



Education Department



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

SCHOOLS IMPROVEMENT SERVICE

The responsibility of the Education Department and GwE in partnership with our schools is to educate our children and our schools' results are consistently good. GwE is a schools improvement service that works on behalf of the six 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 support and challenges them to improve the quality of classroom learning and teaching and supports leaders to improve the quality of the leadership in our schools - this all to further improve results for our children and young people.

In Gwynedd, there are 83 primary schools, 13 secondary schools, 2 special schools and 1 lifelong school.

Summer Performance - Secondary

Percentage of Key Stage 3 (14 years old) who reach the expected level in Welsh or English, Mathematics and Science



Summer
2016
92.0%



Summer
2017
92.8%



Summer 2018
92.8%

Percentage of 15 year old pupils (on the previous 31st August) achieving 5 GCSE grades A*-C, including Welsh (language) or English (language), and Mathematics (numeracy) (TL2+)

54.6%

The schools provide inclusive education for children and young people up to 16 years old, and 43.8% of the pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM) in 2018 gained 5 A*-C GCSE grades, including Welsh (language) or English (language), and Mathematics or Mathematics (numeracy) (TL2+). In Gwynedd, post-16 education is provided in partnership with the colleges and the secondary schools in Arfon, by Coleg Meirion-Dwyfor (Grŵp Llandrillo Menai) in Dwyfor and Meirionnydd and Ysgol y Berwyn, in the Bala area.

Percentage of Key Stage 2 (11 years old) who reach the expected level in Welsh or English, Mathematics and Science.



Summer
2016
89.8%



Summer
2017
92.1%



Summer 2018
91.2%

Summer 2018 Performance - Primary

Percentage of pupils assessed at the end of the Foundation Phase (7 years old) who reach the expected level (Foundation Phase Indicator (FPI))



81.7%

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 principles of a fit for purpose education system that will form the basis for realising the Education Department's vision and develop the system to ensure education of the highest quality for the children and young people of Gwynedd, 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 Headteacher to concentrate on leadership issues in the primary sector.

In light of adopting the principles, this field will transfer to the Department's day-to-day work, as it is anticipated that there is no swift process that would enable the implementation of the principles across the system during the period of this Council, but rather, a cautious action, within context, and in a way that will enable the system to 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 of Professor Donaldson.

Strengthening Leadership

Improvement Priority 2



The importance of leadership, in order to ensure the best outcomes for learners, is acknowledged as a priority, and in Gwynedd we ensure that our plans to develop leadership support and enable the intention to transform the education system in Gwynedd in future based on these principles, and to also consider the local, regional, national and international context.

We will develop clear directions and plans for each tier of leadership needed in our education system in Gwynedd now and in future and encourage and promote leaders' professional learning on every level within our schools. We will also continue to develop and assist the system to ensure the best conditions for educational leadership to thrive. We will also identify and target future leaders, ensuring that they follow an appropriate programme of professional teaching.

EDUCATION MODERNISATION TEAM

Some of our school buildings are old and 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 2012-2021, the Council will have invested £69 million to improve the condition and learning environment of schools in the interests of the County's children.

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 headteachers 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



Post-16 education provision varies across the county. Post-16 education is provided in partnership with the secondary schools and the colleges in Arfon, by Coleg Meirion-Dwyfor (Grw p Llandrillo Menai) in Dwyfor and Meirionnydd and Ysgol y Berwyn, in the Bala area.

We will consider the merits of the various provisions currently operational, along with future opportunities and challenges. This will include research and a report on the current provision across the county that will form a basis for considering whether or not there is a case to change the provision in 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 to bursting. We have managed to attract funding from Welsh Government to invest in education provision in the catchment area, with the Council also providing half the money and contributions made in conjunction with planning permission to develop new housing in the area.

We have reviewed the primary education provision in Bangor, and the Cabinet has approved a plan worth £12.7m. As part of the scheme, a new school will be built for Ysgol y Garnedd for 420 learners and will be completed by September 2020. We will also commence the work of adapting the existing site and building of Ysgol y Faenol for 315 learners that will also include a communal space and will be completed by January 2021.

