

# BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

## REPORT TO SUBJECT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 1

14 MARCH 2022

### REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR - EDUCATION AND FAMILY SUPPORT

#### BRIDGEND LOCAL GOVERNMENT EDUCATION SERVICES POST-INSPECTION ACTION PLAN UPDATE

#### 1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update in respect of Bridgend's Local Government Education Services' Post-Inspection Action Plan.

#### 2. Connection to corporate well-being objectives/other corporate priorities

- 2.1 This report assists in the achievement of the following corporate well-being objectives under the **Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015**:

**Supporting a successful sustainable economy** - taking steps to make the county borough a great place to do business, for people to live, work, study and visit, and to ensure that our schools are focused on raising the skills, qualifications and ambitions for all people in the county borough.

**Helping people and communities to be more healthy and resilient** - taking steps to reduce or prevent people from becoming vulnerable or dependent on the Council and its services. Supporting individuals and communities to build resilience, and enable them to develop solutions to have active, healthy and independent lives.

**Smarter use of resources** - ensure that all resources (financial, physical, ecological, human and technological) are used as effectively and efficiently as possible and support the creation of resources throughout the community that can help to deliver the Council's well-being objectives.

#### 3. Background

- 3.1 Bridgend's Local Government Education Services (LGES) were inspected by Estyn in March 2019. The inspection report, published in May 2019, may be found here:

<https://www.estyn.gov.wales/provider/6729999>

- 3.2 While the report was largely positive, Estyn made four recommendations:

- R1 Raise standards of literacy in primary schools
- R2 Improve outcomes for post-16 learners in sixth forms
- R3 Increase the pace of improvement in schools causing concern
- R4 Strengthen the role of the Welsh Education Strategic Forum (WESP) to ensure timely progress in delivering the priorities identified in the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan.

3.3 The inspection report also identified a number of additional areas for improvement, as follows:

#### **Inspection Area 1 Outcomes**

- Inspection outcomes for primary schools
- Outcomes for young offenders
- Destination data relating to Year 11 leavers
- Recognised accreditations achieved by young people in non-formal settings (youth support)

#### **Inspection Area 2 Education services**

- Weak teaching in 'schools causing concern' is taking too long to improve
- School improvement evaluations focus too much on data rather than on the standards pupils achieve
- Current data tracking systems are under-developed (eg ability to monitor learners needs to be improved)
- Performance of more able and talented learners
- Evaluation of services for learners with emotional, social and behavioural difficulties (ESBD)
- Knowledge in relation to the progress made by young carers

#### **Inspection Area 2 Leadership and management**

- Involvement of school staff in reporting outcomes to elected members
- Monitoring impact of training in schools

### **4. Current situation/proposal**

4.1 Following the inspection, the local authority developed a post-inspection action plan (PIAP) to ensure the areas for improvement identified within the Estyn report would be addressed.

4.2 The local authority maintained the following processes to assist in the effective monitoring of the PIAP.

#### **Performance and Financial Monitoring Board**

4.3 A Performance and Financial Monitoring Board comprised of senior managers from the Education and Family Support Directorate, Central South Consortium's Principal Improvement Partner and officers from HR and Finance meets monthly to review the performance of all schools. This allows the local authority to identify early any cause for concern that needs to be addressed. It reports and makes recommendations for action directly to the School Improvement Group.

#### **School Improvement Group**

4.4 The School Improvement Group is comprised of the Leader of Bridgend County Borough Council, the Deputy Leader of the Council, the Cabinet Member for Education and Regeneration, the Chair of Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee

1, the Chief Executive, senior managers from the Education and Family Support Directorate, Central South Consortium's Principal Improvement Partner and officers from HR and Finance. The School Improvement Group meets every half term to review any schools causing concern and to make decisions based on recommendations from the Performance and Financial Monitoring Board. The School Improvement Group plays an integral role in school improvement and provides a high level of scrutiny.

### **Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 1**

- 4.5 Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 1 is comprised of elected members, and supported by Democratic Services is designed to hold executive officers and Cabinet members to account over decisions that are made. The committee makes reports and recommendations which advise the Cabinet and the Council on its policies, budget and service delivery. The committee supports the work of the Council as a whole in the improvement of public services.

### **Business Plan Progress Tracker**

- 4.6 In 2020, the Education and Family Support Directorate introduced a Business Plan Progress Tracker to support its ongoing self-evaluation and business planning processes.
- 4.7 The Business Plan Progress Tracker illustrates progress against each of the inspection report's four recommendations and identified areas for improvement. This helps to identify the areas of good practice and areas for development/improvement and feeds directly into the directorate's business planning cycle.

### **Progress against the four recommendations**

- 4.8 The following progress has been reported in respect of each of the **four recommendations**.

