

Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council

Self-Evaluation Report



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MERTHYR TUDFUL
MERTHYR TYDFIL
County Borough Council

Question 2: Provision and Service Delivery

Learning Department

SUMMARY STATEMENT

Question 2:

Provision and Service Delivery

2.1	How well does the service engage with corporate support services to help improve service provision and delivery?	Unsatisfactory
2.2	How well does the service understand and take advantage of opportunities for collaboration and partnership working?	Adequate
2.3	How well does the service understand and use the sustainable development principle (the five ways of working)?	Adequate

REMEMBER:

When completing your form, please try to be evaluative rather than descriptive and focus on the impact and outcomes for people and the environment. In your evaluation identify what you consider to be strengths and areas for improvement and be brief, referencing the supporting evidence. Responses should consider the requirement to demonstrate the five ways of working; (e.g.) capture the requirements and contributions of collaborative working arrangements etc.

Please Note:

Evidence supporting the judgments recorded in response to Question 2.3 can be attached: this should be labelled as **Appendix 1**

Governance (for Performance & Scrutiny use only)

	Date:
Form completed and received:	DD/MM/YYYY
Internal challenge - session:	DD/MM/YYYY
Corporate Management Team session:	DD/MM/YYYY
Reviewed at Scrutiny:	DD/MM/YYYY

QUESTION 2: PROVISION & SERVICE DELIVERY

Question 2.1: How well does the service engage with corporate support services to help improve service provision and delivery?

JUDGEMENT

Adequate

EVALUATION: When answering the question, consider the following:

- The quality and frequency of contact with support services;
- Whether the support received enabled the service to improve provision and delivery

Current Position:

There is within the department a well-established culture of self-evaluation the results of which are reported to scrutiny members and challenged throughout the year. This is enhanced by a growing understanding across the department of how each team within the department is interlinked and how each team relates to the over-arching goal of raising standards. Regular departmental sessions to consider evaluate the impact of activities contribute to this work. Due to the need to provide key evidence against the Estyn Framework often the department does not have the opportunity to engage fully with the performance team or business change. There is a lack of corporate understanding of the nature of schools and the framework within they work and this can lead to challenges when considering appropriate support for the department. Nearly all schools have service level agreements with IT, legal and HR – these service level agreements are regularly reviewed to ensure they are fit for purpose and provide value for money.

Good Practice:

Engagement with accountancy to support the work of the schools forum and support school budget delivery
IT delivery to schools is well-regarded and provides all schools with good provision
Growing ability to demonstrate how activities meet the five ways of working
Departmental self-evaluation activities

Evidence:

The activities of the school budget forum which includes officers from accountancy demonstrates a collegiate approach to budget management.
The department can evidence discussion and consideration of the five ways of working through their self-evaluation activities (included below)

Areas for Development:

Work with human resources to ensure that schools are fully supported to meet issues such as disciplinary actions and capability.
Develop a clear path for support for wellbeing for all staff within schools.
Develop a clear action plan for how business change and performance officers can better support the learning department deliver on their corporate priorities.

Priorities for Improvement:

Further develop the challenge to CSC in order to prioritise provision to impact more fully on standards of attainment particularly at the end of KS4

As a matter of urgency evaluate the impact of provision in relation to the poverty agenda through evaluation of activities carried out across a variety of service areas

Improve wellbeing of all pupils but particularly SEBD pupils and other vulnerable groups.

Focus on supporting schools to improve their staff wellbeing through developing and publishing a School Staff Wellbeing Charter that has the buy-in of all schools.

Improve arrangements for supporting behaviour needs in schools.

Work with Children's Services to improve outcomes for CLA.

Develop a more effective and co-ordinated use of Capita One across LGES, including Inclusion, ALN, Admissions, Early Years, NEETs, YSS and agree a corporate position for use of Capita One within Early Intervention/Preventative services.

Question 2.2: How well does the service understand and take advantage of opportunities for collaboration and partnership working?

JUDGEMENT

Adequate

EVALUATION:

When answering the question, consider the following:

- Contribution to existing strategic partnership plans
- Joint outcomes with other services
- Existing regional collaborations
- Partnership with the private or third sectors
- Partnership with public agencies
- Support for school improvement (*2.2a – only Education to consider*)
- Support for vulnerable learners (*2.2b – only Education to consider*)

Current Position:

Within maintained schools the main service delivery is through the regional Consortium- Central South Consortium. Currently this provision can only be judged at best adequate due to the last verified data for end of key stages. With the new ALNET agenda there is more regional collaboration with Early Years settings as they prepare for its implementation – this partnership is good and early evidence suggests is having string impact on schools readiness for the Act. Youth Services and the participation agenda link closely with third sector agencies and this work is at least good. The impact on young people is beneficial and the engagement of our young people through the Youth forum is recognised nationally as good practice. To support the Estyn framework – more detailed explanation of the provision provided to education settings is outlined in the evidence section. This is to allow members the opportunity to consider the wider aspects of the work of the departments to support the challenge they themselves face from the education inspectorate.

Good Practice:

The work of the ALNET Transformation Agenda regional plan is having a positive impact of schools
 The work of MTBWYF is recognised nationally as good practice
 The new PRU is beginning to engage its cohort, thus enabling those young people to engage with education more fully. This is also relevant to the new special tuition process
 The Inspire 2 work team engage well with hard to reach young people

Evidence:

The following statements are directly linked to the evidence that is needed within the Estyn framework and should be considered alongside this framework.

- Effective relationships exist between the Local Authority and the local consortium (CSC) in addition to the collaborative culture and positive relationships that have been forged between schools and the local consortium. As a result the Local Authority knows its schools very well. Policies, systems and processes are developed in a collegiate manner and the Local Authority has an accurate understanding of the need to work in partnership with schools so that all that the Local Authority’s vision for ongoing school improvement is clear and understood by all of the education community.

- The Local Authority in partnership with the Central South Consortium has continued to provide effective monitoring, challenge, support and intervention for all schools across the borough, which is bespoke to the needs of the school. Categorisation processes are robust and accurate and are carried out in a transparent manner in partnership with the HT, Challenge Adviser and Governing Body. In addition, all schools are provided with support packages which fit the needs of their school well and are agreed in a collaborative manner by the Headteacher, Challenge Adviser and Chair of Governors. The work of Challenge advisers and the reports they produce is monitored closely to ensure consistency of approach across all schools. As a result, schools are provided with very good levels of support for ongoing school improvement and this is evidenced from positive outcomes in inspections in recent years and also through an increase in the number of green schools across the LA over the last three years.
- The Local Authority in partnership with the regional consortium identify, address and manage the changing needs and circumstances of schools well and this has resulted in a slight increase in the number of schools needing a more intensive package of support over the last three years. Support for Red and Amber schools consists of bespoke challenge and support provided by the CSC Challenge Adviser, deployment of CSC Accelerated Progress Leads and the effective use of CSC Strategic Advisers who provide Literacy, Numeracy, Science and DCF support. Red and Amber schools also benefit from school to school support which is brokered by CSC. Red and Amber schools are required to attend a termly (half termly for red schools) School Improvement Forum which is made up of the Challenge Adviser, Senior Challenge Adviser, Accelerated Progress Lead and the Chair of the Governing Body. Senior leaders present a wide range of evidence to demonstrate the progress that the school is making towards meeting its priorities for improvement. The School Improvement Forum for red schools is also attended by the Chief Education Officer. Schools report that they find the School Improvement Meetings very beneficial and that such meetings provide rigour, challenge and a clear focus on the journey to achieving school improvement priorities. As a result, many of the schools who are in the red or amber category are making strong progress towards meeting the recommendations in their respective support plans.
- The Local Authority in partnership with CSC give good attention to improving the quality of teaching. Many schools are part of School Improvement Groups (SIG) each of which has a focus on securing improvements in many aspects of teaching e.g. pedagogy, assessment, literacy and numeracy. As a result, outcomes for teaching and learning experiences are at least good in many schools as evidenced in by Estyn inspections in recent years.
- Attainment and progress data is used effectively to challenge and support schools. A wide range of further information from local authority service areas and the Central South Consortium is used successfully to determine the capacity for improvement in schools and provide appropriately differentiated support for individual schools dependent upon their area of need.
- School level and pupil level targets continue to be challenged in each school as part of the national categorisation process and progress towards these targets are reviewed termly by all Challenge Advisers. LA officers are kept up to date with the changes to target setting and interim performance measures at KS4 through updates via the consortium.
- Termly 'Team around the School' meetings with Challenge Advisers and Local Authority officers to discuss various issues for each school in relation to school improvement, performance data, health and safety, buildings and finance issues; providing the local authority with opportunity to assess the capability of a school's leadership team in relation to driving through agreed future improvements. However, there is a need to ensure all officers understand the need to address follow-up actions from meetings in order to drive improvements.
- The Local Authority in partnership with the regional consortium provide a comprehensive Professional Learning offer for colleagues at all levels and at all stages in their career e.g. HLTA and TA programmes. A number of schools across the LA are designated CSC 'Hub' schools that deliver professional learning programmes to other schools across the consortium. Leadership across the authority is supported by access to programmes such as NPQH, Aspiring Headteachers and Improving Leadership Skills of Deputy Heads. Access to such programmes over time has contributed to the judgements on leadership being at least good in many schools in recent Estyn inspections. Bespoke support for leadership is brokered when needed through coaching and mentoring and shortages in key personnel in some schools has been addressed by engaging the expertise of highly experienced and extremely effective colleagues from across the LA. This is impacting positively on improving the quality of leadership and building capacity to affect change. Formal federation of schools in the borough has also secured improvements in leadership e.g. St Mary's and St Illtyd's. The

memorandum of understanding that exists within the Taff Bargoed Learning Alliance has had a significant impact on improving standards of teaching, learning and leadership. However, improving the effectiveness of middle leaders in some schools and the impact they have on improving outcomes remains an area for development.

