

<b>Report to</b>	<b>Performance Scrutiny Committee</b>
<b>Date of meeting</b>	<b>6 June 2024</b>
<b>Lead Member / Officer</b>	<b>Gill German (Lead Member for Education, Children and Young People), Geraint Davies (Head of Education)</b>
<b>Report author</b>	<b>Geraint Davies (Head of Education)</b>
<b>Title</b>	<b>Estyn Inspection Report 2018</b>

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

1.1. The report provides information on the actions taken following the Denbighshire Estyn Inspection of February 2018.

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

2.1. To provide information regarding the work that has been undertaken following the Publication of the Inspection Report on Education Services in Denbighshire

## **3. What are the Recommendations?**

3.1. Scrutiny is invited to discuss the details of this report and to consider if all possible actions to address the recommendations have been completed considering the current position following the Pandemic.

## **4. Report details**

4.1 Estyn works with the Welsh Government to make sure that all schools in Wales are the best that they can be. Estyn's vision is to improve the quality of education and training and outcomes for all learners in Wales. The word Estyn means 'to reach out' and 'to stretch' in Welsh.

As a Crown body, Estyn were established under the Education Act 1992. They are independent of the Welsh Parliament but funded by the Welsh Government (under Section 104 of the Government of Wales Act 1998).

4.2 Denbighshire were inspected by Estyn in February 2018 having previously been inspected in 2012. At the time the chief executive was appointed in April 2009 and the head of education and children's services had been in post since January 2010. The council leader had been in post since November 2007 and the main portfolio holder for education services had been in post since May 2017.

4.3 In the 2018 Inspection Estyn reported on 3 Inspection Areas:

- Outcomes
- Quality of Education Services
- Leadership and Management

4.4 A copy of the Inspection report can be found in **Appendix 1** and previous reports on the Estyn [Website](#). The Inspectors judged Denbighshire as follows:

<b>Inspection area</b>	<b>Judgement</b>
<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Quality of education services</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>Excellent</b>

4.5 An outcome of the Inspection was an invitation for Denbighshire to prepare a case study for dissemination on Estyn's website on how the authority has effectively blended the education and children's services and its resulting impact on provision and outcomes.

4.6 Following an Inspection Estyn provide a number of recommendations on areas that require improvement, and providers are expected to address these.

Denbighshire received 2 recommendations:

- R1 Reduce the variability in outcomes in secondary schools.
- R2 Ensure that the evaluation of services focuses clearly on measuring the outcomes that children and young people achieve through those services:

### **RECOMMENDATION 1**

4.7 This recommendation was because despite consistently strong performance overall, the performance of individual secondary schools has been variable over

the last three years. Prior to the Pandemic work was undertaken with the Regional School Improvement Service to address this recommendation. In March 2020 the world changed as schools went into lockdown.

- 4.8 We are unable to report on the current levels of variability between Secondary School outcomes as the directive from Welsh Government is clear: **(Appendix 2)**

*“..... due to the different assessment arrangements and grading that has taken place in response to the lasting effects of the pandemic, it is all the more important that **we avoid making any comparisons to results from other years, at either national, regional or school level**..... All Wales Core Datasets should not be used to judge or compare schools, and should not be used to drive decisions that are not in the best interest of learners”.*

- 4.9 In 2018, Estyn identified too much variability in the outcomes of secondary schools in Denbighshire. In partnership with GwE, the local authority works towards ensuring all learners achieve good quality outcomes. Each secondary school is allocated a Supporting Improvement Advisor who works with the senior leaders in the school to support them in the evaluation of their performance and identification of improvement priorities. These improvement priorities are then expanded into a school development plan. The local authority and GwE provide bespoke support plans for each secondary school, according to the improvement priorities identified in their development plans.

- 4.10 Schools now place a far greater focus on the use of data in their internal self-evaluation and improvement processes, rather than on comparing data publicly. Welsh Government expects schools and local authorities to use performance information to better understand their own context and drive improvements; it should not be used in isolation to judge performance or compare schools.

- 4.11 The local authority officers, along with GwE Core Leads, monitor the performance of schools during fortnightly meetings. All areas of a school's performance are considered during these meetings. Following the publication of the core data set, this is also considered. Where required, actions are identified for individual schools who may need additional support.

4.12 A future report will provide comparative data between National performance and the overall performance of Denbighshire schools. Work is ongoing to consider how to resurrect the School Standards Monitoring Group to meet the requirements of the “School improvement guidance: framework for evaluation, improvement and accountability” that becomes statutory in September.

## **RECOMMENDATION 2**

4.13 Recommendation 2 relates to the procedures that are in place to monitor provision for pupils educated in out-of-county settings and in resource-based provision within the authority. The Inspectors in 2018 believed that reports on the out-of-county provision did not focus well enough on the progress made by pupils.

4.14 Since 2018 steps have been taken to address these concerns as follows:

- Monthly Inclusion Officer meetings to review progress made by out of county learners and ensure attendance at provision.
- Local Authority staff attend annual reviews for learners with statements of ALN and Individual Development Plans for out of county learners.
- Re-establishment of Independent Panel to review progress with one Out-of-County provider.
- Local Authority staff regularly liaise with out of county providers in order to ensure individual learner progress.
- Local Authority staff liaise regularly with Health colleagues and Resourced based staff to discuss progress of learners.
- Tracking has been developed to capture the overview of all learners in out of county placements.

## **5. How does the decision contribute to the Corporate Themes?**

5.1. This area of work contributes towards making Denbighshire a healthier and happier place where young people want to live and work and have the skills to do so as identified within the Four Purposes. It also contributes to make Denbighshire a place where young people can learn and make good progress

in their skills, learning in a fair and safe environment. This will help ensure all learners have the best start in life and can realise their full potential.

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

- 6.1 Responding to recommendations will have minimal impact on other services. The local authority (LA) will continue to liaise with GwE to utilise Welsh Government grants to support this area of work.

## **7. What are the main conclusions of the Well-being Impact Assessment?**

- 7.1. A Well-being Impact Assessment will generally be required for decisions or proposals for change in order to comply with the Equality Act 2010, the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Welsh Language Standards. Welsh Government have impact assessed the rollout of the new curriculum.

## **8. What consultations have been carried out with Scrutiny and others?**

- 8.1 All elected members at the time of publication received a copy of the Inspection report.

## **9. Chief Finance Officer Statement**

- 9.1. Costs will be met from existing delegated budgets to schools, Education budget and also grant funding that has been made available from Welsh Government.

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

- 10.1. The main risk is that future Inspections of Local Authority Education Services are negative.

## **11. Power to make the decision.**

Section 21 of the Local Government Act 2000

Sections 7.3, 7.4.1 and 7.4.2 of the Council's Constitution.