#### **R1 Raise standards of literacy in primary schools**

- The local authority and Central South Consortium have worked in close partnership to offer effective support to all primary schools in developing and improving literacy.
- Improvement partners linked to all schools work with senior leaders to support in the development of effective self-evaluation and subsequent improvement planning.
- Where a school identifies that literacy is an area for improvement then suitable support is brokered by the improvement partner to meet the needs of the school. For example, in one primary school, there was requirement for improvements in spelling and extended writing. As a result of this need, a specialist team of literacy advisers worked with the school over the period of two terms. This resulted in improvement in all pupils' writing and spelling.
- Central South Consortium also offers a significant professional learning offer aimed at supporting schools with various initiatives and programmes. Take-up of

the professional learning offer in Bridgend is good with many schools accessing programmes. For example, Central South Consortium has funded schools to access an expert writing programme which helps schools to understand how effective their pupils' writing is and offers way for schools to improve their practice.

- Schools also have the opportunity to attend primary literacy network meetings on a termly basis to share interesting practice and stay updated with local, regional and national updates. Central South Consortium provides schools with a knowledge bank of case studies linked to effective practice in primary literacy.
- Based on an annual survey completed by all schools, the professional learning provided by Central South Consortium is amended to meet the emerging pattern of need.
- All schools with a school improvement priority linked to literacy are currently reporting that they are on track to meet their target and are receiving the support they require.
- School self-evaluation documents have identified the need to monitor the standards of literacy in primary schools closely due to the disruption caused by the pandemic. This is a target on all primary school improvement plans.
- The changes to published performance measures (as directed by Welsh Government in July 2019) mean that schools will need to monitor pupil progress.
- Several literacy initiatives offered by Central South consortium have been adopted by schools including 'Reading Reconsidered', 'Writing Revolution' and 'Voice 21'.
- School self-evaluation documents have identified the need to monitor the standards of literacy in primary schools closely due to the disruption caused by the pandemic. This is a target on all primary school improvement plans.
- The changes to published performance measures mean that schools will need to monitor pupil progress.
- The 'Snippets of Success' document has highlighted some of the positive work of primary schools in Bridgend, with one school implementing some of the strategies shared to develop science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) through their whole-class literacy text. The 'You can put it together' project demonstrated how a story book can be used effectively in developing cross curricular skills using a multi-disciplinary approach.
- Since the local authority LGES inspection, five out of the six schools that received full inspections in Bridgend have received a judgement of 'good' for their standards.
- Within one inspection report, it was commented how most pupils enter the school with language and numeracy skills that are below those expected for pupils of their age. As they move through the school, most pupils make good

progress in improving their literacy, numeracy, Welsh and information and communication technology (ICT) skills from their starting points.

- Another inspection report highlighted that pupils are able to write extensively, adapting their style to suit their purpose and intended audience. Many write well at length in various contexts.
- In the last school year, school clusters were in receipt of £10k per cluster plus individual funding from the Regional Consortia School Improvement Grant (RCSIG) for schools to develop literacy (as per their cluster plans). It is expected that the pending establishment of a deputy headteacher group for primary school practitioners will help the local authority to collate evidence of, and share, good practice of literacy within Bridgend helping to raise standards further.

## **R2 Improve outcomes for post-16 learners in sixth forms**

- The changes to assessment procedures (with centre assessed grades and centre determined grades) and changes to the reporting of outcome measures during the pandemic make it impossible to compare outcomes for cohorts of post-16 learners in sixth forms.
- However, schools are reporting that many learners have exceeded their expectations and have not been disadvantaged and have been successful in their university applications.
- The well-established post-16 Seren Academy Network provides evidence indicating how learners have progressed through the opportunities presented by Seren Academy. The destination report required by Welsh Government for Seren tracks the successes and is an indication as to how well learners have done in achieving places at Russell Group Universities.
- The post-16 Cabinet report (July 2021) recommended that schools retain their sixth forms for the foreseeable future and requires schools 'to work together to deliver on a range of improvements to the current situation'. With this in mind, the long-established Curriculum Development Leaders Group meets monthly to further develop and implement the collaborative work to ensure that all learners in Bridgend County Borough Council receive the most varied option choices at post-16.
- The alignment of option blocks on the sixth-form timetable has helped increase access to courses offered by schools and Bridgend College and allows for the development of additional courses to be added. With the support of the Post-14 Strategic Partnership Group, the Curriculum Development Leaders Group is currently considering how greater use of blended learning may increase options offered in the next school year. This may involve some shared teaching between schools, further increasing the means of collaborative working.
- The recommendations for a more 'blended learning' approach is at the forefront of the Curriculum Development Leaders Group agenda. Schools are discussing how they can limit travel between schools by offering a 'hybrid' approach to teaching (contributing to the reduction in carbon emissions, transport costs for schools and improving time effectiveness for learners). Discussions have

included particular subjects being taught by two schools where staff from each school teach an element of the course. 'Learner voice' will be considered in these developments and will play an integral role in evaluating the quality of this provision.