- Schools are encouraged to share best practice through informal sessions via the primary and secondary Headteacher forums.
- Schools across the authority are being well supported to meet the needs of national reform via the regional consortium. Most schools have engaged effectively in preparing for the new curriculum and have an accurate picture of their strengths and areas for development through the use of evaluation tools. Many schools are engaging well with the Schools as Learning Organisations agenda and this supported effectively by the professional learning offer from the local consortium. Most schools work well as part of their clusters and are planning appropriately to embrace the ALN Transformation. In addition, the consortia's ALN Transformational Lead supports LA officers, schools and Challenge Adviser very well in ensuring that the information disseminated to schools is of a very high quality. LA officers have accompanied Challenge Advisers on their summer term visits to schools to discuss preparedness for ALN transformation. This joint approach between LA and the consortium ensures consistency of key messages to schools and allows the LA to provide robust support and challenge. Self-evaluation and improvement planning in all schools continues to be linked explicitly to the Challenge Framework via the Central South Consortium.
- The local authority's Partnership Agreement has been agreed by all stakeholders, it is effective in supporting, monitoring and challenging all schools.
- The Local Authority continues to make effective use of statutory powers to challenge the leadership and management in those schools whose performance is causing concern. Half-termly Risk Management Conferences are undertaken with the Head of Legal Services, Human Resources, Senior Challenge Adviser, the Education Portfolio Lead and Chief Education Officer. At these meetings, schools with identified risks are discussed and further support is planned and reviewed; the attendance at these half-termly meetings has been inconsistent and thus the challenge has not always been provided in a timely manner.
- Timely use of informal warning notices continues to be used across the authority and the LA continues to use its statutory powers effectively to challenge underperformance. To date in 2018-19 there have been two informal warning notices issued to secondary schools across the borough.
- To date in 2018-19, of the schools that have received Estyn inspections, two have been placed in Estyn review and one other received 'Excellent' judgements for all five inspections areas and has been asked to produce a case study. There is a good correlation between the local authority's judgements on schools and those of Estyn.
- The Authority works with its school improvement partner, CSC in delivering governor training including development support for school governors specifically around the reform journey e.g. ALN transformation. Many governing bodies continue to improve their skills in holding school leaders to account for their performance through an increased understanding of a range of performance data. In these schools, governors are continuing to use data well to ensure more rigorous performance management arrangements for Headteachers. However, this remains inconsistent across all schools.

School Support for the Welsh Language

Support for the development of the Welsh language in schools within the local authority is delivered in partnership with the local consortium through the principles contained within the 'Cymraeg Mewn Addysg' document.

The document clearly outlines a range of strategies and a targeted approach for each setting in the local authority to achieve the highest standards in Welsh and in Welsh education so that learners enjoy the highest quality of teaching and learning in Welsh in order to support the Welsh Government in reaching a million speakers by 2050. Such strategies include the promotion of school to school working, supporting schools in developing the new curriculum, purposeful collaboration with other partners e.g. Cardiff University, WRU, Urdd, Menter Iaith the National Museum of Wales, developing effective leaders and providing all teachers and teaching assistants with opportunities for continuous professional development. Consortium colleagues represent the Authority on local, regional and national panels, ensuring that LA schools receive up to date information regarding broader priorities pertaining to the development of Welsh in schools. The consortium's

strategic leader for the development of the Welsh language regularly meets with the LA's chief education officer to provide updates.

Developing the use of Welsh in all schools is a priority and is supported effectively by Welsh in Education officers. The two Welsh medium primary schools in the local authority are currently 'Hwb' schools for Welsh First Language. Both schools are also involved with 'Cadwyn Cynradd' which ensures delivery of training on Additional Learning Needs and in addition, both schools currently support English medium primary schools on their journey in improving provision and standards of Welsh across the age range (including early years). Best practice case studies have been produced by two English medium secondary schools within the county borough to support the transition of pupils from year 6 into year 7.

The two Welsh medium primary schools are successfully implementing the Siarter Iaith, both schools having achieved the Bronze Award and are expected to obtain the Silver Award in the autumn of 2019. Most primary schools across the local authority have engaged purposefully with the Cymraeg Campus initiative.

Over the course of the academic year, primary school teachers and teaching assistants are able to access a comprehensive professional development offer of consortium-based training. However, further work needs to be completed in order to increase the number of teachers and teaching assistants who opt to be involved in such professional development opportunities. For those colleagues who did participate, evaluation forms of the training courses note their effectiveness. Members of staff from two LA schools have sought opportunities to further their language training through the WG funded Sabbatical courses over the last two years and one more school has been accepted for 2019-20. However, numbers of staff attending such courses have been historically low across the LA. Through cross consortia collaboration with the EAS, effective programmes have been established to support the development of pupils' literacy skills in the Welsh medium secondary school that Merthyr pupils attend in a neighbouring local authority.

Welsh in Education officers provide bespoke support schools when needed and the majority of schools in receipt of support made at least good or better progress over the course of 2018-19. Officers support all LA schools with KS2/KS3 moderation and this support is embedded and well received. Officers advise schools of the requirements of pupil profiles and work well to support year 6 teachers prior to and during the moderation process. The Welsh in Education team continually evaluates its work to ensure schools receive a high quality service, refining its methods accordingly in collaboration with schools.

Numbers opting to receive their secondary education through Welsh from the county borough have shown a steady increase over the last three years.

Welsh in Education Strategic Plan and Forum

The MTCBC Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) for 2017-2020 was accepted by the Welsh Government in July 2018 and an Implementation Plan adopted by the Forum. The implementation of the WESP is driven and monitored by the MTCBC Welsh Strategic Forum made up of officers, elected members, school representatives and other organisations linked to the development of the Welsh language and Welsh medium education. It is known locally as the WESP Forum. Representatives from Welsh Government regularly attend meetings of the Forum. The Forum is currently chaired by the Inclusion Manager.

The WESP sets out the Welsh Government's vision for an education and training system that responds in a planned way to the growing demand for Welsh-medium education. The aim is to facilitate an increase in the number of people of all ages able to use the Welsh language with their families, in their communities and in the workplace. The WESP is a key vehicle for creating an improved planning system for Welsh-medium education.

The Forum works effectively as a multi-agency platform for delivering and monitoring the WESP. All members bring high levels of knowledge and expertise to the Forum which are freely shared to achieve the common vision of promoting Welsh-medium education and the Welsh language.

The Forum is very robust in holding the Local Authority to account in its delivery of the Plan and achieving the targets contained within it. The forum membership is regularly reviewed. Reports on the progress of the WESP are routinely presented to the Education Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

School Governor Support

The Authority is compliant with its statutory duty to provide regulatory Governor Training Programme. Mandatory training and termly briefing sessions are provided by the Central South Consortium, the Authority supplements this with its own training programme. E-learning opportunities are also available and the Central South Consortium has developed its own portal in readiness for the 2019/2020 academic year. A wider training programme is also provided which aims to reflect National, Regional and Local priorities and with appropriate emphasis on key training requirements such as Safeguarding.

Arrangements are in place that allow governors to access training opportunities in any of the five local authorities in the region. This provides governors with a greater choice in accessing mandatory training opportunities and provides greater cost effectiveness.

The Central South Consortium has developed a Governor Lead Group which consists of Senior Governor Support Officers from each of the five local authorities and Consortium Officers which support the development of training, conferences, briefing sessions and other initiatives such as the use of Consultant Governors.

The Authority offers a Clerking Service to all schools including the Management Committee of the Pupil Referral Unit. The service is purchased by 27 of its 28 schools. The Authority also supports the termly meetings of the Merthyr Tydfil Association of School Governors which provides an effective, regular consultation platform. Termly meetings are also held with chairs and vice-chairs of governing bodies to brief them on relevant issues. The Governor Support Team also support governing bodies in undertaking Governing Body Self-Evaluation and Governor Skills Audits.

Support is also provided to cluster school based Governor Improvement Group (GIGs). Their aim is to allow governors to determine their own training and development requirements and facilitate peer to peer support.

