



City and County of Swansea

Notice of Meeting

You are invited to attend a Meeting of the

Scrutiny Performance Panel – Education

At: Guildhall, Swansea
On: Thursday, 12 September 2019
Time: 4.00 pm
Convenor: Councillor Lyndon Jones MBE

Membership:

Councillors: C Anderson, A M Day, M Durke, S J Gallagher, L S Gibbard, D W Helliwell, B Hopkins, L James, S M Jones, M A Langstone and L J Tyler-Lloyd

Co-opted Members: D Anderson-Thomas, A Roberts and J Meredith

Agenda

Page No.

- | | | |
|---|---|---------|
| 1 | Apologies for Absence | |
| 2 | Disclosure of Personal and Prejudicial Interests.
www.swansea.gov.uk/disclosuresofinterests | |
| 3 | Prohibition of Whipped Votes and Declaration of Party Whips | |
| 4 | Conveners Letters and Minutes | 1 - 16 |
| 5 | Elective Home Education | 17 |
| 6 | Performance of pupils receiving Free School Meals | 18 |
| 7 | Work Programme 2019/2020 | 19 - 20 |
| 8 | For Information | 21 - 25 |

Next Meeting: 17 October at 4.00pm

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Huw Evans'.

Huw Evans
Head of Democratic Services
Thursday, 5 September 2019

Contact: Michelle Roberts, Scrutiny Officer

Councillor Lyndon Jones
Convenor
Schools Scrutiny Performance Panel

BY EMAIL

Please ask for: Councillor Jennifer Raynor
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Our Ref: JR/CM
Your Ref:
Date: 5th August 2019

Dear Councillor Jones

EDUCATION SCRUTINY PERFORMANCE PANEL – 11 JULY 2019

Thank you for your letter dated 31st July 2019.

I am pleased that the Panel found clear examples of good practice in developing wellbeing and attainment of pupils attending Dylan Thomas Community School.

You correctly point out that many of the achievements of the school and pupils are not recognised by the Welsh Government's present measurement of outcomes.

It is a matter of concern that 60% of pupils arrive at Dylan Thomas School with a reading age significantly below their chronological age. The Panel may wish to look at the programme initiated by the former Head of Cefn Hengoed, Sue Hollister, in raising attainment and aspiration in Cefn Hengoed's feeder primary schools in the East Side.

I would totally agree about the importance of being able to forward plan with as much financial certainty as possible in the medium term.

For this reason, officers each year provide each school with three year indicative school budget shares as well as offering as much further advice and guidance as possible over the course of each year to inform future school spending plans.

Unfortunately Councils, and indeed the Welsh Government itself, face the same challenges from the current continuing scale of financial uncertainty and the fluidity of local government finance settlements.

Schools, with their delegated budgets, are of course able to manage funding issues over more than one financial year as they are able to carry forward accumulated reserves to cushion the impact of in year fluctuations in funding streams as well as, where appropriate, seeking approval for a managed deficit. Such flexibility is not available to other Education or indeed Council services.

The Council will continue to press the case with the Welsh Government (WG) for greater future funding certainty, and for the significant cost implications of UK and WG decisions regarding pay awards, pension contributions and free school meal entitlements to be funded within local government finance settlements, as it did in its contribution to the recent school funding inquiry. I am sure that the WG will continue to make a similar case to the UK government. We will also continue to press for earlier announcements of specific grant allocations to schools.

Yours sincerely



COUNCILLOR JENNIFER RAYNOR
CABINET MEMBER FOR EDUCATION IMPROVEMENT, LEARNING & SKILLS



**To/
Councillor Jen Raynor
Cabinet Member for Education
Improvement, Learning and Skills**

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31 July 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 11 July 2019. It is about improving wellbeing in Schools after a visit to Dylan Thomas Community School.

Dear Councillor Raynor,

Education Scrutiny Performance Panel – 11 July 2019

At our meeting on the 11 July 2019, we visited and met with the Chair of Governors, Executive Head, Headteacher and the Senior Deputy Headteacher at Dylan Thomas Community Comprehensive School.

We chose to speak to this school because we had heard about the positive practice at the school in relation to improving the wellbeing of pupils, with the aim of and resulting in, improving pupil attainment. We understand that Wellbeing is a key aspect of the New Curriculum and thought that it would be timely to get a good understanding of the key issues by seeing work being done on the ground with pupils. We have detailed our thoughts on our visit in this letter.

We heard about the context of the school and why wellbeing is so key for Dylan Thomas. It is a Comprehensive School that has in excess of 529 pupils, including three Specialist Teaching Facilities (STF) on site. 70% of the pupils live in the 20% most deprived areas of Wales so there is a high level of poverty here. 54% of the pupils receive Free School Meals. Over 60% of pupils have a reading age significantly below their chronological age on entry to Year 7. 60% of pupils are identified as having Additional Learning Needs. There is also increasing Mental Health complaints and high mobility rate and in year transfers.

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We heard that the focus of the school, and of staff, is on raising the expectations of pupils and improving their aspirations; that there are many talented children at the school, but, unfortunately, some children do not see themselves as good enough and underestimate their abilities. The Headteacher explained that the barriers and challenges the school face could not be used as an excuse for poor standards, telling us about some examples of children who have excelled at the school. We agreed that high aspirations for all pupils is key.

