

# EARLY YEARS EDUCATION PROVISION STATEMENT

This position statement has been developed following a review of early years education provision and practice within Carmarthenshire's infant and primary schools.

This statement will deal with the following issues-

1. Admission to early years education provision within infant and primary schools
2. Early years education provision in Carmarthenshire and addressing the lack of early years education provision in some areas of Carmarthenshire

## **Admission to early years provision within schools**

Evidence from questionnaires, school visits and data analysis confirms that there is inconsistency across schools in applying the County Council Admissions Policy.

The admission of children to schools is controlled by an **Admissions Authority**. Parents must apply for a place at a school via the Admissions Section. There is an online application process which ensures that applications are managed and treated equitably and that the agreed over-subscription criteria is used when there are more applications than places.

A school cannot refuse an application for a place at the school. If there are more applications than places the parents are informed and advised of their right to appeal against the decision.

An Independent Panel deals with admissions appeals.

The Policy is as follows (from *Information for Parents Booklet 2016-17*)-

## **3. AT WHAT AGE CAN CHILDREN START SCHOOL?**

### **What is Early Years?**

Early Years education is a non-statutory provision available to 3 year olds and an application for admission to provision within a school, i.e. for categories (i) and (ii) below, will have to be made to the Admissions Authority by the closing date.

### **Where is part-time education available?**

All 3 year olds are entitled to **10 hours per week** free placement, at a registered setting, through the Early Years and Childcare Workforce Development Group, from the term following their third birthday. Wherever practical the Authority allows non-maintained providers to use school premises.

There are various forms of provision:-

- i. Nursery School - Ammanford Nursery School is the only nursery school in the County.
- ii. Nursery/Early Years classes in Infant or Primary School.
- iii. Provision by the non-maintained sector who are partners in the Early Entitlement Group, such as Wales Pre-school Providers, Mudiad Meithrin and private providers. Find more information under the Carmarthenshire Family Information Service in this booklet.

### **When can a pupil start part-time education?**

Children will normally be admitted to Early Years provision in schools where it is available on a **part-time basis at the beginning of the term following their third birthday**.

Parents do not have a right of appeal if a place is not offered at an early years setting of their choice.

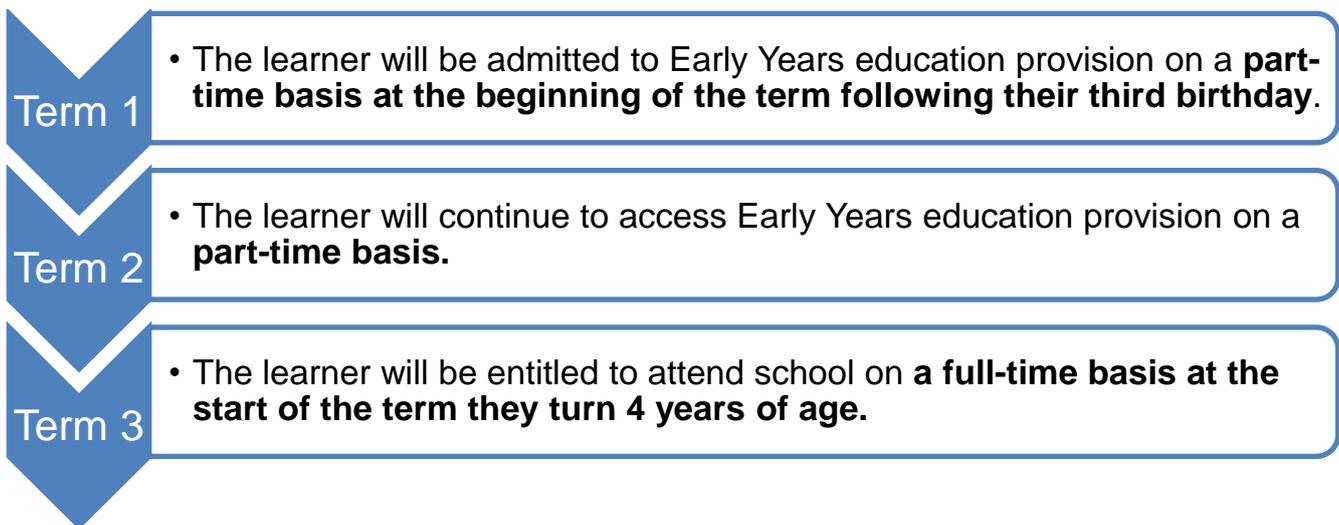
There is no automatic right to continue into full time education if you have been offered a part time education place. A formal application must be made to the correct admissions authority.

