

Professional enquiry is a key component of Curriculum for Wales, how can Senior Leaders in schools facilitate this within their context and within a climate of change?

Lisa James-Smith

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Abstract

The education system in Wales is currently on an ambitious and innovative reform journey and research and evidence informed practices are crucial to its success. There is a proposed shift in power with teachers themselves developing professional autonomy through undertaking professional enquiry; no longer consumers of research, rather producers. This renewed view of teachers as enablers of the new curriculum and professional enquirers has generated discussion amongst senior leaders of schools of the mechanisms for implementing such a shift and the capacity of schools and teachers to deliver the expectations attributed to them. This research aims to produce insights into how leaders can support the vision of the Welsh Government within a school context (policy intention to policy enactment). Key documents from Welsh Government's, 'National Approach to Professional Learning' intended to support schools and teachers to be Curriculum for Wales ready, will be used to inform research practices. Research comprised of a mixed method approach, utilising an online survey, semi-structured interviews and a desk top exercise using teachers within the context of a school. The aim to produce insights to inform sustainable, curriculum change and develop teachers' professional learning.

Declaration

This work has not previously been accepted in substance for any degree and is not being concurrently submitted in candidature for any degree.

Signed:  (candidate)

Date: 27.3. 20

STATEMENT 1

This dissertation is being submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Masters in Education

Signed: 

Date: 27.3.20

STATEMENT 2

This dissertation is the result of my own independent work / investigation, except where otherwise stated.

Other sources are acknowledged by footnotes giving explicit references. A reference list is appended.

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STATEMENT 3

I hereby give consent for my dissertation, if accepted, to be available for photocopying and for inter-library loan, and for the title and summary to be made available to outside organisations.

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To my loving, gentle dad...as promised.

Chapter 1: Introduction

In 2011, Wales embarked on a large-scale school improvement reform journey and introduced a range of policies to improve the quality and equity of its school system. There was a number of reasons for this but the disappointing performance of Welsh 15 year old pupils in the 2009 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA)¹ results, sparked a national debate on the quality and future of education in Wales. This resulted in a broad consensus on the need for change. Subsequently, the Welsh Government (WG) has undertaken a series of fundamental policy reforms within the Welsh education system (WG, 2012 and 2017), including large-scale curriculum reform. This has been undertaken by utilising a range of external expertise; independent reviews undertaken by the OECD², Professors Tabberer³, Furlong⁴ and Donaldson⁵ and the revision of its professional learning strategy. Policy reform currently focuses on the three core objectives of “raising standards, reducing the attainment gap between pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds and their peers; and delivering an education system that is a source of national pride and public confidence” (Williams, ‘Our National Mission’, 2017, p2). The message from Welsh Government is clear, the reform programme should not only be conceived as a set of policy changes aimed at reshaping practice across Wales, but also a significant shift in the underlying culture.

Whilst there has been considerable agreement amongst educationalist around the need for major changes to the Welsh education system, myself included, there has been debate on specific elements, such as the pace, volume and culture of change and the resources available. One such major cultural shift being, “moving to a more reflective evidence-informed education system with a greater emphasis on professional enquiry and research”

¹ [PISA](#) is an international study that was launched by the OECD in 1997, first administered in 2000 and now covers over 80 countries. Every 3 years the PISA survey provides comparative data on 15-year-olds’ performance in reading, mathematics and science. In addition, each cycle explores a distinct “innovative domain” such as Collaborative Problem Solving (PISA 2015) and Global Competence (PISA 2018). The results have informed education policy discussions at the national and global level since its inception.

² www.OECD.org/edu/Improving-schools-in-Wales.pdf

³ Gov.wales/topics/educationandskills/publication/wagreviews/review-of-initial-training-in-wales/

⁴ Gov.wales/topics/educationandskills/publication/wagreviews/teaching-tomorrows-teachers/

⁵ Gov.wales/topics/educationandskills/schoolshome/curriculum-for-wales-curriculum-life/why-we-are-changing/successful-futures/

(Rowlands, 2020, p4). 'Enquiry' has become the driving force for changing practice or 'Pedagogy'. In a recent Welsh Government, 'National Engagement Event' (11.3.20), providing *Curriculum for Wales* updates to key educationalists, Dr Kevin Palmer (Deputy Director, Pedagogy, Leadership and Professional Learning Division, Welsh Government), clearly stated the importance of an enquiry driven workforce to realise the *Four Purposes*, the vision for Education in Wales. "Enquiry on the reflection of teaching and practice is pedagogy-pedagogy is the deep understanding of what makes learning work", he moves on to state that, "being enquiry led [profession] helps to create an ecosystem for informed opinion". The idea of teachers being the experts within their classroom with a sound knowledge of what works is fundamental to our new curriculum.

'Successful Futures: Independent Review of Curriculum and Assessment Arrangements in Wales' (Donaldson, G, 2015), a research document funded by Welsh Government to examine the current state of education in Wales, has become the catalyst for current education reform at all levels undertaken in Wales. The report includes the views of a broad range of stakeholders; children, teachers, educational professionals, parents and experts on a national, international and global level and resulted in sixty eight recommendations, all of which were adopted by Welsh Government. Chapter Five 'Pedagogy' is key to my research. Donaldson presents his perception of Pedagogy within the realisation of the Four Purposes, whereby pedagogy becomes more than *teaching*. It represents, "the considered selection of those methods in light of the purposes of the curriculum and the needs and developmental stage of the children and young people", combining theoretical and practical knowledge and skills, with a sound understanding of the, 'why' and 'how' of teaching as well as the 'what' (p65).

"The implications for the formation and subsequent growth of teachers as reflective practitioners and professional enquirers are considerable. Pedagogy lies at the heart of what it means to be an excellent teacher" (Donaldson, p65).

Within the context of my school where I'm undertaking this research, as well as being the current deputy head teacher, the question needs to be asked of how senior leaders facilitate the remit of professional enquiry within such a climate of change?

To realise the recommendations of, 'Successful Futures' and secure the effective implementation of a new curriculum, the Welsh Government released a series of

documents/ action plans setting out the vision and aims for education reform to 2021; 'Qualified for Life- An Education Improvement Plan for 3 to 19 year old in Wales'(2014), 'Curriculum for Wales, A Curriculum for Life' (WG, 2015) and 'Education Wales-Our National Mission 2017-20' (WG, 2017). The current plan is underpinned by four enabling objectives:

- Developing a high-quality education profession.
- Inspirational leaders working collaboratively to raise standards.
- Strong and inclusive schools committed to excellence, equity and well-being.
- Robust assessment, evaluation and accountability arrangements supporting a self- improving system.

At the time of writing, the journey has arrived at, 'Our National Mission: A Transformational Curriculum, Proposals for New Legislative Framework' (White Paper, WG, 2019), "a significant landmark on our education reform journey" (Williams, 2019, p6) and the release of 'Curriculum for Wales' (2020). This new legislative framework is needed to implement the new curriculum and assessment arrangements by reaffirming the principles of a new curriculum for Wales and, "define(s) it through a broad set of duties which provide the freedom for practitioners to use their professionalism and creativity to meet the needs of all learners" (WG, 2019, p9). The newly published Curriculum for Wales offers an overarching structure for curriculum planning, but the responsibility is on each school to design its own curriculum to provide what their learners need to flourish in the twenty first century.

The Welsh Government envisages that these reforms will be achieved through contributions from what it describes as the three tiers of the Welsh education system. Tier 1, Welsh Government, Tier 2, four regional consortia, Estyn, Education Workforce Council and Higher Education Institutes and Tier 3 schools, 'working together to provide the range of experiences for children, young people and professionals to enhance their learning and well-being (WG, 2017a). The Tier 3 schools were introduced in 2016 in, 'Curriculum for Wales, Curriculum for Life', as Pioneer Schools.

There are two types of Pioneer Schools, Curriculum Pioneers and Professional Development and Learning Pioneers. The school used for this research is both a Pioneer Curriculum and Professional Learning school and as such required to co-construct and network with regional consortia, Estyn, Welsh Government (WG), Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to help create the content of the curriculum as well as test and refine it. Professional Learning

Pioneers have the role of identifying the skills, knowledge and understanding needed for the teaching workforce to realise Curriculum for Wales; achieved by undertaking what is termed as, 'Critical Contextual Professional Enquiry' (CCPE), alongside the latest national and international evidence and expertise.

The purpose of this study then is an exploration into how a senior leadership team of a large special school, can prepare its workforce for the new Welsh curriculum, 'Curriculum for Wales' 2022. Currently, schools in Wales follow the National Curriculum which has been in place since 1988. It is a content-based curriculum prescribing what skills and knowledge children should be taught to ensure each pupil is given the same standard of education. The proposed new curriculum will be a '**Purpose**' based curriculum, whereby teachers are given autonomy to decide, within the framework of 'Four Purposes', (the heart and vision of the curriculum), 'six Areas of Learning and Experience (AoLEs)' (the knowledge, skills and experiences), three 'Cross-Curricula Responsibilities' and twelve 'Pedagogical Principles', what and how they want to teach the pupils in their class based on stage of learning referred to as, 'Progression Steps' and the context of the school.

With such a radical new curriculum, the shift from a prescriptive curriculum to a purpose led curriculum the Welsh Government realises their responsibility to upskill the school workforce to ensure their experiences, skills and knowledge are in place to meet the challenges ahead. *Curriculum for Wales 2022* seeks to allow for a broadening of learning, supporting settings and schools to be more flexible in their approaches and provides education leaders and practitioners with greater agency, enabling them to be innovative and creative in their approach. A key message of, *Successful Futures* was a view of teachers as 'professional developers' of the curriculum and 'agents of change', and a new emphasis on flexible, local planning.

"to assist teacher agency and support education professionals and practitioners to enjoy the autonomy to make school-level decisions within a common framework, and to design and develop curricula relevant to the context and needs of the learner."
(WG, A guide to Curriculum for Wales 2022, 2019, p6)

The new curriculum is less prescriptive, in order to be enacted to the benefit of learners it is dependent on quality teaching that responds to pupil needs. The new curriculum is designed to give schools the autonomy that the over prescription has inhibited. Schools are

asked to take ownership, taking the framework of the new curriculum and designing it into *their* school curriculum based on pupil need and the context of the school. From my perspective the current opportunity to have a voice in significant curriculum reform, which aims to be inclusive of all learners, is both exciting and essential. Regardless of all the challenges, we agree as a Senior Leadership Team that, “there has never been a better time to be involved in Welsh education and there is much to be proud of... **together we can** be even better” (Williams, K. 2017).

My school, as a Pioneer Curriculum and Professional Learning school, has fortunately been part of the reform journey for four years. Pioneer schools have now been termed, ‘Lead Enquiry School’ (formerly Pioneer Professional Learning) and Quality Improvement schools (formerly Curriculum Pioneer).

This research aims to examine professional learning, specifically the idea of ‘enquiry’ as a professional learning tool, as a means of preparing teaching staff to facilitate the vision of Curriculum for Wales. I hypothesise that the current expectation of the Welsh Government will far exceed what schools are able to deliver regardless of the intent of individual teachers and schools due to the current demands, culture and resources available. I plan to test my assumption within my school to produce insights to inform sustainable, achievable curriculum change. Furthermore, provide awareness into teachers understanding of professional learning in the context of Curriculum for Wales and the Government’s approach to professional learning.

Recognising the difference between policy intention and policy enactment I plan to examine the following questions within my school to establish if, ***‘professional enquiry is a key component of Curriculum for Wales, how can Senior Leaders in schools facilitate this within their context and within a climate of change?:***

- Does the school community understand what is meant by professional enquiry and the expectation assigned to it?
- Do we as leaders encourage staff to engage in enquiry, do we have the right culture and structures necessary to develop an enquiry led profession?
- Does the school community understand the term, *teacher agency*, and as a means of curriculum reform? Or as Donaldson states ‘professional developers’ and ‘agents of

change’ as well as the principle of ‘subsidiarity’ (Handy, C. 1995), recommendation 22 of Successful Futures?

