
EDUCATION STATEMENT

Cardiff Council wins CAVC Partnership Award

At the annual Cardiff and Vale Awards Ceremony, Cardiff Local Authority was presented with the Business and Partner Award for its partnership work in developing the Junior Apprenticeship Programme and the Post-16 developments at Eastern High School.

School Performance

Since 2013, there has been an acceleration in the performance of Cardiff schools across all phases of education. In 2016, the city performed above the national averages in a wide range of performance indicators and there has been improvement in a number of areas. These include:

- Overall pupil outcomes in the main performance indicators at the expected and higher levels and at every key stage, with improvements in Cardiff rankings in Wales. For example, since 2013 the percentage of pupils achieving FPI has improved from 83.7% to 88.9%, with Cardiff moving from 18th position in Wales to 7th;
- An increase in the number of schools in the highest benchmarking quarter and a corresponding decrease in the number of schools in the lowest benchmarking quarter in the primary phase;
- The performance of girls at the end of each key stage and now comparing favourably with the Welsh average;
- Outcomes for vulnerable learners, such as eFSM pupils, and the overall performance of minority ethnic pupils;
- Outcomes at Key Stage 4 in the Level 1, Level 2, and Level 2 inclusive threshold indicators;
- The number of secondary schools where less than 50% of pupils achieve five GCSEs grades A*-C including English or Welsh and mathematics has decreased from eight in 2015 to four this year; and
- The proportion of SEN pupils at School Action and School Action Plus, achieving headline measures.

Of course, there remain areas for improvement. There is a reduced, but still noticeable variation, in the standards achieved by schools with comparable pupil populations in both the primary and secondary sectors. We need to continue to focus on improving the relatively low performance of three of our secondary schools. While we have narrowed the gap in the performance for children eligible for Free School Meals, we need to continue this progress and tackle the underachievement

of some groups of learners, in Minority Ethnic groups, White UK pupils in schools in deprived areas of the city and our children who are looked after.

While the number of pupils who do not progress to employment, education and training has fallen significantly since 2013 (figures for the current year are not yet available), further work is still required. We are determined to ensure that no child is left behind and that the opportunities provided for all our children are consistently excellent.

Cardiff schools were mentioned as case studies in excellence in the Annual Report by the Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales. These schools were Cardiff High School, Kitchener Primary, Rhydypenau Primary and Severn Primary. Cardiff, was the Welsh Authority with the most schools highlighted in the report.

Additional Learning Needs (ALN) Reform

The Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Bill, was introduced to the National Assembly for Wales in December 2016. The aim of the legislation is to improve the planning and delivery of additional learning provision through a person-centred approach.

The timescale for the Bill to be enacted and implemented has not been specified, but a number of steps have been announced to support the development of new practice. This includes an ALN Innovation Grant to support regional partnership projects between local authorities, schools, further education institutions, specialist providers, health, social services, early years and the third sector. The Inclusion services of the five Central South Consortium authorities have submitted a successful collaborative bid that will enable schools and specialist services to work together to develop practice in preparation for the reform.

School Catering Managers ILM Level 3/4

Starting in September 2014, Education Catering embarked on a project to upskill frontline and central managers. In partnership with learning provider, Talk Training, an ILM Level 2 Award in Team Leading was offered to all frontline Kitchen and Catering Managers across the primary and secondary school kitchens, with a Level 4 Diploma in Management offered to central management employees. 15 learners enrolled on these 18 and 24 month courses. These courses were designed to enhance the skills and attributes of our workforce in this important sector and, enable them to better manage themselves and their teams. Modules included, amongst others, communication, encouraging personal development in themselves and others, workplace innovation and essential skills in IT, numeracy and literacy. All learners completed the courses. A presentation ceremony was held on the 7th December 2016 attended by Assistant Director, Jackie Turner, who presented colleagues with their City and Guild's certificates.

Nicola Magee (Catering Manager, Radyr Comprehensive) said,

“Whilst it was a big commitment and time consuming, the level of teaching was excellent and I learned a lot.”

Tracey Lacey (Catering Manager, Whitchurch High - Lower Site) said,

“Even though it was hard work it got my brain in gear, especially as I was not used to learning. Loved it!”

