



Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru  
Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales



WALES **AUDIT** OFFICE  

---

SWYDDFA **ARCHWILIO** CYMRU

**A report on**

**Pembrokeshire County Council  
County Hall  
Haverfordwest  
Pembrokeshire  
SA61 1TP**

**Date of inspection: December 2019**

**by**

**Estyn, Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education  
and Training in Wales**

## About Pembrokeshire County Council

Pembrokeshire County Council is located in West Wales and has a total population of just over 125,000 people. The local authority maintains six secondary schools, two all-age (3-16) schools, 52 primary schools, one special school and one pupil referral unit.

The Chief Executive was appointed in 2015. The Director of Children and Schools took up her post in 2017, following a period as interim Director from 2014, and the Deputy Chief Education officer was appointed in 2017. The council leader has been in post since 2017 and the cabinet member for education and lifelong learning took up his post in May 2019. The local authority was last inspected in June 2011.

Pembrokeshire is one of the six local authorities in the ERW regional consortium for school improvement.

In 2019-2020, the Council's net education budget is approximately £88 million. The delegated school budget per pupil is £ 4,856 per pupil, which is 13th highest of all local authorities in Wales.

Inspectors take account of a wide range of information about the local population when evaluating outcomes and the quality of education services. They consider this information alongside information about the national population. Some of the most useful information about children and young people in Pembrokeshire is noted below:

- Over a three year average, 16.2% of pupils aged 5 to 15 are eligible for free school meals, slightly lower than the Wales average of 17.8%
- 12.1% of pupils aged 5 and over are fluent in Welsh, which is lower than the Wales average of 16.2%
- 5.6% of pupils aged five and over are from ethnic minorities, below the Wales average of 11.4%
- 24.3% of pupils have special educational needs, higher than the Wales average of 22.2%
- 64 children per 10,000 were looked after by the local authority in 2019, which is lower than the Wales average

## Summary

Senior officers and senior elected members have defined an ambitious vision and set a strong strategic direction for education services in Pembrokeshire. This clarity is beginning to have a positive impact on team-working within education services, and is leading to productive collaboration between the authority and other organisations which support education across the authority.

Over the last few years, to align its work to the overarching strategies, the authority has refined its approaches to supporting education across the county in several key areas. The restructured school improvement team is developing its knowledge of schools, and there is greater clarity about the roles and responsibilities of officers and school leaders in developing schools as resilient learning organisations. Although the authority has been robust in dealing with underperformance in a few instances, there has been insufficient focus on improving teaching and leadership in schools.

Overall, the standards achieved by pupils in Pembrokeshire schools are too variable. Standards are good or better in only half of the primary schools inspected in the last three years. Although there have been improvements in a few secondary schools, in a minority, outcomes are below expectations. Standards in literacy, numeracy and Welsh second language require improvement in around half of primary schools and all secondary school inspected since 2017.

The authority is developing a more structured approach to support vulnerable groups of learners. Work to improve the achievement of pupils eligible for free school meals has gained momentum recently with the introduction of a more robust strategy, and there are a few examples of effective work in this area in a few primary schools. There are comprehensive and effective systems to identify pupils' special educational needs at an early stage. The Team Around the Pupil, Parent and School (TAPPAS) model supports this identification well and provides access for pupils, families and schools to a beneficial range of support and specialist help. The behaviour support team provides valuable support and training. This is beginning to have a positive impact on the behaviour of pupils, particularly in primary schools. However, in secondary schools, particularly in a very few secondary schools, pupils' behaviour is not good enough. Overall, the number of fixed-term exclusions is markedly higher than in secondary schools across Wales.

There is a clear strategy for school re-organisation across the county. The work to develop Welsh-medium provision in recent years is particularly noteworthy and supports the authority's strategic ambitions well.

There are helpful self-evaluation processes in place in education services. However, in a minority of areas of the authority's work, evaluation is not rigorous enough and plans for improvement are not sufficiently sharp. This, together with the lack of clarity in the approaches to improve teaching and leadership in schools, means that the pace of improvement has been too slow.

