

Meeting	Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee
Date	19 April 2018
Title	Gwynedd Foundation Phase Outcomes
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Cabinet Member	Councillor Gareth Thomas
Purpose	The purpose of this report is to present the Foundation Phase results.

Context

The percentage of pupils of statutory school age entitled to free school meals has remained consistently low in Gwynedd over the last five years in comparison with the rest of Wales. In accordance with the all Wales schools improvement framework, these pupils are expected to achieve well regarding Foundation Phase indicator compared to Wales.

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Gwynedd	13.7%	12.9%	13.3%	13.0%	12.4%
Wales	19.5%	19.1%	18.8%	18.4%	17.8%
Gwynedd Position (1=%PYD isaf)	5	4	4	4	4

The following table indicates that Gwynedd performs substantially lower than expected and although Wales and the area have made progress last year, a reduction has occurred in Gwynedd results, and although the reduction, 0.2% is a very slight reduction, it had a negative impact on the County's position nationally.

	2015	2016	2017
Gwynedd	86.8%	86.8%	86.6%
Wales	86.8%	87.0%	87.3%
Position (expected = 4/22 LEAs)	11	14	15

During 2016-2017, substantial input was given (as in the regions other counties) to try and improve the Foundation Phase's performance. Training was presented to ensure that the schools prepare challenging activities in the Foundation Phase areas and every school received guidance on Assessment at the Foundation Phase.

Gwynedd's performance compared to the remaining North Wales authorities is highlighted below. Only performance in Welsh and Personal Development meets the expectation taking into account the numbers of learners entitled to free school meals.

	Position
Foundation Phase Indicator	3
Language – Welsh D5+	5
<i>Language – Welsh D6+</i>	<i>1</i>
Mathematical Development	3
Mathematical Development D6+	3
Personal Development D5+	2
<i>Personal Development D6+</i>	<i>1</i>

Several complex factors impact pupils performance and there is no simple solution.

Following discussions with a cross-section of Gwynedd headteachers, and feedback from a questionnaire disseminated (10 responses were received), these were the main factors that emerged as regards the obstacles faced by schools and the strategies they implement to try and surmount them.

Teaching through the medium of Welsh

Pupils language	2015	2016	2017
% Welsh in the home	64.6	66.4	64.0

Over the past 3 years, a reduction has occurred in the percentage of pupils where Welsh is spoken at home.

Gwynedd FPI Performance	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
% Pupils who achieved the FPI (Full cohort)	83.0	82.8	85.2	86.8	86.8	86.6
% Pupils who achieved Welsh Cohort	87.6	86.9	89.4	88.4	88.7	88.3
% Pupils who achieved English Cohort	47.4	63.6	64.3	77.8	52.2	57.9
% Pupils who achieved the FPI (Without including the English Cohort)	83.6	83.2	85.9	87.0	87.4	87.1

Acquiring Language

There is no definite answer to how much time learning a new language should take. Learning a new language is dependent on very many elements such as;

- age-group
- ability or talent to learn a new language
- motivation to learn
- how similar is the language to the first language
- if the language is a minority language
- how many hours in a day
- week and years they come into contact with the language
- context of the lessons
- quality of teachers
- resources
- opportunities to practice
- parents attitude.

It is often recommended, that at least between 600 and 10,000 hours are required, with 1000 being optimistically suggested as a possibility.

Difficulties where assessment is held through the medium of Welsh:

It is apparent:

- That Gwynedd Language Policy, (different from the other Counties), is firm in that the pupils must be assessed through Welsh at the Foundation Phase, despite the difficulties that arise. It could therefore be argued that the policy places the Schools at a disadvantage and puts additional pressure compared to many schools in other Counties, where there is the option to assess through Welsh or English.
- That over a third of the County's pupils do not speak Welsh, and for many English is an additional language.