In terms of outcomes and the performance data, the school has been on a journey of improvement since 2010/11. In 2015 41% of pupils achieved L2+ up from 15% in 2011. However, since then the goalposts have shifted significantly with all performance data including non-mainstream pupils, outcomes therefore look lower.

We also heard that there have been changes to exam qualifications discounting of vocational subjects. We understand that vocational subjects are the ones that suit many of the pupils at Dylan Thomas best so these changes are negative on pupils at the school. We recognise that for Dylan Thomas it is not about less achievement but that some achievements are no longer accredited.

There are three STFs at the school and all are counted in the performance data. For the school there are different levels of success. For some that might mean getting a G, for others it may be about getting As. We agreed with them when they said that pupils are all impressive in their own way.

There has been a big improvement in attendance levels. Going up from 88% to 93%, which is the schools best ever attendance figure. We heard that pupils enjoy coming to school, that they feel supported as well as challenged. Many also have a free breakfast here to ensure a good start to the day.

We were very impressed with the young people who took us on a tour of the school. We felt that they are great ambassadors for the school.

We would like to share the key learning points we found from our visit with you.

To improve wellbeing across schools in Swansea we need to ensure:

- Wellbeing is at the heart of what they do
- They constantly remind pupils of expectations and raise their aspirations
- They constantly build and improve relationships at the school, with parents and the local community
- They focus on positivity rather than punitive sanctions: a positive approach to pupil attainment and behaviour (examples including capture and promote positives, praise, reward, meet and greet at school gates, learning walks rather than behaviour room)
- Schools are proud of their pupils and they develop a sense of community
- They recognise that one size does not fit all, individualise when and where possible
- They work closely with other agencies like Evolve, Youth Offending Service, Education Other Than At School services, Princes Trust etc.

- They continually work to improve pupil attendance
- They train staff in how to improve behaviour and avoid exclusions including Pivotal Behaviour Approaches.
- They have a strong challenging but supportive governing body
- They are sharing and seeking best practice in order to continually improve.

We heard from the Chair of Governors that finance is a great source of worry to the governing body, that it is still the great unknown so a lot of uncertainty. Also that the Senior Leadership Team was restructured because of the budget and that they were only able to do that successfully because of the quality of staff they have. He expressed his concerns about future finances and how uncertainty makes it difficult for the school to forward plan. He felt that it was a great strain on teachers and a real barrier to moving forward. We agreed that being able to forward plan with some certainty financially in the medium term rather than just the short term is very important and we said we would raise this with you.

We were pleased to hear that there are strong links between the school and the Council's Pupil and Governor Unit who they felt are supportive. We were also encouraged to hear that the school feel that the School Improvement Service now understands the school (and its context) and that they receive genuine support from them, which the school finds very helpful.

We would like to congratulate everyone at the school and the governing body for the hard work and commitment to their improvement journey. Particularly in relation to improving the wellbeing of pupils at the school, which is clearly proving to be successful in not only the wellbeing of pupils but in improving school attendance and the reduction in pupil exclusion. We would like to compliment the school for developing a culture where pupils feel valued. We wish the school the very best for the future.

We welcome your thoughts on any of the issues raised in our letter but would ask for your response in writing on the following point by 22 August 2019.

1. We agreed that being able to forward plan with some certainty financially in the medium term rather than just the short term is very important. Could you let us know your thoughts on this matter particularly how schools can plan for the medium term future when budgets are so uncertain moving forward?

Yours sincerely,

COUNCILLOR LYNDON JONES

Convener, Schools Scrutiny Performance Panel

✉ Cllr.lyndon.jones@swansea.gov.uk



City and County of Swansea

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

Committee Room 3A - Guildhall, Swansea

Thursday, 13 June 2019 at 4.00 pm

Present: Councillor L R Jones (Chair) Presided

Councillor(s)

C Anderson
L S Gibbard
L James
L J Tyler-Lloyd

Councillor(s)

A M Day
D W Helliwell
S M Jones

Councillor(s)

M Durke
B Hopkins
M A Langstone

Co-opted Member(s)

Alexander Roberts

Other Attendees

Cllr Jen Raynor

Cabinet Member for Education Improvement and Skills

Officer(s)

Helen Morgan - Rees
Michelle Roberts
Nick Williams

Head of Education Achievement & Partnership
Scrutiny Officer
Director of Education

Apologies for Absence

Councillor(s): S J Gallagher and H M Morris

Co-opted Member(s): D Anderson-Thomas and J Meredith

1 Appoint Convener for the 2019/2020

Cllr Lyndon Jones was elected as Convener
Cllr Cyril Anderson agreed to act as informal Vice Convener

2 Disclosure of Personal and Prejudicial Interests.

Cllr Cyril Anderson declared personal interest in item 8.

