

**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**MUNICIPAL YEAR 2019-2020**

**CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE  
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**Agenda Item No.**

**Date: 25<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2019**

**REPORT OF:  
CABINET MEMBER FOR  
EDUCATION AND INCLUSION  
SERVICES**

**Cabinet & Scrutiny Engagement**

**Author: - Gaynor Davies, Director of Education and Inclusion Services  
(Tel No 01443 744001)**

**1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

The purpose of this report is to provide Members with a detailed update on the progress made in advancing the core commitments of the Council and the Executive over the last financial year.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that Members:

- 2.1 Scrutinise and comment on the information contained within this report.
- 2.2 Consider if any further information is required.

**3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 To challenge any arising matters or issues with the Cabinet Member for Education and Inclusion Services that the portfolio holder is responsible for and to ensure that the appropriate mechanisms are in place to effectively scrutinise and challenge performance.

**4. BACKGROUND**

- 4.1 On the 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2018, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered a report regarding the engagement of the Executive at future Scrutiny Committee going forward.
- 4.2 As part of the Council's ongoing commitment to Cabinet Member engagement, this annual report is published to provide Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee with an opportunity to scrutinise the performance of the Education Directorate, to share successes and potential challenges, and to consider priorities for further improvement. This approach allows each Cabinet Member the opportunity to update

Scrutiny Members on the delivery of their respective areas of the Corporate Plan and the outcomes achieved.

## **5. EDUCATION AND INCLUSION SERVICES: ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

5.1 The Directorate aims to ensure the effective delivery of high quality Education Services to two infant schools; two junior schools; 89 primary schools; three 3-19 schools; two 3-16 schools; 12 secondary schools; four special schools; and two pupil referral units.

5.2 In addition to school support, the Directorate also provides a range of services to: early years registered education providers; childcare providers; children and young people and their families and carers; partner agencies; and other Council Directorates and departments.

5.3 The Local Authority Education Services that exist within the Directorate include the following:

- **21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools & Facilities Management**
  - 21 Century Schools
  - School Catering, Community Meals, School Cleaning
  - School Governance
  - Child Care Offer
- **Primary and Secondary School Achievement**
  - Primary and Secondary School Improvement
  - 14-19 Strategy
  - Music Service
  - Registered Education Providers
- **Inclusion Services**
  - Educational Psychology
  - Learner Support Services
  - Children Looked After Team
  - Special Educational Needs Service
  - Education Otherwise than at School (EOTAS)
- **Attendance and Wellbeing Service**
  - Attendance and Wellbeing Support
  - Fixed Penalty Services
  - Children Missing Education
- **School Transformation & Data**
  - Management Information/Data
  - School Information Management Systems (SIMS)
  - School Admissions.

5.4 Local authorities have many statutory roles and responsibilities in relation to the provision of education. In general, local authorities must:

- contribute towards the spiritual, moral, mental and physical development of the community by ensuring that efficient primary and secondary education is available to meet the needs of the people in its area;
- ensure that education and training functions are exercised with a view to promoting high standards and promoting the fulfilment of learning potential;
- secure the sufficient supply of school places;
- ensure that additional learning provision is kept under review and meets the needs of children with special educational needs;
- allocate individual schools budget in accordance with the formula set out in the School Funding (Wales) Regulations 2010; and
- ensure that the governance of individual schools is robust.

5.5 All children and young people in Rhondda Cynon Taf are entitled to an excellent education that enables them to achieve the best possible outcomes at each stage of their lives. The education provided by our schools needs to be of the highest quality, sustainable and flexible to meet the changing needs of children and young people from birth to adulthood. The provision of excellent educational opportunities underpins and drives the development of economic prosperity in the area.

5.6 Education and Inclusion Services work in partnership with Central South Consortium to support and challenge schools to raise standards and deliver improved outcomes for children and young people across the region.

5.7 The current delivery plan for 2019/20 is focussed on delivering 4 key priorities. These include:

**Priority 1:** To develop inspirational leaders working collaboratively to improve outcomes and reduce the attainment gap.

**Priority 2:** To develop strong inclusive schools committed to excellence, equity and wellbeing.

**Priority 3:** To develop 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning Organisations.

**Priority 4:** To review and further improve our services to ensure that they are future proof and accessible.

## **6. 21<sup>st</sup> CENTURY SCHOOL MODERNISATION PROGRAMME**

6.1 The Council is continuing to deliver the Council's key priority of school modernisation in order to deliver enhanced educational facilities fit for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. In partnership with Welsh Government, Rhondda Cynon Taf has an ambitious 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools and Education Programme which is being delivered as part of two waves of funding. The Band A funding stream totalling £173.4M is nearing completion

Band B projects totalling £168M are currently at different phases of development and implementation.

