

<b>ISLE OF ANGLESEY COUNTY COUNCIL</b>	
<b>COMMITTEE :</b>	<b>Partnership and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee</b>
<b>DATE:</b>	<b>2 February 2016</b>
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>School Progress Review Group</b>
<b>PORTFOLIO HOLDER(S):</b>	<b>Councillor Ken Hughes (Portfolio Holder – Life Long Learning)</b>
<b>HEAD OF SERVICE :</b>	<b>Delyth Molyneux ( Head of Service - Learning)</b>
<b>REPORT AUTHOR:</b>	<b>Joint Report by Delyth Molyneux (Head of Service - Life Long Learning) and Geraint Wyn Roberts (Scrutiny Officer).</b>
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## **1.0 RECOMMENDATION**

1.1 The Committee is requested to note the report in respect of the on-going work of the School Progress Review Group (the Panel).

## **2.0 REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATION**

2.1 Members of the Panel have given consideration to the best way of reporting on their work. On the 10 July 2015 Panel Members concluded that the best way forward was for a report to be submitted to the Partnership and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee during the municipal year and that the Scrutiny Annual Report include reference to the Panel's work when it is submitted to the Council's Annual Meeting every May. In order to avoid duplication, the Panel Members also concluded that the Partnership and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee be considered as the appropriate parent Scrutiny Committee, as it is supported by the Scrutiny Officer- who also supports the Panel.

## **3.0 BACKGROUND**

3.1 The School Progress Review Group was established on the 21 November 2012 by the Education and Leisure Scrutiny Committee. It arose from recommendations made by Estyn on the quality of Education services for children and young people on Anglesey. The aim of the group is to assist the Education Service in improving the performance of schools on the Island, by increasing and developing local accountability for school performance and enhancing local members' knowledge about key performance drivers and challenges that face schools on Ynys Môn.

3.2 With the establishment of a new Scrutiny Committee structure during May 2013 it was agreed that Members of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee and the Partnership and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee would continue with the work of the School Progress Review Group but designate it as a Scrutiny Outcome Panel. The Terms of Reference of the Panel to include:

- To monitor the progress of individual schools;
- To Learn from schools performing well;
- To make recommendations to the Life Long Learning Department (if necessary) that a school may require additional support from the Education Service and/or the Regional School Improvement Service (GwE).

#### **4.0 POSITION STATEMENT**

4.1 The current Membership of the Panel consists of:

- Councillor Meirion Jones
- Councillor Gwilym Jones
- Councilor Derlwyn Hughes
- Councillor Alun Mummery
- Councillor Lewis-Davies
- Councillor Richard Owain Jones
- Councillor Dylan Rees
- Councillor Jim Evans

4.2 The “Senior School Standards and Inclusion Manager” provides guidance to the Panel about which schools should be invited to appear before it. The criterion used to select schools is 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. It is important to emphasise that the decision as to which school is invited to appear before it lies solely with the Panel. The following schools have appeared before the Panel during 2015:

<b><u>Date</u></b>	<b><u>School</u></b>
5 February 2015	Ysgol Gymuned Pentraeth
5 February 2015	Ysgol Gymuned Garreglefn
13 February 2015	Ysgol Gynradd Amlwch
13 February 2015	Ysfgol Gymuned Moelfre
10 March 2015	Ysgol Uwchradd Llangefni
10 March 2015	Ysgol Y Graig

17 March 2015	Ysgol Uwchradd Caergybi
17 March 2015	Ysgol Llanfawr
10 July 2015	Planning Session

- 4.3 Members of the Panel receive a significant amount of confidential information at meetings. Information includes academic and attendance performance data, finance and staffing/management information. Information is securely shared with Panel Members as it is deemed sensitive or confidential in its nature.
- 4.4 The Head teacher, Chairperson of Governors and the relevant GwE (Regional School Improvement Service) Challenge Adviser are invited to attend the Panel meeting to discuss attainment standards, inclusion issues, attendance and the management of resources which includes financial and management aspects.
- 4.5 In order to record matters a “decision record” is taken at each meeting, which contains Panel Members conclusions, which is in turn provided to the Life Long Learning Department to action, as necessary. The Panel has the discretion to invite some schools to reappear before them if there are issues that wish to be revisited by them at a later date.

## **5.0 EMERGING THEMES AND PATTERS**

- 5.1 School representatives that attend the Panel meetings are open in identifying any weaknesses and strengths in school performance and provide a full explanation to Members about pertinent factors that may affect performance e.g. small cohorts and pupils with special educational needs.
- 5.2 All schools to date have evidenced the use of development plans that address areas of weak performance and prioritise actions to improve performance.
- 5.3 The smaller the school the more likely its performance will be variable, and this can vary significantly from year to year and affect its overall categorisation within the national model. If for example, there is an increase in the cohort numbers who have identified special needs, or less developed Welsh language skills
- 5.4 Pupil attendance figures are generally quite good, although some schools experience difficulties in ensuring adequately high attendance from all pupils, and with the recent introduction of higher attendance expectations within the Estyn Inspection Framework, a few schools find themselves additionally challenged and

within the 'LA monitoring' category as a result, despite all other aspects judged as being Good.

5.5 A minority of schools experience difficulties in maintaining consistency of staffing levels due to maternity and special leave obligations, and its effects are more marked in the smaller schools.

5.6 All schools are striving to improve Welsh Language skills and are committed to raising pupils' ability in this area.

5.7 Although not a general theme, a concern was expressed by one school in respect of the level of support provided to it to enable a member of staff to be appointed in a timely manner.

5.8 Schools are well regarded in their community.

## **6.0 NEXT STEPS**

6.1 Following the appointment of a new officer to the post of "Senior School Standards and Inclusion Manager" during November 2015, a number of schools will be invited to appear before the Panel between January 2016 and December 2016.

6.2 Some additional lines of enquiry will be included in 2016 to include:

- The effectiveness of the role of the GwE Challenge adviser in supporting and challenging orange and red categorised schools to improve.
- The effectiveness of 'school to school' working.
- The use of school balances (e.g. rationale for those above 5%).
- Recruitment and retention of key staff, identifying and encouraging young talent.
- The effectiveness of Governing Bodies in school improvement and accountability.

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