Prohibition of Whipped Votes and Declaration of Party Whips

None

4 Notes and Conveners Letters

Letter and notes confirmed

5 Current Issues in Education - Overview Presentation

Cabinet Member for Education Improvement and Skills, Nick Williams Director of Education and Helen Morgan Rees, Head of Service Education attended the meeting and outlined the key issues affecting education over the coming year. The following was noted:

The Panel heard that there are 10 key areas that will be priorities for education particularly, over the coming year. It was highlighted that we also need to be mindful of the demographic changes and how that also impacts on school performance:

1. Additional Learning Needs (ALN) Reform
2. Curriculum for Wales (including for example: changes to qualifications, greater emphasis on wellbeing, welsh language digital competence, developing initial teacher training. Panel also ensuring balance for teaching that includes a local flavour.
3. Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), including increasing mental health issues as barriers to learning, behaviour in schools.
4. Elective Home Education
5. National Programme to develop schools leaders
6. Embedding professional standards for teaching and learning
7. Changing accountability systems, including categorisation and inspection systems likely to change, what will they look like in the future
8. National professional learning offer coming in Autumn 2019
9. Changes to pupil assessment, this will be parallel to introduction of new curriculum, expect assessment to change, what will this look like in the future and possible new measures
10. Schools becoming learning organisations, schools developing a strong vision for teaching and learning, inviting others in to see practice and going out and collaborating with others.

Councillor agreed that these should be reflected throughout their work programme and questioning over the coming year.

6 Review of the year past and plan for the year ahead

The Panel reviewed their year past, including what when went well and what could be improved, this included:

- Scrutiny of individual schools went well. Visiting some schools was of benefit to the panel, be able to see the work happening on the ground speaking to Headteacher, staff, governors and pupils.
- It has been of benefit to the education department and topics discussed have helped develop those areas including in particular in relation to Education Other Than at School and the Small Schools Review.
- Education said they find the challenging questions from scrutiny about performance useful, especially the searching questions that have been asked around vulnerable learners.
- Good for keeping abreast of changes and challenges in relation to education matters.

- Must be conscious not to overload schools so co-ordinating with others around visits important
- More context around some subjects would be helpful.

The Panel then discussed their Work Programme for the coming year, they would like to include the following issues, being mindful that things may change so this will to be flexible to additions and some change.

1. Some issues the panel identified but did not get chance to look at last year
 - Alternative Learning Needs
 - Post 16 Performance
 - School Transport
2. Items suggested by Education Department
 - Elective Home Education
 - Healthy Schools Initiative
 - National Mission and Developing a Transformational Curriculum. This session could consider how schools are responding to the draft new curriculum for Wales and the related 4 enabling objectives
 - Not in Education Employment or Training (NEETs) prevention - school visit to see the approach at school level. Pentrehafod School has been suggested.
3. Items identified for ongoing monitoring
 - EOTAS improvements including new building progress
 - Progress with the 21st Century Schools Programme
4. Annual items
 - Schools Scrutiny (choose from school categorisation information)
 - a. 1 Red school/s: Penclawdd Primary School
 - b. 2 x Practice based visits: Wellbeing of Pupils - Dylan Thomas Community Secondary School. NEETs prevention - Pentrehafod School
 - Data and commentary on school categorisation and data on school performance
 - ERW progress with Business Plan
 - Performance of Education Improvement Service
 - Looked after Children's Educational Performance
 - Free School Meal Pupil Performance and use of Pupil Deprivation Grant
 - Scrutiny of annual budget as it relates to education matters (Feb 20)
 - ERW Regional Scrutiny Councillor Group - updates

7 For Information Item

Individual school inspection outcomes were noted.

The meeting ended at 5.30 pm

Councillor Paxton Hood-Williams

Please ask for: Councillor Jennifer Raynor

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Our Ref: JR/JW

BY EMAIL

Your Ref:

Date: 1 July 2019

Dear Councillor Hood-Williams

**JOINT MEETING OF THE SCHOOLS SCRUTINY PERFORMANCE PANEL AND THE
CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES SCRUTINY PERFORMANCE PANEL**

Thank you for your letter dated 10 June 2019.

Please find my responses to your questions below.

Response to questions posed from a Youth Ambassador for the Fostering Network

1. Why was the decision made?

The Looked after Children (LAC) element of the Pupil Development Grant (PDG) is a sum of money issued by Welsh Government (WG) to be used as a school improvement grant. It is distributed to Local Authorities, via their regional consortium. For Swansea that is ERW, (Education through Regional Working).

Historically, ERW have provided local authorities (LAs) with the full grant to be used in a way that was deemed most appropriate for the needs of LAC, those subject to a Special Guardianship Order (SGO) and those who had been adopted within individual authorities. Most authorities within ERW have used this grant to centrally employ staff to work with these vulnerable learners. In Swansea, we employed three project workers to carry out this work. Often, these most vulnerable young people experience high mobility between schools, and LA staff can provide a constant support for the young people if they do move between settings, as well as advocating for the needs of the learner.

Prior to the financial year 2018-2019, LAs were given information from ERW that they were working towards a WG model of delegating the grant to school clusters to bring the funding in line with the wider PDG. We were subsequently informed that this would be a transition year and that any monies delegated to employees could be retained for this year, however the new model of working would be implemented in the financial year 2019-2020. All employees at risk were informed of this.

