

REPORT TO: Education Committee

MEETING DATE: 12 March 2019

BY: Depute Chief Executive (Resources and People Services)

SUBJECT: Educational Psychology Service Validated Self Evaluation:
Follow-through Evaluation by Education Scotland

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To report to Committee on the Educational Psychology Service Validated Self Valuation follow-through evaluation by Education Scotland.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to:
- i. Note the key strengths and next steps as outlined by Education Scotland following their follow-through evaluation visit to the Educational Psychology Service (Appendix 1).
 - ii. Note the action taken by Educational Psychology Service to address the next step identified by Education Scotland.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Validated self-evaluation (VSE) is an evaluative activity that supports and challenges the work of Educational Psychology Services (EPS) by working collaboratively with inspectors from Education Scotland to identify strengths and areas for improvement.
- 3.2 An initial visit in March 2016 found a number of key strengths:
- Good relationships between Educational Psychologist's and educational establishments that were highly valued by school staff.
 - Building capacity in staff and partners through bespoke training and targeted follow up resulting in improved outcomes for children and young people in the classroom.

- Offering objective and reflective input to multi-agency teams resulting in improved planning, decision making and outcomes for Looked after Children and young people.
 - Highly valued research skills and knowledge used effectively to build capacity and develop training packages.
- 3.3 The following areas for improvement were identified:
- Extend the role of the Educational Psychology Service beyond the traditional Additional Support Needs population and resource allocation process.
 - In partnership with the authority, align service delivery more fully and appropriately with a GIRFEC approach.
 - Initiate dialogue with the newly appointed Head of Education to review the balance of service delivery, releasing time for the Educational Psychology Service to utilise its psychological knowledge and expertise to make a stronger strategic contribution to local and national policy initiatives and strategic priorities.
 - Ensure that the Educational Psychology Service builds on opportunities to support the authority's vision, values and aims.
- 3.4. A follow-through visit took place in January 2018 to review progress and to further identify the areas of service delivery that should be prioritised to secure continuous improvement (Appendix 1).
- 3.5 The key strengths identified were:
- Trusting relationships between schools and their link Educational Psychologist. Their understanding of the school context increased the effectiveness of embedding practice, for instance, following training.
 - Increased capacity across the team to support key strategic priorities and an increased consistency of practice across the Service.
 - Learning and development work within schools and across the Authority in a range of topics is highly valued and more aligned to strategic priorities of the Local Authority and Education Service. Training was valued, particularly when knowledge of the school is used to create an individually tailored programme. This includes embedding the work through further development within the school or partner agencies to build capacity.
 - The capacity to use our unique psychological skills and knowledge to build a holistic, contextualised picture of the children/ young person and then distil the information down to identify how an individual's needs can be met. All partners find this contribution helpful and evidence of increased capacity to take forward this aspect of service delivery.
 - The collaborative approach including using the "Plan, Do, Review" framework was valued by schools and partner agencies. It supported partners to think in a reflective and focused manner and helped create more consistency of practice.
- 3.6 The following areas for improvement were identified:

- Consider the use of data to determine whether EPS involvement has improved outcomes in the short, medium and longer term for children and young people. This includes better use of data already gathered by the Authority and closer collaboration with Quality Improvement Officers. Embedding reflective practice within our Request for Assistance process and Service Level Agreement with schools are further steps in this endeavour.
- Ensuring positive Mental Health and Wellbeing outcomes for children and young people across the Authority by continuing to deliver Mental Health First Aid training to school staff and contributing to the development of the Health and Wellbeing curriculum.
- Increasing our research function by considering the team's role in supporting practitioner enquiry.

3.7 Action taken to address the next steps include:

- Closer collaboration and liaison with the Quality Improvement Officers through the school review process.
- Service self-evaluation now takes into account existing data regarding the outcomes for children and young people and initial plans are in place to use this data to make decisions regarding the focus of our future service delivery.
- Changes have been made to the Request for Assistance and Service Level Agreement forms to more clearly capture data and evidence on the impact on outcomes of involvement with the Service.
- Every member of the team are trained in Scottish Mental Health First Aid. This training has been and continues to be offered to all school staff and embedded within our work.
- A member of the team has been significantly involved in the East Lothian Council Mental Health Strategy and will be a member of the steering group that will be set up. The Educational Psychology Service is key to taking forward the actions set out in the strategy.
- In recognition of the importance of the Educational Psychology Service role in early intervention, a two year development post focusing on the Early Years has been created.

3.8 Education Scotland were satisfied with progress made from the initial visit and were confident in the capacity of the Service to make continuous improvement under the leadership of the Principal Educational Psychologist and the Head of Education. No further scrutiny activity is planned.

4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There are no policy implications associated with this report.

5 INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 5.1 The subject of this report does not affect the wellbeing of the community or have a significant impact on equality, the environment or economy.

6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Financial - None
6.2 Personnel - None
6.3 Other - None

7 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 7.1 Appendix 1 – East Lothian Educational Psychology Service Validated Self-Evaluation Follow-through Report (May 2018).

