



Education & Youth Portfolio

Self-Evaluation Report

June 2018

Local Government Education Services Inspection Framework



Contextual Information

Formed in 1996 following local government reorganisation, Flintshire is a well governed and high performing unitary local authority in the north east corner of Wales bordering Cheshire, Wrexham and Denbighshire.

Flintshire has a strong track record of being a direct provider of local services from education to street-scene to housing. Whilst direct provision is at the core of its model, Flintshire is also a creative and flexible council and operates both as a provider and a commissioner of services. It has been instrumental in developing collaborative arrangements such as a regional school improvement service, an employee-owned mutual in leisure, libraries and cultural services and a local social housing trading company. Continuing to develop sustainable models of delivery and maintaining high quality services continues to be a priority for the Council.

Flintshire provides local public services for 154,626 people who live in 65,489 households. It has the largest population of the North Wales authorities and is the sixth largest in Wales. With 5,831 staff the Council is the second largest employer in the County and provide services including, education, housing, leisure, libraries, planning, refuse collection, environmental health, recycling, roads, social services, trading standards, transport and tourism. Flintshire has seven libraries, ten sports and leisure centres, three country parks and maintains 754.78 miles of County roads.

Flintshire has 78 schools (64 Primary, 11 Secondary, 2 Specialist & 1 PRU) providing education for 23,634 pupils, including those educated other than at school. 15.3% of the total population are of school age.

Based on the 2011 Census, the Welsh language is spoken by 14.4% of the population in Flintshire compared to 19% across Wales. The County has 5 Welsh medium primary schools and 1 Welsh medium secondary school. There are no dual stream or bilingual schools presently in the County.

The County also has a mixed provision of faith based education with 7 Church in Wales Voluntary Aided primary schools, 5 Roman Catholic primary schools and 1 Roman Catholic secondary school.

Flintshire has a strong tradition of supporting a local infrastructure of non-maintained early years' provision through both English and Welsh, which supports the Council in its delivery of childcare and early years education. Flintshire is an early adopter of the Welsh Government's flagship childcare policy of 30 hours free provision for working parents and there is a strong network of childminders, playgroups and private day nurseries delivering this combination of childcare and early education prior to children transitioning into schools.

The current (2017) population of school aged pupils entitled to Free School Meals (e-FSM) is 12.33% compared to a Wales average of 16.34%. The county has a mix of affluent and deprived areas. Latest data (2014) shows that the percentage of LSOAs (Lower Super Output Areas) in the 10% most deprived areas of Wales is 2.2%. There are 34.8% of LSOAs in the 50% most deprived areas of Wales.

20.17% of school aged pupils are designated as having a Special Educational Need in Flintshire compared to a Welsh average of 22.63%.

Structure of the Council

Flintshire County Council has 70 Councillors that are normally democratically elected every 4 years. It is currently run by a minority Labour administration with a political make up of: Labour 34, Independent Alliance 14, Conservative 6, Independents 6, Liberal Democrats 5 and New Independents 5.



Leader of the Council – Cllr Aaron Shotton



Chief Executive – Colin Everett

The Council has a Cabinet and a Scrutiny function. Decisions are usually made by the Cabinet for all issues including major policy matters. The role of Overview and Scrutiny Committees is to hold the Cabinet to account and to assist in the improvement and development of the Council's policies and services. Flintshire has six Overview and Scrutiny Committees covering: Corporate Resources, Community & Enterprise, Education & Youth, Environment, Organisational Change and Social and Health.

Flintshire's Corporate Plan 2017-22

The Council has a good track record of being a high performing authority. The Council Plan 2017-23 was adopted by the Council in September 2017 and is reviewed on an annual cycle. The year-end Council Plan report for 2017/18 is largely positive with 83% of activities being assessed as having made good progress and 71% having achieved the desired outcome. Performance indicators show good progress with 57% meeting or near to period target. Risks are also successfully managed.

Flintshire County Council was the most improved authority for performance in Wales across all Public Accountability Measures in 2016/17 and continues to perform well at a national level.

The Corporate Improvement Plan is closely aligned to the plan of the Public Service Board and has 6 themes:

- Supportive Council
- Ambitious Council
- Learning Council
- Green Council
- Connected Council
- Serving Council

Working in Partnership

Flintshire County Council has a longstanding and proud track record of partnership working. The communities it serves rightly expect statutory and third sector partners to work together to manage

shared priorities through collaboration. The Flintshire Public Services Board (PSB) is at the heart of promoting a positive culture of working together and concentrates energy, effort and resources on providing efficient and effective services to local communities.

The priorities of the Public Service Board are:

- Independent Living
- Integrated Community Social and Health Service
- Developing and Inspiring Resilient Communities
- Safeguarding

Public Services Board partners include: Natural Resources Wales, Public Health Wales, North Wales Police, Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board, National Probation, Flintshire Local Voluntary Council, North Wales Fire and Rescue Service, Coleg Cambria, Glyndwr University and Welsh Government.

National recognition

The Council ranks highly not only against its peers, but also other public sector companies, for its achievements. This is recognised by a number of regional and national awards spanning a wide range of services for example educational achievements; state of the art educational facilities; new housing initiatives; social services; regeneration; environmental issues.

Self-Evaluation of Education Services

1.0 OUTCOMES

1:1 Standards and progress overall

Standards 2015 - 2017

Rankings of Flintshire in comparison to Welsh authorities in the main indicator at each key stage is outlined below. The number in brackets indicates the authority's comparative ranking based on the percentage of 5-15 year old pupils receiving FSM. Flintshire's expected performance is 6th.

Table 1: Benchmarking data for the region on main performance indicators

	2015				2016				2017			
	FPI	CSI KS2	CSI KS3	L2+	FPI	CSI KS2	CSI KS3	L2+	FPI	CSI KS2	CSI KS3	*L2 +
Ynys Môn (7)	15	3	9	12	20	9	7	13	17	4	9	16
Gwynedd (4)	10	6	1	5	14	7	2	4	15	3	1	6
Conwy (9)	21	19	6	18	21	20	9	17	21	19	8	12
Sir Ddinbych (14)	13	12	12	14	10	14	12	14	20	17	18	17
Sir y Fflint (6)	9	11	7	8	13	5	6	10	5	6	5	9
Wrecsam (10)	19	14	19	20	15	18	16	18	11	7	16	20
GwE (1)	4	2	1	3	3	3	1	3	3	1	1	3

Standards in Foundation Phase

During the previous three academic years, standards in the Foundation Phase have been good, showing an upward trend. In 2016-17, end of Foundation Phase performance in all core subjects increased at both the expected and higher outcomes. The percentage of pupils achieving the FPOI is consistently in line with or above the national average. In 2016-17, the percentage of pupils achieving FPOI increased by 2.6% to 89.5%, which is above the average for Wales.

Flintshire's LA ranked position is now 1st in the consortia and 5th nationally, an improvement of 8 ranked places from 2016. Flintshire has the greatest increase in the region in 2017 with the progress in the region over the last two years higher than that seen on national level. The gap between performance and target in the FP was <1% and the smallest in the region.

GwE and the Local Authority are focused on supporting schools to improve the percentage of pupils achieving the higher outcomes in each subject, particularly Outcome 6 Welsh First Language.

Table 2: Performance at Foundation Phase Outcome Indicator

FPOI	2015		2016		2017	
	%	Rank	%	Rank	%	Rank
Flintshire	87.0	9	86.9	13	89.5	5
Wales	86.8		87.0		87.3	

All Areas of Learning significantly improved their ranked position at the expected level in 2017. Mathematical Development and Personal & Social Development, Well-being and Cultural Diversity were ranked higher than Flintshire's expected performance of 6th. Language, Literacy and Communication (English) matched expected performance with an improvement of 5 ranking places from 2016. Language, Literacy and Communication (Welsh) improved its ranking position by 13 places from 2016.

Table 3: Breakdown of Areas of Learning performance in Foundation Phase at expected level

Area of Learning Outcome 5+	LA 2015		LA 2016		LA 2017		Wales 2017
	%	Ranking	%	Ranking	%	Ranking	%
LCE	89	9	88.4	11	90.3	6	88.1
LCW	91.2	15	88.1	20	94.1	7	90.9
MD	90.2	10	90.2	12	92.2	5	90.3
PSD	95.6	9	94.5	14	96.1	3	94.7

The percentage of more able pupils achieving the higher outcomes has risen over a three year period for English, Mathematics and PSD. However, the percentage of pupils achieving Level 5 in Welsh First Language has shown a downward trend in recent years.

In 2017 At Outcome 6+, Language, Literacy and Communication (English), Mathematical Development and Personal & Social Development, Well-being and Cultural Diversity all improved their rankings, were above the Wales percentages for 2016 although below expected performance. Language, Literacy and Communication (Welsh) dipped by 1.7%; ranked 21st in Wales.

Table 4: Breakdown of Areas of Learning performance in Foundation Phase at above expected level

Area of Learning Outcome 6+	LA 2015		LA 2016		LA 2017		Wales 2017
	%	Ranking	%	Ranking	%	Ranking	%
LCE	36.5	7	36.7	9	40.0	7	38.1
LCW	39.2	7	33.9	15	32.2	21	38.1
MD	34.2	11	36.4	10	40.6	7	38.7
PSD	60.8	6	57.6	13	63.1	9	61.3

Girls continue to outperform boys in the core assessed Foundation Phase areas. The gap has narrowed in LCE and LCW but increased in MD and PSD. The differential in performance between boys and girls in Flintshire across all indicators in 2017 is smaller than the average differential performance between boys and girls across Wales.

The performance of pupils entitled to free school meals (e-FSM) improved by 4.2% on 2016. The performance of n-FSM pupils improved by 2%. The performance of e-FSM pupils was 16.3% poorer than n-FSM pupils; a 2.1% closing of the gap from 2016. This was the highest increase within the region.

Standards in Key Stage 2

In 2016-17, the percentage of pupils achieving CSI has risen for the 5th consecutive year to 90%, which is above the average for Wales. Although Flintshire's position for CSI dipped from 5th to 6th place in

Wales, this corresponds to Flintshire's expected ranking of 6th in Wales. The percentage of Flintshire pupils achieving the expected and higher levels improved in all core subjects in 2016-17.

The improvement in the percentage of pupils achieving Level 5 in the core subjects has been identified as a priority for GwE and the Local Authority. In particular, there is a focus on improving Flintshire's position in Wales regarding the percentage of pupils achieving Level 5 Welsh First Language.

In Key Stage 2 there was a continued trend of improvement at both the expected and higher than expected levels with an improvement of 3.1% from 2016. Flintshire's ranked position is equal to its expected benchmark position. Within the region, Flintshire's performance was 3rd, with GwE's performance overall having risen from 3rd position in 2016 to 1st of the four consortia. The gap between performance and target was <1%.

Table 5: Performance at Core Subject Indicator KS2

CSI	2015		2016		2017	
	%	Rank	%	Rank	%	Rank
Flintshire	87.9	11	90.1	5	91.0	6
Wales	87.7		88.6		89.5	

All subject areas improved their performance in 2017 with English, maths and science above the Wales percentage. Mathematics was ranked higher than Flintshire's expected performance. Welsh first language was however, the lowest ranked in Wales despite performance improving by 2.3% on 2016,

Table 6: Breakdown of core subject performance in KS2 at expected level

Subject Level 4+	LA 2015		LA 2016		LA 2017		Wales 2017
	%	Ranking	%	Ranking	%	Ranking	%
English	90.1	9	91.2	6	92.6	7	91.1
Welsh 1 st Lang	86.4	19	84.3	21	86.6	22	91.6
Mathematics	90.9	9	92.3	3	93.0	5	91.6
Science	92.1	10	92.8	9	93.2	8	92.2

At Key Stage 2, the percentage of more able pupils achieving the higher levels has steadily risen over a three year period for English, mathematics and science. The percentage of pupils achieving Level 5 in Welsh First Language has shown a downward trend in recent years.

In 2017, at Level 5+, mathematics improved its ranking and English and science maintained their ranking equal to 2016. English, mathematics and science improved their performance on 2016; English by 4.7%, mathematics by 7.1% and science by 4.9% and were above Wales' percentages for 2016 but below Flintshire's expected performance of 6th. Performance in Welsh first language fell in 2017 by 5%.

Table 7: Breakdown of core subject performance in KS2 at above expected level

Subject Level 5+	LA 2015		LA 2016		LA 2017		Wales 2017
	%	Ranking	%	Ranking	%	Ranking	%
English	41.2	8	41.7	9	45.8	9	44.7
Welsh 1 st Lang	38.6	8	37.3	12	32.3	20	41.5
Mathematics	41.7	10	42.3	13	49.4	7	47.0
Science	40.2	14	42.1	11	47.0	11	46.4

In Key Stage 2 the variance for CSI rose slightly to -5.7, which is above the National average.

The percentage of eFSM pupils achieving CSI was less than non eFSM pupils but there is an overall of improved of 6.4% on 2015.

Standards in Key Stage 3

Performance at Key Stage 3 is good, and the Core Subject Indicator has shown a steady trend of improvement over the last 5 years and consistently above national averages (increasing to 89.5% in 2017, an increase of 1.1%). This places Flintshire consistently above similar local authorities.

Performance exceeded modelled outcomes in the CSI at Level 5+ in 2017; modelled outcomes were also exceeded in mathematics and Welsh second language and equalled in English. English improved again at Level 5+ for the fourth time in five years after a slight dip (92.5%) in 2016; mathematics was the same as 2016 (92.7%) and science improved for the fifth successive year (95.1%). Seven out of the eleven schools are in the higher quartiles in English and mathematics at Level 5+.

Performance at Level 6+ improved in English, mathematics and science but performance fell in Welsh first language by 2.5%. At Level 7+ performance improved from 14.3% in 2016 to 22%. Results at L7+ compare very well across the core subjects. Outcomes in English, maths and science are all higher than national results. English results at this level have increased consistently over the last four years. Maths dropped slightly in 2017 (by 0.2%) after three consecutive years of increase and Science improved significantly by 6.1% on 2016.

Flintshire is ranked 5th out of 22 local authorities on the basis of FSM at CSI Level 5+, an improvement of one place on 2016 and ranked second in GwE- the highest achieving consortium on this measure. In relation to Level 5+ in the core subjects Flintshire was ranked 6th in English, 5th in mathematics and 10th in science.

Table 8: Performance at Core Subject Indicator KS3

CSI	2015		2016		2017	
	%	Rank	%	Rank	%	Rank
Flintshire	87.1	7	88.4	6	89.5	5
Wales	83.9		85.9		87.4	

Table 9: Breakdown of core subject performance in KS3 at expected level

Subject Level 5+	LA 2015		LA 2016		LA 2017		Wales 2017
	%	Ranking	%	Ranking	%	Ranking	%
English	91.4	5	91.1	6	92.5	6	90.5
Welsh 1 st Lang	80.0	18/18	96.8	4	95.1	7	93.5
Mathematics	92.0	3	92.7	5	92.7	5	90.8
Science	94.3	6	94.8	7	95.1	10	93.5

Table 10: Breakdown of core subject performance in KS3 at above expected level

Subject Level 6+	LA 2015		LA 2016		LA 2017		Wales 2017
	%	Ranking	%	Ranking	%	Ranking	%
English	60.3	4	61.2	7	61.5	8	58.7
Welsh 1 st Lang	36.7	18	63.5	4	61.0	11	62.9
Mathematics	65.8	5	67.1	6	67.9	7	65.4
Science	62.3	7	64.6	10	67.4	10	65.5

At KS3 there was an improvement in performance at CSI between 2014 and 2017 with the gap between boys' and girls' performance falling over this time, from -7.9 in 2014 to -5.6% in 2017. The performance of both genders has consistently improved over the last four years. Encouragingly, though, both boys' and girls' performance is higher than national averages at this level (boys 86.8%; girls 92.4%).

The gender gap in Flintshire in 2017 is narrower than the Wales average across all subject areas and CSI. The largest gap in performance between boys and girls was in English.

The gap between e-FSM pupils and n-FSM pupils in achieving the Core Subject Indicator at KS3 had been closing steadily over the last 5 years, from 29.5% in 2012 to 14.7% in 2016. However, it increased again to -20.9%, the 5th widest in the region in 2017.

The performance of FSM pupils was lower than in 2016 - 71.7% achieved the CSI in 2017 compared with 76.2% in 2016. The number of FSM pupils here was also noticeably lower than in the last three years at 191.

Standards in Key Stage 4

Following significant changes to GCSEs in English/ Cymraeg and the introduction of two mathematics GCSEs and the 'best of' measure in 2017, comparisons against previous years are difficult. Nationally performance in Wales was down 5.4% on the 2016 outcome at Level 2+; however, the drop in Flintshire results was slightly smaller at 4.5%. Flintshire performance on this measure ranks 9th in local authorities in Wales, an improvement on 11th in 2016 but still below expected performance of 6th.

In comparison with other local authorities in the region, Flintshire performance at Level 2+ ranked second. Positively, the gap between Flintshire and the leading authority in the region narrowed significantly in 2017 from 4.4% to 1.1%. Regional performance in English ranks first; 'best of mathematics ranks first and science ranks first (up from second last year). Results in all three core subjects exceeded national averages - English by 2.8%, mathematics by 5% and science by 4.4%. Nationally, Flintshire is ranked ninth in English and fourth in 'best of mathematics' and science. Three Flintshire schools were in the top ten regional schools on the L2+ measure. There were significant improvements in outcomes at L2+ in two high schools and further improvement in two others.