- 6.2 Completed Band A developments included in 2018/19 resulted in:
- A new Cwmaman Community Primary School – £7.2M investment which has included community play facilities and flood alleviation works
  - A new Nant Gwyn 3-16 Community School - £13.5M investment including a new primary phase and remodelled secondary phase building, new early years and flying start setting together with a new 3G pitch and MUGA
  - A new Porth 3-16 Community school - £12M investment including a new primary phase building, remodelled secondary school and new 3G pitch
  - A new Tonyrefail 3-19 Community School - £44.2M investment with primary and secondary phase buildings completed together with a new early years building and flying start setting, new 3G pitch and PE facilities in the adjacent leisure centre
  - Remodelling of Ferndale Community School - £2M investment including improved classrooms and teaching areas (new science laboratories, ICT suites, and general teaching areas), new toilets, 3G pitch and road safety improvements
  - Treorchy Comp – £12.2M investment including improvements to classroom and teaching areas (new science block, 6th form provision and improved catering facilities). The second phase of the development includes a new general teaching block with toilets and is due for completion in May 2020
  - YGG Llwyncelyn – £250K investment. Improvements included new infant toilets and a remodelled junior block
  - Cymmer Primary School - £2.2M investment and remodelling of the junior block
  - YGG Tonyrefail – £1M investment and improvements to the school, including the development of a new Welsh Medium Early Years provision
  - Relocation of the Tai Centre into the former Ysgol yr Eos Primary School.
- 6.3 The Band A programme has removed over 3,600 surplus school and resulted in significantly improved learning environments and opportunities for learners. Community benefits have been numerous and included: reduced carbon footprint; increased wellbeing and participation of both girls and boys in sporting activities on the new 3G pitches; increased leisure facility usage as reflected in Junior More card memberships; sponsored gardening initiatives for schools; innovative STEM projects; apprenticeships and work based programmes.
- 6.4 Band B developments are currently underway and in 2018/19, Welsh Government approved the Council's Strategic Outline Business Case of £168M to deliver the second phase of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century School and

Education Programme. Cabinet has approved Band B developments to the northern Cynon Valley. These include plans for Penderyn Community Primary School to become a Welsh Medium School and an investment of £10.4M for a new build for Hirwaun Primary School. The business case for the latter has been approved by Welsh Government and construction has commenced.

Cabinet approval has also been given for a new extension for YGG Aberdar (£3.3M investment) and YG Rhydywaun (£10.2M investment). Business cases are being developed and will be considered by Welsh Government in October 2019.

- 6.5 In August 2019, Cabinet approval was given to progress with a number of Band B developments in the Greater Pontypridd area. This included two new 3-16 schools for Hawthorn and Pontypridd High School and the removal of sixth form provision from Cardinal Newman RC School, Hawthorn High School and Pontypridd High School. Agreement was also provided to establish a post 16 centre of excellence in Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School. Alternative Faith based education and college provision will also be provided at St David's College and Coleg Y Cymoedd.

As part of these Band B proposals, Cabinet also agreed to establish a new Welsh medium school on the school site of Heol Y Celyn to replace the existing school and YGG Pont Sion Norton. Amendments to catchment areas were also approved and a commitment given to consult on developing Welsh medium additional learning needs provision at a future date.

- 6.6 The Council has an extensive programme of planned capital and revenue works. In 2018, the Council invested £9.7M in planned capital school improvement works and £3M in revenue minor repair works, to reduce the backlog of maintenance in schools.

An additional investment of £3M was made for new 3G pitches for Ferndale Community School, YGG Garth Olwg, YG Rhydywaun and Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School, including a new running track.

- 6.7 In January 2019, the Council successfully secured £1M Welsh Government funding for a new community hub and school hall for Ffynnon Taf Primary School. This funding was subsequently enhanced using Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) monies to provide a new classroom extension block and early years facility.

- 6.8 The Council has been awarded a total of £2.5M as part of a Childcare Offer Capital Grant to support capital investment in childcare settings and the effective implementation of the Childcare Offer. Funding for four capital projects was successfully secured to relocate, improve or create wraparound childcare facilities on a number of sites. This has resulted in

an additional 133 Care Inspectorate Wales registered childcare places in Rhondda Cynon Taf.

