

PARTNERSHIP AND REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 6 February 2018

PRESENT: Councillor Gwilym O Jones (Chair)
Councillor Robert Llewelyn Jones (Vice-Chair)

Councillors K P Hughes, Vaughan Hughes, Alun Roberts, Dafydd Roberts, Margaret Murley Roberts, Nicola Roberts and Robin Williams.

Mr Keith Roberts (The Roman Catholic Church),
Mrs Anest G Frazer (The Church in Wales).

Councillor Llinos M Huws – Leader of the Council

Other Elected Members invited to attend the meeting

Councillors John Griffith, Richard Griffiths.

IN ATTENDANCE: Chief Executive,
Assistant Chief Executive (Partnerships, Community and Service Improvements),
Head of Learning,
Head of Democratic Services,
Senior Standards & Inclusion Manager (GMH),
Scrutiny Officer (GR),
Committee Officer (MEH).

APOLOGIES: Councillor Glyn Haynes.

Councillor R Meirion Jones (Portfolio Holder – Education, Libraries, Culture & Youth).

ALSO PRESENT: **Representatives from GwE**

Mr Arwyn Thomas – Managing Director
Mrs Meinir Huws – Schools Challenge Advisor – Primary
Mrs Sharon Vaughan – Schools Challenge Advisor – Secondary.

Mr Arwyn Williams – Designated Head of Learning

The Chair welcomed Councillor Kenneth P Hughes as a new Member on the Partnership and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee.

The Chair welcomed Mr Arwyn Williams the Designated Head of Learning to the meeting.

The Vice-Chair wished it to be noted that it is centenary, to the date, of the campaign of Suffragettes to allow women the right to vote. The Representation of the People Act was passed to allow women, at the time, the right to vote at the age of 30.

1 APOLOGIES

As noted above.

2 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

None received.

3 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 November, 2017 were confirmed.

4 PROGRESS REPORT : SCHOOL STANDARDS

Submitted – a report by the Head of Learning in relation to the above.

The Senior Standards & Inclusion Manager reported that the percentage of statutory school age pupils who are eligible for free school meals in Anglesey over the last five years in comparison to Wales and individual authorities has reduced substantially and the authority has been placed in the 7th most privileged in Wales. This is a concern as the comparison does not equate to the local economy of the Island. It was noted that schools receive grants as per numbers of each child eligible for free school meals.

The Officer referred to the table, within the report, which shows pupils on the additional learning needs register. The authority has been placed in the 4th LA position within the primary sector which again seems high in comparison to other local authorities in Wales. She expressed that the matter needs to be given priority over the coming months as regards to additional learning needs criteria. It has been shown that the number of pupils on the register for additional learning needs seems to reduce as the pupils move into secondary education as the authority has been placed 8th LA position in Wales. The Senior Standards & Inclusion Manager further referred to children that are educated at home and it seemed the Authority is categorised more favourably within this criteria.

The Chair welcomed Mrs Meinir Huws, Schools Challenge Advisor (Primary) and Mrs Sharon Vaughan, Schools Challenge Advisor (Secondary) to the meeting. He said that both Officers have been reporting to the Scrutiny Panel – Schools Progress Review on a regular basis.

The Schools Challenge Advisor (Primary) gave a detailed analysis of the performance data drawing attention to the main aspects requiring attention to the Committee.

Foundation Phase

- Setting higher expectations in the Foundation Phase and developing better resilience to school target setting, assessment and tracking procedures to close the gap between targets and performance;
- Promoting better use of data and intervention programmes to drive the necessary improvements;
- Continue to ensure better consistency across schools in relation to understanding of the 'best-fit' in setting final levels;
- Improving pedagogy in the Foundation Phase with specific focus on improving planned opportunities to develop literacy/numeracy across the learning areas; ensuring activities with a high level of challenge; ensuring improved opportunities to apply skills and ensuring an improved balance between teacher/learner led tasks.
- Raising standards in Welsh as a first language in the Foundation Phase;
- Continue to develop schools' ability to ensure a challenging approach to planning in improving performance, particularly at the higher levels;
- Close the gap in performance of free school meals/non-free school meals pupils in the expected outcomes and in Welsh and Personal and Social Development in the higher outcomes;
- Targeting support for schools where rolling performance has been in the lowest 50%;
- Continue to work with the Local Authority Officers to improve the quality of leadership on all levels to ensure that not one school is put into statutory follow-up category following an Estyn inspection;
- Promoting improved school-to-school collaboration to ensure that best practice is cascaded and embraced.

