



Well-being Objective 3

Start Well - Support and improve progress, achievement, and outcomes for all learners

Despite the extreme challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic we have worked effectively as one Education and Children's Services team to ensure that our children and young people were successfully supported to access their education and all the services they required to ensure achievement and outcomes remained positive.

Why this Well-being Objective is important

- ⊙ We want all of our children and young people to have the best possible start in life by supporting them to gain the skills and knowledge they need to lead happy, healthy, fulfilling lives.
- ⊙ We want to improve outcomes for all ages through lifelong learning, to enable them to thrive in 21st Century living and the world of work.
- ⊙ Research by *The Institute of Education* suggests that attending a good pre-school and primary school can have more impact on children's academic progress than their gender or family background (Taggart, 2015).
- ⊙ Our service remains committed to both the principles and priorities as outlined in the Welsh Government's most recent strategic document [Education in Wales: Our National Mission](#).
- ⊙ Reducing the number of NEET young people reduces the effects of poverty and the wider cost to society of support services, reliance on benefits and offending.
- ⊙ It is essential to maximise the life opportunities of children, ensuring that as many young people as possible are able to progress to school 6th forms, Further Education Colleges, apprenticeships, training provision or work.
- ⊙ It enables young people to contribute positively to their local communities.



How well are we doing (and how do we know)? Sources of evidence

Success Measures / Explaining the Results

367.2 is the average score (best 9 exam results) for Year 11 pupils 2019/20 (2018/19 Academic Year)



6th highest in Wales
Source: StatsWales



93.9% Attendance at Primary Schools

93.5% Attendance at Secondary Schools
Source: StatsWales

95% are satisfied with their child's primary school



(Up on the previous year of 84%)

89% in Wales

Source: National Survey for Wales

1.1% year 11 pupils & **2.7%** year 13 pupils are Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)



(Previous year - Yr 11: **1.8%** & Yr 13: **3.5%**)

- ⊙ No results for the **Education Attainment or Attendance rates** have been published since 2019/20 (2018/19 Academic Year) due to the COVID-19 pandemic, as students were unable to sit final exams. Instead, their grades reflect predicted results based on coursework and mock examination results. Results by County were not published and would not be comparable to previous years if known. Summer exams 2022 are due to go ahead as scheduled.
- ⊙ **95%** are **satisfied with their child's Primary School** according to the most recently available National Survey for Wales data (2019/20).
- ⊙ The % of Year 11 and Year 13 pupils that are Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) have improved in the last year. With Year 11 pupils reducing from 1.8% (32/1,181) to 1.1% (21/1,885) and Year 13 reducing from 3.5% (23/652) to 2.7% (18/678). Work continues to address leavers not in education, employment or training with a particular focus on projects previously funded by the EU. The

Youth Support Service have staff identified to support young people in all secondary schools and in Post 16 community outreach settings. Work continues to identify replacement funding for ESF projects and we are liaising closely with Welsh Government on this matter.

Progress on the steps we are taking to achieve this Well-being Objective

Improvement in pupil and young people progress, wellbeing and outcomes

- ⦿ Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2020-21 academic year's assessment and qualification process has been different to previous years with summer examinations cancelled. Instead, a new system was designed and delivered by schools and colleges based on a range of assessment evidence on which to determine a learner's grade. Final results show that over a quarter (28.7%) of GCSE students earned A*-A grades nationally. Almost three quarters (73.6%) received A*-C grades, and overall 98.5% of students passed their GCSEs with grades of A*-G. Welsh Government did not publish local authority level results, as these could not be compared to previous years, and instructed local authorities not to aggregate schools data to county level. Summer 2021-22 exams are due to go ahead as scheduled.
- ⦿ At A Level, a total of 99.1% of A level students in Wales achieved A* - E grades and 21.3% of learners receiving an A* grade. At AS level, 37.1% of all grades awarded were A in Wales this year, with 96.7% of candidates achieving A - E grades.

Address low School Attendance

- ⦿ Due to the pandemic, annual school attendance data for academic year 2020-21 was not collected or published.

