

# Caerphilly Local Authority Education Strategy



**Dilyn rhagoriaeth gyda'n gilydd  
Pursuing excellence together**

September 2022 – August 2025

# Contents

Foreword – Cabinet Member for Education

Vision – Chief Education Officer

1. The National Context
2. The Local Context
3. Regional Partnerships
  
4. Building on our successes - Shared Ambitions
5. Revision of the Education Strategy
6. The Principles of Evaluation and Improvement
7. The role of stakeholders in creating this strategy - #TeamCaerphilly
  
8. Main Areas for development
  
9. Learner Journey – from 0 to 25
  - Early Years
  - Learner Journey – School and other education settings
  - Support for young people in post-16 education
  - The Contribution of Caerphilly Youth Service
  - The role of the Education Achievement Service in supporting the learner journey
  - Learning throughout life
  
10. Key strategies that support the realisation of the Education Strategy
  - Strategy: Inclusion and wellbeing
  - Strategy: Support for pupils at risk of NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training)
  - Strategy: Improving Pupil Attendance
  - Strategy: More Able and Talented
  - Strategy: Pupils' Acquisition of Digital Skills
  - Strategy: Welsh in Education Strategic Plan 2022-2032
  - The role of Sustainable Communities for Learning (formerly 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools)
  - Strategy: Medium Term Financial Principles

Afterword – Corporate Director for Education and Corporate Services

Appendix 1: How we will measure our success – education directorate indicators.

## Political forward: Cabinet Member for Education

I am elated to become the Cabinet Member for Education and Communities at a time when the Directorate is in such a good position and where education in Caerphilly is described as being in 'safe hands'. Also, during my induction period, I have enjoyed being 'a critical friend' during the self-evaluation process.

Obviously, there are challenges ahead following the Covid-19 Pandemic, the Cost-of-Living Crisis and the implementation of the new Curriculum for Wales and ALN reform.

As a former school nurse and Healthy Schools Co-ordinator, I know how important health and wellbeing is to young people and staff attending our schools. So, when Professor Donaldson started talking about Wellbeing in the curriculum I was delighted.

Health and Wellbeing is not just about food and fitness and the pandemic has highlighted the need for our young people (and sometimes their families) to access schemes dealing with Mental and emotional health and wellbeing, personal development and relationships and substance use and misuse. We know that without the good foundational building blocks that our young people are unable to access the skills required to learn.

School staff are more aware of this than ever and are delivering schemes along with other professionals to address the needs of our young people and their families.

This new strategy will help facilitate health and wellbeing in the new curriculum and therefore help to repair the building blocks to enable our young people to learn and develop into responsible, well-developed citizens. It will also build on the successes of the Shared Ambitions strategy, providing a framework where all stakeholders in Education in Caerphilly can navigate the challenges ahead.

**Carol Andrews**

**Cabinet Member for Education**

## Vision for education: Chief Education Officer

Learning has the power to transform the lives of children, young people and adults.

In Caerphilly County Borough Council, all those involved in this learning believe that a culture of trust, strong working relationships and a passion for making a difference, will lead to sustained improvement over the coming years.

We have great aspirations which are sometimes constrained, but never defined, by circumstance.

We will remain focused on providing our absolute best and will be unwavering in our commitment to excellence.

***Pursuing excellence together.***

**Keri Cole**

**Chief Education Officer**

## 1. The National Context

Welsh Government acknowledges the disruption caused by the Covid-19 pandemic and subsequent impact on children, learners and young people across Wales. Although focused on local needs within the Caerphilly Local Authority, this Education Strategy supports the national plans to 'Renew and Reform'.

Welsh Government, together with our own self-evaluation processes, suggest that the pandemic has affected some groups of learners more than others. Therefore, the nature of this Education Strategy needs to reflect this additional concern, recognising and supporting different groups of learners in the appropriate way. In particular:

- vulnerable or disadvantaged learners, and learners with ALN have not necessarily had access to the support they need; some may have faced challenges with distance learning, and some with readjusting to face-to-face learning. We need also to support those learners whose circumstances have changed during the pandemic, who may not have previously fallen into this category;
- learners in Early Years education are at a critical stage for language, social, emotional, physical and cognitive development. Pupils risk missing key development milestones, which could impact on their emotional wellbeing, communication and learning development. They may have specific challenges in finding a sense of belonging in their schools or settings, or in being away from their families;
- an understanding that families may also be anxious to be separated from their children as they return to school and supporting wellbeing of both children and their families is paramount in a successful return to education with consistent attendance;
- learners in post-16 and transition and those moving into post-16 provision will be concerned with progressing to their next steps, as well as with their longer-term employability and skills. These learners will have experienced particular pressures and uncertainty, and their confidence will have been affected;
- specific challenges for Welsh immersion learners in English-speaking households, and learners transitioning from Year 6 to Year 7.

At the highest level, the ambitions of the strategy are shaped not just by local circumstances but by policies and strategies determined by national government. Among those cited in the

Education Strategy or that have a direct bearing on it are the Programme of Government, ALN reform, the new National Curriculum for Wales, the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act, Welsh Government Renew and Reform post-Covid-19, the Tertiary Education Bill, the Sustainable Communities for Learning programme, Children's Rights in Wales, Flying Start and Childcare, Parenting & Inequality strategy and the universal offer of free school meals for primary pupils.

## 2. The Local Context

Caerphilly Local Authority covers an area stretching from the Brecon Beacons National Park in the north, to Cardiff and Newport in the south. It is bordered to the west by Merthyr Tydfil and Rhondda Cynon Taff, and to the east by Blaenau Gwent and Torfaen local authorities.

The area lies at the heart of both the South Wales Valleys and the Cardiff Capital Region. The Caerphilly County Borough occupies some 108 square miles (28,000 hectares) of the Valleys area of South East Wales. It is a little over 18.6 miles long and nearly 11 miles wide and is formed by the valleys of three rivers: the Rhymney, Sirhowy and Ebbw. The County Borough has 180,000 residents living across a mixture of urban and rural communities.

Three quarters of the County Borough is used for agriculture and forestry.

There are around 23,000 statutory aged pupils attending schools across the Local Authority. Caerphilly learners account for around a third of the learners sitting external examinations at the end of key stage 4 across the region of South East Wales in any given year. Over 11,000 (8%) of young people (8-25) engaged with the Youth Service.

**In Caerphilly there are:**

| <b>Setting Type</b>                       | <b>Cymraeg</b> | <b>English</b> |
|---|----------------|----------------|
| Primary Phase School                      | 11             | 61             |
| Voluntary-aided Primary School            | 0              | 1              |
| Secondary School                          | 1              | 10             |
| 3 to 18 School                            | 0              | 1              |
| Special School                            | 0              | 1              |
| Pupil Referral Unit                       | 0              | 1              |
| Further Education college                 |                | 2              |
| Registered Childminder                    | 90             |                |
| Registered group-based Childcare provider | 21             | 72             |

|                                   |   |   |
|-----------------------------------|---|---|
| Non-maintained education provider | 7 | 7 |
| Youth Service                     | 1 |   |

The Early Years and Childcare team in education works across the Borough in partnership with the Health Board, voluntary organisations and others as part of a broader Early Years team across the borough. The team supports registered childcare providers, and commissions contracted childcare and education placements, as well as providing early intervention support for children and families with emerging needs.

The EAS, the education consortium for South East Wales, supports the role of Caerphilly Local Authority in delivering their statutory functions, addressing improvement priorities and promoting improved pupil outcomes.

There is Youth Work (Service) provision across the borough supporting both universal access and more targeted support for young people and their families, as well as continued delivery of quality library services and community centres.

Our Adult Education provision delivers quality learning opportunities across the Borough for individuals beyond school age.

There are significant levels of deprivation within the Local Authority with around 30% of statutory school age pupils living in 20% of the most disadvantaged areas in Wales. 14 of the 110 areas in the Caerphilly County Borough are in the top 10% of the most disadvantaged areas in Wales.

26.4% of Caerphilly pupils of statutory school age on roll are entitled to free school meals (taken from Pupil Level Annual School Census 2022).

Caerphilly continues to increase its homelessness prevention work and the number of young people supported to resolve homelessness issues via the addition of a dedicated project located within the Youth Service.

Caerphilly County Borough Council fully supports the Welsh Government's "Programme of Government" commitments to combat poverty and inequality. A Cost-of-Living Crisis Working Group is looking at all the current and potential funding streams to ensure the LA's response is effective, timely and efficient in supporting the increasing numbers of vulnerable people across the Borough. New projects include Caerphilly Cares – Community Cooking Champion, a project aiming to tackle Food Poverty & Insecurity throughout the Caerphilly County Borough by educating people on how to cook and prepare healthy nutritious food. Participants will then extend the training into their communities. There is a strong connection

between a good diet and the capacity of young people to learn. This aspect of CCBC's work links with the Welsh Government's policy, with Plaid Cymru, to create a universal free school meals offer to all primary pupils.

The Council has prioritised improving the education opportunities for all as one of its Wellbeing Objectives and has committed to an ambitious investment programme. The Sustainable Communities for Learning investment programme is a major, long term capital programme jointly funded with Welsh Government that aims to create a generation of 21<sup>st</sup> century schools. Band A of the Sustainable Communities for Learning programme is nearing its end with three new schools built and three schools improved. Work is currently underway to deliver the equally ambitious Band B programme.

Caerphilly County Borough Council is committed to working with other organisations in a range of partnerships. At all times it will seek to improve the outcomes and impact of the services provided through these partnership arrangements. Whether this is, for example, through the school improvement work with EAS or the collaborative arrangements amongst the County's school sixth forms. In some cases, this will be the provision of commissioned services and CCBC will ensure that, on behalf of its learners, any such services deliver on expectations.

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### **3. Regional Partnerships**

Caerphilly County Borough Council has excellent working relationships with the neighbouring local authorities and a range of other services across the South East Wales region. These partnerships provide cohesion and integration across the region and deepen the understanding of issues and the solutions and strategies than can be deployed to meet the challenges we all face in our region of South East Wales. As indicated, each of the partnerships has its own specialist area of focus.

Wider agencies can provide a source of advice, guidance and support that can be brought to bear on the successful delivery of the Education Strategy. These include the Welsh Local Government Association, the Association of Directors of Education in Wales (and its sub-groups such as Finance), the National Academy for Education Leadership, national associations for parents and governors as well as a broad range of national groups from Youth Services to Healthy Schools and Education in Welsh.



Among the key regional partnerships interacting with the Education Strategy is the EAS commissioned by five local authorities to deliver the regional school improvement service.

The Greater Gwent Health, Social Care and Well-being Partnership Board is a key partnership body; established to lead and guide the implementation of the Social Services and Well Being (Wales) Act 2014 in our region.

