



City and County of Swansea

**Minutes of the Education & Skills Policy  
Development Committee**

Committee Room 5 - Guildhall, Swansea

Wednesday, 10 July 2019 at 4.00 pm

**Present:** Councillor R V Smith (Chair) Presided

**Councillor(s)**

J P Curtice

**Councillor(s)**

L R Jones

**Councillor(s)**

M B Lewis

**Officer(s)**

Gareth Borsden

Helen Morgan - Rees

Nick Williams

Democratic Services Officer

Head of Education Achievement & Partnership

Director of Education

**Also Present:**

Jenifer Ford – Headteacher Pentrehafod Comprehensive

Lisa Carroll – Assistant Headteacher Pentrehafod Comprehensive

Andrew Owen - Headteacher Birchgrove Comprehensive

Jamie Kelleher – Head of English Birchgrove Comprehensive

Janet Waldron MBE – Challenge Advisor Swansea Council (Substantive  
Headteacher of Pontarddulais Comprehensive

Nia Miles – Assistant Headteacher of Pontarddulais Comprehensive

Simon Davies – Headteacher Ysgol Bryn Tawe

Nerys Vaughan – Assistant Headteacher Ysgol Bryn Tawe

**Apologies for Absence**

Councillor(s): M Durke, B Hopkins and M A Langstone

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**10 Disclosures of Personal and Prejudicial Interests.**

In accordance with the code of conduct adopted by the City & County of Swansea, no interests were declared.

**11 Minutes.**

**Resolved** that the Minutes of the Education & Skills Policy Development Committees held on 12 June 2019 be agreed as a correct record.

**12 Discussion with Schools.**

The Chair welcomed the all the staff from Birchgrove, Bryn Tawe, Pentrehafod and Pontarddulais Schools to the meeting.

Pentrehafod

Jennifer Ford and Lisa Carroll outlined the progress and initiatives their school had undertaken since the publication of Professor Donaldson's report in 2015.

They indicated that the work done has been aimed to benefit and enhance the provision for young people going forward. A key issue for them has been focused on literacy and has been developed in association with the seven cluster schools. This has been trailed in different areas including humanities, science & technology and digital skills, with an emphasis on cross subject learning.

Their learning pathway has four core purposes.

Transition arrangements have also been updated and revised, and a Welsh Government grant allowed the school to develop a scheme involving artists/storytellers into the transition days. The aim of the project was to get young people re-engaged with the written word.

Lower attaining pupils were also identified and targeted with extra help and assistance. This is being achieved via extra lessons, lunchtime & after school clubs etc. The school was also moving to a 9 form entry from 7 form, so this will assist the young people through smaller class sizes.

A new 3 pathway scheme on ICT/Digital provision was also being developed at KS4.

A 'leader of learning' was also appointed who also works across the cluster schools, and this has proved beneficial.

A new humanities timetable and provision has also been trailed this year and has worked well.

A revised middle leadership structure had been developed recently and copies of this were shown to Members of the Committee. This wasn't strictly in line with the Donaldson model but has proved successful for the school.

The school is also looking to build on the Skills, Citizenship & Well Being role and hope to link in with the Welsh Bac and vocational subjects it provides.

The also outlined the link with a company call Empathy Lab, who they are working with to further improve literacy and increase empathy.

They indicated that had received a grant to improve links and working relationships with the cluster schools and this was being developed in conjunction with a company called Nesta. An action plan for this had now been developed and this links in with the restorative practice, literacy schemes already in place.

They indicated they worked well and liaised with the Challenge Advisers.

They outlined the good support the school gets from ERW and outlined that Professor Donaldson had visited the school recently which had proved very useful.

### Birchgrove

Andrew Owen and Jamie Kelleher outlined that their school was not a pioneer school. They detailed the work ongoing at their school ongoing at their school.

