



Annual Report

Education Department

2020-21



EDUCATION ANNUAL REPORT 2020-21.

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CONTEXT

THE VISION OF THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT: Gwynedd children and young people attaining the highest standards in order to maintain the language, culture and economy locally.

PURPOSE: *Promote the achievement and well-being of Gwynedd's children and young people by ensuring effective governance, leadership and management of our schools.*

SERVICES WE PROVIDE: Raising Standards, Support Services, School Staff Salaries and Contracts, Teachers' Pensions, School Catering, School Cleaning, School Transport, Health and Safety, School Admissions, Support for Governors, Financial Support for Schools, Information and Communication Technology, Data Unit, Human Resources Support for Schools and the Education Department, Attendance and Behaviour, Education Welfare Service, Additional Learning Needs, Child Protection, Leadership and Management, Training, the Welsh language.

WHAT DOES THE DEPARTMENT DO?

- Support children and young people to attain the highest standards.
- Ensure that pupils with Additional Learning Needs receive the most suitable support.
- Ensure that pupils with emotional and behavioural needs are fully included within Gwynedd schools.
- Ensure that pupils within Gwynedd schools are safe.
- Provide appropriate support services for the Gwynedd Education Service.
- Develop leaders and support the workforce in the schools.
- Support for school governing bodies to enable them to act as effective governors.

In 2020-21 there were 80 primary schools, 13 secondary schools, 1 All-through School, 1 Lifelong Learning School and two Special Schools in Gwynedd.

The exceptional period of the pandemic again in 2020-21 means that the Education Department is not in a position to report on its key performance measures, such as learner' attendance, exclusions and academic achievements.

In his written statement (dated June 2021), the Education Minister confirmed that *'the decision to suspend Key Stage 4 and sixth form performance measures will extend into the 2021/22 academic year. Qualification award data will not be used to report attainment outcomes at school, local authority or regional consortium level and should not be used to hold schools to account for learner outcomes.'*

THE WELSH LANGUAGE

Purpose

- Ensure that Gwynedd's children receive Welsh-medium education and have opportunities to use Welsh in their daily lives.

Good features:

- **Welsh in Education Strategic Plan**
Set clear expectations for the Department and our schools for Welsh as a subject, as a medium of teaching and learning, and as a medium of socialization by producing and consulting on a new statutory document 'The Welsh in Education Strategic Plan' (WESP) which will replace the current document in September 2022. In accordance with the regulation of the School Standards and Organization Act Wales (2013) and the Welsh Government's 'Welsh 2050 – Million Speakers' targets.
- **Language Centres**
Continue to ensure quality immersion education provision to enable primary and secondary newcomers to benefit fully from the Welsh-medium and bilingual education system in Gwynedd.
- **Language Charter & Secondary Welsh Language Strategy**
Promote and increase the use of Welsh among young people within the curriculum and socially, by leading on the Language Charter and Secondary Language Strategy in order to increase children's social use of Welsh in primary and secondary schools.

We have been working with secondary schools to draw up individual action plans to increase the opportunities for children and young people to use Welsh in formal and informal settings, and have paid particular attention to the language medium of provision across the curriculum at Phase 2, Key Stage 3,4 and 5.

- **Additional Learning Needs**
All pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) have access to Welsh-medium services. Welsh-medium and bilingual provisions and services are available for the full range and variety of ALN.
- **Schools Language Policy**
We have introduced the Schools Language Policy to emphasize our general principles that:
 - all the county's schools act in a way that contributes to the aims and objectives of the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan, to increase and improve the planning for Welsh-medium education provision.
 - every school fosters positive attitudes among the pupils and the workforce towards the language, creating pride and increasing the use of the language inside and outside the classroom.

Following the re-introduction of the Schools Language Policy, overall performance in Welsh is consistently good across the school system.

- **Respond to the impact of the lockdown periods on the Welsh language**

We have identified that the main concerns in Gwynedd as a result of the lockdown periods are learners' social use of Welsh, their willingness to speak Welsh, and the standard of the oral language patterns.

The Language Strategy Co-ordinator and the Language Charter Co-ordinator co-operate action plans with the schools to respond to these concerns about oral skills and to facilitate any support for them.

- **Language skills of the education workforce**

We have paid particular attention to supporting the language skills of the workforce in an attempt to facilitate the future of Welsh- medium provision across the curriculum at Key Stages 3, 4 and 5 by piloting the Welsh Government's Welsh in Work for Teachers pilot with one school teaching staff secondary in the county.

