

The Vale of Glamorgan Council

Cabinet Meeting: 3 October, 2016

Report of the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Education

School Performance Report 2015-2016: Foundation Phase and Key Stages 2 to 5

Purpose of the Report

1. To inform Members of pupil attainment and school performance outcomes.

Recommendations

1. That Cabinet notes pupil attainment and school performance outcomes, based in the case of GCSE and A level examinations, on provisional data.
2. That Cabinet note that in accordance with the School Standards and Organisation Act (2013), a formal warning notice was issued in 2015 and extended during the academic year to Bryn Hafren Comprehensive School and that the statutory intervention at Barry Comprehensive School has also been extended to include the appointment of two additional governors.
3. That the report is referred to Scrutiny Committee (Learning and Culture) for consideration and that the Committee is invited to reconvene an individual school progress panel meeting at Bryn Hafren Comprehensive School.

Reasons for the Recommendations

1. To ensure Members are aware of the attainment of pupils and the performance of schools in 2015/16.
2. To assure Members that the full powers available to the authority are being used to improve schools that are underperforming, in accordance with the School Standards and Organisation Act (2013).
3. In order that Scrutiny Committee (Learning and Culture) can review educational outcomes for Vale schools and, in relation to the named school, to review the progress that the school is making.

Background

2. Statutory end of Key Stage Teacher Assessment (TA) is administered at the end of the Foundation Phase, Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3, when pupils are aged 7, 11 and 14 years old respectively.

3. The National minimum expectations for pupils at the end of the Foundation Phase and Key Stages 2 and 3 are as follows: Outcome 5 at the end of the Foundation Phase, Level 4 at the end of Key Stage 2 and Level 5 at the end of Key Stage 3.
4. Additionally, expectations for our more able pupils at the end of each phase are as follows: Outcome 6 or above at the end of the Foundation Phase, Level 5 or above at the end of Key Stage 2 and Levels 6 and 7 at the end of Key Stage 3.
5. In relation to external examinations at Key Stages 4 and 5, this report outlines performance for the measures as follows (see [appendix 4](#) for changes which will come into effect in 2016/2017).
 - The Core Subject Indicator (CSI); the proportion of pupils attaining a GCSE A* - C in the core subjects of English, Welsh, Maths and Science.
 - Level 2 Threshold; proportion of pupils attaining 5 x GCSEs A* to C.
 - Level 2+ Threshold; proportion of pupils attaining 5 x GCSEs A* to C including Maths, English or Welsh. This is the government's preferred measure of educational attainment.
 - English GCSE Level 2; the proportion of pupils attaining English GCSE A* to C.
 - Maths GCSE Level 2; the proportion of pupils attaining Maths GCSE A* to C.
 - Science GCSE Level 2; the proportion of pupils attaining Science GCSE A* to C.
 - A Level; the level 3 indicator measures the proportion of pupils attaining 2 or more A levels A - E.
6. For Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5, this report uses provisional data and comparative benchmarking information only.
7. The Council's ambition is that educational outcomes in the Vale of Glamorgan are the best in Wales and match those of the most successful authorities in England with similar socio economic profiles. The Council also seeks to ensure that all school performance is benchmarked in the high or highest benchmarking positions.
8. In general, the Vale of Glamorgan is advantaged in terms of socio-economic deprivation. The proportion of pupils entitled to receive free school meals (FSM) is used as a proxy indicator of socio-economic deprivation. In 2015-16, the Vale ranked 5th lowest overall for the proportion of pupils entitled to receive free school meals (4th lowest at primary level and 6th lowest at secondary level). These findings indicate that the aggregated performance of Vale of Glamorgan schools should be significantly higher than for Wales as a whole and always rank in the five highest performing Local Authorities (LAs), as a minimum expectation.
9. In 2013, at the request of Cabinet, the Scrutiny Committee (Lifelong Learning) established individual school progress panels. The purpose of the panels is to ascertain whether the school has up to date and authoritative improvement plans, arrangements in place to monitor the impact of the plans and to amend the plan as appropriate and to establish what progress has been made and what further progress is required. The panels also seek to identify any barriers to improvement that could be resolved by additional support from the Council.

