RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

MUNICIPAL YEAR 2014-15

**EDUCATION AND LIFELONG LEARNING
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

DATE: 8th APRIL 2015

Agenda Item 4
LOCAL AUTHORITY EDUCATION SERVICES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SELF EVALUATION REPORT APRIL 2015

*REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND LIFELONG
LEARNING*
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1.   PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

The purpose of this report is to provide Members with the opportunity to review and challenge the draft Self Evaluation Report for Education Services for Children and Young People in Rhondda Cynon Taf April 2015.

2.   RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members:-

2.1   Note the content of this report and appendix.

2.2   Review the Self Evaluation Report (SER) and consider whether it is an honest and robust reflection of the position of the Council's education services.

3.   BACKGROUND

3.1   Attached as Appendix A is the draft 'Councils Education Services for Children and Young People April 2015' Self Evaluation report.

3.2   Effective self evaluation leads to improvements across services including the improvement of standards achieved by learners.

3.3   All services within the Directorate and partners with an interest in improving outcomes for Children and Young people contribute to the SER process.

3.4   All council services undertake a self evaluation as part of their business planning processes.

3.5   The self evaluation identifies areas for improvement, which will be prioritised and actions will be assigned to individual services to be included in their operational business plans.

3.6   The Self Evaluation Report will inform the Education priorities which are included in the Council's WPI plan.

4.   CONCLUSION

4.1   In August 2014 Estyn concluded that Rhondda Cynon Taf Borough Council is judged to have made sufficient progress in relation to the recommendations following the inspection of March 2012, which placed the Education Services for Children and Young People in RCT in a follow up category requiring Estyn monitoring.

4.2   As a result, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales considers that the authority is no longer in need of Estyn monitoring and was removed from further follow-up activity.

4.3   A robust self evaluation process is necessary to ensure that the progress made so far is maintained and to recognise that the Council and its schools still have work to do before we become one of the best education authorities, with the best schools in Wales.

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Rhondda Cynon Taf

Self-Evaluation of the Local Authority's Education Services for Children & Young People

April 2015

DATA	RELEASE DATE
NDC Results	September 2014
Secondary Attendance	September 2014
FFT Data	February 2015
WG Value Added	November 2014
KS4 and KS5 results	26 November 2014
Primary Attendance	3 December 2014
School Bandings-secondary	January 2015
Outcomes by FSM	January 2015
Outcomes by Pupil Characteristics	March 2015
Exclusions	March 2015
Careers Wales destination report	April 2015

KEY QUESTION 1: HOW GOOD ARE OUTCOMES? Quality Indicator: 1.1. Standards Evaluation	Evidence
1.1.1 Results Compared with National Averages, Similar Providers and Prior Attainment	
Click here for details of Rhondda Cynon Taf's Educational context and comparable Authorities The 2014 teacher assessment results at foundation phase, KS2 and KS3 show that 14 out of the 15 indicators have improved since 2013. The foundation phase LCE measure fell by 0.3 percentage points. In 2014, the rate of improvement in 9 of the 15 key measures has been higher than for Wales as a whole which has enabled the Authority to close the gap to the All Wales average. At key stage 3, all 5 measures showed improvement higher than for Wales as a whole. Since our last Estyn inspection (2011 data) all comparable indicators have improved. Performance measures for key stage 4 indicate good progress since 2012 with our rate of improvement exceeding national increases in all key indicators. While outcomes at KS5 have improved the provisional 2014 data indicate that the percentage of boys achieving level 3 has remained at the same level since 2012 and the percentage of pupils achieving A*-A grade has fallen in both years Although outcomes have improved and our rankings are in line or above free school meals (FSM) expected position, in order to narrow the gap to the highest performing authorities in Wales and improve outcomes for all pupils we need to further reduce the variance within and between our schools. While more than 50% of our schools are above the median of their FSM group at KS2 and KS3 further improvement is required to reduce the variation between schools especially at Foundation phase.	
Foundation Phase	
- In 2014, 81.8% of RCT pupils achieved the foundation phase outcome indicator (FPI) compared to 85.2% nationally – a difference of 3.4 percentage points. This ranked us 21 out of the 22 Authorities, a decrease from 19th in 2013, slightly lower than our overall FSM ranking for 2014 of 20th. - Since 2013, looking at the individual areas of learning the gap between our performance and the All Wales data has increased for all areas except Welsh. Rankings have improved in LCW, remained the same in LCE and decreased in PSD, MDT and FPI. - Since 2012, the percentage of RCT pupils achieving the FPI has improved from 77.2% to 81.8% - an improvement of 4.6 percentage points, 0.1% points below the All Wales improvement. - The 2014 FPI results show that we are fourth out of the five consortium Authorities – in line with our FSM position.	
KS2	
2014 results continued the upward trend in all subjects. Our CSI result ranks us 18 out of the 22 Authorities. An improvement from 20th in 2012 and higher than our FSM ranking. - The CSI outcome in 2014 was 84.3% – with the gap between RCT and the All Wales average decreasing from 3.3 to 1.8 percentage points. When looking at our consortium Authorities this places us 4th out of the 5 authorities. - Trends since 2012 have shown levels of improvement greater than Wales in all indicators, enabling us to close the gap to the all Wales average and improve our rankings in all subjects except Science which remained the same. The greatest	

	improvement was seen in Welsh fist language where our ranking improved from 18th to 12th.	
KS3	
	• Since 2012 ALL indicators have improved at a greater rate than the All Wales average. Improvement range from 8.6 percentage points in English to 13.2 in Welsh. • 2014 produced the Authority's best results in the CSI and all core subjects. • Since 2012 we have improved our CSI rank from 20th to 18th Welsh from 19th to 14th with the remaining subjects are in line with our expected position based on FSM.	
Progress between key stages	

	• The majority of pupils make the expected levels of progress between key stages.
	  ○ In 2012, between key stage 1 and key stage 2 over 78.3% of pupils improved by at least 2 levels, this percentage had increased to 85.5% by 2014. The highest percentage being in English (92.5%) and the lowest in Welsh (85.5%).
	  ○ In 2014, between key stage 2 and key stage 3, over 43% of pupils improved by at least 2 levels, the highest being Science (52.2%) and the lowest English (43.2%).
	• Comparing 2014 results with 2012, all measures have shown an improvement in the percentage of pupils progressing at least 2 levels.	

KS4	
	• All key indicators improved in 2014 with the rate of improvement (except the level 1 threshold) being greater than or equal to the All Wales rate. • Since 2012, the rate of improvement for all key indicators has outperformed the All Wales data, enabling the gap between RCT performance and the Welsh average to narrow. • Rankings have improved for all indicators with our Level 2 performance now ranked 12th compared with 15th and our capped points score 16th compared with 20th in 2012. • For the Level 2 threshold indicator RCT results outperformed the All Wales data for the second consecutive year. • In 2014, amongst the CSC Authorities we were 2nd for Level 2 threshold, 3rd for the ACWPS, 4th for Level 2+ and CSI and 5th for Level 1.	
KS5	
	• Results for 2014 show the percentage of pupils achieving the Level 3 indicator has improved at a high rate than the all Wales data, this reverses the decline seen in 2013 with results back to the 2012 level at 96% • The average wider points score (AWPS) has increased to 718 from 701 in 2013, this compares to a fall in the All Wales data. • Since 2012, the AWPS has increased at a faster rate than the all Wales data enabling the gap to the all Wales figure to decrease. Over the same period the Level 2 threshold has remained the same compared to an increase of one percentage point across Wales.	
FSM benchmarking Quartiles	

	• When looking at school level key stage assessment outcomes across the FSM benchmarking quartiles:
	  ○ Performance at key stage 3 shows all indicators except Welsh have more than 50% of schools above the median of their FSM group, the highest being Maths with 57.9% in addition 4 have more than 25% in the top quartile. All indicators have improved since 2012 when no indicator had more than 50% of schools above the median and all had more than 40% of schools in the bottom quartile of their FSM group.
	  ○ Performance at key stage 2 shows all indicators have more than 50% of schools above the median of their FSM group and none with more than 25% in the bottom quartile. All indicators have improved since 2012 when 4 of the	

5 indicators had more than 25% of schools in the bottom quartile.

- o Performance at Foundation Phase shows that all indicators except LCW have fewer schools above the median of their FSM group than in 2012. In 2014, no indicator had more than 25% of schools in the top quartile and all except LCW had more than 25% of schools in the bottom quartile.

- For KS4 in 2014, when RCT schools are compared with similar schools nationally, more than half are above the median of their FSM group in 4 of the 5 indicators compared with none in 2012. All five indicators have more than 25% of schools in the top quartile.

Year/ Indicator	Level 1	Level 2	Level 2 incl. E/W & M	A.C.W.P.S.	C.S.I
2011/12	26.3%	42.1%	42.1%	36.8%	47.4%
2012/13	57.9%	63.2%	57.9%	47.4%	63.2%
2013/14	57.9%	68.4%	42.1%	57.9%	63.2%

Post 16 –Staying On Rates /LENQ – Full data available April 2015

- Data for 2013 indicates that there has been an increase in the percentage of year 11 pupils remaining in full time education from 86% to 87.5%.This is an increase of 3.1% since 2010 and is above the All Wales data of 86.4%.
- Whilst the percentage staying on in school has remained constant, there has been an increase in those continuing in college.
- For pupils leaving year 13 the percentage in Rhondda Cynon Taf who plan to go onto further study is 79.8% - above the All Wales figure of 78.9%. Nationally, the percentage of year 13 pupils intending to progress to higher education has decreased by 0.3% but remained constant in RCT.
- The number of pupils leaving education without a qualification fell in 2012 to 0.9% and fell further in 2013 to 0.5% - the 2013 figure representing 16 pupils- compared with 30 in 2011. This ranks RCT 17th an improvement from 20th in 2011. While performance is still below the all Wales data the gap has halved from 0.4 to 0.2%.

Post 16 NEETS – Provisional Data – final due out April 2015

- The 2014 Careers Wales Destination Report confirms the percentage of school leavers, aged 16-18 years, reported as NEET in RCT stands at 4.06%. This is 1.16% less than in 2012.

Value Added – FFT updates due February 2015

- The FFT value added contextual analysis of LEA 2013/14 (SX model) outcomes at key stage 4 from key stage 3 shows that attainment is higher than expected for % level 2 , %Level 2 E/W & M and % Core Subjects A*-C, with Level 1% and Mean Score in line with expectations.
- KS2 from KS1 FFT value added for 2013/14 shows performance in line with expected for Core Subjects, Welsh and Maths with significantly lower performance in English and Science.
- The WG value added analysis for 2014 outcomes indicates that at an LA level, value added Model 2a, performance at KS4 from KS3 shows values significantly higher than expected in 6 of the 7 indicators with 4 being in the top quartile. Comparisons at key stage 4 from key stage 2 again shows 6 of the 7 indicators significantly above expected levels. While overall performance is good, as with outcome data, performance varies across schools.

Categorisation

- In December 2014 a new categorisation system was introduced by Welsh Government for secondary and for the first time primary schools.
- This categorisation identifies the degree of support a school will receive from Central South Consortium.
- In the primary sector:

Green	Yellow	Amber	Red
7 (6.7%)	61(58.1%)	33 (31.4%)	4 (3.8%)

- In the secondary sector:

Green	Yellow	Amber	Red
3 (17.6%)	2 (11.8%)	11 (64.7%)	1 (5.9%)

Estyn: School Inspections

- During academic year 2011/2012 under the new Common Inspection Framework 19 primary, 5 secondary and 1 special schools were inspected. In academic year 2012/13 17 primary and 1secondary schools were inspected. In the academic year 2013/14 18 primary, 1 secondary and 3 PRUs were inspected.

  The outcomes can be summarised as:

Current Performance	Unsatisfactory	Adequate	Good	Excellent
Academic Year 2011/2012	0	11	12	2
Academic Year 2012/2013	0	7	11	0
Academic Year 2013/2014	1	13	8	1
Percentage	**1.5%**	**47.0%**	**47.0%**	**4.5%**

Prospects for improvement	Unsatisfactory	Adequate	Good	Excellent
Academic Year 2011/2012	0	4	19	2
Academic Year 2012/2013	0	4	13	1
Academic Year 2013/2014	1	7	14	1
Percentage	**1.5%**	**22.7%**	**69.7%**	**6.1%**

- During Autumn 2014, 2 non-maintained settings, 7 primary schools, 2 secondary schools and 1 special school were subject to an Estyn inspection.

- 8 schools were subject to follow-up activity with 1 primary school having outcome changed from Estyn monitoring to being in need of significant improvement and one remaining in significant improvement for a further six months. The two schools judged to require special measures were closed at the end of the Autumn Term. The follow-up visit to secondary PRU's resulted in the setting no longer deemed to be in need of significant improvement.

Achievement and Attainment through Informal Learning

The Authority and partners continue to offer a wide range of non-formal learning opportunities for young people to gain qualifications and skills;
- The Authority continues to see good engagement levels of non-formal accredited qualifications gained by young people engaging in youth work programmes.
- The Authority's Youth Service has performed above the Welsh average with 12% of learners/young people engaged gaining a nationally recognised qualification compared to 11% nationally (2013-14).

- Since the creation of the new Youth Engagement and Participation Service, as part of the Councils Service Change programme;
  - **88%** of key stage 4 attendance referrals from schools, for young people with an attendance between 86-90%, have improved attendance to above 90%.
  - **117** Generic referrals received for young people identified as AMBER through vulnerability profiling. **26** cases have closed due to improved engagement in positive activities, education or training.

A significant number of young people, unknown to any other service, have been located and quickly re-engaged into education, employment and training. From July 2014 to November 2014, **44 Tier 1** young people aged 16yrs and above have been located with **35** young people successfully and quickly re-engaged into education, employment and training.

Support is in place for young people 16 to 24 to 'positively' engage in education, employment and training to help improve their future prospects. Between April and December 2014:
  - **64.9%** (333) were supported back into education, employment and training
  - **14.8%** (76) remain open cases currently being supported

In addition, of the 81 young people engaged in the Your Future First' programme
  - **50.6%** were supported to improve their skills and prepare them for employment
  - **43.2%** remain open cases currently being supported.

KEY QUESTION 1: HOW GOOD ARE OUTCOMES? **Quality Indicator: 1.1 Standards** **Evaluation**	**Evidence**
1.1.2 How Good are the Standards of Groups of Learners	
Gender	
Over the last three years the performance analysed by gender has fluctuated across the key stages. For the FPI and CSI: • FP – In 2014 the performance of boys in RCT improved by 0.7% points, since 2012 their performance has improved by 7.7% points compared with 5.5% points across Wales enabling the gap to the All Wales data to be narrowed. For girls the 2014 results showed an increase in performance of 2.2% points, this being the same as across Wales as a whole. Since 2012, the rate of improvement for RCT girls has been slower than across Wales resulting in the gap between the performance widening. Although the LA gender gap has widened by 1.5% points since 2013, it has decreased by 5.7% points since 2012 and is now only 0.1% points wider than for Wales as a whole. • KS2 – Since 2012 the performance of both boys and girls in RCT has improved faster than for Wales. The gender gap in RCT has decreased and is now 0.4% points below the All Wales level compared with 2.1% points above in 2013. • KS3 – Performance trends are similar to KS2 with both RCT boys and girls improving faster than for Wales as a whole. For 2014, the gender gap in RCT has narrowed and is now 9.5% points compared with 14.3% points in 2012. The gender gap is still slightly wider (0.8% points) than for Wales as a whole but has reduced. • Since 2012, girls and boys have improved their performance in all key measures apart from Girls in LCE where the results for 2014 are 0.3% points below the 2012 level. Girls continue to outperform boys in all measures with the largest gender gap being 8.6% in LCW and the smallest in MDT -5.3%. • At both KS2 and KS3 all subjects have seen improvements for both boys and girls. Although girls still outperform boys in all key measures the gender gap has narrowed in 3 of the 5 measures at KS2 and all measures at KS3. • Since 2012 for the four key measures at KS4 (CSI, Level1, Level 2 and Level 2+) girls have improved faster than girls across Wales with the 2014 performance at level 1 and level 2 now above the all Wales data. For boys the trend is similar with	

