

## ISLE OF ANGLESEY COUNTY COUNCIL Scrutiny Report Template

<b>Committee:</b>	Partnership and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee
<b>Date:</b>	14 April, 2021
<b>Subject:</b>	Schools Progress Review Panel
<b>Purpose of Report:</b>	A progress update on the work of the Schools Progress Review Panel
<b>Scrutiny Chair:</b>	Cllr. Gwilym Owen Jones
<b>Portfolio Holder(s):</b>	Cllr. R Meirion Jones
<b>Head of Service:</b>	Rhys Howard Hughes, Director of Education, Skills and Young People
<b>Report Author:</b> <b>Tel:</b> <b>Email:</b>	Sioned Rowe, Scrutiny Officer 01248 752039 SionedRowe@ynysmon.gov.uk
<b>Local Members:</b>	N/A

### 1 - Recommendation/s

The Partnership and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee are asked to:

**A1 Note:**

- Progress to date in the work of the School Progress Review Panel in delivering its work programme which includes robust challenge of individual schools' performance.
- The areas of work addressed through the new arrangements introduced in shadowing the Learning Service and GwE

**A2** Recommend that the Committee reaches a conclusion on the robustness of the Panel's monitoring to date.

### 2 – Link to Council Plan / Other Corporate Priorities

Direct link to Council Plan / transformation priorities. The Council's Plan includes an ambition to work with the people of Anglesey, their communities and with partners to ensure that the best possible services are provided that will improve the quality of life of everyone across the Island. One of the 3 aims of the Plan is to "create conditions that will enable everyone to reach their full potential." The work of the Panel is key to supporting schools and the Council to achieve that aim.

### 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**

At the request of the Panel:

1. To what extent is the Scrutiny Committee satisfied with the work done by the Panel up to now?
2. Is the action taken by the Panel up to now robust enough and is the rate of the work appropriate?
3. How can the Panel's work be further strengthened?
4. What other areas could the Panel scrutinise?

#### **5 – Background / Context**

##### **1. CONTEXT**

As previously reported, Members will be aware that scrutiny has developed over the last two years through the work of the 3 scrutiny panels. This report summarises the progress made to date in relation to the **Schools Progress Review Panel**.

##### **1.2 Panel Governance Arrangements**

There are robust governance arrangements in place that are a foundation to the work of the Panel and it is intended to continue to hold monthly meetings of the Panel<sup>1</sup> in the future. A process of reporting progress on a quarterly basis to the Partnership and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee was established by Cllr. Gwilym Owen Jones, Chair of the Panel.

The membership of the Panel remains as reported to the Committee during the last quarter<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Meeting of the Partnership and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee held on 20 April and 27 June 2017.

<sup>2</sup> Meeting of the Partnership and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee held on 9 April, 2019.

<b>Councillor</b>	<b>Scrutiny Panel</b>
Gwilym O Jones (Chair of the Panel)	Partnership and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee
Margaret M Roberts	
Kenneth P Hughes	
Vaughan Hughes	
Alun Roberts (Vice-chair)	Corporate Scrutiny Committee
John Arwel Roberts	
Richard Griffiths	
<b>Co-opted Member of the Scrutiny Panel</b>	
Mr Keith Roberts	Corporate Scrutiny Committee

### **1.3 WORK FOCUS OF THE SCHOOLS PROGRESS REVIEW PANEL**

This progress report includes reference to the last 4 meetings of the School Progress Review Panel – and consequently covers the period **November, 2020→ March, 2021**.

**1.4 Monitoring Individual Schools' Standards** - Monitoring of individual school standards is well established and continues to develop. Following discussion in October, 2019 about the programme for monitoring standards in individual schools, there was strong evidence of action on the decision in terms of further developing scrutiny.

However, this work stream has currently been shelved as a result of the pandemic, and the Panel intends to revisit these visits when conditions permit. The Panel will therefore need to adapt the way it works and scrutinise the performance of individual schools, and there is scope for the Panel to undertake this work virtually over Teams in the future.

