

T: 01495 355100 Ext./Est: 5100

E: committee.services@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk

Contact:/Cysylltwch â: Democratic Services



THIS IS A MEETING WHICH THE PUBLIC ARE ENTITLED TO ATTEND

27th November 2019

Dear Sir/Madam

EDUCATION AND LEARNING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

A meeting of the Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee will be held in Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Ebbw Vale on Wednesday, 4th December, 2019 at 10.00 am.

Please note that a pre and post meeting will be held 30 minutes prior to the start and following the conclusion of the meeting for members of the committee.

Yours faithfully

Michelle Morris
Managing Director

AGENDA

Pages

1. SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION

You are welcome to use Welsh at the meeting a minimum notice period of 3 working days is required should you wish to do so. A simultaneous translation

We welcome correspondence in the medium of Welsh or English. / Croesawn ohebiaith trwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg neu'r Saesneg.

will be provided if requested.

2. APOLOGIES

To receive.

**3. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS AND
DISPENSATIONS**

To consider any declarations of interests and
dispensations made.

4. EDUCATION & LEARNING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 5 - 10

To receive the Minutes of the Education & Learning
Scrutiny Committee held on 25th October, 2019.

(Please note the Minutes are submitted for points of
accuracy only)

5. ACTION SHEET - 25TH OCTOBER 2019 11 - 12

To receive the action sheet.

**6. SPECIAL EDUCATION & LEARNING SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE 13 - 20**

To receive the Minutes of the Special Education &
Learning Scrutiny Committee held on 6th November,
2019.

(Please note the Minutes are submitted for points of
accuracy only)

7. ACTION SHEET - 6TH NOVEMBER 2019 21 - 30

To receive the action sheet.

8. IMPROVING SCHOOLS PROGRAMME 2019 31 - 44

To consider the report of the Strategic Education
Improvement Manager.

9. SCHOOL ATTENDANCE 45 - 52

To consider the report of the Corporate Director
Education.

10. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME - 15TH JANUARY 53 - 56

2020

To receive the report.

To: Councillor H. Trollope (Chair)
Councillor J. Millard (Vice-Chair)
Councillor D. Bevan
Councillor M. Cook
Councillor G. A. Davies
Councillor L. Elias
Councillor W. Hodgins
Councillor J. Holt
Councillor C. Meredith
Councillor J. C. Morgan
Councillor K. Pritchard
Councillor K. Rowson
Councillor T. Smith
Councillor B. Summers
Councillor S. Thomas
T. Baxter
A. Williams

All other Members (for information)
Manager Director
Chief Officers

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COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

REPORT TO: **THE CHAIR AND MEMBERS OF THE EDUCATION & LEARNING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

SUBJECT: **EDUCATION & LEARNING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 25TH OCTOBER, 2019**

REPORT OF: **DEMOCRATIC SUPPORT OFFICER**

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR H. TROLLOPE (CHAIR)

Councillors: J. Millard
D. Bevan
M. Cook
L. Elias
W. Hodgins
C. Meredith
J.C. Morgan
K. Rowson
T. Smith
B. Summers
S. Thomas

Co-opted Members

T. Baxter
A. Williams

AND: Corporate Director of Education
Head of Education Transformation
Strategic Education Improvement Manager
Scrutiny & Democratic Officer / Advisor

ALSO: Ed Pryce, Assistant Director - Strategy and Policy (EAS)
Ms C. Leaves, Headteacher Tredegar
Comprehensive School
Mr L. Perrett, Tredegar Comprehensive School

ITEM	SUBJECT	ACTION
	<u>ANNOUNCEMENTS</u>	
	The Director of Education announced the appointment of	

	<p>Meryl Echeverry as the new Head of Abertillery Learning Community.</p> <p>Councillor Wayne Hodgins congratulated Aspire Blaenau Gwent on achieving the Large Employer of the Year Award at the Apprenticeship Cymru Awards 2019.</p> <p>The Chair and Scrutiny Members extended their congratulations and requested that appropriate letters be forwarded.</p>	Scrutiny Officer
No. 1	<p><u>SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION</u></p> <p>It was noted that no requests had been received for the simultaneous translation service.</p>	
No. 2	<p><u>APOLOGIES</u></p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from Councillors G.A. Davies, J. Holt and K. Pritchard.</p>	
No. 3	<p><u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS</u></p> <p>There were no declarations of interest or dispensations reported.</p>	
No. 4	<p><u>EDUCATION & LEARNING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</u></p> <p>The Minutes of the Education & Learning Scrutiny Committee Meeting held on 11th September, 2019 were submitted.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED that the Minutes be accepted as a true record of proceedings.</p>	
No. 5	<p><u>ACTION SHEET – 11TH SEPTEMBER, 2019</u></p> <p>The action sheet arising from the meeting of the Education & Learning Scrutiny Committee held on 11th September, 2019 was submitted.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED that the action sheet be noted.</p>	

No. 6	<p><u>EXECUTIVE DECISION SHEET FOR THE EDUCATION & LEARNING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the Executive Decision Sheet.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED that the Executive Decision Sheet be noted.</p>	
No. 7	<p><u>SCHOOL PERFORMANCE: END OF FOUNDATION PHASE, KEY STAGE 2, KEY STAGE 3 , KEY STAGE 4 (PROVISIONAL)</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Strategic Education Improvement Manager which was presented to provide Members with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an update on the agreed reporting arrangements in light of the accountability reforms that are occurring at a national level; and • performance monitoring information in line with agreed reporting arrangements for statutory, end of key stage teacher assessment for 2018/19 for end of foundation Phase, Key Stage 2, Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 (provisional) at local Authority level and hence opportunity to provide feedback on processes to secure ongoing improvement. <p>The EAS representative presented the report and detailed the main points contained therein. The format of the report had been agreed by the five regional Directors of Education in the South East Wales Consortium (SEWC) and the Education Achievement Service (EAS) to ensure consistency of reporting and was in line with the national reform agenda.</p> <p>A Member raised concerns around the new reporting arrangements. The EAS representative said that any feedback from Members on what information was required would be considered for potential inclusion in reporting.</p> <p>With regard to individual pupil performance data, the Director of Education said that with the removal of the high stakes accountability, the broader school performance could be scrutinised as this would not involve scrutiny of individual pupil performance data. There would be other</p>	

arenas where pupil performance discussions on continual improvement could take place, e.g. Member briefing sessions.

A Member commented that the regional overview of performance of the new interim measures was easy to understand and gave Members relevant information.

The EAS representative informed Members that in paragraph 6.2.3 – all headline measures were interim.

In response to a Member's question regarding individual School Development Plans, the Director of Education said that schools would be addressing the data in their individual Development Plans and would focus on improving the right things. A professional panel would look at the School Development Plans to ensure they were tailored and bespoke to the individual school.

A Member commented that in relation to the arrangements that would remain and the documents produced for the Governing bodies, the School Development Plans hold schools to account on Members behalf. Schools were undergoing major changes and needed to re-imagine how education was being delivered. Feedback had been received from staff who were excited about the changes with schools moving in the right direction. One school in particular needed extra support, the Member felt that there needed to be involvement from Executive and Scrutiny Members on reinventing education in Blaenau Gwent with schools and Governing bodies also playing their part.

The Director of Education commented on strengthening the role of the Governing body, performance reporting and individual data that was available to Members.

The EAS representative pointed out that primary school data training for Governors would be available.

A Member referred to Governors and the accountability reforms and felt that cluster training to provide adequate challenge should be arranged. The EAS representative said that if schools required cluster training this could be provided on request.

A Member enquired regarding performance data for home educated pupils. The Director of Education explained the limitations to the extent that this data could be assured, home educated pupils sat qualifications but the number of home visits were limited and further work needed to be undertaken in this area.

A Member commented that pupils needed a steady environment to encourage learning for their future and not continual change. He felt that some skills were only available in colleges and not in schools.

The EAS representative referred to the national picture and the policy change decision by the Welsh Government. There had been concerns regarding the quality of BTec qualifications and stressed the most able learners would continue on. Only the way schools were supported would change to support continual development. There was one Science Advisor in place and the strongest science departments would support other schools.

The Director of Education commented that over the next 10 years £100m from the Welsh Government had been promised for Science and technology. The role of the Member Strategic Board was to make links closer to schools to better support youngsters and felt encouraged regarding the work to improve sciences.

A Member commented that it was pleasing to note the level of progress made by pupils and enquired how these rates of performance could be measured and presented to scrutiny. The Director of Education said that there was a National Register of Elected Home Educated pupils which contained the reasons why parents had selected home education.

The Committee AGREED, subject to the foregoing, to recommend that the report be accepted and endorse Option 1; namely that Members scrutinised the revised policy and contributed to the continuous assessment of effectiveness by making appropriate recommendations to the Executive Committee.

Councillors Wayne Hodgins, Clive Meredith, Bob Summers and Martin Cook left the meeting at this

	<p>junction.</p>	
No. 8	<p><u>FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME – 6TH NOVEMBER AND 4TH DECEMBER, 2019</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Chair of the Education & Learning Scrutiny Committee.</p> <p>The Chair raised concerns regarding the Annual National Performance Information contained in the Information Pack and requested that a Joint Scrutiny Committee meeting be held to consider the item.</p> <p>A Member suggested that reports on the Information Packs be included on the web site in future. The Director of Education said that it was important that Information Pack reports be included on the web site for external Regulators to view the information.</p> <p>Another Member suggested that the Executive Member for Education and EAS representatives be invited to the next meeting to secure ongoing improvement and continue to move Education forward.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED this course of action.</p> <p>In response to a Member's question regarding membership of sub groups, the Strategic Education Improvement Manager said that memberships of sub groups could be updated to ensure equal representation.</p> <p>A Member requested a report on literacy and numeracy figures. The Director of Education said that as part of the accountability reform national test scores data was not available.</p> <p>The Committee FURTHER AGREED that the report be accepted and endorse Option 2; namely that the Education & Learning Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme for the meetings on 6th November and 4th December, 2019 be approved.</p>	

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council

Action Sheet

Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee – Friday 25th October 2019

Item	Action to be Taken	By Whom	Action Taken
	Letter of congratulations to be sent to the new Headteacher of Abertillery Learning Community in being successful in her new appointment as Headteacher.	Democratic Support Officer	Letter sent
	Letter of congratulations to be sent to the Aspire Team for being winners of the 'Large Employers of the Year' at the Apprenticeship Cymru Awards 2019 on Thursday 24 th October 2019.	Democratic Support Officer	Letter sent
8	<u>Forward Work Programme – 6th November and 4th December 201</u>		
	Executive Member for Education to be invited to meeting on 6 th November 2019.	Scrutiny and Democratic Officer	Executive member invited.

