

My Ref: Scrutiny/Correspondence/MJH

18 September 2015

Councillor Sarah Merry  
Cabinet Member - Education and Skills  
County Hall  
Atlantic Wharf  
CARDIFF  
CF10 4UW



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Neuadd y Sir  
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Dear Sarah

Thank you for attending the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee on 15<sup>th</sup> September 2015 to provide an opening statement and answer questions on the agenda item **Quarter one performance and Provisional School Results 2014/15**. I would also like to thank Nick Batchelar for his introduction of the report and answers to Members questions. During the way forward section of the meeting the Members' considered the information in the report and answers to their questions, and identified a number of comments, concerns and recommendations for your consideration, as detailed below.

### **Quarter 1 performance**

The Committee welcomed the opportunity to be presented with the Directorates Quarter 1 performance report. Members were pleased to read about the progress being made to improve the performance of all areas of Education. In particular Member commented on the improved performance in respect of Neets, which had been in decline. Members noted that many of the problems were now being addressed and performance had improved. The Committee also considered that the new data sharing protocol, across organisations, should further help reduce the number of Neets.

Members did however question the primary schools admissions procedure, as some Members were aware of a cohort of pupils who were still not attending school as places had not been found. Members noted the Directors comments that all pupils had been offered a school place, however a number of appeals were still being processed and they will all be completed within the statutory time scale. The Committee requested a further update on the outcome of the appeals, to Members, following the 30 days statutory time scale. Furthermore Members would like a breakdown of the numbers of Primary and Secondary school children who as of 16<sup>th</sup> September 2015 had not yet attended school because of appeals, or that they had not yet accepted an offered place.

A Member expressed concern that in the Q1 performance reports, corporate risk section, the School Organisation Programme (SOP) was shown as "red/amber". The Director stated that the "red/amber" risk was due to capacity issues in achieving the ambitious timescales for project delivery. The Committee requested assurance that

additional management actions would be put in place to ensure that the SOP programme would be fully implemented.

Members, when questioning the poor performance of certain school causing concern, were informed by the Director that Estyn had recently sent a letter about Eastern High, stating that improvements had been made. The Committee requested that they receive a copy of this and any other similar letters that Estyn send in respect of their monitoring visit to any schools causing concern.

### **Provisional School Results**

Members welcomed the continued and sustained improvements in the overall results, however, Members did express their wish for further improvements, across all performance measures, to ensure that every Cardiff school is a good school where learners achieve well.

The Committee did however express considerable concern that the performance of pupils, in Mathematics, was the most significant area that needed improvement, particularly in certain schools. The Committee recommended that you and the Director of Education ensures that the Central South Consortium immediately implements appropriate measure to bring about significant improvements in results in Mathematics across all key stages, and in all schools.

The Committee also expressed its concern that teacher assessments were inconsistent across schools. The Committee requested details of the actions being proposed by you, the Director of Education and the Central South Consortium to address this issue.

Finally the Committee wished to inform you that they approved their work programme for the year, as required by the Constitution, and I have attached, for your information, a copy of the work programme calendar so that you and your officers are aware of the issues that the Committee will be seeking to scrutinise at each meeting.

I hope that these comments, advice and recommendations, detailed above will be of use and support in improving outcomes for Cardiff's pupils. The Committee looks forward to receiving the requested additional information listed above together with a positive response to this letter within the next month.

To recap, this letter requests several actions, requests for information and recommendations, as follows and requires a response:

- A further update on the outcome of the admission appeals, following the completion of the 30 day statutory timescale for an appeal hearing, and the numbers of pupils who have not yet attended school because of appeals or pressure on the admissions process;

- Assurance that additional management actions would be put in place to ensure that the SOP programme would be fully implemented;
- A copy of the recent Eastern High Estyn letter;
- Details of the measures being implemented to bring about significant improvements in results in mathematics across all key stages; and
- Details of the actions being implemented to address the inconsistencies in teacher assessments.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Cook', with a horizontal line underneath it.

**COUNTY COUNCILLOR RICHARD COOK**  
**Chair – Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee**

CC: Nick Batchelar – Director of Education and Lifelong learning  
CC: Cheryl Cornelius – Cabinet Support Manger  
CC Nichola Hayward – Resources Manager  
CC Paul Burke – Committee Clerk





My Ref / Fy Ref: CM32215

Your Ref / Eich Ref : Scrutiny/Correspondence/MJH

Date / Dyddiad: 4 November 2015

Councillor R. Cook  
Chair  
Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee  
County Hall  
Atlantic Wharf  
Cardiff  
CF10 4UW

Dear / Annwyl Richard,

**RE: Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee 15 September 2015**

Thank you for your letter of the 18<sup>th</sup> September, 2015 following the meeting of the Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee on 15<sup>th</sup> September, 2015.

