Inspection of
Powys Local Education Authority
Access to Education
November and December 2004
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1. Introduction

Local education authority (LEA) inspections are carried out under Section 38 of the Education Act 1997. They contribute to, and comply with the requirements of, the Wales Programme for Improvement\(^1\). Each LEA inspection usually focuses on at least one major area of activity that has already been the focus of a self-evaluation process by the LEA.

Powys LEA reviewed their activities concerned with access to education in the summer and autumn terms 2004 by using the authority’s review procedures and within the overall framework of the Wales Programme for Improvement. At the time of the inspection, the authority had approved the review and the draft action plan resulting from the review.

This area of activity was inspected in November and December 2004. The inspection team comprised of an inspector from the Audit Commission’s local education authority inspectorate and three inspectors from Estyn. The team examined documentation relating to the council’s review and interviewed relevant staff. The views of users were obtained through scrutiny of questionnaire outcomes, discussions with focus groups and other representative groups and visits to schools.

The inspection team is required to make two key judgements. These are:

1. How good is the LEA’s performance in respect of the area of responsibility that is being inspected?

The LEA’s performance in discharging its responsibilities is rated on a four-point scale as follows:

- excellent - good with outstanding features
- good - good features and no important shortcomings
- fair - good features outweigh shortcomings
- poor - many important shortcomings

\(^1\) Wales Programme for Improvement: Guidance for local authorities (Circular 18/2002), National Assembly for Wales, 2002
(2) Will the LEA’s performance improve in respect of the area of responsibility that is being inspected?

The prospects of improvement are rated on a four-point scale:

- **excellent** - improvement prospects are good, with significant improvements already in place
- **promising** - improvement prospects are good, with no major barriers
- **uncertain** - some good prospects, but barriers in important areas
- **poor** - many important barriers to improvement

The inspection team’s findings in relation to access to education are set out in Section 3 of this report.
2. Background

Powys is a large, rural county in mid-Wales with a population of 125,000. It is the most sparsely-populated county in England and Wales. About 20% of the population are Welsh speakers.

In Powys, there are 109 primary schools, 13 secondary schools, three special schools and special units in 12 primary schools. About three-quarters of the primary schools have fewer than 130 pupils and just over half have fewer than 90 pupils. The numbers on roll in secondary schools range from 1,070 pupils to 287. Eight of the 13 secondary schools have fewer than 650 pupils. There are 178 pupils in the three special schools. Overall, 846 pupils (4.01%) have statements of special educational need compared with the Wales average of 3.33%. The proportion of pupils entitled to free schools meals (9.6% in January 2004) is well below the average for Wales (17.6%).

The Powys economy is reliant on a relatively narrow industrial base that includes sectors such as health, agriculture and education. There are many small businesses and a high proportion of unskilled occupations. Powys has the highest proportion of working-age adults in employment in Wales and it has a low unemployment rate compared with the rest of Wales. However, average earnings and household incomes are amongst the lowest in Britain.

Funding

The total expenditure on education per pupil in Powys is relatively high. In 2004-2005, Powys is eighth out of the 22 Welsh authorities. Powys allocates 40.9% of its total budget to education, which is 1.2 percentage points above the Wales average of 39.7%. The authority’s spend on education for 2004-2005 is 1.8% above that indicated by the Welsh Assembly Government.

Powys is below the national average for the percentage of funding it delegates to schools. In 2004-2005, it was 13th out of the 22 authorities, delegating 87.4% of the Local Schools Budget (LSB) to schools, compared with the Welsh average of 88.46%. The authority is a relatively low delegator, because it retains a high proportion of its budget to pay for home-to-school transport. Powys is the second highest spender on home-to-school transport of all the Welsh authorities. In contrast, the proportions of its budget that it allocates to school improvement and strategic management are well below the average for all authorities.

