
Report To:	Education & Lifelong Learning Committee	Date: 02 November 2010
Report By:	Corporate Director Education & Communities	Report No: EDUC68/10/AH
Contact Officer:	Albert Henderson	Contact No: 01475 712828
Subject:	HMIe Report on the Inverclyde Psychological Service	

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform the Education & Lifelong Learning Committee of an HMIe report on the Inverclyde Council Psychological Service.

2.0 SUMMARY

- 2.1 The report was published on 28 September 2010. Inverclyde Education Psychology Service has received a very good report from HMIe. Members should note that the evaluation of service performance reflects well on the service with six quality indicators evaluated as 'very good'.

- 2.2 The following key strengths were highlighted:

- the service had developed strong leadership with the support of the authority
- it had made a promising start in re-designing the service to improve impact on service users
- the service had established strong and trusting relationships with parents/carers, children and young people
- it had started the process of developing a robust operational planning framework linked to corporate objectives

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Education & Lifelong Learning Committee note the HMIe report on the Inverclyde Education Psychology Service.

Albert Henderson
Corporate Director Education & Communities

4.0 BACKGROUND

4.1 The Inverclyde Education Psychology Service was inspected by Her Majesty's Inspectors of Education (HMIe) in April and June 2010. The inspection covered key aspects of the work of the service at all stages, identified key strengths and main points for action using the following six-point scale:

Excellent	-	outstanding, sector leading
Very Good	-	major strengths
Good	-	important strengths with some areas for improvement
Satisfactory	-	strengths just outweigh weaknesses
Weak	-	important weaknesses
Unsatisfactory	-	major weaknesses

4.2 The inspection of Inverclyde educational psychology provision was undertaken on behalf of stakeholders. The evaluation of EPS was conducted within a framework of quality indicators which embody the Government's policy on Best Value.

4.3 In assessing the indicators of quality, HMIe found three aspects of the work of the service to be 'satisfactory', ten to be 'good' and six to be 'very good'. The evaluations of the indicators of quality can be found on page 6 of the appended report.

4.4 The report on the Inverclyde Education Psychology Service was published on 28 September 2010 and is attached as an appendix to this report. It has been issued to staff, parents, local elected members and the Convener and Vice-Convener for Education & Lifelong Learning.

4.5 The reports lists four main points for action:

- take steps to develop a more universal approach to its work;
- put in place a robust self-evaluation framework to ensure continuous improvement and consistency of practice;
- become more responsive to the needs of the local community by better identifying the areas where educational psychology can be most effective; and
- build staff capacity to enable them to play a full part in the delivery of the full range of EPS to the local and wider community

4.6 The service has devised an action plan and the authority will work closely with the service to ensure its continued progress.

**Summary of evaluation of the
educational psychology service**



Definition of terms used in this report.

HM Inspectors use published criteria when making evaluations. They are published as quality indicators which relate evaluations to six levels. HMIE began using a six-point scale to make evaluations in August 2005. The table below shows how the six-point scale relates to the four-point scale that we used previously.

Old level	New level	Description
Very good	Excellent	Outstanding, sector leading
	Very good	Major strengths
Good	Good	Important strengths with some areas for improvement
	Satisfactory	Strengths just outweigh weaknesses
Fair	Weak	Important weaknesses
Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Major weaknesses

This report also uses the following words to describe numbers and proportions:

almost all	over 90%
most	75-90%
majority	50-74%
less than half	15-49%
few	up to 15%

Contents	Page
1. The aims, nature and scope of the inspection	1
2. What key outcomes has the service achieved?	1
3. How well does the service meet the needs of its stakeholders?	2
4. How good is the service's delivery of key processes?	3
5. How good is the service's management?	3
6. How good is leadership?	4
Appendix 1 - Quality indicators	6

1. The aims, nature and scope of the inspection

Recommendation 20 of the *Review of Provision of Educational Psychology Services in Scotland (2002)* charged HM Inspectorate of Education (HMIE), on behalf of the Scottish Ministers, to provide an external evaluation of the effectiveness of the Educational Psychology Service (EPS) in improving the impact and outcomes for children, young people and families.

The inspection of Inverclyde educational psychology provision was undertaken on behalf of stakeholders. The evaluation of EPS was conducted within a framework of quality indicators which embody the Government's policy on Best Value.

This web-based report should be read alongside other strategic inspections of Inverclyde Council which sets out the wider context in which EPS are delivered.

