



City and County of Swansea

Notice of Meeting

You are invited to attend a Meeting of the

Scrutiny Performance Panel – Education

At: Remotely via Teams
On: Thursday, 20 January 2022
Time: 4.00 pm
Convenor: Councillor Lyndon Jones MBE

Membership:

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

Co-opted Members: D Anderson-Thomas and A Roberts

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Next Meeting: Monday, 14 February 2022 at 3.00 pm

Huw Evans

Huw Evans
Head of Democratic Services
Thursday, 13 January 2022

Contact: Michelle Roberts, Scrutiny Officer

Agenda Item 4



To:
Councillor Robert Smith
Cabinet Member for Education
Improvement, Learning and Skills

BY EMAIL

Please ask for:
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Michelle Roberts

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Date
Dyddiad:

21 December 2021

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 9 December looking at the Education Performance against key objectives, the Swansea Skills Partnership and the Regional Education Partnership.

Dear Cllr Smith,

Education Scrutiny Performance Panel – 9 December 2021

We would like to thank you and Helen Morgan Rees 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.

Harassment in Schools

Thank you for updating us in relation to the recently published national Estyn report relating to harassment in schools. We heard that the report contains three recommendations and the Education Directorate are considering these and will be progressing them via a working group. You agreed to update the Panel on progress.

School Meals

We asked you to update us on the policy in Swansea in respect of the provision of school meals when a family is in debit in their school meal account. You told us that no child in Swansea should go hungry when at school and that there are contingencies in place for schools should parents not have monies in the school meal account. You said we are here to support families and would encourage any family struggling to pay for school meals to have a confidential dialogue with their child's school.

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY / TROSOLWG A CHRAFFU

SWANSEA COUNCIL / CYNGOR ABERTAWE

GUILDHALL, SWANSEA, SA1 4PE / NEUADD Y DDINAS, ABERTAWE, SA1 4PE

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I dderbyn yr wybodaeth hon mewn fformat arall neu yn Gymraeg, cysylltwch â'r person uchod
To receive this information in alternative format, or in Welsh please contact the above

Performance against identified education priorities (RAG)

You told us that the report gives a positive set of outcomes especially given the complications caused by the pandemic. We understand that the annual performance report from the statutory chief officer for education we normally receive is not available. Also, during the pandemic externally verified examinations have ceased and Welsh Government no longer collects end of key stage assessments. In addition to this, the national categorisation of schools is suspended alongside the inspection of schools by the education inspectorate Estyn. As a result, it is difficult to make comparisons and report on schools' performance. We were therefore pleased to look at the education performance against its key objectives including the RAG status.

We heard that it has been an unprecedented and difficult year in education, but you did point to several successes in that time, including for example the work around the Additional Learning Needs Reform agenda that is ensuring we are responding appropriately to new Act.

Your report concluded that performance against key objectives is good for the majority of objectives and reflects a status of suitable progress, addressing the priorities in most aspects. Only minor aspects require further attention. However, performance against a few priorities and a few objectives is weaker due to resource issues, the effects of the pandemic or by other external factors but importantly, the evaluation of progress is honest. Where there are key blockers to performance, matters are reported as part of the corporate risk management process. Overall, the performance against historic key headline indicators is impossible to report with the key assurances for school management, governance and performance are now mainly achieved through monitoring and evaluation by education officers.

We discussed a number of issues with you, including how the statements in the document are actually measured. Also, who determines the assessment of each category. We heard that this is not done in isolation. However, the Education Directorate work as a team and as a group of senior leaders you challenge each other about each part of the RAG status. Also, it is not just a team leader or a head of service determining this, conversations are had with all those involved and feedback is asked for.

We heard that in the last seven years Swansea Autistic Spectrum Disorder pupils have increased threefold, which indicates a demand for specialist places. We were encouraged to hear that we are creating more places here and bringing pupils back from out of county places into Swansea closer to home. We were pleased to see that making sure there are places for all our learners was a key objective for Swansea.

In light of the recent publicised tragic child death in England, we asked you how you are ensuring that education and schools are communicating effectively with council departments and across its partners including Health? We heard that schools and the education department are continually monitoring to ensure vulnerable and at-risk children are on our radar, making sure information is shared between education, children services and other relevant agencies. Regular meetings take place between the Director of Education and Head of Services in Child and Family to ensure all relevant issues are looked at. We also heard that education and schools work with health visitors and young people's mental health services in relation to this. Training is

provided, both from a child protection and safeguarding perspective and general training relating to younger children who are not always able to speak for themselves. We were reassured to hear that these things allow children to be observed carefully. Also, when teachers have concerns, they share these with the designated child protection officers in their school.

Swansea Skills Partnership Update

We were pleased to hear Partneriaeth Sgiliau Abertawe/ Swansea Skills Partnership has made suitable progress during the last year by building on the early foundations we heard about at our meeting this time last year. You outlined some of those successes including for example: the promoting, maintaining and developing Swansea as a Learning City and developing a local action plan focussing on digital capacity and guidance for learners in order to inspire learners to consider the types of jobs and opportunities within the Swansea Bay City Deal.