**Quarter 1 Performance**

You requested a further update on the outcome of appeals. I can confirm that all appeals have been completed within the statutory 30 day timescale. Pupils have been offered places in both English and Welsh medium provision in both the Primary and Secondary sector and it is now down to parental choice as to which option is taken up for the child. This is because, within the Primary Sector, there are currently 222 places available in 19 different English medium schools and 36 places in 7 different Welsh primary schools. In addition, in the secondary sector there are Welsh medium places available in Ysgol Glantaf and Bro Edern and English medium places in a number of community schools.

You also expressed concern that in the Q1 performance reports, corporate risk section, the School Organisation Programme (SOP) was shown as red/amber. SOP is shown as red/amber because, whilst the design of Eastern High Project has progressed to Planning Committee, the high value construction contract has not yet been signed off. This is anticipated to be completed on time and by the end of the year. At this point the risk rating of the Project will be reduced when there is certainty of delivery of this large scale project. Additional experienced staffing has been secured to strengthen capacity in the SOP Team.

With regards to the discussion of schools causing concern, I enclose a copy of the Estyn Monitoring Report for Eastern High dated June 2015, which identifies the improvements that have been made, and what more needs to be done.



## **Provisional School Results**

With regard to the Committee's concerns about performance, specifically in mathematics, please find attached a report that went to the Education Development Board on the 7<sup>th</sup> October, 2015 which outlines the appropriate measures that are being taken to bring about significant improvements in results in mathematics.

You have requested details of action being implemented to address the inconsistencies in teacher assessments. The Consortium is commissioned to address the consistencies in teacher assessment and have taken the following actions:-

In 2014 – 15 there have been some key developments that have begun to improve the standardisation, moderation and verification processes across the Central South Consortium region, namely:

- Many headteachers and senior leaders attended the information sharing sessions for the dissemination of the CSC booklet "Securing Consistency in Teacher Assessment. These sessions provided further training and guidance to support a consistent approach to standardisation and moderation of teacher assessment within and between schools.
- Many clusters across the region provided dates for their moderation and had consortium officers to attend and monitor end of foundation phase and key stage 2/3 cluster moderation meetings in English, Welsh and mathematics.
- Clusters provided CSC with a clear audit trail of their standardisation and moderation processes.
- A 10% sample of schools across the region have had their teacher assessments verified by the consortium. This exercise exemplified some examples of good practice but also highlighted in some cases insufficient evidence as a key barrier to awarding accurate levels.

The Welsh Government commissioned a report on the external verification of Teacher Assessment, in the summer term of the last academic year. It is currently still in draft and will be submitted to WG at the Internal Partnership Board meeting on 18<sup>th</sup> November. Once they have agreed it then copies can be distributed to all stakeholders.

Yours sincerely  
Yn gwyir



**CIlr /Y Cyng Sarah Merry**  
**Cabinet Member for Education/**  
**Yr Aelod Cabinet Dros Addysg**  
**Member for Cathays /**  
**Aelod Dros Cathays**



*Rhagoriaeth i bawb - Excellence for all*

Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg  
a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru

Her Majesty's Inspectorate  
for Education and Training in Wales

**Report following monitoring  
Level of follow-up: special measures**

**Eastern High School  
Quarry Hill  
Newport Road  
Rumney  
Cardiff  
CF3 3XG**

**Date of visit: June 2015**

**by**

**Estyn, Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and  
Training in Wales**

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**The monitoring team**

Robert Davies	Reporting Inspector
Vaughan Williams	Team Inspector
Delyth Lloyd Gray	Team Inspector
Steven Pringle	Team Inspector



## **Outcome of monitoring**

Eastern High School is judged to have made insufficient progress in relation to the recommendations following the core inspection in December 2014.

As a result, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales is maintaining the level of follow-up activity.

Estyn inspectors will re-visit the school in about three months' time to inspect progress against the recommendations.