Key Stage 2

- Continue to set higher expectations in Key Stage 2 and developing better resilience to school target setting, assessment and tracking procedures and promoting better use of data and intervention programmes to drive the necessary improvements;
- Raising standards in Welsh as a first language;
- Continue to develop schools' ability to ensure a challenging approach to planning in improving performance, particularly on the higher levels;
- Close the gap in performance free school meals/non-free school meals pupils at the higher levels;
- Targeting support for schools where rolling performance has been in the lowest 50%;
- Continue to work with the local authority Officers to improve the quality of leadership at all levels to ensure that no school is put into statutory follow-up category following an Estyn inspection;
- Promoting improved school-to-school collaboration to ensure that best practice is cascaded and embraced.

The Committee considered the report and raised the following matters :-

- Clarification was sought as to the strategy that the authority has in place to identify pupils that are eligible for free school meals. The Schools Standards & Inclusion Manager responded that the system of identifying pupils eligible for free schools meals has changed over the years with the Department for Works and Pension targeting those people who receive benefits and that their children are eligible for free school meals. She expressed that it seems that the system has not been as successful as recent years and the Officers from the Education Department are now in the process of encouraging Headteachers to raise awareness with parents who are in receipt of benefits to the provision of free school meals for their children. The Head of Learning said that the Universal Credit system is to be introduced in June, 2018 and it is a concern as some parents are on the levels of 'just managing' at present with some parents having more than one job to able to be able to survive; these people do not qualify for benefits which is of concern.
- Clarification was sought whether there is a lack of consistence as regard to assessment of pupils between schools on the Island. The Schools Challenge Advisor (Primary) responded that she was not aware that there was inconsistency between schools as to the assessment of pupils. She said that training has been afforded to schools and noted that the size of the cohort within Anglesey schools is small and one pupil can have an impact on the data. She further expressed the view that the level of assessment may be too high in the past but schools that require support have been targeted..
- Questions were asked as to the Business Plan put in place for improvement of data as regard to performance of schools and whether the Officers were confident that there will be improvements next year and especially within the Foundation Phase. The Schools Challenge Advisor (Primary) responded that schools have set out targets as to performance of their pupils and data has been collected during the autumn period, which shows improvement up to date.
- Concerns were expressed as to the position of Anglesey as regard to the Welsh Language achievement within Key Stage 2. It was expressed that Anglesey and Gwynedd are the highest proportion of Welsh language speakers in Wales. The Schools Standards & Inclusion Manager responded that children seem to be communicate with each other whilst playing on the school yard in English. Schools need to be challenged by their Governing Bodies, parents and local communities as to their performance in the Welsh language.

The Schools Challenge Advisor (Secondary) gave a detailed analysis of the performance data of pupils as regard to core subject together with main aspects requiring attention to the Committee as follows :-

Key Stage 3, 4 & 5

- More intense collaboration with the Local Authority to address considerable concerns in underperforming secondary schools;
- Improving the efficiency of Senior Leadership Teams and Quality Assurance and accountability processes in Key Stage 4;
- Ensuring improvement in performance in core subjects through the support of the Subject Advisor. Targeted support in 'waves' with 'Wave 3' meaning intensive support :-