Plans to self-assess and support the language skills of the education workforce have been implemented in the county's secondary schools. Commission and conduct training on the principles of language immersion in the Foundation phase.

Priorities for the next period:

- Continue to set clear expectations for our schools for Welsh as a subject and as a medium of teaching and learning through the introduction and implementation of a new 10-year statutory document 'Welsh in Education Strategic Plan' in September 2022.
- Expand and develop the Gwynedd Immersion System to provide quality up-to-date immersion education to all newcomers to the county.
- Plan a series of language immersion principles training workshops for use by all teachers in the county.
- Continue to support learners that need extra support to increase their confidence and skills in the Welsh language.
- Continue to support our schools in completing and implementing their Language Charter and/or Secondary Language Strategy plans to promote and increase Children's informal use of Welsh.
- Continue to support teachers and classroom assistants to develop their skills and confidence in Welsh.
- Monitor the linguistic categories of schools and the medium of education provision to ensure continuity of pupils' Welsh medium education as they transfer from KS2 to KS4 and beyond.

ADDITIONAL LEARNING NEEDS AND INCLUSION

The purpose of the ALN&I service is to:

- Support the development of ALN provision of quality in educational settings.
- Identify additional needs early on in the child's life and ensure appropriate intervention;
- Ensure early and appropriate intervention when problems emerge;
- Work in a more integrated and multi-agency manner, sharing information and undertaking joint planning provision for learners with ALN;
- Ensure that the skills and understanding of the workforce are developed continuously;
- Ensure clear communication with children, young people and families that receive provision.
- The above contributes in conjunction with the education providers, our compliance with the Additional Learning Needs Legislation (2018) which came into effect in September 2021.

The joint partnership with Anglesey Council exists since September 2017.

Good features:

- An electronic Individual Development Plan System has now been in use by all schools for two years, following a successful pilot period. The system facilitates the work of schools and the service significantly, and continues to be developed further.
- The Nurturing Schools project is still operational and demonstrates positive results within the secondary and primary sectors, as well as developments in the area which include training ELSA teaching assistants. (Emotional Literacy Support Assistants).
- The use of a new Criteria System has been extended further in order to enable reporting on children's progress on a wider level, as holistic methods are required to show the progress of children and young people with ALN.
- The number of tribunals remains very low, with tribunals involving provision within Gwynedd schools leading to favourable outcomes for the Authority (i.e. confirming that appropriate provision is in place).
- Schools' inclusivity indicators continue to highlight that Gwynedd schools are inclusive although there are definite challenges around this due to the pandemic – exclusion rates, the number of pupils who receive alternative provision and the numbers being home-schooled voluntarily, and attendance, all paint a very inclusive picture in comparison with nationwide figures.
- The pandemic has been extremely challenging for learners in general, but especially learners with ALN and I. During the Estyn Thematic review of the provision offered to vulnerable learners, the work of the team as praised in the context of the support provided to schools, parents and learners.

PRIORITIES FOR THE NEXT PERIOD:

- With the change in Legislation coming into effect gradually over a three year period (up to September 2024) we are prioritising the following:
 - Continue to develop and build on consistency of provision. This includes reviewing the method of allocating ALN funds to schools in order to ensure the best provision for learners with ALN.
 - Continue to develop the quality of Individual Learning Plans and put learners at the centre of the process.
 - Ensure support for education providers to respond to the new requirements of the legislation.

- Continue to strengthen and simplify the 0-3 years and 16-25 pathway provision, and respond to the new requirements for these age groups.
 - Strengthen the multi-agency co-operation to ensure effective provision.
- The services will also continue to prioritise the following in order to strengthen the provision:
 - Ways of tracking the progress and effectiveness of interventions within the on-line IDP, using the method or reporting progress and revised criteria.
 - Strengthen the provision model for maintaining behaviour within the secondary sector.
 - Clear communication plan for schools around the moderation panels processes and allocation of funding.
- Continue to respond effectively to the requirements in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

SAFEGUARDING

Purpose

- Safeguard the well-being of children and young people.
- Ensure that every child feels safe in the Council's schools and educational centres.
- Ensure that everyone that works in education in the county follows the Wales Safeguarding Children Procedure 2020.

