

Schools Performance Scrutiny Panel

Summary: This is an agenda pack for a meeting for the Schools Performance Scrutiny Panel taking place on the 13 August 2015. The main item being discussed relates to the Special Education Needs Reform.

Date: 13 August 2015

Time: 4.00pm (pre meeting for Panel members at 3.30pm)

Venue: Committee Room 3b, **GUILDHALL**

Members of the Panel:

Fiona Gordon	Paul Meara
Mike Day	Anthony Colburn
Beverley Hopkins	Robert Smith
Cheryl Philpott	Dave Anderson-Thomas (Parent Governor Co-optee)
Mandy Evans	Sarah Joiner (Parent Governor Co-optee)
Hazel Morris	

Copy of Agendas to:

Helen Morgan Rees – Hub Head of School Improvement

Lindsay Harvey – Chief Education Officer

AGENDA

No.	Item
1.	a. Cabinet member Responses to Conveners letters arising from the Panel meeting on the 18 May 2015. b. Notes arising from the Panel meeting on 18 June 2015
2.	Additional Learning Needs (ALN) Reform See attached: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Questions sent to Lindsay Harvey in advance of your meeting• Extract from Welsh Assembly Government Website (background)
3.	Scrutiny improvement outcomes identified by Scrutiny Programme Committee - to discuss implications for the panels work
4.	Work Programme Timetable 2015/16
5.	For Information <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Individual Estyn reports published since last update• Articles and useful background information

***Please note members should declare personal and prejudicial interests and party whipping in the usual manner

Contact: Michelle Roberts, Scrutiny Officer

Tel: 01792 637256

Email: michelle.roberts@swan-sea.gov.uk



CITY AND COUNTY OF SWANSEA
DINAS A SIR ABERTAWE

Councillor Fiona Gordon
Convener, Schools Performance
Scrutiny Panel

Please ask for:
Gofynnwch am:
Direct Line:
Llinell Uniongyrochol:

Councillor Jennifer Raynor
(01792) 637429

E-Mail / E-Bost: cllr.jennifer.raynor@swansea.gov.uk
Our Ref / Ein Cyf: JR/JW
Your Ref / Eich Cyf:
Date / Dyddiad: 22 June 2015

If you require this or any other information in another format e.g. Braille, audio tape or a different language, please contact me

Fiona
Dear Councillor Gordon

Thank you for your letter dated the 1st June 2015.

Schools Performance Scrutiny Panel – 18 May 2015

1. Reassurance from you that FSM administrative centralisation is the best way forward and that schools have had input into this change.

Assurance can be given that Benefits Team's confirmation of Free School Meal (FSM) eligibility is a more efficient and accurate system than had previously been used and was welcomed by schools. The number of pupils entitled to FSM has not reduced since implementation of the new system, however there has been a national reduction linked to Housing Benefits and Council Tax Reduction claims. The new system asks families to opt out of FSM as part of their claim for other benefits and this should show an increased position for schools in Swansea, as historically some families have not wished to claim for FSM even though they have been eligible. This will lead to increased PDG for these schools.

COUNCILLOR/Y CYNGHORYDD
JENNIFER RAYNOR
CABINET MEMBER FOR EDUCATION /
AELOD Y CABINET ADDYSG

CABINET OFFICE, THE GUILDHALL, SWANSEA, SA1 4PE
SWYDDFA'R CABINET, NEUADD Y DDINAS, ABERTAWE, SA1 4PE

☎ (01792) 637429

✉ cllr.jennifer.raynor@swansea.gov.uk www.swansea.gov.uk

CITY AND COUNTY OF SWANSEA

DINAS A SIR ABERTAWE

Page 2

A working party was established to consider the change in eligibility process and schools were represented at this working party. Feedback was given to schools and their representatives at various meetings before the process was changed, such as the Admin Forum, Finance Group and Business Meeting. A number of emails were also circulated to all schools before the change to advise of the new process. There are always one or two teething problems when a system is changed but overall the feedback from schools is that the new process is preferable and it has also reduced administrative support at the centre.