the rate of improvement being higher in all four measures with the 2014 performance for the level 1 threshold being higher than across Wales as a whole. • Comparing the performance gap between boys and girls in RCT, since 2012 the gap for two of the indicators have narrowed (Level1 and Level 2) while the remaining two have widened. • Since 2012 both boys and girls in RCT have improved at a faster rate than across Wales for the average wider points score. Percentage of pupils achieving the level 3 threshold has remained at the 2012. Over the past three years RCT boys have improved faster than RCT girls in the AWPS.	
Free School Meals	
• At Foundation Phase there has been an improvement in performance by FSM pupils in both LCW and PSD. The gap between FSM/Non FSM pupils for LCW is wider than the previous year due to a much larger improvement in performance by non FSM than FSM pupils. However, the gap continues to be narrower than for Wales as a whole. The gaps for other areas have widened compared to 2013. • The gap at KS2 for RCT in 2014 has narrowed compared to 2013 for English, Maths and Science. Compared to the all Wales data the gap is lower for English and higher for CSI, Maths and Science. The gap is significantly higher for Welsh 1st Language for 2014 in RCT due to under performance by FSM and a large improvement by non FSM pupils. • At KS3 the FSM gap in all subjects except Welsh 1st Language has narrowed since 2013. When compared to the all Wales data the gap is narrower for Maths and Science, similar for English and CSI and slightly higher for Welsh 1st Language. The increase in the gap for Welsh 1st Language in RCT is due to a much higher number of non FSM pupils achieving and a decrease in FSM pupils achieving. • Results at KS4 show that the gap is narrower for CSI, level 2 and level 2 including E/W & M for both RCT in 2013 and when compared to the all Wales average. The gap has increased at level 1 due to an increase in performance by non FSM pupils and decrease by FSM.	
Able & Talented	
• The percentage of A*-A awarded at GCSE in 2014 was 15.6% and increase from 13.8% in 2013. • The percentage of A*-A awarded at A level in 2014 was 15.7% lower than the 2012 data (17.67%) and the 2012 data (19.79%).	
SEN	
• In 2014, 55.3% of pupils in RCT registered as school action achieved FPI - an improvement from 52.21% in 2013. Performance by school action plus pupils was 32.57% compared to 31.21% in 2013. • At KS2 the percentage of school action pupils achieving CSI for RCT was 62.73% compared to 55.91% in 2013. Outcome for school action plus pupils was 39.47% compared to 38.42% in 2013. • At KS3 the percentage of school action pupils achieving the CSI in RCT was 44.95% compared to 31.10% in 2013. The performance for school action plus was 31.85% compared to 26.9% in 2013.	
LAC	
• The achievement of Looked after Children can fluctuate due to small cohorts and a greater percentage of LAC pupils who have identified special educational needs. • In 2014 the percentage achieving the CSI increased at both KS2 and KS3 (KS2: 55.56% to 62.5% and KS3 27.78% to 36.4%). • At KS4, in 2014 90.9% of Looked after Children achieved 2 or more GCSEs. This is a decrease from the 2013 data of 93.55%. • No LAC pupil left school without a qualification. This is a significant achievement compared to 3.23% in 2013/14. • The percentage of LAC who are not in Education, Employment or Training at 16	

continues to fall (10/11–5.5%, 11/12–3%, 12/13–2.8%, 13/14–3.23%, 14/15–0%).	
Ethnic Minorities	
• The ethnic population is relatively small (1.5%) therefore outcomes between years are liable to fluctuate. The performance of our ethnic population in general, out-performs the relevant RCT cohort as a whole across all key stages.	
English as an Additional Language (EAL) – not updated national data available March	

• As at March 2015 the LA supported 753 pupils with EAL, compared to 623 in July 2013. Of these 54% moved through at least one stage of the WG language acquisition stages since accessing MEAG support.
 	
• Although the cohort of EAL learners is small their end of key-stage performance for 2014 was positive with
  o 81.0% of EAL learners achieved the FPOI, compared with 77.6% last years and 81.8% RCT cohort.
  o 89.6% of ELA learners achieved CSI at KS2, compared with 95% last year and 84.3% RCT cohort
  At KS3, 84.1% of EAL learners achieved RCT – 78.4%.
 	
• Pupils within RCT are supported to undertake GCSEs in their home languages and recent results were encouraging. In 2014, 14 secondary schools and 1 primary (1 year 6 pupil) had 50 pupils who undertook 37 GCSE/ 12 AS / 1 A Level examinations in 11 languages. Results included 12 A*, 17 A, 1 B and 3 C grades.	

KEY QUESTION 1: HOW GOOD ARE OUTCOMES? **Quality Indicator: 1.1 Standards** **Evaluation**	**Evidence**
1.1.4 How Good are Learners' Skills	
Since 2012, KS2 outcomes for reading have improved at a faster rate than for Wales as a whole, with the gap between RCT and All Wales data for 2014 being 0.91 percentage points, compared to 4.7 percentage points in 2012. Similar trends have been seen at KS3 with the gap to the Welsh average reducing from 5.5 points to 3.4 points. Improvements in writing skills at KS2 have been at the same rate as across Wales and remain 3.4% points below the Welsh average At KS3 improvement rates have been higher with the gap now 2.7% points compared with 6.4% points in 2012.	
Results from the 2014 National reading and numeracy tests indicates that more than 77% of pupils achieved standardised scores of at least 85. The highest being in English (81.1%) and the lowest in numeracy reasoning (77.9%). Comparing results to the All Wales data showed a gap of 2.1% points for English increasing to 5% points for Welsh. Performance in numeracy procedural is 4% points below the All Wales level with reasoning being 4.3% points below.	
Performance in ICT at KS3 continues to improve at a faster rate than for Wales with the percentage of young people achieving the expected level or above in ICT in 2014 being 90.0% compared with 80.7% in 2012. This improvement has enabled the gap to the All Wales performance to close, reducing from 5.51% to 1.15% points.	
A variety of specific interventions based on the pupil's need are undertaken with children with additional needs. These have shown significant improvement in basic skills and analysis of achievements against baseline highlights that across all tests 91% of pupils showed improvement (compared with 72% in 2011/12). Outcomes for key programmes have been: • 175 learners with SEN have been the focus of Cumbria Reading Intervention (CRI) with notable gains in reading ages (RA) and spelling ages (SA). The average gains in both reading and spelling ages over a 12 week period were as follows: 2009: RA gains 10.8 months SA gains 9.7 months 2010/11: RA gains 9.8 months SA gains 9.8 months 2011/12: RA gains 11.4 months SA gains 8.92 months 2012/13: RA gains 21.31 months SA gains 9.71 months 2013/14: RA gains 23 months SA gains 9 months.	
Essential Skills	

In 2014 there was a very slight drop in the number of level 2 and level 3 skills achieved, with 1,112 level 2 and 753 level 3 qualifications gained compared with 1,119 and 827 respectively in 2013.

Academic Year 2013/14		
Skill	Level 2	Level 3
Application of Numbers	532	90
Communication	21	566
Information Technology	559	97
	1,112	753

Welsh Baccalaureate

The number of young people achieving the Welsh Baccalaureate qualification continues to increase. In 2014 562 young people achieved the qualification compared to 527 in 2013 and 507 in 2012.

KEY QUESTION 1: HOW GOOD ARE OUTCOMES? Quality Indicator: 1.1 Standards Evaluation	Evidence
1.1.5 How Good are Learners' Welsh Language Skills	
First Language Welsh	

Learners make good progress in Welsh language skills in Welsh-medium schools, especially within the primary sector.

Foundation Phase

- In 2014, 90.1% of pupils achieved the required level, or higher in LCW compared to 89.8% nationally, an improvement of 6.0% since 2013.
- This represents a 7.8 % point improvement on 2012, higher than the all Wales improvement of 3.9 % point, with our ranking now 12th out of 20 authorities.

KS2

- In 2014, 88.4% of RCT pupils achieved level 4 or higher in Welsh first language compared to 88.1% nationally.
- This represents a 7.5 % point improvement on 2012, higher than all Wales improvement of 4.1 % point and ranks us 14th compared with 17th in 2012.

KS3

- In 2014, 90.0% of RCT pupils achieved level 5 or higher in Welsh first language compared to 90.1% nationally.
- This represents a 13.2 % point improvement on 2012, higher than the all Wales improvement of 5.9 % point, improving our ranking from 17th in 2012 to 8th in 2014 (out of 18 Authorities).

Performance at the higher levels are also good with 28.5% achieving outcome level 6+ at FP compared with 32.5% nationally, 34.2% achieving level 5+ at KS2 compared with 33.9% nationally and 52.9% achieving level 6+ at KS3 compared to 52.9%.

KS4

- In 2014, provisional data shows that 70.02% of pupils who were entered for Welsh 1st language at GCSE obtained grades A*-C, up from 67.1% in 2013.

- 78% of pupils who entered Welsh literature at GCSE obtained A*-C compared with 69.6% in 2013.

KS5

- The number of pupils sitting Welsh first language is relatively small – in 2014 only 22 entered, although this is higher than the 2013 data of 19. The percentage achieving A*-C can vary but for 2014 this was 50% compared to 75% nationally. An improvement from 42.1% in 2013.

Welsh Second Language	
The performance of pupils in Welsh Second language remains relatively constant, showing small improvements at KS3 and slight dips in KS4 • KS3 – 74.8% of pupils in RCT achieved the expected level or above in Welsh second language compared to 77.8% across Wales, which has enabled the gap to the All Wales average to narrow. • KS4 – Provisional figures for 2014 indicate that 71.9% of pupils who sat Welsh second language full course achieved grade A*-C. – a slight dip from 75% in 2013. For the Welsh second language short course the percentage achieving A*-C was 46.99% compared with 47.2% in 2013. • KS5 - 33 pupils sat 'A' level Welsh 2nd language with 64% achieving A*-C.– a slight decrease on the 69.8% achieving in 2012, although the small cohort size makes trend data less reliable.	
Transition	
Provisional data shows: • The transition rate for KS2 to KS3 in 2014/15 was 97.3% compared with 97.67% in 2013/14. • The transition rate for KS3 to KS4 in 2014/15 was 99.2% compared with 99.6% in 2013/14.	

KEY QUESTION 1: HOW GOOD ARE OUTCOMES? **Quality Indicator: 1.2. Wellbeing** **Evaluation**	**Evidence**
1.2.1 How Good is the Development of Healthy and Safe Attitudes	
Even though budget constraints have required restructuring of services, RCT continues to provide children and young people with an extensive, innovative range of provision covering both physical social and emotional wellbeing.	

• 104 primary schools operate breakfast clubs, this represents 98% of the total schools that could be involved in the initiative, a significant increase from 73% in 2011/12. In addition 2 special schools and 1 PRU run a breakfast club.
 • Counselling service through Eye-to-Eye is offered to all secondary age pupils at school and in community facilities with 1601 pupils (accessing 6530 sessions) and young people receiving counselling in 2013/14 – an increase from 1,474 in 2012/13 (9% increase). A total of 83.47% of males improved their YP Core score following counselling and 83.85% of females.
 • Fixed term exclusions relating to bullying remain low with only 18 incidents reported in 2013/14.
 • The variety and scope of provision has received positive responses from young people regarding their wellbeing. In the 2013 young people Extending Entitlement Viewpoint Questionnaire, of the 8,837 young people who took part
    o 79% reported that their health was generally good,
    o 83% felt safe in their community (80% in 2011),
    o 89% that they found it easy to obtain the information and advice they wanted (88% in 2011).	

KEY QUESTION 1: HOW GOOD ARE OUTCOMES? **Quality Indicator: 1.2 Wellbeing** **Evaluation**	**Evidence**
1.2.2 How Good is Participation and Enjoyment in Learning	
A comprehensive range of provision is in place to enhance pupils' participation and enjoyment in learning, these have resulted in a low level of exclusions and the local	

authority's Youth Engagement and Participation Service having both high reach and attendance levels.

A series of events and activities for children and young people are organised by the Library Service and these are well attended by children and young people in their own time. For example, 974 children took part in last year's Summer Reading Challenge while 1,183 children and young people attended activity sessions during school holidays.

The ECALM (Every Child a Library Member) initiative was recently launched in the county with the intention to ensure that every child at Year 4 is allocated a library card and introduced to the Library Service.

School Attendance - primary quartile data provided by WG January 2015

- Attendance in our primary schools has improved since 2011/12 by 1.4%. This improvement being higher than for Wales as a whole (at 1.0%) with the gap narrowing from 0.7% to 0.3%. This progress has improved our ranking to 17th from 18th in 2012.
- Whilst our performance has improved by 1.1% points since 2013, our ranking has dropped one place from 16th to 17th.
- Latest comparable data for similar schools across Wales shows that the percentage of RCT schools that have attendance rates above the median of their FSM group has improved from 30.77% in 2011 to 51.35% in 2013.

Year/Quartile	1	2	3	4	Percentage above Median
2011/12	12.17%	26.09%	31.30%	30.43%	38.26%
2012/13	18.92%	32.43%	31.53%	17.12%	51.35%
2013/14	19.82%	31.53%	27.03%	21.62%	51.35%

- Since 2012, secondary attendance in RCT has improved by 2.5 percentage points to 93.1%, almost twice as much as the improvement for Wales as a whole (1.4%). The gap between RCT and the Welsh average has narrowed and is now 0.5% with our ranking improving from 21st to 17th.
- Comparing similar schools across Wales shows that whilst the number of schools in the bottom quartile of their FSM group has reduced significantly and the number in the top quartile has increased, there remains too many schools below the median of their FSM group.

Year/Quartile	1	2	3	4	Percentage above Median
2011/12	10.53%	15.79%	31.58%	42.11%	26.32%
2012/13	21.05%	15.79%	26.32%	36.84%	36.84%
2013/14	26.32%	10.53%	47.37%	15.79%	36.85%

Attendance of Specific Groups

- In the latest report to Welsh Government (March 2015), there were 16 Gypsy Traveller children registered in RCT schools - 12 in primary and 4 in secondary. Attendance for all pupils being above the WG minimum target of 50% in 2013-14. All 4 pupils in the secondary sector and 10 in the primary sector achieved attendance above 70%. In addition there are 4 gypsy traveller children not registered at a school although 3 have been engaged with the bespoke family learning project set up in response to a number of year 6 female pupils whose parents had indicated would not be moving into secondary education. The service works closely with the 4

children and their families to ensure they have an opportunity to access their entitlements.

- Due to small cohort sizes for ethnic minority pupils trends can vary but for 2014, in secondary schools the lowest attendance for pupils with a known ethnic background came from white pupils and the highest from Asian/Asian British. The cohorts are similar sized in primary schools but for 2014 the lowest attendance was seen for the Asian/Asian British ethnicity and the highest for Chinese/Chinese British.
- Attendance of pupils eligible for FSM in secondary schools is currently 5.1% below pupils not eligible for FSM. This gap has narrowed from the 2012 figure of 6.4%. Unauthorised absence is higher for pupils eligible for FSM at 4.0% compared with 1.1% for non FSM pupils, although the gap has narrowed by 0.2 since 2012.
- In primary schools the FSM/non FSM attendance gap continues to decrease and for 2014 was 2.4% - a decrease from 3.1% in 2011. Unauthorised attendance remains higher for pupils eligible for FSM the gap remaining at 1.4%, the same as for 2012.
- From 2012 to 2014 attendance in RCT secondary schools has been slightly higher for boys than for girls. The gap in 2014 being 0.1% points, the same as in 2012. While the unauthorised absence rate for both boys and girls has improved the gap remains the same with the unauthorised level for boys being 1.76% compared with 1.71% for girls – a gap of 0.5% points.
- Attendance at PRUs varies but all three provisions have attendance over 74% with average attendance across the three provisions being 80.41% in 2013/14 compared to 75.36% in 2012/13.

Exclusions

- There were 17 permanent exclusions across the Authority in 2013/14, this is an increase of 1 since 2013 and 11 since 2012.
- While there has been a small increase in permanent exclusions the number of fixed term exclusions continues to fall. In 2014 there were 1562 incidents compared with 1645 in 2013 – a fall of 5.05%. There has also been a slight increase in the number of days lost to fixed term exclusion from 3655 to 3,838 – an increase of 5.01%.
- The latest available comparative data (2013) highlights that RCT rate of 5 days or fewer within secondary schools has reduced from 89.5 to 82.7 per 1000 pupils. RCT is below the Welsh average in relation to fixed term exclusions 6 days or more per 1000 pupils. RCT is ranked 4th in Wales for the average number of days lost 2.2 compared to 2.5.

Bullying and Time Out

Data relating to incidents of bullying, positive physical intervention and use of time out show improvements over time. These are summarised as follows:

Data	Academic Year 2012/13	Academic Year 2013/14	Trend Data
Bullying	577	460	20.3% reduction
Time Out	3912	1913	51% reduction
Positive Physical Intervention	181	90	50% reduction

- Comparison of Academic year 2012/13 and Academic Year 2013/14 data suggests a reduction of 20.3% in incidents of bullying, 51% in the use of time out and 50% in positive physical intervention.
- Fixed term exclusions relating to bullying remain low with only 18 incidents reported in 2013/14 compared to 11 in 2012/13 and 28 in 2010/11.

Youth Service Attendance and Reach

- The new Youth Engagement and Participation Service, created as part of the

Councils Service Change programme, has seen good engagement levels of young people. Since September to December 2014, 6,914 individual young people have engaged in positive youth activities, extended youth provision and issue based youth work. Of the 6,914 young people engaged:

- 39% (392) of the YP identified as RED engaged (most at risk young people)
- 41% (865) of the YP identified as AMBER engaged
- 39% (1,922) of the YP identified as GREEN engaged
- 39% (2,039) of the YP identified as WHITE engaged.

The service has managed to maintain a good level of engagement despite a 50% cut in budget, with only a 14% (810 individual YP) decrease in the number of young people engaged with the service compared to the same period last year (2013).

