

Cabinet Member for Education, Councillor Jennifer Raynor

22 December Scrutiny Programme Committee

I set out my priorities at Council on 4th November 2014 and in response to a question from Councillor Mike Day, more information was provided in a written response published in the Council Summons on 2nd December 2014.

The Schools Performance Panel of 11th December 2014 took a close look at the Annual Self Evaluation of Local Authority Education Services for Children and Young People 2014. As many of you know, I was a member of the Schools Performance Panel before becoming a Cabinet Member. I am confident that both the Council's and many schools Self Evaluation exercises are more able to accurately interpret information and identify areas which need developing. The new educational improvement team is making a positive continuation across Swansea.

There are however, some serious challenges to maintaining this improvement:-

- 1 The budget cuts for the next 3 years
- 1 The sudden, unexpected and unplanned in year cuts from W.G.
- 1 Regional education, our relationship with ERW, especially governance, accessibility and the financial stresses

These 3 factors will impact on this Authority's plans for the future; the improvement of school building's, reducing NEETS, EMLAS, transport, employment training, EOTAS and grants or funding for cultural activities.

I am continuing to attend meetings with Headteachers and visiting schools. Despite more W.G. funds supporting Flying Start, there are areas of Swansea, including deprived areas where good quality pre school child care is not available. This is one area where I would to see scrutiny take an active role. As Social Services tighten their "front door", schools are left to deal with the crowd locked out. At 16, vulnerable children suddenly lose the additional support schools have supplied. Who works with those children/young people and their families in the big transition into work or training.

1. Council summons – 4th November 2014
2. Council summons – 2nd December 2014
3. Annual Self Evaluation at Local Authority Education Services for Children and Young People 2-014. Report to Schools Performance Panel – 11th December 2014

The above are all public documents.

Extract from Council papers – 4 November 2014

Education's challenges and priorities are those of our single integrated plan, One Swansea, and the Corporate Improvement Plan 2013-17, namely to:

1. Raise attainment and achievement for all learners 3-19
2. Improve Attendance levels
3. Improve Literacy in English and Welsh to enable all pupils to take full advantage of the curriculum and to reduce the gap between boys and girls.

National and local indicators will continue to be monitored closely. The Council is working with its schools to increase the number of 15-16 year olds achieving the GCSE level 2 threshold, including English and / or Welsh first language and maths. From a low of 49.2% in 2009 there has been a year on year increase to 55.3% in 2013 and to 58.8% this year, 2014. Councillors will, I know, be pleased to hear that the percentage of pupils who achieved the GCSE level 2 threshold rose from 59.9% in 2009 to 84% this year. Those who achieved the level 1 threshold rose from 86.1% in 2009 to 94.9% this year.

It is very important that we continue with Education's contribution to our Corporate Priority to reduce the impact of poverty and focus on improving attainment and achievement for disadvantaged pupils and learners. At key stage 2, those in receipt of free school meals are making considerable progress. Outcomes at key stages 3 and 4 will be closely monitored for Page 216 Agenda Item 15.evidence of improvement and for the effective use of the additional funding schools receive.

The LA will continue to monitor the percentage of half days missed at both primary and secondary schools. Attendance has been improving: primary schools are now at 94.4% and secondary schools not far behind at 93.3%. To maintain improvement, Education will be working closely with parents / carers and schools to ensure that pupils receive a rich and meaningful curriculum in a safe environment. Support will be offered where problems are identified.

Being literate, able to read and write and communicate is an essential skill. There has been a steady improvement from the Foundation Phase upwards. The data will continue to be analysed. Targeted support will be offered including ERW support, Challenge Advisors and through our Hub arrangement with NPTC. Education will continue to develop partnerships with the further & higher education sectors and with work based trainers and employers to increase the literacy and skills of those seeking to improve adult qualification.

My priorities of constant improvement will be achieved by using all the data to drill down in detail to identify the specific areas and pupils where improvement is slow. Working with our schools and regional partners, additional support and / or different approaches successfully proven elsewhere will be introduced. Regular monitoring of all indicators local and national will be used to measure progress. Education in the City & County of Swansea will continue to draw on national and international research to inform our use of data and

our practice.

From Council papers – 2 December

What are the key milestones in order to meet the set targets?”

Section 1 of the Education Business Plan 2014-15 / Post-Inspection Action Plan contains targets for 2014 for a range of indicators which were set at 6th/10th/14th ranking in national performance, based on Swansea performance in 2013 and trends plus challenge. The Business Plan/PIAP is at: <http://www.swansea.gov.uk/estyninspections>

Ref	Business Area	Expected Outcomes
	Raise Standards	
S1	Foundation Phase, age 7	<p>Improve our national local authority position to 14th</p> <p>Reduce the number of schools in the bottom quartile and below the median</p> <p>To achieve 14th position performance outcome 5 targeted to improve to:</p> <p>Foundation Phase Indicator 82.3%</p> <p>PSD 93.3%</p> <p>LCE 85.1%</p> <p>MDT 86.8%</p>
S2	Key Stage 2, age 11	<p>Improve our national local authority position to 10th</p> <p>Reduce the number of schools in the bottom quartile and below the median</p> <p>To achieve 10th position performance in Level 4 targeted to improve to:</p> <p>Core Subject Indicator 85.4%</p> <p>English 88.0%</p> <p>Maths 88.2%</p>
S3	Key Stage 3, age 14	<p>Improve our national local authority position to 10th</p> <p>Reduce the number of schools in the bottom quartile and below the median</p>

