



EDUCATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE REMOTE MEETING HELD VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS ON MONDAY, 17TH MAY 2021 AT 5.30PM

PRESENT:

Councillor T. Parry - Chair
Councillor C. Andrews - Vice-Chair

Councillors:

E. M. Aldworth, A. Collis, A. Farina-Childs, Ms J. Gale, D. Havard, M. P. James, B. Miles, J. Roberts and J. Simmonds.

Councillor R. Whiting (Cabinet Member for Learning and Leisure).

Together with:

Officers: R. Edmunds (Corporate Director for Education and Corporate Services), K. Cole (Chief Education Officer), S. Richards (Head of Education, Planning and Strategy), P. Warren (Strategic Lead for School Improvement), P. O'Neill (Senior Youth Service Manager), C. Forbes-Thompson (Scrutiny Manager), S. Hughes (Committee Services Officer) and M. Harris (Committee Services Support Officer).

Also present:

Co-opted Members: Mr M. Western (Cardiff ROC Archdiocesan Commission for Education Representative), Mrs T. Millington (Parent Governor Representative), Mr G. James (Parent Governor Representative) and Mr D. Davies (Caerphilly Governors Association).

RECORDING ARRANGEMENTS

The Chairperson reminded those present that the meeting was being recorded and would be made available to view via the Council's website, except for discussions involving confidential or exempt items. [Click here to view.](#)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors P. J. Bevan, W. David, D. T. Hardacre and Mrs G. D. Oliver. Apologies were also received from Mr D. Davies (Caerphilly Governors Association) and Mrs P. Ireland (NEU).

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest received at the commencement or during the course of the meeting.

3. MINUTES – 22ND MARCH 2021

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Education Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 22nd March 2021 (minute nos 1- 9) be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

4. MINUTES – 25TH MARCH 2021

RESOLVED that the minutes of the special meeting of the Education Scrutiny Committee held on 25th March 2021 (minute nos 1- 6) be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

5. CONSIDERATION OF ANY MATTER REFERRED TO THE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CALL-IN PROCEDURE

There had been no matters referred to the Scrutiny Committee in accordance with the call-in procedure.

6. EDUCATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The Scrutiny Manager presented the report which outlined details of the Education Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme for the period May 2021 to March 2022 and included all reports that were identified at the Education Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 22nd March 2021. Members were asked to consider the Forward Work Programme, alongside the Cabinet Forward Work Programme, prior to publication on the Council's website.

The Head of Education, Planning and Strategy highlighted further reports to be added to the Education Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme for the meeting to be held on 29th June 2021 and proposed that the Caerphilly County Borough Welsh Library Standards report be presented to the Scrutiny Committee as an information item.

Following consideration of the report and subject to the amendments proposed, it was moved and seconded that the recommendations be approved. By way of Microsoft Forms voting this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that the Education Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme be published on the Councils' website.

7. CABINET REPORTS

None of the Cabinet reports listed on the agenda had been called forward for discussion at the meeting.

REPORTS OF OFFICERS

Consideration was given to the following reports.

8. DIRECTORATE PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT SIX MONTH UPDATE 2020

The Cabinet Member for Learning and Leisure introduced the report to present the Scrutiny Committee with the new Education Directorate Performance Assessment (DPA) which is part of the Council's new Performance Framework. Members were informed that the DPA

provides information and analysis for the 6-month period April – November 2020 and forms part of the overall Council 'self-assessment' activity, of which members are invited to discuss, challenge and scrutinise the information in the DPA.

Points of clarification were sought on the priority to raise standards of attainment in relation to the number of pupils achieving no qualifications which has risen from 0.9% in 2017-18 to 1.7% in 2018-19. The Strategic Lead for School Improvement advised the Scrutiny Committee on how this data is being addressed. Points of clarification were also sought on the priority to reduce the impact of poverty on attainment for both vocational and non-vocational qualifications to provide equity of opportunity. The Youth Service Manager provided an overview on the qualifications delivered by the Youth Service.

A Member raised a number of concerns in relation to school performance data and comparisons on previous years. Clarification was sought on what Officers intend to do to improve this significantly over the next two or three years. The Chief Education Officer confirmed that there will be centre determined grades for 2021 and Members were reassured that processes were put in place. Members were advised that 2019 saw an improvement in the results but they were not satisfactory and the two years of data that followed will make it a more difficult job for those involved with school improvement. Members were further advised that Officers continue to meet with secondary schools and primary schools where there is a level of concern. Officers also work with the Education Achievement Service (EAS) to have overviews of visits that have been undertaken by Challenge Advisors. It was highlighted that in terms of the expected results for this year, they appear to be in line with last year. The Scrutiny Committee was reminded that the data is not used for accountability purposes, but Members were reassured that things are going in the right direction. The Officer drew attention to the information report from EAS which outlines how they have challenged and supported schools during this period. Members were informed that the current evidence, the 2019 data and the inspection outcomes up to March 2020 informs that schools are making progress and are on track to continue to improve. Members were also updated on the current NEET figures.

A discussion ensued on the types of vocational or other qualifications and Members agreed to the suggestion of a report to the Scrutiny Committee on this topic. The Corporate Director for Education and Corporate Services highlighted how it had been apparent through the course of the conversation the passion that exists across the Scrutiny Committee and to make sure there is good provision in place for children not following traditional pathways. With reference to the suggested report to the Scrutiny Committee it was advised that it be a single item on the agenda in order to discuss and challenge in more detail.

Members discussed, challenged and scrutinised the information contained within the report.

The meeting closed at 6.25 pm.

Approved as a correct record and subject to any amendments or corrections agreed and recorded in the minutes of the meeting held on 29th June 2021 they were signed by the Chair.

CHAIR