

T: 01495 355100 Ext./Est: 5100

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

Contact:/Cysylltwch â: Democratic Services



**THIS IS A MEETING WHICH THE PUBLIC ARE ENTITLED TO ATTEND**

30th October 2019

Dear Sir/Madam

**EDUCATION AND LEARNING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

A meeting of the Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee will be held in Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Ebbw Vale on Wednesday, 6th November, 2019 at 2.00 pm.

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

Yours faithfully

Michelle Morris  
Managing Director

**AGENDA**

**Pages**

**1. SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION**

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

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

will be provided if requested.

2. **APOLOGIES**

To receive.

3. **DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS**

To consider any declarations of interests and dispensations made.

4. **EDUCATION ACHIEVEMENT SERVICES (EAS), VALUE FOR MONEY REPORT, FINANCIAL YEAR 2018/19** 5 - 36

To receive the report of the Corporate Director Education.

5. **YOUTH SERVICE PERFORMANCE REPORT 2018-2019** 37 - 44

To consider the report of the Youth Services Manager.

6. **MANAGEMENT OF PUPIL PLACES AND THE SCHOOL ESTATE 2018/19** 45 - 62

To consider the report of the Education Transformation Manager.

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

All other Members (for information)  
Manager Director  
Chief Officers

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# Agenda Item 4

*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: **6<sup>th</sup> November 2019**  
Report Subject: **Education Achievement Services (EAS), Value for Money Report, Financial Year 2018/19**  
Portfolio Holder: **Cllr Joanne Collins, Executive Member for Education**  
Report Submitted by: **Lynette Jones, Corporate Director of Education  
Geraint Willington, Director - Resource, Business and Governance, EAS**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
v	15.10.19	28.10.19			06.11.19	18.12.19		

## 1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council is a partner local authority of the EAS Regional School Improvement Service. This report describes the outcomes of an external report on the value for money (VfM) of the Regional Service in 2018/2019.

## 2 Scope and Background

- 2.1 The VfM report for 2018-2019 (Appendix 1) focusses on the delivery of the regional service and the regional impact set against a number of criteria.
- 2.2 Members will note that the report does not break down individual Local Authority (LA) detail. The VfM report focuses entirely on the impact of the regional service on a number of measurable outcomes that are contained within the commissioned regional Business Plan. The Council will have received a number of detailed reports in previous meetings and through LA scrutiny committees such as: LA Outcomes, Categorisation, Estyn Inspection outcomes which has specific LA detail.
- 2.3 The report has been written by an external consultant, Rod Alcott. This is the second year that this consultant has reviewed the VfM of the EAS. The report has been sectioned to include the following elements:
- Executive Summary
  - Recommendations
  - Economy: Spending less
  - Efficiency: Spending well
  - Effectiveness: Spending wisely
  - Equity: Spending fairly
  - Sustainability: Spending for the long term
  - Conclusion
  - Appendix: Pen Portrait
- 2.4 The full content of the Regional School Improvement VfM 2018/2019 report can be found in Appendix 1.

## 2.5 What is Value for Money?

VfM or cost effectiveness, is a measure of how well resources are being used to achieve intended outcomes. Good value for money is the optimal use of resources to achieve intended outcomes. VfM is usually measured by considering:

- **Economy:** minimising the cost of resources used while having regard to quality (inputs) – spending less;
- **Efficiency:** the relationship between outputs and the resources used to produce them – spending well; and
- **Effectiveness:** the extent to which objectives are achieved (outcomes) – spending wisely.

2.6 Whilst the above represent the traditional method of measuring VfM it is also possible to include two further dimensions:

- **Equity:** the extent to which services are available to and reach all people that they are intended to – spending fairly. Equity is sometimes included within considerations of effectiveness but is treated separately here to highlight its importance to the work of EAS; and
- **Sustainability:** an increasingly standard consideration within the context of the Well-Being of Future Generations Act (WBFG) – spending for the long term.

## 2.7 External Judgement of the EAS

Assessing the performance of EAS against the criteria outlined above, the conclusion is that:

**EAS is providing good value for money in terms of those aspects that are within its control – notably economy, efficiency, equity and sustainability. However, collective action involving EAS, its constituent local authorities and school leaders is required to address concerns over educational outcomes across the region and those schools that are underperforming.**

This conclusion has been arrived at because:

- *Economy:* EAS is delivering its services to all schools across the region while continuing to spend less.
- *Efficiency:* The regional approach to deployment of resources allows economies of scale to be achieved; and the impact on service delivery of reduced EAS resources is being mitigated by a concerted effort to build compensatory capacity within schools to allow the quality of support to schools to be maintained.
- *Effectiveness:* Overall, educational outcomes are not improving at the desired rate in all schools, particularly within identified schools within the secondary phase, and this needs to be addressed through acceptance of collective responsibility and accountability to improve performance.
- *Equity:* A comprehensive programme designed to better equip schools to support vulnerable learners has been established across the region,

based upon cluster working and reinforced by the distribution of wellbeing grants to every cluster.

