

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

2nd OCTOBER 2014

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND LIFELONG LEARNING

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**FOUNDATION PHASE, KEY STAGE 2 & 3 AND PROVISIONAL KEY STAGE 4
OUTCOMES FOR 2014**

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

The purpose of this report is to provide Members with initial feedback on the Foundation Phase, Key Stage 2, 3 & 4 outcomes for the academic year 2013/14.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members:

- 2.1 Note the information contained within this report.
- 2.2 Agree that detailed school by school information is presented to a future Cabinet and Education & Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Committee on receipt of the final data from the Welsh Government.

3. FOUNDATION PHASE

- 3.1 The table below sets out the Foundation Phase Outcomes, which are measured by the percentage of pupils achieving at least outcome 5 (the expected outcome) in teacher assessments. This is the third year of the Foundation Phase Measures.

Foundation Phase Indicator	2012	2013	2014
Rhondda Cynon Taf	77.2	80.6	81.8
Wales	80.5	83.0	85.2
Rank	20	19	21
Personal and social development, well-being and cultural diversity	2012	2013	2014
Rhondda Cynon Taf	89.1	90.9	91.9
Wales	90.8	93.0	94.2
Rank	20	21	21
Language, literacy and communications skills – English	2012	2013	2014
Rhondda Cynon Taf	80.9	83.2	82.9
Wales	83.4	85.2	86.6
Rank	20	19	20
Language, literacy and communications skills – Welsh	2012	2013	2014
Rhondda Cynon Taf	82.3	84.1	90.1
Wales	85.9	86.7	89.8
Rank	19	17	12
Mathematical Development	2012	2013	2014
Rhondda Cynon Taf	84.0	85.9	86.1
Wales	86.6	87.4	88.7
Rank	20	16	21

- 3.2 In reviewing the comparative data it is important to contextualise the data to take into account the socio-economic factors across the 22 Welsh local authorities. Whilst poverty and deprivation are not excuses for educational underperformance, they are factors that influence educational outcomes. In comparing the position of Rhondda Cynon Taf with the other local authorities, in terms of pupils eligible for free school meals, Rhondda Cynon Taf has the second highest level. Therefore, if the indicators are compared based on free school meals, you would **“expect”** Rhondda Cynon Taf to be 21st in the

comparative indicators. Therefore, our performance should be judged on the value added over and above what is expected.

- 3.3 This is only the third year the Foundation Phase Indicators have been assessed and there are some significant inconsistencies in assessments evident between schools and between local authorities and regions. Until Welsh Government use the national literacy and numeracy tests to provide a degree of challenge to the teacher assessments, the robustness of the Foundation Phase data will continue to be questioned as an accurate comparator of performance.

4. KEY STAGE 2

- 4.1 The table below sets out the achievements of 11 year olds for a number of the mandatory areas of learning based on teacher assessments. The Core Subject Indicator represents the percentage of pupils achieving Level 4 or above in English or Welsh (first language), mathematics and science in combination.

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Percentage of pupils achieving the KS2 Core Subject Indicator	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Rhondda Cynon Taf	74.1	76.3	77.1	79.3	82.6	84.3
Wales	77.0	78.2	80.0	82.6	84.3	86.1
Rank	19	18	19	20	17	17
Percentage of pupils achieving level 4 or above in English	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Rhondda Cynon Taf	77.8	79.2	79.6	81.7	85.2	86.7
Wales	81.0	81.9	83.4	85.2	87.1	88.4
Rank	19	19	20	21	20	19
Percentage of pupils achieving level 4 or above in Mathematics	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Rhondda Cynon Taf	80.6	82.1	83.3	84.7	86.2	87.6
Wales	82.5	83.3	84.9	86.8	87.5	88.9
Rank	18	18	17	18	18	20
Percentage of pupils achieving level 4 or above in Welsh First Language	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Rhondda Cynon Taf	78.3	82.5	82.5	80.9	84.3	88.4
Wales	79.9	81.0	82.0	84	86.7	88.1
Rank	17	14	15	17	16	14
Percentage of pupils achieving level 4 or above in Science	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Rhondda Cynon Taf	82.7	82.4	82.6	85.0	87.2	88.8
Wales	86.4	86.4	87.1	88.5	89.7	90.3
Rank	21	20	20	20	20	19

4.2 At Key Stage 2, the primary schools have made good progress in 2014, across all Key Indicators. The rate of improvement across Rhondda Cynon Taf has been at least equal to the Welsh average.

