

# Report

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Report to:	<b>Education Resources Committee</b>
Date of Meeting:	<b>29 March 2011</b>
Report by:	<b>Executive Director (Education Resources)</b>

Subject:	<b>Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMle) - Evaluation of the Educational Psychology Service</b>
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## 1. Purpose of Report

1.1. The purpose of the report is to:-

- ◆ provide information on:-
  - ◆ the outcome of Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMle) evaluation of the effectiveness of the Educational Psychology Service
  - ◆ Education Resources' success in the 2011 COSLA awards

## 2. Recommendation(s)

2.1. The Committee is asked to approve the following recommendation(s):-

- (1) that the information on the outcome of the evaluation of the effectiveness of the Education Psychology Service by HMle is noted;
- (2) that Education Resources' success in achieving the Best Team Award at the 2011 COSLA Awards is noted; and
- (3) that the proposal by Education Resources to share the excellent practice found in terms of improving the life chances of children, young people, their families and carers outlined in paragraph 5.2 is noted.

## 3. Background

- 3.1. The Review of Provision of Educational Psychology Service in Scotland (2002) charged HMle, on behalf of the Scottish Ministers, to provide an external evaluation of the effectiveness of the Educational Psychology Service in improving the impact and outcomes for children, young people and families.
- 3.2. The evaluation of the Educational Psychology Service was conducted within a framework of quality indicators which embody the Government's policy on Best Value. The inspection team also included an Associate Assessor who was a depute Principal Educational Psychologist serving in another Scottish Local Authority.
- 3.3. The report by HMle was published on 1 February 2011.

- 3.4. The COSLA Excellence Awards celebrate the very best in Scottish local government. The emphasis is on rewarding the most innovative developments, and on recognising projects that can demonstrate excellent service delivery to communities.

South Lanarkshire Psychological Services received a special COSLA award for Best Team for their work in supporting children and families through their programme 'Give Us a Break!' in March 2011.

Further recognition of the high quality of support the Psychological Service provides to families, schools and other partners took place on Tuesday, 15 March 2011 when South Lanarkshire Council hosted the launch of the HMle report on Educational Psychology in Scotland: Making a difference.

#### **4. Findings of HMle Inspectors**

- 4.1. HMle inspectors evaluated the quality of provision on 14 quality indicators (see Appendix 1). The contents of the report were addressed under the following headings:-

- The aims, nature and scope of the inspection
- What key outcomes has the service achieved?
- How well does the service meet the needs of its stakeholders?
- How good is the service's delivery of key processes?
- How good is the service's management?
- How good is leadership?

- 4.2. HMle found that the Educational Psychology Service had been very successful in aligning its work with the vision, values and aims of the Council's Education Resources and Integrated Children's Services. It had made a significant contribution to the Education Resources' Action Plan and to the Children's Services Plan (*Getting It Right for South Lanarkshire's Children and Their Families*). Psychologists had played lead roles in developing policy and practice within the education authority, particularly in relation to the wellbeing themes *achieving, nurtured, included and safe*. The service was working very well with others in the authority to reduce the number of out of authority school placements and to improve the achievements and attainments of looked after and accommodated children. Psychologists had established a very strong child centred approach to all aspects of their work and this was very successful in driving equality, fairness and inclusive practice.

- 4.3. The key strengths of the Educational Psychology Service were identified as follows:-

- the outstanding leadership of the Principal Educational Psychologist and staff involvement in the continuous improvement of their service
- the provision of a very effective service to the local community
- achieving very clear alignment with the corporate vision, values and aims
- the establishment of innovative evidence based approaches to make a positive difference to the life chances of children and young people
- establishment of strong positive relationships with stakeholders
- having embedded a very child centred approach to educational psychology driving equality, fairness and inclusive practice

- 4.4. The impact of the service on children and young people, parents and carers was very good. A range of very high quality interventions developed by psychologists were helping individuals and groups of children and young people, by giving a greater emphasis to their strengths and reducing risks to their emotional health and wellbeing. The service had established very high quality partnerships and was using these to improve experiences and outcomes for children and young people. Children coping with loss, including family break-up and bereavement, were being significantly helped by a well-targeted programme developed jointly by psychologists, NHS Lanarkshire and Macmillan Cancer Support. The programme 'Give Us a Break' for children aged 10-14 years was approved by the Education Resources Committee on 19 January 2010. Parents and carers (including foster carers) of children with additional learning needs were very well-supported by the service. Psychologists gave very valuable help to parents and carers to support their children more effectively. Children who had worked with Psychologists felt respected and valued and thought that the help they received had a positive impact on their lives.
- 4.5. Schools and support services expressed very high levels of satisfaction with the Educational Psychology Service. The Post School Psychological Service had carried out very effective work to support the authority in ensuring that young people requiring More Choices More Chances were receiving an appropriate standard of service.
- 4.6. Psychologists were committed to providing a high quality service and they were supported in this by a very helpful administrative and clerical team. A number of the service's initiatives had attracted national interest and a number of staff were involved in national developments and working groups.
- 4.7. The service provided very effective levels of consultation and advice to children and young people, families, schools, and support services within the authority's staged intervention framework. At a casework level, assessment was, in most cases, designed to impact at the least intrusive level of intervention. The service was recognised for making good progress in improving the quality of literacy and Autism Spectrum Disorder assessments to ensure consistency of practice and build capacity in key colleagues throughout the authority. The service made a very strong contribution to research and strategic development within the authority.
- 4.8. The service had established very high quality partnerships at the strategic and operational level with other Council services, health and the voluntary sector. A strong and effective approach to self-evaluation had been embedded in the work of the service.

