

Report of the Cabinet Member for Education

Cabinet – 15 December 2016

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): 1)	It is recommended that: Cabinet notes the progress update on the five Recommendations in the Estyn Inspection Report.
Report Author:	Lindsay Harvey
Finance Officer:	Pini Patel
Legal Officer:	Stephanie Williams
Access to Services Officer:	Sherill Hopkins

1.0 Introduction

1.1 All local authority 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. The City and County of Swansea was inspected in June 2013 and the report was published in September 2013.

2.0 Background – Estyn Inspection 2013

2.1 Many good features and services were noted in the inspection report

<http://estyn.gov.uk/download/publication/291263.7/inspectionreport-city-and-county-of-swansea-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 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 the local authority's capacity to improve were judged to be good. The Inspection Report made five recommendations for improvement.

- R1 Develop and implement a strategy to improve levels of attendance in primary schools
- R2 Quality assure the work of officers to secure greater consistency in the level of challenge they offer to schools
- R3 Improve officers' evaluation of the quality of leadership and management to schools to make sure that underperforming schools are identified and supported quickly
- R4 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
- R5 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 2014-2015. Estyn accepted the PIAP/Business Plan in July 2014. An end-of-year report on that plan was produced in 2015 and a report for 2016 is in development. The PIAP/Business Plan and the last end of year report 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 July 2016. Due to the progress that has been made, from September 2016 the board meets on a bi-monthly basis. 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 to February 2015. In order to make the monitoring function more transparent, since March 2015 progress is reported directly to Cabinet twice annually.
- 2.6 In March 2015, the Education Strategy Group was established, under the following terms of reference:
- to act as an innovation and ideas forum, drawing together schools and local authority elected 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; and
 - to provide a mechanism for strategic dialogue in making budget choices, building on the base budget review.
- 2.7 The Education Strategy 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

Summary

- Primary school attendance for Swansea schools was 95.7% for 2015-2016 slightly down for the same period in 2014-2015 at 96%
- A total of nine schools achieved 97% and above attendance and thirty-two achieved 96% and above, twenty-two achieved 95% and above and

eleven achieved 94% and above. Only four schools achieved 94% and above and one school achieved 92.8% attendance.

- Attendance at the PRU setting was 74.8% an increase on the same period for 2014-2015 at 66.9%.
- Many schools have recorded high sickness absence during this period.
- All schools are now using the common attendance action plans, local authority target setting analysis tools and follow the ERW attendance process.
- Strong links continue between the Education Welfare Service (EWS) and Education Improvement Team colleagues notably challenge advisers. Every school's autumn term core visit has had a specific allocation of time for the education welfare officer to discuss attendance in benchmark 3 and 4 schools, this has been very positive. Every school is in the process of drawing up an attendance action plan as part of the Autumn Core Visit. All will be completed by the end of the autumn term 2016.
- The Education Department has appointed an Incentivising Attendance Officer who has launched the incentivising attendance scheme with schools. A competition for primary aged pupils to draw up a poster to promote good attendance has identified 'A Mighty Attender' as the promotional campaign slogan. An official launch event has been arranged for 6 December 2016. The pupil voice has contributed significantly to this initiative.
- Secondary attendance for Swansea schools for the first half of the autumn term 2016 was 94.7% which is lower than 95.2% for the same period in the previous academic year.
- The "expected" benchmark position would be 14th based on free school meal measures.
- This figure is down 0.5% compared to 2014-2015.
- A few secondary schools will be targeted for additional support and challenge.
- Of the fourteen secondary schools, three had attendance of 93% and above and four achieved attendance of 94% or above, three achieved 95% and above and three achieved 96% and above. Only one secondary school had attendance below 93%.

Further work required

- Data is disappointing compared to the position in the autumn term 2015. However, with concerted effort the end of year projected outcomes for 2015-2016 can be achieved. 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.
- Education welfare officers and challenge advisers as well as the Incentivising Attendance Officer are identifying good practice which is being shared at every opportunity particularly with schools that have failed to make good progress or struggled to implement concepts supporting good attendance and punctuality
- Revised guidance (which includes model warning letters) has now been agreed and has been issued to schools.