Good features:

- Gwynedd schools have received information about the new Wales Safeguarding Children Procedures that were published by Welsh Government in April 2020. These new procedures were presented digitally in the form of an AP. Key staff from the Department and Gwynedd schools have received a foundation level training on the procedures by NSPCC Wales via an agreement with the North Wales Safeguarding Board.
- The department has ensured attendance at every Part 5 meeting where allegations have been made against staff within Gwynedd schools. The numbers have reduced during 2019-20, with a very small number directly involving staff from the Education Department.
- The Education Department has created a new training pack in Welsh for Designated Persons in schools and educational settings in co-operation with the Safeguarding in Schools Group, Welsh Government. The course has been presented in Gwynedd in 2020 and after evaluating and receiving feedback on the suitability of the presentation it will be presented on a regular basis in 2021.
- The Education Department and the Learning and Development service within the Council have been collaborating to develop a training pack in the field of domestic abuse. The pack 'Asking and Implementing' has been jointly developed and has been presented monthly to staff within the Education Department during 2020 and 2021.
- Training on taking positive action in response to inappropriate sexualised behaviour (Brook) was provided for primary and secondary schools during 2020 by the new Emerald service, Children's Services, Gwynedd Council.
- A high percentage of staff within the Education Department and staff within schools have collaborated with staff from Children's Services to receive training in the field of improving the department's practice in preparation for Case Conferences and Core Groups. This scheme continues to be introduced in 2021 and 2022.

Priorities for the next period:

- Ensure that everybody that works in the education field in Gwynedd has received our new foundation level training package for Designated Persons in schools in response to the new guidelines on safeguarding children in education.
- Re-establish the procedure of annual quality assurance to monitor visits to every school in Gwynedd following the lockdowns in 2020 and 2021.
- Provide "Ask and Implement" courses for all education and school staff. This program is currently progressing well in Gwynedd.
- Ensure that the safeguarding policy by all Gwynedd schools is in accordance with the new Wales Safeguarding Children Procedures document 'Keeping Learners Safe' 2020.

- Ensure that schools are better prepared to contribute effectively in case conferences, core group meetings, and Section 5 meetings in accordance with the new Wales Safeguarding Children Procedures

EARLY YEARS

The Early Years Unit plans to ensure the Authority fulfils the statutory requirement of securing a nursery place for every child from the term after his/her third birthday. From September 2021, nursery education provision is being offered at 58 settings across the county (two of which is temporarily closed at present). All settings have now enlisted with Mudiad Meithrin and are monitored regularly.

Good features:

- Foundation Phase Support Teachers have delivered training to all settings on:
 - Homelink bags – physical literacy
 - Foundation Phase principles, planning, assessment, the Profile and self-evaluation (new Leaders)
 - Foundation Phase principles, planning, assessment, the Profile and self-evaluation (Assistants – optional)
 - Senior teachers have attended Ffordd Gwynedd training.
- The Early Years ALN Coordinator has delivered training to all settings on: ALN&I (the impending code) to internal staff.
- All settings that have been subject to joint inspections (CIW/Estyn) since January 2019 have received a good report for each theme, with the content of some reports pointing to aspects of excellence.
- The arrangements for the Quality Group were reviewed and made largely virtual.
- Settings have begun to create a One Page Profile for every child with ALN, and following the new arrangements attached to the new legislation.
- Teaching Advisors took part in a workshop to present effective resources for supporting the needs of young children in all settings.
- A new childcare and nursery education setting has opened under the care of Ffalabalam Nursery at Ysgol y Garnedd, Bangor with capital funds from the Childcare Offer.
- Good practice continues to be shared between Flying Start teachers and teachers in the Foundation Phase.
- A Senior Foundation Phase Teacher has inspected another setting, and is going to carry out an engagement visit at two other settings before the end of 2021.
- The team has shared duties and areas of expertise and this became embedded during the period.
- Ten settings have committed to working on the Mudiad Meithrin Crossing the Rubicon scheme.
- Most settings now make use of the revised planning and assessment sheets.
- HWB site for Gwynedd Teaching Advisors has been established.
- Settings now familiarizing themselves with the use of planning sheets that allow them to track the child and record observations that indicate the teaching that has taken place.
- During the pandemic, the teachers have adapted to maintain virtual placements. Over the period it has been possible to share good practice, information on training, offer guidelines for safer e-opening – by looking at the welfare of staff, children and parents and offering support in relation to risk assessments.
- Regular contact has been made with families of Gwynedd's ALN children during the lockdown period to give them support due to the closure of a significant number of nursery settings.
- Packs of activities were made during the lockdown period for the settings to offer parents at home and these were distributed as an idea of the day on the Gwynedd Family Hub /

Facebook pages. Extra home link bags have been produced on various themes such as Small World and Music.