On 11 December 2018, Gareth Morgans, (Director of Education for Carmarthen), circulated a letter to all Directors following correspondence from Steve Davies, Welsh Government's Director of Education, calling for more consistency in the use of PDG-LAC. In it Steve Davies wrote,

"It is evident that, to date, there have been a range of approaches across Wales and that there is a need for a more coherent, national approach from April 2019. There is acceptance from Welsh Government that 2018-19 is a transition year in which we move towards greater consistency. There is a very clear expectation from Welsh Government that, in line with the PDG, the LAC element should go directly to schools with the aim of moving 'to a model with greater consistency, equity and robustness...'"

In the following workshops he was also able to convey the concerns that most local authorities have. These included issues of capacity within some clusters of schools, clusters with low numbers of LAC, resource demands of complex cases, flexibility of approaches, regional training packages, linking in with other services and key stage 4 support packages.

Despite the concerns raised, WG have continued to maintain that the grant is a school improvement grant, and as such should be distributed to schools, rather than be held centrally. This new way of working has now been signed off by Kirsty Williams, Education Minister.

2. Why was the decision made so abruptly not giving young people time to adjust?

At the time of the communication from Gareth Morgans, described above, officers were still unsure whether we would have the funds to ensure that we could allow the project workers to continue. Various avenues were being explored. ERW had mentioned that they may implement a hybrid scheme, which would see part of the PDG-LAC kept centrally and part distributed to clusters. Although a seemingly good offer, this did not come to fruition.

There was also exploration into whether the project workers could be jointly funded through Child and Family Services and Education and a meeting was convened on the 28 January 2019, with all relevant staff. Unfortunately, budgetary demands would not allow this. It was also felt that due to the nature of the job description of the project workers, the very nature of their work was not strategic. Their support only reached a small percentage of the LAC population in Swansea.

Officers also met with headteacher representatives from both primary and secondary schools, to investigate the possibility of school clusters 'buying in' the services of the project workers. This is not an avenue in which schools wished to pursue. The overall feeling was that they would be able to utilise any funds received in a more strategic and equitable way.

Such negotiations do take time, but were necessary as the benefit to the young people of having such a worker in their lives is recognisably positive. This coupled with periods of sick leave of some of the project workers themselves, regrettably left very little time to prepare the young people as fully as we would have liked.

3. Why the young people effected were not consulted?

It is recognised that young people respond best to those adults with whom they have formed a strong bond of trust with. This is the very nature of the project workers remit, and as such it seemed most natural for them to inform the young people of the Welsh Government decision.

In hindsight, it would have been better to work with school staff to consult with the young people. However all decisions were made with the best of intentions at the time.

4. How LAC young people will be supported, now this service has changed?

In terms of the partnership with the Reaching Wider 'Diamond Project', the service has continued and young people still enjoy the experience of attending Swansea University every week. Further collaboration has been planned and successfully implemented for a project with primary aged LAC learners; and the Education for Looked after Children's coordinator will be meeting with representatives from Reaching Wider during the summer, to hopefully plan future events, as funding dictates. This is an extremely important partnership and essential in raising the aspirations among our LAC population.

Schools will receive the PDG-LAC as WG have dictated. This will be monitored in line with regional guidelines. Unfortunately, to date, LAs have not been given any information about the grant, and it still hasn't been distributed to schools. So schools find themselves in a position whereby they have no support from the LA, nor have the funds from the grant.

Response to questions posed by the panel

1. How will the new Facility in Cockett improve the education of our most vulnerable children including LAC?

The new facility at the Council's Cockett House site will provide a new base for the EOTAS (Education other than at School) service. The new teaching facility will replace existing and outdated pupil referral accommodation that is currently scattered at various locations across the city.

Class sizes will be small – with a maximum of 7 pupils to 2 members of staff. This allows for a more bespoke approach to supporting pupils to develop the skills necessary to enable them to access learning and develop appropriate and relevant social, emotional and behavioural skills.

Staff in the Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) will work closely with partner agencies to provide a wrap-around support to vulnerable pupils and their families, with the explicit aim of supporting well-being outcomes. The work is currently on-going with the PRU support work team to align assessment and intervention work with that of SSD and will serve to provide a more continuous and integrated approach to the assessment of well-being needs and inform more targeted support to pupils with a high level of need.

The co-location of services including the Home Tuition Service and Behaviour Support Team, alongside the planned Early Intervention Team, will enable the new facility to provide timely and targeted support to schools to prevent pupils from requiring EOTAS provision. It will also enable the service to provide support to develop the capacity of schools to better meet the needs of pupils exhibiting challenging behaviour and emotional difficulties.

Low self-esteem and a history of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), is often a contributing factor to poor behaviour. The Council investment in this new facility will support staff to ensure that the children and young people recognise their worth and the importance the LA places on them, ultimately increasing self-worth and resilience.

2. How will it be inspired by cutting-edge best practise?

The new facility is designed with the new curriculum for Wales in mind. Its design is one of its kind, which poses an exciting opportunity for vulnerable pupils in Swansea.

The Head of the PRU has worked closely with the architects and Council planning team to inform the design of the new building. This means that the building is designed specifically to meet the needs of pupils with Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties. There has already been a lot of interest in the project from other LAs.

