

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

MUNICIPAL YEAR 2016-2017

**CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Agenda Item No. 4

Date: 27TH SEPTEMBER 2016

**REPORT OF:
DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND
LIFELONG LEARNING**

**FOUNDATION PHASE, KEY STAGE 2 & 3
AND PROVISIONAL KEY STAGE 4
OUTCOMES FOR THE ACADEMIC YEAR
2015-2016**

**Author: - Chris Bradshaw
(Tel No 01443 424026)**

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

The purpose of this report is to provide Members with initial feedback on Foundation Phase, Key Stage 2 and 3 and Provisional Key Stage 4 outcomes for the academic year 2015-2016.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members:

- 2.1 Note the information contained within the report.
- 2.2 Consider the implications of this data on the level of support needed for schools during this academic year 2016-2017.
- 2.3 Consider whether more information on standards groups and resulting support should be presented to this committee once the process is finalised in January.
- 2.4 Agree that detailed school by school information in relation to Key Stage 4 data will be presented to this committee on receipt of final, verified data from Welsh Government.

3. BACKGROUND

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

4 **FOUNDATION PHASE**

4.1 The table below sets out the Foundation Phase Outcomes, which are measured by the percentage of pupils achieving at least outcome 5 (the expected outcome) in teacher assessments.

Foundation Phase Indicator - %	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Rhondda Cynon Taf	77.2	80.6	81.8	86.3	87.2	86.9
Wales	80.5	83.0	85.2	86.8	87.0	87.3
Rank	20	19	21	14	11	13
Personal and social development, well-being and cultural diversity - %	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Rhondda Cynon Taf	89.1	90.9	91.9	94.3	94.6	93.8
Wales	90.8	93.0	94.2	94.8	94.5	94.7
Rank	20	21	21	18	13	20
Language, literacy and communications skills – English - %	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Rhondda Cynon Taf	80.9	83.2	82.9	86.8	87.7	87.7
Wales	83.4	85.2	86.6	88.0	88.0	88.1
Rank	20	19	20	17	16	14
Language, literacy and communications skills – Welsh - %	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Rhondda Cynon Taf	82.3	84.1	90.1	94.4	94.8	92.2
Wales	85.9	86.7	89.8	91.3	90.7	90.9
Rank	19	17	12	4	4	11
Mathematical Development - %	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Rhondda Cynon Taf	84.0	85.9	86.1	89.1	90.0	90.2
Wales	86.6	87.4	88.7	89.7	89.9	90.3
Rank	20	16	21	16	13	14

4.2 In reviewing the comparative data it is important to contextualise the data to take into account the socio-economic factors across the 22 Welsh local authorities. Whilst poverty and deprivation are not excuses for educational underperformance, they are factors that influence educational outcomes. In comparing the position of Rhondda Cynon

Taf with the other local authorities, in terms of pupils eligible for free school meals, Rhondda Cynon Taf has the fourth highest level behind, Blaenau Gwent, Neath Port Talbot and Cardiff. Therefore, if the indicators are compared based on free school meals, you would **“expect”** Rhondda Cynon Taf to be 19th in the comparative indicators. Therefore, our performance should be judged on the value added over and above what is expected.

- 4.3 The results have fluctuated slightly in Rhondda Cynon Taf in 2017 by less than 1% but which can considerably change the comparative council ranking. The general trend over the past few years has been positive.

5. **KEY STAGE 2**

- 5.1 The table below sets out the achievements of 11 year olds for a number of the mandatory areas of learning based on teacher assessments. The Core Subject Indicator represents the percentage of pupils achieving Level 4 or above in English or Welsh (first language), mathematics and science in combination.

Percentage of pupils achieving the KS2 Core Subject Indicator	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Rhondda Cynon Taf	79.3	82.6	84.3	85.8	88.5	90.0
Wales	82.6	84.3	86.1	87.7	88.6	89.5
Rank	20	17	17	19	15	11
Percentage of pupils achieving level 4 or above in English	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Rhondda Cynon Taf	81.7	85.2	86.7	88.0	90.0	91.4
Wales	85.2	87.1	88.4	89.6	90.3	91.1
Rank	21	20	19	19	15	12
Percentage of pupils achieving level 4 or above in Mathematics	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Rhondda Cynon Taf	84.7	86.2	87.6	88.9	91.3	92.2
Wales	86.8	87.5	88.9	90.2	91.0	91.6
Rank	18	18	20	20	12	8
Percentage of pupils achieving level 4 or above in Welsh First Language	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Rhondda Cynon Taf	80.9	84.3	88.4	92.3	93.9	93.0
Wales	84	86.7	88.1	90.5	90.8	91.6
Rank	17	16	14	9	9	8

