DRAFT AGENDA

ID	1810
Committee	Pwllgor Craffu Addysg a Dysgu
Date	26/02/2020
Attendees	Gemma Wasley (Swyddog)
	Cynghorwyr Haydn Trollope (Cadeirydd)
	Cynghorwyr Jonathan Millard (Is-gadeirydd)
	Cynghorwyr Derrick Bevan (Aelod Pwyllgor)
	Cynghorwyr Martin Cook (Aelod Pwyllgor)
	Cynghorwyr Gareth A. Davies (Aelod Pwyllgor)
	Cynghorwyr D. Lyn Elias (Aelod Pwyllgor)
	Cynghorwyr Wayne Hodgins (Aelod Pwyllgor)
	Cynghorwyr Julie Holt (Aelod Pwyllgor)
	Cynghorwyr Clive Meredith (Aelod Pwyllgor)
	Cynghorwyr John C. Morgan (Aelod Pwyllgor)
	Cynghorwyr Keith Pritchard (Aelod Pwyllgor)
	Cynghorwyr Keri Rowson (Aelod Pwyllgor)
	Cynghorwyr Tommy Smith (Aelod Pwyllgor)
	Cynghorwyr Bob Summers (Aelod Pwyllgor)
	Cynghorwyr Stephen Thomas (Aelod Pwyllgor)
	Mr. Tim Baxter (Co-Optee)
	Mr. Alun Williams (Co-Optee)
	Lynette Jones (Swyddog)
	Lynn Phillips (Swyddog)
	Gavin Metheringham (Swyddog)
	Michelle Jones (Swyddog)
	Liz Thomas (Swyddog)
	Gwasanaethau Democrataidd (Notify)
	Leeann Turner (Secretary)
	Pob Cynghorydd (Notify)
	Louise Bishop (Notify)
	Sean Scannell (Notify)
	Anne-Louise Clark (Notify)
	Richard Crook (Notify)
	Rhian Hayden (Notify)
	Damien McCann (Notify)
	Michelle Morris (Notify)
	Steve Berry (Swyddog)
	Andrea Jones (Swyddog)
	Cynghorwyr Joanne Collins (Notify)

Item ID	1358
Item Title	Cyfieithu ar y Pryd
Summary	Mae croeso i chi ddefnyddio'r Gymraeg yn y cyfarfod, mae

	angen o leiaf 3 diwrnod gwaith o hysbysiad ymlaen llaw os dymunwch wneud hynny. Darperir gwasanaeth cyfieithu ar y pryd os gwneir cais.

Item ID	1359
Item Title	Ymddiheuriadau
Summary	Derbyn ymddiheuriadau.

Item ID	1360
Item Title	Datganiadau Buddiant a Goddefebau
Summary	Ystyried unrhyw ddatganiadau buddiant a goddefebau a wnaed.

Item ID	1361
Item Title	Pwllgor Craffu Addysg a Dysgu
Summary	Derbyn cofnodion y cyfarfod o'r Pwyllgor Craffu Addysg a Dysgu a gynhaliwyd ar 15 Ionawr 2020. (Dylid nodi y cyflwynir y cofnodion er pwyntiau cywirdeb yn unig).

Item ID	2175
Item Title	Dalen Weithredu - 15 Ionawr 2020
Summary	Derbyn y ddalen weithredu.

Item ID	2176
Item Title	Cynllun Busnes EAS ac Atodiad Awdurdodau Lleol 2020-2021
Summary	Ystyried adroddiad Cyfarwyddwr Corfforaethol Addysg..

Item ID	2177
Item Title	Drafft Ganfyddiadau Hunanarfarnu Gwasanaethau Addysg Blaenau Gwent
Summary	Ystyried adroddiad Cyfarwyddwr Corfforaethol Addysg..

Item ID	2178

Item Title	Categoreiddio Ysgolion
Summary	Ystyried adroddiad y Cyfarwyddwr Corfforaethol Addysg

Item ID	2179
Item Title	Perfformiad Ysgol Terfynol Cyfnod Allweddol 4 2019
Summary	Ystyried adroddiad y Cyfarwyddwr Corfforaethol Addysg.

Item ID	2180
Item Title	Ysbrydoli i Gyflawni a Pherfformiad Gwaith - Ionawr-Rhagfyr 2019
Summary	Ystyried adroddiad y Rheolwr Gwasanaeth Ieuenctid.

Item ID	2181
Item Title	Polisi Derbyn Addysg Blaenau Gwent ar gyfer Addysg Feithrin ac Addysg Statudol 2021/22
Summary	Ystyried adroddiad y Rheolwr Trawsnewid Addysg.

Item ID	2182
Item Title	Blaenraglen Gwaith - 29 Ebrill 2020
Summary	Derbyn yr adroddiad.

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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 – 15TH JANUARY, 2020**

REPORT OF: **DEMOCRATIC SUPPORT OFFICER**

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR H. TROLLOPE (CHAIR)

Councillors: J. Millard
                        D. Bevan
                        L. Elias
                        W. Hodgins
                        J. Holt
                        J.C. Morgan
                        K. Pritchard
                        K. Rowson
                        T. Smith
                        S. Thomas

Co-opted Member
A. Williams

AND: Corporate Director of Education
                 Head of Education Transformation
                 Service Manager for Inclusion
                 Press & Publicity Officer
                 Scrutiny & Democratic Officer / Advisor

ITEM	SUBJECT	ACTION
No. 1	**SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION** It was noted that no requests had been received for the simultaneous translation service.	

No. 2	**APOLOGIES**	
	Apologies for absence were received from Councillors M. Cook, G.A. Davies, C. Meredith and B. Summers.	
	Co-opted Member T. Baxter	
No. 3	**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS**	
	There were no declarations of interest or dispensations reported.	
No. 4	**EDUCATION & LEARNING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**	
	The Minutes of the Education & Learning Scrutiny Committee Meeting held on 4th December, 2019 were submitted.	
	The Committee AGREED that the Minutes be accepted as a true record of proceedings.	
No. 5	**ACTION SHEET – 4TH DECEMBER, 2019**	
	The action sheet arising from the meeting of the Education & Learning Scrutiny Committee held on 4th December, 2019 was submitted, whereupon:-	
	Item 8 – Improving Schools Programme	
	A Member raised concern that the action had been marked as completed when no response had been received. The Scrutiny & Democratic Officer advised Members that the Head of Democratic Services had spoken with the Executive Member for Education and it was advised that the Executive Member would contact the Leader of the Labour Group directly.	
	The Leader of the Labour Group confirmed he had not had any contact with the Executive Member for Education to date. A Member commented that all Education & Learning Scrutiny Committee Members should receive a response.	
	The Leader of the Labour Group agreed with his colleague's view that all Education & Learning Scrutiny Committee	

	Members should have all the information and suggested that the Chair write to the Executive Member for Education to avoid this situation arising in future.

The Chair agreed with this course of action.

The Committee AGREED, subject to the foregoing, that the action sheet be noted. | |
| No. 6 | **EXECUTIVE DECISION SHEET FOR THE EDUCATION & LEARNING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Consideration was given to the Executive Decision Sheet.

The Committee AGREED that the Executive Decision Sheet be noted. | |
| | **ORDER OF AGENDA**

It was agreed that Item 8 – 21st Century Schools Programme – Gateway Review be considered at this juncture. | |
| No. 8 | **21ST CENTURY SCHOOLS PROGRAMME – GATEWAY REVIEW**

Consideration was given to the report of the Head of Education Transformation which was presented to provide an opportunity for Members to scrutinise the 21st Century Schools programme, particularly the outcome of the Welsh Government facilitated Gateway Review (September 2019).

The Head of Education Transformation spoke to the report and highlighted the main points contained therein.

A Member enquired regarding recouping the costs of the sewer diversion and the highway infrastructure. The Head of Education Transformation said that the sewer diversion had cost £1.3m and the Welsh Government had contributed £650,000 towards the costs. In relation to the highway infrastructure a Welsh Government capital maintenance grant of circa £400,000 had been used to ease revenue cost pressures and confirmed that a total of £800,000 had also been put back into the Council's capital programme from Welsh Government bids. | |

	A Member requested clarity in relation to the Welsh Medium School. The Head of Education Transformation said that discussions had been held regarding revenue implications and the Welsh Government had confirmed that no further revenue support would be available at this time. A presentation would be presented to an informal Executive/CLT in February and following the discussions a report would be presented to this Committee to inform Scrutiny Members of the situation.
	The Member commented that Welsh education was a priority for the Authority and this issue needed to be progressed. The Head of Education Transformation said the Welsh Government had confirmed that £6m capital for this project could be carried forward. The Band B priority projects were secondary school remodelling, Bro Helyg remodelling as well as a replacement primary school in the Ebbw Fawr valley. A business case was soon to be submitted to the Welsh Government and will include further refurbishment works in other primary schools if resources allow. Remodelling of schools impacted on pupil attendance and behaviour and work with the Planning Department regarding S106 agreements ensured that future capacity levels in schools was linked to residential developments in the area.
	The Committee AGREED to recommend that the report be accepted and endorse Option 2, namely that the report be accepted as provided.
	Councillor Jonathan Millard left the meeting at this juncture.
No. 7	**PUPIL EXCLUSIONS**
	Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Director of Education which was presented to provide opportunity for Members to scrutinise exclusion data for Blaenau Gwent at Primary and Secondary schools for the academic year 2018/19.
	The Service Manager for Inclusion spoke to the report and highlighted the main points contained therein.

	Councillors John C. Morgan and Steve Thomas left the meeting at this juncture.	
	In response to a Member's question regarding the reason for exclusions under the 'Other' category, the Service Inclusion Manager felt that there should not be an 'Other' category as it showed no clarity for the reason for exclusion.	
	A Member enquired if there was a link between the decrease in exclusions and the examination results and referred to the comparative data with Blaenau Gwent rated 13 out of 22 for 5 days or less exclusions. The Director of Education said that figures compare favourably particularly in KS4. The Service Manager for Inclusion said that persistent disruptive behaviour was one of the main reasons for exclusions and there was an ongoing need to minimise exclusions. Regarding managed moves, managed pupil moves was an agreement between two schools and the parent/carers to give a pupil a fresh start and was based on Welsh Government guidance. The River Centre provided a full curriculum and specialist placements were closely managed. The school also provided home tuition to some pupils with special medical needs.	
	A Member requested comparison data for previous years in relation to paragraph 6.1.7 exclusions by month and paragraph 6.1.8 exclusions by year group as a percentage. The Service Manager for Inclusion agreed to provide the comparison data to Members.	Service Manager Inclusion
	A Member referred to the low number of exclusions in primary schools and what support was available. The Service Manager for Inclusion said that in the first instance support would be provided through the Education Psychologist allocated to the school. A Pastoral Support Plan could be used which supports an action focused multi-agency approach. Should it be necessary the school could consider the appropriateness of requesting consideration of change of placement. He added that Primary schools had been successful at keeping exclusions low.	
	The Committee AGREED to recommend, subject to the foregoing, that the report be accepted and endorse Option 1; namely that Members scrutinise the information detailed within the report, thereby contributing to continuous self-	

	evaluation prior to making appropriate recommendations to the Executive Committee.	
No. 9	**EDUCATION WORKFORCE SICKNESS ABSENCE PERFORMANCE** Consideration was given to the report of the Head of Organisational Development and the Corporate Director of Education which was presented to provide Members of specific scrutiny committees the opportunity to scrutinise and challenge relevant directorate sickness absence performance and the proposed actions for improvement. The Director of Education spoke to the report and highlighted the main points contained therein. A Member enquired if holding annual workforce meetings was adequate. The Director said that workforce meetings were kept under review and sickness performance data was also discussed at Strategic Headteachers meetings. Organisational Development worked closely with Headteachers and were guided by Occupational Health and GP advice. A Member welcomed the report being presented to each Scrutiny Committee but had concerns that the Sickness Absence Policy was not being adhered to, he was aware that some Managers were not using the iTrent system. He also felt that individual schools should not be identified in the report. The Director would take this point back to colleagues. A Member referred to sickness absence within the Authority being a key risk and enquired if high levels of sickness had an impact on school performance and enquired regarding iTrent sickness triggers. The Director said this did provide challenges and could be linked to well-being. A successful iTrent pilot had been carried out and 39% of return to work interviews had been recorded on the system, however, further improvement needed to be undertaken. The Director informed Members that some school based support staff such as catering and cleaning staff were employed by a different Directorate. As individual Workforce Sickness Absence Performance reports would	

	be considered at each Scrutiny Committee Members comments would be considered for future reporting. A Member commented that clarity was needed regarding which directorate employed which staff and pointed out that special circumstances may need to be considered when dealing with special schools. Reference was made to the estimated sickness absence costs. The Director said that costs to the Authority for the six month period were estimated at £398,718 and did not include supply costs i.e. on-costs, cover arrangements etc. and this would need to be looked at in detail. The Committee AGREED to recommend that the report be accepted and endorse Option 1, namely that having scrutinised the absence performance information and proposed arrangements to improve attendance rates within the Education Directorate identify any further areas for improvement in order to drive forward performance improvement. Councillor Jonathan Millard re-joined the meeting at this juncture.	Director of Education
No. 10	**FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME – 26TH FEBRUARY, 2020** Consideration was given to the report of the Chair of the Education & Learning Scrutiny Committee. A Member requested that a six month update on projected results for all schools be added to the forward work programme. The Director of Education would lodge a request with the EAS for the report to be prepared and presented to a future meeting. The Committee AGREED that the report be accepted and endorse Option 2; namely that the Education & Learning Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme for the meeting on 26th February, 2020 be approved.	

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**Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council**

Action Sheet

Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee – 15th January 2020

| Item	Action to be Taken	By Whom	Action Taken
5	**Action Sheet – 4th December 2019** Members noted that the action: "**Improving Schools Programme Abertillery Learning Community:** Members requested for the Executive Member Education to provide a response regarding correspondence about a meeting relating to a Blaenau Gwent School." – had not been completed and requested that the Executive Member respond as requested.	Executive Member for Education	Action completed.
7	**Pupil Exclusions** Members referred to paragraphs 6.1.7 'Exclusions by Month' and 6.1.8 'Exclusions by Year Group' and requested that comparative data from the previous year is provided.	Gavin Metheringham, Service Inclusion Manager	Information attached.
9	**Education Workforce Sickness Absence Performance** Members requested further information to be included in the report.	Scrutiny Members / Performance and Democratic Team	Working Group of scrutiny members, with support from the Performance and Democratic Team, to be arranged to discuss what information Members would like to see in the report moving forward.

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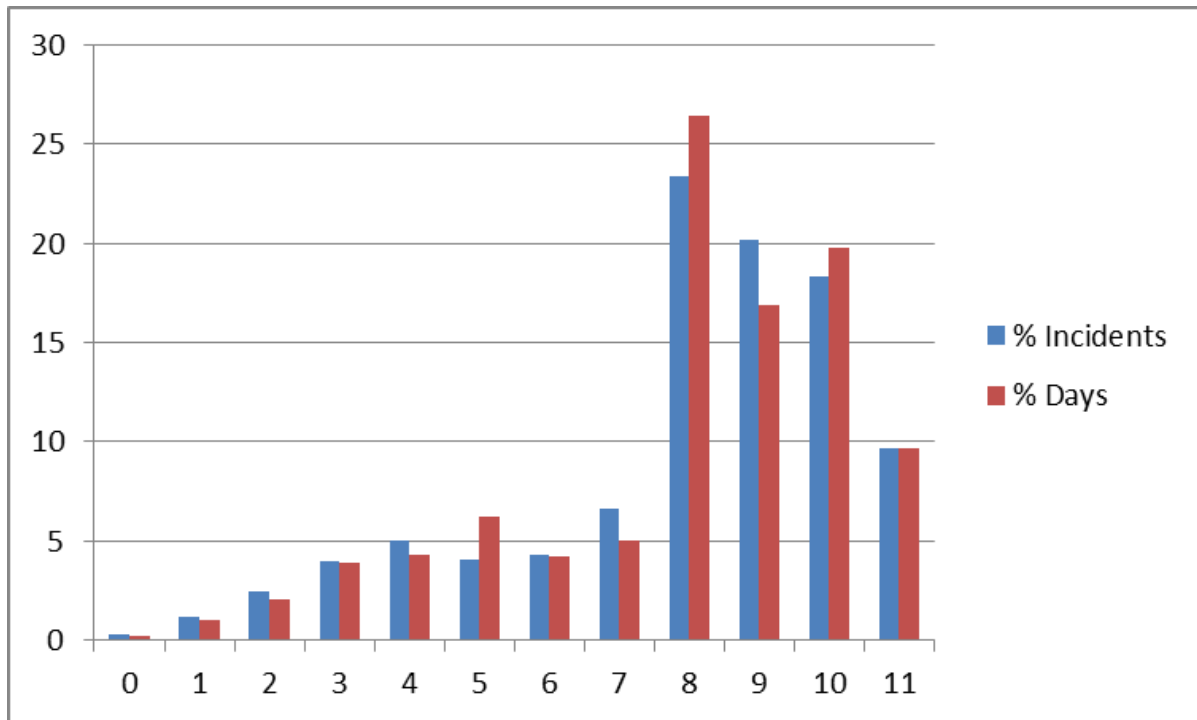**Exclusions By Month – Last Two Years**
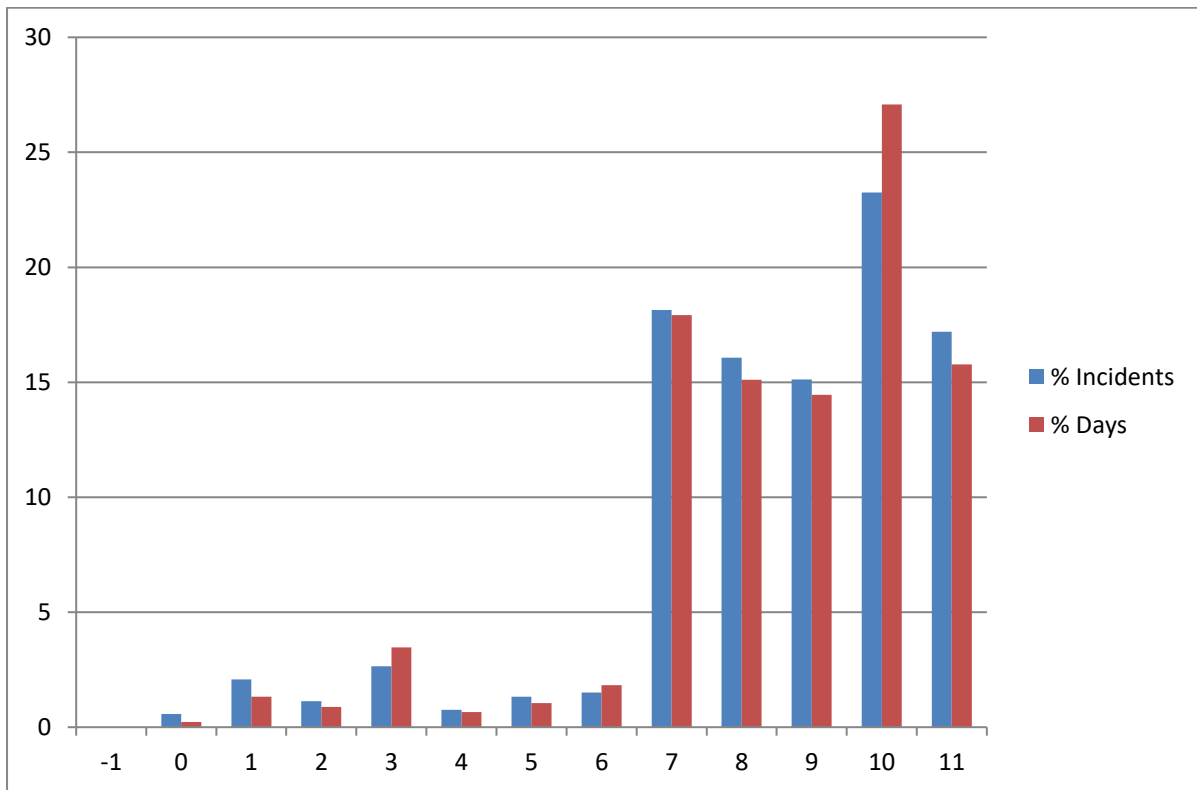
2018/19
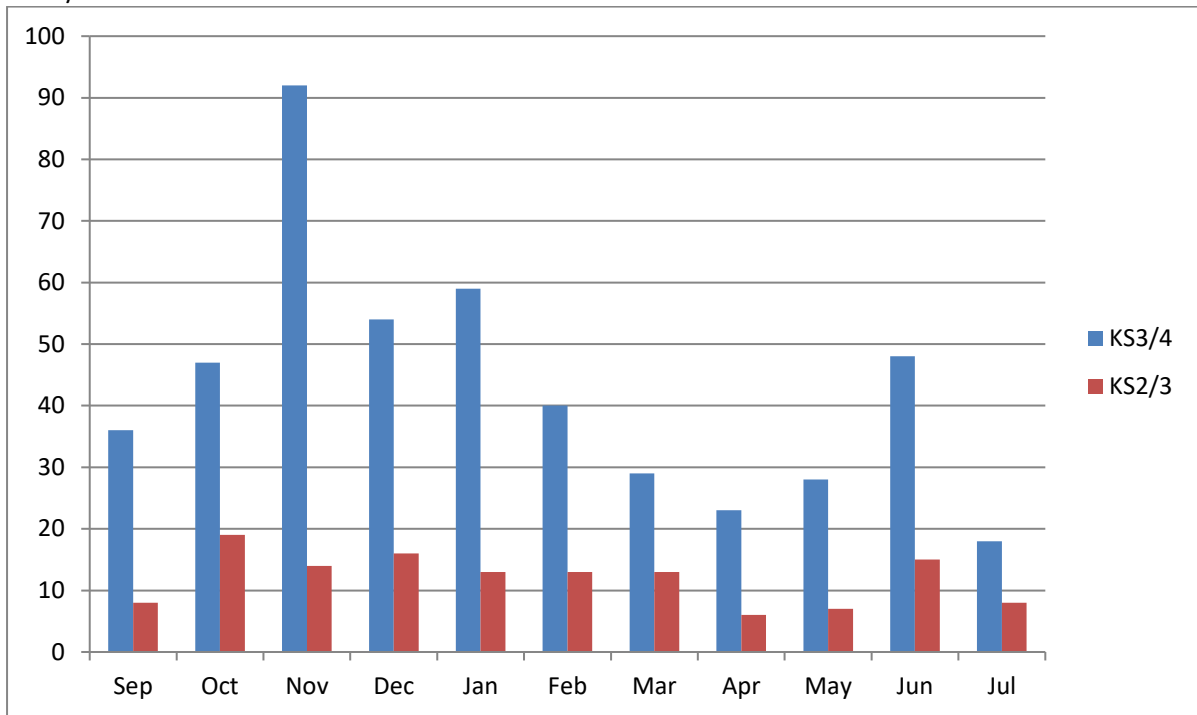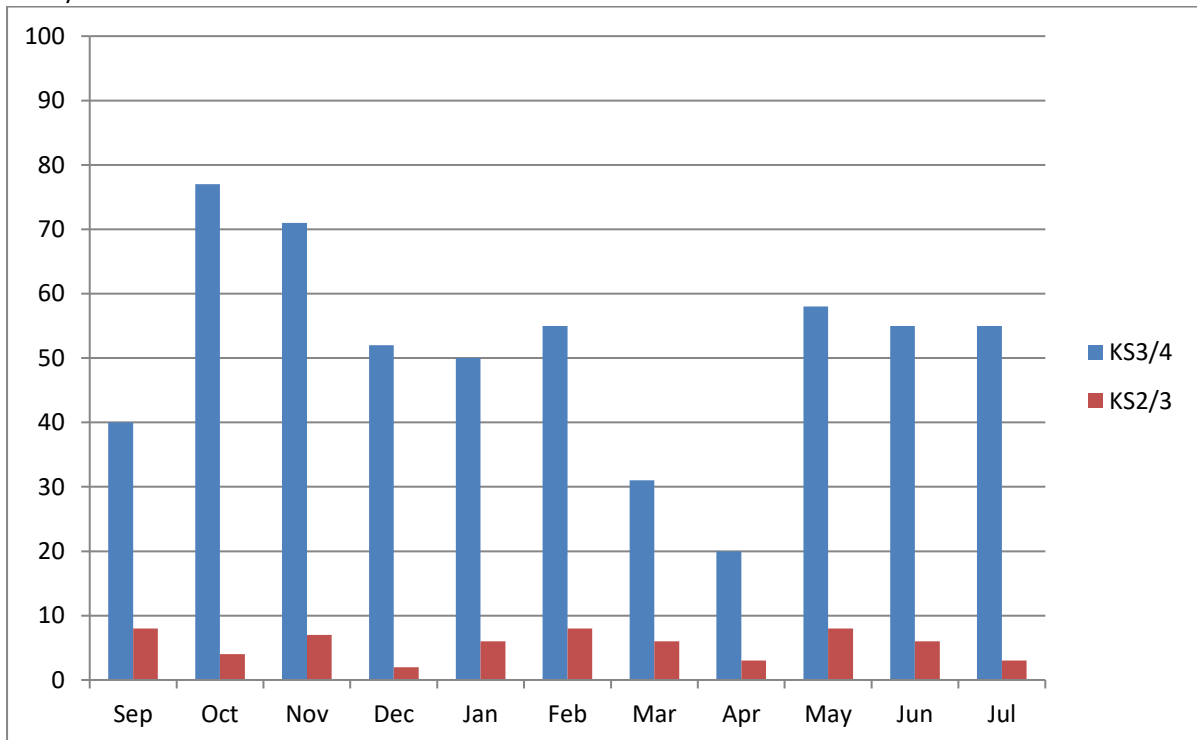
2017/18

Exclusions By Year Group – Last Two Years

2018/19

2017/18

Page 16

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:	**26th February 2020**
Report Subject:	**EAS Business Plan and Local Authority Annex 2020-2021 (Draft for consultation)**
Portfolio Holder:	**Cllr J. 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)
√	11.02.20	14.02.20			26.02.20	11.03.20		

1. **Purpose of the Report**

   This report asks for members to consider the full contents of the draft EAS Business Plan 2020-2021 and the Local Authority Annex 2020-2021, as part of the regional consultation process. Through this activity Members will ensure that the plan enables appropriate support for schools to improve and that all pupils reach their potential across Blaenau Gwent.

2. **Scope and Background**

2.1 The EAS is a not for profit limited company that is owned by the five LAs in South East Wales. The EAS delivers, through an agreed Business Plan, a wide range of school improvement services to all schools (all key stages, including all through schools and special schools), pupil referral units and funded non-maintained nursery settings on behalf of each LA. This plan supports the role LAs have in delivering their statutory function, addressing their individual improvement priorities and promoting improved pupil outcomes.

2.2 The EAS is required to submit an annual overarching regional Business Plan with accompanying annexes for each of the five Local Authorities (LAs). This Business Plan (2020–2021) outlines the programme of work that is required to continue to improve outcomes and provision for children and young people in settings and schools in South East Wales. The plan focuses on the need to raise aspiration and accelerate improvement in pupil outcomes, improve the quality of teaching and leadership, support schools to realise the national reform agenda and to continue to build upon the self-improving system within and across schools and settings.

2.3 Priorities for the Business Plan have been derived from Local Authority Strategic Plans, the progress that has been made towards the previous Business Plan, areas that have been identified as requiring improvements through internal self-evaluation processes and external research.

2.4   Members are asked to take the opportunity to comment on the contents of the Business Plan as part of the consultation process and provide a written response as appropriate.

2.5   Members are asked to consider the main strengths and areas for development within Blaenau Gwent, as detailed in LA Annex and to consider how LA services can be aligned to meet the ambitious targets within the Business Plan, therefore ensuring all pupils meet their full potential.

3.   **Options for Recommendation**

3.1   This report has been approved by Education DMT, CLT for submission to Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee.

Option 1:
For members to accept the report and the Business Plan.

Option 2:
For members to consider the plan and offer further comment for consideration by the EAS; this can be done via a written response back to the EAS.

Written feedback on the draft Business Plan should be provided to the Managing Director of the EAS following the scrutiny meeting. This feedback will inform the final version of the Business Plan.

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

4.1   **Statutory Responsibility**

4.1.1   The EAS is required to submit an annual overarching regional Business Plan with accompanying annexes for each of the five Local Authorities (LAs).

4.1.2   **Corporate Plan**
Education Aims
- Improve pupil outcomes, progress and wellbeing, particularly for our more able and our most vulnerable learners.
- Improve the quality of our education services and our school buildings to help our learners achieve great outcomes.
- Continue to support our school leaders to help our pupils achieve their ambitions.

We will expect:
- Our Vision for Education to continue to support the work of schools and school leaders, to achieve great outcomes for all our children and young people.
- Our partners to support our joint work to achieve ambitious outcomes, for all children and young people
- Our parents and carers to continue to support their children and the Council, to help all our children and young people achieve their ambitions.

Measurements/targets:

- Pupil outcomes and progress for our 7, 11, 14 and 16 year old pupils in English and Maths, particularly our more able and our most vulnerable learners.
- School inspection and school categorisation judgements.
- Progress through our investment programmes.
- Positive views from parents/carers and pupils about our schools.
- The proportion of pupils who arrive late for school or who are persistently absent.
- Post – 16 learner outcomes.

4.1.3 **Blaenau Gwent Wellbeing Plan**

The content of the EAS business plan is clearly aligned to the objectives in the Blaenau Gwent Wellbeing Plan which aims for everyone to have the best start in life. Through this plan it seeks to ensure that the education provision is appropriate and able to meet the needs of children and young people so that their progress is as good as it ought to be.