An excellent school in the right place

- ⦿ Carmarthenshire, Pembrokeshire and Swansea Councils have formed a formal partnership, '*Partneriaeth*', to deliver services to schools in the new region. There is a new Legal Agreement which outlines the role of the new Consortium, how the budget and business plan are to be developed and governance arrangements. The new Staffing Structure as agreed by the Joint Committee has been completed and a Lead Officer appointed. Initially the consortium will focus on delivery of high-quality professional development to support curriculum reform and leadership. The work of the consortium is informed and monitored by regular meetings between key Local Authority and Partneriaeth (LA&P) officers. There are clearly defined roles and responsibilities between LA&P and who is best placed to lead on an initiative is identified. There is a new website and regular communication with schools. Early indications are that the new provision is far more focused and responsive to local needs.
- ⦿ We are currently undertaking a review of our Modernising Education Programme. However the current agreed programme continues and we have recently completed projects at [Ysgol Rhys Prichard](#), [Ysgol Pum Heol](#) and [Ysgol Llangadog](#) with on-site progress at Ysgol y Castell and Ysgol Gorslas. Work on [Ysgol Pembrey](#) has commenced in January 2022.
- ! Construction costs are experiencing an unprecedented spike and it is causing a significant challenge to the deliverability of the Modernising Education Programme with schemes on site and in development.
- ⦿ The Environment Department have already been engaged and worked up schemes across five school sites:
 - Burry Port Community School (Primary)
 - Y Bedol CP School (Primary)
 - Ysgol Heol Goffa (Special)
 - Llangennech CP School (Primary)
 - Ysgol Glanymor (Secondary)

The total budget cost to carry out these urgent works for September 2022 is £1.76 million. Given that the budget costs are significant a virement approval is necessary.

Workforce development and succession planning

- ⦿ Educational support advisers work routinely alongside our headteachers, their senior leadership teams, teaching and support staff, ensuring that they have a robust understanding of the strengths of their schools and the areas in need of further focus or development. Support provided is tailored to the needs of the school and we ensure additional capacity for all schools requiring more regular input. The team monitors progress alongside senior leaders, ensuring suitable support; this has become increasingly possible as COVID-19 restrictions have eased.

- ⦿ The department's collegiate approach to school improvement, as well as the strategic focus group approach has ensured a more efficient use of time and an improved focus on the challenges that schools are addressing, informing the services' professional learning programme. The work of the department has been updated this term, aligning to the Education and Children's Services 10-year plan and to the outcomes of the headteachers' survey and the headteacher Well-being Charter consultations. In addition, the department remains focussed on inspiring leaders for the future, succession planning and upskilling through a comprehensive professional development programme which complements nationally delivered strategies. This programme is well underway however additional marketing of this opportunity is still needed in order to attract further participants.
- ⦿ Revised recruitment processes are robust and more accurately assess candidates' competencies, skills and experiences. These expectations are explicitly shared through our development programme and this has been valued by our participating heads of the future.
- ⦿ Feedback from the updated approach to supporting school governors is extremely positive. Regular online meetings are valued and are enhancing leadership and governance skills across a range of strategic, operational and COVID-19 related matters.
- ⦿ Leaders have responded robustly to requests from schools to address staff wellbeing and constructed a wellbeing charter tackling workload and work life balance of our education workforce. Related actions underpin departmental business planning.
- ! Due to the fall out of the pandemic there is a national shortage of teachers.

The development of Welsh in all our services

- ⦿ Following public consultation held in Autumn 2021 we have produced a revised Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP). This has been submitted to Welsh Government for approval. The WESP will become operational from 1 September 2022.
- ⦿ We are increasing the number of teachers and support staff who can confidently teach through the medium of Welsh. Training courses across all linguistic levels as well as for Gloywi Iaith are offered to all schools. A language audit gives detailed information for school staff language levels and so can be targeted for specific language courses. On-line courses and language learning coupled with Pedagogy in the Foundation Phase, are proving to be a positive way of implementing Welsh language learning.

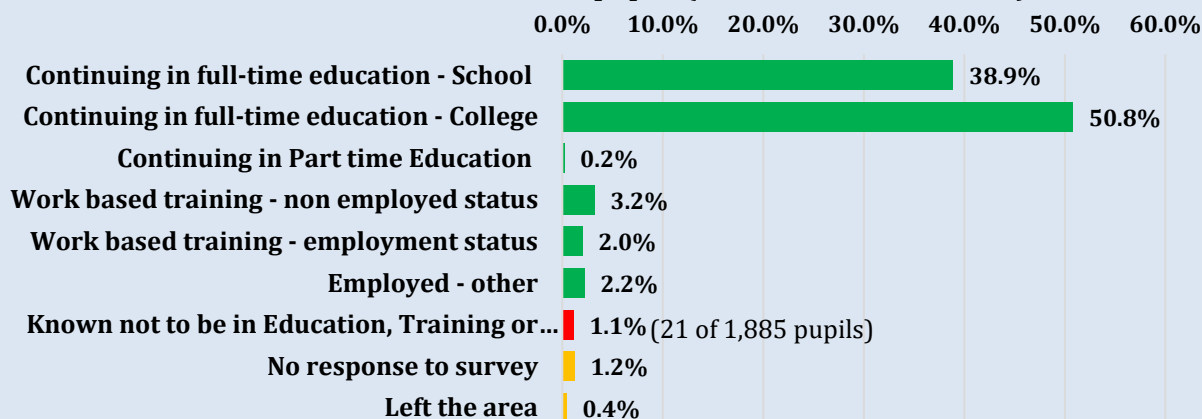
Focus on skills demands and employability to ensure that local and regional demands are met