In 2003-2004, LSB for primary schools and the Individual Schools Budget (ISB) per pupil for primary and secondary schools were in the top quarter of authorities in Wales. The LSB spend for secondary pupils was also above the Welsh average. However, the authority instituted authority-wide cuts in the 2004-2005 budget round and this reduced the level of school funding increases for that year. Powys schools have therefore not retained their ISB funding position relative to other authorities, with primary schools dropping from fifth to 12th place and secondary schools from third to eighth in 2004-2005.
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<th>Powys CC</th>
<th>Wales average</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Primary schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004-2005 Individual Schools Budget (£ per pupil)</td>
<td>£2698</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(12th/22)</td>
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<tr>
<td>2003-2004 Individual Schools Budget (£ per pupil)</td>
<td>£2612</td>
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The authority intends to make further cuts and additional efficiency savings across the authority in 2005-2006. Schools’ funding will again be part of this budget review. In 2003-2004, the authority had a high number of schools in deficit. Thirty-eight percent of primary schools and 54% of secondary schools are in deficit, including 23% of primary schools and 15% of secondary schools that have a deficit of over 2%. The authority has not as yet determined the impact of further budget reductions on these schools in financial difficulties. The authority has begun to take action to address schools in deficit, but this has not resulted in any significant reduction in the number of schools with deficits.

The authority currently spends more on key stages 2 and 4 than on other key stages, but this may change as it is currently reviewing its funding formula, so that it is matched to the current needs of pupils. The authority is consulting extensively with the schools and other stakeholders about the formula review. All changes to the formula will be met from within the existing schools budget. There will be no additional growth.

The authority spends just above the average on capital compared with other Welsh authorities. The forecast capital spend on education is £4.2m in 2004-2005, which is 16% of its total capital expenditure of £26.2m. In terms of capital expenditure for education, Powys was 10th out of the 22 LEAs in 2003-2004 and is ninth in 2004-2005.

Access to education

Powys County Council is organised into six directorates, one of which is the Children, Families and Lifelong Learning (CFLL) Directorate. The authority has a CFLL Committee and three of the committee’s members sit on the County Council’s Board. The CFLL Directorate is organised into four functional areas under the Group Director. The four functions are:

- school improvement;
- lifelong learning and community services;
- children and families; and
- directorate support services.
The directorate support services function is responsible for asset management planning, planning of school places, admissions, health and safety, catering and cleaning, financial support, staffing, administration and training.

The Technical and Local Services (TLS) Directorate provides building maintenance, facilities management, architectural design, and mechanical, electrical and quantity surveying services for the CFFL Directorate and schools. The TLS Directorate also provides property valuation, sale and purchase services and undertakes the procurement and provision of home-to-school transport through its Transport Co-ordination Unit. The Corporate Support Services (CSS) Directorate is responsible for strategic asset management planning, and it manages property services, provides professional property advice and undertakes projects on behalf of the CFFL Directorate and schools. The Corporate Property Panel has specific responsibilities to the Board and County Council for property and asset management.

The authority has a policy to provide a small schools allowance to primary schools with fewer than 70 pupils. When numbers fall below 28 in any school, the policy requires the authority to undertake a review of the allowance and the future of the school. As result of the application of this policy and a subsequent review, the CFFL Committee proposed the closure of two primary schools in July 2002. However, the County Council rejected the proposals and asked the CFFL Committee to develop an alternative approach to the organisation and management of primary schools that dealt in particular with small schools and surplus places. The new approach involved the identification of appropriate criteria based on:

- surplus places;
- the condition of buildings;
- the relative location of the school; and
- the potential for schools to co-operate, link together or form a federation.

This review led to new proposals that affected 12 primary schools. It was proposed that some would close and new area schools would replace others. Following consultation, in November 2003 the authority decided to close two schools, but to retain one school that met all the agreed criteria for closure. It also decided to conduct further investigations into the proposals for new area schools in the south-west and north-west of the county. At the time of the inspection, the Welsh Assembly Government informed the authority that it had approved the closure of the two designated schools. In October 2004, the authority decided to further develop the policy for managing school places, consult on the policy and apply it to a review of all schools. The policy is to be completed by July 2005.
The authority’s review of access to education

The review and inspection focused on the following aspects of access to education:

- asset management;
- planning of school places;
- admissions to schools; and
- home-to-school transport.

The review team comprised elected members, officers from the CFLL Directorate and officers from the CSS and TLS Directorates. The review was completed just before the inspection and was submitted to members in October 2004.

The authority also carried out a cross-cutting review of passenger transport, including home-to-school transport. This review involved officers from the CFFL, TLS, CSS and Community Services Directorates, officers from Chief Executive’s department, elected members, a representative of Powys Community Transport Forum and an officer from the Audit Commission in Wales. The report was completed in April 2004.