- Plans are in place to finalise the revised Code of Conduct for Cabinet approval.
- The Education Welfare Service supports schools regarding the issue of Fixed Penalty Notices in order to ensure that a consistent approach is being implemented across all Swansea schools. An administrative assistant has been appointed and has put in place excellent tracking/audit procedures to support the administrative functions. This post is funded from income from the Fixed Penalty Notices as agreed by Welsh Government.
- In the longer term, the impact on the readiness for school of young children in areas covered by Flying Start provision should support their well-being 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

Summary

- The consistent challenge to schools has shown strong progress since the inspection in 2013. There are now effective standardised processes in place to ensure rigorous challenge (ie deep data analysis, tighter reporting mechanisms and quality assurance procedures). ERW's single platform (Rhwyd) for gathering intelligence across schools captures school improvement well. Thus, all challenge advisers work to common set of high expectations.
- A new regional Head of Quality and Standards has been appointed to ensure that challenge across each hub within the region remains high. Best practice is now shared on a wider basis within Swansea and between other local authorities within the region.
- The autumn core visits and reports to Estyn are subject to robust quality assurance processes. From September 2015 a regional platform for challenge adviser reports has been created to ensure greater consistency on challenge. Joint visits with peers, the Head of Education Improvement and the Chief Education Officer provide further assurance on consistent challenge. All autumn core visit documentation has been assessed by the Head of Education Improvement and lead challenge advisers. Moderation exercises at regional and national levels are in place to ensure consistency.
- Quality assurance of the second core visit is undertaken by the Chief Education Officer. Feedback was provided to challenge advisers in September 2015. From 2016, each lead challenge adviser and Hub Head of Education Improvement will undertake quality assurance.
- Minimal expectations on the levels of challenge have been reinforced again through training and the issuing of the challenge adviser handbook. This has been replicated in 2016.
- Challenging lines of inquiry now underpin the work of all challenge advisers.

- 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 and the Hub joint senior managers meeting, to secure continual improvement. This continues in 2016.
- Training on data analysis has been provided to challenge advisers to generate more challenging lines of inquiry.
- Lead challenge advisers are now consistently good role models for effective challenge in both secondary and primary sectors.
- In the termly visit by Estyn link inspectors in November 2015, it was confirmed that Swansea is a typical authority in terms of the quality of its challenge and support, neither worst nor best in Wales. The balance of evidence supports the yellow status of this recommendation. In July 2016, the link inspector reported that Estyn judged, during inspection of school improvement services in June 2016, that the service provided across the region is good. Improvements were acknowledged in how challenge advisers report to Estyn and in the evidence considered to monitor and evaluate schools.
- All schools have attended September seminars so that they are appraised of what to expect during monitoring visits by challenge advisers.
- Induction, training and standardised guidance has been given to new challenge advisers on how to monitor and evaluate schools effectively.

Further work required

- While the current configuration of Education Improvement Service 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 and field work of challenge advisers closely.
- Ensure that the new regional repository for monitoring reports (Rhwyd) is utilised consistently through checking and providing written feedback on each report.
- Ensure that there is consistent challenge on the quality of statutory school development plans which now contain pupil deprivation grant and education improvement grant expenditure plans.
- Distribute leadership further so that more quality assurance is undertaken by lead challenge advisers.
- New challenge advisers have started in September 2016. As a result, quality assurance requirements have increased.
- School to school work is increasing with greater peer challenge. However, it is more challenging to ensure consistency with more part-time school improvement professionals.

- Since September 2016 a consistent approach is being adopted in how the service provides feedback to schools on their *improving quality* processes.
 - No additional lines of enquiry have been included this year during autumn visits.
- 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

Summary

- The autumn term visits in 2015 challenged leadership, on all levels, thoroughly. Leaders are expected to produce evidence to support improvements. There is clearer continuity from one monitoring visit to the next where progress is determined by response to previous recommendations. Recommendations are set by Estyn and the education improvement service.
- A leadership development programme for both primary and secondary sectors is meeting the needs of the senior leadership teams in the secondary sector and new or acting headteachers in the primary sector.
- Support for underperforming schools has been strengthened through co-ordinated support to schools.
- Schools continue to be supported, on a cluster basis, to help improve the accuracy of teacher assessment because teacher assessment has been too generous in a few schools.
- Challenge advisers now provide feedback on the quality of strategic planning and evaluation processes and reports.
- All schools were evaluated during the second core visits in 2014-2015 to challenge their monitoring processes for improving the quality of teaching.
- All new and acting headteachers have been assigned mentors.
- From September 2016, all schools will receive formal feedback on their improving quality processes.
- A further emphasis has been placed on governor attendance during monitoring visits.
- Secondary challenger advisers are now experienced leaders conducting peer challenge and review. The risk of cosiness has been mitigated against, through quality assurance procedures.
- Evaluations of schools in primary schools are now more firmly based on the principle of schools producing their own evidence of their capacity to improve.
- There are suitable programmes in place for growing leadership within schools as well as a greater scrutiny on how schools develop leaders from within.

