

<b>Meeting of:</b>	<b>EDUCATION AND YOUTH SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</b>
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	<b>9 FEBRUARY 2026</b>
<b>Report Title:</b>	<b>TEACHING AND LEARNING</b>
<b>Report Owner: Responsible Chief Officer / Cabinet Member</b>	<b>CABINET MEMBER FOR EDUCATION AND YOUTH SERVICES  CORPORATE DIRECTOR - EDUCATION, EARLY YEARS AND YOUNG PEOPLE</b>
<b>Responsible Officer:</b>	<b>GAYLE SHENTON HEAD OF LEARNING  DARREN JONES GROUP MANAGER – SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT  GAIL BIGGS GROUP MANAGER - INCLUSION</b>
<b>Policy Framework and Procedure Rules:</b>	<b>There is no impact on the Council’s policy framework or procedure rules.</b>
<b>Executive Summary:</b>	<b>Curriculum, teaching and learning</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Schools continue to refine their curriculum and embed effective teaching practices that support pupil progression in knowledge, skills, and understanding.</li> <li>• Strong teaching is characterised by clear learning intentions, sequenced learning, and effective use of formative assessment.</li> <li>• Inclusive teaching ensures all learners feel valued and supported, with differentiated approaches and universal interventions promoting equity.</li> </ul> <b>School inspections</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 43 core inspections have taken place since May 2022 with two schools currently in an Estyn follow up category.</li> </ul>

- There have been 18 core inspections and 17 interim visits from September 2024 to January 2026 (17 months).
- Estyn identified 20 spotlights of effective practice including many on teaching and learning in the 18 core inspections since September 2024.

### **Digital competence and online safety**

- Schools are integrating digital technologies to enhance learning and prepare pupils for a digital future.
- The local authority supports schools with infrastructure, online safety education, and guidance on emerging technologies such as Artificial Intelligence.

### **Qualifications reform**

- The current reform of qualifications for 14–16-year-olds (2025–2027) introduces phased changes to GCSEs and vocational qualifications.

### **Professional learning**

- All schools engaged with the Central South Consortium's professional learning programme in 2024–2025.
- The newly established national body, Dysgu, now leads professional learning and leadership development across Wales.
- Schools benefit from bespoke support, collaboration networks, and continued professional learning from Central South Consortium.
- Schools benefit from bespoke support, training, collaboration and professional networks from the local authority in relation to Additional Learning Needs (ALN), early years, curriculum support and post 16 education.

### **Strategic priorities**

- Schools are prioritising teaching and learning in their development plans, with nearly all achieving planned impact.
- The local authority continues to analyse inspection findings and strategic priorities to align support and resources effectively.

	<p><b>Way forward</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure teaching and learning is a core part of the new directorate three-year strategic plan based on extensive consultation.</li> <li>• Strengthen the continuum of teaching, learning and well-being between cluster schools.</li> <li>• Further embed national guidance on ‘Enabling Learners’.</li> <li>• Ensure an effective programme of professional learning and support is in place for schools.</li> </ul>
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## 1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update the Education and Youth Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the current position relating to teaching and learning in schools within Bridgend County Borough.

