Self-evaluation report
May, 2014

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Key Question 1 - How good are outcomes?

Quality Indicator: 1.1.1 Standards - results and trends in performance compared with national averages, similar providers and prior attainment

In 2013, the percentage of pupils of compulsory school age eligible for free school meals (24.42%) was higher than the Welsh average (19.53%) and the 21st highest in Wales compared to other local authorities, where first is the lowest free school meals (FSM) figure and 22nd is the highest (PLASC 2012).
Sixteen of the 110 areas in Caerphilly are in the 10% most deprived areas in Wales.

Foundation Phase
Performance in the Foundation Phase is good, continuing to be above the Wales average for all indicators. The percentage of pupils achieving the Foundation Phase outcome indicator is higher than the National average at 85.0% and ranked 7th in Wales when compared to other local authorities. 69% of schools are in the top 2 quarters based on performance in the Foundation Phase outcome indicator when benchmarked against similar schools in Wales.
The percentage of pupils achieving the expected outcome level 5+ each of the mandatory areas of learning is higher than the National average. Performance in English Language, literacy and communication skills is ranked 9th in Wales, performance in Welsh Language, literacy and communication skills is ranked 3rd in Wales, performance in Mathematical Development is ranked 8th in Wales and performance in Personal and social development, well-being and cultural diversity is ranked 12th in Wales. The percentage of schools in the top 2 quarters based on the percentage of pupils achieving outcome level 5+ when benchmarked against similar schools in Wales is above average in all mandatory areas of learning.
The percentage of pupils achieving outcome level 6+ are higher than national averages for all mandatory areas of learning except Language, literacy and communication skills in Welsh. The percentage of schools in the top 2 quarters based on the percentage of pupils achieving outcome level 6+ when benchmarked against similar schools in Wales is above average for all areas of learning.

Key Stage 2
Performance in key stage 2 is good and continues to be higher than expected given a FSM ranking of 21st for all core subjects at level 4 and above. The percentage of pupils achieving the Core Subject Indicator was slightly lower than the National average in 2013 and ranked 15th in Wales when compared to other local authorities. Performance has increased year on year for the last 5 years. 57% of schools are in the top 2 quarters based on performance in the core subject indicator when benchmarked against similar schools in Wales.
The percentage of pupils achieving the expected level 4+ in Mathematics and Welsh first language are above the Wales average whilst performance in the CSI, English and Science is just below the Wales average. The percentage of schools in the top 2 quarters based on the percentage of pupils achieving level 4+ when benchmarked against similar schools in Wales is above average for all core subjects.

The percentage of pupils achieving level 5+ improved at a greater rate than at level 4 in 2013 and Wales as a whole for English, mathematics and science. However, performance at the higher level 5+ remains below national averages for all core subjects. The percentage of schools in the top 2 quarters based on the percentage of pupils achieving level 5+ when benchmarked against similar schools in Wales is above average for English, mathematics and science.

Key Stage 3

Performance at key stage 3 is adequate. The percentage of pupils achieving the Core Subject Indicator is below the National average and ranked 18th in Wales when compared to other local authorities. Performance has increased year on year for the last 5 years and increased by 5.1 percentage points in 2013, which was at a faster rate than the Wales average. 57% of schools are in the top 2 quarters based on performance in the core subject indicator when benchmarked against similar schools in Wales, an increase from 35% in 2012.

The percentage of pupils achieving the expected level 5+ are below national averages for English (18th in Wales), mathematics (17th in Wales) and science (19th in Wales) and ranked 10th in Wales for Welsh first language. However, the percentage of schools in the top 2 quarters based on the percentage of pupils achieving level 5+ when benchmarked against similar schools in Wales are above average for English, mathematics and science.

The percentages of pupils achieving level 6+ are below national averages for English, mathematics and science and equal to the national average in Welsh first language. The percentage of schools in the top 2 quarters based on the percentage of pupils achieving level 6+ when benchmarked against similar schools in Wales are at or above average for English and science.

Key Stage 4

Performance at key stage 4 is adequate. All key indicators are ranked between 17th in Wales (Level 1 threshold) and 21st (Level 2 threshold and Capped Points Score) and there has been a three year upward trend in all key indicators with the exception of the CSI which dipped in 2013 but remains higher than in 2011.

There is a three year upward trend in the proportion of learners achieving the Level 2 threshold inclusive of English/Welsh and mathematics and Caerphilly was placed 20th in Wales in 2013, just above the LA's FSM ranking of 21st. This increase masks variation between schools; 8 schools improved their performance in this indicator whilst 5 declined. The proportion of schools in the bottom benchmark quarter has reduced over the last three years from 7 schools in 2011 to 1 school in 2013, which is the fifth lowest proportion of schools in the bottom quarter in Wales.

The proportion of learners achieving the Level 2 threshold inclusive of English/Welsh and mathematics has been higher than the WG expected attainment from 2009 to 2012 (2013 not yet available).

Quality Indicator: 1.1.2 Standards - standards of groups of learners

Gender
Foundation Phase

The difference between boys' and girls' performance decreased slightly in 2013 for the FPI but is wider than the gap across Wales. The gap increased for LLC English, LLC Welsh, mathematical development and PSDWCD and is now wider than the national gap in all indicators other than LLC Welsh.

Key Stage 2

The difference between the percentage of boys and girls achieving the Core Subject Indicator, English, and Science in 2013 remained smaller than national differences, and was smaller than the national difference in mathematics for the first time since 2008.

Key Stage 3

The difference between the percentage of boys and girls achieving the Core Subject Indicator reduced in 2013 by 2.36 percentage points but remains higher than national differences. The difference also decreased in English and Welsh first language but increased in mathematics and science.

Key Stage 4

The difference between the percentage of boys and girls achieving the Level 2 threshold inclusive of English/Welsh and mathematics reduced in 2013 by 3.75 percentage points and is smaller than national differences at a 4.57 gap compared with 8.34 across Wales. The difference also decreased for the Level 2 threshold, Level 1 threshold, Capped Points Score, CSI, and English, but increased in Welsh first language, mathematics and science.

FSM
Foundation Phase

70% of pupils entitled to FSM achieve the Foundation Phase Outcome Indicator compared with 91% of pupils not entitled to FSM. The gap has increased slightly from 20.48 points in 2012 to 20.60 and is above the 2013 Wales average of 17.6.

The performance gap varies between indicators from 11.9 points in LLC Welsh to 20.6 in LLC English.

Key Stage 2

68.6% of pupils entitled to FSM achieve the Core Subject Indicator compared with 89.3% of pupils not entitled to FSM. The gap reduced between 2012 and 2013 from 24.6 to 20.4 points, which is slightly above the 2013 Wales average of 18.3.

The performance gap varies from 15.7 points in science to 21.9 in Welsh first language.

Key Stage 3

There has been a three year reduction in the gap between the proportion of pupils entitled to FSM and those not entitled to FSM achieving the CSI from 33.6 points to 27.4 points, and the gap is now smaller than the Wales average. The gap has also reduced in Welsh first language, mathematics and science. Whilst the gap increased in English in 2013, the gap remains smaller than in 2011.

Key Stage 4

There has been a three year reduction in the gap between the proportion of pupils entitled to FSM and those not entitled to FSM achieving the Level 2 threshold including English/Welsh first language and mathematics from 31.7 in 2022 to 28.9 in 2012 (provisional KS4 data). The gap has remained smaller than the gap across Wales for the last 5 years.

EAL
Foundation Phase

90% pupils with English as an additional language achieved the foundation phase outcome indicator in 2013 compared with 85% non-EAL pupils.

Key Stage 2

87.5% of pupils with English as an additional language achieved the KS2 Core Subject Indicator in 2013, which is higher than the non-EAL figure of 84.3%.

Key Stage 3

72.7% of pupils with English as an additional language achieved the KS3 Core Subject Indicator in 2013, which is just below the non-EAL figure of 73.5%.

Key Stage 4

35.7% of pupils with English as an additional language achieved the Level 2 threshold inclusive of English/Welsh and mathematics in 2013, compared with the non-EAL figure of 46.3% (provisional data).

Ethnicity
Foundation Phase

Pupils in ethnic groups other than White British achieve at or above the level of pupils from a White British background, with 92.1% pupils from a non-White British background achieving the FPI in 2013.

Key Stage 2

Pupils in ethnic groups other than White Other achieve at or above the level of pupils from a White British background, with 84.4% of pupils from other ethnicities achieving the CSI in 2013.

Key Stage 3

Pupils in ethnic groups other than White Other achieve at or above the level of pupils from a White British background, with 91.2% of pupils from other ethnicities achieving the CSI in 2013.

Key Stage 4

Pupils in ethnic groups other than White Other achieve at or above the level of pupils from a White British background, with 51.3% of pupils from other ethnicities achieving the Level 2 threshold inclusive of English/Welsh and maths in 2013.

