

Appendix 3

Gwynedd Schools Strategy 2026 - 2036 questionnaire results

1. Introduction

This report presents an analysis of the responses received to the engagement questionnaire on the Gwynedd Schools Strategy 2026 - 2036. Its purpose is to provide the Cabinet with a clear, balanced and transparent picture of the nature of the responses, the level of representation, and the main themes raised, in order to inform strategic decisions about the development and implementation of the Strategy.

2. Background to the Engagement

The engagement was carried out as an integral part of the process of formulating a Schools Strategy for the next decade. The questionnaire was targeted at a wide range of stakeholders, including schools, governing bodies and education staff. The engagement was widely promoted across the education sector, including through the Primary and Special Catchment Advisory Group, the Secondary Strategic Planning Group, Education Department Staff, Gwynedd School Heads as well as the Gwynedd Governors' Forum.

3. Size of Responses and Representation

19 responses to the questionnaire were received. The profile of the respondents is as follows:

- **9 School governors**
- **4 Primary school representatives**
- **6 responses in the "Other" category**, including individuals or organisations such as education staff.

Over half of the responses have come from governors, who are stakeholders with a direct understanding of the education system and the strategic implications of the Strategy.

However, it is important to put these numbers in context. Gwynedd's schools estate consists of 94 schools, along with hundreds of governors, thousands of staff and extensive local communities. The responses are most useful as qualitative evidence.

4. Overall Impression of the Strategy

The responses show support for the strategic direction of the document. Respondents acknowledge:

- That the Strategy realistically reflects the demographic, financial and educational challenges facing the county.
- That a clear vision be set for the planning of school provision in the medium and long term.
- That the emphasis on the Welsh language and bilingualism is appropriate and consistent with Gwynedd's identity and aspirations.

At the same time, it is noted that the document is fairly high-level at times.

5. Key Themes

5.1 Sustainability of the School Network

The sustainability of the school network is a clear theme:

- An understanding is expressed of the need to review the current provision, particularly where pupil numbers are low.
- There is support for the principle of reorganisation, including the merger or closure of schools, to ensure efficient use of resources.

However, concern is expressed regarding:

- The potential impact of school closures on local communities.
- Implications for community cohesion and the use of Welsh outside the classroom.

5.2 The Welsh Language and Immersion Education

There is very strong support for the Strategy in terms of:

- Confirming Welsh education as the mainstream of education in the county.
- Developing and strengthening the provision of immersive education.

At the same time, there is a demand for:

- Clear arrangements to monitor and evaluate pupils' linguistic progress.
- Assurance that schools will receive appropriate practical support, training and resources to realise the linguistic ambitions of the Strategy.

5.3 The Education Workforce

Concerns about the workforce are a cross-cutting theme:

- Concern about workload, staff recruitment and retention.
- Recognising that the success of the Strategy depends on a skilled, supportive and sustainable workforce.

While the Strategy recognises these issues at a strategic level, there is a demand for practical action to support staff.

5.4 Pupil Welfare and Educational Experience

Respondents emphasise that:

- Pupils' welfare is a central consideration in any structural change.
- School size and pastoral provision are key factors in the planning of the school network.

There is a clear expectation that learners' educational experience and emotional welfare will be central to all decisions.

5.5 Implementation, Governance and Monitoring

There is a clear demand for:

- A detailed framework for action, with clear steps, timetables and responsibilities.
- Robust arrangements for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating the progress of the Strategy.
- Assurance that the Strategy will remain a live document capable of responding to changes in circumstances.

6. Conclusion

The engagement has provided useful feedback on the direction of the Gwynedd Schools Strategy 2026 - 2036. Although the number of responses is relatively low given the size of the school estate and the degree of engagement, the responses identify consistent and relevant themes.

In summary, the feedback underlines:

- Overall support for the strategic direction of the document.
- The need to balance financial and strategic sustainability with community sensitivity.
- The importance of the Welsh language, the welfare of the workforce and pupils as core pillars of the Strategy.
- A clear expectation for clarity, transparency and collaboration when moving to implementation.

The Schools Strategy is generally seen as a robust, ambitious and forward-looking document, with broad support for its vision and emphasis on quality, welfare and the Welsh language. At the same time, the responses underline that the success of the Strategy depends heavily on clear action.

This analysis should be regarded as supporting evidence to assist the Cabinet in making informed decisions on the future of school provision in Gwynedd.