



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

24th JANUARY 2019

KEY STAGE 4 AND KEY STAGE 5 EXAMINATION RESULTS AND PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL CATEGORISATION FOR 2018

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND INCLUSION SERVICES IN DISCUSSIONS WITH THE RELEVANT PORTFOLIO HOLDER, COUNCILLOR J ROSSER.

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1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide Members with the final confirmation of Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5 examination results for 2017-18 and the Welsh Government Primary and Secondary School Categorisation for 2018-19.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Cabinet:

- 2.1 Note the information contained within the report.
- 2.2 Note the action taken to date and the future planned intervention of the Director of Education and Inclusion Services in partnership with Central Services and Central South Consortium to support schools currently categorised as amber and red.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 To ensure that Cabinet Members are fully aware of the educational performance of our pupils and schools in Rhondda Cynon Taf.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5 outcomes are externally verified through GCSE and GCE Advanced Level examinations which are undertaken at the end of the respective Key Stages.
- 4.2 The local authority analyses examination outcomes for each school

and compares school's performance against other secondary schools in the County Borough. Comparisons are also made across the region, so that Rhondda Cynon Taf's performance can be measured against the other local authorities within Central South Consortium. National benchmarking datasets provide an indication of comparative performance at an all Wales level.

- 4.3 When reviewing the comparative data it is important to contextualise the information and 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 Rhondda Cynon Taf with other local authorities, in terms of eligibility for free school meals, Rhondda Cynon Taf has the third highest level behind Blaenau Gwent and Neath Port Talbot. Therefore, if the indicators are compared based on free school meals measures, you would "expect" Rhondda Cynon Taf to be 20th in the comparative indicators. Therefore, our performance should be judged on the value added over and above what is expected.

5. KEY STAGE 4

- 5.1 Substantial changes were introduced to the Key Stage 4 curriculum in 2017 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.
- 5.2 As a result, the GCSE qualifications are developed to meet the different requirements of each regulator, 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.
- 5.3 In 2017 the following changes were introduced:
- 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 in 2017 are detailed as follows:
 - A maximum of two vocational qualifications will count towards the Level 1, Level 2 and Level 2 inclusive measure. 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 counts towards the literacy and maths elements of the Level 2 inclusive performance measure. English literature no longer counts 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.

5.4 The new examinations were first undertaken by Welsh pupils in 2017, and Key Stage 4 outcomes last year were variable, with some schools displaying greater resilience in adapting to the changes imposed. In light of the new examinations and the fact that they assess different skill sets and knowledge bases than the previous examinations, the results achieved prior to 2017 cannot be meaningfully compared to 2017 and 2018 outcomes. Nevertheless, judgements can still be made about the progress made since 2017. *However, it should be noted that further changes to performance measures are planned for 2018/19.*

5.5 Schools will need to consider further analysis for summer 2019 reporting, the details of which are still to be agreed by Welsh Government, as this will include analysis of:

- the cohort split into thirds;
- the performance of schools in a similar socio-economic setting;
- participation, entry and grades received for English, mathematics and science.

Welsh Government are due to issue further detail and guidance on these requirements.

5.6 The table below sets out the Key Stage 4 results for 2018. Central South Consortium's data is also shown for comparative purposes. The 2016 dataset is also included for reference purposes only.

KS4	2016 Legacy GCSE's %	2017 New GCSE's Actual %	2018 GCSE's %
Level 1 threshold (5 A*-G at GCSE or equivalent)			
RCT	96.7	94.7	94.7
CSC	95.4	94.3	94.5
Wales	95.3	94.4	93.7
Level 2 threshold (5 A*-C at GCSE or equivalent – minimum of three GCSEs)			
RCT	90.3	63.2	64.2
CSC	87.1	67.6	69.2
Wales	84.0	67.0	67.0
Level 2 threshold (5 A*-C at GCSE or equivalent) including English/Welsh and mathematics			
RCT	56.6	49.8	53.1
CSC	60.9	54.5	57.6
Wales	60.3	54.6	55.1
A* - C in English			
RCT	69.0	56.4	60.0
CSC	71.1	62.5	65.0
Wales	69.3	63.7	62.6
A* - C in Welsh			
RCT	74.3	74.7	70.9
CSC	77.5	79.1	79.2
Wales	75.1	74.2	74.3
A* - C in Mathematics (best of the 2 GCSEs)			
RCT	61.6	59.3	61.5
CSC	66.5	62.4	65.3
Wales	66.9	62.5	63.6
A* - C or equivalent in science			
RCT	85.7	78.6	58.5
CSC	85.9	80.3	63.0
Wales	82.4	75.6	63.0

