

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

11 MAY 2015

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND TRANSFORMATION

OUTCOME OF THE ESTYN INSPECTION OF THE CHILDREN'S DIRECTORATE

1. Purpose of Report.

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform Scrutiny of the Outcome of the Estyn Inspection of the Children's Directorate.

2. Connection to Corporate Improvement Objectives/Other Corporate Priorities

- 2.1 The information in this report relates to strategic priority 2 in the Corporate Plan 'Working Together to Raise Ambitions and Drive Up Educational Achievement'.

3. Background

- 3.1 Following the outcome of the inspection of education services for children and young people in October 2012, the authority was identified as requiring Estyn monitoring as follow-up to this inspection. The full text of the report is available on the Estyn website: www.estyn.gov.uk

- 3.2 In 2012, Inspectors reached the following judgements:

Overall Judgement	Adequate
Capacity to Improve	Adequate
How good are outcomes?	Adequate
Wellbeing	Adequate
How good is provision?	Adequate
Support for ALN	Good
Promotion of social inclusion	Adequate
Access and school places	Good
How good are leadership and management?	Adequate
Leadership	Adequate
Improving quality	Adequate
Partnership working	Good
Resource management	Adequate

- 3.3 In 2012 the inspection team reported that this Local Authority fell into the category of 'follow-up activity' and therefore required on-going Estyn monitoring visits. The implication of this was that on re-inspection the local authority would have either been removed from the monitoring category where sufficient progress would have been made or be placed in a further monitoring category of requiring 'significant improvement'. 'Significant improvement' is a formal category that applies to schools and Local Authorities causing concern, as defined by the Education Act 2005.

Where this is the judgement, the Minister for Education and Skills and Assembly officers are informed. Significant improvement means that a Local Authority is judged to be performing significantly less well than it might in all circumstances be expected to perform. If progress is not good enough, the Local Authority may be placed into 'special measures'. Special measures means that a Local Authority is not providing an acceptable standard of education and its leaders are not demonstrating that they can help it to improve.

3.4 The Local Authority was required to develop a Post Inspection Action Plan (PIAP) to address Estyn's concerns. The PIAP contained detailed plans to address each of the following areas of concern :

- R1 Improve outcomes for learners, especially at key stages 2 and 3 by using individual pupil data to set more robust targets and by strengthening the rigour and consistency in the local authority's challenge to schools
- R2 Improve attendance in primary and secondary schools by continuing to develop the joint work between education welfare and family engagement officers
- R3 Strengthen self-evaluation in order to understand what is working well and what needs to improve in order to help learners achieve their goals
- R4 Improve the quality of information provided to elected members so that they can challenge the performance of the authority's services and schools more robustly
- R5 Continue to reduce the number of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET).

4. Current situation / proposal

4.1 Progress against the PIAP was monitored closely by Estyn and there were follow up inspection visits in March and December 2014.

4.2 A team of inspectors conducted an interim visit to Bridgend in March 2014 in order to ascertain the level of progress against recommendations 3 (Strengthen self-evaluation in order to understand what is working well and what needs to improve in order to help learners achieve their goals) and 4 (Improve the quality of information provided to elected members so that they can challenge the performance of the authority's services and schools more robustly).

Improvements to systems designed to capture, monitor and report performance and to track delivery of plans were noted. At that time, it was commented that there was good evidence to support self-evaluation, but the Directorate needed to make better use of it to analyse and measure impact. It was judged that the new corporate performance framework was good.

With regard to 'improving the quality of information provided to elected members so that they can challenge the performance of the authority's services and schools more robustly' progress was noted. Inspectors considered the effectiveness of

training for elected members to increase their understanding and ability to interrogate data. They commented on the training being well received and on a good partnership with the consortia to deliver this training. Inspectors suggested that the quality of information provided to members was improving especially through good use of the intranet site Info Zone. Committee reports were found to be detailed and inform members well. The Director has addressed the quality of reports to overview and scrutiny. Children's Overview and Scrutiny meeting was observed and the Director was observed to make good use of answering questions to provide members with broader, relevant information. It was judged that the role of Cabinet was clear in monitoring school performance.

