

Evaluation of Progress Against Recommendations

R1 Improve standards and performance to reduce the percentage of schools that are in the bottom 25% when compared to similar schools across Wales (1.1) and reduce the gap in performance between boys and girls (1.2)

Monitoring

Embedded tasks since the 2011 LAESCYP inspection include:

- continuing to monitor, challenge and support targeted primary schools identified as underperforming;
- enhancing the role of elected members in school improvement interventions with stage 3 and 4 schools;
- embedding decisive earlier interventions in primary schools where serious concerns are identified;
- providing targeted INSET to primary schools in the lower quartiles to raise pupils' literacy and numeracy standards and plan with schools the use of the SEG grant funding;
- continuing to strengthen primary standardisation and moderation procedures in line with statutory assessment arrangements through subject co-ordinator meetings, training of all Foundation Phase teachers in the end of Foundation Phase outcomes and supporting Foundation Phase Partnerships in the development of standardised portfolios;
- continuing to provide and improve effectiveness of primary cluster group meetings and meetings of the Foundation Phase Partnership Boards to ensure the sharing of good practice and to further improve teaching strategies, planning and assessment; and.
- analysing primary and secondary school outcomes in 2012 in order to reprioritise planned support.

Ongoing work includes:

- annual update to performance targets (Spring 2013);
- subject Forums and PLCs sharing of good practice between schools; and
- Governor training on understanding data and supportive challenge in schools.

(1.2)

Embedded tasks include:

- Subject Officers/Link Officers monitoring, challenging and supporting boys' literacy and numeracy developments in primary schools with high levels of boys' underperformance;
- a three day literacy course aimed at Year 3 & 4 teachers focusing on teaching phonics, spelling, reading and oracy into writing;
- sharing of best practice and information to primary schools from the 'Tribal' 3 year programme to counteract the under-achievement of boys and from Gary Wilson's conference on boys' literacy, through INSET and co-ordinators' meetings;
- sharing and monitoring of best practice in targeted groups of schools with high levels of boys under-achievement;
- Literacy officer support to schools' PLCs focused on raising boys' literacy and dissemination of practice;

- production of a mental maths resource for the Foundation Phase and training for all schools in the use of the resource;
- introduction of an improved science scheme of work for science at Key Stage 2 which provides pupils with more engaging, contextualised activities and tasks that appeal to boys;
- consolidating the use of the 'Science Enquiry Games' resource book received by each school in the spring term 2012;
- support PLC in planning and implementation of an improvement programme targeting boys reading in Welsh at Key Stage 2.

Additionally, work to plan, implement and monitor interventions in schools where boys are underachieving in year 5 in Welsh is on target.

Evaluation

Overall performance continues the pattern of previous years with Flintshire being one of the highest performing local authorities in Wales on indicators at Key Stages 3 and 4. When Flintshire's overall performance on key indicators is compared with Councils across Wales attainment is broadly in line with expectations at Key Stage 3 and higher than might be expected at Key Stage 4.

Whilst recognising the concerns expressed by schools regarding the consistency of end of Key Stage teacher assessments in the Primary Phase across Wales, Flintshire still has too few primary schools that are in the top 25% and too many in the bottom 25% based on the 2011/12 data in the Foundation Phase (FP) and in Key Stage 2. Assessments in the Council's schools are below the expected levels at the end of the FP and at Key Stage 2. The rate of improvement on outcomes at Key Stage 2 is less than that to which Flintshire aims.

Whilst Flintshire's learner outcomes at secondary level compare favourably with other areas of Wales, Wales does not compare favourably with standards in a substantial number of other countries. Areas of positive performance need to be viewed in the light of a national need to further raise standards of achievement for all learners. This will require a sustained focus on improving pupils' literacy and numeracy skills and ensuring all learners leave full-time education with a recognised qualification in both first language and mathematics.

(1.1)

Foundation Phase & Key Stage 2

Foundation Phase outcomes are reported for the first time in 2012. Overall performance at the end of the Foundation Phase is too low at 1% below the All Wales averages. Whilst four out of five learners (79.7%) achieve the expected Foundation Phase Outcome Indicator (FPOI), this places the Council in 15th position (3.6 percentage points) below the expected 6th position. Raising standards across the Foundation Phase remains a priority.

In Language, Literacy and Communication (LCE) skills/ English the 2012 outcome was 82%. Performance in LCE is the lowest performing of the Foundation Phase areas and is a key priority for improvement. This places Flintshire below the Wales average of 83.4%.

2012 performance in Language, Literacy and Communication Skills/ Welsh (LCW) performance was 84.1%, which is below the Wales average of 85.9%.

Maths performance at 85.9% is below the Wales average of 86.6%.

PSD performance at 91.6% is above the Wales average and the strongest area of learning in Flintshire, but further progress is required to secure top quartile outcomes.

Performance at Outcome 6 is overall good and improving. Outcome 6 in LCE, Mathematical Development (MDT) and Personal, Social Development (PSD) are above the Welsh average.

In the Foundation Phase Indicator Outcome 5+ only 39% of schools are in the higher quartiles. These figures are similar in LCE, LCW and maths.

In Outcome 6+ 48% of schools are in the higher quartiles for LCE, 58% for maths and PSD, but only 20% in LCW i.e. one school.

Comparisons at Key Stage One and Foundation Phase show that our position has been too often in the lower quartiles over the last 3 years.