Support for Vulnerable Learners

English as Additional Language and Gypsy Travellers

- Due consideration is given to ensure that anti-bullying and equality policies take account of the specific needs of all vulnerable groups including GRT and EAL pupils. Schools provide an inclusive ethos where diversity is celebrated and healthy debate is encouraged. Resources and training have been provided for schools so that they are better able to promote the GRT and those of other countries. Workshops for pupils have been delivered at Student Conferences to promote the unique GRT culture that exists in MTCBC and worldwide. GRT pupils have been encouraged to attend Youth Borough Wide Student Forums. Such participation events give all pupils an opportunity to express their views. A Youth Mayor has been from the GRT community previously.
- Targeted support for vulnerable learners particularly those identified as having English as an additional language and Gypsy Travellers has resulted in improved levels of engagement, behaviour and achievement. Attendance rates for 93.8% of GT pupils exceeded the 200 minimum sessions. The majority of Gypsy traveller pupils had over 90% attendance for the academic year. Attendance for EAL pupils remains above that of non EAL pupils at the end of June 2019.
- The main aim of the EAL team is to improve levels of English language acquisition in order to achieve improved engagement, attendance, behaviour and attainment. In 2018-2019 there were 672 EAL pupils on roll in Merthyr schools, an increase of 33 over 2017-2018. Of these pupils, 222 were EAL level E (fluent) compared with 172 in 2017-2018. Of the 450 pupils at EAL level A-D (where A is new to English and D is competent), 348 (77%) made progress. There was no change in the percentage increase in RC schools, where 93% of EAL pupils at levels A-D made progress. The lower progress levels are due to the fact that more pupils have achieved EAL level E fluent. This was achieved against the back drop of a significant reduction in funding. This resulted in the redeployment of 2 BSAs and 1 GT Support Worker.
- Following the notification of the funding cut there was a re-configuration of service delivery. This resulted in establishing an Entry-level class to accelerate language acquisition for those pupils with low levels of English and where no alternative support was in place. The Immersion class has been established since May 2019 and is supporting 13 pupils from 6 schools.
- Baseline levels have been set for pupils attending the class, and regular assessments are carried out both by schools and by the EAL Team. 100% of pupils (13) of ages from Reception to Secondary show an

improvement in the acquisition of the English language. Schools value the Immersion class and are prepared to transport pupils to the class. Pupils feel safe to experiment with the English language and as such are flourishing.

- Moving forward there are plans to extend the Immersion class to support more EAL pupils and to include those from the Gypsy Traveller community. Two adult volunteers have been sourced from the ESOL programme and will support pupils as from September 2019. As a result of WG's re-consideration of funding allocation two LSAs, one of whom is bilingual, are due to start as of September 2019. The EAL Training programme has been re-designed so that as from September 2019 all training can be accessed online.
- The Gypsy Traveller Support Worker coordinates MTCBC lease management on the Glynmil site. This involves license agreements, risk management, health and safety, advocacy and referral, repairs and maintenance management, liaison with site owner and site residents, Universal Credit change over payment system, housing benefit, CT and budget management, eviction and debt management, community development and community centre management.
- Engagement opportunities are sought. Exhibition stands have been held at Merthyr College for Hate Crime week and Holocaust memorial. A GRT Art exhibition (Hold your Horses) was available in the foyer of the college at Christmas. Pupils from the Gypsy Traveller community attended the Student Conference in November 2018. A workshop was delivered on GRT awareness. This involved a GRT quiz and discussion to improve understanding around GRT cultures. This involved further discussion around reaction to racist bullying in order to promote improved inclusivity at school and in the community.
- Gypsy Roma Traveller awareness training is made available for all partners working with GRT within Merthyr Tydfil to support on three objectives.
 - Gain a better understanding of GRT culture and difference
 - Gain knowledge about our duty here in Wales
 - Confidence in professional practice working with GRT and on sites
- The GRT awareness presentation was also delivered as part of the Equality Toolkit for senior management. There are plans for the toolkit to be delivered on to inspire2achieve (20 staff). South Wales Police and the Youth Service are coordinating dates for the training to be delivered to frontline and senior staff members over the summer.

Partnership work on the Glynmil site developed

After school art workshops in partnership with Artis Community have been held. Artis were successful in gaining additional funding to open an arts club on site as from September 2019, developing the "Hold your Horses" into an intergenerational literacy project, with plans for a launch of the book next year at the world book festival. Further engagement activities have included

- Outdoor cookery in celebration of GRT history month (on Site for community members) 19/06/2019
- CAB drop in session
- 6 week parent and toddler sessions followed by February half term play week on site (funded by Child and play grant, delivered by Torfean Play)
- Summer play sessions (4 days over the summer, funded by child and play grant, delivered by Torfean Play. Additional funding of £150 from holiday hunger WG).
- Boxing, private boxing sessions to start over the summer in partnership with South Wales Police on site.

Elective Home Education

- There continues to be agreed processes and procedures in place for those pupils who are electively home educated. The Advisory Teacher with this area of responsibility maintains a register of pupils electively educated at home in order to monitor and track pupil progress, local authority officers liaise regularly to ensure accurate information is retained and that appropriate support is provided for these pupils.
- Colleagues from Inclusion have worked with WG in developing the EHE statutory guidance, including that around Safeguarding. This guidance includes statutory responsibilities for the Advisory Teacher.

Young Carers

The Young Carers Service within Merthyr Tydfil has been provided by Barnardos since 1997. The service operates an open referral system, accepting referrals from young carers themselves, their families and professionals. The service is currently facilitated by a full time project worker and a sessional worker. The service offers:

- Young carers assessments and care planning
- There are three after-school groups in community venues which provide a mix of leisure time and issue based topics.
- One to one sessions are provided for young carers who need intensive support. This can include emotional support, support to access health service, confidence building or relationship issues. During 2018/2019 184 one to one sessions were conducted

During 2018/2019 24 new young carers assessments were undertaken, all of which led to a support plan. A further 156 young carers support plans were reviewed within the set timescales.

For the first time Merthyr Tydfil Young Carers in May 2018 had the opportunity to engage in a residential stay. This was delivered via PGL Travel Ltd which is the UK's leading outdoor education provider, delivering inspirational learning through adventure. This was significant for those that attended as many young carers do not have the same opportunities as their peers to have a 'holiday'. They engaged in a number of activities including archery, raft racing and abseiling; all of which are designed to build young people's resilience and confidence. Twenty seven young carers participated in the residential.

Merthyr Tydfil's Young Carers Choir was established in January 2019. A highlight for the choir was the opportunity to perform in the Barnardo's Young Supporters Concert at St David's Hall, Cardiff. The benefits of the choir are, providing young carers with opportunities that help build their self-esteem and confidence.

The financial year of 2018/2019 saw a reduction in funding to the Young Carers Service from Families First. In 2019/2020 the provision is entirely core funded; this has meant an overall reduction in the young carers' budget. Children's Services has sought to access carer's monies to supplement the provision to young carers and create capacity via the development of the Early Help Hub med at increasing young carer's access to a broader range of preventative services.

Strategy

All schools strive to create an inclusive school ethos where diversity is embraced; headteachers and senior leaders provide a clear vision and strategy for supporting children who are known to be Young Carers. They have high aspirations for all pupils including those who are young carers, while also recognising that these pupils may need additional support and guidance in order to succeed.

Curriculum

Schools try to ensure that children who are looked after have full access to the curriculum and enrichment activities available to all other learners, where appropriate. Schools recognise that these pupils are often in need of additional curriculum and emotional support to enable them to reach their potential.

Tracking

Schools have tracking systems that monitor the progress of all pupils including those who are Young Carers. This would be analysed on a termly basis in order to set targets, evaluate the impact of interventions and to identify ways for improvement. Most schools have a good understanding of the performance of these pupils across the school and on an individual basis. This progress information would be mapped alongside targets in pupils' individual education plans (IEPs).

Wellbeing

Schools recognise the importance of pupil wellbeing in order to succeed and are aware of the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE's) agenda. They utilise various interventions such as Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning, (SEAL), Emotional Literacy Support Assistants (ELSA), School Counselling and mentoring. Transition for all pupils is carefully planned, but school understand that additional time and or support for transition for Young Carers might need to be considered. Pupil participation is strong across all of our schools and Young Carers are encouraged to join Student Councils, Eco Committees etc. Young Carers are routinely invited to annual student

conferences. Schools would use the IEP review meetings to gauge the views of Young Carers. This would provide the pupil with an ideal opportunity to express his or her views on education and set targets for the future. A key principle of the ALNET 2018 is around being child focused; this stresses the importance on gathering the views of the child concerned. This approach is being adopted by all schools.

Governors

Governing bodies and designated governors for children who are young carers have a key role to provide suitable challenge to headteachers. However, their effectiveness in this role varies considerably across Wales. Their role is to provide a level of support and challenge. Termly reports to Governors should include the progress made by all pupils including any vulnerable groups e.g. Young Carers. (Attainment, attendance and behaviour/exclusions)

