

Isle of Anglesey County Council

Scrutiny Report

Committee:	Partnership and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee
Date:	13 November, 2025
Subject:	Education Scrutiny Panel Progress Report
Scrutiny Chair:	Councillor Dylan Rees

1. Who will be the portfolio holder presenting / leading the report?

Portfolio Holder	Role
Councillor Gwilym O Jones	Chair of the Education Scrutiny Panel
Councillor Dafydd Roberts	Portfolio Holder for Education and Welsh Language
Service Officer (Supporting)	Role
Aaron Evans	Director of Education, Skills and Young People

2. Why the Scrutiny Committee is being asked to consider the matter

Note progress made and to provide assurance

3. Role of the Scrutiny Committee and recommendations

- ☒ For assurance
☐ For recommendation to the Executive
☒ For information

Recommendation(s): R1 Note the progress made during the last period in terms of the work of the Education Scrutiny Panel.

4. How does the recommendation(s) contribute to the objectives of the Council's Plan?

Direct link to the Council Plan: 2023-2028. Education is one of the six key strategic aims (Council Plan: 2023-2028) namely - ensuring an effective education provision for today and for future generations. It is considered that Elected Members have a crucial role in realising this aim by scrutinising and holding to account. The work of the Education Scrutiny Panel contributes towards this aim.
--

5. Key scrutiny themes

Key themes the Scrutiny Committee should concentrate on:

1. The impact of the Scrutiny Panel's forward work programme against the Council Plan.
2. Key areas for strengthening the work of the Scrutiny Panel
3. The effectiveness of the Field Work Sessions against the outcomes of the Scrutiny Panel

6. Key points / summary

1. SUMMARY

1.1 Members will be aware of how the scrutiny panels contribute towards the Council's governance arrangements:

- Social Services Scrutiny Panel
- Resources Scrutiny Panel
- **Education Scrutiny Panel**

1.2 Panel Governance Arrangements

- i. The Scrutiny Committee¹ confirmed the Panel's terms of reference in a way that creates the conditions to broaden the remit of its work with the following key benefits:
- ii. Developing a scrutiny model for Education that focuses on a smaller group of Members working together on specific themes so that they can be more involved, develop a level of expertise in the subject and encourage good attendance and teamwork.
- iii. Strengthen Members' capacity to further challenge performance by improving the quality of their general knowledge and understanding regarding school performance data.
- iv. A forum for discussing information on Service risks as a basis for the Partnership and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee's forward work programme.
- v. A forum for developing a group of Members with the expertise and ownership to lead discussions on Education issues at the Partnership and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee

Members will be aware of the robust governance arrangements in place as a basis for the work of the Panel²

Furthermore, arrangements have been put in place to regularly report on progress to the Partnership and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee through the Chair of the Panel, Cllr. Gwilym Owen Jones. The membership of the Panel is attached (Appendix 1).

2. FOCUS ON THE EDUCATION SCRUTINY PANEL'S WORK

This is the Education Scrutiny Panel's sixth progress report and covers the period February 2025-October 2025

¹ Partnership and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee, 16 September, 2025

² Meetings of the Partnership and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee held on 20 April and 27 June 2017

Following an independent review of our Scrutiny arrangements, commissioned in the summer of 2024, an Improvement Plan was developed outlining five key themes for action.

Theme 4 highlighted the need for a more streamlined and flexible structure for Scrutiny. This includes achieving a better balance between formal and informal meetings, allowing space for fieldwork sessions focused on timely, strategic priorities aligned with the Council Plan; with an emphasis on evidence-based scrutiny to both support the Learning Service and ensure accountability. At the heart of this new approach is ensuring the voice of the learner remains a golden thread throughout. During the period noted, the Panel met formally three times with a series of fieldwork sessions in between³, considering the following issues:

2.1 Curriculum for Wales:

In February⁴ the Panel had the opportunity to engage in field work by visiting a Primary School focusing on the following theme→Curriculum for Wales. During the fieldwork session, Members of the Panel were given a better understanding of the Curriculum for Wales led by Graham Donaldson, whilst assessing the progress of the curriculum within the Primary Sector illustrated through practical examples from the classroom by pupils of the School. The Panel was able to identify and recognise how the curriculum focuses on developing skills, knowledge, and experiences across six Areas of Learning. It emphasises critical thinking, problem-solving, well-being, and creativity, aiming to foster active, engaged, and lifelong learners.

Members acknowledged how the school's implementation of the curriculum offers numerous opportunities for students with Additional Learning Needs, aligning with the school's educational philosophy, which places inclusion at its core.