The new build will provide bespoke spaces for the different ages and needs that will be attending. It will house areas to support sensory and therapeutic support in addition to specialist subject areas such as design and technology, science and art rooms. The addition of these rooms will greatly enhance the curriculum opportunities that are already judged as good by Estyn.

Research into supporting the needs of pupils who have undergone trauma or ACEs; or who have issues associated with mental health or neuro-developmental difficulties will underpin the teaching and well-being support strategies that will be used to support pupils who attend the new PRU. Staff training is currently being focused on areas such as trauma informed practice and supporting mental health, in addition to understanding the implications of the new curriculum in relation to the PRU context.

The Head of the PRU has also established a strong regional network for staff working in the PRU sector. This was recognised as a strong feature in the recent Estyn Inspection. This work will enable regional school to school sharing of good practice, and development of sector leading practice.

3. Can the use of alternative school data, such as FFT data provide a better mechanism for monitoring the educational progress of vulnerable children?

Fischer Family Trust (FFT) data can be used to monitor the progress of various pupil groups. The management systems unit (MSU), currently use it alongside other data we have in our analysis of school and pupil performance.

FFT shows value-added for a number of groups which are pre-defined on their system. However, as LAC numbers are low, in most cases LAC cannot be viewed as a group, although an individual learner's value added attainment can be viewed. FFT currently measure progress in key stages 2 and 4, but locally we also have a tool known as the VAP+ (Vulnerable Assessment Profile) which can be used to show progress at all key stages.

All schools are given the VAP+ each September but it can be run for various groups on demand at any time. LAC learners are a key vulnerable group and as such the MSU produce a VAP for them as a group each April which scores them on 14 different aspects of vulnerability.

In summary, FFT data is very useful to show progress, but it is best used alongside the other tools used to measure outcomes.

Yours sincerely



**COUNCILLOR JENNIFER RAYNOR
CABINET MEMBER FOR EDUCATION IMPROVEMENT, LEARNING & SKILLS**



**To/
Councillor Jen Raynor
Cabinet Member for Children,
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10 June 2019

BY EMAIL

Summary: This is a letter from a Joint meeting of the Schools and the Child & Family Services Scrutiny Performance Panel to the Cabinet Member for Education Improvement, Learning and Skills following a meeting on the 2 May 2019. It is about Looked After Children Educational Outcomes.

Dear Councillor Raynor,

Schools Scrutiny Performance Panel – 2 May 2019

On the 2 May 2019, the Schools Scrutiny Panel and Child & Family Services Scrutiny Panel came together to look at an issue that had been raised by both panels, the Educational Outcomes of Looked After Children. We would like to thank Mark Sheridan, Julie Thomas, Helen Morgan Rees, Kate Phillips and Helen Howells for attending the meeting.

Prior to our meeting, we received an email from a Youth Ambassador for The Fostering Network who is also a care leaver herself. She asked to address the panel on behalf of a number of Swansea's looked after children who have concerns about the cuts in funding for their bespoke, tailored 1:1 support and wished to share their individual experiences on how the loss of this service has and could impact on their lives.

We heard that these changes are the result of the LAC element of Pupil Deprivation Grant being diverted from specific LAC-centred support directly into mainstream schools instead. She said that the young people are having difficulty accepting this abrupt change and feel they have not had the opportunity to have their voice heard about such an important change. We heard they have established strong relationships, built respect and trust with their support workers, and do not feel that schools could replicate this. They also feel that it is not only about the support received from workers, but the support they receive from each other which has become like a family to them.

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She recognised that the decision had now been made but still wanted to raise these concerns with the Council so that it is understood and improvements can be made around future decisions. She asked for a response to the following points:

1. Why the decision was made?
2. Why the decision was made so abruptly not giving young people time to adjust adequately?
3. Why the young people effected were not consulted?
4. How LAC young people will be supported, now this service have changed?

Officers attending the meeting responded to the issues raised and apologised to the young people concerns for any hurt or upset they had felt. Explaining the uncertainty in how the Pupil Development Grant from Welsh Government will be used in future was a contributing factor; that they had worked hard to find a solution and keep the support workers, but it was not possible. Officers explained that support of the Tribe Group was really successful and valued but that it only reaches about 20 young people. Therefore, many young people are not being heard in Swansea as the resources are concentrated in one place. Officers also explained that the Diamond Project will continue with the University and that the Councils Children and Young People Participation Team will be picking up this activity. Officers agreed to respond to the above four points in writing and will send a copy of this response to the panel for information.

We then discussed the briefing report on the Performance of Looked After Children. We heard and welcomed the allocation of the LAC Pupil Development Grant on a cluster of schools basis, recognising that monies can then be concentrated and used in the best way for that group of schools. We would like to see young people consulted on how the money will be used to support them.

We also wanted to highlight the principle of Looked After Children and wider support for pupils being everybody's business and not just LAC Co-ordinators in Schools. We agreed with Officers when they said it is important that capacity is built within all schools to work with vulnerable pupils.

The difference between education outcomes of LAC pupils between KS2 and KS4 was raised. We wanted to understand why there is such a stark difference in performance here. Officers explained the figures shown are based on a small cohort of children each year and that these are not the same children, as children come in and out of care throughout the year. The data therefore will vary year on year because each cohort will have different abilities and this, because the figures are so small, can have a big impact on our results.