Under the banner of Gwent Safeguarding, the South East Wales Safeguarding Children Board (SEWSCB) undertakes its responsibilities in relation to the protection of children in our region, who are in need of care and support, from abuse or neglect and the prevention of any risk of abuse, neglect or other kinds of harm.

The Cardiff Capital Region City Deal is a regional partnership with an ambitious investment programme designed to develop the transport infrastructure and connectivity as well as expanding employment and apprenticeships to positively promote regeneration of communities. It also promotes and supports the key business sectors in the region and aims to help expand the pool of skilled employees that the employers in these sectors really need.

The Early Years Integration Transformation Programme Steering group comprises the five local authorities, Aneurin Bevan University Health Board and Public Health Wales. This steering group oversees the implementation and evaluation of the midwifery and early years strategy and core programme to shape future integrated delivery, including identification and support for children with emerging needs and transition into school.

The regional and local networks are extensive and include the following:

- South East Wales Inclusion Group.
- South East Wales School Improvement Group.
- South East Wales Healthy Schools Group.
- National PHW Healthy Schools Group.
- The Community Safety Partnership.
- The Welsh Language Forum.
- The Welsh Education Forum.
- The Cost-of-Living Crisis Group.
- Careers Wales.

#### 4. Building on our successes - Shared Ambitions

'Shared Ambitions: working together to achieve the best outcomes for our young people' was an ambitious strategy that outlined how the council worked with schools and partners to deliver a clear vision for improving attainment and achievement from 2019 to 2022. In December 2021, an external, commissioned review of the Shared Ambitions strategy identified the following features:

- There is a clear sense of ambition and school leaders feel inspired by the way corporate officers prioritise the needs of children and young people.
- Politically and corporately, there is a clear commitment to support the wellbeing of learners and staff; to ensure that every setting develops a learning environment that is inspiring and ambitious to each individual pupil or student; that is inclusive and supports the holistic needs of all learners; that delivers equality. There is a vision for how schools and education relate to economic growth and prosperity.
- The Local Authority was praised for its leadership and support during the pandemic. Actions have progressed during the challenging period of the Covid-19 pandemic. Relationships across the educational community in Caerphilly are very strong.
- Schools and services operate in an environment of significant commitment and trust.
- School leaders report that the strategy has framed local priorities effectively and has guided actions into realistic outcomes.
- Headteachers feel that the strategy provides consistency of approach and a strong sense of the educational community working together to deliver common aims.
- All senior school leaders and officers feel that the #TeamCaerphilly brand provides a powerful and meaningful umbrella term that brings the educational community together across the local authority.
- The Covid-19 pandemic has impacted significantly on the ambition of the strategy, but senior leaders within schools were keen to acknowledge the heroic and tireless support they have received during the pandemic.
- The pandemic has focused activities around supporting vulnerable learners and in being more specific in identifying their needs, e.g., investment in technology.
- Headteachers felt that there was strong support for the Welsh-medium sector in the Local Authority.
- Learner participation plays an integral part in the management of education services in Caerphilly. Pupil voice is given a prominent role across settings.

The external report identified the following areas for further development:

- To become more effective, leaders should track and map the provision for vulnerable learners, reviewing how the information and data is utilised to carry out these key responsibilities.
- The Local Authority needs to consider how it will support children's and young people's views and voices to be heard and reflected in its strategies, self-evaluation and improvement planning processes.
- The Local Authority should consider setting a zero NEETs target and within a broader context.

## **5. Revision of the Education Strategy**

This is a key moment in time for Caerphilly County Borough Council to renew its Education Strategy. The strategy will take account of the conclusions from the Shared Ambitions review, our own self-evaluation processes, external guidance such as Estyn and other crucial factors.

It will include the implementation of the new 'Curriculum for Wales' (2021) and Additional Learning Needs Act (2018), ensuring that support for schools and settings deliver on the high expectations set out by Welsh Government. The new strategy will also need to reflect the educational environment in the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic. The Local Authority must work effectively and efficiently with stakeholders and partners to ensure we address priorities and maximise impact.

### **The purposes of the strategy:**

- Identify and reset priorities for the Local Authority (LA) post-covid, based on high expectations and ambition for all learners (standards, progress, provision, wellbeing);
- Ensure that all stakeholders engage and adopt the vision and strategy based on high expectations and ambition;
- Identify a common approach towards addressing the priorities identified in the strategy, including the implementation of the new curriculum and ALN reform;
- Agree a set of principles around how we work together to maximise efficiency and productivity.

## 6. The Principles of Evaluation and Improvement

Caerphilly Local Authority has a duty in respect of education based on section 22 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998. This includes:

- A 'general responsibility for education' in their area by contributing 'towards the spiritual, moral, mental and physical development of the community by securing that efficient primary education, and secondary education... are available to meet the needs of the population of their area'. [Section 13, Education Act 1996]
- A duty to promote high standards, and the fulfilment of learning potential, in the exercise of their education functions. [Section 13A, Education Act 1996]

Local Authorities 'maintain' schools, which means they have an interest in them being managed well, provide effective provision and achieve high standards of learning for all children, pupils and young people.

To achieve this, Caerphilly Local Authority uses effective ongoing self-evaluation and improvement processes to:

1. evaluate how the Local Authority is performing, covering all aspects of education over time, with an ongoing focus on learner provision and progress;
2. inform the processes for improvement – both priorities and actions;
3. support sustained improvements over time, not short-term 'quick fixes';
4. identify areas of strength to be shared with others;
5. promote professional reflection and discussion;
6. inform professional learning for all staff; and
7. improve the planning of Welsh medium education and Sustainable Communities for Learning programmes.

Our self-evaluation is most effective when it:

- focused on improvement for children, pupils and young people;
- is continuous and aligned with processes for improvement;
- is reflective, honest and inclusive, using rigorous evidence-based approaches that take in a wide range of views from across the school (including learner voice), the wider community and peers;
- uses evidence-based practice to innovate and improve;
- uses data proportionately alongside first-hand evidence, to evaluate own strengths and areas for improvement;
- shares effective practice within and between schools and other settings;
- retains existing effective practice;

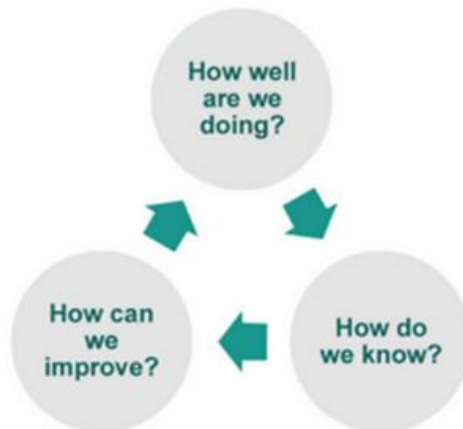
- involves all children, pupils, young people, staff, parents/carers, governors and other stakeholders;
- includes collaboration with peers to support their own and others' practice; and
- keeps progress against improvement priorities under review.

### **How we use information to evaluate how successful we are ?**

Since Shared Ambitions was introduced, the Council has changed the approach to the collection, scrutiny and overall purpose of data. This is in line with principals promoted as part of the Education in Wales: Our National Mission agenda. Specific reference can be located in a range of sources including:

- New National Evaluation and Improvement Resource (Education Wales)  
[The national resource: evaluation and improvement - Hwb \(gov.wales\)](https://www.gov.wales/government/education-wales/the-national-resource-evaluation-and-improvement)
- New arrangements for the inspection of schools and PRUs (Estyn).  
[Our new inspection arrangements for schools and PRUs | Estyn \(gov.wales\)](https://www.gov.wales/government/estyn/our-new-inspection-arrangements-for-schools-and-prus)

This redefined purpose to the use of data is firmly embedded with the Local Authority self-evaluation and improvement planning policy and process. In basic terms, this can be represented by the diagram below:



To achieve the above, a range of approaches are required to gather reliable evidence. All data should be used proportionately, and where possible, triangulate evidence. The use of data to determine support for schools should not be the responsibility of senior leaders only, but part of daily practice for all.

The above approach leads the Local Authority to consider the indicators we use to create an accurate profile of an improvement journey. We aim to ensure that we maintain a mature

and nuanced understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement, of an educational setting or service, that will ensure that the support we offer is appropriate and effective.

## 7. The role of stakeholders in creating this strategy - #TeamCaerphilly

An inclusive ethos that values the views, engagement and participation of all stakeholders is central to ensuring the success of this strategy. The vision and objectives for improvement will only be achieved when everyone works together to achieve our ambition for all learners.

In readiness for the strategy, a range of stakeholders were engaged to genuinely understand the successes, challenges and barriers to success for all children, learners and young people accessing education and support in Caerphilly. The following views will also be used to hold the education directorate to account throughout the three-year duration of this strategy.

| Stakeholder group   | Event                               | Key Issues  |
|---------------------|-------------------------------------|---|
| Pupils              | School council engagement sessions. | <p>Curriculum:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opportunities for creativity, autonomy, active choices</li> <li>• More focus on science and design technology</li> <li>• Variety in how lessons are taught - group discussions, independent learning, presenting, teacher guidance and modelling</li> <li>• More opportunities to learn outside</li> <li>• More visitors that enhance curriculum experiences</li> </ul> <p>Active role in the life of the school:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Active role in decision making including themes and topics delivered through the curriculum</li> <li>• Opportunities to feed their experiences/views to senior leaders and Governors</li> <li>• Genuine pupil voice/being listened to</li> <li>• Incorporating LGBTQ</li> <li>• Support for mental health sessions</li> <li>• Active school councils consisting of pupils with specific backgrounds (FSM, non-FSM, young carer, CLA, LGBTQ)</li> <li>• Improving the school environment</li> </ul> |
| Looked after pupils | Learner Voice                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Being included in decision making and planning</li> <li>• Key adults in school to support well-being</li> <li>• Support with their learning</li> <li>• A wide range of opportunities; academic and extra-curricular</li> </ul>   |