## **Recommendations**

- R1 Raise standards in schools, particularly in literacy, numeracy and Welsh second language
- R2 Improve the outcomes for all groups of learners, including those eligible for free school meals and those who are more able
- R3 Improve the effectiveness of the authority's work to improve teaching and school leadership
- R4 Strengthen the quality of evaluation by officers at all levels to improve the precision of planning for improvement

## **What happens next**

Pembrokeshire local government education services are causing significant concern and require follow-up activity. The provider will update its improvement plans to show how it is going to address the recommendations. Estyn will review the provider's progress through post-inspection improvement conference and progress conferences. A monitoring visit will take place about 30 months after the publication of this report.

## Main findings

### Outcomes

Overall, the progress made by pupils in Pembrokeshire varies too much from school to school. In a minority of secondary schools, pupils' progress is below expectations.

During the last three years, Estyn has judged standards as good or better in around half of primary schools. This is well below the national average. In this time, two primary schools have been placed in a statutory category, although one has since been removed. Of the three secondary schools inspected, one was judged good for standards, one adequate and one unsatisfactory. Currently, three secondary schools are in a statutory category.

Fewer schools have been placed in a statutory category in the last three years in comparison with the last cycle of inspections. However, one secondary school placed in an Estyn category of follow-up in the previous cycle has not improved and is now in special measures.

Pupils' skills of literacy and numeracy are identified as shortcomings in around half of primary schools, and in all secondary schools inspected since 2017. Pupils' achievement in Welsh first language is strong. However, pupils' progress in Welsh second language is an area for development in around half of primary schools and in all secondary schools. Shortcomings in the quality of teaching, including low expectations and a lack of progressive and planned opportunities to develop literacy, numeracy and Welsh second language across the curriculum limit the progress pupils make.

The performance of more able pupils at key stage 4 has improved over the last three years, although it remains below the national average. Pupils with special educational needs generally make suitable progress. Pupils in the special school make particularly strong progress. The performance of pupils eligible for free school meals is too variable. At key stage 4, the achievement of these pupils is below expectations in comparison with that of their counterparts across Wales.

The proportion of year 11 learners who are not in education, employment or training has fallen over the last three years to just below that of the Wales average.

Outcomes from Estyn inspection reports in the primary school sector show that most pupils' wellbeing is good. In two out of three secondary schools inspected, wellbeing and attitudes to learning have been judged to be adequate and in need of improvement. School inspections in Pembrokeshire have found that most primary pupils feel safe and that many feel safe in secondary schools.

Overall, the attendance of pupils in primary and secondary schools compares favourably with levels in similar local authorities. In primary schools, the attendance of pupils eligible for free school meals is better in Pembrokeshire schools than that for similar pupils across Wales. In secondary schools, the attendance of this group of pupils is lower than the national picture. In primary schools, the percentage of pupils who are persistently absent compares favourably with the average across Wales. In secondary schools, the figure has decreased notably over time and has recently fallen below the Wales average.

The number of permanent exclusions are small and generally in line with or below the Wales average. However, the number of fixed-term exclusions of five days or less in Pembrokeshire secondary schools is notably higher than the national average in secondary schools. A very few secondary schools account for a high proportion of these exclusions.

Most primary school pupils feel that their school helps them to understand healthy eating and drinking, and that they take regular opportunities to exercise. In secondary schools, about half the pupils participate in beneficial extra-curricular sport activities at least once a week. A high proportion of pupils receive music tuition and participate in the county orchestra and band and these activities contribute positively to their wellbeing.

Many children and young people know whom to turn to if they are worried or upset. Those who require support about issues such as anxiety and relationships engage effectively with school-based counsellors. Many of them are confident enough to self-refer to these support services, demonstrating a high degree of independence.

Children and young people take advantage of valuable opportunities to contribute to decisions about issues that affect them. Pembrokeshire Youth Assembly identified bullying as a matter to discuss, and helped to evaluate an anti-bullying scheme prior to its implementation in schools. The Youth Assembly has many sub-committees that provide worthwhile opportunities for young people to contribute and to make decisions. The Youth Bank committee members, for example, administer a local grant fund. They encourage other young community groups to make formal bids for funding, and scrutinise the applications. One notable example of this beneficial work is the grant that the Youth Bank awarded to the Pembrokeshire Junior Safeguardians to run a conference that highlighted their peers' understanding of issues around safeguarding and child sexual exploitation.