The authority published its corporate asset management plan in March 2004.
3. Access to education

Summary

The scoring chart displays information in two dimensions, one for each of the two key inspection judgements. The inspection judgements are represented by the position of the black circle in relation to the descriptors at the left-hand side and at the foot of the chart.

Scoring Chart

What are the prospects for improvement?

Excellent

Promising

Uncertain

Poor

How good is the LEA’s performance?

The LEA’s performance in relation to access to education is fair.

Good features of the LEA’s performance are:

- the authority has clear and challenging aims for the activity that are well understood and have the commitment of officers and members with key responsibilities;
The areas that require attention are:

- there is a high proportion of surplus primary school places;
- there is no overall coherent programme of school re-organisation at present and some elected members do not show the necessary commitment to tackle surplus places;
- although there is an efficient and effective system for forecasting secondary pupil numbers, the system for forecasting primary places is underdeveloped;
- although schools generally rate home-to-school transport as being of good quality, the cost of home-to-school transport is high and there is a large overspend on the budget; and
- a high proportion of the authority’s school buildings have shortcomings.

The access to education activity has promising prospects for improvement.

Factors that are likely to support improvement are:

- the review process for access to education was comprehensive, robust and critical;
- there is a good-quality action plan to implement the review’s findings;
- senior CFLL Directorate officers provide good leadership and direction;
- the chief executive and senior elected members have a clear commitment to addressing the issue of surplus school places;
- there are challenging and realistic targets for improving school buildings and reducing surplus places;
there is a good-quality strategic approach to asset management planning; and

the authority is prepared to take difficult decisions and has a good track record in improving school buildings.

Factors that are likely to impede improvement are:

- In some instances, the authority has not been able to proceed with its proposals because some elected members have not always shown the necessary commitment to agreed policy.

Recommendations

In order to secure the improvements that are needed, the local authority should:

R1 ensure that elected members lead and deliver on the activities required to ensure a planned reduction in surplus places and the most efficient use of resources;

R2 develop the strategy so that it leads to a transparent and coherent programme to tackle the issue of surplus school places;

R3 seek efficiency savings in home-to-school transport; and

R4 improve the forecasting system for primary school admissions.
How good is the LEA’s performance?

Are the authority’s aims clear and challenging?

The CFLL Directorate business plan for 2004-2005 sets out clear and challenging aims and objectives in respect of access to education. They include:

- ensuring sufficiency, suitability, condition and sustainability of education premises;
- rationalising school provision;
- identifying the need for additional capacity; and
- removing surplus capacity.

The plan shows clearly how these objectives link with corporate objectives. There is also a close link between the Directorate’s business plan and the objectives included in the School Organisation Plan (SOP) and the Supplementary Education Strategic Plan (SESP) for 2004-2005.

Schools, officers and elected members with key responsibilities within the authority have a clear understanding of the extent of the challenges that the authority faces and are fully committed to bringing about the necessary improvements.

The authority has given initial consideration to whether some of the improvements it seeks could be secured by outsourcing the provision of parts of the services to external providers. In relation to home-to-school transport, it has commissioned a report by an external consultant to explore the benefits of providing parts of the school transport service itself as a means ensuring increased efficiency and effectiveness.

Do the authority’s policy, provision and relationships meet these aims?

The authority is committed to developing a performance management culture and has actively adopted Best Value principles and the Wales Programme for Improvement. It has a clear performance management framework that links together all the various plans and the monitoring and evaluation activities. It has a comprehensive review programme. Service delivery plans are clear and detailed and their implementation is subject to quarterly reviews. Increasingly these reviews focus more on improvement and outcomes. There are links between appraisal and business planning, but these are not developed enough for a few staff.
School places

The authority has 19.1% of surplus places in the primary sector. Thirty-eight out of 107 primary schools have a capacity that is over 25% of the numbers on roll. Twenty of the schools with a surplus of 25% or more have fewer than 50 pupils on roll. Seven primary schools have a shortfall of 10% or more of places. In the secondary sector, there are 9.9% surplus places overall, but two of the schools have over 25% unfilled places. A current building programme in one of the secondary schools will remove the surplus.

