

## 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) We had two meetings in September which included taking our annual look at the ERW Business Plan and how it affects Swansea, discussing the effectiveness of tools and techniques for intervention with the Headteacher from Sketty Primary School and we reviewed the support provided by the School Improvement Service.
- d) In October we met with Bryniago Welsh Medium Primary Schools and looked at their current performance and prospects for improvement
- e) On the 16 November we looked at eFSM pupil performance and use of the pupil deprivation grants and looked at schools annual audit report
- f) The support and performance of Looked After Children was the main focus for our meeting in December but we also received updates on restorative practice and pioneer schools
- g) Our February meeting will concentrate upon educational performance where annual verified data, the school categorisation outcomes and our process in the Estyn Post Inspection Action Plan will be discussed. Also in February we will receive an update on progress in relation to the School Music Service.
- h) March we will speak to the Headteacher, Chair of Governors and the Lead Link Officer for Birchgrove Comprehensive School about the current educational performance and prospects for improvement.
- i) 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

We have sent six letters to the Cabinet Member since May, one of the issues covered included for example

#### **Support and performance of Looked After Children – 8 December 2016**

We heard that currently there are 495 Looked After Children (LAC) and also 242 children on Special Guardianship Orders (SGO). We were encouraged to hear that further support is going to be offered to those children and carers that have SGOs and to adopters. We recognise that although SGO children are no longer looked after their needs have not gone away and the costs to local authority associated with LAC education cannot be recouped.

We were pleased to find an upward trend in all Key Stages but recognise that work is still required especially in relation to closing the gap between mainstream pupils and LAC pupils especially as they get older.

We were informed that Attachment Training had recently been introduced by ERW. The training will be rolled out to all schools in both Neath Port Talbot and Swansea starting in January 2017. This is a positive step but we did feel that it would be useful for all Councillors to be offered this training.

We heard that Estyn had chosen Swansea as a good practice local authority in relation to listening to the “learner’s voice”. We were particularly pleased to hear about with the involvement, participation and engagement of LAC in service planning and reviews.

We were interested to find out how much Education Other Than At School services (EOTAS) is used by Looked After Children. We were informed that the number of LAC accessing EOTAS is small and that no children were awaiting provision (LAC are prioritised and can be admitted over admissions numbers anyway). When the current data was collected there were no LAC in a PRU provision.

We were pleased to hear that when LAC become looked after their original school is maintained where possible and they only look for a move of school if there is an opportunity for a long term permanent placement elsewhere.

#### 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
**Extra meeting 6 Feb	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Annual budget as it relates to education matters</li> </ul>
<b>Meeting 10</b> 16 Feb 17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School Music Service</li> <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>
<b>Meeting 11</b> 16 Mar 17	<b>School 3</b> – Birchgrove Comprehensive School Headteacher and Chair of Governors Pre- meeting with link challenge advisor
<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 (Became 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 available)

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

N/A