At Key Stage 2, there has been a steady improvement in performance at level 4+ over the past few years. There has been an improvement in the CSI at the end of Key Stage 2 over the past three years, but a decline in the relative Authority position which fell in 2012 to 16th (4.3 percentage points below 6th position). Performance at 81.3% is below the Wales average of 82.6%.

Performance at level 5+ is generally good compared to Wales and shows a steady upward trend in all core subjects. Training provided by the Authority on achieving the higher levels has had an impact on end of Key Stage results.

There was sustained performance in English in 2011 and 2012 at 83.8% after a steady rise over the past five years. The Council's relative position has fallen to 17th and below the Wales average of 85.2%. At level 5+ there has been a steady rise in performance above Wales averages. Raising literacy standards across the curriculum (English and Welsh) remains a key priority. The newly appointed LOTS (Literacy Outstanding Teachers) are focusing on raising standards at Key Stage 2 in targeted schools.

In Welsh, performance has weakened at level 4+ over the past two years. At 78.9% the Local Authority is 18th and below the Wales average of 84%. Due to the low cohort size, however, the difference between achieving 6th and 18th position is just eight pupils. At level 5+ Flintshire has been consistently above the Wales average.

Outcomes in Maths at level 4+ have risen steadily over the past three years from 83.3% in 2010 to 86.3% in 2012, but the Council's relative position in Wales has declined and at 86.3% places the Local Authority as 16th in 2012 and below the Wales average of 86.8% by 0.5 percentage points. 34.5 % of pupils achieved Level 5+ in 2012 and this represents a steady rise in level 5s from 27.9% over the last three years. This trend is above the Wales average.

Outcomes in Science at level 4+ have risen steadily over the past three years, but the Council's relative position is only 16th and at 87.8% is just below the Wales average of 88.5%. The percentage of learners achieving Level 5+ has risen significantly from 30.1% in 2008 to 36.4% in 2012. This figure compares favourably with the Wales average of 33% in 2012.

In Key Stage 2 level 4+ 64% of schools are recorded as being below the median in the CSI and for English. Outcomes are also too low in Science. Raising the quartile position of schools in the core subject areas remains a key priority for improvement.

FSM eligible learners benchmark data reflects consistently higher performance. In 2010, the percentage of schools above the median for the CSI was 80% at KS1 and 83% at Key Stage 2. Around a third of schools were in the top quarter at each Key Stage (13 schools), with very few in the bottom quarter (just one school at Key Stage 1 (2.4%) and three at Key Stage 2 (7.5%).

At inspection, four schools were judged as having adequate standards and six schools as good standards in 2011/12. One primary school was in special measures, but was recommended to be removed from the category within four terms. Targeted support will continue to raise standards in all primary schools to at least good.

Areas for further development include:

- raising standards across the Foundation Phase remains a priority (including those in Language, Literacy & Communication);
- increasing the percentage of pupils achieving level 4a at KS2 (as opposed to 4c) will provide a stronger foundation for Key Stage 3;
- raising the benchmark position at the end of Key Stage 2 remains a key priority; and
- ensuring no primary schools enter Estyn categories of concern and moving all schools towards good or beyond.

Key Stage 3

When compared with authorities nationally, performance of Flintshire learners at the Key Stage 3 Core Subject Indicator is good overall. 76.0% of Flintshire pupils achieved the Core Subject Indicator in 2012 - an increase of 2.2% on 2011 and continuing the upward trend over the last five years. Despite this improvement, the gap between Flintshire and the Wales average, at 3.5 percentage points, is lower than in previous years and Flintshire is placed 7th in Wales.

Compared to Welsh Government value added estimates of performance in 2012, Flintshire schools overall performance was good. Welsh first language, based on a small cohort of learners, was not as successful following a significant improvement in 2011.

Welsh Government 2011-12 Key Stage 3 (from Key Stage 2) estimates of performance against actual are:

	Model 1	Model 2b	Actual
CSI	70.6%	72.9%	76.0%
English	78.6%	80.7%	83.1%
Welsh 1st	76.8%	76.2%	67.9%
Mathematics	80.1%	81.4%	83.9%
Science	82.6%	84.6%	87.3%

The Welsh Government Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 Value Added Summary 2011/12 rates Flintshire's outcomes in the second quartile with a significant positive value added figure for model 1. Model 2b also shows positive value added but is in the third quartile.

Performance of Flintshire learners in the Core Subjects is good overall with Welsh Government Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 Value Added Summary 2011/12 rating Flintshire's outcomes in English and Science in the first quartile with significant value added for Model 1. In Model 2a English outcomes are in the top quartile, with Science in the second quartile.

Mathematics is in the second quartile for both models with a significant value added on Model 1. Welsh First Language was in the fourth quartile in model 1 and 2a with the small cohort of learners not able to consolidate the significant improvements achieved in 2011.

The proportion of learners achieving Level 5+ improved again in English (0.6 percentage points), Mathematics (1.9 percentage points) and Science (1.8 percentage points) in 2012 continuing the trend of improvement in each of the last five years in all of these subjects. However, the gap in performance between Flintshire and Wales narrowed in 2012. Flintshire ranked 6th, 7th and 3rd respectively in the core subjects.

When considered against FSM benchmarking, six Flintshire schools were above the median in each of these core subjects with six below the median. However, there were fewer schools in the upper quartile, particularly in English.

