



## City and County of Swansea

### Notice of Meeting

You are invited to attend a Meeting of the

## Scrutiny Performance Panel – Education

**At:** Multi-Location Meeting - Gloucester Room, Guildhall / MS Teams

**On:** Thursday, 18 January 2024

**Time:** 4.30 pm

**Convenor:** Councillor Lyndon Jones MBE

**Membership:**

Councillors: A Davis, A M Day, F M Gordon, B Hopkins, Y V Jardine, S M Jones, S Joy, J D McGettrick, F D O'Brien, A J O'Connor

Co-opted Members: Beth Allender and Elizabeth Lee

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### Agenda

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<b>1 Disclosure of Personal and Prejudicial Interests.</b> <a href="http://www.swansea.gov.uk/disclosuresofinterests">www.swansea.gov.uk/disclosuresofinterests</a>	
<b>2 Prohibition of Whipped Votes and Declaration of Party Whips</b>	
<b>3 Minutes</b>	1 - 3
<b>4 Letter/s</b>	4 - 9
<b>5 Public Questions</b> Questions can be submitted in writing to <a href="mailto:scrutiny@swansea.gov.uk">scrutiny@swansea.gov.uk</a> up until noon on the working day prior to the meeting. Written questions take precedence. Public may attend and ask questions in person if time allows. Questions must relate to items on the open part of the agenda and will be dealt with in a 10-minute period.	
<b>6 Cluster Working - Curriculum for Wales</b> A meeting with Gowerton Secondary School and its cluster of Primary Schools.	10 - 11
<b>7 Work Plan for 2023/2024</b>	12 - 13

**Next Meeting:** Monday, 12 February 2024 at 3.00 pm

*Huw Evans*

**Huw Evans**  
**Head of Democratic Services**  
**Thursday, 11 January 2024**

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**Contact: Scrutiny Officer**

# Agenda Item 3



City and County of Swansea

## Minutes of the **Scrutiny Performance Panel – Education**

**Multi-Location Meeting - Gloucester Room, Guildhall / MS Teams**

**Thursday, 14 December 2023 at 4.30 pm**

**Present:** Councillor L R Jones (Chair) Presided

**Councillor(s)**

A M Day  
J D McGettrick

**Councillor(s)**

S M Jones  
F D O'Brien

**Councillor(s)**

S Joy  
R V Smith

**Other Attendees**

Robert Smith

**Officer(s)**

Sarah Hughes  
Helen Morgan-Rees

Team Manager for Education Strategy  
Director of Education

**Apologies for Absence**

Councillor(s): A Davis, B Hopkins and A J O'Connor  
Co-opted Member(s): Beth Allender and Elizabeth Lee

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**105 Disclosure of Personal and Prejudicial Interests.**

None

**106 Prohibition of Whipped Votes and Declaration of Party Whips**

None

**107 Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting on the 23 November 2023 were agreed by the Panel.

**108 Public Questions**

No public questions were received.

**109 Annual Education Performance against identified priorities including Estyn Inspection Update and Cabinet Member Q&A**

The Panel thanked Councillor Robert Smith (Cabinet Member for Learning and Skills), Helen Morgan Rees (Director of Education), Kate Phillips (Head of

Vulnerable Learners) and Sarah Hughes (Education Strategy) for attending the Panel and presenting a writing report giving details about Education performance against identified priorities. The discussion covered:

- Progress with recommendations made by the Estyn Inspection of the Local Government Education Service in Swansea in 2022, including Post 16 Education and strengthening Welsh Language provision in Education. The Panel heard that good progress had been made with both recommendations.
- Progress against key priorities, some of these include for example:
  - Inclusion strategy
  - Attendance action plan
  - Embedding the requirements of the Additional Learning Needs Reform and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018
  - Reviewing specialist provision
  - Embedding a whole school approach to emotional health and wellbeing
  - Support for looked after children
- The Panel heard that good progress had been made for most objectives and where specific aspects require attention, steps to address these have been identified.

The following issues/questions were raised by the Panel. A summary of the Panels views on progress made and the responses to their questions, will form part of the letter to the Cabinet Member sent following the meeting.

