



City and County of Swansea

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

Remotely via Teams

Thursday, 15 July 2021 at 4.00 pm

Present: Councillor L R Jones (Chair) Presided

Councillor(s)

C Anderson
B Hopkins

Councillor(s)

A M Day
L James

Councillor(s)

D W Helliwell

Co-opted Member(s)

D Anderson-Thomas

Co-opted Member(s)

Co-opted Member(s)

Other Attendees

Robert Smith

Cabinet Member - Education Improvement, Learning & Skills

Officer(s)

Brij Madahar
Helen Burgum
Gareth Rees
Rachel Thomas
Helen Morgan-Rees

Scrutiny Team Leader
Headteacher Bishop Gore Secondary School
Headteacher Pontarddulais Secondary School
Assistant Headteacher Pontarddulais Secondary School
Director of Education

Apologies for Absence

Councillor(s): S J Gallagher, S M Jones, M A Langstone and L J Tyler-Lloyd

1 Disclosure of Personal and Prejudicial Interests.

None

2 Prohibition of Whipped Votes and Declaration of Party Whips

None

3 Minutes of Previous Meeting

Minutes of the meeting on the 24 June 2021 were accepted.

4 Public Questions

No public questions were received.

5 Behaviour Strategy, how associated delegated spend to schools is being used

The Panel invited two Headteacher's from different Secondary Schools in different parts of Swansea to discuss how they are using the monies they have been delegated as part of the behaviour strategy. They wanted to find out how schools are using these monies to reduce referrals to Education Other Than At Schools Services, to re-introduce pupils back into schools after attending such services and other behaviour related issues.

Helen Burgum the Headteacher at Bishop Gore Secondary School and Gareth Rees the Headteacher and Rachel Thomas the Assistant Headteacher at Pontarddulais Secondary School attended the Panel meeting. They both made a PowerPoint presentation on key questions sent to them by the Panel prior to the meeting, namely:

1. How are you using your delegated spend, associated with the behaviour strategy, to reduce exclusions and referrals to EOTAS?
2. Can you give us some examples of where this has benefited pupils in your schools?
3. How has the disruption to education caused by the pandemic affected your work in this area and what has been the impact on pupils? And how do you hope that things will change in future?
4. How well is it helping you to reintegrate pupils back into mainstream after being in EOTAS?
5. How do you feel the overall behaviour strategy in working to the benefit pupils currently?
6. In your opinion, could this be improved?

Pontarddulais Secondary School outlined:

- Context of the school including: 846 pupils on role, overall 17.5% eFSM pupils, 23% pupils with Additional Learning Needs
- Team Around the Child team is where much of the work in relation to behaviour issues, and where the delegated funding from the behaviour strategy is used. This more widely includes for example pastoral support, ALN, Careers Wales, school nurse etc.
- Key to this and addressing behaviour and reductions in referral to Education Other Than At School Services is TY Dysgu, at unit that supports pupils who struggle with behaviour in the mainstream provision. Funding from delegated spend goes towards funding 3 teachers and a co-ordinator for this provision.
- Training has been provided for teachers on the Thrive Strategy, this an approach that helps teachers develop pupils social and emotional skills.
- This work has massively reduced exclusions, EOTAS referrals and has increased pupil confidence around the school.
- Some of the initiatives/activities include for example Bulldog Boxing, Transform days, Paw-fact Baxter Project
- The pandemic affected our work in this area as follows: outdoor visits, use of External providers, rise in fixed term exclusions – re-establishing boundaries, over the last half term a marked improvement in behaviour around the school. Pupils have adapted remarkably well, however there are have been pressures on staffing and costs to work around issues faced

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- We are integrating pupils back into mainstream after being in EOTAS using a hybrid approach/bespoke timetables - mix of Ty Dysgu and mainstream provision. Each pupil has a designated key member of staff.
- In our opinion provision could this be improved by continued Cynnydd funding (highlighted at SCCASH meeting), funding of pre 14-16 to prevent EOTAS referrals and to train more staff in the Thrive approach

Bishop Gore Secondary School outlined:

- Context of the school including 11-18 inclusive, with large diverse catchment.
- Using delegated spend, associated with the behaviour strategy, to reduce exclusions and referrals to EOTAS using Our 'Nurture Provision' (B-Hi5) and 'Wrap-around support package' (Pitstop) at KS3 and our 'Transition to Adulthood Provisions' (Mi-Pod and ELEV8) at KS4 strive to provide supportive learning environments that are stimulating and challenging, where pupils are encouraged, praised and nurtured in order to develop self-awareness and discipline.
- The aim of the provision is to enable pupils, to work holistically with partners both inside and outside the school and to provide a curriculum that is appropriate to meet the physical, emotional, developmental, social and spiritual needs of the individual
Impact has been improved attendance, prevention of permanent exclusions, reduction in EOTAS placements, 100% pass in L2 SWEET since introduced and 100% pass in L2 Achieve since introduced
- Just some examples of where this has benefited pupils in your school include: successful reintegration from EOTAS provision, reduced risk/prevention of EOTAS referral, reduced risk/prevention of permanent exclusion, reintegration for school refusers and those experiencing school anxiety
- The disruption to education caused by the pandemic affected the work and pupils:
 - Negative impact on some pupil's mental health and wellbeing and some pupils have experienced additional trauma.
 - Some vulnerable pupils have experienced crisis/bereavement and lost employment/financial worries.
 - Pupils daily routines were disrupted. Lack of tolerance towards others.
 - Vulnerable pupils did not participate in blended learning opportunities (unwilling/reluctant/too anxious to engage in online learning)
 - Pupils identified with additional needs including SEBD were unable to access the support usually received in the school setting.
 - Support services were not able to conduct direct face to face work and so families declined support and refused to engage remotely.
 - Many school refusers/persistent absentees have refused to return to school, we are working with EWO.
 - The current risk assessments and operational guidelines are preventing pupils from accessing support. The current safety measures prevent/restrict many activities that address the needs of those pupils experiencing social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. The tools that staff use to engage and motivate pupils are far reduced.
- How do you feel the overall behaviour strategy is working to the benefit pupils currently? Without it we would have a significant number of pupils that we would have not engaged with or been able to support in a flexible way to meet their needs given the changing situation.

- Improvement to behaviour strategy could be made by the strategies and approaches need to be flexible to meet the changing needs of the pupils. This means upskilling staff to ensure they have training such as ELSA, CBT etc. This is costly but we need the agility to respond swiftly.
 - We need also need to develop programmes around mental health, tolerance and contextualised safeguarding. Initiatives such as the Cynnydd Learning Coaches help and support our pupils to look at pathways and self-regulation. These roles are grant funded and the money is coming to an end for many of these types of projects.
 - We already subsidise our provision and we need to ensure that roles and provision are sustainable to enable planning to take place to continue to meet the needs of for learners given the very specific tissues that are now emerging as a result of the pandemic.

The Panel:

- wished to thank the schools on behalf of the pupils. They felt it was impressive to hear about the initiatives and good practice in introducing positive behaviours.
- recognise that each school has its own challenges and that the bespoke response to schools to this was the right way to address this but the panel were keen to find out how all the good practice being learnt is being shared. The Panel heard that there are a number of mechanisms by which good practice is being shared formally and these also result in informal sharing between schools and educators. For example SCCASH, depositories of practice on online platforms, regionally and locally, Estyn also highlights areas of excellent practice that can be accessed through its website.

6 Verbal Feedback from ERW Scrutiny Councillor Group 28 June 2021

The Convener of the Panel Cllr Lyndon Jones, updated Members on his recent attendance at the Regional ERW Scrutiny Councillor Group meeting on the 28 June 2021. The informed the Panel of some of what was discussed including:

- ERW will end on 31 August 2021 and the new South West Wales Education Partnership will begin on the 1 September 2021
- It will have a smaller footprint of Pembrokeshire, Carmarthenshire and Swansea but that it may be possible for other local authorities to buy in services from the new partnership
- Concerns raised about cost of winding down of ERW and about costs of setting up the new partnership and who will contribute to these.
- Also issues like rules of engagement and veto need to be agreed
- A letter has recently been sent to the Chair of the ERW Joint Committee giving the views of the Scrutiny Councillor Group. A response has been requested to that before the end of ERW. This response will be reported to the Swansea's Educations Scrutiny Panel and will also be agendered for the Scrutiny Programme Committee for information.

The Director of Education updated the Panel on progress that had been made since the ERW Councillor Group on the 28 June, including:

- Shadow South West Wales Education Partnership Joint Committee has met, in a closed meeting.

- Concerns raised by the Scrutiny Councillor Group were discussed in this meeting. They agreed that work needed to be done to wind down ERW.
- Powys did not want to leave ERW but agreement has been made in principle that services of the new Partnership will be available to other local authorities.
- New legal agreement will go to each local authorities Cabinet/Council.
- It was recognised that ERW would not wind down fully by 31 August, there will be a period of transition required. The new legal agreement will take us there.
- Before we move on from current partnership we need to understand the contingent liabilities of the ERW existing partners. Current agreement states that leaving local authorities have 100% liabilities in the first and second years and then it's a sliding scale from there. The staffing structure will determine cost for existing parties.
- The staffing structure for the new partnership has been reduce in proportion to new body with a scaling down of approximately 40%.
- The Governance structure will appear in the new legal agreement. This is currently in draft and needs to be finalised but has matured into a decent document. It does include some of the issues raised by the Scrutiny Councillor Group on the 28 June and these have been put into that draft. There is still work to be done and it is planned that the draft legal agreement will go to each Local Authority in the autumn.
- The new Partnership will have a clear business plan that states the priorities moving forward. It is important that this delivery plan is understood as a key part of the partnership and for regional scrutiny to hold that to account.
- Observer status will be offered to a member of the new regional scrutiny body to attend the new partnership Joint Committee as requested by the Scrutiny Group.

7 Work Programme 2021/2022

The work programme was received.

The meeting ended at 5.15 pm

Chair