- That the majority of the pupils are assessed through the medium of Welsh although it is a second and sometimes a third language for them. It therefore poses a considerable challenge for Gwynedd schools to ensure that outcomes/standards in Welsh at the Foundation Phase, are high.
- Sometimes, that all staff members do not adhere to the school's language policy and turn to English with non-Welsh pupils. This leads to inconsistency.
- That 'small' schools results are hugely impacted by cohort number and does not truly reflect the work that is done there. e.g. 5 y2 pupils equivalent to 20% each. Therefore, if one pupil did not reach the target, the FPI would be 80%.
- That children for whom Welsh is a second language require much more time to reach the expected outcome, and that children who are latecomers require much more support to reach the expected outcomes.
- That assistants are no longer used, as in the past, to target intervention groups due to lack of funding.
- That the schools do not receive outside support for Welsh until KS2. Y3 latecomers and on, can attend the Language Centre during their first term at the school, if there is room. Sometimes, if there is room, some schools can make an offer for their Y2 pupils to attend, but that is subject to the school's location within the County. This has a positive impact.
- KS2 pupils then receive after care on their return to school. It is felt that it would be of huge benefit if this crucial service was available to target FP pupils as well as the Junior department, or that at least they are supported by an external officer during the period prior to Y3. A unit's suitability would of course depend on the maturity of the individual pupil to attend.
- Where there is a 4 year old class, that the senior pupils have an important role to develop the younger pupils language skills, however, where there is a class of the same age, with the majority non-Welsh speakers, it is a very high, daily challenge. There is also little time available to reach the expected standards.
- Where pupils have very intensive ALN, it is very difficult for them to have a positive impact on end of FP language results.
- Lack of consistency in assessing NEWBES- Schools include NEWBES assessments in their data and this sometimes has a negative impact on their end of stage results and on the LEA's results;
- Schools assess latecomers (Arrive at the school on or after January 1st) in Welsh and they also perhaps previously in an English education system. According to the Welsh Government, the schools are entitled to assess them through the language that best reflects ability. However, if the option is to assess them through English – but the language in which the child is taught is Welsh, does the child receive the required education so that he/she achieves the objective? However, if the teaching is through the medium of English, this then undermines/impairs the language spoken by the rest of the class.
- Examples have been seen of overseas families returning home to see their families for about two months and then returning to school. However, nothing can change this, it has a negative impact on overall outcomes, but especially on the development of Welsh.
- The Schools have no impact over the pupils use of Welsh outside the school.
- That non-Welsh speaking parents more often than not are supportive of the development of Welsh, especially due to their understanding of the County's Language policy expectations. However, some schools have more work than others to gain their collaboration. This involves much investment in time and staff.
- The need to target Welsh in the pre-school establishments as well – e.g. Cynllun Croesi'r Bont. (Estyn approves the plan).
- The need to promote further collaboration between the pre-school establishments and the schools.

Implemented Strategies for Improvement

Seen:

- That staff's commitment to develop successful strategies, have had a positive impact on the outcomes over the years.
- Where there are enough Welsh speaking pupils/enough staff available to support groups and individuals, that teaching through the medium of Welsh is not a problem for the schools.

- That pupils immersion in Welsh is a huge success.
- Effective use of schemes such as Aled Afal/ Tric a Chlic/ Trugs, to develop pupils skills and ensure effective establishment of language patterns.
- That schools regularly assess and track the pupils development, with for instance, eg 'assessment and setting the next target pages' in pupils books, so that the pupil and staff are aware of the next steps and expectations.
- That use was made of staff specialization to share information and good practice not only at their own school but externally. This certainly adds to the success of teaching and learning.
- That the staff purposefully jointly plan across classes/school, using structures and plans that motivate the pupils and ensures progression from one year to the next.
- That the schools commitment to the Language Charter's success promotes pupils and parents commitment to the development of Welsh. Hopefully, it will have a further impact on future outcomes.
- Close collaboration between the schools and the parents to ensure the pupils educational development and ensure support. e.g. parents evenings on e.g. Tric a chlic/ reading cafe/ lead the parents towards Welsh classes/share Language Charter materials. Schools see the advantage of being able to fall back on the County's Language policy.
- With the Welsh Government's emphasis on ensuring that every County's 'Welsh Strategy' is ambitious, that the remaining schools in Wales, in future, will have to make further moves along the language continuum. When that occurs, schools in Gwynedd will be in a very strong position, as they are already at the upper end of the language continuum.

