



City and County of Swansea

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

Committee Room 6 - Guildhall, Swansea

Tuesday, 12 December 2017 at 4.00 pm

Present: Councillor M Sykes (Chair) Presided

Councillor(s)

A M Day
L R Jones

Councillor(s)

L S Gibbard
M A Langstone

Councillor(s)

D W Helliwell

Officer(s)

Nick Williams
Dominic Nutt
Michelle Roberts

Chief Education Officer
Deputy Education LAC Co-ordinator
Scrutiny Officer

Apologies for Absence

Councillor(s): M Durke, S J Gallagher, F M Gordon and L J Tyler-Lloyd
Co-opted Member(s): D Anderson-Thomas

1 Disclosure of Personal and Prejudicial Interests.

Councillors Mike Day and Louise Gibbard

2 Notes and Conveners letter from the panel meetings on 18 October 17 and 16 November 17

The convener's letter and notes were received by the panel.

3 Looked After Children Educational Outcomes

The panel welcomed the Deputy Education Looked After Children Co-ordinator to the meeting, thanking him for the detailed answers to the questions that had been sent to him in advance of the meeting.

The [report](#) covered:

- Looked After Children (LAC) educational performance including:
 - Comparisons to other children in local schools and LAC children in other LA's
 - Pupils achieving different core subject indicators at different key stages
 - Bridging the gap in educational outcomes of LAC
 - Out of county placed children
- Plans to raise educational attainment of LAC

- How individual pupils are supported to achieve in and out of school
- How children are supported to continue to further and higher education
- Personal Developments Plans and how they are audited.
- Young people's views about their education and aspirations also about the services they receive
- Participation in afterschool activities and barriers to participation
- LAC and school exclusions and children educated other than at school
- Working with others to improve outcomes

The panel then specifically discussed:

- The provision of attachment aware schools training being developed following recognition of the impact of attachment issues on learning and the developing brain. The panel were pleased to see the role out of this training which will increase staff understanding in all Swansea schools about the issues faced and help to develop strategies to support LAC learners to further improve attainment.
- The panel heard that the Additional Learning Needs Unit is seeking to introduce Emotional Literacy Support Assistant training for schools, funded by the LAC/PDG grant. They recognise that this will further extend individual support available to learners in schools across Swansea.
- Councillors heard about the LAC learners' participation work in raising the profile of the learner voice in Swansea which is featured as a good practice case study in the Estyn Report 'Raising the attainment, achievement and aspiration of children who are looked after'.
- Good links have been established with Gower College and further education. LAC pupils are supported through the transition into higher education.
- Development of a virtual school website, which is the first in Wales. It will help provide information and link more closely with others including for information sharing.
- There has been no permanent exclusions of looked after children for a number of years. Most vulnerable pupils are kept in school with support. Work to limit the risk of exclusion.

4 Support for Vulnerable Pupils and Pupil Deprivation Grant Spend across Schools

The Panel looked at how the pupil deprivation grant has been spent across Swansea to support the achievement of vulnerable pupils across Swansea. A report was provided and the Chief Education Officer attended the meeting to answer questions.

The following was noted:

- Pupil Deprivation Grant (PDG) is for pupils eligible for free school meals (eFSM) and is allocated to schools by the local authority per financial year. The amount equates to £1050 per eFSM pupil and is based on the annual census of pupils.
- The panel were provided with a [report](#) detailing all PDG spend for the 2016/17 and detailing spend per school. Each school is required to publish their PDG spending online.

- Schools have used the PDG in a variety of ways, referencing recent research to help inform the decisions. Some of the common spending patterns in Swansea are:
 - Intervention for Oracy
 - Target groups for intervention and additional hours
 - Literacy and basic skill interventions
 - Literacy catch up
 - Computers and digital devices
 - Individual plans
 - Equal access and opportunity i.e. trips visits and experiences
 - Feedback and mentoring
- A breakdown of allocations was included in the report
- It was outlined that schools must demonstrate that the grant is reaching the right pupils. The impact of interventions to measure should be evaluated by schools, especially where staff are employed through grant monies. The panel recognise that currently not all grant monies are impactful and that there is an increasing demand to show that PDG is making a difference.
- The panel heard that financial officer work with a designated challenge advisor to ensure that PDG spending is appropriate and that challenge advisors are monitoring on an annual basis.
- Members emphasised the importance of schools using the evidence base when planning future spend, being able to learn from what is making a real impact is important. The panel were reference to some useful documentation particularly the [ERW poverty directory of strategies and resources](#)
- It was highlighted that the PRU were not currently compliant with their use of the PDG. The panel heard that this is because they have only recently been allocated the PDG for those pupils attending the PRU. Until recently the originated school was in receipt of it. The PRU will now be able to plan and use the monies directly for its eFSM pupils.

5 Workplan 2017/2018

The workplan was received.

6 For Information Item

The 'for information' items where received by the panel as follows:

- Letter from ERW Councillor Group to ERW Joint Committee (29 Sep 17)
- Annual Audit of Schools
- Reducing Workload for teachers and headteachers Guide

The meeting ended at 4.50pm