
SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

17/03/16

Present:

Councillor Beth Lawton (Chair)

Councillors: E. Selwyn Griffiths, Alwyn Gruffydd, Siân Wyn Hughes, Elin Walker Jones, Eric Merfyn Jones (ex-officio), Gareth A. Roberts, Ann Williams, Eirwyn Williams, Hefin Williams and R H Wyn Williams.

Officers: Gareth James (Members' Manager - Support and Scrutiny) and Glynda O'Brien (Members' Support and Scrutiny Officer).

Also in attendance:

For item 3 below:

Councillor Gareth Thomas, Cabinet Member for Education
Arwyn Thomas, Head of Education
Elfyn Vaughan Jones, Senior GwE Challenge Adviser
Garem Jackson, Education Quality Improvement Officer
Owen Owens, Senior Manager Education Resources Service
Gwern ap Rhisiart, Senior Manager Additional Learning Needs and Education Inclusion

For Items 4 below:

Councillor W. Gareth Roberts, Cabinet Member for Adults and Health
Morwena Edwards, Corporate Director
Aled Davies, Temporary Head of Adults, Health and Wellbeing Department
Ffion Johnstone, Chief Officer Gwynedd and Anglesey Health Board

Apologies: Councillors Aled Evans, Dewi Owen, Eryl Jones-Williams, Linda Ann Wyn Jones, Siôn Wyn Jones and Peter Read.

1. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

No declarations of personal interest were received from any members present.

2. MINUTES

The Chair signed the minutes of the previous meeting of this Committee that took place on 28 January 2016.

3. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

The Education Department's Annual Report was presented outlining the performance of the Education Service for the year stating the strengths and weaknesses the Service had identified that required attention.

(a) The Cabinet Member for Education stated that the Education Service had gone through an unstable period prior to the appointment of the Head of Education with several

key posts vacant and he was glad that the service had by now been restored. The Scrutiny Committee was requested to take notice of the following elements when comparing Gwynedd's performance with other authorities in terms of the TL2+ indicator:

- That Gwynedd schools were much more inclusive
- Welsh and English were equal in Gwynedd

In addition, Members' attention was drawn to the following points:

- That it was good leadership that improved schools
- Work was proceeding to transform the Additional Educational Needs and Inclusion provision
- The success of the Language Charter by spreading its use not only in north Wales, but also across the whole of Wales

(b) The Head of Education gave the context to the report under three headings namely, standards, provision and quality of leadership. It was noted that the report had identified matters that required attention and these would be in-putted into the 2016/17 business plans and it was trusted that within a year progress could be shown.

Attention was drawn to the fact that ESTYN was reviewing the new inspection framework for each sector and the Schools Improvement Service (GwE) would receive an inspection soon.

(c) A brief verbal report was received as follows:

A. By the Senior GwE Challenge Adviser

He reported on the main messages from the schools' performance data and it was noted that performance was robust across each Key Stage and there was a rolling progress from 2013 - 2015 in most areas that exceeded than the national rolling progress. In comparison with the 22 authorities in Wales, it was noted that the Gwynedd profile was very good in terms of KS3, fairly robust in KS2 and there was room for improvement in the Foundation Phase. Regarding the work programme for the above Key Stage it was necessary to:

- Continue to work with schools to ensure a reduction in the percentage where performance was in the lowest fifty within the free school meals family.
- Continue to work with schools in relation to the reliability and strength of teachers' assessments
- Improve and empower the quality of the planning and provision in KS2 and the Foundation Phase

In terms of Key Stage 4, it was noted that the performance was fairly strong and was a profile to be proud of namely that Gwynedd in comparison with the 22 authorities in Wales was in the first position in TL1, 3rd position in terms of the core subjects indicator and 5th in the TL2 and TL2+ indicators.

Members were reminded that the performance of many schools had gone through the pendulum effect and following specific work with these it was pleasing to note that there had been significant progress in many schools and further progress was to be undertaken.

In terms of the performance in the context of the ESTYN inspections which caused a little more concern, it was noted that 18 schools had been inspected and three had been placed in a statutory category. In the opinion of the Senior Challenge Adviser this was an

unsatisfactory profile and several actions had been taken to redress the situation and by now the position was much more positive.

