



# Annual Report

# Education Department

2021-22



## **EDUCATION ANNUAL REPORT 2021-22**

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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, Management and Training, Modernising Education and 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 2021-22 there were 79 primary schools, 12 secondary schools, 1 All-through School, 1 Lifelong Learning School and two Special Schools in Gwynedd.

In a statement from the Minister for Education, Jeremy Miles MS, he stated: 'Qualification award data will not be used to report on attainment outcomes at school, local authority or regional consortium level and should not be used to hold schools to account for learner outcomes. '

Therefore, in accordance with the Minister's statement, it is not possible for the Authority to discuss any results in order to measure the performance of schools and compare standards as part of this annual report.

## **PRIORITY PROJECTS OF THE COUNCIL PLAN 2018-23**

During the last year, the education department had a number of priority projects in the Council's strategic Plan which the department was expected to implement during the year.

The plan's priorities address the Department's main risks, together with investment to adapt schools, or build new schools so that the children and young people of Gwynedd are educated in the best possible learning environment.

Although the department's priority projects have been going in the right direction during the year, it must be recognized that there have been challenges in carrying out the department's capital projects during the year due to the challenges of the pandemic and an increase in the costs of building materials.

### **Sustainable Learning Communities Programme**

#### **Bangor Catchment Area**

Ysgol y Faenol has had a major extension to accommodate 315 pupils. Although the timetable has slipped as a result of the pandemic, the extension was completed during the year, and the pupils can now take advantage of their new learning environment. Nevertheless, discussions continue in relation to land transfers and consequently, it is not possible to complete work on the school's car park at present. The building has also been planned to be a hub for the local area, with a new community centre built as a part of the development.

Initial feasibility work has been completed to identify the needs of Ysgol Ein Harglwyddes, and there is agreement to locate the new school on the site of Ysgol Glanadda (which is now closed) and this location is in accordance with the aspirations of the community.

The department is aware of the poor condition of the building and existing learning environment at Ysgol Tryfan in Bangor, and as a result the department has begun the process of considering possible opportunities to ensure a first class learning environment there, ensuring suitable progression to the investment already achieved in the primary schools in the Penrhosgarnedd area of the city.

#### **Cricieth Catchment Area**

Following the support of the Cabinet to increase the capacity of Ysgol Trefferthyr to 150 learners and build a new school due to the poor condition of the current building. As part of the process of submitting a planning application to relocate the school to the A497 site, two technical issues have arisen regarding the site, and in response to that, work has been commissioned, and by now the archaeological work has been completed, and a safe route to school survey has also now been completed and a report has been submitted to the Planning Department.

#### **Post-16 Education in Arfon**

As a result of the varying quality of education and learner experiences across the Post-16 Education System in Arfon, the Cabinet gave permission to the Department to contact stakeholders to discuss the vision for Post-16 education in Arfon. A series of virtual meetings were held with headteachers, Governors, staff, parents, learners and the broader community to present the new vision for post-16 education, as well as gather views and ideas on the best way to realise the vision. We reported on the initial messages from this engagement to the Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee in February last year, and we are now in a position to press on with this project following the delay seen over the past year.

Linked to the post-16 education field, during the year the Department succeeded in abolishing the fee for the post-16 travel ticket for all learners from September 2022 onwards. This is particularly important to ensure that as a Council we do not place any obstacles to enable our young people to continue their education after the age of 16, and even more important these days considering the tremendous increase in living costs.

#### Condition and Suitability

During the year, as with the previous year, the impact of building materials prices due to Covid and Brexit affected our ability to realize some of our plans to improve the condition and adapt our school buildings. As a result, during the year the Education Department jointly with the Housing and Property Department re-examined the plans considering what can be practically achieved on a priority basis due to having to address higher costs with the available budget. However, we managed to complete the investment in the condition and suitability of Ysgol Bethel, Ysgol Glan y Môr and Ysgol Cymerau with work continuing on the sites of Ysgol Llanrug and Ysgol Botwnnog.

