

PARTNERSHIP AND REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the special meeting held on 12 December 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 and Nicola Roberts.

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

Mrs Anest Frazer – The Church in Wales,
Mr Dyfed Wyn Jones – Parent Governor – Primary Schools Sector,
Mr Keith Roberts – The Roman Catholic Church.

Other Members of the County Council invited to attend

Councillors R A Dew, John Griffith, Richard Griffiths, Llinos M
Huws, Aled M Jones.

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

APOLOGIES: Councillors Glyn Haynes and Trefor Lloyd Hughes MBE.

ALSO PRESENT: Mr Elfyn Jones – Senior Secondary Lead – GwE.
Mrs Sharon Vaughan & Mr Rhys Williams – GwE.

The Chair welcomed Mr Dyfed Wyn Jones - Parent Governor – Primary Schools Sector to his first meeting of the Committee. The Chair noted that attaining a Parent Governor – Secondary Schools Sector was not successful and the Scrutiny Officer will be readvertising for a representative to serve on both the Authority's Scrutiny Committees.

The Chair referred that a positive report has been received by the Auditor General for Wales' Report on the Isle of Anglesey County Council Scrutiny Arrangements. He thanked the Scrutiny Manager and Scrutiny Officer for their work.

1 APOLOGIES

As noted above.

2 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Councillor Nicola Roberts declared a personal interest in respect of Items 4, 5 and 6 as she is a Governor at Talwrn Primary School and her daughter is attending Ysgol y Graig, Llangefni and her son attending Ysgol Gyfun, Llangefni.

3 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 November, 2018 were confirmed.

4 SCHOOLS STANDARDS REPORT (SUMMER 2018)

Submitted – a report by the Head of Learning on the standards in Anglesey Schools (Summer 2018).

Mr Elfyn Jones - Senior Secondary Lead – GwE reported that the contents of the report is different to previous years due to Welsh Government introducing significant changes to how performance measures are reported. Following Welsh Government consultation on future publication of teacher assessments, WG no longer publish comparative Foundation Phase, Key Stage 2 and 3 data at schools, local authority and consortia level and therefore beyond a comparison with national averages, there is no comparative nor benchmarking information available. In October 2014 the Foundation Phase Areas of Learning (AoL) for Language, Literacy and Communications Skills and Mathematical Development were revised to align them with the National Literacy and Numeracy Framework (LNF) as well as making them more demanding. In line with this the Foundation Phase outcomes were recalibrated to align with the increased expectations of the revised Areas of Learning. The revised AoL were introduced on a statutory basis from September 2015. This means that the cohort of children that started Reception in September 2015 were the first children to be formally assessed against the revised outcomes at the end of the Foundation Phase in the Summer of 2018. Comparisons of Foundation Phase outcomes with previous years at school level should therefore be avoided as they are not measured on a comparable basis. It was noted that comparison of yearly results in future will not be local authorities comparing results against each authority neither will comparability between schools but scrutinise the variance as to what is achieved within a particular subject within a school or within a Key Stage.

The Chair welcomed Mr Rhys Williams, Schools Challenge Advisor (Primary) and Mrs Sharon Vaughan, Schools Challenge Advisor (Secondary) to the meeting.

The Schools Challenge Advisor (Primary) gave a detailed analysis of the performance data to the Committee.

Foundation Phase

- This year's results in the Foundation Phase shows a national decrease when compared to previous years. Many teachers are under the impression that there are higher expectations to achieve an Outcome and this is one factor that has led to less public achieving Outcome 5;
- Many schools are reporting on Welsh first language in 2018 as opposed to second language in 2017. With exception to Welsh the FPI gap between 2017 and 2018 performance is wider nationally than in Anglesey on both the expected outcomes and the higher outcomes;
- This Authority has a specific plan to drive improvements within the Foundation Phase. There is already a Steering Group with Head Teacher representation from each catchment area in place. GwE facilitates supports and quality assure the work of the Steering Group and Supporting Improvement Advisers will also work within catchment areas to identify the needs of each school. This action plan is in specific response to Welsh, Baseline Assessment, the Early Years and improving tracking and targeting systems;
- Results for higher Outcomes 6+ in Anglesey schools remain relatively good. Even though there are higher expectations this year to achieve this Outcome, schools have raised the level of challenge in order to meet the new requirements.

Key Stage 2

- Schools performance on Anglesey remains strong overall. Performance in all subjects on the expected Level 4 is similar to national results with the exception of Welsh which is lower. Performance on the higher 5+ levels is again strong overall;
- Areas of improvement are to implement relevant recommendations of the agreed action plan as within the Foundation Phase.

