

**CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

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**DRAFT SCHOOLS CAUSING CONCERN - MEMBERS VISITS**

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**Purpose of Report**

1. To provide Members with an update on the outcome of the latest series of visits to schools causing concern in 2015/16. The visit were arranged to enable the Members to explore the factors challenging the performance of schools which had shown an unexpected drop in pupil performance last year.
2. To seek agreement to report the task group's findings to the Cabinet Member for Education and the Director of Education and Lifelong Learning.
3. To determine whether the Committee wishes to develop a further programme of visits to schools, as identified by an assessment of the 2015 – 2016 pupil performance results.

**Background**

4. On 15 September 2015 the Committee agreed their work programme for 2015/16, which included the scrutiny of the advice, support and challenge of Cardiff's schools categorised as causing concern. The Inquiry was programmed to take place throughout the year, with head teachers and chairs of governors being either invited in to County Hall, or visited within their schools.
5. The Committee agreed an interim report in November 2015, which was sent to the Cabinet Member, who provided a full response in January 2016. The task group subsequently agreed to re-focus its work to visit those schools that had show an unexpected drop in pupil performance, as show in the previous year's result. The change of focus was to better understand the causes for the change in

performance, the challenges that the school is facing, actions put in place, and the support being received from the Council and the Consortium.

### **Aim of the Visits**

6. The Task Group's key aim for each visit was for:
  - a. The Members to explore the factors challenging the performance of the schools, whose results had shown an unexpected drop in performance, as published in the 2014/15 School Results.
  - b. To enable the school to demonstrate its ambitions, capacity and commitment to rapid and sustained improvement.
  - c. To identify any barriers that the school considers it is facing, which could be resolved by action of the Council or the Consortium.
  
7. The Committee's Task Group Members included, Councillors Cook, Chaundy, Murphy and Rees, and Carol Cobert, Church in Wales Representative. The Chairperson also extended an invitation to any Committee Member from a School's Electoral Ward.
  
8. The visits were also designed to offer constructive challenge to the Head Teacher and Chair of Governors, as well providing feedback and observations that might support the improvement of the schools performance. To aid in the review of the school a visit feedback form was developed which included questions for the Head Teacher and Chair of Governors to respond to, where appropriate, around:

The reasons for the dip in performance	Tracking and monitoring Pupils	Support from the Council
Leadership	Learning pathways	Skills of the Governing Body
Improvement process	Attendance & Punctuality	Governor Training
Interventions	Exclusions	Governor Challenge of performance
Teaching	Support from the Consortium	

9. The Members were provided as background information, the latest Estyn inspection report, progress against the Estyn recommendations, School Improvement plans, and details of which areas of performance had shown an unexpectedly dip.

10. The Task Group arranged to visit three schools (one each term) to Bryn Hafod Primary School, Thornhill Primary School and Eastern High, and met with Head Teachers and (where possible) the Chair of Governors. The dip in performance that prompted the Members to visit each school were:

### Bryn Hafod Primary School

School Name	2013-14 FPOI	2014-15 FPOI	BMQ	Diff	SRB nos	2013-14 CSI	2014-15 CSI	BMQ	Diff	SRB nos
BRYN HAFOD PRIMARY SCHOOL	71.74	71.74	4	0.00	SRB 1	75.68	55.88	4	-19.79	SRB 1

### Thornhill Primary School

School Name	2013-14 FPOI	2014-15 FPOI	BMQ	Diff	SRB nos	2013-14 CSI	2014-15 CSI	BMQ	Diff	SRB nos
THORNHILL PRIMARY SCHOOL	91.80	86.67	3	-5.14		94.74	89.09	3	-5.65	

### Eastern High School

ALL PUPILS		Level 1 Threshold				
School Name	2012	2013	2014	2015 Target	2015 (from school)	
Eastern High School	79.8	78.1	79.8	80.6	63.7	
ALL PUPILS		Level 2 Threshold				
School Name	2012	2013	2014	2015 Target	2015 (from school)	
Eastern High School	45.3	43.9	43.9	44.3	39.3	
ALL PUPILS		Level 2+ Threshold				
School Name	2012	2013	2014	2015 Target	2015 (from school)	
Eastern High School	25.0	25.4	21.5	30.3	13.9	

**Outcome of School visits**

- 11. The Members were pleased to meet with the Head Teacher and where possible the Chair of Governors. The Members took the opportunity to be shown around the schools, observing where possible lessons and facilities. The information provided and discussions around the areas of concern were open and honest. The Members were also pleased with all three of the visits, and considered that the Head Teachers had each identified the key areas for improvement, and these were being supported appropriately by the Council and Consortium.
  
- 12. Each of the Members who visited the schools completed the pro forma with their own perspective on the answers provided during their discussions with the Head Teacher, around the areas of interest highlighted through the questions listed in the visit pro forma.
  
