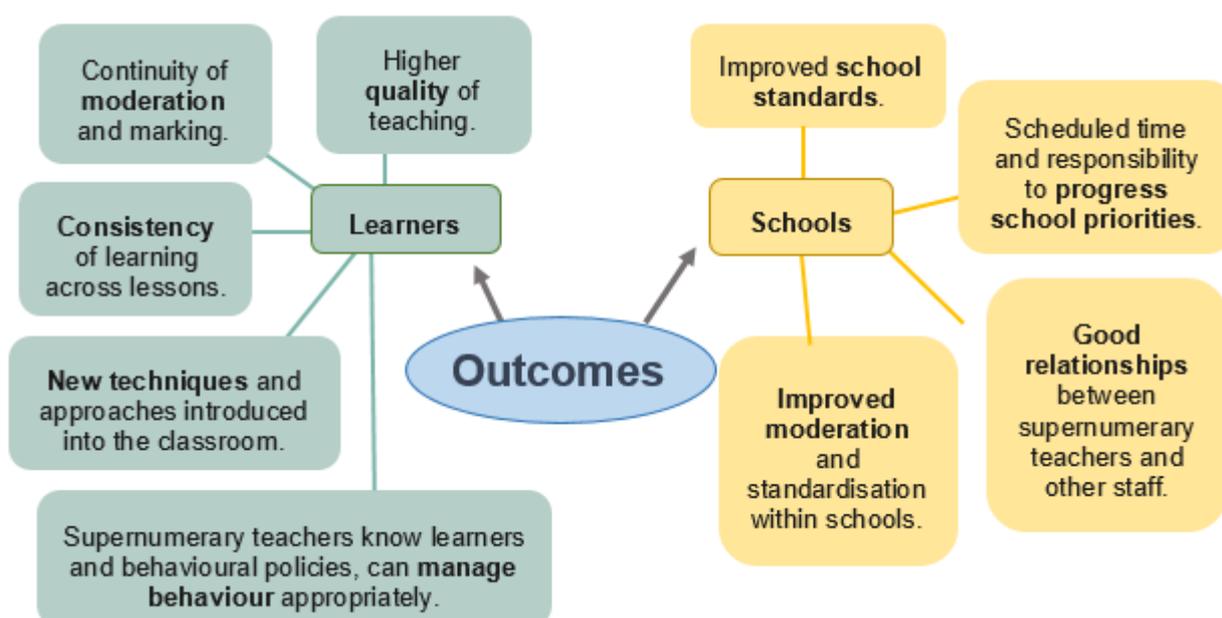
Making the most of available Supernumerary teacher time

For this pilot project, the cluster decided to trial employing two supernumerary teachers across the eight schools. The schools judged this to have been correct for a pilot, but of course it has meant that schools needed to ensure their limited time with the supernumerary teachers was used to best effect. As such, the cluster schools have made sure they allow supernumerary teachers to deliver meaningful lessons while providing cover. They have planned and delivered lessons across upper Key Stage 2 and lower Key Stage 3, for example delivering weekly sessions on literacy, numeracy and science. They have also been involved in extra-curricular activities; one has supported an after-school football club and they have attended a residential course with pupils. They have also been involved in Forest School and one has provided valuable support in the cluster lead school's resource provision. The supernumerary teachers were given two weeks of planning time at the start of the project and in September 2018 to ensure they could deliver valuable lessons while providing cover. Learners emphasised that they find the lessons just as enjoyable and that the supernumerary teachers bring new teaching approaches, resources and games to the classroom.

Using cover for specific school improvement priorities

The supernumerary teachers have primarily been used to release staff to focus on school development priorities. For example, using the supernumerary teacher cover:

- For staff to work on a formative assessment project (run by the regional education consortium).
- For staff to work on levelling pupils' work and building portfolios.
- To focus on monitoring of standards of pupils' work and to monitor subject areas (it is usually challenging for them to release staff for such activities). This school also noted that using the supernumerary teachers in this has allowed them to continue to improve following an Estyn monitoring period, focusing on developing pupil learning and raising standards.
- To release middle managers, each of which have been allocated a priority from the School Improvement Plan to progress during this non-contact time.