The school has successfully integrated the curriculum through a range of diverse projects, incorporating a broad spectrum of the following cross-curricular skills:

- i. Literacy and Languages
- ii. Ecology
- iii. History
- iv. Mathematics and Numeracy
- v. Science and Technology
- vi. Digitalisation
- vii. Geography
- viii. Problem-solving.

Specific focus was given to the following aspects:

-  Highlighting the school's best practices in implementing the curriculum.
-  The importance of the Voice of the Learner through practical examples as demonstrated by Pupils.

Outcomes:

³ Formal meetings of the Education Scrutiny Panel held on 27/03/2025, 24/06/2025, 24/09/2025

Field work sessions of the Education Scrutiny Panel held on 20/02/2025, 08/09/2025, 09/09/2025, 10/09/2025

⁴ 20/02/2025

- i. Measure local progress in delivering the Curriculum for Wales. Specific focus on the Primary and Secondary Sectors and developments in the transition period.
- ii. Identify the school's good practice in implementing the Curriculum for Wales through examples in the classroom.

2.2 Self-evaluation of the Impact of the Education Scrutiny Panel:

At its formal meeting in March⁵, Panel Members were invited to discuss and evaluate the effectiveness and impact of the Education Scrutiny Panel by undertaking a self-assessment, guided by the following core questions:

Self-assessment core questions:

1. What were the highlights of the Education Scrutiny Panel during the past year?
2. In your opinion, what impact did the Education Scrutiny Panel have during 2024/25 in supporting the Partnership and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee to make recommendations to the Executive?
3. What aspects of the Education Scrutiny Panel's Work Programme could be improved or delivered more effectively in the future?
4. What development needs do you have to support you in the role as a Member of the Education Scrutiny Panel?
5. Any general observations on the influence and / or impact of the work of The Education Scrutiny Panel in the decision-making process?

The following key points were highlighted:

-  Members noted areas for improvement included the need for more thorough scrutiny focusing on areas of concern and stronger follow-up on actions to ensure effective oversight.
-  Members expressed a desire to engage in more practical work as a Panel, aiming to ensure that their efforts have a direct impact and lead to meaningful influence on the decision-making process.

Outcomes:

- i. Members expressed interest in training to support continuous improvement and develop understanding of the new Estyn inspection framework.
- ii. Members emphasised the importance of having a clear remit for each piece of work, aligned with the Panel's vision and terms of reference, to assess whether the objectives are being achieved.

2.3 Effective Transition → readiness to learn:

During a formal meeting of the Education Scrutiny Panel on 24th of June, Members received a comprehensive overview on Effective Transition → readiness to learn, in order to prepare them for the next series of field work sessions scheduled to take place across different schools⁶ during September 2025. Specific attention was given to the following aspects:

-  School governing bodies must create and publish a collaborative transition plan to support learners moving from Year 6 to Year 7, in line with the Transition from Primary to Secondary School (Wales) Regulations 2022.
-  Plans must place the learner at the center, addressing individual progression, well-being, and continuity of learning through coordinated curriculum and teaching across the 3–16 continuum.
-  Strong partnership between secondary and feeder primary schools is essential, with

⁵ 27/03/2025

⁶ Ysgol y Graig Fach, Llangefni, Ysgol Y Tywyn, Caergeiliog, Ysgol David Hughes, Menai Bridge

coordinated curriculum and assessment planning across the cluster to ensure smooth transitions.

- ✚ Transition plans must include clear proposals for review and evaluation, focusing on their impact on learning continuity and learner progression.

As part of the fieldwork sessions, members were presented with the following set of key scrutiny questions designed to guide and support effective scrutiny:

2a. To what extent does the school have clear strategies in place to ensure continued educational progress for learners when moving from Nursery to Reception and/or Year 6 to Year 7

2b. How effectively is the school working with other catchment schools on transition?

2c. How open and effective is sharing information about wellbeing/additional learning needs (ALN) of pupils as they transition?

2d. How familiar are learners with their new school?

During the various field work sessions, Members noted strong professional dialogue and communication among schools within the catchment area. However, it was highlighted that additional transition activities could be developed, resources permitting, between secondary schools and their respective catchment primaries, with several pupil-led suggestions provided, highlighting the importance of incorporating the voice of the learner. Members' also noted a more consistent approach is needed across the entire schools to ensure clear and effective communication and information-sharing between schools and parents, particularly during transitions from one school to another (e.g. shared proformas).

Outcomes:

- Opportunities were identified to develop additional transition activities, resources permitting, between secondary schools and their respective catchment primaries. Several pupil-led suggestions were shared, reinforcing the importance of incorporating the voice of the learner in transition planning.
- Improved Communication and Information-Sharing: Members identified the need for a more consistent approach across the schools to strengthen communication and information-sharing between schools and parents, particularly during key transition points between schools.

