

EDUCATION & YOUTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Thursday 12 th April 2018
Report Subject	Self-Evaluation of Local Government Education Services
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Education
Report Author	Chief Officer (Education & Youth)
Type of Report	Operational

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Flintshire County Council undertakes an annual self-evaluation against the framework for the inspections of Local Authority education services published by Estyn.

From September 2017 a new framework has been issued by Estyn - Inspection of Local Government Education Services – and this will be used for the inspection of education services within local authorities on a five year cycle between 2018 and 2023. The latest self-evaluation report has been written to reflect the requirements of this new framework.

This report provides an overview of the new inspection arrangements and a summary of the draft self-evaluation report as well as a full copy of the draft report is attached.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	To note the new Estyn framework for the inspection of education services within Local Authorities in Wales.
3	To contribute their evaluative comments and evidence in relation to the latest draft self-evaluation report.

REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING THE SELF EVALUATION OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT EDUCATION SERVICES
1.01	<p>The prime purpose of self-evaluation is to lead service improvements to secure the best possible outcomes for children and young people supported by the Education and Youth Portfolio. Only by robustly evaluating the strengths of the current provision and identifying areas for further improvement can the portfolio continue to refine the manner in which it delivers services to secure better outcomes.</p> <p>Self-evaluation needs to be a process which involves all stakeholders rather than senior managers working in isolation. This draft report is being shared with a range of stakeholders including portfolio officers, headteachers, elected members, partner organisations and learners themselves. This will allow them to contribute their evidence on how successfully education services for children and young people are being delivered and identify further areas for improvement.</p>
1.02	<p>Estyn defines self-evaluation as a process not a one-off event. At the heart of self-evaluation are three questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How well are we doing and what impact are our services having?• How do we know?• How can we improve things further?
1.03	<p>The process of self-evaluation should be continuous and an embedded part of the work of the Local Authority. It will be a cycle which includes planning for improvement, undertaking improvement activity, monitoring the actions taken and most importantly, evaluating the impact they have had – the ‘so what?’ question. The emphasis should always be focused on the impact of each aspect of provision on the outcomes achieved by learners and of their wellbeing.</p>
1.04	<p>Self-evaluation is based on a wide range of information about the strengths and areas for improvement and will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Analysis of data from assessments, tests and national examinations at an individual learner, subject, departmental and school level as well as at a whole local authority level.• Evaluations of the quality of educational support services being offered to schools and their impact on learners by the local authority’s core team.• Evaluation of the challenge and support being provided to schools by the regional education improvement service, GwE.• Evaluation of inspection evidence in relation to schools, non-maintained commissioned settings and other related services.• Reviewing progress against strategic improvement plans e.g. Council Improvement Plan, Education Portfolio Plan, Public Service Board Plan.• Reviewing how well the local authority is implementing national

	<p>policies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation of the challenge provided to the service through the Education & Youth Overview and Scrutiny Committee. • Auditing practice against policies and procedures e.g. Safeguarding, Health and Safety, Financing of Schools, Admissions etc. • Sampling the views of key partners and stakeholders on the quality of educational services being delivered.
1.06	<p>For any inspection of local government education services by Estyn, the starting point will always be the self-evaluation report and so it is a critical document. This draft report is in the process of being consulted upon with all key stakeholders to ensure that it is a robust and realistic evaluation of the portfolio's current performance and members of the committee are invited to add their evaluative commentary to the report.</p>
1.07	<p>From September 2017 Estyn introduced a new framework for the inspection of local government education services and during the academic year 2017-18 undertook a pilot of this framework in two local authorities – Neath Port Talbot and Denbighshire. It is anticipated that any learning from these two pilot inspections will be incorporated into the final model.</p> <p>All other local authorities in Wales will be inspected from September 2018 onwards over the following 5 years with 1 LA per region per annual cycle. Local authorities will receive eight weeks' notice of inspection. Estyn will also gather additional information from other bodies e.g. Welsh Audit Office (WAO) and the Care Standards Inspectorate (CSI) prior to inspection.</p> <p>The inspection team will be led by a Reporting Inspector from Estyn and other HMLs, including at least one of the Local Area Link Inspectors (LALI) who visit local authorities on a termly basis. Representatives from WAO will be part of the inspection team and potentially representative from CSI if pre-inspection evidence requires it.</p> <p>2-3 weeks prior to the inspection, the team will make a preliminary visit to the LA to meet with a range of stakeholders to gather evidence which supports the development of their lines of enquiry e.g. heads, chairs of governors, leaders/managers from partner organisations such as GwE, other statutory bodies, FE institutions, training providers, voluntary organisations, private companies etc. They will also meet with GwE staff who support schools in the authority and children/young people's representative groups.</p> <p>On the first day of the inspection week the inspection team will meet with the Chief Executive, Chief Officer, Leader, Cabinet Member for Education and Chair of Scrutiny. The local authority will give a 30 minute presentation on key messages from the LA's own self-evaluation. The Reporting Inspector will then outline emerging themes the team will be focusing on during the week.</p>
1.08	<p>The inspection areas in the new framework focus on:</p>

