
Education other than at school

June 2016



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Publication Section

Estyn

Anchor Court

Keen Road

Cardiff

CF24 5JW or by email to publications@estyn.gov.wales

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Introduction

This is a report about education other than at school (EOTAS). The report focuses on provision for pupils of compulsory school age that receive EOTAS as all or the main part of their main education. The report has been produced in response to a request for advice from the Welsh Government in the Minister's annual remit to Estyn for 2015-2016. The report follows the Estyn survey on good practice in EOTAS published in June 2015.

The report is intended primarily for the Welsh Government, EOTAS providers, headteachers, local authorities and regional consortia. This report draws on evidence noted in appendix one.

Background

How does legislation define EOTAS?

Section 19(1) of the Education Act 1996 gives local education authorities the power to make 'arrangements for the provision of suitable education at school or otherwise than at school for those children of compulsory school age who, by reason of illness, exclusion from school or otherwise, may not for any period receive suitable education unless such arrangements are made for them,' (Great Britain, 1996).

In 2016, the Welsh Government published a guidance document on Inclusion and Pupil Support, which further details these legislative requirements. It also outlines a range of EOTAS provision available in Wales, including pupil referral units (PRUs), individual tuition, Youth Gateway, training providers, work-related education and voluntary and community organisations.

A local authority has the power to arrange suitable EOTAS provision for young people over compulsory school age but under the age of 18. This report does not include provision specifically for young people over compulsory school age.

A pupil receiving EOTAS may be dually registered between a school and a PRU or the local authority, or have single registration with a PRU or the local authority. The local authority will have responsibility for co-ordinating and financing the provision. A pupil receiving alternative provision arranged and financed by a school, such as a vocational course at a college of further education, is recorded as being educated off site and not dually registered.

Generally, pupils receiving EOTAS work towards attaining BTEC level 1 and 2 awards at certificate, extended certificate or diploma level. These enable pupils to gain the equivalent of up to four GCSEs. However, changes to the qualifications framework will reduce this to the equivalent of two GCSEs.

In 2007, Estyn reported that 'some local authorities in Wales maintain unregistered units that educate pupils of compulsory school age' (p. 5). Local authorities continue to educate pupils in unregistered provision. The majority of these are community-based centres where pupils attend for 'home tuition'.

In addition, local authorities commission EOTAS from unregistered providers operating as independent schools. Under the Education Act 2002, any provider of full-time education for five or more pupils of compulsory school age (or one pupil with a statement of SEN) is considered to be an independent school. All independent schools are legally required to register with the National Assembly for Wales, (Welsh Government, 2011).

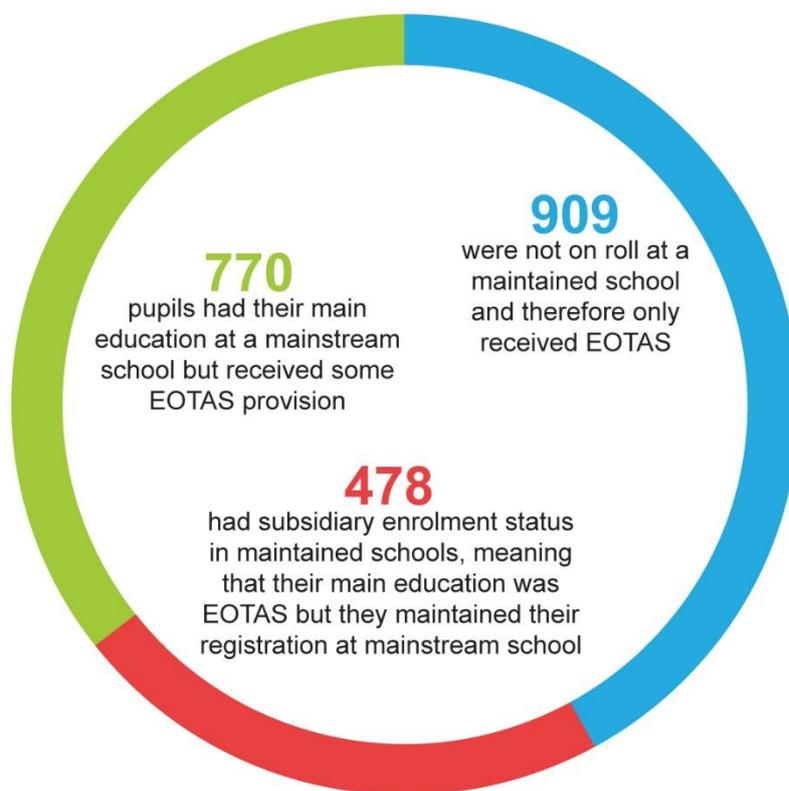
How many pupils receive EOTAS?

The number of pupils receiving EOTAS varies widely across the local authorities of Wales. It also varies from week to week as the number of pupils excluded from schools changes and the number of pupils referred to EOTAS as their main education while still registered at school changes. In 2013-2014, 89 pupils were permanently excluded from maintained schools in Wales (Welsh Government, 2015b).

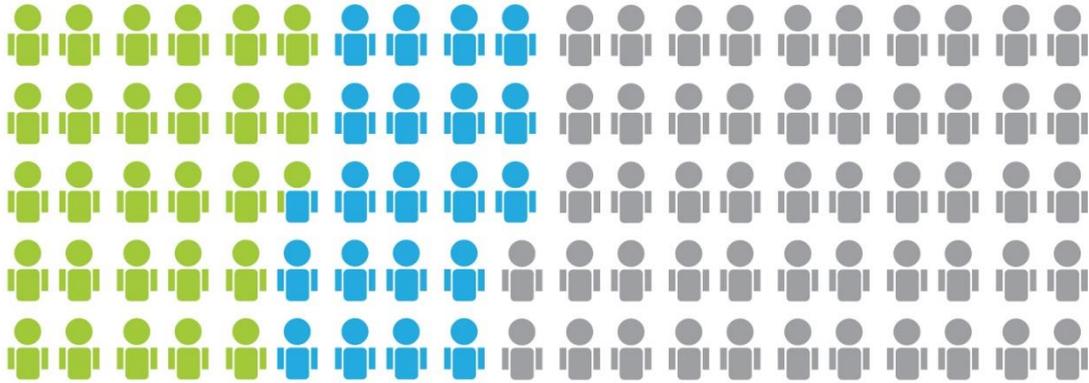
The most recent data from the Welsh Government (2015) shows that the number of pupils receiving EOTAS has risen year-on-year over the past five years. In the school census week of 12-16 January 2015, the total number of pupils reported as receiving EOTAS funded by their local authority was 2,157. This is an increase from 1,220 in 2012-2013, (Welsh Government, 2015a).

Of these pupils, 86.2% had special educational needs, with 33.4% having a statement. Just under 35% were eligible for free school meals. The majority of these pupils were from a White-British ethnic background.

Of the pupils reported in school census week:



Just under half of the 2,157 pupils receiving EOTAS attended pupil referral units (PRUs)...



