

ISLE OF ANGLESEY COUNTY COUNCIL

Scrutiny Report Template

Committee:	Partnership and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee
Date:	12 December 2018
Subject:	Progress Report by the School Progress Review Scrutiny Panel
Purpose of Report:	To report on the Panel's work from 11/6/18 to 5/12/18
Scrutiny Chair:	Councillor Gwilym Jones
Portfolio Holder(s):	Councillor R Meirion Jones
Head of Service:	Arwyn Williams
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Local Members:	Not Ward Specific

1 - Recommendation/s

The Partnership and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee is requested to recommend that:

1. It agrees that the Panel is providing robust challenge on individual school's performance.
2. It agrees that the Panel is monitoring implementation of the Learning Service's Improvement Plan and that the plan is on target thus far.
3. It agrees that progress is being made by the Panel in monitoring the work undertaken by the Foundation Phase Cluster Leadership Group that leads on improving performance in the Foundation Phase across the Island.
4. There are no matters that currently need to be escalated to the attention of the Executive from the ongoing work of the Panel

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 the 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 (the Panel) is key to supporting schools to realise 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?
- Are there areas that need to be scrutinised by the Panel?

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. Membership of the panel includes :
 1. Councillor Gwilym O Jones (Chair)
 2. Councillor Alun Roberts (Vice-Chair)
 3. Councillor Margaret M Roberts
 4. Councillor Vaughan Hughes
 5. Councillor Kenneth P Hughes
 6. Councillor Richard Griffiths
 7. Councillor John Arwel Roberts
 8. Keith Roberts

5.2 This report summaries the work of the Scrutiny Panel-School Progress Review (the Panel), from 11th June 2018 to 6th December 2018.

5.3 The Education and Leisure Scrutiny Committee established the Panel on the 21st 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. 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 Over recent months, the Panel has also benefited hearing from schools that have had successful outcomes in raising standards, received good Estyn reports and linked themes, which are nationally prioritised to understand various challenges facing schools.

5.5 The Panel can invite schools to attend on more than one occasion if there are matters that need to be re-visited later.

5.6 Since the last Progress Report submitted to the Committee on the 19th June 2018, the Panel has met on 5 occasions:-

- 13 July 2018 -Ysgol Gynradd Bodedern
- 7 September 2018 - Review of the Learning Action Plan
- 27 September 2018 - Foundation Phase
- 25 October 2018 - Ysgol y Ffridd and Ysgol Y Graig
- 22 November 2018- Ysgol Corn Hir and Ysgol Henblas

5.7 The Panel has focused on the following matters :

- The Panel met with representatives from five primary schools and four members of the Foundation Phase Leadership Group. The Senior Standards and Inclusion Officer provides the Panel with a school performance summary before every meeting. The Panel also receives information from GwE; an officer is available in meetings, to discuss any support being received by a school. Where applicable, schools are invited back to provide future updates on areas identified for improvement by the Panel. Since July 2018, it has been agreed that visiting schools should receive a thank you letter, which also offers the panel the opportunity to give a concise report on their findings. It also gives the Panel an opportunity to re invite schools to monitor specific progress.
- The Panel received updates by the Head of Learning in respect of implementation of the Learning Services Action Plan. The Plan identifies detailed work streams to improve schools performance. This is a regular item on the Panel's Work Programme.
- Raising Performance in the Foundation Phase is high on the Learning Department agenda and although good outcomes have been made in ensuring nearly all schools are now assessing pupils in Welsh first language, ensuring consistency of high standards across all subjects remains a priority.
- Primary schools sector and the Learning Service are aware that improvement in the Foundation Phase is required. The Panel is particularly pleased to note that in order to drive improvement in this area the Foundation Phase Cluster Leadership Group has been established. The work of the Foundation Phase Cluster Leadership Group commenced in June 2018.
- Following a briefing session given by Foundation Phase Cluster Leadership Group, the Panel were reassured that a robust action plan is being undertaken to strengthen this area. The Panel is also reassured that the Schools' joint priority and actions are in direct line to the Learning Services Action Plan. A termly monitoring report by Senior Standards Officer will ensure that the Foundation Phase remain high on the Panel's agenda and that progress is measured. The Panel noted that progress had been made and the Foundation Phase Cluster Leadership Group are motivated to ensure collaborative work, which will lead to improvements in the teaching and learning across the Island. However to date, the effect on the work undertaken has not had enough time to impact on standards. The Panel will continue to monitor progress.

- The Panel is of the view that performance in the secondary sector, although good, should be better. An overview was provided of education results of the five secondary schools on Anglesey. It was noted that results in some subjects were disappointing compared to other schools within the region. However, it is recognised that complex issues regarding benchmarking makes it difficult to compare performance as there had been changes to curriculum and threshold level marks in some subjects (compared to examinations taken 12 months earlier). A Secondary School felt unable to attend the Panel at the beginning of the academic year however, a second invitation has now been offered later during the term.
- Head of Learning announced that secondary Head Teachers would like to invite Panel members to consider schools visit. This would give Panel members further insight into schools standards and a chance to talk to pupils and staff. Panel members were grateful for the opportunity and happy to accept the invitations, however it was agreed that Head Teachers should also be asked to report in the usual way to the scrutiny Panel.
- The Panel is concerned that Free School Meals (FSM) pupil numbers is decreasing although the Island's economy on the whole does not reflect the change in families' circumstances. Schools face great challenges in ensuring that vulnerable pupils are being supported to better access education. The Panel has now a good understanding that various inclusion strategies such as Talk About, Play Therapy and Nurture Groups have become essential tools for many schools to support most vulnerable pupils.
- Recently evidence has been received that a new Head teacher has worked effectively with the Authority and GwE and thus enabled a school to be taken out of Estyn measures. The Panel was pleased to note that the Head teacher and Chair of Governors recognised that children come first every time.

5.8 The Panel concluded that there are no key messages that currently needed to be escalated to the Executive.

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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