

# Public Document Pack

Learning, Skills and Economy Scrutiny Committee Monday, 1 October 2018

## MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE LEARNING, SKILLS AND ECONOMY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD AT COUNCIL CHAMBER - COUNTY HALL, LLANDRINDOD WELLS, POWYS ON MONDAY, 1 OCTOBER 2018

PRESENT

County Councillor

County Councillors M Barnes, G Breeze, K W Curry, S C Davies, D O Evans, D R Jones, E M Jones, G Jones, K Laurie-Parry, S McNicholas, J Pugh, L Roberts, P Roberts, D Selby, R G Thomas, Mrs A Davies and MC Alexander

Parent Governor A Davies.

County Councillor M Alexander (Portoflio Holder for Education and Welsh Language)

Officers: I Budd (Director for Education), A Clark (Head of Learning), E Towns (Senior Challenge Advisor), L Lovell (Senior Challenge Advisor), E Palmer (Head of Strategic Policy and Performance) and E Patterson (Scrutiny Officer)

### 1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from County Councillors Bryn Davies, Les George, Diane Jones-Poston, Iain McIntosh and Edwin Roderick, Parent Governor Representative Sara Davies, and Church Representative Margaret Evitts.

### 2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following declarations of interest were made in respect of Members who are School Governors. Members who are Local Authority appointed School Governors are granted an exemption under the Members' Code of Conduct to take a full part in discussions excluding regulatory type matters. Members who are appointed as School Governors otherwise than through the Council have a similar dispensation to take a full part in discussions excluding regulatory type matters.

Mark Barnes	Penygloddfa Primary School, Newtown High School
Graham Breeze	Welshpool High School
Kelvyn Curry	Rhayader C in W Primary School
E. Michael Jones	Radnor Valley Primary School
Gareth Jones	Llanfair Caereinion Primary School
Karen Laurie-Parry	Archdeacon Griffiths Primary, Gwernyfed High School
Sue McNicholas	Ysgol Bro Tawe, Ysgol Maesydderwen
Jeremy Pugh	Builth Wells High School
Pete Roberts	Cefnlllys Primary School
Lucy Roberts	Bryn Hafren Primary School, Llanfyllin High School
Gwynfor Thomas	Llanfyllin High School
Angela Davies	Rhayader C in W Primary School, Interim Governing Body - Ysgol Calon Cymru

<b>3.</b>	<b>DECLARATIONS OF PARTY WHIPS</b>
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There were no disclosures of prohibited party whips which a Member has been given in relation to the meeting in accordance with Section 78(3) of the Local Government Measure 2011.

<b>4.</b>	<b>MINUTES</b>
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The Chair was authorised to sign the minutes of the meetings held on the 18<sup>th</sup> June 2018, 25<sup>th</sup> June 2018 and 29<sup>th</sup> August 2018 as correct records.

<b>5.</b>	<b>PROVISIONAL LEARNER OUTCOMES, ATTENDANCE AND EXCLUSIONS 2018</b>
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**Documents:**

- Briefing on Provisional Learner Outcomes, Attendance and Exclusions 2018
- Additional information requested and provided on Key Stage 5 results (included in minutes under section on Key Stage 5)

Introduction

The Director introduced the paper explaining that the Learner Outcomes report is part of the performance management cycle within the Schools Service. This data (provisional and then final) will feed into the self-evaluation report and inform the school's improvement plan.

The information was sourced from teacher assessments at Foundation Phase (FP), Key Stage 2 (KS2) and Key Stage 3 (KS3) and from public examinations for Key Stage 4 (KS4) (GCSEs) and Key Stage 5 (KS5) (A Levels).

On the main GCSE indicator (L2+ - 5 GCSEs at grades A\*-C including English/Welsh and Maths), on provisional results Powys has come top amongst the ERW authorities and second in Wales. Whilst this is encouraging the service are not complacent and there is more to be done particularly in regard to Key Stage 5 outcomes. Student numbers have fallen to the point where only 3-4 A level centres are viable and there will be a challenge of working with communities to ensure that an appropriate level of subjects are available for study at Key Stage 5 and students gain good outcomes.

During the last year 8 schools have been removed from and Estyn Category including 5 in Special Measures and 2 schools which were causing concern have been placed in an Estyn Category. The next challenge, which will be included in the self-evaluation and school improvement plan) will be to know Powys schools so well that they get the support and challenge they need and are not in a position where they are place in a category.