- Panel pleased to see good progress with both Estyn recommendations and asked was there an action plan to support these too and whether that could be included in future update.
- Who was consulted in the learner voice work, did it include 6<sup>th</sup> Form or all Post 16 for example those in vocational education.
- Possible new special school. Will travel to the new school have an impact for those using it as it will be based on one site rather than two.
- Data comparison. Would it be more realistic to compare current data with that of 2019 rather than the last few years at the moment. Also, a useful measure might be to look at destination indications like those pupils getting their 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> choice university place.
- What support is provided to Headteachers both in relation to inspections and more widely.
- When school is in special measures or Estyn monitoring, how does the local authority monitor progress.
- How do the LA and schools support armed forces children.
- PISA results, do we have results for the Swansea area.

The Panel asked the Cabinet Member and Director to thank both the Education Directorate and schools for their excellent work this year.

#### **110 Feedback from Partneriaeth Scrutiny Councillor Group**

Councillor Lyndon Jones updated the Panel about Partneriaeth Scrutiny which included sharing the letter to the Chair of the Joint Committee from the Councillor Group following their last meeting on the 23 October 2023.

The Panel welcomed the update with regard to Partneriaeth Scrutiny and felt it was useful to have copies of the letters. One of the issues raised in the letter was regarding the training, development and support provided by Partneriaeth and was this available to school governors.

**111 Work Plan for 2023/2024**

The Work Plan for 2023/2024 was noted.

The meeting ended at 5.40 pm

**Chair**

# Agenda Item 4



**To:**  
**Councillor Robert Smith**  
**Cabinet Member for Education and Skills**

**BY EMAIL**

*Please ask for:* Michelle Roberts  
*Gofynnwch am:*  
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*e-Bost:*  
*Date* 12 December 2023  
*Dyddiad:*

**Summary:** This is a letter from the Education Scrutiny Performance Panel to the Cabinet Member for Education and Learning following the meeting of the Panel on 23 November 2023. The Panel discussed looked after reducing disadvantage in schools, the School Improvement Services and Cookery in school.

Dear Cllr Smith,

## **Education Scrutiny Performance Panel – 23 November 2023**

We would like to thank you, the Director of Education, Head of Planning and Resources, Principal School Improvement Officer and Head of Achievement and Partnership Service for attending the meeting and providing information for the Panel. We are writing to you to reflect on what we learnt from the discussion and to share the views of the Panel.

### **Reducing disadvantage in school**

We heard about how the Education Directorate and schools work to reduce disadvantage in schools including the use of the Pupil Development Grant (PDG), the roll out of free school meals, the cost of the school day and school uniform. The main aim of this is to raise the attainment of pupils from low-income households by reducing the barriers they face in achieving their full potential.

We were told that the PDG received by schools can vary greatly depending on the number of pupils eligible. When using the grant, it has been found that some interventions are more successful than others and the best approaches are not always the most expensive. We were pleased to hear that approaches used should be research and evidenced based.

We asked how the level of pupil development grant to schools will be determined in the future, given the free school meal (FSM) proxy may no longer be as accurate due

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to parents having less incentive to register because of the roll out of FSM. We were told that schools are constantly reminding parents to register, also because it enabled them to access the possibility of a grant for school uniform.

You told us that the FSM indicator is probably not the ideal proxy for deprivation in schools, but it is the best we have for now. A two-pronged approach will need to be used, firstly, continuing to get parents to register but also, secondly, to look at other indicators of deprivation.

We also asked whether good practice examples in reducing disadvantage are being shared across schools. We heard that PDG guidance to practitioners and leaders in Wales on the use of this grant is predominantly around whole school approaches. So those approaches, once embedded, are shared in a variety of ways. One way is through our SIT sharing that knowledge across the system as they visit schools. We also heard that this is done via case studies and at head teacher seminars, where we invite our school leaders to present some of their good practice. Partneriaeth share practice as well and Estyn published case studies once they have inspected schools.

