



City and County of Swansea

Minutes of the **Scrutiny Performance Panel – Education**

Remotely via Teams

Thursday, 20 January 2022 at 4.00 pm

Present: Councillor L R Jones (Chair) Presided

Councillor(s)

C Anderson
D W Helliwell
S M Jones

Councillor(s)

A M Day
B Hopkins

Councillor(s)

S J Gallagher
L James
L J Tyler-Lloyd

Co-opted Member(s)

D Anderson-Thomas

Co-opted Member(s)

A Roberts

Co-opted Member(s)

Other Attendees

R V Smith
Damian Benney
Jeff Bowen

Cabinet Member Education Improvement, Learning & Skills
Acting Headteacher Penyrheol Comprehensive School
Chair of Governors Penyrheol Comprehensive School

Officer(s)

Nigel Jones
Damian Beech
Helen Morgan Rees
Michelle Roberts

Schools Improvement Adviser
Head of School Improvement Service
Director of Education
Scrutiny Officer

Apologies for Absence

Councillor(s): M A Langstone

1 Disclosure of Personal and Prejudicial Interests.

None

2 Prohibition of Whipped Votes and Declaration of Party Whips

None

3 Minutes and Letters

The minutes were approved and the letter accepted for the 9 December 2021.

4 Public Questions

No public questions were received.

5 School Scrutiny Session 2 - Penyrheol Comprehensive School

The Panel met with the Headteacher Damian Benney and the Chair of Governors Jeff Bowen from Penyrheol Comprehensive School to discuss the school's performance and improvement journey. The following was noted:

- The Panel thanked the Headteacher for his detailed overview and for his answers to our set of questions that were sent to the school in advance of the meeting.
- The Panel welcomed the overall progress that has been made at the school since the Estyn Inspection. They were particularly keen to hear about the progress being made in relation some of the Estyn recommendations contained in that report. Especially the progress that has been made in the areas of literacy and numeracy and planning to address teaching and assessment.
- The Panel were pleased to hear about:
 - The clear emphasis on improving teaching and learning right across the curriculum
 - Getting pupils to think more deeply about the subject content as part of their writing by directly aligning the teaching of writing and the development of writing across the curriculum
 - The use of positive strategies to improve pupil behaviour and attitudes to learning
 - The Interim School Improvement Plan clearly focusing on pupil wellbeing and behaviour
 - The recognition of the importance of ongoing professional learning and development for all teaching staff
 - Willingness to work with, as well as share knowledge, learning and experience with other schools
 - The use of researched and evidence-based initiatives and interventions
 - A positive and enthusiastic acting Headteacher who is showed he is happy to work with other schools and the local authority in order to improve outcomes for pupils
 - A strong supportive governing body who are clearly aware of their role to challenge but also support the school.
- The Panel heard that many of the senior management positions at the school are currently temporary or in an acting capacity.
- The Panel were concerned to hear about the increase in behaviour related issues since the start of the pandemic but were encouraged to hear that the school has been using a number of different strategies to address this and they thanked the Headteacher for his honest assessment of the situation.
- The Panel Heard that the School Improvement Plan is currently an interim one, with the purpose of working through the pandemic with a clear focus on wellbeing and behaviour. They also heard from the Director that there is also a positive behaviour strategy in Swansea and the success of this depends very much on how this works in practice and that ongoing input to improve this through experience learned is very welcome.
- The Panel were encouraged to hear from the Headteacher, that the support received from the from the local authority, has been excellent including from Human Resources, Payroll and Finance. He also said that the allocated School Improvement Adviser has been excellent in supporting him, the school and in

providing positive challenge. He also felt the support from other Headteachers in Swansea and the development opportunities offered to him, as a new headteacher, have been superb in helping him to develop in his new role.

- The Chair of Governors said that the collaboration between schools in Swansea was impressive.
- The Panel were pleased to hear that the school is sharing and using best practice through the use of the many networks and support open to them.
- The Panel congratulated the Headteacher, the Governing Body and staff at the school for their continued hard work in moving the school forward, especially given the difficulties and challenges caused by the pandemic.

6 Work Programme 2021/2022

The Panel meeting on the 24 March at 4pm has been brought forward and will now take place on Tues 15 March at 2pm.

The meeting ended at 5.40 pm

Chair