Members were given an opportunity to ask questions on the contents of the above and the relevant officers responded as follows:

- (i) That inspectors looked at standards over a period of time, how good was the teaching, school curriculum, how good was the leadership provision. A school was placed under special measures if it performed consistently low over a period of three years and the Inspectors had seen that the quality of a percentage of lessons was sufficient or unsatisfactory. If a school had not identified its weaknesses /strengths and did not move sufficiently quickly to improve it was placed under special measures.
- (ii) In terms of the difference in the standards of learners and the pendulum effect in the performance of some schools, it had to be borne in mind that every child was different and one / two children could make a difference to the performance indicators. If the learning was consistently good it was noted that the pupils did the best they could and attained the expected standards.
- (iii) In the context of collaboration between primary and secondary, it was recognised that this had been on the Education Service's agenda for several years. Whilst accepting that there was room to improve communication and understanding of the requirements, it was noted that GwE had divided the schools to promote collaboration from school to school in order to share good practice. It was trusted that the fruits of this collaboration could be seen during the summer term. In addition, by establishing the follow on school model from 3 -16 years old it was trusted that this type of pattern would strengthen collaboration.
- (iv) Regarding the disappointment that Gwynedd was in 17th position in the Welsh reading tests, it was recognised that further consideration had to be given to this but it had to be borne in mind that Gwynedd's language policy in the primary sector was inclusive especially in comparison with other authorities. Discussions had taken place with ESTYN regarding the collection and interpretation of this data and how they form an opinion on schools that promote both languages.
- (v) Regarding the significance of the categories and specifically what was judged to be excellent by ESTYN but was being monitored by the authority, it was explained that the element that needed to improve was attendance in the primary sector. It was further noted that as a County attendance needed to improve.
- (vi) It would be useful for members of the Scrutiny Investigation on the Education Support Service to discuss with schools placed in the red sector on the type of support received from the Education Support Service and GwE.
- (vii) Following the work undertaken by the Scrutiny Investigation into the Quality of Education, it appeared that the gap between the performance in KS3 and KS4 continued to be huge. In response, it was explained that over the years it had become more and more evident that level 5 in KS3 was not the true performance indicator when learners complete their education at the end of KS4 but rather that a higher level in KS3 was most significant in performance.
- (viii) A comment was made that the Welsh language should be stronger. In response, it was recognised that a target had to always be set so that the pupils can be bilingual and are educated to a standard to be able to work locally and owning the Welsh language was a challenge not only for education, but also socially.
- (ix) In terms of further concern regarding supporting the Welsh language in the secondary sector following the good work done in the primary sector as a result of the Language Charter, that it was intended to expand the Charter to the secondary sector. In addition, an external expert was conducting further research and it would be interesting for this Scrutiny Committee to see the outcomes of that work to scrutinise the variety within schools.

- (x) There was no reference in the report to the change in the curriculum and the challenges facing schools regarding this. In response, it was explained that the specifications for KS4 in Welsh / English / Mathematics were being presented. Lead schools had been identified across the region to develop with leadership and several training sessions had taken place with a range of supporting workshops. It was noted in terms of Professor Donaldson's report for circa 2020, that a national programme was proceeding to identify national lead schools and from 2017 onwards those schools would work in catchment-areas to give guidance to the remaining schools.
- (xi) Regarding how the financial cuts will impact on training for teachers, especially in those schools who underachieve, it was explained that they would have to be creative in collaboration with GwE regarding what was required, more collaborative methods to be considered, sharing resources / expertise as well as avoiding duplication.
- (xii) It was explained that the free school meals indicator had been fairly consistent.

The Senior GwE Adviser went on to note that a good working relationship existed between the authority and GwE and this had been strengthened where the flow of information ran smoothly and this allowed GwE and the authority to intervene earlier.

Reference was made to the new model in relation to the categorisation of support to schools based on colour. It was explained that schools in the green categories were grouped together where more independence could be given to them to prepare the ground and use their expertise. This would give the capacity to be able to work more intensively with schools in the amber and red categories. They would be in a position to report back more maturely on the development of this model next year.

Attention was drawn to the central system of gathering targets in order to intervene earlier and the intention to appoint Challenge Advisers to develop performance in English and Mathematics. They would plan jointly with the authority on the role of the Mathematics Adviser who would specifically work in Gwynedd.

A range of programmes were presented to improve the quality of leadership together with a programme to improve middle leadership.

In response to questions, the officers noted as follows:

- (i) That they would seek to change the Liaison Challenge Advisers every 2/3 years.
- (ii) In terms of the number undertaking the NPQH qualification, it was explained that GwE had a comprehensive leadership programme where they would discuss with the authority what support the schools need and who were the prospective future leaders. In addition, the need to target individuals to attend suitable courses was noted.
- (iii) It was explained, in the context of appointing Headteachers, that the authority was working jointly with governors as the authority had a good knowledge of the potential of individuals.