- *Sustainability*: EAS has an agreed Medium Term Financial Plan that sets out a sustainable approach to financial management in the future and is concentrating upon preparing schools to meet the challenges of curriculum reform, based upon a robust regional delivery network for professional learning that is intended to ensure that pupils needs will be met in the future and the workforce are well prepared and informed on all aspects of the reform agenda.

- 2.8 The report notes that; “While maintaining the quality of support to schools is essential, effectiveness depends upon what this support achieves. The overriding purpose of EAS, as set out in its mission statement, is to *‘transform the educational outcomes and life chances for all learners across South East Wales’*.”
- 2.9 Consequently, assessment of effectiveness must relate to its contribution in bringing about this desired transformation. One approach to this assessment is to look at educational outcomes as measured by categorisation outcomes, Estyn inspection outcomes and pupil outcomes. However, it must be recognised from the outset that these outcomes cannot be achieved by any one organisation or programme of support. They require collaboration and a collective effort for which there is a collective responsibility and accountability. In relation to this report this collective responsibility and accountability extends to Welsh Government, EAS, Local Authorities and schools.
- 2.10 The report concludes that; “While the report is written in discrete sections, to mirror the constituent parts of a VfM evaluation, it is important to recognise that discrete does not mean unconnected. On the contrary, achieving value for money requires delivery strands to complement and reinforce one another to create a coherent and consistent overall approach that makes the best use of resources.
- 2.11 For EAS this coherence and consistency comes from its ever-evolving approach to supporting the emergence of a self-improving system based on cluster working. This approach runs as a consistent theme throughout the report as illustrated by the following examples:
- Financial underpinning through maximisation of delegation rates and remodeled approaches to cluster funding.
  - The development of a Well-being and Equity Strategy centred around a cluster-based approach.
  - The creation of Learning Schools Networks and enhanced peer working arrangements.
  - A professional Leadership offer that emphasises collaboration and shared development in a cluster-based context
- 2.12 The above demonstrates that the approach adopted by EAS is consistently centred around attempting to create additional capacity in schools, utilise external support and research to shape service delivery, focus sharply on interventions that provide support and challenge to underperforming schools and to ensure that the demands of curriculum reform can be met in a

sustainable way that does not compromise current provision. In financially constrained times, with impending major curriculum reform, this would appear to represent a very sensible use of resources.

2.13 The report notes two recommendations for consideration:

1. Further develop and refine the current approach to VfM evaluation in FADE reporting.
2. Consider whether there are cost-effective ways to secure the involvement of Head Teachers in further developing the annual VfM report for 2019-20.

2.14 These recommendations will be accepted in full and will be implemented within the current business planning cycle.

### 3. **Options for Recommendation**

3.1 **Option 1:** members scrutinise the report and provide feedback thereby engaging in self-evaluation processes prior to recommending for approval by the Executive.

**Option 2:** accept the report as provided and recommend for approval by the Executive.

### 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 EAS through its planning cycle is required to submit an annual value for the money report on the regional school improvement service.

#### 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 out pupils achieve their ambitions.”

#### 4.1.3 **Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan**

The content of the EAS business plan 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)***

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council made a financial contribution of £364,452 this financial year to the regionally commissioned Education Achievement Service (EAS) for the delivery of the statutory school improvement functions; namely, support, challenge, monitoring and intervention.

### 5.2 ***Risk including Mitigating Actions***

Risk lies in weak or late identification of significant school improvement concerns. Mitigating actions involve both the Local Authority and EAS having effective monitoring processes in place, which cover the impact, effectiveness, quality and appropriateness of school leadership, school provision and pupil outcomes. Effective partnership working is therefore essential in order to maximise the impact of both the Local Authority and EAS on pupil outcomes and well-being.

### 5.3 ***Legal***

The Collective and Management Agreement (CAMA) sets out the terms and conditions of the partnership between Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council and the EAS.

### 5.4 ***Human Resources***

The regional HR officers in the EAS work closely with OD officers in the Council.