ALNET 2018

- The Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Bill (ALNET Bill) was introduced to the National Assembly for Wales on Monday 12 December 2016. On 12 December 2017, the Bill was passed and later received Royal Assent to become the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act. The Act has created the legislative framework to improve the planning and delivery of additional learning provision, through a person-centred approach to identifying need early, putting in place effective support and monitoring and adapting interventions to ensure they deliver desired outcomes.
- To ensure successful and consistent implementation of the new system, Welsh Government are helping services to prepare for the changes ahead and to develop closer multi-agency and cross-sector working practices. This includes the ALN Transformation Grant to support delivery partners (including Local Authorities, Consortium, FEIs and Local Health Boards) to prepare for transition to the new system. Through this grant, funding has been allocated to the Central South Region to ensure and support the successful delivery of targets, as set by Welsh Government.
- The prime Welsh Government policy objective is to create a unified legislative framework to support children and young people aged 0-25 years with ALN in schools and FE through the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018. It is part of a broader programme to transform support for learners with ALN in Wales.
- The Central South ALN Transformation project board and work streams were formed in September 2018 to complete work outlined in the Central South Implementation Plan 2018/2019 and formed phase one of the Central South ALN Project. Phase two of the project has commenced, and the Central South region has been awarded funding of £949,656 from Welsh Government to implement new targets detailed in the Central South ALN Transformation Implementation plan 2019/2020. An objective detailed in this plan is to: develop a communication plan that informs all stakeholders of the proposed changes, professional development opportunities and raising awareness activities planned for 2019-20.
- MTCBC has been working collaboratively with the other LAs in the regions to enable readiness for the new Code. ALN cluster Leads have been identified and are disseminating key messages and resources to the schools in their cluster. The LA routinely shares information at the ALNCO Forums.
- Resources for the LA, parents and pupils on the new code and what it means to them are being produced. Regional presentations on PCP, and Rights and Responsibilities have been produced and shared with LA colleagues and schools. TAFGs have been established to consider a collaborative approach to the following; the definition of ALN, ALP, WM resources, Provision mapping and IDP process maps. Guidance has been drafted for Post 16 and EYs transition processes. While, the CSC is to deliver training for middle leaders to ensure that ALNCOs are more able to carry out their duties in line with its new role as per the Code.
- To help support this work a Communication Plan is being drafted. The aim of this plan is:
 - To raise awareness of the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal Act through clear, consistent and accurate messages and engagement activities with all stakeholders;
 - To ensure stakeholders and the target audience within the Central South Region understand the purpose of the Act and the wider transformation programme through clear messages and targeted communications at key stages;
 - To manage expectations, concerns and 'myths' around what the Act means for stakeholders and all those concerned with the new ALN system;
 - To support Central South Local Authorities, Further Education Institutions, Health Boards and

stakeholders to become ALN Act ready;

- To support stakeholders to take ownership of delivering the transformation by sharing consistent messages and materials with their relevant audiences and clearly explaining any duties or responsibilities that they have under the Act for delivering aspects of the transformed ALN system;
- To ensure stakeholders are aware of the professional development opportunities and raising awareness activities taking place in the region linked to the Central South Implementation Plan 19/20 specifically in relation to RCTCBC, MTCBC and BCBC.

Additional Learning Needs

- Since April 2018 the Schools' Counselling service is a jointly commissioned service with Families First community counselling. (The service was previously provided by Eye to Eye.) The new model works toward the integrated service approach promoted by Cwm Taf Morgannwg Health board. YP Core Points scoring data has improved by 2.4 points since 2016 and 1.13 points since the new contract in April 2018.
- A majority of schools are accessible for wheelchair access, and adaptations are being made to the remaining schools in response to pupil need. However, some schools do not lend themselves to wheelchair access due to the age, site and layout.
- Participation rates within preschool childcare have increased slightly since 2014 by 5% to 36% according to the 2017 Childcare Sufficiency Assessment.
- The authority has a programme for the evaluation of all ALN services provided for, or commissioned by, the authority. This has led to continued improvements in the services and increased commissioning of services through another local authority in order to meet needs.
- The SLA with RCT for the VI service is reviewed on an annual basis to ensure that provision is based on pupil need. Pupil progress is monitored and evidenced via the pupil SIP alongside end of KS data. 100% of VI pupils have achieved the CSI over the last 3 year period. This year Mobility Services have been commissioned from another provider due to capacity issues (maternity leave). However RCT is able to provide this service again from September 2019. Consistency has been ensured via service meetings. VI pupils are low incidence high tariff due to the cost of the specialist equipment and intensive support that is required.
- Provision for pupils with PD/MD is reviewed on an annual basis to ensure that it meets pupil need and the requirements of the Equalities Act 2010. PD pupils are high tariff due to the cost of the specialist equipment and intensive support that is required. There are an increasing number of pupils accessing mainstream schools with complex PD/MD needs, such as Down syndrome, catheterisation, tracheostomy and complex epilepsy. 2018 PLASC data shows that the LA has a higher than average incidence of PD than the All Wales data. Specialist equipment is provided in partnership with Health and Vision Products Community Equipment store. Mobility Screeners and Health Care plans are in place as required and are reviewed annually. Manual Handling training is offered to all schools via the ALN training programme. The service coordinator works with Health, Property Services and Schools Support Service to ensure that building adaptations are carried out as required, based on pupil need. Wherever possible, pupils access their school of choice, although some schools cannot be adapted as they have access issues due to the nature of the site and age of building.
- The local authority continues to conduct statutory assessments in accordance with the SEN Code of Practice and in an effective and timely manner. 97% or more of statutory assessments that have been undertaken since 2014 have been completed within statutory timescales, unless an exception has been granted due to ongoing resolutions.
- All pupils with a Statement of SEN are provided with additional provision, where appropriate, to which they are entitled. Provision is specific in statements and the annual review process is robust. All Young People contribute towards their Statutory Assessment and Annual Reviews, in line with person centred practice.
- Following a review of LRBs, the need for specialist provision for pupils with complex SEBD needs in schools within the local authority has been addressed. The new provisions are being embedded and have, to date, resulted in a 50% reduction of pupils requiring costly out of county provision. In addition, specialist provision for pupils with ASD has been increased to cater for increasing demand within the LA (100 pupils diagnosed in the last 3 years, compared with 206 pupils diagnosed over the previous 10 year period).
- LRBs have been involved in moderation of pupil's work to improve teacher assessment and ensure that this is accurate and robust. The small steps of pupil progress for LRB pupils are assessed using annual Instep assessment. All primary aged pupils have progressed. Foundation Phase pupil progress has averaged 13% in literacy and 11% in maths for 2016-2018. Key Stage 2 pupil progress has averaged 8% in literacy and 10% in maths for the same period. A termly LRB Forum was established this year focusing on best practice sharing.

Topics to date have included ASD.

- Work is being undertaken to ensure information is shared with mainstream settings from the health services prior to pupils with complex needs starting school. However, for a number of pupils with complex additional learning needs this information is not timely.
- The SALT commissioned service from Cwm Taf Morgannwg Health board working operational practices have been established. Pupils in the specialist provisions have received Speech and Language support; 27 pupils are on the caseload with 17 receiving direct support; 7 pupils have been discharged and 6 are receiving consultative support in class. School staff have received training and a menu for future training has been developed for the next academic year 19-20.
- The current Hearing Impaired Learning Resource Bases in primary and secondary will end in the Summer Term 2019. All pupils have been accommodated in appropriate provisions or will be supported in their mainstream schools by the LAs peripatetic HI service. Parent meetings have been held throughout the process.
- The local authority continues to work closely with outside education providers, partnership services and support services including Children's Social Services and Children Looked After Education Support services, to ensure children are well placed and closely monitored and reviewed.
- Advice for individual parents and carers with children with additional learning needs continues to be good, they are supported well through the process and continue to work in partnership with schools. A parent drop in session offered by EPS was well attended at Greenfield School. Very good pupil-focused support is provided to schools and families for the early identification, evaluation and intervention of pupils with additional learning needs. Support for families has also been provided through the family liaison officers, MIA and WEFO funded projects since 2011. All policies and protocols are reviewed on an annual basis to ensure that provision meets the needs of schools and pupils with additional learning needs.
- Parent Partnership continues to be embedded across all ALN and Inclusion Teams and has contributed to a reduction in SEN Tribunals, which continue to remain low with no tribunal in process. However cases which are at risk of tribunal are significantly increasing. This is partly due to the significant increase in requests for statutory assessments (a 67% increase over the last 5 years). It is worth noting that there has also been a significant increase in the number of requests that did not meet criteria (1 in 2015, compared with 30 in 2018-19). The local authority continues to work very closely with SNAP Cymru to support parents and provide high quality impartial information, advice and guidance to allow them to make informed decisions and resolve disputes without recourse to complaint or tribunal.
- The Inclusion, ALN and the EPS actively engages in mediation and dispute resolution of more complex cases with pupils, parents and school leaders working alongside SNAP Cymru and other advocates. During the 2018-2019 academic year 31 'complex cases' were supported by the LA ALN team. 12 cases were classified as Green, needing no further action following resolution. 10 cases were classified as Orange, needing some future monitoring. 9 cases are 'Red', requiring continued support and ongoing resolution.
- The local authority has reviewed the current practice and arrangements for parent partnership work, mediation and conflict resolution across the five authorities as a result of the review of current practice, key actions have been implemented including the development of a toolkit on Dispute Resolution for schools and information for parents. 100% of schools have engaged in Dispute Resolution Training.
- Accredited Manual Handling training continues to be delivered by local authority officers to school staff across the authority, ensuring the safety of pupils and staff where pupils have limited mobility and/or personal care needs. Termly ALNCO Forums continue to be held to provide support and training to all colleagues appointed to the role. ALN Reform has been the main focus to prepare ALNCOs for the changes to their role and this will continue into 2019/20. In addition, all newly appointed ALNCOs participated in the induction training programme ensuring a consistent approach to the role across the authority.

Support for Learners with Adverse Childhood Experiences

ACEs is a strategic priority for the LA both within the Focus on the Future corporate plan under the element of Living Well, as well as within the Learning Department Improvement plan under Wellbeing.

Support for learners affected by ACEs

The LA has produced CLA Friendly School guidance. Part of this guidance refers to ACEs and supports schools in meeting this agenda. There is an expectation that schools use PSPs with **all vulnerable learners** in need of additional support including those affected by ACEs.

The main emphasis thus far has been in relation to training, which has been initially coordinated via CSC. The focus has been on identifying and training cluster champions.

