

The Vale of Glamorgan Council

Cabinet Meeting: 25 April, 2016

Report of the Cabinet Member for Children's Services & Schools

Individual School Progress Panels

Purpose of the Report

1. To respond to a Cabinet resolution regarding proposed individual school progress meetings.

Recommendations

1. To request that the Scrutiny Committee (Lifelong Learning) conducts individual school progress panels at High Street and Fairfield Primary schools.
2. To agree the minor amendments to the protocol in relation to School Progress Panel meetings as outlined in [Appendix A](#).

Reasons for the Recommendations

1. In order to establish whether the schools have appropriate plans and monitoring arrangements in place and to establish what progress has been made and what further progress is required.
2. In order that the protocol can be updated as necessary.

Background

2. At their meeting on 7 March, Cabinet considered a referral from the Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Committee of the report 'National Categorisation - outcomes for Vale schools'. The referral included a recommendation 'that progress panel meetings at the identified schools [High Street Primary and Fairfield Primary] be conducted' and 'that a programme of work in respect of this recommendation (and one other) be presented for consideration by the Committee'.
3. In making this recommendation, the Scrutiny Committee had noted that High Street Primary School had remained in the amber support category with the capacity to improve changing from a B to a C and that Fairfield Primary School had been identified by Estyn as a primary school in which the local authority should have taken a more direct approach in challenging performance.

4. On 7 March, Cabinet resolved that a further report be brought back to Cabinet that provides a review of the High Street and Fairfield primary schools, detailing the current issues and the involvement of the Scrutiny Working Panel, and establishes a protocol for future visits to schools, to thereafter be referred to Scrutiny Committee (Lifelong Learning) if necessary.
5. Following a Cabinet decision in January 2013 the Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Committee agreed to establish School Progress Panels to ascertain whether the identified schools had up to date and authoritative improvement plans, that they had arrangements in place to monitor the impact of the plans and to amend them as appropriate and to establish what progress had been made against each action and what further progress was required. This approach sought to improve the accountability of schools for pupil attainment.
6. Reviews of the progress panels were conducted by the Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Committee and reported to Cabinet in June 2014 and September 2015.

Relevant Issues and Options

7. Although many positive aspects have been identified at High Street Primary School the identified developmental need is as follows:
 - Although the school has managed to reverse the downward trend of the last three years, the foundation Phase Indicator (FPOI) is still below that of similar schools.
 - The performance against the core subject indicator CSI shows some improvement however, they remain in the fourth benchmarking quartile for the second year.(71% in 2015 compared to 66% in 2014)
 - The performance of e-FSM pupils does not compare favourably with that of non-e-FSM pupils or with the performance of e-FSM pupils in similar schools.
 - The gap in the outcomes achieved by boys compared with girls is wide especially at outcomes 5 and 6 in the Foundation Phase in LLC and mathematics and is wider than in similar schools.
 - Mathematical development at outcome 5 and 6 in the Foundation Phase has declined over the last three years and is now in the third benchmarking quarter for outcome 5 and the fourth quarter for outcome 6. LLC at the Foundation Phase has also declined at outcome 5 and is now in the third quarter having previously been in the second quarter.
 - English level 4+ is in the fourth benchmarking for the second year. The disaggregated results show that the rate of improvement has not been sufficient over the last three years.
 - Boys are underperforming compared to girls in all areas of literacy and science at level 4+ and the gap has remained significant for the last three years.
 - e-FSM pupils are underperforming and the gap for these pupils in literacy at levels 4 and 5 does not compare favourably with non e-FSM or similar schools. The gap has widened over the last three years.
 - The school's value added data shows that pupils who have been at the school from reception make expected progress, with many achieving two levels of progress in key stage 2. However, the number of pupils exceeding expected progress and reaching the higher levels needs to improve.