- The local authority, through the Welsh Government Hwb Infrastructure Grant, has provided laptops to all post-16 learners attending Bridgend schools. This has had a significant impact in allowing learners to work flexibly at home and in school and to help bridge the gap in learning that the COVID-19 pandemic has produced. 'Learner voice' activities in schools reveal that this development has been well received by learners and they have noted positive outcomes as a result.
- All secondary schools have access to 'UCAS Gold' paid for by the local authority. This service produces final destination reports about those learners who applied to university. This service provides schools with the following information allowing them to meet the needs of the learners more efficiently and accurately: a monthly key statistics report, an annual destination map, an annual progression report and an annual competitor report. The report is usually sent to schools in December.
- The local authority's long-established Heads of Sixth Form Network allows all nine secondary school Heads of Sixth Form to meet every half-term to discuss pertinent areas at post-16. Each meeting has a set agenda and minutes are taken and disseminated to the network members. The network also feeds into the Curriculum Development Leaders Group agenda facilitating clear communications about post-16 matters and alignment of agendas.
- Members of the Heads of Sixth Form network make use of a Hwb Teams file created to collate information and resources that can be shared across the schools. It is a 'one-stop-shop' area for all to access information and work more effectively.
- From the Heads of Sixth Form Meetings, it became clear that schools needed some extra support with providing work experience, apprenticeship opportunities and university research. To assist with this, the local authority has funded all secondary schools with a one-year licence for Springpod and this has been met with enthusiasm by Heads of Sixth Form, curriculum leaders and headteacher members of the Post-14 Strategic Partnership Group. Springpod is an online platform that allows learners to search and be part of virtual work experience and apprenticeship schemes that are suitable for their future career aspirations. Springpod works well alongside Unifrog – a platform offering impartial advice about universities in the UK and around the world and supporting learners to create their personal statements and UCAS references in preparation for their UCAS applications. Unifrog licences for all schools are also paid for by Bridgend County Borough Council. Quantitative data can also be given by Unifrog in terms of use by all schools.
- Heads of Sixth Form have access to Central South Consortium's Post-16 Partnership meetings to gain knowledge on what is happening across the region. It provides Heads of Sixth Forms with the opportunities to share and learn from good practice in a bid to improve post-16 outcomes.

- The Welsh Government 'Recruit, Recover and Raise Standards (RRRS) and Learner Recovery and Progression funding has made a significant impact on how schools can support learners both academically and with mental health concerns. Schools have been able to give learners a bespoke package of support that is right for them, as noted in the Estyn thematic report (January 2021).
- Learner voice activities have enabled schools to implement strategies and interventions in support of their learners' needs. Schools have been able to use the money to employ additional staff in supporting the learners (eg wellbeing coaches) and to offer wellbeing activities as well as extra subject specific sessions and transition activities to assist learners in their decisions beyond age 16. Heads of Sixth Form noted the positive impact of these transition activities.
- Welsh Government's 'Winter of Wellbeing' funding has allowed schools to develop further initiatives to support learners. Heads of Sixth Form meetings facilitate the sharing of good practice in this respect and they can work collaboratively together in supporting learners if they wish.
- Sixth-form students have had the opportunity to offer direct feedback to the directorate, elected members and to the scrutiny committee through learner voice activities. This feedback helped to shape and modify the blended learning offer.

### **R3 Increase the pace of improvement in schools causing concern**

- Monitoring processes have been established to assist with identifying any cause for concern as early as possible and to accelerate the pace of improvement in schools causing concern.
- The schools placed in the special measures category since the local authority LGES inspection have now all been removed from that category and continue to be supported by the local authority and Central South Consortium according to their needs.
- The monitoring activities identified in this report have enabled far closer monitoring of individual school performance and any related issues.
- Working in close partnership, the local authority and Central South Consortium have provided each school causing concern with a significant and purposeful bespoke package of support to meet their specific needs. The package of support was developed by the school's improvement partner and agreed with the school and local authority.
- For example, in one primary school this meant that they were receiving support to develop teaching and learning, support to improve literacy and numeracy, support to enhance the governing body and additional support from an additional specialist consultant to help improve leadership and management.
- Timely monitoring processes are used with all schools causing concern to ensure that improvements are kept on-track and that any barriers can be overcome. A particularly strong feature is how information from progress review

meetings is then escalated to School Improvement Group meetings, allowing all key stakeholder to remain updated.

