

Panel Perfformiad Craffu - Ysgolion

Lleoliad: Ystafell Bwyllgor 5 - Neuadd y Ddinas, Abertawe

Dyddiad: Dydd Iau, 15 Mawrth 2018

Amser: 4.00 pm

Cynullydd: Y Cynghorydd Mo Sykes

Aelodaeth:

Cynghorwyr: C Anderson, A M Day, M Durke, S J Gallagher, L S Gibbard, F M Gordon, D W Helliwell, B Hopkins, L James, S M Jones, L R Jones, M A Langstone a/ac L J Tyler-Lloyd. Aelodau Cyfetholedig: D Anderson-Thomas

Agenda

Rhif y Dudalen.

- | | | |
|----------|--|----------------|
| 1 | Ymddiheuriadau am absenoldeb. | |
| 2 | Datgeliadau o fuddiannau personol a rhagfarnol.
www.abertawe.gov.uk/DatgeliadauBuddiannau | |
| 3 | Cofnodion. | 1 - 9 |
| 4 | Cyfarfod Paratoi gyda'r Ymgynghorydd Herio ar gyfer Ysgol Gyfun Gatholig yr Esgob Vaughan gyda Rob Davies | 10 |
| 5 | Sesiwn gydag Ysgol Gyfun Gatholig yr Esgob Vaughan
Gydag Emma Pole, Pennaeth a Chadeirydd y Llywodraethwyr | 11 - 30 |
| 6 | Cynllun Gwaith 2017 - 2018. | 31 |
| 7 | Eitem Er Gwybodaeth | 32 - 37 |

Cyfarfod nesaf: Dydd Iau, 12 Ebrill 2018 ar 4.00 pm



Huw Evans
Pennaeth Gwasanaethau Democrataidd
Dydd Iau, 8 Mawrth 2018

Cyswllt: Scrutiny - 01792 637256



**To/
Councillor Jen Raynor
Cabinet Member for Children,
Education and Lifelong Learning**

*Please ask for:
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*Date
Dyddiad:*

23 February 2018

BY EMAIL

Summary: This is a letter from the Schools Scrutiny Performance Panel to the Cabinet Member for Children, Education and Lifelong Learning following the meeting of the Panel on 15 February 2018. It is about Morriston Primary School Performance and prospects for improvement.

Dear Councillor Raynor,

Schools Scrutiny Performance Panel – 15 February 2018

At our meeting on the 15 February 2018 we met with the Hub Head of the Education Improvement Service and then the Headteacher and the Vice Chair of Governors from Morriston Primary School.

We spoke to this school because it has been highlighted as Amber on the support and categorisation matrix. We wanted to discuss what the school is doing to improve its current performance and prospects for improvement. We have detailed our thoughts on how the school is progressing in this letter.

We heard from the Hub Head of School Improvement that:

- The school was inspected in March 2017 and revisited again recently. The school is in a statutory Estyn category and in need of improvement. Estyn in 2017 judged the school to be Adequate for current performance and Adequate for its prospects for improvement.
- It is receiving a 'red' support package that consists of 25 day support. This heavy package of support has now started to bear fruit with improvements seen in both governance and leadership. The school has shown they are keen to make it work and have welcomed the support.
- The outcome of the Estyn Inspection (including what the authority already knew) that there had been a lack of strategic leadership at the school. The issue of safeguarding had been identified as needing particular improvement.

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY / TROSOLWG A CHRAFFU

SWANSEA COUNCIL / CYNGOR ABERTAW

GUILDHALL, SWANSEA, SA1 4PE / NEUADD Y DDINAS, ABERTAW, SA1 4PE

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- The school has had an acting Headteacher since the spring of 2017 who had taken over after two years of inconsistent leadership at the school.
- That improvement has accelerated since the acting Headteacher took the role. The school has been totally engaged with the local authority in both support and challenge.
- An Improvement Panel that includes the Governing Body has been set up which meets on a monthly basis with the purpose of accelerating improvement. The Team around the School has helped support the school to move forward.

The Headteacher then outlined the context in which the school is working explaining that the school has 50% ALN with two special teaching facilities and a short stay observation unit. This and the transitional nature of the local community means mobility in and out of catchment is generally high.

From the discussion with the Headteacher, Vice Chair of Governors and the Challenge Adviser we concluded that there is now a much improved picture at the school as compared to the situation when Estyn inspected in March 2017. We felt that this is mainly due to:

- The school having a new and enthusiastic Headteacher who is committed to driving improvements forward at the school
- The school welcoming support and challenge from the Team Around the School including the Governing Body; along with making efforts to work with other schools and headteachers to improve and to exchange good practice through, for example, book scrutiny.
- The school has strong support from parents and local community.
- The school has a far more correct understanding of where it stands with regard to its current performance and prospect for improvement (self-evaluation)
- Reviewing policy and putting procedures in place to address the issues relating to safeguarding at the school.
- The school having a supportive, engaged and knowledgeable governing body that has the necessary skills to help to drive improvement.

We congratulate the Headteacher and school staff, the challenge advisor and the governing body at the school for their hard work and commitment to driving improvement at the school. Overall, we are pleased to see a strong leadership team at the school emerging along with a supportive and challenging governing body. We are keen to see the improvements that have been put into place embedded and making an impact we therefore plan to make a visit to the school this time next year.

We welcome your thoughts on any of the issues raised in our letter and do not, on this occasion, require a formal written response.

Yours sincerely,

COUNCILLOR LYNDA JAMES

Convener, Schools Scrutiny Performance Panel

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City and County of Swansea

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

Committee Room 5 - Guildhall, Swansea

Thursday, 15 February 2018 at 4.00 pm

Present: Councillor Lynda James Presided

Councillor(s)

C Anderson
B Hopkins
M A Langstone

Councillor(s)

L S Gibbard
L James
L J Tyler-Lloyd

Councillor(s)

D W Helliwell
L R Jones

Other Attendees

Alison Thomas
Cllr Andrea Lewis

Headteacher at Morriston Primary School
Vice Chair of Governors Morriston Primary School

Officer(s)

Michelle Roberts Scrutiny Officer

Apologies for Absence

Councillor(s): S J Gallagher, S M Jones and M Sykes
Co-opted Member(s): D Anderson-Thomas

1 Disclosure of Personal and Prejudicial Interests.

None

2 Notes and Conveners Letters

Letters and notes received by the Panel

3 Preparation meeting with Challenge Advisor for Morriston Primary School

The Hub Head of School Improvement attended the panel on behalf of the allocated Challenge Advisor who was unable to attend. The following was noted from the discussion:

- The school was inspected in March 2017 and revisited again in recently the school is in the statutory Estyn category and in need of improvement.
- It was receiving a Red support package that consists of 25 day support. They have also received support from other Headteachers. This heavy package of support has now started to bear fruit with improvement seen in both governance and leadership. The school has shown they are keen to make it work and welcomed the support.