Next possible steps:

- Consistency of entry to Language Centre for the Foundation Phase.
- An additional language centre to meet the need.
- Peripatetic officer to support new FP pupils to Welsh/Welsh and English before and after attending centre.
- Officer's support to target absences.
- Appropriate and timely additional support for the ALN pupils and the borderline pupils.
- County support for NEWBES parents so that they have an opportunity to learn both languages and thus support the pupils/school's work.
- Ensure consistent appropriate use of Government's instructions in NEWBES and Latecomers assessment.

Difficulties where assessment is through English:

Seen:

- High percentage of pupils with 'English as an additional language' and no County provision to target their needs whilst at the Foundation Phase. KS2 is a constant success.
- Lack of time to establish the new language prior to the assessment phase.
- Inadequate number of Assistants to target daily language requirements at the school.
- When there is a linguistic lack, it is sometimes difficult to ensure that there are not also additional educational needs. Timely specialist support required to ensure effective appropriate provision.

Implemented Strategies for Improvement

Seen:

- Schools internal strategies in place regularly, that target needs as well as possible.
- Collaborate with similar schools, to observe good practice and moderation.
- Use Assistants to support the pupils language needs but this has an impact on FP pedagogy as there is insufficient staff to target and supervise.
- Prepare additional internal support when pupils return following lengthy periods of absences.

- Parir parents with other parents of the same language but who possess good English skills. This develops the parents language skills and their ability to collaborate with the schools and assist their children.

Next possible steps:

- Provide additional support at the school for EAL pupils.
- EAL services' timely co-operation.

Social Deterioration/low baseline

Difficulties:

- More and more children arrive at the Nursery and Reception classes with weak basic and social skills. A great deal of time spent working with the children to develop these expected skills that were common a few years ago.
- A high percentage of pupils attend school lacking the expected toileting and self-care skills, unable to use a knife and fork properly, and with little ability to socialize and converse.
- A higher percentage of children with lack of engagement requirements, and this impairs the flow of the class, the teaching and learning.
- A high percentage have no recognition of letters or numbers, no idea how to use a pencil, or how to handle a book.
- More children possess very weak oracy and listening skills, and many have difficulty in sitting, listening, focussing and learning.
- Many of the pupils know how to play with an ipad and mobile phone games but no idea how to sing and recite simple nursery rhymes and songs.
- More social problems/conflict/quarrelling between parents/ quarrelling in the homes, that has a negative impact on the children and their relationship with others at the school.
- Social services have more input than previously due to social difficulties.
- Some parents have a negative mindset towards education. Much more social problems/conflict/quarrelling between parents/quarrelling at home/that has a negative impact on the children and on their relationship with others at the school.
- More parents possess weak parenting skills.

Implemented Strategies for Improvement

Seen:

- Much time invested in improving the expected basic requirements, at times at the expense of the requirements of the rest of the class and curriculum requirements.
- Staff spend time providing nurturing structures/activities to undo the negative impacts that impair individuals behaviour.
- Strategies such as nurturing Groups, Circle time sessions, / Caleb Time / Ysgol Dina / friends /drop in sessions – voice concern / Talk About/ calming down areas - continuous modelling/staff make positive comments/reward systems/home –school contact, implemented.
- Spend much time and human resources to develop a positive relationship with parents, to ensure effective co-operation. Activities held such as 'fun for the family', Welsh lessons, family Signature, Numicon evenings, and often grant funding has to be used to fund this. This of course implies that less is directly invested on the pupils.
- However, schools note that it is pleasing to notice a positive change in parents co-operation when time, effort and resources is invested in them.

Next possible steps:

- Earlier intervention occurs through co-operation between the Health and Education Services to train parents on schools expected requirements.
- Provide support for schools to deal with parents who pose problems. This often places much pressure on staff and is time consuming.
- Support for schools who have several 'English as additional language' parents to have an active role in their child's education.
- Continuity for ABC centre for Nursery and Reception classes.