Welsh Government funding was also secured for a full time project officer to manage these projects and develop a small capital grant scheme. £120K will also be available to support small scale capital improvements and adaptations to childcare providers participating in the Childcare Offer.

In addition, to this £2.5M the Council has recently received approval for an additional £1M for Treorchy Primary School for much needed improvements to the school's early years facilities.

- 6.9 The Education Directorate has responsibility for co-ordinating Welsh Government's Childcare Offer which provides working parents 30 hours per week of combined Foundation Phase Nursery (FPN) education and additional funded childcare for 3 and 4 year olds for 48 weeks a year. Rhondda Cynon Taf was selected as one of seven early implementers of the Childcare Offer initiative when the scheme was launched in September 2017.

Parents apply for funding via an online portal and at the request of Welsh Government, the Education Directorate also administers the scheme on behalf of Bridgend and Merthyr Tydfil Councils. A total of 2430 applications have been processed, which have included 1695 applications from Rhondda Cynon Taf residents. The offer has impacted positively on working families, with up to £3847 provided per child to support annual childcare costs. Childcare providers have also benefitted as services have expanded and become more sustainable.

- 6.10 A successful bid of £1.6M was approved by Welsh Government to reduce infant class sizes in three schools (Parc Lewis, Llanharan and Gelli Primary Schools) in Rhondda Cynon Taf. One scheme is now complete and another two are in development. In addition to this resource, a further £1.3M was secured for additional teachers in six schools (YGG Llyn y Forwyn, Gelli Primary School, Llanharan Primary School, Parc Lewis Primary School, Penywaun Primary School and Pontygwaith Primary School) in order to further reduce class sizes
- 6.11 The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools team have been heavily involved in enhancing Welsh medium provision. As part of the Welsh Language Early Years Grant, a successful business case was submitted to secure Investment of £3.5M for six projects. Three projects are nearing completion (YGG Ynyswen, YGG Evan James and YG Llanhari) and a further three are in the design and planning phase (YGG Llantrisant, YGG Aberdar, YGG Abercynon).

Good progress has been made to support the actions outlined in the current Welsh in Education Strategic Plan. One of the Council's statutory responsibilities is to ensure that there is a sufficient supply of suitable

school places to meet demand, and we have to ensure effective strategic planning in the Welsh medium sector. In 2018/19 the Council has:

- Increased the capacity of YGG Llwynceilyn by 100 places
- Increased the capacity of YGG Tonyrefail by 120 places
- Committed to investing at YGG Aberdar to provide a further 60 places as part of the Band B programme of investment
- Committed to increasing capacity at YG Rhydywaun to provide an additional 162 places as part of Band B programme of investment
- Increased capacity in Ysgol Garth Olwg through investment and the creation of a new 3-19 school
- Committed to investing in a new Welsh medium school for the pupils of Pont Sion Norton and Heol Y Celyn to provide an additional 90 spaces
- Agreed to comprehensive plans for Dolau Primary School which will expand the Welsh and English medium provision a result of planned housing development This new provision will provide a further 540 primary places
- Committed to amending the language category of Penderyn Primary School from its dual language status to a Welsh Medium Primary School increasing the number of Welsh medium places available
- Committed to undertaking a feasibility study to identify a suitable site to build a new school for YGG Llyn-y-Forwyn, and YG Cwm Rhondda
- Committed to consult on opening a new Welsh Medium Primary School to serve planned housing developments to the south of Llantwit Fardre/Church Village, if housing developments proceed
- Committed to undertaking a feasibility study to explore the opportunities to increase the availability of Welsh Medium primary school places in the Cynon Valley, south of Aberdare.

## **7. SCHOOL GOVERNANCE**

During the 2018/2019 academic year, the Governor Support Service provide a comprehensive clerking, advice and guidance service to 101 schools with all primary, all through and special schools buying back services via a service level agreement. All secondary schools, with one exception, buy into an advice service. Support was also provided on 220 schools based complaints during the last academic year.

Regular training is provided for schools and a speed training day has been included in the training calendar for 2019/20 in an attempt to enhance to improved engagement in mandatory training.

