

COMMITTEE	Services Scrutiny Committee
DATE OF MEETING	11 December 2014
ITEM	Report on progress of the Quality Promotion Project at the Secondary Schools since June 2014
CABINET MEMBER	Cllr Gareth Thomas
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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 identified several specific fields and aspects requiring attention to raise young people's standards of performance, specifically at the end of Key Stage 4 (KS4). The Promoting Quality Project has been implemented since January 2014, with the Project Officer leading the work full-time since September 2014.

A Project Management Board was established and an Action Plan was produced (*see Appendix 1*) in response to the Scrutiny Committee report's comments and ESTYN Post-Inspection Recommendations.

The work completed on the project since June 2014 is outlined in this report.

1. Leadership Development

1.1 Ysgol y Moelwyn , Ysgol Botwnnog and Ysgol Dyffryn Ogwen have held leadership development days sharing their good practice with leaders from other schools in the County. The three schools presented aspects of their work that had been commended by ESTYN inspectors; Data use and progress tracking, English, Feedback and Marking, Self and Peer-assessment, Inclusion, Effective Governance, Primary Secondary Liaison, Mathematics, and Teaching and Learning. Emphasis was placed on their journey in developing these and their impact on student outcomes. The days were well supported and very positive feedback was received. Following these days, the other schools have implemented some of the strategies. In addition, the days have led to whole staff training in some of the other schools.

1.2 Two secondary senior managers were accepted on the NPQH training course which will prepare them for headteacher posts.

- 1.3 A Strategic Leadership pilot scheme has commenced in the Moelwyn catchment-area. A development plan was prepared for the pilot, which includes the objective of leadership development at every level across the catchment-area.
- 1.4 GwE was commissioned by the Education department to develop specialization amongst the county's Professional Tutors, to ensure the development of leadership across every level within secondary schools and to drive the School to School collaboration work.
- 1.5 A visit was made to a sector leading school in South Wales to gather good practices in leadership and to observe how two schools had successfully entered a federal arrangement leading to an improved performance in Summer 2014 results at both schools. The main conclusions in relation to 'excellent' leadership were the need to:-
- Obtain a clear mission statement which unites the entire school community; 'Give of our best, to be the best'
 - Ensure that SMT members are trained to gain the NPQH qualification.
 - Strive to make prudent leadership team appointments – strike a balance between fresh ideas and a knowledge of the school.
 - Rigorous Self-evaluation and Performance Management procedures.
 - Increase accountability in a collaborative and supportive system – two way challenge based on integrity and respect at a professional level.
 - Ensure that the headteacher and deputy are visible and are involved with the pupils daily.
 - Plan in detail and try out new ideas – establish a 'give it a go' culture.
 - Create an ethos of, 'what's best for the learners'.
 - Recognise that all staff are leaders – the best training is provided within the school.
 - Recruit wisely – re-advertise until a suitable applicant is obtained.
 - Establish the SMT link members as mentors/'coaches' heads of departments
- 1.6 Leadership Training (inter-personal/effective communication skills) has been arranged for primary school headteachers. The feedback from the training was good. Good people skills are essential for school leaders. Currently, the Training Unit runs courses in key fields for developing leadership. School leaders are unable to benefit from this comprehensive training programme. Extending the provision, to include schools, would be a positive development.

2. Mathematics

- 2.1 A 'Good Practices in Mathematics' booklet has been provided to every school, summarising successful practice in some across North Wales, including a report on the effective practices of 11 schools across Wales in the field, outlining KS4 Maths Strategy, and summarising ESTYN findings on best practice.

- 2.2 Two meetings have been organised and held for the County's Numeracy co-ordinators. Work has commenced on preparing Numeracy resources (operational and reasoning) to promote the field across the curriculum. This will lead to the development of a bank of resources, of a high standard, which will be used to develop learners' numeracy skills in all schools.
- 2.3 A professional development day was held on numeracy at two centres for representatives of all the County's schools.
- 2.4 A paper was presented offering a solution to the County's Mathematics situation. A model was developed, suggesting that a Mathematics/Numeracy Officer was appointed as a member of the Education Department. This individual would be available to work with all schools to continue with the process of raising standards in the subject. However, due to the need to make savings and in view of budgetary cuts, the proposal could not be realised. An alternative model needs to be presented.
- 2.5 This year, more Mathematics trainees follow a secondary PGCE course through the medium of Welsh at Bangor (8 out of 17 in all). However, it is intended to hold discussions with the University to discuss the possibility of re-training teachers who specialize in other fields, to teach mathematics.