- The Gwynedd Advisory Teachers' HWB site is established but there are struggles with login permits.
- A laptop and ipad were distributed to all nursery settings.
- Covid recovery capital grants have been distributed to 4 non-maintained provisions.
- Higher cost support grants due to Covid were distributed to 31 providers.
- Income loss support grants and self-isolation costs distributed to 3 providers.
- An Assistant Officer has transferred from Mudiad Meithrin to the Early Years team.

Priorities for the next period:

- Further developing the team's areas of expertise including holding training and sharing good practice virtually to the sector i.e. physical literacy.
- Nursery education providers to come back to normal following the pandemic and promoting the importance of nursery education as early firm foundation with Gwynedd families.
- Begin to prepare settings for the introduction of the Curriculum for Wales – a Curriculum for Life by introducing the terminology of the four purposes.
- Introduce the 'enabling steps' in the spring when the document will have been published.
- Continue to provide settings with updates on the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018.
- Continue to support the work of the WG capital investments.

EDUCATION MODERNISATION TEAM

The work of modernising education in the County continues to successfully contribute to the education system and has attracted over £69m since 2012. The Education Modernisation Team is responsible for ensuring that planning work to provide education aligns with the County's education needs for the future.

The Programme is very ambitious in aiming to transform the way children and young people are able to access high quality schools with a learning environment which supports outstanding education. The Council is also determined to develop an education system which enriches learning experiences.

The Education Department aims to plan strategically to ensure that the appropriate type and number of schools are located in the correct locations, and to also upgrade the standard of school buildings to establish an estate which is suitable for the twenty-first century. The Programme will continue to fully commit to realising the current vision to *"offer education of the highest possible quality that will give the County's children the experiences, skills and confidence that would enable them to develop to be bilingual, successful and full citizens."*

The main aims of the Programme are to ensure that the current work programme continues to reach the agreed criteria to,

- contribute towards realising the aims of education principles which are fit for purpose to ensure a viable secondary school system, increased non-contact time for primary headteachers and that no more than two age ranges are included within the same class in the primary sector.
- implement the consultation process with parents, staff, governors and stakeholders which complies with the requirements of the statutory process, and which communicates clearly;
- implement an effective system to communicate with relevant Council departments, to monitor and evaluate activities;
- deliver the aims of the Programme to ensure a leadership environment which provides sufficient time for headteachers to lead, the best possible learning environment and quality of buildings for children, a reasonable travelling distance for children and a more effective management of educational resources, including reducing the cost per head in order to ensure the best value for money;
- ensure progress to complete the building work and establish schools which are part of the first financial Band;
- complete background work and update core data to be able to provide the necessary information to senior officers in order to respond proactively to situations as they arise.

Priorities for the next period:

- Complete the Bangor project, which includes an investment worth £12.7 million. The new building at Ysgol y Garnedd has opened since November 2020 with a capacity of 420 and able to offer a place for pupils in Coedmawr and Glanadda schools, subject to parental choice. The work to increase the capacity of Ysgol y Faenol to 315 and improve the suitability and condition of the building, whilst also taking advantage of the opportunity to improve community resources continues, with the aim that the work will be completed by the end of the Spring Term of 2022.
- Following the decision to adopt education principles, which are fit for purpose, assist the work of the Education Department to realise the vision to develop the system to ensure a high-quality education for the children and young people of Gwynedd for the twenty first century.

- Following the Cabinet's decision on 10 March 2020, continue to hold informal discussions on post-16 education in Arfon, so as to ensure fairness and strong support for all young people in the county to enable them to succeed and realise their potential.
- Following the Cabinet's decision in April 2019 continue with the intention to build a new school in Cricieth.
- Continue to implement one of the Band B projects to improve the condition and suitability of 30 school buildings in the County, with the first and second tranche of the project now operational, and continue to develop future annual proposals.
- Ensure the submission of successful business cases to the Welsh Government to attract matched funding for projects included in Band B.
- Collaborate with relevant departments to prepare additional applications to attract money for early years, community elements and the Welsh language.
- Undertake processes to monitor that the project benefits have been realised and to assess whether they have been completed successfully. There will be a need to ensure that all necessary procedures are in place to monitor benefits and that they are monitored continuously.