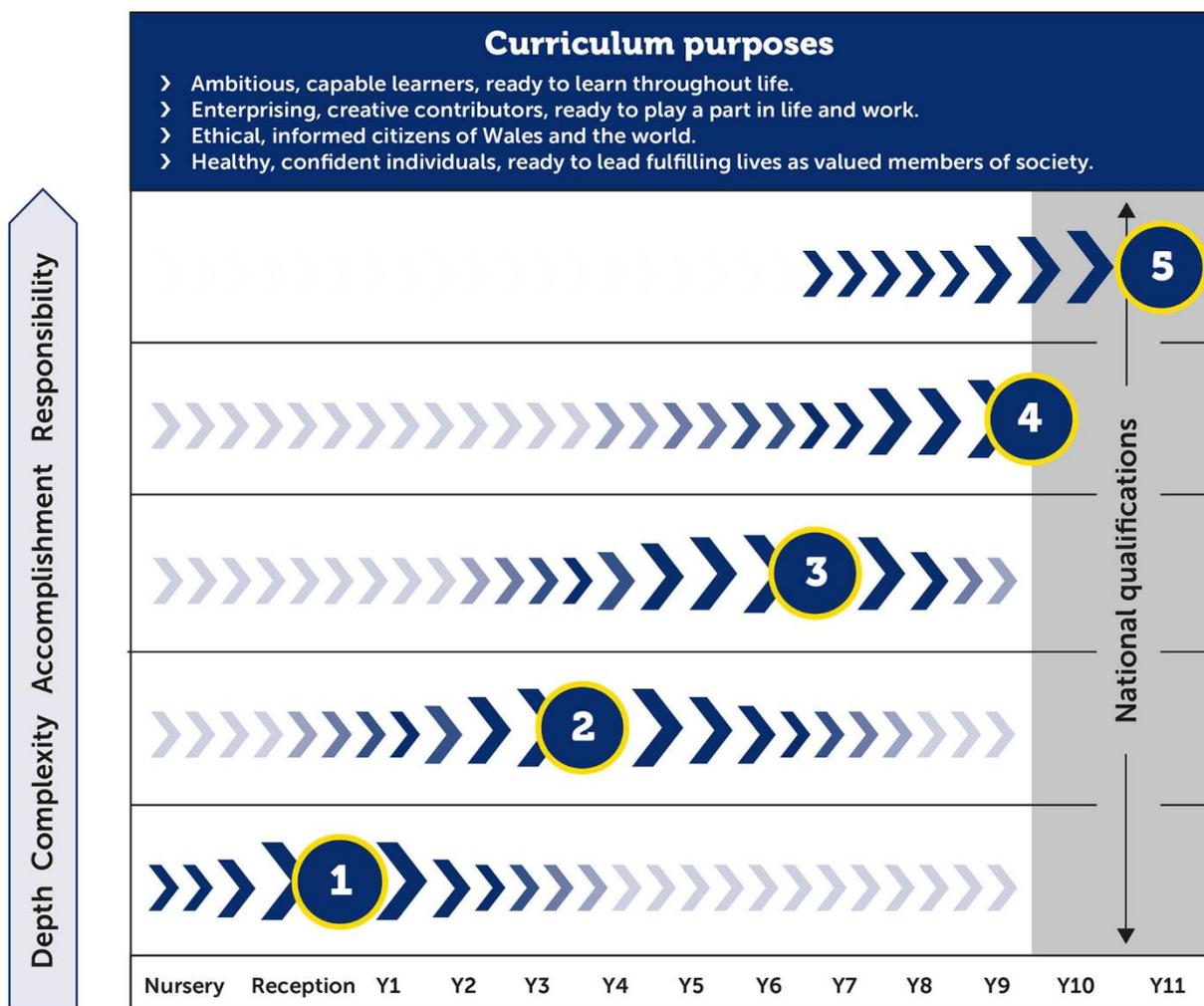
## 2. Background

- 2.1 Following devolution in 1999, the Welsh Government gained control over education policy, allowing for a more tailored approach to meet the needs of learners in Wales. This led to several reforms, including the introduction of the [Foundation Phase in 2008](#) for younger learners and a stronger emphasis on the Welsh language and culture.
- 2.2 In 2015, the [Successful Futures report](#) by Professor Graham Donaldson laid the foundation for a new curriculum for schools in Wales. It proposed a shift from a subject-based model to a revised framework that focuses on developing key learner attributes through six Areas of Learning and Experience.
- 2.3 The [Curriculum and Assessment \(Wales\) Act 2021](#) formalised these changes, establishing a new statutory framework for learners aged 3 to 16. The curriculum began rolling out in September 2022, with full implementation by September 2026. It gives schools greater autonomy to design and refine their own curriculum, encourages interdisciplinary learning, and promotes progression based on developmental readiness rather than age alone.
- 2.4 The Curriculum for Wales, initially implemented in 2022, is designed to support learners aged 3 to 16 in becoming:
- ambitious, capable learners;
  - enterprising, creative contributors;
  - ethical, informed citizens; and
  - healthy, confident individuals.

## **Learning is organised into six Areas of Learning and Experience:**

- expressive arts;
- health and well-being;
- humanities;
- literacy and communication;
- mathematics and numeracy; and
- science and technology.

2.5 Across all areas, learners develop key cross-curricular skills in literacy, numeracy, and digital competence. Progression is structured through five steps aligned with key milestones, with assessment focused on supporting individual learning journeys. Schools have flexibility to design their own curriculum, provided it reflects the four purposes and includes all mandatory elements such as Welsh and English, Religion, Values and Ethics, Relationships and Sexuality Education, and the cross-curricular skills.