## **8. SCHOOL HOLIDAY ENRICHMENT PROGRAMME (SHEP)**

The SHEP was delivered in partnership with health and community sports staff in order to alleviate pressures on families living in poverty and to provide regular meals, nutrition education and physical activity for vulnerable children. The summer holiday programme for 2018 involved a total of five schools (Glenboi, Heol y Celyn, Maerdy, Penywaun and

Ysgol Hen Felin), with over 180 pupils in attendance and over 1,260 meals produced over a 3 week period. Parents were also engaged in one session and provided positive feedback on the programme.

## **9. CATERING**

- 9.1 The 21<sup>st</sup> Century school modernisation programme has included the redesign of five secondary school kitchens and dining halls to improve the dining experience and promote learner engagement and attendance. Evidence suggests the investment in school facilities is having a significant impact on the take up of school meals with an increase of 17,934 meals at primary level and 86,811 meals at secondary level during 2018/19.
- 9.2 Breakfast service has been extended to an additional four secondary schools in order to encourage early arrival in schools.
- 9.3 An extensive choice of menus have been developed for learners with wide ranging allergens (29 in total) and bespoke menus created for 184 learners with more complex requirements. A vegan menu is also accessible for those requiring this option.
- 9.4 The Catering Service has develop an innovative training programme which has targeted 656 Council employees and 79 private sector clients. In addition, 1878 learners in seven schools have accessed training in cake art. Income generated from training increased from £20K to £45K during 2018/19, with further increases likely. E-learning modules have been established for over 1,000 members of core staff and further modules in food safety and allergen training are in development.
- 9.5 Catering Services currently have 20 workplace apprentices who are working towards a NVQ level 2. In addition, training was provided to 7 Cater2Work Programmes and the SHEP programme.
- 9.6 Significant service changes were introduced to Community Meals in 2018 and have been successfully implemented. Community meal kitchens were reduced from three to one and delivery routes streamlined to ensure efficiency. Annual savings of £258K were predicted but these are now more in the region of £300K per year. Despite these efficiencies, service delivery has been maintained and remains effective.
- 9.7 Breakfast clubs are operational in 91 primary schools and four all through schools. The service employs 561 staff and provides approximately 24,500 breakfasts per week. This is a significant financial commitment for the Council, particularly as numbers and associated costs are increasing due to increasing numbers of working parents accessing this free provision. More work needs to be undertaken to ensure learners eligible to free school meals take full advantage of this provision.



## **10. SCHOOL PERFORMANCE**

- 10.1 Following a written statement by the Minister for Education in July 2018 and a consultation which ended in January 2018, teacher assessment data is no longer published at a school, local authority and consortia level. This is a significant move away from gathering information about young people's performance on a school by school basis for accountability purposes.
- 10.2 When compared against the national averages, the performance of RCT schools in the Foundation Phase has been broadly similar to last year. Pupil outcomes in all core areas of learning, at both the expected and higher outcomes, are below the national averages.

This year's results in the Foundation Phase reflect a decrease in the percentage of pupils achieving the expected outcomes across Wales. The Wales average for the Foundation Phase Outcome Indicator has reduced by 2.6 percentage points to 80.0%. The main reason for this is the implementation of new outcomes in the Foundation Phase Assessment Framework that have been used in language and mathematics. Many teachers were under the impression that there were higher expectations to achieve an outcome and this is one factor that has led to fewer pupils achieving outcome 5.

The gap in performance between boys and girls for the Foundation Phase Outcome Indicator has remained in line with the previous year. The gap in performance between eFSM and nFSM pupils has increased for the Foundation Phase Outcome Indicator in the most recent year, with the performance of eFSM falling at a faster rate than that seen for nFSM pupils.

- 10.3 When compared against the national averages, the performance of schools at Key Stage 2 has been broadly similar to last year. The percentage of pupils achieving the expected level is in line with the national average for English, but below the national average for all other core subjects. At the higher levels, the percentage of pupils achieving expected outcomes is above the national average for Welsh, but below the national average for all other core subjects.

The gap in performance between boys and girls for the Core Subject Indicator has increased slightly in the most recent year, with the performance of both boys and girls decreasing. The gap in performance between eFSM and nFSM pupils for the Core Subject Indicator has increased in the most recent year, with the performance of eFSM pupils falling at a faster rate than that seen for nFSM pupils.

- 10.4 Key Stage 3 results are broadly in line with outcomes from 2018. The percentage of pupils who achieved the expected level has fallen marginally for English, mathematics, science and Welsh to around 89% in English and mathematics and to around 91% in science and Welsh.

The proportion of pupils failing to record a single level of progress between Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3 has increased for all core subjects while the proportion of pupils making two or more levels of progress has decreased for all core subjects.

