



Education Department



The purpose of the Education Department is to ensure that Gwynedd's children and young people receive the best education and experiences in our schools to enable them to reach the highest standards and to foster the qualifications and skills that enable them to live and prosper.

SCHOOLS SERVICE

Supporting Schools Leadership, Management and Governance

It is the responsibility of the Education Department to promote effective leadership, management and governance in our schools by supporting, equipping and holding schools' management teams and governance bodies accountable. This is done in many ways depending on the individual needs of schools.

In terms of the effective leadership and management of our schools, support is given by providing an experienced headteacher as mentor to each new headteacher in their first year in post. This is also done through a motivational programme jointly devised by the Education Department and the Learning and Development Service for head teachers, management teams and middle managers in schools.

The Education Department provides support for governors by ensuring that they understand their role and operate effectively. This is done by providing them with strategic and practical support as necessary, advising them appropriately, as well as by providing a programme of training to ensure the effective governance of our schools. The Education Department also has intervention powers to be used when a school is not being properly governed.

Schools Improvement Service

It is the responsibility of the Education Department and GwE, in partnership with our schools, to educate our children and our schools' results are consistently good. GwE is a schools improvement service, which works on behalf of the six Local Authorities in north Wales, to lead, organise and coordinate improvements in schools' performance.

The partnership between the Education Department and GwE provides our schools with both support and challenge in order to improve the quality of classroom learning and teaching, to support leaders to improve the quality of the leadership in our schools - this all serves to further improve results for our children and young people.

In Gwynedd, there are 83 primary schools, 12 secondary schools, 2 special schools and 2 all-through schools.

Performance

The schools provide inclusive education for children and young people up to 16 years of age. In Gwynedd, post-16 education is provided in partnership with the colleges and secondary schools in Arfon, Coleg Meirion-Dwyfor (Grŵp Llandrillo Menai) in Dwyfor and Meirionnydd, and Ysgol Godre'r Berwyn in the Bala area.

Welsh Government has given clear direction to Local Authorities not to publish the summer 2019 educational results, and discussions are ongoing with the Welsh Government regarding the manner in which Education Authorities may be held accountable for their performance in the absence of comparative data on performance across Wales.

Transforming the schools system

Following consultation on the sustainability of the education system in Gwynedd, along with general concerns that the current schools system is not sustainable, the Council Cabinet adopted the following, fit-for-purpose educational principles that will form the basis for realising the Education Department's vision and develop the system in order to ensure high-quality education for the children and young people of Gwynedd for the twenty-first century, namely:

- A system of viable secondary schools
- No more than two age ranges within the same class in the primary sector
- Approximately 80% of non-contact time for the Head teacher to concentrate on leadership issues in the primary sector.

Having adopted these principles, this field will become a part of the department's day-to-day work, as it is anticipated that implementing the principles across the system, during the period of this Council, will not be a swift process. We will proceed cautiously to ensure that the education system can respond to the enormous changes on the horizon, such as changes to the schools inspection procedure (Estyn), along with very significant changes to the curriculum and the organisation of our schools in light of the recommendations in Professor Donaldson's report.

Strengthening Leadership

School leadership is vital in order to secure the best outcomes for learners. This project emerged in a period where there was a shortage of applicants for some leadership positions in schools, but the situation has improved by now, and in light of the development of the *GwE Professional Offer* which contains a comprehensive catalogue of training to develop leaders, middle managers and practitioners at all levels in our schools. We will, however, continue to respond to the needs of leaders and aspiring leaders in our schools by providing them with mentoring and motivational sessions along with valuable experiences when opportunities arise for us to do so.

EDUCATION MODERNISATION TEAM

Some of our school buildings are old and are unsuitable to meet the learning and teaching needs of our children in future. The purpose of this service is to plan and realise innovative projects to adapt or build new schools for Gwynedd's children and young people to be educated in the best possible learning environment to enable them to prosper.

During the period from 2012-2022, the Council succeeded in investing £69 million to improve the condition and learning environments of schools for the benefit of the county's children:

- Ysgol yr Hendre, Caernarfon
- Ysgol OM Edwards, Llanuwchllyn
- Ysgol Craig y Deryn, Llanegryn
- Ysgol Penybryn, Tywyn
- Ysgol Bro Llifon, Groeslon
- Ysgol Hafod Lon, Penrhyndeudraeth
- Ysgol Glancegin, Maesgeirchen
- Ysgol Bro Idris, Dolgellau Catchment Area
- Ysgol Godre'r Berwyn, Y Bala
- Ysgol y Garnedd and Ysgol y Faenol, Bangor
- Ysgol Trefferthyr, Cricieth

The Education Modernisation Team is developing viable education provision models that seek to:

- ensure a first class learning environment for children and staff in Gwynedd schools
- improve the conditions and circumstances for head teachers to enable them to lead and manage schools effectively and efficiently
- ensure the most effective and best use of the Education Department's budget



Post-16 Provision

Improvement Priority 2



The manner in which post-16 education is provided varies throughout the county. Post-16 education is provided in partnership with the secondary schools and colleges in Arfon, by Coleg Meirion-Dwyfor (Grŵp Llandrillo Menai) in Dwyfor and Meirionnydd, and Ysgol Godre'r Berwyn in the Bala area.

