

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

12 JANUARY 2016

Present: Councillor Richard Cook (Chairperson), Councillors Chaundy, Gordon, Joyce, Murphy, Dianne Rees and Lynda Thorne

Co-opted Members: Mrs P Arlotte (Roman Catholic representative), Carol Cobert (Church in Wales representative), Ms Catrin Lewis (Parent Governor Representative) and Mrs Hayley Smith (Parent Governor Representative)

58 : APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors Joe Boyle and Derrick Morgan.

59 : DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Chairperson reminded Members of their responsibility under Part 3 of the Members' Code of Conduct. There were no declarations of interest.

60 : MINUTES

The minutes of the Committee Meeting on 8 December 2015 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairperson.

61 : CARDIFF SCHOOLS ANNUAL REPORT

The Chairperson welcomed Councillor Sarah Merry, Cabinet Member for Education, Nick Batchelar, Director of Education and Lifelong Learning, Angela Kent, Head of Achievement and Inclusion, together with Hannah Woodhouse (Managing Director, Central South Consortium), John Hayes (Headteacher, Ysgol Gyfun Cymraeg Plasmawr), Helen Turner (Headteacher Pencaerau Primary School) and Kevin Tansley (Headteacher Ty Gwyn Special School).

The Chairperson invited Councillor Merry to make a statement. Councillor Merry informed the Committee that results had improved on the previous year and that in Key Stage 2 the rate of improvement had been faster than in any other authority in Wales. Councillor Merry advised that the draft Cardiff 2020 plan would be available in the spring.

The Director presented the report, advising that there had been continuing improvement in performance and in some areas the improvement had continued at a faster rate than across Wales as a whole. However, as some outcomes were still not yet high enough it is important that the picture continues to improve.

Angela Kent provided the Committee with information in relation to the 7 key messages contained in the report:

- Performance continues to improve but there remains too much variation between schools, particularly in the secondary sector;
- The performance of primary schools overall is relatively stronger than secondary schools overall;
- Improvements in challenge and support are making a difference overall but there are still a minority of schools causing concern;
- Leadership and Governance are key;
- Performance of Minority Ethnic Pupils is improving in secondary schools at a faster rate than White UK pupils;
- Whilst performance overall is improving the outcomes of some vulnerable groups needs strengthening;
- Girls' outcomes are higher than boys in most indicators but the performance of girls does not compare as well with national figures.

Kevin Tansley advised the Committee that the pupils at Ty Gwyn have to be treated as individuals because of their specific learning needs. Helen Turner was of the view that there had been great improvements; networking groups sharing best practice, pairing schools to share best practice and the development programmes that had been arranged by the Consortium. John Hayes was of the same view, but believed that the picture has changed over the last 5 years due to a number of factors including accountability, the interpretation of data and level 2 threshold improvements. Secondary schools are working hard to improve performance however, there is still more to be done.

The Chair invited questions and comments from Members:

- Members queried the need to categorise pupils by ethnicity as some pupils were now 2nd and 3rd generation and whether that information can be linked to schools underperforming, schools being in a deprived area or in schools where there are difficulties in the quality of leadership.
- Members questioned why the report did not contain information on the National Literacy and Numeracy tests which had been provided previously and whether the information should have been appended to this report.
- Members queried the underachievement of White UK pupils living in more deprived areas as opposed to the achievement figures for Minority Ethnic pupils and whether specific strategies were in place to address the issue and further, were there strategies to deal with specific underachievement in performance of White UK male pupils. Officers advised that from the data collated the numbers of underachieving White UK pupils are growing. Schools are now managing their own Ethnic Minority Achievement Service (EMAS) staff which allows them to target specific difficulties and specific pupils which is making a difference.