#### Free School Meals

In December 2021 Jeremy Miles MS, Welsh Government Minister for the Welsh Language and Education, announced that £25m of capital funding would be invested in kitchen and dining infrastructure in Welsh schools as part of plans to introduce free school meals to all primary school children in Wales over the next three years. The policy is part of the co-operation agreement between the Welsh Government and Plaid Cymru.

Following the original announcement, from January onwards, kitchens and dining spaces in all primary schools in Gwynedd were inspected in order to identify which kitchens required upgrading of their large appliances such as ovens and dishwashers as well as lighter apparatus. We gathered parents' opinions to see how many intended to take advantage of the scheme so that we had an overview before making adaptations to our infrastructure. In terms of the large appliances, 28 new combi-ovens and 17 dishwashers have been installed, with more to be installed early in the new year.

It became clear that several sites would need an extension to cope with the possible increase in the numbers who would be eating a hot meal, as either the kitchen or dining space were unsuitable or too small. The following schools received an extension over the summer holidays, namely Ysgol Hendre, Ysgol Bethel, Ysgol Bro Lleu, Ysgol Llanrug and Ysgol Maenofferen.

#### The Well-being and Attainment Gap

The work of supporting the well-being of children and young people over the past year has focused on responding to the challenges and the effects of the pandemic. Since September 2020, all schools in Gwynedd have implemented an Accelerated Learning Programme with funding from the Welsh Government, to respond to the impact of the lockdown on the well-being and attainment of some specific groups of 5-16-year-old learners.

Beyond school, we have identified two stages in a child and young person's life as being a priority in terms of responding to the well-being and attainment gap, namely 0-5 year olds, and young people post-16. Indeed, the lockdown period has highlighted the vulnerability of the early years sector, with inconsistency across the county in terms of the range and availability of services. The range of partners who are involved in the provision along with the strategic direction of the field nationally makes it difficult to structure our services here in Gwynedd. The project group has agreed upon specific work streams and has prioritised conducting a care and education provision adequacy assessment across the authority. At the same time, work is being undertaken on different funding models, as well as the implications of leaseholds between providers and Gwynedd Council.

Also, the 16-24 age group has been disproportionately affected by the pandemic as there are more referrals for well-being, mental health and homelessness assistance among this age group. It is therefore intended to give specific attention to this field in order to mitigate any knock-on effects, ensuring that young people receive appropriate support and provision to enable them to thrive.

#### Transforming the ALN & I Provision

During the past year, this project has focused on preparing for the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018. This Act came into force in September 2021, but with some elements of the Act delayed in the first year e.g. post-16 period.

During the year a Welsh Government ALN Act Readiness Review showed very strong progress in terms of the Authority's preparations for the Legislation, with the requisite statutory posts in place since January 2021 and operating effectively. Collaboration with the Health Board developed well by collaborating with the Designated Education Clinical Lead Officer (DECLLO). A number of stakeholder training events were held in order to specify particular aspects of the Final Code. Work on the dispute resolution routes to ensure that they are operational have been completed. In the early years sector the necessary systems for early identification, and establishing clear processes have been completed. Preparatory work in the post-16 sector is continuing. Also the work of developing a work, curriculum and assessment link between the mainstream and Special Schools has developed and continues to develop.

Innovative work is continuing to be done in terms of the use and continuous development of the on-line Individual Development Plan system, with the system driving the entire process for the schools, parents, external agencies and other education provisions (e.g. the early years).

#### Digital Education Strategy

Over the past two years, a little over £1.3m has been invested in the network. Subsequently, a substantial number of devices have been distributed in accordance with the strategy. Enough ipads have been distributed to provide one to every four learners in the Foundation Phase, and enough Chromebooks have been distributed so that all learners in years 3 to 6 have one device each. Windows 10 devices were also prepared for all pupils in years 7, 10 and 11, and were distributed at the end of the summer term, with a small proportion distributed at the beginning of September 2022. In addition, by September 2022, every teacher in Gwynedd will have received a standard device via the strategy with the hope that this will spark imagination and further stimulate the ingenuity and effectiveness of the aspects of digital learning across the sectors.

