

Committee: **Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee**
Date of meeting: **3rd November 2020**
Report Subject: **Summary of Inspection Outcomes for Educational Establishments – Autumn Term 2019 and Spring Term 2020**
Portfolio Holder: **Cllr J Collins, Executive Member for Education**
Report Submitted by: **Lynn Phillips, Interim Corporate Director of Education**
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Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
x	x	19.10.20			03.11.20	x		

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide Members of the Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee with important performance monitoring information regarding the inspections undertaken by ESTYN of educational establishments and an update of inspection outcomes for:
- schools inspected during the Autumn term 2019 and Spring term 2020; and,
 - the outcomes of Estyn monitoring visits during this period.
- 1.2 Education and Learning Scrutiny Members will be aware that the publication of this report has been delayed as a result of the emergency response to the pandemic.

2. Scope and Background

- 2.1 The report summarises the outcomes and recommendations of inspection reports awarded by Estyn for educational establishments inspected during this period together with reported outcomes of Estyn monitoring visits to identified settings and schools during this period.

3. Options for Recommendation

- 3.1 This report has been discussed by Education DMT, CLT prior to submission to Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee.

Option 1

Accept the report as provided.

Option 2

To scrutinise the information detailed within the report and contribute to the continuous assessment of effectiveness by making appropriate recommendations to the Executive Committee.

4. Evidence of how does this topic supports the achievement of the Corporate Plan / Statutory Responsibilities / Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan

4.1 Statutory Responsibility

4.1.1 All education and training providers in Wales are inspected by Estyn. The current inspection framework changed in September 2017.

4.1.2 Schools and other education providers are now given judgements in relation to the 5 inspection areas of (the arrangements for early years settings are summarised in Appendix 1):

- 1. Standards,
- 2. Wellbeing and attitudes to learning
- 3. Teaching and Learning Experience
- 4. Care support and guidance and
- 5. Leadership and Management

4.1.3 With judgements now being made on a four point scale

Judgement : What the judgement means?	
Excellent	Very strong, sustained performance and practice.
Good	Strong features, although minor aspects may require improvement.
Adequate and needs improvement	Strengths outweigh weaknesses, but important aspects require improvement.
Unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement	Important weaknesses outweigh strengths.

4.1.5 A further breakdown of what each inspection area covers is shown in appendix 1.

4.1.6 Recommendations to secure further improvement are always made in all inspection reports. The school/setting are expected to address these recommendations through their improvement planning processes. Schools and education settings are supported to devise their plans by the Education Achievement Service (EAS). The EAS approve all plans and also monitor progress through the plans.

4.1.7 Where necessary, Intervention Plans are drawn up and progress is monitored more formally through a School Causing Concern (SCC) process that operates in accordance with the regional South East Wales Consortium (SEWC) Schools Causing Concern Policy.

4.1.8 Depending on the result of the inspection, Estyn determines the level of follow-up which the school requires. An explanation of the difference between the levels of follow-up activity is shown in appendix 1.

4.1.9 **Blaenau Gwent Wellbeing Plan**

The Estyn inspection framework is clearly aligned to the objectives in the Blaenau Gwent Wellbeing Plan which aims for everyone to have the best start in life. Through this plan it seeks to ensure that the education provision is appropriate and able to meet the needs of children and young people so that their progress is as good as it ought to be.

5. **Implications Against Each Option**

5.1 ***Impact on Budget (short and long term impact)***

There are no direct financial implications for this report. Blaenau Gwent continues to make a financial contribution to the regional Education Achievement Service (EAS) arrangements of approximately £300,000 per annum. As a part of the Council's arrangements for intervention in schools in line with the South East Wales Consortium (SEWC) framework, there are occasions when additional funding is required to support schools through the use of external agencies particularly, when an adverse inspection report is received. Any funding required is allocated from within current budgets within the Education Directorate portfolio.

5.2 ***Risk including Mitigating Actions***

The Estyn inspection Framework focuses primarily on standards, the quality of education provision and the quality of leadership in educational establishments and schools. Failure to identify schools and provide support appropriately places at risk the quality of education and standards in individual schools. The Estyn Inspection Framework provides an external viewpoint through which potential risk is identified and resolved. Moreover, the public nature of Estyn inspection reports also poses reputational risk to the individual school or setting and to the Council as a whole should an adverse report be published, and the Council's role is to ensure that high standards and quality of provision are maintained in all settings.