A desktop research exercise has been conducted, along with fieldwork with key stakeholders, in order to consider the merits of the various provisions currently in operation, along with opportunities and challenges for the future. The intention is to prepare a report on the current provision throughout the county that will form a basis for considering whether or not there is a case for changing the post-16 provision in the future.

Bangor Catchment Area

Improvement Priority 2



A number of primary schools in the Bangor catchment area (and in particular the Penrhosgarnedd area) are full or overflowing. We have managed to secure funding from Welsh Government to invest in education provision within the catchment area, which the Council will match by providing half the money, along with contributions received in relation to granting planning permission for a new housing development in the area.

We have reviewed the primary education provision in Bangor, and the Cabinet has approved a £12.7m plan. As part of this plan, Ysgol y Garnedd will have a new building for 420 learners, the construction of which will be completed by September 2020. We have also commenced the work of adapting the Ysgol y Faenol building and surrounding site in order to accommodate 315 learners and create a community space. Some difficulties beyond our control have caused the completion of the Ysgol y Faenol project to be delayed until January 2021.

Trefferthyr Catchment Area, Cricieth

Improvement Priority 2



The Council has decided to build a new primary school in the Trefferthyr catchment area, in Cricieth, due to the poor condition of the existing building.

We will complete the planning and construction work for the new building by September 2021. Work is progressing well, and the school will gain facilities for the early years and a space for the cylch meithrin.

Meirionnydd Collaboration

Improvement Priority 2



The Education Department has recently been working in collaboration with Meirionnydd secondary schools in looking at the current arrangements for the provision of secondary education in the area.

This has involved identifying the challenges faced by the schools due to their size in terms of recruiting teachers, middle managers and leaders.

There is an intention to conduct joint research with the schools' head teachers in order to find creative solutions that would lead to further collaboration between Meirionnydd schools with the aim of ensuring that the quality of the education is consistently good and sustainable for the future.

ADDITIONAL LEARNING NEEDS (ALN) SERVICE

The service supports children and young people with Additional Learning Needs - which include specific areas of learning needs, communication and interaction, visual impairment, hearing impairment and medical/physical needs.

The service provides early intervention and support that is tailored for each individual pupil through a team of specialist teachers and assistants. Support is offered to schools through the Psychology Service. Every pupil has full access to Gwynedd schools, thereby ensuring that every child reaches his or her full potential.

Transforming the Additional Learning Needs and Inclusion provision

Improvement Priority 2



Work has already been done to transform the additional learning needs and inclusion service, with the aim of ensuring that those children and young people who need it have access to the most suitable support to enable them to fulfil their potential. This service is now provided throughout Gwynedd and Anglesey, and in light of this transformation, the focus has been and continues to be on training and equipping our schools' workforce with the necessary skills and understanding to enable them to support our most vulnerable children and young people to fulfil their potential. Work is ongoing to develop the service further in some areas, such as the early years and post-16.

We will continue to develop the support in the classroom and how it is organised, with regard in particular to pre-school provision, post-16 provision and special schools. We will also build on the existing partnership work between our special schools and with the authority's mainstream schools in order to enhance the learning experiences of children with severe and complex needs. The crux of this work will be to ensure that our systems comply with the requirements of the new Additional Learning Needs legislation for Wales.

WELFARE AND INCLUSION SERVICE

The welfare and inclusion service supports schools to promote attendance, positive behaviour and support for children and young people who experience behavioural, emotional and/or social development difficulties. This support is delivered by a team of specialist teachers, welfare officers, school counsellors and specialist assistants.

We ensure that pupils with emotional and behavioural needs are fully included within Gwynedd schools through training, support in the classroom and the provision of behaviour support services outside mainstream schools. The welfare service promotes attendance by working with pupils, schools and families. Attendance at Gwynedd schools over the last three years has been consistently good.

