

LEARNING COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

28 November 2018

SCHOOLS STANDARDS MONITORING SUB COMMITTEE – UPDATE REPORT

Report Submitted by: Cllr Powell, Chair of the Schools Standards Monitoring Sub Committee
Report Written by: Rebecca Fahey-Jones, Corporate Scrutiny Officer

1. Area Affected

1.1 All schools in the County Borough.

2. Purpose of Report

2.1 To request members of the Learning Communities Overview & Scrutiny Committee note the recommendations made by the sub committee following the scrutiny of both the performance of individual schools, and the support they receive from the Education Achievement Service and the Council's Education Service.

3. Recommendation

3.1 The committee is invited to:

- Review the recommendations made by the Schools Monitoring Sub Committee and the responses to those recommendations; and
- Identify any key issues / areas they wish to add to their current work programme to enable more in-depth scrutiny to take place.

4. Background

4.1 Following discussions with the Torfaen Recovery Board, it was suggested a sub committee be established to scrutinise both the performance of individual schools, and the support they receive from the Education Achievement Service and the Council's Education Service.

4.2 This approach was agreed by the Learning Communities Overview & Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 7th October 2014.

5. The Schools Standards Monitoring Sub Committee

5.1 The work programme for the sub committee has been set in consultation with the Lead Director for Children & Young People and focuses primarily on looking at individual schools' performance on a "by exception" basis. The members therefore started their scrutiny activity by looking at all secondary schools initially, taking the schools participating in the Schools Challenge Cymru process first, in alphabetical order.

5.2 Each meeting of the sub committee has considered a report detailing a school's performance and progress against both its own targets and any aspirational targets set by the Council itself. It has also considered the support being provided by both the Education Achievement Service and the Council's Education Service so members can seek assurance that they are working in harmony to support and drive school performance and pupil attainment.

5.3 All information is presented in a set format, agreed by the sub committee, aimed at enhancing consistency and understanding.

The findings and any recommendations made by the sub committee during their meetings have been submitted to the Executive Member for Education and the Head of Education Services for consideration, the EAS, as well as the school's Headteacher and Chair of Governors.

5.4 This report details the recommendations and the responses to those recommendations (at appendix 1, 2) relating to the following schools:

- Croesyceiliog Comprehensive School
- Ponthir Church in Wales Primary School

6. Recommendation

6.1 The committee is invited to:

- Review the recommendations made by the Schools Monitoring Sub Committee and the responses to those recommendations;
- Identify any key issues / areas they wish to add to their current work programme to enable more in-depth scrutiny to take place.

Appendices	Appendix 1 - Recommendations & Responses – Croesyceiliog School Appendix 2 - Recommendations & Responses – Ponthir Church in Wales School
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Background Papers	Note: Members of the public are entitled, under the Local Government Act 1972, to inspect background papers to reports. The following is a list of the background papers used in the production of this report. None
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<p>For a copy of the background papers or for further information about this report, please telephone: Rebecca Fahey-Jones, Corporate Scrutiny Officer Telephone; 01495 766337</p>

Appendix 1 – Croesyceiliog School

To:	Mr David Taylor, Head teacher Croesyceiliog Comprehensive School Mr Phil Davies, Vice Chair of Governors, Croesyceiliog Comprehensive School Sharon Davies, Head of Learning Julian Doroszczuk, Principal Challenge Advisor
From :	School Standards Monitoring Sub Committee (of the Learning Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee)
Date of meeting:	Thursday 3 rd May 2018

Report considered by the Sub Committee:

EFFECTIVENESS OF SCHOOL SUPPORT – CROESYCEILIOG SCHOOL

Scrutiny Activity undertaken by the Sub Committee:

The Overview and Scrutiny Sub Committee reviewed the information presented; considered and investigated a number of key issues for the school; and examined the current level of support being provided to the school by both the Local Authority and the Education Achievement Service.

Views expressed by the Sub Committee for consideration by the Executive Member / Officers / Headteacher / Chair of Governors / and the Education Achievement Service:

The members concluded they would like to offer the following comments and recommendations for consideration.

A response to each of these recommendations is required. Please indicate (✓) whether each recommendation is accepted for implementation, rejected or noted for future consideration. A brief explanatory note should also be provided to support your response.



SCHOOL



LEA



EAS

Recommendation 1:- To the School	Accepted for implementation	Rejected	Noted for future consideration
<p>The SSMSC expressed concerns with regards to the increasing workload on the Head teacher in addressing the recommendations from Estyn, overseeing the building of the new school and the transition arrangements once complete, looking to make appointments to the SLT, making plans for a sixth form provision for a 12month period on the existing school site and having to attend appeals panels for school admissions.</p> <p>It was recommend that similar to how the EIB is supporting the school in making improvements in standards, a transition board be established to support the head teacher in ensuring that the transition to the new school is as smooth as possible and lessens any potential negative impact on pupil attainment.</p>			
<p>Response:-</p> <p>There is a project manager appointed from Education that oversees all activities regarding the build at Croesyceiliog which works very closely with the school.</p> <p>There are regular meetings via the Torfaen Curriculum Panel which all school with post 16 provision, as well as Coleg Gwent participate in. The meetings have been a forum for the Post 16 draft curriculum and once this has been agreed, the meetings will concentrate on transition plans to ensure a smooth transition from all 3 schools (and not just Croesyceiliog) to the new Post 16 centre.</p>			
Recommendation 2:- To the LEA	Accepted for implementation	Rejected	Noted for future consideration
<p>The SSMSC recommend that all 3 secondary schools losing sixth form provision should receive a high level of dedicated support.</p> <p>The SSMSC has particular concerns with regards to Croesyceiliog school due to still needing to house a sixth form provision on the existing site of the school after the rest of the school has transferred to the new building.</p> <p>Concerns were raised relating to aspects such as health and safety matters with students being on the old site as well as potential discipline issues.</p> <p>Financial impact was also a concern with members stressing that Croesyceiliog school should not incur any financial costs by having to retain a sixth form provision on the existing site.</p> <p>The SSMSC request an update on the planned provision for the 6th form students at Croesyceiliog school once it has been finalised.</p>			

