

# Schools Performance Scrutiny Panel

**Date:** 21 August 2014

**Time:** 3.30pm

**Venue:** Meeting Room 3 (2.2.7.), Civic Centre

## Members of the Panel:

Fiona Gordon  
Mike Day  
Beverley Hopkins  
Cheryl Philpott  
Jane Harris  
Mandy Evans  
Hazel Morris

Paul Meara  
Anthony Colburn  
Penny Matthews  
Robert Smith  
Dave Anderson-Thomas (Parent Governor Co-optee)  
Sarah Joiner (Parent Governor Co-optee)

## Copy of Agendas for information to:

Arwyn Thomas (Chief Education Officer)

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## AGENDA

No.	Item
1.	Conveners letter and notes arising from the meeting held on 3 July 2014
2.	<p><b><i>Elective Home Schooling:</i></b> the Panel raised a number of concerns around this matter particular around how performance is measured for these children, the curriculum used, how it is regulated and safeguarding.</p> <p>See attached a briefing note and background information</p> <p>Robin Brown – Head of Education Inclusion</p>
3.	<p>Work Programme 2014/2015</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Possible topic for work programme: Welsh Government newly release document '<i>Raising ambition and attainment in schools in Wales</i>'. Does the Panel wish to have a session on this? (<i>Copy attached to end of agenda</i>)</li></ul>
<b>Background Information</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a) Estyn Inspections for individual schools published since last update</li><li>b) Relevant statistical, research or articles since last update</li></ul>	

\*\*\*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@swansea.gov.uk](mailto:michelle.roberts@swansea.gov.uk)





City And County Of Swansea

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Dinas A Sir Abertawe

Councillor Will Evans  
Cabinet Member for Learning  
and Skills

*Please ask for:* Michelle Roberts  
*Gofynnwch am:*

*Scrutiny Office* 01792 637256  
*Line:*  
*Llinell*  
*Uniongyrchol:*

*e-Mail* [michelle.roberts@swansea.gov.uk](mailto:michelle.roberts@swansea.gov.uk)  
*e-Bost:*  
*Date* 21 July 2014  
*Dyddiad:*

Dear Cllr Evans,

**Schools Performance Scrutiny Panel 3 July 2014**

At our panel meeting on the 3rd July we looked at how the authority tackles the issue of poor performing teachers and the recruitment of senior staff in schools. Arwyn Thomas the Chief Education Officer and Debra Yeates from Human Resources attended the meeting to discuss a number of specific issues which had been raised by the panel at a previous meeting, particularly the amount and accuracy of record keeping in schools in relation to staffing matters.

The panel noted a number of issues and wished to highlight the following:

- We were interested to hear that there is a regional human resources group covering six local authority areas that is currently looking at competency policies in schools within that region. The panel were keen to emphasise that the policy, to be effective, must outline what the key expectations are of a staff member, and also the importance of the quality of record keeping in schools.
- Early engagement with the individual and the associated trade union is important when issues of competency are raised with a staff member. The panel believe it is important to put these concerns *on the table early* so they can be addressed quickly and not impact adversely on the education provided to those children and young people who might be affected.
- Schools must keep good quality records of human resources matters because if documentation is not in place the competency process is difficult to take forward. The panel believe that historically this has not been the case in some schools. There is a need monitor and quality assure to ensure that this does happen.
- We heard about the idea of a leadership academy for Headteachers, senior school staff and aspiring leaders and thought this was excellent concept. We believe a leadership academy would help ensure better consistency in practice across schools and would also be important in future workforce planning - ensuring we have the next generation of senior management in schools. We thought that

this could potentially be investigated with University of Wales Trinity St David's where there is currently experience of training teaching staff.

The panel were pleased to hear from the Chief Education Officer that a new school improvement team will be in place in September and that they will receive a full programme of training and development including national welsh training for challenge leaders. We discussed the priorities for the school improvement service and agreed that ensuring consistency in practice must be high on that priority list. We plan to have a session with the head of the school improvement service and the Chief Education Officer in September around this issue.

