

**Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru | National Assembly for Wales
Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg | Children, Young People and Education
Committee**

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Ymateb gan : Estyn

Response from : Estyn

**Further comments from Estyn outlining shortcomings in provision for
vulnerable learners in consortia and local authority reports**

Regional Consortia for School Improvement

In 2016, Estyn carried out inspections of the four regional consortia, supported by the Wales Audit Office. Estyn will be following up these inspection with monitoring visits to ascertain progress in 2017 and 2018.

A common shortcoming that emerged from the inspections is that although regional consortia may collect data on pupils' performance, they do not evaluate or analyse the performance of groups of pupils, including vulnerable pupils, in sufficient detail to improve outcomes for vulnerable learners.

Central South Consortium. Inspected in February 2016

The consortium has appropriately recognised the need to develop closer working between challenge advisers and inclusion staff to share information about vulnerable groups of pupils. Across the region there are examples of useful collaboration between these services in terms of joint meetings and visits to schools. A recently formed inclusion strategy group is providing valuable opportunities for managers in the five authorities to develop collaborative working and greater consistency across the region. However, the collation and analysis of data about vulnerable pupils is at an early stage of development.

North Wales Consortium. Inspected in April 2016

The recent improvement in the consortium's data collection, management and analysis has enabled challenge advisers to support and inform their work with schools in greater depth. However, senior leaders do not always use data at pupil level effectively enough to inform their judgements about strengths and areas for improvement in all performance outcomes, for example in analysing the outcomes of groups of pupils, including vulnerable pupils, at a regional level.

Network members have a good range of information about vulnerable learners in their own local authority. However, there is not yet a collective understanding of the achievement and progress of these pupils across the region.

EAS Consortium. Inspected in May 2016

The EAS takes good account of national and local priorities in its plan. For example, EAS is providing strong leadership for the Welsh Government's New Deal programme to develop education professionals at all levels and EAS has tailored its work well to support the context of each local authority. Targets for improvement in the plan do not take enough account of a wide range of performance indicators in order to fully measure progress in areas for improvement, such as the performance of vulnerable learners and more able learners.

There is a beneficial working relationship between principal challenge advisers and local authority lead officers, which enables information about vulnerable groups of pupils and those with additional learning needs to be shared with increasing effectiveness. Purposeful collaboration between these services has led to helpful sharing of practice across the region. In addition, special schools and pupil referral units across the region are now working together and there is a more co-ordinated approach to policy development. However, the collation and analysis of data about vulnerable pupils are not used at a strategic enough level across the region to inform improvement planning.

ERW Consortium. Inspected in June 2016

The consortium collects and analyses data about the current performance of schools effectively, including their performance against relevant comparators and benchmarks. However, evaluations lack sufficient detail about the performance of groups of pupils, including vulnerable pupils, at a regional level.

Local authorities

Estyn carried out inspections of local authority education services between 2010 and 2016. All local authorities received an inspection between 2010 -2013. As a result 15 out of the 22 authorities required follow-up in the form of a series of monitoring visits and, in some cases, re-inspection.

A common shortcoming from this inspection cycle was that, although some groups of vulnerable pupils appeared to make progress and attain at rates close to the whole cohort, in the local authorities exemplified below systems to robustly evaluate and analyse the performance of all their pupils were underdeveloped or absent.

Blaenau Gwent

In 2011 Blaenau Gwent had relatively small numbers of pupils who were from vulnerable groups. These pupils tended to perform inconsistently and their outcomes were better at key stage 2 and key stage 3 than at key stage 1 and key stage 4. The local authority undertook an annual analysis of the performance of pupils identified as being part of vulnerable groups. Yet the authority did not use this data fully to evaluate provision and informing future planning.

However Estyn's inspection of local authority education services in 2013, we reported that minority ethnic pupils generally perform better than their cohorts in the Foundation Phase, key stage 3 and key stage 4, However Gypsy and Traveller pupils and looked-after children generally perform less well than their cohorts.

Gwynedd

In Estyn's inspection of the local authority in 2013, we reported that different organisations and agencies use data well to plan the support provided to vulnerable young people, but they do not always monitor and evaluate these plans rigorously enough to measure their impact on individuals' wellbeing. Therefore they do not know whether these initiatives are effective.

Merthyr Tydfil

In Estyn's monitoring visit of November 2012, which followed on from the local authority being placed in special measures, we reported that pupils with additional learning needs generally make progress in achieving their individual targets. However, analysis is not consistently available for all groups, including vulnerable learners.

The local authority provides a broad range of targeted services to support vulnerable young people. However, it has not evaluated well enough the quality and impact of its services to promote social inclusion and wellbeing. It does not monitor and analyse data for vulnerable groups of learners appropriately. As a result, the authority cannot be sure that the needs of these groups of learners are met.

Monmouthshire

Estyn's inspection of the local authority in 2012 reported that the performance of particular groups of pupils, including vulnerable groups and those with additional learning needs, is variable and this analysis is not consistently available for all groups.

Newport

In Estyn's inspection report in 2011, we noted that although there are helpful targeted interventions aimed at learners from vulnerable groups that result in individuals receiving good support, staff do not always use data well enough to measure the impact of this support.

Pembrokeshire

When Estyn inspected the local authority in 2012, we reported that vulnerable groups and those with additional learning needs generally attain at their expected levels. However officers do evaluate and analyse the performance of all groups of learners consistently enough.

Torfaen

Estyn's inspection of the local authority in 2011 reported that the performance of groups of vulnerable pupils and those with additional learning needs (ALN) is mixed. Learners with English as an additional language perform well compared to national norms. The gap in performance between learners entitled to free school meals and other learners is wider than across Wales as a whole.

Support for parents of pupils with Autistic Spectrum Disorder and for parents from the Gypsy and Traveller community is particularly effective. However, the authority does not do enough to ensure that all parents are aware of the range of support and advice available to them.

Vale of Glamorgan

Estyn's inspection of the local authority found that partnership activity has progressed well and there are many examples of successful multi-agency projects. These include work with children and young people who offend and good post-14 learning provision that has improved attainment for vulnerable groups. This work is supported by 'Families First' preventative work. However, the authority does not always have a good enough strategic overview of how well this type of activity affects learning.

Wrexham

Estyn's inspection of the local authority in 2010 reported that although the authority has introduced a range of useful initiatives which support vulnerable learners well, officers do not evaluate outcomes enough to target provision effectively.