

EDUCATION & YOUTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Monday 20 th May 2019
Report Subject	Self-Evaluation of Local Government Education Services
Cabinet Member	Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Education
Report Author	Chief Officer (Education & Youth)
Type of Report	Operational

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Flintshire County Council undertakes an annual self-evaluation against the framework for the inspections of Local Government Education Services published by Estyn.

This report provides an overview of that self-evaluation and highlights key strengths and areas for development in the current provision for education services.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	To note the content of the self-evaluation report and provide their feedback to officers on the current performance of education services.
---	--

REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING THE SELF EVALUATION OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT EDUCATION SERVICES
1.01	The prime purpose of self-evaluation is to lead service improvements to secure the best possible outcomes for children and young people supported by the Education and Youth Portfolio. Only by robustly evaluating the strengths of the current provision and identifying areas for further improvement can the Portfolio continue to refine the manner in which it delivers services to secure better outcomes.
1.02	At the heart of self-evaluation are three questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How well are we doing and what impact are our services having?• How do we know?• How can we improve things further?
1.03	Self-evaluation is based on a wide range of information about the strengths and areas for improvement and will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Analysis of data from assessments, tests and national examinations• Evaluations of the quality of educational support services being offered to schools and their impact on learners by the local authority's core team• Evaluation of the challenge and support being provided to schools by the regional education improvement service, GwE• Evaluation of inspection evidence in relation to schools, non-maintained commissioned settings and other related services• Reviewing progress against strategic improvement plans e.g. Council Plan and Education Portfolio Business Plan• Reviewing how well the Local Authority is implementing national policies• Evaluation of the challenge provided to the service through the Education & Youth Overview and Scrutiny Committee• Auditing practice against policies and procedures e.g. Safeguarding, Health and Safety, Financing of Schools, Admissions etc.• Sampling the views of key partners and stakeholders on the quality of educational services being delivered.
1.04	The self-evaluation report outcomes then link to the Portfolio Business Plan and Regional Business Plans where key areas for improvement activity are identified, scheduled and monitored.
1.05	The new framework for Local Authority inspections on education services was introduced in 2018 following a pilot period and focuses on: 1. Outcomes <ul style="list-style-type: none">1.1 Standards and progress overall1.2 Standards and progress of specific groups1.3 Wellbeing and attitudes to learning 2. Quality of Education Services <ul style="list-style-type: none">2.1 Support for School Improvement2.2 Support for Vulnerable Learners

	<p>2.3 Other education support services</p> <p>3. Leadership & Management</p> <p>3.1 Quality and effectiveness of leaders and managers</p> <p>3.2 Self-evaluation and improvement planning</p> <p>3.3 Professional learning</p> <p>3.4 Safeguarding arrangements</p> <p>3.5 Use of resources</p> <p>This, therefore, provides the framework for the Portfolio's self-evaluation report.</p>
1.06	<p>All Local Authority Education Services in Wales will be inspected by 2022. Local Authorities will be given 10 weeks' notice of an inspection. The self-evaluation report produced by the Local Authority will be the key document used by the inspectors to inform their lines of enquiry and judgements when they visit, supported by analysis of a range of data, interviews with senior leaders and with a number of key stakeholders.</p> <p>The inspection team will produce a report which takes the following form:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • About the Local Authority • Summary • Recommendations • What happens next • Main findings : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Outcomes - Education Services (the report will include each local inspection question followed by the evaluation) - Leadership and management <p>Should the inspection determine that the Local Authority is not ensuring the provision of an acceptable standard of education and senior leaders lack the capacity to secure the necessary improvement, the Local Authority will be judged to be 'causing significant concern.'</p> <p>Where this is the case, Estyn will chair a post inspection improvement conference with senior leaders (officers and elected members) from the Local Authority and other key stakeholders to ensure that appropriate improvement plans are being developed to address shortcomings three months after the main inspection. The improvement plans will be reviewed regularly through the usual cycle of termly Estyn visits of the Local Authority Link Inspector (LALI) and then a more formal progress conference will be held twelve months after the improvement conference to evaluate the impact of improvement plans.</p> <p>Twelve months following the improvement conference, an Estyn monitoring visit will be undertaken to determine if the Local Authority can be removed from follow up.</p>
1.07	<p>Flintshire County Council has recently received notification of its inspection under this Framework and will be inspected by a team of Estyn and WAO inspectors during the week of 3-7th June 2019. A two day preliminary visit will take place on 22nd and 23rd May 2019.</p>