#### Meirionnydd Collaboration

Progress on this project has been slow and has been affected as a result of the obvious challenges of the pandemic and the busy nature of secondary schools. Nevertheless, we have sought the opinion of headteachers and representatives of the governing body of every secondary school on the potential challenges they face in terms of providing quality secondary education in the area, such as recruiting teachers, middle managers and leaders. We have also circulated a questionnaire to seek the views of learners, staff, parents and headteachers, that will inform the future direction of the project, and we are currently in the process of analysing messages from those questionnaires.

#### Promoting the Use of the Welsh Language

Following an extended period of home teaching, and the national concern expressed about the adverse effect of Covid on Welsh language standards, during the year the department collected data through various questionnaires in order to get a better overview of the Welsh language skills of our children and young people. The evidence from the questionnaires shows that oral skills are the

biggest concern across the county, and each school has set out to draw up an action plan in response to the situation.

## 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**

The Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) is a statutory document for every local authority to plan strategically over a 10-year period to ensure growth in Welsh medium education. The WESP is part of Wales's long-term vision in Cymraeg 2050. In order to support the planning process, the WESP has been arranged around seven outcomes that reflect the learner's education journey and match the Cymraeg 2050 and Our National Mission policy fields.

The new WESP came into force on 1st September 2022 and will come to an end on 31 August 2032. During 2021/22 the department prepared the new plan following the timeline and programme set out by the Welsh Government.

During Autumn 2021, a full consultation was held on the draft version of the new WESP that came to an end before Christmas. The WESP was submitted before Cabinet for approval in March 2022, and was presented to the Language Committee at the beginning of the summer. The final version of the WESP was approved by the Minister for Education and the Welsh Language on 24 June 2022.

The Welsh Government and the Minister will continue to monitor progress and actions taken annually. However, our aim in Gwynedd is that the WESP is a live and ambitious document that drives our actions in favour of Welsh medium education in the county and reflects the unique position of Gwynedd.

- **Language Centres**

### Purpose

Promote the achievement and well-being of children and young people to acquire the Welsh language and 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.

During the year a new headteacher and deputy were appointed to the Immersion Education System. Following a consultation process a new staffing structure for the system has been confirmed which will become operational in January 2023.

In collaboration with the Modernising Team, considerable construction has taken place during the year to realise the vision and intention of the Cabinet, including the Welsh Government's capital expenditure of £1.1m to establish new immersion education sites at Bangor, as well as improving resources at the Eifionydd immersion education site. The Eifionydd and Bangor buildings have now been completed and the quality of the sites are excellent and the learning environment is world class, including modern and up-to-date provision e.g. interactive screens and resources to facilitate learning and teaching. They are intended to provide cutting edge and up-to-date immersive education in strategic areas of linguistic significance in the county. The facilities facilitate the delivery of Curriculum for

Wales in the classroom as well as the outside area. They are also within reasonable reach of facilities such as Gwynedd Libraries, Byw'n Iach Centres, shops, clubs and social enterprises. Visiting these places will be a great opportunity to broaden learners' experiences and bring the Welsh language to life for them. Unfortunately, the new language unit on the Ysgol Uwchradd Tywyn site will not be completed in time to welcome learners in January 2023. However, we trust that the centre will be ready during the Summer 2023 term. Meanwhile the centre will be temporarily located at Bro Idris Secondary site.

At the Cabinet meeting on 19 July 2022, unanimous support was received to move forward to submit a full business case to Welsh Government to secure the £1.1m funding from the Welsh-medium Education Capital Grant which has already been pledged in principle to align capacity and improve the learning environment of the remaining primary Language Centres in the county, namely Maesincla, Llangybi and Dolgellau.