- Members were aware of the immersion initiative for pupils who wished to learn Welsh and queried whether a similar initiative could be developed for pupils who have English as an Additional Language. Officers advised that consideration is being given to a cluster of schools being able to undertake some sort of similar initiative.
- Members queried how long there has been an underperformance in attainment of girls in English and expressed concern at that information bearing in mind the general gender gap performance data.
- Members raised concerns as to whether or not the target for engaging more Governors will be reached. Officers advised that there has been a recruitment campaign and some strong Governors have been appointed but they are continually striving to attract new Governors.
- Members briefly discussed the use of extra resources for programmes such as Read Write Inc. Although it was noted that information as to School budgets has not yet been released.
- With reference to the Performance of SEN pupils Members queried to what extent that the performance results were cohort specific. Officers advised that they were cohort specific within the school, however, not across the Local Authority Area. Members also queried whether, in relation to the percentages provided, a break down can be provided in respect of the various needs of the pupils. Officers confirmed that that information could be provided.

The Chairperson thanked the Cabinet Member and officers for attending the meeting, their presentations and for answering Members' questions.

AGREED: That the Chairperson, on behalf of the Committee, writes to the Cabinet Member providing the Committee's comments and observations.

62 : CONSORTIUM DRAFT SELF-ASSESSMENT AND DRAFT BUSINESS PLAN 2016/17

The Chairperson welcomed Hannah Woodhouse, Interim Manager, South Central Wales Education Consortium (the Consortium) and Councillor Chris Elmore, Chairman of the Consortium Joint Committee, Nick Batchelar, Director Education & Lifelong Learning and Angela Kent, Head of Achievement and Inclusion to the meeting.

Hannah Woodhouse presented the two reports, namely:

- Draft Self Evaluation Report which included an explanation of the positive features and also areas for improvement across the three key areas, namely Outcomes, School Improvement Service and Leadership; and
- Draft Business Plan for 2016/2017 which includes the Consortium's vision by 2018 and the priorities for improvement in 2016/2017.

The Chairperson thanked Hannah Woodhouse and Councillor Elmore for their presentation and invited questions and comments from the Committee:

- HW advised Members that the Consortium is to be the subject of an Estyn Inspection.
- Members noted that whilst the Business Plan was very laudable, concern was raised that it was inconsistent in depth. Members provided an example; page 108 under the heading to reduce the variations in performance between schools '*Secure improvement at pace in red and amber support schools reflecting what works through effective intervention*'. Other actions have a more detailed narrative.
- Members raised concern that the number of NEETs in Cardiff was not reducing and queried the role of the Challenge Advisors, particular as this had been addressed at previous meetings. Members were advised that the Challenge Advisors are now provided with more regular detailed information, and a vulnerability assessment profile used to identify those more likely to become NEET.
- Members queried whether the Business Plan does address the concerns that have been raised and were advised that self-evaluations are carried out, particularly on the basis that there is information from 5 Local Authorities. The Director advised Members that in due course, Cardiff 2020, an ambitious strategy which goes beyond the Consortium and matches the demands of the local economy and demographic changes, will be implemented.
- Members questioned the access to and use of pupil data by the Consortium and were advised that there were difficulties in both, partly due to there being no consistent approach to storing the information across the different Authorities.
- Members were advised that a recruitment drive is currently ongoing to specifically for both Headteachers and Maths teachers.

The Chairperson thanked Hannah Woodhouse, Councillor Elmore and Officers for attending the meeting, their presentations and for answering Members' questions. AGREED: That the Chairperson writes to the Central South Consortium providing the Committees comments and observations.

63 : PREVENT STRATEGY

The Chairperson welcomed Carl Davies, Home Office Prevent Coordinator, and Barrie Phillips, Wales HE/FE Prevent Co-Ordinator.

The purpose was to provide the Committee with a verbal briefing on the Prevent Strategy's key objectives and projects covered.

The Chairperson invited questions and comments from Members.

- Members queried what practical tips were available to try and assess who may be vulnerable and were advised that the WRAP training and the 'Train the Trainer' workshops referred to in the presentation provides information as to general vulnerability. The Local Government Association has also published a leaflet 'Leading the preventing violent extremism agenda – a role made for Councillors'.
- Members were advised that an increase in religious practices, for example those attending prayers, and learning the Quran or an increase in those were traditional dress is not in itself a concern. Faith and religious differences have to be respected and it is important to ensure that certain parts of society are not marginalised and that there is respect and tolerance of all.
- Members queried their role and requested that training be developed specifically for Councillors to enable them to be prepared to address any issues which their constituents raise.
- Members were advised that there were still a number of unregistered schools, for example independent schools are not specified authorities in accordance with the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015. Members felt that the strategy should include those schools.
- Members were advised that the Prevent Strategy Toolkit would be available within a few weeks, a copy of that could be provided together with the latest guidance.