- Outcome of the Estyn Inspection including, what the authority already knew, that there had been a lack of strategic leadership at the school. The issue of safeguarding had been identified as needing particular improvement.
- School has had an acting Headteacher since the spring of 2017 who had taken over after two years of inconsistent leadership at the school.
- That improvement has accelerated since the acting Headteacher took the role. The school has been totally engaged with the local authority in both support and challenge.
- An Improvement Panel that includes the Governing Body has been set up that meets on a monthly basis with the purpose of accelerating improvement. The Team around the school has helped support the school to move forward.

4 Session with Morryston Primary School

The Acting Headteacher Alison Thomas and Vice Chair of Governors Cllr Andrea Lewis attended the panel to discuss the schools current performance and prospects for improvement. The following points were noted from the discussion:

- The school has responded to inspection finding/recommendations by:
 - Acting quickly seeking support and good practice from Cable Primary School
 - Looked at and remodelled staffing structure
 - Totally revamped Foundation Phase Provision
 - Working with Teaching staff to go through PIAP and linked it to timetables and monitoring
 - Team Around the Schools was established and monthly meetings with governing body. This has provided both challenge and support and all seems to be on track
- Vice Chair of Governors said the local authority support has been invaluable and that the governing body and the school have welcomed it. *We feel we are now ready for the next Estyn follow-up.* The Team Around School has had a very positive impact for pupils and staff. Systems much more robust and this is down to the hard work and commitment of the Acting Headteacher.
- Great support from parents and pupils. Developing a vision and reinforcing it has helped greatly. Recognise that it has been an unsettling time for parents and pupils with all the changes so we now need a period of stability and have time invested in them.
- Embraced the support provided by the Performance Specialists, also worked with other experienced Headteachers to improve our self-evaluation document.
- We also work with other schools to book monitor and scrutiny as well as in the school. Helping to identify strength and further develop teaching and learning.
- Safeguarding – policies and procedures have been review and changes made including health and safety issues including improving schools grounds, reinstating the play area and improving the school environment inside. Far more clarity with Chair of Governors Lead for safeguarding and Vice Chair seconded. Controlled reception and foyer area introduced and changes to recruitment practices so they are far more robust.
- Minimising exclusion – school inclusive in nature, do everything it can not to exclude. Prides themselves with working with children to prevent exclusion.

Work well with the Pupil Referral Unit and halfway house and have successful transitions back into school. The school has 50% ALN with two special teaching facilities and a short stay observation unit. This and the transitional nature of some of the local community also meaning that mobility in and out of catchment is high.

- Pupil Attendance – at 93.5% at moment which is not where we want to be but have had pupils who are on part timetable and pupils from traveller community. Employed an attendance officer and pastoral officer from Pupil Deprivation Grant monies. Working closely with families and the Education Welfare Officers.
- Teaching and learning performance was raised by Estyn. Performance specialist has worked with school and literacy is now good. We worked closely together to move school forward.
- Headteacher said they have a strong governing body that does not shy away from challenge but also recognising when doing well.
- Governing Bodies' priorities – clear role of governing body and highest priority is improving outcomes for children at the school and supporting school staff at this difficult time and through the next inspection. Feel confident we are in a very strong place now.
- It was agreed that all the new processes and practice introduced now needs time to embed in order to see an impact.

Conclusions of Panel

1. Impressed with enthusiasm of Headteacher
2. Heard that staff, parents and pupils on board to deliver improvements
3. Believe the school now has a good knowledge of where it stands from its more accurate self-evaluation
4. School now needs a period of stability to embed developments
5. Overall pleased to see a strong leadership team at the school emerging, a supportive and challenging governing body and look forward to seeing improvements embed. Would like to make a follow up visit this time next year.

5 Workplan 2017/2018.

The Panel agreed that they would like to look at education performance in Science across Swansea which includes speaking to a Headteacher of a school that are excelling in this area.

The Panel will next meet on the 15 March 18 with the Headteacher and Chair of Governors from Bishop Vaughan Catholic Secondary School.

The meeting ended at 5.30 pm

Councillor Mo Sykes
Convener
Schools Scrutiny Performance Panel

BY EMAIL

Please ask for: Councillor Jennifer Raynor
Direct Line: 01792 63 7429
E-Mail: cllr.jennifer.raynor@swansea.gov.uk
Our Ref: JR/HS
Your Ref: ref
Date: 14 February 2018

Dear Councillor Sykes

Schools Scrutiny Performance Panel – 18 January 2018

I am writing in response to your letter dated 1 February 2018 in relation to the Schools Scrutiny Performance Panel held on 18 January 2018.

In response to the two questions you have put in your letter please find below the responses.

First of all, with regard to asking governing bodies to allocate a designated governor to champion the 'stretching of the most able pupils', the local authority (LA) will write to governing bodies to ask them to assign a governor to take on a role to oversee and monitor provision that will stretch the most able and talented pupils. Whilst this cannot be a mandatory requirement we will encourage schools to assign a link governor as good practice guidance.

Secondly, with regard to the request to investigate the development of a way of measuring how effective early intervention services are for improving children's readiness for school the LA has secured ALN Innovation Grant funding to purchase Wellcomm packs for all schools, including Welsh medium schools – where we have delivered a bespoke package of training.

Additional training is also scheduled for February and March to train those schools who are not already using the resource. The Wellcomm Toolkit assesses the receptive and expressive language skills of pupils on entry to Nursery and provides simple interventions to develop language skills in readiness for entry into Reception.

A SIMS tracking system is currently being used and we expect to have some data from Nursery pupils this academic year from the schools that are currently using the Wellcomm Toolkit. It is envisaged that the 2018/2019 data sets will be more reliable as it is hoped that all Swansea schools should be adopting this facility by then.

The LA will be recommending that all schools record this data to ensure a more accurate reflection across Swansea. Further training is planned for October where it is hoped to discuss plans with Additional Learning Needs Co-ordinators to encourage all schools to record results on SIMs.

I trust this response will provide the clarity on the questions you have posed.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J Raynor', written in a cursive style.

Councillor Jennifer Raynor
Cabinet Member for Children, Education & Lifelong Learning



City and County of Swansea

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

Committee Room 5 - Guildhall, Swansea

Tuesday, 13 February 2018 at 2.00 pm

Present: Councillor Lynda James Presided

Councillor(s)

C Anderson
L James

Councillor(s)

L S Gibbard
J A Raynor

Councillor(s)

D W Helliwell

Co-opted Member(s)

D Anderson-Thomas

Officer(s)

Nick Williams
Brian Roles
Michelle Roberts

Chief Education Officer
Head of Education Planning and Resources
Scrutiny Officer

Apologies for Absence

Councillor(s): A M Day, M Durke, S J Gallagher, B Hopkins, S M Jones, L R Jones and M Sykes

1 Disclosure of Personal and Prejudicial Interests.

None

2 Scrutiny of Annual budget: as it relates to education matters

Cllr Jennifer Raynor (Cabinet Member for Children, Education and Lifelong Learning), Nick Williams (Chief Education Officer) and Brian Roles (Head of Planning and Resources) attended the meeting to present the budget proposals as they relate to education matters.