		<p>To achieve 10th position performance in Level 5 targeted to improve to:</p> <p>Core Subject Indicator 78.5%</p> <p>English 84.2%</p> <p>Welsh 89.4%</p> <p>Maths 85.9%</p>
S4	Key Stage 4, age 16	<p>Improve our national local authority position to 6th</p> <p>Level 1 Threshold 94.9%</p> <p>Level 2 Threshold Inclusive 56.0%</p> <p>No qualifications 0.00%</p>
S5	Post-16 performance	<p>Improve Key Stage 5 performance</p> <p>At Level 1</p> <p>At Level 2</p> <p>At Level 3</p>
S6	Performance of disadvantaged pupils	<p>All measures in S1,2,3,4 to the following groups of pupils:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free school meals • Boys <p>Maintain reduction in NEETS at 16 <i>[performance not expected to reduce much below c 3.0 as the remaining young people are the hardest to find provision for]</i></p> <p>Reduce NEETS 16-18</p>
S7	Attendance	
	(a) Primary	<p>Improve our national local authority position to 14th</p>
		<p>Reduce the number of schools in the bottom quartile and below the median</p> <p>To achieve 6th position (2013 value) performance targeted to improve to:</p> <p>- Primary 94.1%</p>
	(b) Secondary	<p>Improve our national local authority position to 10th</p> <p>Reduce the number of schools in the bottom</p>

		quartile and below the median To achieve 6th position (2013 Value) performance targeted to improve to: - Secondary 93.3%
S8	Reduce Exclusions	
	(a) Permanent	0
	(b) Fixed Term more than 6 days (rate/1000)	Improve ranking to 14th - 4.0 No permanent exclusions in the Primary Sector Reduction of permanent and managed moves out of mainstream education in the Secondary sector Fixed term exclusions not to rise (number of days lost/ average number of days)

Extract from Annual Self Evaluation at Local Authority Education Services for Children and Young People 2014 (Report to Schools Performance Scrutiny Panel – 11th December 2014)

Summary

We think that overall the present quality of Education Services is good and that the capacity to improve outcomes is also good.

How good is the service?

Excellent Features

Performance of Swansea secondary schools at key stage 4 across a range of indicators when compared with similar schools;
Overall school inspection performance when compared with other Local Authorities.

Good features

Education's contribution to the performance of key Council strategic priorities of improving attainment and achievement and reducing poverty has been strong this year.
Performance is improving in the key areas of attainment, attendance, inclusion and managing the infrastructure. National rankings are generally at or better than the expected level for key indicators of performance.

Performance is particularly good at 16 years of age in the main indicator level 2 including English/Welsh and mathematics. Swansea is ranked 7th in Wales compared to free school meal position of 14th. Five of the schools with the highest percentage of free school meals achieved their best ever results this year.

Attendance in both secondary and primary has improved by over one and 1.3 percentage points respectively. This equates to our pupils attending for over 80,000 days more than last year.

Adult and community learning has had a provisional judgement of good and excellent from Estyn.

Good progress is being made against the LAESCYP Inspection post inspection action plan from 2013.

The LA has a good track record in managing surplus places in English-medium schools, while providing Welsh-medium places, through the QEd 2020 programme.

Safeguarding arrangements are robust and monitored carefully; Service and team plans link well to Directorate and Corporate priorities.

Areas to develop*

- Improve benchmark performance of schools at 7, 11 and 14 years of age;
- Reduce the number of pupils educated outside of mainstream schools;
- Improve the quality of provision at the secondary pupil referral units;
- Reduce NEETS at age 16
- Continue the work to improve primary and secondary attendance.

Will the service improve?

Factors likely to support improvement:

Senior political and officer leadership of education is strong;
Education priorities are very clear and support the delivery of the Corporate agenda very well;
Political and officer accountability and scrutiny of performance within the Education Department is robust ;
The new education improvement team is well led and is making a positive contribution to school local authority relationships

The factors that are likely to hinder improvement*:

- Difficult budget decisions in the next three years;
- Unplanned budgetary cuts from Welsh Government ; and
- The regional education agenda not aligning itself to local priorities and the need for resources.

Recommendations

1. Improve benchmark performance of schools at 7, 11 and 14 years of age;
2. Continue to improve the performance of pupils in receipt of Free school meals;
3. Reduce NEETS at age 16
4. Further develop the School to School Support strategy;
5. Review the Ethnic Minority Language and Achievement Service;
6. Restructure Education Other Than at School;
7. Review the delivery and financial viability of Employment Training;
8. Continue with the Business Administration Review.

***Areas to develop and factors that hinder improvement should be in the service business plan.**