

SUBJECT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 1 - WEDNESDAY, 9 OCTOBER 2019

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE SUBJECT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 1
HELD IN COUNCIL CHAMBER, CIVIC OFFICES ANGEL STREET BRIDGEND CF31 4WB ON
WEDNESDAY, 9 OCTOBER 2019 AT 14:30**

Present

Councillor CA Webster – Chairperson

TH Beedle	JPD Blundell	NA Burnett	RJ Collins
PA Davies	J Gebbie	B Sedgebeer	RME Stirman
LM Walters	KJ Watts	A Williams	AJ Williams

Apologies for Absence

M Jones
C Jackson
Rev. Canon Edward Evans

Registered Representatives

L Morris

Officers:

Julie Ellams	Democratic Services Officer - Committees
Andrew Rees	Democratic Services Manager

Invitees:

Andy Harding	Chair of Governors, Plasnewydd Primary School
Lindsay Harvey	Corporate Director Education and Family Support
Michelle Hatcher	Group Manager - Inclusion
Simon Phillips	CSC Challenge Advisor
Andy Rothwell	Senior Challenge Advisor Central South Consortium
Councillor Charles Smith	Cabinet Member for Education and Regeneration
Andrew Williams	Assistant Managing Director Central South Consortium
Eleanor Williams	Headteacher, Plasnewydd Primary School

79. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr T Beedle declared a personal interest in item 4, Plasnewydd Primary School Post-Inspection Action Plan, because he was the Chair of Bridgend Governors Association and his wife was a Governor at Plasnewydd Primary School.

80. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Members considered the minutes of the meetings of 4th June 2019, 8th July 2019 and 23rd August 2019.

4th June 2019 – Minute 66, paragraph 4, Mr Graham Adamson (not Gordon Adamson) addressed the Committee.

8th July 2019 – Councillors PA Davies and JPD Blundell were present at the meeting and did not send apologies as recorded. Both Councillors declared an interest in agenda

SUBJECT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 1 - WEDNESDAY, 9 OCTOBER 2019

item 4. Rev Canon Edward Evans and William Bond were incorrectly recorded as invitees and not members of the committee.

23rd August 2019 – Rev Canon Edward Evans sent his apologies for the meeting but this was not recorded.

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committees dated 4th June 2019, 8th July 2019 and 23rd August 2019 be approved as a true and accurate record subject to the corrections detailed above.

81. PLASNEWYDD PRIMARY SCHOOL POST-INSPECTION ACTION PLAN

The Corporate Director – Education and Family Support presented a report informing Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 1 of the progress made by Plasnewydd Primary School in respect of the objectives in the school's post-inspection action plan (PIAP). He welcomed Eleanor Williams (Headteacher), Andy Harding (Chair of Governors) and from Central South Consortium (CSC) Andrew Williams (Acting Managing Director), Andy Rothwell (Senior Challenge Advisor) and Simon Phillips (Challenge Advisor).

The Corporate Director – Education and Family Support explained that Plasnewydd Primary School was inspected by Estyn in January 2018. As a result of the inspection, Estyn was of the opinion that the school required special measures. A PIAP was drawn up which illustrated how it would address the six recommendations identified. The local authority supported by CSC, completed a statement of action detailing how it would support the school. Since September 2018, Plasnewydd had received intensive support from the local authority and CSC and other schools had received funding to work with Plasnewydd to support them with their recommendations. The local authority and Central South Consortium would continue to support Plasnewydd Primary School as it had done throughout the post inspection process, until it was deemed that the school no longer required special measures.

The Corporate Director – Education and Family Support explained that Plasnewydd Primary School was recently monitored by Estyn in June 2019. It was Estyn's opinion that overall, the school required special measures although progress in some areas was identified. He explained that it would be rare for a school to come out of special measures after 1 year but every effort would be made to ensure the school was out of special measures as early as possible.

A member asked if they were satisfied with the progress being made to improve the quality of teaching and assessment in key stage 2. The Corporate Director – Education and Family Services replied that they had to increase the speed of the journey. The school had received a lot of support and now they had to embed those actions. The CSC Challenge Advisor concurred that the pace needed to increase and there had to be consistency in approach.

