



To:
Councillor Jennifer Raynor
Cabinet Member for Education
Improvement, Learning and Skills

BY EMAIL

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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 22 April 2021 looking at the Additional Learning Needs Reform, an Estyn Report and Letter giving Education response to the pandemic and progress with the implementation of the New Curriculum for Wales.

Dear Cllr Raynor,

Education Scrutiny Performance Panel – 22 April 2021

We would like to thank you, the Director of Education Helen Morgan Rees, Rob Phillips (Challenge Adviser) and Rob Davies (Head of Secondary Phase Team) for attending our meeting. We are writing to you to reflect on what we learnt from the discussion and to share the views of the Panel.

Update on Additional Learning Needs (ALN) Reform

We heard that the Additional Learning Needs and Tribunal Act (ALNET) has seven key objectives that underlie the Act including it covering 0-25 year olds, high aspirations and improved outcomes, a simpler less adversarial system and increased collaboration. We were pleased to hear that ALN is an Education Directorate priority and that the importance of culture change in the success of the reform programme is recognised.

We were interested to hear about the ALN journey in Swansea and what this has, and will, involve throughout the implementation of the ALNET Act. We heard for example children, young people and their families are central to the process with increased participation and a clear and consistent right of appeal.

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We were pleased to see that Swansea is getting a solid grip of the change that is required to implement this reform as well as beginning to make the changes required to make it a reality on the ground.

Estyn Report and Letter - Education Response to the Pandemic

The Director of Education explained that during the disruption over the past year it has been difficult to assess performance and report upon it. So it has been very useful to hear from Estyn about our response to the pandemic and also to receive a level of reassurance from an external regulator. We heard that five recommendations have been made as part of the national review and that we are working to address these. You told us Estyn is coming to Swansea next week to see how we are responding to them and to see how we are integrating them into our recovery plan.

Update on the New Curriculum including progress with its implementation

We were told about the work completed prior to the pandemic including the working group established to set up the curriculum implementation. We were pleased to hear that a lot of high-quality professional learning took place in the hiatus of the pandemic. We heard that the next steps will include giving schools space to recover and to update Swansea's Curriculum Implementation Plan following the disruption. We were also encouraged to hear that from an Additional Learning Needs perspective the New Curriculum is very exciting, as it is able to be far more responsive to ALN needs.

Your Response

We would welcome your comments on any of the issues raised but on this occasion do not require a formal written response.

Yours sincerely

COUNCILLOR LYNDON JONES

Convener, Education Scrutiny Performance Panel

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