3 Ensure that there are appropriate procedures to track learners achievement

- 3.1 Other Local Education Authorities '(LEAs) work in the data and tracking field has been researched and a report was presented to the Achievement Panel on the local situation compared to that in other authorities. Although several other authorities have data units within their education departments, (or jointly with the social services department), their overall opinion was that most of this work would shift to be the Regional Consortia's responsibility. It would therefore be unwise to establish new procedures within the Education Department to track learners' achievement.
- 3.2 Currently, the CYNNAL data Unit data analyses data for the Education Department. GwE will produce comparative data analysis for the schools' performance in the main indicators.
- 3.3 GwE have appointed a Data Manager to make more effective use of data for school improvement and to delegate its resources. The data manager's role will be to strengthen the data gathering, collation and distribution process at a regional level and develop a tracking system that will ensure availability of performance data during the school year. A regional data pack will soon be available and the tracking system will be ready by February 2015. (GwE Business Plan). The data pack will facilitate the work of the Education Department, enabling the officer to monitor schools performance at specific times during the school year. In the interim period, GwE will collect this information during their termly visits to schools

3.4 GwE's Challenge Senior Adviser is holding a meeting in the near future for school representatives to enable the schools to adopt agreed principles on target setting, frequency of assessment, progress tracking and intervention.

4. Raise and communicate all stakeholders expectations

4.1 Reports have been presented to headteachers and the Inclusion Group (following research work and visits) on the best practices to reach those parents and learners who disengage themselves from education. The report makes recommendations on how to promote family involvement more effectively.

4.2 Ysgol y Moelwyn shared their vision of having high expectations of their learners and inspiring them to have the self-belief to succeed.

4.3 Schools in deprived areas, who have succeeded in raising standards have the following qualities:-

- The emphasis on cross-curricular development of learners skills.
- Limit the variation in the quality of teaching.
- Develop a curriculum that is relevant to the young people. A robust partnership exists with a Further Education College – more places available for learners of every school to follow courses. The college also holds Saturday Clubs, Revision Clubs and Science Clubs.
- **An expectation** that the learners follow Level 2 courses (change of emphasis – formerly Level 1 courses for all and consideration given to Level 2 courses).
- Extensive pastoral support for vulnerable learners.

5. Strengthen the LEA's role in raising standards at secondary schools

5.1 A document was produced outlining the LEA and GwE's responsibilities within the National Model. The document refers to improving methods of ensuring GwE's accountability, by developing the role of the Standards Group.

5.2 The Standards Group meets fortnightly and focuses on discussing schools' performance. The Quality Group's agenda has been rationalized to ensure more meaningful discussions on specific schools. Challenge Advisors will attend the meetings to present reports and answer questions on specific schools.

5.3 Good practice are disseminated in the Headteachers' meetings group and in the Inclusion Group. One positive outcome of the project has been the willingness of schools to share their best practice and their desire to learn from one another.

5.4 A meeting was held with GwE's Head of Brokerage and Support to discuss school to school collaboration that occurs within the LEA. Arrangements have been made for him to attend Gwynedd professional tutors meeting on January 21.

6. Further develop Governors key role as a critical friend

6.1 Following the National Model for Regional Working, this area will become part of GwE's remit.

6.2 Headteachers received information on effective Governing Bodies work pattern by one of the education department's officers. The headteachers were reminded of Governors statutory duties and they were made aware of the success criteria for gaining the bronze award for Governing Bodies.