In addition, a lot of exciting work has taken place during the year in the context of Welsh Government late immersion revenue funding. Staff at the Immersion System have been working closely with author Anni Llŷn to write a new Immersion Plan for the language units that will bridge learners within the primary and secondary sector. This new scheme is based on an imaginary village called Aberwla and incorporates appropriate language patterns within the language continuum in Curriculum for Wales. It is a scheme relevant to the twenty-first century and reflects contemporary Wales. The scheme will be launched at the National Eisteddfod of Wales Llŷn ac Eifionydd in August 2023 and will replace the current scheme the following September. To support the scheme, we in collaboration with Animated Technologies have developed a virtual element to the village. This is an innovative project that enables our newcomers to step into Aberwla on a virtual platform to practice language patterns in the supermarket. There they have the opportunity to play games with each other while filling their basket by reading instructions and following a shopping list. This special project was launched in the Science Village at the Tregaron National Eisteddfod Summer 2022 in the company of the Minister for Education and the Welsh Language, Jeremy Miles. Later in August our application to evolve this project was approved and work is ongoing to develop three further locations in the village of Aberwla, namely Tyddyn Swnllyd Farm, Glampio Field, Garage and Gajets Shop.

Welsh Government officials are very keen to share this resource nationally and discussions are underway to do so in the near future. To this end they are keen to fund the development of all the locations in the village in addition to the original grant. This is recognition of our innovative vision as an Immersion System we are proud of this innovative virtual resource and proud of the opportunity to share it for the benefit of learners and support the Welsh Government's aim in Cymraeg 2050 across Wales.

- **School categorisation according to Welsh language provision**

Welsh Government has introduced new arrangements for categorising schools according to Welsh medium provision from September 2022. The number of categories is reduced to three in the primary sector, and three in the secondary sector. One of the aims of this new arrangement on categorisation is to encourage schools to increase their Welsh provision, with one of the core principles of the arrangement that no school should offer less Welsh medium provision in the future than they have in the past.

In 2021/22 the education department planned and responded to the new arrangements for the primary and secondary sector and completed that process with the schools and Welsh

Government during the summer term – in order to implement the new arrangements from September 2022 onwards. Follow-up work will continue during the next year to ensure that the regime develops and is embedded in order to fulfil the ambition of Gwynedd in this field.

- **Language Charter & Secondary Welsh Language Strategy**

We have been promoting and increasing the use of Welsh amongst young people within the curriculum and in a social context, by leading on the Language Charter and Secondary Language Strategy so as to increase the social use of the Welsh language by children in our primary and secondary schools.

We have been collaborating with secondary schools to act on specific actions to increase the use of Welsh in formal and informal situations. Attention continues to be paid to the language medium of provision across the curriculum in Key Stage 3, 4 and 5. The intention to re-establish the Language Forums in every secondary school has been agreed to promote and strengthen the use of Welsh by our schools, and respond to the priorities outlined in the WESP. Language and Bilingual Awareness sessions have been held by some pupils across the county.

- **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.

- **Language skills of the education workforce**

We have continued to support the language skills of the workforce by cooperating with providers to structure provision that responds to the needs identified across the county. In addition, language and Immersion Methodology training have been held in every secondary school catchment area across the county.

#### **Priorities for the next period:**

- Ensure that the new Welsh in Education Strategic Plan in September 2022 drives the department's work effectively as we plan and implement in favour of Welsh medium education across our schools.
- Ensure that the Categorising Schools according to Welsh medium provision requirements are embedded and sets out Gwynedd's ambition for every school, and ensures continuation in the Welsh language education provision for pupils as they transfer from KS2 to KS4 and beyond.
- Continue to expand and develop the Gwynedd Immersion System to provide quality up-to-date immersion education to all newcomers to the county, focusing on the primary aged language units.
- 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.

