

# EDUCATION & CHILDREN SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

THURSDAY, 5<sup>TH</sup> JULY, 2018

**PRESENT:** Councillor D. Price [Chair]

**Councillors:**

K.V. Broom, I.W. Davies, J.P. Jenkins, B.W. Jones, D. Jones, G.R. Jones, M.J.A. Lewis, K. Lloyd (in place of S. Najmi), E.M.J.G. Schiavone, B. Thomas, E.G. Thomas and D.T. Williams

Mrs G. Cornock-Evans – Parent Governor [Carmarthen Area]

Mrs M. Jones – Parent Governor [Dinefwr Area]

Mrs V. Kenny – Roman Catholic Church Representative

Mrs J. Voyle-Williams – Church in Wales Representative

**Also in attendance:**

Councillor G. Davies, Executive Board Member for Education & Children

**The following Officers were in attendance:**

Mr G. Morgans - Director of Education & Children  
Mr A. Morgan - Head of Education Services  
Mr A. Rees - Head of Curriculum & Wellbeing  
Mr S. Smith - Head of Children's Services  
Mr S. Davies - Modernisation Services Manager  
Mr G. Kirby - Music Service Co-ordinator  
Mrs M. Evans Thomas - Principal Democratic Services Officer

**Chamber, County Hall, Carmarthen : 10.00 a.m. - 12.40 p.m.**

**1. APOLOGIES AND OTHER MATTERS**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors L. Bowen and S. Najmi and from Mr J. Davies (Parent Governor Member).

The Chair extended a warm welcomed to Mrs Mputsoe, an Education Officer from Taba Seca in Lesotho who was on placement in Carmarthenshire as part of a programme being run by Dolen Cymru whereby she would learn about our education system and collect ideas on how to develop the education system in Lesotho.

**2. DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL INTEREST**

Councillor	Minute Item(s)	Nature of Interest
D. Jones	6 – Music Service Update – July 2018	Her sons are members of the Carmarthenshire Music Service
G. Jones	5 – Carmarthenshire County Council's Draft Annual Report 2017/18	His wife works in the Education Department
G. Jones	6 – Music Service Update – July 2018	His wife works in the Education Department

G. Jones	7 – Approaches to Securing “Positive Behaviour” in Carmarthenshire Schools	His wife works in the Education Department
G. Jones	8 – Supporting Progression into Teaching, Leadership Roles and Headship	His wife works in the Education Department
G. Jones	9 – Elective Home Education- Cabinet Secretary’s Response to Correspondence	His wife works in the Education Department
G. Jones	10 - Implementing ERW Core Support Visits and Schools Causing Concern	His wife works in the Education Department
B.W. Jones	7 – Approaches to Securing “Positive Behaviour” in Carmarthenshire Schools	Her son works at Ysgol Parc-y-Tywyn
B.W. Jones	8 – Supporting Progression into Teaching, Leadership Roles and Headship	Her son works at Ysgol Parc-y-Tywyn
B.W. Jones	9 – Elective Home Education – Cabinet Secretary’s Response to Correspondence	Her son works at Ysgol Parc-y-Tywyn
B.W. Jones	10 – Implementing ERW Core Support Visits and Schools Causing Concern	Her son works at Ysgol Parc-y-Tywyn
E. Schiavone	7 – Approaches to Securing “Positive Behaviour” in Carmarthenshire Schools	His wife works at QE High School
E. Schiavone	8 – Supporting Progression into Teaching, Leadership Roles and Headship	His wife works at QE High School
E. Schiavone	9 – Elective Home Education – Cabinet Secretary’s Response to Correspondence	His wife works at QE High School
E. Schiavone	10 – Implementing ERW Core Support Visits and Schools Causing Concern	His wife works at QE High School
Mrs M. Jones	5 – Carmarthenshire County Council’s Draft Annual Report 2017/18	She is employed by the University of Wales Trinity Saint David
Mrs V. Kenny	11 – Referral from the Social Care & Health Scrutiny Committee	Her daughter works in Social Services

### 3. DECLARATIONS OF PROHIBITED PARTY WHIPS

There were no declarations of prohibited party whips.

### 4. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

The Chair advised that no public questions had been received.

## 5. CARMARTHENSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL'S DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT 2017/18

[NOTE: Councillor G. Jones and Mrs M. Jones had earlier declared an interest in this item.]

The Committee was informed that in line with the requirements of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 the Authority must publish an Annual Report on past performance by the end of October each year and under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2005 the Authority was also required to publish an Annual Report on its Well-being Objectives.

The Council's draft Annual Report included the Well-being Objectives relevant to the Education & Children Scrutiny Committee. The report provided an overview of 2017/18 performance, progress reports for all 15 Well-being Objectives and a link to track progress on every specific action and target set for each Well-being Objective. The report also provided additional performance information on out-turn data (September) and National Survey for Wales Results (June), which would be updated when results became available.

