

COUNCIL: 20 JUNE 2019

EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT & SKILLS STATEMENT

School Organisation Programme

Band A of the 21st Century Schools programme is now coming to a close, with the final accounts being closed for Cardiff West Community High School, Eastern High School and Adamsdown Primary School. Band A successfully delivered 24 projects at a value circa £163 million.

Band B of the programme includes circa £284m of capital investment, which has now commenced, with Fitzalan High School and St Mary the Virgin Primary School leading the way. The commencement of Band B has also coincided with the appointment of Richard Portas as the Council's new School Organisation Programme Director.

Redevelopment of Cantonian High School, Riverbank Special School and Woodlands High School

The next stage of the redevelopment of Cantonian High School, Riverbank Special School and Woodlands High School was approved by Cabinet on 13 June 2019 following an extensive and consultation process, which involved a range of interested parties, including parents, staff, governors, neighbouring schools, and elected members, as well as extensive pupil consultation. The Council received a total of 759 consultation responses, with a 94% positive response from wider stakeholders.

The Cabinet has approved the issuing of statutory notices to increase the capacity of Cantonian High School from 6 to 8 forms of entry, expand the Specialist Resource Base for learners with an Austim Spectrum Condition (ASC), and the transfer of Woodlands and Riverbank Special Schools to the Doyle Avenue site. As part of the proposals, Woodlands Special School's capacity will be increased from 140 to 240 places and Riverbank Special School will be increased from 70 to 112 places. The estimated investment in the overall project is £67.3m and will be a key priority within the Council's 21st Century Schools Band B programme.

Howardian Primary School

I was delighted to attend the official opening of Howardian Primary School on 5th June 2019, which was also attended by the Welsh Government Minister for Education, Kirsty Williams AM. Howardian Primary School was established in September 2015 and initially occupied classrooms within the former Howardian Education Centre. The brand new £7m school, which was funded jointly by the Welsh Government's 21st Century Schools Band A programme and the Council, welcomed children through its doors in September 2018. The school has two forms of entry and offers a programme for community use within school hours and out of school hours, including Adult Education classes that previously operated in the former building.

School Inspections Update

The quality of education provision in Cardiff is improving, as evidenced by both national categorisation and Estyn inspection outcomes. Since September 2018, 14 schools have been inspected and had reports published. Of these schools, 11 have been judged to be good or excellent for standards. Further to the update provided in my statement to Council in March 2019, inspection reports have been published for the following schools:

- Cantonian High School – judged as 'Good' in all five inspection areas
- Cardiff High School – judged as 'Excellent' in all five inspection areas
- Grangetown Primary School – judged as 'Good' in all five inspection areas
- Millbank Primary School – judged as 'Good' in all five inspection areas
- St. Illtyd's Catholic High School – judged as 'Adequate and needs improvement' in all five inspection areas
- St. John Lloyd RC Primary School – judged as 'Good' in all five inspection areas
- Tremorfa Nursery School – judged as 'Excellent' in three of five inspection areas and 'Good' in two inspection areas. Estyn will also invite the school to prepare case studies on its work in relation to developing independence and highly positive attitudes to learning in very young children and its use of reflective, daily evaluation meetings to plan for progression for dissemination on Estyn's website.

School Holiday Enrichment Programme

Cardiff's multi-award winning School Holiday Enrichment Programme (SHEP), Food and Fun, continues to expand with 16 schools (1 Welsh medium school, 1 special school, 1 secondary school and 13 primary schools) running the programme this summer. I was pleased to open a recent Food and Fun stakeholder meeting to plan this year's programme, which was attended by over 70 school staff and partner organisations.

SHEP, which was developed in Cardiff in 2015 before being rolled out throughout Wales in 2017, received recognition in the report of the Children's Future Food Inquiry that was published in April 2019. This found that Wales is the most advanced in terms of holiday provision within the UK through the investment and commitment to SHEP.