Further work required

- Further develop the leadership and management programme to build capacity at all levels of management within schools. A group of primary

headteachers are working with the lead primary challenge adviser to develop a deputy head development programme – this work will feed into the regional leading learning group work and is leading provision in this area in the region.

- 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). (This is built into the aspiring headteachers programmes and is planned for the new primary deputy headteacher programme).
- Continue to liaise with ERW and University of Wales Trinity St David's to develop a robust leadership development programme. (Both the secondary and primary aspiring heads programmes are accredited by Trinity St David's)
- A few primary schools were 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.
- Deploy leaders to support the work of other leaders.
- Provide specific training for long-term serving headteachers.
- Early identification and prevention on stressors that affect headteacher wellbeing.
- Middle leaders in primary/ secondary have had access to regional training in Autumn 2016 and there is now a more formal network for deputy headteachers in Swansea.
- Maintain vigilance that the impact of leadership is evaluated and not just the activities undertaken by leaders.

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

Summary

- Estyn undertook a monitoring visit to Swansea PRU on 14-16 March 2016 and removed the PRU from being 'in need of significant improvement'.
- The designated challenge adviser continues to work closely with the centres that comprise the Swansea PRU. The Additional Learning Needs Unit and the Education Improvement Service are also working to support the PRU.
- The Intervention Board will continue to work with the Swansea PRU Management Committee in the short term to ensure robust monitoring of the effectiveness the new PRU improvement plan.
- Simon Evans, Head of Swansea PRU, is progressing this plan.
- The plan has challenging targets for improved pupil outcomes including attendance and academic performance.
- A replacement for the leadership of Arfyn Education Centre has been secured through the secondment of an experienced mainstream leader.

- The existing temporary deputy head at Step-Ahead has been appointed as Acting Head on a temporary basis.
- The conclusions and recommendations of the EOTAS Visioning Workshop in May have been summarised into a report which was submitted for consideration to CMT.
- A business plan for the new service delivery model has been prepared and will be submitted to Cabinet in December
- The PRU underwent its first Core Visit 1 and is awaiting final categorisation. It seems likely that the findings of the visit will be that good progress has been made since the Estyn monitoring visit

Further work required

- A new leadership structure for the Home Tuition Service is being developed.
- The Head of Swansea PRU will need to provide extended support to the two temporary leaders of PRU provision from September 2016
- Head of Learner Support Services, Head of Additional Learning Needs Unit and Head of PRU /Behaviour Support Unit managers are working on a new leadership structure for the Behaviour Support Team
- The appointment process for the new Head of the PRU / BSU is underway
- The PRU will undergo its first Autumn Core Visit in October 2016
- Head of PRU/BSU is working closely with Heads of Centres, Head of Learner Support Services and the Challenge Adviser to drive improvement through the new PRU Improvement Plan.

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: Yellow

Summary

- The 2015 annual self-evaluation of local authority education services for children and young people (LAESCYP) has now secured Cabinet Member for Education approval and has been published.
- The new Education Department Service Plan for 2016-2017 has been finalised and approved.
- A pan-Department internal risk register is now in place. Operational risks are managed by Heads of Unit and are scrutinised through formal governance methodology using the Education Department's Strategic Leads Board (SLB) and Senior Leadership Team (EDSLT).
- A comprehensive performance management system across the Department is now in place. Following consultation with staff, it has been agreed that the Education Department's performance management cycle will be based on an academic rather than a financial year.

- A revised meeting structure has been in operation since May 2015. SLB and EDSLTT meetings continue to be 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.
- A revised structure for the Education Department has been implemented and, having now been in place for 11 months, it continues to provide a stable and consistent service.
- The recently-appointed Head of Learner Support Service has now been in post for three months. Along with the Chief Education Officer, the Head of Education Improvement Service, the Head of Education Planning and Resources and the Head of Strategic Planning and Improvement Group, the Education Department's top-level team is now fully populated and is functioning well.
- The Department has revised its operational plan and service area performance evaluation reporting templates.

Further work required

- The Education Department's revised performance management arrangements need to be embedded across all service areas. The target date for full engagement is 31 August 2017.

3.6 A self-evaluation of Local Authority Education Services for Children and Young People takes place each year. The 2016 report is in development. Previous versions can be found at: www.swansea.gov.uk/estyninspections. The self-evaluation provides more detail on the areas covered by the Recommendations.

4.0 Equality and engagement Implications

4.1 While there is no specific equality of engagement implication 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 has been developed for the EOTAS review.

5.0 Financial implications

5.1 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 to 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

6.1 There are no immediate 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