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

- Clarification was sought as to the work undertaken by the established Steering Group within each catchment area in response to Foundation Phase needs. The Head of Learning responded that data previously collected within the Foundation Phase needed to be enhanced. He said that a Steering Group of Head Teacher representation was established and a representative from each catchment area was identified to promote good practice within their specific catchment area. A data base is now available to identify strengths and weaknesses within the Foundation Phase and there is a facility to allow Head Teachers to be able to share good practice and collaboration within the sector;
- The Vice-Chair questioned as to whether GwE was affording value for money in their role in supporting schools and whether measures are in place to gauge the role of GwE. The Senior Secondary Lead – GwE said it is a matter as to what the Authority's Head Teachers, Teachers and Education Officers consider the

benefit of GwE within the Island Schools. He noted that GwE Officer is work closely with Education Officers as regard to standards within primary and secondary schools. The benefit of the Authority working with GwE can also be measured as regards to categorisation profile i.e. schools that have received green category in respect of Leadership and Teaching within the schools. He further said that GwE provides the Authority with statutory monitoring of schools and a recent shift has taken place with GwE providing professional support within the schools to raise the standards required. GwE has also provided a programme to attract potential Head Teachers within schools from qualified teachers.

The Schools Challenge Advisor (Secondary) gave a detailed analysis of the performance data :-

Key Stage 3

- The Core Subject Indicator (CSI) performance in Anglesey has increased and is higher than the national average. An increase was seen in the percentage of free school meals learners who attained the CSI indicator.
- *Welsh* – performance on the expected level has slightly increased again this year, and has increased over a 3 year rolling period. Performance in Anglesey is higher than the national average this year.
English – performance on the expected level in English has remained consistent this year and is higher than the national average.
Mathematics – performance on the expected level in Mathematics has increased again this year and is higher than the national average within the 3 year rolling period. A slight fall was seen in performance on one level above the expected level and performance is slightly below national average.
Science – a slight fall in performance on the expected level, but it remains high and is higher than the national percentage. Performance on one level above the expected level has fallen slightly this year and is slightly below the national percentage.
- Anglesey's performance in key stage 3 remains high and is higher in nearly all indicators when compared to national performance;
- Increase performance is required in mathematics and science on one level above the expected level.

Key Stage 4

- Following the changes in examinations in 2016-2017, there remains significant volatility in GCSE outcomes. Significant changes to the pattern and numbers of pupils sitting exams in the Summer 2018 has had an impact on results as demonstrated in the proportion of grades across all subjects in the A* to C range in Wales decreasing by 1.2pp to 61.6%;
- GCSE's are being reformed and 15 updated subjects were sat this Summer for the first time. The new GCSE of qualifications in Science was examined for the first time in 2018 and coincides with the changes to the performance indicators at Key Stage 4;

- Significant changes to grade boundaries has taken place since the Summer of 2017 and November 2017 compared to the Summer of 2018, particularly at C grade in English and Mathematics. This has made it difficult for schools to ensure accurate projections and target setting;
- An increase has been seen in the performance of three of the five secondary schools on the Island;
- Initial figures show that free school meal pupils have performed better;
- A training programme is afforded by GwE with regard to specific educational programmes and all five of the Secondary Schools take advantage of the training plan;
- A Group 'Camu' has been established on Anglesey with representation from the five secondary schools and GwE. The development plans and individual needs of each school is discussed. Sub-Groups have also been established to give specific attention to improve the performance of schools i.e. improve the performance of pupils who have free schools meals, teaching and learning, leadership improvements and sharing good practice. She noted that one secondary school on Anglesey received an Estyn Inspection recently and the Inspectorate complimented the forward thinking in establishing such a framework by the Authority and GwE;
- Within Key Stage 4 it has become apparent that boys in Anglesey Schools are weaker within the Welsh and English language subjects (GwE has compared data for performance of boys in languages in comparison on a par with national statistics for boys and in Wales). GwE and the five secondary schools in Anglesey will now be focusing on improving the performance of boys within the language subjects within the schools.

The Schools Challenge Advisor (Secondary) wished it to be noted her appreciation as regards to the successful working relationship and collaboration between GwE and Anglesey schools.

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

- Reference was made to this year's GCSE English Language Grade C boundary. The Portfolio Holder - Education, Youth, Libraries & Culture responded that the boundary to attained a Grade C in the English Language GCSE was higher for pupils in 2018 than in 2017. To attain a Grade C in 2017, the required mark was 200 points but in 2018 the mark was raised to 220 points. He noted that the six North Wales Portfolio Holders with a responsibility for Education have complained to Welsh Government with regard to the unfairness to pupils as regards to this matter;
- Concerns expressed that immense changes are occurring within the education system and the effect it has on teachers' and pupils. The Senior Secondary Lead – GwE expressed that the education system will require the Education Authority and Schools' to draw its own curriculum. He expressed that it will be an opportunity for Anglesey to be able to draw up its own local curriculum which can draw upon experiences from businesses and communities;
- Questions raised as to the problems in attracting Science teachers within secondary schools. The Senior Secondary Lead – GwE said that GwE is in

negotiations with Universities to promote the teaching profession; attracting STEM subject teachers is becoming a concern. The Standards & Inclusions Senior Manager expressed that it is imperative that the education profession needs to be promoted within schools so as to attract young people to be Teachers' in the future.

