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Her Majesty's Inspectorate  
for Education and Training in Wales



WALES AUDIT OFFICE  
SWYDDFA ARCHWILIO CYMRU

## **Quality and standards in education and training in Wales**

**A report on the quality of**

**Ynys Môn Local Education Authority**

**Access and school organisation**

**June 2007**

**by**

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

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- ▲ special schools;
- ▲ pupil referral units;
- ▲ independent schools;
- ▲ further education;
- ▲ adult community-based learning;
- ▲ youth support services;
- ▲ youth and community work training;
- ▲ LEAs;
- ▲ teacher education and training;
- ▲ work-based learning;
- ▲ careers companies;
- ▲ offender learning; and
- ▲ the education, guidance and training elements of The Department for Work and Pensions funded training programmes.

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- ▲ provides advice on quality and standards in education and training in Wales to the National Assembly for Wales and others; and
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## Context

### The Inspection

- 1 In April 2006, a six year (April 2006 to March 2012) cycle of Local Education Authority service inspections, under section 38 of the Education Act 1997 and the Children Act 2004, began. The inspection framework for this cycle is on the Estyn website [www.estyn.co.uk](http://www.estyn.co.uk).
- 2 This inspection took place from 11 June 2007 to 15 June 2007. The focus of this inspection was agreed to be access and school organisation. Before the inspection, Ynys Môn LEA produced a self-evaluation report as a part of its own review of its work on access and school organisation.

### Key judgements

- 3 The inspection team makes two key judgements about each service. These are:

#### **(1) How good is the local authority's performance?**

- 4 The local authority's performance in discharging its responsibilities is rated on a four-point scale as follows:

Grade 1 good with outstanding features (\*\*\*)

Grade 2 good features and no important shortcomings (\*\*)

Grade 3 good features outweigh shortcomings (\*)

Grade 4 shortcomings in important areas

#### **(2) Will the local authority's performance improve?**

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

Grade 1 improvement prospects are good, with significant improvements already in place

Grade 2 improvement prospects are good, with no major barriers

Grade 3 some good prospects, but barriers in important areas

Grade 4 many important barriers to improvement

## **Key questions**

- 6 In order to make the two key judgements, inspectors evaluate the authority's performance in relation to each of four key questions:
- How effective is the authority's strategic planning?
  - How effective are the authority's services?
  - How effective are leadership and management?
  - How well do leaders and managers monitor, evaluate and improve services?
- 7 These four key questions and the evaluations are set out in the findings section. They are recorded as grades, using the four-point scales set out at (1) and (2) above. All of the grades are included in the Grading Profile.

## Background to the authority

- 8 Ynys Môn County Council is the second smallest authority in Wales with a total population of approximately 68,934. About 4,482 of the population are aged 11 to 18. The majority of the population (60.1%) is able to speak Welsh, in most cases as a first language. A high percentage (72%) of Welsh speakers are between the ages of three and 24. The population is predominately white, with very low representation of residents from ethnic communities. The authority operates a bilingual policy, giving equal status to Welsh and English when providing services to the public and much internal business is conducted in the Welsh language.
- 9 The Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation indicates that six of the island's wards are in the top 100 most deprived areas in Wales. Unemployment levels are at 4.9% of the population. This is just below the Welsh average of 5.1%. Levels of unemployment amongst young people between 18-25 years of age, at 26%, are very high. Almost 16% of the county's pupils qualify for free school meals, a proportion similar to the Wales average.
- 10 The authority lists the falling population, the increase in the number of residents over 75 and the significant number of young people leaving the island to study or work as significant factors in its planning.
- 11 The demographic changes have had a considerable impact on the school population and a further, significant reduction in this population is projected over the next 10 years.
- 12 There are five secondary schools in the authority, of which four have a high level of provision of bilingual education. One secondary school, Ysgol Uwchradd Bodedern, has been designated as a Welsh medium provider for the extended catchment area which includes the more anglicised Holyhead area. There are 52 primary schools serving a school population of 5,136. One of these schools is voluntary aided and provides education for Roman Catholic pupils, three others are voluntary-controlled Church in Wales schools and one school has foundation status. There are three special educational units, and two pre-school assessment units, a special school catering for pupils aged 3-19 and two centres for teaching Welsh to pupils moving to the authority. The authority has a service level agreement with Gwynedd Council to provide education for some pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties at a special school located in Gwynedd, the neighbouring local authority.
- 13 Ynys Môn County Council is organised into four directorates, one of which is the Education and Leisure Directorate. The inspection focused on the areas reviewed by the Education and Leisure Directorate which were aspects of access and school organisation. The inspection of access services focused on the provision of school places, asset management, school transport and admissions.