We were particularly pleased to hear about action taken and the focus on Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEETs) by the Partnership. You told us about the progress made in relation to this strand, hearing that a real traction had developed in the last academic year and that the partnership had blossomed with a range of partners working together on this issue.

We were disappointed that little progress had been made with regard to engaging with and including the business community on the Partnership. You did tell us that the Partnership does have links with the regional Learning Skills Partnership and they are represented on the board. Also, that each of the partners have their own links with businesses and that link is fed in through the partnership. You said that there have been difficulties in identifying those business who would participate but there is clear desire for this to happen. We were pleased with how the Partnership is progressing but agreed that we do need more involvement from the business community and this extra element would make a big difference because businesses are the job creators.

We would also encourage the Education Directorate to have a conversation with different partners to gain some indicative feedback. We feel it is important to ask them about how they want to see the partnership develop further and how they think this should happen.

Regional Education Partnership

We were pleased to hear that the legal agreement for the new regional education partnership known as Partneriaeth has been established with all three local authorities agreeing it at their individual Cabinet meetings this Autumn.

We heard that the legal agreement will now allow the Partnership to have a Joint Committee that can start to make decisions. We were pleased to hear that the agreement contains a strong governance structure which includes a Scrutiny Councillor Group.

We understand that ERW still needs to be wound down by closing down the accounts so will need a final ERW Joint Committee meeting for that to happen. The Director

confirmed that costs arising from the winding down of ERW will be borne by all original Local Authorities that were members of ERW.

We heard that staffing is still in a position of flux as the existing staff structure is going through change. Some staff have been retained but others have moved on and there are also some positions to fill. The size of the organisation has much reduced, and the staffing reflects that. The staffing structure should be in place by the end of January.

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 written reply.

Yours sincerely

COUNCILLOR LYNDON JONES

Convener, Education Scrutiny Performance Panel

Cllr.lyndon.jones@swansea.gov.uk



City and County of Swansea

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

Remotely via Teams

Thursday, 9 December 2021 at 4.00 pm

Present: Councillor L R Jones (Chair) Presided

Councillor(s)

C Anderson
D W Helliwell
S M Jones

Councillor(s)

A M Day
B Hopkins
R V Smith

Councillor(s)

S J Gallagher
L James
L J Tyler-Lloyd

Co-opted Member(s)

-

Co-opted Member(s)

-

Other Attendees

Robert Smith

Cabinet Member - Education Improvement, Learning & Skills

Officer(s)

Helen Morgan-Rees
Michelle Roberts

Director of Education
Scrutiny Officer

Apologies for Absence

Councillor(s): No apologies received

1 Disclosure of Personal and Prejudicial Interests.

None

2 Prohibition of Whipped Votes and Declaration of Party Whips

None

3 Minutes and Letters

The Minutes of the 18 November were agreed as a correct record.

The Conveners letter and Cabinet Member response following the Panel meeting on the 21 October were accepted. An update was made relating to a national Estyn report recently published relating to harassment in schools. The Panel heard that the report contains 3 recommendations, the Education Directorate have looked at these and will be progressing them via a working group. The Cabinet Member agreed to update the Panel on progress in due course.

The Panel accepted the Conveners letter and Cabinet Member response following the Panel meeting on the 18 November.

4 Public Questions

No public questions were received.

5 School Meals - Verbal Update

The Panel Convener asked the Cabinet Member and Director to update them on the Policy in Swansea in relation to the provision of school meals when a family may be in debit in their school meal account.

The Panel heard that no child in Swansea should go hungry when at school and that there are contingencies for schools put in place if parents do not have monies in the school meal account. The Cabinet Member said that we are here to support families and would encourage any family struggling to pay for school meals to have confidential dialogue with their child's school. He also said that if any Councillors become aware of a situation arising, they can contact him and he will look into it.

6 Performance against identified education priorities (RAG) and Cabinet Member Q&A

The Panel asked the Cabinet Member and Director to update them on the performance of the Education Directorate against its key objectives.

- The Cabinet Member said that it is a positive set of outcomes especially given the complications caused by the pandemic.
- The Education Scrutiny Performance Panel normally receives an annual performance report from the statutory chief officer for education. During the pandemic externally verified examinations have ceased and Welsh Government no longer collects end of key stage assessments. In addition, the national categorisation of schools is suspended alongside the inspection of schools by the education inspectorate Estyn. As a result, it is difficult to make comparisons and report on schools' performance. The Panel therefore looked at the education performance against its key objectives including the RAG status.
- The Panel heard that the key education and skills objectives are
 - we want Swansea to be one of the best places in the world for children and young people to grow up
 - we want every child and young person in Swansea to achieve, to be healthy, to be resilient and to be safe
 - we want children and young people to attend school regularly because they are more likely to achieve the skills and qualifications that they need to go on into further education, higher education, employment or training
 - we want children and young people to obtain qualifications and skills that are suited to the economic needs of the future and to be able to contribute positively as active local citizens
 - we want to prevent children from becoming disengaged from learning