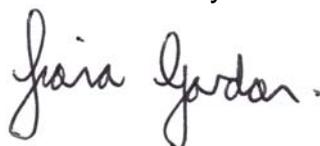
Two related issues that were raised by the panel include:

1. the importance of schools autumn visit and how that would benefit from more involvement of governors. For example the chairs of the schools' statutory committees should be invited. This would then ensure that the information from that visit is disseminated effectively across each school's governing body.
2. More training/information on the Law as it stands in relation to school Governance should be made available to governors. We felt that it is vital that all governors understand their role and responsibilities fully. The Scrutiny Programme Committee has agreed that one of the topics for in-depth scrutiny this year will be school governance and that this issue can form part of that inquiry.

The panel received a verbal update from the Chief Education Officer on progress at Duvant Primary School. As you are aware we had a meeting with the School's then Headteacher and Governors in February and you will recall the letter we sent you with our concerns. We are now pleased to hear that the situation has moved in a positive direction and that the leadership changes are now beginning to have a positive impact at the school.

The panel does not require a formal response to this letter.

Yours sincerely



Fiona Gordon  
Convener of Schools Performance Scrutiny Panel  
[fiona.gordon@swansea.gov.uk](mailto:fiona.gordon@swansea.gov.uk)

# Schools Performance Scrutiny Panel

3 July 2014

## Notes

In attendance:

Fiona Gordon

Cheryl Philpott

Mike Day

Penny Matthews

Sarah Joiner - Co-optee

Jane Harris

Paul Meara

Robert Smith

Tony Colburn

Dave Anderson-Thomas - Co-optee

Arwyn Thomas – Chief Education Officer

Debra Yeates – Interim Head of Service Human Resources

Michelle Roberts – Scrutiny Officer

### 1. Issues arising from notes of previous meeting

- Add to work programme: how schools deal with alcohol and drug misuse issues
- Mobility between schools data received by Panel: the panel did note that the mobility between some schools was quite high but recognised that some areas have more transient populations. The Panel asked that this information be circulated to all Local Authority/councillor governors.
- EOTAS review update: the external review is now complete and education will be meeting to receive feedback over coming weeks. Chief Education Officer said he should be in a position to bring outcomes and action plan to the Panel in September.

### 2. Verbal Update – Dunvant Primary School.

- Leadership issues at the school have been addressed with the support and assistance of human resources and legal
- Head of Cwmglas Primary School is acting as Executive Headteacher until a new Head is appointed
- School will be seeking to appoint Head over coming months
- Issue was addressed quickly and now the school is moving forward.

### 3. Tackling poor performance of teachers and recruitment of senior staff

- New team for school improvement will be in place by September, panel meet with Head of new team and Arwyn in September and the new team Chart be circulated in the meantime.
- New challenge leaders will receive full induction and training, national training for challenge leaders will also be used.
- The Panel highlighted the importance of the autumn visit/meeting and believe that it would be beneficial for more governors to be involved so that information can be disseminated more effectively; that maybe it should be chair of governors and chairs of the statutory committees.
- More training on the law for governors was highlighted; the need for governors to understand their responsibilities was discussed. Cllr Day said that there will be a scrutiny inquiry into School Governance and that this could form part of that terms of reference.