Percentage of pupils achieving level 4 or above in Science	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Rhondda Cynon Taf	85.0	87.2	88.8	89.4	91.6	92.6
Wales	88.5	89.7	90.3	91.4	91.7	92.2
Rank	20	20	19	20	12	12

5.2 At Key Stage 2, the primary schools have made good progress in 2017 across the majority of subject areas, with Rhondda Cynon Taf pupils performing just above the Welsh average for the first time. The table shows the positive trend in performance which reflects well on our primary schools and bodes well for future success at Key Stages 3 & 4.

6. KEY STAGE 3

6.1 The table below sets out the achievements of 14 year olds for a number of the mandatory areas of learning based on teacher assessments. The Core Subject Indicator represents the percentage of pupils achieving Level 5 or above in English or Welsh (first language), mathematics and science in combination.

Percentage of pupils achieving the KS3 Core Subject Indicator	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Rhondda Cynon Taf	66.9	73.6	78.4	81.6	84.0	87.4
Wales	72.5	77.0	81.0	83.9	85.9	87.4
Rank	20	16	16	16	17	14
Percentage of pupils achieving level 5 or above in English	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Rhondda Cynon Taf	74.7	79.2	83.3	86.0	87.1	90.4
Wales	79.3	82.9	85.9	87.9	89.2	90.5
Rank	20	17	18	19	17	15
Percentage of pupils achieving level 5 or above in Mathematics	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Rhondda Cynon Taf	75.1	81.1	84.3	87.3	88.9	90.7
Wales	81.1	83.9	86.5	88.7	90.1	90.8
Rank	22	19	17	16	18	14
Percentage of pupils achieving level 5 or above in Welsh First Language	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Rhondda Cynon Taf	76.8	85.9	90.0	92.5	91.4	94.1
Wales	84.2	87.6	90.1	90.9	92.0	93.5

Rank	17	12	8	7	14	9
Percentage of pupils achieving level 5 or above in Science	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Rhondda Cynon Taf	79.2	84.9	88.7	90.7	91.4	93.3
Wales	83.6	87.0	90.4	91.8	92.8	93.5
Rank	19	16	18	16	18	14

6.2 At Key Stage 3, the secondary schools have made good progress in 2017, across all of the five Key Indicators, with the rate of improvement in Rhondda Cynon Taf greater than the Welsh average for the five indicators.

7. KEY STAGE 4

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

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

7.3 In Wales, 2017 has seen:

- The introduction of new GCSE's for English Language, Welsh (first) Language, GCSE Mathematics and a new examination GCSE Mathematics – Numeracy;
- The new GCSEs are now linear with the assessment being undertaken through examination at the end of the course. Previous GCSEs were available in a modular option, which included a controlled assessment unit for the language qualifications and examinations which could be taken in stages over a two year period;
- Significant changes to the key performance measures:
 - A maximum of two vocational qualifications will count towards the Level 1, Level 2 and Level 2 inclusive. In 2016 five vocational qualifications could have counted for the

Level 1 and Level 2 thresholds and three for the Level 2 inclusive;

- Only the new GCSE's for English Language, Welsh (first) Language, and one of GCSE Mathematics or GCSE Mathematics – Numeracy will count towards the literacy and maths elements of the Level 2 inclusive performance measure. English Literature no longer is counted towards the literacy and maths elements;
- The capped points score performance measure is the “best” nine qualifications, rather than the previous eight, which must include English Language or Welsh (first) Language, GCSE Mathematics, GCSE Mathematics – Numeracy, two Science qualifications (two Science GCSE's from 2018), and no more than four vocational qualifications.

7.4 In England, the GCSEs that are designed to meet Ofqual requirements are graded 9 to 1, with 9 being the highest grade. Where the WJEC, the examination board for Qualifications Wales, does not offer specific subjects such as Latin, Community Languages such as Polish, Film Studies etc, schools can access the qualifications through the English examination boards and the pupils will be graded under the 9 to 1 mechanism.