- as corporate parents of Looked After Children, we want our Looked After Children to succeed in school and to have opportunities for further education, higher education, employment or training
 - we acknowledge that a child or young person with additional learning needs requires timely and effective support to allow them to reach their full potential
 - we want our children and young people to be aware of their global rights and responsibilities so that they can be active and responsible citizens, fulfil their potential and make a difference to their communities
 - we want our children and young people to have good Welsh language skills
- The Panel heard that it has been an unprecedented year in education but can point to several successes some of these include for example the work around Additional Learning Needs Reform agenda ensuring we are responding appropriately to new Act. Also, the ongoing improvements and new schools via the 21st Century Schools Programme.
 - In conclusion, the Panel heard that performance against key objectives is good and for a majority of objectives and reflects a status of suitable progress, addressing the priorities in most aspects. Only minor aspects require further attention. However, performance against a few priorities and a few objectives is weaker due to resource issues, the effects of the pandemic or by other external factors. Importantly, the evaluation of progress is honest. Where there are key blockers to performance, matters are reported as part of the corporate risk management process. Overall, the performance against historic key headline indicators is impossible to report. The key assurances for school management, governance and performance are now mainly achieved through monitoring and evaluation by education officers.

The Panel asked several questions, these are summarised as follows:

- *How are the statements in the document measured, as some are qualitative rather than quantitative? Also, who determines the assessment of the category?* The Panel heard that this is not done in isolation, and it is not one person determining it, we work as a team and a group of senior learners to challenge each other about each part of the RAG status. Also, it is not just a team leader or a head of service determining this, we have conversations with all those involved and ask for feedback.
- *How much of this report is outward looking, as much of what we do depends on our partners?* The Panel heard that on frequent basis we look at understanding how well we are doing not just internally as a Directorate, but more outward facing in terms of receiving more feedback. We have not actually surveyed our head teachers on our performance and, that is something potentially that we should be considering like for example on an objective like teaching and learning. We have surveyed some of our schools in relation to their support needs over that last academic year.
Outward facing is part of the Well-being of Future Generations Act, so ways of working have been transformed since 2015, it is an expectation that everybody works in partnership and demonstrates integrated ways of working. This report

does not really demonstrate how much work we do with other departments within this Council, but we also work with our partners in terms of for example: ALN.

- *Are we providing the right balance between measuring things and doing things?* The Panel heard that planning is important for us to deliver well on our objectives. We can aspire, but without a clear planning, those aspirations could falter. But Director agreed that right to make sure there is a balance to be struck in terms of getting two embroiled in paperwork when we should be looking on the horizon seeing what else is out there and taking the temperature of how well we're doing.
- *Do we benchmark performance with others?* The Panel heard that this is done if there is comparable data available, in for example areas of corporate performance monitoring like pupil attendance. We compare this with other local authorities, and we know where we rank. Were it is sensible to make comparisons we do, but obviously some of those strategic plans are unique to Swansea so difficult than to compare the level of planning and delivery against that plan because, for example, our additional learning plan in Swansea would look different to another authority. It is bespoke and unique to the needs of Swansea, so we have to evaluate it locally.
- *Why are more children needing Additional Learning Needs support?* The Panel heard that in the last seven years in Swansea Autistic spectrum disorder pupils have increased threefold, so we know that there is a particular demand for specialist places. We would dearly like to educate them in Swansea so by creating more places here and bringing them back from out of county places into Swansea is the aim. So that is a key objective for us in terms of making sure we've got enough places for the learners.
- *In light of the recent publicised tragic child death in England, how are we ensuring the Council is communicating effectively across departments and with its partners including Health?* In education we and school are monitoring to ensure vulnerable and at-risk children are on our radar, making sure information is shared between children service and other relevant agencies. Regular meetings take place between the Director of Education and Head of Services in Child and Family to ensure all relevant issues are looked at. We also work with Health visitors and young people's mental health services. Training is provided, both from a child protection and safeguarding perspective and general training for younger children who are not always able to speak for themselves. Both of those things together allow us to have eyes on children and observe them very carefully. When teachers have concerns, they to share with the designated child protection officers in their school.

7 Swansea Skills Partnership Update

One year ago, the Panel met with members of the Swansea Skills Partnership and today they asked the Cabinet Member and the Director to update them on progress made since that meeting.

The Panel heard that Partneriaeth Sgiliau Abertawe/ Swansea Skills Partnership has made suitable progress during the last year by on building on its early foundations.

The success can be summarised as follows:

- Promoting, maintaining and developing Swansea as a Learning City

- Developing a local action plan focussing on digital capacity and guidance for learners in order to inspire learners to consider the types of jobs and opportunities within the Swansea Bay City Deal
- Developed a sustainable digital platform in My Choice to support the learning and earning pathways of pupils in Swansea schools
- Reinforced the collaborative advantage of educators, careers advisers and officers working in partnership
- Identified transition and taster opportunities for Swansea learners to discover opportunities linked to their subjects, interests and ambitions
- Monitored and evaluated progress against strategic priorities and ensured appropriate linkage to the Regional Learning and Skills Partnership skills plan
- Identified and developed strong careers advice including apprenticeships and work-based learning and expanded the focus to include younger
- In partnership with higher and further education providers explored professional learning opportunities and dissemination of good practice
- Ensured apprenticeships and work-based learning align to future skills needs.
- The Panel were particularly pleased to see action taken, and a focus on, Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEETs) by the Partnership. They heard about the progress made in relation to the NEETs strand, hearing that a real traction had developed in the last academic year and that the partnership had blossomed with range of partners working together on this issue.
- The Panel were disappointed that little progress had been made with regard to engaging with and including the business community but heard that the Partnership does have links with the regional Learning Skills Partnership, and they are represented on the board. Each of the partners also have their own links with businesses and that link is fed in through the partnership. Difficulty was express in identifying and get any nominations. The Partnership would welcome any names that we can consider approaching. The Partnership would need to change the terms of reference. A report that went to Cabinet originally did not reference the business community, although there is a clear desire for that to happen.
- The Panel were pleased with how the Partnership is progressing but agreed that we do need more involvement from the business community and this extra element will make it even better.
- *The Panel asked if a survey of partners had taken place this year?* They heard that a survey of partners has not be had this year, but it is an open agenda in terms of any partners wanting to feed into the agenda and contribute to a strategy. That invitation is always there. The Panel said that they would really encourage the Education Directorate to come talk to the partners, in order to gain some indicative feedback, asking then about how they want to see the partnership develop further and how those partners think this could happen.

8 Update on progress with the Regional Education Partnership

The Cabinet Member and Director updated the Panel on progress made in relation to establishing the new regional education partnership and the winding down of ERW. The Panel heard:

- The Legal Agreement for the new regional education partnership known as Partneriaeth has been established with all three local authorities agreeing it at their Cabinet meetings this Autumn.
- This Legal Agreement allows us to have a Joint Committee proper. Partners have met as a shadow joint committee but now we can look forward in the new partnership, with a proper joint committee for the first time and that can start to make decisions.
- We also need to wind down ERW by closing down the accounts and will need a final ERW Joint Committee meeting for that to happen.
- Everything is still in the position of flex in the sense that the existing staff structure is going through change, we have been able to retain some of those staff, others have gone to other jobs, and there may be positions that we will need to fill. The size of the organisation has much reduced, and the staffing reflects that. The staffing structure should be in place by the end of January.
- It will have a scaled down focus as opposed to ERW and will focus on professional learning and leadership development. The School Improvement aspects will set within each local authority.
- The agreement contains a strong governance structure which includes the Scrutiny Councillor Group.
- The Panel asked whether all the original partners were expected to contribute to the winding down of ERW? The Director confirmed that this is the case.

9 Work Programme 2021/2022

The Panel received the Work Programme.

The meeting ended at 5.15 pm

Chair

Agenda Item 6



Report of the Convener of the Education Performance Scrutiny Panel

20 January 2022

Schools Performance – Session with Penyrheol Comprehensive School

Purpose:	To provide ongoing challenge to school's performance to ensure that: pupils in Swansea are receiving high quality education and the authority is meeting its objectives in relation to improving school standards and pupil attainment.
Content:	Meeting with Headteacher and Chairs of Governors of Penyrheol Comprehensive School
Councillors are being asked to:	The Panel will consider and discuss the issue and give their views to the Cabinet Member via a letter from the Convener

Context

The Panel agreed, as part of their work programme this year, to speak to a selection of schools inviting the Head Teachers and Chairs of Governors to their meetings to discuss the school's performance and improvement plan, focusing on outcomes, provision and leadership.

Key Issues and Questions

In attendance at the meeting will be

Damian Benney – Headteacher
Jeff Bowen – Chair of Governors

Below are the key issues/questions that were agreed by the Panel for all their sessions with schools. These have been sent to the Headteacher in advance of the meeting.

1. How has the school responded to its most recent Estyn Inspection findings and recommendations for improvement, including what the school needs to do to improve learner outcomes and to increase the school's capacity to improve in the future?
2. How is the school addressing the implementation of the New Curriculum and the National Mission for Education?
3. How are you improving the quality of teaching and learning experiences and what impact is that having on pupil outcomes?

4. What are the barriers to the school improving its learner outcomes including any challenges they are experiencing in implementing the new curriculum?
5. How are teaching staff engaging with the teaching and learning requirements including developing their own professional learning?
6. What is the school doing to improve levels of pupil attendance and to minimise school exclusions?
7. What are the governing bodies' priorities and how are they being addressed?
8. How does the school seek and use best practice (including sharing your good practice across schools)?
9. How well have you been supported by the local authority and the school improvement service?

Find attached in **Appendix A** the schools most recent Estyn Report.



Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru
Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales

A report on

**Penyrheol Comprehensive School
Pontarddulais Road
Gorseinon
SA4 4FG**

Date of inspection: October 2018

by

**Estyn, Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education
and Training in Wales**

About Penyrheol Comprehensive School

Penyrheol Comprehensive School is an English medium 11-16 mixed comprehensive school maintained by Swansea local authority. It serves an area north west of Swansea that includes Gorseinon, Penyrheol, Loughor, Kingsbridge and Garden Village. There are currently 885 pupils on role, which is lower than at the time of the last core inspection in September 2013.