The following questions/observations were raised on the report:-

- Reference was made to the fact that 29.4% of children are overweight or obese. Officers were asked about this data and what feedback is given to parents. The Director informed the Committee that the data was generated by the Health Board. He explained that, with regard to childhood obesity, there are many initiatives which are widely promoted e.g. healthy eating clubs. Officers are working with colleagues from the Leisure Department on several initiatives;
- Asked for further information regarding the greater alignment between the Team Around the Family (TAF) and Flying Start, the Head of Children's Services explained that Flying Start is a government funded programme which provides support for children living in deprived areas of the county. TAF is involved when it is recognised that children require additional support and a team approach is needed and allows agencies like health, social care etc. to come together and work closely together to address the needs of the child;
- Reference was made to the fact that assessments undertaken through the Welsh medium have fallen to 39.9% and officer were asked for an explanation. The Director explained that this could be due to a variety of reasons e.g. that more children went to English medium secondary schools this year. He added that officers would undertake a detailed analysis of the figures and circulate the information to members;
- Concern was expressed that if a child visits the orthodontist the school records this as an authorised absence instead of medical and officers were asked if anything could be done to address this anomaly. The Director explained that officers are currently in discussion with the Welsh Government with regard to absence codes;
- Asked what can be done about children who are regularly absent from school, the Director explained that there is only a small number in the county and the Welfare Team work with these families to support them. In some instances legal action is taken and these powers are used as and when necessary. The Head of Curriculum & Wellbeing added that

attendance statistics are much better now than they were five years ago and because so much improvement has been made the focus has now shifted to pupils who attain less than 85% attendance.

**RESOLVED that the report be received.**

## **6. MUSIC SERVICE UPDATE - JULY 2018**

[NOTE: Councillors D. Jones and G. Jones had earlier declared an interest in this item.]

At its meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> March, 2018, during consideration of the Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring Report 2017/18, the Committee resolved to receive a report at a future meeting on the problems being faced by the county's Music Service.

On a day to day basis, Carmarthenshire Music Service (CMS) provides:-

- peripatetic music support to 79 schools across the county;
- over 5000 pupils receive tuition across a range of instrumental and vocal tuition, delivered by 32 staff (24 FTE);
- statutory curriculum support is provided at Key Stage 2 in 7 schools;
- performing opportunities are offered across all key stages with:
  - 11 junior ensembles rehearsing termly, culminating in the annual Junior Proms at the end of the summer term;
  - 3 intermediate ensembles rehearsing weekly, culminating in the annual Intermediate Festival;
  - 5 senior ensembles rehearsing termly, culminating in the annual Senior Music Festival.

CMS is a highly regarded and valued service, both within the county and nationally and due to a number of successful performances and achievements, has seen its profile rise both within the UK and Europe.

The service has been under intense financial pressure over recent years and experienced a shortfall of £169,127 for 2017/18. This could be mainly attributed to a decrease in buy-back of tuition from schools due to budgetary pressures etc. There are also many significant challenges nationally including reductions in the purchase of Service Level Agreements (SLA) as a direct result of rate increases and contract changes. There has been mention of national funding, however, in the meantime it was imperative to think of ways to keep the service afloat.

The following questions/observations were raised on the report:-

- Officers were asked when we could expect a firm statement in relation to national developments and funding. The Music Service Co-ordinator explained that decisions are currently being made regarding funding for the future and £2m has been earmarked over the next two years to look at how music services can be developed across Wales;
- Asked if the provision of a music service in schools is cheaper than supply cover, the Music Service Co-ordinator explained that it can be, however, it is more to do with the fact that the supply cover may not provide what the school wants whereas the Music Service would;

- Asked how certain they are that the proposed changes are not going to have an effect on children and standards, the Committee was advised that last year the service moved from weekly provision to half termly which had a dramatic effect on standards so for next year the original structure has been put back in place. Officers are trying to cut cost as much as possible without seeing the service diminishing;
- Asked how many schools have not signed up to a SLA and why, the Committee was informed that it was sometimes difficult to convince schools of the positive aspects of music e.g. motor skills, calming influence. If some schools do not use the service for a while officers ask the school what they would like the service to offer. More schools are signing up promptly to the SLA due to new administrative arrangements, but the exact figures are not finalised yet. There was, however, a problem with the more rural schools as it takes might take 2 hours to travel there and back for a half hour buy back;
- The importance was stressed of the music service being available to all children throughout the county. The Director informed the Committee that the department absorbed last year's overspend, however, it was essential to look at whether to allocate core funding to protect the service.

## **RESOLVED**

**6.1 that the report be received;**

**6.2 that the Committee receive an update report as soon as information is received regarding national developments.**

## **7. APPROACHES TO SECURING 'POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR' IN CARMARTHENSHIRE SCHOOLS**

[NOTE: Councillors B.W. Jones, G. Jones and E. Schiavone had earlier declared an interest in this item.]

