

**Report of: The Director of Children's Services**

**Report to: Scrutiny Board (Children and Families)**

**Date: 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2015**

**Subject: Scrutiny Inquiry - 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. Summary of main issues

The report is brought before the Scrutiny Board to facilitate the final planned session of the Scrutiny Board inquiry into Learning Improvement.

This year, the report has been created in an alternate format, the intention of which is to enable it to be published on the web, thus widening the readership and ensuring that the report is user friendly. The electronic version will have automated links to supportive documentation (level 2) and the full data set (level 3). For the purposes of this meeting the Scrutiny Board has been provided will supporting data sets.

The finalised report once agreed by Executive Board will be been published slightly later in the year due to national data slippage.

## 2. Recommendations

The Scrutiny Board (Children and Families) is recommended to:

a) Note and consider the documented information provided and presented verbally to the Board on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of April 2015 and comment where necessary on the new format and contents of the draft Annual Standards Report for future development.

b) Make recommendations as deemed appropriate on the future provision of ongoing support, challenge and intervention in Leeds to ensure that progress continues to be made.

c) Note that the terms of reference may incorporate additional information to extend the inquiry should the Children and Families Scrutiny Board identify any further scope for inquiry or request further witness or evidence during this session.

## **1.0 Purpose of the Report**

- 1.1 At its meeting on the 24th April 2014, the Scrutiny Board was presented with the Annual Standards Report (Early Years Foundation Stage, Primary & Secondary Schools). The report summarised the achievement of learners in Leeds at all key stages, including Early Years Foundation Stage in 2013. It also outlined the action taken by the Council to fulfil its responsibilities to support, monitor, challenge and intervene as necessary.
- 1.2 Considering the information presented in April 2014, the Scrutiny Board at its meeting on the 19th of June 2014 resolved to undertake an inquiry looking at the Learning Improvement Service and the impact, influence and value of this service in raising educational standards in the city and narrowing the attainment gap, particularly in early years.
- 1.3 Terms of reference were agreed by the Scrutiny Board on the 11 September 2014.
- 1.4 The purpose of the inquiry is to make an assessment of and, where appropriate, make recommendations on the following areas:
  - Strategies and systems in place to secure learning improvement with Learning Providers for children and young people from the age of 2 years.
  - Improving outcomes for Children and Young People by identifying:
    - a) the quality of service provided by and the performance of the Learning Improvement Service
    - b) the impact the Learning Improvement Service is having on learning providers across the city to improve educational standards
    - c) the effectiveness of the Learning Improvement Service in narrowing the gap in attainment and progress and ensuring children and young people are ready for learning.
    - d) if Learning Improvement Service intervention and operation in Leeds is providing good value for money and is sustainable going forward
  - The extent of collaborative, supportive and productive relationships between the Learning Improvement Service and Learning Providers.

## **2.0 Submission of Evidence**

- 2.1 The Scrutiny Board has requested the submission of the Draft Annual Performance Report 2013-14 including data sets and analysis for Leeds to facilitate debate regarding:
  - The use of the data to improve educational outcomes
  - Narrowing the gap
  - The impact of the learning improvement service on the reported outcomes
- 2.2 The draft Annual Standards Report summarises the achievement of learners at all Key Stages throughout 2013-2014. It shows the achievements and challenges over the course of that academic year, and provides recommendations for the future. It also outlines the actions taken by the Council to fulfil its responsibilities to support,

monitor, challenge and intervene as necessary. This report is draft and is therefore subject to change. It is scheduled to be submitted to the Executive Board in its completed state in June 2015.

### **3.0 Main Issues - Draft Annual Standards Report**

- 3.1 Evidence is drawn from national and local performance data monitoring activities undertaken by council officers and Ofsted inspection reports.
- 3.2 There continues to be significant changes within the field of education both nationally and locally, with a shift from large centralised systems to much smaller and, by necessity, a more effective and streamlined local authority improvement function. Despite increasing and significant budget pressures within the council there is a continued drive to develop innovative and creative approaches to school improvement.
- 3.3 The challenge for the local authority is to retain its core roles of; monitoring, challenging and intervening in schools where necessary. Whilst this applies to all local authority maintained schools, there is an emphasis on weaker schools where standards are too low.
- 3.4 In addition, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools (HMCI) has made it explicit that local authorities must evaluate, monitor and challenge the effectiveness of academies. The introduction of the role of Regional Schools Commissioners introduced in September 2013 establishes a line of accountability for academies.
- 3.5 The decision by Leeds City Council, following extensive consultation with schools, was to ensure that it has sufficient school improvement resource to continue to provide a robust model of challenge and support to all local authority maintained schools. This comprises an annual review cycle for all schools (differentiated according to need) and additional support for schools causing concern.

### **4.0 Equality and Diversity/ Cohesion and Integration**

- 4.1 The improvement in attainment of vulnerable groups is still a key area for improvement and is highlighted in the challenges for the city on page 6.
- 4.2 The Equality Improvement Priorities 2011 to 2015 have been developed to ensure our legal duties are met under the Equality Act 2010. The priorities will help the council to achieve its ambition to be the best City in the UK and ensure that as a city work takes place to reduce disadvantage, discrimination and inequalities of opportunity.
- 4.3 Equality and diversity will be a consideration throughout the Scrutiny Inquiry and due regard will be given to equality through the use of evidence, written and verbal, outcomes from consultation and engagement activities.
- 4.4 The Scrutiny Board may engage and involve interested groups and individuals (both internal and external to the council) to inform recommendations.
- 4.5 Where an impact has been identified this will be reflected in the final inquiry report,

post inquiry. Where a Scrutiny Board recommendation is agreed the individual, organisation or group responsible for implementation or delivery should give due regard to equality and diversity, conducting impact assessments where it is deemed appropriate.

## **5.0 Recommendations**

5.1 The Scrutiny Board (Children and Families) is recommended to:

a) Note and consider the documented information provided and presented verbally to the Board on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of April 2015 and comment where necessary on the new format and contents of the draft Annual Standards Report for future development.

b) Make recommendations as deemed appropriate on the future provision of ongoing support, challenge and intervention in Leeds to ensure that progress continues to be made.

c) Note that the terms of reference may incorporate additional information to extend the inquiry should the Children and Families Scrutiny Board identify any further scope for inquiry or request further witness or evidence during this session.

## **6.0 Background documents<sup>1</sup>**

None

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<sup>1</sup> 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.