5. KEY STAGE 3

5.1 The table below sets out the achievements of 14 year olds for a number of the mandatory areas of learning based on teacher assessments. The Core Subject

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Indicator represents the percentage of pupils achieving Level 5 or above in English or Welsh (first language), mathematics and science in combination.

Percentage of pupils achieving the KS3 Core Subject Indicator	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Rhondda Cynon Taf	55.4	59.2	61.5	66.9	73.6	78.4
Wales	61.3	63.7	68.0	72.5	77.0	81.0
Rank	20	18	20	20	16	16
Percentage of pupils achieving level 5 or above in English	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Rhondda Cynon Taf	64.4	69.0	69.4	74.7	79.2	83.3
Wales	70.6	72.5	76.0	79.3	82.9	85.9
Rank	21	19	20	20	17	18
Percentage of pupils achieving level 5 or above in Mathematics	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Rhondda Cynon Taf	69.2	70.1	72.1	75.1	81.1	84.3
Wales	73.5	75.5	77.9	81.1	83.9	86.5
Rank	20	20	20	22	19	17
Percentage of pupils achieving level 5 or above in Welsh First Language	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Rhondda Cynon Taf	71.6	71.2	71.7	76.8	85.9	90.0
Wales	75.1	76.8	81.3	84.2	87.6	90.1
Rank	12	15	18	17	12	8
Percentage of pupils achieving level 5 or above in Science	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Rhondda Cynon Taf	70.0	74.1	75.0	79.2	84.9	88.7
Wales	75.6	77.1	80.3	83.6	87.0	90.4
Rank	20	17	20	19	16	18

5.2 At Key Stage 3, the secondary schools have made good progress in 2014, across all Key Indicators with the rate of improvement across Rhondda Cynon Taf greater than the Welsh average for all the key indicators.

5.3 During the past two years, secondary schools have been challenged to focus on Key Stage 3 and to:

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- Reduce the number of pupils making no levels of progress from KS2 across the core subjects;
- Increase the number of pupils, making two or more levels of progress across the core subjects.

5.4 The table below shows the improvement made by schools, which has had a positive impact on the Key Stage 3 results and will have a significant impact on the Key Stage 4 results in two years time.

	% of pupils making no level of progress in KS3 in 2012	% of pupils making no level of progress in KS3 in 2014	% of pupils making two or more levels of progress in 2012	% of pupils making two or more levels of progress in 2014
English	17.81	8.47	25.0	43.16
Mathematics	17.22	9.19	37.24	46.73
Science	14.97	6.08	29.62	52.18
Welsh	16.81	3.33	15.49	46.90

5.5 There are still too many children not achieving sufficient progress at Key Stage 3 and this will remain a focus in 2014/15 ensuring nearly all pupils are able to achieve the Level 5 at the end of Year 9 (14 years of age) but also increase the number of pupils achieving Level 6 and above.

5.6 Of those pupils that achieve a Level 5 in English, in Rhondda Cynon Taf schools, 66% achieve an A*-C at GCSE. However, 95% of those pupils that achieve a Level 6 at the end of KS3 achieve an A*-C in GCSE English. If we are to improve our KS4 results, we have to continue work to maximise pupils' performance in KS 2 and 3.

6. KEY STAGE 4

6.1 The table below sets out the **provisional** Rhondda Cynon Taf's Key Stage 4 results over the four years to 2014. The all Wales verified information will be available in December 2014 along with the secondary school bandings or its replacement.

6.2 The results set out below may change by very small percentages over the next few weeks as final examination grades are clarified.

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KS4	2011	2012	2013	2014
Level 1 threshold (A*-G at GCSE or equivalent)				
RCT	88	89	93	94
Wales	90	92	93	n/a
Level 2 threshold (5 A*-C at GCSE or equivalent)				
RCT	64	69	78	84
Wales	67	73	78	n/a
Level 2 threshold (5 A*-C at GCSE or equivalent) including English/Welsh and maths				
RCT	43.3	43.8	46.3	50.4
Wales	50	51	52.7	n/a
Core Subject Indicator (A*-C at GCSE or equivalent in English/Welsh, maths and science)				
RCT	43	43	45.3	47.8
Wales	49	49	49.2	n/a
A* - C in English				
RCT	57.9	55.8	58	61.5
A* - C in Welsh				
RCT	73.0	70.0	70.3	70.0
A* - C in maths				
RCT	49.4	51.0	52.5	56.8
A* - C or equivalent in science				
RCT	68.2	75.2	81.9	84.9

