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**FRIDAY, 22 JANUARY 2021**

**TO: ALL MEMBERS OF THE EDUCATION & CHILDREN SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

I HEREBY SUMMON YOU TO ATTEND A VIRTUAL MEETING OF THE **EDUCATION & CHILDREN SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** WHICH WILL BE AT **10.00 AM. ON THURSDAY, 28TH JANUARY, 2021** FOR THE TRANSACTION OF THE BUSINESS OUTLINED ON THE ATTACHED AGENDA.

*Wendy Walters*

**CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

<b>Democratic Officer:</b>	<b>Michelle Evans Thomas</b>
<b>Telephone (Direct Line):</b>	<b>01267 224470</b>
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Wendy Walters Prif Weithredwr, *Chief Executive*,  
Neuadd y Sir, Caerfyrddin. SA31 1JP  
County Hall, Carmarthen. SA31 1JP

# EDUCATION & CHILDREN SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

14 COUNCIL MEMBERS, 2 NON-ELECTED VOTING MEMBERS AND 3  
ELECTED VOTING PARENT GOVERNOR MEMBERS

## PLAID CYMRU GROUP – 7 MEMBERS

- |    |            |                      |
|----|------------|----------------------|
| 1. | Councillor | Liam Bowen           |
| 2. | Councillor | Kim Broom            |
| 3. | Councillor | Betsan Jones         |
| 4. | Councillor | Jean Lewis           |
| 5. | Councillor | Darren Price (Chair) |
| 6. | Councillor | Emlyn Schiavone      |
| 7. | Councillor | Dorian Williams      |

## LABOUR GROUP – 3 MEMBERS

- |    |            |             |
|----|------------|-------------|
| 1. | Councillor | Dot Jones   |
| 2. | Councillor | Gary Jones  |
| 3. | Councillor | Bill Thomas |

## INDEPENDENT GROUP – 2 MEMBERS

- |    |            |                            |
|----|------------|----------------------------|
| 1. | Councillor | Arwel Davies               |
| 2. | Councillor | Edward Thomas (Vice-Chair) |

## NEW INDEPENDENT GROUP – 1 MEMBER

- |    |            |               |
|----|------------|---------------|
| 1. | Councillor | Shahana Najmi |
|----|------------|---------------|

## UNAFFILIATED – 1 MEMBER

- |    |            |              |
|----|------------|--------------|
| 1. | Councillor | John Jenkins |
|----|------------|--------------|

## NON ELECTED VOTING MEMBERS (2)

- |    |                  |                                      |
|----|------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. | Mrs V. Kenny     | Roman Catholic Church Representative |
| 2. | Rev. D. Richards | Church in Wales Representative       |

## ELECTED VOTING PARENT GOVERNOR MEMBERS (3)

*Term of office expires on the 31/03/2022*

- |    |             |                     |
|----|-------------|---------------------|
| 1. | Vacancy     | Area 1 – Dinefwr    |
| 2. | Mr A. Enoch | Area 2 – Carmarthen |
| 3. | Vacancy     | Area 3 - Llanelli   |

# AGENDA

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE
2. DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL INTEREST INCLUDING ANY PARTY WHIPS ISSUED IN RELATION TO ANY AGENDA ITEM.
3. PUBLIC QUESTIONS (NONE RECEIVED)
4. REVENUE BUDGET STRATEGY CONSULTATION 2021/22-2023/24. 5 - 40
5. AN EVALUATION INTO HOW CARMARTHENSHIRE'S EDUCATION & CHILDREN'S SERVICES DEPARTMENT RESPONDED TO COVID-19. 41 - 110
6. MODERNISING EDUCATION PROGRAMME - PROPOSAL TO CHANGE THE NATURE OF PROVISION AT MODEL VA PRIMARY SCHOOL. 111 - 154
7. MODERNISING EDUCATION PROGRAMME - PROPOSAL TO CHANGE THE NATURE OF PROVISION AT YSGOL Y FELIN. 155 - 198
8. TASK & FINISH GROUP FINAL REPORT - ALN FORMULA FUNDING. 199 - 210
9. EXPLANATION FOR NON-SUBMISSION OF SCRUTINY REPORTS. 211 - 212
10. FORTHCOMING ITEMS. 213 - 218
11. TO SIGN AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE HELD ON THE 6TH JANUARY, 2021. 219 - 224

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## EDUCATION AND CHILDREN SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 28<sup>th</sup> JANUARY 2021

### REVENUE BUDGET STRATEGY CONSULTATION 2021/22 to 2023/24

Appendix A – Corporate Budget Strategy 2021/22 to 2023/24

Appendix A(i) – Efficiency summary for the Education and Children Department

Appendix A(ii) – Growth Pressures summary for the Education and Children Department

Appendix B – Budget monitoring report for the Education and Children Department

Appendix C – Charging Digest for the Education and Children Department

#### To consider and comment on the following issues:

- Members consider and comment on the budget strategy proposals
- Members consider and comment on the proposals for delivery of efficiency savings for their service area identified in Appendix A(i)
- Members are also invited to bring forward any other proposals for efficiency savings
- Members examine the Departmental Budgets
- Members endorse the Charging Digests

#### Reasons:

- The Executive Board at its meeting on 18<sup>th</sup> January 2021 will have considered the attached Revenue Budget Strategy 2021/22 to 2023/24 (Appendix A) and endorsed the report for consultation purposes. A verbal update will be given at the meeting in relation to any changes or specific proposals made by the Executive Board if appropriate.

**To be referred to the Executive Board for decision: NO**

#### Executive Board Member Portfolio Holders:

- Cllr. David Jenkins (Resources)
- Cllr. Glynog Davies (Education & Children)

#### Directorate:

Corporate Services

#### Name of Director:

Chris Moore

#### Report Author:

Randal Hemingway

#### Designation:

Head of Financial Services

#### Tel No. / E-Mail Address:

01267 224886

[Rhemingway@carmarthenshire.gov.uk](mailto:Rhemingway@carmarthenshire.gov.uk)

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

# EDUCATION AND CHILDREN SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 28<sup>th</sup> JANUARY 2021

### REVENUE BUDGET STRATEGY CONSULTATION 2021/22 to 2023/24

The objective of the report is to allow members to consider the corporate budget strategy for the financial years 2021/22 to 2023/24 to consider the service delivery impact and options for the forthcoming years.

The report is set out as follows:-

#### **Appendix A**

- The attached report is a copy of the Revenue Budget Strategy 2021/22 to 2023/24 that has been presented to the Executive Board. As part of the budget consultation process the report is presented to this Scrutiny Committee for your consideration.
- The report provides members with an initial view of the revenue budget issues for the forthcoming year and also reflects departmental submissions.

#### **Appendix B**

Current budget extracts for Education and Children Department.

#### **Appendix C**

Charging Digest for the Education and Children Department. The charges for 2021/22 have yet to be adopted and any change to the proposed charges will impact on the budget/efficiency proposals.

<b>DETAILED REPORT ATTACHED?</b>	<b>YES</b>
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## IMPLICATIONS

I confirm that other than those implications which have been agreed with the appropriate Directors / Heads of Service and are referred to in detail below, there are no other implications associated with this report.

Signed: **Chris Moore** Director of Corporate Services

Policy, Crime & Disorder and Equalities	Legal	Finance	ICT	Risk Management Issues	Staffing Implications	Physical Assets
YES	NONE	YES	NONE	NONE	NONE	NONE

### 1. Policy and Crime & Disorder

The budget is being prepared having regard to the Improvement Plan.

### 3. Finance

The report provides an initial view of the Budget Strategy for 2021/22, together with indicative figures for the 2022/23 and 2023/24 financial years. The impact on departmental spending will be dependent upon the final settlement from Welsh Government and the resultant final Budget adopted by County Council.

## CONSULTATIONS

I confirm that the appropriate consultations have taken in place and the outcomes are as detailed below:

Signed: **Chris Moore** Director of Corporate Services

1. Local Member(s) – N/A

2. Community / Town Council – N/A

3. Relevant Partners – Consultation with relevant partners will be undertaken and results will be reported during the budget process.

4. Staff Side Representatives and other Organisations – Consultation with other organisations will be undertaken and results will be reported during the budget process.

**EXECUTIVE BOARD PORTFOLIO HOLDERS AWARE/CONSULTED?**  
YES

(Include any observations here)

**Section 100D Local Government Act, 1972 – Access to Information**  
**List of Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:**

**THESE ARE DETAILED BELOW:**

Title of Document	File Ref No. / Locations that the papers are available for public inspection
2021/22 3 year Revenue Budget	Corporate Services Department, County Hall, Carmarthen

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**REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICES**

**Education & Children Scrutiny Committee**

**28<sup>th</sup> January 2021**

**REVENUE BUDGET STRATEGY 2021/22 to 2023/24**

**(Copy of Executive Board report 18/01/2021)**

<b>HEAD OF SERVICE &amp; DESIGNATION.</b>	<b>DIRECTORATE</b>	<b>TELEPHONE NO.</b>
<b>C Moore, Director of Corporate Services</b>	<b>Corporate Services</b>	<b>01267 224121</b>
<b>AUTHOR &amp; DESIGNATION</b>	<b>DIRECTORATE</b>	<b>TELEPHONE NO</b>
<b>R Hemingway, Head of Financial Services</b>	<b>Corporate Services</b>	<b>01267 224886</b>

**1. INTRODUCTION**

**1.1.** Executive Board in November 2020 received a report on the Revenue Budget Outlook for 2021/22 to 2023/24 which appraised Members of the financial outlook and the proposals for taking forward the budget preparation for the three year period.

**1.2.** This report provides Members with the current view of the Revenue Budget for 2021/22 together with indicative figures for the 2022/23 and 2023/24 financial years. The report is based on officers' projections of spending requirements and takes account of the provisional settlement issued by Welsh Government on 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2020. It also reflects the current departmental submissions for savings proposals after taking account of the impact of pandemic on the delivery of these savings.

**1.3.** Whilst significant work has already been undertaken in preparing the budget, this represents an initial position statement which will be updated over the coming month as the budget is further developed, council members are engaged and public consultation takes place. The final settlement is due to be received from Welsh Government on 2<sup>nd</sup> March.

**1.4.** The report is broken down into 5 parts:

- Funding Projections
- Budget Requirement
- Impact on the Authority's budget requirement
- Consultation
- Conclusion

- Recommendations

## 2. PROVISIONAL SETTLEMENT

- 2.1. The provisional settlement was announced on Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2020. Indicative figures for individual Local Authorities were provided for one financial year only, 2021/22, with no further information about future years' settlements.
- 2.2. The Westminster Comprehensive Spending Review announced on 25 November 2020 included a significant Barnett consequential, reported at £1.3 billion, though it is understood this includes Covid-19 expenditure. There were also the following announcements which have a material impact on our budget considerations:
  - 2.2.1. An announcement of a “pay freeze” for public sector workers excluding the NHS, but with “at least £250” for anyone earning below £24,000. Whilst unquestionably below the 2.75% allowed for previously, members should note that not only has no further information been published on this, but it is also stressed that this should be considered as an opening negotiating position in what is ordinarily subject to national pay bargaining. Unions have reacted negatively calling it a “kick in the teeth for the key workers”.
  - 2.2.2. A national living wage of £8.91, an increase of 2.2% on the current £8.72, much less than anticipated.
- 2.3. The main points of the Provisional Settlement 2021/22 on an all Wales basis are as follows:
  - 2.3.1. Local government revenue funding for 2021/22 set at £4.651 billion, an increase of 4.0% (£177 million) compared to 2020/21, but this is after transfers into the settlement of £5 million.
  - 2.3.2. Our analysis suggests there are however inconsistencies in this:

The settlement allows for £4 million of transfers in respect of the September 2020 Teachers pay award, which represented only partial funding of the part year (7 months) financial effect of the pay award. We estimate the full year effect of the award is approximately £40 million across

Wales, which will need to be met from the improved settlement.

WG also provided £1.6 million funding in 2020/21 to support the sixth form element of the September 2020 Teachers pay award. By contrast, WG have neither added this to the settlement nor increased sixth form grant funding, which remains at a cash flat position.

2.3.3. Unlike previous years, there is no funding floor. Individual settlements range from +2.0% (Ceredigion) to +5.6% (Newport), although there is some disquiet about this across Wales.

## 2.4. The Settlement figures for Carmarthenshire are:

2.4.1. After adjustments for WG identified transfers, the increase in the provisional settlement is 3.8% (£10.466 million). The Aggregate External Finance (AEF) therefore increases to £284.820 million in 2021/22. This includes £244k in respect of Teachers pay.

This settlement is significantly above our previous assumption of +2.0%, however there remains significant risk to our funding position as it provides no additional funding either in respect of any future pay award or Covid-19 related costs and/or continuing income reduction (discussed in paragraph 3.4.3 below)

On the basis of this experience, and in the absence of any forward guidance for future years, the MTFP assumptions for 2022 and beyond maintain our current assumptions of annual settlement increases of +2.0%, but increases to the assumed level of pay, price and other inescapable pressures, leading to a savings target of £17 million over the three year MTFP period.

2.5. Details of the Welsh Government Service Specific Grants were provided alongside the provisional settlement on 22 December 2020 at an all Wales level. Many remain at broadly at similar level (cash value level), however there are however some important updates :

- The social care workforce grant has been increased from £40m to £50 million across Wales. As was the case last year, we assume that the increase, estimated at £600k for Carmarthenshire, can be used in full towards the obvious and unavoidable service pressures.
- The Additional Learning Needs grant of £7.2 million across Wales which was introduced last year has been continued. This

continuation is welcome as it can be applied to the department's recurrent need of £400k

- A reduction of £1.0 million to the Sustainable Waste Management Grant, which will reduce the support from Carmarthenshire's core waste budgets by around £55k.

There are a number of grant changes referred to in narrative to the main WG budget narrative which are not reflected in the local government provisional grant tables, which we understand are due to be updated for the final settlement.

### 3. BUDGET REQUIREMENT 2021/22

#### 3.1. Current Years performance (2020/21)

3.1.1. As the Authority's core spending requirements remains constant year on year, a review of current year's performance is important in identifying whether there are any underlying problems within the base budget

3.1.2. The current projection for the Revenue Outturn for 2020/21 (based on the October 2020 monitoring) is as follows

Service	Approved Budget £'000	Total Expenditure Forecast £'000	Variance Forecast For Year £'000
Chief Executive	12,994	12,436	-558
Communities	102,882	103,794	912
Corporate Services	27,637	27,186	-452
Education and Children's Services	178,291	179,798	1,506
Environment	59,190	60,207	1,017
<b>Departmental Expenditure</b>	<b>380,995</b>	<b>383,420</b>	<b>2,426</b>
Cont from Dept/Earmarked Reserves			0
Capital Charges	-19,940	-21,140	-1,200
Levies and Contributions	10,538	10,538	0
Transfer to/ from Reserves	0	0	0
<b>Net Expenditure</b>	<b>371,593</b>	<b>372,818</b>	<b>1,226</b>

The main reasons for the departmental overspends are as follows:

- o Communities Department: overspends against budget in the areas of Physical Disabilities, Learning Disabilities and Mental Health.

- Education and Children’s Services: overspend is due mainly to the forecast increase in school deficit balances.
- Environment Department: overspends are due to a shortfall in income across parking and property maintenance, together with additional costs within Waste Services.

The Authority is currently forecasting a variance of £1.2 million at the year-end that will have to be met from Reserves

### 3.2. Validation

3.2.1. Validation reflects the changes in expenditure requirements to deliver the **current level** of services in future years. Primarily this is inflation, but also includes some service specific changes. The key validation factors are as follows:

	<u>2021/22</u> <u>Original</u>	<u>2021/22</u> <u>Proposed</u>	<u>2022/23</u>	<u>2023/24</u>
General inflation	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%
Electricity	5.0%	5.0%	5.0%	5.0%
Gas	5.0%	5.0%	5.0%	5.0%
Fuel	5.0%	5.0%	5.0%	5.0%
Pay Inflation - non teaching	2.75%	2.75%	2.75%	2.75%
Pay Inflation - Teaching	2.75%	2.75%	2.75%	2.75%
Levies	2.9%	2.4%	2.5%	2.5%
Pension Contributions	nil	nil	nil	nil
Capital Charges	£500k	£500k	£500k	£500k

3.2.2. Our previous planning assumptions include future annual pay awards of 2.75% for all staff. Since then, the Chancellor’s Autumn Budget statement included a pay freeze for public sector workers, with the exception of NHS staff and other public sector workers earning below £24,000 who would receive “at least £250”. Without any detail beyond this, it is impossible to accurately estimate the cost of this. Teachers pay is similarly uncertain - the additional part year effect of the September 2020 pay award adds around £1 million to schools expenditure above 2020/21 levels.

The Chancellor’s proposal is in effect an opening employer’s position – our staff remuneration levels are subject to national pay bargaining, further complicated by WG assuming responsibility for Welsh Teachers pay decisions in 2019. The minister’s letter which accompanied the provisional settlement stated that WG itself had received no Barnett consequential in respect of pay and therefore authorities should provide for this in their budgets.

Given the current scale of uncertainty and that pay represents the single largest expenditure item in our budgets, it is deemed prudent to retain the pay award assumption in our draft budget at this time. This will also enable Carmarthenshire to uphold its commitment to being a living wage employer.

3.2.3. We have received confirmation from the fire authority that their indicative budget assumes a levy increase of 2.43%. This is based on the explicit understanding that firefighters pension cost increases continue to be met through direct grant award.

3.2.4. As a result of these factors, validation is at a similar level to last year and adds £11.1 million to the current year’s budget.

### 3.3. Cost Reduction Programme

3.3.1. In anticipation of the settlement challenges, significant work to review service efficiencies/rationalisation proposals has been undertaken.

In ordinary times, delivery of current savings proposals and development/preparation for future years forms a significant proportion of services activity and in particular, senior management capacity. The impact of the pandemic, and our response to it, has severely curtailed our ability to make normal levels of progress in this area.

Officers have reviewed savings and deferred delivery of a total of £3.043m from 2020/21 and 2021/22 to the outer two years of the plan.

3.3.2. The savings targets set for each financial year are as follows:

	2021/22 £m	2022/23 £m	2023/24 £m
Original targets (November Budget Outlook report)	5.930	5.209	5.208
Updated targets (following Provisional Settlement)	2.511	5.209	5.208

3.3.3. Accordingly, departments have developed a range of proposals, and these efficiencies are included in **Appendix A** of this report.

- The efficiency proposals are categorised as follows:  
 Managerial – Efficiencies that result in no perceivable change to the overall level of service delivery.  
 Policy – Efficiency or service rationalisation proposals that will directly affect service delivery.

	2021/22 £m	2022/23 £m	2023/24 £m
Managerial	2.438	4.346	2.429
Existing Policy	0.073	0.565	1.115
New Policy	Nil	Nil	Nil
<b>Total</b>	<b>2.511</b>	<b>4.911</b>	<b>3.544</b>
Shortfall	Nil	0.298	1.664

(Detail at **Appendix A**)

3.3.4. The summary sheet at Appendix A sets out the savings targets set for individual departments and the value of savings currently identified.

### **3.4. New Expenditure Pressures**

3.4.1. New expenditure pressures are the combination of additional cost to meet existing service needs e.g. increased client base/greater service take up and the costs of meeting change in service provision e.g. policy changes.

3.4.2. The original budget outlook report included £6 million in 2021/22 per annum to meet growth pressures.

Initial growth bids in excess of £11 million have been submitted by departments for 2021/22. This figure does NOT include any continuing Covid-19 response and/or income loss. Based on an evaluation of the value and unavoidable nature of pressures submitted as well as additional funding identified through grants as explained in paragraph 2.5 above, core funding for specific pressures totalling £4.689 million have been funded.

For this budget round, social care pressures are particularly difficult to quantify, for the following reasons:

- Funding required for the National Living Wage increase is less than expected, as the Chancellor's announcement of £8.91/hour was much less than the figure forecast by the Office of Budget Responsibility. However, the sector has been through unprecedented turmoil over the last year, and

cost pressures may persist even as Covid-19 hopefully recedes.

- The social care workforce impact of the new trading arrangements with Europe post Brexit could be significant
- There is a clear and unprecedented increase in need for Mental Health services. Whilst £500k has been provided for in the budget, it is hard to predict how demand will evolve.

Based on this assessment, a contingency sum of £500k has been set aside specifically against Social care. Members should further note that the budget figures contained within this report do not allow for any future funding pressures in respect of waste. To achieve increasingly challenging statutory Welsh Government recycling targets, it is likely that changes will need to be made to the waste collection methodology in the coming years which will require significant one off capital funding as well as increases to recurrent revenue budgets.

Information will continue to be reviewed and updated between draft and final budgets, and where grant funding can be identified to meet any of these pressures in part or full, this will be adjusted.

- 3.4.3 Covid-19 has led not just to unprecedented additional costs, but also a collapse of important income, particularly during periods of lockdown. Taken together, it is anticipated that the combination of additional expenditure and income loss will have a £30 million impact on Carmarthenshire’s current year budgets. Authorities have submitted monthly claims, which have been assessed, and to a very significant extent, fully refunded by WG. Looking ahead to next year, continued WG funding in this way has not been committed at this stage, not least because WG itself does not yet have funding confirmed as a consequence of Westminster Covid-19 related expenditure.

At the time of writing, the national picture appears bleak with the highest ever reported daily cases and daily deaths at the same peak as the first wave. Whilst the rollout of both approved vaccines is clearly the “way out”, the speed of vaccination is highly ambitious, and it has already been suggested that restrictions may continue to be needed next Winter. In this context, an additional £1 million corporate contingency is set aside in our budget.

In total, pressures funding adds £6.189 million to the budget. The detail is provided at **Appendix B**.

- 3.4.4 In addition to the authority’s own expenditure pressures, there is an urgent need to expand support to local businesses to support



economic recovery. This is primarily capital grant expenditure and is discussed in the separate capital programme report to be considered on the agenda today. However, as there is insufficient additional capital funding available, the draft revenue budget includes a £1 million one-off allocation to support this expenditure.

### **3.5. Schools Delegated Budgets**

3.5.1 The last two budgets have provided in full for known pressures to school budgets including inflationary costs and pay awards. Over that time, school balances have continued to worsen. Prior to the pandemic, there was a significant focus on addressing the root causes of this, and to support individual schools to return to financial sustainability. It was recognised this would inevitably take some time to see the full effect of the changes being made. The unrelenting pressure on schools which the pandemic has caused has delayed this significantly. During the spring and summer, there was a moratorium on school redundancies, and the Autumn term has seen TTP activity for school staff grow to an unimagined scale. In recognition of this, next year's budget provides funding for known pressures in full. This includes the full year effect of the September 2020 pay award, and funding will be retained centrally against the any unfunded award in September 2021.

Members should however note that schools funding in 2020/21 received additional one-off support from the "Accelerated Learning Programme" in response to Covid-19 of £16.6m across Wales. WG have been able to continue this grant, though the value drops by around 30%. No information is yet available for the equivalent sixth form funding.

### **3.6. Internal Funding**

3.6.1. Generally speaking whilst the use of reserves to support annual budgets should not be summarily discounted, it must be treated with caution. Funding on-going expenditure from such funds merely defers and compounds difficult financial problems to the following year. One-off items of expenditure within any budget proposal lend themselves better for such funding support.

3.6.2. In deliberating this point however, members must bear in mind any **inherent risks** that may be built into the budget strategy. These include:

- Uncertainty around the true economic impact of the new trading arrangements with Europe
- The pace of deployment and efficacy of Covid-19 vaccine upon the need for continuing public health restrictions
- Future inflation/interest rates
- The timing and severity of fiscal or expenditure measures brought in by Westminster Government to balance public sector finances.
- Additional pressure on demand lead Services

In addition as mentioned previously Welsh Government have only been able to provide a one year settlement and we have no knowledge of future settlement, which therefore means it is difficult to construct multi-year budgets in the absence of any clear forecasts.

3.6.3. The following table summarises the main categories of reserves held by the Authority.

	1 <sup>st</sup> Apr 2020 £'000	31 <sup>st</sup> Mch 2021 £'000	31 <sup>st</sup> Mch 2022 £'000	31 <sup>st</sup> Mch 2023 £'000
Schools Reserves	-2,001	-3,496	-2,496	-1,496
General Reserves	11,221	11,490	11,490	11,490
Earmarked Reserves	91,617	75,887	37,028	29,369

#### 3.6.4. School Reserves

- Schools have delegated responsibility for the management of their own finances. The level of reserves held by an individual school at any point in time will depend on a number of factors including the level of contingency fund that the school governing body considers appropriate, and the particular plans each school has for expenditure. Officers have yet to be informed of any transfers to/from these reserves by individual schools for future years.
- Legislation allows schools to carry forward reserves from one financial period to another. The School Funding (Wales) Regulations 2010 requires schools to limit their accumulated reserves at year end to £50,000 for Primary Schools and £100,000 for Secondary and Special Schools or 5% of their budget dependant

on what is greater. School Improvement officers are currently working with schools to ensure they comply with the guidance. As at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020, 45 primary, 6 secondary and 1 special schools were in deficit.

### 3.6.5. General Reserves

- In the changeable and challenging environment currently facing Local Government the Authority is committed to maintaining a reasonable level of General reserves or Balances. Whilst there is no prescribed minimum level for Balances, Council has previously deemed 3% of net expenditure as being a prudent level, which has been accepted by our Auditors as being reasonable
- The overall level of balances is taken into consideration each year when the annual budget is set and has on occasions been utilised to augment expenditure/reduce council tax. The 2020/21 budget was set on the basis of no transfers from the General Reserves. Based upon the October Budget monitoring (outlined in paragraph 3.1.2 above) there could be a small increase of £269k to General Reserves and a worsening of £1.5m on school deficit balances at the end of the current financial year.
- Given ongoing impact of the pandemic response on our budgets and the uncertainty of continued WG support into next year, therefore it is deemed imprudent at this stage to assume any further support for future years budgets from the current General Reserves.
- Taking account of reduction in overall reserves forecasted, consideration needs to be given to how these balances are built back up over future years.

### 3.6.6. Earmarked Reserves

- The Authority holds earmarked reserves which have been set up to finance the delivery of specific projects, or in protecting the authority

against future liabilities or issues. The reserves can be summarised as follows:

Reserve	31 March 2020 £'000	31 March 2021 £'000	31 March 2022 £'000	31 March 2023 £'000
Insurance	12,194	12,944	13,694	14,944
Capital Funds	47,234	41,285	8,449	2,241
Development Fund (inc. Schools Dev Fund)	1,637	440	815	2,090
Corporate Retirement Fund	4,299	4,299	3,299	2,299
Joint Ventures	1,306	418	350	316
Other	24,947	16,501	10,421	7,479
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>91,617</b>	<b>75,887</b>	<b>37,028</b>	<b>29,369</b>

- As can be seen from the table above the level of earmarked reserves fluctuates greatly year on year, and whilst the level in each fund is not an exact science it is based on an informed estimate and past experience of the likely call on the authority in future years in line with the intended purpose of each reserve. Great care must therefore be taken when considering utilising such funds for purposes other than those which they were created as this could lead to the authority being faced with substantial unfunded liabilities in the future
- The budget proposals therefore assume nil contribution from reserves in support of the revenue budget in 2021/22 and a further analysis of the reserves held will be undertaken over the coming months with any further proposed utilisation being considered at the budget finalisation stage.
- Taking account of the proposals within this report, the Director of Corporate Services confirms that overall the estimated level of financial reserves (as indicated above) is adequate for the financial year 2021/22, with the General Reserves being at the minimum that could be supported. However the Director is very conscious of the ongoing commitment to capital projects and of the demand on future services

and therefore feels the reserves will need to be monitored closely going forward.

#### 4. IMPACT ON THE AUTHORITY'S BUDGET STRATEGY

The table below provides an updated position on the current financial outlook taking account of the provisional settlement and also other recent validation changes.

4.1. The Current Financial Outlook (updated for the Provisional Settlement) is set out in the table below:

	Current MTFP		Proposed Financial Model		
	2021/22 £'000	2022/23 £'000	2021/22 £'000	2022/23 £'000	2023/24 £'000
<b>Previous Year's Budget</b>	371,593	382,147	371,593	387,328	398,356
General Inflation	2,462	2,462	2,451	2,534	2,728
Pay Inflation	6,688	6,849	6,512	6,848	7,035
Transfers in & other*	1,334	1,326	3,094	1,355	1,367
Growth	6,000	5,500	6,189	5,500	5,500
Savings proposals	-5,297	-4,694	-2,511	-4,911	-3,544
Further savings to be identified	-633	-515	0	-298	-1,664
Net Expenditure	382,147	393,075	387,328	398,356	409,778
Funded by:					
Revenue Settlement	279,643	285,235	284,820	290,517	296,327
Council Tax Receipts	102,505	107,840	102,507	107,839	113,451
<b>Council Tax Increase:</b>	<b>4.89%</b>	<b>4.89%</b>	<b>4.89%</b>	<b>4.89%</b>	<b>4.89%</b>

\*includes funding allocation to Economy Recovery capital (paragraph 3.4.4)

**4.2.** The total of cost reductions now required for 2021/22 is £2.5m and for the 3 year period are estimated at £13m.

**4.3.** The 2021/22 draft budget currently includes a contingency sum of £1.5m in respect of risks around Brexit, Covid-19 and further pressures. Should the level of risk or uncertainty reduce before the final budget setting, it may allow members scope to consider additional information forthcoming in respect of:

4.3.1. Responses to the consultation process

4.3.2. Clarification of specific grants

4.3.3. Further growth pressures not currently addressed

## **5. CONSULTATION**

Budget consultation has been planned for the coming month and a summary of the individual approaches are as follows:

**5.1.** Members seminars. (18-22 January 2021)

**5.2.** The consultation process will commence online from 18 January 2021.

**5.3.** Town & Community Councils and commercial ratepayers consultation in January 2021.

**5.4.** Consultation with Scrutiny Committees during January 2020.

**5.5.** Consultation with the Schools Budget Forum on 11 February 2021.

**5.6.** Trade Union Consultation meeting on 22 January 2021

## **6. WELLBEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS (WALES) ACT 2015**

**6.1.** In considering the budget proposals, members need to take into consideration the requirements of the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. The Act requires that we must carry out sustainable development, improving the economic, social environmental and cultural well-being of Wales.

‘... the public body must act in a manner which seeks to ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs’

**6.2.** In doing so, we must demonstrate the following 5 ways of working:

- Looking at the long-term so that we do not compromise the ability of future generations to meet their own needs

- Understanding the root causes of the issues to prevent them recurring
- Taking an integrated approach so that we look at all well-being goals and objectives of other services and partners
- Collaboration – Working with others in a collaborative way to find shared sustainable solutions
- Involving a diversity of population in decisions that affect them

### 6.3. Carmarthenshire's Well Being objectives:

#### **Start Well**

1. Help to give every child the best start in life and improve their early life experiences
2. Help children live healthy lifestyles
3. Continue to improve learner attainment for all
4. Reduce the number of young adults that are Not in Education, Employment or Training

#### **Live Well**

5. Tackle poverty by doing all we can to prevent it, help people into work and improve the lives of those living in poverty
6. Create more jobs and growth throughout the county
7. Increase the availability of rented and affordable homes
8. Help people live healthy lives (tackling risky behaviour and obesity)
9. Support good connections with friends, family and safer communities

#### **Age Well**

10. Support the growing numbers of older people to maintain dignity and independence in their later years
11. A Council wide approach to support Ageing Well in Carmarthenshire

#### **In a Healthy and Safe Environment**

12. Look after the environment now and for the future
13. Improve the highway and transport infrastructure and connectivity
14. Promote Welsh Language and Culture

## **Governance**

### 15. Building a Better Council and Making Better Use of Resources

## **7. CONCLUSION**

- 7.1.** Currently the budget proposals assume the full delivery of all of the savings proposals submitted, together with the identification and delivery of the shortfall in savings proposals 2022/23 and 2023/24.
- 7.2.** Further cost reductions need to be identified for years 2022/23 and 2023/24 to be able to maintain the current Budget Strategy and level of council tax. The savings to be identified in years 2 and 3 of this Strategy amounts to £1.96 million and departments will be working over the forthcoming year to identify these savings.
- 7.3.** It is recognised the critical importance of minimising the Council Tax increase for our residents whilst maintaining a balanced budget in these unprecedented and challenging times.
- 7.4.** Given the scale of the current budget gap forecast, Council Tax increases have been maintained at the previous MTFP levels of 4.89% in each of the three financial years. This provides at least some mitigation to the savings proposals which the council needs to consider deferring to future years of the Medium Term Financial Plan.
- 7.5.** Over the coming weeks and part of the refining of the Medium Term Financial where the Authority gets further clarification on costs and grant funding and feedback on the consultation, the Authority will aim to limit the Council Tax increase as far as possible.

## **8. RECOMMENDATION**

- 8.1.** That Executive Board:
- 8.2.** Note the contents of the report and approve the three year Budget Strategy as a basis for consultation. Specifically seek comments from consultees on the efficiency proposals in Appendix A.
- 8.3.** Give consideration as to what additional savings proposals can be identified to deliver a balanced budget over the full 3 year financial planning period.



## EDUCATION &amp; CHILDREN SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

28th January 2021

## Efficiency Summary

	PREVIOUS TARGETS			
	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	Total
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Chief Executive	492	432	432	1,356
Education & Children	1,029	904	904	2,837
Schools Delegated	-	-	-	0
Corporate Services	205	180	180	565
Communities	2,813	2,471	2,470	7,754
Environment	1,391	1,222	1,222	3,835
	<b>5,930</b>	<b>5,209</b>	<b>5,208</b>	<b>16,347</b>

	REVISED TARGETS			
	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	Total
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Chief Executive	451	432	432	1,315
Education & Children	50	904	904	1,858
Schools Delegated	-	-	-	0
Corporate Services	-	180	180	360
Communities	1,318	2,471	2,470	6,259
Environment	692	1,222	1,222	3,136
	<b>2,511</b>	<b>5,209</b>	<b>5,208</b>	<b>12,928</b>

## Proposals

	MANAGERIAL				EXISTING POLICY PROPOSALS				NEW POLICY PROPOSALS				TOTAL PROPOSALS			
	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	Total	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	Total	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	Total	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	Total
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Chief Executive	451	434	0	885	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	451	434	0	885
Education	50	350	140	540	0	520	960	1,480	0	0	0	0	50	870	1,100	2,020
Schools Delegated	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Corporate Services	0	210	212	422	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	210	212	422
Communities	1,268	2,304	1,497	5,069	50	45	95	190	0	0	0	0	1,318	2,349	1,592	5,259
Environment	669	1,049	580	2,298	23	0	60	83	0	0	0	0	692	1,049	640	2,381
	<b>2,438</b>	<b>4,346</b>	<b>2,429</b>	<b>9,214</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>565</b>	<b>1,115</b>	<b>1,753</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2,511</b>	<b>4,911</b>	<b>3,544</b>	<b>10,967</b>

	SHORTFALL - to be identified			
	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	Total
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Chief Executive	0	-2	432	430
Education & Children	0	34	-196	-162
Schools Delegated	0	0	0	0
Corporate Services	0	-30	-32	-62
Communities	0	122	878	1,000
Environment	0	173	582	755
	<b>0</b>	<b>298</b>	<b>1,664</b>	<b>1,961</b>

DEPARTMENT	2020/21 Budget	FACT FILE	2021/22 Proposed	2022/23 Proposed	2023/24 Proposed	Total	EFFICIENCY DESCRIPTION
	£'000		£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	

## Education & Children

### Director & Management Team

Departmental - cross cutting	various across the dept	Cross-departmental support costs including administration, financial processing, & premises management		100		100	Reprofiled to allow implementation of programme due to link with school rationalisation. Root & branch review of support services across the Department in order to realise savings and increase flexibility
<b>Total Director &amp; Management Team</b>			<b>0</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>100</b>	

### Access to Education

Catering Services	1,643	The school meals service currently has a production kitchen (full kitchen facilities) in almost every school with a few having meals brought in from another school, where the receiving school has a dining centre arrangement.		100	140	240	Reduced number of school kitchens subject to the progress of school rationalisation and review the need for full kitchen facilities at school sites.
<b>Total Access to Education</b>			<b>0</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>240</b>	

### Education Services & Inclusion

School based Early Voluntary Retirement / redundancy (funded centrally)	233	Schools are currently provided with budget to fund Teaching Assistants (TAs) for pupils with a statement of educational need. If the pupil moves school, the TA can be redundant as they have been employed by a specific school. Development of centrally employed TA's and managed redeployment will reduce pressure on the EVR budget.	50	50	0	100	Currently Teaching Assistants are directly recruited by schools if the Local Authority decides that a child with ALN requires additional support. As these children move from the primary to secondary sector or a specialist provision the staff are no longer required and this results in a redundancy which costs the Education Service. The proposal is to develop a Pool of centrally employed Teaching Assistants to support ALN who would be trained and upskilled. When a child with ALN is identified the school would be provided with the Teaching Assistant rather than be expected to recruit their own. When the support is no longer required the TA will revert to the Pool to be allocated to another school. This should result in a reduction in redundancy costs.
<b>Total Education Services &amp; Inclusion</b>			<b>50</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>100</b>	

### Children's Services

Children's Services	17,471	Children's Services encompasses the Social Worker teams, Fostering, Adoption, Early Years, Family Support Services and specialist care provision	0	100	0	100	Continual review of services, maximising grant opportunities and managing vacant posts without putting the service at risk of not meeting its statutory function.
<b>Total Children's Services</b>			<b>0</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>100</b>	

### Education & Children Total

**50      350      140      540**

DEPARTMENT	2020/21 Budget	FACT FILE	2021/22 Proposed	2022/23 Proposed	2023/24 Proposed	Total	EFFICIENCY DESCRIPTION
	£'000		£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	

**Education & Children**

School Improvement	1,261	The Council is obliged to employ a notional number of officers to provide a School Improvement Service to meet the needs of our schools. With a reduced number of schools it is possible to review this notional figure.		0	130	<b>130</b>	Reprofiled to post election to allow implementation of programme. Reduction in School Challenge Advisor levels equivalent to 1 FTE on the basis that the school rationalisation programme has progressed.
Education Otherwise than at School	1,866	This service meets the needs of learners who, due to a wide range of often complex behaviour and engagement issues, cannot access education in mainstream schools. These learners require a bespoke and specialist package of support.	0	50	0	<b>50</b>	Under this proposal, the council will increase the partial recoupment from schools (to consider more elements of the placement e.g. officer time, administration, monitoring, progress reviews etc). Currently, the Council only recoups the pupil funding element from the pupil's main school.
Children's Services- Education and Child Psychology	894	The Educational and Child Psychology Service use the psychology of how people learn, behave, think and feel to help support children and young people to reach their potential. They work mostly in schools but also in preschool settings, at home, in foster homes and in respite care settings.		100	0	<b>100</b>	This has been delayed from 2020-21 due to Covid pressures and will now be actioned from April 2022. Reduce the number of Education and Child Psychologists and reconsider structure utilising grant funding where possible to maintain sufficient support.
Catering Services - primary school breakfasts	827	The Catering Service delivers the Welsh Government's free primary breakfast initiative to all those primary schools in Carmarthenshire that request it. Savings have been delivered in the last 2 financial years by remodelling the staffing level.	0	50	0	<b>50</b>	This has been delayed from 2020-21 due to the implications of Covid and reprofiled allowing time for schools to get back to normal. Review Breakfast Club provision to distinguish between catering and care element of the service & introduce a voluntary parental contribution towards the care element (20 families paying £1 per day in 30 schools would be £114k per annum). The LA is responsible for providing a free breakfast for which supervision is required for approximately 20-30 minutes on average. However, the catering service currently provides the supervision for an extra 15-40 minutes, for which a voluntary contribution has just been introduced to help sustain this facility, which allows for earlier pupil drop off in the mornings. Parents / Guardians in receipt of Free School Meals or struggling financially need not make a voluntary contribution.
Additional Learning Needs	650	A review of all specialist settings and provision in light of the impending ALN Transformation and our Behaviour Services Review with the aim of upskilling school staff to deal with a range of ALN and implement our Inclusion Policy	0	70	30	<b>100</b>	This has been reprofiled from 2021-22 to allow for implementation post Covid recovery with an intended commencement of Sept 2020. Maintain the Teaching complement to work on an outreach basis so that the pupils attend their local school and benefit from the additional support which could therefore become more widespread. It is expected that the TAs could be redeployed as part of the development of the centrally coordinated SEN support pool releasing part of this specific budget area.
Departmental - across Education Services	14,596	The majority of the Services' budgets are for the support, administration and management of the schools - School improvement, Grant support, Data, Admissions, School Meals, Music Service, ALN, safeguarding to name a few	0	0	300	<b>300</b>	Reprofiled to post election to allow implementation of programme. Rationalising of Primary Schools will enable a reduced level of support to function appropriately with fewer sites. The savings would actually be managerial as service provision would not be reduced, however it is a policy decision that would enable this efficiency to be delivered

<b>Education &amp; Children Total</b>			<b>0</b>	<b>270</b>	<b>460</b>	<b>730</b>	
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**Schools Delegated Budget**

Primary School Delegated Budget	61,222	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This is the budget delegated to every school under the Fair Funding formula.</li> <li>The budget is to meet all the costs associated with running a school e.g. staff costs, premises costs, SEN specialist support, Service Level Agreements for specific services such as HR, IT, Legal, Grounds Maintenance, Music.</li> </ul>		250	500	<b>750</b>	Reprofiled to post election to allow implementation of programme. It is proposed that we review our primary schools footprint identifying schools that are disproportionately expensive to operate and finding it challenging to sustain educationally effective teaching and learning structures due to low pupil numbers. Through carefully selected decommissioning and strategically driven school federations the primary school estate could be reduced. Rationalising the number of schools will improve the financial stability of the remaining schools and reduce demands on a range of County Council services e.g. Finance, HR, catering, cleaning.
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<b>Schools Delegated Budget Total</b>			<b>0</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>750</b>	
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**Demographic, Legislative or continuing pressures**

APPENDIX A(ii)

	Description	2021/22 £'000
Modernising Education Team	Provide core funding for team which has been reserve funded historically	50
Transforming 14-16 Learning pathways & Young Apprentices	Continuing work previously grant funded - partnership working, curriculum choice, developing links, helping to reduce NEETs.	100
WESP Strategy implementation	Revenue funding to staff 4 Welsh language immersion centres (WG capital grant) - 3 on line Sept 2020, 4th from Sept 2021 (£100k). Training & development if Welsh within schools moving along the continuum (£50k)	150
<b>Total for the Education &amp; Children Department</b>		<b>300</b>
<b>TOTAL EDUCATION &amp; CHILDREN</b>		<b>300</b>

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**Education & Children's Services Scrutiny Report**  
**Budget Monitoring as at 31st October 2020 - Summary**

Division	Working Budget				Forecasted				Oct 2020 Forecasted Variance for Year £'000
	Expenditure £'000	Income £'000	Net non- controllable £'000	Net £'000	Expenditure £'000	Income £'000	Net non- controllable £'000	Net £'000	
<b>Schools Delegated Budgets</b>	132,231	-13,543	0	118,687	133,726	-13,543	0	120,182	1,495
Director & Strategic Management	1,480	0	-109	1,371	1,501	-0	-109	1,391	21
Education Services Division	7,259	-2,716	21,134	25,676	6,724	-2,148	21,134	25,710	34
Access to Education	9,046	-6,201	1,584	4,429	9,979	-6,901	1,584	4,662	233
School Improvement	3,467	-1,526	427	2,368	3,549	-1,725	427	2,251	-117
Curriculum & Wellbeing	8,570	-4,781	886	4,674	8,803	-4,994	886	4,694	20
Children's Services	24,451	-6,087	2,721	21,086	26,504	-8,518	2,721	20,708	-378
Additional resources for reopening of schools	0	0	0	0	1,049	-850	0	199	199
<b>TOTAL excluding schools</b>	<b>54,272</b>	<b>-21,311</b>	<b>26,643</b>	<b>59,604</b>	<b>58,109</b>	<b>-25,136</b>	<b>26,643</b>	<b>59,616</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>186,503</b>	<b>-34,854</b>	<b>26,643</b>	<b>178,291</b>	<b>191,834</b>	<b>-38,679</b>	<b>26,643</b>	<b>179,798</b>	<b>1,507</b>

