



City and County of Swansea

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

Ysgol Crug Glas Special School, Croft St, Swansea SA1 1QA

Wednesday, 17 October 2018 at 1.30 pm

Present: Councillor M Sykes (Chair) Presided

Councillor(s)

C Anderson
L James

Councillor(s)

S J Gallagher

Councillor(s)

L S Gibbard

Co-opted Member(s)

A Roberts

Other Attendees

Clare Hobson

Michelle Hibb

Suzie Smith

Steve Barrett

Maggie Bullen

Gethin Smith

Headteacher Ysgol Crug Glas School

Senior Management Team Ysgol Crug Glas School

Senior Management Team Ysgol Crug Glas School

Chair of Governors Ysgol Crug Glas School

Governor Ysgol Crug Glas School

Consultative Head and Headteacher Penybryn School

Officer(s)

Rob Phillips

Michelle Roberts

Challenge Advisor

Scrutiny Officer

Apologies for Absence

Councillor(s): A M Day, M Durke, F M Gordon, D W Helliwell, B Hopkins, S M Jones, L R Jones and M A Langstone

Co-opted Member(s): D Anderson-Thomas

1 Disclosure of Personal and Prejudicial Interests.

None

2 Notes and Conveners letters

The Panel noted the notes from the meeting on the 27 September 2018.

3 Preparation session with Challenge Advisor

Councillors met with the Schools Challenge Advisor Rob Phillips and the Consultative Head Gethin Sutton to discuss how the school is progressing with its improvement journey. Key points noted from this discussion include:

- Leadership staffing issues around time of inspection in 2016 and for a while after putting the school in a vulnerable position, so there was three key decisions by Governing Body and Local Authority to:
 1. Appoint acting Headteacher Claire Hobson
 2. Involve Consultative Head Gethin Sutton
 3. Establish a Team Around the School network
- These three key decisions have been instrumental to improvements at the school. Estyn were very pleased with the progress made and so quickly and agreed the school could come out of Estyn monitoring in May 18
- More active governing body with regard to challenge aspects recognising the support aspects were strong.
- Leadership much stronger and much more spread rather than just with Headteacher
- A pioneer school with four other schools in a network 2 special schools in Swansea and 2 in Neath Port Talbot.

4 Ysgol Crug Glas Special School

Councillors took a tour of the school and then met with Headteacher Claire Hobson and Management Team Michelle Hibb and Susie Smith and Governors Steve Barrett and Maggie Bullen. Also in attendance for this session were Rob Phillips, Challenge Advisor and Consultative Head Gethin Sutton. Main points from the discussion included:

- The school is doing its best to be creative in its activities but is restricted by some of the barriers include: the premises, finance, staffing level and resource. Many positives with the location, close the many things, work closely with local community and business.
- Possible Federation with Penybryn School being considered which in the longer term may include seeking Plan B funding for new build facility.
- The panel heard from Governors that there has been a reduction in funding to the school mainly due to:
 - Teaching assistants grading review where TAs were upgraded to scale 6 but school only receives funding for Scale 4.
 - Delegation of TA posts to the school that were previously centrally funded. The amount delated was the budget amount rather than the actual spend which has resulted in shortfall of £88,700.
- The reduction in funding has resulted in the loss of 2 teachers, 17 mid-day supervisors and the use of school reserves. Councillors also heard that this reduction is still a work in progress. The School was awarded £70,000 from the restructuring fund in the current financial year, this was a one off payment and with the new budget round coming, the governors are gravely concerned as to the effects of this and how it is likely to be a barrier to school improvement.
- Estyn commented on progress made with their recommendations when they revisited in April 2018, they said 'the current leadership team is very effective in driving forward school improvement'. Including:
 - Recommendation 1 – since the core inspections, senior leaders have placed appropriate emphasis on improving the way that teachers plan to develop pupil skills progressively. Teaching has a strong focus on

developing pupil skills at a pace and level that is adapted well to their individual needs and abilities.

- Recommendation 2 – Staff now have a clear understanding of the importance of wider skills in meeting pupil social and emotional needs. The school has implemented a useful wider skills framework that identifies how pupils can develop skills progressively, such as working with others and thinking skills.
- Recommendation 3 – Senior leaders communicate a strong, shared vision for the school that focuses well on collaborative working across the staff team. The shared vision is a strength of the school.
- Recommendation 4 - Senior leaders have implemented a strategic approach to improve standards and provision at the school by providing all staff with valuable opportunities to observe and share good practice. This has been key in moving forward.
- Recommendation 5 – Governors share the clear vision of improvement for the school. Senior leaders have delivered bespoke training to governors on important aspects of the schools work including use of data to track pupil performance. This has improved Governors knowledge and ability to support and challenge the school more effectively.
- This has mean for pupils at the school – The school has a clear and robust cycle of monitoring, evaluation and review. Quality assurance systems are effective I helping leaders to identify its strengths and areas for improvement.
- The Governors and Headteacher said they were very pleased with the support that they have received from the local authority, school improvement service and the Consultative Head.
- They have seen a massive shift in progress at the school since the original inspection.
- Governing body's priorities moving forward includes a strong commitment to continuous improvement and ongoing support and challenge. Also the possible Federation and Plan B new school. But with so much change over last few years the governing body have asked for a period of stability until Sept 2019. In that time they and the school will be looking in detail at the Federation option.
- School and governors feel that they have learnt so much over the last couple of years and feel that the Team Around the School was a great success for them.
- The Panel were very pleased to hear about the positive outcome of the Estyn re-inspection and the speed of which improvement have been made. They also congratulated the school staff and governors for their commitment to improvement which they believe has been key to their success in moving forward so quickly. The panel felt that the assistance of the Consultative Head, the School Improvement Service and the Team around the School had been a resounding success and is an excellent model for the future when school are facing challenging situations. The panel thanked all those who attended and wished the School the very best for the future.

A letter will be written to the Cabinet Member for Education Improvement, Learning and Skills outlining the Panels views from the visit.

5 Work Programme 2018/19

The Work Programme was noted.