

EDUCATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 9th July 2015

Update Report and Changes to the LA Risk Register for the Local Authority Arrangements to Support School Improvement (LAASSI) Inspection Framework

Report by Director for Children's Services

Introduction

1. Education Scrutiny Committee was briefed in April 2015 about the inspection framework and implications for the local authority. A subsequent meeting took place between officers from the Education and Learning service and the chairman and vice chairman of the Education Scrutiny Committee to ensure that the forward plan covered the full range of scrutiny areas expected of an effective local authority.
2. This report provides an update of the preparatory actions taken by the officer LAASSI Forum and highlights changes to the risk assessment register. The Lead Cabinet Member for Education sits on the LAASSI Forum.

Preparatory Actions taken by Officers

3. A LAASSI Forum chaired by the Deputy Director for Education and Learning has been established which meets regularly and oversees the preparation and evidence collection. Its work and that of other officers since the April briefing has included :
 - a. The Autumn Term Position Statement has been re-configured to reflect a broader range of factors and help keep all schools under review, ensuring that Headteachers and Governing Bodies are alerted to any issues requiring improvement action in a timely manner.
 - b. Consultations with schools have taken place regarding the scope and content of a new service level agreement for provision of data for collaboratives of schools.
 - c. The content and scope of a new core offer regarding school performance data provided for schools has been developed.
 - d. All nine themes now have initial self-evaluation position statements (SEPS) drafted and a short term action plan has been produced.
 - e. A longer term action plan (1 year) is in the process of being scoped to run for the 2015-16 academic year.
 - f. A storyboard of key strengths and areas for development against each of the 4 reporting areas under the inspection framework was collated at the LAASSI workshop in early July. This will form an important overview for

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service staff, schools and members. It will be brought to the autumn term meeting of the Education Scrutiny Committee for consideration.

- g. The evidence and impact library - cross referenced to the inspection framework criteria - has been further refined and updated.
 - h. The Strategic Schools Partnership – Commissioning Model – has finished its formal consultation in early June. This has resulted in a rich (if diverse) pool of views and suggestions which are still being prioritised for action. Progress on the mapping of effective practice at school level across the county as a web based project has been made - this was an area of considerable interest from schools that responded to the consultation.
 - i. In response to the key priorities in the new Education Bill under the new government, Oxfordshire is :
 - Submitting bids for a number of the new 500 free schools available in areas of significant demand; and will combine the option of using these in the short term (until they fill to capacity) to meet the demand for the additional child care spaces required.
 - Reviewing areas with vulnerable small schools and proactively engaging in planning for structural collaboration to strengthen their position and outcomes, prior to any forced academisation intervention by the Secretary of State.
 - j. A combined post of Leadership Development and Governance has been successfully recruited to, thus addressing an historical gap in the county's provision for schools and strategy in the area of leadership development.
 - k. The Local Authority (LA) has ceased provision for Newly Qualified Teacher induction support with effect September 2015 and negotiated a commission with the Oxfordshire Teaching Schools Alliance (OTSA) that they become the preferred provider for the LA with termly accountability reporting sharing for wider school improvement intelligence sharing.
 - l. The Strategic Schools Partnership – Commissioning Board has now had two meetings. It has scoped its quality assurance arrangements and agreed a data monitoring format for commissioning packages of schools to school support. A commissioning fund of £160k has been identified from the existing Schools and Learning Service budget for supporting under-performing schools. An Operational sub-group is being developed to take forward the practical activity relating to School to School Support programmes for identified schools commissioned by the Board.
 - m. Plans are in hand to redefine the offer for Headteacher Induction support – again in partnership with the OTSA - which will apply from September 2015.
4. Nationally, a number of common successes for LAs have been identified. The most common areas of strength were rigorous and clear challenge, good school performance data available, effective work with system leaders and networks and effective support and challenge for governance.