The school serves a mixed social community and the school receives pupils from the full ability range. The percentage of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is 16.3%, which is very close to the national average of 16.4%. Only a very few pupils are fluent in Welsh and speak Welsh at home. The percentage of pupils with additional learning needs is 25.9%, which is higher than the national average of 22.9%. The percentage of pupils who have a statement of special educational needs is 3.7% compared to 2.2% for Wales. Around 2.5% of pupils speak English as an additional language.

The school incorporates a small specialist teaching facility for pupils with moderate to severe learning difficulties. This facility has a maximum intake of 10 pupils, generally two pupils per year group.

The current headteacher was appointed in September 2002. The senior leadership team consists of the headteacher, two deputy headteachers, an assistant headteacher and a business manager.

Further information is available from the Welsh Government My Local School website at the link below.
<http://mylocalschool.wales.gov.uk/Schools/SchoolSearch?lang=en>

Summary

Penyrheol Comprehensive School is a fully inclusive school that supports its pupils well. Support and guidance for pupils with additional learning needs is strong and has contributed well to the standards they achieve. Most pupils behave well in lessons. They are proud of their school and are courteous towards their teachers, peers and visitors. Many pupils make suitable progress in lessons. They read well to extract information, write with sound technical accuracy and develop their numeracy skills suitably in a range of relevant subjects.

The quality of teaching and learning experiences provided by the school has had a positive impact on outcomes for pupils at the end of key stage 4. Many teachers plan lessons effectively using their assessment of previous work. They use a variety of well-constructed resources that engage pupils well in lessons.

Leaders have a clear vision for the school based on raising the ambitions of all pupils and preparing them for their future lives. They share a sense of purpose and commitment to the school's values and ambition reflected in their motto "I lwyddo rhaid credu – To achieve you need to believe".

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

Recommendations

- R1 Improve standards of pupils' literacy and numeracy across the curriculum
- R2 Improve planning to address any weaknesses in teaching and assessment
- R3 Improve provision to develop pupils' Welsh language skills in situations other than Welsh lessons

What happens next

The school will draw up an action plan to address the recommendations from the inspection.

Main findings

Standards: Good

In lessons, the majority of pupils make strong progress and recall previous learning well. A few pupils make very good progress and produce work of exceptional standard.

Most pupils develop sound speaking and listening skills. They listen with due attention and respect to the teacher and their peers. Many contribute appropriately and confidently in class discussions when given the opportunity. They discuss their work well and explain their ideas clearly. A very few pupils build on the contribution of others without being prompted, and do so in a highly articulate way. A minority provide only brief verbal responses, though often this is in response to teachers' closed questioning.

Many pupils read well to extract information, for example in religious education when finding facts and different attitudes to creation. A minority of pupils use inference and deduction well to enhance their understanding of a writer's intentions. A very few pupils are able to evaluate characters particularly well and analyse skilfully how a writer uses language to influence the reader's feelings, such as when discussing Lady Macbeth's relationship with her husband.

Many pupils write with sound technical accuracy and use subject specific terminology well. They write clearly in a formal style, for example when writing up processes or experiments in science. A very few produce sophisticated pieces of extended writing, arguing effectively and synthesising information from a variety of sources, for example when examining the causes of poverty in Elizabethan times. The majority of pupils demonstrate a clear sense of purpose and audience in their writing. However, a minority lack a sufficient sense of audience and, as a consequence, they make incorrect language choices and their writing lacks the correct tone.

Pupils develop their numeracy skills suitably in a range of relevant subjects. Many pupils use the four rules of number well for simple calculations. A majority apply their number skills and knowledge of scales appropriately, for example when measuring latitude and longitude in geography. The majority interpret data appropriately when reading charts, tables or graphs. They measure accurately and use their understanding of proportions suitably, for example to produce exact replicas of food containers to scale for pop art drawings. In general, pupils do not take sufficient care when drawing graphs to ensure that they are titled, labelled and plotted accurately.

Pupils develop their information and communication technology (ICT) skills well across the curriculum. When given the opportunity, many pupils use specialised software purposefully, for example when composing music, drawing and designing objects. A very few pupils carry out computational thinking well when producing diagrams to show processes in science, in topics such as osmosis or enzymes.

A minority of pupils develop their thinking skills suitably through considering a variety of sources and evidence to draw conclusions effectively, such as when discussing the claimants to the throne in 1066. Pupils demonstrate strong creative skills, for example when designing educational toys for young children or making festive merchandise.

Performance in the level 2 threshold including English and mathematics has fluctuated over the past four years but is broadly in line with that in similar schools. Performance in the capped points score has been strong in two of the last four years. In 2015 and 2017, performance in this indicator is well above the average for similar schools. Provisional data for 2018 indicates that performance in these indicators has been maintained.

The proportion of pupils gaining five or more GCSEs or equivalent at grades A*-A has fluctuated over the past four years. Performance in this indicator compares well with the average for similar schools in two of the last three years, which includes the provisional outcome for 2018.

Over the past three years, the performance of boys has been above that of boys in similar schools in many indicators at key stage 4. Girls' performance has been below that of girls in similar schools in the level 2 threshold including English and mathematics for the last four years.