**Education & Children's Services Scrutiny Report**  
**Budget Monitoring as at 31st October 2020 - Detail Monitoring**

Division	Working Budget				Forecasted				Oct 2020 Forecasted Variance for Year £'000	Notes
	Expenditure £'000	Income £'000	Net non- controllable £'000	Net £'000	Expenditure £'000	Income £'000	Net non- controllable £'000	Net £'000		
Primary Schools	69,767	-8,545	0	61,222	69,932	-8,545	0	61,387	165	Based on schools' working budgets received for 2020/21 & updated for 2nd quarter monitoring returns which reflect reduced actuals during summer term and the application of ALP grant against teacher posts where redundancies have been postponed due to Covid-19.
Secondary Schools	58,331	-4,958	0	53,373	59,231	-4,958	0	54,273	900	
Special Schools	4,132	-40	0	4,092	4,562	-40	0	4,522	430	
<b>Total Schools Delegated Budget</b>	<b>132,231</b>	<b>-13,543</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>118,687</b>	<b>133,726</b>	<b>-13,543</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>120,182</b>	<b>1,495</b>	
Director & Management Team	1,082	0	-180	901	1,076	0	-180	896	-6	
Business Support	398	0	71	469	424	-0	71	495	26	Pool cars fleet costs (£9k) and Dept central mailing costs
<b>Total Director &amp; Strategic Management</b>	<b>1,480</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-109</b>	<b>1,371</b>	<b>1,501</b>	<b>-0</b>	<b>-109</b>	<b>1,391</b>	<b>21</b>	
School Expenditure not currently delegated	295	0	20,932	21,227	283	-1	20,932	21,214	-13	
School Redundancy & EVR	2,017	0	20	2,036	1,904	0	20	1,924	-113	Part year moratorium on redundancy processes due to Covid-19
Early Years Non-Maintained Provision	1,704	-1,337	9	376	861	-549	9	320	-55	Fewer children taking up places in non-maintained settings
Special Educational Needs	2,844	-1,379	149	1,614	3,288	-1,597	149	1,840	226	Increase in existing out of county placement costs.
Sensory Impairment	398	0	24	422	387	-0	24	411	-11	
<b>Total Education Services Division</b>	<b>7,259</b>	<b>-2,716</b>	<b>21,134</b>	<b>25,676</b>	<b>6,724</b>	<b>-2,148</b>	<b>21,134</b>	<b>25,710</b>	<b>34</b>	
School Admissions	345	-84	29	291	314	-84	29	259	-32	Part year staff vacancy & staff budget saving as not all staff at top of grade
School Modernisation	114	-1	1,056	1,170	201	-33	1,056	1,224	55	Premises costs relating to closed schools
School Meals & Primary Free Breakfast Services	8,586	-6,116	499	2,968	9,464	-6,784	499	3,179	210	Income target of £100k for breakfast club contributions not achievable due to summer term closure and reduced take up due to Covid-19. £100k additional cost of FSM due to Covid-19 that are not eligible for WG hardship
<b>Total Access to Education</b>	<b>9,046</b>	<b>-6,201</b>	<b>1,584</b>	<b>4,429</b>	<b>9,979</b>	<b>-6,901</b>	<b>1,584</b>	<b>4,662</b>	<b>233</b>	
School Effectiveness Support Services	265	-43	208	431	213	-37	208	384	-47	Delayed recruitment to school support due to Covid-19
National Model for School Improvement	1,139	-60	66	1,146	1,035	-26	66	1,075	-70	Reduced travelling due to Covid-19 and maximising Education Improvement Grant to release core budget
Education Improvement Grant	1,489	-821	0	669	1,706	-1,038	0	669	0	
Other School Grants incl PDG	573	-603	153	123	594	-624	153	123	0	
<b>Total School Improvement</b>	<b>3,467</b>	<b>-1,526</b>	<b>427</b>	<b>2,368</b>	<b>3,549</b>	<b>-1,725</b>	<b>427</b>	<b>2,251</b>	<b>-117</b>	
Post 16 Funding	246	-245	0	1	246	-245	0	1	0	
Music Services for Schools	1,038	-737	46	348	1,100	-762	46	385	37	Delay with staff restructuring which has been further affected by Covid-19
Behaviour Management	95	0	15	110	408	-313	15	110	0	
Welsh Language Support	337	-10	76	403	511	-176	76	411	8	
Education Other Than At School (EOTAS)	2,205	-339	187	2,053	2,380	-445	187	2,122	70	Increasing number of placements from schools for alternative provision requiring increased staffing due to both complexity and numbers



**Education & Children's Services Scrutiny Report**  
**Budget Monitoring as at 31st October 2020 - Detail Monitoring**

Division	Working Budget				Forecasted				Oct 2020 Forecasted Variance for Year £'000	Notes
	Expenditure £'000	Income £'000	Net non- controllable £'000	Net £'000	Expenditure £'000	Income £'000	Net non- controllable £'000	Net £'000		
CCG - Families First Grant (Youth)	613	-611	0	3	613	-611	0	3	-0	
Participation	85	0	44	129	78	0	44	122	-7	
Youth Offending & Prevention Service	1,979	-1,116	310	1,173	1,882	-1,084	310	1,108	-65	Reduced travelling, staff vacancies and maximising grants to release core budget
Adult & Community Learning	574	-571	88	92	536	-540	88	84	-8	
European Funded Projects	1,126	-1,125	72	74	791	-790	72	74	-0	
School Information Systems	270	-28	47	289	256	-28	47	276	-14	
<b>Total Curriculum and Wellbeing</b>	<b>8,570</b>	<b>-4,781</b>	<b>886</b>	<b>4,674</b>	<b>8,803</b>	<b>-4,994</b>	<b>886</b>	<b>4,694</b>	<b>20</b>	
Commissioning and Social Work	6,916	-81	1,682	8,517	7,042	-202	1,682	8,523	6	
Corporate Parenting & Leaving Care	1,173	-211	71	1,033	1,261	-288	71	1,045	12	
Fostering Services & Support	3,941	0	44	3,986	3,990	-45	44	3,989	3	
Adoption Services	532	0	37	569	1,093	-489	37	641	72	One off payment committed for adoption of sibling group £125k, partially offset by maximising grant income in other areas of the service
Out of County Placements (CS)	670	0	4	675	489	-29	4	464	-211	Reduction in Out of County placements and no current remand placements
Garreglwyd Residential Unit	602	-170	109	541	760	-328	109	541	-0	
Respite Units	987	0	116	1,102	985	-0	116	1,101	-2	
Childcare	901	-345	342	897	880	-351	342	870	-27	Additional in year grants awarded from Welsh Government supporting priorities the service had already identified and have staff working on
Short Breaks and Direct Payments	535	0	16	551	674	-142	16	548	-3	Revised projections in October returns resulting in improved net budget position in this area
Children's/Family Centres and Playgroups	734	-473	92	352	778	-515	92	355	2	
CCG - Flying Start Grant	3,353	-3,347	14	20	3,376	-3,370	14	20	-0	
CCG - Families First Grant	1,040	-1,038	2	4	1,081	-1,080	2	4	-0	
Family Aide Services	172	0	0	173	305	-191	0	114	-58	Part year vacant posts and maximisation of grant income
Other Family Services incl Young Carers and ASD	540	-300	24	264	697	-507	24	214	-50	Part year vacant post (currently out for recruitment) and maximisation of grant income
Out of Hours Service	175	0	1	176	175	0	1	176	0	
Children's Services Mgt & Support (incl Care First)	992	-76	31	946	1,120	-275	31	875	-71	Further utilisation of grants - £45k, staff budget saving as not all staff at top of grade & purchase of extra leave - £12k, staff recruitment savings with most posts advertised on our website - £14k
School Safeguarding & Attendance	296	-45	75	325	552	-353	75	274	-52	Part year vacant posts and maximisation of grant income
Educational Psychology	894	0	60	954	1,246	-352	60	954	0	
<b>Total Children's Services</b>	<b>24,451</b>	<b>-6,087</b>	<b>2,721</b>	<b>21,086</b>	<b>26,504</b>	<b>-8,518</b>	<b>2,721</b>	<b>20,708</b>	<b>-378</b>	

**Education & Children's Services Scrutiny Report**  
**Budget Monitoring as at 31st October 2020 - Detail Monitoring**

Division	Working Budget				Forecasted				Oct 2020	Notes
	Expenditure £'000	Income £'000	Net non- controllable £'000	Net £'000	Expenditure £'000	Income £'000	Net non- controllable £'000	Net £'000	Forecasted Variance for Year £'000	
Additional Cleaning for schools re-opening	0	0	0	0	850	-850	0	0	0	Assumes additional cleaning costs will be fully recovered from Welsh Government. Expectation that additional cleaning costs in other establishments will be recovered from the user departments.
Face coverings & PPE	0	0	0	0	199	0	0	199	199	Expenditure incurred in August to procure Face Coverings & PPE for Schools at short notice expected to exceed WG grant by £199k
<b>Total Additional Resources for Reopening of Schools</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1,049</b>	<b>-850</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>199</b>	<b>199</b>	
<b>TOTAL FOR EDUCATION &amp; CHILDREN'S SERVICES DEPARTMENT</b>	<b>54,272</b>	<b>-21,311</b>	<b>26,643</b>	<b>59,604</b>	<b>58,109</b>	<b>-25,136</b>	<b>26,643</b>	<b>59,616</b>	<b>12</b>	
<b>TOTAL FOR EDUCATION &amp; CHILDREN'S SERVICES DEPARTMENT INCLUDING SCHOOLS</b>	<b>186,503</b>	<b>-34,854</b>	<b>26,643</b>	<b>178,291</b>	<b>191,834</b>	<b>-38,679</b>	<b>26,643</b>	<b>179,798</b>	<b>1,507</b>	

APPENDIX C

**CHARGING DIGEST - Education & Children**

2019/20 Actual £	2020/21 Budget £	2021/22 Budget £	Business Unit	Service Provided	2020/21 Charge Levied £	2021/22 Proposed Charge £	Comments
23,115	13,800	14,000	Curriculum and Wellbeing	<b>Community Centres</b> <b>Room Hire</b> Hourly - No Refreshments - minimum 1 hour	£11.22	£11.44	2% increase.
28,518	13,028	15,300	Curriculum and Wellbeing	<b>Welsh for Adults</b> Welsh for Adults charge for courses provided on behalf of the National Learning Welsh Centre (Full/Concessionary) Welsh for the family course (15 hours over 10 weeks)  Early Bird Discount - if paid by end of September	Full price - £90; Concessionary - £54  Reduced price as main target group - £5. No concessions  50% discount on full fee to £45	To be confirmed by NCLW as per comment	Charges reviewed and amended by the National Centre for Learning Welsh. Charges for 2021-2022 will depend on fees set by the NCLW.  Early Bird % discount applied against full price only. No further discount on concessionary rate. New courses offered in January 2021 will also have this discount applied.
3,219	645	274	Curriculum and Wellbeing	<b>Room Hire</b> Hourly - Llandeilo Community Centre	£11.22	£11.44	As per Community Centres Charges
9,187	9,380	9,570	Curriculum and Wellbeing	<b>Adult Community Learning</b>  LA courses - Full fee per course term  Basic Skills & ESOL - ESOL – Full Cost Recovery (not eligible for Welsh Government funding) - per term One off registration fee at Basic Skills Centre Dyslexia Screening - 2.5 hours & resources ESOL City & Guilds examination fee GCSE Maths and English (Initial paper/second maths paper)	£85 (£75 + £10 Accreditation Fee)  £200 £10 £75 £50 £60 / £30	£85 (£75 + £10 Accreditation Fee)  £200 £10 £75 £50 £60 / £30	No increase appropriate for client group  No increase appropriate for client group No increase appropriate for client group No increase appropriate for client group No increase appropriate for client group

APPENDIX C

**CHARGING DIGEST - Education & Children**

2019/20 Actual £	2020/21 Budget £	2021/22 Budget £	Business Unit	Service Provided	2020/21 Charge Levied £	2021/22 Proposed Charge £	Comments
20,398	0	5,000	Curriculum and Wellbeing	<b><u>Carmarthenshire Music Service</u></b> Concert Ticket Charges for concerts, including the Lyric & Ffrwnes Theatres	Adult £9.00 Concession £7.00	Adult £9.00 Concession £7.00	The proposed charges for the 2020/2021 academic year will be carried forward to the 2021/2022 academic year. Additional performing opportunities will be sought to increase income. Activities have not been able to take place in 2020-2021 to generate income due to COVID-19. Any proposals for 2021-2022 will depend on the pandemic and national / CCC Health & Safety measures. Charges will be kept at this level to try to encourage attendance following the pandemic.
7,594	0	10,000		Parental charge for Intermediate and Senior Ensemble pupils attending weekly rehearsals.	£70 per pupil for the academic year	£70 per pupil for the academic year	
0	0	200		Administrative charge added to all examinations fees collected for ABRSM and Trinity Guildhall Examinations	£2 administration fee to be added to the cost of each graded exam	£2 administration fee to be added to the cost of each graded exam	
0	0	500	Curriculum and Wellbeing	<b><u>Youth Support Service</u></b> <b>Room Hire</b> Hire per hour - Bwlch Youth & Community Centre and Streets Youth Club.	£0.00	£11.44	New 2021-22
100	817	500	Education Services	<b><u>In Service Training (INSET) -</u></b> <b><u>Course/Consultancy Fees</u></b> Inspection Duties / Advisory Services	As per contract/tender	As per contract/tender	Dependant on Estyn requests
5,547	41,769	41,907	Education Services	<b><u>Griffith Jones Training Centre</u></b> Lettings Griffith Jones Centre - Half Day/Full day	£57.65 / £93.00	£58.80 / £94.90	2% increase

APPENDIX C

**CHARGING DIGEST - Education & Children**

2019/20 Actual £	2020/21 Budget £	2021/22 Budget £	Business Unit	Service Provided	2020/21 Charge Levied £	2021/22 Proposed Charge £	Comments
9,828	0	0	Education Services	<u>Neuadd y Gwendraeth</u>			
				Hall - Half Day / Full Day / Evening	£104 / £156 / £135	£106 / £160 / £138	
				Sound & Light - System only / System & Technician	£21 / £42	£21.50 / £43	
				Training Room - Half Day / Full Day / Evening	£57.65 / £93.00 / £77.00	£58.80 / £94.90 / £78.60	
				Meeting Room - Half Day / Full Day / Evening	£57.65 / £93.00 / £77.00	£58.80 / £94.90 / £78.60	2% increase
				Full building - Half Day / Full Day / Evening	£156 / £208 / £187	£160 / £212 / £190	
				Performance package (practice & show) - full building	£188	£192	
				Half day practice - full building	£52	£53	

**APPENDIX C**  
**CHARGING DIGEST - Education & Children**

2019/20 Actual	2020/21 Budget £	2021/22 Budget £	Business Unit	Service Provided	2020/21 Charge Levied £	2021/22 Proposed Charge £	Comments
4,910,549	5,383,560	5,491,231	<b>School Meals</b>	<b>Primary Schools</b>			
				Pupil Meal	2.55	2.60	5p increase inflation
				Adult Meal	3.98	4.06	2% increase. Charge inclusive of VAT
				<b>Secondary Schools</b>			
				Free Meal Token - Pupil	2.55	2.60	Inflation increase to be applied (5p)
				Free Meal Token - Adult	2.55	2.60	Inflation increase to be applied (5p)

**APPENDIX C**  
**CHARGING DIGEST - Education & Children**

2019/20 Actual £	2020/21 Budget £	2021/22 Budget £	Business Unit	Service Provided	2020/21 Charge Levied £	2021/22 Proposed Charge £	Comments
7,668	7,953	8,112	Children's Services	<b>Childcare</b>			Training provided to registered childcare workers with the County.
				Paediatric First Aid Course	£25 + VAT	£25 +VAT	
				Child Protection Course	£10 + VAT	£10 + VAT	
				Basic Food Hygiene Course	£25 + VAT	£25 + VAT	
				Basic Food Hygiene - Refresher	£20 + VAT	£20 + VAT	
				Playwork Training Level 1	£35 + VAT	£35 + VAT	
				Playwork Training Level 2	£40 + VAT	£40 + VAT	
				<b>Child/Family-Playgroups</b>			
			<b>Room Hire</b>				
0	0	0		Hire per hour - Carmarthen Playgroup - Argel	£11.22	£11.44	New charge proposed to start in 20/21 - charging Crossroads for using the venue on weekends for contact. 2% increase built in for 21/22

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## Education and Children Scrutiny Committee 28<sup>th</sup> January, 2021

<b>Subject: An Evaluation Into How Carmarthenshire’s Education and Children’s Services Department Responded to COVID-19</b>		
<b>Purpose:</b> To provide reassurance that the Department learns from the experience and addresses any shortcomings.		
<b>Recommendations / key decisions required:</b> To respond to the shortcomings and report on progress made in addressing them.		
<b>Reasons:</b> As a ‘learning organisation’* the Education and Children’s Services Department needs to review performance on a regular basis and address any shortcomings. <i>* A Learning Organisation has the capacity to change and adapt routinely to new environments and circumstances as its members, individually and together, <b>learn</b> their way to realising their vision.</i>		
<p>The report provides an overview of how the local authority and regional has worked with schools and pupils referral units (PRUs) to promote learning and support vulnerable pupils during the COVID-19 period between June and November 2020, that is the period after the initial lockdown when schools were reopening.</p> <p>It captures the way the local authority has adapted its work to respond to the challenges resulting from COVID-19. The work was carried out before all schools returned to remote learning in January 2021 but will be help the LA to inform current ways of working.</p>		
Relevant scrutiny committee to be consulted    YES		
<b>Education and Children Scrutiny Committee- January 28<sup>th</sup>, 2021</b>		
Exec. Board Decision Required		NO
Council Decision Required		NO
<b>EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBER PORTFOLIO HOLDER:-</b> Cllr. Glynog Davies		
<b>Directorate:</b> Education and Children’s Services  <b>Name of Head of Service:</b> Gareth Morgans  <b>Report Author:</b> ESTYN	<b>Designations:</b>  Director of Education and Children’s Services	<b>Tel:</b>  <b>Email addresses:</b>  EDGMOrgans@sirgar.gov.uk

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**  
**Education and Children Scrutiny Committee**  
**28<sup>th</sup> January, 2021.**

**SUBJECT: An Evaluation Into How Carmarthenshire's Education and Children's Services Department Responded to COVID-19**

**CHRONOLOGY**

**28<sup>th</sup> February, 2020-** The first case of COVID-19 in Wales was confirmed in a person who had returned from Northern Italy, and then transferred to a specialist NHS infection centre at the Royal Free Hospital in London. The Chief Medical Officer for Wales, Frank Atherton, said that the Government would be taking "all appropriate measures" to reduce the risk of transmission.

**10<sup>th</sup> March, 2020-** 9 more cases were discovered in Wales bringing the total to 15, the first significant jump in cases.

**11<sup>th</sup> March, 2020-** the World Health Organization declared the outbreak a pandemic.

**16<sup>th</sup> March, 2020-** the first death in Wales was reported in Wrexham.

**18<sup>th</sup> March, 2020-** the Welsh Government announced that all schools and nurseries in Wales would be closing by the 20<sup>th</sup> March, initially for a period of four weeks, and Education Minister Kirsty Williams said that it would very likely be for a "considerable period of time". A limited number of schools were to remain open to provide support for key workers and children with additional needs. It was further announced in the following days that all exams, including GCSEs and A-Levels, would be cancelled, with grades being based on existing work and predicted grades.

**23<sup>rd</sup> March, 2020-** UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson, having the agreement of all devolved governments, announced a lockdown of the United Kingdom, with only essential services remaining open. This announcement was followed by the Welsh First Minister Mark Drakeford announcing that the measures would also cover Wales and would come into effect from that evening.

**3<sup>rd</sup> June, 2020-** it was announced that schools in Wales would reopen on the 29<sup>th</sup> June. It was advised that in each school there would be a phased approach with Year groups split into small groups with staggered starts and breaks. It was expected that a third of pupils would be present at any one time.

*COVID-19 Pandemic in Wales from Wikipedia*

Since March 20<sup>th</sup>, 2020 Education and Children's Services Department officers had to radically adapt the way they had traditionally worked to focus primarily on supporting schools and services in order that the children and young people in our care were accessing all the support and interventions they required. It was an unprecedented period of time and decisions had to be taken by the Director, the Departmental Management Team and Service Managers based on the information available at that time.

In the Autumn term all schools and services re-opened fully however at the end of December and into January 2021 schools moved to remote learning.

Over the Autumn Term, 2020 ESTYN undertook a thematic survey to reflect on local authorities, regional consortia and schools' approaches to teaching and learning and pupil wellbeing.

Part 1 of the review was to support the Welsh Government and local authorities/regional consortia by achieving the following objectives:

- provide Welsh Government and individual local authorities and regional consortia with a report reflecting their work and approaches during the lockdown period and at the start of the period when schools return to full operation. The reports will enable Welsh Government to understand the broad strengths and lesson learnt in the way local authorities and regions are operating during this period. It will also enable us to celebrate effective practice as well as sign-posting local authorities and regional consortia to consider other ways of approaching these new challenges. The national report will look at learning and remaining challenges for the education system as a whole.
- Identify how learning from before the summer is being used to support planning for and delivery of blended learning approaches and support for vulnerable learners in the Autumn term.
- learn lessons from the most effective practice about capacity, collaboration, future planning and change management. This will support planned reforms in education and local government over the next few years.

Part 2 of the work focussed on two aspects:

1. **Promoting learning-** what quality assurance work has been done to improve the quality of the learning offer and how has this been used to develop further guidance and professional learning?
2. **Supporting vulnerable learners-** how has the local authority targeted services and support to vulnerable learners to support them to engage in learning, what barriers still exist?

#### **Key themes that were explored- Promoting learning**

- **Learning from September-** support for schools to plan learning
- **Planning for progress-** support for school leaders to identify specific groups or cohorts of learners that have been disproportionately affected by school closures
- **Recruit, Recover, Raise standards- accelerated learning programme-** work with schools to plan work under the Recruit, Recover and Raise standards grant funding.
- **Professional learning-** developing the expertise of practitioners in pedagogies/ approaches that maximise the potential of blended learning

#### **Key themes that were explored- Vulnerable learners**

- **Promoting wellbeing-**work to identify and respond to the wellbeing needs of vulnerable learners.
- **Curriculum-** work to ensure that all vulnerable learners have access to a curriculum that is appropriate to their learning needs.
- **Health and Safety-** support for schools to implement relevant guidance in relation to health and safety.

- **Specialist services and multi-agency working-** engagement with partners and how will this inform and strengthen future collaborative working.
- **Statutory processes and referrals-** meeting statutory duties and responding to any changes in demand for services.
- **Professional learning-** support for the professional learning of staff to support vulnerable learners.

The findings of these reports were positive reflecting effective partnership working between all involved in the education system. However, a few areas need further consideration and will be incorporated into our 2021/22 Departmental Business Planning.

**DETAILED REPORT ATTACHED?**

**YES**

## IMPLICATIONS

I confirm that other than those implications which have been agreed with the appropriate Directors / Heads of Service and are referred to in detail below, there are no other implications associated with this report:

*Edy Morgans*

**Signed:** Director of Education and Children's Services.

Policy, Crime & Disorder and Equalities	Legal	Finance	ICT	Risk Management Issues	Staffing Implications	Physical Assets
<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>

### Policy, Crime & Disorder and Equalities

Officers had to consider and respond to Welsh Government policy and guidance and implement changes at a pace which was often challenging. In addition the lack of policy and appropriate guidance from Welsh Government impeded progress on occasion and local decisions had to be taken based on the information available. There has been a clear focus on vulnerable children and young people throughout this pandemic.

### Legal

The Local Authority has had to ensure compliance with COVID related legislation ensuring that it continues to deliver a high quality service to all children and young people.

### Finance

The Department has supported schools with all financial management issues during this period including provision for learners eligible for free school meals, early years childcare funding, utilising grants and ensuring schools have access to all required resources.

### ICT

Access to suitable ICT has been a priority ensuring that learners had suitable hardware and connectivity in order to engage in remote learning. This was a challenging task with the County Council providing 1600+ pieces of hardware and 255+ MIFI connections. It is an ongoing piece of work as many learners are required to self-isolate due to being contacts to a positive COVID case.

### Risk Management Issues

A robust and comprehensive Risk Assessment Template was provided to all schools prior to the June re-opening. This template is reviewed on a regular basis reflecting changes in guidance and advice from Welsh Government, Public Health Wales and other organisations. In regard to vulnerable learners and staff schools were advised to undertake individual risk assessments and implement appropriate actions to mitigate the identified risks.

### Staffing Implications

Appropriate advice and guidance have been issued to staff by the HR Department throughout this period. Regular and constructive meetings have been held with Trade Unions to address any issues and challenges.

### Physical Assets

Schools were effectively supported in planning and preparing Covid safe learning environments for the safe return to school in June. This included a range of resources including signage, hand washing stations, hand sanitising units in every classroom and suitable PPE.

## CONSULTATIONS

I confirm that the appropriate consultations have taken in place and the outcomes are as detailed below

Signed: 

Director of Education and Children's Services

- 1. Scrutiny Committee-** during the initial months of the pandemic this Committee did not meet. We have however taken a report to the November meeting outlining our response to Covid.
- 2. Local Member(s)-** regular communication was shared with local members in regard to schools.
- 3. Relevant Partners-** regular communication was shared with school Governors.
- 4. Staff Side Representatives and other Organisations-** regular meetings were held with the Department's Employee Relations Forum.

EXECUTIVE BOARD PORTFOLIO HOLDER(S)  
AWARE/CONSULTED

YES

Include any observations here

### Section 100D Local Government Act, 1972 – Access to Information

#### List of Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:

Title of Document	File Ref No.	Locations that the papers are available for public inspection
ESTYN Letter	Appendix 1	Attached to this document
ESTYN Thematic Report	Appendix 2	Attached to this document

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Dear Wendy Walters,

During the early autumn term, the Welsh Government asked us to undertake a review of local authorities work in supporting their learning communities in schools and pupil referral units (PRUs) during the period from March to October 2020.

This letter outlines the outcome of this work in Carmarthenshire local authority. The content of the letter is based on virtual meetings with officers, the cabinet lead member for education and a sample of schools and PRUs. We have also considered the supporting documentation provided by the local authority and the feedback from surveys of school/PRU leaders, governors, teachers and support staff, parents and pupils. We have referred to the outcomes of the surveys where relevant, although the surveys were mainly be used to inform the national report which was published on our website on 15 January. Here is a [link](#) to that report.

We would like to thank your staff for giving of their time to discuss their work with us and for providing additional information on request.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Meilyr Rowlands".

**Meilyr Rowlands**

**Her Majesty's Chief Inspector**

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## **The local authority's work to support its schools and PRUs - March to August 2020**

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### **Leadership and collaboration**

Carmarthenshire local authority has been pro-active and diligent in its efforts to provide schools and PRUs with the right support in a timely manner during this period. Officers say that the months when schools were closed for all but targeted childcare was a particularly challenging period. The effective collaboration across different departments in the local authority was a strong feature of the local authority's work.

Throughout this period, local authority officers communicated extensively within and across departments, with schools, PRUs and other stakeholders. For example, senior officers produced weekly newsletters, which were sent directly to headteachers and chairs of governors updating them on key information. They also held regular virtual meetings with headteachers and chairs of governors to discuss emerging issues and address concerns. Senior officers also shared information with parents via the council website and social media.

Through their weekly virtual headteacher meetings and bulletins, senior officers set out their expectations for schools and PRUs. Officers planned for the continuation of learning for pupils and provided useful support for parents and staff in schools through the local authority's website. This ensured that communication with stakeholders was clear.

During the lockdown period, officers provided all governors with Hwb email addresses to improve communication and share access to resources. They reconfigured training to help governors support their schools. All training was held virtually and included aspects such as supporting the wellbeing of headteachers, using the 'Wellbeing Audit Tool', making effective use of the Recruit, Recover and Raise Standards: the accelerating learning programme grant and providing guidance on safe recruitment. The local authority's evaluation of the training programme concluded that governors found the training beneficial, and that more governors participated in virtual training than previously attended similar training events in person. They plan to continue with this approach to governor training in the future.

The portfolio holder for education, the elected members on the executive board for education and children were consulted and scrutinised all the key decisions relating to schools and PRUs. The local authority suspended its Education and Children Scrutiny Committee meetings during lockdown. These are scheduled to restart in November 2020.

Senior officers used the content of guidance provided by Welsh Government to prepare executive summaries for schools to ensure that the information was manageable and accessible.



## Promoting learning

The local authority has worked well with its schools and regional consortium (ERW) to oversee its approaches to distance learning. As well as focusing on support for providers in the local authority, officers also contributed purposefully to the Welsh Government Continuation of Learning plan. From the beginning of lockdown, education support advisers were in regular contact with schools to signpost them to support for wellbeing, offering advice as necessary and signposting schools to resources they could use to support learning.

From contact with schools, PRUs and other intelligence gathered, local authority officers identified at an early stage inconsistencies in the quality of the learning experiences schools and PRUs were giving to pupils and in the support they were offering. In order to help promote more consistent approaches, the local authority produced learning packs and playlists for practitioners and teachers in all key stages. For example, the local authority provided guidance to non-maintained settings on the types of activities they could share with parents to support children's learning, with a clear focus on practical and outdoor activities. The school improvement team issued a survey to seek the views of parents about their children's learning experiences and other related issues. There was a high response rate, with feedback indicating that most parents were generally happy with their schools' provision for distance learning.

During our engagement phone calls with school leaders, many praised the support, advice and resources on healthy school matters that schools could use to plan activities for pupils. The local authority also provided training sessions on the use of online digital platforms to support learning such as Microsoft Teams. The sessions were accessed by many schools across the local authority.

Towards the beginning of lockdown, a few schools had started planning to provide synchronous learning for pupils. This work was put on hold temporarily by the local authority following guidance provided by the Welsh Government around safeguarding concerns of using synchronous learning. A few schools found this frustrating as they felt that they had robust plans to deliver this work safely. Following later guidance provided by the Welsh Government, officers encouraged schools to use synchronous learning where relevant and provided schools with specific guidance and a clear protocol to support them with potential safeguarding matters based on this guidance.

The local authority collaborated with schools to try to ensure that all of their pupils had appropriate access to ICT equipment during the time that schools and PRUs were closed. The authority loaned ICT equipment to over 1600 pupils to support their digital learning during lockdown. It also supported over 300 pupils who did not have access to the internet. Each school or PRU was responsible for gathering the information needed to inform the local authority of the ICT needs of their pupils. Despite the local authority's and the schools' efforts, a few schools reported that some families were still awaiting equipment towards the end of the summer term.

The local authority aligned its professional learning plans with the ERW's training schedule to provide online training to schools during the lockdown period. The local authority arranged statutory training modules for all schools on aspects such as safeguarding, data protection and manual handling. Staff also had access to a range of webinars provided by the regional consortia across Wales and most found the videos on how to use different software to assist distance learning beneficial. The local authority also developed an online course on blended learning and synchronised learning for one representative from each school and PRU. This was well attended and has been used as part of the basis for developing the recovery curriculum from September. The local authority also offered school senior leaders an opportunity to access professional development on stress management and improving staff wellbeing.

### **Cameo: Welsh language training**

During the lockdown period, the local authority provided a differentiated Welsh learning course for teachers and support staff to improve their Welsh language skills. Through working with the Welsh for Adults tutors, virtual lessons were introduced and tailored to suit learners' needs. The commitment and engagement with these courses has been high. Around 125 members of staff took part in this training with many completing the course successfully.

The local authority continued to fund non-maintained settings that were open during this period. Officers worked with umbrella organisations such as Mudiad Meithrin to enable them to furlough their staff, where necessary. Early years advisory teachers produced useful guidance for staff working in the foundation phase in schools and in non-maintained settings to support young children during lockdown and when they reopened. For example, the guidance included worthwhile activities for staff to use to develop pupils' creative and physical skills in the outdoor area.

Staff in the local authority worked determinedly to ensure that schools could re-open on 29 June. In line with most other local authorities in Wales, a decision was made that schools in Carmarthenshire would open for three weeks, closing on 17 July, rather than extend the term for an extra week. Most secondary schools accepted their pupils for one day a week for the three weeks, with primary schools adopting flexible approaches based on their particular circumstances. A few schools needed to cap the number of children attending their childcare hubs when schools re-opened in order to accept other pupils within the school's revised capacity, taking social distancing into account.

### **Cameo: Supporting health and safety concerns in schools**

Nearly all schools praised the local authority's support for health and safety. Local authority officers provided schools with a clear plan for reopening at the end of June and for September. Officers visited schools and PRUs to undertake site visits alongside headteachers, chairs of governors and local councillors. They supported staff to ensure the buildings were safe for the return of pupils. This included providing them with signs and hand washing equipment.

Regular online 'drop-in' sessions offered by officers were a particular strength of the authority's work to support health and safety. Staff in schools and PRUs were able to access these sessions to ask for advice and support on any areas of concern, for example 'Test, Trace, Protect' or for advice around providing certain learning activities. This support continued throughout the lockdown period and into the autumn term.

Local authority staff produced a welcome pack for teachers to use with their pupils during the three weeks at the end of the summer term. The main focus of this pack was on pupils' wellbeing.

Although a challenging task, the local authority managed to secure school transport for all the pupils needing it for the three week period at the end of the summer term – around 450 in mainstream schools and a further 100 in specialist provision.

The local authority ensured sufficient cleaning staff were available for all schools and PRUs, which included someone on site throughout the day as well as the normal cleaning staff at the end of the day.

Officers of the local authority have evaluated informally the effectiveness of its approach to reopening schools and PRUs. Questionnaires for headteachers at the end of the first week after reopening in June indicated that most were happy with the support they received and the plans for reopening were generally successful. Although a few members of staff in schools continued to be shielding for the three weeks before the summer break, there were enough in work to meet the needs of the numbers of pupils attending.

The local authority did not run childcare hubs for children of key workers during the summer break. However, it did run sessions for vulnerable learners and pupils with complex needs. The local authority also brokered support from the private sector to run around a half of their usual summer play clubs. Over 160 young people attended the six family learning days arranged by the local authority and around 100 attended the three weeks of summer engagement and learning activities.

Officers were proactive in supporting schools and PRUs to plan for the full reopening of schools in September as soon as the Welsh Government made the decision about this.

## **Supporting vulnerable learners**

The local authority placed a clear focus on the wellbeing of pupils, school staff and its workforce, and this remained at the forefront of their approach during this period. The local authority responded quickly to mobilise its resources and expertise across different departments to support schools, PRUs, pupils and parents.

From the outset, the local authority has provided schools and PRUs with support and advice to help safeguard the wellbeing and mental health of pupils and staff. For example, the Education Psychology Service offered bespoke support to schools and signposted schools and families to relevant information such as dealing with bereavement and loss.

Different departments across the local authority collaborated regularly throughout the lockdown to support the wellbeing of pupils and staff. Staff across departments developed systems to prioritise support for vulnerable pupils. For example, the local authority identified that young carers were one of the first groups of children to demonstrate high levels of anxiety. Consequently, staff set up 'WhatsApp' groups to communicate with young carers and supported them by providing wellbeing packs and food vouchers. When it was necessary to do so, they visited these young people and arranged socially distanced walks for them to have time away from the home and to talk to someone regarding any issues or anxieties.

Local authority officers, alongside schools and pupils, identified the ongoing need for counselling services during the lockdown period. Staff worked closely with the Area 43 counselling service to provide counselling through phone calls or through virtual meetings with pupils from Year 5 upwards who requested this support. Leaders in schools found this work to be highly valuable for pupils, with a few pupils also self-referring into the service.

The local authority used a wide range of information to identify vulnerable learners. Family liaison officers collaborated with schools and parents to ascertain the needs of vulnerable pupils and to discuss how they could be supported. Where possible, officers made provision to support pupils with additional learning needs in mainstream or specialist childcare hubs. Additional learning needs managers provided regular support and information to the staff in hubs, providing guidance on how best to support the vulnerable learners.

From the period when schools were initially closed, the local authority developed a protocol that stated explicitly the expectation that schools and other providers made contact with vulnerable learners on at least a weekly basis. Where this was not possible for schools or PRUs, they were able to make referrals into the education welfare service who would provide support to help them engage with families.

As part of the strategy for supporting its pupils, local authority departments also developed creative ways of using the skills of staff. For example, the Minority Ethnic Achievement Service (MEAS) used the bilingual skills of their teaching assistants to make welfare calls to families. The teaching assistants supported them with accessing and understanding Welsh Government and local authority guidance.

They also provided practical help, for example with making applications for free school meals.

As schools closed in late March, the local authority provided childcare services for children of key workers and vulnerable learners in hubs based in several schools across the county. This arrangement was reviewed regularly and amended as needed. The local authority also supported the Welsh Government Childcare Assistance Scheme to provide childcare for children up to three years old. As time went on, and the demand for more childcare places increased, more hubs were opened until nearly all schools provided childcare in their buildings in the week before they reopened on 29 June.

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## **The local authority's work to support its schools and PRU from September 2020**

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### **Leadership and collaboration**

Leaders across the local authority have continued to adapt their processes and procedures to support schools and PRUs to reopen for pupils in September. Officers are adjusting and improving their approaches as they learn more about what works well and what doesn't, and to take account of the latest national advice and guidance. Cross-departmental working across the local authority, based firmly around the council's core value of working as 'One Team', has brought coherence to their work and helped officers support schools and PRUs effectively.

The strategic plans of the department for education and social services include priorities to support the wellbeing of staff, pupils, and families and support for schools and PRUs as they plan for future learning. Departmental plans such as the 'Vulnerable and Disadvantaged Learners' plan set out clearly how the authority is working to support its schools and PRUs and learners. The local authority has begun evaluating the impact of its plans and taking any learning from these to tweak and enhance their ways of working. For example, they have seen the benefits of supporting schools and PRUs virtually, especially in terms of working more efficiently and with greater agility. The local authority is currently considering which aspects of its work with schools and PRUs can be done more efficiently and effectively through virtual means and which would still be carried out more effectively in face-to-face meetings when possible.

Leaders have tried to ensure clear and consistent communication with all stakeholders. For example, through regular meetings with headteachers, the director and other officers have been able to disseminate information and share the rationale behind decisions. They have listened to headteacher feedback on the arrangements for these meetings and made adjustments to them as necessary. School improvement teams share information about any decisions to schools through the education support advisors and feed key messages from schools back to senior officers. In addition, the local authority has used stakeholder groups such as

the supporting vulnerable learners group and the equity group to inform their decision-making and evaluate their work.

## **Promoting learning**

Since September, the local authority has been working with its schools and PRUs to introduce a recovery curriculum, with a specific focus on developing a blended learning approach in case of future disruption. Officers have considered research by Michael Fullan, 'Education Reimagined: The future of learning', as a basis for moving learning from a distance learning model used during lockdown to a model that could be used for the safe re-opening of schools. Part of this approach has been re-imagining learning for the future and taking account the potential implications of the Curriculum for Wales.

To ensure a continuation of learning, officers simplified the 15-point Welsh Government continuity of learning plan to create a focus with four priority areas covering distance learning with an emphasis on 'curriculum and pedagogy', 'digital equality', 'wellbeing, equality and inclusion', and 'leadership and communication'.

The local authority continued with regular virtual meetings with headteachers from September. Following feedback from headteachers, the authority modified how it communicated with them by reducing the numbers of people present at each meeting and providing more sector-specific meetings. The meetings have been a forum for officers to address any concerns, to clarify the authority's approach and discuss next steps. The 'chat' system was available inside and outside the meetings so that information from the meeting was available to leaders even if they were unable to attend. Headteachers appreciated this approach and the willingness of the local authority to adapt procedures to assist them. As the term progresses, there is now more of a balance between addressing operational matters and a focus on teaching and learning.

Many schools and PRUs found it difficult to manage the volume of information being sent to them from different sources including Welsh Government and local authority guidance. In response to this issue, local authority officers established 'Y Porth', a one-stop shop with bilingual information for headteachers and managers in schools and PRUs. Y Porth holds all relevant and up-to-date information in one place, for example, all the weekly bulletins and updates, continuous professional development information for staff and governors, a place to book training and presentations of professional learning that has already taken place. It is constantly updated and schools find the resource to be very helpful. The system continues to evolve and is intended to support the local authority with future work and communication with schools.

For the reopening of schools in September, bilingual guidance documents were created and shared with schools and PRUs and stakeholders including welcome packs for parents and staff and guidance on blended learning and supporting safe online learning.

The local authority provided support for schools and PRUs to develop the outdoor learning environment, providing activities that promote resilience and perseverance in problem solving. At present, training on outdoor learning has been provided for the non-maintained sector, nursery, primary schools and PRUs with pupils from primary schools. The training for secondary schools was postponed due to the lack of take up in the training, although the local authority plans to run this again during the current academic year.

Schools, PRUs and local authority officers have worked collaboratively to balance learning with supporting wellbeing. Officers are working to pilot various blended learning approaches with a select number of schools. For example, they have worked with a few secondary schools to produce videos of pre-recorded lessons and shared this good practice with other schools and PRUs. Officers ensure that blended learning is always on the agenda of the local authority headteachers' meetings.

The local authority has used a range of social media successfully to engage pupils and ensure that parents receive a consistent and useful flow of information to help them support their child's wellbeing and learning. Officers have gained useful feedback from parental questionnaires as well as information about how parents have been successful in supporting their children's learning during the pandemic.

#### **Cameo – supporting pupils' Welsh language development**

The local authority identified the need to support pupils to maintain their engagement with the Welsh language from early in the pandemic. The Welsh advisory team adapted and refined their existing resources to provide schools and PRUs with beneficial activities to share with pupils and parents. In addition, they created extra-curricular activities and micro-lessons for pupils to recall previous learning, revise grammar, and to develop their reading skills and numeracy skills. They provided worthwhile tasks based on Welsh poetry as a stimulus to learning as well as providing activities to develop pupils' Welsh speaking skills through the 'Cynllun Clonc' and Flipgrid activities.

Social media was used well to promote Welsh language activities, for example scientific activities for the outdoors and activities on history of the local area. Homework booklets were also distributed to enable parents to support their children with work through the medium of Welsh.

Local authority officers and teachers in a number of its secondary schools worked with regional consortia to create a wide range of valuable Welsh language resources to support learners in Welsh-medium and English-medium schools.

Officers continued to develop resources for schools throughout the autumn term to support schools to improve pupils' Welsh language development.



Local authority officers have used research to provide practical advice and support to schools on developing accelerated learning techniques. They have looked at how schools can support pupils' learning by improving areas such as metacognition, collaborative learning, providing effective feedback, approaches to homework, tutoring and peer tutoring. Officers are also promoting the Voice 21 oracy strategy in schools and PRUs to improve pupils' confidence, articulacy and capacity to learn. The local authority is exemplifying good practice arising from this work to share with other schools and PRUs across the local authority.