LAC
Foundation Phase

80% of looked after pupils in Caerphilly schools as at PLASC 2013 achieved the Foundation Phase Outcome Indicator in 2013 (15 pupils in cohort).

Key Stage 2

75% of looked after pupils in Caerphilly schools as at PLASC 2013 achieved the Core Subject Indicator in 2013 (12 pupils in cohort).

KS3

41.2% of looked after pupils in Caerphilly schools as at PLASC 2013 achieved the Core Subject Indicator (17 pupils in cohort).

SEN
Foundation Phase

51.3% of pupils with special educational needs achieved the Foundation Phase Outcome Indicator in 2013, a slight increase from 49% in 2012.

Key Stage 2

50.1% of pupils with special educational needs achieved the CSI in 2013, an increase from 45% in 2012.

Key Stage 3

29.4% of pupils with special educational needs achieved the CSI in 2013, an increase from 22% in 2012.

Key Stage 4

10.5% of pupils with special educational needs achieved the Level 2 threshold inclusive of English/Welsh and maths in 2013.

Quality Indicator: 1.1.4 Standards – skills

Skills

English

At key stage 2, writing is the weakest (relatively) attainment target, in line with national averages. Performance in oracy and reading are above the national averages but writing is slightly below.

At key stage 3, oracy, reading and writing results are lower than those nationally, with the widest gap for writing which is also the lowest attainment target.

Welsh

At key stage 2, writing is the weakest (relatively) attainment target. However, performance is above the national average in oracy, reading and writing and is 5.91 percentage points higher than the national average for writing.

National Reading and Numeracy Tests

English reading - The proportion of pupils with a standardised score below 85 and the proportion with a standardised score above 115 in Caerphilly was 20th in Wales at 14.1% and 22.3% respectively.

Welsh reading – The proportion of pupils with a standardised score below 85 was 18th in Wales and the proportion with a standardised score above 115 was 14th in Wales at 8.9% and 28.8% respectively.

Numeracy - The proportion of pupils with a standardised score below 85 was 19th in Wales and the proportion with a standardised score above 115 was 17th in Wales at 15.4% and 14.2% respectively.

Quality Indicator: 1.1.5 Standards - Welsh language

Welsh First Language

Performance in LLC Welsh in the Foundation Phase is ranked 3rd in Wales and improved by 3.0 percentage points in 2013 to 90.7% for the expected outcome 5+ and by 10.2 points to 28.0% for the higher outcome 6. Performance is above the median in 91% of schools at Outcome 5+.

Performance at key stage 2 is 9th in Wales at 89.6% for the expected level 4+ but is below the Wales average for level 5+ at 24.3% (Wales: 30.4%) having declined slightly by 0.4 percentage points from 2012. Performance is above the median in 73% of schools at Level 4+.

Performance at Key Stage 3 is above the Wales average at 88.1% and improved at a faster rate than Wales as a whole in 2013.

Performance at Key Stage 4 declined in 2013 and is now below the Wales average for the first time since 2009. However, this is just one school.

Welsh Second Language

KS2 performance improved significantly by 18.6 percentage points in 2013 to 64.64%, which brings Caerphilly to 13th in Wales from 20th in 2012.

KS3 performance improved by 2.6 percentage points in 2013 to 67.9%, which is below the Wales average of 73.5% and ranks Caerphilly 21st in Wales.

72.54% of the year 11 cohort were entered for a Welsh second language qualification in 2013, of which 34.48% entered the full course, which is the second highest take up rate within south east Wales. 58.9% of pupils achieved A*-C in Welsh full course and 52.8% achieved A*-C in Welsh short course in 2013.

1.1 Areas for Development

Foundation Phase
• Further increase the number of schools above the median and the number of schools in the top benchmark quarter for all areas of learning.
• Improve the proportion of pupils achieving outcome 6+ in Language, Literacy and Communication Skills.

Key Stage 2
• Improve performance in the CSI, English and science so that it is above the national average.
• Improve performance at Level 5+ in all core subjects.
• Further increase the number of schools above the median and the number of schools in the top benchmark quarter for all core subjects

Key Stage 3
• Improve performance in the CSI and all core subjects so that performance is closer to the national average.

Key Stage 4
• Improve performance in all key indicators and subjects so that the LA rankings move closer to the Wales average.
• Reduce variation between schools so that all schools make improvements in 2014.

Gender
• Reduce gender differences in the Foundation Phase and Key Stage 3 so that they are below the Wales average.
• Maintain the lower than national average difference at KS4.

Groups of Learners
• Improve the performance of learners entitled to FSM at all key stages.
• Improve the performance of EAL learners at KS4.
• Improve the performance of LAC pupils at all key stages.

Skills
• Improve writing in English and Welsh first language.
• Improve Caerphilly's rankings in the national reading and numeracy tests.

Welsh
• Increase performance in Welsh first language at KS4 back to 2012 levels.
• Improve Welsh second language performance at KS3 and KS4
• Increase the proportion of pupils entered for Welsh language qualifications at the end of KS4.

Quality Indicator: 1.2 .1 Wellbeing – attitudes to keeping healthy and safe

Provision for wellbeing across the Authority is good. Schools engage in a range of effective programmes. However, there is a need to improve clarity of roles across agencies.

Children and young people have a good understanding of how to stay healthy. Learners have access to good quality healthy school meals. Young people are fully engaged in the process and programmes are effective in helping learners to make healthy choices about what they eat.

An effective programme operates to support pre-school learners and their families to support healthy behaviours.

All schools are fully engaged in a range of high quality sport programmes and out of school hours leisure activity resulting in increased levels of participation.

The introduction of the intensive swimming lessons has resulted in an increase in the number of children aged 11 being able to swim 25 meters. However, there needs to be continued improvement in this area.

Effective youth diversionary activities are resulting in a greater understanding of keeping safe and improved engagement of young people. Achievement of teenage parents is good.

The LA has a clear Bullying Prevention Strategy and Model Anti-Bullying Policy available for schools. This provides schools with effective guidance. Estyn school inspection reports identify that schools deal with bullying effectively or well.

High quality Child Protection training is mandatory for all Directorate, teaching and non-teaching staff, governors and other partners, for a consistent approach to safeguarding.

There has been effective dissemination of specialist practice of Internet Safety for children. The Internet Safety training programme will build capacity across secondary schools.

Good multi-agency working has resulted in the reduction in crime and the number of young offenders.

Processes for monitoring incidents of discrimination are good and comply with statutory requirements. However there is a lack of consistency in reporting.

Effective delivery of parenting modules has contributed to the achievement of Investor in Families status, resulting in increased parental engagement in school.

Quality Indicator: 1.2.2 Wellbeing - participation and enjoyment in learning

Many schools have a positive impact on children's behavior, enjoyment and attitudes to learning.

LA officers in consultation with the EAS, monitor attendance and exclusions monthly and contact schools to clarify any issues. The impact of this accelerated approach has been significant and many schools have increased rates of attendance and reduced rates of exclusion.

All schools use electronic registration systems and have dedicated support from an EWO; 100% of secondary schools and 99% of primary schools access electronic classroom registration. However, there is a need to provide targeted support via training for school staff and Governors.

Attendance within primary schools has continued to improve, albeit by a small percentage. In 2012/13 an attendance rate of 93.2% reflects an improvement of 0.1%. There has been steady progress in attendance in secondary schools. In 2012/13 an attendance rate of 92% reflects an improvement of 0.3%. Further progress has been made during 2013/14 in attendance at both phases.
Newly established systems for tracking the attendance of EOTAS pupils will facilitate improved attendance rates for pupils in vulnerable groups.
Validated data shows that there have been no permanent exclusions in primary schools for two consecutive years. Since 2007/08, the downward trend in permanent exclusions in secondary schools has been maintained. At both phases there has been a decrease in the number of fixed term exclusions as well as the number of days lost due to exclusions. However, the indicator with exclusions of 6 days or more remains too high.
The Learning Centre successfully addresses the behavioural, social and learning needs of the pupils. There is an effective "revolving door" process for learners where all pupils attend their mainstream school for at least 1 day each week.
There is a good managed moves protocol between schools. In 100% of managed moves undertaken in 2012/13, none resulted in permanent exclusions. However, there is a need to develop the role of schools in the decision making process.

Quality Indicator: 1.2.3 **Wellbeing** - community involvement and decision making

Good support is provided for learners throughout the leadership pathway to gain new skills and deployment in a range of volunteering opportunities.
As part of the Leadership pathway, the Coach of the Future programme is good and is promoted by Sport Wales at a national level.
The Young Ambassadors movement is providing a positive impact on young people's leadership skills. In 2012-2013, 127 learners were engaged in planning and organising a range of events.
Service providers are better supported to develop participative practice through use of the Children and Young Peoples Participation Toolkit and accompanying training.
Young people's influence in decision-making is good and improving. In 2012-13, 97% of young people sampled felt that the level of influence on decision-making was very high, compared to 82% in 2011, and 57% in 2010.
Excellent progression in attainment of soft skills for children on the Junior Forum and high levels of decision-making and team working skills for young people in the Youth Forum. 67% reported an increased understanding of Democracy and 71% reported an increased understanding of participation and participation standards in September 2013.

