

Estyn Monitoring Visit March 2015

Progress Report JUNE 2015

Recommendation 4

Improve the effectiveness of joint planning across the range of partnership working

Report Author

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Background

This recommendation is a modified statement of the initial recommendation to “Improve the effectiveness of partnership planning for outcomes in priority areas” dating from the January 2011 inspection. The February 2014 visit judged that it had been “partly addressed”. The visit also assessed progress against the recommendation to “Improve the effectiveness of joint planning across the range of partnership working” as “largely addressed”. That visit letter noted:

- Integrated priorities for children and young people in the What Matters Plan
- constructive partnerships of the Cardiff Partnership Board
- Education Development Board and Families and Young Peoples Board re-focused
- multi-agency working in relation to EET: better early identification and coordination of support
- effective working with schools to establish a 5 step framework for managing attendance and behaviour, but fixed term exclusions still too high
- the initiation of close partnerships with HE and business
- closer working between LA and Consortium.

However it was judged that these partnerships were not at that time demonstrating enough impact on raising standards.

Overview of progress since February 2014

a) Overview

The partnerships noted in the 2014 monitoring visit have since that time been consolidated and extended so that they contribute positively to improvement in learner outcomes. Roles, relationships and mutual expectations and accountabilities between schools, the LA and the Consortium have been clarified, leading to a sharper focus on key priorities, higher expectations and a more mature culture of challenge and support. The Council’s overall commitment to improving educational attainment has been strengthened within the framework of the What Matters Partnership Plan with a revised Corporate Plan and significantly enhanced corporate commitment to education. There has been significant strengthening of partnerships between the schools in the Authority, Higher and Further education, and business and enterprise.

Partnership planning across institutional and geographical boundaries has been extended through the LSCB Board. Links between schools and local Neighbourhood Partnerships have been strengthened to foster joint working in supporting vulnerable pupils. Strong partnership arrangements are in place to deliver the Prevent Strategy and the Channel programme throughout Cardiff.

These improved arrangements have impacted positively on improved attainment and a reduction in NEET. In particular the percentage of Year 11 leavers designated as NEET reduced from 4.9% in 2013 to 4.2% in 2014.

b) Achievements since February 2014 monitoring visit**Effective working with schools**

There is now a clearer recognition of the delegated responsibilities of schools and their governing bodies and as a consequence sharper holding to account in relation to the learner outcomes that they deliver. School leaders and governors are now more effectively engaged in taking shared responsibility for the improvement of attainment across all Cardiff schools.

School to school support is well established in Cardiff as it is across the Consortium area. Formal commissioned arrangements have been established between schools requiring improvement and strong schools, for example at Cardiff high and Eastern; Llanishen Fach and Fairwater. There is now a well-established network of School Improvement Groups (SIGs). 4 Cardiff schools are operating formally as 'hub' schools and 4 as 'specialist' schools offering professional development in teaching and leadership.

The 5 step approach to behaviour management, and delegation of funding to schools, has led to a reduction in exclusions. Areas of difficulty are addressed in a constructive way. For example a Hard to Place Panel has been established to ensure shared responsibility for the admission arrangements in difficult cases. The panel is chaired by a headteacher and all heads are involved in decision making. Good progress has been made in ensuring that learners at risk of NEET are assessed through consistent use of the Vulnerability Assessment Profile in all schools.

There is an improved culture and practice in joint working between the Authority and schools, with more open dialogue, and better engagement. For example the Schools Budget Forum has held two well attended training days, and has initiated action to review Service Level Agreements for traded services provided by the Council to schools. It is better placed to deal constructively with the challenging budget pressures ahead.

There are improving multi agency partnership in relation to the most challenging primary pupils and their families. Information briefings and networking have been put in place to ensure that primary heads are aware of and can access neighbourhood support structures. Some improvement in the structures and relationships between children's social care and school leaders- more to be done.

Local Authority and Consortium

The working relationship between the Authority and the Consortium is now more robust, with a clear focus on the priorities for improvement in Cardiff. Governance of the Consortium service delivery has been strengthened, and with Cardiff elected members and officers playing an active role. The support and challenge to schools categorised as red or amber is more effectively structured, with appropriate linkage between Consortium and senior Local Authority staff. Action is being taken to strengthen information sharing and communication to ensure that challenge advisers are fully connected in their work to the spectrum of LA services which support schools and their pupils.

Partnerships with Higher and Further Education and Business

The Education Development Board provides formal oversight of this engagement with much additional partnership activity outside the meetings. Cardiff Business Council has taken a strong lead in promoting the need for governors to be drawn from business and

enterprise in Cardiff. A sub-group of the council has been established to promote this objective and has secured additional governors in a number of Cardiff schools, including as part of formal intervention into governance where it has been weak. The number of governors from Cardiff Metropolitan University and Cardiff University has increased, with for example, promotion of the role of school governor in Cardiff in staff newsletters.

