

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

MUNICIPAL YEAR 2018-19

**CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Agenda Item No. 4

Date: 26th SEPTEMBER 2018

**REPORT OF:
DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND
INCLUSION SERVICES**

**FOUNDATION PHASE, KEY STAGE 2 & 3
AND PROVISIONAL KEY STAGE 4
OUTCOMES FOR THE ACADEMIC YEAR
2017-18**

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1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

The purpose of this report is to provide Members with initial feedback on Foundation Phase, Key Stage 2 and 3, and Provisional Key Stage 4 outcomes for the academic year 2017-18.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members:

- 2.1 Note the information contained within the report.
- 2.2 Consider the implications of this data on the level of support needed for schools during academic year 2018-19.
- 2.3 Agree that detailed school by school information in relation to Key Stage 4 data will be presented to this committee on receipt of the final, verified data from Welsh Government.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Learners across Wales are assessed at the end of Years 2, 6 and 9. This assessment is undertaken by teachers who know the learners and a system of local and national moderation has been undertaken for a number of years to ensure this process is robust. At the end of Year 11, pupils take externally marked examinations. This data is not verified until the end of the Autumn Term. As a comparison the only data published for Foundation Phase, KS2 and KS3 by Welsh

Government is based on the Welsh average and moving forward it will not be possible to report on national ranking positions for these stages.

4 FOUNDATION PHASE

4.1 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.

Foundation Phase Indicator - %	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Rhondda Cynon Taf	80.6	81.8	86.3	87.2	86.9	81.25
Wales	83.0	85.2	86.8	87.0	87.3	82.6
Rank	19	21	14	11	13	N/A
Personal and social development, well-being and cultural diversity - %	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Rhondda Cynon Taf	90.9	91.9	94.3	94.6	93.8	92.1
Wales	93.0	94.2	94.8	94.5	94.7	93.4
Rank	21	21	18	13	20	N/A
Language, literacy and communications skills – English - %	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Rhondda Cynon Taf	83.2	82.9	86.8	87.7	87.7	82.4
Wales	85.2	86.6	88.0	88.0	88.1	84.0
Rank	19	20	17	16	14	N/A
Language, literacy and communications skills – Welsh - %	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Rhondda Cynon Taf	84.1	90.1	94.4	94.8	92.2	86.7
Wales	86.7	89.8	91.3	90.7	90.9	86.1
Rank	17	12	4	4	11	N/A
Mathematical Development - %	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Rhondda Cynon Taf	85.9	86.1	89.1	90.0	90.2	85.5
Wales	87.4	88.7	89.7	89.9	90.3	86.6
Rank	16	21	16	13	14	N/A

- 4.2 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 Rhondda Cynon Taf with other local authorities, in terms of pupils eligible for free school meals, Rhondda Cynon Taf has the third highest level behind, Blaenau Gwent, and Neath Port Talbot. Therefore, if the indicators are compared based on free school meals, you would **“expect”** Rhondda Cynon Taf to be 20th in the comparative indicators. Therefore, our performance should be judged on the value added over and above what is expected.
- 4.3 Data suggests that Foundation Phase Indicators dipped by 5.65% in Rhondda Cynon Taf during 2017/18, which is 1.35% below the Welsh average. However, a decline in performance was also evident across Wales on all 5 performance measures. It is highly likely that this dip is attributable to changes in the expectations for outcomes in the Foundation Phase which have been aligned to the expectation statements within the Areas of Learning. This recalibration has ensured that outcomes now more accurately reflect the teaching and learning expectations within the revised Areas of Learning. As a direct result of this change it is now more challenging to achieve Foundation Phase outcome 5.

5. **KEY STAGE 2**

- 5.1 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	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Rhondda Cynon Taf	82.6	84.3	85.8	88.5	90.0	89.24
Wales	84.3	86.1	87.7	88.6	89.5	89.5
Rank	17	17	19	15	11	N/A
Percentage of pupils achieving level 4 or above in English	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Rhondda Cynon Taf	85.2	86.7	88.0	90.0	91.4	90.9
Wales	87.1	88.4	89.6	90.3	91.1	91.1
Rank	20	19	19	15	12	N/A
Percentage of pupils achieving level 4 or above in Mathematics	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018

Rhondda Cynon Taf	86.2	87.6	88.9	91.3	92.2	91.4
Wales	87.5	88.9	90.2	91.0	91.6	91.8
Rank	18	20	20	12	8	N/A
Percentage of pupils achieving level 4 or above in Welsh First Language	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Rhondda Cynon Taf	84.3	88.4	92.3	93.9	93.0	92.2
Wales	86.7	88.1	90.5	90.8	91.6	89.7
Rank	16	14	9	9	8	N/A
Percentage of pupils achieving level 4 or above in Science	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Rhondda Cynon Taf	87.2	88.8	89.4	91.6	92.6	91.4
Wales	89.7	90.3	91.4	91.7	92.2	92.1
Rank	20	19	20	12	12	N/A

5.2 At Key Stage 2, the data suggests that the performance of primary schools during 2017/18 deteriorated slightly (by less than 1%age point) across the majority of subject areas. Nevertheless, the Core Subject Indicator outcomes are at the 2nd highest level since 2013. Rhondda Cynon Taf pupils performed just above the Welsh average for the percentage of pupils achieving Level 4 or above in Welsh (first language).