The Educational Psychology Service

The Inverclyde Council EPS was based in Port Glasgow. At the time of the inspection there were 8.9 full-time equivalent (FTE) educational psychologists (EPs), which included one principal educational psychologist (PEP), one depute principal educational psychologist (DEP) and 0.9 senior educational psychologist. A further DPEP had been appointed but had not taken up post at the time of the inspection. There were 2.5 FTE clerical staff. The senior management team of the EPS had been very recently appointed. The PEP had been a DPEP in Inverclyde EPS from February 2009 to August 2009, and was then appointed to PEP. The DPEP joined the service in January 2010.

2. What key outcomes has the service achieved?

The EPS had shown a good level of success in supporting the authority in achieving its objectives. For example, supporting schools in the assessment of dyslexia, and in working collaboratively to develop an improved strategy for early year's services. More recently they had been involved in working groups to support the authority in the strategic and operational implementation of *Curriculum for Excellence*. Collaboration with a few other partners such as 'Choose Life' had also resulted in positive outcomes for targeted groups of young people. There were some good examples where the service had shown improvements by working through others to achieve positive outcomes. For example, by prioritising work with looked after and looked after and accommodated children (LAAC), they demonstrated improvements in multi-agency working resulting in improved attainment. Positive outcomes had also been demonstrated in relation to a number of specific interventions. For example, Mellow Parenting and Applied Suicide Intervention Skills (ASIST). The service now needs to plan for sustainability so that they can demonstrate improvements over time and long term outcomes for all children and young people.

All EPs across the service had very good knowledge and understanding of their statutory requirements. The service effectively complied with appropriate guidance and legislation which was well embedded in individual practice and service documentation.

The service had in place robust financial procedures for monitoring and regulating the budget which took effective account of service and authority priorities.

3. How well does the service meet the needs of its stakeholders?

Children and young people felt that EPs had enabled them to contribute effectively to decisions concerning their lives. There was strong evidence of EPs making a positive impact on vulnerable groups of children and young people at the individual case level and at the level of specific groups. For example, LAAC had been given very valuable help to address attachment, trauma and recovery issues which had resulted in a reduction in experiences of crisis and emergency psychiatric admissions. Children and young people were well supported at transitions, particularly at the stage of making future career choices. Almost all parents and carers who had contact with EPs were highly satisfied with the service they received. They found that EPs listened to them, understood and respected them. They gave them valuable assistance to help them to help their children's learning and development. Some schools and the local community were receiving helpful evidence-based support from EPs in their work to support the learning, development and wellbeing of young people. In the best examples, the support provided was early enough to stop difficulties becoming more serious. There was a need to be more explicit about the roles and remits of EPs particularly in relation to their contribution at the systemic level. They also needed to extend the services provided to educational establishments to build capacity and ensure greater impact and consistency of practice for all children and young people. The service had made some good contributions to the wider community of educational psychology. They had learned from and adapted new approaches to intervention. Some of this work had been presented to the National Conference for Educational Psychologists, and in a poster presentation at a European Symposium. The service now needs to ensure that all stakeholders benefit from the range of innovative practice. They also need to create their own approaches and share these with others through, for example, peer reviewed articles, and other forms of publication.

EPS staff were now becoming more confident about their role within the service. They made more effective contributions to the service's self-evaluation and this had resulted in a clearer view of where the service needed to improve. Most staff were highly motivated to improve services and were keen to be involved in more authority working groups. All staff now had annual reviews and were engaged in service planning through regular staff meetings. Almost all staff felt that they had very good opportunities for professional development which supported them to improve their practice. Greater challenge of individual and service practices was beginning to impact positively on service delivery. The service should build on these emerging strengths to ensure greater teamwork, consistency of practice and further engagement of staff in the systems and process used to support continuous improvement.

4. How good is the service's delivery of key process?

The service offered effective service delivery across the majority of the core functions. Work at the individual case level was good, with sound advice and consultation provided for children, young people and their families. The service also offered consultation and advice to educational establishments, partner agencies and the education authority (EA) through membership of authority strategy groups. A wider range of assessment approaches were being developed and reviewed with a greater emphasis on collaborative forms of assessment. These approaches needed to be shared with stakeholders to ensure better understanding of the EPs approach to assessment. The service also needed to ensure that new approaches were being applied consistently and appropriately. The service delivered a range of high quality interventions to promote attainment, achievement and health and wellbeing in response to the identified needs of individual children, young people and their families. For example; Interventions Around Attachment, Solution Oriented Approaches, Restorative Practices, bereavement support work, suicide prevention and parenting programmes. Almost all interventions were helpfully designed to develop the capacities of *Curriculum for Excellence*. Training and professional development supported the delivery of the service's interventions. The interventions offered by the service now need to be better planned and built into improvement plans for establishments and other community providers. Almost all of the service's interventions and training were well-evaluated and the feedback used to inform future practice. The service should now develop its research role to ensure that it is well embedded, supports continuous improvement for its major stakeholders, and is cost effective.

