

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

24 SEPTEMBER 2019

SCHOOL PERFORMANCE 2018/19

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND INCLUSION SERVICES
IN DISCUSSIONS WITH THE CABINET MEMBER FOR EDUCATION AND
INCLUSION SERVICES (COUNCILLOR MRS J ROSSER)**

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1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Members with feedback on the performance of schools across Rhondda Cynon Taf during 2018/19.
- 1.2 To advise members on the significant changes in Welsh Government performance and accountability measures.
- 1.3 To provide members with the required contextual information to explain the necessary changes in school performance reporting.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members:

- 2.1 Note the information contained within the report.
- 2.2 Consider the implications of the change in Welsh Government performance measures on future school performance reporting.
- 2.3 Agree that further reports will be presented on receipt of the final, verified data from Welsh Government.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Welsh Government has been developing new evaluation and improvement arrangements to ensure that performance and accountability measures align with the new Curriculum for Wales 2022. It is proposed by Welsh Government that the new arrangements will assist in raising standards, reducing the attainment gap, and deliver an improved education system in preparation for 2022. These new arrangements are evolving in a planned way to support schools to build a self-improving system and plan for sustained improvements.

4. FOUNDATION PHASE, KEY STAGE 2 AND KEY STAGE 3 PERFORMANCE MEASURES

- 4.1 In July 2018, changes to the Education (Amendments relating to Teacher Assessment information) (Wales) Regulations 2018 came into force. As a result of amendments to these regulations teacher assessment data, and national reading and numeracy test data at a school, local authority and consortia level will no longer be published. These changes in measures apply to all maintained primary and secondary schools.
- 4.2 Focus is still placed on using teacher assessment information and national assessment data to inform better teaching and learning. Nevertheless, this change represents a significant move away from gathering information about learners' performance on a school-by-school basis for accountability purposes.
- 4.3 Parents will continue to access their children's school performance relative to the national level and Welsh Government will continue to collect individual learner level data to ensure transparency at a national performance level and to inform policy.
- 4.4 Schools, governing bodies and local authorities will still have access to their own data, alongside national level data, for self-evaluation purposes.
- 4.5 Comparative data in relation to other schools within local authorities or families of schools will no longer be provided. School Comparative Reports and All Wales Core Data Sets for schools and local authorities in respect of teacher assessment data will cease to be published and the My Local School website will no longer include teacher assessment data below the national level.
- 4.6 As a result of these changes, in future Members will not be provided with end of key phase and stage outcomes at a local authority, regional or national level.

5. KEY STAGE 4 PERFORMANCE MEASURES

- 5.1 Welsh Government is attempting to remove the historic disproportionate emphasis on one or two isolated school performance measures. They have introduced new interim Key Stage 4 (KS4) measures for 2018/19. There is a general move towards a wider range of indicators to better capture the whole learning experience and the progress of all learners, as opposed to a disproportionate focus on particular groups of learners.
- 5.2 As part of this process of change, Welsh Government has implemented a suite of interim KS4 performance measures. These new measures, based on points scores, will remove the emphasis on threshold

measures which have historically resulted in an excessive focus on borderline C/D grade learners. Moving forward, a focus on point scores will reflect a school average of all individual learners' points scores, rather than a percentage attaining a minimum threshold level.

- 5.3 The KS4 interim measures for summer 2019 are summarised as follows:
- **Capped 9 measure** which includes 3 core measures (literacy, numeracy and science measures) and any other six best qualifications (other than those already contributing to the 3 core measures)
 - **Literacy measure** (best of language and literacy)
 - **Numeracy measure** (best of mathematics/numeracy)
 - **Science measure** (best of science)
 - **Welsh Baccalaureate Skills Challenge Certificate** measure.