- Finally, do senior leaders understand the systems for change and the impact of change on people, to use such knowledge to be successful in preparing its workforce for major curriculum reform. Leading change, theory into practice?

To answers the questions posed I plan to examine the Welsh Government’s professional learning strategy within the context of current curriculum reform and how it can be used to prepare our workforce for change.

“professional learning is extremely important in the building of teacher agency particularly the engagement with professional enquiry which will be crucial in enabling teachers in Wales to develop their theories of knowledge to work with the new curriculum in innovative and constructive ways”. (Egan, 2018)

Two documents will be central in this, the Welsh Government’s *Professional Standards for Teaching and Leadership* (WG, 2017) to develop in teachers new skills and approaches, “[which] place emphasis upon each teacher extending themselves in terms of their pedagogy through innovation, collaboration, professional learning and leadership” (Waters, 2017); and the OECD’s *Schools as Learning Organisations model* (SLO), to support change management and leadership (Kools and Stoll, 2016) and consider if these two approaches support each other or if there is dissonance. If the SLO model and professional standards are interpreted in the right way I believe both can exemplify, “the importance of effective professional learning for teachers being continuous, facilitated by collaboration and networking and engaging teachers in and with educational research” (Egan, 2019). I will also examine the work of Professor Mark Priestley and his research into Scotland’s *Curriculum for Excellence (2015)*, to exemplify the idea of ‘teacher agency’. To conclude I plan to examine change management models to support transformational change within my school. All research will be undertaken within my school using predominantly teaching staff, undertaking an online survey, semi structured interviews and a desk top activity.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Setting the scene, my context- climate of change and curriculum reform

Within my introduction I outlined the changing shape of Welsh Education, my stance is highly supportive of the Welsh Government. Accomplishing all that is expected of schools, leaders and teachers will prove challenging. Policy enactment through examining professional enquiry will be the pilot for further developments within my school. As a school we have fully followed the journey with Welsh Government, the next stage will be empowerment of my staff to enable the vision for all learners through professional enquiry. Some research as to why the role of *Enquiry* is given such importance will need to be examined.

September 2016 schools across Wales were chosen by Welsh Government and Local Consortia to become Pioneer Schools for both Professional Learning and Curriculum, my school was chosen for both. Their remit to engage in and explore the new curriculum content within their own school and with wider partner schools or, 'Cluster Schools'; prior to the draft Curriculum for Wales release nationally in April 2019 as well as after its release.

Central to the process of curricula reform is the focus on enhancing and shaping teacher agency and nurturing the professional learning needs of teachers and other staff (Priestley, Biesta, & Robinson, 2012). Between 2017 and 2018, Pioneers were developing the idea of teacher agency through a co-constructed research project based on an adapted 'critical collaborative professional enquiry' (CCPE) model (Drew, Priestley, & Michael, 2016). Enquiry was undertaken in cycles examining suitability of content within, Areas of Learning and Experience (AoLE's), Progression Steps, as well as identifying professional learning opportunities to support teachers in realising the new curriculum. Enquiry findings were reported to Welsh Government via universities (University of Wales Trinity St David's and Glasgow University) involved in supporting the Pioneer schools to undertake their research. This stage in the reform process was referred to as the CAMAU project.

From 2018 to 19, the focus of Pioneer Schools was to further develop their professional enquiry skills through *authentic investigations* in their own schools and within their clusters supported by the University of Wales Trinity St David, Bangor University and Cardiff

Metropolitan University. This work aimed to identify the immediate professional learning requirements aligned to the new curriculum. The feedback phase concluded in July 2019, allowing Curriculum Pioneer Schools and wider stakeholders to review recommendations made, modify and refine the content of the new curriculum before being made available in January 2020 in its final form.

A recommendation of the research undertaken through CAMAU, was the need to further develop, 'Critical Contextual Professional Enquiry' (CCPE). 'Enquiry' being a key element to realise curriculum reform, and embedded within the Welsh Government's, Professional Learning Model, 'The National Approach to Professional Learning' (NAPL, 2018)(Appendix 1); through the 'Professional Standards for Teaching and Leadership' (PSTLS, 2017) and 'Schools as Learning Organisations' (SLOs, 2017)). In September 2019, Pioneer Professional Learning schools were divided into sub groups, one being referred to as, 'Lead Enquiry Schools'. The role of such schools being to support teachers and schools to become 'enquiry led'. Within, 'Our National Mission', this forms part of what is referred to as 'the self-improving system', "where school leaders and teachers have the skills, capacity and commitment to continually learn and *improve* their practice so that every child achieves their potential" (WG, 2017, p36). *Improving/improvement*, also tackled through peer engagement and support in what is referred to as a 'collaborative environment'.

These cycles not only provided information that informed curriculum and professional development, but interestingly the experience of universities working with schools in this manner provided evidence for a proposed national approach to professional enquiry. At all stages pioneer leads were developing their research skills.

2019 to 2020 my school is now a 'Lead Enquiry' school, undertaking the 'National Professional Enquiry Project' (NPEP) the new remit to work alongside universities and clusters to achieve a 'National Approach to Professional Enquiry' (NAPE) and support schools to widen research practices.

The purpose of this research however, will be to use past experience of Pioneer engagement, at a regional and national level to support the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) of my school to prepare staff to become "enquiry driven" within a "climate of Change" (WG, 2017). As Donaldson (2015, p111) states,

“A major, sustained change programme will be required to convert the recommendations of (this) review into practice...successful implementation will require a sophisticated change strategy that establishes clear milestones and takes full account of the implications for system and teacher capacity...Based on principles... that the curriculum should be authentic; evidence-based; responsive; inclusive; ambitious; empowering; unified; engaging; based on subsidiarity; and manageable”.

As starting point for Senior Leadership, *teacher capacity*, that is in part, the professional learning needs of staff, will be paramount especially if we are to achieve subsidiarity and empowerment of staff. Creating system capacity for this to transpire will depend on an understanding of teachers’ perception of the principles stated in Successful Futures and leaders ability to facilitate and create the structures necessary.

To do this I plan to review the research literature in three strands. The first strand being to examine the current literature surrounding professional learning, how it supports ‘teacher capacity’, and its importance in realising curriculum for Wales. The second strand professional ‘enquiry’ and how it supports the principles of ‘evidence based’, ‘empowering’, ‘subsidiarity’ as expressed through Successful Futures and the bestowment of teachers as agents of change . Finally, models of change management- how the transformational agenda of the Welsh Government can be managed on a school level to bring about a cultural shift; identifying the challenges that will arise for teachers and leaders alike and possible solutions within a school context.

Strand 1: Professional Learning- realising Curriculum for Wales

At each stage of its ambition to transform education in Wales, the Welsh Government has collaborated internationally with education professionals and international research, including, “The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development’ (OECD). Their role being to evaluate progress and make recommendations for future developments. Since 2014, they reported a shift in the Welsh approach to school improvement, “away from a piecemeal and short-term policy orientation towards one that is guided by a long-term vision and characterised by a process of co-construction with key stakeholders” (2014).

Equally, they advocated strengthening some of the implementation processes that underpin Wales’ reform journey, as well as several policy areas: the development of a high-quality teaching profession, making leadership a key driver of education reform, ensuring

equity in learning opportunities and student well-being, and moving towards a new system of assessment, evaluation and accountability. Such recommendations have impacted hugely on the current phase of the reform journey and resulted in the *Four Enabling Objectives* of 'Our National Mission' (2017). These *objectives* support the Welsh Government's vision for our new education system whereby, "learners in Wales will enjoy teaching and learning that inspires them to succeed, in an education community that works cooperatively and aspires to be great, where the potential of every child and young person is actively developed" (Welsh Government, 2014).

In 2015 Wales further refined its education vision of the Welsh learner through the *Four Purposes* of the new curriculum. These state that all children and young people should develop as:

1. ambitious, capable learners, ready to learn throughout their lives
2. enterprising, creative contributors, ready to play a full part in life and work
3. ethical, informed citizens of Wales and the world
4. healthy, confident individuals, ready to lead fulfilling lives as valued members of society

(Donaldson, 2015; Welsh Government, 2015).

This ambition for all 16 year olds leaving school, has guided the design and development of Curriculum for Wales 2022. It is the heart and vision for all professionals involved in creating and realising the new curriculum.

Undeniably then, the expectation on schools to achieve the Welsh ambition of this new curriculum is aspirational. Recommendations 58 to 62 focuses on teacher and leadership capacity and what the programme of professional learning should entail so that teachers are equipped with the skills and knowledge necessary to realise 'Curriculum for Wales' (p117-118). The Furlong (2015) review and Waters (2017) of Initial Teacher Education and professional standards identified the need for substantial change in training and professional learning to achieve the vision, resulting in new professional standards made statutory in 2018. Equally, Estyn also identifies the importance of leadership and teaching in building capacity for school improvement, they state that where leadership and teaching is excellent, "... a strong culture of professional learning, with systematic planning for and evaluation of professional learning activities" exist. (ESTYN, Annual Report, 2017).

The message is clear from all tiers, Curriculum for Wales will only succeed through the abilities of its workforce and the commitment of leadership to drive it forward.

Furthermore, Chapter Four, 'Delivery', White Paper (WG, 2018) examines the role of professional learning and the importance of helping teachers to be, "the best that they can be... (to) unleash their creative and professional expertise...be life-long students, learning from each other, continuously improving". Such peer to peer and local drive to improve is framed by what is referred to as, The National Approach to Professional Learning (NAPL, 2018). This framework builds capacity for all practitioners including teaching support staff, classroom teachers and school leaders and underpins all aspects of the Welsh Government's National Mission for Education. The Minister for Education in Wales, Kirsty Williams, believes that a national approach to professional learning will reduce variation in existing provision and guarantee an equitable entitlement for all practitioners.

This legislative arm of realising Curriculum for Wales endorses chapter seven of '*Successful Futures*', regarding a balance between enabling teachers to use their professionalism and creativity to respond to the needs of their own children and young people, and ensuring that those aspects of the curriculum deemed to be essential are given legislative force. In a school context, teachers would be encouraged to take significant responsibility for developing a curriculum which is consistent with national expectations, but which is also able to reflect the needs of the children and young people in their school.

Within the NAPL the new Professional Standards for Teaching and Leadership (PTLS) (WG, 2017) and Schools as Learning Organisations (SLOs) (WG, 2018) are the structures to cultivate professional learning.

If Our National Mission (2017 p2) sets the scene for professional learning and the importance of realising the Welsh ambition through four enabling objectives, of promoting teaching and leadership excellence so that standards are raised across the board. Then professional standards are the conduit in achieving this priority; by describing the skills, knowledge and behaviours that characterise excellent practice and by supporting professional growth at a personal level and increasing capacity for professional autonomy and transformative practice. On a school and national level, Schools as Learning

Organisations provide the framework for preparing the workforce. Both are essential enablers for the vision of teachers as creative, inquiring professionals as set out in the Furlong and Donaldson reports in a way which provides entitlement for professionals and not simply a performance management exercise. For the purpose of my research professional standards and schools as learning organisations will need to be examined closely.

a) Professional Standards

Professional standards have an important role to play in describing the skills, knowledge and behaviours that characterise excellent practice. Within the last three years the government have released new standards for teaching and leadership, for classroom support assistants as well for initial teacher education, “designed with the profession for the profession” (Waters, 2017). Standards are used to support career long professional learning and growth and extend the use of effective pedagogy. There is an expectation that the profession commits to extending themselves in order to best serve and affect positively on the life chances of the learner in all schools, “Teachers influence the future while working with the present” (WG, 2017). Standards have an over-arching set *of professional entitlements, values and dispositions*, and also places an expectation that education professionals engage with research and develop their practice throughout their career.