- 14 The following table compares the performance of pupils in Ynys Môn schools at National Curriculum teacher assessments with that of pupils throughout Wales:

**The percentage of pupils attaining the Core Subject Indicator (CSI) in each key stage in Ynys Môn and Wales in 2006**

	Key stage 1	Key stage 2	Key stage 3	Key stage 4
<b>Ynys Môn</b>	<b>84.6%</b>	<b>73.6%</b>	<b>57.8%</b>	<b>40.3%</b>
Wales	80.6%	74.2%	58.2%	40%

**Funding**

- 15 The Welsh Assembly Government's Standard Spending Assessment (SSA)<sup>1</sup> per head of population for the Isle of Anglesey County Council for 2006-2007 was well above the average for local authorities in Wales. Within this, the education component (education Indicator-Based Assessment (IBA)<sup>2</sup>) amounted to a little over £46 million. This represents about £4,660 for each pupil in Anglesey schools. This level of IBA is the highest of all authorities in Wales, reflecting the fact that a high proportion of the county's population lives in small villages and that, as a result, education services are more costly to deliver than in more densely populated areas. It also reflects the fact that levels of deprivation, as measured by the proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals, are close to the average for Wales and higher than in other predominantly rural authorities.
- 16 In recent years, the authority has set its total revenue budget for managing and delivering all its services at a level a little below SSA. In keeping with this policy, the net education budget for 2006-2007 and for previous years was set at a level below education IBA; for 2006-2007, the education budget was set at 96.4% of education IBA. This level of funding by the authority nevertheless yielded a net education budget per pupil for 2006-2007 of £4,277, second highest in Wales. Including grants, spending on schools<sup>3</sup>, whether delegated or controlled centrally, amounted to £4,349 per pupil, second highest of all local authorities in Wales.
- 17 The authority spent about £2.8 million of capital in 2005-2006 in order to improve school buildings. The capital budgets for 2006-2007 and 2007-2008 have increased substantially to £5.1 million and £6.2 million respectively, reflecting the start of a major project to relocate schools from the centre of Llangefni as well as a number of smaller projects.

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<sup>1</sup> SSA is the means by which the Welsh Assembly Government distributes Revenue Support Grant to local authorities.