Data

The LA captures data in relation to ACEs through the Vulnerability Profile (VP). This is currently used in the secondary schools and is to be rolled out across the primaries as of September 2019. The VP data is used to identify children and young people who are the most vulnerable and likely to have experienced ACEs. All staff within both the Learning Department and Children's Services have had ACE awareness training. This has ensured that where complex issues are noted, that the team around the family is more informed and able to provide more appropriate support.

LA panels take ACEs into consideration when making decisions with regards to provision or placement. Likewise, central teams advise schools of the impact of ACEs and guide staff to plan accordingly.

Training

The LA is still at the early stages of developing ACEs informed schools however; the awareness training accessed so far, has enabled staff to be more conscious of this agenda.

- Through the CSC the aim has been to deliver the WG phase 1 and 2 training and to develop an ACE Ambassador for each school cluster.
- Through CSC the LA has purchased a copy of 'Resilience' and this has been used to initiate ACE awareness training/discussions across LA services and with schools.
- All HTs, ALNCOs, CAs and Learning Department staff (including early years, youth service and adult learning) have received ACEs Awareness Training.
- Governors have been offered the opportunity to receive training – this is a focus moving forward.
- Training in the Community Zones has been facilitated by Public Health Wales. A map and gap exercise was undertaken of stakeholders and partners. Approximately 12 people accessed the Train the Trainer module on the ACEs Hwb. This contained a leaver's agreement for the delivery of at least 4 sessions per annum.
- Moving forward the ACEs training will now be delivered across the Cwm Taf region by the Safeguarding Training Unit, who will inform CSC of people who have been trained.

Education Psychology Service (EP)

80 sessions of EP time were provided for critical incidents across the authority during the last academic year. In addition, the joint EPS has provided 20 sessions of mindfulness training, 4 sessions of CAHMS liaison and 4 sessions on Dealing with Worries. 14 sessions of training to manage self-harm and suicide were also delivered to school staff.

EP time is allocated fairly across schools in Merthyr Tydfil based on number of pupils on roll, FSM eligibility and numbers on SEN register (305 sessions delivered to schools, plus 57 preschool sessions). Each cluster of schools is also allocated 6 group consultations per year (24 sessions delivered this year). However, this model of allocation will need to be reviewed in light of the ALNET 2018.

ACES and trauma informed practice training has been provided by the EPS to schools, ALNCOs, LA officers and governors. Termly ELSA training has been provided by the EPS, as well as half termly ELSA supervisions sessions for clusters of schools (18 sessions delivered this term).

Review of LA Enhanced Provision

During 2018/19 a review of the LA Enhanced Provision funding to schools was undertaken. LA decided to review the systems and processes for the allocation of enhanced provision – significant budget overspend 2018-19 financial year. The budget was frozen as of the Autumn term 2018.

A HT / LA Working Group established to oversee the review, consider the impact of enhanced provision allocated to schools, review current systems and processes. HTs were paired with LA staff and visits to schools took place over 4 weeks, lasting approximately 2 hours. 25 out of 26 schools engaged in the review. Review team met with HT and ALNCO of each school. Findings were reported, recommendations and next steps identified and agreed by the joint HT/LA Working Party.

A review of the LA Enhanced Provision funding (now 'Additional Funding') was undertaken in collaboration with schools in order to identify a streamlined, more cost effective means of allocating support, and enable schools to

build capacity within their education workforce to support our most vulnerable learners. From September 2019 schools now have a specific income allocation which will allow each setting to plan and deliver a more bespoke ALN enhanced support service depending on the needs of their pupils and school circumstances. Schools now have increased autonomy to engage additional practitioners and build capacity and workforce expertise within their own settings. A number of schools have decided to review their current provision and introduce specific support for their pupils' ALN i.e. Nurture provision.

School Support Service

The School Support Service comprises of the Behaviour Support Team and Greenfield Outreach, the team provides support to schools working with pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) and who display challenging behaviours. Schools can apply for support for pupils at School Action plus following school based interventions and evidence of a graduated response. The school support service also provide training to schools which include: Positive Behaviour Support (PBS), Person Centred planning (PCP) and Solution focused Therapy. 2018-19 was the first academic year that the BST and Outreach team merged to become the School Support Service in an attempt to meet the increasing need of support for schools in addressing challenging behaviour, and reducing the risk of fixed term and permanent exclusion. In the academic year 2018-19 there were **92 referrals** from primary schools; **43 (47%) pupils showed an improvement in their behaviour**. In the academic year 2018-19 there were **52 referrals** from secondary schools; **27 (52%) pupils showed an improvement in in their behaviour**.

Outreach/BST	Primary Referrals	Primary exclusions	Secondary referrals	Secondary exclusions
2018/19	92	45 (49%) out of these 10 pupils had multiple (more than 3) exclusions	49	22 (45%) out of these 3 pupils had multiple (more than 3) exclusions

The local authority Outreach Service has delivered Positive Behaviour Support Training to all schools in Merthyr, along with Merthyr College and the EOTAS provision. The outreach service with an outside provider (Helen Sanderson Associates (HSA)) has delivered Person Centred Practice training to 26 out of 29 schools within the authority, in order to ensure a consistent approach to Person Centred Planning (PCP) across the authority; as a result of the training, all Annual Reviews are conducted using a PCP approach ensuring reviews are effective and transitional planning is timely and supported. All schools are now involved in this process, in some capacity, either via the cluster delivery work or the Outreach Training. This approach has also been rolled out to Early Years settings and Merthyr College, in order to ensure a consistent approach across the LA. All Early Years' settings have been offered PCP training and nearly all settings (approx. 90%) attended. One Page Profiles are being piloted on entry to settings, with a view to have One Page Profiles included with all transition documents by Summer 2019. Following PBS and PCP audits of schools, it was identified that further training was required to continue to drive both approaches throughout all settings. A training programme has been created to cater for this need with further training in PBS for school staff and Senior Leaders; Train the Trainer training for identified staff within each cluster; further PCP training for all members of staff and introductions to both approaches for Governors. All schools have received a presentation on PCP, delivered regionally as part of the readiness for the ALNET 2018, via their ALN Cluster Leads. This will ensure that key messages are disseminated throughout the school and that, In line with the ALNET Bill, all teachers understand their role as teachers of ALN.

PRU

- The PRU is a newly established setting serving the town of Merthyr Tydfil that has been established following a realignment of behaviour and EOTAS provision across the local authority. The school now operates from two different sites and consists of a KS2 Setting, Ty Dysgu Dowlais and a KS3/4 setting, Ty Dysgu Homphray. The KS2 provision makes use of an old infant's school building with around a third of the site being occupied

by the PRU. Currently there are 7 pupils in the KS2 setting and approximately 28 pupils in the KS/4 setting. It should be noted that cohort is subject to change depending on the Local Authority need. Approximately 40% of pupils are entitled to free school meals and 12% of pupils are CLA. The cohort represents the wider demographic across the Local Authority. All pupils that attend the school have been identified as having significant social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. Across the academic year several pupils have received statements of special educational needs for a range of learning needs ranging from ASD, SLD and PMED. The academic baseline of nearly all pupils is extremely low. In 2018-19 attendance figures range predominantly between 60 and 70%. The school has been categorised as a 'Red' school and is therefore in receipt of a comprehensive package of support from the local consortium and the Local Authority.

- Due to the nature of the provision, often learners are not able to access the full academic curriculum. However, a more appropriate curriculum has been developed for the PRU; bespoke timetables are implemented for pupils where necessary in order to reflect their individual strengths and to increase motivation. There has been an **increase** in the total number of exclusions issued from 16 in 2016/17 to 80 in 2017/18, but this is attributable to a more robust Behaviour Policy that has been consistently adhered to.

Special Tuition

- As of September 2018 the LA commissioned Equity Solutions to deliver the vast majority of its special tuition needs. This has built capacity and has facilitated more bespoke arrangements for its delivery when required. Pupils have achieved qualifications and engagement rates have improved. The tutors have also supported some of the pupils attending the PRU to enable them to achieve financial literacy qualifications. Improved processes for the allocation of special tuition and the monitoring of progress have been established to enable improved outcomes.

Alternative Provision

- The alternative provision in Pen Y Dre High School has resulted in a reduction of exclusions and has also resulted in no Year 7 pupil requiring education provision in the EOTAS setting. This provision has been further enhanced via consultation and support from the BST and EPS.
- Effective and timely arrangements continue to be in place for transition back into school for pupils who have been excluded, Children Looked After, refugee children and those who were previously electively home educated. The local authority continues to hold weekly Clearing Panels attended by a range of professional representatives, which provide a robust system for addressing complex cases, including moves into the local authority and emergency cases/changes in circumstances. These regular panel meetings ensure that individual cases are dealt with promptly, with input and advice from a range of relevant education professionals. However, pupils that moved into MTCBC from another authority do not always have timely plans in place to accommodate their transition into school and were therefore referred for Special Tuition.

Bullying

The local authority continues to promote positive attitudes towards race equality and strategies to combat racism; in schools, diversity is celebrated and healthy debate is encouraged. As a result of key activities undertaken, reported incidents of bullying in relation to racism remains low. The key activities that are in place to improve wellbeing in general and bullying include activities at a whole school level which includes the PSE curriculum; Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL), Circle Time, Philosophy 4 Children along with Show Racism the Red Card events. At an individual targeted level activities include Emotional Literacy Support Assistants delivering counselling, Restorative Justice, Mindfulness and Student Assistant Programme. At a specialist level activities include support from the Behaviour Team, Educational Psychologists, Children Looked After support, Play therapy, along with the use of Key Workers and/or Learning Coaches.