Performance in English, Maths and Science shows a generally positive trend at levels 6+ and 7+, with outcomes close to target other than for English at Level 6+.

Outcomes in non-core subjects at Key Stage 3 continue to be good and improving. The proportion of learners achieving Level 5+ in 2012 was higher than in 2011 in all non-core subjects. Flintshire outcomes were in the top four of all authorities in Wales for all subjects in 2012 with the exception of PE (although even here Flintshire outcomes increased from 81.5% to 85.6%).

FSM benchmarking identifies more individual school non-core outcomes above the median than below in each of the last three years. In 2012 this trend continued and of 144 core and non-core benchmarked outcomes for Flintshire schools, 34 were in the top quartile, 44 in the second, 39 in the third and 27 in the fourth. Outcomes at Levels 6+ and 7+ in non-core subjects have not compared to Wales averages as positively as Level 5+. There were general improvements in 2012 across the range.

Areas for further development include:

- continuing to improve performance at level 6+ and 7+ to ensure pupils make as much progress as possible; and
- aiming to improve benchmark performance so that no school's results are in the bottom quartile against similar schools.

Key Stage 4 & 5

At Key Stage 4 the proportion of Flintshire learners that attain the Level 2 Threshold including English/Welsh and Maths is very good. In 2012 figures show this was 59.6%, compared to a Wales average figure of 51.1%. This compares to 58.2% in Flintshire and 50.1% for Wales in 2011. This widens the differential between Flintshire and the Wales average from 2011. In 2012 Flintshire had three schools placed in the upper quartile and a further four in the second, with only two in the lower quartile. Progress since 2008 when Flintshire secured 45.2% against a Wales average of 45.6% has been excellent.

Outcomes across Flintshire for the Level 1 Threshold have improved once again from 93.7% in 2011 (Wales 90.3%) to 95.6% in 2012 (Wales 91.8%). Seven schools were in the upper quartile and a further two at or above the median, with no schools in the lower quartile, when compared to FSM benchmarking in 2012. This is excellent progress since 2007 when the Flintshire figure was 88.1% against a Wales average of 86%.

Outcomes across Flintshire for the Core Subject Indicator have improved once again from 57.3% in 2011 (Wales 48.7%) to 57.6% in 2012 (Wales 48.9%). In 2012 two schools were in the upper quartile for performance at the CSI, with a further five in the second quartile and only two in the fourth.

Compared to Welsh Government value added estimates of performance in 2012, Flintshire schools' overall performance is good with actual performance above estimate on the four indicators estimated

Welsh Government 2011-12 Key Stage 4 (from Key Stage 2) Estimates of performance against actual

	Model 1	Model 2b	Actual
Level 1 Threshold	92.3%	93.3%	95.6%
Level 2 Threshold	67.5%	70.7%	77.3%
CSI	47.1%	51.1%	57.6%
Level 2 Threshold + 48.6%		52.6%	59.6%

The 2011/12 Value Added Summary (matched to prior attainment at Key Stage 2) places Flintshire outcomes in the upper quartile for both models for the CSI, Level 2+ and Level 1 indicators, with generally significant value added. Level 2 Threshold and

both points scores are in the second quartile on both models, with significant value added in model 1.

The Average Wider Points scores for Flintshire learners has been below the average in Wales in recent years (nine points below in 2011) although we have consistently predicted an improvement in this indicator following changes in curriculum design. Outcomes in this indicator for 2012 show Flintshire now 44 points ahead of the Wales average and this is good progress. Improvements in learner performance have contributed to a 95.5 point year on year increase and the number of learners completing the WBQ has also been a significant factor. Figures also show Flintshire's average for Capped Wider Points score 13.3 points ahead of Wales in 2012 compared to just 3.8 points in 2011.

Analysis of value added data provided by Fischer Family Trust shows that, when compared to past performance at Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3, Flintshire Key Stage 4 learners achieve above expectations for the A* to G pass rate, A* to C passes and A*/A grades. Introducing social factors within the SX has identified small negative outcomes for performance at A*/A grades in recent years, but in 2011 this was positive, which demonstrated good progress.

Flintshire aggregates the outcomes of CATs tests taken by learners in Year 7 each year. The 2012 Key Stage 4 cohort therefore took these tests in 2007 and there was a marked decline in the proportion of learners with scores above average relative to previous years, with only 43.3% of learners scoring above average on the CATs Mean Score compared to the expected 50%. However, working with schools the local authority refused to accept an overall reduction in targets set for this year group, in fact maintaining an aspiration for improvement. The result of this has been that the initial low analysis of this group has not affected outcomes at Key Stage 4 in the way that may have been feared and this is a good and important outcome.

The very low proportion of learners leaving full time education without a recognised qualification is excellent with the trend over 5 years being a reduction from 1.5% to 0.2% in 2012 (Wales benchmark 0.4%).

In schools the proportion of Post 16 learners achieving the Level 3 threshold varies across providers but is good overall at 96.8% in 2011 and 97.3% in 2012.

The average wider points score of Flintshire Post 16 school learners increased to 817 in 2011 compared to a Wales average of 799. This was the first time in recent years that Flintshire had exceeded the Wales average, as more schools undertook the WBQ than in previous years. Provisional figures for 2012 show a decrease in points scores across Flintshire and Wales and this needs to be investigated. There is currently too wide a variation in outcomes within and across centres, with many good outcomes whilst others are only adequate. This is a key driver for the Strategic Outline Case for change.

