

EDUCATION & CHILDREN SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 11 March 2020

PRESENT: Councillor D. Price (Chair)

Councillors:

K.V. Broom, I.W. Davies, B.W. Jones, D. Jones, G.R. Jones, M.J.A. Lewis, S. Najmi, E.M.J.G. Schiavone, B. Thomas, D.T. Williams, J. Davies, M. Jones, Rev. D Richards, V. Kenny and G. Davies

Co-opted Members:

J. Davies	-	Parent Governor
M. Jones	-	Parent Governor
V. Kenny	-	Roman Catholic Church Representative
D Richards	-	Church in Wales Representative

Also in attendance:

Councillor G Davies, Executive Board Member for Education and Children
Anna Bolt, Head of Curriculum Reform & Innovation - ERW
Dr Llinos Jones, Headteacher - Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Bro Myrddin
Dr Caryl James, Headteacher - Ysgol Penboyr

The following Officers were in attendance:

G. Morgans, Director of Education & Children's Services
A. Rees, Head of Curriculum and Wellbeing
L. Jenkins, Executive Board Support Officer
A Thomas, Head of Education Services and Inclusion
M. Evans Thomas, Principal Democratic Services Officer
J. Laimann, Assistant Democratic Services Officer

Chamber, County Hall, Carmarthen, SA31 1JP - 10.00 am - 12.40 pm

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors L. Bowen, E. Thomas and J. Jenkins.

The Chair noted that this would be the last meeting for Parent Governor Representatives who had reached the end of their term of appointment. He thanked them for their time and their hard work and commitment and wished them well.

2. DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL INTEREST INCLUDING ANY PARTY WHIPS ISSUED IN RELATION TO ANY AGENDA ITEM.

There were no declarations of personal interest

3. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

None received.

4. NEW CURRICULUM

Members received presentations on the New Curriculum and raised the following matters –

In response to a question on how a class of 30 pupils can be focused on individually for the purposes of a learner/child led curriculum, Members were advised that the main aim of the new curriculum was to provide the best education for all children. The curriculum itself is not an individualised curriculum however the focus will be on the individual and not the end result, with more emphasis on moving the learner forward. Members referenced lower attaining pupils and were advised that the new curriculum offered a learning experience for individuals across a broader range of subjects.

Members were concerned that Religious Education could be lost within humanities in the new curriculum, however the Head of Curriculum and Wellbeing advised that this was not likely. He further advised that it remains a statutory requirement to provide Religious Education and that Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education were involved in the development of the new curriculum. Religious Education would also form part of the curriculum focusing on citizenship and culture.

Members noted that as School Governors data is used to scrutinise and identify issues, with the new curriculum this may not be possible. The Head of Curriculum Reform and Innovation advised that results-based data would not reflect the learning of a pupil, only how hard they worked on a particular exam, however, the new curriculum aimed to create people who can better perform in the workplace not just at a GCSE. In future, scrutiny would need to focus on progress and distance travelled which may require a more practical review process within school governance arrangements. ERW are developing governor training in relation to the new curriculum.

Members raised concerns in relation to the amount of preparation time allotted for schools to prepare for the new curriculum, noting that the time amounted to one week. The Director of Education and Children's Services advised that there was a general consensus that the time allocated was insufficient, however legislation dictates how many days per year a child is required to be in school, and therefore how many days staff can spend planning without being in a classroom. The Director further advised that he would raise the issue with Welsh Government.

In relation to the previous point Members asked whether schools were engaging with preparations for the new curriculum and were advised that approximately 55% of schools had attended recent ERW events and a clear majority of school leaders were glad that a new curriculum was being implemented.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the report be received.

5. ACTIONS AND REFERRALS

Members were advised that the incorrect report had been provided. Updated information noting that all actions and referrals had been completed and was circulated to Members.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the report be received.

6. EXPLANATION FOR NON-SUBMISSION OF SCRUTINY REPORT

Members reviewed a report outlining the reasons for the non-submission of reports as noted in the Forward Work Programme.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the report be received.

7. FORTHCOMING ITEMS AND FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

Members considered the items due at the next meeting of the Committee.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the report be received.

8. TO SIGN AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE HELD ON 23 JANUARY 2020

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on the 23rd January 2020 be signed as a correct record.

CHAIR

DATE