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COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

REPORT TO: **THE CHAIR AND MEMBERS OF THE EDUCATION
& LEARNING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

SUBJECT: **SPECIAL EDUCATION & LEARNING SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE – 6TH NOVEMBER, 2019**

REPORT OF: **DEMOCRATIC SUPPORT OFFICER**

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR H. TROLLOPE (CHAIR)

Councillors: J. Millard
D. Bevan
M. Cook
L. Elias
W. Hodgins
C. Meredith
J.C. Morgan
K. Pritchard
K. Rowson
T. Smith
B. Summers
S. Thomas

Co-opted Members

T. Baxter
A. Williams

Executive Member - Education

Councillor J. Collins

AND: Corporate Director of Education
Head of Education Transformation
Service Manager Inclusion
Strategic Education Improvement Manager
Education Transformation Manager
Youth Services Manager
Service Manager Performance & Democratic / Advisor

ALSO: **EAS Representatives**
Ed Pryce, Assistant Director - Strategy & Policy
Geraint Willington, Director – Resource, Business and
Governance

ITEM	SUBJECT	ACTION
	<p><u>BEREAVEMENT</u></p> <p>It was with sadness that the Chair informed Members of the death of Phil Hackling a former Blaenau Gwent employee within the Housing Service. Members stood and observed a one minute silence as a mark of respect.</p>	
No. 1	<p><u>SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION</u></p> <p>It was noted that no requests had been received for the simultaneous translation service.</p>	
No. 2	<p><u>APOLOGIES</u></p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from Councillors G.A. Davies and J. Holt.</p>	
No. 3	<p><u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS</u></p> <p>There were no declarations of interest or dispensations reported.</p>	
No. 4	<p><u>EDUCATION ACHIEVEMENT SERVICES (EAS) VALUE FOR MONEY REPORT, FINANCIAL YEAR 2018/19</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Director of Education and the Director – Resources, Business and Governance (EAS) who presented the report which described the outcomes of an external report on the value for money (VfM) of the Regional Service in 2018/19.</p> <p>A Member referred to the external consultants conclusion and felt that assurances were needed that to achieve the desired educational outcomes a collective effort from Executive and Scrutiny Members, the EAS and Schools was needed to drive further improvements. The responsibility and accountability rested with everyone. The Executive Member for Education offered a level of assurance and confirmed that a collective approach would be used.</p>	

The Director of Education gave examples of performance improvements such as language and literature for 7 year olds, A* grades and level 6 English had improved. Working jointly in an holistic way had demonstrated clear improvements with the Directorates Service Plan. There was a range of services committed to joint working and raising pupil ambitions.

A Member enquired if the emerging picture of Blaenau Gwent was mirrored across the whole EAS region and felt that concerns needed to be addressed. The Director of Education said regular monthly meetings were held and any emerging concerns could be raised. Discussions also included areas that needed additional challenge to schools. Wider group meetings were held every half term between EAS officers, Inclusion officers, Youth Service, Legal officers and officers from Organisational Development, all shared relevant information to provide additional support where needed and hold the EAS to account.

The EAS representative commented that communication and information was shared at half termly meetings between the five regions with a view to a shared strategy and shared knowledge of individual schools to ensure that appropriate support and challenge had been provided to secure the necessary pace of improvement. The meetings were recorded and actions reviewed at the next meeting.

The Member referred to the differences in school performance. The Director of Education said that the Governor structure included the five local authorities Directors of Education to consider and challenge EAS inspection reports.

In response to a Member's question regarding the 2% ISB being put in the general reserve, the Executive Member for Education advised that this would be part of the wider discussion on the Council budget.

A Member commented that he welcomed the report but expressed concerns regarding educational outcomes in the EAS regions and enquired regarding the proportion of Challenge Advisors appointed to primary and secondary schools and the Mentor support for secondary schools and

	<p>requested a breakdown of these figures. The EAS representative said</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • there was a commitment to capacity building through Mentor support demonstrated by the spending of some £167,000 to fund the programme; • there was an acknowledgment of secondary school performance. • National categorisation - the EAS was accurate and robust in their categorisation with five local authorities support. • Challenge Advisors – changes within secondary schools had been owing to national changes as well as strategic decisions. • Significant strength in leadership in primary schools. <p>A Member requested percentages and numbers of Challenge Advisers supporting primary and secondary schools. The EAS representative would provide the numbers requested.</p> <p>A Member raised concerns around the ISB budget for schools, PDG and FSM had dropped and felt that the Executive Member needed to be aware of this issue. A Member commented that these issues would be considered at a future budget meeting.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED to recommend, subject to the foregoing, that the report be accepted and endorse Option 1; namely that Members provided feedback thereby engaged in self-evaluation processes prior to recommending for approval by the Executive.</p>	EAS representative
No. 5	<p><u>YOUTH SERVICE PERFORMANCE REPORT 2018-2019</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Youth Services Manager.</p> <p>The Youth Services Manager presented the report which provided an update on the performance of the Youth Service and for Members to scrutinise the impact of the service.</p> <p>In response to a Member's question regarding the potential end of European funding, the Youth Services Manager said that there was a potential risk that European funding would</p>	

	<p>cease, however, part of her role was to look at opportunities and explore funding routes such as the Big Lottery and City Deal.</p> <p>A Member raised concerns regarding duplication of some work. The Youth Services Manager responded that the Youth Support grant received from the Welsh Government enabled the service to appoint additional youth workers to support young people who need additional support with their emotional and mental health. The Manager emphasised that it was about understanding and recognising how youth working can contribute to improving mental health in young people and not about duplication of work. A Youth Homelessness Co-ordinator had been appointed to look on a local level what issues were happening in Blaenau Gwent with the focus on those young people at risk of experiencing homelessness and mental health.</p> <p>In response to a Member's question regarding value for money in relation to the Duke of Edinburgh project, the Youth Services Manager said that Blaenau Gwent held the licence for groups such as local football and rugby teams to set up their own Duke of Edinburgh project, however, schools held their own licence.</p> <p>A Member enquired regarding the maximum age of young people the Youth Service supported. The Youth Services Manager said that the Youth Service co-ordinated the 11-18 Counselling Service. There was a legal requirement to support young people up to the age of 25 and monies had been ring-fenced to meet this duty.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED to recommend that the report be accepted and endorse Option 2; namely to accept the report as provided.</p> <p>Councillor Steve Thomas left the meeting at this juncture.</p>	
No. 6	<p><u>MANAGEMENT OF PUPIL PLACES AND THE SCHOOL ESTATE 2018/19</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Education Transformation Manager.</p>	

<p>The Education Transformation Manager presented the report which provided Members with the opportunity to scrutinise the management of pupil places focussing on both processes and outcomes.</p> <p>In response to a Member's question regarding capacity issues and pupil projections in special schools, the Education Transformation Manager said that the Inclusion team would look at capacity in special schools re pupil projections. There had been significant demand for places at the special school and work was being undertaken on the consultation document for expansion to accommodate pupil numbers.</p> <p>The Member requested that information regarding the special school be added to future reports for Members consideration. The Education Transformation Manager said a report would be included in the forward work programme and information on the special school would be included in future reporting.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED this course of action.</p> <p>Another Member enquired how the Education Transformation team would address surplus places. The Education Transformation Manager said that work on the reduction of surplus places action plan was being developed for schools and the team would look at projected pupil numbers on current trends, explore teaching arrangements, look at pupil population figures in future years and introduce short term measures to monitor pupil numbers.</p> <p>The Education team work closely with schools to monitor capacity in line with projections and focused on what was needed for that particular school. The team would look at self-help for schools to manage their spaces more efficiently.</p> <p>A Member enquired if the team received information from the Planning Department in relation to new residential developments. The Education Transformation Manager said that the team looked at current approved developments and projected proposals and would</p>	<p>Education Transformation Manager</p>
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	<p>incorporate approved developments into the team's projections.</p> <p>The Committee FURTHER AGREED to recommend, subject to the foregoing, that the report be accepted and endorse Option 2, namely that the Scrutiny Committee considered the report and provided comments relating to improvements that can be made to the current monitoring processes.</p>	
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Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council

Action Sheet

Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee – Wednesday 6th November 2019

Item	Action to be Taken	By Whom	Action Taken
4	<p><u>Education Achievement Services (EAS), Value for Money Report, Financial Year 2018/19</u></p> <p>A member referred to the Appendix and Page 21 regarding the £167,00 to fund the mentoring programme and requested that a breakdown of funding to primary and secondary schools be provided.</p> <p>Members requested the percentages and numbers of Challenge Adviser supporting schools.</p>	<p>Ed Pryce, EAS Assistant Director Strategy and Policy</p> <p>Ed Pryce, EAS</p>	<p>As per the report, the funding was solely to support the programme in secondary schools only. Schools were invited to apply for this specific funding. Allocation was available to the 4 schools in Blaenau Gwent and 2 applied.</p> <p>There are 2 secondary schools - both have a CA with a secondary school background.</p> <p>There are 2 11-16 schools - both are supported by a CA with a secondary background. Any additional phase specific support for the primary phase is brokered by the CA.</p> <p>There are 19 primary schools – all have a CA with a primary school background.</p> <p>There are 2 special schools - both have a CA with a special school background.</p> <p>In percentage terms the proportion of CAs from the same phase is 100%.</p>

Item	Action to be Taken	By Whom	Action Taken
6	<p data-bbox="297 234 972 304"><u>Management of Pupil Places and the School Estate</u></p> <p data-bbox="297 344 1030 414">Members requested that information on the Special School is included in future reporting.</p>	<p data-bbox="1068 344 1290 483">Claire Gardner, Education Transformation Manager</p>	<p data-bbox="1352 344 2067 414">The report has now been updated with information requested, as per attached document.</p>

Date of meeting: **18th December 2019**

Report Subject: **Management of Pupil Places and the School Estate 2018/19**

Portfolio Holder: **Executive Member for Education Cllr. Joanne Collins**

Report Submitted by: **Education Transformation Manager – Claire Gardner**

Reporting Pathway (Dates to be Entered)								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
✓	15.10.19				06.11.19	18.12.19		

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide Executive Committee with an overview of the management of pupil places and the school estate throughout the 2018/19 academic session, focusing on both processes and outcomes.