- ⦿ We have continued engaging with partners and stakeholders over the design of the new curriculum. We are undertaking a project on the theme of 'Decolonising the Curriculum' in partnership with Swansea University's Dr Kirsti Bohata who is head of the National Centre for Writing on Wales in English (CREW). This project is focussing on different aspects of Carmarthenshire Learners' experience of and understanding of concepts including 'identity' and 'over-population' in relation to the notion of decolonisation. Schools will provide their feedback during the summer term. We liaised with the Regional Learning and Skills Partnership which are producing their skills barometer in February 2022, with a view to working with schools to identify how we can develop pathways and courses that meet the skills and competences required by the 8 Regional industry and business development areas. With the publication of the Skills Barometer we have begun our own scoping exercise of the pathways and experiences offered in our schools and supported by us through an [online survey](#) and face to face discussions. We will formulate a plan emanating from this.

Youth Engagement and Progression Framework

- ⦿ The Youth Engagement and Progressions Framework continues to be implemented in line with Welsh Government Guidance, which contributes to improved service outcomes in terms of more effectively engaging those children and young people that are NEET. Of the outcomes known to us, 98.9% of pupils remained in education, employment or training.

Destination data for Carmarthenshire Y11 pupils (Academic Year 2020-21)

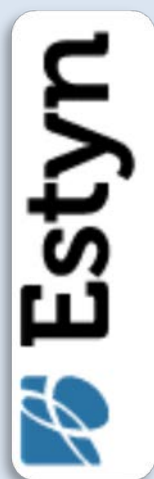


European Social Fund projects

- ⊙ We continue to explore alternative funding sources to replace European Social Funded projects, developing funding bids. The Chair of the Education and Children Scrutiny Committee wrote to Welsh Government to raise concerns about the delivery of NEET work into the future. Welsh Government responded that they are still awaiting the UK Government's plans to replace EU funding.

REGULATORY REPORT

Assurance and Risk Assessment – Emerging Risks and Next Steps (3 February 2022)



Assurances:

- Leaders have a good understanding of issues in the authority including around schools causing concern.
- Leaders maintained the good communication between departments throughout the pandemic to ensure that support for schools and other providers was available quickly.
- A substantial number of primary schools have been removed from Estyn Review.
- Pre-inspection reports show that the authority generally knows its schools well.
- Local Authority is proactive in increasing Welsh medium provision in the primary sector.
- Local Authority officers appear to have suitable plans in place to deal with the issues regarding leadership of smaller schools, for example by federating or merging them.
- The authority has supported schools and providers to understand and embed the new Additional Learning Needs Act.
- Effective scrutiny arrangements.

Concerns:

- There are a very few primary schools in a statutory category.
- With the local authority leaving ERW, there is uncertainty over some arrangements with Partneriaeth.
- Recruiting headteachers to lead a few primary schools is causing concern.
- Although overall, the number of pupils who did not progress from year 10 to 11 in Carmarthenshire is slightly below the national average for the last two years, the rates of pupils who cannot be matched to a destination are high in a minority of schools over the last two years.
 - Budget balances in schools

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE TASK AND FINISH GROUP REPORT



A review of the current provision for early years education, childcare and play opportunities. The report outlines 20 recommendations. At Cabinet on the 31 January 2022 the recommendations of the Education and Children's Scrutiny Committee's Task and Finish Group to review Carmarthenshire's Education Admissions Policy was approved.

Sustainable School Gardens

School gardens and community connections are also gaining momentum across Carmarthenshire. An excellent example of working with the wider community and connecting with organisations such as Incredible Edibles has been witnessed at Ysgol Pembrey. The school has developed a productive and sustainable garden which includes numerous raised beds and a well-stocked polytunnel. The success of the garden is a result of all learners taking part in the planting, watering and weeding. A whole school programme of maintenance and management with delicious produce made available for the local community.



Ysgol Bro Dinefwr has established an impressive outdoor learning space. The school has a multi-purpose outdoor learning area to facilitate hands-on learning and enable delivery of the Curriculum for Wales. They have worked closely with organisations, local businesses and charities on a number of projects including a large outdoor learning area, an outdoor performance area and a peace garden.

