
EDUCATION AND SKILLS

SOP Update

This month I attended the official opening of the extension to Coed Glas Primary School in Llanishen. This is one of our three most recent primary school projects that have been funded by the 21st Century School Programme. I was delighted to unveil the plaque revealing the name the “Learning Cube” as chosen by the pupils. This £1m two storey extension provides excellent 21st century learning facilities for the children including 2 new classrooms, interactive breakout spaces and community meeting rooms.

Another project that is progressing at pace is the construction of the new Eastern High School in partnership with Cardiff & Vale College. On the 30th of September I attended the official ground breaking ceremony for this £26m Community Focussed school. Due for completion in December next year by Willmott Dixon, this superb new facility will not only be sustainable but provide the latest technology for teaching and learning in addition to fantastic sporting facilities, such as a 3G floodlit dual use pitch for both rugby and football, for use by the local community.

I am also pleased to update that the procurement for our next new secondary school, for the wards of Ely & Caerau, has commenced. The tender has been released at a value of £28m and we are expected returns by the 16th of December, with a view to appointing a main contractor during January 2017. On the 14th of November, at a community event attended by over 500 residents and pupils from the local community, the new Head teacher Martin Hulland announced the name of the new school. It will be called Cardiff West Community High School. We look forward to sharing the design of the new school with you early next year.

Best Breakfast Club in Wales 2016 – Oakfield Primary School, Cardiff

Oakfield Primary School’s Breakfast Club, which regularly caters for 150 pupils each day, has been running for approximately 10 years. The club provides children (aged 4 – 11) with a healthy and calm start to the day and this means that the children go into their classrooms feeling happier with a superb attitude towards their learning.

To be selected as winners for the Best Breakfast Club in Wales award for the second year running is testament to significant work that all staff put in in order to ensure the club is such a worthwhile experience for every child. The children’s social skills and confidence have improved significantly as well as punctuality and attendance in general. It’s a huge credit to all those involved.

Erasmus/International Links

Cardiff Council has received funding for a large number of Erasmus+ programmes this year and with help from our International School Linking department participation in European projects in Wales has risen by almost 400% this year.

The most recent study visit was to Finland where Emily Daly, International School Linking Officer, accompanied 21 headteachers and a challenge advisor to Kuopio to learn why Finland is so successful on the PISA scale. This was a week long programme and the group will follow this with visits to Italy, Holland and back to Finland by a range of senior, middle and aspiring leaders with the aim to inspire our school leaders to investigate innovative approaches to raising standards.

Last week Cardiff is welcomed directors of education, advisors, headteachers and teachers from 9 European countries and from China to participate in training and job-shadowing opportunities in our schools. The week of activities culminated in the Internationalising Education Conference in City Hall on Thursday 17th November during which 200 delegates from Wales and partner countries participated in 23 workshops and an international café to celebrate good practice in Wales, share ideas and forge new partnerships.

UK Youth Parliament – House of Commons Annual Sitting

On Friday 11th November, two young people from Cardiff travelled to London to join 276 other Members of Youth Parliament from across the UK to take part in this year's UK Youth Parliament's annual sitting which involves Members of Youth Parliament debating on the green benches of the House of Commons. The sitting, chaired by the Speaker of the House of Commons, Rt Hon John Bercow MP, heralds the start of UK Parliament Week (14-20 November), an annual festival of events intended to connect communities across the UK with their democracy.

Elin Bold and Stephanie Ezeadum, Members of Youth Parliament for Cardiff debated a range of topical issues, including the need for a 'curriculum for life' and tackling racial and religious discrimination.

Elin gave a speech on her ideas for a 'Better, Kinder Democracy' and said after the event *'it was an unforgettable and invaluable experience and I felt immense pride representing the young people of Cardiff.'*

Stephanie Ezeadum MYP who spoke passionately on the issue of race and religious discrimination said *"The annual sitting was an amazing experience I feel blessed to have been a part of it"*

Show Racism the Red Card

Sunil Patel from Show Racism the Red Card gave a presentation to head teachers to outline how the organisation can support schools to deal with all kinds of racist behaviour. Thirteen schools across the city have now been offered free workshops with the children and training for staff during the Spring term. If this pilot project is successful and evaluated well by the schools involved we will look to roll out training to a second phase of schools in the summer term. This work will add to the school support provided by the Cardiff Against Bullying team.

Cardiff Governors Association

Governor Associations are key in supporting school governance. They provide a professional network for governors to share good practice and are a vehicle for discussion of the latest education developments in their Local Authority and the education sector nationally. Cardiff Governors Association (CGA) was revitalised in 2015 when a revised constitution was adopted, which included new financial arrangements for funding its activities and programme. It has organised a programme of seminars and training workshops for this academic year that compliments the existing training programme provided by the Local Authority.

On Saturday 12 November, the CGA held its Annual Training Conference and its theme was 'Schools and Business in Partnership'. Speakers included:

- Sarah Merry, Cabinet Member for Education
- Nick Batchelar, Director of Education
- Kath Keeley, Headteacher of The Hollies School
- Matt Appleby, Director, Business in the Community
- Lee Humphreys, Assistant Headteacher, Llanishen High School

Approximately 40 governors attended this interactive session from across the city. The event provided an opportunity for governors to network and to share and discuss good practice on partnership working.

WG Consultation on School Governance

The Welsh Government has released a consultation on proposals to revise and consolidate the school governance regulatory framework in Wales. The proposals are to revise the legislative framework for school governance, to place a stronger focus on skilled governing bodies. This includes giving governing bodies the flexibility to make their own decisions about their constitution and membership to meet the particular needs of their schools.

The proposals will:

- Revise and update the school governance and staffing regulatory framework so that all maintained school governing bodies in Wales are best placed to ensure the effective governance and success of their schools
- Consolidate and simplify the current legislative framework by ensuring that there is a single, consistent approach to school governance across all maintained schools in Wales.

Governing Bodies and Headteachers have been notified of the consultation and asked to respond before the deadline date of 17 February 2017. It is proposed that the Local Authority and Governing Bodies will be given up to 18 months to implement the changes after the new regulations are made. Details of the consultation can be found here:

<https://consultations.gov.wales/consultations/consolidation-and-revision-school-governance-regulatory-framework-wales>

Newly Appointed LA Governors

The Local Authority Governor Panel met on 8th November 2016 and recommended 21 candidates for appointment. 13 were new applications and the remaining 8 were re-appointments. A number of the appointments were made to schools that have had vacancies for a significant amount of time and to schools that are in the greatest need of improvement. The panel noted the high calibre of applications received at this meeting and in previous meetings.

The next panel meeting is scheduled for 12th January 2017.

Councillor Sarah Merry
Cabinet Member for Education & Skills
23 November 2016