The education of LAC has proved an incredibly challenging area for Swansea for decades. Hearing from officers was helpful but looking at what can be done to actually improve educational attainment is key. We need to learn what works from children and young people who succeed despite the challenges they face. We need a detailed understanding of why these issues are so complex.

We felt the new PRU in Cockett is exciting because it will aim to tackle these and other long-standing education challenges. We are interested to hear how this new facility will improve the education of our most vulnerable children including LAC and how it being inspired by cutting-edge best practice?

We also heard that the L2i is very difficult to achieve for vulnerable pupils and that it is better for them to be tested on the progression they make rather than merely attainment. We recognise the importance of the value added measure. We were concerned to hear Value Added Measures are no longer easily available from the Welsh Government but are encouraged that we do have our own Vulnerability Assessment Profile.

We heard that there is a real will in Swansea to develop a more systematic approach to improving the outcomes of vulnerable pupils, recognising that it is not just down to schools and not just relating to LAC but also those children on the Child Protection Register and Special Guardianship Orders. We agreed with Officers, that we need to be able to see what difference we are making to pupils and need to support them to be as good as they can be. We understood that, because of the small number of pupils, it is difficult to sensibly compare cohorts to assess the effectiveness of LAC (and all vulnerable pupil) pupil performance. We queried whether use could be made of Fischer Family Trust performance data to identify the progress being made by LAC pupils on an individual basis. We were interested to hear about the intention to develop an Action Plan to deliver an integrated and outcome focussed approach. We would welcome more information on this as it develops.

We welcome your thoughts on any of the issues raised in our letter but would ask for a written response on the following issues by 1 July 2019.

1. How will the new facility in Cockett improve the education of our most vulnerable children including LAC?
2. How will it be inspired by cutting-edge best practice?
3. Can the use of alternative school data, such as FFT data provide a better mechanism for monitoring the educational progress of vulnerable children?

Yours sincerely,

COUNCILLOR PAXTON HOOD WILLIAMS

Convener, Joint meeting of the Schools Scrutiny Performance Panel and the Child and Family Services Scrutiny Performance Panel

✉ Cllr.paxton.hood-williams@swansea.gov.uk

Agenda Item 5



Report of the Convener of the Education Performance Scrutiny Panel

12 September 2019

Briefing and Q&A Elective Home Education

Purpose:	To look at and discuss Elective Home Education
Content:	A briefing and Q&A session on Elective Home Education
Councillors are being asked to:	The Panel will consider and discuss the information provided and give their views and recommendations to the Cabinet Member via a letter.

Introduction

At the Panel's Work Planning meeting in June 2019, it was agreed that the panel would schedule a briefing on Elective Home Education in its Work Programme for 2019/20.

It will consist of a presentation and a Question and Answer Session. The essence of the presentation will be to provide Members with an update on current and emerging provision in relation to Effective Home Education.

In attendance will be Susan Griffiths (Education Welfare officer) and Helen Morgan Rees (Head of Achievement and Partnership Service).

Agenda Item 6



Report of the Convener of the Education Performance Scrutiny Panel

12 September 2019

Briefing and Q&A **Performance of pupils receiving Free School Meals**

Purpose:	To look at and discuss the performance of pupils receiving Free School Meals
Content:	A presentation and Q&A session on the performance of pupils receiving Free School Meals
Councillors are being asked to:	The Panel will consider and discuss the information provided and give their views and recommendations to the Cabinet Member via a letter.

Introduction

At the Scrutiny Performance Panel in July the issue of performance of pupils receiving Free School Meals (eFSM) was referred to the panel for consideration. It was subsequently included in the work programme for 2019/20.

This item will consist of a verbal presentation and a Question and Answer Session. The essence of the item will be to provide Members with an update on current and emerging provision for eFSM pupils including work being done to increase performance in line with non eFSM pupils.

In attendance will be Helen Morgan Rees, Head of Achievement and Partnership Service.