Pupil Voice

- Pupil voice is strong across the LA. All schools actively seek pupil voice and have Student Councils. Some schools also have Eco and /or Attendance Committees. The remit of these groups vary, but are a vehicle to better understand the needs of the pupil by empowering them to take ownership of projects to ensure improvements.
- Pupil voice has been actively sought as part of the Council's current public consultation on Post 16 Transport options. The public consultation is taking place between 22 January and 16th April 2018.
- Half of schools are engaged in the Rights Respecting Schools, enabling an ethos of mutual respect whereby

pupils and staff feel listened to and valued. Two schools, Heolgerrig Primary and Trelewis Primary have witnessed an improvement in attendance and a reduction in exclusions since becoming a Rights Respecting School.

- Over 90 pupils from schools across the authority attended the November Student Conference in 2018. Of those in attendance, all felt more informed about making choices that impact on their health and wellbeing. The focus in 2018 was on Mental Health and Screen time overload. At this event the Youth Forum launched their Toolkit that included self-help ideas for addressing mental health for secondary aged pupils. In 2018/19 the second Student conference event focusing on the Future Generation and Wellbeing Act was held. The aim of this event was for the young people to learn how the Future Generation and Wellbeing Act will impact on them and for their voice/opinions to be heard with regards to the new ways of working and for them to understand how they can influence planning. As a result of these meetings there has been improved communication between the PSB and the future generation of MTCBC.

There is good provision of services around, PSE, sport, the arts and healthy lifestyles.

Schools Holiday Enrichment Programme

The School Holiday Enrichment Programme (SHEP) is a school-based scheme that provides healthy meals, namely breakfast and lunch, food and nutrition education, physical activity and enrichment sessions to children during the summer holiday, although the scheme is not restricted to the summer holiday period, this is deemed to be the best time to provide this service.

“Food and Fun” is the brand identity used at local level to promote the scheme to children and families, which is match funded by the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA). The aim is to prevent children going otherwise hungry in the holiday period and to improve children’s health, promote learning through a structured programme of enriched activities and to maintain attainment, which could otherwise be lost during long holiday periods.

Following a strict and scheduled criteria set by WLGA, a SHEP steering group was established consisting of staff members from MTCBC Catering Department, Healthy Schools Team from the hosting school site (including Head Teacher, local Co-ordinator, Safeguarding member), MTCBC Leisure Services and Public Health Wales Dietetic Services, a very positive example of cross team partnerships to maintain the wellbeing of young peoples within the authority.

Goetre Primary has been hosting the SHEP programme since 2017 and has received very good media attention. Each year the programme has evolved and increased in numbers with 2019 having 120 pupils registered and catered for. The opportunity to explore a second site, a secondary site, was unsuccessful. The aim here was to provide an identical service but to pupils of transition school years i.e. primary to secondary. It was believed that this would have provided an excellent opportunity for pupils to also engage with each other and make friends and overcome any anxiety that could occur during this phase.

SHEP was run within Merthyr Tydfil for 12 consecutive days following the end of the summer school term, as this has been found to be the best time period in order to secure full attendance. Breakfast, lunch, one hour of physical activity, nutrition and enrichment sessions were provided on a daily basis. Other external activities included visits from the library service, Design to Smile, the Fire Service, St Johns Ambulance, guest appearances from Wallace & Gromit and the opportunity for parents / grandparents / carers to join pupils for breakfast once a week.

It is hoped that next year, the programme will grow further and offer opportunities to other communities within Merthyr Tydfil.

Other provision

Eco Schools

- Engagement with the Eco Schools Awards remains high. 21 out of 28 schools have Green flag status; 9 of which is Platinum status. During the summer term of 2019/20 Edwardsville Primary and Ysgol Rhyd y Grug both achieved new flags and Ysgol Santes Tudful, Ysgol y Graig renewed their platinum award. These awards nurture positive attitudes to the environment, and develop and active global citizenship.

Healthy Schools

- All schools are involved in the Healthy Schools award scheme. 15 schools have achieved phase 5, Troedyrhiw has achieved phase 6 and Ysgol Santes Tudful has achieved the NQA. The involvement in this scheme allows pupils to better understand how to live more healthily.

School Health Research Network (SHRN)

All 4 secondary schools took part in the SHRN survey in 2018. The findings showed that MTCBC pupils are above the Welsh average for consuming energy drinks and are below the Welsh average for healthy eating. However, it was pleasing to note the positive response to School Connectedness.

Music

- All pupils, including vulnerable groups of pupils, have access to enrichment type activities e.g. Music, sporting events, off site visits and Art Workshops. This improves self-confidence and self-esteem.
- Between 2016 and 2019, the number of young people taking part in free music lessons within schools has doubled from 500 to 1000. 105 hours music lessons a week are taught in 23 schools across the borough, as well as the college, by the team of well qualified and experienced specialist Peripatetic Music Tutors, thus continuing the county's strong tradition of music-making by delivering the high quality music services offered. Tuition is currently offered in; Strings, Woodwind, Brass, Percussion, Guitar, Harp, Piano and Singing, delivering the music lessons to all group sizes ranging from individuals and small groups to whole class ensemble tuition (WCET). The Merthyr Tydfil Music Service strives to be inclusive ensuring music is available to all and provides high quality music tuition to students of all ages and abilities in a variety of educational settings inspiring young people from Merthyr Tydfil to make music together whilst having fun creating tomorrow's musicians today
- The MTCBC Music Service organises a variety of free weekly Ensembles, (Orchestra, Windband, Brass Ensemble and Guitar Ensemble), giving all learners the opportunity to participate thus enhancing the young musicians' team-working skills as well as their social skills after school hours. The Merthyr Tydfil Youth Music ensembles play publicly throughout the year at their own concerts as well as for charity and other events. All members are encouraged to enter the annual Young Musician competitions held by the music service on behalf of the local Rotary club and The Friends of Merthyr Tydfil Youth Music. In addition to these competitions, which provide a much needed solo platform for the learners, the Music Service provides termly half-day instrumental workshops, massed singing workshops and events for More Able and Talented pupils, which are all now part of the annual cycle of events taking place. 2019 will see the premier performance by Merthyr young musicians at the national festival: Music For Youth.
- The pupils have achieved significant standards in musical excellence. The four counties of Merthyr Tydfil, Bridgend, Caerphilly and Rhondda Cynon Taf organise the Four Counties Youth Music ensembles meeting once a term. For the academic year 2018/2019, a dozen young Merthyr Tydfil musicians were successful in gaining places in the FCY Orchestra, Windband and Brass Band. Advanced musicians are eligible to apply for audition for membership of the National Youth Arts Wales Ensembles and as a result of the 2018/2019 auditions, one of our young people has achieved an offer for a place in the National Youth Choir of Wales while another is on the reserve list for membership of the National Youth Wind Orchestra of Wales, this same young musician has been awarded an unconditional place to study for a Music degree at the Royal Welsh College Of Music and Drama from September 2019.
- WLGA funding has helped the Music Service purchase/fund the following:
FSM support, Ensemble access, Instruments, Access and Inclusion, Progression and achievement, GCSE & A level music support, Mater classes and Rock and Pop Ensemble.

Other areas wider than maintained education

Inspire to Achieve pre 16

Merthyr Tydfil works effectively with Regional and local partners on the Inspire to Achieve and Inspire to Work Programmes. Good use is made of the data gathered through the Early Identification Toolkit (EIT) to identify vulnerable learners and allocate appropriate support, through agreed protocols. Take up of lead working support in I2A (pre 16) is good with 276 young people taking up the offer of support from 300 referrals; in 2017-18.

School based partnership meetings led by the EPC are used effectively to allocate monitor and track the progress and intended destinations of 'red' flagged young people. While schools retain responsibility to monitor the risk of NEET for 'amber' and 'green' flagged young people. Through this lead working support the project contributes to and has had a positive impact on the local NEET figure. During 2015-16 academic year 90% of Year 11 learners receiving this support entered a destination and in 2016-17 this rose to 97% with 17/18 figures currently being compiled.

Inspire to Work post 16

The Post 16 NEET Operational and Lead Worker Practitioner partnership Group identifies young people requiring additional support to access a post 16 opportunity. Though a person centred approach, the group allocates appropriate support using a broad range of partners.

The latest data available demonstrates that during the period 1st April 2017 to 31st March 2018 there were 142 new referrals to the NEET Operational and Lead Worker Practitioner group. Of the 116 that were closed during that period, 60 were supported into EET (51.7%). Analysis of 'Star Assessment' scores for young people exiting Inspire programmes shows that most (99%) report an improvement in their wellbeing as a result of their participation in the project.

2:3

Early years –

Historically the take up of childcare in Merthyr Tydfil for the 0-4 age group has been low in comparison to the rest of Wales and currently stands at 34% according to the 2017 CSA. Whilst this demonstrated a 3% improvement on the 2014 assessment the improvement is heavily influenced by the expansion of Flying Start which provides free part time childcare for 41% of eligible children aged 2-3 across the county borough. Since the 2017 CSA a further 2 Cylch Meithrin have been developed. These provisions have been developed in line with the CSA action plan which identified a projected increase in demand and the lack of capacity in current provision.