It was RESOLVED to approve the content of the report.

ACTION : As noted above.

5 GWE ANNUAL REPORT 2017/18

Submitted – a report by the Senior Secondary Lead –GwE.

The report highlighted the performance of GwE for 2017/18 and noted that GwE provides a focused and supportive challenge to develop a self-improving system which trusts schools and their leaders at every level. The report provided GwE's Business Plan Priorities for 2018/19, together with an overview on educational standards across North Wales in 2017/18.

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

- Whilst accepting that there is continued improvement in sharing good practice between schools a Member expressed that specific target dates needs to be identified. The Senior Secondary Lead – GwE responded that GwE considers that the main focus within the coming years will be to have better resilience. He considered that the good practice is within the schools and as they will be facing extensive changes to the educational curriculum, GwE will be supporting a rolling programme within schools. He noted that Welsh Government and Estyn will be publishing expectations for schools in the near future to be challenging and supporting each other;
- A Member expressed that he considered that GwE's Improvement Support Advisors needs to be located within schools. He also referred that GwE's support is costly. The Head of Learning responded that he did not consider that a comparable model afforded by GwE would achieve the improvements and support that schools on Anglesey have been given and especially with extensive changes the education system will be facing over the next few years. The Portfolio Holder – Education, Youth, Libraries & Culture expressed that the support GwE has given to improve and enhance Anglesey schools has been imperative to the success of the schools. He also noted that the work of the Schools Progress Review – Scrutiny Panel has been supported and guided by GwE to challenging schools that have been appeared before the Panel. As part of supporting the development of the Panel, the Senior Secondary Lead –GwE invited Members of Panel to shadow the work of GwE in schools during specific visits. This was welcomed by the Committee as part of supporting the scrutiny role of Members.

It was RESOLVED to note the report.

ACTION : To arrange for Members to shadow the work of GwE once necessary arrangements have been put in place by GwE in consultation with the Learning Department.

6 SCRUTINY PANEL - SCHOOLS PROGRESS REVIEW

Submitted – a progress report by the Chair of the Scrutiny Schools Progress Review Panel and the Standards & Inclusions Senior Manager.

The Standards & Inclusions Senior Manager reported the Schools Progress Review Scrutiny Panel has since reporting to this Committee, met on five occasions and have received reports and have met with Heads and Governors as follows :-

Ysgol Gynradd Bodedern
Review of the Learning Action Plan
Foundation Phase
Ysgol y Ffridd and Ysgol y Graig, Llangefni
Ysgol Corn Hir, Llangefni and Ysgol Henblas

The Panel receives information from GwE and an Officer is available in meetings to discuss any support being received by a school. The Panel also receives updates by the Head of Learning in respect of implementation of the Learning Service Action Plan. Raising performance in the Foundation Phase is high on the Learning Department agenda and although good outcomes have been made in ensuring schools are now assessing pupils in Welsh first language, ensuring consistency of high standards across all subject's remains a priority. The Officers further said that following a briefing session given by the Foundation Phase Cluster Leadership Group, the Panel were reassured that a robust action plan is being undertaken to strengthen this area. It was noted that 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.

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

- Clarification was sought as to the current situation as to the recruitment of Head Teachers within the Primary Sector. The Standards & Inclusions Senior Manager responded that a number of new Head Teachers have been in place since the last two years. She further said that a number of teachers' within the primary sector have requested NPQH training to become Head Teachers;
- Reference was made that Elected Members previously visited schools to view activities and performance of schools. The Chief Executive said that he considered that it would be advantageous for Elected Members to visit schools as it could enhance their role as Governors and would be informative as regards to evidence of value for money in respect of the role GwE within the Island's Schools.

It was RESOLVED :-

- To agree that the Schools Progress Review – Scrutiny Panel is providing robust challenge on individual school's performance;

- To agree that the Schools Progress Review – Scrutiny Panel is monitoring implementation of the Learning Service's Improvement Plan and that the plan is on target thus far;
- To agree 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;
- That there are no matters that currently need to be escalated to the attention of the Executive from the ongoing work of the Panel.

ACTION : As noted above.

7 WORK PROGRAMME

Submitted – a report by the Scrutiny Officer on the Committee's Work Programme to July 2019.

It was RESOLVED to note the Work Programme to July 2019.

ACTION : As above.

**COUNCILLOR GWILYM O JONES
CHAIR**