5. **Implications Against Each Option**

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

5.1.1 The EAS is subject to a robust governance model that is underpinned by a Collaboration and Members agreement (CAMA) and Articles of Association. Ensuring that the EAS provides value for money is of utmost importance. As recipients of public funding it is important that budgets are allocated wisely. We will endeavour to deliver even better value for money through achieving financial balance and delivering services within the constraints of our budget, making further efficiency savings wherever possible and ensuring delegation rates to schools are maximised.

5.1.2 The EAS is funded on an annual basis from three sources: Local authority core contributions, regional school improvement grants and a service level agreement for governor support services. A spending plan accompanies the Business Plan which is intrinsically linked to all actions contained within it. A detailed overview of the regional distribution of all grants is available for all schools to view and compare allocations and rates of delegation through the regional grant monitoring tool.

5.1.3 Delegation rates to schools has increased to 94% whilst the EAS staff profile by 48% since 2012. An element of the EAS was originally set, a trading income target of £1.25m from schools to enable balanced year end account position. This has now been totally eradicated from income dependency and schools are no longer charged for any training or services provided in line with the business plan.

5.1.4 Local authority funding for consortium working is underpinned by the National Model for Regional Working, published by the Welsh Government in 2014. The model recommended a core funding allocation of £3.6m for the EAS. The current LA core contribution is based on these figures less year on year efficiencies of £1.17m since 2012 agreed in collaboration with the 5 local authorities. The local

authorities' indicative figures for 2020/21 are as follows: Blaenau-Gwent LA's contribution for 2020/21 is £358,985, compared with £364,452 in 2019/20.

5.1.5   The Collaboration and Members Agreement (CAMA) details the procedure that needs to be followed for all school improvement grants received into the region. All grants are approved by local authority Chief Education Officers / Directors of Education with a follow up ratification from JEG members. Historically there were two main grants received into the region from Welsh Government. Pupil Development Grant (PDG) and Education Improvement Grant (EIG). The latter has been re-designated as the Regional Consortia School Improvement Grant (RCSIG) and includes specific initiatives to support the objectives within the 'Education in Wales: Our National Mission'. In addition to the two main grants, two small regional indicative grants were received for SEREN learners.

5.2   *Risks*

5.2.1   Blaenau Gwent LA Risks

- There is Insufficient progress is made in accelerating early language acquisition skills between the ages of 3 to 7.
- Increases in value-added progress in English and maths between key stage 2 and 3 and particularly between key stage 3 and key stage 4, do not have a sufficient impact on key stage 4 outcomes.
- Attainment in English and maths in key stage 3 at Level 6+, remains too low
- Attainment in English and maths (maths in particular) at level 2 in key stage 4 remains too low.
- Value-added progress for our most vulnerable learners, particularly between key stage 3 and key stage 4, does not improve sufficiently

These risks are mitigated through the identification of priorities as seen in the priority areas above and within the detailed within the EAS Business Plan, Blaenau Gwent LA Plans and the Education Strategic Plan.

5.2.2   Regional Risks: As part of the internal EAS risk management process several aspects have been identified as potential barriers to the successful implementation of this Business Plan. These clearly set out the elements that will be important to ensuring optimum impact of the work of the EAS in partnership with LAs. These are:

- Full use is not made of consultation events to help shape the direction of the Business Plan to ensure collective regional ownership of priorities and actions for improvement;
- The work of the EAS in improving outcomes for learners (particularly vulnerable learners) will not be optimised unless there is engagement with all key partners across LAs to ensure effective joint targeting of resources;
- Schools / settings that require improvement are not: identified at an earlier enough stage, accessing /engaging / receiving the most appropriate or effective support, are not held to account in a timely manner using the most appropriate strategies;
- Agreed actions are not carried out in a timely manner by identified parties;

- LA statutory powers are not utilised in a consistent, appropriate and timely way; and
- Uncertain financial projections to enable more effective long-term planning.

5.3   *Legal*
The EAS is required to submit an annual overarching regional Business Plan with accompanying annexes for each of the five Local Authorities (LAs).

5.4   *Human Resources*
None for this report.

6.   **Supporting Evidence**

6.1   *Performance Information and Data*

6.1.1   Please note that a mid-year evaluation of the current business plan (2019/20) has been submitted to each of the EAS governance groups and has been available for local authorities to share as appropriate within their own democratic processes (created in November 2019). Within the context of evolving accountability arrangements school and where appropriate under Welsh Government guidance aggregate LA performance data has been presented to this committee in previous reports and this business plan has been informed by that data analysis.

6.1.2   The delivery model for the Business Plan is on a regional basis, the needs of each school and trends within Blaenau Gwent are met through bespoke work with each school. Regional investment in building the capacity of schools and educational settings over the last five years have enabled more collaborative ways of working. This approach is enabling teachers and leaders to learn from each other, to try out new approaches and to engage with educational research as the backdrop for improvement. Across the region there are now a variety of ways in which the EAS supports and challenges school improvement.

6.1.3   The EAS offers a comprehensive Professional Learning Offer (PLO) to all schools and settings across the region. For the past three years the region has funded schools to deliver a large proportion of the professional learning activity much of which is offered on a cluster basis. Each cluster has an assigned lead for professional learning who organises and co-ordinates support for, and access to professional learning across each of the clusters. In addition, each school has a regionally funded professional learning lead who co-ordinates this work at school level.

6.1.4   All schools are provided with a bespoke support package that compliments the priorities identified within their own School Development Plans (SDPs) in line with the levels of support they require. The support levels are informed by the national categorisation process, Estyn inspection outcomes or local intelligence. There is a degree of flexibility within the deployment model to allow for in-year changes in circumstances. The progress schools are making towards their priorities within their SDPs and against their local targets are captured on a termly basis are reported to local authorities

6.1.5   For sustained school improvement to happen it is essential that the culture for change is embedded and that all partners work together recognising that each partner (school, LA and EAS) has its role to play in securing improvements. Priorities for the Business Plan have been derived from LA Strategic Plans, the progress that has been made towards the previous Business Plan (as noted in the regional self-evaluation document), and areas that have been identified as requiring improvements. A wide range of information has been reviewed to formulate the priorities within this Business Plan:
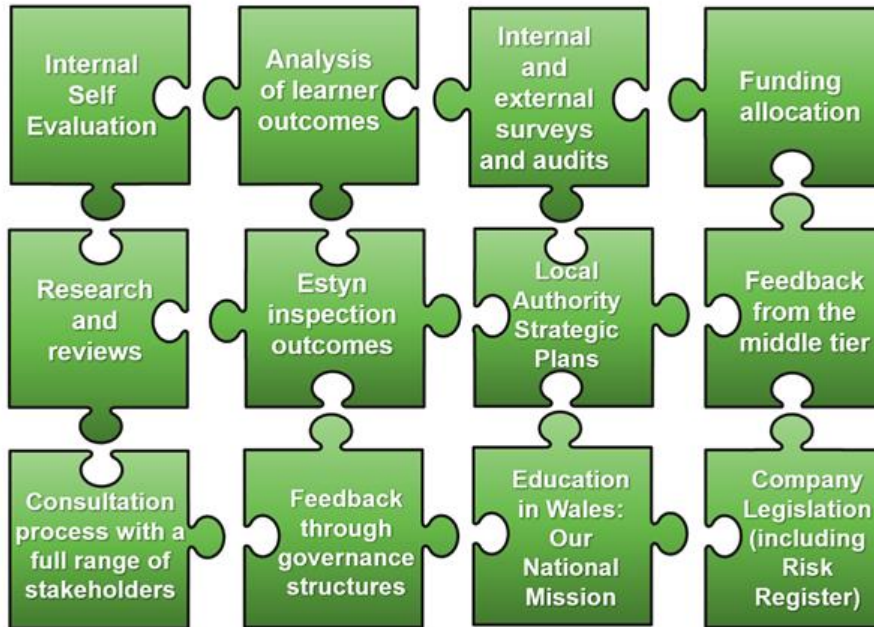
6.1.6   A wide range of research has also been undertaken to assist with refining the regional delivery model:
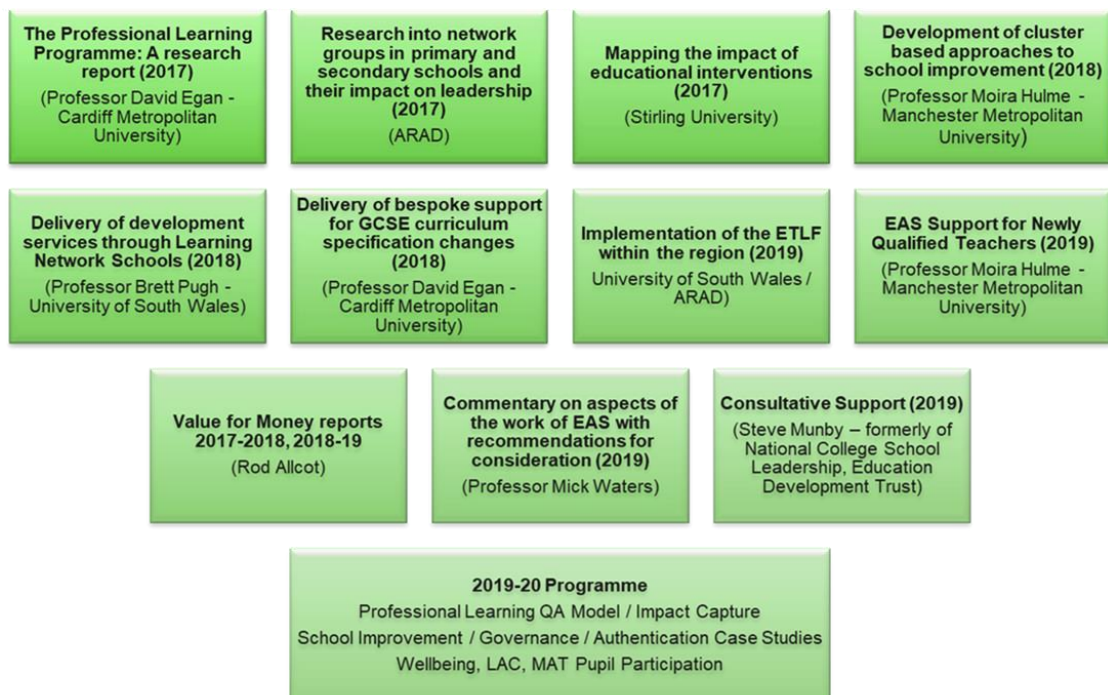
6.1.7   The Business Plan is in the consultation process. The Consultees are noted below:
- EAS staff
- Directors of Education (within South East Wales) and Diocesan Directors
- Regional Joint Executive Group (JEG)
- EAS Company Board
- EAS Audit and Risk Assurance Committee
- Individual local authority education scrutiny committees
- Regional headteachers strategy group
- Regional governor strategy group
- Sample of teachers from within the region
- Sample of school councils from within the region

6.1.8   The final version of the Business Plan will be supported by a range of supporting documents:
- Local Authority Annex documents 2020 – 2021
- Detailed Business Plan 2020–2021
- Regional Grant Mapping Overview 2020–2021
- Regional Self-Evaluation Report (Executive Summary)
- EAS Risk Register (Executive Summary)
- Regional Professional Learning Offer 2020–2021
- Local Authority Strategic Education Plans

6.1.9   This Business Plan addresses each local authority strategic priority that are indicated with *. These priorities fall within the remit of the work of the EAS. Additionally, the EAS will work in partnership with Blaenau-Gwent LA to support additional local authority priorities, as appropriate.

6.1.10   The EAS will support the LA in their statutory responsibility of securing that their education and training functions are exercised with a view to promoting high standards and promoting the fulfilment of learning potential.

Blaenau-Gwent Strategic Priorities 2020-21 (as provided by the LA):

Strategic priorities for 2020/2021	Main link (s) to the improvement strands within the Business Plan
Accelerating early language acquisition skills between the ages of 3 to 7.*	1, 2 and 3
To increase value-added progress in English and maths between key stage 2 and 3 and particularly between key stage 3 and key stage 4.*	1, 2 and 3
To increase attainment in English and maths in key stage 3 at Level 6+.*	1, 2 and 3
To improve attainment in English and maths (maths in particular) at level 2 in key stage 4*	1, 2 and 3

To improve value-added progress for our most vulnerable learners, particularly between key stage 3 and key stage 4.*	1, 2 and 3

6.1.11   EAS Improvement Strands:

Improvement Strand	Description
1	i) Developing a high-quality education profession ii) Inspirational leaders working collaboratively to raise standards
2	Strong and inclusive schools committed to excellence, equity and wellbeing
3	Robust assessment, evaluation and accountability mechanisms, supporting a self-improvement system
4	EAS Business Development

6.1.12   Each improvement strand within this plan has a specific emphasis on the work of the EAS in promoting improved outcomes for vulnerable learners, in particular those in receipt of FSM and specific actions that are undertaken to improve secondary schools. These strategies are based on a wide range of research evidence. It will be important that all other stakeholders, including Blaenau Gwent LA and schools, have their own specific strategies to support vulnerable learners.

6.1.12   The actions contained within the plan align with the Welsh Government strategic document Education in Wales: Our National Mission (Action Plan 2017-2021), are based upon findings from educational research and best practice and address the priorities in each local authority strategic plan. As a result of internal self-evaluation we still need to work with local authorities to:

- Ensure that schools that require the highest levels of support and / or in Statutory Categories secure improvement within an acceptable timescale (within 2 years) to reduce their support level and / or be removed from a statutory category.
- Consider a more strategic approach to identifying the next group of headteachers in the region. Further develop the executive headship role so that the very best leaders can make an impact in more than one school.
- Provide effective intervention, challenge, support and capacity-building. Continue to be clear about the bottom lines for intervention and continue to refuse to compromise when children are losing out on a good education. In most cases the focus should be on capacity-building.
- Develop a talent management and leadership framework that focuses on middle leadership development on individual schools and clusters rather than mixed cohorts
- Retain a high bar for the identification of those who can provide support for other schools, continuing to focus on quality and ensuring due diligence and brokering the best from within and outside the region.

- Continue to build the capacity of governing bodies within the region by revising the delivery model for governor training, aligned to the cluster model and provide bespoke professional learning to secondary governing bodies to enable them to undertake their roles effectively.
- Further strengthen the governance arrangements by appointing high quality non-executive directors who can provide additional expertise and independent external challenge.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning, to include skills development, in identified secondary schools in order to secure improved learner progress, outcomes and engagement in learning, particularly for vulnerable learners.
- Retain a high bar for the identification of those who can provide support for other schools, continuing to focus on quality and ensuring due diligence and brokering the best from within and outside the region

6.1.13   As a result of internal self-evaluation, we still need to work with local authorities and schools to:

- Continue to develop bespoke and school led peer review models focussing on improving the quality of teaching and learning that build mutual and reciprocal peer support and challenge.
- Continue to be clear about what the role of EAS is around the wellbeing and equity agenda. Continue to champion and to integrate the work and to stay focused on EAS priorities.
- Develop a boarder range of evaluation strategies that identifies that does not focus solely on end of key stage outcomes but looks at a range of teaching and leadership behaviours that would be a result of a support or intervention strategy.
- Further strengthen the governance arrangements by appointing high quality non-executive directors who can provide additional expertise and independent external challenge.
- Continue to promote succession planning within EAS and to empower the broader leadership team, especially when it comes to exposure to governance and to the production of strategic reports.

6.1.14   As a result of internal self-evaluation, we still need to work with local authorities and schools to:

- Secure the effective implementation of curriculum for Wales in all schools and settings. Engage in consultations that support the reform agenda.
- Engage in two pilot programmes for schools causing concern and the implementation of the National Resource for School Improvement.
- Design and deliver national professional learning.
- Ensure that elected members are fully apprised of changes to accountability arrangements.
- To secure an indicative 3-year grant funding model.

6.1.15   **LA Annex Documents**

Each LA Annex contains an overview of national categorisation for the LA, a summary of the schools in any Estyn follow-up category, aggregate pupil progress information, attendance / exclusion information and a summary of key performance areas.

The improvements that are required at regional and local authority level require a strong commitment of partnership-working to be successful. Where local authorities and the EAS work in close partnership, there is evidence, particularly with regards to schools causing concern, that rapid and sustainable school improvement can be achieved.

6.1.16   **How does the EAS support schools to identify and address their school improvement priorities?**

Regional investment in building the capacity of schools and educational settings over the last five years have enabled more collaborative ways of working. This approach is enabling teachers and leaders to learn from each other, to try out new approaches and to engage with educational research as the backdrop for improvement. Across the region there are now a variety of ways in which the EAS supports and challenges school improvement. The impact and effectiveness of the strategies are reviewed regularly through both internal and external processes. A summary of these supporting strategies are below:

- The role of the challenge adviser in supporting, brokering and challenging the pace of progress schools make in addressing their identified school priorities;
- The role of EAS officers (including subject specific support, support for governors, wellbeing and equity) in supporting, brokering and challenging the pace of progress schools make in addressing their identified school priorities;
- Access to funded school networks that support all aspects of professional development and school improvement focused on improving the quality of leadership and teaching and learning;
- Access to a wide range of professional learning, some with accreditation options, for teaching assistants, teachers, school leaders and governors;
- Peer working and peer reviews;
- The use of trained and accredited coaches and mentors for teachers and leaders, sourced from within and beyond; and
- Access to eLearning materials and high-quality resources.

6.1.17   **Working in partnership with local authorities, schools and setting the ambitions for 2020/21 and beyond are:**

- Overall the number of schools requiring the highest levels of support continues to decrease and when a school is placed within a statutory category it will be removed within an acceptable timeframe agreed with the LA.
- All schools and settings engaged in the pilot programme will have developed a bespoke teaching and learning strategy for their schools.

- Nearly all secondary schools have engaged with a PL programme for cross curriculum skills development and have improved their provision as a result.
- Nearly all schools have wellbeing and equity as a key area within their SDPs and will poverty proof the cost of the school day.
- The quality of SDPs within the secondary phase continue to improve with many being at least good
- Nearly all schools maximise their capped 9 performance through a focus on breadth and quality of provision for all learners.
- All school leadership teams and the majority of middle leaders and teachers will have engaged with the PL programme to support the implementation of the curriculum for Wales.
- Nearly all schools will develop as effective learning organisations.
- Nearly all schools are demonstrating progress against the national language charter framework objectives.
- A regional professional learning programme and talent management framework will be implemented to identify and track aspirational leaders.
- The region has a comprehensive leadership development pathway for aspiring and existing leaders.
- All secondary schools causing concern will be held to account by each LA for the pace of progress and where this is too slow appropriate action will be taken.
- The model for delivery of governor training will be reviewed and revised.
- Worked collaboratively with middle tier partners to support the realisation of the national mission.
- A majority of Chairs and Vice Chairs of governors within the secondary phase will be better equipped to support and challenge the pace of improvement within their schools.
- The revised learning network schools model will be implemented focusing on quality and ensuring due diligence and brokering the best from within and outside the region.
- Bespoke and school led peer review models demonstrate impact on improving the quality of teaching and learning in identified schools.
- An online resource to support teaching and learning will be developed to exemplify and share best practice across the region.
- A LA based online resource for Health and Wellbeing will be created for schools to signpost to a range of provision and partners.
- A boarder range of evaluation strategies will be developed and used that does not focus solely on end of key stage outcomes but looks at a range of teaching and leadership behaviours that would be seen as a result of a support or intervention strategy
- The delegation rate to schools is maintained at 94%.
- Governance arrangements will be strengthened, and additional non-executive directors will be appointed to the company board.
- Succession planning within the broader leadership team of the EAS is improved with team members having more exposure to governance meetings and to the production of strategic reports.

6.2   ***Expected outcome for the public***
        High Quality education is a fundamental pre-requisite of ensuring future local and national prosperity through the provision of an informed and well-educated workforce and society. The Local Authority's statutory role to monitor and evaluate school performance and the quality of provision, coupled with its statutory powers of intervention in schools causing concern is funtamental to ensuring that all schools provide high quality education provision.

6.3   ***Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation)***
        Involvement of partners is fundamental to securing and sustaining school improvement. The statutory framework advocates this and the work of the Local authority, its commissioned school improvement service (EAS) and schools evidences the positive impact of working in this way.

6.4   ***Thinking for the Long term (forward planning)***
        The SEWC regional framework seeks to ensure that schools deliver high quality provision and standards in the long term.

        The business plan that is being consulted upon for 2020/2021 is clearly aligned with this approach.

6.5   ***Preventative focus***
        A key element of the Council's work is to monitor settings and ensure appropriate support to secure continuing high standards. Estyn Inspection reports reflect the extent to which settings and Local Authorities has been effective in achieving this.

6.6   ***Collaboration / partnership working***
        Educational improvement in Blaenau Gwent is delivered on a regional basis through the South East Wales Consortium in collaboration with Caerphilly, Monmouthshire, Newport, Torfaen and Blaenau Gwent Councils.

6.7   ***Integration (across service areas)***
        The Estyn Inspection Framework is aimed at promoting high standards and high-quality education provision. This aim is fundamental to the Council's well-being objectives and is fundamental to the joint work between Education and Social Services Directorates.

6.8   ***EqIA(screening and identifying if full impact assessment is needed)***
        Not required for this report.

7.   **Monitoring Arrangements**

7.1   The South East Wales Consortium is required to submit to the Welsh Government a three-year business plan that will be updated annually. This plan and the Blaenau Gwent LA Annex cover the period 2020-2021. This meets the requirements set out in the Welsh Government's National Model for Regional Working. The business plan addresses all aspects in support of improvements across the school and settings in Blaenau-Gwent and through this consultation activity members will ensure that the plan enables appropriate support for schools to improve and that all pupils reach their potential across Blaenau Gwent.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

A. The South-East Wales Regional Mission: Business Plan (2020-2021) (First Draft for Consultation)

B. Draft LA Annex Document 2020/2021

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The South East Wales Regional Mission: Business Plan

(2020-2021)

"Transforming pupil outcomes, creating capacity through networks, enabling excellence in teaching and leadership"

The final version of the Business Plan and all accompanying documents will be available in both Welsh and English. There will be a detailed delivery plan and a regional professional learning offer that supports the actions contained within this plan.

The Education Achievement Service (EAS) Business Plan will go through a thorough consultation process prior to the publication of the final version. The consultees are listed below:

- EAS staff
- Directors of Education (within South East Wales) and Diocesan Directors
- Regional Joint Executive Group (JEG)
- EAS Company Board
- EAS Audit and Risk Assurance Committee
- Individual local authority education scrutiny committees
- Regional headteachers strategy group
- Regional governor strategy group
- Sample of teachers from within the region
- Sample of school councils from within the region

The final version of the Business Plan will be formally agreed by each local authority Director of Education / Chief Education Officer, the Joint Executive Group and the Company Board:

Cllr K Preston Chair of Education Achievement Service Company Board	
Cllr D Yeowell Chair of Joint Executive Group	
Ms D Harteveld Managing Director, Education Achievement Service	
Mr Will McClean Lead Director on behalf of South East Wales Directors Group	

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Section 1: Regional context

The EAS is the school improvement service for the five local authorities (LAs) in South East Wales (Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly, Monmouthshire, Newport and Torfaen). The number of pupils of compulsory school age in 2019 was 72,698. This represents 19% of all pupils in Wales. There are 234 maintained schools in the region, 16% of all maintained schools in Wales (EAS figure correct from September 2019, Wales figure from PLASC, 2019). The percentage of pupils of compulsory school age who are eligible for free school meals (FSM) is 19.2%, which is higher than the national figure of 18.3%. This level of eligibility is the joint highest of the four regional consortia with Central South Consortium (PLASC, 2019). In the region, 10% of people aged three and over say that they can speak Welsh compared to the Wales average of 19% (2011 Census, ONS). The percentage of pupils aged 5 or over from an ethnic minority background is 10.8%, an increase from 10.3% in 2018. This is a similar rate of increase to that nationally (11.4% from 11.0%). Based on local authority reported numbers (Summer 2019), 1024 children in the region are looked after (LAC) by an LA and attend a school in the region. From 2019, looked after children are no longer being recorded in the PLASC return so there can be no comparison against Wales, however this is an increase regionally from 983 children in 2018.

Schools

Blaenau Gwent (22.7% FSM)	
2	Non-maintained Nursery Settings
19	Primary
2	Secondary
2	Special
2	3-16

Caerphilly (19.7% FSM)	
14	Non-maintained Nursery Settings
63	Primary
6	Infant
4	Junior
11	Secondary
1	Special
1	Pupil Referral Unit
1	3-18

Monmouthshire (11.3% FSM)	
27	Non-maintained Nursery Settings
30	Primary
4	Secondary
1	Special
1	Pupil Referral Service

Newport (19.4% FSM)	
24	Non-maintained Nursery Settings
2	Nursery
43	Primary
9	Secondary
2	Special
1	Pupil Referral Unit

Torfaen (22.0% FSM)	
15	Non-maintained Nursery Settings
25	Primary
6	Secondary
1	Special
1	Pupil Referral Service

Overview of regional school staffing		
Local Authority	Number of Teaching Staff	Number of Support Staff
Blaenau Gwent	511	575
Caerphilly	1,519	1,366
Monmouthshire	679	642
Newport	1,427	1,283
Torfaen	773	751
EAS	4,909	4,617

Section 2: Overview

What does the EAS do on behalf of, and in partnership with, LAs and other organisations?

The EAS is a not for profit limited company that is owned by the five LAs in South East Wales. The EAS delivers, through an agreed Business Plan, a wide range of school improvement services to all schools (all key stages, including all through schools and special schools), pupil referral units and funded non-maintained nursery settings on behalf of each LA. This plan supports the role LAs have in delivering their statutory function, addressing their individual improvement priorities and promoting improved pupil outcomes. This Business Plan encompasses delivery across the following aspects:

- Monitor, challenge, support and intervention
- Curriculum, assessment and accountability reform
- Data collation, analysis and support (school, LA, region)
- Professional Learning: Teaching and Leadership
- Professional Learning: Teaching Assistants / Higher Level Teaching Assistants
- Equity and wellbeing
- Literacy, numeracy and digital
- Welsh language development
- Core and non-core subjects
- Support for governing bodies including professional learning
- National strategies, to include: Lead Creative Schools, Global Futures
- Specialist HR support
- Initial Teacher Education / Graduate Teacher Programme

How does the EAS support schools and settings to identify and address their improvement priorities?

Regional investment in building the capacity of schools and educational settings over the last five years have enabled more collaborative ways of working. This approach is enabling teachers and leaders to learn from each other, to try out new approaches and to engage with educational research as the backdrop for improvement. Across the region there are now a variety of ways in which the EAS supports and challenges school improvement. The impact and effectiveness of the strategies are reviewed regularly through both internal and external processes.

A summary of these supporting strategies is:

- The role of the challenge adviser in supporting, brokering and challenging the pace of progress schools make in addressing their identified school priorities;
- The role of EAS officers (including subject specific support, support for governors, wellbeing and equity) in supporting, brokering and challenging the pace of progress schools make in addressing their identified school priorities;
- Access to funded school networks that support all aspects of professional development and school improvement focused on improving the quality of leadership and teaching and learning;
- Access to a wide range of professional learning, some with accreditation options, for teaching assistants, teachers, school leaders and governors;
- Peer working and peer reviews;
- The use of trained and accredited coaches and mentors for teachers and leaders, sourced from within and beyond; and
- Access to eLearning materials and high-quality resources.

Regional delivery model

Regional investment in building the capacity of schools and educational settings over the last five years have enabled more collaborative ways of working and a move towards the creation of a self-improving school system. This approach is enabling teachers and leaders to learn from each other, to try out new approaches and to engage with educational research as the backdrop for improvement. Across the region the ways in which the EAS supports and challenges school improvement has developed over the past 6 years. The impact, effectiveness and value for money of regional strategies are reviewed regularly through both internal and external processes. The region has commissioned several external reviews over the past 3 years that have helped to shape future direction based upon effective principles of a self-improving system.

The EAS offers a comprehensive Professional Learning Offer (PLO) to all schools and settings across the region. For the past three years the region has funded schools to deliver a large proportion of the professional learning activity much of which is offered on a cluster basis. Each cluster has an assigned lead for professional learning who organises and co-ordinates support for, and access to professional learning across each of the clusters. In addition, each school has a partially funded professional learning lead who co-ordinates this work at school level. Support via the numerous funded learning network schools is also organised on a geographical basis to support this delivery model.

The cluster-based professional learning lead also provides schools within the cluster with updates and development materials to support all key priorities within the National Mission, to include: Schools as Learning Organisations and the Professional standards for teaching and leadership. This work is disseminated to all schools / practitioners through their nominated professional learning leads.

Each cluster also has a linked curriculum pioneer school, that supports regional delivery of key information and latest drafts/key messaging with regards to the new Curriculum for Wales. EAS organises regular briefing sessions with professional learning leads, headteachers, chairs of governors and local authority partners to ensure consistency of messaging, understanding and respective roles and responsibilities in key areas of work.

All schools are provided with a bespoke support package that compliments the priorities identified within their own School Development Plans (SDPs) in line with the levels of support they require. The support levels are informed by the national categorisation process, Estyn inspection outcomes or local intelligence. There is a degree of flexibility within the deployment model to allow for in-year changes in circumstances. The progress schools are making towards their priorities within their SDPs and against their local targets are captured on a termly basis are reported to local authorities.

The EAS can offer advice, support and guidance that promote improved outcomes in schools and settings, whilst LAs retain the statutory responsibility for schools and school improvement.

