

COUNCIL

11TH OCTOBER 2023

ESTYN INSPECTION OF CARMARTHENSHIRE'S LOCAL GOVERNMENT EDUCATION SERVICES

Purpose: To enable Elected Members to consider the report and areas for development.

Recommendations / key decisions required:

- To review the current position.
- To be assured that arrangements are in place to address the recommendations and minor areas for improvement.

Reasons:

Following the publication of the inspection report, and in order to meet Estyn's expectations, the local authority should update its plans to address the recommendations and to take account of shortcomings identified through the inspection process. The local authority should update its plans within three months of publication of the inspection report.

Cabinet Decision Required NO

Council Decision Required NO

CABINET MEMBER PORTFOLIO HOLDER:- Cllr. Glynog Davies

I am extremely proud of the commendable work of Carmarthenshire's Education Services and grateful for the efforts of all our staff, schools and pupils recognised in this thorough report by Estyn. In Carmarthenshire, our vision and strategic leadership are clear and distinct, so that we can provide the best possible education for our children and young people, and I look forward to pushing ahead and realising our plans. I would like to thank all the officers for their continuous work that has led to this positive outcome. My personal thanks to the Director for his prominent strategic leadership.

**Directorate: Education and
Children's Services**

**Name of Director:
Gareth Morgans**

Report Author: ESTYN

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

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

COUNCIL

11TH OCTOBER 2023

ESTYN INSPECTION OF CARMARTHENSHIRE'S LOCAL GOVERNMENT EDUCATION SERVICES

Background to Local Government Education Services Inspection (LGES)

Inspections of LGES are carried out under Section 38 of the Education Act 1997 which provides that His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales (HMCI) '*may, and, if requested to do so by the Secretary of State, shall, arrange for any local authority to be inspected*'.

Such an inspection '*shall consist of a review of the way in which the authority are performing any function which relates to the provision of education for (a) persons of compulsory school age (whether at school or otherwise) or (b) for persons of any age above or below that age who are registered as pupils at schools maintained by the authority.*'

Estyn's inspection of local authorities is informed by the [Guidance handbook for the inspection of LGES 2022 \(gov.wales\)](#). The handbook sets out the way in which Estyn conducts inspections of local government education services (LGES), which has changed significantly since our last core inspection in 2012.

Between the 10th and 14th of July 2023, Estyn inspected Carmarthenshire Council under its Local Government Education Services (LGES) framework.

The Local Government Education Services Inspection Framework

Inspection area 1– Outcomes	1.1 Standards and progress overall 1.2 Standards and progress of specific groups 1.3 Well-being and attitudes to learning.
Inspection area 2– Education Services	2.1 Support for school improvement 2.2 Support for vulnerable learners 2.3 Other education support services
Inspection area 3- Leadership and management	3.1 Quality and effectiveness of leaders and managers 3.2 Self-evaluation and improvement planning 3.3 Professional learning 3.4 Safeguarding arrangements 3.5 Use of resources

Inspectors evaluate and report on **all aspects of inspection areas 1 and 3** of the framework. **Inspection area 2** of the framework sets out the scope of education services that could be inspected during an inspection. As part of each inspection process, Estyn will form **a set of local inspection questions about education services**. Inspectors will evaluate services covered by these questions and report on each question separately within the report.

Under Inspection area 2, four local inspection questions were identified for Carmarthenshire, which were:

- 1. How effective are school improvement processes in improving the quality of teaching and school leadership?*
- 2. How well do the authority's arrangements for school modernisation and reorganisation ensure appropriate education provision for all children and young people, including pre-school and post-16 education?*
- 3. How well do the local authority's education services promote positive behaviour and good attendance in its schools?*
- 4. How successful is the local authority in ensuring that pupils' additional learning needs are identified early, and that suitable provision is in place to meet those needs.*

A preliminary visit took place on the 22nd and 23rd of June 2023, to conduct interviews with a range of stakeholders including headteacher representatives for primary, secondary and special schools; representatives of Chairs of Governors across primary, secondary and special schools; the regional education partnership, Partneriaeth; trade union representatives; diocese; the local health board, parents and officers from other Directorates of the Local Authority.

The core inspection consisted of data analysis from learner outcomes, school inspections and stakeholder questionnaires; scrutiny of evidence provided by the local authority including our self-evaluation report; and interviews with a range of Members and officers. Audit Wales inspected the Local Authority's use of resources under the inspection area of Leadership and Management.

During all core inspections, Estyn consider whether local government education services are **causing significant concern** and require follow-up activity. **Estyn judged that education services in Carmarthenshire do not fall into this category.**

The report was published on 27th of September 2023 and identified many strengths and notable features.

Three recommendations were made-

R1 Improve pupils' attendance in the authority's schools.

R2 Strengthen school improvement processes, particularly for secondary schools.

R3 Refine approaches to self-evaluation and improvement planning.

Work had already begun to address aspects of the recommendation prior to the inspection as they were already identified via self-evaluation and improvement planning processes.

The outcome of the inspection is detailed within the Estyn Inspection report appended to this document. It is Estyn's expectation that the inspection report is scrutinised in full by the Scrutiny Committee, so that the necessary support and challenge can be provided about the Directorate's plans for improvement.

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:

Director of Education and Children's Services

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

Inspections of LGES are carried out under Section 38 of the Education Act 1997 which provides that His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales (HMCI) '**may, and, if requested to do so by the Secretary of State, shall, arrange for any local authority to be inspected**'. The Local Authority must respond to the report and address the recommendations.

Finance

Addressing some of the recommendations and minor area for improvement may require additional resource which will be reviewed by officers as part of our Action Plan and will be considered as part of the budget discussions for 2024/25 budget setting.

Risk Management Issues

With the current financial forecasts for 2024/25 and subsequent years there is a risk that reduced resources could hamper our ability to address the recommendations and sustain the high quality and sustainable service we have developed.

Staffing Implications

Implementing the recommendations may require us to expand the Local Authority Teams in order to secure the required improvements.

Physical Assets

One of the local questions was in relation to- **How well do the authority's school modernisation and re-organisation arrangements ensure appropriate education provision for all children and young people, including pre-school and post-16 education?**

Addressing current challenges within the sector will require significant capital investment to further develop and improve school assets.

CABINET MEMBER PORTFOLIO HOLDER AWARE?-		YES Cllr Glynog Davies is aware of Estyn's report and recommendations.
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
A report on education services in Carmarthenshire County Council- Estyn	ESTYN REPORT	Adroddiad arolygiad - Cyngor Sir Gaerfyrddin 2023 (llyw.cymru) Inspection report - Carmarthenshire County Council 2023 (gov.wales)
Guidance handbook for the inspection of LGES 2022 (gov.wales)	ESTYN GUIDANCE	https://www.estyn.gov.wales/system/files/2022-08/Guidance%20handbook%20for%20the%20inspection%20of%20LGES%202022.pdf