

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE LEARNING AND SKILLS SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE HELD AT BY ZOOM ON MONDAY, 24 JANUARY 2022**

PRESENT: County Councillor P Roberts (Chairman)
County Councillors B Davies, S C Davies, E Roderick, L Roberts, R G Thomas,
J Berriman, A Jenner, DW Meredith, J M Williams.
Co-Opted members A Davies, S. Davies and M Evitts

Cabinet Portfolio Holders In Attendance: County Councillors P Davies (Portfolio Holder for Education and Property) and A W Davies (Portfolio Holder for Finance and Transport)

Officers: Lynette Lovell (Director of Education), Eurig Towns (Senior Challenge Advisor), Wyn Richards (Scrutiny Manager and Head of Democratic Services), Marianne Evans (Senior Manager - Education Services), Delyth Jones (Challenge Advisor), Anwen Orrells (Senior Manager – Education Services), Emma Palmer (Head of Transformation and Communications), Sarah Quibell (Professional Lead for Education Support Services), Hayley Smith (Service Manager for Inclusion and Youth Services) and Sharon Hughes (Senior Foundation Phase Advisor)

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from County Councillors K Roberts-Jones and T Van-Rees (other Council business).

2. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest from Members relating to items for consideration on the agenda.

3. DECLARATIONS OF PARTY WHIP

The Committee did not receive any disclosures of prohibited party whips which a Member has been given in relation to the meeting in accordance with Section 78(3) of the Local Government Measure 2011.

4. WELSH IN EDUCATION STRATEGIC PLAN (WESP)

Documents Considered:

Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) – Report of the Portfolio Holder for Education and Property.

Issues Discussed:

- Consultation on the draft WESP undertaken between September and November 2021. The responses received are included in the report which included responses from a number of organisations and National Organisations such as Community Councils, governing bodies and Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin and RhAG (Parents for Welsh Medium Education).
- The main amendments suggested included:
 - strengthening the introduction section,
 - linking it more clearly with the strategy for Transforming Education,

- making better linkages with the Local Development Plan and other key Council strategies and policies.
 - more detail about the outcomes especially about Outcome 1 (Early Years) and to identify areas of the county where there are gaps or areas where there is a need for improvement.
 - transition rates for Years 6 and 7 have been included for each school.
 - updated information around secondary school developments.
- The main themes from the consultation are general support for the ambition of the WESP. The view of Estyn is also included.
 - More detailed information is required about key actions and including timescales. The Council has been careful not to put too much detailed information in the WESP, as this is a ten year strategy. In addition, for each outcome a detailed action plan will be developed.
 - There was concern about pupil transition rates and does the Council have sufficient Welsh speaking staff to deliver the aims of the WESP.
 - A number of local issues were also raised.
 - Should Cabinet approve the document it will be submitted to Welsh Government for scrutiny and approval. If approved, it would become operational from 1st September 2022.

Outcome 1.

- This Outcome is around more three year old children receiving their education through the medium of Welsh. Whilst all outcomes are important, it is pre-school / early years which is where it all starts and therefore this is the cornerstone of the strategy.

Question	Response
<p>P15-16 – the statistics do not add up. September 2020 - 358 funded Welsh Medium early year places (24.4%). January 2021 – 372 places but the percentage goes down to 24.2%. P16 April 2021 - 390 places and 24.4%. Can this be explained.</p>	<p>The figures will be checked and a response provided. This could be to do with the numbers of funded places and the numbers of pupils entering early years at the beginning of term. The number of funded places is going up but the numbers entering early years Welsh Medium provision is not increasing as much hence the percentage would decrease.</p>
<p>Do we have figures for September 2021 and January 2022 which could be added to the document.</p>	<p>The figures for September 2021 are available, and the figures for January 2022 should be available, but will need to check that all the pupils have taken up their places.</p>
<p>Flying start – will this be available in the Welsh Medium school in Welshpool when it opens. BTEC post 16 childcare started in September. It would be helpful to know numbers of students and where is it located i.e. across the county or in one location. The document states that the next tendering round will apply for funding</p>	<p>Flying start providers have submitted their tenders to the childcare team but it is not known if Ysgol Gymraeg y Trallwng has been successful or not as yet. BTEC – was offered on the post 16 offer for all learners in September 2021 via E-Ysgol. However, no pupils have taken it up. Currently the Service is marketing the course and sharing information in preparation for September 2022. The course would be</p>