5. Effective LAs have:
- Successfully negotiated an open and co-operative culture across all schools, focused on LA-wide outcomes.
 - Re-designed approaches to meet local needs and changing resources.
 - A strategy for encouraging stronger schools to support weaker schools which was transparent, consistently applied, and understood by elected members, headteachers and governors.
 - Developed collaborative partnerships of schools and groups of schools, and commissioned or brokered support from teaching schools, local alliances and trusts, and NLEs/LLES (National/Local Leaders of Education).
 - Good knowledge of their schools, had a good understanding of performance and contextual information, and ensured decision-making processes were tied to regular data collections.
 - Credible staff who succeeded in 'striking the right balance' between challenge and support.
 - Ensured intervention in underperforming schools swift and proportionate, including through 'in-house' approaches or use of statutory intervention powers.
 - Reported significant concerns about academies to DfE/RSC (Department for Education/Regional Schools Commissioner) promptly.
 - Taken robust action taken where governance was weak.
 - Provided support and training that was valued by schools and carefully linked to identified needs.
6. Oxfordshire has made positive inroads against all of these effectiveness indicators over the last year but it is important to note that in some areas the impact of this progress needs more time to be realised.

Risk Assessment

7. There are eight main triggers which form the basis of regional identification of LAs for school improvement inspections. These will change on a termly basis as schools are inspected and their outcomes may improve the LA's position - or alternatively increase the risk level. The table overleaf reflects Oxfordshire's position in April 2015.

Criteria/Triggers for Inspection April 2015	LA Evaluation (RAG)	Trend Direction	Comment
1. % CYP in Good/Outstanding Schools/Pupil Referral Units/ Alternative Provision is lower than nationally	Green	↑	<i>Broadly in line with at Primary. Above at Secondary</i>
2. Higher than average number of schools in an Ofsted category and/or where progress of schools in a category is not rapidly improving	Amber	↓	<i>Published figures (as of Dec 14) indicate broadly in line with at Primary and slightly below at Secondary. However the number of inadequate primary schools is increasing and will be in line with national average.</i>
3. % of Good/Outstanding schools is lower than national average	Amber	↑	<i>Better at secondary than Primary. % Outstanding schools lower than nationally.</i>
4. Attainment Levels are lower than national average and/or improvement trends are weak	Amber	Mixed ↔	<i>EYFSP/ KS1 in line with KS2 – relative position falling KS4 –above national</i>
5. Rates of Progress, relative to starting points, are lower than national average and/or improvement trends are weak	Green	↑	<i>KS 1-2 above national KS 2-4 strongly above national</i>
6. Pupils eligible for the Pupil Premium achieve less well than pupils not eligible for the PP nationally	Red	↓	<i>Pupil premium gaps at both KS2 and KS4 wider than national</i>
7. Qualifying complaints to Ofsted about schools in LA	Green	↔	
8. Where the SoS requires an inspection of LA SI functions	Amber	↔	

8. Trigger 6 has been in an area of on-going concern for the Council but the slight decline is Trigger 2 is concerning – the directional trend has been caused by two academies falling into an Ofsted category. For maintained schools there has been one school going into an ofsted category and one coming out.
9. **Trigger 2** is being addressed by new procedures for keeping all schools under review and school to school support packages, and the recently introduced focus on good and outstanding schools with a downwards trend.

10. **Trigger 6** is being addressed via the new Vulnerable Learners Strategy and actions planned for closing the gap between disadvantaged groups and their peers, and increased area partnership accountability for their collective vulnerable learners.

Conclusion

11. The county is on track in terms of its preparation for a potential Ofsted inspection. It is using the opportunities and inspection impetus to drive more coherent and integrated school improvement provision and outcomes through:
 - Engineering a range of practice changes between teams.
 - Generating additional service offers for schools that will make an impact on outcomes.
 - Strengthening its relationships with schools.

RECOMMENDATION

12. **The Committee is RECOMMENDED to note this Update Report and continue to ensure that their forward work plan ensures appropriate Scrutiny coverage of the nine inspection themes**

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