|  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
|  |   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individual pathways for social and emotion growth as well as learning</li> <li>• Developing a sense of belonging within in a school community</li> </ul>  |
| Pupils educated outside a mainstream setting | Learner voice   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Equal opportunity to curriculum choice and resources</li> <li>• Vocational element</li> <li>• Involvement in what they are being taught and how they are being taught</li> <li>• Individual pathways, door left open back to school if appropriate</li> <li>• Opportunities for work experience</li> </ul>  |
| Young people 11-25                           | Ten open access youth work settings and groups including LGBTQ+ | <p>Curriculum:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to broad curriculum with excellent teachers</li> <li>• Focus on practical activities, including art, music, cooking, sport, design technology, construction, mechanics</li> <li>• Involvement in developing the Curriculum for Wales</li> <li>• Active participation in what is taught</li> <li>• Learn more about the wider world</li> <li>• Learn about financial management including pensions, tax, credit, mortgages</li> <li>• Commitment to raising awareness about the environment</li> <li>• Relationships and sexuality education</li> <li>• Substance misuse</li> <li>• Life skills that prepare for the future</li> <li>• Stimulating, fun lessons where pupils take an active role. More discussion, group-based lessons</li> <li>• Visits to colleges to prepare for transition</li> </ul> <p>Wider school issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More involvement in decision making</li> <li>• Positive relationships between staff and pupils based on mutual respect</li> </ul> |
| Parents/carers                               | Three workshops with parent groups across Caerphilly borough.   | <p>Parents/carers want the following for their children:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Happy, confident children</li> <li>• Wellbeing of children strong focus in schools</li> <li>• Inclusive environments with positive relationships</li> <li>• More opportunities for play</li> <li>• Access to digital resources</li> <li>• Stronger transition between schools for children and their families</li> <li>• Greater empathy towards individual family's needs</li> <li>• Strong communication between parents and setting, both written and verbal</li> <li>• Recognising all children's strengths – not just academic achievement</li> </ul>   |

|  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
|  |   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support to deliver consistent approaches to learning between home and school</li> <li>• Building bridges between parent and school to form holistic community</li> <li>• Equity for all pupils – regardless of background</li> <li>• A curriculum to meet individual needs</li> <li>• Pupil voice genuinely a feature of schools and makes a positive difference to school life</li> <li>• Positive strategies to manage behaviour including restorative approaches</li> </ul>   |
| Governors  | Governor network session – 60+ Governors attended           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Having access to a range of internal and external evidence to verify and improve evaluation of the school's strengths and areas for development</li> <li>• Strong, productive relationships between the Governing Body and senior leaders to appropriately support and challenge</li> <li>• Highly effective induction and ongoing training for Governors to undertake role effectively</li> <li>• Support to prioritise training to effectively fulfil role</li> <li>• Support for all pupils, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds</li> <li>• All pupils to have access to digital resources</li> <li>• Governors to have excellent knowledge of ALN reform and Curriculum for Wales to undertake role effectively. This is not simply an introduction to the curriculum but a more robust understanding to allow appropriate challenge and support</li> <li>• Strong network of Governors including support through mentors and peer networks</li> </ul> <p>The following areas should be main areas for development in the strategy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Narrowing the attainment gap between FSM and non-FSM</li> <li>• Attendance</li> <li>• Safeguarding</li> <li>• Inclusion and Accessibility</li> <li>• Wellbeing</li> <li>• Digital Equality, IT</li> <li>• Reading and Writing skills</li> <li>• Support for parents to reinforce learning at home</li> </ul> |
| Cross-directorates (e.g. sport, digital, catering) | Meetings through the calendar year with managers and staff. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gross motor skills – system to track the progress of pupils</li> <li>• Physically active pupils, especially girls' participation in extracurricular sport</li> <li>• Effective Implementation of physical activity within the new curriculum</li> <li>• All pupils having access to swimming lessons</li> <li>• Pupils having access to cycling proficiency lessons</li> </ul>   |



|                            |   |  |
|----------------------------|---|--|
|                            |   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pupil/device ratios – all pupils have access to digital resources to make strong progress in their learning</li> <li>• Robust infrastructure to support the increased use of technology in school environments</li> <li>• Utilisation of IT investment on standards and provision</li> <li>• Utilisation of IT to enhance introduction of new curriculum</li> <li>• Utilisation of IT to support all learners, including ALN and MAT</li> <li>• Sustainable financial plans to ensure strong investment for the future</li> <li>• Revisit the approach to encourage pupils to eat healthier during the school day</li> </ul>  |
| Schools                    | Headteacher cluster meetings<br>Professional discussions meetings | <p>Staffing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resilient workforce</li> <li>• Focus on staff wellbeing</li> </ul> <p>Curriculum:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Successful implementation of Curriculum reform and ALN reform that has tangible benefits for all learners</li> <li>• Effective common approaches to assessment within and across clusters of schools</li> <li>• Strong peer networks built on collaboration, support and accountability (especially within clusters across primary and secondary)</li> <li>• Focus on basic skills affected by the covid pandemic (oracy, reading, writing, numeracy, digital)</li> <li>• Support for pupils attending Welsh medium schools where English spoken at home</li> </ul> <p>Wider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effective multi-agency working to improve outcomes for learners</li> <li>• Excellent pupil attendance</li> </ul> |
| Further education colleges | Stakeholder meeting   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continuing good relationships with schools over ALN learner transitions and improving the efficiency of the Multi Agency Transition Support Meetings</li> <li>• More comprehensive sharing of pupils' information prior to transition to ensure appropriate support is in place including contacts for agencies involved with particular learners</li> <li>• Identification of a single lead worker for these learners</li> <li>• Improved partnership and collaboration over transition events including co-ordinated calendars of activities</li> </ul>   |

|                                 |                                       |  |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|
|                                 |                                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthening relationships with schools post-Covid</li> <li>• Key challenges seen as: resilience, mental health &amp; wellbeing, social skills, financial pressures, exam skills, confidence</li> </ul>  |
| Careers Wales                   | Stakeholder meeting                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More consistent provision of pupil information especially predicted grades</li> <li>• Continued positive engagement with schools and the Youth Engagement and Progression Co-ordinator</li> <li>• Easier access to pupils and facilities for group work</li> <li>• Encourage schools to go for the new version of Careers Mark</li> <li>• Would like to see wider use of work experience</li> </ul>   |
| Local Authority education staff | Stakeholder meetings during 2021-2022 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support for disadvantaged and vulnerable groups</li> <li>• Commitment to basic skills</li> <li>• Focus on all aspects of AOLEs</li> <li>• Raise the profile of expressive arts within the new curriculum</li> </ul>   |
| Social Services                 | Stakeholder meeting April 2022        | <p>Partnership working with schools and Education:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Joint meetings to share knowledge and expertise</li> <li>• Build effective working relationships with schools including headteachers, ALNCo's, learning support assistants and the Designated Safeguarding lead person</li> <li>• Hold key meetings in term time so schools can be represented</li> <li>• Build excellent lines of communication</li> </ul> <p>Building confidence in operational practice with schools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Further develop safeguarding training so that staff in schools have confidence in their roles, especially the Designated Safeguarding Person;</li> <li>• Support schools in understanding the level of concern that requires reporting, the timeliness of referrals and how they manage disclosures.</li> </ul> <p>Other aspects of service improvement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve the effectiveness of discussions where panels are considering pupils with safeguarding issues</li> <li>• Minimise the time between exclusion and the provision of work to avoid disengagement from education</li> <li>• Improving the opportunities, especially in non-mainstream settings, for young people to be prepared for transition to adult life</li> <li>• Further improve the ability to make referrals if there are concerns for pupils not attending a school setting</li> </ul> |

|                           |                     |   |
|---------------------------|---------------------|---|
| EAS                       |                     | <p>Work with the Local Authority with the aim of transforming the educational outcomes and life chances for all learners across Caerphilly.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure successful learning experiences and high levels of wellbeing, particularly for those learners facing the greatest challenges;</li> <li>• Build effective networks of professionals across the five local authorities and beyond, and working together to improve leadership, teaching and learning and;</li> <li>• Attract and retain a team of outstanding people who embed our core values in their work and share a passion for excellence.</li> </ul> |
| Union representatives     | Stakeholder meeting | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support for the most vulnerable</li> <li>• Support for more able and talented learners</li> <li>• Understand the role that education plays in social mobility</li> <li>• Ensuring the children from disadvantaged backgrounds reach their full potential</li> </ul>  |
| Corporate Management Team |                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In support of the key priorities for improvement</li> <li>• Recognise the role that stakeholders play in the success of the strategy</li> <li>• Recognise the link between education and employability skills and the future success and wellbeing for all residents living in Caerphilly</li> <li>• Ensure ongoing funded projects are recognised in the strategy; e.g. 'Multiply' project to support adult numeracy.</li> </ul>  |
| Scrutiny                  |                     | To be received  |

## 8. Main Areas for development

Over the last twelve months, the Local Authority has undertaken a rigorous self-evaluation process to identify the main objectives for improvement over the next three years. We believe that prioritising the following areas will result in the Local Authority meeting its aspiration and ambition for all learners and satisfying the emerging themes from the stakeholder engagement sessions.

The objectives below will be reflected in the updated corporate and education plans, which will be used to hold the education directorate to account.

| Objective  | Rationale   |
|--|---|
| <p>Continue to provide robust approaches to <b>safeguarding of children and young people</b> based on emerging needs and demands as an outcome of the Covid-19 pandemic.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safeguarding continues to underpin all priorities to ensure there are robust systems and practice across the Education Directorate and schools.</li> <li>• There are several areas of focus post-pandemic, including continued advice and support to all education staff, increased training provision and auditing safeguarding arrangements across schools/settings.</li> <li>• Research shows that there was an increase in domestic abuse in households during the pandemic, resulting in increased operation encompass alerts to schools and a significantly higher number of referrals.</li> <li>• Physical interventions have increased in provisions that provide tailored support, which could indicate an impact on wellbeing needs of the more vulnerable learners following the pandemic.</li> </ul> |
| <p>Equip <b>leaders</b> with the skills to have a significant impact on progress, attainment and provision and wellbeing.</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inspirational leaders effectively fully achieve the vision of #TeamCaerphilly (based on collaboration, inclusivity, engagement, and support).</li> <li>• Leaders include (but not limited to) Governors, councillors, headteachers, senior leaders, teachers, youth workers, team leaders, learning support assistants, mid-day supervisors, setting based administrative staff, young people, pupils and education staff.</li> </ul>  |
| <p>Ensure the effective implementation of <b>Curriculum for Wales</b>.</p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New curriculum is statutory from September 2022 for many year groups.</li> <li>• Emerging evidence indicates that effective implementation of the revised curriculum improves standards and accelerates learner progress.</li> </ul>   |
| <p>Accelerate the <b>progress of vulnerable</b> learners.</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pandemic has had an impact on learners and the attainment of particular groups especially the most</li> </ul>  |