There is a robust participation and inclusion mechanism to ensure learners can contribute to the decision-making process and they have effectively contributed to the development of the single integrated plan 2013-18. The Caerphilly Local Service board Citizen Engagement Strategy and Action Plan further supports this. Participation in the Junior Forum from Primary Schools is good, at 75% in 2012/13, with an average of 67% attending each meeting, a 1% increase on the previous year.

Participation by Secondary Schools and Youth Support Services in the Youth Forum via conference representation improved in both cases by an additional 7 in 2012, compared with the previous year. However, 5 schools participated in the 2013 Annual Conference representing a decrease with an increase of 15 Youth Support Services. The continuing general engagement of Schools and Youth Support services remains good.

1.2 Areas for Development

- Identify an effective process for reporting incidents of bullying and harassment.
- Further reduce the rate of fixed term exclusions as well as the number of days lost due to fixed term exclusions, particularly those of 6 days and above. (Refer to 2.3.2).
- Accelerate attendance rates and reduce unauthorised absences
- (Refer to 2.3.2)
- Develop the role of schools in the decision making process relating to managed moves.
- Review strategies to Increase participation from Secondary schools in the Youth Forum.
- Further improve the quality of teaching within school swimming, to raise the standards of attainment of all Key Stage 2 pupils
- Develop a model of best practice in relation to internet safety

Key Question 2 - How good is provision?

Quality Indicator: 2.1.1 Support for school improvement- local
authority support, monitoring, challenge and intervention

Well-developed robust and efficient approaches are in place to support, challenge and intervention in schools. The LA Maintained Schools Partnership agreement coupled with the EAS Intervention Framework (IF) underpins this process. Senior officers in the authority work closely with lead officers in the regional school improvement service to make sure that there is a consistent and rigorous challenge to schools.

Schools identified for intensive support have useful and comprehensive intervention plans outlining clearly the actions that they need to take. These plans, and the progress the school makes in implementing them, are challenged rigorously by the cabinet member for education and senior officers from both the authority and the regional consortium school improvement service.

Quality of leadership and management is the core of the IF. The EAS has identified strength of leadership from within the LA and is using this resource to improve leadership across the consortium.

An interim QA Model for the EAS and the LA is in place with the full model being implemented from September 2014. Senior officers in the authority work closely with lead officers in the regional school improvement service to make sure that there is a consistent and rigorous challenge to schools. The LA have developed a culture of mutual challenge with the EAS which effectively holds all officers and schools to account for improvement.

The work of SLs is integrated with the EAS literacy / English, numeracy, Welsh Language, 21st Century Learning, and foundation phase teams. These teams use evidence based approaches to identify the schools requiring intensive support and the impact of their work is monitored in partnership with the SL. Early evidence suggests that this model is effective.

Support for literacy and numeracy in secondary schools is good.

The work of SLs is monitored rigorously by senior managers in the EAS and in the LA. Similar processes are now being implemented for curriculum teams through a collaborative approach with senior Inclusion Officers. Most written reports are comprehensive, evaluative and provide agreed actions to be taken by the school, the LA and the EAS.

All schools historically received an LA School Data Profile, this has been further developed by the EAS with greater emphasis on vulnerable groups. EAS target setting arrangements have built upon previous approaches and are based on a collation of individual pupil targets and prior performance.

The local authority has introduced a comprehensive target setting process that links school performance targets to the progress of individual learners. Schools are required to identify potential barriers to success for individual learners in years 10 and 11. The targets produced by schools are challenging and clearly set the ambition for improvement across the authority. The target setting process leads to coordinated and well-resourced programmes of support for learners.

SL visits continue to focus upon the quality of tracking processes across all schools. However, this still remains an area for improvement in a minority of schools.

Quality Indicator: 2.1.2 Support for school improvement - the
authority's work in raising standards in priority areas, including curriculum support

The regional consortium's school improvement service has provided schools with a comprehensive tool to evaluate and improve the quality of teaching. Schools using this resource are better able to monitor classroom practice and address underperformance.

Support for literacy continues to be good with improved outcomes across KS2 and KS3.

The EAS numeracy team has focused sharply on systematic development of pupils' number skills. Feedback from teachers and school leaders has been very positive. Early impact has shown standards of learning and teaching have improved in around half of the schools. Rigorous tracking and end of year data has resulted in an increase in standardised scores for all ability groupings.

The Outstanding Teachers initiative has developed a bank of teachers with the expertise to influence and improve the mathematics teaching of others.

A small minority of primary schools and just under half of secondary schools have received enhanced intervention from the EAS Welsh advisory team to improve However, this still remains an area for improvement across KS2.

All schools meet the Learning and Skills (Wales) Measure 2009 at KS4 and post-16. Collaborative working at key stage 5 is good. However, standards at KS4 remain an area for improvement in all schools.

All schools and further education partners agreed a common teaching day at KS4 allowing a broad range of option choices at level 1 and 2. This has supported the overall increase in standards.

Welsh-medium collaboration between Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymni and Ysgol Gyfun Gwynllyw in Torfaen is good. This partnership known as Partneriaeth 6, was judged as outstanding by Estyn in 2010.

A strategy for the reduction of NEETs ensures that services and agencies work collaboratively to secure improved outcomes for young people identified or at risk of becoming NEET. The reduction of NEET young people in the LA had shown a continuous improvement reducing to 4.4% in 2013.

Support for the Foundation Phase and Early Years settings is good with planning closely integrated to ensure that it supports the literacy and numeracy strategies.

The Foundation Phase team provides high quality training events to meet the needs of all practitioners. Evaluations of these events are good or very good.

There is close collaboration with the work of EWO's and SL's. Progress is challenged through the SL core visits and through specific Intervention Plans. Impact of this work over the past 2 years has shown improvements.

All schools prepare detailed plans for grants. These plans are discussed and agreed with the SLs to ensure that they are focused on the schools' priorities.

Caerphilly maintains a high level of investment to improve literacy and numeracy including the deployment of a specialist team to deliver 'catch-up' programmes. For children and young people with emerging needs, there are currently a small number of highly effective interventions, which are mainly aimed at improving literacy skills. Recent reviews of leadership and management are particularly useful and give clear messages to schools and their governing bodies about the issues that they need to address. All schools have a categorisation for the quality of leadership. Whilst a majority of schools demonstrate effective planning for improvement, this remains an

area for improvement in a minority of schools.

The authority has provided useful training for senior managers and governors in schools to help them to better understand the performance of their schools. System leaders attend governing body meetings to report on leadership, provision and performance in the school. As a result governors understand better the issues facing their schools and the areas in need of improvement.

A comprehensive training programme is offered to all Governors. The latest PLASC return data reports Governor vacancies are below the Wales average in the Secondary sector and above in the Primary sector.

All newly appointed headteachers, and those experienced headteachers new to Caerphilly are appointed a mentor and participate in a structured induction programme.

2.1 Areas for Development
- The quality of planning for improvement remains an area for development in a minority of primary and secondary schools.
- Improve the quality of pupil level tracking across most secondary schools.
- Continue to improve outcomes at KS4.
- Continue to improve standards in Welsh 2nd Language at KS2.

Quality Indicator: 2.2.1 Support for additional learning needs and educational inclusion - work to meet its statutory obligations in respect of children and young people with additional learning needs (ALN)

The authority meets the requirements of the SEN and Disability Act. The authority and schools make good provision for pupils with statements, at school action and school action plus. Statutory assessments, statements of special educational need and annual reviews are completed efficiently and within the time limits identified within the SEN Code of Practice for Wales.

Procedures supporting the statutory assessment process are excellent with the percentage of final statements of special educational need issued within 26 weeks including exceptions being 81% and excluding exceptions 100%.(Dec'13)

The percentage of pupils with a statement of educational needs, including pupils placed out of county, is 2.53% (2012/2013) (compared to 2.66% in 2011/2012 and 2.83% 2010-2011)which is below the Welsh average of 2.9%. As a result of improved procedures the number of SEN statements have reduced from 984 in 2007 (3.32% of school population) to 772 in 2013. However analysis of requests for statutory assessment over the last academic year shows an upward trend in new requests.

Innovative quality assurance measures underpin the improving statutory assessment process, which include:
- a monthly statistical management report,
- excellent communication links with all stakeholders

ALN Officers work strategically with officers from health and safety to plan access to school for pupils with disabilities from an early age, targeting schools for any necessary adaptations to accommodation or curriculum. There are effective

procedures in place to ensure that the transport needs of children and young people are identified in a timely and effective manner.

Arrangements for phase transfer for pupils with Statements of SEN are effective. 100% of transition statements for the academic year 2013-14 were issued within the required time frame.

