



Summary & Priorities

Quarter 1 & 2 (April to September) 2020

The performance period under review aligns with the first six months of the COVID-19 pandemic. It is important to recognise that during this time, Caerphilly Council and the communities it serves have been severely impacted by the virus with some services ceased, some delivered in alternative ways and many of the Council's staff redeployed in support of services that had not existed prior to the beginning of the financial year. The reintroduction of many of those services only a matter of months on, along with key governance processes such as the Council's DPA process, demonstrates how the Council has begun to return to a semblance of normality while also continuing to protect our people and place from COVID-19. I would like to record my appreciation of Education and School based staff for the way in which they have adapted, transformed working practices and done whatever has been asked of them during this time.

In terms of specific performance updates during Q1 and Q2, I would like to place on record my thanks for the way in which our Schools, supported by the LEA, have closed; transitioned in to childcare hubs; introduced an innovative approach to delivering FSM supported blended learning; partially reopened, and then opened again fully in September while doing everything in their power to keep staff and pupils as safe as possible. The work that has been done and the commitment and bravery that has been required cannot be underestimated. Since returning to school in September the focus has very much been on catching up with lost lesson time, particularly for examination age pupils as well as overcoming the significant challenges associated with a reintroduction of face to face teaching; home to school transport and hot school catering. The workload pressures on Head Teachers and LEA staff to support this effort have been immense and protracted and concerns are growing about the resilience of the school community should the pandemic response continue into the medium term. To assist, a wide range of financial, technical and wellbeing support is being wrapped around the sector.

Some of the specifics that have been achieved throughout the period are as follows:

- Safe systems of work and comprehensive Risk Assessments introduced ahead of a return to school along with COVID secure approaches to Transport, Catering and Pupil ingress/egress
- The introduction of an application process for childcare places across the emerging childcare hubs and the process of accepting children was developed and implemented in only a matter of days
- Free to use and publicly available WiFi has been installed across every school site to enable greater use of smart devices across school settings
- Levels of FSM uptake have increased by 20% following the introduction of an innovative FSM delivery approach that has placed food on the plates of every learner and also kept local businesses afloat
- Agreement and funding from Cabinet to introduce a whole Borough approach to cashless catering which is now being rolled out
- Creation of a daily COVID dashboard for schools to enable incidences of positive cases and associated self isolation periods to be monitored and managed to keep schools open in very difficult circumstances
- Further innovations have been introduced across the Library Service such as the Order and Collect Scheme which is now being rolled out across every Library setting
- Support for the vulnerable from across Education has been exceptional with vulnerable learners a specific focus throughout lockdown for functions such as the Youth Service, EWO and ALN Teams
- Staff from across Education have been redeployed into critical support roles for the organisation with Childcare Hubs, FSM delivery, the Council's Buddy Scheme, Customer First and even the AB UHB benefitting from the support of Education staff
- The 21st Century Schools Business Cases for the expansion of Trinity Fields and the relocation of Ysgol Gymraeg Cwm Gwyddon have been developed and approved for consultation by Cabinet

In response to COVID 19, the buddy scheme was set up beginning on the 16th March 2020 to deliver a community response to support vulnerable people and those who were self-isolating. The Corporate Policy Unit managed the system with assistance from across all Council Services. Services that had effectively shut down mainstream activity offered staff to the Buddy scheme as part of the normal working week. 590 staff responded as volunteers to support this group; to provide support with shopping, prescription pick-up, keeping in touch etc. At the peak 1560 Vulnerable People were registered on the scheme.

