

Report of the Cabinet Member for Education

Cabinet – 14 April 2015

ESTYN INSPECTION OF LOCAL AUTHORITY EDUCATION SERVICES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE 2013 – UPDATE ON PROGRESS IN ADDRESSING THE FIVE RECOMMENDATIONS

Purpose:	For Cabinet to receive an update on the progress in meeting the five Recommendations in the Estyn Inspection Report.
Policy Framework:	Estyn Common Inspection Framework.
Reason for Decision:	Political monitoring of progress in meeting the five Recommendations was stipulated by Estyn.
Consultation:	Legal, Finance and Access to Services.
Recommendation(s):	It is recommended that: 1) Cabinet notes the progress update on the five recommendations in the Estyn Inspection Report.
Report Author:	Helen Morgan-Rees
Finance Officer:	Ben Smith
Legal Officer:	Stephanie Williams
Access to Services Officer:	Sherill Hopkins

1.0 Introduction

1.1 All local authorities' education services for children and young people in Wales are inspected by Estyn under the Common Inspection Framework. Authorities are inspected on the basis of a self-evaluation. City and County of Swansea was inspected in June 2013 and the Report published in September 2013.

2.0 Background – what the Estyn Inspectors found in 2013

2.1 Many good features and services were noted in the inspection report. <http://www.estyn.gov.uk/download/publication/291263.7/inspectionreport-city-and-county-of-swanea-2013/>

2.2 Estyn made the following specific judgements:

- Primary attendance rates were well below average with nearly half of schools in the bottom 25% when compared to similar schools on the free-school-meal benchmarks;
- Too many schools did not improve quickly enough when identified as needing follow-up after a core inspection and too many were in categories of concern;
- The reintegration of pupils in key stage 3 educated other than at school back into mainstream schools and the provision in the key stage 4 pupil referral unit were not good enough;
- Processes to quality assure the work of officers were not effective enough to make sure that all officers consistently challenge all schools to improve.
- Performance management and quality assurance processes were not applied consistently enough within education services to identify and address underperformance of staff;
- Education targets were often not sufficiently challenging; and
- Annual reviews of the authority's education services and the self-evaluation report prepared for the inspection provided too positive an analysis of the authority's work in a few areas.

2.3 The outcomes of the 2013 inspection were that Performance was judged to be Adequate and Capacity to Improve judged to be Good. The Inspection Report made five Recommendations for improvement.

- Develop and implement a strategy to improve levels of attendance in primary schools
- Quality assure the work of officers to secure greater consistency in the level of challenge they offer to schools
- Improve officers' evaluation of the quality of leadership and management in schools to make sure that underperforming schools are identified and supported quickly
- Improve the quality of provision for those pupils who are educated other than at school, particularly to raise standards of achievement and to assist reintegration back into schools
- Improve the consistency of leadership across all education services and the quality of self-evaluation and improvement planning within education services

2.4 A Post-Inspection Action Plan was developed in the format of the Education Department Business Plan 2014-15. Estyn accepted the PIAP/Business Plan in July 2014. It can be found at: www.swansea.gov.uk/estyninspections.

2.5 The Chief Executive established an Improvement Board in July 2013 to monitor progress following the inspection. It has met at least monthly from that date to now. In addition, the Leader of the Council established a Member-led monitoring board, the Education Leadership Board, which

met termly during the first year after the inspection and most recently in February 2015.

2.6 In March 2015 the Education Strategic Group was established, under the Terms of Reference:

- To act as an innovation and ideas forum, drawing together schools and local authority Members and officers
- To ensure the development of coherent and consistent short, medium and long term financial strategies for education in the City and County of Swansea
- To ensure political, officer and school involvement in developing such financial strategies - both revenue and capital
- To propose options for Council to consider, outlining potential implications
- To provide a mechanism for strategic dialogue in making budget choices, building on the current base budget review

The Group is served by a number of key stakeholders and delivery partners including Governors.

3.0 Progress on addressing the five Recommendations and further work required

Key to ratings:

GREEN = Excellent progress, YELLOW = Good progress, AMBER = Limited progress, RED = Remains a concern

3.1 Recommendation 1: Develop and implement a strategy to improve levels of attendance in primary schools
Status: AMBER

- Schools made Attendance a top priority and strengthened their structures, systems and processes in line with established effective practice.
- Schools were set more challenging targets based on national improvement trends plus an uplift.
- As a result, there has been good improvement of 1.4% in the rate of Primary Attendance in 2013-14. Wales improved by 1.1%.
- Almost all schools made good improvement. However, other similar schools across Wales also improved and although fewer Swansea schools were in quartiles three and four, the quartile distribution was still negative, with 31% above the median and 69% below (last year was 22% above the median and 78% below).
- The position in the first half of the 2014-15 academic year is that primary school attendance is up on the same period in 2013-14. This is encouraging but improvement needs to be maintained.