B. By the Quality Improvement Officer

It was noted that a report was commissioned regarding leadership and this would be presented to the Cabinet in due course. Attention was drawn to the following main points that emanated from interviews with several Headteachers and elected Members:

1. There was much greater focus on decisions and recent discussions at an authority level regarding leadership and it was recognised that a significant change was required in the field of leadership.
2. Clear commitment to collaboration
3. By now the existing arrangements were not appropriate and it was necessary to take action to deal with this i.e. look at leadership and organisation as they were not sustainable and Headteachers had a clear view that change was required.
4. The authority needed to improve its performance to identify leaders
5. Significant reduction in the number of authority central staff and consequently there was lower capacity to satisfy the requirements of schools.
6. There was a specific focus seen regarding leadership in both the authority and in GwE business plans
7. The authority had established an independent progress Monitoring Board to look at how quickly schools come out of the statutory category
8. A problem had been identified in the performance of English / Mathematics
9. Examples of federal models - sharing leaders across schools
10. Continue to work on conditions
11. Continue with the system of school to school collaboration
12. Ensure that capital investment was available to create an area office model
13. Develop the Education Development Unit's role

The Head of Education and the Education Improvement Officer responded to enquiries from individual Members as follows:

- (i) They wished to implement the new system for the Service's Area Offices in the next academic year
- (ii) In relation to the numbers who were undertaking the NPQH qualification, that 20 persons within the region had been accepted last year and there were approximately 100 places nationally. This year for the first time the quota had been increased. It was added that if more were accepted for this qualification then there would be more competition for posts and it was noted how important it was that individuals used the qualification if they managed to succeed.

C. By the Senior Manager Additional Learning Needs and Inclusion:

The actions and priorities for the coming year were outlined, namely:

- Establish a system of self-evaluation across schools to arm them to be able to identify attendance patterns earlier
- System of prosecuting and specific penalty notices
- That there was a reduction in the number of permanent exclusions in the secondary sector with an increase in the permanent exclusions in the primary sector mainly due to the lack of support for children with behavioural problems. It was noted that urgent attention was required for this issue in KS2 and KS3.
- A new procedure was in place since the beginning of January to support pupils with emotional behaviour issues in KS4. It was seen that the pupils benefited from the packages that had been tailored for their own individual needs.
- The TRAC scheme had been established since January
- A Security Officer had been appointed for the Department and the security / access arrangements for schools had been tightened together with arranging specific training
- That the strategic review was proceeding for additional learning needs pupils and there had been joint modelling with Anglesey in order to strengthen provision. It was noted that they had to be aware of the needs of children within the existing system

such as how to support children on the autistic spectrum, children with specific language disorders and behaviour.

- A small reduction was seen in the number of statemented pupils and a new procedure had been established with individual development plans.
- Forums had been established to control access to special needs services e.g. language disorder, behaviour, that placed more focus on support to pupils via central services.

The officers responded to the Members' enquiries as follows:

- (i) That parents needed guidance regarding school policies specifically with taking pupils out of school during school term to go on holiday. They would collaborate with the Legal Department on the exact wording of the policy etc.
- (ii) Attendance was vital to nurture young people's attitude to work.
- (iii) Whilst accepting that the economy of Gwynedd was dependent on tourism and that parents could not go on holiday during the winter, it was noted that it was important to convey the message to parents that attendance was vitally important.
- (iv) It was anticipated that the new Ysgol Hafod Lon would open in around October 2016 and the ABC Unit would remain within the mainstream of Ysgol Eifion Wyn, Porthmadog due to a lack of room at the special school.
- (v) It was trusted that a counsellor would be appointed in the next few days for next term.
- (vi) It was confirmed that there would be a significant change in terms of provision for autistic children as part of the review of additional learning needs where consideration would be given to establishing units within schools to support children individually in order to focus expertise and strengthen the service.

Resolved: (a) To accept and note the contents of the annual report.

(b) To approve:

- (i) that the Education Support Services Scrutiny Investigation makes a specific point to discuss with schools in the red category to assess the type of support those schools receive from the authority, GwE and others.**
- (ii) That the elements of the Support Services Scrutiny Investigation receive attention by the Education Support Services Scrutiny Investigation rather than the full Scrutiny Committee.**

(c) Due to the risk of delay in reporting on performance, to request that the Education Cabinet Member submits an interim report to the Scrutiny Committee in the Autumn to see the pattern of summer examination results.

(ch) That the Scrutiny Committee gives specific attention to Special Education in the work programme for next year and to consider its early scrutiny in the meeting in May.

4. PROGRESS REPORT ON THE FROM HOSPITAL TO HOME SCRUTINY INVESTIGATION - PART 2

A progress report was submitted against the main recommendations of the From Hospital to Home Scrutiny Investigation - Part 2.

The Cabinet Member for Adults, Health and Well-being gave the background and Committee Members were given an opportunity to scrutinize the contents.