Analysis of A Level data for schools provided by Fischer Family Trust shows that value added performance was positive in 2011. Fischer demonstrates that of 1597 matched entries there was a positive value added for pass grades of 1% on the PA model and 0.8% on the SE model. There was a more significant level of value added for the number of A-C grades achieved, at 3.1% and 2.1%. At the highest A*-A level

Flintshire had a positive value added figure of 0.9% and 1.1% on the two models and this demonstrates significant progress compared to previous years.

In Flintshire, participation rates (in Year 12 / FE college) for Key Stage 4 school leavers are good, show a positive trend and are consistently higher than the all Wales average. In 2011 89% of learners progressed into Year 12 compared to 85.1% across Wales. At the end of Year 13, 84.6% of Flintshire learners continued in education compared to 79.4% of Year 13 learners in Wales. Overall, Flintshire Learners are slightly more likely to complete Sixth Form and stay in education than is average across Wales.

The trend of decline in the number of learners known to be NEET in Flintshire after Year 11 continued in 2012 with a reduction of 0.1 percentage points on the 2010 figure to 2.7%. This is the best figure in Wales and significantly below the national average of 4.4%.

Outcomes of Estyn Inspections of Secondary Schools are good. This also reflects the outcomes of the 2011 Area Inspection report on the quality and standard of provision for 14 – 19 year old learners in Flintshire, when current performance and prospects for improvement were judged as good. Five Flintshire High Schools have been inspected under the new framework. Progress in these schools has been good. Performance in all key questions has been judged as good across all five schools. Current overall performance is judged as good in each school and prospects for improvement are excellent in four schools and good in the fifth.

Areas for further development include:

- continuing to raise standards of achievement at Key Stage 4 for all five key indicators so that within the next four years they improve and are consistently above Flintshire's FSM ranking;
- developing protocols for sharing and analysing post-16 attainment across the full range of learning providers;
- aiming to improve benchmark performance so that no school's results are in the bottom quartile; and
- ensuring post 16 reorganisations secure improved Key Stage 5 outcomes for learners.

(1.2)

The percentage difference in the performance of girls and boys in Flintshire across the areas of learning in the Foundation Phase and in the Foundation Phase Indicator is less than the difference for Wales at Outcome 5+. The lowest percentage difference in Flintshire is in Maths reflecting the position for Wales.

The percentage difference in the performance of girls and boys in Flintshire at Key Stage 2 is slightly wider in English by 0.6 percentage points but less in maths by 0.1 percentage points. In reading, writing and maths combined the gap remains at 0.6 percentage points between Flintshire and Wales. The Council has targeted groups of schools where there is a significant girl/ boy % difference in literacy and this is positively impacting on standards in those schools.

Performance of boys in achieving the Key Stage 3 Core Subject Indicator is good and has shown a positive trend of improvement with 73.7% of boys succeeding in 2012. This is 6.5% above the Wales average and ranks 4th. Girls' performance at CSI in 2012 was 78.4%. This is one percentage point below the previous best figure achieved in 2011, when Flintshire girls ranked 3rd in Wales.

Performance of boys and girls both show a generally positive trend at Key Stage 4. At 57.2% (in 2011) boys' outcomes for the Core Subject Indicator were 11.7 percentage points above the average of boys in Wales. Boys had the highest outcomes in Wales for the second consecutive year. Girls' outcomes in Flintshire for this indicator, at 57.3%, were 5.3 percentage points higher than the average for Wales and ranked third. In 2012 girls performed better, with boys achieving 53.6% (Wales boys 45.1%) and girls 61.7% (Wales girls 52.9%).

At the Level 1 threshold figures for 2012 show the continued positive trend with Flintshire boys outperforming Wales boys by 5 percentage points (Flintshire 95%, Wales 90%), whilst Flintshire girls outperformed Wales girls by 2 percentage points (Flintshire 96%, Wales 94%) in 2009.

In schools there is generally no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls at the Level 3 threshold. The wider points score for girls (841 in 2011) is higher than that for boys (792) although the boys were further above the Wales average performance than the girls. This continued in 2012 with girls scoring 75 points more than boys, although 98% boys achieved the threshold compared to 97% of girls.

R2 improve the standard and quality of provision in primary schools by:

- **addressing a trend of declining attendance (2.1);**
- **reducing fixed term exclusions (2.2); and**
- **reducing school balances and deficits in line with national guidelines (2.3).**

Monitoring

(2.1)

Embedded tasks include:

- setting targets to reduce absences from individual schools for the IWO service and requesting that schools report progress as a matter of course to Governors on a termly basis;
- ensuring that Governors are trained and fully aware of expectations on attendance and exclusion matters;
- encouraging schools to reduce the numbers of days exclusion placed upon pupils by introducing a universal model tariff for misdemeanours;
- supporting targeted schools in developing a range of strategies including rewards for pupils and use of partner agencies and parents to improve attendance rates;
- reviewing current IWO involvement using a quality assurance framework.

Targeting support towards those schools most in need, ongoing tasks include ensuring that schools set challenging targets, monitor progress and evaluate

outcomes. The service now shares progress on attendance rates with schools on a half termly basis. It shares expected standards and challenges if these are not achieved.