The gap in performance between boys and girls has increased for the Core Subject Indicator and all core subjects, with the weaker performance of boys being the main reason for this outcome.

Compared with 2018, the gap between pupils entitled to free school meals (eFSM) and pupils not entitled to free school meals (nFSM) has narrowed for the Core Subject Indicator and all core subjects other than English. The gap for English widened by just 0.3%age points.

10.5. 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 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. 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.

10.6 The Key Stage 4 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. Welsh Government 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 Key Stage 4 learners against these measures for the 2018/19 academic year. However, this data will be provided to inform school self-evaluation and will not be used for comparative purposes.

10.7 It is important to note that while the local authority and consortium have gained initial information regarding Key Stage 4 outcomes, these **results**

**are provisional and should be interpreted with caution** as changes are likely following data cleansing and the remarking of scripts.

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

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

Provisional outcomes on the new interim threshold measures are detailed as follows:

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. It is difficult to make judgements on the threshold measures are

Outcomes on the new Capped 9 measure were below the points score achieved across the region as were the points scores for the literacy, numeracy and science measures. The Welsh Baccalaureate Skill Challenge Certificate points score shows improvement since 2018 and was above the Central South Consortium average this academic year.

- 10.8 Overall, in Rhondda Cynon Taf at A level, 96.1% learners gained A-E grades and 70.3% secured A\*-C grades, these figures represent

improvements on 2018 outcomes. In addition, nearly 20% achieved A\*-A grades. 98.3% of learners gained the Level 3 threshold an improvement of 2.1%age points on 2018.

The proportion of learners gaining 3A\*-A grades improved by 1%age point. There was a slight dip in the proportion of learners gaining 3A\*-C grades. Outcomes for the Welsh Baccalaureate Skills Challenge Certificate in 2019 were ahead of regional figures for %A\*-C and %A\*-E

- 10.9 At AS level both the percentage of learners gaining A-C and A grades improved on 2018 figures.

## **11. 14-19 STRATEGY**

- 11.1 Following changes in the way Post 16 funding is calculated, £9,610,814 was distributed to schools with suitable provision. Seven schools were audited and the method of distribution was deemed to be good.

- 11.2 14-19 provides support to schools for curriculum and timetabling matters and support and training using the ALPS system is ongoing and is used by all our sixth form providers.

- 11.3 In order to improve the variety of Post 16 pathways, work based learning opportunities are provided and training delivered in the Hen Felin Training Centre. Last year saw the numbers rise to 45 learners, an increase of 280%. Further increases are expected this year with plans to increase the curriculum.

- 11.4 14-19 continues to provide training for all secondary schools as part of the Microsoft Imagine Academy. This year it has also provided training for primary schools and have seen several schools recognised by outside agencies and awards for their work with digital learning. Rhondda Cynon Taf has provided the first learners to succeed in a new coding qualification and this has been recognised on the World stage.

- 11.5 The service continues to work with Higher Education Institutions, Further Education Institutions, Welsh Government and other partners to ensure that there is continuity of provision and to promote the employability prospects of our learners.

## **12. MUSIC SERVICE**

- 12.1 The music service continues to provide quality music teaching to 44 primary schools and 10 secondary schools. The service provides individual tuition, group and whole class instruction as well as running several ensembles. Whole class provision in primary schools often provides cover for teacher PPA and to cover the specialist music curriculum input that may be missing in the school.

- 12.2 The service has benefitted from an injection of £123,000 from the Welsh Government and this has been used to repair and replace instruments as well as set up a number of projects in a number of schools to increase the participation rates.
- 12.3 There has been an increase in the number of learners accessing the service in the last year. Whilst many of these are at the beginner stage it is hoped that many will continue. Rhondda Cynon Taf continues to be a lead in the Four Counties Orchestra and many of our performers are represented at this level.

### **13. REGISTERED EDUCATION PROVIDERS (REPs)**

- 13.1 There are currently 28 Registered Education Providers (REP's) and two working towards REP status. These are CIW registered childcare settings who deliver foundation phase nursery education and are inspected by Estyn. REPs are used to supplement foundation phase nursery education throughout the County and in 2018-19 academic year, 638 children accessed provision of this nature.
- 13.2 Since January 2018, six REP's have had Estyn inspections, all of which received Good or Excellent judgements in all areas.

