

The Vale of Glamorgan Council

Cabinet meeting: 22 January, 2018

Report of the Cabinet Member for Learning and Culture

School Performance Report 2016-2017: 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 years 2016/17 and 2017/18 to Bryn Hafren Comprehensive School to include the appointment of two additional governors.
3. That Cabinet refers this report to the Learning and Culture Scrutiny Committee for consideration.
4. That Cabinet notes the changes in key stage 4 performance measures.

Reasons for the Recommendations

1. To ensure Members are aware of the attainment of pupils and the performance of schools in 2016/17.
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. To enable scrutiny of school performance outcomes.
4. To ensure Members are aware of the changes and resulting implications for comparative purposes.

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 1](#) for changes which will come into effect in 2017/2018).
 - The core subject indicator (CSI); the proportion of pupils attaining a GCSE A* - C in the core subjects of English, Welsh, mathematics and science.
 - Level 2 threshold; proportion of pupils attaining 5 x GCSEs A* to C.
 - Level 2+ (L2+) threshold; proportion of pupils attaining 5 x GCSEs A* to C including mathematics, English language or Welsh language. 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 mathematics 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. It should be noted that Welsh Government have introduced key changes to the performance measures in 2016-2017 which affects any possible comparisons that may be made against previous data. Therefore, caution should be used with comparing 2016-2017 outcomes with previous years. The main changes are:
 - the introduction of a cap of 40% of non-GCSEs that contribute to threshold measures;
 - the removal of literature for the level 2 threshold including English / Welsh and mathematics;
 - the introduction of the new specifications for English, Welsh, mathematics and numeracy;
 - a new Capped 9 points score measure which includes GCSEs in English or Welsh language, mathematics and numeracy, 2 science qualifications and four other qualifications which could be GCSEs, vocational qualifications or the new Welsh Baccalaureate.
7. In general, the Vale of Glamorgan is advantaged in terms of socio-economic deprivation. The proportion of pupils eligible to receive free school meals (eFSM) is used as a proxy indicator of socio-economic deprivation. In 2016-17, the Vale ranked 5th lowest overall for the proportion of pupils eligible to receive free school meals. These findings indicate that the aggregated performance of Vale schools should be significantly higher than for Wales as a whole and always rank as fifth highest performing Local Authority (LA), as a minimum expectation.

Relevant Issues and Options

8. When considering Local Authority (LA) performance, the key indicators for consideration are as follows:
 - 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; the spot rank, preferentially, should be in first position or, as a minimum, 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.
9. 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.
10. 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.
11. 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.
12. Progress in the Foundation Phase:
 - The positive trend in improving standards continues for the majority all indicators at outcome 5, the exceptions being literacy, language and communication in English (LCE) and mathematical development (MDT). Following a cumulative increase of 1.8 percentage points (pp) from 2014-2016, MDT dipped by -0.5pp in 2017. LCE dipped by -0.9pp although remains the highest in the region ([Appendix 2](#)).
 - Performance at outcome 6 has increased measurably for all indicators, most notably in LCE where attainment has improved by a further 4.6pp. 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) increased slightly and remains the highest in the Central South Consortium.
 - When comparing the performance with other local authorities, with the exception of Personal and Social Development (PSD) at outcome 6 which was ranked 5th, all other indicators in the Foundation Phase performed better than expected and were ranked in the highest 4 ([Appendix 3](#)).
 - At both outcome 5+ and outcome 6 the majority of schools perform above the median in all indicators. Of particular note is LLCW where 75% of schools are above the median.