Additional Educational Needs

Gwynedd FPI Performance	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
% Pupils who achieved the FPI (full Cohort)	83.0	82.8	85.2	86.8	86.8	86.6
% Pupils who achieved the FPI (Not including R/SA+/SA) pupils	94.2	94.2	95.0	97.3	96.5	96.3
% Pupils who achieved FPI (R/SA+/SA only)	51.3	51.5	53.0	57.9	57.3	57.5
% Pupils who achieved the FPI (SA only)	64.2	61.7	68.1	71.4	68.3	71.9

Difficulties

Seen:

- An increasing number of ALN pupils at the schools, and although the schools are wholly inclusive, these requirements have an impact on FP results.
- Although additional support is provided to support ALN pupils, (by the Education Department, Health Department, or the school), and although the children make good/expected progress against their baseline and personal targets, this progress, more often than not, is insufficient to impact the expected outcomes.
- Due to the complex needs of the referral process, LEA ALN Department do not intervene early enough and often, the crucial early years go by without the pupils receiving the additional required support. The schools must deal as effectively as possible with the difficulties and outcomes, until additional support is available. This can place much strain on staff and other pupils.
- Although the process has accelerated since Gwynedd and Mon ALN Strategy was adopted, due to a lack of units for pupils in the Reception Year, several pupils may for a period be in the mainstream class without the appropriate level of support to meet their requirements.
- Concern as the Staff and Parents feel frustrated due to the increasing gap between the performance of the pupils and their peers when awaiting additional support.
- Pupils at the schools have a broad spectrum of intensive needs. At times, even with a 1 to 1 assistant's support, these needs have a negative impact on the class effective running, on the teaching, the learning and thus impacts the rest of the pupils and the outcomes.
- Concern that many 1 to 1 assistants have not received specialist training therefore they lack the ready skills to support the pupils from the outset.
- Schools express concern about ineffective targeting for borderline pupils and that investing more regular support for these pupils would have a positive impact on FP results.
- Although schools purposefully target, because the support staff often support the intensive ALN pupils, they are unable to target the borderline pupils as frequently as they would like.
- That a reduction in schools budget has led to a reduction in the number of FP assistants in general. The schools cannot maintain the level of additional support to target specific groups. Due to lack of funding and staff, provision varies from school to school.

- Some schools require a specialized centre to support FP pupils who have more intensive specific needs e.g. behavioural difficulties, / speech impairment, where they can receive short-term specialist support, followed by after-care support on their return to school. This would not only ensure specialist provision, but also enable the schools to further target the borderline pupils.
- Concern that there is an 'ABC' centre for pre-school pupils, there is however, no follow-up to this service for FP pupils.
- Although there is purposeful planning, it is felt that a specialist officer needs to provide more practical support in the classroom. This would have a greater impact. The advisory teachers who directly worked with the pupils are sorely missed.
- That the requirements of pupils 'who come and go' have a negative impact on class requirements and that additional support is required to target those needs. Much time and resources invested but inconsistency in their length of stay at the school.
- Concern about lack of support for pupils for whom 'English is an additional language'. At times, it is difficult to discover whether additional needs or lack of language understanding cause difficulty.

Implemented strategies to surmount.

Seen:

- That the strategies implemented, - detailed targeting/ regular support, ensures that over 50% of the ALN pupils achieve the expected outcome and they also perform above their target.
- That several effective programmes are used throughout the schools such as: Black Sheep, activities from the book 'Language Builder – Elklan', Restart, Tric a Chlic, Numicon Programme, SAFMEDS, Headsprout, Various Reading and comprehension, Talk About, Might Moe, Anger management, Ffrindiau Ffeind, Access to the nurture groups, activities that stem from the Boxall scheme.
- That schools target the pupils requirements from the Nursery class upwards, (this is inconsistent in every school) planning beforehand to ensure support within the school, investigate to obtain new ideas, and willing to adapt as required.
- That there are robust procedures to identify individuals needs at an early stage and provide supportive robust interventions and strategies.
- That there are electronic systems to track every pupil's progress and this allows staff to identify and respond to any underperformance.
- Where there is finance in reserve/grants available, it is used by the schools to employ additional staff to target specific groups of pupils daily. There is however, huge concern as this funding is reducing. Where funding is not available, the schools are often reliant on volunteers, and this does not always meet the need.
- As regards 'more able and gifted' pupils, that there are robust and purposeful strategies in place for them, and because of the nature of the pupils, they can work more independently, respond to challenges, and achieve the higher outcomes.
- That schools plan extended experiences and opportunities and are willing to adapt teaching methods/structures to achieve the higher outcomes.
- That GwE challenges schools results. The schools must ensure that they have robust evidence that clearly shows why the pupil cannot achieve the expected outcomes. Likewise, Headteachers challenge their staff to ensure that their assessment is robust, and that their support structures meet the need.
- That a great deal of time and human resources are invested to support the pupils who 'come and go', but frequently, the support that the schools can provide is inadequate to ensure that pupils achieve the expected outcomes within the available time. This then impacts the school FPI and County. County support to target individuals would be hugely beneficial.

