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Dear Helen Morgan Rees

Enhanced LALI visit: February 2026

On the 3-5 February 2026, Mike Hayes HMI and a team of two HMI carried out an enhanced local authority link inspector visit which focussed on support and challenge in your secondary schools and how you support and develop the use of Welsh in your settings and schools.

During our visit, we had the opportunity to:

- Meet with you, your senior team and relevant officers
- Meet with a range of headteachers
- Meet with officers from Partneriaeth
- Meet with members of Partneriaeth Addysg Gymraeg Abertawe (PAGA)
- Scrutinise documentation

We hope you and your education services team found this visit to be helpful. Below is a summary of our findings.

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Mae Estyn yn croesawu gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg a Saesneg. Bydd gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn y naill iaith neu'r llall yn cael yr un flaenoriaeth.

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Estyn welcomes correspondence in both English and Welsh. Correspondence received in either language will be given equal priority.

Area of focus 1: How well does the local authority support and challenge its secondary schools to improve outcomes for learners?

Strengths:

It was useful to discuss the local authority's strategic vision for education in Swansea (Abertawe 2028) and how it was co-constructed beneficially with headteachers. It was also clear that the Director of Education has built positive and trusting relationships with secondary school leaders over time and increased her presence in schools. Leaders in the sector value her input to the school improvement dialogue. They feel listened to and tell us that communication channels have been strengthened.

It was interesting to hear about the recent peer review commissioned to consider the effectiveness of the school improvement arrangements, prompted by recent inspection outcomes. Officers told us how they have responded to the findings by revising the secondary school improvement framework, with the aim of strengthening their school improvement processes by focusing more closely on the impact of their work. This has included increasing the number of school improvement advisers (SIAs) and curriculum support officers and placing a greater emphasis on the use of first-hand evidence by SIAs. These arrangements are relatively recent and the local authority have not evaluated the impact of these changes yet.

Areas for Consideration:

Leaders in the local authority are aware that in order to fully realise the benefits of the changes to the school improvement framework and the increased investment of resource, they need to strengthen the processes in place to evaluate the quality and impact of their work.

To support this, we think it would be helpful for you to consider:

- What are the most suitable mechanisms to evaluate the impact of changes made since the peer review?
- How effective are your evaluation processes in enabling you to identify specific strengths and areas for development across the school improvement service?
- How can you better support SIAs and curriculum teams to provide consistent high-quality challenge and support to schools?
- How can you strengthen the monitoring of the quality of the work of SIAs and curriculum teams?

- How can you ensure that SIAs broker effective support from the curriculum team and Partneriaeth to target areas most in need of improvement?

Area of focus 2: How well does the local authority support and develop the use of Welsh in all its settings and schools?

Strengths:

In our conversations, it was clear that the local authority demonstrates a strong and sustained commitment to promoting the Welsh language across Swansea. Strategic leadership provides a clear vision for Welsh-medium education and the wider use of Welsh, supported by effective partnership working through Partneriaeth Addysg Gymraeg Abertawe (PAGA).

The local authority made clear their strong commitment to increase the capacity of Welsh-medium provision through capital investment and future planning. They have made progress in increasing capacity overall through enhancements of current Welsh-medium providers. Officers regularly gauge the uptake of pre-nursery places and are investigating options for introducing Welsh-medium education provision strategically and sustainably. Officers also outlined how they have secured provision for immersion provision and language enhancement which supports pupils transitioning from English-medium primary education.

The local authority told us about their progress in developing Welsh-medium provision for learners with additional learning needs, including recent investment in specialist teaching facilities, which increases choice for families and learners.

We discussed with officers how they provide targeted support to schools who receive recommendations about improving Welsh in their inspection. They told us that nearly all of these schools have strengthened their provision and note that Welsh is being used more across their schools.

It was clear from discussions that the Welsh in Education officers work well with their partners to provide valuable professional learning opportunities and practical support to schools to strengthen Welsh language provision. School leaders told us that they appreciate the quality of the support on offer.

Areas for consideration:

To facilitate further improvement, we think it would be helpful for you to consider:

- How can you better understand the factors that influence families' decisions to enter, remain in, or leave the Welsh-medium sector, from early years through to primary education, and how effectively can you use this to address barriers and identify mitigating factors to increase the numbers accessing Welsh-medium education?
- How well you support pupils wishing to transfer from English-medium to Welsh-medium secondary education?
- To what extent do you investigate and use opportunities to promote the Welsh language and bilingualism through partnerships with vocational courses and future employment initiatives, including projects such as the Swansea Bay City Deal and the Swansea Pledge?
- How effectively do you use available data, such as the National Centre for Learning Welsh dashboard, to proactively identify and address workforce professional learning needs?

Many thanks for facilitating the visit and I look forward to discussing the developments in the two focus areas with you and your colleagues in my link visits.

Yours sincerely

Mike

Mike Hayes HMI