During the ensuing discussion the following points were highlighted:

(a) In response to a comment made regarding the lack of GPs and nurses in Gwynedd, especially in the Dwyfor and Meirionnydd areas, the Chief Health Officer for Gwynedd and Anglesey explained that this was a national problem and in north Wales this was more of an issue in the Wrexham area. It was further noted that the Health Board had received funding in the sum of £4.9m from the Welsh Government for Primary Care that would enable the establishment of multi-agency teams around GPs to include nurses, additional therapists, offer audiology out in the community as well as additional pharmacists. In terms of GPs, that action would be taken to try to get the youth to return to their communities as part of the Outstanding GP Development Programme. They had managed to attract five back to the Health Board with two doctors working in Gwynedd - one in Nefyn and the other in Caernarfon. It was trusted that more youth could be attracted and this would be an opportunity for them to work part time as a GP and for the remainder of their time they could specialise in a particular field.

(b) There was praise for the additional nurse at Botwnnog together with the pharmacists and people trusted them. It was added that there was a need to collaborate with the third sector and there should be no deterioration in the service.

In response, the Chief Health Officer for Gwynedd and Anglesey noted that there was a good relationship with Mantell Gwynedd and through the funding received from the Welsh Government it was trusted that they could implement a Social Prescribing scheme with the third sector.

The Corporate Director gave an assurance that a better understanding had by now developed between the Council and the third sector and different ways of collaborative working had to be considered. The Care Challenge project working with communities was mentioned and it was noted how important it was in all the integrated work that the third sector was a key part of the integrated team.

(c) The importance of advertising and giving a better understanding especially to older people of the Advance Nurse Practitioner scheme.

In response, it was explained that there was work to develop the above scheme during the next 2 / 3 years. It was recognised that it needed to be promoted especially to GP surgery reception staff. It was also ensured that a specific article would be prepared for the local press together with social media about the Multi-agency Teams. It was trusted that more than one model could be trialled where nurses may visit and undertake visits to homes and the scheme had been trialled in Pen Llŷn since January. The development would be good news.

(ch) In response to a comment made regarding a vulnerable person going home from hospital to another vulnerable person, an assurance was given that the Health Board was trying to develop a Discharge to Assess scheme where it would be ensured that individuals were assessed within a day or two of having returned home.

The Corporate Director added that there should be collaboration as part of the process to ensure that individuals receive care. It was further noted that the recruitment of home carers caused concern in some areas and these jobs should be promoted to attract young people.

(d) An observation was made that there was possibly pressure to move persons out of hospital into their homes, and in some cases this was premature and should it not be ensured that there was a bed for them in community hospitals to convalesce before they returned home.

In response, the Chief Health Officer for Gwynedd and Anglesey explained that collaboration was important and specifically with the Integrated Teams to ensure care of individuals within communities.

The Corporate Director added that more work was required regarding support for non-paid carers.

(dd) In response to an enquiry regarding arrangements at Ysbyty Alltwen, it was recognised that this had been a success despite the Health Board and the Council having different governance structures. It was trusted that they would proceed in the next few months to extend the Integrated Teams.

(e) The Cabinet Member for Adults and Health noted that the situation in this field was critical in terms of financial resources and therefore the way of addressing the problems had to be adapted. It was recognised that there was a great deal to be achieved in different ways in order to get a better result for individuals.

(f) In response to an enquiry regarding 'step-up - step-down' beds at Plas Pengwaith, Llanberis and other care homes, the Head of Adults, Health and Well-being Service explained that arrangements were being made to change the nature and geographical split of the provision as the previous arrangement had not been totally successful.

(ff) The Corporate Director explained, referring to a letter sent to Albert Heaney, Director of Social Services, Children and Families, expressing concern about the problems in terms of provision of private nursing homes and also in the recruitment of nurses to work there. It was trusted that they would be able to report back to the Committee on this issue with options for consideration in around May.

(g) The Corporate Director referred further on the contact made with Margaret Flynn (author of the Winterbourne Report) and her experience would be discussed further with the Champion for Older People, Champion for Carers, Councillors Beth Lawton and Angela Russell along with one member who had personal experience. It was suggested that Councillor Elin Walker Jones, Autism Champion, should be part of the above discussion.

(ng) In terms of retaining nurses, it was explained that the number accepted by Bangor University was not sufficient. Some nurses were lost when they specialised in a particular field, as well as a result of bureaucracy. It was trusted that by changing the model and the way of working that paperwork would be reduced to enable nurses to give more care to patients. In addition, nurses tended to favour jobs in Hospitals rather than in nursing homes. It was recognised that there was a piece of work to be undertaken regarding this to see how the profile of the Home Care Nurse could be raised.

Resolved: (a) To accept, note and thank the officer for the report.

(b) To approve that the work was developing and to continue to work jointly with the carers to promote and advertise the arrangements of the Multi-agency Teams (ANP)

(c) To programme follow-on work on the organisation of Ysbyty Alltwen together with a career in the care field at the Annual Workshop of this Scrutiny Committee that will take place on 28 April 2016.

The meeting commenced at 10:00am and concluded at 12:45pm.

CHAIRMAN.