The authority has taken important steps to start to address the issue of surplus places in primary schools in Powys. It has taken difficult decisions to close two schools. However, it failed to take a decision to close a third school that had been identified as a result of an agreed policy. Overall these decisions to close two small schools will have a limited impact on the problem of surplus places. Recently the authority has started to take a more concerted approach to the development of a programme for the organisation of primary schools that will address the issue of surplus places and lead to a more efficient use of resources.

The authority has an efficient and effective system for forecasting the number of secondary school pupils. It also has an accurate forecast of the overall number of primary-age pupils and of the likely impact of housing developments, but it does not have enough information on individual schools. As a result of its review, the authority has started to refine its forecasting models for primary schools.

Proposals to tackle surplus places have been subject to rigorous and open debate and included full and appropriate consultation with stakeholders. In considering the proposals, the authority took full account of the wide range of additional factors that influence the closure or re-organisation of schools. Up until now there has not been the clear political strategic leadership that is needed to tackle this issue, but this is improving as the chief executive and senior members are now committed to taking difficult decisions.

Provision for Welsh-medium education has a prominent place in the ESP and all the planned activities concerned with access to school places, school buildings, admissions and home-to-school transport are linked closely to the authority’s Welsh Education Scheme. Overall, there are enough Welsh-medium places to meet demand.

The SOP contains a detailed, comprehensive and self-critical appraisal of the circumstances facing the authority. It clearly identifies the issues and challenges facing the authority, including the changing national, political and environmental situations. It identifies clear aims and principles that provide guidance and direction to developments. The implementation plan devised as a result of the review of access to education sets out specific targets, actions and timescales for school re-organisation.
Asset management planning

The authority published its asset management plan in March 2004 and this contains many references to the education building stock. Suitable work is in progress to publish an asset management plan for the education functions by March 2005 and for all schools to have their own plans by the same date.

In response to the Audit Commission in Wales inspection of asset management in 2002, the authority has developed a more strategic and transparent approach that includes a clearer idea about the quality of its stock and a closer match to needs, demands and priorities. Allocation of funding for building maintenance and improvements had been based on historical grounds, but the new plan ensures that funding is related to priorities. At present, the plan is not tied to the budget-setting process or to business planning, but appropriate steps are being taken to ensure that this will now become part of asset management planning.

About two per cent of school buildings are classified as ‘life-expired’ or pose a serious risk, while just under half of them have major defects. The authority estimates that it has a repair backlog of £40m for its schools. Over the last ten years, the authority has replaced five primary schools with new buildings and three schools with a new area school. In Estyn school inspections over the last two academic years, the accommodation was judged to be good or better in 53% of schools, satisfactory in 42% and unsatisfactory in 5%.

The authority has up-to-date and accurate information on the condition, sufficiency and suitability of school buildings and it is developing increasingly sophisticated methods of collecting this information. It is well aware of which buildings are unsuitable or in poor condition and of which areas of the county are likely to see increases in population and demand.

There are specific and detailed plans to improve the condition of buildings over the next three years. These plans aim to address the shortcomings in all the buildings classified as either ‘life-expired’ or posing a serious risk and to reduce the number of buildings that have major defects from just under a half to a third of the total stock. Over this same period, the proportion of buildings that are classified as good will increase from 16% to 22%. For the next three years, the authority has identified the funding required to carry out the improvements to school buildings and the key priorities for this work. The authority has not set out a long-term capital plan, but it has drawn up initial proposals to meet the capital needs, including the use of prudential borrowing and other funding sources.

The authority’s work on asset management planning links appropriately with the work taking place on school places, Welsh-medium education, early years education, 14-19 education and social inclusion. The authority has started to audit disability access to all its school buildings.

In the Audit Commission’s survey of schools’ perceptions (2004), schools rated the authority’s building maintenance and its management of building projects between satisfactory and poor. From the authority’s own analysis on the completion of
projects, schools are more positive about the service, but there are a few shortcomings. As a result of the new approach to the prioritisation of the maintenance and development of school buildings, there is evidence from inspection visits that schools’ views have improved since the Audit Commission school survey and they now rate the service to be good.

**Admissions to schools**

The authority has established new admission arrangements for four-year-olds that make the process more straightforward than it was previously. However, since September 2004, an issue has arisen where some three-year old pupils funded by the Powys Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership have been admitted to schools without being entered on the school register. The authority is now dealing appropriately with this issue.