<p>for training teachers to improve language skills. Does that include supply cover for the member of staff who is training. If not this could discourage staff from undertaking the training.</p> <p>When is audit of all early years staff Welsh Language skills going to take place.</p>	<p>delivered through E-Ysgol so would be available across all of Powys.</p> <p>Setting cover – training is offered and cover would be provided for staff.</p> <p>Audit of language skills – will be included in more detailed plans as from September.</p> <p>Recommended – amending document to reflect that BTEC course offered but that no pupils took it up in September 2021.</p>
<p>Concern about the lack of granularity in some of the projections. Going forward outcomes are much vaguer which is expected over a ten year plan. There is no mapping of the losses and gains in Welsh language provision that the Council is aware of. The WESP highlights that one of the challenges is around areas of Powys where there is not much easily accessible provision such as Presteigne and East Radnorshire. The WESP is aligning itself with the transformation process. As an example Dolau School which is the only accessible school to east Radnorshire is marked for closure where there is current Welsh Language early years provision. The loss of these places is not transparent in the WESP. Should the WESP be more specific about gains and losses in the plan about Welsh Medium provision.</p>	<p>There is a need to look at areas where there is a critical mass so that growth can be achieved and sustained and the authority would be looking at the main towns to develop Cylch Ti a Fi and Cylch Meithrin provision.</p>
<p>If the authority is looking at towns, the 24 existing Ti a Fi Groups are mostly established in villages where there is development from the community. Why are we so confident that developing in the towns is where there is the groundswell of support.</p>	<p>Its about strategic planning of the whole of the continuum to develop provision from the early age. There are Cylch Ti a Fi provision scattered around the county, but the authority needs to work with its partners to see where there are places where the main opportunities are and growth can be sustained.</p>
<p>Whilst provision in East Radnorshire has been removed there is nothing specific in the plan to replace the provision in East Radnorshire. We need to be more realistic in the WESP about this.</p>	<p>This is the strategy. The more detailed proposals will follow. The aspiration is to increase Welsh Language provision across the county, but this will be easier in some areas than others. We need to work with partners and 13 localities to take this forward over the ten years. It will be important to include a baseline to see how far we've moved in the delivery of the strategy.</p>
<p>There is a new Cylch Ti a Fi in Llandrinio. Would be interested to know how many are attending it as</p>	<p>Recommendation – if the Council is working with such groups should we not support some generic material to jointly</p>

<p>the advertising for it was limited. If we want to introduce these groups elsewhere, we need to better explain what the group is about to communities to attract people to attend.</p>	<p>promote the opening of new facilities in a community.</p>
<p>Transition and development – do you have any observations as to how transition between pre-school and primary is progressing. Is there improvements and what are the plans for improvement in the future.</p>	<p>The figures received from Mudiad Methrin is that about 90% of pupils are transferring from Welsh Medium early years to Welsh Medium primary education in 2020. The authority does not have the figures for 2021 as yet.</p> <p>Recommended – if the figures become available before the strategy is approved by Welsh Government could they be included.</p>
<p>Do we have any indications about whether there are areas of concern in terms of numbers entering Welsh Medium early years which could cause issues for Welsh Medium primary education in future.</p>	<p>Most of the Welsh Medium early years provision is fairly stable but they are small numbers. The authority is working with settings to ensure their continuity and hopefully this provision will not be lost in the future.</p> <p>The strategy is aiming for 100% transition from Welsh Medium early years provision to Welsh Medium primary provision but much of this is about providing information to families and promotion. The authority has already improved its promotional materials and RhAG has recently received a grant to aid local authorities with promotion and information sharing.</p> <p>Promotion is the key for early years and providing an understanding for parents of what early years provision is. Leadership also has a key role and communications with parents and carers so they have an understanding about language acquisition.</p> <p>As part of the new online admissions process (which will be live in September 2022) information is included about the benefits of Welsh Medium education to support parents in their decision making.</p>