We were interested to hear how awareness is being raised across schools about the barriers faced by pupils caused by deprivation. We agreed that the poverty proofing of the schools day is a good way to identify and make practical changes in schools based on what pupils really need to enable them to partake fully in their education.

### **School Improvement Service (SIT) Update**

We heard that SIT support schools in a number of ways through the school year but the core of the work centres around annual support visits. The agenda for visits are co-constructed with headteachers in order to support high levels of ownership and engagement. One of the key objectives for the last academic year was to support schools in self-evaluation. Schools were encouraged to self-evaluate in the areas of vision and leadership; curriculum, learning and teaching and wellbeing, equity inclusion. We heard that this year SIT is focusing on

- A differentiated/graduated approach to the number of school visits per school depending on the level of need.
- Supporting schools and settings to have a clear rationale for their priorities.
- Supporting schools to plan for improvement in a more focused manner.
- Improving the quality of school-based evaluations.
- Supporting schools to undertake purposeful quality assurance that promotes an improving view of pupil progress, the impact of their curriculum plans and the provision to promote positive wellbeing.

We asked what the differing roles are between the SIT and Partneriaeth. We heard Partneriaeth provide curriculum support and development in aspects of the national leadership programme including training that enables practitioners to do what they need to do at the chalkface. While the SIT is a separate team that sits within the local authority whose role it is evaluate schools and their improvement journey.

We thanked the SIT and wished to note that we appreciate the excellent support they are providing to our schools in Swansea.

## **Cookery in Schools Briefing**

We heard that cookery within schools falls within the Health and Well-being area of the Curriculum for Wales, where learners are helped to understand factors that affect health promoting behaviours. As a result, learners should be taught the importance of a balanced diet, nutrition and the impact of choices on well-being; how to plan and prepare basic, nutritious meals and applying a range of techniques to prepare meals. The report also provided us with a snapshot of where we are now in both the primary and secondary sector in Swansea.

We agreed that Penclawdd was a shining example of what can be done and asked if there was any strategy at this stage to consider rolling out that learning more widely. Although we do recognise some of the difficulties with that, not least the finding of the physical space in each school. We heard that there is not a specific strategy but it does sit under a much wider strategy in relation to poverty and is about how we support our families. In the longer term, it may need to be a Welsh national strategy rather than an individual local authority that pushes some aspects forward.

We also asked how often a child actually gets to cook in school. We were told that there would not be any data specifically saying how often it is. It would be down to individual schools to determine, as part of their design of the curriculum and how they blend that in. Although we were told there is more anecdotal evidence similar to Penclawdd Primary School in how schools in their work as community focused schools are making it a much wider offer and bringing the families in.

We were encouraged to hear that it is part of the new curriculum but do feel that cookery and nutrition is a serious issue and an important life skill. Schools should ensure that it is clearly part of their curriculum planning. A start needs to be made if we are to be serious about this work.

## **Your Response**

We would welcome your comments on any of the issues raised in this letter but on this occasion do not require a formal response.

Yours sincerely

## **COUNCILLOR LYNDON JONES**

Convener, Education Scrutiny Performance Panel

[Cllr.lyndon.jones@swansea.gov.uk](mailto:Cllr.lyndon.jones@swansea.gov.uk)





**To:**  
**Councillor Robert Smith**  
**Cabinet Member for Education and Skills**

**BY EMAIL**

*Please ask for:* Michelle Roberts  
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*e-Bost:*  
*Date* 4 January 2024  
*Dyddiad:*

**Summary:** This is a letter from the Education Scrutiny Performance Panel to the Cabinet Member for Education and Learning following the meeting of the Panel on 14 December 2023. The Panel discussed the Annual Education Performance including an Estyn Inspection recommendation progress update.

Dear Cllr Smith,

### **Education Scrutiny Performance Panel – 14 December 2023**

We would like to thank you, the Director of Education and the Team Manager Education Strategy for attending the meeting and providing information for the Panel. We are writing to you to reflect on what we learnt from the discussion and to share the views of the Panel.

### **Annual Education Performance against identified priorities including Estyn Inspection recommendation progress update**

We were told that good progress has been made with both the recommendations from the Estyn Inspection of the Local Government Education Service in Swansea in 2022, which included recommendations on post-16 education and strengthening Welsh Language provision in Education.