2. Scope and Background

2.1 The Planning of School Places Legislative and Policy Context: Pupil Place Management

Councils have a duty to manage, monitor, review and plan pupil places on an annual basis, in line with Welsh Government Legislation.

2.2 Local Context: Pupil Place Management, Capacities, Projections, Surplus and Sufficiency

Capacity calculations were determined for each of the schools in October 2018, which informed the final admission numbers for the Blaenau Gwent School Admissions Policy 2020/21.

- 2.3 Councils are required annually to provide an assessment of surplus and/or sufficiency issues at primary schools for a 5-year period and a 7-year period for secondary schools.

- 2.4 Pupil projection accuracy has improved over the last 3 years, with 100 % of primary and 98% of secondary projections confirmed to be accurate during the 2018/19 and 2017/18 academic sessions; in comparison to 97% for primary 94% for secondary during the 2016/17 academic session.

- 2.5 Between January 2018 and January 2019 the percentage of surplus places within primary has further decreased from 14% to 11%; with the 19% in January 2018 being maintained into January 2019 for secondary. The sustained higher number of surplus places at secondary, is attributable to the birth rate for the year 7 cohort (2006/2007 births), along with secondary pupil population remaining stable throughout the academic year, with no

positive trend noted in either outward or inward migration. Surplus places in both the primary and secondary sector are projected to decrease further over the next 2 years, taking the primary percentage to 9% and secondary to 11%, by the 2022/23 academic year – with the overall combined projected status as 10%.

2.6

Live birth rates have fluctuated over the last ten years, with a downward trend noted between 2012 and 2019 (**Appendix 1**). However, there has been an upward trend in inward migration over the last academic session, with approximately 215 pupils – (168 of which were primary pupils), moving into Blaenau Gwent between September 2018 and August 2019 via in-year transfer. The net migration based upon school transfers in-year for 2018/19 was 399, with 184 pupils recorded by schools as moving out of county. It should be noted that historically a number of schools have failed to accurately record outward migration, which is presently being addressed via the Admissions Forum.

2.7

The School Organisation Policy (2017) sets a target of reducing surplus places to 15% by 2020 by which time the primary sector is projected to have 10% and the secondary sector 15% surplus places. The Education Transformation team targeted the following schools whereby the percentage was over 15%, during the 2019/18 academic session:

- Coed y Garn Primary School – Admission number reduced from 270 to 246 resulting in the surplus % reducing from 24% in 17/18 to 20% in 18/19
- Sofrydd Primary School – Admission number reduced from 174 to 162 resulting in the surplus % reducing from 18% in 17/18 to 13% in 18/19
- Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Helyg – Admission number reduced from 360 to 258 resulting in the surplus % reducing from 41% in 17/18 to 17% in 18/19

2.8

The Education Transformation team's strategy for the 2019/20 academic session is to work on the development of surplus places reduction action plans with the following schools who are projected (as at January 2019) to have over 15% surplus between 2020 and 2023:

- St Illtyd's Primary School currently have 8% surplus in 2018/19 but projected to rise to 23% in 2023/24
- St Marys Roman Catholic Primary School currently have 0% surplus in 2018/19 but projected to rise to 23% in 2023/24
- Cwm Primary School currently have 20% surplus in 2018/19 but projected to rise to 32% in 2023/24
- Deighton Primary School currently have 22% surplus in 2018/19 but projected to rise to 25% in 2021/22

2.9

There are a relatively small number of schools which are projected to have sufficiency issues between 2021 2025 as follows:

- Glyncoed

- Coed y Garn Primary School
 - Abertillery Learning Community Secondary Campus
- 2.10 All of which will be addressed via the annual assessment of school capacity.
- 2.11 Over the last academic session the team have submitted the following Section 106 requests for developer contributions, in-line with securing increased capacity in schools within the development area:
- Ebbw Fawr Valley – 5 for primary provision
 - Tredegar Sirhowy Valley – 1 for primary provision
- 2.12 Pen y Cwm pupil place management is demand-based due to its status as a special school; therefore, this and the River Centre Learning Community fall outside of standard pupil place management processes, with uptake and placement managed and monitored by the Inclusion Service. The current capacity of Pen y Cwm is 120 and there are presently 132 pupils on roll, with 9 pupils on the waiting list for a place at the school. In addition, there are 7 potential pupils awaiting transition to Pen y Cwm between September 2019 and September 2020.
- 2.13 Demand for Pen y Cwm has significantly increased over the last academic session, with the school projected to have sufficiency issues in 2019/20. Therefore, Education Transformation and Inclusion are presently preparing a consultation document and associated report, which seeks to increase the schools capacity to 150. The report will be taken via the Councils political processes for review and to seek approval to consult on this proposal in 2020.
- 2.14 The River Centre Learning Community (RCLC) has a capacity of 64. Presently, there are 56 pupils on roll, 8 of which are on home tuition, with 6 based in the House – Ty Avon. The nature of this provision requires management of pupil places to be fluid. Allocation of places is managed by the Inclusion Service in consultation with key partners.
- 2.15
- Condition and Suitability**
- For a detailed overview of the management and maintenance of the school estate please refer to **Appendix 2**. The 2018/19 position for school building condition and suitability continues to improve. Condition and suitability assessment criteria range from A (good) - D (bad). Blaenau Gwent has only 1 school categorised as 'D' for condition. Figure 1 (**Appendix 3**) highlights the latest position in respect of the Blaenau Gwent school estate.
- 2.15
- The condition and suitability programme for the 2019/20 academic session, will be planned for implementation from January 2020. This will also inform the prioritisation of projects within Band B and C of the 21st Century Schools Programme, along with potential further school organisation priorities, minor and planned works programmes etc.
- 2.16

The Council are reviewing the criteria and methodology linked to suitability assessments and will commence implementation of the revised procedures in January 2020. There is only one school building categorised as a 'D' (Glyncoed Primary School) within the school estate.

3. **Options for Recommendation** *To include Recommendation(s) / Endorsement by other groups, e.g. CMT/Committees/Other groups)*

3.1 Corporate Leadership Team requested that the report be condensed, with relevant school estate management data appended. This data is now contained within **Appendix 2**. Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee considered the report and requested that special school pupil place data was added. Special school pupil place management is now covered in paragraphs 2.12 - 2.16.

3.2 **Option 1:** Executive Committee considers and accepts the report.

3.3 **Option 2:** Executive Committee considers the report and provides comments relating to improvements that can be made to the current monitoring processes.

4. **Evidence of how does this topic supports the achievement of the Corporate Plan / Statutory Responsibilities / Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan**

4.1 Education is a priority in the Council's Corporate Plan of which the planning of school places and management of the school estate are essential components. In addition, facilities management contributes to the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). The Council has statutory duties and responsibilities aligned to with the planning of school places and the management school Estate in line with following policy and legislation:

- Welsh Government's Measuring the Capacity of Schools in Wales Guidance (2011)
- Welsh Government School Admission and Admission Appeals Code's (2013)
- Welsh Government School Organisation Code (2013)
- The School Standards and Framework Act 1998
- The Local Authority Financial Scheme Regulations 1998
- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005

4.2 The planning of school places and management of the school estate seeks to respond to the Council's wellbeing goals for all learners.

5. **Implications Against Each Option**

5.1 **Impact on Budget** *(short and long term impact)*

Welsh Government has indicated that there will be a further Schools Capital Maintenance Grant allocated to Local Authorities in 2019/20 financial year.

The Education Minor Works budget is monitored, with planning already underway for the 2019/20 academic session.

5.2 ***Risk including Mitigating Actions***

The Council have a statutory duty to comply with Welsh Government legislation and policy as detailed above. The primary risks and mitigating actions are as follows:

- Sustainability issues within the school estate— this is managed and mitigated against in line with capacity assessments, projections, condition and suitability reviews, along with the delivery of minor and planned works programmes and school organisation.
- Ineffective distribution of pupil places and/ or insufficient places to meet demand – this managed, mitigated and informed by the capacity assessment process and pupil projections, in conjunction with the admissions process.
- Compliance with statutory duty and legislative obligations - this is managed in line with policy and guidance review and development on an annual basis; along with facilities (including minor works and maintenance), health and safety and FRA monitoring and review, which is undertaken on a monthly basis.

5.3 ***Legal***

There are no direct legal implications associated with this report.

5.4 ***Human Resources***

There are no direct legal implications associated with this report.

6. **Supporting Evidence:**

6.1.1 ***Performance Information and Data***

Between the 2017/18 and 2018/19 academic sessions there has been a considerable reduction in surplus places within the primary sector. The secondary sector has fluctuated in line with transfers out of borough in particular. The secondary sector has remained below 20% surplus places for the last 2 years

- 6.1.2 Surplus places are set to decrease further to within and below target over the next 5 years (Please refer to the graph and percentages detailed within **Appendix 4**, along with **Appendix 5** for pupil projection data as at January 2019).

