

SPECIAL CABINET - 15TH JANUARY 2013

SUBJECT: THE POST INSPECTION ACTION PLAN IN RESPONSE TO THE ESTYN INSPECTION IN JULY 2012

REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR, EDUCATION & LIFELONG LEARNING

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To agree a programme for monitoring the Post Inspection Action Plan (PIAP) – attached as Appendix 1.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 The quality of Caerphilly Local Authority's education services for children and young people was inspected in July, 2012, and was carried out in accordance with section 38 of the Education Act 1997, the Children Act 2004 and the Learning and Skills Act 2000. Following publication of the report in November, 2012, a PIAP has been produced in order to demonstrate how progress towards the recommendations will be planned and monitored. On the 11th December, 2012, Members of the Education for Life Scrutiny Committee were appraised of outcomes of the inspection and content of the draft plan.

3. LINKS TO STRATEGY

- 3.1 Raising standards of achievement and reducing surplus places in schools are current priorities within the Directorate Improvement Plan.

4. THE REPORT

- 4.1 Estyn use a four point scale to make judgements on three key questions - how good are outcomes?; how good is provision?; and how good is Leadership and Management, as well as current performance and prospects for improvement. The scale is as follows:-

- Excellent - many strengths, including significant examples of sector-leading practice;
- Good - many strengths and no important areas requiring significant improvement;
- Adequate - strengths outweigh areas for improvement;
- Unsatisfactory - important areas for improvement outweigh strengths.

- 4.2 Caerphilly was judged to be '*adequate*' for the 3 key questions.

- 4.3 Current performance was judged as '*adequate*' because:-

- in 2011 at key stage 3, two thirds of secondary schools were below average and in key stages 3 and 4 there are too many schools in the bottom quarter for important performance indicators when compared to similar schools on the free school meal benchmarks;

- Caerphilly has not met its Welsh Government benchmark at key stage 3 in the last three years;
- secondary schools have not been held consistently to account for their performance and, as a result, improvement in some schools has been too slow;
- fixed-term exclusions from schools of five days or less have risen notably; and
- since the last inspection in 2009, there has been little progress in reducing the significant number of surplus places in both secondary and primary schools.

4.3.1 However, it was acknowledged that:

- when the performance of Caerphilly schools is compared with that of similar schools in Wales, based on the percentage eligible for free school meals, performance is just above average in key stages 1 and 2;
- performance against the Welsh Government's benchmarks based on free school meal entitlement has improved at key stage 4 over the last four years and, in 2011, the authority met the two main benchmarks for key stage 4;
- there are effective processes for the early identification of pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) and appropriate support for their physical and learning needs; and
- Caerphilly is successfully reducing the number of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET).

4.4 Caerphilly Local Authority's capacity to improve was judged as '*adequate*' because:

- target-setting and self-evaluation are not consistently robust and challenging;
- corporate and statutory partnership planning processes are not aligned;
- progress against recommendations from previous inspections has been inconsistent;
- elected Members have not acted quickly enough with regard to the secondary school modernisation strategy and do not challenge under-performance in schools robustly enough; and
- the Local Service Board (LSB) is yet to develop the capacity to hold others to account.

4.4.1 However, it was acknowledged that:

- senior leadership within the Education and Lifelong Learning Directorate is strong and is driving the improved challenge and support to schools;
- there is good practice where firm links to planning and appropriate focus on improving outcomes for learners are contributing to measureable improvement in standards;
- the Director of Education makes sure that appropriate links are made between projects and strategies at service level and those at strategic partnership level in order to add value to the Directorate's work; and
- improved alignment of financial and educational outcomes data in planning and performance management is further strengthening the already effective financial management of education services.

4.5 When the report was published in November, 2012, the following recommendations were made:

- implement improvement strategies and specific actions to improve outcomes for learners, especially at key stages 3 and 4;
- strengthen the level of challenge to its secondary schools;
- improve the robustness of self-evaluation and target setting;
- align corporate and partnership strategic planning processes in order to make best use of available resources to improve outcomes for children and young people; and
- take urgent action to reduce surplus capacity in schools generally and secondary schools in particular.

- 4.6 Estyn is of the opinion that the authority falls into the category of follow-up activity and will require an Estyn Monitoring visit. The date and focus of this monitoring visit will be determined by Estyn in due course
- 4.7 The PIAP was produced by the Directorate Senior Management Team and senior officers in the Education Achievement Service (EAS). It outlines the recommendations made by Estyn in the inspection in July, 2012 and describes clear actions, timescales and success criteria. The PIAP includes contextual information within each recommendation, as well as arrangements for monitoring and reporting the progress made.
- 4.8 The PIAP will be monitored through Senior Management Team, Corporate Management Team, Cabinet and Scrutiny. This schedule is included in the PIAP document.

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 No Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) have been undertaken on the Post Inspection Action Plan itself as Equalities and Welsh Language issues have no direct relevance to the recommendations contained within the Plan.
- 5.2 EIAs and relevant consultation will be undertaken at the appropriate time however, where the specific actions for example impact on issues of literacy and numeracy, school exclusions etc where an Equalities or Welsh Language perspective may be part of the context.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no financial implications.

7. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no personnel implications.

8. CONSULTATIONS

- 8.1 There are no consultation responses that have not been reflected in this report.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1 That Members agree arrangements for the monitoring of the PIAP.

10. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 10.1 The PIAP has been submitted to Estyn and there is a requirement for progress to be monitored.

11. STATUTORY POWER

- 11.1 Education Act 2005.

Author: Keri Cole, Manager, Learning, Education and Inclusion.
Consultees: Directorate Senior Management Team
Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning
Chair and Vice Chair Education for Life Scrutiny Committee
Corporate Management Team
Education Achievement Service

Appendices:
Appendix 1 Post Inspection Action Plan