



EDUCATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 10TH JANUARY 2022

SUBJECT: SELF EVALUATION

**REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR FOR EDUCATION AND
CORPORATE SERVICES**

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 Update Members on the self-evaluation process and its impact on strategic planning. To also raise awareness of the contribution of self-evaluation towards the implementation of a revised education strategy.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 The education self-evaluation process is an integral feature of the iterative cycle of strategic planning and service improvement. It is fundamental in ensuring the directorate secures ongoing improvements that positively contribute to the objectives in the service improvement plan and corporate plan.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Members are requested to note the contents of this report.

4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 Self-evaluation provides key evidence for improvement across the Education Directorate.

5. THE REPORT

- 5.1 A range of data and other information is collected through the self-evaluation process and has the following purposes:
- provides an evidence base upon which to arrive at judgements about pupil outcomes and progress, quality of provision and the effectiveness of leadership and management of Education Services and its future improvement journey;
 - reflects on what has been done to consistently deepen understanding;

- recognises and celebrates good practice and where appropriate uses this to support others in line with Caerphilly LA's vision for education;
- ensures that stakeholders understand the context of the organisation and the contribution that they can make towards further improvement;
- improves the performance, impact and effectiveness of the directorate services and its constituent parts, including commissioned services, so that Members and Regulators can hold officers, the school improvement service, education and youth settings to greater account;
- evaluates value for money across services; and
- quality assures our contribution to overall corporate objectives.

5.2 An effective self-evaluation process will lead to the following:

- strategic and operational plans which are monitored against clear targets and success criteria;
- purposeful activities linked to continuing professional development;
- improved provision for education and youth support services; and
- accelerated outcomes on the standards and quality of education and wellbeing for all learners across the Caerphilly Local Authority.

5.3 The Caerphilly Education directorate self-evaluation links directly to the Estyn Local Government Education Services Inspection Framework (LGES) and our wider local authority priorities. This enables us to have an accurate and up to date picture of our strengths and areas for development across all areas of our work.

5.4 The three inspection areas of the LGES inspection framework are set out below.

Inspection area 1 – Outcomes

- Standards and progress overall
- Standards and progress of specific groups
- Wellbeing and attitudes to learning

Inspection area 2 – Education Services

- Support for school improvement
- Support for vulnerable learners
- Other education support services

Inspection area 3 – Leadership and management

- Quality and effectiveness of leaders and managers
- Self-evaluation and improvement planning
- Professional learning
- Safeguarding arrangements
- Use of resources

5.5 The range of self-evaluation activities that take place across the education directorate include:

- Monitoring and evaluation reports that identify progress against the corporate plan objectives and/or emerging priorities in the service improvement plan;
- Focused self-evaluation sessions to promote consistency and coherence in our approach to achieving quality self-evaluation outcomes. This can also include stakeholders who do not work within the education directorate;

- Termly monitoring of the impact of the work identified in service improvement action plans;
- Regional peer moderation;
- Use of data to support evaluations. Data are represented in monitoring and evaluation reports, service improvement plans, and the Directorate Performance Assessment;
- Stakeholder voice activities including the Youth and Junior Forum;
- Consultation processes with key stakeholders (including scrutiny committee) on strategic decisions and planning.

Examples of monitoring and evaluation reports in autumn term 2021 include:

- How effective is support for LAC pupils?
- Evaluate the delivery of ESF employability projects delivery and Adult Community Learning (Adult Education) delivery during 2020/2021.
- Do we effectively manage school places to meet the needs of our communities?
- Priorities for Elective Home Education (EHE)
- Priorities for the Educational Psychology Service (EPS) for academic year 2021/22.
- Professional Learning and Development – healthy schools case study.
- Evaluating the effectiveness of Library Services engagement with children and young people.
- Evaluate how the LA carries out its statutory duties for identifying children & young people in employment.
- Explore the pattern of attendance and exclusions for academic year 2020/2021 and share identified areas for development.
- Evaluate progress made to date with regards EOTAS provision and agreed strategy.
- Highlight how the LA carries out its statutory responsibilities for safeguarding.
- Identify progress re. implementation of Edtech project and consider next steps with regards to infrastructure, devices and curriculum.

Monitoring and evaluation reports are scheduled during the academic year and are subject to scrutiny by senior and middle managers, who act as consultees providing guidance and advice. Actions arising from these sessions are followed up at the appropriate time.

5.6 Service Improvement Plan

Education priorities continue to be identified annually via the Service Improvement Plan and termly monitoring and evaluation processes. In September 2020, the SIP was amended to address the immediate needs of the covid-19 pandemic. Ongoing monitoring and evaluation processes have identified a range of emerging priorities for 2021-22:

1. Re-ignite, recover and reform learning in order to raise standards of learning;
2. Improve the aspiration, engagement and progress of vulnerable learners;
3. Further develop the strategic vision for EOTAS;
4. Further reduce the number of NEET young people at the point of leaving compulsory education and beyond;
5. Improve pupil attendance;
6. Effective Management and Implementation of the 21st Century Schools Programme;
7. Ensure that all disadvantaged learners make appropriate progress so that attainment is in line with their peers.

The most recent service improvement plan (2021-22) includes action plans written by service areas that take account of the emerging priorities listed above.