### **14. INCLUSION SERVICES**

- 14.1 Rhondda Cynon Taf has 46 learning support classes (LSC), 4 special schools and 2 Pupil Referral Units (PRU) which costs in the region of £3.1 million annually. There are approximately 330 pupils accessing the 46 LSC provisions within County across a range of needs.
- 14.2 A total of £3.3M Additional Needs Funding (ANF) is delegated to mainstream schools annually to ensure that both non-statutory and statutory mainstream provision for learners with severe and persistent needs is robust and supports mainstream inclusion.
- 14.3 The service currently maintains 1,319 statements of Special Educational Needs (SEN). This is in comparison to 657 statements in 2013/14 which represents the significant growth in statutory demand and in the complexity of need in the locality. National data for 2017/18 however highlights that RCT are below the All Wales average in terms of numbers of statements learners with 2.4% of the school population being in receipt of a statement compared to 2.7% throughout Wales. Despite this growth, performance indicators in relation to timely completion of the statutory process have shown significant improvement from 2017/18 and 2018/19.

Quarter	Percentage of statements issued within 18 weeks (18/19 financial year)	Percentage of statements issued within 26 weeks (18/19 financial year)	Percentage of statements issued within 18 weeks (17/18 financial year)	Percentage of statements issued within 26 weeks (17/18 financial year)
1	94	90	60	71
2	98	100	66	67
3	95	95	79	87
4	97	97	85	85

- 14.4 There has been evidence of a growth in both permanent and fixed term exclusions in recent years. The number of days lost has increased significantly in 2018/19 to a total of 5374.5 days.

Exclusion Data	2017/18	2018/19
Fixed Term Exclusions	2229	2690
Number of days lost	4294	5374.5
Number of permanent exclusions	8	23

To address this rise in exclusions, Access & Inclusion and School Improvement Services have developed a robust graduated approach to support and challenge for schools which determines the level and intensity of intervention each school will receive to address agreed strategic improvement strategies, with clear processes for monitoring and escalation of concerns.

- 14.5 The Educational Psychology Service provides both statutory and non-statutory services for children and young people aged 0-19. Following a steady increase in the number of referrals to the EPS, an enhanced focus upon early intervention and preventative work with schools was introduced through more consultative working practices. This has resulted in a decrease in the number of referrals to the service from 1453 in 2017/18 to 1165 in 2018/19.

The service has received specialist training in order to support schools and learners to respond to Critical Incidents and sad events. During 2018/19, 90 sessions (45 days) were provided by the EPS to support schools during these difficult periods of time. Feedback indicates that this provision is very much valued by RCT schools.

- 14.6 The Children Looked After (CLA) Team within Access & Inclusion endeavours to reduce the risk of poor educational outcomes through individual, group, whole school and strategic approaches and the preparation, monitoring and recording of Personal Education Plans (PEP). The CLA Friendly Schools resource was launched in September 2017 as a tool to support improved outcomes for this vulnerable group of learners. This resource has been used as a framework for schools to prioritise areas they need to further develop and to identify how best to utilise the PDGLAC funding in a targeted and sustainable way. A total of 14 RCT schools have achieved CLA Friendly School Quality Mark with 5 achieving gold and 9 achieving platinum status. A further 6 schools have currently enrolled for the 2019/20 CLA Quality Mark training.
- 14.7 Learner Support Service consists of: the following teams: Sensory, Cognition and Learning including Multi Ethnic Achievement Service, Behaviour, Speech Language and Communication including Autism. The service provides advice, guidance and training to schools to support pupils with a range of Additional Learning Needs (ALN) and provides line management to the staff within the learning support class provision in the local authority.
- 14.8 The Education Other Than At School provision consists of a primary and secondary Pupil Referral Unit. The recent Estyn inspection at the primary PRU in June 2019 awarded a judgement of 'Excellent' for all 5 inspection areas and will be used by Estyn as a case study on its work in relation to the extremely effective curriculum planning across the PRU.
- 14.9 The local authority's Alternative Provision Service provides individual and group tuition to some of the local authority's most vulnerable learners. Outcomes for this group of learners have shown steady improvement over the past 2 years. However, there has been a continuing increase in the number of learners accessing the service over recent academic years, highlighting the increasing vulnerability of learners in relation to mental health and wellbeing.

