

Report of Director of Children’s Services

Report to Scrutiny Board (Children & Families)

Date: 13th November 2014

Subject: Inquiry into Raising Educational Standards in Leeds - Learning Improvement

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

1.0 Summary of main issues

- 1.1 The report presents the Learning Improvement services’ self-evaluation against the standards set out in the Ofsted framework for the inspection of local authority school improvement services. It also presents the Leeds for Learning Strategy for Learning Improvement June 2013 which is the current, approved strategy for the service.
- 1.2 The report notes the intention to develop a refreshed wider education strategy for the city and to consult on this with the full range of stakeholders. The inquiry into the service will be used to assist in the refreshed strategy documents (see appendix 1).

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 The board is asked to endorse and support the ongoing work of services within the learning improvement team.
- 2.2 The board is asked to note the crucial role of partnership working and sector led school to school support in the future provision of support, challenge and intervention in Leeds.
- 2.3 Members are asked to discuss the materials presented in the context of their terms of reference for the inquiry into the service.

3.0 Purpose of this report

- 3.1 To facilitate the first stage of the inquiry into the council's learning improvement service, the report presents the self-evaluation report of school improvement services, the Ofsted framework for school improvement inspections and the Leeds for Learning Improvement Strategy.
- 3.2 The learning improvement services' self-evaluation is set out alongside the standards outlined in the Ofsted framework for the inspection of local authority school improvement services. This report also presents the Leeds for Learning Strategy for Learning Improvement June 2013. This is the current, approved strategy for the service.

4.0 Background information

- 4.1 Through the Children and Young People's Plan the Children's Trust Board and Council have approved the following principle:

"Children's Trust and local government partners must see all local schools as community assets and have a clear role in holding those institutions - no matter what the governance arrangements - to account for the contribution they make to the wellbeing of the local population."

- 4.2 The Learning improvement service recognises that schools and other learning settings are autonomous, self-governing and best placed to tackle the learning improvement agenda. However, the local authority's role is to monitor, challenge and, where necessary, intervene to ensure effective partnership working takes place. This should be focused on building positive relationships to effect change.
- 4.3 The local authority's role in raising standards through monitoring, challenging and, where appropriate, intervention is statutory. However, our strategic framework recognises and highlights that even where the local authority has a major, direct role, the responsibility for school improvement ultimately rests with schools and school leaders as autonomous and self-managing institutions. It is the responsibility of schools to make the best use of the challenge and support available to them.
- 4.4 Brokering school to school support is central to our learning improvement work. The learning improvement service is building on existing models of partnership working, and strengthening, extending and formalising current arrangements. The intention of this is to improve the performance of low achieving schools and support good and improving schools to become outstanding.
- 4.5 The local authority currently engages with a number of partner headteachers and the five teaching schools who work in partnership with the learning improvement service to help accelerate the rate of school improvement across the city. The key objectives of their work are to enhance communication between Leeds schools and the local authority, promote the sharing of good practice, advise on appropriate action in relation to challenge and intervention, in addition to facilitating collaborative working.

5.0 Main issues

- 5.1 In partnership with the Leeds Children's Trust Board (CTB) and the Leeds Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB), we will act decisively to ensure that all children and young people are appropriately cared for, and safeguarded to secure their well-being. This will include academies to ensure that their systems recognise those who are vulnerable and in need of care and protection, as well as those whose wellbeing is potentially compromised. At the beginning of each academic year a meeting with the sponsor and the principal will be offered to discuss the academy's priorities for the coming year, explore any identified areas for development, and agree any joint working and opportunities for further school to school support.
- 5.2 The self-evaluation of the learning improvement service, based on the Ofsted criteria for learning improvement, is included in the background documents (see appendix 2). It sets out a position statement, the strengths and areas for development against the 9 Ofsted criteria:
- The effectiveness of corporate and strategic leadership of school improvement
 - The clarity and transparency of policy and strategy for supporting schools and other providers' improvement, and how clearly the LA has defined its monitoring, challenge, support and intervention role.
 - The extent to which the LA knows its schools and other providers, their performance and
 - The standards they achieve and how effectively support is focused on areas of greatest need
 - The effectiveness of the LA's identification of, and intervention in, underperforming schools, including the use of formal powers of intervention
 - The impact of LA support and challenge over time and the rate at which schools and other providers are improving
 - The extent to which the LA commissions and brokers support for schools and other providers
 - The effectiveness of strategies to support highly effective leadership and management in schools and other providers
 - Support and challenge for school governance
 - The way in which the LA uses any available funding to effect improvement including how it is focused on areas of greatest need
- 5.3 The current strategy for the service is also included in the background documents. Based on the self-evaluation this will be updated and then subject to consultation with the full range of stakeholders, including schools and elected members (see appendix 3).

