

Document Pack



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WEDNESDAY 18TH JANUARY 2017

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

**I HEREBY SUMMON YOU TO ATTEND A MEETING OF THE
EDUCATION & CHILDREN SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WHICH WILL
BE HELD IN THE CHAMBER, 3 SPILMAN STREET,
CARMARTHEN AT 10:00AM ON THURSDAY 26TH JANUARY
2017, FOR THE TRANSACTION OF THE BUSINESS OUTLINED
ON THE ATTACHED AGENDA.**

Mark James CBE

CHIEF EXECUTIVE



PLEASE RECYCLE

| | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Democratic Officer: | Matthew Hughes |
| Telephone (Direct Line): | 01267 224029 |
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| Ref: | AD016-001 |

EDUCATION & CHILDREN SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

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

PLAID CYMRU GROUP – 6 MEMBERS

- | | | |
|----|------------|-----------------------|
| 1. | Councillor | C.A. Campbell |
| 2. | Councillor | J.M. Charles |
| 3. | Councillor | W.G. Hopkins |
| 4. | Councillor | P. Hughes Griffiths |
| 5. | Councillor | M.J.A. Lewis |
| 6. | Councillor | J.E. Williams (Chair) |

INDEPENDENT GROUP – 3 MEMBERS

- | | | |
|----|------------|-----------------|
| 1. | Councillor | I.W. Davies |
| 2. | Councillor | A. James |
| 3. | Councillor | D.W.H. Richards |

LABOUR GROUP – 4 MEMBERS

- | | | |
|----|------------|------------------------------|
| 1. | Councillor | D.J.R. Bartlett (Vice-Chair) |
| 2. | Councillor | J.D. James |
| 3. | Councillor | P.E.M. Jones |
| 4. | Councillor | J. Williams |

NON ELECTED VOTING MEMBERS (2)

- | | | |
|----|------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. | Mrs. V. Kenny | Roman Catholic Church Representative |
| 2. | Mrs. J. Voyle Williams | Church in Wales Representative |

ELECTED VOTING PARENT GOVERNOR MEMBERS (3)

Term of office expires on the 31/03/2018

- | | | |
|----|-----------------|---------------------|
| 1. | Mrs. E. Heyes | Area 3 – Llanelli |
| 2. | Mrs. K. Hill | Area 1 – Dinefwr |
| 3. | Mrs. A. Pickles | Area 2 – Carmarthen |

AGENDA

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE
2. DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL INTEREST
3. DECLARATIONS OF PROHIBITED PARTY WHIPS
4. PUBLIC QUESTIONS (NONE RECEIVED)
5. FORTHCOMING ITEMS 5 - 6
6. CSSIW INSPECTION OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES IN CARMARTHENSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL 7 - 34
7. SCHOOL PERFORMANCE AND ACHIEVEMENT 2015-2016 35 - 70
8. E&C SCRUTINY COMMITTEE TASK & FINISH REVIEW 2015/16 FINAL REPORT: NARROWING THE ATTAINMENT GAP – LEARNERS ELIGIBLE FOR FREE SCHOOL MEALS 71 - 130
9. EXPLANATION FOR THE NON-SUBMISSION OF SCRUTINY REPORT 131 - 132
10. TO SIGN AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE HELD ON THE 21ST NOVEMBER 2016 133 - 148

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EDUCATION & CHILDREN SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 26th JANUARY 2017

**Forthcoming items for next meeting –
Wednesday 15th March 2017**

| Discussion Topic | Background |
|--|---|
| WG Categorisation of Schools 2017 | This report will provide the Committee with an opportunity to consider the current position of the County's schools and areas for improvement. The categorisation information can be used by the Committee to scrutinise the performance of Carmarthenshire schools and the impact of the ERW Consortium, as well as challenge any under-performance. |
| Council's Well-Being Objectives 2017/18 | The Well-being of Future Generations Act requires most public bodies in Wales to carry out sustainable development with the objective of improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of their area. It places a well-being duty on those public bodies to set and publish objectives designed to maximise their contribution to the seven national well-being goals. They are also required to take all reasonable steps to meet those objectives. This item will provide the Committee with an opportunity to consider and comment on the Council's proposed objectives for 2017/18. |
| Q3 Performance Monitoring Report 2016/17 | This is a standard 6-monthly report which allows members to undertake their monitoring role in relation to the department's services. |

| Discussion Topic | Background |
|-------------------------------|---|
| Budget Monitoring 2016/17 | This is a standard quarterly item which enables members to undertake their monitoring role of revenue and capital budgets in relation to the Education & Children Department. |
| Actions & Referrals Update | This quarterly report provides an update on progress made in relation to actions and requests from previous meetings. |

EDUCATION & CHILDREN SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 26th JANUARY 2017

CSSIW Inspection of Children’s Services in Carmarthenshire County Council

To consider and comment on the following issues:

- That the Committee considers and comments on the outcomes of the inspection and recommendations therein.

Reasons:

- In July 2016, Care & Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) undertook a pilot inspection of children’s services in Carmarthenshire County Council.
- To enable members to exercise their scrutiny role in relation to monitoring performance.

To be referred to the Executive Board for decision: NO

Executive Board Member Portfolio Holder: Cllr. Gareth Jones (Education & Children)

| | | |
|---|--|---|
| <p>Directorate: Education & Children</p> <p>Name of Head of Service: Stefan Smith</p> <p>Report Author: Bobbie Jones</p> | <p>Designations:</p> <p>Head of Children’s Services</p> <p>Lead Inspector CSSIW</p> | <p>Tel Nos. / E-Mail Addresses:</p> <p>01267 246530 sjsmith@carmarthenshire.gov.uk</p> <p>0300 7900 126 cssiw@wales.gsi.gov.uk</p> |
|---|--|---|

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

EDUCATION & CHILDREN SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 26th JANUARY 2017

CSSIW Inspection of Children's Services in Carmarthenshire County Council

The attached report outlines Care & Social Services Inspectorate Wales' findings and recommendations for Children's Services in Carmarthenshire County Council, following its inspection of the services in July 2016.

The inspection took place during a period of significant change for Carmarthenshire County Council while implementing the Social Services and Well-Being (Wales) Act 2014.

The Local Authority was also bringing in revised social work operating models across Children's Services.

The inspection was a pilot to test and learn from a revised approach to local authority inspection, with greater emphasis on understanding how the delivery of social services improves outcomes for people in need of care and support.

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.

Signed: Stefan Smith Head of Children's Services

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

CONSULTATIONS

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

Signed: Stefan Smith Head of Children's Services

1. Local Member(s) – N/A
2. Community / Town Council – N/A
3. Relevant Partners – N/A
4. Staff Side Representatives and other Organisations – N/A

**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 |
|---|---|
| CSSIW Inspection of Children's Services: Carmarthenshire County Council (July 2016) | <p>Cymraeg: http://cssiw.org.uk/our-reports/local-authority-report/2016/160927-childrens-services-carmarthenshire/?skip=1&lang=cy</p> <p>English: http://cssiw.org.uk/our-reports/local-authority-report/2016/160927-childrens-services-carmarthenshire/?lang=en</p> |

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Inspection of *Children's* Services

Carmarthenshire County Council

Mae'r ddogfen yma hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg.
This document is also available in Welsh.



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Introduction

Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) undertook a pilot inspection of children's services in Carmarthenshire County Council in July 2016. The purpose of the pilot was for CSSIW to test out and learn from a revised approach to local authority inspection methodology which introduced a greater emphasis on understanding the extent to which the delivery of social services improves outcomes for people in need of care and support.

This pilot was narrowly focused, specifically testing out inspection tools and methods that supported evaluation of outcomes for children and families accessing information, advice and assistance, preventive and statutory services. An evaluation of outcomes for carers was out of scope for this pilot as was an assessment of advocacy services.

Inspectors looked closely at the quality of outcomes achieved for children in need of help, care and support and/or protection. We focussed specifically on the quality of practice, decision making and multi-agency work in the delivery of information, advice and assistance services. In addition inspectors evaluated what the local authority knew about its own performance and the difference it was making for the people it was seeking to help, support and protect.

Inspectors read case files and interviewed staff, managers and professionals from partner agencies. Wherever possible, they talked to children, young people and their families.

The fieldwork for this pilot inspection took place during a period of significant change for Carmarthenshire County Council, in particular the implementation of the Social Services and Well-Being (Wales) Act 2014 (SSWBA) was embryonic so the requirements of the act had not had sufficient time to embed into new practices and procedures. Also the authority was in the process of introducing revised social work operating models across children's services. Our case file sample included a mix of these new approaches alongside previous arrangements for the completion of assessments and plans. CSSIW recognised that in evaluating the quality of work during this period of major change our capacity to make consistent judgements was limited and this was exacerbated by the very small sample size we reviewed.

Nevertheless we found an authority committed to supporting children and families to stay together whenever it was safe to do so and their approach to delivering family support services underpinned this commitment. Inspectors were pleased to note that elected members, senior leaders, managers and staff were committed to achieving improvements in the provision of help, support and protection for children and families.

The recommendations made on page 5 of this report identify the key areas where post-inspection development work should be focused. They are intended to assist Carmarthenshire County Council and its partners in their continuing improvement.

The inspection team would like to thank Carmarthenshire elected members, staff, partner agencies and service users who contributed to this report.

Summary of Findings

Information, Advice & Assistance

We found that generally when referrals were made that children and families were signposted to services and/or offered assessments appropriately. Safeguarding concerns were re-routed to statutory services speedily and appropriately. Regardless of the referral route IAA services could be provided bilingually as well as in a range of relevant formats. Partners broadly understood the route's available for accessing a range of services for children and families. Further development was required at all levels to more effectively align IAA services with the requirements of the SSWBA and improve outcomes for children and families.

Access and Assessment & Safeguarding and Protection

Generally partners and the authority provided a timely and appropriate response to concerns about children and young people who might be at risk. The understanding of thresholds between partners and children's services was inconsistent and multi-agency work to address this was indicated. Overall, assessments were timely and contained appropriate information from a range of sources. The quality of risk analysis within assessments and care planning was variable and although assessments and plans were generally child-focussed, they did not always take sufficient account of the impact that adults' behaviours had on children. Assessments and plans were effectively shared with children and families. Management oversight of the quality of assessment and care planning was insufficiently robust in terms of challenge and quality control. Arrangements for stepping up and down between the preventive and statutory sectors were generally understood. Children, who were or were likely to be, at risk of harm were identified and child protection enquiries were thorough and timely. Regional multi-agency protocols needed to be updated.

Leadership, Management & Governance

We found committed and effective leadership, management and governance arrangements were in place in Carmarthenshire. SMT and elected members demonstrated effective leadership and had a clear vision about what they wanted children's services to look like. This was reasonably well communicated to staff. Children's services business could have been more highly prioritised by scrutiny arrangements. We saw some evidence of the authority monitoring and evaluating its own performance, particularly through the TAF hub and external review of child in need and family support services. Work with partners, especially at a regional level, could usefully be strengthened. We found a committed, stable and suitably experienced workforce. The building blocks were in place to further develop service provision in alignment with the SSWBA.

Recommendations

1. Multi-agency arrangements should be established to strengthen operational plans to support effective co-ordination of statutory partner's completion of Joint Assessment Frameworks.
2. The local authority should establish effective systems to ensure that thresholds for access to statutory services are understood and consistently applied by staff and partners.
3. The consistency and quality of social work and risk analysis contained in assessments and plans must be improved.
4. The quality of management oversight of assessment and planning should be strengthened.
5. Strong political and corporate support for children's services must continue to ensure service improvements underway are prioritised and the pace of improvement sustained.
6. The local authority and partners should continue to work together to develop an integrated approach to delivering information, advice and assistance, preventive services and statutory provision to achieve greater continuity and reduce duplication for children and families accessing these services.

Key Dimension 1: Access, Information Advice & Assistance

What we expect to see:

The authority works with partner organisations to develop, understand, co-ordinate, keep up to date and make best use of statutory, voluntary and private sector information, assistance and advice resources available in their area. All people have access to comprehensive information about services and get prompt advice and support, including information about their eligibility and what they can expect by way of response from the service. Arrangements are effective in delaying or preventing the need for care and support. People are aware of and can easily make use of key points of contact. The service listens to people. Effective signposting and referring provides people with choice about support and services available in their locality, particularly preventative services. Access arrangements to statutory social services provision are understood by partners and the people engaging with the service are operating effectively.

Key findings

- IAA services were available bilingually and in a range of accessible formats
- Children's services worked effectively alongside other public sector services and the voluntary sector to provide a range of interventions to support vulnerable families.
- Those staff providing IAA services were well trained, confident in their ability to recognise safeguarding thresholds and familiar with referral procedures to statutory services.
- Overall commissioned preventative services made appropriate referrals to statutory services.
- More work with statutory partners in health and education to raise awareness of their role and responsibility for undertaking JAF completion was required.
- Local authority and partners could benefit from clarification about the inter-relationship between each other's roles and responsibilities for undertaking the provision of IAA services.

Explanation of finding

- 1.1. Carmarthenshire local authority was committed to supporting children and families to stay together. The authority's Family Support & Prevention Strategy promoted the least intrusive method of intervention possible, consistent with safeguarding and advocated the importance of engaging with children and families in the co-production of assessments and of person centred planning. The authority provided Information Advice and Assistance (IAA) services that were accessible to the public and to professionals through a variety of formats and offered in people's language of need.

- 1.2. The Family Information Service (FIS) statement of service 2016 was consistent with the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 (SSWBA) as it defined both “*information*” and “*guidance*” and clearly differentiated between these two activities. The website was well-developed and easy to navigate, evidenced by an 89.6% satisfaction response rate to FIS on-line survey. Users were signposted to a comprehensive range of universal childcare and/or preventative services but inclusion of a hyperlink to the council’s website would have created a more direct route for people requiring information about eligibility for care and support services. FIS had been pro-active about promoting their service particularly through a creative approach to working with primary schools and the introduction of a Partnership Working with Schools Award. Despite some very proactive work with primary schools the service recognised it has more to do to engage directly and effectively with older children.
- 1.3. FIS staff appeared to be well-trained in respect of giving information and they were well-informed about a wide range of local services for children and families in the area. They were able to recognise when it was appropriate to provide more in depth information and to describe advantages and disadvantages of options outlined. FIS staff had recently spent a short time shadowing duty workers and as a result believed they were developing a better insight into the work of the authority’s Central Referral Team (CRT). They were familiar with procedures, including issues around consent, for ongoing referral of relevant cases to CRT and they were aware of their safeguarding responsibilities.
- 1.4. Key to the authority’s Family Support & Prevention Strategy was Team Around the Family (TAF). The TAF management board with strategic representation from local authority, health, education and voluntary sector provided governance and accountability and was supported by operational middle management and practitioner groups similarly constituted.
- 1.5. The TAF hub supported the collection, collation and analysis of data across much of the preventive sector. This information was used to identify areas of greatest need as well as gaps in provision and to inform the commissioning cycle. The authority had utilised this intelligence alongside information arising from regular contract monitoring arrangements to re-commission child and family support provision. This had resulted in the provision of a range of services to: provide choice; help meet the needs of individuals and communities; and prevent the need for statutory services. Services were organised around four tiers of need. Tier 1 included universal services available for all children and families. Services for children and families needing some extra support were at tiers 2 and 3. Tier 4 included services for families and children in crisis requiring statutory intervention. Families in need of access to a number of services could move between tiers depending on circumstances and the effectiveness of support.

- 1.6. The TAF hub also provided a referral route for families and professionals to access support services for children and families. It comprised a central team of suitably trained and experienced co-ordinators, who provided support, liaison, guidance and training to a diverse range of practitioners and commissioned family support services. The co-coordinators role was to review referrals and make decisions about thresholds. Arrangements for stepping-up from preventive services were clearly articulated in the TAF protocol and evidence from our case file sample reassured us that overall commissioned services made appropriate referrals to statutory services. In many cases of a very small sample agencies continued to support families during this process.
- 1.7. Those cases not requiring statutory services were either signposted to relevant single agency family support; or if the family presented with more complex needs (falling short of a requirement for an assessment for care and support) they were allocated to a key worker in the commissioned project evaluated as being most relevant to their individual circumstances for a Joint Assessment Framework (JAF) to be undertaken and a multi-agency package of support offered. We noted that there was more work to be done with statutory partners in health and education to raise awareness of their role and responsibility for undertaking JAF completion. Due to pressures of demand there could sometimes be a delay in obtaining a JAF and there were also waiting times for some commissioned services. Although we were reassured that families stepping down from statutory services continued to receive social work support during the wait we were not able to gain a sense of how any other families referred to these services were supported during a waiting period.
- 1.8. The work of CRT covered the whole of Carmarthenshire. This team of duty workers provided a point of contact for people who had concerns about a child's welfare or safety. As most contacts were received from other professionals the extent to which duty workers directly offered information, and/or advice and/or assistance to children and families (in comparison to third party) was unclear. Local authority and partners could usefully benefit from clarification about the inter-relationship between each other's roles and responsibilities for undertaking the provision of IAA services as the requirements of the SSWBA become further embedded.

Conclusion

We found that generally when referrals were made that children and families were signposted to services and/or offered assessments appropriately. Safeguarding concerns were re-routed to statutory services speedily and appropriately. Regardless of the referral route IAA services could be provided bilingually as well as in a range of relevant formats. Partners broadly understood the route's available for accessing a range of services for children and families. Further development was required at all levels to more effectively align IAA services with the requirements of the SSWBA and improve outcomes for children and families.

Key Dimensions 2 & 4: Access and Assessment & Safeguarding and Protection

What we expect to see: Access and Assessment

All people entitled to an assessment of their care and support needs receive one in their preferred language. People experience a timely assessment of their needs which promotes their independence and ability to exercise choice. Assessments have regard to the personal outcomes and views, wishes and feelings of the person subject of the assessment and that of relevant others including those with parental responsibility. This is in so far as is reasonably practicable and consistent with promoting their wellbeing and safety and that of others. Assessments provide a clear understanding of what will happen next. Recommended actions, designed to achieve the outcomes that matter to people, are identified and include all those that can be met through community based or preventative services.

What we expect to see: Safeguarding and Protection

Effective local safeguarding strategies combine both preventative and protective elements. Where people are experiencing or are at risk of abuse neglect or harm, they receive urgent, well-coordinated multi-agency responses. People are not left in unsafe or dangerous environments

Key Findings

- Generally partners and the authority provided a timely and appropriate response to concerns about children and young people who might be at risk.
- There was not always a consistent understanding of thresholds; however threshold decisions in relation to safeguarding and child protection concerns were robust.
- Assessments were timely and developed from a wide range of sources including information from partners, parents and carers.
- Families views were considered and reflected in assessments and a copy of completed assessments were effectively shared with them.
- Good social work practice was reflected in the content of assessments and care planning.
- Social workers needed to be more robust and confident in working with families and setting out their professional analysis of risk and needs.
- Management oversight of the assessment and planning process was insufficiently robust in terms of challenge and quality control.
- Child protection enquiries were thorough and timely and were informed by decisions made at a strategy discussion.
- Multi-agency child protection thresholds protocol needed to be updated to incorporate more recent Welsh Government guidance.

Explanation of findings

Access & Assessment

- 2.1. Arrangements for access to statutory children's services were well organised. Although the quality of information supplied by partner agencies was variable, duty workers were diligent in chasing missing information. There was a perception amongst some staff and managers that despite the shared directorate arrangements a minority of schools still lacked confidence in raising concerns with families and that on occasions this could delay referrals. This is an area that needs to be addressed by training.
- 2.2. We found generally that partners and the authority provided a timely and appropriate response to concerns about children and young people who might be at risk. Duty workers demonstrated a good awareness of the preventive services available for children and families across the authority. All were experienced and told us that they were "very confident" in their ability to recognise and act appropriately on immediate safeguarding concerns.
- 2.3. Under the supervision of team managers duty workers undertook thorough additional enquires with professionals and with families to clarify and confirm contact information to inform initial decision making. In cases where the threshold for an assessment for care and support was indicated duty workers subsequently completed referral forms. The majority of referrals seen were of good quality and represented a brief analysis of the presenting risks and needs. Whilst not yet explicitly articulated as such these referrals effectively represented the start of a proportionate assessment. Partners were often not advised of the outcome of referrals.
- 2.4. The workflow arrangements between CRT and locality assessment teams were well established. All contacts that met the threshold for an assessment for care and support were transferred to locality assessment teams. Partners reported that in a small number of cases the transfer between teams could create delay in decision making leading to a potential impediment to children and families receiving early help. The authority could usefully assure itself that the workflow arrangements between these teams are as streamlined as possible.
- 2.5. Staff reported that despite good personal working relationships with partner agencies there was not a shared common understanding of thresholds for access to statutory services. Partners also commented on some inconsistencies in the application of thresholds. However they were also clear that threshold decisions in relation to safeguarding and child protection concerns were robust. Evidence from our case file review also suggested some inconsistencies in the application of thresholds in respect of referrals where there was no obvious indication of significant harm. Nevertheless, we found that the constructive relationship between CRT and locality assessment team managers facilitated healthy challenge around threshold decision making and as such was a key strength that made a positive contribution to

arrangements for management oversight. We also noted that the TAF manager participated in quarterly threshold review meetings but judged that a wider range of partners could usefully be engaged in the quality assurance process to more effectively achieve a consistent and shared understanding of thresholds.

- 2.6. The authority had appropriate systems in place for responding to referrals out of normal office hours. The Out of Hours Team had access to the authority's electronic information system and the CRT manager had systems in place to prioritise cases referred by this service if required.
- 2.7. The authority had identified the significance of domestic abuse and children's services were participating in a domestic abuse conference call (DACC) pilot at the time of our fieldwork. This regular multi-agency arrangement aimed to protect victims and reduce the likelihood of further harm to children from domestic abuse. We observed the DACC to be effectively chaired by police and that all other partners were well prepared for the call and participated constructively. Any actions agreed for each agency were clearly articulated and it was evident that when there were repeat victims previous actions were reviewed. The authority and partner's needed to assure themselves that this initiative was achieving its aim. Although a governance and accountability structure was in place to monitor the pilot the authority had yet to determine how or when the outcomes from the pilot would be evaluated and/or reported on.
- 2.8. A new template for recording proportionate assessments and care and support plans was introduced in May 2016. The format encouraged practitioners to apply the principles of the SSWBA when undertaking assessment and planning activities. Staff we spoke to had been involved in the development of these forms through the Form Review Group (FRG) and were generally positive about the changes.
- 2.9. Most of the assessments we saw were timely. However, we found that social workers and their managers were still making the transition toward more flexible timescales advocated by a proportionate approach to assessment. The impact of this was that although a small number of families were undergoing assessment in what would previously have been considered a (procedurally) timely manner, some faster decision making could have more effectively contributed to their well-being sooner. Nevertheless, it was clear that the authority was preparing well to manage the changes they faced introduced by the SSWBA. Team managers had already set up supervision systems to monitor timeliness of assessments so as to minimise drift. Additionally they were taking a flexible approach to progressing casework to closure/signposting dependent on individual need rather than being determined by process driven timescales.
- 2.10. We found that most of the assessments we reviewed contained some good quality information developed from a wide range of evidence including relevant and appropriate information sought from partner agencies as well as parents

and carers. Families we spoke to reported that social workers engaged them well in their assessment and that their views were considered and reflected. A copy of the completed assessment was given to them and they reported that it was easy to read and was provided in their language of need. It was clear that social workers were working hard to engage children and families in what matters conversations and co-production of plans. We saw evidence of children contributing to assessments, including in some instances through their participation in direct work. Children were seen alone as appropriate often at school or in a safe environment.

- 2.11. However, good social work practice was sometimes undermined by the structure and design of the assessment template. The format for assessments was still very new, and was being used inconsistently across and within assessment teams. Whilst assessment often captured children's wishes and feelings and that of their parents and family the social work and risk analysis was not as evident. Analysis did not always sufficiently explore the impact of the adults' behaviour on the child or the depth of enquiry that had been undertaken which then impacted on the resulting plan. This was to the detriment of achieving transparency with families when setting out clearly what was required of them and/or the potential consequences of failing to make necessary changes. Social workers needed to be more robust and confident in working with families and setting out their professional analysis of risk and needs.
- 2.12. The introduction of the SSWBA has meant a period of adjustment for staff. Those social workers interviewed told us that they viewed the aims of the act as building on and promoting good practice. Staff had undertaken introductory training on the principals of the act and had started to feel more comfortable with the use of new language. Having had an opportunity to apply the intentions of the act the authority recognised that more training was needed to better embed changes into practice. To support this the authority was at an early stage of introducing the Signs of Safety model of social work across locality assessment teams and we saw evidence of practitioners using Signs of Safety tools, for example in relation to the direct work undertaken with children, in some of the assessments reviewed.
- 2.13. Management oversight of the assessment and planning process was insufficiently robust in terms of challenge and quality control. Whilst all of the assessments we reviewed had been signed-off, managers needed to be confident and evidence the extent to which they had provided challenge and direction. We also found that managers had signed off a small number of assessments that were of insufficient quality.
- 2.14. We saw a number of assessments with an outcome that included appropriate signposting to a single agency and/or to multi-agency (TAF) services. We found the TAF protocol outlined processes for signposting and stepping down. However, there was little guidance to help staff practically distinguish between signposting to other services as an *outcome of assessment* compared to stepping down as an *outcome of good engagement over time with a care and*

support plan. In terms of the former, it was positive that we saw some cases where signposting followed short focused interventions. However, the social workers delivering these interventions sometimes conceptualised signposting as a mechanism for progressing cases to an early closure and in so doing underestimated the value of their own work as a preventive service. Whilst our sample did not include cases stepping down from a care and support plan the strategic commissioning arrangements for Family Support Services (FSS) recognised families need for support during the transition from statutory to preventative services. The TAF protocol also outlined arrangements for ensuring that these families properly understood the potential impact on their own well-being and that of their children, of declining to take up services offered.

Safeguarding & Protection

- 2.15. Inspectors found that when referrals were received where there was an indication that a child or children were at risk or had suffered significant harm, prompt decisions were made and initial action was taken to protect the child. Child protection investigations were undertaken, in line with guidance, following a strategy discussion. A rota of social workers from locality assessment teams ensured that there was no delay in completing Section 47 enquiries when these were needed. Whilst within the small sample of cases we reviewed the quality of this work was good the clarity and timeliness of recording needed to be improved to ensure new workers or those taking over a case when the allocated worker was absent, as well as managers, achieved a swift understanding of the needs and risks associated with children and families. In the cases reviewed, inspectors saw no examples of children and families being subjected to child protection investigations unnecessarily.
- 2.16. Effective multi-agency arrangements ensured compliance with All Wales Child Protection Procedures and facilitated information sharing. The regional Children's Safeguarding Board (CSB) was established and chaired by Carmarthenshire's director of social services (DSS). Joint multi agency training took place between police and social workers and it was reported that this worked well. However, multi-agency protocols had not been updated since 2008 and did not include regional arrangements for addressing child sexual exploitation (CSE) or female genital mutilation (FGM). Rapid multi-agency work to update protocols and improve consistency of thresholds was indicated.

Conclusion

Generally partners and the authority provided a timely and appropriate response to concerns about children and young people who might be at risk. The understanding of thresholds between partners and children's services was inconsistent and multi-agency work to address this was indicated. Overall, assessments were timely and contained appropriate information from a range of sources. The quality of risk analysis within assessments and care planning was variable and although assessments and plans were generally child-focussed, they did not always take sufficient account of the impact that adults' behaviours had on children. Assessments and plans were effectively shared

with children and families. Management oversight of the quality of assessment and care planning was insufficiently robust in terms of challenge and quality control. Arrangements for stepping up and down between the preventive and statutory sectors were generally understood. Children, who were or were likely to be, at risk of harm were identified and child protection enquiries were thorough and timely. Regional multi-agency protocols needed to be updated.

Key Dimension 5: Leadership, Management and Governance

What we expect to see

Leadership, management and governance arrangements together establish an effective strategy for the delivery of good quality services and outcomes for people. Meeting people's needs for quality services are a clear focus for councilors, managers and staff. Services are well-led, direction is clear and the leadership of change is strong. The authority works with partners to deliver help, care and support for people. Services are designed and commissioned to: improve outcomes for individual people; reflect community need; and address key priorities within the local population. Work with partners in shaping the pattern and delivery of services is informed by the views and experiences of people who use or may need to use services. Services are delivered by a suitably qualified, experienced and competent workforce that is able to recognise and respond to need in a timely and effective way.

Key Findings

- There was strong corporate support for children's services; leadership, management and governance arrangements complied with statutory guidance and the director of social services had established systems that supported effective oversight of children's services.
- Elected member, directors and heads of service demonstrated a common understanding of the direction and drive needed to ensure both statutory and preventive services effectively improved outcomes for children and families.
- There were strong links between children's services schools and education welfare services although links with housing services were less well embedded.
- Scrutiny arrangements could be strengthened.
- There was a clear strategic direction for children's services which was effectively led by the head of children's services.
- Locally good foundations for IAA services were in place but more work with partners and staff was required to better understand and plan for the changes to practice required to more fully implement the requirements of the SSWBA .
- The planning and commissioning strategy for modelling family support services was well developed and made efficient use of resources.
- We found a stable, suitably qualified, experienced and committed workforce who felt valued.
- Children's services had a strong commitment to learning and development; staff received and appreciated regular supervision.
- Staff and managers were signed up to the values of the SSWBA and committed to making it work.

