



**To:**  
**Councillor Robert Smith**  
**Cabinet Member for Education and Skills**

**BY EMAIL**

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*Date* 1 July 2024  
*Dyddiad:*

**Summary:** This is a letter from the Education Scrutiny Performance Panel to the Cabinet Member for Education and Learning following the meeting of the Panel on 20 June 2024. The Panel discussed the Curriculum for Wales implementation in Swansea.

Dear Cllr Smith,

### **Education Scrutiny Performance Panel – 20 June 2024**

We would like to thank you and the officers from the Education Directorate for attending the meeting and providing information for the Panel. We are writing to you to reflect on what we learnt from the discussion and to share the views of the Panel.

### **Curriculum for Wales**

You told us that this was still an evolving piece of work and that it is not without its challenges but that you continue to be pleased with how it is progressing in Swansea.

The Principal Improvement Adviser gave us an update on progress with regard to the work happening in schools, the school improvement team and Partneriaeth including the challenges that have arisen and how they are being addressed or mitigated. We were also interested to hear about what is planned to continue to move this important agenda forward.

We asked how schools across Swansea are working together to take forward the Curriculum for Wales across their clusters. We heard that nearly all schools in Swansea have a good grasp of the high-level statements that exist within the curriculum for Wales. Schools have used those themes to provide a really clear view of linear progression and what that looks like from 3 years old to 16 years old. Nearly all of our schools and settings provide practitioners with a clear shared understanding

#### **OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY / TRUSLOW A CHRAFFU**

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of progression. There are plans in place to deepen that work, so not just linear progression but vertically as well. We also heard that a key piece of work will take place to unpick and share how clusters of schools are working together especially those that are not geographically close together who making it work effectively.

We asked about the minority of schools in Wales where Estyn have identified that the Curriculum for Wales has not yet had a positive impact. We were told that one school in Swansea, when inspected, included a recommendation along those lines, but that is one out of all the inspections that took place and that five out of the overall fifty inspections across Wales. We heard that in reality it is a small number and those recommendations are pointing at the area of inclusion and/or the integration of the primary school in to the secondary school. So, we heard that it is about looking at how do we make those links even more explicit, it may also be that particular schools have some challenges in terms of, for example geography.

We asked how we are insuring a focus on pupils learning basic skills in this process of change to introduce the new curriculum. We were told that more and more schools are going back to those basic skills and are making those explicit in their school improvement plans but that is not happening everywhere. We heard that the curriculum needs to be implemented in a way that plans for all pupils. We heard that previously we were governed by an accountability system that made us get to a measure. Now we are able look at the individual pupil and provide a much more bespoke curriculum and offer for each individual child.

We also asked whether we are taking teachers with us on the journey to develop the Curriculum for Wales in Swansea schools. We heard that in the daily conversations that the School Improvement Officers have with practitioners they are finding that teachers are still excited by curriculum for Wales, that they enjoy seeing and giving responsibility and ownership to the pupils. The Principal School Improvement Adviser also said it is our job to give them the confidence to take this forward. In his view, we are taking teachers with us but he said, in saying that teachers are already at the table with curriculum for Wales.

## **Your Response**

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

Yours sincerely

**COUNCILLOR LYNDON JONES**

Convener, Education Scrutiny Performance Panel

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