



**CITY AND COUNTY OF SWANSEA**  
**DINAS A SIR ABERTAWE**

**To:**  
**Councillor Jennifer Raynor**  
**Cabinet member for education**

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*Date*  
*Dyddiad:*

27 November 2014

Dear Cllr Raynor

**Schools Performance Scrutiny Panel 13 November 2014**

We met with the Access to Learning Manager and Principal Education Psychologist at our meeting on the 13 November to look at issues affecting behaviour of children and young people in school and how that in turn affects schools performance. We also, in preparation for this meeting, contacted schools asking for their views on this issue and at the meeting used those responses to inform our questioning and discussion.

We received a copy of the behaviour strategy document 'Promoting Positive Behaviour for Children and Young People in Swansea' 2014 and were informed that the Swansea's strategic approach starts with a recognition that there is a continuum of behaviour from good and acceptable behaviour to severely challenging. Within this approach there is an acknowledgment that some behavioural difficulties are complex in origin and require multi-agency insight and involvement if they are to be addressed. We were pleased to see that this strategic approach involves prevention, early identification and intervention, partnership work with parents/carers and young people/full range of agencies and maintaining an appropriate continuum of provision to meet needs. We were also encouraged to see that the main philosophy is to keep children in mainstream but to have an avenue for those who cannot access this. We also agreed that schools must build their capacity to be able to manage more children in mainstream.

The Panel recognise that Restorative Practice is a good tool but some young people need more, so it is important for schools to have a range of 'tools' at their disposal to manage behaviour.

The Panel were interested to hear about the multi agency KIN project based at Hafod Primary school and we plan to go along to a future meeting.

We understand that Swansea has significant issue around drugs and alcohol and we recognise how important it is to look at its effects both on the child directly and

through living in an environment where drugs and alcohol are used. The Panel were informed that Swansea has a small drugs and alcohol service for children and young people through SANDS drugs project and that demand on this service way outstrips capacity. We are interested in finding out how much the authority contributes to the funding of this service?

We must as an authority ensure that the behaviour strategy is used consistently across schools in Swansea. We would like to emphasise the importance of advice being given and consistency being monitored by the schools improvement service.

Please see attached a breakdown of the comments received from schools to a selection of questions which were sent to them by email around behaviour. Resulting from this we had a detailed discussion about the Special Education Needs funding formula and were informed that this is currently being looked by the education service. We therefore plan to look into this further and will schedule it as future item for our work programme. We found the information from schools very useful and would like to pass that informative information on to you.

This letter is for your information we do not require a formal response.

Yours sincerely

**Paul Meara**

**Convened this Schools Performance Scrutiny Panel meeting**

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## Breakdown of comments from Schools

No.	Questions sent and responses received
1.	<p><b>How do you believe behaviour issues impact on your schools performance?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Behaviour does impact significantly on outcomes. Recent curriculum developments have supported schools in providing appropriate course for pupils who struggle to manage their own behaviour on more academic courses. Learning pathways including work based learning have also served to improve the learning outcomes of all pupils. Improvements in outcomes have come from ensuring that all pupils are following course which are appropriate for them.</li> <li>• There are two key impacts of poor behaviour on school performance. The first is the disruption caused to pupils' learning, both to the individual who is misbehaving (who might end up being put outside a classroom for a period of time, or in internal exclusion or being externally excluded) and to the other pupils in the class whose lessons are being disrupted. Just 5 minutes wasted per lesson per day adds up to the equivalent of missing 3 full weeks of schooling per year! The second impact is on the time of the staff dealing with the misbehaviour. This includes the classroom teacher whose enthusiasm and energy are worn down by misbehaviour, making them less effective as teachers. It also includes the enormous amount of time and effort invested by schools in trying to support pupils with behavioural problems and modify their behaviour. Tens of thousands of pounds are spent annually on this. If the misbehaviour wasn't occurring, this money could be spent on teaching and learning.</li> <li>• In order to maximise engagement and good behaviour: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ It is essential to have a curriculum which meets needs of the school and its community and is flexible enough to reach out to pupils of all abilities.</li> <li>○ It is essential to develop skills in young people to enable them to access the curriculum.</li> <li>○ It is essential to support pupil wellbeing to best provide them with the confidence and mindset to access the curriculum and apply themselves to their work.</li> <li>○ Teachers and Teaching Assistants must be kept informed of issues which are affecting individual young people to enable them to best support the young person's learning.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <u>Key Challenges</u> Children with severe behavioural problems in classes of 30 are one of the biggest challenges facing teachers in our school.</li> <li>• <u>Our research--</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low levels of educational achievement have a negative impact on an individual's engagement with society and it is highly likely that these individuals will engage in criminal activity. –become NEET</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FSM pupils are three times as likely to have SEN. Eligibility for FSM is particularly high for three types of SEN behavioural, emotional and social.</li> <li>• Income and material deprivation influences educational outcomes reducing the number of educational resources and the home environment.</li> <li>• Deprivation is associated with ill health, family stress, low levels of parental education and involvement in their children's education, low levels of cultural and social capital and low aspirations.</li> <li>• Pupils are at greater risk of low birth rate, which can influence cognitive/physical development.</li> <li>• Low income has adverse affects on parents well-being which affects the quality of their parenting. Family stress can lead to problems with children's education/emotional development. There is a higher chance of pupils being exposed to multiple risk factors e.g. depression, domestic violence, unemployment, overcrowding, substance misuse.</li> <li>• Knowledge/skills/interests of pupils from different backgrounds (social/cultural) may be limited possibly resulting in poorer social connections/opportunities.</li> <li>• Literacy is an important factor, as low levels of literacy on entry means pupils are more likely to fall behind and will find it difficult to catch up thus impacting on their levels of attainment, and engagement and ability to access the curriculum.</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our children do not have the role models at home – we need to provide these role models in school. We endeavour to ensure that behaviour issues do not impact on our school's performance. We have a clear discipline policy which is based on restorative practice principles. Our expectations for good behaviour are high and are based on the core principle of respect. We have a Behaviour Support Officer working on dealing with low level classroom issues/lunch time and play time incidents/bullying and cyber-bullying incidents. We use Restorative Practice methodologies e.g. Circle to resolve issues and help children to move forward after an incident. We have clear sanctions which we apply fairly and firmly. We use the SIMS system to record all behavioural issues so that we can monitor and track behaviour. We report to Governors in every meeting on short term exclusions. We aim to keep exclusions for serious incidents as short as possible so that students do not miss too much school.</li> </ul>
<b>2.</b>	<b>Whether you find restorative practice methods help to address behaviour issues?</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Restorative practices support the majority of pupils to resolve difficulties. For the minority, these practices need to be supported by dedicated staff who are available full time for the children. Reduction in funding for services will have a detrimental impact on the extensive support currently used to good effect to support our vulnerable pupils.</li> <li>• We are just beginning the process of training staff in restorative practice techniques. Restorative practice is built on mutual respect and this has been a cornerstone of our approach at Penyrheol Comprehensive for many years.</li> </ul>

