



City and County of Swansea

Minutes of the **Scrutiny Performance Panel – Schools**

Committee Room 5 - Guildhall, Swansea

Thursday, 18 January 2018 at 4.00 pm

Present: Councillor Mo Sykes (Convener) Presided

Councillor(s)

C Anderson
L S Gibbard
L James
L J Tyler-Lloyd

Councillor(s)

M Durke
D W Helliwell
L R Jones

Councillor(s)

S J Gallagher
B Hopkins
M A Langstone

Co-opted Member(s)

D Anderson-Thomas

Co-opted Member(s)

Co-opted Member(s)

Other Attendees

Cllr Jennifer Raynor

Officer(s)

Nick Williams Chief Education Officer
Michelle Roberts Scrutiny Officer

Apologies for Absence

Councillor(s): A M Day and S M Jones

1 Disclosure of Personal and Prejudicial Interests.

None

2 Notes and Conveners Letters

The Conveners letters and notes were accepted.

3 Annual Education Performance Report (including verified data)

Cllr Jen Raynor (Cabinet Member for Children, Education and Lifelong Learning) and Nick Williams (Chief Education Officer) presented the report and discussed outcomes with the Panel.

The Panel heard that:

- Swansea has a strong track record of improving outcomes for learners across all stages in schools.

- Performance at Foundation Phase shows positive trend of improvement over the last five years. However, the overall Foundation Phase outcome indicator remains below the national average and Swansea's rank position has fallen over time. Overall performance is adequate. Swansea is 19th out of 22 authorities in 2016-17.
- Performance at key stage 2 shows a positive trend of improvement during the last five years with the rank position of 13th and an improvement on 2015/16. Overall performance is good with nearly 90% of learners achieving the core subject indicator before they leave primary schools.
- Performance at Key Stage 3 shows year upon year improvement during the last five years. Swansea is now above the national average. Rank position is above expectation. National test performance is very good. Overall performance is strong.
- Performance at Key Stage 4 between 2012 and 2016 was outstanding with schools showing continuous improvement across all main indicators. However, in 2016-17 new examinations have resulted in re-calibrated performance across Swales. Swansea performance remains relatively strong despite drops in performance indicators.
- Nearly all learners in Swansea schools entering 2 or more A levels (or equivalent) have achieved the level three threshold at A level during the past three years. However, 2017 results are below Wales and rank in 18th position. The average point score show variability between years and sixth forms.
- Areas identified for development are:
 - Foundation Phase
 - Pupils in receipt of free school meals at all key stages and particularly at KS4 and science
 - Improve outcomes at A level through collaborative working with college
 - Improve outcomes for new qualifications in key stage 4, particularly science

The following issues were discussed further:

- Panel did have concerns about the Foundation Phase data, that Swansea is 19 out of 22 and the overall performance being adequate. They heard that there have been issues with the consistency of use of the Foundation Phase philosophy across all schools. There are a small number of schools are not completely working to this philosophy while there are some schools that are very strong in this area. The Cabinet Member and Chief Education Officer said that they recognised how important it is to get this right especially because the New Curriculum will build upon the Foundation Phase. The Panel were pleased to hear that the inconsistency on how Foundation Phase is used within some schools will be addressed this year.
- Looked After Children (LAC) are receiving more support in order to achieve better outcomes. We must support LAC like we would our own child making sure they have the right opportunities.
- Continuing to working to close the gaps between boys and girls performance and Free School Meal pupils, for example, Key Stage 4 and Free School Meal pupils (efsm). The re-calibration of exams have impacted higher on schools with larger number of efsm pupils. Council/schools will be working to address this.

- 6th form and A Level (or equivalent) outcomes are not one of Swansea's strongest areas of performance. There has been a concentration on retention rates rather than outcomes but the Council is working with schools and Gower College to improve this.
- Stretching more able pupils was discussed, the panel heard that schools are making sure that challenging measures are set for these pupils, that there are after school clubs available and that primary and secondary schools work closely to ensure a child is stretched throughout school life. The Panel agreed with the Cabinet Member that it would be useful for Governing Bodies to allocate a designated Governor to champion this in each school.
- The Panel asked if we have seen an improvement in children's readiness for school that are due to the early intervention services like Flying Start. They heard that hard evidence is difficult to give at present but anecdotally yes and it is improving. The Panel queried whether there needs to be a way of measuring this?
- Upskilling teaching and non-teaching staff are key areas for development in schools and doing this working across clusters, as exemplified by Headteacher of Ponlliw Primary School.
- The Panel asked whether we as an authority are paying enough attention to getting good qualified teachers to become future and inspiring school leaders. The Panel heard that the importance of this was recognised and that one thing in place was the Leadership Academy.

4 **Estyn Inspection of Local Authority Education Services for Children and Young People 2013 - Update on progress in addressing the five Recommendations, Dec 2017**

Nick Williams (Chief Education Officer) introduced the report, firstly giving some context.

- Swansea Council was inspected in 2013. A Chief Executive Improvement Board was established to monitor progress with improvement to recommendations and improvements have been reported to Cabinet annually. This will be the last report updating on the 2013 inspection progress.
- The authority has made good progress with the recommendations, namely:
 - Recommendation 1:** Develop and implement a strategy to improve levels of attendance in primary schools
This is now Green with good progress being made addressing the recommendation in nearly all aspects.
 - Recommendation 2:** Quality assure the work of officers to secure greater consistency in the level of challenge they offer to schools.
This now Yellow with strong progress, addressing the recommendation in most aspects. Only minor aspects require further attention.
 - Recommendation 3:** Improve officers' evaluation of the quality of leadership and management in schools to make sure that underperforming schools are identified and supported quickly.
 - Recommendation 4:** Improve the quality of provision for those pupils who are educated other than at school; particularly to raise standards of achievement and to assist reintegration back into schools.

This is now Amber with satisfactory progress, addressing the recommendation in many aspects. A few significant aspects require attention.

Recommendation 5: Improve the consistency of leadership across all education services and the quality of self-evaluation and improvement planning within education services.

This is now Yellow with Strong progress, addressing the recommendation in most aspects.

- The panel looked particularly at recommendation 4 hearing that the rate of improvement for this aspect has moved up a gear. With a newly appointed Headteacher for the pupil referral unit making strides and improvements are now strong. But there is more to do especially around ensuring consistency in teaching. It has been recognised that the accommodation and facilities are not up to scratch for EOTAS pupil's needs so and commitment to improving this in the form of a new build (submission as a Band B to Wales Government accepted). The outcomes of this recommendation will continue to be monitored by Corporate Management Team.

5 Workplan 2017/2018.

The Work Programme was received.

6 For Information Item

The Panel noted the recent Estyn Inspections of St David's Primary School and Gowerton Primary School.

The meeting ended 5.20pm