## 6. Supporting Evidence

### 6.1 ***Performance Information and Data***

The value for money performance of regional consortia is contained in 2.7 above.

### 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 fundamental 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 value for money report 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 have 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)***

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 Council a value for money report. Alongside this report the Council will have received a number of detailed monitoring reports in previous meetings and through LA scrutiny committees such as: LA Outcomes, Categorisation, Estyn Inspection outcomes which has specific LA detail.

8. **Background Documents / Electronic Links**

Appendix 1 - The South-East Wales Regional Value for Money Report (2018-2019)

## Acronyms:

HT:	Headteacher
DHT:	Deputy Headteacher
SLT:	Senior Leadership Team in a school
Ass HT:	an Assistant Headteacher
GB:	Governing Body
SE:	a self-evaluation process whether in a school or Local Authority
LGES:	a Council's Local Government Education Services. This is the framework used by ESTYN when inspecting the Local Government's Education Services
SER:	a Self-Evaluation Report
KS2:	Key Stage 2 for pupils between the age range 7 to 11 years of age.
KS3:	Key Stage 3 for pupils between the ages of 11 and 14 years of age.
KS4:	the pupils between the ages 14 to 16 years of age.
ALN:	for pupils presenting with additional learning needs
SEN:	for pupils presenting with special educational needs
eFSM:	for pupils eligible for free school meals
Non FSM:	for pupils who are not eligible for free school meals
CSI:	the core subject indicator which means pupils achieve the expected levels in all 3 core subjects of English, Maths and Science.
SI:	for a school placed in a statutory category of Significant Improvement
SM:	for a school placed in an ESTYN statutory follow-up category as requiring special measures
PL:	Professional Learning
CA:	the school's Challenge Adviser
EAS:	the commissioned regional Education Achievement Service
LNS:	a learning network school
ETLF:	the excellence in teaching and learning framework which helps support the development of high quality teaching and learning
LSA:	Learning Support Assistants working in learning settings

YS: Youth Service

SEIM: Strategic Education Improvement Manager

SEM: Safeguarding in Education Manager

EWO: Education Welfare Officer

EP: Educational Psychologist

ET: Education Transformation Team

SCC: Schools Causing Concern

IP: Intervention Panel

SWN: Statutory Warning Notice to Improve

ICC: an Improvement Case Conference

EHE: when a parent decides to elect to home educate their child (ren) -  
elective home education

**Appendix 1**

# **Regional Value for Money (VfM) Evaluation 2018-2019**

## **Education Achievement Service (EAS)**

**Report Author: Rod Alcott (External Consultant)**  
**Date of final report: 24 May 2019**

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DRAFT

## Executive Summary

Value for Money (VfM), or cost effectiveness, is a measure of how well resources are being used to achieve intended outcomes. Good value for money is the optimal use of resources to achieve intended outcomes. VfM is usually measured by considering:

- **Economy:** minimising the cost of resources used while having regard to quality (inputs) – spending less;
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While the above represent the traditional method of measuring VfM it is also possible to include two further dimensions:

- **Equity:** the extent to which services are available to and reach all people that they are intended to – spending fairly. Equity is sometimes included within considerations of effectiveness but is treated separately here to highlight its importance to the work of EAS; and
- **Sustainability:** an increasingly standard consideration within the context of the Well Being of Future Generations Act (WBFGE) – spending for the long term.

Assessing the performance of EAS against the criteria outlined above the conclusion is that:

**EAS is providing good value for money in terms of those aspects that are within its control – notably economy, efficiency, equity and sustainability. However, collective action involving EAS, its constituent local authorities and school leaders is required to address concerns over educational outcomes across the region and those schools that are underperforming.**

This conclusion has been arrived at because:

- *Economy:* EAS is delivering its services to all schools across the region while continuing to spend less.
- *Efficiency:* The regional approach to deployment of resources allows economies of scale to be achieved; and the impact on service delivery of reduced EAS resources is being mitigated by a concerted effort to build compensatory capacity within schools to allow the quality of support to schools to be maintained.
- *Effectiveness:* Overall, educational outcomes are not improving at the desired rate in all schools, particularly within identified schools within the secondary phase, and this needs to be addressed through acceptance of collective responsibility and accountability to improve performance.
- *Equity:* A comprehensive programme designed to better equip schools to support vulnerable learners has been established across the region, based upon cluster working and reinforced by the distribution of wellbeing grants to every cluster.
- *Sustainability:* EAS has an agreed Medium Term Financial Plan that sets out a sustainable approach to financial management in the future and is concentrating upon preparing schools to meet the challenges of curriculum reform, based upon a robust regional delivery network for professional

learning that is intended to ensure that pupils needs will be met in the future and the workforce are well prepared and informed on all aspects of the reform agenda.

