



EDUCATION, YOUTH & CULTURE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Thursday 14 th September 2023
Report Subject	Regional School Effectiveness and Improvement Service (GwE) Annual Report 2022-2023
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Education, Welsh Language, Culture and Leisure
Report Author	Chief Officer (Education and Youth)
Type of Report	Operational

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The GwE Report provides a detailed overview for members of the work of the Regional School Improvement Service with Flintshire schools during the academic year 2022 -2023.

The report identifies that there is a strong relationship between Flintshire County Council and the Regional School Effectiveness Service (GwE). There are robust procedures in place for setting a direction and holding the regional service to account. The specific roles of the Local Authority and the regional school improvement service in school improvement are explicit and clear to all stakeholders and they are effectively held to account by local scrutiny procedures.

Flintshire LA with the support and advice of GwE knows its schools and settings well and provides a robust and appropriate challenge as well as effective support and intervention for them. There are strategies, policies and processes for school improvement that are clear to all stakeholders and which shape and steer the delivery of school improvement activity.

The report also details how the Local Authority responds promptly and firmly to schools causing concern. There are specific examples in the Local Authority's schools where intensifying the challenge and support alongside robust and timely action have directly resulted in positive changes. There is strong evidence that the

Local Authority's processes and actions to support schools causing concern is impacting on the quality of leadership and pedagogy and leading to improved standards in those schools identified.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	The Education, Youth and Culture Overview & Scrutiny Committee is asked to accept the Report from GwE and note the positive impact of the regional service in supporting Flintshire schools, maintaining the focus on effective and successful schools.
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REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING THE GWE REPORT 2022-2023
1.01	<p>The content of the report captures progress against four key areas:</p> <p>Key Area 1 – Improving Leadership Key Area 2 – Improving Teaching and Learning Key Area 3 – Curriculum and Provision Key Area 4 – Learner Progress and Standards</p> <p>There are two appendices within the report: Appendix 1 is a concise summary of the four key areas for secondary schools; Appendix 2 is a concise summary of the four key areas for primary schools.</p>
1.02	<p>Numbers – quantities and proportions</p> <p>In order to be consistent, the report uses the same terms as Estyn to describe proportions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • nearly all = with very few exceptions • most = 90% or more • many = 70% or more • a majority = over 60% • a minority = below 40% • few = below 20%
1.03	<p>Key Area 1 – Improving Leadership</p> <p>In most of the Local Authority's schools, the senior leadership is strong. The Local Authority and GwE provide a rich array of professional learning to develop leadership at every level, together with targeted and bespoke</p>

	<p>support for schools as required, and especially for those schools causing concern. Moreover, there are robust arrangements in place in the Local Authority where school leaders collaborate to support one another in primary clusters and secondary alliances and take increasing ownership and accountability for one another's improvement journey.</p>
<p>1.04</p>	<p>Key Area 2 – Improving Teaching and Learning</p> <p>The quality of teaching is generally strong across most schools in all sectors and purposeful action is taken to address areas of concern and to reduce in-school variance. The Local Authority, in partnership with GwE, has been taking positive steps to support leaders and teachers to improve the quality of teaching and learning prior, during and after the Covid-19 period.</p> <p>From the beginning of lockdown, the Local Authority and GwE were proactive in their support for schools. A wide range of quality materials and models for distance and blended learning have been provided through digital platforms such as 'Google Classroom' and GwE Support Centre. The work has drawn on the findings of research into effective international practices.</p> <p>Almost all headteachers have appreciated the input of the Supporting Improvement Advisers (SIAs) and Local Authority officers in providing guidance and support for schools and clusters to develop their provision. Almost all headteachers noted that facilitating cluster meetings has been instrumental in sharing ideas and good practice for developing their distance and blended learning provision. It was also noted that these meetings have had a positive impact on their mental health and well-being.</p>
<p>1.05</p>	<p>Key Area 3 – Curriculum and Provision</p> <p>The regional service has effectively supported leaders in preparation for The Reform Journey and Curriculum for Wales and has been flexible in its provision in order to meet schools' various needs during the pandemic. Due to effective collaboration and engagement between the LA, GwE and schools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • all schools are implementing plans to deliver against the four purposes of the new curriculum. • all schools are working to develop a balanced curriculum offer to meet the needs of their learners including the more able. • all clusters are implementing transition plans. • all schools are actively engaging in peer collaboration within and across sectors.
<p>1.06</p>	<p>Key Area 4 – Learner Progress and Standards</p>

	The increased focus on supporting schools to improve the quality and consistency of leadership and pedagogy has led to improved standards across nearly all primary and secondary schools. Pace of improvement needs further acceleration in a minority of primary schools and in a few secondary schools. Impact of teaching and provision on pupils' progress continues to be a priority in all secondary schools.
1.07	<p>Support and challenge for schools causing concern</p> <p>Flintshire Local Authority responds promptly and firmly where there are schools causing concern. There are specific examples where intensifying the challenge and support alongside robust and prompt action have directly resulted in improvements. There is strong evidence that the Local Authority's actions to support schools causing concern is effective.</p>

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	There are no financial implications arising from this report. GwE will operate within the current financial resources.

3.00	IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT
3.01	<p>There are no specific risks arising from this report and subsequent actions.</p> <p>GwE maintains its own risk register to identify and manage risks on a local, regional and national level which is regularly updated and reported upon to the Management Board and the Joint Committee.</p> <p>The Management Board comprising of GwE senior managers and the six North Wales Chief Education Officers, monitors matters of governance continuously. GwE has procedures in place to ensure the Joint Committee meetings, where the six North Wales Cabinet Members for Education have governance oversight and decision-making powers, supported by the host authority Gwynedd, are conducted effectively and the service is held appropriately to account.</p> <p>The Council's Education Portfolio has a detailed risk assessment which outlines key risks related to the delivery of education services and method statements which describe how these risks are managed. These are regularly reported to the Education, Youth and Culture Overview Scrutiny Committee.</p>

4.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED/CARRIED OUT
4.01	<p>Regular discussions are held with GwE Management Board which comprises of the Senior Management Team of GwE and the six Chief Education Officers of the North Wales authorities.</p> <p>GwE use a range of models and surveys to consider impact, based on national and international research, as well as working collaboratively with strategic Higher Education Institutes (HEI). GwE is working closely with Bangor University on the 'Collaborative Institute for Education Research, Evidence and Impact' (CIEREI) Project.</p>

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	<p>Document 1: GwE Scrutiny Report for Flintshire 2022-2023</p>

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	<p>Cwricwlwm i Gymru / Curriculum for Wales</p> <p>https://hwb.gov.wales/cwricwlwm-i-gymru/</p> <p>https://hwb.gov.wales/curriculum-for-wales/</p>

7.00	CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS
7.01	<p>Contact Officer: Arwyn Thomas, GwE Managing Director Telephone: 01492 806115 E-mail: ArwynThomas@gwegogledd.cymru</p> <p>Contact Officer: Vicky Barlow, Senior Manager for School Improvement Telephone: 01352 704019 E-mail: vicky.barlow@flintshire.gov.uk</p>

8.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
8.01	<p>GwE –is the North Wales regional school improvement service working alongside and on behalf of the six North Wales local authorities.</p>

GwE Management Board - comprising of GwE senior managers and the six North Wales Chief Education Officers. The Board monitors matters of governance continuously.

SIA – Supporting Improvement Adviser for GwE. Each school has an allocated SIA.

Cymraeg 2050 – Welsh Language Strategy; long-term approach to achieving a million Welsh speakers by 2050