

ISLE OF ANGLESEY COUNTY COUNCIL Scrutiny Report Template

Committee:	Partnership and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee
Date:	6 February 2018
Subject:	Progress Report by the Scrutiny Panel: School Progress Review
Purpose of Report:	To report on the Panel's work since 14/11/17
Scrutiny Chair:	Councilor Gwilym Jones
Portfolio Holder(s):	Councillor R Meirion Jones
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Local Members:	All Members

1 - Recommendation/s

The Partnership and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee is requested to note:

- Progress made to date with the work of the Scrutiny Panel: School Progress Review
- That a work-streams pertaining to the Education Service Improvement Plan are being addressed.
- There are no matters that currently need to be escalated by the Panel to a decision making committee.

2 – Link to Council Plan / Other Corporate Priorities

The County Council Plan 2017-2022 has the ambition to work with the people of Anglesey, their communities and partnerships to ensure we deliver best available services that will improve quality of life for everyone across the Island. One of three aims is the plan to 'Create conditions that will enable everyone to reach their potential' The work of the Scrutiny Panel -School Progress Review is one way to promote schools to reach that ambition and objective

3 – Guiding Principles for Scrutiny Members

To assist Members when scrutinising the topic:-

3.1 Impact the matter has on individuals and communities **[focus on customer/citizen]**

3.2 A look at the efficiency & effectiveness of any proposed change – both financially and in terms of quality **[focus on value]**

3.3 A look at any risks **[focus on risk]**

3.4 Scrutiny taking a performance monitoring or quality assurance role **[focus on performance & quality]**

3.5 Looking at plans and proposals from a perspective of:

- Long term
- Prevention
- Integration
- Collaboration
- Involvement

[focus on wellbeing]

4 - Key Scrutiny Questions

- Is the Committee satisfied with the work undertaken by the Panel?
- Are there any suggestions to strengthen the work of the Panel?
- How does the Panel encourage improvements in school performance?

5 – Background / Context

5.1 Members will be aware that 3 Scrutiny Panels have been established, namely :

- **Scrutiny Panel: Finance** (reports to the Corporate Scrutiny Committee).
- **Scrutiny Panel: Children’s Services** (reports to the Corporate Scrutiny Committee).
- **Scrutiny Panel: Schools Progress Review** (reports to the Partnership and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee, but please note the Panel consists of 4 Members of the Partnership and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee and 4 Members of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee).

5.2 All Panels now meet regularly. This report summaries the progress made as regards to the Scrutiny Panel - School Progress Review from 14 November 2017 to date.

5.3 The Education and Leisure Scrutiny Committee established the Panel on the 21 November 2012. It arose from recommendations made by Estyn on the quality of education services for children and young people on Anglesey. The Senior School Standards and Inclusion Manager provides guidance to the Panel about schools that may be appropriate to invite to appear before it. The criterion used to select schools are based on the national school categorisation framework, school performance and Estyn reports and the aim is to have a good mix of small, medium, large and primary/secondary schools

5.4 The Panel can invite schools to reappear before them if there are matters that need to be re-visited later.

5.5 Since the last Progress Report, submitted to the Committee on the 14 November 2017, the Panel has met on four occasions:-

- 10 November 2017
- 30 November 2017
- 8 December 2017
- 12 January 2018

5.6 The Panel has concentrated on the following matters since November:

- Met with 5 primary schools and 1 secondary school.
- One secondary school whose KS4 results had been good in 2017 when comparing data of other Secondary Schools across the Island. The Panel investigated key factors for the stronger results.
- Received information regarding Welsh Government initiative to reduce workload of teachers and Head teachers and identify steps being implemented to make schools aware of the initiative.
- Pause and Review all key messages to date from panel meetings and submit findings to the Partnership and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee on the 6 February 2018.

The Panel concluded there were 10 key matters that would need addressing to ensure schools continued improvement.

- **Teacher and Head teacher workload-** the Panel supportive of the Welsh Government initiative to reduce teachers and Head teachers' workload. The Panel emphasised the need for schools to be made aware of the new guidelines.
- **Teacher Recruitment-** the Panel noted that there is on-going difficulty in recruiting suitably experienced teachers and head teachers. It is accepted that this is a national problem and not limited to Isle of Anglesey.
- **School Performance-** the Panel keen to emphasise that all school representatives are open in identifying school weaknesses and strengths and provide a full explanation about pertinent factors e.g. small cohorts, less developed welsh language skills etc. All schools to date have evidenced the use of development plans that address areas of weak performance and prioritise actions to improve performance.
- **Relationship between Schools and GwE-** the Panel noted that most schools have an effective and constructive relationship with GwE but a small number are more sceptical about its effectiveness.
- **Identifying Pupils with Additional Learning Needs-** the Panel emphasised the need for schools to become more consistent in identifying pupils as having Additional Learning Needs. There was a consensus amongst the Panel that some pupils need not fall into this category if they were to receive targeted support.
- **New Welsh Curriculum-** A new curriculum to be introduced gradually from 2022. It means that for five years, teachers will have to teach the old and the

new systems at the same time to students of different ages. Children aged six or seven today will be the first to start new curriculum when they start secondary school in 2022 and will continue with it as they progress through school. Children in primary schools will all switch over the same year. However, older children will still learn the traditional way. The Panel considers that here is a need for schools to start preparing for the changes.

- **Free School Meals-** the Panel concerned that the number of pupils eligible for free school Meals on Anglesey has decreased in the 2017/18 academic year. Economic activity on the Island does need seem to justify such a decrease and it is considered more likely due to the way claims are processed. A need to look further into the matter.
- **School Capacity** - A school has identified difficulties in being able to meet current demand for places. The situation at the school is anticipated to deteriorate further if Wylfa Newydd is built. The Panel agreed that there is a need to continue with school modernisation and education business planning to address these strategic matters.
- **Welsh Language Skills-** All Schools are fully committed to implement the Council's Welsh Language policy but some schools are facing challenges in having to teach pupils with less developed welsh language skills.
- **Basic skills** – The Panel concerned that it seems a number of children lacking basic skills when attending primary schools. The Panel is of the view that this matter cannot be addressed by schools only and that there is a need for early cross-departmental action.

The panel will continue to meet once every month before reviewing terms of reference at the end of July 2018.

6 – Equality Impact Assessment [including impacts on the Welsh Language]

Not applicable

7 – Financial Implications

none

8 – Appendices:

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9 - Background papers (please contact the author of the Report for any further information):

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