



## Report of the Director of Education and Chair of the Education & Skills Service Transformation Committee

Education & Skills Service Transformation Committee – 9 April 2025

### Education & Skills Service Transformation Committee Annual Report 2024-2025

<b>Purpose:</b>	To provide Council with an update on the progress made on the development of principles for pupil progression, and on a policy for supporting positive behaviour in schools.
<b>Policy Framework:</b>	Corporate Plan 2022-2028, Education & Skills
<b>Consultation:</b>	Education & Skills Service Transformation Committee, Access to Services, Finance and Legal.
<b>Recommendation(s):</b>	It is recommended that:  1. That the draft report be approved and referred to Council.
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<b>Finance Officer:</b>	Caroline Rees-Jones
<b>Legal Officer:</b>	Stephen Holland
<b>Access to Services Officer:</b>	Rhian Millar

#### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 In accordance with the Terms of Reference, the purpose of Service Transformation Committees is to contribute to the ongoing development of the Council's agreed transformation activities (specifically in relation to the Council's corporate plan, policy commitments, Corporate Transformation Plan, and Medium-Term Financial Plan) for consideration and adoption by Cabinet Members, Cabinet and / or Council as appropriate.

- 1.2 It was agreed that the work plan for the Committee during the 2024-2025 municipal year would focus on:
- Learner progress and the development of a set of 'Swansea Principles'
  - Supporting positive behaviour in schools
- 1.3 This report summarises the contribution of the Education and Skills Transformation Committee towards the development of the principles of pupil progression and new policy for supporting positive behaviour in schools.

## **2. Principles of Pupil Progression**

- 2.1 In June 2024, the Principal School Improvement Adviser provided information to the Committee to support a potential work plan item around the development of a set of 'Swansea Principles' for progression. This included explanations around accountability, the role of governing bodies, local and regional scrutiny arrangements, the work of Estyn, procedures in place to support schools, and definition and clarity around assessment and assessments. Progression was defined as 'how a learner develops and improves their knowledge and skills over time'. Members of the committee discussed and asked further questions, which the Principal School Improvement Adviser responded to. The Cabinet Member and Director also responded, indicating that a more focused and simplified approach could be beneficial to schools.
- 2.2 In July 2024, the Principal School Improvement Adviser provided the Committee with a verbal update in the first meeting as a work plan item for learner progress. The update considered designing a Swansea set of principles and to develop understanding around how to interpret pupil progression across our schools and settings within the local authority. Overall progression in learning was defined as 'a process of developing knowledge, skills and understanding over time'.

The requirements for each school and setting were shared with the Committee, including that that it had to publish, through its governing body, its arrangements for curriculum and assessment. Ongoing assessment should be in place for every learner and assessment was about pupil progression.

The Committee were provided with details of a programme to support a shared understanding of linear progression from 3-16. This programme did not support an individual view of a school's curriculum design of the principles of progression that sat underneath it, and the School Improvement Team had responded to this through the development of episodes of evaluation. The Committee were informed that a lead officer for curriculum, learning and teaching had been appointed, with the School Improvement Partnership being the recipient of bids or business models from schools and or cluster partnerships to develop

some work together. Various options were outlined to provide principles and practical guidance for schools and settings in order to progress this piece of work. The Committee made a number of comments and asked questions, which the Principal School Improvement Adviser responded to accordingly.