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| <p>In particular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Accelerate the progress of pupils who receive education outside a mainstream setting (<b>EOTAS/EHE</b>)</li> <li>- Reduce the number of young people post-16 without access to education, employment or training (<b>NEETS</b>).</li> <li>- Implementation of the <b>ALN Act</b>.</li> </ul> | <p>vulnerable and those from disadvantaged backgrounds.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognition that the pandemic has adversely affected vulnerable groups of pupils.</li> <li>• Learners accessing education outside mainstream school settings require the same levels of high-quality education and curriculum entitlement as their peers, particularly following the disruptive consequences of the Covid pandemic.</li> <li>• The impact of the pandemic means that the reduction in the number of NEETS over time (2.6% in 2016/17, falling to 2.2% in 2020/21) could reverse unless we ensure effective coordinated support between the education authority and partners.</li> </ul> |
| <p>Improve pupil <b>attendance</b> and reduce <b>exclusions</b>, with particular focus on vulnerable groups.</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The impact of covid-19 has had a detrimental effect on pupil attendance. Data are currently around 6% lower than prior to the pandemic.</li> <li>• Focus will be given to reducing persistent absenteeism among vulnerable groups and disadvantaged learners.</li> <li>• Overall, pupil exclusions across the Local Authority are too high. Challenges remain around the number of permanent exclusions.</li> <li>• Supporting the wellbeing of learners and families to reduce anxiety is a specific area of ongoing work.</li> </ul>  |
| <p>Further improve provision and support for young people (<b>post-16</b>)</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, there is a need to strengthen collaboration and practice across our post-16 partnerships to ensure learners make appropriate choices with helpful advice and support.</li> </ul>  |
| <p>Close the gap in attainment between those <b>learners from low-income backgrounds</b> and those who do not live in poverty.</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evidence from local, regional and national sources indicate a strong link between deprivation and under-achievement.</li> <li>• Lack of progress in closing this attainment gap over the last decade particularly at key stage 4.</li> </ul>  |
| <p>Improve <b>digital skills</b> for all learners.</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Curriculum for Wales – focus on learners being digitally competent is a central feature of Curriculum for Wales.</li> <li>• Ensure all schools have the training and tools available to best prepare their learners for life inside and outside the classroom.</li> <li>• Ensure that Edtech funding provides values for money.</li> <li>• Work with families to support vulnerable learners where there is a lack of funding in the home for Wi-Fi</li> </ul>  |

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|   | /data or a lack of technical expertise to support their children.   |
| Reach the target of 26% of year 1 pupils in <b>Welsh medium</b> by 2031   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expectation that there is an increase in the numbers of nursery and reception pupils receiving their education through the medium of Welsh.</li> <li>• Children require continued support to improve their Welsh language skills when transferring from one stage of their statutory education to another.</li> <li>• More opportunities for learners to use Welsh in different contexts in school.</li> <li>• There is recognition of the need to provide effective provision of Welsh-medium education for pupils with additional learning needs (ALN).</li> <li>• Increase the number of teaching staff able to teach Welsh (as a subject) and teach through the medium of Welsh.</li> </ul>  |
| Support pupil wellbeing by improving attitudes to <b>healthy food choices and active fitness</b>  | <p>Local Authority School Health Research Network data (2022) has identified the following concerns:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The number of pupils consuming high sugary/energy drinks per day.</li> <li>• Pupils' low consumption of drinking water during the school day.</li> <li>• Less than expected number of pupils eating 5 fruit or vegetables a day.</li> <li>• Increased number of pupils being inactive for 7+ hours a day.</li> </ul>  |
| Ensure the most vulnerable families including those in <b>poverty</b> , can access support to give their child the <b>best start in life</b> .  | <p>Increase the access to support by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increasing the reach of Flying Start programme through phase 1 expansion from Sept 2022.</li> <li>• Increasing universal part time funded 2year old childcare placements in future phases.</li> <li>• Increase the Childcare Offer for students in HE/FE from Sept 2022.</li> <li>• Increase take-up across the borough to early language support, child development support and family support by maximising funding streams.</li> <li>• Increase accessibility of information available through the Early Years and Childcare website and the Dewis database.</li> </ul> <p>A revised curriculum for non-maintained settings must be effectively implemented to meet the needs of all children accessing this provision.</p> |
| Through the Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme ensure that the County Borough provides sufficient <b>school places</b> to meet demand as well as upgrading/replacing school | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Within school catchment areas, meet the expectations of parents and governors for school places in all Welsh and English maintained settings across the County Borough.</li> <li>• CCBC needs to reduce surplus capacity in English-medium schools whilst at the same time increasing</li> </ul>   |

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| <p>accommodation, as appropriate, so that <b>schools are fit for purpose in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.</b></p> | <p>capacity in Welsh-medium schools in line with the WESP.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planned increases in specialist places for our most vulnerable learners to meet the continuing rise in demand.</li> <li>• The programme needs to continue to renew or replace, where appropriate, existing school building stock with fit for purpose 21<sup>st</sup> century accommodation thus contributing to the transformation of learning environments alongside the introduction of the new national curriculum in Wales.</li> </ul> |
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## 9. Learner Journey – from 0 to 25

The new Curriculum for Wales sets out to establish a new kind of journey for children, pupils and young people whereby they can develop a deeper knowledge of the learning continuum and the range of skills needed for their journey 3 to 16 and then beyond. At the heart of this journey is the development of the Four Purposes whereby learners are supported to become:

- ambitious, capable learners, ready to learn throughout their lives
- enterprising, creative contributors, ready to play a full part in life and work
- ethical, informed citizens of Wales and the world
- healthy, confident individuals, ready to lead fulfilling lives as valued members of society

The journey will be the progression made by each learner aged 3-16, framed by the 27 'What Matters' statements. These are developed within the context of the six areas of learning experience. The sections that follow set out how those learner journeys will be developed in practice.

An important element in the journey will be to ensure there are consistent and effective transition processes between each phase providing high quality experiences for learners. Smooth and well-informed transitions, under-pinned by strong partnership work between phases, will help learners towards achieving ambitious targets for each stage of their development. This may also require putting in additional support or more extended preparation to meet the needs of individual or groups of learners.

Below is the link to the Curriculum for Wales guidance:

[Introduction - Hwb \(gov.wales\)](#)

## 9.1. Early Years

In Caerphilly borough we want every child to have a good start to their learner journey regardless of where they live. We want children to be happy, healthy, and resilient which includes having healthy secure relationships with consistent caring adults, who can support their child's development opportunities, in a safe enriching home environment.

Sometimes adults need support to give their child a good start. The early years team will be there with the family when needed on their journey from the antenatal period throughout their early years and through key transition points. Early years will promote accessible information online and through the multiagency team who will offer the right support at the right time by the right person for the family especially for those most vulnerable families including those living in poverty and digitally excluded. Support may be virtual, in person in the community or in the home depending on the needs of the family.

The Early Years team includes everyone working with families from antenatal to 7 years, for example, midwifery, health visiting, school nursing, speech and language as well as other health specialists, childcare, schools, family support and early intervention teams. The whole workforce will need coordinated cross-agency regional continuing professional development opportunities to ensure they are skilled to meet the needs of the whole family through a What Matters approach to develop inclusive provision. This will include using the specialists in early years to upskill the rest of the team.

Our purpose is to ensure the most vulnerable families, including those in poverty, can access support to give their child the best start to their early years.

We will increase the access to support by:

- Increase the reach of the Flying Start programme through phase 1 expansion from Sept 2022.
- Increase access to the universal part time funded 2year old childcare placements in future phases of expansion, including Welsh medium, throughout the lifetime of this Strategy and as Welsh Government funding expands.
- Increase access to the Childcare Offer for students in HE/FE from Sept 2022.
- Increase access across the borough to early language support, child development support and family support by maximising funding streams.
- Increase accessibility and breadth of information available through the Early Years and Childcare website and the Dewis database.

[Home - Caerphilly Early Years Caerphilly Early Years](#) / [Hafan - Blynyddoedd Cynnar Caerffili Blynyddoedd Cynnar Caerffili](#)



*'every child should have access to a good, positive education experience that is varied, holistic and can take account of individuals views and interests' – parent*

## **9.2. Learner Journey – Schools and other education settings**

Three-year milestones have been devised to support schools to self-evaluate their development journey and implementation of the new curriculum. These will enable schools to embrace the four purposes at the heart of curriculum reform.

The formation of this self-evaluation framework was created in consultation and collaboration with school improvement partners (EAS) and then senior leaders across Caerphilly from several settings. The principals within this framework can also be used across other educational settings.

School senior leaders can use the document to track their progress towards the indicators. As mentioned previously, self-evaluation is most effective when it is continuous and aligned with processes for improvement, uses evidence-based practice to innovate and improve, and shares effective practice within and between schools and other settings.

The indicators were informed by current Welsh Government guidance.

[School improvement guidance: framework for evaluation, improvement and accountability - Hwb \(gov.wales\)](#)

[Embedding a whole school approach to emotional and mental wellbeing](#)

## Three Year Milestones - School Development Journey

### 1. Leadership

|   | Developing  | Creating  | Establishing  | Embedded  | Modelled  |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| <b>Establish a school vision which incorporates Curriculum for Wales.</b>   | Principles for a school vision are shared with stakeholders and align to LA and regional Frameworks.                    | Create a shared vision from all stakeholder feedback.   | The school and wider community adopts the vision through the day to day running of the school and whole school planning and policies. | The school and wider community adopts the vision through the day to day running of the school and whole school planning and policies. | Schools can reference a range of examples of how the stated vision has impacted on stakeholders and the wider community.        |
| <b>School staffing structure effectively supports Curriculum for Wales.</b> | Schools identify a management, teaching and support staff structure in place to meet the needs of Curriculum for Wales. | Where relevant, with the Governing Body share potential developments to staffing models.  | Implement what is fit for purpose to meet the needs of the learner, curriculum and offers value for money.                            | Implement what is fit for purpose to meet the needs of the learner, curriculum and offers value for money.                            | Schools can reference a range of examples of how the Curriculum for Wales has impacted on stakeholders and the wider community. |
| <b>School Development Plan (SDP)</b>  | The school has a clear self-evaluation (SER) and SDP approach which identifies school, local and national priorities.   | The school works with cluster and external partners to develop the National Evaluation Improvement Resource (NEIR) approach to self-evaluation. In particular the use of first-hand evidence. | The SDP specifically addresses the short- and long-term school improvement priorities.  | The SDP specifically addresses the short- and long-term school improvement priorities.  | Schools can reference a range of examples of how the SDP has impacted on stakeholders and the wider community.                  |

|   |  |   |  |  |   |
|---|--|---|--|--|---|
| <b>Strong strategic leadership by Governors</b> | Governors have appropriate support, mandatory training and wider training to fulfil their role as an effective governor. | Governors have a meaningful role in developing the school vision, committees, policies and school development planning. | Governors (with the Headteacher) formally review performance management (PM), Staffing, Curriculum, provision and building/ resources.                       | Governors (with the Headteacher) formally review PM, Staffing, Curriculum, provision and building/ resources.  | Schools can reference a range of examples of how Governance has impacted on stakeholders and the wider community. |
| <b>Transition</b>                               | Child Looked After (CLA) and Cluster plan is submitted to the EAS annually.  | Ensure the Transition Plan reflects all school needs, LA and national priorities and is shared with stakeholders.       | There is a progressive development towards enhanced Curriculum for Wales planning and delivery (Reception – Year 8) which broadly aligns across the cluster. | There is a progressive development towards enhanced Curriculum for Wales planning and delivery (Reception – Year 8) which broadly aligns across the cluster. | Schools can reference a range of examples of how Transition has impacted on stakeholders and the wider community. |

