

Psychological Services HMIE Inspection Report (Follow-up published February 2011) and current developments.

Education Children and Families Committee

21 June 2011

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This report summarises the progress made by Psychological Services from December 2009 when they were first inspected to November 2010 when HM Inspectors of Education undertook a follow-up inspection. The report then focuses on the most recent developments within the service. Reference is made to the key strengths of the service and to its ongoing improvement programme designed to ensure the standard of service delivered to children, parents and schools remains strong for the foreseeable future. Reference is also made to recommendations made by HMIE for the authority to provide more support and challenge to the service.

2. Main Report

Background

- 2.1 Within its functions as an education authority the Council has a statutory duty to provide a psychological service as part of its provision for additional support needs. Educational Psychologists (EPs) provide a range of services to children and young people, to their parents and to schools. The service operates in every educational establishment within the authority, providing assessment and advice on additional support needs. The service also provides consultancy, training and research on additional support needs and related concerns to establishments and to the education authority itself.
- 2.2 Much of the work of the service is carried out directly with children, young people, their parents and teachers. Under the terms of the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 education authorities are required to undertake assessment of additional support needs including psychological assessment. The Act gives parents the right to request assessments and since the introduction of the new legislation in 2005; new referrals to Psychological Services have risen from 310 in 2004/05 to 450 for 2009/10. The number of new referrals is currently 360 with one term left in the 2010/11 session.

- 2.3 The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act was amended in 2009 and new provisions came into force in November 2010. The new Act further extends parents' rights to request an assessment of their children at any time. It also introduces new obligations for the assessment of the additional support needs of Looked After Children. These amendments to legislation are likely to lead to a significant increase in the demand for and referrals to Psychological Services in 2010 -11 and beyond.

The Follow-Up Inspection

- 2.4 The follow-up inspection report addresses four key areas where inspectors were interested in noting the service's progress towards meeting the main points for action. The inspection report confirms that encouraging progress has been made across these action points.

2.4.1 *Through leadership at all levels and in partnership with key stakeholders develop a clear direction for the service*

Service managers have ensured that psychologists contribute fully to service development. A shared vision has been produced entitled *Applying Psychology, Making a Difference*. The Team Plan has strengthened the shared ownership and common purpose within the service. The plan outlines the service's contribution to the objectives of the authority [Children's Services Priorities 1-7, Strategic Objectives 1-7 and Additional Support for Learning priorities 1-3]. The plan also demonstrates the service's work in achieving the wider national objectives of Getting It Right For Every Child and the Curriculum for Excellence. The service uses its re-designed end of year reviews/Planning with Schools process to consult with schools on what has been achieved, what progress has been made with ongoing developments over the session and what areas are seen as priorities for the forthcoming session. The service consults with pupils through its Pupil Participation Group. The service has a very effective stakeholder's group which contributes significantly to service development and direction.

2.4.2 *Plan for continuous improvement to allow the measure of performance over time*

HMle found that the service has made significant progress in planning for continuous improvement. Psychologists understand the planning process and how it relates to positive differences in the lives of children and young people. Planning is carried out in conjunction with corporate planning staff within the authority. The Team Plan is reviewed and validated by corporate planning services. The Team Plan enables the measurement of performance over time.

2.4.3 *Develop challenge within the service to improve consistency of practice*

Service managers have taken steps to ensure appropriate systems for challenge are in place. The Professional Review and Development (PRD) process is conducted twice a year linking individual Continuing Professional Development to the Team Plan and to improvements for service users. The service has also taken steps to ensure equity of provision across all the establishments within the authority through our Service Guide for Schools. For example, recently in James

Gillespie's Primary School the school psychologist was able to recruit a colleague from the service to deliver input to all staff on interpreting the data from the Pupil Wellbeing Questionnaire. This input was evaluated positively and is a model for future work that can be delivered to interested schools. In this way we are able to deliver a more consistent service across Edinburgh and to increase the service we can provide to all of the establishments we work in.

Encouraging progress is noted in the way the service has received support and challenge from senior officers within the authority with respect to planning and standards and quality reporting. The evaluative component of these support and challenge processes is being made more stringent. This includes regular performance reporting to Heads of Services (see 2.5 for details).

2.4.4 Develop processes of self-evaluation with all staff to monitor performance and improve outcomes for children and young people

Evaluation processes are beginning to be effective in monitoring staff performance. The Research and Evaluation Group review by the service managers and performance data. This information is used to guide the development of the service.

Progress since the Follow-Up Inspection

2.5 Psychological Services operate especially strongly in their direct work with children and the large number of parents and pupils who respond to surveys and questionnaires rates young people, parents, schools and partner services and psychologists' work very positively. In the period since the HMIE inspection for example pupil feedback questionnaires indicate an overall effectiveness rating from pupils of 9 out of 10. Similarly, just over 90% of parental returns indicated that the service was effective in meeting the needs of their children.