- The difference in FPOI performance for those pupils entitled to free school meals (eFSM) and those that are not (non FSM) has reduced slightly from -13.8% in 2016 to -10.2%. This is the narrowest gap we have seen in performance and is narrower than the region, however, it remains an area of developmental need.
13. Progress in Key Stage 2:
- Improvements in attainment at Level 4 have been made in all performance measures except science which dipped by -0.2pp (Appendix 2). The greatest improvement was in Welsh, and at 96.7%, is the highest of all core subjects.
 - With the exception of Welsh, performance at level 5+ has risen again for the fifth consecutive year. Most notable are the improvements in science which improved by 7.1pp. Mathematics and English also improved by 6.1pp and 5.2pp respectively. Welsh is now the lowest performing core subject at level 5+.
 - The core subject indicator, CSI, has increased by 0.8 percentage points this academic year. This is the fifth consecutive rise and increases the Vale's rank to first in Wales.
 - When compared to the performance of other local authorities, the Vale of Glamorgan was in the top 3 for all indicators (Appendix 3)
 - With regards to benchmarking, at level 4, the percentage of schools in the top half is strong again this year in all 5 indicators. Of particular note is Welsh (80%). At level 5 there were further increases and many schools were in the top half in all subjects. Of particular note is science where 56% of schools were in the top 25%.
 - The difference in CSI performance between eFSM and non FSM has decreased from -13.9% to -12%. The gap remains narrower than the region and while this improvement is positive, it remains an area of focus.
14. Progress in Key Stage 3:
- At KS3 standards remain strong, having risen yet again in English, mathematics and the CSI. (Appendix 2). The highest performing of the core subjects are Welsh (95.6%) and Science (95.7%). All indicators at the expected level rank the Vale of Glamorgan at fourth or higher when compared to other local authorities (Appendix 3).
 - The high expectations shared across the authority has significantly impacted on the rise in standards at level 6+ with an increase in all performance indicators except Welsh which has fallen by 1.1pp. The greatest improvement was seen in English which has increased by 3.6pp. Science continues to be the highest performing core subject (75.1%) with Welsh now the lowest performing (66.7%).
 - There were improvements at L7+ in all subjects with significant gains in Welsh (4pp), science (3.9pp) and English (2.8pp). Welsh continues to be the lowest performing of the core subjects at this level and is the only indicator ranked below fifth when compared to other local authorities.
 - Benchmarking at all levels remains strong. Most schools had above median performance in all indicators and all schools were in the higher 50% for the CSI.
 - The performance of eFSM pupils improved by 3.8pp and the gap has narrowed from -19.9% to -15.3%. It remains a focus for improvement, even though the difference is now -5.8pp less than the regional average.
15. Progress at Key Stage 4:

- Performance in the L2+ indicator decreased by 6.7pp to 60.4% but remains the highest in the CSC and higher than the Wales average of 54.6%. However, the performance of eFSM pupils fell sharply and the gap has widened from 25.2pp to 35.8pp ([Appendix 4](#)). Overall, the Vale of Glamorgan is ranked fourth when compared to other local authorities in this key indicator.
- Of the core subjects, the decrease of -6.8pp in (best of) mathematics had the greatest impact on the L2+. This dip was greater than the CSC average of -4.1pp and the Wales average of -4.4pp, but the overall performance at 67.3% remains the highest in the CSC and higher than the Wales average of 62.5%. Performance improved in one school, but two of the eight schools suffered a decrease of greater than 10pp, the greater of which was -24.8pp. The decrease in the remaining 5 schools ranged from -3.3pp to -9.3pp. Whereas boys outperformed girls in mathematics by 3.6pp in 2016, in 2017, the performance of boys dipped more than that of girls and girls outperformed boys by 0.3pp.
- English in the Vale of Glamorgan saw a decrease of -4.7pp compared to a CSC average decrease of -8.6pp and a Wales decrease of -5.6pp, but improved compared to other local authorities. This decrease can be attributed to the change in specification and the removal of English literature. Outcomes in English improved in 4 out of the 8 schools, but in the remaining 4 schools, the decrease ranged from -10.6pp to -21.5pp. The performance of boys fell by -8.7pp compared to a -1.5pp decrease of girls.
- The performance of Welsh language in the one Welsh medium school was strong and improved by 3.5pp; performance in Welsh was the stronger of English or Welsh. When compared to other local authorities, the Vale's ranking improved from seventh to fifth.
- The percentage of pupils achieving 5 A*-A grades increased from 21.9% in 2016 to 24.8% in 2017. This is significantly higher than the CSC and Wales averages of 18.3% and 16.8% respectively. Of particular note is the increase in Cowbridge ([Appendix 5](#)) where 46.5% of pupils achieved this measure. This was the highest in the region. However, there was a decrease in the percentage of eFSM pupils who achieved 5 A*-A and in 6 out of 8 schools, no eFSM pupils achieved 5 A*-A grades.
- In the first year of the average 'capped 9' wider point score (refer to paragraph 6 for further details), pupils in the Vale of Glamorgan achieved an average score of 345.4 points compared to a CSC average of 331.3 and a Wales average of 325.8. The Vale of Glamorgan was the second highest performing local authority in Wales in this new measure.
- At level 2, the Vale of Glamorgan's performance decreased by -14pp to 73.8% compared to a CSC decrease of -19.5pp to 67.6% and a national decrease of -17pp to 67%. Level 2 performance improved in 2 out of the 8 schools. In the remaining 6, the decrease ranged from -4.4pp to -27.5pp. The performance of boys decreased by 17.2pp compared to girls, whose performance decreased by 5.5pp. The greatest decrease is evident in schools that have in recent years developed a curriculum that includes a wider range of qualifications, including BTEC and other skills' based qualifications. These are predominantly schools with higher percentages of pupils eligible for free school meals. Overall, the Vale of Glamorgan's ranking improved from seventh to fourth when compared to other local authorities.
- Level 1 performance improved by 0.5pp to 95.9% which results in the Vale of Glamorgan performing higher than other LAs in the region having previously been