We heard about progress with the pupil voice consultation in relation to post-16 education, hearing that an extensive learner survey took place in 2023 with sixth form learners. We asked whether other post-16 pupils were consulted i.e., those doing vocational education and/or at Gower College. We heard that the survey originally covered just sixth form pupils but was then extended to other post-16 pupils, although we heard that the response from Gower College pupils was not as good as was hoped. The Panel agreed that vocational and other courses can be a very different 'offer' and it is important to understand those young people's views.

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We were pleased to hear that both the Inclusion Strategy and the School Attendance Action Plan had been agreed and are now active.

We were interested to hear about the review of specialist provision and the possibility of a new state of the art special school that would replace Ysgol Pen-yr-Bryn and Ysgol Crug Glas in Swansea (noting that this will not replace our current STF provision). We look forward to hearing more about this in the future as the proposal progresses.

We discussed the Key Stage 4 and advanced level results data and recognised that comparison of 2020, 2021 and 2022 would not be useful but we did suggest that it might be more realistic to compare between 2023 current data and that of 2019 prior to the pandemic. We also felt that it would also be useful to look at pupil destination information like, for example, those pupils getting their 1st and 2nd choice university place.

We were told that seventeen schools had been inspected by Estyn in the last academic year, five of these will be followed up by Estyn, with one school being placed in special measures. We asked how the local authority monitors progress with schools that are placed in follow up or special measures and heard that a School Improvement Adviser is assigned to a range of schools. When schools are in one of these categories the Adviser will work intensely with the school and will have done so both pre and post inspection. We also heard that bespoke training, for example, for new and acting leaders may be offered as well as support for new governance arrangements through the Councils Governor support Unit.

We also heard that there are currently two post inspection action plans for any school that goes into a statutory category: the local authorities plan and the post inspection plan. We were pleased to hear that Estyn recognised the burden of having two plans and they are now going to splice those plans together from January.

We were encouraged to hear that there were also six Estyn case studies indicating that in those six Swansea schools there is exceptional practice.

We were interested to explore the support that is provided to Headteachers both in relation to the pressure of inspections and other serious issues they may experience in their schools. We were told that the Local Authority do provide a range of support mechanisms including counselling and stress management. We noted that there is a self-referral system currently, which means that headteachers do not need to go to their chair of governors to be referred to counseling. The Council is also trying to remedy some things before they become an issue, hearing that there are range of factors that could impinge on wellbeing that are being looked at, for example, most recently ways to reduce the bureaucratic workload burden.

We were pleased to hear that Estyn have changed the way they inspect and have adapted the inspections to support the wellbeing needs of leaders and school staff and judgements have been removed and replaced with a narrative outcome designed to support improvement.

We asked how the Local Authority and schools support armed forces children. We heard that the Local Authority has strong links around this and that there is also financial support for armed forces pupils, as long as we know about them.

We asked about the PISA results and whether we could see the breakdown for Swansea. We heard local authorities are not provided with the outcome data for PISA and that pupils are chosen randomly across schools in Wales so providing a breakdown of data for Swansea specifically is not possible.

The Panel were pleased to hear that good progress had been made with most of the Education identified priorities. We were told that where specific aspects require attention, steps to address these have been identified.

The Panel asked the Cabinet Member and Director to pass their thank you to both the Education Directorate and schools for their excellent work this year.

### **Partneriaeth Scrutiny**

We discussed the most recent Partneriaeth Scrutiny letter to the Chair of the Partneriaeth Joint Committee, where an issue was raised about the training, development and support provided by Partneriaeth and whether this was available to school governors. The Panel asked how this was utilised in Swansea. Helen Morgan Rees agreed to speak to our Governor Support Unit to see how this is and can be linked to our current governor development programme.

### **Your Response**

We would welcome your comments on any of the issues raised in this letter but on this occasion do not require a formal response.

