

CABINET

Date of Meeting	Tuesday, 24 th September 2019
Report Subject	Estyn Inspection of Flintshire's Education Services
Cabinet Member	Leader of the Council & Cabinet Member for Education
Report Author	Chief Officer (Education & Youth)
Type of Report	Strategic

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The education services of Flintshire County Council have recently been subject to a full inspection by Estyn, Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales under the national framework for the inspection of local government education services.

This report provides an overview of that process and the final inspection report is attached as an appendix.

The report reinforces the leadership and performance of the education and youth function, and accords with our self-assessment which demonstrates a high level of self-awareness of strengths and areas for improvement.

As to be expected, the report also acknowledges areas of improvement and these are noted as recommendations for the Council to address. It is worth noting that these had already been identified as priorities through the Portfolio's own self-evaluation processes prior to the inspection.

The recommendations will now be collated into an appendix of the E&Y Portfolio Business Plan, called a Post Inspection Action Plan and progress on these recommendations will be reported regularly to Cabinet and to the Education and Youth Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	That Cabinet/Scrutiny Committee receive the Estyn report on education services in Flintshire and acknowledge its findings.
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REPORT DETAILS

1.00	INSPECTION OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT EDUCATION SERVICES
1.01	<p>From September 2017 a new framework was issued by Estyn for the Inspection of Local Government Education Services and this will be used for the inspection of education services within all local authorities in Wales on a five year cycle between 2018 and 2023.</p> <p>Flintshire County Council received notification that its education services would be inspected between 3rd and 7th June 2019 with some preliminary inspection activity being undertaken on 22nd and 23rd May. An online survey was also launched via the Estyn website to collate the public's view of education services in Flintshire.</p> <p>The inspection team was led by a Reporting Inspector from Estyn and the team comprised of 12 inspectors in total. The team included both of the Local Area Link Inspectors (LALI) who visit the local authority on a termly basis, two representatives of the Welsh Audit Office (WAO) and two senior officers from other local authorities acting in a peer inspector role.</p> <p>The Local Authority also has representation on the inspection team, in the form of a Nominee. This role was undertaken very effectively by Vicky Barlow, Senior Manager for School Improvement who acted as the link between the Estyn inspection team and the senior managers of the Education Portfolio.</p>
1.02	<p>On the 22nd and 23rd May the two senior inspectors made a preliminary visit to the LA and met with a range of stakeholders to gather evidence to support the development of their lines of enquiry for the week of inspection. This included headteachers, governors, diocesan representatives and leaders/managers from other council services and wider partner organisations. They also met with the Youth Council and representatives from School Councils.</p> <p>On the first day of the inspection week, 3rd June, the whole inspection team met with the Chief Executive, Chief Officer, Leader and Cabinet Member for Education, Chair of Scrutiny and the senior managers of the Education and Youth Portfolio. The Chief Executive and the Chief Officer for Education and Youth made a 30 minute presentation outlining the context of education services in Flintshire and the challenges currently being faced. The Senior Managers for School Improvement and for Inclusion then made individual presentation to nominated inspectors on the five local questions that Estyn had identified as the focus for the inspection of education services in Flintshire. In addition to the standard focus on Outcomes and on Leadership and Management, five local questions focused on the following areas:</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?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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?
1.03	<p>Prior to the week of inspection the senior management team of the portfolio collated hundreds of pieces of evidence to demonstrate the effectiveness of the service and these were uploaded into Estyn's Virtual Inspection Room on a secure section of the Estyn website for the inspection team to access.</p> <p>During the week of the inspection itself, the Estyn team asked for further documentation to support their work.</p>
1.04	<p>During the full week of the inspection, small groups of inspectors interviewed a range of officers including the Chief Executive, Leader of the Council, Chair of Scrutiny, Chief Officer, GwE officers and the senior and middle managers of the portfolio to pursue their lines of enquiry and cross check evidence.</p> <p>Short feedback was given to the Chief Officer each evening and on the last day of the inspection, a verbal report outlining the first draft of the report was shared with the Council leadership, the Chief Officer and the senior managers of the portfolio.</p> <p>As the report is subsequently moderated by Estyn, its contents at that stage had to remain confidential until its final publication on 9th August 2019 on the Estyn website.</p>
1.05	<p>The full report is attached as an appendix to this report for Members' consideration.</p> <p>The report is positive with many strengths of the current educational provision identified. The local authority did not require any follow up Estyn activity. The local authority has also been asked to write a case study on its particularly effective practices in supporting the early language development of children and this will be published on the Estyn website to positively impact the work of other local authorities.</p> <p>Where Estyn felt improvements were necessary, these are reflected in the recommendations within the report. The recommendations were not a surprise to the Education Portfolio as they had mostly been identified as areas for improvement through its own self-evaluation processes and included as actions in the Portfolio Business Plan. The recommendations are:</p> <p>R1 Improve outcomes for learners in key stage 4.</p> <p>R2 Reduce exclusions and increase attendance in both primary and secondary schools.</p> <p>R3 Improve the ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the few front line education services identified in the report in order to provide more accurate information about the impact of the local authority's work.</p> <p>R4 Manage the reduction in school budget deficits more effectively.</p>