The local authority has provided support and guidance for schools and PRUs, including a template of a spending plan, to make effective use of the grant funding for 'Recruit, recover, raise standards: the accelerating learning programme'. The expectation that schools use the plan will allow officers to monitor how well the schools are utilising the grant and its impact. There has been good collaboration between the local authority and schools on spending this grant with one secondary school sharing their planning for utilising the grant with the Welsh Government as good practice.

The local authority and ERW have aligned their strategic plans to provide a programme of development opportunities and various training events for school and PRUs. For example, the authority has worked with the ERW to provide professional learning for specific subject areas in secondary schools, which staff have found useful. Many schools and PRUs feel that these opportunities are more accessible online and less teaching time is lost for training.

Local authority officers have provided useful guidance to non-maintained settings and schools on developing learning activities in the foundation phase. This has included ideas and activities to develop pupils' skills in the outdoor learning environment as well as how to organise classroom practice to meet foundation phase principles in response to COVID-19.

### **Cameo: professional learning activities**

The local authority has collaborated effectively with the ERW to provide a comprehensive programme of professional learning activities during the autumn term.

The local authority is providing a series of virtual professional development opportunities for schools and PRUs including training for ALN and emotional wellbeing. The local authority is working closely with Barry and Matthew Carpenter to help develop a recovery curriculum to re-engage pupils in learning. Their methodology focuses clearly on promoting pupils' wellbeing and mental health through a relationship-based approach, where social interaction and compassionate leadership are key elements.

The authority has also provided workshops to schools with Professor Lee Elliot Major, sharing ideas on how to improve the engagement and outcomes of disadvantaged learners.

In addition to work with external sources, the local authority is aiming to provide inspiration and guidance to schools in preparing for the new Curriculum for Wales through the 'Autumn Series' of professional learning.



## Supporting vulnerable learners

The education and wellbeing service has continued to work with schools to engage with vulnerable families to assist pupils' return to their school or PRU. The use of a risk rating system has enabled the service to target the families that need the most support. The service has developed a helpful engagement plan and guidance for schools and is supporting them to plan interventions to assist pupils' safe return to schools and PRUs

### **Cameo: Wellbeing packs to support a safe return to school or PRU**

The local authority created wellbeing packs for parents, pupils and staff to support a safe return to school in June and for the new term in September. Officers based the packs on research, using this information to offer practical ideas, activities and advice. The 'Welcome back' pack for parents offers advice on how parents can help their child to prepare for the return to school. The pack for pupils includes advice on what they might experience such as when using school transport as well as suggestions helping their wellbeing.

The 'Health and Happiness' programme provides bespoke support to all providers on supporting pupils' wellbeing. Officers have used a range of research including the New Economics Foundation (NEF) model on the five features of wellbeing to underpin these activities. This wellbeing model focuses on supporting pupils to connect with people around them, being active, taking notice of their environment, keeping learning and giving something back to the community or a friend.

Where schools and PRUs are unable to maintain contact with families, they refer the pupils to the School Safeguarding and Attendance team so that they can help try to re-engage families. This process has been successful in either re-engaging vulnerable families with the school, offering a more tailored response such as home welfare visits, or referring to child protection processes. Prior to the use of engagement plans, the numbers of children becoming electively home educated averaged at 25 children per week. Since the implementation of these plans, numbers have fallen due to pupils returning to school. The use of these plans has also had a positive impact on school attendance. Carmarthenshire school attendance has been consistently above the Welsh national average since reopening in September.

Services such as the Gypsy Roma Traveller service have continued to support pupils and families from the start of the September. For example, they have continued to engage with families through the established WhatsApp group to support them with their children's return to education.

The Additional Learning Needs department has continued to provide schools and PRUs with support around curriculum planning for pupils with ALN since September. For example, they ran bespoke training in September for PRUs and specialist settings on how to approach blended learning and shared examples of practice from different specialist settings in the local authority.

Through ALNCo panels, the service has continued to work with schools and PRUs on supporting the wellbeing of pupils on their return to school, as well as assist schools and PRUs with assessments and curriculum planning. For example, the Carmarthenshire Communication Support Service has provided useful support through videos to schools and PRUs on how to use ChATT detailed Speech Screen and Phonological Awareness Assessment to identify gaps in learning, alongside resources to support curriculum planning.

The MEAS and the Gypsy Roma Traveller service have identified a regression in language skills of a number of pupils using the services. In order to help address this, they identified a virtual learning platform that they are currently rolling out with schools and PRUs which will allow these pupils to access a tailored package of activities to support their English language acquisition.

A number of schools across the local authority have experienced a rise in the number of families from outside of Wales moving into the area and placing their children in Welsh medium provision. The Welsh advisory service have continued to offer remote language support to latecomers to the Welsh language through the use of Microsoft Teams. Schools accessing this support have found it beneficial in supporting these pupils acquire new Welsh language skills.

The support of the health and safety department has continued to be valuable to providers since reopening in September. The local authority has provided template risk assessments to schools and PRUs that consider the needs of all learners, including vulnerable learners. Officers continued to offer regular virtual 'drop-in' sessions. School leaders, who even if they are unable to attend the session, can access the chat functionality to see if any questions and answers are relevant their schools. Schools and PRUs have found this service to be very helpful and appreciate the support provided.

The local authority has worked with schools and PRUs throughout lockdown and into the new term to ensure that they continue to safeguard learners during this time. For example, they have continued to work with Dyfed Powys Police to share Operation Encompass notifications with schools and provide follow up advice as necessary. The number of notifications rose significantly during lockdown and the local authority worked with schools and PRUs to provide guidance to parents on issues such as domestic abuse support through school and PRU websites and by providing more advice to schools and PRUs when referring pupils and families causing concern.

Special schools and schools with specialist provision have commented that the local authority has been quick to respond with requests sent to them. Multi-agency working with specialist nurses and physiotherapists, for example, has continued to support specialist provisions to meet individual pupil needs.

Schools and PRUs have found the support from the youth support service to be helpful in engaging and supporting individuals. Although restrictions have altered the way that some youth workers go about their role, school and PRU leaders praised them for their creative solutions to help vulnerable pupils engage with their learning.

The behaviour and support service has continued to develop and implement a new Team around the Pupil, Parent and Setting (TaPPaS) approach with secondary schools. The project was piloted with schools in the Llanelli area before lockdown and it proved to be successful. Following an evaluation, officers decided to continue with the multi-agency approach virtually from September. A core group of multi-agency professionals, including a school representative, the school ALNCo and members of the Educational and Child Psychologist Team, Behaviour Support and Community Team, School Safeguarding and Attendance Team and Team around the Family in Schools supports pupils, families and schools to meet the emotional wellbeing needs of children and young people. The work also invites the input from other agencies as necessary, such as the youth support service, school nurse and ALN officers. This learner-centred approach enables multi-agency services to plan for the needs of pupils holistically and reduces the burden on parents needing to contact separate services to support their child's needs.

The local authority has developed useful guidance for schools and PRUs on maintaining statutory processes to ensure that all processes can continue remotely. Officers have supported schools and PRUs to adapt the annual review process and statutory requests, offering technical support to facilitate remote working where necessary. The local authority has evaluated these processes and found them to be beneficial in engaging stakeholders such as multi-agency services and parents. Consequently, they plan to sustain a version of remote working moving forward. Generally, statutory processes continued without delay.

Overall, the Additional Learning Needs referrals processes for schools and PRUs has continued as normal since September, with nearly all schools continuing to refer pupils as necessary and processes following these referrals following usual processes. As part of this process, a few schools and PRUs are concerned around observations of pupils taking place electronically and feel this places an extra burden on staff.

The local authority has continued to run a wide range of courses to support schools and PRUs and settings identify and respond to the needs of vulnerable learners. Officers have worked creatively to deliver training and support virtually for providers. For example, Carmarthenshire's Wellbeing Training Toolkit provides schools with access to training around issues such as mental health first aid, trauma-informed practice and mindfulness. Schools are able to access this training in line with their own professional learning needs.

The ALN service has also adapted its training programme to be delivered remotely, for example by providing a self-directed training package needs such as hearing impairment followed by bespoke discussion and training groups on Microsoft Teams.

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# **Local authority and regional consortia support for schools and PRUs in response to COVID-19**

Update report from June to November 2020

January 2021



**The purpose of Estyn is to inspect quality and standards in education and training in Wales. Estyn is responsible for inspecting:**

- ▲ nursery schools and settings that are maintained by, or receive funding from, local authorities
- ▲ primary schools
- ▲ secondary schools
- ▲ special schools
- ▲ pupil referral units
- ▲ all-age schools
- ▲ independent schools
- ▲ further education
- ▲ independent specialist colleges
- ▲ adult community learning
- ▲ local authority education services for children and young people
- ▲ teacher education and training
- ▲ Welsh for adults
- ▲ work-based learning
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## Introduction

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This report is written in response to a request for advice from the Minister for Education in July 2020. It provides an overview of how local authorities and regional consortia have worked with schools and pupils referral units (PRUs) to promote learning and support vulnerable pupils during the COVID-19 period between June and November 2020, that is the period after the initial lockdown when schools were reopening. It captures the ways local authorities and regional consortia have adapted their work to respond to the challenges resulting from COVID-19. The work was carried out before all schools returned to remote learning in January 2021 but will be helpful to inform current ways of working.

The intended audience for this report is the Welsh Government, local authority and regional consortia officers and staff in schools and PRUs. It draws on the evidence base in appendix 1 including interviews, survey feedback and documentary evidence. Due to restrictions associated with COVID-19 we were unable to visit schools and PRUs to gather first hand evidence about the quality of provision. The quantitative feedback from the surveys issued can be found in appendix 2. We have also provided detailed feedback to individual local authorities and regional consortia to support their own self-evaluation for improvement. The report is part of a series of publications by Estyn to share learning and support the education system's continued response and recovery (Appendix 3).

The report features 'cameos' from local authorities and regional consortia. These are not case studies as we are unable to evaluate the impact of the work because of restrictions on our activities due to COVID-19. The cameos are included to exemplify points raised in the report, giving a flavour of the work that has taken place across Wales.

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## Background

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In the foreword to his Annual Report 2019-2020, Meilyr Rowlands HMCI (Estyn, 2020, p.4) stated that 'the last months of the 2019-2020 academic year brought challenges to Welsh education the like of which we have not seen in generations. The challenges were many, complex and unexpected. The COVID-19 pandemic changed people's lives, had a huge impact on economies, and caused major disruption to education systems worldwide and in Wales'. His foreword offers an initial account of how schools and other education and training providers coped with the initial lockdown period and strived to support pupils while providing continuity of learning for them remotely. For further information on this initial lockdown period see the [Annual Report 2019-2020](#).



This thematic report focuses on the period from late summer to late autumn. A timeline of significant events during this period can be found in appendix 4.

In late June, nearly all schools reopened to pupils to provide an opportunity for them to 'Check in, catch up and prepare for summer, and September'. In July and August, the Welsh Government published guidance to support schools to reopen to all pupils, on supporting learning and on supporting vulnerable learners (Welsh Government 2020a, 2020b, 2020c). Schools and PRUs reopened to pupils in September, with a transition period leading up to all pupils attending by 14 September 2020. Almost immediately, schools began to experience their first positive COVID-19 cases among pupils and staff, reflecting the situation in their communities, and the first of a series of local restrictions to reduce transmission was announced. During September and October, individual pupils, classes or whole year groups were required at times to self-isolate, leading to the need for remote learning provision. The length of self-isolation periods varied from one day to 14 days depending on the reason and personal circumstances<sup>1</sup>. Positive COVID-19 cases continued to rise and the Welsh Government announced a two-week firebreak lockdown from 23 October 2020. Schools and PRUs were closed for half-term during the first week of the firebreak. During the second week primary schools re-opened for face-to-face learning while many secondary-aged pupils reverted to distance learning from home.

In early November, around 90% of pupils were in school. The proportion of pupils in school fell to around 80% by the end of November and to around 70% by mid-December, as increasing numbers of pupils were required to self-isolate or their school was closed due to an insufficient number of staff available to supervise pupils on site. Towards the end of the autumn term, an increasing number of parents chose not to send their children to school, even if their school remained open, often due to concerns about being able to meet family or friends at Christmas. The national attendance figures mask considerable variation across schools and local authority areas, as in the local authorities worst affected by COVID-19 only around 50% of pupils were in school towards the end of the term. The national figures also mask considerable variation across age groups, with older secondary school age pupils having the lowest attendance at school.

The scope of this thematic report includes the extent of the support provided to schools and PRUs by local authorities and regional consortia during this period. Although the scope does not include post-16 or pre-school providers, we refer to aspects of these sectors' work where helpful. The report focused specifically on two aspects:

- Promoting learning – the quality of the learning offer and how has this been supported through further guidance and professional learning?
- Supporting vulnerable pupils – how did the local authority targeted services and support to vulnerable pupils to support them to engage in learning? What barriers still exist?

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<sup>1</sup> The maximum self-isolation period was reduced to 10 days from 10 December 2020.

We also considered the early planning and implementation for the 'Recruit, recover and raise standards programme' grant across schools and PRUs and the next steps for this work.

At the time of our engagement with schools in October, very few pupils needed to receive blended learning. Most pupils were able to attend school and benefit from face-to-face teaching. Where pupils were required to isolate or shield, schools provided distance learning until they were able to return. A blended learning approach would involve a cohesive, intentional plan for pupils' learning to involve a combination of learning in school and at home which was not required in most schools during the autumn term. At the time of publication in January 2021, all schools have returned to providing remote learning for pupils, with some face-to-face provision in school for vulnerable pupils and those with parents who are key workers.

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## Main findings

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- 1 Local authorities and regional consortia have worked closely together and with the Welsh Government to respond to the evolving context caused by the pandemic. Through the Association and Directors of Education Wales (ADEW), senior leaders have provided good support for each other and collaborated to create shared approaches and resources.
- 2 Local authorities provided valuable support to enable their schools and PRUs to reopen successfully to all pupils in September. Particular strengths were the practical support around health and safety and on communicating with parents and learners. For example, local authorities, working with health care partners where appropriate, supported risk assessments, including for vulnerable pupils and developed welcome packs providing information for parents, carers and pupils. School leaders welcomed the direction from local authorities and regional consortia to focus on pupil wellbeing and felt this was appropriate.
- 3 During the initial lockdown and the autumn term, local authority services had to respond rapidly to support the wellbeing of all pupils, and particularly those known to be vulnerable. Where local authorities already had effective joint working across services and external agencies, this was evident in the efficiency with which they responded to these needs. In other local authorities where collaboration is less well established, the pandemic has been a catalyst to strengthen joint working. The enhanced use of digital communication also contributed to more efficient multi-agency working within local authorities.
- 4 During the initial lockdown, teachers had to respond quickly to the need to provide distance learning materials for pupils. This provision improved though the summer term. As the need for a number of pupils to learn away from the classroom continued in the autumn term, it remained a priority to further improve and embed distance and blended learning provision. Regional consortia and local authorities have developed helpful guidance, playlists of videos featuring good practice and a range of professional learning. However, schools', local authorities' and regional consortia's oversight of the quality of provision is underdeveloped.
- 5 Pupils' learning experiences in the autumn term varied widely across and within schools. This is partly due to the varied impact of the pandemic in different areas and also as a result of the different policies and practices adopted by local authorities in relation to close contacts and the different ways that schools have organised groups and cohorts of pupils. These factors have resulted in considerably unequal learning experiences for pupils who have received most of their autumn term education in school and those who have been taught at a distance for extended periods.
- 6 In his recent Annual Report, the Chief Inspector's noted that 'despite considerable effort by schools, local authorities and central government to provide additional equipment and support, a minority of learners were disadvantaged by lack of access

to suitable computers or adequate connectivity.’ The barriers to learning at home identified in the summer term, including access to digital technology, remained in the autumn term.

- 7 The pandemic has had a greater impact on certain groups of pupils and magnified challenges that already existed. For example, school leaders have told us that pupils eligible for free school meals made slower progress in their learning during the initial lockdown than their peers, with some pupils returning to school with weaker language and numeracy skills than before the initial lockdown started.
- 8 The pandemic has exacerbated some challenges that local authority and regional consortia had already been working with schools to address. Pupils across Wales have experienced the pandemic in very different ways as a result of their home circumstances. The necessity for pupils to work at home for periods of time in the autumn term has highlighted the need for pupils to be able to work independently successfully and for schools to focus on supporting pupils to improve learning resilience.
- 9 Local authorities and consortia have recognised the potential longer-term impact of the pandemic on the wellbeing of children and young people. All have offered enhanced professional learning for staff from schools and PRUs on supporting wellbeing, including on bereavement and adverse childhood experiences. Children and young people already challenged because of adverse childhood experiences prior to the pandemic have faced further challenges. Children and young people in stable family environments with very few or no prior adverse childhood experiences may also have been affected by the pandemic. For example, time away from friends caused by lockdowns, isolation periods or having to remain in tight bubbles at school can have an adverse impact on pupils’ social development and their mental health.
- 10 In most cases, local authorities have ensured that statutory processes for pupils in relation to special education needs (SEN), including assessments and annual reviews, have continued during the autumn term. Where there have been delays, this has most commonly been due to the capacity of educational psychology services and other specialist services, caused by staff absence or challenges in delivering services remotely.
- 11 Regional consortium and local authority officers continued to support teachers’ and school leaders’ digital competence during the autumn term. The increased effective use of digital communication has had positive consequences for facilitating more agile, efficient and frequent interactions between and within learning communities across Wales. School and PRU leaders have valued the flexibility of online professional learning opportunities provided by local authorities and regional consortia.
- 12 School leaders across Wales have mixed views about the effectiveness of support they have received from their local authority and their regional school improvement consortium during the pandemic. School leaders in south west Wales are most satisfied with the support they have received from their local authority, while school leaders in north Wales are most satisfied with the support they have received from their regional consortium.

- 13 Local authorities made appropriate early adaptations to the governance arrangements but a few local authorities were too slow in resuming their scrutiny functions. By the middle of July 2020, most councils had begun to hold Cabinet meetings online, but only half of councils had held virtual meetings of their scrutiny committees. As a result, decisions about re-opening schools and providing support for learners in the summer were not scrutinised in half of councils. By the autumn, all council Cabinets were meeting online, and scrutiny committees in most councils were also meeting online.

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## Recommendations

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### **Recommendations for the Welsh Government to work with regional consortia, local authorities, and other partners and providers to:**

- R1 Urgently address barriers to learning at home, particularly where this is due to a lack of access to suitable computers or adequate connectivity
- R2 Improve the quality of the distance and blended learning experiences for pupils by supporting more effective teaching across and within schools and PRUs
- R3 Develop a coherent approach to improve progress in literacy, numeracy and personal and social skills of vulnerable pupils disproportionately affected by the pandemic, for example pupils eligible for free school meals
- R4 Establish strategies to monitor and address the long-term impact of the pandemic on the physical and mental health of pupils
- R5 Create opportunities to take stock and evaluate the impact of policies and practices developed since the start of the pandemic to inform future ways of working and curriculum design

## Leadership

### Decision-making and governance

- 14 Local authorities and regional consortia have worked closely together and with the Welsh Government to respond to the evolving context caused by the pandemic. Through ADEW – the Association of Directors of Education in Wales – directors of education have worked co-operatively to support each other through the pandemic. Directors have reduced the burden on themselves, their officers and staff in the regional consortia by identifying aspects of work that they can agree to work on collaboratively or on behalf of each other. ADEW has supported national work with Welsh Government such as guidance relating to the continuity of learning.
- 15 Audit Wales has published several reports on how councils' governance arrangements have been affected by the pandemic. Early during the initial lockdown period, councils had to use emergency governance arrangements, meaning that typically 'responsibility for decisions about how councils use public money and provide services fell to senior council officers in consultation with a much smaller number of senior councillors than would usually be involved in decision-making – sometimes just the leader of the council.' (Audit Wales, 2020).
- 16 Some councils were slow to use new regulations that came in to force in April 2020 that made it easier for councils to meet virtually. As Audit Wales noted, 'in some of those councils there is no comprehensive record available online of the decisions taken since lockdown. This makes it difficult for the public to see and understand the decisions their council has taken during lockdown, and who is accountable for them' (Audit Wales, 2020).
- 17 By the middle of July 2020, most councils had begun to hold Cabinet meetings online, but only half of councils had held virtual meetings of their scrutiny committees. As a result, decisions about reopening schools to all pupils and providing support for learners in the summer were not scrutinised in half of councils. By the autumn, all council Cabinets were meeting online, and scrutiny committees in most councils were also meeting online.
- 18 When important decisions are being taken about education services, local authorities should usually take account of the views of school leaders as well as other stakeholders where relevant. Our survey of school leaders across Wales carried out in October 2020 found that the majority of them agree that their local authority involves them effectively in discussions about local education services. However, a few school leaders do not feel involved enough. Local authorities have continued to build on the range of fora they have with school and PRU leaders to communicate, consult and in a few cases, co-construct approaches.

### Working together to support schools and PRUs

- 19 School and PRU leaders in south-west Wales were considerably more positive about the work of their local authority than leaders were about their local authority in the

other three regions. For example, they were more positive about the timeliness of advice and guidance from the local authority, how well their local authority communicated with them, and the support provided to enable their school or PRU to re-open successfully to all pupils in September 2020. They were also more positive about how well their local authority involves them in discussions about education services. South-west Wales is the only region where challenge advisers are directly employed by local authorities, rather than by regional consortia, and this may partly explain why leaders are more positive in this region.

- 20 School leaders' views of the support they receive from their regional consortium varies considerably. A majority of leaders agreed that GwE had provided effective support and guidance to support learning in their school or PRU. Nearly half of leaders agreed with this was the case with EAS, but only a minority agreed this was the case with CSC and ERW. A majority of leaders also agreed that GwE had provided useful information on the differences between, and approaches to, distance and blended learning. Just over half of leaders agreed with this was the case with CSC and EAS, but only a minority agreed this was the case with ERW.
- 21 Just over half of school leaders told us that they feel that their local authority cares about their wellbeing. This indicates that there is room for improvement in the relationship between some local authorities and their school leaders. A majority of teachers and most support staff told us that their school cares well for staff wellbeing.
- 22 During the initial lockdown, local authority services had to respond rapidly to support the wellbeing of all learners, and particularly those known to be vulnerable. Where local authorities already had effective joint working across services and external agencies, this was evident in the efficiency with which they responded to needs. For example, in Bridgend, the 'early help locality service model' already meant that multi-disciplinary teams worked out of three bases in the county, working in an integrated way to support families with vulnerable children and young people. These teams were well placed to work collaboratively and provide support through the pandemic. In other authorities where collaboration is less well established, the pandemic has been a catalyst to strengthen joint working. For example, Anglesey and Gwynedd's education psychology service has collaborated with the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service to develop a new approach to supporting pupils who are absent from school because of their emotional wellbeing.
- 23 Local authorities have sought to support school leaders in preparing for various scenarios in the face of uncertainty about how the pandemic may affect schools through the autumn and into 2021. A majority of school and PRU leaders told us in our survey that their local authority provides effective guidance to support them to develop flexible plans in the event of further spikes in infections.



**Cameo: School Business Resilience Planning**

Prior to the increased operation of schools, the Corporate Director for Education and Family Support in Bridgend required all schools including the PRU to produce a business resilience plan. The local authority provided a plan template. Settings were asked to consider a range of possible scenarios and the actions they would take to ensure the continuity of learning. The local authority quality assured the plans and, where necessary required further clarification. Possible scenarios included; the self-isolation of pupils, either individually or as whole year groups; the self-isolation of staff; planning to ensure continuity of leadership. Possible solutions may include the strategic planning and mapping of blended learning; developing the capability and capacity of staff and pupils in using online platforms to support blended learning; producing pre-prepared emergency learning packs for all groups of pupils; use of Welsh Government's 'Recruit, recover and raise standards programme' grant and cover arrangements.

**Delivering ongoing priorities**

- 24 Local authorities have tried sustain as much 'business as usual' as possible while dealing with the various added needs of schools and PRUs associated with the pandemic. For example, wherever possible, work has continued to reorganise schools and improve school facilities as part of the Welsh Government's 21st Century Schools Programme. The workload associated with responding to the pandemic has undoubtedly slowed progress in some areas. For example, at the end of March 2020, Neath Port Talbot left the regional school improvement consortium, ERW, and three of the remaining five authorities gave notice of their intention to leave at the end of March 2021. The lack of a clear plan for school improvement services in south west Wales from April 2021 is a significant concern. Elected members and senior officers across all local authorities in the region have been slow to ensure that there is a clear vision and plan for how high quality school improvement services that meet their needs will be provided to schools and PRUs from April 2021.
- 25 Planning and professional learning activities focused on preparing for Curriculum for Wales that schools, local authorities and regional consortia had planned for this year have inevitably been disrupted by the pandemic. From September, we had originally planned to begin discussions with all schools in Wales about their early preparatory work to implement Curriculum for Wales from September 2022. Instead, our discussions with schools in the autumn mainly concentrated on how they are responding to the pandemic. Despite the disruption to preparatory work for Curriculum for Wales, our Chief Inspector noted in our latest annual report that the pandemic 'has presented providers with the need and the opportunity to evolve and innovate ... The re-thinking that the lockdown required of schools, combined with deeper engagement with families and support services, has arguably put schools in a better place to co-create with these stakeholders a common vision for realising the Curriculum for Wales' (Estyn, 2020, p.9).



## Promoting learning

### Supporting schools and PRUs to reopen to all pupils

- 26 Prior to September, many pupils had spent only a few days in school since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in March, with some not having spent any time in school. In July, Welsh Government (2020c) issued guidance to schools and settings to support the full return to school in September. This set out priorities for learning emphasising the health and wellbeing of pupils and the importance of outdoor learning. Officers from local authorities ensured that they adopted the same priorities in their work with schools at the start of the autumn term. Local authority officers recognised the pressure that school leaders were under as they planned the reopening of schools and the amount of their time that they needed to give to operational matters including keeping staff and pupils safe. In order to support headteachers, most local authorities and regional consortia distilled the guidance about learning and brought relevant information together in one place, as in Carmarthenshire where officers established Y Porth website for this purpose. Many of the headteachers who responded to our survey said that they had sufficient support from their local authority to help them to re-open their school or PRU successfully. Many agreed that their local authority had provided guidance in good time. This contrasts with what school leaders told us about the guidance in the spring and summer terms, when many felt that it was received too late and that they had to put processes in place to support pupils' learning prior to receiving guidance.

#### **Cameo: Supporting pupils' return to school**

GwE developed a regional model in line with Welsh Government guidance, with local authorities and schools, to ensure that the individual needs of pupils were met, with consideration to their local context. The model evaluated the school's preparedness and approach to ensure learning for all pupils continued. It focused on three inter-related components that assess pupils' fitness for learning. These include their emotional and mental wellbeing; their health and physical fitness; and their core skills of numeracy, literacy, independence, and readiness for new learning.

The aim of the model was to support schools to assist pupils to return to 'learning fitness' and to promote learning which allows pupils to continue to make progress. Ensuring coherence for pupils between in-school and remote learning is another key element of the model including developing appropriate learning while current curriculum requirements were temporarily disapplied.

- 27 Through the school summer break and into the autumn term, regional consortia and local authorities built on the work during the initial lockdown to provide support and guidance to schools for ensuring the continuity of pupils' learning. In some instances, resources provided earlier in the pandemic were revised and updated to make it easier for school leaders and teachers to engage with them. For example, in

the EAS, officers listened carefully to the views of headteachers about the playlist of videos showing effective practice that officers had begun to compile at the start of the pandemic. In the summer term, schools had found the playlist useful as it drew together the national and local guidance about distance learning in one place. As the volume of materials increased, school staff found it more difficult and time-consuming to use the resource and officers responded well to this by streamlining the content into an easier to use web-based resource.

#### **Cameo: 'Supporting Our Schools' website**

In response to feedback from stakeholders, the EAS have created a new website to house their support for schools resources. The new website is easier to navigate than the playlist that the service used previously. Resources are clearly labelled and easy to scan. The website contains sections covering different topics such as governance, school improvement, guidance on using the accelerating learning grant funding and curriculum support. The website also contains a link to another new website that houses all resources related to distance and blended learning. These resources are also clearly organised under themes and there are several examples of informative case studies and presentations from schools, as well as links to helpful external resources. In order to make it easy for leaders to identify any new resources, these are signposted each week in a separate section, before being moved to the relevant themed section. The EAS staff are providing online introductory sessions to the new websites. These well-attended, informative sessions are sector specific and available through both English and Welsh. In addition to providing a demonstration of the websites, these sessions also include a choice of breakout sessions involving presentations from schools and an opportunity for discussions in small groups.

### **Identifying and addressing regression in learning**

- 28 Early in the autumn term, schools leaders started to plan how they could best use the funding from the Welsh Government for the 'Recruit, Recover, Raise Standards' programme. The Welsh Government (2020e) issued guidance for schools to support the use of the grant using the work of national and international organisations including the Children's Commissioner and the OECD to identify the impact of the pandemic on pupils' progress in learning. The government acknowledged that, while many pupils had not progressed as much as they could, there were groups of pupils for whom the impact of the pandemic was greater. These included pupils in year groups preparing for examinations, pupils who had made the transition from primary to secondary school and vulnerable and disadvantaged pupils. Local authorities and regions supported schools to plan for the use of the grant. For example, in GwE, officers worked with schools to try to ensure that headteachers used the funding in a sustainable way and aligned its use to local priorities, including the Welsh language strategy, to benefit pupils in the longer term. Across Wales, many schools found it difficult to recruit staff using the grant because they were drawing on a limited number of available people. A few schools employed a teacher or teaching assistant on a shared basis and many schools used the funding to increase the hours of existing staff. In smaller schools, funding was often not sufficient to be able to support recruitment. Although, it is too early for schools and local authorities to

monitor the impact of the grant on addressing pupils' skills deficits, officers from local authorities and consortia have plans in place to do this. Officers in Powys local authority provided helpful advice for governors about how to evaluate schools' use of the funds on pupil progress.

- 29 The impact on pupils' learning and skills from the initial lockdown period differs widely across Wales. In their study into 'Schoolwork in Lockdown', researchers from UCL (Green, 2020) found that children across the United Kingdom spent an average of 2.5 hours each day engaging in learning. Their research shows that 20% of pupils engaged with learning for less than an hour each day and only 17% worked for more than four hours (Green, 2020, p.2). This means that between March and September 2020 nearly all pupils across the UK spent considerably less time than usual learning during the pandemic. In Wales, the number of pupils engaging with learning was lower than the averages for the UK as a whole. The study found that 20% of pupils in Wales were doing no schoolwork at home or less than an hour each day (Green, 2020, p.19). Only 15% of pupils were learning for four hours each day (Green, 2020, p.19). The report highlights substantial inequality linked to deprivation and social groups. Our findings from engagement calls to schools in the October 2020 mirror these findings. Headteachers from schools in areas of social deprivation say that teachers found it more difficult to engage pupils and families with learning through the summer term. We reported on the reasons for this, including access to technology for learning and support from parents in the thematic section of the Annual Report 2019-2020 (Estyn, 2020).

**Cameo: Assessing the level of learner engagement in the Vale of Glamorgan**

Prior to reopening to all pupils, officers from the local authority, in collaboration with the CSC and schools, developed a matrix to assess the level of engagement of pupils and their wellbeing. Through conversations held between improvement partners and headteachers, information was collected from 55 out of 56 schools in the Vale of Glamorgan. The useful report summarised the key findings, the barriers and challenges encountered by schools and effective practice across the region, and concluded by highlighting ways forward. The information gathered has been used to inform local policy and share effective practice across the local authority through a collection of case studies. In addition, support was provided to schools to help strengthen areas such as increasing the engagement of vulnerable pupils.

- 30 As pupils returned to school in September 2020, leaders and teachers put in place processes to identify the impact of the school closure period on pupils' learning and skills. Many schools used the national online personal assessments for reading and numeracy with pupils in Years 2 to 9 to supplement teachers' own assessments of pupils' skills. Identifying pupils' skill levels following the school closure period was a particular challenge for secondary schools as pupils moved from Year 6 to Year 7. To help schools to identify a baseline for these pupils in secondary schools across the south-east region, the EAS provided schools with funding to support pupil assessment. Generally, local authorities report that pupils have fallen behind with reading and writing skills, and headteachers reported in early October that there has also been a negative impact on the speaking and social skills of younger pupils in the

foundation phase. Local authority and consortia officers are working with schools to address these skills deficits, and are mindful of the need to ensure that schools do not focus on these core skills to the detriment of the wider curriculum.

### Supporting Welsh language skills

- 31 An issue identified during the summer term was the learning of pupils in Welsh-medium schools from English-speaking homes, as many of these pupils had not had the opportunity to hear or practise the language. Addressing this issue was one of the aims of the Welsh Government's 'Recruit, recover and raise standards programme'. As the pupils affected by this issue returned to school in September, staff were particularly concerned about the levels of pupils' speaking skills. Local authorities put a number of initiatives in place to support schools and pupils. For example in Neath Port Talbot, the Welsh advisory service developed useful resources and collaborated with Menter Iaith and the Urdd to provide support for schools. In Wrexham, officers ensured that pupils from Welsh-medium schools who have needed to self-isolate since September have received resource packs and weekly face-to-face sessions or online sessions including podcasts. Several local authorities, including Conwy and Bridgend, used their immersion facilities to provide additional support for these pupils and Cardiff increased its provision in this area to help cope with demand. Officers in the regional consortia also provided support for schools. The EAS placed members of its Welsh support team in Welsh-medium primary schools across the region during the autumn term to support staff and pupils to address the deficit in pupils' skills. In our discussions with headteachers from English-medium primary schools, many said that they valued the support for teaching Welsh from local authorities and regional consortia, in particular the resources produced by Welsh advisory team staff to support provision in school.

#### **Cameo: Supporting pupils who are new to the Welsh language**

One example of the close alignment of the work of Gwynedd and GwE is their approach to supporting schools to develop pupils' Welsh language skills. The challenge of catering for their linguistic needs when schools reopened for all pupils in September was compounded by the difficulties in running Welsh language units in their traditional form. To support primary schools, the local authority arranged for the specialist teachers to provide an outreach service on a cluster basis, while the cluster's improvement support officer worked with the schools to create and adapt Welsh schemes of work.

- 32 Around 1,000 parents responded to our survey question about support for pupils in Welsh-medium schools. Many of these said that they were happy with the support provided by the school to help their children make progress with their Welsh. Very few parents felt that this was not the case, but those that did said that there was a lack of support for parents who do not speak Welsh and a lack of bilingual resources to enable parents to provide support for their children at home. Most of the pupils who responded to our survey agreed that they are getting good support to help them with their Welsh language skills.

**Cameo: Supporting pupils' Welsh language development**

In Carmarthenshire, officers identified the need to support pupils to maintain their engagement with the Welsh language from early in the pandemic. The Welsh advisory team adapted and refined their existing resources to provide schools and PRUs with activities to share with pupils and parents. In addition, they created extra-curricular activities and micro-lessons for pupils to recall previous learning, revise grammar, and to develop their reading skills and numeracy skills. They provided worthwhile tasks based on Welsh poetry as a stimulus to learning as well as providing activities to develop pupils' Welsh-speaking skills through the 'Cynllun Clonc' and Flipgrid activities.

Social media was used well to promote Welsh language activities, for example scientific activities for the outdoors and activities on history of the local area. Homework booklets were also distributed to enable parents to support their children with work through the medium of Welsh. Local authority officers and teachers in a number of its secondary schools worked with regional consortia staff to create a wide range of valuable Welsh language resources to support pupils in Welsh-medium and English-medium schools. Officers continued to develop resources for schools throughout the autumn term to support schools to improve pupils' Welsh language development.

**Promoting broad curriculum experiences**

- 33 Through Modification of Curriculum Requirements in Wales Notices, the Welsh Government temporarily modified the requirement for schools and funded non-maintained nurseries to provide the basic curriculum and associated assessment arrangements. In practice the curriculum narrowed in many schools in the autumn term. Whether the result of their own risk assessments or a misunderstanding of Welsh Government operational guidance, lots of schools determined the need to sanitise resources between uses. In schools where this was the case, it has had an impact on the youngest and the oldest pupils in schools in particular. For example, in the foundation phase pupils have had to access a limited range of resources in their continuous and enhanced provision. In secondary schools, pupils' access to equipment in practical subjects such as art and science has also become more difficult for teachers to manage.

**Cameo: Supporting science teaching**

ERW subject teams shared clear and helpful guidance which reassured and supported science teachers in the region. For example, the ERW science team gave examples of online sites that included video demonstrations of experiments, and useful and engaging resources that teachers could use for distance learning.

- 34 In a few local authorities, the delivery of shared services to schools, for example peripatetic music tuition for pupils stopped. In other local authorities, including Caerphilly and Cardiff, officers found new ways of providing these services. In Ceredigion, the authority's information technology team provided support to the



music service to enable them to teach virtually. This has enabled pupils to continue to receive instrumental lessons. This way of working has removed tutors' travel time and contributed to maintaining pupils' standards.

#### **Cameo: Caerphilly music service**

Local authority officers have worked to ensure that the schools' music service was able to resume its work more fully from September 2020. The local authority has provided clear guidance to music service staff and schools on how this service can be delivered safely in schools. It has also provided detailed guidance and protocols on how the service can be delivered remotely. The guidance covers a range of issues and scenarios, including lessons for individuals and classes, live and recorded sessions and safeguarding considerations. The guidance also provides clear information as to how the Welsh Government's guidance should be followed in the context of the Caerphilly music service.

- 35 In November 2020, the Minister for Education confirmed that, for qualifications in 2021, there will be no end of year examinations for pupils taking GCSE, AS level or A levels. The Minister established a Design and Delivery Group to advise on the process of awarding qualifications without examinations. Plans for this process were again being reviewed as term started in January 2021 with all pupils learning from home due to another national lockdown. Although it is understandable and necessary that plans for awarding qualifications have had to change again this year, these changes, especially in-year changes, can cause great stress and anxiety for pupils, as well as teachers.
- 36 Pupils in key stage 4 following alternative curriculum courses are a particular concern to many schools. There is a great deal of variation in how easily these pupils can access their alternative and off-site provision and this has proved to be a considerable timetabling challenge for schools. A large number of more practical courses such as hair and beauty have not been able to run. As a result, a few pupils who usually access provision of this kind, particularly those who were previously at risk of exclusion, are displaying challenging behaviour or are disengaging. Even when these courses are accessible, often it is with a reduced timetable because the provider cannot allow pupils from one school to mix with another. In Powys, officers engaged with all post-16 pupils through the Powys Learning Pathways website during the summer holidays. This helped pupils to feel supported and engaged after a period of disruption to their learning. At the same time, local authority officers made helpful bridging units available to pupils about to start post-16 courses. These units together with the contact have helped pupils transition to their post-16 studies. During the autumn, pupils had to remain at their own school for all learning as it was not possible to visit other campuses, even if their subject teachers were based elsewhere. Supported by officers in the local authority, subject teachers streamed lessons live so that all pupils could access them. As the local authority had already used remote learning through their 'e-sgol' programme, the transition to online learning was comparatively seamless and schools and pupils are familiar with how to make the best use of it.

- 37 Providers of post-16 education have developed contingency plans for local lockdowns or outbreaks of COVID-19 and continue to amend aspects of the delivery of teaching, training and assessment across the sectors. Where venues for pupils to receive face-to-face teaching or training have had to close, the restrictions on access to pupils' workplaces continue to be a major barrier to learning. Providers offer online activities to maintain learner engagement and interest, however a key challenge on vocational programmes and courses is maintaining the engagement and motivation of pupils during periods of lockdown or self-isolation. These pupils selected practical-based courses and with the current crisis this aspect is often paused or significantly reduced. Providers report that higher level pupils on higher level programmes, even those undertaking academic courses and programmes, may not make the progress that was initially expected due to family reasons such as childcare restricting their study time.

### Promoting more effective distance and blended learning

- 38 In her research commissioned by the Senedd's Children, Young People and Education Committee, Dr Sofya Lyakhova of Swansea University (2020) found that, although many pupils fall behind in their academic learning without access to teachers and support from their parents, a small proportion may make gains in learning, particularly in reading. These are pupils who have the ability to self-regulate or as John Hattie (2020) says, 'they know what to do when they do not know and there is limited help available'. Lyakhova's research emphasises the need for pupils' emotional health and wellbeing to be strong in order for them to be able to learn independently. School improvement advisers have noted that building resilience and developing independent skills have become more evident as school priorities since pupils returned to school in the autumn. Local authority and regional consortia officers are aware of the need for a greater focus on teaching and learning strategies that accelerate the development of pupils' abilities in these areas.
- 39 The need for schools to act quickly to address the need for pupils to learn at home became more urgent as the autumn term progressed. It became clear in September 2020 that schools were going to be affected by positive COVID-19 cases and that pupils would be required to self-isolate at home for periods of time. In our survey, many governors said that their schools and PRUs had sound plans in place to ensure that teaching could continue if pupils were away from school because of another lockdown or the need to isolate. A majority of headteachers agreed, saying that local authorities had provided effective guidance to support schools and PRUs to develop flexible plans to deal with further outbreaks of COVID-19 infection. In practice, pupils' experiences as a result of these outbreaks have varied widely across Wales due to the varied impact of the pandemic in different areas and also the different policies and practices adopted by local authorities in relation to close contacts and the different ways that schools have organised groups and cohorts of pupils. This has resulted in further inequity in the learning experiences between pupils who have received their autumn term education in school and those who have been taught at a distance, in some cases for a significant proportion of the term. Where this happens, the barriers to learning at home identified in the summer term, including access to digital technology and parental support, remain. When we surveyed school leaders in October 2020, many headteachers felt that local authorities had been proactive in providing information technology resources and internet connectivity for those pupils

without access to these at home. Teachers and governors were less positive about this support. Around half of governors said that local authorities had provided effective support in this area. Although many teachers from primary schools and PRUs and a majority of those from special schools said that schools were helping pupils to overcome barriers to learning at home, only around half of the secondary school teachers and a minority of the teachers from all-age schools who responded to our survey agreed with this.

- 40 In November 2020, the Children’s Commissioner for Wales (2020) spoke to pupils from Years 9 to 13 to identify any differences in their learning experiences between the summer and autumn terms, in particular the period where all pupils in these year groups were working at home because of the national firebreak. The pupils involved in this work said that there had been improvements in their experiences of distance learning. Their days were structured in a similar way to a school timetable, and teachers had checked that all pupils had access to digital devices and were provided with feedback on their work online in a timely manner. In some schools, pupils had been asked to complete surveys about their learning experiences and, as a result, teachers had made adjustments to suit pupils. For example, some schools provided recordings of lessons that pupils could use at a time that suited them. The issues raised by pupils included the amount of work provided, which meant that they were working long hours, and the inconsistency of provision between different subject areas. They also shared concerns about the lack of support from parents who do not have the skills to support them and the lack of digital skills of some teachers. Many said that they missed interacting with teachers and other pupils and that, although the distance learning offer had improved, it still does not compare well with learning at school. The importance of remote peer interaction was one of the findings from the EEF’s Rapid Evidence Assessment (2020). Across the studies that EEF researchers reviewed, they found a range of strategies to support peer interaction, including peer marking and feedback, sharing models of good work, and opportunities for pupils to participate in live discussions of content. The evidence from pupils and schools indicates that this is an area of distance learning that needs development.
- 41 Across Wales, regional consortia and local authority officers have seen the COVID-19 pandemic as an opportunity to focus on developing the ethos and principles of the Curriculum for Wales, for example the focus on health and wellbeing in schools at the start of the autumn term. In Powys, challenge advisers are promoting the use of the pedagogical principles to enrich pupils’ learning. In Flintshire, officers provided training on using the outdoor environment as a way to develop pupils’ resilience and perseverance in problem-solving. The training was provided for non-maintained settings, nursery and primary schools and PRUs with pupils of primary school age. Across the GwE region, officers recognise that many secondary schools have had to change their approach and plan lessons in thematic blocks due to pupils being in ‘bubbles’. Officers and elected members see this as a strength as it links clearly with the authority’s vision for implementing the Curriculum for Wales. Many secondary schools have made use of resources provided through GwE’s new online ‘support centre’, including multi-disciplinary units of work that fit well with the principles of the Curriculum for Wales. Despite this positive work, there is also a recognition that the pandemic has slowed the progress that schools were making in addressing the implementation of the new curriculum.