(2.2)

Embedded work includes:

- delegating Social Inclusion funding to schools so that schools can target support more immediately;
- encouraging schools to adopt the model “universal tariff” for exclusions to ensure consistency and fairness;
- change the referral process to the short term PRU, enhancing school responsibility and encouraging all schools to support the Managed Moves Protocol;
- training for schools on classroom management and behaviour management to reduce the requirement to exclude.

Continuing work includes:

- encouraging schools to develop in house strategies to avoid/reduce exclusions; and
- encouraging Governing Bodies to challenge decisions made by Headteachers through training for governors.

(2.3)

Embedded tasks include:

- developing a policy on school balances for inclusion in the Scheme for Financing Schools;
- consulting with internal stakeholders, reviewing responses and updating policy;
- submitting the draft policy to Schools Budget Forum for consideration;
- approval of the revised policy; and
- circulating the revised policy to Headteachers and Chairs of Governors.

The current task is to embed robust systems for monitoring adherence to policy

Evaluation

(2.1)

The Council has a highly effective range of services and strategies which support and promote attendance and support pupils to maintain their educational placements. **Primary School attendance shows an improving trend from 93.7% in 2009/10, to 93.9% in 2010/11 and 94.5% in 2011/12.**

The Inclusion Welfare Service (IWS) has a history of extremely effective partnership working with schools to ensure a whole school approach to reducing absenteeism which include Attendance Strategy Meetings, Electronic Truancy Call, First Day absence calls and weekly monitoring. The IWS works very closely with the Behaviour Support Team and pupils struggling to access school are further supported through targeted Behaviour Planning / Management Meetings. This has ensured that attendance in schools across Flintshire has been consistently above the national average since 2006/07.

Flintshire is looking to build on this good practice to bring attendance figures in line with the UK benchmarks. To support this training has been held for school Governors to reinforce the importance of pupil attendance. A conference was also held for schools in November 2012 to promote good practice and explore ways of moving forward.

Monthly monitoring reports for attendance are shared with all key officers within the Directorate including the Director and Cabinet Member for Education.

The IWS has developed a comprehensive tracking system to monitor the impact of officer involvement. This is currently being reviewed and early indications suggest that it has supported more targeted interventions by the service.

The Welsh Government reviewed the actions of Local Authorities with regard to support for attendance. Flintshire was highlighted as an example of effective practice.

(2.2)

Since 2008-09 there have been no permanent exclusions within Flintshire's Primary Schools. The number of fixed term exclusions for primary pupils rose in 2009/10 to 123 instances but has reduced and remained fairly constant with 90 instances in 2010/11 and 99 in 2011/12.

Clear guidance regarding policies and protocols are in the Local Authority Behaviour and Attendance Policy. Half termly meetings are held for secondary school representatives to discuss and review policy and appropriate strategies. Officers also contribute to the Inclusion Service ANCo training and termly meetings.

The Local Authority has been working to support the reduction of exclusions within its schools. Monthly reports on exclusions are issued to Inclusion service managers to ensure appropriate action can be taken. The Managed Moves protocol is fully implemented and is operational within both primary and secondary schools.

There are effective procedures in place to reintegrate pupils back into school including Pastoral Support Programmes and reintegration meetings. Officers work hard to enable pupils to retain their current placements or to settle into new ones.

(2.3)

The overall position for Flintshire schools showed a decrease in net surplus balances from £3.402m in March 2011 to £3.113m in March 2012. Primary School balances totalled £2.061m at March 2011 and £2.182m at March 2012. The range of balances is between a surplus of £121k (Ysgol Gwenffrwd) to a deficit of £42k (Sychdyn CP). There were 10 primary schools with deficits totalling £164k at March 2011.

Following a wider finance review, which ensured that capacity is in place to deliver a full review programme, the Authority has also commissioned an activity-led review of Education Funding, focusing on extending delegation to schools and improving the educational rationale of the funding formula.

The Council has also introduced revised arrangements for the management of school balances following the inspection recommendation in 2011. A new policy has been developed following extensive consultation with Headteachers' Federations, Governing Bodies, School Budget Forum, and Trade Unions. Implementation of the new arrangements is expected to secure continuing reductions in school balances from the end of the 2012/13 financial year in March 2013.

R3 improve how senior officers and all elected members work together to:

- **improve standards for all learners (3.1);**
- **improve self-evaluation and reporting to members (3.2); and**
- **reorganise secondary schools, reduce surplus places and make better use of resources (3.3)**

Monitoring

(3.1)

Completed work includes:

- reviewing reporting of outcomes and improvement strategies to the Lifelong Learning Overview and Scrutiny Committee;
- revised remit for Member/ Officer School Performance Monitoring Meetings;
- broadened Member participation in School Performance Monitoring Meetings.

Work underway includes:

- revising the school/ LA partnership agreement with particular reference to LA responsibility for monitoring and evaluating performance of schools, in line with implementation of the regional school improvement service in April 2013; and
- a new commitment to training for Councillors in their role of promoting good governance and school improvement as school governors.

(3.2)

Self-evaluation involving stakeholders is a key strength of the Council. This was also recognised by Estyn in the May 2011 14-19 inspection. Following discussions during and following the October 2011 LAESCYP inspection the authority has taken steps to ensure that all stages of the process (particularly stakeholder engagement) are well documented.

Embedded work includes:

- Annual Scrutiny consideration of performance against education targets;
- implementation of revised quarterly performance reporting arrangements;
- review of protocols on reporting to elected members;
- general member induction (post-election) including factsheets, training events and tailored support for office holders;
- published annual timeline of performance information and performance reporting framework;
- Member Workshops on educational performance;
- renewed self-evaluation based on 2011/12 outcomes.