Achievement Outcomes in all Areas of Learning and Experience

= Progression Steps 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 are indicative of the likely progress of most children.

[Donaldson Review](#): An end to Key Stages and a change to the way we structure pupils' progression?

- 2.6 The Curriculum for Wales is designed to be flexible and learner-centred, aiming to develop pupils into ambitious, creative, ethical, and healthy individuals. It encourages schools to design their own curriculum tailored to their learners and communities.
- 2.7 Effective delivery of this curriculum depends on high-quality teaching and learning. Successful schools demonstrate a clear teaching vision, use shared pedagogical (teaching) frameworks, and plan learning thoughtfully to ensure progression. They also incorporate local contexts to ensure authentic learning and use formative assessment to enhance engagement and reflection.

## **Estyn Spotlight – Developing pupils’ understanding of their local area ([Ysgol Y Ferch O’r Sger](#))**

- 2.8 One of the main components of the curriculum that has been developed at Ysgol Y Ferch O’r Sgêr is Prosiect Cynefin, which is based on developing pupils’ understanding of their local area, heritage and culture. A key feature of Prosiect Cynefin, is that it starts with the pupils themselves. Pupils consider their own experiences in relation to a specific theme or area of learning. This then expands to explore differences between individuals in the classroom, the school, the local community, and Wales, before learning about cultures in the wider world.
- 2.9 All primary-age children within the local authority have followed a revised school curriculum since at least 2022, aligned with the principles of the Curriculum for Wales. The curriculum became mandatory for Year 7 and Year 8 learners in secondary schools from September 2023.
- 2.10 Enabling Learning is a key part of the [Curriculum for Wales guidance](#) and was introduced in 2022. It promotes a holistic and child-centred approach to education, built around three core enablers:
- enabling adults who build strong relationships and understand child development;
  - engaging experiences that are meaningful, play-based, and responsive to children’s interests; and
  - effective environments that are safe, stimulating, and encourage exploration.

Learning is guided by five developmental pathways - belonging, communication, exploration, physical development, and well-being - which are interdependent and support the development of the four purposes. The quality of interactions between adults and learners, along with the learning environment, is seen as crucial in helping children develop towards the four purposes.

## **Estyn Spotlight – Supporting pupil well-being and readiness to learn ([Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Calon Y Cymoedd](#))**

- 2.11 Inspectors found that one of the school’s best features is the way in which leaders have improved pupils’ behaviour, attendance and mindset so that they are in a good place to learn. They have established successful procedures to support vulnerable individuals who have difficulty coming to school on a daily basis and help them to settle in their classes through the establishment of Hwb Hafan. Vulnerable pupils are given the opportunity to attend Hwb Hafan at the beginning of the day. This is a safe and welcoming space that enables them to settle and prepare mentally for the day’s activities. In addition, staff are available throughout the day to support and re-engage with these pupils to ensure they are happy and ready to continue learning.
- 2.12 [The Transition from Primary to Secondary School \(Wales\) Regulations 2022](#) were introduced to ensure a smooth and supportive move for pupils between Year 6 and Year 7, in line with the requirements of the Curriculum for Wales.

- 2.13 These regulations require all maintained secondary schools and their cluster primary schools to work together to produce Transition Plans. These plans must focus on maintaining continuity in learning, supporting individual pupil needs and well-being, and ensuring curriculum coherence across the transition. The first plans were mandated to be in place by September 2022 and must be reviewed annually. Each secondary school has a transition plan with their cluster primary schools, and it is a mandatory requirement. The transition plans continue to be developed to ensure they fulfil the requirements and support learners as they move between schools at key transition points.
- 2.14 The Welsh Government provides detailed [guidance](#) and is to support schools meet these requirements, emphasising collaboration, a shared understanding of progression, and learner-focused planning.

### **3. Current situation/proposal**

- 3.1 Since the implementation of the Curriculum for Wales, schools continue to make beneficial progress in refining and embedding effective teaching practices. Improvement partners work in partnership with school leaders to evaluate the impact of improvements to teaching practices with a focus on impact for learners. Schools develop frameworks that support teachers to understand and apply effective teaching principles. Schools refine their curriculum to reflect their vision and ensure it supports pupil progression in knowledge, skills and understanding. Teachers design engaging activities that revisit key concepts and enable pupils to apply their learning in meaningful and authentic contexts. Where these improvements are part of the school development plan, school governors will receive regular updates on the progress of school priorities and the impact of the changes through evidence has been collated and analysed.