The admissions booklet published each year is clear and well set-out, and contains all the required and relevant information. There are appropriate consultations with neighbouring authorities and schools. Pupils new to the authority are placed in suitable schools. An admissions forum has been set up and the arrangements for admissions and appeals conform to the Welsh Assembly Government’s code of practice. There is a high number of appeals in the secondary sector. All parents who request an appeal are able to receive one and appeals are completed in good time. Overall, the authority allocates a high proportion of pupils to their parents’ first choice of school. All the planned actions to further improve the admission procedures set out in the SESP have been completed as intended.

**Home-to-school transport**

The authority is the second highest spender per pupil in Wales on home-to-school transport. There is generally a lack of competition for the provision of school transport in most parts of Powys. For 59% of routes, there was only one tender when the service’s contracts were awarded. This has a significant impact on the costs of the service. The authority has recently had difficulty in managing the home-to-school transport budget. It has started to take corrective action, for example, by making more use of the corporate procurement officer to negotiate contracts up for renewal and strengthening the eligibility criteria for certain groups. Even so, these changes have had limited impact so far as transport costs continue to rise. In 2003-2004, the overspend on the home-to-school transport budget was £530K and the projected overspend for 2004-2005 is around £350K. This is despite the authority providing an additional £500K in the budget for 2004-2005.

In the Audit Commission schools’ survey for 2004, the home-to-school transport was rated satisfactory to good, with 96% rating it satisfactory, good or very good. Schools visited during the course of the inspection rated the service to be good or very good.

The authority included a review of home-to-school transport in its detailed and comprehensive review of passenger transport in April 2004. This review was robust and self-critical, evaluated a broad range of evidence and identified shortcomings.
and clear recommendations for improving passenger transport. Despite the development of a strategic approach to transport, the authority has not fully explored ways of improving its transport services as much as it could, for example by integrating them with social services transport.

A number of the recommendations from the review of passenger transport concerned home-to-school transport and included changes to the policy governing school transport, transport for students aged over 16 and behaviour on school transport. As a result, the authority is developing a new policy for home-to-school transport. The new policy includes a thorough review of the existing policy and sets out appropriate proposals to address the recommendations in the review of passenger transport. At present, there is not enough monitoring of the quality of home-to-school transport, but the new policy identifies this as an area for improvement and appropriate steps are being taken.

**How does performance compare?**

According to Welsh Assembly Government information for 2003, Powys ranked 13th out of the 22 Welsh authorities for the overall proportion of surplus primary places. For the proportion of secondary places, it ranked eighth. Overall, the authority has 15.3% of surplus school places, which places it 12th out of the 22 Welsh authorities. This is an improvement on 2002 when it had 18% surplus places and was ranked at 19th.

A quarter of primary schools and nearly half of secondary schools completed the Audit Commission schools’ survey for 2004. When compared with the other authorities that took part in the survey in England and Wales, the authority is performing at about the average for the questions concerned with access to education. Primary schools’ views were generally more positive than those of secondary schools. Primary schools were critical about the quality of programming and management of building projects and secondary schools were critical about asset management planning. However, since the survey was conducted, the authority has introduced a clear and transparent improvement programme for school buildings, which has been positively received by the schools and has alleviated much of this criticism.

In relation to the Association of the Directors of Education in Wales (ADEW) benchmarking club for the planning of school places, Powys is placed in the following positions for 2002-2003:

- seventeenth out of 21 for the percentage of primary schools with 25% or more surplus places;
- nineteenth out of 21 for the percentage of secondary schools that are overfilled by more than 10%; and
- twentieth out of 20 for appeals as a percentage of the intake in secondary schools.
Powys' transport costs per pupil as taken from the pupil and student services benchmarking club for 2001-2002 are above the average for Wales, but well below the highest. The cost for the planning of school places is £6.10 per pupil, which is below the Welsh average of £8.08.
5. Findings: Access to education
Will the LEA’s performance improve?

Is the authority’s self-evaluation process likely to drive improvement?

The authority has carried out a thorough and robust review of its work on access to education. The decision to review these aspects is consistent with the findings of the joint risk-assessment by the authority and external regulators in April 2004, which identified school places and asset management as high risk and school transport as a medium risk. The authority identified a clear set of objectives for the review that linked closely with those of the SESP and business plan.