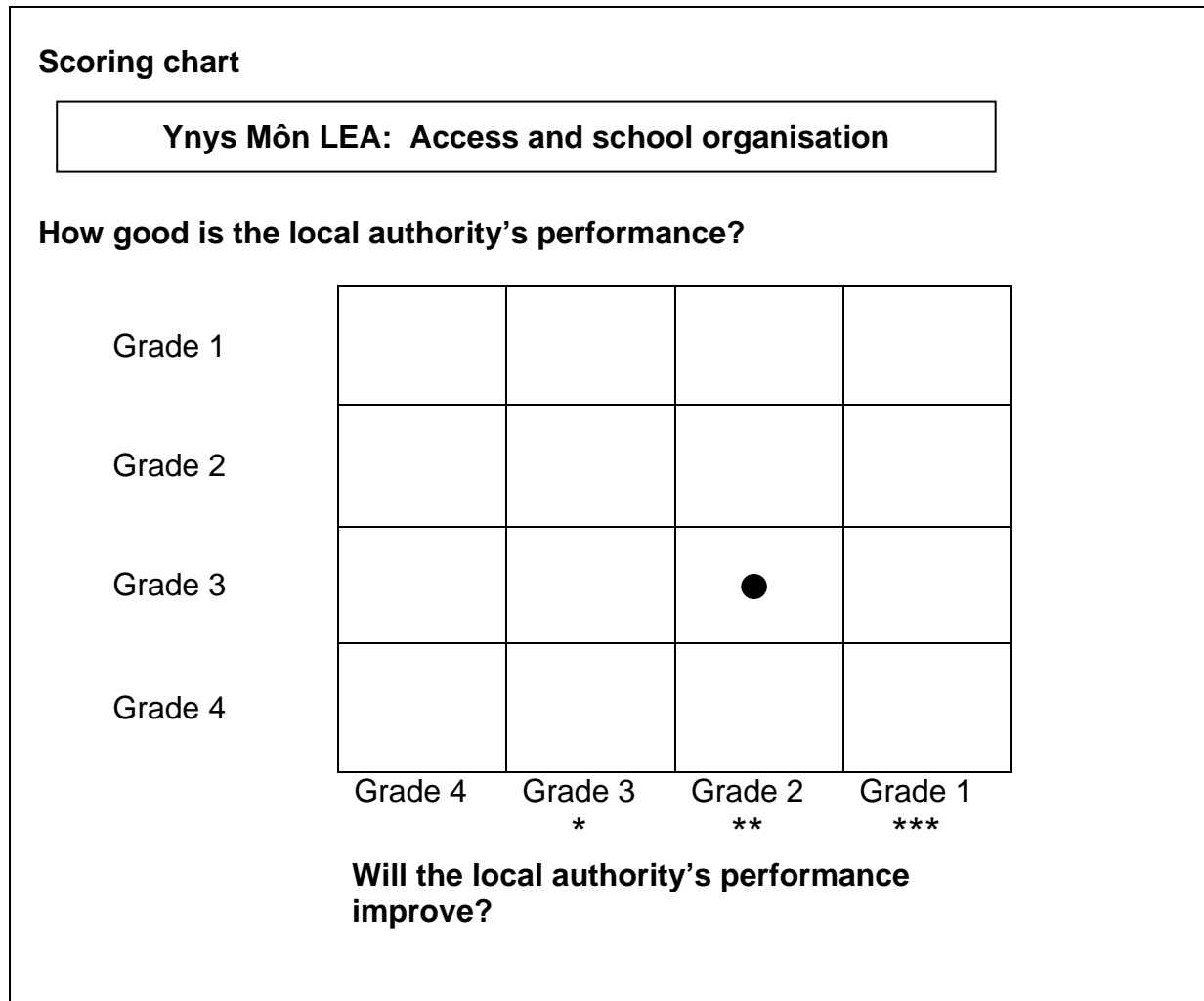
<sup>2</sup> Education IBA is that part of SSA relating to the delivery of education services. Education IBA is not intended as a spending target and authorities are free to spend at levels above or below IBA, in accordance with their priorities.

<sup>3</sup> The Schools Budget, as defined in The LEA Budget, Schools Budget and Individual Schools Budget (Wales) Regulations 2003



## Summary

- 18 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 grades at the left-hand side and at the foot of the chart.



**How good is the LEA's performance?**

**Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings**

- 19 The good features of the local authority's performance are:
- ✓ there is a clear commitment to reorganising, reflected in recent responses to the local authority's consultation on primary schools;
  - ✓ in general, school buildings are in a good state of repair;
  - ✓ the authority's provision for home-to-school transport is of generally good quality;
  - ✓ the authority has a good policy on admission arrangements for schools;

- ✓ the authority implements its bilingual policy effectively in relation to the provision of school places;
- ✓ the authority makes good arrangements for pupils with disabilities to attend local schools; and
- ✓ the authority has an efficient and effective system for forecasting the total number of pupils that will attend its schools each year.

20 The following areas require attention:

- × the authority has too many surplus places and only has a detailed strategy at present to reorganise primary schools to deal with these;
- × the authority has yet to complete its corporate asset management plan; and
- × the authority's current performance management arrangements are ineffective and, as a result, elected members do not monitor and evaluate the service or pupil outcomes well.