#### **Estyn Spotlight: [Nottage Primary School](#) – Developing pupils as thoughtful and independent learners**

- 3.2 A notable feature of the school's provision is the highly effective approach to developing pupils' thinking and problem-solving skills. Pupils of all ages engage confidently with stimulating activities that promote creative thinking, both independently and collaboratively. Nearly all pupils respond positively to these challenges. They demonstrate perseverance and resilience when exploring different approaches to complete tasks. Examples of tasks and activities that were undertaken to develop independence, thinking and problem-solving skills:
- In the nursery, pupils participated in age-appropriate independent activities such as small-world play, mark-making, and creative work linked to the Welsh dragon. They made their own choices on materials and activities, and these activities supported language development, fine motor skills, with a focus on problem solving.
  - Pupils in Years 2 and 3 developed literacy skills through the teacher modelling of an expressive poetry performance, highlighting the use of voice, pace, volume and gesture. Guided discussion enabled pupils to identify effective performance features and create their own success criteria that they used to rehearse the poems collaboratively. They made purposeful performance

choices without adult direction and were able to explain their choices.

- Year 6 completed learners independently accessed instructions on a learning platform to complete a plugged computational thinking task, using block coding to program a World War 2 model vehicle. Pupils also followed and evaluated instructions to make a World War 2 spam sandwich, developing reasoning and procedural thinking, before using a Caesar Cipher to encrypt and decrypt World War 2 messages.

3.3 Strong teaching is characterised by clear learning intentions, well-structured lessons and sequenced learning that builds over time. Teachers make effective use of formative assessment and integrate authentic, local contexts to deepen pupil engagement. Schools implement a range of monitoring activities to evaluate the quality of teaching and learning and identify areas for improvement. Examples of monitoring activities used by schools to evaluate the quality of teaching and learning include lesson observations, work scrutiny, learning walks, listening to learners and data analysis.

**Estyn Spotlight: [The Bridge Alternative Provision](#) – Equity of curriculum offer**

3.4 Leaders provide an inclusive and equitable curriculum for all pupils, including those unable to attend the main site. These pupils benefit from full-time online teaching delivered by pupil referral unit staff, ensuring consistency and full access to qualifications in line with their peers. This is a significant strength of the provision.

3.5 Inclusive teaching and learning under the Curriculum for Wales is based on the principle that every learner should feel valued, supported and able to thrive, regardless of background, ability or need. Schools adapt the curriculum, teaching methods and environments to meet diverse needs and promote equity. They provide high-quality, differentiated teaching that adjusts pace, content and presentation to ensure all learners can access and engage meaningfully. Teachers use formative assessment and feedback effectively to guide teaching and respond to emerging needs. Inclusive classroom environments feature predictable routines, visual supports and flexible grouping, creating safe and accessible spaces. Whole-school approaches to well-being and behaviour promote positive relationships. Regular tracking and review of pupil progress, using multiple data sources, supports shared understanding and accountability. Universal interventions and structured small-group support in literacy, numeracy and well-being offer early help without stigma and promote equity.

**Estyn Spotlight: [Litchard Primary School](#) – Effective targeted support through rigorous pupil monitoring**

3.6 Senior leaders have established a highly effective system for assessing and monitoring pupils' progress and well-being. Staff use a holistic approach to collate information, enabling them to identify pupils who require additional support swiftly. Regular 'pupil surgeries' allow staff to evaluate the impact of interventions and make timely adaptations to reduce barriers to learning.

3.7 A shared understanding of progression is central to the Curriculum for Wales. It ensures learners move forward with consistency, coherence and appropriate challenge. Practitioners collaborate within and across schools to define joint

expectations for progression in knowledge, skills and experiences. This shared understanding is informed by the [Principles of Progression](#), [Statements of What Matters](#) and [Descriptions of Learning](#), which guide curriculum design and assessment.

- 3.8 Under the Curriculum for Wales, pupil progress is not measured through levels or national tests as before. Instead, progress is tracked through a continuous, holistic approach, embedded in day-to-day teaching and assessment. Each school has developed a bespoke assessment framework to their school that utilises the three statutory roles of assessment and is designed to measure pupil progress against the curriculum that each school developed.

