

CABINET MEMBER FOR EDUCATION

Scrutiny Members will be sent a 50+ page document covering all areas of the Education Department's work.

Headlines

At the 4 November 2014 meeting of Council I stated my priorities.

1. Raise attainment and achievement for all learners 3-19.
2. Improve attendance levels.
3. Improve literacy in both English and Welsh to enable all pupils to take full advantage of the curriculum and to reduce the gap between boys and girls.

All Councils are facing very challenging times. Education and Children's Social Services have received relative prioritisation as all council departments face large reductions in their budgets. This still resulted in real-term cuts for many schools. Education has become very dependent on grants. Although PDG rose this year most of the other grants were reduced. The impact varies from school to school. We are expecting a smaller financial settlement next year.

Swansea is 14th highest of the 22 Welsh local authorities in terms of free school meals, so our 'expected' benchmark position would be 14th for most performance measures. For the 14/15 year we are better than this on almost all the indicators, the exception being the Foundation Phase where we are ranked 15th. This is up from 17th for the year before which suggests the correct measures to support improvement have been put in place.

For the national reading test in English, we are 5th best for the percentage of learners with a score of 85 or above and 4th best for the percentage scoring 115 or above, an improvement on 2014. For the national reading test in Welsh, we are 9th and 14th in Wales.

Both the national numeracy tests indicate that we are well above our expected benchmark position.

At Key Stage 4, the summer term 2015 GCSE results are the best ever results from Swansea. At 'A' and 'AS' level Swansea students performed very well.

Despite these real successes we have to keep working to ensure that all our children are supported to achieve to their full potential. I am pleased to see the PDG being used and shared between schools to improve reading and family learning.

Secondary school attendance is positive. I am concerned at the attendance levels in primary schools. There is a large variation between schools. All schools have attendance plans in place. For some children a team approach with EWO and Social Services is required. We are looking incentive schemes for children and starting to use penalty notices for parents.

Jennifer Raynor