The headteacher explained that in the current cohort there were very low levels in literacy with some pupils barely at bronze and that at least half would need literacy intervention. Good progress had been made from nursery to the end of foundation stage and they needed to continue this across KS2. She explained that as soon as children moved from KS1 to KS2 parents stopped reading with their children because they thought it was no longer necessary. They specifically targeted the year 2 cohort of 35 children and only 7 parents engaged with the school. The Committee noted the comments of the headteacher on the difficulties the school had engaging with families and the barriers for parents coming into the school as the school had an intake of pupils

SUBJECT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 1 - WEDNESDAY, 9 OCTOBER 2019

from a broad area which resulted in a lack of community cohesion within the school. The Corporate Director – Education and Family Support replied that Pencoed Primary School had recently been commended for their community cohesion and that the headteacher would be making a presentation to all the headteachers regarding community engagement. He extended an invitation to all members of the committee to attend an event being held at the Hi-Tide where the Head of Pencoed Primary School would deliver this training.

A Member expressed concerns that following the initial inspection in January 2018, they were not “taking it seriously”. Limited progress had been made on 3 recommendations and there was no sense of urgency. The Corporate Director - Education and Family Support replied that yes, the school, the local authority and CSC were taking it seriously and they shared her concerns regarding the limited progress. With regards to what had been done, they had exercised their statutory powers and issued a formal warning and had approached the minister to exercise this. If they did not see improvements in outcomes, they would be writing to the minister to disband the governors and to set up an interim board. The headteacher added that she had met with HR to discuss the capability process and the teachers that needed help were being supported by other teachers.

A member asked if there were issues with local authority appointed school governors attending meetings but making little or no contribution. She suggested that when they were looking to appoint a governor, they should look at an individual’s training record and not just attendance. The headteacher reported that there had been significant changes to the governing body over the last year and that a new Chair of Governors had been appointed in October 2018. She added that it continued to be difficult to get parents involved and to fill vacancies. The Corporate Director- Education and Family Support explained that they were looking at policies and procedures around governor selection and that in time, a report on the review would be submitted to committee. The Senior Challenge Advisor explained that additional support on top of the mandatory training had been provided and also a consultant had been brought in to work with the governing body. There were also e-learning modules for governors channelled through the schools. The Committee noted that the Corporate Director - Education and Family Support would be providing a workshop to the Bridgend Governors Association on the review he was conducting. Localised training would be available to governors and the Corporate Director - Education and Family Support requested that governors take advantage of this opportunity.

A Member asked if the headteacher saw capability issues within the team which were unsolvable and if support and resources would help them to address these. He was advised that the authority dealt with capability the same way all authorities did and there was a common policy with HR. This gave an individual the opportunity to succeed and they had to demonstrate that enough support had been provided to staff to move forward. They currently had 20% of staff not in school, one had finished and another was being supported back on a phased return. A member asked if the teachers were being protected to the detriment of the children and added that children had a limited time in school and they would not get that time back again. The Corporate Director Education and Family Support replied that they prioritised children and Estyn had recently reported that the authority was doing a good job of placing the child at the centre. Two years ago they had been talking to the trade unions who were very supportive and wanted the same outcome.

A member asked how much support was available to teachers across the board. The CSC Senior Challenge Advisor replied that there was a vast package of support available to schools within budget constraints. There were approximately 300 programmes available delivered by the schools, bespoke support from CSC and funds

SUBJECT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 1 - WEDNESDAY, 9 OCTOBER 2019

available for teachers to visit schools where things were working well. The Acting Managing Director CSC added that the Plasnewydd package was the largest they had put in place to meet the specific needs of the school. Some support or training was being provided at every level.

A member asked what opportunities were there for children to read during the school day. The headteacher replied that there was guided reading and also pupils read with students, governors and teaching assistants. She added that with the exception of year 5, every class had improved, some significantly.

A member asked how despite the measures taken, the evidence in the report indicated that there was limited progress and he asked why recommendations 2 and 4 had not been inspected during the recent visit. The Corporate Director Education and Family Support explained that this was standard for this type of review and they did not know what they would look at until they arrived.

The Chair of Governors outlined some of the barriers to improvement. The school was small and there were lots of new appointments. They had to upskill to provide critical challenge and gain perspective and understanding. They had undertaken a skills audit to establish strengths and weaknesses and had met with Estyn regarding the underperformance of the teachers.