The table illustrates that Level 1 outcomes remained relatively stable during 2017/18 in comparison to 2016/17. Improved outcomes were

evident on Level 2 and Level 2+ measures during 2017/18. The Level 2+

outcomes improved by 3.3% which is greater than the progress made both regionally and nationally. The Level 1 outcomes were above the regional average for Central South Consortium (CSC) and the national average, although Level 2 and Level 2+ outcomes were below both the regional and national averages. The percentage of learners achieving A*-C in Welsh and science dipped this academic year, particularly in science. This can be explained by the recent changes in performance measures and the reduced reliance on BTEC science qualifications. A*-C outcomes in English and mathematics (best of the 2 GCSEs) improved by 3.6%age points and 2.2%age points this academic year.

In comparison with the all Wales average for Level 2+, the gap with Rhondda Cynon Taf's is at a historic low (2%age points). Rhondda Cynon Taf currently ranks 10th out of 22 local authorities for Level 2+ suggesting that we are performing above expected outcomes given our fsm ranking in Wales.

- 5.7 Variations across schools and key performance measures were evident this academic year but in the main the vast majority of schools made encouraging progress on Key Stage 4 outcomes.
- 5.8 During the autumn term senior local authority officers have been proactively working with head teachers and school improvement officers in Central South Consortium to analyse the outcome data and to identify individual school strengths and areas for area for improvement. Analysis has also included performance on a school by school basis, and within each school on a subject by subject basis. An analysis of outcomes for vulnerable groups has also been undertaken to ensure that schools are targeting their resources and interventions appropriately. Data suggest that schools need to ensure that the right curriculum is made available to all Key Stage 4 pupils that best suits their needs and that the teaching provided is of the highest standard possible. Focus also needs to be placed on ensuring that learners are ready to learn, attend school regularly and access the right support to enable them to overcome any barriers to learning that are experienced.

6. PROGRESS AT KEY STAGE 5

- 6.1 Over the last four years, there have been substantial changes in the post 16 environment with the removal of some courses, the introduction of new syllabi, 6th form reorganisation in parts of the Borough and restriction in the choice of examination boards. This makes the comparison of outcome data over time difficult. Rhondda Cynon Taf's performance on the National Level 3 threshold indicator suggests that the outcomes are just below the regional and national average by 1.7%

and 1.4% respectively for 2017/18. Nevertheless, 96.2% of learners achieved the Level 3 threshold. A gap of 2.0% exists between boys and girls on this measure, with girls outperforming boys.

		All Number of pupils aged 17 who entered a volume equivalent to 2 A levels	All Entered a volume equivalent to 2 A levels who achieved the level 3 threshold %	Boys Entered a volume equivalent to 2 A levels who achieved the level 3 threshold %	Girls Entered a volume equivalent to 2 A levels who achieved the level 3 threshold %
2017/18	RCT	869	96.2	95.0	97.0
	Central South	3327	97.9	97.2	98.5
	Wales	9452	97.6	96.7	98.3
2016/17	RCT	1004	96.3	95.7	96.7
	Central South	3589	97.4	96.7	98.0
	Wales	10152	97.1	96.2	97.9
2015/16	RCT	1079	97.0	95.3	98.3
	Central South	3751	97.7	96.9	98.3
	Wales	10804	98.0	97.1	98.6

- 6.2 In line with national averages, girls continue to outperform boys on the wider points score measure. There has been a significant increase in the average points score this year with an increase of 46.2 achieved for pupils aged 17.

Year		Number of pupils aged 17	Average wider points score for pupils aged 17	Average wider points score for pupils aged 17	Average wider points score for pupils aged 17
2017/18	RCT	996	723.8	691.4	746.1
	Central South	3757	754.9	720.5	783.5
	Wales	10613	740.1	691.8	780.9
2016/17	RCT	1175	677.6	615.9	723.5
	Central South	4096	736.1	694.1	774.0
	Wales	11434	730.6	681.2	773.2
2015/16	RCT	1278	765.7	705.8	812.7
	Central South	4286	830.2	780.6	874.0
	Wales	12066	823.2	768.0	869.9

6.3 In 2017, Welsh Government published data relating to the number of learners achieving 3 A*-A grades and 3 A*-C grades. Data suggests that the percentage of learners who achieved 3A*-A and 3A*-C increased by 4.7%age points and 9.2%age points in 2017/18. Local trend data shows positive improvements on all 6 of the new suite of indicators which will replace the Level 3 threshold. In line with national averages, girls outperformed boys on both A*-A and A*-C measures. Rhondda Cynon Taf currently ranks 14th out of 20 local authorities for the percentage of pupils entering a volume equivalent of 2 A Levels and who achieved 3 A*-C grades. It should be noted that Blaenau Gwent and Merthyr Tydfil do not have any school based 6th form provision.