Issues covered included (with specific reference to education matters):

- Medium Term financial planning 2019/20 to 2021/22
- Revenue budget 2018/19
- Capital Budget and Programme 2018/2019 – 2021/22
- Letter from Schools Budget Forum

3 Discuss and summarise views and recommendations

- The Panel are supportive of the education related budget proposals and of how monies have been allocated given the current budget situation.
- The issue of year on year funding from Welsh Government was raised especially in light of the need to plan services over the longer term (as referenced in the Wellbeing and Future Generation Act). The panel recognise that the authority

does develop an indicative 3 year medium term plan but this will change year on year depending on the local authority's allocation from Welsh Government. The panel would encourage councils to work together to make representations to Welsh Government around developing a longer term funding plan. The Panel were also keen to see changes made that reduce the lag between allocation of grants from Welsh Government and actual receipt of that funding.

- The Panel had concerns about the impact that the 11% cut to the education improvement grant will have on supporting services in particular the Ethnic Minority Achievement Service but were pleased to hear that the authority are looking to fill the gap for some services from reserves for 1 year.
- The Panel heard that some schools were managing the difficult budgetary situation better than others: the panel felt that sharing good practice across schools in relation to this aspect would be highly beneficial.

The meeting ended at 3.00 pm



Report of the Convener of the Schools Scrutiny Performance Panel 15 March 2018

Preparation Session with Challenge Advisor for Bishop Vaughan Secondary School

Purpose:	To assist the panel in providing ongoing challenge to schools performance to ensure that: pupils in Swansea are receiving high quality education; and the authority is meeting its objectives in relation to improving school standards and pupil attainment.
Content:	Preparation meeting with Challenge Advisor before session with Bishop Vaughan Secondary School.
Councillors are being asked to:	Consider the information provided and make their views known to the Cabinet Member via a Conveners Letter.
Lead Councillor:	Councillor Mo Sykes, Schools Scrutiny Performance Panel
Lead Officer & Report Author:	Michelle Roberts, Scrutiny Officer Tel: 01792 636356 E-mail: michelle.roberts@swansea.gov.uk

Background

The Panel agreed as part of their work programme this year to speak to a selection of schools inviting the Head Teachers and Chairs of Governors to their meetings to discuss the schools performance and improvement plan, focusing on outcomes, provision and leadership.

Preparing for meeting the School

The Panel also at this meeting on the 31 August agreed to meet with the appropriate Challenge Advisor in order to prepare for their session with the school.

The Challenge Advisor has prepared some background information to help the panel prepare, find this attached in **Appendix A**.



Report of the Convener of the Schools Scrutiny Performance Panel 15 March 2018

Schools Performance – Session with Bishop Vaughan Secondary School

Purpose:	To provide ongoing challenge to schools performance to ensure that: pupils in Swansea are receiving high quality education; and the authority is meeting its objectives in relation to improving school standards and pupil attainment.
Content:	Meeting with Headteacher and Chairs of Governors of Bishop Vaughan Secondary School.
Councillors are being asked to:	Consider the information provided and make their views known to the Cabinet Member via a Conveners Letter.
Lead Councillor:	Councillor Mo Sykes, Schools Scrutiny Performance Panel
Lead Officer & Report Author:	Michelle Roberts, Scrutiny Officer Tel: 01792 636356 E-mail: michelle.roberts@swansea.gov.uk

Context

The Panel agreed as part of the their work programme this year to speak to a selection of schools inviting the Head Teachers and Chairs of Governors to their meetings to discuss the schools performance and improvement plan, focusing on outcomes, provision and leadership.

Key Issues and Questions

Below are the key issues/questions that were agreed by the Panel on 31 August for their sessions with schools. These have been sent to the Headteacher in advance of the meeting.

1. How the school has responded to inspection findings and recommendations?
2. What does the school need to do to improve learner outcomes and to increase the schools capacity to improve in the future?
3. What are the barriers to the school improving learner outcomes? How can the LA help you to overcome these?
4. How is the school using tools and initiatives available to improve outcomes?
5. What is the school doing to improve levels of pupil attendance?
6. What is the school is doing to minimise school exclusions?
7. What are the governing bodies' priorities and how are they being addressed?
8. How best practice is being shared across schools?
9. Thoughts about support given by the local authority and the school improvement service?

Find attached in **Appendix A** the schools most recent Estyn Report.



Rhagoriaeth i bawb – Excellence for all

Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg
a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru

Her Majesty's Inspectorate
for Education and Training in Wales

A report on

**Bishop Vaughan Catholic School
Mynydd Garnllwyd Road
Morrison
Swansea
SA6 7QG**

Date of inspection: March 2012

by

**Estyn, Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education
and Training in Wales**



During each inspection, inspectors aim to answer three key questions:

Key Question 1: How good are the outcomes?

Key Question 2: How good is provision?

Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?

Inspectors also provide an overall judgement on the school's current performance and on its prospects for improvement.

In these evaluations, inspectors use a four-point scale:

Judgement	What the judgement means
Excellent	Many strengths, including significant examples of sector-leading practice
Good	Many strengths and no important areas requiring significant improvement
Adequate	Strengths outweigh areas for improvement
Unsatisfactory	Important areas for improvement outweigh strengths

The report was produced in accordance with Section 28 of the Education Act 2005.

Every possible care has been taken to ensure that the information in this document is accurate at the time of going to press. Any enquiries or comments regarding this document/publication should be addressed to:

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Context

Bishop Vaughan Catholic School is an 11-18 mixed comprehensive voluntary aided school within the City and County of Swansea unitary authority and the Catholic diocese of Menevia. The school serves the whole authority and surrounding areas. There are currently 1,400 pupils on roll, an increase of about 130 from the last inspection in 2006, including 261 in the sixth form. The school works in partnership with a neighbouring school to provide sixth form education.

Around 52% of pupils are baptised Catholics, mainly from Catholic primary schools.

Since the last inspection the number of Catholics has declined. The school has been increasingly able to admit pupils of other denominations and faiths, as well as pupils with no religious affiliation who feel they can benefit from being in a church school.

In the current academic year, 20.4% of pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is above the Welsh average of 17.4% for secondary schools. At the time of the last inspection, the majority of pupils came from neither specially advantaged nor specially disadvantaged backgrounds. Around 40% of pupils live in the 20% most deprived areas in Wales.

About 14% of pupils are on the school's special educational needs register. The percentage of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is 2%, compared with 2.6% for Wales as a whole.

Around 19% of the school's pupils are from a minority-ethnic or mixed-race background. This includes around 16% of pupils who are learning English as an additional language. There are virtually no pupils who speak Welsh as a first language or to an equivalent standard.

The individual school budget per pupil for Bishop Vaughan Catholic School in 2011-2012 means that the budget is £3,672 per pupil. The maximum per pupil in the secondary schools in Swansea is £7,713 and the minimum is £3,215. Bishop Vaughan Catholic School is 13th out of the 15 secondary schools in Swansea in terms of its school budget per pupil.

Summary

The school's current performance	Good
The school's prospects for improvement	Excellent

Current performance

Bishop Vaughan Catholic School is a good school because:

- standards are very good, particularly in external examinations at key stage 4, and steadily improving;
- most pupils make good progress and develop their subject-specific and wider skills well in lessons and in their written work;
- most pupils are highly engaged and well motivated, and display well-developed social and life skills;
- there is outstanding provision for pupils to learn about sustainability and the role they and others play in society and the world;
- teaching enables pupils of all abilities to make secure progress and prepares them well for their next stage of learning; and
- the strong caring and inclusive ethos and high levels of mutual support successfully promote high expectations and raise aspirations for all pupils.