## **Recommendations**

The VfM report for 2017-18 contained a small number of recommendations and progress against these recommendations is summarised below:

1. Develop a framework for on-going analysis of VfM throughout the year that enables EAS to form a clear judgement on whether VfM is being secured. The approach needs to be one that embeds VfM as part of an on-going process throughout the year, rather than a one-off retrospective review annually. Such an approach will require:
  - ensuring VfM is considered in the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of service delivery;
  - including VfM analysis within the self-evaluation process;
  - including VfM review within a forward work programme for all governance groups;

*Progress:* A framework has been established through inclusion of VfM considerations within the on-going Focus, Analysis, Delivery, Evaluate (FADE) approach to self-evaluation. This provides a suitable platform for future development and refinement of the approach that includes the necessary increased consistency and enhanced rigour. No evidence is available regarding forward work programmes for governance groups.

2. Develop a robust Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) that:
  - provides a clear and concise view of future sustainability and the decisions that need to be made to balance the financial implications of objectives and policies against constraints in resources; and
  - forms the pivotal link that translates the organisation's ambitions and constraints into deliverable options for the future.

*Progress:* A robust MTFS that is closely aligned to the Business Plan has been developed and shared with governance groups

3. Work with other consortia to develop a national framework for assessing VfM at a regional level to encourage the sharing of good practice and ensure consistency of approach.

*Progress:* This requires a national approach and there is no evidence available regarding the development of a national framework.

## **Recommendations from 2018-19 VfM Review:**

1. Further develop and refine the current approach to VfM evaluation in FADE reporting by ensuring that:
  - FADE reports include (or are accompanied by) resource and cost data;
  - intended outcomes for specific strands of work are attributable to that specific intervention and do not include organisation wide aspirations such as improve performance at KS4;



- a robust and rigorous mechanism is developed for identifying the impact of specific interventions on the promotion of high standards and improved outcomes; and
  - individual strands of work are evaluated for VfM as part of a formative process that is brought together mid-year and later at the end of the year in an organisation wide summative evaluation.
2. Consider whether there are cost-effective ways to secure the involvement of Head Teachers in further developing the annual VfM report for 2019-20.

The main body of this report sets out the evidence that underpins the VfM evaluative statements contained in the executive summary.

***Economy: EAS is delivering its services to all schools across the region while continuing to spend less:***

The amount of money available to EAS to spend on resources in 2018-19 was less than in previous years. Both core funding from the constituent local authorities, based on a WG driven formula, and grant funding have reduced. Income from trading services has ceased as the result of a conscious decision that charging schools for services runs counter to the philosophy of the organisation.

Trading income derived from EAS selling their services to schools either through training or intensively supporting schools/departments in need of support. EAS does not intend reverting back to being a trading organisation because it is felt that this compromises their legitimacy, is not in line with the changing national agenda and is at odds with the strategic direction set by the Company Board.

The extent of the reduction in core funding, grant funding and trading income is shown below. There has been an agreed 7.8% reduction in LA funding over the past 3 years which along with the elimination of, trading income, has resulted in a reduction in total core funding of some £1.2m or 27% in absolute terms between 2015-16 and 2018-19; although in real terms, when inflation and pay awards are taken into account, the reduction has been in excess of 30%. Over the same time period the small reduction in the amount of grant money received from the Welsh Government has resulted in EAS having £1.9m or 3.3% less, in total, available in absolute terms.

	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
LA Funding	£3,481,085	£3,376,653	£3,275,353	£3,209,847
Trading Income	£924,853	£601,974	£447,460	£0
Total Core Funding	£4,405,938	£3,978,627	£3,722,813	£3,209,847
Grants	£52,703,146	£56,082,261	£52,033,572	£51,991,066
<b>Total</b>	<b>£57,109,084</b>	<b>£60,060,888</b>	<b>£55,756,385</b>	<b>£55,200,913</b>
Delegated to Schools	£47,413,811	£50,384,126	£46,481,315	£48,886,304
Delegation Percentage	90%	90%	89%	94%

Residual Income <sup>1</sup>	£7,687,144	£7,668,633	£7,278,655	£6,314,609
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However, if increases in the rate of delegation to schools are taken into account then residual income spent on running the organisation, including staffing costs, fell by some £0.96m or 13.24% from 2017-18 to 2018-19

The evidence clearly demonstrates that EAS is spending less than in previous years and that the rate of reduction is accelerating, while the overall number of schools being supported has remained largely static.