Percentage of pupil attendance in schools ✓

Primary	95.3%	94.8%	94.8%
	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Secondary	95.2%	94.7%	94.5%
	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19

Number of permanent exclusions in schools			
academic year to summer -	2018	2019	
Primary	5.2%	1.7%	
Secondary	5.3%	3.4%	

Although attendance is high and the rate of permanent exclusions is low, the challenge of maintaining and promoting welfare and inclusion is intensifying with an increasing number of pupils exhibiting challenging behaviour. The service will ensure that our schools receive appropriate training and support to meet the challenge.

Underlying all of this, the service provides specialist guidance in the field of safeguarding. Specialist training and advice is provided to schools across the Authority.

THE WELSH LANGUAGE

The Welsh language permeates through all of the Education Department's work and services. The statutory document 'Welsh in Education Strategic Plan' sets out clear expectations for the department and our schools in terms of Welsh as a subject and as a teaching medium. In 2020-21, in accordance with the new regulations which came into force on 1 January 2020, we will prepare and consult upon a new document, the 'Welsh in Education Strategic Plan', which will replace the existing document in September 2021. The new plan will cover a period of 10 years in order to align with and support the Welsh Government's targets as stated in its *Cymraeg 2050* strategy.



Gwynedd has led the pioneering work of influencing children's social use of the Welsh language in primary schools through the Welsh Language Charter. The purpose of the Charter is to encourage children to speak Welsh outside the classroom, and to ensure participation from all members of the school community in order to achieve this aim. The department has also provided guidance and support to Welsh Government in the national roll-out of the Language Charter.

Gwynedd is the only county in Wales that has established a Secondary Sector Language Strategy as a progression of the Language Charter, and both the primary and secondary schools were all eager to see clear continuity with respect to the Language Charter. One fundamental distinction in the context of the Secondary Sector Language Strategy is that it involves the promotion of both formal and informal use of the Welsh language.

Promoting the Use of Welsh by Children and Young People

Improvement Priority 5



Due to the success of the Charter, there has been an increasing demand to ensure progression in secondary schools. Evidence from research commissioned by the Education Department demonstrates the need for a plan and a strategy to promote the curricular and social use of the Welsh language in our secondary schools. We have been working in collaboration with all secondary schools to produce an individual action plan in response to the vision and requirements contained within the Secondary Sector Language Strategy, with particular attention paid to the language medium of the provision in all areas of the curriculum in Key Stages 3, 4 and 5.

We continue to employ a Primary Sector Language Charter Coordinator along with a Secondary Sector Language Strategy Co-ordinator who will provide the appropriate challenge and support to both our primary and secondary schools in order to positively influence children and young people's use of the Welsh language. Following the success of the Language Charter in Gwynedd, the Welsh Government Language Charter Framework will come into force during 2020-21; this new Framework includes the primary and secondary sectors, and we will focus on supporting every school to operate in compliance with the new national requirements. At the same time we will continue to collaborate with secondary schools on the language medium of the provision in all areas of the curriculum. To this end, each school and cluster will have an individual action plan which will respond to the needs and linguistic context of the school and the surrounding community in order to raise the status of the Welsh language and provide more opportunities for children and young people to use Welsh in both formal and informal situations.

The department also maintains Language Centres that provide intensive Welsh language courses for incomers to enable them to learn Welsh and contribute to Gwynedd's educational and social life. These centres help our primary and secondary schools implement the Welsh Language Policy.

SCHOOLS BUSINESS CENTRE

For some time now, there has been considerable concern among head teachers regarding their working conditions, as they have to fulfil a number of different roles; as leaders, managers, teachers and administrators. Without exception, Estyn inspections have highlighted that effective leadership, together with adequate resources and time, results in good education and high standards.

In September 2019 we established the Schools Business Centre in order to develop the help and support provided to our schools, to rationalise it and share the managerial burden. The core function of the Schools Business Centre is to provide an information management (SIMS) service to primary schools, and there is also a focus on providing service level agreements to primary schools for services such as written and simultaneous translation for schools, and also on reducing the managerial and administrative workloads of head teachers and teachers.

RESOURCES SERVICE

The purpose of this service is to provide the necessary statutory support for Gwynedd schools to operate on a daily basis. The service includes schools admissions, staff salaries and contracts, cleaning, catering and healthy eating schemes and school transport. It also provides support for schools with finance, human resources, health and safety and information and communication technology. The service also provides support to governors.

The department's day to day work contributes towards the following Gwynedd Well-being Objectives by ensuring that residents can:

Enjoy happy, healthy and safe lives

Receive education of the highest quality which will enable us to do what we want

Live in a natural Welsh society

Live with dignity and independently for as long as possible.