...of which **592** pupils were on roll at a single PRU

Source: Welsh Government (2015a)

The rate of pupils aged 11-15 years whose main education is EOTAS increases as pupils' ages increase. In 2014-2015, 1.5 out of every 1,000 pupils aged 11 years were receiving EOTAS. This rate increased to 18.2 out of every 1,000 pupils aged 15 years. Seven out of ten pupils receiving EOTAS are boys, (Welsh Government, 2015a).

Main findings

- 1 Overall, EOTAS provision does not give pupils the same access to their education entitlements as their peers. A minority of pupils have to wait for more than 15 days to access provision, receive a restricted curriculum, or follow courses that are not challenging enough.
- 2 Pupils receiving EOTAS do not usually have access to a broad and balanced curriculum that enables them to gain qualifications that meet their needs and potential. Only a very few pupils are taught by subject specialists. A lack of resources and facilities for subjects such as science limits the curriculum for too many of these pupils. This shortfall means that pupils miss out on important aspects of education, which can impact on their future chances of employment and training.
- 3 Pupils receiving EOTAS do not always receive the full-time education (usually 25 hours a week) to which they are entitled. Most pupils for whom local authorities provide home tuition are educated for a maximum of 10 hours a week. They then follow a restricted curriculum because there is not enough time to teach all the subjects of the National Curriculum. Many of these pupils have had extended periods of school-based intervention and support through a Pastoral Support Programme (PSP) to help them manage their behaviour.
- 4 Pupils who have previously been attending Welsh-medium schools have extremely limited opportunities to continue their learning in Welsh when they start EOTAS. When providers recruit staff to work with these pupils, they do not always recruit qualified teachers.
- 5 Pupils with additional learning needs do not often receive the specialist support they need, even when this is set out in a statement of special educational needs. They do not consistently receive the specialist multi-agency support they need.
- 6 Nearly all pupils who receive EOTAS in Years 10 and 11 remain in EOTAS for the rest of their school career. They rarely re-integrate into school.
- 7 For many pupils, EOTAS provides them with a second chance to succeed. Many pupils' attendance improves and they are more motivated to learn because they have interesting learning experiences.
- 8 Many pupils who receive EOTAS study vocational courses. These experiences often motivate pupils to do well. They learn the skills needed to access further training or work. They gain qualifications that are relevant to the area of work they wish to pursue.
- 9 Many pupils develop good relationships with staff. They appreciate staff understanding the difficulties they experience. Over time, these relationships help to support pupils to improve their behaviour.

- 10 Very few pupils continue to be friends with pupils from their mainstream schools. They develop new friends in EOTAS, but these pupils often do not live nearby and it is difficult to meet up with them outside of school time.
- 11 Nearly all local authorities experience difficulties ensuring that pupils receiving EOTAS access the expertise of the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS). Staff do not get the specialist advice and guidance they need to support pupils' needs.
- 12 Overall, local authorities' referral processes for learners to gain access to EOTAS are unclear and not well understood. In most local authorities, these processes do not make sure that assessment and other information is transferred promptly from school to the EOTAS provider.
- 13 Across Wales, there is a lack of understanding about the registration requirements for pupils receiving EOTAS. A very few headteachers, who have dual registered pupils receiving EOTAS in Year 11, remove them from the register of the school in January. This means that the attainment of these pupils, which is often not in line with their peers, does not count in the school's performance data. Their local authorities endorse this practice.
- 14 Most local authorities do not monitor or oversee EOTAS or alternative provision robustly enough. In most cases, they know how many pupils are receiving the EOTAS they provide or commission from independent providers. Very few know how many other pupils are also accessing full-time offsite alternative provision, often in the same providers, but directly commissioned by schools.
- 15 Most local authorities collect data on the qualifications gained by pupils receiving EOTAS. Only a minority of local authorities monitor and evaluate the progress of pupils receiving EOTAS. Overall, local authorities do not track the ongoing progress of pupils well enough to ensure that all pupils meet their potential. They monitor attendance and behaviour, but they do not all keep records of pupils' learning needs or their progress against learning targets. In a few cases, procedures to track pupils' daily punctuality and attendance and to ensure pupils' safety are not followed.
- 16 Very few teachers of EOTAS, especially those employed by independent providers, have access to training and support that would keep them up-to-date with the latest practice and curriculum requirements. They do not usually know where to go to get the best advice or to see good practice. Local authorities do not encourage their specialist teachers and educational psychologists to share their expertise with independent providers of EOTAS.
- 17 Welsh Government regulations require independent providers of full-time provision for five pupils or more, and one pupil with statements of special educational needs, to be registered as independent schools. A minority of local authorities commission full-time EOTAS for large groups of pupils from providers that are not registered as independent schools. The majority of local authorities visited maintain unregistered PRUs. They operate tuition centres and other non-registered centres to provide education for up to 25 hours a week.

- 18 Elected members are unaware of all the aspects of EOTAS for which they are responsible. They are unsure about how well pupils receiving EOTAS progress or how much the local authority spends on EOTAS. They do not know if the pupils who received EOTAS go on to further education, employment or training. This means they cannot judge whether the EOTAS they provide is effective or gives value for money.

Recommendations

The Welsh Government should:

- R1 strengthen guidance to local authorities and schools regarding the requirement to:
- notify the Welsh Government of all EOTAS they provide or commission, including tuition centres, PRUs and independent provision
 - maintain records of all pupils receiving EOTAS provision, and those who receive alternative provision arranged by schools independently of their local authority
 - maintain records of the numbers of pupils receiving EOTAS who go on to become not in education, employment or training (NEETS)
 - improve accessibility to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) and other specialist agencies for pupils who receive EOTAS
- R2 publish attainment and attendance data for EOTAS learners at local authority level
- R3 consider revising the threshold for providers to register as independent schools

Local authorities should:

- R4 notify the Welsh Government of all EOTAS provision they provide or commission
- R5 check carefully the registration status of each provider they use to ensure that, where appropriate, provision that they commission is registered as an independent school with the Welsh Government
- R6 ensure that EOTAS referral procedures are understood by schools and include the requirement for assessment and other information to transfer promptly from school to EOTAS provider
- R7 monitor the quality of all alternative provision provided or commissioned for pupils in their local authority, including that arranged by schools or through 14-19 Networks
- R8 provide pupils with suitable education within 15 days of a decision being made that they should receive EOTAS
- R9 provide all pupils receiving EOTAS with a full-time curriculum that meets their needs, enables them to achieve their potential and ensures that they are re-integrated wherever possible

- R10 provide Welsh-medium EOTAS for pupils who have received their education in Welsh
- R11 meet the statutory requirement to ensure that pupils with a statement of special educational needs receive the support noted on their statement or Individual Development Plan
- R12 provide elected members with all the information they need about EOTAS to enable them to judge its effectiveness and value for money

Schools should:

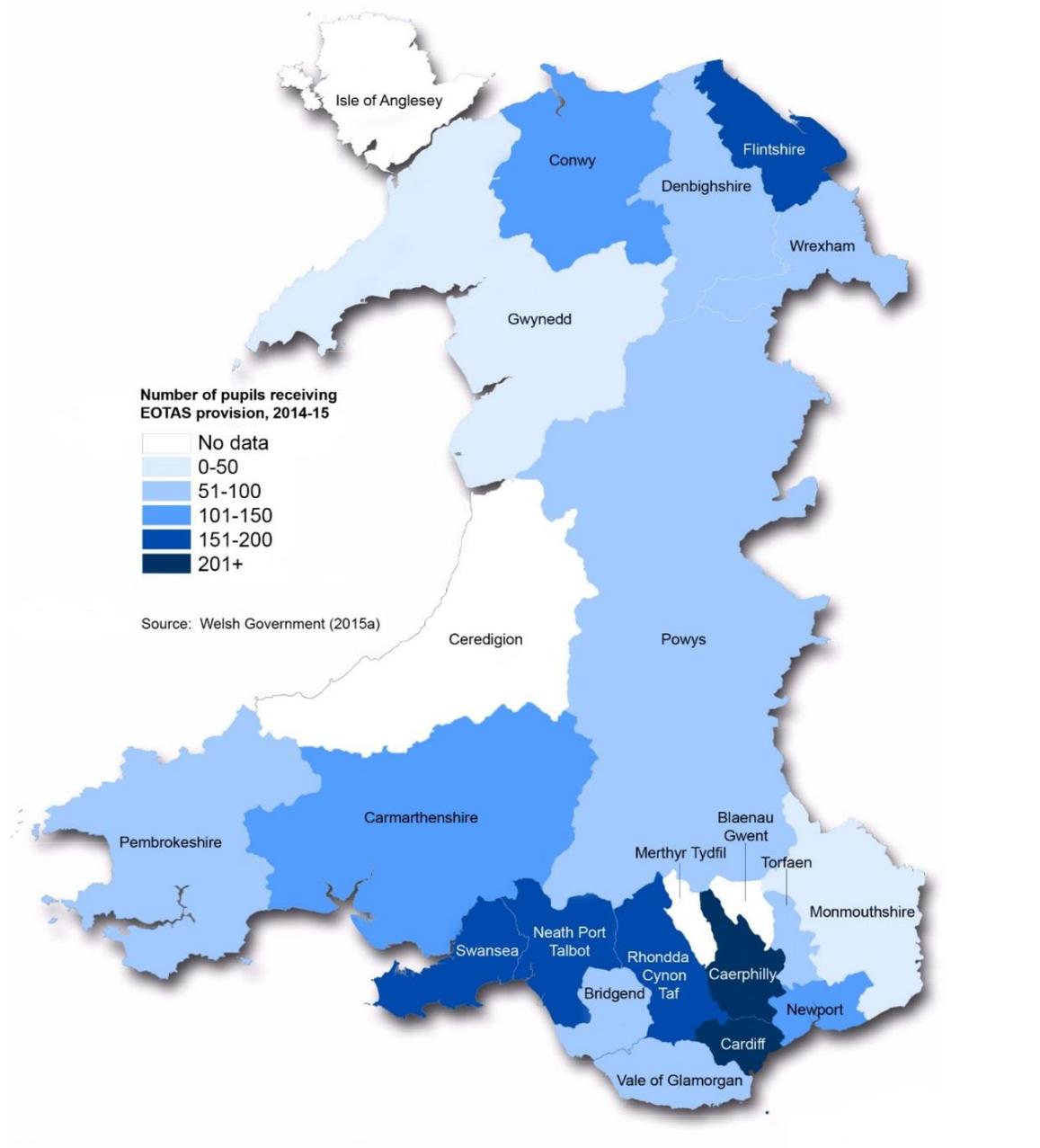
- R13 work closely with their local authority and provide them with comprehensive timely information about all pupils they refer for EOTAS and alternative provision, including through 14-19 Networks
- R14 check carefully the registration status of each provider that they use and check whether they should be registered if they are not
- R15 ensure that providers of EOTAS who are educating pupils from their school receive good quality information about pupils' learning and behaviour needs
- R16 keep in touch with pupils from their schools receiving EOTAS, monitor their progress, including academic performance, and re-integrate them wherever possible
- R17 work closely with EOTAS providers to ensure curriculum continuity for pupils from their school

What provision do pupils receive?

- 19 The following map notes the number of pupils receiving EOTAS as identified in the PLASC data returns 2015.

Figure 1: Number of pupils in Wales receiving EOTAS provision not on roll at a maintained school, 2014-2015

EOTAS provision - Wales



Source: Welsh Government (2015a)

- 20 The data shown on the above map does not necessarily provide an accurate picture of the number and proportion of pupils receiving EOTAS because there is uncertainty around the criteria for identifying a provision as EOTAS.
- 21 To understand the extent of EOTAS provision, a survey of local authorities was undertaken by Estyn on 8 May 2015. The chart in figure 2 below illustrates the number of pupils receiving EOTAS provision provided by or commissioned by each local authority.

The nature of provision

- 22 There are many reasons why pupils receive EOTAS. Mostly, they have been excluded from school, are refusing to attend school, or have very challenging behaviour associated with social and emotional behavioural difficulties. As a result, they have often missed extended periods of education and have gaps in their learning. These pupils often have low self-esteem and lack confidence. Many have low aspirations for their future.
- 23 Across Wales, very few pupils return to mainstream from EOTAS provision. It is particularly unlikely for pupils in Year 11 to return to mainstream school. No data is available about pupils across Wales who receive an alternative curriculum arranged through their school or the 14-19 network of provision. This means that the information about the number of pupils out of school, or the length of time they are out of school, is incomplete.
- 24 The EOTAS provisions visited for this survey are nearly all primarily for pupils at key stage 4. A majority of these providers also have a small number of pupils who are at key stage 3. One provider visited was for pupils at key stage 2. Over the last three years, across all provisions visited, only a very few pupils returned to mainstream schools. In a few providers, pupils were not aware that there was a possibility they could return to school.
- 25 Many pupils make an initial visit to the EOTAS provider with someone they know, such as a local authority Youth or Inclusion Service worker or Youth Offending Service officer. Once this visit is made, they begin attending fairly soon. However, a minority do not attend school or any other provision for long periods before they commence EOTAS. For a very few pupils, the time between attending school and regularly receiving EOTAS is as much as three years. This is due to a variety of reasons, for instance that they have persistently refused to attend, have experienced mental health problems or other illnesses, or have spent time in the criminal justice service. In most cases, local authorities work hard to engage and support these pupils using a range of strategies. However, for a very few pupils there does not appear to be a valid reason for the delay in local authorities providing EOTAS.
- 26 Only a very few schools regularly follow up on the progress of pupils who are still on their register once they receive full-time EOTAS. Providers are usually required to forward weekly reports on pupils, but the focus is on attendance and behaviour rather than academic performance. In most local authorities, inclusion services keep good records of attendance and behaviour. Providers also report on pupils' end of key stage performance data.