- There is a regional Human Resources group looking at consistency in human resource matters across six authorities. They are currently looking at the suitability of the competency policies.
- The Duty is different in England to Wales, in England it is a much more accelerated process.
- Competency Policy must stipulate the criteria of what is expected, this must be very clear in the policy. The process must emphasised the importance of the quality of the record keeping and the actions that need to be put in place and acted upon by the individual in order to improve performance.
- Panel suggests that a question be included in the 'key issues for governors to ask' around how many school staff are being dealt with under competency policy
- Early engagement with the individual and union is key. Need to tell individual about the issues and discuss how these can be addressed. Putting concerns on the table early and recording them. This stage is completed within the school, without LA or governor involvement.
- If improvements are not made at that informal stage it is then taken to the next level where the individual will be told again what the issues are, support offered to help improve, targets set and improvement measured.
- It is down to schools to monitor and improve in line with their own performance management policy. Challenge leaders role is to monitor and work with school to ensure that improvement happens.
- The Panel wish to highlight the importance of keeping good high quality records of staff matter because if the documentation is not in place the competency process is difficult to take forward. The Panel believe that historically in some schools this has not been the case.
- The chief education officer highlighted the need for more consistency in practice across schools and that there was a need for a leadership academy for heads, senior school staff and aspiring leaders. This could be done locally at University of Wales Trinity St David's where there is currently experience of training teaching staff.
- Adequate workforce planning across schools in the authority is important to ensure we have the next generation of senior management in schools.

#### **4. Actions arising from the meeting**

- ✓ Conveners letter to be written outlining views from discussion around *tackling poor performance of teachers and recruitment of senior staff*.
- ✓ The Panel asked that information on mobility of children across Swansea schools information be circulated to all Local Authority/councillor governors.
- EOTAS departmental review and action plan to be scheduled for a Panel in September (Arwyn to inform Panel when it is available).
- How schools deal with alcohol and drug misuse issues to be scheduled into the work programme this year (discuss what and when a future meeting).
- ✓ Arwyn Thomas be asked to attend the Panel meeting on 21 August to discuss issues raised at the meeting in June around Home Schooling.
- ✓ Arwyn Thomas and Head of School improvement be invited to the Panel meeting in September to discuss the new School Improvement Team, role of challenge leaders and ensuring consistency of support to schools. Structure chart for the new team to be circulated in the meantime.
- ✓ Email Legal about regulations relating to Masons as School Governors.

## Schools Performance Panel - Home Schooling

### Your questions sent to Robin in preparation for the meeting:

1. How is it regulated i.e. what does the legislation say and what is the professional guidance on this matter, what does the Wales Government say about this matter, do Estyn provide advice?
2. Do parents/carers need permission to take their child out of school and home educate?
3. How do we ensure these children are safeguarded?
4. What contact do we have with home schooled children and their parents?
5. Is there a clear pathway for parents and professionals on this issue, or should one be created?
6. The legislation says *Under Section 7 of the 1996 education act, parents are responsible for ensuring that their children receive an education suitable to their age ability and aptitude, as well as any special needs he or she may have* - how do we ensure that this is actually the case?
7. How do we assess the quality of the education they are receiving?
8. Do we know how many children are home schooled in Swansea? How do these children perform in comparison children in school, do we know? Do they sit exams? Do we record their results?
9. Are there any associations / advice available to parents who home educate their children? Do we provide any?
10. What happens if it comes to light that a child is not being home schooled effectively i.e.: meeting the requirement of Section 7 of the Act?
11. Is there anything that can be done to ensure that these children are educated effectively? Do you consider it any issue that needs addressing? If so what would you like to see happen nationally/locally?