At Level 2, results in Wales were down 17% and 16.3% regionally, with a similar fall in Flintshire - 16.8%.

The Level 1 indicator shows a regional and national drop of 0.5% and 0.9% respectively, with a similar drop in Flintshire of -0.7%. Outcomes here exceed national averages by 0.2% (94.6% v 94.4%).

At KS4 the pattern for performance of more able and talented performance is more inconsistent. 14.5% of pupils achieved five A*/A grades in 2017 - the same number as in 2016. This is further below the Welsh average than in 2016 (2.3% in 2017 v 1.4% in 2016). There is a significant gap in the performance of boys and girls with 10% of boys achieving the threshold and 19.1% of girls. However, the gap is smaller than last year (9.1% v 10.2% in 2016).

Three schools all had encouraging rises in this indicator but around half of schools also had a decline in performance. Some schools have this area as an identified strand for improvement this year and there is ongoing joint work between three schools in the authority to address this. There are also some significant gaps in boys and girls performance in some schools.

Table 11: Performance in main KS4 indicators

Indicator	Flintshire 2015	Flintshire 2016	Flintshire 2017	Wales 2017	Ranking (expected 6 th)
L1 Threshold	94.5%	95.3%	94.6%	94.4%	12 th
L2 Threshold	83.2%	82.6%	65.8%	67%	12 th
L2 Inclusive	60.6%	61.5%	57%	54.6%	9 th
Capped9			346.8	350.9	11 th
Average capped(cwps)	342.1	343.3	319.2	325.8	12 th
5A* / A	14.1%	14.5%	14.5%	16.7%	11 th

Table 12: Performance in core subjects at KS4

Indicator	Flintshire 2015	Flintshire 2016	Flintshire 2017	Wales 2017
A*-C in English or Welsh First Language	72.2%	71.6%	66.9%	65%
Best of maths	69.4%	69.5%	67.5%	62.5%
Science	85.8%	83.9%	80.0%	75.6%

Overall the gap between boys and girls performance at L2+ increased in 2017 (11.2%) and is larger than that nationally (8.6%). Both boys' and girls' performance is, however, higher than national averages, boys by +0.7 and girls by 3.8%, suggesting a slight tail off in boys' achievement on this measure this year.

In Flintshire 51.4% of boys achieved L2+, slightly above the national average (0.7%) and girls achieved 62.4%, 3.6% above national average. The fall performance in 2017 (-2.3) was much smaller than that across the country as a whole.

In 7 out of 11 schools in Flintshire boys' performance is higher than the national average. There were some significant improvements in the performances of cohorts this year.

Performance at five A*/A grades is below national averages for both boys and girls. The gap in performance reduced slightly from 2016 (9.1% from 10.2%) but remains larger than the national gap (7.8%). The boys' performance increased by 0.5% for 2016 to 10%; girls' performance decreased by 0.6% to 19.1%.

The gap between e-FSM pupils and n-FSM pupils in achieving the L2+ Indicator at KS4 is wider than that nationally. Pupils not entitled to free school meals (n-FSM) achieved better than the Wales average in 2017 but pupils entitled to free school meals (e-FSM) achieved below the Wales average in 2017. There were 155 pupils in receipt of free school meals sitting GCSEs in year 11 in 2017. Performance at Level 2+ has been below national averages over the last two years (25.2% v 28.6%). This is also reflected on the L indicator. At Key Stage 4, the gap between the performance of pupils in receipt of free school meals and those who are not has increased locally to 36.6%, an increase of 3.4% on 2016. This was the third successive annual decrease in the performance of the FSM group in Flintshire.

The performance of L1 learners in receipt of free school meals is also lower than that nationally in 2017 (86.5% against 88.8% nationally) as is performance at five A*/A grades (2.6% in Flintshire; 4.6 % of learners in Wales), although the gap in Flintshire is smaller than that nationally (13.6% v 14.9%).

In six schools, however, the performance of pupils in receipt of free school meals exceeds both that nationally and regionally and in two schools the performance of this cohort increased, to buck national trends. In three schools, however, performance was below 10% though the number of pupils were very low in some of these. It is worth noting that only one school, has more than twenty pupils in this cohort and two schools have fewer than ten.

Table13: Performance of pupils e-FSM and n-FSM at L2+ (5A*-C inc E/W & M)

L2 Inclusive (% achieving)	2015			2016			2017		
	e-FSM	n-FSM	Diff	e-FSM	n-FSM	Diff	e-FSM	n-FSM	Diff
Flintshire	35.2	65.9	30.8	33.7	66.9	33.2	25.2	61.7	36.5
Wales	31.6	64.1	32.4	35.6	66.8	31.3	28.6	61	32.4

Standards in Key Stage 5

The model of delivery for Key Stage 5 varies nationally and across the region. Six out of eleven secondary schools in Flintshire offer post-16 provision. The Council has also developed a joint delivery model with Coleg Cambria, called Deeside 6th, to provide a more sustainable post-16 model for the northern area of the County but which also now attracts students from across the authority and beyond.

Performance in the 3A*/A measure rose significantly in Flintshire, increasing to 8.3% from 4.1% and is just 0.1% below the national average. Conversely the 3A*-C dropped significantly, with Flintshire dropping by 13.9% to 50.1% and Wales down 16% to 54.6%. A similar pattern can be seen on the Average Wider Point data with Flintshire performance at 692.4 (down from 764.3) and Wales average at 730.6 (down from 823.2). At Level 3 the success rate was 97%, just below the national average of 97.1%.

Table 14: Performance at L3 Threshold KS5

Indicator	Flintshire 2016 %	Wales 2016 %	Flintshire 2017 %	Wales 2017 %
Level 3 Threshold	98.5	98.0	97	97.1
Average Wider Point Score	764.3	823.2	692.4	730.6
3A* A	4.1	6.7	8.3	10.5
3A* - C	64	70.6	50.1	54.7

Analysis of Results by Gender

Table 15: Gender performance at Level 3 Threshold KS5

Performance	2016	2017
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Indicator	Female	Male	Diff	Female	Male	Diff
Achieving the Level 3 Threshold	99.4%	97.0%	-2.4	98.1	95.5	-2.6
Average Wider Point Score	824.1	684.8	-139.3	733	638.6	-94.4

Females continue to outperform males in Flintshire on headline indicators at Key Stage 5. This reflects the national picture of gender performance at age 17. In the Level 3 threshold, achievement fell for females and males compared to 2016.

The gap in the performance of the genders across the Level 3 indicator in Flintshire widened slightly in 2017 from the 2016 position by -0.2%. The gender gap in performance in the Average Wider Point score indicator reduced.

National Literacy & Numeracy Data Analysis 2017:

The Flintshire average age standardised score in the English Reading Test is 99.8. The percentage of learners' standardised reading scores less than 85 increased by 0.4% in 2017 to 13%. This is below the regional average of 14.1% and the Wales average of 13.3%. Scores between 85 and 115 decreased by 0.5% to 68.6% which is above the regional average of 67.7% and the Wales average of 67%. The percentage of scores above 115 decreased by 0.4% to 15.2% above the regional average of 15%.

The Flintshire average age standardised score in the Welsh Reading Test is 99.7. The percentage of learners' standardised reading scores less than 85 increased by 1.6% in 2017 to 16.4%. This is above the regional average of 14.6% and the Wales average of 13.4%. Scores between 85-115 decreased by 2.7% to 65.8%, to below the regional average of 66.9% and the Wales average of 68.4%. The percentage of scores above 115 increased by 1.8% to 16.2% and is just below the Wales average of 16.6% and the regional average of 16.8%.

The Flintshire average age standardised score in the Procedural Numeracy Test is 99.3. The percentage of learners' standardised procedural scores less than 85 increased by 0.1% in 2017 to 13.3%. This is below the regional average of 14% but just above the Wales average of 13.1%. Scores between 85-115 increased by 0.6% to 69.9%, above the Wales average of 67.8% and the regional average of 69%. The percentage of scores above 115 decreased by 0.5% to 13.8% and is below the regional average of 14.1% and the Wales average of 16%.

The Flintshire average age standardised score in the Reasoning Numeracy Test is 100.2. The percentage of learners' standardised reasoning scores less than 85 decreased by 0.5% in 2017 to 11.3%. This is below the regional average of 11.9% and the Wales average of 12.4%. Scores between 85-115 increased by 1.5% to 69.8% which is above the Wales average of 67.6% and the regional average of 68.6%. The percentage of scores above 115 decreased by 1.1% to 15.4% and is below the regional average of 16% and the Wales average of 16.6%.

Welsh Language Skills

The cohort of pupils within Flintshire being assessed through Welsh medium is relatively small with only 5 Welsh medium primary schools and one secondary school which means the performance of cohorts year on year can vary. In addition, a very high proportion of the pupils in Flintshire's Welsh

medium schools come from homes where Welsh is not the language of the home. Performance in Welsh First Language (W1L) is an area targeted for improvement across all key stages at the expected and higher than expected levels as current outcomes place Flintshire at the lowest benchmarks.

The improvement in Welsh 2nd Language (W2L) standards at Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3 over the last few years is a positive trend e.g. Level 4+ at KS2 has improved from 53.2% in 2012 to 79.4% in 2016 and 81.7% in 2017. Level 5+ at KS3 has improved from 71.8% to 86.4% in 2016 and 87.9% in 2017, ranking Flintshire 2nd in the region for both phases.

The take up of the full GCSE Welsh course in Flintshire's secondary schools has been disappointing in the past and too many pupils leave Flintshire schools without any qualification in Welsh. In 2016, the percentage of pupils in the authority's English medium schools entered was 71% with 25% full course and 75% short course. In 2017 64% of pupils in the authority's English medium schools were entered for a Welsh 2nd Language GCSE; 32% of which were full course and 68% short course.

In the full course in 2017, 89.8% of pupils achieved grades A*-C, compared to 80.4% in 2016. In the short course 55.4% achieved A*-C compared to 57.4% the previous year. The change to the WJEC examination structure for Welsh GCSE from 2017 onwards where only the full course will be offered should improve participation rates but schools are already reporting concerns about staffing expertise and curriculum time. These issues are referenced in the LA's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan. In response to these specific concerns around the changes to GCSE, 2 W2L development days have been provided for Heads of Welsh during this academic year led by the GwE Lead Practitioner.

National Categorisation 2017

The national categorisation profile for Flintshire primary / specialist primary schools has further improved on 2016 with no schools in the 'Red' category for three years, a reduction in the number of schools in 'Amber' from 8 to 3 and an increase in 'Green' schools from 19 to 25.

The national categorisation profile for Flintshire secondary / specialist secondary schools has improved on 2016 for those schools requiring the most intensive support with a reduction in the number of schools in the 'Red' category from 4 to 1 (includes one school closure). The number of schools in the 'Amber' category is 4 schools. The number of schools in the 'Yellow' category has increased from 3 to 4 with a reduction in 'Green' schools from 4 to 2.

Inspection Outcomes 2016/17:

Estyn inspection reports indicate that the majority of Flintshire primary schools provide a good standard of care, support and guidance for pupils. The Estyn profile also shows that the majority of primary schools effectively promote pupil wellbeing and positive attitudes to learning.

Over a three year period, pupil attendance has remained steady, usually in line with or slightly below the Wales average. The Local Authority and GwE regularly monitor attendance rates at individual school level and ensure that identified poor attendance rates are promptly discussed and acted upon by school leaders.

Inspection outcomes in primary phases in Flintshire during the 2016-17 cycle presented a very positive picture. Inspection outcomes remain an area of focus for the Local Authority, supported by its regional partner, GwE with a particular focus on increasing the number of 'Excellent' judgements awarded. The overall percentage of inspections with outcomes of 'Good or better' increased to 80% which is higher than the figure for the 2015-2016 cycle.

Out of the 10 primary schools inspected in 2016-17, 7 were judged as 'Good' in both key judgements with no follow up and one (special, primary) was judged as 'Good' and 'Excellent' and asked to provide two case study for excellent practice. Two schools were inspected and judged to require Estyn Review.

All primary schools in follow up activity from the 2015-2016 cycle (3 in LA monitoring and 3 in Estyn Monitoring) were successfully removed during the year.

The Estyn inspection profile for Flintshire secondary schools is generally good and improving. Two schools are currently in Estyn statutory category and one school in Estyn monitoring. In the course of 2017-2018 to date one school has been removed from Special Measures and one from Estyn monitoring. However, improvement is required in the number of excellent judgements in the key inspection areas within the new framework

In the last cycle of inspection reports six out of the eleven secondary schools achieved at least a good in the *Current Performance* and *Capacity to Improve* indicators. It is expected that one of the schools in category will be removed this academic year and the school in Estyn review has made good progress since September. One further school will need more time to meet the recommendations made for Special Measures.

Since September 2017, under the new inspection framework, there have been eight inspection reports published to date. No schools have been placed in statutory category and just one school was placed in Estyn Review. One primary school received Excellent for all five inspection areas and one other received three judgements of Excellent. Four primary schools received the judgement of Good for each of the 5 inspection areas and the secondary school inspected received 2 judgements of Excellent and 3 of Good.

Schools causing concern are the subject of close monitoring by the LA and GwE and there are clear action plans in place and highly focused support to ensure the removal of these schools from follow up in the shortest possible timescales. Where appropriate, leadership and governance arrangements have been strengthened in these schools and Accelerated Improvement Boards established comprising senior school leaders, key governors and senior officers of the Local Authority and GwE.

Although the authority has a good track record in supporting schools being removed from categories, the overall priority is to reduce the number of schools being placed in follow up in the first instance and have more schools achieve judgements of 'Good' or 'Excellent'. Increasing use of intervention powers are being made where schools cause concern to ensure challenge and support is timely and effective.

1.2 Standards and Progress of Specific Groups

Pupils Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)

The data in Table 16 demonstrates that the authority has maintained a level of Year 11 NEET below the Welsh average and in 2014 and 2015, had the lowest levels in Wales. An increase in the number of young people at Tier 2 (unable to engage) accounted for the rise in 2016. The provisional data for 2017 shows a slight year on year reduction.

Table 16: Year 11 Leavers (%) from schools in Wales known to be not in education, employment or training

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Flintshire	3.6	1.3	1.3	1.7	1.6
Wales	3.7	3.1	2.8	2.0	N/A

Source: Careers Wales

Table 17: Year 12 and 13 Leavers (%) in Flintshire known not to be in education, employment or training

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Flintshire					
Year 12	1.1	1.4	0.9	1.7	1.01
Wales Yr 12	2.1	1.9	1.6	1.2	N/K
Year 13	3.8	3.05	2.6	2.3	3.09
Wales Yr 13	4.7	4.9	3.76	3.11	N/K

Table 18: Outcomes following Intervention through the Personal Support Service

	Number of young people	% engaged in EET	% NEET	% Unable to Engage	% Moved Out of Area
2016/17	39	56	21	18	5
2014/15	42	40	24	29	7

The authority provides support to young people who have disengaged through the 14-19 Personal Support service. The intervention offered has supported young people aged between 16 and 18 has enabled increasing numbers to re-engage with a range of outcomes (education, employment or training) as outlined in the table below. The European Social Funded project ADTRAC will provide additional intervention with a particular focus on those individuals with mental health difficulties which should reduce the percentage who are unable to engage. Pregnancy is a further factor which affects the ability to engage and this accounted for 13% Tier 2 NEET in 2016/17 and 17% Tier 2 NEET in 2014/15.

Education Other than at school (EOTAS) and Excluded Pupils

Flintshire has traditionally had high levels of pupils educated other than at school (EOTAS), when compared against other authorities with the rate of EOTAS being the national highest for a number of years. Whilst the Flintshire statistics are skewed by the large provision offered under the umbrella of the Portfolio Pupil Referral Units, including the Foundation Phase Assessment Centre, work has been undertaken with schools to reduce the numbers, particularly at Key Stage 4. The overall national statistics evidence a decrease as can be seen in Table 19 below.

Table 19: Number/Rate of EOTAS across Flintshire

	Number					Rate per 1000 pupils				
	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17
Flintshire	111	137	145	119	95	4.7	5.7	6.1	5.0	4.0
Wales	1,220	1,225	1,387	1,512	1,402	2.6	2.6	3.0	3.2	3.0

The number of Year 11 EOTAS pupils has seen an approximate 50% reduction from 65 in 2015 to 27 in 2017. This has been achieved by the allocation of targeted funding to broaden the offer of vocational subjects offered across Key Stage 4 and also the development of more individualised bespoke packages around mainstream pupils to prevent them from disengaging. This has been a priority as the authority recognises that pupils who are supported to maintain their KS4 school placement tend to achieve better outcomes compared with those who disengage and access provision within the PPRU at this late stage in their academic career.