Concise and clear information on the statutory assessment process is provided for parents/carers. Documents are available bilingually and in alternative formats when required. Individual children and young people are consulted and listened to when learning programmes are planned and decisions made about their future. Further work is required to fully develop a 'child friendly' statement by using a 'person centred planning' (PCP) approach.

Annual Reviews are effectively planned, managed and coordinated through a range of systems and interventions.

Processes in place to monitor pupils with ALN, who are educated in out of county schools or settings are good. However this aspect could be developed further, particularly with regard to pupils placed out of county without statements.

Officers and the Partnership, Information and Communication Coordinator work very effectively with parents and provide advice, guidance and training to parents/carers as appropriate. Only three appeals to the SEN Tribunal have been lodged against Caerphilly since September 2011, two of which was subsequently withdrawn by parents

High quality safeguarding policies and procedures effectively promote the safety and wellbeing of pupils with ALN and Looked After Children

Quality Indicator: 2.2.2 Support for additional learning needs and educational inclusion - work in raising standards for children and young people with ALN

Information sharing mechanisms between services within Learning, Education and Inclusion is excellent. Information shared in the 'wider group' meetings contributes to the overall school profile and appropriate actions and /or interventions are identified and agreed as part of a holistic approach to planning support for schools. 46

The Skills Strategy provides a robust framework within which data is used effectively to target groups of learners in mainstream settings. ALN service teams provide high quality advice, support, training and intervention, which reflect the three tiers of intervention of the Skills Strategy.

The Specialist Teacher team provides time limited literacy support for year 4 pupils in targeted schools. Evaluation of the impact of this intervention shows that 87% of pupils receiving support during the autumn and spring terns and 91% of pupils receiving support during the spring and summer terms made progress in terms of the level of passage read.

All SENCOs can access induction training and individual support. Key issues are addressed at regular intervals through SENCo Surgeries, Forums and meetings. However analysis of referral paperwork and IEPs contained in referrals for additional support and Annual Reviews shows that the quality of IEPs continues to be an issue.

To support high quality, inclusive teaching, there is an exceptional range of training available in ALN for staff within schools and settings; the Advisory Team has

continued to develop SEN awareness training for Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs). For children and young people with emerging needs, there are currently a small number of highly effective interventions, which are mainly aimed at improving literacy skills. Interventions for speech, language and communication needs (SLCN), are innovative, creative and models of collaborative working.

Progress of children and young people with ALN and in vulnerable groups is closely monitored through a range of assessment tools.

Children and young people who are more able and talented (MAT) are provided with opportunities to develop their skills through a range of innovative projects. The ALN School Improvement Advisor continues to work with System Leaders in the EAS on the development of support and training for MAT children and young people in Caerphilly

The Quality Assurance System (QAS), developed by Caerphilly has subsequently been adopted by schools in a number of other Local Authorities. It is recognised that data the QAS generates could significantly contribute to current school improvement data, particularly relating to vulnerable groups. Caerphilly and the other local authorities in the South East Wales Consortium are working closely with the EAS to explore how this system could be integrated into existing structures and implemented across the consortia.

As part of the Quality Assurance System development, the authority has worked closely with schools to improve the accuracy of PLASC data. Schools submit their completed SEN register on an annual basis, and through quality assurance visits, schools are challenged to ensure that pupils are appropriately placed on the SEN register.

A system has been developed to record involvement, training and interventions delivered to schools by ALN officers. This supports analysis of input to schools and the impact this has on raising capacity in schools and pupil outcomes.

Quality Indicator: 2.2.3 Support for additional learning needs and educational inclusion - provision for children and young people with ALN, including provision that is commissioned and /or provided by or with other agencies

There is high quality specialist support for early years providers and schools managing the learning programmes of children and young people with additional learning needs. The Integrated Service for Children with Additional Needs (ISCAN) provides early identification and interventions for children with emerging and identified additional needs and disabilities from birth to 19 years old. Caerphilly Children's Centre acts as the 'front door' for referrals for single agency referrals and multi-agency referrals.

Effective and coordinated working with a range of agencies including health, social care and voluntary agencies, promotes a 'team around the family' approach to planning and intervention for children and young people and their parents /carers. The case studies illustrate the type of support and interventions that children, young people and their families receive.

Outreach services are well established and highly effective. The LA works in partnership with Trinity Fields and Specialist Resource Bases (SRBs), to provide outreach services, which offer excellent additional support and training for schools, parents and other stakeholders.

Caerphilly LA in collaboration with Trinity Fields School and Resource Centre leads

on the Real Opportunities Initiative which is funded from the European Social Fund. Estyn recognised that the Real Opportunities programme including the sex and relationship course, met the criteria for sector leading practice.

LAC pupils identified as having additional learning needs are offered effective direct support in literacy and numeracy skills from a dedicated Education Support Worker Team.

ALN Services have comprehensive systems in place to ensure that the progress of children and young people with ALN are regularly evaluated and information shared with relevant agencies or professionals. Due to the development of an improved county wide pupil tracking system and Quality Assurance System it is recognised that all ALN data needs to be aligned to one system and this will be a priority for the next academic year.

In September 2012 Caerphilly LA became a signatory to the Pan Gwent Multi agency Transition Protocol, which was launched in October 2012. The Caerphilly Transition Pathway has been developed collaboratively and will be fully operational from September 2014 .

There are robust systems in place to ensure that pupils with physical/medical or mental health difficulties receive as much education a possible and maintain good links with their schools. The proportion young people leaving school without a qualification has decreased since the academic year 2010-11. A contributory factor is the high quality pre and post 16 advice and support for pupils with additional learning needs which is available from a range of providers**.**

Individual children and young people are consulted and listened to when learning programmes are planned and decisions made about their future.

Quality Indicator: 2.2.4 Support for additional learning needs and educational inclusion - work with parents and carers of children and young people with ALN

There is highly effective coordinated support and advice for parents and carers of children and young people with ALN. The LA has a Service Level Agreement with SNAP Cymru, which provides a Parent Partnership and Dispute Resolution Service. Parents and carers are fully included in any decisions relating to their child's education. SNAP work closely with the Statutory Team and attend meetings on a termly basis

The Statutory Team provide outstanding support for parents and build very positive relationships with them. A dedicated Parent Partnership Officer provides highly effective support for parents, in collaboration with other partners though her role as ISCAN Manager.

High quality support for parents is provided by the Super Shell-by Team, as part of the Families First Integrated Family Learning Programme**.**

The Caerphilly Autistic Spectrum Service (CASS) offer a comprehensive range of training and support sessions for parents and carers who have children with a diagnosis of ASD.

Caerphilly took part in the Welsh Government's robust testing phase of the Individual Development Plan (IDP). , A pilot school will be setting up a PLC which will focus on tracking and monitoring the impact of a person centred approach on the well-being and attainment of pupils. The PLC will also look to track specific interventions as identified through the IDP process, monitoring the impact of this

process on a smaller group of learners.

The Specialist Outreach Teacher works closely with parents of individual children during the placement process following statutory assessment or on transition and all Officers from the ALN service who support children and young people provide comprehensive information to parents about their child's progress and achievements. However, apart from Annual Review parent view forms, procedures are not in place to obtain feedback from parents or carers regarding the provision their child receives or clarity of information provided.

Views of parents are valued and their inclusion on key LA planning and strategy groups is promoted. . Parental views are also obtained via termly coffee mornings which are held for parents of children with special educational needs and disabilities.

2.2 Areas for Development

- Continue to reduce the number of statements issued through improved early intervention strategies.
- Address increase in new requests for statutory assessment
- Improve systems to monitor and evaluate outcomes of children and young people placed in out of county schools or settings.
- Develop a child and young person friendly statement using a 'person centred planning 'approach.
- Work with the EAS literacy team to ensure that literacy and numeracy interventions and training delivered by the LA are appropriately targeted and support the Literacy /Numeracy framework.
- Build capacity in schools with regard to supporting children and young people with dyslexia
- Quality of IEPs in schools
- Develop benchmarking data in order to inform national performance indicator for children and young people with VI, HI and MSI.
- Review guidance criteria to make it fit for purpose for in-county and consortium contexts.
- Effective TA support is monitored by ALN School Improvement Manager
- Data collected on progress of pupils with ALN is aligned to central systems.
- Extend parental feedback and views through rolling out and embedding the stakeholder views element of the Quality Assurance System.
- Extend and embed the use of 'person centred planning'

Quality Indicator: 2.3.1 Promoting social inclusion and wellbeing-
work to promote social inclusion and wellbeing of all children and young people, including behaviour, anti-bullying, preventing exclusion and education otherwise than at school (EOTAS)

Provision for social inclusion and the wellbeing of children and young people is effective.

Strategic leadership is strong, planning processes are clear, and target setting is appropriate. The targeting of interventions are targeted progress is monitored. This is reflected in improving trends in exclusions and attendance rates.

Universal and targeted services are well coordinated. Improved access for children with disabilities, support for early identification of need, increase of parental engagement in childcare and links with other groups impacts positively on pupil outcomes.