## 2. Provision/pedagogy

|   | <b>Developing</b>   | <b>Creating</b>   | <b>Establishing</b>   | <b>Embedded</b>  | <b>Modelled</b>  |
|---|---|---|---|--|--|
| <b>Improve the provision for Areas of Learning Experiences and skills including 1.Specialist Teaching</b> | Audit of staff skills and qualifications.<br><br>Audit of facilities and resources (fit for purpose). | Professional learning plans identify training needs for staff to meet curriculum needs and training events. | Nearly all staff are trained to provide high quality teaching and learning to meet the needs of the curriculum. | Resources and buildings are fit for purpose and the infrastructure plan is monitored annually. | Schools can reference a range of examples of how provision development has impacted on stakeholders and the wider community. |

|   |  |   |   |   |  |
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| <b>2.Learning Environment</b>   |  |   |   |   |  |
| <b>The curriculum is appropriate for learners meeting their needs with the Curriculum for Wales and GCSE specifications</b> | Curriculum Audit of the What Matters Statements, Learning descriptors and progress steps from R – Y11 for all AoLEs along with the 4 purposes. | There is a progressive development towards enhanced C4W planning and delivery demonstrated through curriculum planning and first-hand evidence. | School has a strategic approach to managing the integration of AoLE Principles of Progression, cross-cutting themes and authentic learning. | The school self-evaluates the quality of curriculum and implements refinements.     | Schools can reference a range of examples of how provision development has impacted on stakeholders and the wider community.   |
| <b>Robust tracking of progression for all learners for all AoLEs/ Subjects.</b>   | The school has a clearly defined assessment policy.  | The school develops systems to collect Quality Assurance (QA) for teacher assessment information.   | The school uses tracking systems to identify underachieving learners and implement interventions.   | Implement moderation activities across clusters/ regions.                           | Schools can reference a range of examples of how assessment and tracking has impacted on stakeholders and the wider community. |
| <b>The school effectively delivers the skills framework across the school.</b>  | Stakeholders have a clear understanding of the skill framework (Literacy, Numeracy, DCF & Welsh)   | Teaching and learning policy has a specific - skills section.   | Schools implement whole school strategies, including any external resources.  | The planned delivery of skills and progress is recorded (tracked) for all learners. | Schools can reference a range of examples of how skills have impacted on stakeholders and the wider community.                 |

### 3. Professional Learning

|   | Developing  | Creating  | Establishing   | Embedded   | Modelled   |
|---|---|---|--|--|--|
| <b>The school creates a high-quality workforce (teaching, non-teaching and leadership) to meet the needs of the National Mission 2022 and beyond.</b> | <p>School has a strategic approach to professional learning on key areas i.e.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Teaching and Learning (Recognised monitoring approaches)</li> <li>2. Leadership/ National Mission</li> <li>3. Wellbeing (staff and students)</li> </ol> | Professional learning plans identify training needs for staff to meet curriculum needs and training events. | The professional learning experience is evaluated (from the plan) against impact in the class/ area of development to inform current and future whole school planning. | The professional learning experience is evaluated (from the plan) against impact in the class/ area of development to inform current and future whole school planning. | Schools can reference a range of examples of how Professional Learning has impacted on stakeholders and the wider community. |

### 4. Quality of Teaching

|                                | Developing   | Creating  | Establishing  | Embedded  | Modelled   |
|--------------------------------|--|---|---|---|--|
| <b>Teaching &amp; Learning</b> | <p>The school has revised the 2022 teaching and learning strategy/policy which is understood by all stakeholders, e.g. Use of 12 Pedagogical Principles.</p> | The Professional Learning (PL) plan identifies and supports the development of teaching and learning. | There is an effective QA cycle which monitors the quality of teaching and learning. | Leaders / strong innovative practitioners support other colleagues (in school and regionally) in need of further support. | Schools can demonstrate how the quality of teaching and learning has impacted on learners. |

### 5. Wellbeing

|   | <b>Developing</b>  | <b>Creating</b>   | <b>Establishing</b>   | <b>Embedded</b>   | <b>Modelled</b>   |
|---|--|---|---|---|---|
| <b>Attendance</b>                           | School has a robust attendance policy that aligns to LA (Education Welfare Service) and WG statutory guidance. This is communicated clearly with all stakeholders.   | The school tracks learner attendance and intervenes at agreed stages (Policy).  | The school develops a wider range of support and challenge strategies.  | The school develops a wider range of support and challenge strategies.  | Schools can reference a range of examples of how the management of attendance has improved learner attendance at an individual and whole school level.  |
| <b>Tracking of Wellbeing and Provisions</b> | <p>The school has a scoping approach to identify those in need of wellbeing support and required initiatives and provision</p> <p>Student Voice/ Surveys/Focus groups</p> <p>The school is also utilising the WG Whole-School Approach (WSA) to Wellbeing Self-Evaluation Tool to identify wellbeing priorities and appropriate provision to address these</p> | The school uses wellbeing data and other sources (e.g., Spiral of Inquiry approach and WG WSA Self-Evaluation Tool) to create a school action plan. | The learners' wellbeing needs are identified, appropriate provision/intervention is put in place (as identified from the 'Supporting Wellbeing and Positive Relationships Toolkit' in the Inclusion Compendium / advice from the Educational Psychology Service (EPS)) and learner outcomes are monitored against intervention. | The learners' wellbeing needs are identified, appropriate provision/intervention is put in place (as identified from the 'Supporting Wellbeing and Positive Relationships Toolkit' in the Inclusion Compendium / advice from the Educational Psychology Service (EPS)) and learner outcomes are monitored against intervention. | <p>Schools can reference how the action plan (and for example, spiral of inquiry) has impacted on improving learner wellbeing.</p> <p>Schools can reference through, for example, their Spiral of Inquiry(s) and WSA to Wellbeing Self-Evaluation Tool how they have identified appropriate initiatives and implemented these to impact on the wellbeing of key stakeholders and the wider community.</p> |
| <b>Staff Wellbeing</b>                      | The senior leadership team is aware of the challenges facing staff and implements  | The school develops scoping strategies, such as using the NEIR and WSA to Wellbeing Self-evaluation Tool and  | The school implements strategies within Teacher/ LSA conditions to support staff wellbeing  | The school implements strategies within Teacher/ LSA conditions to support staff wellbeing  | Schools effectively manages Professional Standards and WG Workload Charter to create the best possible  |

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|  | <p>approaches to support the workforce.</p> <p>The school through consultation with the EPS can identify and source (from the EPS) appropriate wellbeing support for staff</p> | <p>developing working groups.</p> | <p>The school is accessing available support from the EPS (e.g., staff wellbeing training, 6-week staff wellbeing programme, half-termly supervision groups) and signposts staff to external agency support (e.g., Care First - Employee Assistance Programme; Education Support)</p> | <p>The school is accessing available support from the EPS (e.g., staff wellbeing training, 6-week staff wellbeing programme, half-termly supervision groups) and signposts staff to external agency support (e.g., Care First - Employee Assistance Programme; Education Support)</p> | <p>education environment for our learners</p> <p>Schools can reference the staff wellbeing support in place in their WSA to Wellbeing Self-evaluation Tool</p> |
|--|--|-----------------------------------|---|---|--|

### **9.3. Support for young people in post-16 education**

The learner journey, in preparation for post-16, starts with early exposure to impartial advice and guidance about the wide range of possibilities for future progression. This, in turn, will support good decision making by our learners so that they can make a successful and sustained transition at age 16 because they had been able to choose the progression pathway that was right for the individual.

In following the refreshed guidance on Careers and Work-related Education (CWRE) as a cross-curricular theme in the new national curriculum, learners will be exposed to careers guidance in varied forms from 3 to 16 and beyond. All our subject staff, primary and secondary, will need to be capable of including aspects of CWRE in their programmes of learning.

In CCBC's post-16 provision, the sixth-form partnerships will be underpinned by agreements set out in joint memoranda of understanding including:

- The principles of strong partnership working;
- The breadth of the curriculum choice;
- The commitment to and monitoring of the quality of provision alongside mechanisms for improvement;
- The co-ordination of activities and processes across the partnerships that will provide an equity of experience to our learners across the Local Authority.

We will work with our wider partners, including the colleges and work-based training providers, to ensure that there are strong vocational routes available to our learners that are matched to their desires and aspirations as well as the employer needs across our Cardiff City Region.

To support some of the most vulnerable learners who want to progress to college a post-16 transition protocol has been developed. This aims to ensure that vulnerable learners (e.g., those with ALN, at risk of becoming NEET, CLA, or with mental health needs) are supported to have an enhanced transition to college. Enhanced transition includes enhanced careers input in year 10, support with the college application, visits to post-16 destinations, a Multi-Agency Transition Meeting (MATSM) in which college staff are present and, if required a person-centred planning meeting. The MATSM and PCP meetings ensure that key information is shared to enable college staff to gain a good understanding of pupil needs so that the college setting can put the appropriate support in place to meet those needs.



Support will continue to be provided by the Youth Service, Inspire to Achieve, Inspire to Work, Communities and Careers Wales to help learners make the right choices and to provide that support, if and when learners need to switch pathways, all the way from 16 to 25.

**Therefore, our aims for post-16 are:**

- Support the continued development of sixth-form partnerships and collaboration that deliver a breadth of curriculum choice for our learners and high-quality provision.
- Work with our wider partners including the colleges and work-based training providers to ensure that we have vocational progression pathways where our learners can develop the skills they need for employment in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

To support learners on their journey, we have developed the 'Caerphilly Pathways' website providing comprehensive advice, guidance and support for all aspects of available post-16 education, apprenticeships and training. The website can be accessed below:

[Welcome to Caerphilly Pathways](#)

[Croeso i Lwybrau Caerffili \(caerphillypathways.co.uk\)](http://caerphillypathways.co.uk)

#### **9.4. The Contribution of Caerphilly Youth Service**

Caerphilly Youth Service's vision is for young people to have enjoyable experiences, feel valued and listened to, and to learn, achieve and aspire to do well now and in the future. To realise this, the following principles are applied:

- Participation - making young people feel valued and listened to, and for them to learn to achieve
- Informal educational - providing experiences that enhance young people's personal development
- Key transition support, including support activity that reduces the likelihood of NEET status
- The development of intellectual, practical and creative skills
- Understanding that individual young people have very different life experiences and chances
- Prevention of exclusion/promotion of inclusion (community/school/society)

## **Key Youth Service planning**

- Service restructuring to provide more responsive and flexible forms of youth work – all in the context of post- Covid reignition and recovery
- Whole service focus on the reduction of NEETS
- Greater harmonisation of educational delivery with secondary schools (specific reference to wellbeing curriculum strand)
- More effective combination of universal access youth work for 11–25-year-olds and targeted, specific project work with young people

Through the key Youth Service curriculum areas (life skills, recreation, health and wellbeing, citizenship and creativity), youth workers engage and educate young people in all aspects of their lives. Provision is delivered through a wide variety of methods such as detached and outreach, premises-based and digital work. This will enable young people to engage in their education by means that best suit their individual circumstances.