Table 20: Outcomes at Key Stage 4 within the PPRU

Year	No. on Roll (January)	Entered at Least 1 Qualification	Achieved L1 Threshold	Achieved L2 Threshold	English A*-C	Maths A*-C	Science A*-C
2016/17	16	81	13	0	19	0	6
2015/16	32	94	6	0	6	6	3
2014/15	60	100	17	2	18	17	12

*SSSP data

The data shows that the number on roll at the PPRU increased from the January PLASC date from 16 to 27. All pupils leaving the PPRU in June 2017 had achieved at least 1 Entry Level qualification. Of the leavers, 89% went to secure further education, employment or training. A small number of pupils access EOTAS provision other than the PPRU. A number of these pupils have been permanently excluded during Key Stage 4 and an individualised programme has been provided to support them to the end of their compulsory education. Some pupils on roll at school also have access to alternative vocational provision through local colleges and work-based learning providers. Table 21 below provides a summary of the outcomes from these courses by provider.

Table 21: Outcomes for Pupils accessing Alternative Education programmes (2016/17)

Provider	No. of Starters	Overall Attendance Rates	Course Completion Rate	% Completers Achieving Qualification
Coleg Cambria	78	63%	60%	80%
North Wales Training (NWT)	12	56%	67%	37%
Motivational Preparation College for Training (MPTC)	24	75%	79%	100%
Forest School	12	62%	35%	100%

Analysis of the college data identified high dropout rates in courses such as Hair and Beauty which appeared to be related to pupil expectations around the course content. The range of courses has been modified in response to the completion/attainment rates for 2017/18. Discussions have taken place with NWT training with regard to the low completion levels and revised working arrangements have been implemented for 2017/18 to support improved outcomes. A more robust selection/matching process has also been implemented this year to support improved outcomes for this cohort of learners.

Attainment and Achievement of Pupils with ALN

Work has been undertaken with schools around the accurate identification of pupils with SEN/ALN. This has resulted in a reduction in the number of pupils being identified as School Action Plus (SAP) particularly in the secondary sector. The number of statemented pupils has also reduced and these are now the pupils with the most severe needs.

Comparison of outcome data from 2013/14 to 2016/17 shows an overall improvement in the performance of pupils with ALN at Foundation Phase, KS2 and KS3. However, there is a significant reduction in the outcomes for ALN learners in KS4 at Level 1 and Level 2 Thresholds and this is a targeted area for improvement.

Of the children who held either a statement of ALN or were on School Action Plus 15.6% achieved L2+, a slight fall from 2016 (15%). The % achieving L2 fell more markedly to 22% from 40% in 2016, a fall mirrored nationally and in other local indicators. 22% achieved English and 30.3% achieved 'best of' maths. 2.8% of the cohort achieved five A*/A grades. All outcomes were below regional averages apart from 'best of' maths which was 2.2% higher and five A*/A which was 0.5% higher than in 2016. There was a significant fall in performance in Science (-17.5%) which probably reflects the change in some schools from 'equivalent' qualifications to the more traditional GCSE in anticipation.

A factor impacting on school outcomes has been the challenge of maintaining school placements for those at risk of disengagement including pupils who would previously attended the PPRU. The Authority has prioritised the maintenance of pupil places within mainstream schools, particularly at KS4. The decrease in KS4 outcomes for schools is likely to be a result of the inclusion of outcomes for pupils who previously would have attended the PPRU or EOTAS.

Table 22: End of Key Stage Outcomes for Pupils at School Action Plus or Statemented Attending Mainstream Schools in Flintshire

Outcome	2013/4 %		2016/17 %	
	SAP	S	SAP	S
Foundation Phase Indicator	34.7	23.1	52.4	36.4
KS2 Core Subject Indicator	39.0	15.6	61.2	30.0
KS3 core Subject Indicator	49.5	22.2	61.0	31.0
KS4 Level 1	92.3	87.5	79.5	82.14
KS4 Level 2	70.8	47.5	27.4	17.9
KS4 Level 2+	26.2	10.0	19.2	10.7
KS4 Core Subject Indicator	24.6	10.0	19.18	7.14

Learners with sensory impairment

Pupils with sensory impairments access additional support through the authority's specialist sensory staff. The cohorts are generally small in number although there is an increase in the number of pupils with a hearing impairment (HI) requiring additional input. This has placed increased pressure on the HI staff within the service and is a concern going forward in terms of staff capacity.

When compared to the authority's overall outcome figures for all learners, the pupils with a sensory impairment are often achieving in line with expected outcomes. It is difficult to make year on year comparisons given the very small numbers undergoing end of key stage assessments; this is frequently 1 pupil with a visual impairment.

Table 23: Outcomes for learning with sensory impairment

Hearing Impairment	2014-15 HI	FCC LA	2015-16 HI	FCC LA	2016-17 HI	FCC LA
FPI	100	87	50	86.9	25	89.5
KS2 CSI	30	87.9	80	90.1	33	91.0
KS3 CSI	75	87.1	71	88.4	75	89.5
KS4 CSI	25	58.7	50	58.8	86	55.0
Visual Impairment	2014-15 VI	FCC LA	2015-16 VI	FCC LA	2016-17 VI	FCC LA
FPI	100	87	100	86.9	0	89.5
KS2 CSI	80	87.9	86	90.1	100	91.0
KS3 CSI	100	87.1	100	88.4	100	89.5
KS4 CSI	50	58.7	75	58.8	100	55.0

Ethnic Minority Pupils

The number of pupils from minority ethnic groups remains fairly low as a percentage of the total school population however, Flintshire has seen a significant rise in numbers in the number of pupils with English/Welsh as an additional language as demonstrated by Table 24 where the % values relate to the percentage of the regional and national total numbers.

Table 24: Number of pupils with English/Welsh as an Additional Language

	2012/13		2013/14		2014/15		2015/16		2016/17	
Flintshire	432		547		655		753		864	
North Wales	2,562	16.8%	2,840	19.2%	3,052	21.5%	3,229	23.3%	3,485	24.8%
Wales	19,971	2.1%	21,931	2.3%	23,453	2.8%	25,189	3.0%	26,606	3.2%

As of January 2017, there were 43 different languages (plus English and Welsh) being spoken in Flintshire schools.

Table 25: Number of different language spoken by pupils in Flintshire

Language	Polish	Romanian	Lithuanian	Bulgarian	Cantonese	Portuguese	Bengali	Malayalam
No. of Pupils	502	92	74	52	48	32	27	23

The outcomes for pupils with English/Welsh as an Additional Language generally show an increasing trend of improvement despite the increasing pupil numbers and the significant reduction in capacity of the central EAL service due to budgetary pressures within the Council. Where a reduction in outcomes has been observed, this is often due to pupils entering secondary schools with none or very limited English, or on a few occasions, pupils having significant levels of special educational need.

Table 26: Outcome data (%) for Pupils with English/Welsh as an Additional Language

Outcome	2011/12/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
Foundation Phase Indicator	62	77	80	81	88
Key Stage 2 CSI	71	79	78	86	89

Key Stage 3 CSI	70	73	77	66	78
Key Stage 4 CSI	40	35	57	43	45
Level 1 Indicator	94	86	100	100	95

Gypsy & Traveller Pupils

The nature of the Traveller community within Flintshire has changed over the last few years with the population becoming far more transient. In 2016/17, the number of pupils on the Traveller Education Service Caseload increased to 165; this is usually in the region of 120. Of the 165, 22% were completely new to the authority, approximately 30% left during the academic year and 50% travelled in and out, and were in the area for less than half of the school year.

This transience is largely due to housing and site issues, including the building of a new site in Winsford in Cheshire and the change of management of the local site in Queensferry. Most of the pupils are not attending schools when they are not in the area and significant gaps in education have impacted on attainment, self-esteem and behaviour. Maintaining relationships and supporting pupils and families has therefore been very difficult. Ensuring children meet their potential within our school system remains a difficult challenge and it has been necessary for the Traveller Service to seek alternative methods of engagement and support for schools and pupils. These have included a range of bespoke timetables and alternative curriculum opportunities, Youth Group projects, individually targeted interventions such as Unearthing Boxes and 'Be Smart, Be Cool, Be Positive'. Pupils who accessed these interventions and had attendance rates in excess of 50% tended to make good progress as demonstrated in the outcome table below.

Table 27: Outcome data (%) for pupils from the Traveller Community

Outcome	2011/12/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
Foundation Phase Indicator	50	57	60	47	40
Key Stage 2 CSI	61	50	77	45	64*

* The % outcome increased to 75% for pupils with attendance in excess of 50% and compares favourably to the national averages for Gypsies (56.1%) and Irish travellers (60.9%).

Of the 2 Key Stage 3 pupils who completed Year 9, 1 achieved the Core Subject indicator.

Generally, the low numbers of most ethnic minority groups make it difficult to track or make direct comparisons between different ethnicities, Table 28 shows the overall outcome data. Analysis of individual ethnic groups shows that Romanian pupils have generally scored lower than other ethnic groups at all key stages. This is largely attributable to language capabilities and more limited time spent in the UK. The majority of our Romanian pupils are also living in areas of social deprivation.

There is evidence that Travellers of Irish Heritage require additional support. Children from vulnerable groups, such as Black Caribbean, identified via All Wales data as underachieving across Wales, generally perform well, though the numbers are generally too small in each cohort to make any comparisons.

Table 28: Key outcomes for Minority Ethnic Groups

Ethnicity	Foundation Phase		Key Stage 2		Key Stage 3		Key Stage 4		
	%age CSI	No. of pupils	%age CSI	No. of pupils	%age CSI	No. of pupils	%age CSI	L1 Indicator	No. of pupils
All Ethnicities	84%	154	83%	126	85%	80	55%	97%	75

Looked After Children

The number of children who are looked after in Flintshire continues to rise however, the number of children undergoing an end of key stage assessment is extremely low making year on year comparison difficult. The educational outcomes at the end of Key Stage 4 (Average Points Score) have benchmarked extremely poorly against national outcomes but in the last 3 years, the gap between Flintshire's performance and the Welsh average figures for LAC has significantly reduced and in 2014-15 was higher than the Welsh average.

The number of looked after pupils experiencing an exclusion from school peaked in 2014/15 but saw a reduction in 2015/16. The percentage of looked after children experiencing a change in schools placement also shows a reducing trend which is in line with the authority's policy.

Table 29: Outcomes for Children who are Looked After

	No. of LAC (statutory School Age)	No. of Year 11 LAC	Average KS4 Points Score FCC	Average KS4 Points Score Wales	No. of LAC being excluded from school	LAC experiencing 1 or more change in School (FCC)	LAC experiencing 1 or more change in School (Wales)
2015/16	154	9	248	269	7	19 (12%)	12%
2014/15	137	6	358	275	16	25 (18%)	13%
2013/14	122	13	225	262	6	18 (15%)	14%

Young People within the Youth Justice System – NEET

The YJS has had a rolling cohort figure of around 80 young people that the service is working with at any one time. Around 30 of these young people are on Statutory Orders from Court or the Police, and 50 are working with the service on a voluntary, prevention basis. The latest (2011) age 10-17 population figure for Flintshire was 14,711 so at any one time the YJS is working with 0.54% of the population of children and young people age 10-17 in Flintshire.

The YJS does not have a statutory obligation to provide ETE provision, but instead to facilitate access to education through assessment and signposting/referral, and therefore the YJS will provide cohort information to Education colleagues in order for them to report NEET figures in the cohort.

The YJS monitors those young people who are assessed as not in an appropriate level of ETE once they become involved in the criminal justice system. The service does not assess young people in terms of literacy, numeracy or digital competence and therefore this information is not available.

As part of any YJS assessment, young people's education, training and employment needs are assessed. Those assessed as NEET are automatically referred to the YJS Education Officer to explore possible provision. NEETs are monitored on a monthly basis by the YJS Education Panel and Management Team.

In the first half of 2017/18, 78% of school age young people who are involved with the YJS were offered an appropriate level of ETE provision. In the same period, 54% of young people who were age 16-18 were offered ETE provision. (Source: CAMMS performance framework)

Under the new Council Plan from 2017/18 the indicators were changed to:

- The percentage of young people under 16 years old in the youth justice system offered education, training or employment.
- The percentage of young people aged 16 – 18 in the youth justice system offered education, training or employment
- The previous indicators were different and are not comparable, therefore this data is not available.

In the Q1 reporting period for 2017/18, the YJB evidenced a 22% increase in the average number of ETE hours attended by young people of school age throughout the length of their order and an 18% increase for young people above school age. (Source: Wales YOT Data Summary)

The YJB National Performance indicator looks at those young people whose Statutory Court Orders have closed in the reporting period and therefore is a much smaller cohort than that reported upon locally. Comparative data is as follows:

School Age

Q1 2015/16 – 51% increase from 9.1hrs to 11.4hrs average ETE attended (3 young people)

Q1 2017/17 – 66% increase from 11.4hrs to 17.2hrs average ETE attended (4 young people)

Q1 2017/18 – 22% increase from 17.2hrs to 21hrs average ETE attended (6 young people)

Above School Age

Q1 2015/16 – 26% reduction from 9.8hrs to 7.2hrs average ETE attended (3 young people)

Q1 2017/17 – 27% increase from 7.2hrs to 9.2hrs average ETE attended (4 young people)

The YJS is utilising the Junior Attendance Centre to increase accredited outcomes and skills through the Agored framework. The YJS estimates that 6-8 young people have obtained additional Agored qualifications in the last 12 months.

The service has only formalised the Agored framework in the last 12 months since a staffing change at the Youth Justice Centre, therefore historic figures are not available. Going forward, this is an area which will be monitored and will therefore be available for future reporting.

Young People with Additional Learning Needs

An innovative theatre project, which was ASDAN Accredited, involving pupils from Ysgol Maes Hyfryd Specialist Secondary School, supported by pupils from St David's High School, resulted in 9 ASDAN Activity awards and 1 peer mentoring award during 2017.

Students at Ysgol Maes Hyfryd also took part in the Duke of Edinburgh Award in partnership with the Youth Service. 2017 saw 2 x bronze, 1 x Silver and 1 x Gold Group successfully complete the award.

Early Education Funded Provision for 3 year olds (Early Entitlement)

Over the last three years Flintshire has averaged 847 three year olds accessing early education, known locally as Early Entitlement through a mixed provision of mostly playgroups and private day nurseries. Some schools offer early education as part of their nursery/reception class if there is a lack of non-maintained provision in the area. Pupil level data on standards achieved by three year olds is not collected by the Local Authority. Quality of provision in the non-maintained sector is monitored regularly by the Early Entitlement Advisory Team and a number of partner schools and is quality assured by Estyn and CIW. The LA uses Estyn inspections as the main source of data on standards and progress in funded non-maintained settings.

Over recent years there have been mixed outcomes from Estyn inspections of non-maintained settings funded to deliver Foundation Phase education to eligible 3 year-olds. The turnover of staff in the non-maintained sector can make securing consistency of standards and provision challenging and the Local Authority Advisory team often find themselves having to train staff with no prior knowledge about how to meet the additional demands of educational provision rather than childcare.

From 2016 onwards, Advisory Teachers have been required to write pre-inspection reports under the revised Estyn framework, rather than just provide a verbal report to the Inspector. The Advisory Teachers' reports clearly identify a setting's strengths as well as areas for development. Teachers have undertaken this task with integrity and objectivity and the match between their judgement in the reports and the final inspection outcomes match closely. No concerns have been raised by the Inspectors undertaking an individual visit or through the Local Area Inspection visits to the Local Authority that these reports are not accurately reflecting the standards and quality of provision in the non-maintained settings.

2015 - 2016: 8 core inspections resulted in 1 report with aspects of Excellent/Good, 4 others as Good; 1 in LA Monitoring, 2 in Estyn Monitoring, and 1 re-visit resulted in a setting being moved down from Estyn Monitoring into Focused Improvement.

2016 - 2017: 13 inspections and 3 re-visits were undertaken. Of the 13 inspections in 2017, 4 settings were deemed to be Good, 6 required Local Authority Monitoring for minor aspects of provision and 3 were judged to require Estyn Monitoring.

Inspection re-visits during 2016-17 resulted all 3 settings (2 in an 'Estyn Monitored' category and 1 in a 'Focused Improvement' category) being removed from their 'follow-up' category because they had made good progress against the recommendations in their reports. An additional setting requiring 'Local Authority Monitoring' following an inspection in 2016 was also removed from this category during 2017.

From the start of the 2017-18 academic year, 7 settings have been the subject of a core Estyn inspection and all outcomes have been positive. 2 further settings have been removed from follow up following good progress made against recommendations. 5 more settings will be inspected before the end of the academic year.

Other specific learner groups identified in the framework

The numbers of refugee and asylum seekers resettled in Flintshire is extremely low (2 families) and the children in these family groups have not yet undertaken any end of key stage educational assessments.

In Flintshire, children and families in difficult circumstances have been identified as those suffering from 'Adverse Childhood Experiences' (ACES's) and the work of the recently established Early Help Hub

will provide the opportunity to cross reference those children to their educational outputs and monitor their performance.

Learners with basic skills needs are those identified as scoring 85-90 on the Welsh national tests for literacy and numeracy and work is currently being undertaken to review the performance of this group of learners over time.

Performance data on children of service families has not been captured by the local authority in the past but with the recent adoption by the Council of the Armed Forces Covenant, school admissions forms are being changed to request this information from families. This will then allow the monitoring of this group over time.