Prospects for improvement

The prospects for improvement are excellent because of the:

- astute and effective leadership of the headteacher and leadership team that provides firm direction to all aspects of the school's work;
- culture of high expectations throughout the school;
- rigorous and systematic self-evaluation procedures, based on a robust and comprehensive analysis of performance data, which lead to well-planned improvement strategies;
- very good track record in securing improvement, particularly in raising standards in recent years;
- outstanding partnership working that provides a wide range of choices for pupils aged 14 to 19 and impacts positively on standards, attendance and behaviour; and
- prudent and efficient management of resources.

Recommendations

In order to improve further, the staff and governors of Bishop Vaughan Catholic School need to:

- R1 continue to raise standards, particularly in those areas where there is relative underperformance;
- R2 promote best practice more widely to increase the proportion of excellent teaching;
- R3 extend the use of differentiated learning activities to match pupils' needs;
- R4 improve consistency in the quality of marking within and between departments;
and
- R5 improve the quality of middle management in those subject areas where it is less effective.

What happens next?

The school will produce an action plan that shows how it will address these recommendations. The school will be invited to prepare a written case study describing one of the excellent features identified in the report.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Good

Standards: Good

Performance at key stage 3 is good. In 2011, when compared with similar schools based on the proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals, the school's performance placed it in the top quarter of schools. Performance in mathematics and science has been above family averages for the last five years. Performance in English has generally been improving over the last four years and was well above the family average in 2011. However, too few pupils achieve the higher levels in English.

At key stage 4, performance is particularly good. It has generally been well above family averages in each of the last three years. In 2011, performance was the best in the family for many indicators. When compared with the relative performance of similar schools based on the proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals, performance was in the top quarter in all indicators.

English performance has been in the top quarter for the last three years when compared with that of similar schools in terms of free-school-meals benchmarks. Performance in mathematics has been above the family average in four of the last five years. Pupils' progress from both key stage 2 and key stage 3 is very good.

In 2011, less than 1% of pupils left school without a qualification. The proportion staying on in full-time education after 16 is very high and increasing. Very few pupils who left school at 16 are not in education, employment and training.

In the sixth form, students generally perform well.

At key stage 3, the difference between the performances of boys and girls is smaller than family averages. At key stage 4, boys achieved better than girls in 2011. The performance of both girls and boys is above family and Wales averages. At both key stage 3 and key stage 4, the performance of pupils entitled to free school meals has improved and these pupils perform better than in similar schools. However, the gap between these pupils and others has increased. Pupils learning English as an additional language make particularly good progress. Most pupils with special educational needs achieve as expected.

Most pupils make good progress in lessons. Many have a secure recall of previous learning, which they apply well to draw links, solve problems and understand new concepts. Many pupils, across the ability range, demonstrate good problem-solving skills in investigative work. Across the curriculum, pupils analyse a range of information, explain ideas and processes thoughtfully and produce balanced and considered opinions. In a few lessons, pupils make excellent progress. They display high levels of resilience when tackling challenging thinking and problem-solving tasks and demonstrate an ability to make creative connections to new topics. However, in a few lessons, pupils do not develop their skills or understanding enough.

Nearly all pupils listen attentively. Many speak clearly and confidently in a range of situations. Most key stage 3 pupils locate, select and use information effectively, using textual evidence to support their views, for example to explain the impact of a writer's choice of language on an audience. At key stage 4, many pupils demonstrate good levels of analysis in their reading. They use inference and deduction effectively, for example to make thoughtful comments on characters and themes in literary texts.

Many pupils write extended pieces fluently for a range of audiences and purposes. They make purposeful choices of vocabulary, use technical terms confidently and employ a suitable range of punctuation for effect.

Most pupils develop their numeracy skills well across the curriculum, for example to calculate formulae, and to collect and display data using a variety of graphs and charts. Pupils develop their information and communication skills well.

Pupils' performance in Welsh second language at key stage 3 has been below that of similar schools for the last four years. At key stage 4, the small but increasing proportion of pupils who take the full GCSE course make good progress in developing their Welsh second language skills. Pupils on the short course make adequate progress in developing these skills. Generally, pupils at all key stages use Welsh confidently during registration periods, assemblies and other school events, such as the annual eisteddfod.

Wellbeing: Excellent

Pupils develop their social and life skills extremely well. They develop their inter-personal skills and ability to learn independently particularly well and are very well prepared for life and work outside school. Pupils support each other well in lessons, particularly when working in teams. They show a strong sense of respect for the views, opinions and beliefs of others.

Nearly all pupils feel safe and believe that the school deals promptly and well with any instances of bullying. Pupils gain a secure understanding of health and safety issues and make good progress in learning about healthy-eating choices. They understand, for example, the importance of good hydration.

Many pupils take part in a wide range of extra-curricular physical activities. Sixth form students participate enthusiastically in a range of physical activities.

Pupils enjoy their lessons and most are highly engaged. Nearly all pupils are punctual. Attendance rates have improved considerably and are now in the top quarter when compared with those of similar schools.

Behaviour in classes is good and often excellent. The number of exclusions of up to five days fell significantly last year to the lowest level for six years. Pupils at risk of exclusion make good progress within the behaviour-support provision and most return to mainstream classes quickly.

Pupils contribute well to decisions that affect the school including aspects of teaching and learning. There is an active school council that has influenced changes to the school environment, for example through the installation of speed bumps and improvements to the quality of toilets.

Pupils participate well in a good range of extra-curricular activities and many are actively involved in fundraising or awareness-raising for charity. Often these activities are pupil led.

Key Question 2: How good is provision?	Good
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Learning experiences: Good

The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum, which meets pupils' needs and aspirations. The key stage 3 curriculum builds well on pupils' experiences in their primary schools and at key stage 4 there is a good range of general and vocational courses. More able and talented pupils in key stage 4 have the opportunity to study an AS course in religious studies. Effective collaboration with other providers ensures that sixth form students can choose from a comprehensive range of academic and vocational courses.

The school provides a wide range of extra-curricular activities, including residential courses, religious retreats, and a cycling pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela, all of which impact positively on pupils' wellbeing.

The school has introduced effectively several strategies to develop pupils' skills. These include the introduction of the Welsh Baccalaureate qualification for pupils in key stage 4 and the sixth form. There is a strong focus on improving pupils' reading skills, for example through a cross-phase literacy project for pupils in Year 7 and the Engage Project, which provides literacy support for identified pupils in key stage 4.

Provision for Welsh language development is good. Nearly all key stage 4 pupils are entered for a GCSE in Welsh second language. Pupils' understanding of Welsh culture and traditions is developed well across a range of subjects and through extra-curricular activities, including an annual eisteddfod.

There is outstanding provision for pupils to learn about sustainability and the role they and others play in society and the world. The eco-committee and fair trade committee have both been very effective in raising awareness through activities such as 'Take a Step for Fair Trade' and school assemblies. Pupils gain a secure understanding of global citizenship through lessons and the many international links the school has developed, including those made through school's active involvement in the Comenius Project.