### **Will the local authority's performance improve?**

<b>Grade 2: Improvement prospects are good with no major barriers</b>
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21 Factors that are likely to support improvement:

- ✓ political leadership is firm and decisive and has a good understanding of the strategic issues facing education such as school reorganisation. The leader of the authority and senior officers openly support the strategy for re-organisation and their strategic leadership is setting a clear direction;
- ✓ bi-monthly meetings between the most senior elected members, officers and headteacher representatives provide a good forum to discuss educational issues robustly and proactively;
- ✓ the new managing director is making a significant difference to the way the authority is governed such as increasing the accountability of services to performance across the authority;
- ✓ eighty-five per cent of replies to the authority consultation document on primary school reorganisation agreed that the way schools are organised should change. The council voted to support this view and a set of proposals to address the issue of small schools and unfilled places is being drawn up; and
- ✓ significant improvements have been made to the access service since the last inspection in 2005.

22 The factors that are likely to hinder improvement are set out below:

- × the authority has taken a long time in addressing the reorganisation of school provision and does not have a good track record in this area.

## Recommendations

- 23 In order to secure the improvements that are needed, the local authority should:
- R1 deliver the primary strategy for school reorganisation and produce and deliver a more comprehensive secondary school reorganisation strategy that facilitates delivery of high quality education for all pupils efficiently. The strategy should include an appropriate emphasis on:
- creating schools that are educationally and financially viable in accommodation that is suitable for modern education; and
  - reducing surplus places.
- R2 develop a consistent framework of resourced business plans that address risks and improvement priorities, and include, wherever possible, clearly defined, measurable targets;
- R3 ensure that performance in progress with improvement priorities is monitored and reported to an appropriate forum of elected members at regular intervals; and
- R4 complete the corporate and service asset management plans.

## Findings

- 24 The two judgements for the field inspected are shown in the table below.

How good is the LEA's performance?	Grade 3
What are the prospects for improvement?	Grade 2

### How good is the LEA's performance?

#### Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

#### Leadership

- 25 The leader of the council provides strong leadership and direction for the authority's executive and ruling group. He has a good knowledge of the issues related to access and school organisation. The lead member for education and children's services is experienced and also has a thorough understanding of education in general. He is well informed about the challenges of reducing too many unfilled school places. Senior elected members have been effective in securing the agreement of all members that the present pattern of school organisation is no longer an option. Members understand that the cost of maintaining these surplus places, particularly in small schools, is too high and cannot be sustained in the face of lower levels of funding through the revenue support grant and competing priorities within the authority.
- 26 The leadership of the new managing director is clear and purposeful. He is in the process of introducing a comprehensive new system of performance management to the authority, including an improved corporate business planning model. Elected members have also agreed to his proposals to modify the committee structure in order to clarify responsibilities. He has communicated his long-term vision for education effectively with schools by attending their annual conference. He has followed this up by meeting headteacher representatives on a regular basis.
- 27 The managing director has started a programme of quarterly meetings with each directorate in order to review the performance of each service, and its contribution to the achievement of corporate targets such as reductions in sickness absence. Directors have been appraised and have personal targets, and all staff within the directorate have also been appraised during the last three months. Managers are now better focused on performance.
- 28 The director of education and lifelong learning and senior education officers provide vision and effective leadership for the implementation of the authority's aims and policies. They give clear, well-reasoned advice to members, helping to ensure that access is a priority in the authority's strategic planning. This improved understanding of members reflects the significant work undertaken by officers since the last inspection of access and school organisation in 2005.
- 29 The authority does not have enough capacity to tackle the reorganisation of all schools at the same time. It has come to the right decision that it should address primary reorganisation as a priority. When the primary reorganisation strategy has been implemented it will then address the issue of secondary school reorganisation.