Learners with an attendance rate of 80% or below are formally categorised as 'learners with low attendance' and a data matching exercise is currently underway to track the academic performance of this cohort.

The local authority does not hold data on learners at risk of gender or sexuality based bullying or on adopted children. Schools will know who their pupils are with medical needs and will be tracking their performance but this is not held centrally.

The local authority expects that School Improvement Advisers will challenge Head Teachers on the performance of pupils who do not meet the expected attainment level. Going forward, senior managers within the portfolio will review the pupil records of learners who do not meet their expected levels and this may identify trends in particular groups over time.

1.3 Wellbeing and attitudes to learning

Analysis of the inspection outcomes across Flintshire schools over the last three years demonstrate that the majority of schools receive good judgements on aspects of pupil wellbeing and pupil attitudes to learning. In those positive reports there is a theme of pupils feeling safe in schools and confident that the school will deal effectively with any issues. In these schools pupil behaviour is noted as good with children and young people being polite and courteous to each other, to staff and to visitors. The majority of reports note that pupils engage very well in lessons, show great pride in their work and are curious, inquisitive and enthusiastic learners, working in a range of learning contexts appropriate to their age and stage of learning.

The Estyn Inspections of the Portfolio Pupil Referral Units in Flintshire in February 2015 and of Canolfan Enfys in March 2015 resulted in the following judgements for section 1.2 Wellbeing:

- Portfolio PPRU – Adequate
- Canolfan Enfys – Good

Pupils across both settings reported feeling safe and that positive relationships were in place between staff and pupils. Levels of exclusions were reported as being low with nearly all pupils improving their behaviour over time. They learn to manage their anger and reduce conflict with staff and others. Pupils with high levels of anxiety were deemed to gain confidence and become more willing to take part in group activities and express themselves with both pupils and parents recognising the positive impact these changes have on the quality of their lives. The low levels of attendance across the secondary sector provision was deemed to have a negative impact reducing the judgement to Adequate across the PPRU.

Attendance

School attendance is a high priority both for the Welsh Government and local authorities in their aim to improve standards. Flintshire schools have, in the main, demonstrated a trend of improvement for the secondary sector, with this being consistently above the national average for Wales with the exception of this year. Authorised absences such as illness and particularly exclusion in the secondary sector have impacted on the overall attendance figures for 2016/17. Unauthorised absence remains very low with the figure for primary schools sitting at 0.4% and 0.8% across secondary schools; these are both the second lowest values in the respective sector.

Table 30: Flintshire Schools' Attendance in comparison with Welsh Averages

	Attendance (%)				Unauthorised absence (%)			
	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
Flintshire Primary Schools	94.8	94.7	94.7	94.8	0.4	0.3	0.3	0.4
Wales Average	94.8	94.9	94.9	94.9	1.0	1.0	1.1	1.1
Best in Wales	95.8	95.8	95.7	95.6	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.2
Flintshire Secondary Schools	93.8	94.2	94.3	93.9	0.5	0.3	0.4	0.8
Wales Average	93.6	93.8	94.2	94.1	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.4
Best in Wales	94.5	94.7	95.0	95.2	0.5	0.3	0.4	0.5

Table 31 below shows the spread of attendance figures across the primary and secondary sectors in 2016/17. This demonstrates that the majority of primary schools have attendance figures in a tighter cluster around or in excess of the Welsh average. Those schools showing lower percentages include the areas with a more transient population and in particular a high school which closed at the end of the academic year 2016/17.

Table 31 – Spread of attendance figures

Attendance (%)	<90	90.0-90.9	91.0-91.9	92.0-92.9	93.0-93.9	94.0-94.9	95.0-95.9	96.0-96.9	97.0-97.9	98.0-98.9	99.0-100
Primary 2016/17	1	0	0	2	11	10	30	9	1	0	0
Primary 2015/16	1	0	1	3	6	15	19	17	4	1	0
Secondary 2016/17	1	1	1	1	3	5	0	0	0	0	0
Secondary 2015/16	0	0	1	1	1	5	4	0	0	0	0

Whilst levels of unauthorised absence are very low across the county, the percentage of persistent absence, i.e. attendance less than 80% is in both primary and secondary schools are both higher than the Welsh averages as outlined in the table below. Despite the broadening of the curriculum offer, there are a number of pupils who are increasingly difficult to engage, with increasing levels of severe anxiety contributing to this. The authority has established a multi-agency steering group to oversee and direct its provision around mental health. The initial focus for the group was around self-harm prevention. The brief for the group has now extended and partners are exploring/reviewing a range of strategies under the '5 Ways to Wellbeing' framework to recommend for implementation across schools.

Table 32: Persistent Absence

	Primary Schools			Secondary Schools		
	No. of Pupils	% Persistent Absence FCC	% Persistent Absence Wales	No. of Pupils	% Persistent Absence FCC	% Persistent Absence Wales
2016/17	211	11.5	8.4	366	26.8	22.8
2015/16	215	11.2	8.2	331	24.5	21.9
2014/15	192	10.0	7.6	325	22.0	23.7

Exclusions – Permanent and Fixed Term

The number of permanent exclusions from Flintshire schools had traditionally been very low in both the primary and secondary sector as the verified data confirms in Table 33 below. Internal data shows a significant increase in numbers of permanent exclusions particularly in the secondary sector in 2016/17. The reasons for exclusion are predominantly violence/aggression towards another pupil or adult.

Table 33: Number of Permanent Exclusions from Flintshire Schools

	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Primary	0	0	0	1	1
Secondary	4	1	0	3	2

Similarly, there is an increasing trend of fixed-term exclusions across Flintshire schools, with the rates of exclusion being above the Welsh averages for both sectors. The focus on reducing the number of exclusions of 6 days or more since 2013 has supported an overall reduction which has been sustained. However, the number of exclusions of 5 days or less increased significantly in 2015/16.

The authority is seeing an increase in the level of complex needs experienced by pupils across our schools. There is a noticeable increase in the levels of aggression towards adults and this is also now more evident in young pupils in the Foundation Phase. The restructure of the PPRU has been undertaken with a view to providing additional outreach to mainstream schools, with additional provision being available to the primary sector. This is currently being piloted in a number of targeted schools during which time the delivery model/impact will be evaluated and refined.

Table 34: Fixed-Term Exclusions

Year	Exclusion Type	Number of Exclusions		Rate of Exclusion*	Average days lost
		Primary	Secondary		

2015 - 2016	5 Days or Less	838		35.3	N/A
	Wales	2810	10110	30.9	
	Over 5 days	44		1.9	
	Wales	126	469	1.4	
2014 - 2015	5 Days or Less	712		30	
	Wales	2188	10096	29.9	
	Over 5 days	40		1.7	
	Wales	138	612	1.7	
2013 - 2014	5 Days or Less	696		29.7	2.1
	Wales	1992	9789	26.7	N/A
	Over 5 days	42		1.8	9.2
	Wales	129	579	1.6	N/A
2012 - 2013	5 Days or Less	689		29.4	2.1
	Wales	1593	10824	27.9	2.0
	Over 5 days	67		2.9	10.7
	Wales	139	782	2.1	9.7

*Rate per 1000 pupils

Managed Moves

The authority revised its policy on Managed Moves in 2016/17 and shared this with Head Teachers through the Federation Meetings. The process is used predominantly on the secondary sector although there have been successful moves within the primary sector. The authority contributed towards the Estyn thematic review of Managed Moves in October 2017 which identified a number of positive aspects of the practice being undertaken. Concerns raised by the stakeholder group as part of the Estyn interviews included the willingness of all schools to engage and the inappropriate use of the policy on occasions to move pupils on to alternative placements.

Healthy Schools & Healthy Pre-Schools

All maintained nursery, primary, secondary, special schools and pupil referral units in Flintshire, in addition to Bryn Tirion Hall School participate in the Healthy Schools Scheme which equates to 79 settings.

As of January 2018 there are 44 settings participating in the Flintshire Healthy Pre-school Scheme. Settings are targeted to prioritise those within the lower two fifths areas of deprivation, as measured by the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation in order to reduce inequalities in health.

Currently 10 schools have achieved the National Quality Award for Healthy Schools and 11 pre-school settings have completed the HSPSS.

Welsh Network of Healthy School Schemes (WNHSS) The following targets are set by Public Health Wales (up until 31st March 2018):

Target 1: 95% schools to achieve the Phase 3 award (or higher) As of January 2018, 96% of Flintshire schools have achieved Phase 3 or higher in their participation of the Healthy Schools Scheme. This equates to 76 schools.

Target 2: 10% of schools to achieve the National Quality Award (NQA) Phase 6 As of January 2018, 12.6% of Flintshire schools have achieved the NQA which equates to 10 schools.

Target 3: 20% of schools working towards the NQA (achieved Phase 5) As of January 2018, 34% of Flintshire schools have achieved Phase 5 and are working towards the NQA, which equates to 27 schools.

Healthy & Sustainable Pre Schools Scheme (HSPSS):

Target 1: PHW have identified that ‘between 20–30 settings per local authority should be supported to work toward agreed achievement criteria’ in 2017-18. As of January 2018 there are 44 settings participating in the Flintshire healthy pre-school scheme.

Obesity Target (Local): Recruit 5 additional settings to the scheme (from 40 settings to 45) 4 settings have been recruited to date identified by Flying Start in the first instance and utilising Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation.

Obesity Target (General): Increase in the number of Early Years Settings achieving the Physical Activity/Play and Nutrition and Oral Health benchmarks within the Healthy and Sustainable Pre-School Scheme. At the end of March 2017 there were 26 settings from 40 that had completed the Nutrition and Oral Health topic criteria and to date this has increased by 6 to 32 settings in total. 1 setting is also scheduled before the end of March 2018.

At the end of March 2017, there were 20 settings from 40 that had completed the Physical Activity and Active Play criteria and to date this has been increased by 7. There are 27 settings in total that have completed this topic with a further 2 scheduled before the end of March 2018.

Outcome 1: Standards and Progress Overall

Areas for ongoing improvement	Key Sources of Evidence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve outcomes in Welsh first language • Continue to improve performance of pupils entitled to FSM in secondary schools • Further improve outcomes at A*/A at KS4 • Further improve outcomes for KS5 at A*-C and A*/A • Improve take up and outcomes in Welsh GCSE at KS4 • Improve attendance rates and outcomes for EOTAS pupils 	<p>All available data sets Estyn reports</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce number of fixed and permanent exclusions • Improve outcomes for Looked After children • Increase the number of schools and settings receiving 'Excellent' judgements by Estyn 	
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Risks

- Funding pressures on delegated schools budgets resulting in reducing staffing and interventions for learners which may undermine standards
- Funding pressures on core LA support teams e.g. Inclusion, Youth Justice Service reducing expert support for learners
- Increasing EAL population in context of reducing MEAG funding, impacting on LA/school ability to support learner outcomes
- Increasingly complex needs of learners and accessibility of appropriate provision impacting on learner outcomes achieved
- Increasing numbers of permanent exclusions in primary and secondary phases reducing learner opportunities to secure positive outcomes

2.0 Quality of Education Services

2.1 Support for School Improvement

The local authority knows its schools very well and provides them with robust and appropriate challenge, support and intervention. There are clear strategies, policies and processes that are well understood and give a clear shape and direction to the service.

The relationship between Flintshire and the regional school improvement service, GwE, is outstanding. Flintshire's Interim Chief Education Officer is a member of the GwE Management Board whilst the Cabinet Member for Education is a member of the Joint Committee. Senior officers contribute to the leadership of school improvement strategies locally, regionally and nationally through participation in professional networks/strategic groups.

The local authority has benefited from the establishment of a Regional School Improvement Team that has ensured greater consistency in its challenge and support to schools. The strength of the service's revised strategy is using the expertise and experience of service staff and School Senior Leaders to provide high quality guidance and support to schools. This has contributed to improved consistency in the quality of school improvement activity within the local authority.

The GwE Regional Business plan identifies priorities for improvement across the region and Flintshire L2 Business Plans for primary and secondary highlight the actions specific to the local authority's context. Factors leading to schools 'causing concern' are identified and shared quickly. These are addressed at an early stage following implementation of specific interventions with Core Leads and Supporting Improvement Advisers. Arrangements for communicating and ensuring accountability include:

- Fortnightly meetings between the Senior Manager for School Improvement with Core Leads for Primary and Secondary to discuss progress against business plan priorities including a focus on progress in schools that are causing concern. Where relevant, other Officers and/or Supporting Improvement Advisers are invited to attend.
- Half termly meetings of the LA Quality Board chaired by the Chief Education Officer and attended by the Cabinet Member for Education, Chair of Education Overview and Scrutiny Committee, LA Senior Managers and GwE Senior and Core Leads.

Continuing to improve performance in Key Stage 4 is a priority and outcomes for pupils in receipt of free school meals in particular. As a result, each secondary school has been assessed to identify requirements for support and development. All secondary schools, therefore have a support programme which is fit for purpose, with greater alignment to their improvement plan. The school support plan clearly defines how GwE and the local authority utilises its resources to ensure targeted improvements in key priority areas.

A strength of the challenge and support in the local authority is the increasing role and influence of the Subject Supporting Improvement Advisers in supporting core departments in schools. They work in close collaboration with link School Improvement Advisers and the primary and secondary Core Leads to challenge and support underperforming secondary school departments. The quality of work of the Core Subject Improvement Support Advisers is excellent. They respond sensibly, and often innovatively to the needs of individual schools and provide very clear and beneficial guidance for core

subject leaders. This has had a very positive effect on standards in specific schools, in addition to strengthening and ensuring consistency in the quality of planning, learning and teaching in Key Stage 4. Robust data analysis has also led to more effective targeting of resources such as the tiered 'wave' approach adopted in all core subjects at key stage 4 for 2017-18.

The authority, in partnership with GwE, has effective procedures to support schools in their self-evaluation and improvement planning. Workshops and extensive training has been provided to schools by Supporting Improvement Advisers. Schools are robustly challenged on the quality of their self-evaluation processes. The impact of this can be seen in the good leadership profile in Estyn inspections.

In partnership with GwE, the local authority has taken very positive steps to improve its data handling system from the Foundation Phase to Key Stage 4. This sophisticated system includes comprehensive data for each key stage and groups of learners and is analysed purposefully for individual schools and sectors. This system has led to better consistency in the type of data considered and the way in which it is used. Senior Leaders within the service use data effectively to ensure areas of improvement are identified quickly and addressed robustly through detailed business planning. Data and information is scrutinised more robustly to monitor progress against agreed actions. As a result, data is used much more effectively to challenge and allocate specific support for schools.

Support for school leaders in the local authority has improved through a range of developmental programmes. The feedback from those who have completed the development programmes is generally very good with nearly all indicating that it has impacted positively on aspects of their work. GwE is working closely with Bangor University on the 'Collaborative Institute for Education Research, Evidence and Impact' (CIEREI) Project to establish effective evaluation systems for their development programmes; to measure their impact in schools as part of a regional approach. The project will also contribute to the research and development of improved effective leadership.

'A Curriculum for Wales Successful Futures' strategy has been developed which includes details of the work of the Pioneer schools across GwE. It also gives clear direction on how GwE will work with all local authority schools to implement a clear and systematic approach to support, reflecting on their readiness for the new curriculum; and supporting schools with their preparation for this. Each school cluster has a designated lead person to help facilitate the change management process that schools will have to undertake when developing the new curriculum and implementing new professional standards.

Regular updates on curriculum reform are given to all Supporting Improvement Advisers to consistently share with schools. Where appropriate, priorities and actions identified to raise standards are included within Successful Futures planning, and collaborative work between Secondary, Primary and Successful Futures team members takes place to meet these priorities.

Provision and plans to improve standards in the Foundation Phase are well developed in the local authority. A Foundation Phase support programme, targeting planning, teaching, assessment and leadership is in place. As a result, head teachers, teachers and assistants have a deeper understanding of effective provision and improved standards within the Foundation Phase.

The Literacy and Numeracy Supporting Improvement Advisers provide an extensive range of programmes across the local authority to support improvement of planning and provision in the primary sector. This has had a positive effect on quality of provision and improving standards especially at higher levels.

GwE have developed a number of strategies to support all learners, with additional focus on vulnerable learners such as children who are looked after and learners who are eligible for free school meals. Through reports, officers are able to identify good practice across the authority in both primary and secondary schools. There is joint working between Local Authority Inclusion Officers and GwE Support and Improvement Advisers.

Local authority support for specialist and PPRU provision has been very strong with the facility being highly organised within strategic planning, SER, monitoring procedures and curriculum provision.

Flintshire has a very good inspection profile in the primary sector and good and improving in the secondary sector. There is clear evidence to demonstrate that the authority's support for primary and secondary schools causing concern or who were placed in statutory category, has been a determining factor in accelerating their improvement journey. For secondary schools in a statutory category, a tailored support plan is agreed, and progress monitored on a termly basis via AIBs. This has led to significant improvements with almost all schools being removed from category within the expected time-frame. The increase in the intensity of support and challenge has also led to personnel changes at senior and middle leadership in a number of these schools, thus further accelerating progress.