However, spending less is not in itself proof of providing VfM. Delivering VfM also requires the reduced spending to be used efficiently to maintain the quality of service being offered to schools across the region. The next section of the report will look at the evidence around how well resources have been deployed.

**Efficiency: The regional approach to deployment of resources allows economies of scale to be achieved; and the impact on service delivery of reduced EAS resources is being mitigated by a concerted effort to build compensatory capacity within schools to allow the quality of support to schools to be maintained.**

The centralised model of service delivery that has been adopted across the region has enabled efficiencies to be realised and economies of scale to be secured, particularly in relation to avoiding duplication of functions. Some illustrative examples of this are:

- the reduced cost of financial management resulting from centralising the function within EAS rather than having it duplicated across the five constituent local authorities; and
- centralising governor support within EAS rather than having it replicated across five local authorities.

EAS recognises that the role of Governors is integral to the leadership capacity within each school and that it is therefore critical that governing bodies are well informed so that they can effectively discharge their role of challenge and support. In relation to the provision of governor support it is worth noting that EAS remains the only consortium to include Governor Support Officers, who work in partnership with Challenge Advisers to strengthen governance.

The Governor Support Service is provided through a Service Level Agreement (SLA) that schools can opt into if they so choose. It is significant to note that the take up for the Clerking SLA across the region has increased to 99%; a level of elective engagement that would appear to suggest that it represents good value for money.

This perception of good value for money is further strengthened by the results from a survey, to consider the impact of the EAS Training programme and the Professional Clerking Service, that was undertaken in July 2018. 541 Governors completed the Online Governor Support Survey. The survey revealed that out of the governors surveyed:

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<sup>1</sup> Residual Income is after distribution of Minority Ethnic Achievement Grant (MEAG) and Gypsy Traveller Children Grant

- 93% agreed that they are satisfied with the overall service provided for the last 4 years;
- 93% agreed that training has made them more effective and helped them understand their role more clearly;
- 92% agreed that the training helped them understand their strategic role;
- 91% agreed they were more confident to challenge and to monitor progress;
- 95% agreed they are confident to challenge the Headteacher's report; and.
- 80% agreed that they understood the priorities and outcomes of Pupil Deprivation Grant (PDG).

EAS is addressing the lower confidence of Governors when it comes to understanding PDG through training sessions provided by the Strategic Lead for Equity and Wellbeing. These sessions are designed to enable governors to develop their knowledge and understanding of:

- the current national and regional agenda regarding Wellbeing and Equity and Grants available to schools;
- the terms and conditions of each grant;
- how to evaluate grant expenditure within their schools; and
- how they can challenge their schools on the progress of vulnerable learners.

2019-20 will see further development of the support service for Governors through the introduction of two options for the SLA to ensure the service meets the needs of governing bodies throughout the region:

- Option 1: Local Authority (LA) Statutory Service and Clerking Service
- Option 2: LA Statutory Service and Clerking Service with Statutory Committee Support

From October 2018 the provision of a specialised Human resources (HR) service across the region, that was previously contracted out to a local authority, has been brought in to EAS. The service has a dedicated resource through the appointment of a Regional Specialist HR Senior Officer. The service has provided the following support across the region:

- Training for Headteachers and leadership teams
- Training and support on capability procedure
- Governor training
- Training for EAS staff

The aim of the service is to ensure that:

- the appointment process for Headteachers is suitably robust;
- school leaders are effectively implementing processes to deal with underperformance of staff;
- governors are suitably trained to manage statutory processes; and
- processes for performance management of staff and leaders are effectively implemented.

EAS will review the implementation of its programme of support and evaluate its impact as part of its mid-year review of the Business Plan in the autumn of 2019. Curriculum expertise is another area where savings can be achieved through the employment of one person to provide expert support in a specific area of the

curriculum, as opposed to each local authority having to employ its own dedicated resource. The development of Learning Network Schools has further accelerated this process of securing efficiency savings through allowing one school to provide support in a specific curriculum area to a number of participant schools across the region, rather than needing a Network School per local authority. The gain in this example can be qualitative as well as quantitative. It might allow the only school within the region that has the level of expertise that is ideally required to be used, rather than potentially diluting quality through the need to identify one Network School per authority.

