



CITY AND COUNTY OF SWANSEA
DINAS A SIR ABERTAWE

Councillor Will Evans
**Cabinet Member for Learning
and Skills**

Please ask for:
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Date
Dyddiad:

21 July 2014

Dear Cllr Evans,

Schools Performance Scrutiny Panel 3 July 2014

At our panel meeting on the 3rd July we looked at how the authority tackles the issue of poor performing teachers and the recruitment of senior staff in schools. Arwyn Thomas the Chief Education Officer and Debra Yeates from Human Resources attended the meeting to discuss a number of specific issues which had been raised by the panel at a previous meeting, particularly the amount and accuracy of record keeping in schools in relation to staffing matters.

The panel noted a number of issues and wished to highlight the following:

- We were interested to hear that there is a regional human resources group covering six local authority areas that is currently looking at competency policies in schools within that region. The panel were keen to emphasise that the policy, to be effective, must outline what the key expectations are of a staff member, and also the importance of the quality of record keeping in schools.
- Early engagement with the individual and the associated trade union is important when issues of competency are raised with a staff member. The panel believe it is important to put these concerns *on the table early* so they can be addressed quickly and not impact adversely on the education provided to those children and young people who might be affected.
- Schools must keep good quality records of human resources matters because if documentation is not in place the competency process is difficult to take forward. The panel believe that historically this has not been the case in some schools. There is a need monitor and quality assure to ensure that this does happen.
- We heard about the idea of a leadership academy for Headteachers, senior school staff and aspiring leaders and thought this was excellent concept.

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We believe a leadership academy would help ensure better consistency in practice across schools and would also be important in future workforce planning - ensuring we have the next generation of senior management in schools. We thought that this could potentially be investigated with University of Wales Trinity St David's where there is currently experience of training teaching staff.

The panel were pleased to hear from the Chief Education Officer that a new school improvement team will be in place in September and that they will receive a full programme of training and development including national welsh training for challenge leaders. We discussed the priorities for the school improvement service and agreed that ensuring consistency in practice must be high on that priority list. We plan to have a session with the head of the school improvement service and the Chief Education Officer in September around this issue.

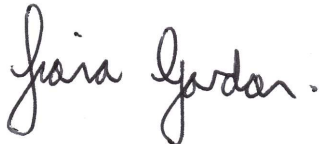
Two related issues that were raised by the panel include:

1. the importance of schools autumn visit and how that would benefit from more involvement of governors. For example the chairs of the schools' statutory committees should be invited. This would then ensure that the information from that visit is disseminated effectively across each school's governing body.
2. More training/information on the Law as it stands in relation to school Governance should be made available to governors. We felt that it is vital that all governors understand their role and responsibilities fully. The Scrutiny Programme Committee has agreed that one of the topics for in-depth scrutiny this year will be school governance and that this issue can form part of that inquiry.

The panel received a verbal update from the Chief Education Officer on progress at Dunvant Primary School. As you are aware we had a meeting with the School's then Headteacher and Governors in February and you will recall the letter we sent you with our concerns. We are now pleased to hear that the situation has moved in a positive direction and that the leadership changes are now beginning to have a positive impact at the school.

The panel does not require a formal response to this letter.

Yours sincerely



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