## **Education services**

Under Inspection Area 2, Estyn sets local inspection questions that are relevant to each local authority. Local inspection questions focus on education services that relate to the local authority's current strategic priorities or result from information that Estyn has about education services in the local authority.

### **How well does the local authority challenge the performance of schools and support them to improve the quality of teaching and leadership?**

The local authority, in partnership with the regional consortium, has implemented a broad range of initiatives and proposals to help schools to improve. Overall, the local authority's work has had limited impact on the progress of a minority of secondary schools in particular. In addition, the local authority has not been successful in meeting its aims of ensuring that leadership is good or better in all schools and there has been an insufficient focus on improving teaching. Generally, the pace of improvement in schools causing concern has been too slow.

Senior leaders have recognised that the school improvement services lacked impact. In order to address this shortcoming, they restructured the school improvement team and redefined the role of the challenge advisers in providing challenge and support to

schools. Officers and advisers are developing productive relationships with school leaders and a sound knowledge of schools' strengths and areas for development. They undertake a suitable range of monitoring activities in schools. In the most useful instances, they carry out activities such as learning walks and scrutiny of pupils' work alongside school leaders. This provides advisers and school leaders with beneficial opportunities to evaluate the quality of teaching and learning and identify ways to improve together. As part of the restructure of the service, the local authority no longer employs curriculum advisers. There is now greater clarity within the service and in schools about the roles of local authority staff and those employed by the regional consortium in supporting school improvement. However, it is too early to see the impact of this work in improving important areas of pupils' outcomes such as literacy, numeracy and Welsh second language.

There is a shared vision within the local authority and its regional consortium that schools develop as resilient learning organisations that take responsibility for their own improvement. To meet this goal, officers have started to facilitate approaches to schools working in clusters. For example, one cluster of schools has identified the need to improve pupils' writing skills. All staff in the cluster access professional learning opportunities that help them to develop and use strategies to raise standards in writing. This work is helping teachers to see pupils' learning as a continuum across the age range and to share responsibility for the standards that pupils achieve throughout their education. The cluster has set up a project team to lead this work and evaluations show that it has led to more consistent approaches to teaching writing across the primary and secondary schools.

Senior leaders have developed a sound process for identifying schools that are at risk of causing concern. They consider a wide range of key indicators from across the range of education services to evaluate how likely schools are to need support with different aspects of their work. For example, they consider pupils' attendance levels, safeguarding processes and the schools' financial information alongside standards of attainment. Members of the directorate management team use this information appropriately to provide an approach to supporting schools which is more tailored to the specific needs of the school. For example, they allocate challenge advisers to schools where their particular skills and experience will be helpful in bringing about improvement.

Local authority officers use their statutory powers appropriately. For example, they issue warning notices to schools to improve leadership and management in addition to improving outcomes for pupils. They add experienced governors to governing bodies of schools causing concern to help governors to provide improved levels of challenge to school leaders. Officers have established education improvement boards for schools that are in red and amber support categories. The deputy director of education and the principal challenge adviser meet regularly with board members to monitor the progress that schools are making and to hold school leaders and governors to account for this progress. This process has been more successful with primary schools than with secondary schools. The very few primary schools in need of significant improvement have made strong progress in addressing the shortcomings from their core inspections.

A minority of secondary schools are in statutory categories following inspection. The local authority has supported these schools to address shortcomings in leadership by

helping them to restructure staff teams and recruit new leaders. Officers provide mentors for newly appointed senior leaders to support them in their new roles. They identify suitable professional learning opportunities for leaders and teachers to help them to improve their practice. For example, they have established close working arrangements between schools needing support and high performing schools across the region and further afield. They broker bespoke support for underperforming departments in secondary schools. Despite the initiatives and developments, the pace of improvement in these schools remains too slow.

The local authority and its regional consortium offer worthwhile opportunities for senior and middle leaders in schools to participate in national leadership programmes. Senior officers within the education directorate provide support for new school leaders and for those requiring additional support through a variety of coaching and mentoring activities. However, the local authority has not been successful in meeting its aims of ensuring that leadership is good or better in all schools. In schools inspected since 2017, a majority of secondary schools have received adequate judgements for leadership. During this period, outcomes for leadership in primary schools are better with leadership judged as excellent in a very few primary schools. However, in a minority of primary schools, leadership is adequate and requires improvement.