	<p>1. Outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1.1 Standards and progress overall 1.2 Standards and progress of specific groups 1.3 Wellbeing and attitudes to learning <p>2. Quality of Education Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2.1 Support for School Improvement 2.2 Support for Vulnerable Learners 2.3 Other education support services <p>3. Leadership & Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3.1 Quality and effectiveness of leaders and managers 3.2 Self-evaluation and improvement planning 3.3 Professional learning 3.4 Use of resources
1.09	<p>The inspection team will make a judgement on a four point scale:</p> <p>Excellent – Very strong, sustained performance and practice</p> <p>Good – Strong features, although minor aspects may require improvement</p> <p>Adequate and needs improvement – Strengths outweigh weaknesses, but important aspects require improvement</p> <p>Unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement – Important weaknesses outweigh strengths</p> <p>Follow up activity will be considered if one or more inspection areas are judged to be UNSATISFACTORY or if all inspection areas are judged to be ADEQUATE. This will involve Estyn working with the local authority and undertaking a monitoring visit within two years.</p> <p>If no follow up activity is required then Estyn will issue a report which will include recommendations for the local authority to work on for the remainder of the five year cycle with monitoring undertaken by the termly visits of the Local Area Link Inspector.</p>
1.10	<p>Estyn has a 'Virtual Inspection Room' (VIR) which is an electronic depository in which all documentation is uploaded and stored. This is currently being updated by the senior management team of the portfolio to ensure the evidence being used to support the commentary in the self-evaluation report is appropriate and accurate.</p>

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	The self-evaluation document outlines the perceived strengths along with key areas for improvement and the risks to be managed. The resource implications of these will be defined in the revised Portfolio Improvement Plan which builds on the self-evaluation report.
2.02	The budget for the Education and Youth Portfolio, including delegated budgets to schools, is one of the largest in the Council. In the current financial climate with the reduction in the Revenue Support Grant for 2018-19 and cuts to a number of education grant funding streams from Welsh Government, the funding of educational services remains under significant pressure.

3.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
3.01	This report has been co-constructed with input from local authority officers, and GwE partners and is now in a wider consultation phase with elected members, school representatives and a wide group of key partners and stakeholders.
3.02	The Education & Youth Overview and Scrutiny Committee provides the opportunity for elected members to participate in the process of self-evaluation.

4.00	RISK MANAGEMENT
4.01	The self-evaluation process feeds into the Portfolio Improvement Plan and the overall Council Improvement Plan both of which outline associated risks and mitigating factors.
4.02	<p>Areas of risk identified through the self-evaluation process include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding pressures on delegated schools budget resulting in reduced staffing levels and interventions for learners which may undermine standards. • Funding pressures on core LA support teams e.g. Inclusion, Youth Services, Youth Justice Services potentially reducing expert support for vulnerable learners and putting preventative programmes at risk. • The uncertainty over the sustainability and levels of grant funding and inflexible grant conditions. • Increasingly complex needs of learners and the cost and accessibility of appropriate provision for those educated other than at school (EOTAS) which may impact on outcomes achieved. • The ability of regional partnership arrangements to deliver effective school improvement services whilst offering value for money. • The ability of the local authority to respond effectively to the proposed Additional Learning Needs legislation against a backdrop of reducing

	<p>budgets.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council's financial capacity to deliver an ambitious programme of school modernisation. • Resilience of central teams and workload levels. • Availability of suitably qualified and experienced leaders to take on headship roles.
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5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	Appendix 1 – Estyn Framework for the Inspection of Local Government Education Services
5.02	Appendix 2 – Draft Self-Evaluation Summary 2018
5.03	Appendix 3 – Draft Self-Evaluation Report 2018

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	<p>None.</p> <p>Contact Officer: Claire Homard Interim Chief Officer (Education & Youth) Telephone: 01352 704190 E-mail: claire.homard@flintshire.gov.uk</p>

7.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
7.01	<p>Estyn – the Education and Training Inspectorate for Wales</p> <p>HMI – Her Majesty's Inspector (employed by Estyn)</p> <p>GwE – Regional School Improvement Service for the North Wales region commissioned by Flintshire County Council</p> <p>EOTAS – Education other than at school applies to children and young people who do not access their education within a maintained school setting. Examples may include home education, pupil referral units and independent schools.</p>