

Report

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Report to:	Education Resources Committee
Date of Meeting:	13 September 2011
Report by:	Executive Director (Education Resources)

Subject:	Validated Assisted Self-Evaluation (VSE)
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1. Purpose of Report

1.1. The purpose of the report is to:-

- ◆ advise of the outcome of the validated self-evaluation of the effectiveness of the education functions of South Lanarkshire Council undertaken in partnership with Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIE).

2. Recommendation(s)

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

- (1) that the outcomes of the Validated Assisted Self-Evaluation activity with HM Inspectorate of Education (HMIE), as detailed in Appendix 1, which evaluated the effectiveness of the education functions of South Lanarkshire Council be noted; and
- (2) that a detailed action plan to address the jointly agreed areas for further improvement contained within the joint report be prepared.

3. Background

- 3.1. In August 2010, the Committee was informed of the revised Validated Assisted Self-Evaluation (VSE) proportionate approach to the inspection of the education functions of a local authority, which was introduced in 2009. Approval was given for Education Resources to progress with its participation in the Validated Self-Evaluation process in partnership with HMIE. This supported the implementation of the 2010/2011 Resource Plan which included a commitment to further progress the key theme of self-evaluation.
- 3.2. In February 2011, the Committee was provided with a further report advising of Education Resources' progress with the validated self-evaluation of the effectiveness of the education functions of South Lanarkshire Council.
- 3.3. HM Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) joined Education Resources in South Lanarkshire Council during February and March 2011 to carry out the validated self-evaluation (VSE) as part of the Council's ongoing self-evaluation. In discussion with HMIE, senior managers identified priority areas of Education Resources' work for the focused, in-depth analysis enabled by the VSE. These were areas which identified strengths in outcomes for learners and families, and how these might be improved further. The ongoing implementation of Curriculum for Excellence presented an opportunity to consider approaches to learner transitions. Improving approaches to quality assurance within a context of diminishing resources was a further key focus area. Attainment trends highlighted the need to look more closely at the

performance of lower-attaining pupils, and other factors associated with their learning and achievement. The implementation of the *Parents as Partners Strategy* prompted a further consideration of how Education Resources could continue to develop greater engagement with stakeholders.

As a result, the following themed groups were established for the four key areas of the VSE:-

1. Transitions
2. Closing the Gap
3. Stakeholder Engagement
4. Quality Assurance

During each of the stages of the VSE, HM Inspectors (HMI) worked with the theme groups to support group members in a range of self-evaluation activities. This included analysing available data and information, interviewing a wide range of stakeholders and partners, and examining practice in other council areas.

4. HMle's assessment of the quality of self-evaluation in South Lanarkshire Council

- 4.1. The report jointly prepared by HMle and Education Resources published on 8 July 2011 noted the approach and resulting improvement planning priorities used by South Lanarkshire Education Resources were comprehensive and are supported by a robust system of performance monitoring, including analysing information from external scrutiny. There was effective joint working between elected members and officers, ensuring a very strong coherence between the Council's strategic goals and its improvement priorities. (The HMle and South Lanarkshire joint report on the VSE can be found at <http://www.hmie.gov.uk/ViewEstablishment.aspx?id=12159&type=14>).
- 4.2. The report further noted that South Lanarkshire Council has a long track record of delivering high quality education services and of working to continuously improve outcomes for children, young people, adult learners, families and communities. The VSE work has confirmed that there are robust processes in place for evaluating the work across establishments and services in Education Resources. Approaches for engaging with stakeholders and making use of rich sources of evidence and data are strong and continue to improve.
- 4.3. South Lanarkshire Council and HMle jointly identified the following high-level strengths:-
 - very clear vision and strong leadership demonstrated by councillors, the Executive Director, the education management team, and senior managers resulting in positive outcomes for learners, families and communities in South Lanarkshire. Positive outcomes include high quality learning experiences, high and improving levels of attainment and achievement at all stages, an improved school estate, and high proportions of positive and sustained destinations for school leavers;
 - Education Resources' rigorous self-evaluation and robust improvement planning has ensured continuous improvement in a time of reductions in resources;
 - very effective partnership working within Education Resources, for example, with community learning, and services such as educational psychology, which delivers support and is leading to very positive outcomes for children, young people and families;
 - impact of learning communities in delivering effective integrated provision for children and young people.

- innovative and successful approaches in engaging with groups of stakeholders and involving them in improving outcomes for all. These include families who do not readily become involved with education, and young people who have significant barriers to achievement arising from personal circumstances.

5. Next Steps

5.1. As a result of the work undertaken throughout the VSE process, South Lanarkshire Council and HMIe have agreed the following areas for further improvement. These reflect Education Resources' continuing commitment to improving outcomes for learners and families:-

- build on the learning community model as the key mechanism in providing consistently high quality, integrated working across establishments and services;
- identify and share best practice, for example, in supporting vulnerable young people, and ensure that establishments, learning communities and services are more consistent in using that best practice to support improvement; and
- ensure that the culture, approaches and impact of self-evaluation for improvement within all establishments and services are more consistent.

5.2. The formation of four action planning groups will take place over the course of the next few months and Education Resources' employees and partners are currently being approached to further support this important area of work.

5.3. All agreed areas for improvement have been incorporated in the Education Resources' Resource Plan. Progress in relation to the improvement actions will be included as part of the Resource Plan monitoring and reporting arrangements.

6. Employee Implications

6.1. None

7. Financial Implications

7.1. None

8. Other Implications

8.1. In developing the proposal for Education Resources to undertake a validated assisted self-evaluation, consideration has been given to the risks associated with the planning, organisation and outcomes of this new assessment process. These are not considered to be significant.

9. Equality Impact Assessment and Consultation Arrangements

9.1. This report does not present a new strategy, policy or plan and is, therefore, not subject to equality impact assessment.

9.2. Consultation and dialogue has taken place with establishments, services, trade unions and other stakeholders as Education Resources continues with validated self-evaluation.

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Executive Director (Education Resources)

23 August 2011

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

- Raise educational attainment for all
- Improve lives of vulnerable children, young people and adults
- Increase involvement in lifelong learning

Previous References

- Education Resources Committee - 31 August 2010
- Education Resources Committee - 01 February 2011

List of Background Papers

- Validated self-assessment - HMle

Contact for Further Information

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

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