Youth Offending Service	
- The latest Youth Justice Board data summary for Rhondda Cynon Taf in 2013/14 (full year) continues to show a positive engagement of young offenders in education, training and employment following intervention by the Youth Offending Service - Young people of statutory school age increased their hours of engagement by 3.4% compared to 1.2% nationally. - Young people above statutory school age showed improvement of 24.3% compared with 16.1% nationally.	

KEY QUESTION 1: HOW GOOD ARE OUTCOMES? **Quality Indicator: 1.2 Wellbeing** **Evaluation**	**Evidence**
1.2.3 How Good is Community Involvement and Decision-making	

Young people continue to have a sector leading, well developed range of opportunities to have their voices heard and impact on decisions that affect them e.g. biennial extending entitlement questionnaire, budget consultation, development of strategic plans and a range of specialist youth fora. A variety of participation mechanisms are used to ensure young people of all ages have the opportunity to get involved with decision that affect them. Recent examples include:

- Team Around the Family (TAF)
  Young people designed the user friendly version and also interviewed organisations and agencies for the tender for TAF. Young people will be involved in the next tender for early intervention services during December 2014. There is now key worker capacity available in Rhondda, Cynon and Taff Ely. They have also produced young person friendly versions of the Strengths and Needs cards used for assessments.

- Fostering Framework for Wales
  A number of young people who are looked after in RCT, worked with LAC from other authorities on the new Fostering Framework, which included a various pieces of work. These young people also worked on the development of an online survey tool for young people who are looked after and produced a young person friendly version of the 360 degree framework. One of our young people achieved an award at the LAC Awards in March 2014. The current piece of work under the Fostering Framework will be to devise a survey tool for disabled children and young people who are looked after by the local authority. Consultations having started in November 2014.

- Young Carers Project SLA
  When Fframwaith revisited their SLA for the Young Carers Project they wanted the process to be co-designed and developed with the young carers themselves. Young carers were trained in the commissioning process and asked to come up with a service design which was wanted and needed to fit them. This included the

volunteers visiting other young carer groups to find out what it was they felt would work best for them. This information was put into a service specification by the commissioning manager, who then went back to the young people to check it's accuracy. There were a couple of things that could not be included, but reasons for this were clearly explained and compromises were reached.

- School Organisation
  School Councils have played a key role in all the statutory consultation exercises on proposals to close a number of primary and secondary schools as well as having input into the appointment process for head and deputy head teachers. For the consultation on the proposal to reorganise education provision in the Rhondda valley and Tonyrefail area, school council members have been involved in the survey format and delivery. Meetings have been held with the school councils of all schools directly involved in the proposal (13 meetings in total), detailed notes have been taken and these will be included in the consultation report that will be published.
- The Youth Engagement and Participation Service has established an effective Youth Inspectors Team which supports continuous improvement across the service and voluntary sector. To date, 16 new youth inspectors have been trained to undertake 6 inspections across the Borough. This year the inspections have focused on voluntary sector provision such as the YMCA and Llanharan drop-in, against the national information standards. Prior to the inspection each organisation is required to complete a self evaluation report and provide backing evidence to substantiate their outcome. Following the inspection by the young people, a formal report is produced against the criteria and feedback, with recommendations for any improvements, provided to the organisation.

- E-teen Libraries
  Young people who use the E-Teen libraries in Rhondda Cynon Taf identify events and activities they would be interested in attending and a regular programme is developed to meet those needs and interests. These include film nights, job clubs for young people, reading groups, craft activities as well as special events such as
- Harry Potter Day.

KEY QUESTION 2: HOW GOOD IS PROVISION? Quality Indicator: 2.1. How do we evaluate support for school improvement? Evaluation	Evidence
2.1.1 How well do we provide the functions of support, monitoring, challenge and intervention?	
The LA has with the CSC further improved its level of challenge to schools, especially where there are leadership and management issues leading to under performance. The LA in close co-operation with the challenge advisers (CA) of the CSC provides robust support and challenge in all sectors, underpinned by strong working relationships and effective communication with schools. Nearly all Headteachers are responding positively and self-critically to the changed climate, the RCT/CSC Ambition, and are setting more ambitious targets that if achieved, will significantly improve outcomes in 2015. Good progress has been made on effectively utilising data and developing differentiated support to target underperforming schools, it is acknowledged that this process is ongoing and the momentum of the RCT/CSC Ambition needs to be maintained to embed progress and improve outcomes consistently within and across all schools. The strong culture of challenge required to sustain improvement is supported by the direct engagement of the Director and heads of achievement and is having a positive impact on standards of attainment in schools.	
• The LA school partnership agreement requires updating to reflect the expectations of the LA and CSC. • Under the leadership of the Director robust action, including the wise use of LA	

	powers, is undertaken where required.	
•	The quality of leadership and management in schools is recognised as key to high performing schools and is one of the main areas that is addressed and reported on within the School Improvement Reports (SIR). This evidenced view arises from sound data analysis, CA contact during visits and school reviews. The quality of leadership is also included as an important feature in the school categorisation analysis.	
•	Since September both Heads of Achievement (Primary and Secondary) have also held key roles within the Consortium. They both sit on the senior management team within CSC as well as RCT. Together with the Service Director for Schools and Community, they also sit on the CSC Operational board. This increased direct contact has enabled a deeper knowledge and understanding of schools to identify emerging issues and concerns. Effective features of both sectors are the school by school 'clinics' to discuss progress and barriers to improvement**.** At regular meetings CAs are also given the opportunity to discuss specific LA arrangements for example in relation to attendance and HR and access, inclusion and engagement. There are many good examples of extended joint working in schools and joint visits to schools which are not currently being replicated across the region.	
•	In addition to these meetings information from other service areas, such as that for attendance and exclusions, feed into the CSC to identify schools where there is good practice or concern**.**	
•	A process of leadership reviews and mid cycle reviews in secondary schools is in place and will continue to include members of Access & Inclusion as key components of the review team**.** Within primary schools, members of Access and Inclusion play a key role in mid-cycle reviews in particular where there are LA resourced classes at the school. Buildings maintenance issues are also included where appropriate as part of primary school reviews. Reviews in primary schools are also triggered by concerns raised in case conferences.	
•	Specific challenge and support packages for schools categorised as amber and red for support needs is in place from a range of high quality providers.	
•	Challenging targets have been set for KS3 and kS4 performance and agreed with all schools. These reflect the significant change in the culture of aspiration and expectation that has arisen from the setting of the RCT/CSC Ambition and personal involvement by the Director. No secondary school is targeting less than the FFT 'D' estimates for key performance measures for 2015**.** Primary schools are expected to set targets whether above the median for their benchmark group or at FFT 'D' estimate whichever is higher.	
•	The CSC SIR has been revised and now incorporates a wide range of powerful data analyses to support the growing data literacy of school governors. These changes also enable a more robust challenge to schools in raising expectations. The Director of Education and Lifelong Learning and the heads of achievement quality assure all reports before they are shared with schools.	
•	The LA school improvement approach is focused on the authority school strategy. This well publicised strategy identifies six key elements for attention by the CSC/LA and schools. School improvement initiatives being developed within the LA are all closely associated with elements of the strategy. Some examples would be the Outstanding Teacher Programme allied to the use of the latest (IRIS) technology to support the dissemination of great practice within and between schools (element 3) and the bespoke, graduated leadership programmes for leadership at all levels (element 1). New work in secondary schools since 2012 has targeted improvement in the core subjects through intensive challenge and support programmes with core subject leaders. The focus in primary schools has been on developing capacity for improving literacy and identifying challenge and support for new HTs, DHTs and middle leaders.	
•	The partnership between the LA and Microsoft has led to innovative practise across all schools being developed and recognised nationally and globally as best practice.	
•	The use of data by LA Officers and CAs is good and is good or improving in all	

schools.

- Schools are provided with access to a wide range of relevant performance, value added, benchmarking and other comparative data sets that are complemented by the provision of additional data analyses to support schools in evaluating the performance of particular groups. Some progress is being made in developing a web-based school portal that will significantly improve immediate access to data and shared judgements about strengths and weaknesses.

- Analysis of school and authority data is undertaken by the Director, heads of achievement and CAs over the summer break and in the autumn term so that priorities for improvement are identified early in the year and prior to link visits so that robust and informed discussions take place. This consequently informs the target setting process and enables CAs to challenge expectations where these are inappropriate.

- For the last two years secondary schools have been expected to return at four intervals over the year, their assessments for the proportion of pupils currently secure to achieve qualifications for key performance measures at KS4. This has focused attention on trajectories of progress and the quality of assessment and intervention. All schools now have access to the latest SIMS tracking modules such as Discover.

- In order to focus attention on significant LA performance issues the LA has required schools to submit targets for the proportion of pupils making 2 levels of progress at key stage three and for closing gaps relating to gender and FSM/NFSM at both KS3 and KS4.

- The LA tracking system within primary schools allows the LA to track progress year on year within KS2 and challenge HTs where progress is weak.

- The Chairs and Headteachers of red schools meet the Director of Education and key school improvement officers including the challenge adviser every half-term to monitor progress against the agreed action plan. Amber schools undertake a similar exercise once a term. The meetings enable officers to keep track of progress and challenge both the schools and challenge advisers to provide robust evidence of improvements. This can result in changes in management being made.

- The LA works alongside CSC to ensure that where there are causes for concern, appropriate letters are sent to headteachers and chairs of governors outlining processes and procedures that need to be addressed.

- The financial position of each school is monitored quarterly by the Education Senior Management Team. The Director of Education and Lifelong Learning writes to schools that are projected to be in a deficit position requesting a recovery plan to be submitted. This is followed-up by visits from Corporate Finance to support the Headteachers to make the required changes.

- The Director of Education and Lifelong Learning writes to all secondary school Headteachers, immediately after the KS4 results are published, summarising their performance and in some instances asking specific questions on their performance. Following the 2012 results, five schools were identified as requiring warning letters. Following the 2013 outcomes all these schools had shown improvements, some significantly so. Three of these schools had their warning letters removed and two schools were reissued with warning letters where progress was deemed to be insufficient. Two further schools were notified that they would be subject to warning letters. Following the 2014 results all bar one school had their warning letters removed. There was an escalation in one school and a formal executive headship was considered but a more informal mentoring Headteacher is in place to support the senior leadership team and Governing Body in their decision making. This is the only secondary school with powers of intervention in place.

- There is a systematic and well planned series of meetings between the LA and primary and secondary Headteachers which focus on school improvement.

- The Council works well with the CSC to provide in-depth review and support to

specific schools and additional support has been provided by others, such as the small group of experienced secondary Headteachers working as CAs within the LA. This has enabled both the quantum of support, pace and depth of the reviews to increase as well as providing the opportunity to internal LA staff, such as those from attendance and behaviour teams, to gain experience and learn from good practice.	
• As a result of guidance provided by LA, Officers at Headteachers' seminars and during link visits, significant progress has been made by most schools in improving self-evaluation processes. With the majority of schools inspected in the current cycle being judged good or better in KQ3.2, it is recognised that there is further work required to improve consistency across all schools.	
• The quality of most schools' self-evaluation appropriately identifies strengths and areas for improvement and a recent review of all secondary school improvement plans along with recent guidance from the LA and CSC brings further cohesion between a school's SIP and SER.	
• Despite the significant improvements in procedures referred to above, too many primary and secondary schools are being identified as requiring follow-up monitoring as a result of inspection. Where schools are placed in a follow-up activity, the Head Teacher and chair of governors meet with the cabinet member for education, Director and senior officers to present and discuss their post inspection action plan, regular reports are made on progress and nearly all schools are removed from follow-up activities quickly. Where schools have not been successful in being removed, there have been serious leadership concerns and the LA has worked with governors and union bodies to address the issues. Two schools identified by Estyn as requiring significant improvements/special measures and categorised as red schools were both closed in December 2015.	

KEY QUESTION 2: HOW GOOD IS PROVISION? Quality Indicator: 2.1. How do we evaluate support for school improvement? Evaluation	Evidence
2.1.2 How effective are we in raising standards in priority areas, including curriculum support?	
• Where there are particular concerns over performance, the LA takes action to meet the identified challenges, as for example the work to improve standards in mathematics and English in secondary schools. The LA directs the work of the CSC intervention team to support weaker mathematics and English departments. Resources from the CSC intervention teams have been effectively directed to those mathematics and English departments with the greatest need. There are intensive programmes of support for the leaders of English and mathematics departments. Outcomes across the LA improved in all core subjects in 2014; progress of 2 levels at KS3 increased significantly. • In 2014/5 amber and red schools have match-funded support from the literacy and numeracy teams within CSC. These interventions are monitored by the CA attached to the school and a summary of improvements is shared with the SCA and LA officers on a termly basis. • Outcomes across the LA improved in all core subjects in 2014.	
• Foundation Phase support and challenge is commissioned through CSC although during 2012/13, the support for schools was targeted by the LA at Literacy. The head of achievement or her representative attends AWFPA meetings in order to ensure that appropriate messages are fed back to schools. • The LA Family learning officer sits on the Pori Drwy Stori working groups and she liaises with the head of achievement to development this strategy across schools and communities. Family Learning courses were held at 27 primary schools in RCT (13/14) engaging with 465 adults and 344 children. • Stronger links have been developed with Communities First partnerships, regular meetings have been held with the head of achievement (primary) and community first managers to develop match-funding projects and other programmes which	

directly support schools and their communities to raise standards of learners. • Communities First managers use the same well-being evaluation tool to baseline and evaluate progress of their programmes.	

The 14-19 network has enabled the extension of curricula provision (including developing the MAT agenda) which has impacted on outcomes at KS4 and KS5.
• The network has ensured that all providers meet the requirements of the skill measures with all schools offering more than 30 choices.
• Extending the provision has included a full range of vocational courses which has seen the staying on rate for RCT increasing at a faster rate than for Wales. The development of good working relationships has resulted in schools being supported by specialist organisations to deliver a broader range of activities including;
    ➢ A series of entry level qualifications provided by Agored Cymru.
    ➢ Level 1 Construction courses for pupils at risk of disengaging from learning.
    ➢ A series of workshops for more able and talented pupils including the successful venture to Mission Discovery at Kings College London.
    ➢ The development of motor vehicle and manufacturing courses.
• A programme of training has been developed for teachers to ensure that they are skilled in the delivery of new qualifications and have the opportunity to share best practice with colleagues.
• There are regular meetings with curriculum deputies and of the WBQ network to inform strategy and give direction.
• A comprehensive pedagogy support package for teachers has been established that includes the use of teaching with technology and 21st Century lesson design. This results in a qualification accredited by Microsoft.	

KEY QUESTION 2: HOW GOOD IS PROVISION? **Quality Indicator: 2.1. How do we evaluate support for school improvement?** **Evaluation**	**Evidence**
2.1.4 How well do we provide support for school leadership, management and governance?	
There is good support for school leadership and governance with a wide-ranging leadership development programme available for leaders and managers at all levels. The provision was judged as good in the previous inspection. The programmes contribute positively to succession planning for the benefit of the LA and its schools and to improving the overall quality of leadership. Strengths and areas for improvement in aspects of senior and middle leadership and management are identified robustly and accurately and inform targeted support and challenge. Where there is underperformance of leadership the Director or his representative has worked with the chair of governors and Headteacher, with effective HR support, to produce a robust support plan. In some primary school cases the support plan has included assistance from mentor Headteachers. Through the writing of LA/CSC school leadership review reports and in the writing of the SIR, clear links are made between the quality of leadership and standards of achievement. Intervention in a number of schools has improved the quality of leadership and its impact on standards. The LA/CSC procedures for the categorisation of schools contain explicit criteria to inform judgements on the effectiveness of leadership. These play a significant part in determining a school's needs as set out in a statement of action.	
• A comprehensive induction programme is run for all new Headteachers, both acting and substantive, New Headteachers are involved in networks with a mentor Head Teacher and have access to specific training opportunities. Coaching support has been provided to mentor Headteachers to support this work.	