## **ADDITIONAL LEARNING NEEDS AND INCLUSION**

The purpose of the ALN&I service is to:

- Support the development of ALN and Inclusion 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:**

- The transition from the old SEN Legislation to the new ALN Legislation continues to keep momentum and on track.
- 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).
- The work to adapt the inclusion provision model has taken place and is now active.
- The Services will also continue to prioritise the following for strengthening the provision:
  - Continue to respond effectively to the demands of the COVID-19 crisis
  - Training in the field of emotional development and well-being continues to strengthen and includes ELSA (Emotional Literacy Support Assistants) training, Grief and Loss Training 'Growing Through the Seasons', strengthening training in the field of Developmental Trauma.

### **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:
  - Undertake conversion work and develop the provision in the Post-16 sector
  - Ensure stakeholder input to a continuous review of what is offered to learners with ALN&I.
  - 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.

## **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.
- The department has ensured attendance at every Part 5 meeting where allegations have been made against staff within Gwynedd schools, case numbers remain low.
- 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 Education Department and the Learning and Development service have been collaborating to develop a training pack in the field of domestic abuse. The pack 'Asking and Implementing' has been jointly developed and continues to be presented to staff within the Education Department.

### **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.
- Agree a new procedure of annual safeguarding quality check visits for all schools in Gwynedd.
- Provide "Ask and Implement" courses for all education and school staff.
- Conduct a review of example policies submitted to the schools with particular attention to safeguarding issues.
- Ensure training for schools that will better prepare them for contributing effectively at case conferences, core group meetings in line with the Safeguarding Children Procedures Wales 2020.

## 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 2022 the nursery education provision will be offered in 56 locations across the county. All the settings are members of the Mudiad Meithrin and are regularly monitored.

### Good features:

- Senior Advisory Teacher (SAT) has introduced a Friendly Communication Locations strategy to all locations.
  - All locations come together under the care of their advisory teacher to discuss ideas and strategies for ensuring language development in the locations.
  - Cohort of locations attended ELKLAN and MAKATON training
- SAT Attended meetings - early years advisory teachers with ESTYN
- SAT has delivered training on the Curriculum for Wales 2022 to all locations.
- SAT has held training to follow the child's path to nurseries and babysitters.
- SAT has carried out one engagement visit as part of the work for ESTYN
- The teaching team have attended various sessions/training namely professional learning resources in the Foundation Phase (CiG). 'Working with Uncooperative and Hostile parents', Play and Playful Learning Kym Scott, 'Interfering or Interacting', *Sgemau*, 'In the moment planning' and 'Mindfulness in Clinical Practice'
- All locations and advisory teachers have been allowed to attend training
- Health and Mental Wellbeing for Children aged 2 to 4 by Leisa Mererid
  - All locations have received a pack of resources to go with the training
  - All locations receive the support of a consultant teacher to hold ongoing sessions.
- Julie Fisher's 'Interfering or Interacting', offered to all locations.
- Planning Training at the Moment - Anna Ephgrave has been offered every location- a strategy to follow the child's path.
- *Sgemau* by Dr Stella Louis.
- All locations have received a booklet on *sgemau*
- Early Years ALN Lead Officer has delivered training to all settings
- Settings create One Page Profiles for all ALN children and follow the new arrangements attached with the new legislation.
- The advisory teachers supported each location in implementing the requirements of the ALN code including support at targeting level.
- Every location that has received a joint inspection (CIW/Estyn) since January 2021-2022 has received a 'good' opinion for each theme, with occasional reports referring to aspects of excellence within the content of the report.
- Two locations continue to work on receiving 'Hygge in the Early years' accreditation
- A new location 'Lle Chi' has opened in Blaenau Ffestiniog following a long period of failing to secure nursery education provision in the area.
- Early Years capital investment has taken place on the sites of Maenofferen school, old Beuno Sant school, Ysgol Bro Tryweryn, Ysgol yr Hendre, Ysgol Llanllechid, Ysgol Faenol, Ysgol y Garnedd and Ysgol Maesincla.
- Almost £40 thousand of small capital grants were distributed to nine different locations
- All locations have received multicultural dolls (boys and girls) for implementing the Relationship and Sexuality Education Code (training to follow)
- A process was implemented to restructure the team to be an Early Years team with the teachers supporting Flying Start and Foundation Stage settings.
- One other location has been considered for following the Croesi'r Bont strategy by the Mudiad Meithrin.