The Welsh launch of the Children's Future Food Inquiry Report was held at Cardiff West Community High School on 2nd May 2019, which I attended along with the First Minister and Cardiff West Assembly Member, Mark Drakeford AM. Pupils from Prestatyn High School and Cardiff West Community High School were able to present their #Right2Food charter and had the opportunity to highlight the need for urgent action on child food insecurity.

The Bevan Foundation also published a report last month, entitled 'Kids on the breadline: Solutions to Holiday Hunger', which recommended that all holiday provision schemes in Wales should set high standards for nutrition, activities, safeguarding and parent/carer involvement based on the SHEP model.

Child Friendly City

On 23rd May 2019, a delegation from Cardiff travelled to London to take part in a Unicef UK national conference to mark the 30th Anniversary of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) being adopted by the UN General Assembly. The delegation included the Council's Director of Education & Lifelong Learning and Alana Ellis, who is a young person on Cardiff's Child Friendly City Advisory Board. The title of the conference was 'Children's rights at 30: a powerful tool for cities & communities' and aimed to celebrate the UNCRC turning 30, while also shining a light on the challenges that councils in the UK continue to face as they work to protect the rights of the country's most vulnerable children.

Cardiff delegates had the opportunity to sit on panels to share how a child rights-based approach can bring councils and their local partners together to help improve the effectiveness and legitimacy of the local decisions that shape children's lives. Alana also made a fantastic presentation about how children and young people have influenced the shape and direction of the Child Friendly City programme in Cardiff.

The Council is pleased to be an active partner with Unicef UK and I am very encouraged by the progress that is being made right across Cardiff, which includes rights based health charters, young people sitting on a scrutiny committee, a significant increase in the Rights Respecting Schools programme and the delivery of a wide range of training, including to many councillors. I would like to thank all of the children and young people who are helping to shape this important programme, especially Alana for representing Cardiff so well at the recent conference.

2019 Urdd National Eisteddfod

The 2019 Urdd National Eisteddfod was held in Cardiff Bay from 27th May to 1 June and provided an ideal opportunity to celebrate 70 years of Welsh medium education in the capital city of Wales. The primary school show, 'Troi Heddiw yn Ddoe', was a highlight of the week, with the children portraying the story of the development of Tiger Bay. The Hamadryad ship was a focal point of the production, which also raised awareness of the history surrounding our newest and 20th Welsh medium school, Ysgol Hamadryad in Butetown.

The Urdd Eisteddfod provides a fantastic platform to children and young people to perform in a variety of competitions. So many schools from across Cardiff came away with a significant number of medals and wards, but perhaps most importantly all children who performed or competed left the Urdd Eisteddfod with unforgettable memories that will last a lifetime.

Cardiff County and Vale of Glamorgan (CCVG) Music Service

Four members of CCVG Training Choir have been successful in auditions for parts in the Welsh National Opera's forthcoming production 'The Cunning Little Vixen'.

Members will recall that the CCVG Youth Choir led the singing at the Special Meeting of the Council on 17th May 2019 to mark the award of the Freedom of the City to Dame Shirley Bassey.

CCVG Youth Orchestra performed an outstanding joint concert at BBC Hoddinott Hall in April 2019 with Sydney Youth Orchestra, and had the opportunity to spend time with their Australian peers.

CCVG Youth Brass Band received a Bronze Award at the UK Brass Band Championships that were held at Warwick in March 2019. One member of the Youth Brass Band, Michael Triggs, also won the Richard Fice Award of £2,000 to further his studies.

International School Linking

60 visitors from six different countries across Europe have visited Cardiff recently. All of the visitors were from schools, universities and local authorities and were part of Erasmus+ partnership projects with the Council's International School Linking team. One of the European cities represented was Warsaw in Poland and I was pleased to meet the Vice-Director of Education from Warsaw and welcome him to the city. Cardiff has worked with Warsaw on many projects over the last 11 years and our new project, Challenging Extremism, at Key Stage 3 is an exciting project involving Cardiff, Warsaw and Ferrol in Spain.

Councillor Sarah Merry
Cabinet Member for Education, Employment & Skills
14 June 2019