Most primary schools and all secondary schools inspected since 2017 have recommendations to improve aspects of teaching. While school improvement staff from the authority and the regional consortium work with individual schools to address these recommendations, the authority lacks a clear strategic approach to improve the quality of teaching. Over time, the work to improve teaching in both primary and secondary schools has had limited impact.

### **How effectively do education services support the progress of pupils eligible for free school meals?**

Overall, the provision to improve the outcomes for pupils eligible for free school meals is underdeveloped. The local authority's response to the weak performance of these pupils over time has not had enough impact on their progress.

The local authority has developed a few innovative projects to support vulnerable pupils including those eligible for free school meals. These include a suitable range of music tuition and sports development opportunities, and the 'Cynnydd' project, which supports young people who may otherwise disengage from education. Recently, the local authority has taken the innovative step of appointing 'free school meal champions' in all school clusters to support schools in selecting and developing the most appropriate approaches to tackle poverty and disadvantage. Many schools in the local authority have practice that supports vulnerable pupils very well. In the strongest examples, they engage in effective multi-agency working, and deliver beneficial community and family learning. These schools evaluate the impact of this work well and are able to show that these strategies make a positive difference to the achievement of disadvantaged pupils.

In partnership with the regional consortium, the local authority has developed a clear and appropriate strategy to tackle poverty and disadvantage in schools. However, the vision is not shared widely enough and officers do not understand it sufficiently.



Furthermore, officers do not have a clear enough view of what works well, how to share effective practice, and how to ensure that their approach is coherent and holistic. The local authority does not make specific provision for more able children who are eligible for free school meals.

Challenge advisers carry out activities to ensure that schools have a suitable focus on the progress of pupils eligible for free school meals. The local authority has ensured that all challenge advisors have a target relating to free schools meals within their individual performance management plans, and this ensures there is a consistent focus on this area. The local authority monitors schools' compliance with the terms and conditions of the pupil development grant (PDG). However, officers do not evaluate the impact of specific strategies in improving outcomes for eligible pupils effectively enough.

Overall, the lack of a sustained focus over time, together with inconsistent approaches to addressing the issue of the underperformance of pupils eligible for free school meals, means that these pupils do not make sufficient progress in comparison with their counterparts across Wales.

### **How effective is the LA in ensuring the early identification of pupils with SEN and providing appropriate support and monitoring as necessary?**

The local authority has effective systems in place for the early identification of pupils with special educational needs (SEN) across all ages.

The Team Around The Pupil, Parent, and School (TAPPAS) model is well established. The TAPPAS approach provides a valuable graduated response and effective support specific to the needs of pupils across all ages. 'TAPPAS 1' consultation and planning meetings aspire to raise the educational achievement for all pupils, including those with SEN. They provide helpful opportunities for schools to receive additional support and advice to address the needs of pupils from a range of professionals. Termly 'TAPPAS 2' meetings are cluster-wide forums that provide an effective network to support school staff and Additional Learning Needs Coordinators (ALNCos). They include beneficial opportunities for professional learning and sharing good practice. These meetings are used effectively to identify where additional support is required, and to provide access to more specialised provision where necessary.

The in-house Parent Partnership Service offers strong support for families. It provides a range of services including a telephone contact line and guidance and support to signpost families to available services. It also provides valuable training workshops and works with individual families who may require more intensive support. The service leads on 'TAPPAS 3' cluster-based termly meetings. These provide an effective network for parents, facilitate peer-to-peer support and offer valuable guidance for parents from a range of professionals. TAPPAS 3 meetings help to identify and address common themes across schools and families to support a comprehensive system of early identification and support.

The Early Years Service has well-established early identification processes and strong working partnership arrangements with a range of service providers, such as paediatricians, audiologists and the speech and language therapy service. Nearly all

primary schools and an increasing number of Early Years maintained and nonmaintained nurseries screen routinely all pupils on entry to assess any literacy or communication difficulties. The outcomes of these assessments provide valuable information to inform Early Years TAPPAS meetings. The local authority recently introduced an Early Years Toolkit to support settings to improve their selfevaluation. However, it is too early to see the impact of this work.

A range of valuable screening and assessment tools are in place across all primary schools and non-maintained playgroups. The local authority tracks pupil outcomes and is beginning to use this information to monitor pupil progress. However, across the service, the range of data is not used well enough to evaluate pupils' progress, or to identify the effectiveness of approaches.