Computing Unlocked

Over the last 18 months, the e-learning team have developed with our schools a Scheme of Learning – ‘Computing Unlocked’. It was updated last summer to take account of the requirements arising from publication of the Digital Competency Framework.

There has been significant interest from schools in other Local Authorities across Wales. It has provided an opportunity to generate income by selling the scheme of learning to other schools outside Cardiff. Most recently, a cluster of primary schools in North Wales has purchased it.

Partnerships

St Monica’s School in Cathays is working closely with the JDO Foundation, a charity in the USA, on an international linking project. It is a proactive way to tackle extremism and misunderstandings by working with children and teachers within St Monica’s and with schools across the world.

Children and teachers link up with other children and teachers around the world, using state of the art technology, technology that those children might not have been able to have access to if it weren’t for the sponsorship of the Foundation. The mission is to have at least 2 schools in each European country linked with schools in different states in the USA. There are only 2 schools in Wales that are part of the programme, St Monica’s and Penygarn Primary in Torfaen. St Monica’s school is linked to a school in Wisconsin and with one in Belfast.

I also visited Severn Primary School (awarded a double excellent in a recent Estyn report) who, through an Erasmus scheme, are developing with schools in other European countries “Prevent” materials that could be used in primary schools. The Headteacher was also part of the recent visit to Finland and I was able to see some of the ideas that she had brought back from that visit.

“Inspire” Anti-bullying Awards

I was privileged to open Cardiff Against Bullying’s Inspire and Recognition Awards Ceremony, which celebrate and recognise the contribution children, young people and adults make to enhance the lives of others through their selfless acts of kindness and support. The winners were: Community Award - Hannah Jenkins & Abbey Willcocks, Pyramid Student Volunteers, Staff Award (primary) - Leanne Ryan, Coed Glas Primary, Staff Award (secondary) - Wendy Foster, St Teilos, Young Person Award (secondary) - Nadia Khatun, Willows High, Young Person Award (primary) - Ella Farmer, Millbank Primary, and School Award - Ton-Yr-Ywen. Show casing good practice were Ysgol Gymreag Pencae, Christ the King Primary, Radyr Comprehensive.

Cantonian

We have committed to spend £1.443 million over the next three years for the supply of a “Superblock” of modular accommodation, demountable canteen and

dining facility at Cantonian High School.

Willows High School

A routine survey of Willows High School brought to light the need for essential electrical maintenance. As a result, the school was open to Year 11 pupils, week beginning the 23rd January 2017. Young people in Years 7 to 10 were engaged in educational programmes with transport provided, from Wednesday the 25th January, at alternative sites including Cardiff City stadium and Butetown Youth Pavilion.

Governance

LA Governor Panel

The LA Governor Panel met on the 12th of January 2017 and recommended 19 candidates for appointment. Seven of these were new applications and the remaining 12 were re-appointments. The panel noted the high calibre of applications received.

LA governor vacancies have reduced from 7.95% to 6.91% in the last 12 months and work continues to recruit high quality governors.

The new LA Governor selection process has been successful in matching applicants with schools where their skills and experience are needed. Chairs of Governors and Headteachers are consulted on the skills required when matching applicants to vacancies on governing bodies. The next LA Governor Panel meeting is scheduled for the 2nd March 2017.

Director of Education's Strategic Briefing with Chairs of Governors

The Director's Strategic Briefing with Chairs of Governors took place on Tuesday 24 January 2017. A key item at this meeting was the Welsh Government's consultation on the 'Reform of School Governance: Regulatory Framework', which closes on the 17th February. The discussion provided an opportunity for governors to express their views on the proposals and for officials from the Welsh Government to respond to questions.

Looked After Children Award

St. Teilo's High School and Rumney Primary School both received awards for supporting Looked After Children in the Bright Sparks Awards in December. They had been nominated by people who had had positive experiences of the school going the 'extra mile' for the Looked After Children in their care.

The schools have excellent practice in place to meet the emotional and wellbeing needs of Looked After Children and ensure that they achieve the best possible academic outcomes.

Councillor Sarah Merry
Cabinet Member (Education)
26 January 2017