

COUNCIL: 21 JULY 2022

DEPUTY LEADER & EDUCATION STATEMENT

Summer of Fun Festival

The Summer of Fun festival begins on Saturday 23 July and runs until Monday 5 September. The Welsh Government-funded festival will include two weeks of activities on City Hall lawn, as well as city-wide activities and an arts & cultural programme curated by Arts Active that will take place throughout the summer holiday period.

Young people who attend the site on City Hall lawn from 23 July to 7 August will have the opportunity to join in various workshops, watch fantastic theatre and spectacular performances, contribute to the communal art installation, play games, or simply enjoy the sunshine. Although the entire festival will be inclusive and neurodiverse friendly, the first session of each Thursday on City Hall lawn will be a 'quiet session' tailored specifically to neurodiverse children, young people and their families.

Tickets for the festival went live earlier this month for priority groups to book activities initially, before tickets were then made available to the wider public. The priority groups included care-experienced children, young carers, those families being supported by Family Services and those families seeking asylum. All families now have access to opportunities across the city and further information, including a programme and map of the city-wide activities, is available on the Child Friendly Cardiff website at: <https://www.childfriendlycardiff.co.uk/>

Energy Efficiency in Schools

Over £1.3 million has been invested by the Council in energy-saving upgrades across 11 Primary, Secondary and Special Educational Needs (SEN) schools in the city as part of the work to be carbon neutral by 2030.

Work on the school retrofit project started in July 2021 and has just been completed. The initiatives are set to drastically reduce the Council's operational carbon emissions by up to 20% across the 11 school sites – Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Bro Eder, Bryn Celyn Primary School, Glyncoed Primary School, Hywel Dda Primary School, Llandaff City C.I.W. Primary School, Llanishen High School, Mary Immaculate High School, Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Plasmawr, St Illtyd's High School, The Bishop of Llandaff C.I.W. High School, and Ty Gwyn Special School – as well as saving an estimated £185,000 a year.

As part of the project, a range of new energy-efficient technologies have been installed across the schools, including LED lighting upgrades, solar panels, fridge and freezer controls, valve and pipework insulation, as well as new Building Energy Management Systems (BEMS), which optimise building controls and energy usage.

Engagement sessions with the schools' Eco Teams are also planned, where pupils will learn about the benefits of the works, including the enhanced lighting levels and health benefits from the removal of existing fluorescent lighting.

Passport to the City

On 13 July 2022, the new Cardiff Children's University partnership and Passport to the City programme were launched at the Centre for Student Life at Cardiff University. The Passport to the City programme is a key commitment in our 'Stronger, Fairer, Greener' policy statement and aims to ensure that children and young people from all backgrounds can enjoy the world-class amenities that Cardiff has to offer. This initiative also supports the Council's Child Friendly City ambitions and our aim to become the first UNICEF Child Friendly City in the UK.

This exciting new partnership between the Council, schools, the Children's University charitable organisation and Cardiff University will help children and young people to be inspired and motivated whilst developing a wide range of talents, skills and abilities – all whilst fostering a sense of inquisitiveness and a love of lifelong learning.

The launch event celebrated the success of those children that have taken part in our early pilots over the last year, which has seen more than 400 children at St Mary the Virgin CiW Primary School in Butetown, St Fagan's Primary School, Peter Lea Primary School in Fairwater and Windsor Clive Primary School in Ely take part. Pupils have accessed more than 90 different activities, such as fitness classes, art & music activities, graphic design and STEM activities (science, technology, engineering and maths). Those children recording the highest number of hours of activity attended the event at Cardiff University and received certificates to acknowledge their achievements, with some pupils having already achieved the Children's University Bronze Award.

Following the launch of the Passport to the City, we will work to extend the range of activities that children and young people will be able to access in the city, utilising our growing network of partners via the Cardiff Commitment. We will also increase the numbers of schools that can get involved.

Universal Free School Meals

In Cardiff, the majority of Reception year children will be offered Free School Meals from the new autumn term onwards and work is being carried out in many of the city's primary schools so that kitchens are able to cater for a significantly greater number of pupils. In response to the current rising cost of living, we are committed to implementing the scheme as efficiently as possible. Our teams are working to build on catering capacity in schools across the city so that, through a phased approach and with Welsh Government agreement, we can work towards rolling the scheme out to all primary school aged children over the next three years. This is an important step in reaching the shared ambition of ensuring that no child goes hungry whilst in school.

National Plan for Music Education

The Council has recently appointed to the post of Achievement Officer – Music for Schools. The new postholder is due to start work next month and will lead the development of our response to the aspirations included in the recently published National Plan for Music Education in Wales. These include greater opportunities for engagement with music for all young people, opportunities for participation in groups and a national music instrument and resources library. The Welsh Government has recently distributed additional grant funding to assist with this work and Cardiff will receive an additional £439,000 in this financial year. As our music service covers both Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan, we will be working closely with the Vale of Glamorgan Council in developing our plans.

Estyn Inspection Reports

Two inspection reports were published by Estyn on 13 July 2022, which related to [Cathays High School](#) and [Bryn Y Deryn Pupil Referral Unit \(PRU\)](#). The new inspection framework does not use summative judgements, but provides fuller, contextual detail that reflects each school.

I am pleased to say that the inspection report for Cathays High School is an excellent report that underlines the quality of education provided at the school. The only recommendation related to the strengthening of provision for personal and social education in Year 11. Commenting on the leadership and culture of the school in the report, Estyn said: *“Through inspirational leadership and a culture of high ambition underpinned by the mission of ‘opportunities for all’, Cathays High School is a highly inclusive and aspirational learning community where pupils and staff thrive...There is a firmly established culture of safeguarding that pervades the school. All staff, through all aspects of their work, take personal ownership for ensuring that all pupils’ needs are catered for in a sensitive and safe way. As a result, pupils thrive in this happy, safe, and caring environment and are exceptionally proud to belong to their school community”*

Estyn noted that pupils at Cathays High School *“place great value on and actively celebrate the school’s cultural diversity”*, with the *“school’s location at the heart of Cardiff and the diverse nature of the local community”* being important influences on the curriculum. Estyn also commented on the Specialist Resource Base where pupils *“receive outstanding care, support and guidance that helps them develop their confidence and self-esteem and make considerable progress from their starting points”*.

The report for Bryn Y Deryn PRU is also very positive and recognises the valuable work that is undertaken with young people. The Estyn inspection report found that the PRU *“effectively provides a wide range of worthwhile learning opportunities for pupils as they plan for their pathways to further education, training or employment”* with many pupils making *“strong progress from when they join the PRU”*.

Estyn also noted that the PRU is *“a calm and nurturing learning environment where pupils feel highly valued”* and where there is an exemplary culture and ethos of supporting well-being that has been *“particularly important in addressing the increased mental health and emotional needs of pupils as a result of the pandemic”*.

The inspection report made three recommendations in relation to monitoring and improving attendance, and improving both Welsh language provision & skills and the use of ICT across the curriculum.

Both schools have been asked by Estyn to produce excellent case studies.

Thank You Day

As the 2021/22 academic year draws to a close and, following on from 'Thank You Day' on 4 July, I would like to place on record my own thanks to all our learners, parents, carers, guardians, teachers, governors, employers and everyone else in the education sector in Cardiff. I should also give a special mention for the remarkable achievement of three female teachers at Oakfield Primary School who will all be retiring on the same day at the end of the current term after having clocked up 100 years of experience between them. It has been another challenging year, so thank you to everyone for all their hard work.

Councillor Sarah Merry
Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member for Education
15 July 2022