The three core purposes of assessment are:

- Support individual learners on a day-to-day basis. Teachers use ongoing formative assessment to give feedback, adjust teaching, and identify next steps in learning.
- Identify, capture and reflect on learner progress over time. Schools gather evidence (work samples, observations, discussions, tasks) continuously, tracking how pupils deepen their knowledge, skills and understanding in relation to their school's curriculum.
- Understand group progress to reflect on practice. Schools review class or cohort progress to evaluate teaching approaches and adjust the curriculum or interventions.

**Pupil progress is evaluated through:**

- pupil work;
- conversations;
- practical tasks;
- observation;
- formal assessment and data; and
- reflective learning discussions.

Schools gather this evidence to evaluate the progress that is made, not just what content is completed.

**Estyn Spotlight: [Penyfai Church in Wales School](#) – Early learning provision for younger pupils**

- 3.9 Provision for the youngest pupils is excellent. Staff use professional learning effectively to deepen their understanding of early childhood development. They create environments that encourage curiosity and exploration. Teachers use observation purposefully to plan activities that extend learning. Recent changes to

numeracy teaching have led to pupils developing a deeper understanding of numbers.

- 3.10 Schools are encouraged to use the progression framework to support professional dialogue, particularly at key transition points such as the move from primary to secondary school. Leaders play a key role in facilitating reflection on learner progress, embedding progression into self-evaluation and improvement processes, and ensuring equity and coherence across settings. [Welsh Government guidance and resources](#) support schools in structuring these discussions and implementing progression consistently across the 3 to 16 continuum.
- 3.11 Vertical collaboration between schools is a focus for the local authority. This strengthens the continuum of development for pupils in curriculum, pedagogy and well-being. Improved transition processes and a shared understanding of progression among practitioners support this aim.
- 3.12 As children and young people increasingly engage with digital technologies for learning, communication and entertainment, schools face the challenge of equipping them with the knowledge and skills to navigate online spaces safely and responsibly. In a world where technology plays a central role, it is essential that schools adopt and integrate digital tools effectively to provide learners with diverse learning experiences and the competencies needed to thrive in a rapidly evolving digital landscape. Bridgend County Borough Council remains committed to preparing learners for the technological challenges and opportunities of the future.

#### **Estyn Spotlight: [Brynteg School](#) – Developing pupils’ digital skills**

- 3.13 Pupils at Brynteg School develop their digital skills well. Key Stage 3 and sixth-form pupils use school-provided digital devices responsibly and independently to enhance their learning. In computer science lessons, pupils benefit from purposeful opportunities to build a broad repertoire of skills, such as interrogating databases. Across the curriculum, pupils apply their digital skills in authentic contexts, for example when coding to control micro-bit devices.
- 3.14 With the widespread use of technology and the increasing complexity of digital tools, online safety has become a priority in Welsh education. The Curriculum for Wales places strong emphasis on developing learners’ digital competence and resilience.

#### **Estyn Spotlight: [Bryntirion Comprehensive School](#) – Provision for digital skills development**

- 3.15 Pupils develop their digital skills effectively in ICT and computing lessons, as well as across a range of subjects. These include well-planned opportunities through ‘Dysgu Byw’. Dysgu Byw is part of the curriculum at Bryntirion Comprehensive where all pupils have planned opportunities to develop life skills and learner effectiveness through personal and social education, skills challenge lessons and enterprise activities. In these instances, examples of work pupils undertook includes:

- build spreadsheets and work with formulae well to carry out a range of analysis;
- tasks such as considering potential over and underspends in budgets under different scenarios;
- explore the advantages and disadvantages of social media and develop a strong understanding of how to keep safe online discuss the ethical considerations of representations of sexualised images online and their impact on identity, image, reputation and mental health;
- develop websites or use social media platforms effectively to present their ideas; and
- using a range of applications to edit and embed multi-media.

3.16 The Education, Early Years and Young People Directorate recognises the challenges schools face in promoting online safety. It is committed to ensuring schools have access to the latest research and guidance on technology and online safety. Through collaboration, the directorate supports schools and local authority services to respond effectively to current online safety issues and act in the best interests of all technology users.

3.17 The local authority works closely with schools to strengthen their capacity to deliver targeted online safety education. It ensures that school technology meets Welsh Government digital standards and reflects the technology learners encounter in their daily lives.