Next possible steps

- Reduce County ALN structure to ensure more timely specialist support.

- A 'Bank' of County specialist assistants to support ALN pupils at the schools who have received appropriate training.
- The county provides an officer to target the 'borderline' pupils regularly, and thus have a positive impact on the outcomes.
- Establish specialist centres for specific difficulties and after care service within schools to follow.
- County officer to provide timely/regular support and for a specific period, the 'come and go' pupils.

Staffing

Difficulties:

Seen:

- That the schools most valuable resource to raise standards at the Foundation Phase is the good/excellent and permanent staff, who effectively collaborate to plan, prepare and ensure follow-up and consistency. This has a positive impact on the expected outcomes and higher. It is however, observed, that a lack of funding leads to staff having fewer opportunities to attend training, visit good practices to other schools, and that this is important to ensure improved standards. Teachers and assistants have very high expectations.
- That Headteachers have to be very creative when facing cuts in order to retain experienced staff and thus ensure standards. This often puts additional pressure on individuals.
- Lack of staff and funding to support additional projects that would have a positive impact on outcomes.
- At the start of the Foundation Phase, the staff: pupil ratio was 1:8 in the Nursery and Reception class, and 1:15 in Y1 and 2. By now, due to lack of funding, the ratios are not as good. Some schools see this as very difficult especially when they try to continue to comply with FP pedagogy.
- Following cuts, that a school must discover funding to fund the best practice. Not being able to maintain the previous provision standards gives cause for concern. This is very frustrating for them.
- In some Y1 and Y2 classes, there are 30 pupils with 1 teacher/1 Assistant. Prepared zones are seen within the class/school/in the outside area, however, as the class does not open to these outside areas, it is felt that all the areas cannot be put to best use, to enrich and extend experiences. There are not enough supervisory staff.
- Lack of funding over the years has had an obvious impact on reduction in Assistant numbers at the schools. This implies that needs/groups cannot be targeted as effectively.
- Lack of specialization amongst 1 to 1 assistants can impair running of the classroom when they lack the effective and necessary skills to work with the pupils. This leads to lack of fair play for the child in their care and to the rest of the class.
- When new staff in schools and/or new strategies are implemented, this can take time to bed down, and sometimes, patience is required before changes are seen.
- Difficulty to obtain supply teachers during staff absences. Schools tend to use well-known supply teachers as their work is good, are experienced, familiar with the children and school arrangements. There is greater consistency and less impairment on running of the classroom. However, these teachers are not always available and there is a reliance on less experienced/able. It is seen that there is a need to ensure a professional development pathway for supply teachers as with other teachers so as to ensure consistency.
- That this also applies when assistants are absent and it is very difficult to fill this gap. This of course impacts pupil groups targeting strategies and classroom arrangements.
- An inadequate number of County FP courses have recently been held for teachers and assistants. Require more stimulating courses.
- Concern as to lack of specific training for non-Welsh speaking teachers and assistants in the County. (Despite recent progress through Regional Collaboration with GwE)
- Concern that the messages shared are not always consistent.

