



Pupil referral units

Overall, PRUs have supported children and young people through difficult times over the past year. The standard of their **care, support and guidance** is highly effective in addressing complex issues around pupils' **well-being** that were exacerbated by the pandemic and still continue to affect progress.

What's going well

- Pupil well-being continues to be a high priority across PRUs. Leaders are increasingly expanding the range of interventions available to address the social, emotional, behavioural and mental health needs of pupils. For example, there is increased use of trauma informed practices.
- Staff have a secure understanding of the needs of their pupils and barriers to their learning.
- Communication with parents and carers was strengthened during the pandemic in most PRUs, with all PRUs remaining open. These practices are continuing across PRUs.
- Generally, PRUs have positive working relationships with a range of external agencies to support the needs of their pupils.

What needs to improve

- Unverified data suggests that attendance continues to be a challenge in PRUs and remains below pre-pandemic levels.
- The persistent absenteeism of a few pupils continues to be a challenging issue.
- External agency support to address attendance issues is often not easy to access or timely.
- Access to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) is too variable across different areas.
- There continues to be inconsistency in arrangements across local authorities regarding 'ownership' of pupils' IDPs in PRUs.



Nearly all PRUs continue to have flexible curriculum arrangements, which help to strengthen **teaching** and, in turn, support pupils' **learning**. Staff are still addressing gaps in pupils' **learning** and social, emotional and behavioural development that arose during the pandemic.

What's going well

- Many pupils are re-engaging well in their learning, helped by the flexibility in the curriculum. For example, PRUs have been flexible in adapting their curriculum offer to allow pupils to gain a range of worthwhile qualifications and accreditations in Year 11.
- As pupils' well-being needs are addressed, they improve their engagement with more formal learning experiences.
- Staff use comprehensive assessment packages to clearly understand gaps in pupils' learning and to provide appropriate interventions to address these.
- Generally, PRUs support pupils' additional learning needs appropriately.
- Pupil transition into PRUs is well supported with robust entry assessments to help pupils to settle quickly.
- Staff quickly re-established effective transition planning for pupils' post-PRU placements. Very few pupils leave PRUs and become not employed, in education or training (NEET).

What needs to improve

- Variability in the quality of teaching impacts on pupil progress.
- [There is too much variability in the preparedness of PRUs for the Curriculum for Wales.](#)



Leaders’ resilience, perseverance and creativity continues to support pupils and staff. As PRUs prepare for curriculum and ALN changes, leaders have continued to be flexible and responsive to the highly complex needs of pupils, parents and carers.

What’s going well

- There is a strong commitment from leaders to provide high quality provision for pupils.
- Quality assurance systems are improving, which is giving leaders an increasingly accurate understanding of PRUs’ strengths and areas for improvement.
- Generally, the professional learning opportunities for staff align to PRU priorities effectively. This provides staff with the skills they need to support the complex needs of the pupils more successfully.
- Management committees have improved how they support and challenge staff.

What needs to improve

- Continued staff absence and vacancies, and leaders’ ongoing ability to address these issues, remain a challenge.
- Across local authorities, there is too much variation in how PRUs are organised. This includes inconsistencies in budget arrangements and different levels of responsibility managing additional services such as home tuition.