The Portfolio Holder observed that the positive changes would have been achieved with the schools working closely with school improvement teams and implementing agreed interventions. It is now necessary to focus on those schools still in an Estyn category and those schools that have headroom to improve.

## **Discussion:**

### Summary

*It is noted that teacher assessment data will no longer be published. How will the service fill this gap?*

At a recent meeting between Welsh Government and Elected Members this change was raised as a concern as this is key evidence for scrutiny. The change has been brought about to overcome the unintended consequence of schools focussing on borderline pupils at the expense of other pupils. There will no longer be comparisons with families of schools which used proxy indicators such as Free School Meals (FSM) to determine similar schools. These proxy indicators had their own problems for example a low income area could have a similar low level of FSM as a high income area but the schools would face very different challenges. The teacher assessment data will no longer be used and at the autumn core visits attention will be paid to pupil progress and value added. There has been a national move from macro to micro data throughout Wales and Estyn are looking at the impact of this change. It will be necessary to have better self-evaluation at school level.

### Standards

At Foundation Phase the 2018 cohort is the first that has gone through since changes in 2015 and therefore comparisons cannot be undertaken with previous years. Powys has the highest results in the ERW region and whilst there are some gender disparities these are similar to levels across Wales.

*There have been criticisms of the performance of ERW with other regions improving at a faster rate. Would Powys be better joining GwE?*

ERW should be performing better and information available later in the cycle will be more detailed and this will be brought back to scrutiny.

*The gender gap is of concern. It needs to be tackled at this stage to ensure boys do not fall behind and stay behind throughout their education.*

This is an issue and the authority need to constantly challenge schools to be addressing this. Good practice is identified and shared but there is also a lack of male role models amongst primary school staff. Whilst the attainment of boys has improved in recent years the attainment of girls has also improved and thus the gap remains.

*How is the service engaging with parents to ensure they undertake their responsibilities appropriately?*

The authority does work to provide support to pre-school children through the Early Years programme where required. It is important that all children start school ready to learn and this needs to be undertaken in partnership with parents. A lack of school readiness can quickly lead to underachievement.

## Key Stage 2

There were 1290 pupils at the end of KS2. The results at this stage put Powys first amongst the ERW authorities. The improvement at higher level outcomes is encouraging demonstrating that schools are no longer only concentrating on pupils at the level 3 – 4 border. Girls continue to outperform boys but this is mostly below all Wales figures. Gender gaps are a national and international issue. Performance of eFSM pupils has improved considerably at this stage. The service will continue to examine the data at school level to ascertain where particular problems are occurring.

*Whilst good performance is reported and this should be acknowledged what is happening to the remaining pupils and in particular those eFSM pupils, which aren't achieving the appropriate levels?*

At Core Visits progress of eFSM pupils is tracked and the use schools are making of the Pupil Development Grant is assessed. Further work is needed to target performance of eFSM pupils.

*The FSM indicator does not identify families on low income. What can the authority do to ensure pupils from low income families receive appropriate support?*

There is an issue regarding support of pupils on low income. It has been found in a school with a FSM level of 10% that 80% of Sixth Form pupils receive the means tested benefit EMA (Education Maintenance Allowance). There has been an update in FSM in Powys since the introduction of the Cashless System.

## Key Stage 3

Attainment at KS3 has improved significantly and Powys is now has the highest attainment in the ERW region. Attainment at the highest levels has improved. There is still a gender gap and whilst eFSM pupils have benefitted from the schemes developed with Pupil Deprivation Grant money these schemes can be offered more widely with more pupils benefitting.

*Is transition between Primary and Secondary schools improving?*

Some High Schools have a very successful transition programme whilst in other High Schools more work still need to be done.

*Is the improvement in Primary School standards feeding through to improvement in Secondary Schools?*

This will have helped the improvement of standards in High Schools but it also the case that the drop in standards at Year 7 is less now with pupils entering High School at Level 5 continuing to be stretched throughout their High School career. Robust moderation in clusters across Powys has also helped this improvement.

*Whilst school standards are good and are in many cases where they should be ERW are now expecting school self-evaluation to be more rigorous. How can lay governors confidently undertake this extended role?*

The service are looking to reconfigure Governor Support and this is an area which could be appropriate for consideration at scrutiny.

## Key Stage 4

There have been considerable changes at KS4 this year which the English exam requiring candidates to get an extra 20 marks for a grade C and the Maths exam an extra 10 marks for a grade C. There have been a number of changes to specification but despite these changes there had been an increase in provisional L2+ results to 62.8% which is highest in ERW. Schools were previously very focussed on pupils achieving around the C/D border which was driven by the use of L2+ as an indicator. A move to using Capped 9 scores (the top 9 scores for all candidates) will mean that schools will focus on the attainment of all pupils.