Name of Priority	Completion Date	RAG	Progress - Achievements - Comments
Aim the reduce the impact of poverty on Early Years	Ongoing	●	<p>Welsh Government announced a new funded childcare scheme which we made operational during April 2020. This was a redirect of the Childcare Offer funding and aimed predominantly at children aged 0-5years from families of key workers who needed to attend the workplace as well as very vulnerable children. During April to 31st August 2020, we supported 555 children aged 0-5years with funded childcare places.</p> <p>Families First and Flying Start early intervention support was delivered virtually throughout the period, ensuring families were contacted and had access to support as they needed it. Many projects used social media closed groups to maintain contact, build peer support networks, support communities to support each other, doorstep drops of activity packs relevant to the age and stage of the children.</p> <p>Health visitors and family workers and additional needs workers in Flying Start continued to do in person contacts in clean rooms for families where there were greater concerns, including for those where there were safeguarding concerns, very vulnerable families, complex family needs, and digitally excluded. The doorstep drops of activity packs with the doorstep contact supported families who felt very isolated and were struggling to support their child's development.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over 200 parents were supported through the parent network closed groups plus wider parents in the community through the food parcels. • 148 families with 151 children of which, 10 are pregnant, were being contacted weekly by parenting team. • 28 parents were being contacted weekly for support by ALN team with a further 6 being supported through in person contact in clean rooms. • 72 parents were supported with children's language delays and have since accessed in person support in clean rooms as well as virtual support. • The Flying Start childcare team initially was redirected to support key worker children alongside school hubs. However, they restarted for Flying Start children from 29th June and have continued since then to engage and support children's development. While the Flying Start children were not attending setting, 800 children had doorstep drops of individualised development activity packs. Also, during the summer holidays all children from the childcare settings had weekly delivery drops to support their development at home. <p>The Childcare Offer was restarted from 1st September for working parents of 3 year olds in part time Education. 528 children accessed funded childcare placement through the Childcare Offer in September, saving parents just over £157k in childcare fees for September and supporting the sustainability of small local childcare businesses</p>
Raise standards of attainment.	Ongoing	●	<p>Prior to lockdown, Standards and provision at end of Foundation Phase and Key Stage 2 were judged to be good. This is evidenced by individual pupil level data, and Estyn outcomes. However, two Welsh medium schools were inspected in Autumn 2019 where standards were judged by Estyn to be adequate. As a result, both schools were placed in the category of 'significant improvement'.</p> <p>Verified Key Stage 4 data for 2018/19 (verified by WG Core data sets, published January 2020) identified an improving trend across a range of legacy indicators and newly implemented interim measures. Summary over one year indicated improvements in SCC, Literacy, Numeracy, Science and all Legacy measures (except Level 1). This is against a national picture where there has been a decline in performance against a number of indicators. However, the number of pupils achieving no qualifications has also risen from 0.9% in 2017-18 to 1.7% in 2018-19. This is 0.8% higher than the national average.</p> <p>Key Stage 5 performance is a mixed picture which has resulted in an increased focus on performance measures related to pupils achieving 3 A-C and A*-A qualifications.</p> <p>In response to the Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic, the Welsh Government cancelled all statutory data collections that would have been due to take place in Summer 2020. This means that no end of key stage data was submitted, therefore there is no data available for FP through to KS3. Due to the cancellation of summer 2020 GCSE, AS and A level examinations, the Welsh Government will not be reporting on KS4 and KS5 school performance measures for 2019/20. Analysis of standards for this year cannot include aggregated LA data or individual school performance data and, therefore, comparison of year on year progress is not possible.</p> <p>Strategies have been initiated by schools that aim to minimise the impact of the disruption. This includes a range of professional learning activities for school and LA staff to develop effective blended and distance learning strategies. This pedagogical strategy is however in its infancy and will require significant ongoing development and refinement.</p>
Reduce the impact of poverty on attainment for both vocational and non-vocational qualifications to provide equity of opportunity.	Ongoing	●	<p>Youth Workers have continued to work with pupils from Learning Pathway Centres to enable the attainment of accreditation during lockdown.</p> <p>In the past year and including the earlier stages of lockdown, 120 young people in the Youth Service have achieved over 340 national (non GCSE) qualifications and over 2600 young people have achieved over 8000 local awards</p>
Reduce the Impact of Poverty upon communities	Long term and ongoing	●	<p>Verified Key Stage 4 data for 2018/19 (verified by WG Core data sets, published January 2020) identified an improving trend across a range of legacy indicators and newly implemented interim measures for FSM pupils. The performance of FSM pupils was broadly in line with the Welsh average. As stated above, the cancellation of summer 2020 GCSE, AS and A level examinations has meant that the Welsh Government will not be reporting on KS4 and KS5 school performance measures for 2019/20.</p> <p>At the onset of lockdown, the Youth Service supported catering's food delivery arrangements by constructing and providing a suitable risk assessment for the delivery of FS meals for all CCBC staff and volunteers – youth workers contributed to the distribution of free school meals to vulnerable families throughout the lockdown period.</p> <p>Feedback from schools indicates that FSM pupils were more likely to be affected by the lockdown period. The Edtech strategy has been repurposed as a response to this (see below).</p>