There are *five Standards of Practice*- pedagogy, innovation, collaboration, leadership and professional learning, with pedagogy considered to be the most important dimension (Children, Young People and Education Committee, 2017, p17). Within each dimension, *elements* have been selected to focus on the key features of reform of the curriculum and on the characteristics of professional practice. In turn each element is expressed through two *descriptors*, the first professional practice required at entry to the profession, the second to exemplify sustained highly effective practice.

“They empower all those teaching in our classrooms to work together to raise learner outcomes. This is a key part of a fundamental shift towards a system driven by career-long learning. My vision is to strengthen leadership and make sure that there is greater consistency across our schools”. (Davies, 2017)

As Deputy Head Teacher with responsibility for the professional development of 190 staff, the challenge will be how to ensure teaching staff (support staff) use the standards to grow, spread, deepen and innovate effective pedagogy. The dilemma being creating the systems,

afore mentioned by Donaldson in his review, to enable effective professional development as well as reiterate its purpose as professional *entitlement* to improve teacher capacity. For the purpose of my research I plan to focus on the 'Professional Learning' standard and the elements of a) 'Wider Reading and Research Findings' and b) 'Professional Networks and Communities', and their descriptors. The first for teachers: a)

- **Sustained Highly Effective Practice descriptor:** There is structured engagement in an action research community and evidence of practice informed by wider reading and research findings on a national and international scale.
- **Induction Descriptor:** The teacher makes reasoned pedagogic decisions based upon relevant reading and research findings

From the leadership standards:

- **Sustained Highly effective Formal Leadership descriptor:** Leadership is a reservoir of knowledge and understanding about pedagogic reading and research and able to make connections for the teaching community linked to their working context.
- **Effective Formal Leadership descriptor:** Leadership maintains and develops a constructive and relevant attitude to study in colleagues.

The language used emphasizes the importance of research to professional practice as well as the *pressure* on senior leads to be well read, supporting the school community to be likewise. Undoubtedly this should be the case, to raise standards and improve the education experience of our pupils. However, there is a greater component to this when considered alongside b) 'Professional Networks and Communities'

- **Sustained Highly Effective Practice descriptor:** The teacher takes an active role in the wider education community with contributions to journals, conferences and learning communities.
- **Induction descriptor:** The teacher makes efforts to benefit from a regional, national or international professional network or community, focused on appropriate subject, process or age phase.

From the leadership standards:

- **Sustained Highly effective Formal Leadership descriptor:** Leadership ensures that the school plays an active role in the widest education community with planned contributions to journals, conferences or learning communities on the part of all in the community, including learners.
- **Effective Formal Leadership descriptor:** Contribution to conferences, journals and research is carried out in partnership with others.

From this point enquiry moves from an activity of enhancing classroom practice and a school improvement tool, to a very different level. Enquiry for publishing for the education community has far greater implication on school resources, structures and systems, including the issue of ethics. How this can be facilitated, regardless of my own personal beliefs and perspectives of its value, will be challenging.

The following model may offer some assistance to this dilemma.

b) Schools as Learning Organisations

The OECD model of 'Schools as Learning Organisations' offers the following explanation of the term and concept:

"A learning organisation is a place where the beliefs, values and norms of employees are brought to bear in support of sustained learning; where a 'learning atmosphere', 'learning culture' or 'learning climate' is nurtured and where 'learning to learn' is essential for everyone involved". (Kools and Stoll, 2016 p 47).

Wales considers the development of schools as learning organisations as vital for supporting schools to put its new, 21st century curriculum into practice. A growing body of research evidence shows that schools that operate as learning organisations can react more quickly to changing external environments and embrace changes and innovations (OECD, 2018).

"Schools that are learning organisations have the capacity to adapt more quickly to changes as well as explore and try out new approaches so that they can improve learning and outcomes for all their students" (Welsh Government, 2017).

A 'Schools as Learning Organisations' (SLO) model for Wales was released in November 2017 (Appendix 2) to support schools to develop as learning organisations. Professional Development and Learning Pioneer Schools had a leading role in developing and exemplifying the characteristics and behaviour that all schools in Wales need to show to be successful learning organisations. The model gives an indication of a schools "readiness for change" (OECD, 2018) at both school- and system levels. The model was released as an online survey (November 2018), supplying senior leaders of schools quantitative data against the seven dimensions of the model. The SLO model for Wales focuses the efforts of school leaders, teachers, support staff, parents, (local) policy makers and all others involved into realising seven dimensions in its schools. These seven action-oriented dimensions and

their underlying elements highlight both what a school should aspire to and the processes it goes through as it transforms itself into a learning organisation.

In his research report to Welsh Government to support the, 'National Professional Learning Approach for Wales: Area 9 Professional Learning and Schools as Learning Organisations' (2018), Egan et al, questions the claim of the Welsh Government that, "the majority of schools in Wales seem well on their way in developing as learning organisations" (OECD, 2018, p3). A claim based on a self-reported survey completed by less than 10% of schools in Wales.

A concern justly made. In 2017, the pilot SLO survey was undertaken by myself and a number of staff within my school with little direction and purpose. The 'snapshot', the term used for the results, could easily be questioned on its validity and reliability as a true representation of the school. Staff, including myself, undertook the questionnaire with the unenthusiastic attitude of, "not another questionnaire". However, the outcome, the snapshot itself, regardless of the somewhat negative undertaking, exposed an over enthusiastic result, pleasing but not a true reflection of the school. This also highlighted the importance of further research methods than simply using a questionnaire result to formulate opinion.

What's more, the same survey (OECD, 2018) also identified that two dimensions had been less well developed, one of which 'establishing a culture of inquiry, innovation and exploration'. Interesting as this a key principles to curriculum reform and the focus of this research. The description of this dimension are as follows:

- Staff are willing to take risks and experiment and innovate in their practice
- The school supports and recognises staff for taking initiative and risks
- Staff engage in forms of enquiry to investigate and extend their practice
- Enquiry is used to establish and maintain a rhythm of learning, change and innovation
- Staff are open to thinking and doing things differently
- Problems and failures are seen as opportunities for learning
- Learners are actively engaged in Enquiry

Enquiry within this model is about the professional learning culture of a school and the freedom for staff to be creative and innovative in their practice. As in the *Professional*

Standards the importance of teachers and schools becoming engaged in and with research is highlighted within the *SLO* model. Its focus however, is on the “efficacy of research for improved school effectiveness within what is currently the dominant paradigm of self-improving school systems” (Hargreaves, 2012). Teachers and leaders motivation to be involved in *enquiry* is dependent on many factors, the description of the *SLO* model points towards that of culture. The worth of professional enquiry is paramount for Welsh Government and its reform agenda, but does this emphasis translate to the workforce? If not the vision of professionalism envisioned by Donaldson and Furlong may not be realised.

Welsh Government will need to make a decision on the focus on enquiry-will teachers be expected to be *enquiry* driven for school improvement, to undertake *enquiry* to make improvements within classrooms or will they be schools producing research to be published within academic journals?

Strand 2: Enquiry and empowerment.

- “..an enquiry which is carried out in order to understand, to evaluate and then to change in order to improve educational practice.”
Bassey (1998)
- “...a personal attempt at understanding while engaged in a process of improvement and reform.”
Hopkins (2002)

These two definition of ‘enquiry’ as a process of understanding for improvement are advanced further by Kennedy (2005). In her paper, ‘Models of Continuing Professional Development: a framework for analysis’, Kennedy identifies nine key models classified in relation to their capacity for supporting professional autonomy and transformative practice. For the purpose of this research, model nine the *Action Research Model* was of greater interest. Kennedy cites,

‘(Action research) the study of a social situation, involving the participants themselves as researchers, with a view to improving the quality of action within it’. (2005)).

An explanation of ‘enquiry’ shared by Bassey and Hopkins. However, she goes on to discuss that it has greater impact on practice when it is shared in communities of practice and has relevance to practitioners (Weiner, 2002; Burbank & Kauchack, 2003), thus instilling “greater participation, relevance and democracy” (p. 3). Collaborative action research

provides an alternative to the passive role imposed on teachers in traditional models of professional development. Teachers being encouraged to view research as a process as opposed to merely a product of someone else's endeavours (Burbank & Kauchack (2003). This model identifies shifting the balance of power towards teachers themselves through their identification and implementation of relevant research activities, developing capacity for professional autonomy. This aligns itself to Donaldson's idea of 'subsidiarity' and teachers being 'agents of change'.

"if the aim is to create a high-performing system, approaches should focus less on central direction and more on the need to develop local responsibility and decision making, build capacity and engage teachers and schools more creatively in the improvement process". (McKinsey and Company, 1978)

However, as Donaldson (2015, p99) notes, "'education systems inevitably include schools and teachers with varying experience, confidence and capacity", so an approach to support both ends of the spectrum of schools and teachers will be needed.

'Subsidiarity', means that power stays as close as possible to the action, "(it) is dependent on mutual trust and confidence which supports positive disagreement and argument". (Handy, 95). Donaldson, exemplifies this further, " the message for Wales is for the Welsh government to set the direction and place trust in the vast majority of schools and teachers to follow that lead in ways that will serve their children and young people well'.

This is a significant shift given several decades of policies that worked to de-professionalise teachers, with prescriptive curricula and oppressive regimes of testing and inspection.

"The extent of legislative control and associated accountability mechanisms, seen as necessary at the time, have inhibited professionalism, agility and responsiveness in dealing with emerging issues, and have forced too-frequent political intervention in non-strategic matters." (Donaldson, 2015,p10)

Now teachers not only have a say in curriculum reform on a national level but on a local level. Donaldson planted the seed that not only gives explicit permission for teachers to exert high[er] degrees of professional autonomy within the contexts in which they work, but actually sees it as an important dimension of teachers' professionalism.

There remains the question of how teachers exert professional autonomy and leaders embed the idea of subsidiarity into their school culture, a complete shift in mindset.

‘Enquiry’ is an established element of professional practice intended to build capacity, empowering, creating innovation and change, but in itself is it enough?

Priestley’s research in the context of ‘Curriculum for Excellence’ (Scotland) may offer some guidance as it is an example of recent curricular reform in which teachers are explicitly positioned as agents of change. In his paper, ‘Teacher Agency and Curriculum Change’, Priestley et al (2012) examines the factors that are likely to promote or inhibit teacher agency. He argues that agency isn’t simply about individual capacity, as something that individuals have or don’t have, but as something that is achieved in and through concrete contexts for action. He identifies the idea of agency as an achievement rather than an (individual) capacity.

” While the capacities and capabilities of individuals are important and might be seen as a necessary condition for the achievement of agency, it is never a sufficient condition, as agency always has to be achieved in concrete situations. This means that the achievement of agency also depends on existing cultures of thinking, working and doing (see also James & Biesta 2007; Biesta 2011), and on wider structural issues.” (Priestley, 2012 p8)

Teacher agency depends on interdependencies; teacher education and professional development in order to increase teachers' capacity and capability, personal belief and attention to cultures and structures. “Without attention to the latter two levels as well, it is unlikely that the call for teachers to become agents of change will effect a real transformation of educational processes and practices” (Priestley et al, 2012)).

This suggests that If there is a mismatch between these there is a real danger professional agency won’t be realised, or subsidiarity. *Enquiry*, in itself as a professional learning tool to bring improvement and informed knowledge to empower and enrich classroom practice will only work in the right environment, reinforcing Fullan’s (1993) maxim that change requires “reculturing as well as restructuring”.