	<p>The five local questions that will be scrutinised in addition to the general inspection framework are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How well does the local authority work with schools to improve attainment across key stage 4? • How well does the local authority ensure appropriate support for schools and settings causing concern? • How effective is the local authority's work to improve school attendance and reduce exclusions? • How well do the local authority's services ensure suitable support for pupils Educated Other Than At School (EOTAS)? • How effective is the local authority's work in identifying, providing and monitoring statutory support for pupils with special educational needs? <p>The report on Flintshire's Education Services will be published on August 9th 2019.</p>
1.08	<p>Members of the Scrutiny Committee have received separate reports on learner outcomes across all key phases earlier in the year. A significant proportion of the self-evaluation report records this data as it is the basis for the evaluation of standards achieved by pupils in the authority. This, in turn, is a measure for the effectiveness of the quality of education delivered by schools in Flintshire.</p> <p>Ministerial changes to the way in which data is now collected and reported at a national level, particularly at Foundation Phase, Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3, has resulted in the removal of rankings of local authorities based on their expected performance linked to free school meal benchmarks. Performance of local authorities is only now reported against the Wales averages.</p>
1.09	<p>Inspection area 1 of the framework reports on outcomes for learners. Overall, standards and performance of educational services in Flintshire are good and this is reflected in the pupil performance data across all key stages, in the national categorisation profile of schools and the Estyn profile of school inspections.</p> <p>Standards in Foundation Phase, Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3 are all good with Flintshire's outcomes at expected and higher than expected levels mostly above the Wales average. There is a strong trend of continuous improvement and the Local Authority demonstrates a highly effective and sustained approach to early identification and support for schools to ensure that pupils make progress.</p>
1.10	<p>Following the changes in 2016-17 there remains significant volatility in GSCE outcomes. Significant changes to the pattern and numbers of pupils sitting exams in the summer 2018 has had an impact on results as demonstrated in the proportion of grades across all subjects in the A*-C</p>

	<p>range in Wales decreasing by 1.2% to 61.6%.</p> <p>GCSEs are being reformed and 15 updated subjects were sat in the summer of 2018 for the first time. The new GCSE suite of qualifications in science was examined for the first time in 2018, and coincides with the changes to the performance indications at KS4, to include only GCSE results for Science, as two measures in the capped 9 indicator. As a result, comparison with historical data is not applicable.</p>																																								
1.11	<p>There have been significant change to grade boundaries since the summer of 2017 and November 2017 compared to summer 2018, particularly at C grade in English and mathematics. This has made it difficult for schools to ensure accurate projections and target setting.</p> <p>Flintshire schools' outcomes in English in 2018 have been significantly influenced by entry decisions. Schools which entered pupils for English and mathematics exams early i.e. at the end of Year 10 performed better than those who followed ministerial advice and did not enter until the end of their GCSE course in the summer of Year 11. This has not just been a Flintshire issue but also reflected across the region. The drop in performance particularly in English has had an impact on performance at Level 2+, where English is a key component of the measure.</p> <p>Concerns about the manner in which grades were awarded mostly in English but also in mathematics in the summer of 2018 have been raised at the highest level in Welsh Government and Qualification Wales, who provide the independent quality assurance of the examinations process.</p> <p>The Overview & Scrutiny Committee has debated this issue at length in previous meetings and communicated directly with Qualifications Wales.</p>																																								
1.12	<p>Nevertheless, learner outcomes at Key Stage 4 in 2018 improved in most areas to be above national averages and Flintshire's performance was the strongest in many indicators across the GwE region. Maths and maths numeracy both improved and science continues to be a local strength.</p> <p>The performance of more able pupils, an area targeted through the Local Authority's business plan, improved by over 2% in 2018 as measured by the increase in the percentage of GCSEs being awarded at A* and A grades.</p> <p>The percentage of pupils not achieving any qualifications fell from 1% to 0.6% and is below the Wales average.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="319 1680 1117 2083"> <thead> <tr> <th>Indicator</th> <th>Flintshire 2017</th> <th>Flintshire 2018</th> <th>Wales 2018</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>L2+</td> <td>57.0</td> <td>56.6</td> <td>55.1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>L2</td> <td>65.8</td> <td>69.2</td> <td>67.0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>L1</td> <td>94.6</td> <td>94.7</td> <td>93.7</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Capped Points</td> <td>346.8</td> <td>352.2</td> <td>349.5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>English</td> <td>66.5</td> <td>62.8</td> <td>66.5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Welsh First</td> <td>71.9</td> <td>77.4</td> <td>74.3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Numeracy</td> <td>62.9</td> <td>64.1</td> <td>58.0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Maths</td> <td>62.4</td> <td>64.6</td> <td>59.4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Best of maths</td> <td>67.5</td> <td>68.5</td> <td>63.6</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Indicator	Flintshire 2017	Flintshire 2018	Wales 2018	L2+	57.0	56.6	55.1	L2	65.8	69.2	67.0	L1	94.6	94.7	93.7	Capped Points	346.8	352.2	349.5	English	66.5	62.8	66.5	Welsh First	71.9	77.4	74.3	Numeracy	62.9	64.1	58.0	Maths	62.4	64.6	59.4	Best of maths	67.5	68.5	63.6
Indicator	Flintshire 2017	Flintshire 2018	Wales 2018																																						
L2+	57.0	56.6	55.1																																						
L2	65.8	69.2	67.0																																						
L1	94.6	94.7	93.7																																						
Capped Points	346.8	352.2	349.5																																						
English	66.5	62.8	66.5																																						
Welsh First	71.9	77.4	74.3																																						
Numeracy	62.9	64.1	58.0																																						
Maths	62.4	64.6	59.4																																						
Best of maths	67.5	68.5	63.6																																						