3.18 It is essential that all stakeholders, including learners, are supported in the ethical and responsible use of emerging technologies, such as artificial intelligence. Effective guidance helps ensure these tools enhance education while promoting critical thinking and safeguarding against risks and ethical concerns.

3.19 Schools receive support from the local authority in introducing generative artificial intelligence (Gen AI) resources. They are developing learning around the responsible and ethical use of Gen AI to reflect its growing presence in society. To ensure safe and effective curriculum delivery, schools are advised to use secure, modern digital devices and infrastructure that meet current performance standards. The Bridgend Schools' ICT Strategy Group provides strategic advice on technology adoption, ensuring alignment with Welsh Government standards. This protects users from cyber threats, data breaches and inappropriate content, while ensuring compatibility with educational platforms. The ICT Strategy Group meets half termly and is made up of headteachers and local authority officers. The work on ICT and the support provided was subject to a detailed focus on 24 November 2025, when the Digital Learning Report was presented to Scrutiny.

#### **Estyn Spotlight: [Oldcastle Primary School](#) – Community engagement**

3.20 The school responds effectively to the needs of its community, positively impacting pupil engagement. Staff offer a wide range of valuable activities for pupils and parents, focusing on life skills such as financial management, healthy cooking on a

budget and supporting children's reading development. The school also provides advice for families facing challenging circumstances. Parents value these opportunities and report a positive impact on their own well-being and that of their children.

- 3.21 Parents and families are essential partners in implementing the school curriculum and supporting teaching and learning. Their involvement enriches education by extending learning beyond the classroom into homes and communities. When families actively participate, children feel supported and motivated, making learning more meaningful and relevant. Examples of how parents can support teaching and learning include attending family workshops or class curriculum events, taking part in curriculum consultation activity when the school is refining their curriculum and supporting home-based learning as appropriate.
- 3.22 Strong communication between home and school builds trust, helps identify challenges early and celebrates progress. This reinforces a shared responsibility for every child's educational journey.

**Estyn Spotlight: [Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Oqwr](#) – Supporting families experiencing poverty**

- 3.23 Leaders have established an Emotional and Family Well-being Team of staff at the school, which provides purposeful and sensitive support to families. Staff build strong relationships with parents and pupils and demonstrate a clear understanding of family needs. They offer tailored provision, including emotional support, and facilitate access to specialist services such as housing and budgeting advice. The team also runs a collection and exchange service for free school uniforms, including for pupils transitioning to secondary school. Leaders use grant funding effectively to ensure cost does not prevent pupils from participating in off-site educational visits.
- 3.24 The [reform of qualifications for 14–16-year-old learners in Wales \(2025–2027\)](#) aligns with the Curriculum for Wales and aims to develop ambitious, capable, ethical and confident individuals. The reform will be implemented in three waves:
- Wave 1 (2025): New GCSEs in core subjects with a focus on skills and digital assessment;
  - Wave 2 (2026): Expansion to creative, technological and health-related subjects, alongside revised science qualifications; and
  - Wave 3 (2027): Introduction of Vocational Certificates of Secondary Education (VCSEs), Foundation Qualifications, a modular Skills Suite and the Personal Project.

These changes aim to modernise assessment, support diverse learner needs and prepare students for future education and employment.

- 3.25 The reform presents implications for both practitioners and learners. Practitioners will need to redesign curriculum and assessments, adopt new specifications and integrate digital tools, supported by phased implementation and professional learning. Learners will benefit from more engaging and flexible assessments but

may face challenges adapting to new qualification structures and digital formats. The shift towards non-exam assessments may increase demands, particularly for those requiring reasonable adjustments. Careful planning and support are essential to manage the transition effectively.