The categorisation process is accurate and robust; and is supported by a clear and transparent process. This gives schools appropriate support to improve and is reflected in increasingly strong inspection outcomes particularly in the primary sector and the very close correlation between local authority reports and Estyn findings.

The local authority is working closely with GwE and with emerging organisations since the disbanding of Governors Wales by Welsh Government. There is a good understanding and greater clarity between the role of the Local Authority and its partners in delivering governor training. A regional conference this year concentrated on how to be an effective critical friend, the new Estyn Framework and what makes an effective SDP and SEP. This was developed by all three partners working together.

The local governor training programme is comprehensive and reflects changing national, regional and local priorities. Appropriate emphasis is given to key training requirements, such as safeguarding. The local authority provides appropriate mandatory training for governors in conjunction with neighbouring authorities in the North Wales Governor Support Officer Group. The local authority has regularly arranged annual governor conferences with a focus on developing skills and knowledge and feedback from governors has been extremely positive. The local authority encourages applications from under-represented groups to ensure that all governing bodies represent the diversity of their communities. No Flintshire governor has been dismissed from office due to misconduct.

In terms of ensuring further improvements to the monitoring, challenge and intervention work with schools, Supporting Improvement Advisers have received an intensive programme of support. In addition to the training programme, guidance is provided, defining and highlighting expectations, and a more robust induction programme for head teachers and other school SLT members who contribute to supporting school improvement via secondments.

Positive feedback has also been received from Estyn on the quality of pre-inspection and re-inspection reports that has significantly improved over the last couple of years demonstrating the effectiveness of the quality assurance work undertaken. The effective use of data and target setting was acknowledged in the recent Estyn monitoring Inspection of GwE (October 2017).

Both formal and informal feedback from Head Teachers indicates that there is robust challenge for improvement from Local Authority and GwE Officers. Effective consultation with Head Teacher Federations in Flintshire and through the GwE User Group continues to shape the future development of the service to ensure it delivers the appropriate support across all schools in Flintshire to enable them to succeed.

Partnership agreements clearly set out arrangements to support, monitor, challenge and intervene in schools.

2.2 Support for Vulnerable Learners

Flintshire retains a non-delegated budget to fund a range of services to support and promote inclusion. These have undergone review in light of the financial situation of the authority and a 30% reduction has been implemented over a 3 year period. Where possible, the number of managerial roles have been reduced to maintain front line delivery of a range of services. Services such as individual support for literacy and numeracy have ceased given the focus and support on this area offered through GwE.

In terms of percentage expenditure, services and provision to support children with a range of behavioural, emotional, social and welfare difficulties is comparatively higher than other areas of service such as sensory support and language intervention in direct response to presenting need. Where possible, services provide individual intervention to pupils however, in many cases, the delivery model now focuses on providing advice, guidance and training to develop capacity across settings. A significant element of the central budget is held within the authority's PPRU. This underwent a restructure in 2016/17 with a view to offering a more preventative outreach element to the provision. This is in the early stages of development and implementation.

The delegation of ALN funding previously held centrally to fund 1:1 provision for learners has been distributed to schools to facilitate local decision making around provision. Many schools have welcomed this and have developed local expertise and provision to respond to the needs of those within their school community. Others have struggled given their available resources/environment and feel the impact of the reducing central services more keenly.

The Young Person's Counselling Service is an integral part of the Authority's support mechanism to prevent young people from becoming vulnerable. All secondary schools, including the specialist school and the PPRU are allocated counsellor time with referrals also being taken for Year 6 pupils. Capacity to respond to the demand has been an issue, particularly during 2016/17 when the service had reduced capacity due to sickness absence for the majority of the year; access to additional counselling support through the TRAC project has alleviated this to a degree.

All young people engaging with the service undertake an initial assessment (YP-Core) and this is repeated at the end of the intervention to measure impact. Table 35 below shows that on average, those that did engage tended to see a positive outcome following the sessions. The most common reason for accessing the service has remained consistent and is family related matters. Increasingly, anxiety is overtaking the previously more prevalent reasons such as anger/behaviour.

Table 35: Impact of the Young Person's Counselling Service

	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
No of Clients	397	401	351

Male YP Core Average Initial Value	15.10	14.88	14.70
Male YP Core Average Exit Value	7.60	7.58	6.70
Female YP Core Average Initial Value	19.50	18.33	16.50
Female YP Core Average Exit Value	11.80	11.09	8.10
% Self-Referral	14%	10%	12%

The authority has focused on raising awareness across schools of pupils who may be experiencing relationship trauma, particularly in relation to attachment. The Education Psychology Service have facilitated Touchbase Training to build capacity of staff in schools. Following the launch in 2015-16, schools wishing to further develop their practice in this area have continued to meet with Education Psychologists and Behaviour Support Teachers to review and share effective practice. To date, 14 practitioners have undertaken the Attachment Lead in Schools Training: *Understanding how to support adopted, fostered and troubled pupils to settle and learn*, accredited by University of Brighton. Feedback from the practitioners indicate that attachment aware and trauma informed practice is evident in the schools that undertook the training, although capacity and resources (human and monetary) were cited as barriers to full implementation. In response to this, the authority is working with GwE lead officers to explore the use of Pupil Development Grant across settings to support the implementation of 'nurture' provision.

In anticipation of the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018, the authority has been actively involved in the reform process and officers have contributed to pilot projects on Quality Assurance/Provision Mapping, Person-Centred Planning (PCP) and facilitating/enhancing the role of the ALNCo/SENCo. There are four schools nominated as 'beacon' schools across the County who act as PCP champions and centres of excellence to provide support and advice. When done well, the PCP process pinpoints the areas of concern and identifies a holistic approach to supporting the individual/family. Training was provided to schools and key officers between 2014 and 2016. Information on the progress of the Bill has been shared with head teachers through the Federations and a report was presented to the Education Overview and Scrutiny Committee in January 2017 to raise the awareness of elected members.

A review of the impact of these initial projects identified that there were a number of schools who no longer had a trained person along with a significant number who had not moved their practice forward after accessing the training. For some schools, the ongoing uncertainty around the content of the reforms and the delayed implementation date resulted in this not being made an immediate priority. A 3-year PCP plan has now been developed with the focus on supporting schools to develop their knowledge and practice in readiness for the reforms and to improve the support processes currently being implemented. Regional collaboration is a feature of the plan, building on the practice developed through the WG Innovation Fund across Flintshire, Wrexham and Conwy.

All schools implement the graduated response outlined in the SEN Code of Practice for Wales. The use of screening tests at key times across the academic year and surveys such as PASS provide additional information in terms of areas in need of development, individual progress and attitudes to learning. The authority has recently purchased software licenses for secondary schools to identify pupils at risk through on-line activity. This is a pilot and the impact will be evaluated at the end of this academic year (2017-18). The Learner Profiling Tool is used centrally to identify secondary pupils at risk of disengagement. The tool accessing key data fields on schools' SIMS systems such as attendance, exclusion and attainment and those pupils hitting a score of 31+ are reviewed through the

termly school Youth Engagement Progression Framework meetings. Many of these pupils will go on to access individual intervention and the scores are monitored on a monthly basis for progress/deterioration.

Where possible, partnership or collaborative opportunities between portfolio teams, children's services and voluntary organisations have been explored and implemented. An effective arrangement exists between the Authority's language and communication service (CLASS) and BCUHB speech & language therapists. The collaboration combines the professional health knowledge with educational experience offering schools and individuals timely and effective intervention. Analysis of the outcomes shows that the majority of pupils accessing the time limited service demonstrate an improvement in their identified area of need or in a small number of cases, move on to access the specialist provision offered through the Authority's school-based Resource provision. Outcomes at end of key stage assessments for pupils who have accessed the service since 2013 indicate that 44% achieved the FPI, 41% achieved KS2 CSI and 75% achieved the KS3 CSI demonstrating the longer term impact of the early intervention.

Flintshire works in partnership with Wrexham County Borough Council to deliver the European Social Funded projects TRAC and ADTRAC. These target young people at risk of disengagement or those post-16 who are no longer engaging. These projects are enhanced by the work of the Engagement Progression Coordinator (EPC) who has developed links with local third sector providers. Through the termly meetings chaired by the EPC, referrals to TRAC are considered and the range of alternative provision is discussed; a directory of these providers has been generated and shared with schools, many of which are engaging provision directly themselves. The TRAC project had a delayed and problematic start in terms of recruitment however, analysis of data to date since the start of the project in 2016 shows that of the 281 pupils who have been allocated intervention via the service, 112 have been exited, with 77% maintaining their engagement with education/training. The Families First funded Resilience Project enhances the TRAC offer in a targeted delivery.

Flintshire hosts a sub-regional sensory service offering support for children and young people with a visual or hearing impairment. The service is commissioned by Wrexham and Denbighshire and officers work closely with health professionals across North Wales and across the border into England. The development of the sub-regional service has been effective in supporting the development of expertise across this area; 2 members of staff were appointed in 2016 without the mandatory qualifications due to lack of a suitably experience recruitment pool. This option was only viable due to the support and expertise available across the existing members of the service. Other benefits of the regional approach include the ability to maintain a level of service across the caseload during staff absence and the ability to recycle equipment across the 3 authorities.

Not all partnerships arrangements have remained intact. The arrangement with Wrexham for a shared Principal Education Psychologist which began in 2012 ended in September 2017. Evaluation of existing partnership arrangements and those that have ceased indicate that financial efficiency is not always an outcome of such arrangements and in areas such as the Sensory Service, budget allocations have needed to increase to support the staffing structure. The differing operational systems between authorities have also impacted on the success of such arrangements and the equal prioritisation of resources across all partners can be an issue.

Flintshire has retained a relatively large Education Welfare Service (EWS) compared to neighbouring authorities, consisting of 1 FTE Senior Education Welfare Officer and 8 FTE Education Welfare Officers.

Of this, an allocation of 0.6FTE is designated as the education link within the Youth Justice Service. These officers are linked to school clusters and operate on a needs-led referral basis. Where necessary, schools are challenged to improve their internal processes around attendance and the majority now have internal staff who provide an immediate response and target a reduction in the non-persistent absenteeism. Schools are encouraged to make referrals to the EWS if attendance drops to 85% or below, following which the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) will work in partnership with the school and other relevant agencies to improve attendance for that individual pupil.

The promotion of good behaviour in schools is key to the work of a number of central services in particular, the Behaviour Support Team, Education Psychology Service and the PPRU. Training (internal and external) is offered and accessed both at individual school level and county wide to develop awareness, skill and empathy. The well attended Secondary Pastoral Leads Group provides the opportunity for discussion and sharing of effective practice in this area. The Managed Moves process has been a focus at these meetings to support adherence to the LA's policy.

A number of schools are using Pastoral Support Plans (PSP) effectively to support pupils with behavioural, social and emotional difficulties. This has however, been identified as a training need to support wider knowledge and appropriate use of such plans. Access to a bespoke programme of intervention for learners will be through a PSP once training has been implemented to support the appropriate identification of the programme components and an improved monitoring process.

The local authority has invested time in securing additional provision for pupils who are Educated Other Than At School (EOTAS). The majority of placements are fulfilled via the PPRU but where external provision is commissioned, officers review relevant documentation, e.g. Estyn/Ofsted reports, undertake visits and review outcomes achieved by Flintshire pupils in attendance. Placements/provision has been ceased where this not been deemed effective. The authority is currently experiencing difficulty sourcing short term placements with an appropriate level of accreditation for pupils excluded in KS4 and this can lead to delays in learners accessing alternative provision. Officers are working with local providers to commission more flexible quality provision.

The Education Welfare Service along with other key services such as Admissions, actively engage with queries from other authorities to help find children missing in education. Internal systems to support the identification of Flintshire children missing from education have recently been reviewed to ensure they are robust and there is an appropriate 'provision' base to allocate to pupils to whilst alternative provision is developed. The portfolio has also streamlined its procedures for tracking and identifying children missing in education through a new protocol involving HMRC.

The authority has maintained low levels of NEET as evidenced by data in Outcome 1. The breadth and range of the curriculum offer has been key to supporting this at KS4 alongside the Personal Support Engagement Service. The strategies are discussed/agreed at the multi-agency 14-19 Network meetings. The increasing prevalence of mental health difficulties, particularly incidences of self-harm, led to the establishment of the multi-agency Emotional Wellbeing Steering Group in 2016/17. The group is using the '5 Ways to Wellbeing' as a set of principles to guide its work and support the development of appropriate intervention/provision to improve overall wellbeing and the ability to engage.

The designated officer with responsibility for Elective Home Education (EHE) provides information and advice to parents who wish their child to be educated at home. An information pack is circulated and annual visits are undertaken as part of the monitoring process. Officers' work closely with colleagues

across Social Services as required where safeguarding is deemed to be a concern. In line with other authorities, Flintshire has seen an increase in the numbers of EHE with 91 children now being identified as EHE in January 2018 compared to 72 in 2016.

Flintshire maintains a team of 3 ALN officers who provide advice and guidance to schools and parents as part of the statutory process. Each of the officers have cluster groups of schools and follow the pupils from entry into primary and transition to secondary and post 16, ensuring they develop an greater awareness of the child's need and build a working relationship with the educational setting and the parents/carers. One officer has responsibility for pre-school and the implementation of a separate Moderation Panel covering pre-school only has been effective in terms of efficient use of time and input from an appropriate range of professionals across health, education and social services.

The increase in the number of requests for statutory assessment has placed increasing pressure on the ALN officers in terms of capacity to attend and contribute to reviews. Alongside their ALN responsibilities, each officer has an additional area of specialism, i.e. pre-school, Autism and literacy/numeracy and the increase in statutory requests is impacting negatively on their ability to fulfil all elements of their role, including the monitoring of provision across schools.

The Education Psychology service has also seen an impact of the increased requests for statutory assessment as this reduces the ability to do deliver the wider psychological input across educational settings with the focus of work being on the completion of Appendix D reports. The impact of this, along with having a member of the team off on long term sick leave has meant that a number of statutory assessments have not been completed within the designated timescales. Whilst all attempts have been made to minimize the impact of this on the pupil, it remains a concern, both in terms of capacity and wider service impact. The data shown in the table below, however, does show that Flintshire is consistently above the Welsh averages for completion of statutory assessment, significantly so where the process has permissible exceptions.

Table 36: Statutory Assessment Completion Rates (%)

	Completion within 26 weeks without exceptions		Completion within 26 weeks with Exceptions	
	FCC	Wales Average	FCC	Wales Average
2016/17	100	95.4	96.3	77.4
2015/16	98.6	94.5	89.7	68.1
2014/15	100	95.6	87.7	64.5

The range of central services offering individual targeted interventions for pupils with ALN has reduced as a result of the need for all portfolios to find efficiencies in order to support the Council in setting a legally balanced budget. Service progress is monitored against defined outcomes, e.g. end of key stage outcomes, therapy outcome measures, alternative accreditation etc. These outcomes are monitored and evaluated by the service manager; key outcomes for learners with ALN are referenced in Outcome 1.

As part of the statutory assessment/statement process, all pupils undergo an annual review process. The documents are reviewed by the ALN team and progress against outcomes is reviewed as part of that process. Interim reviews are attended by officers where there are identified issues with progress/provision.

Flintshire operates a collaborative multi-agency approach to the joint commissioning of non-maintained specialist placements. All education-only placements are considered firstly by the authority's Moderation Panel at which a recommendation to explore external specialist provision may be issued. Representatives from other agencies, i.e. Health and Social Services are engaged in multi-disciplinary meetings to determine the individual's needs and the type of provision needed. An external review of the authority's processes around joint commissioning was undertaken in 2015 by the company Red Quadrant and this judged the Joint Commissioning Panel processes to be robust. Since then, the engagement of the Authority's Brokerage Service as part of the process has resulted in an improvement in commissioning and quality assurance processes.

Despite the improved rigour in the process, the number of children accessing non-Flintshire maintained provision continues to rise. The number of day placements has increased from 61 in 2014/15 to 88 in 2016/17. A cross-portfolio project is underway (January 2018), to identify the reasons for accessing 'out of county' placements with a view to developing the in-house provision to respond effectively to need.

Good links exist between the Education & Youth and Social Service Portfolios in relation to pupils who are 'looked after'. Joint meetings are held regularly and the cross membership of Chief Officers at Portfolio Programme Boards supports greater awareness and joint working. The Authority has an active Children's Forum which includes representation from Members, Officers, and Head Teachers and importantly, looked after children. This provides an opportunity for issues to be regularly raised and considered. Officers also work closely with schools and GwE to identify and source appropriate provision/intervention for looked after children. Members have recently given consent for a cross-portfolio project to audit and review the processes and provision which lead to looked after children having to access their care/education in non-Flintshire provision to see where improvements can be made. The Integrated Youth Provision Participation Team engage the cohort in the Flintshire County Council Youth Council and enable the young persons' voice to be considered.

Parental engagement is an ongoing area of importance for the Authority. Schools look to offer a range of opportunities to engage effectively with parents, as does the local authority in terms of its services and training. The Parent Partnership Service is commissioned through the Flintshire Citizen's Advice Bureau which supports access to a range of advice and guidance alongside support and advice on ALN. The service is utilised well with the number of referrals increasing to 183 as compared with 123 in 2015/16. The main reasons for referral were around ASD, ADHD and referrals to CAMHS. In response to this, additional training has been commissioned to raise awareness within schools around ASD. A forum to support Family Engagement staff in schools has also been established and sessions have been planned around ASD and ADHD to offer additional support to families.