Explanation of Findings

Direction of Services

- 3.1. We found the authority was committed to prioritising services that support the most vulnerable children and families in Carmarthenshire. This was against a backdrop of declining budget and increasing demand alongside the implementation of the most significant legislative change to social services in Wales for many years. There was strong corporate support for children's services generally and for the family support and prevention strategy in particular. Elected member, directors and heads of service we interviewed demonstrated a common understanding of the direction and drive needed to ensure these services effectively supported improved outcomes for children and families in Carmarthenshire.
- 3.2. The children's services division was located within the department for education and children. This structure was well embedded. Directors and heads of service offered assurance that the DSS had good oversight of children's services issues and confidence that children's services were linked in to the wider social services and housing agenda. This was achieved through a formal protocol for social care governance and a range of other intuitive and more informal networks established over time.
- 3.3. We saw evidence that the corporate structure supported strong links between children's services with schools, education welfare services and with the educational psychology service. Links between children's services and housing services were more tenuous. The authority had invested in training for housing advice staff since the implementation of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014. Despite this the senior management team (SMT) recognised that further work was required to help housing advisors support vulnerable children and families more effectively. We saw evidence in case-files that supported this view.
- 3.4. Elected members were clear about the strategic direction for children's services. Senior managers reported that elected members were supportive of children's services. They visited front-line teams regularly and had attended training on the SSWBA so were aware of the implications of the act on the service and the authority. Routine scrutiny arrangements were well established and members generally had confidence that officers were delivering good quality services to children and families. However inspector's review of the content of scrutiny meeting minutes did not provide adequate assurance that children's services business was sufficiently highly prioritised in these meetings. A greater emphasis on eliciting feedback from children and families about their experiences and a more thorough interrogation of information about emerging trends arising from the impact of the preventive sector and their inter-relationship with statutory provision was needed to provide greater assurance that outcomes for children and families were being improved.

- 3.5. Leadership management and governance arrangements complied with statutory guidance and constituted an experienced and stable SMT. We heard that there was an ethos of healthy and constructive challenge within SMT and that this contributed to a culture of driving improvement to service models that promoted integrated services to meet the needs of communities.
- 3.6. We found clear strategic direction for children's services was effectively led by the head of children's services and that this was disseminated to other managers and staff. The organisational structure that incorporated both the statutory and preventive sector under his line management symbolised the authority's vision of a joined-up model of family support, as well as giving him access to pooled core funding and anti-poverty budgets and providing him with a good line of sight on front-line practice across the piece.
- 3.7. Inspectors had some reservations, at a strategic level about the pace with which the IAA requirements of the SSWBA were embedding in children's services. We saw evidence of strong foundations in place to achieve compliance with the principles of the Act; supported by the family support and prevention strategy as well as changes to social work operating models through the introduction of Signs of Safety and Reclaiming Social Work. Also in the longer-term there was an aspiration to create a single "front door" to social care services, integrated with health and housing. A project, part funded by health had been set up to progress this. However, in the meantime, a clearer understanding of pathways and the inter-relationships between the preventive sector, delivery of IAA services and access arrangements to statutory children's services could assist the authority and partners designing and commissioning future services to achieve efficiencies through streamlining processes. More importantly, an earlier clarification could contribute to making an immediate improvement to social care outcomes for children and families accessing these services in the shorter term.
- 3.8. Members of SMT reported good relationships with partners and some collaborative regional work in preparation for the implementation of the SSWBA was evident. The Mid & West Wales Health & Social Care Collaborative, now the Regional Partnership Board had commissioned an independent evaluation of IAA services in the region and a children's services work stream chaired by Carmarthenshire's DSS had been set up as mechanism for implementing future shared initiatives. It was however unclear at the time of the inspection how effectively and at what pace these arrangements were progressing to support and develop a multi-agency approach to local IAA services in Carmarthenshire.

Shaping Services

- 3.9. In the main it was evident that commissioning and resources allocated to services for children and families were being used to promote the most positive impact on outcomes for children and families. The commissioning process was informed by data collected by the TAF hub. Building on this work the authority could usefully develop a more cohesive approach to the collection and analysis of performance information at the interface between preventive and statutory services to create a more robust evidence base to support their understanding of the impact of preventive services on mitigating the need for children and families to (re)enter statutory provision.
- 3.10. Despite constraints on the use of grant funding the authority had been innovative about using resources as flexibly as possible to meet the diverse needs of its communities. This resulted in achieving a wide range of appropriate services that met the needs of children in need of a care and support plans and those in need of preventative services. As well as an extension of TAF provision to 16 – 25 year olds changes to arrangements for FSS created by a 50:50 split between core and grant funding facilitated greater consistency of provision for families stepping-down from care and support plans.
- 3.11. A weekly resource panel, jointly managed by practice and planning team managers, had been established. This provided a mechanism to identify gaps or barriers in service provision and assisted practitioners to find alternative solutions for immediate needs. Information collected by the panel also informed the future planning and commissioning cycle. Some social workers reported that they found the panel useful although others were unaware of the level of flexibility in provision that could be achieved. Given the potentially negative consequences of this lack of awareness for some families more effective communication about the panel's purpose throughout the workforce could be beneficial.
- 3.12. Despite the clearly effective and constructive working relationships between children's services and the preventive sector that facilitated transition between statutory and non-statutory services for children and families, there generally remained a distinct boundary between the two. The authority were still looking at how the work of the preventative services could be more effectively aligned with the provision of IAA services and assessment thereby aiming to achieve as much continuity and as little duplication for children and families as possible. Benefit could be achieved from determining how preventative and statutory services could work better together to produce proportionate assessments and to concurrently address eligible and non-eligible needs.

Workforce

- 3.13. Generally we found a stable group of staff and managers who felt valued and supported. We found a suitably qualified and/or experienced workforce across

CRT and locality assessment teams. The Children's Disability Team was also reported to be more stable after a period of change although a health funded post remained unfilled at the time of the inspection. Staff including (assistant) team managers had received recent child protection training. All CRT members, including the manager, had enrolled on TALK (NVQ level 4) training for IAA staff to further enhance their skills and competence in engaging with people.

- 3.14. We found a culture that supported learning, review and improvement. The head of service welcomed external review and validation of service improvement and modelled this approach to the workforce. Staff reported that managers and senior managers were visible and approachable and that they valued the authority's approach to delivering services. All staff and managers we spoke to were clearly committed to the ethos of family support and prevention. Staff welcomed opportunities to contribute to innovation and service improvements and met regularly with the head of service to do this. We saw evidence through the work of the Feedback Information Group (FIG) and the Form Review Group (FRG) of senior managers listening to staff feedback and responding accordingly to it.
- 3.15. Effective arrangements were in place in respect of workforce development and support. Whilst social workers in the locality assessments teams reported an increase in the complexity of some the work allocated caseloads were manageable and they felt well supported by their managers. All staff interviewed told us they were generally confident in the supervision and oversight provided by their managers; formal supervision was regular and of good quality and they were encouraged to take up development opportunities as they arose. Evidence from our case file review suggested however that managers could usefully have been more critically challenging in their oversight of the quality of assessments and plans.
- 3.16. Training for the SSWBA had been delivered in a series of workshops to all children's services staff, including FIS advisors. This focused on the principals, culture and attitudinal change required by the act. We found commitment from staff to make new arrangements work and staff we interviewed were clearly signed-up to the values of the act. Now having had an opportunity to start implementing new arrangements a targeted approach to attaining a more in depth understanding of the impact of the act on practice, specifically in relation to the development of IAA services, was required.

Conclusion

We found committed and effective leadership, management and governance arrangements were in place in Carmarthenshire. SMT and elected members demonstrated effective leadership and had a clear vision about what they wanted children's services to look like. This was reasonably well communicated to staff. Children's services business could have been more highly prioritised by scrutiny

arrangements. We saw some evidence of the authority monitoring and evaluating its own performance, particularly through the TAF hub and external review of child in need and family support services. Work with partners, especially at a regional level, could usefully be strengthened. We found a committed, stable and suitably experienced workforce. The building blocks were in place to further develop service provision in alignment with the SSWBA.

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EDUCATION & CHILDREN SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 26th JANUARY 2017

School Performance and Achievement 2015-2016

To consider and comment on the following issues:

- To note the contents of the report and the key issues arising from an analysis of quantitative and qualitative data in relation to the performance of schools during the academic year 2015/16.

Reasons:

- To enable members of Scrutiny to undertake their key role in monitoring standards of education within the County's schools and assist in determining future priorities as a result of the issues raised from the analysis.

To be referred to the Executive Board for decision: NO

Executive Board Member Portfolio Holder: Cllr. Gareth Jones (Education & Children)

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| <p>Directorate: Education & Children</p> <p>Name of Head of Service: Andi Morgan</p> <p>Report Author: Elin Forsyth</p> | <p>Designations:</p> <p>Head of School Effectiveness</p> <p>Principal Challenge Adviser</p> | <p>Tel Nos. / E-Mail Addresses:</p> <p>01267 246645 andimorgan@carmarthenshire.gov.uk</p> <p>01267 246646 emforsyth@carmarthenshire.gov.uk</p> |
|--|--|--|

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

EDUCATION & CHILDREN SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 26th JANUARY 2017

School Performance and Achievement 2015-2016

This report on 'School Performance and Achievement 2015/16' comprises of an overview of:

- quantitative school performance and attendance data
- external qualitative judgements (Estyn)
- values and skills achievement in Carmarthenshire schools

The information is provided in three sections:

Section 1 – Standards 2015-16: this section contains a summary of teacher assessments, test and examination results for pupils in the Foundation Phase, Key Stages 2, 3, 4 and 5. For each stage there is a brief written commentary to introduce the data graphic provided. Graphs include results compared to targets set, performance in previous years and the all Wales average. A focus is also provided on the performance of our eFSM learners. A concluding summary highlights the key strengths and areas for further improvement.

Section 2 – School Inspection Outcomes: this section contains a summary of performance of the schools inspected by Estyn during the academic year 2015-16. We measure performance against the content of the Estyn Common Inspection Framework in terms of judgements awarded and the number of schools placed in 'Estyn Follow Up' categories.

Section 3 – Developing Values and Skills for Life Long Learning: this section contains information on a wide and exciting range of pupils' achievements across the authority. We believe firmly that schools are centres where our learners are developed as individuals. Our provision aims to provide all learners with a range of skills that will support them further as lifelong learners and productive individuals within our society.

Section 4 – Glossary of acronyms

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.

Signed: **Andi Morgan** **Head of School Effectiveness**

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

CONSULTATIONS

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

Signed: **Andi Morgan** **Head of School Effectiveness**

1. Local Member(s) – N/A
2. Community / Town Council – N/A
3. Relevant Partners – N/A
4. Staff Side Representatives and other Organisations – N/A

**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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DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION & CHILDREN

Our Vision ... Carmarthenshire is a community where children are safe and nurtured and learners are supported to achieve their full educational potential

School Performance and Achievement Report 2015-16 Academic Year

Gareth Morgans
Interim Director of Education & Children's Services



Safeguarding Children and
Improving Education Standards for All



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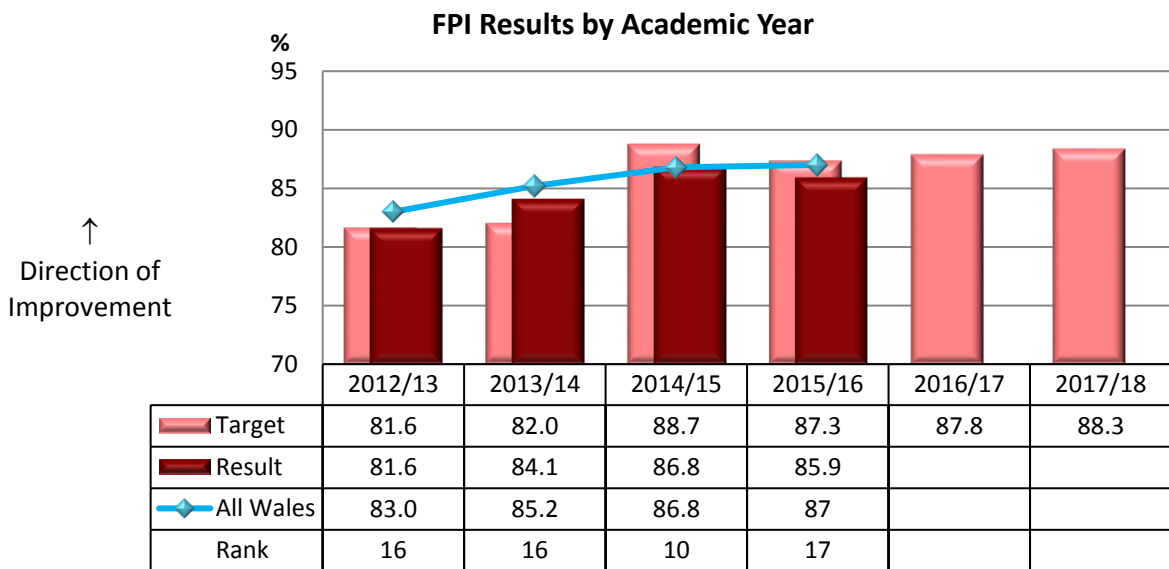
1. Standards: Our achievements for 2015-16

1.1 Challenge, Support and Intervention for improved provision and outcomes

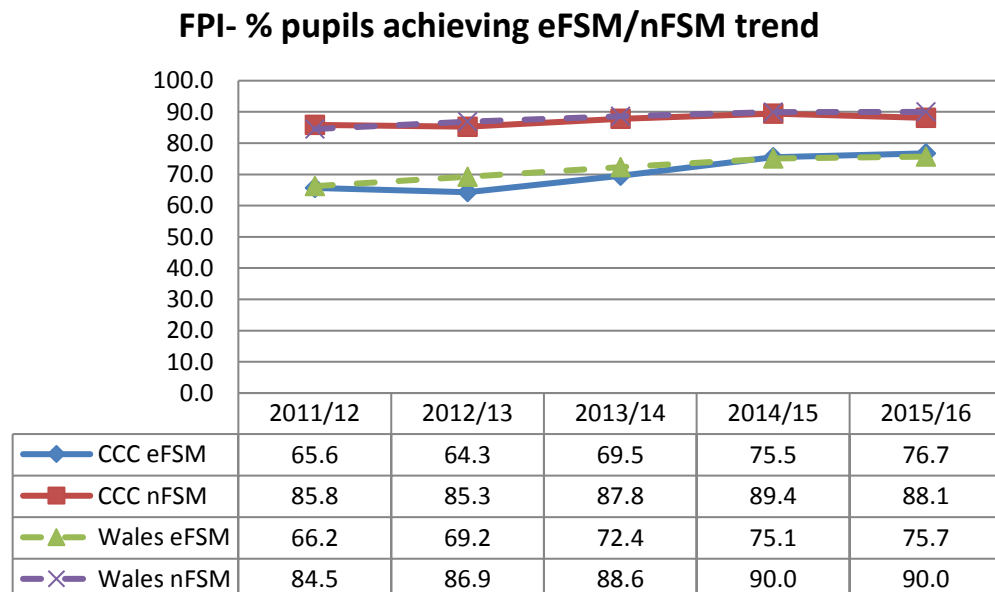
Challenge, support and intervention activities across our schools have continued to focus on improving provision and outcomes for all Carmarthenshire learners. The following range of performance data graphs provide an overview of our progress, strengths and areas for further improvement.

1.1.1 Foundation Phase:

- This graph (percentage of pupils achieving the Foundation Phase Indicator 'FPI' as a four year trend) demonstrates ongoing our upward improvement trend to 2015 and a slight decline in performance in 2016.

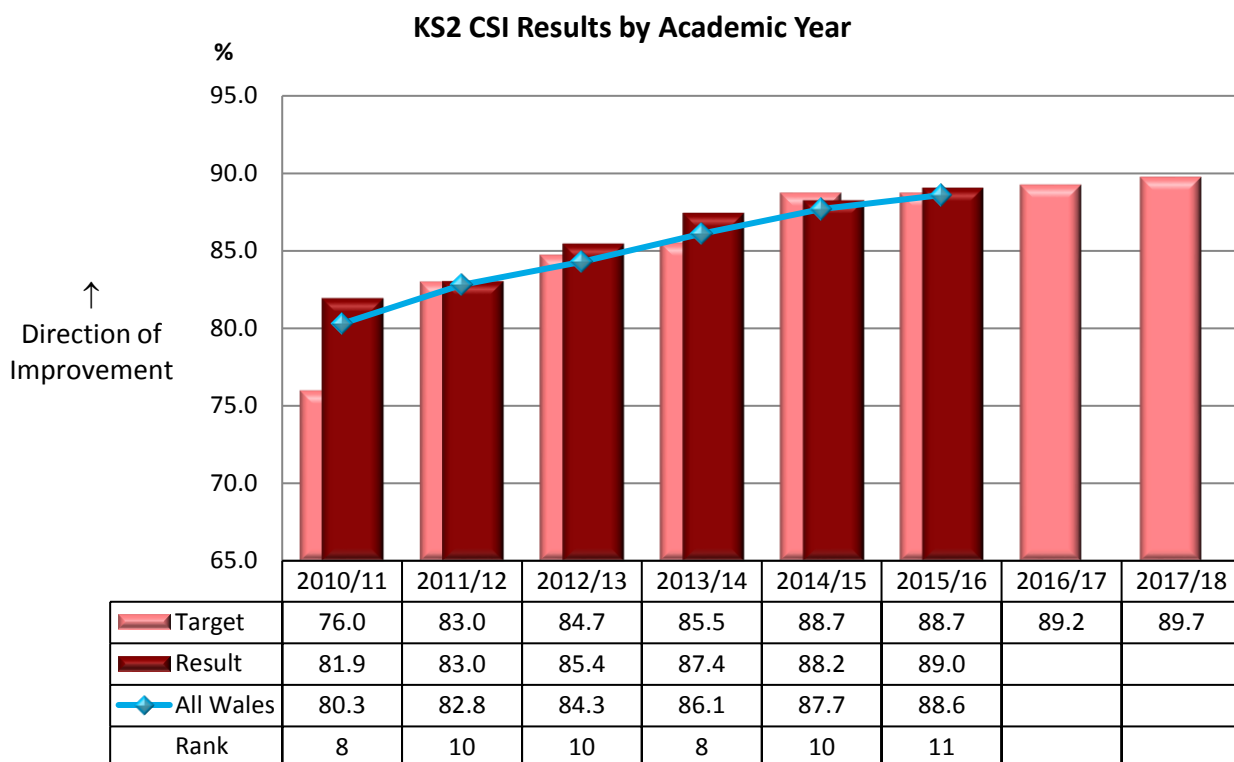


- This graph demonstrates our ongoing improvement in the performance of eFSM learners (eligible for Free School Meal) over five years and a comparison with non eFSM learners in Carmarthenshire and Wales.



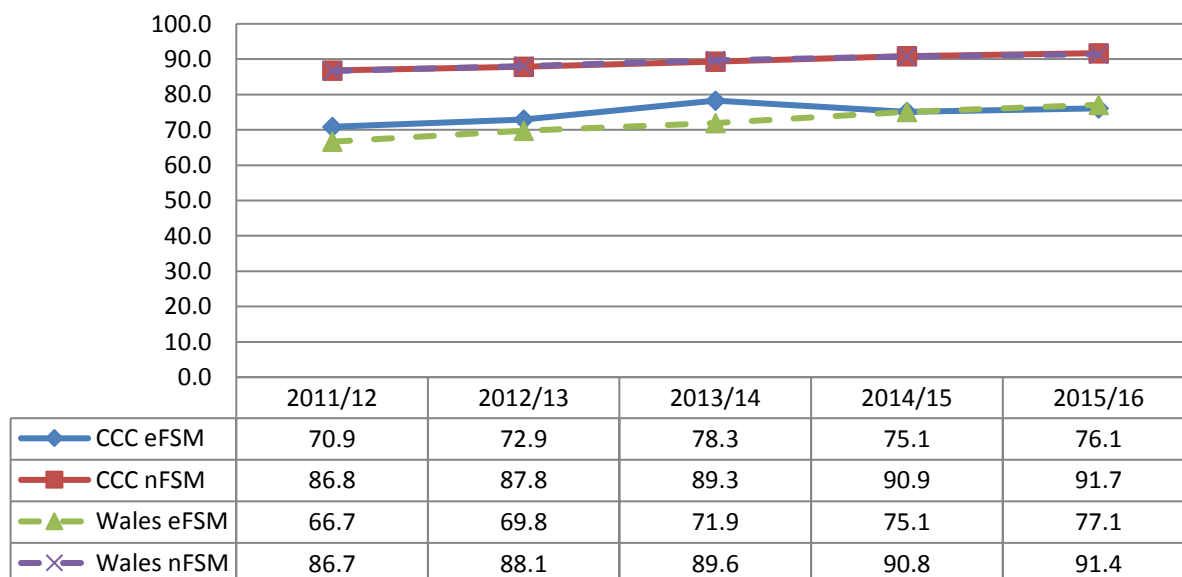
1.1.2 Key Stage 2 (KS2)

- This graph (percentage of pupils achieving the Core Subject Indicator 'CSI' as a six year trend) demonstrates our consistent upward trend of ongoing improvement.



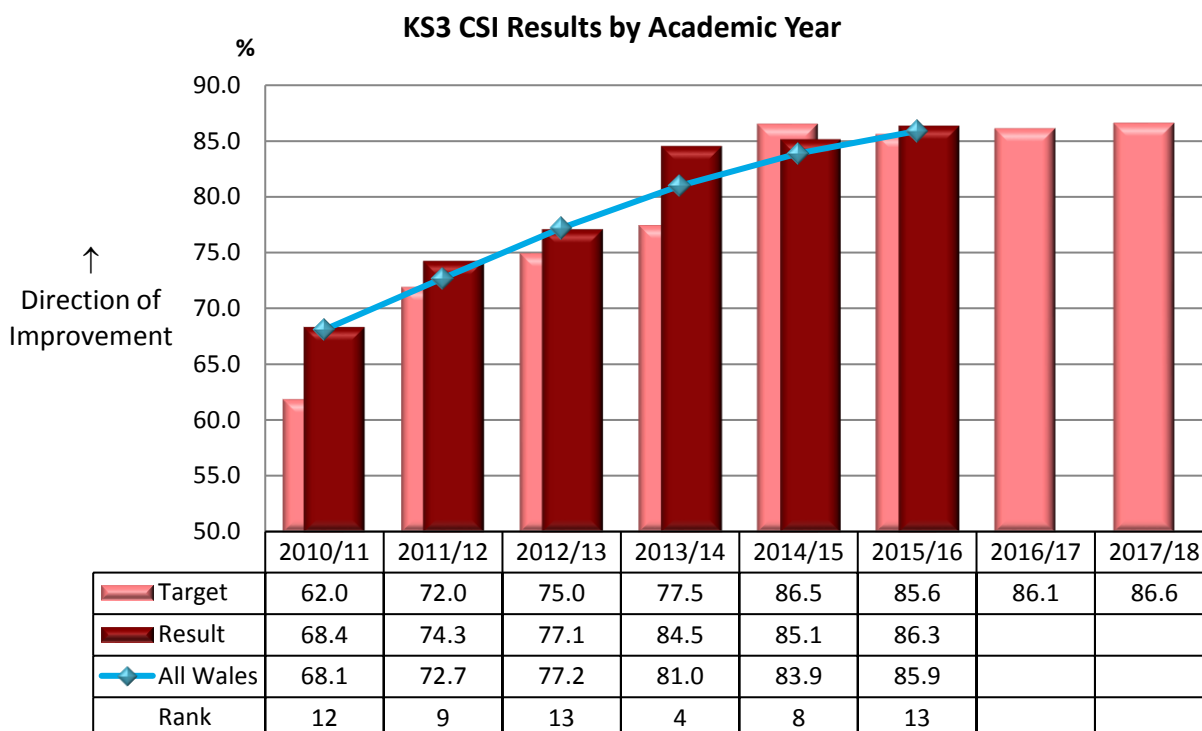
- This graph demonstrates the performance of our eFSM learners (eligible for Free School Meal) over five years and a comparison with non eFSM learners in Carmarthenshire and Wales. An increase in performance is noted this year, however a 1% point gap exists between ourselves and the All Wales performance.

KS2 CSI % pupils achieving eFSM/nFSM trend



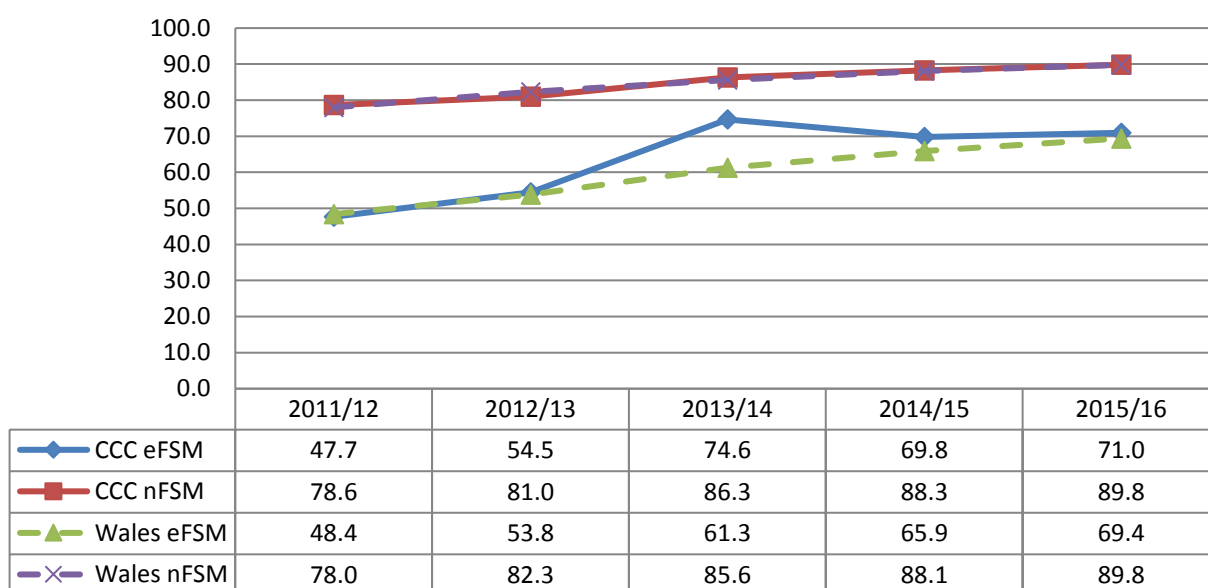
1.1.3 Key Stage 3 (KS3)

- This graph (percentage of pupils achieving the Core Subject Indicator 'CSI' demonstrates our consistent six year upward trend of improvement.



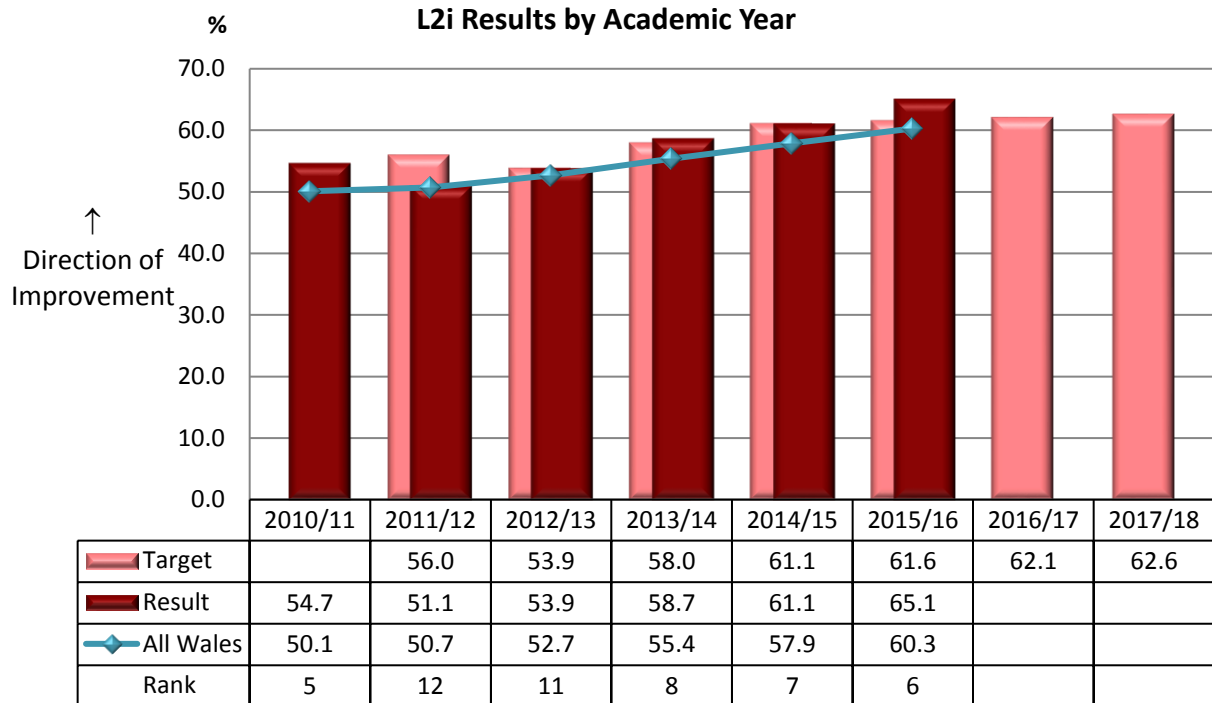
- This graph demonstrates an increase in the performance of KS3 eFSM learners (eligible for Free School Meal) in comparison with the previous year. Our performance remains above the All Wales performance figure for four out of the five years.