	<p>Science* - 69.0 63.0</p> <p>5 A*/A 14.5 16.6 18.0</p> <p>Welsh Bacc Nat - 53.5 51.4</p> <p>Welsh Bacc Found - 83.6 85.3</p>
1.13	At Key Stage 5, A level performance continued to improve at A*-A and A*-C closing the gap between Flintshire's performance and the Wales average.
1.14	<p>The quality of education services in Flintshire can also be measured by the outcome of Estyn inspections and through the national categorisation of schools. At primary level in particular, Flintshire has a strong Estyn profile with no schools in a statutory category of concern and an increasing number of schools receiving 'Excellent' judgements.</p> <p>At secondary level the profile is generally good and improving with a reduction in the number of schools placed in statutory categories of concern. There have been no primary schools in a 'red' support category for the last three years and an increase in 'green' schools from 24 to 27. The number of 'red' and 'amber' schools in the secondary sector has reduced in 2018 and the number of 'yellow' and 'green' schools increased.</p> <p>Where schools do need to improve their performance there is swift and robust challenge and support from the Local Authority and by the regional school improvement service, GwE and this is evidenced by their timely removal from Estyn follow up categories.</p>
1.15	<p>The Local Authority has a range of services which work effectively to support pupils with Additional Learning Needs or pupils who may be vulnerable to underachievement.</p> <p>Over a three year period with a few exceptions, the gap between boys' and girls' performance is better in Flintshire than the national gap across all key stages.</p> <p>Overall, the performance of pupils entitled to Free School Meals is generally good but this does need to improve further at Key Stage 4.</p> <p>Through its effective partnership working, the Local Authority has maintained a very low level of pupils at Yr 11 not being in education, employment or training (NEET) and figures are well below the national average.</p> <p>The Local Authority has worked in partnership with schools to reduce the number of pupils who are educated other than at school (EOTAS). The rate per 1000 pupils in Flintshire has been on a downward trend, except for a blip in 2016-17. The trend in Wales over a similar time frame has seen an increase in the number of EOTAS pupils. The majority of the EOTAS pupils access their provision through Plas Derwen, the Local Authority's Portfolio of Pupil Referral Units and these pupils will have a range of significant additional learning needs requiring the provision of targeted and specialist intervention. Maintaining pupils in mainstream school remains a priority for improvement within the Portfolio.</p>
1.16	Reflecting the national picture, Flintshire has seen an increase in the

	<p>number of pupils identified as having Special Educational Needs – it has risen by 4% since 2014. This has had an impact on performance data at the end of each key stage for pupils identified at School Action Plus or having a Statement of Educational Needs where outcomes on headline indicators generally dipped between 2017 and 2018. Supporting pupils with ALN to achieve their potential remains a priority of the Local Authority.</p>
1.17	<p>For pupils with very complex needs, provision is delivered through the County's two specialist schools – Ysgol Pen Coch and Ysgol Maes Hyfryd. Outcomes for these pupils is good and has been verified by the recent inspection of both schools where it was reported that pupil outcomes are good and the majority make strong progress from their starting points and in relation to their individual needs and abilities.</p>
1.18	<p>In January 2018 there were 43 different languages being spoken in Flintshire schools in addition to English and Welsh. The support provided for these pupils by schools and the Local Authority generally shows an increasing trend of improvement for pupils with English as an Additional Language.</p>
1.19	<p>The outcomes for Traveller children across all key stages saw an increase in 2017-18 against a backdrop of increasing numbers and levels of transience. The Authority continues to provide support to children and young people from this community and works effectively with schools to ensure their engagement and success.</p>
1.20	<p>Overall, the outcomes for Looked After Children are good despite the relatively low numbers of children undertaking end of phase assessments which makes year on year comparisons difficult. A significant number of these pupils also have Special Educational Needs. Nevertheless, the LAC outcome data showed improvement across nearly all key stages in 2018.</p>
1.21	<p>Attendance in the primary sector has remained relatively static but in 2017-18 percentage attendance exceeded the Wales average for the first time since 2013-14. Unauthorised absence in the primary sector remains one of the lowest in Wales.</p> <p>Attendance in the secondary sector has dipped over the last two years and is just below the Wales average. Whilst unauthorised attendance has risen in the secondary sector over the last three years, it still remains below the Wales average.</p> <p>Improving secondary attendance remains a priority of the Local Authority.</p>
1.22	<p>Flintshire has traditionally had low levels of permanent exclusion in the primary and secondary sector. The reasons for exclusion are predominately violence towards other pupils or adults. Published and verified data is only currently available up to 2016-17 and shows an increase in the number of permanent exclusions in both the primary and secondary sector.</p> <p>Primary schools have seen a downward trend of fixed-term exclusions since 2015-16 but an increase in secondary schools. The Local Authority continues to work with schools to reduce the number of exclusions and has revised key policies to support this ongoing priority e.g. Managed Moves</p>