- CSC and the LA provide together a progressive and complimentary leadership development programmes. - Support of very good quality is provided for senior leaders who aspire to headship in the near future. The LA has commissioned a high level leadership development programme for leaders of the future. This programme whilst linking to national leadership standards focuses on challenging aspiring leaders to reflect on and develop key elements of their own leadership skills. Teachers have applied for this programme using a similar application form to NPQH. - For both primary and secondary colleagues, modular courses of high quality are available to middle leaders who wish to move to senior leadership and for teachers who wish to improve their middle leadership capacity. These courses are linked to leadership standards and also challenge teachers to reflect on their own skills and how these can be further developed. - There are well attended programmes for heads of core subjects that address their key leadership and management competencies alongside approaches to raising the bar and closing the gaps in performance. - The LA and CSC both provide a range of opportunities and mechanisms for leaders and managers to develop knowledge and share good practice to ensure they are informed about national and local issues. e.g. the literacy programme for primary schools. - Within termly primary Headteacher meetings time is spent discussing national priorities, sharing good practice and challenging aspirations. - A programme of leadership seminars are held regularly for senior leaders in secondary schools. Topics have included self-evaluation, attendance and a range of inclusion, learning and teaching approaches. - A series of programmes involving the leads on attendance and behaviour from secondary schools, including a 'Wellbeing' Day, has involved discussion of LA strategy, good practice exemplars and opportunities for networking and the sharing of good practice.	
A comprehensive service providing clerking to the Governing Body plus support in managing school finance and other aspects of school management is offered to all schools. Take-up amongst primary schools is high, with all 118 such schools in RCT participating. Most of our secondary schools also purchase at least the basic level of service with a third purchasing the full clerking service.	
The Governor Support Service provides a range of services for schools to support the management needs of governors. - All new governors are provided with a comprehensive introductory pack and receive induction training sessions. - There is a termly training programme based on the Authority's priorities for improvement and governor feedback. - Agreements have been set up with neighbouring Authorities for governors to attend training in the Authority in which they live if preferred. During academic year 2012/13, 77 training courses were run for Governors with 319 attendees. Since September 2013, 122 courses were offered with 1186 governors attending. A high number were very positive in the feedback. Courses are reviewed on a termly basis.	
- Mandatory governor training for new governors, chairpersons and clerks was introduced by Welsh Government in September 2013, by January 2014 all clerk training had been completed and by the end of the Spring term 2014 over 95% of all the statutory training had been successfully completed with feedback being extremely positive. - Dealing with Complaints training has been introduced during the spring term 2015. Positive feedback has been received. - A training needs analysis for governors is due to be completed during the summer term, which will link into the training planned for the next academic year (2015/2016).	

• School Improvement Report Training was introduced during the Spring Term. This course aimed to support governors in understanding the new categorisation system introduced by CSC. A small number attended and feedback was positive.	
• Governor vacancies within the Authority currently stand at 9.78%. We are currently reviewing the process of recruiting governors. We continue to work towards promoting governorship in our schools to reduce the vacancy levels on year.	
• The Annual Report to governors provides comprehensive information on school performance both attainment and financial as well as utilising the WG core data sets and benchmarking quartiles to provide comparative data. Training sessions on understanding this data and how to utilise it to challenge outcomes to improve have been developed and form part of the mandatory training available to governors.	
• Since the introduction of legislation regarding the federation of School Governing Bodies in 2010, we have actively promoted this issue where it appears that 'paired' schools would be suitable for this model of governance, and where the introduction of such arrangements can bring tangible benefits with respect to the leadership and management of schools. Two small schools, located in the same village just 1/2 mile apart have federated successfully with the new Executive Headteacher of the school taking up post in January 2014. We have also previously federated two 'pairs' of Infant and Junior Schools governing bodies (at Penygraig and Cwmaman). More federation of Governing Bodies will take place when opportunities arise.	

KEY QUESTION 2: HOW GOOD IS PROVISION? Quality Indicator: 2.2. How do we evaluate support for additional learning needs and educational inclusion?	
Evaluation	**Evidence**
2.2.1 How well do we meet statutory obligations in respect of children and young people with ALN?	
The LA continues to meet its statutory obligations in respect of children and young people with additional learning needs. Robust and rigorous safeguarding policies and procedures are employed to ensure the safety and wellbeing of learners with ALN. Education representatives sit on Quality Assurance Standards Group (QASG) and undertake joint visits with Safeguarding Co-ordinator where there are safeguarding concerns.	
All time out rooms have been audited and data on incidents of bullying, use of physical intervention and time out rooms is collated and shared with schools on a termly basis. Regular data meetings are held in Access & Inclusion to scrutinise data and used to inform support and challenge visits. Improvements have been evident within 87% of schools as a consequence of the visits.	
Data indicates that the Access & Inclusion Service continues to produce a high percentage of statements within 26 weeks (including and excluding exceptions: 65.9% and 83.7% respectively). Performance dipped in quarter 1 in 2013/14 which impacted on the overall results for the year. The number of statements issued has increased by 21% since 2010/11 due to improvements in statutory assessment processes and enhanced parental and school awareness. The LA currently maintains 757 statements. RCT is 2nd in Wales for the number of pupils with statements attending mainstream schools. RCT has very few appeals made to SEN Tribunals for Wales (SENTW). As the second largest LA in Wales RCT accounted for only 4% of the total number of Appeals registered in 2012/13. RCT therefore has a very favourable national ranking of 5th on this measure. This is a reflection of RCT's commitment to partnership working. All pupils with statements of SEN are provided with the additional provision to which they are entitled. It is not a requirement to have a statement of SEN to access the extensive	

range of specialist provision that RCT provides. The LA has an excellent range of provisions and a recent remodelling of the SEN provision attached to mainstream schools. If the final phase of remodelling is implemented, RCT will have 46 Learning Support Classes, 2 PRUs and 4 Special Schools. In addition, £2.7m is delegated to support mainstream inclusion for both statemented and non statemented pupils.	
LA officers work closely with colleagues from Corporate Estates to promote inclusion for learners with physical/sensory difficulties and play a key role in ensuring that schools are fit for purpose and suitably adapted to ensure access. This has resulted in 47 schools having major adaptations and 72 having minor adaptations to promote access for pupils with SEN. The LA is currently auditing schools' physical access. The Accessibility Strategy has been amended and sent to relevant stakeholders for consultation.	
Manual/ client handling training is provided by LA officers. This training was evaluated as very good/good in a 100% of cases. Good use is made of expertise from different agencies to meet training requirements.	
The Ymbarel team consists of a LAC Co-ordinator, 1.5 Psychologists, 6 Behaviour/Learning Support Assistants, Data Admin Officer and LAC Nurses. A LAC data pack is published and is used to inform service priorities and a LAC Outcomes Working Group of Elected Members and LA officers has been established. There is multi agency respresentation at LAC Operational Committee meetings where data for LAC is scrutinised and actions agreed. There is educational representation at this fortnightly panel. Personal Education Plans (PEPs) completed within 20 school days of a pupil entering the care system or changing schools during the year has improved. Trend data shows improvements over two years, but a dip in 2013/14 has been evident (2011/12 – 70.89%, 2012/13 – 72.08%, 2013/14 – 63.3%). This is an area that requires continued focus and targetting.	
LA representatives monitor progress of pupils attending out of county provisions through attendance at and involvement in annual reviews.	
Pupils with ALN access good quality provision as evidenced by Estyn Inspections in all special school settings. RCT has an excellent primary PRU with sector leading practice in 3 areas and excellent prospects for improvement (15 ratings of excellent were awarded). Estyn reports illustrate that our LSC provisions are predominately good and B Squared data suggest that pupils with SEN predominately make good or expected progress in specialist settings. B Squared report for 2013/14 highlights progress in P levels as: 1.64 in English, 1.76 in Mathematics and 1.57 in PSHE. There is a Specialist Assessment Action Plan aimed at improving systems for reviewing individual progress.	
Access & Inclusion Service have been working collaboratively with School Improvement Service/Challenge Advisers following an agreed programme of SEN review visits to be completed over the academic year. This is based on feedback from the Matrix completed termly by all senior officers and heads of services.	

KEY QUESTION 2: HOW GOOD IS PROVISION? **Quality Indicator: 2.2. How do we evaluate support for additional learning needs and educational inclusion?** **Evaluation**	**Evidence**
2.2.2 How well are we raising standards for children and young people with ALN?	
The Access and Inclusion Service intervenes early and promptly and evaluates the effectiveness of interventions. Referral data is analysed to inform highly effective training schedule, which is well utilised by schools. The Service received 2,439 referrals in 2013/14. Data is rigorously evaluated to measure impact and to inform service priorities. PI's indicate that Access and Inclusion Service staff respond promptly to referrals.	
£2.7 million of Additional Needs Funding has now been delegated to 17 Local Cluster Groups since April 2013. Guidance materials and training have been developed to ensure fair and equitable resource allocation. Workshops with schools were held in March 2014 in order to raise compliance levels and share good practice in relation to cluster base approaches to ANF processes and	

procedures. Further workshops were held in November 2014 to further develop the ANF criteria; evidence on medical needs; statementing criteria and annual review documentation.

Clusters continue to work on improving consistency in decision making. Further audits in three clusters which are in a deficit position are planned to occur in the Summer Term 2015.

Schools returned evaluation data in 2014 of which 93.02% stated ANF had a positive impact on pupils and suggests that LCGP are allocating funds equitably between primary and secondary schools/pupils. 45.95% of the allocated support is being used to support access to the curriculum. Impact on exclusion is also evident when comparing 2012/13 and 2013/14 data. In 2013/14, 69 incidents of exclusion related to pupils in receipt of ANF compared to 115 in the previous year, which is a reduction of 40%. This correlates to 123 days lost by pupils excluded in receipt of ANF compared to 258 days in 2012/13 which is a reduction of 52.32%.

Currently a graduate officer is undertaking a review of ANF, visiting all cluster chairs and stakeholders to seek their views in order to compile a report detailing recommendations and areas of good practice. A report will be available July 2015.

Systems are well established to evaluate the outcomes of learners attending specialist provisions. A range of data including National Curriculum attainment, attendance, exclusion, LA reading/numeracy scores and B Squared data is used to monitor the extent of progress made by learners. Data is scrutinised and challenge and support visits are undertaken as part of a rolling programme of targeted intervention. These visits follow the LSC monitoring protocol as detailed in the revised School/LA Agreement. A training audit is currently being undertaken to establish training needs of staff in LSCs.

The Authority continues to provide a wide range of specialist provisions based within mainstream schools to promote inclusion. Detailed and rigorous data analysis of RCT SEN need has been undertaken to inform priorities in the provision development. A report to Cabinet outlining proposals was submitted November 2013. Radical proposals to re-align LSC provision in order to ensure provisions are fit for purpose and address growing pupil need in specific areas and to reduce surplus LSC places has been consulted. Proposals have involved a 6500 stakeholder consultation from December 2013 – January 2014. Year 1 and 2 of the 3 year plan have been implemented. Year 3 proposals were reported to Cabinet in November 2014, and a consultation exercise with 2154 stakeholders has been completed. The Consultation Feedback Report has been published and Statutory Notices have been issued for schools affected.

The LA established a post 16 Special School satellite base for 15 young people with severe ASD in September 2014. There are currently 9 pupils accessing the specialist provision.

The Ymbarel Service produces a data pack which is published annually to report on outcomes for LAC. There is evidence that improvements have been made in relation to pupil outcomes when comparing LAC performance indicators. An action plan has been devised to further strengthen the work of the team.

Access and Inclusion Service staff are actively involved in joint reviews with School Improvement in mainstream settings with specialist provisions and PRUs, and have contributed to LA wide literacy reviews. Staff participate in system leaders update meetings, attend cross LA service case conferences, and work collaboratively on joint initiatives with School Improvement (e.g. Communication Language Inclusive Classrooms CLIC).

When comparing SA/SA+ attainment data from 2012 with 2013, outcomes indicate that improvements are evident in attainment of Foundation Phase indicators for SA pupils in 32.11% of schools, in 47.06% of KS2 results and 37.5% of KS3 results. In respect of SA+ pupils attainment levels: 9.17% of schools show improvements in Foundation Phase, 14.71% in KS2 and 41.67% in KS3. This data is being used to inform training, support and challenge visits and the joint working with School Improvement Service/System Leaders.

Analysis of outcome data is used effectively to track progress and evaluate the impact of targeted support (e.g. Cumbria Reading Intervention and POPAT). In addition all teams within Access and Inclusion have systems in place to monitor the progress of groups of pupils with VI, HI, SpLD, S&L, ASD, SEBD and complex LD. Data analysis shows that good progress is reflected on standardised assessments, pre and post intervention measures and/or specialist intervention programmes (SIP's).
  • Results for specific learning difficulty pupils show 77.3% of pupil assessment results had improved from baseline scores and 75% of supported pupils achieved targets set on SIPs
  • Learners with speech, language and ASD needs made progress for baseline scores in 51%. A further 65% of supported pupils achieved targets set in their SIPs.
  • Results show of the 73% of supported pupils with hearing impairment achieve targets set on SIPs.
  • Results show 73% of supported pupils with achieved visual impairment targets set on SIPs.
  • B Squared data collated from all Learning Support Classes highlights progress in P levels as: 1.64 in English, 1.46 in Mathematics and 1.57 in PSHE over 2013/14..
  • An Access and Inclusion Service data pack is produced annually and used to inform service developments and priorities.	

Learning from views of stakeholders is central to the Access and Inclusion Service's improvement drive. Information has been gathered in a systematic way using a range of methods involving schools, parents, pupils and professionals. Semi-structured interviews with pupils who received intervention from the Access and Inclusion Service suggest that 98% of children and young people felt things had improved since receiving support (increase of 8% when compared to last academic year result of 90%). Professional focus groups show positive service perceptions. Any identified areas of concern feed into Service action plans. Parent questionnaires are currently being collated.	
The drive to promote inclusion and empower school staff to provide appropriate support for learners with a range of SEN has progressed. The Access and Inclusion Handbook – *Working Together in RCT* - has been updated and provides guidance to schools on local systems and procedures. SEN guidance and criteria are now well embedded (e.g. statutory assessment, ANF, and are frequently revised according to strategic priorities (e.g. statementing criteria; ANF criteria))	
The Access and Inclusion and School Improvement Training Schedule continues to be successful with 902 staff trained in 2013/14. In total 3887 members of staff have attended 158 courses in the last 5 years. Referral data is used to inform a data report and the Access and Inclusion Training Schedule. Average ratings of 3.74 achieved on training evaluations for addressing objectives (4 highest rating of very good). Follow up evaluations post training suggest good impact on professional practice and pupil outcomes at group and individual level. Based on an evaluation of the training data the LA is introducing a new RCT SENCO Training Toolkit to better equip school staff to address pupil needs. 3 SENCO surgeries have been held since September 2014 with an attendance rate of 64.44%. Teams also provide bespoke training and contribute to CSC training events (e.g. ELSA training).	
Internal performance indicators are in place to quality assure response times for referrals to different areas of Access and Inclusion.	
All time out rooms within the LA have been audited by Access & Inclusion Service staff. Trend data relating to the use of time out, incidents of physical intervention and bullying are shared with schools termly. Concerning data is discussed in termly internal data meetings and followed up with support and challenge visits. Improvements have been evident within 87% of cases as a consequence of the visits.	
Gatekeeping arrangements for accessing specialist support are robust and transparent. Evidence of school based interventions, pupil data and existing support detailed in Local Authority panel submissions from schools are radically improved. Compliance with LA guidance ensures that schools are now meeting the SEN Code of Practice requirements.	

This supports robust decision making by the LA and fair resource allocation. School are now required to complete an SPR (Specialist Placement Request) proforma detailing evidence of a graduated response, the nature and severity of the pupil's ALN, and to provide supporting documentation.	
Tonyrefail Multi Agency Surgery has been established by EPS in partnership with Health, Communities First, TAF, CAMHS and Attendance and Wellbeing Service. Consultation meetings established for schools to discuss complex cases and to problem solve. Very positive evaluations have been received from schools who report improved outcomes.	
A multi agency group has been set up to provide an appropriate forum to discuss and address the very complex needs of learners at Ysgol Ty Coch.	
EOTAS provision has undergone considerable improvements and investment since 2012. Data is collated annually from PRUs and this is used to inform the LAs support and challenge role. Attendance, exclusion and re-integration figures from PRUs suggest that progress has been made in all settings. 65 pupils were re-integrated back into mainstream education last academic year. 2 PRU's (NSSC and Ty Gwyn) were merged and relocated onto one site in January 2014. An Executive Head of Centre was appointed to lead both the Primary PRU (Tai Centre) and the secondary PRU in March 2014. Tai was noted to be excellent during an Estyn inspection in September 2014 and Ty Gwyn was no longer deemed to be in need of significant improvement following a revisit in January 2015.	
Internal audits have undertaken to review Elective Home Education and Group/Home tuition, with recommendation for improvements identified. A remodelling of the home tuition service is planned and union/staff consultation is imminent (March 2014).	