- 4.3 In December 2014, an inspection team revisited to undertake a full re-inspection with a particular focus on recommendations 1, 2 and 5. The inspection team held discussions with elected members, head teachers and governors, senior officers and a range of other staff. The team scrutinised documentation including evidence on the progress made against each of the recommendations since the 2012 inspection.
- 4.4 The inspection team commented favorably on the significant changes to the senior management team within the children's directorate and observed that progress in addressing the recommendations from the inspection was initially slow. However, it was also noted that 'the pace of change has increased under the leadership of the new director'.
- 4.5 A broad spectrum of interventions have been implemented to bring about the wide range of improvements noted by inspectors. These include:
- Implementing the transformation agenda for the children's directorate through the Children's Change Programme Board
 - A greater focus on performance, self-evaluation and outcomes
 - Working more closely with schools and the Central South Consortium to set more challenging and aspirational targets for pupils.
 - The use of statutory powers more effectively to intervene in schools causing concern; providing schools with a clearer direction regarding the authorisation of term-time holidays and consulting with stakeholders regarding a code of conduct for a 'zero tolerance' approach to authorising holidays in term time and of issuing fixed penalty notices for poor attendance.
 - The introduction of the new corporate performance management framework to define accountability for performance management, as well as setting out the necessary processes and procedures from corporate level down to individual level.
 - Improving the quality of education services information available to elected members, especially through the developing use of the 'Info Zone' online system and providing detailed information in committee reports to support recommendations for action.

- Improving officers' reports on school performance to ensure that the important messages are conveyed clearly;
- Implementing the key components of the Youth Engagement and Progression Framework (YEPF) where an engagement and progression co-ordinator collates information from various sources, within the authority and other partners, to aid in the early identification of potential NEETs and those most at risk of disengagement and by using early identification systems to allocate a lead worker to support these young people and ensure that suitable interventions are put in place to meet their needs.

4.6 Estyn has concluded that 'Bridgend County Borough Council is judged to have made sufficient progress in relation to the recommendations following the inspection of October 2012. As a result, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales considers that the authority is no longer in need of Estyn monitoring and is removing it from further follow-up activity.' See Estyn Letter (January 2015) Appendix 1.

4.7 In summary, the extent to which the recommendations were met by December 2014 were noted as follows:

R1 Improve outcomes for learners, especially at key stages 2 and 3 by using individual pupil data to set more robust targets and by strengthening the rigour and consistency in the local authority's challenge to schools: **Largely addressed**

R2 Improve attendance in primary and secondary schools by continuing to develop the joint work between education welfare and family engagement officers: **Largely addressed**

R3 Strengthen self-evaluation in order to understand what is working well and what needs to improve in order to help learners achieve their goals: **Partly addressed**

R4 Improve the quality of information provided to elected members so that they can challenge the performance of the authority's services and schools more robustly: **Largely addressed**

R5 Continue to reduce the number of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET): **Largely addressed**

5. **Effect upon Policy Framework & Procedure Rules**

5.1 The content of this report has no effect upon policy and procedure rules.

6. **Equality Impact Assessment**

6.1 There are no direct equality impact issues arising from this report.

7. **Financial Implications**

7.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

8. Recommendations

8.1 It is recommended that the Committee:

(a) Note the content of this report.

Deborah McMillan
Corporate Director - Children

Contact Officer: Susan Roberts

Telephone: (01656) 642616

E-mail: Susan.Roberts2@bridgend.gov.uk

Postal Address Children's Directorate
Bridgend County Borough Council
Civic Offices
Angel Street
Bridgend
CF31 4WB

Background Documents:

Cabinet Report 5th March 2013 "Report of Estyn Inspection of Bridgend's Local Authority Education Services