Relevant Issues and Options

10. When considering LA performance, the key indicators for consideration are as follows:

- Local Authority (LA) performance compared with the all Wales means and the LA performance compared to the top five highest performing LAs in Wales;
 - LA performance trends over time, when compared with the all Wales means and prior performance;
 - the relative gap in performance between LA means and the all Wales means;
 - the spot rank position of the performance of the local Authority when compared with LAs across Wales; should, as a minimum, be within the top five highest performing LAs in Wales;
 - for each indicator in each phase, the proportion of schools performing in the high or highest benchmarking positions when compared with similar schools and ranked against LAs across Wales.
11. For benchmarking purposes a school can be located in the top two quarters, i.e. the high or highest benchmarking position in the group or in the lower to lowest two quarters. Relative performance of similar schools is then described as being either above or below the median i.e. either in the top 50%, or in the bottom 50%, of similar schools.
 12. Estyn places great emphasis on the need to ensure that at least 50% of schools across an LA, for each indicator within each phase, are located in the high or highest benchmarking positions, or above the median.
 13. Welsh Government uses this information to rank individual LAs according to the proportion of schools, in each LA, that are located above, or below the median. This is known as the LA School Benchmarking Rank comparative information. This latter information is not yet available for 2015/16.
 14. Progress in the Foundation Phase:
 - The positive trend in improving standards continues for the majority of indicators at outcome 5, the exceptions being Literacy, Language and Communication in Welsh (LLCW) and Personal and Social Development (PSD). Following an increase of 5.1% in 2013/2014, LLCW dipped by 0.9% in 2014/15 and a further 1.5% in 2015/16 although remains higher than LLCE (English). PSD dipped by 0.2% although remains the highest in the Central South Consortium ([Appendix 1](#), page 2).
 - Performance at outcome 6 has increased measurably for all indicators, most notably in PSD where attainment has improved by a further 5.4%. Performance at outcome 6 has been a continued focus for improvement and the impact of the support and challenge to schools has resulted in significant gains over the last three years.
 - The foundation phase outcome indicator (FPOI) has fallen very slightly after three years of improvement but remains the highest in the Central South Consortium.
 - The LA rank for FPOI 2016 has improved to second from third. ([Appendix 1](#), page 7).
 - At outcome 5+ the majority of schools perform above the median in all indicators. Of particular note is mathematical development (MD) where 75% of schools are above the median.
 - All Welsh medium primary schools were again placed above the median for Welsh (LLCW) at outcome 6 although only 57% were above the medium at outcome 5.
 - The difference in FPOI performance for those pupils entitled to free school meals (eFSM) and those that are not (non FSM) has fallen again from 12% in 2014 to

13.7%. Whilst this sustains the reduction from 21.5% in 2013, it remains an area of developmental need.

15. Progress in Key Stage 2:

- Standards of attainment at Level 4 continue to rise, albeit at a slower rate than in recent years, in all but science, which has maintained the same high attainment as 2015 at 95.1%. ([Appendix 1](#), page 2).
- Performance at Level 5+, with the exception of English, which is comparable with the attainment of 2015 and science which dipped by 0.2%, has risen again for the fourth consecutive year. Most notable are the improvements in Welsh where attainment improved by a further 7.8%. The improvement in all four main performance indicators shows significant improvement over three years of between 9.2 and 22.5%.
- The core subject indicator, CSI, has increased by 0.6 percentage points this academic year. This is the fourth consecutive rise and maintains the Vale's rank as second in Wales for the third consecutive year.
- With regards to benchmarking, at level 4, the percentage of schools in the top half has increased this year in all 5 indicators. The range is 55% (science) to 70% (maths). At level 5 there were increases in the percentage of schools in the top half in English and Welsh. Of particular note is Welsh where all schools were in the top half, of which, 80% were in the top 25%.
- The difference in CSI performance between eFSM and non FSM has decreased from 14.8% from 14%. While this improvement is positive, it remains an area of focus.

16. Progress in Key Stage 3:

- At KS3 standards are good, having risen yet again this year. ([Appendix 1](#), page 3).
- At level 5+ standards have improved, with an increase in all performance indicators.
- The high expectations shared across the authority has significantly impacted on the rise in standards at this level, with significant gains at level 6+ in English, mathematics and science rising to 62.9%, 71.5% and 71.8% respectively. Attainment in English remains lower than in the other subjects.
- There were notable improvements at L7+ also, particularly in mathematics which rose by 5% to 39.1%.
- The improvements continue at the higher level with measurable gains in all indicators with the exception of Welsh which fell from 18.6% to 16.1%. Performance in mathematics is particularly strong with 39.1% of learners achieving L7+.
- The CSI has increased by a further 3.8% to 91.2%, maintaining the upward trend of the last four years.
- Ranking for CSI at KS3 has improved from 5th to 4th in Wales. ([Appendix 1](#), page 8).
- Benchmarking at level 5+ and level 6+ shows significant improvements in all indicators. All schools are in the top two quarters for all indicators.
- At Level 7+, benchmarking data reflects the improved performance in English, mathematics and science. 88% of schools had above median performance in English and science whilst the performance in Maths increased to 100%. Due to improvements in performance in Welsh in other local authorities and a slight dip in the Vale, performance in this indicator fell below the median.

- The performance of eFSM pupils improved by 0.1% but, as a result of a 2.8% improvement in the performance of non FSM pupils, the gap has widened from 15.7% to 19.8%. It remains a focus for improvement.