7.5 As this is the first year the new examinations are being undertaken by Welsh pupils, the WJEC, the body that sets the examinations, wrote to all schools in November 2016 to highlight some of the outcomes they expect to see on respect of the changes. These include:

- Increased variability for schools and colleges as they adapt to the demands of the new qualifications;
- The proportion of students awarded grade C or above in both new GCSE Mathematics qualifications will be lower than the percentage of pupils awarded a grade C or above in each of these qualifications individually. The two new Mathematics qualifications are significantly different to the previous GCSE qualification and to each other, assessing different content and skills.

7.6 The new examinations test different skill sets and knowledge bases than the previous examinations, and this years results cannot be meaningfully compare to last years results. It will take a further two years to establish meaningful comparative trend data.

7.7 The table below sets out the **provisional** Rhondda Cynon Taf's Key Stage 4 for 2017. The provisional Central South Consortium data is also shown to provide some form of comparative and the 2016 data to illustrate the significant change in how the performance measures are calculated. The all Wales information will be available in December 2017 along with the secondary school categorisation.

- 7.8 The results set out below will change over the next few weeks as final examination grades are clarified.

KS4	2016 Legacy GCSE's %	2017 New GCSE's %
Level 1 threshold (5 A*-G at GCSE or equivalent)		
RCT	96.7	94.8
CSC	95.4	94.2
Wales	95.3	Na
Level 2 threshold (5 A*-C at GCSE or equivalent – minimum of three GCSEs)		
RCT	90.3	61.7
CSC	87.1	67.7
Wales	84.0	Na
Level 2 threshold (5 A*-C at GCSE or equivalent) including English/Welsh and mathematics		
RCT	56.6	48.8
CSC	60.9	53.7
Wales	60.3	Na
A* - C in English		
RCT	68.6	55.5
CSC	70.6	61.6
A* - C in Welsh		
RCT	75.3	75.0
CSC	78.0	79.3
A* - C in Mathematics (best of the 2 GCSEs)		
RCT	61.3	59.1
CSC	66.1	62.0
A* - C or equivalent in science		
RCT	85.4	78.5
CSC	85.5	80.3

- 7.3 The table illustrates that the new GCSE's and the new method of calculating the key performance indicators suggests a significant decrease in educational performance in RCT and Central South Consortium in 2017. As explained earlier, educational performance in some schools has increased between 2016 and 2017 if the 2016 method of calculating the key performance measures had been applied. Therefore it is difficult to form an informed opinion on the performance of all our 17 secondary schools.

- 7.4 Nevertheless, there are some schools that have performed significantly better than others, and a few schools where the results do provide some cause for concern.

- 7.5 Over the next month or so, Council officers, working with headteachers and the Central South Consortium will analyse the data and better

understand what has gone well, and what needs to improve, on a school by school level, and within each school, on a subject by subject area. First indications suggest that schools need to ensure that the right curriculum is made available to all Key Stage 4 pupils that best suit their needs and that the teaching provided is of the highest standard.

- 7.6 Final examination information on each of the 17 secondary schools in Rhondda Cynon Taf will be presented to Cabinet and the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee on receipt of the final data in December.

8. CONCLUSION

- 8.1 Across the Foundation Phase, Key Stage 2 & 3, the performance of our pupils and schools has been relatively consistent, showing, in general, incremental improvement, as there has been over the past five years. Welsh Government is planning curriculum changes for these key stages in the future, as it implements the vision and principles of the Donaldson Review.
- 8.2 However, KS4 has seen significant changes in 2017 in terms of the KS4 curriculum and the way in which school performance is assessed. In 2018, further changes will be introduced with the new Welsh Baccalaureate attainment measures at Foundation and National levels replacing the current Level 1, Level 2 and Level 2 inclusive threshold measures.
- 8.3 Schools across Wales have sought to introduce these changes with minimum disruption to pupils and ensuring that this years pupils are not disadvantaged by being the first year group being assessed under the new curriculum and performance measures. The new approach introduced by Welsh Government is certainly more robust and challenging to pupils and schools.
- 8.4 Given, this is the first year of the new KS4 curriculum and performance measures it is difficult to form a balanced judgement on the performance of each school, however, it is evident that some similar schools in the County Borough have out-performed others. It is important that the schools working with the Consortium understand their respective performance and take steps to ensure that action is taken to improve future KS 4 results.