

**Response to Education Scrutiny Group report
presented to Cabinet on 24th May 2016.**

Cllr Arwel Jones

Portfolio holder for Education

In response to the issues raised in the conclusions of the Education Scrutiny Group report presented to Cabinet on 23rd May 2016 , the Portfolio Holder for Education and the Cabinet provides the following response :

- a) It is recommended that the Portfolio Holder for Education and the Cabinet take the necessary steps to ensure that rapid and sustained performance is evidenced in those schools which are underperforming.**

Response:

The educational performance in respect of achievement and attainment is a priority for the Council and Cabinet as evidenced in the One Powys Plan.

The Schools Service through the ERW alliance of six local authorities team of challenge advisors consistently implements the regional strategy for School Improvement through the regional team of Challenge Advisors to achieve the ERW vision of ;

“a consistently high performing school network across the region with every school a good school offering high standards of teaching under good leadership resulting in all learners achieving their maximum potential”.

This vision is aligned in Powys through the School Service Business Plan which in 2016-2017 identifies the following main objectives for school improvement:

- To improve standards in all phases and key stages with a particular focus on improving the performance of eFSM learners and performance at higher levels.
- To improve outcomes at key stage 4
- To improve the quality of leadership, including governors, across our schools with a specific focus on secondary schools.

The Portfolio holder for Education takes the following actions to challenge school performance and the support, monitoring and intervention of the School Improvement Service

- Regular challenge at School Service quarterly performance review meetings to ensure all intended actions are being implemented with an end of year evaluation of impact through analysis of key performance data.

It is acknowledged that significant issues exist in respect of inspection outcomes in secondary schools. The predominant concerns are the schools in special measures or significant improvement. In order to ensure greater challenge to the rate of improvement further action to be taken is as follows:

28-6-16

ACTION	IMPLEMENTATION DATE	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER/MEMBER
Portfolio Holder to attend Secondary School "Improvement Board" meetings	As from September, 2016	Portfolio Holder Head of Schools Service Senior Challenge Advisor

- b) It is recommended that the Portfolio Holder assures Cabinet that the ERW Challenge Advisor Service is providing the appropriate level of support and challenge in Powys schools and he is continually advised of schools causing concern.**

Response:

The Portfolio Holder through his weekly meetings with the Head of Schools Service is continually advised of school performance. This includes schools causing concern and also schools which are performing well. Inspection outcomes are shared with the Portfolio Holder with support to be provided discussed.

The Head of Schools Services writes to all schools following the publication of inspection reports. The Portfolio Holder receives a copy of all letters.

It is acknowledged that capacity to supporting secondary schools has been an issue. Recruitment to Challenge Advisor posts of suitably qualified and experienced leaders from secondary schools is a challenge for all regions due to the salary scales involved. Powys, however has been successful in appointing an additional challenge advisor with proven experience, for secondary schools who will commence in post at the beginning of the new academic year in September 2016.

Further action to be taken:

ACTION	IMPLEMENTATION DATE	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER/MEMBER
Post inspection outcome letters to be copied to the Leader of the cabinet	From September 2016	Head of Schools
Portfolio Holder to attend Schools Service Management Team	From September, 2016	Portfolio Holder Head of Schools Senior Challenge Advisor

meetings once per term to receive monitoring reports relating to Schools Causing Concern		
Cabinet to receive annual performance reports based on previous years school performance outcomes to include end of year outcomes/ National Model categorisation and Estyn outcomes	Annually in late Autumn Term	Portfolio Holder Head of Schools

c)It is recommended that the Portfolio Holder provides assurance that School Governing Bodies provide the appropriate level of support and challenge to their individual school.

Response:

Challenge Advisors are responsible for supporting and monitoring governor effectiveness.

Through the ERW ladder of support and intervention framework schools are categorised for capacity to improve.

The Governor's role in challenging their school is part of this categorisation with judgements made against a range of criteria which includes:

- a) School leaders and governors challenge underperformance effectively and are largely successful in securing the required improvement
- b) The school's leaders and governors do not always challenge underperformance effectively
- c) The school's leaders and governors do not challenge underperformance effectively

The judgement on the above is then a contributory factor to the bespoke menu of support provided to a school which may include bespoke governor training.

To improve the quality of school governance the Schools Service has a comprehensive training programme in place which for 2016-2017 includes:

- Inclusive School (ALN/Inclusion)
- Budget
- LAC
- Difficult conversations (HR)
- Managing change (HR)
- Performance Management linked to professional standards
- Child Protection
- Safeguarding
- Asking the right questions
- Info sessions on Hwb
- Preparing for curriculum change, successful futures including digital competency framework
- Mandatory training for clerks

- Mandatory training for Chairs
- Mandatory training for understanding and analysing data

In addition during 2016-17 it is intended to;

- Provide bespoke workshop sessions for all governors who have responsibility for the performance management of headteachers, together with the production of revised guidance documentation
- Provide a bespoke workshop for elected members who are school governors on their roles and responsibilities in challenging school performance including the setting of performance management objectives

d) It is apparent that there is far from equal access to the One Powys Plan priority for many pupils. Cabinet are urged to take the appropriate action to ensure that the education provided to all pupils of Powys is of the highest standard and that where it is apparent that these standards are falling short then appropriate action is taken within the powers available to the local authority be taken to address this.

Response;

The Local Authority has a range of strategies to improve the performance of schools. This includes:

- a) Providing a bespoke menu of support following classification during the Autumn Term.
- b) Half termly monitoring of schools classified as in the red support category, or following an Estyn inspection a school is judged to require Estyn monitoring, is in need of "significant improvement (SI) or special measures(SM)"
- c) Establishing Improvement Boards for schools requiring Estyn monitoring, who are in "need of significant improvement" or special measures or in the red support category who are not making sufficient progress
- d) Consideration and issuing of a formal warning notice under section 3 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 where matters are not resolved within a measurable period
- e) Implementing a school re-organisation programme which includes a focus on standards.