- Informed by the progress review meetings, the School Improvement Group has made timely and evidence-informed decisions to use statutory powers when necessary. This has included issuing warning notices and exercising the right to disband a governing body and establish an interim executive board.
- The local authority and Central South Consortium have also made very effective use of deploying brokered leadership support, using existing expert headteachers to support and in some cases run schools. For example, a headteacher of one Bridgend primary school filled an executive headteacher role in another Bridgend primary school and was instrumental in moving the school out of 'special measures'.
- In another example, in order to increase the pace of improvement in one Bridgend secondary school, the local authority has had direct engagement with trade unions involving members of HR and the Corporate Director of Education and Family Support.
- The local authority has offered Learner Support assistance (eg behaviour support/wrap-around support from the Inclusion Service) in several Bridgend schools over the past three years. In one example, the work of the Inclusion Service played a significant role in assisting the improvement journey of one Bridgend primary school in 'special measures'.
- The local authority made a capital investment to replace a double mobile classroom (which housed an infant observation unit for pupils with additional learning needs) at one Bridgend primary school with a fit-for-purpose facility. The teaching and ancillary rooms within the building and external spaces were designed to meet the specialist needs of the learners and are fully accessible in terms of the Equalities Act 2010. The building was handed over to the local authority from the contractor in November 2020.

#### **R4 Strengthen the role of the Welsh Education Strategic Forum to ensure timely progress in delivering the priorities identified in the WESP**

- The WESP Forum now meets on a termly basis and engages a range of key stakeholders and delivery partners. In addition, we have established several sub-groups to ensure the objectives set out in our WESP are progressed.
- For example, over the past two years, the following sub-groups have met:
  - Welsh Language Steering Sub-Group
  - Welsh-medium Childcare Sub-Group
  - Training and Apprenticeships Sub-Group
  - Geographical Assessment Sub-Group
  - School Modernisation Capital Investment Sub-Group



- Welsh-medium Secondary School Band C Provision Sub-Group
- The WESP Forum is comprised of local authority officers (including the Corporate Director of Education and Family Support), the Cabinet Member for Education and Regeneration and a range of external partners (eg Menter Bro Ogwr, Meithrin Cymru, RhAG, Urdd), teachers and headteachers from Welsh and English-medium schools, a chair of governors, and representatives from Bridgend College and Welsh Government. A clear terms of reference document has been developed by the Forum and this guides the work of the group.
- The Forum has worked in partnership to write the 10-year draft WESP 2022-2032. A day of planning took place in summer term 2021, engaging with external partners.
- The local authority has supported the proposal for the replacement and enlargement of two Welsh-medium primary schools planned to open in September 2024 and September 2025 respectively.
- An options appraisal is currently being undertaken to identify a potential site to relocate and enlarge the Welsh-medium secondary provision and co-locate a new one form-entry Welsh-medium primary school. This work is ongoing and would be subject to a future Cabinet decision.
- In January 2020, Cabinet gave approval in principle to a future commitment for the provision of a Welsh-medium one form-entry primary school in the Porthcawl area.
- The options appraisal process in respect of the new Welsh-medium childcare and seedling school at Porthcawl has concluded, and it is recommended that both provisions are co-located on one site. In September 2021, Cabinet gave approval for an expression of interest to be submitted to Welsh Government for Welsh-medium capital grant funding in respect of the seedling school.
- Bridgend County Borough Council has used the Welsh Government Hwb Infrastructure Grant to ensure all pupils attending Welsh-medium schools in Bridgend benefit from a one-to-one, pupil/device ratio.
- Three Welsh-medium early years childcare schemes are in process. Work has begun at Bettws and in the Ogmores Valley, and the options appraisal for Bridgend Town has been completed.
- The development with Welsh-medium early years provision continues to progress. Some examples are as follows:
  - There has been shared development of a Ti a Fi group at Bettws and Blackmill funded by Flying Start developed in collaboration between Flying Start Mudiad Meithrin and Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Calon y Cymoedd. There is potential for a further Ti a Fi group in partnership with Mudiad Meithrin, Flying Start and Ysgol Y Ferch o'r Sgêr at the Integrated Children's Centre in North Cornelly.