## **Progress since the last inspection**

### **Recommendation 1: Ensure that all pupils are safe in school**

No judgement applied

The school has acted successfully upon many of the health and safety issues identified at the time of the core inspection. Pupil safety has improved by securing the perimeter fence and having one point of entry. This helps prevent unauthorised access into the school and has substantially reduced the number of pupils leaving the school grounds during the day. An effective new CCTV system contributes to making the site more secure and safer for pupils. The school has increased the number of staff on duty around the school during lessons, morning break and at lunchtime. This has helped to ensure better supervision that has resulted in pupils conducting themselves in a more appropriate manner.

The school has responded well to ensure that safety related policies and risk assessments are in place and shared with all staff. These include clear and useful guidance on issues such as the administration of medicines, fire evacuation and security protocols.

Since the core inspection, the school has introduced clear guidance on safeguarding of pupils for all staff. Appropriate training for staff has increased their awareness of the procedures to follow within the school. However, the appointment of a new child protection officer is very recent and a full review of safeguarding procedures is ongoing. The school intends to support the systems and procedures for safeguarding through its 'Eastern Promise' scheme, based on privileges, developed in conjunction with pupils.

The school has conducted a wellbeing survey with around half of pupils that included questions about how safe they feel in school. The survey showed that the majority of these pupils usually or always feel safe in the school. However, the majority of pupils interviewed during the monitoring visit said that they feel insecure in school at least some of the time.

The school keeps suitable records of bullying incidents in the anti-bullying log. This shows that the number of reported incidents have decreased this term with the majority of reported cases being resolved successfully. However, the records do not show the actions that staff have taken to resolve such incidents or details of any

further actions required. The school has plans to develop a new anti-bullying policy through consultation with pupils and staff. This is to include a clear definition of bullying and agreed actions to tackle incidents.

**Recommendation 2: Raise standards and improve pupils' literacy and numeracy skills**

No judgement applied

Since the core inspection, the school has focused the majority of its efforts on strategies to raise the achievement of Year 11 pupils, especially in English and mathematics. This has included an appropriate range of interventions, such as individual mentoring and revision sessions, which have been suitably targeted at those pupils most at risk of underachievement. However, it is too early to ascertain the impact of these initiatives.

Lesson observations and scrutiny of pupils' work shows that the standards achieved by pupils remain too low. In the minority of lessons where pupils make good progress, they recall prior learning well and engage successfully in tasks. They work effectively with each other to share and develop their understanding. However, overall, in many instances pupils complete little work.

Pupils' ability to express their understanding of the topics being studied has improved, and a minority articulate their understanding clearly. However, the majority of pupils still lack the confidence to share their ideas fully with each other and in class discussion.

A few pupils write confidently and fluently for a range of purposes and audiences. However, the literacy and numeracy skills of many pupils remain well below expectations. They make frequent errors in their spelling, punctuation and grammar, and lack confidence in expressing themselves through pieces of extended writing. In a few lessons, pupils use their numeracy skills well in subjects other than mathematics, but many pupils do not have a secure enough grasp of basic number skills and are over reliant on the use of a calculator.

Provisional key stage 3 data indicates that most pupils continue to perform at a level well below that of pupils in similar schools, and noticeably so in English.

A range of strategies have reduced the negative impact of poor behaviour on learning. However, the poor attitude to learning of a minority of pupils continues to limit the progress that they make.

Planning to implement the literacy and numeracy framework is still significantly underdeveloped.

**Recommendation 3: Improve pupils' behaviour, attendance and attitudes to learning**

No judgement applied

Since the core inspection, the school has implemented suitable procedures to respond swiftly to the very poor behaviour of a few extremely challenging pupils. Feedback from pupils and staff indicates a clear reduction in disruption to lessons. There is now a greater clarity in procedures to manage behaviour and a few staff are beginning to gain confidence in challenging the behaviour of individuals in lessons. However, a majority of staff ignore low level disruption and off-task behaviour in their classrooms. As a result, too many pupils do not listen attentively in lessons and do not apply themselves well enough to activities. A very few pupils continue to display very poor behaviour in lessons. In general, the behaviour of pupils during unstructured times of the day has improved. However, the behaviour of a few pupils around the school remains a concern.

Since the core inspection, the school has made small steps in improving pupils' attendance. Improvements include support staff dealing effectively with pupils who avoid attending lessons. However, the school does not monitor whole-school attendance closely enough and does not follow up persistent absence. The school has not analysed the attendance of different groups of pupils.

Since the last inspection, exclusion figures have reduced significantly and more pupils now receive internal exclusions and are supported within the on-site inclusion centre. The school's "after school workshops" are beginning to have a positive impact on the reduction of fixed term exclusions.

