



. CITY AND COUNTY OF SWANSEA
DINAS A SIR ABERTAWE

To:
Councillor Jennifer Raynor
Cabinet member for education

Please ask for: Michelle Roberts
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Date 11 November 2014
Dyddiad:

Dear Cllr Raynor

Schools Performance Scrutiny Panel - 10 November 2014

At our panel meetings on the 16 October and 10 November we looked at the performance and outcomes from Morryston Comprehensive School. We spoke to the Hub Head of Education Improvement about performance at the school and then we met with the school's Headteacher and Chair of Governors. This letter details our thoughts.

The Panel found there to be a discrepancy between the information provided to us by the Challenge Advisor (which was only verbal, as it emanated from a very recent meeting, the findings of which were confidential) and what they actually heard from the School. The Headteacher and Chair of Governors did recognise that they had things to work on but did not reflect the urgency or the scale of the issues highlighted by the Education Improvement Service. The Panel were concerned that they did not seem to be 'on the same page'. We felt that it will be difficult to make improvements if there is not a consensus on the way forward.

The Panel recognised the importance of robust senior and middle management to making improvements and sustaining them in a school. The Panel felt that there has been some improvement in the school and that the school does have areas of good practice, but they did agree that there was an issue around the consistency of leadership and management at the school and felt that there was little sense of a strong, cohesive, effective management team.

The panel discussed the rising expectation and workload of Headteachers, understanding that they have to spend a lot of time away from actual educational matters dealing with, for example, management of the site and budget matters. Although this was recognised the Panel did agree with the Headteacher when he said that Heads must be less operational and use delegation more, therefore enabling them to be able to plan and be more strategic.

The Panel were pleased to hear that Governors for the school have started to become far more involved and engaged, though there is quite a variation in degrees of involvement between governors. The Panel were encouraged and hoped this

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would lead to further improvement in the School. The Panel welcomed the news that the Governing Body will be working towards a Bronze Award.

We welcome the improvement made in attendance and exclusion numbers and the use of the Pupil Deprivation Grant imaginatively to champion Free School Meals pupils at the school. The Panel also recognised the value of the newly established inclusion unit at the school.

We look forward to seeing further improvement now that the building works are complete, the performance management framework is in place and key senior staff are in situ.

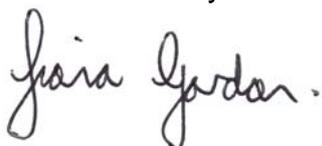
We would also like to pass on the views given by the school on the wider support received from Local Authority including:

- The data analysis information they receive is excellent.
- Literacy and numeracy support are excellent.
- Would like to see broader expert curriculum support i.e. science and geography advisors.
- Human Resources support is good but they can struggle with the volume of requests from schools.
- Have concerns around how the SEN budget is distributed, ensuring the level of funding can meet the needs of our children. This needs to be communicated in a transparent way.
- New challenge advisor Paul Cokely has been good, enabling us to see things from a number of dimensions.
- Leadership Support Network is very good.
- ICT support is an issue for Morriston and for all schools, creating a significant barrier to progress
- Schools could benefit from more support from Challenge Advisors and from Human Resources.

The issue of children being put on a school roll but never actually attending that school because they are on an EOTAS pathway or at a PRU was once again highlighted. The school has to record these children's attendance and attainment details as part of their statistical reporting even though they will have no control of these children's outcomes. This can skew the school's performance figures substantially; Morriston state that this could potentially move the school in some aspects from quartile 4 to 1.

This letter is for your information and does not require a formal response.

Yours sincerely



Fiona Gordon

Convener of Schools Performance Scrutiny Panel

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