A Member asked if there was a risk that changes to the curriculum and ALN/SEN Reform could slow down progress and direction. The headteacher replied that they tried to meet the needs of the new learners to ensure they used the budget wisely. She had a good understanding of what she had to put in place and was confident there would be no impact on the speed of progress.

The Chairperson asked the headteacher what more could be done to ensure the school made satisfactory or good progress within a reasonable time. The Corporate Director Education and Family Support stated that there was a commitment from the local authority to support the school 100%. Bespoke training was available to meet their needs and support them to address each recommendation. The headteacher explained that they needed a chance to embed the support already given. Staff needed to know when they were being scrutinised and what would be happening. The Senior Challenge Advisor concurred with this and added that scrutiny were playing their part in a robust process.

Members discussed the impact of shrinking budgets on training offered by WJEC. They discussed asking the CM to write to the minister to look at the effects of austerity on a teacher's ability to access training to ensure continuing professional development. The Committee agreed that a request be made to the Cabinet Member for Education and Regeneration to write to the Minister for Education to consider the effects of reducing budgets and the impact it has on the funding and provision of continuing professional development training for teachers which was provided through the WJEC.

The Committees requested that the minutes of this meeting be sent to the School Improvement Group and the Head of Plasnewydd Primary School.

The Committee recorded its thanks to the Head and Chair of Governors for their contribution at the meeting. They also asked for the results of the next Estyn inspection to be reported back to Committee as soon as practicable to do so.

The Committee noted the invitation made by the Head of Plasnewydd Primary School for members of the Committee to make a visit to the school and should Members wish to do so to contact her to make those arrangements.

Conclusions

The minutes of this meeting be sent to the School Improvement Group and the Head of Plasnewydd Primary School.

The Committee noted that the local authority and Central South Consortium continues to support Plasnewydd Primary School as it has done throughout the post inspection process, until it is deemed that the school no longer requires special measures.

The Committee noted the comments of the headteacher on the difficulties the school has in engaging with families and the barriers for parents in coming into the school as the school has an intake of pupils from a broad area which results in a lack of community cohesion within the school. The Committee noted the invitation made by the Corporate Director Education and Family Support that all members of the Committee will be invited to attend an event being held at the Hi-Tide where the Head of Pencoed Primary School will deliver training on community and parental engagement.

The Committee noted the invitation made by the Head of Plasnewydd Primary School for members of the Committee to make a visit to the school and should Members wish to do so to contact the Head to make those arrangements.

The Committee requested that it be advised by the Corporate Director Education and Family Support of the outcome of the next Estyn monitoring visit to take place on 31 October 2019 as soon as it was practicable and legal to do so.

The Committee noted that the Corporate Director Education and Family Support is in the process of revising policies and procedures for the selection of governors and that a report on the review be considered by Scrutiny. In doing so, the Committee considered that the right people be appointed to sit and participate on school governing bodies in order that they provide the school with the appropriate support required as it was noted that a number of governors do not contribute actively to the life of the school and neither do they sit on Sub-Committees. The Committee noted that the Corporate Director Education and Family Support will be providing a workshop to the Bridgend Governors Association on the review he was conducting. The Committee noted that localised training is made available to governors and the Corporate Director Education and Family Support requested that governors avail themselves of training opportunities which are provided. Concern was expressed by the Committee at the criteria applied to the appointment of local authority governors.

A request be made to the Cabinet Education and Regeneration to write to the Minister for Education to consider the effects of reducing budgets and the impact it has on the funding and provision of continuing professional development training for teachers which was provided through the WJEC.

82. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE

The Democratic Services Manager presented the Forward Work Programme and informed the Committee it would receive a report on Post 16 Education – Consultation, at its next meeting on 30 October 2019. The Committee also noted the invitees to attend.

The Committee requested an update on progress as to whether the Wellbeing Survey completed by staff had been sent to school staff for completion.

SUBJECT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 1 - WEDNESDAY, 9 OCTOBER 2019

83. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY - FEEDBACK FROM MEETINGS

The Committee considered the feedback and officer's responses and allocated RAG status to the following:

Post Inspection Action Plan in respect of the four main recommendations and the plans to improve the areas for development – **Green**

Post Inspection Action Plan – Summary report to be provided by the Corporate Director Education and Family Support to Scrutiny at the end of each term showing progress against post inspection plan objectives - **Amber**

84. URGENT ITEMS

None

The meeting closed at 17:30