- A standalone Welsh-medium Flying Start childcare provision in Caerau has been established.
- A Welsh-medium, Flying Start-funded childcare provision available across Bridgend, in collaboration with local Cylch Meithrin settings, has been established.
- There has been an effective review of the 'Pam Dewis Gymraeg?' ('Why Choose Welsh?') booklet and digital information led by the Early Years Team in collaboration with members of a WESP working party.
- Welsh language training has been offered in collaboration with University of Wales Trinity St David's to a range of childcare settings with a focus on the Flying Start settings but reaching more widely.
- Fa La La - Welsh Medium gross/fine motor skills and communication package. The package includes training, supply costs and resources for all Bridgend childcare settings. This development was part of the Child Development Fund Grant from Welsh Government as part of the work to support children across Bridgend in the development of fine and gross motor skills. The package was extended to the parent cohort via digital platforms. This package includes CDs/activity cards and relevant resources to support the development of Welsh language skills.
- All non-maintained Foundation Phase settings have been allocated a £300 grant to specifically focus on the development of Welsh language development funded by the Welsh Government 'Recruit, Recover, Raise Standards' Grant.
- The Healthy and Sustainable Pre-School Officer is supporting some very exciting opportunities around the service offered by the local 'cooking bus' with bilingual sessions a focus. This support also offers Bridgend's childcare practitioners to benefit from the learning and increase their confidence in the use of the Welsh language.
- The 'Caffi Clebran' information for practitioners learning Welsh is regularly promoted on the Bridgend Early Years Facebook practitioner's group.
- Information from Welsh-medium partners is regularly shared on the Early Years Facebook page. This includes Menter Bro Ogwr, Mudiad Meithrin, and Cymraeg I Blant.
- Support has been provided for children and young people with additional learning needs. The Sensory Team has been developed to ensure we are now able to offer support to visually impaired learners to use Braille through the medium of Welsh. In the current financial year:
  - The learning resource centre for learners with autistic spectrum disorder (ASD LRC) at Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Llangynwyd is supported by £74,562 included in the schools delegated budget.

- The ASD LRC at Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Calon Y Cymoedd is supported by £86,659 included in the schools delegated budget.
- In addition, a budget of £30,920 for 2021-2022 is held centrally for support for pupils with moderate learning difficulties in Welsh-medium primary schools.
- Consultation began on 10 January 2022 on the establishment of an additional LRC for pupils with moderate learning difficulties (MLD) in a Welsh-medium primary school with effect from 1 September 2022.
- In October 2021, Bridgend submitted a bid for an Immersion Grant to Welsh Government which was successfully approved. The total amount of the bid is £97,780. The bid includes a research project with Vale of Glamorgan Council exploring Welsh-medium primary and secondary immersion, and a research project within Bridgend.
- During the 2021-2022 financial year, finance to support the Welsh language has been prioritised in the following ways:
  - Welsh-medium primary schools in Bridgend receive additional delegated budget of £5,100 per school.
  - Bridgend's Welsh-medium secondary school receives additional delegated budget of £20,915.
  - One Bridgend Welsh-medium primary school is continuing to benefit from the Welsh Government Grant for the Reduction of Infant Class Sizes. The grant was £71,182 for 2021-2022.
  - Welsh Government has confirmed further grant funding for 2022-2023 to fund the final term of the 2021-2022 school year.
  - There has been a Welsh-medium uplift in the post-16 grant for 2021-2022 allocated to Bridgend's Welsh-medium secondary school. The revised amount is £89,156.
- To improve communication, Bridgend County Borough Council has issued specific press releases and has carried out further related publicity, including social media promotion, on the following subjects:
  - 5 July 2021 - Publication of Welsh Language Standards report
  - 2 September 2021 - Welsh Language Strategy
  - 14 September 2021 – Plans for new Welsh medium seedling school
  - 21 September 2021 - WESP consultation
  - The Education and Family Support Directorate issues a Monday Mailshot to each week to all schools. This ensures that all mass communication with schools is issued in a bilingual format.

- Welsh-medium schools in Bridgend are proactively exploring ways to address the capacity of the workforce. There are examples where Welsh-medium schools are developing their own staff. For example, at Bridgend's Welsh-medium secondary school, putting non-teacher-qualified staff through the initial teacher training (ITT) route.
- All schools are encouraging student placements in their schools which will also be a way of possibly recruiting those staff. Welsh-medium headteachers are proactively seeking students in colleges as they are finishing their courses.
- The local authority and Central South Consortium continue to promote and signpost training opportunities for school staff and activities for pupils to support Welsh language education in Bridgend. Central South Consortium offers an extensive range of professional learning activities and coordinates the Cymraeg Campus awards to promote the language. Two Bridgend primary schools have recently been awarded the Cymraeg Campus Gold award.
- The local authority took a proactive stance during lockdown by developing multi-agency support for learners (and their parents) from non-Welsh speaking homes with maintaining their language skills. This included adding a page on the Bridgend County Borough Council website with resources linking to support from Central South Consortium and from outside agencies like Menter Bro Ogwr and the University of South Wales.

4.9 The following progress has been reported in respect of the identified **areas for improvement**.

### **Inspection Area 1 Outcomes**

#### **Inspection outcomes for primary schools**

- Due to the pandemic, there has been a suspension of school inspections with the exception of schools in an Estyn category.
- Schools have continued to be supported by the local authority and Central South Consortium.
- Improvement partners have remained in contact with schools to offer bespoke support to meet the needs of the schools and this has been well received by schools.
- Each of the primary schools who were judged to be in need of 'special measures' since the LGES inspection have since been re-inspected and judged to have made sufficient progress to be removed from that category.
- Following a desk-based review the one primary school placed in an 'Estyn review' category has now been judged to have made sufficient progress to be removed from 'Estyn review'.