GWYNEDD AND ANGLESEY POST-16 EDUCATION CONSORTIUM

Gwynedd Council is a strategic partner in a Consortium framework which has a complete overview of the post-16 education field across the counties of Gwynedd and Anglesey. Together with Gwynedd, which is the lead partner, there are three other full strategic partners, namely the Isle of Anglesey County Council, Grŵp Llandrillo Menai and the secondary schools in the area that have sixth forms. This partnership enables high-level strategic decisions to be made on all aspects affecting post-16 education.

The work of the Consortium encompasses:

- Facilitating a network of good quality post-16 provision and courses at learning settings throughout the Consortium area
- Facilitating transport for the courses
- Managing and co-ordinating the 14-19 network for Gwynedd and Anglesey
- Leading on the Seren scheme to extend experiences for the most able and talented learners in the post-16 cohort and also KS3 on behalf of both Authorities
- Facilitating a professional group of sixth form heads
- Promoting and contributing strategically to the work of STEM Gogledd
- Collaborating with the North Wales Economic Ambition Board in order to identify career paths both locally and throughout the region.

As well as ensuring consistency, clear pathways and excellent quality for the learners while avoiding any duplication in terms of provision and systems, the framework also enables the cost of employing staff to lead on and administrate all relevant elements to be shared.

The work of the Consortium is monitored by a Lead Board which consists of representatives of the Chief Officers of the Partner Organisations.

TRAC SCHEME

Purpose

TRAC is a project across the six counties of North Wales. It aims to prevent vulnerable children and young people from disengaging in education and by doing so reduce the likelihood that they will be inactive and unemployed in the future. It is a European-funded project with a total value of £39.6m across the region. The project has been in operation since September 2015 and will end on 31 July 2022.

The total value of the project in Gwynedd is £4.6m (£3.3m of which is European funding, with the Council contributing officer time equivalent to £1.3m) and we aim to support at least 1,340 children and young people during the lifetime of the project.

Good features:

- 14 members of staff employed (through grant funding) to support vulnerable pupils by providing a range of interventions which complement, *but do not duplicate*, the mainstream education provision, focusing on raising the aspirations of children and young people referred to the project and supporting them to reconnect with their education.
- Being creative in our provision and 'thinking outside the box' in terms of how barriers which prevent all pupils from engaging with their education may be overcome.
- Developing a provision that is unique to the individual and is pupil-focused.
- Able to develop and build effective relationships with the pupils.
- Being consistent, transparent and patient; usually the children and young people we work with have a range of complex challenges in their lives that may impair our ability to succeed.
- Support the provision pupils receive from various agencies (such as the Children's Department, Children and Young People Mental Health Service etc.)
- Intensive support over a specific period to support vulnerable pupils in Year 6 for successful transition to Secondary (in operation since Autumn 2019).
- Working with others to identify the support required by TRAC (and others) to make a real difference to a pupil's future prospects.

Results:

- As of the end of October 2021, 1104 pupils have been supported by TRAC Gwynedd. A range of results have been achieved, such as moving on to work or training, improving attendance and behaviour, and support for young people with severe mental health problems.
- During the 2020-21 academic year:

- Pupils supported (Years 7 to 11) (new referrals):	81
- Pupils supported (Year 6/ transition period)	86
- Pupils leaving the project with reduced likelihood of being inactive (not in education, employment or training):	90
- Pupils gaining a Level 1 / 2 BTEC qualification	39

Priorities for the next period:

- Continue to provide for and support the vulnerable pupils identified by the project
- Continue to provide the alternative curriculum offer by means of accredited units by Agored Cymru.
- To be proactive in terms of promoting the work being accomplished.
- Implement the exit strategy for the project, (which ends in July 2022) by establishing a sustainable model for transferring the provision to other services within the Education Department.

- Undertake mapping of the TRAC legacy and how the Department may continue to implement this model by mainstreaming into established services.
- Complete a report that evaluates the impact of the scheme locally and produces a business plan for the scheme's successor if possible.