The performance of pupils eligible for free school meals has fluctuated in most indicators over the last four years. Performance in the level 2 threshold including English and mathematics has been below that of the same group of pupils in similar schools for three of the last four years. Provisional outcomes for 2018 shows a significant improvement on the previous year's performance in this indicator. Pupils with additional learning needs make strong progress against their targets and many achieve well by the end of key stage 4.

Most pupils are entered for a GCSE qualification in Welsh and many gain a level 2 qualification. Many pupils make suitable progress in developing their Welsh language skills in their Welsh lessons. However, pupils' use of the Welsh language across the curriculum and around the school is very limited.

At the end of Year 11, nearly all pupils remain in education, employment or training.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Good

Most pupils enjoy their life at school and appreciate the strong relationships they have with staff and their peers. Nearly all feel safe, included and valued. Pupils have a clear understanding of the range of support and guidance available to them and believe that the school deals effectively with the few incidents of bullying that arise. Most are proud of their school and are courteous towards their teachers, peers and visitors.

Pupils are active in decision-making to improve the school and its environment. In a few departments, this includes asking their opinion of teaching and learning. The well-organised school council plays an important part in representing the school community and pupil representatives take their roles very seriously. Recent initiatives include reviewing the system of rewards for regular attendance and designating pupils as 'waste warriors' to reduce and recycle plastic waste. Pupils develop their leadership skills well. For example, language ambassadors support younger pupils to practise their French and Spanish and sports ambassadors help to run lunchtime clubs.

Many pupils take advantage of the extensive offer of extra-curricular clubs and activities. This helps them to show-case their performance skills or participate in sports to keep active and healthy. A few more able pupils develop their oracy skills well in the 'Bar Club' by learning how to present a case in a mock trial.

Many pupils show positive attitudes to healthy living. They value the suitable choices of food in the canteen, access to water fountains in school and the opportunity to assess their fitness in physical education. Pupils of all ages are involved in charitable work, supporting local and national charities, such as the food bank during harvest festival week.

Most pupils behave well in lessons, although behaviour around the school is more variable. They listen attentively to the teacher and other pupils. Many display a positive attitude to their work and have a strong commitment to their learning. They sustain their concentration well throughout the lesson and work independently to complete and improve their work. They work purposefully and productively in small groups, for example when they co-operate to identify time signatures in music.

Many pupils engage fully in their learning and make positive contributions to the lesson. For example, Year 7 pupils practise speaking French with enthusiasm and, in art, pupils are proud to show the steps taken to produce their final piece. In a few lessons, pupils persevere when faced with particularly challenging tasks. This includes pupils in a computer science lesson using programming expertly to complete an HTML page and a complex computer game within a strictly limited timeframe. Many pupils organise their work and utilise techniques well to consolidate their learning, for example by highlighting important parts of texts without prompting

Teaching and learning experiences: Good

The quality of teaching and learning experiences provided by the school has had a positive impact on outcomes for pupils at the end of key stage 4.

Nearly all teachers have strong subject knowledge and offer clear explanations and instruction. They form productive working relationships with their pupils and manage behaviour well.

Many teachers use a variety of well-constructed resources that engage pupils well in lessons. They plan lessons that respond effectively to pupils' prior learning and are linked suitably to the teacher's assessment of previous work.

In a majority of cases, teachers provide well-timed activities with a successful balance of whole-class, group and individual tasks. This results in pupils making suitable progress in a range of skills. However, a minority of teachers do not consistently match tasks or questions to meet the needs of all pupils well enough.

In a few very successful lessons, teachers maintain a suitably high level of challenge and pace to learning. They give pupils of all abilities an opportunity to decide how they would like to work and, through thoughtful selection of groupings, ensure full participation. In a few cases, when teachers talk too much, it slows the pace of learning and reduces opportunities for pupils to participate and work independently.

Most teachers use questioning competently to gauge pupils' knowledge and recall of prior learning. However, teachers' questioning does not consistently probe pupils' understanding or challenge them to develop their verbal responses.

A majority of teachers circulate effectively during lessons to support and encourage pupils. They provide useful verbal feedback during the lesson, which supports individuals suitably. A minority of teachers provide helpful written feedback to whole classes that highlights common areas in need of improvement. This is often followed by useful tasks that strengthen pupils' understanding of those areas. In a few cases, teachers' comments do not identify clearly enough how pupils can improve their work.

The school plans its curriculum effectively to meet the needs of pupils. It works well with pupils to enable most to take appropriate qualification choices, which provide suitable pathways for their futures. At key stage 3, the curriculum promotes foundation subjects equally, ensuring that all areas of learning are valued. As a result, pupils select a broad range of options at key stage 4, including foreign languages, humanities and creative subjects. In general, the school's setting arrangements support learning suitably. However, there are a few very large classes in key stage 3, creating difficulties in managing group and practical work.

The school's early identification of pupils who will benefit from bespoke opportunities through partnerships with other local education organisations is a particular strength. This leads to these pupils receiving worthwhile provision and achieving useful qualifications. In addition, the school ensures that pupils with moderate to severe learning needs receive valuable support in its specialist teaching facility. These pupils are integrated well into mainstream provision, ensuring very positive learning outcomes and promoting strong personal development.