Education other than at school

Figure 2: Estyn - Number of pupils in Wales receiving EOTAS as their only provision, by provision, May 2015

EOTAS provision by LA/Provision type

| | Pupil referral unit | Independent special school or college | Further education college | Work-based learning or training provider | Individual, group, home or hospital tuition | LA funded resource provision that is independent of a mainstream school | Youth service including Youth Gateway | Voluntary organisation | Extended work experience | Outdoor education | Therapeutic provision other than hospital | Other |
|-------------------|---------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------|--|---|---|---------------------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------|---|-------|
| Isle of Anglesey | 13 | . | . | . | 9 | . | . | . | . | . | . | 3 |
| Gwynedd | 14 | 6 | . | . | 1 | . | . | . | . | . | . | 8 |
| Conwy | 53 | 10 | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . |
| Denbighshire | 10 | 2 | 53 | . | 7 | . | 2 | . | 27 | . | . | . |
| Flintshire | 65 | 14 | 28 | . | 6 | . | . | . | . | . | . | . |
| Wrexham | 13 | 4 | . | . | 45 | . | . | . | . | . | . | . |
| Powys | 15 | 14 | 1 | 6 | 24 | . | . | . | 5 | . | . | 6 |
| Ceredigion | 11 | 3 | . | . | 1 | . | . | . | . | . | . | 4 |
| Pembrokeshire | . | 20 | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . |
| Carmarthenshire | . | 4 | . | . | 3 | . | . | . | . | . | . | . |
| Swansea | 5 | 18 | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . |
| Neath Port Talbot | . | 5 | . | 2 | 23 | . | . | . | . | . | . | 3 |
| Bridgend | 12 | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . |
| Vale of Glamorgan | 14 | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . |
| Rhondda Cynon Taf | 121 | . | . | . | 14 | . | . | . | . | . | . | . |
| Merthyr Tydfil | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . |
| Caerphilly | 8 | . | 5 | 47 | 85 | 18 | . | 30 | . | 52 | . | 16 |
| Blaenau Gwent | 4 | 5 | . | . | . | 8 | . | . | . | . | . | . |
| Torfaen | 4 | 17 | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | 1 | . |
| Monmouthshire | 6 | . | . | . | 12 | . | . | . | . | . | . | . |
| Newport | 15 | . | 8 | 3 | 3 | 8 | 3 | . | . | . | . | 41 |
| Cardiff | 9 | . | . | . | 27 | . | . | . | . | . | . | . |
| Total | 392 | 122 | 95 | 58 | 260 | 34 | 5 | 30 | 32 | 52 | 1 | 81 |

Source: Responses to a survey of local authorities asked about provision of education other than at school (EOTAS); conducted by Estyn on 8 May 2015

Support and guidance

- 27 For the most part, local authorities meet with pupils and their parents or carers to discuss any options available to them before they receive EOTAS. These options are often very limited. As a consequence, although pupils are consulted about their future placement, the options from which they choose are not sufficiently broad and balanced. In particular, older pupils have limited vocational options.
- 28 Older pupils receive good support from EOTAS staff and additional professionals, such as youth workers and staff at Careers Wales, to plan their transition to the next stage in their life. However, there is no data collected on the number of pupils receiving EOTAS who go on to become NEET.
- 29 There are well-developed partnerships with CAMHS and the voluntary and community sector in a few local authorities. In these areas, pupils receive good therapeutic support to meet their needs. Where these partnerships are effective, it is mostly down to the commitment of individual CAMHS workers who understand the importance of joint work around vulnerable pupils. However, nearly all local authorities experience difficulties ensuring pupils access the expertise of CAMHS. As a result, EOTAS staff are not always confident their planning and interventions are appropriate.
- 30 Pupils are generally very appreciative of the nurturing relationships they develop with EOTAS staff. They talk to staff about their emotions and life experiences. They know that staff understand their needs and help them manage their emotions and behaviour. As a result, over time, most pupils learn to control their emotions and improve their behaviour.
- 31 All providers visited employ experienced staff to meet pupils' emotional and behavioural needs. Many of these staff have specific training, for example, in youth work, counselling and as learning coaches.
- 32 Although Careers Wales and learning coaches provide ongoing support and guidance to nearly all pupils receiving EOTAS, they have extremely limited influence on the curriculum opportunities offered by providers. As a result, pupils' choices remain limited to those offered by providers, rather than part of a planned pathway.

Curriculum

- 33 Pupils receiving EOTAS do not always receive a broad and balanced curriculum that enables them to achieve and gain recognised qualifications in line with their needs and potential.
- 34 They do not consistently have access to core subject teaching, and the range of subjects and qualifications they follow are mostly limited. This shortfall means that pupils miss out on important aspects of education, which can impact on their future chances of employment and training. For example, pupils at four providers visited do not have opportunities to study science at any recognised level, and no pupils follow accredited courses in a modern foreign language or Welsh. One reason for this is that providers do not have the specialist staff, resources or facilities required to offer,

for example, science or information and communication technology (ICT). They do not always have the range of subject specialists required for teaching a broad curriculum. This restricts pupils' learning.

- 35 Pupils at one provider visited have no provision for science or Welsh and staffing issues mean that at the time of the visit they have no English teacher or tutor to facilitate English.
- 36 A key stage 2 independently commissioned PRU visited offers a broad curriculum but does not offer Welsh as a core subject for pupils for whom it had previously been core. This is against the ethos of the authority's bilingual language policy and hampers pupils' opportunities to make progress.
- 37 Most pupils follow BTEC level 1 and level 2 and other local accreditation, but only a very few pupils surveyed follow GCSEs other than the core subjects of English and mathematics. A very few pupils continue with any aspects of the Welsh Baccalaureate.
- 38 At one provider of sports vocational courses, pupils also follow core curriculum subjects. Teachers from the referring school deliver these subjects on the site of the provider. This ensures that the school maintains responsibility for the pupils' learning and outcomes.
- 39 Nearly all pupils access personal and social education as a key part of the provider's curriculum framework. These learning experiences provide pupils with valuable information about a wide range of important issues including sex and relationships education, bullying and the UK Government's 'Prevent' strategy. Further, this aspect of the curriculum is most often where pupils have opportunities to gain better understanding into the emotional aspects of their own behaviour. As a result, over time and with skilled support and guidance, many pupils learn to control their emotions and improve their behaviour.
- 40 A very few pupils receive weekly physical education lessons, but this is nearly always for personal fitness, team-building and a way of using up excess energy, rather than as a formal subject in which they can gain recognised qualifications. Pupils mostly use the facilities of a local sports centre because the providers do not have the space or equipment required.
- 41 Small groups of pupils and individuals in a few local authorities receive an alternative vocational curriculum well-tailored to their needs. This is the result of creative planning and tailored support, particularly with youth services. In these local authorities, as well as learning vocational skills, pupils benefit from specialist support to manage their behaviour and develop their self-esteem. These pupils gain BTEC qualifications in the area of vocational learning and this often motivates them to progress to further education or training.
- 42 Many local authorities and schools try to motivate pupils who are disengaged from learning and with poor attendance by offering short alternative curriculum options. For example, pupils can follow options such as DJ mixing, rally car engineering and theatrical make up. The options form part of a pathway to future employment or further training.