Failure to ensure that there is robust monitoring of settings and of Council services carries with it a number of significant risks:

- Undetected and unaddressed decline in school performance and the quality of provision.
- Students do not achieve to acceptable levels.
- Lack of overall improvement in schools' performance.

- Children do not receive the best start in life
- Negative impact on the reputation of the Council.

Similarly, ineffective monitoring of Council services also poses a range of risks including:

- Reducing standards and quality of provision in settings,
- Poor value for money,
- Ineffective support for settings which hinders their improvement,
- Negative impact on the reputation of the Council.

Through the monitoring of performance by means of Estyn reports, the Scrutiny Committee ensures that educational settings and supporting services are able to deliver provision of a high quality.

5.3 ***Legal***

Estyn is a Crown body, established under the Education Act 1992.

5.4 ***Human Resources***

None for this report.

6. **Supporting Evidence**

6.1 ***Performance Information and Data***

6.1.1 During the reporting period three establishments were inspected with no monitoring visits during the period.

6.1.2 **Brynmawr Foundation School**

Brynmawr Foundation School was inspected by Estyn in December 2019. The inspectors awarded a judgement against all four inspection areas of 'unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement' and against the inspection area of care support and guidance a judgement of 'adequate and needs improvement' was recorded. The Estyn report is attached as appendix 2.

Estyn made four recommendations for improvement and these are summarised below:

- R1 Improve pupils' standards across the school, including their literacy and numeracy skills
- R2 Improve pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to learning
- R3 Improve the effectiveness of teaching to motivate, engage and challenge pupils to make good progress in lessons
- R4 Strengthen leadership at all levels to improve leaders' ability to identify areas for development and to plan effectively for improvement

The report recognises that ‘Since 2018, the Headteacher has worked positively with staff and pupils to create stability following a period of uncertainty and change. He has instigated a programme of change across the school that focuses appropriately on strengthening leadership at all levels and developing teaching. Staff are engaging enthusiastically in professional learning. However, these changes have not had a sufficient impact on important areas of the school’s work such as teaching and pupils’ standards. Although pupils make strong progress in a few lessons, in a majority of lessons, many pupils do not make enough progress. The school has a supportive and inclusive ethos. Many pupils are confident in their social interactions. However, many pupils are not suitably resilient or motivated in their lessons, and this hinders their learning. ‘

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, Estyn were of the opinion that, that special measures were required in relation to this school. Subsequently, the school has drawn up a Post Inspection Action Plan that details how it is going to address the recommendations and the Local Authority and EAS has drafted a statement of action as to how it will support the school. In line with agreed procedures for schools in an Estyn Category a meeting took place on 27th February 2020 at which the Post Inspection Action Plan (PIAP) was reviewed and feedback provided by Estyn as to how the action plan may be furthered strengthened. Moving forward, Estyn will monitor the school’s progress on a termly basis. However, given the present pandemic the approach to a return to business as usual activities is yet to be determined but this is likely to be a key activity at the commencement of the new academic session.

6.1.3 **Cwm Primary School**

Cwm Primary School was inspected by Estyn in December 2019. The inspectors awarded a judgement against all five inspection areas of “Good.” The Estyn report is attached as appendix 3.

Estyn has also invited the school to prepare a case study on its work in relation to intergenerational community work, for dissemination on Estyn’s website. Estyn made three recommendations for improvement and these are summarised below:

- R1 Ensure that pupils in the foundation phase have meaningful opportunities to develop as independent learners
- R2 Ensure that teachers match activities to the needs of pupils of all abilities, particularly the least able
- R3 Improve the quality of presentation, spelling and punctuation in key stage 2

The report recognises that “Cwm Primary School plays a key role at the heart of its community. Staff place great importance on the happiness of pupils and recognise that all pupils need to feel safe, secure and valued in order to be able to learn and make progress. As a result, standards of wellbeing in the school are very high.

Teachers and teaching assistants deliver learning activities that engage pupils and encourage them to want to learn. They integrate aspects of Welsh culture and local history well. Staff use the Welsh language frequently and encourage its use among pupils effectively. As a result, standards in Welsh are a particular strength.

