

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO COUNCIL

19 JUNE 2019

REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR EDUCATION AND FAMILY SUPPORT

ESTYN INSPECTION OF BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL'S LOCAL GOVERNMENT EDUCATION SERVICES

1. Purpose of report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform members of the outcomes of the recent Estyn inspection of Bridgend County Borough Council's local government education services.

2. Connection to corporate improvement objectives/other corporate priorities

2.1 This report assists in the achievement of the following corporate priority/priorities:

- Supporting a successful economy – taking steps to make the county a good place to do business, for people to live, work, study and visit, and to ensure that our schools are focused on raising the skills, qualifications and ambitions of all people in the county.
- Helping people to be more self-reliant – taking early steps to reduce or prevent people from becoming vulnerable or dependent on the Council and its services.
- Smarter use of resources – ensuring that all its resources (financial, physical, human and technological) are used as effectively and efficiently as possible and support the development of resources throughout the community that can help deliver the Council's priorities.

3. Background

3.1 Bridgend County Borough Council was inspected by Estyn during the week commencing Monday 18 March 2019 under the new Local Government Education Services (LGES) Inspection Framework, introduced in September 2018. The full text of the report is available on the Estyn website:

<https://www.estyn.gov.wales/sites/www.estyn.gov.wales/files/documents/Bridgend%20County%20Borough%20Council.pdf>

3.2 The inspection was moderated by an Assistant Director from Estyn. Inspectors from Wales Audit Office (WAO) and Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) were members of the inspection team.

3.3 A wide range of stakeholders were involved in the inspection including elected members, officers, headteachers, learners and members of the public.

4. Current situation/proposal

4.1 In relation to Inspection Area (IA) 1 Outcomes, the following **strengths** were identified:

- Pupils in Bridgend schools make good progress between the ages of 5 and 16.
- At key stage 4, pupil performance (especially that of more able and talented (MAT) pupils) is strong.
- Performance of learners eligible for free school meals (eFSM) and other vulnerable groups is good.
- Positive reduction in the number of learners not in education, employment or training (NEETs).
- Pupil attendance is good (especially that of vulnerable groups).
- Use of learner voice in the decision-making process is effective.
- Stakeholder engagement is strong.
- Support for learners with education, social and behavioural difficulties (ESBD) is effective.

4.2 In relation to IA1 Outcomes, the following **areas for development** were identified:

- Pace of progress in ‘schools causing concern’ is too slow.
- Inspection outcomes for primary schools.
- Pupils’ literacy skills in primary schools.
- Outcomes for young offenders.
- Performance of sixth form pupils at A*-C.
- Destination data relating to Year 11 leavers.
- Recognised accreditations achieved by young people in non-formal settings (youth support).

4.3 In relation to IA2 Education Services, the following **strengths** were identified:

- ‘Team Bridgend’ approach is effective especially in relation to delivery partner engagement.
- Good working relationship between the local authority and the consortium.
- School Improvement Group is effective.
- Local authority and consortium officers know their schools well.
- Support programmes are good and focus appropriately on key areas for improvement (ie School Holiday Enrichment Programme).
- Integrated services complement the work of schools effectively.
- Bridgend Music Service highlighted as providing particularly good provision.
- Good support for learners with ESBD and vulnerable groups – notably through the Inclusion Service and the Vulnerable Groups Team.
- Education Welfare Service identified as effective.

4.4 In relation to IA2 Education Services, the following **areas for development** were identified:

- Weak teaching in ‘schools causing concern’ is taking too long to improve.
- School improvement evaluations focus too much on data rather than on the standards pupils achieve.
- Current data tracking systems are under-developed (eg ability to monitor learners’ needs to be improved).

- Performance of more able and talented learners (especially at key stage 2 and post-16).
- Evaluation of services for learners with ESBD.
- Knowledge in relation to the progress made by young carers

4.5 In relation to IA3 Leadership and Management, the following **strengths** were identified:

- Elected members and officers have a clear vision for ensuring effective education provision in Bridgend.
- The vision is communicated effectively to stakeholders and delivery partners.
- Elected members have a good understanding of education issues.
- Effective cross-party working enables the local authority to continue to deliver its strategy for education.
- Scrutiny is well run.
- The local authority's allocation of resources to its education services and schools reflects the high priority afforded to education in the corporate plan.
- Elected members engage effectively with officers.
- Priorities are clearly defined and provide a sound base for improving education.
- The Education and Family Support Directorate's self-evaluation, risk and financial management processes are well-established and are effective.
- The Education and Family Support Directorate has an effective working structure which brings a focused and collaborative approach to managing a wide range of issues.
- Staff feel valued and are clear about the outcomes they are expected to deliver in their roles.
- Performance management is effective.
- Arrangements for safeguarding in education are appropriate.

4.6 In relation to IA3 Leadership and Management, the following **areas for development** were identified:

- There is too much emphasis on headline measures – closer focus on incremental measures is required.
- Reports to elected members do not always identify the key implications arising from information.
- Involvement of Welsh Education Strategic Forum in Welsh Education Strategic Plan (WESP) activity.
- Monitoring impact of training across services.
- Planned financial savings (especially home-to-school transport).

4.7 The report concluded with the following recommendations:

- R1 Raise standards of literacy in primary schools
- R2 Improve outcomes for post-16 learners in sixth forms
- R3 Increase the pace of improvement in schools causing concern
- R4 Strengthen the role of the Welsh Education Strategic Forum to ensure timely progress in delivering the priorities identified in the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan

- 4.8 In recognition of notable practice, Estyn has asked Bridgend County Borough Council to provide a case study on its work in relation to young people's involvement in decision-making processes in schools and the local authority, for dissemination on Estyn's website.
- 4.9 A post-inspection action plan must be prepared by the local authority and submitted to Estyn by 31 August 2019.

5. Effect upon policy framework and procedure rules

- 5.1 There is no impact on the Council's policy framework or procedure rules.

6. Equality Impact Assessment

- 6.1 There are no direct equality implications arising from this report.

7. Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 implications

- 7.1 The well-being goals identified in the Act were considered in the preparation of this report. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable impacts upon the achievement of well-being goals/objectives as a result of this report.

8. Financial implications

- 8.1 There are no financial implications arising directly from this information report.

9. Recommendation

- 9.1 It is recommended that Council notes the content of this report.

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Background documents

- Guidance handbook for the inspection of local government education services from September 2018:
https://www.estyn.gov.wales/sites/default/files/documents/Guidance%20handbook%20for%20the%20inspection%20of%20LGES%202018_0.pdf
- Estyn inspection report accessible online via:
<https://www.estyn.gov.wales/sites/www.estyn.gov.wales/files/documents/Bridgend%20County%20Borough%20Council.pdf>