LEADERSHIP

Purpose

The aim of the leadership plan is to ensure that all Gwynedd leaders have the ability to ensure that each child under their care is able to reach his or her full potential. The Authority has identified the need *"to work jointly to create a culture that enables leaders to thrive; and can inspire and influence children on all levels"*.

Positive features

- A particular emphasis is being placed on securing a system which is planned and developed to ensure appropriate leaders at all levels.
- A particular emphasis is being placed on ensuring a consistency in the best experiences and opportunities for Gwynedd pupils.
- A particular emphasis is being placed on ensuring that existing leaders are developed using effective methods.
- A particular emphasis is being placed on ensuring that specific conditions enable leaders to thrive.

Motivation

The Department invested in an Incentive and Mentoring in Education pilot project to give head teachers the opportunity to reflect on their experiences with a professional motivator. The program ran throughout the pandemic, giving headteachers and members of school management teams the opportunity to discuss and reflect with motivators from various professions and industries at an unprecedented time of pressure. Feedback was very positive.

Headteachers were also given the opportunity to be trained to gain a fully funded postgraduate qualification in mentoring and mentoring. 7 headteachers took the opportunity and have successfully completed the degree and become professional motivators themselves. This will add to the pool of Welsh speakers available in Gwynedd.

The school leader training scheme has now evolved into a continuum of professional learning, offered regionally and includes the following:

1. Middle Leadership Development Program

The program promotes very effective leadership through self-evaluation and reflection, exploring the relationship between leadership, successful schools and the wider community through;

- develop an understanding of the role
- further develop their understanding of the national reform agenda
- develop their practice in line with the formal standards of leadership
- prepare for effective engagement with bespoke elements of specialist knowledge and skills; PLCs, ALN, Welsh, faith schools, small schools etc.

2. National Senior Leadership Development Program

Again, with a particular focus on self-evaluation and reflection this program;

- Further develop understanding of the role of senior leader
- Develop the knowledge and skills that an effective senior leader should know and be able to adopt

- Have the opportunity to develop the leadership behaviors required for an effective senior leader
- Further develop their understanding of the national reform agenda
- Develop their practice within the formal standards of leadership.

3. National Program for Developing aspiring Headteachers - Preparing for the NPQH 2021-2022

This program is available to all experienced school leaders who believe it demonstrates achievement against the Professional Standards for Learning & Leadership and views headship as a realistic next step.

It will build on previous experience, to build:

- their understanding of the role of an effective headteacher
- their skills and attributes through self-review against the Professional Standards for Teaching and Leadership
- their understanding and ability to apply a variety of leadership skills effectively
- their co-operation skills through effective participation in peer networks
- their knowledge and skills for developing their schools as learning institutions and ensuring the success of the national reform agenda

The Program will enable participants to reflect on their own professional practice, and to ensure that they are well prepared when applying to undertake a formal assessment for the National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH).

4. New Appointed and Acting Headteachers Development Program

A program that supports new and acting headteachers in their work:

- It is designed in accordance with the Regional Professional Learning Model
- Content is based on the Professional Standards for Teaching and Leadership, Developing Schools in Wales as Learning and Education Institutions in Wales: Our Nation's Mission
- The duration of the program and the progression of learning activities are consistent throughout Wales
- There are common expectations about participants' progress and how this will affect their leadership practice

5. Experienced Headteachers Development Program

A program for, and opportunity for, already experienced headteachers;

- Reflect on their own leadership style and how their leadership affects others
- Reflect on the impact of a range of leadership approaches
- Understand the theory of change and reflect on how that affects their leadership on the transformational journey of reform
- Work with others to lead their schools effectively and have a positive impact on leadership across Wales
- Embed an appropriate innovation culture and practice across and beyond its schools

Priorities for the next period:

- Ensure that there is appropriate integration between this leadership development plan and the principles adopted by the Cabinet, to ensure that we have suitable arrangements which develop and identify leaders for our existing system and for the future.

EDUCATION DATA UNIT

Purpose

The purpose of the Gwynedd and Anglesey Education Data Unit is to support the Education Department through the provision of high-quality data infrastructure and information that drives decisions and performance.

