



City and County of Swansea

**Minutes of the Education & Skills Policy
Development Committee**

Remotely via Microsoft Teams

Wednesday, 17 November 2021 at 4.00 pm

Present: Councillor M Durke (Chair) Presided

Councillor(s)

F M Gordon
H Lawson
D W W Thomas

Councillor(s)

B Hopkins
M B Lewis

Councillor(s)

L R Jones
S Pritchard

Officer(s)

Gareth Borsden
Helen Morgan-Rees
Stephanie Williams

Democratic Services Officer
Director of Education
Principal Lawyer

Apologies for Absence

Councillor(s): J P Curtice

20 Disclosures of Personal and Prejudicial Interests.

In accordance with the Code of Conduct adopted by the City and County of Swansea, the following interest was declared;

Councillors Mike Durke – Agenda Item 4 - Keeping Pupils On Track: Examples of Best Practice from Pentrehafod and Dylan Thomas Schools – Personal.

21 Minutes.

Resolved that the minutes of the Education & Skills Policy Development Committee held on 20 October 2021 be agreed as a correct record.

22 Keeping Pupils On Track: Examples of Best Practice from Pentrehafod and Dylan Thomas Schools.

The Chair welcomed Mr Goulding and Mr Payne to the meeting.

Ashley Payne, Deputy Headteacher at Dylan Thomas Community School outlined the various actions and initiatives that had helped to support the pupils, staff and parents during the various lockdowns, amongst these were

- SCASH headteachers group which continued to meet via Teams throughout the pandemic,

Minutes of the Education & Skills Policy Development Committee (17.11.2021)
Cont'd

- regular contact between the headteacher and the heads of all the primary catchment schools,
- initial setting up of the health hub in Townhill,
- availability of free school meals(50%+ of pupils) for children in the first lockdown and the change to payments system after that,
- provision of the childcare facility for key workers,
- delivery of IT equipment to children to enable inclusion in online work and attendance,
- checking of online pupil attendance and the follow up visits/calls by staff to encourage attendance and participation,
- delivery of work to pupils;
- particular support and help for vulnerable learners;
- development of Covid recovery action plan which links to the schools development plan,
- good liaison with staff, setting up of well-being groups and staff helping and supporting each other and covering for absent colleagues was excellent,
- mental health/anxiety issues for young people and their families,
- support and help for young people and families who had lost relatives – provision of counselling service and bereavement advice from local authority helped greatly,
- platform groups for young people with low moods – 6 week programme has worked well,
- transition arrangements for current year 8s did cause some problems due to the various lockdowns and restrictions and the subsequent lack of contact between school/pupil/families prior to them attending the school, which has been an issue,
- TIDE inclusion programme for vulnerable pupils and those with social problems was well used by pupils,
- issues with numbers of statemented pupils wanting to attend the school and lack of availability and access to the SDFs has been an issue which has led to an investment in nurture classes and significant improvements to the classrooms and learning provision for SDF pupils,
- continuing of attendance monitoring and follow up work with pupils to engage and encourage better attendance,
- community use of schools playing fields is protected, new gym been developed for pupils, and sport/well-being is embedded into curriculum now, recent appointment of rugby hub officer and links with Swans on ALN football,
- awarding of gcse grades this year via assessment/no exams,
- issues around the communications and leak of information from Welsh Government during the pandemic wasn't great for schools as often it was being reported in the media before the local authority/schools had received it and a lack of leadership and advice/guidance from the WJEC was also an issue,

Matthew Goulding, Headteacher at Pentrehafod School also outlined the various actions and initiatives that had helped to support the pupils, staff and parents during the various lockdowns, and gave provide the committee with a detailed and informative powerpoint presentation which included and covered the following areas:

- make of the school – 1000+ pupils on role(11-16), 36.4% of pupils on free school meals(41.3% if transitional provision considered), 63% of pupils live in most deprived areas(WIMD),

Minutes of the Education & Skills Policy Development Committee (17.11.2021)
Cont'd

- understanding vulnerability and its impact on student progress and life chances – developing a shared understanding of students who have a barrier to learning and development which could be from a wide ranging areas such as social deprivation, attendance problems, mental health issues, additional learning difficulties, free school meals, English as an additional languages etc
- key milestones in a child's journey through the school system – links with cluster schools and issues around lack of reading and literacy skills, inter-generational poverty and lack development of social skills of children, impact of Covid going forward,
- impact of new curriculum going forward on teaching and how and what children are taught,
- knowing your students – development of a detailed profile of each student on a both academic and well-being level, including cognitive profile, impact of adverse childhood experiences, attendance/exclusion etc,
- development of a “pupil on a page” programme which includes a wide area of data on topics such as attendance, achievement, conduct, wellbeing, reading levels etc,
- development of a “class” and a “year” on a page to compare, contrast and monitor across a wider cohort,
- possible need for greater support from local authority on attendance issues due to the ongoing impact of Covid and ideally each comprehensive could have their own dedicated education welfare officer,
- equity starts with achievement – encourage and give children the opportunity to be successful,
- Alumni programme – started in Easter 2020 – raising of pupils horizons and expectations, giving pupils different and life enriching experiences and taking them to places they have never been both physically and mentally, welcoming former pupils back into school both individually and via businesses to provide opportunities for work experience, apprenticeships and mentoring possibilities,
- excellent links with Careers Wales and the education business exchange scheme, careers fairs, employment videos,
- links with Virgin Atlantic Partnership – one of only three schools in the world which are involved,
- “brilliant club” – aimed at more able & talented pupils and help with university visits and extra tuition,
- developing whole school health and well-being – including engagement with community partners, refining of relationship/sex education programme, pupil survey helps to develop new ideas, development of school reading programme,
- impact of Covid particularly on the routines of school, engagement and attendance initiative and transition issues for current years 7 & 8,
- broad curriculum and offering of vocational courses – but there are some issues with students attending college and adapting to the different “non-school” environment,
- issues with Cynnydd project, particularly around data collation and bureaucracy issues,
- what we need to do going forward – country wide problems with literacy, development of Swansea wide reading profile, encouragement to participate in physical activity, pilot schemes with communities on mentoring and entrepreneurship.

Members asked various questions and made comments regarding both the presentations and work and initiatives undertaken by the two schools during the different phases of the various lockdowns, to which Mr Payne and Mr Goulding responded accordingly.

The Chair and Members thanked both teachers for their attendance and input.

23 Workplan 2021/2022.

The Chair referred to the workplan as outlined in the report and suggested the following areas for discussion at the next few scheduled meetings:

December - Vocational Education.

January - Sport, Health & Physical Literacy Provision and Outdoor Education.

February - Adverse Childhood Experiences.

Members supported the proposals for the future workplan and requested information on the Cynnydd programme be distributed to them when available.

Resolved that the updated workplan as outlined above be approved.

The meeting ended at 5.32 pm

Chair