Education Scrutiny Performance Panel Work Programme 2019/2020

Date	Items to be discussed
Meeting 1 13 Jun 19	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Key issues facing Education/Schools over coming year 2. Panel discuss, plan and agree work programme for coming year
Meeting 2 11 Jul 19	<p>School 1 - Dylan Thomas Community Comprehensive School visit</p> <p>Good Practice: Wellbeing: How the school meets the needs of their children, the challenges they face and the way they meet them. School visit to see approach at school level.</p>
Meeting 3 12 Sep 19	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Performance of pupils receiving Free School Meals 2. Elective Home Education
Meeting 4 17 Oct 19	<p>School 2 – Penclawdd Primary School</p> <p>(Red) Meet with Headteacher and Chair of Governors at School include preparation session with the Challenge Adviser</p>
Meeting 5 14 Nov 19	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Healthy Schools Initiative 2. National Mission and Developing a Transformational Curriculum. This session will consider how schools are responding to the draft new curriculum for Wales and the related 4 enabling objectives.
Meeting 6 19 Dec 19	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 21st Century Schools Programme Update (including progress with EOTAS new build) 2. School Transport 3. Annual Audit report (for information)
Meeting 7 16 Jan 20	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Annual Education Performance (incl. verified data) and School Categorisation (Cabinet Member invited) 2. Looked After Children Educational Outcomes 3. Supporting Vulnerable Learners - Pupil Development Grant spend (Annual)
Meeting 8 Feb 20 - TBA	Annual Budget as it relates to Education matters
Meeting 9 13 Feb 20	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Session on Additional Learning Needs Reform and progress in Swansea 2. Education Improvement Service Performance update and ERW progress against priorities locally and regionally (Annual)
Meeting 10 12 Mar 20	<p>School 3 –Pentrehafod Comprehensive School</p> <p>To look at Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEETs) prevention - a school visit to see the approach at school level</p>
Meeting 11 Add date	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Swansea Skills Partnership 2. Education Other Than At School progress with improving outcomes and the new build
Meeting 12 30 Apr 20	<p>School 4 - Session on Post 16 – Pupil performance at sixth form and colleges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support for and performance of post 16 pupils in sixth form and colleges • Speak to sixth form and college Heads, Cabinet Member and Education Officers • Leaders of Learning for this aspect (ERW)

A. Estyn Inspections Summaries
(Published since your last update in June 2019)

For Information

For Information

School Inspection Outcomes

Published today, 3 July 2019

YG Bryntawe

<https://www.estyn.gov.wales/sites/www.estyn.gov.wales/files/documents/Ysgol%20Gyfun%20Bryn%20Tawe%20en.pdf>

New Inspection Arrangements:

Standards	G
Wellbeing and attitudes to learning	E
Teaching and learning experiences	G
Care, support and guidance	E
Leadership and management	G

Brynmill Primary

https://www.estyn.gov.wales/sites/www.estyn.gov.wales/files/documents/Brynmill%20Primary%20School_0.pdf

New Inspection Arrangements:

Standards	Good
Wellbeing and attitudes to learning	Good
Teaching and learning experiences	Good
Care, support and guidance	Good
Leadership and management	Good

Published today, 27 August 2019

Crwys Primary

https://www.estyn.gov.wales/sites/www.estyn.gov.wales/files/documents/Crwys%20Primary%20School_0.pdf

New Inspection Arrangements:

Standards	Good
Wellbeing and attitudes to learning	Excellent
Teaching and learning experiences	Good
Care, support and guidance	Good
Leadership and management	Good

Published today, 27 August 2019

Portmead Primary

<https://www.estyn.gov.wales/sites/www.estyn.gov.wales/files/documents/Portmead%20Primary%20School.pdf>

New Inspection Arrangements:

Standards	Good
Wellbeing and attitudes to learning	Good
Teaching and learning experiences	Good
Care, support and guidance	Good
Leadership and management	Good



To:
Cllr. Ellen ap Gwynn
 Chair of the ERW Joint Committee

Please ask for: **Scrutiny**

Scrutiny Office Line: **01792 637256**

e-mail scrutiny@swansea.gov.uk

Date **24 June 2019**

Dear Councillor ap Gwynn

ERW Scrutiny Councillor Group – 3 June 2019

The Scrutiny Councillor Group would like to thank Geraint Rees and Osian Evans for attending the meeting and for presenting the information we requested and answering our questions. I am writing to you to reflect the views from that meeting.

Geraint outlined the current position and the progress made with the programme of reform. We heard things have moved on significantly with growing collaboration and improving consistency across the region. We were pleased to hear that there has also been closer working with Headteachers across the region.

We heard that Neath Port Talbot Council had given one year’s notice to leave ERW. Hearing that their leaving will be contingent on whether they feel the reform programme has moved forward effectively and if they believe it has, they may rescinded that notice to leave. We understand they have said they will take part fully in development of ERW over that time in order to drive improvement to where they would like it to be.

We were pleased to hear that some key staff appointments have been made and that a solution to filling the Head posts has been found. Although we were concerned that the Interim Managing Director will be finishing in July and a replacement has yet to be identified. We feel that ERW will be in a weaker position without this role in place. The Councillor Group would like to see this addressed as a matter of urgency. We also thanked Geraint Rees for his support and service over the past year and wish him well for the future.

We discussed the need for more ‘fleetness of foot’ in ERW activities and in particular with Governance matters. We understand that the Joint Committee only meets once a term so decisions have to wait for those meetings, which can slow down progress. We heard that there are proposals to speed up the Executive Function with more delegated activity. Including developing a 3:2:1 strategy, which will speed up the process for some decisions. We were also told that the emerging governance structure of ERW will develop alongside the new staffing model. We would like to see schemes of delegation put in

place to improve the speed of decision making. The Councillor Group has asked for more information on this at their next meeting.

The meeting discussed the difficulties highlighted by the categorisation system including how the public, parents and the press perceive it as a judgement on how well the school is doing rather than its true role as a support framework for schools. We would encourage the regions views on this to be expressed with Welsh Government.

We heard that currently there is a void in the region around leadership development, bringing on new leaders in schools, and we agreed that this needs to be a priority moving forward.