## Professional learning

- 42 Regional consortia and local authorities increased the range of professional learning opportunities to address the additional need caused by the pandemic. Much of their work in the autumn term focused on supporting schools to understand and develop approaches to distance and blended learning, building on the work they started in the initial lockdown. As schools identified pupils' needs on their return to full-time schooling, officers in local authorities and regional consortia responded by tailoring their learning offer to support teachers to address pupils' specific needs. GwE offer a wide range of opportunities for schools to participate in specific professional learning opportunities to improve pupils' literacy, numeracy and accelerated learning strategies. In Swansea, officers adjusted their learning offer as their understanding of the impact of distance learning on pupils developed. They worked with schools to provide the best fit model for individual circumstances. For example, the local authority supported teachers to design paper materials for distance learning following evidence that pupils do not learn as well in front of a screen when compared with on paper. Officers in Swansea also provided support for schools to develop their approach to assessing pupils' work through virtual platforms. They offered virtual training on approaches that include using mini quizzes, giving feedback using the live-chat facility on platforms like 'Microsoft Teams', using video recordings to explain new tasks and to identify misconceptions and offering whole-class feedback on common misconceptions. A few local authorities, including Cardiff, collaborated with organisations such as the Open University to support professional learning in schools. In Cardiff, schools and the Cardiff and Vale College worked with the Open University to deliver a programme of interactive online workshops, focused on pedagogy and effective learning design.

### **Cameo: Using evidence from communication with schools to inform professional learning**

Officers in Swansea carried out a survey with primary headteachers, seeking information on specific training needs during the pandemic. They analysed the responses and came up with a list of items for future webinars. These included developing the use of live sessions, how to use the tools available via Hwb and other useful platforms/apps and suggestions for easy-to-use tools for teachers to help them when designing online/distance learning activities. As a result, the local authority produced a comprehensive programme of webinars to address these.

- 43 Officers from local authorities and regional consortia used the initial lockdown period to engage with national and international research, to identify effective practice to share with schools. In Bridgend, school improvement partners collated evidence about learning from the Education Endowment Foundation (2020) whose findings include that the quality of teaching is more important than how it is delivered. This has helped schools in the local authority to think about their approaches to distance and blended learning. In Carmarthenshire, officers used the work of Michael Fullan as a basis for moving learning from a distance learning model used during the school closure period to a model that could be used as schools re-opened fully for the autumn term. In the EAS, officers adapted the approach of Simon Brakespear to help school leaders to see their response to the pandemic in phases and to identify what was important and different at each phase.

- 44 Officers from local authorities and regional consortia have started to put plans in place to evaluate the impact of their support for schools on pupils' learning. In Gwynedd, officers recognise that it is not yet possible to draw meaningful conclusions about schools' approaches to distance learning. However, following the first case of a school having to send home a significant cohort of pupils in the autumn term, officers evaluated the distance learning provision. They created a case study for other schools, outlining the implications and the factors that leaders and teachers need to consider when planning for pupils to learn remotely. Following cluster meetings with the regional school improvement service to discuss distance and blended learning, one school in Wrexham trialled using a digital distance learning approach while pupils were in class. One group of pupils completed activities and tasks online while the teacher used direct instruction with other pupils. This allowed teachers to support pupils to use software and upload work to a digital platform while they were in school. It also allowed the school to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the activities and tasks set as distance learning. The school is adapting its approach following feedback from this process. The EAS carried out a survey to gain leaders' perceptions of their learning offer. Local authorities within the region are using this information to help them to develop an overview of their schools' provision. Across Wales it is too early to be able to evaluate fully the impact of this work on schools and pupils as processes to evaluate the quality of learning offers including distance learning are in the early stages of development.
- 45 Training to support teachers' digital competence continued in the autumn term. Officers in ERW provided a series of webinars for primary, secondary and special schools and PRUs that give an overview of the tools available through Hwb to support blended and distance learning, complementing their earlier work. The sessions included specific themes for school leaders, such as what to consider when experiencing individual year group isolation. These webinars also included recordings and live discussions with school leaders from around the region, which school leaders found reassuring when considering how best to implement their own plans. In addition, the team shared online safety and self-review tools, as well as curriculum support for specific areas, for example to develop teachers' practice with coding. A Google Classroom set up specifically for teaching assistants to develop their online skills has attracted over 200 participants. In our engagement calls with schools, headteachers identified the improvement in teachers' ICT skills and their confidence in the use of technology to support pupils' learning as a positive impact of the pandemic on schools. The need for teachers to put what they had learned into practice quickly made the professional learning immediately relevant to their needs.
- 46 Most consortia and local authorities found that, as professional learning moved online, more practitioners have taken up learning opportunities as they no longer involve full days out of school and materials can be accessed at any time. A majority of the support staff who responded to our survey said that they had received effective professional learning to support them to make a successful return to school. Despite the opportunities available for professional learning, our survey also found that 22% of teachers who responded do not feel that they have had sufficient opportunities to support their understanding of distance and blended learning.
- 47 The period since March 2020 has delivered many challenges for local authorities and regional consortia in their work to support schools. It has also provided opportunities

to think differently and to work in different ways. Officers are aware of the need to learn from the experience and are keen to maintain and build upon the new ways of working that have had a positive impact. The use of digital platforms to hold meetings and as a way of delivering professional learning has been both time and cost effective and has enabled more education staff to participate in these more frequently. In the spring and summer terms 2020, teachers had to respond quickly to the need to provide distance learning materials for pupils. This provision improved though the summer term and as the number of pupils needing to learn away from the classroom has increased in the autumn, the need to further improve and embed distance and blended learning provision remains a priority. The pandemic has reinforced issues that local authorities and consortia had already been working with schools to address. These include the impact of poverty on families and in particular on children's learning. Pupils across Wales have experienced the pandemic in very different ways as a result of their local and home circumstances. The initial lockdown period and the necessity for pupils to work at home for periods of time in the autumn term have highlighted the need for pupils to be able to work independently successfully and for schools to focus on supporting pupils to improve learning resilience.

## Supporting vulnerable pupils

### Preparing for pupils to return in September

- 48 Having briefly welcomed pupils back to their school or PRU at the end of the summer term, leaders' attention turned to supporting vulnerable pupils during the summer holiday as well as preparing for the autumn term. Local authorities organised various summer activities, often led by youth workers. These usually targeted the most vulnerable pupils, such as children looked after by the local authority and those whose behaviour in their community was a concern, and provided a range of useful activities to support personal and social skills as well as their wellbeing.
- 49 Many support services for vulnerable pupils continued through the summer holiday too, such as online counselling, welfare visits to families in need, helplines for those needing support. In Merthyr Tydfil, a local authority officer maintained contact through the summer holiday with Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils and their families to support them to remain engaged in learning, with schools reporting that a good proportion of these pupils returned to school in September 2020. In Torfaen, education welfare officers identified pupils who did not engage with the 'Check in, catch up, prepare for summer and September' sessions in schools at the end of the summer term (Welsh Government, 2020d). The officers then worked closely with families to support pupils to return to school in September.

#### **Cameo: Re-engaging pupils through summer activities**

Officers in Denbighshire recognised that some vulnerable pupils would benefit from additional input in order to successfully re-engage with learning. They secured grant funding to deliver engaging and enriching activities to target vulnerable young pupils and those from economically disadvantaged areas. The Education and Children's Services worked in partnership with the Youth Service and external partners to provide a summer holiday activity programme over five weeks. This helped to bridge the gap between the initial lockdown period and the full reopening of schools to all pupils in September by inspiring young people through sport, music, drama, team building and craft activities. Activities included lessons on African drumming, a drama workshop hosted by a West End star, and team games on a beach. All participants received free lunch and bus passes in order to facilitate attendance.

- 50 While scientists warned of the potential for a 'second wave' of COVID-19, this was unpredictable both in terms of timing and scale. The Welsh Government committed to returning all pupils full-time in the autumn, with scope for a staggered start in September. Local authority officers, and sometimes regional consortium officers, worked closely with school and PRU leaders across Wales to ensure that school sites were safe for pupils. In some cases, health and safety officers jointly carried out risk assessments with school and PRU leaders. In other cases, leaders carried out their own assessments and these were sent to officers to be checked. Local authorities have helpfully held drop-in online meetings or used a digital forum for headteachers to discuss health and safety issues with officers.

- 51 Where relevant, individual risk assessments were carried out for vulnerable pupils with special educational needs and those requiring extra support, and often local authority officers supported this process and assisted with any resulting concerns. For example, officers in Caerphilly worked with parents and school staff to discuss the use of PPE when a child with autistic spectrum condition spits when distressed. Officers provided staff in another school with surgical respiratory protection masks for when working with pupils who require aerosol or suctioning procedures.
- 52 Schools and PRUs across Wales prioritised pupils' wellbeing at the start of the autumn term. Regional consortia and local authorities provided professional learning, guidance and resources to help staff think through the potential issues. Much of the professional learning offered to leaders, teachers and support staff across Wales focused on understanding how trauma can affect children and young people, and how staff can identify those who are struggling and support them. For example, GwE offered a 'Return to school trauma-informed schools programme', which included practical strategies and key teaching and learning principles and models. In EAS, teaching assistants were offered training in delivering a 'coping and connecting' six-week intervention programme to support targeted vulnerable pupils settle back to school life. In Powys, existing school-to-school support continued, with staff at the PRU training school staff across the local authority on supporting pupils' behaviour and readiness to learn on their return to school.
- 53 Professional learning also focused on the importance of relationships, with schools and PRUs encouraged to give time to this at the start of the autumn term. For example, CSC purchased access to the Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) for all schools, and ERW commissioned Professor Robin Banerjee to deliver professional learning to develop staff understanding of self-efficacy and connection as key to supporting wellbeing.
- 54 Some local authorities provided parents and carers with information and advice to support pupils' return to school. For example, Carmarthenshire created a 'Welcome back' pack that explained what pupils might experience when using school transport and practical suggestions on how to support their child's wellbeing.

**Cameo: Supporting vulnerable pupils' wellbeing needs in preparation of the return to school**

In collaboration with the Educational Psychology team, leaders and teachers in Neath Port Talbot provided a 'One Page Profile' via Microsoft Forms for all pupils to complete before the 'Check-in, catch-up, prepare for summer and September' period. This was an effective approach to gain direct, individual information from pupils regarding their wellbeing during the initial lockdown. This information served as a guide for teachers to plan more diverse and bespoke provision on their return, especially for specific vulnerable groups such as pupils with SEN.

- 55 Most pupils were happy to return to school in September 2020, for the social contact with friends as well as to progress their learning. Many headteachers we contacted commented on how engaged most pupils were, and how positively they were accepting new routines and procedures. Our survey of pupils in October 2020 found

that 77% agreed or strongly agreed that felt safe in school. Prior to the pandemic, 89% of pupils, on average, told us they felt safe in their school when they surveyed as part of their school inspection. This indicates the anxiety that a few pupils were feeling on returning to school, despite the protective measures that were in place. In particular, pupils expressed concern about the unsafe behaviour of a very few pupils who did not follow their school's rules and put others at risk. Some school leaders have noted that enforced changes to how the school operates, such as staggered break times, zones for different year groups and one way systems, have had a positive impact on pupils' behaviours and they are considering which changes may be useful to continue when the pandemic is over.

- 56 Pupils who were moving to a new class within their school or PRU or a new school or PRU in September 2020 had missed out on usual transition activities, including visits to familiarise themselves with the site and staff. Schools and PRUs made up for the lack of visits and opportunities to meet new staff in the summer term through helpful video tours and staff introductions alongside information on websites to help pupils prepare for their transition. In our survey, 92% of pupils moving to a new class in September felt that teachers helped them settle, with only a very few disagreeing.
- 57 Some primary schools have commented that young children starting school for the first time in September 2020 are less ready for school than is usually the case. They also noticed that children that who had their first year in school disrupted by the initial lockdown had regressed in their readiness for learning. For example, schools identified weaknesses in the development of these pupils' social and communication skills, and more children than normal are unable to toilet and feed themselves. This is making it harder for young pupils to settle, and is stretching the resource of staff to support them.

**Cameo: Sharing a school's approach to supporting skills in the early years across Monmouthshire**

One primary school in Monmouthshire noticed that the sudden ending of school in March had a significant negative impact on pupils in the reception class. From March, many of these young pupils made less progress in relation to their personal, social and learning skills than would have normally been expected. To help address this, leaders, teachers and support staff worked with parents to create a framework of skills to tackle this deficit. The local authority noted that the school's strategy seemed to be successful and shared the learning from this with other schools..

- 58 While almost all pupils returned to school or PRU in September 2020, a very few did not and some parents opted to educate their child at home. The number of pupils being educated at home has been steadily rising in recent years, but there has been a sharper increase this year. Around half of local authorities report that the number of families choosing to educate their children at home has increased as a result of the pandemic.
- 59 The Welsh Government postponed the introduction of statutory guidance and regulations on elective home education due to COVID-19, so local authorities



continue to have limited responsibilities and powers in relation to ensuring that every child's right to an education are upheld. Local authorities have varying degrees of success in their efforts to encourage these families to engage voluntarily. For the large proportion of families that are willing to engage, local authorities offer varying extent of support to parents and carers of children educated at home. For example, in Anglesey, officers established an elective home education forum to help to strengthen the procedures around home education and in Neath Port Talbot inclusion officers worked with schools to provide guidance to parents of pupils with a statement of special educational needs.

- 60 A very few pupils did not return to their school or PRU because of specific health and safety concerns that meant the risk to themselves or staff was too great. This included, for example, pupils with severe health conditions and those with extremely challenging behaviour. In these rare instances, local authorities have worked with schools and PRUs to ensure that these pupils can continue to learn from home as much as possible.
- 61 Local authorities often proactively supported vulnerable young people to return to school in September 2020. For example, in Ceredigion a team of youth specialists was attached to each secondary school. Youth workers, specialist behaviour workers and youth justice workers supported pupils who were known to be at risk of not engaging in their education. This support, in addition to that provided by the schools themselves, contributed to high attendance rates for these pupils.

### Supporting wellbeing

- 62 For children and young people already challenged by several adverse childhood experiences, the pandemic may have magnified the challenges they face and taken a heavy toll on their wellbeing. Even children and young people in stable family environments with very few or no prior adverse childhood experiences have been significantly affected by the pandemic. For example, time away from friends caused by lockdowns, isolation periods or having to remain in tight bubbles at school can have an adverse impact on pupils' social development and their mental health. Indeed, schools and local authorities noted that some of the pupils they had become concerned about were not pupils that they would previously had recognised as vulnerable.
- 63 During the initial lockdown, schools and local authorities refined their approaches and systems for identifying and monitoring vulnerable pupils and sharing information between agencies. In Cardiff, for example, the local authority set up a new data system for collecting information on vulnerable pupils. The information was reviewed weekly by a 'joint vulnerable pupils panel', which planned a co-ordinated response across services.
- 64 During the initial lockdown, local authority services had to respond rapidly to support the wellbeing of all pupils, and particularly those known to be vulnerable. Where local authorities already had effective joint working across services and external agencies, this was evident in the efficiency with which they responded to needs. In authorities where collaboration is less well established, the pandemic has been a catalyst to strengthen joint working. For example, Anglesey and Gwynedd's

education psychology service has collaborated with the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service to develop a new approach to supporting pupils who are absent from school because of their emotional wellbeing.

**Cameo: Multi-disciplinary working – sharing information and providing solutions**

A key feature of Bridgend's ability to adapt and respond quickly to the needs of children and young people, particularly those identified as vulnerable, has been the strong connections that exist across and within service areas. For example, the pre-existing 'early help locality service model' across the borough helps to ensure that professionals share relevant information with one another. Multi-disciplinary staff are co-located at three sites across the borough. Discussions and solution-focused work with families involve different specialist services. This integrated approach helps to ensure also that support is prioritised and allocated appropriately.

The development of the multi-agency safeguarding hub, in place for the past two years, has also contributed to a sharing of intelligence around safeguarding concerns for individuals. Colleagues from South Wales Police, the local health board and local authority are co-located and provide a single point of contact for agencies to refer into.

- 65 In the summer term 2020, school leaders often noted that they had been inundated with information, guidance and suggested resources and activities to support pupils' wellbeing and to support vulnerable pupils. This was a reflection of how all agencies, including local authorities, regional consortia, health services, police and justice services, local and national voluntary organisations, were keen to support children, young people and their families. Taking account of feedback from senior leaders, agencies helpfully rationalised their communication with schools during the autumn term.
- 66 In most cases, local authorities have ensured that statutory processes for pupils in relation to special education needs (SEN), including assessments and annual reviews, continued during the autumn term. Where there have been delays, this has most commonly been due to the capacity of educational psychology services and other specialist services, caused by staff absence or challenges in delivering services remotely. In Wrexham, the local authority has employed a locum educational psychologist to boost capacity in their service and help complete outstanding assessments. Local authority services, schools and PRUs have adapted so families and professionals involved with their child's education can meet online where necessary to facilitate statutory processes. During the autumn term, services gradually resumed face-to-face work to support assessment of pupils with SEN, although headteachers were frustrated by inconsistent approaches across agencies to returning to face-to-face work.
- 67 Local authority services to support pupils with special educational needs have found ways to continue support for pupils. For example, in Caerphilly, the regional SENCOM service for pupils with sensory difficulties has worked remotely with pupils through video conferencing technology and provided bespoke training to school staff so that they can support pupils with hearing or visual impairments.



- 68 Our survey of parents and carers in October 2020 found that the majority of those with children who receive additional support agreed that the school or PRU is considering their child's needs and providing appropriate resources, support and guidance for them. A similar proportion felt that the school or PRU makes appropriate arrangements for their child to discuss their feelings, health and wellbeing or concerns. On both matters, a few parents disagreed. Where parents and carers had concerns, these related to poor communication about how their child's needs would be met, support outlined in a statement for special educational needs not being provided, reduced support for pupils with autistic spectrum condition, and general concerns about the usual support not being provided.
- 69 The Welsh Government gave local authorities additional funding this year to increase the capacity of counselling services. These services are provided directly by some local authorities, although more commonly the service is commissioned from an external provider. In some cases, the funding has been used to extend access to Year 4 and Year 5 children as local authorities are only required to provide a service for Year 6 children in primary school. In the Vale of Glamorgan, the local authority has employed a play therapist to provide support to younger children in primary schools, to complement the counselling service. Lots of counsellors have completed additional training in counselling online. While some counselling services resumed face-to-face sessions with children and young people during the autumn term, others continued to provide sessions online or over the telephone as they did during the initial lockdown. Young people around Wales have mixed views about counselling via video or telephone calls: some find it easier to talk to a counsellor this way whereas others have not engaged and are waiting for face-to-face sessions to resume.
- 70 Some local authorities and consortia are supporting schools to use their 'Recruit, recover, raise standards' programme grant from the Welsh Government to increase capacity to support the emotional wellbeing and mental health of pupils. For example, in Ceredigion, schools have used the funding to increase the hours of Emotional Literacy Support Assistants, working under the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service 'In-Reach' pilot.
- 71 Safeguarding work with children, young people and families continued online through the autumn term when circumstances meant that this was the best option. While the rate of children placed on the child protection register was a little lower than usual during the initial lockdown period, the rate rose through August 2020 and peaked in September before dropping again through the autumn term. The peak rate was not a significant increase compared to typical fluctuations or the long term trend for rising numbers of children being placed on the register nationally. There is no clear correlation between the local authorities seeing the highest increases in the rate of children placed on the child protection register and the incidence of COVID-19 in the community.
- 72 Young people have often spent more time online than usual due to periods of self-isolation and restrictions on activities that they would usually be involved in. In Monmouthshire, the local authority recognised the increased safeguarding risk associated with this. Local authority officers worked with their schools, the PRU and the Home Office to hold more frequent Channel Panels to review concerns about pupils relating to extremism or radicalisation.

- 73 School attendance was understandably affected by COVID-19 in the autumn term. After pupils gradually returned at the start of September 2020, attendance peaked at 88% at the start of October. Attendance dropped through October as the incidence of COVID-19 began to rise sharply in some parts of Wales. Attendance was 90% in the first week after the firebreak in November, which included half-term, before dropping through the rest of the autumn term. Attendance in the autumn term is highest for pupils in primary schools, with the exception of nursery pupils. Pupils in Years 11, 12 and 13 have the lowest attendance. Much of the absence is explained by pupils having to self-isolate. Although recorded as authorised absence, schools provide distance learning for these pupils, although for logistical reasons there is often a delay of a day or so before the full distance learning offer is in place for self-isolating pupils. School leaders report that pupils often make slower progress in their learning when self-isolating.
- 74 There is a close correlation between school attendance rates and local COVID-19 rates. Through the autumn term, pupils were affected unequally as enforced self-isolation due to close contact with a confirmed COVID-19 case affected certain parts of Wales more than others. Some pupils experienced several weeks of distance learning during the autumn term due to self-isolation, whereas other pupils were in school every day.
- 75 The 'Test, Trace and Protect' (TTP) strategy in Wales is a partnership between the Welsh Government, local authorities and NHS organisations. The purpose of the strategy is 'to enhance health surveillance in the community, undertake effective and extensive contact tracing, and support people to self-isolate where required to do so' (Welsh Government, 2020f). The strategy appears to have been implemented slightly differently across Wales when a positive COVID-19 case has been confirmed in a school. In some local areas, much larger groups of pupils have been regarded as a close contact compared to other areas despite schools having similar protective measures in place. This has particularly affected older pupils in secondary schools, with some of these pupils having several weeks away from school in self-isolation during the autumn term. The local variation in implementation of the TTP strategy has impacted pupils' progress and wellbeing unequally across Wales.
- 76 When pupils are required to self-isolate, some local authorities work with schools to share this information across services and with partners so that vulnerable pupils can be offered additional support. For example, in cases where a pupil is on the child protection register in Denbighshire, officers make contact on the first day of self-isolation to ensure that support is in place. When several hundred pupils from a school serving an area of high deprivation were required to self-isolate, Denbighshire's Youth Support Team worked constructively in partnership with local police officers to support young people who were gathering outside during the day instead of self-isolating.
- 77 Schools, PRUs and education services sometimes reported that they had noted a rise in concerns about pupils' mental health. All local authorities have sought to ensure that schools and PRUs are aware of all the support that is available for pupils struggling with their mental health.

**Cameo: Guidance on supporting learners' mental health and wellbeing**

From the outset, Swansea has prioritised the health and wellbeing of learners and staff. The improved sharing of information across the local authority and with external agencies during the pandemic, allowed officers to focus on common issues affecting learners across Swansea. In particular it became evident that there could be an increase of learners self-harming, suffering from anxiety and depression or attempting to take their own lives. As a result, the local authority produced timely guidance for schools to support their learners and information on where to seek further help. The guidance was also shared with a neighbouring local authority to help support their learners.

**Supporting vulnerable pupils**

- 78 Schools have found it particularly challenging to support all their vulnerable pupils. Our survey of support staff found that many of them feel that they have been providing effective support to vulnerable pupils, with hardly any disagreeing. In the same survey, just over half of teachers felt that they were able to meet the needs of their vulnerable pupils, with around two-in-ten teachers disagreeing.
- 79 Children and young people who are Gypsy, Roma or Travellers often miss more school than most pupils for cultural reasons. Local authorities have worked hard to maintain contact with families and encourage them to return to school in September. For example, officers in Carmarthenshire used an existing WhatsApp support group to keep families engaged and as a platform for offering support where needed. This authority is also providing these families with access to a tailored package of activities to support language skills as this was identified as a common concern.
- 80 Pupils with English or Welsh as an additional language are particularly vulnerable to making little progress when they are expected to learn from home, as was the case during the initial lockdown and periods of self-isolation in the autumn term. Often these pupils' parents or carers do not understand English or Welsh and therefore find it difficult to support their child's learning. In Newport, the Gwent Education Minority Ethnic Service (GEMS) continued to support pupils at home during the autumn term. Multi-lingual staff in GEMS kept in regular contact with families affected, to support pupils to continue learning as well as to monitor their wellbeing.
- 81 Operation Encompass is a relatively new scheme where police services commit to contacting key staff in relevant schools before the start of the next school day if they have been called to an incident of domestic abuse at a child's home. This early information enables schools to offer immediate support to pupils affected. As lots of schools remained in contact with vulnerable families during the school summer holidays and the two-week firebreak in the autumn term, authorities such as Cardiff worked with police services to extend the scheme to operate through these periods too.
- 82 Children and young people looked after by local authorities are among the most vulnerable in Wales, both in terms of their wellbeing as well as their education outcomes. Local authorities have often added in extra checks and support for these

children and young people during the pandemic. For example, in Bridgend local authority officers visited care placements weekly, which helped them to identify potential placement breakdowns and be proactive in providing additional support where needed rather than waiting for placements to fail. Anglesey and Gwynedd local authorities provided looked-after children with a laptop to enable them to continue learning at home during lockdown or self-isolation periods.

- 83 Pupils in work-based learning have faced redundancy or anxiety related to potential redundancy during the autumn term. Some vocational courses, such as hair and beauty, have been significantly affected by the pandemic. This has disproportionately affected vulnerable pupils who are more likely than their peers to follow vocational routes at ages 14-19. For example, older secondary-aged pupils in Merthyr could not continue with junior apprenticeships run by the local college. This caused considerable disappointment for these young people, the vast majority of whom returned to school full-time while the local authority had to make alternative provision for the rest.

#### **Cameo: Local authority support for vocational provision**

In one secondary school in Pembrokeshire, leaders had already planned to evaluate and review its vocational provision during the last academic year. They worked with a local authority officer to carry out this evaluation. The school no longer employs an external vocational provider and has created its own vocational provision. It has employed three staff from the previous provider and a qualified teacher to supervise the provision. This has resulted in a significant financial saving for the school as well as allowing leaders to monitor the quality and effectiveness of the provision more closely. Around 230 learners currently access the vocational provision as part of their curriculum. The school has worked with the local authority so pupils from other providers can also access this provision. Through its vocational courses, the school now provides a crèche, nursery, and a motor vehicle workshop that serves the local community.

- 84 It is difficult to assess the impact of the pandemic on the proportion of young people in Wales who are not in education, employment or training (NEET). Work to monitor and support young people to secure a suitable destination at the end of Year 11 into the autumn was significantly affected. Given the pandemic's national impact on employment and training generally, it is not surprising that early information from some local authorities suggests that more young people are NEET at age 16 this year than in recent years. In Swansea, pupils that schools and the PRU had identified at risk of becoming NEET were prioritised for support in the summer 2020. The young people were referred to multi-agency early help hubs for support and guidance on their next steps, and local authority officers continued to monitor their progress in the autumn term and provide support where necessary. As a result, nearly all of these vulnerable pupils have been engaged in some form of education, employment or training during the autumn, despite the challenges brought by the pandemic.

**Cameo: Supporting disengaged pupils**

Wrexham local authority planned a programme to target Year 9 learners who have become increasingly disengaged with education during the COVID-19 period or have become vulnerable due to their COVID-19 experiences. The programme includes 15 weekly sessions where between 10 and 15 pupils from six secondary schools take part in activities and challenges to develop their engagement with learning and resilience. Activities include problem-solving workshops, outdoor activities, workshops with motivational speakers and support from Careers Wales delivered online.

- 85 Pupils eligible for free school meals have poorer outcomes than their peers. The pandemic has hampered the efforts of the education system to support these pupils to achieve better outcomes than their predecessors. Headteachers have told us that this group of pupils made slower progress in their learning during the initial lockdown, with some pupils returning the school with weaker language and numeracy skills than before the lockdown started. In addition to the annual Pupil Development Grant, the Welsh Government has provided schools with additional funding through the 'Recruit, recover, raise standards' grant. Local authorities and regional consortia have advised schools on how this grant could be used to fund suitable strategies to support pupils eligible for free school meals to catch up on their learning during the autumn term and beyond. In Rhondda Cynon Taf, the local authority has worked with the Child Poverty Action Group to strengthen its support for pupils living in poverty. For example, a cluster of schools has focused on identifying the local barriers to learning that exist because of poverty currently and is working with the Action Group and local authority to address these.
- 86 Rising obesity in children and young people is a national concern as it leaves them susceptible to poor physical health. Obesity is primarily caused by what children and young people eat and drink and how physically active they are. It appears that pupils have had fewer opportunities to be physically active at school during the autumn term than would usually be the case. In our learner survey, 77% agree they have enough chance to exercise, which is lower than the average response from inspection surveys where 86% of pupils agree. A lot of schools have reduced the time pupils have for lunch breaks in order to protect bubbles of pupils using facilities, meaning that pupils have less time to play and be physically active. Very few schools ran any after school clubs during the autumn term that involved physical activity, and the usual sports competitions between schools have not taken place. Local authorities have taken different approaches to access to outdoor play equipment and parks, and leisure facilities and gyms have been forced to close locally and nationally at times due to government restrictions.
- 87 Local authority youth workers played a significant role in supporting vulnerable children, young people and their families during the initial lockdown and have continued to provide support through the autumn term. Youth workers are often highly skilled at building relationships quickly with young people, gaining their trust and finding creative ways to support young people, especially those who are at risk of disengaging with their education. Youth workers already used technology to communicate with young people, and have built on this during the pandemic by

setting up more online spaces where young people can connect safely with each other and with youth workers to socialise and discuss issues that interest or concern them. Some of these spaces were set up for specific groups, for example for young people wishing to chat online in Welsh or for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender young people.

- 88 Youth workers have struggled to maintain contact with a very few vulnerable young people who do not have regular internet access or do not like to use online tools. Despite the effectiveness of online communications, young people often regret the lack of in-person social interaction they have had this year. Where safe to, youth workers have re-established opportunities to meet with young people in person. For example, youth workers in Powys have visited the key market towns between 5pm and 7pm during the autumn to engage with young people informally, which has provided useful opportunities to check on their wellbeing and help them to access support if required.
- 89 Despite having extremely heavy workloads, some local authority services have created space to consider what is working well and how they could improve the way they are supporting vulnerable pupils and their families.

#### **Cameo: Evaluating family experiences**

The ALN and Social Inclusion team in Conwy is eager to learn more about the effect of this pandemic on vulnerable learners and their families. As a result, officers are involved in a project that is based on 'Evaluating family experiences during lockdown', including focus on COVID-19 bereavement support and enhanced counselling support. This has been supplemented by training for individual schools delivered by the Educational Psychology Service on request. This is in preparation for another possible lockdown situation.



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## Appendix 1: Evidence base

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As part of the work we engaged in discussions with 340 schools and PRUs across Wales and held meetings with staff in every local authority and regional consortia.

We issued surveys to seek the views of:

- leaders
- teachers
- support staff
- governors
- parents/carers
- learners in key stages 2 and above

In addition, we looked at a range of documentary evidence provided by local authorities and regional consortia as well as nationally available guidance, data and research.

## Appendix 2

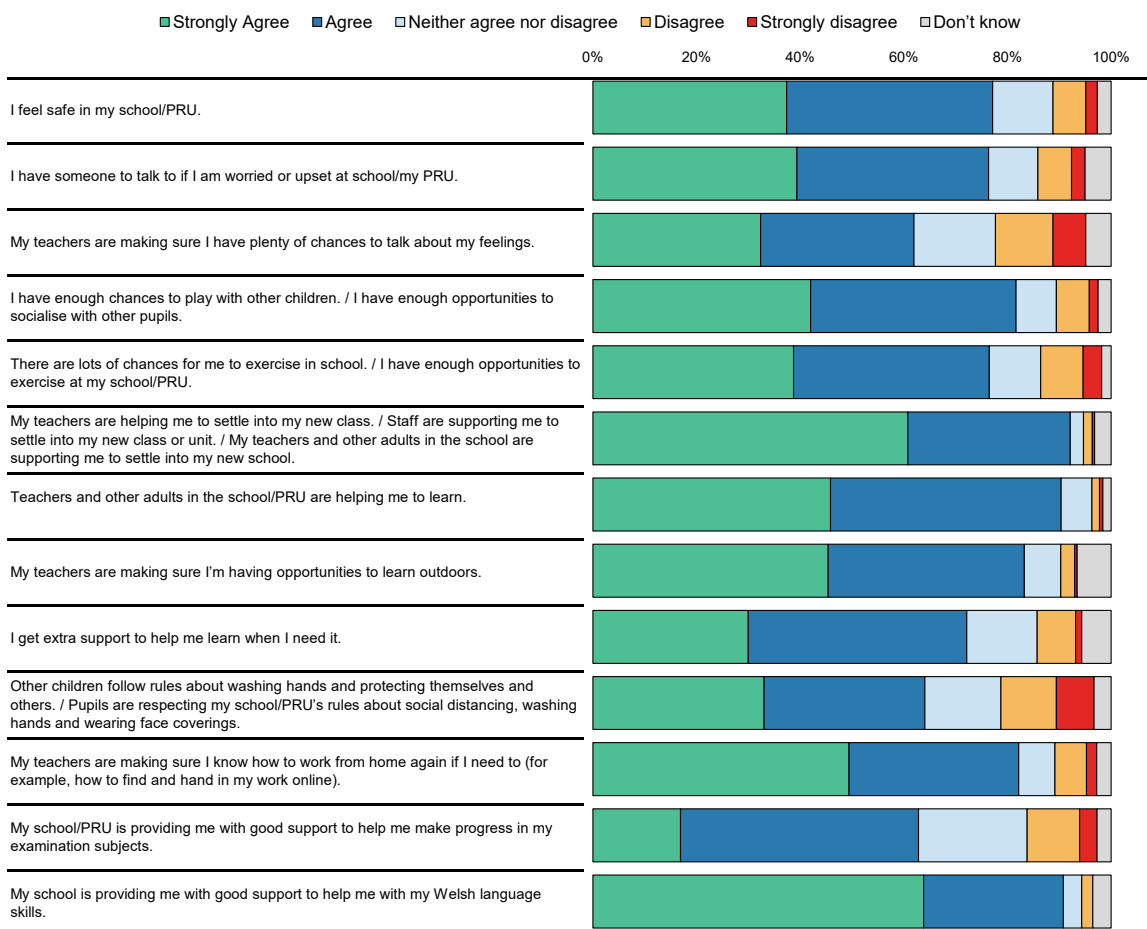
In addition to the calls to schools and LA, we issued and promoted surveys to stakeholders.

We had individual surveys for learners, parents or carers, school or PRU leaders, teachers, support staff and governors or members of PRU management committees. Some of the questions were directed at specific groups within those populations, so not all questions have been responded by all participants.

The responses are summarised below.

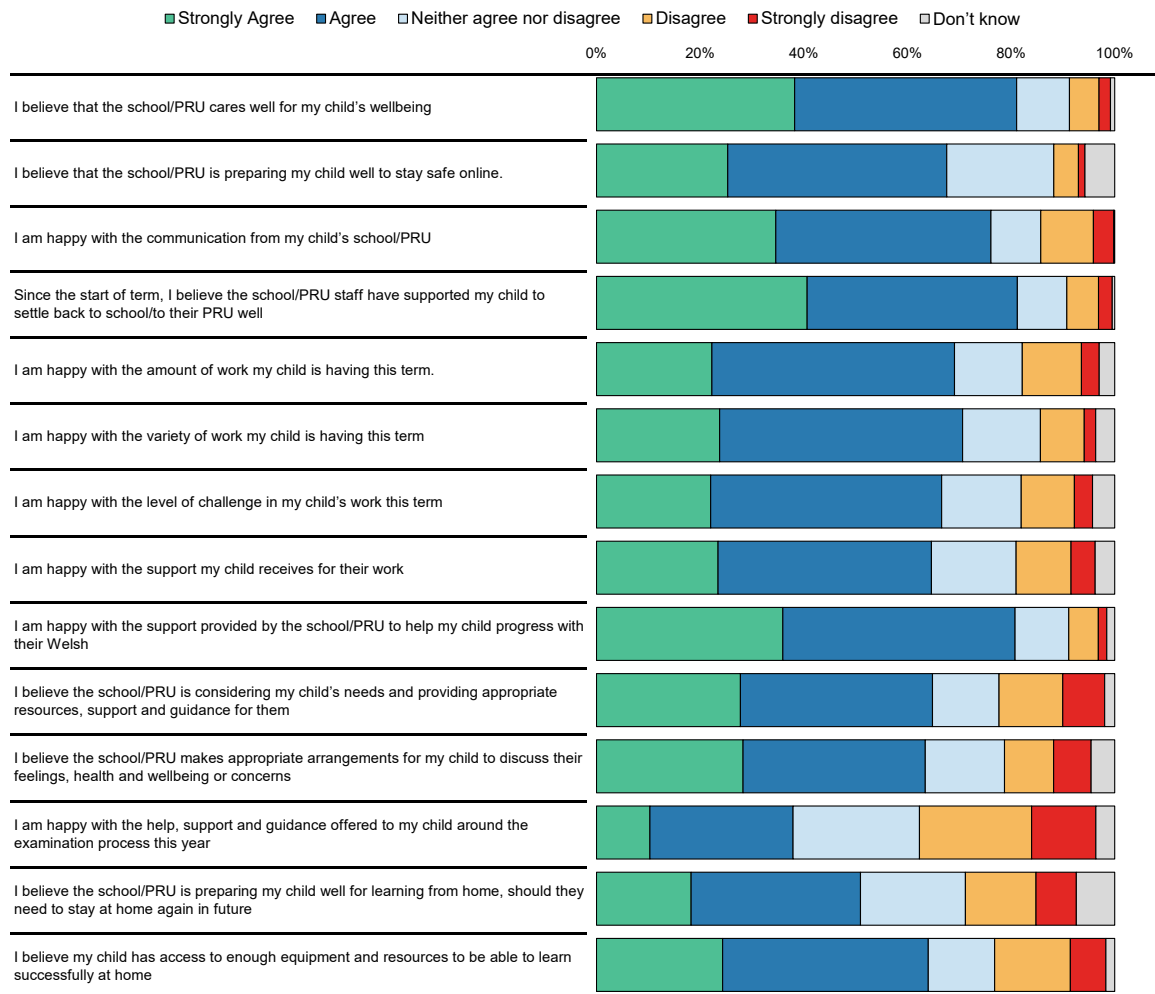
Stakeholders were also able to leave a comment to explain their answers or provide additional information. These were analysed and the information used to inform this report.

