

Report of the Cabinet Member for Children, Education & Lifelong Learning

Council – 27 July 2017

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

Purpose:	For Council to receive an update on the progress in meeting the five Recommendations in the Estyn Inspection Report.
Policy Framework:	Estyn Common Inspection Framework.
Consultation:	Legal, Finance and Access to Services.
Recommendation(s):	It is recommended that: 1) Council notes the progress update on the five Recommendations in the Estyn Inspection Report.
Report Author:	Nick Williams
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. 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-swanse-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 to 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. An end of year report on that plan was produced in 2015. A self-evaluation report for 2016-2017 is in development and will be published in the autumn term. 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 now meets bi-monthly. 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 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 (March 2015: Amber, October 2015: Yellow, March 2016: Yellow, November 2016: Yellow, May 2017: Yellow)

Summary

- Primary school attendance was 95.4% for the first two terms of the 2017-2018 academic year. This compares to 94.9% for each of the two previous years. The five year trend since 2011-2012 has an improvement of 1.6% which is the joint highest rate of improvement in Wales.
- It is likely that there will be an increase in absence due to term time holidays in the second half of the summer term particularly, however it is anticipated that primary attendance will improve overall by around 0.1% on the figure for the last academic year.
- 21 schools achieved 96%+ attendance and 34 schools achieved 95%+ and 19 schools achieved 94%+ attendance for the period.
- Four schools achieved 93%+ attendance and only one school achieved 92.8% for the period.

- It is hoped that attendance overall within the primary sector will rise by about 0.1% for the academic year 2017-2018.
- Termly meetings with the Interim Head of Learner Support and the Challenge Adviser with responsibility for attendance are taking place to review performance and identify schools in need of support and challenge.
- Education Welfare Officers and Challenge Advisers, in addition to the Incentivising Attendance Officer are identifying good practice that 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.
- The incentivising attendance awards and celebratory events are having a positive impact in raising the profile of good attendance in City and County of Swansea schools.
- The Education Welfare Team support 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.
- Where schools are consistently applying the ERW Guidance there is evidence of improved attendance. Particularly where the Guidance is being used across the cluster group.

Further work required

- ERW guidance has been adopted to support improved attendance in Swansea schools. This guidance is being embedded in Swansea schools and there is evidence of improved attendance where schools have implemented procedures outlined in the guidance.

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 (March 2015: Yellow, October 2015: Yellow, March 2016: Yellow, November 2016: Yellow, May 2017: Yellow)

Summary

- Generally, 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 (i.e. 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 was 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. However, live recommendations made on safeguarding need to be followed up by 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. However, the Estyn report in 2017 that there is not always enough evidence on the quality of teaching. Also, there is not enough evaluation of the standards seen in pupils' work.
- 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 and 2017.
- 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. The Head of Primary Phase Unit in Swansea has now been filled initially on an interim basis. The main purpose of the Head of Primary Phase Unit in Swansea is to ensure good quality support for school improvement by managing a team of core and commissioned challenge advisers. 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.
- 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.
- Local authority support plans are now in place to ensure that the schools most in need of support have a clear picture of how improvement will be accelerated in partnership with a range of stakeholders.

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). A new Head of Secondary Phase Unit took up post on 1 February 2017 and is planning to consolidate the secondary unit by September 2017.
- Continue to monitor the written work and fieldwork of challenge advisers closely.
- Ensure that the new regional repository for monitoring reports (Rhwyd) is utilised consistently through checking and providing written feedback on the majority of reports.
- 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. In addition, further part-time challenge advisers (x4) commence on 1 April 2017. Re-affirmation of consistent methodology will be required.
- 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. Although there is consistent guidance, consistent behaviours and values require consolidation.
- 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.
- A fresh supply of challenge advisers will be introduced in September 2017. This may mitigate against any risk of over generous evaluations from challenge advisers in a small minority of schools.