KEY QUESTION 2: HOW GOOD IS PROVISION? Quality Indicator: 2.2. How do we evaluate support for additional learning needs and educational inclusion? Evaluation	Evidence
2.2.3 How good is provision for children and young people with ALN, including provision that is commissioned and/or provided by or with other agencies?	
A Communication Literacy Inclusive Classrooms (CLIC) project established in June 2013 as a Joint Access & Inclusion and School Improvement LA initiative to identify and improve support for children with speech language difficulties. Funding was secured from Families First (closing the gap 3-8 year olds) to deliver this programme. This project is currently being rolled out across all RCT schools and Year 3 will commence in September 2015. There are currently 107 schools involved in the project and 1,663 children have been assessed to date. 134 members of school staff have been trained to use the SpeechLink assessment tool and 24 LSAs have achieved accredited ELKLAN status. A total of 113 consultation visits have been undertaken by the Learning Support Service to agree interventions/actions to bring about change. Reassessments undertaken in May 2014 highlighted that 60.75% of pupils identified with moderate to severe difficulties had improved and 58.37% of pupils with mild/moderate difficulties had also improved. 10% of pupils assessed were identified as having significant learning needs, 21% with moderate needs and 66% with no identified need in this area. 308 intervention groups have been established to address these identified needs. The literacy element of CLIC was launched in January 2015 with 52 members of staff representing 25 schools. Attendees received training in DEST assessment and Hands on Literacy Early Years Intervention. DEST pre-intervention data is currently being collated centrally and will be used as an evaluation tool in July 2015 to review progress of pupils.	
Education services have a good working relationship with a range of other professionals from Children's Services and health to ensure that the needs of learners with more complex needs are met. This includes work around out-of-county placements, provision of speech and language therapy in specialist settings, provision for disabled children, fostering and adoption. All Children's Services LAC panels have education representatives and the LAC team in Access and Inclusion has a number of Children's Services funded posts. A new SLA has been negotiated with SALT service to ensure a	

good level of provision in specialist settings.	
The Authority has a well established and robust managed moves protocol between schools and cross LA borders to support learners at risk of permanent exclusion or to re-integrate those who have been permanently excluded. Exclusion data report and support and challenge visits show clear improvements in fixed term exclusions however more work is required in reducing the duration of exclusions. - Fixed term exclusion data suggests that significant improvements were made over 2013/14 and 2012/13. There has been a 5.05% reduction in fixed term exclusion and 5.01% increase in the number of days lost. - A 6.25% increase in the number of permanent exclusions (equated to 17 exclusions in 2013/14 compared to 16 in 2012/13) was evident during 2013/14. - The percentage of pupils receiving FSM that have been excluded has slightly increased from 42.55% (2012/13) to 44.76% (2013/14). - The percentage of LAC pupils being excluded per 1000 pupils has significantly decreased from 80.54% in 2010/11 to 76.40% in 2012/13 to 61.90% in 2013/14.	
The LA has reviewed Behaviour Support Service delivery and has consulted with stakeholders. With effect from September 2015 schools will receive delegated funds which they can use to access packages of BSS support at various levels. An element of funding has been retained to support statutory duties but the service will operate as a traded service from September 2015.	
EP Service works closely with Cwm Taf Portage Service. This service provides early support and intervention for pre-school pupils with SEN. There is an established Early Years Forum and close links are now evident with the Early Years Service. Co-ordination of services around our younger children supports early intervention and prompt support to meet emerging needs.	
Children and young people in RCT have benefited from additional funding from various sources to ensure that they and their families have the provision that is needed for their additional learning needs: - VIVA Transition Project works with all mainstream and special schools in RCT - RCT People First, Count Me In project provides 1-1 advocacy support for people with high and complex needs. - SNAP Cymru Encouraging Partnership, Listening to Children, Giving families voice. - VALREC - Team Around the Family Panel. All promote and advocate inclusion of all young people within RCT through the various projects that they run with a strong emphasis on Learner Voice to influence service delivery.	
The WG ASD grant is managed through Cwm Taf LHB and has secured additional WG funding for key working. Through this we have - Improved access to information for families of children / young people with ASD, a directory of services has been developed and distributed to families, schools, family care and network, health services and ASD parent groups. - Training for parents/carers of children and young people with ASD. - Training of staff to provide an Early Bird and Early Bird Plus service – the Early Bird service is currently providing three programmes per year with a maximum of 12 families attending each programme. 100% of parents/carers who attended the Early Bird Training rated the course as being very helpful or helpful in enabling them to meet the needs of their child. - Scoping exercise with parents has been completed and favourable feedback received. - There are currently two transition workers who support young people with a Learning Disability who have complex needs and/or challenging behaviour. Support is provided between secondary school and FE/HE into adult services.	
The LA has 15 accredited Team Teach trainers and provides training to schools and PRUs. Access and Inclusion has developed guidance to schools on positive physical	

intervention and has established processes for collecting data from schools. Incidents have reduced over the academic year from 181 in 2012/13 to 93 incidents in 2013/14. Support and challenge visits undertaken in relation to positive physical intervention resulted in a reduction in incidents in all the settings visited.	

KEY QUESTION 2: HOW GOOD IS PROVISION? **Quality Indicator: 2.2. How do we evaluate support for additional learning needs and educational inclusion?** **Evaluation**	**Evidence**
2.2.4 How well do we work with parents and carers of children and young people with ALN?	
The Authority has a low number of appeals to SENTW (3 in 2012/13) and (1 in 2013/14). This is a reflection of good working relationships with parent/carers and SNAP Cymru. A wide range of literature explaining the statutory process and services is available and parents are informed of a named contact to speak to for further discussions as required.	
Excellent support is provided by the LAC psychologists (Senior Practitioner/EP) for foster carers. This includes a 12 week training programme based on the Solihull Approach on issues relating to attachment which has been exceptionally well received. Access and Inclusion are involved in both Adoption and Fostering Panels.	
Support for parents of learners with Asperger Syndrome and Autism is good across the Authority. A robust multi-agency ASD strategy has been written in consultation with a range of professionals and parent/carers.	
Workshops for parents of school children with sensory impairments are held by members of the Learning Support Service Sensory Support Team across RCT 3 times during the academic year. Sessions provide an opportunity for parents to share experiences, gather advice and support from specialist staff.	
The RCT ASD Steering group includes three parent / carer representatives, all of whom provide personal input to the group in addition to representing local parent/carer groups. There are three parent carer support groups across RCT. ASD strategy funding has been deployed to fund some of the groups to enhance the wellbeing of their children.	
Professional focus groups are held to ensure all partner agency views are captured and taken into account when reviewing and planning service delivery. Following an evaluation of participation in parental focus groups it was felt that to extend reach in capturing parental views a change in practice was needed. A feedback questionnaire is now sent directly to a cross section of parents for evaluation of service delivery.	
On referral to A & I parents are asked to comment on their child's needs. This information is invaluable and actively encouraged. The EPS uses consultation frameworks devised to structure joint school meetings where parental input is key.	

KEY QUESTION 2: HOW GOOD IS PROVISION? **Quality Indicator: 2.3. How do we evaluate the promotion of social inclusion and wellbeing?** **Evaluation**	**Evidence**
2.3.1 How well do we work to promote social inclusion and wellbeing of all children and young people, including healthy lifestyle choices, behaviour, anti-bullying, preventing exclusion and education otherwise than at school (EOTAS)?	
A Wellbeing in Education project was launched in January 2014 which is aimed at promoting the capacity of schools to audit the wellbeing of learners at an individual, class and whole school level. Data is used to inform collaborative work between schools and the Access and Inclusion Service staff and to jointly agree interventions to bring about change. A total of 39 schools are currently involved and project outcomes are currently being evaluated. The LA has devised a new Wellbeing and Behaviour Strategy to ensure that there is a co-ordinated approach to promoting wellbeing across the Education and Lifelong Learning Directorate. This has been consulted on and a Wellbeing Forum established in December 2014 to identify targets/interventions to bring about change. An action plan to implement the strategy is currently being drafted. Outcomes will be rigorously evaluated post	

strategy implementation. This will take into account recent Estyn survey on addressing bullying on the grounds of pupils protected characteristics (report published July 2014).	

Targeted provision is available for the more vulnerable groups through the Youth Engagement and Participation Service. The early identification of young people through Vulnerability Profiling is the foundation of the service. Vulnerability profiling provides a consistent approach to the use of early identification of young people across the service to inform the allocation of support, development of provision, evaluation of its impact and ensure the right young people are receiving the support they need.
 	
• RCTs Anti-bullying strategy is now well established. Bullying data is collated from schools and PRUs on a termly basis. Based on the findings/trends of the data a number of schools are further audited and visited to identify areas of concern and good practice. When comparing 2013/14 and 2012/13 data there has been: 22% reduction in the number of incidents of bullying within primary schools and 3.5% reduction in secondary schools. There has been a 20.3% reduction compared to last academic year's data.
 	
• Access and Inclusion Service has made significant progress in relation to the collation and interrogation of data (e.g. time out, exclusion, use of positive physical intervention and bullying). Termly reports are produced and support and challenge provided. This has resulted in significant improvements. When comparing 2012-13 and 2013/14 there has been 51% reduction in the use of time out rooms across RCT. It is also noted that there has been a 50% reduction in the use of positive restraint throughout RCT. 87% of schools receiving support and challenge visits have reduced data returns.
 	
• Training in Restorative Approaches has been provided for all secondary school wellbeing co-ordinators, SENCos and LSAs. All Attendance and Wellbeing Service staff and YEPS Youth Re-engagement Officers have also undertaken an intensive four day practitioner training programme to allow the staff to implement Restorative Approaches in Schools (RAIS) in their case and group work.
 	
• RAIS project was launched in May 2014 and 4 pilot schools have received intensive training over 2014/15. A RAIS Steering Group has been established to drive this work and phase 2 will be implemented in September 2015.
 	
• During June 2013 schools were requested to complete a questionnaire regarding the use of Social Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) within their school. 32 schools responded to the survey. Schools were asked to comment and rate a series of questions, Whilst the number of responses was low it is evident that those schools using the initiative are finding it very useful. Of the returns received:
    • 68% schools recorded a noticeable impact on children's understanding of their feelings and ability to manage them
    • 63% schools recorded a noticeable impact on children's learning behaviours
    • 22% recorded considerable and 17 schools recorded a noticeable impact on children's relationship with each other
    • 72% school have an identified SEAL co-ordinator.
 	
• Since June 2011, Access and Inclusion Service staff have trained 185 members of staff on Emotional Literacy Support Assistants (ELSA) training. All are now trained to deliver group emotional literacy interventions. Training has been very positively evaluated and RCT staff are now involved in delivering consortia wide ELSA training.
 	
• 8 Behaviour Audits have been undertaken in secondary schools to establish good practice and to inform LA behaviour strategy. Feedback has been provided to the Pastoral Heads Group by the Head of BSS.	

• Communities First have an excellent track record of delivering projects and activities which promote social inclusion and well being of children and young people. • There continues to be a wide range of targeted services provided by Communities First which includes many projects jointly funded with schools utilising the Pupil Deprivation Grant.	

LAC Quality Assurance Panel meets fortnightly to discuss LAC pupils and outcome. The LAC Education Co-ordinators works with partner agencies to ensure LAC pupils are appropriately placed and their educational needs are met. The number of PEPs completed within 20 school days of a pupil entering the care system/changing schools during the year has deteriorated (deterioration could possibly be due to maternity leave of post holder). Trend data shows fluctuation (2011/12 – 70.89%, 2012/13 – 72.08%, 2013/14 – 64%).	
Access and Inclusion Service actively participate in Child Practice Reviews and Practitioner Forums ensuring lessons learnt are shared with multi agency partners. An education representative sits on Quality Assurance Standards Group (QASG) and undertakes joint audits with the Safeguarding Co-ordinator where there are safeguarding concerns. Representative attend various multi agency safeguarding groups including: Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH), Operational Committee, Cwm Taf Childrens Safeguarding Board (CTSCB),etc	
A representative from EPS works closely with YOS and the Youth Bureau. EP time is allocated to develop preventative strategies in work with young people. Following the successful pilot monthly consultation meetings are held with YOS case managers to enhance use of appropriate interventions such as solution orientated techniques, motivational interviewing and personal constructs psychology. These strategies were shown in the evaluation of the pilot to have a positive impact on the effectiveness of the YOS case managers in supporting young offenders.	
Through its referrals from schools the Access & Inclusion Service provides targeted intervention to assess the performance and needs of specific groups of vulnerable pupils and where appropriate provide regular support from specialist teachers/learning support assistants. Evidence of impact is monitored through progress from baseline assessment to re-assessment and progress against specific individual agreed targets. Pupils with Specific Learning Difficulties achieve 75% of Specialist Intervention Programmes (SIPs), Speech & Language supported pupils achieve 65% of SIPs; Visually Impaired and Hearing Impaired pupils achieve 73% of SIPs respectively.	
The Multi Ethnic Achievement Grant is well utilised to target literacy support of EAL learners to improve access to the curriculum and engagement with the wider community. In 2013/14, 12 Show Racism the Red Card workshops have been provided to RCT schools to promote social inclusion and wellbeing of minority ethnic group learners (11 were provided in 2012/13).	
Semi-structured interviews with pupils who received intervention from the Access and Inclusion Service suggest that 98% of children and young people felt things had improved since receiving support (increase of 8% when compared to last academic year result of 90%).	
The Authority has a strong track record of promoting and encouraging children and young people to participate in a wide range of musical activities within schools and the wider community. 4 Counties courses and Workshop days 2014-2015 - 146 participants - RCT Weekly ensembles 2014-2015 - 390 participants - RCT day courses 2014-2015 – 110 participants - ABRSM Examinations 2014-2015 – 200 participants 18 pupils included in the National Youth Ensemble.	
Vulnerability Profiling was first developed in 2012 by the Attendance and Wellbeing Service as a means of early identification of those children and young people at risk of disengaging from learning as a result of socio-economic barriers they face outside of the school environment. Utilising a range of school, Education, Children's Services and Police data scores are attributed to each data set resulting in a RAG system being applied at a pupil level. The Vulnerability Profile enables us to look across a number of indicators to establish a broader definition of vulnerability in terms of securing educational outcomes and target resources more effectively. This promotes pupil wellbeing, which in turn prevents children and young people disengaging from education and becoming NEET.	

Following the recent inspection in 2014 Estyn judged that our vulnerability profiling 'effectively highlights young people who need additional help to keep them engaged in education, training and employment'. In addition, a tick box has been created on each school's SIM system which can be checked if a parent of the pupil is serving in the armed forces. These pupils are then able to access support from dedicated Education Support Officers funded by the Ministry of Defence Education Support Fund.	
RCT Theatres continue to provide opportunities for children, young people and their families to enjoy a range of professional live arts experiences.	
The School Nursing Service contributes to the delivery of PSE/SRE programmes in schools delivering sessions related to sexual health, healthy eating, smoking, self-esteem/ body image, etc. Smoking cessation groups have been held in schools in conjunction with Stop Smoking Wales and Smoke Bugs will be piloted in primary schools in the new year.	

KEY QUESTION 2: HOW GOOD IS PROVISION? **Quality Indicator: 2.3. How do we evaluate the promotion of social inclusion and wellbeing?** **Evaluation**	**Evidence**
2.3.2 How well do we promote attendance and keep children and young people in education, employment and training?	
The Authority has always recognised the importance of promoting school attendance and since the Estyn Inspection in March 2012 there have been significant changes in the Authority's approach to improving attendance.	
RCT Schools Attendance Strategy is effectively embedded across services and schools. Improvements in the use of data to compare and challenge levels of attendance in schools has led to improvements in both Primary and Secondary settings. Improving attendance is a specific action within the Single Integrated Plan within the Prosperity theme and as such is an identified priority for all services. The AWS liaises effectively with and co-ordinates between a range of services in order to support their contribution to the attendance priority. The School Attendance Toolkit was reviewed and updated in September 2014 to account for service developments and changes in national legislation. All schools have updated their school attendance policies to reflect these changes, and have been ratified and adopted by their relevant Governing Bodies. A Consortium-wide Code of Conduct for the issuing of fixed penalty notices for non-school attendance was developed by representatives of all five local authorities. This was put out for consultation to all Headteachers and Governing Bodies, as well as South Wales Police. The responses were used to update the Code where necessary and this was presented to Cabinet which was approved in July 2014. The Code of Conduct was in place for September 2014. Fixed penalty notices were issued January 2015. In line with the implementation of the penalty notices, RCT consulted on the introduction of a consistent approach to authorising holidays in term time. With Cabinet agreement, from September 2014, all schools have been encouraged to adopt a 'zero tolerance' approach and support the local authority in its endeavour to tackle this type of absence. Reports on school attendance rates and the performance of the AWS are presented to Education Scrutiny on a termly basis. Data Response Visits are now mainstream across all schools (primary, secondary, special and PRU) as a means of formally recording the advice and guidance on attendance matters given to schools by the AWS as well as evidencing the provision of tailored support to individual schools in addition to the case management of referrals. As a means of escalating this process and troubleshooting issues that are negatively	

impacting on school attendance levels, senior members of the AWS can request a joint school visit with the Challenge Advisor to discuss these issues in a wider school improvement context. An evaluation is conducted and the responses RAG indexed to show the areas of good practice and identify the development needs that need to be addressed. This will then be monitored by both the Challenge Advisor to ensure the school is tackling these gaps and by the AWS to ensure the LA is supporting the school in the most appropriate way to achieve their targets. Data response visits were identified as good practice in Estyn's 2014 Thematic Report on Attendance.

The AWS have strong working relationships with schools and other agencies such as the police and the courts. RCT lead the planning for the annual Valley Line Truancy Patrol every December in partnership with British Transport Police and neighbouring EWS services.

RCT has clear procedures in place for instigating statutory interventions and applies these procedures, overseen by AWS Team Leaders, to ensure the use of legal powers is appropriate and consistent and that our legal responsibilities are met. RCT has a monthly attendance court at Pontypridd Magistrates court and the number of successful prosecutions is increasing, as are the number of child licenses issued.

	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14
Prosecutions	45	79	79
Child licenses issued	150	268	361
Work permits issued	0	18	19

The Local Authority's responsibility for Children Missing Education is efficiently and effectively managed by the Attendance and Wellbeing Service. The CME policy and processes are in place to identify, track and monitor this cohort.