The interim measures are points based rather than focused on the percentage of pupils attaining a particular threshold grade or level. Point score equivalents for the different grades are as follows:

- **A*=58; A=52; B=46; C=40; D=34; E=28; F=22; G=16.**

- 5.4 Following the Welsh Government announcement in November 2017 regarding early entries, only the results of the first awarding of a complete qualification have counted towards the performance measures for summer 2019 reporting.
- 5.5 Welsh Government is making changes to the information provided for schools in the All Wales Core Data Sets (AWCDS) to reflect the interim KS4 performance measures.
- 5.6 In line with the move away from threshold measures, Welsh Government will no longer be providing analyses on the percentage of learners achieving: individual subjects, including the Welsh Baccalaureate at Foundation or National, or threshold performance measures, namely the Core Subject Indicator (CSI) or Level 2 threshold.
- 5.7 Welsh Government will provide analyses of the Level 2 inclusive and Level 1 threshold measures for 2018/19 only. This is due to the fact that there was still a legislative requirement for schools to set targets for KS4 learners against these measures for the 2018/19 academic year. However, this data will be provided to inform school self-evaluation and should not be used for comparative purposes.
- 5.8 National benchmarking data was previously provided to allow comparisons with other schools in similar socio-economic circumstances. This data will no longer be provided in future.

To replace the benchmarking data, thirds analysis will be provided for each of the interim KS4 measures. This analysis will involve the cohort for each school being divided into thirds based on attainment. This will show the average points score for the upper third, middle third and lower

third of the cohort. This will be shown against modelled outcomes for free school meal eligibility levels and compared to averages for other schools in Wales and the school's family.

- 5.9 The Director of Education in Welsh Government, the Chief Inspector for Estyn and the Chief Executive of the WLGA have sent a joint letter to Cabinet Members, Chairs of Scrutiny, Chief Executives and Directors of Education across Wales to provide a steer on the handling of unverified KS4 examination results for the summer 2019 and the new interim performance measures. The July 2019 letter highlights Welsh Government's view that it is counter-productive for schools to be placed under disproportionate pressure on the basis of individual measures and that focus should be placed on using 'a broad range of un-aggregated data and information' to enable the Council to discharge its statutory duties when reporting on school performance. The communication also recommends that Councils evaluate the performance of individual schools rather than generating aggregated data at local authority level to support and challenge individual schools on their improvement.

6. NATIONAL SCHOOL CATEGORISATION SYSTEM

- 6.1 The National School Categorisation System will remain for the immediate future. The next round of outcomes are scheduled to be published in January 2020. The categorisation system will in future need to evolve to fit with the new Evaluation and Improvement arrangements.

7. SCHOOL INSPECTIONS

- 7.1 Estyn is currently consulting on phase 1 of a transition period to new inspection arrangements that will align with the new curriculum and evaluation and improvement reforms. During phase 1 (September 2020-September 2021), a partial suspension of school inspections is proposed, with schools causing concern still being monitored.
- 7.2 During this period, Estyn will undertake inspector engagement visits to all schools to understand how well schools are developing their practices in relation to the new curriculum, and other education reforms. It will also allow time for the changes needed within the Inspectorate to move forward to the new purpose of inspection.

8. OVERVIEW OF KEY STAGE 4 PERFORMANCE (2018/19)

- 8.1 Further detail in relation to the interim measures is provided below:

-The **Capped Points Score** calculates the average of the scores for the best awards for all individual learners in the cohort, capped at a total volume of nine GCSEs or equivalent qualifications (referred to as 'slots') **Three** of the nine slots equate to three GCSEs only in literacy, numeracy and science, with the best grade achieved for each slot from

the relevant qualifications. The remaining **six** slots reflect to the points attached to each learner's best remaining six qualifications (excluding those awards that are contributing towards the three subject-specific slots described above). There is no cap on the total volume of non-GCSEs that can contribute towards the 'other six' (non-subject-specific) slots.