For sustained school improvement to happen it is essential that the culture for change is embedded and that all partners work together recognising that each partner (school, LA and EAS) has its role to play in securing improvements.
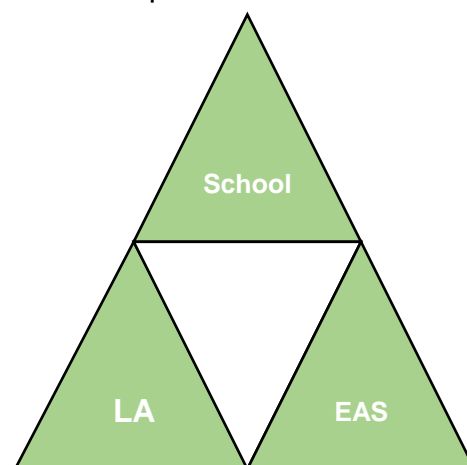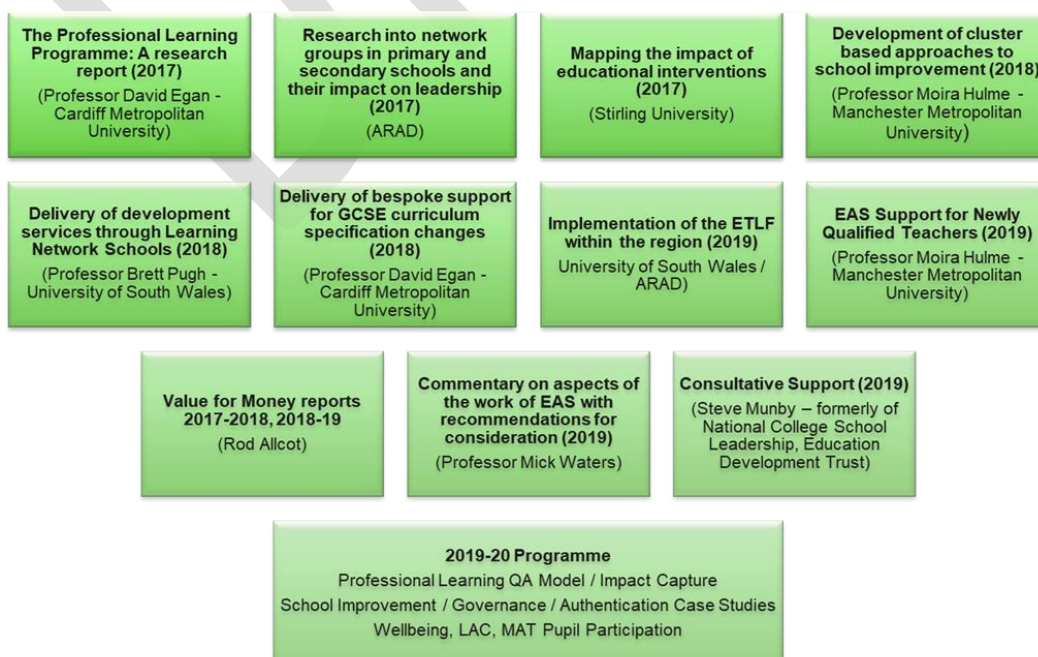
Section 3: Business Plan 2019/2020: Introduction

This Business Plan (2019/2020) outlines the programme of work that is required to continue to accelerate outcomes and provision for children and young people in settings and schools in South East Wales. The plan focuses on the need to raise aspiration and accelerate improvement in pupil outcomes, improve the quality of teaching and leadership, support schools to realise the national reform agenda and to continue to build upon the self-improving system within and across schools and settings.

Priorities for the Business Plan have been derived from LA Strategic Plans, the progress that has been made towards the previous Business Plan (as noted in the regional self-evaluation document), and areas that have been identified as requiring improvements. A wide range of information has been reviewed to formulate the priorities within this Business Plan:
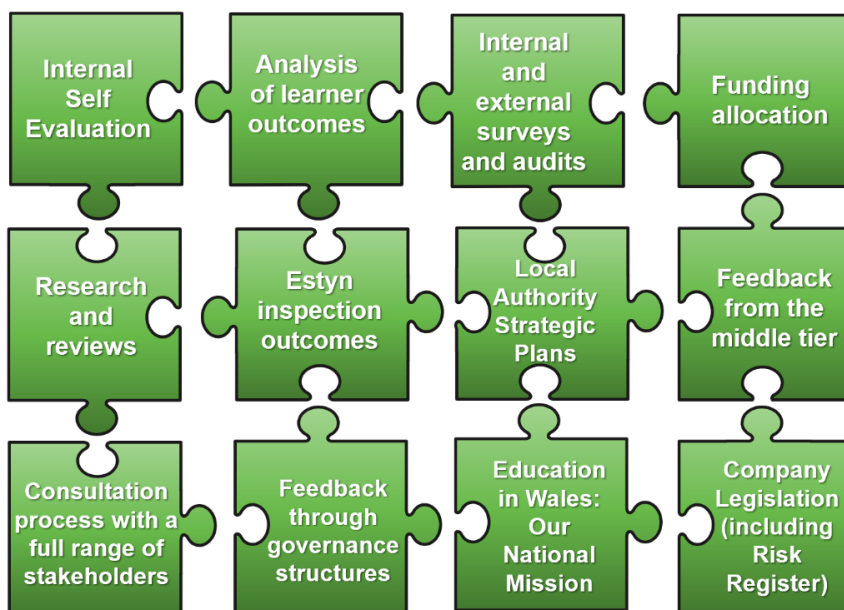
The EAS Business Plan priorities continues to be shaped using the outcomes of external reviews and research:

Local authority education strategic priorities 2020/21 (provided by each local authority)

This Business Plan addresses each local authority strategic priority that are indicated with *. These priorities fall within the remit of the work of the EAS. Additionally, the EAS will work in partnership with LAs to support additional local priorities, as appropriate.

The improvements that are required at regional and local authority level require a strong commitment of partnership-working to be successful. Where local authorities and the EAS work in close partnership, there is evidence, particularly with regards to schools causing concern, that rapid and sustainable school improvement can be achieved.

LA	Strategic priorities for 2020/2021	Main link(s) to improvement strands within the Business Plan
Blaenau Gwent	Accelerating early language acquisition skills between the ages of 3 to 7.*	1, 2 and 3
	To increase value-added progress in English and maths between key stage 2 and 3 and particularly between key stage 3 and key stage 4.*	1, 2 and 3
	To increase attainment in English and maths in key stage 3 at Level 6+.*	1, 2 and 3
	To improve attainment in English and maths (maths in particular) at level 2 in key stage 4*	1, 2 and 3
	To improve value-added progress for our most vulnerable learners, particularly between key stage 3 and key stage 4.*	1, 2 and 3

LA	Strategic priorities for 2020/2021	Main link(s) to improvement strands within the Business Plan
Caerphilly	Improve outcomes at Key Stage 4 with particular focus on standards in the English language and Capped 9 measures. *	1, 2 and 3
	Further improve the quality of leadership across all phases of education. *	1 and 3
	Increase the number of pupils achieving 3 A-A* at Key Stage 5. *	1 and 3
	Improve attainment and progress of all learners in receipt of free school meals across all phases of education, with particular focus on the more able. *	2
	Further improve pupils' acquisition digital competency skills *	1 and 3
Monmouthshire	Strengthen leadership and teaching and learning capacity in identified schools to ensure that all pupils make appropriate progress from their starting points. *	1, 2 and 3
	Improve the outcomes for all vulnerable learners, particularly those eFSM, at the secondary stages (key stages 3 and 4) and at the higher levels. *	1, 2 and 3
	Reduce variance in outcomes between schools and departments particularly at key stage 4. *	1, 2 and 3
	Work with all stakeholders to develop effective mechanisms to help reduce the amount of exclusions.	2
Newport	Improve provision and outcomes for FSM learners in all key stages.*	1, 2 and 3
	Reduce variance in outcomes, teaching. and leadership, particularly at key stage 4. *	1, 2 and 3
	Ensure a consistent approach to ALN provision, in line with the requirements of the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018 through the implementation of a Leadership/ALN Review framework in collaboration with Local Authority inclusion services.	2
	Reduce persistent absenteeism, particularly in secondary schools, and so improve secondary attendance.*	2

LA	Strategic priorities for 2020/2021	Main link(s) to improvement strands within the Business Plan
Torfaen	Improve the progress that FSM pupils make across all key stages, particularly key stage 4 by ensuring LA services compliment and support regional provision. *	1, 2 and 3
	Ensure all of Torfaen schools have a clear strategy for improving the quality of teaching and learning particularly in secondary schools to reduce within school variation so all pupils, including boys and vulnerable learners, make appropriate progress over time. *	1, 2 and 3
	Reduce the level of variability in the quality and impact of leadership at all levels in secondary schools in the authority to secure good and sustained pupil outcomes. *	1, 2 and 3

Each improvement strand within this plan has a specific emphasis on the work of the EAS in promoting improved outcomes for vulnerable learners, in particular those in receipt of FSM and specific actions that are undertaken to improve secondary schools.

These strategies are based on a wide range of research evidence. It will be important that all other stakeholders, including schools and LAs, have their own specific strategies to support and promote improved outcomes for learners. The EAS will endeavour, as appropriate, and within available resources to support LA strategic plans to maximise the impact on learner outcomes.

Summary of the progress that has been made during 2019/2020*

Summary of progress 2019/20

90% of schools felt that the role of EAS is clear and there is a clear vision for school improvement

52 current serving headteachers undertaking the role of Challenge Advisers

55 HLTAs have achieved the qualification

All secondary schools have a partially funded lead for vulnerable learners and professional learning

92% of schools and settings received ACE awareness training with 1707 teachers noting that the training informed their provision within the classroom

29 NPQH candidates successfully gained the qualification

35 schools received the Seren Foundation Grant

Over the past 3 years the number of acting headteachers has **decreased**

All PDG grant plans are linked to Sutton trust toolkit

Designed and developed a grant planning toolkit with **100%** engagement from schools

94% delegation rate to schools = £45.92M

52 schools engaged in the more able and talented network meetings

208 NQTs have successfully completed induction across the region

All schools engaged in the regional offer to support curriculum for Wales

All school clusters engaged in Wellbeing Network meetings

194 schools have engaged with the SLO portal

221 learners completed the Seren Programme in 2018 with an increase in 2019 of 285 learners engaged

All secondary schools PDG plans have been agreed through professional panels

1588 governing body meetings clerked ; **615** governors attended professional learning and an additional 114 online induction sessions.

6,035 twitter followers

87% of Seren learners went to Oxbridge or Sutton Trust universities

69 schools within the region are providing support to other schools across the region

Peer working models continue to be developed

1111 professional learning opportunities have been offered to support the teaching and leadership standards

Between 2017/2018 and 2018/2019 there have been increases in the % of schools judged to be good or excellent in each of the 5 inspection areas by at least **11%**

Overall the number of schools requiring the highest levels of support continue to **decrease**

156 self chosen networks of schools

*further detail is contained within the mid and end of year review of the 2019/2020 Business Plan

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As a result of internal self-evaluation, we still need to work with local authorities and schools to:

Continue to develop bespoke and school led peer review models focussing on improving the quality of teaching and learning that build mutual and reciprocal peer support and challenge.

Continue to be clear about what the role of EAS is around the wellbeing and equity agenda. Continue to champion and to integrate the work and to stay focused on EAS priorities.

Develop a boarder range of evaluation strategies that identifies that does not focus solely on end of key stage outcomes but looks at a range of teaching and leadership behaviours that would be a result of a support or intervention strategy.

Further strengthen the governance arrangements by appointing high quality non-executive directors who can provide additional expertise and independent external challenge.

Continue to promote succession planning within EAS and to empower the broader leadership team, especially when it comes to exposure to governance and to the production of strategic reports.

As a result of internal self-evaluation we still need to work with other regions, Welsh Government and middle tier partners to:

Secure the effective implementation of curriculum for Wales in all schools and settings. Engage in consultations that support the reform agenda.

Engage in two pilot programmes for schools causing concern and the implementation of the National Resource for School Improvement.

Design and deliver national professional learning.

Ensure that elected members are fully apprised of changes to accountability arrangements.

To secure an indicative 3-year grant funding model.

As a result of internal self-evaluation, we still need to work with local authorities and schools to:

Ensure that schools that require the highest levels of support and / or in Statutory Categories secure improvement within an acceptable timescale (within 2 years) to reduce their support level and / or be removed from a statutory category

Consider a more strategic approach to identifying the next group of headteachers in the region. Further develop the executive headship role so that the very best leaders can make an impact in more than one school.

Provide effective intervention, challenge, support and capacity-building. Continue to be clear about the bottom lines for intervention and continue to refuse to compromise when children are losing out on a good education. . In most cases the focus should be on capacity-building

Develop a talent management and leadership framework that focuses on middle leadership development on individual schools and clusters rather than mixed cohorts.

Retain a high bar for the identification of those who can provide support for other schools, continuing to focus on quality and ensuring due diligence and brokering the best from within and outside the region.

Continue to build the capacity of governing bodies within the region by revising the delivery model for governor training, aligned to the cluster model and provide bespoke professional learning to secondary governing bodies to enable them to undertake their roles effectively.

Further strengthen the governance arrangements by appointing high quality non-executive directors who can provide additional expertise and independent external challenge.

Improve the quality of teaching and learning, to include skills development, in identified secondary schools in order to secure improved learner progress, outcomes and engagement in learning, particularly for vulnerable learners.

Retain a high bar for the identification of those who can provide support for other schools, continuing to focus on quality and ensuring due diligence and brokering the best from within and outside the region

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Business Plan 2020/2021

The actions below have been developed in collaboration with our partners, linked to each local authority strategic priorities. They represent the key priorities for the region to deliver in 2020/21. However, they are not exhaustive, and we recognise the importance of continuing to deliver our core business to a high standard.

Improvement Strand 1	**i)** **Developing a high-quality education profession** **ii)** **Inspirational leaders working collaboratively to raise standards** • Developing all staff and leaders to have the right knowledge and skills to do their job effectively so that pupils make good progress over time. • Developing leaders and providing them with the opportunity to learn with and from others.

What will the EAS do?

Quality assurance and impact of all professional learning
- Continue to provide schools with guidance to complete, publish and evaluate the impact of their Professional Learning Plan.
- Pilot the regional model for quality assuring all professional learning to capture impact.

Curriculum Reform
- Provide all schools with access to the national professional learning programmes, for all staff, to support the implementation of the curriculum for Wales. This will be jointly delivered with regional Innovation schools and Professional Learning schools.
- Provide schools with examples of effective school development actions for curriculum reform and support schools to implement these.
- Encourage all schools to be research informed by creating a network of lead enquirers from Professional Learning schools to develop the capacity for professional enquiry in all schools.
- Use the outcomes of the engagement visits completed by Estyn to support the development of a set of common expectations around the implementation of the curriculum for Wales.

Schools as Learning Organisations
- Design and facilitate professional learning that encourages schools to develop as effective learning organisations. This will include a range of approaches such as e-learning, school to school working and research.
- Provide a coordinated programme of support to ensure all schools develop as effective learning organisations e.g. how to use the survey to inform school development priorities.
- Support the remaining schools who have yet to engage the schools as learning organisation (SLO) survey.
- Share case studies where schools and clusters are effectively developing as learning organisations.
- Provide support and guidance to schools about how to use the SLO survey to inform school development priorities

Teaching and Learning
- Identify and share effective whole school strategies for teaching and learning from within and beyond the region.
- Support schools to use a range of first-hand evidence to improve the quality of teaching and learning through a modelled, shared and guided approach.
- Identify and work with effective leaders, teachers and teaching assistants across the region from all phases to share best practice that captures the progress of learners. This will include

the development of a regional online resource that will include pupils work, portfolios, film clips of teachers, learners and leaders.
- Provide a range of delivery models and access to a wider range of professional learning across all areas of learning to support schools to improve the quality of teaching and learning within and beyond the region.
- Identify and share through planned professional learning, successful examples of provision, teaching and application of skills that evidences pupil progression across all phases from within and beyond the region.

Professional learning teaching assistants
- Provide a professional learning offer that supports teaching assistants whether new to the role, a practicing teaching assistant or as an experienced higher-level teaching assistant.

Professional Learning for statutory induction
- Continue to refine and develop the induction support for Newly Qualified teachers, including the role of the school-based induction mentor, the role of the external verifier and the support provided beyond the statutory induction period. Strengthen partnership working with HEI institutions to offer joint induction support for early career entry.

Initial Teacher Education
- Continue to work with higher education partners, cross regional partners and schools in developing and delivery of all routes into initial teacher education.

Inspirational leaders working collaboratively to raise standards
National professional learning offer for leaders
- Provide a professional learning offer in partnership with higher education institutions and other regions to support leaders at all levels in all schools and settings through a nationally endorsed range of programmes: Middle leadership, senior leadership, aspiring headteacher / preparation for NPQH, NPQH, New and Acting headteachers, experienced headteachers.

Identifying, recruiting and retaining effective leaders
- Identify aspirational leaders and provide them with bespoke professional learning and a range of leadership experiences that supports them to develop an individual professional learning journey, particularly within the Welsh medium and secondary sectors.
- Work with local authorities and governing bodies to explore a range of leadership models e.g. Executive headship
- Regional specialist HR will work with local authorities to review and revise senior leadership recruitment processes to include using evaluations from a range of stakeholders and professional learning for appointment panel members.
- In partnership with other regions and higher education institutions, provide a mentoring and coaching programme to develop and support school leaders and governors.

Governors as leaders
- Review and refine the Governor Support Clerking Service Level Agreement, to ensure that it supports effective governance.
- Review and refine the delivery model for professional learning (not including the mandatory training) for governors using the cluster-based 'train the trainer' approach.
- Further develop online resources for governors, including tools to assist with self-evaluation.
- Provide opportunities for collaborative professional learning for school leaders and governors.

- Identify governors who can undertake a range of roles within and beyond their own school, providing bespoke professional learning to strengthen and build capacity within the region.
- Explore and encourage peer support arrangements for governing bodies to secure improvement.

Specialist HR
- Work with local authorities to complement existing services.
- Provide specialist HR professional learning for school leaders to include the implementation of the Professional Standards for Teaching and Leadership and managing performance.

Targeted support for the secondary phase (in addition to above)
- Review and refine the current model for the development of teaching and learning strategies in identified schools, use the outcomes to engage a further cohort of secondary schools.
- Continue to provide a range of strategies to support leadership of teaching and learning e.g. school to school, research informed approaches
- Continue to provide professional learning for Chairs and Vice Chairs of governors in secondary schools focussing on improving the quality of leadership and teaching and learning.
- Support schools to explore a range of models to help them prepare for the implementation of curriculum for Wales.
- Review and refine co-ordinated Challenge Adviser and subject specific support and delivery in identified schools e.g. intensive block time, challenge adviser and school to school model
- Supporting schools to ensure that curriculum pathways provide an appropriate choice for all learners.

Specific focus on improving the outcomes of Vulnerable Learners
- Design and facilitate professional learning for specialist teaching assistants in partnership with local authorities and settings.
- Review and refine the secondary Vulnerable Learner Lead programme, sharing effective practice across selected clusters and primary schools.
- Design and facilitate national online resources to complement the middle leadership programme for more able and Seren school leads.
- Evaluate the current range of enhanced curriculum opportunities funded via the pupil development grant and share best practice across the secondary phase.
- Capture best practice of a range of curriculum offers that are provided in PRU provisions.

	Strong and inclusive schools committed to excellence, equity and wellbeing
Improvement Strand 2	• Providing schools with support, guidance and professional learning to ensure all learners (including all known groups of vulnerable learners) attend school every day, engage well in their learning, receive the correct support and challenge in supportive and inclusive learning environments.

What will the EAS do?

- To provide a programme of professional learning through a 'Train the Trainer' approach that provides the foundations of universal provision across all schools and settings. This will include strategy development and professional learning for: FSM learners, LAC learners, Known Adopted learners, Young Carers, More and Most Able Learners and those who have English as an additional language.
- Embed the regional Equity and Wellbeing Strategy (which encompasses strategies for all vulnerable learners) to further develop multi-agency working, to build on the universal provision for all schools and settings.
- To create an online interactive curriculum tool that captures the resources available to support schools in shaping their provision for Health and Wellbeing at a local and regional level.
- To co-construct a professional learning programme in partnership with local authorities on 'Improving pupil engagement and behaviours in learning' based upon the principles of adverse childhood experiences agenda.

- Review and extend the network of schools engaged with the 'Raising the achievement of disadvantaged youngsters' programme.
- To improve pupil voice and pupil participation across the region in partnership with the School and Super Ambassador Programme to influence school and regional priorities.
- To introduce a revised regional approach to improve the monitoring and impact of the pupil development grant that includes a professional panel attended by local authority officers.
- Work with local authorities to ensure that local authority strategic plans for vulnerable learners are complimented by the regional strategy.
- Attendance and exclusions
- To support the Regional Transformation Officer to update stakeholders on ALN Reform and support the shaping of a professional learning programme to meet the changing requirements of ALN Reform.
- To continue to support schools and settings with the planning, monitoring and evaluating of grant plan expenditure. Continue to provide schools with guidance to complete, publish and evaluate the impact of the Pupil Development Grant.

Targeted support for the secondary phase (in addition to above)
- Design and facilitate a pilot programme to enhance the use of Form Group time in Secondary Schools.
- To engage with Career Wales to design a programme that offers learners career advice from year seven onwards in order to map their flightpaths to their desired destinations.

Improvement Strand 3	**Robust assessment, evaluation and accountability mechanisms, supporting a self-improvement system** • Providing support for schools to use a wide range of evidence to accurately assess where they are, where they want to be and how they will get there through continuous self-improvement.

What will the EAS do?

- Provide schools with a range of targeted support focussed on school development priorities in line with their current support level.
- Focus support will be brokered between the EAS, LA and school leaders.
- Implement the regional approach to schools causing concern in partnership with LAs that includes regular schools causing concern meetings and regional schools causing concern register to monitor the progress that schools make.
- Where concerns arise in any school or setting the EAS will share relevant information with LAs and Diocesan Directors to inform next steps and where appropriate this may include the use of LA statutory powers to accelerate progress.
- Working alongside key partners including Estyn, Welsh Government, Local Authorities and school leaders, pilot an approach to supporting schools causing concern to identify appropriate and timely support and intervention in order to accelerate progress.
- Embed the regional strategy for target setting with a key focus on the school's context at a local level, and further develop the use of pupil progress data at school level in line with the national guidance.
- Provide professional learning opportunities for schools, governing bodies and LAs to understand the changing assessment and accountability arrangements within the reform agenda.
- Support the piloting of the national evaluation and improvement resource (NEIR) in identified regional schools and ensure key learning is shared with all schools and settings.
- Provide professional learning to all schools and settings to promote effective self-evaluation and improvement planning processes.
- Formally monitor and evaluate the quality and impact of self-evaluation and development planning for all schools and settings to secure improvement in progress and attitudes of learners, the quality of teaching and learning and the quality of leadership.
- Further develop the regional approach of 'School on a page' so that a broader range of information is used for accountability purposes focussed on pupils' wellbeing and attitudes to learning, the standards achieved and progress made by all pupils including those in vulnerable groups, the quality of teaching and learning in schools and settings as well as the quality of leadership.
- Provide ongoing professional learning for elected members on how they can use this broader range of school information to hold schools to account more effectively, promoting cultural and behavioural change.
- Support and advise LAs in the delivery of their statutory functions for SACRE and the development of individual Welsh and education strategic plans.

Supporting a self-improvement system
- Refine the Learning Network Schools approach to reflect new and emerging service priorities.
- Refine and extend the peer working models for school leaders with a focus on improving the quality of teaching and learning.
- Provide further opportunities for schools to develop self-chosen networks of professional practice, based upon common improvement needs.
- Commission a range of evaluative research reports in priority areas to provide recommendations to further develop key areas of service delivery.

Targeted support for the secondary phase (in addition to above)

- Refine and extend the peer working programme to include middle leaders, to support a broad range of subjects across the curriculum in the secondary phase.
- Explore external systems that will support schools to set targets, track pupil progress, measure value added performance and engagement in learning.
- Provide guidance and support for schools to set appropriate local targets in line with school development priorities whilst retaining the focus on individual pupil level target setting.
- Support schools' engagement with consultations regarding reforms to key stage 4 qualifications.
- Collaborate with schools and other sectors to share and analyse outcome and destination data at key stage 5.

Specific focus on improving the outcomes of Vulnerable Learners

- Continue to refine the grant planning system and the processes in place to support the planning, reviewing and evaluating of impact of expenditure in line with the EEF
- Refine the role of the Wellbeing and Equity LNS to become more focused on an area of work
- To continue grant discussion meetings with LA partners to focus on provision and progress of vulnerable learners.
- To support all secondary schools to have a Wellbeing Equity Section on their SDP.

Improvement Strand 4	**EAS Business Development** • Developing systems and processes that enable the company to effectively and efficiently support schools and settings promoting improved pupil outcomes. • Develop a workforce that embodies the core values and mission of the EAS. • Ensure the EAS adheres to legislative requirements.

What will the EAS do?

- Continue to refine the business model for the EAS to ensure that it aligns to the regional priorities for national reform.
- Work with key partners to deliver a more sustainable funding model that aligns with the workforce plan and secures an updated Collaboration and Members Agreement.
- Maintain a high-quality, well informed, flexible and motivated workforce that represent our values and vision.
- Ensure the effectiveness of the company board and the audit and risk assurance committee, through appropriate professional learning.
- Continue to develop the regional grant mapping tool to enable more efficient and effective interrogation of data, impact capture and value for money at school, LA and regional level.
- To continue to publish the regional grant allocations and maximise delegation rates to schools.
- Ensure that systems and processes are in place to enable the effective delivery of the Governor Support Service Level Agreement.
- Refine the value for money model, further exploring access to comparative data.
- Enhance the use of self-evaluation processes to ensure our work has impact on improving outcomes, provision and leadership.
- Ensure the efficient delivery of accurate performance data and wider intelligence to support effective self-evaluation and service delivery.
- Refine and enhance the communication and marketing strategy to ensure appropriate stakeholder engagement.
- Continue to engage with other consortia and middle-tier organisations, such as Estyn, to realise efficiencies in programme development and delivery.

Working in partnership with local authorities, schools and setting the ambitions for 2020/21 and beyond are:

Ambitions for 2020/21

Overall the number of schools requiring the highest levels of support continues to decrease and when a school is placed within a statutory category it will be removed within an acceptable timeframe agreed with the LA

Nearly all schools have wellbeing and equity as a key area within their SDPs and will poverty proof the cost of the school day

Nearly all schools maximise their capped 9 performance through a focus on breadth and quality of provision for all learners

The model for delivery of governor training will be reviewed and revised

Nearly all schools are demonstrating progress against the national language charter framework objectives.

A broader range of evaluation strategies will be developed and used that does not focus solely on end of key stage outcomes but looks at a range of teaching and leadership behaviours that would be seen as a result of a support or intervention strategy

An online resource to support teaching and learning will be developed to exemplify and share best practice across the region

The delegation rate to schools is maintained at 94%

All schools and settings engaged in the pilot programme will have developed a bespoke teaching and learning strategy for their schools

The quality of SDPs within the secondary phase continue to improve with many being at least good

All school leadership teams and the majority of middle leaders and teachers will have engaged with the PL programme to support the implementation of the curriculum for Wales

A regional professional learning programme and talent management framework will be implemented to identify and track aspirational leaders

All secondary schools causing concern will be held to account by each LA for the pace of progress and where this is too slow appropriate action will be taken

A majority of Chairs and Vice Chairs of governors within the secondary phase will be better equipped to support and challenge the pace of improvement within their schools

A LA based online resource for Health and Wellbeing will be created for schools to signpost to a range of provision and partners

Nearly all secondary schools have engaged with a PL programme for cross curriculum skills development and have improved their provision as a result

Bespoke and school led peer review models demonstrate impact on improving the quality of teaching and learning in identified schools.

Nearly all schools will develop as effective learning organisations

Governance arrangements will be strengthened, and additional non-executive directors will be appointed to the company board

The region has a comprehensive leadership development pathway for aspiring and existing leaders

Worked collaboratively with middle tier partners to support the realisation of the national mission

Succession planning within the broader leadership team of the EAS is improved with team members having more exposure to governance meetings and to the production of strategic reports

The revised learning network schools model will be implemented focusing on quality and ensuring due diligence and brokering the best from within and outside the region.

Section 4: Governance and funding

The EAS is subject to a robust governance model that is underpinned by a Collaboration and Members agreement (CAMA) and Articles of Association. Ensuring that the EAS provides value for money is of utmost importance. As recipients of public funding it is important that budgets are allocated wisely. We will endeavour to deliver even better value for money through achieving financial balance and delivering services within the constraints of our budget, making further efficiency savings wherever possible and ensuring delegation rates to schools are maximised.

Consortium funding

The EAS is funded on an annual basis from three sources: Local authority core contributions, regional school improvement grants and a service level agreement for governor support services. A spending plan accompanies the Business Plan which is intrinsically linked to all actions contained within it. A detailed overview of the regional distribution of all grants is available for all schools to view and compare allocations and rates of delegation through the regional grant monitoring tool.

Delegation rates to schools has increased to 94% whilst the EAS staff profile by 48% since 2012. An element of the EAS was originally set a trading income target of £1.25m from schools to enable balanced year end account position. This has now been totally eradicated from income dependency and schools are no longer charged for any training or services provided in line with the business plan.