The Committee considered a report providing an overview of current practice and guidance in support of positive behaviour and anti-bullying within Carmarthenshire's schools.

Carmarthenshire has a strong and lengthy track record of working effectively within this field, drawing on numerous elements of research and good practice both nationally and internationally.

The report detailed the range of strategies available to our schools to achieve high standards of positive behaviour and our clear expectation of keeping everyone safe from any level of bullying.

The following questions/observations were raised on the report:-

- Asked how progress is monitored and how you measure whether bullying is being reduced, the Head of Education Services explained that the monitoring process includes a range of activities such as Challenge Advisers visiting schools and questionnaires are circulated to schools on an annual basis to review the progress and impact of such strategies;
- Asked whether the questionnaires are targeted at pupils or teachers the Committee was advised that one questionnaire is for schools leaders to

complete and the other is an electronic version which schools circulate to their learners. The Director added that schools will have their own ways of recording pupil satisfaction and wellbeing measures. The department gathers that data and the outcome of any surveys could be circulated to the committee for information;

- Asked whether the questionnaires might contain comments regarding the impact that bad behaviour can have on teachers, the Head of Education Services explained that this would be addressed through Challenge Advisers' core visits and if any concern is raised then they would provide any support needed;
- Reference was made to the fact that there appears to be a lot of different initiatives in schools and the need for consistency throughout the county was stressed as bullying can define the rest of someone's life. Officers were asked if it would be possible to operate a county-wide anti-bullying policy to include the latest anti-bullying legislation. The Director explained that the Authority can provide a framework and template document. He added that the really effective models in schools are those which have been prepared by the schools themselves. The Head of Curriculum and Wellbeing explained that the landscape is changing with e-safety and the hazards of social media. Wellbeing is ascending as a theme in our schools and a Behaviour and Wellbeing Manager has been seconded to work on strategies to promote positive behaviour;
- Reference was made to the success of the Speakr initiative in this regard and officers agreed to provide the Committee with data in relation to take-up;
- Concern was expressed that bullied children are unable to get transport to attend another school. The Head of Curriculum and Wellbeing stressed the importance of making sure that the culture/ environment in the school is right so that pupils do not feel the need to move schools.

## **RESOLVED**

**7.1 that the report be received;**

**7.2 that the Committee receive a report at a future meeting to include data measuring the effectiveness of positive behaviour initiatives.**

## **8. SUPPORTING PROGRESSION INTO TEACHING, LEADERSHIP ROLES AND HEADSHIP**

[NOTE: Councillors B.W. Jones, G. Jones and E. Schiavone had earlier declared an interest in this item.]

The Committee considered a report setting out the current areas of activity, both within Carmarthenshire and nationally, in support of:-

- access to and encouragement of teaching as a career; and
- support for leadership progression into senior roles and headship.

The report detailed the range of opportunities available to our workforce in support of enhanced leadership practice, self-development and achievement.

ERW has worked proactively in conjunction with the Welsh Government and the Authority on the #Discoverteaching strategy which aims to encourage more people to embrace a rewarding career in teaching.

ERW and the Authority have also worked hard to ensure a wide range of developmental leadership opportunities are regularly available to support our school workforce. These opportunities are purposefully provided at a variety of leadership levels, seeking not only to strengthen and upskill our workforce, but also reinforce the key message of the value and impact of effective, distributive leadership within our schools.

Carmarthenshire has played an integral part in developing the content of the NPQH programme over time and ensuring that we provide candidates with high quality support and opportunities to gain the mandatory qualification for headship in Wales. The 2017/18 cohort witnessed an impressive 16 candidates from Carmarthenshire undertake the qualification. All 16 successfully achieved the standard and this unprecedented high number of candidates (in comparison with other Local Authorities within the ERW region) evidences the positive impact that they many professional development opportunities have had on our Aspiring Leaders. These successful candidates will now be available to support our leadership agenda in line with the need of our schools.

Carmarthenshire schools have been invited to share best practice through the lead practitioner programme which is providing valuable professional development opportunities. Schools are funded to support others in line with the menu of support agreed through the categorisation process. Practitioners are leading on effective self-evaluation processes or strategic development within a federation. These opportunities are enabling schools to share best practice and are providing purposeful leadership opportunities for aspiring leaders of the future.

Challenge Advisers have focussed in detail on the issue of teacher workload during their core visits thus supporting the Welsh Government campaign aimed at addressing workload issues in relation to marking and feedback processes. Advice and guidance has impacted positively on reducing teacher workload and is constructively informing a cultural change across the profession in relation to marking and feedback expectations.