Flying Start

FS - 41% (1204) of the 0-4 population are eligible to access Flying Start within Merthyr Tydfil, which is the highest proportion of children with access in a local authority (LA) across Wales. Geographically this results in 15 of the 36 LSOAs in Merthyr Tydfil being Flying Start eligible. Through the commissioning model implemented over the past 4 years there are now 93% of childcare settings registered to deliver Flying Start through a core and approved model This has enabled Flying Start to influence the delivery and quality of childcare across the County Borough. The take up of Flying Start childcare was 97% in 17/18 and ranked Merthyr Tydfil as 2nd in Wales, significantly above the Welsh Average.

Although not nationally reported attendance rates of children in Flying Start placements is at 83% and is noted as comparing well when looking at other Flying Start provision across Wales

A programme of joint moderation has been piloted using both the previous CDP and now the FPP with nursery class teachers and childcare providers across the borough. This approach will continue to be embedded to ensure consistent assessment and the validity of the judgements made within the outcomes data achieved and shared with schools through agreed transition arrangements for all Flying Start children.

Non-Maintained

There are currently 3 non maintained registered education providers within Merthyr Tydfil and these are supported through a continued collaboration with Education of an appointed advisory teacher attached to the Early Years team. Estyn inspection of these providers evidences that in the main judgements are 'Good'. There has been a decreasing number of pupils accessing they're education outside of school in recent years however with the introduction of the childcare offer and the nursery review of school places which is concluding this situation could change and see the non -maintained sector need to expand to meet parent's needs. The Education Improvement Grant and the Early Years Pupil Deprivation Grant has been developed and delivered centrally and utilised to focus improvement for children's outcomes in line with FPP data analysis across settings.

Free Childcare Offer

Merthyr Tydfil works in partnership with Rhondda Cynon Taf to deliver the Welsh Government childcare offer, with Merthyr Tydfil's role being as an engagement authority. The CSA parental survey suggested that there would be a 56% take up of the Childcare offer which would equate to 200-230 children based upon the 400 three to four year olds potentially eligible for the offer. These individuals would require part time or half-day provision to complement their school place and access to afterschool or holiday provision. 17.5 hrs is the offer - To meet this demand we currently have 25 providers registered to deliver the offer (95%) and a take up of the offer by 245 families.

Play Sufficiency

The Play Sufficiency Assessment has recently been completed ensuring compliance with the duties of the authority. The Assessment was undertaken through a collaborative approach and aims to ensure the involvement of the voices of children and parents throughout the process as well as partner organisations. Within the 2018/19 assessment 211 children in year 5 in schools across the county borough have contributed towards the assessment and an additional 59 members of the public (children/young people and parents) have taken part in focus groups to explore in depth some of the themes of the assessment. Within the resources available good progress has been made and reported to Council with an agreed action plan in place. Effective planning arrangements have enabled the Play Steering group to utilise almost double the original funding allocation for the last 2 years from Welsh Government against agreed priorities.

Youth Support Services

A good range of informal and non-formal learning opportunities are offered through universal provision, which focuses on the key areas identified by young people of health and wellbeing, employment, arts and culture, physical activity and citizenship. A recent survey of youth support service organisations elicited a 58.3% response rate which was slightly higher than the response rate of 57.5% in the previous survey in 2014 and demonstrated that of the responses 22 were YSS and 6 dedicated NEETS provisions.

The breakdown of organisational respondents demonstrates that at the time of the survey there were **8 open access youth provisions**, providing a range of activities covering all of the priority areas.

No	Priority Area	No. of Providers	No. of Projects or Activities	Targeted Age Range			
				11-13	14-16	17-19	20-25
1	Raising Attainment, Accreditations, Qualifications	17	31	10	22	22	15
2	NEETS & Youth Unemployment	11	28	8	17*	22	17
3	Healthy Living	22	42	29	36	31	17
4	Active Citizenship & Participation	15	25	13	15	18	16

A good range of qualifications that extend young people's skills and knowledge are offered and delivered in youth settings, e.g. Youth Achievement/Challenge Award, Duke of Edinburgh, Sport Leadership, Royal Yachting Association awards and BTEC's and this is reflected in the performance data for the Youth Service when benchmarked across Wales. For 11-13 year olds, examples include Youth Challenge Award and London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art (LAMDA) Awards.

Of the respondents **16 providers** held a recognised quality mark and **3 providers** were currently undertaking a quality mark. Examples of these included PQASSO; Mind Quality Mark; Health and Safety - Safe Contractors Scheme; Quality Assurance ISO 9001; Amber Green Inclusion Award and National Children and Young People Participation Kite mark for Wales and Quality Mark for Youth Work in Wales.

As part of the quality process and to provide evidence of high standards of service the response data identified that **14 providers** employed staff who are registered with the Education Workforce Council (EWC). Of these, **8 providers** were from the third sector.

Substance Misuse

The Cwm Taf Area Planning Board for substance Misuse has now commissioned an integrated substance misuse service and recently established a group specifically to look at children and young people's services as part of the development of this service. Ensuring it becomes fully integrated into existing support systems and structures.

YOS

Recent information demonstrates that the joint Cwm Taf YOS continues to be effective in reducing the number of first time entrants into the criminal justice system. Since April 17/18 there has been a reduction from 196 to 136 first time entrants by the end of Dec 2018, which is well below the Welsh Average. In addition to this provision is also successful in reducing the custody rate and between April 18 and March 19 no young people were placed in Custody. Reoffending rates are still higher than average for the 'family group' which the YOS has now been placed in.

At post 16, Llamau offers the specialised projects Symud Ymlaen and Learning for Life which are examples of specialised support services for young people who are looked after and have involvement with Youth Offending Services. Work is currently being undertaken to look at ways to increase referrals into these projects but it is recognised that there is a competitive market in the post 16 employment arena.

MTBWYF

The local authority through a partnership approach provides young people with an excellent range of opportunities to have their voices heard: through the Merthyr Tydfil Borough Wide Youth Forum (MTBWYF): the office of Youth Mayor.

Following the success of the Youth Mayor election in 2017, a further review, incorporating the views of school pupils, took place which resulted in an increase to 2800 young people taking part in this democratic process and voting in the 2018 election. The improvement was achieved through involvement of all young people educated in Merthyr Tydfil and an increase in the number of young people becoming candidates. The partnership with Democratic Services has enhanced this process and resulted in a more inclusive approach and raised the profile of the Youth Mayor.

Merthyr Tydfil is the first local authority to approve young person representation on Scrutiny Committee's and this arrangement continues to embed. This partnership approach to working with young people, supported by Democratic Services and the Performance and Scrutiny Team, has had some tangible impacts this year.

- secured consultation on the new bus station with members of MTBWYF and a discussion with the Leader of the Council.
- Due to concerns raised about the impact of this development on access for homeless people to the night shelter a homelessness working group has been set up.
- Consultation on Cyfarthfa Castle developments with members securing representation in discussions on the proposed Heritage Trail.
- There is now also young person representation on the Town Planning Group.

Positive mental health continued to be a focus of the work of MTBWYF this year and was extended to include primary schools. This has resulted in the 'Feeling Good' project, which has produced a song and an activity pack to use with primary school pupils and was officially launched on 17th July.

Young people themselves are taking forward the participation agenda and have been trained to deliver 'Young People Say' training. This year they delivered training to 22 members of staff from 4 local organisations that work with young people. This work will support the promotion of the refreshed National Participation Standards and encourage local organisations to sign up. The findings of the YSS survey show that **12 providers** meet the new National Participation Standards while **10 providers** requested more information and support on this.

At a regional level and following a request by the Deputy Youth Mayor, young people have collaborated with colleagues from the RCT youth forum and produced an animated version of the Cwm Taf Wellbeing Plan, which was launched on 3rd July. This is a much simplified version that is intended for use with young people, but also the wider public and members of staff.

Community Zone

The development of this integrated facility within one of the most deprived areas of Merthyr Tydfil has brought

together a number of service provisions into a single facility and is connecting services across providers through a neighbourhood network. The advantages of this approach are too early to judge in full however it has already resulted in additional investment: upgraded environmental areas; increased play facilities and opportunities; provided an information and advice facility; secured investment to create a community coffee shop to challenge social isolation and promote community cohesion. A partnership with the third sector is now bringing additional community development support across the area and the relocating of the Youth club provided by the third sector into the facility is proving extremely successful with the young people of the community.

Leisure, Culture and Sports Development

The work of Active Merthyr Tydfil spans across schools, recreation and community clubs.

Sport and physical activity play a huge part in people's wellbeing and activities are planned to develop confidence, tackling isolation as well as health benefits. The work of the Active Merthyr team currently supports the local authority's wellbeing objectives, integrating the work of the team with the wider work of the council and with both internal and external partners.

Early Years

This year almost half of all the primary schools have accessed SKIP-Cymru© training and 18 early years staff have been trained.

Primary

Young Leaders

This project aims to increase lunchtime physical activity opportunities across primary schools and engage inactive children through the development of a Young Leaders programme. During the year 136 Young Leaders have been recruited, trained and deployed and 15 schools engaged in the programme. The partnership working between Active Merthyr and the Urdd has developed through the Young Leaders programme incorporating Welsh on the yard sessions therefore further developing children's bilingual skills. During the year Active Merthyr utilised a version of the Warwick Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale to demonstrate the impact of sport and physical activity. All pupils who participated in the Young leaders programme saw their wellbeing scores improve.