Yours sincerely

### **COUNCILLOR LYNDON JONES**

Convener, Education Scrutiny Performance Panel

[Cllr.lyndon.jones@swansea.gov.uk](mailto:Cllr.lyndon.jones@swansea.gov.uk)

# Agenda Item 6



## Report of the Convener of the Education Scrutiny Performance Panel 18 January 2024

### Session with the Gowerton Comprehensive School and its Cluster Primary Schools

<b>Purpose:</b>	To look at how the cluster is working together to introduce the Curriculum for Wales
<b>Content:</b>	An introduction to the meeting
<b>Councillors are being asked to:</b>	Consider the information discussed at the session and give views to the Cabinet Member via a letter from the Convener
<b>Lead Councillor:</b>	Councillor Lyndon Jones, Convener of the Education Scrutiny Performance Panel
<b>Lead Officer &amp; Report Author:</b>	Michelle Roberts, Scrutiny Officer E-mail: <a href="mailto:michelle.roberts@swansea.gov.uk">michelle.roberts@swansea.gov.uk</a>

#### 1. The Meeting

- 1.1 The Senior Strategic Adviser from Partneriaeth Cressy Morgan will attend and give an overview of the support provided by Partneriaeth to the cluster.
- 1.2 The Panel asked to speak to a school cluster in Swansea about their progress with the introduction of the Curriculum for Wales. Invited to attend the Panel today are the Headteachers and Chairs of Governors from the Gowerton Comprehensive School Cluster, as follows:

School	Headteacher	Chair of Governors
Gowerton Comprehensive	Kath Lawlor	Morrison Frew
Gowerton Primary	Iain Ashton	Lyndon Mably
Llanrhidian Primary	Donna Caswell	Jane Houston
Penclawdd Primary	Louisa Reynolds-Milnes	Mark Thomas
Pen-y-Fro Primary	Rachel Lewis	Andrea Hill-Jones
Waunarwydd Primary	Jamie Evans	Rayna Soproniuk

- 1.3 The headline questions sent to the schools in advance of the meeting are:

- a) How is it going so far?
- b) What are you finding most challenging?
- c) How are you supporting your teachers and school staff to transition to the new curriculum?

- d) How are you working together as a cluster to ensure a consistency of approach?**
- e) How do you know how effectively you are implementing the Curriculum for Wales in the Gowerton cluster?**
- f) How are you taking learners along with you on this journey? How is information about the curriculum being shared with the learners? How are the learners responding to the curriculum, particularly those who have had experience of both systems?**
- g) How do you feel about the support you have received from the local authority and Partneriaeth?**

Background papers:

Estyn Reports for each school can be found via the link below

[https://www.estyn.gov.wales/inspection-reports?f%5B0%5D=local\\_authority\\_lir%3A57](https://www.estyn.gov.wales/inspection-reports?f%5B0%5D=local_authority_lir%3A57)