17. Progress at Key Stage 4:

- Provisional data indicates improved performance in L2 for Maths (+4.1%) and Science (+0.6%). L2 English and Welsh dipped by -2.6% and -0.3% respectively ([Appendix 1](#), page 4).
- The CSI showed a further increase of 3% in 2015/16 having increased by 3.8% in 2014/15.
- The L2+ indicator has increased by 2.4 percentage points to 67.3%, ranking the Vale third in Wales. However, two schools had a fall in L2+: Llantwit Major (-10%) and Stanwell (-5%). Individual school performance at KS4 is shown in [Appendix 2](#).
- It was the extent of the increase in L2+ performance in the remaining schools that led to the improvement in the local authority L2+ performance. Barry Comprehensive increased by 12%, St Cyres by 11% and St Richard Gwyn by 10%.
- Based on last year's quartiles, Barry Comprehensive, St Cyres and St Richard Gwyn show improvement in their benchmarking positions. Further analysis of Barry Comprehensive's progress is included in paragraph 19.
- For the level 2+ threshold, the difference in performance between eFSM and non FSM is narrowing. It was 37.4% last academic year and 28.4% in 2015/16. While this is a significant improvement, it remains an area of focus.
- When considering the L2+ performance of eFSM pupils, there are two schools where fewer than 35% of these pupils achieved the L2+ threshold: Ysgol Bro Morgannwg (22.22%), and Bryn Hafren (16.67%). The best performing school with regard to this indicator was Cowbridge (85.71%).

18. Progress at Key Stage 5:

- The percentage of pupils achieving the level 3 threshold (equivalent to 2 A levels A* - E) increased from 97.6% to 97.8% ([Appendix 3](#)).
- A level performance for the local authority improved from 75.55 to 77.3%% for A-C grades and from 97.5% to 98.1% for A*-E grades. The percentage of entries achieving A* to A grades dipped to 22.3% from 22.9% last academic year. Of particular note are the improvements in Bryn Hafren School and Barry Comprehensive School where L3 threshold improved by 5.3% and 8.5% respectively.

19. Schools causing concern and the use of powers of intervention:

- Barry Comprehensive School was judged by Estyn as requiring significant improvement in July 2015. Progress against 2 recommendations was judged as satisfactory and against the remaining four as limited. It is noted that the improved KS4 performance was not taken into account as Estyn cannot use unverified data.
- GCSE performance has demonstrated significant improvement in most measures. Of particular note are the improvements in English and the L2+, despite this improvement further work remains to be done. The percentage of eFSM pupils attaining the L2+ improved from 19% to 47%
- Barry Comprehensive is currently subject to statutory intervention by the Council in accordance with the Standards and Organisation Act 2008 which has now been

extended to include the appointment of two additional governors. Estyn are due to re-visit Barry Comprehensive School on 28th September to determine whether or not the school has made sufficient progress to be removed from the statutory category of significant improvement.

- Bryn Hafren was judged by Estyn as requiring significant improvement in March 2016. Despite making improvement in certain areas such as L2+ and L2 mathematics, now 45% and 58% respectively, it has failed to make the improvement required in other key indicators such as L2 English which dropped to 52% from 65%. In addition the percentage of eFSM pupils attaining L2+ remains unacceptably low at 17%. Estyn is likely to revisit the school in the summer term 2017.
- The school has been sent a formal warning notice and has been given minimum expectations in key performance areas. It has been informed that if these expectations are not reached, the interim Director of Learning and Skills will recommend to the Council that it exercises its powers of intervention in the governance and management arrangements of the school.
- St Richard Gwyn was sent a formal warning notice in September 2015 and was given minimum expectations in key performance areas. Progress has been strong in most indicators, notably in L2+ and mathematics, both of which improved by 10 percentage points. The school will receive a letter to remove the formal warning and congratulate them on their progress.

Resource Implications (Financial and Employment)

20. The National Categorisation process seeks to identify schools that require additional support and challenge in order that resources, particularly those of the Central South consortium, are appropriately targeted. The categorisation of schools is currently being reviewed to take into account 2015/16 outcomes and to re-target resources accordingly.

Sustainability and Climate Change Implications

21. High levels of pupil attainment underpin a sustainable economy.

Legal Implications (to Include Human Rights Implications)

22. End of Key Stage Assessment is a statutory obligation.

Crime and Disorder Implications

23. There are no crime and disorder implications.

Equal Opportunities Implications (to include Welsh Language issues)

24. There are no equal opportunity implications.

Corporate/Service Objectives

25. Improving outcomes and wellbeing for all learners.

Policy Framework and Budget

26. The recommendations of this report are within existing policy framework and budget.

Consultation (including Ward Member Consultation)

27. Not applicable

Relevant Scrutiny Committee

28. Learning and Culture.

Background Papers

None.

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