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DATE	12 February 2019



East Lothian Educational Psychology Service

Validated Self-Evaluation

Follow up Report (May 2018)

Validated self-evaluation (VSE) is an evaluative activity that supports and challenges the work of Educational Psychology Services (EPS) by working collaboratively with inspectors from Education Scotland to identify strengths and areas for improvement.

An initial visit in March 2016 found the following key strengths:

- Good relationships between Educational Psychologist's and educational establishments that were highly valued by school staff.
- Building capacity in staff and partners through bespoke training and targeted follow up resulting in improved outcomes for children and young people in the classroom.
- Offering objective and reflective input to multi-agency teams resulting in improved planning, decision making and outcomes for LAC and young people.
- Highly valued research skills and knowledge used effectively to build capacity and develop training packages.

The following areas for improvement were identified:

- Extend the role of the Educational Psychology Service beyond the traditional ASN population and resource allocation process.
- In partnership with the authority, align service delivery more fully and appropriately with a GIRFEC approach.
- Initiate dialogue with the newly appointed Head of Education to review the balance of service delivery, releasing time for the Educational Psychology Service to utilise its psychological knowledge and expertise to make a stronger strategic contribution to local and national policy initiatives and strategic priorities.
- Ensure that the Educational Psychology Service builds on opportunities to support the authority's vision, values and aims.

A follow up visit took place in January 2018 to review progress and to further identify the areas of service delivery that should be prioritised to secure continuous improvement.

The council appointed a new permanent Head of Education in December 2016, with the new post-holder previously occupying the post on secondment from Education Scotland since March 2016. The new Head of Education has a clear vision of strengths and areas for improvement across the education sector in East Lothian and has developed an ambitious change agenda. This has been a key factor that has facilitated significant improvement for the Educational Psychology Service across all areas identified by the initial VSE.

The Head of Education and the newly formed senior management team, including the Principal Educational Psychologist, had realigned the vision, values and aims of the Education service and within this the role of the Educational Psychology Service. Service priorities were clearly linked to the Education Service Improvement Plan and the Children's Strategic Partnership plan and clear synergy was evident across all planning documents. This has provided clarity for the Educational Psychology Service and has allowed greater involvement in strategic initiatives and priorities.

An external review of ASN provision within the Authority facilitated the Educational Psychology Service to realign their role in relation to resource allocation. This has increased capacity to support school improvement and improve outcomes for children and young people. Evidence and feedback from school staff demonstrated an increased capacity to respond to children and young people's additional support needs with recommendations providing strategies and curricular adaptations that lead to improved outcomes.

A strategic focus on developing positive relationship approaches and inclusive practice across the Authority had allowed the Educational Psychology Service to promote evidence based practice and Implementation Science to support school improvement (e.g. Nurture Groups, Restorative Approaches). There was a clearer focus on how service delivery linked to whole school improvement. The focus on a smaller number of approaches and interventions has allowed the Service to provide greater depth of knowledge and understanding and a greater consistency across the team. School staff valued the links the Educational Psychologist could make between the school improvement activities and casework thereby supporting them to embed practice via the on-going role in the school.

A range of evidence was available to demonstrate the role of the Service in building capacity across schools to understand the needs of young people with attachment difficulties and the strategies and supports needed to settle them to learn. Clear evidence of impact included increased inclusion, children more settled, improved staff well-being and lower exclusions.

Key Strengths:

- Trusting relationships between schools and their link Educational Psychologist. Their understanding of the school context increased the effectiveness of embedding practice, for instance, following training.
- Increased capacity across the team to support key strategic priorities and an increased consistency of practice across the Service.
- Learning and development work within schools and across the Authority in a range of topics is highly valued and more aligned to strategic priorities of the Local Authority and Education Service. Training was valued, particularly when knowledge of the school is used to create an

individually tailored programme. This includes embedding the work through further development within the school or partner agencies to build capacity.

- The capacity to use our unique psychological skills and knowledge to build a holistic, contextualised picture of the children/ young person and then distil the information down to identify how an individual's needs can be met. All partners find this contribution helpful and evidence of increased capacity to take forward this aspect of service delivery.
- The collaborative approach including using the "Plan, Do, Review" framework was valued by schools and partner agencies. It supported partners to think in a reflective and focused manner and helped create more consistency of practice.

Next steps:

- Consider the use of data to determine whether EPS involvement has improved outcomes in the short, medium and longer term for children and young people. This includes better use of data already gathered by the Authority and closer collaboration with Quality Improvement Officers. Embedding reflective practice within our Request for Assistance process and Service Level Agreement with schools are further steps in this endeavour.
- Ensuring positive Mental Health and Wellbeing outcomes for children and young people across the Authority by continuing to deliver Mental Health First Aid training to school staff and contributing to the development of the Health and Wellbeing curriculum.
- Increasing our research function by considering the team's role in supporting practitioner enquiry.
- In recognition of the importance of the EPS role in early intervention, a two year development post focusing on the Early Years has been created.

Education Scotland were satisfied with progress made from the initial visit and were confident in the capacity of the Service to make continuous improvement under the leadership of the Principal Educational Psychologist and the Head of Education. No further scrutiny activity is planned.

Dr Lynne Binnie

Principal Educational Psychologist

May 2018