	<p>However, we want to look at the specific techniques of restorative practice and trial these. Obviously we are doing this because we hope that these techniques will help us to improve pupil behaviour, particularly low-level disruption in lessons.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes. It is a fine title but its principles, based on good sense and maximising the skills of a trained adult can calm, soothe, negotiate, engage, communicate and intervene. To best place restorative practices to address behaviour it is essential that all staff in the school are trained. It is highly desirable that pupils are trained as peer mentors and that Prefects/Senior Prefects are trained. In this way there is a whole school consistency of approach which restores and reinforces.</li> <li>• <u>Restorative practice methods—</u> This is not the answer for dealing with pupils who have severe and complex needs.</li> <li>• Restorative practices should not be a stand alone method for addressing behaviour issues. Being a rights respecting school should be the umbrella from which all policies and practices should fit. Restorative practices should be a part of this.....and a natural way of dealing with low level conflicts and disputes.</li> <li>• We have begun to use Restorative Practices from September being the last secondary school to receive training. We have been able to integrate the principles well with our inclusive and positive ethos so that it has very naturally become a part of life here. It is effective and we have already seen the positive effect on children as the process allows them to move forward leaving baggage behind having dealt with feelings and hurt after incidents.</li> </ul>
<p><b>3.</b></p>	<p><b>Your views on the effectiveness of restorative practice methods and other initiatives designed to address behaviour?</b></p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are pupils who are hard to reach who do not respond to restorative practices and need highly intensive work; usually on a one to one. However the majority of pupils respond well to good teaching and learning; the ability of all staff to build positive and productive relationships; as well as an efficient affective system which links pastoral systems with academic provision.</li> <li>• Having not implemented restorative practice on a whole-school basis yet, I can't say whether it works or not. However, anecdotally I have heard both positives and negatives. Positive, that it has made a significant difference in improving behaviour; negative, that pupils can become blase about it after a while and view it with cynicism.</li> <li>• Any strategies, when consistently applied by a team of trained staff will have an impact. It is my view that the process of embedding the strategy is more important to its success than which strategy is used.</li> <li>• <u>Initiatives designed to address behaviour</u> In the classroom- *high quality teaching *sensitive pupil groupings</li> </ul>