During registration time, a lack of structure, poor punctuality and pupils' consumption of food and drink with high levels of fat and sugar are not conducive to developing positive attitudes to learning. Staff and most pupils are positive about the recent introduction of initiatives such as The Eastern Promise, The Pupil Class Charter and the Teacher Pledge to Learners in order to promote positive learning experiences. However, it is too early to measure the impact of these initiatives.

**Recommendation 4: Improve the quality of teaching and the effectiveness of assessment across the school**

No judgement applied

Since the core inspection, leaders have had not had enough time to improve the quality of teaching and learning in the school. Overall, teaching across the school remains weak. However, a few areas of good practice exist.

In a minority of lessons, teachers communicate high expectations for pupils' behaviour and learning, and teachers have strong working relationships with pupils. Importantly they communicate enthusiasm for their subject. In these lessons, teachers demonstrate secure subject knowledge and activities engage, enthuse and sustain the interests of pupils well. Tasks build progressively on pupils' previous learning and extend their understanding into new areas. Teachers use a range of

questioning styles well to test and extend pupils' understanding of concepts. Teachers' classroom management skills are strong and instances of poor behaviour are dealt with sensitively and effectively.

In a majority of lessons, teachers do not communicate high enough expectations for pupils' behaviour, learning and presentation of work. Planning is often weak and activities do not engage pupils sufficiently well. This means that pupils often stray off task and as a result do not complete much work in lessons. This is a common feature and is evident in pupils' work books which contain many examples of poorly attempted tasks and exercises by pupils. In addition, in these lessons, teachers' classroom management skills are weak and they do not challenge or deal with poor or off task behaviour effectively.

The school has devoted considerable resources to improving the assessment of Year 11 pupils' attainment. A range of strategies has been deployed to improve pupils' level of achievement. However, it is too early to establish the impact of these initiatives. Strategies to monitor the attainment of other pupils remain underdeveloped, and there is a lack of consistency in assessment practices within and across subject areas.

The majority of teachers mark pupils' work regularly. A minority of written comments give pupils clear guidance on how to improve their work. However, the quality and consistency of written feedback remains too inconsistent. Very few pupils take note of teachers' feedback and respond to the targets they have been set.

The quality of reports to parents has been improved since the core inspection, and they now receive suitable information regarding pupils' progress and areas for improvement.

**Recommendation 5: Strengthen leadership at all levels and improve the rigour and consistency of self-evaluation and improvement planning**

No judgement applied

Since the core inspection there have been significant changes to the senior leadership team. The changes have involved the appointment of a new headteacher in January 2015. Since his appointment, the headteacher has undertaken a swift and efficient leadership review and restructure. The new leadership structure provides a coherent framework for securing improvement. However, it will be some time before all leaders are appointed to new roles in this structure. Currently, two new deputy headteachers, a new assistant headteacher, a part time assistant headteacher and a business manager support the headteacher in the senior leadership team. The new senior leaders are temporary in post. Permanent appointments will be made for January 2016.

School governance has been strengthened. The appointment of an experienced chair of governors along with additional governors has improved the expertise of the governing body. All statutory committees are now in place. As a result of the changes, governors are beginning to have a fuller understanding of the issues in the

school and are able to monitor the school's progress more closely.

The school has also benefitted from leadership expertise provided by a local secondary school. This support is improving the school's curriculum organisation and data systems. In addition, leaders have reviewed the school's alternative curriculum and this is being rationalised to provide a more sustainable model for next year. The school's policies are being updated and important policies such as teachers' performance management are now in place. However, further work remains to ensure that all statutory policies and documents are updated to meet the school's needs.

Up to now, senior leaders have prioritised their work well and have made consistent progress in improving safety across the school, reducing exclusions, supporting pupils in Year 11 and in improving aspects of leadership. However, overall, senior leaders have not been in post long enough to impact in key areas such as improving:

- pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning in lessons
- pupils' academic standards and attendance
- the quality of teaching and learning
- levels of accountability through well organised line management arrangements
- the quality of whole school and departmental self-evaluation, review and planning processes
- the quality of middle leadership

Furthermore, the leadership of special educational needs in the school is very weak. The local authority is providing some additional support in this area, but given the needs in the school the current level of support and overall provision is insufficient.

### **Recommendations**

In order to maintain and improve on this progress, the school should continue to sustain the level of progress it has already made, and continue to address those inspection recommendations where further progress is required.



