

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

MUNICIPAL YEAR 2015/16

**CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

19TH OCTOBER 2015

AGENDA ITEM 4

**FOUNDATION PHASE, KEY STAGE
2 & 3 AND PROVISIONAL KEY
STAGE 4 OUTCOMES FOR 2015**

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND LIFELONG LEARNING

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 2015.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members:

- 2.1 Scrutinise and comment on the information provided and agree that more detailed school by school information is presented to the 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 fourth year of the Foundation Phase Measures.

Foundation Phase Indicator	2012	2013	2014	2015
Rhondda Cynon Taf	77.2	80.6	81.8	86.3
Wales	80.5	83.0	85.2	86.8
Rank	20	19	21	14
Personal and social development, well-being and cultural diversity	2012	2013	2014	2015

Rhondda Cynon Taf	89.1	90.9	91.9	94.3
Wales	90.8	93.0	94.2	94.8
Rank	20	21	21	18
Language, literacy and communications skills – English	2012	2013	2014	2015
Rhondda Cynon Taf	80.9	83.2	82.9	86.8
Wales	83.4	85.2	86.6	88.0
Rank	20	19	20	17
Language, literacy and communications skills – Welsh	2012	2013	2014	2015
Rhondda Cynon Taf	82.3	84.1	90.1	94.4
Wales	85.9	86.7	89.8	91.3
Rank	19	17	12	4
Mathematical Development	2012	2013	2014	2015
Rhondda Cynon Taf	84.0	85.9	86.1	89.1
Wales	86.6	87.4	88.7	89.7
Rank	20	16	21	16

- 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 fourth 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. Action has been taken by the four regional consortia to try and ensure greater consistency of assessment in 2015. In addition the differences in performance between the 22 local authorities are very small and a 1% difference in performance could change a local authority’s ranking by up to 9 places.

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.

Percentage of pupils achieving the KS2 Core Subject Indicator	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Rhondda Cynon Taf	76.3	77.1	79.3	82.6	84.3	85.8
Wales	78.2	80.0	82.6	84.3	86.1	87.7
Rank	18	19	20	17	17	19
Percentage of pupils achieving level 4 or above in English	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Rhondda Cynon Taf	79.2	79.6	81.7	85.2	86.7	88.0
Wales	81.9	83.4	85.2	87.1	88.4	89.6
Rank	19	20	21	20	19	19
Percentage of pupils achieving level 4 or above in Mathematics	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Rhondda Cynon Taf	82.1	83.3	84.7	86.2	87.6	88.9
Wales	83.3	84.9	86.8	87.5	88.9	90.2
Rank	18	17	18	18	20	20
Percentage of pupils achieving level 4 or above in Welsh First Language	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Rhondda Cynon Taf	82.5	82.5	80.9	84.3	88.4	92.3
Wales	81.0	82.0	84	86.7	88.1	90.5
Rank	14	15	17	16	14	9
Percentage of pupils achieving level 4 or above in Science	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Rhondda Cynon Taf	82.4	82.6	85.0	87.2	88.8	89.4
Wales	86.4	87.1	88.5	89.7	90.3	91.4
Rank	20	20	20	20	19	20

4.2 At Key Stage 2, the primary schools have made progress in 2014 meeting or exceeding the Welsh average rate of improvement, except for the Core Subject

Indicator where the rate of progress was 0.1 of 1% lower than the Welsh average rate of improvement.

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 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	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Rhondda Cynon Taf	59.2	61.5	66.9	73.6	78.4	81.6
Wales	63.7	68.0	72.5	77.0	81.0	83.9
Rank	18	20	20	16	16	16
Percentage of pupils achieving level 5 or above in English	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Rhondda Cynon Taf	69.0	69.4	74.7	79.2	83.3	86.0
Wales	72.5	76.0	79.3	82.9	85.9	87.9
Rank	19	20	20	17	18	19
Percentage of pupils achieving level 5 or above in Mathematics	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Rhondda Cynon Taf	70.1	72.1	75.1	81.1	84.3	87.3
Wales	75.5	77.9	81.1	83.9	86.5	88.7
Rank	20	20	22	19	17	16
Percentage of pupils achieving level 5 or above in Welsh First Language	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Rhondda Cynon Taf	71.2	71.7	76.8	85.9	90.0	92.5
Wales	76.8	81.3	84.2	87.6	90.1	90.9
Rank	15	18	17	12	8	7

Percentage of pupils achieving level 5 or above in Science	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Rhondda Cynon Taf	74.1	75.0	79.2	84.9	88.7	90.7
Wales	77.1	80.3	83.6	87.0	90.4	91.8
Rank	17	20	19	16	18	16

5.2 At Key Stage 3, the secondary schools have made good progress in 2015, across all Key Indicators, with the rate of improvement in Rhondda Cynon Taf greater than the Welsh average.

