

EDUCATION & YOUTH OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Thursday 7 th July, 2016
Report Subject	Regional School Effectiveness and Improvement Service (GwE)
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Education & Youth
Report Author	Chief Officer (Education & Youth)
Type of Report	Strategic

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Regional School Improvement and Effectiveness Service (GwE) was established in 2013 as the North Wales response to the National Model for Regional Working which provided a framework for school improvement recognising the important role that schools, local authorities, regional consortia and Welsh Government play in supporting education.

Since April 2013 GwE has provided the school improvement functions on behalf of the six North Wales local authorities by working in a commissioning partnership. GwE has identified 5 key priority areas and these have been agreed by all constituent local authorities and these address the region's commitment to addressing national and local priorities.

These are:

- To raise the standards of teaching and learning for all learners across the region, consistently at all stages.
- To improve the quality of leadership and its impact
- To develop a self-improving school systems
- To improve internal procedures in order to ensure an effective and consistent support and challenge service across the region
- Ensure the effective governance, leadership and management of GwE

The Service Level Agreement between GwE and the individual local authorities provides two key elements:

- The Challenge and Support Programme to all schools, designed to ensure a clear and unambiguous focus on improving school performance and outcomes for learners, through a model of "supportive challenge and challenging support" via regular visits to schools by GwE Challenge Advisers.

- The GwE Development Programme offered to support the professional development of all practitioners to ensure the highest standards of teaching and leadership to underpin a self-improving system which secures the highest outcomes for learners.

As the core element of the Challenge and Support Programme, GwE Challenge Advisers regularly visit schools to monitor the quality of key school documentation e.g. school self-evaluation reports and school improvement plans to ensure they are fit for purpose. They also monitor the quality of teaching and learning regularly through lesson observation and work scrutiny. School leaders and teachers are challenged to improve the quality of provision and support is provided through bespoke programmes tailored to the needs of individual schools linked to the national model for school categorisation. Detailed reports are written after every visit which are shared with the school and the local authority.

In order to improve the quality of school leadership and the quality of teaching and learning in the classroom to underpin higher achievement, GwE has also continued to expand its Development Support Programme over the last twelve months, designed to support the professional development of educational practitioners from entry into the profession as a newly qualified teacher through middle and senior leadership to headship.

The over-arching priority of the Regional School Effectiveness and Improvement Service (GwE) is to secure improved outcomes for learners across the region at all key stages – Foundation Phase (3-7 yr olds), Key Stage 2 (7-11 yr olds), Key Stage 3 (11-14 yr olds) and Key Stage 4 (14-16 yr olds).

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	That members receive the update report on the Regional School Effectiveness and Improvement Service (GwE) and note Flintshire's priorities and objectives within the GwE Business Plan
2	That members receive an update on the work to improve Level 2+ outcomes for learners at Key Stage 4 (5 GCSE's A* -C including English/Welsh and Mathematics) in the summer of 2016.
3	That members receive an update on the successful development and delivery of GwE's two integrated core programmes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the Challenge and Support Programme - the Development Programme

REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING THE REGIONAL SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS AND IMPROVEMENT SERVICE (GwE)
1.01	<p>Working through the sub-regional GwE Hwb for Flintshire and Wrexham, based here in County Hall, Mold, the Senior Challenge Adviser for GwE and the local authority's Senior Manager for School Improvement, meet regularly to implement and monitor the priorities in the GwE business plan. This plan includes an annex in relation to each local authority. Flintshire's annex outlines our local educational priorities, linked to the Council's Improvement Plan and has articulated the vision and purpose of the Education & Youth Portfolio:</p> <p>Vision: To ensure all Flintshire pupils experience learning which matches their individual needs (academic, emotional, social, cultural) and enables them to achieve their potential.</p> <p>Purpose: To provide a modern, high quality and well performing education system which enables Flintshire pupils to develop lifelong learning skills that support them throughout their educational journey and beyond into the wider world.</p> <p>In addition to the national and regional priorities of improving standards in literacy & numeracy and reducing the impact of poverty and disadvantage, Flintshire has specific priorities related to improving outcomes for Looked After Children and those exiting the Youth Justice system; to reducing barriers to engagement to ensure equality of access for all children and young people; to identify and target the schools most in need of support; to share best teaching practice and resources across schools and the region; and to develop the capacity of schools to respond to national initiatives and regional reforms.</p> <p>The Flintshire Annex to the GwE business plan shows the actions to achieve these objectives and the outcome measures which will be used to judge its success.</p>
1.02	<p>The main focus for improvement at the current time is to improve the number of learners at Key Stage 4 who achieve the Level 2+ indicator (5 GCSE passes A* to C including English/Welsh and Mathematics). To achieve this, a new methodology of target setting and progress monitoring has been introduced since September 2015 to ensure better outcomes across the region in the summer exams of 2016. Progress towards these targets is being regularly monitored by GwE and prospects for better L2+ outcomes this summer are encouraging.</p> <p>In 2015, Flintshire achieved 60.6% of pupils attaining the L2+ target. This was a small reduction on the 2014 outcomes of 61.9%. The target set for Flintshire's L2+ outcomes in 2016 is 65.1% and for 2017 the target is 69%.</p> <p>With a focus on improving the outcomes for pupils entitled to Free School Meals, the target for these pupils to achieve the L2+ in 2016 is 43.9%. This</p>