### Learners (760 responses)

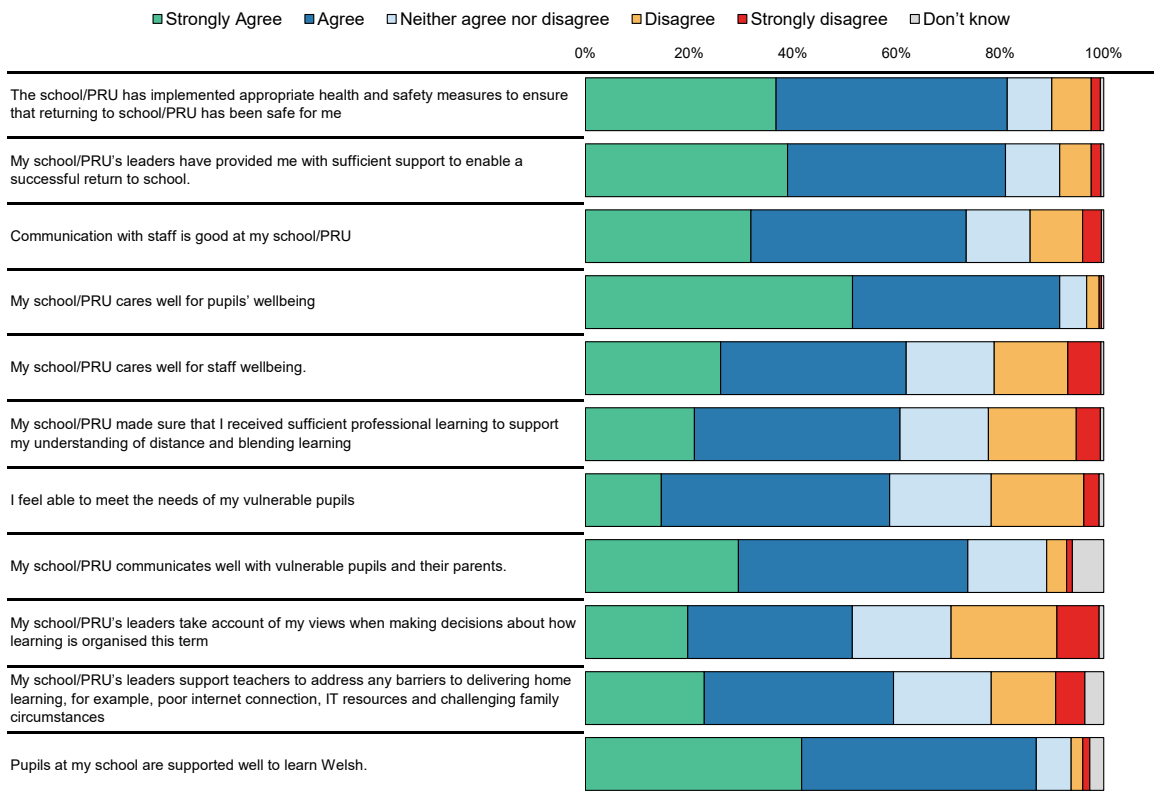




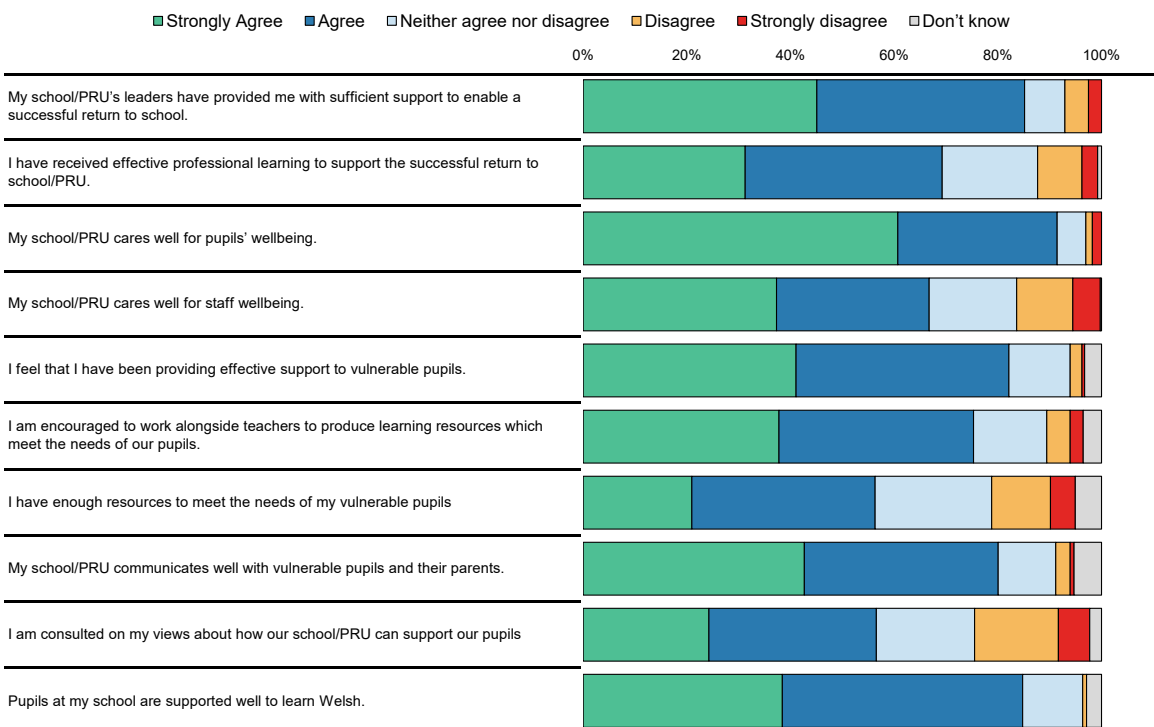
## Parents and carers (3620 responses)



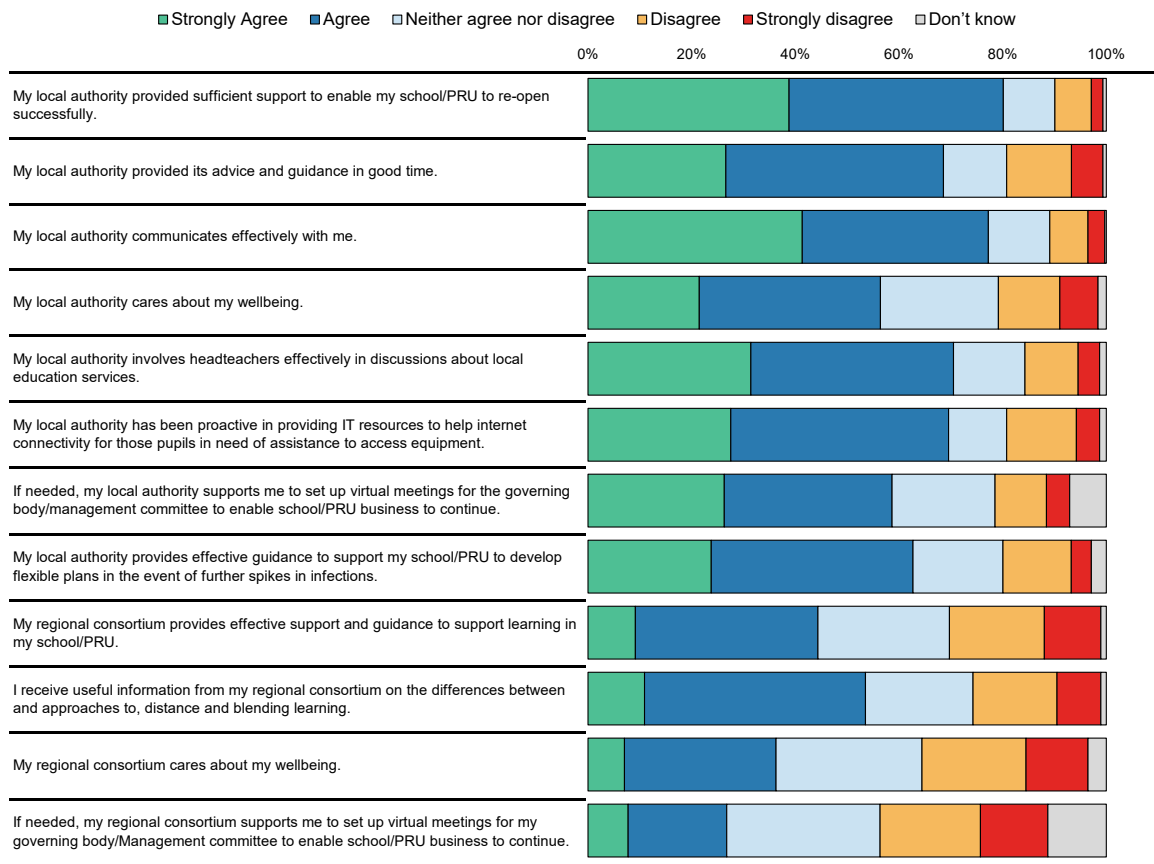
## Teachers (908 responses)



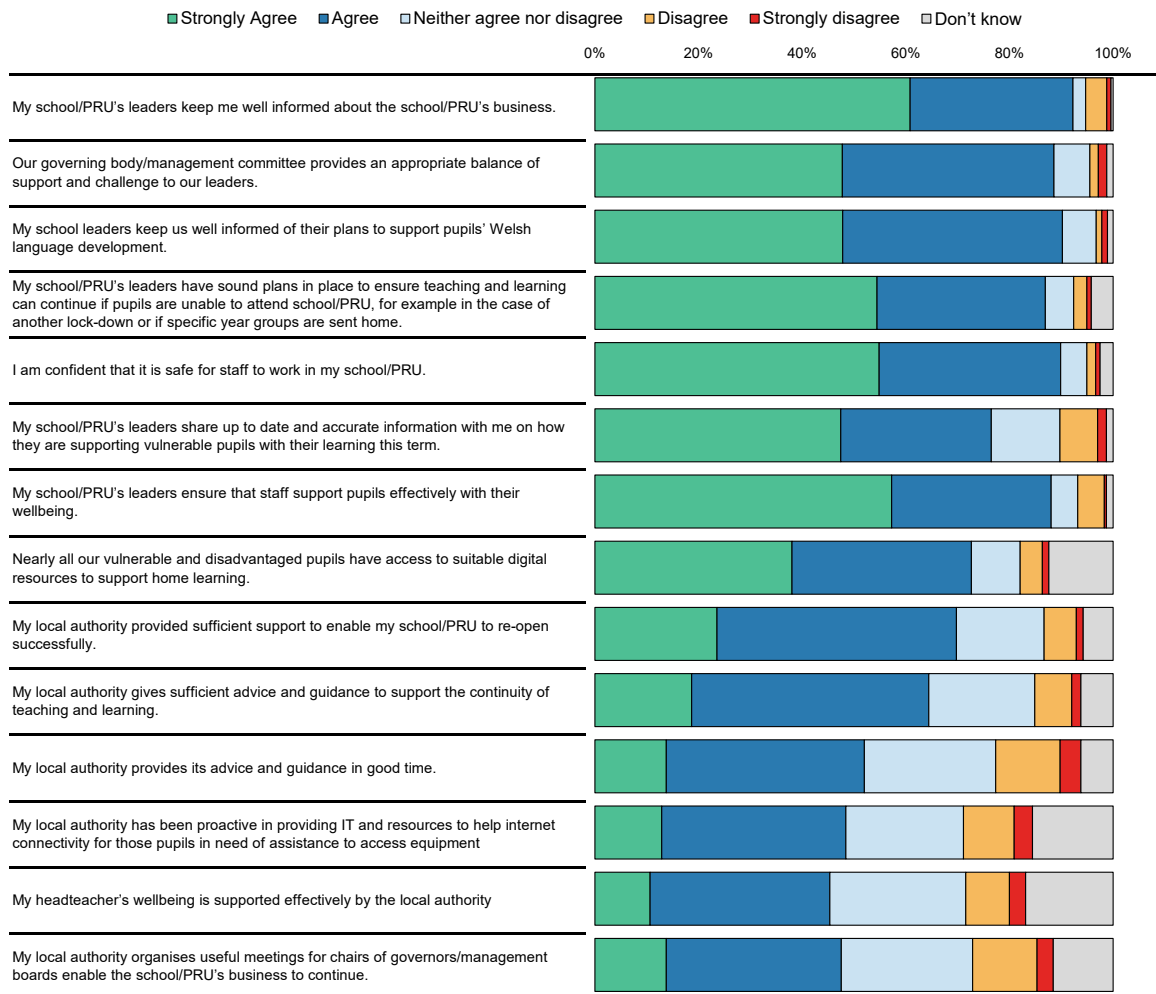
## Support staff (397 responses)



## Leaders (312 responses)



## Governors (245 responses)



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## Appendix 3: Estyn publications

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### Guidance

- [Advice for school and PRU leaders and governors on how to continue with school and PRU business during the Covid-19 pandemic](#)
- [Arrangements for September 2020 Planned approaches across maintained schools and PRUs](#)
- [Cameos and ideas for continuity of school business during Covid-19](#)
- [Cameos and ideas from schools and PRUs on continuing with school business](#)
- [Key principles to support the continuation of school and PRU business](#)
- [Supporting wellbeing and learning during COVID-19 – approaches from adult learning in the community partnerships](#)
- [Supporting wellbeing and learning during COVID-19 – approaches from further education colleges](#)
- [Supporting wellbeing and learning during COVID-19 – approaches from primary schools](#)
- [Supporting wellbeing and learning during COVID-19 – approaches from PRUs](#)
- [Supporting wellbeing and learning during COVID-19 – approaches from secondary schools](#)
- [Supporting wellbeing and learning during COVID-19 – approaches from special schools](#)
- [Supporting wellbeing and learning during COVID-19 – approaches from work-based learning providers](#)
- [Engagement work: Primary sector update – autumn 2020](#)
- [Engagement work: Secondary sector update – autumn 2020](#)
- [Engagement work: All-age school sector update – autumn 2020](#)
- [Engagement work: Maintained special school and pupil referral unit \(PRU\) sector update – autumn 2020](#)
- [Engagement work: Post-16 sector update – autumn 2020](#)

## Thematic reports

- Community schools: families and communities at the heart of school life [thematic report](#) and [training materials](#)
- [Insights into how independent schools and specialist colleges have responded during the COVID-19 pandemic](#)
- Learner resilience – building resilience in primary schools, secondary schools and pupil referral units [thematic report](#) and [training materials](#)

## Blog posts

- [Adverse childhood experiences \(ACEs\) - how can schools support children and young people who live in difficult circumstances?](#)
- [Is your school one that puts families and communities at the heart of its work?](#)
- [Now learners have returned to schools and colleges, what part have we played and how will our role change in the future?](#)
- [Our support for Welsh education and training in the current climate](#)
- [What can schools and PRUs do to strengthen pupils' resilience?](#)
- [Working together to support teaching and learning during COVID-19](#)

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## Appendix 4: Timeline

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## March 2020



- Chief Inspector for Wales announces immediate suspension of all of Estyn's inspections.
- Minister for Education announces that schools will close for statutory provision of education by 20 March. Also, announces suspension of GCSE and A level examinations for summer 2020.



## April 2020

- Suspension of the Childcare Offer for Wales. Funding to be used to support vulnerable children and the childcare costs of key workers.
- Welsh Government announces £1.25 million for additional mental health support for children who may be experiencing increased stress or anxiety as a result of the Coronavirus outbreak. They announce £3 million for local authorities to purchase hardware and secure internet connectivity to ensure learners in Wales are not 'digitally excluded'.
- Estyn release advice for school and PRU leaders on how to continue with school and PRU business. In collaboration with Welsh Government, regional consortia and ADEW we release 'Developing Approaches to Support Distance Learning'.
- The Minister for Education sets out five key principles for when and how schools would return.



## May 2020



- Welsh Government announces £3.75 million of funding to support mental health in schools and publishes a COVID-19 Resilience Plan for the post 16 sectors, including further and higher education, apprenticeships, employability and adult learning.





## June 2020

- Further education colleges and work-based learning providers begin to re-open for face-to-face learning for a priority groups of learners.
- Minister for Education announces that she will use the Coronavirus Act 2020 to disapply temporarily basic curriculum requirements for Wales.
- Most schools re-open to pupils to provide an opportunity for them to 'Check in, Catch up and prepare for summer, and September'.



## July 2020

- Estyn publishes several thematic reports and sector specific insights to support Wales to keep learning. In conjunction with the four regional consortia we also release 'Models of blended Learning' guidance to help from September.
- Welsh Government introduces the Curriculum and Assessment Bill to provide a legislative framework for the new curriculum and assessment arrangements. They announce the 'Recruit, recover and raise standards' scheme to employ 900 extra teaching staff in schools.
- Welsh Government announces additional funding of over £50 million for universities and colleges to maintain jobs in teaching, research and student services, invest in projects to support economic recovery, and support students suffering from financial hardship.



## August 2020

- Wales's Childcare Offer is re-established. Working parents are again able to access 30 hours of early education and care.
- Estyn releases 'Planned approaches across maintained schools and PRUs', to capture a variety of approaches in response to common challenges across different education sectors.
- Welsh Government pledges an additional £4 million to support childcare providers affected by COVID-19 and further funding of up to £264m for local authorities to support a range of services, such as social care, education and leisure.
- Education Secretaries for Wales, England and Northern Ireland announce that exam results will be based on teacher assessment.
- Minister for Education guarantees that learners' final A Level grade will not be lower than their AS grade. Published GCSE and revised A-level results based on teachers' assessments show a notable increase in grades over previous years.
- The Minister for Education announces an independent review of the arrangements for awarding grades for the 2020 summer examinations.

## September 2020



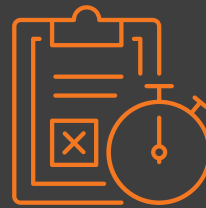
- All pupils return to school, phasing in during the first two weeks of term.
- Minister for Education announces a commitment to provide free face coverings for all learners in secondary school and further education settings.
- Minister for Education announces that all pupils eligible for free school meals will continue to receive provisions if they are shielding or have to self-isolate.
- Estyn begins engagement calls to schools, PRUs, and post-16 settings on request from the Welsh Government to carry out a thematic review of the extent and impact of local authorities' and regional consortia's approaches to supporting schools, their school communities, governing bodies and learners. Estyn also opens a survey for learners, governors, parents and school staff to share their experiences.



## October 2020

- The Education Policy Institute (EPI) publishes a report that describes the way the Welsh Government provided laptops and wi-fi devices to address the lack of access to online learning caused by the coronavirus pandemic as 'commendable'. The report states that, in contrast to other UK nations, the Welsh Government was able to draw on 'well established infrastructure to act quickly following the closures'.
- Minister for Education publishes an updated action plan setting out the next steps in Wales' reform journey, ahead of the introduction of the new Curriculum for Wales in 2022. The action plan, known as Our National Mission, shows the steps the Welsh Government has taken in response to the coronavirus pandemic and its response to the independent report published by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).
- Minister for Education announces that "there will be an uplift of pay to reward our highly skilled and hardworking teachers in Wales." This includes an agreement in principle to accept all of the Independent Welsh Pay Review Body's recommendations for 2020/21.
- Deputy Minister for Health and Social Services announces £12.5m package of funding to support vulnerable children and families.

## November 2020



- Pupils in Years 9-13 remain at home for the week after half-term as part of the national 'firebreak'.
- Minister for Education announces that there will be no end of year exams for learners taking GCSEs, AS levels or A levels in 2021. In place of exams, the Welsh Government intends to work with schools and colleges to take forward teacher managed assessments, including assessments that will be externally set and marked but delivered within a classroom environment under teacher supervision.
- Deputy Minister for Health and Social Services launches the new 'Parenting. Give it Time' campaign providing information, support and advice for parents. The new campaign covers issues reflecting parents' concerns during the pandemic, including how to understand and respond to children's behaviour.

# December 2020

- Estyn publishes its insight reports on the immediate effects of the pandemic on schools, PRUs and all age settings. These reports summarise the findings made from the engagement calls carried out during September and October.
- Estyn publishes the Chief Inspector's Annual Report for 2019-2020. This annual report reviews the standards and quality of education and training in Wales from September 2019 to March 2020. It also offers an initial account of how schools and other education and training providers supported pupils and students during lockdown while providing continuity of learning for them remotely.
- Minister for Education decides that all secondary schools and colleges in Wales will move to online learning for the last week of term, with local decisions to be made about whether or not other schools would be open that week.



## Glossary

<b>Distance learning</b>	Where work is set and/or lessons broadcast (live or pre-recorded) to learners at home. This means that they are not required to attend school to access.
<b>Blended learning</b>	Where learners are provided with a combination of face-to-face learning provided in school, which is complemented by cohesively planned distance learning tasks and activities
<b>CSC</b>	The regional consortium for school improvement for central south Wales
<b>EAS</b>	The regional consortium for school improvement for south east Wales
<b>ERW</b>	The regional consortium for school improvement for south west Wales
<b>GwE</b>	The regional consortium for school improvement for north Wales

### Numbers – quantities and proportions

nearly all =	with very few exceptions
most =	90% or more
many =	70% or more
a majority =	over 60%
half =	50%
around half =	close to 50%
a minority =	below 40%
few =	below 20%
very few =	less than 10%

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# EDUCATION & CHILDREN SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 28<sup>th</sup> January 2021

## MODERNISING EDUCATION PROGRAMME

### PROPOSAL TO CHANGE THE NATURE OF PROVISION AT MODEL VA PRIMARY SCHOOL

**To consider and comment on the following issues:**

- The proposal as outlined below and in the attached consultation document;
- Officers to initiate formal consultation on the proposal;
- That a report is submitted to the Executive Board at the end of the consultation period.

**Reasons:**

- To support Carmarthenshire’s Welsh in Education Strategic Plan launched on 25 June 2018 in accordance with WG Strategic Plans;
- To comply with statutory procedures and guidance in relation to school re-organisation;
- To formulate views for submission to Executive Board for consideration.

<b>Executive Board Decision Required</b>	YES – 08/02/2021
<b>Council Decision Required</b>	NO

**Executive Board Member Portfolio Holder:** Cllr. Glynog Davies (Education & Children)

<p><b>Directorate:</b> Education &amp; Children</p> <p><b>Name of Head of Service:</b> Simon Davies</p> <p><b>Report Author:</b> Sara Griffiths</p>	<p><b>Designations:</b></p> <p>Head of Access to Education</p> <p>Modernisation Team Manager</p>	<p><b>Tel Nos. / E-Mail Addresses:</b></p> <p>01267 246471 <a href="mailto:SiDavies@carmarthenshire.gov.uk">SiDavies@carmarthenshire.gov.uk</a></p> <p>01267 246618 <a href="mailto:SMGriffiths@carmarthenshire.gov.uk">SMGriffiths@carmarthenshire.gov.uk</a></p>
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**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**  
**EDUCATION & CHILDREN SCRUTINY**  
**COMMITTEE**  
**28<sup>th</sup> January 2021**

**MODERNISING EDUCATION PROGRAMME**  
**PROPOSAL TO CHANGE THE NATURE OF PROVISION**  
**AT MODEL VA PRIMARY SCHOOL**

**Background**

On 25<sup>th</sup> June 2018 in accordance with WG Strategic Plans the Local Authority launched **Carmarthenshire's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan** and its vision for a bilingual Carmarthenshire. To achieve this, the authority will deliver significant growth in Welsh medium education and training to increase the number of children and young people who become fluent in both Welsh and English and have the ability to use their languages confidently with their families, in their communities and in the workplace.

With this in mind, the Local Authority has a responsibility to provide its communities with the best education and opportunities possible and believes that this can be achieved through set objectives. Carmarthenshire County Council are fully supportive of the aim that all pupils are able to speak, read and write in both Welsh and English fluently by the end of Key Stage 2 and will provide services that will ensure high quality learning opportunities for all Carmarthenshire's children, young people and adults, thereby enabling them to achieve their full potential as lifetime learners in the context of the unique bilingual nature of the County.

In order to support Carmarthenshire's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan and national policies in moving the county's schools along the Welsh language continuum, the attached draft consultation document sets out proposals with regards to the change in nature of provision at **Model VA Primary School**.

**The Proposal**

- From 1<sup>st</sup> September, 2022 the nature of Foundation Phase provision at Model VA Primary School will change to Welsh medium education.

This will only affect pupils starting in the Foundation Phase at the school from September 2022 onwards. Current pupils attending the school will be unaffected.

With learners accessing Welsh medium education in the Foundation Phase this will, in time, necessitate setting up a Welsh Stream at Key Stage 2 to ensure continuity of provision. This will be reviewed in line with Carmarthenshire's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan.

**Recommendation**

E&C Scrutiny Committee is requested to endorse the proposal and recommends to the Executive Board that a formal consultation be initiated.

**DETAILED REPORT ATTACHED?**

**YES: Draft Consultation Document**



## IMPLICATIONS

I confirm that other than those implications which have been agreed with the appropriate Directors / Heads of Service and are referred to in detail below, there are no other implications associated with this report.

Signed:  Head of Access to Education

Policy, Crime & Disorder and Equalities	Legal	Finance	ICT	Risk Management Issues	Staffing Implications	Physical Assets
YES	YES	YES	NONE	YES	YES	NONE

### 1. Policy, Crime & Disorder and Equalities

Developments are consistent with the Authority's Corporate Strategy and the Modernising Education Strategic Outline Programme and WESP 2018.

### 2. Legal

Appropriate consultation will need to be initiated in accordance with the relevant statutory procedures.

### 3. Finance

Revenue implications will be catered for within the Local Management of Schools Fair Funding Scheme.

### 4. ICT

None.

### 5. Risk Management Issues

The proposal may impact on the demand for school places at the school and surrounding catchment area schools. The situation will be monitored as part of the school admission process and ongoing data forecasting and analysis through the Authority's Modernising Education Programme.

### 6. Staffing Implications

Staffing implications will be addressed in accordance with the County Council's Policy and Procedures.

### 7. Physical Assets

None.

## CONSULTATIONS

I confirm that the appropriate consultations have taken in place and the outcomes are as detailed below:

Signed:  Head of Access to Education

**1. Scrutiny Committee** – Will be consulted on 28/01/2021.

**2. Local Member(s)** – The local members are aware of the proposal and will be consulted during the formal consultation period.

**3. Community / Town Council** – Will be consulted during the formal consultation period.

**4. Relevant Partners** – Will be consulted during the formal consultation period.

**5. Staff Side Representatives and other Organisations** – Will be consulted during the formal consultation period.

<b>EXECUTIVE BOARD PORTFOLIO HOLDER AWARE/ CONSULTED</b>	YES
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<b>Section 100D Local Government Act, 1972 – Access to Information List of Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:</b>	
<b>Title of Document</b>	<b>File Ref No. / Locations that the papers are available for public inspection</b>
Carmarthenshire's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan	<a href="https://www.carmarthenshire.gov.wales/home/council-democracy/strategies-and-plans/welsh-in-education-strategic-plan/">https://www.carmarthenshire.gov.wales/home/council-democracy/strategies-and-plans/welsh-in-education-strategic-plan/</a>
MEP Biennial Review	<a href="http://www.carmarthenshire.gov.uk">www.carmarthenshire.gov.uk</a> Executive Board 20 <sup>th</sup> June 2016
21 <sup>st</sup> Century Schools Website	<a href="http://www.21stcenturyschools.org">www.21stcenturyschools.org</a>

# Proposal to Change the Nature of Provision at Model VA Primary School

## Consultation Document

**DRAFT**

[carmarthenshire.gov.uk](http://carmarthenshire.gov.uk)

Cyngor **Sir Gâr**  
**Carmarthenshire**  
County Council



Page 115

## **School Modernisation Section**

**Sara Griffiths**, Modernisation Team Manager

If you require this information in large print, Braille or on audiotape please contact the Department for Education & Children

**Email:** [DECMEP@carmarthenshire.gov.uk](mailto:DECMEP@carmarthenshire.gov.uk)

**Telephone:** 01267 246618

## Foreward

On 25<sup>th</sup> June 2018 in accordance with Welsh Government Strategic Plans the Local Authority launched [Carmarthenshire's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan](#) and our vision for a bilingual Carmarthenshire. To achieve this, we will deliver significant growth in Welsh medium education to increase the number of children and young people who become fluent in both Welsh and English and have the ability to use their languages confidently with their families, in their communities and in the workplace.

With this in mind, the Local Authority has a responsibility to provide its communities with the best education and opportunities possible and believes that this can be achieved through set objectives. Carmarthenshire County Council are fully supportive of the aim that all pupils are able to speak, read and write in both Welsh and English fluently by the end of Key Stage 2 and will provide services that will ensure high quality learning opportunities for all Carmarthenshire's children, young people and adults, thereby enabling them to achieve their full potential as lifetime learners in the context of the unique bilingual nature of the County.

The Local Authority not only supports this vision, but are wholly supportive of a bilingual Wales. On the 10<sup>th</sup> July 2017 the Welsh Government published "Cymraeg 2050: A million Welsh Speakers" with the aim of reaching a million Welsh speakers in Wales by 2050. The document considers three key themes:

- Increasing the number of Welsh speakers;
- Increasing the use of Welsh; and
- Creating favourable conditions, infrastructure and context

all of which we must consider in our own locality where our education system can support, develop and sustain bilingualism.

In order to support Carmarthenshire's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan and national policies in moving the county's schools along the Welsh language continuum, this consultation document sets out proposals with regards to the change in nature of provision of the Foundation Phase at **Model VA Primary School**.

Consultation will follow the guidelines established by the Welsh Government as set out in the [School Organisation Code 2018](#) and will involve identified interested parties. The information set out in this document is intended to clarify the proposals for your school and support the consultation process.



**Gareth Morgans**  
**Director of Education and Children**

## Glossary of Abbreviations

<b>ALN</b>	Additional Learning Needs
<b>AN</b>	Admission Number
<b>CCC</b>	Carmarthenshire County Council
<b>CP</b>	Community Primary
<b>DS</b>	Dual Stream
<b>EM</b>	English Medium
<b>Estyn</b>	Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales
<b>FTE</b>	Full Time Equivalent
<b>LA</b>	Local Authority
<b>MCSW</b>	Measuring the Capacity of Schools in Wales
<b>MEP</b>	Modernising Education Programme
<b>NOR</b>	Number on Roll
<b>PLASC</b>	Pupil Level Annual School Census Data
<b>PT</b>	Part-Time
<b>WESP</b>	Welsh in Education Strategic Plan
<b>WG</b>	Welsh Government
<b>WM</b>	Welsh Medium

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## Introduction

Carmarthenshire County Council has a legal responsibility to review the number and type of schools it maintains in the area and whether or not it is making the best use of the resources and facilities to deliver the opportunities that children deserve.

As part of this process the Council has published its vision on how it sees the future for all of the primary and secondary schools in the County and this includes consulting on the future shape of education in Model VA Primary School.

This consultation document outlines current provision and options to determine the optimum solution for meeting future need.

## Background

Model Church in Wales VA Primary School is an English medium primary school. The school provides education to pupils between the ages of 3-11 years old.

Over recent years, pupil numbers have been declining gradually.

Based on current pupil projections, this trend is set to continue for the next five years.

Model VA Primary School building condition is **Grade B** – Satisfactory (Performing as intended but exhibiting minor deterioration).

The school's most recent Estyn inspection completed in October 2019 judged the school as **Good** in all five inspection areas.

The Local Authority has a responsibility to provide all pupils with the best education possible and believes that providing bilingual opportunities has a role to play in this. This aligns with Carmarthenshire's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan 2017-2020 which aims to move schools along the Welsh language continuum. In light of this, the best way to create confident, bilingual individuals is through immersing pupils in the Welsh language from a very early age.

## Rationale for Change

This proposal has been prepared in response to Carmarthenshire County Council's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) and the Welsh Medium Education Strategy (WMES). The Local Authority has a vision for a bilingual Carmarthenshire. To achieve this, we will, in accordance with 'Cymraeg 2050: A Million Welsh Speakers':

***“Ensure significant growth in Welsh-medium education and training to increase the number of people of all ages to become fluent in both Welsh and English and have the ability to use their languages***



***confidently with their families, in their communities and in the workplace.”***

As a result, it is the Local Authority’s proposal:

- From 1<sup>st</sup> September 2022 the nature of Foundation Phase provision at Model VA Primary School will change to Welsh medium education.

This proposal will support the development of bilingual and multilingual opportunities in line with the new curriculum to be launched in 2022.

Should the proposals be implemented, all future pupils at the school will receive their Foundation Phase education primarily through the medium of Welsh.

This will only affect pupils starting in the Foundation Phase at the school from September 2022 onwards.

Current pupils attending the school will be unaffected.

With learners accessing Welsh medium education in the Foundation Phase this will, in time, necessitate setting up a Welsh Stream at Key Stage 2 to ensure continuity of provision. This will be reviewed in line with Carmarthenshire’s Welsh in Education Strategic Plan.

In addition, this proposal will link to Welsh Government Policies as stated below:

- Rewriting the Future;
- Successful Futures;
- Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015;
- Welsh Government’s Draft Strategy; and
- 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools and Education Programme.

## **Early Welsh Medium Immersive Provision**

The immersion method focuses on using Welsh as the predominant medium of teaching and learning, using practical and visual techniques to help children and pupils to develop vocabulary and syntax. The essence of this method is introducing and modelling good language. Also, international evidence confirms that ‘the most effective way of developing bilingual children is to immerse them in the less common language whilst also developing their skills in the more common language.’ Young children do not need to learn a language as adults do. They absorb languages if they are exposed enough to them.

There is an abundance of research showing that investing in the first years of a child’s life improves outcomes for them throughout the rest of their lives.

The change to Welsh medium education at Foundation Phase will strengthen pupils' bilingual skills from an early age providing them with a firm foundation for future linguistic development.

As qualified by research the presence of two languages in the operating system of the brain is likely to produce a more richly fed thinking engine (Baker, 2000:66-67). Therefore, this proposal provides pupils with increased opportunities to reach their full potential as bilingual learners.

## **Bilingualism**

### **The advantages of being bilingual**

#### **What does being bilingual mean?**

The ability to live your everyday life using two languages.

Being able to switch from one language to another fluently and confidently at any given time.

#### **Education**

- Bilingual children tend to be more successful in education. They tend to perform better in tasks.
- Bilingual people find it easier to learn additional languages.
- Children in Welsh medium education do just as well, if not better, in English as children in English medium education.

Evidence:

[Estyn Thematic Report- Welsh in Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3 in Welsh-medium or bilingual schools](#)

#### **Career**

- Speaking two languages is an extra skill to put on your application form and CV.
- Bilingual people earn an average of 11% more income.
- Employers need bilingual workforces in Wales, because services need to be offered bilingually in accordance with the Welsh Standards Paper.

Evidence:

[Wales Online Article - Welsh Speakers 'more likely to get top qualifications and jobs'](#)

### Nigel Owens

“ Without my Welsh education in School I would not have had all the opportunities to present and perform and I would not have been encouraged to start as a referee at 16 years old.

I carry Welsh with me wherever I referee in the world. Before each game I listen to Welsh music. I'm lucky enough to have two languages and Welsh is an important part of who I am. ”



### Alex Jones

“ Having a bilingual education has been pivotal to me in so many ways. It meant that I had twice as many opportunities, it doubled my capacity to learn other languages, it enhanced my ability to communicate and therefore make friends, and most importantly, it gave me a strong sense of belonging and of our heritage. Starting out as a broadcaster in Welsh gave me the vast experience I needed to move forward to my dream job. Without a bilingual education, I'd be in a very different place. ”



## Health

- Research shows that being bilingual delays the onset of Dementia and other symptoms of Alzheimer disease.

Evidence:

[Article - Delaying the onset of Alzheimer's disease: Bilingualism as a form of cognitive reserve](#)

[The Telegraph Article- Bilingual people twice as likely to recover from a stroke](#)

## Life

- Speaking two languages widens your horizons.
- Being able to speak Welsh gives you access to many aspects of Welsh culture, history and identity.
- Speaking Welsh can provide a key to rich community life.
- Being able to speak Welsh gives you a strong sense of identity and belonging.
- Being able to switch from one language to the other with confidence gives the individual self-confidence and pride.
- Speaking many languages can make people more tolerant towards other cultures.

Evidence:

[The Advantages of Bilingualism in Welsh and English by Colin Baker](#)

## Common parental concerns

### **‘How can I help my child with homework if I don’t understand much Welsh myself?’**

Welsh schools set homework instruction in Welsh and in English so there will be no problem in understanding what your child is being asked to do at home. The schools themselves will be happy to provide educational advice and the parents evening will be in your chosen language.

Work set will be appropriate to the pupil’s age and ability level and therefore should be within your child’s reach.

Developing increasingly as independent learners, you may find that your child is happy to progress without extra parental guidance as they get older.

[Booklet - Welsh Homework? No problem](#) (English version)

[Booklet - Gwaith Cartref? Dim problem](#) (Welsh version)

### **‘Will pupils who struggle with Welsh medium education have to move to an English medium school?’**

It is the Local Authority’s desire that all pupil receive the opportunity to become bilingual in both Welsh and English languages. In Welsh medium schools, pupils will receive their education principally through the medium of Welsh, with English being taught as a subject in Key Stage 2 and used as a medium for instruction. Sufficient support will be provided to all pupils as required through a range of mechanisms and tailored to the individual’s needs.

### **‘The children will be confused and their English will suffer.’**

On average, bilingual children achieve higher grades in the English language. Also, as a child explains homework in English to the parent, their own understanding is reinforced. Ask your child to describe what he/she is doing in his own words.

On average, about 80% of Carmarthenshire pupils who attend Welsh medium education get an A\* to C grade in both Welsh and English.

### **‘Will my child’s thinking be affected by being bilingual?’**

The answer is “yes”, and probably for the better. The presence of two languages in the operating system of the brain is likely to produce a more richly-fed thinking engine (Baker, 2000:66-67).

### **‘Will my child be able to cope with learning through the medium of Welsh?’**

School and staff are fully committed to providing the necessary support to all pupils and parents through a wide range of mechanisms: open door policy; homework provided bilingually; support by The Athrawon Bro Service; bilingual school website etc. Staff are also required to differentiate the curriculum and make reasonable adjustments when required to meet the needs of every pupil.

### **‘Should the Welsh language be forced?’**

International evidence, cited by the Welsh Government, confirms that the most effective way of developing bilingual children is to immerse them in the less common language whilst also developing their skills in the more common language. This is consistent with national policy to expand Welsh medium education in order to develop increasing numbers of fully bilingual young people and to enable more children to benefit from the advantages of bilingualism, gathered through international research.

### **‘Will learning through the medium of Welsh affect later life opportunities?’**

Yes, but probably for the better. It is the belief of the department, based upon international evidence and local experience, that children benefit from a truly bilingual education, which provides wider skills developments, such as cognitive ability, task understanding and flexibility, enhanced powers of concentration etc. and that all children should receive these opportunities. Being bilingual or multilingual also broadens individuals’ cultural experiences and can enhance career prospects. Bilingualism will increasingly over time become an employment skill and possessing Welsh language skills will increasingly over time give individuals a competitive advantage when seeking employment.

### **‘Does learning through the medium of Welsh segregate English speaking pupils/families?’**

On the contrary, learning through the medium of Welsh provides all children with opportunity to become fully bilingual with the skills to be able to read, write and speak in both Welsh and English languages by the time that they leave primary school. In Welsh medium schools, children receive their education principally through the medium of Welsh with English being taught as a subject in Key Stage 2 and used as a medium of instruction. Learning through the medium of Welsh also helps family/community members with the opportunity to develop their Welsh language skills.

### **‘Will children with additional learning needs be able to learn through the medium of Welsh?’**

Carmarthenshire County Council’s policy is that all its schools should be inclusive, with children with additional learning needs being educated in a mainstream setting alongside their peers wherever possible. In the vast majority of cases, this is achieved, with all children benefitting. All pupils with additional learning needs have specific individual plans based on their circumstances and a tailored support programme is provided according to need. Generally, an additional learning need is not a barrier to learning two languages. There will be rare instances, however where a child may be diagnosed with a condition that is not conducive to a fully bilingual education. In these circumstances a package of support is identified by professional practitioners and discussed with parents.

## **Carmarthenshire Language Learning Centres**

Due to the nature of the county we need to provide a language service to all latecomers so that they can become fully assimilated into our bilingual communities and are steeped in Welsh language and culture. In order to achieve this, we need to address the importance of dedicated facilities to support latecomers to a level where they can easily integrate into the day to day timetable in Welsh medium schools. Thorough research shows that this can be more easily achieved through intensive language courses. Language centres are the vehicles needed to ensure that this becomes a reality. As alluded to above, the language centres will also provide language support for parents and pupils and will also have provision for professional learning and Welsh for Adults.

## **Bilingualism in Carmarthenshire**

Further information can be found using the following links:

- **Cymraeg gyda’r plant / Welsh with your kids- give it a go!**

[Booklet - Cymraeg gyda'r plant/Welsh with your kids-give it a go!](#)

Within this booklet you will find a number of useful Welsh words and phrases which can be used to practise the Welsh language with young children. This will help them to speak naturally and confidently.

- **Bod yn Ddwyeithog... yn Sir Gâr / Being Bilingual... in Carmarthenshire**

[Booklet- Bod yn Ddwyeithog...yn Sir Gar/Being Bilingual... in Carmarthenshire](#)

This booklet details what it means to be bilingual whilst highlighting the advantages that can be achieved from being bilingual in areas such as education, career, health and life. In addition, within this booklet you will find the answers to many common parental concerns regarding the Welsh language.

- **Welcome to Wales    Welcome to Carmarthenshire    Welcome to Welsh**

[Booklet- Welcome to Wales    Welcome to Carmarthenshire    Welcome to Welsh](#)

This booklet has been prepared by Carmarthenshire County Council to welcome newcomers to its bilingual County. Within the booklet you will find information on how the Welsh language is used in Carmarthenshire along with details on where you can find Welsh language support and useful websites to visit to develop your Welsh language skills.

## The Consultation Process

The consultation on this proposal will follow guidelines established by the Welsh Government as stated in the School Organisation Code (2018).

### Who will be consulted?

This document will be sent to the following interested parties:

Staff (Teaching and Ancillary)	Director of Education – All Neighbouring Authorities
Governors and Parents/Guardians	Diocesan Director of Education Church in Wales and RC
Local County Councillors	Estyn
Community Councillors	Regional Transport Consortium
Members of the Senedd (MS) / Regional Members / Members of Parliament (MP)	Neighbouring Primary and Secondary schools
Welsh Ministers	All relevant unions
SEN Partners	Welsh Language Commissioner
LA Special Educational Needs Division	Local Police and Crime Commissioner
ERW – Education through Regional Working	Flying Start
	Child Care / Early Years
Communities for Work +	Public Services Board
Communities for Work	Legacy
Fusion	Families First Carmarthenshire

***\*Copies of the consultation document will be sent to the Head teacher and Chair of Governors of the surrounding catchment area of schools subject to proposals.***



## Consultation Period

The consultation period for the proposals starts on 22 February 2021 and ends on 4 April 2021.

Consultees can submit their views in favour of or against a proposal. Responses received during the consultation period will not be treated as statutory objections. If consultees wish to object, they will need to do so in writing during the statutory objection period outlined on page 16.

### Considering your views

During the consultation period you can ask questions and express your views by writing a letter to the address below or by completing an online survey using the following link:

[Insert Link](#)

Letters should be sent to the following address by no later than noon on 4 April 2021:

Mr Gareth Morgans, Director of Education and Children's Services,  
Building 2, St. David's Park, Jobs Well Road, Carmarthen, SA31 3HB  
Or E-mail to: [DECMEP@carmarthenshire.gov.uk](mailto:DECMEP@carmarthenshire.gov.uk)

### Drop-in Sessions

Due to the ongoing implications of the Coronavirus issue we have been advised to postpone all events where there is interaction between staff, parents and the wider community and as a result there will not be a drop in session to discuss proposals. Should you feel strongly about discussing the proposals please contact Mrs Rhianydd Evans by sending an e-mail to [DECMEP@carmarthenshire.gov.uk](mailto:DECMEP@carmarthenshire.gov.uk) and a virtual meeting can be arranged.

### Consultation with Pupils

There will be an opportunity for the pupils of the schools subject to the proposals to participate in the consultation process.

The information gathered from the consultation with pupils will form part of the consultation report which will be submitted to the Executive Board for consideration following the consultation period.

## **Consultation Report**

A Consultation Report will be published on Carmarthenshire County Council's website at least 2 weeks before a decision is made on whether or not to proceed to publish a statutory notice. Hard copies of the report will also be available on request. The report will summarise the issues raised by consultees and provide Carmarthenshire County Council's response to these issues. The report will also contain Estyn's view of the proposal and details of consultation undertaken with the pupils.

The Executive Board of Carmarthenshire County Council will consider the consultation report and decide whether or not to proceed with the proposal.

If the Executive Board decides to continue with the proposal Carmarthenshire County Council must publish a statutory notice.

## **Statutory Notice**

The statutory notice will be published on Carmarthenshire County Council's website and posted at the schools subject to proposals. Copies of the notice will be made available to the schools to distribute to pupils, parents, guardians, and staff members (the schools may also distribute the notice by email).

### **Statutory Objection Period**

The statutory notice will set out the details of the proposal and invite anyone who wishes to object to do so in writing within a period of 28 days. If objections are received an objection report will be published on the Carmarthenshire County Council website. Hard copies of the report will also be available on request. The report will summarise the issues raised and provide Carmarthenshire County Council's response to those objections.

## **Determination of Proposal**

Carmarthenshire County Council will determine the proposal. The County Council may decide to approve, reject or approve the proposal with modifications. In doing so, the County Council will take into account any statutory objections that it received.

### **Decision Notification**

Following determination of proposals all interested parties will be informed and advised of the availability of the decision which will be published electronically on Carmarthenshire County Council's website.

## The Statutory Process Time-Table

The statutory process and timetable will be as follows:

22 February 2021	Issue of this consultation document to identified and other interested parties.
4 April 2021	Closing date for views on the proposal to be received by the Department for Education and Children.
27 April 2021	<p>A Consultation Report will be taken to the Executive Board for a decision on whether or not to proceed to publish a statutory notice. OR alternatively proposal ends.</p> <p>The Consultation Report will be published on Carmarthenshire County Council's website at least 2 weeks prior to the publication of a statutory notice.</p> <p>If the decision is made to proceed then a statutory notice will be published. The notice will outline details of the proposal and be published on the Council's web site and be displayed near the entrance of the school and schools which are subject to the proposals. Copies of the notice will be made available to the school to distribute to parents, guardians and staff members. Following publication there will be a 28 day period during which time formal written objections will be invited.</p> <p>The statutory notice will give details on how you may record your objections to the proposal.</p>
8 June 2021	End of formal 28 day notice period for objections. County Council will determine the proposal. The County Council may decide to approve, reject or approve the proposal with modifications, in doing so the County Council will take into account any statutory objections received.
July 2021	<p>Deadline to notify parents of intention to implement proposal.</p> <p>Following determination of proposals all interested parties will be informed and advised of the availability of the decision which will be published electronically on Carmarthenshire County Council's website.</p>

## School subject to proposals

		<b>Model Church in Wales VA Primary School</b>
<b>School Location</b>		College Road Carmarthen SA31 3EQ
<b>Age Range</b>		3-11
<b>School Category</b> (Community [C], Voluntary Aided [VA], Voluntary Controlled [VC])		Voluntary Aided
<b>Language Category</b>		English Medium
<b>Number of registered Pupils (January 2020)</b>	<b>Nursery Age</b>	67
	<b>Reception – Y.6</b>	362
	<b>Total</b>	429
<b>Number of pupils previously on the register</b>	<b>January 2019</b>	438
	<b>January 2018</b>	443
	<b>January 2017</b>	454
	<b>January 2016</b>	478
<b>Pupil Projections</b>	<b>January 2021</b>	421
	<b>January 2022</b>	405
	<b>January 2023</b>	400
	<b>January 2024</b>	395
	<b>January 2025</b>	396
<b>Capacity (including nursery age)</b>		485
<b>Cost per pupil (2020/21)</b>		£3,412
<b>School Budget (2020/21)</b>		£1,406k
<b>Estyn Inspection Result</b>		<a href="#">Estyn</a>
<b>Building Condition Category</b>		B

# The Proposal

- From 1<sup>st</sup> September 2022 the nature of Foundation Phase provision at Model VA Primary School will change to Welsh medium education.

This will only affect pupils starting in the Foundation Phase at the school from September 2022 onwards.