# Report for Education Development Board

7<sup>th</sup> October 2015

## Cardiff 2015 GCSE mathematics

### Introduction

This report provides an overview of educational outcomes in mathematics for the academic year 2014-2015 and attempts to set them in the context of regional and national performance and that of the core cities. The data is based upon the provisional results reported by schools. In some aspects the results are still awaiting the outcome of appeals.

### Background

The table below shows the trend in performance in mathematics, English and the level 2 inclusive threshold for Cardiff over the last four years. It can be seen that performance in the level 2 inclusive measure is inhibited by the outcomes in mathematics. If outcomes in mathematics were in line with outcomes in English, then performance in the level 2 inclusive measure would be closer to 65% which is the local authority's target for 2016.

Performance Indicator	2012	2013	2014	2015 Prov SSSP	2015 Target	2015 Prov Wales
Mathematics L2	55.3%	56.7%	59.2%	63%	69.4%	64%
English L2	63.1%	62.1%	66.0%	72%	70.1%	68%
Level 2+	49.3%	49.9%	54.0%	59%	63.0%	58%

It can also be seen from the table that the level 2+ threshold has improved by 10 percentage points since 2012, whilst mathematics and English have only improved by 8 and 9 percentage points respectively. Schools are becoming more effective at reducing the number of pupils that achieve level 2 in only one of mathematics or English/Welsh but not both. The improvements in schools' pupil tracking processes, in combination with successful intervention have improved schools' effectiveness in this area.

### Context

In the Welsh context, Cardiff's performance in mathematics is just below the national average, whilst performance in English is 4 percentage points above. Although the core cities data for 2015 is not yet available, it can be seen from the 2014 data that Cardiff's performance is lower than four out of eight of the core cities. The city context cannot therefore be the underlying factor in the performance of the city's pupils in mathematics.

### Core Cities 2014

	Birmingham	Bristol	Leeds	Liverpool
Mathematics Level 2	66.6%	65.3%	59.1%	61.3%

	<b>Manchester</b>	<b>Newcastle</b>	<b>Nottingham</b>	<b>Sheffield</b>
<b>Mathematics Level 2</b>	<b>60.7%</b>	<b>70.4%</b>	<b>59.1%</b>	<b>64.5%</b>

### **Outcomes**

In 2015 outcomes in mathematics by school ranged from 92.8% down to 18.9%, with four schools having outcomes below 50%. Three out of these four schools are part of the Schools Challenge Cymru programme and have been subject to local authority intervention.

In nine secondary schools, the results in the level 2+ threshold were less than expected. In all but one of these schools this stems from lower than expected performance in mathematics.

Four schools improved their results in mathematics in 2015 and their level 2+ performance was above their FFTD estimate.

One school's result in mathematics was slightly lower in 2015 than in 2014 but their level 2+ performance remains above their FFTD estimate.

Five schools improved their results in mathematics in 2015 but their level 2+ performance is below their FFTD estimate. These schools will be supported to ensure that successful learning and teaching strategies are implemented to improve provision across all year groups and that there is not an over reliance on last minute interventions in year 11.

The remaining seven schools produced lower outcomes in mathematics in 2015 than in 2014 and these outcomes are below the FFTD estimates for the schools.

### **Identified Reasons for Poor Performance**

In the schools where outcomes in 2015 decreased, some or all of the following causes are present:

- Instability at senior and departmental leadership level, leading to a lack of leadership monitoring and quality assurance processes
- Poor quality teaching
- Staffing absence and the lack of good quality mathematics supply teachers
- Difficulty in recruiting to vacant mathematics posts at all levels
- Inaccurate assessments at both key stages and ineffective examination entry policy
- Lack of department collegiality
- Too slow in implementing agreed improvement strategies
- Inaccurate targeting and resourcing of interventions
- Inaccurate self-evaluation and improvement planning linked to pupil outcomes

### **Future Actions**

The local authority has commissioned the consortium to take action to address the factors identified above.



### Data Analysis

Further data analysis needs to be undertaken by schools to identify specific groups of pupils who may be underperforming. In mathematics, across the city, FSM pupils do not perform as well as nFSM pupils. In some schools girls' performance is lower than boys and some ethnic minority groups also under perform.

Strategies for improving the performance of vulnerable pupils are being included in the termly head of department network meetings. Challenge advisers are expecting to see this level of analysis by mathematics departments in schools along with suitable action plans to address identified underperformance.