- 6.3 For the key performance indicators, the Level 1 threshold, the Level 2 threshold, the Level 2 threshold including English/Welsh and mathematics and the core subject indicator, the 2014 KS4 performance is the best the secondary schools in Rhondda Cynon Taf have ever achieved. The other four local authorities that comprise the Central South Consortium have also made good progress in 2014. However, this improvement is not representative across the rest of Wales.
- 6.4 The Key Stage 4 results for Rhondda Cynon Taf are pleasing, particularly when you take into account the fact that the examinations regulatory body, JCQ, has reduced the pass rates for the core subjects, except for English in Wales. The table shows that for the key subjects such as English and mathematics we are improving. Furthermore, the percentage of children achieving the Level 1 and the Level 2 thresholds continue to rise and out of a cohort of nearly 3,000 pupils only 16 pupils (11 boys and 5 girls) will leave this year with no qualifications.
- 6.5 The provisional results show that of the 19 schools:
- 9 improved the Level 1 threshold (5 A*-G at GCSE or equivalent);
 - 14 improved the Level 2 threshold (5 A*-C at GCSE or equivalent);
 - 15 improved the Level 2 threshold including English/Welsh and mathematics;
 - 14 improved the English GCSE grades A*-C;
 - 16 improved the mathematics GCSE grades A*-C.

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- 6.6 Of the four schools that did not improve the Level 2 threshold including English/Welsh and mathematics:
- Two were due to falling mathematics results, but with rising results in English;
 - One was due to falling results in English, but with rising results in mathematics; and
 - One had falling English and mathematics results;
 - Two of the four schools are closing on 31 August 2014.
- 6.7 The Council will continue to work with the Central South Consortium Education Service and the schools to better understand the performance in all our schools and, where appropriate, provide the appropriate expert support to improve the results for 2015.
- 6.8 In September 2013, after a number of secondary schools had consistently underperformed when compared to similar schools, Warning Letters in accordance with the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 were issued to four secondary schools. The Council and the Central South Consortium Education Service have worked diligently with these schools to improve their performance. The Warning Letters set out agreed education performance targets to be met by the schools in 2014; otherwise the Council would consider whether it was appropriate to use its powers of intervention under the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013.
- 6.9 We are pleased to report that three of the four schools have made good progress and have met or are very close to their targets and letters rescinding the Warning Letters will be sent to the Chair of Governors and Headteacher of the three schools.
- 6.10 A meeting has been arranged between the Director of Education and the Headteacher and Chair of Governors of the school that has repeatedly not achieved its targets, despite two warning letters, to discuss possible Council intervention options to improve the performance of the school.
- 6.11 A further two schools have made progress in 2014, after a drop in performance in 2013, but this progress has not been sufficient. The headteachers of these two schools have met the Director of Education and the two schools have agreed clearly defined performance targets set along with a package of challenge and support to enable the governing body and senior management team to significantly improve the performance of the schools. If sufficient progress is not being made in the two schools during the course of the year, Warning Letters could still be issued.

- 6.12 Final examination information on each of the 19 secondary schools in Rhondda Cynon Taf will be presented to Cabinet and the Education and Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Committee on receipt of the final verified data in December.

7. CONCLUSION

- 7.1 For the second consecutive year, education performance in Rhondda Cynon Taf is improving across the four key stages and has improved in KS 2, 3 & 4 faster than the Welsh average. Schools should be congratulated for this improvement.
- 7.2 Whilst, this improvement is very welcome, it evident from Estyn inspections of our schools that further improvement is required before we can ensure that every school in Rhondda Cynon Taf is a “good” school. Still too many schools, when compared to similar schools across Wales, are in the third and fourth quartiles. If we continue to share best practice between schools, learn from high performing schools across the UK, maintain the focus on measuring and supporting pupils’ progress, over the next few years more of our schools will become consistent first and second quartile performers.
- 7.3 Schools have embraced the need to focus on literacy and numeracy and improving educational standards in English and maths. It is essential that this continues and that the changes and improvements they have introduced to date continue to be implemented in a disciplined and rigorous manner. The Central South Consortium Education Service will be focusing its visits to schools on ensuring that all schools focus on literacy and numeracy standards, have robust pupil tracking systems in place that are used effectively for the benefit of individual pupil attainment.
- 7.4 There is no panacea to success in education it is achieved through incremental improvement across everything the schools, subject areas, individual teachers and teaching support staff undertake. Rhondda Cynon Taf’s educational results are not being transformed over night, but with a small number of priorities and the commitment evidenced this year by the leaders and staff in our schools to deliver these priorities, educational performance will continue to improve at all key stages.