Teaching: Good

Teachers have secure subject knowledge and high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour. They use these qualities effectively to engage and motivate pupils. Many teachers plan and prepare lessons thoughtfully with clearly communicated objectives and well-designed learning activities. Most lessons include good strategies for

developing pupils' communication and thinking skills, for example through the use of a variety of independent, paired, group and whole-class tasks. Where teaching is highly effective, learning activities are matched to pupils' needs and skilful questioning challenges and develops pupils' thinking particularly well. In a few lessons, a lack of pace or suitably differentiated tasks means that a few pupils do not make enough progress.

The school has comprehensive procedures for assessment, reporting and recording. Most pupils receive good-quality oral and written feedback on the progress they are making and what they need to do to improve. However, the quality of marking varies too much within and across departments with a few teachers not providing pupils with enough detail on how they can improve their work or checking whether areas targeted for improvement have been addressed. Most teachers provide useful opportunities for pupils to assess their own progress and achievement, and that of others.

The school has effective systems for tracking and monitoring pupils' progress. Pupils are aware of their targets and these are reviewed regularly through discussion with teachers, middle leaders and the senior management team. Predictive data is used constructively to motivate and challenge pupils in key stage 4 and the sixth form.

Parents receive detailed reports on the progress of their children that identify strengths and weaknesses clearly. Parents feel that they are well informed about their child's achievement and progress.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Pupils' spiritual and moral development is at the core of the school. In and beyond lessons, staff promote a strong sense of inclusivity and clear moral values. Pupils' spiritual development is promoted very effectively through a wide range of activities, including assemblies, participation in local or international pilgrimages and open access to the school chapel or Muslim prayer room.

The school provides a high level of care for pupils, with subject, pastoral and support staff knowing their pupils well. The effective pastoral structures and the well-organised and targeted support provision have contributed successfully to improved standards and attendance levels and a significant reduction in fixed-term exclusions.

Pupils' wellbeing and healthy development is promoted successfully across the school. For example, the personal and social education programme provides all pupils with a comprehensive and age-appropriate insight into key areas related to their development. This programme is supported effectively through good use of specialist external services.

The school provides pupils with good-quality information, guidance and advice. It is pro-active in establishing strong links with relevant external agencies to support pupils' educational progress and personal development.

Provision for pupils with additional learning needs, especially those learning English as an additional language, is a particular strength of the school. The procedures for identifying pupils' needs, supporting them well through inclusive mainstream provision, and monitoring their progress contribute significantly to the good standards these pupils achieve.

The school has an appropriate policy and has procedures for safeguarding.

Learning environment: Excellent

The school is a highly-inclusive community. The way in which it respects and values diversity and celebrates achievement is an outstanding feature of the school. Together, staff and pupils promote a very strong and caring ethos, based firmly on mutual respect, which enables pupils to integrate extremely well and make good progress. For example, almost one-in-five pupils join the school from African, eastern European or far east countries and these pupils make rapid progress in their learning, supported well by staff and their peers.

The school's Catholic Christian ethos is exceptionally positive and underpins all policies and practices. There are well-established equality and diversity procedures that challenge stereotypes, ensure equal access to the curriculum, and promote high expectations and raise aspirations particularly successfully. Pupils are encouraged consistently to reflect on their beliefs and values and appreciate how their behaviour can affect the lives of others. This ethos is reflected in the stable and ordered environment and the freedom from harassment or oppressive behaviour.

The buildings and grounds are well maintained. The interior decoration, which is enhanced well by displays of pupils' work, contributes to a positive learning environment. Sixth-form accommodation, including study rooms that are well-resourced with computers and a dedicated café, provides a particularly stimulating learning environment. Overall, learning resources meet pupils' needs well.

Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?	Good
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Leadership: Good

The headteacher and senior leaders provide purposeful and astute leadership that places a high emphasis on improving standards and the quality of provision. They have a clear vision and promote specific aims and objectives that reflect the school's ethos and commitment to provide an inclusive, Christian education for all pupils in accordance with the principles and teaching of the Catholic faith. These aims and values are communicated effectively to pupils, parents and stakeholders in strategic plans, policies and prospectuses. The senior leadership team works well together setting out clear priorities and providing firm direction to all aspects of the school's work.

There are well-defined management structures and a well-established cycle of meetings that focus appropriately on self-evaluation and planning for improvement. Staff at all levels understand their roles well. They have a firm understanding of the

school's strategic priorities and their responsibilities in improving learners' standards and wellbeing. The effectiveness of middle managers is good and has improved significantly in recent years, particularly in the use of data to monitor performance. However, there are a few subject areas where the quality of middle-management is less effective.

There are appropriate performance management arrangements that provide a suitable balance between offering challenge and support, and lead to the identification of staff development needs. Leaders and managers at all levels are held accountable for the quality of their work.

Governors are well informed about the performance of the school and have a secure awareness of its strengths and weaknesses. They provide appropriate strategic direction for the school's work. They hold the headteacher and other leaders to account appropriately for improvement in quality and standards.

The school has responded well to national and local priorities. These include very good partnership working with other schools and the local college to extend the range of options in key stage 4 and the sixth form, and a strong emphasis on improving pupils' literacy skills and wellbeing.

Improving quality: Excellent

The school has rigorous and extremely effective arrangements for improving quality. They have contributed significantly to the very good progress the school has made since the last inspection, for example in securing the commitment of all staff to tackling the school's priorities. This is particularly evident in the strong and steady improvement in standards and pupils' high levels of wellbeing.

The headteacher and senior managers have an extensive and precise understanding of all areas of the school's performance. They make particularly good use of a comprehensive range of performance data, which they analyse robustly and perceptively to compare the school's performance with other schools in their family and across Wales. They use this data well to evaluate relative achievement in all subject areas and have taken prompt and effective action to tackle areas of underperformance.

The cycle of monitoring, evaluation, improvement-planning and review is firmly established with self-evaluation documents being constantly updated.

Leaders and managers evaluate the performance of their areas effectively through regular reviews of a wide range of evidence including pupils' work and a careful analysis of data. There is an extensive programme of lesson observations by staff at all levels, which provides particularly valuable first-hand evidence about the quality of teaching and learning, and the extent to which staff are meeting their personal performance targets. These observations identify clearly strengths and areas for improvement in teaching and learning and make a significant contribution to improving practice.

There are well-designed systems for gathering the views of pupils, parents and the broader community, including the use of external consultants, which the school uses well to plan improvements.

The school uses the findings of self-evaluation reviews effectively to set clear improvement priorities as part of a three-year strategic plan. Department and whole-school improvement plans are closely aligned with all plans focusing appropriately on a few key strategies.

Staff development needs appropriately reflect whole-school and departmental priorities and are met effectively. The sharing of professional knowledge both within the school and with other schools and partners is particularly good.

Partnership working: Excellent

Outstanding partnership working provides a wide range of choices for pupils aged 14 to 19 and greater efficiency in the use of resources, and impacts positively on standards, attendance and behaviour. In particular, the post-16 collaboration with a partner school has led to significantly increased levels of learner participation and engagement in their studies, improving retention rates and increasing progression to higher education. Evaluation arrangements are rigorous and outcomes continue to improve.

