

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 June 2017 includes:

- a) In July 17 an Education Scrutiny Workshop was held where Councillors received an overview of education in Swansea and then discussed their programme of work for the coming year.
- b) In August the Panel looked at the Pupil Voice in Swansea and also agreed their work programme.
- c) In September discussed progress with the Education Other Than At School changes to service and accommodation.
- d) In October we looked at the Education Improvement Serviced and received an update on QED 2020 and the 21st Century Schools Programme
- e) On the 16 November the panel visited Olchfa Comprehensive School meeting with the Head and Chair of Governors of the School along with the Head of Parklands Primary School to look at progress with their collaboration work in relation to development of the new curriculum for Wales. Councillor also met with a group of young people from the Olchfa School Advisory Group.
- f) The support and performance of Looked After Children was the main focus for our meeting in December but they also looked at the pupil deprivation grant spend and how it is being used to improve the outcomes of vulnerable pupils.
- g) On the 18 January we had our annual review of the Education Performance Data and School Categorisation.
- h) Over this period the Panel has also kept up to date with individual school Estyn Inspections publications and any advisory/practice documents.

3. Achievements / Impact

We have sent three letters to the Cabinet Member since July 17. One of issues covered, as an example, was a visit to a school to look at how they are progressing with the development of the new curriculum.

We met with Hugh Davies the Headteacher, Cllr Mary Jones the Chair of Governors from Olchfa Comprehensive School and Anne Lloyd the Headteacher Parklands Primary School, to look at how the development of the New Curriculum for Wales (for which they are a pilot) is progressing from their viewpoints. The Panel took away a number of learning points from this session and they have shared these with the Cabinet Member for Schools, Education and Lifelong Learning and on the Scrutiny Blog including:

- Strong leadership within schools will be key to moving forward, but must recognise that School readiness for the new curriculum will be varied.
- Both the School Governing Body and Leadership Team within a school must be committed to it and be ready to move it forward.
- Collaboration is happening not only because of the new curriculum pilot, some schools were thinking this way and starting to move down that road but this has been an impetus to moving forward. There are some schools that are not pioneer schools but are starting to do this because they recognise that it is the right thing to do.

- There are a minority of individuals within schools that are not convinced and therefore not as supportive of Donaldson and the ethos of the new curriculum. There is still a need to be winning of hearts and minds with some.
- Must recognise schools are at different stages of learning and development, therefore their ability to move forward with the new curriculum will vary and will need different levels of support.
- Ensure everything is grounded in the 4 core purposes, 'they are the fundamental touchstone'. Teachers must understand and be committed to this in order to move forward.
- The pedagogy and type of knowledge is different so teachers need to embrace this as part of their continuous improvement journey. It will be important moving forward for the criterion to fit with the pedagogy that goes with the new curriculum.
- It is vital to use evidence to inform the development of the practice needed. Moving forward must be underpinned by research and evidence based decisions.
- The learning for pupils is much broader within the new curriculum than with the old one, subjects are looked at in more depth and breadth, enabling pupils to question and think, it also frees up time to explore issues more. This enables children to think/question and not just acquire knowledge.
- The new curriculum needs to be about teaching and learning, about what the child needs and not only about results and data.
- Working across clusters will be important moving forward, the primaries and secondary schools working together to ensure smooth transitions and shared practices will be of benefit to all.
- There is an important role for all the pioneer schools in being reflective and looking at the effective pedagogy learned and that is needed, also encouraging and giving confidence to other schools to start down this process.

We were extremely impressed with both schools and their commitment and drive in improving the outcomes of their pupils. We did recognise that they both have taken this great opportunity to shape new practice and have embraced it fully.

4. Future Work Programme

The work programme left this municipal year is as:

Meeting date	Items to be discussed
Extra Meeting 13 Feb 18	*Scrutiny of Annual Budget as it relates to education matters
Meeting 8 15 Feb 18	*School 2 – Morriston Primary School Amber: Speaking to Head and Chair of Governors of a School including preparation session with the challenge advisor. <i>Confirmed.</i>
Meeting 9 15 Mar 18 CR5	*School 3 – Bishop Vaughan Catholic Secondary School Amber: Speaking to Head and Chair of Governors of a School including preparation session with the challenge advisor. <i>Confirmed.</i>
Meeting 10 12 Apr 18 CR5	1. School to School Collaboration, and/or 2. Science in Schools in Swansea, or 3. Meeting with the Association of School Governors
Extra Meeting Date TBA	Pre-decision Scrutiny Alternative Learning Needs Reform Commissioning Review (<i>awaiting a cabinet date</i>)
Meeting 11 10 May 18 CR5	1. Item to be agreed 2. Review of the year and planning for the year ahead

5. Action for the Scrutiny Programme Committee

N/A