The Local Authority has effectively aligned the provision of support for young people to remain in education, employment and training to the Welsh Government's Youth Engagement and Progression Framework.

The established, excellent working relationships have been strengthened with Careers Wales, schools and the Local Authority, and the WASPI assured information sharing protocol has been reviewed. Vulnerability Profiling, as the Local Authority's early identification system required by the Youth Engagement and Participation Framework, has demonstrated it's potential to be developed to support planning and performance monitoring in other contexts.

Through Families First funding the Post 16 Transitional Support Workers have been effective in securing destinations for young people Tier 2 and delivering the Your Future First Pre-engagement programme. This means that all young people in Tier 2 are given the opportunity to engage with a Lead Worker for additional support in line with the Youth Engagement and Progression Framework.

Young people deemed to be Tier 1 are supported by Youth Re-engagement Officers to make successful transitions through the established enhanced support.

A pilot joint initiative between Engagement and Participation Service and the Bridges into Work project that commenced in January 2015 has engaged with 69 participants in a two month period (January – February 2015).
   o 69 young people have had Essential Skills assessments,
   o 10 young people are due to start work placements within the NHS
   o 52 have gained at least 1 qualification
   o 46 employment outcomes have been achieved including 5 work placements and 16 paid jobs.

The Bridges into Work Project (September 2011-December 2014) engaged with 584 participants aged 16-19 years of whom 394 gained 1 or more qualification and 213 went into employment.	
The Youth Offending Service has now merged with Merthyr Tydfil.	
62 pupils are currently registered as Elective Home Educated pupils as at January 2015. These pupils are supported by a Key Worker based in Ty Gwyn, who is responsible for engagement, monitoring and support for EHE pupils and parents. All parents are offered support visits within 8 weeks of de-registration from school. Bi-annual visits are subsequently offered to maintain good levels of communication between the families and the service. Internal audits have been undertaken to review Elective Home Education with recommendations for improvements identified.	
First release exclusion data report highlights that RCT rate of 5 days or fewer within secondary schools has reduced from 89.5 to 82.7 per 1000 pupils. RCT is below the Welsh average in relation to fixed term exclusions 6 days or more per 1000 pupils. RCT is ranked 4th in Wales for the average number of days lost 2.2 compared to 2.5. The downward trend for fixed term exclusions and number of days lost continues to be evidenced with falls of 28% and 19.02% respectively when comparing Autumn Term 2012 with 2013 data. This reflects the impact of the termly support and challenge visits to schools.	
17 pupils were permanently excluded during 2013/14. An additional 1 permanent exclusion was overturned when presented to the Governing Body. No appeals were subject to an independent appeals panel.	
All young people who enter the criminal justice system complete a learning style questionnaire which ensures that the service can develop bespoke programmes that best suits the young person. In response to recommendations in the Joint Inspection of YOTS a joint YOS/education interface group has been established to develop re-engagement opportunities for young offenders.	
There are good joint working arrangements between services with dedicated EPS time allocated for the YOS to facilitate meaningful re-engagement in education.	
A dedicated trainee programme for Care Leavers continues to support young people at KS5 and beyond providing training and work experience.	

KEY QUESTION 2: HOW GOOD IS PROVISION? Quality Indicator: 2.3. How do we evaluate the promotion of social inclusion and wellbeing? Evaluation	Evidence
2.3.3 How good are our youth support services and personal support?	
A range of services commissioned through Families First provide support for Young People aged 11-25, these projects are evaluated quarterly and the evaluation covers performance, quality of provision and the impact the project has on young people. Services commissioned cover young people who: • are known to the Youth Offending Services • need help to enter employment, education or training • need information, advice and guidance on finances and sexual health • encourage young people to volunteer • need help and support to participate in physical activities and sport. Examples of good outcomes are: • The Youth Bureau has achieved significant reductions in first time entrants into the youth criminal justice system within Rhondda Cynon Taf. In the period April 2010 – March 2011 this figure was 287; the implementation of the bureau in 11/12 saw this figure reduce to 107 and for April 2012 to March 2013 there were 79 FTE's in RCT.	

- Since the introduction of the Youth Bureau and the significant progress made in reducing 1st time entrants the Reparation programme which facilitates work between a victim, communities and those who have committed an offence targets those who have offended or repeat offenders.
- In the first 6 months of 2013/14 52 young people accessed the programme with 38 being young offenders with 100% of young people on a conditional caution and between 70 and 82% of young people on a statutory order completing the intervention.
- STARs project which focus on those young people who are disabled, vulnerable, at risk or have identified health needs and aim to improve the health and well being of young people through delivering programmes that support their access into physical activity and sport.
- For the first half of 2013/14 1324 children and young people accessed the programme with 100% having and improved attitude toward exercise and between 55 – 60% accessing mainstream provision during the intervention.
- Pathways to progression – detached youth service provides a targeted provision engaging with the hardest to reach, most isolated, and disengaged young people in RCT. The deliver a programme of flexible need let interventions to encourage participation, empowerment, healthy and informed decision-making and choices.
- In the first half of 2013/14 179 young people accessed the service, with 100% of young people completing learning and training programmes.
- Sexual Health Outreach services in RCT is a nurse-let service which is provided via a sessional basis for young people aged 11 – 25 years linking closely and supporting frontline professionals and initiatives such as the Team around the Family.
- The aim of this services is to deliver targeted specialist contraception and sexual health support to vulnerable young people who are at high risk of:
  - unintended pregnancy, and
  - poor sexual health and are not effectively accessing mainstream services.

- For the period 1st April 2013 – 31st September 2013 the services provided:
  172 sessions in various educational and youth settings.
  32 training sessions delivered
  52 STI tests
  23 pregnancy tests
  65 referrals to other agencies.

  This service is provided in a range of settings to improve accessibility including education/advice, 1 to 1 advice. In addition to sexual health advice, the service addresses issues such as relationships, smoking and alcohol.

Since the creation of the new Youth Engagement and Participation Service, as part of the Councils Service Change programme;
- **88%** of key stage 4 attendance referrals from schools, for young people with an attendance between 86-90%, have improved attendance above 90%.
- **117** Generic 1 to 1 referrals received for young people identified as AMBER through vulnerability profiling. **26** cases have closed due to improved engagement in positive activities, education or training.
- A good number of young people, unknown to any other service, have been located and quickly re-engaged into education, employment and training. From July 2014 to November 2014, **44 Tier 1** young people aged 16yrs and above have been located with **35** young people successfully and quickly re-engaged into education, employment and training.

Positive activities and extended provision delivered by the Youth Engagement and Participation Service, is planned and mapped against the 4 thematic domains as set out in the RCT Youth Support Services Strategy to ensure that the service supports young people to access their entitlements. Since September to December 2014, the service has

seen good engagement levels of young people with 6,914 individual young people engaged in a range of positive youth activities, extended youth provision and issue based youth work including

- 46 Information, Advice and Guidance activities have been delivered by the Youth Engagement and Participation Service. This includes; nutrition, drop in sessions, first aid, food hygiene, get healthy and fit, Child Exploitation and Online Protection awareness raising, show racism the red card, smoking awareness –effects and facts. The WICID website gives young people access to information on activities and services available to them across RCT, Wales and the UK. The site operates within the Ten Entitlements and is in line with the European Youth Information Charter.
- **23** Education, Employment and Training activities were delivered by the Youth Engagement and Participation Service during the Autumn term 2014 which fall into this thematic area. This includes; BTEC in Massage, Community Sport Leadership Award, First aid, literacy and numeracy skills, math's leader's award, post 16 pathway clubs and GCSE Astronomy.
- The Youth Engagement and Participation Service has developed a robust accreditation strategy with the focus on delivering Level 2 qualifications linked to the Qualification and Credit Framework (QCF) which contributes towards school performance thresholds. This is significant shift away from historical delivery of accredited learning which consisted of young people gaining mostly entry level 1 qualifications. To support this process 17 schools have been established as Agored Cymru recognised centres.
- Significant support is being provided through the SEETs Strategic group to reduce the number of NEETs in the county. Since its implementation Year 11 NEET figures have reduced by 0.5%, Year 12 by just over 0.5% and Year 13 by 3.6%. NEETs figures for 16 year olds have been decreasing suggesting the focusing of post 16 transitional support is an effective method of reducing NEET
- 397 Sporting and Artistic Engagement activities were delivered by the Council's Youth Engagement and Participation Service during the Autumn term 2014. This includes; all 5x60 provision, acting, animation, beauty salon, carpentry, ceramics, film making, cookery, creative writing, drama, fashion design and media.
- A team of Community Sport Officers lead on the development and delivery of voluntary sector sport clubs across the county – there are currently 392 community sport clubs providing provision across RCT.
- The 5x60 programme operates across all secondary schools to support young people to engage in physical activity and progress onto community club provision. The 5x60 programme has a strong track record with 58% of secondary pupils engaging with the programme compared to 54% nationally. Since 2011 work has been ongoing to improve opportunities for pupils attending special schools, with engagement levels now over 80%.

The sector leading RCT Extending Entitlement (Viewpoint) Survey is delivered biennially, online, across RCT which captures the views, opinions and needs of over 8,000 young people and is used to inform the planning of services for young people in RCT. The survey is currently being amended to reflect the new Youth support Services Strategy. The Youth Engagement and Participation Service is establishing a comprehensive network of youth forums across all 17 extended provisions which link back into each school council.

The 14-19 Creative Industries Group together with Designs4Life programme provides innovative events for young people to gain advice and support on entering the creative industry sector.	
RCT has an effective and comprehensive counselling service commissioned through Eye to Eye. During 2013/14, 1601 young people attended counselling. There was a total of 6530 counselling sessions delivered. Overall improvement rates in Emotional health Post Counselling (YP Core) showed that 83.47% of males and 83.85% of females showed an improvement.	

KEY QUESTION 2: HOW GOOD IS PROVISION? Quality Indicator: 2.3. How do we evaluate the promotion of social inclusion and wellbeing? Evaluation	Evidence
2.3.4 How good are safeguarding arrangements?	
A comprehensive self evaluation of safeguarding and Child Protection Practices in Education Services for Children and Young People in Rhondda Cynon Taf is undertaken to establish the Local Authority's position in relation to safeguarding practices. Self Evaluation is an ongoing process and a range of senior officers from across Directorates and Services contribute and agree an Action Plan. Progress towards achieving the identified priority actions are monitored by the Strategic group and reported to the Education and Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Committee and the Cwm Taf Childrens Safeguarding Board. Officers from Education are involved in the establishment of a Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) which is based in Pontypridd Police Station. The MASH will ensure an integrated approach with a number of agencies working together in one place, sharing information and making collaborative decisions Planning for transition of children referrals to MASH is well underway and should be in place by the end of April 2015.	

KEY QUESTION 2: HOW GOOD IS PROVISION? Quality Indicator: 2.4. How do we evaluate access and school places? Evaluation	Evidence
2.4.1 How well do we provide an appropriate range and number of school places?	

Rhondda Cynon Taf has a comprehensive range of educational provision across the county providing education for over 38,000 pupils in 129 schools. The Authority has robust forecasting and planning processes for school organisation based on effective working across departments.
 	
While there is sufficient provision to meet current demand across the Authority, there remain pockets of over demand and supply together with accommodation that requires improvement.
 	
The following schools were closed in August 2014 on target and resulted in the removal of over 600 surplus places:
    1. Glantaf Infants School.
    2. Ynyswen Infants School.
    3. Glanffrwd Infants School.
    4. Aberdare High School.
    5. Aberdare Girls School.
    6. Blaengwawr Comprehensive School.
 	
In addition to the above:
• A further 600 surplus places are programmed to be removed when all building work for the new Aberdare Community School is completed in April 2015.
 	
• Rhiwgarn Infants School closed on 31st December 2014. This removed 100 surplus places in total (incl. Nursery places).
 	
• Aberllechau Primary School closed on 31st December 2014, removing a total of 110 surplus places.
 	
• The closure of Pentre Primary School has been approved by WG, but closure date has been amended to August 2015 (originally August 2014) due to delay in receiving decision and the need to complete major construction works at Treorchy	

Primary School.

- Catchment area realignment – catchment area of Y Pant Comprehensive School amended from September 2015, to address oversubscription issues whilst at the same time removing surplus capacity at Bryncelynnog Comprehensive. This proposal will result in the removal of 200 surplus places at Bryncelynnog over the next 5 years.

- The Primary school catchment areas in the Llanharan, Brynna, Dolau and Bryncae have been reviewed to address issues of oversubscription at Dolau Primary, whilst utilising surplus capacity at Llanharan Primary more effectively.

The Council has secured £160M of capital funding to deliver the 21st Century schools programme. This is the highest indicative allocation of all Authorities in Wales. Investing in projects removing over 3,300 surplus places, including:

- Y Pant Comprehensive - The Full Business Case for Y Pant received approval by WG in July 2014. The design for the new school is complete and planning permission has been obtained. The project is scheduled to start construction on site Summer 2015.

- The Outline Business Case for the proposal to reorganise Primary, Secondary and sixth form provision in the Rhondda Valleys and Tonyrefail area has been approved by WG. Consultations on the proposals have concluded with all Governors, staff and school council consultation meetings completed in November 2014. Parents and the local community drop in meetings and exhibitions were undertaken in January and February 2015. This is the largest proposed reorganisation of education provision this Council has ever embarked on and involves a total of 21 schools across all education sectors. It will substantially reduce the surplus places in this LA by the end of the 21st Century Schools band A tranche of proposals, by 2019.

- Construction of the new Aberdare Community Secondary School building is progressing well and on programme to open in Easter 2015.

- In February 2015 the replacement of the junior block at Llwyncrwn Primary School commenced on site. 90 surplus places have already been removed at this school with the removal of redundant mobile accommodation; a further 30 will be removed once this work is complete.

- Feasibility studies are in progress for consideration of Cabinet in the near future of the closure and merger of several schools with the creation of new schools funded from the remaining 21st Century funding envelope.

Although improvements have been made and plans in place for future improvements it is acknowledged that this is an ongoing long-term issue with the Authority still having one of the highest percentage of surplus spaces in Wales. The detailed asset management plan, allocation of funding and 21st Century School submission demonstrates the Authority's commitment to continue to improve provision of school places and secure provision that is fit for purpose in the 21st Century.

Some recently completed Capital Improvement Schemes have enhanced the range of school places available, including:

- Cymmer Infants – Remodelling works to receive Rhiwgarn Infants School added a further classroom space.

- Trerobart Primary School – New school hall, new extension to Foundation Phase

	Evidence
Building and landscaping works to receive pupils from Glanffrwd Infants School. • Penyrenglyn Primary School, Ysgol yr Eos and Williamstown Primary School - Improved Foundation Phase areas and the setting up of new classes for pupils with additional learning needs to receive pupils from Ynyswen Infants School. • New satellite Autistic Centre for secondary aged pupils created in the former Glanffrwd Infants School. • The Authority maintains comprehensive data systems relating to school capacities and admission numbers in line with the MCSW guidance. All are reviewed annually and include school verification and sign off. • Forecasting systems are well developed and utilise the DfES best practice guidance with accuracy continuing to be within the target of 1% of outturn (accuracy of latest forecasts: Secondary -0.46%, Primary 0.72%). • The corporate asset management database (techforge) holds comprehensive school accommodation data including assessments on suitability, condition, sufficiency and statutory compliance. • Overall, both English and Welsh-medium provisions meet current demand although there are localised pockets of over demand and supply. The main reason being the continued demographic movement from the upper valleys with large housing developments around key transportation routes; in particular the M4 corridor. • Any medium to long-term issues are being addressed within the 21st century school proposals.	
• The repairs and maintenance programme is well managed and emergency repairs dealt with promptly - with all schools buying into the SLA, and all school budgets clearly identifying funds for repairs and maintenance. • There are excellent working arrangements in place across directorates to make best use of knowledge and resources to meet needs. The capital programme is developed between Corporate Estates, Finance and Education via the Capital Working Group. There are regular meetings between Corporate Estates and Education Officers to share information on local needs which in turn informs future development and resource allocation. The Head of School Organisation sits on the local development planning group to ensure education links into the wider development and regeneration agenda. • school inspection reports are monitored are monitored with School Improvement colleagues and where buildings issues are identified, these are further investigated and resolved in consultation with the school and governing body.	