2. Information on how school/teachers are currently being upskilled in teaching EMLAS children? And what are the future plans in this area?

3200 learners from ethnic minority backgrounds are currently in receipt of specialist English as an additional language (EAL) and/or bilingual support via EMLAS in 74 schools. The numbers of learners requiring EMLAS specialist support are increasing year on year.

In the context of significant increasing numbers of learners requiring EMLAS specialist support and diminishing specialist staffing resources in EMLAS, the Service has developed a sustainable capacity-building model aimed at upskilling class/subject teachers in schools to better meet the distinctive language and learning needs of learners from ethnic minority backgrounds in particular those learning English as an additional language (EAL).

The EMLAS capacity-building model involves EMLAS Specialist Teachers working rotationally with class/subject teachers to jointly plan lessons, develop resources and implement more inclusive teaching strategies.

The EMLAS capacity-building model is currently operated in schools in tandem with targeted direct support for learners from ethnic minority backgrounds at greatest risk of underachievement. Whilst some schools have fully embraced the EMLAS capacity-building approach to upskilling class/subject teachers, other schools have engaged somewhat reluctantly and a small number have rejected the EMLAS capacity-building strategy seeing direct support for learners as a higher priority than upskilling of class/subject teachers.

COUNCILLOR/Y CYNGHORYDD
JENNIFER RAYNOR
CABINET MEMBER FOR EDUCATION /
AELOD Y CABINET ADDYSG

CABINET OFFICE, THE GUILDHALL, SWANSEA, SA1 4PE
SWYDDFA'R CABINET, NEUADD Y DDINAS, ABERTAWE, SA1 4PE

☎ (01792) 637429

✉ dlr.jennifer.raynor@swansea.gov.uk www.swansea.gov.uk

CITY AND COUNTY OF SWANSEA
DINAS A SIR ABERTAWE

Page 3

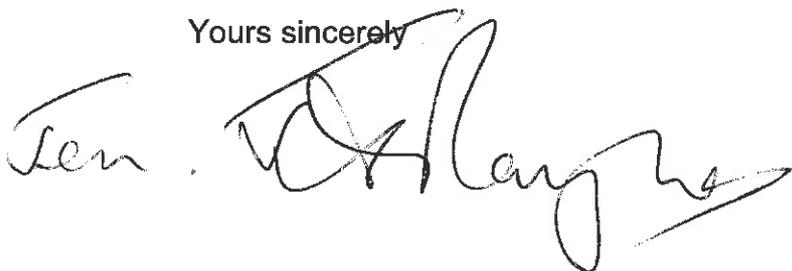
The impact of the EMLAS capacity-building model on the confidence, knowledge and skills of class/subject teachers in providing for the needs of learners from ethnic minority backgrounds is measured and evaluated by EMLAS each school year.

Between April 1 2014 and March 31 2015, 83 class/subject teachers in 8 secondary, 25 primary, 1 Infant and 1 junior school were involved in capacity-building collaborations with 23.0 full-time equivalent (FTE) EMLAS Specialist Teachers. 85%, or 70 of the 83 class/subject teachers involved, awarded a higher rating to their confidence levels, knowledge and skills at the end of the capacity-building collaborations than at the start. This level of success evidences the impact of the capacity-building model on upskilling class/subject teachers.

With a further reduction of 6.0FTE in EMLAS Specialist Teacher staffing levels, the Service will need to promote the capacity-building model in schools over direct learner support in order to build future sustainability for the Service and to grow independence in schools to meet the needs of this group of vulnerable learners.

In addition to language support for ethnic communities, the Authority is facing a growing need to provide language support to schools with children arriving from Eastern Europe and the Baltic states.