*Where outcomes are recorded on split site schools is it possible to differentiate between both sites?*

Data is available on both sites and this has been discussed with the Headteacher.

*Can consistent time-series data be provided to demonstrate trends and allow independent conclusions to be drawn thus avoiding any challenge of cherry picking?*

GCSEs changed in 2017 and so it is not always possible to provide data for like for like comparisons.

#### Key Stage 5

There has been a decrease in the number of A levels taken and the number of candidates over the last 5 years which leads to issues over the breadth of the curriculum and sustainability of campus'.

<b>Powys A-levels</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>
Candidates	624	593	583	510	532	444
Entries	1,551	1,470	1,431	1,266	1,265	1,086
A*-A	22.6%	21.5%	21.7%	19.0%	18.3%	21.7%
A*-B	50.5%	52.4%	49.5%	47.2%	43.4%	49.2%
A*-C	76.5%	77.8%	76.9%	74.6%	72.7%	76.2%
A*-E	98.5%	98.1%	98.0%	97.1%	98.5%	97.5%

(NB This data is provided by schools and is provisional for 2018)

*How are school to school results compared at this stage when schools can decide admissions criteria and there may be a tension between offering places for able students in subjects they will succeed in against offering places for all students in subjects they would like to study?*

This difficulty is acknowledged.

*It is a concern that Powys have lost one third of A level students in 5 years. Whilst pupil numbers have declined over this period there has been a drift to the east with students following courses in Shrewsbury and Hereford. Is the authority talking to school leaders about sustainable post 16 provision?*

This analysis is correct. The number of candidates is shrinking as is the offer. It will not be possible to maintain the status quo moving forward and a working group is looking at this issue.

*Are the outcomes for College students available?*

There is no disaggregated information for Powys students studying at college or in England. The authority only have data for the students studying in Powys schools.

*There are pupils accessing schools in England who are under 16 therefore it is not the breadth of offer, or standards that are at issue when parents are choosing a school. Why are children accessing schools in England?*

In some cases this will be the closest school, in others it will be due to parental choice. There are push and pull factors and overall there may be a equal gain and loss but it is likely that this will be different in different areas.

It is disappointing that 15-20 pupils are travelling from Newtown to Bishops Castle but there have been recent changes in Newtown which can lead to uncertainty. Overall projected numbers in Newtown are holding up.

Overall the Portfolio Holder noted Powys was a net importer of pupils with students travelling past schools in Gwynedd to access education at Ysgol Bro Hyddgen in Machynlleth. Additionally, raising standards at the John Beddoes campus of Newtown High School has stemmed the flow out of county to Lady Hawkins in Kington. There is a financial impact on these flows with in some cases A level courses being run with nearly half of students coming from out of county.

*It is of concern that Powys are below the Welsh average for all indicators at Key Stage 5 and further detail is requested on outcomes at this key stage when the verified results are considered in the New Year.*

### Exclusions

In 2017/18 ten pupils were permanently excluded (12 pupils in 2016/17) and 29 pupils had a fixed term exclusion of 5 days or more (23 pupils in 2016/17).

Under the ALN Transformation Review programme is a workstream on Behaviour Support which will be programmed for scrutiny ahead of Cabinet in January 2019.

*In appendix 7 the reasons given for permanent exclusions suggest there are more exclusions than recorded.*

In some cases more than one reason for exclusion is cited.

*What happens with excluded pupils? Is their progress tracked and, given the previous position with the PRU being in Special Measure is this an appropriate place for these pupils?*

The PRU has been removed from Estyn category and new Head Teachers have been appointed for the North and South. Additional staff have also been appointed. The PRU needs to improve links with the High Schools and use their expertise in behaviour matters to support High Schools. It would also be appropriate for the Special Schools to support schools in this way (although at present Brynlywarch Hall Special School is in Special Measures).

It is intended to support schools to provide a learning environment which develops behaviour for learning and is not punitive. This will be a challenge given the large number of small schools in Powys. Cluster working will be essential for this to work.

It should be noted that the number of permanent exclusions is low and there will be different reasons for each pupil which will require a highly individualised approach. These issues will be explored in more detail when the Behaviour Support strategy will be scrutinised.

