



MERTHYR TYDFIL
County Borough Council
Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol
MERTHYR TUDFUL

MINUTES OF MEETING

SCRUTINY : LEARNING AND LAESCYP MEETING

MONDAY, 18TH APRIL, 2016

PRESENT: Councillor L Mytton (**In the Chair**)

Councillors S Williams, M Davies, G Lewis, K Moran, S Slater and C Tovey

Cooptees:

Claire Brown, Alan Rees and Rosemary Lazell

Officers:

Dorothy Haines (Chief Officer (Learning) - Chief Education Officer), Chris Hole (Manager for Early Years), Sarah Bowen (Inclusion and Wellbeing Manager) and Teresa Winiarski (ALN Manager)

Outside Bodies:

Caedraw Primary School: Jill Watkins (Headteacher), Paul Jones (Chair of Governors) and Brenda Morgan (Vice Chair of Governors)

Howard Jones (Scrutiny Officer) and Karen Vokes (Democratic Services Officer)

ITEM NO.	AGENDA MATTER	DECISION
1299	Apologies for absence	Apologies for absence were received from Anne Roberts (Co-optee).
1300	Declarations of Interest (including whipping declarations)	No declarations of interest were made.

1301	Caedraw Primary School - Attendance at Scrutiny meeting	<p>The Chair welcomed Jill Watkins, Headteacher of Caedraw, together with Paul Jones, Chair of Governors and Brenda Morgan, Vice Chair of Governors at the School.</p> <p>Jill Watkins thanked the Committee for the invite to the meeting and gave a background to the achievements made at the School.</p> <p>Mrs Watkins then referred in detail to progress made in relation to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The development of an Accelerated Improvement Plan in November 2013 to focus on improving learning and teaching, rationalising data and reviewing reading provision. • Levels of School Categorisation for the period 2013 to 2015. • A breakdown of Caedraw School's Improvement Strategies together with the impact, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improving learning and teaching - Termly Pupil Progress Reviews - Introduction of RWI and Guided Group Reading - Review of Staffing - Improving Leadership - Improving Pupil Attendance and late arrival - Improved budgeting and financial management <p>Officers provided advice and background information in relation to the following questions from the Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance Reward Initiatives for children. • Service Level Agreements at the School. • Relationship with the Central South Consortium and Challenge Advisers. • Monitoring of the School's energy consumption. • Attendance at the Energy Efficiency Seminar in February 2016. • Feedback from Secondary Schools on children's performance. • Future discussions with Secondary Schools to ensure that the good progress made in the Primary Schools continues in the Secondary sector. • In relation to pupil attendance, how is the School engaging with Parents to continue improvement? • The involvement of the Board of Governors in relation to the School's finance and improved budget.
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		<p>The Chair then thanked Jill Watkins, Paul Jones and Brenda Morgan for their update to the Committee.</p>
1302	<p>Reducing Young People Not in Education Employment Training (NEET)</p>	<p>Allan Rees (Co-optee) left the meeting at 5.00 pm.</p> <p>Chris Hole took the Committee through the report and highlighted the key points, as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvement in NEETS and the role of the NEETS Co-ordinator. • Youth Unemployment for 16 to 24 year olds. • Further steps for improvement. • Youth Engagement Framework. • The drop in Young people taking up Apprenticeships. • Work based learning opportunities. • Destination Planning with young people. • Early identification of disengagement toolkit carried out within Schools. • Where we want to be to improve outcomes and to work with partners to achieve high expectations. • What we need to do next. <p>Officers provided advice and background information in relation to the following questions from the Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More emphasis on encouraging young people to apply for Apprenticeships. • Is there a difference between the two schemes listed under target additional support for NEETS, namely Communities 4 Work and Bridges into Work and can children living in different communities first areas attend. • How does Youth unemployment compare with neighbouring Authorities and throughout Wales, also an explanation on the significant drop. • In relation to children with Additional Learning Needs, is there any additional support provided to children that fall into these categories. • Clarification in relation to the involvement of Merthyr College. • Clarification in relation to the Economic Growth Partnership.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dialogue with Welsh Government/Parliament through the use of political representatives. • In relation to the early identification process (as outlined to paragraph 5.5), how do you identify a child and how many of those will go onto NEETS? • In 2015, 135 people were at a high risk of disengagement. What is being done for them rather than in the future? <p>RESOLVED that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee notes the contents of the report. • Chris Hole to circulate comparison data of neighbouring Authorities in relation to Youth Unemployment. <p>Councillor Gareth Lewis left the meeting at 5.30 pm.</p>
1303	The Performance of Groups of Vulnerable Learners	<p>Teresa Winiarski and Sarah Bowen outlined the background in relation to the performance of groups of vulnerable learners and highlighted the key points as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Categorisation of Pupils into School Action and School Action Plus. • Pupils with Special Educational Needs. • Pupil Level School Census (PLASC). • Rate of progress of boys and girls. • Pupils eligible for Free School Meals. • Pupils with English as an Additional Language. • Ethnic Minority Pupils. • Looked after Children. • Pupils educated other than at School. • The key priorities for improvement. • The next steps being progressed. <p>Advice and background information was given in relation to the following questions from the Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can the key priorities for our ALN pupils be more specific?

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do you see the ALN Provision for the most needy children across the Authority this time next year? • Are we confident that schools data collection is robust and reliable enough to be used? • One of the reasons performance of pupils eligible for Free Schools Meals has improved at a faster rate is due to the support of the Central South Consortium. Is this support going to continue? <p>RESOLVED that:</p> <p>The Committee notes the contents of the report.</p>
1304	Scrutiny Referrals, Feedback and Follow up Actions	The Chair advised that she will update members at the next meeting if any issues are raised in the Joint Scrutiny/Audit Committee scheduled for Wednesday, 20 th April 2016.
1305	Reflection and Evaluation of Meeting	The Chair and the Committee reflected in detail on the issues that had been considered.
1306	Forward Work Programme	The Chair to liaise with members on arranging an informal meeting to reflect on last year's work and also to consider inclusion within the coming year's work programme.
1307	Any other business deemed urgent by the Chair	Following debate in relation to the coming year's Committee schedule, the Committee resolved that the Learning and LAESCYP Committees would revert back to a 6 weekly timetable.