KS3 CSI - % pupils achieving eFSM/nFSM trend



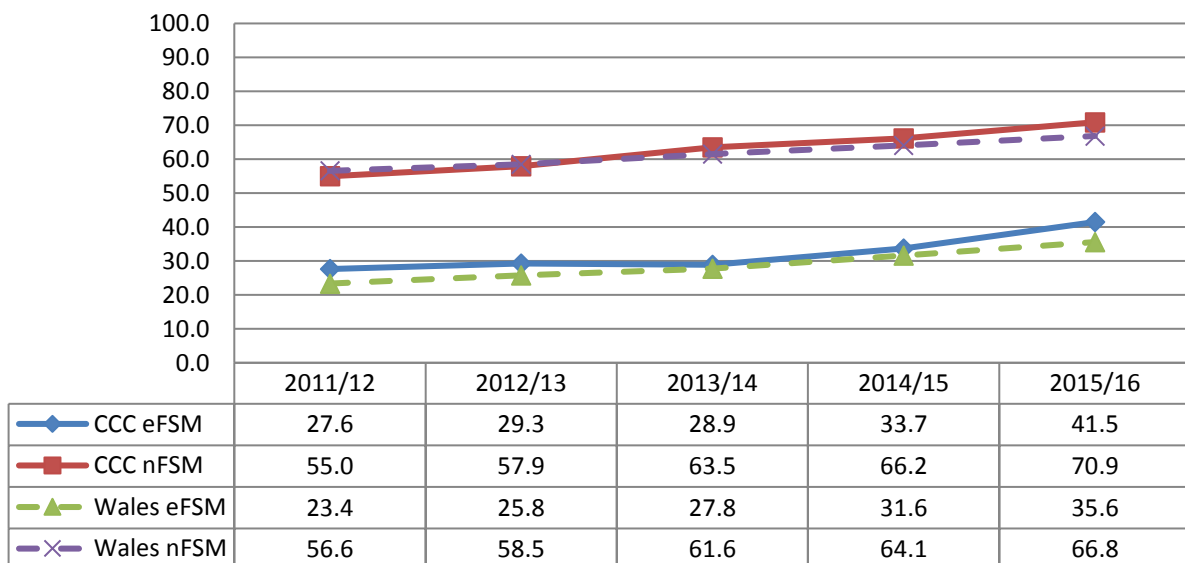
1.1.4 Key Stage 4

- This graph notes percentage of pupils achieving the Level 2 inclusive (L2i or L2+) indicator over five years demonstrates our greatest success to date with this key indicator. Achieving 65.1% is an excellent achievement. It clearly represents the combined and focused efforts of our schools and officers on raising standards.



- This graph demonstrates the ongoing improved performance of our eFSM learners at the L2i (with a comparison against nonFSM learners and All Wales data). We have consistently outperformed 'Wales eFSM L2i' since 2011/12.

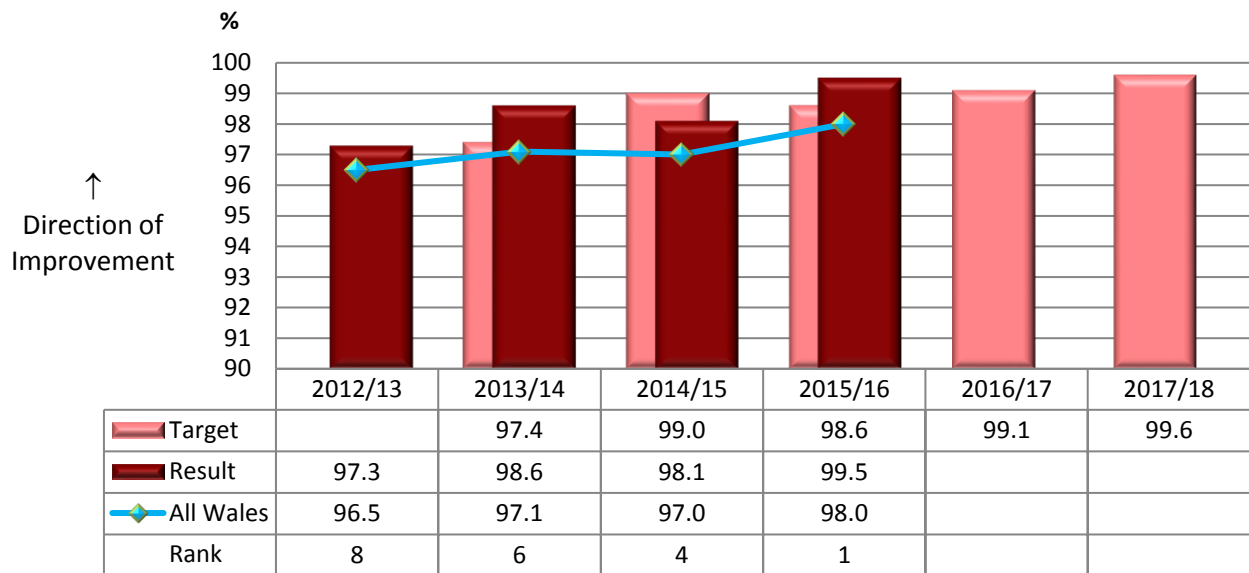
KS4 L2+ - % pupils achieving eFSM/nFSM trend



1.1.5 Key Stage 5

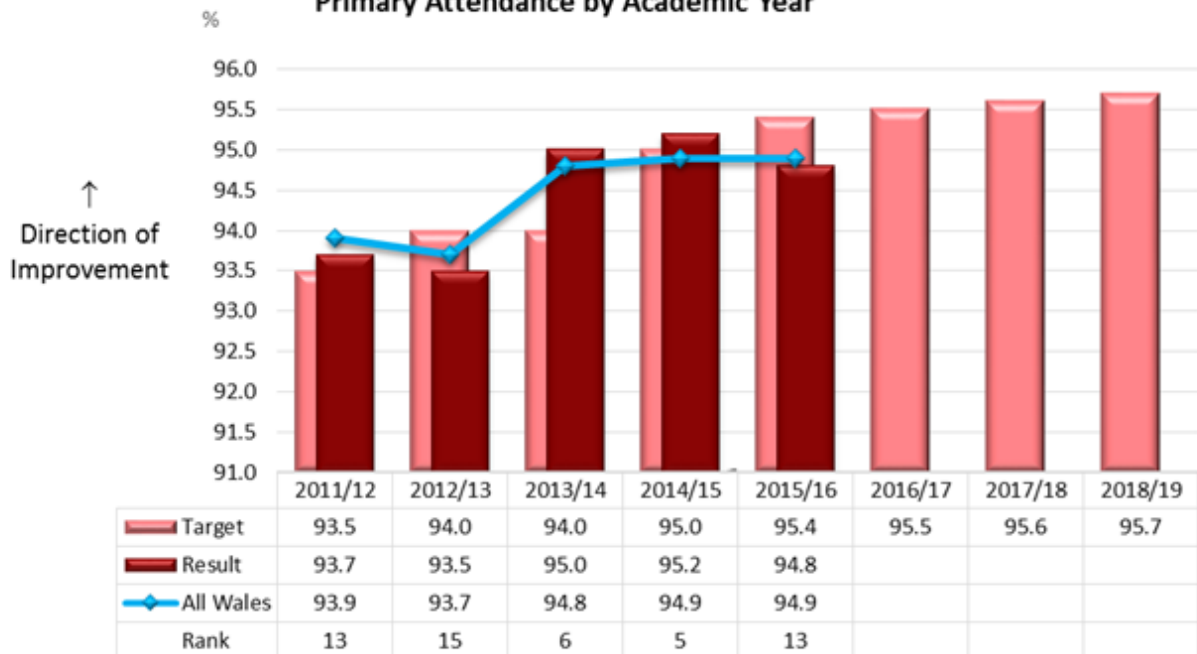
This graph demonstrates our consistent high level of performance (above the All Wales figures since 2009) for the past four years at Level 3 Threshold (2 or more A Levels or equivalent qualification). We have outperformed the All Wales figure for each year.

L3 Results by Academic Year



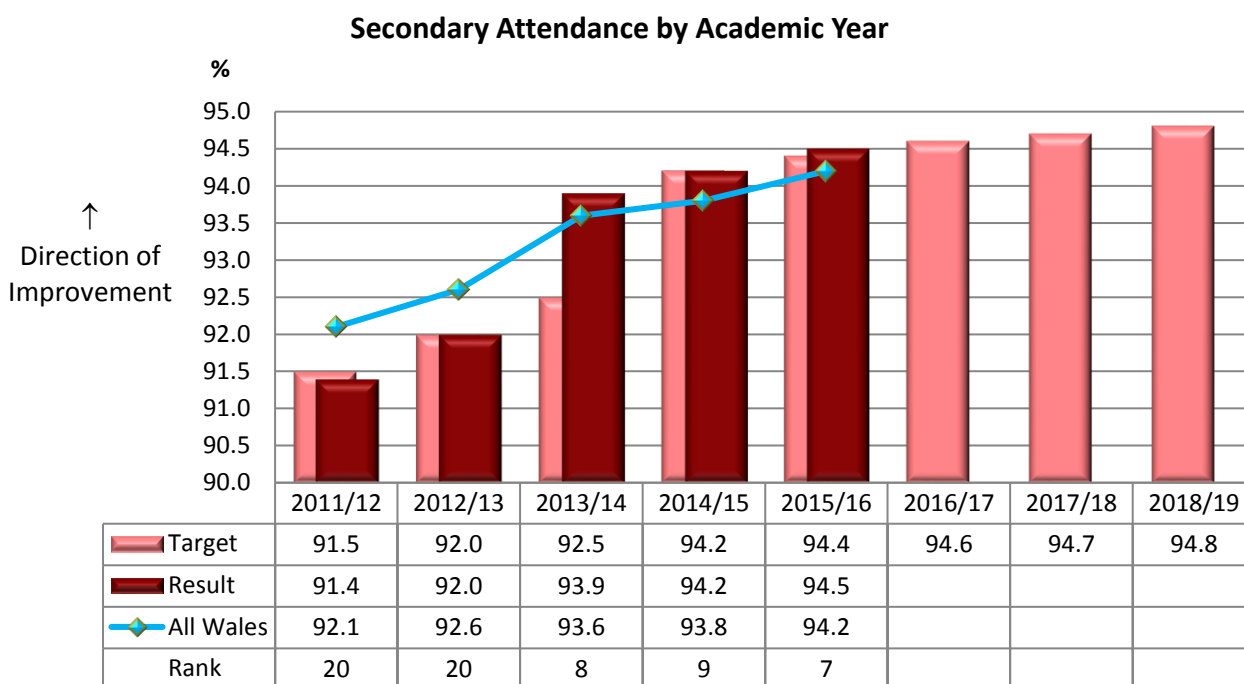
1.2 Attendance - Primary Schools Performance:

Primary Attendance by Academic Year



Primary Attendance is off target and the result has declined compared to the previous year (94.8% compared to 95.2%). Our Welsh comparative ranking has remained constant at 5th having risen from 15th three years ago. The Education Welfare Service has improved engagement from parents. Headteachers are supported with more accurate and regular data monitoring and sharing activities.

1.3 Attendance – Secondary Schools



This Performance Indicator is on target and the result has improved compared to the previous year (94.5% compared to 94.2%). Our provisional comparative ranking is equal 7th which is two places higher than last year (9th). This result is also above the Welsh average of 94.2%. Our expected ranking, based on the % of Eligible Free School Meal pupils per LA is 11th, something we have exceeded by 4 places with this result. Restructuring of the Education Welfare Service has improved engagement from Headteachers coupled with more accurate and regular data monitoring and sharing which assisted in improving attendance.

A summary of strengths and areas for further improvement:

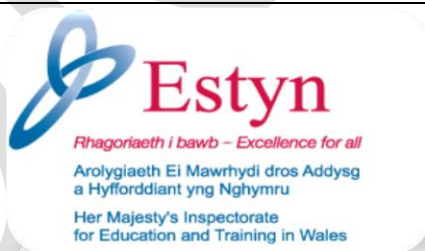
Our key strengths:

- All end of Key Stage indicators, apart from the Foundation Phase, have demonstrated an increase in performance.
- Attainment at the L2i threshold (5 A Levels A* - C including Welsh or English and Maths) recorded 65.1% - our highest result ever.
- The attainment of Free School Meal pupils across all Key Stages has improved. Attainment in Key Stage 4 for the 'L2i' continues to improve significantly and outperform the Wales average.
- We are ranked 1st within Wales for attainment at Level 3 in Key Stage 5.
- Levels of attendance at both primary and secondary continue to demonstrate consistency and improvement, particularly in the secondary sector.

Areas for further improvement:

- Continue to enhance provision and outcomes in the Foundation Phase
- Continue to enhance provision and outcomes for More Able and Talented pupils
- Continue to ensure enhanced outcomes for all eFSM learners

2. School Inspection Outcomes



2.1 Key messages from 2015-16 Inspections (*based on 15 school inspections*)

Main strengths:

- A range of our schools have continued to receive judgements of 'Excellent' against specific areas of the Estyn Inspection Framework and were invited to provide 'Good Practice Case Studies' to support the work of other schools:
Bro Myrddin – Well being and Learning Experiences
Teilo Sant – Well-being, Learning Experiences, Leadership and Improving Quality

Myrddin – Partnerships

- ‘Care, Support and Guidance,’ ‘Partnerships’ and ‘Learning Environments’ were judged to be good or better in nearly all schools.

Areas for improvement:

Around half of the schools inspected need to focus further on -

- Further improving attainment to support higher judgements of ‘standards’
- Further improving Leadership and Improving Quality

2.2 Inspection Outcomes Profile for 2015-16

1. The following tables show the percentage of grades achieved against Estyn’s ‘Quality Indicators’ by schools* inspected during the academic year 2015-16 (15 schools - 12 primary, 2 secondary and 1 Pupil Referral Unit).

*each school represents approximately 7%

| | Excellent | Good | Adequate | Unsatisfactory |
|-----------------------------------|------------------|-------------|-----------------|-----------------------|
| Standards | 0% | 47% | 53% | 0% |
| Wellbeing | 13% | 53% | 27% | 7% |
| Learning Experiences | 13% | 33% | 54% | 0% |
| Teaching | 0% | 60% | 40% | 0% |
| Care, support and guidance | 0% | 87% | 13% | 0% |
| Learning environment | 0% | 66% | 27% | 7% |
| Leadership | 7% | 53% | 33% | 7% |
| Improving Quality | 7% | 40% | 40% | 13% |
| Partnerships | 7% | 80% | 13% | 0% |
| Resource Management | 0% | 47% | 46% | 7% |

2. The following table shows the number of our schools placed across the complete range of Estyn categories over the past five academic years.

| | 2011-12 (16 schools) | 2012-13 (23 schools) | 2013-14 (19 schools) | 2014-15 (20 schools) | 2015-16 (15 schools) |
|---|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Sector Leading (Case Study) | 6% | 9% | 5% | 15% | 13% |
| Other 'good schools' (no category) | 25% | 26% | 32% | 20% | 20% |
| LA Monitoring | 6% | 13% | 16% | 20% | 13% |
| Estyn Monitoring | 44% | 48% | 47% | 35% | 41% |
| Significant Improvement | 13% (2 schools) | 4% (1 school) | - | 10% (2 schools) | 13% (2 schools) |
| Special Measures | 6% (1 school) | - | - | - | - |
| Overall in Category | 69% | 65% | 63% | 65% | 67% |

3. Developing Values and Skills for Life Long Learning

Carmarthenshire schools strive tirelessly to provide high quality teaching and learning through a wide range of stimulating and engaging experiences for all. Our learners develop numerous important values and skills from early Foundation Phase activity right through to Sixth Form study. In an ever changing world of challenge and opportunity, such core values and key skills are essential to success and enjoyment for all learners. In this section of the report we celebrate the wide variety of opportunities, focusing on participation and achievement, available within our schools. These opportunities are as important as the more traditional aspects of standards and attainment as reported in Section One. Developing a multi-skilled lifelong learner demands a varied and innovative curriculum of opportunities as the following overview celebrates.

3.1 The Foundation Phase

Throughout 2015-2016 academic year we have continued to provide Carmarthenshire schools with support for the delivery and implementation of the Foundation Phase

Framework for Children’s Learning for 3-7 year olds in Wales. The Foundation Phase Grant has maintained its delegated allocation to schools to employ additional Teaching Assistants (enabling them to work towards achieving the ratios recommended by the Welsh Government). The Local Authority has also provided the expertise and guidance of a Foundation Phase Training Officer who has delivered an effective training programme, together with additional, direct support in schools. The 2015-2016 training programme focused mainly on developing literacy and numeracy in the Continuous Provision and also looking at early writing in the Foundation Phase.

3.2 *Non maintained settings*

| Estyn Inspections in 2015-2016 | |
|--|-------|
| Number of Non-Maintained Settings in full Estyn inspections | 8 |
| % of Non-Maintained Settings in ‘followup’ | 37.5% |
| Excellent | 1 |
| Good | 4 |
| LA Monitoring | 1 |
| Estyn Monitoring | 2 |
| In need of Significant Improvement | 0 |
| Special Measures | 0 |
| Number of Settings in ‘followup’ from 2014-2015 with good outcomes | 4 |

- There are 41 Non Maintained Settings in Carmarthenshire delivering part time educational provision to 3 year olds.
- A total of 1181 children accessed the free early years entitlement in Non-Maintained Settings for 2015-2016.

Cae’r Ffair Nursery and Myrtle House Nursery kindly agreed to take part time in pilot inspections, where Estyn and CSSIW are working together to develop a joint inspection framework for early years and childcare provision. The pilot inspections resulted in good outcomes with Cae’r Ffair Nursery recognised to have excellent provision in providing children with high quality learning experiences. Estyn acknowledged that Cae’r Ffair Nursery inspire children’s learning which improves their literacy and numeracy skills, by going on trips to local sites and receiving visitors.

The Non-Maintained Settings continue to receive productive support and training from the Early Years Advisory Teachers. The main focus of the training programme in 2015-2016 was on child development and attainment through the introduction of the Foundation Phase Profile (FPP). The FPP supports summative assessments at statutory points and provides a nationally consistent method for scoring the Foundation Phase outcomes and progress data.

The Early Years Pupil Deprivation Grant allows the Non-Maintained Settings to set out to tackle poverty and inequalities. The grant has been assigned to support children's oracy skills by introducing the Non-Maintained Settings to the ChATT programme. The programme has allowed Settings to identify early on strategies and approaches to effectively support children's oracy skills.

The Non-Maintained Settings work collaboratively with the Local Authority to maintain and deliver good and high quality provision.

3.3 *Enhancing Welsh Heritage, Culture, Sustainable Development and Global Understanding*

Reading our way to enjoyment and success ...

1. Welsh Book Council Quiz 2015-16

57 teams from our primary schools participated in 2 rounds held within Carmarthenshire. 256 pupils were involved in discussion and presentation of materials based on their reading and learning. Ysgol Llannon won in the National Round held in Aberystwyth on 14th June 2016 for years 3 and 4.



New Book Quiz for KS3

Carmarthenshire and Pembrokeshire schools piloted a new Book Quiz competition for KS3 pupils on behalf of the Welsh Books Council.

Ten teams came together at the Griffith Jones Centre, St Clears, to compete for the trophy in a competition of high standard.

Elinor Wyn Reynolds of Gomer Press was the judge, and was very pleased with the lively, intelligent and mature discussions.

In 3rd place came a team of Year 8 pupils from Ysgol Maes y Gwendraeth; second was a team of Year 9 pupils from Ysgol Bro Dinefwr and 1st place went to Year 9 pupils at Ysgol y Strade.



2. 'Sgwad Sgwennu Cymraeg' (Welsh Writing Squad)

Twenty 'More Able and Talented' KS3 pupils from Ysgol Bro Myrddin, Ysgol Maes Y Gwendraeth and Ysgol Y Strade participated in our termly Sgwad Sgwennu 'creative writing' workshops with poets and authors - Manon Rhys, Eurig Salisbury and Elinor Wyn Reynolds.

3. Bookslam 2015-16!

"The more you read, the more things you will know.
The more that you learn, the more places you'll go." Dr Seuss.

- A very successful county round of the Welsh Books Council reading competition - 'BookSlam' - was held on 22nd April, 2016. The standard of the competition was extremely high, with book discussions and stage performances from pupils of Johnstown CP, Ysgol Glanyfferi, Stebonheath, Ysgol Bro Banw and Ysgol Llangunnor.
- Congratulations to Ysgol Glanyfferi who were county winners this year. Johnstown CP's team also qualified for a coveted place in the National Round.
- A Roald Dahl drama workshop provided entertainment throughout the day.

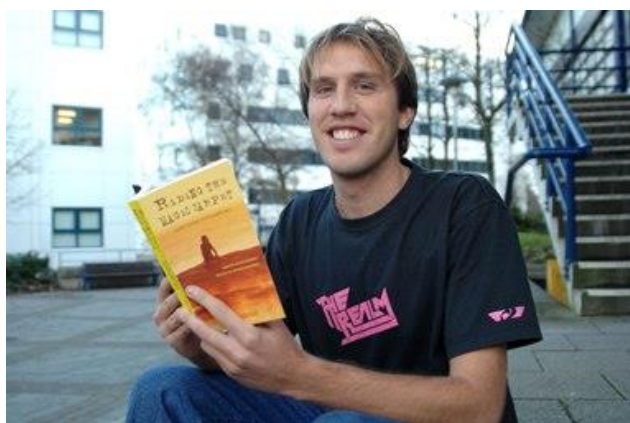


Above: Pupils of Ysgol Glanyfferi perform in the National Final of the BookSlam Competition - Theatr Brycheiniog, Brecon.

Below: Johnstown CP School's team pictured on stage. The BFG also made a guest appearance!



- In the summer term, Tom Anderson, an up and coming Welsh author, visited Carmarthenshire to work with some of our more able and talented writers .
- The Writing Squads are organised to inspire and develop the talent of Carmarthenshire’s young writers at secondary level. Other recent guest authors include Mererid Hopwood, Ceri Elen Morris and Fran Evans.



Carmarthenshire Secondary Writing Squad working with Tom Anderson, Welsh author.

History and Religious Education Artefact Loan Service

| Celtiaid/Celts 1 | |
|---|----------------|
| Eitemau yn y Cawell Storio/ Items in Storage Crate | Nifer/Quantity |
| 1. Helm Waterloo/Waterloo Helmet | 1 |
| 2. Trowsus/Trousers | 1 |
| 3. Clogyn/Cloak | 1 |
| 4. Tlws/Brooch | 1 |
| 5. Sgyrt/Skirt | 1 |
| 6. Llyfr/Book: Caradog and the Romans | 1 |
| Eitemau sydd ddim yn y Cawell Storio/Items not in Storage Crate | |
| 7. Tarian/Shield | 1 |
| 8. Gwayffon/Spear | 1 |
| 9. Cleddyf/Sword | 1 |
| 10. Gwain/Sheath for Sword | 1 |



- The County Museum at Abergwili hosts a collection of loan boxes that supports the teaching of history and Religious Education.
- There are over 30 history boxes ranging from Roman soldiers' uniforms through to household items from the 1960s and 1970s. There are also a number of historical models such as castles that can be borrowed.
- There are a similar number of Religious Education boxes containing religious artefacts such Torah scrolls, prayer mats and Diwali sets.
- The collections support learning from the Foundation Phase to Key Stage Three. New packs of resources are currently being developed.
- This year sixty one schools in Carmarthenshire and 4,606 pupils used this free loan service.

Welsh Heritage Schools Initiative



Pupils from Ferryside school recreating a photograph taken in their village last century

Each year, the Welsh Heritage Schools Initiative invites schools across Wales to undertake heritage projects and to submit them for this nationwide heritage competition.

- This year was another successful year for schools in Carmarthenshire with six winning submissions.
- County schools displayed their entries at the County museum at Abergwili over the summer.

The Scarlets partnership

This year the partnership focused on e-books and the five Carmarthenshire Digital Pioneer schools looked at a different aspect of the Scarlets experience such as match day and the environmental impact of the stadium. Pupils from Ysgol y Dderwen, Ysgol Llangadog, Ysgol Nantgaredig, Ysgol Peniel and Ysgol Teilo Sant worked closely with staff from the rugby club and then produced themed bilingual e-books that will be hosted on the Scarlet's education web page.



Fair Trade

Carmarthenshire has been a Fair Trade county for nearly seven years. The schools in the county have contributed significantly to this achievement. Ninety schools are registered on the Fair Trade scheme with 20 schools having worked their way through the full programme and gained the Fair Trade flag having been awarded the Fair Achiever Award.



The Fair Trade Committee and staff from Ysgol y Felin and guests celebrating gaining their new Fair Trade flag

The Divine chocolate poetry competition is an established feature of the Welsh education year. A number of primary and secondary schools in the county have been very successful in this event over the years. This year Ysgol Nantgaredig were runners up in the primary category of this event.



Elsa Moore from Ysgol Nantgaredig with her prize from Divine chocolate

European School Partnerships and Professional Development

New projects

2015/16 saw a 100 percent success rate for the Carmarthenshire schools supported to apply for EU funding from the Erasmus + programme to develop strategic partnerships aimed at exchanging best practice and promoting innovation.

Some of the issues to be tackled by these partnerships include:

- promoting equality and combatting discrimination (Dyffryn Taf & Strade, Beca)
- developing digital competences to raise standards in literacy and numeracy (Y Dderwen & Peniel, Parc y Tywyn)
- improving wellbeing and enhancing entrepreneurship (Ysgol Gymraeg Rhydaman)
- empowering whole school communities to take greater control of their learning journeys (Ffwrnes & Maesllyn)

A cluster application was successfully made for funding for Foundation Phase practitioners from Tygroes, Penygroes, Llys Hywel and Y Ddwylan. This will enable them to develop more creative teaching approaches and make better use of the outdoor environment through accessing specialist training in Italy and Iceland.

Ongoing projects

Heol Goffa are working with other Special Schools in the Republic of Ireland, Northern Ireland and Scotland to develop teaching approaches to support students with severe communication difficulties.

Coedcae successfully completed the second year of their three year partnership working with Lithuania, Spain, Poland and Italy, looking at improving wellbeing through sport.

Ysgol Bro Myrddin's project focusing on Sustainable Development drew to a close this year, culminating in a European summit in the Council Chamber. This exciting project has been included as a case study on the ERW website <http://www.erw.wales/news-archive/2016/04/together-for-a-green-europe/>

3.4 Information and Communication Technology:

- Primary schools have been supported through practical workshops and half day update networking sessions in using hwb tools with a focus on data handling using J2Data and data modelling with Excel online.
- Secondary schools have been supported in using a range of hwb tools including Office 365, playlists, assignments and hwbnetworks through middle leader PLCs.
- Support has been provided to secondary schools on e-portfolio use for the Welsh Baccalaureate qualification.
- A blended learning approach to support shortage subjects is being developed using a range of hwb and wider tools.
- A common theme for all schools has been the context of the ERW pathway to Digital Competence, with an initial priority of developing schools evidence of online safety through the 360° Safe Cymru online framework. Three LA officers have embarked on becoming 360° Safe Cymru Mark assessors. Schools have had the opportunity to

engage with and feedback on the draft version of the Welsh Government Digital Competence Framework.

3.5 **Healthy Schools Scheme**

The Healthy Schools Scheme is now in its 13th year with a total of 113 schools on board the scheme. During this academic year a total of 4 schools were successful in completing another phase within the scheme. There are currently 4 Schools working towards Phase 2, 16 schools working towards Phase 3, 35 schools working towards Phase 4, 36 Schools working towards Phase 5 and 19 schools working towards the National Quality Award (NQA) which is the highest award achievable within the scheme.

Training for Teachers and LSA's

- Whole School Training sessions were delivered on the National PSE 'Growing-Up' Resource.
- A Primary School Food Conference was held to emphasise the prevalence of childhood obesity and its effects on the nation. Delegates attended 5 different workshops which included a 'Food in Schools' workshop which was delivered by Gareth Thomas the Food in Schools Co-ordinator for Wales and Associate Officer for WAG.
- Four 'Healthy School Co-ordinator' training days were held. Attendees received training on various health issues such as Domestic Abuse, Healthy Eating & Oral Hygiene.
- A Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) Anti Bullying Train the Trainer Course was delivered by Stonewall Cymru to both primary and secondary school practitioners.
- A 'Whole School' Twilight Training session was delivered to Ysgol Gymraeg Rhydaman with regards to recent up-dates to the Healthy Schools Scheme and current Health issues. Focus was placed on the 'Healthy Eating in Schools Regulations Act' and on the new Eat-well-Guide.

Training for pupils

- The scheme delivered Sexual Health & Relationships Educator Training to over 60 Year 12 pupils at 3 secondary schools within the authority: Bro Dinefwr, Amman

Valley and Stradey. The Year 12 pupils successfully delivered Sexual Health & Relationship sessions to their year 8 and 9 peers following the training.



Healthy Eating provision for Schools:

- The scheme has funded the delivery of Nutritional sessions delivered by Hayley Herbert (Registered Dietitian) and practical cooking sessions by Jane McEwen (Cooking Counts Wales) to Penygroes, Laugharne, Ysgol y Castell and Peniel, who are all working towards the NQA. The scheme also arranged for these schools to receive sessions from Carmarthenshire's Catering Service on creating healthy smoothies with the use of the Smoothie Exercise bikes.



Partnership Working and Health Promotion

- Stonewall Cymru has confirmed that Carmarthenshire is now placed 33rd out of 50 other Local Authorities in The Education Champion Equality INDEX, an improvement from last year.
- The Healthy School Scheme participated in 3 events delivered and organised by Menter Cwm Gwendraeth Elli in order to promote the scheme and to promote the benefits of regular physical activity and healthy eating on health.

- The Healthy Schools Officer had the opportunity to meet with visiting teachers and their Head-teacher from Kanstelli Community School in Finland. The visitors were given a presentation which focussed on the aims and principles of the Healthy Schools Scheme on a national level and also the work that has been undertaken within Carmarthenshire. It was a very positive experience for all, with the Finnish teachers being inspired to set up a similar initiative within their area.
- The HSS continues to co-ordinate and chair the Childhood Obesity Prevention Group Meetings which have been running successfully for over two years. The scheme continues to have several actions within the Group's Action Plan such as increasing physical activity levels amongst school pupils.
- The scheme held the Healthy Schools Christmas Competition, (October 2015 – December 2015) where pupils from both secondary and primary schools were invited to re-create the popular Christmas song 'The 12 Days of Christmas' to 'The 12 Healthy Days of Christmas'. The winning school was Johnstown Primary school who received Physical Activity Equipment.
- A Healthy Schools Network has been created on Hwb for Healthy School Co-ordinators and Teachers. The purpose of the Network is to strengthen the relationship between the Co-ordinators across Carmarthenshire, to improve communication, to share resources, ideas and good practice.
- A second Healthy Schools Officer was appointed on a secondment basis to work alongside the current Officer during the 2016-17 academic year.