Outcome 2

Question	Response
<p>We have dual stream schools and want to move to Welsh Medium primary schools. What plans do we have to bring the next tier of potential Welsh Medium primary schools into being.</p>	<p>The target for outcome 2 is to increase Year 1 pupils from 22.6% being educated through the medium of Welsh to 36% which means 163 additional pupils in Year 1 educated through the medium of Welsh which is a challenging target. There is a pilot already in Ystradgynlais where there is a reception class in September 2021 that started through the medium of Welsh and there is an ambitious vision as well at Ysgol Bro Caereinion to develop Welsh Medium provision but this is subject to agreement by the governing body and to consultation. This will be to increase the offer of Welsh Medium in the reception classes of some of our dual stream schools</p>
<p>To have sustainable Welsh Medium Secondary Schools we will need more Welsh Medium primary pupils. How do you intend to grow the provision over this period at primary level where you are identifying a need for a Welsh medium High School.</p>	<p>There needs to be the promotion of the advantages of bilingualism, ensuring support for parents and then moving schools along the continuum. Also Trochi provision will be important. The data will show the increase which has already occurred in dual stream schools.</p> <p>All three categories of schools in Powys have a large part to play in increasing the numbers of Welsh speakers in the County. How we move schools along the language continuum depends on the nature of that school. There will be a need to work with schools so if there is Welsh Medium staffing capacity there at a school to see if this can be developed becoming a Welsh Medium school. Working with individual schools is key to the development and the intention.</p>
<p>A Trochi class was established in Newtown last year which has been successful. However, there has been no promotion of the opportunities for primary children in North Powys about this provision. This should have been promoted in all primary schools. If this provision is to continue are steps being taken to promote this facility.</p>	<p>It was a pilot immersion (Trochi) scheme which was established during covid. This is a pilot in Newtown to develop resources and staff and to evaluate its effectiveness as the project progresses, and a report will be produced at the end. A grant was received from Welsh Government for Trochi. It was promoted but the pilot could only take on twelve pupils. The pilot has been</p>

	<p>extended until February. Communication will be key to promote the effect of this pilot and Trochi is something the Council wants to expand across the county. We also need to ensure these pupils continue their journey to a Welsh Medium education.</p>
<p>Can we move forward immediately from the pilot to a full time provision or will another cohort start again in April. When will the next cohort start, so there is no gaps in provision.</p>	<p>Trochi / Immersion is a major part of the strategy and will be a part of the strategic plan going forward. It is important to plan Trochi according to need. The need was clear with the eleven and the progress has been good. Should there be a further need we can address this. Promotion of the Welsh Language is a key in the WESP.</p>
<p>The outcomes and objectives start with the aim of "more" children through the Medium of Welsh at each stage. Are the figures projected on previous figures or where do they come from. If a provision is closing where else is it rising. Would like to have seen more specific detail about increases. Most children in Welsh Medium provision now are there because the opportunity was available i.e. it was there rather than it was offered. Also there needs to be promotion and also opportunities in all areas and that provision needs to be of a high quality to attract people. More detail needed on location, opportunity and quality.</p> <p>What evidence do we have from discussions with parents that there is a demand for the numbers proposed.</p>	<p>From September 2022 one opportunity will be the new curriculum. The aspiration is for all learners to use the Welsh language as part of the 4 purposes. Bilingualism needs to be normalised in Wales and the WESP as a strategic plan hopefully supports that vision.</p> <p>Estyn in 2019 identified that we had to improve Welsh Medium provision. There is inequity and uncertainty currently about Welsh Medium provision. Therefore, we need to ensure that the provision is available in all places, should parents want to take this up.</p> <p>We are one of the local authorities where Welsh Medium provision is not growing as significantly as in most other authorities which is of concern. Estyn now feels that the strategy can deliver what we need to do in Powys to develop provision is enhanced and progressed and provides opportunities in 13 clusters / locations as well as an equality of provision. Estyn were clear that there needs to have a strategic plan to address the pathway of provision.</p>
<p>Are you confident that you can recruit enough staff to achieve this provision. (Outcome 7)</p>	<p>Developing staff is key. There have been some sabbaticals for staff but there needs to be an improved offer for professional development. Workforce development is a key element to seeing this vision through plus making this an attractive offer for people to come and live and work in Powys.</p>
<p>The section on workforce provision is</p>	<p>There is a workforce development plan</p>

