

Councillor Mo Sykes
Convener
Schools Scrutiny Performance Panel

Please ask for: Councillor Jennifer Raynor
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Our Ref: JR/CM
Your Ref:
Date: 3rd July 2018

BY EMAIL

Dear Councillor Sykes

Schools Scrutiny Performance Panel – 7 June 2018

Thank you for your letter and the insightful work of the Schools' Scrutiny Panel. It was very pleasing to read about the good practice in science taking place across Swansea's schools.

Regarding your first point, currently, there are no formal arrangements in place to gather the views of pupils on their subject choices for post-16. However, this information would be beneficial to the Council and its schools. Therefore, officers will look to develop a way of capturing these views by working with school leaders through the post-16 and curriculum network groups.

Concerning points 2, 3 and 4, these are all linked to promoting science through cluster working. It would be beneficial to promote these worthwhile aspects through the Council's termly cross-phase school meetings, making use of the best practice already evident in Swansea's schools, as highlighted in your report, and ERW's subject specialists for science. In addition, it might be possible to make use of Gower College's science facilities at certain times of the year. The Council's 14-19 Curriculum Officer can explore this option further.

In relation to point 5, Careers Wales organise careers events across Swansea and Neath Port Talbot that nearly all schools attend. There are useful links to science and industry, but this aspect could be developed further. The 14-19 Curriculum Officer will explore options in this area and consider the feasibility of creating a joint resource that can be used to inspire pupils to pursue careers in science. Furthermore, schools can exploit many STEM opportunities through companies such as See Science, Techniquist, Science Made Simple. Therefore, it would be beneficial to collate this information for schools and disseminate it through our networks. We will also look to work more closely with Swansea University. For example, we could bring in women role models working with STEM subjects to encourage more girls to consider careers in these areas.

Finally, regarding point six, we will continue to reinforce the importance of developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills in science through the work of our performance specialist and challenge adviser teams and related school networks. In particular, challenge advisers can encourage the use of pupils' voice to promote the benefits of following a career in science.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J Raynor', written in a cursive style.

Councillor Jennifer Raynor
Cabinet Member for Education Improvement, Learning & Skills