## **5. Features of good practice**

- 5.1. The report highlighted the following features of good practice:
- *FAIR*: Framework of Assessment and Intervention for Resilience
  - '*Give Us a Break*': a programme for children aged 10-14 years who are coping with negative change including family break up and bereavement
  - Educational Psychology Service leadership of the development of Education Resources' operating procedures, and support to schools and children in response to critical incidents
  - The contribution of the Post School Psychological Service team to the national agenda

- 5.2. Education Resources proposes to share the excellent practice found in terms of improving the life chances of children and young people, their families and carers through the dissemination of the report 'Educational Psychology in Scotland: Making a difference' and to continue to promote and further develop programmes that ensure better outcomes for children and families. It was particularly encouraging to note that, in this national report, HMle noted 5 key areas for change for all Educational Psychology Services; two of these relating to research and self-evaluation are aspects of South Lanarkshire's Psychology Services work which were particularly highly commended.

## **6. Leadership**

- 6.1. The Principal Educational Psychologist provided very strong leadership and direction and demonstrated a clear commitment to continuous improvement which has ensured better outcomes for children and families. Professional creativity was encouraged, success celebrated and staff were well supported to develop innovative approaches to service delivery. Leadership of improvement and change within the service was outstanding. The Principal Educational Psychologist made a strong contribution to the wider quality agenda within the authority and the service was highly valued by partners and a range of stakeholders.

- 6.2. A summary of the evaluations against the 14 quality indicators is shown in Appendix 1.

## **7. Next Steps**

- 7.1. HMle identified the following as points for action and confirmed that the service should:-

- continue to improve arrangements for the systematic involvement of stakeholders in service development
- continue to build on its approaches to assessment to ensure consistent practice across the service

- 7.2. HMle have intimated that, as a result of the Educational Psychology Service's high performance and its very good understanding of its strengths and areas for improvement, the inspection process has ended at this stage and HMle will make no more visits in connection with this inspection.

- 7.3. The COSLA Excellence Award for 'Best Team' is further evidence of the Psychology Services on-going commitment to making a difference to improving the life chances of children, young people and families. Congratulations are offered to all in Education Resources, South Lanarkshire Psychological Services on achieving this highly prestigious award.

## **8. Employee Implications**

- 8.1. None

## **9. Financial Implications**

- 9.1. None

## **10. Other Implications**

- 10.1. There are no direct risks associated with this report.
- 10.2. There are no significant sustainability issues in connection with the recommendations contained within this report.

## **11. Equality Impact Assessment and Consultation Arrangements**

- 11.1. There is no requirement to carry out an impact assessment in terms of the proposals contained within this report.
- 11.2. Consultation has taken place with a wide range of stakeholders through surveys and face to face dialogue during the inspection of Psychological Services and these views have helped to shape and inform the findings in the HMle report.

**Larry Forde**  
**Executive Director (Education Resources)**

9 March 2011

### **Link(s) to Council Objectives/Improvement Themes/Values**

- Raise educational attainment for all
- Increase involvement in life long learning
- Improve lives of vulnerable children, young people children and adults
- Improve health and increase physical activity

### **Previous References**

Education Resources Committee – 19 January 2010

### **List of Background Papers**

- HMle summary of evaluation of the Educational Psychology Service (1 February 2011)
- Educational Psychology in Scotland: Making a difference (15 March 2011)

### **Contact for Further Information**

If you would like to inspect the background papers or want further information, please contact:-

Andrea Batchelor, Head of Education (Inclusion)

Ext: 4452 (Tel: 01698 454452)

E-mail: [andrea.batchelor@southlanarkshire.gov.uk](mailto:andrea.batchelor@southlanarkshire.gov.uk)

<b>Quality Indicator</b>	<b>Evaluation</b>
Improvements in performance	Very good
Impact on children and young people	Very good
Impact on parents, carers and families	Very good
Impact on the local community	Very good
Consultation and advice	Very good
Assessment	Good
Intervention	Very good
Provision of professional development and training for other groups including parents, teachers and health professionals	Very good
Research and strategic development	Excellent
Policy development and review	Very good
Participation of stakeholders	Good
Operational planning	Very good
Leadership and direction	Very good
Leadership of change and improvement	Excellent