- 2.3 The next meeting on this item took place in September 2024, with Elaine Sharpling from the University of Wales Trinity St. David (UWTSD) outlining the background to the Camau i'r Dyfodol/Steps to the Future Project which is a Welsh Government funded scheme between UWTSD and Glasgow University. The presentation included an explanation of the Curriculum for Wales (CfW) and the guidance required from Welsh and Local Government; the thinking required around curriculum, assessment and pedagogy and challenges faced by practitioners; further definition and explanation around progression; and the connections between different stages and levels of learning. Committee members discussed the presentation and asked various questions, particularly around the post covid impact on school attendance, rise and potential implications of home schooling, cluster working, additional pressure being placed upon teachers by the new CfW and the need to support and help teachers with the new way of working that the CfW has brought.
- 2.4 The Principal School Improvement Adviser followed with a presentation which outlined a background and basis for a set of Swansea principles for pupil progression. This presentation included the role of assessment; what assessment should support; supporting individual learners on a day-to-day basis; identifying, capturing and reflecting on individual learner progress over time; understanding group progress in order to reflect on practice; summarising the current position; and next steps to outline principles of effective formative assessment, reference a range of strategies, develop a better understanding of both feedback and next steps needed by learners and examples of effective practice. The Committee discussed the presentation and asked questions around the issues and topics detailed within it, particularly around support to disadvantaged children, adverse childhood experiences, trauma relating to difficult family circumstances & substance misuse etc and their effect on young people, school cluster approaches and the need for consistency, pace and monitoring of progress, impact and availability of flying start scheme.
- 2.5 In December 2024, the Principal School Improvement Adviser provided the Committee with a detailed presentation, outlining the position relating to the development of a series of Principles for Pupil Progression in Swansea Schools. The presentation detailed further the role of assessment; supporting individual learners on an ongoing, day-to-day basis; identifying, capturing and reflecting on individual learner progress over time; understanding group progress in order to reflect on practice; summarising where the use of assessment is particularly strong, schools ensure that it has a formative role in improving teaching

and helps pupils better understand their learning; the next steps to outline principles of effective formative assessment, reference a range of strategies, develop a better understanding of feedback and a better understanding of learner next steps and examples of effective practice. Areas to be considered as part of Swansea's Principles of Learner progression and their benefits were shared in detail, with the construction of a draft document with stakeholder engagement as a next step. The Committee made a number of comments and questions around the development of the new principles and consideration that schools would need to be involved and supported through the introduction of the new principles. The Committee outlined the need to support vulnerable learners, free school meals pupils, reading standards and literacy standards, with parental involvement and support also a key issue.

- 2.6 In February 2025, a set of draft principles were shared with the Committee for Swansea schools as a framework to support pupil progression going forward. It was outlined that the principles would be subject to consultation and discussion with various relevant stakeholder groups before a final draft report is brought back to the committee for approval. Committee members made comments and asked questions. The Committee resolved that the draft policy would be refined following stakeholder input and brought back to the Committee for further approval.

### **3. Supporting Positive Behaviour in Schools**

- 3.1 In June 2024, the Head of Vulnerable Learners Service provided information to the Committee to support a potential work plan item around supporting positive behaviour in schools. A definition of behaviour was shared, an overview of the current situation and context in Swansea and the legal obligations of the local authority. Next steps were shared for consideration.
- 3.2 Following the meeting, Committee Members were invited to attend a multi-agency young person's behaviour workshop to inform planning and shape development of a future policy.
- 3.3 In July 2024, the Head of Vulnerable Learners Service provided a presentation to the Committee, outlining the elements that were being worked on to support behaviour, including partnership work, workshops and a questionnaire for schools. An update was given around the multi-agency young person's behaviour workshop, that included the issues faced by agencies/organisations; what approaches were needed; what the agencies could offer; how organisations could work collectively; and the next steps. The Committee was informed that a second event had been scheduled for September 2024. Committee members discussed the presentation and asked questions around the issues and topics within it.