*How can small schools with young teachers know the strategies required to deal with very challenging behaviour?*

In these cases support from central services would be appropriate to help teachers manage the challenging behaviour. The Behaviour Support Strategy aims to equip teachers with the skills needed to be inclusive but it would be expected that this would take 3-5 years to be fully embedded in all schools. If challenging behaviour is being experienced in schools then help can be sought from the ALN team or Powys People Direct for family support depending on the individual circumstance.

*The report describes support for children and young people who are vulnerable. It is not the aggressor who is vulnerable but the victim.*

It is not as straightforward as victim and perpetrator as both pupils have human rights. It may be that the family needs support which can be provided either through Children's Services or through the ALN programme. It is important that all schools have a nurturing ethos and sufficient practitioners for this to succeed. At present not all schools are committed to this and an extensive training programme will be necessary.

The Portfolio Holder noted that approximately 40% of pupils who present with disruptive behaviour have suffered a bereavement within the last 12 months.

*In respect of exclusions are pupils behaviours changing or are schools getting better at dealing with challenging behaviour?*

Both instances are happening but there has been a lack of development at consortia level with ERW being behind other consortia in sharing peer to peer improvement.

*How is the schools service using the youth service to help in these cases?*

The Youth Service does work within schools and the Youth Justice Team is involved with restorative justice programmes. This work is having a proven impact in some schools.

*The figures for exclusions appear to be low but how can Members be assured that they are good?*

Detailed work in the ALN strategy will benchmark these figures which will feed into the self-evaluation document which scrutiny will have sight of.

*Are there other factors which may influence challenging behaviour for example pupils with ALN or who are children looked after?*

The Schools Service is discussing at Corporate Parenting the way a Virtual School could be used to compare children looked after with their peers. This may take some time to develop as Welsh Government is moving away from publishing the micro data needed for this type of analysis.

Cllr D Evans left 12.30pm

Attendance

Attendance data will be verified later in October 2018. Most schools are now targeting pupils and the Education Welfare Service have introduced a new system for supporting schools according to need.

*What is the current situation regarding term time holidays?*

The Portfolio advised that the authority did not sanction or approve term time holidays but that a recent Supreme Court case had found in favour of the parents. Advice to schools is to explain to parents the impact on the pupils' education and on classroom teaching.

*In connection with attendance another issue is lateness. What are the rules regarding lateness? This should be communicated by way of a press release.*

A press release will be prepared.

*Could the dates of school holidays be changed so that peak time could be avoided in part? These changes could also be appropriate for schools with a large group of pupils for example eastern Europeans who may wish to travel abroad to celebrate Easter?*

It is the intention of Welsh Government to align holiday dates across Wales and this will take into account the Royal Welsh Agricultural Show.

*If term times are set would it be possible to alter half term dates?*

### Schools Causing Concern

Schools causing concern are called into School Improvement Boards which are more challenging than the Head of Schools had observed elsewhere. The Secondary Challenge Advisor capacity has been strengthened with 2 experienced Challenge Advisors now willing to challenge cultural and social norms. The Team around the School is working with HR, finance and the Challenge Advisors working together on a school by school basis.

The individual schools causing concern will be examined in more detail later in the annual cycle but the overall position is summarised as:

Newtown High School – remains in Special Measures

Builth Wells High School – has come out of Special Measures

Llandrindod High School – Came out of Special Measures Summer 2018

Caereinion High School – Came out of Special Measures Spring 2018

Llanfyllin High School – remains in need of Significant Improvement. Has a new Senior Leadership Teams and will be re-inspected this academic year

Bro Hyddgen all through school – remains in Estyn Review – expect a re-inspection this term

Brecon High School – has recently been in Special Measures and has had excellent results this year. Budget remains a serious issue

Maesydderwen High School – remains in Estyn Review – expect a re-inspection this term. A new Head Teacher has been appointed who will be mentored by an experienced Head Teacher. A new Deputy Head is to be appointed.

Overall this is an improving picture but more work is required.

*When a school is in an Estyn category it receives a package of support. When it comes out of category what support does it receive?*

At present schools are categorised in the autumn term and this highlights the support that they need for the forthcoming year. Schools who have just come out of Estyn category are vulnerable until it can be confirmed that the improvement has been embedded.

*Is the new joint school which is a combination of two schools which have recently been in Special Measures receiving appropriate support?*

Yes.