Year		All		Boys		Girls	
		Percentage of Pupils entering a volume equivalent of 2 A levels who achieved 3 A*-A grades	Percentage of Pupils entering a volume equivalent of 2 A levels who achieved 3 A*-C grades	Percentage of Pupils entering a volume equivalent of 2 A levels who achieved 3 A*-A grades	Percentage of Pupils entering a volume equivalent of 2 A levels who achieved 3 A*-C grades	Percentage of Pupils entering a volume equivalent of 2 A levels who achieved 3 A*-A grades	Percentage of Pupils entering a volume equivalent of 2 A levels who achieved 3 A*-C grades
2017/18	RCT	10.2	54.3	8.5	43.8	11.5	61.9
	Central South	15.0	61.9	15.3	55.4	14.8	67.1
	Wales	13.4	58.1	13.0	50.1	13.8	64.2
2016/17	RCT	5.5	45.1	6.4	33.5	4.8	53.5
	Central South	11.8	56.6	12.6	49.7	11.0	62.5
	Wales	10.5	54.7	10.3	47.6	10.6	60.5

7. PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL CATEGORISATION

- 7.1 The current school categorisation model has changed significantly since 2016.
- 7.2 **Step One:** consisting of data analysis in relation to standards and performance has been removed.
- 7.3 **Step Two:** This judgment based on the school's ability and capacity to self-improve is now central in coming to a view on a school support category. The process begins with the school's own self-evaluation. The judgement on capacity to improve is to do with the school's ability to drive its own improvement for the future and has a strong focus on leadership, learning and teaching.
- 7.4 Following consideration of the self-evaluation report and relevant evidence relating to school leadership, the performance of all learners and groups of learners and the quality of teaching and learning within the school, the governing body, together with the challenge advisor, will agree the judgement for the school's capacity to improve.
- 7.5 **Step Three:** this judgement will lead to a colour categorisation of the school which will trigger a bespoke programme of support, challenge and intervention.

7.6 The categories of support are:

- Green - these are our best schools who:
 - know themselves well and identify and implement their own priorities for improvement;
 - are rewarded by greater autonomy with limited, if any, interaction with challenge advisors; and
 - have the capacity to lead others effectively (school to school support).

- Yellow – these are our good schools who:
 - will know and understand most of the areas in need of improvement; have many aspects of the schools performance which are self-improving; and
 - will receive limited challenge and support meetings deployed according to need.

- Amber – these are our schools in need of improvement who:
 - do not know and understand all the areas in need of improvement;
 - have many aspects of the schools performance which are not improving quickly enough; and
 - will receive time limited, focused challenge and intervention to support improvement; and
 - be subject to termly progress meetings with senior challenge advisor.

- Red – these are our schools in need of greatest improvement who:
 - will receive critical intervention;
 - receive an automatic warning letter from the local authority and subsequent use of statutory powers where necessary;
 - trigger intensive and effective collaboration between local authority and consortium;
 - will receive time limited, focused challenge and intervention to support improvement; and
 - be subject to half-termly progress meetings with the senior challenge advisor.

7.7 A summary of Rhondda Cynon Taf's provisional categorisation, subject to National Moderation, is shown below:

Category	Primary Schools						Secondary Schools					
	No of Schools			%			No of Schools			%		
	2016	2017	2018	2016	2017	2018	2016	2017	2018	2016	2017	2018
Green	23	38	36	22.3	36.9	38.7	5	4	5	29.4	23.5	29.4
Yellow	66	59	48	64.1	57.3	51.6	7	10	7	41.2	59.0	41.2
Amber	13	5	6	12.6	4.9	6.5	5	1	3	29.4	5.9	17.6
Red	1	1	3	1.0	1.0	3.2	0	2	2	0	11.8	11.8

There has been an increase in the percentage of schools categorised as green at both primary and secondary level. A reduction in the percentage of good primary and secondary schools accessing yellow support has been evident during 2017/18 and a growth in the number of schools requiring improvement and amber/red support is evident at primary level. There has been a significant increase of 11.75% in the percentage of secondary schools requiring amber support but the proportion of secondary schools categorised as requiring the greatest improvement and red support has remained stable.

The Central South Consortium's Framework for Challenge and Support sets out the response from the School Improvement Service to schools in each of the four categories, with the greatest support and challenge targeted at the amber and red schools.