It is clear that all pupils are entitled to **part-time education** from the beginning of the term following their third birthday. Part-time is defined as either 5 morning or 5 afternoon sessions or a mixture of 5 morning/ afternoon sessions.

Pupils will be entitled to attend on a full-time basis at the start of the term preceding their 4<sup>th</sup> birthday- i.e.

- *in September for those who have their 4th birthday between 1<sup>st</sup> September and 31<sup>st</sup> December;*
- *in January for those who have their 4th birthday between 1<sup>st</sup> January and 31<sup>st</sup> March;*
- *in April for those who have their 4th birthday between 1<sup>st</sup> April and 31<sup>st</sup> August.*

Therefore in Carmarthenshire-



### **ACTIONS- to ensure consistency and fairness to all schools and pupils**

1. We will review funding for all 3 year olds within schools and only provide 0.5 funding per pupil for the first two terms.
2. As from the **1<sup>st</sup> of April, 2017**, the Local Authority will vehemently monitor compliance with this policy.
3. If a school does not comply with the policy the Local Authority will consider the following sanctions-
  - Any pupil who appears on a school's role and who has not been admitted by the Admissions Section will not be funded.
  - Any pupil who appears on a school's roll and who has not been admitted by the Admissions Section will need to apply for a place at the school. If there are no places available the parents will have to look for an alternative school.
  - **If a school is admitting 3 year old pupils on a full time basis during their first two terms at the school the Local Authority, in the budget re-run, will reduce the school's funding by the pupil's full value.**

## **Early Years education provision in Carmarthenshire and addressing the lack of early years education provision in some areas of Carmarthenshire**

All children in Wales are entitled to free, part time, good quality Early Years education provision in an *approved/registered early years setting* from the beginning of the term after their third birthday and prior to gaining full time entry into school. Part time is defined as a minimum of ten hours per week for around the same number of weeks as the normal school year.

An *approved/registered early years setting* can be either a 'maintained' setting, which is a nursery class in a school, or a 'non-maintained' setting, which could be a playgroup or a private day nursery. All *approved/registered early years setting* are registered with the Local Authority (LA) to deliver early years education.

Currently early years education in Carmarthenshire is delivered via a mixed economy approach; delivered in schools and by non-maintained settings.

A review of early years education provision and practice within Carmarthenshire's infant and primary schools has been undertaken with a view of ensuring equity of access for all children and support improving outcomes for all learners.

The review sought to evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of the present nature of early years education provision in Carmarthenshire and to identify whether an improved configuration could be identified.

The Review presented a range of delivery models that could be used to redefine the structure of early years education provision and considered the implications in changing the current system and the time required to implement changes.

**The Departmental Management Team's preferred option was that all schools would provide early years educational provision. However, due to the economic climate and reducing budgets this is not feasible.**

We will therefore-

1. Continue with the mixed economy approach, where early years educational provision is delivered by schools and non-maintained settings, is maintained.
2. Work with schools/non-maintained sector on addressing gaps in provision.
3. As part of the Modernising Education Programme consider each individual project and develop an options appraisal in regard to the provision of early years educational provision required. Responses could include-
  - The status quo
  - Creating space within the new/remodelled school for provision of early years education by a non-maintained partner.
  - Setting up early years education provision within the school and managed by the school.

**Gareth Morgans, Chief Education Officer, November 16<sup>th</sup>, 2016.**