- 3.26 Analysis of inspection recommendations at local, regional and national levels highlights self-evaluation as a key area for improving teaching and learning. Effective monitoring activities focus on learner outcomes and progress within learning activities. A range of practice has been shared with school leaders across local authority networks, and regional professional learning and resources have been developed to support effective self-evaluation processes.
- 3.27 Since the recommencement of core inspections in Wales in April 2022 following the Covid-19 pandemic, Estyn has undertaken 43 core school inspections within the local authority. Three schools were placed in a statutory category of follow-up, and two schools currently remain in such a category. The three schools that have been placed in a statutory category of follow up are:
- Caerau Primary School was inspected in May 2023 and was removed from special measures in December 2024;
  - Bryncethin Primary School was inspected in November 2024; and
  - Tynyrheol Primary School was inspected in November 2025.
- 3.28 Several schools have been invited by Estyn to provide case studies showcasing curriculum development or highly effective practice. These case studies are published on Estyn's website as improvement resources to support schools across Wales. Examples from Bridgend include:
- [Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Llangynwyd: Planning for improvement to ensure the best learning experiences for pupils](#);
  - [Heronsbridge School: Professional learning at Heronsbridge School](#); and
  - [St Mary's Catholic Primary School: High-quality learning experiences](#).
- 3.29 Following the introduction of the new [inspection framework](#) in September 2024 18 core inspections and 20 interim visits have taken place in Bridgend schools. Almost two thirds of schools in the local authority have been subject to a core inspection or interim visit in the past 17 months.
- 3.30 The new inspection framework includes Estyn spotlights that highlight examples of effective practice in Welsh education settings. These spotlights showcase innovative and impactful approaches identified during inspections. Under the new framework, 18 schools have received a core inspection, and 20 spotlights of effective practice have been identified, reflecting the quality of provision developed within individual schools.

- 3.31 There is regular and ongoing analysis of local authority, regional and national recommendations to ensure that professional learning and support for schools is aligned with inspection findings, school self-evaluation and strategic priorities.
- 3.32 Schools use self-evaluation processes effectively to identify areas for development and prioritise these within their school development plans. In the 2024–2025 academic year, all schools in the local authority identified aspects of teaching and learning for improvement. In the 2024-2025 academic year, schools in Bridgend agreed 242 strategic priorities and 237 (97.9%) strategic priorities were successfully implemented, with schools achieving the intended impact in their identified focus areas.

**Estyn Spotlight: [Pencoed Comprehensive School](#) – Improving teaching through professional learning**

- 3.33 The school is developing a vibrant culture of professional learning. There is a strong focus on improving teaching through first-hand evidence of strengths and areas for development. A range of complementary approaches—including coaching, research-informed practice, collaborative planning and reflection, teacher-led workshops and whole-school events—support the school’s ambition to strengthen pedagogy. Pupil voice plays an important role in this work. The ‘Pedagogy Pioneers’, a group of trained pupil leaders, work with staff to inform improvements in teaching and learning.
- 3.34 In 2024–2025, all schools in the local authority engaged with the professional learning programme provided by Central South Consortium. A total of 98.3% (59) of schools accessed the programme to support improvements in teaching and learning.
- 3.35 During the academic year, professional learning advisers made 145 one-off visits to support schools. In addition, 37 schools received a bespoke programme of support to develop and refine their teaching and learning provision.
- 3.36 Schools also engage with a range of external providers and organisations to access professional learning and in-school support tailored to their specific needs.
- 3.37 Following the [Welsh Government-led middle tier review](#) significant changes have been made to national and regional professional learning provision. From 1 September 2025, the new National Professional Learning and Leadership Body [Dysgu](#) was established to deliver a unified national approach to professional development and leadership support for maintained schools and settings in Wales. Dysgu focuses on curriculum, teaching, well-being and equity.
- 3.38 As part of the national restructure, Central South Consortium continues to provide professional learning, bespoke support and resources for schools in Bridgend as a commissioned service on behalf of the five local authorities. However, the scope of the support programme has been refined under a new remit from the local authorities, with Dysgu taking on part of the remit for professional learning for curriculum, leadership and national priorities. Central South Consortium continues to provide support for:

- teaching and assessment;
- 14-19 education;
- Foundation learning;
- Areas of Learning and Experience;
- skills;
- newly qualified teacher induction;
- teaching assistants; and
- outdoor education.

3.39 Central South Consortium continues to embed a self-improving system through school-led networks, professional learning contributions from schools, and regionally funded collaboration projects. Following the middle tier review, these networks, collaborations and school-led professional learning are within the revised remit of Central South Consortium.

3.40 The local authority maintains a close working relationship with Central South Consortium through governance arrangements and regular information sharing. This information sharing occurs at formal governance level to professional advisers working closely with a school weekly in a period of intensive support. Schools receive regular communication from Central South Consortium with regard to the professional learning offer, opportunities for funded projects or other support that is available for part of the workforce. Communication happens through different channels to maximise engagement. Key areas for focus in the Consortium's professional learning offer are informed by analysis of school strategic priorities, inspection recommendations and other evidence.