3. Change Management.

Within Successful Futures, Donaldson writes about the need for:

“A major, sustained change programme... to convert the recommendations of the Review into practice. Successful implementation will require a sophisticated change strategy that

establishes clear milestones and takes full account of the implications for system and teacher capacity". (2015, p111)

He writes of the recurring issues of, "whether the mechanisms for implementing previous decisions about the curriculum had taken sufficient account of the capacity of schools and teachers to deliver well what was expected of them".

Regardless of policy being accepted, if implementation isn't considered carefully regarding school based capacity, then policy intention are unlikely to be realised. Historically, there is a discouraging portrayal of educational reform in different settings (Hoyle, 75; Hattie, 76; Elmore, 77). Change strategies are highly cultural and context specific, there is a need to be wary of isomorphism. Donaldson identifies the need, "to learn the lessons from the limitations of past reform and adopt a change strategy that best meets the nature of the Welsh context and its educational culture". He identifies a list of issues that must be considered:

- have a governance structure that can maintain strategic oversight of implementation, is inclusive, has reliable evaluation and feedback mechanisms and allows clear and timely decision making
- ensure that the purposes and intended benefits of the proposed reform programme are communicated clearly and effectively
- establish engagement mechanisms designed to secure the active involvement of the teaching profession

All are considerations made to support the national agenda but are also relevant in realising change within my school context. Consequently, change should be carefully phased, is part of an implement plan (School improvement plan), allow time for engagement and discussion and at all stages communicated effectively to the school community.

My research has identified numerous strategies and approaches that can be used by leaders to implement change (Lewin, 1950; McKinsey, 1980; Kotter, 1996; Hiatt (PROSCI organisation), 2006; Bridges, 1933; Kubler, 1969). All start with the need to state why change is crucial and needed. All have differing strengths and weaknesses but through examining them it is possible to identify that change management in itself will not produce lasting change.

Recent attendance at a 'Change Management Masterclass'(2018) presented by Melanie Franklin, Chair of the Change Management Institute, provided further insight on how to

proceed with change within my context. The objectives of the event were to look at the capabilities of individuals to lead change and how to realise change without destabilising the school. Within capabilities of leadership to implement change, she examined the *personality* needed to instigate change; that of influence, inspire and enthuse. Leadership needs to communicate change in this manner not as some additional burden of something that has to be done. A crucial consideration.

Change management in itself is the ongoing “process that takes time, expertise, dedication and efforts to implement and run” (Franklin, 2018), it refers to a structure that controls organisational change and moves an “organisation from the status quo to a desired future state”. However, while change management in itself is a process of controlling and supporting an organisation to adjust to change it rarely has the ability to empower and give ownership of the change to an organisation’s employees. Franklin states, “unless employees feel empowered to change the way they operate in accordance with other changes to the organisation, the change cannot be either deep-rooted or far-reaching”. She talks of the necessity of, “a driving force” to compel the organisation to change, without this urgency, a change management process will likely find it difficult to drive rapid or large-scale change. This is where, ‘Change Leadership’ become imperative because it holds the necessary authority and communicates the vision. While change management monitors and controls the change, change leadership is the force behind driving the change.

Of the models examined, ‘The PROSCI ADKAR® Model’ provides a goal-oriented change management model that guides individual and organisational change. The goal being to achieve a ‘culture of enquiry’

ADKAR is an acronym that represents the five tangible and concrete outcomes that people need to achieve for lasting change: awareness, desire, knowledge, ability and reinforcement.

- Awareness of the need for change
- Desire to participate in and support the change
- Knowledge on how to change
- Ability to implement required skills and behaviors
- Reinforcement to sustain the change

PROSCI also provides a 5 stage plan for facilitating ADKAR: Communicating the Plan, Sponsor Roadmap (actions), Training Plan (knowledge and abilities), Coaching Plan and Resistance Management Plan. Resistance based on emotional or psychological inhibitors to change. Bridges', 'Transition Model' and Kubler- Ross', '5 Stage model', may exemplify further what is meant by this. Bridge's model focusses upon transition, the loss of the old ways of doing something and movement to the new. The difference between transition and change is subtle, but it is important to understand it. Where transition on one hand is internal, change on the other is something that happens to people, even when they don't realise it. Transition is something that happens to people when they are going through the change. Change can be instant, transition may take time. The model focuses on three main stages that are given as follows:

- **Ending, Losing, and Letting Go** –this first stage that is marked with resistance and emotional discomfort including fear, resentment, anger, denial, sadness, frustration and most of all-disorientation.
- **The Neutral Zone** – This is the stage of uncertainty, impatience, and confusion. This stage is associated with low morale and reduced productivity, and one may experience anxiety and skepticism as well when going through this stage. But despite this, the neutral zone may also include innovation, renewal and a burst of creativity.
- **The New Beginning** – When the neutral phase is passed through support and guidance, the stage of acceptance and energy enters the picture. At this level, people begin to embrace the change and understand its importance. They are beginning to build the skills needed to reach the new goals and may start to experience benefits of the change already. It is associated with high levels of energy, new commitment and a zest to learn.

Kübler-Ross' '5 Stage Model' is based on research of those diagnosed with a terminal illness. However, the five stages can be applied to the loss change can bring such as; denial, then anger, bargaining, depression and finally, acceptance. Both models serve to inform the reasons behind emotional attachment to change. An understanding of this will aid leadership to plan effectively as well as support their team through the change process.

Lessons learnt from this section, to 'create a culture of enquiry, within a climate of change' will inform my methodology. Communicating what will be happening and why, Franklin refers to this as 'Horizon Scanning', what is around the corner to avoid "trips and falls", the plan. Staff need to understand what can be gained, "desirability or attractiveness of the future state- the vision" (Berkhard & Harris, 1987). The worth of professional enquiry is paramount for Welsh Government and its reform agenda, but can this emphasis translate to the workforce? The need for co-construction and collaboration, involvement of all and

ownership. Throughout the process leadership need to understand the emotion assigned to change and time needed for transition and implementation as well as being prepared for resistance and the reasons for it.

Chapter Three: Methodology

In my introduction I set out the aims of my research, this chapter will explain how I intend to undertake my research within an educational context.

Context

This research took place in a very large local authority residential special school in South Wales catering for the needs of 3-19 year olds all with a Statement of Special Educational Needs. Due to the nature of the school there is a high staff to pupil ratio, currently there are 245 pupils alongside 180 classroom based staff, 30 of which are teaching staff the remainder of staff are Higher Level Teaching Assistants and teaching assistants. A number of the staff had previously participated in school based research to support our Pioneer role during the Autumn Term 2019. In addition to this, prior trials with a focus on enquiry had been undertaken from Spring Term 2019, which informed my use of methodology as well as developing greater personal knowledge within this area. All research was carried out with the full permission of the Head Teacher. This school was chosen due to my current position as Deputy Head Teacher with responsibility for the professional learning of all staff besides being one of the 'Lead Enquirers' of Central South Consortium. Undertaking research within a known context has both strengths and dissonance.

The strengths being that of prior knowledge through the engagement and enabling activities regarding 'Curriculum for Wales' facilitated by Welsh Government. Engagement with the four purposes- the vision, exploration of the big ideas of the curriculum and the principles of 'Successful Futures and new educational values. Trials of the curriculum and how it could work within our school context had taken place. Creating the climate of change had begun. Engagement in understanding 'enquiry' had to continue further using the Welsh Government's model of choice, the 'Stirling Model' of 'Critical, Collaborative Professional Enquiry' (CCPE), "the systematic development and evaluation of an intervention or interruption to existing practices' (Drew, Priestley, 2016); in conjunction with consideration of current practices and personal knowledge of the barriers to and drivers of change.

Empowering action by providing development opportunities for enquiry based learning and supporting teacher agency as a means of curriculum reform, developing professional

learning and strengthening approaches to research and enquiry was next. The ambition, whereby professional enquiry will become an established part of professional practice in Wales and a key enabler of the new school curriculum was at this stage, in my school context, in its formative period.

Dissonance was mainly that of my position. My dual role of senior leader and researcher introduced a possible 'social desirability bias' (Nerderhof, 1985). I was concerned that data would be invalid and unreliable, staff responding with answers aimed to please rather than a true indication of opinion.

Nevertheless, using my school and the sample of 30 teachers alongside a proportion of support staff to undertake my research can be seen to exemplify the 'close to practice' research approach that BERA is promoting (Wyse et al, 2019).

Method

Using the Stirling model of CCPE comprising of three phases: focusing, interrupting and sense making. This section comprises of the interrupting stage. Examining and interrupting existing practices to generate empirical data. The aims set in my introduction were:

1. Does the school community understand what is meant by professional enquiry and the expectation assigned to it? Questionnaire/ Interviews/ Desk top activity
2. Do we as leaders encourage staff to engage in enquiry, do we have the right culture and structures necessary to develop an enquiry led profession?
3. Does the school community understand the term, *teacher agency*, and as a means of curriculum reform? Or as Donaldson states 'professional developers' and 'agents of change' as well as the principle of 'subsidiarity' (Handy, C. 1995), recommendation 22 of Successful Futures?
4. Finally, do senior leaders understand the systems for change and the impact of change on people, to use such knowledge to be successful in preparing its workforce for major curriculum reform. Leading change, theory into practice?

To gain evidence to qualify these aims a mixed method approach of an online survey, semi structured interview and a desk top exercise was utilised to provide both quantitative and qualitative data, as to 'compliment' (Thomas, 2013) each other. The occasion for the research was the implementation of Wales' new Curriculum for Wales, a policy that aims to change the structure, content and method of Welsh education. Curriculum for Wales can be seen as an example of modern curricular reform in which teachers are given increased autonomy to make decisions about what and how they should teach within a given framework. To

achieve this teachers need to develop, “a greater understanding and participation of ‘enquiry’ (to)... support the principle of, ‘subsidiarity’ in curriculum reform” (Donaldson, 2015).

The research focused on teachers understanding of ‘enquiry’ as outlined within the Welsh Governments model for professional learning the, ‘National Approach to Professional Learning’ (NAPL) (2018), through the sections of ‘Professional Standards for Teaching and Leadership’ (PTLS) (2018), and ‘Schools as Learning Organisations’ (SLO) (2018), against the background of the introduction of the new curriculum.

These two key documents provided the basis for the survey, interview questions and desk top activity. The rationale to focus on such sources were to gain insight into staffs existing knowledge and understanding; as well as establish if both documents do indeed provide the structure to support teachers and leaders to become enquiry informed and driven; plus support school’s ability to create a culture of enquiry as indicated by the Welsh Government.

An important first step was to gain permission from the Headteacher to undertake my research through email so a record could be made of his agreement. Next, to ‘Horizon Scan’ (Franklin, 2019) to widely share an easily understood narrative of the expectation on teachers that explained how Wales’ SLO model and PTLS can guide schools in their developments or the expectation to. This was conducted by providing staff with an overview, through a presentation delivered in a set school meeting, revisiting the vision of the new curriculum and the structures that are now in place to support schools. As the participants of this research are part of ‘Pioneer’ work they had a firm grounding in curriculum reform. Nonetheless, reaffirming the journey, was an essential part to introducing this research and to share information to possible volunteers. At this stage only teachers were asked to participate as they had prior knowledge of their Professional Teaching and Leadership Standards with the wider school population only having limited experience of the ‘Standards for Assisting Teaching’ (WG, 2019). In addition, to eliminate the possibility of participants feeling coerced a letter was released to teachers via internal email with an explanation of the reasons for research being undertaken, the methods to be

used and stating explicitly that participation was both optional and would be anonymous (Appendix 3).