6. KEY STAGE 3

6.1 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	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Rhondda Cynon Taf	73.6	78.4	81.6	84.0	87.4	87.9
Wales	77.0	81.0	83.9	85.9	87.4	88.1
Rank	16	16	16	17	14	N/A
Percentage of pupils achieving level 5 or above in English	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Rhondda Cynon Taf	79.2	83.3	86.0	87.1	90.4	91.4
Wales	82.9	85.9	87.9	89.2	90.5	91.2

Rank	17	18	19	17	15	N/A
Percentage of pupils achieving level 5 or above in Mathematics	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Rhondda Cynon Taf	81.1	84.3	87.3	88.9	90.7	91.5
Wales	83.9	86.5	88.7	90.1	90.8	91.6
Rank	19	17	16	18	14	N/A
Percentage of pupils achieving level 5 or above in Welsh First Language	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Rhondda Cynon Taf	85.9	90.0	92.5	91.4	94.1	93.2
Wales	87.6	90.1	90.9	92.0	93.5	93.8
Rank	12	8	7	14	9	N/A
Percentage of pupils achieving level 5 or above in Science	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Rhondda Cynon Taf	84.9	88.7	90.7	91.4	93.3	93
Wales	87.0	90.4	91.8	92.8	93.5	93.7
Rank	16	18	16	18	14	N/A

6.2 At Key Stage 3, the secondary schools made good progress during 2017/18 on 3 out of 5 key performance measures, and a further one outcome measure remained relatively stable. The performance on most Key Stage 3 indicators was just below the Welsh average, with the exception of outcomes in English, which was 0.2% above the all Wales average.

7. KEY STAGE 4

7.1 Substantial changes were introduced to the KS4 curriculum in 2017 and how individual pupil and school performance is assessed in Wales, Northern Ireland and England. In the past the three countries have been aligned and the education standards had been set and maintained by one qualification regulator. There are now three separate regulators for the GCSE qualification across the three countries.

7.2 As a result the GCSE qualifications are developed to meet the different requirements of each regulator, which are awarded independently of each other. This means that the grades awarded within a subject will no longer be benchmarked across each country. Clearly, this could create problems in the future in terms of comparisons between qualifications for employers and further and higher education institutions. The three regulators are committed to

working together, as they keep their respective approaches to maintaining standards, under review.

7.3 In 2017 the following changes were introduced:

- The introduction of new GCSE's for English language, Welsh (first) language, GCSE mathematics and a new examination GCSE mathematics – numeracy;
- The new GCSEs are now linear with the assessment being undertaken through examination at the end of the course. Previous GCSEs were available in a modular option, which included a controlled assessment unit for the language qualifications and examinations which could be taken in stages over a two year period;
- Significant changes to the key performance measures in 2017 are detailed as follows:
 - A maximum of two vocational qualifications will count towards the Level 1, Level 2 and Level 2 inclusive measure. In 2016, five vocational qualifications could have counted for the Level 1 and Level 2 thresholds and three for the Level 2 inclusive;
 - Only the new GCSE's for English language, Welsh (first) language, and one of GCSE mathematics or GCSE mathematics – numeracy counts towards the literacy and maths elements of the Level 2 inclusive performance measure. English literature no longer counts towards the literacy and maths elements;
 - The capped points score performance measure is the “best” nine qualifications, rather than the previous eight, which must include English language or Welsh (first) language, GCSE mathematics, GCSE mathematics – numeracy, two science qualifications (two science GCSE's from 2018), and no more than four vocational qualifications.

7.4 The new examinations were first undertaken by Welsh pupils in 2017, and Key Stage 4 outcomes last year were variable, with some schools displaying greater resilience in adapting to the changes imposed. In light of the new examinations and the fact that they assess different skill sets and knowledge bases than the previous examinations, the results achieved prior to 2017 cannot be meaningfully compared to 2017 and 2018 outcomes. Nevertheless, we can make some judgements about the progress made since 2017. However, it should be noted that further changes to performance measures are planned for 2018.

7.5 The table below sets out the **provisional** Key Stage 4 results for 2018. The provisional Central South Consortium data is also shown for comparative purposes. The 2016 dataset is also included for reference purposes only.

7.6 It should be noted that these provisional results may well change over the next few weeks as final examination grades are confirmed following remarks.