## **Strategic planning**

- 30 Planning documents within the authority take good account of national and local priorities. The Corporate Improvement Plan for 2006-2007 notes the outcome of the corporate risk assessment and identifies the level of risk that the absence of an Asset Management Plan (AMP) brings to the Authority. However at the time of inspection, the AMP was still not complete.
- 31 The issues identified through the risk assessment process appropriately influence the priorities of the education department, as set out in the Single Education Plan (SEP). Two of the six key priorities in the SEP relate to the development of community-focused schools, falling school rolls and surplus places. The plan provides good direction to officers and elected members in their work implementing the Children's Services and Children Act 2004. The SEP forms a sound basis for the development of the Children and Young People's Plan for 2008. The SEP is limited in terms of its value to managers and elected members as a basis for monitoring the performance of each of the key service functions because in places it lacks clear measurable targets and success criteria.
- 32 The authority has well-established and comprehensive processes for consultation and collaboration with schools. It has made good use of the existing consultative groups throughout the review of school reorganisation. In addition, it has established a specific forum of representatives of headteachers, elected members, governors and officers to look in detail at the issues related to surplus places. Children and young people have not been consulted on the specific issues related to surplus places. However, the authority has taken on board comments made by young people that school toilets in secondary schools needed improving and invested in better facilities. It has also sought the views of young people in the review of school transport and these will be taken into consideration in the implementation of the code of conduct and re-tendering process next year.

## **Partnership working**

- 33 The authority has substantial experience of successfully working in partnership with others to provide formal and informal learning for children and young people. For example, Cynnal and the Joint Committee for SEN (the school improvement and additional learning needs services), shared with Gwynedd, provide a valued and effective service to schools. There are effective partnerships and interesting proposals to further enhance the quality of provision in Ynys Môn working with the other North Wales authorities.
- 34 Although it is too early to judge the impact of the proposals, Ynys Môn has used the Welsh Assembly Government Geographical Pathfinder<sup>4</sup> and process of public consultation to conclude that a formal consortium arrangement between schools, Coleg Menai and other partners will ensure better equality of opportunity and equity of resources in post 16 education.

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<sup>4</sup> Geographic Pathfinders have reviewed the provision of funded 16-19 education and training, evaluated options for change and recommended a preferred option for implementation in six selected areas of Wales. The Menai corridor was one of these areas.

- 35 The 14-19 Network is making good progress in developing a range of appropriate opportunities for pupils excluded, or at risk of exclusion, from school. However, excluded pupils still do not receive the full 25 hours of education that they are entitled to. This means that young people are at risk of leaving school without the basic skills and qualifications to help them through adulthood.
- 36 The work of the Children and Young People's Framework Partnership (CYPFP) is beginning to have a positive impact on service planning and delivery. A number of key appointments and designations have led to the recent improvements. These include:
- a children and young people's framework manager who has a background of working in education;
  - a children's partnership co-ordinator;
  - a young people's partnership co-ordinator;
  - a lead member for children and young people;
  - a lead director for children and young people; and
  - a managing director.
- 37 One important development that has resulted from the CYPFP is a 'Local Delivery Network' of multi-agency professionals based around each secondary and the special school. The Network, working with the secondary officer, has helped to reduce significantly the number of permanent and temporary exclusions. This year permanent exclusions are down from 17 pupils to one pupil. Temporary exclusions are down by nearly a third from 336 to 238. This has been achieved through providing support, advice and guidance for pupils with behaviour problems in schools, as well as by developing the range of alternative curriculum options available in key stage 4. In addition, the number of looked after children (LAC) who are temporarily excluded has dropped from 10 in 2002-2003 to three in 2006-2007. There have been no permanent exclusions of LAC so far this academic year.

### **Performance management**

- 38 Previous inspections have highlighted weaknesses in performance management within the education service. These weaknesses apply across the authority, as reported in the Relationship Manager's Annual Letter. In the past, therefore, the authority has been slow to identify and tackle significant emerging problems, such as the growth in the number of surplus places in schools, overspending in the special needs budget and rising numbers of exclusions in secondary schools.
- 39 The authority has agreed to changes in its committee structure in order to improve the quality of decision making. Portfolio holders are generally well informed, but there has, in the past, been a lack of clarity about the respective roles of the Executive and the Overview and Scrutiny Committees with the result that the authority as a whole has given too little attention to the monitoring of performance. This has now been addressed through the adoption of a new structure that

strengthens the role of the Audit Committee and seeks to ensure that decision making is fully informed by a thorough understanding of performance and risk.

- 40 The education service has produced detailed action plans in response to previous inspections. Officers monitor progress in their delivery thoroughly and report this periodically to the Overview Committee. This planning has contributed well to securing improvements in a number of important areas in response to inspection recommendations. However, the action plans do not provide a comprehensive set of objectives, targets and clearly resourced key actions that are necessary to ensure continuous improvement and to address each of the risks facing the service. These plans are not, therefore, a substitute for sound business planning. The lack of a corporate approach to business planning remains a weakness but this is being addressed.