Active Merthyr have this year organised a primary school's cricket festival, 2 day tennis festival and a tag rugby festival. All have been well attended by schools and more importantly further developed the teams role within schools and with pupils.

Active Merthyr has this year taken over the timetabling and monitoring of the school swimming sessions with the aim of improving transparency, value for money and quality of lessons.

Secondary

NEET Project – This project in partnership with the Inspire to Achieve team, incorporated a physical activity session as part of a weekly programme for a group of teenage pupils at the risk of becoming NEET. 50% of the learners completed the programme and the Wellbeing measure showed an 11% increase in their overall wellbeing score.

MGirls – an Active Merthyr initiative to engage secondary age pupils into physical activity. The programme started as school based but moved to become Community based, through Treharris Boys and Girls club. In 2018 MGirls at Treharris Boys and Girls Club was shortlisted for the "Promoting Health Wellbeing and Active Lifestyles Award" at the Youth Excellence Awards.

Greenfield School Table Cricket – The school were introduced to the programme through a Disability Cricket Coach with Cricket Wales and supported by Active Merthyr who assisted with resources. Table Cricket has engaged a cohort of pupils who were previously inactive in physical activity. It has provide them with an opportunity to participate in physical activity on a regular basis and also given the confidence to participate in other programmes. As a result of the programme the school travelled to lords Cricket Ground for the second year in a row, representing Wales in the National Cricket Finals.

Extra - Curricular

Primary School Football league

The Primary School Football League has been a great success this year with 20 primary schools taking part in the after school league at Penydarren Park. This has involved over 250 pupils taking part in regular physical activity

and competition. Consultations have meant that over 53% of children attending did not play for a club and this has informed future club development plans. The league has also allowed further developed the links between Active Merthyr and schools.

Merthyr Public Library Service

Merthyr Tydfil was chosen as the national focus for Bookstart week. Over 50 children attended at the park and took part in a nature walk with parents through the grounds to end with snacks, stories and songs. As a result, library staff have been asked to present at the annual Superbox Conference for early years practitioners. The Library was also chosen to launch the Welsh Summer Reading Challenge. The Library has continued to maintain a strong programme of activities and events during the year, both through direct delivery from Library staff and through partnership working with other organisations. One such partnership is through Active Merthyr and the local authority where staff developed and delivered part of the programme for the SHEP summer project.

The Merthyr Tydfil Public Library service has in 2018/19 provided

- A range of classes supporting formal and informal learning: e.g. Computer classes, Lego Club, Toddler Times, Happy Hour Computer Basics, Art groups, Knitting groups (for adults and children), Chatterbooks, Homework clubs, Welsh toddler times, , Book clubs, Silver Surfers, Digital Fridays, school visits
- Trevithick Day Competition & Event with over 100 schoolchildren from 4 MT Schools, 4 Museum Workshops / 4 Richard Trevithick Events, Presentation Event showing the cooperation between Libraries / Museum / Rights of Way / Merthyr College / Heritage Trust
- Harri Webb Poetry Workshops at Dowlais Library, funded by Biffa / Trecatti Trust, 3 local schools involved, prize sponsorship by local business – Dolphin Chip Shop
- International Women's Day Event / Launch of Purple Plaque for Ursula Masson, over 100 people attended, highlighting cooperation between Red House, Libraries, Merthyr College & Chwarae Teg
- Earth Hour Event at Cyfarthfa Park, over 300 people attended, partnership working between Libraries, Museum & Head4Arts

MUSEUM SERVICE

Education

Coal Mining Art Project

The history of coal mining in the Merthyr Valley art project was completed in July, with the final school, Cyfarthfa Park Primary partaking in the practical workshops.

This research, photographs and video is now being edited by the artist and the launch for the film has been confirmed for the 21/11/2018 at RedHouse.

Wales for Peace

In July the Wales for Peace project continued with the Girls group from Cyfarthfa High. The pupils visited the museum to present the initial research and discover more about the museum and it's collection.

Sandford Award

The Museum service won the Sandford Award for Heritage Education in 2018.

The Education Interpretation Officer delivered a stimulating day of learning activities. He had an excellent rapport with the children and actively encouraged them to use their thinking, reasoning and observational skills throughout the day. The responded positively and asked him interesting and thoughtful questions themselves.

Children visiting Cyfarthfa Castle Museum and Art Gallery will enjoy a stimulating day of investigative learning, and return to school with an empathetic understanding of Merthyr's history and of its contribution and significance to local and national heritage.

New Workshops

A new outreach Education Workshop on the history of Coal Mining has been created and is now available for school to book. The workshop utilizes materials and knowledge acquired through the coal mining art project and has repurposed to support the national curriculum of Wales.

Dowlais Art Project

Through February and March 2019 the EIO worked with two classes from Dowlais Primary for their 'Galleries' topic. Using the artwork held at Cyfarthfa Castle Museum & Art Gallery created by the 20th Century Dowlais Settlement Artists the pupils took part in 4 workshops:

IT Service

The schools ICT Service provide a range of services and support to schools. We currently have an SLA in place with all schools in the Local Authority area.

The support provided includes:

- MIS Hosting and Support (SIMS), data management, training and development
- Technical Support – desktop and devices; setup, management and repair
- Server hosting/management, to include all file hosting and network management services
- Integration with external services, such as HWB
- Data Backup
- Network (internal Managed Network)
- Network (Broadband connectivity, PSBA connection)
- Internet Filtering and safeguarding for pupils and staff
- Procurement services
- Disposal services
- Professional, customer service and engagement services, to ensure the service is meeting the needs of the customer.

The service has been in operation since 2004 and consists of five team members and the support of the wider IT department. The team make up include: Team leader (1 – FT), Engineer (1 – FT), Technician (3 – FT).

Impact of Services

In previous Service evaluation exercises, the service has been overall considered *excellent* by schools (2018 Annual SLA evaluation). All schools judge the service as either *Excellent* or *Good* when asked whether the service has a positive impact on the leadership and management of the school.

The foundation of the service is to remove the risk and complexity of running IT services for schools, to enable the management and teaching staff to access the services they need and free their time to concentrate on teaching and learning.

Strengths and Weaknesses

The service draws strength from receiving support from all schools in the local authority area. This leads to repeated opportunity for consistency, standardisation and reduce support burdens, essentially leading to lean and efficient service delivery.

The Schools ICT team is part of the wider IT department and can draw on the knowledge and expertise available. The team is fully dedicated to schools, engaged and listens to requirements. The service aims to be flexible to ongoing and changing requirements, in line with digital trends and curriculum changes.

Although no formal partnerships exist, we do engage and can work in partnership where necessary with 3rd parties, who schools occasionally employ, to deal with their specific requirements, which fall outside of the service levels agreement. The ensure standard in network security are adhered to.

Weaknesses concern the Schools ICT Support team's size and the occasional limited opportunity to develop deep skill knowledge in certain IT systems. The risk is often offset by standardising on a limited product set and encouraging schools to work with the authority on joint initiatives. The team is required to cover a lot of ground to meet the requirements of the schools.

The authority's ICT strategy has expired and in recent times the Schools ICT Support Team has lacked access to a forum which could establish an authority wide Digital Strategy for schools. This has somewhat increased the difficulty of ensuring consistent approaches are made in provision of relevant and consistent ICT and digital services and made the task of change management more involved. A renewed focus on a Digital Strategy is

being made, with a recently formed Digital Strategy Group consisting of a number of school based leaders and IT coordinators.

Areas for Development:

In light of the evidence given above, identify areas that the service would like to develop in order to do better.

Priorities for Improvement:

These are the priority areas that need immediate improvement in order to have an ***impact on outcomes***. Consider the judgements - this should be about moving from unsatisfactory to adequate, or from adequate to good.

QUESTION 2: PROVISION & SERVICE DELIVERY

Question 2.3: How well does the service understand and use the sustainable development principle (the five ways of working)?

EXAMPLES OF THE FIVE WAYS OF WORKING ARE ATTACHED AS APPENDIX A.

NB: Only complete the objective relevant to your area- leave the Corporate AREAS BLANK

Ensure that you place a score in each of the 5 boxes: 0=no evidence; 0.5=some evidence but much to do; 1.0=good evidence but with development needs; 1.5 good evidence and embedded practice; 2.0 evidence of being an exemplar for others in this regard. See the Guidance document for a descriptor for each score.

Objectives and Corporate Areas of Change						
	Best Start to Life	Working Life	Environmental wellbeing	Living Well	Corporate Support Services	
Ways of Working	Long term					
	Prevention					
	Involvement					
	Collaboration					
	Integration					

NB: The descriptor of the scores to support the allocation of judgements you ascribe to Question 2.3 can be found in [Guidance Document Question 2](#) (attached)

JUDGEMENT:

Once you have assigned a score for each of the 5 ways of working RELEVANT to the Wellbeing objective that the service is accountable for, transfer the scores in the table below and use the performance key to provide a judgement. For example, Long Term is scored 1.5 in the matrix the judgement is GOOD.

Ways of working	Judgement
Long term	
Prevention	
Involvement	
Collaboration	
Integration	

SCORE	JUDGEMENT
2	EXCELLENT
1.5	GOOD
1	ADEQUATE and needs improvement
0-0.5	UNSATISFACTORY and needs urgent improvement