(3.3)

The Council's School Modernisation Strategy was developed with extensive involvement from Headteachers, Governors and Elected Members from the earliest stages of discussion of principles. It was approved in 2010 with support from the Council's Executive and Scrutiny functions. However, the then Executive did not support a proposal for closure of the County's smallest primary school (in accordance with the strategy) and the secondary review programme was temporarily halted in the Summer of 2011 following initial community consultation and reaction.

Key work since the Autumn 2011 inspection includes:

- engaging Elected Members in the strategic and operational aspects of secondary school area reviews;
- preparing and submitting 21st Century School Programme documentation;
- continuing with area reviews of secondary schools (including post 16 provision);
- progressing primary review work; and
- completing proposals for amalgamations in accordance with policy.

Evaluation

(3.1)

Elected members have a good track record of prioritising improving learner opportunities and outcomes. In recent times, they have shown increasing willingness to take key decisions to secure and safeguard opportunities and outcomes for the future. The Local Service Board is increasingly ambitious in its programme in support of local learners and communities.

Flintshire County Council's vision is based on extensive knowledge of national and local priorities and performance data. Members engage in these priorities in regular seminars and in annual Cabinet and Scrutiny programmes for the discussion of policy and performance. Members scrutinise standards of attainment and school performance.

The Scrutiny work programme provides robust challenge and support for the improvement of learner outcomes. The Cabinet Member attends each meeting to address questions and explain policy decisions. On-going monitoring of standards and provision, together with scrutiny of 14-19 and school modernisation programmes are examples of how Scrutiny has helped to develop and enhance the implementation of council priorities.

A standing group involving both the Chair and Vice Chair of Scrutiny and the Cabinet Member oversees work to support individual schools facing difficulty. They monitor the usage of the Authority's school improvement powers. They are particularly effective in working alongside Governing Bodies to help them recognise both the need to change and to support them through improvement journeys. This group builds on the earlier work undertaken by the Chair of Scrutiny and Cabinet Member, but allows for wider engagement of elected members. This group is already having an impact on the number of primary schools moving from Stages 3 and 4 of the Council's monitoring and intervention procedures.

(3.2)

Flintshire has an established cycle of rigorous self-evaluation and feedback from learners and stakeholders. It uses this to inform its forward planning.

Quarterly and end of year service delivery reviews take place across the Council. The latter involve service teams in evaluating their performance against their team plan targets. Managers work to challenge and moderate each other's team evaluation judgements across Lifelong Learning and wider Council services.

The Lifelong Learning self-evaluation is shared with Headteachers' Federations, the Governors' Association and Children & Young People's Partnership partners including voluntary sector representatives. Their evaluative comments and priorities influence the development of self-evaluation recording and service planning. Examples include the Children and Young People's Partnership and Health and Wellbeing Partnership and the relevant sub groups and networks. e.g. the Families First leads delivery board.

The Chief Executive, Director of Lifelong Learning and senior Directorate Managers meet regularly with stakeholders. They meet on a scheduled basis with Headteacher Federations, school governors, trade union representatives and wider groups of partners. They meet with the Flintshire Youth Council and with school councils and groups of learners during their programme of visits. Many successful strategies have developed from these meetings. Examples include the Wellbeing strategy and the participation programme for engagement.

The Local Authority also undertook a perception survey of schools in July 2011 with positive outcomes. The areas surveyed were support for school improvement, support for additional learning needs, social inclusion and wellbeing, access and school places and leadership.

The lead commissioning officer for inclusion consults with parents, young people, Headteachers and ANCos in the development of the inclusion strategy and evaluation of previous strategic developments.

Flintshire County Council is proactive in the way it approaches underperformance in schools. This has led to significant improvements in schools and in key performance indicators. The Cabinet Member, Chair of Scrutiny and Member Working Group rigorously review all school inspection reports. They also scrutinise and actively monitor improvement plans and other actions in relation to schools causing concern to the Authority. This involves working closely with school leadership teams and governing bodies.

Scrutiny challenges the Cabinet Member and senior officers on standards of attainment and school performance. Systematic monitoring by scrutiny has focused attention on continuous improvement.

The Children and Young People's Partnership encourages a wide range of learners, stakeholders and partners to provide evaluative feedback through a range of mechanisms including consultation workshops, events and surveys and by utilising social media. The high level of engagement in the development of the current Children and Young People's Plan and the emerging Families First programme are examples of this. Other examples of learners influencing strategic developments include:

- Respect fest/ Respecting Others;
- Speak Out and Youth Conference Reports / development of social media use for virtual youth conferences in 2012;
- Young Flintshire participation levels;
- 21st Century Schools;
- Child Poverty Strategy;
- Families First;
- National Outcomes and disability scoping with parents of disabled children;
- Young at Heart (intergenerational project); and
- participation in recruitment and in consultation for Team around the Family posts, participation posts and 3rd sector posts.

(3.3)

Flintshire County Council has an appropriate range and number of school places, with effective monitoring and planning for future needs. The incoming Administration has moved quickly to take key decisions on addressing surplus places. Actions have included issuing statutory proposals on closure of the smallest primary school and approving preferred options for the secondary area reviews, together with accelerating the formula review and area school review programmes.

