

COMMITTEE	Services Scrutiny Committee
DATE OF MEETING	19 June 2014
ITEM	Report on development of Promoting Quality in Secondary Schools Project
CABINET MEMBER	Cllr Gareth Thomas
REPORT BY	Nicola Hughes, Education Quality Project Officer Dewi R Jones, Head of Education

Background

A report was published by the Scrutiny Committee on Quality of Education in September 2013 following a consultation process with relevant stakeholders. The report noted several specific areas and aspects requiring attention to raise standards, specifically so at KS4. The following fields were identified:-

- **Leadership**
- **Mathematics**
- **Understanding Performance Data**
- **Raising and communicating expectations**
- **Variation in standards of performance within schools and between schools**
- **The LEA's role**
- **Governors role**
- **Pupils Voice**

Since then, two other areas have been identified which are important for raising standards, namely:-

- **Support for vulnerable pupils, especially pupils receiving free school meals**
- **Primary/secondary transition arrangements**

This report highlights the work completed as part of both the project (since January 2014) and the LEA's ESTYN Post-Inspection Action Plan, in the above-mentioned fields.

Recommendation	That which has been achieved	Outcomes thus far
<p>Leadership</p> <p>It is recognized that quality of leadership at every level is one of the most important aspects to raise and maintain standards in schools. (‘Journey to Improve Twelve Schools’ – ESTYN, ESTYN annual report 2013)</p>	<p>Regional Schools Improvement Service (GwE) support at a whole school and departmental level to develop leadership and raise standards</p> <p>Termly monitoring visits held and full use made of the entire data range to agree on targets and steps for further improvements at the 5 schools.</p> <p>A professional network has been facilitated from amongst the target schools SMTs to share good practices and present further guidance on target setting and tracking pupils progress; effective use of data by school’s leaders; how to ensure early and effective intervention in instances of under-performance; promote excellent teaching and learning throughout the school. In addition, 3 days training was organized for a representation of middle leaders to give greater focus to aspects of self-evaluation, improvement plans, tracking at a departmental level and planning for teaching/learning.</p>	<p>Target schools cycle performance profile available and provides a basis for setting challenging targets for main KS4 indicators. Improvements in the performance of the vast majority of main indicators of the 5 target schools by the Summer.</p> <p>Fine-tuned evaluations completed at the target schools and purposeful planning has occurred to drive improvements.</p> <p>Quality Improvement Plan implemented at the 5 schools. All of the 5 target schools take forceful action on Improvement Plan requirements.</p> <p>Greater consistency in schools response to LEA requirements. Guidance/training provided for Governors.</p> <p>Governors have a better understanding of data and make better use of evidence to challenge performance.</p> <p>More effective scrutiny of evidence of progress operational at the target schools.</p> <p>Aspects of low performance/performance in the comfort zone challenged at an early stage in the target schools.</p>
	<p>A termly meeting of North Wales’ welsh school headteachers is held across North Wales.</p>	<p>Professional development for headteachers. Raise awareness of National developments in Leadership, Effective Use of Data and Planning For Improvement.</p>
	<p>Support is provided for acting headteachers by Experienced Mentors. (LEAs vision document- Developing Leadership Together).</p>	<p>Career development needs of Acting headteachers identified. Support from experienced Mentors ensures guidance and support in key areas e.g. Self-evaluation, Budget setting, Strategic Planning.</p>
	<p>Three secondary schools in Gwynedd open their doors to share good practices and thus develop leadership throughout the County - through describing their journey towards achieving excellence.</p>	<p>Enhance the skillsof management teams across the County. The activity leads to improvements at every school.</p>

