



**To/
Councillor Jen Raynor
Cabinet Member for Children,
Education and Lifelong Learning**

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BY EMAIL

Summary: This is a letter from the Schools Scrutiny Performance Panel to the Cabinet Member for Children, Education and Lifelong Learning following the meeting of the Panel on 21 September 2017. It is about Education Other Than At School Services.

Dear Councillor Raynor,

Schools Scrutiny Performance Panel – 21 September 2017

The Panel would like to thank you, Mark Sheridan and Amanda Taylor for attending the Schools Scrutiny Performance Panel on 21 September 2017. We wanted to explore the improvements being made in relation to Education Other Than At School Services (EOTAS) and the impact that this is having on improving pupil performance. Thank you for providing a written paper which has given us some detail about this progress.

We are writing to you to reflect on what we learnt from the discussion, share the views of the panel, and, where necessary, raise any issues or recommendations for your consideration and response. The main issues discussed are summarised in the following paragraphs.

We were pleased to hear that there has been good progress with movements to change the accommodation used by the EOTAS service and that the project is now moving forward at a fast pace. We heard that a bespoke plan/design for a new build facility in Cockett was in place and that it will reflect the differing needs of children and young people in Swansea. This includes for example, those with Social, Emotional and Behavioural needs. We also agreed with the Head of the PRU when she said that the new facility must be a bright, welcoming and supportive school environment so we are pleased to hear young people are helping in its design.

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY / TROSOLWG A CHRAFFU

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We heard that a Band B submission has been made to Welsh Government to help fund the project and that the Council will hear back formally about this application in October 2017. We were told that if it is accepted the plan is to open to take pupils in September 2019. We were told that the current facilities will be maintained until the new build is ready in 2019. A further report will go to Cabinet post October 2017 with further details. The Panel would like to see this when it is available and the panel are interested in seeing the design proposals if possible.

We were informed that good progress is being made with the proposed new model of delivery. This included the development of a tiered range of online, school based and external training for schools and services in issues related to social, emotional and behavioural difficulties, additional learning needs and well-being.

We accepted that development of the half-way house concept is a longer term part of the new model so were pleased to hear that until this is fully developed, staff are being recruited to start developing that process and to work with schools and pupils where there is risk of EOTAS.

We welcomed the improvements in developing and improving the culture within these services, particularly in the commitment from staff in working together across EOTAS towards a joint vision. The Panel can see how these proposals and the new systems that have been put into place along with enthusiasm of the new Headteacher, officers and staff involved have started to develop a good solid base from which hopefully a direct positive impact will emerge moving forward.

You accepted that there was room for improvement in relation to those children returning to school after a period in EOTAS also known as the revolving door. We heard that progress is gradually being made to ensure that it is much clearer at the outset about a move to a PRU with the originating school; ensuring expectations are shared about the pupil's return back to the school. We were encouraged to hear about the memorandum of understanding that has been agreed with schools detailing the support that will be provided to enable children to return to school.

We were pleased to hear that good progress is being made with leadership, in raising standards and developing the curriculum in the PRU. We heard that the PRU is now providing a good academic and vocational offer and also importantly is including the Digital Competency Framework and the Literacy and Numeracy Framework across the curriculum

The Panel were pleased to hear about the behaviour self-evaluation toolkit for schools that has been designed and that this will form part of the Challenge Advisors visit.

We heard that there is a very real appetite for positive change and working together across all agencies involved in this new model. We therefore felt that from the information provided at the meeting today that the picture for EOTAS and the future services for children with Social, emotional and behavioural issues is looking much improved.

We are interested in hearing any further thoughts you have about the issues raised in our letter and would ask that you keep the Schools Performance Panel updated on further progress particularly when the project moves to the next stage after October.

Yours sincerely,

COUNCILLOR MO SYKES

Convener, Schools Scrutiny Performance Panel

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