KS4	2016 Legacy GCSE's %	2017 New GCSE's Actual %	2018 GCSE's Provisional %
Level 1 threshold (5 A*-G at GCSE or equivalent)			
RCT	96.7	94.7	95.2
CSC	95.4	94.3	94.4
Wales	95.3	N/A	N/A
Level 2 threshold (5 A*-C at GCSE or equivalent – minimum of three GCSEs)			
RCT	90.3	63.2	64.7
CSC	87.1	67.6	69.7
Wales	84.0	N/A	N/A
Level 2 threshold (5 A*-C at GCSE or equivalent) including English/Welsh and mathematics			
RCT	56.6	49.8	52.9
CSC	60.9	54.5	57.4
Wales	60.3	N/A	N/A
A* - C in English			
RCT	68.6	58.5	59.7
CSC	70.6	63.6	64.8
A* - C in Welsh			
RCT	75.3	74.7	73.3
CSC	78.0	79.1	79.9
A* - C in Mathematics (best of the 2 GCSEs)			
RCT	61.3	59.3	61.4
CSC	66.1	62.4	65
A* - C or equivalent in science			
RCT	85.4	78.6	58.7
CSC	85.5	80.3	63.1

7.7 The table illustrates that improved outcomes were evident on Level 1, Level 2 and Level 2+ measures during 2017/18. The Level 1 outcomes were above the regional average for Central South Consortium (CSC) but Level 2 and Level 2+ outcomes were below the average for the region. The percentage of learners achieving A*-C in Welsh and science dipped this academic year, particularly in science. This perhaps can be explained by the recent changes in performance measures and the reduced reliance on BTEC science qualifications. A*-C outcomes in English and mathematics (best of the 2 GCSEs) improved by 1.2% and 2.1%age points this academic year.

- 7.8 Variations across schools and key performance measures were evident this academic year but in the main the vast majority of schools have made encouraging progress on Key Stage 4 outcomes.
- 7.9 Over the next month or so, Council officers, working with headteachers and the Central South Consortium will analyse the data and better understand what has gone well, and what needs to improve, on a school by school level, and within each school, on a subject by subject basis. An analysis of outcomes for vulnerable groups will also be undertaken to ensure that schools are targeting their resources and interventions appropriately. First indications suggest that schools need to ensure that the right curriculum is made available to all Key Stage 4 pupils that best suits their needs and that the teaching provided is of the highest standard.
- 7.10 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 verified data in December 2018.

8. CONCLUSION

- 8.1 Foundation Phase outcomes in Rhondda Cynon Taf have dipped during 2017/18 but this decline was also reflected in national datasets. This will require further interrogation and intervention in schools causing concern to ensure that the previous pattern of incremental improvement is re-established. However, the decline in local and national Foundation Phase outcomes is likely to be attributable to the alignment of the expectation statements within the Areas of Learning, which are now more challenging to achieve.
- 8.2 Key Stage 2 outcomes showed a marginal decline during 2017/18 but the Core Subject Indicator outcomes were at the second highest level since 2013, which suggests that performance remains strong at 89.24%.
- 8.3 At Key Stage 3, progress was made on most indicators but these were in the main below the Welsh average, with the exception of English, which was above the all Wales average. Nevertheless, data suggests that steady progress has been maintained on most Key Stage 3 performance measures.
- 8.4 There has been evidence of progress on Level 1, Level 2 and Level 2+ Key Stage 4 outcome measures during 2017/18 which is very encouraging. A*-C outcomes in Key Stage 4 in English and maths show improvement this academic year. Science outcomes would benefit from further improvement.

Given, that this is the second year of the new Key Stage 4 curriculum and performance measures, it is possible to make some judgements on the performance of each school. Data suggests that most schools have made progress on Key Stage 4 performance measures. Schools in the main have improved performance and all schools will continue to work with the local authority and the Consortium to understand their respective performance and take the necessary steps to improve on future Key Stage 4 results and build on the progress made.

- 8.5 Key Stage 4 has seen significant changes since 2017 in terms of the curriculum and the way in which school performance is assessed. Further changes are planned in future and interim aspirational performance measures for secondary schools are planned which shifts the focus away from 'average' outcomes. These new measures, based on points scores, will remove the emphasis on the Level 2 inclusive measures for Key Stage 4 and the narrow focus on borderline C/D grade pupils that the current threshold measures has cultivated.
- 8.6 An updated version of the current 'Capped 9' points score will be established which will include three specified components at its core, namely literacy, numeracy and science outcomes. It is proposed that the remaining 6 components will comprise pupils' best results for GCSE, or equivalent qualifications approved or designated for delivery in Wales, and as such will be open to local choice. The remaining 6 components of the Capped 9 will in future reflect the school's context and the breadth of curriculum offered and will hopefully provide the necessary assurances that all pupils are able to follow a curriculum that meets their needs. Moving forward schools will still be required to drill down and self-evaluate outcomes for learners eligible and not eligible for free school meals, and girls and boys. It is anticipated that this approach will allow a far more robust analysis of school and learner progress than is currently in operation.