

Report title	Report on School Effectiveness Service working in Denbighshire
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Member with Education Responsibility	

Purpose of the Report

The main purpose of the report is to present information which will allow elected members to scrutinise the work of the School Effectiveness Service (GwE) with regard to Denbighshire schools and to evaluate the effect of the work on outcomes, standards of work and quality of leadership. This report needs to be read in conjunction with the Annual Performance Report so that impact of support actions noted in this report can be assessed against performance outcomes.

Supporting Cooperate Priorities

- GwE Service Level Agreement for 2013-14 is based on the principle of targeted support for schools in need of intervention.
- GwE and LA priorities are both based on learners achieving their full potential. However, despite the alignment between National, Regional and Authority priorities, due to the regional focus on intervention in underperforming schools and the identifying triggers for this within the original service level agreement, the majority of Denbighshire schools were unable to access support to move from good to excellent.
- GwE regional priorities for 2013-14 were as follows:-
 - Increase the proportion of 16-year-old learners achieving the Threshold Level 2 + at the end of KS4
 - To raise standards of achievement of learners who are entitled to FSM
 - To raise standards of achievement in the national reading and numeracy tests
 - Increasing numbers and standards of achievement in Welsh First Language
 - Increase the proportion of 16-year old learners achieving at least 5 A * / A by the end of KS4
- Denbighshire Local Authority priorities for 2013-14 are as follows:-
 - Raising attainment
 - Narrowing the gap between groups of learners
 - Tackling deprivation
 - Improving literacy and numeracy
 - Supporting pupils well being
 - Accessing curriculum enrichment opportunities and improving engagement in education.
- Additional GwE regional priorities for 2014-15 are as follows:-
 - Establish and promote an effective model for regional school to school collaboration
 - Improving the quality of leadership and teaching / learning
 - Supporting and empowering schools in assessment procedures, standardization and moderation of teacher assessments
- The GwE business plan going forward (written autumn 2014) has an appendix for key priorities for each Local Authority. LA officers and GwE have co-constructed this section of the plan, ensuring that it is aligned with Denbighshire LA priorities.
- The setting of targets for schools is a key discussion between GwE and LA and progress towards these targets are reported each term.

Governance

- GwE was established in partnership with the 6 Local Authorities in North Wales to be accountable to the county councils and to carry out their statutory functions in relation to school improvement [and in particular, to monitor, challenge and provide support services]. The delivery of the Service Level Agreement is based on a model which is designed on the number of days specified for:
 - Termly monitoring visits looking at attainment data and capacity of the school to improve.
 - supporting schools in risk categories
 - pre and post-inspection support
- The capacity of the service meant that it was not possible to work beyond this remit due to a number of reasons. This included a) difficulty in recruitment especially at secondary level b) initial experience and ability of system leaders at a school leadership level and c) working in a transitional period where intelligence gathering had to be a focus before intervention and support could be actioned.
- The GwE staffing structure for 2013-14 can be seen in Appendix 1a. During 2013-14 the GwE senior leadership team comprised of five members; one Managing Director, three Senior System Leaders (one for each hub) and a Business Manager. The GwE staffing structure for 2014-15 can be seen in Appendix 1b.
- A team of equivalent to 30 full-time Challenge Adviser work across the region with 9 of those working specifically in the Conwy / Denbighshire Hub during 2013-14. The original Senior System Leader for the Conwy / Denbighshire Hub left in September 2013 and was replaced from October 2013. Details of the Conwy / Denbighshire team can be found in Appendix 2 including past experiences in leadership. There is also reference to the structure of the team in 2014-15.

- GwE and LA jointly deliver on school improvement and are jointly responsible for applying the curriculum which feeds into the work of ESTYN. However as GwE and LA have responsibility for different aspects of this agenda. Therefore collaborative working is essential to ensure quality challenge and support in all areas. Continuous collaborative working and communication is an essential part of the way GwE and Denbighshire LA ensure that quality school improvement is delivered across the authority.
- Senior Leadership in GwE and Denbighshire LA have developed a robust quality assurance model was developed and included:-
 - GwE Senior Challenge Advisor met on a fortnightly basis with Denbighshire LA officers to discuss various schools and agree where intervention and support was needed. There was also regular contact by phone and email.
 - All GwE Challenge advisors met Denbighshire LA officers once a term to discuss all schools. A report is drafted by GwE which is shared with LA officers prior to the meeting. This forms the basis for discussions.
 - Schools were categorised during a joint GwE / Denbighshire meeting where all intelligence by GwE Challenge advisors and Denbighshire officers is taken into account.
 - Partnership working between senior officers in GwE and Denbighshire LA is continuously being evaluated and developed to ensure improvement and impact.
- A model has been further developed this current academic year and is now far more robust and communication lines clearer between LA and GwE officers. The model now includes:-
 - Fortnightly meetings continue between Senior Challenge Advisor and Denbighshire officers.
 - There is regular consultation between GwE and Local Authority officers regarding school categorisation which informs the reporting. The official categorisation took place during October; however this can be updated at any time during the year depending on individual school's circumstances.
 - Challenge advisors in consultation with LA officers collate a half termly report detailing level of challenge and support for every Denbighshire school. This report includes judgements on capacity to improve, progress against recommended actions and impact seen during the period.
 - A document detailing Denbighshire target schools is updated half termly, noting number of days of support received, cost of intervention and impact against the recommended actions.
 - All GwE Challenge advisors will meet once a term with Denbighshire Officers to discuss every school and to receive input from Welsh advisory team, ALN Department, Inclusion and to receive any relevant information from HR and Finance which may impact on standards.
- No annual scrutiny report was not produced for 2013-14 due to the fact that the service had not been functional for 12 months.