The number of appeals to the SEN Tribunal for Wales remains consistently low; 2 in 2014/15, 2 in 2015/16 and 1 in 2016/17. The authority's officers across the range of Inclusion Services work in partnership with parents, pupils and other professionals to secure positive outcomes for learners with significant SEN. The authority commissions a dispute resolution service through Snap Cymru and this has only been requested/utilised on 1 occasion over the past 3 years.

The reducing level of central funding allocated to Inclusion Services over the last 4 years has intensified the need for targeted, effective training. Examination of Foundation Phase outcomes alongside the increasing number of EAL has led to the regular training on language acquisition to build capacity, particularly across early years' settings and Foundation Phase settings. To date, this training has been delivered to all Flintshire Early Entitlement settings and 90 members of staff across 40 Flintshire

schools. Training reviews has indicated a greater awareness and understanding of language acquisition, development and strategies to support those pupils with difficulties.

The authority has a published policy on De-escalation/Physical Intervention with the focus being on de-escalation. Schools record incidents in bound & numbered books. Flintshire has traditionally used the 'Team Teach' approach and training for school-based staff is offered through the secondary specialist school. The PRICE approach has recently been introduced as an alternative approach and is currently used in the PPRU and the primary BESD Resource who offer county-wide training. A review of the authority's policy will be undertaken through the development of a regional policy as recommended by the Regional Safeguarding Board.

Flintshire is increasing its focus on supporting families affected by imprisonment. Over 30 members of staff from various settings have completed the 'Hidden Sentence - supporting children with an imprisoned family member' training delivered by Barnados and have established a working group to disseminate good practice across services and increase awareness and support for schools. A member of the Inclusion Service sits on the multi-agency Programme Steering Group for Families Affected by Imprisonment.

Safeguarding

The Chief Officer for Education and Youth is the strategic lead for safeguarding in the Education & Youth Portfolio and chairs the Corporate Safeguarding Panel. Operational activity is delivered by the Learning Adviser for Health, Wellbeing and Safeguarding who attends national and regional safeguarding meetings, co-ordinates training for schools, governors and portfolio staff, provides model policies for schools and acts as the key liaison between Education and other portfolios in the Council as well as with external partners.

There are comprehensive arrangements for the strategic planning for safeguarding within the portfolio and with schools and for monitoring these. An updated Safeguarding and Child Protection model policy was issued to schools in Autumn 2017 which reflects national guidance from Keeping Learners Safe and the All Wales Child Protection Procedures. A structured training programme is in place covering all aspects of safeguarding including training for Designated Safeguarding Leads, Child Sexual Exploitation, Harmful Sexual Behaviour, e-safety, Domestic Abuse and Violence against Women, Prevent, Modern Slavery and County Lines. There are excellent relationship with key local partners e.g. North Wales Police, Barnardos, Hafan Cymru, NSPCC, Lucy Faithfull Foundation and E999.

Support materials and model lessons for teachers, particularly at secondary level, have been produced to support the delivery of key aspects of Personal, Social and Health education and have been well received by schools. There is a thriving PSHE county forum. Excellent partnership working with Theatr Clwyd has resulted in a powerful drama workshop for KS3 pupils on the issue of consent that has proved highly effective in enhancing pupils' knowledge and skills in keeping themselves safe and encouraged some young people to come forward to request individual support.

Safer recruitment practices are followed by the portfolio and by schools and there is regular monitoring activity through audit procedures. A new annual monitoring report for school leaders to report to their governing bodies and the LA on safeguarding matters has been recently developed and will be completed at the end of each academic year. Senior managers of the Education and Youth Portfolio and the Human Resources team work effectively with managers from Social Services in the event of allegations against members of staff from schools.

2.3 Other Education Support Services

Funded Part Time Early Years Provision

Flintshire has a long tradition of supporting early years' education and currently has 52 settings and 23 schools registered to deliver part time, early education for three year olds. Provision is for 10 hours of funded education per week. Flintshire has always endeavoured to maintain high levels of support for these funded settings where there is no qualified teacher, as per the original terms and conditions of the Foundation Phase Grant. A central team of 4 fte teachers and 2 specialist learning assistants work across the settings to provide targeted role modelling of teaching, to develop quality learning environments and support setting staff to produce robust self-evaluation reports and improvement action plans as required by the Estyn framework.

The core team is also supported in this delivery by a number of early years' teachers in schools, funded by the LA, where the local playgroup is the main feeder into the school nursery class. Initially developed as a strategy to maintain delivery in the face of reducing budgets and recruitment restrictions, there have been other benefits of this approach such as improved transition arrangements for pupils and sharing of best practice. However, the school based teachers have acknowledged their reliance on the core team who are real experts in provision for 3 year olds in the non-maintained sector. All support teachers produce pre-inspection reports on settings and assist with post-inspection action plans. Where settings require follow up after an inspection, particularly in the more significant categories, then the level of support is increased.

With the removal of the grant conditions to provide '10%' teacher time and reducing central resources, the authority is currently considering how it can maintain appropriate levels of support to funded settings to ensure high quality standards of provision and improve the number of settings being judged as Good or Excellent by Estyn as this will be at risk without dedicated teacher support.

Playgroups and Day Nurseries are also increasingly reporting concerns about their long term sustainability in the current financial climate and the level of funding provided by the local authority to provide early education and in the last twelve months, 7 number of settings have deregistered from the scheme. However, the local authority still has sufficient capacity to deliver the number of early education places required. As an early implementer of the Welsh Government's 30 hour Free Childcare Offer, many settings have registered as joint providers so this additional funding will provide some mitigation in this sector.

Flintshire has extended the number of Welsh medium Early Entitlement providers from five to seven in recent years and will continue to work closely with Mudiad Meithrin to develop new provision in a key geographical location in the county during 2018 where there is not yet capacity. There is currently sufficient capacity to deliver Welsh medium early years' education but the aim is to increase this as a stepping stone to more children accessing their full time education in a Welsh medium school. This is a key target in the authority's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan.

Free Childcare Offer – Early Implementer

Flintshire is one of the Early Implementer authorities in Wales, selected in 2016, to work with 6 other authorities and Welsh Government to develop and test the childcare offer before the scheme goes national in 2020. The aim of the 30 hour childcare offer is to mitigate against the effects of poverty on outcomes for children and reduce inequalities. The provision of high-quality early education and childcare is central to the Welsh Government's 'Building a Brighter Future', the 10 year plan which sets out the Government's commitment to improve the life chances and outcomes of all children in Wales. The Welsh Government has committed to offering working parents and registered guardians of three and four year olds in Wales 30 hours of government-funded childcare and early education for 48 weeks of the year.

It was agreed at the beginning of 2017 that Flintshire would take a phased approach, initially aiming for 75 children, this was extended to 441 then to 748 children by the end of March 2018. Flintshire is currently in 55 Lower Super Output wards, with 33 remaining. As at 5 February, 2018 there were 158 settings registered; 477 application received; 70 applications not seen or pending awaiting further information; 287 applications processed and confirmed eligible from September 2017 and 120 applications processed and confirmed eligible from January 2018.

Regular monitoring by Welsh Government officials has identified Flintshire's approach to the roll out of the Childcare Offer as highly effective and a business case is now being considered by WG to allow Flintshire to move to full roll out from April 2018. The method of delivery of the offer and the IT systems developed by Flintshire staff to support the offer are being considered as exemplary models for other local authorities to follow when they come onto the scheme. The effective joint partnership between a number of key partners e.g. Social Services Early Years & Parenting Team, Childcare Development Team, Early Entitlement Team, Family Information Service, Wales Pre-School Playgroup Association, Mudiad Meithrin, National Day Nurseries Association and PACEY (Childminders) has been integral to the success of the pilot and is an excellent example of partnership working.

Integrated Youth Services

Provision for young people in Flintshire is delivered through an integrated model combining the work of the Youth Service and the Youth Justice Service and enhanced collaboration between providers across statutory and voluntary services, utilising various streams of grant funding e.g. Youth Justice Grant, Youth Support Grant and Families First alongside core funding. Alongside a universal service offer of dedicated youth centre provision, the Integrated Youth Provision also offers commissioned projects. These include Young Carers, URDD bilingual provision, Breathing Space Wellbeing (based in Mold Alun High School) and specialist disability provision and targeted work for prevention with Theatre Clwyd Cymru. This mixed menu offers the best opportunity to be reactive to current needs of young people. The Integrated Youth Provision also prioritises young people evidencing at least two Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and deliver with an ACE informed trauma approach.

The Youth Justice Service has ensured that its 3 year Youth Justice Plan is committed to the following priorities;

- Increasing the number of young people in Education, Training and Employment (ETE)
- Increase the range of ETE opportunities for children and young people
- Equipping the workforce with trauma informed approaches and restorative justice solutions.

All young people involved within the YJS undergo a comprehensive holistic assessment which assesses their likelihood of re-offending, risk of serious harm to others in addition to their safety and wellbeing needs. This also include issues and concerns relating to education, training and employment, physical health and emotional and mental health.

The YJS has an ETE Panel and a referral process which identifies young people not in receipt of their full ETE entitlement. Efforts are made by YJS Case Managers and Education Officer to develop an Individual Learning Plan and explore alternative provisions and increasing ETE attendance. The YJS is utilising the Agored Framework and developing its own Forest School to increase alternative provisions. The YJS is also utilising its Junior Attendance Centre to increase young people's skills in literacy and numeracy and delivering workshops on healthy lifestyle and choices. Young people with

elements of reparation or Unpaid Work will complete the Health and Safety Agored qualification. The unpaid work projects all have an educational and/or vocational focus e.g. joinery, decorating, landscaping etc. with the aim of increasing the future employability of young people.

In one secondary school the Outdoor Education worker has been delivering sessions developing skills through outdoor education linked to team work and communication resulting in ASDAN accreditation. These learners have received additional support in basic personal skills. Pupils from the PPRU are also given opportunities to develop team work and listening skills through outdoor learning opportunities.

The YJS reports ETE performance to the Youth Justice Board and local performance frameworks on a quarterly basis. The KPIs are a measure of the education provision a young person is offered and engages in through the lifetime of the Order. If a young person is not being offered appropriate provision, the Education Coordinator seconded into the YJS will liaise with the Education Team to improve provision, and then the YJS case manager will support the young person to ensure that their engagement is maintained.

The YJS has committed to training staff in restorative justice conferencing and the trauma recovery model whilst forging links with schools to provide peer support to staff in utilising restorative justice solutions as part of their disciplinary policy.

The YJS has trained its work force in the Enhanced Case Management Approach which utilises and is informed by the Trauma Recovery Model to assist young people in making positive outcomes and desisting from offending. The approach is supported by a trained Clinical Psychologist.

The Flintshire Integrated Youth Provision (FIYP) Participation Team work with partners to ensure the voices of young people are represented locally and nationally on a wide range of issues.

Flintshire commissions Barnados to deliver support for Young Carer on a three tier model of intervention. The project offers needs assessments, respite group activities, training, peer support, 1-1 support and individual development plans. The project supports over 200 young people annually.

With the recent establishment of the Flintshire Youth Council, the commitment to involving children and young people at the highest strategic level of decision making in the local authority is set out as an example and benchmark for all organisations involved. It ensures that the duty of Due Regard under the Right of Children and Young People's Measure 2011 is appropriately discharged. The FIYP Participation Team work with Healthy Schools Co-coordinators and Schools Council Leads to ensure that there are strong links to the Youth Council.

Effective participation work by officers delivers a range of opportunities for young people to be involved in activities and events designed to support their academic, social, physical and emotional development. These include projects on healthy eating, relationships, sexual health, mental health, the effects of pregnancy and child rearing, consent, substance and alcohol misuse, financial literacy etc.

The Sorted Team who support young people in relation to substance misuse can clearly identify the positive impact of their service on improving awareness of the impact of such behaviours. For example, in the last quarterly reporting period (Q3) 26 young people referred to the team because of their offending behaviour undertook drug and alcohol interventions; of the 24 young people who completed targeted interventions during the periods, 17 engaged well and expressed a wish to continue with the support sessions and reported a reduction in risk taking behaviour; of the 65 young people referred to the project for targeted intervention, only 3 young people (5%) reoffended and none went into custody.

Integrated Youth Services also provide targeted support for vulnerable groups such as young people from Gypsy and Traveler communities who can often face issues when moving between high schools. The use of a Rights Based Approach has been successful in allowing them to explore who they are and how to integrate successfully in their school communities, improving their chances of engaging successfully in education. Similarly, young people who are carers are provided with dedicated support to facilitate their engagement in youth services commissioned through projects funding by Families First. The Authority supports the attendance of young carers to the Youth Service Annual Camp which has successfully run for three years and participation in this has acted as a springboard to help young carers integrate into mainstream youth provision.

An effective example of work by the Integrated Youth Team to reduce the numbers of young people who are not in education, training or employment (NEET) is The Resilience Project. Young people between the ages of 16-25, who are not currently in Education, Employment or training are targeted by the project which offers a bespoke package to engage them and provide a safe learning environment or their first steps into the world of higher education or employment. Resilience takes referrals from other agencies, parents or young people. They meet the young people in their home environment and work to re-engage them into group situations, building on achievements and supporting any setbacks until the young person is able to work independently towards his or her own goals.

The Integrated Youth Service also provides other play and sporting opportunities for older young people throughout the year through in a partnership approach with other key agencies e.g. Drug and Alcohol Team, Sports Development, North Wales Police and Anti-Social Behaviour Co-coordinators. This provides an effective platform to engage young people in a positive way and share important messages and access to services they may be in need of.

Play Services including Play Sufficiency

As a result of the development of an alternative delivery model for leisure services, the opportunity to bring play into Integrated Youth Services was seized in late 2017. Flintshire has a strong tradition of providing safe spaces and quality play opportunities for young children during summer holidays. The portfolio has an excellent track record in partnership working with over 30 Town and Community Councils to deliver these quality play schemes.

Flintshire County Council upholds Section 11 of the Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010 which places a statutory duty on all local authorities to assess and secure sufficient play opportunities for children and to consider the many aspects of community life that affect play opportunities e.g. use of the environment; traffic and transport; play and leisure provision, and parental and community involvement with play. Flintshire is effective in adhering to the statutory guidance, 'Wales – A Play Friendly Country'.

The portfolio has maximised the impact of the All Wales Play Opportunities Grant from Welsh Government. A key success has been *Playful Futures* schools project, which has improved opportunities for play across a range of school settings. It has made a major difference to the school day by creating more playful environments, supporting pupil voice and training midday supervisors and there is clear evidence that the projects have impacted positively on the quality of children's play as well as their health and wellbeing.

Lack of capacity within some service areas to deliver some activity agreed in the Play Sufficiency Action Plan was identified as a concern during the most recent audit process. As a result, Flintshire County

Council is currently prioritising the reinvigoration of a strategic approach to drive forward local annual action plans and is being supported in this by Play Wales.

Healthy Schools & Healthy Pre-Schools

In Flintshire four staff are funded by Public Health Wales to support schools and pre-school settings to actively participate in both the WNHSS and HSPSS. The Flintshire Healthy Schools Scheme works to ensure that health education and promotion becomes an integrated part of the school curriculum, the ethos of the school and community. The Scheme works in partnership with local and national organisations to ensure a coordinated and multi-faceted approach to health within schools. The Healthy and Sustainable Pre School Scheme (HSPSS) was launched nationally in 2011 and was developed as an extension of the Welsh Network of Healthy Schools Scheme (WNHSS). The criteria for the HSPSS have clear parallels with the WNHSS National Quality Award.

School Holiday Enrichment Programme (SHEP)

In Flintshire a local SHEP steering group has been established by the Healthy Schools team during the autumn term 2017 and two schools have been in bids to host the clubs during summer 2018.

School Health Research Network (SHRN)

All Flintshire secondary schools have undertaken the survey during the autumn term 2017 and will be issued with their individual research findings at the end of the spring term 2018, alongside a county report. An event for school council representatives will take place in March 2018 to help pupils understand how to interpret research data and action plan.

School Sports Survey

Sport Wales has run surveys of primary and secondary school pupils, in school years 3 to 11, for over 17 years. All schools which collect a sufficient number of survey responses from their pupils receive unweighted results from the survey. For the last survey in 2015 Flintshire surveyed 5090 pupils.

Flintshire's School Sports Survey identified an increase in the number of pupils 'hooked on sport' from 42% in 2013 to 49% in the last survey undertaken in 2015. This is above the Welsh average of 48%. The 'Hooked on sport' measure is a combined measure of activity that takes place outside of PE lessons – i.e. the number of occasions per week that a pupil takes part in either extracurricular school based activity or community based club activity.

In Flintshire, 94% of pupils enjoy PE with 64% saying they enjoy it 'a lot', and 83% enjoy extracurricular sport with 52% say they enjoy it 'a lot'. 40% of primary school pupils in Flintshire (39% of males and 42% of females) attended a leisure or sports centre once a week or more often during the 2015/16 academic year. This compares with 31% of primary pupils across Wales (30% of males and 33% of females).