Response:-

There is a project manager appointed from Education that oversees all activities regarding the build at Croesyceiliog which works very closely with the school.

The post 16 curriculum for the new Post 16 Centre is in draft form. All 3 secondary schools are heavily involved with the design of the curriculum and regular meeting have and will continue to take place regarding transition arrangements, on agreement of the curriculum.

The financial situation is clearly exceptional and therefore will trigger an additional funding allocation to cover exceptional costs. The headteacher will be informed of the estimated costs, the anticipated associated funding and these will be built in to the school's financial forecasts.

**Recommendation 3:-
To the LEA**

Accepted for
implementation

Rejected

Noted for future
consideration

Whilst the SSMSC were in support of the PIAP, it was recommended that a high priority be placed on supporting staff in particular middle leaders, in delivering the actions detailed.



Response:- accepted for implementation

The SLT at Croesyceiliog has been strengthened with the appointment of 2 permanent Assistant Headteachers – 1 with a pastoral lead and 1 raising standards lead. EAS are supporting the school with the school's improvements towards the recommendations from the Estyn inspection through subject support plans and middle leadership training. The support and improvements are evidenced and monitored as part of the agreed agenda items in the EIB meetings. This is to ensure appropriate challenge is applied (if needed) as well as support.

Overall comments

Overall, members expressed significant concerns with regards to the impact reductions in budgets is having on the school.

In conclusion the sub-committee offered their thanks to Mr Taylor, Head teacher and the Vice-Chair of Governors for attending the meeting and for contributing so openly and honestly.

The sub-committee wished them well throughout the transition period and requested that the school return before the sub-committee in 18months time following Estyn's return and once the transition to the new school has taken place.

Appendix 2 – Ponthir Church in Wales Primary School

To:	Mrs Anna Britten, Headteacher, Ponthir Church in Wales Primary School Mrs Tina Davey, Deputy Headteacher, Ponthir Church in Wales School Mrs Angela O'Brien, Chair of Governors, Ponthir Church in Wales Primary School Sharon Davies, Head of Education Improvement (LEA) Kay Hartveld, Challenge Advisor, Education Achievement Service (CA)
From :	School Standards Monitoring Sub Committee (of the Learning Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee)
Date of meeting:	Thursday 27 th September 2018

Report considered by the Sub Committee:

EFFECTIVENESS OF SCHOOL SUPPORT – PONTHIR CHURCH IN WALES PRIMARY SCHOOL

Scrutiny Activity undertaken by the Sub Committee:

The Overview and Scrutiny Sub Committee reviewed the information presented; considered and investigated a number of key issues for the school; and examined the current level of support being provided to the school by both the Local Authority and the Education Achievement Service.

Views expressed by the Sub Committee for consideration by the Executive Member / Officers / Headteacher / Chair of Governors / and the Education Achievement Service:

The members concluded they would like to offer the following comments and recommendations for consideration.

A response to each of these recommendations is required. Please indicate (✓) whether each recommendation is accepted for implementation, rejected or noted for future consideration. A brief explanatory note should also be provided to support your response.



SCHOOL



LEA



EAS

Recommendation 1:- To the LEA	Accepted for implementation	Rejected	Noted for future consideration
<p>The Schools Monitoring Sub Committee encourages the school to continue raising the profile of the pupil voice initiative as a key focus area</p>			
<p>No comments</p>			
Recommendation 2:- To the LEA	Accepted for implementation	Rejected	Noted for future consideration
<p>The sub-committee recommend that any school running a significant surplus budget be closely scrutinised to ensure that they are not allowing serious underspends on important equipment such as IT facilities</p>			
<p>Response:-</p> <p>Ponthir has additional support from the Schools Business Improvement officer from the Education Services finance team to ensure that the school’s budget is being monitored appropriately.</p>			
Recommendation 3:- To the LEA	Accepted for implementation	Rejected	Noted for future consideration
<p>It was recommended that the Head of Learning report the sub-committee’s concerns to the EIB for Ponthir school, with regards to the pressure and stress on the staff at the school in delivering the work set out within the PIAP and attending training courses on top of carrying out the day job of teaching.</p> <p>The committee stressed the importance of ensuring that the school and staff are well supported in order to manage both elements carefully.</p>			
<p>Response:-</p> <p>The committee’s concerns will be an agenda item at the next Intervention Panel meeting. Each meeting looks closely at the progress the school is making and also ensures that the support given is appropriate to the school, to allow progress to be made. This will include staff well-being.</p>			

Overall comments

The Schools Monitoring Sub-Committee expressed their thanks to the Head, Deputy Head and Chair of Governors for attending and for their comprehensive contributions. The sub-committee wished the school continued progress moving forward.