**See attached a briefing note from the Head of Education Inclusion addressing some of these issues.**



**TIMETABLE/PLAN OF WORK 2014/2015**  
**Schools Performance Scrutiny Panel**

<b>Meeting date and venue</b>	<b>Item to be discussed</b>
<b>Meeting 1</b> 29 April 14 – 3.30pm	Discuss and agree Panel work programme for the coming year
<b>Meeting 2</b> 5 June 14 – 3.30pm	Update on progress with Education Inclusion / EOTAS Review (Arwyn Thomas)
<b>Meeting 3</b> 3 July 14 - 3.30pm Chamber Meeting Room	Advice / assistance given to Schools and School Governing Bodies in relation to ( <i>Arwyn and Human Resources</i> ): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Tackling poor performance of teachers and dealing with competence issues</li> <li>– Recruitment of senior staff within schools</li> </ul>
Education Inclusion Scrutiny Panel will be reconvened to look at this	Meeting to be arranged to look at EOTAS independent review feedback and arising draft action plan <i>Arwyn will inform Members when this is available</i>
<b>Meeting 5</b> 21 Aug 14 – 3.30pm Meeting Room 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Look at schools use of the Pupil Deprivation Grant (data) - <i>***to be moved as up to date data will not be available until Oct***</i>.</li> <li>• Home Schooling (<i>Arwyn Thomas</i>)</li> </ul>
<b>Meeting 6</b> 18 Sep 14 – 3.30pm Meeting Room 3	How are we ensuring consistency in teacher and classroom assessments and in support given by Challenge Leaders? ( <i>Arwyn and Head of School Improvement Service</i> )
<b>Meeting 7</b> 16 Oct 14 – 3.30pm Meeting Room 3	<b>School 1</b> (chosen from support and challenge matrix) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Morriston Secondary School (Headteacher, Chair of Governors and pre meeting with Challenge Leader)</li> </ul>
<b>Meeting 8</b> 13 Nov 14 - 3.30pm Meeting Room 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Look at how we tackle behaviour issues in schools (policies etc)</li> <li>• Restorative Practice and its impact (data, case studies and schools views?)</li> </ul>
<b>Meeting 9</b> 11 Dec 14 – 3.30pm Meeting Room 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Annual Education Performance Data Reporting (Cabinet Member invited)</li> <li>– Update on Regionalisation issues</li> </ul>
<b>Meeting 10</b> 22 Jan 15 - 3.30pm Meeting Room 3	<b>School 2</b> (chosen from support and challenge matrix) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clwyd Primary School (Headteacher, Chair of Governors and pre meeting with Challenge Leader)</li> </ul>
<b>Meeting 11</b> 19 Feb 15 – 3.30pm Meeting Room 3	Look at position and the drive for improvements in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Numeracy and literacy across the curriculum</li> <li>– Drill down into standards at different key stages (<i>Arwyn and Challenge Leaders</i>)</li> </ul>
<b>Meeting 12</b> 19 Mar 15 – 3.30pm Meeting Room 3	<b>School 3</b> (chosen from support and challenge matrix) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• St Josephs Primary School (Headteacher, Chair of Governors and pre meeting with Challenge Leader)</li> </ul>
<b>Meeting 12</b> 16 Apr 15 - 3.30pm Meeting Room 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluate your year</li> <li>• Plan year ahead</li> </ul>

**3.30pm pre-meeting with Panel at 4pm**

**As at: 14/01/2015**

**Items to be added to or moved on the work programme:**

1. How schools deal with drug and alcohol issues?
2. Use of the Pupil Deprivation Grant (data) move from August to Oct/Nov?

**Item 4**

**For Information**

**A. Estyn Inspections Summary**  
*(Published since your update in June 2014)*

**For Information**

School	Date published	Schools Current Performance	Schools Prospects for improvement	Estyn Recommendations
<p><b>St Josephs Catholic Primary School</b> <a href="#">Link</a></p> <p><b>What happens next?</b> The local authority will monitor the school's progress.</p>	June 2014	Good	Good	<p>R1 Improve attendance</p> <p>R2 Provide more challenging learning experiences for more able pupils</p> <p>R3 Ensure consistency in marking in order that pupils have a better understanding of what it is they need to improve</p> <p>R4 Refine the school's self-evaluation process and ensure the targets in the school development plan focus more on raising pupils' standards</p>
<p><b>Christchurch (C.I.W.) Voluntary Aided Primary School</b> <a href="#">Link</a></p> <p><b>What happens next?</b> The school will draw up an action plan that shows how it is going to address the recommendations. Estyn will invite the school to prepare a written case study, describing the excellent practice identified during the inspection.</p>	June 2014	Good	Good	<p>R1 Improve the standards of attainment in mathematics and science of more able pupils at the end of key stage 2</p> <p>R2 Increase the opportunities for pupils to write extensively in different styles in subjects across the curriculum</p> <p>R3 Increase the opportunities for pupils to develop higher order numerical skills in subjects across the curriculum</p>