The local authority has clear criteria for referrals to the Inclusion and Early Years panels. Through the TAPPAS approach, all schools can refer pupils to the appropriate panel for additional support, resources, or placement in specialist provision. As a result of recent improvements, panel processes for placing a child in a Learning Resource Centre or special school setting are streamlined and clear.

Directorate priorities for the service include an evaluation of the local authority's prevention and early identification strategies. Currently all teams have plans in place. However, not all planning address the priorities well enough. As a result, this reduces the impact of planning for improvement in this aspect of the local authority's work.

### **How well do education services promote positive behaviour?**

The authority has recently updated its behaviour strategy and operational guidance to take into account, for example, changes in line with Additional Learning Needs (ALN) reforms in Wales. The authority has invested resource in a specific approach to improving behaviour, with the aim of developing consistency in behaviour management in schools, which is central to their strategy.

The behaviour support team provides a worthwhile range of training and guidance for teachers in relation to its approach to behaviour management, and a wellreceived menu of support. Officers in this team demonstrate a thorough knowledge and understanding of positive behaviour management practices and strategies. Their actions are helping teachers to improve their behaviour management. This is contributing to reducing significantly the rate of exclusions of five days or less in primary schools.

Despite this progress in the primary sector, the equivalent rate for secondary pupils has increased and remains considerably higher than the rate for pupils in Wales. In the main, this is due to very high rates of exclusion in a few secondary schools. Recently the authority has assisted these schools to develop worthwhile provision to support pupils at risk of exclusion. Despite positive early indications, it is too soon to gauge the impact of these approaches.

Officers communicate well with settings and schools through regular TAPPAS meetings. In addition, they participate in regular service briefings to share intelligence regarding individual providers. These briefings enable the behaviour support service to inform fellow officers of their work and enable all teams to align their activity beneficially.

Pupils and young people have good access to a broad suite of support services both in and out of school. Officers from specialist teams including sport development, music and the youth service offer a wide range of opportunities for pupils to participate in a variety of engaging activities. Young people who offend or are at risk of offending receive appropriate personal support and are helped suitably to re-engage with education and their communities.

The authority monitors exclusions appropriately including that of vulnerable groups. Officers have a comprehensive knowledge of the profile of individual pupils who benefit from support through the Pembrokeshire Learning Centre or the Cynnydd Project, and the qualifications they attain. However, despite this emphasis on individual learners, evaluation of broader strategies and approaches at team level is not developed sufficiently, and officers do not monitor progress towards targets or evaluate the impact of their work well enough.

**How well does the local authority address school reorganisation issues, including taking account of non-maintained settings, Welsh-medium provision and provision for post-16 learners?**

The local authority's strategy for reorganising its schools reflects its vision for promoting high educational standards through delivering efficient primary and secondary education for learners. It undertakes purposeful strategic reviews on an area basis to ensure that there are the right schools, of the right type in the right places, and ensuring that they are suitable for their learners. During recent years the local authority has secured significant funding through Welsh Government grants to ensure that school stock is of good quality and meets the needs of learners.

Most of the proposals over the last five years have focused well on expanding the local authority's provision for Welshmedium education, amalgamating or federating smaller primary schools as well as reorganising primary and secondary education in Pembroke, Haverfordwest and the St David's peninsular. In addition, a few proposals have expanded the age range of schools to provide more opportunities for nursery age pupils to access early education. This forms part of the local authority's strategy to ensure that the location of non-maintained settings complements the school-based provision effectively to encourage more children to attend. The local authority works well with strategic partners to target key areas where uptake of these places are low.

A strong feature of the local authority's school reorganisation programme is its work to expand Welshmedium provision across the whole of the county. This links well with targets in its Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP), which sets out how the local authority plans to increase the number of Welsh speakers in line with national and local priorities. It has been bold and ambitious in its school reorganisation proposals, which have increased demand for Welsh medium education in new locations. A very good example of this is the establishment of the new 3-16 school, Ysgol Caer Elen, in Haverfordwest. A key feature of its approach is the integration of pre-school provision in the area, which ensures access for all children to Welshmedium provision regardless of their home language. The local authority also uses its current building stock well to facilitate the expansion of Welsh medium schools, for example by establishing Ysgol Hafan y Môr using the refurbished Tenby Infant school building following their transfer to a new school site.