3.41 Additional support within the new national professional learning approach includes contributions from the National Centre for Learning Welsh, Adnodd, Diversity and Anti-Racism Professional Learning (DARPL), and the Curriculum for Wales Grant Support Programme.

3.42 Schools benefit from bespoke support, training, collaboration and professional networks from the local authority in relation to additional learning needs, early years, curriculum support and Post-16 education.

3.43 There are a range of opportunities to share effective practice across cluster, local authority and regional networks. These networks operate at multiple levels—from headteachers to classroom practitioners—with practice shared appropriately according to the audience. Examples of practice shared includes:

- Team Bridgend, which is made up of all headteachers and appropriate officers within the local authority, shares a range of operational and strategic information, for example, 'Transition planning and developing a shared understanding of progression';

- Deputy Headteacher Network that shares practice from different clusters, and professional learning to meet the needs of senior leaders, for example, 'Providing challenge to pupils';
- Heads of department 'Teach Meets' where heads of department for a specific subject can meet to discuss challenges being faced by the qualification reforms and share solutions;
- regional and local authority foundation learning leader networks; and
- leaders of primary school literacy regional network to share the latest information, effective practice and resources to support the teaching of literacy in schools.

### **The Way Forward**

- **Undertake extensive consultation** on the new three-year strategic plan for the directorate, with a strong focus on further improving teaching and learning across all settings. These consultations will take place in the spring and early summer.
- **Continue to promote vertical collaboration** between clusters of schools to strengthen the continuum of teaching, learning and well-being, and support effective pupil transition at key stages of their educational journey.
- **Further embed national guidance on 'Enabling Learners'** by engaging all school staff and stakeholders. This will enhance provision through a deeper understanding of pupil development and progression.
- **Work collaboratively with partners** to ensure an appropriate programme of professional learning and support is in place. This will be informed by continuous analysis of data and evidence and will focus on developing leadership at all levels to drive improvements in teaching and learning. A range of evidence will be used as part of this analysis including school strategic priorities, Estyn recommendations and a review of the range of support being provided. This will be completed by officers across the directorate to develop a programme of support that meets the needs of our schools.
- **Support the implementation of new Key Stage 4 qualifications** through peer networks, professional learning, infrastructure readiness and active participation in national consultations. Schools will be encouraged to share feedback to inform the ongoing development of the qualifications reform.

## **4. Equality implications (including Socio-economic Duty and Welsh Language)**

- 4.1 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. 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. 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 because of this report.

## **5. Well-being of Future Generations implications and connection to Corporate Well-being Objectives**

5.1 The well-being goals and principles prescribed for within the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 connect directly to the approach to supporting children, young people and their families. The approach is consistent with the five ways of working as defined within the sustainable development principle and more specifically as follows:

<b>Long term</b>	The approach to teaching and learning focuses on meeting the needs of children and young people from the age of 0 to 25 to maximise their potential.
<b>Prevention</b>	The focus of teaching and learning is upon identification of needs of young people and ensuring that there is appropriate learning provision in place to meet individual needs.
<b>Integration</b>	The approach to teaching and learning addresses the need for a coherent delivery of economic, social, environmental, and cultural outcomes.
<b>Collaboration</b>	A fundamental principle of the approach to teaching and learning focuses on improving collaboration within schools, between schools, with officers and school stakeholders create a unified system.
<b>Involvement</b>	Ensuring that children and young people, parents and carers are at the heart of the system and that needs are discussed and met in a person-centred way.

## **6. Climate Change and Nature Implications**

6.1 There are no climate change or nature implications resulting from this report. However, we are committed to supporting the implementation of the local authority's 'Bridgend 2030 – Net Zero Carbon Strategy' and Welsh Government's carbon reduction commitments.

## **7. Safeguarding and Corporate Parent Implications**

7.1 The directorate has a robust approach to safeguarding, and this is detailed within the directorate's strategic plan. The Education, Early Years and Young People Directorate Strategic Plan 2023-2026 is aligned with Bridgend County Borough Council's (BCBC's) Corporate Parenting Strategy.

## **8. Financial Implications**

8.1 There are no financial implications specifically relating to this report.

## **9. Recommendations**

9.1 The Education and Youth Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee is asked to:

- consider the contents of the report; and
- provide feedback.

## **Background documents**

None