- 3.4 In October 2024, the Head of Vulnerable Learners updated the Committee with a presentation around progress, which included the workshops held; the main issues identified; what approaches are needed; what could other people/organisations offer the Council; how organisations could work collectively; the 'Iceberg' effect of problems and issues affecting young people and the possible options to support these; the funding context and pressures affecting and impacting upon budgets; agreeing a vision; and the next steps. The Committee discussed the points raised, made various comments relating to the presentation and asked questions around the issues and topics detailed within it, particularly around costs/finances within the authority and the impact of increased spending in one area that impacts on other service areas/silo mentality, possible better spending/targeting of resources, the long term impact of covid, increased community/parental engagement, the role of school governors and the delivery plan and toolkit timescales. Members welcomed and supported the various multi-agency sessions held and the ongoing consultation exercise that is ongoing.
- 3.5 In January 2025, the Team Manager for Pupil Support presented a report to update the Committee on progress made in relation to developing a new Swansea Council behaviour policy for schools and sought their input on the next steps. The report contained and detailed information around the background to the development of the new policy; the change and increase in challenging behaviour in schools and increase in exclusions; various social and demographic reasons and impacts upon behaviour; the increase in numbers of Additional Learning Needs and neurodiverse learners; the duties of the local authority to promote high standards of education; progress to date including the workshops and the stakeholders that attended; a questionnaire that was shared with schools and how the workshops, surveys and feedback have enabled a clearer focus on issues and approaches needed; and details around follow-up workshops to support the development of a new policy focusing on respect, rights and responsibility. The Committee discussed in detail the report and the presentation and made various comments and questions in relation to them both. The Committee agreed that a draft policy was to be shared in the February meeting.
- 3.6 In February 2025, The Head of Vulnerable Learners Service presented a draft local authority behaviour policy in detail with the Committee, that set out expectations and responsibilities for rights-based respectful relationships across schools as part of a revised strategy for improving pupil behaviour. The background to the drafting of the new policy, the local and national contexts, the legal issues to be addressed and covered, the various stakeholder events and consultation sessions held to date and the feedback and findings received from these, and the discussions and input from previous committee meetings were also shared. Committee Members asked questions and made comments and suggested some additional minor amendments to be made to the

policy and resolved that the draft policy be approved following the minor amendments and referred to Cabinet.

- 3.7 In March 2025, a Behaviour Conference was held for Swansea schools and was attended by the Chair of the Education and Skills Service Transformation Committee. The draft policy and toolkit were launched during the conference.

#### **4. Progress to the end of the Municipal Year 2024/2025**

- 4.1 Following the input of the Education and Skills Service Transformation Committee and other stakeholders including headteachers, the draft principles of progression have been refined and will be presented to the Committee in April 2025 for final consideration and approval. Following approval, this will be referred to Cabinet (Appendix 1).
- 4.2 A new policy titled 'Swansea Council Respect, Rights and Responsibility Policy' has been developed for supporting positive behaviour in schools. Feedback and amendments were made to the draft policy following the February meeting and the final draft was referred to Cabinet in April 2025 (Appendix 2).

#### **5. Integrated Impact Assessment Implications**

- 5.1 The Council is subject to the Equality Act (Public Sector Equality Duty and the socio-economic duty), the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure, and must in the exercise of their functions, have due regard to the need to:
- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Acts.
  - Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
  - Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
  - Deliver better outcomes for those people who experience socio-economic disadvantage
  - Consider opportunities for people to use the Welsh language
  - Treat the Welsh language no less favourably than English.
  - Ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.
- 5.1.1 The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 mandates that public bodies in Wales must carry out sustainable development. Sustainable development means the process of improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales by taking action, in accordance with the sustainable development principle, aimed at achieving the 'well-being goals'.

- 5.1.2 Our Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) process ensures we have paid due regard to the above. It also takes into account other key issues and priorities, such as poverty and social exclusion, community cohesion, carers, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and Welsh language.

The IIA process has been undertaken for each of the new policies and are included alongside their reports to Cabinet.

## **6. Legal Implications**

- 6.1 There are no specific legal implications associated with this report.

## **7. Financial Implications**

- 7.1 There are no financial implications associated with this report.

**Background Papers:** None

### **Appendices:**

Appendix 1 – Swansea Principles for Pupil Progression (Item 4 on Today's Agenda Pack)

Appendix 2 – Swansea Council Respect, Rights and Responsibility Policy – [Agenda for Cabinet on Thursday, 10 April 2025, 10.00 am - Swansea](#)