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<p>Help those who are able to follow a non-traditional attainment path.</p>	<p>Mar-20</p>	<p>●</p>	<p>Provision and standards during the period April to September was obviously dominated by the adaptations necessary to the pandemic. Whilst during the initial period our blended learning approach was called into action, towards the latter all provisions were active with re-integration programmes focused on wellbeing, of both staff and students, alongside the identification of learning gaps which have informed our curriculum diet for the Autumn Term 20.</p> <p>Of significance during this time has been the development of remote learning for our students currently on Home Tuition. Work has been undertaken by a large proportion of the EOTAS team in linking our LA based tutors with clusters of schools, developing IT capabilities of both adults and students and developing re-integration plans where appropriate. This has already had a positive impact in the reduction of resources used to employ agency workers. Savings are currently being re-directed towards the recruitment of further LA based tutors.</p> <p>The process of supporting these students has been significantly strengthened with the appointment of two Assistant Educational Psychologists who are working directly with students and their families, identifying barriers and facilitating progress back to mainstream schools. A key action arising from scrutiny of NEETs performance data and trends over the past 5 years has been the development of NEETs strategy that captures and harmonises related activity across the Education directorate and elsewhere within the authority. A draft is currently being refined and a specific set of actions will accompany release of the document late Autumn 2020.</p>
<p>Support learning that enables young and adult employment opportunities including a focus on 'future skills'</p>	<p>Long term and ongoing</p>	<p>●</p>	<p>Yearly targets have been achieved however this period covers the Covid 19 – lockdown and during this time we were only able to provide support to our participants via email and telephone calls. It must be noted that many of these participants have been unemployed for a considerable period and need intensive support to gain qualifications and employment. However, despite limited It access and initial difficult using emails and the internet 30 participants gained QCF employability related qualifications and 9 participants gained employment during this period. Youth Service Engagement and Progression arrangements have continued support for traineeship take up within the authority and is championing the new Wales-wide apprenticeship scheme. Destinations secured for school leavers include take up of significant amounts of training opportunities, vocational and otherwise, in further education.</p>
<p>Improve digital skills for all ages.</p>	<p>Long term and ongoing</p>	<p>●</p>	<p>The Edtech programme has also been repurposed in response to the national lockdown and risk to digitally disengaged learners. Wave 1 -3: The network infrastructure as part of waves 1-3 to replace network switches and access points is progressing. 33 schools completed, 37 school partially completed, 17 schools remaining.</p> <p>Wave 4: The investment in filtered Guest wifi throughout schools has enabled pupils to use their own suitably enabled devices. A further £1.4 m Edtech funding has been allocated to purchase 7710 Lenovo Chromebooks for learners without their own device. Roll out plan required to consider priority year groups to receive devices.</p> <p>As part of the Stay Safe, Stay Learning project a total number of 1076 laptop devices from 47 schools were repurposed into Chromebooks and supplied to learners. EAS have produced an IT self-evaluation toolkit to enable schools to identify strategic priorities in the development of digital learning. This initiative is in its infancy but is currently being trialled by schools that form part of the IT Stakeholder group.</p>
<p>Improve the learning environment.</p>	<p>Long term and ongoing</p>	<p>●</p>	<p>The 21st Century Schools Team have been managing a range of investment and development opportunities to support building improvements across schools in the Borough.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 21st Century Schools and Colleges Band A Programme – Trinity Fields refurbishment • 21st Century Schools and Colleges Band B Programme – Ysgol Gymraeg Cwm Gwyddon / Trinity Fields – proposals are currently at consultation stage and a report is being prepared for Cabinet to decide on whether to proceed with both projects. • CCBC Capital Maintenance Programme • WG Capital Maintenance Programme • WG Welsh Medium Grant • WG Childcare Grant • Community Hubs – Athletics track at Oakdale • Sporting Facilities – 3G pitches at St Cenydd, Lewis School Pengam, Cwm Rhymni (Gelli Haf)
<p>Safeguard all children and young people in order to create a climate for learning, particularly the most vulnerable.</p>	<p>Sep-20</p>	<p>●</p>	<p>The education safeguarding coordinator post has been appointed. Training for schools (train the trainer is ongoing) and networks with secondary and primary DSPs have been established. School audits are being undertaken in line with the schedule. The LA has developed a formal exclusion strategy currently in draft and to be shared with Scrutiny and Cabinet outlining the vision for reducing exclusions. Processes for monitoring exclusions have been made more robust.</p> <p>The Educational Psychology Service (EPS) provided direct support to the childcare hubs including to the most vulnerable pupils linked to our special school, consultation regarding individual concerns and support for pupil and staff wellbeing. The EPS also set up a helpline for professionals and parents, which was accessed by both schools and parents who were struggling to cope with their children’s ALN and increased anxiety. A virtual meeting was held with all of the secondary school Pastoral Leads to discuss how schools were supporting their most vulnerable pupils during the lockdown period; this provided an opportunity to provide guidance and for schools to share examples of good practice. The EPS also made contact with school ALNCo’s to ascertain, via a survey, how ELSA support was being provided to the most vulnerable pupils during school closures. Bereavement support was also provided to both schools and parents, this included helping schools to identify which pupils would be most impacted by the bereavement, so that support could be provided to these pupils. The school-based counsellors provided weekly check-ins with the pupils who opted in to this service and who were receiving counselling prior to school closures. Online individual and small group CBT support was also provided to those pupils who were identified as very anxious, who were receiving this intervention prior to lockdown and who opted for this support to continue during lockdown.</p> <p>EP contact was made with all schools immediately prior to both the 2 week ‘Check in, Catch up and Prepare’ return to school in the summer term and the start of the Autumn term, to discuss how schools could support the return of pupils in general and specifically those they considered to be most vulnerable. Linked to this, the EPS created two guidance booklets based on a trauma-informed approach to support schools to prepare for pupils return to school by supporting their understanding of the impact of covid-19 on wellbeing and by providing guidance and practical strategies that schools could implement to support both staff and pupil wellbeing as a pre-requisite to create a climate for learning</p>

RAG Status

- Black Not yet started or too early to report any progress (achievements/changes)
- Red Started but not progressing well
- Amber Started with reasonable progress achieved
- Green Going well with good progress