	<p>*assessment for learning ( huge potential to narrow the gap and help low attainers)</p> <p>*engaging curriculum- relevant -extra curricular activities</p> <p>*homework club and support</p> <p>*parent workshops and support</p> <p>*early interventions to tackle inadequate progress in literacy and numeracy</p> <p>* appropriate support for children with SCN ***</p> <p>* support class with highly trained/ skilled workforce to implement interventions and catch up programmes.</p> <p><u>School Culture</u></p> <p>*positive school culture. A Rights Based Ethos. See case study</p> <p>*pupils aspirations are predictors of educational attainment</p> <p>* school ethos needs to promote positive aspirations and expectations</p> <p>* teachers attitudes- assumptions and behaviours. Teachers need to be supported when there is a high proportion of pupils with SCN in their classes.</p> <p>* pupils need to access the curriculum and school..... It is their right to have the best education available to them and their individual needs met.</p> <p>*pupil voice- is an important means of engaging learners-range of positive effects including self esteem, efficacy and skills.</p> <p><u>Best results include-</u></p> <p>*concentration of resources-pupils supported in small groups allowing greater personal learning and attention.</p> <p>*early interventions to help pupils catch up before they fall too far behind with consequent benefits for their ability to access the curriculum and in the prevention of early disengagement from learning.</p> <p>* one to one and / or small group support to provide plenty of direct instruction by the teacher or other suitably trained adults.</p>
<p><b>4.</b></p>	<p><b>How issues relating to drugs and alcohol affect your pupil population and in turn how that affects the schools performance?</b></p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If there is a drug sub-culture within a year group, it is very challenging for the school to encourage those pupils involved to feel motivated to doing their work in school. Parents can feel powerless to prevent their children from being involved with groups of young people, who stay out late at night and struggle to get up in the morning for school. In nearly all cases the parents want to work with the school to try and resolve the issues.</li> <li>• A small group of disaffected pupils can have a disproportionate impact on the outcomes of a year group.</li> <li>• The misuse of drugs and alcohol among young people in the Gorseinon area is quite a problem. Every year we have</li> </ul>

pupils who come into school under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol. Very occasionally these substances may be brought on to the site and shared with others. We work closely with parents, the police and social services to deal with these issues and seek to minimise them through personal and social education

- Incidents of pupil alcohol abuse are not commonly known in our community. That is not to say they do not exist but they cause no issues in the school. Issues of parental alcohol abuse have far more devastating effects on young people and are a little more common, particularly if the mother is affected.
- Young people need money to buy alcohol and young people carrying alcohol are visible, as it is bulky. Re drugs, it is unfortunate that they are far cheaper to access than alcohol and are far easier to disguise. Legal highs have caused some issues but very localised amongst a small group of young people and following close liaison with local police the shop selling has now closed. Adults supplying access to drugs in the community are a concern.
- Young people approaching adults outside shops to buy cigarettes or alcohol for them is a problem. Fortunately the community is proactive about this and lets the shop staff know and/or the school. However, a small number of people are prepared to do this for young people, just to keep a handful of change. Working directly with Trading Standards has impacted on this and currently there are no incidents reported.

- Issues relating to drugs and alcohol

As stated above in research ... ..drug and alcohol dependency can have huge impacts on our children, their wellbeing and performance. We address such issues through our KIN project. Each individual's needs are identified and intervention programmes are implemented and monitored.

Interventions include: -

Support for families

Aims:

Employ a Family support officer and develop a family learning team to;

Develop a more stable family environment and address the root cause and negative impact of family poverty. Provide Parent and family counselling.

Enable a flying start in life providing health and parenting support

Provide English and numeracy classes for parents to focus on improving their own literacy and numeracy skills thus impacting on supporting their children's learning at home.

Partner agencies; Family support officer, Communities First Team, School Nurse, TAF team, Flying start team Eyst.

Improving Literacy and Numeracy

Aims:

Provide Catch up sessions for pupils who are falling behind

Introduce a structured phonic approach

Introduce concrete resources to improve numeracy/reasoning

Concentration of resources – pupils supported in small groups  
 Targeted support for pupils with EAL, SEN and MAT  
Partnership agencies include; EMLAS, EYST, ALNco  
Improving Attendance.  
 Appointment of Attendance/well being officer to work with EWO, pupils and families.  
Partner agencies involved; School attendance officer, Family support worker, EWO, School clerk  
Improving emotional well-being  
 Appointment of school Counsellor  
 Support staff trained in Play Derbyshire  
 Introduction of PATHs programme  
Partner agencies: school counsellor, support staff, The Exchange, Barnardo's  
Embed the 'SO TO DO' project - Aim:  
 Reduce number of first time entrants into youth justice system  
 Reduce the number of pupils who become NEET  
 Reduce injuries caused by accidents  
Partner agencies: Police, antisocial behaviour officer, fire, drugs/safety squad  
 The aim is to provide role models from the agencies. Pupils engage in sessions, to educate them about the consequences of their actions. This programme has had a powerful influence on our pupils and the number of antisocial incidents reported in the community has decreased significantly. The project has also given advice and support to parents who have alcohol and drug problems—impacting on and improving the life chances of the family.  
Impact of Project  
 Attendance 87% to 94.7%  
 Using INCERTs to track pupil's progress. All pupils make huge progress from baseline and nearly all attain expected levels for their age. FSM and EAL pupils perform as well/often better than their peers  
 No exclusions

- Excellent relationships, seamless transition from Flying Start to school to Comprehensive
- We have lessons on both issues in our PSE and Health sessions. There are clear expectations regarding the use of alcohol or drugs on the school site. If these expectations are not met then we apply the principles and sanctions of our school discipline code, involve the parents and governors, and community police. These occasions have been very rare over the past decade.

**Responses received from:**

Pontarddulais Comprehensive, Penyrheol Comprehensive, Cefn Hengoed Comprehensive, Ysgol Gyfun Gwyr, Hafod Primary

**As at: 13 November 2014**