- 7.8 For the amber and red schools, the diagnosis of need for improvement undertaken by the challenge advisor with the school will drive the work within the school. The challenge advisor will provide the core allocation of contact according to the school's category and will broker the required additional support through the commissioning function of the school improvement service working closely with the strategic advisors as necessary.
- 7.9 The nature and amount of support will be determined by the identified need and may be derived from a number of sources, which could include one or a combination of:
- Support from other schools in the region;
 - Support from other school improvement organisations and/or individuals from across the UK;
 - Specific leadership and/or teaching development.
- 7.10 For schools requiring amber or red support the challenge advisor will need to keep the school's progress and the appropriateness and impact of the support under review so as to make changes where required in good time. The focus will be on the impact of the work to secure improvement rather than the number of days delivered.
- 7.11 To summarise, there has been a growth in the number of schools requiring the least amount of support (green) and a deterioration in

the number of school categorised as good schools requiring yellow support. An increase in the overall number of amber and red schools requiring support for improvement is evident. Over the next few years, the Council and the schools will work together to strive to ensure that increasing number of schools are good schools that do not require significant support to improve.

- 7.12 Welsh Government are undertaking a fundamental review of the accountability system in Wales and a new assessment and evaluation framework in planned. In future, it is anticipated that robust and continuous self-evaluation, along with professional dialogue, will be a key tool to support improvement. Data driven judgements that places schools into a standards group as part of the categorisation has been removed and a new assessment, evaluation and improvement framework is under development. Welsh Government have commissioned the OECD and Estyn to work with the teaching profession to develop a national self-evaluation framework and toolkit, which will operate in conjunction with a peer review and endorsement framework.

8. EQUALITY AND DIVER SITY IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 This is an information report. No Equality Impact Assessment screening form is required.

9. CONSULTATION

- 9.1 This is an information report, no consultation is required.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 There are no financial implications.

11. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

- 11.1 None at present.

12. LINKS TO THE COUNCILS CORPORATE PLAN/OTHER CORPORATE PRIORITIES

- 12.1 Educational performance has a clear link to the Council's priority of Building a Strong Economy. Improved educational performance will have a positive impact on this priority.

13. CONCLUSION

- 13.1 Level 1 outcomes were above the regional and national averages during 2017/18. There has been evidence of progress on Level 2 and

Level 2+ Key Stage 4 outcome measures which is very encouraging. A*-C outcomes in Key Stage 4 in English and maths show improvement this academic year. Moving forward, Science outcomes would benefit from further improvement.

Given, that this is the second year of the new Key Stage 4 curriculum and performance measures, it is possible to make some judgements on the performance of each school. Data suggests that most schools have made progress on Key Stage 4 performance measures. Schools in the main have improved performance and all schools will continue to work with the local authority and the Consortium to understand their respective performance and take the necessary steps to improve on future Key Stage 4 results and build on the progress made. The gap between Rhondda Cynon Taf and the all Wales Level 2 + data is at a historic low (2%age points) and the national ranking is encouraging at 10th place.

- 13.2 Key Stage 4 has seen significant changes since 2017 in terms of the curriculum and the way in which school performance is assessed. Further changes are planned in future and interim aspirational performance measures for secondary schools are planned which shifts the focus away from 'average' outcomes. These new measures, based on points scores, will remove the emphasis on the Level 2 inclusive measures for Key Stage 4 and the narrow focus on borderline C/D grade pupils that the current threshold measures has cultivated.
- 13.3 An updated version of the current 'Capped 9' points score will be established which will include three specified components at its core, namely literacy, numeracy and science outcomes. It is proposed that the remaining 6 components will comprise pupils' best results for GCSE, or equivalent qualifications approved or designated for delivery in Wales, and as such will be open to local choice. The remaining 6 components of the Capped 9 will in future reflect the school's context and the breadth of curriculum offered and will hopefully provide the necessary assurances that all pupils are able to follow a curriculum that meets their needs. Moving forward schools will still be required to drill down and self-evaluate outcomes for learners eligible and not eligible for free school meals, and girls and boys. It is anticipated that this approach will allow a far more robust analysis of school and learner progress than is currently in operation.
- 13.4 Key Stage 5 outcomes have remained relatively stable during 2017/18 with 96.2% achieving Level 3 threshold. In line with the national averages, girls continue to outperform boys on the wider point score measure but significant improvements in the wider point score was evident for all Rhonda Cynon Taf learners, including both boys and girls. Girls' performance on this measure significantly exceeded that of the boys in Key Stage 5. The percentage of learners achieving 3 A*-A

and 3 A*-C improved significantly during this academic year. It is hoped that through the rationalising of 6th form provision in the Rhondda Valley and access to greater choice for learners within 21st Century learning environments outcomes will continue to improve during 2018/19.

Other Information:-

Relevant Scrutiny Committee-

Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

Background Papers-

None

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972
AS AMENDED BY
THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985
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Background papers – None.

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