

Report of the Cabinet Member for Education

Cabinet – 15 October 2015

ESTYN INSPECTION 2013 – UPDATE ON PROGRESS

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.
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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. Local authorities are inspected on the basis of a self-evaluation. City and County of Swansea was inspected in June 2013 and the report was 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-swanseas-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.
- Annual reviews of the local authority's education services and the self-evaluation report prepared for the inspection provided too positive an analysis of the local 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 (PIAP) 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. The Education Business Plan for 2015-16 which builds on that of 2014-15 is appended below.

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. In order to make the monitoring function more transparent, progress is now reported directly to Cabinet, beginning in March 2015. From January to mid-March 2015, the local authority was without a Chief Education Officer.

2.6 In March 2015, the Education Strategic Group was established, under the following 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 base budget review

The Group is served by a number of key stakeholders and delivery partners including school 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: YELLOW

- Attendance in our secondary schools has hit an all-time high for 2015-16 at 94.0%, up 0.7% on last year. Swansea's ranking improved to 10th in Wales after 5 years where ranking was 15th or 16th.
- In primary schools, the provisional figure in the year to date sees attendance at 94.9%, up 0.5% on last year. National performance and rankings are due in late November.
- By the end of 2014/15, eight primary schools had attendance exceeding 96% and eight secondary schools at or exceeding 94%, with one achieving 96%.

- All schools are now using the common attendance action plans, local authority target setting analysis tools and follow the ERW attendance process.
- Strong links are being established between the Education Welfare Service and Education Improvement Team colleagues (notably Challenge Advisers).
- Two Swansea schools (St Helen's Primary School and Parkland Primary School) appeared in the recent Estyn attendance good practice document.

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 local authority will continue to work together to embed and share the strategies and actions that lead to higher levels of attendance.
- This work will be supported by joint EWS and Challenge Adviser visits in the autumn term and also best practice events scheduled for the autumn term
- In the longer term, the impact on the readiness for school of young children in areas covered by Flying Start provision should support their wellbeing and contribute towards improved 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, continues to provide strong leadership.
- The team of nine Swansea Challenge Advisers have now been working effectively for three 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.
- Quality assurance of the second core visit is now also undertaken by the new Chief Education Officer.
- Quality assurance protocols for reports to Estyn have been strengthened so that the Chief Education Officer approves reports after the Head of Education Improvement has quality assured them.

- Throughout the year, training and guidance has been delivered to challenge advisers in addition to continual feedback on written reports. A summative report on reports to Estyn has been produced, and fed back to challenge advisers, to secure continual improvement.

Further work required

- While the current configuration of Education Improvement Team personnel provides a high-quality service, staff recruitment and retention continues to be challenging (most notably in the secondary sector).
- Continue to monitor the written work of challenge advisers closely.

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

- The recently introduced 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.
- A leadership development programme for both primary and secondary sectors has started to address the needs of the senior leadership team in the secondary sector and new or acting headteachers in the primary sector.
- Support for underperforming schools has been strengthened by a professional working partnership with each Challenge Adviser.
- Schools have been supported, on a cluster basis, to help improve the accuracy of teacher assessment because teacher assessment has been too generous in a few schools.

Further work required

- Further develop the leadership and management programme to build capacity at all levels of management within schools.
- Raise awareness of leadership standards to ensure aspiring (and existing) senior leaders have a full understanding of all aspects of leadership and management (eg HR, trade union issues, finance, health and safety and buildings).
- Continue to liaise with ERW and University of Wales Trinity St David's to develop a robust leadership development programme.
- A few primary schools have been placed in a statutory category within the 2014-2015 academic year. In all cases, pupils' performance,

according to teacher assessment, appeared good and this masked issues on managing resources, including staff. Additional training for new challenge advisers will be required for national categorisation.

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 Key Stage 4 Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) was removed from 'special measures' in January 2015 but the whole Swansea PRU (all key stages) was judged 'in need of significant improvement'. A post-inspection action plan has been developed.
- A new Challenge Adviser with responsibility for special educational needs, including PRUs and special schools, took up post on 13 May 2015. She has begun to work with the centres that comprise the Swansea PRU.
- An internal report commissioned in June 2015 raised significant issues in respect of the strategic and operational capability of PRU settings across Swansea. Following on from the report, actions were agreed by the Access to Learning Team and the Education Improvement Team which have resulted in greater clarity around strategic responsibility and operational management for the 2015-16 academic year.
- A robust implementation plan to improve Swansea PRU was finalised by 31 August and will be shared with all relevant leads and staff of the PRU as soon as possible. A key focus of the implementation plan involves curriculum and staff development. External moderation of the implementation plan will ensure the actions are comprehensive, swift and objective.
- An Intervention Board has been created to support, challenge and monitor the implementation plan. This will also support the wider governance arrangements of PRU settings in Swansea through the newly-formed PRU Management Committee. A chairperson has been appointed for the Intervention Board and terms of reference are being developed. A Teacher in Charge for Swansea PRU will be sought.
- The Intervention Board will work with the Education Otherwise Management Committee (effectively the governing body for the PRU) to ensure robust monitoring of the effectiveness of the post-inspection and implementation plans.

Further work required

- A review of teaching and learning at Swansea PRU is planned for autumn 2015.
- Changes to the remaining elements of EOTAS will be subject to further work. Reorganised provision will need to be gradually introduced over the next academic year and monitored over time to assess its impact on improved reintegration rates and standards of achievement for pupils.

- A decision has been made to restructure the Home Tuition Service and it is envisaged that the new delivery model will be in place from January 2016.
- A decision will need to be made regarding longer-term, strategic-level staffing requirements.

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

- An online DIG (Delivery Improvement Group) reporting tool provides clear lines of accountability and supports a Departmental benefits realisation programme. Benefit Managers and Benefit Owners have been identified and update the self-evaluation as required.
- The Business Plan for Education 2015-16 is aligned with national, regional, Local Service Board and corporate priorities, while also addressing all five recommendations from the post-inspection action plan. It sets out the governance and performance management arrangements for education services in Swansea.
- A pan-Department internal risk register is being developed for introduction to senior staff in early September and operation across the Department from October 2015
- A comprehensive performance management system has been adopted throughout the Department and quarterly performance management meetings are held. The Department has set itself the target of 30 September 2015 for all officers to have individual performance management plans.
- A revised meeting structure has been in operation since May 2015. Strategic Leads Group, Education Department Senior Leadership Team, and Delivery Improvement Group meetings are held on a monthly basis. All meetings have comprehensive agendas, are minuted and receive formal reports.
- There is a strong focus on corporate priorities, local targets and regional objectives at each meeting.

Further work required

- The senior leadership team within the Education Department has been depleted during 2015. Suitable management of key absences has ensured that service delivery has been maintained effectively. This is now proving challenging due to ongoing absence (especially of senior officers) and recent retirements. A revised Departmental structure has been approved by Directors' Group. It is hoped that the new structure will provide business continuity.

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. The 2015 self-evaluation is due by early December.

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

Whilst there are no immediate financial implications arising from this report, acceptance could result in additional expenditure at a future time. Acceptance does not mean that additional resources will be made available and it should be assumed that future spending needs will need be contained within existing budget provision and have full and due regard to the budget principles set out in 'Sustainable Swansea – Fit for the Future' and the likely levels of future budgets having due regard to the budget and medium term financial plan

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-swansea-2013/>

Annual self-evaluation of Local Authority Education Services for Children and Young People, December 2014

www.swansea.gov.uk/estyninspections

Appendix 1

Education Department Business Plan 2014/15 Progress Report

Appendix 2

Terms of Reference EOTAS Intervention Board