In addition the review of the Team Plan in February 2011 shows significant progress in meeting the relevant objectives of the authority. Certain aspects of the ongoing work of the service are of particular note:-

- The service's research into nursery deferrals has greatly assisted the reduction in nursery deferrals in Edinburgh, bringing the authority more in line with the rest of Scotland and ensuring value for money in the early years' sector.
- The service has led on prioritisation in all establishments of the Additional Support Needs that Looked After Children are now assumed to have. A database is managed by the service for LAC within Edinburgh and for the considerable number of children looked after outwith Edinburgh. The service is working to ensure that these children have their needs met and that the authority is again receiving best value for money given its expenditure.
- The service is a major contributor to the authority's Integrated Literacy Strategy through our work in all establishments and our research and policy work for the Literacy Strategy Board. Information collected as part of this work is showing improvement in attainment data for targeted groups in various schools e.g. those establishments in Positive Action Areas.
- The service's research and intervention in Literacy and Looked After

Children has led to significant improvement in attainment for this vulnerable cohort of the poorest performing pupils in the Primary 3 and Primary 5 age range targeted by the study. This work is now being used to inform the design of a literacy intervention for Looked After Children further information about this will be reported to the September Committee.

- The service is leading the roll out of parental training programmes using the Teen Triple P (Positive Parenting Programme) and PEEP (Peers Early Education Partnership) early years materials. The service is contributing to the Growing Confidence initiative through the roll out of the Seasons for Growth bereavement and loss group work with children. In all these well evaluated initiatives the service delivers interventions and is involved in the training of trainers.
 - The service continues to support the roll out of the re-launched Getting It Right For Every Child in all establishments within the authority through the use of Solution Focussed Pupil Support Groups involving pupils and parents in decision making and also in acting as a first point of information and support for all head teachers.
 - The service's work in the special school sector on a model to support school improvement 'Team Around the School' the further development of this partnership working remains a priority.
 - The service continues to lead nationally in conjunction with the [Royal Caledonian Schools Trust](#) which supports the children of parents who serve or have served, in the armed forces and the Scottish Government in meeting the specific needs of Armed Forces families.
- 2.6 At the time of the follow-up inspection the Principal Psychologist was working in an acting capacity following the retirement of the previous Principal Psychologist. After a national recruitment exercise the Acting Principal Psychologist has now been appointed to a substantive position.
- 2.7 Through support and challenge from the Service Stakeholder Group the service has re-configured its self-evaluation procedures and this has led to a greater understanding within the service of the validated self-evaluation process and how this can be used to demonstrate progress in meeting the needs of children and young people. Regular meetings are scheduled between service managers and senior officers. This has increased the rigour of the support and challenge given to the service.
- 2.8 The self-evaluation process (evaluation data, PRD, Team Plan Standards and Quality Report) is now more strongly connected to improved outcomes for children and young people. A policy is being created within the service to link improvement planning, service quality management and the national quality improvement framework to actual positive differences for children and young people. Information produced through this process has been used to inform and improve the rigour of the service's Standards and Quality Reports.
- 2.9 The service management remains committed to developing a challenging, caring and supportive environment that results in staff reporting positively about working in the service.

3 Conclusions

- 3.1 Psychological Services have shown significant improvements in performance since 2009. The service has increased the consistency of its work across the schools and establishments of Edinburgh. The service has through planning, evaluation and review of the work of all psychologists maintained and in some specific areas increased the input it has delivered to its stakeholders.

On current performance these improvements will be sustained in the foreseeable future. Psychological Services plays a critical role in the authority's capacity to meet statutory requirements and HMIE will want to be assured that improvements in leadership and management are well established with the capacity for sustained improvements in performance. Inspectors are due to return to undertake further follow-up work in November 2011 to ensure that the service's own evaluations are validated. In light of this a further progress report will be submitted to the Committee in 2011/12.

- 3.2 Coincidentally, over the period of the inspection process the authority initiated a wider self-evaluation of its provision for Additional Support Needs. The findings of HMIE are consistent with the outcomes of this wider self-evaluation exercise. Both processes highlight effective partnership working as a key priority for continuing improvement in provision for learners with additional support needs. This is being taken forward within the service improvement plan providing a framework for Psychological Services to work in effective partnerships with establishments, other ASL services and the Quality Improvement Team to bring about sustainable improvement in meeting learners' needs and provision for additional support needs.

4 Financial Implications

- 4.1 There are no financial implications.

5. Environmental Impact

- 5.1 There are no new environmental implications arising from the inspection and the continuous improvement process.

6. Recommendations

- 6.1 Committee is asked to:

- a) Note the outcome of the follow-up inspections and the ongoing improvement programme subsequent to inspection which addresses the identified areas for development.=
- b) Receive a further progress report in 2011/12

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Appendices None

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Wards affected All

Single Outcome Agreement

Background Papers HMIE Inspection Report December 2009
 HMIE Follow-through Report February 2011