The Headteacher sets a clear vision for the school based around pupil wellbeing. She works with other leaders, teachers and teaching assistant in a series of teams that encourage all to develop their leadership skills and contribute to school improvement. The school works well with other providers to improve the quality of its provision and share its strengths.

6.1.4 **Ysgol Gymraeg Brohelyg**

Ysgol Gymraeg Brohelyg was inspected by Estyn in February 2020. The inspectors awarded a judgement against four inspection areas of “Good” and “Adequate and need improvement” against the inspection area of teaching and learning experiences. The Estyn report is attached as appendix 4. Estyn made three recommendations for improvement and these are summarised below:

- R1 Ensure that teaching and learning experiences develop the independence of all pupils in the foundation phase consistently
- R2 Improve provision to develop pupils’ ICT skills across the school
- R3 Strengthen self-evaluation and planning for improvement procedures in order to prioritise and address the most important areas

The report recognises that “The school is a caring and hard-working community which provides a firm foundation for pupils’ learning from an early age, particularly in acquiring the Welsh language. The Headteacher and staff have high expectations of pupils and, as a result, most make good progress during their time at the school. Staff organise purposeful interventions for pupils, which succeed in supporting them to improve their literacy and numeracy skills, and wellbeing, well.

Across the school, most pupils show enthusiasm towards their learning. They respect others well and work diligently in pairs and groups. Classes are organised and industrious places in which most pupils persevere well with their tasks. However, not all pupils in the foundation phase are given enough opportunities to enable them to make their own decisions and become independent learners. Staff plan valuable opportunities for pupils to apply their literacy and numeracy skills consistently in their work. However, they do not plan purposefully enough to develop pupils’ information and communication technology (ICT) skills.

The Headteacher has a clear vision to realise the aim of ‘setting a firm foundation for a bright future’. The school has established a hard-working management team that has succeeded in leading significant improvements successfully over time. However, processes for self-evaluation and planning

for improvement do not always focus enough on the most important priorities in order to move the school forward.”

6.2 ***Expected outcome for the public***

Monitoring of inspection reports is an important mechanism for ensuring that Members of the Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee are sufficiently informed to enable them to hold the authority to account effectively for the quality of education provision.

6.3 ***Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation)***

The Estyn Inspection Framework is delivered in accordance with National regulation.

6.4 ***Thinking for the Long term (forward planning)***

The Estyn Inspection Framework is focused on securing long term improvement in settings. It is one of a number of triggers through which additional monitoring and support can be targeted at a setting to secure strong and continuing prospects for improvement. However, the SEWC regional framework for school categorisation linked with support for schools causing concern seeks to ensure that schools deliver high quality provision and standards in the long term with the aim that Estyn reflects this in their inspection reporting.

6.5 ***Preventative focus***

A key element of the Council’s work is to work with the EAS to ensure that settings are regularly monitored so that appropriate support is in place and high standards are secured. Estyn Inspection reports reflect the extent to which settings and Local Authorities have been effective in achieving this. The vast majority of recent inspection reports in Blaenau Gwent settings have demonstrated that the Council has achieved this goal.

6.6 ***Collaboration / partnership working***

Educational improvement in Blaenau Gwent is delivered on a regional basis through the South East Wales Consortium in collaboration with Caerphilly, Monmouthshire, Newport and Torfaen Councils. The Council also secures a range of provision to support vulnerable learners through regional arrangement as well as support for its early years settings.

6.7 ***Integration(across service areas)***

The Estyn Inspection Framework is aimed at promoting high quality leadership, excellent standards and high quality education provision. This aim is fundamental to the Council’s well-being objectives and is fundamental to the joint work between Education and Social Services Directorates.

6.8 ***EqIA***

Not required for this report.

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

- 7.1 Monitoring of inspection reports is an important mechanism for ensuring that members of the Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee are sufficiently informed to enable them to hold the authority's services to account effectively for the quality of education provision and pupil outcomes.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

- Appendix 1 – School Inspection Framework
- Appendix 2 – Brynmawr Foundation School
- Appendix 3 – Cwm Primary School
- Appendix 4 – Ysgol Bro Helyg