<p><b>Dunvant Primary School</b> <a href="#">Link</a></p> <p><b>What happens next?</b> The school has been removed from the list of schools requiring Estyn monitoring. There will be no further Estyn monitoring visits in relation to this inspection.</p>	July 2014	-	-	Out of Estyn Monitoring	
<p><b>Penclawdd Primary School</b> <a href="#">Link</a></p> <p>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.</p>	July 2014	Adequate	Adequate	R1 Improve outcomes for pupils at the end of Foundation Phase and key stage 2, particularly for the more able R2 Improve the quality and consistency of pupils' writing R3 Improve standards in Welsh R4 Improve levels of attendance R5 Ensure that pupils have good opportunities to develop scientific skills, knowledge and understanding in key stage 2	R6 Ensure that all teachers use assessment for learning strategies consistently and focus their marking on providing pupils with useful information on how to improve R7 Establish more formal and systematic processes for monitoring, self-evaluation and school improvement planning

## **B. Relevant statistical, research or articles since last update (Published since your last update on 5 June 2014)**

### ***Reports and Articles***

#### **Bullying still a concern in Welsh schools**

27 June 2014

Too many pupils suffer from bullying during their school lives, according to a report published today by Estyn. Education providers have a responsibility to tackle bullying in all forms under the Education Act 2002, and yet the ways in which schools deal with bullying varies widely.

Estyn's report, **'Action on bullying'**, found that even schools with good strategies to address bullying do not have a common understanding of how important it is to focus on groups of pupils with a higher-than-average risk of being bullied, such as gay, lesbian and transgender pupils, those with a disability and pupils from a minority ethnic background. Very few schools consult with groups of pupils to gain a true picture of the extent and nature of bullying at the school. The report examines how effectively schools take action to address all instances of bullying.

Ann Keane, Chief Inspector, says,

*"Too many pupils have their lives spoilt by bullying. Schools should be places where all pupils feel safe and able to learn. Bullying not only affects a child emotionally and psychologically but can result in poor attendance and underachievement.*

*"Our report outlines common weaknesses and provides schools with an anti-bullying checklist to use to see if they are on track.*

*"Schools should provide staff with training on how to identify, prevent and manage bullying so that they can eliminate this behaviour from our classrooms. I encourage all teachers to take note of the recommendations in the report and help to make sure that all schools establish an ethos in which children understand that they have a right to be safe".*

Inspectors found that not enough schools keep a specific record of bullying incidents and fail to identify patterns of behaviour that could inform anti-bullying planning. In most secondary schools, the rise in cyberbullying is a concern and schools find its anonymous nature difficult to manage. Nevertheless, the majority of pupils know how to report bullying. The best schools take a proactive approach to preventing bullying. Crickhowell High School in Powys has created a more tolerant environment by ensuring that issues of diversity and equality are explored in the curriculum. The school also has a student support officer who provides counselling and advises staff on issues like cyberbullying.

Best-practice case studies in the report also explore strategies to address bullying which include making effective support available to pupils at unstructured times of the day. Good schools also provide counselling services and use external agencies to support pupils who experience bullying.

**'Action on bullying'**, contains a series of recommendations for schools and local authorities. Schools should ensure that staff know how to deal with and record incidents of bullying and make sure they can tackle different types of bullying. Local authorities and regional consortia should provide training and support for school staff and governors.

This report is published in response to a request for advice from the Welsh Government in the Minister's annual remit to Estyn for 2013-2014 and is available in full [here](#).