not smart. All the other sections have key milestones and targets, but in this section at year five there is a narrative rather than targets. Therefore, it does not set out what good looks like. This section needs further development.	underneath this strategy with clear targets, setting out the needs in each area. Will take on board the need for more data regarding expectations, and add information from the workforce development plan.
What information do we have on Welsh Language proficiency skills of staff in schools. Do we have a baseline. Could this data be included in the strategy	We have this information across all schools in relation to staff, so we do have a baseline. Also have details of those staff who have undertaken training whose proficiency has improved. Yes this data can be included in the document. There is a lead in time to develop the workforce.

Comment:

- Should the Council be offering some attractive bursaries for people who are planning to undertake teacher training through the medium of Welsh in exchange for a commitment of three to five years commitment of working for the authority.

Outcome 3

Question	Response
Only 14% of pupils in the Welsh stream transferred from Ysgol Trefonnen to secondary Welsh Medium provision and only 22% from Ysgol y Trallwng. What are the reasons and should we be worried about these figures and is there a risk about the projected figures for a Welsh Medium high school in Builth not materialising.	Historically there has been variable transition rates from Ysgol Trefonnen to the Welsh Medium provision. It could be argued that one reason for the non transition is that the Welsh Medium secondary provision is not as accessible to the pupils i.e. Builth not Llandrindod. It could also be an issue of a lack of choice at Ysgol Calon Cymru, or a disparity in choice of subjects in Welsh Medium by comparison to English Medium. There are similar issues in Welshpool. Is it that students cannot see a full Welsh Medium provision. This is something the authority needs to work on and hopefully some of this understanding about demand will come out of the current review. There is concern over all transition rates. Overall currently only 83% transfer from Welsh Medium provision to Year 7 provision. Another example would be Ysgol Dafydd Llwyd in Newtown where not all pupils transfer to secondary Welsh Medium provision. The reason why the Ysgol Calon Cymru plans were included in the strategy is because they have been approved by Cabinet. However, in terms of refreshing

	the WESP this will need further discussion with Welsh Government as to its approach.
<p>It is of concern that no information is available about why transition rates are low as it impacts on projected figures in the plan.</p> <p>In relation to Ysgol Calon Cymru the proposals are currently out for engagement and by committing in a strategic document to a particular course of action, the concern would be that we could be boxing ourselves in.</p>	<p>It is clear that drop off rates are about the inequity in secondary provision and a lack of a broad enough offer which the Council aspires to.</p> <p>Regarding Ysgol Calon Cymru, Welsh Government would be expecting us to put our intention forward rather than not include it in the plan.</p> <p>Although numbers are low, do we need to start somewhere and then create the numbers which will increase those numbers. The other additional challenge is the size of Powys and pupil numbers.</p>
<p>Admire the ambition but this is the Cabinet's adopted plan. The question is where is the evidence for this plan by comparison to another plan. Should not any plan detailed in the document be evidenced.</p>	<p>The early engagement work will help shape the proposal and provide the evidence. Further engagement work is going to be undertaken prior to a definite proposal being forthcoming.</p> <p>In the WESP it states that the proposal for Ysgol Calon Cymru is subject to the statutory Schools Code, but will have the discussion with Welsh Government. The plans would not impact on the streams in Trefonnen and Rhayader as this would be against our own policy.</p>
<p>Would like an explanation as to what is meant by equity of provision. What we should be looking at is equal access for everyone. To do this we need to fund bilingual education better. We might be able to have equal provision in 13 catchments at primary level, but it is not possible at in 13 catchments at secondary level without a Welsh and English Medium high school in each catchment.</p>	<p>The plan is to develop Welsh Medium secondary provision at Caereinion for North Powys. Any changes to provision would need to go through the statutory Transformation process.</p>

Comment:

- Detail in the plan about Ysgol Calon Cymru and the all Welsh provision at Builth. As we are at the pre-consultation stage, there is no evidence yet to support the model which will be suggested for consultation and engagement. Should this type of information be included in a ten year plan or should the plan just say that we are considering options rather than identifying a preferred solution.
- It was suggested that the plan include reference to the proposal to develop three all through Welsh Medium schools rather than detailing specific sites. Specific business cases would then be prepared for each of those schools.