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

- Reduce the number of pupils making no levels of progress 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 2015	% of pupils making two or more levels of progress in 2012	% of pupils making two or more levels of progress in 2015
English	17.81	8.00	25.00	46.17
Mathematics	17.22	7.37	37.24	51.83
Science	14.97	5.12	29.62	56.06
Welsh	16.81	3.07	15.49	59.90

5.5 There are still too many children not making sufficient progress at Key Stage 3 and this will remain a focus in 2015/16 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 In Rhondda Cynon Taf schools, 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 in order that more pupils achieve the Level 6 at the end of KS 3.

6. KEY STAGE 4

6.1 The table below sets out the **provisional** Rhondda Cynon Taf's Key Stage 4 results over the five years to 2015. The all Wales information will be available in December 2015 along with the secondary school categorisation.

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

KS4	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Level 1 threshold (A*-G at GCSE or equivalent)					
RCT	88	89	93	94	95.1
Wales	90	92	93	94	n/a
Level 2 threshold (5 A*-C at GCSE or equivalent)					
RCT	64	69	78	84	85.5
Wales	67	73	78	82.3	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	53.8
Wales	50	51	52.7	55.4	n/a
Core Subject Indicator (A*-C at GCSE or equivalent in English/Welsh, maths and science)					
RCT	43	43	45.3	47.8	53.5
Wales	49	49	49.2	52.6	n/a
A* - C in English					
RCT	57.9	55.8	58	61.5	64.7
A* - C in Welsh					
RCT	73.0	70.0	70.3	70.0	72.4
A* - C in maths					
RCT	49.4	51.0	52.5	56.8	59.9
A* - C or equivalent in science					
RCT	68.2	75.2	81.9	84.9	86.2

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 2015 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 2015. However, as in 2014, this improvement is not representative across the rest of Wales.

6.4 One area of concern is the performance of pupils eligible for free school meals, whose Key Stage 4 outcomes are not improving as quickly as those pupils not eligible for free school meals. The table below shows the performance of those pupils eligible for free school meals and those not eligible over the past four years, for the key performance indicator, the percentage of pupils achieving the Level 2 threshold plus English/Welsh and mathematics:

% achieving the L2 threshold, + English/Welsh and maths	2012 %	2013 %	2014 %	2015 %
Eligible for free school meals	21.5	21.7	26.3	27.2
Not eligible for free school meals	49.9	53.4	57.7	60.1
Difference in performance	28.4	31.7	31.4	32.9

- 6.5 The Welsh Government has made reducing the gap in educational performance between pupils eligible for free school meals and those not eligible a priority, and has provided significant sums to schools through the Pupil Deprivation Grant to achieve this. There are schools in the County Borough and across the region that have seen significant improvements in the performance of pupils eligible for free school meals and we will take the necessary steps to ensure that the practice in these schools is shared and implemented across all the schools.
- 6.6 Since 2011 the secondary schools have made significant progress. In 2011 the Council was in the following position for the Level 2 threshold plus English/Welsh and mathematics indicator:
- Two schools had less than 30% of pupils achieving the Level 2 threshold plus English/Welsh and mathematics;
 - Seven schools had greater or equal to 30% but less than 40% of pupils achieving the Level 2 threshold plus English/Welsh and mathematics;
 - Two schools had greater or equal to 40% but less than 45% of pupils achieving the Level 2 threshold plus English/Welsh and mathematics;
 - Eight schools had greater or equal to 45% of pupils achieving the Level 2 threshold plus English/Welsh and mathematics.
- 6.7 In 2015, only one of our seventeen schools scored less than 45%, compared to eleven in 2011. The only school that scored less than 45% was the new secondary school in Aberdare at 44.2% (this school achieved a 10% improvement on the combined scores of the three legacy schools). This statistic evidences that the Council is delivering on its commitment to make every school in every community a good school.
- 6.8 The Council will continue to work with the Central South Joint 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.
- 6.9 We are pleased to report that no secondary school in Rhondda has been issued with a warning letter in 2015, based on the education performance over the past two years. Nevertheless, eight secondary schools will be subject to greater scrutiny and challenge to continue to improve the quality of leadership and

teaching and to address the underperformance of free school meal pupils. Five of the schools are also part of the Welsh Government Schools Challenge Cymru programme.

- 6.10 Final examination information on each of the 17 secondary schools in Rhondda Cynon Taf will be presented to Cabinet and the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee on receipt of the final data in late November/early 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 is 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 new school to school approach to school improvement. However, this approach is still in its infancy and if it is to continue to improve educational standards in key areas such as English, Welsh and maths, headteachers and the Consortium will have to maintain a disciplined and rigorous approach to maximising the benefits from collaboration. The Challenge Advisors will be focusing their visits to schools on ensuring that all schools focus on literacy and numeracy standards, have robust pupil tracking systems in place, and can ensure that the pupils eligible for free school meals are receiving the necessary support to ensure they make sufficient progress when compared to pupils not eligible for free school meals.
- 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 over the past few years by the leaders and staff in our schools to deliver these priorities, educational performance will continue to improve at all key stages.