## 15. Attendance and Wellbeing Service

### 15.1 Primary School Attendance (including Special Schools)

Academic Year	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19*	3 year Variance
<b>% Attendance RCT</b>	94.6%	94.2%	94.3%	<b>-0.3%</b>
<b>All Wales Average</b>	94.9%	94.9%	<i>Unavailable</i>	<b>0.0%</b>
<b>eFSM/ non FSM Gap RCT</b>	2.4%	2.3%	2.2%	<b>-0.2%</b>
<b>eFSM/ non FSM Gap Wales</b>	2.7%	3.0%	<i>Unavailable</i>	<b>+0.3%</b>

\* RCT figures for 2018/19 may be subject to change following the statutory submission to Welsh Government. We are unable to provide All Wales figures for 2018/19 until the publication of data by Welsh Government expected late October/early November.

The overall primary school attendance for 2018/19 is 94.3% compared to 94.6% in 2016/17, a decrease of 0.3%. The All Wales average, which has remained static in the previous two year period at 94.9%, is unavailable for 2018/19 until after the statutory submission date and release of information via Stats Wales. The gap between the attendance of eFSM pupils and nFSM pupils has narrowed by -0.2% over the three years to only 2.2%. Figures for 2016/17 and 2017/18 are narrower than the Welsh average, which has widened by 0.3% over the same period. At 94.3% primary school attendance stands below our ambitious 2018/19 Local Authority target of 95.1%.

### 15.2 Secondary School Attendance (including Special Schools)

Academic Year	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	3 year Variance
<b>% Attendance RCT</b>	93.5%	92.9%	92.8%	<b>-0.7%</b>
<b>All Wales Average</b>	94.1%	93.8%	93.8%	<b>-0.3%</b>
<b>eFSM/ non FSM Gap RCT</b>	5.0%	5.2%	4.8%	<b>-0.2%</b>
<b>eFSM/ non FSM Gap Wales</b>	4.9%	5.1%	<i>Unavailable</i>	<b>+0.2%</b>

The overall secondary school attendance for 2018/19 is 92.8% compared to 93.5% in 2016/17, a decrease of 0.7%. This represents more than twice the rate of decline of the All Wales average across the same period and in 2018/19 is 1.0% below the average national attendance level. The gap between the attendance of eFSM and nFSM pupils has narrowed by 0.2% since 2016/17 with the latest figures from Welsh Government unavailable at the time of writing. At 92.8% secondary school attendance stands below our 94.1% Local Authority target for 2018/19.



## **16. SCHOOL TRANSFORMATION AND DATA**

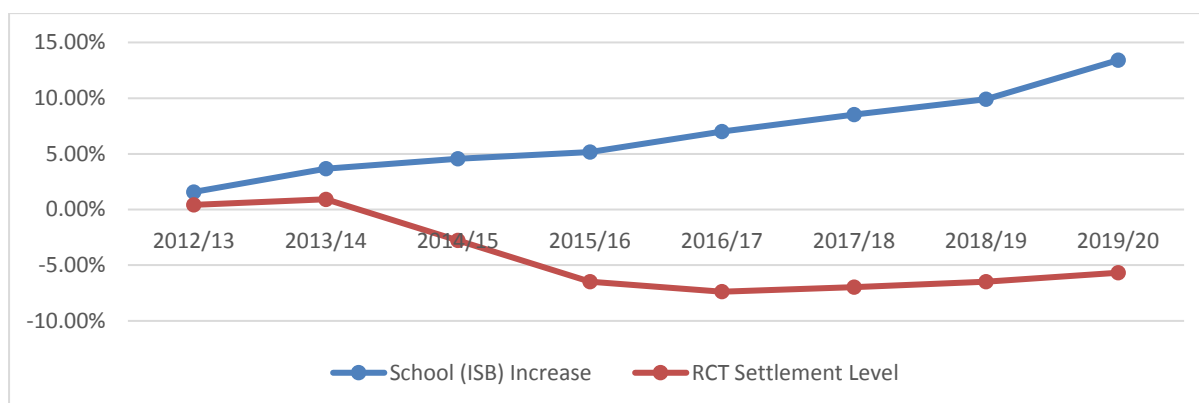
- 16.1 The core objective of the Transformation and Data Team is to ensure that effective collation and analysis of data across the Education and Inclusion Service Directorate. The integrated Capita One central database allows service areas and the Council to undertake effective strategic analysis of data in collaboration with other Departments and Directorates and ensures the timely and robust production of data to inform service evaluation and improvement.
- 16.2 The service also supports schools to manage and maintain their Schools Information Management System (SIMS) and associated partner products. SIMS is used by the schools to manage pupil details and data, including attendance, behaviour, attainment, assessment and SEN status data. During 2018//19, 683 members of staff were trained by the SIMs team, in 56 different courses from 115 schools and local authority departments.
- 16.3 The data team are also responsible for ensuring that all the pupil records are all effectively migrated and configured in the new 21st Century Schools that opened in September 2018
- 16.4 The Data team is responsible for providing Welsh Government with statutory returns, i.e. PLASC, Pupil Forecasting, Supply of School Places, School Capacity Calculations and School Workforce Annual Census.

