

A Protocol for Operations  
Between 5 Local Authorities  
and the  
Education Achievement Service



In partnership with



## Introduction

The formation of the South East Wales Education Achievement Service (EAS) represents a major step change in collaboration and in the delivery of Education in Wales.

It is essential that all 5 local authorities (LA's) are clear on their collective expectations of the EAS and how these expectations are to be met.

This document outlines a set of principles and outlines agreed operational practice which will serve to ensure there are clear lines of communication and accountability between the EAS and partner LA's.

## Principles

### 1. The Education Achievement Service

- works for and on behalf of the 5 partner authorities (LA's) and their schools.
- works to the commission of these 5 authorities as set out in this protocol and related documents. It is recognised that these documents will need to be reviewed, refined and revised with the aim of producing a single commissioning position by September 2013.
- engages with schools on behalf of the Local Authorities:
  - as strategically defined by the JEG (as set out in the Commissioning Agreement);
  - in response to schools and their individual needs;
  - in response to pre and post inspection needs of schools and LA's.

2. Any changes at a strategic level are taken by the JEG. (Change may be proposed by the EAS and/or the LA's). Operational management of the EAS rests with the Managing Director of the Service.

3. An annual calendar of all EAS meetings with headteachers and governors, including agendas and attendees, will be shared with LA's in advance, including meetings of headteachers in an individual authority.

4. Both Directors of Education and the management and practitioners within the EAS need to ensure they inform each other promptly of any issues or developments relevant to each school.

These principles should inform everything that we do.

## Operational Practice

These comprise core activities which may be varied by local agreement to reflect LA needs and circumstances (recognising this may incur additional costs). Standard expectations include:-

## Safeguarding

- In all of its publications, content and communication with schools the EAS will promote the primacy of making children safe.

## Monitor, support, challenge and intervention (MSCI)

### (i) Statutory Duty

- The EAS will implement a common process to ensure the statutory duty of the LA is met. This will include the categorisation of schools.

### (ii) Briefings & Intelligence Sharing

- The Senior System Leader for the region/LA will attend a fortnightly briefing with the Director of Education and management team. These meetings are reciprocal intelligence meetings when, for example, LA's update the EAS on school amalgamations, closures and wider issues. One meeting on a half-termly basis will focus upon quality assurance by the LA. The meetings will recognise that regular written reports will be used for routine updates and will therefore focus on significant school issues and take up no more than 3 hours.
- Systems Leaders liaise with Inclusion personnel within the LA informally (on a needs basis) to explore leadership issues relating to for example the performance of vulnerable groups, attendance, effective classroom management, the management of behaviour, LAC and other related issues.
- The Senior System Leader will recommend to the LA the school category prior to it being confirmed with Headteacher and Governing Body.
- If a school is identified as requiring intervention and statutory powers are to be evoked, a meeting will be held with the Director of Education and relevant EAS personnel. All related information and supporting evidence to be presented to the LA at least 3 working days prior to the meeting.

### (iii) Performance Data

- The EAS will undertake the prompt analysis of un-reconciled performance data and share this with the LA as per agreed schedule.

### (iv) Reporting

- a) Reports on school visits are to be written on a standard, agreed template - EAS personnel report the outcome of all visits to schools to an agreed LA contact within 48 hours.
- b) Overview reports to be prepared as per contract and provided to the Director of Education and his/her nominees. Frequency to be agreed with LA at the beginning of each academic year.

To ensure there is coherence and a complete understanding of improvement activity in schools, overview reports need to include, where appropriate, objective commentary on the leadership of the school by

- The governing body
- Headteacher
- Senior leadership team

and reflect the work undertaken in the school by other EAS and LA personnel.

## Communication

- The EAS and LA's share draft communications to schools whenever a change in policy or practice is determined by the JEG or by national government; or any other significant document.

## Inspections

- The EAS will prepare pre inspection reports for LA's – 3 weeks before due date set by Estyn. Systems Leaders to return the report in 5 working days to allow the LA to sign off before forwarding to Estyn.
- Attendance at inspection feedback meetings will be by agreement with the home LA. Outcomes of the Inspection will be discussed between EAS and LA prior to advice being given to schools.
- The role of the EAS where a school is placed in significant improvement or special measures is outlined in the EAS Intervention Framework document.

## Appointment of Senior Staff in Schools

- Working with the governing body, human resources staff and the Director of Education, the EAS support the assessment and appointment process of head, deputy and assistant headteacher posts, as defined by the LA.

## Performance Management

- The EAS will act as one of the nominated LA representatives. The LA reserves the right to send a further representative as deemed appropriate.

## Consultation

- In response to consultation papers from Welsh Government and other National Bodies, the EAS will seek initial comments from LA's and then prepare a draft document for discussion on behalf of the consortium and / or LA. The EAS will not make a separate response to Welsh Government and / or other National Bodies.

## Budget and finance

- Through the Intervention Framework, the EAS will monitor the impact and use of grant funding.
- Each Authority will need to assure themselves that the grant has been spent in accordance with grant criteria.
- Audit trails as required by WAO/WG need to be defined.

## Overview & Scrutiny

- A representative of the EAS prepare reports and attend individual LA Education Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Schools' Forum at a frequency set by the Local Authority but at least annually (this also includes attendance at Joint Scrutiny arrangements).