Yours sincerely



COUNCILLOR JENNIFER RAYNOR
CABINET MEMBER FOR EDUCATION

COUNCILLOR/Y CYNGHORYDD
JENNIFER RAYNOR
CABINET MEMBER FOR EDUCATION /
AELOD Y CABINET ADDYSG

CABINET OFFICE, THE GUILDHALL, SWANSEA, SA1 4PE
SWYDDFA'R CABINET, NEUADD Y DDINAS, ABERTAWE, SA1 4PE

☎ (01792) 637429

✉ cllr.jennifer.raynor@swansea.gov.uk www.swansea.gov.uk



CITY AND COUNTY OF SWANSEA
DINAS A SIR ABERTAWE

Councillor Fiona Gordon
Convener Schools Performance
Scrutiny Panel

Please ask for:
Gofynnwch am:
Direct Line:
Llinell Uniongyrochol:

Councillor Christine Richards
(01792) 637443

E-Mail / E-Bost:
Our Ref / Ein Cyf:
Your Ref / Eich Cyf:
Date / Dyddiad:

cllr.christine.richards@swansea.gov.uk
CR/JW

19 June 2015

If you require this or any other information in another format e.g. Braille, audio tape or a different language, please contact me

Dear Councillor Gordon

I write in response to your letter dated 1 June 2015 regarding elective home education.

With reference to the working group to consider what information can be shared with colleagues in Social Services and Education, I can confirm that a meeting has taken place. It will, however, be necessary to undertake further work to pursue developing a protocol and so a further meeting is being planned for mid-July.

Welsh Government legislation does not allow local authorities to challenge parents who choose to home educate their children. However, it is hoped to draw up a protocol agreement to ensure that Family and Children Services, the Education Department and school staff can work more closely together, within the confines of the legislation, to improve the support for children being home educated. When the Swansea model has been drafted, it is intended to share the protocol with other local authorities in the ERW Region through the ERW Safeguarding Group.

The Welsh Government is currently consulting on the draft non-statutory guidance for local authorities on elective home education and it is intended that the working group will meet when feedback on this consultation document is available. The consultation ends on 3 July 2015.

COUNCILLOR/Y CYNGHORYDD
CHRISTINE RICHARDS
DEPUTY LEADER / Y DIRPRWY ARWEINYDD

CABINET OFFICE, THE GUILDHALL, SWANSEA, SA1 4PE
SWYDDFA'R CABINET, NEUADD Y DDINAS, ABERTAWE, SA1 4PE

☎ (01792) 637443

✉ cllr.christine.richards@swansea.gov.uk www.swansea.gov.uk

CITY AND COUNTY OF SWANSEA
DINAS A SIR ABERTAWE

Page 2

I trust this reply will help to reassure you that this work is on-going. It is not considered appropriate to continue further until the Welsh Government consultation process has ended.

Yours sincerely

Christine Richards

**COUNCILLOR CHRISTINE RICHARDS
DEPUTY LEADER & CABINET MEMBER
FOR SERVICES FOR CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE**

**COUNCILLOR/Y CYNGHORYDD
CHRISTINE RICHARDS
DEPUTY LEADER / Y DIRPRWY ARWEINYDD**

CABINET OFFICE, THE GUILDHALL, SWANSEA, SA1 4PE
SWYDDFA'R CABINET, NEUADD Y DDINAS, ABERTAWE, SA1 4PE

☎ (01792) 637443

✉ cllr.christine.richards@swansea.gov.uk www.swansea.gov.uk

**Schools Performance Scrutiny Panel
Notes**

18 June 2015

In attendance:

Cllr Fiona Gordon

Cllr Anthony Colburn

Cllr Beverley Hopkins

Cllr Cheryl Philpott

Cllr Paul Meara

Betsan O'Connor, Managing Director ERW

Lindsay Harvey, Chief Education Officer

Helen Morgan Rees, Hub Head Education Improvement Service

Michelle Roberts, Scrutiny Officer

1. Education Through Regional Working

Betsan O'Connor, the Managing Director of ERW, our Chief Education Officer Lindsay Harvey and the Hub Head of the Education Improvement Service Helen Morgan Rees attended the meeting to discuss the ERW Business Plan:

- ERW is an alliance of 6 local authorities governed by a legally constituted joint committee. Its aim is to implement the agreed regional strategy and business plan to support school improvement.
- The Consortium comprises of six local authorities: Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion, Pembrokeshire, Powys, Neath Port Talbot and Swansea. The purpose of ERW is to deliver a single consistent and integrated professional school improvement service for children and young people in a range of settings within the six local authorities.
- ERW is governed by a legally constituted Joint Committee. This is made up of the six local authority leaders.
- ERW's Joint Committee is advised by the Executive Board. The Board is made up of the six LA Directors, external school improvement experts, Headteacher representatives and the Managing Director.
- The ERW Delivery Board takes responsibility for the operational delivery of the ERW Business Plan. All local authority Chief Education Officers sit on that.
- The ERW priorities for 2015-2018 are: Leading Learning, Teaching and Learning and support for Learning. These are cross cutting work streams which may be amended yearly depending on operational changes and needs. The priorities reflect and inform the Single Plan priorities for each local authority which is the One Swansea Plan for here: people learn successfully, improve attendance and school achievement (school readiness and child poverty)
- The ERW Strategy is to:
 - Ensure effective performance in all schools
 - Robustly and consistently challenging the performance of schools and the outcomes achieved by learners
 - Deploy a differentiated system of professional support to schools in proportion to need through nationally agreed categorisation framework
 - Supporting strategies to develop the literacy and numeracy skills of learners
 - To improve outcomes for disadvantaged learners

- Facilitate effective school to school support in order to improve performance and outcomes
- Managing and deploying well trained challenge advisers to challenge performance and broker bespoke support
- Mission statement for ERW *'build school capacity through support, challenge and intervention to become self-improving, resilient organisations which continually improve outcomes for learners'*.
- Panel please that ERW was the best performance region in Wales. Best practice has also been identified in this Hub which has been shared across the regions.
- Please to hear the Education Improvement Service is now providing a more robust and effective challenge therefore empowering schools to make improvements. The flexibility of the staffing of the service with approximately a quarter of challenge advisors being current Headteachers is proving to keep the advice and challenge to schools current. The panel were pleased to see this working well but with the caveat that it does not have a negative impact on the schools from which those teachers originate.
- The Panel also recognised the improved service provided should also help to eliminate any surprise Estyn Inspection results with assessments being made in line with expectations.
- The Panel were encouraged to hear that ERW does and have challenged Welsh Government on matters that affect the locality.
- Panel agreed that it will be important to scrutinise the Cabinet Member in her role as the council's representative on ERW and this will be built into the schools performance work programme.
- The first seminar/meeting for scrutiny chairs across the region is planned for September.

2. Work Programme and actions arising

1. The next meeting of the Panel is scheduled for the 16 July when the panel is scheduled to look at support for and educational attainment of children looked after and of gypsy traveller children.

As at: 30 June 2015

ALN/SEN Reform

Questions sent to Lindsay Harvey in advance of the meeting

1. What has changed or will change?
2. What are the implications for Children and Young People/families, schools, the local authority?
3. How are we preparing for the changes?
4. Are we working with others to prepare?
5. What do you see as the key improvements in these changes?
6. Who will benefit most/least from the changes?
7. What are the anticipated financial implications?
8. What do you think of the changes?

Additional Learning Needs Reform

Extract from Welsh Assembly Government Website

Last updated 06 July 2015

We are proposing to introduce a new legislative framework for supporting children and young people with additional learning needs.

In May 2014, we published a White Paper setting out proposals to introduce a new legislative framework for supporting children and young people with additional learning needs. The White Paper explained how our proposals will create:

- a unified legislative framework to support learners aged 0 to 25 with additional learning needs
- an integrated, collaborative process of assessment, planning and monitoring which facilitates early, timely and effective interventions
- a fair and transparent system for providing information and advice, and for resolving concerns and appeals.

The consultation on the White Paper closed 25 July 2014 and received 215 responses. In addition to the written consultation, workshops were held for children and young people and their parents/carers. These were attended by 174 children and 55 parents and carers. The White Paper, a summary of responses and a report on the workshops can be accessed from our [Consultation page](#).

