

## Schools Scrutiny Performance Panel Update

### 1. Remit of the Panel

The overarching purpose of the panel is to: provide ongoing challenge to schools 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.*

### 2. Key Activities

The Panel is currently meeting on a monthly basis (see attached work timetable) and the work completed since the last update in April includes:

- a) In May the Panel discussed and agreed their programme of work for the year
- b) In June the Panel met with Cefn Hengoed Community Secondary School
- c) In July we planned to meet with the ERW Chief Executive to take our annual look at the ERW Business Plan and how it affects Swansea but unfortunately this had to be cancelled, this has been rescheduled for late September
- d) Over this period the Panel has also kept up to date with individual school Estyn Inspections publications and any advisory/practice documents including for example: relevant Estyn Inspection outcomes for Swansea, Estyn and other guidance information.

### 3. Achievements / Impact

One convener's letter to the Cabinet Member has been sent since May where the panel looked at:

#### **Individual School Scrutiny – Cefn Hengoed Community Secondary School**

We chose to speak to the school because it has been highlighted as showing excellent practice by Estyn and we wished to learn, celebrate and help share that good practice. We have given our thoughts in a letter to the cabinet member as well as feeding back to the school.

We found that some of the reasons for the schools exceptional Estyn judgement are

- *Leadership: the high quality and consistency of leadership at all levels is a particular strength. Roles and responsibilities are distributed well and lines of accountability are clear. All leaders set the highest expectations and level of challenge to staff and individual departments, as well as pupils. Estyn*
- Excellent quality assurance and use of data, tight monitoring with several layers of quality assurance
- A sharp focus on pupil performance and raising standards
- Commitment to Continuous Professional Development of staff resulting in high teaching quality across the school which has been judged as a particular strength by Estyn
- Continually self-evaluating school that addresses challenges head on
- Supportive and challenging governing body
- Supportive local community that also benefit from this successful school
- Excellent pastoral care
- The school works well with others in sharing practice, not only with its cluster primaries but also with parents and the local community

We were particularly impressed by

- The work of Cefn Hengoed with its cluster Primary's Schools
- Literacy, numeracy and basic skills all being developed fully across the curriculum

- How the school has narrowed the gap both between boys' and girls' performance and significantly improving outcomes for boys and pupils in receipt of free school meals
- The overall improved performance of successive year 9 and 11 cohorts in terms of national indicators
- Ongoing improvement in pupil attendance with this year being on target so far 94.1% attendance.

The school also identified some of the challenges it will face over coming years, including

- The continued focus on and reduction to budgets for schools and the public sector
- Donaldson report and associated developments - positive but resource intensive.
- Welsh Baccalaureate - also resource intensive.

#### 4. Future Work Programme

In May we evaluated the year's work, identify learning points and then began planning for the coming year. The work programme has been agreed as follows:

Meeting date	Item to be discussed
<b>Meeting 4</b> 1 Sep 16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reviewing the provision of support for school improvement including improving the quality of teaching and learning and of the consistency of teacher assessments.</li> </ul>
<b>Meeting 5</b> 29 Sep 16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ERW - progress against Business Plan priorities locally and regionally</li> <li>• Discuss tools/techniques for intervention (examine intervention programmes to see how effective they are, speaking to Sketty Primary School as an example)</li> </ul>
<b>Meeting 6</b> 19 Oct 16	<b>School 2</b> – Amber school Birchgrove Comprehensive School, (Headteacher, Chair of Governors), Pre meeting with Challenge Advisor
<b>Meeting 7</b> 17 Nov 16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annual Audit Report of Schools (invite Chair of Audit Committee)</li> <li>• Free school meal pupils performance and use of the Pupil deprivation grant (including data on how it has been spent by schools)</li> </ul>
<b>Meeting 8</b> 8 Dec 16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Looked After Children – Educational Performance update</li> <li>• Swansea Association of Governing Bodies (<i>tentative - tba</i>)</li> <li>• The development of new curriculum - pioneer schools in Swansea</li> </ul>
<b>Meeting 9</b> 18 Jan 17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annual Education Performance Reporting (verified data)</li> <li>• Latest school categorisation matrix</li> <li>• Estyn Inspection - Post Inspection Action Plan – progress update</li> </ul>
**Extra meeting (Feb)	• Annual budget as it relates to education matters <i>Date TBA</i>
<b>Meeting 10</b> 16 Feb 17	<b>School 3</b> – Red or Amber School to be agreed
<b>Meeting 11</b> 16 Mar 17	<b>School 4</b> – Red or Amber School to be agreed
**Extra meeting (Mar)	Pre-decision Scrutiny: Commissioning Review of Alternative Learning Needs/Special Educational Needs <i>Date TBA</i>
<b>Meeting 12</b> 6 Apr 17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EMLAS update</li> <li>• Evaluate year and discuss possible topics for new municipal year</li> </ul>

#### Topics also identified to be prioritised and to be scheduled in year:

1. Effective networks and collaborations between schools – cluster working (behaviour)
2. Preparedness for School (To become a separate inquiry)
3. A particular reference to Science when speaking to schools this year
4. New Estyn Inspection Regime from 2017 (all councillor briefing to be arranged)
5. Home-schooling non statutory guidance (to agenda when published in Autumn)

#### 5. Action for the Scrutiny Programme Committee

We were pleased that the topic that had arisen via their work programme discussions was recently chosen for in-depth scrutiny review by the SPC, namely, preparedness for school.