- The **literacy measure** calculates the average of the scores for all individual learners in the cohort, taking the best grade from any of the literature or first language Welsh or English GCSEs awarded to a learner.
- The **numeracy measure** calculates the average of the scores for all individual learners in the cohort, taking the best grade from either of the mathematics or mathematics – numeracy GCSEs awarded to a learner.
- The **science measure** calculates the average of the scores for all individual learners in the cohort, taking the best grade from science GCSEs awarded to a learner.
- The **Welsh Baccalaureate Skills Challenge Certificate measure** calculates the average of the scores for the Welsh Baccalaureate Skills Challenge Certificate awards for all individual learners in the cohort, whether it is the Foundation (Level 1) or the National (Level 2) award.

8.2 It is important to note that while the local authority and consortium have gained initial information regarding KS4 outcomes from schools, the data outlined in Table 1 are from results collated from schools on the day of examination results. This data has not yet been verified and the **results are provisional and should be interpreted with caution** as changes are likely following data cleansing and the remarking of scripts.

Table 1: Provisional outcomes on current interim performance measures for key stage 4 - 2018/19

| KS4 | 2018 | 2019 Provisional % |
|--|------|-----------------------|
| Capped 9 Points Score | n/a | 349.5 |
| Literacy Points Score | 38.6 | 37.9 |
| Numeracy Points Score | 37.2 | 35.5 |
| Science Points Score | 35.4 | 35.0 |
| Welsh Baccalaureate Skill Challenge Certificate – Points Score | 36.1 | 38.1 |

Please note that as the interim measures are new for 2019, Welsh Government has recalculated 2018 datasets in the form of new, headline interim measures. However, this refitted data for 2018 does not take into account the ‘first award only’ approach to KS4 performance measures that has been introduced for the first time for 2019 reporting purposes. The comparative data should therefore be considered with caution as it reports measures that were not in place at the time that the cohort was in situ. The datasets are therefore not directly comparable for this reason.

Outcomes on all measures were slightly below the regional average, with the exception of the performance on the Welsh Baccalaureate Skills Challenge Certificate which was above the Central South Consortium outcome for the region. Performance on most measures did not deviate too significantly from 2018, when considering the new measures and the recalculated data for last year.

- 8.3 Table 2 provides data on the percentage of learners who have achieved A*-A, A*-C and A*-G grades at GCSE. This data relates to **WJEC GCSE results only** and should therefore be treated with a degree of caution, as schools will have entered varying, but possibly significant, proportions of pupils for GCSE’s with other examination boards.

Table 2: provides an overview of the percentage of learners who have achieved A*-A, A*-C and A*-G grades

| KS4 | 2018 | 2019 Provisional % |
|-------------|------|--------------------------|
| % A*-A GCSE | 18.5 | 18.4 |
| % A*-C GCSE | 61.6 | 62.8 |
| % A*-G GCSE | 96.4 | 97.2 |

In comparison to last year the percentage of GCSE A*-C grades gained by pupils in our local authority has increased by 1.2%age points, as has the percentage of pupils achieving A*-G grades (increase of 0.8%age points).

- 8.4 During the next month or so, Council officers, will be working closely with headteachers and the Central South Consortium to analyse the data so as to evaluate what has gone well and to identify priorities for improvement. This analysis will be undertaken at a school level and subject basis to inform self-evaluation and school improvement planning. Support will be put in place to ensure that underperforming schools are supported to make the necessary progress, and, where necessary, challenged to ensure that timely improvements are made.

An analysis of outcomes for vulnerable groups will also be undertaken to ensure that schools are targeting their resources and interventions appropriately. Further progress is clearly needed across the board to ensure that outcomes are improved at this time of unprecedented reform in Education. The local authority needs to ensure that an appropriate curriculum is made available to all Key Stage 4 learners that best suits their needs and that the teaching provided is of the highest standard.

- 8.5 Final examination information for each of the 4 all-through schools and 13 secondary schools in Rhondda Cynon Taf for 2019 will be presented to Cabinet and the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee on receipt of the final verified data in December 2019.