6.1.3 **All Wales Position**

The January 2017/18 surplus places comparative data for Wales (the Council are presently awaiting 2018/19 data, which is scheduled for distribution in early 2020), demonstrated Blaenau Gwent's position was:

- 19th (out of 22 Local Authorities) for primary;
- 8th (out of 22) for secondary; and,

- 14th (out of 22 Local Authorities) in terms of the combined primary and secondary position.
- 6.1.4 The January 2017/18 surplus places comparative data for Wales (Please refer to **Appendices 6** All Wales Primary and Secondary Data; All Wales Primary Data, and All Wales Secondary Data - for more information).
- 6.2 ***Expected outcome for the public***
The management of pupil places aims to secure continued access to education places in Blaenau Gwent for current and future pupil populations.
- 6.3 ***Involvement*** (*consultation, engagement, participation*)
A schools engagement programme, which considers the needs of current and prospective pupils, staff etc. is in place i.e. school facilities action planning sessions, capacity review sessions, medical needs and accessibility reviews etc.
- 6.4 ***Thinking for the Long term*** (*forward planning*)
The planning of pupil places and management of the school estate takes account of short, medium and long-term planning arrangements informing:
- Minor works and maintenance priorities
 - 21st Century Schools and School Organisation Priorities
 - Capacity plans in line with surplus and sufficiency etc.
- 6.5 ***Preventative focus***
Management of pupil places and the school estate is focused on early identification and planning, in order to secure a school estate that is fit for purpose that contributes to raising educational standards, which is a Council priority.
- 6.6 ***Collaboration / partnership working***
Key management and operational staff across the Council and school estate, are involved in detailed annual reviews of facilities and pupil places
- 6.7 ***Integration*** (*across service areas*)
The process is cross-cutting in the sense that it impacts upon Education, Schools, Estates, Planning and Building Control, Community Services, and Social Services etc.; therefore, service area involvement is key to effective implementation.
- 6.8 ***EqIA*** (*screening and identifying if full impact assessment is needed*)
Equality impact assessments are continuously carried out in line with both the management of pupil places and the school estate.
7. **Monitoring Arrangements** *State how the work will be monitored e.g. through scrutiny or directorate performance management arrangements*
- 7.1 Education review and monitor both the planning of school places and management of school estate processes and outcomes consistently

throughout each academic year, incorporating learning from the previous year.

8. **Background Documents / Electronic Links**

Appendix 1 - Live Birth Graph



Births
Graph.2000.2017.xls

Appendix 2 – Detailed Management and Maintenance of the School Estate Overview



Appendix 2 -
Management of the S

Appendix 3 – Figure 1: School Condition and Suitability Ratings



Figure 1 Consition
and Suitability Rating:

Appendix 4 – Surplus Reduction Graph



graph 12-22.xlsx

Appendix 5 – January 2019 Pupil Projection Data



Projected Pupil
Numbers and Surplus

Appendices 6 - All Wales Primary and Secondary Data



all wales data.xlsx

REF: MOPPATSE2018-19.198

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Agenda Item 8

Executive Committee and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: N/A

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: N/A

Committee: **Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee**

Date of meeting: **4th December 2019**

Report Subject: **Improving Schools Programme 2019**

Portfolio Holder: **Cllr J Collins, Executive Member for Education**

Report Submitted by: **Michelle Jones, Strategic Education Improvement Manager**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
14.11.19	19.11.19	20.11.19			04.12.19	18.12.19		

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To provide elected members with an overview of those schools, over the last 3 years that have presented as a cause for concern, their progress and the work delivered or currently underway to continue to support them to improve.

2. Scope and Background

- 2.1 The report covers all schools and settings within the County Borough identified by the Education Directorate, supported by the, EAS and/or Estyn as needing to improve.
- 2.2 The Blaenau Gwent Improving Schools Programme operates within the regional arrangements for supporting schools across South East Wales, and aligns with the regional policies and processes for school monitoring, evaluation, support and intervention. The regional arrangements build on the national frameworks and guidance and in particular the National Framework for Categorising Schools and the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013. The background to categorisation is explained further in Appendix 1.
- 2.3 The Blaenau Gwent Improving Schools Programme focuses particularly on those schools which need to secure improvement in schools categorised as Amber and Red.

3. Options for Recommendation

3.1 Option 1

Members are asked to scrutinise the information detailed within the report and contribute to the continuous assessment of effectiveness by making appropriate recommendations to the Executive Committee.

3.2 **Option 2**

Accept the report as provided.

4. **Evidence of how does this topic supports the achievement of the Corporate Plan / Statutory Responsibilities / Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan**

4.1 **Corporate Plan**

• **Education Aims**

- “To improve pupil outcomes, progress and wellbeing, particularly for our more-able and most vulnerable learners
- To improve the quality of our education services and our school buildings to help learners achieve great outcomes
- To continue to support our school leaders to help our pupils achieve their ambitions.”

4.2 **Statutory Responsibility**

The School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 consolidates, clarifies and reforms the law in relation to intervention in schools causing concern. The Welsh Government’s statutory guidance for schools causing concern (February 2014) details the local authority powers of intervention in schools causing concern, the grounds on which those powers can be invoked and the procedures governing the intervention process. A further explanation of this is explained further in Appendix 1, which includes the LA powers of intervention.

4.3 **Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan Objectives**

One of the objectives in the Blaenau Gwent Wellbeing Plan aims for every child to have the best start in life. Through our Education provision we seek to ensure that provision is appropriate and able to meet the needs of children and young people so that their progress and performance is as good as it ought to be.

5. **Implications Against Each Option**

5.1 **Impact on Budget**

There are no direct financial implications for this report. However, the Council allocates approximately £42.8 million to schools via the Individual Schools Budget (ISB) to provide high quality education and to improve pupil outcomes.

- 5.1.1 Blaenau Gwent continues to make a financial contribution to the regional EAS arrangements of approximately £364,000 from the core Education Directorate Budget. The EAS is the Council’s commissioned school improvement service commissioned to work directly with schools to provide professional challenge and support to improve. The Education Directorate holds the EAS to account for the impact and effectiveness of their work in schools in Blaenau Gwent.

5.2 ***Risk including Mitigating Actions***

Risk is associated with underperformance and ineffective processes to improve performance and progress in identified schools. Failure to raise standards is identified as a key risk to the Council, both in terms of reputation and pupil life chances. This is reflected in the Education Directorate and EAS risk registers.

5.2.1 Mitigating actions include the routine monitoring of quantitative and qualitative information, regular quality assurance meetings between the Council and the EAS, regular quality assurance meetings within the Education Directorate and across teams, school inspection findings and school categorisation results.

5.2.2 The progress schools make in their School Development Plans is monitored on a half- termly basis. School attendance and exclusion figures are monitored on a fortnightly basis. School's safeguarding processes are also closely monitored.

5.2.3 Holistic support packages are devised via regular intra Council services meetings between OD, finance, health and safety, education and school governor support services.

5.2.4 Through ongoing robust self-evaluation processes school level performance data is regularly analysed and evaluated to identify emerging trends or possible underperformance.

5.2.5 The quality of provision i.e. the quality teaching and learning in classrooms is monitored and supported via the EAS. The quality of school leadership is also supported extensively by the EAS via a range of programmes and school-to-school networks.

5.3 ***Legal***

The improving schools programme operates within the legal framework of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013.

5.4 ***Human Resources***

There is no direct staffing or workforce implications arising from this report.

6. **Supporting Evidence**

6.1 ***Performance Information and Data***

6.1.1 **School Categorisation**

All schools are categorised on an annual basis in accordance with the National Model for Categorisation. The process takes place at a regional level and for the last 3 years national moderation has confirmed that the regional process is robust. Appendix 1 shows the significant reduction in the level of support that Blaenau Gwent Schools require for the period 2017 to 2019.

6.1.2 **Schools in the Red and Amber Categories, that have made positive progress (2017 to 2019)**

Appendix 1 details the progress of the following schools, Ebbw Fawr Learning Community (Red to Yellow), St Joseph's RC Primary (Amber to Yellow), St Mary's RC Primary Yellow (in year) to Amber to Yellow), Rhos-y-Fedwen (Yellow Amber (in year) to Amber).

6.1.3 **Schools who are in receipt of additional support 2018 to 2019**

Appendix 1 details the additional support that is now provided for Brynbach Primary School (Yellow to Amber).

6.1.4 **Schools in Receipt of a Statutory Warning Notice (Red)**

Appendix 1 details the arrangement and progress for the two schools; Abertillery Learning Community and Brynmawr Foundation School, both of which are in receipt of a statutory warning notice to improve from the Council.

6.3 ***Expected outcome for the public***

6.3.1 ***Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation)***

The regional policy for monitoring, evaluation and intervention in schools through the categorisation process is derived from the National Categorisation Framework, but has been evolved through the engagement of a variety of stakeholders including schools and members of governing bodies.

A range of Council departments and external partners are involved in delivering programmes to support schools requiring improvement. Monitoring progress towards targets enables effective targeting of support.

6.3.2 ***Thinking for the Long term (forward planning)***

Analysis of aggregate school performance data is a key element in ensuring that schools are known well by the Council so that appropriate support and intervention can be directed towards areas of greatest need.

Monitoring of school performance facilitates support for schools to ensure that schools maintain high quality outcomes in the longer term.

6.3.3 ***Preventative focus***

Through effective monitoring and evaluation of school performance, early identification of emerging areas for improvement can be achieved with consequent early intervention to secure improvement.

The effectiveness of the Council's monitoring, evaluation and intervention programmes ensure that preventative action is taken early in order to minimise the escalation of concerns.

6.3.4 ***Collaboration / partnership working***

The Council collaborates with neighbouring local authorities through the South East Wales Consortium for the provision of School Improvement services through the Education Achievement Service (EAS).