40% of secondary school pupils in Flintshire (40% of males and 40% of females) attended a leisure or sports centre once a week or more often during the 2015/16 academic year. This compares with 36% of secondary pupils across Wales (34% of males and 37% of females).

Schools are actively encouraged to use the Sports Survey information to improve the quality of provision for sporting and extra-curricular provision for pupils and there is a good level of engagement through programmes such as 5x60, Young Dragons and Us Girls.

Early Help Hub

In early 2017 the Flintshire Public Service Board (PSB) commissioned the establishment of an Early Help Hub to support the delivery of more timely and appropriate early intervention and support for families with greater needs. There were multiple drivers for this including the introduction of the Social Service and Wellbeing Act 2014, the CSSIW inspection report recommendations about prioritising early intervention, intervening earlier at lower cost and for better outcomes and the extent to which so many cases being referred and re-referred to Children's Services did not meet thresholds for a statutory intervention, notwithstanding that the families often presented with persistent challenges.

The Early Help Hub's co-location will inform speedier information sharing and decision making to provide more effective support for families in a cost effective joint commissioned model. The agencies commissioned into the Hub are:

- **Y Teulu Cyfan** who will lead on direct interventions with families and draw upon their existing partnerships with Action for Children, Child and Adult Mental Health Services, Active 4-16, Community Parents, CAIS, Drug and Alcohol Team and the Domestic Abuse Safety Unit.
- **Action for Children – Young People** who will lead on targeted 1-1 working and group work with young people and families and the engagement of young people up to the age of 25 in education, employment, volunteering and work experience through the Resilience Project. They will also draw upon their effective partnerships with the Flintshire Local Voluntary Council and Aura, the local provider of leisure services.
- **Action for Children – Disability** who will lead on the provision of support and services for families with disabled children/young people to ensure better engagement in social, leisure, play and sporting opportunities to improve physical and mental health and transition into adulthood.

Nominated staff from the Education and Youth Portfolio are an integral part of this Early Help Hub contributing to the assessment of children and families and identifying appropriate mechanisms for support where there is clearly an identified need and there is evidence of two or more Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE's). Staff across the portfolio and in schools have been briefed on the purpose and operation processes of the EHH and an understanding of the impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences. They are being actively encouraged to make direct referrals to the EHH. The Hub development has been led on behalf of the portfolio by the Senior Manager for Integrated Youth Provision who has responsibility for commissioning Families First and has also been supported strategically by the Chief Officer for Education and Youth and the Senior Manager for Inclusion.

The EHH has been through a 'soft launch' pilot phase during the autumn of 2017 and is successfully transitioning into its full operational model.

School Place Planning & Provision

Flintshire County Council has a strong track record in strategically managing its school estate through its own resources and through the effective use of grant funding schemes e.g. 21st Century Schools programme in order to manage the effective and efficient delivery of school places. It has demonstrated a willingness to take difficult decisions to modernise the school network to improve the quality improving

the quality of the learning environment to underpin teaching and learning and address issues related to condition and suitability.

Under its School Modernisation Strategy the Council has undertaken a major programme of school organisational change proposals which have on included the closure of one nursery school, three primary schools, one secondary school, the development of four federal arrangements across the primary and secondary sector, the amalgamation of all infant and junior schools, the rationalisation of post 16 provision in the north of the County resulting in a partnership arrangement with Coleg Cambria, the extension of primary Welsh medium provision, the building of two new primary schools and an award winning 3-16 learning campus and other major remodelling programmes. Another primary school build is scheduled for the end of the 21st Century Band A programme bringing the total funding envelope for this initial tranche to £64.2m.

Flintshire's Strategic Outline Plan for Band B is equally ambitious at £85m and has approval from Welsh Government and the Council's Cabinet. The Council is currently evaluating its programme priorities and how to use the differing forms of funding available e.g. Capital and Revenue based funding and the Mutual Investment Model (MIM).

The proposed programme provides efficient and effective educational infrastructure to meet current and future demand. The programme has potential to remove up to 10 educational buildings from the service portfolio and ensure suitable investment in new facilities. All projects within the programme will be designed to promote community access to school and sports facilities.

The backlog maintenance for projects within in the programme is £7,732,996 for secondary and £1,692,356 for primary. For new school projects the Council would expect to achieve 100% reduction in backlog maintenance, for remodelling projects an 80% reduction and smaller scale projects the aim would be for 50% as a benchmark. The Council has clearly defined arrangements for repairs and maintenance of schools and responds appropriately to emergencies.

The SOP is linked to the Council's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan. The Band B programme is focused on 3 of the 6 schools within the Welsh Medium (WM) sector, linking in with the Council's desire to ensure that WM is given priority and linking into the National Welsh Language Strategy.

Voluntary Aided schools are maintained jointly by the County Council and either the Church in Wales or the Roman Catholic Church. Aided schools also have access to separate capital funding streams directly through the Welsh Government. The Council continues to work in partnership with the Diocesan Authorities to ensure that Aided schools are appropriately located and fit for purpose.

In September 2017 the Pupil Level Annual School Census showed the 64 primary schools had a total capacity of 14,001 full time places but only had 12,323 total numbers on roll (NOR), which is a surplus of 15.37%. 11 Schools in the secondary sector had a total capacity of 10,772 with 9188 NOR and 16.77% surplus places. When combined, these figures equate to 15.58% surplus places across the school network, which is higher than the maximum national target of 10%.

In January 2013, there were some 4,000 surplus places in Flintshire schools (15.4 per cent of the total) distributed across primary and secondary schools. Surplus places at September 2017 are lower at 3,262. The proposals contained in the SOP, should they be implemented, will reduce unfilled places in this sector to within the national target.

Pupil number projections methodology are aligned to with other authorities across the region and are completed twice per year, these are linked to school data returns, namely, January PLASC and

September returns. The capacity assessments are conducted using the Welsh Government's Measuring the capacity of schools in Wales and are audited once per year.

The Authority has an up-to-date Asset Management system and data from the system is used to influence decision making on capital investment in the school network. Priorities for investment for the schools capital programme are clear, linked to strategy, funded and agreed and based upon up-to-date information. However, despite significant expenditure, the authority's data shows that the school portfolio still requires significant further investment.

In 2016/17 suitability surveys were commissioned and conducted across the schools' portfolio based on national guidance. Despite the significant investment through 21st Century Schools programme and the Council's own capital programme, it is estimated that an investment in excess of £130m is still required to address suitability issues across the schools network.

Table 37: Suitability of School Buildings

Suitability Grade	No of Schools	Percentage %
A	12	15.38%
B	23	29.49%
C	39	50.00%
D	4	5.13%

School condition surveys are re-assessed in line with national asset management guidance on a five year cycle, with the repair & maintenance (R&M) backlog estimated in excess of £19m, a substantial improvement from the £35m backlog reported in the 2010 SOP.

Table 38: Condition of School Buildings

Condition Grade	No of Schools	Percentage %
A	4	5.13%
B	66	84.62%
C	8	10.26%
D	0	0.00%

Flintshire County Council has no schools in condition 'D' as this would mean that the school building life would have expired or be at risk of imminent failure.

The Council consults with children and young people, parents, school governors and staff and other relevant stakeholders prior to making proposals for any school modernisation change. The consultation process involves the completion and presentation of impact assessments around community, transport, buildings, equalities and language and includes a financial appraisal.

The responses from each formal consultation process is presented to the Council's Cabinet, along with the impact assessment, options appraisal and officer recommendations. Cabinet then decide on how to progress. For all construction projects the Head teacher or nominated person from School forms part of the "operational team".

Flintshire consults other admission authorities and coordinates admission arrangements with neighbouring authorities, including common dates of return and common offer dates. Flintshire participates in the regional North Wales Admissions Group to coordinate admissions arrangements and

develop/deliver joint training. The Council is represented at the ADEW School Admissions Officers' Group and is aware of national and Welsh Government initiatives in the service.

The composite prospectus, "Guide to Education Services" is reviewed and published annually and is made available on line to all parents on 1st September each year, as part of the annual admissions round. Feedback from Welsh Government on the composite prospectus has been incorporated in to the Guide. Flintshire's online admissions process was used by 100% of applicants for Secondary, Reception and Nursery for September 2017.

The vast majority of parental preferences continue to be met (96%) and the number of appeals for admission in September 2017 reduced when compared to previous years. All appeals are held before the end of the academic year and any appeals outside the timetabled admissions process are heard well within 30 school days in accordance with the School Appeals Code. Panel members are trained in accordance with the Appeals Code, and advertising, recruitment and training of panel members takes place every 3 years jointly with other admission authorities. This is a cost effective way of managing recruitment and training and ensures consistency across the region.

Applications for mid-term transfers are made online and every effort is made to admit pupils within 10 school days. Flintshire's Managed Moves Protocol has been revised recently and agreed with all head teachers.

2. Quality of Education Services

Areas for ongoing improvement	Key Sources of Evidence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen joint working between schools and the LA to enhance pupil engagement and maximise the use of reducing resources to improve learner outcomes Consolidate restructuring of PRU and relocation onto a single site to maximise the impact of service for PRU learners and extend support for mainstream provision to maintain learners in schools Increase access to education, employment and training for young people in the YJS Continue to strengthen links between the Portfolio and its secondary schools with the North Wales Economic Ambition Board to maximise learner access to apprenticeships and employment opportunities Continue to improve the school estate through school modernisation strategy and capital investment Continue to reduce the percentage of surplus places through school modernisation programme Increase provision for Welsh medium school places in urban areas of the Authority and increase take up in rural areas where existing provision is under-subscribed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public Service Board Plan Flintshire County Council Improvement Plan Portfolio Improvement Plans GwE Business Plans Corporate Documents e.g. Cabinet & Scrutiny Reports Corporate Monitoring Reports Audit reports Revised Operating Structure Annual Report of the School Performance Monitoring Group Integrated Youth Strategy Youth Justice Plan Training plans/presentations 21st Century Schools Business Cases Admissions Forum Minutes & Policy Commissioning documents e.g. Families First

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Risks

- Reducing funding for local government impacts on range of central education services to support children and young people, particularly the most vulnerable
- Reduction in grant funding e.g. EIG/MEAG/Youth Support Grant/Youth Justice Grant impacts on range of support for school improvement and for vulnerable learners
- Uncertainty of sustainability of grant funding and short term grants with inflexible grant conditions undermines ability for LA to plan strategically to maximise impact
- Affordability of school modernisation programme in current financial context could impact on ambition
- Resilience of central teams and workload levels

Outcome 3 – Leadership and Management

3.1 Quality and effectiveness of leaders and managers

Flintshire County Council benefits from highly effective leadership at all levels of the organisation. As a result, there is very strong corporate and political support for Education and Youth Services across the Council. Political and officer leadership of Education is very good and innovative. Education priorities are very clear and support the delivery of the corporate agenda effectively.

The local authority's approach to strategic leadership delivers excellent services to all residents, underpinned by public service values. Within the context of delivery of services to children and young people there is a moral commitment to delivery in an inclusive, nurturing and worthwhile way which enables them to successfully to embrace adult life and become responsible, independent, economically active and resilient citizens.

The leadership structure and hierarchy of accountability within the local authority, both from an Elected Member and an Officer perspective is clearly articulated and understood. Roles and responsibilities are clearly documented both within the local authority and for local residents. The development of senior and middle leadership in the Council since the last inspection has contributed to the sustained improvement in many key indicators.

The approach the authority has taken to developing its vision and priorities demonstrates a clear and connected 'golden thread' which runs through all plans, policies and strategies and complies with all legislative requirements. A key feature of the local authority's approach to planning is the acknowledgement that within the context of setting aspirational objectives, plans need to be ambitious. Senior Officers have ensured that the balance between creating and sustaining a culture of ambition is contextualized and the approach to setting education targets and measuring performance supports this. The impact of this approach has been that:

- The needs and priorities of pupils have been consistently supported and challenged both by Officers and Elected Members. Overall this has delivered consistently good outcomes for pupils.
- The Senior Leadership Team in the Local Authority cohesively understands the importance of securing better outcomes for children and young people not just in the short term, but within a longer-term perspective of building resilience, becoming economically active and reducing dependency on public services.

The impact of this is that within the context of legislative compliance the local authority has ensured that the learning and support offer is focused on what is appropriate to meet the individual needs of children and young people. This is evidenced by high levels of engagement and participation and consistently good outcomes over time.

Elected Members effectively undertake statutory duties and make a worthwhile contribution to the development and progress of statutory plans. They also show real commitment to safeguarding the welfare of vulnerable learners. There is very strong member engagement in the following areas:

- The Welsh in Education Strategic Plan and the Welsh Standards Committee
- The Corporate Parenting Forum
- The Corporate Safeguarding Panel
- The Economic Ambition Board

- The Standards Quality Board

The Council has a very good track record of communicating with residents, service users, services and stakeholders through external processes and internal website arrangements. The impact of this has been that the Local Authority has developed a strong culture of engagement and inclusivity when agreeing priorities, making difficult decisions and engaging with stakeholders. This has ensured that what matters to the resident is integral to priority setting and resource allocation. This can be seen in recent processes around the budget settlement for schools and in consultations around school organisational change.

Leaders and managers communicate high expectations for securing improvement and challenge schools positively to good effect through a range of forums. From a school improvement perspective these include regular meetings with the head teacher community, working through nominated representatives on the primary and secondary Head Teacher Federations, School Performance Monitoring Group and other specific groups e.g. ALNCo forum, County Curriculum Steering Group and Emotional Health and Well-Being Strategy Group. There is also effective monitoring and challenge for other areas of provision through groups such as the Youth Justice Board, Children's Services Forum and Corporate Safeguarding Panel. The key objectives of the Public Service Board are clearly aligned with the Council's and portfolio's strategic improvement plans.

There are effective performance management arrangements which bring about improvements. They also help ensure that objectives for individual officers link well to operational and strategic priorities. Key plans align well at all levels and help elected members to understand and make effective use of performance information. Policies and initiatives are implemented consistently. Progress against the Council's priorities is monitored corporately and school performance is additionally scrutinised through the GwE Management Board and Joint Committee.

Elected members show determination in challenging and supporting services and taking difficult decisions to bring about necessary improvements, for example, on school organisational change and using statutory powers of intervention in schools causing concern. Members have also made difficult decisions in relation to the financing of schools in the challenge to set a legally balanced budget in the context of reduced funding for local government and increasing inflationary pressures.

The local authority and its partners have a clear commitment to learners and to developing a learning culture in the county. Senior leaders have very high aspirations for children and young people and they understand clearly the impact of national and regional priorities and how this impacts on decision making locally for services to support children and young people e.g. Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act, Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act, Education in Wales - Our National Mission, Cymraeg 2050 – Welsh Language Strategy, North Wales Economic Growth Deal.

Senior management restructuring has enhanced the portfolio team's agility and ability to respond rapidly to changing circumstances. Whilst a lean team in terms of senior personnel, leaders work in a sophisticated way with a range of strategic partners across public services to set high level priorities together and deliver their vision for the young people of Flintshire. They are well respected by elected members, external partners, regional colleagues and school leaders.

Senior leaders have put structures in place to guide co-operation and lead by example. The extensive use of secondments, joint appointments and collaborative initiatives means that staff at all levels recognise and understand each other's strengths whilst working confidently within their own

specialisms to achieve the agreed vision e.g. the development of the Early Help Hub, joint Sensory Service, Families First commissioning, Childcare Offer etc.

The local authority has a good track record of identifying and intervening where hurdles to effective working hinder progress. Difficult decisions are responded to proactively. Where appropriate, the political leadership, other elected members, the Chief Executive or other senior managers intervene effectively to overcome obstacles. Systems leadership and the delegation of resources support the efforts to place the learner first and protect the quality of education and support services.

This has been exemplified particularly in the recent endeavours by all officers and elected members to set a legally balanced budget for 2018-19 in the face of significant financial challenges. Delegation rates to schools to protect front line services are above the Welsh average and additional funding to protect schools budgets are channeled in wherever possible. Central education services made significant efficiencies of over 30% in three years to protect schools direct funding. However, cuts to grant funding still pose a major risk to the quality of educational delivery.

Scrutiny task and finish groups (including the School Performance Monitoring Group) have successfully examined key aspects of the portfolio's work and have informed decision making well. Elected members across the political spectrum provide a good degree of challenge to the portfolio team and to schools directly to improve service quality and performance and will make collective decisions to maximise funding for schools, as evidenced in the budget setting process for 2018-19.

The local authority works very effectively with GwE (Regional School Improvement Service), one of its key partner organisations. Since the inception of the service in 2013, there has been a very good track record of engagement with the service to support its development and robust scrutiny of the service in holding it accountable for the scope of its delivery on behalf of Flintshire. GwE Officers participate fully in Flintshire business and understand and contribute to the vision, aims and objectives of the Council. local authority and GwE Officers have parity of status within the organisation and respective roles and responsibilities in contributing to the delivery of the service within Flintshire.