The school has very good links with the local authority, the diocese and local parishes and a range of outside community and voluntary agencies. The school works effectively with the local college, employers and organisations to broaden and raise pupils' vocational aspirations. These partnerships make a significant contribution to promoting learners' wellbeing, and social and life skills.

Worthwhile links have been established with partner primary schools. Transition arrangements help ensure curricular continuity and pastoral progression of good quality.

Communication with parents is very good. They are well informed of school activities and consulted on a range of school developments. Parents' concerns are addressed promptly and effectively.

Well-designed arrangements for groups of teachers to work together to develop and promote effective learning strategies make a valuable contribution to improvements in teaching and standards.

Resource management: Good

The school manages its resources efficiently, planning carefully for future development through prudent strategic budgeting. The governing body scrutinises the school's use of resources rigorously through its finance and staffing sub-committee. The headteacher and senior managers ensure that all expenditure is allocated appropriately to the school's strategic priorities as identified through whole-school and departmental improvement plans. As a result, the school has maintained a secure financial position and retained suitable contingency funds to meet projected capital expenditure on the school buildings.

Teachers are well qualified and deployed efficiently to make best use of subject expertise. Teaching assistants provide good support, particularly for those pupils with additional learning needs and those learning English as an additional language.

The school makes effective use of its resources to achieve good standards and wellbeing and provides good value for money.

Appendix 1

Commentary on performance data

At key stage 3, the core subject indicator (the expected performance in English or Welsh, mathematics and science, the core subjects of the National Curriculum) improved significantly by six percentage points in 2011, maintaining the steady rise since 2008. Over the last five years, performance has been above the family average and, in 2011, it was the best in the family. When compared with similar schools based on free school meals, the school was in the top quarter in 2011 and above the median in the previous four years. When compared with modelled expectations, it is slightly above.

In English, performance improved significantly in 2011 and was well above the family average. There has been an improving trend since 2008 although this has not been consistent. Performance has been above the family average in two of the last four years. In 2011, it was in the top quarter when compared with that of similar schools based on the proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals, but was either above or below the median in the previous four years. Performance in English at level 6 or above has been below the family average in each of the last four years.

In mathematics, performance has been above the family average in each of the last four years. In 2011, it was second best in the family and has maintained an improving trend since 2009. Performance has been in the top quarter when compared with that of similar schools based on the proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals in each of the last five years. At level 6 or above, performance has been less consistent although it has been well above the family average in each of the last five years.

Performance in science has been consistently above the family average in each of the last five years, although it has been uneven and dipped slightly in 2011. When compared with that of similar schools based on the proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals, performance has been in the top half for the last two years and was in the top quarter for the previous three years. At level 6 or above, performance has been above the family average in each of the last five years.

However, pupils' progress from key stage 2 for 2011 was below expectations for the core subject indicator, English and mathematics and well below that to be expected in science.

In key stage 4, performance was above family and Wales averages in all key indicators. The level 2 threshold (the equivalent to five or more GCSEs at grade A* to C) including English or Welsh and mathematics has been above the family average in each of the last four years and improved by 12 percentage points in the last two years. In 2011, it was the best in the family. When compared with performance levels of similar schools in terms of free-school-meals benchmarks, it was in the top quarter in 2011 and in the top half in the previous two years. Performance is well above modelled expectations. The core subject indicator shows a similar pattern.

Performance in the level 2 threshold shows a steady improvement over the last four years. It has been well above the family average in each of the last five years and was second best in the family in 2011. When compared with performance levels in similar schools in terms of free-school-meals benchmarks, it has been in the top quarter in the last three years. Performance in the capped points score (comprising the best eight results from all qualifications approved for use in Wales at the age of 16) was the best in the family in 2011. Performance is well above modelled expectations. Performance in the level 1 threshold (the equivalent to five or more GCSEs at grade D to G) has been above the family average for the last four years and was the best in the family in 2011.

English performance has improved steadily from 2008 and was the best in the family in 2011. It has been well above the family average for the last five years. Compared with levels in similar schools in terms of free-school-meals benchmarks, English performance has been in the top quarter for the last three years. Performance in mathematics has improved significantly since 2009 and was second in the family in 2011. It has been above the family average in four of the last five years. Compared with levels in similar schools in terms of free-school-meals benchmarks, performance was in the top quarter in 2011 but had been in the bottom half in the previous two years. Pupils' progress from both key stage 2 and key stage 3 is very good for almost all indicators.

In 2011, less than 1% of pupils left school without a qualification and the proportion staying on in full-time education after 16 is very high and increasing. Very few pupils who left school at 16 are not in education, employment and training.

In the sixth form, students perform above the Wales averages for the level 3 threshold (equivalent to two A levels at grade A* to E) but below for the wider points score (comprising all qualifications approved for use in Wales at the age of 18). Value-added information shows that pupils generally perform as expected.

At key stage 3, the difference between the performances of boys and girls in the core subject indicator is below the family average and also the Wales average. The gap is below the family average in English and mathematics and in line with the family average in science. At key stage 4, boys achieved better than girls in most indicators in 2011. This is in contrast to the family and Wales where girls do better than boys. The performance of both girls and boys is above family and Wales averages.

At key stage 3, pupils entitled to free school meals perform better than the family average. However, although the performance of these pupils has improved over the last three years, the gap between these pupils and those who are not entitled to free school meals has increased. The pattern at key stage 4 is similar with the performance of pupils entitled to free school being better than family averages but generally improving at a slower rate than other pupils.

Appendix 2

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to parent questionnaires

Estyn received 39 responses to the parent questionnaire representing a relatively small proportion of the total number of parents. Of those that responded, most parents gave a positive or very positive response to many questions.

Most parents are satisfied with the school with many expressing strong approval. They state that it is well run and that their children are safe and like the school. Most parents indicate that their children were helped to settle in well when they started school. Many consider there is a good range of extra-curricular activities and trips with most saying that their children are encouraged to be healthy. Most parents feel comfortable about approaching the school to discuss matters about their child's education and wellbeing.

Nearly all parents believe that their children are making good progress, that teaching is good and that staff expect their children to work hard and do their best. They say that homework reinforces learning. Most parents indicate that staff support their children well and feel that their children are well prepared for moving on to the next school or college or work.

Most parents feel well informed about their children's progress. Many believe that pupils behave well in school and that staff treat all children fairly and with respect.

Responses to learner questionnaires

Estyn received responses from 376 learners, selected at random from across the age range. Nearly all learners state that they feel safe in school. Many indicate that they have someone to turn to if they have any concerns and believe that the school deals well with bullying.

Most learners consider that they are doing well. Nearly all say that staff help them to learn and make progress and encourage them to take responsibility. Many believe that they have enough books and equipment and say that homework helps them to understand and improve their work. Most feel well prepared for further education or employment.

Many learners state that the school teaches them to be healthy and most agree that there are plenty of opportunities to get regular exercise.

Most learners confirm that staff treat them fairly and with respect and indicate that the school helps them to understand and respect people from other backgrounds.