Centralised delivery that eliminates duplication also allows efficiencies to be realised in terms of staffing levels; while centralised administration of grants to schools, as opposed to administration per authority, has enabled school budgets across the region to benefit from receipt of an ever-increasing proportion of Welsh Government grants, as the delegation rate to schools has risen from 90% to 94%.

Centralised financial management, governor support services, curriculum expertise and grant administration are specific examples of the potential for efficiency gains. However, in more general terms, efficiency savings will be realised across the region for as long as there is no duplication of school improvement services from the £3m EAS receives from its partner LAs and the funding that LAs retain.

Reduced spending has inevitably resulted in a considerable reduction in staffing numbers, with the number of Full Time Equivalent (FTE) staff reducing from 107 in 2015-16 to 77 in 2018-19, representing a 28% reduction. FTE numbers are projected to continue to fall to 72 in 2019-20, taking the total reduction in FTE staff reduction to 35 over the period 2015-16 to 2019-20, representing a reduction of approximately one third in staffing levels.

However, effective resource management is about more than cost saving through staffing reductions. The challenge for EAS has been to manage the reduction in such a way as to mitigate the impact on service delivery. Throughout the process EAS has recognised the need to be flexible in its approach to ensure it remains fit for purpose and able to deliver its Business Plan priorities. With this in mind a balanced approach has been taken to ensure key posts are retained to enable continuity of delivery with minimum disruption to the support provided to schools. In particular re-structuring has been designed to ensure continuation of the progress that has been made in developing a self-improving system across the region and extending the collaborative opportunities for schools so that they are able to meet the demands of the reform agenda.

EAS has also realised the necessity for emerging structural arrangements to facilitate effective succession planning and the need to streamline and strengthen the SMT and SLT structures to ensure maximum value for money is achieved.

To ensure the continued effective delivery of school improvement services, in the face of staffing reductions, EAS has recognized the need to ensure that systems are in place to support schools to work collaboratively and become partners in a self-improving system in which school leaders have the skills, capacity and commitment to continually learn and improve their practice.

Fundamental to this approach has been the development of a Professional Learning programme designed to support improvement and development in schools to help them fully engage and prepare for curriculum reform. As part of this programme EAS provided funding of £ 5,822 pounds to each non pioneer school with the expectation that this would help fund a Professional Learning Lead in each school. Postholders would then contribute to the development of professional learning to support schools in preparing for curriculum reform, developing the use of the new professional teaching and leadership standards and developing Schools as Learning Organisations.

In carrying out their role it is expected that Professional Learning Leads will:

- promote effective teaching and learning strategies in preparation for curriculum reform across the school and relevant wider networks;
- develop professional values and dispositions;
- develop professional learning through effective collaboration and development of innovations across the school and wider school community; and
- lead, develop and enhance professional learning of other staff.

As of November 2018, 482 school leaders from across the region had participated in formal leadership programmes provided by EAS. The Professional Learning programme includes the provision of mentor support for leadership in secondary schools, the delivery of services through the development of school-based networks, the development of cluster-based approaches to school improvement and the introduction, facilitation and support of peer working arrangements.

Mentor support for secondary schools entails a range of supportive interventions designed to increase leadership capacity and secure an effective rate of improvement. These interventions include the allocation of:

- mentors for Headteachers in identified schools;
- mentors for Deputy Headteachers in identified schools;
- a mentor for a Chair of Governors in an identified school;
- a mentor for newly appointed Headteacher in an identified school; and
- experienced acting Headteachers to identified schools.

Mentors are professionals who have been chosen and allocated on the basis of their proven leadership abilities and come from schools both within and outside the region. Their role is to provide a balance of support and challenge that builds leadership capacity as a pre-requisite for securing future improvement. However, raising standards will be dependent upon capable leaders engaging with the range of professional school improvement services being provided by EAS.

EAS commitment to capacity building through mentor support is demonstrated by the spending of some £167,000 to fund this programme in 2018-19. In value for money terms the test of the effectiveness of this spend will be the extent to which outcomes improve over time in the schools that have been the recipients of this resource expenditure.

The importance attached to capacity creation through collaboration is reflected in the EAS Business Plan for 2018-19 where *'Supporting collaboration and a self-improving system'* is an identified priority accompanied by a mid-year (November 2018)

progress judgement of *'Satisfactory progress - many aspects addressed but still significant work to do in important areas'*.