### Quality of Leadership

Head of department network meetings are arranged by the consortium and used to share best practice and provide peer to peer challenge and support. Leadership development groups have been established to enable heads of department to work collaboratively on leadership tasks, for example, book scrutiny and data monitoring. Red and amber schools have access to match funded support to provide coaching for their subject leaders and can be linked with successful mathematics departments. Consideration is being given to the possibility of using successful subject leaders to become "executive" heads of department across more than one school.

### Quality of Teaching

The quality of teaching needs to be improved significantly, across all year groups (and in the primary sector), if sustainable improvement is to be made in mathematics across the city. The consortium has started a "Qualified for Life" project, to be rolled out to all schools, in preparation for the new key stage 4 mathematics curriculum to be first examined in June 2017. This project involves coaching teachers to develop their pedagogical practice before disseminating across the department and across the region in a similar manner. Dissemination across the region has already started with the open days held at eight schools across the consortium during the summer term 2015.

The consortium has fully funded the Outstanding Teachers Programme (including supply cover) for mathematics teachers and also arranges "Teachmeets" and drop in clinics for specific areas of practice. In-school triad development work and/or coaching is facilitated by the consortium and match funded for red and amber schools. "Count On", developed by the consortium is a strategy for sharing good practice through the observation of lessons. There are a significant number of non-specialist teachers of mathematics and additional support for them is being provided through courses such as "Want to teach mathematics?" which is a subject knowledge enhancement programme for non-specialist teachers.

The need to increase the supply of qualified and effective mathematics teachers continues to be a challenge. A strong, well timed recruitment campaign, funded by the consortium, is being planned. Schools are also being proactive in advertising posts with additional recruitment and retention allowances and other incentives for strong heads of department such as assistant Headteacher positions.

Improvement in the learning and teaching of mathematics is a focus of many of the secondary school improvement groups (SIGs), with stronger departments taking a lead in this area.

### Accuracy of Assessment

11 secondary schools reported greater 'currently secure' figures in May 2015 than the school reported provisional 2015 figures. In some cases this was caused by schools using previous grade boundaries without any consideration to the fact that these may change.

The strategic adviser for secondary numeracy is visiting those schools where assessment has shown to be insufficiently accurate. This issue is also being addressed at the head of department network meeting during the autumn term. Moderation and verification is also a part of the leadership group programme.

**Angela Kent – Head of Achievement and Inclusion**

**Laura Morris – Strategic Adviser Secondary Numeracy**

My Ref: Scrutiny/Correspondence/MJH

19 October 2015

Suzanne Griffiths  
Director of Operations  
National Adoption Service  
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Dear Suzanne

I would like to thank you, Rachel Evans, Head of Children's Services for the Vale of Glamorgan Council, Angela Harris, Vale, Valleys and Cardiff Regional Adoption Service Manager, for attending the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee on 13<sup>th</sup> October 2015 to present the **National and Regional Adoption Service briefing updates**. I would also like to thank Councillor Sue Lent, as Board Member and Tony Young, Board Member, for their contribution to the report and the full and honest answers that were provided at the meeting. Following consideration of the report presented at the meeting and answers to Members' questions, the Committee has asked me to write to you with the following comments, concerns and recommendations.

The Committee was pleased to receive the National Adoption Services first Annual Report together with a briefing on the Governance and Operation of the National Adoption Service. The Members were really impressed with the work that had achieved since the service had been set up. The Members also appreciated the briefing on the Vale, Valleys and Cardiff (V V C) Regional Adoption Service. Members welcomed the additional performance data as well as the positive picture it was now showing.

The Committee did however express some concern that the VVC region was not as yet performing consistently at the same level as the other regions and looked forward to seeing steady improvements in performance in future reports. Members did also request that future reports should have some comparative information from relevant English Authorities.

The Members considered that the scrutiny of the National and Regional Adoption Service should continue, to enable the Committee to be assured that the services are providing an appropriate service for Cardiff's Looked After Children. The Committee recommended that the Annual Report should therefore be presented to Committee, at this time each year, together with an additional Regional Annual Report, to allow the Committee to fully scrutinise the work of the VVC Regional Adoption Service.

I hope that the comments, advice and recommendation, detailed above, will be of use and support in the adoption of children across Wales and in particular in Cardiff, and I look forward to a positive response to this letter within a month.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Richard Cook', with a horizontal line underneath it.