5.7 Re-ignite, recover, reform – Transition to a new Education Strategy

In response to the challenges faced over the past 18 months, all service areas across the education directorate are reflecting upon recent events and considering how service re-shaping could address current and future challenges. There will be a revised five-year Education Strategy, which will support schools where the following Service Improvement Plan descriptors will be adopted:

Reignite – inspire and promote creative learning, engage learners, encouraging those that are reluctant;

Recover – accurately assess and evaluate, implement appropriate intervention and provision;

Reform – build on recent advances in the use of digital technology, develop newly-implemented methodology to accelerate learning.

Our Education Strategy will directly correlate with the Welsh Government plans to Renew and Reform. Welsh Government acknowledges the pandemic has had a significant impact on learners and disruption has been a significant challenge. The key areas, which WG and CCBC will address are as follows:

- Learners will need support to develop a secure foundation for learning;
- Learners will need support to continue to progress, developing their skills, knowledge and understanding;
- Practitioners will need support for their own wellbeing;
- The educational system is already working towards reform.

The evidence from Welsh Government suggests that the pandemic has affected some groups of learners more than others. Therefore, the nature of Education Strategy needs to reflect this additional concern, recognising and supporting different groups of learners in the appropriate way. In particular:

- vulnerable or disadvantaged learners, and learners with ALN have not necessarily had access to the support they need; some may have faced challenges with distance learning, and some with readjusting to face-to-face learning. We need also to support those learners whose circumstances have changed during the pandemic, who may not have previously fallen into this category;
- learners in Early Years education are at a critical stage for language, social, emotional, physical and cognitive development. Pupils risk missing key development milestones, which could impact on their emotional wellbeing, communication and learning development. They may have specific challenges in finding a sense of belonging in their schools or settings, or in being away from their families;
- learners in post-16 and transition and those moving into post-16 provision will be concerned with progressing to their next steps, as well as their longer-term employability and skills. These learners will have experienced particular pressures and uncertainty, and their confidence will have been affected;

- specific challenges for Welsh immersion learners in English-speaking households, and learners transitioning from Year 6 to Year 7.

The purpose of the revised Education Strategy:

- Identify and reset priorities for the Local Authority based on high expectations and ambition for all learners, with focus on standards, progress and provision;
- developing a strong, consistent and strategic vision that takes account of the challenges presented through the Covid-19 pandemic;
- Ensuring all stakeholders engage and adopt the vision outlined in the strategy;
- Identify a set of agreed milestones that monitor our effectiveness as a Local Authority;
- Agree a set of principles around how we work together to maximise efficiency and productivity;
- Support the implementation of recent Local Authority strategies including the Inclusion Compendium, Engagement and Progression strategy, and the Edtech digital initiative;
- Ensure financial decisions impact directly on learner provision and achievement, including the 21st century schools strategy;
- Build on the strengths of the Shared Ambitions strategy;
- Implementing Curriculum and ALN reform for the benefit of all learners;
- Reassert focus on standards and skills with particular focus on literacy, numeracy, digital skills and vocational learning.

Actions to implement the revised education strategy:

- Undertake a review to consider the impact of the 'Shared Ambitions' strategy, identifying strengths and areas for development. Findings from review to inform future strategy;
- Undertake a rigorous scrutiny of available self-evaluation data including monitoring and evaluation reports, service improvement plans, quantitative and qualitative data;
- Undertake a number of question and feedback sessions with focus groups that will be used to identify the main areas for support and consider milestones to track progress. Engagement groups will include the Youth forum, school councils, Governor network, education practitioners, parents/carers, other LA directorates, and education partners;
- Write the education strategy that takes into account the findings gathered from the above. The content to include milestones that allow stakeholders to track the impact of the strategy;
- Implement the strategy within wider strategic planning. This will include embedding the priorities within future service improvement plans, EAS Business plans and remodeling the Directorate Performance Assessment to reflect changing priorities;
- Implement effective communication of the strategy. This will include a conference for education practitioners to launch the strategy, sharing the strategy with parent and youth forums, and utilising social media. Easy access versions to be produced to support all members of the Caerphilly community.

5.8 Conclusion

Educational activity in the authority is to be reviewed as part of the transition to a revised Education Strategy, all within the context of the re-ignition, recovery and reformation agenda that supports current and post-pandemic development.

The review will be comprehensive and triangulated and based on the proven quality and monitoring mechanisms now in place, drawing on the self-evaluation activities of all stakeholders in the educational context.

Educational priorities will include a focus on support for those with specific needs, balanced with a focus for all on learning standards and skills development.

All service areas across the Education Directorate understands the importance and need for self-evaluation as key evidence for improvement.

6. ASSUMPTIONS

6.1 No related assumptions have been felt to be necessary in relation to this report.

7. SUMMARY OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

7.1 There are no specific recommendations as this is not an operational document and there are no delivery implications. The IIA is attached as Appendix 1.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There are no financial implications with respect to this report.

9. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are no personnel implications with respect to this report.

10. CONSULTATIONS

10.1 The draft report was distributed as detailed below. All comments received will be reflected in the next version of the report.

11. STATUTORY POWER

11.1 Education Act 1996
Shared Ambitions
Equality Act 2010
'Shared Purpose: Shared Future, Statutory Guidance on the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015', and in particular SPSF 3 – Annex B, which is issued in accordance with Section 17(3) of the Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010 and applies to local authorities in respect of local well-being plans and whenever they take decisions which might affect children and young people.

Appendix 1: Integrated Impact Assessment

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Councillor Ross Whiting, Cabinet Member for Learning and Leisure
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