Local authority contributions

Local authority funding for consortium working is underpinned by the National Model for Regional Working, published by the Welsh Government in 2014. The model recommended a core funding allocation of £3.6m for the EAS. The current LA core contribution is based on these figures less year on year efficiencies of £1.17m since 2012 agreed in collaboration with the 5 local authorities. The local authorities' indicative figures for 2020/21 are as follows:

Local Authority	£
Blaenau Gwent CBC	358,985
Caerphilly CBC	1,005,705
Monmouthshire CC	414,127
Newport CC	803,293
Torfaen CBC	516,355
Total	**3,098,465**

LAs Core Contribution as a %

- Blaenau Gwent CBC — 12%
- Caerphilly CBC — 32%
- Monmouthshire CC — 13%
- Newport CC — 26%
- Torfaen CBC — 17%
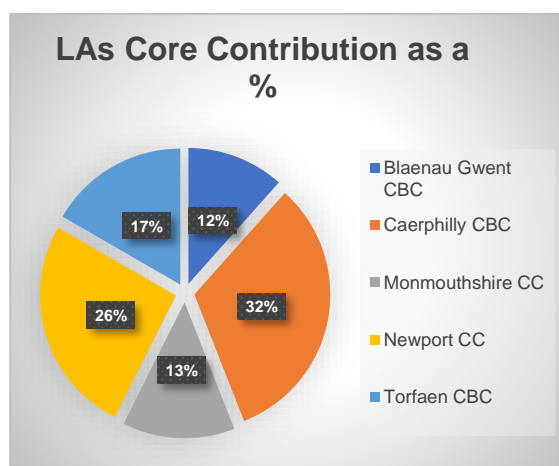
In terms of the above £0.357m of this figure is used to secure capacity within the Challenge Adviser team from current serving headteachers and £0.2m of this figure is used to secure service level agreements and venue costs sourced through local authorities.

Regional school improvement grants

The Collaboration and Members Agreement (CAMA) details the procedure that needs to be followed for all school improvement grants received into the region. All grants are approved by local authority Chief Education Officers / Directors of Education with a follow up ratification from JEG members.

Historically there were two main grants received into the region from Welsh Government. Pupil Development Grant (PDG) and Education Improvement Grant (EIG). The latter has been re-designated as the Regional Consortia School Improvement Grant (RCSIG) and includes specific initiatives to support the objectives within the 'Education in Wales: Our National Mission'. In addition to the two main grants, two small regional indicative grants were received for SEREN learners.

Included in the Regional Consortia School Improvement Grant are two historic grants that require match funding* from the LAs to facilitate the grant offer. These figures are included in the following table alongside the delegation** rate per key area of grant.

Grant Name	Grant Total	Amount delegated* to schools	Delegation* Rate	Regionally Retained
		Indicative Calculation 2020/21		
	£	£		£
Regional Consortia School Improvement Grant (RCSIG)				
- Education Improvement Grant	24,930,697	23,133,194	93%	1,797,503
- Professional Learning for Teachers	2,231,515	2,231,515	100%	0
- Other grant initiatives	3,527,764	2,658,940	75%	868,824
Pupil Development Grant (PDG)	18,064,750	18,064,750	100%	0
PDG (Lead Regional PDG Adviser)	100,000	0	0%	100,000
Seren Pre 16	98,400	98,400	100%	0
Seren Post 16	55,000	55,000	100%	0
Total	**49,008,126**	**46,241,799**	**94.4%**	**2,766,327**

**Delegation: This refers to funding which gives freedom of choice to a school in how it is used. It must however be spent in accordance with, and in the spirit of, the core purpose of the grant and the individual school development plan.

The following circumstances will not be classed as delegated:

- Staff seconded from the LA or the consortium to a school(s) or a cluster(s).
- Staff working wholly or partly in schools and paid for from a local authority or consortium retained budget.
- Staff or services that form part of an SLA – this type of activity will be classed as non - delegated.
- Monies delegated from the consortium to a local authority.

Several factors including funding, delivery of the business plan, workload, and the expectation placed by LAs, EAS, WG on the benefit of the grants has led to an enhanced live common school and cluster grant planning tool being proposed for 2020/21. This school planning tool delivers on

each of these factors. WG Hwb will be used as the host and accessible to key staff within the individual school, LA and the EAS.

The tool has been designed to capture all grant costs associated with the national mission, provide transparency on school and regional spend, report on intended impact and outcome of the grant including direct reference to the Sutton Toolkit. The tool also can cross reference to the school development plan and the one plan approach will be piloted with several schools in 2020/21. To further strengthen the transparency every school across the region will have live access to the individual grants delegated to each and every school.

Governor Support Service Level Agreement

The EAS has responsibility for providing a Governor Support service to all schools in the region. The service provides support to school governing bodies, headteachers, and individual governors. This includes advice, guidance, training, and an optional clerking service in order to support governing bodies to deliver their responsibilities.

The optional clerking service is provided through an annual service level agreement with an option to buy into a clerking service and then additionally a statutory committee clerking service. Only one school opted not to buy into the clerking service in 2019/20. The indicative funding for 2020/21 is £0.388m.

Monitoring and evaluation

The annual reporting activity through each of the governance groups is agreed in advance. Progress on the implementation and impact of the Business Plan will be reported formally at a mid-year basis to the Joint Executive Group and Company Board; this will include an evaluation of the regional plan and of each individual local authority annex document. These reports, as in previous years, will be suitable for scrutiny activity at local authority and national level.

Throughout the year there will be many interim impact reports associated with the implementation streams within the Business Plan which will be reported through each of the governance groups, though individual LA committees (as requested) and though evaluation and improvement events with Welsh Government officials, These include: reports on pupil outcomes and progress, progress on schools causing concern, regular updates on outcomes/impact from regional / local authority self-evaluation activity and regional strategies, feedback from external reviews, annual regional value for money report, Managing Director's Annual Report, outcomes from regional school and governor surveys.

The financial accounts are reported to both the company board on a quarterly basis and through the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee on a termly basis. The final year end accounts are externally audited and reported in line with the 2016 UK Corporate Governance Code. In compliance with the Companies Act these accounts are reported and approved at the Annual General Meeting by the Joint Executive Members who are shareholders of the EAS.

Additional supporting documents

This Business Plan is supported by the following documents:

- Local Authority Annex documents 2020 – 2021
- Detailed Business Plan 2020–2021
- Long term overview 2021-2023
- Regional Grant Mapping Overview 2020–2021
- Regional Self-Evaluation Report (Executive Summary)
- EAS Risk Register (Executive Summary)
- Regional Professional Learning Offer 2020–2021
- Local Authority Strategic Education Plans
- Mid-year and final year review of Business Plan 2019/2020

Local Authority Specific Annex 2020-2021

Local Authority: Blaenau Gwent

Summary of National Categorisation of schools in the Local Authority in 2017-2018, 2018-2019 and 2019-2020

Step 2 - Primary		Numbers of Schools				Percentage of Schools			
		D	C	B	A	D	C	B	A
Blaenau Gwent	17-18	0	1	12	6	0%	5%	63%	32%
	18-19	0	0	10	9	0%	0%	53%	47%
	19-20	0	2	8	9	0%	11%	42%	47%
South East Wales	17-18	2	17	83	88	1%	9%	44%	46%
	18-19	5	16	63	105	3%	8%	33%	56%
	19-20	6	11	55	117	3%	6%	29%	62%

Step 3 - Primary		Numbers of Schools				Percentage of Schools			
		Red	Amber	Yellow	Green	Red	Amber	Yellow	Green
Blaenau Gwent	17-18	0	2	11	6	0%	11%	58%	32%
	18-19	0	2	8	9	0%	11%	42%	47%
	19-20	0	2	8	9	0%	11%	42%	47%
South East Wales	17-18	8	14	81	87	4%	7%	43%	46%
	18-19	5	18	62	104	3%	10%	33%	55%
	19-20	6	13	54	116	3%	7%	29%	61%

Primary Step 2 - Blaenau Gwent

Year	A	B	C	D
19-20	47%	42%	11%	
18-19	47%	53%		
17-18	32%	63%	5%	

Legend: ■ A ■ B ■ C ■ D

Primary Step 3 - Blaenau Gwent

Year	Green	Yellow	Amber	Red
19-20	47%	42%	11%	
18-19	47%	42%	11%	
17-18	32%	58%	11%	

Legend: ■ Green ■ Yellow ■ Amber ■ Red

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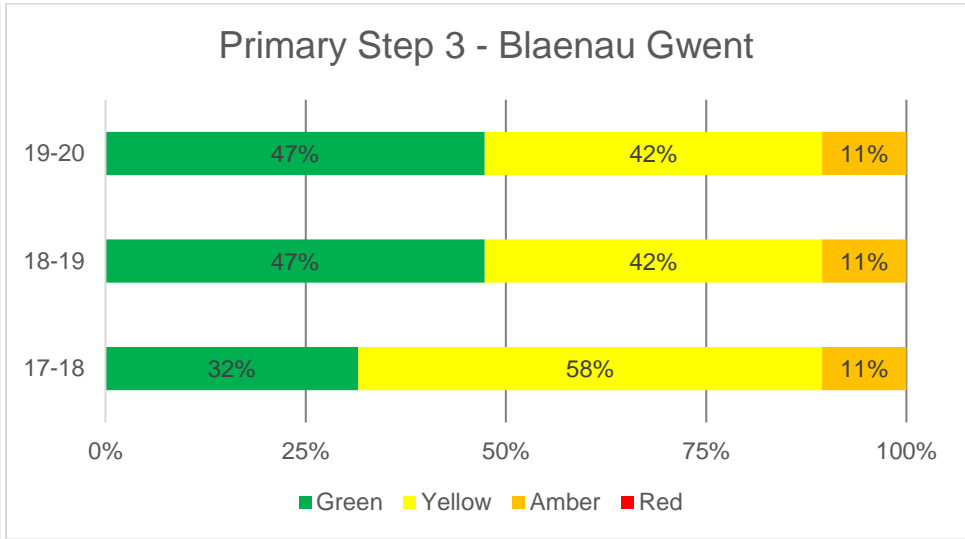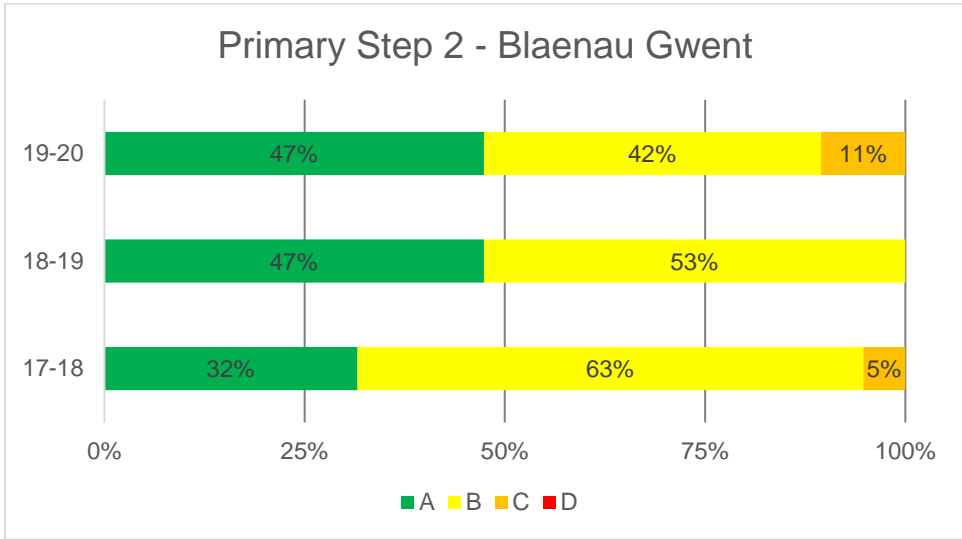
Step 2 - Secondary		Numbers of Schools				Percentage of Schools			
		D	C	B	A	D	C	B	A
Blaenau Gwent	17-18	1	1	0	1	33%	33%	0%	33%
	18-19	0	1	0	1	0%	50%	0%	50%
	19-20	1	0	0	1	50%	0%	0%	50%
South East Wales	17-18	6	14	7	6	18%	42%	21%	18%
	18-19	5	14	7	6	16%	44%	22%	19%
	19-20	7	8	10	7	22%	25%	31%	22%

Step 3 - Secondary		Numbers of Schools				Percentage of Schools			
		Red	Amber	Yellow	Green	Red	Amber	Yellow	Green
Blaenau Gwent	17-18	1	1	0	0	50%	50%	0%	0%
	18-19	1	0	1	0	50%	0%	50%	0%
	19-20	1	0	1	0	50%	0%	50%	0%
South East Wales	17-18	1	2	0	0	33%	67%	0%	0%
	18-19	1	1	1	0	33%	33%	33%	0%
	19-20	1	1	1	0	33%	33%	33%	0%

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Secondary Step 2 - Blaenau Gwent

Secondary Step 3 - Blaenau Gwent

Step 2 – All through schools		Numbers of Schools				Percentage of Schools			
		D	C	B	A	D	C	B	A
Blaenau Gwent	17-18	1	0	1	0	50%	0%	50%	0%
	18-19	1	0	1	0	50%	0%	50%	0%
	19-20	1	0	1	0	50%	0%	50%	0%
South East Wales	17-18	1	1	1	0	33%	33%	33%	0%
	18-19	1	1	1	0	33%	33%	33%	0%
	19-20	1	0	2	0	33%	0%	67%	0%

Step 3 – All through schools		Numbers of Schools				Percentage of Schools			
		Red	Amber	Yellow	Green	Red	Amber	Yellow	Green
Blaenau Gwent	17-18	1	1	0	0	50%	50%	0%	0%
	18-19	1	0	1	0	50%	0%	50%	0%
	19-20	1	0	1	0	50%	0%	50%	0%
South East Wales	17-18	1	2	0	0	33%	67%	0%	0%
	18-19	1	1	1	0	33%	33%	33%	0%
	19-20	1	1	1	0	33%	33%	33%	0%

All Through (3-16/18) Step 2 - Blaenau Gwent

All Through (3-16/18) Step 3 - Blaenau Gwent

5

LA schools currently in any Estyn follow-up category

Phase	School	Date of last inspection	Date report published	Follow-up status of last inspection
Secondary	Brynmawr Foundation	Oct-19	Dec-19	Special Measures

Phase	School	Date of last inspection	Date report published	Follow-up status of last inspection
3-16	Abertillery Learning Community	Feb-18	Apr-18	Significant Improvement

High Level Pupil Progress Analysis - 2019 - FP to KS2 / KS2 to KS3

LA/Region: Blaenau Gwent

Progress of pupils between FP and KS2

Subject	Matched Cohort	2+ levels of progress	1 level of progress
LLC - Welsh	37	97.3	2.7
LLC - English	712	90.4	9.1
Mathematics	756	90.6	9.4

Matching

2015 FP cohort	2019 KS2 cohort	%age of FP cohort matched	%age of KS2 cohort matched
49	38	75.5	97.4
745	802	95.6	88.8
794	802	95.2	94.3

* 2019 KS2 English cohort excludes Welsh Medium pupils to more accurately match the FP English cohort.

Progress of pupils between KS2 and KS3

Subject	Matched Cohort	2+ levels of progress	1 level of progress	1+ levels of progress
Welsh 1st Lang.	0	-	-	-
English	533	38.1	51.2	89.3
Mathematics	533	44.5	45.4	89.9
Science	533	37.3	53.7	91.0

Matching

2016 KS2 cohort	2019 KS3 cohort	%age of KS2 cohort matched	%age of KS3 cohort matched
22	0	0.0	-
677	556	78.7	95.9
677	556	78.7	95.9
677	556	78.7	95.9

Summary
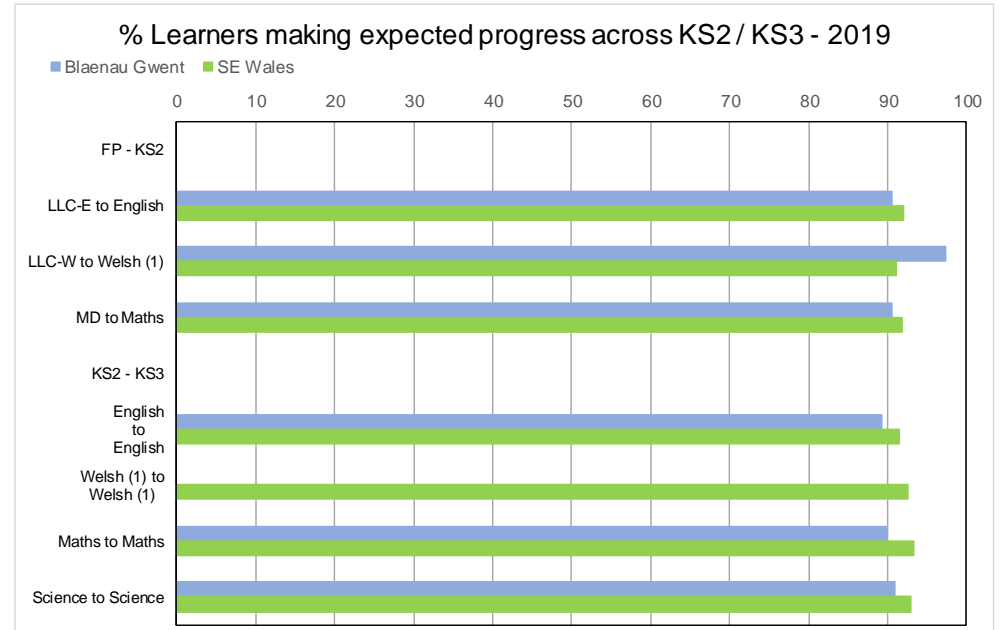
	LLC-E to English	LLC-W to Welsh (1)	MD to Maths	
FP to KS2 Expected Progress (2 'Levels')	90.4	97.3	90.6	

	English to English	Welsh (1) to Welsh (1)	Maths to Maths	Science to Science
KS2 to KS3 Expected Progress (1 Level)	89.3	-	89.9	91.0

% Learners making expected progress across KS2 / KS3 - 2019
Blaenau Gwent   SE Wales

Key Points: From FP to KS2, more than 9/10 learners make expected or greater progress. From KS2 to KS3 similar progress is made except for English, where it falls to 17/20

FP to KS2   A slightly higher proportion of learners, than across the region as a whole, make at least expected progress in English, Welsh (1st) and mathematics

KS2 to KS3   A far lower proportion of learners make at least expected progress in English
A slighlty lower proportion of learners make at least expect progress in mathematics
A slightly lower proportion of learners make at least expect progres in science

Blaenau Gwent
Cyngor Bwrdeisdref Sirol
County Borough Council

EAS
Education Achievement Service
for South East Wales
Gwasanaeth Cyflawni Addysg
i Dde Ddwyrain Cymru

LA summary and key issues

- Accelerating early language acquisition skills between the ages of 3 to 7.
- To increase value-added progress in English and Maths between KS 2 and 3 and particularly between KS 3 and KS 4
- To increase attainment in English and Maths in KS 3 at Level 6+
- To improve attainment in English and Maths (Maths in particular) at L2 in KS 4
- To improve value-added progress for our most vulnerable learners, particularly between KS 3 and KS 4

Attendance/Exclusions

- There has been an increase in attendance at secondary level since 2015, but a slight decrease at primary. Secondary and primary figures below that of Wales.
- There has been a marginally decrease in unauthorised absence at primary level, but an increase at secondary level. Both are above Wales.

Exclusion figures are reported by LA

- There has been an increase in exclusions of 5 days or fewer at primary level, but a decrease at secondary level. There has been a decrease in exclusions of 6 days or more at secondary level, but an increase to 1 at primary level.
- There were no permanent exclusion from primary schools in 2019, compared to one in 2018. There were 3 permanent exclusions in 2019 in secondary schools, all from Brynmawr. There were 8 permanent exclusions from secondaries in both 2017 and 2018, and 1 in 2016.

Inspection/Categorisation

- The percentage of schools judged at least Good for Standards of achievement was 63%. 63% of schools were judged Good or better for Well-being and attitudes to learning.
- The percentage of primary schools categorised green has remained stable in 2019/20, as has the percentage of schools in the amber / red categories. Two secondary schools remain categorised as red.

Schools requiring Improvement 2019-2020 (Amber and Red Overall Categories of support)

The information below indicates the schools in the overall category of Amber or Red in the Local Authority in the academic year 2019-2020, that will require additional support. The support is in line with the guidance within the National Categorisation System and within the SEWC Intervention Framework 2019-2020. Each of these schools have a detailed Intervention or Support Plan, the progress each school makes over the next academic year will be captured through regular Education Improvement Boards (EIBs) or Intervention Meetings.

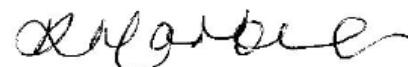| Schools requiring Amber levels of support	Schools requiring Red levels of support
Glyncoed Primary	Abertillery Learning Community
Sofrydd Primary	Brynmawr School

LA Director / Chief Education Officer:

Mrs. Lynette Jones

Cabinet Member for Education:

Cllr. Joanne Collins

EAS Managing Director

Ms. Debbie Harteveld

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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: **26th February 2020**

Report Subject: **Blaenau Gwent Education Services DRAFT Self – Evaluation Findings**

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)**
√	13.02.20	14.02.20			26.02.20	11.03.20		

1. **Purpose of the Report**

1.1 To provide members with opportunity to scrutinise the findings of ongoing self-evaluation processes undertaken in the Education Directorate, with partners and across the Council. Findings inform our evaluations of progress against our key improvement priorities, which will be the subject of a further, separate report.

1.2 This report looks at the emerging findings against the inspection framework for Local Government Education Services (LGES) which will inform evaluations of progress against the key improvement priorities set out in business improvement plans.

1.3 A separate report will evaluate the extent of progress against the improvement objectives as set out in the Education Directorate's Business Improvement Plan and the Council's Corporate Plan.

2. **Scope and Background**

2.1 The report provides a high-level narrative and appended presentation, which sets out the emerging findings of self-evaluation. A detailed, evaluative narrative, identifying areas where good progress has been made and where ongoing further improvement is required, is available on request.

2.2 Findings from self-evaluation are reflected as actions for improvement in the Directorate's Business Improvement Plans at Directorate, Service and Team level. Effective self-evaluation means that the Directorate remains focussed on improving the right things.

2.3 A comprehensive data set of school performance, coupled with evaluations of impact and effectiveness of Council based and brokered support feeds into the overall evaluation.

2.4   A comprehensive self-evaluation process helps identify those areas where progress has been made and where further improvement is required. Emerging findings, via ongoing self-evaluation is captured every October and March, as well as via quarterly performance and finance reporting mechanisms.

2.5   The findings of self-evaluation are captured in degrees of detail, from most detailed to high-level points only. However, it is the high-level points only, which are presented in this report.

3.   **Options for Recommendation**

3.1   This report has been approved by Education DMT and CLT prior to submission to Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee.

        Option 1: to accept the report as presented.

        Option 2: members are requested 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   This report provides the Committee with important and statutory performance monitoring information, as well as opportunity to identify where progress has been made and where further improvement is required.

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

4.1   **Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan**

        One of the objectives in the Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan aims for every child to have the best start in life. Through effective self-evaluation and improvement planning processes, 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 (short and long term impact)*

5.1.1   The Council allocates approximately £42.8 million (2019/20) to schools via the Individual Schools Budget (ISB) to provide high quality education and to improve pupil outcomes.

5.1.2   The Council's total gross budgeted expenditure per pupil for 2019/20 was £6,372 which is the 3rd highest in Wales and £523 above the Welsh average of £5,849.

5.1.3   For 2019/20 the funding delegated to schools was 85.7% which is above the all Wales average and ranked 1st when compared to the family of schools. (Local Authority Budgeted Expenditure on Schools 2019/20). The Education Directorate has an improving position on a 'value for money' basis, in that school categorisation has improved significantly and the overall central funding has reduced, in line with public sector austerity measures.

5.1.4   The Council commissions the Education Achievement Service (EAS) to deliver the statutory functions of school improvement. The annual financial costs being £364K which has reduced by 2% over the last 3 years (for example £371 FY 18/19, £21K over 3 years).   Schools categorisation profile has improved over the last 5 years against a backdrop of decreasing financial contributions to the EAS: this therefore, effectively represents good value for money.

5.1.5   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*

5.2.1   Risk is associated with weak self-evaluation which fails to accurately identify those areas where good progress has been made and where further improvement is needed. Strong self-evaluation helps services target resources at greatest need and hence bring about improvement precisely where it is needed.

5.2.2   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.

5.2.3   Mitigating actions include:
- strong self-evaluation processes which accurately identify those areas which need to improve the most;
- 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;
- the progress schools make towards targets is also monitored on a termly basis. School attendance and exclusion figures are monitored on a fortnightly basis.   School's safeguarding processes are also closely monitored.

5.2.4   Holistic support packages are devised via regular intra Council services meetings between OD, finance, health and safety, education and school governor support services. School level performance data is regularly analysed and evaluated to identify emerging trends.

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*
This report provides information about statutory, end of Key Stage school performance underpinned by processes set out in the National Model for regional working and School Improvement. The School Standards and Organisation Act Wales (2013) support strategic and operational activity to improve pupil outcomes.

5.4   *Human Resources*
None for this report.

6.   **Performance Information**

6.1   **Performance**
Areas where good progress has been made:
- School inspection and school categorisation profile has improved significantly with no Primary schools in follow up, and excellent practice identified in a number of schools;
- GCSE L2 English and Capped 9 improved;
- GCSE A*/A grades improved in English and Maths;
- A-level A-C grades were greater than all-Wales means;
- Value-added progress in English and Maths, reading and numeracy for our 7 and 11 year olds have improved;
- 11-year-old boys made better progress in reading;
- The Reach of the Youth Service exceeded that of the all-Wales means;
- Primary persistent absenteeism reduced to below that of the all-Wales means;
- The School Based Counselling Service provides good support;
- Permanent exclusions reduced;
- Good progress through the 21st Century schools programme;
- The Headteacher Induction and support programme was very well received by aspiring and new Headteachers;
- The Staff wellbeing survey was good; and
- The EAS provide good value for money.

6.2   **Areas where further improvement is required:**
- Higher levels of language acquisition in our very young children in the Early Years;
- Improved attainment of eFSM pupils and particularly our More Able pupils in the Early Years and throughout education;
- Improve school attendance;
- Progress between Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 and attainment at Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 in English and Maths;
- Provision for pupils with additional learning needs;
- Reduction in NEETs; and
- Reduce school exclusions and parents/carers who opt to EHE.

The Council will continue to work with partners across the Council, for example, children's services, regeneration, legal, finance and organisational development to focus the work on improving pupil outcomes and supporting school leaders. The Council will also continue to work across the Greater Gwent Partnership namely the Education Achievement Service (EAS) to support our school leaders to improve pupil outcomes and wellbeing.

6.3 **Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation)**
The Directorate's self-evaluation processes are aligned with LGES and the regional policy for monitoring, supporting, evaluation and intervention in schools through the categorisation process is derived from the National Categorisation Framework.

A range of Council departments and external partners are involved in delivering programmes to support schools requiring improvement. Monitoring progress enables effective targeting of support. The Education Directorate's senior officers, alongside Inclusion officers and officers in OD and Finance provide valuable advice and support for schools. They work in very close partnership with the EAS to design and implement effective support packages for schools presenting as a cause for concern.
All of the above are also engaged and contribute to the Council's self-evaluation processes.

6.4 **Thinking for the Long term (forward planning)**
Analysis of individual 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. Effective self-evaluation processes ensure that resources are targeted at greatest need and secure improvement in longer term. Monitoring of school performance facilitates support for schools to ensure that schools maintain high quality provision and hence improved pupil outcomes and wellbeing in the longer term.

6.5 **Preventative focus**
Through effective self-evaluation processes, support and monitoring of school performance, early identification of emerging areas for improvement can be identified with consequent early intervention to secure improvement. The effectiveness of the Council's monitoring, support, evaluation and intervention programmes ensure that preventative action is taken early in order to minimise the escalation of concerns.

6.6 **Collaboration / partnership working**
The Council collaborates with neighbouring local authorities through the South East Wales Consortium for the provision of School Improvement Services from the Education Achievement Service (EAS).

The Council also secures a range of pupil support services such as the regionally based support service for pupils with hearing and vision challenges as well as support to improve speech and language and support for our pupils of ethnic minority and those with English as an additional language.

Learning support is also in place to support achievement for our children who are looked after.

Within the Council, the school improvement and inclusion leadership teams ensure there is a coordinated approach to supporting schools across the County Borough as a whole.

6.7 ***Integration(across service areas)***
Ensuring that schools deliver high quality education provision to secure high pupil outcomes and wellbeing relates directly to Council Improvement Objectives; that Children's and young people's learning is maximised and standards at Key Stage 4 are raised.

These overarching outcomes and objectives permeate the work of a range of Council departments and partners. Effective monitoring, support, evaluation and intervention are fundamental to the Council's wellbeing objectives as appended below.

6.8 ***EqIA(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, support, 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 and wellbeing are improved for all children and young people.

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

7.1 Monitoring of the emerging findings of self-evaluation is an important mechanism for ensuring that members of the Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee and the Executive are sufficiently informed to enable them to hold the Authority effectively to account for the quality of education provision and hence pupil outcomes and wellbeing. Well-established processes are in place to ensure that improvement plans are cognisant of emerging findings for improvement.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

- Appendix 1 – High Level Summary

Blaenau Gwent Education Directorate: emerging findings of self-evaluation.
HIGH LEVEL SUMMARY
January 2020

Lynette Jones, Corporate Director of Education

Contextual Information

➡ NPT ranks 1 st in Wales followed by BG for eFSM acting as a proxy indicator for deprivation.