Financial Management

The regional service is jointly funded by the 6 Authority [based on an agreed formula]. In 2014-15, those contributions will be as follows:

Cyngor	£	%
Anglesey	£364,146	10.23%
Gwynedd	£640,614	17.99%
Conwy	£555,908	15.61%
Denbighshire	£539,137	15.14%
Flint	£796,986	22.38%
Wrexham	£664,019	18.65%
Total	£3,560,810	

Percentage of the budget allocated to commissioning in the various authorities from April 2013 to August 2014 [* excludes autumn 2014 onwards]:

Cyngor	£	%
Anglesey	£35,559.09	12.32%
Gwynedd	£63,505.49	22.00%
Conwy	£72,379.63	25.07%
Denbighshire	£21,729.13	7.53%
Flint	£27,925.20	9.67%
Wrexham	£67,562.69	23.41%
Total	£288,661.23	

- Due to the restrictions brought about by the current Service Level Agreement, the amount of commissioned support received by Denbighshire was limited. Due to the fact that the Denbighshire LA schools profile was a positive, a profile with no schools in ESTYN statutory Category and only a few schools in ESTYN monitoring or causing concern, the LA received a limited share of the regional commissioning budget during 2013-14.
- During the current academic year (2014-15), taking into account the categorisation profile of Denbighshire schools, a commissioning budget of £27,300 (18.2%) has been set aside for intervention in Denbighshire schools.

Workforce Planning and Development

- The original Service Level Agreement noted areas of possible risk during the development of the service. These included a) Ability to recruit suitable staff and b) Dip in standards

Some of this risk has been realised in the following way:-

- Ability to recruit staff; there was a difficulty in appointing a full team for Conwy / Denbighshire Hub which led to two schools not receiving a visit in Summer term 2013 and did not have an allocated System Leader until Summer 2014.
- Dip in standards; during this transitional period, GwE and LA have worked closely to ensure that there was no regression in standards during the period. This was realised with a positive trend in attainment at all key stages in summer 2014. However, with regard to schools' capacity to improve, the initial period of transition and the problems with dissemination of intelligence led to some schools not making the expected progress during the year. 2013-14 Performance data at all Key Stages put Denbighshire LA in the top 10 amongst Welsh Local Authorities; this was a target for Denbighshire LA.

Responding to the External Environment

- Due to the generic regional SLA, it has been difficult to respond to specific LA needs over and beyond GwE priorities. However, local needs are now taken into account through the new business case LA appendix. This will ensure that there is more flexibility around the needs of the LA while ensuring regional consistency through the requirements of the National Model.
- A focus for GwE during 2013-14 was to prepare schools for inspection and to ensure post ESTYN support. This was done in conjunction with LA intelligence of schools. The profile for Denbighshire schools during this period can be seen in Appendix 3. Below is a summary of ESTYN inspection data for Spring 2013-Summer 2014:-

Current Profile for Denbighshire [all schools] :

- Number /%schools in Local Monitoring: 1 [2.1%]
- Number/%schools in ESTYN monitoring: 3 [6.4%]
- Nifer/% schools in Significant Improvement: 0 [0.0%]
- Number /%schools in Special Measures: 0 [0.0%]

Judgement profile [for schools inspected during the period]: 13

- Number/% awarded Good or better across the 3 Key Questions : 9[69%]
- Number/% of KQ1 judgements were good or better : 9 [69%]
- Nifer/% of KQ2 judgements were good or better: 9[69%]
- Nifer/% of KQ3 judgements were good or better: 9[69%]
- Nifer/% where a KQ was deemed to be unsatisfactory: 0 [0%]
- Nifer/%where an area was judged to be outstanding: 0 [%]

Schools who have come out of category during the period:-

- Two schools (Esgob Morgan and Cefn Meiriadog) have come out of LA monitoring during the period
- One school (Bodnant) has come out of ESTYN monitoring during the period
- One school (Cyffylliog) has come out of Special Measures during the period