	<p>would represent a significant improvement on the outcomes for this cohort of pupils compared to 2015 when only 35.2% of e-FSM pupils achieved this L2+ indicator. The target for 2017 is 54.4%.</p> <p>GwE Challenge Advisers have undertaken a focused visit to all secondary schools in the Spring Term to undertake a review of the school's progress in meeting their L2+ targets, monitoring the school's own tracking procedures and collating the results already secured through early entry examinations. Current projections collated from these recent visits show Flintshire schools at 66% L2+ which is just above target. For e-FSM pupils the projections currently show 38% of pupils achieving L2+ which would be better than last year's performance but is still below the ambitious target of 43.9%.</p>
1.03	<p>All schools in Flintshire are being actively encouraged to access the Development Programme offered by GwE which aims to provide quality professional development opportunities for teachers at all stages of their career path. The number of conferences and training courses offered by GwE continues to be expanded to provide support to practitioners on a range of subject specific areas e.g. literacy, numeracy, ICT as well as updates on changing specifications to GCSE examinations, Welsh Baccalaureate etc. The development of bespoke leadership programmes to underpin improvements in school leadership have been extended and how focus on each stage of the leadership continuum e.g. subject/middle leaders, deputy headteachers, new headteachers (including the programme for the delivery and assessment of the National Professional Qualification for Headship), existing Headteachers and Executive headteachers (i.e. Headteacher of more than one school).</p>

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	<p>The financial resource required to deliver the Regional Service for School Effectiveness and Improvement is provided through the Service Level Agreement between the 6 Local Authorities and GwE.</p>

3.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
3.01	<p>No consultations required in relation to this report.</p>

4.00	RISK MANAGEMENT
4.01	<p>The risk identified in the Council's Improvement Plan in relation to the Regional School Effectiveness and Improvement Service is that schools do not engage effectively with GwE and maximise the opportunities provided by the Regional Service. This is mitigated by the regular and effective collaboration between GwE and Local Authority officers at many levels including the GwE Management Board, the Joint Committee and locally between the Senior Challenge Adviser for the Flintshire/Wrexham hub and the Senior Manager for School Improvement in the Education and Youth Portfolio.</p>

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	<p>Appendix 1 – GwE Business Plan Annex for Flintshire.</p> <p>Appendix 2 – Report to GwE Joint Committee - KS4 Outcomes, Strategy and Tracking.</p> <p>Appendix 3 – Summary of strategies implemented to improve the regional L2+</p> <p>Appendix 4 – GwE Challenge and Support Programme for schools in support category ‘Green’ and those recognised as strong or well established ‘Yellow’ schools</p> <p>Appendix 5 – GwE Challenge and Support Programme - for schools in the amber and red support categories.</p> <p>Appendix 6 – GwE Challenge and Support Programme - for the majority of schools in the yellow support category.</p>

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	<p>None.</p> <p>Contact Officer:- Claire Homard Senior Manager School Improvement</p> <p>Telephone:- 01352 704019</p> <p>E-mail:- claire.homard@flintshire.gov.uk</p>

7.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
7.01	None.