- Settings now use planning sheets that allow them to follow the child's path and record observations that indicate the teaching that has taken place.

**Priorities for the next period:**

- Re-visit 'Our purpose' following the re-structuring. Our vision as one team and consider performance measures to match.
- Ensuring consistency in every location from 2 upwards be it DD or other.
- Support the locations on the implementation of the 2022 CiG.
- Support the locations on their journey to be Communication Friendly locations.
- Training and Support on the January 2023 Assessment document.
- Look at quality assurance tools by considering – ITERS, STTEW.
- Continue to coordinate the ongoing Early Years capital investment at Cricieth School and Tywyn High School
- Present the Early Years 2022—25 capital plan to the Government
- Distribution of small grant capital to settings
- Implement the Recruitment, Recovery and Raising Standards grant scheme for non-maintained placements
- Review the funding formula for nursery education harmonising with the Childcare Offer and Flying Start
- Implement the priorities of the Early Years transformation work program such as harmonising leases on school sites.

## **MODERNISING EDUCATION TEAM**

### **Purpose**

Some of our school buildings are old and unfit to meet the needs of Curriculum for Wales and learning and teaching in the twenty-first century. The purpose of this service is to design and realise innovative projects to adapt schools or build new schools so that the children and young people of Gwynedd can be educated in the best possible learning environment to enable them to thrive.

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 namely Band A and recently Band B;
- 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.

The work of modernising education in the County continues to successfully contribute to the education system and has attracted over £73m since 2012.

### **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 to improve the suitability and condition of the building while improving the community resources has been completed with learners benefiting fully from the new learning environment.
- Begin the Bangor phase two project, which focuses specifically on the secondary sector and Welsh medium education.

- 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 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.

## **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"*.

The department over this past period has identified leadership as a priority that needs attention to ensure leadership succession at all levels and ensure that skilled and ambitious individuals follow the leadership programmes. In doing this, the aim is to increase the number of qualified and appropriate candidates for leadership positions and specifically therefore school headteachers.

### **Positive features:**

- A particular emphasis is being placed on securing a system which is planned and developed to ensure appropriate leaders to inspire 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 effective methods that develop existing leaders and equip leaders of the future.
- A particular emphasis is being placed on ensuring that specific conditions enable leaders to thrive.

### **Motivation**

Headteachers were given the opportunity again to be trained to gain a postgraduate qualification in motivating and mentoring. 7 headteachers have taken advantage of this opportunity in the past, and successfully completed the degree and become professional motivators themselves. These motivators are now available to motivate others and their teams within their schools also reap the benefits.

**By now the leadership development programmes for leaders in schools is a continuum of professional learning, which is 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. Participants will:

- 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, this programme promotes highly effective leadership with a particular focus on self-evaluation and reflection Participants will:

- further develop their understanding of the role of the 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 behaviours 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 2022-2023**

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

This program will build on previous experience, in order to nurture:

- 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**

This is a program that runs for two years and is available to support all newly appointed headteachers, and temporary headteachers at work. The program:

- is designed in accordance with the Regional Professional Learning Model
- 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
- duration and the progression of learning activities are consistent throughout Wales
- has common expectations about participants' progress and how this will affect their leadership practice

### **5. Experienced Headteachers Development Program**

Again, here is a program that runs over a period of two years, but this time for already experienced headteachers in order to be an even more effective headteacher. Participants will:

- 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 that inspire for our existing system and for the future.

## **EDUCATION DATA UNIT**

### **Purpose**

Ensuring support for the Education Department by providing high quality data and information infrastructure that drives decisions and performance.