All GwE Officers working in Flintshire understand the vision and priorities of the Council within the school improvement context and work towards supporting this. This is evidenced by the way in which the GwE Level 1 plan supports the service business plan and the way in which the two organisational structures integrate and align. The mutually supportive, yet challenging culture, fostered between GwE and Flintshire officers enables the authority to maintain focus on outcomes for learners and achieve a consistent and measured position with regard to those outcomes, across all phases and over time. This has been achieved despite pressures created by the change agenda and the areas highlighted for improvement in the Estyn inspection of the Consortia in 2016.

The impact of joint working in this way has been to ensure that Flintshire schools benefit from a much broader and more connected range of expertise which is evidenced by the strong profile of Estyn inspection outcomes in Flintshire and good and improving outcomes over time.

Good arrangements are in place to support and challenge schools as a result of enhanced scrutiny of standards, provision and leadership. Underperformance and risk factors within schools are now identified quickly and addressed at an early stage through the effective joint working of local authority officers and Support Improvement Advisers from the regional service. Local and Regional Quality Boards monitor and report on the impact of these interventions to senior managers and political leaders. The School Performance Monitoring Group has a clear track record in challenging schools and ensuring they are supported to improve.

Senior GwE and LA officers meet formally on a fortnightly basis to discuss schools. Progress against KS4 targets is a main agenda item. There are many informal meetings and discussions which take place on a weekly basis and this has further strengthened communication between GwE and Flintshire.

All schools have had access to regional and bespoke leadership training. Flintshire secondary schools take up has been good with many school leaders taking part in the following programmes; Experienced Head Teacher Programme, Aspiring Leaders and Middle Leadership Programmes. Evaluations from schools have been extremely positive. There is evidence that these programmes have strengthened and upskilled many school leaders across Flintshire.

3.2 Self Evaluation processes and improvement planning

The local authority has a well-established process of evaluation, review and challenge. Leaders, managers and elected members have an accurate understanding of the authority's strengths and weaknesses. They routinely make good use of a range of rigorous monitoring activities. The authority undertakes a wide range of self-evaluation activities analysing data and first-hand evidence well to make accurate evaluations of the quality and impact of services. The arrangements also identify clearly the areas for improvement and help ensure that progress against strategic and other plans is reviewed effectively and timely interventions made.

Through its joint working with GwE, the local authority has a detailed Level 2 Business Plan for primary and secondary schools that are agreed between the Chief Education Officer and the GwE Core Leads Supporting Improvement Advisers (SIA). Agreed priorities in the business plans are based firmly on the findings of the self-evaluation processes. The plans accurately identify key issues within schools in the local authority and include a bespoke improvement plan to address the specific challenges. Progress towards achieving the agreed outcomes at a local authority level is regularly reviewed in meetings between the core lead SIA, the Chief Education Officer and senior Education Officers. The plan is regularly updated to reflect the outcomes of whole school review and support visits commissioned by the local authority.

A robust accountability framework ensures that ongoing issues are escalated from the local authority Quality Boards to senior leaders Council's senior leaders and Management Board. Progress is RAG rated appropriately and senior leaders challenge any slippage in expected progress. The regular reviews of the business plans at all levels enables accurate evaluation of the progress towards achieving priorities. This ensures that the business plans remain flexible to incorporate new priorities during the monitoring period if required.

The local authority works swiftly and effectively with GwE Officers to address 'Schools Causing Concern'. Where rapid progress is required Accelerated Improvement Boards have been established to oversee progress. These Boards meet regularly and include key officers of the authority, GwE and school leaders, including governors.

The local authority has benefitted from the rapid and significant improvements made by the new GwE leadership team. There is consistent dialogue with key offices of the authority and a common focus on school improvement, particularly at secondary school level.

The consortium's recent Estyn monitoring Inspection (October 2017) noted:

'GwE responds positively to requests from local authorities to conduct intensive internal reviews in individual schools. Extensive investment in human resources and time ensures that schools receive

comprehensive and fair reviews. Reports that derive from these reviews are rigorous and include purposeful recommendations.' This has certainly been evidenced in schools within Flintshire.

Senior leaders in GwE, in partnership with local authority officers, use data effectively to ensure areas for improvement are identified quickly and addressed robustly through detailed business planning. Data and information is also scrutinised robustly to monitor progress against agreed actions. The quality of planning at all levels for 2017-18 underlines this step change. As a result, the quality of information shared with the GwE Management Board and Joint Committee has improved significantly, enabling members to scrutinise and challenge progress effectively.

Education officers with the Council focus well on joint planning and resourcing as well as building capacity for continuous improvement. The local authority has strong links with the community, good liaison and communication with schools, parents/carers and works effectively with other agencies enabling officers to deliver joined-up programmes that improve outcomes and wellbeing for learners. The Family Information Service is an important conduit to enable access to relevant up to date information to support these aims.

Senior managers demonstrate significant commitment to developing strategic partnerships across all aspects of the local authority's work. Through the Public Service Board (PSB), the local authority and its partners have joint ownership of priorities and outcomes. These aims are communicated clearly in the Public Service Board's Single Integrated Plan.

The authority engages well with partners, service users and other stakeholders in its evaluation processes and in planning for improvement. For example, the Integrated Youth Strategy "Delivering Together" featured full engagement of young people's representatives in its development.

The authority uses a corporate database for the recording of complaints, concerns and requests for services. A senior Manager within the portfolio is a link officer for complaints. The majority of these have to be re-directed back to the individual school complaints procedures as complainants frequently believe that the authority should deal with a complaint against a school on their behalf. Complainants are advised of the correct procedure and, as necessary, the portfolio provides support to schools on its procedures. On-line complaints training is available to all governing bodies.

For the small number of complaints directly against services provided by the portfolio these are mainly considered to be 'requests for service' and generally relate to administration around on-going casework e.g. statements of special need.

The local authority is compliant with the requirement regarding partnership agreements with its schools.

3.3 Professional Learning

Relationships with schools are good. Regular head teacher meetings and the partnership groups in the consultative structure form an effective mechanism for raising issues and agreeing actions to tackle them. Flintshire benefits from well-established learning networks within and across schools and now increasingly across the region which enables schools to develop and share their professional knowledge.

Flintshire schools are engaging effectively with the range of professional development opportunities provided by GwE and by the local authority. Senior officers have contributed significantly to the development of a regional and national school improvement programme. The local authority in

partnership with GwE delivers appropriate training for school leaders, including a regional induction programme for new head teachers. The success of this is evidenced by the fact that many schools have been judged at least 'good' for Key Question 3 over the last five years.

Partnership activities make a strong contribution to widening the range of choices for learners and this has benefits for their standards and wellbeing. The authority takes a leading role in developing joint working practices and promotes trust and good communication between partners. These include effective partnerships between the authority, the police, local health board, voluntary agencies, other local education authorities and integrated youth support services. The local authority monitors and co-ordinates the work of these partners well. Individual partners have a good understanding of their own strengths and weaknesses in the services they deliver and collective contributions and co-production can be evidenced.

Partnership working between the local authority, further and higher education establishments, employers and secondary schools in developing the work of the 14-19 network is good. They successfully promote co-operation and enable school governors, the college, employers and the authority to plan, monitor and resource an effective 14-19 curriculum that meets the needs of learners well. Collaboration in the development and transition into a new post-16 hub on Deeside has been recognised by the Welsh Government through the publication of a national case study.

The Welsh Advisory Team in the Portfolio actively encourage schools staff at all levels, including head teachers, to engage in the WG sabbatical training programmes for practitioners who wish to teach through the medium of Welsh or wish to improve their Welsh-language skills. Take up across all four levels or training are good and Flintshire staff represent a sizeable proportion of each cohort. This is extending the number of staff with improved Welsh language skills which is contributing to the improving quality of provision for learners in both English and Welsh medium schools.

The authority promotes professional learning for its core portfolio team through structured learning opportunities most visible through the Flintshire Academi infonet which provides learning and e-learning modules on Leadership and management, personal development, specific professional development, equality and diversity, welsh language, health and safety and ICT.

The authority has a strongly developed Flintshire Trainee scheme, with many trainees subsequently gaining employment within the Council. There is an ongoing commitment to apprenticeships with an annual opportunity for services to benefit from the engagement of Modern Apprenticeships. The significant capital projects such as the social housing scheme and 21st Century school projects now offer a range of apprenticeship opportunities through the Future Works collaboration. The authority is currently exploring the feasibility of a Junior Apprenticeship programme for Key Stage 4 in collaboration with Coleg Cambria for 2018/19. This will offer a fulltime vocational course for students in Hospitality and Catering leading to a potential Level 3 vocational pathway post-16.

All staff benefit from the annual appraisal scheme which ensures personal and professional objectives are linked to the annual corporate service and portfolio plans. Centrally employed teaching staff have statutory performance management. The process enables employees and managers to explore individual strengths and identify wider opportunities for these to be utilised effectively. This has resulted in officers taking the lead in opportunities such as WG pilot for the ALN Reforms and Childcare Offer. The Senior Manager for School Improvement is currently acting up as Interim Chief Officer for Education and Youth. These opportunities support succession planning at a time where central services are reducing and all employees are encouraged to engage with the range of opportunities available to them.

Senior Managers network and share good practice at monthly Change Exchange sessions with the Chief Executive and Chief Officer Team. Quarterly Academi sessions for managers also provide key updates and contribute to cross-cutting policies and strategies. Specifically within the portfolio, there are termly portfolio workshops for service managers to share updates, future plans and engage in consultation and professional development opportunities. There is a comprehensive online training programme available for all staff of the Council to access on corporate training priorities e.g. safeguarding, GDPR, leadership and management etc. Networking by senior managers through representation on various groups of the Association of Directors of Education in Wales ensures service planning is informed by current and best practice from across Wales.

3.4 Use of resources

Flintshire County Council has developed a very good approach to managing its budget which enables it to maintain focus on the delivery of priorities. The local authority has responded very effectively to the challenges presented by the financial climate in a strategic, structured and coordinated way with the aim of protecting front-line delivery for service users.

Education reform and investment has remained a priority for the local authority despite the challenging financial climate. The high strategic priority given to the education service is reflected in the authority's allocation of both revenue and capital resources. The schools' delegated budgets have been protected from efficiency reductions in recent years and elected members across the Council have directed additional funding streams to schools when they have become available. Risks about the impact of poor funding on the quality of education services has been clearly articulated and is understood by elected members and head teachers.

The authority's spending decisions relate directly to strategic priorities for improvement and benefits for schools and their learners. The school funding formula is regularly reviewed in consultation with schools and reported to the School Budget Forum. Staffing, accommodation and financial resources are soundly managed and deployed to support learning and improvement. The authority reviews the outcomes of its financial plans to make sure that money is spent wisely and has a positive impact on standards.

Partnership activity provides good value for money because it contributes to extensive opportunities and improved outcomes for learners in aspects which the authority and its schools alone could not provide.

The authority has been successful in securing grant funding for both revenue and capital projects has committed to contributing half of 21st Century Band A school modernisation investment in schools from its own resources. It has also an ambitious programme valued at £85m for Band B. It has secured funding through the Small and Rural Schools Grant, Infant Class Size Grant and has submitted bids for the Welsh Medium and Childcare grants recently released by Welsh Government.

The local authority currently has an estimated repair & maintenance (R&M) of approximately £19m, but this is a substantial improvement from the £35m backlog reported in the 2010 SOP and has been achieved through targeted capital investment. However, the level of R&M remains a risk and is strategically linked to the Band B programme of 21st Century Schools.

School balances are at an unprecedentedly low level in the secondary sector and have decreased significantly in the primary phase during 2016-17, reflecting the budgetary pressures being absorbed

by schools. The authority is proactive in providing schools with appropriate support and challenge where surpluses are too high and where there are deficits. However, the current level of overall school balances is a risk.

Many externally funded initiatives track the progress of learners and service users and their families effectively, e.g. Families First, Flying Start, TRAC/ADTRAC and Youth Support Grant. In the best examples, early bespoke interventions with families make measurable contributions to improved educational outcomes. More effective use is being made of results based accountability. However, late notification of grant funding and associated conditions can make it difficult for officers to plan. Nevertheless, there is clear evidence that grant funding is always maximised to support strategic priorities and deliver quality services.

There are rigorous processes of financial management across the Council and regular reviews of portfolio budgets to ensure value for money and the identification of efficiencies to support the annual budget setting process in times of austerity. Flintshire County Council has achieved nearly £80m efficiencies over the last ten years and the Education and Youth Portfolio has achieved efficiency targets of 30% over the last three years. Through regular portfolio budget management processes, senior managers take responsibility for their services budgets, well supported by a central finance team.

The Council has engaged independent, external experts to review its budget setting and monitoring processes who have concluded that processes are robust, decisions around future spending plans are sound and that the authority has been innovative in the face of significant financial challenge.

“Flintshire’s response to funding reductions in recent years has been measured and appropriate. The Council has adopted a systematic approach to ensure that efficiencies are gained across all services and the organisation has embraced alternative models of delivery where appropriate. There is nothing in Flintshire’s approach which significantly stands out from that of others in the sector, and there are plenty of examples of good practice and innovation within the Council.” (Independent Financial Review of Flintshire County Council by Alan Gay OBE)

With a significant proportion of its budget used to commission the regional school improvement service, it is important that the local authority is reassured that GwE has effective financial management processes in place. Communication and consultation about financial arrangements are effective with both core funding and grant-expenditure kept under regular review by GwE, the host local authority and the Joint Committee. A formal framework has been developed to assess the wider value for money that GwE provides. There is now a consistent view across all stakeholders of how the value for money of GwE’s activities can be measured within the business plan structure and objectives.

Detailed work has been undertaken to align grant allocations with priorities. Supporting Improvement Advisers challenge schools on their use of grant funding, with a clear assessment on the use of this funding. This has reduced the inconsistencies between schools around identifying the impact of the use of grant funding on pupil outcomes.

Overall, the authority’s education services, including schools, continue to provide good value for money.

3. Leadership & Management

Areas for ongoing improvement	Key sources of evidence
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Continue to develop the monitoring and governance of GwE to ensure best impact for learners and value for money	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Public Service Board PlanFlintshire County Council Improvement Plan

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to strengthen the professional offer for core staff in the Portfolio to support career development and succession planning • Continue to develop effective partnerships to deliver services in an integrated and cost efficient manner • Continue to manage the school estate through the school modernisation strategy and through the variety of grants from WG eg 21st Century Schools, Childcare Grant, Infant Class Size Grant, Welsh Medium Grant. • Increase the challenge to schools on curriculum models and financial efficiency to more effectively manage budget deficits. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Portfolio Improvement Plans • GwE Business Plans • Corporate Documents e.g. Cabinet & Scrutiny Reports • Corporate Monitoring Reports • Audit reports • Revised Operating Structure • Annual Report of the School Performance Monitoring Group • Integrated Youth Strategy • Youth Justice Plan • Medium Term Financial Plan • School Funding Formula • School balances report • WAO Annual Improvement Report • School Budget Forum Minutes • Independent Budget Review Report
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Risks

- Maintaining high quality core services with reducing financial resources
- Poor school funding levels & school balances undermining school performance
- Resilience of senior managers in the Council and in schools to manage the challenging environment
- Attracting good leaders to senior roles in school and in the Portfolio to provide effective succession
- Affordability of school modernisation programme vs ambition
- Backlog of Repairs & Maintenance
- High costs of school transport

Appendix 1 : Flintshire Context including comparators to Welsh average*

Data Sources: PLASC 2017 & Stats Wales

School Data	Number	% of FCC	Avg % Wales*
Total Number of Primary Schools overall	64		
Number of Welsh medium primary schools	5		
Number of Faith primary schools	12		
Number of Foundation primary schools	1		
Total Number of Secondary Schools overall	11		
Number of Welsh secondary schools	1		
Number of Faith secondary schools	1		
Number of Foundation secondary schools	0		
Total Number of Specialist Schools	2		
Number of Specialist primary schools	1		
Number of Specialist secondary schools	1		
Total Number of PRU	1		
Pupil Data (All Ages & excluding EOTAS)			
Total number of school based pupils	23,554		
Total number in Primary	14,009	59.48%	
Total number in Secondary	9,335	39.63%	
Total number in Specialist	210	0.89%	
Total EOTAS including PRU	80	0.34%	
Total in faith schools	2,786	11.83%	
Total in Welsh medium schools	1,402	5.95%	
Total pupils Electively Home Educated (August 16)	72	0.31%	
Total number of Looked After Children (March 17)	205	0.87%	
Total number of children receiving care and support including LAC, Child Protection & Disability	390	1.65%	3.41%
Total pupils eligible for Free Schools Meals	2,918	12.33%	16.34%
Total Gypsy Traveller Pupils	64	0.27%	
Total English as Additional Language pupils	1060	4.50%	7.14%
Total number of pupils with SEN overall	4,752	20.17%	22.63%
Total number of Statemented pupils	537	2.28%	2.7%
Total number of School Action pupils	2,945	12.50%	12.7%
Total number of School Action Plus pupils	1,270	5.39%	7.23%
Welsh National Index of Multiple Deprivation (2014)			
Number of Lower Super Output Areas in Flintshire	92		
% LSOAs in most deprived 10%		2.2%	
% LSOAs in most deprived 20%		12.0%	
% LSOAs in most deprived 30%		19.6%	
% LSOAs in most deprived 50%		34.8%	

*Where comparative data available