Outcome 4

Question	Response
<p>How confident are you that E-Ysgol is the way forward to expand Welsh Medium provision in smaller Welsh Language units. What is the uptake of E-Ysgol and how do you see this developing in future as there is no details of targets in the plan at present.</p>	<p>The post 16 strategy has just been published. One of the key elements is that there we will ensure equity of provision between both languages. This will not be fully possible for September 2022 but the authority might be able to build more academic subjects through the medium of Welsh. There is a lack of vocational subjects at present which is being reviewed. Some schools have been working together to identify where the strength of provision is and where the offer can be broadened. The authority is also liaising with other authorities and by collaboration providing an additional offer for post 16 learners. It is not possible to provide figures of take up at present as the offer is still being developed.</p> <p>In relation to Key stage 4 there is little provision currently but it will be expanded in future.</p> <p>ACTION – need for smarter targets to be included as for other sections in the WESP.</p>
<p>Concerned about the small numbers who chose to study Welsh at A Level. This could impact on the numbers of future Welsh teachers. What can we do to encourage pupils to study Welsh at A Level.</p>	<p>We wish we could say that more students were are choosing to study Welsh at A level, but this is an issue across Wales. The authority is trying to improve provision and also looking for opportunities to promote to students the benefits of using Welsh outside the school as well promoting the benefits of pursuing Welsh Language courses as a career choice for the future not just for becoming a teacher.</p>

Outcomes 5 and 6 – Siarter Iaith and ALN. There are no changes in the document, but the previous scrutiny observations will be revisited for the Cabinet meeting. The ALN element is also short of measurable targets.

Scrutiny made the following observations:

- The Committee suggested that the following additional information should be included in the strategy:
 - Outcome 1 Early Years – addition of pupil numbers for September 2021 and January 2022 (if available)
 - That although the BTEC courses had been offered that no pupils had taken up the offer in September 2021.
 - Baselines for current Welsh medium provision in catchments and measurable targets so that progress in developing provision can be

assessed. Generally, this is an issue in the strategy as without sufficient data assurances about the progress of the plan cannot be provided.

- Outcome 2 (Reception Classes) – the data included is only for one year. Additional historical data should be included to show trends.
- Additional measurable targets in the strategy such as for ALN.
- The Committee also suggested that the Council should offer bursaries / apprenticeships to pupils seeking to follow teaching careers through the medium of Welsh conditional on their remaining employed by the Council for a specified period once their training had been completed.
- That the Council seeks to support new Early Years Groups with generic information to promote the establishment of any new venues.
- The Committee supported:
 - that the promotion / marketing of the benefits of bilingual education was a key factor to ensuring the development of Welsh Medium education in Powys.
 - That workforce development was another key factor to delivering the strategy.
- The Committee questioned whether the proposal for Welsh language linked to Ysgol Calon Cymru should be included at this stage of the WESP as the proposal was at an early stage of consultation and thus not evidenced.
- The Committee accepted the suggestion that the details for the locations of proposed Welsh Medium secondary provision be replaced in the strategy with the aim to establish three all through Welsh Medium schools in the county.
- The Committee expressed concern:
 - That few Welsh Medium courses were on offer through E-Ysgol at Key Stage 4.
 - Regarding the few numbers of pupils studying Welsh medium A level courses which could impact on numbers wishing to pursue their future careers through the medium of Welsh including teaching.

Scrutiny's Recommendations to Cabinet:

- 1 that the additional data suggested together with baselines and measurable targets be included in the strategy**
- 2 that the Council should offer conditional bursaries / apprenticeships to pupils wishing to teach through the medium of Welsh**
- 3 that the Council seeks to support new Early Years groups by the provision of generic information to promote the establishment of new venues**
- 4 that the details for the locations of proposed Welsh Medium secondary provision be replaced in the strategy with the aim to establish three all through Welsh Medium schools in the county**

Councillor A Jenner left meeting 4.07 p.m.