The Council also secures a range of pupil support services such as Hearing Impaired, Visually Impaired, Speech and Language, and Ethnic Minority support services through regional collaboration.

Within the Council, the school improvement and inclusion leadership teams ensure that there is a coordinated approach to supporting schools in the Education Directorate and across the Council as a whole.

6.3.5 *Integration(across service areas)*

The Council commissions its school improvement function on regional basis.

6.4 *EqlA (screening and identifying if full impact assessment is needed)*

There is no requirement for EQIA assessment since this is not a change of policy or practice. However, implementation of the council's monitoring, evaluation and intervention practice in schools has a positive impact on children and young people and on staff within a particular school. By improving the quality of education, standards are improved for all children and young people. Through the Council's school improvement strategy, particular focus is given to vulnerable learners and those who are at risk of underachievement.

7. Monitoring Arrangements

- 7.1 Monitoring of improvement pathways is an important mechanism for ensuring that members of the Education Scrutiny Committee and the Executive are sufficiently informed to enable them to hold the authority to account effectively for the quality of education provision and hence pupil outcomes.

8. Background Documents / Electronic Links

Appendix 1 – Improving Schools

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Improving Schools Programme**School Categorisation**

The national framework for the categorisation of schools is based on a three-stage process.

Judgements on the overall category of support are based on a four-colour model, green, yellow, amber, and red, with “green” denoting the category where least support is needed.

The Blaenau Gwent Improving Schools Programme focuses particularly on those schools which need to secure improvement in schools categorised as Amber and Red.

In the case of schools categorised as Amber, the school's Challenge Adviser works with the school to create a Single Plan i.e. the school development plan which defines the support available through the Local Authority and the Education Achievement Service (EAS). Regular half-termly School's Causing Concern meetings are held in each school with the Headteacher, Chair of Governors, EAS representatives and LA Representative. During these meetings the school is provided with the opportunity to present the progress it has made and to consider the appropriateness and impact of the support provided. Following the meeting there is a determination as to the extent of the progress made by the school and consequently the next steps to be taken by all parties represented at the meeting.

In the case of schools categorised as Red, the school's Challenge Adviser works with the school to create a Single Plan i.e. the school development plan, which defines the support available through the Local Authority and the Education Achievement Service (EAS). Unlike with schools categorised as Amber, this could include interventions made under the Local Authority's formal powers as detailed in School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013. In cases where such schools have been placed by Estyn in the categories of either requiring significant improvement or special measures then the School Development Plan will be replaced by a more formal LA Statement of Action and Post Inspection Action Plan (PIAP)

In the schools requiring such improvement regular half-termly Schools Causing Concern meetings (SCC) are held, which may be chaired by the Executive Member for Education and are attended by the Headteacher, Chair of Governors, Director of Education, Strategic Education Improvement Manager, Principal Challenge Adviser and EAS representatives. During these meetings the school presents and evidences the progress it has made, and the panel also considers the appropriateness and impact of the support and intervention provided. The panel considers and evaluates the extent of progress the school is making against the action points set out in the School Development Plan or Post Inspection Action Plan, (if the school is in an Estyn Category). Following each meeting, the Schools Causing Concern Panel evaluates the progress which the school has made and determines the next steps which should

be taken in relation to supporting the school. This can include the invocation of formal powers of intervention should that be considered appropriate.

Statutory Responsibility

The School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 consolidates, clarifies and reforms the law in relation to intervention in schools causing concern. The Welsh Government's statutory guidance for schools causing concern (February 2014) details the local authority powers of intervention in schools causing concern, the grounds on which those powers can be invoked and the procedures governing the intervention process. The guidance also summarises the powers of Welsh Minister to intervene in schools where the local authority has failed to do so or has done so inadequately. This includes the Welsh Ministers' powers to direct the local authority to close a school.

The statutory guidance defines a "school causing concern" as one which is:

- Subject to a Warning Notice issued under the 2013 Act.
- Not subject to Warning Notice but meets one or more of the six grounds for intervention and there is a related risk to the health and safety on any person that calls for urgent intervention
- Deemed by Estyn to require significant improvement.
- Deemed by Estyn to require special measures.

Under the terms of the Act, a school will be "eligible for intervention" where one of the following six grounds for intervention exist:

- Ground 1: The standards of performance of pupils at the school are unacceptably low.
- Ground 2: There has been a breakdown in the way the school is managed or governed.
- Ground 3: The behaviour of pupils at the school or any action taken by those pupils or their parents is severely prejudicing, or is likely to severely prejudice, the education of any pupils at the school.
- Ground 4: The safety of pupils or staff at the school is threatened (whether by a breakdown of discipline or otherwise).
- Ground 5: The governing body or head teacher has failed, or is likely to fail, to comply with a duty under the Education Acts.
- Ground 6: The governing body or head teacher has acted, or is proposing to act unreasonably in the exercise of any of its or his or her functions under the Education Acts.

Should the LA determine that grounds for intervention exist, the LA must issue a warning notice to the school governing body setting out:

- the grounds for intervention,
- the reasons why the LA is satisfied that the grounds for intervention exist,
- the action which the governing body is required to take
- the period in which the action is to be taken by the governing body
- the action the LA is minded to take should the governing body not take the required action or make sufficient progress.

In the case of a foundation, voluntary aided or voluntary controlled school the LA will work in partnership with the relevant bodies.

A school is also eligible for intervention where:

- the school has been deemed by Estyn to require significant improvement or special measures. (In both these cases there is no requirement to issue a warning notice prior to intervention.);
- and/or,
- one or more of the grounds 1- 6 exist and/or there is a related risk to the health or safety of any person that calls for urgent intervention.

Local Authority powers of intervention

Under Section 5 of the Act, the LA is able to intervene in schools causing concern in the following ways:

1. Direct the governing body to secure advice or collaborate with another school
2. Appoint additional governors and nominating a new Chair
3. Appoint an Interim executive board
4. Suspend the delegated authority for the governing body to manage the school's budget
5. Direct the governing body to take certain action or to desist from taking certain action.

A school remains eligible for intervention by the LA until one of the following events takes place:

- the authority gives notice that it is satisfied that the grounds for interventions that have been dealt with or that using its powers of intervention would not be appropriate for any other reason;
- the Welsh Ministers determine that the power to intervene is no longer in effect and give notice in writing to the local authority and the governing body of their determination.

Performance Information and Data

All schools are categorised on an annual basis in accordance with the National Model for Categorisation. The process takes place at a regional level and for the last 3 years national moderation has confirmed that the regional process is robust.

School Categorisation January 2017

Overall, National School Categorisation in January 2017 indicated an improvement when compared with the previous year. In January 2017:

- 2 schools were categorised as Red (Abertillery Learning Community and Ebbw Fawr Learning Community);
- 4 schools were categorised as Amber (St. Joseph's RC Primary, St Mary's RC Primary, Ysgol Bro Helyg and Canolfan yr Afon). A further 2 schools were re-categorised from yellow to amber due to the need to provide additional support (Rhos-y-Fedwen Primary and St Illtyd's Primary);

- 14 schools were categorised as yellow; and
- 4 schools were categorised as green (Beaufort Hill Primary, Deighton Primary, Georgetown Primary and Tredegar Comprehensive School). This was an improvement on the year before.

School Categorisation January 2018

Overall, National School Categorisation in January 2018 indicated an improvement when compared with the previous year in terms of the number of green schools:

- The number of Red schools remains the same. One school remains categorised as Red (Abertillery Learning Community), one school (Ebbw Fawr Learning Community) moved to Amber, but one school (Brynmawr Foundation) moved from Yellow to Red;
- 4 schools were categorised as Amber (The River Centre, Ebbw Fawr Learning Community, Rhos-y-Fedwen Primary and St Illtyd's Primary);
- 11 schools were categorised as yellow; and
- 8 schools were categorised as green (All Saints RC Primary, Beaufort Hill Primary, Deighton Primary, Georgetown Primary, Glanhwy Primary, Pen-y-Cwm Special, St Mary's CiW Primary and Tredegar Comprehensive School). This is again an improvement on the previous year.

School Categorisation January 2019

Overall, National School Categorisation in January 2019 indicated an improvement when compared with the previous year in terms of the number of green and yellow schools:

- The number of Red schools remains the same **(2)**. Two schools remain categorised as Red (Abertillery Learning Community and Brynmawr Foundation School).
- **2** schools were categorised as Amber (One school Rhos-y-Fedwen Primary remained as Amber with Brynbach Primary School being categorised from yellow to amber due to the need to provide additional support. Overall this represented a reduction of 2 schools compared to the previous year).
- **10** schools were categorised as yellow (CoedyGarn Primary, Glyncoed Primary, St Joseph's Primary, St Marys RC Primary, Sofrydd Primary, Ysgol Gymraeg Brohelyg, Ystruth Primary with a further 3 schools moving from Amber to Yellow - River Centre, Ebbw Fawr Learning Community and St Illtyds Primary).
- **11** schools were categorised as Green (All Saints RC Primary, Beaufort Hill Primary, Deighton Primary, Georgetown Primary, Glanhwy Primary, Pen-y-Cwm Special, St Mary's CiW Primary and Tredegar Comprehensive School with a further 3 schools moving from Yellow to Green Blaenycwm Primary, Cwm Primary and Willowtown Primary). This is again an improvement on the previous year and over a three year period represents a significant improvement in the percentage of schools categorised as either Yellow or

Green and demonstrates the improved capacity and leadership within our schools.