Y Berwyn (Y Bala) Catchment Area

Improvement Priority 2



The Council has already decided to reorganise education in the Berwyn catchment area in order to rationalise the schools system and improve the education provision and standards.

The construction work has now ended, and we have opened a Library, Theatre, Sports Hall and an all-weather football pitch which is a resource for all schools in the catchment area as well as the wider community.

We will complete the work of establishing Ysgol Godre'r Berwyn, a provision for 3-19 year olds on the Ysgol y Berwyn site, Bala that will also offer services for the local community, by September 2019. This involves completing the process of establishing the governing body, and assisting with arrangements for opening the new Learning Campus.

Trefferthyr (Cricieth) Catchment Area

Improvement Priority 2



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

We will complete the work of planning and building the new building by September 2021. The school will include facilities for the early years along with space for the Cylch Meithrin.

ADDITIONAL LEARNING NEEDS SERVICE (ALN)

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

The service provides early intervention and support that is tailored for every individual pupil through a team of specialist teachers and assistants. The service offers support to schools through the Psychology Service. Every pupil has full access to Gwynedd schools therefore 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 completed on transforming the additional learning needs and inclusion service, to ensure that children and young people who need it have access to the most suitable support to enable them to fulfil their potential. The work of further developing the service is continuing.

We will continue to develop the support in the classroom and how it is organised, 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 improve the learning experiences of children with severe and complex needs. The crux of this work will be to ensure that our systems coincide with the requirements of the new Wales Additional Learning Needs legislation.

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 included in full in Gwynedd schools through training, support in the classroom and providing behaviour support service outside mainstream schools. The welfare service promotes attendance by working with pupils, schools and families. The attendance at Gwynedd Schools over the last three years has been consistently good.

	Percentage of pupil attendance in schools 		
Primary	95.4%	95.3%	94.8%
	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
Secondary	95.0%	95.2%	94.7%
	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18

Number of permanent exclusions in schools (2017/18 academic year)

Primary – 5.2%
Secondary – 5.3%

Attendance is high and the rate of permanent exclusions is low, however the challenge of maintaining and promoting welfare and inclusion is intensifying with an increasing number of pupils displaying challenging behaviour. The service will ensure that our schools are correctly trained and supported to meet the challenge.

As a basis for all of this, the service provides specialist guidance in the safeguarding field. 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, Strategic Plan - Welsh in Education sets out clear expectation for the Department and our schools for Welsh as a subject and as a teaching medium.

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 to achieve the aim. The Department also leads and supports Welsh Government to roll out the Language Charter as a national plan.



Secondary Sector Language Strategy

Improvement Priority 5



As a result of the success of the Charter, there have been increasing calls to ensure a successor for it in secondary schools. Evidence from research commissioned by the Education Department proves the need for a plan and a strategy to promote the curricular and social use of the Welsh language in our secondary schools.

We will continue to employ a Secondary Sector Language Strategy Co-ordinator who will provide the appropriate challenge and support to our secondary schools. Every secondary school will have an individual and unique action plan which will reflect the linguistic context of the school and the surrounding community. The young people themselves will also develop a programme of informal and exciting activities for their peers, in order to raise the status and increase the informal opportunities for young people to use the Welsh language socially.

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 are essential to help our primary and secondary schools implement the Welsh Language Policy.

THE SERVICE OF THE AREA OFFICES

Area Education Offices

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 show that effective leadership, together with adequate resources and time, results in a good education and high standards.

We will continue to develop the Area Education Offices in order to develop support and backing for our schools, as well as rationalise and share the management requirements. This will be done by developing the role of the Business and Services Officers to co-ordinate and facilitate partnership work between the schools themselves and between Council departments, in order to reduce the management and administrative workload 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 access to schools, staff salaries and contracts, cleaning, catering and healthy eating schemes and school transport. It also provides financial, human resources, health and safety and information technology and communications support for schools. The service also provides support to Governors.