Performance Management

- GwE Challenge advisors facilitated Head teacher performance Management in all Denbighshire schools over the past academic year. Head teacher personal objectives were discussed in Visit 1 in preparation for the official PM meeting with school governors.
- Challenge Advisors completed a self-assessment profile during autumn 2013; however there was no Performance Management process in place for Challenge Advisors during 2013-14. Performance Management Policy and Documentation is now in place and PM meetings for all GwE staff are taking place during autumn 2014. Challenge Advisor objectives include one regional priority focus, one with a school improvement (or group of schools) focus and one regarding a personal development need.
- GwE Challenge Advisors have received regular regional training on school improvement issues, this totalled five full days training during 2013-14 academic year. Up and above this, there were six Conwy/ Denbighshire hub team meetings where Challenge advisor training was an aspect of the session.
- At the beginning of autumn 2014 all challenge advisors attended National training in Cardiff. This was based around the new National Standards for Challenge Advisors. A national task group are working on a national continuous professional development package for Challenge Advisors which will be implemented regionally.
- All schools received the standard three visits during 2013-14. This was a combined total of 85.5 days of Challenge Advisor time in schools. Preparation and report writing time has been calculated at a combined total of 199.5 days of challenge advisors time. All, apart from four secondary schools during visit 1, were carried out by full time GwE challenge advisors. GwE commissioned two retired Head teachers to carry out visit 1 in the four secondary schools.
- Challenge Advisors attended the Head teacher's performance management meeting in all 57 Denbighshire schools during the autumn 2013 term. This equated to 28.5 days.
- Challenge advisors also visited schools to support school development in leadership and teaching and learning. They also attended at least one governing body meeting in every school. A combined total of 188.5 days of Challenge advisor time

was spent conducting these supportive visits in Denbighshire schools. A breakdown of this support can be seen in Appendix 4. As can be seen these visits range from 0.5 day to 17 days depending on need (average of 3.3 days per school). In schools requiring further intervention, a total of 41.5 days of commissioned support was arranged in ten (18%) Denbighshire schools. Associate Partner support from GwE was also arranged and this amounted to 35.5 days in 11 (19%) of Denbighshire schools. Seventeen (30%) of Denbighshire schools took part in GwE organised Literacy and Numeracy intervention training totalling 28.5 days, while GwE funded and facilitated Numeracy training for the Denbighshire Welsh schools federation and was attended by many Head teacher and teaching staff from all First language Welsh schools within Denbighshire.

- Appendix 4 includes three specific examples of where intervention by GwE in collaboration with the LA has led to improvement in standards and school development.

Partnership and Collaboration

- GwE and LA officers, through processes and protocols work collegiately through quality partnership working. Examples of these include:-
- GwE staff has accompanied LA and school Head teachers to SSMG meetings during 2013-14.
- All GwE and LA officers meet once a term and a report is produced detailing the good practice, development needs, intervention and impact of intervention of all schools.

Equalities and Safeguarding

- GwE have an equality plan and policy and this is adhered to by all staff. GwE are also aware of the Denbighshire equality plan and policy and also adhere to this.
- GwE have a safeguarding policy and this is adhered to by all staff. GwE are also aware of the Denbighshire Safeguarding policy and procedures and also adhere to this.

Scrutiny and Challenge

- GwE carry out its own scrutiny and quality assurance processes. The Senior System Leader shadows a percentage of CA visits; three were carried out in Denbighshire during 2013-14. Senior System Leaders from other hubs also shadow one CA visit each term, Denbighshire schools received one of these visits during 2013-14. A percentage of reports are also scrutinised each term and feedback given to the Challenge Advisors. Challenge Advisors also peer assess reports each term and discuss consistency of reporting. Over the year, reports to LA have become more focused and are more consistent in reporting style.
- Schools have the opportunity to complete an on-line survey on the appropriateness and effectiveness of each GwE visit. Out of the 57 schools within Denbighshire, 18 schools responded in autumn 2013 (32%), 11 schools in spring 2014 (19%) and 14 schools (25%) responded in the summer 2014. The feedback from those schools who responded was extremely positive.
- The work of GwE in Denbighshire schools is scrutinised by LA through fortnightly meetings with the Senior Challenge Advisor and during termly meetings Challenge Advisor also meets with the Head of Service at least once a term. Denbighshire LA has representation on ADEW, the Joint Committee and GwE user group which scrutinises the work of GwE across the region.
- Denbighshire LA carried out an audit of GwE Challenge advisor work during the summer 2014. The findings of this report will be fed back to GwE staff during autumn 2014 and will form part of the GwE Conwy / Denbighshire team action plan for the forthcoming year.

Consolation and Engagement

- There is representation from Denbighshire Head teachers on the GwE user group. This group consults on GwE process once a term.
- The Denbighshire / Conwy Senior Challenge Advisor has attended several Head teacher forums, both Primary and Secondary during the 2013-14 year, alongside LA officers. During these forums, Head teachers are updated on GwE priorities and objectives as well as information dissemination regarding Welsh Government and regional developments.
- Local Authority officers are briefed on a fortnightly basis on GwE developments. There has been full consultation between GwE and LA officers regarding the Denbighshire LA annex of the GwE business plan for 2014-15.

Risk management

It has been identified during 2013-14 that the following areas need to be monitored carefully during 2014-15:-

- Consistency in quality and content of Challenge Advisor Reports.
- Timing of when Challenge Advisor reports are presented to LA officers to ensure intelligence is disseminated before schools receive official copies.
- Ensure increased number of stakeholder questionnaire returns by Denbighshire schools to ensure more robust quality assurance.
- To monitor and quality assure Head teachers who are on secondment with GwE as Challenge Advisors.