

The Vale of Glamorgan Council

Cabinet Meeting: 4 July, 2016

Report of the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Education

Central South Consortium Estyn Report

Purpose of the Report

1. To advise Cabinet of the outcomes of Estyn's inspection of the Central South Consortium and the plans in place to address the recommendations.

Recommendations

1. To note the contents of the inspection report and the plans in place to address the recommendations.
2. That the inspection report is referred to the Scrutiny Committee (Learning and Culture) for consideration.

Reasons for the Recommendations

1. The work of the Central South Consortium plays a vital role in the delivery of the Council's statutory responsibilities in relation to schools. Following the earlier thematic review this is the first inspection of the Consortium and provides an evaluation of the work of the Consortium and recommendations for future action.
2. The Scrutiny Committee will need to consider the contents of the report and the plans to address the recommendations to inform its scrutiny of the work of the Consortium.

Background

2. Since 2012 the region has seen the fastest improvement of any in Wales. Results in all key stages have risen to or above the national average and the pace of improvement at key stage four has been more than double that seen nationally. At the same time all five authorities have been removed from monitoring by Estyn and in all cases the contribution of the Consortium was noted.
3. In 2014 the five authorities in Central South Consortium launched 'The Central South Wales Challenge' which set out a school led strategy for improvement. This was designed to identify and support schools to lead improvement across the region, at a system level and at a school level. At the same time there were changes to the challenge adviser function and many more seconded head teachers were encouraged to become challenge advisers.

4. Estyn inspected the Consortium in February/March 2016 under their new framework for Consortia published the previous autumn. It was the first of the four consortia to be inspected and the remaining three will be inspected before the end of the summer term.
5. The inspection took two weeks and involved 9 inspectors. More than 50 head teachers and governors were interviewed as were all Council Leaders and Cabinet Members, Chief Executives, Directors, S151 officers, the Senior team of the Consortium and many staff. The inspection was supported by a survey of all head teachers and governors, to which more than 50% of schools responded, which was undertaken in January.

Relevant Issues and Options

6. The report (attached at [Appendix A](#)) was published on the 26th May and it is expected that all consortia will be revisited against their recommendations from the autumn of 2017 onwards.
7. The report made five judgements within its framework with a context section on performance and outcomes. Against each areas the judgements were:
 - Quality of School Improvement Service: Adequate
 - Leadership: Good
 - Improving quality: Good
 - Strategic Partnerships: Good
 - Resource Management: Adequate
8. In the context section the report recognised the rapid improvement across the five authorities in the region, the fastest improvement nationally and that the consortium was now sitting at or above the national average in all indicators.
9. The report recognised a number of areas of strength in particular the increased consistency and quality of challenge advisers and categorisation processes, the clarity of vision and strategy within the self improving school system strategy work and the strength of engagement with head teachers and authorities, also the effective use of resources. It notes:

‘The consortium has a clear vision and strategy to improve schools that is understood by most stakeholders and underpins the support for school improvement well. Almost all schools across the region are engaging purposefully with school-to-school working.’

‘Over the last two years, the consortium has developed into a reflective organisation that is committed to evaluating and improving its own practice and performance.’
10. There were four recommendations within the report:
 - Ensure that school improvement services address the variability of performance across schools and local authorities, particularly at key stage 4
 - Improve the accuracy of the evaluations of schools by challenge advisers in order to ensure a greater focus on improving teaching and leadership
 - Strengthen the procedures for monitoring and evaluating the impact of school improvement work

- Evaluate progress against the regional consortium’s operational plans more effectively
11. Set out below is a summary of the actions in the CSC business plan against each of the recommendations. This refers to the more detailed plan attached at Annex B which sets out specific actions currently in the CSC business plan and further actions to be added. These plans will be used to evaluate and demonstrate progress against the recommendations in a future Estyn revisit. Progress will be monitored monthly with report to the Advisory Board and Joint Committee each term. The Vale's Learning and Culture Scrutiny Committee will also receive an annual report which will focus on progress in relation to the recommendations.

Recommendation	What are we doing?	Impact measurement
R1 Ensure that school improvement services address the variability of performance across schools and local authorities, particularly at key stage 4	<p>Reviewing our approach to secondary support with a tight focus on impact and risks in the coming year, this will include:</p> <p>Delivering subject specific support for schools to improve leadership of teaching, with a focus on vulnerable children and particularly boys;</p> <p>Supporting the implementation of new qualifications and performance measures in the coming year and reviewing risks;</p> <p>Sharpening the impact of our support strategies particularly leadership support at secondary level with a focus on reducing variability;</p> <p>Tightening our approach to intervention in secondary schools with a focus on effective brokered support from other schools.</p>	<p>Improve the proportion of secondary schools achieving good or better outcomes for standards in inspection to above the national average;</p> <p>Reduce the variability in outcomes particularly for vulnerable groups across the region increasing particularly efsm boys outcomes more rapidly than national averages.</p> <p>Reduce to zero schools entering SM or SI categories and reduce secondary schools in red and amber categories.</p>
R2 Improve the accuracy of the evaluations of schools by challenge advisers in order to ensure a greater focus on improving teaching and leadership	<p>Review the challenge and support framework with a view to sharper reporting, enhanced management and QA and increased capacity to effect improvement by challenge advisers in time and flexibility allocations.</p>	<p>Correlation of pre inspection and post inspection reporting demonstrates increased alignment particularly at secondary level.</p>
R3 Strengthen the procedures for monitoring and evaluating the	<p>Deliver the research and evaluation strategy, supported by researchers from Cardiff University to evaluate the</p>	<p>School to school strategies clearly demonstrate consistent improvement in capacity</p>

impact of school improvement work	impact and VfM of our key strategies reporting termly to Advisory Board.	across the region including in successful applications for leadership. Evidence clear of impact in termly reports including surveys.
R4 Evaluate progress against the regional consortium's operational plans more effectively.	The report notes a tighter process for operational planning in 2016/17. We will continue with this in year.	Effective in year self-evaluation processes demonstrate progress against business plan and identify risks and slippage rapidly.

12. Following the inspection stakeholders and Directors in the region carried out a stocktake to review progress and to identify further areas where focus was needed. These included:
- A need for a focus on succession planning, recruitment of core subject staffing and leadership capacity in the region;
 - A focus on developing pedagogy and joint practice development at teacher level through school to school working;
 - A focus on engagement in particular with teachers, governors and elected Members about the role of the consortium and impact of school to school working;
 - A focus on consistent intervention and a sharp response to schools which do not make sufficiently rapid progress;
 - A need to review the role of challenge advisers with a view to increasing impact and sharpening reporting;
 - A need to engage with pace on national strategies and agendas in the region in a way that builds capacity and streamlines change management.
13. The attached plan ([Appendix B](#)) sets out what is already being done in these areas and additional areas where the business plan will be amended.

Resource Implications (Financial and Employment)

14. There are no financial or employment implications for the Council as a result of the report.

Sustainability and Climate Change Implications

15. High performing schools make a significant contribution to economic prosperity and to vibrant and sustainable communities.

Legal Implications (to Include Human Rights Implications)

16. There are no legal implications arising from this report.

Crime and Disorder Implications

17. There are no crime and disorder implications arising from this report.

Equal Opportunities Implications (to include Welsh Language issues)

18. There are equal opportunity implications arising from this report

Corporate/Service Objectives

19. Improving outcomes and well-being for all learners.

Policy Framework and Budget

20. The recommendations of this report are within existing policy framework and budget.

Consultation (including Ward Member Consultation)

21. Not applicable.

Relevant Scrutiny Committee

22. Learning and Culture.

Background Papers

None.

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