The local authority has undertaken a comprehensive review of secondary schools and its sixth form provision across the county. As a result, the local authority, working co-operatively with the local further education college, is rationalising post-16 provision to improve the range, accessibility and cost-effectiveness of appropriate courses for learners. However, access to post-16 vocational options is still limited, which limits young people's employment opportunities and plans for local economic regeneration.

### **Leadership and management**

Senior elected members and senior officers are committed to improving outcomes for learners in Pembrokeshire and have high expectations for improvement. The local authority has an aspirational vision that 'every child achieves and contributes more than they thought possible'. This vision underpins the Cabinet's Programme for Administration 2018-2022 and the Corporate Plan 2019-2020. Together these set a strong strategic direction for education services, taking good account of local and national priorities for improvement. The Children and Schools Directorate Plan 2019-2020 helpfully develops the strategic objectives into specific areas for action.

Elected members, staff in education services, schools and external partners share the vision for learners and support the authority's strategic direction. The authority has developed strong, co-operative relationships with schools and external partners, such as the further education college.

The recently restructured directorate management team works well together to provide sound leadership for education services. Through their meetings and through the Performance Management Board, which includes senior elected members and other senior officers, they monitor systematically progress against strategic objectives, as well as monitoring progress in individual schools causing concern. Risks relating to education services are managed well.

Leaders take appropriate decisions when they are not satisfied with progress in schools. For example, the authority has issued warning notices to schools causing concern, and used its powers to appoint additional governors and, in one school, to suspend the governing body's right to a delegated budget.

The authority works pro-actively with other local authorities to support improvement in education services and schools. The authority plays a significant role in the work of ERW, the regional consortium, and strives to ensure that the service meets local needs. Senior and middle leaders in education services liaise well with leaders in other local authorities to learn from them and engage in collaborative work.

The directorate has established processes for planning improvement and evaluating its services, and in most cases this has led to improvements in outcomes in key areas. Planning and evaluation processes take appropriate account of the views of stakeholders, including headteachers and governors. Generally, team leaders have a sound understanding of corporate and directorate priorities, and the majority of team planning and evaluation is clearly linked to these priorities. However, a minority of individual teams do not align their evaluation processes well enough to the objectives in the Directorate Plan. As a result, officers do not evaluate the outcomes that children and young people achieve through those services consistently enough. In a minority of areas, quality assurance and evaluation processes are not sufficiently robust to measure impact and ensure appropriate pace of change and improvement.

The authority has made good progress against many of the recommendations made in the previous inspection. The progress against the recommendation concerning Welsh-medium provision has been particularly strong. However progress against a minority of recommendations, such as raising standards and improving self-evaluation, has been more limited.

Individual performance management processes are well established. Officers at all levels engage in professional learning and there is an appropriate balance between opportunities for personal development based on individual aspirations and those areas identified as directorate priorities, for example improving outcomes for eFSM learners. Many officers and senior managers have engaged in suitable professional learning, for example Leadership Pathway accreditation, to help succession planning. There are good examples of officers learning from effective practice elsewhere leading to significant strategic improvement, such as the work done to extend Welsh-medium provision.

The authority has an appropriate range of policies and procedures to support the management of safeguarding duties within the department and across the local authority's schools. In particular, the policy and procedures around safe staff recruitment are clear, and provide a suitable structure to ensure this aspect is properly managed.

The authority undertakes safeguarding audits of its schools regularly. These audits verify local procedures, and demonstrate that the authority is listening carefully to the views of staff and pupils. They lead to clear outcomes, which are reported to the education safeguarding management group. Any actions for improvement are incorporated by the school into its development plan, and progress against these actions are monitored effectively by the challenge adviser.

The authority takes a proactive approach to the provision of training and support to schools regarding their duties under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015. This includes a generic policy for schools regarding Prevent, which sets out clearly the school's duties and how to respond, as well as highlighting the importance of the contribution of the curriculum to building resilience among pupils.

The authority has issued useful guidance to schools on the effective management of complaints. This guidance sets out clearly for schools what is expected of them, with regard to managing complaints fairly and for governing bodies to investigate these objectively. This includes managing properly those complaints that may impact on safeguarding aspects.