In the main, the school plans effective opportunities for pupils to engage in worthwhile learning experiences. These include valuable creative and digital opportunities, such as using design software in technology or developing coding in ICT. Pupils have a wide variety of opportunities in after school clubs, such as drama, pottery and badminton. Useful projects support more able pupils, such as visits from medical specialists.

The school maintains an effective work placement programme, which includes varied opportunities, such as vocational trades, and legal and veterinary professions. These experiences have a worthwhile impact on pupils' understanding of the world of work and their personal development.

The school plans for the development of skills well. Comprehensive tracking of literacy skills across the curriculum informs teachers well about individual pupils' needs. It also provides pupils with up-to-date literacy targets for improvement. The school does not use these literacy targets well enough to improve its provision.

The development of pupils' numeracy skills across the curriculum has been enhanced by helpful teaching resources, such as video clips and work cards for calculating averages or setting out pie charts. This ensures a good degree of consistency in the teaching. The school plans appropriate activities to support pupils' ICT skills. For example, in geography, pupils use global positioning systems (GPS trackers) in local survey work to develop their data collection skills.

The school provides a few opportunities for pupils to develop their Welsh language and appreciation of culture, for example a 'Shwmae' day and trips to Llangrannog. Generally, this aspect of the school's provision is underdeveloped.

Care, support and guidance: Good

Penyrheol Comprehensive School supports its pupils well in a caring and inclusive community. It supports vulnerable pupils well, using a wide range of initiatives. These include literacy and numeracy support, sessions to help develop social and emotional communication skills and interventions to improve behaviour. These are supported by useful links with external agencies and have contributed suitably to pupils' wellbeing and academic progress.

The school monitors attendance and behaviour robustly. The school behaviour policy is implemented consistently by nearly all staff and is understood by most pupils. The 'Cynnydd' project, providing an alternative curriculum in key stage 4, supports pupils in danger of exclusion and disengagement well. The specialist teaching facility provides high quality support, guidance and worthwhile academic and social experiences for very vulnerable pupils.

The school monitors pupil progress closely. Leaders use a wide range of evidence regarding their academic progress, behaviour and social development, to determine the support each pupil needs

Support and guidance for pupils with additional learning needs is strong and has contributed well to the standards they achieve.

A range of valid strategies is used by the school to communicate effectively with parents. These include social media platforms, parents' evenings and specific focused evenings, such as on e-safety and digital competency. Reports to parents on pupil progress are comprehensive.

The school provides effective support for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school helps pupils to make decisions regarding their own health and wellbeing by promoting healthy lifestyles effectively. The school has appropriate arrangements to promote healthy eating and drinking. Pupils with additional learning needs are able to participate in all aspects of school life and have an equal opportunity to participate in decision-making groups. The school council contributes positively to improvements to school life, for example through recycling schemes, changes to uniform and promoting positive behaviour.

A comprehensive personal and social education programme is valued by pupils and contributes well to their development. The school evaluates and amends this provision carefully in light of pupil feedback. It develops pupils' attitudes and values effectively, allowing them to understand their place within their own community and the wider world, for example through its work in respecting the rights of children. The school provides appropriate opportunities for pupils to reflect on their own beliefs and those of others. It gives appropriate advice and guidance to pupils and their families to support their future career choices.

The school responds and manages any incidents of bullying well. This includes making effective use of 'Seriously K.I.N.D.' pupil ambassadors, who have been trained to foster inclusivity within the school community. Where incidents occur they are recorded and followed up thoroughly.

An extensive range of extra-curricular activities encourages positive pupil involvement in creative arts and sports activities. The opportunities for pupils to be involved in musical events, public speaking and the annual whole-school production have a positive impact on their confidence and self-esteem.

The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

Leadership and management: Good

The headteacher has developed a clear vision for the school based on raising the ambitions of all pupils and preparing them for their future lives. He is supported suitably by his leadership team. They work well together and share a sense of purpose and commitment to the school's values and ambition reflected in their motto "I lwyddo rhaid credu – To achieve you need to believe". This has contributed well to the positive morale of most staff and has suitably supported improvements to pupil outcomes and wellbeing. There are a few important areas of the school's work where leadership has not led to sufficient and sustained improvements, such as the quality of teaching and the performance of pupils eligible for free school meals.

Senior leadership roles and responsibilities are mostly distributed equitably and focus appropriately on raising standards of achievement and pupil wellbeing. The headteacher holds his team to account suitably through frequent meetings, which include regular reviews of pupil progress.

There is a clear line management structure for senior leaders to support and challenge middle leaders. This includes regular timetabled group meetings for curriculum and pastoral leaders respectively. These meetings are largely operationally focused, while individual link meetings have suitable, common agenda items focusing appropriately on monitoring the progress and wellbeing of pupils. A few of these meetings do not lead to sufficient, clear action points. This does not help senior leaders to hold middle leaders to account robustly enough.