The feedback from the consultation was used to help us to refine and improve our proposals and to inform a draft Bill. On 18 June 2015 the Minister for Education and Skills issued a [statement](#) in which he announced that the draft Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Bill would be published for consultation with stakeholders before the summer recess in 2015. An early draft of a new ALN Code of Practice and an outline of our plans for implementation will also be published in the autumn term.

As part of the development of the Regulatory Impact Assessment to support the draft Bill, we commissioned Deloitte to carry out an independent review of the provision of funding for learners with special educational needs (SEN) or learning difficulties and/or

disabilities (LDD) across Wales. The aim of the review was to investigate and analyse all aspects of the costs associated with supporting learners under the current legislative framework, and consider the impact of proposed legislative reforms. Deloitte produced a report on the findings of their review which was published on 6 July 2015.

Background to the reforms

In 2007, the then Welsh Assembly Government conducted a preliminary consultation on possible reform of the current special educational needs framework, following a review by the former Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills (ELLS) Committee of the National Assembly for Wales. Afterwards a number of pilot projects were set up to develop and trial new systems and approaches to reform and a report was made with these findings.

We consulted on its aim to bring forward legislation in this area in June 2012. The consultation document, [Forward in partnership for children and young people with additional needs](#), set out a broad vision for a reformed system.

While many respondents welcomed the proposals in principle, many felt that more detail would be needed in order to properly understand the implications of the proposals in practice. In order to collect more views on the proposals we held a series of workshops in the autumn of 2013. A summary of discussions document was produced to record the ideas exchanged during the workshops.

DOCUMENT DOWNLOAD



PDF

[Summary of stakeholder workshops on potential reforms for additional learning needs](#) (File size: 833KB)



PDF

[An examination of the provision of funding for learners with special educational needs or learning difficulties and/or disabilities](#) (File size: 840KB)

Item 3

Scrutiny improvement outcomes: Discuss the implications for the Panels work

The Scrutiny Programme Committee agreed a number of outcomes it would like to see in Scrutiny over the coming year. This item has therefore been agendered so you can discuss the implications of these on the work of the Schools Performance Scrutiny Panel. *(SPC agreed these should be subject to wider discussion by scrutiny members and that the committee and panels should take responsibility for the outcomes in their own work plans).*

Can the Panel discussion/consider:

- **What are we doing now for each of the outcomes? (as a committee/panel)**
- **What more do we need to do?**

Outcomes from Scrutiny Programme Committee to discuss:

1. We need to talk more to cabinet members so that we can plan better and ensure that our work is making a difference
2. We need to align the work of scrutiny more closely to the five corporate priorities so that we can focus and impact on the things that matter.
3. We need more briefings and development sessions so that we have the knowledge and skills we need
4. We need more coverage in the media so that the public are more aware of our work
5. We need more members of the public contributing to scrutiny meetings so that we can reflect their views in our work
6. We need closer links with regulators and inspectors so that we can provide a more coordinated and effective challenge

