



**To/
Councillor Jen Raynor
Cabinet Member for Children,
Education and Lifelong Learning**

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2019

BY EMAIL

Summary: This is a letter from the Education Scrutiny Performance Panel to the Cabinet Member for Education Improvement, Learning and Skills following the meeting of the Panel on 17 October 2019. It is about Penclawdd Primary Schools improvement journey.

Dear Councillor Raynor,

Education Scrutiny Performance Panel – 17 October 2019

On the 17 October, we met with the Headteacher and Chair of Governors of Penclawdd Primary School. We thank you, Damien Beech and Helen Morgan Rees for attending our preparation session.

We chose to speak to Penclawdd Primary School because it had been categorised as Red on the ERW support matrix. We wanted to discuss the schools improvement journey, look at what the school is doing to improve its current performance and how it plans to improve moving forward. We have detailed our thoughts on how the school is progressing in this letter.

We heard about the context of the school, including that currently there are 146 pupils on roll, 15% with Additional Learning Needs and three pupils with statements. 15.6% of pupils receive free school meals and 7.5% have English as an additional language. There are currently 7 classroom teachers (2 part-time) and 10 teaching assistants (some part-time).

We heard about the complex leadership issues around the time of the Estyn inspection and then about the subsequent staff appointments including that of the current Headteacher in September 2018 and the recently appointed Deputy Head. The Chair of Governors wanted to record the Governing Bodies thanks to the Councils Human Resources and Legal Team for their time and commitment in helping to resolve those complex staffing issues.

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY / TROSOLWG A CHRAFFU

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We concluded from our discussion with the Headteacher, Chair of Governors and the Challenge Adviser that improvements at the school are progressing well and we felt this was mainly due to

- The school having a supportive, engaged and challenging governing body that understands its own skills base making it resilient and in a good position to help to drive improvement. We were particularly interested to hear about the work the governing body has done using a matrix to assess its skills base. We were pleased to hear that governors are now active, visible, knowledgeable and not afraid to challenge.
- A stronger leadership team is in place with a capable and enthusiastic Headteacher and newly appointed experienced Deputy Head Teacher.
- The school has a clear improvement plan and is working with and receiving support from the Local Authority and the Education Improvement Service.
- School leaders are using self-improvement processes effectively to identify what pupils do well and what needs to improve.
- The school are carefully considering which improvement tools are best for them, for example, Building Blocks and Seesaw.
- The school is enthusiastically learning from and sharing their good practice with other schools.
- The school has strong support from parents and the local community with the school taking its role in the community seriously.
- A maintenance action plan is now in place to address the shortcomings with the building including site security.

We are pleased to hear about the much-improved picture at the school from the time of the Estyn Inspection and we recognise the school has come a long way in a short amount of time. We feel this is due to the commitment of the Headteacher and staff at the school, the governors and the Education Improvement Service driving forward the improvements needed.

We congratulate the Headteacher and the governing body at the school for their hard work and commitment to this improvement journey, which is clearly moving in the right direction. An invitation to visit the school was extended to the Panel, so we will therefore make a visit to see their progress further embedded in the summer term 2020.

We welcome your thoughts on any of the issues raised in our letter but on this occasion do not require a formal written response.

Yours sincerely,

COUNCILLOR LYNDON JONES

Convener, Schools Scrutiny Performance Panel

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