➡ In Wales, attainment over last 3 years at the end of Foundation Phase, KS 2 and KS 3 either declined or broadly stayed the same. This was mirrored in Blaenau Gwent except for English at L6 at Key Stage 3, which improved.

➡ In Blaenau Gwent School categorisation and inspection outcomes have improved over the last 4 years.

Secondary School Categorisation

Secondary School Categories 2018/19

- There are no national averages readily available for Step 1 and Step 2 data, and no Step 1 data was used for categorisation again this year.

- At the time of writing the regional comparative information for secondary settings shows that 53% of secondary schools across the region are categorised as red or amber compared to 50% in Blaenau Gwent.

- During the past three years, the proportion of schools in the green category has remained stable at Step 2 and Step 3.

Primary School Categorisation

Primary School Categories 2019/20

- There are no national averages readily available for Step 1 and Step 2 data, and no Step 1 data was used for categorisation again this year.

- However, during the past three years, the proportion of schools in the green category has increased for both Step 2 and 3, and is now 47% (compared to 43% for 2018/19 and from 32% for 2017 18).

- Similarly, the majority of primary schools (89%) are now categorised at both steps as either yellow or green with a greater proportion categorised as green than in 2017/18. This is in line with the regional performance of 89% for green / yellow schools.

1.1 Standards and progress overall - Areas where good progress has been made:

In the Foundation Phase: Almost two-thirds of schools improved LLCE results in 2019 while a similar proportion of schools exceeded their targets in MD.

Value-added (VA) Progress Foundation Phase to KS 2: (between the ages of 7 and 11 years old)

- pupils made good progress in English and Maths, also in reading and numeracy.

- boys made better progress than girls in reading and numeracy

eFSM Value-added (VA) Progress:

- eFSM mean progress (NC) was similar to that of non-FSM in KS 2 and KS 3 in English and Maths

- eFSM also made similar progress (NC) between KS 3 and 4 to that of non-FSM in English and Maths

In Key Stage 3:

- Level 5+ in writing, reading and oracy improved

- In 3 of the 4 secondary settings English, reading and writing at L6+ improved

- In 3 of the 4 settings Value-added progress in numeracy improved

1.1 Standards and Progress overall: Areas requiring improvement:

- Early language acquisition and attainment pre-school and in the Foundation Phase needs to improve

- Attainment of pupils entitled to Free School Meals needs to improve in all phases and Key Stages

- The quality of provision in Key Stages 2 and 3 for pupils with ALN at SA and SA+ levels need to improve

- Value-added progress for pupils across Key Stage 3 in English and Maths (at L5+ and L6+) needs to improve

- Attainment at GCSE in Maths and English in Key Stage 4 needs to improve

- Value-added progress for pupils in English and Maths as they move between Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 needs to improve - this includes pupils at The River Centre

- Pupil outcomes and progress in ALC and BFS need to improve

- Progress of children looked after during Key Stage 3 needs to improve

- Post-16 attainment at A*/A at A and AS level needs to improve as does completion rates

- NEETs need to reduce to below that of the all-Wales mean.

Pupil wellbeing: attendance and exclusions

- Primary school attendance has declined between 2016/17 and 2018/19 from 94.5% to 94.2%. However, at the end of 2017/18 there were a greater proportion of schools placed in Q1 and Q2. This places BG 3rd in the family of LAs.

- All Wales mean for Primary attendance stands at 94.6% in 18/19 (LA rank available in March 2020) BG Primary attendance is therefore 0.4pp below the all-Wales means.

- Primary: Unauthorised absence at the end of 2018/19 remained the same as in 2017/18 at 1.4% but still placed BG primary schools 2nd in its family of LAs and in line with the Welsh mean (1.4%).

- Primary: Persistent absenteeism in the primary sector has remained at 1.6% since 2015/16. (18/19 data is released in March). The all-Wales means stands at 1.7% BG remains 0.1% below this and ranks joint 1st in our family of LAs and joint 2nd in SEWC.

Pupil wellbeing: attendance and exclusions

- Secondary attendance, declined from 93.7% (16/17) to 92.9% (18/19). Based on the trend data over the 3-year period Blaenau Gwent is placed joint 3rd in our family of local authorities and 5th across the SEWC region. All-Wales means for secondary attendance is 93.8% which places BG 0.9pp lower than the all-Wales figures.

- Secondary unauthorised absence has increased from 1.5% (16/17) to 2.2% (18/19) and BG remains above national averages (1.7%).

- Persistent absenteeism in the secondary sector has increased from 3.4% to 4.1% since 2015/16, (18/19 data is released in March), which place places BG 1st in our family of local authorities and 2nd across the SEWC region. Despite the slight increase in persistent absenteeism, it is in line with the Welsh average of 4.1%.

- There has been a marginal reduction in pupils with below 80% attendance at the end of July 2019 compared to the end of July 2018. (747 in 2018/19 compared to 772 in 2017/18).

Pupil wellbeing: attendance and exclusions

- At the last point whereby comparative Council data was available (17/18), Blaenau Gwent ranked 13/22 fo rates of 5-day exclusions or less, 4/5 in our family of LAs and 2/5 in South East Wales Consortia (SEWC). For rate of 6 days or more we were joint 6/22, 2/5 in our family of LAs and 2/5 in SEWC.

- KS3/4 data shows a 19% reduction in the number of exclusions in 2018/19 compared to the previous year and a 12.6% reduction in the number of days lost.

- Foundation Phase (FP)/KS2 data shows an increase in incidents of exclusion as well as a commensurate increase in the number of days lost.

- Data at FP/KS2 shows that a small number of schools account for 66% of exclusions and in those schools a significant proportion of the total relate to a small number of pupils (11).

- In 2017/18 more pupils in yr 7 were excluded that in any other year. In 2018/19 there has been a considerable reduction in yr7 exclusions.

- There were a total of three permanent exclusions in 2018/19 compared to nine in 2017/18 and 12 in 2016/17. Of these, all were in KS3/4.

1.3 Wellbeing and Attitudes to Learning: Areas where good progress has been made:

- Primary unauthorised absence at the end of 2018/19 remained the same as in 2017/18 at 1.4% but still placed BG primary schools its family of LAs and in line with the Welsh mean (1.4%).

- In Primary: persistent absenteeism in the primary sector has remained at 1.6% since 2015/16. (18/19 data is released in March). Th Wales means stands at 1.7% BG remains 0.1% below this and ranks joint 1st in our family of LAs and joint 2nd in SEWC.

- In Secondary: persistent absenteeism in the secondary sector has increased from 3.4% to 4.1% since 2015/16, (18/19 data is relea in March), which place places BG 1st in our family of local authorities and 2nd across the SEWC region. Despite the slight increase persistent absenteeism, it is in line with the Welsh average of 4.1%. 3 of the 4 secondary schools exceeded the WG modelled figu for attendance in 2017-18.

- All: there has been a marginal reduction in pupils with below 80% attendance at the end of July 2019 compared to the end of July 2 (747 in 2018/19 compared to 772 in 2017/18).

- There are good, recent examples as reported in school inspection reports, where pupil voice is noted as being good for example, S Illtyd's Primary, St Joseph's RC Primary, BleanY Cwm Primary, St Mary's CIW.

- Inspection outcomes for care, support and guidance as well as for wellbeing are generally good in this area.

Wellbeing: where good progress has been made

- There are a good range of support programmes in place: Healthy Schools demonstrating exemplary work with schools in this area, good levels of participation in sport and events to seek views of CYP

- Effective Counselling service in place for 11 to 25 year olds.

- Exclusions: At the last point whereby comparative Council data was available (17/18), Blaenau Gwent wa 13/22 for rates of 5-day exclusions or less, 4/5 in our family of LAs and 2/5 in South East Wales Consorti (SEWC). For rate of 6 days or more we were joint 6/22, 2/5 in our family of LAs and 2/5 in SEWC. KS3/4 data shows a 19% reduction in the number of exclusions in 2018/19 compared to the previous year and a 12.6% reduction in the number of days lost.

- In 2017/18 more pupils in Yr 7 were excluded that in any other year. In 2018/19 there has been a considerable reduction in Yr7 exclusions.

- There were a total of three permanent exclusions in 2018/19 compared to nine in 2017/18 and 12 in 2016/17. Of these, all were in KS3/4.

- BG has 71 EHE pupils, which is below the all-Wales mean of 121 per LA but need to reduce: 3rd lowest our family of LAs. In BG 79% of families received a visit in the last 12 months compared with an average 40% across Wales. There has been a decrease in pupils with ALN becoming EHE.

- The EHE Policy has been reviewed and an action plan implemented with progress overseen by the Inclusion Core Group. There is good monitoring and pre-emptive processes now in place.

1.3 Wellbeing and Attitudes to Learning: Areas requiring improvement:

➡ To improve primary school attendance in BG from 94.3% to equate at least to the all-Wales mean of 94.5%. Primary school attendance has declined between 2016/17 and 2018/19 from 94.5% to 94.2%. However, at the end of 2017/18 there were a greater proportion of schools placed in Q1 and Q2. This places BG 3rd in the family of LAs. All Wales mean for Primary attendance stands at 94.6% in 18/19 (LA rank available in March 2020) BG Primar attendance is therefore 0.4pp below the all-Wales means.

➡ To reduce primary unauthorised absence in BG from 1.4% to that of the all-Wales means which is 1.3%. Primary: unauthorised absence at the end of 2018/19 remained the same as in 2017/18 at 1.4% but still placed BG primary schools 2nd in its family of LAs and in line wit the Welsh mean (1.4%).

➡ To work to reduce persistent absenteeism in the primary sector to well below that of the all-Wales means i.e. Wales= 1.7%, BG=1.6%: Primary: persistent absenteeism in the primary sector has remained at 1.6% since 2015/16. (18/19 data is released in March). The all-Wale means stands at 1.7% BG remains 0.1% below this and ranks joint 1st in our family of LAs and joint 2nd in SEWC.

1.3 Wellbeing and Attitudes to Learning: Areas requiring improvement:

- To improve secondary school attendance from 92.9% to 93.8% (all-Wales means): Secondary attendance, declined from 93.7% (16/17) to 92.9% (18/19). Based on the trend data over the 3-year period Blaenau Gwent is placed joint 3rd in our family of local authorities and 5th across the SEWC region. All-Wales means for secondary attendance is 93.8% which places BG 0.9pp lower than the all-Wales figures.

- To reduce persistent absenteeism in the secondary sector in BG from 4.1% to below that of the all-Wales means (also currently 4.1%). Persistent absenteeism in the secondary sector has increased from 3.4% to 4.1% since 2015/16, (18/19 data is released in March), which place places BG 1st in our family of local authorities and 2nd across the SEWC region. Despite the slight increase in persistent absenteeism, it is in line with the Welsh average of 4.1%.

- To reduce unauthorised absence in the secondary sector in BG from 2.2% to below that of the all-Wales means (1.6%) Unauthorised absence has increased from 1.5% (16/17) to 2.2% (18/19) and BG remains above national averages (1.7%)

1.3 Wellbeing and Attitudes to Learning: Areas requiring improvement:

- Exclusions need to reduce: The Inclusion team are working to support the two identified schools in this regard. At the last point that comparative Council data was available (17/18), Blaenau Gwent was 13/22 for rates of 5-day exclusions or less, 4/5 in our family of LAs and 2/5 in South East Wales Consortia (SEWC). For rate of 6 days or more we were joint 6/22, 2/5 in our family of LAs and 2/5 in SEWC. Foundation Phase (FP)/KS2 data shows an increase in incidents of exclusion as well as a commensurate increase in the number of days lost.

- EHE: In 2019 the rate of EHE in BG is 8.5 pupils per 1000 compared to 6.4 per 1000 in 2018. Wales' average is 6.5 per 1000. Wales saw an increase of 0.8pp while the increase in BG was 2/1pp. BG has the 7th highest EHE per 1000 CYP

- 31% of EHE are from Year 11 this compares with 17.6% nationally. A spike has been observed in the numbers of year 11 becoming EHE. Anxiety and bullying remain the key reported factors that led to parents opting to EHE.

- EHE figures for BG schools are too high. Work to support schools and parents/carers in this important area will continue.

2.1 Support for school improvement: Areas where good progress has been made

- Good knowledge of schools and good partnership and close working between the EAS and Directorate/Council services

- Much improved school inspection and significant improvement in school categorisation profile (no primary school in follow-up)

- Good outcomes / progress for identified vulnerable groups in recent years.

- Swift action taken by Council to implement powers to improve schools.

- The process for the appointment of LA Governors is now well established and there is evidence of improved governance in a majority of schools.

2.1 Support for school improvement: Areas requiring improvement:

- To continue intensive work to improve pupil outcomes and progress both ALC and BFS in line with plans

- To continue to work with the EAS and schools to improve outcomes and progress for all pupils, particularly in the secondary sector, for eFSM and vulnerable groups and in the Early Years

- To continue to support schools to improve the effectiveness and impact of their grant planning, particularly PDG

- To work with the EAS, the Directorate Inclusion Services and schools to improve the quality and effectiveness of provision for ALN

- To devise specific school based support to bring about an acceleration in early language acquisiti and general skill development in the early years and through to the end of the Foundation Phase the first instance.

- To work with the EAS and schools to increase the number / proportions of learners who achieve higher-level outcomes and progress at each key stage, particularly during the early years and in

- To work with the EAS and schools to improve attendance, reduce exclusions and EHE

2.2. Support for Vulnerable Learners: areas where progress has been made

- Good progress has been made through the comprehensive ALN Provision Improvement Plan

- The River Centre in now open, ASD provision is in place

- The ALN Service has undergone a review and is being reconfigured to meet the diversity of present need

- Resource Base provision has improved

- Excellent practice has been secured in Pen Y Cwm Special School

- Estyn judgements in school inspections for care support and guidance remain good or better

- Practice to identify pupil progress using matched data (also for specific pupils groups) is now in its second year and is helping to identify where further improvement in provision is needed , for example, in KS3 in particular and in identified schools, in the progress rates between KS 3 and KS 4 in English and Maths, and to secure improved progress for all vulnerable groups, including eFSM and particularly during and between KS3 and KS 4

2.2. Support for Vulnerable Learners: areas where further improvement is required:

- The quality and effectiveness of support to increase attainment of very young pupils in the early years and at the end of the Foundation Phase (particularly eFSM but not solely) needs to improve so that progress rates going forward for these learners is accelerated significantly.

- The quality and effectiveness of support provided for all vulnerable learners, including eFSM needs to improve so that attainment and progress increases significantly both during KS 3 and between Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4.

- The quality of provision and effectiveness of leadership and management of inclusion, in these Key Stages, need to improve, particularly in identified schools and settings and for the specific groups in this report and as set out in their relative FADE. To continue to progress the partnership approach with the EAS to bring about this improvement.

Support for Vulnerable Learners: where further improvement is required

Exclusions: to continue with important work underway to reduce exclusions.

To work with Secondary HTs to establish the Revolving Door approach for pupils in the River Centre and mainstream secondary schools

To support the newly reconfigured ALN Service operating out of Pen Y Cwm Special School.

Work with colleagues in the wider Inclusion team and regionally to continue to provide support and challenge for schools in line with the **ALNET Act.**

ALN in EY: Panel arrangements are effective in providing support for EY pupils with ALN. However, developing ALN capacity-building in EY is in the early stages of development and needs to be accelerate

EP Service: to secure an improved and blended working approach with Children's Services to exp how the EPS can work more effectively within Early Years settings

EHE practice for those on the cusp of EHE needs to be more targeted for identified year groups and in identified schools. The Action Plan needs to be fully implemented.

To continue to work closely with the EAS and schools to support schools in improving analysis of pupi with SEN who perform below expected levels to ensure that all pupils show good progress in line with the ability from their individual baselines particularly for **those pupils in KS 3 at SA level.**

2.3 Support for other services: areas where progress has been made

- There has been strong progress through 21st Century Band A and welcomed approval for Band B

- The Youth Service provides good outcomes, reach, support and progress for CYP.

- Strong progress has been made to reduce surplus places and forecast pupil places and manage facilities.

- The Council has good arrangements in place to support the coordination of early years, childcare and play to ensure sufficiency.

2.3 Support for other services: areas where further improvement is required

- To continue to improve cross Directorate working between Youth Services, Education Transformation, Inclusion and School Improvement

- Ensure the Youth Service continues to contribute to the broader Inclusion and Wellbeing agendas, through wider Inclusion meetings and regular meeting with Senior Inclusion leaders.

- To undertake a review of the management of home to school and college transport is managed, and how the Environment and Communities Directorate and Education Directorates develop procedures that are able to more effectively address current gaps that have been identified in reviewing the policy.

- To conduct a review of Online Admissions to further improve parental engagement.

3.1 Quality and effectiveness of leaders and managers: Areas where good progress has been made

- The improving School Categorisation and School Inspection Profile and good progress through the 21st Century schools programme over the last 3 years, demonstrates the increased effectiveness of leaders and managers in Local Government Education Services in Blaenau Gwent.

- The Council considers all evidence and implements its full use of statutory powers where applicable.

- The impact of good, effective leadership is demonstrated through programme completion for example, the opening of 6 Bells, The River Centre, good progress through the 21st Century Schools Band A programme and approval of Band B programme for 2019 to 2024.

- Regional leadership across the SEWC area and nationally is being exercised well by senior officers.

3.1 Quality and effectiveness of leaders and managers: areas where further improvement is required

➡ To continue to develop the collective understanding and impact of work required regarding The School Standards and Organisation Act, particularly for Schools Causing Concern.

➡ To continue to develop officer expertise through the Professional Learning Offer.

➡ To further develop member led self-evaluation activity across key service areas located within Local Government Education Services, for example via the Scrutiny Sub-group looking at Wellbeing in Schools.

3.2 Self-evaluation and improvement planning: Areas where good progress has been made

- The Self–evaluation Policy and practice is now well developed and established part of routine work in the Directorate.

- The FADE approach to writing evaluations is embedded into routine practice. Processes are totally aligned with Corporate policy. The Education Directorate is confident in its SE processes and their ability to sustain continual improvement.

- The Council is swift in its action and use of full statutory powers where applicable, to secure the improvement required.

- Partnership working between the Council and the EAS is strong and is subject to significant joint working and quality assurance.

Self-evaluation and improvement planning: Areas where good progress has been made

- Impact evaluations reveal that the EAS and direct work of Challenge Advisers is having a positive impact on outcomes, provision and the quality of leadership.

- The School Categorisation and School Inspection Profile has improved significantly over the last 3 years effectively evidencing the effectiveness of self-evaluation processes.

3.2 Self-evaluation and improvement planning: Areas where further improvement is required

- To develop the collective understanding of accountabilities as set out in the School Standards and Organisation Act – particularly those regarding schools causing concern

- To continue to engage members in meaningful self – evaluation activity, for example the Scrutiny Sub Group looking at School Wellbeing.

- To continue to ensure that Business Plans bring about the improvement required.

- To continue to engage with a wider stakeholder group when undertaking evaluations, particularly Headteachers.

- To build in a greater range of qualitative evidence into the self-evaluation process

3.3 Professional learning: Areas where progress has been made

- Senior Officers now hold Chair positions across a number of SEWC and all Wales groups; this supports their ongoing professional development.

- 121 coaching sessions are embedded as routine practice. PDR underpinned by an effective 360 process is an embedded process (and available). This also includes contributions form Headteachers for senior Officer's PDR i.e. the Corporate Director for Education and Head of Service for Transformation

- New Headteacher and aspiring deputy induction learning offer is in place and led by an experienced Headteacher

- Staff Wellbeing Survey evidenced very good outcomes

3.3 Professional learning: Areas where further improvement is required

- To engage in more formal evaluations of the impact and effectiveness of CPD for Directorate officers.

- To continue to develop ways in which officers can continue to engage in professional development activity via their regional and national roles.

3.4 Safeguarding arrangements: Areas where progress has been made

- The Matrix approach to capturing information is helpful and supports the ongoing improvement in practice in this area.

- The close working arrangements between Education and Social Services departments have developed well, further supporting a coherence of approach regarding safeguarding in schools and settings

- Recent work to respond to community safety issues, counter potential terrorism and extremist behaviours has progressed well, for example, the Safer School Partnership, the Respect and Resilience Action Plan.

Safeguarding arrangements: Areas where progress has been made

- The Operation Encompass work has progressed very well and supports schools in this regard.

- Quality assurance processes to test the robustness of safeguarding processes have been implemented and inform ongoing work in this area.

- The new Council Policy requiring all school Governors to be DBS cleared is being implemented.

- The 2019 Safeguarding Policy has been reviewed and is being implemented

3.4 Safeguarding Arrangements: Areas where further improvement is required

- Continue to develop policy and practice that is responsive to emerging school concerns in line with the Vision for education of school led improvement in a contextual safeguarding approach.

- Full implementation of VAWDA SV (Group 1) training needs to be achieved at school level, as well as the implementation of Group 2 training across all LGES settings

- The 360-degree safe Cymru Policy needs to be agreed by the Executive and implemented in all schools. (by end of summer term 2020)

3.4 Safeguarding Arrangements: Areas where further improvement is required

- Digitalisation of the safeguarding matrix to be developed and streamlined to enable greater readability.

- Provide greater flexibility in the training offer to increase the uptake of safeguarding training by school governors

3.5 Use of resources: Areas where progress has been made

- Protection of ISB 1% uplift FY 2019/20 and all WG grant (2020/21) will be pass ported to schools for 2020/21 (equating to a 5% uplift)

- SMR 2 and SMR 2+ now complete with Service Manager for Inclusion and Strategic Education Improvement Manager now in place.

- EAS provides good value for money

- Schools have worked strategically with the Directorate to establish a PRC budget for staff terminations.

- All schools have signed up to the 3 year SLA arrangement with the Council.

- 21st Century Band A nearing successful completion Band B approved.

3.5 Use of resources: areas requiring improvement

- Schools' deficit balances in the secondary sector have increased and need to be kept under close review going forward; timely support to be provided by the LA. Review of funding formula to be completed prior to start of FY 2020/21

- Additional Welsh Medium provision needs to be developed and the WESP progressed accordingly.

- Cost pressures for transport, OOC placements and AWPU exist and work needs to continue to reduce them

- The ALN Service operating out of Pen Y Cwm Special school needs to deliver high impact and high quality support to schools.

- Bridging the Gap work programme needs to continue so that potential for a more blended service delivery is fully explored fully and opportunities maximised where possible.

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: **26th February 2020**

Report Subject: **School Categorisation**

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)
	04.02.2020	14.02.20			26.02.2020	11.03.20		

1   **Purpose of the Report**

1.1   To inform Scrutiny Members of the Blaenau Gwent school categorisation profile for 2020.

2   **Scope and Background**

2.1   The report covers the categorisation of all schools in Blaenau Gwent County Borough.

2.2   **National School Categorisation**

The Minister for Education and Skills announced the introduction of the National School Categorisation System in September 2014. The system, which covers both primary schools and secondary schools, has evolved over subsequent years.

From 2017-2018, Welsh Government removed the data-driven judgement that placed schools into a standards group as part of Step 1. Discussion around the school's self-evaluation and school development planning has become the central feature of the model. The school's data remains as a starting point for discussions within the school and with the Challenge Adviser about their capacity to improve in relation to leadership, teaching and learning.

3.   **Options for Recommendation**

3.1   This report has been approved by Education DMT, CLT for submission to Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee.

Option 1

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

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 **Statutory Responsibility**

4.1.1 The national approach to school categorisation seeks to ensure that our learning organisations are appropriately supported and clearly aligned to the aims and objectives set out below:

4.1.2 **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 building to help learners achieve great outcomes
  - To continue to support our school leaders to help our pupils achieve their ambitions."

4.1.3 **Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan**

The statutory framework is clearly aligned to the objectives in the Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan which aims for everyone to have the best start in life.

Through this plan it seeks to ensure that the education provision is appropriate and able to meet the needs of children and young people so that their progress is as good as it ought to be.

5. **Implications Against Each Option**

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

5.1.1 There are no direct financial implications for this report. However, the Council allocates approximately £42 million to schools via the Individual Schools Budget (ISB) to provide high quality education and to improve pupil outcomes.

5.1.2 Blaenau Gwent continues to make a financial contribution to the regional EAS arrangements of approximately £300,000 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.

5.2 ***Risk including Mitigating Actions***
Risk is associated with underperformance and ineffective processes to improve performance 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.

5.3 ***Legal***
As part of the agreed National Model for Regional Working, Welsh Government, local government, regional consortia and the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) have worked together to ensure a national and consistent approach to the categorisation of schools.

5.4 ***Human Resources***
None for this report.

6. **Supporting Evidence**

6.1 ***Performance Information and Data***

6.1.1 **Primary School Categories 2019/20**

There are no national averages readily available for Step 1 and Step 2 data, and no Step 1 data was used for categorisation again this year.

However, the chart below shows that during the past three years, the proportion of schools in the green category has increased for both **Step 2 and 3**, and is now 47% (compared to 43% for 2018/19 and from 32% for 2017 18). Similarly, the majority of primary schools (89%) are now categorised at both steps as either yellow or green with a greater proportion categorised as green than in 2017/18. This is in line with the regional performance of 89% for green / yellow schools.

Primary School

		Numbers of Schools				Percentage of Schools			
		Red	Amber	Yellow	Green	Red	Amber	Yellow	Green
Step 3	17-18	0	2	11	6	0%	11%	58%	32%
	18-19	0	2	8	9	0%	11%	42%	47%
	19-20	0	2	8	9	0%	11%	42%	47%
		D	C	B	A	D	C	B	A
Step 2	17-18	0	1	12	6	0%	5%	63%	32%
	18-19	0	0	10	9	0%	0%	53%	47%
	19-20	0	2	8	9	0%	11%	42%	47%

6.1.2 **Secondary School Categories 2018/19**

There are no national averages readily available for Step 1 and Step 2 data, and no Step 1 data was used for categorisation again this year.

At the time of drafting the report the regional comparative information for secondary settings shows that 53% of secondary schools across the region are categorised as red or amber compared to 50% in Blaenau Gwent.

The chart below shows that during the past three years, the proportion of schools in the green category has remained stable at Step 2 and Step 3.

Secondary Schools (excluding special schools)

		Numbers of Schools				Percentage of Schools			
		Red	Amber	Yellow	Green	Red	Amber	Yellow	Green
Step 3	17-18	1	0	0	1	50%	0%	0%	50%
	18-19	1	0	0	1	50%	0%	0%	50%
	19-20	1	0	0	1	50%	0%	0%	50%
		D	C	B	A	D	C	B	A
Step 2	17-18	1	1	0	1	33%	33%	0%	33%
	18-19	0	1	0	1	0%	50%	0%	50%
	19-20	1	0	0	1	50%	0%	0%	50%

6.1.3 **All Through School**

This year the data for all through schools has been extracted whereas previously it was included within the primary or secondary data. However, within this data set the categorisation of Special schools (Penycwm – Green and The River Centre – Yellow) is not included. However, for holistic purposes if it were to be included, the profile for the current year would demonstrate that many of the all through settings (75%) are categorised as either green or yellow for Step 2 and 3.

		Numbers of Schools				Percentage of Schools			
		Red	Amber	Yellow	Green	Red	Amber	Yellow	Green
Step 3	19-20	1	0	2	1	25%	0%	50%	25%
		D	C	B	A	D	C	B	A
Step 2	19-20	1	0	2	1	25%	0%	50%	25%

However, when the special schools are removed from analysis, the chart below shows that during the past three years, the proportion of schools in the yellow category has remained stable at Step 2 whilst at Step 3 improvements have been seen during the three year period.

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6.1.4 **All Through Schools (excluding Special schools)**

		Numbers of Schools				Percentage of Schools			
		Red	Amber	Yellow	Green	Red	Amber	Yellow	Green
Step 3	17-18	1	1	0	0	50%	50%	0%	0%
	18-19	1	0	1	0	50%	0%	50%	0%
	19-20	1	0	1	0	50%	0%	50%	0%
		D	C	B	A	D	C	B	A
Step 2	17-18	1	0	1	0	50%	0%	50%	0%
	18-19	1	0	1	0	50%	0%	50%	0%
	19-20	1	0	1	0	50%	0%	50%	0%

At the time of drafting the report the regional comparative information for all school settings is not available.

6.1.5 **Combined Categorisation**

Overall, the 2019 /20 data confirms that over the last 3 years schools have continued to improve their categorisation profile. However, regional comparisons at this time are not available.

In summary:-
- Many schools (82%) are now categorised as either green or yellow
- Very few (7%) (only two primary schools categorised as amber, with,
- A few 11% (only two schools categorised as red (one all through and one secondary school)).Importantly, these two schools continue to receive bespoke, timely support to enable them to improve.

This represents a significant improvement in the improvement journey when compared to the profile in 2014 when only two schools were green.
Appendix 1 2019 /20 categorisation data.

All Schools (including, Special and PRU)

		Numbers of Schools				Percentage of Schools			
		Red	Amber	Yellow	Green	Red	Amber	Yellow	Green
Step 3	17-18	3	5	11	8	11%	19%	41%	30%
	18-19	3	2	11	11	11%	7%	41%	41%
	19-20	3	2	11	11	11%	7%	41%	41%
		D	C	B	A	D	C	B	A
Step 2	17-18	3	1	15	8	11%	4%	56%	30%
	18-19	2	1	13	11	7%	4%	48%	41%
	19-20	3	2	11	11	11%	7%	41%	41%

NB The separate phases of primary and secondary are recorded separately in the above table

This data set further evidences the practical implementation of the vision with schools implementing a partnership, school-led, self –improving school to school, system approach to secure excellent achievement and wellbeing.

