

THE VALE OF GLAMORGAN COUNCIL

CABINET: 24TH APRIL, 2017

REFERENCE FROM LEARNING AND CULTURE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE:
20TH MARCH, 2017

“ INDIVIDUAL SCHOOLS PROGRESS PANEL MEETING (MD) –

The Chairman took the Committee through the report which provided an update on a School Progress Panel meeting that had been held at Bryn Hafren Comprehensive School by a Panel of three Members of the Scrutiny Committee. The Chairman also took the opportunity to thank those who had been involved in the panel, and outlined the relevant issues commencing by advising that following consideration of the GCSE results in August 2016, the Interim Director of Learning and Skills had written to the Chair of Governors on 28th October, 2016 detailing the school's performance in recent years, including data and benchmarking for 2016 and referring to minimum expectations which had been agreed with the Headteacher for 2017. That letter had also outlined that although the school had worked very hard to address performance in key areas, the Council remained concerned about the accuracy and reliability of teachers' assessments in relation to WJEC expectations for English. In light of the GCSE results in August 2016 and as a result of the Council's concerns a further Panel visit was requested to be undertaken, which took place on 9th December, 2016. The Panel meeting provided an opportunity for the school to demonstrate through the democratic process its ambition and commitment to rapid and sustained progress and to identify any barriers that the school may be facing which could be resolved by the actions of the Council.

The minimum expectations for the school for 2017 were also referred to in the letter of 28th October, 2016 and the Central South Consortium's (CSC) School Improvement Service had set aside a significant number of days to challenge and support the school to achieve these.

The table below detailed the minimum expectations required for the 2017 results:

	Minimum Expectations
Percentage of pupils achieving A* - C in English Language	60%
Percentage of pupils achieving 5 A* - C grades in Mathematics	60%
Percentage of pupils achieving 5 A* - C grades including English and Mathematics	55%
Percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals securing 5 A* - C grades including English and Mathematics	40%

Estyn Recommendations

At the meeting on 9th December, 2016, amongst the information presented, the Panel received a detailed account of the school's responses to the Estyn recommendations. It was also noted that following a monitoring visit in March 2016 Estyn had concluded that the school had made insufficient progress in relation to the recommendations of its core inspection which had taken place in May 2012. As a result, Estyn had judged the school as needing significant improvement and the following recommendations were made:

- R(1) Re standards particularly in those areas where there is relative under-performance in English and Mathematics at Key Stage 3 - Judgement - limited progress.
- R(2) Increase proportion of excellent and good teaching - Judgement - satisfactory progress.
- R(3) Ensure that there was a consistent and systematic whole school approach to improving pupils literacy skills - Judgement - satisfactory progress.
- R(4) Improve consistency in the quality of marking so that pupils receive clear advice that helps them improve - Judgement - limited progress.
- R(5) Strengthen the quality of improvement planning to ensure plans link closely with the findings of self-evaluation and include clear targets for improvement - Judgement - satisfactory progress.

In outlining performance at the school, the Headteacher advised the Panel that comparisons with like schools had improved as the benchmark profiles had also improved since the last school inspection. Improvements had also been made at Level 6+ and Level 7+. The school compared its results against schools in the family of schools in the Local Authority and all-Wales results, with many being increasingly favourable. Of note, the Headteacher advised, was the fact that in 2016 the school had achieved its best ever Key Stage 3 results.

The report also outlined progress in relation to the school's Post Inspection Action Plan, performance for pupils receiving free school meals, other school strategies for 2016/17 were

- improving the quality of teaching and learning in English and Mathematics faculties
- increasing the accountability of the English and Mathematics faculties
- improving the quality of leadership and management in English and Mathematics faculties
- actions for Year 11 in 2017 would include the resetting of Year 11 class, amending staffing for key groups of pupils, ensuing key pupil groups had a better teacher / pupil ratio and ensuring that the groups received appropriate additional support interventions.

Pupil progress in relation to English, pupil attendance, school successes, support of the Governing Body, the report and role of the school's Challenge Advisor and in

conclusion, the decision of the Panel on the day of the Panel meeting. The Chairman advised that the Panel had relayed their disappointment to the school with regard to the 2016 English results and, in referring to the Interim Director's letter of 28th October, 2016, the Panel had advised that they expected the school to meet the minimum expectations contained within that letter that 60% of pupils achieve A* - C grade in English Language, 60% A* - C in Mathematics, 55% achieve 5 A* - C grades including English and Mathematics, and 40% of pupils entitled to free school meals secure 5 A* - C grades including English and Mathematics. The Panel however, had concern with regard to the school achieving its eFSM expectations.

Following the Panel meeting, it was subsequently recommended:

- (1) That the minimum expectations as outlined in the Interim Director's letter be met.
- (2) That the Panel receives the details of the November and January exam results to its January 2017 Scrutiny Committee meeting.
- (3) That a copy of the next Challenge Advisor's report is also received by the Panel.
- (4) That an accelerated Improvement Board be established for the school as soon as possible, the arrangements for which to be informed by the Interim Director

The Chairman had also at that time, asked the school's Challenge Advisor to attend the Scrutiny Committee when the report was to be presented to provide the Committee with any up to date information. Mr. Stuart Sherman, the school's Challenge Advisor, subsequently advised the Committee that although it was difficult to provide specific details, there were some indicators as to how well the school was performing but unfortunately no specifics at this stage. For Mathematics the school was slightly lower than the previous year, but this was also reflected in the majority of schools within the Consortium. However, the Mathematics department had recently advised that their targets were now in excess of the target. For English there was less external data but there were some modular results of aspects of the course. However, of note was the fact that the GCSE results coming up in August would now only be considering the subject of English Language within the figures. This was a shame for Bryn Hafren who had always done quite well in the past and to date in English Literature. The current modular result for Literature in March had been notably higher than anticipated and the school had been encouraged by this. They were however more cautious in relation to English Language, but they were optimistic at present. With regard to teaching and learning, a very strong appointment had been made for the Head of English who would start in September 2017. The Consortium had also found monies for further support which was needed for the Summer term.

In acknowledging the changes to GCSE's in August 2016, the Director of Learning and Skills stated that it would be important to wait for the benchmarked results before considering whether any follow up action was required.

Following a request from the Chairman on the work of the Accelerated Improvement Board, the Challenge Advisor commented that they had met on 27th January, 2017 and the next meeting was due to take place on 30th March, 2017. He could also advise that, broadly speaking, the establishment of a Board had been welcomed by the school, which had meant that their work had been streamlined, there were less meetings taking place and they were more focused. In his view, the establishment of the Accelerated Improvement Board had been a positive development.

Following consideration of the report, it was subsequently

RECOMMENDED –

- (1) T H A T the Scrutiny Progress Panel findings as detailed in paragraphs 40 to 43 of the report be accepted.
- (2) T H A T the results of the recent examinations undertaken at the school together with a copy of the latest Challenge Advisor's report be presented to the Panel when available.
- (3) T H A T the verbal update presented at the meeting on the work of the Accelerated Improvement Board be noted and that a further report be presented to the Scrutiny Committee in due course.
- (4) T H A T the Committee receives an update report as soon as possible following the GCSE results in August 2017.
- (5) T H A T the report and its recommendations above be referred to Cabinet for consideration and / or approval.

Reasons for recommendations

- (1) Having considered the contents of the report.
- (2) To apprise Members.
- (3) To monitor the work of the Accelerated Improvement Board.
- (4) To apprise Members.
- (5) For consideration.”

Attached as Appendix – [Report to Learning and Culture Scrutiny Committee: 20th March, 2017](#)