The review team consisted of representatives from a range of key stakeholders. As part of the review process, the review team consulted officers with relevant responsibilities in relation to aspects including Welsh-medium provision, early years and the 14-19 learning network. The Access to Education Working Group, consisting of representatives from primary, secondary and special schools, was also consulted. The review did not seek an external challenge, for example, by someone from another authority.

Good use was made of an extensive range of information and evidence to inform the review. This included issues arising from key planning documents, such as the SOP and the Welsh Education Scheme. The review drew from the findings of previous LEA inspection reports and the reviews carried out on asset management and passenger transport. The review made extensive and careful use of comparative information. This included the findings of the Audit Commission schools’ survey for the last two years.

The review report concludes with a useful summary of findings. It identifies challenging quantitative short-term and long-term targets, particularly in relation to asset management and improving school buildings. It includes a concise list of actions to address issues that are accompanied by appropriate completion dates. Some key partners are not yet aware of the findings of the review.

The lead officer for access to education has produced a useful executive summary of the main report, based on the Estyn/Audit Commission/ADEW self-evaluation criteria. It offers overall grades for each element of the services included in the review. These grades broadly correspond to the findings of the inspection.

The authority participates actively in national benchmarking clubs. It uses performance information to evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of services in the reviews of passenger transport and access to education. The authority also collects and analyses data on the services it provides and monitors and evaluates their performance against clearly identified performance indicators. However, some officers and members are not sufficiently aware of how the authority is performing in comparison with other authorities in relation to admission appeals and the planning of school places.
The authority has carried out effective consultation with stakeholders regarding asset management planning and the prioritisation of future investment. Schools understand the recently-introduced procedures and generally accept how work is to be prioritised.

**How good is the improvement plan?**

The draft improvement plan is written in a standard corporate format and addresses all the areas identified in the review. These include:

- completing and adopting the LEA asset management plan;
- improving forecasting of primary pupil numbers;
- reducing surplus places; and
- improving the condition of school buildings.

The plan is sufficiently detailed and comprehensive, has challenging and realistic time-related targets, identifies the person responsible for individual actions and lays out suitable milestones. However, it does not contain an indication of the detailed costs required to complete the identified tasks.

**Will the authority deliver the improvements?**

The reviews of access to education and of passenger transport provided a thorough analysis of the quality of the service and identified the specific matters that needed to be addressed. The recommendations from these reviews, together with the proposals in the whole authority asset management plan and the draft policy for home-to-school transport, provide a good starting point for making improvements. In particular, the plans to tackle the deficiencies in buildings over the next three years are practical and achievable on the basis of current funding. There is a willingness to review critically, identify the areas to be improved and move forward.

Senior CFFL Directorate officers provide good leadership and direction to the authority’s work on access to education. In relation to tackling surplus schools places they take a strategic view and have sought to develop a clear and well-argued programme.

The chief executive and senior elected members have a strong commitment to improving the work of the authority on ensuring access to education, particularly in relation to reducing surplus places. Overall, senior members have a clear understanding of the issues identified and what needs to be done to address them. They are aware of the need to take tough decisions in respect of school places and on school buildings.
Elected members have now taken the difficult decision to close two of the authority’s primary schools. However, in some instances, the authority has not been able to proceed with its proposals because elected members have not shown the necessary commitment to agreed policy.

The CFFL Directorate has well-established working relationships with other directorates on operational matters related to school buildings and home-to-school transport. More recently, the development of the authority’s asset management plan and the review of school transport have established the basis for more strategic working across the authority’s directorates. All directorates are committed to the improvements to services identified through the reviews.

Overall, the authority has a satisfactory record of financial management. It takes a prudent approach to its finances, and it has built up an adequate level of reserves that are sufficient to deal with any unforeseen major items of expenditure. Budget management and control are generally effective. The development of a medium-term financial strategy is at an early stage and at present it does not fully reflect the authority’s priorities. Members, with the support of the chief executive, are in the process of setting new strategic priorities, aims and objectives and it has been agreed that these priorities will inform the budget-setting process for 2006-2007. As part of the development of the new policy for the organisation of primary schools, the authority plans to include information on the full financial implications of any proposed changes.

Overall, the authority has made good progress in addressing the recommendations in Estyn inspection reports on its work. The authority also has a generally good record in improving the building stock through either the provision of new buildings or refurbishment.