9. INSPECTION OUTCOMES 2018/19

- 9.1 The inspection profile is predominantly good across all sectors in RCT.
- 9.2 A total of 17 core Estyn inspections were undertaken during 2018-2019. These included 16 primary schools (including a Pupil Referral Unit or PRU) and one secondary school. The primary PRU achieved 5 excellent judgements across all inspection areas. A total of 11 primary schools were judged to be good with no Estyn follow up. Of these schools, 2 were asked to write excellent practice case studies.

We have three settings in Rhondda Cynon Taf that are due to recognised at the annual Estyn awards evening recognising excellence in education and training in Wales. Settings are selected on the basis of attaining the judgement of 'excellent' in three or more inspection areas in the academic year 2018-2019. This includes Cylch Meithrin Llanhari, Glenboi Primary School and Tai Educational Centre.

A total of 5 schools were judged as adequate and in need of improvement and placed in a follow up category (Estyn Review).

There were no schools judged as having important weaknesses that outweighed the strengths and requiring Significant Improvement. There were also no schools placed in Special Measures during 2018-19.

A total of 2 primary schools in Estyn Review were re-inspected during the last academic and removed from this category. A further 2 primary schools were removed from the statutory categories of Significant Improvement and Special Measures following re-inspection in 2018/19.

10. PROGRESS OF SCHOOLS IN A STATUTORY CATEGORY 2018/19

- 10.1 On every inspection, Estyn inspectors consider if a school is in need of special measures by considering whether it is failing to give its learners an acceptable standard of education and if the persons responsible for

leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvements. Inspectors have to consider if the school has the capacity to improve before coming to a judgement about whether it requires special measures or not.

If a school does not require special measures, consideration should also be given to whether there is need of significant improvement. This statutory category applies if a school is performing significantly less well than it should be in all circumstances that it would be reasonably expected to perform.

- 10.2 Of the schools inspected in previous years requiring a statutory category, one school remains in a statutory category of Significant Improvement and another remains in Special Measures. Both schools have new leaders in place and are accessing the necessary support to make improvements on their post inspection action plans. Progress in both settings is encouraging.

11. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 This is an information report. No Equality Impact Assessment screening form is required.

12. CONSULTATION

- 12.1 This is an information report, no consultation is required.

13. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 13.1 There are no financial implications.

14. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

- 14.1 None at present.

15. LINKS TO THE COUNCIL'S CORPORATE PLAN/OTHER CORPORATE PRIORITIES/SIP

- 15.1 Educational performance has a clear link to the Council's priority of Building a Strong Economy. Improved educational performance will have a positive impact on this priority

16. CONCLUSION

- 16.1 The new interim performance measures, based on points scores, has removed the emphasis on threshold measures and the associated negative unintended consequences previously associated with these. Namely the narrowing of curriculum choice, the excessive focus on particular group of learners at the expense of others and the competition created across schools and local authorities which has mitigated against a culture of self-improving schools.

- 16.2 In light of this shift in emphasis in performance measures and reporting, moving forward a wider range of performance measures and contextual information will be utilised during 2019/20 to inform self-evaluation and school improvement planning and to make judgements about school effectiveness.
- 16.3 Provisional performance outcomes on the new interim key stage 4 measures suggests that there has been a slight dip in standards in 2019 on most measures. However, it is difficult to make meaningful comparisons across 2018 and 2019 datasets due to the fact that the 2019 outcomes include the 'first award' data only. This is not the case for the re-calculated 2018 datasets. Nevertheless, provisional data suggests that there is scope for further improvements in standards in 2019.
- 16.4 A continued focus on improving leadership and the quality of teaching and learning in our schools is required so that standards can continue to improve and the gap between vulnerable groups is narrowed.

Other Information:-

Relevant Scrutiny Committee-

Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

Background Papers-

None



LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972
AS AMENDED BY
THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985
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Background papers – None.

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