- 43 In a very few local authorities, where very good relationships have developed with individual providers, there are examples of pupils taking part in interesting training opportunities such as land-based studies and outdoor pursuits. These accredited training courses offer appropriate progression to further education courses and employment.
- 44 At four providers visited, pupils follow a specific vocational focus, for example hair and beauty skills. They also receive the core skills of literacy and numeracy. However, they do not all receive ICT. Skills' teaching is mostly offered by staff of the local authority at another venue.
- 45 Pupils interviewed during visits to full-time EOTAS provision consistently expressed their disappointment at having a restricted curriculum. They understood that this would limit their opportunities to gain useful vocational qualifications and that ultimately this would hamper their life prospects.
- 46 This contrasts with the positive views of a very few pupils receiving part-time EOTAS vocational provision. These pupils were unanimously positive that the skills they were developing would help them into college and or employment. Most of these pupils had received helpful support and guidance from the learning coach, Careers Wales or youth worker to help them decide on an area of vocational training suitable to their needs and interests.

Welsh language provision

- 47 Nearly all pupils receiving EOTAS have English as their first language. Generally, local authorities report that the proportion of pupils requiring EOTAS through the medium of Welsh is too low for it to be feasible to set up or commission group support. As a result, nearly all of these pupils attend provision delivered through the medium of English. Their local authorities fail to make provision for them to continue with their Welsh-medium education.
- 48 None of the providers visited offer courses through the medium of Welsh. They try to recruit staff that are Welsh-speaking to work on a 1:1 basis with Welsh-speaking pupils. However, these staff are not always qualified teachers. These arrangements create a number of potential issues. For example, pupils may not be able to continue their education through the medium of Welsh since staff who are not teachers may not have sufficient subject expertise, especially across a range of subjects. Further, pupils who have been receiving Welsh-medium education may not have the technical vocabulary in English to transfer their learning into English easily.
- 49 Staff at one provider visited were not aware that two pupils attending spoke Welsh as their first language. In discussion with inspectors, these pupils noted that it would be very difficult to return to a local mainstream school as their teaching for the whole of Year 9 had been through the medium of English.

Hours of provision

- 50 Pupils receiving EOTAS as all or their main provision are entitled to access full-time supervised education or other activity equivalent to that offered by mainstream in the

area. The latest Welsh Government Guidance (2016) does not note the specific number of hours of education to which pupils are entitled. However, it does note that, 15 days after exclusion on a permanent or fixed-term basis, pupils should have access to full-time provision.

- 51 According to the Welsh Government (2015a), the average number of hours of education provided to EOTAS pupils during the 2015 school census week was 20.5 hours.
- 52 Pastoral support programmes (PSPs) enable some pupils to access a temporarily reduced timetable. This can help them to attend regularly and support their transition to back to full-time education. This can be especially so for pupils with health needs. However, for too many pupils a PSP is an inappropriate long-term measure. As a result, these pupils do not access their entitlement to education and this restricts their opportunities to learn. They do not have enough opportunities to develop the discipline of routine they will need for college or work.
- 53 Six of the eleven providers visited provide 25 hours provision. Here, there is an expectation that pupils attend each day. Vocational courses and home tuition are nearly always part-time. Most pupils attending vocational courses of up to three days a week also attend other provisions where they receive skills and subject teaching. Very few pupils attend mainstream school for any part of the week. Pupils receiving home tuition rarely receive more than 10 hours of education each week. These pupils receive significantly less than the full-time education that is offered by local mainstream schools. The significant health needs of a very few pupils are a barrier to accessing further hours.
- 54 Many pupils regularly attend EOTAS provision. Discussions with pupils about their previous attendance records at school suggest that EOTAS helps them improve their attendance. For these pupils, there are three key motivating factors in improving attendance: the staff at the provider; the alternative curriculum; and the arranged transport to attend EOTAS. However, records of attendance from pupils' previous schools are rarely available for providers to compare past attendance.

Providers' qualifications, skills and experience

- 55 All of the providers visited have at least two years' experience of providing courses for pupils receiving EOTAS. Two providers are part of a larger organisation that offers work-based training and other provision. The vocational providers visited have at least 10 years of experience providing for pupils receiving EOTAS. They have extensive experience in their area of vocational expertise.
- 56 Staff qualifications vary across the providers visited. Nearly all of those offering basic and core skills have a minimum of one qualified teacher and other key support staff such as learning coaches. Generally, these teachers have been working in EOTAS and outside schools for more than three years. They have not been involved in recent training for mainstream teachers on curriculum developments. They are not always aware of current practice. Teachers employed in the private, voluntary or community sectors do not generally have opportunities to attend training provided by regional school improvement consortia. This means that they miss out on

opportunities to network with current practitioners and they do not easily know where they might see good practice. Very few of these teachers visit mainstream schools to learn about current curriculum practice. This makes it difficult for them to offer a curriculum that is in line with that of mainstream schools.

- 57 Only a very few providers employ staff who are qualified and experienced in supporting pupils with special educational needs. As a result, they do not all have the skills to support pupils' needs appropriately, even when these needs are identified on their statement of special educational needs. Where this happens, local authorities fail to meet their statutory obligations to ensure that the provision specified in a pupil's statement of special educational needs is met.
- 58 Not all vocational providers visited have qualified teachers. However, they all have a range of skilled staff qualified in the specific vocational area offered, such as outdoor pursuits, forestry and hair and beauty. For the most part this is appropriate since pupils attend these providers on a part-time basis and receive core subject teaching arranged by the local authority in a PRU, mainstream school or at an alternative provision base. One provider visited is associated with a professional sports club. Here, a core curriculum supplements professional sports' coaching to provide full-time provision. More talented pupils who access this provision have a realistic career path towards work in this sport. However, opportunities to access this type of EOTAS are limited to a small number of pupils. A key stage 2 independently commissioned PRU, based within an outdoor pursuits centre, employs experienced teaching and support staff who are qualified instructors for outdoor pursuits.

How well do pupils achieve in EOTAS?

Pupil outcomes

- 59 Currently, it is not possible to compare the attainment of pupils receiving EOTAS to national, local or family benchmarks. However, nearly all pupils study a restricted range of subjects. As a result, only a very few pupils attain as well across a similar range of subjects as their peers in mainstream schools.
- 60 A very few pupils gain A*-C grades in GCSEs in the core subjects of English or Welsh, mathematics and science. This is because most pupils only study a small range of BTEC or Entry level GCSEs. They do not always have opportunities to study higher level courses, even when these better suit their abilities. This is a major shortcoming.
- 61 Pupils, especially more able pupils, do not consistently achieve their potential. Overall, they achieve the targets set for them by providers and attain accreditation for their learning, but these targets are often too low.
- 62 Generally, pupils studying vocational courses gain the relevant qualifications. Usually, these are BTEC level 1 and 2 awards at certificate, extended certificate or diploma level. Currently, these enable pupils to gain the equivalent of up to four GCSEs. However, changes to the qualifications framework will reduce this to the equivalent of two GCSEs. Nearly all headteachers interviewed are concerned that these changes will impact negatively on pupils receiving EOTAS.

- 63 Nearly all pupils following vocational courses improve their literacy and numeracy skills. However, they do not often achieve nationally accredited qualifications for these skills. In particular, these pupils often do not have opportunities to develop their ICT skills.
- 64 Pupils with additional learning needs, even those with statements of special educational needs, do always have their needs fully met. They often do not have expert support to help them develop their literacy and numeracy skills. Pupils' communication and thinking skills are very often under-developed.
- 65 Nearly all pupils make good progress in improving their wellbeing. Over time and with expert support where necessary, they improve their behaviour and learn to control their emotions.