The Learning Networks that have been established across the region comprise:

- Learning Network Schools who are funded to provide support to the participant schools through a series of activities; and
- Participant Schools who are the schools that are benefiting from engagement; they are the schools that will do most, although not all, of the learning from the experience. Participant Schools are generally not funded.

Currently across the region there are 61 primary Learning Network Schools and 17 secondary schools who deliver up to 46 different options for professional learning within the secondary phase.

Between January and April 2018, the University of South Wales (USW) undertook an independent research project looking at the delivery of development services through learning networks. In their final report they stated that *'delivering development services through Learning Schools Networks is an effective strategy for adding-value, accelerating improvement and building confidence, thereby establishing a sustainable self-improving system'*.

While the report acknowledges that there are a small number of areas for development and stresses the need for consistency of approach, it also highlights the large number of ways in which the programme works well. These are identified as:

- *Network and Participant Schools understand their role and take ownership of it. Senior leadership teams are engaged.*
- *There is rigorous selection of Network Schools and clarity that they have the capacity to support without detriment to their own standards.*
- *There is transparency with Network and Participant Schools and EAS carrying out diagnostic and support planning phases.*
- *Schools have established improvement networks and share resources.*
- *There is a clear process for capturing impact in short and medium term.*
- *There is a clear understanding of how the programme fits within the wider school-to-school EAS programmes*

In addition to the research undertaken by USW, EAS also commissioned a research team from the Education and Social Research Institute of Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU) to evaluate the development of cluster-based school improvement. The aim of the project was to assess the extent to which the potential rewards of the cluster approach initiated in South East Wales in 2017 had been achieved across the region in the first year of the programme. MMU reported their findings to EAS in August 2018.

The background to the research project was the introduction by EAS, in May 2017, of a cluster-based model of school improvement. The aims of the cluster-based approach were to develop a more socially inclusive curriculum and identify more effective models for the professional development of the teacher workforce. The school-cluster model was intended to become the 'anchor' for professional practice and capacity building that occupied an important strategic role in the regional approach to delivering a self-improving system.

In its final report MMU concluded that the following benefits had been realised from cluster working in 2017-18:

- *Some clusters have engaged in joint practice development to improve experiences of transition and are developing common school policies.*
- *Cluster working is supporting the development of a collaborative culture across institutional and stage boundaries.*
- *Cross-phase cluster working is promoting collective responsibility for outcomes by focusing attention on the progression of learning.*
- *Distributed leadership of cluster activity can provide rich professional development opportunities that support professional renewal and the development of adaptive expertise.*
- *Close cluster working has provided opportunities for enhanced peer support and reciprocal learning among senior colleagues at different stages of headship.*

In addition to Learning Network Schools and cluster arrangements EAS has also been engaged in building school leadership capacity through other forms of peer working arrangements. One strand of this work was the bringing together of Headteachers to form peer review teams for school categorisation in the summer and autumn terms in 2018. Participating schools received funding of £500 per school, amounting to a total expenditure of £46,500 across the 93 schools that opted to engage with this approach as opposed the alternative of draft categorisation by the Challenge Adviser.

An evaluative survey was conducted of participating Headteachers which elicited 41 responses (44% response rate). One striking aspect of the responses was that 36 out of 39 respondents either 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' that *'the process of working in the peer review group had enhanced their strategic leadership and professional skills'*.

In addition to the school categorisation peer review process EAS commissioned Professor Mick Waters to provide a commentary on their approach to peer working. One of Professor Waters' recommendations was that *'The skills of school evaluation and review need to be learned and developed over time and EAS should think of developing several models of peer review across the region so that those involved are taking part in an action research programme rather than a training programme. This could be a fundamental turning point for school improvement and emerging models could be a prototype for development in other regions.'*

As a result, EAS has been exploring different Peer Working Models from January 2019 through a programme entitled: *'A collaborative leadership approach to school improvement - Action research into effective models for peer working and review.'*

The programme has taken the form of conducting a pilot of six models of peer working involving 44 schools. These models can be summarised as:

- Secondary School Pedagogy Programme
- Cluster Working
- Self-Chosen Existing Secondary Networks
- Raising the Attainment of Disadvantaged Youngsters (RADY)
- Secondary schools with common priorities
- Sharing Practice Within and Outside the Region

It is expected that each group will submit a report by the 30th June 2019 as part of an evaluation of the programme, scheduled to be completed by 10th July, which will address a number of key questions in order to shape further work on peer review:

- How effectively did each model work?
- What did we learn about the peer review process?
- How do we keep improvements going?
- In what way do head teachers need support in such programmes?
- Was the investment worth it?
- If so, what is needed in the next phase?