### **Provision of school places**

- 41 Ynys Môn has 52 primary schools, five secondary schools and one special school. One of the secondary schools, in addition to serving the needs of the natural catchment area, is also a designated Welsh-medium provider for an extended more anglicised catchment area.
- 42 The LEA has a good system for forecasting the number of pupils entering schools each year and this data is reviewed annually. This year's forecast was 100% accurate in the primary sector and there was a discrepancy of only 1% between the predicted numbers and the actual numbers entering secondary schools.
- 43 There are too many surplus places in Ynys Môn schools. Officers have prepared detailed data to show the extent of the problem facing the council.

	Total number of unfilled places in Ynys Môn	% of unfilled places in Ynys Môn	% Wales average	Forecast for 2010 in Ynys Môn
Primary	1,334	23%	17.7%	1,779
Secondary	1,055	17%	13.6%	1,521

- 44 The primary population is forecast to fall even further by 2013 thus creating more surplus places. In the primary sector it is predicted that 40% of schools will have less than 50 pupils by 2010. Nearly 31% of primary schools have a significant surplus of 25% or more of places unfilled. Only one of the five secondary schools has 25% or more unfilled places. However, this data will have to be reviewed after primary and secondary school capacity figures have been recalculated using the new Welsh Assembly Government formulae.
- 45 The Ynys Môn schools organisation working group reviewed effectively the principles around the organisation of primary schools. It was established in 2005 comprising elected members, primary school headteachers and LEA officers. It met seven times and clearly helped to identify the issues facing the local authority. The group considered a wide range of evidence and was well informed by the authority of different options and the cost implications. The group presented its report on primary school reorganisation to the authority in the spring term 2007. The working group came to the conclusions that the current situation is not economically viable.

- 46 The authority used evidence from the working groups' report to prepare a clear three-step strategy to address surplus places in primary schools. The first task was to prepare a clearly written and realistic consultation document on the principles surrounding school reorganisation. This has been completed effectively. The council has used the document and consulted widely and effectively with stakeholders over the principles of reorganising primary school education in Ynys Môn. Bangor University were commissioned to carry out an independent analysis of the questionnaires. Elected members have approved the preparation of plans for reorganisation. The second stage will entail consultations on options for specific plans and the third step will be to publish statutory notices if these plans are accepted by the authority.
- 47 Through the consultation process, local communities have had good opportunities to influence the policy of the authority on primary school reorganisation. Headteachers, governors, parents, elected members and communities are very aware that the existing pattern is not a viable option. Eighty-five per cent of replies to the authority consultation document agreed that the way schools were organised should change.

### **Asset management**

- 48 Though there has been considerable progress since the last inspection in 2005, the authority's asset management plan remains incomplete and has not yet been approved by the authority.
- 49 Nevertheless, most of the information needed to contribute effectively to decision making about the reorganisation of primary schools is now available. Officers have detailed information about the condition of school buildings and the cost of putting right any defects, which they collected in 2005-2006. However, the information is not updated routinely to take account of maintenance work completed at each school, and is not therefore always as up-to-date as it should be. Schools have recently completed questionnaires about the suitability of their buildings for delivering the modern curriculum, but these responses have not yet been moderated to ensure that schools have interpreted the requirements consistently. Data about the capacity of schools will be updated using the new formulae issued recently by the Welsh Assembly Government.
- 50 Primary schools are in generally good condition. However, three of the five secondary schools are in need of significant refurbishment and this work has been agreed as the priority for the use of future allocations of specific education capital grants over the next 10 to 15 years. The authority estimates that about £17 million is needed to remedy the maintenance backlog. The authority has adopted a pragmatic approach to the task of improving the accessibility of schools to pupils with disabilities by making adaptation as necessary in order to ensure that pupils who are known to be entering the system can attend the school chosen by their parents.
- 51 Staffing vacancies within the property services department have contributed to the delay in completing the asset management plan and in the progress of past building projects. These issues have now been addressed with posts filled and a new structure that includes project management capacity has been approved. There was no slippage on the education capital programme in 2006-2007.



