

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

21 JANUARY 2020

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

Co-opted Members: Patricia Arlotte (Roman Catholic representative),
Karen Dell'Armi (Parent Governor Representative) and
Matthew Richards (Parent Governor Representative)

29 : APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Cunnah and Taylor

30 : DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following declarations of interest were made in accordance with the Members Code of Conduct:

Councillor	Item Number	Nature of Interest
Naughton	9	Personal - Local Authority Governor at St David's CIW Primary School
Joyce	9	Personal - Ward Councillor
Bridgeman	9	Personal – Ward Councillor, Llanrumney
Phillips	4	Personal, family member in receipt of educational support

31 : MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting on 12 November and 17 December were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairperson.

32 : CHILD MENTAL HEALTH - DRAFT INQUIRY REPORT

Councillor Mike Phillips, in accordance with the Members Code of Conduct declared a personal interest in this item on the basis that he has a family member in receipt of educational support.

It was noted that the report provides the Committee with evidence and key findings of the task group inquiry into Child Mental Health. It also includes a set of recommendations for the Cabinet and Public Services Board.

Councillor Mike Phillips, as Chair of the Inquiry, presented the report and outlined the 7 recommendations. He thanked all those who attended to give evidence and also thanked those involved from the Youth Council.

AGREED: to endorse the report for submission to Cabinet and Cardiff Public Services Board.

This document is available in Welsh / Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg.

33 : CARDIFF SCHOOL'S ANNUAL REPORT

The Chairperson and Committee agreed that both this item and the Central South Consortium's (CSC) contribution to raising standards in Cardiff's Schools would be dealt with together.

Members were advised that the Cardiff Schools Annual Report summarises the performance of Cardiff Schools in 2018/2019, and provides an overview of the progress made in raising standards attained by pupils, which in turn helps to achieve the objectives and targets set by the Council. The CSC report deals with the progress made by CSC in relation to standards in Cardiff's schools and how it compares across the whole consortium.

The Chairperson welcomed Councillor Sarah Merry (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member – Education, Employment and Skills) Nick Batchelar (Director Education and Lifelong Learning), Mike Tate (Assistant Director Education and Lifelong Learning), Catherine Rowlands (Senior Challenge Advisor – Primary), Geraint Lewis (Senior Challenge Advisor – Secondary) and Andrew Williams (Acting Assistant Director, Central South Consortium) to the meeting.

Councillor Merry was invited to make a statement during which she reiterated that education is a key priority; education provides the best start in life and remains the surest route out of poverty. The aim is to deliver for every child.

The Assistant Director presented the annual report, outlining the overall key strengths of Cardiff's performance in 2019 but advised that there is still further work to be done, notably in the secondary phase. The inconsistencies across schools needs to be addressed; further work involving vulnerable groups is required; and there needs to be a focus on challenge and support.

The Chairperson invited questions and comments from members.

- Members asked about the practice of off-rolling and how extensive the issue was. They were advised that there are a range of reasons, protocols needs to be developed to ensure consistent practice with regard to ownership of these pupils; there needs to be remediation and good restorative practices.
- Members referred to the attainment gap between pupils eligible for free school meals (eFSM) and those not eligible for free schools meals (nFSM) and asked whether there were similarities in the demographics which could be used to focus support. It was noted that although Cardiff was performing well relative to Wales the gap is still significant. Members were advised that no pupil is the same, and that there may in fact be several issues. Work is ongoing with schools to identify the progress of learners.
- Members noted that there has been a significant expansion in Welsh Medium Schools and further investment will deliver additional places in both mainstream and Additional Learning Need (ALN) settings. Members were advised that Cardiff is looking at

inclusion provision through the medium of Welsh; however the growing need continues to outstrip supply. There is also the challenge of finding teachers who can and want to work in Welsh Medium Schools.

- Members asked about the increasing gap between girls and boys who are eFSM and why, despite the focus on trying to decrease that gap, it does not appear to be working. The Challenge Advisor for primary schools advised that the vulnerable learners' project is still running and will continue into the next academic year, it will provide useful information. There has been a change of approach and more intelligence is being received from schools.

The inclusion expert pilot which involves identifying successful practice in supporting vulnerable learners, as well identifying where improvements can be made, means that a new strategy is now being formulated.

- Members referred to the figures provided in relation to the attendance of pupils, in particular the proportion of persistent absence across Cardiff secondary schools, which has increased from 724 to 838. Members asked for further information in relation to whether the absence was from specific schools and what work was underway to address the issue.
- The Committee noted that the number of schools categorised as Green has increased, but that at current rates it would take a long time before all schools were categorised as Green. Members were advised that these were last year's figures and the figures for this year were more positive although categorisation of schools was only a small part of the work being undertaken. It is also important to learn from the stronger schools to ensure that all schools fulfil their potential.
- Members discussed the EOTAS (Educated other than at school) and were concerned to note that although learner outcomes were showing improvement work needed to continue to ensure that transfers to EOTAS from mainstream schooling are reduced. The Assistant Director advised that it is necessary to ensure that what is being considered is what is important for the child; for example vocational provision has been linked to the reduction in those not in employment, education or training (NEET). There are wider qualifications offered which do not form part of the measures.