**COUNTY COUNCILLOR RICHARD COOK**  
**Chairperson – Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee**

CC Rachel Evans, Head of Children's Services for the Vale of Glamorgan Council,  
CC Angela Harris, Vale, Valleys and Cardiff Regional Adoption Service Manager  
CC Councillor Sue Lent, Board Member  
CC Tony Young, Board Member

My Ref: T: Scrutiny/CYP/MJH

Date: 21 October 2015



Councillor Sue Lent  
Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Families, Children and Early Learning  
City of Cardiff Council  
County Hall  
Cardiff  
CF10 4UW

Dear Sue

### **CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – Budget Monitoring Panel**

I am writing to you on behalf of the Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee, following its consideration of an update report from the Committee's Budget Monitoring Panel.

The Committee established this Panel as part of its 2015/16 work programme, to seek ways to optimise Committee time in line with WAO advice managing the length of meetings within a three hour target. While the approach will place some extra burden on Panel Members and on the committee scrutiny officer, I and my Committee colleagues hope that it will maintain the effectiveness of our current scrutiny consideration, while reducing the burden on you and senior managers. We will be interested to hear your thoughts as the work of the Panel develops.

The Panel met on 6 October and reviewed the Month 4 budget monitoring Cabinet report, and associated documents, which were relevant to the Committee's Terms of Reference.

At its 13 October meeting the Committee considered a progress report from the Panel which included a number of comments and concerns that the Panel Members made during their consideration of the Children's Services budget projections for the end of 2015/16. The Committee agreed that I should write to you with these concerns, namely:

- **Line 203 Payment by Results Looked after Children & Rehabilitation Project Year 1.** Members requested further information on the barriers in achieving this saving, as well as further details of the ongoing review of all "out of county placements" to identify other savings and plans to ensure that this budget saving is fully met.
- **Line 212 Business Support Review (Lean Review).** The Panel were concerned that it did not appear that robust challenge of this proposal had been undertaken prior to it being included in the Budget proposals, as the Finance comment now indicated that this saving would not be achieved. Members requested information on how the Directorate would be seeking

alternative actions to ensure that this saving is fully achieved along with a timeline and milestones in achieving this saving.

- **Line 217 Market and Demand Management of Commissioned Residential Services.** Members expressed concern that the finance comment stated that there was some doubt as to whether the whole targeted savings would be achieved in 2015/16. Members requested further explanation on why the saving would not be achieved and what actions were being developed to ensure that alternative saving were being developed.
- **Budget Realignment** - The Panel expressed concern that Children's Services had consistently had budget realignments in recent years. In 2015/16 this amounted to £2.4 million to meet on-going pressures on the budgets for external placements, leaving care support costs and adoption allowances. The Panel agreed to undertake a further investigation into these areas of consistent overspend at the next Panel meeting, when it considers the Month 6 Budget Monitoring Report.

Finally the Panel also agreed to hold a further meeting shortly after the Month 6 Budget Monitoring Cabinet Report had been published, and a further meeting at full Committee after the Month 9 Budget Monitoring report has been published. This will enable Committee to assess the progress made in monitoring and managing the Education and Children's Services budgets, as well as reviewing the responses received to the Committee's letter.

I look forward to receiving a positive response to this letter within the next month.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Cook', with a horizontal line underneath it.

**COUNTY COUNCILLOR RICHARD COOK**  
**Chair – Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee**

Cc Tony Young, Director of Social Services  
Christine Salter, Section 151 Officer  
Cheryl Cornelius, Cabinet Support Manager

My Ref: T: Scrutiny/CYP/MJH

Date: 21 October 2015



Councillor Sarah Merry  
Cabinet Member for Education  
City of Cardiff Council  
County Hall  
Cardiff  
CF10 4UW

Dear Sarah

### **CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – Budget Monitoring Panel**

I am writing to you on behalf of the Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee, following its consideration of an update report from the Committee's Budget Monitoring Panel.

The Committee established this Panel as part of its 2015/16 work programme, to seek ways to optimise Committee time in line with WAO advice managing the length of meetings within a three hour target. While the approach will place some extra burden on Panel Members and on the committee scrutiny officer, I and my Committee colleagues hope that it will maintain the effectiveness of our current scrutiny consideration, while reducing the burden on you and senior managers. We will be interested to hear your thoughts as the work of the Panel develops.

The Panel met on 6 October and reviewed the Month 4 budget monitoring Cabinet report, and associated documents that were relevant to the Committee's Terms of Reference. The Panel's findings were referred to our Full Committee meeting on 13 October, and this letter contains the Committee's agreed feedback on issues pertinent to your Portfolio.