- 52 The authority and its schools are clear about their respective responsibilities with regard to the repair and maintenance of school buildings. Almost all schools have chosen to use the authority's property services to manage most work on their behalf. In these schools, the arrangement also allows the authority to exercise its responsibility to monitor the condition of its assets. In the case of primary schools, in particular, the pooling of their delegated repairs and maintenance funding permits the authority to prioritise work across the island's schools, and to combine capital and revenue funding effectively to maintain schools in good condition.
- 53 Schools report that the quality of the service received from property services has improved since the last inspection. The service level agreement underlying this arrangement is clear. However, the forthcoming renewal of the five-year agreement provides an opportunity to include clear performance standards against which schools might judge the quality of the service they receive, and to clarify the client support role of education officers within the arrangement.

### **Admissions to schools**

- 54 Pupils are able to attend the school of their choice. Parents receive clear and detailed information about the authority's policy and arrangements. There is an effective system in place to deal with appeals, which are very few in number. The partnership with social services is generally effective with regard to admissions. Looked-after children are placed in schools that are best suited to their needs. Appropriately, admissions procedures give priority to these children. Only 4.8% of looked-after children experienced one or more changes of school in 2005-2006, the second lowest proportion of all authorities in Wales.
- 55 There are clear admissions policies in place for special schools. Pupils with disabilities have access to a school place of their parents' choice, with support and transport as required in accordance with Council policy.
- 56 There are appropriate consultations with neighbouring authorities, diocesan authorities and schools over admissions. As a result pupils new to the authority are placed in suitable schools. There is good specialist provision for these pupils to increase their bilingual skills. The authority implements its bilingual policy effectively in relation to the provision of school places.
- 57 The local authority helps schools work together to avoid permanent exclusions. It does this by overseeing the transfer of a pupil at risk of exclusion to another school. All schools have agreed to the local authority protocol for 'managed moves'. To date there has been no need to use this protocol, although there have been transfers based on agreements between individual schools.
- 58 There is a good range of opportunities for pupils 'educated otherwise than at school' (EOTAS). Some pupils on alternative curriculum programmes stay on school rolls. The Secondary Schools' Inclusion Group assist in making the admissions policy to alternative curriculum programmes work according to pupil needs. Disaffected pupils are now identified early and are given appropriate support. As a result, many are fully integrated back into school.

## **Home-to-school transport**

- 59 The authority has a clear policy about home-to-school transport. The policy in the primary sector is more generous than is required by statute as it provides free transport for primary school pupils under eight years old residing over 1.5 miles from their catchment area school and for pupils between eight and 11 years old.
- 60 The local authority has drafted a new code of practice for parents, pupils, schools, contractors and drivers which clearly set out responsibilities and expectations regarding school transport.
- 61 The authority established a School Transport task and finish panel to monitor improvement in this area of work. This has been successful in ensuring the focus of elected members, officers and partner organisations. As a result, the authority has made progress in improving the quality and safety of home school transport. In addition, the authority has secured additional investment to support the implementation of improving the home to school transport service contracts due to be reviewed early in 2008.
- 62 The local authority charges £60 per year for transport over the age of 16. The local further education providers are effective at collecting these fees. However, arrangements to collect the money from post-16 pupils attending schools are not as effective as the income generated is less than it should be.
- 63 Good progress has been made to find ways of improving the school transport service. The information from this work will now inform contract discussions in preparation for re-tendering the contract next year. As a result, the authority is in a good position to provide a better service for transporting learners to and from school.
- 64 Poor pupil behaviour on a small minority of home-school transport routes remains a challenge for the local authority. It has tried out different initiatives aimed at combating this issue. The local authority has effectively piloted the use of closed circuit television (CCTV) cameras on buses. In addition, the local authority has consulted pupils about these issues and will include their responses in the renewing of transport contracts.
- 65 The clear guidelines provided by the authority and the written contracts with transport companies help to ensure that vehicles and relevant equipment comply with legislation. The local authority satisfactorily monitors the punctuality of home school transport, the behaviour and the quality of school buses. All taxi drivers and escorts have recent criminal records bureau (CRB) checks. The local authority is currently working with partners across North Wales to make sure that all public bus drivers working within home-school transport are CRB checked. At present this aspect of monitoring is not effective enough.