The ERW Business Plan 2019/2020 was circulated to the Group. We were pleased to hear that as it develops it will be more aligned with individual LA education plans. We also heard that all the actions associated with the plan are currently being costed and we would like to see this at our next meeting in September. We agreed with the Interim Managing Director when he said aligning grants monies to the business plan priorities will give more integrity to how it is shared across local authorities. We emphasised the importance of clearly demonstrating how the money is aligned across the region in order to provide confidence in the process.

We were disappointed in the lack of timeliness of correspondence from Joint Committee. We need to develop a system between the Joint Committee and Scrutiny that ensures effective and timely two-way dialogue. We suggest that we write to you following each meeting and would request that you respond to us in writing within 28 days of receipt of that letter. Can you please consider this request, whether this is possible and respond to us with your thoughts in your next letter.

We welcome your thoughts on any of the issues raised in our letter and would be grateful if you could respond in writing addressing the following points:

- 1) What is the current position and plans for appointing the ERW Managing Director role?
- 2) What are the plans for the ERW schemes of delegation and for improving the speed of decision making across the organisation?
- 3) Look at how to develop a system between the Joint Committee and Scrutiny that ensures effective and timely two-way dialogue based on our suggestion.

Yours sincerely,

Cllr John Davies
Chair ERW Scrutiny Councillor Group
Cllr.john.davies@pembrokeshire.gov.uk

Annwyl John

Thank you for your letter dated 24th of June from the ERW Scrutiny Councillor Group. I am pleased that Geraint and Osian were able to report favourably (and accurately) on the growing sense of collaboration and purpose that we now have, and that there will be a continued drive to develop ERW to support schools with delivery of their significant challenges.

Since the meeting of your group, there have been further appointments into the leadership of ERW. Andi Morgan, Head of Education Services at Carmarthenshire Council will take over from Geraint for the coming months to consolidate the reforms that have been put in place. Additionally, some excellent school leaders from across the region have agreed to join ERW on a one-term in the first instance arrangement, in order to embed the key functions of the new ERW – (supporting schools with the planning of the new curriculum, build up teacher and support staff expertise and develop leadership capacity across all schools). Those individuals are

Tracy Senchal
Karen Lawrence
Anna Bolt
Jonathan Roberts

In response to some of the other key points that you raise, it would be good to draw your attention to the following points.

1. ERW Governance – during the challenging times that we have just been through, it was agreed that we would not tinker with the governance arrangements for ERW. These matters will now be addressed. You rightly point out to the 3,2,1 approach which will give headteachers a significant voice in the future direction of ERW. As a clearly defined 'support body' it is only appropriate that they have a stronger voice in shaping the support that their schools receive. Beyond that, it is our intention to review the approach to governance. Discussions have already taken place regarding how Executive Members for education can take a more active role, and the fleetness of foot needed between various accountability tiers. Kate Evan Hughes (Director, Pembrokeshire) and Gareth Morgans (Director, Carmarthenshire) will engage with Elin Prysor (Ceredigion lead on ERW's legal services) to bring forward proposals. They will need to reflect the key areas of clarity, appropriate delegations, transparency, flexibility and fleetness of foot. We will ask them to bring forward some proposals for the autumn. We will also work with Andi Morgan as soon as he is in post to ensure that there is clarity in terms of a scheme of delegation. Our recent audit report on the year's work makes clear that governance has improved, but there are still issues outstanding that need to be resolved.



2. You are not alone in raising concerns around the effectiveness of and the perceptions around categorisation. It had been expected that a new national approach to evaluation and accountability would by now be put in place. That has not been the case, and it is now expected that we continue with categorisation of schools into 2020. Our representatives on national groups have made their feelings known, and the frustration that is being caused by delays to the reform of the accountability model. However, we are committed to working with Welsh Government to help bring forward proposals that will better reflect our shared belief that a collaborative education system is what we need to underpin the scale of reform that is underway.
3. The matter of a void in leadership development has been a long-standing deficit in the Welsh education system. Over the last year, the 4 regions have created a team to work extensively with the National Academy for Education Leadership to build up a national portfolio of leadership development opportunities for teachers. Tom Fanning, a highly experienced headteacher from Ceredigion, has been working in this group as ERW's representative, and much progress has been made. There will be a suite of leadership development programmes available for teachers in ERW from September. This should grow annually, and I'm very pleased that our universities in Wales are now playing a far more active role in the development of leadership programmes.
4. The Joint Committee was very pleased to commend this year's business plan. As you say, it provides clarity and alignment, and can be built upon over the coming years. The allocation of funding for all streams and for all activities and schools is now entirely transparent, and all directors are able to access all spending that passes through ERW. Sharing the key parts of the business plan's spending plans can easily form part of the new interim MD's work with you as a scrutiny group, now that reporting systems have been generated for such transparency.
5. I apologize for the difficulty that occurred with your last correspondence. We conducted 3 Joint Committee meetings between February 8th and the end of May. Matters relating to the reform of ERW were progressing very quickly, and we should have responded to you at a point during that time. Osian and Geraint are already working on proposed dates for all meetings for next year, which will enable effective synchronicity between Joint Committee, Scrutiny, Executive Board, Headteacher Board, Trades Unions and others. We hope that this ensures that we do not have the disjoin that happened during recent months.

Yours Sincerely,