The majority of learners feel the school takes account of their views, although key stage 4 learners feel less well consulted.

Many learners say that pupils behave well although about three-in-ten express concerns about behaviour.

Appendix 3

The inspection team

John Thomas	Reporting Inspector
Alun Connick	Team Inspector
Huw Collins	Team Inspector
Peter Harris	Team Inspector
Sue Morgan	Team Inspector
Denise Wade	Team Inspector
Ted Tipper	Lay Inspector
Trevor Brown	Peer Inspector
Eugene Scourfield	School Nominee

Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the school and from the Estyn website (www.estyn.gov.uk)

Under the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003, the school must provide copies of the report to all parents of the school. Where a pupil is subject to placement by a local authority, a copy of the report should be sent by the school to each relevant authority.

Year groups and key stages

Schools use a common system of numbering year groups from the start of compulsory schooling to 18 years of age. This system emphasises the importance of continuity and eases communication among schools, governing bodies, parents and LEAs.

The term 'Reception' (FPR) refers to the year group of pupils in a primary school who reach the age of five during the academic year. FPYear 1 refers to the year group of pupils who reach the age of six during the academic year and so on. Year 13 is the year group of students who reach the age of 18 during the academic year.

Primary phase:

Year	FPR	FPY1	FPY2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6
Ages	4-5	5-6	6-7	7-8	8-9	9-10	10-11

Secondary phase:

Year	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13
Ages	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18

The four key stages cover the following year groups:

Foundation Phase	Reception, Year 1 and Year 2
Key stage 2	Year 3 to Year 6
Key stage 3	Year 7 to Year 9
Key stage 4	Year 10 and Year 11

Glossary of terms

Core subject indicator (CSI)	This relates to the expected performance in English or Welsh, mathematics and science, the core subjects of the National Curriculum.
Families of schools	These have been created to enable schools to compare their performance to that of similar schools across Wales. Families include schools with similar proportions of pupils entitled to free school meals, living in 20% most deprived areas of Wales, having special education needs at school action plus or statemented and with English as an additional language acquisition less than competent.
Level 1	This represents the equivalent of a GCSE at grade D to G.
Level 1 threshold	This represents a volume of learning equivalent to five GCSEs at grade D to G.
Level 2	This represents the equivalent of a GCSE at grade A* to C.
Level 2 threshold including English or Welsh first language and mathematics	This represents a volume of learning equivalent to five GCSEs at grade A* to C including English or Welsh first language and mathematics.
Level 2 threshold	This represents a volume of learning equivalent to five GCSEs at grade A* to C.
Level 3	This represents the equivalent of an A level at grade A*-E.
Level 3 threshold	This represents a volume of learning equivalent to two A levels at grade A* to E.
Average wider points score	This includes all qualifications approved for use in Wales at the relevant age, for example at the age of 16 or at the age of 18.
Capped wider points score	This includes the best eight results from all qualifications approved for use in Wales at the age of 16.
All-Wales Core Data sets	Schools and local authorities may refer to performance relative to their family of schools. These families of schools have been created to enable schools to compare their performance to that of similar schools across Wales. Families include schools with similar proportions of pupils entitled to free school meals, living in 20% most deprived areas of Wales, having special education needs at school action plus or statemented and with English as an additional language acquisition less than competent.

Work Programme for Schools Performance Panel

This is the Work Programme Timetable for 2017/2018. Meetings will start at 4pm unless otherwise stated. Pre-meetings will be arranged as required by the Panel.

Meeting date	Items to be discussed
Briefing 6 Jul 17	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Education Scrutiny Workshop (Overview of Education, School Improvement Service and ERW) 2. Planning the year in Education Scrutiny
Meeting 1 31 Aug 17 CR5	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Agreeing the Scrutiny Work Programme 2. Discuss how you wish the panel to operate (pre-meeting, questioning) 3. Developing key questions for school scrutiny sessions* 4. Information on the Pupil Voice in Swansea
Meeting 2 21 Sep 17 CR3a	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Education Other Than at School (EOTAS) - Update on progress with changes to service and accommodation 2. How Schools are building capacity to manage behaviour internally
Meeting 3 18 Oct 17 CR5	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. *School Improvement Service Performance update (Annual) 2. Quality in Education (QED) and 21st Century Schools Programme
Meeting 4 16 Nov 17 2pm Olchfa School	<p>*School 1 – a Pioneer School (Green/excellent School) Olchfa Secondary School and Parklands Primary School Collaboration Speak to Headteacher and Chair of Governors from both schools along with the school improvement service and a group of pupils</p>
Meeting 5 12 Dec 17 CR5	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Looked After Children Educational Outcomes 2. Pupil Deprivation Grant spend and support for vulnerable pupils 3. Annual Audit report (for information)
Meeting 6 18 Jan 18 CR5	<p>*Annual Education Performance (incl. verified data) and *School Categorisation</p>
Extra Meeting 7 5 Feb 18	*Scrutiny of Annual Budget as it relates to education matters
Meeting 8 15 Feb 18 CR5	<p>*School 2 – Morriston Primary School Amber: Speaking to Head and Chair of Governors of a School including preparation session with the challenge advisor. <i>Confirmed.</i></p>
Meeting 9 15 Mar 18 CR5	<p>*School 3 – Bishop Vaughan Catholic Secondary School Amber: Speaking to Head and Chair of Governors of a School including preparation session with the challenge advisor. <i>Confirmed.</i></p>
Extra Meeting Date TBA	Pre-decision Scrutiny Alternative Learning Needs Reform Commissioning Review (<i>awaiting a cabinet date</i>)
Meeting 11 17 May 18 CR5	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Key issues in Education over coming year 2. Review of the year and planning for the year ahead

*Core annual items

For Information

A. Estyn Inspections Summary
(Published since your update on 18 January 2018)

For Information

School

Bishopston Comprehensive School

February 2018

Link to full report <https://www.estyn.gov.wales/sites/default/files/documents/Bishopston%20Comprehensive%20School.pdf>

New Inspection Arrangements:

Standards	Excellent
Wellbeing and attitudes to learning	Excellent
Teaching and learning experiences	Excellent
Care, support and guidance	Excellent
Leadership and management	Excellent

Useful Information / Background Reading

1. Closing the attainment gap: 15 key lessons learned in the Education Endowment Foundation's (EEF) first 6 years

The EEF is an independent charity dedicated to breaking the link between family income and educational achievement.

The following summarises 15 key lessons the EEF has learned about 'what works' to improve teaching and learning; and then scaling that evidence to create the maximum possible benefit for children and young people, particularly those facing disadvantage.

Eligibility for free school meals (FSM) is used as the proxy measure of economic disadvantage.

1. Early Years education has huge promise in preventing the attainment gap becoming entrenched before children start school. However, it has not yet yielded as much as it should. Professional support and training for early years workers is key. Areas with potential include communication and language approaches; self-regulation strategies; and parental involvement.
2. What happens in the classroom makes the biggest difference - improving teaching quality generally leads to greater improvements at lower cost than structural changes. There is particularly good evidence around the potential impact of teacher professional development; but the supply of high quality training is limited.
3. Targeted small group and one-to-one interventions have the potential for the largest immediate impact on attainment. Some whole class and whole-school interventions have shown promise but may take longer to show results.
4. The transition between phases of education – notably early years to primary, and primary to secondary – is a risk-point for vulnerable learners. Schools need to diagnose pupils' needs as soon as possible to put in place effective support to help those falling behind to catch up.
5. The challenge of improving post-16 attainment is a particular issue for students from disadvantaged backgrounds. A majority of students eligible for free school meals have not achieved a good standard in English and mathematics by age 19. More evidence is needed to identify the best ways to improve outcomes for these learners.