The primary school level of surplus places is currently 17.93% (average September 2012) whilst the secondary school surplus is 15.71% (average September 2012). In 2011 (the last available benchmarking) Flintshire's figures were the 9th lowest in primary and 7th lowest in secondary in Wales. 20 primary schools and 3 secondary schools have more than 25% surplus places. The Council has plans to address these issues within its School Modernisation Strategy through reorganisation and alternative use of school premises.

Primary school surplus places have reduced over the last three years from 18.20% to 17.93% due to fewer Year 6 pupils leaving than the number of reception children starting school. Pupil numbers are expected to increase in future years, reducing surplus places to below 10%, due to an increasing birth rate and planned housing developments. This is already being evidenced with an increased reception intake in September 2012. 49 additional children were in the reception classes of local schools compared with September 2011.

Secondary school surplus places have increased over the last three years from 12.76% to 15.71% due to fewer Year 7 pupils arriving than young people leaving secondary education. Pupil numbers in Year 7 are expected to decrease in future years until September 2015-16. All secondary schools with more than 25% surplus places are subject to reviews which have reached preferred option for change stage.

Flintshire County Council determines the capacity of schools in accordance with Welsh Government guidance. The Council works with schools to develop strategies

for the reorganisation of school accommodation to meet current and future needs, e.g. short-term 'mothballing' of class bases in schools where pupil numbers are expected to increase in future or reorganisation of Additional Learning Needs provision.

The 2011 LAESCYP inspection concluded that the Authority's asset management planning is good and information on condition, sufficiency and suitability of school buildings is accurate and regularly updated. Budgets are closely matched to where there is the greatest need. Work undertaken is on time and to budget.

In recent years, the Council has opened new purpose built primary schools at Greenfield and Connah's Quay. A new primary school is currently being developed at Shotton which is on target for opening in September 2014. Following five completed or current consultations, the County Council is on schedule to complete its infant/junior amalgamation programme by September 2013, providing better opportunities and continuity for learners. The Council has also issued a statutory proposal for closure of its smallest primary school (at Rhes y Cae) with planned closure in August 2013.

The 16-18 Strategic Outline Case, approved by the Welsh Government, ensures delivery through collaboration between schools, Deeside College, work-based learning providers and training providers. All key partners are represented on the Flintshire Learning Network. The Network was inspected in 2011 securing the best ever result in Wales with good outcomes and prospects.

Flintshire is also leading the development of the regional procurement framework for 21st Century Schools programme delivery to secure value for money as well as community benefits including training, apprenticeships and employment opportunities.

Following a wider finance review, which ensured that capacity is in place to deliver a full review programme, the Authority has also commissioned an activity-led review of Education Funding, focusing on extending delegation to schools and improving the educational rationale of the funding formula.

The Council has introduced revised arrangements for the management of school balances following the inspection recommendation in 2011. A new policy has been developed following extensive consultation with Headteachers' Federations, Governing Bodies, School Budget Forum and Trade Unions. The level of school balances has reduced from £3,124k in 2011/12 to £2,928k in 2012/13. Implementation of the new arrangements is expected to secure continuing reductions in school balances.

R4 reduce the number of days' education that learners in Flintshire miss due to fixed term exclusions of six days or more in all of its secondary schools

Monitoring

Key actions since the 2011 LAESCYP inspection include:

- ensuring that Governors are carrying out hearings for 'long' fixed term exclusions with LA representation whenever possible;
- ensuring governor training contains element of challenge to Heads on usage of fixed term exclusions;
- encouraging schools to look at other options to exclusion through training, the purpose of exclusion agenda and multi-agency working. e.g. Multi Agency Planning Meetings, in house exclusion areas, using PRUs and early identification of support needs;
- targeting schools for challenge and support that are using 'long' exclusions;
- reporting exclusions with comparative data on a half termly basis; and
- encouraging schools to use the "universal tariff" approach.

Evaluation

The number of permanent exclusions has reduced in both the primary and secondary sector. Secondary numbers have reduced from nine in 2007/08 to one in 2011/12. The number of fixed term exclusions of 5 days or less has also reduced in the secondary sector from 786 in 2007/08 to 509 in 2011/12.

The number of fixed term exclusions of six days or more fell from 123 in 2007/08 to 79 (71 individuals, 56 in secondary schools) in 2009/10), to 61 (53 individuals, 44 in secondary schools) in 2010/11 and 48 (41 individuals, 30 in secondary schools) in 2011/12. **The average number of days' education that secondary learners in Flintshire lost due to fixed term exclusions of six days or more in all of its secondary schools has reduced from 14.6 days in 2011/12 to 11.5 days so far in 2012/13.**

The Council has a highly effective range of services and strategies which support and promote attendance and support pupils to maintain their educational placements.

Clear guidance regarding policies and protocols are in the Local Authority Behaviour and Attendance Policy. Half termly meetings are held for secondary school representatives to discuss and review policy and appropriate strategies. Officers also contribute to the Inclusion Service ALNCo training and termly meetings.

The Local Authority has been working to support the reduction of exclusions within our schools. Monthly reports on exclusions are issued to Inclusion service managers to ensure appropriate action can be taken. The Managed Moves protocol is fully implemented and is operational within secondary schools.

There are effective procedures in place to reintegrate pupils back into school including Pastoral Support Programmes and reintegration meetings. Officers work hard to enable pupils to retain their current placements or to settle into new ones. Performance Indicators relating to the reduction of permanent exclusions are set within the Inclusion Services and these are being achieved.