Documents Considered:

Estyn Thematic Review – Covid
Education Response to Covid 19 and Lessons Learned.

Issues Discussed:

- The report covers the issues which had to be addressed such as emergency childcare hubs, collaborative working, health and safety, task and finish group between services working with the Unions. The report shows the themes which came out of all aspects of the work.
- Digital learning – there were different ways of delivering digital learning and it was learned that this was dependent on the needs at the time.
- Impact of new ways of working including collaboration and consultation.
- Well-being was a key priority for lessons learned and will be key priority moving forwards.
- Team around the hub which became the Team around the cluster and how effective this was for joint delivery of support to vulnerable learners.
- There are key themes from both reports regarding how the authority works with its schools.
- Digital working and new ways of working led to a different way of engaging with schools and has had a positive impact.

Question	Response
<p>It was identified that there were pupils that were digitally disadvantaged. Are those pupils still digitally disadvantaged today outside the pandemic by comparisons to others in the same cohort. Are you maintaining a log of those pupils so if we are in the same position again we can respond to them quickly and how are we supporting them today if they have no access to the internet at home.</p>	<p>Resources were provided to pupils during Covid. Out of 880 families, over 1300 devices were distributed to those families. Some found it difficult to get connectivity even though they were provided with wi-fi devices. Schools then adjusted how they supported these pupils as well. Some were considered to be vulnerable learners so they could access the childcare hubs at schools. Others allowed them to come into the school to download work so they could work at home although not online.</p> <p>Schools continue to have updated lists of pupils with digital connectivity issues so if pupils need to move to distance or blended learning they address the learning needs for those pupils.</p>
<p>For those pupils who are digitally disadvantaged, are we monitoring their performance and are we taking this digital advantage into account if they are not progressing as expected. Is this a new risk indicator which should be monitored.</p>	<p>All schools will be tracking their pupils' performance so will be ensuring that all pupils can access their learning outside school either digitally or on-line and making adjustments to make sure that that the pupils are not being disadvantaged.</p> <p>Currently when the school improvement advisors visit schools they ask about pupils who did not engage in learning or those who found it difficult to access</p>

	<p>learning. Those who were able to access the childcare hubs or to be engaged in their learning have progressed well and most of those are returning to where they are expected to be in terms of progress. Those who disengaged in their learning for a number of reasons have found it more difficult to re-engage in their learning as they have returned to school, and schools are using their accelerated learning grant to target interventions to assist those pupils.</p>
<p>Training undertaken to support children with their health and well-being - what monitoring has there been of that training. Will this training be continued and monitored going forward and how it impacts on a pupil's progress.</p>	<p>Training has changed due to the needs of well-being and because health and well-being is central to the curriculum for Wales. The Welsh Government has released its whole school approach to emotional health and well-being for schools and therefore the focus on this was going to change. The report contains a list of the types of training being offered but this is not a one-off. The authority is committed to rolling out the trauma informed approaches to all schools. In addition, the authority is utilising grant money to ensure a system of supervision of those working with pupils. These are now permanent features in schools, but it is important that schools focus on its particular needs.</p> <p>In terms of evaluation the authority has moved to using the Kirkpatrick model of evaluation, to be able to assess what is and not working well. Therefore, there is a stronger method of evaluating the training that is being delivered.</p> <p>Anecdotally and through data it is clear that the pandemic has had some impact on the behaviour of pupils, and pupils presenting with greater needs and the authority is needing to respond to that.</p>
<p>This is a positive report and the Service has changed and improved things as the pandemic has progressed. What is not in the lessons learned report is what the Service might do differently in the future if this happened again.</p>	<p>The Service's Management Team has reviewed and evaluated what happened over the pandemic. One of the things changed was following a review of the cluster hubs following the first lockdown, and when hubs were required a second time they were based on the pupils' own school.</p> <p>The way the authority responded to the pandemic was good, and what has been learned has been positive. Collaboration</p>

