
COVID-19 RECOVERY IN SCHOOLS

Purpose of the Report

1. For Members to receive a brief update of this issue ahead of a number of presentations on the latest position in relation to Covid-19 Recovery in Schools being made at this meeting of the Scrutiny Committee. This is a follow up arising from a deep dive scrutiny on this issue in December 2022.

Background

2. At its work programming forum on the 19th July 2022, Members of this Committee agreed that they would wish for **“Covid-19 Recovery in Schools”** to be a priority topic during 2022/23 and that bi-annual reports be considered by the Committee – one following the start of the school year, and one towards the end of the school year, looking towards the Summer Programme.
3. On the 13 December 2022, Members dedicated its formal CYPSC meeting to undertake a short, deep dive scrutiny into this issue. During the way forward, it was agreed that an update be considered at the July 2023 meeting. The output letter from this Committee arising from the December 2022 meeting is attached at **Appendix A**, with the Cabinet response attached at **Appendix B**.

Issues

4. At its meeting in December 2022, Members invited the following witnesses to the meeting:

- Councillor Sarah Merry, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Education;
- Melanie Godfrey, Director of Education & Lifelong Learning;
- Mike Tate, Assistant Director of Education and Lifelong Learning;
- Patrick Brunnock, Head Teacher, Corpus Christi RC High School
- Claire Skidmore, Head Teacher, Radyr Primary School
- Michelle Jones – Head Teacher, Lansdowne Primary School

5. At the December meeting, Members raised a number of concerns relating to:

- Attendance;
- Access and attainment for all;
- Referrals;
- Development and Behaviour;
- Mental Health and Wellbeing – staff and pupils;
- Vulnerable Learners;
- Exclusions;
- Support for Staff

These are highlighted in more detail in **Appendix A**.

Previous Scrutiny

6. Since July 2020, this Scrutiny Committee has provided a number of comments, observations and views on the following issues relating to Covid-19 Pandemic Recovery in Education & schools.

- Learning and attainment for all
 - Ensuring all schools work to similar standards and approaches – learning from best practice etc;
 - Pupils who had disengaged with learning and the knock-on effect this may have in relation to their individual achievement and attainment;
 - NEETS;

- Post 16 learning;
- Digital Deprivation & Inequality;
- Support for vulnerable learners;
- Non-Formal education settings
- Planning/Preparing
 - Use of Welsh Government Funding – where is it going, how will it be used?
 - Summer Provision
- Health and Well-being
 - School Based Counselling and Pupil Wellbeing;
 - Mental health services and capacity for children & young people;
 - Staff Health and Well-being.
- Examinations and Assessments;
- Inspection Activity;
- Consultation and Engagement with Children & Young People.

7. This Scrutiny Committee has considered this topic on the following dates:

- 30 July 2020¹
- 12 October 2020²
- In December 2020, Members of this Scrutiny Committee were sent a further briefing via email on further updates in relation to education recovery dated 15 December 2020.
- 15th March 2021³
- 11 May 2021⁴
- 21st September 2021⁵
- 13 December 2022 ⁶

¹ [Agenda for Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee on Thursday, 30th July, 2020, 4.30 pm : City of Cardiff Council \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#)

² [Agenda for Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee on Monday, 12th October, 2020, 4.30 pm : City of Cardiff Council \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#)

³ [Agenda for Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee on Monday, 15th March, 2021, 4.30 pm : City of Cardiff Council \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#)

⁴ [Agenda for Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee on Tuesday, 11th May, 2021, 5.00 pm : City of Cardiff Council \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#)

⁵ [Agenda for Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee on Tuesday, 21st September, 2021, 4.30 pm : Cardiff Council \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#)

⁶ [Agenda for Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee on Tuesday, 13th December, 2022, 4.30 pm : Cardiff Council \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#)

Way Forward

8. A number of presentations will be made at this meeting, and the following witnesses will be in attendance meeting to answer any questions:
 - Councillor Sarah Merry, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Education;
 - Mike Tate, Assistant Director of Education and Lifelong Learning;
 - Patrick Brunnock, Head Teacher, Corpus Christi RC High School
 - Claire Skidmore, Head Teacher, Radyr Primary School
 - Michelle Jones – Head Teacher, Lansdowne Primary School

9. Members will be able to agree any comments, concerns or recommendations that they wish to pass on to the Cabinet Member and Senior Officers during the Way Forward and decide whether they wish to receive further updates from witnesses in the future.

Legal Implications

10. 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 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

11. 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 will set out any financial implications arising from those recommendations.

RECOMMENDATION

That Committee considers this report and information provided at the meeting and agrees any recommendations, comments or advice it wishes to offer to the Cabinet Member, Head Teachers in attendance and Senior Officers in Education & Lifelong Learning; and any future scrutiny Members may wish to undertake on this issue.

Davina Fiore

Director of Governance and Legal Services

28 June 2023