Angharad, Year 13 pupil, *"I think, especially in light of the growing environmental movement that our age group has been so involved in, it's really nice to have something where we have a real sense of urgency, and we can be involved on lots of different levels."*

Cerys, Year 12, *"It's a matter of our lives now. I think it should be important to everyone, and this is why we've started the outdoor learning area, so that we can protect the environment and try and combat climate change."*

Chloe, Year 9, *"This whole garden, it's supposed to focus on the environment and appreciating the world around us and I think it brings that back home to pupils in the school - because to have this area where it's full of natural beauty, it makes us appreciate what we've got here."*





[Climate change: Carmarthenshire school's zero-carbon secondary bid - BBC News](#)



Carmarthenshire Outdoor Schools

The Carmarthenshire Outdoor Schools Network (CODS) launched its programme for 2022-23 in late March as a part of Outdoor Learning Week, Wales. The CODS programme offers all Carmarthenshire schools the opportunity to share good practice, resources and work collaboratively. A professional dialogue to ensure all schools are supported and confident to develop purposeful learning in the outdoors. The aim of the network is to offer opportunities for all learners to appreciate and connect with nature and become ethical and informed citizens of today and the future. A group of six Carmarthenshire schools are currently working in strong partnership with Natural Resources Wales and the Brechfa Windfarm Company. All six schools visit the Brechfa Forest site each term. As a result of this project the schools are currently developing a range of curriculum resources which will be available in September 2022.

Climate Action Consultation Group

The Climate Action Consultation Group was launched in November 2021 during the week of COP26. The group was formed to action an eight-point Climate Action Manifesto which was developed as part of the global citizenship programme, Walk the Global Walk. The Climate Action Manifesto was approved unanimously by the full Executive Board in October 2021. A formal consultation meeting takes place each term which offers an opportunity for the group, invited guests, local councillors and council officers to discuss issues relating to climate change and implement their manifesto's recommendations. The consultation group meetings are chaired by the students and ensures their thoughts and concerns on climate issues are shared across a broad platform. At the last meeting students met with Deputy Minister for Climate Change Lee Waters to highlight how we can reduce the use of single use plastics. Future discussions will include reducing food waste in schools, climate change gardening and sustainable school transport initiatives. [News Article](#)

What and how we can do better

Our delivery plan to achieve this objective

Ref	Actions and Measures	Date/Target	Owner/Resp. Officer
A	Improvement in pupil and young people progress, wellbeing and outcomes (Abbrev.)		
1	Considering the impact of COVID 19, we will support our schools to ensure the wellbeing and progress of all learners, including those who are vulnerable, eligible for free school meals or looked after. <i>(15459)</i>	March 2023	Elin Forsyth
2	We will base a new suite of measures based on the on the new WG measures when published. <i>(15415)</i>	March 2023	tbc
B	Address low School Attendance		
1	Improve attendance reporting systems to enable challenge to schools. <i>(16127)</i>	March 2023	Allan Carter
C	An excellent school in the right place		
1	We will review the MEP, bearing in mind COVID-19 implications, and initiate a new programme. <i>(14998)</i>	March 2023	Sara Griffiths
D	Workforce development and succession planning		
1	We will ensure greater headteacher engagement in collaborating on our strategic development and review of progress. <i>(16128)</i>	March 2023	Elin Forsyth
2	Further strengthen our approach to developing the 'self-improving' school, facilitating collaboration and sharing effective practice, basing our approach on the principles of a school as a learning organisation. <i>(16129)</i>	March 2023	Elin Forsyth
3	Develop a new recruitment drive with assistance from HR and Communications colleagues in order to attract more applicants for the current vacancies, this will form a key part of the new Workforce Strategy being developed for the Council. <i>(16130)</i>	March 2023	Elin Forsyth
E	The development of Welsh in all our services		
1	Endeavour to implement a purposeful and robust 10 year WESP for all stakeholders. <i>(15434)</i>	March 2023	Catrin Griffiths
2	We will work with the County's schools to move them along the Welsh language continuum and also ensure that individual pupils within relevant schools are provided with opportunities to continue with their Welsh medium education throughout all key stages. <i>(15433)</i>	March 2023	Catrin Griffiths
3	We will increase the number of teachers and support staff who can confidently teach through the medium of Welsh. <i>(15032)</i>	March 2023	Catrin Griffiths
F	Focus on skills demands and employability to ensure that local and regional demands are met		
1	We will continue with the design of the Carmarthenshire Curriculum in partnership with schools and other providers, framed within the national context. We will pursue opportunities to link corporate and economic strategy with the design of the new curriculum <i>(15424)</i>	March 2023	Aeron Rees
2	We will dovetail local opportunities for curriculum enrichment and extension with the national architecture with a view towards developing a Carmarthenshire Learner Offer. <i>(15425)</i>	March 2023	Aeron Rees
G	Youth Engagement and Progression Framework		
1	We will continue to use the Youth Engagement and Progression Framework and the Vulnerability Assessment Profile as a means of effectively engaging those children and young people that are NEET/at risk of NEET. <i>(15408)</i>	March 2023	Gill Adams
H	European Social Fund projects		
1	We will ensure continuation of planning and delivery of the local elements of the European Social Fund (ESF) projects. <i>(15441)</i>	March 2023	Gill Adams



View our [detailed progress commitments and targets here](#) for 2021/22 against this objective