Pupils' experiences

- 66 Many pupils develop positive relationships with staff. Generally, they trust staff and are confident that staff will try and help them, whatever their problem.
- 67 Despite these positive aspects, many pupils are frustrated that they cannot access a full curriculum. They understand that, because of this, their future life, further study and employment chances are limited. For example, one pupil wanted to go on to study art at a further education college and in higher education. However, he knew that this was unlikely because he is not studying art as one of his four GCSEs.
- 68 Once receiving EOTAS, many pupils report that they lose touch with their friends at mainstream school. They develop new friendships with peers in EOTAS but these pupils often do not live nearby so it is difficult to meet up with friends outside of school time. This does not motivate their return to mainstream, even when this is a possibility.

How effectively do local authorities plan, manage, monitor and evaluate EOTAS?

- 69 EOTAS is a consistent feature in key local authority strategic plans such as the Single Plan and the Youth Engagement and Progression Framework. However, these plans do not often lead to effective policy or strong co-ordination that develops consistent practices across all the organisations providing EOTAS. Generally, the plans focus on improving only aspects of EOTAS such as PRUs, exclusion, attendance and NEETS.
- 70 In most local authorities, the Youth Engagement and Progression Framework sets out appropriate measures for early identification of pupils who may require EOTAS. These frameworks usually identify processes to broker support and establish systems to track pupils' progress. They set out how local authorities will plan provision and pathways to further education, employment or training. However, in most local authorities it is too soon to see the impact of these plans. Generally, the use of destination data as part of an evaluation of EOTAS is underdeveloped.

- 71 A few local authorities are beginning to plan provision based on an analysis of the needs of the local labour market. At least one local authority has based its Youth Engagement and Progression co-ordinator within the Economic Development Department to help take advantage of the potential links. So far, it is too soon to see the benefits of this.
- 72 Criteria for accessing and exiting EOTAS are unclear in many local authorities. Schools are generally satisfied with the accessibility of provision for their pupils, but they are not always sure of the official processes they should follow. They rely on good liaison with specific officers to ensure that pupils move on from their school to an alternative provision. They are not always clear about how long pupils have to wait before they start the new provision. Schools do not regularly follow the progress of pupils who remain dual registered but receive EOTAS.
- 73 In a few local authorities, referral processes to EOTAS are well-managed and schools are clear about the process and monitor pupils' progress when they receive EOTAS. Here, access to EOTAS is for the most part through a staged approach, with support provided to pupils at risk of exclusion. Support is also offered to build the capacity of school staff to manage behaviour effectively and consistently. In urban areas with effective systems of referral, managed moves panels support the smooth transfer of pupils between schools. However, in rural areas, distances between schools prevent effective managed moves. In the most effective local authorities, alternatives have been developed to meet their local needs, such as schools' internal exclusion provision and local area provision.
- 74 Local authorities continue to educate pupils in unregistered PRUs. They do not realise that they should notify the Welsh Government of any centre, for example home tuition centres, where they educate pupils.
- 75 Many local authorities commission independent providers through a procurement exercise. This enables them to set out clear specifications and expectations such as having a local base, offering specific qualifications and having specific staff expertise. However, these arrangements do not guarantee that pupils have equal access to their entitlement as their peers.
- 76 A few local authorities commission provision for large numbers of pupils. The outsourced provision functions in a very similar manner to PRUs, although pupils do not move in and out as easily as should happen in an effective PRU. Not all providers of full-time EOTAS for groups of pupils are registered with Welsh Ministers as independent providers of education.
- 77 In most cases, information given to EOTAS providers prior to pupils' placement about the needs of individual pupils is minimal. Information tends to focus on their behaviour and circumstances around their exclusion. Providers rarely receive previous attendance and assessment data or any detail about learning needs and experiences. This means that providers have very little information from which to plan for the individual needs of these pupils. Most often, staff do a baseline assessment of all new pupils and plan for their individual needs using this information. However, staff do not always have the additional training and experience to assess or support pupils' special educational needs. They do not generally access the local authority educational psychology service or private specialists to help them understand pupils' learning needs.

- 78 All of the local authorities visited have an appropriate range of policies and guidance for safeguarding pupils, for the behaviour management of pupils and for the use of restrictive physical interventions. Providers access the same training as local authority staff in relation to these aspects. However, in a very few independent providers, there is confusion about whether they should follow safeguarding procedures of the local authority or those of their parent company.
- 79 Headteachers, inclusion officers and senior leaders in local authorities say that there are inconsistencies in the interpretation of pupils' enrolment status requirements. Schools are required to dual register any pupils who attend another school or PRU. Pupils attending provision arranged or agreed by the school, including vocational courses at college or work experience as part of an alternative curriculum, should be recorded as receiving education off-site. Pupils undertaking extended work experience should be recorded separately. When pupils receive EOTAS for an extended period, and it is not likely that they will return to mainstream, their enrolment status may change.
- 80 There are various arrangements as to which school/PRU is the main school and which is the subsidiary when pupils are dual registered. This decision has an impact on where the pupil's performance data is registered. In at least one local authority, schools are advised to remove dual registered pupils from the register prior to the January collection of PLASC data. The consequence is inconsistent reporting of schools' performance data across Wales.
- 81 There is potential for inconsistencies in data when pupils undertake activities arranged under the 14-19 network of local providers, and when schools arrange alternative provision. Headteachers who were asked to offer a definition of EOTAS consistently noted 'any education that is other than at school'. There was no consistent understanding as to whether this should include provision accessed through the 14-19 network of local providers or arranged with providers themselves. Many schools commission alternative provision outside the school setting independently of their local authorities, and all schools commission through the 14-19 network of local providers.
- 82 None of the local authorities visited collect data on the alternative provision commissioned by schools, even when pupils attend this provision for five days each week. Local authorities are required to maintain records of all pupils being educated outside school, on a part-time or full-time basis. The information ensures that local authorities are accountable for fulfilling their duty to provide suitable and appropriate education to all young people of compulsory school age.
- 83 This has significant implications for local authority planning and evaluation. For example, officers and elected members cannot make an informed judgement about the performance of schools or about the effectiveness of schools to include all pupils, if they are unclear whether schools are actually educating all their pupils. Nor can they evaluate the true cost of EOTAS across the local authority.
- 84 Only a very few local authorities have robust systems to monitor EOTAS regularly and ensure that all provision is of a high quality. Nearly all local authorities visited recognise that there is need for improvement in their processes and are either currently reviewing or planning to review these.