The greatest value of the project has been the ability for school to regularly utilise [the teacher] for internal moderation and standardisation of work within school. This has allowed SLT (school leadership team) and subject leaders to continually monitor and raise standards of teaching and learning.

The teachers know the pupils, staff and routines of the school which help them to deliver lessons effectively. Pupil behaviour has been better as the teachers understand individual pupils' needs; this has meant the pupils respond well towards them. Teaching and learning in class has remained at a high standard even when we have to release teachers from their classes.

Case study 4: A Welsh-medium cluster

Background

The Neath Port Talbot cluster has piloted different ways of apportioning teachers' time over the duration of the project. Initially, a specific apportionment was set aside for each school but this arrangement did not respond effectively to the needs of schools as they arose. Secondly, a flexible system of allowing schools to use teachers at short notice for the supply of illness or emergency was piloted. This system caused a burden for Ysgol Gymraeg Ystalyfera Bro Dur, which organised teachers' time. The cluster has now established a process of apportioning teachers' time to support the schools' improvement plans (taking into account a sensible number of days for each school). Ysgol Gymraeg Ystalyfera Bro Dur's bursar keeps records of the supply teachers' time. Cluster schools try to provide their needs to the lead school a month in advance, and the bursary provides a fortnightly schedule.

Overall, the supply teachers have worked across Key Stages. The current system has allowed a good balance between the needs of schools and the needs of supply teachers themselves.

Neath Port Talbot cluster	Allocation and role	Impact
 <p data-bbox="204 1227 347 1256">10 schools</p>  <p data-bbox="212 1386 352 1415">5 teachers</p>	<p data-bbox="448 1032 799 1641">The cluster has trialled different approaches to allocation, starting with an equal and regular split between schools, moving to a completely flexible on-demand approach and then finally settling on using the teachers to support school improvement priorities across the cluster. The teachers generally work across key stages and are allocated periods for planning together.</p>	<p data-bbox="831 1032 1401 1368">Schools have used the teachers to release staff to focus on school improvement, for example collaborative planning for the new curriculum. The teachers are familiar with schools' policies, approach and strategies, including the Welsh Language Charter. The project has provided consistent Welsh-medium supply cover, which is often very difficult to secure.</p> <div data-bbox="858 1424 1422 1637" style="border: 1px solid #ccc; padding: 10px; margin-top: 10px;"> <p data-bbox="895 1440 1390 1626"><i>Usually, when you leave work for supply teachers, it isn't always completed, or not to the standard you want, and you have to re-do it – this hasn't happened. (Translation)</i></p> </div>

Specific benefits for Welsh-medium cluster schools	Benefits the Project has offered to supernumerary teachers
<p>The Welsh-medium schools regularly face challenges in recruiting suitable supply staff through external agencies, able to teach through the medium of Welsh to a high standard. It is not uncommon for schools to make use of non-Welsh speaking supply teachers, when faced with a lack of other options. Supernumerary teachers address these supply challenges, ensuring schools can access Welsh-medium supply regularly and with less difficulty.</p> <p>Supernumerary teachers are familiar with the school's Welsh-language policies, projects and approaches. For example, they have been able to work in-line with the schools' Welsh Language Charter strategy and adopt or develop appropriate resources.</p> <p>They have understood and supported the school's focus on Welsh language and literacy, using the same drills and language formats as other teachers. For example, one supernumerary teacher reported that running Speaking and Listening sessions with learners was a specific performance objective for them.</p>	<p>The teachers have received time for joint planning at the start and end of term. During this time, they have successfully created resources, shared teaching methodologies and focused on school-level priorities.</p> <p>The salary offered through this project is more stable than the normal supply salary, though still less stable than a permanent teaching post. Teachers benefit from the status of being a teacher with permanent roles. They have access to the training available for other teachers, including specific courses on themes such as ASD (autism spectrum disorder) and safeguarding in different schools.</p> <p>They have also been invited to join school communities, participate in social events and create relationships with co-workers. The early years of teaching can be very challenging and feeling part of the community, and having necessary support, has a positive impact on the well-being of NQT (newly-qualified teacher) and supply teachers.</p> <p>They have been able to gain experience across different key stages (for example, a secondary-trained teacher gained some experience in Foundation Phase). They are now 'better teachers', demonstrated through the performance management processes.</p>