Schools in the Red and Amber Categories, that have made positive progress (2017 to 2019)

Ebbw Fawr Learning Community (Red to Yellow)

In September 2015, the school was issued with a pre-warning notice on the grounds of insufficient improvement in standards and concerns regarding the quality of teacher assessment. Following the Estyn Inspection in February 2016, and the school being placed in the statutory category of significant improvement, the Local Authority issued the school with a warning notice to improve. In April 2016, the Local Authority invoked its powers of intervention by appointing additional Governors to the Governing body and securing a new Chair of Governors. A new Headteacher was appointed to the school in the summer term 2016 and took up his appointment in September 2016. A Local Authority Intervention Panel was established to monitor progress. An Estyn monitoring visit in Spring 2017 recognised the positive progress that had been made, particularly in relation to pupil well-being. The Warning Notice was removed in July 2018 prior to the notification of a revisit from Estyn. The school was revisited by Estyn in July 2018 and removed from the statutory category of requiring significant improvement due to the sustained and strong progress secured by the school. The school is now categorised as yellow in recognition of the level of support that they require.

St Joseph's RC Primary (Amber to Yellow)

In 2014 St Joseph's primary school was categorised as an Amber school, with particular concerns about the capacity for leadership and quality of governance. In the Autumn 2015, the school categorisation remained as Amber. The school had an acting Headteacher, having failed to secure the appointment of a substantive Headteacher on a number of occasions. Under the national categorisation process 2016-17, the school remained in the Amber support category, reflecting the continuing temporary leadership arrangements. The acting Headteacher was appointed to the substantive post in September 2017 and a new Chair of Governors also established. The school was categorised as Yellow in the 2017-18 national categorisation process. The school was inspected by Estyn in January 2018 and was judged to be good in all 5 Inspection Areas.

St Mary's RC Primary Yellow (in year) to Amber to Yellow)

In 2015 and 2016 St Mary's RC Primary school was categorised as a Yellow school. The school was inspected by Estyn in June 2016 and was placed into Estyn monitoring because of the need to improve standards in skills and in teacher assessment and tracking. Because of the adequate judgements for current performance and prospects for improvement, the school was re-classified in year to Amber. Following very strong progress against the recommendations the school was categorised as Yellow in the 2017-18 national categorisation process. The school was revisited by Estyn in December 2017 and removed from Estyn monitoring.

Rhos-y-Fedwen (Yellow Amber (in year) to Amber)

The school was placed in Estyn Review in March 2017, and was subsequently re-categorised in year as Amber. Formal acting Headteacher arrangements were put in place shortly before the inspection. There are effective working relationships across the senior leadership team. The governing body has recently been strengthened although the recruitment of governors remains a key challenge for the school. The main issues during inspection were inaccuracy of teacher assessment at end of KS2 in reading and writing which have since been addressed. This had an impact on the quality of self-evaluation judgement. A new Headteacher was appointed and EIB processes reported that good progress was being made against all recommendations. The school was revisited by Estyn in June 2018 and was removed from Estyn monitoring.

Schools who are in receipt of additional support 2018 to 2019

Brynbach Primary School (Yellow to Amber)

In January 2019 the school was categorised as Amber in 2019 in recognition of the additional support required by the recently appointed Headteacher. Throughout the year EIB processes have reported that progress against the school development plan priorities are Good.

Schools in Receipt of a Statutory Warning Notice

Abertillery Learning Community (Red)

Standards of performance in Key Stage 4 have been sustained from 2018 performance but are still in need of improvement, whilst at primary level performance has declined. The school is currently subject to a LA warning notice to improve and a programme of intervention. LA appointed school Governors are in place as well as an LA nominated Chair of Governors and Vice Chair. An extensive programme of support is now in place across the setting.

The Local Authority and EAS are working closely with the school and Governing Body to improve the school and recently held an Improvement Conference to jointly plan targeted, bespoke support to enable significant improvement across the setting.

The school was inspected in February 2018 and was placed in the statutory category of requiring significant improvement. A follow up visit was held in July 2019 and Inspectors noted the progress that had been made in respect of many of the recommendations for action from the inspection, although noted that many of the improvements are at an early stage of development and as such confirmed that the school will remain within an Estyn category. Following a successful period of leadership by two established Headteachers the Governing Body have successfully recruited a suitably experienced Headteacher to the permanent position of Headteacher.

Brynmawr Foundation (Amber to Yellow, to Red)

In December 2013 Brynmawr Foundation School was inspected by Estyn and placed in Estyn monitoring; with an adequate judgement for its current performance and prospects for improvement. Recommendations included improving the school's performance and improving quality in teaching and learning. The school was categorised as Amber in 2014 and 2015. The school was issued with a statutory Warning Notice in 2015 to improve standards, particularly in Maths. Support was put in place and Key Stage 4 outcomes improved significantly in 2016. The Warning Notice was subsequently lifted.

Due to the improvement secured, in 2016 the school was classified as Yellow, having made strong progress against Estyn's recommendations and with improved performance at the end of KS4.

However, following an unexpected decline in KS4 performance in 2017, particularly in Maths and the outcome of an EAS review of the effectiveness of leadership and management at the school, the school was categorised as Red in the 2017-18 in the national school's categorisation process. The school continues to be subject to a LA statutory warning notice to improve and after a period of support, intervention is now in place. Governance has significantly improved and the additional Governors that had been appointed have been removed evidencing the cultural growth that is now demonstrable within the Governing Body. The Governing Body have appointed both a new Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher and Assistant Headteacher, who will continue to set the direction of leadership and management across all areas of the school. Performance in Key Stage 3 improved which bodes well for future performance. Performance at Key Stage 4 in the Capped 9 in 2019 also improved. However, understandably at this stage of the schools' improvement journey, the impact of changes at leadership level are still at a very early stage of development and do not yet provide an accurate evaluation of significant and sustained improvement.

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Agenda Item 9

Executive Committee and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: N/A

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: N/A

Committee: **Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee**

Date of meeting: **4th December 2019**

Report Subject: **School Attendance**

Portfolio Holder: **Cllr Joanne Collins, Executive Member for Education**

Report Submitted by: **Lynette Jones, Corporate Director of Education**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
14/11/19	19/11/19	20/11/19			04/12/19	18/12/19		

1. **Purpose of the Report**
 - 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide opportunity for Members to scrutinise attendance data for Blaenau Gwent at Primary and Secondary school level for the academic year 2018-19.
2. **Scope and Background**
 - 2.1 This report will provide Scrutiny Members with key attendance data relating to Blaenau Gwent schools and relevant comparisons to family and regional LAs as well as all Wales data where available.
 - 2.2 The key attendance guidance is the Welsh Government Guidance entitled: 'All Wales Attendance Framework' (November 2012). The document provides standards and guidance for practitioners to ensure greater consistency of practice throughout Wales. It also aims to enable the Education Welfare Service and schools to deliver services that are consistent, accessible and of a high standard. Most importantly it is intended to be a practical resource toolkit for use by staff working within the Education Welfare Service.
 - 2.3 In order to fulfil its statutory duty, in December 2015, Blaenau Gwent revised its School Attendance Policy to make it fully compliant with legislation and incorporate the 'Callio' strategy, which had been introduced the previous academic year.
 - 2.4 The Education Welfare Service works closely with schools and other services to promote the need for regular school attendance and to embed new working practices which support this aim.

2.5 In January 2018, registration audits were undertaken in all Secondary schools and in the River Centre and recommendations made to the schools. The recommendations made were to ensure that registers are marked consistently throughout Blaenau Gwent and to ensure that pupils educated off site were safeguarded appropriately.

2.6 In April 2018 reducing persistent absenteeism was made a corporate priority and a plan was put in place to address this.

3. **Options for Recommendation**

The options for Scrutiny to consider are:

3.1 **Option 1:** Members are asked to scrutinise the information detailed within the report, thereby contributing to the continuous self-evaluation of the service prior to making appropriate recommendations to the Executive Committee.

Option 2: Accept the report as provided.

3.2

4. **Evidence of how does this topic supports the achievement of the Corporate Plan / Statutory Responsibilities / Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan**

4.1 The Education Welfare Service supports the Corporate Plan priorities of Education, specifically to improve pupil outcomes, progress and wellbeing through regular school attendance.

4.2 The Education Welfare Service also contributes to all five areas of the Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan. Promoting good attendance supports improved pupil outcomes, progress and wellbeing of pupils, particularly our most vulnerable, enabling pupils to maximise their potential. Whilst being a statutory responsibility we also know that good attendance is a fundamental pre-requisite of ensuring future local and national prosperity through the provision of an informed and well-educated workforce.

5. **Implications Against Each Option**

5.1 ***Impact on Budget (short and long term impact)***

There are no financial implications for the local authority related to this report.

5.2 ***Risk including Mitigating Actions***

There is an ongoing need to improve school attendance so that pupils are attending school on a regular basis and are able to maximise their potential. Failure to ensure that there is robust monitoring of attendance in schools and of the quality of Council Services to support school improvement carries with it a number of significant risks:

- Undetected and unaddressed decline in school performance and the quality of provision;
- Students do not achieve to acceptable levels;
- Lack of overall improvement in schools' performance; and
- Negative impact on the reputation of the Council.

5.2.1 Similarly, ineffective monitoring of Council Services also poses a range of risks including:

- Reducing standards and quality of provision in schools;
- Poor value for money;
- Ineffective support for schools which hinders their improvement;
- Negative impact on the reputation of the Council.

5.2.2 Attendance in all schools is monitored on a fortnightly basis by Officers working within the Education Welfare Service but based in each cluster. Support, advice and appropriate challenge is provided to all schools with bespoke support provided to schools with lower attendance. Specific areas of focus such as encouraging parents to make medical appointments out of school time, minimising the use of exclusions and working with schools regarding the use of reduced timetables continue alongside thorough data analysis to identify trends and areas of good practice.

5.3 ***Legal***

There are no legal implications for this report.

5.4 ***Human Resources***

There are no direct staffing implications associated with this report.

