

Case study: Use of the additional professional learning grant in 2019/20

Context and background

The school

Langstone Primary School is an English-medium Primary school in Newport and forms part of the EAS, School Effectiveness and Improvement Service for south east Wales. The school has 325 learners on roll: 2 per cent are eligible for free school meals (FSM); 8 per cent have additional learning needs (ALN); 1.5 per cent have English as an alternative language (EAL). The gender split in the school is 51 per cent boys and 49 per cent girls.

Designated leaders and members of teaching staff

The leadership team has five members of staff. There are 15 full-time equivalent teachers (FTE) in Langstone Primary School, as well as 9.5 FTE teaching assistants

Additional professional learning grant allocation

The school received £9,229 for the period between April 2019 and March 2020.

How the additional grant was used

The additional grant was used in a number of ways to support professional learning in the school, including:

- releasing a member of staff to attend training on research methodologies and to lead research for the school that can support all teachers to be confident and competent with enquiry-based research
- contracting a provider to work with the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) to gain greater understanding of themselves as leaders, of each other as leaders and collectively as a leadership team
- funding cluster work for the more able and talented and developing a Year 5–8 transition programme on the development of deep conceptual understanding in mathematics using concrete, pictorial abstract (CPA) approaches
- giving time to all teachers to complete a 360° review on the Excellence for Teaching and Leaders Programme. This supported improved understanding of the new professional standards for teaching and leadership and continuing professional learning activities.

- arranging for teaching assistants to visit cluster primary schools as part of sharing good practice
- whole-school mathematics training to support the introduction of the new curriculum for Wales in mathematics and numeracy.

Impact of the grant on colleagues across the school

The grant has had various impacts on colleagues across the school including the following.

- Schools as learning organisations and research triads have increased staff confidence by ensuring there's a lead researcher in the school to carry out individual research activities.
- The work between the provider and the SLT has been insightful and this will continue to develop their effectiveness as a team.
- Mathematics continues to be a focus across the school with time dedicated to it at staff meetings, on learning walks and during learning scrutiny and lesson observations. Staff have become more confident when planning for deep conceptual understanding using CPA approaches.
- The 360° reviews were considered to be a useful tool for self-reflection and identifying personal strengths and areas for continued professional learning.

Impact of the grant on learners

The additional grant has had a positive impact on mathematics learning across the school, with learners using a range of recording strategies, such as pictorial and bar models, before moving to more abstract methods.

The impact continues to be monitored, but all learners have a positive attitude towards mathematics learning.

Lessons learned about professional learning for application to the school

Langstone Primary will continue to identify professional learning for all staff in accordance with their performance management targets and linked to 360° self-reviews, the school development plan and regional and national priorities.

The school will continue to work with the clusters to decide how best to move things forward to support Curriculum for Wales.

Lessons learned about professional learning to share with other schools

All staff and governors should be up to date with developments.

Internal training has been supported by INSET provided by external providers.

The positive response to asking staff at the school to complete Hwb questionnaires has enabled the school to share 'what went well', and doing this at each stage of the journey has offered further benefits.

Training and changes have been shared across the cluster and with other triad schools to ensure wider impact.

Any new approaches developed are based on pedagogy and relevant research, which is shared at each stage.

Staff should be involved in the creation of new planning pro-formas which are reviewed and revised accordingly and support the development of Curriculum for Wales.

Next steps

Going forward, Langstone Primary School will continue to deliver professional learning programmes for EAS. Representatives of the school will also attend regional and national events to ensure they are fully up to date on developments.