6. Pupil Premium funding is a valuable focus to support senior leaders in raising the attainment of disadvantaged young people. But it is vital that schools (as well as early years and post-16 settings) consider how all their resources can be used to achieve this goal. Good teaching for all pupils has a particular benefit for disadvantaged pupils.

7. There is a strong appetite for educators to engage with and use evidence. Up to two-thirds of senior leaders use the EEF Teaching and Learning Toolkit to make decisions, while more than 10,000 schools in England have signed up to take part in one of the EEF's trials so far.

8. Robust and independent evaluation of high potential programmes is not only possible, but essential. Evidence is a crucial tool to inform senior leaders' decision-making and help them identify 'best bets' for spending. Time and money is too scarce to stick with approaches and programmes which do not make a real difference. The effective use of evidence means strategically abandoning ineffective approaches, as well as implementing new ones with positive evidence behind them.

9. We know enough in key areas of teaching and learning to start making a positive difference now. While generating new evidence remains essential, in areas such as literacy there is no excuse for not deploying the existing, extensive evidence to support teaching practice. The growing bank of EEF guidance reports gives teachers the best available evidence in a range of key areas.

10. Teaching assistants can be deployed more effectively. Though previous research had suggested that teaching assistants can have a negative impact on children's learning, EEF trials have shown how, when properly trained and supported, teaching assistants working in structured ways with small groups can boost pupils' progress.

11. How a project is implemented is vital and arguably as important as its content. Successful projects have clarity around their structure, objectives and target group, with high-quality training and materials that allow for adaptation and strong implementation. The EEF's forthcoming guidance report, *A School's Guide to Implementation*, draws out what we have learnt over the last six years.

12. Most programmes are no better than what schools are already doing: around 1-in-4 EEF trials show enough promise for us to re-invest in. Teachers and decision-makers are right to be discerning about where they spend their limited funds.

13. Catch up is difficult: we should aim to get it right first time round for all children. The EEF evaluated over 20 catch-up programmes that aimed to support struggling readers at the transition from primary to secondary school. Though some were shown to be effective in boosting attainment, no single programme delivered enough to close the gap.

14. Essential life skills (or 'character') are important in determining life chances and can be measured in a robust and comparable way. Much less is known, however, about how these skills can be developed and whether they lead to increased academic attainment. This is a major focus of work for the EEF.

15. Sharing effective practice between schools – and building capacity and effective mechanisms for doing so – is key to closing the gap. Teachers and school leaders now have access to a significant and growing body of academic research with enormous potential to improve pupil attainment and save schools money. Research on its own is not enough; applying the findings to the classroom is a real challenge.

The full report is available [here](#).

2. Counter Terrorism in Schools

In July 2017 Kirsty Williams, Cabinet Secretary for Education wrote to all Cabinet Members with responsibility for Education in Wales to draw attention to Counter Terrorism in Schools. The letter raised awareness to the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 which places a responsibility on schools to:

'have due regard, in the exercise of their functions, to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism and challenge extremist ideas that support or are shared by terrorist groups'

The UK Government published the Prevent Duty Guidance for England and Wales for specified bodies including education providers. The link to this document is below:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/97976/prevent-strategy-review.pdf

In support, the Welsh Government has:

- published an updated version of the guidance document 'Respect and Resilience – developing community cohesion' <http://gov.wales/docs/dcells/publications/110209respecten.pdf> which includes an associated self-assessment toolkit. The guidance ensures that schools in Wales have information to help them meet the legal requirements of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015,
- Developed the Keeping Learners Safe Guidance, <http://learning.gov.wales/docs/learningwales/publications/150114-keeping-learners-safe-en.pdf>

the Welsh Government guidance on the role of local authorities, governing bodies and proprietors of independent schools under the Education Act 2002,

- Developed the HWB website – digital learning for Wales, to include an e-safety zone which contains resources, links, advice and support for children young people, parents/carers and educational professionals and promotes safe responsible use of the internet by all,
- Included a challenging extremism module through Global Citizenship Challenge in the Welsh Baccalaureate,
- Been working with colleagues from the South West Grid for Learning to develop bilingual resources for teachers to provide lessons around online safety.

Although at this point in time, there is no intelligence to suggest schools are at greater risk, it is important to stress that there is a need for schools to review their policies and procedures to ensure these are sufficiently robust to deal with such an incident.

Guidance was issued to schools previously advising a review of all safeguarding policies to include a specific paragraph reflecting the training and the need to consider extremism and radicalisation alongside other safeguarding responsibilities.

It is pleasing to note that since 2014, the Home Office accredited training WRAP (Workshop to Raise Awareness on Prevent) has been delivered to 80 Swansea schools. This training has been delivered by our Channel Partnership Chair and Lead Officer for PREVENT – Paul Thomas who can provide advice, guidance and support.

Swansea schools have a range of site specific emergency plans, developed under the direction of our Emergency Management and Health and Safety Service. These include security, bomb threat and effective “lock down” protocols, which have been, both exercised and activated successfully. If you require further information in relation to Counter Terrorism please contact:

emergency.management@swansea.gov.uk

Additionally all school trips and visits, are authorised via the “Evolve System” which includes the scrutiny of all risk assessments, emergency arrangements, supervision and security provisions to ensure they are suitable and sufficient. These are signed off by the Health and Safety Officers, who also liaise with the Emergency Management Officers if required, before the event proceeds. If you have any concern in relation to Health and Safety for school trips and visits please contact Nicole Overton on 07796 275028 or via Nicole.Overton@swansea.gov.uk

Support is also offered for schools including briefings for parents and staff to reassure them of the arrangements in-place to protect children and young people. Specific guidance in relation to crowded places, threat levels and signposting to “Stay Safe” awareness training has been provided to every school within the City and County of Swansea.

The above range of support mechanisms are in place to help schools manage potential incidents of counter-terrorism in schools. As good practice, the Local Authority is calling on each Swansea school to appoint a governor with responsibility for the broader challenge of safeguarding within the school. Whilst this is not a mandatory role, it is recommended good practice. Your governing body may consider that the designated Child Protection Governor can also take on this broader role. However, given the serious nature of these issues and the broader context to elements of safeguarding your governing body may take a decision to appoint a different governor to have this overall responsibility. Whichever way your governing body plans to address these issues will be for individual governing bodies to decide, however, I cannot stress enough the importance of all governing bodies considering these options and taking an appropriate decision in response to this request.

If you would like further information on school governance, as always the School and Governor Support Unit will be able to provide advice and guidance and can be contacted on 01792 636550. Alternatively, if you would like to speak to Kathryn Thomas about this letter please do not hesitate to get back to her either by email or by telephone