6. **Supporting Evidence**

6.1 ***Performance Information and Data***

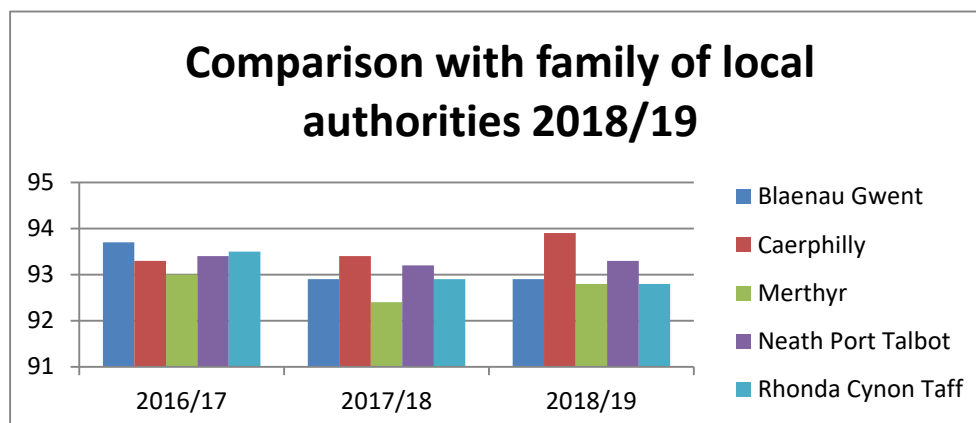
Since reporting to Scrutiny in October 2018 Welsh Government has released the statistical data for primary school attendance in 2017/18, persistent absenteeism in 2017/18 and secondary attendance in 2018/19. The statistical data for primary school attendance in 2018/19 will be released in January 2020 and persistent absenteeism in March 2020.

6.1.1 **Blaenau Gwent Secondary attendance over the last three years**

	Actual	Family	Wales
2016/17	93.7%	93.4%	94.1%
2017/18	92.9%	93.0%	93.8%
2018/19	92.9%	93.1%	93.8%

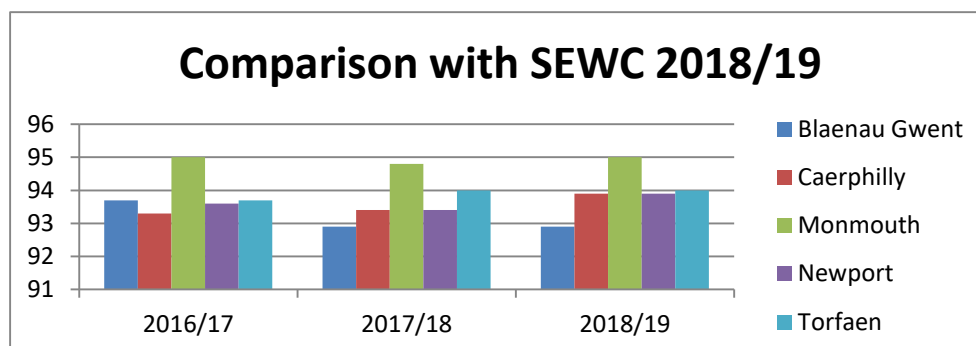
Secondary attendance in 2018/19 ranked 20th out of 21 in Wales. This is unchanged from 2017/18 when it also ranked 20th out of 21 in Wales.

The table below shows how Blaenau Gwent compares with its family of local authorities by percentage attendance:



In our family of local authorities, in 2016/17, Blaenau Gwent was ranked 1st out of 5 (where 1st is the highest performing LA). In 2017/18 we were joint second and in 2018/19 3rd out of 5 for Secondary school attendance.

The table below shows how Blaenau Gwent compares with the South East Wales Consortia by percentage attendance:



When compared to other authorities within SEWC we were ranked 5th out of 5 for Secondary school attendance which is the same as the previous year.

6.1.2 **Blaenau Gwent primary attendance over the last three years**

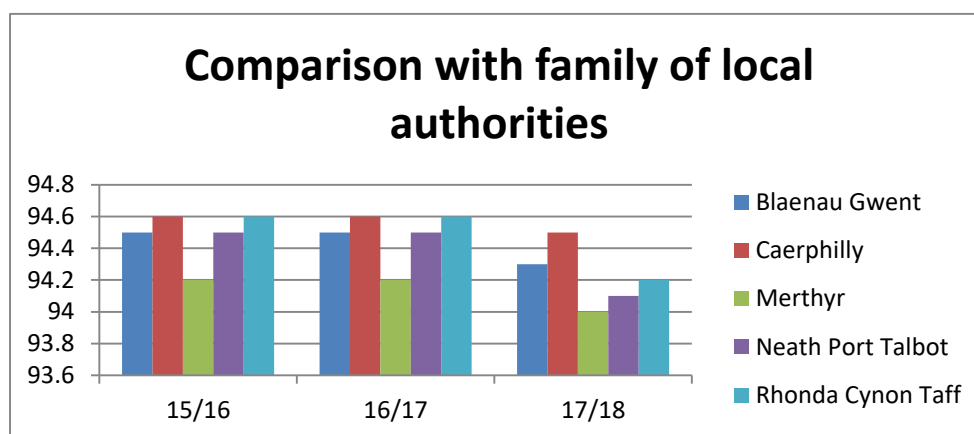
	Actual	Family	Wales
2015/16	94.5%	94.5%	94.9%
2016/17	94.5%	94.5%	94.9%
2017/18	94.3%	94.2%	94.5%

Whilst there has been a decline in attendance there has not been as great a decline as that across the rest of Wales.

Blaenau Gwent's primary attendance compared to the other 21 Welsh local authorities.

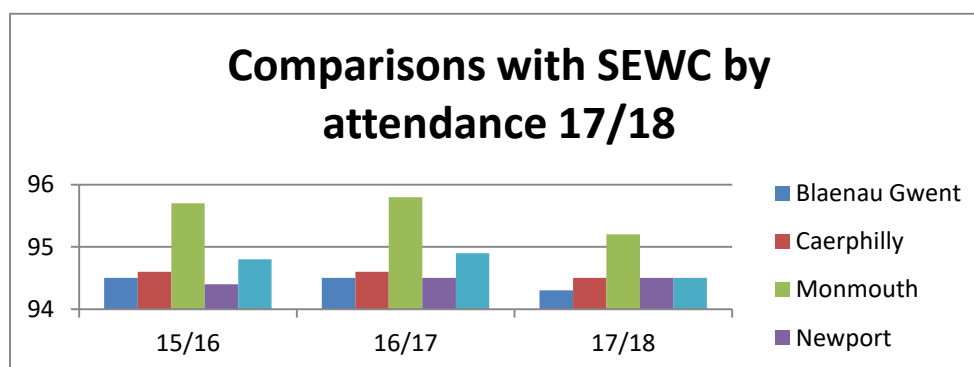
2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
Joint 18th	Joint 20th	Joint 19th	18th

The table below shows how Blaenau Gwent compares with its family of local authorities by percentage attendance.



In 2015/16, Blaenau Gwent was ranked joint 3rd out of 5. In 2017/18, Blaenau Gwent was ranked joint 2nd out of 5 for primary school attendance.

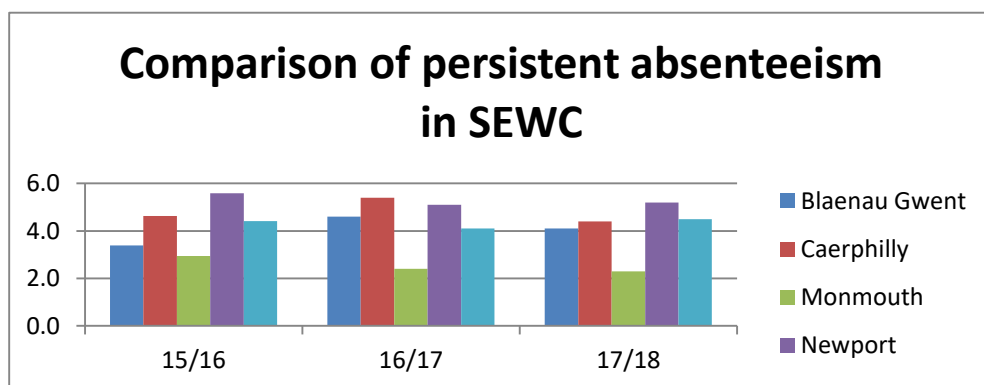
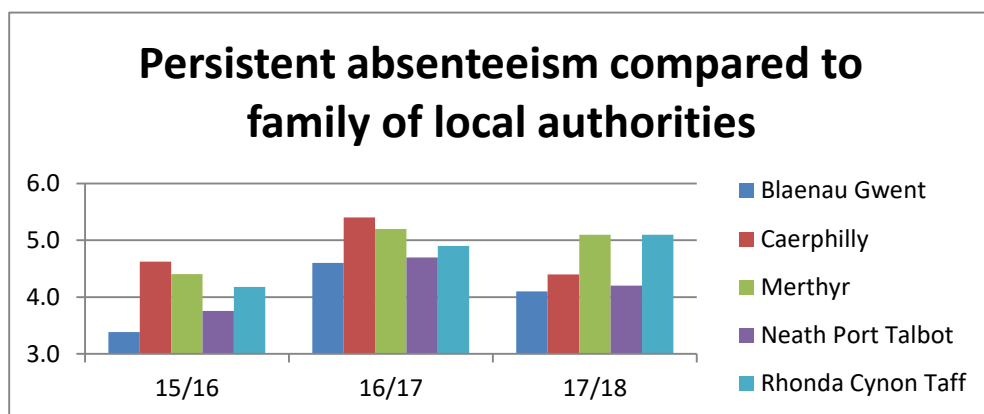
The table below shows how Blaenau Gwent compares with the South East Wales Consortia by percentage attendance.



When compared to other authorities within SEWC we were ranked 5th out of 5 for primary school attendance compared to joint 4th out of 5 the previous year.