# Agenda Item 7

## Education Scrutiny Performance Panel DRAFT Work Programme 2023/2024

Date	Items to be discussed	Who invited
<b>Meeting 1</b> 15 Jun 23 4.00pm	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Additional Learning Needs Reform Annual Update (watching brief item) (Kate Phillips and Alison Lane)</li> <li>2. New Curriculum for Wales Annual Update (watching brief item) (David Thomas)</li> <li>3. Estyn Inspection – progress with recommendations (Sarah Hughes)</li> <li>4. Key issues affecting education 2023/24 (Helen Morgan Rees) then discuss draft Work Programme for 2023/24</li> </ol>	Cabinet Member and Director Relevant officers
<b>Meeting 2</b> 13 Jul 23 4.00pm	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Managing and Improving School Attendance including data</li> <li>2. Managing and Improving School Exclusions including data (Kate Phillips and Helen Howells)</li> </ol>	Cabinet Member and Director
<b>Meeting 3</b> 14 Sep 23 4.00pm	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Looked after Children, support and progress in school (Kate Phillips and Helen Howells)</li> <li>2. Following up on the 10 CDC recommendations (referred from Education Cabinet Development Committee) (Sarah Hughes)</li> <li>3. Feedback from Partneriaeth Scrutiny Councillor Group</li> </ol>	Cabinet Member and Director  Panel Convener
<b>Meeting 4</b> 19 Oct 23 4.00pm	<b>Schools Session and Site Visit 1 – Gorseinon Primary School</b> School Development Plan (Pre-meeting with School Improvement Advisor 18 Oct)	
<b>Meeting 5</b> 23 Nov 23 4.00pm	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Reducing disadvantage in Schools, including pupil development grant, roll out of free school meals, cost of the school day and school uniform (Kelly Small)</li> <li>2. School Improvement Service Annual Update (David Thomas)</li> <li>3. Cookery in Schools (Rhodri Jones)</li> </ol>	Cabinet Member and Director
<b>Meeting 6</b> 14 Dec 23 4.30pm	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Annual Education Performance against identified priorities (RAG) including Estyn Inspection recommendations progress update (Sarah Hughes) and Cabinet Member Q&amp;A</li> <li>2. Feedback from Partneriaeth Scrutiny Councillor Group</li> </ol>	Cabinet Member and Director  Panel Convener
<b>Meeting 7</b> 18 Jan 24 4.30pm	Introducing the New Curriculum for Wales – a meeting with a Secondary School and its Cluster Primaries – Gowerton Comprehensive School cluster. (Pre-meeting with School Improvement Advisor on 17 Jan at 4.30pm)	Headteachers and Chairs of Governors
<b>Meeting 8</b> 12 Feb 24 3pm	Annual Council Budget as it relates to education matters	Cabinet Member and Director

<b>Meeting 9</b> 22 Feb 24 4.00pm	<b>Schools Session 2 – Clydach Primary School</b> School Development Plan. Confirmed (Pre-meeting with School Improvement Advisor 20 Feb at 4.30pm)	Headteacher and Chair of Governors
<b>Meeting 10</b> 13 Mar 24 4.00pm	<b>Schools Session and Visit 3 – Bishopston Comprehensive School</b> School Development Plan (pre-meeting with School Improvement Advisor 5 Mar 4.30pm)	Headteacher and Chair of Governors
<b>Meeting 11</b> 18 Apr 24 4.00pm	1. Religion, Values and Ethics Education (Jennifer Harding-Richards) 2. Hearing the Voices of Children and Young People (Rhodri Jones) 3. Education Other Than At School services (EOTAS) Annual Update (Kate Phillips)	Cabinet Member and Director
<b>Meeting 12</b> 9 May 24 4.00pm	1. Quality in Education (QEd) / Sustainable Communities for Learning Update (Louise Herbert-Evans) 2. Swansea Skills Partnership Annual Update (David Bawden) 3. End of year review in Education Scrutiny	Cabinet Member and Director

To be added when we have more information from Welsh Government: Performance in Swansea Schools – Swansea Education Directorate/Cabinet Member and Partneriaeth (Annual) - Partneriaeth Legal Agreement says ‘Each Council’s scrutiny committee for children’s and education services will meet at least once a year to consider performance and progress in their schools such meetings to be attended by Council and PARTNERIAETH staff equipped to answer questions’.

The Panel will also receive relevant individual school Estyn reports as they are published, along with any other reports or information relevant to Education Scrutiny.

## Background

Cllr Robert Smith, Cabinet Member for Education and Learning  
Helen Morgan Rees, Director of Education

The Officers listed in above timetable and their roles:

Sarah Hughes (Head of Education Strategy)  
Rhodri Jones (Head of Achievement and Partnership Service)  
Kate Phillips (Head of Vulnerable Learners)  
Alison Lane (Head of Additional Learning Needs Team)  
Kelly Small (Head of Planning and Resources Team)  
David Thomas (Principal School Improvement Officer)  
Karin Jenkins (Head of Swansea Music)  
Amanda Taylor (Head of PRU and BSU)  
Jennifer Harding-Richards (Religion, Values and Ethics Adviser)  
Louise Herbert-Evans (Team Manager Capital)  
Lisa Collins (Child Protection and Safeguarding Officer – Vulnerable Learners)  
Helen Howells (Team Manager Pupil Support – Vulnerable Learners)