In order to support effective leadership across our schools, taking into consideration the particular challenges faced by our smaller schools, a range of exemplar resources including policies, examples of self-evaluation and monitoring strategies has been produced. The aim of this directory and bank of resources is to provide valuable reference materials for leaders, sharing best practice and alleviating workload pressures. Conscious of the fact that best practice needs to be shared in an open, regular and practical manner, ERW has development a model which identifies such practice through schools working in collaboration with Challenge Advisers during the core support visits. Agreed areas of best practice are shared through ERW's Dolen website, thus providing a directory for schools to refer to. School-to- school support ensures as a result, relying on leaders at all levels to share strategies and deliver support to participating schools. This mechanism provides staff with invaluable opportunities to develop their leadership skills whilst building effective networks and collaboration across our schools in ERW.

The following questions/observations were raised on the report:-

- Reference was made to the fact that the Committee requested a report on recruitment and retention of teachers and headteachers due to the number of unfilled posts in the county, however, the report did not include any statistics in relation to how many vacancies have been filled and how many remain etc. The Head of Education Services agreed to circulate this information to the Committee;
- Asked if any arrangements exist in schools whereby younger members of staff shadow headteachers and whether this is done across clusters, the Head of Education Services advised the Committee that some elements are currently being implemented, however, this could be expanded upon.

## **RESOLVED**

**8.1 that the report be received;**

**8.2 that the Committee receive an update report at a future meeting.**

## **9. ELECTIVE HOME EDUCATION: CABINET SECRETARY'S RESPONSE TO CORRESPONDENCE**

[NOTE: Councillors B.W. Jones, G. Jones and E. Schiavone had earlier declared an interest in this item.]

At its meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> March 2018, during consideration of a report on Elective Home Education, the Committee resolved that officers draft a letter to the Welsh Government expressing the Committee's concerns with regard to the problems being experienced with home schooled and flexi schooled children.

The letter was duly sent to the Cabinet Secretary for Education, Kirsty Williams, and a response was received on 27<sup>th</sup> June, 2018 which was circulated to members for information.

The following questions/observations were raised on the report:-

- Concern was again expressed over the ambiguity of the term "suitable education" and the uncertainty over the correct definition;
- Asked whether the Authority has used School Attendance Orders, the Head of Curriculum and Wellbeing advised that this avenue has been explored in moderation;
- The Committee expressed its reassurance that the Authority is addressing these issues now and not just sitting back and waiting for the strategy to be published.

## **RESOLVED**

**9.1 that the response from the Cabinet Secretary be noted;**

**9.2 that the invitation for Su Crowther to present an item on the Committee's letter and the Cabinet Secretary's response at the next Local Authority EHE Stakeholder meeting be accepted.**

## 10. IMPLEMENTING ERW CORE SUPPORT VISITS AND SCHOOLS CAUSING CONCERN

[NOTE: Councillors B.W. Jones, G. Jones and E. Schiavone had earlier declared an interest in this item.]

The Committee received a presentation providing an overview of the work of the Challenge Advisers and School Improvement Team in undertaking ERW core support visits during the 2017/18 academic year and the progress made with schools causing concern.

The following questions/observations were raised on the report:-

- Reference was made to School Improvement Panels and officers were asked how the membership is made up. The Head of Education Services explained that membership varies from school to school, however, the Headteacher is always included and others could include Key Stage Leaders, Challenge Advisers and a Local Authority officer;
- With regard to the standard of Challenge Advisers, officers were asked if the Authority checks with headteachers to ascertain whether they are happy with the service they receive from ERW. The Head of Education Services explained that discussions are held regularly with school leaders in this regard.

**RESOLVED that the report be received.**

## 11. REFERRAL FROM THE SOCIAL CARE & HEALTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

[NOTE: Mrs V. Kenny had earlier declared an interest in this item.]

The Committee was informed that the Social Care & Health Scrutiny Committee was scheduled to consider a report on Young Carers at their meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> July, 2018, as part of their Forward Work Programme. However, officers had identified that as Young Carers come under the remit of the Education & Children Scrutiny Committee, then such a report should be submitted to a future meeting of that Committee. Officers also felt that, as members of the Social Care & Health Scrutiny Committee have a special interest in carers, they should be invited to the meeting when the report is being considered.

**RESOLVED that Young Carers be placed on the agenda of the meeting of the Education & Children Scrutiny Committee to be held on 27<sup>th</sup> September, 2018 and the Social Care & Health Scrutiny Committee be invited to attend for consideration of that item.**

## 12. FORTHCOMING ITEMS

**RESOLVED that the list of forthcoming items to be considered at the next scheduled meeting to be held on 27<sup>th</sup> September, 2018 be noted.**

**13. TO SIGN AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE HELD ON THE 7TH JUNE, 2018**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 7<sup>th</sup> June, 2018 be signed as a correct record.

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**CHAIR**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**DATE**