



City and County of Swansea

## Minutes of the **Scrutiny Performance Panel – Education**

Committee Room 6, Guildhall, Swansea

Thursday, 14 November 2019 at 4.00 pm

**Present:** Councillor L R Jones (Chair) Presided

**Councillor(s)**

C Anderson  
L S Gibbard  
L James

**Councillor(s)**

A M Day  
D W Helliwell  
L J Tyler-Lloyd

**Councillor(s)**

S J Gallagher  
B Hopkins

**Other attendees:**

Cllr J Raynor

Cabinet Member Education Improvement, Learning and Skills

Catie Parry  
Emma Griffiths  
Catrin Ford

Public Health Wales (NHS)  
Public Health Wales (NHS)  
Public Health Wales (NHS)

**Officer(s)**

Helen Morgan - Rees  
Michelle Roberts

Head of Education Achievement & Partnership  
Scrutiny Officer

**Apologies for Absence**

Councillor(s): M Durke, S M Jones and M A Langstone  
Co-opted Member(s): D Anderson-Thomas and A Roberts

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**1 Disclosure of Personal and Prejudicial Interests**

Cllr Mike Day declared a personal interest in Item 4.

**2 Prohibition of Whipped Votes and Declaration of Party Whips**

None

**3 Letters and Minutes**

Minutes and letters were agreed

**4 Briefing on Healthy Schools Initiative**

Catie Parry, Emma Griffiths and Catrin Ford from Public Health Wales attended the Panel, gave a presentation and discussing the issues with the Panel. The following points were noted:

- The Panel heard from the representatives from Public Health Wales about the Healthy Schools Initiative in Swansea, why it is so important, the healthy schools scheme itself and how all it all fits with the Curriculum for Wales.
- Councillors were pleased to hear that all Swansea schools have engaged with the Swansea Schools Initiative to different levels, with 12 schools in Swansea achieving the National Quality Award (NQA) that equates 13% of Swansea Schools. With 99% of schools achieving phase 3 and above. 20% of schools are currently working towards the NQA at any one time. These figures all exceed the Welsh Government national targets for the initiative. Hearing that the majority of schools achieving the NQA are from the primary sector but this does not mean that work is not taking place in secondary school. They are engaged in the initiative but are not in a position to go for the award at present. The Panel were assured that help is given to any school that may not have engaged fully or may have stalled in progress by the public health team.
- Councillors asked how much emphasis is put on mental health as part of this initiative. They pleased to hear that mental health and wellbeing is the base topic that everything else is built upon and it underpins what the scheme is all about.
- The Panel heard about the stark HAPPEN data (From Health and Wellbeing data collected by Swansea University). This outlined some of the challenges Wales faces in relation to the health and well-being of our children. For example:
  - 74.8% of children under 5 years old in Swansea are a healthy weight but 25.2% are an unhealthy weight.
  - Only 28% of children taking part in the survey reported eating 5 portions of fruit and vegetables a day.
  - On average, a 5-year-old child living in Swansea will have at least one missing, filled or decayed tooth.
  - Also from the data collected by Cardiff University (call the SHRN data) showed that 44% of pupils in school years 7 to 11 reported eating 1 or more portions of fruit and vegetables a day. It also showed that 44% of pupils report drinking alcohol.
- The Panel recognised this does show that our children and young people are eating the wrong foods and have bad dental hygiene. Hearing that this is preventable and clearly evidences why the work of Public Health Wales and Schools in addressing this is so important. Councillors did agree that working with parents to encourage better eating habits is also key.
- The Panel were told about some of the excellent health improvement work underway in Swansea schools and they agreed with the public health team when they said that this issue it must be kept high, if not top of, the agenda.
- The Panel were encouraged to hear that the new Curriculum for Wales 2022 was exciting because it will introduce a new way of learning for our children and young people, teaching skills they can grow up with. Councillors were particularly pleased that Health and Wellbeing will be one of the six areas of learning and experience and will have equal status on the curriculum to the other 5 areas.
- The Panel thanked Public Health Wales for attending and we look forward to hearing how the new curriculum will help this important agenda progress.