3.6 Carmarthenshire School-based Counselling Service (SBCS)

Carmarthenshire has commissioned Area 43 to manage and provide a professionally accredited school-based counselling service to its young people from year 6 to age 18. Pupil use of the service has continued to be good. 916 pupils used the service in this academic year accessing an average of 5.8 counselling sessions. There has been an increase in use of counselling by year 6 pupils, 38 this year. Young People Core outcome

measures show that the level of emotional distress frequently moves from moderate to mildly elevated and young people's own evaluation of the service is overwhelmingly positive. For example:

- Reassuring advice to help with stress and low mood and how to cope with overthinking.
- Talking through my problems and it's better at home now with mum.
- I was nervous and anxious in the beginning and now I'm more confident.
- It helped me because I had someone I could talk about my problems to.
- I felt a weight has been lifted from my shoulders, it definitely helps to talk issues through.
- It was very good and helped me control my anger and helped me to look at the situation before getting angry and to have a better relationship with my family.
- It helped me with my bullying.

Almost all the children and young people report that their confidence has improved as a result of the counselling sessions, that they were less worried, felt more supported and were more able to cope with issues they were facing.

The predominant issues addressed through counselling were linked to family and self worth. School staff continue to be very satisfied with the provision of the SBCS.

3.7 Carmarthenshire Minority Ethnic Achievement Service (MEAS)

This year has seen our EAL population rise again. The service covers 40 primary schools and 6 secondary schools. Currently we have in excess of 1200 children on our EAL register, a number which has increased year on year (87 in 2003/4).

The service employs 4 English as and Additional Language (EAL) Specialist teachers, 2 Polish Bilingual Teaching Assistants and 2 Arabic Bilingual Teaching Assistants. We support all children who are stage A and B on the EAL register and the majority of stage C students in Secondary. We work closely with those who have daily contact with EAL learners to help them develop inclusive strategies and reach their potential. We offer support for schools preparing for new arrivals and with more advanced learners. This year we have employed a new Specialist Teacher who is a fluent Welsh speaker which allows us to fully support our learners in Welsh medium schools. We work with EAL Coordinators

to monitor the progress of our learners and help with pupil assessment, target setting and planning for future learning. We also provide staff training and offer inset packages.

The MEAS team, working closely with our colleagues in schools, aim to achieve the following common objectives:

- Continued and marked progress of English/Welsh language acquisition
- Enhanced personal development
- School leavers with qualifications and good employment prospects.

Home Office funding has enabled us to employ dedicated Arabic TAs who work closely to support the arrival of Refugee families in the authority. The TAs assist the induction process with translation and interpretation in addition to supporting children in accessing the curriculum in class.

A very successful 'Safe Havens Conference' was held in 2015-16 to raise awareness of the issues surrounding refugees and their resettlement. We have worked closely with other agencies such as the Ethnic Youth Support Team and Show Racism the Red Card to equip schools with the expertise and resources to best help the resettlement process. We also work closely with our colleagues in other ERW regions to share support and best practice.



3.8 Carmarthenshire Traveller Achievement Service

This year the service has been able to support 6 secondary schools and 7 primary schools. We currently have 171 children on our register, not all of whom are currently receiving support.

Support continues to be delivered on a weekly basis, in small groups or 1:1 sessions with the focus being on Literacy and Numeracy. The target is to enable the children to be better equipped to deal with situations that they encounter later in life.

There has been an overall improvement with attendance from Traveller children over the past year. This has impacted slightly on improving their attainment levels in primary schools.

Some Traveller children have continued with their education into years 12 & 13, which is a real achievement. Gypsy children are making the transition to secondary schools but many are leaving from around year 9. However, Irish Travellers are not making the transition to secondary school as their culture is such that they wish their children to be educated at home away from any influences from the settled community.

The service works closely with other agencies and continues to develop close relationships with families to maintain the best educational opportunities for all Traveller pupils within the authority.

3.9 Supporting Additional Learning Needs (ALN)

Supporting schools with ALN Reform

Person-centred coaches have supported schools to familiarise themselves and use person-centred tools. Useful resources for schools such as One Page Profiles and Individual Development Plan pro forma have been developed.

Flagship Schools have been developed to act as models of best practice in the field of Person Centred Practice and champion the tools needed to support future ALN reform. These schools are also developing PCP Support Networking Groups and organise support meetings for coaches.

A Person Centred Practice Conference was held to bring together leaders and managers across Education, Children's Services and Health to gain a shared understanding of Person Centred Practice and to support Welsh Government's vision for ALN transformation.

Behaviour Support Services

Work on remodelling of the Behaviour Support Services continued this year following on from last year's consultative and evaluative work around looking at what works, what needs development and what needs to change. The model at Rhydygors day centre has been adapted to 4 day placements to allow regular outreach support into mainstream schools to strengthen interventions, partnership working and raise capacity. The Behaviour Support Community Team and Rhydygors Day Centre and Canolfan Y Gors staff have been undertaking joint development and training.

Training

Other training being rolled out across schools and services in the county include training through the SENCO Fora on the ALN Transformation Programme, Specific Learning Difficulties, autism awareness, social stories, the 'working for' approach, Anxiety and Autism, Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) and Proact Scip Positive Behaviour Management.

Canolfan Cothi and Garreglwyd

Canolfan Cothi opened as the new Secondary specialist ALN autism provision as part of the newly built Ysgol Bro Dinefwr. During the past year, pupils previously located at Garreglwyd successfully transferred to the Canolfan Cothi Centre which has facilities to support up to 30 secondary aged pupils on the autism spectrum.

Garreglwyd Residential Autism Provision remains in its current location in the Gwendraeth Valley. Two secondary aged pupils with autism who were previously in out-of-county specialist residential provision have returned to Garreglwyd during the year, considerably reducing out of county costs. Planning discussions for further expansion of this provision are in place.

3.10 Carmarthenshire Music Service

Carmarthenshire Music Service has continued to provide high quality tuition and performing opportunities to the pupils of our county. During 2015-2016:

- Pupil numbers remained high with just under 6,000 pupils receiving weekly provision in the form of instrumental lessons, vocal tuition or curriculum support.

- The service ran 5 ensembles at Intermediate Level (Key Stage 3) which culminated in the Intermediate Music Festival held at Q.E. High School during March 2015.
- The service ran 6 ensembles at Senior Level (Key Stages 4 & 5) which culminated in the Senior Music Festival held at the Ffwrnes and Lyric Theatres during March 2016.
- The Service ran 14 Junior ensembles (Primary) that took part in the *Junior Proms Festival* held across four concerts at the Ffwrnes Theatre in June 2016. More than 2,000 primary school pupils from Key Stage 2 took part .
- Over 60 secondary school pupils represented Carmarthenshire in the Six Counties Ensembles run by the ERW Consortium.
- Over 30 young musicians represented Carmarthenshire at National Level performing with National Youth Arts Wales.
- The County Senior Orchestra progressed to the regional finals of the Music for Youth Festival and were invited to perform at Symphony Hall, Birmingham.



- The Secondary Schools' Girls Choir progressed to the regional finals of the Music for Youth Festival and were invited to perform at Symphony Hall, Birmingham.
- The Secondary Schools' Girls Choir were invited to perform at the Music for Youth Proms at the Royal Albert Hall.



3.11 Leadership of Learning

We are fully committed to ensuring the highest quality of 'Leadership of Learning' across all our schools and at every level within them. We actively promote the national drive to enhance the leadership skills and roles of all school practitioners and leaders in support of the best learning and outcomes for all young people. Our work encompasses the entirety of the 'Leadership continuum' to provide opportunities for the whole school community, including Learning Support Assistants, Higher Level Teaching Assistants, Newly Qualified Teachers, Middle Leaders, Aspiring Leaders, Senior Leaders and Governors. Here are a few examples of this work in practice:

i) ERW School Leadership Development Programme:

We have continued to enhance the skills and experiences of our 'middle' and 'aspiring' leaders through active participation in the ERW School Leadership Development Programme. This revised programme provides wholly relevant and constructive opportunities for our practitioners to study key areas of both the Wales and international education agendas. In addition, facilitating 'good practice' and supporting 'whole school improvement' across a variety of strategies forms a focal part of the work.

ii) NPQH (National Professional Qualification for Headship) Provision:

We provide ongoing guidance and support for practitioners from across all sectors wishing to pursue the NPQH programme. We are proactive in the identification of future leaders as a part of ‘talent spotting’ process and work in close partnership with our headteachers and senior leaders. This is clearly aimed at providing a practical ‘succession planning’ programme across our authority.

iii) Carmarthenshire NPQH Programme graduation statistics:

| Cohort | Primary | Secondary | Total |
|---------|---------|-----------|-------|
| 2011/12 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 2012/13 | 5 | 2 | 7 |
| 2013/14 | 2 | 1 | 3 |
| 2014/15 | 3 | - | 3 |
| 2015/16 | 6 | - | 6 |

iv) Professional support and development for Newly Appointed Head teachers:

We continue to support our newly appointed headteachers with –

- Professional mentor support
- Local network meetings*
- ERW Seminars/workshops

*meetings provide opportunities for discussion and collaboration with local authority partners e.g. Human Resources, Inclusion, School Improvement, Finance, Safeguarding, Health & Safety etc.

v) Professional development for Head teachers and Senior Leaders:

Carmarthenshire supports and promotes the effective sharing of good practice within our LA and region through numerous levels of activity. Local Authority and regional collaboration has facilitated individual professional development and whole school improvement most effectively. Once again, our Head teachers and Senior Leaders have experienced and contributed to this work in an enthusiastic and supportive manner. These activities have included:

- Undertaking Executive Headteacher roles (leading schools within a partnership or federation)

- Curriculum innovation work through local or regional 'Leaders of Learning' (sharing of good practice – particularly in the fields of literacy, numeracy, ICT and reducing the impact of poverty)
- Commissioned leadership work: undertaking support and challenge activity within our schools e.g. working with schools causing concern, providing increasing levels of 'School-to-School' support, undertaking ERW Core Visits etc
- Supporting Local, Regional and National Networks including - developing Leadership Programmes, Professional Development Programmes, Governor Services, HR Services, supporting Headteacher Reference Groups etc.
- DEPNET Group (Secondary Deputy Headteachers' Network): this network has continued to link deputy head-teachers from all our secondary schools, engaging them in a wide range of self-improving activities in support of raising standards.

DRAFT

3. Jargon buster

| Jargon | Meaning |
|--------------------|---|
| AfL | Assessment for Learning |
| ALN | Additional Learning Needs |
| Area 43 | Youth Project Charity |
| CSI | Core Subject Indicator - awarded to pupils at the end of: KS2 (Year 6) – achieving Level 4 or above in Welsh or English, Maths and Science KS3 (Year 9) – achieving Level 5 or above in Welsh or English, Maths and Science |
| DEPNET | Secondary Deputy Head teachers' Network |
| EAL | English as an Additional Language |
| EIG | Education Improvement Grant |
| ERW | Education through Regional Working (our Regional Consortium) |
| EWO | Education Welfare Officer |
| FP | Foundation Phase |
| FPI | Foundation Phase Indicator - awarded to pupils at the end of Year 2 achieving Outcome 5 or above in Language (Welsh or English), Mathematical Development and Personal & Social Development |
| KS | Key Stage |
| LA | Local Authority |
| L2i | Level 2 inclusive (5 A Levels A* - C including Welsh or English and Maths) |
| L2 | Level 2 (5 Levels at A* - C grades) |
| Level 3 Threshold | 2 or more A Levels or equivalent qualification |
| MEAS | Minority Ethnic Achievement Service |
| NPQH | National Professional Qualification for Headship (mandatory in Wales) |
| PLC | Professional Learning Community |
| Quality Indicators | The ten 'Quality Indicators' as used by Estyn within the Inspection Framework |
| SBCS | School Based Counselling Service |
| UWTSD | University of Wales, Trinity St. David |

EDUCATION & CHILDREN SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 26th JANUARY 2017

Education & Children Scrutiny Committee Task & Finish Group Final Report 2015/16:

Narrowing the Attainment Gap: Learners eligible for free school meals

To consider and comment on the following issues:

- To endorse the report and recommendations for further consideration by the Executive Board.

Reasons:

- At its meeting on 24th September 2015, the Education & Children Scrutiny Committee agreed to establish a task and finish group to undertake a review into the attainment gap for eligible for free school meals learners.
- The recommendations contained within the report have been formulated by the Group following the consideration of a range of evidence over a series of meetings held between December 2015 and November 2016.

To be referred to the Executive Board for decision: YES

Executive Board Member Portfolio Holder: Cllr. Gareth Jones (Education & Children)

| | | |
|---|--|--|
| <p>Chair of the Task & Finish Group: Cllr. Eirwyn Williams</p> <p>Report Author: Matthew Hughes</p> | <p>Designations:</p> <p>Chair of the Education & Children Scrutiny Committee</p> <p>Democratic Services Officer</p> | <p>Tel Nos. / E-Mail Addresses:</p> <p>01267 224028 jewilliams@carmarthenshire.gov.uk</p> <p>01267 224029 mahughes@carmarthenshire.gov.uk</p> |
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

EDUCATION & CHILDREN SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 26th JANUARY 2017

Education & Children Scrutiny Committee Task & Finish Group Final Report 2015/16:

Narrowing the Attainment Gap: Learners eligible for free school meals

Review Background

The Education & Children 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.

At its meeting on 24th September 2015, the Education & Children Scrutiny Committee considered provisional Examination and Teacher Assessment Results. During consideration of this item, the Committee noted that one of the priorities for the Authority during the 2015/16 academic year was to improve the performance of those learners eligible for free school meals (e-FSM learners) and that this was a national as well as a local priority. The Committee then agreed to establish a task and finish group to research and review the attainment gap for e-FSM learners.

Objectives and Scope

Following its first meeting, the Group agreed that the scope for the review would be:

- Learners eligible for free school meals, including Looked After Children, and the attainment gap in Carmarthenshire.

The Group agreed that the main aims of the review would be:

- To research the attainment gap for learners eligible for free school meals in Carmarthenshire.
- To identify trends at all key stages and key indicators.
- To review how the Pupil Deprivation Grant is being used in our schools.
- To identify best practice interventions in the County's schools, across ERW, the rest of Wales and the UK.

- To raise the profile of the challenge of overcoming the attainment gap in the midst of shrinking budgets, other priorities and curriculum changes.
- To formulate recommendations for consideration by the Executive Board.

Approach

The Task and Finish Group's membership was as follows:

County Councillors

- Cllr. Ryan Bartlett
- Cllr. Peter Hughes-Griffiths
- Cllr. John James
- Cllr. Hugh Richards
- Cllr. Tom Theophilus (until 5th July 2016)
- Cllr. Eirwyn Williams (Chair)

Co-opted Members

- Mr. Simon Pearson – Parent Governor Representative (until 31st March 2016)
- Mrs. Vera Kenny – Roman Catholic Church Representative

The Democratic Services Unit based in the Chief Executive's Department, provided research and general support to the Group.

The following officers provided specialist advice and support during the Group's review:

- Gareth Morgans – Chief Education Officer / Head of Education Services
- Aeron Rees – Head of Learner Programmes
- David Astins – Strategic Development Manager
- Glenn Evans – Senior Education Consultant
- Mary Parry – Consortium Associate School Improvement Officer

A total of 7 meetings were held between December 2015 and November 2016 during which the Group considered evidence and information from a wide variety of sources. The sessions were designed to provide the Group with the relevant information, context and background to the topic.

In addition to officers from the Education & Children's Department, the Group received evidence from the following individuals during its review:

- Mr. Joe Cudd – Head Teacher of Maes-y-Morfa CP School, Llanelli
- Mrs. Rhian Evans – Head Teacher of Carwe, Gwynfryn and Ponthenri School Federation
- Ms. Lisa Davies – Teacher at Carwe School
- Professor David Egan – Director of Wales Centre for Equity in Education
- Mrs. Betsan O'Connor – Managing Director of ERW
- Mrs. Tracy Senchal – Head Teacher of Coedcae Secondary School, Llanelli

Key Conclusions

- The impact of poverty on attainment is a well-known and well researched phenomenon, indeed, there is a wide range of research and good practice available from across the UK to inform and assist the County's schools in targeting the problem. Carmarthenshire needs to build and enhance on this research and good practice.
- There is evidence of much good practice within Carmarthenshire itself, as testified by the narrowing gap over a number of years. However, the good practice in Carmarthenshire and across the ERW region needs to be promoted and implemented by all schools.
- Minimising the impact of poverty on education attainment and reducing the attainment gap requires long term strategies and commitment from all agencies and organisations involved. There is no quick fix solution.
- Free School Meals Service has developed effective electronic and online systems. However, ensuring that those eligible for free school meals take up that opportunity, remains a challenge
- It is essential that rural poverty is not forgotten, especially, as the Public Policy Institute for Wales states: "there is evidence that rural poverty can be masked by the relative affluence of rural areas and by a culture of self-reliance in rural communities".
- It is clear that good leadership in schools as well as giving e-FSM learners a high priority in a school's development plan, is essential to ensure success in dealing with this matter as well as regular tracking and monitoring of pupils.
- Successful schools find creative ways of using the Pupil Deprivation Grant effectively.
- Engagement with parents is important and successful schools share information with and support them.
- The greatest impact of some of these initiatives undertaken by schools is not necessarily an improvement in standards but often is seen in the well-being of the pupils.
- School governors have a key role in monitoring and challenging the way in which their schools spend the PDG and seek to minimise the impact of poverty on education attainment.
- The loss of the PDG would have a significant impact on schools' ability to cater for and support e-FSM pupils.

Recommendations

The Group recommends that:

- Carmarthenshire County Council continues to consider the attainment gap as a matter of priority whilst acknowledging that it requires perseverance from all interested parties over a long period of time to ensure success.
- The County Council develops and publishes a good practice guide for Carmarthenshire schools, outlining effective methods and solutions to reduce the impact of poverty on educational attainment and reduce the attainment gap.
- In developing a good practice guide, the County Council utilises existing and online systems to share with schools and practitioners (e.g. HWB).
- The County Council support an event to launch the good practice guide / promote the deprivation agenda be arranged in Carmarthenshire, in association with the University of Wales Trinity St. David and the European Forum for Freedom in Education (EFFE).
- That the County Council considers and responds to the findings and implications of ERW's rural poverty research, when it is published in 2017.
- That the County Council lobbies the Welsh Government on the importance of the Pupil Deprivation Grant (PDG) and encourages the relevant minister to safeguard the grant for the long term.
- In light of on-going financial pressures, the County Council should urge and support schools to make interventions such as those funded by the PDG, as sustainable as possible for the longer term as well as integrating such initiatives into everyday teaching practice.
- County Council departments be requested to ensure the promotion of the Free School Meals Service to eligible families through front line services (e.g. Housing Benefits Service), encouraging those in receipt of or applying for other benefits, to apply for free school meals.

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.

Signed: **Linda Rees-Jones** **Head of Administration & Law**

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

1. Policy, Crime & Disorder and Equalities – Addressing the attainment gap between e-FSM and n-FSM learners contributes to the following strategic objectives and outcomes in Carmarthenshire County Council’s Corporate Strategy 2015-2020:

- Making the best use of resources
- People in Carmarthenshire fulfil their learning potential
- Carmarthenshire has a stronger and more prosperous economy

It also contributes to implementing ERW’s Business Plan and strategy for ‘Reducing the Impact of Poverty on Educational Outcomes 2015-18’, as well as the Welsh Government’s curriculum reform.

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 & Law**

1. Local Member(s) – N/A

2. Community / Town Council – N/A

3. Relevant Partners – Head teachers, the Managing Director of ERW and the Director of Wales Centre for Equity in Education all addressed the Task & Finish Group during its review.

4. Staff Side Representatives and other Organisations – Officers from the Education & Children and Chief Executive’s departments contributed to and supported the work of the Task & Finish Group.

**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 |
|---|---|
| <p>Task & Finish Group Planning and Scoping Document – E&C Scrutiny Committee (21st January 2016)</p> | <p>Cymraeg http://democratiaeth.sirgar.llyw.cymru/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=153&MId=255&Ver=4&LLL=1</p> <p>English http://democracy.carmarthenshire.gov.wales/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=153&MId=255&Ver=4&LLL=1</p> |
| <p>Provisional Examination and Teacher Assessment Results and Provisional School Attendance Data – E&C Scrutiny Committee (24th September 2015)</p> | <p>Cymraeg http://democratiaeth.sirgar.llyw.cymru/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=153&MId=172&Ver=4&LLL=1</p> <p>English http://democracy.carmarthenshire.gov.wales/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=153&MId=172&Ver=4&LLL=1</p> |

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Scrutiny

in Carmarthenshire

Education & Children Scrutiny Committee

Task & Finish Review 2015/16 Final Report

Narrowing the Attainment Gap: Learners eligible for free school meals



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Members of the Task and Finish Group



**Cllr. Eirwyn Williams
(Chair)**
Cynwyl Gaeo
Plaid Cymru



Cllr. Ryan Bartlett
Betws
Labour



**Cllr. Peter Hughes-
Griffiths**
Carmarthen Town North
Plaid Cymru



Cllr. John James
Burry Port
Labour



Mrs. Vera Kenny
Co-opted Member –
Roman Catholic Church
Representative



Mr. Simon Pearson
Co-opted Member –
Parent Governor
Representative (*until 31st
March 2016*)



Cllr. Hugh Richards
Felinfoel
Independent



Cllr. Tom Theophilus
Cil-y-Cwm
Independent
(*until 5th July 2016*)

Rhagair y Cadeirydd

Mae'n bleser gennyf gyflwyno adroddiad terfynol Grŵp Gorchwyl a Gorffen y Pwyllgor Craffu Addysg a Phlant a sefydlwyd i ymchwilio ac adolygu'r bwch cyrhaeddiad rhwng dysgwyr sy'n gymwys am brydau ysgol am ddim, a'i cyd-disgyblion sydd ddim yn gymwys.

Ein nod fel grŵp oedd canfod y rhesymau y tu cefn i'r bwch annerbyniol yma a dod o hyd i dulliau i'w gau. At y diben hwn, rwy'n ddiolchgar iawn am gyngor a chyfeiriad cychwynnol yr Athro David Egan, o Ganolfan Cymru er Cydraddoldeb mewn Addysg.

Fel grŵp mae dyled arnom hefyd i benaethiaid a staff nifer o ysgolion a wnaeth ddarparu cyflwyniadau gwerthfawr a llawn gwybodaeth ynghylch dulliau arloesol ac effeithiol o wella cyrhaeddiad.

Rwy'n gobeithio y bydd yr argymhellion yr ydym wedi datblygu yn gwneud cyfraniad positif a fydd yn galluogi ysgolion yn Sir Gaerfyrddin a thu hwnt, i gau'r bwch annheg yma.

Rwy'n ddiolchgar dros ben i'm cyd-aelodau ac i aelodau cyfetholedig y grŵp am eu mewnbwn a'i brwdfrydedd yn ystod yr adolygiad. Hoffwn ddiolch yn benodol i Simon Pearson (ein cyn rhiant-lywodraethwr a ddaeth i ddiwedd ei gyfnod yn y rôl yn Mawrth 2016) am ei gyfraniad gwerthfawr, ynghyd â chydabod gyda thristwch, cyfraniad y diweddar Tom Theophilus, a fu farw ar ddiwedd ein adolygiad.

Hoffwn estyn diolch yn ogystal i'r swyddogion a wnaeth ddarparu cyngor a chefnogaeth arbenigol trwy gydol yr adolygiad.

Cyng. Eirwyn Williams
Cadeirydd y Grŵp Gorchwyl a Gorffen

Chair's Foreword

It gives me great pleasure to present the final report of the Education & Children Scrutiny Committee's Task and Finish Group established to research and review the attainment gap between e-FSM learners and their non-eligible classmates.

Our aim as a group was to identify the reasons behind this unacceptable gap and then find ways of closing it. To this end, I am very grateful for the initial advice and direction given by Professor David Egan, Wales Centre for Equality in Education.

As a group we are also indebted to the heads and staff of several schools who gave us extremely valuable and informative presentations regarding innovative and very effective methods of improving attainment.

I hope that the recommendations that we have made will make a positive contribution that will enable all schools in Carmarthenshire and beyond to close this inequitable gap.

I am very grateful to my fellow members and co-opted members of this group for their input and for the enthusiasm they have demonstrated during this review. I would particularly like to thank Simon Pearson (our former Parent Governor Member whose period in the role came to an end in March 2016) for his valuable contribution as well as acknowledging the contribution of the late Tom Theophilus, who sadly passed away at the end of our review.

I would also like to extend my gratitude to the officers who have provided specialist advice and support throughout the review.

*Cllr. Eirwyn Williams
Chair of the Task and Finish Group*

1.0 The Task & Finish Review

1.1 Background

The Education & Children 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.

At its meeting on 24th September 2015, the Education & Children Scrutiny Committee considered provisional Examination and Teacher Assessment Results. During consideration of this item, the Committee noted that one of the priorities for the Authority during the 2015/16 academic year was to improve the performance of those learners eligible for free school meals (e-FSM learners) and that this was a national as well as a local priority. The Committee then agreed to establish a task and finish group to research and review the attainment gap for e-FSM learners.

1.2 Objectives and Scope

Following its first meeting, the Group agreed that the scope for the review would be:

- Learners eligible for free school meals, including Looked After Children, and the attainment gap in Carmarthenshire.

The Group agreed that the main aims of the review would be:

- To research the attainment gap for learners eligible for free school meals in Carmarthenshire.
- To identify trends at all key stages and key indicators.
- To review how the Pupil Deprivation Grant is being used in our schools.
- To identify best practice interventions in the County's schools, across ERW, the rest of Wales and the UK.
- To raise the profile of the challenge of overcoming the attainment gap in the midst of shrinking budgets, other priorities and curriculum changes.
- To formulate recommendations for consideration by the Executive Board.

1.3 Approach

The Task and Finish Group's membership was as follows:

County Councillors

- Cllr. Ryan Bartlett
- Cllr. Peter Hughes-Griffiths
- Cllr. John James
- Cllr. Hugh Richards
- Cllr. Tom Theophilus (*until 5th July 2016*)
- Cllr. Eirwyn Williams (Chair)

Co-opted Members

- Mr. Simon Pearson – Parent Governor Representative (*until 31st March 2016*)
- Mrs. Vera Kenny – Roman Catholic Church Representative

The Democratic Services Unit based in the Chief Executive's Department, provided research and general support to the Group.

The following officers provided specialist advice and support during the Group's review:

- Gareth Morgans – Chief Education Officer / Head of Education Services
- Aeron Rees – Head of Learner Programmes
- David Astins – Strategic Development Manager
- Glenn Evans – Senior Education Consultant
- Mary Parry – Consortium Associate School Improvement Officer

A total of 7 meetings were held between December 2015 and November 2016 (see Appendices 1-2) during which the Group considered evidence and information from a wide variety of sources. The sessions were designed to provide the Group with the relevant information, context and background to the topic.

In addition to officers from the Education & Children's Department, the Group received evidence from the following individuals during its review:

- Mr. Joe Cudd – Head Teacher of Maes-y-Morfa CP School, Llanelli
- Mrs. Rhian Evans – Head Teacher of Carwe, Gwynfryn and Ponthenri School Federation
- Ms. Lisa Davies – Teacher at Carwe School
- Professor David Egan – Director of Wales Centre for Equity in Education
- Mrs. Betsan O'Connor – Managing Director of ERW
- Mrs. Tracy Senchal – Head Teacher of Coedcae Secondary School, Llanelli

2.0 Key Findings

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 Poverty and its impact on education attainment

The Joseph Rowntree Foundation defines poverty as: *“When a person’s resources (mainly their material resources) are not sufficient to meet their minimum needs (including social participation).”*¹

UNICEF suggests that: *“children experience poverty as an environment that is damaging to their mental, physical, emotional and spiritual development”* and that: *“expanding the definition of child poverty beyond traditional conceptualizations, such as low household income or low levels of consumption, is particularly important.”*²

In Wales, the Welsh Government in its Child Poverty Strategy, defines poverty as: *“a long-term state of not having sufficient resources to afford food, reasonable living conditions or amenities or to participate in activities (such as access to attractive neighbourhoods and open spaces) which are taken for granted by others in their society.”*³

The Welsh Government acknowledges that: *“children growing up and living in low income households are much more at risk of having poorer physical and mental health outcomes, are less likely to reach cognitive and developmental milestones in the early years, have poorer educational attainment, are more likely to be not in education, employment or training (NEET) between the age of 16 and 24, and more likely to be unemployed and living in poverty as an adult.”*⁴

Impact of poverty on Education – Child Poverty Action Group

- Children from poorer backgrounds lag at all stages of education.
- By the age of three, poorer children are estimated to be, on average, nine months behind children from more wealthy backgrounds.
- According to Department for Education statistics, by the end of primary school, pupils receiving free school meals are estimated to be almost three terms behind their more affluent peers.
- By 14, this gap grows to over five terms.
- By 16, children receiving free school meals achieve 1.7 grades lower at GCSE.

Source: Child Poverty Action Group - <http://cpag.org.uk/content/impact-poverty>

The impact of poverty can and does lead to a difference in academic achievement and progress between different groups of learners, particularly between those from

¹ A definition of poverty: An explanation of Joseph Rowntree Foundation’s definition of poverty and the terms used in it (September 2014)

² Children Living in Poverty: A review of child poverty definitions, measurements, and policies, UNICEF Division of Policy and Planning and Graduate Program in International Affairs, New School University (April 2005)

³ Child Poverty Strategy for Wales – Welsh Government (March 2015)

⁴ Child Poverty Strategy for Wales – Welsh Government (March 2015)

high-income and those from low-income households. This difference or disparity is commonly referred to as the 'attainment gap'.

The Welsh Government states that: *"the impact of deprivation on educational attainment is neither a new phenomenon nor one unique to Wales."* It adds that *"there's no need to look far from home to see that the impact is greater and progress to tackle it slower in Wales than elsewhere"*.⁵

2.1.2 Free School Meals

Pupils in Wales, who attend school on a full time basis, might be entitled to receive free school meals. A pupil will be eligible to receive a free school meal should their parent(s) or guardian(s) be receiving one of the following benefits or payments:

- Income Support
- Income Based Jobseekers Allowance
- Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Child Tax Credit, provided they are not entitled to Working Tax Credit and their annual income does not exceed £16,190
- Guarantee element of State Pension Credit
- Working Tax Credit 'run-on' – the payment someone may receive for a further four weeks after they stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit
- Universal Credit.