'Google Surveys' was used as my online survey tool, as the survey needed to gather confidence levels/ understanding/attitudes/ willingness, a Likert Scale (Likert, 1932) was used (Appendix 5). The survey was accessed through a desk top link and actioned for a two weekly period, allowing adequate time for engagement. Prior to its release, a pilot questionnaire was shared with 'Lead Enquiry' colleagues from other schools. Discussions regarding whether to use a five or six point Likert scale (Nadler, 2015) resulted in keeping to five to have the mid-point to identify those who 'just don't know'. An even Likert scale would just 'force' people to decide to be positive or negative response, the 'don't know' response for the purpose of my research was interesting.

The semi- structured interview questions (Appendix 6) were a modified version of the questionnaire, used to qualify further the quantitative data gained in the survey. This approach gave 'thicker' description (Thomas, 2013) to gain further clarity participants could be asked to elaborate. Semi-structured interviews encouraged, "interaction and communication", (Kale,1996), (cited in Cohen 2011,) which was missed from the survey as well as being a "social encounter" (p350). With this in mind, while I could acceptably clarify a question, I would have to refrain from interjecting during response, towards the unacceptable level of Whyte's (1982) six point scale of "directiveness". In addition to, 'being aware not to slide into the 'common pitfalls' (Field and Morse, 1989) of interviewers, that is, of interrupting, awkward questions, jumping from one subject to another, and the temptation to counsel interviewees. Finally and importantly, ask leading questions or phrasing answers in moments of confusion (Cohen, 2013).

The interview questions themselves would aim to be *open ended, neutral, sensitive, and clear to the interviewee* (Patton, 1987). The semi-structure of the interviews would follow a scripted set of open ended questions to ensure consistency and uniformity.

The one to one approach allowed for opportunity to consider body language and tone of voice to gain further understanding of the participants opinion. It's important to note that bias cannot be completely avoided with this research method which can affect the validity of the findings. Yet it helps to be mindful of, "experimenter-expectancy effects' or

'Hawthorn Effect' (Thomas 2013, p. 136) brought about by the expectations of the researcher's gestures, tone of voice conveying expectations about findings can influence the interviewee responses. However, acknowledgement of such biases together with the removal of selection bias (Brady and Collier, 2010) and prestige bias (questionnaire being voluntary) (Henreich and McElreath, 2003) can improve the validity of results. Triangulation with the survey and desk top exercise also helps to minimise bias.

An explanation of the research, participant consent and invite to discuss interview questions were circulated to all teaching staff and written consent gathered from willing participants before the interview date to allow sufficient time to decide whether to engage or ask additional questions to clarify any concerns (Hart and Bond 1995: 199). It was also made clear that participants had the right to withdraw from participating in the research at any time. Information gained from the interview would also be anonymised and data gained stored on an encrypted USB. Participants were assured that any information or opinions they divulged would be used in a confidential, professional manner to inform research. Reporting feedback would be generalised, protecting the identity of participants, therefore the risk of attributing any kind of behaviour or comments to individuals would not be present. This approach endorses the British Education Research Association (BERA) ethical guidelines by providing information regarding the aim of the project, gaining informed consent with reassurance that confidentiality/ data management and anonymity were a priority.

The desk top exercise replaced the original intention of a focus group which proved difficult to action due to the teaching requirement of staff and impact on pupils, coupled with workload agreements and the inappropriateness of conducting outside of school working hours. The desk top exercise was undertaken during an, 'In-service Educational Training' day (INSET). Thus allowing a greater number of staff to be involved and time for discussion and dialogue for those taking part. Prior to the INSET, representation was asked from across the school regardless of role and an explanation circulated of the expectation and necessity of the activity. Participation was again optional, taking part was the informed consent and this was conveyed to staff. The expectation was to examine the 'Enquiry' dimension of the SLO survey to ascertain the general understanding of its content whole school. During the

activity participants were again reminded that partaking was voluntary and their right to withdraw.

The decision to open this method whole school as opposed to only teachers was that this exercise was specifically examining 'Schools as Learning organisations', which all staff would need to be familiar with. It also provided opportunity to gauge whole school understanding of enquiry not just a teacher's perspective. If culture is a major factor in realising teacher agency then everyone must have a voice and an opinion.

Each description needed to be discussed, for a starting point and to support understanding through a context all participants were asked to identify, "What does this look like in our school?", giving responses on sticky notes. Names were not required, participants were encouraged to discuss thoughts and feelings to develop collaboration and understanding. A facilitator was present to collect all data gained but not to give any direction or opinion. All participants were made aware that findings would be used jointly for school improvement and for this research. My reason for using a facilitator rather than facilitate myself was to remove the power bias my role could present; a neutral facilitator would possibly encourage greater honesty in their discussions. Findings were circulated whole school at a following meeting with the intention they then become targets within the school improvement plan (Appendix 4). In hindsight, I wish I had used two facilitators one to direct the activity the other to note any questions asked and engagement of staff without exposing individuals. However, due to the fact I had not made this clear from the outset and because it may have deterred some participants from participating I felt it unethical.

This activity was undertaken to establish to what extent the school already had a 'culture of enquiry', providing a baseline to further utilise the Welsh Government's model.

Furthermore, for the purposes of school improvement it provided the opportunity to prepare staff for the actual 'Schools as Learning Organisation Survey' which was planned to be released to staff following the INSET day, a lesson learned from the pilot undertaken in 2017.

The findings from the methods of a survey, semi-structured interviews and a desk top activity will be discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter Four: Analysis of findings

The research utilised a mixed-methods approach, comprising of an online questionnaire, semi-structured interviews with teachers, and a desk top activity based on the, 'Culture of Enquiry' dimension of the SLO model. Twenty two teaching staff responded to the online questionnaire representing 73% of the teaching population in the school. There were no demographics to this questionnaire.

A total of five semi-structured interviews were conducted by the same participants who undertook the online questionnaire representing almost 25%, of the interviewed teaching population and 17% of the school teaching population. There were no demographics used.

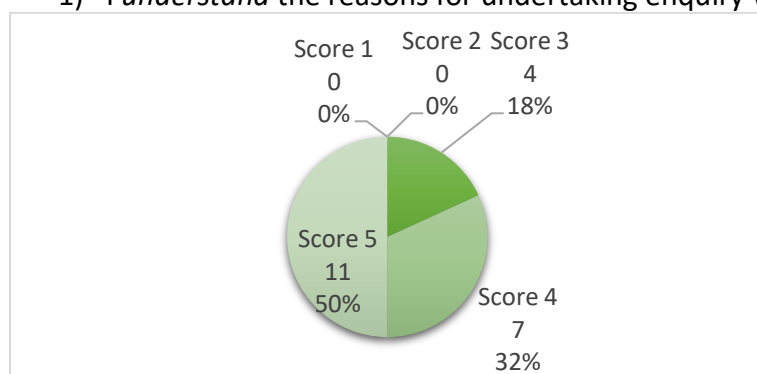
Desk top activity was undertaken by 40 staff from across the school including leaders, teachers and classroom support staff to broaden research finding and to ascertain whether findings from the questionnaire and semi structured interviews undertaken by teachers were reaffirmed whole school. These three research methods will hopefully enhance the validity and reliability of my research

I will report findings from the online questionnaire and interview together to provide both quantitative and qualitative data. I will report online questionnaire in terms of level of understanding, willingness, confidence and support and interview responses in terms of themes.

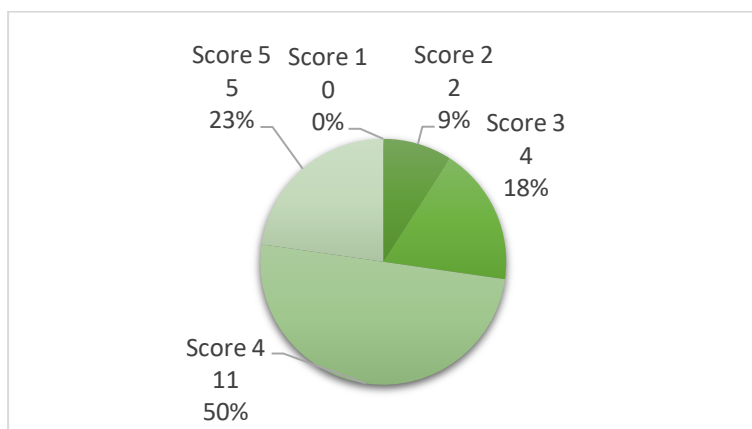
Research findings: Online Survey-taken from a five point Likert Scale and semi-structured interview

Table 1: Questionnaire results

1) *I understand* the reasons for undertaking enquiry within school



2) *I understand* what a culture of enquiry, innovation and exploration looks like in school



On enquiry and culture- of understanding:

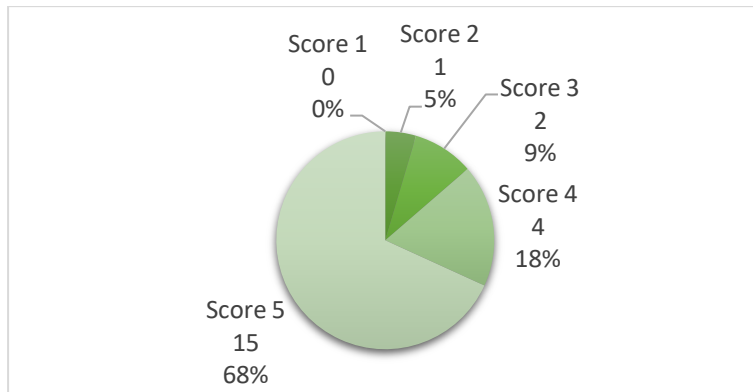
On understanding the reasons for enquiry responses were extremely positive with 82% understanding fully, 18% were unsure.

Response to the culture of enquiry, 73% answering positively, 18% unsure and 9% (2 people) not quite understanding.

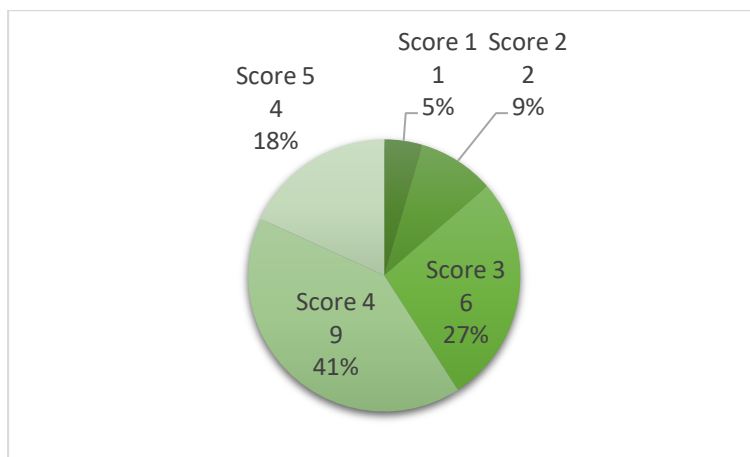
These findings suggest that staff are fully understanding of the importance of undertaking enquiry in school however, teachers may not be aware that for 'enquiry' to flourish appropriate structures need to be in place to create the culture for this to happen. Perhaps staff need a tangible concept to understand fully what a culture of enquiry, innovation and exploration does look like in school. Feedback from the interview corroborate these results, "To inform everything we do" and "to become better practitioners and for children better learning opportunities". The impact on the learning for children was recognised. In response to 'understanding what a culture of enquiry looks like', staff illustrated that they knew but that perhaps systems need to be refined; "I understand what it should look like but the practicalities on creating opportunities and sharing the information is difficult", "It needs to have greater focus, leaders need to make it more formal and tell people to do action research, creating time and space for discussion". The responses indicate that for a culture of enquiry to develop resource factors are prevalent; space and time to action and discuss and a focus. To have an enquiry culture leaders have to do more than support, they need to facilitate it. Egan (2019) states, "the importance of school leadership embracing

professional enquiry as part of a whole-school professional learning culture is critically important.”