Good features:

- The process of submitting schools' admissions or transfer applications has transformed to use the FFOS system rather than a form on the website. This means that an admissions or transfer request for schools now follows the same route as Gwynedd Council Service requests, and is a paperless process.
- Collaborated with the IT Unit and the Education Business Centre to transfer the SIMS information collection form to be electronic. This has been operational since April 2021.
- The PEPs element of the IDP is operational.
- Respond to the challenges posed by Covid-19 by developing new reports to meet the needs of the Education Department.
- Present a weekly report on school attendance as well as more detailed reports as and when required.
- Provide and present an analysis report on GCSE and A Level results.
- Chairing the Regional Project Board leading on identifying an Authority information management system for the region.
- Contribute to meeting the Council's new requirements in the context of challenging the performance measures of the Education Department.
- Support the Education Business Centre with PLASC and SWAC responses.
- Complete the statutory responses (PLASC, SWAS Post-16 data collection) within timescale.

Priorities over the next period:

Due to the uncertainty around Covid-19, it is difficult to set firm priorities, so in the short term it is hoped to achieve the following:

- Further work to ensure that our data is current and of a high standard.
- Ensure better use of 'Transport ONE' so that the information that is extracted reduces the need to use worksheets all of the time.
- Work with the Education Business Centre to present SIMS data collecting forms that can effectively be transferred on-line by September 2021.

SCHOOL GOVERNANCE SUPPORT SERVICE

The purpose of the School Governance Support Service is to:

- Provide support and guidance for headteachers, governors, clerks of governors and Gwynedd schools
- Deliver a training programme for governors
- Prepare training materials/good practices and correspondence for governors and headteachers
- Support Shadow Governing Bodies of new schools

Good features:

- Offer assistance and support to Governing Bodies and their schools as required.
- Continue to improve the quality of governors' work to challenge headteachers so that they understand the meaning of data and understand the real situation of standards in a school.
- Develop the role of governors to take a more strategic role in meetings, as well as encouraging self-evaluation of governors' work and promoting the use of the national self-evaluation system.
- Be able to offer mandatory and additional training in a virtual manner due to Covid restrictions and receive feedback on the training consultation.
- Assist Governing Bodies in fulfilling their statutory role and advise and act as a helpline in governance matters for headteachers and governors including the excess process and complaints etc

Priorities for the next period:

- Implement the findings of the consultation regarding Governors training held in 2020, specifically increasing the number of courses that can be held virtually, develop digital training (videos etc) for some topics, increase the range of training available.
- Upgrade the Governors' Database system and collaborate with IT to promote self-service for the Database so that the Authority's governing clerks can directly input information.
- Collaborate with the ICT department in establishing a section for Governors on HWB (WG) and ensure the Governors have a HWB account.
- Rationalising the list of School Policies and ensure that updated templates are available on HWB (WG).
- Develop a package of Statutory Document templates that schools should have

CONTRACTS AND PERSONNEL UNIT

Purpose

The Unit provides a range of support to all schools in the county. This varies from providing advice and guidance regarding the terms and conditions of school staff employment to head teachers, governors and the county's officers, processing timesheets for payments, creating contracts, verifying the criminal background of every staff member, advising teachers about their pensions and processing redundancy payments.

Good features:

- Staff in our schools continue to receive their wages correctly and on time every month.
- As a department, we continue to adhere to the level of service for schools fairly and consistently for every school, by following the work schedule throughout the academic year.
- All school staff contracts are issued in accordance with statutory requirements, namely within eight weeks of commencing in post.

Priorities for the next period:

- Update and revise the list of supply teachers on the ONE system in order to devise an app through which schools may 'hire' supply teachers. As the list of supply teachers has been revised, we continue to update it as new applications come in, ready for the app.
- Move to an electronic method of storing staff members' personal files. We have now created an electronic file for everyone in iGwynedd. Everyone who has started since 01.09.2020 has an electronic file only. We have transferred the file of all primary school support staff/assistants from paper to electronic mode and plan to move on to do the same with the Secondary and all the county's teachers over the coming months.
- Continue to encourage head teachers to ensure that all teaching staff and Learning Support Assistants are registered with the Education Workforce Council and have completed the DBS process prior to commencing their posts in school. We continue to encourage this. An electronic system of DBS checks has been put in place and will therefore facilitate the situation.
- Collaborate with the Human Resources unit on creating an electronic statement for Teachers. With a statement already in place, it will need to be given out to unions to get the go ahead to act on it as soon as possible.

CATERING AND CLEANING SERVICE

Purpose

To provide nutritious and healthy food for the pupils of Gwynedd Schools and to keep educational establishments clean and safe to assist pupils to reach their potential.