The authority evaluates effectively its ongoing safeguarding work through the safeguarding in education group and uses this process appropriately to identify areas for development and improvement in its systems. However, the reporting of safeguarding activity to elected members through scrutiny does not capture well enough the good work that is taking place at operational level or provide a sufficiently clear analysis of emerging risks or areas for development.

The authority's allocation of resources to its education services reflects the priority afforded to education in the corporate plan. The authority has shown its commitment through taking decisions to prioritise the education budget at a time of budget

reductions across other services, but recognises that maintaining this is increasingly challenging.

The authority produces budget monitoring reports for cabinet, which set out the in-year budget position and include useful commentary on the ongoing budget position.

The education budget overspent in 2018-2019 and is projecting to overspend again during 2019-2020. Although 94% of schools had a positive reserve at 31 March 2019, the authority is predicting this will be reduced to zero at the end of 2019-2020 and is working with schools to minimise the overspend and impact on reserves.

The authority works with schools to understand the financial pressures they face in the short and medium term. The authority has a future-focused approach to financial management in schools based on an understanding of the financial health of schools, using consistent budget assumptions, benchmarking and estimated pupil numbers. The authority also recently revised the 'Scheme for Financing Schools' and as part of this the 'Challenge and Intervention Framework' is used for the very few schools that have a budget deficit.

The authority has a comprehensive range of service level agreements that provides flexibility for schools to enter into the parts of the agreements that are most suitable for them. The take-up rate for these is generally high.

The authority's funding formula for schools takes account of relevant factors. Some changes to the formula have been made in recent years and this is kept under review.

The authority works with a range of partners both within Pembrokeshire and regionally. The authority has also demonstrated a willingness to review the delivery model for some of its commissioned services and, for example, took a decision to deliver the 'Parent Partnership' in-house.

## Evidence base of the report

Before the inspection, inspectors:

- consulted the local authority on the local inspection questions to be used during the inspection
- analysed 956 survey responses, which included the views of 41 learners, 532 parents/carers, 293 school staff or governors, 25 staff from the local authority or regional education services, and 65 other respondents
- carried out a preliminary visit to the local authority to meet with a range of relevant partners to education services, such as learner representatives, headteachers, governors, and leaders from statutory and third sector agencies working with children and young people

During the inspection, inspectors:

- met with the leader of the council, elected members responsible for education services, elected members responsible for the scrutiny of education services, the chief executive, the director of education, other leaders and managers in education services, other relevant staff in the local authority, the managing director and other relevant staff from the regional consortium for school improvement and anyone else that is key to the management or delivery of local education services
- considered the local authority's self-evaluation processes and the outcomes of these
- considered the local authority's strategic and operational plans for improvement
- scrutinised a variety of relevant documents, such as information on learner outcomes, information on the performance of schools and other education settings, including information from the regional consortium for school improvement, minutes from a range of meetings, reports presented to council or scrutiny, information relating to the safeguarding of learners and any other information relevant to the local authority's education services held by Estyn, Wales Audit Office, Care Inspectorate Wales or other relevant agencies

After the on-site inspection and before the publication of the report, Estyn:

- reviewed the findings of the inspection alongside the supporting evidence from the inspection team in order to validate, moderate and ensure the quality of the inspection
- provided a confidential, draft copy of the report to the local authority to note any potential points of factual accuracy and suggest amendments as necessary

## Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the local authority and from the Estyn website ([www.estyn.gov.wales](http://www.estyn.gov.wales))

The report was produced in accordance with Section 38 of the Education Act 1997, the Children Act 2004 and the Learning and Skills Act 2000.

Every possible care has been taken to ensure that the information in this document is accurate at the time of going to press. Any enquiries or comments regarding this document/publication should be addressed to:

Publication Section

Estyn

Anchor Court, Keen Road

Cardiff

CF24 5JW or by email to [publications@estyn.gov.wales](mailto:publications@estyn.gov.wales)

This and other Estyn publications are available on our website: [www.estyn.gov.wales](http://www.estyn.gov.wales)

© Crown Copyright 2020: This report may be re used free of charge in any format or medium provided that it is re used accurately and not used in a misleading context. The material must be acknowledged as Crown copyright and the title of the report specified.

Publication date: 12/02/2020