



City and County of Swansea

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

**Committee Room 5 - Guildhall, Swansea**

**Wednesday, 12 December 2018 at 4.00 pm**

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

**Councillor(s)**

J P Curtice  
M A Langstone

**Councillor(s)**

M Durke  
S Pritchard

**Councillor(s)**

L R Jones  
D W W Thomas

**Officer(s)**

Gareth Borsden  
Sue Edgar  
Stephen Holland  
Mark Sheridan

Democratic Services Officer  
Head of Primary Phase Unit  
Senior Solicitor  
Head of Vulnerable Learner Service

**Also Present:**

St Helen's School

Mark Thompson – Headteacher  
Jack Branford - Junior Teaching Assistant  
Alison Cable - Flying Start Manager  
Beth Cunningham - Family Engagement Leader

Bishop Vaughan Catholic School

Emma Pole – Headteacher

**Apologies for Absence**

None

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

In accordance with the code of conduct adopted by the City and County of Swansea, the following interest was declared:

Councillor S Pritchard declared a personal interest in Minute No.30 – as an LA Governor at Bishop Vaughan.

**29 Minutes.**

**Resolved** that the Minutes of the Education & Skills Policy Development Committee held on 14 November 2018 be agreed as a correct record.

**30 Mark Thompson - Headteacher of St Helen's Primary School & Emma Pole - Acting Headteacher Bishop Vaughan Catholic School.**

The Chair welcomed the two Headteachers – Mark Thompson and his staff from St Helen's and Emma Pole from Cefn Hengoed to the meeting.

Mark Thompson, accompanied by Jack Branford, Alison Cable & Beth Cunningham provided a power point presentation which outlined and detailed the following areas:

- Background of School Community and make up – inner city school, 28 different languages, 24 nationalities, 90% EAL, communities first area, very transient population, attendance gone from lowest in Swansea in 2010 to top 10% in 2017, excellent Estyn report;
- Leadership Matters Programme – Development of leadership team, collaborative working between all staff across the school, importance of working with the children/parents/community;
- Context and background to schools work, which is focused on benefiting the children in ways that may not work in other schools but is successful in our community;
- Culture and climate of the school and community, huge positive impact of Flying Start programme and ability to have additional staff which enables regular contact with children and parents from age 2, the excellent working relationship with Health was outlined;
- Pupil Development Grant is low for an inner city school – only 32k a year which needs to be spent appropriately to achieve the maximum impact and benefit to the children, reasons and issues behind the low figure were outlined;
- Provision of after both in school and school activities such as aspiration week, debating club, literacy club, maths club, choir, school magazine, board games club etc;
- Targeting of both lower and higher achieving pupils with appropriate help and encouragement to progress and achieve;
- Provision of drop in clubs for parents – IT help, English language, home visits, keep fit etc;
- The issue that the school is in the catchment area for Dylan Thomas, but all the children go to Olchfa or Bishop Gore was outlined;
- The continued improvement of results of pupils at both primary and then secondary was detailed;
- Overwhelming effort and commitment of staff.

Members and Officers asked various questions of the school staff around the make up of the school and its community, the reasons behind the low FSM numbers, the initiatives and structures in place at the school, the staff responded accordingly to the queries.

Emma Pole reported and referred the different issues and circumstances affecting her school compared to St Helen's.

She outlined the equally diverse make up of her school, which is now 50% non catholic, and comprises of 42 different nationalities and 46 languages, with 21% free school meals pupils.

The high % of FSM and levels of deprivation in the surrounding communities means the school receives a PDG grant of £254k.

She indicated that the school examines and utilises areas of good practice such as the Sutton Trust Toolkit, Education Endowment Fund and Estyn good practice guidelines.

She indicated the increased levels of support and assistance on hand for all pupils through the provision of various support activities and clubs such as the learning zone, peer support, improved library/IT provision, pupil diagnostic initiative, and outlined the excellent take up of these by pupils on a very regular basis.

She indicated that the PDG has enabled the school to employ both a Health & Well Being Manager and Deputy. These staff are hugely involved with both pupils and parents in all aspects of their school and personal lives such as additional learning support and encouragement, social/emotional/health needs, safeguarding issues etc.

A “nurture” programme has been developed from the above and is proving very successful.

She indicated that the school has a successful six form, with 99% of pupils achieving their first choice of higher education. She referred to the different attitude the school has adopted to its 6<sup>th</sup> form entry policy.

She outlined the school does focus highly on exam results, as they provide young people with “currency for life”, social mobility and a key outcome which are essential for adult life. She stated 44% of GSCE students achieved 5 A-C grades in 2017 which is double the figure from 2010.

In addition to her verbal presentation she distributed to Members a detailed document relating to Bishop Vaughan which outlined a wide variety of information relating to the various topics the committee has been examining including data of FSM pupils, PDG % and amount revived, evidence based approaches, good practice, internal school initiatives, in and after school provision.

Members and Officers asked various questions of Emma around the topics outlined above and in the leaflet provided who responded accordingly.

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

### **31 Workplan 2017/2018.**

The Chair outlined the Workplan for the Committee for the remainder of the Municipal Year 2018/2019.

**Resolved** that the Workplan as shown in the report be noted.

The meeting ended at 5.55 pm

**Chair**