

CHIEF OFFICER STATEMENT

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Schools are pivotal to the Council delivering its aspirations for children and young people. The COVID-19 pandemic presented significant challenges to the education service, such as supporting the rapid introduction of blended learning, providing provisions for vulnerable children and those of keyworkers, and the safe reopening of schools. Despite that we have seen good progress at all our education sites, especially in Griffithstown School and Croesyceiliog Comprehensive, which recently removed from special measures. We also continue to work closely with Cwmbran High School and Ysgol Gyfun Gwynllyw to increase the pace of improvement. We will be consulting on a new education plan that sets out our vision for the next five years, outlines how we will support schools, improve resources for vulnerable learners and involve communities.



What went well...

- ✓ Published our new Welsh Education Strategic Plan which gives a 10- year overview of how we intend to offer Welsh medium education as a real choice for families to increase the number of pupils in Welsh medium education to one in 10.
- ✓ Completed the construction of Torfaen Learning Zone and redevelopment of Croesyceiliog School, Crownbridge Special School, Ysgol Bryn Onnen and Ysgol Gymraeg Cwmbran. Work on new primary age provision at Ysgol Gyfun Gwynllyw is almost complete, and we have secured funding and started the design work for the new school at Maendy.
- ✓ Worked with schools during the pandemic to ensure provision was provided for vulnerable children and children of key workers, during term time and holidays.
- ✓ Successfully delivered support for children with Special Educational Needs and for schools and parents around the new Additional Learning Needs legislation.
- ✓ Strengthened our engagement and relationships with headteachers and education achievement service partners to identify areas of development.
- ✓ Established a Headteachers Strategic Group (HSG) to develop a clear and collective vision to improve outcomes of children and young people.
- ✓ Improved links with Children's Services to ensure timely support and intervention for vulnerable learners.
- ✓ Coordinated more effective cross-Council services, working with schools to ensure high quality services are delivered and operational delivery issues are devolved in a timely manner.
- ✓ Delivered effective Play and Youth Services to increasing numbers of children and young people.



The Challenges this year

Our challenges have been based on service delivery over 2021-22 and a renewed focus on our own self-evaluation, performance and risk management.

Challenges		Solutions/Actions
1	Improve schools' performance - Continue to support all education establishments during the pandemic and through recovery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve the way we self-evaluate how effectively we are supporting schools and other settings, ensuring the work we are doing is delivering improved outcomes for our children and in a timely manner. • Ensure that elected members are able to access information more easily on how we are supporting schools and that we improve the accountability processes in place. • Work in collaboration with school staff, children and young people, elected members and the community to develop a new five-year strategy for education that articulates our aspirations for education in the borough, outlining what we want to achieve together. • Intensify the support to schools in Estyn follow up and strive to secure long term stable leadership for both schools. • Establish a new ICT strategy for schools that will help coordinate both Council and School based activity to ensure all learners within schools have access to appropriate levels of ICT support, over the next five years. • Support our schools to identify children who have been adversely impacted over the pandemic period and ensure they have support for their academic, physical and emotional needs • Consult with the community more frequently to obtain their views on the support being provided to schools to better inform how we shape our services. • Consult on a new approach to support pupils' attendance to ensure we see a return to high levels of attendance in all schools.
2	Promoting Inclusion and implementing the new ALN Act	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a new ALN Strategy outlining our approach to implementation of the new ALN Act and how we will support individual learners, families and schools. • Further develop robust identification and transition processes for Early years pupils in non-maintained settings who have ALN – working closely with Early Years colleagues. • Review the remit of current Resource Bases within schools to determine continuing support needs and extent of the provision on offer. • Review the impact of Torfaen Autism Support Service and to consider whether this should now become core funded. • Roll out Trauma Informed Schools training to all schools and review impact with health colleagues. • Extend support to schools to develop their own Wellbeing Offer and work closely with Health, other agencies and schools, to coordinate support for the promotion of enhanced wellbeing across schools in the Borough.
3	Early Intervention and support for PSB outcomes (objective 3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take direction from the Public Service Board on updating the action plan for Objective 3 in the PSB Wellbeing Plan and in discussions with Public Health Colleagues ensure the current well-being plan supports and compliments the outcomes intended for "Building a Healthier Gwent". • Finalise the Wellbeing Offer online tool. • Work with Torfaen Leisure Partnership Board and Torfaen Leisure Trust to agree an updated suite of wellbeing measures so that impact on health outcomes can be monitored appropriately.