Consequently, schools and clusters continue to build their capacity to self-improve and are becoming more resilient. With our partners we will continue to provide tailored support for all schools and settings and work to support agreed identified areas for improvement and enable the sharing of best practice within across the region and nationally across Wales.

6.2   ***Expected outcome for the public***
Monitoring and understanding a school's improvement journey is an important mechanism for ensuring that parents, residents and members of the Education Scrutiny Committee are sufficiently informed to enable them to hold the authority to account effectively for the quality of education provision.

6.3   ***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.

6.4   ***Thinking for the Long term (forward planning)***
The SEWC regional framework for school categorisation linked with support for schools causing concern seeks to ensure that schools deliver high quality provision and standards in the long term with the aim that Estyn reflects this in their inspection reporting.

Coupled with this the Council's agreed Vision for Education of a school led self-improving system identifies that schools need to continue to develop greater resilience to change, financial challenges and changes in leadership so that progression and continuity in learning and hence outcomes for children and young people are not unduly compromised by these challenges.

6.5   ***Preventative focus***
A key element of the Council's work is to monitor settings and ensure appropriate support to secure continuing high standards. Estyn Inspection reports reflect the extent to which settings and Local Authorities has been effective in achieving this.

6.6   ***Collaboration / partnership working***
Educational improvement in Blaenau Gwent is delivered on a regional basis through the South East Wales Consortium in collaboration with Caerphilly, Monmouthshire, Newport and Torfaen Councils.

6.7 ***Integration (across service areas)***
Ensuring that schools deliver high quality education provision to secure high pupil outcomes relates directly to the first of the Council's three high level outcomes within the Corporate Plan that children's and young people's learning and achievement levels are maximised, and to the first of the Council's improvement objectives which is to ensure that Education Standards are raised particularly at Key Stage 4.

These overarching outcomes and objectives permeate the work of a range of Council departments and partners. Effective monitoring, support, evaluation and intervention are fundamental to the Council's wellbeing objectives

6.8 ***EqIA (screening and identifying if full impact assessment is needed)***
Not required for this report.

7 Monitoring Arrangements

7.1 This report provides information about Welsh Government National categorisation, undertaken by regional consortia. Whilst there are both appeals processes for schools, regional and national moderation, these have now concluded and categorisations published.

7.2 Scrutiny members receive an annual report on school categorisation. As such, the monitoring and understanding of a school's improvement journey is an important mechanism for ensuring that members of the Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee are sufficiently informed to enable them to hold the Authority to account effectively for the quality of education provision and the effectiveness of its commissioned school improvement service.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

Appendix 1 – School Categorisation

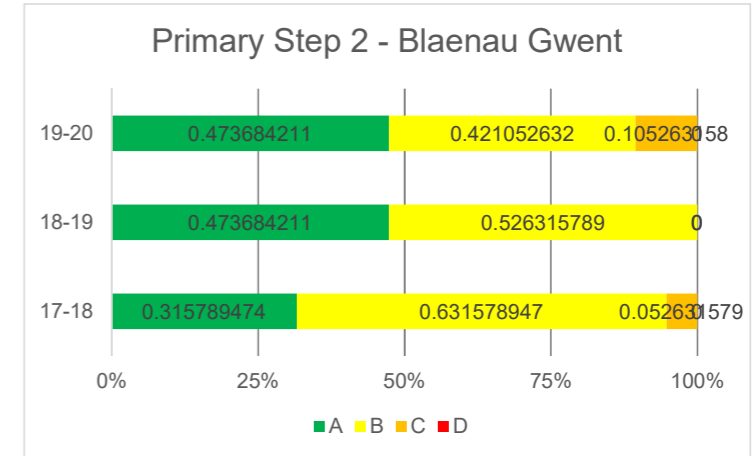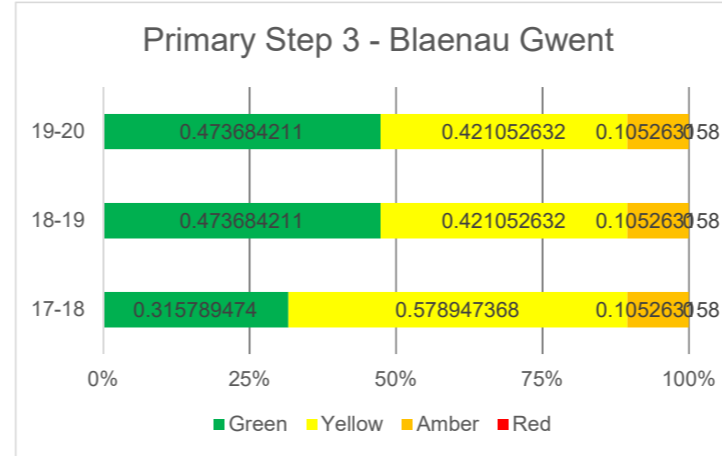This page is intentionally left blank
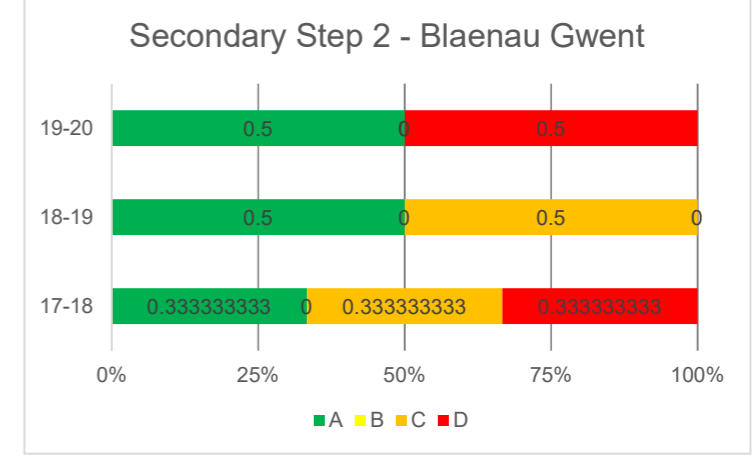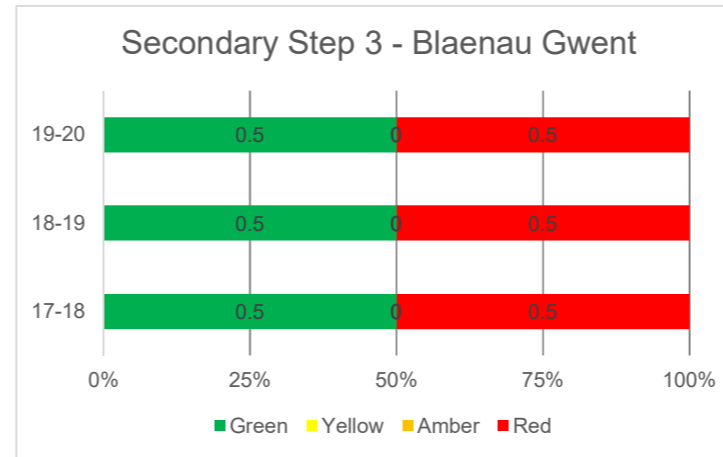
National Categorisation 2019-20

Blaenau Gwent

Primary Schools

		Numbers of Schools				Percentage of Schools			
		Red	Amber	Yellow	Green	Red	Amber	Yellow	Green
Step 3	17-18	0	2	11	6	0%	11%	58%	32%
	18-19	0	2	8	9	0%	11%	42%	47%
	19-20	0	2	8	9	0%	11%	42%	47%
		D	C	B	A	D	C	B	A
Step 2	17-18	0	1	12	6	0%	5%	63%	32%
	18-19	0	0	10	9	0%	0%	53%	47%
	19-20	0	2	8	9	0%	11%	42%	47%

Primary Step 3 - Blaenau Gwent

Primary Step 2 - Blaenau Gwent

Secondary Schools

		Numbers of Schools				Percentage of Schools			
		Red	Amber	Yellow	Green	Red	Amber	Yellow	Green
Step 3	17-18	1	0	0	1	50%	0%	0%	50%
	18-19	1	0	0	1	50%	0%	0%	50%
	19-20	1	0	0	1	50%	0%	0%	50%
		D	C	B	A	D	C	B	A
Step 2	17-18	1	1	0	1	33%	33%	0%	33%
	18-19	0	1	0	1	0%	50%	0%	50%
	19-20	1	0	0	1	50%	0%	0%	50%

Secondary Step 3 - Blaenau Gwent

Secondary Step 2 - Blaenau Gwent

All Through Schools

		Numbers of Schools				Percentage of Schools			
		Red	Amber	Yellow	Green	Red	Amber	Yellow	Green
Step 3	17-18	1	1	0	0	50%	50%	0%	0%
	18-19	1	0	1	0	50%	0%	50%	0%
	19-20	1	0	1	0	50%	0%	50%	0%
		D	C	B	A	D	C	B	A
Step 2	17-18	1	0	1	0	50%	0%	50%	0%
	18-19	1	0	1	0	50%	0%	50%	0%
	19-20	1	0	1	0	50%	0%	50%	0%

All Through (3-16/18) Step 3 - Blaenau Gwent

All Through (3-16/18) Step 2 - Blaenau Gwent

All Schools (including Nursery, Special and PRU)

		Numbers of Schools				Percentage of Schools			
		Red	Amber	Yellow	Green	Red	Amber	Yellow	Green
Step 3	17-18	3	5	11	8	11%	19%	41%	30%
	18-19	3	2	11	11	11%	7%	41%	41%
	19-20	3	2	11	11	11%	7%	41%	41%
		D	C	B	A	D	C	B	A
Step 2	17-18	3	1	15	8	11%	4%	56%	30%
	18-19	2	1	13	11	7%	4%	48%	41%
	19-20	3	2	11	11	11%	7%	41%	41%

National School Categorisation System

National categorisation - Primary & Secondary January 2020

2019-20 Categorisation 2018-19 Categorisation 2017-18 Categorisation

School code	School name	Local authority	Regional consortium	Phase	Step 2	Step 3	Step 2	Step 3	Step 2	Step 3
6775501	Abertillery Learning Com (Primary)	Blaenau Gwent	EAS	Mainstream	D	Red	D	Red	D	Red
6775501	Abertillery Learning Com (Secondary)	Blaenau Gwent	EAS	Mainstream	D	Red	D	Red	D	Red
6773315	All Saints R.C. Primary School	Blaenau Gwent	EAS	Mainstream	A	Green	A	Green	A	Green
6772277	Beaufort Hill Primary School	Blaenau Gwent	EAS	Mainstream	A	Green	A	Green	A	Green
6772306	Blaen-y-Cwm Primary School	Blaenau Gwent	EAS	Mainstream	A	Green	A	Green	B	Yellow
6772067	Bryn Bach Primary School	Blaenau Gwent	EAS	Mainstream	B	Yellow	B	Amber	B	Yellow
6775401	Brynmawr Foundation School	Blaenau Gwent	EAS	Mainstream	D	Red	C	Red	D	Red
6772313	Coed-y-Garn Primary School	Blaenau Gwent	EAS	Mainstream	B	Yellow	B	Yellow	B	Yellow
6772253	Cwm Primary School	Blaenau Gwent	EAS	Mainstream	A	Green	A	Green	B	Yellow
6772072	Deighton Primary School	Blaenau Gwent	EAS	Mainstream	B	Yellow	A	Green	A	Green
6775500	Ebbw Fawr Learning Community (Primary)	Blaenau Gwent	EAS	Mainstream	B	Yellow	B	Yellow	B	Amber
6775500	Ebbw Fawr Learning Community (Secondary)	Blaenau Gwent	EAS	Mainstream	B	Yellow	B	Yellow	B	Amber
6772074	Georgetown C.P. School	Blaenau Gwent	EAS	Mainstream	A	Green	A	Green	A	Green
6772070	Glanhowy Primary School	Blaenau Gwent	EAS	Mainstream	A	Green	A	Green	A	Green
6772309	Glyncoed Primary School	Blaenau Gwent	EAS	Mainstream	C	Amber	B	Yellow	B	Yellow
6777011	Penycwm Special School	Blaenau Gwent		Not Mainstream	A	Green	A	Green	A	Green
6772310	Rhos-y-Fedwyn Primary	Blaenau Gwent	EAS	Mainstream	B	Yellow	B	Amber	C	Amber
6772179	Sofrydd C.P. School	Blaenau Gwent	EAS	Mainstream	C	Amber	B	Yellow	B	Yellow
6772312	St Illtyd's Primary School	Blaenau Gwent	EAS	Mainstream	B	Yellow	B	Yellow	B	Amber
6773316	St Joseph's R.C. Primary School	Blaenau Gwent	EAS	Mainstream	B	Yellow	B	Yellow	B	Yellow
6773309	St Mary's C in W Voluntary Aided School	Blaenau Gwent	EAS	Mainstream	A	Green	A	Green	A	Green
6773308	St Mary's Roman Catholic - Brynmawr	Blaenau Gwent	EAS	Mainstream	B	Yellow	B	Yellow	B	Yellow
6771101	The River Centre 3-16 Learning Community	Blaenau Gwent		Not Mainstream	B	Yellow	B	Yellow	B	Amber
6774061	Tredegar Comprehensive School	Blaenau Gwent	EAS	Mainstream	A	Green	A	Green	A	Green
6772278	Willowtown Primary School	Blaenau Gwent	EAS	Mainstream	A	Green	A	Green	B	Yellow
6772307	Ysgol Bro Helyg	Blaenau Gwent	EAS	Mainstream	B	Yellow	B	Yellow	B	Yellow
6772311	Ystruth Primary	Blaenau Gwent	EAS	Mainstream	A	Green	B	Yellow	B	Yellow

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**
Date of meeting:	**26th February 2020**
Report Subject:	**Final Performance Key Stage 4 2019**
Portfolio Holder:	**Cllr J Collins, Executive Member for Education**
Report Submitted by:	**Lynette Jones, Corporate Director of Education and 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)
	11.02.20	14.02.20			26.02.2020	22.04.20		

1.   **Purpose of the Report**

1.1   To provide members with an update on the final performance information in line with agreed reporting arrangements for Key Stage 4 performance at Local Authority level and hence provide the opportunity to feedback on processes to secure ongoing improvement.

2.   **Scope and Background**

2.1   The format of this report has been agreed by the regional Directors of Education in the South East Wales Consortium (SEWC). This has been agreed to ensure consistency in reporting across the region and is in line with the national agenda regarding changes in accountability as detailed below. The provisional information was reported to this Committee on 25th October 2019.

2.2   **Accountability Arrangements**

2.2.1   The Welsh Government has been developing new evaluation and improvement arrangements to replace parts of the current accountability system. These arrangements have been co-constructed with colleagues in schools, Estyn, local government, regional consortia, and taken international research into consideration. They have been carefully developed to ensure that they align with and help support the realisation of the new curriculum and associated reforms.

2.2.2   The new arrangements will support the aim of raising standards, reducing the attainment gap, and delivering an education system that is a source of national pride and public confidence.

2.2.3   The arrangements are based on the following four key principles. They will be:
  - fair – they will promote equity, inclusion, choice, individual pathways to learning and never losing sight of the learner;

- coherent – allowing each part of the system to work together without overlapping, with clear roles and responsibilities;
- proportionate – ensuring that the implementation of the new arrangements and process is manageable and makes a difference;
- transparent – recognising the breadth of learning experience across schools and the value added by teacher in class.

2.2.4 Over the next three years, there will be an evolving programme of future developments, making the transition between the current system and the future plans. The process of developing the new Evaluation and Improvement arrangements by 2022 will evolve in a planned way to support schools and others to build a self–improving system and plan for sustained improvements.

2.2.5 In May 2018, the Minister for Education announced the introduction of a suite of interim Key Stage 4 performance measures that were developed through collaboration with head teachers and key stakeholders. The new measures, based on points scores, were designed to remove the historic emphasis on the Level 2 threshold measure and the narrow focus on borderline C/D grade learners that past use of threshold measures has cultivated. Instead, they reflect a school average of all individual learners' points' scores, rather than a percentage attaining a minimum threshold level.

2.2.6 The measures have been designed to help broaden learner choice, valuing individual learner needs and achievement. This will help better capture the progress of every learner. Whilst the interim measures are broader in order to achieve this goal, existing curriculum requirements and expectations of provision remain. There will continue to be headline measures on literacy, numeracy and science.

2.2.7 In June 2019, the guidance document for schools, local authorities, regional consortia and key stakeholder groups was issued, on the Interim Key Stage 4 School Performance Arrangements: Measures and Analyses. (Guidance document no: 246/2019 Date of issue: June 2019). As such the reporting against the interim performance measures will commence in September 2019.

2.2.8 It is understood that the interim measures will not significantly change the system wide behaviours. However, schools should not be placed under disproportionate scrutiny on the basis of one or two measures in isolation, as we move to a system that values a much wider range of factors in assessing a school's effectiveness in best providing for individual learners' needs.

2.2.9 There is an expectation that local authorities and regional consortia support schools to make appropriate decisions about their curriculum to avoid narrowing choice for learners.

2.2.10 **As a minimum, there is an expectation that most learners will study:**

- both a Welsh/English language and literature qualification;
- both mathematics and mathematics - numeracy GCSEs;
- and either three separate science GCSEs or a double award GCSE.

2.2.11   The best interest of the learner must always be the main factor in any decision about the qualifications chosen and learners' choices must not be dictated by changes to performance measures.

2.2.12   As previously reported, Welsh Government will commission an independent research project to review the performance measurement system. Decisions on future indicators, and the associated systems that will supersede the interim arrangements, will be informed by this research, in conjunction with the responses received in response to a full consultation with schools and key stakeholders.

2.2.13   The content of this scrutiny report is therefore intended to be used within the context of a wider range of information and a range of regional processes that the local authority will use to evaluate individual school performance, and therefore support and challenge more appropriately to secure improvement.

2.2.14   For all schools the school development plan (SDP) is the school's strategic plan for improvement. It sets out the actions a school will take to improve learner outcomes based on whole school self-evaluation, using a range of performance information. Through a series of workshops, surgeries and professional panels during the summer and autumn terms 2019, this regional review and evaluation process has supported schools to ensure that the processes for school improvement planning are effective and supports the national reform and target setting arrangements. Consequently, a joint review and evaluation of a sample of school development plans with schools, local authorities and the EAS has taken place during the autumn term 2019.

3.   **Options for Recommendation**
3.1   <u>**Option 1**</u>
       Members are asked to scrutinise the final Key Stage 4 performance data and contribute to the continuous assessment of effectiveness by making appropriate recommendations to the Executive Committee.

       <u>**Option 2**</u>
       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**
          o "To improve pupil outcomes, progress and wellbeing, particularly for our more able and most vulnerable learners
          o To improve the quality of our education services and our school buildings to help learners achieve great outcomes
          o To continue to support our school leaders to help our pupils achieve their ambitions."

4.2   **Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan Objectives**
       One of the objectives in the Blaenau Gwent Well-being 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 £48.2 Million 2019/20) to schools via the Individual Schools Budget (ISB) to provide high quality education and to improve pupil outcomes. 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.

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.

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.

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

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

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*

This report provides information about statutory, end of Phase and Key Stage school performance underpinned by processes set out in the National Model for regional working and School Improvement. The School Standards and Organisation Act Wales (2013) support strategic and operational activity to improve pupil outcomes.

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   **Overview of headline measures**
        The interim performance measures are made up of five headline measures, all based on points scores:

        1. Capped 9 measure (interim)
        2. Literacy measure
        3. Numeracy measure
        4. Science measure
        5. Welsh Baccalaureate Skills Challenge Certificate measure

Capped 9 Measure

No*	Slot		Requirement
1	Literacy slot	Subject specific requirements** (GCSEs only)	Best result of first awarding of: Welsh first language or English language or Welsh literature or English literature
2	Numeracy slot		Best result of first awarding of: mathematics – numeracy or mathematics
3	Science slot		Best result of first awarding of (currently limited to awards in the WJEC suite of science GCSE qualifications available to learners): biology, chemistry, physics, science (double award) applied science (double award) and applied science (single award)
4 5 6 7 8 9	'Other six' (GCSEs or equivalent volume of qualifications)	Best six remaining qualification awards***	All qualifications approved/designated for pre-16 delivery in Wales can count, subject to usual discounting rules and excluding Essential Skills Wales qualifications. The Welsh Baccalaureate Skills Challenge Certificate qualification can count towards one of these slots where it features in a learner's best remaining awards.

 *Each slot is the equivalent of one GCSE in size.
The literacy, numeracy and science slots are also standalone performance measures.
**Where multiple awards can count, the best grade achieved by a learner is taken. Only the result for the first complete awarding of that qualification is considered when identifying the best grade.
*** There is no cap on total volume of non-GCSEs contributing to the 'Other six' slots.

6.1.2   **Capped 9 Performance Overview**

        Appendix 1 provides an overview of performance across all schools in the regions (anonymised and non-aggregated). On the first chart each dot represents a single school within the region. The second table in Appendix 1 is sorted from highest performing Capped 9 to lowest performing. Each row represents a single school. Please note though that the school's FSM % is provided to provide some context.

        Within Blaenau Gwent non FSM pupils performed marginally better than FSM pupils with variation in performance ranging from -49.3 in school 1 to -95.5 in School 4.

Meaningful evaluation of the outcomes at individual school level has taken place across the autumn term in dialogue between Local Authorities, EAS and school leaders. Support for individual schools will continue to be provided in line with the National Categorisation system.

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

6.3   ***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.

6.4   ***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.

6.5   ***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.

6.6   ***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.

6.7   ***Integration (across service areas)***
The Council commissions its school improvement function on regional basis.

6.8   ***EqIA (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, support, 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 and Learning 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.

Background Documents /Electronic Links
Appendix 1 – Final Key Stage 4 Performance

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FINAL KEY STAGE 4 PERFORMANCE REPORT

APPENDIX 1

Background to this report

Scrutiny Members will be aware of the content of the Welsh Government, Estyn and WLGA Letter on Evaluation and Improvement Arrangements, 16 July 2019 that was included in the Scrutiny performance report dated 25th October 2019.

Within this joint communication letter it stated that :-

"It is counter-productive for schools to be placed under disproportionate pressure on the basis of individual measures. It is not in the interest of school improvement and risks undermining the ongoing change in culture that we are working together to achieve. We expect local authorities and regional consortia to support schools to make appropriate decisions about their curriculum to avoid narrowing choice for learners.

Collectively, we have agreed that this is the right approach to take and strongly advise you to **use a broad range of un-aggregated data and information** to enable you to discharge your duties when reporting on school performance. Evaluating the performance of individual schools rather than generating aggregated data at local authority level will be more helpful to supporting and challenging individual schools with their improvement."

Capped 9 Performance Overview

The chart below provides an overview of performance across all schools in the regions (anonymised and non-aggregated).

Each dot on a chart represents a single school within the region. Each chart is organised by the FSM % of each school (PLASC 2019), so that the schools serving our least disadvantaged communities are on the left, and those serving our most disadvantaged are on the right.

The single line through each chart is the 'line of best fit' across the region. If schools are on or around the line, then they are performing in line with expectation (for the region). Schools that are well above the line are performing well above expectation for that particular year. Schools that are well below the line are performing well below expectation.
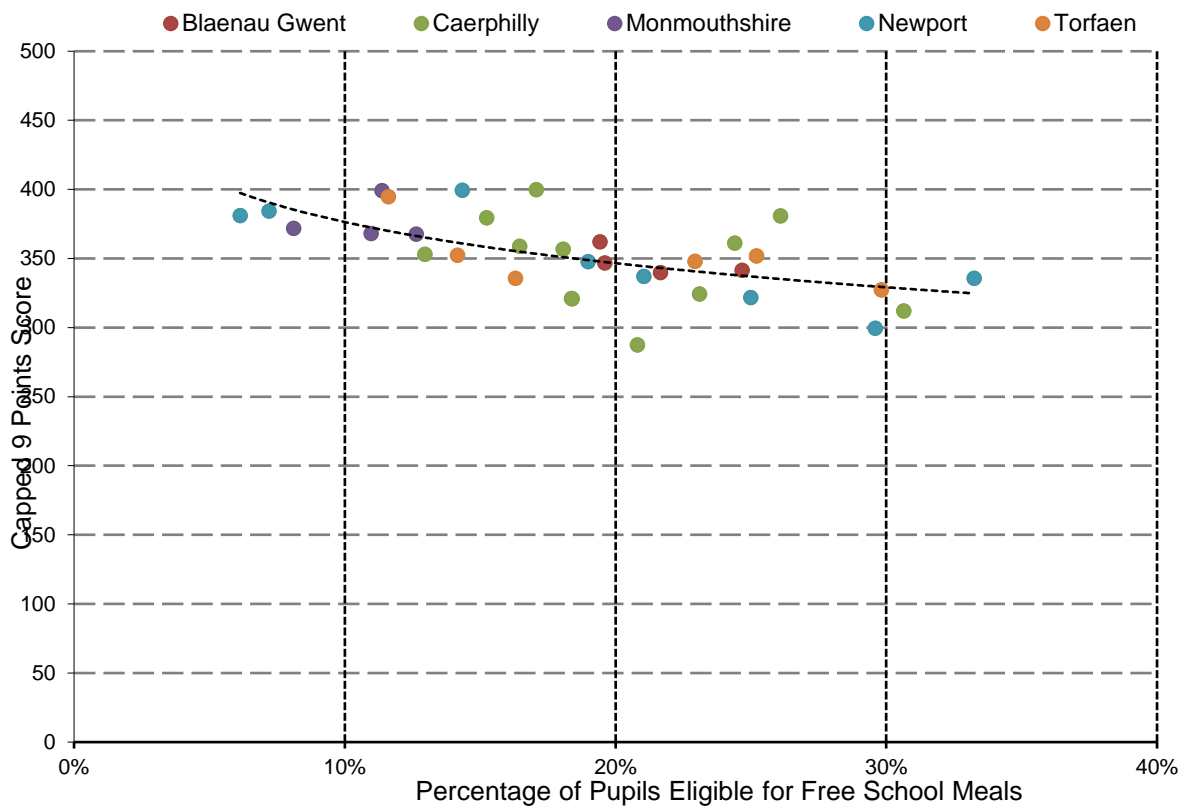
The table below provides a regional overview of performance for the new interim measures. This enables members to familiarise themselves with school level regional performance.

The table is sorted from highest performing Capped 9 to lowest performing. Each row represents a single school. Please note though that the school's FSM % is provided to provide some context.

School	LA	FSM - 3 year RA	Cohort non FSM	Cohort FSM	Capped Point 9			
					All Pupils	non FSM	FSM	Diff.
					399.8	413.6	317.4	-96.2
					399.3	403.1	373.3	-29.8
					399.1	407.1	306.6	-100.5
					394.8	398.3	362.2	-36.1
					384.2	394.3	226.4	-167.9
					381.0	386.4	277.0	-109.4
					380.7	390.1	352.7	-37.4
					379.5	393.2	321.2	-72.1
					371.7	379.9	296.1	-83.8
					368.1	377.5	251.9	-125.5
					367.5	384.2	309.4	-74.9
School 1	B	20.3	93	32	362.1	374.7	325.5	-49.3
					361.1	368.8	316.7	-52.1
					358.9	369.0	311.0	-58.0
					356.7	369.8	287.4	-82.3
					352.9	362.4	273.6	-88.8
					352.3	359.8	310.7	-49.1
					351.8	362.8	311.0	-51.8
					347.9	355.6	284.8	-70.8
					347.6	356.3	303.8	-52.5
School 2	B	21.1	87	20	346.8	357.1	302.1	-55.0
School 3	B	24.9	67	21	341.4	354.0	301.4	-52.5
School 4	B	21.8	154	35	339.9	359.4	263.9	-95.5
					337.0	351.5	273.4	-78.1
					335.8	351.6	260.8	-90.8
					335.6	363.6	284.1	-79.5
					327.4	339.0	304.0	-35.0
					324.4	355.4	252.0	-103.4
					321.7	334.8	270.4	-64.4
					321.1	329.7	286.8	-42.9
					320.8	353.8	303.0	-50.7
					312.1	328.4	251.6	-76.7
					299.6	316.1	260.0	-56.1
					287.5	311.4	213.3	-98.1
Highest					399.8	413.6	373.3	-29.8
Median					352.1	362.6	298.8	-71.5
Lowest					287.5	311.4	213.3	-167.9

Meaningful evaluation of the outcomes at individual school level has taken place across the autumn term in dialogue between Local Authorities, EAS and school leaders. Support for individual schools will continue to be provided in line with the National Categorisation system.

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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: **26th February 2020**

Report Subject: **Inspire 2 Achieve and Work Performance Report January – December 2019**

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

Report Submitted by: **Joanne Sims, Youth Service 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)
	11.02.20	14.02.20			26/02/20	11.03.20		

1.   **Purpose of the Report**

1.1   The purpose of the report is to provide Members with an opportunity to scrutinise the local Inspire 2 Achieve and Inspire 2 Work projects funded by the European Social Fund (ESF).

2.   **Scope and Background**

2.1   In 2013, Blaenau Gwent Youth Service led on the development of two ESF operations across West Wales and the Valleys (6 Local Authorities and 4 FE Colleges) called Inspire 2 Achieve (11-24 at risk of NEET young people) and Inspire 2 Work (16-24 NEET young people). In July 2015, the lead was transitioned to Environment and Regeneration, whilst the local delivery projects still remained with the Youth Service within the Education Directorate.