The Welsh Government also states that: *"young people who receive Income Related Employment and Support Allowance, Universal Credit, Income Support or Income Based Job Seekers Allowance in their own right, may also be eligible to receive free school meals"*.⁶

In order to receive free school meals, parents or guardians will need to make an application to their relevant local authority. In Carmarthenshire, the application is simple and made via the County Council's website. Young people studying at further education colleges institutions are not eligible to claim for free school meals. However, the Welsh Government advises that students contact the student support office to ascertain whether there is other support that could be accessed to contribute to or cover the cost of meals.

The Welsh Government acknowledges the concern that some pupils are not taking advantage of their entitlement to free school meals. This is an issue that Carmarthenshire's Education & Children Scrutiny Committee has noted on a number of occasions during its school visits. One of the main factors is the stigma associated with being in receipt of a 'hand-out' and many parents or guardians may feel embarrassed about asking for assistance in this way.

Research published by the Institute for Social and Economic Research at the University of Essex in 2012 suggested that: *"every day in the UK, almost 300,000*

⁵ Rewriting the future: Raising ambition and attainment in Welsh schools – Welsh Government (June 2014)

⁶ Welsh Government Free School Meals –

<http://gov.wales/topics/educationandskills/schoolhome/foodanddrink/freeschoolmeals/?lang=en>

entitled children do not participate in the Free School Meals (FSM) programme, foregoing a transfer worth up to £400 per year”.⁷

In 2013, the Welsh Government, in partnership with the Welsh Local Government Association, published a ‘Free school meals case studies report’ which outlined a number of factors that influenced the take up of free school meals as well as suggesting potential measures to address these. The main findings of the report were that pupils entitled to free school meals were mostly concerned about queuing, the types of foods available, cost (which the report authors presumed meant the local authority ‘allowance’ for their meals) and what their friends were doing (specifically those pupils eligible for free meals but not taking up their entitlement). The report authors also noted that the concerns voiced regarding the food appeared to relate to whether the options available were not healthy enough or too healthy. The authors also discovered that those pupils eligible to receive free school meals were not overly concerned about the payment systems used by their school.

According to Welsh Government figures, approximately one in five primary school pupils are eligible for free school meals. The data suggests that at the end of Key Stage 2, under 70% of these pupils will achieve expected results when compared with 88% of pupils from better off families. The Welsh Government states that: *“by age 16, children from better off families are more than twice as likely to achieve five good GCSEs, as those from disadvantaged homes”* and that: *“this means that roughly one in five pupils are failing to get good results, not because of lack of ability, but because they are from a poor background”*.⁸

In 2014/15, Ceredigion had the lowest percentage of compulsory aged school pupils (5-15) eligible for free meals at 10.9% and Blaenau Gwent had the highest at 29.2%.

- The number of compulsory aged school pupils (5-15) eligible for free meals has decreased from 69,418 pupils in January 2014 to 68,388 pupils in January 2015.
- The percentage of compulsory aged school pupils (5-15) known to be eligible for free meals has decreased from 19.1% in January 2014 to 18.8% in January 2015
- The number of compulsory aged school pupils (5-15) eligible for free meals was highest in Cardiff at 9,055 and lowest in Ceredigion at 875.

Figure 1 on the following page outlines Welsh pupils aged 5-15 who are eligible for free school meals, according to local authority area, as at January 2016. This data shows Carmarthenshire on 17.3%, below the Welsh average of 18.4% and on a par with the ERW region (also 17.3%).

Figure 2 shows a gradual increase of 1.3% in Carmarthenshire of those pupils eligible for free school meals, rising from 16% in 2013 to 17.3% in 2016.

⁷ Take-up of Free School Meals: Price Effects and Peer Effects by Angus Holford, Institute for Social and Economic Research, University of Essex (July 2012)

⁸ Guidance for using the Pupil Deprivation Grant: What really works? by the Welsh Government (2014)

Figure 1: Welsh pupils aged 5-15 who are eligible for free school meals by local authority – January 2016 (PLASC data)

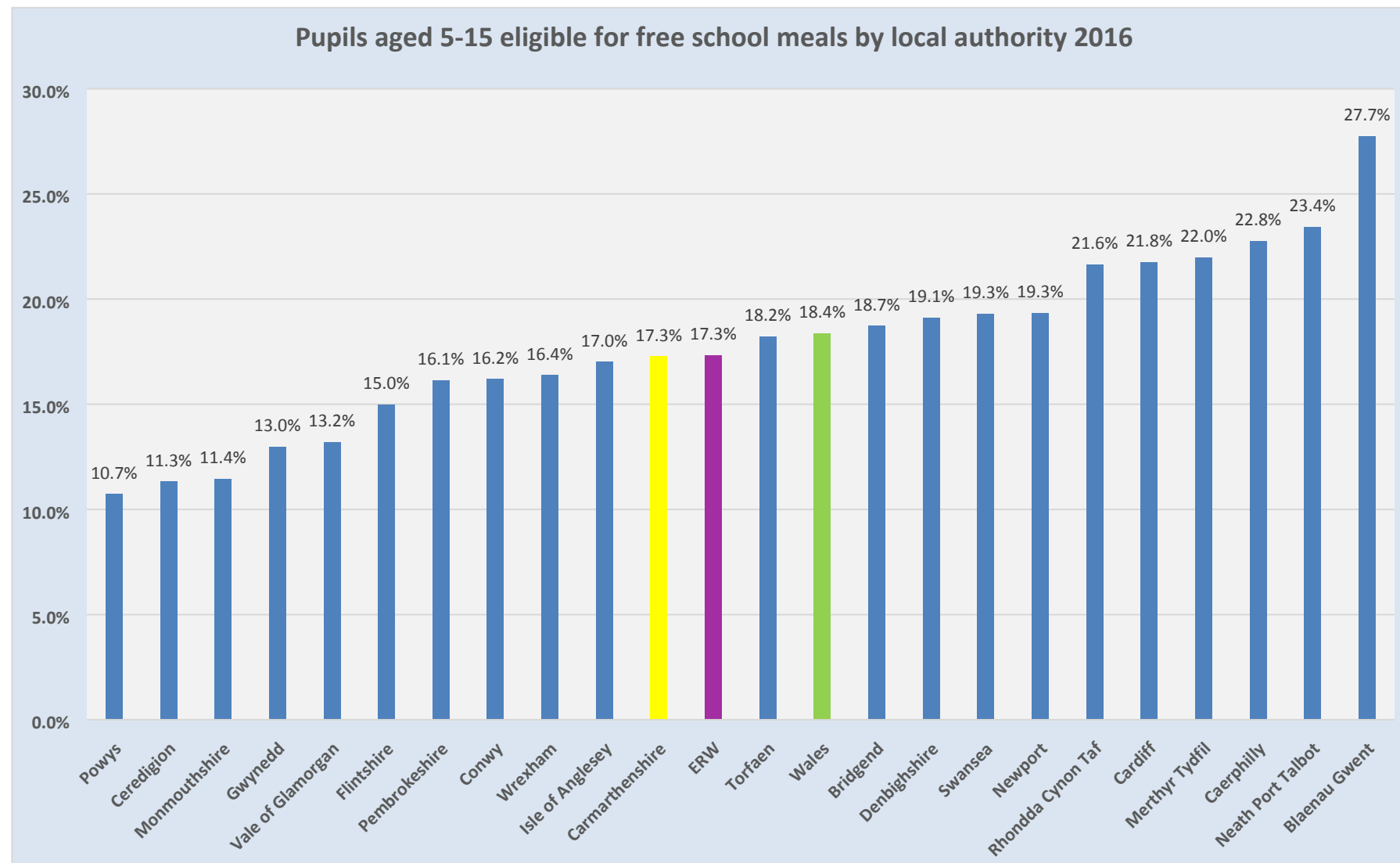
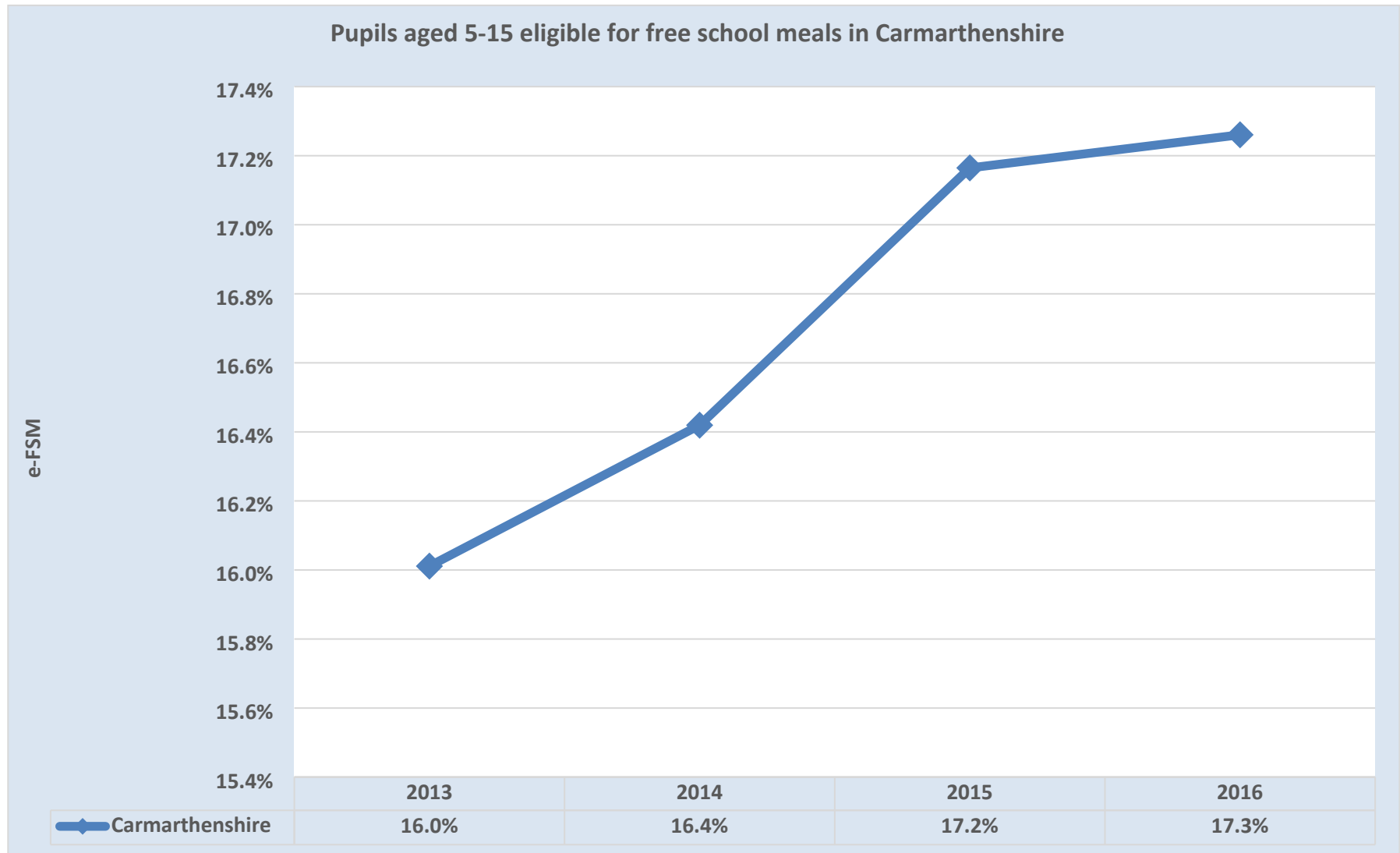


Figure 2: Carmarthenshire pupils aged 5-15 eligible for free school meals January 2016 (PLASC data)



2.1.3 Performance of pupils eligible for free school meals (e-FSM)

Research shows that the performance of pupils who are eligible to receive free school meals (e-FSM) is lower than their non-eligible counterparts at all key stages and in all performance measures. The Welsh Government states that: *“there is also a strong link between achievement and the level of entitlement to free school meals”* and that: *“as the level of free school meal entitlement increases, the level of achievement decreases”*.⁹

Achievement is measured against the following indicators:

- *The **Foundation Phase Indicator (FPI)** represents the percentage of pupils achieving the expected outcome or above in ‘Language, literacy and communication skills’ (in English (LCE) or Welsh (LCW)), ‘Personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural diversity’ (PSD) and “Mathematical development” (MDT) in combination.*
- *Core subject indicator at **Key Stages 2-3** is defined as achieving the expected level in both Maths and Science and either English or Welsh first language. The expected level of the majority of pupils is level 4 at Key Stage 2 and level 5 at Key Stage 3.*
- *At **Key Stage 4** it is defined as achieving five GCSEs at level 2 inclusive qualification, grade A*-C in Maths and either English or Welsh first language.*¹⁰

When considering the core subject indicators, the gap in performance across Wales has narrowed overall during the last four years at Key Stages 2 and 3. At Key Stage 4, the gap in performance in the Level 2 threshold including a GCSE A*-C in English/Welsh and Mathematics widened every year to 2009-10 before narrowing in the following three years, but the gap has widened again between 2012/13 and 2013/14. The provisional data for 2015/16, shows that 35.5% of Key Stage 4 pupils who were eligible for free school meals achieved the Level 2+ threshold and that the gap between this group of pupils and those not eligible for free school meals, is 31.2%.

2.1.4 Pupil Deprivation Grant

In 2012, the Welsh Government launched the Pupil Deprivation Grant (PDG) scheme to provide additional funding to schools based on the number of pupils on their roll eligible for Free School Meals or who are Looked After Children. The aim of the Grant is to improve outcomes for these learners by overcoming the additional barriers that prevent learners from disadvantaged backgrounds achieving their full potential.

The Grant can be utilised to support a range of interventions in order to improve the outcomes of those pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds. The Welsh Government expects schools to outline their rationale for how they will spend the Grant in their School Development Plans. It states that these should: *“demonstrate their priorities*

⁹ Achievement and entitlement to free school meals – Welsh Government Statistics and Research (December 2015)

¹⁰ Achievement and entitlement to free school meals in Wales, 2013 – Welsh Government Statistics and Research (January 2014)

and targets; how they identify pupils' needs and what staff development will be put in place to meet those needs".¹¹

As of September 2014, ESTYN inspectors, as part of their school inspections, have been giving consideration to how pupils eligible for free school meals are supported to improve their rates of attainment. They have also been considering how schools' resources (e.g. the PDG) are being used to further this agenda.

Grant allocations are paid through the regional school improvement consortia on a bi-annual basis. The grant is delegated in full to schools/early years providers other than the Looked After Children portion which is managed on a regional basis by the relevant consortia. The allocation of the grant for the 2015/16 and 2016/17 academic years is outlined in the table below.

Table 1: Allocation of Pupil Deprivation Grant

| Year | Allocation of Grant |
|---------|---|
| 2015/16 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For each child aged 5 to 15 who is eligible for free school meals (e-FSM), as reported in the January 2014 Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC) return, their school will receive £1,050. • For each child who was Looked After (LAC) as reported in the April 2014 Children in Need census, the regional consortium will receive £1,050. • For each eligible child aged 3 to 4 in in the Foundation Phase in maintained and non-maintained settings, an allocation of £300 will be made. |
| 2016/17 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For each child aged 5 to 15 who is eligible for free school meals (e-FSM), as reported in the January 2015 Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC) return, their school will receive £1,150. • For each child who was Looked After (LAC) as reported in the April 2015 Children in Need census, the regional consortium will receive £1,150. • For each eligible child aged 3 to 4 in in the Foundation Phase in maintained and non-maintained settings, an allocation of £300 will be made. |

For the 2015/16 and 2016/17, the Welsh Government introduced the Early Years Pupil Deprivation Grant (EYPDG) which extends the eligibility to three and four-year-olds who are in funded Foundation Phase education. For 2017/18, the allocation for each eligible pupil in the Foundation Phase will increase to £600.

Making effective use of the Pupil Deprivation Grant is an important issue for the Welsh Government. In December 2015, the Welsh Government published its second evaluation report on the use of the Pupil Deprivation Grant. The report included a

¹¹ Guidance for using the Pupil Deprivation Grant: What really works? by the Welsh Government (2014)

series of case studies as well as findings from its analysis of data from the National Pupil Database. The Welsh Government's main findings for Year 2 (2014/15) are outlined below:¹²

- *Case study schools were using sophisticated data systems to identify individual pupils to receive additional support via PDG-funded interventions. The PDG has helped to instigate improvements in the way some case study schools collect and use data.*
- *All schools monitored pupil-level data against individual targets. A few schools explained that they had not previously monitored eFree School Meal pupils separately, or that they had not previously monitored the impact of specific interventions.*
- *There are examples of schools making spending decisions, and changing the way in which interventions operate, on the basis of the data they have collected to improve effectiveness.*
- *The case studies suggest that the biggest impact of the PDG on staffing has been to increase the number and the skills of Teaching Assistants (TAs) employed by schools. TAs are often trained on implementing and evaluating the impact of the interventions they deliver and as a result are becoming highly skilled members of the school staff. The PDG has led to an increase in the size of the school staff in virtually all case study schools.*
- *The way the PDG is spent by schools appears to have evolved over the grant's lifetime. Several case study schools explained they had initially invested in resources and establishing data monitoring systems to track pupils' progress using the funds, but that funds are now concentrated on the delivery of interventions, and specifically on funding staff time to deliver them.*

The Welsh Government has also published guidance entitled 'Guidance for using the Pupil Deprivation Grant: What really works?' as a means of assisting schools on how they can make the best and most effective use of the Grant.

The Local Authority utilises the work of ERW Challenge Advisers for monitoring the effective use of PDG funding within our schools. The content of the 'ERW Core Visit One' (undertaken with every school during the Autumn Term) contains a specific element focused on PDG funding. Schools are required to demonstrate the use and impact of their funding (captured within the content of their individual School Development Plan) on pupil outcomes. Rigorous analysis and discussion with school leaders results in an agreed statement, supported by any appropriate actions deemed necessary, to enhance a school's work.

Details of the Pupil Deprivation Grant allocated to schools in Carmarthenshire are outlined in Appendix 2.

2.2 Policy Context

¹² Welsh Government's Evaluation of the Pupil Deprivation Grant (PDG) – <http://gov.wales/statistics-and-research/evaluation-pupil-deprivation-grant/?lang=en>

2.2.1 Welsh Government

In its strategy 'Rewriting the future: Raising ambition and attainment in Welsh schools', Huw Lewis AM, the then Welsh Government Minister for Education & Skills stated that: *"no child in Wales should be disadvantaged by poverty and inequality"* and that was why he: *"made tackling the impact of poverty on educational attainment [his] top priority"*.¹³

The strategy goes on to state that the Welsh Government's vision is to have: *"high expectations for all learners, regardless of their socio-economic background, and ensure that they have an equal chance of achieving those expectations"*.¹⁴

It is the Welsh Government's view that there is a direct correlation between educational attainment and economic prosperity and that a significant number of children across Wales are not fulfilling their potential. The Welsh Government is also eager to tackle this particular problem as it sees Wales as lagging behind other parts of the UK. In 'Rewriting the Future', figures published by the Welsh Government state that:

- *e-FSM learners in England are around 50% more likely to achieve the Level 2 inclusive than e-FSM learners in Wales at age 15.*
- *The North East of England region is the most socio-economically comparable to Wales. Here, e-FSM learners are over a third more likely to achieve Level 2 inclusive than their peers in Wales.*
- *In every region in England the rate of improvement for the performance of e-FSM learners has been significantly faster than in Wales.*¹⁵

2.2.2 The Qualified for Life (QfL) Agenda and the Donaldson Review

Instigated by the Welsh Government's 'Qualified for Life' report in 2014, Professor Graham Donaldson's independent review of curriculum and assessment arrangements in Wales, entitled, 'Successful Futures' (published in February 2015), heralds a new dawn for school curriculum design. Described as: *"the most far reaching and exciting set of proposals for a generation"*,¹⁶ the 68 recommendations received full ministerial approval and have been accompanied by an implementation plan, namely 'A curriculum for Wales – A curriculum for life' (also published in 2015).

Donaldson notes a number of fundamental design principles, stating that curricula should be: *"inclusive...encompassing and entitlement to high quality education for every child and young person."*¹⁷ Inclusivity is also mentioned in the implementation plan as one of the: *"four enablers of the new curriculum"*.¹⁸

By extension of these ideals, Carmarthenshire curriculum planners are considering how this agenda can be 'for the many, not the few' and a curriculum 'for all learners

¹³ Rewriting the Future: Raising ambition and attainment in Welsh schools by the Welsh Government

¹⁴ Rewriting the Future: Raising ambition and attainment in Welsh schools by the Welsh Government

¹⁵ Rewriting the Future: Raising ambition and attainment in Welsh schools by the Welsh Government

¹⁶ Lewis, H (Welsh Government Minister for Education – March 2015)

¹⁷ Donaldson, G (2015): Successful Futures, p14

¹⁸ Welsh Government (2015): A curriculum for Wales – a curriculum for life, p14

in all schools and settings'. Donaldson augers to provide a 'Pupil Offer,'¹⁹ modelled on School Challenge Cymru principles, which will address barriers to learning and facilitate access to learning for the disadvantaged – as the Council strives to enrich the areas of learning and experiences of pupils in Carmarthenshire. This will help the Council reach its aim of ensuring the holistic development of well-rounded young people, fully prepared for life, living and the world of work.

2.2.3 Regional Consortia

In 2011, the then Welsh Government Minister for Education & Skills outlined twenty priorities aimed at transforming educational achievement standards across Wales. One of the priorities outlined the Government's desire for local authorities to join forces as part of regional school improvement consortia which would: *"identify system leaders, who will support and challenge the Professional Learning Communities, which will have a focus on literacy and numeracy"*.²⁰ There are four education consortia in Wales, with Carmarthenshire part of the 'Education through Regional Working' (ERW) Consortium.

All four consortia have identified reducing the attainment gap for e-FSM learners as a key priority and have included this as a priority within their respective business plans. In addition, ERW and the Central South Consortium (CSC) have published strategies to address this particular issue. The consortia also provide the schools within their areas with additional online advice and guidance on making the most effective use of the PDG funding as well as case studies.

More details of the ERW Consortium's role are outlined in Section 2.4.4.

2.2.4 UK Context

In **England**, the Westminster Government introduced the 'Pupil Premium' in 2011 which is: *"additional funding for publicly funded schools in England to raise the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and close the gap between them and their peers"*.

²¹ The funding is made available to the following educational establishments:

- Local-authority-maintained schools, including special schools and pupil referral units
- Voluntary sector alternative provision (with local authority agreement)
- Special schools not maintained by local authorities
- Academies and free schools (including special and AP academies)

For the 2016/17 financial year, schools in England will be eligible to receive the following figures for every child that is registered as being eligible for free school meals at any point in the last 6 years:

- £1,320 for pupils in Reception to Year 6
- £935 for pupils in Years 7 to 11

¹⁹ Welsh Government (2015): A curriculum for Wales – a curriculum for life, p13

²⁰ 'Teaching makes a difference' by Huw Lewis (February 2011)

²¹ Pupil Premium: Funding and accountability for schools – Guidance by the Department for Education and Education Funding Agency

The Group considered the Pupil Premium during its review and learnt that in the autumn of 2012, Ofsted (Office for Standards in Education, Children’s Services and Skills in England) had visited 68 primary and secondary schools to evaluate how effectively they were spending their Pupil Premium allocations in order to maximise achievement. Ofsted found that where schools had spent the Pupil Premium funding successfully to improve achievement, specific actions and behaviours were evident including the ring-fencing of funding, use of research and allocating the best teachers to teach intervention groups. Details of Ofsted’s findings are outlined in more detail in Appendix 1.

As part of this review, Ofsted also found that where schools were less successful in spending the funding, there was a lack of action and leadership evident including a lack of clarity in relation to the spending of the grant, lack of monitoring and of good performance management systems. Details of these findings are also outlined in more detail in Appendix 1.

The Group noted that Ofsted had published a further update in 2014 stating that where schools were spending the Premium successfully, there was:

- A clear vision and high expectations were set.
- Good or outstanding leadership and a school-wide commitment to raising achievement for e-FSM pupils.
- An association between the overall effectiveness of a school and the impact of the pupil premium.
- Improvement showing due to a commitment to ‘closing the gap’ and the use of robust tracking systems.
- A comprehensive package of support responds to a wide range of specific needs.
- Successful governors who were very actively involved in holding leaders to account for achievement of pupils eligible for the pupil premium.

In **Northern Ireland**, schools are allocated ‘Additional Social Deprivation Funding’ (in addition to the standard funding received from the Education Authority) as part of the ‘Targeting Social Need’ (TSN) initiative, first introduced in 1991 by the then Secretary of State for Northern Ireland. This measure provides for the distribution of funding to schools: *“using a social deprivation element which recognises the additional costs faced by schools in educating children from socially deprived backgrounds, regardless of ability, and the particular challenges faced in schools with high proportions of children from such backgrounds”*.²² The level of additional funding is determined by the number of pupils eligible for free school meals (referred to as ‘FSME’ in Northern Ireland), although for nurseries or pupils in school-based nursery classes, funding is also determined by whether parents are receiving income-based Job Seekers Allowance or Income Support.

²² Local management of schools: Common Funding Scheme 2014/15 – Department of Education for Northern Ireland (2014)

In the post-primary sector in Northern Ireland (secondary), the Additional Social Deprivation Funding is allocated in two ways. Firstly, the social deprivation element, determined by the numbers of pupils eligible for free school meals and secondly, an 'educational attainment element' in recognition of the additional support that is required for those pupils who are performing below their expected level for their age, irrespective of their social background. Attainment at Key Stage 2 (or Key Stage 3 for Senior High schools) is the measure used for distribution of this funding.

All schools which receive the additional social deprivation funding are required to record and justify its use as part of their Every School a Good School (ESaGS), Schools Development Planning process.

In February 2015, the **Scottish** Government launched its Attainment Challenge with the aim of achieving equity in educational outcomes for all pupils in Scotland. This is the Scottish Government's Curriculum for Excellence, Getting it Right for Every Child initiative and the National Improvement Framework, which was launched in January 2016. The Framework, developed by the Scottish Government in conjunction with practitioners, parents and children is considered a central initiative in driving improvement and closing the attainment gap.

The Scottish Government has also established the Attainment Scotland Fund, a targeted initiative worth £750m whose purpose is to be used in supporting pupils in local authority areas with the highest concentrations of deprivation. These 'Challenge Authorities' as they are known are currently, Glasgow, Dundee, Inverclyde, West Dunbartonshire, North Ayrshire, Clackmannanshire, North Lanarkshire, East Ayrshire and Renfrewshire. The Fund was initially aimed at primary schools in order to target improvement in literacy and numeracy, as well as general health and well-being. However, the Fund is available for schools in deprived areas, outside these Challenge Authorities. The programme has been extended in 2016 to another 133 secondary schools across Scotland. In 2017/18, an additional £100m, raised from council tax reforms, is due to be allocated directly to schools, based on the numbers of pupils in both primary and secondary schools who meet the eligibility criteria for free school meals. The Scottish Government is expected to introduce a new framework in late 2016 which will outline proven and evidenced strategies for improving educational attainment.

The Scottish Government also hosts an 'Attainment Challenge Innovation Fund' which allows schools as well as local authorities to fund as well as evaluate innovative projects they may have developed to improve standards and attainment.

The Group learnt that officers from Education Services had attended a conference in Edinburgh where useful links had been established with other educational practitioners and experts in the field of educational inequality.

2.3 Other guidance and research

2.3.1 Wales Centre for Equity in Education (WCEE) – The WCEE is based at the University of Wales and the University of Wales Trinity Saint David and is a joint venture between this university and the University of Wales. It was established to be: “a leading national policy and applied research centre, focusing on all forms of disadvantage associated with low educational achievement in Wales”.²³

The Centre has produced a number of publications relating to the impact of poverty on educational attainment as well as the use of the Pupil Deprivation Grant in Wales. In its publication ‘The Good News... what schools in Wales are doing to reduce the impact of poverty on pupils’, it suggests that where schools are successfully tackling poverty and reducing the impact of poverty and inequality, three key elements are evident, namely effective leadership, quality teaching and parental engagement. The key aspects of these three elements are outlined in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Successfully tackling poverty and reducing impact of poverty

| Effective Leadership | Quality Teaching | Parental Engagement |
|---|--|---|
| Whole-school commitment Rigorous use of data Strategic planning | Rich pedagogy Tailored Curriculum Effective feedback | Welcoming Schools Parents as co-educators Tailored projects |

The Group received evidence from Professor David Egan, one of the report authors, at its meeting in February 2016. In addition to reaffirming the findings of ‘The Good News’ report, he also stressed that perseverance was required by all interested parties and that instances of success where schools had narrowed or closed the attainment gap: “*did not happen overnight*” but “*required planning, teamwork and determination.*”²⁴

2.3.2 ESTYN – In 2012, ESTYN (Her Majesty’s Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales) published the second in a series of reports in response to the Welsh Government Minister’s annual remit to the inspectorate for 2011/12. The reports considered how Welsh schools were: “*tackling child poverty and disadvantage to improve learners’ achievement and wellbeing*”.²⁵ In its report entitled ‘Effective Practice in Tackling Poverty and Disadvantage in Schools’, ESTYN outlines ten strategies that effective schools in challenging circumstances use. Its top 10 strategies for addressing poverty and disadvantage in schools are:

1. *Taking a whole-school, strategic approach to tackling disadvantage*
2. *Using data to track the progress of disadvantaged pupils*
3. *Improving disadvantaged pupils’ literacy and learning skills*

²³ Wales Centre for Equity in Education – www.uwtsd.ac.uk/wcee

²⁴ The Good News... what schools in Wales are doing to reduce the impact of poverty on pupils (WCEE, 2014)

²⁵ Effective practice in tackling poverty and disadvantage in schools (ESTYN, 2012)

4. *Improving the social and emotional skills of disadvantaged pupils*
5. *Improving the attendance, punctuality and behaviour of disadvantaged pupils*
6. *Tailoring the curriculum to meet the needs of disadvantaged pupils*
7. *Providing enriched experiences and a variety of extra-curricular activities and trips*
8. *Listening to pupils and encouraging participation*
9. *Engaging with parents and carers of disadvantaged pupils*
10. *Developing the expertise of staff to meet the needs of disadvantaged pupils* ²⁶

2.3.3 The Sutton Trust Teaching and Learning Toolkit – The Sutton Trust’s toolkit is a: *“summary of educational research which provides guidance for teachers and schools on how to use their resources to improve the attainment of disadvantaged pupils”*. ²⁷ This online resource covers more than thirty ‘strands’ or topics ranging from behaviour interventions, feedback, sports participation, homework, learning styles, peer tutoring, reading and comprehension strategies. The toolkit provides practitioners with the average impact on attainment, the research evidence supporting these interventions as well as potential costs. For example, for ‘feedback’ the Toolkit lists this as an intervention with ‘high impact for very low cost, based on moderate evidence’ whilst listing the option for a pupil to repeat a year as having ‘negative impact for very high cost based on extensive evidence’. The Toolkit was developed by the Trust and published as the ‘Pupil Premium Toolkit’ by Durham University in 2011.

