

**Report to:** Communities Scrutiny Committee

**Date of Meeting:** 14 June 2012

**Lead Member/Officer:** Lead Member for Education/  
Head of School Improvement and Inclusion

**Report Author:** School Effectiveness Performance Officer:  
Secondary

**Title:** Estyn Adult Community Education Inspection

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**1. What is the report about?**

To review the February 2012 Estyn inspection of the Conwy and Denbighshire Adult Community Education Partnership

**2. What is the reason for making this report?**

2.1 To consider the findings of the Estyn Inspection of the Conwy and Denbighshire Adult Community Education Partnership

**3. What are the Recommendations?**

3.1 To review the conclusions of the Estyn inspection and comment on the associated recommendations.

**4. Report details.**

4.1 The adult community education partnership for Conwy and Denbighshire called Cyswllt Dysgu, was subject to an Estyn Inspection during the first week of February 2012. The major partners include Conwy and Denbighshire LAs, Coleg Llandrillo Cymru, Coleg Harlech/WEA(N) and Deeside College (Coleg Llysfasi).

4.2 During the inspection through the analysis of the self-evaluation, performance data, lesson observations and meetings with stakeholders Estyn aimed to answer three key questions:

Key Question 1: How good are the outcomes?

Key Question 2: How good is provision?

Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?

All three Key Questions were judged by Estyn to be Good.

Inspectors also provided an overall judgement on the partnerships current performance which was considered to be Good and the prospects for improvement were considered to be Excellent. At this time this is the best grade profile in Wales for adult community education.

- 4.3 The partnership's current performance is good because:
- learners achieve good standards in the classroom. Their success rates compare well to national comparators;
  - the quality of teaching and assessment is good or better in nearly all cases;
  - providers work well together to plan the curriculum and align provision to national and local priorities; and
  - the quality of leadership and management is good. There is a good level of strategic planning and good arrangements in place for quality assurance and planning for improvement.
- 4.4 The partnership's prospects for improvement are excellent because:
- there is an improving trend in success rates for learners;
  - the high level of trust between partners and commitment to a shared vision have led to good improvement in the standards achieved by learners and in the quality of teaching and assessment since the last inspections;
  - the excellent quality of partnership work secures a high standard of provision planning and quality of resources available to learners; and
  - the good quality assurance systems and the quality of planning for improvement have improved standards for learners.
- 4.5 The Estyn inspection report highlighted that learners from different backgrounds and levels of ability achieve good standards in their work. Many learners with basic skills needs successfully improve their literacy and numeracy skills. Learners of all ages perform equally well. Older learners make good progress in information and communication technology (ICT). Learners from deprived backgrounds achieve good standards in their work.
- 4.6 Not enough Welsh speaking learners use their Welsh language skills well enough as a medium for learning or for assessing their progress.
- 4.7 Most learners improve their confidence by taking part in learning. A few learners consider that learning has transformed their lives. As a result they are better able to manage their lives and support their children.
- 4.9 Teaching is good or better in most of the sessions observed by the inspection team. In these sessions, tutors plan well, give learners good levels of literacy support and help learners to make good progress.

## **5. Leadership and partnerships**

- 5.1 The partnership's leaders provide good leadership. They communicate their vision and strategic aims effectively to partner organisations and members through the Cyswllt Dysgu strategic plan. The clarity of the plan makes sure all partner organisations understand what they need to achieve. Partners have a long and successful track record of

working together to achieve their goals.

- 5.2 Leaders collaborate well with a broad range of other key groups, such as the Local Service Board for Conwy and Denbighshire, and with local regeneration groups such as the Rhyl City strategy. The partnership has taken a firm decision to use adult learning to improve the employment skills of local learners.
- 5.3 The partnership has good arrangements for self-assessment, with clear objectives and timescales. As a result the partnership is able to pull together and evaluate the work carried out by all partners. The self-assessment process is effective in including the views of learners, staff and all partners and organisations involved in adult community learning.
- 5.4 Estyn considers that partnership working is excellent, it has worked very well together over a number of years and has developed high levels of trust. The excellent collaborative working of the partnership improves the standards achieved by learners and the quality of teaching and assessment.

## **6. Estyn's Recommendations**

6.1 In order to improve the partnership needs to:

- R1 increase the number of classes and learning activities in which learners achieve excellent standards in their work;
- R2 increase the amount of excellent teaching and assessment;
- R3 promote a common approach to safeguarding to raise the standard of all partnership members' policies and procedures; and
- R4 promote and improve the use of Welsh as a medium of communication for learning.

## **7. How does the decision contribute to the Corporate Priorities?**

7.1 It supports key aspects of the Big Plan, service business plans as well as contributing to Modernising Education as a corporate priority.

## **8. What will it cost and how will it affect other services?**

8.1 No specific costs have been identified for the inspection or post inspection action plan. All activity is supported by the Welsh Government ACL grant and college funding.

## **9. What consultations have been carried out?**

9.1 Consultation has been carried out with the partners that support adult

community education within the authority and supporting organisations.

**10. What risks are there and is there anything we can do to reduce them?**

10.1 The reputational and political risks to the authority are minimal as the outcomes from the inspection are good and excellent. The risk has been minimised by a significant investment of resource into ACL by all the partners particularly the FE colleges.

**11. Power to make the Decision**

No legal requirements but local authority inspections are mandatory.

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