2.2   The regional lead team in Environment and Regeneration co-ordinate the operations for all joint beneficiaries across West Wales and the Valleys. Blaenau Gwent's Youth Service line manages the two local delivery projects; Inspire to Achieve and Inspire to Work. The Inspire projects are underpinned by the Welsh Government's Youth Engagement and Progression Framework (YEPF).

3.   **Options for Recommendation**

3.1   It is recommended that Members scrutinise the current performance of the two projects and considers the following options;

        Option 1 – Members are asked to scrutinise the information detailed within the report, contribute by making appropriate recommendations to the Executive Committee and accept the report.

        Option 2 – Members do not accept the report.

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

4.1 The Inspire programmes contribute to all 5 areas of the Blaenau Gwent Wellbeing Plan through supporting young people to overcome barriers in their life enabling them to become positive members of the community.

4.2 The programmes also contribute to key objectives within the Corporate Plan, in particular those within Education and also Regeneration. This work also ensures that the Welsh Government's Youth Engagement and Progression Framework 6 key areas are fully met.

5. **Implications Against Each Option**

5.1 Impact on Budget:
The two programmes are externally funded by ESF and so have no impact on core budget. The financial profiles for the two Inspire programmes for 2016 - 2022 are below:

I2W
Total Project Costs - £2,440,445
ESF Grant receivable - £2,148,723
Match Funding identified - £310,874

I2A
Total Project Costs - £3,787,353
ESF Grant Receivable - £3,325,260
Match Funding Identified - £470,026

Redundancy costs are built into the lifetime of the programme.

5.2 Risk:
The funding is secure until 2022. However, plans need to be put in place prior to this end date as if the needs of young people identified are not met, this may lead to more young people not being appropriately supported, impacting upon their wellbeing and becoming or remaining NEET.

5.3 Legal:
There are no legal implications for this report.

5.4 Human Resources:
The report will have a positive impact on staff as existing staff employed through this funding will have extensions in their contract until 2022.

6. **Supporting Evidence**

6.1 Performance Information and Data:

Since 2010, Blaenau Gwent has seen a steady reduction in the numbers of young people becoming NEET from 8.7% (74 young people) in 2009/10 to 1.9% (11 young people) in 2017/18. Unverified figures for 2018/19 are 1.7% (9 young people), which is in line with our lowest (best) number yet. The Raising Aspirations Group, the strategic NEET multi-agency partnership, has overseen the implementation of the Youth Engagement and Progression Framework and holds the Inspire programmes to account.

6.1.2   <u>Inspire 2 Achieve (11-16)</u>

There are 11 members of staff in the Inspire 2 Achieve (I2A) team. A Youth Service Team Manager oversees both the Inspire programmes but the I2A team includes 1 x team leader to manage the 5 x school based youth workers. 2 x Year 6/7 Transition youth workers, 2 x Year 11 Transition youth workers (including year 11 Electively Home Educated young people) and 1 x Emotional and Mental Health youth worker work across all school settings, and also meet young people outside of school.

All I2A youth workers and Careers Wales staff meet individually in their associated schools and as whole teams to discuss partnership working and how best to support identified young people. Direct work with young people consists of 1:1 support and group programmes depending on the needs of the individual. The overall aim of these sessions is to promote inclusion and increase young people's confidence and self-esteem.

Support is offered to young people during school holidays. This can include 1:1 support for engagement and group activities and trips for continuous engagement over these periods.

6.1.3   The projected outcomes (targets) for the lifetime of the project and progress for Inspire 2 Achieve (11-16) are set out below:

- Total number of young people supported: 1196 (699 males, 497 females)
- 7% to gain qualifications (84 young people),
- 20% to enter into further learning when leaving school (239 young people)
- 50% to be at reduced risk of becoming NEET (598 young people)

Since 2016 (when team was established):

- 695 young people (out of 1196) have been supported, 115 above target at this stage (349 male, 345 female), with one young person identifying as Non-Binary.

Of the 431 closed, the following outcomes are recorded:

- 15% have gained qualifications,
- 28% have entered further learning

- 54% have reduced their risk of becoming NEET.
- 85% have improved their soft skills.

6.1.4 For the period of January to December 2019, 264 new young people were supported (123 male, 141 female). Of the 264, 50 were supported by 2 Year 6/7 transition workers, 50 supported by 2 Year 11 transition workers, 146 supported by 4 school based workers, 18 were supported by 1.5 Emotional and Mental Health workers. 49 young people out of the 50 successfully transitioned into year 7, with only 9 needing ongoing support. This success was partly due to peer support established with older Inspire young people in the schools. 13 of the school based (146) young people have been closed, with 9 already recorded having reduced their risk of becoming NEET.

6.1.5 Equality focussed projects delivered through the year included Empire Fighting Chance (non-contact boxing programme) delivered across all 4 mainstream settings and 1 alternative education settings. 60 young people, a mix of male and female, take part weekly. Additionally, one female who moved in to post 16 ETE provision, is now working toward a Level 1 in Construction.

6.1.6 'Healthy Living' is a dominant theme running across all elements of the project. This includes the delivery of registered PSE (Personal and Social Education) units around sexual health, substance misuse, healthy relationships and welsh culture. Also included is physical activity programmes ranging from regular walks, gym sessions and procured in programmes and activities that enable young people to explore nature and sustainability, including the Christmas Arts and Crafts programme.

6.1.7 I2A were part of the ESTYN visit at EFLC on 7th March 2019. Feedback received was very positive, particularly in terms of partnership working between the school and I2A project.

6.1.8 In May 2019, the Youth Service's work, with a focus on Inspire 2 Achieve's work linked to EFLC, were finalists in the Professional Teaching Awards, Youth Work Category.

Inspire 2 Work (16-24)

6.1.9

There are currently 6.5 Inspire 2 Work (I2W) youth workers in the team, managed by the Youth Service Team Manager, which includes 5 x core I2W youth workers (Education, Employment and Training), and 1 x Health and Fitness youth worker and 0.5 emotional and mental health youth worker was appointed at the latter end of this year.

Inspire support for young people aged 16-24 is based upon bespoke support packages via Inspire 2 Work (I2W). I2W plays a pivotal role in supporting young people on Tiers 1,2 and 3 of the Careers Wales 5 Tier Model. Support is also offered to young people linked to the DWP, Housing associations, Social Services and various other agencies.

Although I2W can support any young person who is NEET, and not living in a Communities First area, the reality is that the majority of young people coming through to the team often need long term intensive support, addressing issues such mental health, low self-esteem and housing. Therefore, the team work closely with other Youth Service colleagues and other partners, and small steps are seen as a big success.

Support is provided to young people both on a one to one and group basis, delivering projects such as gym, fitness, training, enterprise and wellbeing.

6.1.10   The Communities For Work (C4W) Triage partnership work is pivotal. All I2W Youth Workers have continued with their Single Point of Contact (SPOC) roles to improve the projects efficiency and partnership working. There is a SPOC for each C4W cluster area in Blaenau Gwent (Ebbw Fawr, Ebbw Fach North, Ebbw Fach South and Tredegar) and their roles include forwarding post code eligible referrals with consent to Triage, providing and gathering information on support and opportunities for young people to and from C4W clusters. There is also a Referral SPOC within the I2W team. This role includes coordination of referrals to and from project, maintenance and development of a referral database, and planning ways to expand referral opportunities through partners.

6.1.11   The projected outcomes (targets) for the lifetime of the project and progress for Inspire 2 Work (16-24) are set out below:

- Total number of young people supported: 780 (438 males, 342 females)
- 50% to gain qualifications (390 young people),
- 20% to enter into further learning when leaving school (156 young people)
- 20% to gain employment NEET (156 young people)

6.1.12   Since 2017 (when team was established):

- 207 young people (out of 780) have been supported (125 male, 82 female).

Of the 179 closed, the following outcomes are recorded:

- 47 achieved a qualification (26%)
- 49 supported into further learning (27%)
- 53 supported into employment (30%)
- 64 still NEET but improved soft skills (36%)

Of the 179 closed, 169 (94%), improved their wellbeing support scores, meaning that their overall awareness and understanding of themselves and the wider world has significantly improved.

6.1.13   For the period of January to December 2019, 204 new young people were referred, with 77 eligible and enrolled (51 male, 26 female). Out of the 77, 54 young people have now completed (with 23 continuing into 2020) with the following outcomes:

- 12 gained a qualification
- 13 supported into further learning
- 21 supported into employment
- 19 still NEET but with improved soft skills
- 52 young people's wellbeing assessment score improved.

The sharing of participants between the Inspire 2 Work programme and C4W programme (C4W is an all Wales programme, run by Welsh Government, funded by ESF) has made meeting and/or exceeding targets difficult.

6.2   Expected outcome for the public:
Through the delivery of these programmes, young people will be supported at the times when they most need it and are more likely to achieve better outcomes in school, training and employment.

6.2.1   The by-product of this enhanced support should lead to more economically active young people, more young people reaching their potential in secondary education and further learning/training and less mental health barriers hindering the development of young people.

6.3   Involvement (Consultation, engagement, participation):
From the outset, young people and partner organisations influenced the design of the programmes.

6.3.1   When WEFO invited the programmes to submit an extension and identify any areas of development in line with the criteria, existing data and project knowledge was initially used to help inform the next steps.

6.3.2   Key gaps identified included the need for additional mental health support, physical health and wellbeing, transition support for year 6 to year 7 pupils, including mentoring and social networking for those young people in mainstream but with Additional learning Needs and Autism Spectrum Disorder. The mental health element has been developed in consultation with Public Health, Primary Mental Health and the lead for the Welsh Government 'In Reach' Mental Health School pilot. The Year 6/7 transition support has been developed in consultation with the then Principal Educational Psychologist and Schools. All posts are now recruited to and have been in post for the most of this year.

6.4   Thinking for the long term:
Funding for these programmes until 2022 gives some stability to the provision and support available for young people. However, the support provided is expected to better prepare young people for their future and beyond the lifetime of the programmes.

6.5 Preventative Focus:
    Both Inspire programmes are preventative in their approach. Inspire 2 Achieve exist to help 'prevent' young people from becoming NEET. Inspire 2 Work exists to 'prevent' young people from developing ingrained negative behaviours and lifestyles into their future.

6.6 Collaboration/Partnership Working:
    The programmes are collaborative in their nature as they are a regionally planned programme, locally delivered. The local Raising Aspirations Group holds the Youth Service to account for achieving the outcomes in both Inspire programmes.

6.7 Integration:
    These programmes impact upon key objectives for both Education and Environment and Regeneration Directorates, including educational attainment, attendance and behaviour and addressing skills and employment for 11-24 year olds.

6.8 EqIA:
    N/A as this programme will not have any negative impact on protected characteristics, only positive.

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

7.1 The Raising Aspirations Group monitors the progress of the local delivery of the two Inspire programmes. A performance monitoring report is presented annually to Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee to scrutinise the local delivery. Annual reports and evaluation reports are also provided to Education Directorate Management Team (DMT).

    Background Documents / Electronic Links
    N/A

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Executive Committee and Council only
Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer:
Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer:

Committee: **Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee**

Date of meeting: **26th February 2020**

Report Subject: **Blaenau Gwent Education Admissions Policy for Nursery and Statutory Education 2021/22**

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

Report Submitted by: **Claire Gardner, Education Transformation 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)**
✔	11.02.20	14.02.20			26.02.20	11.03.20		

1. **Purpose of the Report**

1.1 The purpose of the report is to outline the outcome of the annual review and consultation process associated with the Blaenau Gwent Admissions Policy for Nursery and Statutory Education. Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee are asked to provide their views and comments on the document in preparation for the 2021-22 admission round, prior to its determination and publication on the 15th April 2020.

2. **Scope and Background**

2.1 The Welsh Government's School Admissions Code (2013) dictates that Councils must review their admissions policies annually for consultation and publication by April 15th in the academic year preceding the admissions round. Blaenau Gwent School Admissions Policy outlines the arrangements, criteria and relevant legislation that underpin school admission processes and methodology. The Admissions Authority must ensure that the following information is provided during the consultation process:

    i) Admission numbers for each school;

    ii) Application procedures and the timetable for the admission process;

    iii) The criteria to be applied to applications in the event that there are more applications than places for a school;

    iv) Arrangements for waiting lists and how they operate;

    v) Arrangements for the processing of late applications; and,

    vi) Details of how parents will be notified of a decision on their application, as well as appeal procedures should their application be unsuccessful.

2.2 The primary changes to the policy document for the 2021/22 academic session are as follows:

- A review of the nursery, primary and secondary admission numbers in line with the annual capacity review. This is an annual process which reviews changes to school plans and physical space within

the school, which affect the provision of teaching and learning. This is carried out in line with the Welsh Government Measuring the Capacity of Schools in Wales Guidance (2011). The final agreed capacity calculations are then used to inform admission numbers.

- A review of the dates for the admission round(s), associated processing and offer deadlines.
- A review of the terminology within the associated with complex admissions and hard to place pupils i.e. the term Looked after children has been formally changed to children looked after.

2.3   The draft Blaenau Gwent Admissions Policy for Nursery and Statutory Education (2021/22, please refer to **Appendix 1** for the policy document), was distributed to relevant consultees as outlined within the Welsh Government's School Admissions Code (2013, pages 6-7) and detailed on page 2 of the appended policy consultation document. The consultation period commenced on Friday 17th January 2020 and concluded on Monday 3rd February 2020. During the consultation period, 1 response was received as follows:

- Tredegar Comprehensive made a request to decrease their capacity and associated admission number to 770 and 154 respectively, which was agreed. This is reflected in the appended policy document.

3.   **Options for Recommendation**
3.1   **Option 1:** Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee considers and accepts the policy document.

3.2   **Option 2:** Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee considers the policy document and provides comments relating to improvements that can be made in consideration of the publication date (15th April 2020).

4.   **Evidence of how does this topic supports the achievement of the Corporate Plan / Statutory Responsibilities / Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan**
4.1   In accordance with the Welsh Government's School Admissions and Admission Appeals Code (2013), there is a statutory requirement upon the Council to determine and publish their admissions arrangements annually by the 15th April, the year preceding the admissions round to which they apply.

4.2   Education is a strategic priority within the Corporate Plan, of which school admissions and the planning of pupil places are essential components.

5.   **Implications Against Each Option**
5.1   ***Impact on Budget*** *(short and long term impact)*
There are no direct budget implications associated with this report.

5.2   ***Risk including Mitigating Actions***
There is a risk that Council will not be compliant with the Welsh Government School Admissions Code (2013), if the policy is not approved

and published by the 15th April 2020. The timeline for approval take account of the publication requirements and dates.

5.3 **_Legal_**
The Council is legally required to prepare, implement and update accessibility strategies for all schools for which they are the responsible body.

5.4 **_Human Resources_**
The Schools Admissions Policy for Nursery and Statutory Education 2021/22 has been developed by the Education Transformation team, who oversee implementation and reviews of the policy within Blaenau Gwent.

5.4.1 The Corporate Director, supported by Wider Corporate Leadership Team, will have a key role in ensuring the key staff-related actions are effectively delivered.

6. **Supporting Evidence:**
6.1 **_Performance Information and Data_**
Please refer to **Appendix 2**, for a summary of the 2019/20 Admissions Round. The Council is presently implementing the 2020/21 policy.

6.2 **_Expected outcome for the public_**
The public can expect a fair and equitable admissions process for all pupils in accessing education, and where possible place allocation in line with parent/pupil preference.

6.3 **_Involvement_** _(consultation, engagement, participation)_
Stakeholders and end user needs and engagement are of paramount importance and a key focus of both the policy development, and ongoing admissions process. The Policy is subject to consultation on an annual basis, in line with the Welsh Government School Admissions Code (2013). In addition, the admission arrangements and forms are developed in consultation with key stakeholders including: schools, partners, governing bodies, parents etc.

6.4 **_Thinking for the Long term_** _(forward planning)_
The Strategy is aligned to the Corporate Plan and covers the period 2017 to 2020, with a review programmed for this academic year, followed by publication of the new strategy in late 2020 for a period of 3 years.

6.5 **_Preventative focus_**
The admissions process prevents oversubscription of schools and inequality in line with access to education.

6.6 **_Collaboration / partnership working_**
The Admissions Authority works with other internal admission authorities i.e. the faith and foundation schools, along with external admission authorities within the region and partners such as Social Services, to ensure that there are sufficient arrangements and pupil places for Blaenau

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Gwent Schools. Also, supporting effective appeal, capacity assessment, childcare offer and other associated processes. The Blaenau Gwent Admission Forum which is comprised of school, council, governor and other service representatives; oversee application of the policy, procedures and compliance with the Welsh Government School Admissions and Admission Appeals Codes (2013).

6.7 *Integration* (across service areas)
The Blaenau Gwent School Admissions Policy for Nursery and Statutory Education is aligned to early year's education, pupil place planning, school organisation, the work of social services, planning in line with housing developments etc. Service integration is essential to ensure effective policy implementation, whilst also securing appropriate access to education for current and prospective pupils. The Admissions process is monitored and assured by the Admissions Forum, works in accordance with ALN and Managed Move Panels and associated process. Work with Social Services, Health & Safety, Early Years, Health, Occupational etc. is ongoing to ensure effective transition processes are in place.

6.8 *EqIA* (screening and identifying if full impact assessment is needed)
An Equality Impact Screening Assessment (EQIA) has been completed in line with the policy, which determined that there is no negative impact upon the protected characteristics. The policy promotes equality of opportunity for all, with regards to accessing education.

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

The Admissions Authority monitors the development and delivery admission round(s) and processes on a weekly basis; reporting the Blaenau Gwent Admissions Forum quarterly, providing monthly data analysis and undertaking annual appraisals in line with the delivery of the admission arrangements, which are reported via Council's political processes.

Background Documents / Electronic Links

Appendix 1 – Blaenau Gwent Education Admissions Policy for Nursery and Statutory Education 2021/22

Appendix 2 - Blaenau Gwent School Admissions Analysis 2019/20

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2021/22

Draft Blaenau Gwent Admission Policy for Nursery and Statutory Education

Cyngor Bwrdeisdref Sirol

Blaenau Gwent

County Borough Council

Consultation Process

In accordance with the Welsh Government School Admissions Code (2013) Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council consults upon its admission arrangements on an annual basis, attempting where possible to mirror the admission round timescales of neighbouring admission authorities. The coordinated admission arrangements will determine the date at which application forms are sent to parents as well as the publication of an agreed closing date (For more information please refer to page 13).

Consultation will commence on Friday 17th January 2020 and conclude Monday 3rd February 2020. The admission arrangements will then be published on15th April 2020, the year preceding the 2021/2022 admissions round. The Local Authority will ensure that the following information is provided during the consultation process:

 i) Admission numbers for each school
 ii) Application procedures and the timetable for the admission process
 iii) The criteria to be applied to applications in the event that there are more applications than places for a School
 iv) Arrangements for waiting lists and how they operate
 v) Arrangements for the processing of late applications
 vi) Details of how parents will be notified of a decision on their application, as well as appeal procedures should their application be unsuccessful.

The Local Authority will consult with the following parties on its admission arrangements:

Headteachers of relevant Schools:	All headteachers of community Schools in Blaenau Gwent
Governing body of relevant Schools:	All governing bodies of community Schools in Blaenau Gwent
All neighbouring Local Authorities within the area:	Caerphilly County Borough Council Torfaen County Borough Council Monmouthshire County Borough Council Newport City Council
Admission Authorities for all other schools in the area:	All headteachers of voluntary aided schools in Blaenau Gwent All governing bodies of voluntary aided schools in Blaenau Gwent Brynmawr Foundation School All Saints RC Primary School St Marys Church in Wales Primary School St Marys RC Primary School St Joseph's RC Primary School

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Blaenau Gwent Proposed Admission Policy for Statutory Education 2021/22

1.   Introduction/ Purpose

There is a requirement upon Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council as a directive from Welsh Government, to develop, review and consult upon the Blaenau Gwent School Admissions Policy for Nursery and Statutory Education, on an annual basis. The purpose of the policy in question is to guide and inform the statutory admissions function within Blaenau Gwent, ensuring equality of opportunity for all current and prospective pupils. ***Please note that the following non-maintained schools and non-maintained early year's education providers are responsible for the development of and governed by their own individual Admissions Policies:**

- Acorns Nursery
- All Saints Roman Catholic Primary School
- Brynmawr Foundation School
- Mrs Tiggywinkles Day Nursery
- St Joseph's Roman Catholic Primary School
- St Mary's Church in Wales Primary School
- St Mary's Roman Catholic Primary School

The Blaenau Gwent Admissions Policy for Nursery (non-statutory) and Statutory Education has been updated in line with confirmed admission numbers and the dates from the 2021/22 admission round. All other content remains the same. The policy is fully compliant with the Welsh Government School Admissions Code (2013) and School Admissions Appeal Code (2013). This document outlines requirements associated with and guidance relating to pupil admissions and in-year transfers/admissions for nursery, primary, and secondary school place allocation within Blaenau Gwent.

The Welsh Minister for Education and Skills in 2013 outlined the following key considerations in relation to how pupil place allocation in respect of admissions should ensure equality of opportunity:

"The process of starting or transferring between schools can be a time of uncertainty or anxiety; therefore, it is essential that the principles of fairness and openness are applied to all aspects of school admissions. A properly functioning admissions system, that reflects this, can play a vital part in helping to minimise concerns. It is crucial in delivering equality of opportunity."

Minister for Education and Skills (2013)

2. Admission Types

2.1 Nursery Education

The Council provides free part-time nursery education to every child and every child is entitled to a 'rising 3' place from the start of the term following their third birthday, at either school nursery provision or a quality assured early years education provider.

- Nursery places are in the main offered on a part time basis (am and/or pm sessions which vary in each school throughout the year). Children start attending nursery classes at the age of 3 or 4 years.

- There are three intakes for rising 3 pupils per year as follows:

  - **January**
  - **April**
  - **September**

  *Please note that the specific dates for intake change on an annual basis linked to school term dates. These dates are communicated within the Starting Schools Booklet and on nursery application forms, in line with the admission rounds for nursery, reception and secondary school places.

- Some governing bodies offer full-time provision, which is funded directly from the schools budget. The nursery entitlement within Blaenau Gwent is part-time which equates to12.5 hours per/week (2.5 hours per/day), other than the following nursery provisions, which offer:

  - Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Helyg – full time rising 3 and nursery places
  - St Mary's Roman Catholic Primary School – part-time rising 3 places and full-time nursery places
  - St Joseph's Roman Catholic Primary School - part-time rising 3 places and full-time nursery places

- The regulations pertaining to nursery education are specific and confirm that: **attending a nursery class does <u>NOT</u> give a child priority for a place in the reception year group. A separate application is required for this purpose.**

2.2 Admission to Primary Education

Children are eligible for admission to school at the start of the school year in which their fifth birthday falls (i.e. 1st September to 31st August inclusive).

It is against the law to prevent your child from accessing education at the start of the school year in which their fifth birthday falls.

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The Council must provide education places for the admission of all children in the September following their fifth birthday; however, parents/ guardians or carers have the right to:

a. request that the date their child is admitted to school is deferred until the term after the child's fifth birthday; or,

b. request that their child takes up the place part-time until the term after their fifth birthday.

2.2.1 Allocation of Primary School Places at Abertillery Learning Community

In the case of Abertillery Learning Community Primary Phase, the admission authority (Blaenau Gwent Council) is responsible for placing pupils at the Learning Community. These pupils are then allocated a site within the Learning Community by the Admissions Officer in line with the oversubscription criteria (detailed on page 12). Allocation is then confirmed by the Abertillery Learning Community Leadership team and Governing Body. Once the site has been confirmed the notification process is then administered by the admissions authority. This process has been established in accordance with the Welsh Government School Admissions Code (2013) point 2.51 which states:

"Where split site schools are in operation, the admission authority **should** in most cases, apply the admission arrangements as if the school were a single unit. They **should** make it clear to parents that admission applications are made to the school as a whole and not to a particular site. The site that children attend is a matter for the internal organisation of the school. Appeals **cannot** be made against the site allocated".

The Council's School Organisation Policy (2015), advocates having the right schools, of the right size, in the right places. All school organisation proposals are assessed in line with the Council's admissions and pupil place planning arrangements, to ensure that there is sufficient capacity within Blaenau Gwent Schools to accommodate local pupils.

2.3 Admission to Secondary School

Children/ young people transfer from primary school to secondary school at the beginning of the school year, following their eleventh birthday.

2.3.1 Allocation of Secondary School Places 3-16 at Middle Schools

In the case of both Ebbw Fawr Learning Community and Abertillery Learning Community, **pupils who are on roll in Year 6** at the primary phase will automatically transfer to/ be allocated a place at the secondary phase. In this instance a separate admission application is **not** required. ***Please note all other secondary settings require an application to be made in order for a place to be allocated**.

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2.4   In-Year Transfers (admission that is requested outside of the normal admission round)

In-year transfer/ admission refers to applications made in-year (during and not prior to the academic year commencing), and outside of the normal admission round, i.e. pupils moving into the borough, wishing to change schools etc. All in-year transfers are dealt with in date order of receipt. Where there are a greater number of applications received than the number of places available, the Council will apply their oversubscription criteria (see page 12) in order to determine place allocation and/or refusal.

Applications are processed within 7-15 working days of receipt, confirmation of a place is proved by the Council, and confirmation of a start date is provided by the school. Where possible the start date provided by the school is within 10 days of place allocation being confirmed.

In the following circumstances pupil allocation will be managed differently to that of a standard transfer request:

- **Complex Admissions** – an admission is considered to be complex, if the needs of the pupil fall outside of the standard admission and hard to place procedures (detailed below). In this case a working group co-ordinated by the Admissions Officer, will be convened in order to address the complex nature of the placement, ensuring that all of the pupils needs can be addressed within an appropriate education setting.
- **Hard to place pupils**– applicants who are considered hard to place, fall into one or more of the categories presented below. The 14 categories cover circumstances and/or needs which would deem or contribute to a learner being considered as hard to place:

    o Children who were permanently excluded from their last maintained school placement and are able / ready to integrate to an alternative school;
    o Children returning from the criminal justice system (secure estate);
    o Child victims of serious crimes (child cruelty, kidnapping, sexual or violent crime, FGM);
    o Children who are CLA;
    o Children who have been out of education for longer than two months;
    o Children with below 50% attendance;
    o Children with disabilities or medical conditions which have already impacted on their attendance or participation at school;
    o Children of carers, Gypsies, Roma, Travellers, children whose parents offend, asylum seekers and refugees who have been in the UK less than two years and need a supported entry to school;
    o Homeless children who have been placed in temporary housing;
    o Children who are in a refuge due to domestic violence;

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- o Children of UK service personnel where a change of location ordered by the service leads to a need for a change of school and will have experienced multiple moves;
- o Children who have received 10 days exclusions in the last twelve months; and/or,
- o Children on the child protection register.

It may not be possible to process complex and hard to place admissions within the target timeframe outlined above. In such cases, the applicant would be informed of any increases to the processing timescales with regards to their application, and the process through which the application will be managed. The Additional Learning Needs Panel, Managed Move Panel, and/ or the Complex Admissions Working Group; would be responsible for manging applications as outlined above (please refer to section 2.6 below for further information on the panel's).

As part of the transfer allocation process, the Council will contact the child or young person's current school to obtain information in order to support and ensure a smooth transition. This information will then be shared with the recipient school in order to make sure that they are equipped to meet the pupils' educational, learning and any other identified needs upon transfer.

It is the responsibility of the parent/ guardian or carer to notify the Admissions Officer if they no longer wish to transfer their child to the newly allocated school, as confirmed within the offer letter.

*Please note:

The admissions authority does not encourage transfers from one local school to another, due to the potential disruption that it causes to all parties. However, it does recognise that this process may be required in putting the needs of the child and/ or young person first.

Previous research has determined that the transfer process can impinge upon a pupil's educational achievement and success, unless there are exceptional circumstances, such as the transfer being in the best interest of the child/ young person. Transfers are also dependent (as with general admissions), upon place availability at the preferred school. Parents will be encouraged to discuss at length their reasons for wanting to change schools with the school and admissions authority.

Parents should also consider prior to making a transfer request, differences in curriculum offer available at the child's current school and requested recipient school, i.e. the schools may not offer the same subjects at GCSE level.

2.5 Requests for Admission Outside of Chronological Year Group

It is the Council's policy that children are admitted into their chronological year group. It is only in exceptional circumstances that the Council will support admission into a year group that is not within the chronological year. For example, where there is an appropriate evidence base that suggests the chronological year group is not able to meet the needs of the child e.g. on medical grounds, due to ill health, additional learning needs and/ or if a pupil is new to the UK. Evidence of the placement being 'essential' will be required should a placement of this nature be requested.

Applicants submitting requests for admission into a year group that is not the chronological year for the child/ young person, will be given the opportunity to share their reasons for the application with the Council. The headteacher of the preferred school will be consulted during the processing of the application, and their views considered as part of the decision making process.

Parents, guardians or carers who have been refused a place at the preferred school will have a statutory right of appeal against the decision that has been made; however, there is no right of appeal against a decision to refuse a place into a non-chronological year group.

2.6 Managed Moves, Resource Bases, Special School and Complex Placements

The Council has a protocol in place which ensures that children and young people who may benefit from what is called a 'managed move' are able to move schools in an organised and coordinated way, ensuring that their needs are appropriately met. This protocol is called the Managed Move protocol and implemented via the Managed Move Panel. Where appropriate the Admissions Officer will consider the individual circumstances in line with the Welsh Government Admissions Code (2013), and if the school is over subscribed, utilise and implement 'excepted pupil ' status (for more information please see the aforementioned Welsh Government School Admissions Code, 2013, page 27), in order to admit the pupil.