### **2.0 The Council's Response to COVID-19 (Part 3): Support for Vulnerable Children and the Holyhead Project**

**2.1** A verbal report was received from the Director of Education, Skills and Young People, Senior Welfare Manager and Senior Manager for Additional Learning Needs and Inclusion. The usual support offered to schools and pupils was outlined and how this changed during lockdown. There had been no relaxation in the statutory requirements for additional learning needs, so provision had to continue, which was a significant challenge. The next steps to be taken by the Additional Learning Needs and Inclusion Service are:

- i. Restarting school visits
- ii. Preparing for the new Legislation
- iii. Provision of ELSA training (Emotional Literacy Support Assistance)
- iv. Continue with the Nurturing Schools programme
- v. Work with Gwynedd Healthy Schools to undertake loss and grief training
- vi. Provide special circle time training for the period following lockdown.

### **2.2 Welfare Provision**

The Senior Welfare Manager gave a presentation about welfare provision since the pandemic period and noted that the priority at the start of lockdown was to support FSM

pupils, develop effective Care Hubs and strengthen professional training and safeguarding. It was noted how the Government's definition of a vulnerable child was jointly reformed by the Learning Service and the Children's Service to ensure provision for all vulnerable children. We learned about the Care Hub Vulnerability Matrix created to identify the most vulnerable children through Teulu Môn and the headteachers of schools. It was noted that good work had emerged from the period for example strengthening safeguarding arrangements and earlier identification of pupils to prevent harm, co-ordinated multi-agency working particularly when Ysgol Uwchradd Caergybi Hub was established, and created a system so that all agencies could communicate effectively with each other. This good practice will continue even when the pandemic comes to an end.

### **3.0 GwE Progress Report 2020/21: supporting schools during the Covid-19 pandemic**

3.1 A verbal report was received from the Director of Education, Skills and Young People, GwE Secondary Schools Challenge Adviser and GwE Primary Schools Challenge Adviser. It was noted that the regional report provided an overview of the work GwE has done during the pandemic in conjunction with the 6 authorities, and that their work has had to adapt in the wake of the pandemic. The wellbeing of learners and school staff was identified as the main priority during this period.

3.2 The 5 main areas in which GwE assisted the Council and individual schools were outlined:

1. GwE supported and uploaded initial resources for distance learning on Google Classroom.
2. Supported schools at the start of lockdown by keeping in touch and continuing to support schools when there was a shortage of staff.
3. Distance learning guidelines have been produced in conjunction with other regions and effective models for distance learning.
4. Worked with the Local Authority and created a policy for when schools reopened in the summer term, and assisted with risk assessments for the different sectors.
5. Blended learning - shared multi-disciplinary units to reinforce skills, and ensured guidance and guidelines for school staff.

3.3 The Primary Schools Challenge Adviser - GwE provided an overview of the work that has been undertaken in the primary sector, and noted that many exciting and interesting developments have taken place across the Island, and that the partnership between the Learning Service and GwE has been further strengthened during the period. Live-streaming lessons was piloted, webinars were created and good practice shared. Considerable work has been done to ensure that the Welsh language does not lose its grasp, and a number of resources have been developed including videos of teachers reading stories to support non-Welsh speaking parents. The Language Units have remained operational over the period.

3.4 Schools have made effective use of the 'Accelerated Learning' resources to provide provision for pupils to successfully develop their basic skills following a period of being

unable to receive consistent formal education. As a result, the results of one school in the centre of the county show an overall staggering increase in reading skills over a short period of time. In conclusion, it was noted that all Anglesey primary schools had developed in terms of the technology and had refined their way of working in response to the pandemic.

3.5 A presentation was given by the GwE Secondary Schools Challenge Adviser giving an overview of the work and operation of the Secondary Schools during the pandemic. At the start of the lockdown there was a significant emphasis on upskilling staff and pupils in order to learn and teach effectively using technology. Formal and informal training was carried out by GwE and also by the schools themselves. There was flexibility in the way schools provided blended education, with some choosing to stream some lessons live to groups of pupils; with other schools having used a more 'blended' approach – some live lessons, some non-simultaneous learning through pre-recorded videos or PowerPoint and tasks through the virtual class. Overall, the majority of 'live' lessons have occurred for years 12 and 13. The 5 secondary schools adapted to the needs of learners and teachers, and the Senior Management Teams at the schools ensured that pupils' feedback was fed into the plans for blended learning.

### **3.6 The Welsh Language**

Resources, books, stories and songs etc., have been developed for each phase, and models that teachers can use to plan distance learning activities. Examples include tasks that have been voiced so that non-Welsh speaking parents understand the task. The GwE Support Centre has developed a specific section for Welsh language resources, and it is believed that the profile and importance of the Welsh language has increased since the pandemic, with parents and teachers concerned about the standard of the language.