## Will the local authority's performance improve?

### Grade 2: Improvement prospects are good, with no major barriers

- 66 Following a period of instability, the political leadership within the authority is now more stable. This stability allows the leadership to be firm and decisive on a range of key issues including school reorganisation. This provides better prospects than previously that decisions will be taken for the benefit of the education system as a whole across Ynys Môn, rather than on a ward basis.
- 67 The political leadership has a good understanding of the issues facing education. Bi-monthly meetings between the leader, portfolio holders, senior officers and headteacher representatives provide a good forum to robustly discuss educational issues, such as the 2007-2008 authority budget and efficiency savings in schools. Outcomes of these meetings inform the decision-making process and help steer the strategic direction of the authority.
- 68 The new managing director has been in post for just over six months. Significant changes to performance management at a corporate level have been agreed and implementation has begun. He has also changed the committee structure to increase the scrutiny of performance. This is leading to increasing accountability across the authority and should, in time, also help to ensure that decision making is well informed. Overall, these changes support the prospects for improvement and are being driven effectively by the managing director and leader of the authority.
- 69 Since the inspection in 2005, there has been very good progress in securing consensus about the need for change. There have been significant changes in the perspective and commitment of senior officers and elected members to address the issue of unfilled places. The authority has acknowledged publicly that the current position is not sustainable. The leader of the authority and senior officers openly support the strategy for primary school reorganisation, with the agreed support of the council.
- 70 The authority has recognised that more officer capacity is required to develop and begin to implement the school reorganisation strategy. A senior education officer has been seconded to manage the process of school reorganisation. The increase in capacity is allowing the work needed to make the changes to move forward. A corporate working group including members and officers from a number of directorates will be providing support and challenge to any proposals. This demonstrates that the council sees the reorganisation of schools as a key priority.
- 71 The quality of the access service has improved since the last inspection in 2005. The service has the potential to improve further, given the additional officer capacity. The outcomes from the service are resulting in an increase in learning opportunities and improvements in the well-being of learners in a number of areas. These include:
- the CYPFP is now more effective at developing better opportunities for learners;
  - a significant reduction in the numbers of permanent and fixed term exclusions;
  - better learning opportunities for school learners and those not at school;

- the additional learning needs budget is now well managed and resources are used more effectively;
- the service for addressing repairs and maintenance of school buildings is significantly improved; and
- the authority is in a better position to provide a better service for transporting learners to and from school.

## **The authority's response to the report findings**

The Local Education Authority accepts and welcomes the findings of this report and appreciates the thorough and professional manner in which the Inspection Team measured and evaluated the performance and standards within the aspects of the service that were inspected.

The authority is pleased that, in general, the report recognises the progress made since the previous inspection, in the areas in question, and confirms that we, as an authority, are seriously addressing the key issues in order to ensure success.

We accept the recommendations made by the Inspection Team and intend to produce a robust and effective Post-Inspection Plan, to respond to them and to implement them, which will also promote the further development of the strategic plans which the authority has to establish a more effective and efficient schools system in Anglesey for the future.

## Appendix 1

### The grade profile

<b>Key judgement</b>	<b>Access and school organisation</b>
<b>How good is the authority's performance?</b>	3
<b>Will the authority's performance improve?</b>	2

<b>Key question</b>	<b>Access and school organisation</b>
<b>1 How effective is the authority's strategic planning?</b>	3
<b>2 How effective are the authority's services?</b>	3
<b>3 How effective are leadership and management?</b>	2
<b>4 How well do leaders and managers monitor, evaluate and improve services?</b>	3

## Appendix 2

### The inspection team

Arwyn Thomas HMI	Estyn	Reporting Inspector
Betsan O'Connor HMI	Estyn	Team inspector
Susan Roberts HMI	Estyn	Team Inspector
Terry Williams AI	Estyn	Team Inspector
Huw Lloyd Jones	Wales Audit Office	Team Inspector
Geraint Ellis	Ynys Môn	Nominee