



City and County of Swansea

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

Committee Room 5 - Guildhall, Swansea

Thursday, 15 March 2018 at 4.00 pm

**Present:** Councillor M Sykes (Chair) Presided

**Councillor(s)**

A M Day  
D W Helliwell  
L R Jones

**Councillor(s)**

S J Gallagher  
B Hopkins  
M A Langstone

**Councillor(s)**

L S Gibbard  
L James

**Other Attendees**

Emma Pole  
Gareth Davies  
Rob Davies

Headteacher Bishop Vaughan School  
Deputy Headteacher Bishop Vaughan School  
Challenge Advisor

**Officer(s)**

Michelle Roberts                      Scrutiny Officer

**Apologies for Absence**

Councillor(s): C Anderson, M Durke, S M Jones and L J Tyler-Lloyd

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

None

**2 Notes and Conveners Letters**

Notes and letters were received by the Panel.

**3 Preparation meeting with the Challenge Advisor for Bishop Vaughan Catholic Comprehensive School Rob Davies**

Rob Davies, the Challenge Advisor for Bishop Vaughan Catholic Secondary School attended the meeting and discussed progress at the school with panel members. The following main points were noted:

- In 2016 a number of issues were identified at the school that had caused concern and needed to be addressed, in particular: the need for stable, strong leadership, academic data dipping and a large financial deficit.
- The school received an 'Amber' support package last year and has now been categorised as 'Yellow'. The Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team have welcomed and embraced the support given.

- A new acting Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team were appointed in the September of 2016 and since that time a number of measures have been put in place to bring about improvements at the school. This has resulted in stronger and more stable leadership at the school, an up-lift in academic performance and the managing down of the financial deficit.
- In January the school had an Estyn Inspection which has evidenced a more positive picture and is in line with how the Challenge Advisor had assessed the school had progressed. We heard that Inspection outcome is not yet public but will be published on 4 April.

#### **4 Session with Bishop Vaughan Catholic Comprehensive School**

The Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher from Bishop Vaughan Catholic Secondary School attended the Panel meeting to discuss the schools progress and prospects for improvement with the panel. The following main points were noted:

- The support the school had received from the Local Authority, ERW and other schools
- Support for and training of new and aspiring school leaders and the need to include financial and human resource management in that package of learning.
- The work to improve pupil performance and outcomes at the school, the improvements made and areas still requiring improvement
- The innovative use of the pupil deprivation grant to improve eFSM pupil performance
- The ongoing work to manage down the financial deficit and the implications of grant reductions. We heard that this will disproportionately affect the school because they of the reduction in pupil numbers, imminent changes in support received from the Ethnic Minority and Achievement Service and the post 16 budget reductions.
- Attendance and exclusions
- The condition of some of the school buildings at the school and the need for some major maintenance or replacement of some aspects.

From this discussion with the Head and Deputy Headteacher and the Challenge Adviser we concluded that there is now a much improved picture at the school as compared to the situation in 2016. We felt that this is mainly due to:

- The school now having a new and confident Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team that are proving to be creative and innovative in driving improvements at the school.
- Leaders at all levels in the school, and school staff, having worked together and responded well to the drive to improve pupil outcomes.
- The school having welcomed support and challenge from the Local Authority, the Challenge Advisor and accessed school to school support
- The school is working with the Challenge Advisor to develop its self-evaluation processes.
- A much improved financial situation at the school and clear plan to come out of deficit.

- The school has well considered plans in place to support pupils from vulnerable backgrounds. Using their Pupil Deprivation Grant, the school focuses on improving pupils' outcomes in literacy and numeracy and breaking the link between disadvantage and educational attainment. This has shown positive impacts in pupil performance for eFSM pupils. This has been identified by Estyn as good practice and worthy of sharing with other schools.

The Panel did recognise, however, that some of the areas of particular improvements that are required and these are being addressed through the school continuing to seek 'school to school' support and assistance from the challenge advisor and subject specialists in its self-evaluation processes, mathematics and science and outcomes in 6<sup>th</sup> Form. The Panel did feel that the appointment of a permanent Headteacher should be made soon to ensure stability moving forward.

Councillors congratulated the Headteacher and school staff, the challenge advisor and the governing body at the school for the improvements made at the school since 2016 and look forward to seeing this continue from a now strong base. Overall, we are pleased to see the new strong leadership team at the school taking the school forward and would particularly celebrate the use of the innovative thinking the school is using to solve the challenges that it faces.

The Panel will ask the Cabinet Member to respond to the following points.

1. We recommend that a permanent senior leadership team be appointed soon to ensure ongoing stability and improvement.
2. Whether the Financial implications of budget reductions across a number of services that will affect the school can in some way be mitigated?
3. How potentially the serious maintenance issues within some of the school buildings can be addressed?
4. We recommend that the support and training for new and aspiring leaders of schools include the management of human resource and financial matters.

## **5 Workplan 2017/2018**

The next two panel meetings have been arranged as follows:

17 May 2018 – Overview of key issues facing Education and planning the work of the coming municipal year

7 June 2018 – Science in Schools in Swansea

## **6 For Information Item**

This information was noted by the panel.

The meeting ended at 6.00 pm

Notes of the Scrutiny Performance Panel – Schools (15.03.2018)  
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