## **17. SCHOOL BUDGETS**

- 17.1 2018/19 saw the Council deliver on its commitment to increase the schools' budgets through a £2M (1.4%) increase, which was double the original commitment to schools of at least £1M.
- 17.2 The total schools' budgets in 2019/20 equated to £151.6M, which represents over 31% of the Council's net budget and a total increase in funding of £5.2M (3.5%).
- 17.3 Since 2012/13, schools' budgets have increased at a level above other Council services and above the level of the Council's own settlement from Welsh Government. The comparative increases over the last eight years are shown in the following table and graph:

<b>Year</b>	<b>School (ISB) Increase</b>	<b>RCT Settlement Level</b>
2012/13	+1.58%	+0.42%
2013/14	+2.08%	+0.5%
2014/15	+0.9%	-3.7%
2015/16	+0.6%	-3.7%
2016/17	+1.85%	-0.9%
2017/18	+1.5%	+0.4%
2018/19	+1.4%	+0.5%

2019/20	+3.5%	+0.8%
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Over the 8 year period shown above, schools have received an increase amounting to 13.41%, as opposed to the Council's remaining budgets having been reduced by 5.68%. In monetary terms, this amounts to an extra £26.3M being provided to schools over the period.

17.4 The levels of school reserves held as at the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019 are shown below:

	31/03/2018	Movement 2018/19	31/03/2019
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Special	453	-115	338
Secondary	-1,367	-208	-1,575
All-Through	407	286	693
Primary	4,174	-479	3,695
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,667</b>	<b>-516</b>	<b>3,151</b>

There are currently seven secondary and three primary schools with deficit balances. In accordance with the Council's Deficit Recovery Protocol, individual financial recovery plans are in place for schools that meet the threshold and termly monitoring meetings are convened.

## 18. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

An Equality Impact Assessment is not required as the contents of this report are for information purposes only.

## 19. CONSULTATIONS

No consultation exercises have been undertaken.

## 20. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

This report is for information only.

## **21. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED**

- 21.1 Under section 14 of the Education Act 1996 local authorities are under a duty to ensure that there are sufficient primary and secondary schools in their area to provide all pupils with the opportunity of an appropriate education. An appropriate education is defined in section 14 as one which offers instruction and training which may be desirable in view of pupils' different ages, abilities and aptitudes, and the different periods for which they may be expected to remain at school.
- 21.1 Section 14(6) requires that in carrying out their functions under section 14, local authorities must ensure that special educational provision is made for pupils who have special educational needs.

## **22. LINKS TO THE COUNCILS CORPORATE PLAN/CORPORATE PRIORITIES/SIP**

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.

## **23. CONCLUSION**

- 23.1 Education continues to be a priority for the Council and this is clearly reflected in the extensive investment made as part of the ambitious 21<sup>st</sup> Century School Modernisation Programme and the extensive planned capital and revenue works. These programmes, coupled with additional successful capital grant applications to Welsh Government have enabled the Council to significantly improve the quality of educational environments for our learners and community facilities for our residents.
- 23.2 The Council is committed to protecting school budgets where feasible and in 2018/19 schools benefitted from a £2M increase (1.4%) in budgets.
- 23.3 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. The new interim performance measures at Key Stage 4 make it difficult to make meaningful judgements about performance on attainment outcomes but close monitoring of schools progress and targeted support and intervention will be necessary to ensure that outcomes continue to improve. Raising standards across the board and closing the attainment gap between eFSM and nFSM remains a priority.
- 23.4 Focussed improvement strategies will be necessary to ensure that attendance and exclusions levels, particularly at secondary level, show improvement over 2019/20.

23.5 In order to achieve improvements in our schools at a time of significant change and reform we need to have a strong focus on the enduring elements of great schools, strong leadership, good wellbeing of learners and staff; honest and robust self-evaluation and a world class curriculum based on the needs and aptitudes of all learners consistently supported by excellent teaching and learning in our classrooms. The local authority has a critical role in ensuring that we deliver on this agenda and develop excellent schools fit for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.