



City and County of Swansea

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

Remotely via Microsoft Teams

Wednesday, 15 September 2021 at 4.00 pm

Present: Councillor M Durke (Chair) Presided

Councillor(s)

J P Curtice
L R Jones
S Pritchard

Councillor(s)

F M Gordon
H Lawson
D W W Thomas

Councillor(s)

B Hopkins
M B Lewis

Also present – Councillor R V Smith (Cabinet Member for Education Improvement Learning & Skills)

Officer(s)

Gareth Borsden

Mike Jones

Helen Morgan-Rees

Stephen Holland

Democratic Services Officer

Information Officer

Director of Education

Senior Solicitor

Apologies for Absence

Councillor(s): M A Langstone

11 Disclosures of Personal and Prejudicial Interests.

In accordance with the Code of Conduct adopted by the City and County of Swansea, no interests were declared.

12 Minutes.

Resolved that the minutes of the Education & Skills Policy Development Committee held on 21 July 2021 be approved and signed as a correct record.

13 Data Trends on Vulnerable Learners.

Helen Morgan-Rees and Mike Jones gave a detailed and informative verbal presentation in support of the information circulated to Members in the agenda papers relating to statistics and data trends relating to vulnerable learners in Swansea schools.

Included in the presentation was detailed information from 2011/12 to 2021/22 relating to the following areas:

- Free School Meals(FSM) numbers and the impact of Covid in raising the figure to a new high level;
- Numbers of FSM pupils year by year in schools;
- % of pupils eligible for FSM in schools;
- Pupil distribution across the city as linked to the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD);
- Vulnerability Assessment Profiles (VAP) including the difference between boys & girls, Additional Learning Needs (ALN) pupils, FSM pupils, Looked After Children and those with higher/lower than average numeracy & literacy scores;
- Average VAP scores by electoral wards;
- % of pupils in ALN who are eligible for FSM;
- Numbers of fixed term & permanent exclusions from schools and a year by year breakdown of the figures;
- Operation Encompass initiative and figures relating to the scheme developed in 2019 with South Wales Police to record incidents where pupils have observed domestic violence and the impact of Covid and lockdowns on the figures:

Members discussed and debated the facts and figures outlined and the impact of the pandemic upon them. They raised various queries and questions to the officers relating to topics such as links between FSM & WIMD, other measurements of deprivation such as income rich/cash poor issues, access to services and facilities in the locality, impact of the new curriculum going forward on statistics, differences between English/Welsh education, the Officers responded accordingly to the various issues raised.

They outlined the problems and differences relating to the WIMD figures within wards and the large difference between some communities located within the same ward boundary.

They commended and supported the emotional and well-being support being provided to pupils as part of Operation Encompass

They also requested further information if available including more detailed ward data on WIMD statistics, VAP links with Cynydd project and Careers Wales, information relating to place based data available on pre-birth effects on children of alcohol/drug abuse by parents and any correlation in statistics linked to low birth weights, exclusion data(school by school) and impact of Covid upon these and the issues of Adverse Childhood Experiences and its effect on pupils particularly amongst those who have English as an additional language.

They also discussed the particular issues and challenges faced by certain schools such as Crug Glas and referred to the impact of the new PRU facility at Maes Derw will have going forward.

Members outlined and discussed the need to keep children engaged in education through appropriate help and support and within the school environment and to avoid exclusions wherever possible, whether this is through additional individual support,

the work of the PRU, or via the expansion and promotion of more vocational courses to engage less academic pupils.

Officers indicated that some information referred to above was contained in a recent report to the Education Scrutiny meeting which would be circulated to the committee before the next meeting and indicated any further information on the other areas outlined and discussed above would be provided to the next meeting if available.

14 Workplan 2021/2022.

The Chair referred to the discussions undertaken in the previous item.

Resolved that the next meeting of the Committee receive further information and updates relating to topic areas outlined in the minute above, and where appropriate/available information be circulated to Members before the next meeting.

The meeting ended at 5.15 pm

Chair