6.1.3 **Blaenau Gwent's secondary persistent absentees over the last three years.**

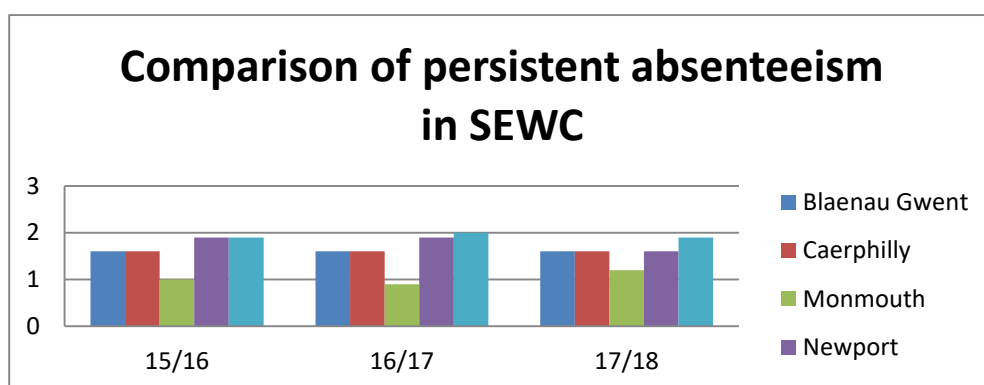
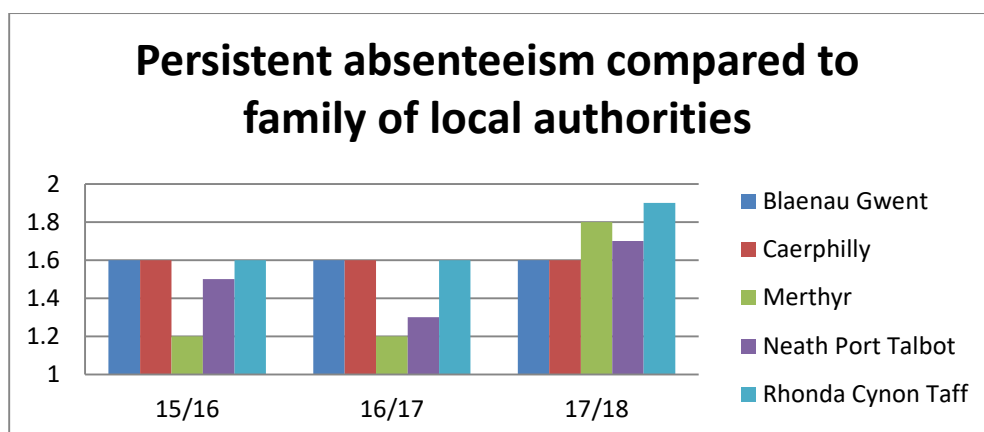
	Actual	Wales
2015/16	3.4%	3.9%
2016/17	4.6%	4.0%
2017/18	4.1%	4.1%



At the end of 2017/18 the percentage of Secondary pupils who were persistent absentees was 4.1% compared to 4.6% the previous year. This makes BG 1st in our family of local authorities, 2nd in SEWC and in line with the Welsh Average of 4.1%.

6.1.4 **Blaenau Gwent's primary persistent absentees over the last three years**

	Actual	Wales
2015/16	1.6%	1.5%
2016/17	1.6%	1.5%
2017/18	1.6%	1.7%



At the end of 2017/18 the percentage of primary pupils who were persistent absentees was 1.6% compared to 1.6% last year. This makes BG joint 1st compared to our family of local authorities and joint 2nd in the SEWC and above the Welsh Average of 1.5%.

6.2 ***Expected outcome for the public***

Improved attendance will result in pupils being able to access an education which will support them to achieve better outcomes reducing the future financial implications on other services.

6.3 ***Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation)***

Attendance data is regularly shared with schools as well as forming a part of the evidence base for other teams' work within the Directorate, the EAS and other Services. A members briefing on the work of the Education Welfare Service is planned for the spring term.

6.4 ***Thinking for the long term (forward planning)***

A focus on improving school attendance aligns to the Directorate and Corporate Plan. Improved attendance levels will have a positive impact on the life chances of children and young people, better preparing them for their future beyond their time in school.

6.5 ***Preventative focus***

Good attendance reduces the likelihood of a pupil becoming NEET, increases the likelihood of a pupil achieving well and supports pupils to reach their potential. The work of the Education Welfare Service is preventative in nature

supporting pupils to engage in education and supporting schools in their management of attendance.

6.6 Collaboration / partnership working

Attendance has a regional profile and supports the work of the EAS. Strong links exist with neighbouring LAs as well as within Blaenau Gwent services such as with Children's Services. Working in partnership with other services is fundamental to providing a co-ordinated, effective service to children and young people as well as schools.

6.7 Integration(across service areas)

A focus on attendance impacts upon key objectives within Education as well as in work with Children's Services.

6.8 EqlA(screening and identifying if full impact assessment is needed)

There are no adverse impacts in relation to the data in this report.

7. Monitoring Arrangements

7.1 Attendance is monitored fortnightly and data shared with schools, on a half termly basis to the Departmental Management Team meeting as well as to the Inclusion team Monitoring, Evaluation and Review group and Wider Group with the EAS. Annual FADEs for primary and secondary attendance are prepared and data is provided to Welsh Government.

8. Background Documents /Electronic Links

The All Wales Attendance Framework is available from the Welsh Government: <https://beta.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-03/all-wales-attendance-framework.pdf>

List of Acronyms

EAS: Education Achievement Service
NEET: Young people not in education, employment or training
SEWC: South East Wales Consortium

Agenda Item 10

Executive Committee and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: N/A

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: N/A

Committee: **Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee**
Date of meeting: **4th December 2019**
Report Subject: **Forward Work Programme – 15th January 2020**
Portfolio Holder: **Cllr Joanne Collins, Executive Member Education**
Report Submitted by: **Cllr Haydn Trollope, Chair of the Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
x	x	20.11.19			04.12.19			

1. **Purpose of the Report**
 - 1.1 To present to Members the Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme for the Meeting on 15th January 2020, for discussion and to update the Committee on any changes.
2. **Scope and Background**
 - 2.1 The Scrutiny Work Programmes are key aspects of the Council's planning and governance arrangements and support the requirements of the Constitution.
 - 2.2 The topics set out in the Forward Work Programme link to the strategic work of the Council as identified by the Council's Corporate Plan, corporate documents and supporting business plans. Effective work programmes are essential to ensure that the work of scrutiny makes a positive impact upon the Council's delivery of services.
 - 2.3 The Committee's Forward Work Programme was agreed in June / July 2019, recognising the fluidity of the document to enable the Committee to respond to urgent and emerging issues, and included timescales when reports will be considered by the Committee. The work programme is managed and implemented by the Scrutiny and Democratic Officer under the direction of the Chair and Committee.
 - 2.4 The forward work programme for the forthcoming meeting will be presented to Committee on a 6 weekly cycle in order that Members can consider the programme of work; request information is included within the reports, as appropriate and / or make amendments to the work programme.
3. **Options for Recommendation**
 - 3.1 **Option 1:** The Scrutiny Committee consider the Forward Work Programme for the meeting on 15th January 2020, and :
 - Make any amendments to the topics scheduled for the meetings;

- Suggest any additional invitees that the committee requires to fully consider the reports; and
- Request any additional information to be included with regards to the topics to be discussed.

3.2

Option 2: The Scrutiny Committee agree the Forward Programme for the meeting on 15th January 2020, as presented.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

- Appendix 1 – Forward Work Programme –Meeting on 15th January 2020

Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee
Forward Work Programme

Scrutiny Meeting Date: Wednesday 15th January 2020

Scrutiny Deadline to receive reports: Friday 20th December 2019

Report Title	Lead Officer	Purpose of Report	Method/ Expert Witness/Exec Member	Latest CLT Sign Off Date	Executive Meeting Date	Council Meeting Date
Penycwm Capacity Consultation Timeline	Claire Gardner	Service Delivery Penycwm School capacity review.	Agenda Item	17.12.19	29.01.20	N/A
Looked After Children Provision and Progress	Catherine Edwards / Gavin Metherringham	Monitoring To consider the information provided in the report and identify opportunities to further improve.	Agenda Item	17.12.19	29.01.20	N/A
Pupil Exclusions	Gavin Metherringham / Lisa Adams	Monitoring Members are asked to review the data and associated outcomes, whilst recognising how this monitoring can inform key strategic priorities.	Agenda Item	17.12.19	29.01.20	N/A
Attendance policy	Lynette Jones	Policy Development To consider and offer views on the attendance policy.	Agenda Item	17.12.19	29.01.20	N/A
Blaenau Gwent Education Accessibility Strategy and Action Plan	Lynn Phillips / Claire Gardner	Policy Development Members to provide their views and comments on the strategy and associated action plan, and propose any relevant changes, additions etc. prior to Executive Committee approval.	Agenda Item	17.12.19	29.01.20	N/A
21 st Century Schools Programme Bands A / B Gateway Review Outcome	Lynn Phillips / Claire Gardner	Monitoring To provide Members with an update on the closure of the 21 st Century Schools Band A programme and the progress made on the Band B programme.	Agenda Item	17.12.19	29.01.20	N/A
Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP)	Lynn Phillips / Claire Gardner	Monitoring	Agenda Item	17.12.19	29.01.20	N/A

Report Title	Lead Officer	Purpose of Report	Method/ Expert Witness/Exec Member	Latest CLT Sign Off Date	Executive Meeting Date	Council Meeting Date
<i>Please note the report and Plan will need to be translated to Welsh by the Directorate.</i>		Members to review performance annually, and monitor outcomes associated with the WESP in line with the vision, goals, targets and objectives; whilst ensuring that this process informs key strategic priorities from a Welsh-medium perspective.				
Departmental Staff Sickness Absence Quarterly Monitoring	Lynette Jones	Monitoring To undertake a quarterly review of staff sickness absence.	Agenda Item	17.12.19	N/A	N/A