The Council has a number of Resource Base provisions throughout Blaenau Gwent to meet the needs of pupils with complex needs, social emotional and behavioural needs (SEBD) or autistic spectrum disorder (ASD) needs that cannot be met within a mainstream environment.

The Council also has two special schools:

- Pen-Y-Cwm Special School, which caters for children and young people with severe, profound and multiple learning difficulties throughout the 3-19 age range.
- River Centre 3-16 Learning Community which caters for pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties throughout the 3-16 age range.

All placements into resource base and special school provision are agreed and managed by the Additional Learning Needs Panel, which is comprised of representatives from:

- School Admissions;
- the Special Educational Needs (SEN) team;
- the Education Welfare Service
- Educational Psychology Service; and,
- Headteachers/ Senior Leaders and school ALNCOs as well as other professionals/officers as and when required.

Decisions are made based upon strict criteria to ensure placements are appropriate. Processes are managed by the SEN team to ensure that pupils with additional learning needs are admitted in a timely manner, whilst ensuring that all of their identified needs can be met by the recipient school. All processes are carried out in consultation with the Admissions Officer in order to inform the allocation and planning of school places.

A complex admission is characterised by the child or young person's needs and or circumstances, being unable to be met within the normal admissions round and general admissions arrangements. Cases characterised as complex often require careful consideration and involvement from a wider network of partners, in order to ensure that the child's educational needs can be met within an appropriate school setting/ placement. Where there is a complex admissions case outside of the remit of the Managed Move protocol and ALN Panel processes, the Admissions Officer will coordinate the development of a working group aligned to the needs of the pupil, in considering the prospective pupil's circumstances and ensuring appropriate school placement. Complex admissions will be managed and processed in accordance with the School Admissions Code (2013). Where appropriate Welsh Government advice may be sought in line with the decision making process.

3. **School Admission Criteria**

The determination of school admissions differs between Local Authority maintained and non-maintained schools. The faith schools, foundation school, and non-maintained early year's education providers within Blaenau Gwent, maintain their own policies and criteria. These differ to the standardised criteria of the Council. The faith and foundation schools are also responsible for administering their own transfer and appeal procedures. **Applications for pupil places at these schools need to be made directly to the preferred school**. Applications for pupils where a faith or the foundation school is a first preference, should only be submitted to the Councils' Education Transformation team in respect of second and third preference schools that are maintained by Blaenau Gwent. ***Please note that the Council are unable to allocate pupil places within the following non-maintained faith and foundation schools and non-maintained early year's education providers:**

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- Acorns Nursery
- All Saints Roman Catholic Primary School
- Brynmawr Foundation School
- Mrs Tiggywinkles Day Nursery
- St Joseph's Roman Catholic Primary School
- St Mary's Church in Wales Primary School
- St Mary's Roman Catholic Primary School

Additionally, the Council cannot allocate pupil places within schools outside of Blaenau Gwent. Out of county school admissions and placements are managed by the admission authority of the Borough within which they reside, and/ or the schools themselves, when they are not maintained by the Council.

The Council works jointly with the faith, foundation schools and non-maintained early year's education providers; to ensure that all pupils applying either via the schools/settings directly or the Councils processes are allocated a place. Joint monitoring also takes place around transfers and appeals.

Each school has a limit to the number of children that it can accommodate per year group. This limit is called the published admission number (please refer to **Appendix 1** of this document for more information). The admission number takes into account the physical space within the school building relevant to each age group, as determined by the Measuring the Capacity of Schools in Wales Guidance (2011). There are two figures derived from this formula for primary school admissions, the admission number for nursery and the admission number for reception. The nursery area includes the available space for all pupils who are eligible to attend nursery, which includes rising threes (as detailed within the nursery section above). For those schools that run both morning and afternoon sessions, the admission number is applied to each session, and so can be doubled. For secondary the figure derived indicates the admission number for all year groups. Schools are asked on an annual basis each autumn-term, to confirm their sessional plans etc. for the admission round and capacity calculations, which are then presented within the admissions policy, two years preceding the academic year to which it applies. Schools will then be bound by the admission numbers for primary and secondary school places. In the case of non-statutory nursery admissions, the capacity calculation is advisory based on the guidance detailed above.

In the event of school reorganisation taking place, the admission arrangements will be determined and confirmed as part of the statutory consultation and transition process.

4. **How to apply for a School Place in Blaenau Gwent (excluding the Faith and Foundation Schools and non-maintained early year's education providers)**

Parents/carers are required to make an application for a school place. Completed forms with supporting evidence are to be returned by the closing date as detailed in Section 6 (below). In order to process an application linked

to allocation of a school place, only **one** of the following types of evidence within each category below will be required for submission with the application form:

- Proof of Residency **(copies of one of the following)**
    - Valid driving licence including paper licence
    - Council tax bill (for the 2020/21 year)
    - Recent child benefit / child tax credit notification, naming the child for whom the application has been made
    - Utility bills (within the last three months)
    - NHS Medical card
- Proof of Date of birth **(copies of one of the following)**
    - Child's birth certificate
    - NHS medical card
    - Valid passport which displays your child date of birth

All completed application forms are then to be returned to:
The Education Transformation team,
School Admissions,
Floor 8,
Anvil Court,
Church Street,
Abertillery.
NP13 1DB.

Applications to the Council can also be made online via the following link: http://blaenaugwent.mycouncilservices.com/ . In making an online application applicants will receive immediate confirmation that their application has been submitted, then written confirmation of pupil placement will be sent on the offer date. Alternatively, parents can request an application pack from the Admissions team on (01495) 355340 or via the following email address: schooladmissions@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk

As previously outlined the faith and foundation schools within Blaenau Gwent have additional criteria linked to their independent status, which needs to be fulfilled in line with the child securing a place. Applications to non-maintained early year's education providers are dealt with directly by the providers concerned.

Where a parent/ guardian or carer does not provide the relevant evidence, the application will be treated as **incomplete** until such time all supporting evidence is received. Consequently, should the supporting information be received after the closing date of the relevant admissions round, then this will render the application **as a 'late' submission**. If the information is not provided upon initial request, the Council will then attempt to chase the parent/ guardian or carer for the information a further **three times only**.

In the case of a double allocation as a result of an administrative error, the Council would need to ensure that adequate places are available and follow

the School Admissions Code and oversubscription criteria, in order to meet the 1st preference requested.

In instances where fraud is suspected, or accusations of fraudulent claims have been made, an investigation will take place. Places may be withdrawn if it is discovered that parents/ guardians or carers have knowingly provided false information in order to obtain the advantage of a particular school place.

Information provided within the application in respect of additional learning needs, will require further consultation with the SEN team. This will ensure effective, suitable provision and placement in line with additional educational needs and/ or a successful transition for the pupil.

5.   **Oversubscription Nursery, Primary and Secondary Criteria for the Normal Round of Admissions**

The admissions authority will consider each individual application received by the published closing date. If the number of applications for an individual school is greater than the admission number, the allocation of places will be carried out using the following criteria, which are listed in order of priority below:

i)   **Children Looked After**

Priority to be given to children looked after/previously looked after (children under Local Authority care); following consultation on the appropriateness of the named school.

Children in care means children who are in care of a Local Authority in accordance with Section 22 Children Act 1989.

ii)   **Catchment School**

Children who live in the catchment area of the school on or before the published closing date.

iii)   **Social/Medical**

Children who the Authority accepts have an exceptional medical or social need for a place at one specific school. Applications will only be considered under this category if they are supported by a medical consultant's report. The information must specify the medical advantage of the child attending the preferred school. Please note that reports from family doctors are NOT accepted for this purpose.

iv)   **Brother or Sister**

Children who will have a brother or sister at the school to which the parent is applying, after the date of admission, will be given a higher priority than those who do not. Please note however, that having a

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sibling at the school does not guarantee admission for any other children in the family. Where there is more than one such case, priority will be given to those children closest in age to the sibling already attending the preferred school as of the admission date. Brothers and sisters whether half, full, step or foster will be considered relevant where living in the same household.

v)   Distance

Children living closest to the preferred school measured by the shortest recognised permitted walking route between the pupils' front door of the home and school gate using a digital mapping system.

It should be noted that a child with a statement of special educational need or equivalent (i.e. individual development plan) which names a specific school, will be admitted in accordance with Section 343 of the Education Act 1996.

Deciding Factors associated with prioritising Admissions

In the event of oversubscription and/or the requirement to prioritise admission based on distance, places will be allocated on the basis of distance between the shortest recognised walking route between the pupils' front door of the home and the main school gate. Distance is calculated using a digital mapping system. Children living closest to the school are given the highest priority.

Multiple births

In the case of multiple births relating to a single family, if only one place is available at the school and the second child who qualifies for a place is a sibling, the school will exceed their published admission number to accommodate both pupils.

6.   Timeframe for Processing Admissions as Part of the 2020/21 Admission Round

Nursery

For places to be allocated in spring summer and autumn term of 2019;

Admission round commences on	1st September 2020
Closing date for applications	5pm on 5th October 2020
Offer date	23rd November 2020

Reception

Admission round commences on	4th January 2021
Closing date for applications	5pm on 22nd February 2021
Offer date	19th April 2021

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Secondary

Admission round commences on   28th September 2020
Closing date for applications   5pm on 16th November 2020
Offer date   1st March 2021

7.   **Arrangements with Neighbouring Admissions Authorities and Neighbouring Local Authorities**

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council has made arrangements with the following neighbouring Councils' and schools, in order for parents to express a preference to attend a school outside of the borough. The Council's schools and admissions team would then liaise with the relevant admissions authority to secure a pupil place along with transition arrangements:

- **Merthyr Tydfil Borough Council**

    Parents can express a preference to attend;

    − Bishop Hedley High School (children living in Ebbw Vale, Beaufort and Tredegar)

- **Torfaen Borough Council**

    Parents can express a preference to attend;

    − Ysgol Gyfun Gwynllyw children from the whole of the borough.

    − St. Albans R.C. High School (children living in Abertillery and Brynmawr)

8.   **Late Applications**

Applications received '**after the closing date'** will be classed as late. These will be considered as a secondary priority to applications received on time. Incomplete applications and those without relevant supporting evidence will also be considered as late, if the information requested is not received by the closing date for admission round to which the application relates.

Late applicants are unlikely to be offered a place at their preferred school, due to places being allocated to on-time applicants, particularly where there are high levels of demand.

9.   **Change of Preferences**

Should a parent/guardian or carer wish to change their preference, they will need to do so in writing. Letters expressing a change of preference are to be directed to the admission authority. Any request of a change in preference received after the closing date will be treated as a late application.

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10. **Waiting Lists**

Following the allocation of places during the normal admission round, children will remain on the waiting list for their preferred school until 30th September the following academic year. Thereafter, parents/ guardians or carers will be required to make a new application for admission. If additional places become available, they will be allocated to children on the waiting list on the basis of the published oversubscription criteria. **Waiting lists do not give priority to children based on the date the application was added to the list.**

11. **Notifying Parents, Guardians or Carers of the Outcome of the Application**

The Council will inform parents/ guardians or carers of the outcome of their application on the published offer date (please refer to pages 13 and 14 for more information). If the application is rejected, parents will receive written confirmation informing them of the outcome and will also be provided with the 'Appeals Guidance for Parents' document, which provides details of the appeals procedure. As part of the refusal letter the Council will allocate a place at the 2nd or 3rd preference school, if a 2nd and/or 3rd preference has been indicated within the application. A place will be allocated at the next nearest available school, should all preferences be unavailable or if an alternative preference has not been specified.

12. **Admission Appeals for Primary and Secondary School Places**

The Council endeavours to fulfil parental preference wherever possible; however, where there are more applications than places available at a school it is not always possible to fulfil parent preference.

The 1996 Education Act provides parents with an opportunity to appeal against the decision of a Local Authority in the matter of **statutory** school admissions -***please note appeals cannot be made for non-statutory nursery admissions**. The appeal will be heard before and considered by an independent appeal panel.

Post receipt of the offer letter detailing the outcome of an application, should a parent/ guardian or carer wish to appeal against the decision of the admissions authority, they will need to complete the form issued with the letter return it to the:

Head of Law and Standards,
General Offices,
Steelworks Road,
Ebbw Vale,
Blaenau Gwent.
NP23 6DN

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Parents will have 10 working days to submit an appeal and their appeal will be heard within 30 school days from the specific closing date indicated within the refusal letter.

13. **Home to School and Post 16 Transports**

Blaenau Gwent Council will provide free transport for children attending their nearest suitable school, where the distance from home to school is over the specified walking distance detailed below:

- more than 1.5 miles from home for children aged under 8 years but of statutory school age; and,
- more than 2 miles from home for children aged 8 years and over.

Distances are measured by using the Council's Digital Information Mapping System, to determine the shortest available safe walking route between the home address and the main gate of the school to be attended.

Parents are able to choose an English-medium, Welsh-medium or a denominational school for their child. The child will qualify for home to school transport to the appropriate catchment area of the school. When the catchment area school is full and unable to admit a pupil, free transport will be provided to the next nearest available school that has room to take the child, as long as the home is 1.5 miles or more away from the school for pupils under the age of 8 years, or 2 miles for pupils aged 8 and over.

The provision of free school transport will be arranged to coincide with the start and end of the normal school day and shall be provided during the school term time. Home to School transport is not provided for breakfast clubs, after school clubs or summer schools. Transport will be provided from pick-up points at approved bus stops on the nearest public transport route to the learner's home, where possible.

Post 16 Travel

All students living in Blaenau Gwent will be provided with a discounted bus ticket or travel grant to the Blaenau Gwent Learning Zone, Ebbw Vale Campus as their designated Post 16 provider; or, the nearest institution where their course is available depending on the following criteria:

- students must be between the ages of 16 to 19 (under 19 prior to the 1st September of the commencement of their course) to qualify;
- students shall reside in the County Borough of Blaenau Gwent;
- students must reside 2 miles or over (nearest walking distance) from their nearest college campus; and, the students should attend a full time course which requires attendance of 16 or more hours per week or a minimum 4 days attendance per week at the institution.

Students and pupils aged 19 or over at the commencement of the course are not eligible for travel assistance from the Council and in these circumstances

they are advised to contact their respective college for details of any available transport provision.

All transport for Post 16 pupils including those with additional learning needs is agreed on a case by case basis by the SEN team in consultation with the Transport Officer. The Council may provide transport up to a maximum of three years.

Travel Grant

The Council's present policy is to provide travel assistance to those who meet the criteria up to a maximum of £150 per academic session. This will be paid termly as follows: £50 autumn, £50 spring and £50 summer.

Welsh Medium / Faith Education

Pupils who wish to undertake their Post 16 studies via the medium of Welsh or attend a Faith school are required to travel further distances for their education, with no direct public service bus routes. These students have the opportunity to utilise the existing contract bus provision in lieu of the Travel Grant, if appropriate.

All awarded transport will be reviewed periodically. For more detailed information on home to school and post 16 transport, along with details on how to apply, please refer to the Blaenau Gwent Home to School and Post 16 Transport Policy (2019/20) https://www.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk/fileadmin/documents/Resident/Schools_and_Learning/Home_to_School_and_Post_16_Transport_Policy_201920.pdf .

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Appendix 1 – Published Admission Numbers

> *Please note in order to apply for a place in one of the following schools/early years education providers, an application will need to be made directly to the school of your choice:*
>
> - **Acorns Nursery**
> - **All Saints Roman Catholic Primary School**
> - **Brynmawr Foundation School**
> - **Mrs Tiggywinkles Day Nursery**
> - **St Joseph's Roman Catholic Primary School**
> - **St Mary's Church in Wales Primary School**
> - **St Mary's Roman Catholic Primary School**

Published Admission Numbers for 2020/21

School *The school highlighted in red are responsible for their own admission arrangements and as such, applications need to be submitted directly to the school.	Nursery Admission Number	Session	Statutory Admission Number (Reception or Year 7)
All Saints R.C. Primary School	30	am	26
Beaufort Hill Primary School	30	am	30
Blaen y Cwm Primary School	26	am	38
	26	pm	
Brynbach Primary School	30	am	30
Brynmawr R.C. Primary School	53	Full time places	30
Coed y Garn Primary School	30	am	30
	30	pm	
Cwm Primary School	52	am	30
	52	pm	
Deighton Primary School	30	am	30
	30	pm from April-term	
Georgetown Primary School	30	am	60
	30	pm	
Glanhowy Primary School	65	am	42
	65	pm	

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Glyncoed Primary School	**52**	**am**	**45**
	52	**pm**	
Rhos y Fedwen Primary School	**26**	**am**	**25**
St. Illtyd's Primary School	**30**	**am**	**30**
St. Joseph's R.C. Primary School	**41**	**full time**	**15**
St. Mary's Church-in-Wales Primary School	**30**	**am**	**30**
Soffryd Primary School	**19**	**am**	**23**
	19	**pm**	
Willowtown Primary School	**30**	**am**	**60**
	30	**pm**	
Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Helyg	**60**	**full time**	**30**
Ystruth Primary School	**37**	**am**	**42**
	37	**pm**	

	Nursery Admission Number	Session	Statutory Admission Number (Reception or Year 7)
Secondary School			
Brynmawr Foundation School			**151**
Tredegar Comprehensive School			**154**
Middle School			
Abertillery Learning Community – Primary Phase	**141**		**140**
Abertillery Learning Community – Secondary Phase			**150**
Ebbw Fawr Learning Community - Primary Phase	**58**	**am**	**40**
Ebbw Fawr Learning Community - Secondary Phase			**238**

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Appendix 2 - Blaenau Gwent Schools Catchment Area Overview Map
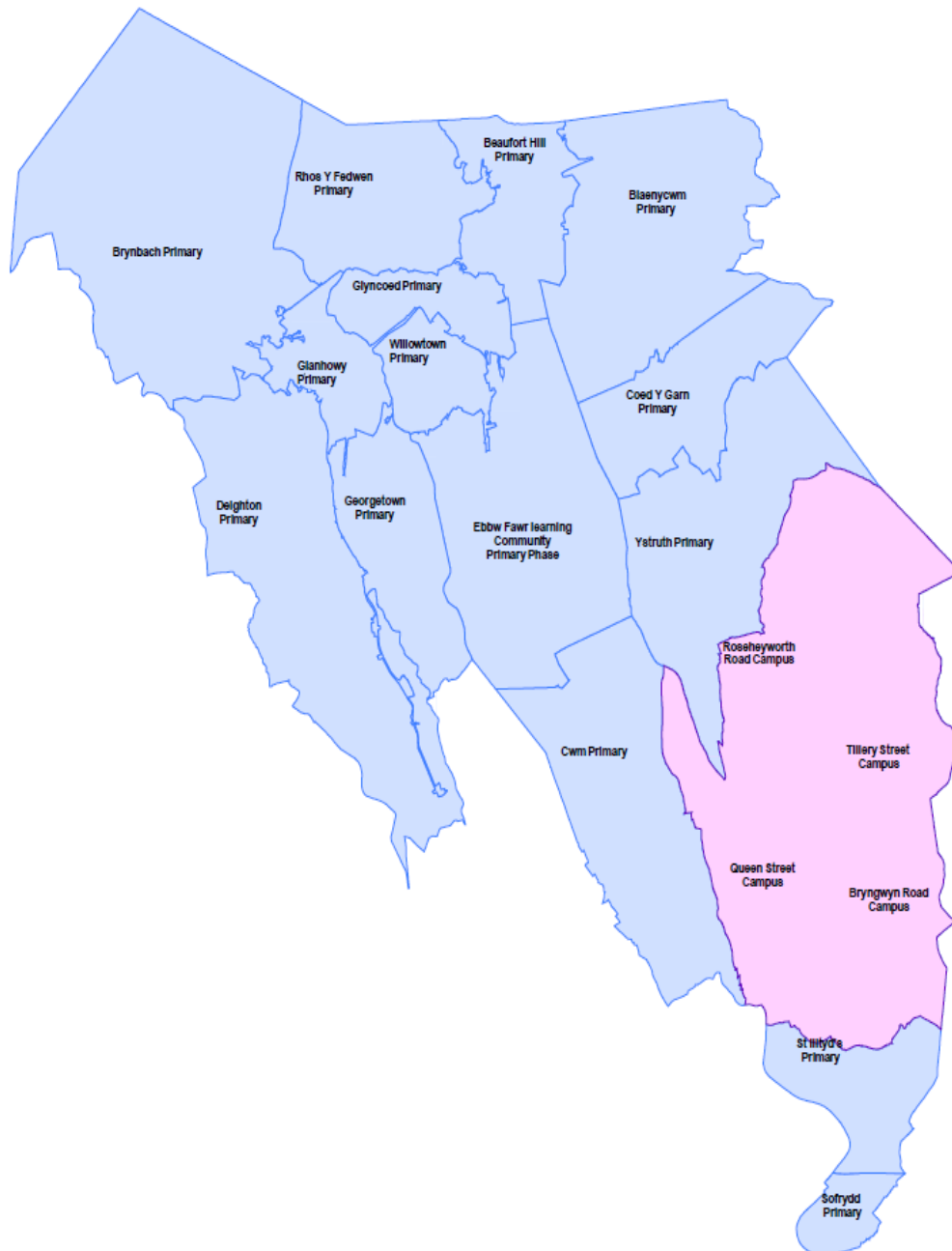
Analysis:

School Admissions – 2019/20 Admissions Round Analysis

The Admissions team have successfully implemented the School Admissions Policy for Nursery and Statutory Education 2019/20, which is evidenced by the following assessment:

- 100% of applications were processed within 48 hours and 100% of standard in-year transfer requests were processed within 15 days of receipt in accordance with the WG School Admissions Code (2013) and Blaenau Gwent's School Admissions Policy for Nursery and Statutory Education 2019/20.

- Transfer rates have fluctuated over the last 3 academic sessions, from 140 in 2017/18, up to 343 in 2018/19 and then a slight increase of 355 in 2019/20. The primary reason for in-year transfer has been inward migration of families into the Blaenau Gwent area, with an upward trend in inward migration seen over the last academic session resulting in 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.

- 9 complex transfers were received and referred to the SEN team for consideration at ALN Panel.

- The admissions officer has attended all ALN Panel meetings and/ or liaised directly with the SEN team on pupil placement.

- There were 5 appeals held for the reception year group during the summer period 2019, which is less than the number of appeals held in 2018. All 5 appeals were upheld in favour of the Council due them being class size appeals.

- The numbers of in-time applications received for the 1,786 pupils who applied for a school place during the 2019/20 admission round, decreased for nursery and reception, but increased for secondary when compared to 2018/19, whereby 2,061 pupils applied for a school place. The lower number of in time applications is attributable to a decrease in the live birth rates for the nursery cohort, which decreased from 770 for nursery during the 2018/19 admission round; to 533 for nursery during the 2019/20 admission round. Overall there were 275 more applications made for a school place in 2018/19 than in 2019/20. Please refer to Figure 1 overleaf for the in-time percentage comparisons:

Figure 1: In-time Application (%)

Percentage of In-time Applications 2017/18	Percentage of In-time Applications 2018/19	Percentage of In-time Applications 2019/20
Nursery – 66%	Nursery – 58%	Nursery – 51%
Reception – 75%	Reception – 79%	Reception – 74%
Secondary – 90%	Secondary – 71%	Secondary – 89%

- The Council were able to sustain 100% of parental first preferences for a 4 years period in respect of both nursery and secondary place allocation, and 99% of first preferences were met for the reception year group (please refer to **Figure 2** below). This is attributable to the effective monitoring and management of school capacities and pupil places along with the continued achievement of surplus place reduction, whereby school admission numbers for primary schools with a high surplus have been reduced over the last year and in turn the admission number has also been reduced.

- First preferences met for late applications are also extremely high due to effective pupil place management processes

Figure 2: First Preferences Met %

% of First Preferences Met for In-time Applications 2016/17	% of First Preferences Met for In-time Applications 2017/18	% of First Preferences Met for In-time Applications 2018/19	% of First Preferences Met for In-time Applications 2019/20
Nursery – 100%	Nursery – 100%	Nursery – 100%	Nursery – 100%
Reception – 99%	Reception – 99%	Reception – 99%	Reception – 99%
Secondary – 100%	Secondary – 100%	Secondary – 100%	Secondary – 100%
% of First Preferences Met for Late Applications 2016/17	**% of First Preferences Met for Late Applications 2017/18**	**% of First Preferences Met for Late Applications 2018/19**	**% of First Preferences Met for Late Applications 2019/20**
Nursery – 100%	Nursery – 100%	Nursery – 100%	Nursery – 99%
Reception – 96%	Reception – 97%	Reception – 96%	Reception – 99%
Secondary – 100%	Secondary – 100%	Secondary – 100%	Secondary – 100%

2

The Welsh Government School Admissions Code (2013) dictates that Councils must review their admissions policies annually for consultation and publication by April 15th in the academic year preceding the admissions round. Blaenau Gwent School Admissions Policy outlines the arrangements, criteria and relevant legislation that underpin school admission processes and methodology. The primary changes to the policy document for the 2020/21 academic session were as follows:

- A review of the nursery, primary and secondary admission numbers in line with the annual capacity review. This is an annual process which reviews changes to school plans and physical space within the school, which affect the provision of teaching and learning. This is carried out in line with the Welsh Government Measuring the Capacity of Schools in Wales Guidance (2011). The final agreed capacity calculations are then used to inform admission numbers.
- A review of the dates for the admission round(s), associated processing and offer deadlines.
- A Blaenau Gwent schools catchment areas overview map was appended to the policy.

The Admissions Policy for 2020/21 was consulted upon and published in line with the Welsh Government's deadline (April 2019). The pilot phase of on-line admission arrangements was launched on September 1st 2016. Online applications have increased overall within the last academic session as outline below:

2017/18
- 158 out of a possible 976 applications received online for nursery;
- 6 out of a possible 796 applications received online for reception; and,
- 16 out of a possible 685 application received online for secondary.

2018/19
- 94 out of a possible 705 applications received online for nursery;
- 93 out of a possible 586 applications received online for reception; and,
- 58 out of a possible 770 application received online for secondary.

2019/20
- 205 out of a possible 659 applications received online for nursery;
- 186 out of a possible 676 applications received online for reception; and,
- 161 out of a possible 654 application received online for secondary.

The aim of the team is to become paperless in preparation for the 2021/22 admission round. A review has been undertaken with the Corporate Transformation team and work is underway in developing a business case which seeks to replace the Abavus System with a suitable

alternative. 2 companies have thus far been approached in order to obtain quotes and comparisons. In addition, promotion and awareness raising of online admissions has increased.

The Admissions Forum met 4 times over the last year (September 2018 – August 2019), with the minimum number of meetings required being 3. The Forum has sustained a good level of attendance at each meeting. The Forum has worked closely with the Education Transformation team in order to:

- improve school and Council awareness and partnership approaches in respect of the implementation and monitoring of the admissions round;
- improve tracking processes from live birth to secondary education (whilst ensuring alignment with Inclusion);
- address issues i.e. ensure that when in-year transfers are allocated a place a start date is offered within 10 days; and,
- explore a wider ranging data set i.e. Flying Start, placement outside of the chronological year group, home tuition and attendance data etc. Ensuring that there is a holistic approach to the management of pupil places.

A Hard to Place Protocol has been developed in line with the emerging need to effectively manage pupil admissions that sit outside of the remit of the School Admissions Policy and Managed Move Protocol. Forum meetings have been programmed in for the 2019/20 academic session.

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:	**26th February 2020**
Report Subject:	**Forward Work Programme – 29th April 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	14.02.20			26.02.20			

1. **Purpose of the Report**
1.1 To present to Members the Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme for the Meeting on 29th April 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 29th April 2020, and:
   - Make any amendments to the topics scheduled for the meetings;

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- 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 29th April 2020, as presented.

Background Documents /Electronic Links
- Appendix 1 – Forward Work Programme –Meeting on 29th April 2020

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Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee
Forward Work Programme

Scrutiny Meeting Date: Wednesday 29th April 2020
Scrutiny Deadline to receive reports: Tuesday 14th April 2020

Report Title	Lead Officer	Purpose of Report	Method/ Expert Witness/Exec Member	Latest CLT Sign Off Date	Executive Meeting Date	Council Meeting Date
Final Self Evaluation (SE)	Lynette Jones	**Service Delivery** To ensure that Members contribute to the development of the SE report for LGES and to determine the actions arising from the SER are appropriate and aligned to the service needs for children and young people.	Agenda Item	14.04.20	FWP – 2020/21	N/A
Education Directorate Improvement Plan	Lynette Jones	**Service Delivery** To provide Members with the opportunity to engage in the improvement planning process thereby supporting sustainable improvement in pupil outcomes and well-being.	Agenda Item	14.04.20	FWP – 2020/21	N/A
ALN Reforms	Gavin Metheringham / Tracey Pead	**Service Delivery** To provide Members with an update on the progress made towards ALN Act readiness and implementation.	Agenda Item	14.04.20	FWP – 2020/21	N/A
Summary of School Inspection Outcomes	Michelle Jones	**Monitoring** To provide Members with an update on any inspection report outcomes, monitoring visits and thematic reports during this period.	Agenda Item	14.04.20	FWP – 2020/21	N/A
Improving Schools	Michelle Jones	**Monitoring** To provide Members with an update on any inspection report findings and progress within schools which are subject to Council intervention.	Agenda Item	14.04.20	FWP – 2020/21	N/A
Progress on ICT Infrastructure and Connectivity in Schools	Lynn Phillips	**Monitoring** To provide Members with an update on the roll out of the ICT Infrastructure and Connectivity project across the school estate.	Agenda Item	14.04.120	FWP – 2020/21	N/A

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