Item 4

TIMETABLE/PLAN OF WORK 2015/2016 Schools Performance Scrutiny Panel

Meeting date and venue	Item to be discussed
Meeting 1 18 May 15 – 4.00pm Room 110, Guildhall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree Panel work programme for the coming year • Update on current position with EMLAS • Briefing on the Education Improvement Grant • Revisit Elective Home Education letter and Cabinet Response
Meeting 2 18 June 15 – 4.00pm CR6, Guildhall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ERW Business Plan (Betsan O'Connor, Managing Director ERW, Lindsay Harvey, Helen Morgan-Rees)# • Home to School Transport – consultation on policy changes
Meeting 3 16 July 14 – 4.00pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Looked after Children Educational – Performance and support • Gypsy Traveller Children Education – Performance and support MEETING CANCELLED
Meeting 3 13 Aug 15 – 4.00pm CR3b, Guildhall	SEN/ALN reform – What are we doing around this reform agenda.
Meeting 4 10 Sep 15 – 4.00pm CR3b, Guildhall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Looked after Children Educational - Performance and support • Gypsy Traveller Children Education - Performance and support
**Extra meeting 5 21 Sep 15 – 4.00pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of curriculum change including implications for schools • Reviewing the work of the School Improvement Service
Meeting 6 8 Oct 15 – 4.00pm CR3b, Guildhall	School 1 Casllwchwr Primary School (Headteacher and Chair of Governors) <i>Pre meeting with Challenge Advisor</i>
Meeting 7 5 Nov 15 – 4.00pm CR3b, Guildhall **New item added	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • **Post Inspection Action Plan progress report - arising from Estyn Inspection 1 year on (Cabinet report 15 Oct 15 - forward look)** • Overview of the effect of budget cuts on education and schools including a look in detail at impact of the closure of breakfast clubs • Impact of cuts on pupils/schools re: cut in transport to Faith Schools <i>Invite chair of Schools Budget Forum</i>
Meeting 8 3 Dec 15 – 4.00pm CR3b, Guildhall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Education Performance Reporting including pupil attendance and exclusion data • School Categorisation
Meeting 9 21 Jan 16 – 4.00pm CR3b, Guildhall	School 2 Brynhyfryd Primary School (Headteacher and Chair of Governors) <i>Pre meeting with Challenge Advisor</i>
Meeting 10 18 Feb 16 – 4.00pm CR3b, Guildhall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How schools are sharing good practice • Feedback from schools on good practice examples (<i>contact schools for this</i>)
Meeting 11 17 Mar 16 – 4.00pm CR3b, Guildhall	School 3 Seaview Primary School (Headteacher and Chair of Governors) <i>Pre meeting with Challenge Advisor</i>
Meeting 12 14 Apr 16 – 4.00pm CR3b, Guildhall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate your year • Plan for year ahead

Item 5

For Information

A. Estyn Inspections Summary
(Published since your update in February 2015)

For Information

School	Date published	Schools Current Performance and prospects for improvement	Previous Estyn Inspection outcome	Estyn Recommendations
Bishop Gore Comprehensive School Link	Jul 15	Excellent / Excellent	Excellent / Excellent (2010)	R1 Improve key stage 4 performance in the level 1 threshold indicator and in science R2 Provide more opportunities for pupils to practise their Welsh language skills outside of Welsh lessons R3 Simplify the marking policy R4 Improve attendance
Craigcefnparc Primary School Link What happens next? The school will draw up an action plan which shows how it is going to address the recommendations. Estyn will monitor the school's progress.	Jul 15	Adequate / Adequate	All grade 2 under old inspection regime (2009)	R1 Raise standards in reading and mental mathematics, particularly in key stage 2 R2 Improve pupils' Welsh oracy skills across the school R3 Ensure that all teachers match tasks to pupils' ability levels and promote their independent learning skills R4 Raise levels of attendance R5 Develop the role of the governing body and the senior leadership team in moving the school forward R6 Ensure that self-evaluation procedures lead to continual improvement

**B. Relevant statistical, research or articles since last update
(Published since your last update in May 2015)**

Reports and Articles

Best practice in leadership development in schools in Wales- June 2015

Estyn: [link](#) to report

Summary

This thematic survey report is published in response to a request for advice from the Welsh Government in the Ministerial remit letter to Estyn for 2014-2015. It reports on effective leadership development within schools and focuses on how effective school leaders try to create a leadership development culture and build leadership capacity.

Recommendations

School leaders should:

- develop a strong culture of professional learning for all staff at all levels in their school
- improve succession planning and the transfer of corporate knowledge
- identify the leadership potential of staff early and support their career development
- ensure that performance management structures pay proper attention to developing potential future leaders
- use the leadership standards as the basis for evaluating their own leadership skills and for developing staff as future leaders

Local authorities and regional consortia should:

- provide guidance for experienced school leaders on developing their staff as future leaders
- provide opportunities for senior leaders to develop their skills in key areas such as challenging underperformance, deploying strategies to improve teaching, and implementing new initiatives
- provide or source effective Welsh and English medium training for leaders at all levels
- promote the use of the leadership standards and the individual leadership review to all school leaders

The Welsh Government should:

- implement a strategy for the development of leadership skills for aspiring and experienced senior leaders
- include the development of leadership skills as a strand in the professional standards for Higher Level Teaching Assistants, teachers and middle leaders

Schools working together should focus on pupil outcomes (Estyn)

23 June 2015 - [link](#)

Nearly all schools are involved in some form of partnership with other schools, but there is not enough evaluation of the impact on pupils of this joint work, according to an Estyn report published today.