### **3.7 Special School**

Since the first lockdown, the special education sector in Anglesey has responded successfully to the needs of the children and young people. Reforming the curriculum and other reforms have continued at a sensible pace during the period, and the current improvement plans reflect a set of honest and achievable aspirations in the context of the impact of the current pandemic.

### **3.6 Next Steps**

GwE's priorities going forward were outlined:

- It is intended to further develop digital skills and prepare for the new curriculum and amendments to the Additional Learning Needs Act, whilst supporting schools.
- Provide a combination of generic and unique support to support schools in further developing a blended learning approach.
- Resources continue to be shared to ensure that statutory requirements are met.

- All schools will need to adapt and review their monitoring and quality assurance arrangements.
- Provide effective leadership development programmes for teachers at all stages of their career.

#### **4.0 Estyn: The support of local authorities and regional consortia for schools and PRUs to respond to COVID-19**

The Director of Education, Skills and Young People introduced Estyn's remit report, noting that the report is very positive and states that the Learning Service and the Island's schools are on track. It was noted that the report was to be welcomed, and was a positive and fair reflection of the work of the schools and the Authority.

#### **5.0 The Journeys of Two Secondary Schools on the Island**

As part of the Panel's scrutiny, two (separate) secondary schools were invited to discuss two specific journeys namely a school trip over the pandemic period, and an improvement journey together with other relevant developments and challenges. Detailed and effective presentations were received from the schools with an opportunity for panel members to question and challenge as relevant. The intention going forward is to invite the other three secondary schools under the same procedure.

#### **6.0 An Update on the Developments of the Gwynedd and Anglesey Additional Learning Needs and Inclusion Partnership** (focus on the service review report and the subsequent action)

6.1 It was noted that an External Consultant undertook an evaluation of the effectiveness of the Additional Learning Needs and Inclusion Partnership for Gwynedd and Anglesey prior to lockdown, which included visiting centres, meeting the management team, staff, and headteachers. The appraisal identified good practice and areas for development, and as a result an action plan was developed. The main strengths of the service were identified as service outcomes and strong leadership, progress against outcomes, training offered to schools, and use of specialist services, as well as timely case closures. It was noted that there were obvious difficulties on the Additional Learning Needs side, but that there were more elements to be developed on the Inclusion side. Areas of development have been identified: a need to adapt the model of provision to ensure a continuum of support through the Secondary, a need for greater access to high level data, and a need to work on transformation and transition to the new law. It was noted that the action plan was operational and that there are clear developments to be seen recently. The intention to establish an ABC Unit was noted in all secondary schools on the Island, which is seen as innovative by Estyn.

#### **7.0 Digital support for schools and general developments regarding the Welsh language**

7.1 The Senior Primary Manager gave a presentation detailing the digital support and resources available to schools on the Anglesey School Support Hub website including guidance and policies, Covid test booking procedures, online training and resources that facilitate the virtual learning process, as well as links to other useful websites and

resources. It was noted that a questionnaire was sent to all schools gathering their views on the support that has been provided to them since the pandemic, and that there had been extremely positive feedback about the website indicating how useful it was.

### **7.3 The Welsh Language**

7.4 The good work being done to ensure that the Welsh language remains a central part of Anglesey's education was mentioned, and reference was made to the Primary and Secondary Language Co-ordinators, the two Language Centres on the Island that immerse pupils, the regional collaboration that takes place and also the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP). It is noted that the work of drawing up the WESP plan has begun, and is now required by the Welsh Government to be a 10-year plan. It was noted that 7 new outcomes had been identified in the WESP. The progress of the Language Charter Project was reported, with pilot work being carried out in four schools on the Island. Reference was made to the Welsh Language Recovery Acceleration Scheme which has been established across the 6 authorities of North Wales, with webinars planned on this after Easter.

7.5 At the Panel's request, a specific presentation on the Welsh language was requested at the next Panel meeting.

## **8. A MATTER TO ESCALATE TO THE PARENTS' COMMITTEE FOR CONSIDERATION**

The following matter is referred for consideration by the Partnership and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee:

**1.4** The Partnership and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee is asked to draw a conclusion on the robustness of the Panel's monitoring to date.

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

N/A

### **7 – Financial Implications**

N/A

### **8 – Appendices:**

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

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**Cllr. Gwilym Owen Jones**  
**Chair of the Schools Progress Review Panel**  
**Date:**