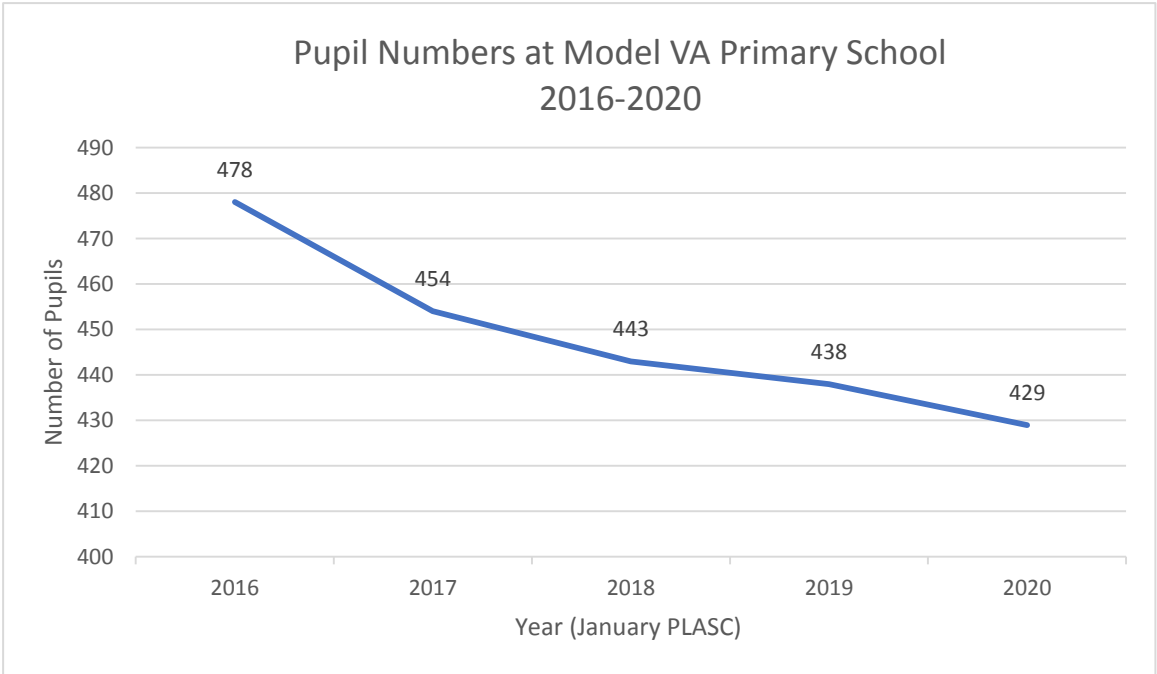
Current pupils attending the school will be unaffected.

With learners accessing Welsh medium education in the Foundation Phase this will, in time, necessitate setting up a Welsh Stream at Key Stage 2 to ensure continuity of provision. This will be reviewed in line with Carmarthenshire’s Welsh in Education Strategic Plan.

## Background

Model Church in Wales VA Primary School is situated on College Road, Carmarthen in Carmarthenshire. It serves the historic parish boundaries of St David’s and St Peter’s Carmarthen although some pupils attending the school live outside these parishes. The school currently provides English medium education to pupils between the ages of 3-11 years old.

The graph below shows pupil numbers at the school over the last five years.



In recent years, pupil numbers have gradually declined and have been below the school's capacity. Pupils are taught in single year group classes. January 2020 PLASC showed that there were 429 pupils at the school and 56 surplus places.

**Advantages and Disadvantages of the proposal**

**Advantages**

- Opportunity for pupils to gain early immersion in the Welsh language from a young age.
- Allows pupils to gain a firm foundation in the Welsh language.
- Provides additional Welsh medium places to meet current and projected demand.

**Disadvantages**

- Potential local community resistance to the proposal.
- Statutory process required to implement the proposal.

**Risks and Counter Measures**

Risk		Counter Measure
1.	Failure to obtain statutory approval to implement the proposal.	- Follow guidelines as set out in the School Organisation Code 2018
2.	An unsatisfactory consultation with the community	- Develop communication strategy and consult on a regular basis to address concerns

**Financial Implications - Revenue**

Model Church in Wales VA Primary School is funded in accordance with the County Council's Fair Funding policy and will receive resources on the same basis as any other school within the County Council, based on pupil numbers and facilities.

## Admissions Arrangements

The Governing Body is the Admissions Authority for Model Church in Wales VA Primary School.

Chair of the Governing Body  
 Model Church in Wales School  
 College Road  
 Carmarthen  
 SA31 3EQ  
 Tel No: 01267 234386

E-mail: [admin@model.ysgolccc.cymru](mailto:admin@model.ysgolccc.cymru)

## Alternative Options Considered

In developing a preferred option, the Authority considered a range of alternative options.

<b>Status Quo – No change to the nature of provision</b>	
<b>Advantages</b>	<b>Disadvantages</b>
No change to stakeholders	Does not support Welsh Government's aim of 1 million Welsh speakers by 2050
No Statutory Process required	Does not meet the aims of the County's WESP.

<b>Change the nature of Foundation Phase provision at Model VA Primary School to Dual Stream education with English medium provision remaining from Key Stage 2 (KS2)</b>	
<b>Advantages</b>	<b>Disadvantages</b>
Provides parents with a choice of language medium in the Foundation Phase	Statutory Process required.
Supports the aims of the County's WESP.	Potential local community resistance to the proposal.
Increases pupils' early linguistic skills.	Possible change for stakeholders.

<b>Preferred Option</b>	
<b>Change the nature of Foundation Phase provision at Model VA Primary School change to Welsh medium education with English medium provision remaining from Key Stage 2 (KS2)</b>	
<b>Advantages</b>	<b>Disadvantages</b>
Opportunity for pupils to gain early immersion in the Welsh language from a young age.	Statutory Process required.
Allows pupils to gain a firm foundation in the Welsh language.	Potential local community resistance to the proposal.
Provides additional Welsh medium places to meet current and projected demand.	Change for stakeholders.
The proposal will help address the issue of a shortage of Welsh medium places within Carmarthen Town.	No job security for some members of staff.

## **School Catchment Area**

The current catchment area of Model Church in Wales VA Primary School will remain as is.

## **Secondary School Transfers**

There will be no change to the current transfer arrangements for pupils in respect of Secondary education.



## School(s) affected by this proposal

School Name	Johnstown Primary	Richmond Park Primary	Myrddin Primary	Ysgol y Dderwen	St Mary's School	Peniel Community School	Abergwili VC Primary	Llangunnor Primary	Bancyfelin School	Cynwyl Elfed Community Primary	Llangain Primary	
School Location	SA31 3HS	SA31 1NN	SA31 1TE	SA31 1TG	SA31 3DE	SA32 7AB	SA31 2JD	SA31 2NN	SA33 5ND	SA33 6TR	SA33 5AE	
County	<b>Carmarthenshire</b>											
Age Range	3-11	3-11	3-11	3-11	3-11	4-11	4-11	3-11	4-11	4-11	3-11	
School Category (Community [C], Voluntary Aided [VA], Voluntary Controlled [VC])	C	C	C	C	VA	C	VC	C	C	C	C	
Language Medium Category (PLASC)	EM	EM	EM	WM	EW	WM	WM	DS	WM	WM	WM	
Number of registered Pupils (January 2020 )	Nursery	72	35	19	63	14	13	3	55	1	2	5
	Reception – Y.6	409	177	79	308	59	103	48	264	38	61	36
	<b>Total</b>	<b>481</b>	<b>212</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>371</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>319</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>41</b>
Number of pupils previously on the register  Page	January 2019	484	213	98	373	68	109	53	314	43	67	36
	January 2018	474	197	101	358	63	109	55	310	35	73	31
	January 2017	468	200	104	360	73	113	60	322	40	71	32
	January 2016	464	197	85	347	82	119	66	319	41	78	25

School Name		Johnstown Primary	Richmond Park Primary	Myrddin Primary	Ysgol y Dderwen	St Mary's School	Peniel Community School	Abergwili VC Primary	Llangunnor Primary	Bancyfelin School	Cynwyl Elfed Community Primary	Llangain Primary
Pupil Projections	January 2021	480	210	101	368	66	118	56	319	41	65	44
	January 2022	477	211	102	383	61	116	51	314	42	63	43
	January 2023	475	205	97	385	65	118	45	306	39	62	49
	January 2024	478	205	96	385	61	119	46	298	39	56	53
	January 2025	477	204	96	383	62	119	46	300	42	60	55
Capacity (including nursery)		459	214	123	361	167	120	68	301	64	94	61
Cost per pupil (2020/21)		£3,403	£4,421	£7,819	£3,564	£3,893	£3,900	£3,862	£3,660	£4,520	£3,975	£4,547
School Budget		£1574k	£924k	£942k	£1269k	£269k	£452k	£197k	£1114k	£176k	£250k	£182k
Estyn Inspection Result		<a href="#">Estyn</a>	<a href="#">Estyn</a>	<a href="#">Estyn</a>	<a href="#">Estyn</a>	<a href="#">Estyn</a>	<a href="#">Estyn</a>	<a href="#">Estyn</a>	<a href="#">Estyn</a>	<a href="#">Estyn</a>	<a href="#">Estyn</a>	<a href="#">Estyn</a>
Building Condition Category		B	B	C	A	C	A	B	B	C	B	A

**Building Condition:**

Grade A	Good. Performing as intended and operating efficiently.
Grade B	Satisfactory. Performing as intended but exhibiting minor deterioration.
Grade C	Poor. Exhibiting major defects and/ or not operating as intended.
Grade D	Bad. Life expired and/or serious risk of imminent failure.

## Evaluation of Present Arrangements

The school was last inspected in October 2019 and was judged as 'good' in the five inspection areas.

The school is a two-form entry school with pupils currently being taught in single year group classes. There is currently a Headteacher, 2 Assistant Headteachers and 12 teachers employed at the school along with 16 teaching assistants.

During each inspection five inspection areas are looked at:

- 1: Standards**
- 2: Wellbeing and attitudes to learning**
- 3: Teaching and learning experiences**
- 4. Care, support and guidance**
- 5. Leadership and management**

## Standards

When they start at the school, most pupils' skills are at the expected level for their age and they make strong progress over time. Most recall prior learning confidently and apply themselves diligently to their tasks and challenges.

Most pupils listen attentively. They speak confidently and politely with their peers and respect other pupils' opinions, such as when discussing which fruit and vegetables they would like to buy from the class shop. Across key stage 2, most pupils appreciate other people's views and share ideas confidently together.

Most pupils read confidently. The nursery and reception pupils develop early reading skills quickly and become aware of the link between sounds and letters. Many Year 2 pupils use phonic skills successfully to discover meaning in different texts. They understand the importance of punctuation and direct speech when reading. The more able pupils read with lively expression and discuss their likes and dislikes maturely. Most pupils maintain strong progress with their reading across key stage 2. They discuss their favoured genres confidently and make sensible decisions about what they want to read. In upper key stage 2, many pupils have good research skills and show a good understanding of the importance of inference in text to read for subtle meaning.

Many reception pupils have well developed early writing skills. They use their understanding of letters to start mark-making from an early stage. Many Year 2 pupils write to a good standard in a variety of genres. Most show a sound understanding of when to use basic punctuation. Many more able pupils develop their ideas effectively when producing a range of engaging writing, both in factual and creative contexts. Most pupils maintain good progress with their writing across key stage 2. For example, when writing a high-quality recount of their recent visit to Green Castle woods, using effective opening paragraphs, time connectives and direct speech. Many Year 6 pupils write to a high standard in different contexts.

Most pupils across the foundation phase have good mathematical skills. Many reception pupils have an early understanding of how to use different coins in the class shop. Many more able Year 2 pupils apply their numeracy skills confidently, adding and subtracting two-digit numbers successfully. Most have a sound understanding of the properties of two and three-dimensional shapes.

Most Year 3 and 4 pupils' numeracy skills are good and they apply them successfully when taking part in challenges within their 'Ditectif Dysgu' activities. Most Year 6 pupils use data to create graphs accurately, for example when drawing a line graph to show the varying weight of chocolate bars over the decades. This is particularly detailed work, and the more able pupils' interpretation of the change in weight is highly effective.

Many pupils' Welsh oracy is developing appropriately across the school. Pupils speak confidently in familiar contexts and enjoy speaking in class with their peers. The younger pupils develop an increasingly wide vocabulary and respond well to the language model and encouragement provided by staff. However, many older pupils lack confidence when using the language in less structured contexts.

Most pupils in the foundation phase develop a good range of ICT skills and apply them well across the areas of learning. Many pupils in Year 2 can search the internet safely for 2D shapes and then use these to classify them in a simple branching database. In key stage 2, many pupils build appropriately on their previous ICT skills. Older pupils locate and use information on the first open heart surgery and use the information to create an informative presentation.

## **Wellbeing Standards**

The school is a very caring and happy community in which nearly all pupils feel valued. They feel safe and secure in school, and appreciate the care shown to them by staff. There is a strong family ethos across the school. Pupils show a high level of respect towards their peers. They value others' contributions during activities and class discussions. The older pupils show concern and empathy for their younger peers and enjoy taking care of them. This supports pupils' wellbeing successfully. Most pupils adhere to the school's high expectations in relation to behaviour.

Nearly all pupils have a clear and detailed understanding of how to keep themselves safe on the internet, and in the wider community. They understand the importance of strong passwords and ensuring that their parents and carers are aware of their online activity.

Most pupils have a sound understanding of the significance of maintaining a healthy lifestyle through eating healthy lunches and snacks. They understand the importance of drinking water regularly. Pupils have a positive attitude towards keeping themselves healthy, through a varied programme of physical activity, including opportunities to participate in the daily mile run. Many pupils enjoy taking part in an effective range of after school activities and clubs. They develop a mature understanding of the human body through their work in science.

Most pupils demonstrate a positive attitude to learning. They respond very well to opportunities to work independently, selecting graded activities that provide them with individual challenges. During these activities, most demonstrate very good resilience, and persevere confidently in order to succeed in completing their tasks. Many pupils develop real ownership of their learning, and explain the impact of different activities on their skill development. Most pupils understand that making mistakes is an essential part of learning.

Many pupils represent their peers diligently on whole school groups such as the school council, eco council, 'cricw Cymraeg', and as digital leaders. These groups meet regularly and discuss issues that relate to the provision at the school.

Most pupils make an active contribution to what and how they learn. They make mature suggestions about the direction that their learning will follow next and feel fully included in the planning process. They know that their teachers will listen to their ideas. Most pupils participate confidently and many maintain excellent concentration during teacher-led and independent activities. This positive attitude to their learning is a consistently strong feature across the school. Pupils' attendance does not compare well with that in similar schools and persistent absenteeism is relatively high.

## **Teaching and learning experiences**

Nearly all teachers have high expectations of pupils in all areas of learning. Most learning activities are engaging and creative and most pupils participate with enthusiasm and interest. Teachers provide meaningful opportunities for pupils to have a say in what they learn. As a result, pupils remain on task for extended periods and speak enthusiastically about what they are learning and why. Most teachers plan activities that provide effective challenge for pupils. As a result, most pupils make good progress and develop their skills successfully.

Teachers plan an enriching range of 'Ditectif Dysgu' enhanced provision activities. They provide a rotation of engaging, independent learning activities for the pupils to select and complete throughout the week. This is particularly evident in key stage 2, where pupils have the opportunity to enhance their skills in focused tasks. As a result, nearly all pupils collaborate successfully with peers and show high levels of perseverance. Teachers plan valuable opportunities for pupils to reflect on their learning, and most pupils speak confidently about the impact this method of working has on their understanding.

Nearly all teachers foster a positive and supportive working environment. They deploy staff well to support groups of pupils in both the indoor and outdoor learning areas. Nearly all staff use effective and consistent strategies to encourage good behaviour and engagement in learning is managed effectively.

Most teachers provide clear guidance for pupils on how to succeed in a task and encourage them to lead their own learning. Most teachers provide useful feedback for pupils, in both written and verbal form. As a result, most pupils understand how to

develop their work further. Most know how to ensure they are making progress and how to improve their work.

Teachers plan and deliver purposeful opportunities for pupils to apply their literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum. However, teachers do not always provide sufficient progression and continuity in developing pupils' ICT skills.

Across the school, many staff use incidental Welsh well to instruct and praise pupils. In many classes, especially in the foundation phase, teachers provide effective opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking in meaningful contexts. However, opportunities to develop pupils' Welsh oracy are not consistent enough across the school and this has a detrimental effect on pupils' standards.

## **Care support and guidance**

The school has effective processes for monitoring pupils' progress. Leaders and staff analyse a wide range of data to set challenging targets for pupils and use this information to measure progress to identify pupils who may need additional support. This enables pupils of all abilities to make good progress.

There is effective provision for pupils with special educational needs (SEN). The SEN co-ordinator and staff collaborate effectively to identify pupils who may require specific support or intervention. The school involves parents in identifying a suitable person-centred plan in partnership with specialist agencies where appropriate. Staff make purposeful use of a range of intervention programmes, such as to support pupils' speech and phonic development. The SEN co-ordinator has developed an effective timetable of assessment activities, which include regular pupil progress meetings. As a result, staff have detailed information about pupil progress against agreed targets.

The school communicates well with parents through social media, email and text messaging service. There is a suitable range of opportunities for parents to engage with the school, for example through the parent council and the parent-teachers and friends association. This enables parents and the community to be part of the life of the school and to support specific projects such as the eco garden.

The school sets regular homework for pupils and provides appropriate advice to parents about how to support their children's learning. For example, teachers arrange a useful numeracy workshop to raise parents' awareness of how to support their children with their numeracy development at home.

The school works closely with parents and the local authority's attendance officer to implement a range of strategies to promote good attendance and punctuality. However, this has not had a strong enough impact on whole school attendance.

The school makes appropriate arrangements to help pupils make healthy lifestyle choices. Staff provide a range of effective opportunities for physical exercise. For example, nearly all pupils participate the daily mile. They receive worthwhile lessons on healthy eating, substance misuse, sex and relationships education and online safety.

Staff provide pupils with opportunities to have a meaningful voice within the school. There are many opportunities for pupils to play an active part in decision-making and to undertake leadership roles.

The school ensures that pupils have opportunities to contribute to events in the local area. For example, the school choir regularly sings at venues in the community including at the local care home. The school provides meaningful opportunities for pupils to reflect on the human consequences of war, for example through making poppies for the annual remembrance service, where they regularly attend and perform.

There are worthwhile opportunities for pupils to reflect on their learning and wellbeing. For example, a mindfulness programme helps pupils to develop resilience when facing challenging situations. Staff and pupils discuss the school's 'value of the half term' and relate it to pupils' friendships and the best use of the 'playtime peacemakers'. There is effective use of restorative practices across the school, ensuring pupils' positive attitudes towards learning and behaviour.

The school provides many opportunities for pupils to engage in worthwhile activities such as visits to Llangrannog and theatre trips, which enrich their out of school experiences successfully.

The school's arrangements for safeguarding meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

## **Leadership and Management**

The headteacher and governors have a clear vision based on establishing high expectations for the academic, social, emotional and wellbeing of all pupils. Recently, they have used the restructuring of the leadership team purposefully to develop an enthusiastic team who have a clear understanding of the roles and challenges they face. The new senior leadership team focus well on the strategic management of the school and work cohesively to monitor and raise standards, and to establish consistency in provision and assessment across the school.

Leaders ensure that the school responds meaningfully to national priorities with a clear focus on developing Welsh language skills within the school. The school is beginning to respond positively to the new curriculum for Wales and many classes are creating an innovative curriculum that successfully engages the enthusiasm and imagination of pupils and staff.

The governors know the school well and provide effective support and challenge in equal measure. They understand and fulfil their roles and responsibilities well, and promote the school's values successfully. Governors undertake visits to the school that equip them with a valuable first-hand understanding of recent developments. This enables them to ask relevant questions to evaluate the impact of changes. As a result, they know the school's strengths and areas for development thoroughly and play a robust role in agreeing school policies and priorities.

Leaders use a range of self-evaluation processes purposefully in order to identify the strengths of the school and the areas that need further development. Their views on standards, provision and leadership are generally accurate and the school's priorities reflect the identified priorities well in nearly all instances. The school has a strong



track-record of making improvements and has responded purposefully to the recommendations of the previous Estyn inspection.

Leaders ensure that professional learning supports school improvement effectively. They make good use of the expertise within the school, for example to improve the consistency and impact of classroom practice. Leaders successfully deliver worthwhile training opportunities to enhance staff understanding of how restorative practices build and maintain positive relationships. They then evaluate the impact of the various strategies and amend practices in response to teacher and pupil feedback. Teachers and leaders visit other schools in order to learn from good practice and have the confidence to evaluate which ideas are most likely to be successful for their pupils. Where appropriate, leaders invite experts to train staff in new initiatives and to support ongoing professional development.

### **Impact of the proposal**

This proposal supports the Council's vision and aims for Welsh medium education as set out in Carmarthenshire's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) 2017 – 2020. The proposal will allow greater opportunities for access to Welsh medium education within the Ysgol Y Model School catchment area.



## **Appendix A – Community Impact Assessment**

Each school has an area that it serves, referred to as the catchment area. Each school is expected to accommodate pupils from within its catchment area and schools must have regard for this ongoing demand.

Most parents send their child to their local school but parents have a right to state a preference for other schools.

### **Catchment Area Analysis – January PLASC 2020 Data**

Model VA Primary School serves the historic parish boundaries of St David's and St Peter's Carmarthen although some pupils attending the school live outside these parishes. As it is categorised as a faith school, it does not have a designated catchment area. It is therefore not possible to obtain any data for the purpose of a catchment area analysis.

### **Other facilities or services provided by the school e.g. after school clubs/ community Library**

The school currently hold a breakfast club for pupils during the weekdays between 8:00am - 8.45am.

Pupils also benefit from an independently run after-school care club which is held every afternoon until 6pm.

### **Community Impact**

Prior to COVID-19, the school was used outside school hours for various classes. These included Yoga & Pilates, Taekwando, Zumba and trumpet lessons.

## Appendix B – Welsh Language Impact Assessment

Carmarthenshire County Council's vision is to provide a service, which will ensure access to high quality learning opportunities for all children, young people and adults, this enabling the achievement of their full potential within the context of the unique bilingual nature of the county.

This proposal supports the Council's vision and aims for Welsh medium education as set out in Carmarthenshire's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) 2017 – 2020. The proposal will allow greater opportunities for access to Welsh medium education within the Carmarthen Town area.

### **Standards \***

In the Foundation Phase, pupils are assessed in different areas of learning but not in Welsh as it is an English medium school. In Key Stage 2, pupils are assessed in each of the core subjects. Based on 2019 data, 79.25% of pupils achieved at least Level 4 in Welsh second language.

### **After school activities which provide additional opportunities to use the Welsh language**

Pupils are offered the opportunity to become members of the Urdd and take part in Urdd activities such as football tournaments and swimming galas. They also take part in Eisteddfod yr Urdd and have reached the national level in singing and recital competitions.

*\* No National Teacher assessments were conducted in 2020 due to the ongoing impact of the Coronavirus outbreak. For this reason, 2019 has been used.*

## Appendix C – Equalities Impact Assessment

### Carmarthenshire County Council Assessing Impact

#### The Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 (the Act) brings together and replaces the previous anti-discrimination laws with a single Act. It simplifies and strengthens the law, removes inconsistencies and makes it easier for people to understand and comply with it. The majority of the Act came into force on 1 October 2010.

The Act includes a new public sector equality duty (the 'general duty'), replacing the separate duties on race, disability and gender equality. This came into force on 5 April 2011.

#### What is the general duty?

The aim of the general duty is to ensure that public authorities and those carrying out a public function consider how they can positively contribute to a fairer society through advancing equality and good relations in their day-to-day activities. The duty ensures that equality considerations are built into the design of policies and the delivery of services and that they are kept under review. This will achieve better outcomes for all.

The duties are legal obligations. Failure to meet the duties may result in authorities being exposed to legal challenge.

Under equality legislation, public authorities have legal duties to pay 'due regard' to the need to eliminate discrimination and promote equality with regard to race, disability and gender, including gender reassignment, as well as to promote good race relations. The Equality Act 2010 introduces a new public sector duty which extends this coverage to age, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity, and religion or belief. The law requires that this duty to pay 'due regard' be demonstrated in the decision-making process. It is also important to note that public authorities subject to the equality duties are also likely to be subject to the obligations under the Human Rights Act and it is therefore wise also to consider the potential impact that decisions could have on human rights as part of the same process.

### **Carmarthenshire's approach to Equality Impact**

In order to ensure that the council is considering the potential equality impact of its proposed policies and practices, and in order to evidence that we have done so, every proposal will be required to be supported by the attached Equality Impact Assessment. Where this assessment identifies a significant impact then more detail may be required.

### **Reporting on assessments**

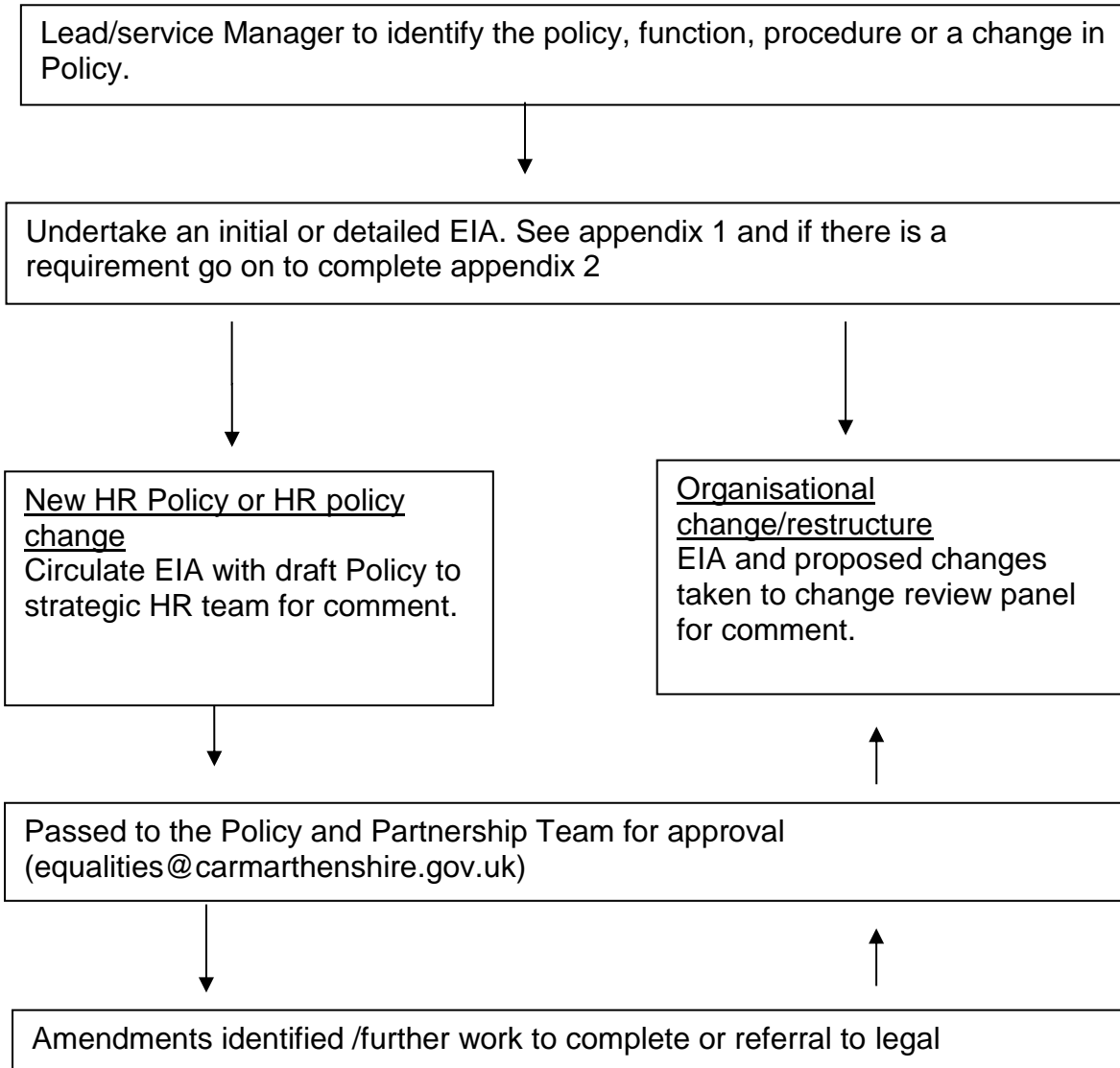
Where it is clear from the assessment that the likely impact on the authority's ability to meet the general duty is substantial, then it must publish a report.

### **Initial and Detailed Equality Impact Assessments**

The initial EIA (appendix 1) is a simple and quick method of assessing the effect of a policy, function, procedure, decision including financial cuts on one or more of the protected characteristics.

The Service Manager responsible for the relevant new or revised policies, functions, procedures and financial decisions must undertake, at least, an initial EIA and where relevant a detailed Equality Impact Assessment (appendix 2); EIA must be attached as background paper with reports to Executive and Scrutiny.

**Equality impact assessment – Process to follow where HR implications have been identified**



**Initial Equalities Impact Assessment Template**

**Appendix 1**

<p><b>Department:</b> Education &amp; Children</p>	<p><b>Completed by (lead):</b> Sara Griffiths</p>	<p><b>Date of initial assessment:</b> November 2020  <b>Revision Dates:</b> July 2021</p>
<p><b>Area to be assessed: (i.e. name of policy, function, procedure, practice or a financial decision)</b></p>	<p>This proposal is to change the nature of provision at Model VA Primary School.</p>	
<p><b>Is this existing or new function/policy, procedure, practice or decision?</b></p>	<p>School Re-organisation Proposal – Modernising Education Programme</p>	
<p><b>What evidence has been used to inform the assessment and policy? (please list only)</b></p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools Programme</li> <li>• Modernising Education Programme</li> <li>• School Organisation Code 2018</li> <li>• PLASC Data 2020</li> <li>• The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015</li> </ul>		
<p><b>1. Describe the aims, objectives or purpose of the proposed function/policy, practice, procedure or decision and who is intended to benefit.</b></p>	<p>The proposal aims to respond to WG ‘A Million Welsh Speakers by 2050’, Carmarthenshire County Council’s Welsh in Education Strategic Plan and the authority’s vision for creating a bilingual Carmarthenshire by changing the nature of Foundation Phase provision at Model VA Primary School change to Welsh medium.</p>	

<p>The Public Sector Equality Duty requires the Council to have “due regard” to the need to:-</p> <p>(1) eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation;</p> <p>(2) advance equality of opportunity between different groups; and</p> <p>(3) foster good relations between different groups</p> <p>(see guidance notes)</p>		<p>2. What is the level of impact on each group/protected characteristics in terms of the three aims of the duty? Please indicate high (H) medium (M), low (L), no effect (N) for each.</p>	<p>3. Identify the risk or positive effect that could result for each of the group/protected characteristics?</p>		<p>4. If there is a disproportionately negative impact what mitigating factors have you considered?</p>	
<p>Protected characteristics</p>		Age	Risks	Positive effects		
			L	Neutral	Foundation Phase pupils will be immersed in the Welsh language.	
			L	ALN pupils will be supported appropriately as required.		
			N	Neutral		
			N	Neutral		
			N	Neutral		
			N	Neutral		

<b>Sex</b>	N	Neutral		
<b>Welsh language</b>	L	Neutral	This proposal is to change the nature of provision in the Foundation Phase to Welsh medium which will support the Council's vision and aims for Welsh medium education as set out in Carmarthenshire's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) 2017-2020.	
<b>Any other area</b>	N	Neutral		

5. Has there been any consultation/engagement with the appropriate protected characteristics?

YES

NO

The Project Officer has liaised with the Headteacher, Staff and Parents of Model VA Primary School with regards to the proposal. All stakeholders will be fully consulted during the formal consultation period.

6. What action(s) will you take to reduce any disproportionately negative impact, if any? Ensure that all key stakeholders are fully informed throughout the statutory process.



<b>7. Procurement</b> Following collation of evidence for this assessment, are there any procurement implications to the activity, proposal, service. N/A Please take the findings of this assessment into your procurement plan. Contact the corporate procurement unit for further advice.		
<b>8. Human resources</b> Following collation of evidence for this assessment, are there any Human resource implications to the activity, proposal or service? As there will be a change in the nature of provision, additional staffing may be required. However, this will be addressed as the scheme progresses and Human Resources will be fully consulted.		
<b>9. Based on the information in sections 2 and 6, should this function/policy/procedure/practice or a decision proceed to Detailed Impact Assessment? (recommended if one or more H under section 2)</b>	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Approved by:</b> Head of Service	Simon Davies	<b>Date:</b> November 2020



# EDUCATION & CHILDREN SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

## 28<sup>th</sup> January 2021

### MODERNISING EDUCATION PROGRAMME

### PROPOSAL TO CHANGE THE NATURE OF PROVISION AT YSGOL Y FELIN

**To consider and comment on the following issue:**

- The proposal as outlined below and in the attached consultation document;
- Officers to initiate formal consultation on the proposal;
- That a report is submitted to the Executive Board at the end of the consultation period.

**Reasons:**

- To support Carmarthenshire’s Welsh in Education Strategic Plan launched on 25 June 2018 in accordance with Welsh Government Strategic Plans;
- To comply with statutory procedures and guidance in relation to school reorganisation;
- To formulate views for submission to Executive Board for consideration.

**Exec. Board Decision Required:** YES – 08/02/2021

**Council Decision Required:** NO

**Executive Board Member Portfolio Holder:** Cllr. Glynog Davies  
(Education & Children)

**Directorate:**  
Education & Children

**Name of Head of Service:**  
Simon Davies

**Report Author:**  
Sara Griffiths

**Designations:**

Head of Access to Education

Modernisation Team Manager

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**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**  
**EDUCATION & CHILDREN**  
**SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**  
**28<sup>th</sup> January 2021**

**MODERNISING EDUCATION PROGRAMME**  
**PROPOSAL TO CHANGE THE NATURE OF PROVISION AT**  
**YSGOL Y FELIN**

**Background**

On 25<sup>th</sup> June 2018 in accordance with WG Strategic Plans the Local Authority launched **Carmarthenshire's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan** and its vision for a bilingual Carmarthenshire. To achieve this, the authority would need to deliver significant growth in Welsh medium education to increase the number of children and young people who become fluent in both Welsh and English and have the ability to use their languages confidently with their families, in their communities and in the workplace.

With this in mind, the Local Authority has a responsibility to provide its communities with the best education and opportunities possible and believes that this can be achieved through set objectives. Carmarthenshire County Council are fully supportive of the aim that all pupils are able to speak, read and write in both Welsh and English fluently by the end of Key Stage 2 and will provide services that will ensure high quality learning opportunities for all Carmarthenshire's children, young people and adults, thereby enabling them to achieve their full potential as lifetime learners in the context of the unique bilingual nature of the County.

In order to support Carmarthenshire's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan and national policies in moving the county's schools along the Welsh language continuum, the attached draft consultation document sets out proposals with regards to the change in nature of provision at **Ysgol Y Felin**.

**The Proposal**

- From 1<sup>st</sup> September 2022 the nature of Foundation Phase provision at Ysgol Y Felin will change to Welsh medium education.

This will only affect pupils starting in the Foundation Phase at the school from September 2022 onwards. Current pupils attending the school will be unaffected.

With learners accessing Welsh medium education in the Foundation Phase the capacity of the Welsh stream in KS2 to cope with the potential increased demand for places will have to be monitored and reviewed in line with Carmarthenshire's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan.

**Recommendation**

E&C Scrutiny Committee is requested to endorse the proposal and recommends to the Executive Board that a formal consultation be initiated.

**DETAILED REPORT ATTACHED**

**YES: Draft Consultation Document**

# IMPLICATIONS

I confirm that other than those implications which have been agreed with the appropriate Directors / Heads of Service and are referred to in detail below, there are no other implications associated with this report:

Signed:  Head of Access to Education

Policy, Crime & Disorder and Equalities	Legal	Finance	ICT	Risk Management Issues	Staffing Implications	Physical Assets
<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NONE</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NONE</b>
<p><b>1. Policy, Crime &amp; Disorder and Equalities</b>            Developments are consistent with the Authority's Corporate Strategy and the Modernising Education Strategic Outline Programme and WESP 2018.</p>						
<p><b>2. Legal</b>            Appropriate consultation will need to be initiated in accordance with the relevant statutory procedures.</p>						
<p><b>3. Finance</b>            Revenue implications will be catered for within the Local Management of Schools Fair Funding Scheme.</p>						
<p><b>4. ICT</b>            NONE.</p>						
<p><b>5. Risk Management Issues</b>            The proposal may impact on the demand for school places at the school and surrounding catchment area schools. Admissions will be monitored and if required, appropriate action will be undertaken.</p>						
<p><b>6. Staffing Implications</b>            Staffing implications will be addressed in accordance with the County Council's Policy and Procedures.</p>						
<p><b>7. Physical Assets</b>            None.</p>						

# CONSULTATIONS

I confirm that the appropriate consultations have taken in place and the outcomes are as detailed below:

Signed:  Head of Access to Education

1. **Scrutiny Committee** – Will be consulted on 28/01/2021.
2. **Local Member(s)** - The local member is aware of the proposal and will be consulted during the formal consultation period.
3. **Community / Town Council** - Will be consulted during the formal consultation period.
4. **Relevant Partners** - Will be consulted during the formal consultation period.
5. **Staff Side Representatives and other Organisations** - Will be consulted during the formal consultation period.

**EXECUTIVE BOARD PORTFOLIO HOLDER(S) AWARE/CONSULTED**  
YES

N/A

## Section 100D Local Government Act, 1972 – Access to Information List of Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:

Title of Document	File Ref No./Locations that the papers are available for public inspection
Carmarthenshire's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan	<a href="https://www.carmarthenshire.gov.wales/home/council-democracy/strategies-and-plans/welsh-in-education-strategic-plan/">https://www.carmarthenshire.gov.wales/home/council-democracy/strategies-and-plans/welsh-in-education-strategic-plan/</a>
MEP Biennial Review	<a href="http://www.carmarthenshire.gov.uk">www.carmarthenshire.gov.uk</a> Executive Board 20 <sup>th</sup> June 2016
21 <sup>st</sup> Century Schools Website	<a href="http://www.21stcenturyschools.org">www.21stcenturyschools.org</a>

# PROPOSAL TO CHANGE THE NATURE OF PROVISION AT YSGOL Y FELIN

## Consultation Document

**DRAFT**

[carmarthenshire.gov.uk](http://carmarthenshire.gov.uk)

Cyngor Sir Gâr  
Carmarthenshire  
County Council



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## **School Modernisation Section**

**Sara Griffiths**, Modernisation Team Manager

If you require this information in large print, Braille or on audiotape please contact the Department for Education & Children

**Email:** [DECMEP@carmarthenshire.gov.uk](mailto:DECMEP@carmarthenshire.gov.uk)

**Telephone:** 01267 246476



## Foreword

On 25<sup>th</sup> June 2018 in accordance with Welsh Government Strategic Plans the Local Authority launched [Carmarthenshire's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan](#) and our vision for a bilingual Carmarthenshire. To achieve this, we will deliver significant growth in Welsh medium education to increase the number of children and young people who become fluent in both Welsh and English and have the ability to use their languages confidently with their families, in their communities and in the workplace.

With this in mind, the Local Authority has a responsibility to provide its communities with the best education and opportunities possible and believes that this can be achieved through set objectives. Carmarthenshire County Council are fully supportive of the aim that all pupils are able to speak, read and write in both Welsh and English fluently by the end of Key Stage 2 and will provide services that will ensure high quality learning opportunities for all Carmarthenshire's children, young people and adults, thereby enabling them to achieve their full potential as lifetime learners in the context of the unique bilingual nature of the County.

The Local Authority not only supports this vision, but are wholly supportive of a bilingual Wales. On the 10<sup>th</sup> July 2017 the Welsh Government published "Cymraeg 2050: A million Welsh Speakers" with the aim of reaching a million Welsh speakers in Wales by 2050. The document considers three key themes:

- Increasing the number of Welsh speakers;
- Increasing the use of Welsh; and
- Creating favourable conditions, infrastructure and context

all of which we must consider in our own locality where our education system can support, develop and sustain bilingualism.

In order to support Carmarthenshire's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan and national policies in moving the county's schools along the Welsh language continuum, this consultation document sets out proposals with regards to the change in nature of provision of the Foundation Phase at **Ysgol Y Felin**.

Consultation will follow the guidelines established by the Welsh Government as set out in the [School Organisation Code 2018](#) and will involve identified interested parties. The information set out in this document is intended to clarify the proposals for your school and support the consultation process.



**Gareth Morgans**

**Director of Education and Children's Services**

## Glossary of Abbreviations

<b>ALN</b>	Additional Learning Needs
<b>AN</b>	Admission number
<b>CCC</b>	Carmarthenshire County Council
<b>CP</b>	Community Primary
<b>DS</b>	Dual Stream
<b>EM</b>	English medium
<b>Estyn</b>	Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales
<b>FTE</b>	Full Time Equivalent
<b>LA</b>	Local Authority
<b>MCSW</b>	Measuring the Capacity of Schools in Wales
<b>MEP</b>	Modernising Education Programme
<b>NOR</b>	Number on Roll
<b>PLASC</b>	Pupil Level Annual School Census Data
<b>PT</b>	Part time
<b>WESP</b>	Welsh in Education Strategic Plan
<b>WG</b>	Welsh Government
<b>WM</b>	Welsh medium

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## Introduction

Carmarthenshire County Council has a legal responsibility to review the number and type of schools it maintains in the area and whether or not it is making the best use of the resources and facilities to deliver the opportunities that children deserve.

As part of this process the Council has published its vision on how it sees the future for all of the primary and secondary schools in the County and this includes consulting on the future shape of education in Ysgol Y Felin.

This consultation document outlines current provision and options to determine the optimum solution for meeting future need.

## Background

Ysgol Y Felin is a dual stream primary school based in Felinfoel, Llanelli. The school provides education to pupils between the ages of 4-11 years old.

In recent years, pupil numbers have remained consistent.

Based on current pupil projections it is estimated that the pupil figures will remain consistent.

Ysgol Y Felin School building condition is **Grade B** – Satisfactory (Performing as intended but exhibiting minor deterioration.)

The school's most recent Estyn inspection completed in September 2016 judged the school's current performance and prospects for improvement to be **Good**

The Local Authority has a responsibility to provide all pupils with the best education possible and believes that providing bilingual opportunities has a role to play in this. This aligns with Carmarthenshire's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan 2017-2020's objective of ***ensuring "that all pupils are able to speak, read and write the Welsh language fluently by the end of Key Stage 2 in accordance with their expected stage of development."*** The best way to create confident, bilingual individuals is through immersing pupils in the Welsh language and as a result the Local Authority is looking to change the nature of provision.

# Rationale for Change

## Ysgol Y Felin

This proposal has been prepared in response to Carmarthenshire County Council's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) and the Welsh Medium Education Strategy (WMES). The Local Authority has a vision for a bilingual Carmarthenshire. To achieve this, we will, in accordance with 'Cymraeg 2050: A Million Welsh Speakers':

**“Ensure significant growth in Welsh-medium education and training to increase the number of people of all ages to become fluent in both Welsh and English and have the ability to use their languages confidently with their families, in their communities and in the workplace”**

As a result, it is the Local Authority's proposal:

- From 1<sup>st</sup> September 2022 the nature of Foundation Phase provision at Ysgol Y Felin will change to Welsh medium education.

This will only affect pupils starting in the Foundation Phase at the school from September 2022 onwards.

Current pupils attending the school will be unaffected.