It is important that school-based staff have a good understanding of the breadth of the youth work offer. Equally important is that youth workers become familiar with the organisation of schools and how best to complement the work of teaching staff in delivering the new curriculum.

The priorities of the youth service are to:

- Secure the engagement of learners through a range of youth work methodology that is best suited to their needs and interests.
- Provide opportunities for learners to achieve formal accreditation through voluntary participation in programmes of learning.
- Provide experiences and opportunities for learners to achieve non-formal accreditation.
- Support learners to develop soft skills through a variety of enriching and beneficial experiences and opportunities.

### **9.5. The role of the Education Achievement Service (EAS) in supporting the learner journey**

The EAS delivers, through an agreed Business Plan, a wide range of school improvement services to all schools (all key stages, including all through schools and special schools), pupil referral units and funded non-maintained nursery settings on behalf of Caerphilly LA.

This plan supports the role local authorities have in delivering their statutory function, addressing their individual improvement priorities and promoting improved pupil outcomes. This Business Plan spans a three-year period and will be subject to an annual review and updates to the annual programme.

The delivery model for the Business Plan is on a regional basis, the individual requirements and trends across Caerphilly will continue to be met through bespoke work with each school and alongside the Local Authority.

All Caerphilly schools will continue to be provided with a support package that complements the priorities identified within their own School Development Plans (outlined below):



### **Universal Support:**

All schools will receive a universal offer of a set number of days to work with their School Improvement Partner (SIP). This will include professional dialogue to agree support and improvement priorities, plus allow additional days for activities that supports self-evaluation. In addition, schools have access to a wide range of professional learning opportunities and professional networks across a range of areas including school leadership, support for teaching and learning and support for wellbeing.

### **Targeted Support:**

In addition to the universal support, schools can access a range of targeted support for a specific school improvement activity. This could include:

- additional School Improvement Partner allocation;
- peer/school-to-school working on an agreed priority e.g. improving teaching;

- advisory support for subjects and/or areas of learning (AoLE);
- shorter term activity e.g. INSET delivery;
- focused Learning Network School subject /AoLE work brokered by the SIP or subject adviser.

### **Bespoke/specialist support:**

Bespoke support days will be negotiated as part of the professional discussion and will be differentiated according to need. This support will usually be over a sustained period of time and will be gradually tapered off when impact is noted and improvement is embedding. This can include intensive, holistic and ongoing work with a focus on leadership and improving the quality of teaching and learning.

### **9.6 Learning throughout life**

The first of the Four Purposes that underpin the new Curriculum for Wales states that learners are supported to become *“ambitious, capable learners, ready to learn throughout their lives”*

In the preceding sections the part played by Early Years, schools, post-16, the Youth Service and EAS have been laid out. But, as Welsh Government has set out, learning is not intended to stop at 16, 18 or 25 but should continue throughout life.

CCBC supports this continuation of the learning journey throughout its residents' lives.

The Caerphilly Adult Community Learning Service (CACLS) has a key role in supporting the learning journey. It meets the needs of individuals and communities through its own services and by working with a range of partners to provide both accredited and non-accredited courses. The offer has an extensive range of provision covering literacy, numeracy, digital literacy, Essential Skills, ESOL, Independent Living Skills and short vocational courses. The CACLS operates out of many different settings right across the County Borough and engages with hundreds of adults every year with particular efforts to work with those adults that are traditionally hard to reach.

The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on CCBC's communities has meant a break or cessation of learning activity for many adults. CACLS is making use of additional Welsh Government funding, through taster and hook activities, to re-engage adults in their learning journey following this disruption.

Over the next three years, CACLS will also be taking advantage of the new Multiply programme and funding. Working with a range of partners across the region, this programme will provide free courses designed to help transform the lives of adults across the County Borough by improving their functional numeracy skills through free personal tutoring, digital training, and flexible courses. These will be delivered in a variety of settings from community facilities to online courses.

The Caerphilly Library Service (CLS) also plays a vital role in individuals' learning journeys supporting residents from "the cradle to the grave". Through its holistic and modern library service, CLS aspires to enhance residents' health and well-being, productivity and economic activity, learning, skills and social interaction.

CCBC libraries are trusted, safe, welcoming and inclusive spaces designed to encourage and promote the enjoyment of reading, learning, creativity, culture, imagination and play.

Every effort is made to:

- provide up to date information and guidance;
- provide children and young people with an engaging and relevant offer;
- ensure provision continues to meet and support both current and future needs;
- have a library stock and resources that are available for loan in support of the new Curriculum for Wales.

CSL libraries embrace technology and digital formats, supporting greater inclusivity and helping to bridge the digital divide.

CLS engages with a number of bilingual activities and initiatives in to bring enjoyment to the reading process and support language development for all ages.

The Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme is a long-term capital investment programme to improve the quality of school buildings. The detail of CCBC's programme is set out in section 10.7 of this Education Strategy. Investment Objective 2 of the programme places emphasis on ensuring the use of facilities is maximized, a key priority being community use. In Caerphilly this may involve the use of sports or leisure facilities or hosting adult and community learning.

## 10. Key strategies that support the realisation of the Education Strategy

Caerphilly County Borough Council's Education Strategy does not exist in isolation. It is shaped and supported by a range of internal strategies that complements and supports the ambition contained in this strategy. These form a complex network of interwoven strands and relationships that unify to achieve the main areas for development.

### 10.1. Strategy: Inclusion and wellbeing

Education in Caerphilly is based on an inclusive ethos emphasising the right of everyone to be treated fairly, regardless of protected characteristic. This is underpinned by the principles of ensuring that all learners have a sense of belonging and will be supported to participate and achieve to the best of their ability.

The Council recognises that health and wellbeing are essential agents for learning and therefore the focus is on ensuring that this is placed at the centre of developments to support children, families, communities and education providers.

Organisational and cultural change is supported by high quality leadership and effective management which promotes inclusive policies and practice. A drive to improve outcomes for children and young people provides opportunities and challenges and the Inclusion Compendium demonstrates the Local Authority's approach to these.

#### Compendium

The Local Authority's Inclusion compendium provides a comprehensive suite of documents underpinned by the Inclusion Strategy. The strategy is aligned with the strategic direction of the Education Directorate and other linked strategies and policies, for example the authority's NEET strategy.



### **Priorities for the inclusion team:**

The focus across the Inclusion teams is on ensuring the LA is compliant with statutory responsibilities (Implementing the ALN Act), and that children's wellbeing is central to everything we do. We are committed to working in partnership with schools, families and outside agencies (e.g. health and social care) to support vulnerable children and families and those who are at risk of becoming disengaged to ensure that children's additional learning needs are well understood, positive and supportive relationships are developed and that children have the right additional learning provision in place to enable them to make progress with their learning and development.

The Education Other Than at School (EOTAS) approach supports the development of a portfolio provision, with clear leadership to ensure accountability and performance, which will support the successful implementation of the ALN Act and 'Curriculum for Wales' which aims to ensure that all learners make progress.

*'Children should always be proud of what they do and what they achieve no matter age or ability'. Parent*

### **10.2. Strategy: Support for pupils at risk of 'Not in Education, Employment or Training' (NEET)**

In Caerphilly, the authority's NEETs reduction arrangements are coordinated by the Youth Engagement and Progression Framework (YEPF), embedded in the Youth Service but working in partnership with all educators and other agencies that have a positive influence on learners' lives. The related NEET strategy, developed in collaboration with all stakeholders, promotes a number of actions in relation to its main priorities – the YEPF develops and reviews the associated actions.

The current priorities are detailed below:

- Identify young people most at risk of disengagement
- Better brokerage and coordination of support
- Stronger tracking and transition of young people through the system
- Ensure provision meets the needs of young people
- Strengthen employability services and opportunities for employment
- Greater accountability for better outcomes for young people

### **10.3. Strategy: Improving Pupil Attendance**

Prior to the pandemic, the Education Welfare Service (EWS) developed a range of strategies to support and improve attendance across the Local Authority. As a result, attendance in primary schools improved from 94.5% in 17/18 to 94.7% in 18/19, whilst attendance in secondary schools improved even further, from 93.4% in 17/18, to 94.0% in 18/19. The rates of persistent absenteeism had also dropped by 1.2% over three years in secondary schools, from 5.4 % to 4.2% and are now in line with the Wales average. In primary, however, figures rose slightly by 0.2% over the three years from 1.6% to 1.8%.

The improvement at secondary in 17/18 saw a rise in the All-Wales attendance rankings from 21<sup>st</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup>. The following year saw a further rise to joint 7<sup>th</sup> attendance data nationally. Although there have been no statutory returns relating to attendance since the pandemic started, unverified data collections suggest that attendance has declined by 4+% in primary schools, and by 8+% in secondary schools. National figures report similar declines.

Moving forward, the Education Welfare Service will aim to support schools to ensure that school attendance is a main area for development in all schools. Managing attendance is a task that requires commitment from all staff employed within the school/EOTAS provision, together with governors, parents and carers, pupils and the community in which the school is located.

Focus will be given to disadvantaged, vulnerable learners and pupils who are absent for long periods of time, which will be informed through regular data collections. The Local Authority will support schools in re-establishing policies and procedures in managing attendance, as well as carrying out focused casework with individual families and pupils.

*'If every child was treated as an individual, they would realise that one size does not fits all, please see them as individuals and not a conveyor belt'. Parent*

### **10.4. Strategy: More Able and Talented (MAT)**

All young people have the potential to be more able and /or talented, and therefore, everyone should have access to opportunities that can support this vision. A key focus is to meet the needs of children who challenge, surprise and make demands on our knowledge, expertise and resources. For the staff in schools and across the Local Authority, the continuing critical task is to identify our MAT children and set in place support that helps them maximise their potential.



CCBC will continue to support schools to identify MAT learners, help them understand their needs and share knowledge of the strategies and resources that will help these children realise their potential. The active engagement of learners in this process along with their parents/carers and a wide range of external agencies will all be critical in helping MAT learners to succeed.

Further, CCBC will also provide support for the development of school-based MAT policies. Schools will be encouraged to take advantage of a wide range of opportunities, resources, strategies and advice through engaging with EAS, the Seren networks and a range of agencies outside school. CCBC will provide professional development opportunities for school staff to facilitate schools' actions in these areas.

CCBC will share its knowledge of resources and best practice through a range of networks. In addition, partnership projects will be developed through the Local Authority's Arts, Music and Sports Development teams supported by external partners such as UWIC and ACCAC.