The self-evaluation document also summarises the key current educational outcomes for children and young people (see appendix 4).

6.0 Corporate Considerations

6.1 Consultation and Engagement

- 6.2 The local authority currently engages with a number of partner headteachers and teaching schools, who work in partnership with the learning improvement service to help accelerate the rate of school improvement across the city. The key objectives of their work are to enhance communication between Leeds schools and the local authority, promote the sharing of good practice, advise on appropriate action in relation to challenge and intervention, in addition to facilitating collaborative working.
- 6.3 The current strategy for the service is included in the background documents. Based on the self-evaluation this will be updated and then subject to consultation with the full range of stakeholders, including schools and elected members.

7.0 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration

- 7.1 Some young people are statistically more likely to have lower attainment and progress levels such as those with learning difficulties and disabilities, those from some ethnic minority backgrounds, those with EAL, those living in deprived areas and poor school attenders. The purpose of all the strategic and operational activity relating to this area of work is to help all children and young people achieve their full potential. A central element of this inquiry and the proposed refresh of the learning strategy is to ensure that the needs of vulnerable children, young people and families who experience inequality of opportunity or outcomes are identified and responded to at the earliest possible opportunity.

8.0 Council policies and City Priorities

- 8.1 The Learning strategy and supporting documents reflect the outcomes, priorities and indicators set out in the Best Council Plan 2013-17, the Children and Young People's Plan 2011-15 and the Joint Health and Well Being Plan 2013-15.

9.0 Resources and value for money

- 9.1 There are no issues arising directly from this report. However, an increasing education in the resources available to local authority learning improvement services and an increase in the resources devolved directly to schools is part of the wider context of the report.

10.0 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

- 10.1 The report is not subject to call in. There are no legal; implications arising directly from the report.

11.0 Risk Management

- 11.1 Risks and risk management arrangements will be updated as part of the refreshed learning strategy.

12.0 Conclusions

- 12.1 Scrutiny members are encouraged to discuss the current educational outcomes for children and young people alongside the strengths and areas for development identified in the self-evaluation carried out by the learning improvement service.

13.0 Recommendations

- 13.1 The board is asked to endorse and support the ongoing work of services within the learning improvement team.
- 13.2 The board is asked to note the crucial role of partnership working and sector led school to school support in the future provision of support, challenge and intervention in Leeds.
- 13.3 Members are asked to discuss the materials presented in the context of their terms of reference for the inquiry into the service.

Background documents¹

- 14.1 Learning improvement self-evaluation report
- 14.2 Leeds for Learning strategy for learning improvement June 2013
- 14.3 Ofsted framework for the inspection of local authority school improvement services

¹ The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.

Appendix

1. Leeds Best City for Learning Education Strategy outline - pg. 7
2. Ofsted framework for the inspection of local authority school improvement services - see additional document
3. Leeds for Learning Strategy for Learning Improvement, June 2013 - see additional document
4. Self-evaluation report for learning improvement - see additional document

Leeds Best City for Learning
Education Improvement Strategy
2014-2017

This strategy provides a framework for understanding where we are as a city, where we want to be and what we will do to ensure that good progress is made, whilst recognising the challenges that we face.

This strategy is based on a number of key areas:

- Outcomes
- OFSTED frameworks
- Local intelligence
- Budget and funding
- Partnerships
- Strategic plans

By development and consultation with:

- Elected members
- CLST
- SLT- LSUS
- Education Strategy Group
- Headteachers and governors
- FE and HE
- Diocese
- PUI sector

Time frame:

- Education Strategy group - November 2014
- Cross party working group - November 2014
- First draft agreed by mid - December 2014
- Scrutiny Committee (working group) - January 2015
- Consultation period up to mid - January 2015
- Final document
- Elected members - end of January 2015
- CSLT - end of January 2015
- Distributed - Mid February 2015
- Scrutiny Committee - March 2015