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## **The majority of 7-14 year-olds achieve good standards in English - Estyn**

17 June 2014

Many pupils in primary schools and a majority in secondary schools achieve good standards in English lessons, according to a report published today by Estyn, the education and training inspectorate for Wales. Pupils in English lessons speak clearly during discussions and respond well to a wide variety of texts. However, concerns remain about standards in writing.

*'English in key stages 2 and 3'* finds that although standards are generally good, there are continuing weaknesses in pupils' higher-order reading skills and in their spelling, grammar and punctuation. In addition, pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds do not achieve as well as their peers and this gap widens as pupils progress from primary to secondary school.

Ann Keane, Chief Inspector, says,

"Reading and writing are the key to success in all areas of the curriculum. Despite the improving trend in the standards of English, the rate of progress is still too slow for 7-14 year-olds in Wales to catch-up with other areas of the UK. Inaccuracies in spelling, punctuation and grammar reduce the quality of writing and affect standards.

"However, there are schools that have been successful in raising standards in English and I urge others to download the report and follow the lead outlined in the best practice case studies."

*'English in key stages 2 and 3'* reports how Glan Usk Primary School, Newport, developed excellent teaching and assessment practices to help pupils achieve high standards in English. The school identified assessment as central to effective teaching and learning. Staff used assessment to help pupils understand where they were in their learning and how to progress. The work has resulted in a rising trend in pupils' performance in English with standards exceeding local and national averages.

Overall, the quality of teaching English is good. The best teachers make skilful use of approaches to develop pupils' reading and writing skills. However, the teaching of writing is underdeveloped in a minority of secondary schools. There is still too much poor quality marking of pupils' work.

The report found that teachers identify pupils' weaknesses without explanation and do not provide enough guidance on how to improve. Assessment also continues to be one of the weakest areas in schools, and the progress of pupils is not tracked well enough.

Estyn's report identifies areas of common weakness in standards of English and contains best practice case studies and recommendations to help schools improve and maintain standards. Schools need to continue to focus on raising standards of pupils' independent writing, provide challenging work in English to stretch all pupils and tackle the underperformance of pupils entitled to free school meals.

This report is published in response to a request for advice from the Welsh Government in the Minister's annual remit to Estyn for 2013-2014 and is available in full [here](#).

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## Best Practice elsewhere

### Cylch Meithrin Glan y Môr

During the last few years there has been a considerable increase in the number of children coming into the setting at 2½ - 3 years of age with delayed speech. These have always been supported in partnership with the county's Early Years Referral Scheme and the Speech and Language Therapy service. However, the number of children with this problem coming to the setting has continued to increase significantly during the last two years. The setting therefore felt that they needed to find an additional approach to tackle this problem.

#### **Nature of strategy or activity identified as sector-leading practice:**

Staff discussed the situation with the management committee and decided to contact the Speech and Language Therapy service to see if they would be willing to meet with individual parents during session time. Staff thought that this would be more convenient for parents and that more would be willing to take up the opportunity. There is an office within the setting which is suitable for one to one meetings, thus ensuring confidentiality. The Speech and Language Therapy department were very supportive of the idea and, following an initial meeting with staff at the setting, a 'surgery' was arranged for the parents. All parents were sent letters informing them of the surgery and inviting them to make an appointment. About 30% of parents took up this offer and came in to speak to the Speech Therapist. As a result, all of the children were given a follow up appointment at the local clinic and relevant support programmes discussed with the parents. These surgeries are held on a termly basis and were widely welcomed by parents.

#### **Impact on provision and learners' standards:**

The children involved with these initiatives are receiving professional support earlier than they might otherwise have done. Parents are happier for the setting to raise concerns as they know that they and their child will get the help they need. They can see how closely we are able to work with other professionals for the benefit of the child. The 'surgeries' are a more relaxed way of discussing concerns than a clinic appointment and parents are happy to come to a setting they are already so familiar with.

Parents are beginning to understand the important role they have to play in developing their child's language. As a result, children are supported better in developing their communication skills and are able to access the full curriculum more effectively as they move on to school at 4 years old.

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