The Chairperson thanked Mr Davies and Mr Phillips for their attendance at the meeting and answering Members questions.

AGREED: That the Chairperson, on behalf of the Committee, writes to the Mr Davies with the Committee's comments and observations.

64 : SOCIAL SERVICES AND WELL BEING ACT (WALES) 2014 BRIEFING PAPER

The Chairperson welcomed Tony Young, Director Social Services and Nicola Poole, Regional Lead, Sustainable Social Services to the Meeting to present the report and to provide the Committee with an update on the progress being made to ensure the Council is prepared to implement the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.

The Chairperson invited questions and comments from Members.

- Members expressed concern that in the Governance section of the briefing there was no reference to any involvement by the Scrutiny Committee and Members felt that the structure should be amended to show that.
- The Director advised that additional funding will be sought in order to contribute to the costs in the implementation of the Act.

The Chairperson thanked the Officers for attending the meeting, their presentations and for answering Members' questions.

AGREED: That the Chairperson, on behalf of the Committee, writes to the Cabinet Member providing the Committee's comments and observations.

65 : PLAY SERVICE BRIEFING PAPER

The Chairperson welcomed Councillor Peter Bradbury, (Cabinet Member, Community Development, Co-operatives and Social Enterprise), and Andrew Gregory (Director, City Operations), Malcom Stammers (Operational Manager, Leisure and Play) and Jane Clemence (Active Communities Officer).

The purpose of the report was to allow Members to undertake the scrutiny of the New Delivery Model for Children's Play which is to be considered by Cabinet in due course.

The Chairperson invited Councillor Bradbury to make a statement. Councillor Bradbury informed the Committee that it is clear that there needs to be a sustainable option and that the pledge made at the time of the Budget Council meeting last year still stands. Councillor Bradbury advised the Committee that Play Services will be provided until the new model play service is in place.

The Director and officers gave the presentation, following which the Chairperson invited questions and comments from the Committee.

- Members were advised that Play Centres would not be closed whilst are being finalised in relation to potential asset transfers and it is intended that the transfers take place by 31.03.16.
- Concern was raised in relation to the suggested possible venues in the Cardiff West area, however, Members were advised that the list of venues had not yet been finalised and was therefore subject to change.
- Members were advised that there are successful play schemes in other areas based on this model. Further, that no decision had been made by Cabinet at this time.

The Chairperson welcomed Wendy Ford (Grangetown Play Centre) and Linda Sullivan (Ely Play Centre) to make a statement on their experiences on the changes being made to the play service:

Wendy Ford and Linda Sullivan advised the Members of the following:

- WF was not a play worker, she was a volunteer although she worked in Education;
- WF believed that the use of a peripatetic team will not work as she believed that it would be too structured;
- Some of the premises were not suitable;

- WF had spoken to volunteers and other people involved at other centres who had expressed concern that they felt that they were being forced in to preparing business plans and that those plans had to be in place by 31 March 2016, and that they had had very little, if any, support;
- LF expressed concern that the volunteers were aware of the problems being faced by children in their own areas and had worked hard at creating a trusting environment for them at the local centre and this would be unsustainable with the new system;
- They did not want to be in a position of running such a Play Scheme, they felt that it should be done by qualified staff;
- Whilst some centres feel that they have not had enough support in preparing the business plan LF had received a great deal of support from ACE.

The Chairperson thanked the Cabinet Member, Officers, Wendy Ford and Linda Sullivan for attending the meeting.

AGREED: That the Chairperson, on behalf of the Committee, writes to the Cabinet Member providing the Committee's comments and observations.

66 : DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting of the Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee is the Budget Meeting on Tuesday 16 February 2016 @ 10.00 am.

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