With learners accessing Welsh medium education in the Foundation Phase the capacity of the Welsh stream in KS2 to cope with the potential increased demand for places will have to be monitored and reviewed in line with Carmarthenshire's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan.

This proposal will support the development of bilingual and multilingual opportunities in line with the new curriculum to be launched in 2022.

Should the proposals be implemented, all future pupils at the schools subject to proposals will receive their Foundation Phase education through the medium of Welsh with the choice of language medium being introduced at Key Stage 2.

This proposal will serve to implement the 7 outcomes noted below as specified by WG in 'Carmarthenshire's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan':

- Outcome 1: More seven year old children being taught through the medium of Welsh
- Outcome 2: More learners continuing to improve their language skills on transfer from primary to secondary school
- Outcome 3: More students aged 14-16 studying for qualifications through the medium of Welsh

- Outcome 4: More students aged 14-19 study subjects through the medium of Welsh, in schools, colleges and work-based learning
- Outcome 5: More students who have higher language skills in Welsh
- Outcome 6: Welsh medium provision for learners with additional learning needs (ALN)
- Outcome 7: Workforce planning and continuing professional development

In addition, this proposal will link to Welsh Government Policies as stated below:

- Rewriting the Future
- Successful Futures
- Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015
- Welsh Government's Draft Strategy; and
- 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools and Education Programme

## **Early Welsh Medium Immersive Provision**

The immersion method focuses on using Welsh as the predominant medium of teaching and learning, using practical and visual techniques to help children and pupils to develop vocabulary and syntax. The essence of this method is introducing and modelling good language. Also international evidence confirms that 'the most effective way of developing bilingual children is to immerse them in the less common language whilst also developing their skills in the more common language.' Young children do not need to learn a language as adults do. They absorb languages if they are exposed enough to them.

There is an abundance of research showing that investing in the first years of a child's life improves outcomes for them throughout the rest of their lives.

The change to Welsh medium education at Foundation Phase will strengthen pupils' bilingual skills from an early age providing them with a firm foundation for future linguistic development.

As qualified by research the presence of two languages in the operating system of the brain is likely to produce a more richly fed thinking engine (Baker, 2000:66-67). Therefore, this proposal provides pupils with increased opportunities to reach their full potential as bilingual learners.

# Bilingualism

## Advantages of Bilingualism

### What does being bilingual mean?

The ability to live your everyday life using two languages.

Being able to switch from one language to another fluently and confidently at any given time.

### The advantages of being bilingual

#### Education

- Bilingual children tend to be more successful in education. They tend to perform better in tasks.
- Bilingual people find it easier to learn additional languages.
- Children in Welsh medium education do just as well, if not better, in English as children in English medium education.

Evidence:

<https://www.estyn.gov.wales/sites/default/files/documents/English%20in%20key%20stages%202%20and%203%20-%20June%202014.pdf>

#### Career

- Speaking two languages is an extra skill to put on your application form and CV.
- Bilingual people earn an average of 11% more income.
- Employers need bilingual workforces in Wales, because services need to be offered bilingually in accordance with the Welsh Standards Paper.

Evidence: <http://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/wales-news/welsh-speakers-more-likely-top-6335953>

## Nigel Owens

“ Without my Welsh education in School I would not have had all the opportunities to present and perform and I would not have been encouraged to start as a referee at 16 years old.

I carry Welsh with me wherever I referee in the world. Before each game I listen to Welsh music. I'm lucky enough to have two languages and Welsh is an important part of who I am. ”



## Alex Jones

“ Having a bilingual education has been pivotal to me in so many ways. It meant that I had twice as many opportunities, it doubled my capacity to learn other languages, it enhanced my ability to communicate and therefore make friends, and most importantly, it gave me a strong sense of belonging and of our heritage. Starting out as a broadcaster in Welsh gave me the vast experience I needed to move forward to my dream job. Without a bilingual education, I'd be in a very different place. ”



### Health

- Research shows that being bilingual delays the onset of Dementia and other symptoms of Alzheimer disease.

Evidence: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3033609/>  
<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/science/science-news/12005837/Bilingual-people-twice-as-likely-to-recover-from-a-stroke.html>

### Life

- Speaking two languages widens your horizons.
- Being able to speak Welsh gives you access to many aspects of Welsh culture, history and identity.
- Speaking Welsh can provide a key to rich community life.



- Being able to speak Welsh gives you a strong sense of identity and belonging.
- Being able to switch from one language to the other with confidence gives the individual self-confidence and pride.
- Speaking many languages can make people more tolerant towards other cultures.

Evidence: [http://www.assembly.wales/NAfW%20Documents/paper\\_3\\_-\\_prof.\\_colin\\_baker.pdf%20-%2002092010/paper\\_3\\_-\\_prof.\\_colin\\_baker-English.pdf](http://www.assembly.wales/NAfW%20Documents/paper_3_-_prof._colin_baker.pdf%20-%2002092010/paper_3_-_prof._colin_baker-English.pdf)

## Common parental concerns

### **‘How can I help my child with homework if I don’t understand much Welsh myself?’**

Welsh schools set homework instruction in Welsh and in English so there will be no problem in understanding what your child is being asked to do at home. The schools themselves will be happy to provide educational advice and the parents evening will be in your chosen language.

Work set will be appropriate to the pupil’s age and ability level and therefore should be within your child’s reach.

Developing increasingly as independent learners, you may find that your child is happy to progress without extra parental guidance as they get older.

[Booklet - Welsh Homework? No problem](#) (English version)

[Booklet - Gwaith Cartref? Dim problem](#) (Welsh version)

### **‘Will pupils who struggle with Welsh medium education have to move to an English medium school?’**

It is the Local Authority’s desire that all pupil receive the opportunity to become bilingual in both Welsh and English languages. In Welsh medium schools, pupils will receive their education principally through the medium of Welsh, with English being taught as a subject in Key Stage 2 and used as a medium for instruction. Sufficient support will be provided to all pupils as required through a range of mechanisms and tailored to the individual’s needs.

### **‘The children will be confused and their English will suffer.’**

On average, bilingual children achieve higher grades in the English language. Also, as a child explains homework in English to the parent, their own understanding is reinforced. Ask your child to describe what he/she is doing in his own words.

On average, about 80% of Carmarthenshire pupils who attend Welsh medium education get an A\* to C grade in both Welsh and English.

**‘Will my child’s thinking be affected by being bilingual?’**

The answer is “yes”, and probably for the better. The presence of two languages in the operating system of the brain is likely to produce a more richly-fed thinking engine (Baker, 2000:66-67).

**‘Will my child be able to cope with learning through the medium of Welsh?’**

School and staff are fully committed to providing the necessary support to all pupils and parents through a wide range of mechanisms: open door policy; homework provided bilingually; support by The Athrawon Bro Service; bilingual school website etc. Staff are also required to differentiate the curriculum and make reasonable adjustments when required to meet the needs of every pupil.

**‘Should the Welsh language be forced?’**

International evidence, cited by the Welsh Government, confirms that the most effective way of developing bilingual children is to immerse them in the less common language whilst also developing their skills in the more common language. This is consistent with national policy to expand Welsh medium education in order to develop increasing numbers of fully bilingual young people and to enable more children to benefit from the advantages of bilingualism, gathered through international research.

**‘Will learning through the medium of Welsh affect later life opportunities?’**

Yes, but probably for the better. It is the belief of the department, based upon international evidence and local experience, that children benefit from a truly bilingual education, which provides wider skills developments, such as cognitive ability, task understanding and flexibility, enhanced powers of concentration etc. and that all children should receive these opportunities. Being bilingual or multilingual also broadens individuals’ cultural experiences and can enhance career prospects. Bilingualism will increasingly over time become an employment skill and possessing Welsh language skills will increasingly over time give individuals a competitive advantage when seeking employment.

**‘Does learning through the medium of Welsh segregate English speaking pupils/families?’**

On the contrary, learning through the medium of Welsh provides all children with opportunity to become fully bilingual with the skills to be able to read, write and speak in both Welsh and English languages by the time that they leave primary school. In Welsh medium schools, children receive their education principally through the medium of Welsh with English being taught as a subject in Key Stage 2 and used as a medium of instruction. Learning through the medium of Welsh also helps family/community members with the opportunity to develop their Welsh language skills.

**‘Will children with additional learning needs be able to learn through the medium of Welsh?’**

Carmarthenshire County Council's policy is that all its schools should be inclusive, with children with additional learning needs being educated in a mainstream setting alongside their peers wherever possible. In the vast majority of cases, this is achieved, with all children benefitting. All pupils with additional learning needs have specific individual plans based on their circumstances and a tailored support programme is provided according to need. Generally, an additional learning need is not a barrier to learning two languages. There will be rare instances, however where a child may be diagnosed with a condition that is not conducive to a fully bilingual education. In these circumstances a package of support is identified by professional practitioners and discussed with parents.

## **Carmarthenshire Language Learning Centres**

Due to the nature of the county we need to provide a language service to all latecomers so that they can become fully assimilated into our bilingual communities and are steeped in Welsh language and culture. In order to achieve this, we need to address the importance of dedicated facilities to support latecomers to a level where they can easily integrate into the day to day timetable in Welsh medium schools. Thorough research shows that this can be more easily achieved through intensive language courses. Language centres are the vehicles needed to ensure that this becomes a reality. As alluded to above, the language centres will also provide language support for parents and pupils and will also have provision for professional learning and Welsh for Adults.

## **Bilingualism in Carmarthenshire**

Further information can be found using the following links:

- **Cymraeg gyda'r plant / Welsh with your kids- give it a go!**

<http://newsroom.carmarthenshire.gov.uk/media/1214148/gd4808-taflencymraeqplant4-002.pdf>

Within this booklet you will find a number of useful Welsh words and phrases which can be used to practise the Welsh language with young children. This will help them to speak naturally and confidently.

- **Bod yn Ddwyieithog... yn Sir Gâr / Being Bilingual... in Carmarthenshire**

<https://www.carmarthenshire.gov.wales/media/1216432/being-bilingual.pdf>

This booklet details what it means to be bilingual whilst highlighting the advantages that can be achieved from being bilingual in areas such as education, career, health and life. In addition, within this booklet you will find the answers to many common parental concerns regarding the Welsh language.

- **Welcome to Wales    Welcome to Carmarthenshire    Welcome to Welsh**

<http://newsroom.carmarthenshire.gov.wales/media/1216436/welcome-pack.pdf>

This booklet has been prepared by Carmarthenshire County Council to welcome newcomers to its bilingual County. Within the booklet you will find information on how the Welsh language is used in Carmarthenshire along with details on where you can find Welsh language support and useful websites to visit to develop your Welsh language skills

## The Consultation Process

The consultation on this proposal will follow guidelines established by the Welsh Government as stated in the School Organisation Code (2018).

### Who will be consulted?

This document will be sent to the following interested parties:

Staff (Teaching and Ancillary)	Director of Education – All Neighbouring Authorities
Governors and Parents/Guardians	Diocesan Director of Education Church in Wales and RC
Local County Councillors	Estyn
Community Councillors	Regional Transport Consortium
Members of the Senedd (MS) / Regional Members / Members of Parliament (MP)	Neighbouring Primary and Secondary schools
Welsh Ministers	All relevant unions
SEN Partners	Welsh Language Commissioner
LA Special Educational Needs Division	Local Police and Crime Commissioner
ERW – Education through Regional Working	Flying Start
	Child Care / Early Years
Communities for Work +	Public Services Board
Communities for Work	Legacy
Fusion	Families First Carmarthenshire

***\*Copies of the consultation document will be sent to the Head teacher and Chair of Governors of the surrounding catchment area of schools subject to proposals.***

## Consultation Period

The consultation period for the proposals starts on 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2021 and ends on 4<sup>th</sup> April 2021.

Consultees can submit their views in favour of or against a proposal. Responses received during the consultation period will not be treated as statutory objections. If consultees wish to object, they will need to do so in writing during the statutory objection period outlined on page 16.

### Considering your views

During the consultation period you can ask questions and express your views by writing a letter to the address below or by completing an online survey using the following link: **New link required**

Letters should be sent to the following address by no later than noon on 4<sup>th</sup> April 2021:

Mr Gareth Morgans, Director of Education and Children's Services,  
Building 2, St. David's Park, Jobs Well Road, Carmarthen, SA31 3HB  
Or E-mail to: [DECMEP@carmarthenshire.gov.uk](mailto:DECMEP@carmarthenshire.gov.uk)

### Drop in sessions

Due to the ongoing implications of the Coronavirus issue we have been advised to postpone all events where there is interaction between staff, parents and the wider community and as a result there will not be a drop in session to discuss proposals. Should you feel strongly about discussing the proposals please contact Mr Roger Bowen by sending an e-mail to: [DECMEP@carmarthenshire.gov.uk](mailto:DECMEP@carmarthenshire.gov.uk) and a virtual meeting can be arranged.

### Consultation with Pupils

There will be an opportunity for the pupils of the school subject to the proposals to participate in the consultation process.

The information gathered from the consultation with pupils will form part of the consultation report which will be submitted to the Executive Board for consideration following the consultation period.

## **Consultation Report**

A Consultation Report will be published on Carmarthenshire County Council's website at least 2 weeks before a decision is made on whether or not to proceed to publish a statutory notice. Hard copies of the report will also be available on request. The report will summarise the issues raised by consultees and provide Carmarthenshire County Council's response to these issues. The report will also contain Estyn's view of the proposal and details of consultation undertaken with the pupils.

The Executive Board of Carmarthenshire County Council will consider the consultation report and decide whether or not to proceed with the proposal.

If the Executive Board decides to continue with the proposal Carmarthenshire County Council must publish a statutory notice.

## **Statutory Notice**

The statutory notice will be published on Carmarthenshire County Council's website and posted at the schools subject to proposals. Copies of the notice will be made available to the schools to distribute to pupils, parents, guardians, and staff members (the schools may also distribute the notice by email).

### **Statutory Objection Period**

The statutory notice will set out the details of the proposal and invite anyone who wishes to object to do so in writing within a period of 28 days. If objections are received an objection report will be published on the Carmarthenshire County Council website. Hard copies of the report will also be available on request. The report will summarise the issues raised and provide Carmarthenshire County Council's response to those objections.

## **Determination of Proposal**

Carmarthenshire County Council will determine the proposal. The County Council may decide to approve, reject or approve the proposal with modifications. In doing so, the County Council will take into account any statutory objections that it received.

### **Decision Notification**

Following determination of proposals all interested parties will be informed and advised of the availability of the decision which will be published electronically on Carmarthenshire County Council's website.

## The Statutory Process Time-Table

The statutory process and timetable will be as follows:

22 <sup>nd</sup> February 2021	Issue of this consultation document to identified and other interested parties.
4 <sup>th</sup> April 2021	Closing date for views on the proposal to be received by the Department for Education and Children.
27 <sup>th</sup> April 2021	<p>A Consultation Report will be taken to the Executive Board for a decision on whether or not to proceed to publish a statutory notice. OR alternatively proposal ends.</p> <p>The Consultation Report will be published on Carmarthenshire County Council's website at least 2 weeks prior to the publication of a statutory notice.</p> <p>If the decision is made to proceed then a statutory notice will be published. The notice will outline details of the proposal and be published on the Council's web site and be displayed near the entrance of the school and schools which are subject to the proposals. Copies of the notice will be made available to the school to distribute to parents, guardians and staff members. Following publication there will be a 28 day period during which time formal written objections will be invited.</p> <p>The statutory notice will give details on how you may record your objections to the proposal.</p>
8 <sup>th</sup> June 2021	End of formal 28 day notice period for objections. County Council will determine the proposal. The County Council may decide to approve, reject or approve the proposal with modifications, in doing so the County Council will take into account any statutory objections received.
July 2021	<p>Deadline to notify parents of intention to implement proposal.</p> <p>Following determination of proposals all interested parties will be informed and advised of the availability of the decision which will be published electronically on Carmarthenshire County Council's website.</p>

## School subject to proposal

		<b>Ysgol Y Felin</b>
<b>School Location</b>		Ynys Wen, Felinfoel, Llanelli. SA14 8BE
<b>Age Range</b>		4 – 11
<b>School Category</b> (Community [C], Voluntary Aided [VA], Voluntary Controlled [VC])		Community Primary
<b>Language Category</b>		Dual Stream
<b>Number of registered Pupils (January 2020)</b>	<b>Nursery Age</b>	17
	<b>Reception – Y.6</b>	205
	<b>Total</b>	222 <b>(exc Special Unit)</b>
<b>Number of pupils previously on the register</b>	<b>January 2019</b>	219
	<b>January 2018</b>	222
	<b>January 2017</b>	226
	<b>January 2016</b>	224
<b>Pupil Projections</b>	<b>January 2021</b>	218
	<b>January 2022</b>	220
	<b>January 2023</b>	217
	<b>January 2024</b>	217
	<b>January 2025</b>	215
<b>Capacity (including nursery age)</b>		240
<b>Cost per pupil</b>		£5,125
<b>School Budget</b>		£1,138,000
<b>Estyn Inspection Result</b>		<a href="#"><u>ESTYN</u></a>
<b>Building Condition Category</b>		B



## The Proposal

- From 1<sup>st</sup> September 2022 the nature of Foundation Phase provision at Ysgol Y Felin will change to Welsh medium education.

This will only affect pupils starting in the Foundation Phase at the school from September 2022 onwards.

Current pupils attending the school will be unaffected.

With learners accessing Welsh medium education in the Foundation Phase the capacity of the Welsh stream in KS2 to cope with the potential increased demand for places will have to be monitored and reviewed in line with Carmarthenshire's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan.

## Background

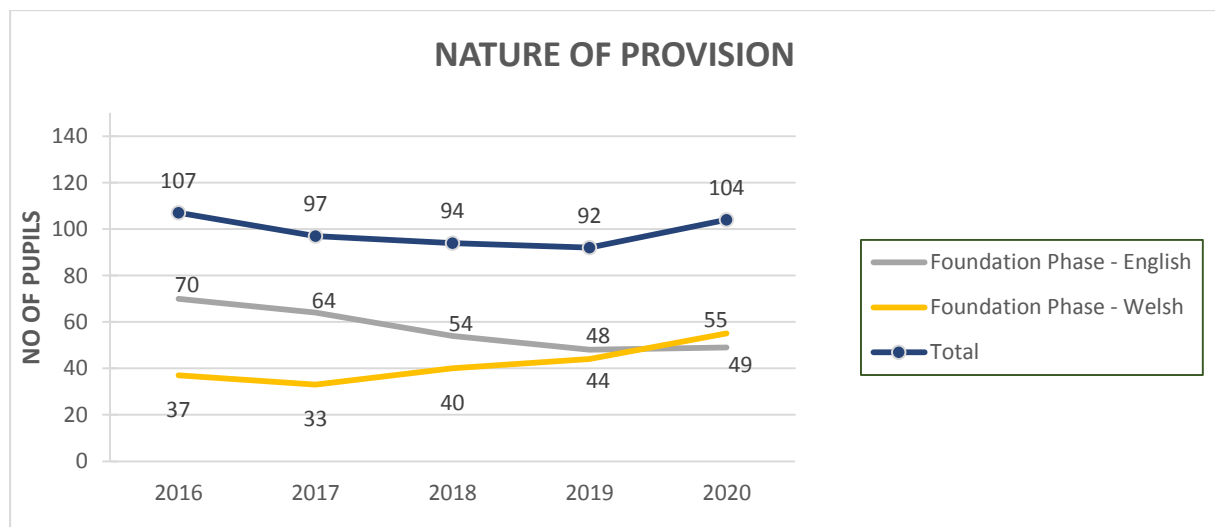
Ysgol Y Felin is a dual stream primary school based in Felinfoel, Llanelli.

The school provides education to pupils between the ages of 4-11 years old.

## Rationale for Change

### Foundation Phase data (Exc Special unit)

The graph below shows the relationship between the language streams and the number of pupils within the Foundation Phase at Ysgol Y Felin between January 2016-2020.



As can be seen from the graph above, the number of pupils attending the English stream Foundation Phase at Ysgol Y Felin has been decreasing and those attending the Welsh stream Foundation Phase have been increasing.

Pupil numbers in the English stream Foundation Phase ranged between 48- 70 during January 2016-2020 whereas pupil numbers in the Welsh stream ranged between 33- 55 pupils.

When considering the number of pupils attending the Foundation Phase as a whole, 47% attend the English stream whilst 53% attend the Welsh stream (January 2020).

### Whole School data - English / Welsh Split

		Foundation Phase	Key Stage 2	Total (Excluding Special Unit)
<b>2020</b>	English Medium	49	81	130
	Welsh Medium	55	37	92
	<b>Total</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>222</b>
<b>2019</b>	English Medium	48	88	136
	Welsh Medium	44	39	83
	<b>Total</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>219</b>
<b>2018</b>	English Medium	54	88	142
	Welsh Medium	40	40	80
	<b>Total</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>222</b>
<b>2017</b>	English Medium	64	78	142
	Welsh Medium	33	51	84
	<b>Total</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>226</b>
<b>2016</b>	English Medium	70	67	137
	Welsh Medium	37	50	87
	<b>Total</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>117</b>	<b>224</b>

### (January PLASC Data 2020)

As can be seen from the table above, the number of children attending the Welsh stream at Foundation Phase (exc special unit) is greater than the number of children attending the English stream at Foundation Phase.

The number of children attending the English stream at Key Stage 2 (exc special unit) is greater than the number of children attending the English stream at Foundation Phase.

## Advantages and Disadvantages of the proposal

### Advantages

- Opportunity for pupils to gain early immersion in the Welsh language from a young age.
- Allows pupils to gain a firm foundation in the Welsh language
- Provides pupils with enhanced linguistic skills for further development in Key Stage 2

### Disadvantages

- Potential local community resistance to the proposal
- Statutory process required to implement the proposal

## Risks and Counter Measures

Risk		Counter Measure
1.	Failure to obtain statutory approval to implement the proposal.	- Follow guidelines as set out in the School Organisation Code 2018.
2.	An unsatisfactory consultation with the community	- Develop communication strategy and consult on a regular basis to address concerns

## Financial Implications - Revenue

Ysgol Y Felin funded in accordance with the County Council's Fair Funding policy and will receive resources on the same basis as any other school within the County Council, based on pupil numbers and facilities.

## Admission Arrangements

The County Council is the Admissions Authority for Ysgol Y Felin

The School Admissions Unit,  
 Carmarthenshire Local Authority,  
 Department for Education and Children,  
 Block 2,  
 Main Building,  
 St. David's Park,  
 Carmarthen. SA31 3HB  
 Tel No: 01267 246449

E-mail: [admissions@carmarthenshire.gov.uk](mailto:admissions@carmarthenshire.gov.uk)

## Alternative Options Considered

In developing a preferred option the Authority considered a range of alternative options.

### Option 1 –Status Quo- no change to nature of provision

Advantages	Disadvantages
No statutory process required	Does not support Welsh Government aim of 1 million Welsh speakers by 2050
No Change for stakeholders	Does not meet the aims of the County's WESP

### Option 2 –Change in nature of Foundation Phase provision (Welsh Medium Foundation Phase and Dual Stream Key Stage 2)

Advantages	Disadvantages
Increases pupils' early linguistic skills	Requires statutory process
Parental choice of language medium remains in Key Stage 2	
Supports the aims of the County's WESP	

### Option 3 –Change in nature of the whole school's provision (Welsh Medium Foundation Phase and Key Stage 2)

Advantages	Disadvantages
Generates bilingual citizens	Requires statutory process
Meets the aim of the county's WESP	

## School Catchment Area

There will be no change to the current school catchment area.

## Secondary School Transfers

There will be no change to the current transfer arrangements for pupils in respect of Secondary education.

**Schools that may be affected by the proposal to change the nature of provision at Ysgol Y Felin:**

	<b>Swiss Valley Primary School</b>	<b>Dafen Primary School</b>	<b>Dewi Sant Primary School</b>	<b>Penygaer Primary School</b>	<b>Old Road Primary School</b>	<b>Five Roads Primary School</b>	
<b>School Location</b>	Heol Beili Glas, Swiss Valley Felinfoel Llanelli SA14 8DS	Lon yr Ysgol Dafen Llanelli SA14 8LL	Rhodfa Bryndulais Ave Llanelli SA14 8RS	Rhodfa Bryndulais Ave Llanelli SA14 8RS	Old Road Llanelli SA15 3HW	Five Roads Llanelli SA15 5EX	
<b>County</b>	Carmarthenshire						
<b>Age Range</b>	4-11	3-11	3-11	3-11	4-11	4-11	
<b>School Category</b> (Community [C], Voluntary Aided [VA], Voluntary Controlled [VC])	Community	Community	Community	Community	Community	Community	
<b>Language Category</b>	English Medium	English Medium	Welsh Medium	English Medium	English Medium	Welsh Medium	
<b>Number of registered Pupils (January 2020)</b>	<b>Nursery Age</b>	14	24	79	18	17	7
	<b>Reception – Y.6</b>	222	130	392	172	154	80
	<b>Total</b>	236	154	471	190	171	87
<b>Number of pupils previously on the register</b>	<b>January 2019</b>	232	164	482	206	173	91
	<b>January 2018</b>	236	161	467	211	187	92
	<b>January 2017</b>	239	163	440	222	153	95
	<b>January 2016</b>	238	141	434	219	174	90

<b>Pupil Projections</b>	<b>January 2021</b>	240	156	465	197	163	88
	<b>January 2022</b>	246	160	458	199	153	95
	<b>January 2023</b>	241	158	458	196	148	96
	<b>January 2024</b>	238	162	467	194	150	94
	<b>January 2025</b>	242	160	464	196	150	93
<b>Capacity</b>		243	163	419	233	240	101
<b>Cost per pupil</b>		£3,573	£3,707	£3,357	£3,589	£3,716	£3,688
<b>School Budget</b>		£870,000	£550,000	£1,504,000	£664,000	£635,000	£321,000
<b>Estyn Inspection Result</b>		<a href="#">ESTYN</a>	<a href="#">ESTYN</a>	<a href="#">ESTYN</a>	<a href="#">ESTYN</a>	<a href="#">ESTYN</a>	<a href="#">ESTYN</a>
<b>Building Condition Category</b>		B	C	C	B	B	C

**Building Condition Key:**

Grade A	Good. Performing as intended and operating efficiently.
Grade B	Satisfactory. Performing as intended but exhibiting minor deterioration.
Grade C	Poor. Exhibiting major defects and/ or not operating as intended.
Grade D	Bad. Life expired and/or serious risk of imminent failure.

# Evaluation of Present Arrangements

## Ysgol Y Felin

Ysgol Y Felin School is a Dual Stream community School within a highly deprived and Community First area.

It caters for children from the ages of 4-11 years.

There are currently 222 pupils on roll at the school. The total number of pupils attending the school including pupils attending the special unit is 261.

Ysgol Y Felin provides education through the medium of Welsh and English across two streams. Parents choose a language stream from Reception onwards. Currently pupils are taught across 4 classes. There are 4 Welsh classes and 5 English classes due to a high intake of pupils entering Year 3 during the year and the need to split the numbers to reduce class sizes.

The children in the English classes are taught Welsh as a second language whilst the Welsh classes are taught through the medium of Welsh. There are 222 pupils on roll, 92 of whom are taught through Welsh, 130 through English and an additional 40 pupils are taught in a special educational needs (SEN) centre comprising of two Foundation Phase assessment and observation classes, a language unit and a Key Stage 2 class of pupils with severe learning difficulties (SLD Centre). The Centre is a purpose-built unit attached to the school building which houses the Language Unit class and also the Observation and Assessment classes.

The school was last inspected in September 2016.

### **Standards**

Nearly all foundation phase pupils make the expected progress or better across all areas of learning from their starting points. The foundation phase indicator shows an increase trend and is higher than the local authority average. However, performance at upper outcomes remain very low across both languages and mathematical development.

Performance at upper outcomes in PDS is extremely high at 90.9%. On the whole, many pupils make the expected progress or better between foundation phase and end of KS2. Welsh standards are good with nearly all pupils achieving the expected level and the minority achieving at higher levels. However, end of key stage 2 data in other subjects demonstrates a downward trend and is lower than the local authority average.

Many pupils demonstrate good literacy skills across the various subjects and areas of learning. Pupils' progress in literacy skills in both Welsh and English across the

school is generally good. In the Foundation Phase, many pupils talk confidently about their work and pupils who begin with low level linguistic skills develop quickly to take a meaningful role in classroom discussion.

Reading skills in both languages are developing steadily across the school. In the Foundation Phase, most pupils apply many suitable techniques to help them understand what they are reading. By the end of the Foundation Phase, they read confidently. In key stage 2, most pupils read effectively from a wide range of sources. They can use books and electronic sources effectively to research information for their class topics. However, the school is continuing to develop pupils' higher order thinking skills to support their progress in class and their understanding of text.

By the end of the Foundation Phase, many pupils produce pieces of writing of a good standard in both Welsh and English, using well-structured sentences in sequence. They generally spell familiar words correctly and use phonetic techniques appropriately to attempt more unfamiliar words. Pupils that are more able write at length for different purposes in different curriculum areas. By the end of key stage 2 in Welsh, boys and girls write well in different genres across the curriculum. However, 2018-19 data shows that boys underperformed in English writing but outperformed the girls in Oracy. Spelling and punctuation are generally in line with pupils' age and ability.

### **Wellbeing Standards:**

Most pupils participate actively in lessons and are eager to learn. Nearly all work co-operatively and most remain on task for extended periods. They show a clear enjoyment in learning, especially in practical lessons, for example when examining Celtic artefacts.

Nearly all pupils are happy in school. They are aware of the importance of keeping healthy and safe including the need to use the internet responsibly. Most pupils know the importance of eating a balanced diet, drinking healthily and taking regular exercise. Over a half are involved in extracurricular activities including rounders, football and roller-skating. This reinforces their understanding of living healthily.

Nearly all pupils know what to do if they feel worried or have a problem. They have worked with the headteacher to develop a system of 'playground buddies' and have established a 'friendship bench' to ensure that pupils enjoy playtimes.

The behaviour of most pupils throughout the school is exemplary. Through a programme of agreed values, pupils understand the importance of showing respect and consideration towards adults and each other. This is a notable feature of the school. The school council and eco committee play an active part in the school and represent the pupils' needs well. The school council has played a proactive role in the management of behaviour on the playground and has introduced a 'luncheon club' and an area on the playground for vulnerable pupils. It also plays an important role in the implementation of the school's response to the Welsh Government's language charter initiative, and actively promotes the use of Welsh around the school. The eco committee has also been proactive in developing 'green' activities,



such as designing planting areas within the school grounds, and working with the local community on a 'litter pick'. As a result, most pupils are aware of the importance of looking after the environment. Attendance has remained consistent through 2018 - 19 and is very slightly above from the previous year's percentage, at 91.7%. EFSM pupils' attendance also remains consistent at 89.8%.

### **Teaching and learning experiences**

The quality of teaching across the school, and the impact on nearly all pupils' learning and progress, is consistently good.

Nearly all teachers have a thorough knowledge of the pupils' abilities and their individual needs, which enables them to use effective strategies to move the learning forward. In these cases, there is a good balance between teacher-led and pupil-led tasks to maintain a lively pace and provide focus for the pupils in learning sessions. Teachers use effective questioning to challenge and motivate pupils. As a result, in most lessons, pupils understand what the teachers expect of them, and teachers discuss with them how well they have achieved.

Nearly all teachers provide tasks at levels that are appropriate for a range of different abilities. This variety of activities maintains the interest of most pupils well. Nearly all teachers make very effective use of ICT resources to support their teaching. In nearly all classes, there is a positive working relationship between staff and pupils. This encourages most pupils to play an active role in the lesson. Nearly all teachers manage behaviour very well.

Most teachers' marking is effective in identifying ways for pupils to improve their work. In literacy, this enables pupils to redraft their work well. There are opportunities for pupils to assess their own and other pupils' work, and nearly all teachers use assessment for learning techniques appropriately in many activities. However, in a few lessons, this does not always lead to pupils knowing how they can improve their work.

The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum which meets the requirements of the Foundation Phase, the National Curriculum and religious education. Many teachers involve pupils in planning termly activities and engage the interests of most pupils effectively. In the best examples, they choose themes carefully and plan stimulating and exciting cross-curricular activities.

The school continuously implements successfully national and local priorities. These are integral to the performance management targets of all staff. The headteacher has arranged for all staff to undertake action research in line with the new national professional standards for teaching and leadership. These are incorporated into the performance management cycle. Leaders give a high priority to developing the workforce. For example, by supporting members following their return work and mentoring members of staff to ensure consistency in pedagogy and teaching standards across the school.

The school makes very good use of the locality and often introduces a new theme following a visit to a landmark or by involving external providers.

Teachers consistently plan, develop and enhance the pupils' awareness of the Welsh language, culture and traditions. Nearly all teachers use incidental Welsh during lessons and outside the classrooms, and encourage pupils to do the same. However, this does not always provide enough structure for pupils to learn from effectively. There is a clear scheme of work for developing Welsh in the English-medium classes to ensure that pupils make good progress. The school promotes a Welsh ethos effectively, and develops the Welsh dimension successfully in all aspects of school life. For example, the support of a local artist has resulted in pupils creating 3D models depicting the Rebecca riots. Nearly all teachers, particularly within the Foundation Phase, plan and make good use of the outdoor areas to enhance learning and teaching. For example, by creating a bug hotel, pupils learn about minibeasts and their habitats.

The school promotes sustainable development and global citizenship effectively through a range of curricular and extra-curricular initiatives and activities, for example, by composting school waste, maintaining links with a school in Malawi, and working to promote sustainable products, such as those available from local supermarkets – coffee, tea, and fruit.

### **Care support and guidance**

Personal and social education is a strength and there is an obvious whole school emphasis on promoting and supporting pupils' wellbeing. Teachers promote pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development successfully. Activities include regular collective worship, promoting values and taking part in local cultural activities. Visitors to the school also contribute positively to these aspects.

The staff support pupils with additional learning needs well by providing them with a wide range of effective interventions activities. This is a strength of the school. All staff know the pupils well and identify the more vulnerable of them at an early stage. The school has a very good track record in raising the achievement of vulnerable learners and is aware of the need to target bordering pupils in order to further improve their progress. This will improve performance at upper outcomes and levels. The school has effective arrangements for promoting healthy eating and drinking. Pupils assist with a range of initiatives including the organisation of the 'fruit tuck shop' and the sale of specially designed water bottles. There are many activities that promote health education, including the creation of fruit faces and posters to recommend eating a balanced diet.

The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and give no cause for concern. All staff ensure that pupils know how to keep themselves safe online, for example by ensuring that they choose a safe password when using the internet.

The school has effective procedures to track pupils' progress. This enables teachers and pupils to agree appropriate targets for improvement, which they share effectively

with parents. End-of-year reports to parents provide useful information on their children's progress and targets for the following year and meet requirements.

### **Leadership and Management**

The headteacher, other leaders and staff have developed a shared vision and there is a very clear strategy to improve outcomes for all groups of learners. Leaders demonstrate a very strong capacity to plan and implement change and they engage all staff and other partners very effectively in the change process.

Self-evaluation is well established and is effective in contributing to improving standards, learning and teaching. As a result, many priorities within last year's school development plan (SDP) are achieved or have made strong and very good progress. Leaders and staff effectively use all available performance data and evidence about the quality of learning and teaching and pupils' work to identify strengths and set improvement priorities. However, all data analysis needs to be summarised for the self-evaluation report.

There is a well-established process for performance management of all staff. Senior leaders use the process effectively to support the professional development of staff and targets link strongly with the priorities in the school development plan.

The school is responding well to national and local priorities. Good examples include the implementation of the Welsh Language Charter and the Digital Competency Framework. These initiatives are having positive impact on pupils' standards in Welsh and ICT.

Governors have a very good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement and are highly effective in supporting and challenging the school's performance.

### **Impact of the proposal on the above**

Currently there are five English and four Welsh mainstream classes, with two age groups in majority of the classes. The children in the English classes are taught Welsh as a second language whilst the Welsh classes are taught through the medium of Welsh. There are 222 pupils on roll, 92 of whom are taught through Welsh, 130 through English and additional 40 of the pupils are taught in a special educational needs (SEN) centre.

The change in the nature of provision at Foundation Phase from Dual Stream to Welsh medium will ensure that the school is moving along the local authority's WESP continuum plan.

# Appendix A – Community Impact Assessment

## Ysgol Y Felin

### Catchment Area Analysis – January PLASC 2020 Data

Each school has an area that it serves, referred to as the catchment area. Each school is expected to accommodate pupils from within its catchment area and schools must have regard for this ongoing demand.

Most parents send their child to their local school but parents have a right to state a preference for other schools.

### **Pupils attending the school from inside / outside the catchment**

Based on January PLASC 2020 data, the geographical data in relation to the pupil distribution for Ysgol Y Felin catchment area indicated that of the 222 pupils on roll (*exc Special Unit*), 91 lived within the catchment area, whilst the remaining 131 were from outside the catchment area.

### **Pupils living in the catchment area attending other schools.**

Based on January PLASC 2020 data, 163 pupils lived within the Ysgol Y Felin catchment area attended other schools.

Taking into consideration the 91 pupils living within the catchment area attending Ysgol Y Felin, and the 163 pupils living within the catchment area but attending other schools, a total of 254 pupils are living within the catchment area of Ysgol Y Felin.

### Other facilities or services provided by the school e.g. after school clubs/breakfast Club/community Library.

A number of clubs are offered at Ysgol Y Felin. The school has a breakfast club which is conducted through the medium of Welsh and English and which promotes a Welsh ethos celebrating the Welsh culture through listening to Welsh music and reading Welsh books and magazines. There is also an after school club run by Welsh speakers whereby various activities are provided for the pupils mainly through the medium of Welsh. On the school site there is a private/Mudiad Meithirn Nursery School which currently provides up to 30 hours of care and education for pupils from two years up through the medium of Welsh.

### Other facilities the school provides e.g. club/play group/community Council

The school has established a wide range of partnerships that have a beneficial impact on pupils' wellbeing and attainment. Communication with parents is very good. The school provides them with many opportunities to support their children's

learning, such as supporting their school work through the ICT network. Parents are supportive and staff and governors value their contributions to school life.

The school is at the heart of its community and pupils make good use of the locality to enrich their curriculum experiences, for example through visits to local places of worship, and places of work, such as the local water reservoir, Parc Y Sgarlets and Parc Howard.

The very strong links with the pre-school setting, located on site, ensures that younger pupils settle confidently into the school. Opportunities for the pre-school children to participate in language and play development sessions before starting school are particularly valuable.

There are effective transition programmes in place with the local secondary schools to ensure that pupils are well prepared to move on to the next phase in their education. The moderation work with the secondary schools and their feeder primaries ensures the reliability of end of key stage teacher assessments.

A strength of the school is its partnership with external specialist agencies to support vulnerable pupils and their families

### **Effect of the proposal on the school/community**

The implementation of the Welsh Medium Foundation phase will ensure that the community of Felinfoel, Llanelli continues to thrive as a bilingual one and helps towards realising Wales ' national ambition of having a million Welsh speakers by 2050. The proposal will provide all pupils joining the school the opportunity to develop their Welsh language skills from an earlier age.

The community of Felinfoel, Llanelli is bilingual in nature. In order to ensure that pupils are able to benefit fully from the community that they belong to, it is vital that they have sound basic skills to be able to communicate informally in Welsh.

## **Appendix B – Welsh Language Impact Assessment**

This proposal supports the Council's vision and aims for Welsh medium education as set out in Carmarthenshire's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) 2017 – 2020. The proposal will allow greater opportunities for access to Welsh medium education within the Ysgol Y Felin School catchment area and will ensure linguistic continuity from the nursery sector along the key stages to the secondary sector so that every pupil becomes fluent and confident in both Welsh and English languages.

### **Language Category**

Ysgol Y Felin is categorised as a Dual Stream Primary School.

### **Standards\***

In Foundation Phase, pupils are assessed in different areas of learning. Based on 2019 data, 80.0% of pupils achieved at least Outcome 5 in 'Language, Literacy and Communication (in Welsh)'.

In Key Stage 2, pupils are assessed in each of the core subjects. Based on 2019 data, 100% of pupils achieved at least Level 4 in Welsh first language.

*\* No National Teacher assessments were conducted in 2020 due to the ongoing impact of the Coronavirus outbreak. For this reason, 2019 has been used.*

### **After school activities which provide additional opportunities to use the Welsh language**

The school takes an active role and pride in implementing the Welsh Charter scheme which ensures that pupils receive opportunities to use the Welsh language in informal ways. The school is also very active with the Urdd organisation arranging residential trips to their camps at Llangrannog annually for pupils from both streams, competing in many sporting activities through the medium of Welsh and taking an active part in the local Eisteddfod, regional and national Eisteddfod on an annual basis. Pupils from both streams also have opportunities to attend the Urdd Jambori. The school hosts activity clubs each week. The linguistic medium of those clubs is Welsh and through this they see that Welsh belongs in the context of art, sustainability, cooking, creative and sporting. The school often invites external companies to come and run drama workshops and to make performances for pupils. These performances and workshops are through the medium of Welsh so that pupils appreciate that Welsh is a living language.

## Appendix C – Equalities Impact Assessment

### Carmarthenshire County Council Assessing Impact

#### The Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 (the Act) brings together and replaces the previous anti-discrimination laws with a single Act. It simplifies and strengthens the law, removes inconsistencies and makes it easier for people to understand and comply with it. The majority of the Act came into force on 1 October 2010.

The Act includes a new public sector equality duty (the 'general duty'), replacing the separate duties on race, disability and gender equality. This came into force on 5 April 2011.

#### What is the general duty?

The aim of the general duty is to ensure that public authorities and those carrying out a public function consider how they can positively contribute to a fairer society through advancing equality and good relations in their day-to-day activities. The duty ensures that equality considerations are built into the design of policies and the delivery of services and that they are kept under review. This will achieve better outcomes for all.

The duties are legal obligations. Failure to meet the duties may result in authorities being exposed to legal challenge.

Under equality legislation, public authorities have legal duties to pay 'due regard' to the need to eliminate discrimination and promote equality with regard to race, disability and gender, including gender reassignment, as well as to promote good race relations. The Equality Act 2010 introduces a new public sector duty which extends this coverage to age, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity, and religion or belief. The law requires that this duty to pay 'due regard' be demonstrated in the decision making process. It is also important to note that public authorities subject to the equality duties are also likely to be subject to the obligations under the Human Rights Act and it is therefore wise also to consider the potential impact that decisions could have on human rights as part of the same process.



### **Carmarthenshire's approach to Equality Impact**

In order to ensure that the council is considering the potential equality impact of its proposed policies and practices, and in order to evidence that we have done so, every proposal will be required to be supported by the attached Equality Impact Assessment. Where this assessment identifies a significant impact then more detail may be required.

### **Reporting on assessments**

Where it is clear from the assessment that the likely impact on the authority's ability to meet the general duty is substantial, then it must publish a report.