- Improving performance in Mathematics and Numeracy. 'Wave 3' support for 1 school, and 'Wave 1' support for two schools;
 - Improving performance in English. 'Wave 3' support for two schools. 'Wave 2' for one school, and 'Wave 1' support for two schools;
 - Improving performance in Science. 'Wave 3' support for two schools. 'Wave 2' support for two schools, and 'Wave 1' support for one school.
- Improving the performance of free school meals learners, particularly in two schools;
 - Improving the efficiency of middle management leaders in Quality Assurance and accountability processes in Key Stage 4 and in leading the learning/teaching assessment and tracking;
 - Ensuring more robust action to check the appropriateness of targets and progress towards targets and ensuring that leaders at all levels make effective and timely use of tracking systems to plan effective interventions and to address underperformance/schools that are not progressing;
 - Ensuring that comprehensive support plans are implemented and that they are effectively delivered to schools, and agree on follow-up activities and timescales with the Local Authority where there are any concerns about the speed of progress.
 - Through the Anglesey Schools' Collaboration Model (and beyond), ensuring more effective School-to School collaboration (on all levels) to disseminate good practice and ensure appropriate support.
 - Improving overall A Level performance, particularly in the higher grades;
 - Ensuring the availability of appropriate support;
 - Developing a regional model for tracking and evaluating performance in Key Stage 5 and scrutinising performance in specific subjects.

The Committee considered the report and raised the following matters :-

- Concerns expressed as to the performance of pupils in the newly introduced examinations. The Schools Challenge Advisor (Secondary) responded that pupils sat a three tier exam i.e. Higher, Intermediate or Foundation Tiers. Different to previous years, C grades were not awarded in the Foundation Tier. There were also notable changes in English and Welsh, in terms of syllabus content and also assessment. In 2017 the written course work element was removed, with only internal oral examinations being assessed, therefore most of the assessment was based on examinations papers. In 2018, only the Science GCSE will count towards the school performance indicators. Many schools in Wales have removed the Science BTEC from their options, and this has created difficulties when comparing Science with previous years. The Head of Learning said that it has been a challenge for teachers in having to adapt the new examination together with changes with the course work been removed. It is accepted that some schools have prepared sooner than others and therefore Anglesey schools need to learn from best performing schools. She further said that whilst accepting that some school years achieve better performance than other years, it was a concern that some schools during May 2017 were still unable to predict the grades of pupils taking their examination in that year. The Head of Learning further said that Headteachers and teachers

need to be able to assess and predict examination grades to pupils and to support them to achieve these grades;

- A Member raised that some Universities are offering non-conditional places to A Level students and he questioned if data shows that these pupils do not achieve their expected grades due to these non-conditional offers. The GwE Managing Director responded that this matter needs to be looked upon as the data is not available. He noted that Universities are competing for students to attend their particular University.

It was RESOLVED to note the progress in standards across Anglesey schools.

ACTION : As noted above.

5 GWE - ANNUAL REPORT 2016/17

Submitted – the GwE Annual Report 2016/17 by the Managing Director of GwE.

The GwE Managing Director gave a detailed report on the Business Plan Priorities for 2017/18, together with an overview on educational standards across North Wales (2015/16). He said that GwE is providing a range of professional learning programmes for practitioners ranging from Higher Level Teaching Assistants to experienced Head Teachers. The Senior Challenge and Support Advisers for each hub operated much more effectively in quality assuring all aspects of the work of Challenge Advisers within the respective teams. He reported further that improving standards and provision in the Foundation Phase is one of GwE's priorities. This year, GwE offered a regional Foundation Phase support programme for the first time, targeting planning, teaching, assessment and leadership. The team of Literacy and Numeracy Challenge Advisers have provided an extensive range of support and development programmes across the region to ensure the quality of planning and provision in both primary and secondary sectors. All schools in an amber or red support category have received a programme of support tailored their specific needs.