	The role of the catchment-area strategy leader has been defined and the model has been presented to the primary and secondary school headteachers.	Hopefully, the scheme will be piloted within one catchment-area. Better strategic planning across the catchment-area, consistent high quality experiences for pupils in the catchment-area. Valuable professional development and support for catchment-area staff.
Mathematics	<p>Maths was focussed upon whilst visiting Gwynedd schools. School management teams and the Heads of Mathematics are fully aware of the need for improved standards in pupils Mathematics and interventions are implemented at every school including:-</p> <p>Additional Mathematics groups.</p> <p>Opportunity to sit examinations early, i.e.:-</p> <p>provide more than one opportunity for pupils to gain Threshold 2 (grade C or above) in Mathematics.</p> <p>Use different examination boards.</p> <p>Support from London Challenge</p> <p>Revision lessons outside school time.</p> <p>Revision sessions during examinations period.</p>	<p>Performance targets in Maths 2014 exceeds those in 2013. Higher % of pupils achieve T2 in Mathematics.</p> <p>More able and gifted pupils (at certain schools) are given extension tasks and sit Additional Mathematics examination.</p>
	Every school has received support from an external adviser to implement the National Literacy and Numeracy Framework.	Pupils receive cross-curricular opportunities to develop numeracy skills.
	Meeting held with Gareth Robert Jones, Mathematics lecturer in the Education Department to try and forge links with the University and respond to the need for training of a high standard in Mathematics and to discuss recruitment problems.	Possible to collaborate with the University in the long-term (3-5 years). LEA needs to consider a solution in discussion with GWE.
Understanding Performance Data	Discussions held at every school on assessing, tracking and monitoring progress and intervention. Extensive and effective use is made of data, especially at KS4. The Government's benchmark data is used to predict performance quartiles based on current attainment. Almost every school has developed effective procedures.	Management Teams are very aware of KS4 pupils performance, effectively tracking their progress and organizing intervention for them. Consequently, schools' performance targets for 2014 better.
	An meeting was held at ysgol Brynrefail to share the school's good practice in assessment and tracking for the remaining LEA schools. Ysgol Brynrefail has developed SIMS to	Gwynedd schools assessment co-ordinators are aware of SIMS' potential and are able to further develop their assessment systems. Schools able to organize

	analyse data.	intervention earlier for pupils.
	Outstanding practices relating to marking and feedback and self-assessment and peer -assessment by the Headteacher of Ysgol Botwnnog. Teachers' feedback in the examples shared set clear targets for improvement for the pupils – more importantly the pupils responded to the teachers' comments and the teachers noted that this had been observed (dialogue) It is intended to present similar sessions on the school's 'Sharing Good Practice' day.	Clear and high expectations communicated to headteachers and leaders regarding feedback on pupils work.
Raise and communicate expectations	GwE System leaders monitor schools targets in the main performance indicators. Ambitious targets set for TL2+. However, System Leaders, Governors and school leaders should not undermine efforts in other subjects. Schools notify parents of individual pupils targets and inform parents of schools' support/intervention. Schools have developed a broadly based and relevant curriculum at KS4. LEA T1 has increased.	
Variation in standards	Work to be done – comment in Visit 1 GwE.	
LEA's role	Project Officer has visited the secondary schools and has conducted an audit. From this information, Gwe reports and ESTYN reports, good practices have been identified. Clear procedures for supporting and sharing good practice have been established.	Schools have understood the purpose of the project and have had an opportunity to contribute to the direction of the work. Consequently, the schools support the project's aims. The system of sharing good practices between schools has commenced.
	An item on the quality of education, including sharing good practice, is on the agenda of every meeting of the secondary school headteachers.	Headteachers' meetings more developmental in nature and headteachers benefit from hearing about good practices in one another's schools.
	Collaboration principles agreed by the secondary school headteachers. Professional development day organized to promote collaboration (October 24).	An opportunity for school staff at every level to come together, develop professionally and collaborate to raise standards throughout the county.
Governors Role	Training and support, of a high standard, available for Governors to ensure they act more effectively as critical friends and to make the school accountable for its performance eg comment on data analysis and use of LEA/GwE monitoring reports to challenge the school's performance [combination of collective catchment-area sessions + specific sessions at	The Governors who attended the sessions more aware of their role and take more effective action.

	the target schools]	
	GwE have held training for Elected Members to support and enable governors to effectively fulfil their 'critical friends' role	
	Headteacher of Ysgol Dyffryn Ogwen has shared good practice on the Governing Body's work at elected members training session. (This session will be presented in due course to school management teams).	
Pupils Voice	When visiting the schools, the work of the School Council was discussed. Every secondary school has a School Council There are very good practices at some schools.	Most of the schools are aware that this is a field that requires further development.
	Headteachers received feedback on the method used at one school to ensure each pupil's participation.	Headteachers are aware of the need to include every pupil in the life of the school.
Support for vulnerable pupils	Primary and secondary school headteachers received guidance on successful strategies, Sutton Trust research findings and guidance on most effective expenditure of the Pupils Deprivation Grant. (PDG).	More effective use of PDG by schools to support vulnerable pupils.
	Headteachers received feedback on good practices in Secondary Schools in the South who have a high percentage of Free School Meals pupils and who perform in the upper quartiles.	The headteachers are aware of successful strategies that could be used to raise standards. Raise expectations of FSM pupils performance.
Primary/secondary transition	Primary school Headteachers received a presentation to raise awareness of the Promoting Quality project. The need for collaboration across both sectors was emphasised. Information was gathered from the secondary schools on their transition work. The pattern varies across the County.	Raise awareness of the need for further developments in the field.