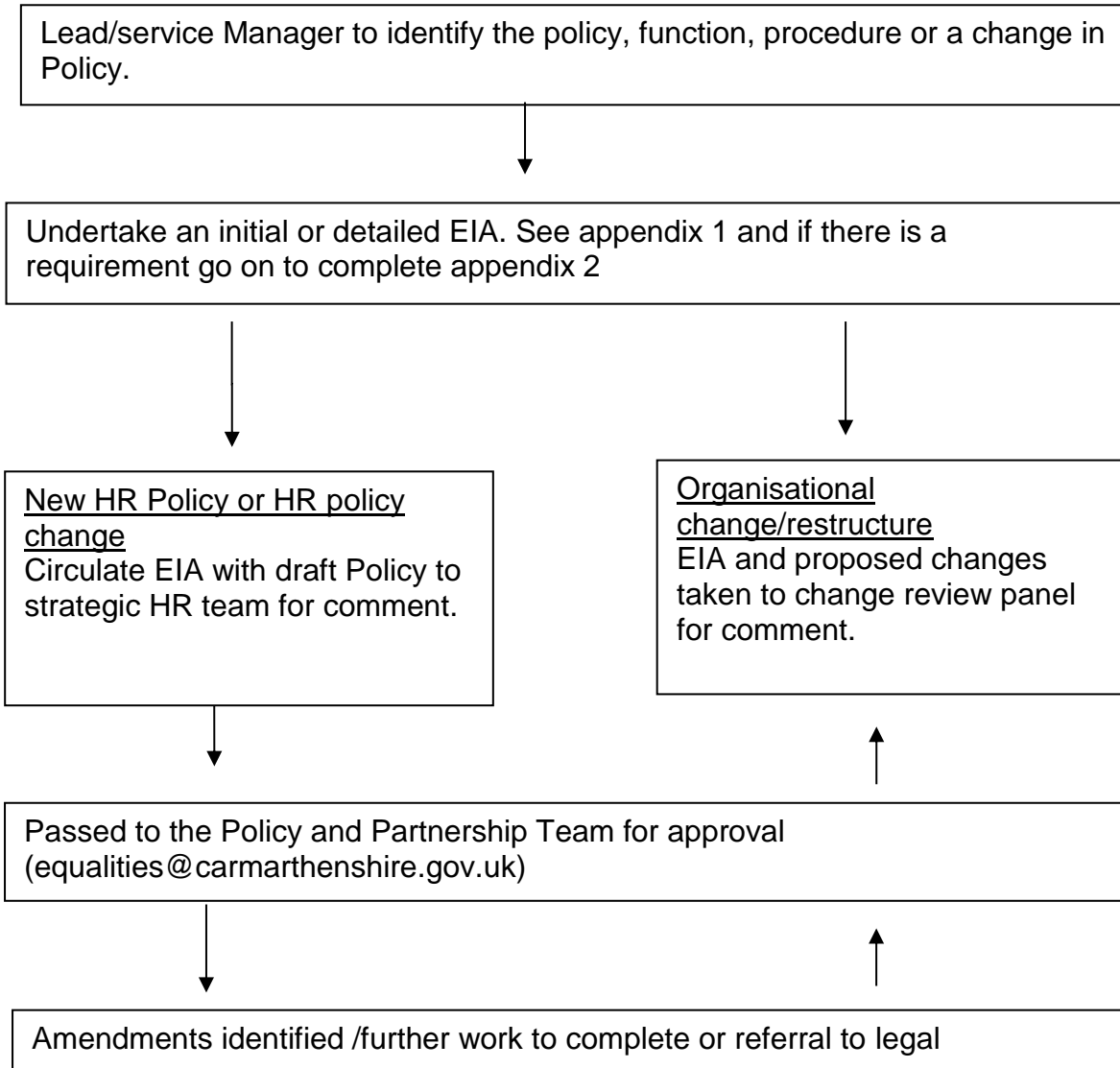
### **Initial and Detailed Equality Impact Assessments**

The initial EIA (appendix 1) is a simple and quick method of assessing the effect of a policy, function, procedure, decision including financial cuts on one or more of the protected characteristics.

The Service Manager responsible for the relevant new or revised policies, functions, procedures and financial decisions must undertake, at least, an initial EIA and where relevant a detailed Equality Impact Assessment (appendix 2); EIA must be attached as background paper with reports to Executive and Scrutiny.



**Equality impact assessment – Process to follow where HR implications have been identified**



Initial Equalities Impact Assessment Template

Appendix 1

<b>Department:</b> Education & Children	<b>Completed by (lead):</b> Sara Griffiths	<b>Date of initial assessment:</b> November 2020 <b>Revision Dates:</b> July 2021
<b>Area to be assessed: (i.e. name of policy, function, procedure, practice or a financial decision)</b>	This proposal is to change the nature of provision at Ysgol Y Felin Primary School.	
<b>Is this existing or new function/policy, procedure, practice or decision?</b>	School Re-organisation Proposal – Modernising Education Programme	
<b>What evidence has been used to inform the assessment and policy? (please list only)</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools Programme</li> <li>• Modernising Education Programme</li> <li>• School Organisation Code 2018</li> <li>• PLASC Data 2020</li> <li>• The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015</li> </ul>		

<b>1. Describe the aims, objectives or purpose of the proposed function/policy, practice, procedure or decision and who is intended to benefit.</b>	The proposal aims to respond to WG ‘A Million Welsh Speakers by 2050’, Carmarthenshire County Council’s Welsh in Education Strategic Plan and the authority’s vision for creating a bilingual Carmarthenshire by increasing Welsh medium provision at Ysgol Y Felin.		
<b>The Public Sector Equality Duty requires the Council to have “due regard” to the need to:-</b>	<b>2. What is the level of impact on each group/protected characteristics in terms of the three aims of</b>	<b>3. Identify the risk or positive effect that could result for each of the group/protected characteristics?</b>	<b>4. If there is a disproportionately negative impact what mitigating</b>

<p>(1) eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation;  (2) advance equality of opportunity between different groups; and  (3) foster good relations between different groups  (see guidance notes)</p>		<p>the duty? Please indicate high (H) medium (M), low (L), no effect (N) for each.</p>	<p>Risks</p>	<p>Positive effects</p>	<p>factors have you considered?</p>
<p>Protected characteristics</p>	<p><b>Age</b></p>	<p>L</p>	<p>Neutral</p>	<p>Foundation Phase pupils will be immersed in the Welsh language.</p>	
	<p><b>Disability</b></p>	<p>L</p>	<p>ALN pupils will be supported appropriately as required.</p>		
	<p><b>Gender reassignment</b></p>	<p>N</p>	<p>Neutral</p>		
	<p><b>Race</b></p>	<p>N</p>	<p>Neutral</p>		
	<p><b>Religion/Belief</b></p>	<p>N</p>	<p>Neutral</p>		
	<p><b>Pregnancy and maternity</b></p>	<p>N</p>	<p>Neutral</p>		
	<p><b>Sexual Orientation</b></p>	<p>N</p>	<p>Neutral</p>		
	<p><b>Sex</b></p>	<p>N</p>	<p>Neutral</p>		
	<p><b>Welsh language</b></p>	<p>L</p>	<p>Neutral</p>	<p>This proposal is to change the nature of provision in the Foundation Phase to Welsh medium which will support the Council's vision and</p>	

				aims for Welsh medium education as set out in Carmarthenshire's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) 2017-2020.	
	Any other area	L	Neutral		

<b>5. Has there been any consultation/engagement with the appropriate protected characteristics?</b>	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>  The Project Officer has liaised with the Headteacher, Staff and Parents of Ysgol Y Felin primary School with regards to the proposal. All stakeholders will be fully consulted during the formal consultation period.
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**6. What action(s) will you take to reduce any disproportionately negative impact, if any? Ensure that all key stakeholders are fully informed throughout the statutory process.**

**7. Procurement**  
 Following collation of evidence for this assessment, are there any procurement implications to the activity, proposal, service. N/A  
 Please take the findings of this assessment into your procurement plan. Contact the corporate procurement unit for further advice.

**8. Human resources**  
 Following collation of evidence for this assessment, are there any Human resource implications to the activity, proposal or service? As there will be a change in the nature of provision, additional staffing may be required. However, this will be addressed as the scheme progresses and Human Resources will be fully consulted.

<b>9. Based on the information in sections 2 and 6, should this function/policy/procedure/practice or a decision proceed to Detailed Impact Assessment? (recommended if one or more H under section 2)</b>	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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Approved by: Head of Service	Simon Davies	Date: November 2020
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## EDUCATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 28th JANUARY 2021

### TASK & FINISH GROUP FINAL REPORT- ALN FURMULA FUNDING

#### Purpose:

The purpose of this report is to provide Education Scrutiny Committee with:

- A final summary of the work of the Task & Finish Group during Autumn 2019.

#### To consider and comment on the following issues:

- To endorse the report of the Task & Finish Group
- To recommend that the work of the Task & Finish Group should be concluded

#### Reasons:

- At its meeting, the Education Scrutiny Committee agreed to establish a task and finish group to undertake a review into funding for ALN pupils in schools.
- The report has been formulated to briefly summarise the work of the group over a series of meetings held during Autumn 2019.

To be referred to the Executive Board / Council for decision: NO

#### EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBER PORTFOLIO HOLDER:- Glynog Davies

Councillor Darren Price

(Chair of the Task and Finish Group)

Report Author: Aneirin Thomas

Designations:

Chair of the Task and Finish Group

Head of Education & Inclusion Services

E-mail:

[arthomas@carmarthenshire.gov.uk](mailto:arthomas@carmarthenshire.gov.uk)

# EDUCATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

## 28th JANUARY 2021

### **SUBJECT: ADDITIONAL LEARNING NEEDS FUNDING**

The Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Committee has a key role to play in monitoring services, development of key policies and strategies, as well as identifying areas for improvement or development within their remit.

The financial support for Additional Learning Needs has experienced much pressure and strain for some time due to increasing demands on the current level of resources available.

The Committee was also aware of the key changes being made by the Welsh Government in this area, which will lead to a new way of delivering support to pupils with Additional Learning Needs.

At their meeting on the 4<sup>th</sup> July 2019 the Committee agreed to establish a task and finish group to review the model for funding ALN in schools. The review was to examine the current funding formula and to consider possible alternative models to meet the requirements of the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act.

The Act highlights the need for an integrated, collaborative process of assessment, planning and monitoring which facilitates early, timely and effective interventions. The underlying need for a more reactive model of funding was a key consideration.

The key aims and objectives for the review were detailed in a planning and scoping document endorsed at that meeting along with the membership of the Task and Finish Group, as follows:-

Councillor Darren Price (Chair)  
Councillor Edward Thomas (Vice-Chair)  
Councillor Kim Broom  
Councillor Gary Jones  
Councillor Shahana Najmi  
Councillor Dorian Williams  
Mr James Davies (Co-opted parent governor representative)

As part of its considerations the group considered a wide range of information in the form of written and verbal reports containing current funding models and possible new parameters for funding. The consultation process consisted of the following-

- Elected Members – 4 meetings
- ALN Workshop with headteachers
- Strategic Group including key officers and headteachers.

The task and finish group highlighted key principles to guide the work of the above consultation groups.

- Requirement for clear reasoning behind any proposed formula
- Tapering effect- that changes are gradual over time
- Headteachers and schools involved in the process
- With the number of statements falling how to make sure that this is going to affect the



transition

- That there was sufficient consultation
- Comparisons- Identify good practice in other authorities

The group identified that there was a need for greater delegation of ALN resources to underpin:

- Strengthening universal and targeted provision for children with ALN.
- Supporting schools to set in place early intervention and staged approaches in a timely manner.
- Enabling schools to meet their statutory duties to make decisions relating to Additional Learning Provision.
- Building confidence of parents/carers that needs can be met promptly without unnecessary process or dispute.
- Promptly resourcing pupils at School Action Plus
- Reducing the requirement for statutory assessment and Statementing processes to direct funding for low incidence high need ALN pupils.
- Central pot for complex medical needs.
- Give schools financial flexibility, enabling schools to access timely external support for children, ensuring that schools have the flexibility to meet children's needs, and better involving schools in decisions relating to ALN.

The Group had regard to the Council's current delegated funding model. For most children in mainstream schools, including those with ALNs and disabilities funding is allocated to them through the school budget and is known as the per pupil funding. This funding supports all learning and is used for staff salaries, including the ALNCO, facilities and ALN resources.

A percentage of the total amount of per pupil funding received by a school should be spent on providing for pupils with ALN. In Carmarthenshire, schools are expected to allocate at least 5% of their per pupil funding to their ALN budget.

A series of workshops with headteachers considered various funding models. It was agreed during these workshops that any new formula funding mechanism needed to support ALN Transformation that will reform the way in which children with ALN are identified, assessed and supported. Previous categories of ALN- school action, school action + and statements will cease, and schools will be required to make statutory Additional Learning Provision through Individual Development Plans (IDPs).

Following input from the task and finish the LA in consultation with headteachers concluded and agreed to the following principles of funding-

- £1,000 per LAC pupil
- Remainder split 25% FSM, 25% school action, 50% school action +

With the intention that as statements reduce, funding will transfer to the ALN supplement to allow schools greater flexibility in meeting the needs of pupils with ALN.

In consultation with Headteachers the formula going forward considered a range of proxy indicators which reflected the contextual nature of schools.

- Social deprivation
- Pupil numbers
- Free School Meals
- Looked After Children

Detailed report attached	YES
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## IMPLICATIONS

I confirm that other than those implications which have been agreed with the appropriate Directors / Heads of Service and are referred to in detail below, there are no other implications associated with this report :

Signed: Linda Rees-Jones

Head of Administration and Law

Policy, Crime & Disorder and Equalities	Legal	Finance	ICT	Risk Management Issues	Staffing Implications	Physical Assets
<b>NONE</b>	<b>NONE</b>	<b>NONE</b>	<b>NONE</b>	<b>NONE</b>	<b>NONE</b>	<b>NONE</b>

## CONSULTATIONS

I confirm that the appropriate consultations have taken in place and the outcomes are as detailed below

Signed: Linda Rees-Jones

Head of Administration and Law

**1. Local Member(s)**

Not applicable

**2. Community / Town Council**

Not applicable

**3. Relevant Partners**

Not applicable

**4. Staff Side Representatives and other Organisations**

Not applicable

**EXECUTIVE BOARD PORTFOLIO HOLDER(S) AWARE/CONSULTED**

**YES**

**Section 100D Local Government Act, 1972 – Access to Information  
List of Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:**

**There are none.**

Title of Document	File Ref No.	Locations that the papers are available for public inspection

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# Education & Children Scrutiny Committee Task & Finish 2019/20

## Additional Learning Needs Funding

[carmarthenshire.gov.wales](http://carmarthenshire.gov.wales)

Cyngor **Sir Gâr**  
**Carmarthenshire**  
County Council



## Background and National changes in legislation

The definition of “additional learning needs” as provided in the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018 is:

(1) A person has additional learning needs if he or she has a learning difficulty or disability which calls for additional learning provision.

(2) A child of compulsory provider age or person over that age has a learning difficulty or disability if he or she—

- (a) has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age, or
- (b) has a disability which prevents or hinders him or her from making use of facilities for education or training of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream maintained providers or mainstream institutions in the further education sector

ALN education is being transformed in Wales, following the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act, which became law last year.

A new statutory support system for children and young people with ALN is due to come into force in Autumn 2021. The Act will be supported by regulations and a new ALN Code.

The Act has three overarching aims:

- **A unified legislative framework** to support all children of compulsory school age or below with ALN, and young people with ALN in school or further education (FE) (rather than two separate systems of SEN up to age 16 and Learning Skills Plans for post-16/19, both of which are currently covered by separate legislation);
- **An integrated, collaborative** process of assessment, planning and monitoring which facilitates **early, timely and effective** interventions (including duties on health boards and local authorities to collaborate with each other through a statutory Individual Development Plan for each learner with ALN);
- A **fair and transparent system** for providing information and advice, and for resolving concerns and appeals (including requiring local authorities to make arrangements for avoiding and resolving disagreements, revising a system found by previous reviews to be ‘complex, bewildering and adversarial’)

## ALN in Carmarthenshire – undertaking a review

The Education and Children’s Services Scrutiny Committee has a key role to play in monitoring services, development of key policies and strategies, as well as identifying areas for improvement or development within their remit.

The financial support for Additional Learning Needs has experienced much pressure and strain for some time due to increasing demands on the current level of resources available.

The Committee was also aware of the key changes being made by the Welsh Government in this area, which will lead to a new way of delivering support to pupils with Additional Learning Needs.

At their meeting on the 4<sup>th</sup> July 2019 the Education and Children Scrutiny Committee agreed to establish a task and finish group to review Additional Learning Needs Funding.

In reviewing the Committee Forward Work Programme, Members identified the purpose of the Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Committee's review. The timely review would look to ensure the implementation of the most effective 'allocation model' in support of Carmarthenshire pupils' needs. The review's work would also seek to further support implementation of the ALN Transformation programme in a strategic, practical and sustainable manner.

## **Overview**

The group convened on five occasions to review the following –

### **31<sup>st</sup> July 2019**

#### **Planning and Scoping**

Members reviewed the current funding models for specialist provision within the authority. Currently, the authority provides funding for a wide range of specialist settings (current costs for staffing this provision approx. £6,222,883) and funds two 'Special Schools' – Ysgol Heol Goffa & Ysgol Rhydygors.

It also provides funding supplements for specific levels of need within mainstream settings which currently focus on:

1. SEN Statements (Primary @ 100% = £2,251,291 / Secondary @ 65% = £2,483,641)
2. An Additional Education Needs supplement based on the following areas of need and formula
  - School Action
  - School Action +
  - SAPA (additional funding for primary schools with less than 100 pupils)
  - Individual Development Plans (IDP) \*within original LA pilot

#### **2018/19 formula**

£1,000 per LAC, balance:

50% Free School Meals, 50% School Action/School Action + /Statementing

#### **2019/20 formula**

£1,000 per LAC, balance:

25% Free Schools Meals, 25% School Action, 50% School Action Plus

The authority provides a Post 16 SEN Supplement to appropriate secondary schools (£372,722) and a wide range of support and guidance for all schools through the ALN & Inclusion Team e.g. Advisory Teachers, Family Liaison Officers, Sensory Impairment Team etc.

## 13<sup>th</sup> September 2019

### **Pupils educated other than at school**

The group considered a Welsh Government (WG) report on the number of pupils receiving education outside of school funded by Welsh local authorities, and the number of pupils receiving elective home education in Wales. Members noted that there were 97 EOTAS pupils in Carmarthenshire with the majority educated across two settings.

The comparative figures for other local authorities were varied, with a relatively low number in Ceredigion, Ynys Môn and Monmouthshire.

EOTAS pupils are either on a roll at a maintained school or have subsidiary enrolment status at a maintained school. Those with dual registration continue to be supported by the school, and in many cases, it will be expected that the EOTAS pupil returns to mainstream school to continue/complete their education.

**Table 1: Number of pupils educated other than at school, by local authority, 2018/19**

Local Authority	EOTAS pupils whose main education is outside of school and who			EOTAS pupils who	
	are not on roll at a maintained school	have subsidiary enrolment status at a maintained school	Total	have main or current enrolment status at a maintained school	All pupils receiving EOTAS provision
Isle of Anglesey	13	0	13	0	13
Gwynedd	40	0	40	0	40
Conwy	72	0	72	0	72
Denbighshire	87	0	87	58	145
Flintshire	80	41	121	6	127
Wrexham	17	45	62	*	*
Powys	53	6	59	*	*
Ceredigion	*	*	13	12	25
Pembrokeshire	14	109	123	13	136
Carmarthenshire	6	66	72	25	97
Swansea	59	93	152	22	174
Neath Port Talbot	*	*	45	*	*
Bridgend	0	69	69	10	79
The Vale of Glamorgan	37	77	114	23	137
Rhondda Cynon Taf	71	122	193	14	207
Merthyr Tydfil	8	65	73	25	98
Caerphilly	83	30	113	128	241
Blaenau Gwent	*	0	*	0	*
Torfaen	*	0	*	19	*
Monmouthshire	*	*	14	7	21
Newport	88	16	104	49	153
Cardiff	215	10	225	86	311
Wales:					
2018/19	1,027	757	1,784	502	2,286
2017/18	1,008	601	1,609	579	2,188
2016/17	892	510	1,402	570	1,972
2015/16	909	603	1,512	602	2,114
2014/15	909	478	1,387	770	2,157
2013/14	958	267	1,225	1,142	2,367

Sources: EOTAS Pupil Census, Welsh Government  
Pupil Level Annual School Census, Welsh Government

#### **Key points for 2018/19**

<b>2,286</b>	the number of EOTAS pupils, down 3% since 2013/14.
<b>1,784</b>	the number of EOTAS pupils receiving their main education other than at school, up 46% since 2013/14.
<b>78%</b>	the percentage of EOTAS pupils receiving their main education other than at school, up from 52% in 2013/14.



## **Budgeted expenditure on SEN Provision 2019-20**

The group considered a report which outlined current budgeted expenditure and previous year expenditure on SEN provision.

### **Out of county placements**

It was noted that a number of pupils receive support from placements outside of Carmarthenshire – some in other parts of Wales, and others in England. The group reviewed the current out of county provision and the projected future costs. It was noted that the authority was reviewing the out of county placements, and in some instances, the authority believed that the pupil's needs could be met in-county, but that parental consent is required to move pupils from their current 'out of county' settings.

It was also noted that some pupils in specialist settings also benefited from extracurricular opportunities and engagement with their peer groups, which they would not necessarily have in a setting within the county. For example, a pupil attending a specialist setting geared towards deaf pupils participating in specialist adapted activities.

### **22nd October 2019**

#### **Post 16 out of county placements**

Members reviewed a report containing information relating to post-16 specialist placements for learners from the South West and Mid Wales region. Currently, post-16 specialist provision is funded by the Welsh Government, however it was expected that this would transfer to Local Authorities in the future.

#### **Regional ALN Transformation Programme**

Members also received a report on the ALN Transformation Programme, outlined within the background section of this report.

### **25<sup>th</sup> November 2019 and 20<sup>th</sup> January 2020**

#### **Current and New Proposed funding formula**

Members noted that discussions between the Department of Education and Children Services (DECS) and schools had taken place over a number of years in terms of trying to develop the most effective 'allocation model' in support of Carmarthenshire pupils' needs.

Members were presented with the funding formula in operation for 2019/20 and had an opportunity to see how changes to the formula affected schools.

Members were also made aware that discussions had already started between DECS and schools with a view to developing a revised formula in preparation for 2020/21.

Given that work was already being undertaken by DECS in consultation with the School Budget Forum, the group agreed that any further detailed work into the formula would lead to duplication, and would not add value.

Therefore, the group formed the view that agreement on the formula should be between the Department of Education and Children's Services and Schools. Members felt strongly that any changes effecting schools and their budgets in relation to changes to the ALN formula should be comprehensively reviewed by the School Budget Forum.

However, the group agreed that there were principles that should underpin any new formula, and the process involved in applying the formula, and asked that these be relayed to the various groups of officers, head teachers and school budget forum during their discussions:

### **Principles of the Formula and its application**

#### **Clear reasoning behind the formula**

Any new formula funding mechanism needs to support and prepare schools for ALN Transformation that will reform the way in which children with ALN are identified, assessed and supported. Previous categories of ALN - school action, school action plus and statements will cease, and schools will be required to make statutory Additional Learning Provision through Individual Development Plans (IDPs).

For most children in mainstream schools, including those with ALNs and disabilities, money is allocated to them through the school budget and is known as the per pupil funding. This funding supports all learning and is used for staff salaries, including the ALNCO, facilities and ALN resources. A percentage of the total amount of per pupil funding received by a school should be spent on providing for pupils with ALN. In Carmarthenshire, schools are expected to allocate at least 5% of their per pupil funding to their ALN budget. The remainder of the funding formula is allocated through supplements which support the identified categories of spend for which a pupil number funding would not be appropriate. ALN funding is one such supplement.

Members were of the view that any future ALN funding formula should be evidence based, and should reflect the extent of the additional learning needs within each setting.

#### **Tapering effect – gradual change - Consideration is given to the reduction in the number of statements and the effect on transition**

Members noted that schools in Carmarthenshire have historically either been fully or partially funded to meet the needs of children who have an SEN statement.

The new ALN reforms would see a transition away from statements to Individual Development Plans. The group discussed concerns in relation to the impact of the changes

to ALN in relation to the move from Statements to IDPs and the impact this may have on school budgets.

Members felt that any changes to funding arrangements during the transition, particularly with regards to delegating more funding directly to schools, needs to be modelled accurately. It should also be done gradually, via a tapering effect over a number of years, so as to minimise budgetary pressures and shocks to schools.

The impact on small schools was also considered and the group were concerned that there would be a significant negative impact on some smaller schools, from which improvement would not be possible; as such contingency measures should be in place. The group called on DECS and schools to consider innovative ways of working that may reduce pressures on smaller schools, which included the sharing and pooling of resources.

### **Be able to / or consider moving money from Secondary to Primary**

A notional 20% of the population are presumed to have some form of ALN and current increases in the diagnosis of conditions such as Autism will see additional pressure placed on ALN funding. The group considered whether there was some flexibility in moving funding from secondary to primary schools in order to support early intervention. Consideration should be given to a strategy to support early years education with a view to alleviating pressures in the longer term.

### **Comparisons - look at good practice in other authorities**

The group considered an overview of the way and extent to which other authorities delegated school budgets.

Members were informed that there wasn't a consistent approach across the country and the group considered that the ALN Transformation Programme would require all authorities to review their provision and funding parameters.

Wherever possible this Authority should identify and share best practice with other Authorities and try to identify common ground via forums such as the Association of Directors of Education in Wales.

### **Headteachers and schools involved - and Consultation has taken place**

Delegation of ALN funding to schools in Carmarthenshire has been discussed with Headteachers over a number of years to support the requirement for change to ensure we have a system that is fit for purpose.

The group noted that in developing a new funding formula, thorough consultation with Headteachers, ALNCOs, Governing Bodies and the School Budget Forum on any proposed changes was paramount.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, Members acknowledged that the ALN Transformation Programme will require a significant amount of work over a number of years and that the Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Committee would need to consider monitoring the progress of this agenda when developing its Forward Work Programme.

DRAFT

**EDUCATION & CHILDREN SCRUTINY  
COMMITTEE  
28/01/2021**

**EXPLANATION FOR NON-SUBMISSION  
OF SCRUTINY REPORT**

ITEM	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	EXPLANATION	REVISED SUBMISSION DATE
<b>Proposal to Relocate Ysgol Dewi Sant</b>	Sara Griffiths	A site selection exercise is currently being progressed. Once completed, we will be able to identify whether a statutory consultation is required to re-locate the school.	To be confirmed
<b>Corporate Strategy</b>	John Buck	Following review of the document at CMT it has been requested that submission to PEB and Scrutiny be delayed allowing for amendments to be made to the document.	To be confirmed; Nicola Evans to contact all Scrutiny's to rearrange.
<b>Corporate/ Departmental Business Plans</b>	John Buck	The Chief Executive has asked that submission of Departmental Business Plans be delayed until she has conducted one to one review meetings with all Directors in regard to forward planning.	To be confirmed

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# EDUCATION & CHILDREN SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 28<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2021

## FORTHCOMING ITEMS FOR THE NEXT MEETING – 7<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2021

Agenda Item	Background	Reason for report
WESP	Every Local Authority is required to develop and implement a Welsh in Education Strategic Plan. The new WESP should commence no later than September 2022.	To comment on the draft of the new WESP (2021-2032).
Department Self Evaluation and 10 Year Strategy	As a 'learning organisation' the Education and Children's Services Department needs to review performance on a regular basis and address any shortcomings.	Our self-evaluation and external reviews has enabled us to development a 10 year strategy to address priorities.
ALN Transformation Action Plan	We want to transform expectations, experiences and outcomes for children and young people with additional learning needs (ALN). To do so, we have developed the additional learning needs (ALN) transformation programme, which transforms the separate systems for special educational needs (SEN) in schools and learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD) in further education, to create a unified system for supporting learners from 0 to 25 with ALN.	The report will outline the activities planned to support our central services and schools in implementing the required reform to ALN.
Corporate/Departmental Business Plans (JB)	The Department Business Plan accompanies the Corporate Strategy to show how the Department is delivering the Corporate Strategy. The document also accompanies the Revenue Budget Consultation as an integration of financial and business planning (this was also a proposal for improvement by Audit Office).	To give members an opportunity to review the Department's draft business plan in support of the Corporate Strategy.

**Items circulated to the Committee under separate cover since the last meeting**

None

**Items attached for information**

1. The latest version of the Education & Children Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme 2020/21
2. The latest version of the Executive Board Forward Work Programme 2020/21



## Education & Children Scrutiny Committee – Forward Work Programme 2020/21

23 <sup>rd</sup> November 2020	6 <sup>th</sup> January 2021	28 <sup>th</sup> January 2021	17 <sup>th</sup> March 2021	21 <sup>st</sup> April 2021
Covid-19 Position Statement including Support for Learning and Learners since March 2020	<del>Education Support for Vulnerable Learners</del>	Revenue Budget Consultation 2021/22 – 2023/24	WESP	Curriculum Development
Education Strategy 2020-2030	Staff and Pupil Wellbeing and Mental Health	<del>Proposal to relocate Ysgol Dewi Sant (tbc)</del>	Department Self-evaluation and 10 Year Strategy	Scrutiny School Visits Framework
Proposal to shorten the internal democratic process for approving statutory consultations	<del>Task &amp; Finish Group Final Report – ALN Funding</del>	<del>Corporate Strategy</del>	<del>Proposal to relocate Ysgol Heol Goffa and to increase its capacity (Stage 3)</del>	
Education & Children Scrutiny Committee Annual Report 2019/20	Financial Challenges Facing Schools – Including Analysis of Grants and ALN Funding	Estyn report and Internal Review on Covid Response/ Education Support for Vulnerable Learners	ALN Transformation Action Plan	
Education & Children Scrutiny FWP 2020/21	<del>Proposal to change the nature of provision at approx. 4 schools (Stage 1)</del>	<del>Corporate/Departmental Business Plans</del>	Corporate/Departmental Business Plans	
Proposal to relocate Ysgol Heol Goffa and to increase its capacity (Stage 2)		MEP Proposal – Model School		
Proposal to discontinue Ysgol Gynradd Blaenau and to increase the capacity and change the nature of provision at Ysgol Gynradd Llandybie (Stage 1)		MEP Proposal – Ysgol y Felin		
<del>Proposal to discontinue Ysgol Ffynyddgors (Stage 1)</del>		Task & Finish Group Final Report – ALN Funding		
<del>Proposal to change the age range at Ysgol Swiss Valley (Stage 1)</del>				
Proposal to discontinue Ysgol Gynradd Mynyddygarreg (Stage 1)				

For information/update reports circulated to the Committee via e-mail throughout the year:-

- Budget Monitoring 2020/21
- Annual Performance Report (Half Yearly)

**Additional reports requested by the Committee:-**

- Staff health & wellbeing and mental health
- Financial challenges facing schools and ALN
- Estyn report and Internal Review report
- Effect on NEETS (European funding)
- Vulnerable learners

**Reports to be allocated in the FWP:-**

- Tackling NEETS (& impact of possible loss of European funding)

**Workshops to be arranged during the year:-**

- Review of the Modernising Education Programme

**EXECUTIVE BOARD FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME 20/21**  
**as at 18/11/2020** (For the period November 20 – Oct 21)

**Introduction**

This plan is published to encourage and enable greater understanding between the Executive, all Councillors, the public and other stakeholders. It assists the Scrutiny Committees in planning their contribution to policy development and holding the executive to account.

The plan gives the public and stakeholders a chance to see the forthcoming major decisions to be made by the Executive Board over the next 12 months. It is reviewed and published quarterly to take account of changes and additional key decisions.

WORKING DRAFT

**EXECUTIVE BOARD FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME 20/21**  
as at 18/11/2020 (For the period November 20 – Oct 21)

<b>EDUCATION &amp; CHILDREN</b>				
<b>Subject area and brief description of nature of report</b>	<b>Responsible Officer</b>	<b>Executive Portfolio</b>	<b>Scrutiny Committee to be consulted</b>	<b>Date of expected decision by Executive Board</b>
SCHOOL UPDATE REPORT- COVID 19, SCHOOLS CAUSING CONCERN AND FINANCE	Gareth Morgans – Director of Education and Children	Education & Children	N/A	
LA EDUCATION SERVICES SELF EVALUATION	Aneirin Thomas – Head of Education and Inclusion	Education & Children	tbc	To be confirmed
UPDATE ON NEW CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENTS	Aeron Rees – Head of Curriculum and Wellbeing	Education & Children	tbc	To be confirmed
POST 16 EDUCATION	Aeron Rees – Head of Curriculum and Wellbeing	Education & Children	tbc	TBC
RESULTS OF 2020 EXAMINATIONS	Aneirin Thomas – Head of Education and Inclusion	Education & Children	N/A	TBC
PROPOSAL TO DISCONTINUE YSGOL GYNRADD BLAENAU AND TO INCREASE THE CAPACITY AND CHANGE THE NATURE OF PROVISION AT YSGOL GYNRADD LLANDYBIE (STAGE 1, 2 AND 3)	Simon Davies – Head of Access to Education	Education & Children	YES	21/12/20 (Stage 1) 10/05/21 (Stage 2) 05/07/21 (Stage 3)
ALN TRANSFORMATION ACTION PLAN	Aneirin Thomas – Head of Education and Inclusion	Education & Children	28/01/20	tbc
CHILDREN'S SERVICES PAPER- TBC	Stefan Smith - Head of Children's Services	Education & Children	N/A	tbc
CARMARTHENSHIRE 10 YEAR STRATEGY FOR EDUCATION	Gareth Morgans – Director of Education and Children	Education & Children	23/11/20	October 2020
PROPOSAL TO RELOCATE YSGOL HEOL GOFFA AND TO INCREASE ITS CAPACITY (STAGE 2 AND 3)	Simon Davies – Head of Access to Education	Education & Children	YES)	21 <sup>st</sup> December
PROPOSAL TO DISCONTINUE YSGOL RHYDYGORS (STAGE 1, 2 AND 3)	Simon Davies – Head of Access to Education	Education & Children	YES	21/12/20 (Stage 1) 10/05/21 (Stage 2) 05/07/21 (Stage 3)
PROPOSAL TO CHANGE THE AGE RANGE AT YSGOL SWISS VALLEY (TBC) (STAGE 1, 2 AND 3)	Simon Davies – Head of Access to Education	Education & Children	YES	21/12/20 (Stage 1) 10/05/21 (Stage 2) 05/07/21 (Stage 3)
PROPOSAL TO DISCONTINUE YSGOL GYNRADD MYNYDD Y GARREG (STAGE 1, 2 AND 3)	Simon Davies – Head of Access to Education	Education & Children	YES	21/12/20 (Stage 1) 10/05/21 (Stage 2) 05/07/21 (Stage 3)

## EDUCATION & CHILDREN SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

WEDNESDAY, 6<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY, 2021

**PRESENT:** Councillor D. Price [Chair]

**Councillors:**

K.V. Broom, T.A.J. Davies, R. James (in place of D. Jones), J.P. Jenkins, B.W. Jones, G.R. Jones, M.J.A. Lewis, E.M.J.G. Schiavone, B. Thomas, E.G. Thomas and D.T. Williams

**Co-opted Members:**

A. Enoch - Parent Governor  
V. Kenny - Roman Catholic Church Representative

**Also in attendance:**

Councillor G. Davies - Executive Board Member for Education & Children

**The following Officers were in attendance:**

S. Davies - Head of Access to Education  
A. Rees - Head of Curriculum and Wellbeing  
A. Thomas - Head of Education and Inclusion Services  
A. Davies - Principal Educational Psychologist  
S. Nolan - Group Accountant  
M. Evans Thomas - Principal Democratic Services Officer  
M. Davies - Democratic Services Officer  
K. Thomas - Democratic Services Officer  
S. Rees - Simultaneous Translator  
J. Corner - Technical Officer

**Virtual Meeting : 10.00 am - 1.10 pm**

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors L. Bowen and D. Jones.

**2. DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL INTEREST INCLUDING ANY PARTY WHIPS ISSUED IN RELATION TO ANY AGENDA ITEM**

There were no declarations of personal interest or party whips.

**3. PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

The Chair advised that no public questions had been received.

**4. STAFF AND PUPIL WELLBEING AND MENTAL HEALTH - JANUARY 2021 UPDATE**

The Committee considered a report providing an update on staff and pupil wellbeing and mental health as a consequence of the Covid-19 pandemic. The

report outlined the additional support and preventative measures put in place by the Department of Education and Children. Whilst focussing on the wellbeing of pupils and school staff, the report also included reference to the wellbeing of other young people who may not be in school but were still under the remit of the Department e.g. young adults in the Youth Support Service.

The following questions/observations were raised on the report:-

- With regard to the reference in the report that costs are being borne by the Education Department, officers were asked if any support is received from the Welsh Government. The Committee was advised that the Department is very grateful for all the support received from Welsh Government, however, if officers feel that additional support is needed, over and above that funded by Welsh Government, then that cost falls on the Local Education Authority. The Head of Curriculum and Wellbeing added that any assistance from central government would be welcome, however, no announcement has been made to date;
- With regard to the number of children and young people waiting for counselling, officers were asked how many are on the waiting list and whether that number had increased during the pandemic. The Committee was informed that all requests for assistance are prioritised and anyone with a high level of distress will be seen first. Officers were doing everything possible to reduce the waiting list, however, it was not just an issue of the availability of resources as accessibility and the availability of the children were also currently issues. Although remote support is available some children prefer to wait until face to face sessions are available again and whilst understandable, this has an impact on the waiting list;
- Reference was made to the fact that when it comes to distance learning, there are three tiers of children – those who are easy to reach, those with challenges and those with a higher degree of challenges and officers were asked how satisfied they were that they are able to reach those children in tiers 2 and 3. The Head of Curriculum and Wellbeing informed the Committee that the pastoral team spend 95% of their team on 5% of pupils and he assured the Committee that work was being undertaken to ensure that the support network in our schools is as strong as it can be;
- Concern was expressed that some children may fall through the net and not get the support they need. The Committee was reminded of the importance of having a good relationship between the school and the parent with regard to distance learning. The Head of Education and Inclusion Services informed the Committee that at the beginning of the first lockdown schools were asked to work with officers on categorising all pupils into red, amber and green in terms of distance learning so that the most vulnerable pupils in the red category could be concentrated on;
- With regard to the audit undertaken at the beginning of the pandemic, officers were asked what type of support is provided for each category and whether this is being audited. The Head of Education and Inclusion Services explained that schools and officers concentrate on the red category and daily contact is expected. With regard to the amber category,

it is all about raising awareness of the needs of the children and what they should be doing. It is made clear to schools that if these children are not online and engaging then they need to take action. Children in the green category need to continue with their learning, however, these pupils also need to be challenged;

- Officers were asked if all children have the IT equipment needed to distance learn and if so, are all schools (primary and secondary) proactive in terms of distance learning. The Committee was informed that 1,600 IT kits have been distributed alongside dongles to enable internet access where required;
- Concern was expressed at the drop in the number of pupils registered for elective home schooling and officers were asked if these pupils have access to online learning. The Head of Education and Inclusion Services informed the Committee that officers were concerned over the level of de-registration at the beginning of the pandemic and they have worked hard on re-engagement with initiatives including using drones to show the safety measures being implemented at schools and parents being invited to see these measures for themselves. He pointed out that the Local Authority receives around £3,500 per capita allowance for each pupil, however, there is no allowance provided for those electively home educated even though staff are designated to assist them;
- Whilst welcoming the work being done with staff and the Welsh Government confidential helpline, an assurance was sought from officers that enough is being done to support staff. The Head of Curriculum and Wellbeing informed the Committee that there are many initiatives in place to support staff including live, virtual sessions offering an opportunity for staff to interact with colleagues from all over Wales;
- Concern was expressed over the tremendous amount of pressure on our teachers and leaders and the fact that if our teachers are not well then we have no chance of getting our school open. Officers were asked if it was possible to make approaches to the Welsh Government to make sure that teachers receive the vaccine as a priority. Officers were asked if it was possible to recommend to the Executive Board that they lobby the Welsh Government to request that teachers be included high on the list of those to be vaccinated. The Executive Board Member for Education & Children agreed to raise this with the Executive Board;
- Reference was made to the fact that the strain on teachers has been immense over the past few months and officers were asked if they had any data to show how many staff are off work due to stress. The Head of Education and Inclusion Services informed the Committee that he did not have the data with him, however, he would circulate to the Committee following via e-mail following the meeting.

## **UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED**

**4.1 that the report be received;**

**4.2 that the Executive Board Member for Education & Children raise with the Executive Board the issue of lobbying the Welsh Government to request that teachers be included high on the list**

**of those to be vaccinated.**

## **5. FINANCIAL CHALLENGES FACING SCHOOLS**

The Committee considered a report outlining the financial challenges facing primary schools. The report detailed the current Fair Funding budget allocation to schools and efforts to distribute equitably to the range of primary schools to meet the educational needs of all learners in Carmarthenshire. The report also outlined some key contextual influences that currently impact on the funding model in schools.

Access to high quality education is a fundamental right for all children and young people and it should not depend on where you live, your social background or the language in which you learn. A good education is one of the most important building blocks a child can receive. It is essential that there is sufficient, equitable funding available to ensure that the education that our children and young people deserve can be delivered effectively and consistently.

The following questions/observations were raised on the report:-

- Asked if there were any figures available in relation to the total expenditure on education by Local Authorities, the Group Accountant explained that this data is compiled by the Welsh Government on an annual basis and an analysis report is available. She added that it was difficult to compare data because all Education Directorates are slightly different in each Authority with some including libraries and in some ALN is delegated whereas in others in it held centrally;
- Asked for a breakdown of the three elements – learners, deprivation and sparsity, the Group Accountant informed the Committee that she would circulate this information by e-mail following the meeting;
- Reference was made to the fact that the report highlighted the significant challenges in our schools and indicated that we cannot continue as we are and it was felt that it was now time to hold meaningful and measured discussions about this. The Executive Board Member for Education and Children agreed that it was a concern that some of our schools are old, in poor condition and not fit for purpose which was why the Modernising Education Programme was so important;
- Concern was expressed at some of the levels of deficit and also in the way that some schools have coped well over the past year but some have got significantly worse. The Executive Board Member for Education and Children explained that capacity is an issue and when a project is included in the MEP, it is because of capacity issues. The Head of Access to Education added that there is a duty on Local Authorities to plan school places and it was therefore essential to match supply with demand. The Welsh Government requires Local Authorities to review all schools with over 10% spare places;
- Reference was made to the fact that the Committee has been concerned about the level of school deficits and the report was useful in showing the reasons and detail behind this. Officers were asked if it would be possible to receive a similar report for secondary schools and the Head of Education



and Inclusion Services agreed to bring a report on this to a future meeting;

- Reference was made to the fact that a significant proportion of all schools have pupils from outside their catchment area. The Head of Access to Education informed the Committee that it had been intended to undertake a review of all catchment areas, however, this had not been possible due to the fact that most of his team have been redeployed to work in other areas due to the pandemic. He added that the catchment area review will be finalised as soon as practicable.

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the report be received.**

[NOTE: At 12.55 p.m., during consideration of the above item, the Committee's attention was drawn to Council Procedure Rule 9 – Duration of Meeting and, as the meeting had been underway for nearly three hours, it was **UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** to suspend standing orders to enable the Committee to conclude the remaining business on the agenda.]

**6. TASK & FINISH GROUP FINAL REPORT - ALN FORMULA FUNDING**

The Chair informed the Committee that he proposed to defer consideration of this report to the next meeting to enable additional information to be included.

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that consideration of the report be deferred to the next meeting of the Committee.**

**7. EXPLANATION FOR NON-SUBMISSION OF SCRUTINY REPORT**

The Committee received an explanation for the non-submission of the following scrutiny report and noted that it would be presented to Committee at the next meeting:-

- Education Support for Vulnerable Learners

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the information be noted.**

**8. FORTHCOMING ITEMS**

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the information be noted.**

**9. TO SIGN AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE HELD ON THE 23RD NOVEMBER, 2020**

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on the 23<sup>rd</sup> November, 2020 be signed as a correct record.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
CHAIR

\_\_\_\_\_  
DATE

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