The high level of engagement in LA programmes impacts positively on behaviour and wellbeing with exclusion rates decreasing. However, consistency of approach across schools to be improved.

Permanently excluded pupils access timely part and full-time appropriate education. However, arrangements for year 11 need to be reviewed.

Evidence suggests an increase in the wellbeing of children and young people using the School-Based Counselling Service.

Attendance for LAC pupils is currently above the national average. There have been no permanent exclusions issued in the last three years and the number of fixed term exclusions has decreased. The percentage of PEPs completed within the prescribed timescales exceeds the national average.

The Learning Centre (PRU) has strong links with schools and good procedures to monitor attendance are in place.

There are effective processes for multi agency working and information sharing. However current data systems must be streamlined further.

Processes for monitoring incidents of discrimination are good and comply with statutory requirements. However there is a lack of consistency in reporting.

The LA meets its statutory duties in relation to child protection, LAC, Corporate Parenting and equalities.

There are robust arrangements in place for monitoring and evaluating the projects within the Families First Programme and outcomes are positive.

Consultation with children, young people and communities including those in vulnerable groups is comprehensive and effective.

Quality Indicator: 2.3.2 Promoting social inclusion and wellbeing -
promoting attendance and keeping children and young people in education, employment and training

LA officers in consultation with the EAS, monitor attendance and exclusions monthly and contact schools to clarify any issues. The impact of this accelerated approach has been significant and many schools have increased rates of attendance and reduced rates of exclusion. However, the indicator with exclusions of 6 days or more remains too high.

Implementation of the attendance policy has led to improvement in attendance rates and a reduction in unauthorised absence in primary schools. Estyn school inspection reports highlight good practice in many schools. However, a number of schools continue to require support to meet targets set.

Legal powers are used effectively and statutory and legal responsibilities are met.

All schools use electronic registration systems and have dedicated support from an EWO; 100% of secondary schools and 99% of primary schools access electronic classroom registration. However, there is a need to provide targeted support via training for school staff and Governors.

A robust approach for monitoring child employment is in place.
Schools benefit from effective support and training for behaviour management.
However, there is a need to review the LA behaviour strategy.
There are clear policies in relation to physical intervention and the use of time out areas and rooms.
Team Teach is the model of de-escalation and the use of restricted physical intervention. The LA has effective arrangements for monitoring reported incidents of restraint.
There has been an increased number of NEETs, from 4.5 in 2011/12 to 5.9 in 2012/13. The Pre-VENT project is being refocused to better address the needs of NEETS and potential NEETS in the County Borough. This is reflected in the new NEETS Strategy and Action Plan.
There are effective policies and procedures to ensure that EOTAS pupils are appropriately placed. Pupil data is recorded within the main MIS system. However, provision and outcomes are variable.

Quality Indicator: 2.3.3 Promoting social inclusion and wellbeing - youth support services and personal support

Governance arrangements for Youth Support Services continue to improve. A common self evaluation and quality tool, now extended to services 0-25 (SERA) has been developed.
The quality of Youth Service provision is mostly Good or above.

The Youth Service continues to excel in the provision of Families First programmes.

Young people engaged with the Youth Service have access to an increasing amount and variety of accreditation opportunities. During 2012/13, 13% of young people achieved local awards though less than 2% achieved nationally recognised qualifications. Improvements during the first half of 13/14 record a 20% and 3% outcome in these areas, respectively.
The number of young people reached by the Youth Service increased from 3595 in 2011/12 to 8816 in 2012/13.
The Student Assistance Programme (SAP) provides support to develop emotional wellbeing in a pastoral setting with targeted groups of students.
Youth Support Services continue to provide a good range of opportunities for young people to access personal support, advice and guidance, with varied programmes provided by engaging organisations.
Young people have appropriate access to Welsh-medium youth work services via a Youth Service partnership with Urdd Gobaith Cymru.
During 2012/13, specific support was given to 987 at risk young people via the Youth Service Hub project.

There has been a 30% reduction in Pre-VENT engagement numbers throughout the year in 2012/13 due to staffing issues and school timetabling issues.

In 2013 64 young people were referred to the Pre-VENT summer scheme

compared to 45 in 2012. This positive increase was due to partnership working with EOTAS provision. An increase to 40 young people supported through this scheme in 2013 positively compares to 29 in 2012, however, work experience placements did not take place in 2013.

116 learning coaches have been trained to support learners in a variety of settings. The Family Information Service (FIS) serves as a single information source.

School Based Counselling (SBC) is effective in responding to individual needs evidenced by reported levels of wellbeing.

Quality Indicator: 2.3.4 Promoting social inclusion and wellbeing - safeguarding arrangements

Safeguarding arrangements are good. There are effective policies and procedures in place in respect of safeguarding that reflect the All Wales Child Protection Procedures.
There is significant contribution to the work of the SEWSCB via representation on relevant Safeguarding groups.   The Board makes a significant contribution to regional work across the South East area.
High quality Child Protection training is mandatory for all Directorate, teaching and non-teaching staff, governors and other partners, for a consistent approach to safeguarding.
The SEWSCB and other partnerships work collaboratively across all programmes. Estyn school inspection reports to date, indicate that there are appropriate safeguarding policies and procedures in schools.

The authority has an effective system of audit for schools to examine their responses to safeguarding responsibilities. However, this needs to be extended to childcare settings.

There are effective recruitment, disciplinary and reporting arrangements to ensure the suitability of staff and volunteers evidenced in a robust monitoring process.

2.3 Areas for development
- Increase the number of YSS achieving accreditation.
- Improve the integration of young people in to quality assessment processes.
- Review the Pre-VENT project to improve engagement
- Address Health and Safety issues to improve work experience uptake
- Ensure that all young offenders improve attendance at educational provision.
- Further develop resources for post 16 young people who are NEET.
- Improve the processes to monitor the quality of education outside the school setting
- Further develop the transition plan in relation to Team Teach
- Further develop bespoke Education Equalities Training programmes.
- Further develop an Information Sharing Protocol for NEETs.
- Capacity building in relation to Safeguarding training will be monitored through the delivery of the SIP performance framework.

Quality Indicator: 2.4.1 Access and school places - the provision of an appropriate range and number of school places

As well as modernising schools and raising achievement, the Welsh Government's 21st Century Schools Programme is an integral part of Caerphilly's strategic management of the provision of school places. In principle approval of match-funding of £26million towards a total amount of £52million has been given by Welsh Government.

The Council has in recent years secured £15.39m from the WG for transitional capital funding, resulting in 3 new Primary school builds, a substantially upgraded Primary school and a Secondary school extension to replace 15 demountable classrooms. Primary school builds are of a very high standard and both creative and imaginative in their design with one outstanding as regards sustainability and another viewed as a 21st century exemplar/demonstration school project by the WLGA. Partnership work with a range of private and public sector providers was a particular strength of the building programme.

In May 2012 the Welsh Government urged all local authorities to take action to reduce unwanted surplus places. It was a Welsh Government requirement that local authorities currently with more than 20% empty places in either sector (primary or secondary), or who are projected to have more than 20% surplus places by 2016 must instigate to reduce to below 15% by January 2015. As at September 2013 Caerphilly had 22.5% secondary and 14.5% surplus places in primary. By 2016 these are forecast to increase to 24.9% in the secondary sector and reduce to 13.7% in the primary sector.

Furthermore Caerphilly had an Estyn Inspection in 2012 and in the Estyn Post Inspection Plan, Recommendation 5 stated that the Council needed to 'Take urgent action to reduce surplus capacity in schools generally and secondary schools in particular'.

The Authority has a School Organisation Plan (2012-2021) and a School Places Plan (2012-2021). Pupil projections are updated annually once the September admission process is complete. School capacities are also regularly reviewed. The Authority also has a Schools Asset Management Plan for the period 2012-2021. Consequently the authority has potentially a strong strategic overview of school places.

Caerphilly's 21st Century Schools Programme has commenced. Increasing demand for Welsh Medium was projected as part of the strategic planning of school places. The Business Case to the Welsh Government clearly showed that demand for secondary Welsh Medium is increasing. In the secondary sector demand is projected to increase to 2138 by September 2019 in comparison to 1465 as at September 2013. The 3-19 Welsh Medium development creates 700 additional secondary places for 11-16 year olds plus 200 sixth form places. In addition it provides for 360 primary pupils and for 30 nursery places supported by wrap around care for around 30 places. The primary provision reduces the existing YGG Caerphilly Primary School. The First Phase of the Project (Years 7 and 8) opened in September 2013. The rest of the project will be completed for September 2015.