#### **Outcomes for children known to the youth justice service**

- Monitoring systems are in place to ensure that learners known to the Bridgend Youth Justice Service (Bridgend YJS) are in receipt of their full entitlement of provision.
- Monthly multi-agency meetings are held to monitor the learners on reduced timetables and the reasons why (at statutory school age and at post-16).
- Where necessary professional meetings are convened for the young person and or referred to the Access to Education Panel.
- The aim is to ensure all professionals are clear on the current interventions, support plans in place and there is a holistic oversight for each young person and that all appropriate support, referrals and interventions are in place.
- Following a staffing restructure within the service 12 months ago, a new core-funded Senior Education Engagement Coordinator position was created to advocate for children deemed to be vulnerable in education to ensure they are able to access education that meets their needs.
- The role is designed to provide a single point of contact for schools and the youth justice service to support the children involved and to maintain a holistic view of the support being provided by education services and social services to facilitate communication and avoid duplication.
- In January 2022, there were 34 statutory school-aged children known to the Bridgend YJS and most of these are on full timetables, although one is not currently on roll at a school.
- In January 2022, there were 18 active interventions for post-16 learners known to the Bridgend YJS and of these one is not engaged in education due to a health issue and one is not engaged in education, employment or training. It is worth noting that the data are constantly changing as new cases come in and others are closed.
- Following the inspection in December 2018, the former Western Bay Youth Justice and Early Intervention Service (WBYJEIS) of which Bridgend was a part was subject to a Her Majesty's Inspectorate Probation (HMIP) Inspection (separate to Estyn inspection). The inspection concluded that the WBYJEIS received an overall rating of inadequate.
- In April 2019, following the outcome of the inspection, Bridgend's Cabinet agreed to the disaggregation of the WBYJEIS and that the new arrangement would be for the Bridgend's YJS to sit within the portfolio of an existing Group Manager within the Education and Family Support Directorate.
- Since this time, a structural change has been undertaken by the service to ensure there is adequate management oversight and direction of support for staff who work with young people who become known to the service, an increased emphasis on the quality and analysis of assessments completed ensuring risks of harm and safety and wellbeing are identified and addressed,

improvements to multi-agency working and closer collaboration with children social care, health, education, probation and police to assist in meeting the needs of young people and their families.

- Following the outcome of the HMIP inspection, an improvement plan (separate from the Estyn PIAP) was developed and has been reviewed regularly. In addition, the plan includes operational priorities identified by staff within the Bridgend YJS and areas for development identified by the National Standards Self-Assessment 2019-2020.
- Due to the time lapse of the last HMIP inspection (2018) and new National Standards being published (July 2021), a new self-assessment report has been developed in line with the new National Standards.
- Bridgend's YJS was re-inspected during the week commencing Monday 14 February 2022 by HMIP. As evidenced in the current self-assessment report, improvements have been made since the last inspection, but further improvements are required. Officers will provide elected members with an update in respect of the HMIP inspection of Bridgend YJS when the report is published (expected in March 2022).

### **Destination data relating to Year 11 leavers**

- As part of the Education and Family Support Directorate's self-evaluation processes, destination data has been identified as an area for development.
- Although the data relating to those learners who are not engaged in education, employment or training (NEET) show that since the inspection in February 2019, our performance has improved to the point whereby we have been above the all-Wales average, the last published dataset (2019-2020) was an exception whereby Bridgend experienced a large increase in NEET young people, specifically those waiting for placements in work-based learning.
- Since moving to a digital platform, work-based learner providers were taking cohorts on nationally on a 'first-come, first-served' basis every two weeks.
- 10 young people started their respective placements on 2 November 2020 (the following Monday from the Careers Wales destination snapshot that is taken on the 31 October each year), and a further 8 young people on the following cohort, 16 November 2020.
- Although schools are able to provide information about the destinations of Year 11 learners who remain in sixth forms, they are less clear about the destinations of learners who leave school after Year 11.

### **Recognised accreditations achieved by young people in non-formal settings (youth support)**

- Between the school years 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 there was an increase in the number of accreditations achieved by young people in non-formal settings and a significant increase in the number of recognised qualifications they achieved.

- However, there was a sharp decline in the following school year 2020-2021.
- The pandemic is likely to have been a contributing factor to this.
- Since the implementation of our Inspire 2 Achieve and Inspire 2 Work projects, delivery staff have been encouraged to focus the content of their intervention around the provision of accredited courses such as those provided through Agored Cymru.
- These courses allow for a personalised, person-centred approach to each intervention tailored to the needs of the young person, but also enable a more structured approach to sessions being delivered, while also ensuring a higher level of consistency of work being delivered between our locality hubs.
- To support the above activity, the service has invested in the role of an accreditation officer who oversees development of new courses, quality assurance, support for facilitators and establishing a digital library of resources and tutor packs.
- The drop-in accreditations being completed since the onset of the pandemic has been attributed to young people either having limited access to appropriate digital resources, or preferring a more direct (face-to-face) intervention to stay motivated to complete workbooks, something that has not been possible with a distanced learning model.
- New investment in our youth support service is planned for the 2022-2023 financial year. This will see an increase in local authority led open access youth provision and the development of more digital opportunities through the recruit of digital outreach workers.
- Both of these roles will enhance the opportunities young people will have to engage with services, and ultimately participate in recognised accreditations.

