



EDUCATION FOR LIFE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 9TH JULY 2013

SUBJECT: PROGRESS MADE TOWARDS RECOMMENDATION 3 OF POST INSPECTION ACTION PLAN (PIAP)

REPORT BY: ACTING DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report is to inform Members of the progress made towards meeting Recommendation 3 within the Post Inspection Action Plan (PIAP).

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 In the Estyn inspection in July, 2012, KQ3.2 was judged to be 'adequate'. The recommendation was to align corporate and partnership strategic planning. Since that time, much work has been undertaken to address this and this report outlines actions taken and the progress made.

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 During the inspection, whilst it was acknowledged that the Self Evaluation Report (SER) generally represented all partners, it was felt that the report did not always evaluate '*the impact on outcomes robustly enough or support assertions with relevant evidence consistently*' nor did it '*always identify areas of strength or those needing further development.*' In particular, there were '*too many initiatives in place across service areas where the evaluation of impact was not built in from the start and consequently officers were not able to say whether the developing practice was effective or not.*'
- 4.2 Whilst there was good practice in some services, in regard to planning and the use of data, it was not consistent across all services and agencies.
- 4.3 It was felt that the response to recommendations made in the past has been insufficient, particularly in the area of removal of surplus capacity.
- 4.4 The PIAP focussed on the development of systems to improve the use of data and strengthen the quality of self-evaluation and how it supports planning for improvement. There was an emphasis on the setting of challenging targets. It also outlined actions to ensure that the quality of the SER is improved and more accurate with clear evidence, supporting areas of strength and areas to be developed. The SER was to be reviewed bi-annually.

- 4.5 Following the inspection in July, 2012, and in line with the Directorate planning cycle, the SER was revised three times. Initially, staff involved received additional training in how to analyse data more effectively and given guidance on how to use supporting evidence. Lead staff were also given support on how to write more evaluatively and less descriptively. The third version of the SER will be completed in September, 2013, when the Foundation Phase and KS2-3 data will be confirmed. The document will be further updated in December and will include confirmed KS4 data. The summative document, complete with judgements, will be presented to this Committee in September 2013. Prior to this, it will be submitted to Estyn for feedback.
- 4.6 The process of self evaluation has become very systematic and much more consistent across the Directorate. All areas have a self evaluation timetable where they identify data sources and supporting evidence for their judgements. On a biannual cycle, lead officers prepare a 200 word summary, together with a judgement on their service. Officers involved are split into challenge teams and meetings are scheduled. The lead officer presents the summary and the other officers challenge the information and judgement. The final judgement is agreed and recorded, together with the rationale. Improvement actions are identified and agreed. In the second part of the cycle, these actions are revisited by the challenge teams and the lead officer reports on progress. If there is a significant barrier which the service manager is finding difficult to overcome, it is escalated to the Learning Education Inclusion (LEI) Manager. These summaries form the basis for the judgement of the Quality Indicator in the SER. Service Improvement Plans and Operational Plans will include the actions for improvement and are often amended during the year to reflect further actions identified. For the Leadership and Management section, challenges take place at Senior Management Team level and follow the same cycle of challenge.
- 4.7 For KQ1 all officers attend the challenge meeting which is held for Foundation Phase – KS3 in July and KS4 in December.
- 4.8 The progress in relation to services for School Improvement are also presented to Senior Management Team by the Senior Systems Leader, Education Achievement Service (EAS). The report and judgement is included in the SER.
- 4.9 Targets set within all plans are agreed with managers and presented to SMT for challenge. Once confirmed they are presented to and monitored by Scrutiny.
- 4.10 Targets set for the end of key stages reflect those set by schools.
- 4.11 Schools set targets and discuss them with the Systems Leader. They agree a minimal level of performance and indicate a challenging target. The targets are agreed by the governing body and submitted to the EAS. The Senior Systems Leader (EAS) meets with the Manager of LEI to analyse school target and, where targets are too low, a visit to the school is scheduled. During the visit, the performance of every individual pupil is reviewed and additional target groups are identified. The barriers these pupils face are discussed and appropriate interventions are agreed. The LA often funds additional transport and revision sessions for those pupils on Free School Meals (FSM) who live in the more isolated communities and who do not have access to their own transport.
- 4.12 The additional target groups are included on the LA provision maps so that the intervention can be evaluated.
- 4.13 There is also a recommendation for provision and progress of vulnerable groups.
- 4.14 Following the success of the challenge meetings, the process will begin for Year 10 pupils in June, 2013.
- 4.15 Families First projects are monitored closely and progress is reported to the Children and Young People's (CYP) Board. An external evaluation of all projects was planned at the outset and completed in March 2013. Findings will be shared with partners and any issues will be addressed.

- 4.16 The Directorate model for self-evaluation has been presented to CMT with a view to informing a council-wide approach to self-evaluation.
- 4.17 Cross-consortia self evaluation is in the early stages where the SER will be shared with partners and Directors, along with EAS, will be invited to challenge judgements made.
- 4.18 The quality of self-evaluation throughout the Directorate has improved by strengthening existing processes. This has contributed to more rigorous monitoring of improvement and robust planning and target setting.
- 4.19 The culture within the Directorate is one of increased accountability and ambition for achievement and success. Challenge is encouraged and embraced.
- 4.20 Lead officers have a more in-depth understanding of how other service areas function and how they can collaborate more effectively.
- 4.21 Managers know their own areas and now accurately judge their service's effectiveness. They use the challenge meetings to confirm their areas for development. They also use them to support the monitoring of their service delivery. They use data systematically to support judgements and build on evaluation to projects identified.
- 4.22 The PIAP has been monitored robustly on a monthly basis and reported to CMT, Scrutiny and Cabinet.
- 4.23 These sessions have led to rigorous challenge and further improvement, particularly in regard to target setting in schools, achievement of FSM pupils and removal of surplus places.
- 4.24 The SER is now a document based on analytical evidence which clearly identifies strengths and areas for development.
- 4.25 The LA has worked closely with other consortium colleagues to develop a thorough approach to the Quality management Process of the services delivered by the EAS.
- 4.26 Whilst much progress has been made, a sharp focus will be maintained on this area to secure further improvement.
- 4.27 The culture of accountability and challenge are key to driving forward improvements.
- 4.28 Peer challenge will be introduced to include other Directorates, EAS and Directors from other local authorities.
- 4.29 Another priority is to strengthen the challenge within School Performance and one of the actions identified in the Leadership and Management challenge meeting is to set up a Scrutiny Panel in September 2013 to engage with headteachers about the performance from the previous year and to explain the context of the targets set.
- 4.30 In conclusion, it is the view of the Directorate Senior Management Team that there has been a significant improvement in the robustness of self evaluation and target setting and that this recommendation has been met.

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.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are no specific financial implications.

7. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 There are no specific 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 note the content of the report and the progress made to meeting Recommendation 3 of the Estyn report July 2012.

10. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1 To inform Members of the progress made in relation to Estyn recommendation.

11. STATUTORY POWER

11.1 Education Act 2005

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Consultees: Directorate Senior Management Team
Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning
Chair and Vice Chair Education for Life Scrutiny Committee
Corporate Management Team
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