The report gives examples of school-to-school support, including informal self-generated or brokered arrangements, collaborations and federations. The report considers what works, and how and why it works. It also discusses the impact, success factors and obstacles facing school-to-school initiatives.

Only a minority of schools with informal, self-generated partnerships can identify the impact of joint working on standards. It is too early to evaluate the impact on standards of schools working in a formal federation.

Estyn's report 'School-to-school support and collaboration' found that successful school-to-school support works best when there is a clear need identified, a genuine commitment from school leaders, and a partnership that is designed to be mutually beneficial. It is also essential that schools working together have clearly identified strategic objectives and success criteria.

Meilyr Rowlands, Chief Inspector, says:

"There are clear benefits for schools in working together, including improving outcomes for pupils and generating a collective sense of responsibility for improvement. Openness, trust and transparency between school leaders are crucial, as well as investing in staff time for research, development and collaboration.

"Although school-to-school working is becoming more common, it needs more support and direction from local authorities and regional consortia. Today's report includes case studies outlining different types of school-to-school collaboration and identifies the barriers to effective collaboration between schools."

The main barrier to effective school-to-school working is a reluctance to invest staff time in collaborative work. School leaders need to tackle concerns about pressure on staff time, particularly if staff need to be released from teaching commitments.

The report recommends that school leaders are clear about the desired outcome of school to school support, identify specific success criteria, and make sure that the focus is on raising standards. Local authorities and consortia should have a clear strategy for matching schools to work together, set expectations about how groupings of schools will operate, make resources available to support school-to-school work, and disseminate good practice. The Welsh Government should consider ways of allowing federations to register as a single school and co-ordinate a national database of good practice.

The key to improving attendance in primary schools lies in a multi-strategy approach

17 June 2015 - [link](#)

Primary schools that maintain or improve pupils' attendance pay consistent attention to it and use a variety of strategies rather than just one particular approach. In a report published today, Estyn highlights the various strategies employed by schools that have successfully tackled poor attendance.

The report, 'Effective practice in improving attendance in primary schools', contains case studies of best practice from primary schools across Wales. Inspectors found that schools with consistently good or improved attendance:

- Create a welcoming environment for pupils
- Have a clear attendance policy
- Engage well with pupils and parents
- Analyse and monitor data about absence and the reasons for it
- Evaluate the impact of attendance strategies
- Develop strong links with community support services
- Have specified staff responsible for improving attendance
- Use appropriate rewards and incentives
- Involve school leaders and governors in evaluating attendance strategies

Meilyr Rowlands, Chief Inspector, says:

“Although there has been an improvement in attendance rates over the last year, pupils in Welsh primary schools still miss more school than those in the rest of the UK.

“Effective school leaders understand the importance of attendance to pupils' life chances. I am confident that the strategies outlined in the report will help schools to improve pupils' attendance and continue the upward trend in attendance rates.”

Parkland Primary School in Swansea is one of the schools visited by Estyn. The best practice case study in the report outlines the successful strategies the school uses to improve attendance. The school engages effectively with pupils and parents to raise their awareness of the importance of good attendance. By also providing access to support from community services and regular monitoring and evaluation the school has successfully improved attendance rates over the last four years. Further case studies can be found in the full report.

The report recommends that schools implement all the strategies identified in the report to make sure that all pupils attend school regularly. In addition, local authorities and consortia should facilitate the sharing of best practice and ensure that challenge advisers support and challenge to school leaders about pupils' attendance. Finally, it is recommended that the Welsh Government promote their 2011 guidance outlining strategies for schools to improve attendance and manage lateness.