

# CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

8 OCTOBER 2019

Present: Councillor Bridgeman (Chairperson),  
Councillors Cunnah, Joyce, Naughton, Parkhill, Phillips, Taylor and  
Singh

Co-opted Members: Patricia Arlotte (Roman Catholic representative),  
Carol Cobert (Church in Wales Representative) and  
Matthew Richards (Parent Governor Representative)

## 1 : APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Linda Morgan and Karen Dell'Armi.

## 2 : DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received for this meeting.

## 3 : EDUCATION STRATEGY - CARDIFF 2030

Members were advised that this item enabled the Committee to review and assess the Education 10 year strategy for Cardiff – Cardiff 2030. The Committee had, at previous meetings, helped influence the development of the Strategy.

The Chairperson welcomed Councillor Sarah Merry (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Education, Employment and Skills), Nick Batchelar (Director of Education and Lifelong Learning) and Mike Tate (Assistant Director of Education Lifelong Learning) to the meeting.

Councillor Merry was invited to make a statement in which she indicated that every child faces a different set of challenges, some are behind before they start school. That has to be recognised and it is therefore important to actually wrap the structure and services around the child. Our aim is that our city has a very high standard of education for every child.

Nick Batchelar (Director, Education and Lifelong Learning) took Members through the draft cabinet report outlining that much of what it is needed over the next ten years will be to consolidate and extend the progress that has been made since Cardiff 2020 was launched. Education will look very different in 2030, it sets out a deep and systematic change. The point of plan is to shape the priorities which should be manifesting themselves in the Capital Ambition Delivery Plan. It is about sharing responsibilities and holding each other to account. It is also necessary to recognise the role of parents as primary educators.

This is set out in the 2 themes and 5 goals:

## Themes:

1. A shared responsibility for education and learning across the City; and
2. Meaningful participation of children and young people.

## Goals:

1. A learning entitlement;
2. Learner's health and wellbeing;
3. Realising the Curriculum for Wales 2022 in Cardiff;
4. A world class education workforce; and
5. High quality learning environments.

## The Chairperson invited questions from Members:

- Members discussed the lack of reference to bullying strategies in the report and were advised that whilst it was not specifically listed, it was inherent in the various references to child safety and wellbeing, and that the positive image of what a childhood should be runs through the whole report.
- Members referred to school not working for every child and that there is an ethnicity attainment gap in Cardiff. It is accepted that outcomes are still not high enough and that to many children and young people fail to do well enough because they do not feel included in the system. There has still not been enough progress in having a more diverse workforce.
- Members expressed concern that the importance of the role of parents/adults play in their education is not suitably recognised within the goals. Whilst the first goal references high quality lifelong learning it does appear to stop at 19 and there is no further reference to their learning. The Director advised that the values are clearly set on within the documents provided but that there is not meant to be detailed implementation information in every area. There are strong links with further education, it is important to prepare learners to go on further.
- Members noted the importance of making sure that schools were at the heart of the local communities and that a Community Focussed School approach will be developed. The Director advised that conversations are taking place and that this document can help shape those conversations. Members would also like to see that the approach is not just about the sports facilities that can be accessed but about providing other facilities that can be access which would help parents, for example English or computer classes.
- Members made reference to all schools being rights respecting schools and queried how that would operate. The Cabinet Member advised there should be emphasis on the pupil voice, it is more than just asking how they want to recycle plastic it is

about engagement and shaping the rules within the school itself. It is about them recognising that it is not just about them but about the person or pupil sat next to them.

- Members discussed success measures and the fact that they seem a little vague but noted that this is a document for the next 10 years and that there would be other documents with specific targets.
- Members discussed the significant gap in outcomes between those on high and low incomes. It was noted that it exists in cities across England, Wales and Scotland. It is a perpetual aspiration which is hugely challenging.
- Members noted the launch date for this document is the 19 November at City Hall. Members were invited to attend.
- Members referred to Eastern High School being an example of a school with good facilities used by the Community, investment in that school has taken place. What is the vision and ambition for schools with estate issues which need further investment. The Cabinet Member advised that there is a real challenge in terms of schools allowing access. It is easier for the larger secondary school but more difficult for primary schools. It is important that we look at ways to help and support schools. In relation to schools where investment is required, it would not be wise to underestimate the challenge faced in relation to those schools.

AGREED – That the Chairperson writes to the Cabinet Member on behalf of the Committee expressing their comments and observations discussed during the Way Forward.

#### 4 : PROVISIONAL PERFORMANCE OF CARDIFF'S SCHOOLS 2018/2019

Members were advised that this report provided the Committee with the Provisional School Results for 2018/19 and that the briefing paper attached provided members with the provisional school results, together with a more detailed analysis across various areas.

The Chairperson welcomed Councillor Sarah Merry (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Education, Employment and Skills), Nick Batchelar (Director of Education and Lifelong Learning) and Mike Tate (Assistant Director of Education Lifelong Learning) to the meeting.