Implemented Strategies for Improvement

Seen:

- Effective collaboration between staff/Headteacher/senior management team creating an effective team that ensures that everybody is proficient in requirements and that specialization and information are shared.
- Appropriate planning by a teacher to address all pupils requirements. Track progress to challenge pupils and support lower ability pupils.
- That best possible use is made of available human resources to support pupil groups.
- Provide creative and enriching experiences for the pupils.
- Assistants and staff closely collaborate to provide the best possible education for all pupils.
- Thorough classroom arrangements and a pleasant environment and ethos.
- FP staff have a robust understanding of FP pedagogy.
- Staff ensure that FP pupils receive engaging and stimulating experiences indoors and outdoors.
- That non-specialist headteachers attend appropriate training, dependent on their staff's specialization to ensure that they are aware of the requirements and spend time observing in the classes. This leads to effective collaboration.
- That staff receive appropriate development to ensure successful teaching and learning and that the good practices are shared with the remaining staff.
- Schools develop pupils to become more independent when there is no additional staff available. This enables more pupils to achieve the higher outcomes in the personal development aspect.
- That investment in targeting purposeful training for staff ensures support of the highest standard (when use, feedback, evaluation and impact assessment is made of the training) and that the entire staff are aware of the requirements.
- Not many staff changes and this ensures consistency.
- Where there were Non-Welsh speaking staff, that schools invest in external training and co-operate with schools who have similar needs.
- Schools collaborate to share ideas and good practice due to lack of funding to appropriately target training.
- Staff jointly discuss/ shadow one another to develop specific skills.

Next possible steps:

- Safeguard funding to fund staff:pupils ratios at the Foundation Phase to enable them to consistently effectively target.
- Provide purposeful training for class and 1 to 1 assistants.
- Provide appropriate professional development for Supply Teachers.
- Provide purposeful training for Non-Welsh speaking staff.
- Provide a bank of staff who have received appropriate training.

Free School Meals

FPI Performance Gwynedd	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
% Pupils who achieved the FPI (Full Cohort)	83.0	82.8	85.2	86.8	86.8	86.6
% Pupils who achieved the FPI (Not including FSM pupils)	85.3	85.3	87.9	88.7	88.6	89.0

% Pupils who achieved the FPI (FSM only)	70.9	70.2	71.0	75.4	76.5	74.0
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Difficulties:

Seen:

- Fluctuation from school to schools with an over-lap between the ALN pupils, borderline and FSM pupils at some schools, and examples of higher outcomes in others.
- Lack of additional staff to target the pupils needs regularly and consistently, impacts the outcomes.
- Pupils requirements depend from time to time on their social background and this then impacts the required intervention. Concern as to why there is no staff with appropriate expertise available to adequately meet these requirements.
- At small schools, where there are often fewer FSM pupils, there is no additional funding through grants to invest in strategies that may impact all pupils standards.

Implemented Strategies for Improvement

Seen:

- Schools invest grant funding to ensure effective targeting to enable FSM pupils to reach their personal targets and as seen, over 70% of them are consistent and achieve the expected outcomes.
- Schools have high and challenging expectations and provide experiences so that the child has the best opportunity to achieve his full potential.
- Robust strategies implemented that ensure an improvement in low baseline, e.g. Dyfal donc/ Aled Afal/ Big Numbers.
- Where there are high numbers of FSM pupils, grants are provided that enable schools to implement several strategies or employ e.g. additional Assistant to develop the Basic Skills. These strategies impact the entire school and not only the FSM pupils.

Next possible steps

- Practical support when there is no funding available in schools – for staff/parents.
- Opportunities to visit good practice schools to share ideas and develop practical strategies.

Comparison Boys/Girls

FPI Performance Gwynedd	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
% Boys	78.5	78.2	80.6	81.6	82.0	83.0
% Girls	87.5	87.3	89.8	92.1	91.7	91.0

Difficulties:

Seen:

- At small schools, small numbers in the cohort makes it difficult to evaluate the difference.
- Examples of lack of purposeful planning to target specific needs of Boys/girls and need to further develop the aspects/needs.
- That the pupils often perform in accordance with their ability in the specific fields but that the schools have to continue to target to justify the results.

- When schools target boys requirements, the girls benefit as well. Consequently, the difference in the outcomes persists.

