



CITY AND COUNTY OF SWANSEA

DINAS A SIR ABERTAWE

To:
Councillor Jennifer Raynor
Cabinet Member for Education

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Date 21 April 2017
Dyddiad:

This is a letter from the Schools Scrutiny Performance Panel to the Cabinet Member for Education following the meeting of the Panel on 6 April 2017. It is about Ethnic Minority Achievement Unit and Bryniago Welsh Medium Primary School.

Dear Cllr Raynor

Schools Scrutiny Performance Panel

At our meeting on 6 April 2017 we received an update on the Ethnic Minority Achievement Unit (EMAU) in the context of recent changes and an update on progress at Bryniago Welsh Medium Primary School.

Ethnic Minority Achievement Unit

We spoke to the Chief Education Officer and the Head of EMAU about how the service is progressing in the context of declining funding.

We heard that the EMAU service is currently supporting approximately 2,500 learners (aged 3-16 years) from ethnic minority backgrounds who speak around 100 different languages and dialects. This includes working with 65 schools, parents and carers and other stakeholders.

We were pleased to hear that English as Additional Language (EAL) Learners are performing well across key indicators with an upward trend over time when compared to all Swansea and all Wales figures.

We discussed funding and associated challenges given that whilst demand has been increasing, funding has been declining. We noted that since 2013 there has been a 31.7% reduction in funding to EMAU.

We were concerned to hear that the diminishing levels of funding in tandem with unpredictability around future Welsh Government funding streams, the potential of higher delegation rates to schools, and uncertainty over future delivery models has had a substantial destabilising effect on EMAU. As a consequence there has been an impact on staff morale, workload and retention. Particularly worrying is the difficulty to forward plan on a long-term basis.

We heard that there is now a significant mismatch between bilingual support need and provision and whilst this is due to loss of staff it is also exacerbated by the unpredictable, changing and fluctuating need across languages.

We were pleased to hear that in order to maintain stability and ensure sustainability in this constantly changing financial environment, a number of measures are being pursued to mitigate against these challenges, including:

- Supporting the development of independence of schools including capacity building at whole school and classroom level. A school action plan rather than a support agreement has been agreed for each supported school.
- A flexible working model has been introduced in 30 primary schools and 3 secondary schools. This includes time being allocated to schools in blocks rather than a weekly basis.
- Reduction in the number of supported pupils based upon the RAG (Red, Amber, and Green) criteria which has a clear focus on pupil outcomes and assessing the level of need.
- Individualised allocation criteria are being used for bilingual support to make best use of the resources and time available.
- Schools encouraged to rely less on EMAU for the provision of interpreting and translating services.

The Head of EMAU also outlined the further work that is recommended over the coming year including training and developing links with challenge advisors and implementing an audit tool, along with the further development of the measures highlighted above.

Bryniago Welsh Medium Primary School

We met with the Hub Head of School Improvement for an update on progress being made by Bryniago Welsh Medium Primary School against the recommendations made in their Estyn Inspection. We heard that the school had needed to be more self-aware and needs to articulate better the impact they are having on pupils at the school.

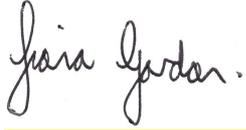
We now heard that:

- There has been a keen focus by the school and the Challenge Advisor on the post inspection action plan to ensure that it is fit for purpose
- The school has had its full quota of 15 days school improvement service support plus more.
- The school is now on track to make progress
- All seven recommendations have made at least satisfactory progress
- There is much more stability in staffing and senior leadership team
- Governors have strengthened their role through developing a Curriculum Sub Committee which is giving more strategic direction and holding the school to account for its standards
- The school is on track to be removed from Estyn Monitoring
- Pressures on staff at the school have been high through this period and it is important to keep an eye on this to ensure continued stability.

- The School is working with another primary school to share practice through triads and other means, recognising that working across schools is essential.

This letter does not require a formal written response.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Fiona Gordon". The signature is written in a cursive style with a period at the end.

Fiona Gordon
Convener Schools Performance Scrutiny Panel
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