the lowest. The CSC average fell by -1.1pp to 94.3% and the Wales average fell by -0.8pp to 94.4%. However, despite the improvement, level 1 remains the only KS4 performance indicator ranked below the indicative position of fifth when compared to other local authorities although it improved from twelfth to sixth.

- When considering the L2+ performance of eFSM pupils, there are three schools where fewer than 35% of these pupils achieve the L2+ threshold: St Cyres (22.9%), Barry Comprehensive (19.4%), and Bryn Hafren (22.2%). The best performing school with regard to this indicator was Cowbridge (63.6%) although this was 22pp lower than in 2016 (Appendix 5).
16. Progress at Key Stage 5:
- The percentage of pupils achieving the level 3 threshold decreased slightly from 98.3% to 98.1% ([Appendix 6](#)). This year, all students in Bryn Hafren Comprehensive, Cowbridge Comprehensive and Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Morgannwg achieved the level 3 threshold (Appendix 6).
 - 15.6% of students in the Vale of Glamorgan achieved 3 A*-A grades at A level or equivalent. This is an increase of 6.5pp from 2016 and higher than the regional average.
 - A level performance for the local authority remained stable at 77.3% for A*-C grades but dipped by 0.3pp to 97.9% for A*-E grades. The percentage of entries awarded A*-A grades improved from 22.3% in 2016 to 26.4% last academic year. Of particular note are the improvements in Stanwell School where 33.9% of grades awarded were A*-A.
17. Schools causing concern and the use of powers of intervention:
- Bryn Hafren Comprehensive School was judged by Estyn as requiring significant improvement in March 2016 and was re-visited in May 2017. Despite making strong progress in certain areas such as assessment, the school was judged to have made insufficient improvement 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 during the current academic year. The school remains subject to a formal warning notice.

Resource Implications (Financial and Employment)

18. 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 2016/17 outcomes and to re-target resources accordingly.

Sustainability and Climate Change Implications

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

Legal Implications (to Include Human Rights Implications)

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

Crime and Disorder Implications

21. There are no crime and disorder implications.

Equal Opportunities Implications (to include Welsh Language issues)

22. There are no equal opportunity implications.

Corporate/Service Objectives

23. This report supports the Vale of Glamorgan's Corporate Plan, Well-being Outcome 3: An Aspirational and Culturally Vibrant Vale, Objective 5: Raising overall standards of achievement.

Policy Framework and Budget

24. The recommendations of this report are within existing policy framework and budget and a matter for Executive decision by Cabinet.

Consultation (including Ward Member Consultation)

25. Not applicable

Relevant Scrutiny Committee

26. Learning and Culture.

Background Papers

None.

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