**Outcomes:**

- **That the Portfolio Holder and Head of Service submit a request to Joint Chairs for scrutiny of the proposed changes to Governor Support**
- **That when standards are reconsidered in the New Year with the verified data the following information is included:**
  - **a breakdown to individual site level for split site schools**
  - **a glossary**
  - **time-series analysis with data points for the last five years to demonstrate trends**
  - **additional information regarding Key Stage 5 results to identify why performance at this stage is below the Welsh average**
- **That in the first instance the issues around cross border movements be considered as part of the work on School organisation/Post 16 review.**
- **That a communication is sent to all schools confirming how to seek support this is required for cases with challenging behaviour**
- **That a press release regarding the importance of attending school on time be prepared jointly between the Scrutiny Chair and Portfolio Holder**

Cllr J Pugh left 12.15pm

<b>6. ESTYN INSPECTION OUTCOMES 2017-18</b>
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**Documents;**

- **Summary of Estyn outcomes and recommendations from schools inspected between September 2017 and August 2018 prepared by the Scrutiny Officer**

**Recurring themes:**

**Welsh oracy:**

The authority has introduced Siarter Iaith a Welsh Language Charter to improve Welsh language skills in all schools. All schools who are due an Estyn Inspection have at least the Bronze award of Siarter Iaith. The schools who have more links with voluntary groups such as the Urdd are less likely to receive this recommendation from Estyn.

**Teacher assessments:**

The authority have a series of moderation meetings in place but this is one area which will need to be revisited.

Independent learning:

The rollout of the new curriculum has identified some schools that spoon feed pupils more than others. This issue is covered during Core Visits.

Finance:

This is an ongoing discussion.

Standards of Teaching:

Certain methods can be put in place to improve standards of teaching for example teacher triads and lead support schools.

The Portfolio Holder noted that the issue of independent learning can be challenging as this is how teachers were taught to teach and is more of a challenge in traditional schools.

## **Discussion**

*It is noted that Crickhowell are preparing a Case Study. Is this good or bad?*

A case study is always positive and occurs when Estyn observe best practice in an area that is excellent and sustained.

*This summary notes pleasing progress and it is positive that the recommendations highlighted can be answered but it is really disappointing that Brynlywarch Hall Special School has received an inspection which finds Well-being as adequate, needs improvement and Care, support and guidance as unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement.*

The Director confirmed he had been shocked when he first visited Brynlywarch Hall Special School. He had taken Cabinet Members to visit and had arranged immediate interim improvements to health and safety issues which were put in place last autumn. There had also been a mismatch in the expectations of learners and provision both from the school and local authority. A specialist advisor has been brought in.

The Inspection report had been published in March 2018 and whilst much work has been done there is still a long way to go. Authority has been given for a new school to be built but further work is needed on the curriculum offer and behaviour strategies.

Governors had not picked up on some of the educational shortcomings as they had been deeply focussed on managing the poor physical state of the building.

The Portfolio Holder noted that whilst it was not an excuse there had been an increase in poor behaviour. The school did have residential provision which was closed due to health and safety concerns. The current Head Teacher would like to be in a position to offer emergency residential care in the future.

It was confirmed that parents were receiving communication regarding the post inspection process.

Cllr E M Jones left 1.30pm

*Are the schools service satisfied with progress in addressing Estyn recommendations?*

There has been a turnover in staffing, additional capacity provided an a refocus on educational outcomes alongside safeguarding. The Governors have been able to move their focus away from the fabric of the building and health and safety concerns back onto the curriculum and expected outcomes for the pupils and students.

*Is this the right location for the school?*

Welsh Government has allowed this project to proceed outside the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools Programme. The appropriate location will be closely examined. There would have been inadequacies in the Schools Asset Management Plan to allow the school to deteriorate to the extent it had.

#### **Outcomes**

- **That a summary assurance note be produced outlining what happened in the case of Brynllwarch Hall Special School and what can be learnt from this for the future**
- **That further updates be provided after Christmas and Easter when the Chair will consider if normal monitoring should resume**

<b>7.</b>	<b>CHAIR'S BRIEFING</b>
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The Chair advised that he was in discussion with the Monitoring Officer and Section 151 Officer regarding a recent Portfolio Holder decision over which he had some concerns. If he considered a call-in was appropriate it would be necessary to call a meeting of Learning, Skills and Economy Scrutiny Committee within 10 days of the date of call-in.

<b>8.</b>	<b>WORK PROGRAMME</b>
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Forthcoming date for this Committee are:

- 17/10/2018 Review of Pre-School Provision and HOWPS Annual Report
- 02/11/2018 Highways Asset Management Plan
- 21/11/2018 Funding Formula Review – Post Consultation
- 13/12/2018 ALN Review

Education Briefings:

- 09/11/2018 School Organisation and Post 16
- TBC School Improvement

**County Councillor P Roberts**

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