	<p>These recommendations will now be finalised into a Post Inspection Action Plan by the end of September and delivered through the work of the Portfolio. The plan will be regularly monitored and its impact evaluated with updates being shared routinely with Cabinet and the Education and Youth Scrutiny Committee.</p> <p>Recommendation 1 will be addressed through the detailed individual school support plans that are jointly constructed with GwE, the regional school improvement service. These support plans are regularly monitored by the Senior Manager for School Improvement who will lead on this aspect of the Post Inspection Action Plan.</p> <p>Recommendation 2 was already identified in the Portfolio Business Plan for 2019-20 but will now be further developed. The lead for this will be the Senior Manager for Inclusion and Progression and will focus on enhancing the work of the Inclusion Welfare Service. However, schools have a direct responsibility for managing the attendance and inclusion of pupils and so they will be engaged in directly supporting this recommendation.</p> <p>Recommendation 3 relates to further refinement of the Portfolio's self-evaluation processes to achieve more detailed evaluation of the work of specific teams and their impact/effectiveness. This will be led by the Chief Officer, Education & Youth.</p> <p>Recommendation 4 is being already being addressed through a specific task group including the Chief Executive, Leader of the Council, Section 151 Officer, Chief Officer for Education & Youth and the Portfolio Finance Manager. Its focus is on strengthening processes around the management of school deficit budgets and strategically reviewing education funding.</p>
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2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	<p>The implementation of the action plan will be resourced mostly through the existing resources of the Education and Youth Portfolio but in the current economic climate the ongoing resilience of these core education services and of school budgets is increasingly threatened and could undermine its success.</p> <p>The addressing of the recommendation in relation to school deficit budgets has been escalated to a corporate level as it is beyond the resource of the Education Portfolio alone and is now the subject of a specific task group including the Chief Executive and the Leader of the Council.</p>

3.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
3.01	These were integral to the inspection process as outlined above.

4.00	IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT												
4.01	The risks associated with the implementation of the post inspection action plan will be incorporated into the risk register for the Education and Youth Portfolio. At this time all will be mitigated against with the appropriate actions.												
4.02	<p>Under the five delivery principles of the Well-being of Future Generations Act this report will have the following impacts:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="304 439 1445 972"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="304 439 759 477">Ways of Working Principle</th> <th data-bbox="759 439 1445 477">Impact</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="304 477 759 562">Long-term</td> <td data-bbox="759 477 1445 562"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> positive with greater funding certainty for education </td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="304 562 759 647">Prevention</td> <td data-bbox="759 562 1445 647"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> positive with implementation of the recommendations </td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="304 647 759 732">Integration</td> <td data-bbox="759 647 1445 732"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> positive with the implementation of the recommendations </td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="304 732 759 853">Collaboration</td> <td data-bbox="759 732 1445 853"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> positive – will continue to support effective working between LA, schools and other key partners </td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="304 853 759 972">Involvement</td> <td data-bbox="759 853 1445 972"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> positive – will continue to support effective working between LA, schools and other key partners </td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Ways of Working Principle	Impact	Long-term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> positive with greater funding certainty for education 	Prevention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> positive with implementation of the recommendations 	Integration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> positive with the implementation of the recommendations 	Collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> positive – will continue to support effective working between LA, schools and other key partners 	Involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> positive – will continue to support effective working between LA, schools and other key partners
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		acknowledged in the report – will support transition to adulthood and community cohesion.
	Vibrant Wales	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> positive impact on culture and bilingualism and opportunities accessed by children and young people acknowledged in the report.
	Globally Responsible Wales	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> positive impact – no impact in relation to this report but school inspection reports highlight positive impact of Healthy & Eco Schools programmes in Flintshire.
4.04	Integrated impact assessments will be undertaken if needed due to change of service policy.	

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	Appendix 1 - Estyn Inspection Report on Flintshire County Council

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	<p>Guidance Handbook for the Inspection of Local Government Education Services 2018.</p> <p>Contact Officer: Claire Homard Telephone: 01352 704190 E-mail: claire.homard@flintshire.gov.uk</p>

7.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
7.01	<p>Estyn – Her Majesty’s Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales</p> <p>Well-being of Future Generations Act – legislation of the National Assembly for Wales which requires devolved public bodies to plan sustainably for the future</p>