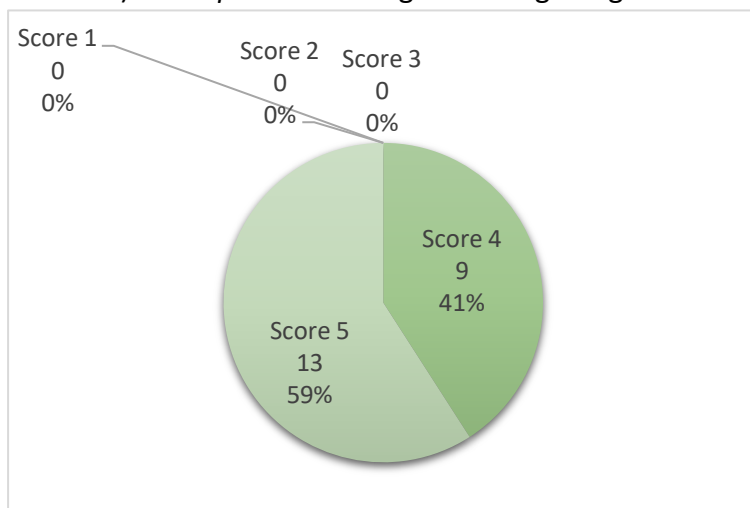
3) I am *willing* to take risks and experiment and innovate in my practice



4) I am *supported* and recognised for taking initiative and risks



5) I am *open* to thinking and doing things differently



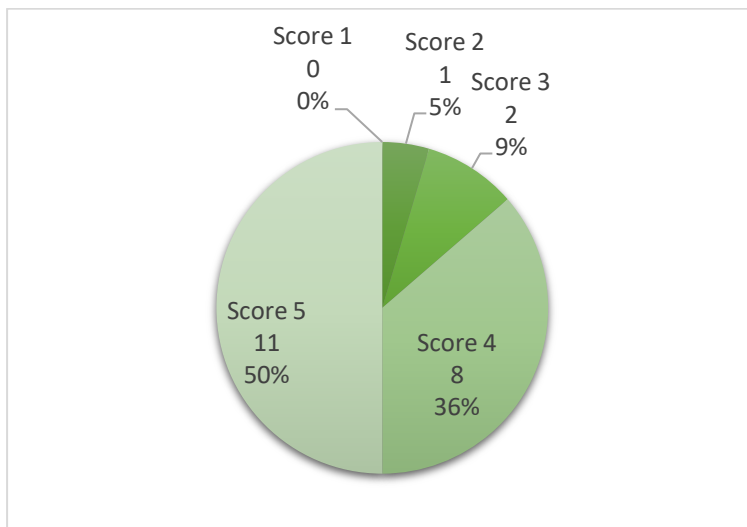
On innovation, thinking about doing things differently and taking risks in practice- on willingness and openness

On willingness to take risks and innovation, 68% were very willing with a further 18% willing, a positive response of 86%, only 2 staff were unsure and 1 member of staff unwilling. The biggest positive response came from an openness of thinking and doing things differently 100% positive with 59% very open to change. These results suggest that teaching staff are ready for change and prepared to take a different approach in their practice, “yes, definitely to stop the mundane and boring”. Responses from the interview were all a resounding yes.

On innovation and taking risks in a supported environment – on support

The results were less positive with 59% believing they would be supported 27% unsure but 14% (3 staff) feeling that they wouldn't be. Although staff appear ready to make a shift in their practice, to be innovative and risk takers, there appears to be uncertainty as to the readiness of the culture and environment. The emotional shift seems to be more advanced than the cultural shift or at least individual's perception of it. Leadership need to be clear in their message regarding classroom practice and support for innovative, creative practices. This also suggests a mindset shift, from the old ways of doing things with the accountability levels attached to teaching to the new way of teachers finding out about pedagogy with increased freedom to trial new approaches. However, when I examined my interview responses staff were complimentary regarding the support they had received from leadership, “leaders have always been supportive and trusting of my abilities. On a classroom level there is much more criticism to change”. Although power bias could be a reason for this it is interesting to view innovation and creativity from the viewpoint of a classroom teacher with a large team. Any new trial would need the backing of their team to engage positively. This exemplifies the need for everyone to have the same message communicated and the why, what and how explained.

5) I see problems and failures as opportunities for learning

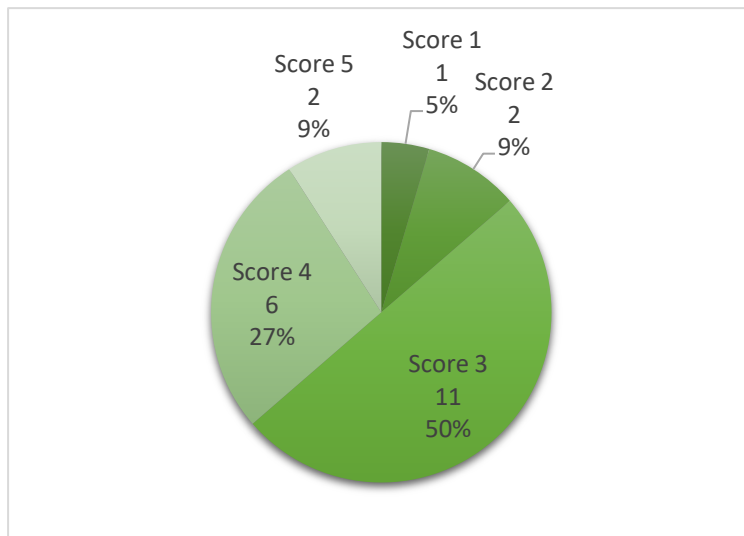


Attitude towards problems to learning- of resilience and problem solving.

86% agree that they would use problems as an opportunity for learning two were unsure with one member of staff disagreeing. This demonstrates a resilient approach to teaching. Three staff, the same number as the question on 'support', would not use failures as opportunities for learning. I'm curious as a senior leader as to whether these would be the same staff. The unfortunate draw back to anonymised data. If they were I would question the culture of the school and its need to address, 'social systems issues' (Kotter, 1985) rather than purely procedural alongside professional learning needs. It would be unwise of leaders to be inattentive to the vulnerability experienced by individuals during organisational change and the effects on the levels of trust in leadership (Johansen, 2005). In opposition, the interview evidence implied that my views on trust and culture were not verified, instead "when I was younger but not so now, I'm willing to be open about what wasn't so great", introducing the concept of experience and possibility in having the personal confidence to see the positivity in making mistakes. The option of peer to peer working to support classroom practice, least confident teachers with the most to build risk taking in practice.

The next questions were aimed to ascertain knowledge of the Professional Teaching and Leadership Standards (PTLS) and the standards related to enquiry.

How *familiar* and you with the 'Professional learning' and 'Innovation' sections of the Professional standards for teaching and learning for Wales?

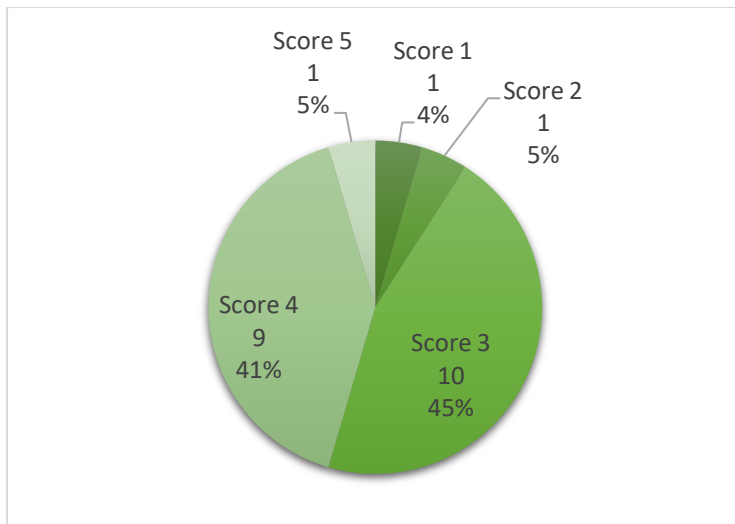


On the 'Professional Learning' and 'Innovation standards of the PTLS- of familiarity

On familiarity with these standards 36% were, with 50% unsure and 13% not at all.

This aligns to recent practice within the school and a focus on the standard of Pedagogy to set personal targets. Staff would be very aware of the PTLS but not necessarily the standard used within this survey. Some staff did choose a professional learning target from 'Innovation' and this is reflected in the results. Interview results varied from, "looked at it and have a good understanding" to "aware of them but more familiar with pedagogy". As a senior leader these results would be expected due to the newness of the standards and targets for school improvement inevitably aligning to certain professional learning needs.

Within your setting to what extent do you *understand* the implications of the phrase 'There is structured engagement in an action research community and evidence of practice informed by wider reading and research findings on a national and international scale'



On the idea of the school being action research engaged/ use of literature to inform practice- on understanding

46% have an understanding with 45% not sure and 10 %, two people with no understanding.

“To what extent”, can suggest a lack of awareness by all teachers of, “a structured engagement in an action research community” of what enquiry/research undertakings are possibly going on currently across the school; or else the terminology of “action research” as opposed to ‘enquiry’ could also cause confusion. Priestley (2016) writes of the need to “to avoid the conflation with the role of the professional researcher...focused on reporting research outcomes”. Whereas, ‘enquiry’ is that of the practitioner, improving outcome for pupils and colleagues within their context. Two very different ideas. These results compared with the interview data suggests that ‘interest’ could be a factor, “hit and miss some people are more proactive”, “50:50 teachers who want to and then there are staff who are happy with the way they are-it needs to happen but where’s the time”? One teacher focused on the word ‘community’, “In terms of my role as digital lead, there is a strong networking community online. I’m more likely to ask my digital cluster group for information than read literature on it, as a classroom teacher I don’t. I speak to colleagues.” For a senior leader with a responsibility for professional learning these findings are influential. There is a need for a whole-school focus on training in this area.

My research has shown that the 'Schools as Learning Organisation' model very much sets the scene for leaders and teachers and creates a template for a successful whole-school approach for undertaking 'enquiry'. To improve pedagogy through trialling, innovation, investigation, to extend professional practice in the classroom in a school context. On the contrary the Professional Teaching Leadership Standards uses the terminology of, 'action research' and 'practice based on wider readings and research findings'. This confuses the message from Welsh Government. If the SLO model provides the structure for schools, the PTLS provides the expectation for the individual teacher and it is the role of the leadership team to use both effectively to realise the ambition of every welsh learner through professional learning opportunities and providing the culture and systems for change to happen.

Whilst reviewing the results from the online survey, I felt that I needed more information to address the impact on schools professional enquiry will inevitably bring. This question was added to my interview questions, 'Do you foresee any problems that will impact on schools undertaking professional enquiry?' The responses were of a practical nature, of time, money, cover. "we know where the gaps are and what we need to do, what we need to improve, but not all staff will take opportunities offered", "workload!" Themes emerging were of a practical nature as well as teacher engagement in the process, all important factors when bringing about change.

Practical implementation issues

While most teachers broadly welcomed the idea of professional enquiry they shared many concerns about its implementation on a practical level, and identified some of the barriers and drivers to its success.

Resources issues

Funding was one of the most frequently identified barriers alongside knowledge and skills, having training and opportunity to undertake enquiry in the classroom or larger scale research. Time within the school day for practitioner enquiry but more so for educational research.

Teacher workload and response to change

These were considered to be additional barriers to implementation.