²⁶ Effective practice in tackling poverty and disadvantage in schools by ESTYN (2012)

²⁷ Sutton Trust’s Teaching & Learning Toolkit - <http://www.suttontrust.com/about-us/education-endowment-foundation/teaching-learning-toolkit>

2.4 What is happening in Carmarthenshire?

2.4.1 Pupils numbers in Carmarthenshire

The Group noted that when investigating the attainment gap in Carmarthenshire and the performance of the County's schools with neighbouring authority areas, it was important to consider pupil numbers. Carmarthenshire has the second highest number of primary aged pupils within the ERW region, as outlined in Table 2.

Table 2: Number of pupils in Primary Schools within the ERW region (2015/16)

| | Boys | Girls | Total |
|-------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Ceredigion | 2,619 | 2,533 | 5,152 |
| Powys | 5,256 | 5,067 | 10,323 |
| Pembrokeshire | 5,484 | 5,288 | 10,772 |
| Neath Port Talbot | 6,618 | 6,203 | 12,821 |
| Carmarthenshire | 8,193 | 7,712 | 15,905 |
| Swansea | 11,565 | 10,639 | 22,204 |
| | | | |
| ERW total | 39,735 | 37,442 | 77,177 |

In the secondary sector, Carmarthenshire again has the second highest number of pupils at 11,332, behind Swansea. Table 3 outlines the numbers of across the region in secondary education.

Table 3: Number of pupils in Secondary Schools within the ERW region (2015/16)

| | Boys | Girls | Total |
|-------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Ceredigion | 2,181 | 2,206 | 4,387 |
| Pembrokeshire | 3,511 | 3,431 | 6,942 |
| Powys | 3,914 | 3,759 | 7,673 |
| Neath Port Talbot | 4,040 | 3,890 | 7,930 |
| Carmarthenshire | 5,726 | 5,477 | 11,203 |
| Swansea | 7,009 | 6,605 | 13,614 |
| | | | |
| ERW total | 26,381 | 25,368 | 51,749 |

With 17.5% of the learner cohort, Carmarthenshire has a significant role to play in the delivery of educational standards within ERW.

2.4.2 e-FSM and the attainment gap in Carmarthenshire

As part of its review, the Group received a wide range of data outlining the performance of Carmarthenshire schools during the 2014/15 academic year. It should be noted that the data for the 2015/16 academic year was not available by the end of the Group's review.

Tables 4 and 5 outline the e-FSM data for the local authorities within the ERW region and show Carmarthenshire placed third behind Neath Port Talbot and Swansea in

terms of the percentage of pupils in receipt of free school meals, both in the primary and secondary sectors.

Table 4: Percentage of primary e-FSM pupils (3 years average)

| | 2010/11 | 2011/12 | 2012/13 | 2013/14 | 2014/15 | 2015/16 |
|-------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Neath Port Talbot | 26.5 | 26.6 | 26.4 | 25.6 | 25.4 | 25.3 |
| Swansea | 22.3 | 21.8 | 21.9 | 21.2 | 20.8 | 20.4 |
| Carmarthenshire | 18.9 | 18.1 | 18.0 | 17.4 | 17.6 | 17.8 |
| Pembrokeshire | 19.3 | 19.0 | 19.6 | 19.6 | 18.7 | 17.1 |
| Ceredigion | 14.5 | 13.3 | 13.1 | 12.5 | 12.3 | 12.0 |
| Powys | 12 | 11.8 | 11.8 | 11.6 | 11.3 | 11.0 |
| ERW | 18.5 | 19.4 | 19.4 | 18.9 | 18.6 | 18.3 |
| WALES | | | | | 19.6 | |

Table 5: Percentage of secondary e-FSM pupils (3 years average)

| | 2010/11 | 2011/12 | 2012/13 | 2013/14 | 2014/15 | 2015/16 |
|-------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Neath Port Talbot | 20.1 | 20.8 | 21.3 | 21.7 | 21.8 | 22.0 |
| Swansea | 20.7 | 19.8 | 20.0 | 19.5 | 19.1 | 18.5 |
| Carmarthenshire | 15.5 | 14.9 | 14.9 | 14.8 | 15.2 | 15.8 |
| Pembrokeshire | 15.5 | 15.2 | 15.5 | 15.6 | 15.8 | 15.5 |
| Ceredigion | 12 | 12.0 | 11.9 | 11.6 | 11.5 | 11.2 |
| Powys | 8.9 | 9.3 | 9 | 9.2 | 10 | 10.1 |
| ERW | 15.6 | 16.0 | 16.2 | 16.1 | 16.2 | 16.2 |
| WALES | | | | | 17.4 | |

Whilst trends in e-FSM percentages are relatively stable over time, it's worth noting that around a fifth of our learners are still within this category – in raw terms for 2015/16 equating to c.2,765 learners in the primary phase and c.1,097 in the secondary sector.

It could be argued that Carmarthenshire has a slightly lower than average regional e-FSM challenge in both primary sector and secondary sector. Being ranked third in challenge, it would be expected therefore that average pupil performance would be expected for Carmarthenshire.

The Group noted that challenge, support and intervention activities across all the county's schools continued to focus on improving provision and outcomes for all Carmarthenshire learners. It noted that in 2014/15, performance of e-FSM pupils in the Foundation Phase Indicator and Level 2 inclusive continued to improve but that more needed to be done to enhance the performance of Free School Meals pupils. This would be a key priority for the Education & Children Department for the 2015/16 academic year and beyond.

Figures 3 to 6 outline the trends in performance at the different key stages in Carmarthenshire between 2010 and 2015.

Figure 3: e-FSM v n-FSM Foundation Phase Indicator

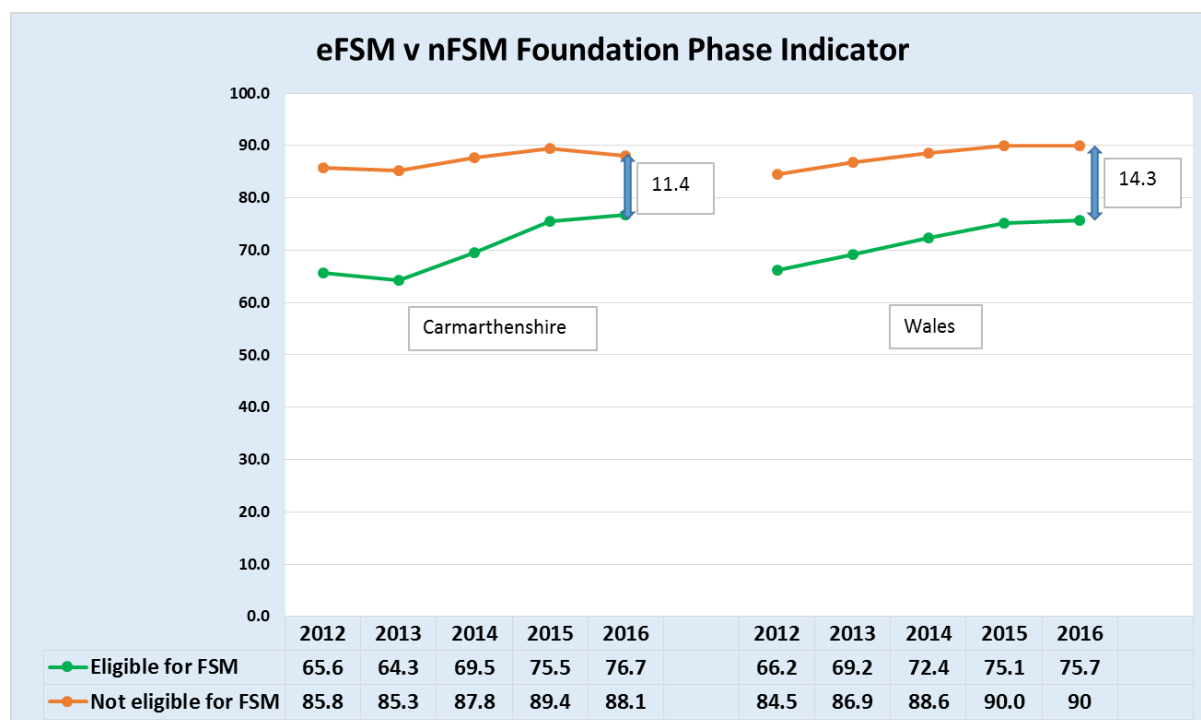


Figure 4: e-FSM v n-FSM KS2 Core Subject Indicator

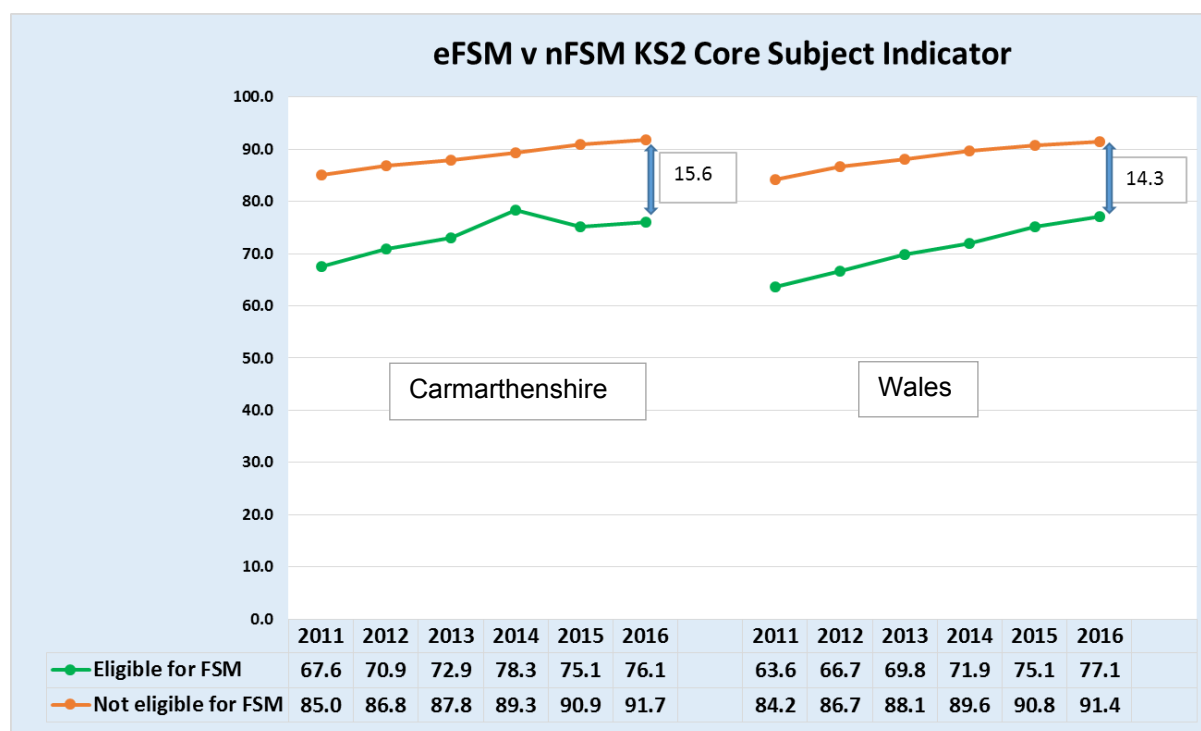


Figure 5: e-FSM v n-FSM KS3 Core Subject Indicator

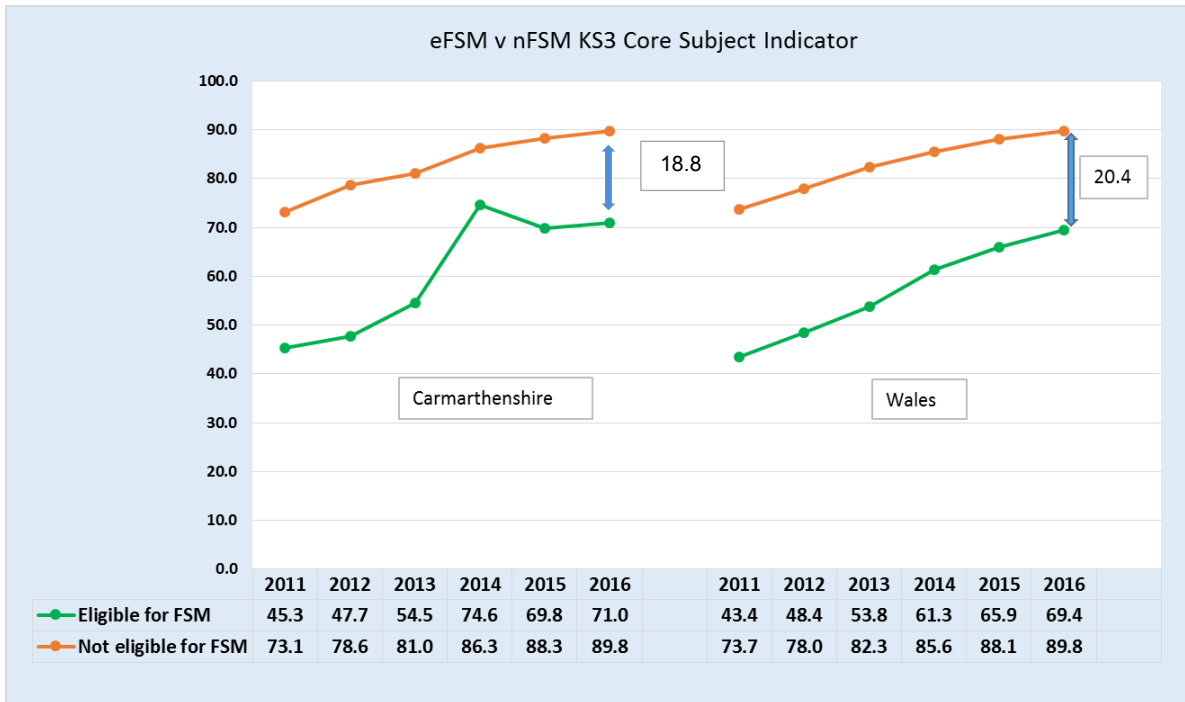
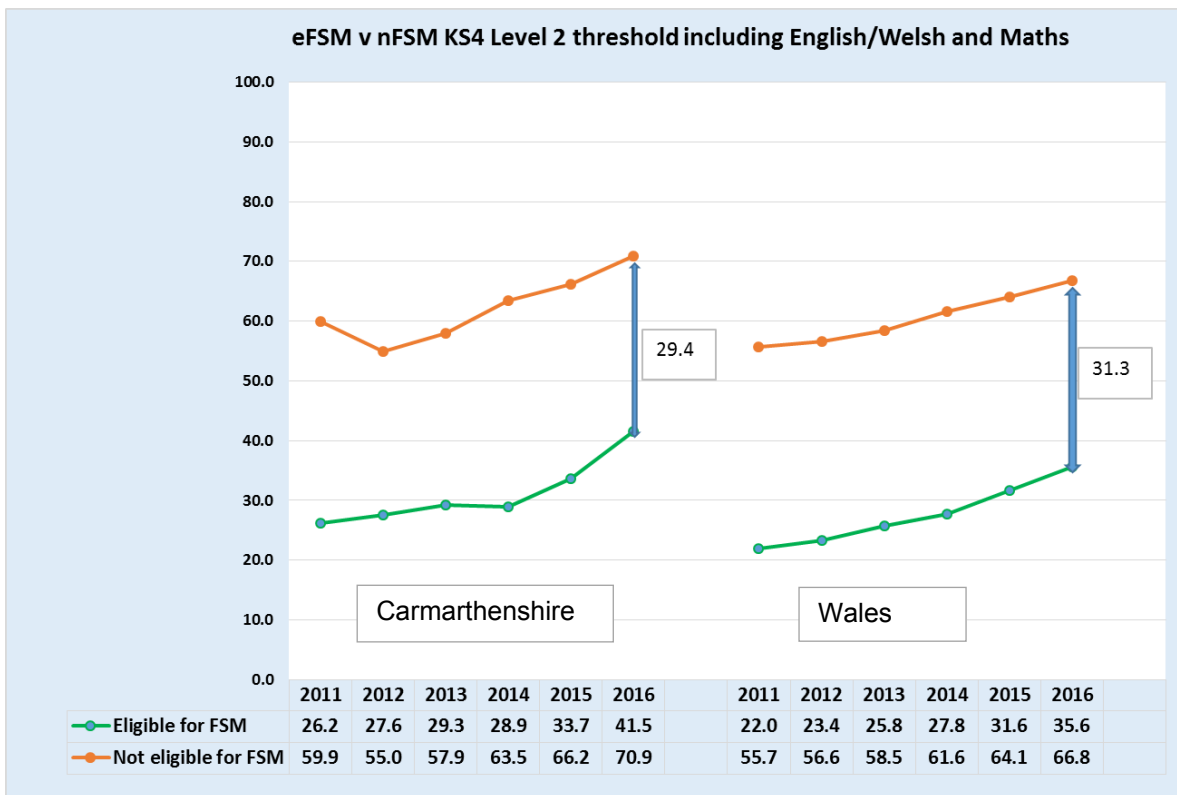


Figure 6: e-FSM v n-FSM KS4 Level 2 threshold including English / Welsh and Maths



Analysis of Figures 4-6 above demonstrates that standards continue to rise at all key stages for e-FSM and n-FSM learners (broadly consistent with the national picture); gaps have been closing slightly, but opened most recently at Key Stages 2 and 3.

Furthermore, attainment gaps in key indicators are wider in the older age groups as starkly demonstrated at Key Stage 4 with the L2i indicator.

The Group was reminded that not all pupils in receipt of free school meals were necessarily under-achieving. The Welsh Government also acknowledges this stating that: *“exceptionally able pupils”* may be in receipt of support from the PDG but *“because of their family background are not achieving their full personal potential, even though they appear to be holding their own in comparison with their peers”*.²⁸

2.4.3 Free School Meal Service

In Carmarthenshire, the Free School Meals Service is administered by the Department for Education & Children. The Department introduced an online application system in 2013 and whilst there was an initial concern due to lack of internet access in some homes, very often, schools will assist parents in applying and this is done on the school premises.

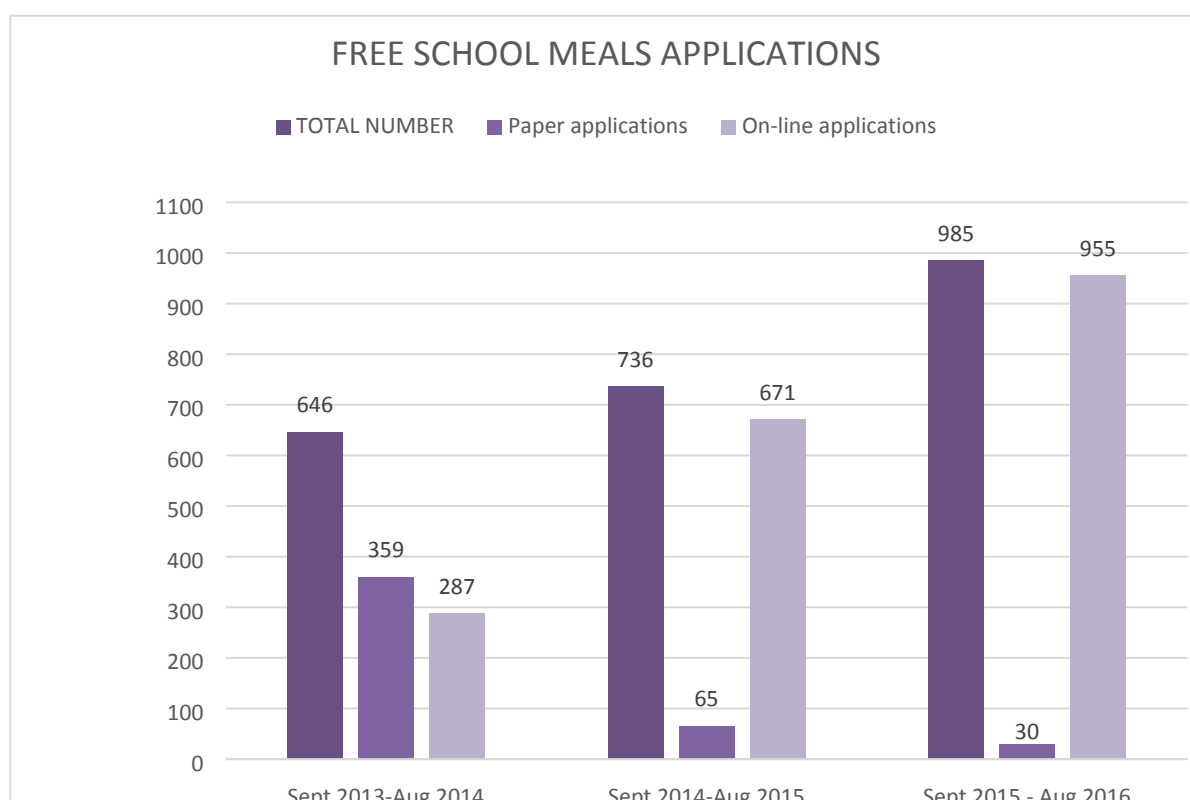
The previous system was paper-based and repeated on an annual basis. The new system does not require a new application to be submitted annually, although there is a duty on the parents to inform the Authority once their circumstances change (and the Authority undertakes regular spot checks). Once an application is received, applicants are checked via an ‘eligibility hub’ run by the Department of Work & Pensions. This will confirm whether a family is eligible or not.

Prior to September 2013, the Department would receive approximately 2,500 paper-based applications each year for approximately 4,300 pupils. Since the introduction of the online system in September 2013 and that parents are no longer required to apply for each new academic year, the numbers of applications have decreased overall with a total of 2,367 applications received between September 2013 and August 2016.

With the introduction of the online system, paper-based applications have dropped year on year since 2013 and now only a handful are received annually.

²⁸ Guidance for using the Pupil Deprivation Grant: What really works? by the Welsh Government (April 2014)

Figure 7: Numbers of Free School Meal applications between September 2013 and August 2016



The Group found that the Authority does not know how many residents are eligible for school meals. Officers had proposed accessing other departmental databases to target those who might be eligible (e.g. those in receipt of Housing Benefit) but this was not possible due to data protection issues.

The Group also learnt that:

- Some schools are very proactive in terms of encouraging parents to apply for free school meals.
- In all the secondary schools where the Authority provides meals (apart from Dyffryn Taf), a cashless system is in place and this had reduced the stigma associated with free school meals and increased take-up.
- There had been discussions with other departments (specifically Housing Benefits Service) about staff encouraging those in receipt or applying for other benefits, to apply for free school meals. However, it was not clear whether this was actually happening or not.

The free school meals are paid for from the Department's Catering Services budget, with the budget set using data on free school meal eligibility at school level.

In Carmarthenshire, the primary and secondary schools with the highest percentage of statutory e-FSM pupils in 2014/15 are listed in the following tables.

Table 6: Carmarthenshire’s Primary Schools with highest percentage of statutory e-FSM pupils

| School | Total of statutory age pupils | Total of statutory e-FSM pupils | % of statutory e-FSM pupils |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Copperworks Infants, Llanelli | 47 | 22 | 46.8% |
| Carwe | 39 | 18 | 46.2% |
| Bryn Teg, Llwynhendy | 195 | 86 | 44.1% |
| Myrddin, Carmarthen | 78 | 33 | 42.3% |
| Old Road, Llanelli | 140 | 58 | 41.4% |

Table 7: Carmarthenshire’s Secondary Schools with highest percentage of statutory e-FSM pupils

| School | Total of statutory age pupils | Total of statutory e-FSM pupils | % of statutory e-FSM pupils |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Glan-y-Môr, Burry Port | 444 | 132 | 29.7% |
| Coedcae, Llanelli | 881 | 227 | 25.8% |
| Bryngwyn, Llanelli | 995 | 206 | 20.7% |
| St. John Lloyd, Llanelli | 517 | 101 | 19.5% |
| QE High, Carmarthen | 1203 | 221 | 18.4% |

2.4.4 The regional picture and the role of ERW

Carmarthenshire is part of the ‘Education through Regional Working’ (ERW) School Improvement Consortium. The ERW region covers six local authority areas and is split into three ‘hubs’, namely:

- Carmarthenshire and Pembrokeshire (Western Hub)
- Ceredigion and Powys (Northern Hub)
- Neath Port Talbot and Swansea (Eastern Hub)

ERW’s aim is to ensure effective performance in all schools across the region and it does this through a variety of ways including:

- *Robustly and consistently challenging the performance schools and the outcomes achieved by all their learners*
- *Developing a differentiated system of professional support to schools in proportion to need that is identified through a nationally agreed assessment and categorisation framework applied consistently across the region*
- *Supporting the deployment of national and regional strategies to develop the literacy and numeracy skills of learners and to improve outcomes for disadvantaged learners*
- *Managing and deploying well trained Challenge Advisers across the region and within the hubs to challenge performance and signpost appropriate relevant support*

- *Triggering formal interventions in schools that fail to perform to the required standard*
- *Building capacity and resilience within schools so that we will enable a self-improving system within the region* ²⁹

In addition to its main business plan, ERW has published a strategy for ‘Reducing the Impact of Poverty on Educational Outcomes’ for 2015-18. This strategy has been developed in conjunction with the region’s schools and partner agencies. ERW also has a dedicated ‘Strategic Lead for Reducing the Impact of Poverty on Attainment’ as part of its wider team of officers.

Recent examples of ERW’s work in relation to the poverty agenda has included its Governor Support Team training and supporting governors to identify the priority needed for e-FSM learners in their schools, particularly in light of the Welsh Government’s new categorisation model. The Consortium’s Looked After Children PDG Work Group also contributes to addressing the attainment gap by planning the delivery of: *“high quality services to schools and pupils through effective collaboration”* ³⁰ and utilising best practice. This Work Group also monitors the use and records the impact of the PDG across the region.

During its review, the Group also received evidence from the Managing Director of the ERW Consortium which included a specific focus on the success of schools in the region’s Eastern ‘Hub’ (Swansea and Neath Port Talbot) in tackling the attainment gap (see two case studies on page 29).

The Group was informed that across the region, PDG plans for improving outcomes for e-FSM learners were monitored closely by ERW challenge advisers. Schools often publish separate plans on their websites and a few schools have included their plans into their statutory school development plans. The Group was informed that the use of grant monies by schools had been challenged from time to time in relation to the appropriate use of the funding. Sustainable, whole school approaches are emphasised and guidance for practitioners as well as ESTYN best practice are shared systematically.

The Group noted that those schools who, according to ERW, were effectively reducing the attainment gap, exhibited the following common characteristics. These schools will have:

1. Clear, precise planning for use of the PDG
2. Effective tracking systems to ensure pupil progress
3. Targeted interventions
4. Engagement with parents
5. Effective formative feedback to pupils
6. Little within-school variation

It is ERW’s view that dealing with the impact of poverty must go beyond decisions on how a school’s PDG allocation is spent and that tackling the impact of poverty must be central to whole-school planning.

²⁹ ERW Poverty Strategy 2015-18

³⁰ ERW Poverty Strategy 2015-18

ERW Eastern Region Case Study – Cwmrhydyceirw CP School

This school, located in the Morriston area of Swansea, has an effective plan in place that outlines how PDG funding is used to support e-FSM pupils and pupils identified as vulnerable. There are no LAC pupils in the school at present.

- Nursery PDG is used to support e-FSM for early identification of SEN especially in speech and language. Pupils are screened using the programme 'Language Link' and appropriate interventions and support allocated to individuals. The plan was available for scrutiny. It is costed carefully and each strategy/activity is linked to improved attainment and achievement of pupils. The school is allocated £58,800.
- Analysis of Free School Meals data suggests the gap between FSM and Non FSM pupils was eliminated at the end of Key Stage 2 for 2014-15 for the first time and actually turned in favour of FSM pupils. The CSI for FSM pupils was 100% and Science, literacy and numeracy interventions will continue as will the Nurture group for pupils with social and emotional difficulties. The Nurture group (a few of which are FSM) is successful in supporting identified pupils to manage their social and emotional issues, thereby raising their self-esteem and confidence, improving their social skills and removing barriers to learning. Further in-class support is provided by highly skilled Teaching Assistants, a few funded through PDG. The school can evidence the impact such provision is having on pupil behaviour and attainment through pupil, parent and staff questionnaires, pupil tracking and Nurture records.
- PDG is also used to support families of vulnerable children through using ICT to engage parents in supporting their child at home and improving their child's attendance and punctuality.
- There has been an improvement in attendance for FSM pupils and identified vulnerable pupils and the fact these children are in school more regularly and being targeted for intervention is impacting positively on raising their attainment

ERW Eastern Region Case Study – Cwmtawe Community School

This secondary school located in Pontardawe, has an effective and comprehensive PDG plan that is regularly reviewed to ensure value for money. The school utilises its tracking system to target this group of pupils with a range of appropriate intervention activities used to address the needs of these learners. At the end of KS3 76.3% of e-FSM pupils (29/38) achieved the CSI, whilst 88.1% of N-FSM pupils achieved the same indicator. This has enabled the school to reduce the gap in performance to its lowest level in the past 5 years. A similar pattern is seen in English and maths. In Science the performance of e-FSM pupils is excellent with all gaining L5+.