Implemented Strategies for Improvement

Seen:

- Much investment made over the past few years in strategies that are effective with boys and girls, e.g. Pie Corbett methods/iaith ar daith/ various areas to promote free writing/use of IT.
- Effective strategies as observed in the above table.
- That FP arrangements in particular address the boys requirements, and that there is an effective balance between the focus work and the continual provision.
- Purposeful targeting implemented to ensure support when required.
- Appropriate strategies and challenge in place.
- Pupils have the freedom to select their personal challenge. This often appeals to the boys.
- Schools ensure that themes are targeted to ensure all pupils interest and that they are part of the planning.
- Areas in place that attract the entire cohort.

Next Possible Steps:

- Continue to target within SDP/class requirements/individual pupils to ensure consistent provision.
- Hold courses when effective new strategies become apparent.
- Promote good practice and enable staff to visit.

Assessment methods

Difficulties:

Seen:

- That past messages have been inconsistent and that this has had a negative impact on schools outcomes.
- Assessment structures vary from school to school – Incerts/professional view, that has possibly led to inconsistency.
- Possibly, that teachers assess too rigidly due to excessive expectations/challenging. It is observed that FP moderation across the County, regionally and within the school 'family' would assist in this respect.
- The need for more guidance for next year with a change in the outcomes.
- Concern that the entire staff do not receive assessment training, especially as Assistants have such a crucial role in the process.
- That all supply teachers do not understand FP assessment requirements. This is essential especially during long-term absences.

Implemented Strategies for Improvement

Seen:

- That Headteachers are confident in their Y2 teachers ability to assess pupils in accordance with FP requirements. They challenge their judgements to ensure robustness. Teachers stand their ground due to their sound understanding of the requirements.
- Collaboration and joint reliance between the headteachers/senior management team/FP departments.
- Headteachers have received training in assessment at the FP and that this has enabled them to challenge the results.
- FP requirements a prominent feature of the schools development Plans.
- Teachers and assistants co-operate to assess. Team work crucial to ensure full assessment and consistent judgement.

- GwE challenges schools to ensure effectiveness of their assessment methods and that Schools must have firm evidence to support their judgements.
- Where required, Headteachers ensure appropriate training for their staff to ensure consistency.
- That staff as well as the Headteacher are accountable for the data and thus must ensure that there are firm strategies to address identified needs.
- That there is an acknowledgement by GwE when there is an underlying 'story' behind some pupils lower results.
- Regular assessment by schools and provide the Headteacher and their colleagues with regular feedback.
- Schools use Incerts to track development of pupils and target groups, to plan and set the next targets and identify gaps that require targeting. Schools use various internal assessment plans as well as Incerts.
- An emphasis placed on data analysis and purposeful use of it to target pupils. This provides input to the schools development plan and appropriate plans are established for effective targeting.
- GwE Training has been of benefit to confirm staff's understanding of assessment requirements, and to ensure that they bring their professional views to bear on final judgement instead of relying only on Incerts.
- Consistency where informal moderation has been established at the Foundation Phase.

Possible implementation measures

- Ensure that Gwe level of challenge is consistent throughout the schools.
- Promote moderation across the FP to ensure consistency.
- Ensure appropriate training and assessment for the entire County staff including supply staff and assistants.

Conclusion

Main recommendations:

- **Develop plans to promote the Welsh language in the pre-school establishments.**
- **Ensure a long-term improvement plan through GwE clearly focussing on improving Foundation phase outcomes. This plan to be divided into the 6 outcomes.**
- **Promote Foundation Phase moderation within and outside the County.**
- **Seek to safeguard the staff ratios at the Foundation Phase.**
- **Review and adapt the ALN provision at a school level for the Foundation Phase, so as to ensure timely and purposeful support and targeting from the Nursery class up to Year 2.**
- **ALNandl service training programme to specifically focus on foundation phase pupils.**
- **Review provision for pupils where English is an Additional Language.**
- **Further develop appropriate training for all staff members who work at the foundation phase.**

The Headteachers stated that they understood that financial constraints had been placed on the LEA as had been imposed on them, and that this impacted on what could be achieved.