Teacher attitude and confidence

There is the suggestion of a lack of confidence, both in taking forward enquiry due to capacity of individuals themselves together with a perceived lack interest or realisation of the significance of enquiry led practices.

Leadership and classroom support

Leaders need to have a clear strategic vision of where they are taking 'enquiry' in their school. When this vision is not clearly articulated to staff, the interviewees suggests that implementation will be hindered, pointing to the need for further national support for leaders to provide training for staff and opportunities to share developments within other schools.

School factors

The research suggests that opportunities for teachers to collaborate within the classroom and across school are extremely important in fostering school-based curriculum development, especially at the developmental stages.

"(...)To promote teacher agency is therefore not only a matter of teacher education and professional development in order to increase teachers' capacity and capability, but also requires attention to cultures and structures. Without attention to the latter two levels as well, it is unlikely that the call for teachers to become agents of change will effect a real transformation of educational processes and practices". (Priestley, 2012)

Research findings: Desk top exercise (Appendix 4)-see table below:

- | | |
|--|---|
| • Staff are willing to take risks and experiment and innovate in their practice. | • Staff are open to thinking and doing things differently. |
| • The school supports and recognises staff for taking initiative and risks. | • Problems and failures are seen as opportunities for learning. |
| • Staff engage in forms of enquiry to investigate and extend their practice. | • Learners are actively engaged in enquiry. |
| • Enquiry is used to establish and maintain a rhythm of learning, change and innovation. | |

Forty staff inputted their opinion against the, 'Establishing a culture of enquiry, innovation and exploration' dimension of the SLO model, identifying 30 ways the school engages with the descriptors. The results offered a colourful and comforting response to the idea of professional enquiry within the school context. Using the viewpoint of a range of staff with different roles and years of service, provided another aspect to my research. Although the response by some did show basic understanding of the term 'enquiry' much was gained regarding the culture of the school combined with the verbal feedback following the activity. Staff were 'pleased to have a say', 'it was great to discuss with colleagues from different departments', 'I thought I wouldn't know much but I did contribute, thank you'. With regards to 'culture', the feedback identifies the following:

- moving staff around departments to share good practice helps to build staff morale
- Pupil transition- staff sharing information with new classes
- Professional development- mentoring
- New curriculum allows space to develop ideas and let learning experiences be led through pupils learning
- Help and encouragement – nobody is wrong we all do things in different ways, same outcome
- Trying out new ways of learning e.g big top

The above statements suggests a culture of inclusivity and trust within a supportive learning environment and a positive engagement with Curriculum for Wales.

Understanding of 'Enquiry' identifies the gathering of information from other sources, not necessarily wider reading, but from practical experience and school based opportunities to share and apply to own practices:

- Visiting other schools sharing good practice
- Learning new skills and new ways of working
- Putting yourself forward for new training and sharing what you learned
- Making lessons fun and interesting with students actively taking part to keep them engaged
- Having opportunities to work with different staff-enquiry groups
- Discussions on SLOs and what it means-collaborative learning
- Classes collaborating to establish fluid lessons targeting the same themes

Such feedback identifies there's an understanding that enquiry is about the sharing of experience and practice to improve classroom experience for of learners. The idea of working collaboratively is appreciated. The next stage for leadership will be to deepen that understanding, formalising the procedures and making 'enquiry' a conscious activity for all.

IMPLICATIONS

My research points to a number of implications for both school practices and for future curriculum developments in Wales – both nationally and within local authorities. The research suggests that for schools to implement professional enquiry, leaders need to articulate a clear vision. This is partly about effective leadership, leaders have a responsibility to facilitate teacher engagement with curriculum reform by providing direction, opportunity and spaces and where needed, training. This direction needs to come from the top, from Welsh Government and filtered down to schools. This is in part a resourcing issue, however it is also an issue of process. I suggest that such a process should include the following dimensions.

Open dialogue or 'sense-making' (Priestley, 2017)

Implementing a new curriculum and new ways of working is complex and emotional involving new and unfamiliar concepts and terminology. Sense-making is a key part of the process of engagement to make sense of key ideas, informed by external resources (for example relevant research on learning, teachers from other schools, external experts).

Addressing barriers/developing drivers

Some staff will be on a different starting point from others regarding capacity or engagement, leaders need to recognise who is who and coach accordingly.

Implications for policy

I will conclude this summary of key findings with the following observations. First, professional enquiry has much to commend it and within my schools teachers fully understand its' worth, whilst recognising the difficulties in implementation.

There remains a risk that without support in the form of training, directed time and resources from Welsh Government, implementation in many schools will not represent the sorts of transformational change envisaged. Second, implementation is dependent upon the active engagement of professional and committed teachers facilitated by well-informed leadership. My research in my context has convinced me that I have in the main, a highly motivated workforce open to leading change, and the culture is in place to facilitate it. However, there are barriers. Enquiry needs to become the driver of school improvement targets, so that ownership is shared with all staff and a collective responsibility. For this to happen it needs to be facilitated in a supportive culture where leaders brokerage opportunities and provide systems without increasing workload. As Priestley states;

“... beliefs play an important role in teachers’ work, an apparent mismatch between teachers’ individual beliefs and values and wider institutional discourses and cultures, and a relative lack of a clear and robust professional vision of the purposes of education indicate that the promotion of teacher agency does not just rely on the beliefs that individual teachers bring to their practice, but also requires collective development and consideration”. (Priestley, 2012)

In the next chapter I will share recommendations based on these findings.

Chapter 5: Conclusions and recommendations

Within the introduction I set out the aims for my research, to examine how the national ambition of the Welsh Government's transformational education reforms and new curriculum could be realised within schools, using my school as a microcosm for a national learning process. Could policy intention be enacted, implemented and realised? What does that entail for schools and senior leadership teams? The focus was professional enquiry, a key component in preparing schools and teachers for the changing culture of education. My research question of, 'Professional enquiry is a key component of Curriculum for Wales, how can Senior Leaders in schools facilitate this within their context and within a climate of change?' was explored by examining the following questions:

1. Does the school community understand what is meant by professional enquiry and the expectation assigned to it?

I've discovered that teachers understand the meaning of *enquiry* as a means to improve practice within their context together with the implications, but whole school there are a variety of interpretations. There will need to be consistency in understanding, to have a whole-school approach. Senior leaders will need to clear on their expectations for staff and communicate the message clearly.

2. Do we as leaders encourage staff to engage in enquiry, do we have the right culture and structures necessary to develop an enquiry led profession?

My research has shown that enquiry exists in school through individual research and in collaboration, although the depth of the enquiry varies considerably. There seems to be a growing interest and involvement of teachers in professional enquiry. The challenge is to encourage school leaders to embrace professional enquiry as part of a whole school professional learning culture. The culture in professional learning is evident, innovation and creativity is encouraged and most staff say they feel supported to challenge their practice, but a targeted, focused approach it is not. Critically important is schools will need external support in developing their approaches to professional enquiry.

3. Does the school community understand the term, teacher agency, and as a means of curriculum reform? Or as Donaldson states 'professional developers' and 'agents of change' as well as the principle of 'subsidiarity' (Handy, C. 1995), recommendation 22 of Successful Futures?

The school community has begun their journey all at different stages, exhibiting enthusiasm for the changes happening across Wales. I also accept they know that to realise curriculum for Wales they will need to be upskilled to improve their capabilities as facilitators of learning, as well as recognising systems will need to change to make this happen. They would not understand their responsibility in realising the vision through the terminology of 'agents of change' as highlighted in Successful Futures. However, this maybe the weakness within my research, failing to explicitly link this idea within my methodology, or use such terminology in discussions. This was addressed in my initial presentation of *the journey so far*, setting the scene for this research but on reflection agency for realising change should have been made more obvious.

4. Finally, do senior leaders understand the systems for change and the impact of change on people, to use such knowledge to be successful in preparing its workforce for major curriculum reform? Leading change, theory into practice. How can change management strategies be utilised to prepare staff for curriculum reform?

Based on the explorations I've undertaken, teaching staff have identified the implications on becoming professional enquirers and the changes that need to be made. There is a need to consider the emotional attachment regarding the transition period as identified by Bridges and Kubler-Ross and regular communication of progress and the next steps. My recommendation would be that schools need to understand specifically why, when and how they are expected to contribute to realising the country's vision of the Welsh learner and the expectations of their engagement needs to be clear. Pioneer schools have been on this journey for a number of years, trialling and co-constructing Curriculum for Wales. Nonetheless, within these schools the messages can be lost or misinterpreted depending on factors such as, the consistency of the message, the interest of the team, trust in leadership and existing work demands.

Welsh Government have provided schools with a timeline of deadlines when changes will be occurring and what needs to be implemented at specific points on the reform journey; professional learning opportunities, engagement events to support non-pioneer schools, additional in-service training days and a digital platform area called 'Hwb' for resources and information sharing and case-studies on enquiry are readily available to support the transition. Nevertheless, if schools do not engage, the aspirations of the Welsh Government for all Welsh Learners and the three core objectives, will not be realised, embedding the existing disparity between schools across Wales. Hearts and minds need to be won.

If any learning is to be taken from this research, recognition must be given to the fact that schools, leadership, teachers and classroom support staff roles and expected contributions will begin at different starting points in the journey. Leaders must allow time and support to ensure the school community evolves at a pace where no person is left behind, that there is a national buy in to the vision of the new curriculum. This process could be reflected nationally ensuring no school is left behind. I've discovered that this is a challenge within a school setting. "Leaders need to clearly articulate their vision and expectations" (Palmer, 2020). Ensuring a thorough, consistent message, which isn't just listened to but heard and enacted upon and providing the right structures to create the climate for change, will be much harder to achieve nationally.

In my introduction I hypothesised that, "the current expectation of the Welsh Government [regarding professional enquiry] will far exceed what schools are able to deliver regardless of the intent of individual teachers and schools due to the current demands, culture and resources available." My research has shown that this is indeed the case. However, there is *intent*, *willingness* and *understanding* of the importance of enquiry on pedagogy to improve teaching for the benefit of learners. To support the realisation of an enquiry led workforce within my school I plan to undertake the following recommendations.

Recommendations

Implications identified from my research will be as significant for both my local context as for schools nationally. Documents used within my research all use various established

nomenclatures such as, 'action research' (Stenhouse, 1975), 'professional inquiry' (Cochran- Smith, 2009), 'professional enquiry' (Egan, 19), 'critical Contextual collaborative Enquiry' (Priestley et al, 2016) 'collaborative enquiry' (Harris & Jones, 2017) and 'research' to describe teachers systematically investigating their practice. I have established that such variations cause confusion to the expectation rested on them. For this end as a school we will be systematic in our terminology using 'professional enquiry'. As leaders we will have to make a decision on the focus of enquiry within our context because of the individual starting points of the school community. Will teachers be expected to be enquiry driven for school improvement, to develop an understanding of pedagogy within the classroom or will the expectation be school teachers as academic researchers?

An enquiry led profession will need space to collaborate, enquire and reflect "needing pedagogical leadership not hierarchial leadership" (Palmer 2020).

There will need to be a shared expectation for schools, what needs to be done to realise the new curriculum within their own specific context. Whilst it shouldn't be a, "top-down" approach to develop teacher's professionalism, leaders should guide teachers to adopt an enquiry "stance" (Egan, 19). Whatever the decision teachers will need to be supported in undertaking enquiry, in understanding expectation, given time, training and support to become professional enquirers

Within my school I plan to make the following changes:

- Make professional enquiry an entitlement for all staff based on their specific professional standards (for teachers and teaching assistants). Ensuring that the enquiry is relevant to the practitioners.
- School systems in place which enables *agency* individually or within collaborative groups.
- Encourage the leadership team to make enquiry the driver for all school improvement targets as well as being enquiry led themselves.
- Research enquiry models further.
- Direct teachers to online resources available on the Hwb and through the Education Workforce council.