The implementation and the success of the County's MAT policy will be monitored and evaluated using data on attainment and feedback from key stakeholders. This will include a reflection on the quality and impact of professional development, references to MAT in school annual reviews and observations from external bodies such as Estyn.

### **10.5. Strategy: Pupils' Acquisition of Digital Skills**

Our vision is to ensure that all our schools have the training and tools available to best prepare their learners to become digitally competent within their educational setting and outside of the classroom. In Caerphilly we believe we have a moral imperative to continually strive to develop and enhance digital skills so we can better equip our learners of their future lives.

To achieve this vision in schools we must:

- provide educators with access to a range of career-long professional learning opportunities which will allow them to make the most of effective use of digital technology;
- support schools with the purchase of cost-effective ICT equipment, with a suitable lifespan, through the EdTech programme. The aim is to enhance digital teaching and learning through the development and delivery of the new curriculum
- provide timely support to ensure the effective use of equipment in schools;
- provide web filtering controls to ensure users are safe online.

## The main principles:

| <b>Leadership</b>   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <p>Empower leaders to drive innovation and invest in digital technologies.</p> <p>Provide access to a range of career-long professional learning opportunities for educational leaders, allowing them to make informed decisions about the best use of digital technology to enrich education and promote digital skills development.</p> <p>Actively share knowledge and examples of how digital technology can enrich education and facilitate digital skills development across education settings</p>   |   |   |
| <b>High quality learning</b>  | <b>Effective and efficient infrastructure</b>   | <b>High quality IT support</b>  |
| <p>Delivering continuity and stability of the learning experience, facilitating student progress and success, both at home and in the classroom.</p> <p>High levels of student engagement, with students empowered to take ownership and control of their learning.</p> <p>Ongoing tracking of student experience, with both teachers and students using this information to evaluate outcomes and inform strategies for success.</p> <p>Inclusion and equity for all learners. The unique flexibility offered by digital technology allows educators to tailor their approaches to best suit individual learners.</p> <p>Ensuring learners have the appropriate skills to access appropriate content but remain safe online.</p> <p>Developing creativity using digital resources.</p> | <p>An effective network infrastructure that facilitates and underpins teaching and learning across the Local Authority.</p> <p>Appropriate connectivity with adequate bandwidth, with the ability to scale when digital needs change.</p> <p>Adherence to web filtering standards</p> <p>Effective access to HWB and all other Cloud based teaching and learning resources.</p> <p>Consideration of the home environment and access to data / Wi-Fi especially with the cost-of-living considerations and those more vulnerable learners living in poverty.</p> | <p>Intelligent client function acting as the conduit between Digital Services and Schools ensuring Welsh Government's Education Digital Standards are being achieved.</p> <p>Dedicated support team providing timely remote and onsite support to ensure essential equipment is always available.</p> <p>Provide appropriate web filtering controls to ensure the Internet Users are safe online.</p> <p>Assist schools to achieve efficiency savings without affecting learner outcomes by using the Hwb/EdTech programme to ensure that staff and learners have equality of access to fit for purpose ICT equipment, that provides a standardised and consistent experience across all schools.</p> |
| <b>Digital competence in the classroom</b>  | <b>Migration to the HWB digital platform</b>  | <b>Safeguarding of online services and school data</b>  |
| <p>Enabling teachers and learners to become efficient digital skills practitioners.</p> <p>Resourcing and supporting Digital Schools through the efficient deployment of devices and technologies.</p>  | <p>The Welsh Government's cloud-based services within the HWB digital learning platform will support future learning developments in the classroom and home.</p> <p>Secure storage of school data.</p> <p>Enable the decommissioning of physical infrastructure in the future.</p> <p>The HWB platforms and resources support a national approach to planning and delivery.</p>   | <p>Keeping learners and staff safe online</p> <p>Ensuring schools' data, systems and services are secure.</p> <p>Protecting the integrity of devices and applications.</p> <p>Established cyber defences across school hardware including on school owned devices.</p> <p>Maintained security configuration for all devices.</p>  |

## **10.6. Strategy: Welsh in Education Strategic Plan 2022-2032**

The Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) outlines how we intend to work with the Welsh Government and a wide range of stakeholders to work towards delivering the Cymraeg 2050 ambition of 1 million Welsh speakers as well as the Programme for Government 2021-2026. The WESP will support our aspirations for the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act for a vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language regardless of socio demographic context. This plan is intrinsically linked to delivering our integrated targets, using the sustainable development principles, across the Caerphilly County Borough including Childcare Sufficiency Assessment plan 2022-2027, the Welsh Language Strategy 2022-2027 and our Caerphilly Corporate Plan 2018-2023 especially Objective 1 Improve Education Opportunities for All and the Strategic Equality Plan 2020-2024 Objective 5 – Welsh Language. The plan demonstrates an importance of improving standards and enabling positive transition throughout education to positive education, training, and employment opportunities, as well as strong connections to A More Equal Caerphilly, A More Prosperous Caerphilly as well as A Caerphilly of Vibrant Culture and Thriving Welsh Language.

The main overarching aim of the plan is to increase the number of Welsh language speakers and the opportunities to use Welsh in our communities. Therefore, we have a minimum target of 26% for learners in year 1 by 2032 which has been set by Welsh Government in order to meet the national 1 million Welsh speakers by 2050 target.

The seven outcome areas for the WESP each have high level targets sitting underneath them with a more detailed annual plan towards meeting the milestones towards 2032.

- Outcome 1: More nursery children / 3year olds receive their education through the medium of Welsh
- Outcome 2: More reception class children / 5year olds receive their education through the medium of Welsh
- Outcome 3: More children continue to improve their Welsh language skills when transferring from one stage of their statutory education to another
- Outcome 4: More learners study for their assessed qualifications in Welsh (as a subject) and subjects through the medium of Welsh
- Outcome 5: More opportunities for learners to use Welsh in different contexts in school
- Outcome 6: An increase in Welsh medium education provision for learners with additional learning needs (in accordance with the duties determined by the ALN Act)

- Outcome 7: Increase the number of teaching staff to be able to teach Welsh (as a subject) and teach through the medium of Welsh

Generally, there will be a need to expand our Welsh medium provision across all phases, childcare, primary and secondary to meet this target, and we need to get our starting point right in the early years to stimulate Welsh language development. There will also be the need to expand our Welsh speaking workforce to deliver the provision needed. In addition, there are a substantial number of other actions highlighted at the end of each of the seven outcome areas of the plan and detailed annual task plans to take forward the work needed, while working in partnership with all members of the Welsh Education Forum and Welsh Language Forum.

### **10.7. Strategy: Sustainable Communities for Learning (formerly 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools)**

The 21st Century Schools programme is a major, long-term, strategic capital investment programme, creating sustainable schools. Welsh Government has recently changed the programme name to '**Sustainable Communities for Learning**' embracing the wider use of schools from a community usage perspective.

Caerphilly County Borough Council has a clear vision for modernising education and improving outcomes for children, pupils and learners. Among the challenges being met through the Sustainable Communities for Learning programme are the rationalisation of secondary and primary schools, the removal of significant surplus places, review of post-16 education, single sex education and developing Welsh-medium provision in the County responding to the targets set by Welsh Government 'Cymraeg 2050' and in line with Authority's own Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP).

Strong leadership at all levels across CCBC combined with an emphasis on learner centric provision and a sharp focus on self-reflection and improvement, together with an emphasis on developing more dynamic data analysis, will further strengthen planning processes for better investment outcomes over the short, medium and longer term.

The 'Band B' programme of proposals, with an envelope of £78 million Capital and £32 million Mutual Investment Model (MIM), has now been identified. At this stage these are only proposals subject to individual business case approval and consultation with all key stakeholders which will play a critical part of the process as the plans develop over the next few years. The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools team has worked hard to develop new ways to facilitate more effective consultation and engagement with communities as we move forward in

reshaping the educational estate. In bringing forward any proposal, suitable arrangements will be made to consult and involve pupils throughout the process and post occupancy.

The Band B programme will deliver further innovative, flexible and adaptable approaches to addressing the challenges moving forward, which include achieving net zero school building programmes, managing the current economic and supply chain issues as well as the availability of specialist contractors and responding to inflationary pressures. Investment in staff development in the areas of accelerating decarbonisation and through undertaking Level 7 NVQ Diplomas in Strategic Management will support this work.

The programme will be continually monitored and reviewed to ensure it meets the vision and changing needs for education within Caerphilly. Currently the key priorities are:

1. Reducing the number of poor condition schools
2. Ensuring that we have the right size schools in the right location
3. Providing enough places to deliver Welsh and English medium education
4. Ensuring the effective use of the educational estate for use by both Schools and the wider Community
5. Working towards Net Zero Buildings in line with Carbon Reduction commitments
6. Delivering against Well-Being Outcome 1 of the Council's Place Shaping Programme

Investment will continue to be made in Welsh-medium provision in response to targets from Welsh Government. There is a challenging juxtaposition between expansion of this provision and the need to reduce surplus places overall across CCBC.

Exciting proposals have been set out within the Sustainable Communities for Learning Band B Programme. These improvements to the Educational Estate will contribute to delivering the aspirations of CCBC's Wellbeing Outcome 1 and will be a key area of focus moving forward. Future workstreams will include:

- The relocation and expansion of Ysgol Gymraeg Cwm Gwyddon which is now underway
- The extension and refurbishment on Llanfabon Infants site to accommodate a new Primary School provision through the amalgamation of Llanfabon Infants and Llancaeath Junior Schools
- The refurbishment of a former school site to create a fit for purpose Centre for Vulnerable learners
- The creation of additional specialist provision through the expansion of Trinity Fields School

- The conclusion of the review of sixth form provision, single sex provision and surplus places
- The continuing review of childcare and ALN provisions in the area to be included for all projects

### **10.8. Strategy: Medium Term Financial Principles**

The Education Finance Team work to support schools and other educational learning settings in their endeavour to achieve the ambitions laid out in this strategy. Strong financial management by Budget Holders, Service Managers, Headteachers and Governing Bodies will make a strong contribution to the most effective use of funding and provide value for money. This will support the quality of provision, e.g. through investment in staffing and other resources. Finance related discussions will:

- consider the impact on the learner and any other stakeholders, seeking to protect the most vulnerable or disadvantaged wherever possible;
- consider the most effective way to support schools with future financial planning, ensuring headteachers and senior leaders receive expert advice;
- provide clear and helpful guidance with the implementation of new and existing grants;
- continue to offer support in managing the impact of the pandemic on school budgets;
- provide bespoke support to schools that are facing increased budget pressures that could lead to a review of staffing structure;
- agree methodology to ensure current funding mechanisms are fit for purpose. This includes funding related to post-16 education and for pupils with additional learning needs;
- work alongside schools to reduce surplus balances over a two-year period (in-line with the School Funding Regulations), ensuring value for money;
- ensure appropriate consultation, with open and transparent discussion.

