

EDUCATION & YOUTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

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| Date of Meeting | Thursday 16th March 2017 |
| Report Subject | Regional School Effectiveness and Improvement Service (GwE) |
| Cabinet Member | Cabinet Member for Education and Youth |
| Report Author | Chief Officer (Education & Youth) |
| Type of Report | Strategic |

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Regional School Improvement and Effectiveness Service (GwE) was established in North Wales in 2013 in response to the National Model for Regional Working. This National Model 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 the following 5 key priority areas, which have been agreed upon by all constituent local authorities to consolidate the region's commitment to addressing National and local priorities:

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

The Service Level Agreement between GwE and the individual local authorities facilitates 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 school by GwE Challenge Advisers.

- The GwE Development Programme to promote and facilitate 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.

GwE Challenge Advisers regularly visit schools to monitor the quality and school’s use of key documents e.g. self-evaluation report, school development plan and pupil performance data. They also monitor the quality of teaching and learning through scrutiny of pupils’ work and observing lessons. GwE Challenge Advisers challenge school leaders and teachers to continually improve the quality of provision. Linked to the National model for school categorisation, GwE provides bespoke support programmes tailored to meet the needs of individual schools. Challenge Advisers write focused reports following every school visit, which are shared with the school and the local authority.

During the current academic year, GwE has continued its Development Support Programme in order to improve the quality of school leadership and also to raise standards in teaching and learning in the classroom. The support programme has been carefully chosen to ensure identified needs are met e.g. targeted support for primary schools with low end of key stage performance targets. The Development Support Programme is designed to support the professional development of educational practitioners from entry into the profession through to middle and senior leadership.

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 i.e. Foundation Phase (ages 3-7), key stage 2 (ages 7–11), key stage 3 (ages 11-14) and key stage 4 (ages 14-16).

RECOMMENDATIONS

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| 1. | That members receive the update report on the school improvement service joint arrangement (GwE) and note Flintshire’s priorities and objectives within the GwE Business Plan. |
| 2. | That members receive an update on the 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 DETAIL

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| 1.00 | EXPLAINING THE REGIONAL SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS AND IMPROVEMENT SERVICE (GWE) |
| 1.01 | The sub-regional GwE hub for Flintshire and Wrexham are based in County Hall, Mold. The Senior Challenge Adviser for GwE and Flintshire’s Senior Manager for School Improvement meet regularly to implement and monitor the priorities in the GwE business plan. The plan includes an annex in relation to each local authority. Flintshire’s annex outlines the County’s educational priorities, linked to the |

Council's Improvement Plan, reinforcing the vision and purpose of the Education & Youth Portfolio.

Vision:

To ensure all Flintshire pupils experience learning which matches their individual needs (academic, emotional, social and cultural) and enables them to achieve their potential.

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.

In addition to the national and regional priorities of improving standards in literacy and numeracy and reducing the impact of poverty and disadvantage, Flintshire has specific priorities related to reducing barriers to engagement to ensure equality of access for all children and young people e.g. improving outcomes for Looked After Children. Flintshire aims to identify and target the schools most in need of support and to share resources and best practice in teaching across all its schools. It is also a priority to develop the capacity of schools to respond effectively to National initiatives and regional reforms.

The Flintshire Annex to the GwE business plan shows the actions to achieve these objectives and the outcome measures which will be used to evaluate its success.

1.02

The main focus for improvement at the current time is to improve the percentage of key stage 4 pupils who achieve the Level 2+ indicator (5 GCSE passes A* to C including English/Welsh and Mathematics). Progress towards this improvement priority is being robustly monitored by GwE.

In 2016, Flintshire achieved 61.6% of pupils attained L2+. This was 1% more than the 2015 outcomes of 60.6%. The target set for Flintshire's L2+ outcomes for 2017 is 69% and for 2018 the target is 71.4%.

Percentage of pupils achieving L2+ in 2016 across the region:

| Ynys Mon | Gwynedd | Conwy | Denbighshire | Flintshire | Wrexham |
|----------|---------|-------|--------------|------------|---------|
| 59% | 66% | 56% | 59% | 61% | 55% |

GwE has reviewed the level of Challenge and Support afforded to High Schools. GwE is restructuring the Service, adjusting the balance of support in order to concentrate more support to KS4. Appendix 2 sets out GwE's rationale for developing a revised secondary Challenge and Support Programme model for 2017.

With a focus on improving the outcomes for pupils entitled to Free School Meals, the target for these pupils to achieve the L2+ in 2017 is 38.6%. If achieved, this performance would represent an improvement compared to 2016, when 33.14% of eFSM pupils achieved this L2+ indicator. The target for 2018 is 42.5%.

GwE Challenge Advisers have undertaken a focused visit to all secondary schools during the Spring term to carry out a review of the school's progress in meeting their L2+ targets. The Challenge Advisers have monitored each school's procedures for tracking pupil progress and the collating of results already secured through early entry examinations. Current projections indicate that Flintshire

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| | schools will average 64.4% attaining L2+, which is below the target of 69%. For eFSM pupils, the projections currently show 32.16% of pupils achieving L2+, which would be slightly lower than 2016. |
| 1.03 | 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. The number of conferences and training courses offered by GwE continues to be expanded to provided support for practitioners on a range of subject specific areas i.e. literacy, numeracy, ICT as well as updates on changing specifications to GCSE examinations. The development of bespoke leadership programmes to underpin improvements in school leadership has been extended and focuses on each stage of the leadership continuum e.g. subject/middle leaders, deputy headteachers, new headteachers and existing headteachers and executive headteachers. |

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| 2.00 | RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS |
| 2.01 | The Regional Service for School Effectiveness and Improvement is funded through the Service Level Agreement between the 6 local authorities and GwE. |

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

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| 4.00 | RISK MANAGEMENT |
| 4.01 | The risk identified in the Council's Improvement Plan in relation to the Regional School Effectiveness and Improvement Service is that schools may not engage effectively with GwE or fail to maximise the opportunities provided by the Regional Service. This risk 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 and Wrexham hub and the Senior Manager for School Improvement in the Education and Youth Portfolio. |

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| 5.00 | APPENDICES |
| 5.01 | Appendix 1: GwE Business Plan Annexes for Flintshire: Level 1 and Level 2 Appendix 2: Developing a revised secondary Challenge and Support Programme model for 2017. Appendix 3: GwE Challenge and Support Programme for schools in support categories 'Green', 'Yellow', 'Amber' and 'Red'. Appendix 4: Examples of support packages and visit reports for amber schools. |

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

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| 7.00 | GLOSSARY OF TERMS |
| 7.01 | None. |