- Ensure key staff are trained to facilitate and support enquiry across the school.
- Seek advice as and when needed from experienced researchers

Furthermore, it is important to note that teachers and school leaders exist in a highly pressured environment and within the context of busy schools working to meet multiple initiatives and agendas will present major implications to achieving an enquiry led workforce. Moreover, the extent to which teachers are motivated to become involved in enquiry as a way of enhancing their own professional self-efficacy will also have a measure of influence and impact on the change management strategies adopted by school leaders.

Throughout the course my research, one of the recurring issues was whether the mechanisms for implementing previous decisions about the curriculum had taken sufficient account of the capacity of schools and teachers to deliver well what was expected of them. The general feeling was that while the policy aspirations had been generally accepted as inspirational (within my school), insufficient account had often been taken of the complexities of implementation. Reform in the past has failed for similar reasons. Welsh Government will need to consider what can be removed from existing workload to help engagement and motivation for this new approach to teaching.

Professional Development

Professionally, being a deputy head teacher in a pioneer school for four years, moving to a lead enquiry school alongside undertaking my own research into professional enquiry has proven to be a huge professional learning journey. Whilst undertaking this role I've fully realised the significance of collaborative working within my own school as well as with colleagues from other schools, universities and regions in what has become an inclusive environment. 'Become', an important word, my realisation that somethings need to develop over time, a natural process when you begin working with new people on new ideas. On reflection, I've realised there's a phase during collaboration when relationships need to build as well as trust to achieve an enriching learning environment. Challenges and disagreements are a natural part of the process, actually invigorating the learning that occurs within the

remit that everyone has an equal voice and deserves to be actively listened to. Hierarchy is removed from the process. Embedding professional enquiry within a school will need staff to work together to develop their skills as researchers as well as reflect on the enquiry process, to share successes and failures and reflect on what's occurred and the next steps. Teachers and leaders need to work together to co-construct an enquiry driven school that suits their context. This can only happen with trust. Trust removes barriers helps create a supportive learning culture where innovation and creative practices through the enquiry approach can flourish. Collaboration and co-construction are crucial to effective curriculum making and development. Cultivation of a safe respectful learning environment, student centred and enquiry led classroom from instruction to pedagogical leadership will be my purpose for the conceivable future.

Personal Development

Personally being a pioneer school and having the opportunity to engage with a plethora of educational stakeholders has been invaluable and has invigorated my enthusiasm for education. The co-construction process instigated by Donaldson, allows for genuine ownership. So to as this research project. Discussing progress with colleagues and undertaking the methods has increased my skill level to support others in school to undertake enquiry, whilst fully understanding the emotional impact it can have. This understanding will inform the structures I will put in place to support staff during their enquiry journey.

Dissemination

It is hoped that the school community can use my research as an example of educational research. The senior leadership team will use the findings of my research to address what needs to happen to make professional enquiry successful within our school and context.

Evaluation/Suggestions for Further Research

Within my context I would hope to examine the impact of being an enquiry led school on pupils' engagement, attainment and achievement of the four purposes.

Just as interesting would be the change in the school community and the idea of empowering staff. Have teachers and classroom support assistants become agents of change? Will there be a visible shift in power, teachers themselves developing professional autonomy and how will this appear? There remains a risk that eventual implementation in many schools will not represent the sorts of transformational change envisaged by the engineers of the new curriculum.

An enquiry led profession within the remit of current curriculum reform is in its infancy. Welsh government places great emphasis on its importance in achieving a purpose led curriculum which anchors on the professional learning of the workforce. The National Approach to Professional Learning gives the structure to achieve such aims but only the future will tell if what the research suggests will actually materialise in practice.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: The National Approach to Professional Learning Model



Schools in Wales as learning organisations



(Welsh Government, 2018f)

PROFESSIONAL ENQUIRY PROJECT:

INFORMATION SHEET FOR ALL PARTICIPANTS AND OTHERS INVOLVED IN THE RESEARCH

Background

The Welsh Government is developing a new school curriculum that will be introduced from September 2022 onwards. As part of this process, educational practitioners (teachers and teaching support staff) will need to update their knowledge and skills through what is known as professional learning in particular the ability to undertake professional enquiry to inform practice.

To understand our school baseline for this I would like to undertake research within our school to ascertain our starting position to put in place structures to move forward with the ambition of Welsh Government. The methods they I be using will include a desk top activity and analysis, an online survey and a semi structured interview.

The purpose of this information sheet is to provide you with enough information so that you can make an informed decision as to whether you are willing to provide consent to participate within the study.

What does the research involve?

You have been invited to participate in a professional enquiry study, which will require your involvement in an online survey, interviews, and desk top activity. These methods will be conducted to help myself gain a better understanding of the professional learning provision which educational practitioners will require to successfully introduce the new curriculum within our school. The survey will be conducted online and circulated through a desk top email link and as such will be totally anonymous. Interviews groups involve myself as researcher having a brief conversation with you based on the survey. It must be stressed at any time you feel uncomfortable you can ask the researcher to stop the study.

The data collected through the research will be written up, analysed and reported. All quotations will be anonymized so that you cannot be identified and would not be used in published documents without your prior permission.

What happens if you want to change your mind?

If you decide to join the study, you can change your mind and stop at any time. I will completely respect your decision. If you want to stop participating let me know straight away.

How I will protect your privacy:

All the information obtained from you is strictly confidential. I will take very careful steps to make sure that you cannot be identified from any of the forms with confidential information that we keep about you. Your name and address, and personal details will be held separately from the other forms, and there is no information on the other forms that could let anyone

work out who you were. When we have finished the study and analysed the information, all the forms used to gather the data will be destroyed. The form with your name and address will be kept alongside consent form for 10 years in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations (2018). Please note you will be given a copy of this sheet to keep together with a copy of your consent form.

LETTER FOR ADULT PARTICIPANTS

Title of Project:

Date

Dear As explained in the accompanying information sheet I am conducting research into 'Enquiry', to support the school in it's journey to realise Curriculum for Wales.

Due to the nature of the project consent will need to be gained for everybody involved. To this end, it would be good to arrange a meeting to discuss the proposed research and data collection methods. To assist you in reaching a decision, I have attached to this letter:

- I. A copy of the participant information sheet
- II. Participant consent form

Should you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me

Telephone: (removed)

Upon completion of my enquiry, I will endeavour to share whole school the report and results obtained from the study.

Your consent to conduct this enquiry will be greatly appreciated.

Signature:

Date:

ADULT PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Participant name:

Name of Researcher:

Title of Project:

Participant to complete this section:

Cross In Each Box

I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet for the study above. I have had the chance to consider the information, ask questions and have an answer.

☐

I understand that my participation is voluntary and I can withdraw at any time.

☐

I agree to participate in the study

☐

I agree to the take part in a semi-structured interview

☐

I agree to the use of anonymised quotations being used from the interview

☐

Signature of Participant

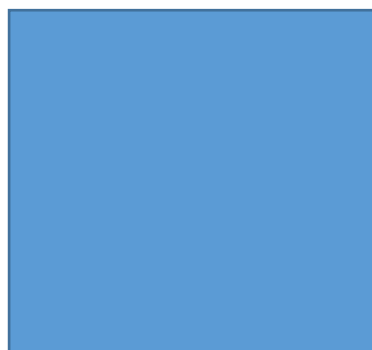
Date

Name of Researcher

Date

Signature of Researcher

Appendix 4: Desk Top Activity- school anonymised



Establishing a culture of enquiry, innovation and exploration.

- Staff are willing to take risks and experiment and innovate in their practice.
- The school supports and recognises staff for taking initiative and risks.
- Staff engage in forms of enquiry to investigate and extend their practice.
- Enquiry is used to establish and maintain a rhythm of learning, change and innovation.
- Staff are open to thinking and doing things differently.
- Problems and failures are seen as opportunities for learning.
- Learners are actively engaged in enquiry.

- Visiting other schools sharing good practice
- Taking pupils on work based learning
- Learning new skills and new ways of working
- Putting yourself forward for new training and sharing what you learned
- Moving staff around departments to share good practice helps to build staff morale
- Pupil transition- staff sharing information with new classes

What does this look like in a Large School?

- Weekly department meetings where good practice is shared
- Whole school meetings
- Consistent approaches to behaviour and pupils discussed, being proactive
- Professional development- mentoring
- Training request forms
- Twilights- opportunities to discuss knowledge, skills with staff from all departments
- Making lessons fun and interesting with students actively taking part to keep them engaged
- Special themes weeks/ days
- Having opportunities to work with different staff- enquiry groups
- AoLE days working with different staff to plan with pupils and staff
- Being a mentor
- Professional development and rating
- Giving your own opinion
- Enquiry workshops
- Performance management
- Discussions on SLOs and what it means- collaborative learning
- Annual meetings schedule
- Round robins working with other pupils and staff
- Classrooms collaborating to establish fluid lessons targeting the same themes
- New curriculum allows space to develop ideas and let learning experiences be led through pupils learning
- Help and encouragement -- nobody is wrong we all do things in different ways, same outcome
- Trying out new ways of learning eg big top
- Being flexible and understanding to student needs

Appendix 5: Online Survey

Professional Enquiry

*Required

Email address *

Your email address

School Name *

Your answer

I understand the reasons for undertaking enquiry within school. *

1 2 3 4 5

Don't understand Understand completely.

PTLS SLO

I understand what a culture of enquiry, innovation and exploration looks like in school. *

1 2 3 4 5

Don't understand Understand completely

SLO

I am willing to take risks and experiment and innovate in my practice. *

1 2 3 4 5

unwilling very willing

SLO

I am supported and recognised for taking initiative and risks.

1 2 3 4 5

SLO

I am open to thinking and doing things differently. *

1 2 3 4 5

not open very open

SLO

I see problems and failures as opportunities for learning. *

1 2 3 4 5

don't agree completely agree

SLO

How familiar are you with the 'Professional learning' and 'Innovation' sections of the Professional standards for teaching and learning for Wales. *

1 2 3 4 5

not familiar very familiar

PTLS

Within your setting to what extent do you understand the implications of the phrase 'There is structured engagement in an action research community and evidence of practice informed by wider reading and research findings on a national and international scale' *

1 2 3 4 5

no understanding understand completely

PTLS

I understand the reasons for undertaking enquiry within school?

I understand what a culture of enquiry, innovation and exploration looks like within a school?

I am willing to take risks and experiment and innovate in my practice?

I am supported and recognised for taking the initiative and risks

I am open to thinking and doing things differently

I see problems and failures as opportunities for learning.

How familiar are you with the professional learning and innovation sections of the PTLS for Wales?

Within your setting to what extent do you understand the implications of the phrase 'There is structured engagement in an action research community and evidence of

Appendix 6: Semi- Structured Interview questions

Semi Structured Interview Questions for all consenting participants.

Enquiry Question:

Date of interview:

1. Can you explain to me your understanding of what is meant by the term 'enquiry'?

2. How familiar are you with the 'Professional learning' and 'Innovation' sections of the Professional standards for teaching and learning for Wales.

3. Within this setting to what extent do you understand the implications of the phrase 'There is structured engagement in an action research community and evidence of practice informed by wider reading and research findings on a national and international scale'

4. Do you understand what a culture of enquiry, innovation and exploration looks like in school?

5. Do you feel supported and recognised for taking initiative and risks?

6. Do you understand the reasons for undertaking enquiry within school?

7. Are you willing to take risks and experiment and innovate in your practice?

8. Are you open to thinking and doing things differently?

9. Do you see problems and failures as opportunities for learning?

10. Do you for see any problems that will impact on school undertaking professional enquiry?