5. How good is the service's management?

The service had recently produced an appropriate range of policies and procedures covering service delivery, key processes, professional codes, inclusion and equality, data management and induction. The policies reflected the authority and EPS vision and the appropriate legislative context. Authority priorities for improvement were embedded in the EPS policy framework. The service should put in place arrangements to monitor the implementation of policies and continue to implement a planned programme of review and update of service policies. Recent stakeholder evaluations provided a sound basis for the service to more robustly evaluate service delivery, to look for patterns and trends and to better demonstrate improvements over time. The service now needs to look at how stakeholders are involved in the development of policy and practice, and how they impact on the service's improvement planning. Further development of planned improvements requires to be fully embedded within service planning and future delivery. The EPS had a sound planning framework and performance planning was now more embedded in the work of the service with regular standards and quality reporting, and more recently, with reports to elected members. The service should further embed the EPS into the Council's performance reporting arrangements and review its planning formats to allow trends over time to be demonstrated. It also needed to complete the review of the planning cycle to fully align with the revised authority planning cycle. The service had developed good partnership working, particularly at the individual case level. It was further embedding the good strategic partnerships it had developed with some agencies to include a wider range of

partners. The service should ensure that all partners have greater clarity about service aims, roles and responsibilities. It should establish a strategic framework with all key partners which further facilitates joint working.

6. How good is leadership?

The current PEP had demonstrated very effective leadership in the short time that she had been in post. The recently appointed DPEP was providing very effective support. The EA had taken a much more robust role in supporting and challenging the service and this had led to significant improvements. Psychological service managers had quickly established a clear agenda for change which they had shared with staff and senior officers of the authority. The service now had a robust framework of management processes to allow them to take forward their modernisation agenda. All staff were now more involved in service planning and had established leadership roles and responsibilities. The service now needed to ensure that all staff had the capacity to deliver the service aims, vision and values. All senior managers and officers should continue to embed the service within mainstream systems and processes and ensure that all staff within the EPS are further supported and challenged.

Key strengths

The service had:

- developed strong leadership with the support of the authority and had established a clear sense of direction with a sound understanding of its own strengths and areas for improvement;
- made a very promising start in re-designing the service to improve its impact on those who use it;
- established strong and trusting relationships with parents/carers and children and young people; and
- started the process of developing a robust operational planning framework linked to corporate objectives.

Main points for action

The service should:

- take steps to develop a more universal approach to its work;
- put in place a robust self-evaluation framework to ensure continuous improvement and consistency of practice;
- become more responsive to the needs of the local community by better identifying the areas where educational psychology can be most effective; and
- build staff capacity to enable them to play a full part in the delivery of the full range of EPS to the local and wider community.

There are some important improvements needed, but because EPS have a good understanding of their strengths and areas for improvement, and are performing well we have ended the inspection process at this stage. We will monitor progress through our regular contact with the education authority.

Laura-Ann Currie
HM Inspector
Directorate 5
28 September 2010

Appendix 1

Quality Indicator	Evaluation
Improvements in performance	Good
Fulfilment of statutory duties	Very good
Impact on children and young people	Very good
Impact on parents, carers and families	Very good
Impact on staff	Good
Impact on the local community	Satisfactory
Impact on the wider community	Good
Consultation and advice	Good
Assessment	Good
Intervention	Very good
Provision of professional development and training for other groups including parents, teachers and health professionals	Good
Research and strategic development	Satisfactory
Inclusion, equality and fairness	Good
Policy development and review	Very good
Participation of stakeholders	Satisfactory
Operational planning	Good
Partnership working	Good
Leadership and direction	Very good
Leadership of change and improvement	Good

If you would like to find out more about our inspections or get an electronic copy of this report, please go to www.hmie.gov.uk.

Please contact us if you want to know how to get the report in a different format, for example, in a translation, or if you wish to comment about any aspect of our inspections. You can contact us at HMIEenquiries@hmie.gsi.gov.uk or write to us at BMCT, HM Inspectorate of Education, Denholm House, Almondvale Business Park, Almondvale Way, Livingston EH54 6GA.

Text phone users can contact us on 01506 600 236. This is a service for deaf users. Please do not use this number for voice calls as the line will not connect you to a member of staff.

You can find our complaints procedure on our website www.hmie.gov.uk or alternatively you can contact our Complaints Manager, at the address above or by telephoning 01506 600259.

Crown Copyright 2010

HM Inspectorate of Education