The Assistant Director reminded Members that there had been significant changes in the assessment and reporting arrangements for schools and pupils performance in Wales this year. Members were then provided with an outline of the key performance results at both primary and secondary levels. Sixth form provisional data was also outlined. A more detailed report will be prepared in January looking at specific schools and the wider data.

The Chairperson invited questions from Members:

- Members discussed broader changes and felt that it will only benefit schools to take part in the improvement groups and queried whether this will have a positive impact. The Assistant Director advised that it was about linking schools with the appropriate partners in particular where the performance is lower, it will also help engagement in the improvement groups. It was also felt important to look at the whole raft of measures to aid the performance issues being faced by some schools at the present time.
- Members were concerned that the new reporting mechanisms were hiding poor performance and not highlighting specific schools or areas within schools that are failing or starting to fail. Members were advised that the percentage decrease is minimal, it allows a dialogue to be started to try and understand why it is happening. The measures need to be able to provide information as to how the whole school is performing and not just a segment of it. There needs to be transparency in respect of the whole school. Governing Bodies need to be able to ask and receive assurance that what they have been told is validated by some hard measures.

AGREED – That the Chairperson writes to the Cabinet Member on behalf of the Committee expressing their comments and observations discussed during the Way Forward.

## 5 : NEW CURRICULUM

Members noted that the new curriculum for Wales is an extensive project with an implementation date of 2022. The briefing provided was to enable the Committee to gain an understanding of the timeline in place to ensure the effective rollout in 2022.

The Chairperson welcomed Councillor Sarah Merry (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Education, Employment and Skills), Nick Batchelar (Director of Education and Lifelong Learning) and Mike Tate (Assistant Director of Education Lifelong Learning) and Natalie Gould from the Consortium to the meeting.

Members were provided with a presentation – Education in Wales: Our National Mission. Natalie Gould provided Members with information about where schools should be at this point, what the consortia is doing to support schools and how the system can make schools and the middle tier accountable for delivery. A considerable amount of work was being undertaken across the different reforms:

- The national approach to professional learning and the fact that there is a national and regional strategy but noted that the strategy may look different depending on where the school is on their journey.

- The strides being made to increase school to school learning, cluster schools, school improvement groups and lead practitioners. It was also noted that there was brokered support for specific schools.
- With specific reference to ALN reform and the focus on equity and wellbeing there is a training model, it involved the training of a champion in a cluster who then disseminates the information. Work is being undertaken on the policies and processes, but it may need some revision bearing in mind the changes to the time scales.
- The reform of initial teacher education (ITE) was revitalised and reformed and was launched in September. There are new providers and there are to be a further three next year. There are now 11 schools working with ITE partners.
- The National Academy for Education Leadership has been established, there are now new and acting headteacher programmes.
- The new curriculum this is the part of the reforms that people focus on. Changes have been made already and the document will look very different from the one that was released in the summary. The target date for release for is still January 2020.

The Chairperson invited questions from Members:

- Members commented on the amount of work that needs to be undertaken and were concerned about the added pressure that the implementation of all these new policies would bring for schools who were already under achieving. Members were advised the changes have to be planned but there has to be a realisation of what the pressures are at the time. Teachers still have to undertake the day job. It is about capacity. The school to school working is voluntary and it is important that schools engage at the right time.

Members were advised that the Consortia are just asking teachers to prepare their school for change. There will be training and support.

- Members asked about Pioneer schools and were concerned that those schools had an advantage over those that were not. Members were advised that schools were provided with funding to help. There needs to be minimum expectation for schools. They all need to be at a certain point at a certain time.

Members also queried whether those Pioneers were a representative cross section. Members were advised that there was a selection process and a breadth of schools became

involved. Initially there were primary, secondary, welsh medium and faith schools involved, although some have dropped out so there may have been some changes.

- Members took the view that seven of the nine reforms referred to related to professional development and that implementation was only a couple of years ago. Members were advised that the curriculum final draft will be published in January which will set out areas of learning, the guidance will be contained in that document. Professional learning is the enabler for the changes. There will be milestones for schools and there is now the new Estyn inspection frame work.

The curriculum will have some detail and some legislation but the planning of the curriculum will be very much at school level.

There was some concern that we are losing sight of what is important, namely children receiving a good education. It is understood that teachers believe that the new curriculum is about teaching rather than being told what to teach. The curriculum is based on excellence and equitability for children.

- Members raised the issue of capacity and asked about the involvement of School Governors. It was noted that there will be training for Governors and their support is vital.
- Members were advised that the role of the Challenge Advisor is an evolving role and is being reviewed continually.

AGREED – That the Chairperson writes to the Cabinet Member on behalf of the Committee expressing their comments and observations discussed during the Way Forward.

## 6 : WAY FORWARD

Members discussed the information received and identified a number of issues which the Chairman agreed would be included in the letters that would be sent, on behalf of the Committee, to the relevant Cabinet Members and Officers.

## 7 : URGENT ITEMS (IF ANY)

There were no urgent items.

## 8 : DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting is on Tuesday 12 November 2019 at 4.30 pm.

The meeting terminated at 7.20 pm