

# Case study: Use of the additional professional learning grant in 2018/19

## Context and background

### The school

Ysgol Tregarth is a Welsh-medium primary school in Gwynedd and is part of the GwE consortium, the School Effectiveness and Improvement Service for North Wales. There are 104 learners on the school register: 12.1 per cent are eligible to receive free school meals (FSM) and 24% cent have additional learning needs (ALN).

### Designated leaders and members of teaching staff

Ysgol Tregarth has two designated leaders, four full time teachers and six teaching assistants.

### Additional professional learning grant allocation

The school received £3,790 for the 2018/19 period.

## How the additional grant was used

Ysgol Tregarth used the additional grant to develop professional learning at all levels within the staffing structure.

Llinwen Jones, Headteacher at Ysgol Tregarth, noted:

‘The ethos of continuously developing, learning and improving is an integral part of the school’s everyday life and practice.’

The school is fully committed to developing as a learning organisation. The grant has been an effective way of focusing on elements that have been recognised as areas for development following the Welsh Government’s ‘Schools as learning organisations’ survey.

The school has specifically focussed on the following.

Establishing a culture of research, exploration, and innovation to prepare for the new curriculum

Nurturing ways for staff to work and co-operate as a team.

Promoting and supporting continuous professional learning for all staff.

The grant has been valuable to the school in:

- developing staff leadership skills
- funding a whole school project to develop the ability of staff (teaching and support) to reflect on their practice in line with the professional learning standards
- strengthening the school's ability for continuous self-improvement and further developing an open ethos
- releasing staff to attend training that supports the journey of preparing for the new curriculum
- releasing teaching and support staff to visit other schools and co-operate with them
- invest in a platform to select a specific element of pedagogy to be evaluated, analysed and planned for in order to improve it
- establish active research teams – assess for learning and a growth mentality.

The Headteacher added:

'The opportunities to co-operate with other schools has proven to be a valuable and powerful professional learning development by allowing Ysgol Tregarth to move forward whilst preparing for forthcoming changes.'

## Impact of the grant on colleagues across the school

### Support staff

As a result of support staff receiving Teaching Continua training and operating in a reflective manner, our staff now have a deeper understanding of what is expected of them in their work. They have developed their ability to self-reflect and evaluate their daily practice, recognising the next steps in order to further develop within their role.

The Headteacher noted:

'This has led to staff being able to fulfil their roles more effectively. It was good to see staff showing an interest in committing to further training programmes.'

## Teaching staff

Every member of the teaching staff has taken advantage of Teaching Continua and used it as a tool to reflect on their practice. This has promoted close co-operation, with staff benefitting from the expertise and strengths of others to develop their own practice.

According to the Headteacher:

‘Having the opportunity to attend Curriculum for Wales training, shadowing, observing and visiting lead schools has equipped the staff with the skills to experiment and trial innovative methods of learning and teaching.’

## Leadership

Every member of staff has had the opportunity to lead a staff meeting following professional learning training or activity. The process has led to some less experienced or less confident members of staff doing things that are less comfortable for them.

The Headteacher added:

‘An opportunity to share and lead in this way ensures that staff members have experiences and opportunities to lead others.’

## Impact of the grant on learners

According to the school the working method in terms of professional learning for all the staff at the school has been very effective which is evident from the positive effect on the learning and the teaching.

Here are some of the main advantages for learners at Ysgol Tregarth.

Confidence in terms of recognising the next steps in their learning

Having rich and innovative learning experiences in line with the four purposes

Developing confident, independent learners

## Lessons learned about professional learning to be applied across the school

The school noted the following key points.

- Co-operating, shadowing, and observing are powerful ways of developing professional learning.
- It is important to give staff the opportunity to report back following any professional learning.
- Planning for embedding professional learning into school practice must be consistent at every level of the staffing structure.
- Invest further in developing a culture of investigation and experimentation by further developing active research teams.

## Lessons learned about professional learning to share with other schools

Here is some advice from the school regarding the biggest lessons learned.

- It is important to effectively plan spending to develop professional learning at all levels of the workforce.
- It is important to develop effective leaders and nurture leaders and prospective headteachers for the future.
- It is important to hold a professional meeting with every member of staff so that they have the opportunity to discuss and identify their needs and aspirations for the future.

According to the Headteacher:

‘The above process allows leaders to effectively plan professional learning.’

## Next steps

Going forward Ysgol Tregarth intends to do the following.

- Develop an individual career plan with every member of staff.
- Plan for the inclusion of parents in professional learning.
- Develop further opportunities for professional learning in a research-led culture.
- Further developing the role of governors in the process of planning and monitoring the effect of staff’s professional learning.
- Continue the school’s journey to develop as an effective learning organisation.