

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

## Context and background

### The school

Ysgol Cae'r Nant is an English-medium primary school in Flintshire and is part of GwE, the School Effectiveness and Improvement Service for North Wales. The school has 391 learners on roll: 17.99 per cent are eligible for free school meals (FSM); 32 per cent have additional learning needs (ALN); 12.1 per cent have English as an alternative language (EAL); and 20 per cent are global A\* and A grade learners, regarded as more able and talented. The gender split in the school is 50.38 per cent boys and 49.62 per cent girls.

### Designated leaders and members of teaching staff

The leadership team has four members of staff. There are 16 teachers in Ysgol Cae'r Nant as well as 17 teaching assistants.

### Additional professional learning grant allocation

The school received £9,144 for the period 2018/19.

## How the additional grant was used

The grant funded professional learning to prepare for the new curriculum. Building on previous work on 'Visible Learning,' the school invested in the *Mantle of the Expert* approach to capture learners' imagination and make learning more meaningful and exciting.

Ysgol Cae'r Nant were inspired to invest in this approach following a visit to Priory School in Brecon. Nicky Kilpatrick, Headteacher, said:

'Both myself and my assistant headteacher witnessed the positive impact that *Mantle of the Expert* had on their learners. Our learners were engaged in learning but not invested, and we wanted to change this.'

Ysgol Cae'r Nant utilised the grant to train both teaching and non-teaching staff in the school and release staff to visit other *Mantle of the Expert* training schools.

In order to become the first *Mantle of the Expert* training school in north Wales the school worked with stakeholders to:

- share training and experiences with colleagues and forming triads across schools
- provide support and open days for other schools to discover this new pedagogy
- hold *Mantle of the Expert* weeks for staff to experiment and try different techniques
- share feedback in staff meetings to inform professional learning community groups.

### Impact of the grant on colleagues across the school

Reflecting on the impact on staff, Nicky Kilpatrick, Headteacher at the school commented:

'We have a mixture of newly qualified and experienced staff here at Ysgol Cae'r Nant. All staff were enthused and had a thirst to professionally develop in this area. They immediately saw the impact that the approach had on our learners, and as a result wanted to develop their own skills further.'

Staff have supported other settings in implementing the *Mantle of the Expert* approach, allowing them to develop as mentors and reflective practitioners and leaders.

Acknowledging the commitment of staff, Nicky Kilpatrick added:

'To achieve *Mantle of the Expert* training school status a number of staff members needed to be quality assured. Staff who become involved require immersive training, regular observations and feedback. The training took staff out of their comfort zones but all agreed that it has had an overwhelmingly positive impact on their classroom practice.'

## Impact of the grant on learners

Some of the benefits of the *Mantle of the Expert* approach reaped by learners at Ysgol Cae'r Nant can be seen below.

Learners are invested in their learning – they are passionate and proud of their work.

Learners frequently bring in work from home, linked to their *Mantle of the Expert* enquiries. This was rare before using this approach.

Work trawls have proven that the *Mantle* has had a positive impact on the depth, quality and volume of writing that learners produce.

Learning walk evidence shows that when carrying out a *Mantle of the Expert* enquiry all learners participate enthusiastically.

Learners speak passionately and purposefully to a range of audiences e.g. GWE advisers, headteachers, parents/carers and governors.

## Lessons learned about professional learning for application to the school

Key learning points from Ysgol Cae'r Nant include the following.

- Adopting a whole-school approach is essential.
- Whole-school professional learning should be linked to performance management targets.
- Plan effectively to maintain pace.
- Monitor progress to ensure consistency and provide support.

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

Key tips from Ysgol Cae'r Nant can be seen below.

Allow time for new methodologies/ strategies to embed and monitor closely.

Don't be afraid of making mistakes – learning from them can be very powerful.

## Next steps

Ysgol Cae'r Nant will aim to:

- maintain the *Mantle of the Expert* training-school status
- quality assure additional staff to become *Mantle of the Expert* teachers
- continue to share good practice with other schools during open days etc.