The Secondary Rationalisation (Phase 1) project is progressing. Formal consultation concluded on 31st January 2014, and the Statutory Notice period ended on 3rd April 2014. The final decision to proceed with the proposal as such is scheduled to be taken by Cabinet on 30th April 2014. The proposal is to close the existing Oakdale and Pontllanfraith Secondary Schools and construct a new 900 place secondary school plus 50 additional learning needs unit at the Oakdale Plateau 3 site. As at September 2013 Pontllanfraith Comprehensive had 521 surplus places, whilst Oakdale Comprehensive had 151. The proposed new school will remove surplus places. Currently it is projected that by September 2016 the percentage of secondary surplus places across Caerphilly will be 25%. Implementation of the proposal will reduce this to 20%.

In addition Libanus and Markham Primary Schools will be diverted to the catchment area of Blackwood. This will help alleviate the surplus places at Blackwood which are 62 as at September 2013.

Processes to assess parental preferences are good. A pre-school (0-1 age) parental questionnaire is distributed annually and this valuable information has enabled effective school place planning, particularly in the Welsh Medium sector.

The outcome of effective school organisation planning will be to provide enough school places in the right areas to meet future demand. The 21st Century Schools stakeholder group determined that there should be a minimum size for a school to ensure educational and financial viability. Future school reviews will be considered in this context.

The third 21st Century schools Project relates to the Upper Rhymney Valley area. Informal discussions have taken place with the parents, school staff and wider community. At present no formal proposals have been made.

Each year the authority undertakes admissions consultation. For September 2013 77 pupils were refused admission into reception year.

The Schools Asset Management Plan contains a 25 year building maintenance figure. However, this is based on a condition survey of schools undertaken five years ago. The condition surveys are being re-run during 2014. It is important that Education has greater involvement.

Areas for development

- Delivery of 21st Century Schools Project
- Revisit re-calculation of school capacities
- Update School Organisation and School Places Plans
- Greater input into School Condition Surveys

Quality Indicator: 2.4.2 Access and school places - admissions to schools

Admissions and Transfer Arrangements are very good and robust systems are in place to ensure the effective placement of pupils within the required timescales.

The Starting School Booklet is of a very high standard and parental satisfaction has consistently been in the range of 95-100%.

The Admissions Team works collaboratively with the two other Admissions Authorities in the area – Cwmcarn High School (Foundation School) and St Helens RC Primary (VA School) to ensure that they are fully compliant with legislation and promotes joint working. The majority of this work is undertaken through the School Admission Forum which ensures a consistent approach to the implementation of Admission arrangements.

The School Admission Forum has been very successful in ensuring that policies meet the needs of vulnerable children by expanding representation of the forum to include officers from across the Directorate.

The Authority's Scrutiny Committee presents a strong challenge to the admissions process to ensure it effectively meets legal requirements parental requirements and equal opportunities guidance.

The Admissions Team has established strong links with a range of external partners and divisions within and cross Directorate such as GEMS (Gwent Ethnic Minority Support) and the Women's Refuge, together with neighbouring LAs.

The Directorate's management of Admission appeals is of a very high standard. The presenting officer, clerk to the panel and panel members completed formal training. The Authority deals with approximately 50-70 appeals each academic year. Last year only one parent referred their case to the Ombudsman who found in favour of the Authority. Good quality advice in the form of a booklet is forwarded to all parents whose children are refused admission to assist them with the appeals process. This bilingual booklet is of a very high quality and has been deemed good practice by WG and other LAs. It is available in other languages and formats upon requests.

The Directorate is proactive in providing a quality training programme to Heads, Clerks and Governors and neighbouring Authorities. This training forms part of the induction process for new Headteachers on an ongoing basis. This training programme has been deemed high quality by participants.

Transfer arrangements in-year are effective. Agreed protocols are in place between admissions, safeguarding, statementing and behaviour support. This ensures that schools are fully informed of the child's needs prior to reintegration into the school.

All Admission documentation and application forms are easily accessible through the Authority's internet site.

The Directorate has established an Alternative Provision Placement Panel which has resulted in the effective management of disaffected pupils.

The Directorate meets a very high percentage of first choice parental preference.

The Authority publishes the number of unsuccessful admissions against each school in their Starting School booklet for transparency purposes.

Quality Indicator: 2.4.3 Access and school places - co-ordination of early years and play to ensure sufficiency

The Early Years team has developed significant partnerships to ensure all children and families can access quality Early Years Education, family support and childcare. Robust commissioning processes have ensured quality, sufficiency of Welsh and English medium places as well as value for money. The EAS and Early Years has good communication and improves quality resulting in Caerphilly ranked 3rd in Wales for Foundation Phase results in 2012 and in 2013 is 7th, which although lower than 2012 still remains above the Wales average and is significantly higher than expected given the levels of deprivation in the borough.

We have robust quality assurance systems in place to monitor and evaluate the quality of work within the early years. All settings offering education must have achieved the local Caerphilly Quality Standard as well as a Nationally Recognised Quality Award. The quality of provision in the non-maintained settings is regularly monitored and evaluated by the Advisory Teachers and Childcare Development Officers and settings. Positive evaluations have been received from settings regarding the impact of the support from Officers. The majority of settings that have been inspected by Estyn have received a judgement of 'good' for current provision and prospects for improvement. 2 of our settings have received 'excellent' judgements in some of the quality indicators.

We provide good quality support and training for all staff working in the early years and childcare. There is training provided across the borough for all settings as identified through the annual workforce audit. Joint funding streams allow the delivery of high quality training across the sector and settings identified as having good practice have shared their practice with the other groups.

There is good provision for places for nursery education across the Borough in both English and Welsh medium schools and settings. Every infant/primary school has been able to offer Nursery provision for rising 4s on a part time basis and the majority of schools offer part time places for rising 3s. Additional provision for rising 3s is complemented through sufficient places in non-maintained settings.

The Flying Start programme has had significant impact in the borough, engaging 100% families in the full quality assured entitlement, with positive impact on child development and parental engagement establishing positive long-term behaviour trends. Flying Start is expanding from 1330 to 2483 and successfully obtained Welsh Government capital funding for the SOP 2012-14. All childcare settings are quality assured with advisory teachers monitoring and challenging the quality of learning, identifying progress in standards through the excellent Schedule of Growing Skills results published August 2013 showing Caerphilly as exceeding the Welsh average and ranked 2nd in Wales for child development levels at 2 years; the children moved from 54% at or above their developmental norm aged 2years (2011-12) to 72% at 3 years (2012-13).

Families are able to access individual family support, and quality assured accredited facilitators delivering evidence-based parenting programmes offered locally through shared resources and funding streams. School staff have been trained and are being supported in delivery of parenting programmes to develop parental engagement and support for their children to raise aspirations and improve standards and reduce behaviour concerns, however, the delivery by school staff needs to be further developed over the next year.

The current standard of information offered regarding childcare is very good with the FIS receiving the NAFIS *Family First Quality Mark,* and future developments include the Investors in Families Award. There is a commitment to Customer Service trained staff, and advice can be given in both Welsh and English. The FIS has been developed to offer 4 zones: Kids Zone, Youth Zone, Family Zone and Professional Zone. Partnership working to implement and monitor the Play Strategy and to co-ordinate and ensure sufficiency of play provision across the County Borough is effective. The audit to support the new Play Sufficiency duty was submitted to Welsh Government resulting in a 'flying squad' training service. There are significant links to the CYPP through the Families First programme. There are additional links with the play service provided by GAVO through the Integrated Children Centres and workforce development.

2.4 Areas for Development
- Delivery of 21st Century Schools Project
- Revisit re-calculation of school capacities
- Update School Organisation and School Places Plans
- Greater input into School Condition Surveys
- Development of the Tribal database to include closer collaboration with the 21st Century Schools Team to provide a more efficient method of updating pupil records with school based information.
- Improve PLASC validation and Free School Meals processes.
- Continue to strengthen links between Local Authority and Education Achievement Service
- Further development of the Tribal database to include more detailed health caseload information to improve forward planning for service provision as well as further analyse exclusions in the Foundation Phase data to identify any preventative targeted work required in particular areas / communities

Key Question 3 – How good are leadership and management?

Quality Indicator: 3.1.1 Leadership

Strategic leadership by elected members and officers is good and has contributed to improvements in outcomes for children and young people, particularly at key stage 4 and for some vulnerable groups. The clear corporate and directorate structure, effective succession planning and strong distributed leadership have helped to create stability.

Major issues at a corporate level triggered a Corporate Governance Inspection (CGI) by the Wales Audit Office (WAO) which highlighted a number of recommendations. Swift progress was confirmed by WAO in January 2014, by the Council to address the recommendations. Corporate governance is given a high priority. Policies and procedures have been reviewed and a programme of training for all senior and middle managers has taken place. Strategic plans clearly outline the vision and priorities of the Council and reflect local need. In turn, strategic plans for the Directorate reflect the priorities of the Council's strategic and statutory plans.

Clear lines of accountability now exist between all levels of planning across the Council and all Directorate plans mirror this approach. This is evidenced by the way the Directorate Priorities reflect those in the Single Integrated Plan. Targets for improvement are included in all plans and individual performance reviews. It is the rigorous challenge of Directorate priorities and outcomes by members, CMT and within the Directorate, that has contributed to improvements in attainment and wellbeing of children and young people.