Similarly at KS4 the performance of e-FSM pupils whilst showing a very slight dip against the 2014 figure remains excellent. Outcomes of e-FSM pupils are above comparative averages in nearly all core indicators and in some cases significantly above. The gap in performance between e-FSM and N-FSM pupils is less than comparative averages. At KS4 money has been used to create additional time for key staff in English and maths to develop resources and provide additional support for e-FSM pupils. The focus for the school is not just those on the C/D borderline but time is invested with those e-FSM pupils who are MAT, thus securing improved outcomes for these. Additional staff have been appointed which has enabled the school to provide smaller classes at KS4 to support improved outcomes.

Additional staff have also been employed to provide English and maths tutoring for e-FSM pupils in Year 11. After school maths classes are scheduled for Year 11 e-FSM learners and the school was able to demonstrate the impact that this is having on improving GCSE outcomes. As a direct consequence of this money and the additional support for e-FSM pupils the school has been able to secure excellent outcomes at both key stages.

The school also provides mentoring sessions for these pupils with the focus being on improving self-belief and raising confidence levels to ensure improved outcomes.

During its review, the Group expressed concern at the impact of poverty on the attainment of pupils in more rural areas of the County. Members suggested that whilst poverty was often more prevalent and visible in the County's urban areas, it was as much of a concern for rural schools as for their urban counterparts. The Group was encouraged to learn that ERW, in conjunction with the GwE Consortium in North Wales, had commissioned research on poverty and limited educational achievement by pupils in rural and isolated areas. A team from Bangor University had won the tender to undertake the research and the key aims of the project would be to:

- *To identify any features that may be attributable to factors of rural poverty and contribute to schools' ability to overcome the hurdles of poverty*
- *Engage with shareholders in education in those areas to identify the hurdles*
- *To assess the validity of FSM as a proxy for poverty in schools*
- *Identify schools that have implemented successful strategies to reduce the impact of poverty and rural isolation on pupil achievement*
- *Digital Features*
- *The research focuses on schools in coastal areas, valleys and rural hinterlands*³¹

The Group noted that a final report was scheduled to be presented to ERW and GwE in July 2017 and members suggested that its findings be considered further by the Local Authority in order to ascertain how Carmarthenshire might assist schools and pupils in its rural communities.

2.4.5 Good Practice in Carmarthenshire

³¹ Research on the impact of poverty and rural isolation on educational achievement – ERW

During the review, the Group received evidence outlining good practice in Carmarthenshire as well as presentations from a selection of schools on the different initiatives being undertaken across the county in order to reduce the impact of poverty and reduce the attainment gap.

Johnstown CP School, Carmarthen – The school’s priority for e-FSM pupils in 2015-16 was that they performed as well as non-FSM pupils at Outcome 5 and 6 Foundation Phase Outcome Indicator and at Level 4 and 5 Core Subject Indicator in Key Stage 2. This includes equitable placement on the ‘More Able and Talented (MAT) register. The school introduced a ‘Peer Mentoring Scheme’ in 2012 and since this time, e-FSM learners have been trained as ‘Techi-Tutors’. This has been very effective in improving self-esteem and developing a deeper understanding of their own learning through teaching other pupils. It is based on a strategy recommended by the Welsh Government and the Sutton Trust. The school’s ‘Johnstown Journal Project’ further develops this, placing high expectations of high standards for e-FSM learners. The e-FSM pupils work alongside MAT pupils as ‘Chief Journalists’, thus ensuring continuous exposure to high quality literacy skills. Year 6 Chief Journals receive ICT training by specialists on relevant advanced technologies and on news reporting.

Bryngwyn Secondary School, Llanelli – The core aims of the school are to improve attendance, attitude and the achievement of disadvantaged learners. ESTYN acknowledges that the School’s: *“successful strategy using a skills-based curriculum has seen a marked improvement in many areas such as attendance, literacy, mathematics and English”*.³²

The School has a highly effective and extremely well attended out-of-school-hours programme. It provides enriching experiences that more advantaged learners take for granted by offering a varied menu of clubs, activities and cultural and educational trips. The programme supports pupils and their families through activities such as homework clubs, catch-up and revision sessions. The school also employs a ‘Learning Coach’ to support both pupils and parents, occasionally liaising with external agencies to provide support to families where needed. Both one to one and group support is offered to pupils preparing for GCSE exams and the Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification (WBQ). Transition projects are also run in conjunction with feeder primary schools which enables the school to ascertain the needs of new pupils, prior to their first day in the secondary school.

Hendy CP School – As a means of engaging with parents and carers, the school developed a scheme as a result of its weekly numeracy classes held for parents. The scheme was written by parents for parents and carers and provides tips and advice on how they can support their child/children’s in their development of numeracy and mathematics



³² A whole-school approach to supporting disadvantaged learners at Bryngwyn School – Best Practice Case Study by ESTYN

skills as they walk around the village. The booklet is aimed at the junior department and “Numeracy around the village has been written by parents for parents and carers, and will give you tips and suggestions to help you support your child in numeracy and mathematics as you walk around Hendy village and beyond.” The booklet is generally aimed at children in the junior department and includes examples of numbers and mathematical problems that can be found in everyday objects and shops within the village (e.g. the menu at the local fish and chips shop).

Ysgol Y Bedol (CP), Garnant – As part of the Education & Children Scrutiny Committee’s school visit programme, members of the Group visited Ysgol Y Bedol in Garnant. During the visit, members learnt of the numerous and varied interventions funded in part by the PDG and used by the school to reduce the impact of poverty on the attainment of its pupils. Initiatives include:

- The Special Educational Needs and CADY Team – Three members of staff facilitate Early Intervention Programmes (e.g. reading, CHATT, Speech and Language, Mathematics), leading Positive Play and ‘Talk About’ sessions, are responsible for late comers to the school ensuring pupils settle successfully, assessing pupils on entry (e.g. reading tests, spelling, reasoning tests), writing reports for outside agencies and run ‘Y Cwtsh Cynnes’ (Peacemakers Project), a lunchtime problem solving centre for pupils.
-
- Employing an Attendance Officer on a part-time basis whose responsibilities include attendance data collection, liaising and working with parents, tracking patterns in absence and working with outside agencies (e.g. Team Around the Family, County Attendance Officer, school nurse).
 - Establishing a Family Support Officer role (an existing member of staff) whose responsibilities include work alongside agencies (e.g. Team Around the Family, Flying Start, Cylch Meithrin, Plant Dewi and the Health Board), holding transition meetings with Cylch Meithrin, undertaking home visits with new families (e.g. getting to know and understand their backgrounds) and offering support to families during difficult times such as bereavement, illness etc. The officer will also meet with parents when personal issues involving pupils arise (e.g. personal hygiene or school uniform).
 - Establishing ‘Gwobr Y Bedol’ (The Bedol Prize), a programme unique to the school. This graded programme for pupils of Years 2 to 6 is based on the principles of the Duke of Edinburgh Award and offer a variety of experiences, develop an ethos of global and community citizenship as well fostering ambition, skills and a sense of achievement.
 - The ‘Teulu Hapus’ School Community Programme held during the course of a year which includes a variety of sessions relating to topics such as language and

play, cooking, community safety, health and well-being and training which are run by different agencies (e.g. Family Information Service, Dyfed-Powys Police, Menter Iaith Dinefwr, Coleg Sir Gâr and the Health Board).

Maes-y-Morfa CP School, Llanelli – The school is located in one of the County’s most deprived ward areas. 97% of the school’s pupils live in the top 10% of the most deprived communities in Wales with a high percentage of unemployment and of residents with no qualifications. The school, under its former head teacher has made significant efforts to engage with parents and the wider community as it is of the opinion that about 50% of student achievement is due to home and community factors. Three key actions adopted by the school have been to:

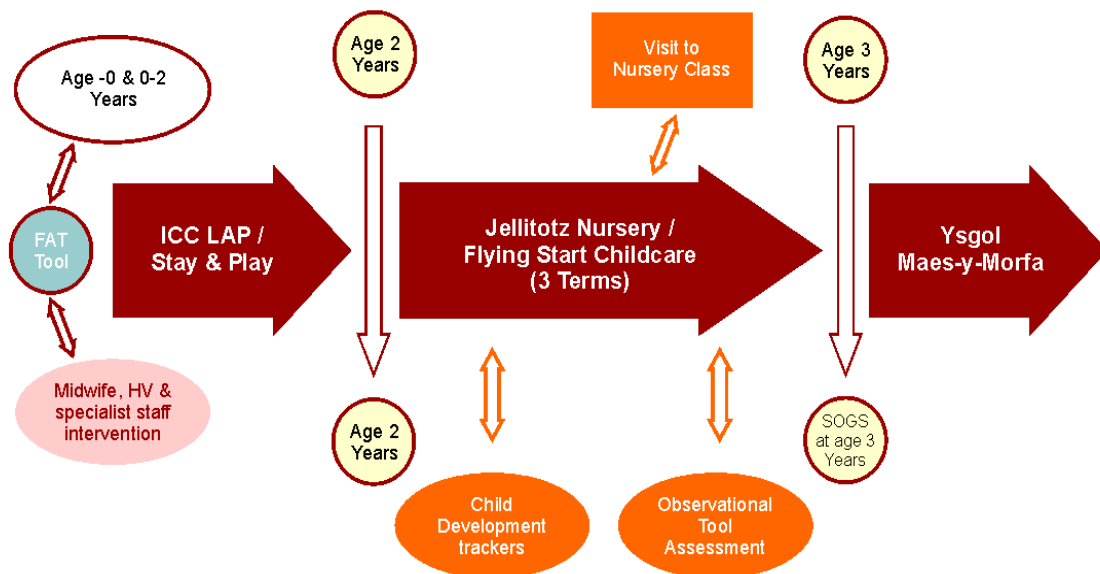
- Build positive home-school relationships through parental engagement
- Adapt pedagogy and the curriculum
- Ensure strategic planning and leadership

It views family, school and community engagement as an integral part of school improvement acknowledging that children live complex lives...in a family as well as in a community. The school has termed this the ‘Big Bag of Worries’ and each child has one or several of these influences which impact on their learning.

The school views the PDG an opportunity and not a ‘gap closing initiative’ and the e-FSM as a coarse and unreliable measure of deprivation. The school has developed its own measures based on data which is available to all schools and working closely in conjunction with other agencies such as Flying Start.

This strategic approach is a context driven model directly measuring and driving the school’s approach to deprivation. The school seeks to capture as much of this data as possible prior to initiating the curriculum.

Figure 8: Maes-y-Morfa Engagement / Data Model



This strategic approach is a context driven model directly measuring and driving the school's approach to deprivation. The school seeks to capture as much of this data as possible prior to initiating the curriculum.

The school has a 'Flying Start' group within its own tracking system which enables it to know which pupils have been supported and at what level of need. This informs its strategic approach to and tracking of pupils in order to inform its approach to deprivation.

Carwe, Gwynfryn and Ponthenri Federation – This federation of schools, located in the lower Gwendraeth Valley has sought to utilise the PDG to run projects that support pupils' classwork. The aim of the projects are to:

- Provide fun and interesting experiences
- Encourage pupils to work in small groups
- Develop pupils' confidence
- Encourage pupils' speaking and listening skills
- Support and develop literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum
- Reinforce literacy, numeracy and ICT skills which are taught in the classroom

Projects run by the individual schools within the federation have included:

- Dewiniaid Darllen – Reading project ('reading wizards') to change attitudes of parents and pupils to reading and books.
- Golf project – Assists with addressing personal, behavioural and social issues (e.g. how to behave, how to receive instruction on learning new skills).
- Fferm Torcefn – This has enabled children to grow fruit and vegetables, be involved in agricultural and environmental projects, as well as serving customers in the farm shop.

- Criw Mentro Mentrus – This initiative (‘entrepreneurial crew’) challenges pupils to run stalls for Christmas events and coffee mornings, teaching financial skills and life skills such as cooking.
- Walking bus – This long-term initiative in Carwe was first introduced in 2006 where children are ‘picked-up’ by volunteers on their way through the village. The ‘bus’ travels whatever the weather, ensuring that the pupils arrive in school on time for breakfast club. It has had an extremely positive effect on the attendance and punctuality of pupils in addition to developing their road safety skills. The school’s walking bus has won five awards over the past decade including two national awards from Road Safety Wales and Asda’s Health for Kids.

The Group concluded that with so many examples of good practice across the County, not to mention across the ERW region and beyond, it would be useful to produce guidance or a good practice guide for the County’s schools in order that all schools had access to the most up-to-date and effective methods of addressing this issue.

3.0 Conclusion

- The impact of poverty on attainment is a well-known and well researched phenomenon, indeed, there is a wide range of research and good practice available from across the UK to inform and assist the County's schools in targeting the problem. Carmarthenshire needs to build and enhance on this research and good practice.
- There is evidence of much good practice within Carmarthenshire itself, as testified by the narrowing gap over a number of years. However, the good practice in Carmarthenshire and across the ERW region needs to be promoted and implemented by all schools.
- Minimising the impact of poverty on education attainment and reducing the attainment gap requires long term strategies and commitment from all agencies and organisations involved. There is no quick fix solution.
- Free School Meals Service has developed effective electronic and online systems. However, ensuring that those eligible for free school meals take up that opportunity, remains a challenge
- It is essential that rural poverty is not forgotten, especially, as the Public Policy Institute for Wales states: "there is evidence that rural poverty can be masked by the relative affluence of rural areas and by a culture of self-reliance in rural communities".³³
- It is clear that good leadership in schools as well as giving e-FSM learners a high priority in a school's development plan, is essential to ensure success in dealing with this matter as well as regular tracking and monitoring of pupils.
- Successful schools find creative ways of using the Pupil Deprivation Grant effectively.
- Engagement with parents is important and successful schools share information with and support them.
- The greatest impact of some of these initiatives undertaken by schools is not necessarily an improvement in standards but often is seen in the well-being of the pupils.
- School governors have a key role in monitoring and challenging the way in which their schools spend the PDG and seek to minimise the impact of poverty on education attainment.
- The loss of the PDG would have a significant impact on schools' ability to cater for and support e-FSM pupils.

4.0 Recommendations

³³ Rural Poverty in Wales: Existing Research and Evidence Gaps by the Public Policy Institute for Wales (2016)

The Group recommends that:

- Carmarthenshire County Council continues to consider the attainment gap as a matter of priority whilst acknowledging that it requires perseverance from all interested parties over a long period of time to ensure success.
- The County Council develops and publishes a good practice guide for Carmarthenshire schools, outlining effective methods and solutions to reduce the impact of poverty on educational attainment and reduce the attainment gap.
- In developing a good practice guide, the County Council utilises existing and online systems to share with schools and practitioners (e.g. HWB).
- The County Council support an event to launch the good practice guide / promote the deprivation agenda be arranged in Carmarthenshire, in association with the University of Wales Trinity St. David and the European Forum for Freedom in Education (EFFE).
- That the County Council considers and responds to the findings and implications of ERW's rural poverty research, when it is published in 2017.
- That the County Council lobbies the Welsh Government on the importance of the Pupil Deprivation Grant (PDG) and encourages the relevant minister to safeguard the grant for the long term.
- In light of on-going financial pressures, the County Council should urge and support schools to make interventions such as those funded by the PDG, as sustainable as possible for the longer term as well as integrating such initiatives into everyday teaching practice.
- County Council departments be requested to ensure the promotion of the Free School Meals Service to eligible families through front line services (e.g. Housing Benefits Service), encouraging those in receipt of or applying for other benefits, to apply for free school meals.

5.0 Appendices

- 5.1 Appendix 1 – Ofsted’s main findings on how schools in England are spending the Pupil Premium
- 5.2 Appendix 2 – PDG allocation for Carmarthenshire schools (2012/13 – 2016/17)
- 5.3 Appendix 3 – Task & Finish Group meetings and attendance
- 5.2 Appendix 4 – List of those giving evidence at the Group’s meetings

5.1 Appendix 1 – Ofsted’s main findings on how schools in England are spending the Pupil Premium

In the autumn of 2012, Ofsted (Office for Standards in Education, Children’s Services and Skills in England) visited 68 primary and secondary schools to evaluate how effectively they were spending their Pupil Premium allocations in order to maximise achievement. Ofsted found that where schools had spent the Pupil Premium funding successfully to improve achievement, the following characteristics were evident. These schools:

- *Carefully ring-fenced the funding so that they always spent it on the target group of pupils*
- *Never confused eligibility for the Pupil Premium with low ability, and focused on supporting their disadvantaged pupils to achieve the highest levels.*
- *Thoroughly analysed which pupils were underachieving, particularly in English and mathematics, and why.*
- *Drew on research evidence (such as the Sutton Trust toolkit) and evidence from their own and others’ experience to allocate the funding to the activities that were most likely to have an impact on improving achievement.*
- *Allocated their best teachers to teach intervention groups to improve mathematics and English, or employed new teachers who had a good track record in raising attainment in those subjects.*
- *Used achievement data frequently to check whether interventions or techniques were working and made adjustments accordingly, rather than just using the data retrospectively to see if something had worked.*
- *Made sure that support staff, particularly teaching assistants, were highly trained and understood their role in helping pupils to achieve.*
- *Systematically focused on giving pupils clear, useful feedback about their work, and ways that they could improve it.*
- *Ensured that a designated senior leader had a clear overview of how the funding was being allocated and the difference it was making to the outcomes for pupils.*
- *Ensured that class and subject teachers knew which pupils were eligible for the Pupil Premium so that they could take responsibility for accelerating their progress.*
- *Had a clear policy on spending the Pupil Premium, agreed by governors and publicised on the school website.*
- *Provided well-targeted support to improve attendance, behaviour or links with families where these were barriers to a pupil’s learning.*

- *Had a clear and robust performance management system for all staff, and included discussions about pupils eligible for the Pupil Premium in performance management meetings.*
- *Were able, through careful monitoring and evaluation, to demonstrate the impact of each aspect of their spending on the outcomes for pupils.*³⁴

Ofsted also found that where schools were less successful in spending the funding, they tended to have at least some of the following characteristics. These schools:

- *Had a lack of clarity about the intended impact of the spending.*
- *Spent the funding indiscriminately on teaching assistants, with little impact.*
- *Did not monitor the quality and impact of interventions well enough, even where other monitoring was effective.*
- *Did not have a good performance management system for teaching assistants and other support staff.*
- *Did not have a clear audit trail for where the funding had been spent.*
- *Focused on pupils attaining the nationally expected level at the end of the key stage (Level 4, five A* to C grades at GCSE) but did not go beyond these expectations, so some more able eligible pupils underachieved.*
- *Planned their Pupil Premium spending in isolation to their other planning, for example, it was not part of the school development plan.*
- *Compared their performance to local rather than national data, which suppressed expectations if they were in a low-performing local authority.*
- *Did not focus their pastoral work on the desired outcomes for pupils and did not have any evidence to show themselves whether the work had or had not been effective.*
- *Did not have governors involved in making decisions about the Pupil Premium, or challenging the way in which it was allocated.*³⁵

³⁴ The Pupil Premium: How schools are spending the funding successfully to maximise achievement by Ofsted

³⁵ The Pupil Premium: How schools are spending the funding successfully to maximise achievement by Ofsted

5.2 Appendix 2 – PDG allocation for Carmarthenshire schools (2012/13 – 2016/17)

| | 2012/13 | 2013/14 | 2014/15 | 2015/16 | 2016/17 |
|--------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Nursery Total | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3,000 | 2,700 |
| Primary Total | 936,594 | 930,260 | 1,870,993 | 2,278,800 | 2,653,100 |
| Secondary Total | 753,275 | 781,572 | 1,466,504 | 1,587,600 | 1,757,200 |
| Special Total | 26,022 | 10,828 | 22,665 | 18,150 | 46,000 |
| Grand Total | 1,715,891 | 1,722,659 | 3,360,161 | 3,887,550 | 4,459,000 |

5.3 Appendix 3 – Task & Finish Group meetings and attendance

| Meeting | Councillors Present | Officers / Visitors Present |
|---|---|--|
| Tuesday 8th December 2015 10:00am Meeting Room 6, Parc Dewi Sant, Carmarthen | Cllr. Eirwyn Williams (Chair) Cllr. Ryan Bartlett Cllr. John James Cllr. Hugh Richards Cllr. Tom Theophilus Mrs. Vera Kenny Mr. Simon Pearson | David Astins Glenn Evans Gareth Morgans Aeron Rees Bernadette Dolan Matthew Hughes Michelle Evans Thomas |
| Monday 18th January 2016 10:00am Meeting Room 6, Parc Dewi Sant, Carmarthen | Cllr. Eirwyn Williams (Chair) Cllr. Ryan Bartlett Cllr. John James Cllr. Tom Theophilus Mrs. Vera Kenny Mr. Simon Pearson | Joe Cudd Glenn Evans Gareth Morgans Mary Parry Aeron Rees Matthew Hughes Michelle Evans Thomas |
| Friday 5th February 2016 10:00am Democratic Services Committee Room, County Hall, Carmarthen | Cllr. Eirwyn Williams (Chair) Cllr. Ryan Bartlett Cllr. Peter Hughes-Griffiths Cllr. John James Cllr. Hugh Richards Cllr. Tom Theophilus Mrs. Vera Kenny Mr. Simon Pearson | Rhian Evans Lisa Davies Professor David Egan Glenn Evans Robert Sully Gareth Morgans Matthew Hughes Michelle Evans Thomas |

| Meeting | Councillors Present | Officers / Visitors Present |
|--|--|--|
| Monday 25th April 2016 10:00am Meeting Room 6, Parc Dewi Sant, Carmarthen | Cllr. Eirwyn Williams (Chair) Cllr. Ryan Bartlett Cllr. John James Cllr. Hugh Richards Cllr. Tom Theophilus Mrs. Vera Kenny | Betsan O'Connor Glenn Evans Gareth Morgans Aeron Rees Matthew Hughes |
| Tuesday 17th May 2016 10:00am Meeting Room 6, Parc Dewi Sant, Carmarthen | Cllr. Eirwyn Williams (Chair) Cllr. Ryan Bartlett Cllr. Hugh Richards Cllr. Tom Theophilus Mrs. Vera Kenny | Tracy Senchal Gareth Morgans Michelle Evans Thomas |
| Tuesday 21st June 2016 10:00am Meeting Room 6, Parc Dewi Sant, Carmarthen | Cllr. Eirwyn Williams (Chair) Cllr. Ryan Bartlett Cllr. Peter Hughes-Griffiths Cllr. John James Cllr. Hugh Richards Cllr. Tom Theophilus Mrs. Vera Kenny | Aeron Rees Matthew Hughes |
| Friday 25th November 2016 10:00am Meeting Room 2, Parc Dewi Sant, Carmarthen | Cllr. Eirwyn Williams (Chair) Cllr. Ryan Bartlett Cllr. Peter Hughes-Griffiths Cllr. John James Cllr. Hugh Richards Mrs. Vera Kenny | Gareth Morgans Aeron Rees Matthew Hughes |

5.4 Appendix 4 – List of those giving evidence at Group meetings

| Meeting | Attendees | Discussion Topic |
|---------------|---|---|
| December 2015 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • David Astins (E&C Department, Carmarthenshire County Council) • Gareth Morgans / Glenn Evans / Aeron Rees (E&C Department, Carmarthenshire County Council) | <p>Free School Meals Service</p> <p>e-FSM / Attainment data</p> |
| January 2016 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joe Cudd – Head Teacher of Maes-y-Morfa CP School, Llanelli • Mary Parry – Consortium Associate School Improvement Officer (E&C Department, Carmarthenshire County Council) | <p>Approach to e-FSM learners at Maes-y-Morfa School</p> <p>Authority’s approach to E-FSM learners and case studies from County’s schools</p> |
| February 2016 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rhian Evans – Head Teacher of Carwe, Gwynfryn and Ponthenri School Federation • Lisa Davies – Teacher at Carwe School • Professor David Egan – Director of Wales Centre for Equity in Education | <p>Approach to e-FSM learners in Carwe, Gwynfryn and Ponthenri units</p> <p>Overview of e-FSM / attainment gap / poverty agenda in Wales and UK</p> |

| Meeting | Attendees | Discussion Topic |
|------------|---|--|
| April 2016 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="544 268 1227 308">• Betsan O'Connor – Managing Director, ERW <li data-bbox="544 419 1093 491">• Gareth Morgans (E&C Department, Carmarthenshire County Council) | <p data-bbox="1321 268 2056 379">ERW's approach to e-FSM learners and attainment gap, as well as case study examples, specifically from Eastern Region Hub</p> <p data-bbox="1321 451 1951 491">Welsh Government School banding for 2016</p> |
| May 2016 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="544 568 1178 639">• Tracy Senchal – Head Teacher, Coedcae Secondary School, Llanelli | <p data-bbox="1321 568 2002 608">Approach to e-FSM learners at Coedcae School</p> |

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<http://ppi.w.org.uk/files/2016/06/An-introduction-to-Rural-Poverty.pdf>

Ysgol Y Bedol (2016) **Ysgol Y Bedol Pupil Deprivation Grant Statement 2016/17**

<http://www.ysgolybedol.co.uk/about/grantiau-grants/pupil-deprivation-grant/>

(Ctrl+Click to follow the hyperlinks and read the documents)

7. Glossary of Terms

| | |
|-------|---|
| CADY | Cydlynnydd Anghenion Dysgu Ychwanegol (Additional Educational Needs Co-ordinator) |
| CHaTT | Programme to support children's underlying pre-learning skills in preparation for the Foundation Phase and Key Stage 2 curriculum |
| CSC | Central South (Wales) School Improvement Consortium |
| CSI | Core Subject Indicator |
| EFFE | European Forum for Freedom in Education |
| e-FSM | Eligible for Free School Meals |
| ERW | Ein Rhanbarth ar Waith – Regional Consortium |
| ESaGS | Every School a Good School |
| ESTYN | Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education & Training in Wales |
| EYPDG | Early Years Pupil Deprivation Grant |
| FPI | Foundation Phase Indicator |
| FSME | Free School Meal Entitlement (Northern Ireland) |
| GCSE | General Certificate of Secondary Education |
| GwE | School Effectiveness and Improvement Service for North Wales |
| HWB | Welsh Government's National Digital Content Repository for Education |
| ICC | Integrated Children's Centre |
| ICT | Information & Communications Technology |
| KS | Key Stage (e.g. KS3 is Key Stage 3) |
| LAC | Looked After Children |
| LCE | Language, literacy and communication skills in English |
| LCW | Language, literacy and communication skills in Welsh |

| | |
|--------|--|
| L2i | Level 2 Inclusive |
| MAT | More Able and Talented |
| MDT | Mathematical Development |
| NEET | Not in Education, Employment or Training |
| n-FSM | Not eligible for Free School Meals |
| OECD | Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development |
| Ofsted | Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (in England) |
| PDG | Pupil Deprivation Grant |
| PLASC | Pupil Level Annual School Census |
| PSD | Personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural diversity |
| SEN | Special Educational Needs |
| TA | Teaching Assistant |
| TSN | Targeting Social Need |
| UK | United Kingdom |
| UNICEF | United Nations Children's Fund |
| WBQ | Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification |
| WCEE | Welsh Centre for Equality in Education |

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**EDUCATION & CHILDREN
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
26th JANUARY 2017**

**Explanation for the non-submission
of scrutiny report**

Council's Well-Being Objectives 2017/18

Responsible Officer(s): Wendy Walters / Robert James

Explanation: This report will now be presented to the Committee at its meeting in March 2017.

Revised Submission Date: Wednesday 15th March 2017

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EDUCATION & CHILDREN SCRUTINY COMMITTEE **21st NOVEMBER 2016**

Present: Councillor J.E. Williams (Chair)

Councillors: C.A. Campbell, J.M. Charles, I.W. Davies, W.G. Hopkins, P. Hughes-Griffiths, A. James, J.D. James, M.J.A. Lewis

Councillor I.J. Jackson – Substitute for Councillor D.W.H. Richards

Mrs. V. Kenny – Roman Catholic Church Representative

Mrs. E. Heyes – Parent Governor Member (Llanelli Area)

Mrs. K. Hill – Parent Governor Member (Dinefwr Area)

Mrs. A. Pickles – Parent Governor Member (Carmarthen Area)

Mrs. J. Voyle Williams – Church in Wales Representative

Also in attendance:

Councillor G.O. Jones – Executive Board Member for Education & Children

Also present as observers:

Councillor G. Thomas

Councillor W.T. Evans

The following officers were in attendance:

Mr. R. Sully – Director of Education & Children's Services

Mr. A. Rees – Head of Learner Programmes

Mr. S. Smith – Head of Children's Services

Mr. D. Astins – Strategic Development Manager

Mr. S. Davies – School Modernisation Manager

Ms. S. Nolan – Group Accountant

Ms. R. Williams – Additional Needs Provision Manager

Miss. S. Griffiths – Graduate Trainee Project Officer (MEP)

Mr. M. Hughes – Democratic Services Officer

Venue: County Hall Chamber, Carmarthen (2:00 – 4:35pm)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND OTHER MATTERS

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors P.E.M. Jones, D.W.H. Richards and J. Williams.

The Chair welcomed Mrs. Jean Voyle Williams to her first meeting as the new Church in Wales Representative on the Committee. He informed the Committee that Mrs. Voyle Williams had replaced Canon Bryan Witt who had recently decided to retire from his role on the Committee. The Chair advised members that he would write a

letter to Canon Witt thanking him for his contribution to the work of the Committee over many years.

The Chair also welcomed Councillor A. James to his first meeting as he had replaced the late T. Theophilus as a member on the Committee.

The Chair also reminded attendees that the filming or recording of proceedings was not permitted in any of the County Council's scrutiny committee meetings.

2. DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL INTEREST

| Councillor | Minute Item(s) | Nature of Interest |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|---|
| Mrs. E. Heyes | Item 5 | She is a parent governor on the Federated Llangennech School Governing Body. |
| Mrs. K. Hill | Item 6 | She is an independent Special Educational Needs advisor. |
| Councillor W.G. Hopkins | Item 5 | He is a governor on the Federated Llangennech School Governing Body. He informed the Committee that the Local Authority's Monitoring Officer had confirmed that he was permitted to take part and vote during consideration of this item. |

3. DECLARATION OF PROHIBITED PARTY WHIPS

There were no declarations of party whips.

4. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

The following questions were received and presented at the meeting. The Chair informed the Committee that apologies had been received from Mrs. Michaela Beddows, Mrs. Sheena Lewis and Mr. Darren Seward. Following their requests, he would read out their questions in their absence.

4.1 Question by Ms. Nikki Lloyd

The School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013, places a statutory duty on local authorities to assess the demand for Welsh-medium education in their area through their Welsh in Education Strategic Plans (WESPs). The Welsh Government's Welsh-medium Education Strategy required local authorities to submit Welsh in Education Strategic Plans (WESPs), to measure demand for Welsh-medium education and outline their targets to the Welsh Government. When looking at the

current position within the Llangennech Schools there are currently 121 children from outside of catchment coming into Llangennech School and at the same time 111 Children leave the village to seek education. The demand for Welsh Medium in Llangennech is clearly being fabricated by these movements and not from demand within the village itself. Has a WESP assessment been done for Llangennech to measure the demand and if so, where is the demand for Welsh Medium in Llangennech?

Response by Councillor J.E. Williams, Chair of the E&C Scrutiny Committee

The Chair stated that Part 4 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 required local authorities to prepare a Welsh in Education Strategic Plan setting out how they would carry out their education functions with a view to improving the planning of the provision of education through the medium of Welsh and improving the standards of Welsh-medium education and the teaching of Welsh.

Section 86 of the Act provided that the Welsh Ministers might require a local authority, in accordance with regulations, to carry out an assessment of the demand among parents in its area for Welsh-medium education for their children. The Welsh in Education Strategic Plans and Assessing Demand for Welsh Medium Education (Wales) Regulations 2013 set out how a local authority should go about conducting a Welsh-medium education assessment, should this be required by Welsh Ministers.

To date, Welsh Ministers had not required Carmarthenshire County Council to undertake a Welsh-medium education assessment and that the County's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan had been formally approved by the Welsh Government.

He added that the progressive increase in the number of pupils attending the Welsh stream and the decrease in the number of pupils attending the English stream in the Llangennech schools over recent years, clearly showed that there was an increasing demand for Welsh-medium education in the area.

4.2 Question by Mr. Steve Hatto

The School Organisation code states: Where a new school, increase in capacity or age range expansion is proposed;

- that there is evidence of current or future need/demand in the area for additional places, with reference to the school or proposed school's language category, designated religious character, and the gender intake (i.e. co-educational/single sex);
- The demand for additional provision of any type in an area should be assessed (WE CONSIDER THIS TO BE THE Llangennech catchment area) and evidenced (In the case of Welsh medium provision this would include an assessment of the demand for Welsh Medium education conducted in accordance with any regulations made under section 86 of the 2013 Act).
- whether proposals will improve access for disabled pupils in accordance with requirements under the Equality Act 2010.

According to information provided via Freedom of information by the School a pilot was carried out to look into Welsh immersion in the reception classes. However, we

are still yet to see the results from this pilot. At the time of the pilot only parents who attended the meeting (LESS THAN A DOZEN WITHOUT THE REST OF THE PARENTS BEING AWARE) were told about it and no letters were issued. The evidence found from this pilot should have been collated and presented with the proposal. The only time we were told about the pilot was when we requested it through FOI and it has never been made public. The evidence and results have not been presented with the proposal or whether they have an impact on the need for change. Can you confirm why this assessment has not been done along with the community assessment that the Authority has refused to undertake?

Response by Councillor J.E. Williams, Chair of the E&C Scrutiny Committee

The Chair stated that the consultation document had been prepared and the consultation process conducted in compliance with the statutory School Organisation Code and that the school had reacted to the dramatic change in the choice of language stream that parents were opting for. Following this, the number of pupils opting to attend through the Welsh stream had been increasing and were significantly higher than the number of pupils attending through the English stream.

4.3 Question by Mrs. Michaela Beddows

In a previous Scrutiny Committee meeting Mr Sully stated that his intention is to change all Dual Stream Schools to Welsh Medium and All English Medium to Dual Stream and so on... This will eventually eradicate all English medium Schools in Carmarthenshire. Can you confirm if this is the Authorities long term Education plan?

Response by Councillor J.E. Williams, Chair of the E&C Scrutiny Committee

The Chair stated that Carmarthenshire County Council had a statutory responsibility under Part 4 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 to prepare a Welsh in Education Strategic Plan for its area, with the explicit aim of improving planning of the provision of education through the medium of Welsh, for improving the standards of that education and of the teaching of Welsh. This Plan required all primary schools in Carmarthenshire, including English-medium schools, to move along the language continuum, progressively expanding the proportion of education that was delivered through the medium of Welsh, with a view to ensuring that in time, all children leaving primary school would be fully bilingual.

4.4 Question by Mrs. Sheena Lewis

We find that we must now ask this question for the third as we believe you have yet to give a clear response. When we first asked this question, there were 1710 empty seats in the Welsh medium Schools in Carmarthenshire. The reply from you and Mr Jones were exactly the same. You both stated you had filled 3500 seats in Welsh medium schools. That was not the question we asked. So again, we ask you. How many empty seats are there in Welsh Medium Schools in Carmarthenshire and don't you think it would be more beneficial to fill those seats before you create anymore?

Response by Councillor J.E. Williams, Chair of the E&C Scrutiny Committee

The Chair stated that based on the Planning of School Places return for 2016, there were 1,514 surplus places in the County's Welsh-medium primary schools. The

Welsh Government expected local authorities to endeavour to manage surplus school places within a tolerance of 10% overall across all schools, accepting that figures at individual schools would vary as a consequence of a number of factors. The School Organisation Code noted that “some spare places were necessary to enable schools to cope with fluctuations in numbers of pupils.” The Welsh Government regarded a single school as having excess surplus places if it had more than 25% of its places empty.

The Chair acknowledged that a number of the County’s Welsh-medium schools had surplus places but that these schools were predominantly in rural areas where there had been a decline in the number of young families and the number of children. This situation was not an indicator of a decline in the demand for Welsh-medium education but an indicator of the demographic changes facing many rural communities, with a generally ageing population. However, through its Modernising Education Programme, the County Council had removed approximately 3,150 surplus places from its primary schools over the past 15 years, predominantly in rural areas and that this demonstrated the Council was effective in managing surplus places.

4.5 Question by Mrs. Julia Rees

There are only 3 Observation/Assessment units in Carmarthenshire. These are units where children with speech and learning difficulties are placed when it is decided by Carmarthenshire county council's education psychologists that they require assessment so that their additional needs can be catered for in school. Some children move from here into special schools, while others are released into mainstream school with support. At present all three of Carmarthenshire's assessment units educate via English medium. It was stated by Mr Sully that the aim of Carmarthenshire county council is to discontinue the provision of English medium education by 2022 and that Llangennech school is merely on this path of change. I am a parent of a child who was enrolled and accepted into the Welsh medium stream at Llangennech school, but on the say of Carmarthenshire county council specialists was placed for assessment at a unit which educated via English medium. This then prevented him being placed back into Welsh medium education upon his release into mainstream education as he could only speak English. How can Carmarthenshire County Council discontinue English medium education in Llangennech thus barring my child to be returned to education in his community school with the longer term possibility of then moving, with support into the Welsh stream of his local school, when it cannot support welsh speaking pupils with learning difficulties to integrate into their chosen communities?

Response by Councillor J.E. Williams, Chair of the E&C Scrutiny Committee

The Chair stated that Carmarthenshire County Council’s policy was 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 was achieved, with all children benefitting. Whilst the system was designed to meet the needs of learners through an universal and inclusive approach, for a small number of children with significant and complex additional needs, this is not always possible and specialised provision offered a more appropriate learning setting.

In order to make sure that the needs of all learners were met, the school system in Carmarthenshire included a range of provision for children with additional needs. A specialised school or unit offered education to children with the most profound or

complex needs where a mainstream setting was either not suitable for the children's needs, or where parents preferred an alternative setting. Selected secondary and primary schools across the County included specialised units for children with particular needs, such as autism, sensory impairment or speech and language delay. The Department for Education & Children provided specific additional support in schools wherever practicable so that as many children as possible remained in their local school. Whilst the Council's preference was to meet the needs of all children in a mainstream setting wherever possible, this was not always practicable.

All pupils with additional learning needs had specific individual plans based on their circumstances and a tailored support programme was provided according to need. Generally, an additional learning need was not a barrier to learning two languages. It was important to assess and monitor progress in each or all of the languages that a child was using or learning, including sign and visually supported communication systems required for some pupils, particularly as the stronger developed language could be used to support and build learning through a lesser developed language medium. Staff were required to differentiate the curriculum and make reasonable adjustments to the language of instruction and response in order to accommodate additional needs and ensure access to the curriculum and learning progress. At times it might be appropriate to target additional support in one language for a period in order to consolidate and accelerate learning (e.g. in literacy).

He added that there would be rare instances, however, where a child might be diagnosed with a condition that was not conducive to a fully bilingual education. In these circumstances, a package of support was identified by professional practitioners and discussed with parents. Arrangements were made for the child to attend an appropriate school where their needs could be met. It might be the case that on a small number of occasions the needs of an individual child could not be met at the local school as, notwithstanding the Council's commitment to inclusive education, it was simply not practicable to meet all needs at every school. In the last five years the Educational and Child Psychology Service had been involved in only one or two cases each year where a move of school has been advised. To place this into context, the County's school system served around 27,000 pupils in total and so the frequency of pupil movement for additional learning needs, was very low indeed.

It was the Council's experience that the vast majority of pupils with a wide range of additional learning needs and abilities were successful in the County's schools, irrespective of the language of instruction but the Council did acknowledge that there would be a very few children whose needs could not be met other than through provision at a specialist unit.

For the Llangennech proposal, the support provided to children currently in the schools with additional needs, would continue through the medium in which they currently received their education. Should the proposal be implemented, all future pupils would receive this support mainly through the medium of Welsh, with appropriate adjustments being made to meet pupils' individual additional needs.

4.6 Question by Mrs. Karen Hughes

During previous meetings, we have been repeatedly told it is not the Authorities intention for any child to leave Llangennech School and due to this a transport or community assessment was not required. However, recent evidence shows that in addition to the 91 that have already sought English medium other than in

Llangennech a further 20 plus pupils have been removed or not started at the school in relation to the implications, if the proposal goes ahead and this number will continue rising. The only English medium school that could accommodate these pupils is Hendy School but this does not have a safe route to school. Following this information, we believe under the School Organisation Code 2013 a community and transport assessment needs to be carried out before any decision can be made. Considering this information, Are you now going to carry out a community and transport assessment?

Response by Councillor J.E. Williams, Chair of the E&C Scrutiny Committee

The Chair stated that based on the Pupil Level Annual School Census data for 2016, 96 children living within the catchment area of Llangennech attended other schools. Of these, 16 children attended Welsh-medium schools, 7 attended dual-stream schools and 73 attended English-medium schools. 3 of these children attended faith-based schools. However, the movement of pupils between school catchment areas was a common circumstance across the County in both urban and rural areas.

The Local Authority was aware of some pupils who had changed schools that might have been as a result of this proposal. However, parents had a right to state a preference for different schools. For the academic year 2016/17, 31 applicants declined their place at Llangennech Infant School. However, 27 of these applications were from outside of the catchment area. Of the 4 applications from within catchment, 2 applicants accepted a place at other schools for other reasons and 2 applicants did not provide a reason for declining. Of the 31 pupils that declined a place at Llangennech Infant School, 12 pupils had stated a preference for Welsh-medium education, 4 pupils had stated a preference for English-medium education and 15 pupils did not state a language preference when completing their application form.

For the 2015/16 academic year, 16 pupils had declined their place at Llangennech Infant School. However, 10 of these applications were from outside of the catchment area. Of the 6 applications from within the catchment area, 1 accepted a place at a Welsh-medium school and one pupil moved to live elsewhere. Of the 16 pupils that declined a place at Llangennech Infant School, 10 pupils had stated a preference for Welsh-medium education, 2 pupils had stated a preference for English-medium education and 4 pupils did not state a language preference when completing their application form.

He added that the consultation document had been prepared and the consultation process conducted in compliance with the requirements of the School Organisation Code and the County Council's proposal was for children from Llangennech to attend the local school. If the proposal was implemented, children residing within the Llangennech school catchment area who attend Llangennech School, would benefit from the Local Authority's Admissions Policy and Transport to School Policy, which took full account of safety considerations. However, should parents decide to place their children in alternative schools where places were available, they would do so taking into consideration all the factors that applied, including the transport implications.

4.7 Question by Mr. Dean Bolgiani

We have previously been advised that the nearest English medium Schools Bryn and Bynea were not oversubscribed. However, recent information obtained under the

Freedom of Information Act 2000 states that both Schools have already refused places. We were advised the reason for refusal is always the same they only refuse admission if the year group is already full or oversubscribed. It was expressly stated in the response that you have never refused an application for any other reason other than over capacity. The issue of providing alternative provision for English Medium education for families from Llangennech was also raised by ESTYN as part of their response to the initial consultation. Can you now please clarify where are you going to cater for pupils who seek English medium Education if it is removed from Llangennech?

Response by Councillor J.E. Williams, Chair of the E&C Scrutiny Committee

The Chair stated that the County Council was not proposing alternatives to Llangennech School for local children. It was the Local Authority's desire that all current pupils remained at the school and that in the future, local children attend their village school, receiving 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 in some other lessons, in the later years of the school.

The County Council was obliged to facilitate parental preference only where this was consistent with the effective delivery of education and the efficient use of resources. No parent had a right to demand a place at any particular school for their child (or children) and school places were allocated on the basis of the Council's published Admissions Policy. This policy favoured children attending their local or designated school. Children were admitted to a school other than their designated school upon application by parents when places were available and subject to the over-subscription criteria set out in the published Admissions Policy.

4.8 Question by Mr. Darren Seward

As part of the statutory notice you state that you are prepared to pay transport costs for pupils from outside of the catchment to attend Llangennech. You have made it clear that you are refusing to pay for pupils seeking English medium education outside of Llangennech. In these days of equal opportunity for all irrespective of sex, race, colour or creed how can you justify such a blatant discriminatory move?

Response by Councillor J.E. Williams, Chair of the E&C Scrutiny Committee

The Chair stated that this proposal did not seek to discriminate against any members of the community in any way. Transport was provided to all pupils in accordance with the Authority's Home to School Transport Policy. He added that should any parents elect to place their children in alternative schools, they did so having considered all the implications, including the transport implications. If any parents elected to place their children in an alternative school that was neither the designated or nearest school, these parents assumed full responsibility for transporting their children to that school.

4.9 Question by Mr. Robert Willock

I would like to point out that in the Llanelli Star dated 14th October 2016 Mr Dole stated "We will always consult the public" How is it that no one consulted the public within the Llangennech area, neither had the Authority consulted with one of its major

education partners Bryngwyn School, in the change of language of Llangennech School. This only became apparent when it was leaked in the local paper. Now we have hard evidence of over 750 objections from the community within Llangennech supporting our position of keeping the dual stream option for the school. With this level of objection against the proposal are you now going to listen to the Public of Llangennech?

Response by Councillor J.E. Williams, Chair of the E&C Scrutiny Committee

The Chair responded by stating that the consultation process has been conducted in compliance with the statutory School Organisation Code. Key stakeholders, including Bryngwyn School, were informed of the consultation period via e-mail at the beginning of the consultation period, in line with the requirements of the School Organisation Code. He added that the decision on whether or not to proceed with the proposal would, by virtue of the law, have to be made on the grounds of whether it was in the best interests of learners. It was, therefore, the educational merits that would have to be the determining factor in decision making, rather than the number of responses received in favour or against the proposal.

4.10 Question by Mrs. Jacqueline Seward

It really saddens us to see how much our once close knit community has been divided by this proposal being pushed by a minority from the village. We have spent nearly a year engaging with community, taking the time to knock doors and listening to what people want. From the last exercise we have hard proof of 750 people against the proposal and need to make you aware that those in support who we spoke to on the doorstep were very few and we encouraged them to let their views to be known. We have always been in support of our children being taught Welsh at the school but are against the total immersion, no parental choice option being peddled under this proposal.

We are aware that a large amount of support letters for the change have been gathered from outside of the village and we have requested an FOI request for a breakdown on postcodes as to where the support and objections have been gathered so it will show where exactly this support has been collected. This evidence is an important factor to enable members to make a decision.

Surely, to decide what is best for the residents of our community it's the people of Llangennech that should have a say. Even without questioning the generated location of the support letters there are still a majority in favour of keeping the dual stream at the school. Unfortunately the results speak for themselves and this has split the village therefore the logical solution would be to keep Welsh and English streams in the school and cater for all. Do you therefore agree that this be best dealt with by delaying this decision until after the May 2017 election, a delay of only 6 months to the whole process, to gauge exactly what the village want which is the way it should have been done rather than letting people from outside the village decide on the fate of our community?

Response by Councillor J.E. Williams, Chair of the E&C Scrutiny Committee

The Chair stated that the process for any proposal had to be conducted in compliance with the statutory School Organisation Code. The School Organisation Code stated that: "under section 53 of the 2013 Act, determination by the proposer must be made

within 16 weeks (112 days) of the end of the objection period. Where the proposer fails to determine the proposal within the period of 16 weeks it is taken to have withdrawn the proposal and it is required to republish the proposals if it wishes to proceed.” Again, he added that the decision on whether or not to proceed with the proposal would, by virtue of the law, have to be made on the grounds of whether it was in the best interests of learners. It was, therefore, the educational merits that would have to be the determining factor in decision making, rather than the number of responses received in favour or against the proposal.

The Chair thanked the representatives of the Dual Stream Committee for their questions and contribution at the meeting and stated that members of the Committee appreciated their concerns and would take their views into account during consideration of the next item.

5. MODERNISING EDUCATION PROGRAMME (MEP) – PROPOSAL TO DISCONTINUE LLANGENNECH INFANT SCHOOL AND LLANGENNECH JUNIOR SCHOOL AND ESTABLISH LLANGENNECH COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Mrs. E. Heyes had earlier declared a personal interest in this item and left the meeting during its consideration and determination.

Councillor W.G. Hopkins had earlier declared that he is a governor on the Federated Llangennech School Governing Body and that the Local Authority’s Monitoring Officer had confirmed that he was permitted to take part and vote during consideration and determination of this item.

The Committee considered a proposal to discontinue Llangennech Infant and Junior Schools and establish Llangennech Community Primary School in their place and the submissions received in response to the proposal to issue a Statutory Notice. The submissions received during the most recent consultation period, as set out in the consultation report, were included within the Objection Report.

The Director of Education & Children’s Services outlined the background to the proposal, the policy context and the content and layout of the report being presented to the Committee. He noted that a considerable response (1,418 responses) had been received, however, as the educational merits were the most important and determining factors in this matter, officers remained of the view that there were no changes required to the proposal following the latest stage of the process.

The following comments were made during consideration of the proposal:

The detailed report was welcomed and that it was stated that the Council was simply implementing that which the Welsh Government required of it. Disappointment was expressed that English-medium schools were not encouraging pupils to become bilingual and that the introduction of Welsh-medium provision was the only way in which the Council could ensure that all pupils were fully bilingual in both Welsh and English.

Reference was made to the significant amount of research, conducted in Wales and internationally, which supported the conclusion that dual-stream or English-medium schools did not create fully bilingual pupils and that full immersion in a Welsh-medium

setting was the only way ahead, especially if the County was to address the significant decline in the number of Welsh speakers, as evidenced by the last Census of 2011. Reference was also made to the Welsh Government's research that had shown that the performance and educational attainment of pupils in Welsh-medium only settings was not affected or hindered, as some suggested. It was felt that the failure to be bilingual was the real cause of division in communities. It was also noted that the Welsh Government had recently outlined its aim of creating 1 million Welsh speakers in Wales and it was clear that education would have to play a significant part in realising its ambition.

Whilst the importance of increasing Welsh speakers and encouraging the use of the language was acknowledged. It was suggested that the objectors' concerns should not be ignored. It was suggested that they had valid points and that not all their questions had been answered fully. It was essential that in order to be open and transparent, all the information needed to be provided in order to ensure that proposals such as this had everyone on board before moving ahead. The Director of Education & Children acknowledged the frustration with the process but noted that any concerns should be directed to the Welsh Government. The Local Authority was simply complying with the requirements handed down by the Government in Cardiff. He also stressed that the Authority had gone well beyond that which was expected of it during the consultation process in seeking to engage with all stakeholders.

Reference was made to the consultation process and a view expressed that this had all been conducted correctly in accordance with the legislative requirements. However, if the proposal was implemented, it was certain that pupils from non-Welsh speaking homes would not simply be thrown in at the deep end but would be supported in every way possible in regards to their language skills. The Director of Education & Children noted that 50% of pupils in the Welsh-stream at Llangennech performed exceptionally well and that parents need not be concerned. The County's schools were very good in nurturing and developing the Welsh language skills of pupils' from non-Welsh speaking backgrounds.

The Committee **RESOLVED:**

- 5.1 That the report be received.
- 5.2 That being satisfied that there were no other related proposals; that the statutory proposal had been consulted upon and published in accordance with the School Organisation Code and contained all the relevant information and, having considered the consultation document and consultation report, the objections and any responses to the notice supporting the proposal in the objection report, it be recommended to the Executive Board that the proposal, as laid out in the Statutory Notice, be implemented.

The Committee's meeting was adjourned for 10 minutes following consideration of this item so that visitors could leave the Chamber.

6. REFORMING THE PROVISION OF SUPPORT FOR LEARNERS WITH ADDITIONAL LEARNING NEEDS

Mrs. K. Hill had earlier declared that she is an independent Special Educational Needs advisor.

The Committee received a presentation outlining the transformation of additional learning needs support in Wales and the current position in Carmarthenshire. The Committee was informed that the Welsh Government was introducing a new Bill to reform the support system for children and young people with additional learning needs (ALN). The Welsh Government and ALN practitioners deemed the reform necessary and long overdue as:

- The current assessment process was inefficient, bureaucratic and costly and based on a model introduced more than 30 years ago
- The current system was not sufficiently child-centred or user-friendly
- Needs were being identified late and interventions were not sufficiently timely and effective
- In 2015, only 23% of learners with SEN achieved the Level 2 inclusive threshold compared to 58% of all pupils

It was expected that Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Bill would be published in December 2016. The Bill would create the legislative framework to improve the planning and delivery of additional learning provision, through a person-centred approach to identifying needs early, putting in place effective support and monitoring and adapting interventions to ensure the delivery of the desired outcomes. The Additional Learning Needs Code would then provide the statutory guidance underpinning the Bill, including mandatory requirements. Members noted that two key changes would be:

- The extension of the age range from 0-18 to 0-25 – All children and young people would have the same rights to receive the provision they required and this would assist in improving transition between school and post-16 education.
- A single statutory plan – Individual Development Plans (IDP) would replace the variety of statutory and non-statutory plans for learners in schools and full-time education.

The Committee was updated on the approach being undertaken by the Local Authority in readiness of having to implement the new legislation, namely through workforce development, implementation / transition support, awareness-raising and supporting policy.

The following issues were discussed during consideration of this item:

It was asked whether officers envisaged a cost saving to the Authority in the long term due to the simplifying and streamlining of the assessment process and whether fewer or more staff would be required. The Additional Needs Provision Manager acknowledged that the workforce would need to be reviewed and it was probable that some staff would be redeployed to work in different areas of responsibility (e.g. away from the current assessment process) and that capacity would need to be built up in other areas (e.g. for work with young people in the 18-25 age category). She noted that there were many unknowns and until the programme started, it would be difficult to be specific about the potential impact.

In response to a further question on potential savings to the service due to the reduction in the number of assessments undertaken, the Additional Needs Provision Manager confirmed that any savings made would be re-directed into other services. The main savings envisaged would be around staff time. One example would be the

educational psychologists who, instead of spending time in conducting unnecessary assessments, could be better deployed out in schools and building capacity amongst staff.

Reference was made to the significant drop in the academic attainment of pupils with additional learning needs, especially between key stages 3 and 4 and it was asked why this had taken so long to identify and address. The Additional Needs Provision Manager noted that the data quoted in the presentation were all-Wales figures and that historically, the focus for 'special educational needs' had been on cognitive impairments (low ability) and this had fostered low expectations and aspirations of pupils in this category. Officers felt that the introduction of the new Bill was very timely and would raise aspirations and expectations for all pupils as many had needs which would not necessarily impair their abilities to achieve educationally (e.g. behavioural, emotional needs).

In response to a query regarding the role of parents and their rights in requesting assessments for their children, the Additional Needs Provision Manager confirmed that parents already had a significant role to play in the existing as well as the new process and that they would still be within their rights to request that their child be formally assessed. However, it was envisaged that as the planning process began earlier in schools, any issues would be identified and that parents could be signposted to the relevant agencies at a much earlier stage.

Whilst the forthcoming changes were to be welcomed, it was asked whether there would be financial implications for the Authority in having to implement these changes. The Additional Needs Provision Manager stated that authorities would have to wait and see until the details and guidance were published in due course. However, the Welsh Government had set aside funding for an innovation grant which would be available to assist local authorities to implement and transfer to the new arrangements.

It was asked whether the training provided for school staff would be sufficient. The Additional Needs Provision Manager reassured the Committee that much work had already been undertaken in planning for the new arrangements in addition to the existing support provided for schools (e.g. Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator Forum, all-school training sessions). The Inclusion Service operated a 'coaching model' which provided assistance to school staff and this would continue in the future. However, she added that head teachers had been aware of these proposed changes for a long time and that there was a responsibility on school leaders to plan ahead and arrange the training necessary for their staff members.

Whilst the presentation was welcomed, concern was expressed that the current process of allocating funding was haphazard and it was asked whether a pilot project had been or would be conducted to test the new arrangements. The Additional Needs Provision Manager confirmed that Carmarthenshire County Council had been part of a pilot project that had been undertaken a few years ago with Glan-y-Môr Secondary School and its respective feeder schools. Personal development plans were piloted and all the County's schools were invited to view the good practice. Again, she reminded the Committee that school leaders and the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators had a duty to provide training in their respective schools.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the update be received.

7. REVENUE & CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING REPORT 2016/17

The Committee considered the Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring Reports relating to the 2016/17 financial year as at 31st August 2016 for the Education & Children Department. It was advised that this latest revenue budget forecast showed a significant overspend of £1,550,000 for the year end. The capital budget showed a forecasted net spend of £13,322,000 compared with a working net budget of £19,607,000 giving a £-6,285,000 variance. Members were advised that the capital variance would be slipped into future years, as the funding would be required to ensure that the various schemes were completed.

The following issues were raised during consideration of the report:

It was asked whether the current overspend would be written off through the use of reserves. The Group Accountant confirmed that this would be the case but in doing so, there would be an impact on future budgets. The Director of Education & Children reminded the Committee that until this year, departmental reserves had been utilised to manage financial volatility. However, these were fully utilised last year and yet the underlying pressures on services had not relented. One significant cost was out of the Authority's control, namely school redundancies and early voluntary retirement arrangements.

Concern was expressed at the continued delay in progressing a new primary school for Ammanford and it was asked whether there was a pecking order as other projects appeared to have jumped the queue. It was also asked what role if any, the Ammanford Task Force had in the planning for a new school. The Director of Education & Children reminded the Committee that it had previously endorsed the Modernising Education Programme Biennial Review earlier that year and confirmed that whilst there was a priority list (Band A, B etc.), it was required to be flexible due to the demographic changes often experienced within the County. He confirmed that work on a new school for Ammanford had commenced over four years ago but since this time, the numbers of children in the town had increased significantly and there was now not enough funding to accommodate the changes to the overall project. Another complication was the lack of suitable land and although one piece of land had since been identified, a further £8m would be required to fund the project. He also reassured the Committee that the Modernising Education Programme Team was liaising closely with the Town's Task Force on this matter.

In response to a query about the Carmarthen West Phase 1 project, the Director for Education & Children informed the Committee that this was linked to the large residential development on the western edge of Carmarthen. Due to the number of proposed houses, a new primary school would be required and initial projections were for a two form entry school for approximately 400 pupils. However, the current plan was to develop a school in two stages as flexibility was required in relation to the progress of the overall development. He confirmed that the funding referred to in the report was for the development / design stage of the school project.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the report be received.

8. HALF-YEARLY COMPLAINTS AND COMPLIMENTS REPORT – 1ST APRIL TO 30TH SEPTEMBER 2016

The Committee considered a report which provided members with statistics and analysis on complaints, compliments and enquiries received and dealt with during April to September 2016/17.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the report be received.

9. FORTHCOMING ITEMS

RESOLVED that the items to be considered at the next scheduled meeting on Thursday 22nd December 2016, be noted.

10. EDUCATION & CHILDREN SCRUTINY COMMITTEE ACTIONS AND REFERRALS UPDATE

The Committee considered an update detailing progress in relation to actions, requests or referrals emerging from previous scrutiny meetings.

Reference was made to the Committee's request that the Welsh Government be requested to simplify the process required for changing school language categories. The Committee was informed that Alun Davies AM (Welsh Government Minister for Lifelong Learning and the Welsh Language) had attended a recent meeting of the County's Strategic Welsh Language Forum, where certain members of the Committee had voiced their concerns to him directly. The Committee was informed that he had been sympathetic to members' concerns and had informed the Forum that the Welsh Language Measure needed to be changed and that consultation on this matter would take place in Spring 2017.

The Executive Board Member for Education & Children also informed the Committee that both he and the Director of Education & Children had recently met with Kirsty Williams AM (Welsh Government Cabinet Secretary for Education) during which they had also raised the Committee's concerns on this same issue. She had also agreed to look into this matter in more detail.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the actions and referrals update be received.

11. TO SIGN AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE COMMITTEE'S MEETING HELD ON THE 22ND SEPTEMBER 2016

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 22nd September 2016, be signed as a correct record.

Prior to closing the meeting, the Chair noted that this would be Mr. Rob Sully's last meeting as the Director of Education & Children as he would be retiring in December. The Chair and members of the Committee thanked Mr. Sully for his excellent service on behalf of the Council and his diligent work as Director over the years and thanked him for his willingness to meet with members and to listen to their concerns. On behalf of the Committee, the Chair wished him a long and happy retirement.

SIGNED: _____ (Chair)

DATE: _____