- 85 Nearly all local authorities have unreliable information on the number of pupils receiving EOTAS, the hours that they attend, their performance outcomes including the progress of pupils with special educational needs, numbers that return to mainstream or who go on to further education, training or work. This is because they do not have a comprehensive overview of the various elements of EOTAS such as home tuition, group tuition attendance at colleges of further education, provision arranged by Youth Services, the Youth Offending Service or health services, or that arranged with independent providers.
- 86 In most local authorities, inclusion services keep good records of attendance and behaviour. Providers also report on pupils' end of key stage performance data. Local authorities rarely link EOTAS data with other schools' performance data to monitor the trends in outcomes across groups of pupils. They do not monitor the impact on schools' performance data of removing pupils receiving EOTAS from their register. No local authority visited compares pupils' outcomes across the range of EOTAS and alternative providers to see what types of provision enable pupils to perform best. Providers are usually required to send reports on pupils weekly to schools and to the local authority, but the reports focus on attendance and behaviour rather than on academic performance.
- 87 Nearly all local authorities use their own officers to ensure that providers meet health and safety guidance. Although, this ensures that EOTAS premises meet basic health and safety requirements, the premises are often not fit for purpose. For example, they do not have science or physical education facilities, and rarely have facilities for pupils to have a hot lunch. In addition, they are not easy for pupils to reach.
- 88 In many local authorities, members receive regular reports about the provision and outcomes for pupils in PRUs. Elected members, interviewed for this report, are very well informed about a range of performance data for pupils in schools and PRUs. They have good understanding of attendance data and they also know about the performance of pupils at the end of key stage 4 and the proportion of young people who are NEET.
- 89 However, reports to elected members do not enable them to judge the performance of all the aspects of EOTAS provided by and for the local authority. As a result, they are unclear about what is provided, how well pupils progress and how much is spent on EOTAS in their local authority. Very few lead elected members visit EOTAS, other than PRUs, to meet pupils and staff.
- 90 Although local authorities have examples of EOTAS meeting the needs of individual pupils well, this is not consistent. Too few pupils receive a good service that meets their needs, enables them to make good progress and prepares them well for a successful future.

Case study 1: Progress in the early identification of pupils at risk of becoming not in education employment or training (NEET) in Gwynedd

Context

The Welsh Government requires local authorities to provide strategic leadership of the implementation of the Youth Engagement and Progression Framework. The Framework aims to reduce the number of young people not in education, employment or training. This requires close working between local authority services and partners including Careers Wales, community and voluntary services, schools and other providers. All local authorities have appointed Engagement and Progression Co-ordinators to support this work.

An agreement to share personal information across agencies through an information sharing protocol is supporting local authorities to progress the strategic management arrangements necessary for implementing the Framework across Wales. In Gwynedd local authority, the protocol is beginning to make a difference to the early identification of pupils at risk.

Strategy

A three-stage brokerage system has been agreed to ensure that schools and other agencies understand procedures in cases of concern.

Stage 1: The headteacher and the Inclusion Officer discuss concerns and share information. Pupils are identified using an early identification tool that collates readily available data and creates a list of pupils starting with those perceived to be at the highest risk of disengagement. The tool uses data on attainment, attendance, exclusions and the number of previous schools.

Stage 2: The school's own multi-agency panel discusses the case and identifies a key worker. This panel brings together the professionals linked closely with the school and includes the school counsellor and welfare officer. Following this meeting, a key worker is allocated who is given the responsibility to create and monitor a personal action plan with a pupil. Progress is measured termly using the data from the early identification tool.

Stage 3: Access to a local authority multi-agency panel. The local authority multi-agency panel includes representatives from the children's services, the youth offending service, Careers Wales and the voluntary sector as well as an educational social worker, a school counsellor, the Inclusion Officer and the Assistant Head of EOTAS. The panel discusses the case and decides on interventions and a monitoring process. It then informs key workers and school staff of the outcome.

Outcome

Pupils receive appropriate support in a timely manner. For example, they may access to 25 hours of alternative curriculum, including core GCSE subjects and extended work experience. In addition, where appropriate, pupils may receive a package of support from a mental health worker, a youth engagement worker and an

advisor from Careers Wales. When necessary, an educational social worker will work with the pupil and family to support attendance or re-integration. During 2015-2016, 240 pupils have benefited from additional services, with 20 receiving more intensive support packages.

As a result of this new planned approach, one recently excluded pupil is now co-operating with a key worker to develop an individual development plan. She is considering suitable vocational courses at the local college of further education. Importantly, she is now willing to receive intervention and understands her need to improve communication skills.

Case study 2: A professional sport club works with schools through its Motivate and Learn project

Context

A professional sports club and schools in the local authority have formed an effective partnership. The partnership's Motivate and Learn scheme provides an alternative curriculum and opportunities to experience training in a work environment for pupils who are disengaged from education. The scheme provides education for individuals and small groups of pupils. Schools and a PRU commission the provision through a service level agreement. However, access to this provision for pupils already receiving EOTAS is dependent upon staff availability.

The Motivate and Learn scheme is part of a range of alternative provision developed by the club and its partners.

Strategy

The Motivate and Learn scheme provides a bespoke curriculum to meet the needs of individual pupils. This individualised curriculum enables pupils to continue to follow their curriculum and smoothly transfer between school and the scheme. Each year the club supports one or two full-time and a small cohort of part-time pupils. Pupils taking part have been identified as at risk of exclusion, or have already been excluded.

The club also runs a series of motivational weeks for Year 9 learners who are at risk of disengagement. Three secondary schools in the area have bought into these courses.

Two Motivate and Learn teachers deliver the individual curriculum for each pupil that is provided by the schools. This includes GCSEs and a range of BTEC qualifications. During pupils' time at the scheme, staff keep in contact with the schools via email, telephone and regular visits.

Nearly all pupils referred to the scheme have an interest in sport, which motivates them to take part. The scheme provides excellent opportunities for pupils to use the rugby and football facilities at the club. In addition, professional players get involved to support pupils' engagement during their period at the scheme.

Pupils attend an initial interview with their parents and school staff to agree the individual package of support. Together they develop a bespoke plan that meets the needs of the individual pupil. Once they attend the scheme there is a regular pattern of contact between their school and staff at the scheme. Schools provide the scheme with work for individual pupils and keep in touch with pupils and staff to monitor their progress. This makes sure that schools maintain responsibility for their pupils.

Nearly all learners receive 25 hours education either full-time at the scheme or part-time at the scheme and part-time at school. Pupils receiving full-time provision usually spend the academic year at the scheme following a successful one-month trial. Nearly all pupils referred are Year 11 boys.

Presently, three schools use the scheme as part of their early intervention strategy. Access to the provision is only when all school strategies have been exhausted. Schools closely monitor pupils' attendance, behaviour and engagement.

Outcomes

Nearly all pupils improve their attendance and behaviour. The majority of previous pupils have transferred to further education at the local college. A very few returned as employees to the club.

Case study 3: Pupils are offered the opportunity to experience the challenge of outdoor pursuits

Context

Most pupils referred to the local authority's inclusion service by schools are poor attenders, disaffected or excluded from school. The rural nature of this authority generally makes transfer to another school impractical. Partly because of this, the local authority has developed partnerships with a range of local providers to offer pupils alternative education. These opportunities have generally been successful in engaging pupils.

One such provider is an established centre for outdoor pursuits. Here, pupils are offered challenging motivational training and nationally recognised qualifications.

This provider is not registered with the Welsh Government as an independent provider of education. However, it is registered with the Health and Safety Executive as the designated Adventure Activities Licensing Authority, to provide watersports, climbing and trekking activities.