## **Inspection Area 2 Education services**

### **Weak teaching in 'schools causing concern' is taking too long to improve**

- There are no longer any schools in 'special measures' or requiring 'significant improvement' in Bridgend (as of March 2022).
- As part of the process to support them out of the category they were well supported in terms of the developing the leadership capacity in each school and although this process is unavoidably time-consuming, the new leadership arrangements have all impacted positively on standards of teaching and learning within the schools concerned.
- There has been strong support for schools causing concern by the local authority and Central South Consortium who continue to offer bespoke support and extensive professional learning to all schools to improve standards of teaching and learning and to avoid 'weak teaching' (as outlined under Recommendation 3 above).

- However, due to the disruption caused by the pandemic it has been difficult to monitor teaching consistently and this will need to be a focus as part of the pandemic recovery.

### **School improvement evaluations focus too much on data rather than on the standards pupils achieve**

- In light of Welsh Government changes to evaluation for improvement and accountability and to the revised Estyn framework, there has been a consequent change in emphasis to focus more on progress made rather than outcomes. This remains an area for development as progress has been impeded due to the disruption of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- One of the business plan targets is to ensure that 100% schools have effective self-evaluation processes in place. Central South Consortium Improvement Partners work with schools to validate targets for improvement and progress towards these targets is monitored in a termly basis and feedback is provided to the local authority to confirm whether schools are 'on track' or 'off track'.

### **Current data tracking systems are under-developed (eg ability to monitor learners needs to be improved)**

- It is recognised tracking specific groups of learners is problematic due to the small numbers of learners involved and/or the lack of intelligence about particular groups (eg adopted children are not always identifiable).
- The local authority is currently seeking to procure a management information system to assist with data tracking systems and to help identify specific groups of learners.
- As outlined above, the local authority has created a new role of Senior Education Engagement Coordinator to assist with tracking the progress of specific groups of learners (eg care-experienced children).

### **Performance of more able and talented learners**

- This is an area that has been identified for improvement across the local authority.
- The identification of more able and talented (MAT) learners is complicated and changeable and as a result there is no clearly defined register of MAT learners.
- As part of their self-evaluation processes, schools work with their improvement partners to assess the performance of all pupils to ensure that they make expected progress.
- An 'Equity and Excellence' document has been produced (and revised) by Central South Consortium and this focuses on the performance of all pupils at all stages of their learning (primary and secondary). It is likely that the document will form the main pillar of a local authority strategy to support MAT learners across Bridgend County Borough Council.



- The Bridgend Seren Network (in line with Welsh Government criteria) focuses on the 'more able' pupils especially in STEM subjects.
- As a local authority we have encouraged schools to identify as many pupils as possible from Year 8 to be part of the Seren Foundation Network (Years 8 to 11) to widen access to the opportunities offered.
- The local authority has funded schools' access to UCAS Gold in order to track the destinations of students who progress to university and this includes those who were part of the Seren Academy network (post-16).

### **Evaluation of services for learners with emotional, social and behavioural difficulties (ESBD)**

- The evaluation of services for learners with ESBD has led to the development of clear referral routes and a graduated response and this is reviewed annually.
- Referral forms have been amended in line with the recent additional learning needs (ALN) reform.
- During the time of the restructure in 2018, a specialist teacher with experience of autistic spectrum disorder (ASD) and a special support officer (SSO) joined the communications and relationships team (CART)
- An additional learning needs strategic provision review was undertaken by Peopletoo. We are currently in the process of implementing the recommendations from the review which includes reviewing provision for learners with ESBD.
- The delegated budget for one of the local authority's special schools has increased in order to meet the needs of learners with a diagnosis of autistic spectrum disorder (ASD). There has been an increase in classes at key stage 2.
- The provision at the local authority's pupil referral unit has been reviewed. A nurture class has opened which supports those pupils who do not have a Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) diagnosis to access the mental health and recovery provision at the local authority's pupil referral unit. We have also introduced an assessment class which affords the local authority the opportunity to monitor those pupils, for example those who move into the local authority. As of 1 April 2022, there will be a budget in place for those pupils who are educated other than at school (EOTAS)
- The Access to Education Panel is now embedded in practice. The Panel meets bi-monthly and a range of stakeholders are present at the Panel in order to be able to make informed decisions on placements for pupils.
- The Education Engagement Team provides each school in Bridgend with an allocated co-ordinator who acts as a single point of contact for issues related to vulnerable learners in school. The co-ordinator provides advice and information

to schools that relate to safeguarding, care experienced children, exclusions, training and support services that can assist schools to meet those learners needs most effectively.