He further said that pace of improvement in the Foundation Phase has been slower than that seen on a national level. Raising standards in the Foundation Phase is a key priority for improvement for the consortium. In general, the pace of improvement in the main indicators in Key Stage 4 has been too slow compared to the rest of Wales and improving its performance is the consortium's main priority. At Key Stage 4, the performance of individual local authorities varies considerably across the region. He said that areas requiring development include :-

- Robust business plans that respond more acutely to the development needs of authorities and individual schools and that have been discussed and agreed with stakeholders.
- That all secondary schools and all amber/red support category schools have appropriately support plans in place.
- More effective deployment of subject Challenge Advisers and the use of subject networks to strengthen departmental collaboration.

- To target individuals who have the potential to be Headteachers of schools and to afford a level of support for these individuals and to plan sooner when Headteachers are retiring to have the best possible individual to take their place;
- To be at the forefront of challenges faced to address the new examination processes introduced by the government;
- That Anglesey is able to be supported by the Challenge Advisors at both primary and secondary sectors.

The Committee considered the report and raised the following matters :-

- Clarification was sought as to why there are still 'red' category identified schools whilst GwE have invested in Challenge Advisors to support these schools. The Managing Director of GwE responded that 'red' category schools are targeted with support and guidance to help them achieve the best possible education for the pupils. He said that some schools have received above their requirements and other schools have suffered as a consequence.
- Clarification was sought as to how the Authority was able to identify and attract Headteachers to lead schools on the Island. The Head of Learning responded that the Authority has a 'Recognising the Leaders of the Future' programme which was supported by the Executive Committee. Work is undertaken, especially in the primary sector, in collaboration with GwE, to identify leaders of the future;
- A Member referred to schools having to make efficiency savings and experienced teachers are having to leave their employment. The Leader of the Council responded that it is a challenge for the education sector during efficiency savings.

It was RESOLVED :-

- **To note the report and to thank the Managing Director of GwE for attending the meeting;**
- **To request that the GwE Annual Report for 2017/18 should include the requirements for support and guidance towards the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 4 in Anglesey.**

ACTION : As noted above.

6 SCRUTINY PANEL - SCHOOLS PROGRESS REVIEW

Submitted – a progress report by the Chair of the Schools Progress Review Scrutiny Panel and Supporting Officer in relation to the above.

The Chair as the Chair of the Schools Progress Review Scrutiny Panel reported that since the last progress report submitted to this meeting on the 14th November, 2017, the Panel has met on four occasions. 5 primary schools and 1 secondary school has addressed the Panel.

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

- Teacher and Headteacher workload
- Teacher Recruitment
- School Performance
- Relationship between Schools and GwE
- Identifying Pupils with Additional Learning Needs
- New Welsh Curriculum
- Free School Meals
- School Capacity
- Welsh Language Skills
- Basic skills

The Committee wished to express their appreciation to the Members of the Schools Progress Review Scrutiny Panel for their in depth work as regard to the range of topics and the process used to challenge schools that have attended the Panel. The Chair also wished to thank the two Schools Challenge Advisors and the Senior Standards & Inclusion Manager for their contribution to the Schools Progress Review Scrutiny Panel.

It was RESOLVED to note :-

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

ACTION : As noted above.

7 NOMINATION TO THE SCRUTINY PANEL - SCHOOL PROGRESS REVIEW

Submitted – a report by the Scrutiny Officer with regard to nomination of one Member of the Partnership and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee to serve on the School Progress Review : Scrutiny Panel.

The Scrutiny Officer reported that due to the resignation of Councillor Eric W Jones from the Partnership and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee a Member from the Committee needs to be nominated as a replacement on the Scrutiny Panel. It was noted that 4 Members of this Committee sit on the Scrutiny Panel : School Progress Review.

It was RESOLVED to nominate Councillor Kenneth P Hughes on the School Progress Review : Scrutiny Panel.

8 WORK PROGRAMME

Submitted – a report by the Scrutiny Officer on the Committee's Work Programme to May 2018.

It was RESOLVED to note the Work Programme to May 2018.

ACTION : As noted above.

The meeting concluded at 4.40 pm

**COUNCILLOR GWILYM O JONES
CHAIR**