Many middle leaders carry out many aspects of their role appropriately. However, the effectiveness of middle leaders overall in securing high standards and improving the quality of teaching in their areas of responsibility varies too much. Leaders at all levels use performance data well to identify and address areas for improvement. In many cases, they have a suitable understanding of the specific aspects of teaching that require development and plan appropriate actions to bring about improvements. In a minority of instances, leaders do not focus closely enough on the impact of teaching on pupil progress. In particular, when scrutinising pupils' work, they pay too much attention to conformity with school policies at the expense of evaluating the standards that pupils achieve. This makes it difficult for these leaders to identify accurately specific areas for improvement.

Leaders collect an appropriate range of first-hand evidence, including pupils' views, in order to evaluate their areas of responsibility. They use this evidence to set broadly appropriate improvement priorities. However, there is too much variation in how precisely leaders plan and monitor their improvement strategies. As a result, these strategies have not had a consistent enough impact on the effectiveness of teaching and assessment.

The school has appropriate arrangements for managing the performance of staff. Objectives relate directly to the school's improvement priorities and support individual professional development well. The school challenges most underperformance robustly. Professional learning activities at a whole-school and individual level link appropriately to both performance management objectives and the school's improvement priorities. Staff have suitable opportunities to share good practice, for example through the 'triad' peer observation programme.

The headteacher, business manager and governors manage the school's expenditure carefully and make best use of the resources available to the school. Currently, there are sufficient staff, who are qualified appropriately and deployed suitably.

The school makes sound use of grant funding, including the pupil development grant, to support vulnerable pupils. This has supported improvements in the wellbeing, including the attendance, of pupils eligible for free school meals, though not in the standards they achieve.

The governors are enthusiastic supporters of the school. They are informed suitably about its performance, including through the use of link governors. Through their improving grasp of pupil performance data they have gained a sound understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development, and now provide a suitable level of challenge on performance in key areas.

Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the school and from the Estyn website (www.estyn.gov.wales)

Estyn evaluates a provider's effectiveness using a four-point judgement scale:

Excellent	Very strong, sustained performance and practice
Good	Strong features, although minor aspects may require improvement
Adequate and needs improvement	Strengths outweigh weaknesses, but important aspects require improvement
Unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement	Important weaknesses outweigh strengths

The report was produced in accordance with Section 28 of the Education Act 2005.

Every possible care has been taken to ensure that the information in this document is accurate at the time of going to press. Any enquiries or comments regarding this document/publication should be addressed to:

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Agenda Item 7

Education Scrutiny Performance Panel Work Programme 2021/2022

All meetings will be held remotely for foreseeable future

Date	Items to be discussed	Who
Meeting 1 24 Jun 21	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Harassment in School - deferred 2. Covid Recovery and key issues affecting Education moving forward 3. Planning 2021/2022 Council year in Education Scrutiny – Draft Work Programme (for discussion by Panel) 	Cllr R Smith H Morgan Rees Panel
Meeting 2 15 Jul 21	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Behaviour Strategy, how associated delegated spend to schools is being used – speak to two secondary schools (<i>Panel identified this item for scrutiny pre Covid</i>) 2. Feedback from ERW Scrutiny Councillor Group 28 Jun21 	Pontarddulais, Bishop Gore Cllr L Jones
Meeting 3 1 Sep 21	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The New Estyn Regime and thematic reviews 2. Update – Education Covid Recovery moving into new school year 3. Update – Regional Scrutiny moving forward 	Estyn - confirmed Cllr R Smith H Morgan Rees
Meeting 4 30 Sep 21	How are we improving schools in Swansea? (How are School Improvement Advisers supporting, evaluating and monitoring schools in Swansea). To also include: Sharing good practice, supporting eFSM pupils and readiness for the City Deal.	Cllr R Smith, Lead School Improvement Advisers
Meeting 5 21 Oct 21	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Harassment in Schools Update 2. Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (A new 10 year plan is being developed, an overview of requirements and the progress made so far) 3. New Curriculum progress update 	Cllr R Smith H Morgan Rees
Meeting 6 18 Nov 21	School Scrutiny Session 1 – Morriston Comprehensive School - Confirmed	Headteacher and Chair of Governors
Meeting 7 9 Dec 21	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Performance against identified education priorities (RAG) (Overview and then Cabinet Member Q&A) 2. Swansea Skills Partnership update 3. Update on progress – Regional Education Partnership 	Cllr R Smith H Morgan Rees
Meeting 8 20 Jan 22	School Scrutiny Session 2 – Penyrheol Comprehensive School - Confirmed	Headteacher and Chair of Governors
Meeting 9 14 Feb 22 (3.00pm)	Annual Budget as it relates to Educations matters (<i>Annual item</i>). To include how education has been affected by energy price rises.	Cllr R Smith H Morgan Rees
Meeting 10 24 Mar 22	<i>Updates on watching brief items:</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Additional Learning Needs Reform 2. New Curriculum 3. Education Other Than At School (EOTAS) 4. End of year report - Education Scrutiny 	Cllr R Smith H Morgan Rees Cllr L Jones

1. To schedule in: a visit to new pupil referral unit Maes Derw (when possible)