Strategy

Pupils attend the centre on a part-time basis for up to two years. Nearly all pupils are referred through the local authority, but schools also commission placements for individual pupils.

Pupils have opportunities to experience a wide range of outdoor activities and

important associated skills such as first aid. Although the skills they learn are focused on their individual development, the activities often require teamwork. Through their experiences, pupils learn to take turns and to look after each other. They learn to take responsibility and develop the confidence required for leadership of others.

The exciting experiences, such as kayaking and climbing, support the development of pupils' vocational skills whilst they improve their confidence and self-esteem. For example, when they first start at the centre, pupils are often unwilling to try the activities, especially because they do not know the other pupils. However, the centre supports them to develop their skills and the learning activity becomes their focus. For many pupils, particularly those with special educational needs such as Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), this may be the first time they have been able to fully concentrate on learning a skill. Over time, as they improve their skills, they develop confidence and enjoyment. They also develop new friendships with their peers.

Outcomes

For a majority of pupils attending this training, attaining appropriate accreditation as proof of their learning becomes a motivating factor. They are keen to achieve well and a few want to progress along a pathway to further training and employment in this type of work.

In 2015, the 15 pupils who attended gained the equivalent of 39 GCSEs for their learning across a range of outdoor and associated activities at the centre. Of these pupils, three gained temporary work at the centre, one of whom continues on an occasional basis when the centre requires additional staff.

Case study 4: Pupils learn woodland crafts to satisfy a local employment need

Context

A local authority noted a need for vocational training for young people to support the rural economy of the area. It commissioned a woodland project through a procurement tendering process using the 'sell2wales' website. The aim was to provide pupils disaffected in school with a high quality service that was interesting and motivational, whilst ensuring value for money.

This project is not registered as an independent provider of education or training with the Welsh Government.

Strategy

The project offers pupils the opportunity to learn woodland management skills and crafts in an authentic vocational environment. Small groups of pupils who are poor attenders, disengaged or excluded from school undertake practical activities in a woodland environment. They achieve accreditation for their achievements and learn specialist skills that are in local demand.

A local businessman, skilled in woodland management, established and manages the project. It is staffed by a small team of local authority youth workers. As a result, pupils receive appropriate advice and guidance to develop their vocational skills whilst being supported to develop their self-esteem, motivation and independent learning skills.

Pupils attend the woodland project on a part-time basis. They learn how to maintain the woodland environment and make basic pieces of furniture using traditional equipment and specialist tools. At the project, pupils are motivated to attend and enjoy the challenge of learning new skills. They develop their skills and learn to control their emotions and behaviour. They learn to take responsibility for their work, co-operate in team work and develop trust in their peers. For many pupils, this represents significant progress.

However, the local authority's Youth Engagement and Participation Framework mapping analysis identified the need to improve the progression pathway for these pupils. As a result, through a partnership with a local work-based learning provider, a BTEC course in land-based studies was created. This enables pupils to attain nationally recognised accreditation for their learning.

In 2015, the project, sponsored by the local authority, also offered a summer course on continuity in learning. This course allows pupils to sustain their learning over the summer holidays and gain additional experience and skills. This is particularly useful to prepare pupils leaving school at the end of key stage 4 for their September transition into further education and training.

Outcomes

Of the seven pupils that attended the summer course in 2015, five progressed to the BTEC course and two entered further education courses to continue their learning in woodland management.

The local authority introduced BTEC qualifications into the alternative curriculum provider framework in 2014. This accreditation currently enables pupils to gain up to the equivalent of four GCSEs (grades D-G). As from September 2016, changes being made to the way that some qualifications will count towards school performance measures at key stage 4 will reduce to a maximum equivalent of two GCSEs.

Since 2014, through a range of alternative provision, 57 pupils have gained a BTEC qualification.

In the last academic year, nine pupils attained the BTEC qualification in woodland management. In all, these pupils achieved the equivalent of 15 GCSEs for their work at the project.

Appendix 1: Scope and evidence base

The scope of the report

These are the areas of provision that the report considers:

- individual tuition and tuition at pupils' homes or hospital
- work-based learning
- work experience
- youth services including Youth Gateway
- further education colleges
- discrete local authority provision
- training providers
- voluntary organisations
- outdoor education providers
- therapeutic provision
- tailor-made packages

The report does not include specific provision for the following groups of children and young people, other than when they receive the provision above:

- asylum seekers and refugees
- traveller children and young people
- children from transient or highly mobile families
- service children
- looked after children
- young people in youth offender institutions and secure units
- children and young people attending PRUs

The report does not include the work of independent special schools as these schools receive Estyn section 163 inspections and are also monitored annually by Estyn.

The findings are based on an analysis of a national provision map of education other than at school (EOTAS) developed from responses to a survey of local authorities. Inspectors visited six local authorities where they scrutinised key documents and interviewed key elected members, senior officers and focus groups of headteachers. In addition, inspectors visited 12 EOTAS providers, across key stages to evaluate the quality of provision and meet with pupils and key staff.

Inspectors visited the following local authorities:

- Wrexham
- Newport
- Neath Port Talbot
- Caerphilly
- Gwynedd
- Rhondda Cynon Taf

Education other than at school

The report took account of previous Estyn surveys, inspection findings and data. It considered a range of other reports and research about learner experiences and education other than at school, including research commissioned by the Welsh Government.

Appendix 2

Background information

The 14-19 Learning Pathway

Under the Learning and Skills (Wales) Measure 2009, as amended by the Education (Local Curriculum for Pupils in Key Stage 4) (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2014, local authorities have a duty to form local curricula for learners in key stage 4.

The local curricula must contain a wide range of options of study, both academic and vocational in nature, and be accessible for all learners, including learners with additional learning needs.

For learners who are unable to access level 2 courses due to their additional learning needs, there should be opportunities to pursue a choice of courses that allow them to make good progression towards level 2 qualifications.

Where this is not possible due to the severity of the individual's need, the courses should lead towards independent living and working within the community.

Registration requirements for pupils attending EOTAS

Under section 4(2) of the Education Act 1996 (as amended by paragraph 10 of Schedule 7 of the Education Act 1997), local authorities may arrange part-time attendance at a mainstream school as part of a package of EOTAS designed to provide suitable education.

The legislation regarding pupils educated off the site of a maintained school for an approved educational activity or attending an approved activity at another school or PRU provides two main attendance registration options. These are Registration Code B and Code D.

Registration Code B 'subsidiary' enrolment status, includes pupils who are:

- educated off site of their mainstream school because they are attending vocational courses at college
- attending alternative education arranged or agreed by the school
- undertaking work experience as part of an alternative curriculum or alternative provision

Registration code D is used when pupils dually are registered at two schools, or a school and PRU. Both schools/PRU share responsibility for these pupils and they should each record the pupil's attendance in accordance with the pupil's shared timetable. One school/PRU should take responsibility for following up all unexplained absences

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The remit author and survey team

| | |
|-----------------|----------------|
| Susan Roberts | Remit author |
| Margaret Davies | Team inspector |
| Huw Davies | Team Inspector |
| Jassa Scott | Team Inspector |