Queries were raised as to whether progress was monitored, there had to be evidence of provision, there is an officer with responsibility for monitoring, and schools are responsible for notifying the authority. It is important that both Education and Children's Services are collaborating; and that there is shared intelligence.

The Chairperson invited Andrew Williams (Acting Assistant Director, Central South Consortium) to add any further information that he felt should be provided. He advised the Committee that the report from the Consortium is very similar and aligns with the Annual Report.

The Chairperson invited questions and comments from members.

- Members asked whether schools have been overrated and the Acting Assistant Director of the Consortium advised that he did not believe that to be the case. It is now about the pupil as opposed to the school. Schools are asked to self-evaluate and let the Consortium know if they should be concerned. There are always checks and balances. The key now is the intelligence being obtained from schools and the advisors knowledge of 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.

34 : SOP 21ST CENTURY - EARLY YEARS PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL PROVISION TO SERVE ADAMSDOWN AND SPLOTT

The Chairperson welcomed Councillor Sarah Merry (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member – Education, Employment and Skills) Nick Batchelar (Director Education and Lifelong Learning), Richard Portas (Programme Director, School Organisation Programme) and Michele Dudridge-Friedl (Operational Manager, Planning and Provision) to the meeting.

Councillor Merry was invited to make a statement in which she indicated that whilst the consultation had taken place in respect of a number of different proposals there had been a change in the stance taken by the Archdiocese in respect of the closure of St Alban's Catholic Primary School which affected other proposals that had been consulted upon. Consequently, it was necessary for further options to be considered for the Adamsdown and Splott areas.

The report was presented and the Chairperson invited questions and comments from Members.

- Members expressed some concern in relation to the current request from the Archdiocese bearing in mind some of the difficulties that had been outlined. Officers advised that there has been unstable leadership at the school for some years; the school has not served the community as well as it should have done. Strong advice will be provided and whilst it is accepted that there is a risk it will be watched and managed.
- In response to a question concerning the potential loss of parkland for the community, the Cabinet Member advised that building the new school would not only reinstate any open space, there would also be an improvement in community facilities.

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

35 : SOP 21ST CENTURY - NEW PRIMARY SCHOOL PROVISION TO SERVE PARTS OF RADYR, MORGANSTOWN, CREIGIAU, ST FAGANS AND FAIRWATER

The Chairperson welcomed Councillor Sarah Merry (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member – Education, Employment and Skills) Nick Batchelar (Director Education and Lifelong Learning), Richard Portas (Programme Director, School Organisation Programme) and Michele Dudridge-Friedl (Operational Manager, Planning and Provision) and Meirion Prys Jones to the meeting.

Merion Prys Jones addressed the committee advising that Welsh Medium Education has been and remains a large challenge. Welsh immersion schools have been successful, but learning Welsh in English medium education has not been as successful. Based on other successful models, particularly in the Spanish Basque region it was felt that the planned dual stream establishment would enable close partnership working of the streams through sharing a site and facilities. It would also enable children within the predominantly English medium stream to build more secure welsh language acquisition.

Councillor Merry stated that there were very practical reasons for this proposal being considered, it is believed to be a very genuinely exciting way to grow the welsh language; other options have to be explored rather than welsh immersion.

The Chairperson invited questions and comments from members.

- Members asked whether the chosen model is likely to pose recruitment issues and were advised that, whilst it is accepted that recruiting the necessary teaching staff will be a challenge, Welsh Government are also involved in planning for this challenge.
- Members discussed the consultation and queried who was contacted and why. They heard as a new primary school being built in the area, local parents (within a 3 mile radius), child providers, ward councillors, and head teachers of nearby schools were contacted. The consultation document was published on the Council's website, there was a public meetings and drop in sessions.
- Members sought clarification that a pupil could move from one stream to another and were advised that any move could only take place if there was a place available.

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

36 : SOP 21ST CENTURY - NEW SCHOOL PROVISION TO SERVE PARTS OF PONTPRENNAU AND OLD ST MELLONS

Councillor Bridgeman and Joyce, in accordance with the Members Code of Conduct, both declared a personal interest in this item on the basis that they are Ward Councillors for Llanrumney. Councillor Dan Naughton declared a personal interest on the basis that he is a Local Authority Governor at St David's CIW Primary School.

The Chairperson welcomed Councillor Sarah Merry (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member – Education, Employment and Skills) Nick Batchelar (Director Education and Lifelong Learning), Richard Portas (Programme Director, School Organisation Programme) and Michele Dudridge-Friedl (Operational Manager, Planning and Provision) to the meeting.

Councillor Merry was invited to make a statement in which she outlined the proposals made by the Governing Body of St Mellons CIW Primary School and advised that one objection had been received.

The report was presented and Members were invited to comment or ask questions detailed as follows:

- Members sought further information in relation to the extra 15 places as a result of the transfer to the St Edeyrn's site and were advised that those places would be administered by the Council during the 3 year transition period, after which the council would be responsible for administering all 30 places.
- Members were advised that improved walking routes from Llanrumney to the new school site will be implemented in readiness for the new school opening – September 2021

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

37 : URGENT ITEMS (IF ANY)

No urgent items were tabled.

38 : 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.

39 : DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Committee is the budget meeting on Tuesday 18 February at 10.30 am

The meeting terminated at 8 pm