- 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 (March 2015: Yellow, October 2015: Yellow, March 2016: Yellow, November 2016: Yellow, May 2017: 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. However, the previous vacancy in the Head of Primary Phase Unit role resulted in temporary representation on the Leading Learning Priority Board so the mentor/mentee list was outdated. Remedial action has been taken.
- From September 2016, all schools will receive formal feedback on their improving quality processes. Challenge advisers have reported that they require further training on this especially as new inspection arrangements for schools commence in September 2017.
- A further emphasis has been placed on governor attendance during monitoring visits. However, governors do not always act as critical friends. Their role requires deeper evaluation in a few schools especially when they act as advocates only.
- Secondary challenger advisers are now experienced leaders conducting peer challenge and review. The risk of cosiness has been mitigated against, through quality assurance procedures. The new Head of Secondary Phase unit has swiftly provided a thorough analysis and useful tips on how to improve evaluation by challenge advisers in his unit.
- 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. This is gathering momentum as schools become accustomed to regional expectations.
- There are suitable programmes in place for growing leadership within schools as well as a greater scrutiny on how schools develop leaders from within.
- Core visits in autumn 2017 demonstrated greater evaluation of the impact on standards by leadership of the school.

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. There is an emerging pattern of concerns on 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.
- A new approach is being adopted to support and challenge schools using a Team Around the School (TAS) approach to hold schools to account with holistic support from the local authority. The approach is designed to be preventative. In a few cases, the support offered to schools has been so strong that it may have masked capability issues in leadership and management. This cannot be sustained.

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 (March 2015: Amber, October 2015: Amber, March 2016: Red, November 2016: Amber, May 2017: Amber)

Summary

- The Cabinet met in December 2016 and approved moving forward on the proposed plans for the development of a new building to house PRU provision on the Cockett House Site.

- A progress update report on the implementation of the new model of provision for Education Other Than At School (EOTAS) and feedback from the recent stakeholder consultation has been planned for Cabinet for 20 July.
- Amanda Taylor has been appointed as the new Head of Swansea pupil referral unit (PRU) and Behaviour Support Unit (BSU) and took up her post on 24 April 2017.
- Simon Evans has been appointed as the new interim deputy headteacher of Swansea PRU and the BSU.
- Transition work between interim Head of PRU and newly appointed Head of PRU is underway and a successful and effective partnership had been developed.
- The designated challenge adviser continues to work closely with the centres that comprise the Swansea PRU. Recent monitoring procedures indicate progress being made against recommendations set.
- The PRU improvement plan is driving further progress and the newly appointed Head of PRU and deputy headteacher, are progressing this plan.
- The plan has challenging targets for improved pupil outcomes including attendance and academic performance.
- Temporary PRU leaders are driving improvements at each centre and have taken lead roles in key areas of priority for the PRU improvement plan.
- An EOTAS steering group has been set up to oversee the progress of the business plan and has met to review progress and inform development at a strategic level.
- Analysis of staff needs had been conducted in line with current needs and proposed reduction in the number of pupils to be admitted to PRU provision over the next 5 years. The number of posts have been identified and proposed adverts have been provided to HR for initial approval.
- Discussions have taken place with headteachers across primary and secondary schools to ascertain their needs from the future service in terms of training and support. More detailed follow up to collate needs is underway.

Further work required

- Report back to Cabinet on the progress of the business plan to overhaul model of service delivery.
- Report back to Cabinet on the progress towards establishing new accommodation for the PRU and Behaviour Support Team (BST) and Home Tuition Service.
- Report back to Cabinet on the progress of appointing suitable staffing to enable operation of the new model of Halfway House, and mode of delivery of the service.
- Secure permanent and temporary appointments for vacant posts at the PRU.
- Secure temporary appointment or secondment of new Head of Arfryn Primary Education Centre.
- Develop strategy for the service delivery model for the new support team.

- 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 (March 2015: Amber, October 2015: Amber, March 2016: Amber, November 2016: Yellow, May 2017: Yellow)

Summary

- An annual self-evaluation cycle calendar has been established in order to further enhance responsibility, accountability and consistency in leadership and improvement planning. The self-evaluation will be completed in the summer term and finalised early in September.
- The remit of the School Improvement Partnership and the Swansea Learning Partnership will be reviewed. Within the terms of reference, there will be an expectation to support, challenge and monitor the Local Authority self-evaluation and improvement planning. In addition, the Pupil Voice Forum will contribute to the self-evaluation report.
- The new Education Department Service Plan for 2017-2018 has been finalised.
- 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 EDSLTL 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.
- The new Chief Education Officer took up his post on 20 March 2017. There is a vacancy in the Education department's top-level team and the structure will need to be reviewed to align with local, regional and national drivers.
- 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.
- Continue with interim arrangements for the Head of Learner Support Service while a wider review of the Education Department structure is undertaken by December 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 Whilst there are 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 UNCRRC). 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-swansea-2013/>

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

www.swansea.gov.uk/estyninspections

Appendices: None.