- Access to Education Panel supports schools in identifying provision that can meet learners needs once issues begin to escalate within a school environment. The panel agrees support and provision to assist that school and that learner to remain within their current school or to plan a move to a more specialist provision (ie at one of Bridgend's special schools or at the local authority's pupil referral unit).

### **Knowledge in relation to the progress made by young carers**

- Monitoring the progress of specific groups (such as young carers) is an area identified for development.
- Where young carers are identified, they can be supported but it is clear that not all children who have caring responsibilities wish to be identified.
- The local authority employs a Young Carers Co-ordinator who undertakes assessments to determine young carers support needs. The co-ordinator, once identifying the child as a young carer, provides them with an ID card that the young carer can use to assist their identification and access benefits and support from within schools, leisure centres and public transport.
- In addition, there is a young carers project facilitated by Bridgend Carers Centre where those children can access group support with other young carers. The project provides activities that promote their identity and wellbeing as a child and as a young carer.

### **Inspection Area 3 Leadership and management**

#### **Involvement of school staff in reporting outcomes to elected members**

- School staff have the opportunity to report outcomes to elected members where they are members of the school governing body.
- School staff have been included in scrutiny committee meetings to provide feedback on the subject being reported (eg support from Central South Consortium and support for governors).
- Democratic Services have invited school staff engagement in Scrutiny sessions and the opportunity to participate in such meetings has been welcomed by participant headteachers, Scrutiny officers, and Chairs of Scrutiny committees as it increases consultation and helps to validate and/or challenge findings.

#### **Monitoring impact of training in schools**

- Central South Consortium produces a local authority performance report which includes the engagement with the professional learning offer to schools and as part of an improved evaluation of learning, the introduction of the Kirkpatrick

evaluation model helps all stakeholders gain a better understanding of outcomes and impact.

- To advance this work further, schools will need to consider the impact of the training received as part of their ongoing self-evaluation processes.

## **5. Effect upon policy framework and procedure rules**

5.1 There is no effect upon the policy framework or procedure rules.

## **6. Equality Act 2010 implications**

6.1 The protected characteristics identified within the Equality Act, Socio-economic Duty and the impact on the use of the Welsh Language have been considered in the preparation of this report.

6.2 As a public body in Wales, the Council must consider the impact of strategic decisions, such as the development or the review of policies, strategies, services and functions.

6.3 This is an information report. Therefore, it is not necessary to carry out an Equality Impact Assessment in the production of this report. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable equality impacts as a result of this report.

## **7. Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 Assessment**

7.1 The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 Assessment provides a comprehensive summary of the outcomes expected from the implementation of the service.

<b>Long-term</b>	Supports the improvement of standards and outcomes for children and young people.
<b>Prevention</b>	Development of post-inspection action plan helped to ensure that recommendations identified are addressed and acted upon to secure improvement of local government education services to benefit all children and young people, preventing standards from slipping and preventing young people from disengaging from education, employment and training.
<b>Integration</b>	Monitoring and acting upon the local authority inspection report is key to ensuring that outcomes for children and young people are achieved thus helping to support a successful economy.
<b>Collaboration</b>	The local authority works closely with schools, Estyn and with the Central South Consortium to deliver the well-being objectives related to school improvement. The local authority inspection report from Estyn informs the work conducted within the directorate and with Central South Consortium to deliver the support for education improvement services.

**Involvement** This area of work involves all stakeholders in local government education services. Each service area works closely with one another and links in with learners and related professional organisations including schools and CSC to refine the annual business plan (incorporating the post-inspection action plan).

## **8. Financial implications**

8.1 There are no financial implications arising directly from this information report.

## **9. Recommendations**

9.1 It is recommended that Overview And Scrutiny Committee 1:

- notes the progress made; and
- provides any feedback as necessary.

**Lindsay Harvey**  
**Corporate Director – Education and Family Support**  
**8 March 2022**

**Telephone:** (01656) 642612

**E-mail:** [Lindsay Harvey@bridgend.gov.uk](mailto:Lindsay.Harvey@bridgend.gov.uk)

**Postal address:** Education and Family Support Directorate  
Bridgend County Borough Council  
Civic Offices  
Angel Street  
Bridgend  
CF31 4WB

### **Background documents:**

- [Draft evaluation and improvement \(accountability\) arrangements in Wales \(February 2019\)](#)
- [Education in Wales: Our National Mission](#)
- [Welsh Government interim school performance measures \(May 2018\)](#)
- [‘Interim Key Stage 4 School Performance Arrangements: Measures and Analyses’ \(June 2019\)](#)