2.4 Corporate Safeguarding-schools contribution:

The Panel met on 24th September to discuss Corporate Safeguarding arrangements, focusing on the contribution of schools. This was part of a joint discussion with the Social Services Panel to consider the key messages emerging from the scrutiny of Corporate Safeguarding reports prior to their presentation to the Partnership and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee⁷. The following key points were noted:

- ✚ The Learning Service are conducting Safeguarding Support Visits to provide further assurance that schools are following relevant procedures, provide support where required and to ensure that there is a healthy culture of safeguarding within each school.
- ✚ Independent reviews are carried out on the "First Door" service.
- ✚ Learning Service and Social Services operate collaboratively, have an integrated approach with a strong working relationship (as "one team") between both services
- ✚ Each school has a designated safeguarding lead for clarity to parents and children.
- ✚ Early identification and intervention through systems such as "My Concern" enables prompt

⁷ Action point agreed upon during a meeting of the Partnership and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee 14/01/25

staff action.

- ✚ Staff training and awareness are prioritised, supporting a trauma-informed approach across schools.

Outcomes:

- The Education and Social Services Scrutiny Panels reviewed key messages emerging from Corporate Safeguarding reports before presentation to the Partnership and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee.
- Initial discussions focused on the panels' role in scrutinising the reports, with a follow-up meeting in December to further examine schools' contributions.

2.5 Improving Attendance:

During the same Panel meeting on 24th of September, members also received a detailed presentation on the theme of improving attendance — the next area of focus for the fieldwork sessions scheduled for November 2025⁸.

The Learning Service aims to return to the pre-pandemic attendance target of 95%, with expectations set for schools and regular meetings held with the secondary sector to monitor and support progress. The following key points were noted:

- ✚ Attendance remains significantly below pre-lockdown levels, with high levels of continuous absences. This aligns with the national Picture. Regular analysis, monitoring, and reporting informs targeted interventions at both school and learner levels.
- ✚ A communications campaign is underway, led by schools, including a video for secondary schools and targeted messages on social media to raise awareness among pupils and parents.
- ✚ Main challenges include high sickness-related absences, increased mental health issues among pupils, and a lack of understanding among some parents about the long-term impact of poor attendance.
- ✚ Content and messaging to support this work will be finalised by February 2026, aligning with strategic plans to improve attendance across the service.

Outcomes:

- Evaluate the effectiveness of the local authority's role in supporting schools to improve pupil attendance. Findings will be presented in the next Scrutiny Panel progress report, during February 2026.

2.6 Scrutiny Panel work programme for the period February, 2025→October, 2025

The forward work programme was reviewed at every meeting of the Panel with the aim of ensuring a robust work programme to support the Panel's contribution to the Council's governance arrangements.

Moving forward, the themes in the Education Scrutiny Panel's forward work programme will continue to reflect the priorities of the Learning Services under the following headings, with a focus on fieldwork:

- Work towards ensuring progress, achievement and educational equality
- Using an integrated approach to ensure fairness and mitigate the impact of poverty

⁸ 10/11/2025-Ysgol Gynradd Rhosybol, 11/11/2025-Ysgol Gynradd Llangoed, 12/11/2025-Ysgol Gyfun, Llangefni

- iii. Support children, young people and staff to be safe, healthy and improve their wellbeing
- iv. Ensure that Education on Anglesey is fit for purpose for future learning communities.

Fieldwork will be meaningful and closely aligned with the Education Scrutiny Panel's work programme, empowering Members to engage and challenge effectively during meetings while also contributing to the ongoing development of our scrutiny model.

6. MATTERS TO BE ESCALATED TO THE PARENT COMMITTEE FOR CONSIDERATION

No matters to be escalated by the Panel

7. Impact assessments

7.1. Potential impacts on groups protected under the Equality Act 2010

N/A

7.2. Potential impacts on those experiencing socio-economic disadvantage (strategic decisions)

N/A

7.3. Potential effects on opportunities to use Welsh and not treat the language less favourably than English

N/A

7.4. Potential impact on the Council's Net Zero Carbon target

N/A

8. Financial implications

N/A

9. Appendices

Education Scrutiny Panel Membership (Appendix 1)

10. Report author and background papers

Elin Allsopp, Scrutiny Officer, Anglesey County Council, Council Offices, Llangefni
LL77 7TW

MEMBERSHIP OF THE EDUCATION SCRUTINY PANEL

Member	Scrutiny Committee
Cllr Gwilym Owen Jones (Chair)	Partnership and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee
Cllr Margaret M Roberts (Vice-chair)	
Cllr Non Dafydd	
Cllr Derek Owen	
Cllr Arfon Wyn	Corporate Scrutiny Committee
Cllr Alwen Watkin	
Cllr Keith Roberts	
Vacant Seat- (Anglesey Independents)	