## Afterword: Corporate Director for Education and Corporate Services

When the Council launched the Shared Ambitions Strategy in 2019, it felt like a watershed moment for the Local Authority and the Education sector in Wales as a whole.

The Strategy was, in my view, a brave and courageous step for the Council. It was a deliberate and calculated attempt to drive improvement across Education in Caerphilly on our terms and with our own very specific context in mind and to put in place the foundations for long term success.

Over the previous decade, the Education system across Wales had become a highly pressurised environment. The publication of school league tables, the introduction of school improvement consortia and the annual benchmarking of pupil results, all of which were intended to drive up standards, had begun to drive behaviours that were limiting progress.

Even the introduction of school categorisation, a move designed principally to ensure that schools were able to access the right amount of improvement support, became a mechanism for ultimately judging school performance.

This, in turn, meant that schools who really did need help were less likely to be totally honest about the amount of help they needed because of the associated implications of being categorised as a red school. Phrases like “Schools Causing Concern” also did little to encourage schools in need of help to step forward and seek it.

The pressure to perform was relentless. Decision-making seemed to be focused on short term success. The challenges associated with underperformance had the potential to quickly spiral and be very difficult to overcome. One bad set of results could negatively impact highly successful careers and could set progress back years.

It was clear that the system needed a reset and that the Shared Ambition Strategy was Caerphilly’s opportunity to do this for its own environment.

The strategy had “Working together to achieve the best outcomes for our young people” at its core. This signalled our intention for contributors right across the system to collaborate in the best interests of the wider team rather to compete.

It centred on five transformational themes that were considered paramount to the long-term improvement of the life chances of our young people. It gave a green light to create a positive and progressive environment where everyone felt trusted and empowered but, perhaps more importantly, protected.

It shifted decision-making from short term to long term and school improvement approaches from 'challenge' to 'support'. It also clarified the roles and responsibilities of everyone within the system, something that has again proven very helpful.

Little did we know when the strategy was signed off in 2019 that a year later we would be in the midst of a global pandemic. While the metrics associated with our early progress could not confidently be validated throughout that period, the 'togetherness', 'open and honest communication' and 'purposeful leadership' that the strategy called for, was witnessed and harnessed by our incredible staff every single day.

TeamCaerphilly has never been stronger and neither has our foundation for ongoing success.

That makes our next step and the successful delivery of this strategy even more important. We are attempting to recover from the negative impact of the global pandemic on our learners. Some of these may not truly be known for many years.

For this reason, the strategy has been built from the ground up by the very people that will implement it and those that will be affected by it.

It has been developed on the basis of extensive consultation and with a view to ensuring we move forward collectively from the strong foundations forged by Shared Ambitions and embodied throughout the pandemic by our amazing staff.

By 'pursuing excellence together' we move forward with the next phase of our improvement journey with a view to giving our pupils and their communities the tools they need to have the very best chance of success in their lives.

**Richard Edmunds**

**Corporate Director for Education and Corporate Services**



## Appendix 1: How we will measure our success – education directorate indicators.

The table below shows the performance indicators for the services within the education directorate. They will be used as part of the local authority's ongoing self-evaluation and improvement planning cycle. The indicators will hold services to account and identify priorities. The data will be presented to scrutiny and cabinet committees to consider the impact of the strategy.

| Service                   | Performance indicators  | Links to the education main areas for development:  |
|---------------------------|---|---|
| Adult/Community Education | Total participation<br>Total number of participants currently engaging<br>Gaining a qualification<br>Work experience/volunteering<br>Participants gaining employment following vol. placement<br>Gaining employment<br>Engaged in job search upon leaving   | Improve <b>digital skills</b> for all learners  |
| ALN                       | Number of Statements issued within statutory timescales (including exceptions) – academic year<br>Number of IDPs issued within the statutory timescales (including exceptions) – academic year<br>Number of Dispute Resolution meetings held in an academic year<br>Number of Appeals to Educational Tribunal for Wales (ETW) each academic year<br>Tracking of Accelerated Learning Programmes against each learner<br>The proportion of out of county placements compared to in county<br>No of pupils with ALN in specialist placement against those attending mainstream provision<br>Transition / Amendments to Statements / IDPs within statutory timescales (Statements) | Accelerate the <b>progress of vulnerable</b> learners.<br>Implementation of the <b>ALN Act</b> .<br>Reach the target of 26% of year 1 pupils in <b>Welsh medium</b> by 2031 |
| Attendance                | % Attendance of all pupils<br>% Attendance FSM<br>% Attendance CLA  | Accelerate the <b>progress of vulnerable</b> learners   |

|                             |   |   |
|-----------------------------|---|---|
|                             | % Attendance persistent absenteeism   | <p>Improve pupil <b>attendance</b> and reduce <b>exclusions</b>, with particular focus on vulnerable groups</p> <p>Close the gap in attainment between those <b>learners from low-income backgrounds</b> and those who do not live in poverty</p>   |
| Children Looked After (CLA) | <p>Number in post 16 in education</p> <p>KS4 outcomes – qualitative statement</p> <p>Qualitative Statement, stakeholder feedback</p>  | <p>Ensure the effective implementation of <b>Curriculum for Wales</b></p> <p>Accelerate the <b>progress of vulnerable</b> learners</p>  |
| Early Years                 | <p>Number of families we worked with</p> <p>Number and percentage of families we made a difference for</p> <p>Number and percentage of children who started school nursery at the right time</p> <p>Number and percentage of families receiving support in a timely manner</p> <p>Qualitative satisfaction survey results</p> | <p>Accelerate the <b>progress of vulnerable</b> learners</p> <p>Close the gap in attainment between those <b>learners from low-income backgrounds</b> and those who do not live in poverty</p> <p>Reach the target of 26% of year 1 pupils in <b>Welsh medium</b> by 2031</p> <p>Ensure the most vulnerable families including those in <b>poverty</b>, can access support to give their child the <b>best start to their early years</b></p> |
| Educational Psychology      | <p>Qualitative statement – impact of support on service</p> <p>Pre-and post-measures of pupil wellbeing following interventions</p> <p>Qualitative statement on behaviour (based on behaviour reviews in schools)</p>   | <p>Accelerate the <b>progress of vulnerable</b> learners</p> <p>Improve pupil <b>attendance</b> and reduce <b>exclusions</b>, with particular focus on vulnerable groups</p>  |
| EOTAS                       | <p>Attendance at EOTAS in comparison to in school</p> <p>Progress at EOTAS provision - qualitative</p> <p>Number of pupils successfully reintegrated into schools</p> <p>Number of NEETS leaving</p> <p>EOTAS provision</p>   | <p>Ensure the effective implementation of <b>Curriculum for Wales</b></p> <p>Accelerate the <b>progress of vulnerable</b> learners</p> <p>Accelerate the progress of pupils who receive education outside a mainstream setting (<b>EOTAS/EHE</b>)</p>   |

|   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| Finance   | Review School balances  | Close the gap in attainment between those <b>learners from low-income backgrounds</b> and those who do not live in poverty   |
| Healthy Schools   | % of schools that have achieved the National Quality Award<br>'School Health Research Network' health and wellbeing data for the authority<br>% of schools engaged with Young Carers provision  | Ensure the effective implementation of <b>Curriculum for Wales</b><br><br>Support pupil wellbeing by improving attitudes to <b>healthy food choices and active fitness</b>   |
| Impact of the implementation of the new curriculum on standards and provision | Impact of the new curriculum – qualitative statement<br><br>Emerging themes from ESTYN inspections<br><br>SDP priorities across all schools (EAS focus)<br><br>Outcomes from thematic reviews   | Equip <b>leaders</b> with the skills to have a significant impact on progress, attainment and provision and wellbeing<br><br>Ensure the effective implementation of <b>Curriculum for Wales</b><br><br>Close the gap in attainment between those <b>learners from low-income backgrounds</b> and those who do not live in poverty<br><br>Improve <b>digital skills</b> for all learners<br><br>Reach the target of 26% of year 1 pupils in <b>Welsh medium</b> by 2031 |
| Inclusion   | Number of permanent exclusions<br><br>Number of fixed term exclusions<br><br>Number of days lost<br><br>Number of pupils receiving fixed term exclusions<br><br>Number of exclusions spilt into gender<br><br>Number of exclusions for pupils in receipt of free school meals<br><br>Number of exclusions for pupils with ALN<br><br>Number of exclusions for pupils with 'looked after' status | Accelerate the <b>progress of vulnerable</b> learners<br><br>Implementation of the <b>ALN Act</b><br><br>Improve pupil <b>attendance</b> and reduce <b>exclusions</b> , with particular focus on vulnerable groups.  |
| Libraries   | Welsh public library standards (WPLS)   | Improve <b>digital skills</b> for all learners   |

|                                 |   |  |
|---------------------------------|---|--|
| NEETS                           | <p>% of 'at risk' NEET young people with a destination at the point of leaving compulsory education</p> <p>Number NEETS identified as free school meals and/or looked after</p>   | <p>Accelerate the <b>progress of vulnerable</b> learners</p> <p>Reduce the number of young people post-16 without access to education, employment or training (<b>NEETS</b>)</p> <p>Close the gap in attainment between those <b>learners from low-income backgrounds</b> and those who do not live in poverty</p>   |
| Music                           | <p>Accreditations</p> <p>Participation of pupils in receipt of free school meals</p> <p>Engagement with more able and talented activities</p>   | <p>Ensure the effective implementation of <b>Curriculum for Wales</b></p> <p>Close the gap in attainment between those <b>learners from low-income backgrounds</b> and those who do not live in poverty</p>  |
| Post 16                         | <p>Annual recruitment into the 6<sup>th</sup> Form</p> <p>Retention rates – year 12-13</p> <p>Destinations</p> <p>MAT pupils attending universities</p> <p>Standards of achievement post 16</p>   | <p>Accelerate the <b>progress of vulnerable</b> learners</p> <p>Further improve provision and support for young people (<b>post-16</b>)</p> <p>Close the gap in attainment between those <b>learners from low-income backgrounds</b> and those who do not live in poverty</p> <p>Reach the target of 26% of year 1 pupils in <b>Welsh medium</b> by 2031</p> |
| Youth service                   | <p>Number of young people engaged in the service</p> <p>Number of contacts with the registered young people projects – average contact per person across the service</p> <p>% of YP that achieve local accreditation</p> <p>% of YP that achieve national accreditation</p> <p>% of young people who express satisfaction with quality of service</p> | <p>Accelerate the <b>progress of vulnerable</b> learners</p> <p>Close the gap in attainment between those <b>learners from low-income backgrounds</b> and those who do not live in poverty</p>   |
| Additional stakeholder feedback | <p>Headteacher survey</p> <p>Stakeholder feedback linked to education strategy</p> <p>Youth forum priority progress</p>   |  |