## **5 The National Mission and Developing a Transformational Curriculum**

Cllr Jen Raynor, Cabinet Member for Education Improvement, Learning and Skills and Helen Morgan Rees, the Head of Education Achievement and Partnership

attended the Panel and provided a written report on how are schools are addressing actions in *Our National Mission* for education, including a transformational curriculum. In brief summary the report covered:

- The Our National Mission plan for education improvement and action plan
- Swansea Education Directorate role as an effective planner and provider of intelligence to enable schools to improve learner outcomes and well-being.
- Inequalities faced by vulnerable learners and requirement to facilitate multi agency partnerships
- Driving inspirational leadership through the four core purposes of the new transformational curriculum
- The national approach to professional learning (NAPL)
- Schools as Learning Organisations (SLOs)
- The blended professional approach and how it is developing in Swansea
- Improving top performance learning in sixth forms through Seren Network Hub
- Commitment to national actions to reduce workload and bureaucracy
- Changing way in which school performance is to be measured

In conclusion

1. Swansea schools demonstrate a strong understanding of the complex changes in the education system in Wales and are being supported to manage change through local and regional strategic actions.
2. The alignment of local and regional priorities to the actions within Our National Mission is helpful and clear.
3. Schools are currently undergoing significant change. The development of schools as learning organisations is key to support navigation through the change.
4. Historic methods of evaluating schools' performance are changing and there is and will be a greater emphasis on pupils' emotional health and well-being.

The points noted from the discussion include:

- That this was an opportune moment to look at how Swansea schools are responding to this challenge. It is important for us to take stock of where we are and what the capacity is in our schools to do this.
- Must develop robust assessment practice across the whole region and consistency. Recognise Swansea is showing secure assessments but is it as good in some of the other parts of the region.
- This is a very difficult period for local authorities and scrutiny in making judgements on the quality of education. Especially as there will be much more focus on progress of individual learners rather than data.
- How schools are addressing the implementation of the new curriculum and all that is involved with that. Education Scrutiny Panel to add this to their list of questions they use for their individual schools scrutiny.
- How Estyn is changing is with the new curriculum. It will be more about conversations with schools rather than judgements. This will be in line with the recent Donaldson report on the Inspectorate. Estyn will ensure their work supports the new curriculum. Non-judgemental visits next year this will be followed by a gap of a year to give breathing space and take stock. Following this the inspection regime will be different, more about integrated partnership

approach although will still inspection for schools where there are concerns. This is a positive move forward.

- Schools to cut down on unnecessary work. More deep evaluation of specific areas where school needs to improve rather than reams of reports on wider areas. This should be more powerful improvement tool rather than just focussing on writing the report to satisfy performance that is more general. Panel agreed that this is the best way forward.
- Although this may be a challenge for some schools as they are still committed to the older system, where accountability reporting is still seen as important so will need help and support to move to the new way of working.
- It will be important to ensure that governors understand the new curriculum and the new greater emphasis on pupil emotional health and wellbeing. It will be important that they ask the right questions.
- New curriculum is not so prescriptive, some teachers will thrive in this environment but we must recognise that some will need more support to progress this successfully.
- Panel asked what is there for those pupils who would like to follow a more non-academic route. There are partnerships with a wide range of partners locally to ensure we are offering experience in the world of work including a number of apprenticeships. The Apprenticeship Academy works with employers to develop opportunities. Panel agreed that this relationship building and opportunities for apprenticeships in a variety of roles could be developed much further. The panel highlighted those digital opportunities that do not necessarily have an academic route attached to them.
- The Panel were told about the positive 'Build me' programme with the PRU and Parc y Werin build, offering 2 days of week training opportunities in construction activities, it includes a supervised visits and discussion about different roles and skills required on site.
- The Panel were pleased with the progress being made in Swansea in relation to the development of the new curriculum and the commitment to developing the Our National Mission here in Swansea. We would like to receive regular updates as it progresses.

## **6 Work Programme 2019/2020**

The Convener informed the Panel that the item scheduled for 13 February 2020 on Additional Learning Needs has been brought forward to the 19 December meeting. Those items scheduled for 19 December have been moved to 13 February.

The meeting ended at 5.30 pm