- 13. The visit pro forma also included an opportunity for the Members to provide their overall comments on the visit, areas for improvement, future actions and any other comments. Detailed below are the comments provided by Members for each visit:

<b>Bryn Hafod Primary School</b>			
<b>Overall comments on visit</b>	<b>Areas for improvement</b>	<b>Further actions</b>	<b>Other comments</b>
<p>The Members were very pleased with the progress being made by the new head teacher since her appointment in September 2015.</p> <p>The Members judged that the performance assessments made by the Head Teacher following her appointment were well documented and that the Head Teacher had implemented a number of key changes to address the issues she had identified.</p>	<p>Investigate the progress being made on the outstanding safety issues and building work</p>	<p>None</p>	<p>None</p>

<p>The Members agreed to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitor the impact of the changes brought in, through the implementation of the changes by the Head Teacher, prior to the Estyn inspection in January 2017.</li> <li>• Seek feedback from the Chair of Governors on the Governing Body's: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• response to the dip in performance</li> <li>• involvement in school's improvements process</li> <li>• fully trained in performance data analysis and up to date with school performance.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>			
<b>Thornhill Primary School</b>			
<p>Restructure of leadership team and teachers is now working well</p> <p>Recently appointed Deputy head has brought in a number of new ideas to improve performance and better engage with parents and the community</p> <p>Staff are much more proactive</p>	None	Appointment of a LA Governor to provide a more balanced governing body	None
<b>Eastern High School</b>			
<p>Now feels like a "normal school"</p> <p>School needs extra support for high level behaviour issues + mental</p>	Need extra training days for staff when	CAMHS – extra	Lessons for New Western High  Head should be on-

<p>Heath (CAMHS). Behaviour, child psychologist</p> <p>Very Good</p> <p>With the appointment of a new Head and two deputies the school is showing signs of positive improvement both in teaching and behaviour.</p>	<p>move to new school</p> <p>About 12 pupils have significant behavioural problems who need special help</p> <p>Maths and literacy. Attendance needs to improve</p> <p>There is a need to improve teachers with a more consistent approach across key stages.</p>	<p>resources</p>	<p>site at all times – or an experienced Deputy – apparently it is proposed that Head is off-site.</p> <p>Be aware of, and quickly address, any conflicts between the staff of the two merged schools.</p> <p>Draw line in the sand.</p> <p>Good governing Body.</p> <p>Boundaries on behaviour – and keep them.</p> <p>More support from high level behaviour issues + mental Health (CAMHS) Liaison with children’s services – better – full time child protection officer at school.</p>
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### Future Scrutiny of schools

14. Members may wish to agree to undertake further visits to schools causing concern during the summer term or continue the visits following the publication of the next set of school performance data in September.

### Way Forward

15. Committee Members will have the opportunity to discuss the information provided in this report, and agree whether any of the information included in the feedback

from the visits should be forwarded to the Cabinet Member for Education, Director of Education and Lifelong Learning or the schools. Members may also wish to discuss the future scrutiny of Cardiff Schools.

## **Legal Implications**

16. The Scrutiny Committee is empowered to enquire, consider, review and recommend but not to make policy decisions. As the recommendations in this report are to consider and review matters there are no direct legal implications. However, legal implications may arise if and when the matters under review are implemented with or without any modifications. Any report with recommendations for decision that goes to Cabinet/Council will set out any legal implications arising from those recommendations. All decisions taken by or on behalf of the Council must (a) be within the legal powers of the Council; (b) comply with any procedural requirement imposed by law; (c) be within the powers of the body or person exercising powers on behalf of the Council; (d) be undertaken in accordance with the procedural requirements imposed by the Council e.g. Scrutiny Procedure Rules; (e) be fully and properly informed; (f) be properly motivated; (g) be taken having regard to the Council's fiduciary duty to its taxpayers; and (h) be reasonable and proper in all the circumstances.

## **Financial Implications**

17. The Scrutiny Committee is empowered to enquire, consider, review and recommend but not to make policy decisions. As the recommendations in this report are to consider and review matters there are no direct financial implications at this stage in relation to any of the work programme. However, financial implications may arise if and when the matters under review are implemented with or without any modifications. Any report with recommendations for decision that goes to Cabinet/Council will set out any financial implications arising from those recommendations.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Committee is recommended to discuss the information provided in this report and:

- i. Agree on the way forward for the continued scrutiny of Cardiff's Schools and overspends;
- ii. Agree to report the outcome of the visits to the Cabinet Member for Education and Director of Education and Lifelong Learning; and
- iii. To identify any areas for further investigations.

**DAVID MARR**

**Interim Monitoring Officer**

**11 May 2016**