Communication with schools is good. The Local Authority (LA) maintains effective communication with schools avoiding duplication with the Education Achievement Service (EAS) communication structure. This has served to inform the Quality Assurance processes of the regional Education Achievement Service and it is also used to inform Council policy.

The Council prides itself on the value it places on staff wellbeing, and recognises that staff are its greatest resource. The annual cycle of performance management within the Directorate ensures that staff are set targets for improvement which support the delivery of the strategic aims.

A review of the Active Pathways, Education Other Than At School and the Key Stage 4 Prevent programmes now provides a clear pathway and a structure of support and guidance for all young people aged 16 to 24. These services now form an integral part of the youth service and each young person's progress is monitored and supported to promote both formal and informal learning. It is too early to monitor the impact of this work.

Strong and decisive leadership by Cabinet resulted in a decision to commence a secondary rationalisation programme and the outcome of the statutory process was agreed by Cabinet on 16th July 2013..

Planning across the Directorate is good; there are clear aims and priorities that reflect the national agenda in the local context, with a focus on learner needs. Links between the Single Integrated Plan and the Directorate, Service and operational plans are clear and understood by service and middle managers. Staff performance

management reviews take place annually and reflect the priorities of the Directorate. Performance is recorded on a corporate system – Ffynnon - and selected Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) are monitored and challenged at SMT, CMT and Scrutiny Committee on a quarterly basis.

The development of a Medium Term Financial Plan has brought rigour and challenge to the senior management of the Directorate and resulted in a more focused approach to budget management. This is an effective process evidenced by £4.3m savings. This approach is now being adopted throughout the Council.

The Leader, Executive members, Chair of Scrutiny Committee and other elected members actively contribute to, challenge, discuss and approve key plans and themes. The Single Integrated Plan and other key strategies have been through a full process of consultation and approval.

Elected members, through regular meetings, reports and relevant plans, have good knowledge of the strategic role and direction of the Directorate and they understand their statutory role. The quality of information provided to members has improved as evidenced by the quarterly progress report to members and use of both written reports and presentations to highlight key areas to debate. This detailed information has brought rigour to the challenge officers are subjected to.

To assist in planning the work of the Scrutiny Committee, the work programme is an agenda item at weekly Senior Management team meetings. The Scrutiny agenda is now published two months in advance and this practice has brought increased rigour to agenda planning.

The Leader and his Cabinet give very careful consideration to all reports requiring difficult decisions and take action in the best interests of children and young people. Members are represented on and influence key corporate level partnerships as well as a range of other groups related to the work of the Education and Lifelong Learning Directorate.

The Cabinet member is a member of the Senior Management Team and has a good understanding of the national agenda and the workings of the Directorate. She actively participates in the monitoring of schools who are subject to an intervention plan.

The Local Service Board (LSB) approved the Single Integrated Plan – Caerphilly Delivers in April 2013. This has been published and distributed to all key stakeholders. This will be implemented in the autumn of 2013.

Quality Indicator: 3.2.1 Improving quality - self-evaluation, including listening to learners and others

The authority has developed appropriate self-evaluation and target setting processes within the education and lifelong learning directorate which are now having a positive effect on the planning and securing of improvement. There is a strong culture of conscious accountability and ambition for all learners and the work of the Improving Governance Programme Board supports this well. Self-evaluation is carefully planned throughout all services, at all levels, to ensure that it is embedded in practice and that outcomes are used to inform and review planning and allocation of

resources for maximum benefit. A range of evidence is used to systematically review and direct plans.

The authority has focused more closely on the systems and processes it needs to ensure that best use is made of all available data to strengthen the quality of self-evaluation. Improved analysis of data supports tracking systems well, and improved use of data helps the authority to track specific groups of learners better. The evidence pertaining to self-evaluation is held within the recently designed 'Administree'.

A monthly data meeting is held in order to analyse data releases and use the outcomes to inform planning and assessment of initiatives and practice. However, this is not consistent across all services and agencies as yet.

Within each service area, self-evaluation summaries are produced and debated at challenge meetings where judgements are agreed and recorded. Actions identified feed into the appropriate plans. Leadership and management summaries are debated at Senior Management Team meetings and the same process is followed. This cycle takes place in December and July and outcomes feed into the summative Self-evaluation report. Plans are sometimes amended as a result of this.

Every September, a summative self-evaluation report is produced and supported by a range of evidence. Lead officers are assigned to each quality indicator and the report is presented to SMT, CMT, Scrutiny and schools for consultation. However, the views of stakeholders need to be reflected within the report.

Whilst self evaluation processes have improved within the directorate, they have yet to be consistently embedded across the council.

Quality Indicator: 3.2.2 How do we plan and secure improvement?

The development of the Single Integrated Plan is impacting well on the progress of joint planning for better outcomes. Consistency between the directorate and the wider partnerships is clearer, with better links between key strategic documents. There is a very clear and direct link from the Single Plan through to individual officers' PDRs and a sharper focus on improved outcomes for learners. Elected Members, senior leaders and lead officers work together to maximise opportunities for success in areas identified.

At SMT level, senior officers present regular feedback on the process of their plans and the evidenced impact. These aspects are challenged and targets are regularly reviewed to ensure continued high expectations. SMT outcomes are challenged at CMT level and officers responsible for these, present directly to CMT where robust challenge ensures a serious connection with the need to improve. Arrangements for monitoring, evaluating and reporting are outlined within all plans. However, links to resources and to the Medium Term Financial Plan are underdeveloped.

At Scrutiny, there is a structured programme of presenting plans and outcomes. However, schools' performance needs to be challenged at greater depth.

The Junior and Youth forum are involved in evaluating appropriate plans and strategies and their comments add a unique insight.

The EAS manage and oversee the setting of targets in schools. The Principal Systems Leader meets wth the Manager of LEI to analyse this data. Consequently, a schedule of challenge visits are agreed and carried out. Revised targets are recorded.

The EAS uses a range of data to challenge performance in schools. This challenge is managed within the Intervention Framework and is very effective. Support and

resources allocated to schools is carefully evaluated in order to ensure a positive impact is made in a timely manner. Whenever necessary, the council has used its policies and procedures to challenge Leadership and Management in a school. This has resulted in changes within those structures. The Manager of LEI presents on ESTYN inspection outcomes, along with categorization updates, at SMT, CMT and Scrutiny.

The progress in the targets outlined in the implementation of the Families First Action Plan is measured through the Family First Board, SMT and Scrutiny. Good practice in multi-agency working has been identified.

Priorities for improvement are identified using a range of data, both qualitative and quantitative, in liaison with a number of stakeholders. Headteacher representatives assist the LA in developing and shaping policy and procedures.

Performance Management systems are well established and targets are linked to operational plans so that all staff have a sense of accountability in their delivery and success. Interim 1:1 meetings ensure that staff remain focused on their performance and targets reviewed. They enable managers to intervene early if staff are not on track to meet targets for any specific reason. This approach has led to a reduction in staff absence for example.

The directorate has established robust guidance for improvement planning. The guidance includes directorate improvement planning, service improvement planning, service improvement plans and personal development reviews. These effectively align planning with performance, and help to enable all staff to understand their roles, responsibilities and contributions towards corporate objectives. Progress is reviewed in a systematic way in team meetings, but is completed formally bi-annually when it is reported to Scrutiny.

Actions included in SIPs have had a positive impact on the areas identified and on outcomes for learners in Caerphilly. Standards in the majority of key indicators have continued to improve, especially at the L2 threshold and wider points score as well as improvement in school inspection reports.

Medium Term Financial Planning is strong and ensures continuity in service delivery. It underpins the service improvement plans and supports priorities identified. Following a second Estyn monitoring visit in March 2014, the local authority was removed from further follow-up activity.

3.2 Areas for Development
- Extend data meetings to Attendance and the tracking of EOTAS pupils

- Circulate completed SER and reflect views of consultees within the report
- Contribute towards council self-evaluation
- Link the MTFP to priorities identified in the Service Improvement Plan

Quality Indicator: 3.3.2 Partnership working - joint planning, resourcing and quality assurance

Strategic partnerships have clear priorities which are understood by all partners. Partnership meetings are well attended and supported by a wide range of partners.

It is through these arrangements that the Authority is able to meet both national and corporate priorities.

The Local Service Board approved the Single Integrated Plan – Caerphilly Delivers in April 2013. This has been published and distributed to all key stakeholders. The mechanism for delivery of the plan, which is to be implemented in autumn 2013, is underpinned by a performance framework which provides a process by which the LSB can hold partners to account. Partnership groups have been rationalised to minimise duplication and to maximise the use of resources.

The LA communicates and works very well with a wide range of partners including the police, fire service, health board, children's services, voluntary sector services, community organisations, local businesses, colleges, work-based learning providers, neighbouring authorities and other stakeholders. The LA's capability and skills for working in partnership with others contribute to service and quality improvement. Partnership arrangements between the Directorate and schools are very good. Effective partnership working between Communities First, Flying Start and the Youth Service is improving. Impact on outcomes for children, young people and their families is positive.