### **Good features:**

- Initiate a regional information management system procurement process by scoping the needs of the Council departments.
- Agree and act to change the September 2022 School Census process to be electronic.
- Team leader is part of the Corporate Data Sub-Group and the Covid-19 Investigation Group.
- Develop the Unit's Power BI skills by ensuring that one officer has completed an external training course.
- Development of an Education dashboard at Authority, sector and school level.
- Provide and present an analysis report on GCSE and A Level results.
- Agree on and report on the Unit's performance measures.
- 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:**

The focus of our work over the next period will be influenced by the Regional Project. Taking this into account these will be our priorities for the next period:

- Appoint a provider for a new Information Management system and start the journey of embedding the system.
- Commissioning a project to look at the transfer of ALN&I reports to Power BI format.
- Continue to develop the School Census process in September.

## **SCHOOL GOVERNANCE SUPPORT SERVICE**

### **Purpose**

Support Gwynedd Schools Governing Bodies to be effective in their work.

### **Good features:**

- Offer assistance and support to Governing Bodies and their schools as required.
- Continue to offer mandatory and additional training in a virtual mode which increases attendance.
- 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
- Provide a list of policies and templates where appropriate on the Hwb for Headteachers and Governing Body Clerks.

### **Priorities for the next period:**

- Look again at the way Governance information is collected and kept working in cooperation with IT to develop a new system.
- Develop a package of Statutory Document templates that schools should have.
- Continue to develop resources to support Governing Bodies to deal with specific procedures i.e. excess, complaints, staffing panels

## **CONTRACTS AND PERSONNEL UNIT**

### **Purpose**

Ensure that the schools receive the highest quality support service in the area of salaries and contracts on time and accurately.

### **Good features:**

- Staff in our schools continue to receive their wages correctly and on time every month.
- 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:**

- Continue to keep the supply staff list up to date in a spreadsheet for when the Supply Teachers 'hire' App is live. We are in the process of creating Supply Application Forms electronically, with the aim of getting these out as soon as possible to facilitate registration to be on the list.
- Following the creation of a final Employment Statement for teachers, aiming to start sending out the statements by Easter 2023 for new staff.
- Using less paper by sending statements/contracts out electronically.
- Continue to encourage headteachers to make sure all learning staff and learning support assistants are registered with the Education Workforce Council and have completed the DBS process before they start school. The electronic DBS checking system that has been put in place facilitates the process.
- Create electronic work schedules and forms for schools.
- Continue with the task of transferring the paper files of all school staff into electronic files.

## **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:**

- Plan and implement the ability to provide free school meal to every child in Reception and Year 1 by September 2022.
- 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 working 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.
- 5 secondary schools have agreed to take part in a free breakfast scheme for Year 7 learners.
- Keeping schools clean and safe.

### **Priorities for the next period:**

- Continue to work on getting the primary schools ready to provide a free school meal for Reception and Year 1 in September 2022, Year 2 in January 2023, and the remaining primary learners by September 2023.
- 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
- Continue to support the Secondary Schools in the process of collecting school lunch arrears.

## **TRANSPORT**

### **Purpose**

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.
- Transport is arranged for post-16 learners.
- The ability to purchase a free post-16 travel e-ticket reducing barriers for Gwynedd's young people to further education.
- The Gwynedd Transport Policy complies with the 'Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008'.

### **Priorities for the next period**

- Continue to ensure efficiency of service by constantly reviewing existing criteria and systems.
- Ask the views of Gwynedd's young people about the service.

## **EDUCATION BUSINESS CENTRE**

### **Purpose**

Support the effective management of schools in Gwynedd.

The Centre supports 79 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:**

- Following the expiration of the small and rural schools grant at the end of March 2022, the Education Business Centre has continued with the additional administrative support service provided to head teachers out in schools as well as providing a school phone answering scheme for some schools with the schools now funding the service.
- Orders from schools for purchasing goods / services through the Education Business Centre credit card continue to increase which shows that schools are benefiting from the service.

### **Priorities for the next 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.
- Introduce a new more effective and efficient regime for paying for schools goods and services.
- Introduce the Education Business Centre's new intranet through Hwb to the schools for communication, information sharing and good practice with schools
- Develop the Business Education Centre Team further in different fields.