Further work required:

- Although there has been good improvement in absolute terms, the comparative position of too many primary schools remains an area for improvement. Schools and the authority will continue to work together to embed and share the strategies and actions that lead to high levels of attendance.

3.2 Recommendation 2: Quality assure the work of officers to secure greater consistency in the level of challenge they offer to schools
Status: YELLOW

- The new Hub arrangements within ERW have strengthened the challenge to schools and the Head of the Education Improvement Hub, appointed in September 2014, has provided strong leadership.
- The team of nine Swansea Challenge Advisers have now been working effectively for one and a half terms. The team has been jointly trained, with Hub colleagues from Neath Port Talbot, by the new Head of Hub and the region.
- The Autumn Core Visits were subject to robust quality assurance processes. These included joint visits with peers and joint visits with the Lead Challenge Adviser or the Head of Hub. All Autumn Core Visit documentation was assessed by the Head of Hub there were moderation exercises at local, Hub, regional and national levels prior to submission of final categories to Welsh Government. This ensured consistency in the work of the Challenge Advisers and reassured schools that they had been treated objectively.

3.3 Recommendation 3: Improve officers' evaluation of the quality of leadership and management in schools to make sure that underperforming schools are identified and supported quickly
Status: YELLOW

- As for Recommendation 2, the new Hub arrangements within ERW have strengthened all aspects of the challenge to schools. The Hub team has been trained to apply the new national categorisation system and the regionally agreed processes consistently and rigorously. Regional paperwork describing the characteristics of leadership and management has been strengthened and that assisted Challenge Advisers in assessing schools fairly and robustly, where in the past they may have been too generous.

3.4 Recommendation 4: Improve the quality of provision for those pupils who are educated other than at school, particularly to raise standards of achievement and to assist reintegration back into schools
Status: AMBER

- The Post-Inspection Action Plan for the KS4 PRU has progressed. Estyn's final monitoring visit took place in January 2015. The KS4 PRU was removed from Special Measures but the whole PRU (all Key Stages)

was judged In Need of Significant Improvement. A new Post-Inspection Action Plan will be drawn up.

- To address the LAESCYP Recommendation, an independent review of Behaviour/EOTAS has been undertaken and a report produced.
- Based on the report's recommendations, a proposal to reorganise EOTAS provision has been developed. It is being consulted on February 2nd – March 19th.

Further work required:

- Reorganised provision will need to be introduced and monitored over time to assess its impact on improved reintegration rates and standards of achievement for pupils.

3.5 Recommendation 5: Improve the consistency of leadership across all education services and the quality of self-evaluation and improvement planning within education services
Status: AMBER

- The Chief Executive established a corporate Improvement Board in July 2013 which has met monthly to monitor progress against the Recommendations from the inspection. In addition, there is a Member-led board which meets regularly to do the same.
- A comprehensive accountability framework is in place. The business planning and performance management process through the Education Department's Business Plan has been streamlined and is supported by lower level plans. Each plan has a nominated lead officer. Estyn accepted the Education Department Business Plan 2014-15 as the post-inspection action plan.
- The Business Plan is aligned with national, Local Service Board and corporate priorities, while also addressing all the Recommendations from the Inspection. It sets out the governance and performance management arrangements for Education.

Further work required:

- The capacity of the senior leadership team within the education department has decreased in 2015. However, the suitable management of key absences has ensured that service delivery has been maintained effectively.

3.6 A self-evaluation of Local Authority Education Services for Children and Young People takes place each year. The latest self-evaluation was completed and published online in December 2014. It can be found at www.swansea.gov.uk/estyninspections. It provides more detail on all the areas covered by the Recommendations.

4.0 Equality and Engagement Implications

Whilst there are no specific equality or engagement implications associated with this report, some specific areas of work resulting from the recommendations will be subject to the Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) process (which incorporates the UNCRC). For example, an EIA report is already being developed for the EOTAS review.

5.0 Financial Implications

There are no financial implications associated with this report.

6.0 Legal Implications

There are no legal implications associated with this report.

Background Papers:

Common Inspection Framework

<http://www.estyn.gov.uk/download/publication/11438.7/common-inspection-framework-from-september-2010/>

Estyn Guidance on inspection of Local Authority Education Services for Children and Young People

<http://www.estyn.gov.uk/download/publications/8326.5/guidance-for-the-inspection-of-local-authority-education-services-for-children-and-young-people-from-september-2010/>

City and County of Swansea LAESCYP Inspection Report 2013

<http://www.estyn.gov.uk/download/publication/291263.7/inspection-report-city-and-county-of-swanse-2013/>

Annual self-evaluation of Local Authority Education Services for Children and Young People, December 2014 / www.swansea.gov.uk/estyninspections

Appendices: None.