They indicated that their view has been to take a cautious approach to change, whilst staying in line with the current national curriculum. They indicated they are working with ERW to upskill the staff in readiness for the new curriculum. They have amended both the management and departmental structures at the school to build on the knowledge and experience of the staff and aim to maintain subject integrity going forward, which is key for pupils wishing to study A levels and progress to University.

They will further discuss with the Challenge Advisers on how best to develop a model going forward for the school.

They referred to the anticipated and understandable anxiety of some teachers towards the new curriculum.

They outlined the excellent support received from the Local Authority and outlined a trial of a more thematic based cross subject learning initiative which aims to assist and encourage improvement.

They gave a powerpoint presentation which included the following topics areas:

- 4 main core principles and learner matrix;
- key principles in curriculum design;
- strong emphasis on developing subject-knowledge;
- knowledge before skill and key links between cross subject learning;
- importance of assessment;
- 4 key purposes of learning at KS3 and associated personal development areas;
- Year 8 assessments and improvement goals;
- Supporting of staff – online CPD library, twitter network, research information etc;
- School to school support, liaison and good practice sharing with both cluster schools and fellow comprehensives locally and across South Wales;
- enhancement and enrichment programme currently in place;
- skill development proposals going forward.

They outlined that the links and relationship with the cluster schools are vitally important to the schools success going forward and referred to a recent meeting with all of them which will be followed up in September.

They indicated the initiatives and progress initially undertaken in maths and English would be rolled out across the other subjects.

He indicated that like other schools literacy is a problem, but the roots lie far wider than the school and feeder schools and is more of a social problem, with less reading being undertaken by young people generally.

They referred to the problem of teacher recruitment facing schools.

### Pontarddulais

Janet Waldron and Nia Miles indicated that their school had been part of the Pioneer scheme.

They indicated that the school has a settled and strong leadership team and outlined their well established and strong links and partnership arrangements in place with their five cluster schools.

They gave a powerpoint presentation which included the following topics areas:

- Background to being chosen as a Pioneer School in 2016;
- Timeline of progress since publication of 'successful futures' in 2015 to date, 7 areas of learning chosen, different approach in Humanities, expanded work with feeder schools;
- Trial period for change which allowed staff to develop;
- 4 core purposes for learning and copy of poster outlining these which is displayed around the school outlined;
- Progression steps and 'what matters' statements – information passed around to members;
- Autumn 2017 expansion and timeline and appointment of ERW leader of learning appointment;
- Autumn 2018 – new curriculum for Science & Technology and Health & Well Being;
- Spring 2019 - 12 pedagogical principles – evaluation & forward planning;
- Views on new curriculum – strengths & concerns;
- Aim to introduce new curriculum in 2020 for Year 8.

### Bryn Tawe

Simon Davies and Nerys Vaughan outlined that their school had been chosen as a pioneer school and gave a powerpoint presentation covering the following areas:

- 4 core purposes and driving forces behind change;
- close working relationship with YG Gŵyr;
- experimental phase for different curricula models;
- views of both young people and staff taken on board during process;
- curriculum planning team – consideration & review of findings;
- key principal is to develop knowledge, skills and to give our students experiences;
- changes to certain subject teaching to give a more local based focus to build on local knowledge and opportunities for learning;
- 6 main areas of learning;
- 3 cross curriculum themes;
- 'what matters' statements and excellent links with 6 feeder schools;
- 12 pedagogical principles and progressions steps;
- moving forward – cluster school events, need for continuing professional learning, upskilling and support for staff;

They further outlined that as they now three years into the pioneer school project, and having visited other pioneer schools they and the staff feel confident going forward that the new curriculum will benefit young people in the long term.

They also referred to the serious issue of teacher recruitment facing schools particularly Welsh medium schools, especially in subjects like science and IT.

Members and Officers asked various questions of the school representatives around the topics outlined above and the lengthy and detailed discussions that took place in the meeting, the representatives responded accordingly.

The Chair and Members thanked the Headteachers and their colleagues for their input and attendance.

**13 Workplan 2019/2020.**

Noted.

The meeting ended at 6.25 pm

**Chair**