KEY QUESTION 2: HOW GOOD IS PROVISION? **Quality Indicator: 2.4. How do we evaluate access and school places?** **Evaluation**	**Evidence**
2.4.2 How good are our procedures for school admissions?	
• All admissions to maintained schools are processed in the published timescales in accordance with the WG School Admissions Code.	
• The Authority has an active admissions forum which undertakes its responsibilities effectively. Admission authorities consult each other regarding admission arrangements and co-ordinate arrangements effectively while still addressing local needs. Our School Admissions Officer also sits on the Admissions Forum of several of our neighbouring LA's.	
• A comprehensive range of bilingual information is available to parents on the admission process including Starting School book. Information is available in hard	

	Evidence
copy or via the Council's website. Flyers and posters are displayed in public places e.g. doctors' surgeries, leisure centres. The Admissions Team have also undertaken awareness raising sessions e.g. information stall at Early Years Teddy Bears Picnic, notices in press and online, visits to Early Years settings and Meithrins.	
• There is an effective system to ensure that in-year transfer applications are processed in a timely manner. In-year transfers include children moving into the area or moving schools within the area. All in-year transfer applications have been processed within the WG guideline of 15 days, with 93% of applications achieving our local target of 5 days.	
• A new in-year transfer co-ordinator post has been established which will ensure that the Council takes a collaborative approach and brings together the schools, Admissions Team and Attendance and Wellbeing Service when co-ordinating in-year transfer requests. This will address possible safeguarding issues and provide reasons for move requests which will assist the Council in identifying possible issues and the provision of support to vulnerable pupils.	
• For pupils living within the county, 98.3% of secondary pupils who have applied for places in September 2015 received a place in their first choice school with all remaining applications being offered their 2nd preference or catchment school (relates to 1 school – Y Pant). Primary places have not yet been allocated but we anticipate that, as in previous years approx. 99% of primary pupils will receive their first parental preference choice.	
• A new online admissions system was piloted in the Autumn Term of 2013, for secondary school applications in the first instance. 37.6% of secondary school applications were received via the online system during this pilot. The online service was extended to nursery, reception and infant/junior transfer applications from the Autumn Term of 2014. The number of secondary school applications received via the online system in 2014 rose to 60.1%. In the same period 27.3% of nursery applications were received via the online system; 59.9% of reception applications were received via the online system; and 46.4% of infant/junior transfer applications were made via the online system. Overall 49.4% of applications in the Autumn Term of 2014 were received via this new service. Measures are being taken to further raise awareness of the online facility for future application rounds which will open in the Autumn Term of 2015 and increase this percentage further.	

KEY QUESTION 2: HOW GOOD IS PROVISION? Quality Indicator: 2.4. How do we evaluate access and school places? Evaluation	Evidence
2.4.3 How good is our co-ordination of early years and play to ensure sufficiency?	
All parents who request nursery education have been provided with an appropriate place either in the maintained or non maintained setting. The vast majority of children are provided with a nursery place within the maintained setting. Nursery education in RCT is currently being reviewed bringing the provision in line with that offered by other Welsh LAs and in accordance with WG guidance. From September 2015 children will be offered a part-time place (15 hours per week) the term after their third birthday; with this increasing to 30 hours per week the term following their fourth birthday.	
Early Years and Family Support work closely with School Improvement and Access and Inclusion to ensure that appropriate provision is available for all children.	
All Early Years settings are registered education providers and are thus subject to Estyn Inspection. All settings are also registered with CSSIW. Provision is monitored and if not up to the required level then the provider is de-registered. There are currently 21 education providers within RCT.	
The Early Years training unit received excellent reports from external verifiers and moderators concerning quality of the training provided. In 2013 RCT won a national award for the quality and impact of the training provided. The training centre has recently been inspected by City and Guilds (February 2015). The inspector noted that the standard and	

quality of training was outstanding.	
Early Years education utilise a number of mechanisms to ensure quality of work e.g. quarterly WG reports, Estyn Inspections, Key Commissioners and Fframwaith reviews. To ensure internal quality assurance a number of tools and systems are being utilised/developed; • Foundation Phase Strategy Group • Flying Start undergoing a baseline assessment visit based on ECERS • Language and Play developing pilot to identify appropriate outcomes (ASPECT) • Development of parental focus groups to assess satisfaction and inform future development • Parenting programme using TOPSE to identify distance travelled.	
The Family information Service (FIS) provides a good range of information through a range of mechanisms but are aware that delivery mechanisms are evolving and the FIS was re-launched in March 2012 to utilise these advances e.g. video loops, social networking and become more visible to the public via Children's Centres and One 4 All Centres. FIS Outreach Officers were appointed early 2014 and have proven to be successful in raising the profile of FIS and forging links with external agencies, childcare providers, parenting groups and families.	

KEY QUESTION 2: HOW GOOD IS PROVISION? Quality Indicator: 2.4. How do we evaluate access and school places? Evaluation	Evidence
2.4.4 How well do we co-ordinate youth support services to ensure access to entitlements?	
At a strategic level youth support services are co-ordinated through the RCT Youth Support Services Strategic Steering Group which is a multi-agency group comprised services who provide youth support services across RCT. The local authority has significantly rationalised the number of strategic groups and as a result the Youth Support Steering group remains to oversee the work of existing operational partnerships concerned with the delivery of different aspects of youth support services as set out in a range of plans e.g. Supporting Education, Employment and Training (SEETs) Strategy, Local Sports Plan, Youth Arts Strategic Partnership Action Plan etc. The work of this group is informed by the RCT Youth Support Services Strategy and action plan that outlines the framework by which the provision of youth support services is planned, delivered and co-ordinated. This ensures youth support services are equitable and appropriate across RCT, by drawing on the skills and expertise of all relevant agencies to provide cohesive support for all young people to access their entitlements. The support for those who face barriers to attendance, engagement and progression in learning has been improved through the introduction of vulnerability profiling, the realignment of support provided to young people through the creation of the new Engagement and Participation Service and the co-ordination of services and provision post 16 through the Engagement and Progression Co-ordinator in line with the Youth Engagement and Progression Framework and the Careers Wales 5 tier model of delivery. The sector leading RCT Extending Entitlement Survey is delivered biennially, online, across RCT which captures the views, opinions and needs of over 8,000 young people and is used to inform the planning of services for young people in RCT. The survey is currently being amended to reflect the new Youth support Services Strategy.	
The use of the Welsh Government Youth Work Strategy Grant to commission Voluntary Sector providers is informed by an annual review of the level of youth support services provision within the 4 thematic domains set out the in the Youth Support Services Strategy.	
YEPS monitors reach and contact levels to ensure provision is targeted where it is most needed. All provision is planned and mapped against the 4 thematic domains as set out in	

	Evidence
the RCT Youth Support Services Strategy to ensure that the service supports young people to access their entitlements.	
Young people with additional learning needs are well provided for within the enrichment formula commitment, with an additional weighting of funds allocated to special schools and special unit pupils.	

KEY QUESTION 3: HOW GOOD ARE LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT? **Quality Indicator: 3.1. How do we evaluate the impact of leadership** **Evaluation**	**Evidence**
3.1.1 What is the impact of our leadership?	
Senior officers and Elected Members share a joint vision in the belief that the children and young people is RCT deserve to have the opportunity to attend the best schools so that they are given every chance to achieve their potential. Senior Officers and Elected Members across the Authority work together to provide strong strategic leadership improving the outcomes for children and young people at all key stages. This has resulted in key education performance indicators showing improving trends.	
The WAO Annual improvement letter to the Council on October 2013 stated that: • The Council continues to make good progress in addressing the proposals for improvement identified in previous assessments. • The Council is taking action to strengthen its arrangements to monitor, evaluate and report progress against its improvement objectives. • The Council continues to have a robust approach to achieving efficiency and resourcing planned improvements but is facing an unprecedented financial challenge over the medium term.	
Elected Members and Senior Managers share a good understanding of education issues and have a sustained record of making appropriate and often difficult decisions that focus on outcomes for children and young people. One of the Council's priorities is "A Top Quality Education For All" the Council has supported this by: • Delivering 1% protection in their education budgets for all years from 2011-12 to 2014-15. • Central South Consortium Joint Education Service is established and providing School Improvement functions across five local authorities, hosted by Rhondda Cynon Taf. • Implementing a robust school modernisation programme that tackles issues around surplus places and school re-organisation. • Investing £50m to build a new state-of-the-art secondary school for Aberdare, closing 3 secondary schools. • Committing a further £110m of capital resources, which includes 21st Century Schools Funding from Welsh Government, to deliver 9 major school rationalisation and improvement projects from 2014. This is the largest programme in Wales. • Restructuring the Youth Services, E3+ and 50x60, rationalising youth buildings to create an improved service which will provide better value for money and improved outcomes. Changes to provision or services are accompanied by wide-ranging consultation. This is exemplified by the school modernisation programme where extensive consultation has been undertaken with proposals being amended following consultation to take account of the public's views.	
Strong cross party leadership continues to prioritise the needs of vulnerable groups of young people across the Council with other Councils including Local Service Board, Cwm Taf Safeguarding Board Cwm Taf YOS and its partnerships.	
The Authority has effective communication with schools and key stakeholders. • Senior Officers continue to attend Head Teacher representative fora in which National and Local vision, strategies and priorities are discussed and agreed with schools. • The Moodle site for a single point of access to information regarding education services, is now well embedded.	

- Hwb access has been set up for every school in RCT.
- The Director of Education and Lifelong Learning addresses issues of underperformance robustly and directly, he meets with individual Head Teachers to review outcomes and identify school specific areas for improvement. Individual meetings are also held with the Head and Chair of Governors of primary schools identified as underperforming.
- 8 warning letters issued with a range of actions of other evidence against underperforming leadership in schools.

KEY QUESTION 3: HOW GOOD ARE LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT? Quality Indicator: 3.1 How do we evaluate the impact of leadership? Evaluation	Evidence
3.1.2 How good is our strategic direction and how well do we meet national and local priorities?	
The Council has a clear hierarchy of plans. RCTs Single Integrated Plan (SIP) 'Delivering Change' published in April 2013 sets out how partners will seek to address the key issues faced by the County Borough that ultimately will make it a better place to live, work and visit. The SIP replaces a number of different partnership plans including the: • Community Strategy • Children and Young People's Plan • Health Social Care and Wellbeing Strategy • Community Safety Plan • Local Housing Strategy The Plan is led by the Local Service Board representing the partner organisations of the area.	
The Education Directorate Strategic Plan 'A Top Quality Education For All' which is part of the Council's Wales Programme for Improvement Plan (The Council's Corporate Plan) identifies key actions for staff within Education and Lifelong Learning to deliver. Progress against national and local measures is reported to Cabinet on a quarterly basis. Underpinning the above are the Service Operational Plans that are the key delivery mechanisms to improve outcomes and achieve the objectives across all high level strategic planning.	
All documents seek to meet the national and local priorities of improving literacy and numeracy and continue to work on reducing the impact of deprivation on learner outcomes. The Education and Lifelong Learning strategic education priorities are: • Improving attendance, with the strategy, having a significant impact on attendance levels • Improving teaching and learning • Improving leadership and management • Modernise the school environments for the 21st Century. Senior officers' involvement and new recruitment processes for all senior leaders in our schools is making a difference in the quality of our senior school leaders. Work on the transformation agenda continues to develop, with the Council working with Coleg Y Cymoedd, providing a site in the centre of Aberdare, adjacent to the new secondary school, for a new FE College. Planning permission has been granted.	
An updated Welsh in Education Strategic Plan has been agreed and published on the RCT website by the required deadline of 1st June 2014.	
Strategic Plans continue to be monitored annually or according to the Welsh Government	

requirements. The Council and Education plans and targets are monitored quarterly and are subject to rigorous scrutiny by Corporate Management Team, Cabinet and Scrutiny Committees. Where there is underperformance or other issues raised, Cabinet has directed Senior Officers to address with robust plans.	
Other Directorates continue to work with education to provide support services for children and young people. Directors from all groups meet on a weekly basis where educational priorities are regularly discussed. The willingness of other directorates to work together to best meet education priorities can be demonstrated by many cross directorate project teams through collaborative working on school building projects, tackling weak leadership, IT management systems etc.	
The Council is currently auditing levels of compliance towards meeting Welsh Language Standards across all service areas.	

KEY QUESTION 3: HOW GOOD ARE LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT? Quality Indicator: 3.1 How do we evaluate the impact of leadership? Evaluation	Evidence
3.1.3 How good is the work of our Elected Members and other supervisory boards	
• The Council has a strong, stable political leadership based around a single party administration and working majority. The Leader and Cabinet Members are actively engaged in all key strategic developments. Service developments are challenged and scrutinised in appropriate detail. • Elected Members have a good track record of bringing about improved learner outcomes. Members scrutinise performance and financial data in detail.	
• Elected Members demonstrate a clear sense of direction and a collective resolve to progress school improvement priorities through their support, challenge and decision-making in key development areas such as: school modernisation and reorganisation; improving school attendance; improving literacy and maximising resources available to schools, through protecting revenue budgets and seeking other external funding. • Elected members have a clear understanding of the importance of their scrutiny role in delivering improved outcomes for stakeholders. • A comprehensive quarterly performance and financial report is reviewed and challenged by Corporate Management Team, Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny Committees. • Scrutiny Committees develop their own forward work programme which provides an opportunity to challenge and review any service or provision in more depth.	
• The Local Service Board (LSB) is effective in identifying barriers to improvement and has published a new Single Integrated Plan 'Delivering Change' in April 2013 which replaced previously prepared individual plans, including the Children and Young People's Plan. The Plan is structured around three outcomes – Safety, Health and Prosperity. The plan is focussed around prevention and early intervention and 'Education Attainment' is a key priority sitting underneath 'Prosperity' with multi agency actions including tackling attendance issues, offering diverse pathways to support more people to stay in education, training and employment, and, providing support to improve literacy and numeracy skills. • The Single Integrated Plan has been developed via a Results Based Accountability methodology with details of '*what we are going to do*' and performance measures to show '*how we know we are making a difference*'. Some Performance measures in relation to Education will be quantitative for example attainment results, but some will also be more qualitative, for example, results from the Viewpoint survey of young people. The Viewpoint survey has been extremely powerful in measuring the impact of interventions across a range of complex issues. • Quarterly reporting to the LSB of achievement against actions within the Single Integrated Plan has been established and the report on the 'Prosperity' outcome was reviewed in February 2014. • The Annual Review of the Single Integrated Plan was undertaken in June 2014, and confirmed that the current priorities of Safety, Health and Prosperity would be	

continued. This Annual Review for 2013/14 summarises all of the work done by partners towards achieving our priorities and can be viewed at http://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/en/councildemocracy/consultations/single-integrated-plan/singleintegratedplan.aspx	
• In line with the Annual Review of the SIP, partnership arrangements continued to be reviewed. Traditionally, partnership working has been directed through strategic partnership boards but, more and more, partners are working together directly, as a team, to achieve better outcomes for the people of Rhondda Cynon Taf. The Local Service Board decided that now these good relationships and ways of working were established that partnership boards were no longer the most effective way of co-ordinating our work. Instead, frontline staff will continue to work together to deliver the priorities of 'Delivering Change'. ('Delivering Change' will continue to be the strategic partnership document and influence organisational plans. It will also continue to be monitored by the LSB.) In September 2014, the LSB instructed that the partnership boards of Safety, Health, Prosperity and Fframwaith were stood down, subject to transitional arrangements.	
• As part of the transition to this way of partnership working, we are considering the most appropriate method of planning services in partnership around children, young people and their families. The mechanisms within Fframwaith, such as the strategic commissioning Directions Group, is likely to be adapted and renewed to be better fit for purpose within these new geographically based partnership arrangements.	
• Positively, the LSB have recognised the far-reaching impact of great quality education, training and employment opportunities on the other priorities within the plan. Therefore, there will be a focus on the key issue of 'Skills and Jobs', with geographically focussed task and finish groups targeting resources where they are needed most and working with local communities to improve outcomes for local people. This method of working will refresh the existing partnership networks built up through Fframwaith, such as Canopi and Team Around the Family.	
• Cwm Taf Regional Collaboration Board is well established and includes Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC, Merthyr Tydfil CBC, Cwm Taf Health Board, South Wales Police and Fire Service, Welsh Government and the Voluntary Sector. As well as responding to queries from the Welsh Government on key issues, the Board has established and delivered its own local projects, including focus on: complex families, empty homes, transport issues, improving consultation and engagement, improving attitudes to employability, and joint Health priorities such as smoking cessation, healthy weight management and mental health and wellbeing interventions.	
• Section 3.1.1 sets out examples of how the Elected Members are prepared to make difficult decisions in order to improve educational outcomes.	