The Committee welcomed Neil Hardee's attendance at the Panel meeting, as the Members had a number of queries and concerns, on which Neil was able to provide a detailed response or explanation. The Panel did, however, raise a number of concerns during its consideration of the Education Services budget projections for the end of 2015/16, and the Committee agreed that I should write to you with the following observations and requests for clarification:

- The Panel questioned the deteriorating position in respect of delegated schools' balances, and the risk that it represented. Members sought assurance that appropriate actions have been put in place to ensure that all school deficits are addressed within a reasonable timescale. Members did, however, wish to receive further information on the actions being taken in respect of Cantonian High, and in Michaelston Community College and Glyn Derw High School which were "federated" in 2011.
- Members also requested details of the discussions being undertaken to review the City of Cardiff Council's contribution to the funding of the Central South

Consortium in future budgets. Members were of the opinion that the Consortium should contribute to the savings required by the commissioning Councils.

- **Line 134: Staff Realignment and Restructure** – Members expressed concern that the finance comments against this saving stated that “Whilst some savings have been achieved there is a level of uncertainty in respect of the full level of savings”. Members noted that this saving had been put on hold, due to the Estyn inspection. The Panel considered that as the Estyn inspection was known well before the budget saving was agreed, this delay should have been built into the overall savings proposals. The Committee therefore expect that this saving will be fully achieved by the end of this financial year and request details of how the full saving will be achieved.

Finally, the Panel also agreed to hold a further meeting shortly after the Month 6 Budget Monitoring Cabinet Report had been published, and a further meeting at full Committee after Month 9 Budget Monitoring report has been published, to assess the progress made in monitoring and managing the Education and Children’s Services budgets, as well as reviewing the responses received to the Committee’s letter.

I look forward to receiving a positive response to this letter within the next month.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Richard Cook', with a horizontal line underneath it.

**COUNTY COUNCILLOR RICHARD COOK**  
**Chair – Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee**

Cc Nick Batchelar, Director of Education and Lifelong Learning  
Neil Hardee, Operational Manager, Resources  
Christine Salter, Section 151 Officer  
Cheryl Cornelius, Cabinet Support Manager



My Ref: T: Scrutiny/CYP/MJH

Date: 21 October 2015



Councillor Graham Hinchey  
Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Performance  
City of Cardiff Council  
County Hall  
Cardiff  
CF10 4UW

Dear Graham

### **CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – Budget Monitoring Panel**

I am writing to you on behalf of the Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee, following its consideration of an update report from the Committee's Budget Monitoring Panel.

The Committee established this Panel as part of its 2015/16 work programme, to seek ways to optimise Committee time in line with WAO advice managing the length of meetings within a three hour target. While the approach will place some extra burden on Panel Members and on the committee scrutiny officer, I and my Committee colleagues hope that it will maintain the effectiveness of our current scrutiny consideration, while reducing the burden on you and senior managers. We will be interested to hear your thoughts as the work of the Panel develops.

The Panel met on 6 October and reviewed the Month 4 budget monitoring Cabinet report, and associated documents, which were relevant to the Committee's Terms of Reference. The Panel's findings were referred to our Full Committee meeting on 13 October.

The Committee considered a number of concerns that the Panel had raised, during its consideration of the Education and Children's Services budget projections for the end of 2015/16. The Members agreed that I should write to you with some comments made by the Panel as they considered to be of a general and corporate nature.

The concerns raised were:

- In the "comments" column the projected budget showed that a number of budget savings (e.g.: **Line 212 Business Support Review (Lean Review) in Children's Services** and **Line 134: Staff Realignment and Restructure in Education**) were unlikely to be achieved. The Panel felt this indicated that, in future, a more robust assessment of achievability needs to be undertaken prior to approval, to ensure that decisions are made on the correct information.
- Members did not understand why the draw down of the Corporate Contingency budget of £950,000 had already been included in the budget monitoring narrative. The Panel believed that the contingency budget should

only be allocated and approved by Cabinet at the year end, should it be needed.

Finally the Panel also agreed to hold a further meeting shortly after the Month 6 Budget Monitoring Cabinet Report had been published, and a further meeting at full Committee after the month 9 report has been published. This will enable Committee to assess the progress made in monitoring and managing the Education and Children's Services budgets, as well as reviewing the responses received to the Committee's letter.

I look forward to receiving a positive response to this letter within the next month.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Richard Cook', with a horizontal line underneath it.

**COUNTY COUNCILLOR RICHARD COOK**  
**Chair – Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee**

Cc Christine Salter, Section 151 Officer  
Cheryl Cornelius, Cabinet Support Manager