Good features:

- The lunchtime menu for primary and special schools complies with the 'Healthy Eating in Schools (Nutritional Standards and Requirements) (Wales) Regulations 2013'.
- The lunchtime menu of Secondary schools is being worked up towards compliance with the 'Healthy Eating in Schools (Nutritional Standards and Requirements) (Wales) Regulations 2013'.
- Tasting/nutrition sessions are held in schools to encourage more pupils to eat school dinners.
- Parents who provide lunchboxes for their children are asked if they would like a school dinner on some days of the week.
- Thematic lunches are offered to schools on a regular basis.
- An on-line payment system for parents makes it easier to pay for different school services such as school dinners, trips, instrument lessons etc.
- Every school which has a nursery group implementing the 30 hour childcare plan can offer a school dinner as part of the provision.
- Keeping schools clean and safe.
- Support secondary schools to become cashless by implementing a school dinners cashless system.

Priorities for the next period:

- Cooperate with schools to enable them to become completely cashless
- Continue to encourage parents to choose school dinners for their children
- Assist schools to reduce the school dinners debt levels of parents
- Act on providing packed lunches for school trips
- Review the demand for breakfast club provision in primary schools
- Following the Government's announcement to provide free school meals for primary pupils, the needs of the service will need to be assessed to meet demand.

TRANSPORT

To arrange transport for Gwynedd pupils to educational establishments, thereby providing them with access to education in order to fulfil their potential.

Good features:

- Transport is arranged for all qualifying pupils
- The ability to purchase a post-16 travel pass by direct debit
- The ability to purchase a post-16 travel e-ticket
- The post-16 user forum meets twice a year
- The Gwynedd Transport Policy complies with the 'Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008'Extend the post-16 travel ticket to include learners over 19 years old.

PRIORITIES FOR THE NEXT PERIOD

- Review the arrangements for the post-16 travel pass.
- Ensure efficiency of service by reviewing existing criteria and systems.

EDUCATION BUSINESS CENTRE

The purpose of the Education Business Centre is to support the effective management of schools in Gwynedd.

The Centre supports 80 primary schools by providing services in accordance with the Service Level Agreement that exists between the schools and the Centre.

Support is provided for a variety of areas of school management.

Positive features:

- Through the small and rural schools grant 2020/21 it was possible to continue to provide the additional administrative support provided to head teachers out in schools as well as implementing the scheme to answer the phone on behalf of some schools.
- Orders from schools to purchase goods / services via the Education Business Centre credit card have increased significantly over the last year which shows that schools are benefiting from the service.
- The Education Business Centre team has been providing support to schools by providing regular reports for pupil and staff contact details to share with the Covid-19 track and trace team.

Priorities for the upcoming period:

- Continue to roll out credit cards to large secondary and primary schools with school administrators to support the system.
- Continue to work closely with the Procurement Team to provide schools with the best value on Procurement contracts.
- Continue to identify and improve services that will contribute to reducing the workload of head teachers.
- Further develop an effective and efficient system for ordering and paying for school goods and services.
- Develop an intranet for the Education Business Centre on the Hwb for communication, information sharing and good practice with schools
- Further develop the outgoing team of administrators for school administration.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Purpose

Although there is no dedicated unit within the Department that deals with information technology issues, significant work has been completed in this key area in conjunction with the Corporate Information Technology Service. The work in the field is based on our Digital Education Strategy with the clear purpose of supporting education through technology.

Positive features:

- Digital Education Strategy has been approved, and highlights how we will respond to the challenge of supporting education through technology.
- Agreed robust future maintenance arrangements.
- Agreed a plan to fully fund and update the devices at the end of their life.
- Gwynedd school networks upgraded to meet national standards.
- Over 6,000 devices provided during the summer term.
- Over 6,000 additional devices have been purchased.
- School emails have been transferred to Hwb.
- School data storage systems have been transferred to a cloud system.
- Professional training plan has begun under the leadership of GwE.

Priorities for the next period:

- Establish a structure for a new in-house device maintenance unit.
- Appointment to the new support structure.
- Agree a work program with individual schools which will include when and how the manual supply of devices will reach the schools.
- Ensure full and consistent use of the devices across our schools.
- Ensure schools have a clear vision on the importance of developing digital skills
- Ensure schools have clear action plans to develop digital skills across the curriculum.