

VALIDATED SELF-EVALUATION: EDUCATION

1.0 SUMMARY

1.1 HM Inspectors (Education Scotland) were invited by Argyll and Bute Council to carry out a Validated Self Evaluation (VSE) of its Education Services. The VSE took place between October 2012 and February 2013. The VSE concluded with a report which was published by Education Scotland on 19 February 2013.

1.2 **Organisation of VSE process** – The VSE built on ongoing self-evaluation taking place within the Education Service and four themes were identified for focused attention during the process. Each theme was evaluated by a group of staff from the Education Service. The groups were led by Senior Managers of the service who co-ordinated activities throughout the VSE and reported on the findings for their theme.

During the VSE, members of each group undertook a variety of activities to evaluate their theme. These included:

- reviewing relevant documentation;
- visiting a sample of establishments across the Council area to observe practice and interview staff and children and young people;
- interviewing a range of stakeholders and senior officers.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 It is recommended the PRS Committee notes the findings from the validated self-evaluation report from Education Scotland and the content of the Standards and Quality Report 2011/12.

3.0 DETAIL

3.1 **VSE Themes** – The VSE Process required the Education Service to select a small number of themes for close scrutiny. The Education Service chose to look closely at a number of outcomes for children and young people. Four themes were selected for evaluation. These were:

- Positive Starts
- Literacy
- Opportunities for All
- School Review

- 3.2 **Initial Engagement** - The Area Lead Officer (ALO), HMI Lead Facilitator (LF) and the Head of Education in Argyll & Bute Council discussed and agreed the shape of the VSE. Education Scotland then worked with the Authority to brief staff and key stakeholders and undertook preparatory work for the next phases.
- 3.3 **Working Together on Self-Evaluation – 1st October 2012** – Education Scotland provided a team to work alongside the EA staff with the purpose of improving the quality of the Education Authority’s self-evaluation.
- 3.4 **Stocktaking** –Argyll and Bute Council and Education Scotland discussed the self-evaluation process and the self-evaluation outcomes. The next stage of activity was agreed on the basis of the findings.
- 3.5 **Education Scotland and the Education Service working together on Matters Arising** – Education Scotland worked with the authority to validate the outcomes of self-evaluation undertaking further appropriate evaluation activities as necessary.
- 3.6 From all themes the Service and HMIs have jointly identified the following high level strengths.
- The shared commitment across the Education Service and its partners to strengthening approaches to self-evaluation and to applying these to drive improvements.
 - High levels of professionalism, knowledge and skill amongst senior managers and staff.
 - Senior managers’ creative and responsive approach to finding solutions to meet corporate objectives and identified needs.
 - Examples of significant improvements in outcomes, including improvements in the number of young people achieving positive post-school destinations.
 - Examples of improvements in arrangements for the delivery of services, for example in early years, as a result of established self-evaluation processes.
 - The engagement of elected members and senior managers in developing a shared vision for education in Argyll and Bute.

4.0 CONCLUSION

- 4.1 The attached report was written by Education Scotland and is complemented by the Education Service’s own self-evaluation documents. It was placed on both the Education Scotland web-site and the Argyll and Bute Council’s website on the date of publication. The VSE exercise has produced a very positive outcome for Argyll and Bute Council and the process of self evaluation and engagement with Education Scotland will deliver long term benefits for this Education Service.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Policy – within existing policy
- 5.2 Financial – None

- 5.3 Legal – In line with Standards in Schools Act (2000)
- 5.4 HR – None
- 5.5 Equalities – within existing equalities
- 5.6 Risk – The positive nature of the VSE Report will assist with managing the Council's reputational risk.
- 5.7 Customer Service - none

6.0 APPENDICES

- 6.1 VSE Report
- 6.2 Standards and Quality in Argyll and Bute Schools 2011/12

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24 May 2013

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