- The school needs to review its provision for the pupils attending the LRB to ensure that they are being sufficiently challenged to achieve their potential. Many of these pupils achieved expected or better levels of attainment at the end of the foundation phase but do not make sufficient progress in key stage 2. Targets set are often too low and do not enable the pupils to achieve their value added based on prior attainment.
 - Although the self-evaluation process is now more systematic, senior leaders' judgements about performance are not always realistic and data analysis is not yet used effectively enough to drive improvement. The school's improvement planning does not address some areas of weakness, such as the achievement of vulnerable groups and of boys, with enough precision. As a result, the impact of self-evaluation and planning on raising the standards they achieve is insufficient.
 - There are appropriate systems in place for teachers' performance management. However, their performance objectives are not focused strongly enough on improving pupils' standards and so arrangements to hold teachers to account for pupil progress are not yet robust enough.
 - The school does not yet have a rigorous system in place for assessing the learning needs of pupils who join the school other than in reception. As a result, the targets set for these pupils, as well as for vulnerable groups and for boys, are not always challenging enough to ensure they reach at least expected levels of attainment.
 - Roles and responsibilities of leaders are clear and subject leaders report to governors about standards in the subject for which they are responsible. However, subject leaders have not yet had sufficient impact on raising standards.
 - Since beginning of the autumn term, senior leaders are dedicating time to meet to review pupils' standards on a weekly basis. As a result, they are better placed to make strategic decisions based on evidence about pupils' progress. However, further time will be required to assess the impact of this change.
 - Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. They provide appropriate support but the rigour with which the school performance is scrutinised and challenged requires further development.
8. Although many positive aspects have been identified at Fairfield Primary School the identified developmental need is as follows:
- Although performance at outcome 5+ is good in the Foundation Phase, performance at outcome 6+ is not. The school is in quarter 3 in all areas and performance is lower than the family average.
 - In addition, the school is placed in quarter 3 for English and quarter 4 for both mathematics and science. This means, for CSI, the school is also quarter 4.
 - For English at level 4+ and the CSI, performance has been in quarter 3 or 4 for the past three years. This is also the case for science at level 5+.
 - The reading results in key stage 2 (88.46% level 4+) are below the family, local authority and Wales averages.
 - Although the gap is narrowing, the achievement of eFSM pupils is inconsistent, with non eFSM pupils outperforming eFSM pupils in most areas across both key stages.
 - The targets in the school development plan (SDP) are not quantifiable and do not have clear success criteria than can be measured and evaluated effectively.

- The school is successful in improving pupils' outcomes in some areas but this is not consistent across the school as a whole.
 - Outcomes in key stage 2 particularly do not compare well with similar schools and there is no evidence of an improving trend in performance.
 - The excellent teaching found in some classes is not consistent across the rest of the school.
9. A procedure for the conduct of progress panel meetings has previously been developed. An updated protocol is attached as [Appendix A](#). The amendments are minor in nature and reflect current post holder titles.
 10. The need for an individual school progress meeting can be triggered by a number of events such as the publication of weak results in external examinations, the outcome of an Estyn Inspections placing a school in a statutory category or the outcome of national categorisation process identifying that the school is in need of higher levels of support in order to improve. The decision whether to progress a School Progress Panel will continue to be made by Cabinet.

Resource Implications (Financial and Employment)

11. Individual school progress panels are resourced from existing budgets.

Sustainability and Climate Change Implications

12. Panel meetings are held in individual schools and generally require travel by car.

Legal Implications (to Include Human Rights Implications)

13. Schools inspections are governed by the Education Act 2005 and related Regulations. The School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 consolidates, clarifies and informs the Law in relation to intervention in schools causing concern. The Minister for Education and Skills announced the introduction of the National School Categorisation System in Wales in 2014, this covers primary and secondary schools. The National School Categorisation System uses performance data to drive school improvement.

Crime and Disorder Implications

14. There are no crime and disorder implications.

Equal Opportunities Implications (to include Welsh Language issues)

15. The progress panels review the progress of learners and in particular learners most vulnerable to underachievement including pupils who are entitled to free school meals.

Corporate/Service Objectives

16. Raising overall standards of achievement.

Policy Framework and Budget

17. The recommendations of this report are within existing policy framework and budget.

Consultation (including Ward Member Consultation)

18. Not applicable.

Relevant Scrutiny Committee

19. Lifelong Learning.

Background Papers

None.

Contact Officer

Jennifer Hill, Director of Learning and Skills

Officers Consulted

Mike Glavin, Head of School Improvement and Inclusion
Karen Bowen, Democratic and Scrutiny Services Officer

Responsible Officer:

Jennifer Hill
Director of Learning and Skills