The partnership between the Authority and Cardiff and the Vale College has been particularly strong in relation to Eastern High. Senior members of the college are on the re-shaped governing body, and very close working with the College underpins the joint development of the new building for the school and College provision, due to open in September 2017.

The Council is using its strategic role in the city to establish a strong "Pupil Offer" for learners at the 6 Challenge Cymru schools in the city, following the national Pupil Offer conference in January 2015.

Wider Partnerships

The Prevent Strategy

Strong 'Prevent' partnerships continue in Cardiff, both in mainstream schools and in Higher and Further Education. Education staff are key players on the Cardiff CONTEST (Counter Terrorist) Board and Channel Panel, and play an active part in reducing vulnerability around extremism. Those partnerships also include Welsh Government, Home Office, Estyn, South Wales Police and the Wales Extremism and Counter Terrorist Unit (WECTU). The Home Office Prevent Co-ordinator works within Cardiff Local Authority and acknowledges the commitment shown by the education sector in Cardiff on the Prevent Agenda.

Education specialists deliver the Home Office WRAP (Workshop to Raise Awareness of Prevent) package and play an active part in the WRAP partnership network. Partners worked effectively together to follow up concerns about young people in relation to three particular Islamic Centres in the City. A co-ordinated, multi-agency approach, involving education staff, Social Services and Estyn, resulted in a proactive visit to all three premises and systems in place to deal with identified issues. Cardiff secondary schools have in place successfully operating the Getting on Together (GOT) Project, which is focused on extremism and delivered to pupils via R.E., the Welsh Baccalaureate and P.S.E. programmes.

Working with health and other partners

There is effective partnership working with health in a number of important areas. This is especially close on a day to day basis in special schools and in the Flying Start provision across the city. There is now a very effective five stage model of support for speech and language, delivered in partnership with the speech and language therapy service. Primary schools assess language development of all children entering Reception and use a range of strategies and interventions to address language delays. The impact on learners has been evidenced as a mean average of 20% improvement of receptive Language skills within the Reception year. Therapy referrals are processed more effectively with needs being met earlier and the gap narrowing between a delay and appropriate language skills. Within the UHB this work has recently won an award with the Health Care Professional Council. The Authority has also set up a joint approach to commission of provision for young people with additional needs with the Vale of Glamorgan and the Health Authority.

Families First

Education is a key partner within the Council's Families First programme and is the lead provider for the Child and Youth Engagement work stream which delivers activities for children and young people aged from 8 to up to 25 and their families, where they need additional support to participate effectively in education and training and take advantage of opportunities for employment.

Adult and community learning

The Cardiff and the Vale Adult and Community Learning Partnership has significantly improved provision, value for money and learner outcomes in adult learning. The Estyn monitoring report of January 2015 noted that very good progress had been made in strengthening the strategic leadership, management and coordination of adult community based learning through partnership working.

Next Steps

What more needs to be done?

- We recognise that the very significant budget pressures we face will require further re-shaping of the functions that the Local Authority is able to deliver, and will unavoidably mean tighter school budgets. The savings required cannot be delivered through efficiencies alone. We must put in place strategies which deliver improved outcomes at lower cost. In primary phase we are seeking to develop pilot clusters of primary schools working together to pool resources and maximise collective capacity. Service Level Agreements have been revised and a Traded Services Board will be established to act as the client side voice in relation to services provided on a traded basis by the Council to schools.
- The working relationships between the Authority and the Consortium Challenge advisers are much improved. We now seek to build tighter integration of roles and understanding so that all challenge advisers have access to the full picture of a school's needs to enable them to engage where appropriate with services across the Authority in a way that establishes a genuine 'team Cardiff' approach to working with schools.
- The Council has developed an Early help Strategy in collaboration with a wide range of partners. The action plan to implement this strategy identifies the key role that schools play in working with children and families. Steps have been taken to strengthen links between schools and other agencies. A Directory of agencies and contacts at a neighbourhood level has been circulated to all schools and a series of 'networking' events run in July 2015 to build better communication between school leaders and key staff in other agencies. The early help action plan will extend and deepen this joint working to ensure affective alignment, good information sharing efficient use of collective resources.

Evidence referred to

Minutes of EDB, ESG, LSCB Executive FYPB, School Budget Forum January 2015

Briefing note: Education Meeting Structure

Overview briefing note: What Matters Partnership in Cardiff Council

Cardiff Annexe to CSC Business Plan

Minutes of CSC Joint Committee, Directors Meetings

Directory of Neighbourhood Services for Schools