The South East Wales Safeguarding Children Board (SEWSCB) is an effective multi agency partnership that co-ordinates and ensures the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements across the Region and hence the Borough. This is evidenced in the Board's Strategic Plan and Partnership Agreement (Refer to 2.3.4).

The Families First Programme is monitored by the Families First Board. A range of partners are actively engaged in the commissioned projects funded through the Families First programme.

The Local Service Board (LSB) approved the Single Integrated Plan – Caerphilly Delivers in April 2013. This has been published and distributed to all key stakeholders. The mechanism for delivery of the plan is underpinned by a performance framework which provides a process by which the LSB can hold partners to account. This will be implemented in the autumn of 2013.

Partnership working across South East Wales Consortium is well developed. This is evidenced by clear protocols of operation, commissioning agreements and a regional approach to quality assurance

The South East Wales Consortium is currently working with the EAS on a regional approach to improving attendance.

Quality Indicator: 3.4.1 Resource management - management of resources

Financial Management across the Council is strong and effective bringing stability to both the Council and schools.

Budget monitoring is robust and proactive. The budget setting process is subject to rigorous scrutiny by Corporate Management Team and Members.

The Directorate operates a systematic financial planning process which evaluates existing service provision and anticipated pressures through revised local and national priorities. Challenge meetings with Director and Service Managers are a key element of this process. Efficiency saving of circa £4m has been identified from 2014/15 – 2016/17.

School budgets have been protected in line with the Minister's pledge.

Additional funding has been provided to support a number of initiatives all linked to

the Directorate Skills Strategy for learners.

Pupils in receipt of Free School Meals are regularly reviewed ensuring all potential claimants are claiming their entitlements. This has resulted in additional grant allocation of circa £500k in recent years.

In the last three years c.£34m has been spent improving the schools' and Directorate's infrastructure. This includes 50:50 partnership working between schools and the Council. In the last two years, awards have been achieved for construction and sustainability on a new school build.

 A range of services are provided through a collaborative model. All are subject to active monitoring and financial review by Service Managers.

Quality Indicator: 3.4.2 Resource management – value for money

The Council has a highly effective financial management programme in place. This includes three year budget planning which allows resources to be targeted to both National and local priorities to support and improve learner outcomes.

Regular budget monitoring is a key area for the Education management team. There is a collective approach across the service to the management of resources and the forecast position is discussed in detail prior to inclusion in reports to CMT and Scrutiny. This ensures that resources are being used in line with the service priorities and that the financial position is being managed effectively.

Provision mapping in the LA has been recognised as a strength by Welsh Government. Caerphilly is leading in collaboration with Flintshire on the development of a quality assurance pilot to support the statutory reform of statements and provision for children and young people with ALN. The model developed by Caerphilly has been used by ESTYN in their Supplementary Guidance for Inspecting ALN in schools.

A system has been developed that effectively tracks pupils and provides a mechanism for measuring learner outcomes against the cost of placement. This will provide a comprehensive database and assist in tracking placements, attendance and outcomes.

The Directorate proactively manages school balances. School balances have reduced in 2013/14 by 41%. A "Management of surplus balances in schools" policy has been agreed by School Budget Forum to address any schools failing to comply with the guidelines agreed.

The safety and wellbeing of pupils is a key priority within the Council. The Council supported the Schools Catering Service in becoming the first in Wales to achieve Appetite for Life in primary schools.

All services are regularly reviewed to ensure they are effective in delivering key Directorate priorities. Internal and external challenge meetings allow resources to be directed to local and national priorities. Schools complete an annual survey on the performance of the Authority's traded services. The School Budget Forum, Traded Services board, reviews the results of the survey and the lowest performing services are appropriately challenged following which an action plan is produced. This is monitored closely to ensure effective delivery of all key actions.

The Council has an excellent record in securing grants. For 2014/15 circa £29m is estimated to be received into the Authority from WG and other bodies. These are aligned to service priorities and are managed positively with spending of 99.9% in

2013/14. A grants database records the detail of grant expenditure and staff employed.

In partnership with the Education Achievement Service (EAS), CCBC supports schools in targeting spend and complying with the grants' terms and conditions of the SEG/ WEG and LAC grants. These amount to £4.7m in 2013/14. This grant funding was fully spent by schools in 2013/14.

Schools and the EAS are key partners in the overall grant strategy. Discussion and agreement on the delegation and use of grants takes place with schools to ensure resources are maximised for the benefit of all learners.

Environmental management is a key priority in the Authority's Asset Management Policy.

Schools are continually supported in identifying energy efficiency schemes and additional funding streams e.g. Welsh Water Scheme and the LA Energy Scheme in reducing carbon emissions.

Some £7m has been invested in Libraries in recent years including a new flagship building which is due to open January 2014 the cost of which is £5.5m. This included the introduction and enhancement of dedicated areas for children and young people. Recent statistics show an increase in book loans for children and young people in excess of 50%., on refurbished sites.

Services provided by partners and outsourced providers are reviewed on a regular basis to ensure their effectiveness in meeting the needs of children and young people. These reviews led to a number of financial savings and have been a key factor in minimising the number of pupils placed in high cost Out of Authority placements.

The council invested in a highly effective initiative to support a number of schools in the reduction of permanent fixed-term exclusions.

An in-depth review is currently taking place on the strategic direction of the funding of the authority's Special Resource Bases (SRBs). The objective of the review will include the rationalisation of SRBs including location and groupings, staff skills audit, and a common assessment and tracking system. The total resources amount to circa £4m.

3.4 Areas for Development
- Strengthen the system to effectively track and evaluate learners educated other than at schools.
- Review Additional Learning Needs in mainstream Schools including Additional Support and Community Tuition, and Education Other than at School settings.

Definitions

Indicator	Definition	Abbreviation
Level 1 Threshold	formerly 5 GCSE at A*-G, but including a range of vocational equivalents	**L1**
Level 2 Threshold	formerly 5 GCSE at A*-C, but including a range of vocational equivalents	**L2**
Level 2 Threshold including E/W&M	L2, but including English or Welsh and mathematics	**L2+**
Core Subject Indicator	Language, mathematics and science GCSE or equivalent in combination	**CSI**
Average Wider Points Score	Measures the quality and volume of qualifications the average learner achieves	**AWPS**
Capped Points Score	Measures the quality of the best 8 qualifications the average learner achieves	**CPS**
No Qualifications	The % of pupils that leave with no recognised qualification	**NQ**

Glossary

ALN	Additional Learning Needs
ASD	Autistic Spectrum Disorder
CASS	Caerphilly Autistic Spectrum Service
CCBC	Caerphilly County Borough Council
CGI	Corporate Governance Inspection
CMT	Corporate Management Team
CSI	Core Subject Indicator
CYPP	Children and Young People's Partnership
EAL	English as an Additional Language
EAS	Educational Achievement Service
EOTAS	Education Other Than At School
EWO	Education Welfare Officer
FIS	Family Information Service
FP	Foundation Phase
FPI	Foundation Phase Indicator
FPOI	Foundation Phase Outcome Indicator
FSM	Free School Meals
GAVO	Gwent Association of Voluntary Organisations
GEMS	Gwent Ethnic Minority Support
HI	Hearing Impairment
IDP	Individual Development Plan
IEP	Individual Education Plan
IF	Intervention Framework

ISCAN	Integrated Service for Children with Additional Needs
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
KS	Key Stage
LA	Local Authority
LAC	Looked After Children
LEI	Learning, Education and Inclusion
LLC	Language, Literacy and Communication
LSB	Local Service Board
MAT	More Able and Talented
MIS	Management Information System
MSI	Multi-Sensory Impairment
MTFP	Medium Term Financial Plan
NAFIS	National Association of Family Information Services
NEET	Not in Education Employment or Training
NQT	Newly Qualified Teacher
PCP	Person Centred Planning
PDR	Performance Development Review
PEP	Personal Education Plan
PLASC	Pupil Level Annual School Census
PLC	Professional Learning Community
PRU	Pupil Referral Unit
PSDWCD	Personal and Social Development, Wellbeing and Cultural Diversity
QA	Quality Assurance
QAS	Quality Assurance System
SAP	Student Assistance Programme

SBC	School Based Counselling Service
SEG	School Effectiveness Grant
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SENCo	Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator
SER	Self Evaluation Report
SEWSCB	South East Wales Safeguarding Children Board
SIP	Service Improvement Plan
SL	Systems Leader
SLCN	Speech, Language and Communication Needs
SMT	Senior Management Team
SRB	Specialist Resource Base
VA	Voluntary Aided
VI	Visual Impairment
WAO	Wales Audit Office
WEG	Welsh in Education Grant
WG	Welsh Government
WLGA	Welsh Local Government Association