6.3 The annual programme of mandatory training for Governors continues to be held.

6.4 Some headteachers have trained Governors in the performance data field.

6.5 Ysgol Dyffryn Ogwen have disseminated information on Governors' effective practices – an aspect of the school's work that was highly commended by ESTYN. The good practice included the presence of the Governors in the school's open evening and meetings between link governors and heads of departments.

6.6 At one sector leading school advertisements are placed for additional governors to serve as members of Governors sub-panels. They do not attend the Full Governing Body meetings. The school is of the view that this provides good training for them and prepares them should there a vacancy arise on the Full Governing Body.

7. Increase learners participation and the influence of the the learner's voice

7.1 The secondary schools were visited to gather learners' opinions about features of the 'Gwynedd School'.

7.2 A training day on 'Participation' was held on November 12th. The day was organised in collaboration with the Healthy Schools Co-ordinator. Excellent feedback was received and all the materials prepared with the schools were disseminated.

7.3 A model Learner Participation Strategy was produced and shared on November 12th at a meeting for Participation Co-ordinators.

7.4 The situation within the LEA regarding promoting participation was looked into and the staff of the Children and Young People's Partnership consulted. **Gwynedd does not have a person who provides a lead on participation.** In several LEAs, their Participation Strategy is driven by a designated officer.

7.5 The effectiveness of support for learners during KS4 was discussed with focus groups of year 12 students. An individual report was prepared for every school and a summative report at an LEA level. Extensive support is provided to learners across the ability range. However, the process highlighted certain common issues that need addressing – guidance on revision techniques needs to be given early in Year 10, Year 10 internal examinations

need to timetabled before their external exams, the additional provision needs to be co-ordinated to avoid clashes between different subjects and the students preferred revision sessions with a specific focus.

7.6 Following a meeting of the project's management board, it was agreed to hold training sessions for individual school councils during the first half of the Spring term if the schools wished to take advantage of the training. The Co-ordinators wanted to hold a day during the Summer term for the school councils and make this an annual event. This will need to be facilitated by the LEA.

7.7 Meirion Dwyfor schools felt frustrated in what it was possible for the school's older learners to do to promote younger learners participation. As a result, a meeting was held with a member of Coleg Meirion Dwyfor's management team to establish a system of student ambassadors who will return to their feeder secondary schools to promote participation. It was agreed to pilot a participation project between the College and one or two secondary schools during the Easter Term. This type of arrangement will not only increase participation amongst younger pupils in the secondary schools, but will also develop the skills of the College students and strengthen applications for university places.

8. Provide schools with guidance to enable them to more effectively support vulnerable learners

8.1 Research work has been summarised and presented to headteachers and the inclusion group.

8.2 A Vulnerable Learners Support Strategy was prepared and shared electronically with all the schools. Consequently, each school is expected to amend the strategy in view of their individual situation and note appropriate targets for improvement in aspects such as vulnerable learners' performance at the end of KS4, attendance and behaviour.

8.3 The up-dates from the ESTYN Inspection Framework and the additional guidance on inspecting this field were disseminated. This served to emphasise the deserved level of attention given nationally to ensure that schools provide the most effective support and provision to these vulnerable learners. Also noted were the good practices of schools who successfully narrowed the gap between specific learner groups performance.

8.4. Effective co-operation has occurred with the Youth Engagement Officer leading the P4 project, in the development of the Early Identification System. This system will not only ensure that vulnerable learners are identified but that they also receive the most appropriate provision. As a member of the P4 project's management board, discussions have been held to establish the authority's suite of provision for young people to ensure that all young people are either in education, training or employment.

Next Steps

Between December and March, further work will be completed on areas of the action plan that have only partially been completed – further develop primary and secondary school links (this will include monitoring the success of the Moelwyn strategic leadership pilot

project), and collecting and sharing the best practice from schools outside the authority. Also, in response to the recommendations of the project's management board – training will be arranged for senior leaders responsible for Teaching and Learning in schools and also forming links with the colleges and the local university (especially in the field of mathematics).

A bulletin collating the work of the project will be released in December and February.

The work carried out during the project will be collated and a document outlining the Council's vision on what defines 'Ysgol Gwynedd' will be published by the end of the Easter Term.