



Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot
Neath Port Talbot Council

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Education, Skills and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee
December 5th 2024

Report of the Head of Education Development – Christopher Millis

Matter for Information

Wards Affected:

All Wards

Report Title. School Improvement Team – Leadership Strategy

Purpose of the Report:

To monitor on the progress of the NPT Leadership Strategy

Executive Summary:

Overall, the local authority has a clear vision for school leadership. The support for leadership development in the local authority is strong and impacts on improved pupil outcomes and wellbeing successfully.

Background:

We recognise the scale of the challenge leaders face in improving provision and pupil progress as we seek to realise Curriculum for Wales and address our schools' needs in relation to the impact on young people of COVID-19. In addition, over the last few years, the senior leadership profile in NPT schools has changed significantly with many experienced headteachers reaching retirement. Currently 43% of NPT schools are led by a headteacher who has been in post for less than 3 years. Subsequently, our deputy headteacher profile is also very inexperienced.

Between 2013-2017 half of NPT schools received Estyn 'follow-up' after their inspection. Consequently, the local authority implemented a new leadership strategy in September 2017. This strategy strengthened support for leadership significantly with a particular emphasis on improving leaders' ability to self-evaluate and plan for improvement more effectively. Consequently, from September 2017 – July 2024 the percentage of schools requiring Estyn 'follow-up' fell from 50% to 20%. The local authority is focused on further strengthening leadership and ensuring all schools are led successfully through effective support for leadership development.

Strengths

The local authority provides comprehensive support for school leaders that impacts on improving provision and pupil progress successfully. This support includes but is not limited to:

- ESO's continue to model and coach effective self-evaluation alongside school leaders through listening to learners, learning walks, work scrutiny etc. Currently, we are placing a particular focus on strengthening secondary Middle Leaders' ability to self-evaluate, as this has been identified as a particular weakness. This modelling is focused for the most part on evaluating the impact of teaching on pupil progress.
- Access to the National Coaching and Mentoring programme. Currently over 150 leaders in NPT schools have accessed this programme to develop a coaching and mentoring culture in their schools.
- The NPT Future Leaders programme focuses on developing the leadership skills of inexperienced senior leaders. Participants are assigned an Education Support Officer (who have all completed the National Coaching and Mentoring Programme) to be their individual leadership coach and focus on providing bespoke support to develop participants' leadership skills.
- ESO's identify and provide bespoke support for leadership through the support visits to individual schools.
- Delivering ongoing support for leading Curriculum for Wales, including:
 - Creating a purpose led curriculum and developing a whole school vision
 - Developing a shared understanding of progression
 - Practical support for leaders to support curriculum design in line with the principles of Curriculum for Wales
- An extensive induction programme for new and acting headteachers including:
 - Support for developing effective school management systems including safeguarding, health & safety, working with governors, effective financial management etc.
 - Coaching support from Geoff Creswell focused on developing leadership skills.
- Access to the National Leadership Programmes for NPT staff, including: National Middle Leaders, National Senior Leaders, National New Headteacher Programme and the new 'Insights into Headship' programme.
- A comprehensive training programme is provided to governors to strengthen their ability to carry out their role effectively.

As a result of the leadership support we provide:

- Most leaders implement strong systems to identify the school's strengths and areas for improvement. Consequently, priorities in the school development plan are appropriate, precise and derive directly from the evidence gathered during the self-evaluation process.
- Most leaders have a track record in improving pupil progress and wellbeing successfully.
- Most school leaders ensure staff access a beneficial range of professional learning including enquiry, coaching and school to school collaboration that link well to the school's strategic priorities and impact successfully on improving provision and pupil progress.
- Most school leaders establish an effective safeguarding culture within their schools.
- Most school leaders have established a clear and coherent vision focused on enabling all learners to realise the four purposes.
- Most leaders continue to construct and evolve their school's curriculum, in line with the Curriculum for Wales Framework, and invest in the enquiry and pedagogical skills of their teachers.

- Most schools have a strong, evidence-based Pupil Development Statement for raising the achievement of its pupils eligible for free school meals (eFSM). Many leaders use the pupil development grant well to support the wellbeing and progress of vulnerable learners.
- Most leaders ensure the school environment supports learners' and practitioners' well-being successfully.
- Many school leaders are building better relationships between schools and families and communities, to support and promote educational achievement.

Areas for development

- We need to continually work with around half of the secondary leaders to articulate a curriculum that is different and compliant with the aims and aspirations of the Curriculum for Wales.
- We need to continue to strengthen middle leaders' (secondary) ability to self-evaluate. In particular, their ability to evaluate teaching and its impact on pupil progress.
- We need to continue to strengthen leaders' ability to evolve their curriculum and teaching in pursuit of the four purposes and the principles of Curriculum for Wales.
- We need to continue to strengthen governors' awareness of their role in school improvement and their ability to support and challenge school leaders in line with the expectations outlined in the new Framework for Evaluation, Improvement and Accountability Guidance 2024.

Financial Impacts:

All NPT schools receive funding for professional learning to strengthen leadership development. The Education Support Officers work with schools and report to Welsh government to ensure good value for money.

Integrated Impact Assessment:

There is no requirement to undertake an Integrated Impact Assessment as this report is for monitoring purposes.

Valleys Communities Impacts:

No implications as this includes all schools

Workforce Impacts:

No implications

Legal Impacts:

There are no legal impacts as this report is for monitoring purposes.

Consultation:

There is no requirement for external consultation on this item as this report is for monitoring purposes.

Recommendations:

No recommendations as this is a report for monitoring purposes only.

Reason for Proposed Decision:

No decision required

Implementation of Decision:

N/A

Appendices:

None

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