	<p>works and has been effective and improved during the pandemic. Digital working has been effective for communications. With hindsight there are not many things that the authority would do differently. This was also dependent on the support provided to the Schools Service by other Council services.</p> <p>Every time we go into the next phase of the pandemic we have adjusted what we do and have had to adapt each time. The strength of this is the work which has been done with the schools and the authority has been supported by and worked in unison with the schools. This is the most important thing learned.</p>
<p>With the dependency on technology, how much has this improved. With the changes in the provision of ICT, as ICT is so important in schools, it is hoped that we get changes to ICT right and schools are supported.</p>	<p>The authority is still working with schools to ensure that by the end of term they will have selected an IT provider for their hardware service. Powys will continue to support their core services. There is a need to make sure that schools have quality equipment for pupils to access especially as digital skills is one of the key skills in the new curriculum.</p>
<p>Pupil performance – the majority of pupils at the level at which they are expected to be. How confident are you of that. Are there any particular geographic areas which have highlighted issues. How is the accelerated learning grant being spent and are there assurances that pupils will be progressing as expected in 18 months' time.</p>	<p>Cannot give assurances into the future. Schools are indicating that at the end of the summer term most pupils were re-engaging with their work and were at a level they were expected to be. Since the autumn school improvement advisors have been able to get into schools and talk to staff and pupils and see work being produced by pupils and further assessments. This is where the assurance is coming from that things are returning to where they should be, i.e. information from schools and verification by advisors.</p> <p>In relation to accelerated learning grants, schools have been asked what they are spending it on and what impact it is having on pupils. However, there are still pupils who have been negatively impacted by the pandemic and need extra support.</p>
<p>PPE and safety of staff and pupils. During the pandemic there have only been a few instances of classes and schools closing. Can you give an assurance that the well-being of</p>	<p>Yes the authority has taken a cautious approach throughout the pandemic. The Service has worked with schools and teaching unions to ensure that health and safety and well-being issues were</p>

pupils and staff will be given a long term priority as we move out of the current wave of Covid.	addressed. As restrictions are lifted the authority will continue to work cautiously and ensure that risks are minimised.
The second report was requested so that the learning was captured and available for new Members moving into the new Council. Would you consider working with the Emergency Planning team to turn this lessons learned document into a working contingency plan for any future pandemic.	The Director of Education commented that this document could be annexed to the Service's business continuity plans. ACTION: recommended that the lessons learned document be developed into a working contingency plan for any future pandemic.

Comments:

- Pleased to see this report and Estyn recognise how quickly the authority moved and embraced digital working and how much progress has been made. This also reflects how the school community has changed its way of working and that the interactions and partnerships have moved forwards after Covid and are transitioning into business as usual.
- This more cluster based working is positive as far as delivery of the new curriculum is concerned.
- Even with the pandemic the Service continued with business as usual and made significant improvements following the improvement journey required as a result of the previous Estyn inspection. An example is ALN where previously it was a service that needed significant improvement to now being seen by Estyn as an example of a service that should be shared with other authorities.
- The Chair commended the Director of Education for her interaction and openness with scrutiny and group leaders during the pandemic.
- The Chair highlighted the work of the ALN team and the significant level of improvement achieved since the Estyn inspection. The Chair paid tribute to the team for this improvement.

Outcomes:

Recommended that the lessons learned document be developed into a working contingency plan for any future pandemic.

6.	COVID UPDATE - LESSONS LEARNED
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This report was considered with the previous Covid report under item 4.

7.	WORK PROGRAMME
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The Committee noted that future meetings would be held as follows:

01-02-22 10.00 – 12.00	Draft Budget
11-02-22 14.00 – 16.00	Alternative Budget (Provisional)

Feb / March	
02-03-22	A.M. ALN Strategy and Readiness for the Act Curriculum for Wales and Professional learning – update (Sally Llywellyn / Lynette) P.M. Bro Cynllaith
29-06-22	
20-07-22	Q1 Performance and Risk Secondary School Strategy
21-09-22	
26-10-22	Q2 Performance and Risk
14-12-22	

County Councillor P Roberts (Chairman)