KEY QUESTION 3: HOW GOOD ARE LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT? **Quality Indicator: 3.2 How do we improve the quality of what we do?** **Evaluation**	**Evidence**
3.2.1 How well do we carry out self-evaluation, including listening to learners and others?	
The Council has clear aims and strategic plans and policies that focus on learners' needs.	
There are well-established corporate processes that ensure services undertake regular self-evaluation including annual business planning, quarterly performance management reviews and monthly budget monitoring. While services undertake self-evaluation there is more work required to ensure consistency across services.	
All evaluations both for schools and LA services including monitoring of data with outcome trends are analysed and reviewed on a regular basis. Schools or services that are viewed to be underperforming are required to produce Action Plans to address issues.	
An effective system has been developed to improve the consistency of self-evaluation across services within the Education and Lifelong Learning directorate. All services undertake an annual self-evaluation and attend SMT on a termly basis to discuss outcomes, actions and issues. These evaluations, together with Council-wide priorities help	

	Evidence
inform the development of the Directorate and Operational Plans.	
Education performance data is regularly shared with Head Teachers in evaluating and agreeing the Council priorities for education resulting in a culture of greater awareness and accountability.	
Staff at every level are involved in the self-evaluations of services through team meetings and 1-to-1s. Action plan progress is included as a regular agenda item on team meetings in order for all staff to have a voice on progress and any barriers identified. The 1-2-1 meetings allow both managers and staff to raise any concerns around individual performance and responsibilities.	
Learners have the opportunity to raise issues and share their views across all areas of the Council's work. The Young People and Families Participation Strategy inform how this will be undertaken. Examples include focus groups of young people regarding council budget allocation, involvement of pupils in school reviews, development of plans and strategies, pupil voice survey.	
Commissioned services are regularly monitored and evaluated. The use of RBA has improved our ability to evaluate services, the outcomes achieved and show the difference they have made. We have a range of effective tools to support evaluation including our commissioning decision-making tool and outcome and cost tool. The Team Around the Family (TAF) approach includes review and measures of distance travelled for individual children, young people and families across a range of domains. It allows us to evaluate the difference we are making for individuals. To ensure TAF does improve outcomes a TAF evaluation framework has been developed and approved. Our innovative outcome framework which looks at outcomes at the population level (whole communities), performance level (for services and systems) and at the individual family level has been developed and approved by Fframwaith. The introduction of Team Around the Family completes this framework and will allow us to review outcomes at all three levels. CSSIW in its recent inspection of the ACRF noted the progress made through Families First and Canopi in improving provision of early intervention and prevention services and outcomes for children and young people.	
Extensive consultation exercises across the County Borough were undertaken to gather public opinion on the recent service changes which are necessary in order to close the budget gap.	

KEY QUESTION 3: HOW GOOD ARE LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT? Quality Indicator: 3.2 How do we improve the quality of what we do? Evaluation	Evidence
3.2.2 How do we plan and secure improvement?	
Self-evaluation underpins all locally defined priorities and is the focus for delivering national priorities. The data analysis forms the basis for setting the level of differentiated support provided to schools, with targets set and challenged based on contextual data e.g. school attendance rates and trends. As a Council we are self critical and openly recognise the areas for improvement. This is recognised in the annual WAO Improvement Reports.	
All schools are challenged in their target setting using a full range of available data evaluation. Trends and performance by similar schools are also included in the challenge and where appropriate progress is monitored through the year to identify underperformance against these targets e.g. school attendance, levels of progress between key stages as well as end of Key Stage results.	
Services across the Authority have to report regularly on a suite of indicators and actions. Education SMT oversee progress on service plans with key measures being reported corporately. Performance against target for these measures is monitored using the RAG system with underperformance requiring a written analysis for Scrutiny.	
Information from data analysis, Estyn school inspections, stakeholder feedback,	

benchmarking and performance trends together with the national agenda are key determinants in developing improvement priorities. Once priorities have been set there has been a strong track record of allocating funding to address priorities.	
As a result of the improved ICT infrastructure we have made large investment in the CAPITA ONE system and SIMS. - The AWS has been fully migrated from Tribal plus all case management and business outputs. - All team managers in IYSS have been trained on the Youth module which has been installed and set up. Data migration and training of all the YEPS will take place in Quarter 1 15/16, and disengagement from the old system will be finalised by June 15. - Governors, Music and the Training Module has been procured for implementation by the end of Quarter 2 15/16. - The Training Module will support the monitoring of all training across the Directorate e.g. Governors, Music and Catering. - We have procured the SEN Module in conjunction with Merthyr and plan to start implementation by Quarter 4 15/16. - SIMS provided 17 in house courses, which 651 school based staff attended. - SIMS provided at school training in 66 schools for 281 school based staff.	
There are robust mechanisms in place to ensure that planning for improvement involves the experiences and views of stakeholders. e.g. Head Teacher, staff and pupils are always heavily engaged in developing the environment, curriculum and resources when new schools are built or refurbished.	
In addition to the regular auditing of schools compliance with financial procedures the Director makes effective use of Internal Audit to agree an annual plan to sample schools compliance in a range of areas , these have included safeguarding (DBS checks), administration of free school meals, use of attendance codes and after school clubs. Following the receipt of written reports from the auditors the Director takes action as appropriate e.g. written warnings.	
A rigorous evaluation following the first year of Families First funding of the Programme and individual projects. The Review identified projects which were either not appropriate for Families First funding, not performing sufficiently well and addressed the imbalance of funding across the outcomes. The result of the Review was to develop a new Families First Plan for 2013-14 which increased funding for outcome 1 which has resulted in an improvement in our strategic approach to SEETs and a reduction in our NEET figures – with 2013 data showing further improvement for both year 11 and year 13 pupils. Increased funding was also provided to reduce the gap in attainment and attendance of pupils in receipt of free school meals – analysis of attendance data show that while overall attendance has improved this improvement has been higher for FSM eligible pupils.	
Performance management reports are produced on a quarterly basis that will cover service activity, spend, outcomes achieved and any identified issued that present during the quarter. These reports are presented to the Directions Group and Key Commissioners.	

KEY QUESTION 3: HOW GOOD ARE LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT? **Quality Indicator: 3.2 How do we improve the quality of what we do?** **Evaluation**	
3.2.3 How are we involved in professional learning communities?	
The directorate recognises the importance of professional learning communities with staff across all services being actively involved at both local and national levels.	
- The authority has active representation on all ADEW groups and sub-groups. - All schools are involved in regular cluster meetings which enables a shared approach to problem solving and good practice with a focus on local needs. The Authority and Central South Consortium are committed to using school to school support as an effective practice to promote school improvement. The CSC has contracted with Professor Mel Ainscow who led the Manchester Challenge to initiate a similar programme in the region. The Council and a group of headteachers are working with Professor Ainscow on developing the model.	

The LA is a regular contributor to the national agenda and national developments. e.g. • Part of the working group contributing to the All Wales Attendance Framework launched in March 2011. • Education representative on the WG All Wales Standing Committee for Service Children in Education. Attend Basic Skills Consortium Group and National conferences. • Active members of the central south Principal Youth Officers group. • Federation of Detached Youth Work. • International symposium on non-formal education.	
The Association of Secondary School Head Teachers in RCT continues to work together and with the Council. They meet half termly and share best practice on specific issues, focussing on 2 key issues each meeting. This is followed up by a similar approach with the LA. If a specific issue arises that affects the majority of schools, a task and finish group is set up and the issue is addressed. Recently, this has included managing the in-year transfer of pupils. Already we have seen benefits to this approach with a shared ambition and growing sense of high expectation and accountability.	
Staff at all levels are encouraged to engage in opportunities to increase their professional knowledge, understanding and skills • When new techniques and processes are developed implementation costs include funding to ensure that staff have appropriate training to fully utilise these systems. e.g. admissions MIS, attendance MIS. • HR provide a range of internal run courses from IT skills to ILM certified programmes. These are available to all staff and identified through 1-to-1s or performance reviews. • Middle managers can be nominated by directors for the Aspire programme, in place to provide officers with the skills and experience required to fulfil a senior management role and enable successful succession planning within the Council. • The Transform project for Senior Managers who are identified as likely to play a major role in the Authority in the future has been established to provide participants with skills to improve their personal impact and organisational performance. • The Council runs an Aspiring Head Teacher Programme. The first year was completed in October 2013. 13 of the 17 participants have been promoted to senior leadership posts, including 5 seconded to struggling schools. A new cohort of 22 aspiring headteachers started the Programme in October 2013.	
Collaboration between services and Authorities is essential in delivering effective services. Staff are involved in both formal and informal collaboration and knowledge sharing with neighbouring Authorities. The Authority is actively involved in the Central South Consortium where skills are being shared to benefit all. The Council acts as host authority for the Central South Consortium.	
There has been significant investment in developing the Team Around the Family (TAF) approach with lead professionals identified across all agencies. A comprehensive TAF Workforce and Training Plan has been developed which clearly identifies individual training needs and opportunities to support the skills and knowledge that our workforce needs. Ongoing local and national research has been undertaken to ensure that workforce activity meets needs that have been identified locally, but also reflects current best practice on a national level. It is clear that for the continued implementation of TAF; a culture change is required which will take time and commitment to embed into everyday practice. During phase 1 implementation of TAF, it has also become apparent that some new requirements and changes to working have uncovered some additional practice issues and local learning sets have began to be facilitated to support the workforce with practice issues and new ways of working to ensure consistency and quality.	

KEY QUESTION 3: HOW GOOD ARE LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT? Quality Indicator: 3.3 How do we evaluate the effectiveness of our partnership working? Evaluation	Evidence
3.3.1 How good are our strategic partnerships?	
Strategic partnerships are secure, inclusive, well attended and supported by a wide range of partners and contribute to the sustained improvements in outcomes for young people in RCT. A shared agenda and vision to improve outcomes and life chances for the Children and Young People of RCT is evident. - There is a strong partnership between the Education Service and RCT schools. Schools are clear about the challenge and support categories in which they fit. The vast majority of schools buy into the Council's SLAs. Partnership working is the foundation for the improvements in pupil attainment and wellbeing outlined in 1.1 and 1.2. - Vulnerability Profiling is being discussed with Coleg y Cymoedd with a view to assisting in identifying young people as risk through becoming disengaged and dropping out of College. - The partnership between the Council, Coleg Y Cymoedd, Careers Wales and a range of commissioned voluntary and private sector organisations to reduce the numbers of young people, aged 16-24, not in Education, Employment or Training. The 'Your Future First' partnership programme has reduced the number of young people not in education, employment or training in RCT to the lowest levels since June 2006 for the 18-24 age group. In December 2014 the JCP reported a 5.1% level of unemployment for 18-24 years olds in RCT, compared to 12.2% in April 2012. NEETs figures for 16-18 year olds have fallen by 1.03% from 5.16% in 2011 to 4.13% in 2014. - The 14-19 Network has worked hard to: ensure the range of options available to students has increased; encourage consortia to challenge quality; and to increase retention rates at Years 12 & 13. This has been achieved. Furthermore, a recent review of the 14-19 Network has been completed and the recommendations have been implemented. - Multi-agency approaches to early intervention continue to result in a significant reduction in the number of young people in the youth justice system in RCT as evidenced by a 23.4% reduction in the number of first time entrants between 20011/12 and 2012/13.	
RCT is the host authority for the CSC and has committed an appropriate level of resources to ensure it has the right approach and support for it to be a success.	

KEY QUESTION 3: HOW GOOD ARE LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT? Quality Indicator: 3.3 How do we evaluate the effectiveness of our partnership working? Evaluation	Evidence
3.3.2 How do we evaluate the effectiveness of joint planning, resourcing and quality assurance across a range of partnership working?	
- Strategic Partnership arrangements are well-established and can evidence tangible benefits for children and young people. The performance management arrangements have improved, however, with increased complex partnership working, many benefits and outcomes from partnership working are difficult to measure especially in the short-term. - To improve the planning, resourcing and quality assurance of the 14-19 arrangements, Cabinet made recommendations for consortia to strengthen their governance, management and financial arrangements with consortia coordinators key appointed and focused on improving provision and outcomes. - Partnership working across Central South Consortium established across 5 councils due to their relationship through the shared school improvement service.	

KEY QUESTION 3: HOW GOOD ARE LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT? Quality Indicator: 3.4 How do we evaluate resource management? Evaluation	Evidence
3.4.1 How do we manage our resources?	
There are robust financial and performance management arrangements in place at a corporate and directorate level to ensure that resources are managed effectively.	
- The Council operates a comprehensive budget prioritisation process, utilising a corporate medium term financial plan which drives the annual budget cycle. The latest WAO Improvement Assessment: <blockquote>*'The Council continues to have a robust approach to achieving efficiency and resourcing planned improvements in services but is facing an unpredicted financial challenge over the medium term.'*</blockquote> - Priorities for the Council are established by Cabinet in consultation with Scrutiny and stakeholders with resources invested in these priority services accordingly. - A sector leading budget consultation is undertaken each year with public and key stakeholders to identify their priority areas for expenditure. - Senior Managers and Elected Members utilise the above to allocate and prioritise spend.	
Funding at directorate level is based on priorities and identified need. Budgets are monitored on a monthly basis with the financial position of services and schools a standing item on the senior management team monthly meetings. Service Managers are challenged against budget overspend and reported in the quarterly performance exception report to cabinet and scrutiny. This robust monitoring of expenditure and challenging its use enables the Council to fund priorities such as the investment in the Attendance & Wellbeing Service.	
The level of reserves held by schools at the end of 13/14 was £109 per pupil i.e. 2.76 %. Of which 12% of our schools have negative balances. We continue to work closely with schools that have deficit balances and assist them to produce and monitor their financial recovery plans. Schools with excessive balances are also required to develop plans to demonstrate how they plan to spend them and are directed to allocate resources in line with the Directors priority	
The percentage delegated to schools has increased to 83% in 14/15 from 82.89% 13/14. If transport was excluded this would increase to 87%.	
All financial expenditure is monitored closely, including grants and carefully related planning priorities. Education and Finance Teams have robust monitoring methods to ensure resources are used effectively and identify any potential service changes e.g. when Glanffrwd Infants closes 31/08/14 the premises have been re-designated as a post 16 Autistic provision for a maximum of 15 places. This provision will meet the increasing demand for out of county placements at an annual cost of £492k i.e. £33k per place which compares favourably to the £51k which is the current average cost of an out of county placement i.e. an annual saving of £277k. Monthly S151 reports, which identify key business and financial risks are discussed by Education Senior Management Team and the Corporate Management Team.	
Senior Finance and 14-19 officers have met with all secondary Head Teacher individually to inform the allocation of 14-19 funding and identify the most effective allocation of funding to meet students and providers requirements. Meetings are also planned with each school bursar to discuss issues including finance, HR and to identify option for securing budget efficiencies.	
Corporate Estates has completed an in-depth analysis of all the Council's school estate, this analysis formed the basis for our School Modernisation Programme	
The Council's sector leading and innovative School Modernisation Programme and 21st Century School Programmes for 2014-2020 rely on the effective use of Council resources to fund new schools for Aberdare, Ynysboeth, Abercynon and Cwmbach. Over the next four years the WG support will fund 50% of the £160m 21st Century School Programme. This is the largest school modernisation programme in Wales and the Council has already secured	

funding for schools in Aberdare and Pontyclun via this funding stream, with proposals for the mid Rhondda and Tonyrefail areas currently being consulted.	
In the latest local school survey 80% of schools rated the financial information (including comparative data) they receive as good or very good.	
Resources are well managed through our commissioning processes. The model and the role of the Directions Group and Key Commissioners in resourcing priorities are viewed as effective and transparent by partners. Commissioning priorities are detailed in the Children and Young People Plan and all existing contracts have been mapped against the priorities of the plan to ensure strategic relevance.	

KEY QUESTION 3: HOW GOOD ARE LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT? Quality Indicator: 3.4 How do we evaluate resource management? Evaluation	Evidence
3.4.2 How do we provide value for money?	
- To ensure that our schools get value for money from Service Level Agreements we have established a Primary Traded Services Board with our Primary Head teachers. This Board meets at least every half term and its terms of reference are to review, challenge and amend all SLAs. - As a direct result of this Board from April 2015 a new SLA for Waste has been established. - The ICT SLA has been reviewed with two new SLAs being available for schools from April 2015. The second is optional and offers curriculum support on a cluster basis.	
Good use of data ensures that we are targeting resources effectively and efficiently. To achieve this, the Council has jointly collaborated with a neighbouring Council to purchase an integrated information management system i.e. Capita One. A planned implementation process will begin with three services i.e. Exclusions, Youth and Governors and the remaining services will come online during the financial year 14/15.	
Value for money underpins the provision of all services across the Council. The importance of financial and budgetary issues and their relationship with strategy is reflected in business plans and the arrangements for reviewing performance. The WAO Improvement Assessment reports that *'the Council continues to focus on stability and sustainability in terms of its finances through an effective financial management framework.'*	
Over the past few years a number of services within the Education Directorate have been restructured to realise efficiency savings, such as Service to Young People, School Organisation and Admissions Team, Governors Support Team, School Music Service and Senior Management arrangements. As a result, teams are working more efficiently, undertaking the majority of the same tasks, but more effectively.	
Senior Officers within finance work closely with schools to improve their resource and financial management, since the last inspection they have introduced a number of new systems and practices including - innovative invest to save program to increase sustainable energy efficiency. - introduction of online dinner money payments. This partnership approach is valued by schools with 68% rating the support they receive to improve resource and financial management as good or very good.	
The following collaborative arrangements with partner Local Authorities have generated substantial efficiency savings and other benefits for the local authorities: - CSC – the shared School Improvement Service with Bridgend, Cardiff, Merthyr Tydfil and the Vale of Glamorgan. - Education and Child Psychology Services – managed and delivered by RCT for Merthyr Tydfil. The cost of the service has fallen in recent years due to the economies of scale and efficient management and work practices. - The Council is leading on the Cwm Taf regional collaboration fund project to	

improve the Schools ICT Management Information System and Infrastructure, which will include Merthyr Tydfil CBC.

- The Council is an active member of the Welsh Purchasing Consortium project team for procurement of Agency staff. This being the biggest collaborative services contract for the Welsh Public Sector and enables economies of scale to be achieved by centralised services and schools.