	Policy and Permanent Exclusion policy.
1.23	<p>Inspection Area 2 of the Self-Evaluation report highlights, in some considerable detail, the range of services provided by the Local Authority either directly through core LA teams, or through its key partner, GwE. The Local Authority is confident that it knows its schools well and has a very effective relationship with the regional school improvement service. This enables schools to benefit from a diverse regional professional offer and bespoke support for improvement at an individual school and cluster level.</p> <p>It also ensures that where concerns emerge, the response is swift and schools are targeted with the appropriate level of challenge and tailored support to progress quickly on an improvement journey. This is evidenced by the positive inspection and national categorisation profile of the authority and the relatively few numbers of schools in a category of Estyn follow up.</p>
1.24	Area 2 also provides a high level of detail around the provision of Inclusion Services for those with Additional Learning Needs. Services to support other learners who may be considered to be vulnerable e.g. Looked After Children, learners with English as an additional language, Gypsy and Traveller children are also described in this section of the self-evaluation report.
1.25	The range of other services offered to children and young people in Flintshire are highlighted in this section including the Welsh Language Advisory Service; Funded Part Time Early Years provision (Early Entitlement); Childcare Offer; Integrated Youth Provision; Play; Healthy Schools and Pre-Schools; Music Service and the Early Help Hub.
1.26	The planning for and provision of school places is also referenced in Inspection Area 2 and provides a detailed overview of the Council's School Modernisation Strategy, the management of repairs and maintenance across the school estate and the school admissions process.
1.27	Inspection Area 3 focuses on the quality of leadership and management of education services within both the Education & Youth Portfolio and across the Council as a whole. The Self Evaluation Report demonstrates that the Council benefits from strong leadership with an effective working relationship between professional officers and elected members. This results in clearly articulated priorities for improvement, as exemplified in the Council Plan and service plans, which are understood by all. A robust Scrutiny process ensure that there is continuous challenge of performance and regular evaluation of performance and impact.
1.28	The Self Evaluation Report articulates the determination of the Council in challenging and supporting services to improve and highlights that difficult decisions have been taken e.g. using statutory powers of intervention in schools causing concern; closing some schools and reorganising the school estate and decisions to protect schools' budgets at a time of reduced funding for local government.
1.29	The Self Evaluation Report provides a comprehensive overview of the range and quality of education services in Flintshire, It acknowledges its strengths but also clearly identifies areas for ongoing improvement which will be

	prioritised over the coming year.
--	-----------------------------------

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	The self-evaluation document outlines the perceived strengths along with key areas for improvement. The resource implications of these will be defined in the revised Portfolio Business Plan which builds on the self-evaluation report.
2.02	The budget for the Education and Youth Portfolio, including delegated budgets to schools, is one of the largest in the Council. In the current financial climate with the reduction in the Revenue Support Grant for 2019-20 and Education Improvement Grant and rising cost pressures, the funding of educational services remains under significant pressure.

3.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
3.01	This report has been co-constructed with input from local authority officers, and GwE partners and is shared with all major stakeholders.
3.02	The Education & Youth Overview and Scrutiny Committee provides the opportunity for elected members to participate in the process of self-evaluation.

4.00	RISK MANAGEMENT
4.01	The self-evaluation process feeds into the Portfolio Business Plan and the overall Council Plan both of which outline associated risks and mitigating factors.

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	Appendix 1 – Estyn Framework for the Inspection of Local Government Education Services 2018
5.02	Appendix 2 – Self-Evaluation Report 2019

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	None. Contact Officer: Claire Homard Chief Officer (Education & Youth) Telephone: 01352 704190 E-mail: claire.homard@flintshire.gov.uk

7.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
7.01	<p>Estyn – the Education and Training Inspectorate for Wales</p> <p>HMI – Her Majesty’s Inspector (employed by Estyn)</p> <p>GwE – Regional School Improvement Service for the North Wales region commissioned by Flintshire County Council</p> <p>EOTAS – Education other than at school applies to children and young people who do not access their education within a maintained school setting. Examples may include home education, pupil referral units and independent schools.</p>