



**To/
Councillor Jen Raynor
Cabinet Member for Children,
Education and Lifelong Learning**

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23 February 2018

BY EMAIL

Summary: This is a letter from the Schools Scrutiny Performance Panel to the Cabinet Member for Children, Education and Lifelong Learning following the meeting of the Panel on 15 February 2018. It is about Morryston Primary School Performance and prospects for improvement.

Dear Councillor Raynor,

Schools Scrutiny Performance Panel – 15 February 2018

At our meeting on the 15 February 2018 we met with the Hub Head of the Education Improvement Service and then the Headteacher and the Vice Chair of Governors from Morryston Primary School.

We spoke to this school because it has been highlighted as Amber on the support and categorisation matrix. We wanted to discuss what the school is doing to improve its current performance and prospects for improvement. We have detailed our thoughts on how the school is progressing in this letter.

We heard from the Hub Head of School Improvement that:

- The school was inspected in March 2017 and revisited again recently. The school is in a statutory Estyn category and in need of improvement. Estyn in 2017 judged the school to be Adequate for current performance and Adequate for its prospects for improvement.
- It is receiving a 'red' support package that consists of 25 day support. This heavy package of support has now started to bear fruit with improvements seen in both governance and leadership. The school has shown they are keen to make it work and have welcomed the support.
- The outcome of the Estyn Inspection (including what the authority already knew) that there had been a lack of strategic leadership at the school. The issue of safeguarding had been identified as needing particular improvement.

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY / TROSOLWG A CHRAFFU

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- The school has had an acting Headteacher since the spring of 2017 who had taken over after two years of inconsistent leadership at the school.
- That improvement has accelerated since the acting Headteacher took the role. The school has been totally engaged with the local authority in both support and challenge.
- An Improvement Panel that includes the Governing Body has been set up which meets on a monthly basis with the purpose of accelerating improvement. The Team around the School has helped support the school to move forward.

The Headteacher then outlined the context in which the school is working explaining that the school has 50% ALN with two special teaching facilities and a short stay observation unit. This and the transitional nature of the local community means mobility in and out of catchment is generally high.

From the discussion with the Headteacher, Vice Chair of Governors and the Challenge Adviser we concluded that there is now a much improved picture at the school as compared to the situation when Estyn inspected in March 2017. We felt that this is mainly due to:

- The school having a new and enthusiastic Headteacher who is committed to driving improvements forward at the school
- The school welcoming support and challenge from the Team Around the School including the Governing Body; along with making efforts to work with other schools and headteachers to improve and to exchange good practice through, for example, book scrutiny.
- The school has strong support from parents and local community.
- The school has a far more correct understanding of where it stands with regard to its current performance and prospect for improvement (self-evaluation)
- Reviewing policy and putting procedures in place to address the issues relating to safeguarding at the school.
- The school having a supportive, engaged and knowledgeable governing body that has the necessary skills to help to drive improvement.

We congratulate the Headteacher and school staff, the challenge advisor and the governing body at the school for their hard work and commitment to driving improvement at the school. Overall, we are pleased to see a strong leadership team at the school emerging along with a supportive and challenging governing body. We are keen to see the improvements that have been put into place embedded and making an impact we therefore plan to make a visit to the school this time next year.

We welcome your thoughts on any of the issues raised in our letter and do not, on this occasion, require a formal written response.

Yours sincerely,

COUNCILLOR LYNDA JAMES

Convener, Schools Scrutiny Performance Panel

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