



City and County of Swansea

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

Multi-Location Meeting - Gloucester Room, Guildhall / MS Teams

Thursday, 23 November 2023 at 4.00 pm

Present: Councillor L R Jones (Chair) Presided

Councillor(s)

A Davis
S Joy

Councillor(s)

A M Day
J D McGettrick

Councillor(s)

B Hopkins
R V Smith

Co-opted Member(s)

Elizabeth Lee

Co-opted Member(s)

Co-opted Member(s)

Other Attendees

Robert Smith

Officer(s)

Helen Morgan-Rees
Rhodri Jones
Kelly Small
David Thomas
Michelle Roberts

Director of Education
Head of Achievement and Partnership Service
Head of Planning and Resources
Principal School Improvement Officer
Scrutiny Officer

Apologies for Absence

Councillor(s): F M Gordon, F D O'Brien and A J O'Connor
Co-opted Member(s): Beth Allender

96 Disclosure of Personal and Prejudicial Interests.

Cllrs Lyndon Jones and Mike Day declared a personal interest in item 9 on the agenda.

97 Prohibition of Whipped Votes and Declaration of Party Whips

None

98 Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting on the 14 September 2023 and 19 October 2023 were agreed by the Panel.

99 Letter/s

The letter to the Cabinet Member following the Panel meeting on the 14 September 2023 was noted.

The letter to the Cabinet Member following the Panel meeting on the 19 October 2023 was noted. The Director updated the Panel on an issue that was raised by the Headteacher, who had felt that some of the group training provided by Partneriaeth was not as beneficial as the one-to-one support. The Director of Education told the Panel had asked Headteacher of Gorseinon Primary to specify training events that fell short of his expectation. He has confirmed that the example/s pre-dated April 2022 when Partneriaeth commenced legally.

100 Public Questions

No public questions were received.

101 Reducing disadvantage in School, including pupil development grant, roll out of free school meals, cost of the school day and school uniform

The Panel thanked Councillor Robert Smith (Cabinet Member for Learning and Skills), Helen Morgan Rees (Director of Education), Kelly Small (Head of Planning and Resources) for attending the Panel and presenting a written report giving details on reducing disadvantage in school. The discussion covered:

- Pupil Development Grant spend
- Roll out of free school meals
- Cost of the school day
- Cost of school uniform and school uniform grant.

The following issues/questions were raised by the Panel. A summary of the Panels views on progress made and the responses to questions, will form part of the letter to the Cabinet Member following the meeting.

- How will payments and pupil development grants be determined in the future when free school meal (FSM) proxy is no longer accurate due to the parents having less incentive to register with the roll out of FSM.
- Potential reduction in time on schools trips by bus due to 20mph rule.
- Are good practice examples in reducing disadvantage being shared across school.

102 School Improvement Service Annual Update

The Panel thanked Councillor Robert Smith (Cabinet Member for Learning and Skills), Helen Morgan Rees (Director of Education), David Thomas (Principal School Improvement Officer) for attending the Panel and presenting a written report giving an update briefing on the School Improvement Service. The discussion covered:

- Service background

- Current position briefing
- Conclusions
- School Improvement Advisers key focus areas for 2023/2024

The following issues/questions were raised by the Panel. A summary of the Panels views in relation to the update on the school improvement service will form part of the letter to the Cabinet Member following the meeting. Some of the issues raised by the Panel include:

- How do the day-to-day roles of the School Improvement Team and Partneriaeth work, what are the differing roles, any gaps or overlaps.

103 Cookery in Schools

The Panel thanked Councillor Robert Smith (Cabinet Member for Learning and Skills), Helen Morgan Rees (Director of Education), Rhodri Jones (Head of Achievement and Partnership Service) for attending the Panel and presenting a written report giving details on reducing disadvantage in school. The discussion covered:

- Introduction to cookery and the Curriculum for Wales
- Cookery in primary schools
- Cookery in secondary schools.

A summary of the Panels views on the briefing of cookery in schools will form part of the letter to the Cabinet Member following the meeting. The following issues/questions were raised by the Panel.

- What are the objectives with regard to cookery, does it form part of the wider strategy around for example poverty.
- Are schools etc building this into the curriculum and how often to children actually get to cook.
- All Wales level of skills is it part of the vocational agenda and are their related qualifications across Wales.
- Penclawdd Primary School cited as a good example. Has rolling out what they are doing more wider been considered.

104 Work Plan for 2023/2024

The Work Plan for 2023/2024 was noted. A briefing relating to Religion, Values and Ethics education is to be added to this year's scrutiny work programme.

The meeting ended at 5.10 pm

Chair