R5 improve the monitoring arrangements for the Children and Young People's Partnership to effectively track the progress of children and young people

Monitoring

At the time of the last inspection, recent studies identified the needs of children, young people and families across the communities of Flintshire. However, locally and nationally service commissioning and performance monitoring was not fully developed against the developing national Families First framework. Continued rapid progress has subsequently been made in commissioning of CYPP services.

Key actions since the 2011 LAESCYP inspection included:

- developing the high level CYPP monitoring templates by July 2012;
- ensuring that National Families First Outcomes are considered in performance planning was completed by September 2012;
- ensuring that local indicators were added to the “national givens” was completed by September 2012;
- the commissioning programme for wellbeing services under Families First has been now been completed this ensured that full current specifications are in place for wellbeing services; and.
- services have also been appropriately commissioned and procured.

Evaluation

In 2011 Estyn concluded that “the CYPP works well to provide a good range of learning opportunities for children and young people. Members have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities and how they contribute to the partnership's priorities. There is a high level of trust and co-operation within the partnership. The partnership reviews how it funds projects regularly, and decommissions projects appropriately to make sure that it allocates resources to where they are needed most”.

The new CYPP was developed using the Results Based Accountability approach which is only now becoming widely known and recognised in Wales. National performance monitoring arrangements were in development at the time of the last inspection. Progress has been rapid since the last inspection, with implementation of new arrangements for Families First.

The CYPP has good links with the main strategic partnerships through the LSB and the Community Strategy, including the LSCB, Health Social Care and Wellbeing Partnership, Community Safety Partnership and the 14-19 Learning Partnership. There is a systematic and comprehensive approach to the identification and development of partnership planning evidenced through development documentation.

The CYPP has a clearly articulated vision, reflecting Council and community strategic plans, for improving outcomes by pooling resources. The 2008/11 plan raised learners' attainment across all key stages and led to improved attendance. It supported improvement across groups of vulnerable learners, e.g. LAC and EAL.

The CYPP Performance Management Framework is used to monitor performance against the priorities within the Children and Young People's Plan and actions that support the development of Youth Support Services are included within Core Aims:

- Action area 1 – Children and young people are cared for;
- Action area 2 - Children and young people are ready, able and encouraged to learn;
- Action area 3 - Children and young people have a healthy lifestyle;
- Action area 4 - Children and young people have time and space to play, and to participate in activities;
- Action area 5 - Children and young people are respected in all areas of their lives;
- Action area 6 - Children and young people are safe; and
- Action area 7 - Children, Young People and Families have the resources they need to maximise their opportunities.

The Children and Young People's Partnership structure also coordinates the provision of Youth Support Services through a range of core aim sub-groups, including the information and involvement sub group, the Families First management board and the Families First programme ownership board which is made up of all the leads of the delivery projects.

The Children and Young People's Partnership supports the delivery of a range of Youth Support Services across sectors through a Young People's Participation Officer who works within the partnership framework in Flintshire.

The Children and Young people's Partnership undertook a service mapping exercise to support the development of the Families First model, commissioning and procurement arrangements in Flintshire. The resulting portfolio of services ensures that we meet current and anticipated needs, whilst also reducing unnecessary duplication of services.

R6 Prioritise areas for improvement identified in its self-evaluation of education

Monitoring

As part of the post inspection action planning a format for prioritising areas for improvement from within the self-evaluation document and inspection report was also completed. The PIAP programme group has ensured that identified areas for improvement, references within the LAESCYP inspection report and recommendations from inspection have been addressed either within the Post-Inspection Action Plan or service planning as appropriate.

The authority will continue to revise priorities on an annual basis as part of the cycle of self-evaluation and service planning.

Evaluation

Data informs decision making, target setting and self-evaluation. Planning is increasingly carefully matched to resources through the Medium Term Financial Planning process.

There have been significant improvements in the Authority's performance management arrangements. Increased consistency across the Council has enabled easier mobilisation of capacity and challenge across the organisation.

The revised performance management framework established by the Children and Young People's Partnership is comprehensive and fully involves all partners in the process through Core Groups and the overarching Partnership Board.

Lifelong Learning's performance management arrangements work well with those of the Children and Young People's Partnership. These allow officers, members and partner representatives to reflect on performance on a quarterly basis and to discuss areas for improvement with Heads of Service. Teams work well to evaluate performance and ensure that service developments are owned by all members of staff. Exception reports evidence how the performance management process follows up on priorities and targets that are at risk of falling behind. The drive to improve performance and outcomes for learners is evident in all service areas and has led to improvements in many different areas, e.g. literacy and numeracy at each key stage, increased provision for excluded pupils and pupils at risk of exclusion.

Central education services have had to face budget and staff reductions. Service strategy focuses on dedicating resources to schools for raising standards of literacy and numeracy and reducing the impact of deprivation and other factors on achievement and attainment. In particular, further work on raising standards of achievement, attainment and attendance of FSM pupils and vulnerable groups is being set in place and complemented by increasing our work to support the more able and talented.

A systematic approach has been taken to ensuring that action and impact is secured against all recommendations made in Local Authority Estyn inspection reports. For example, revised support, monitoring and intervention frameworks have been introduced by School Improvement and Inclusion services, improvements have also been made in analysis of data for vulnerable groups to target support to secure improvements in outcomes.