Switching from a centrally delivered support programme to a cluster-based approach requires switching financial resources out from the centre into schools, so that schools have the time, money and people in place to support their own improvement and improvement in other schools.

The most obvious manifestation of this, across the region, has been the increase in the rate of delegation to schools of grant funding received from the Welsh Government. The rate has increased from 89% in 2017-18 to 94% in 2018-19 resulting in an additional £2.4m being allocated directly to schools.

However, it is important to note that not only has the delegation rate increased but also the way in which it is allocated has been refined to ensure its distribution more closely reflects the commitment to support cluster working. Thus in 2018-19 some £1.5m of grant funding was allocated on a cluster basis as opposed to individual schools. This grant funding was used to provide support to a number of cluster-based approaches including:

- Looked After Children (LAC)
- Wellbeing
- More Able and Talented (MAT)
- Modern Foreign Languages (MFL)

The rationale behind this is that pooling financial resources on a cluster basis can lead to more efficient use of the money. The use of LAC monies can serve as an illustration of the efficiency benefits that can be derived from a cluster-based allocation of grant money.

Historically schools were allocated circa £1,150 for every LAC pupil. Thus, in a cluster with a combined total of 30 LAC pupils, distributed unevenly across the cluster, an individual school with two LAC pupils would receive £2,300 – an amount with which they could do very little. However, allocation on a cluster basis would see the cluster receive circa £34,500 which could permit the appointment of a LAC teacher for the cluster. It is worth noting that this approach to cluster funding is entirely consistent with the recommendation to EAS in the August 2018 report on cluster working from Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU) to ‘*Sustain and extend funding to allow school clusters to mature and plan more effectively*’.

**Effectiveness: Overall, educational outcomes are not improving at the desired rate in all schools, particularly within identified schools within the secondary phase, and this needs to be addressed through acceptance of collective responsibility and accountability to improve performance**



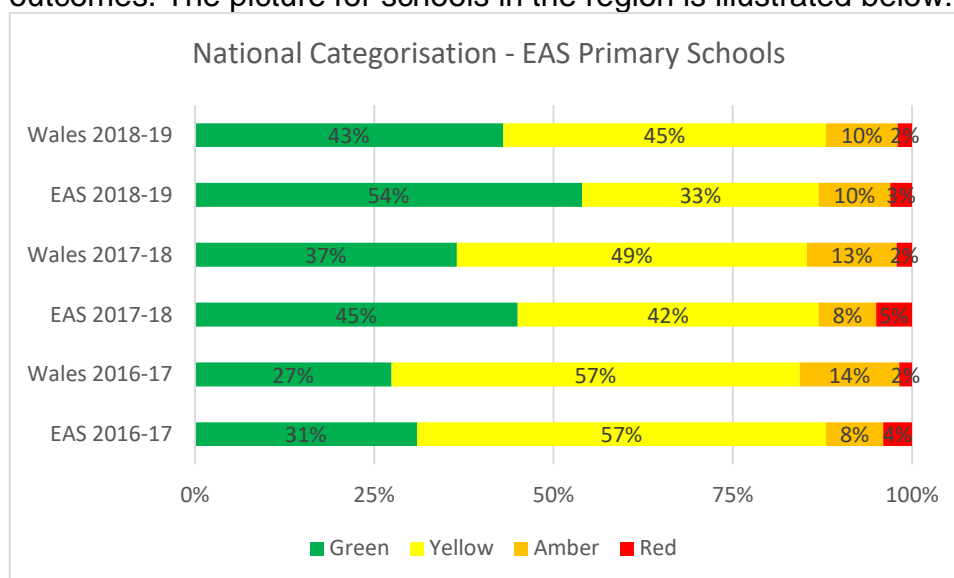
While maintaining the quality of support to schools is essential, effectiveness depends upon what this support achieves. The overriding purpose of EAS, as set out in its mission statement, is to *'transform the educational outcomes and life chances for all learners across South East Wales'*.

Consequently, assessment of effectiveness must relate to its contribution in bringing about this desired transformation. One approach to this assessment is to look at educational outcomes as measured by categorisation outcomes, Estyn inspection outcomes and pupil outcomes. However, it must be recognised from the outset that these outcomes cannot be achieved by any one organisation or programme of support. They require collaboration and a collective effort for which there is a collective responsibility and accountability. In relation to this report this collective responsibility and accountability extends to Welsh Government, EAS, Local Authorities and schools

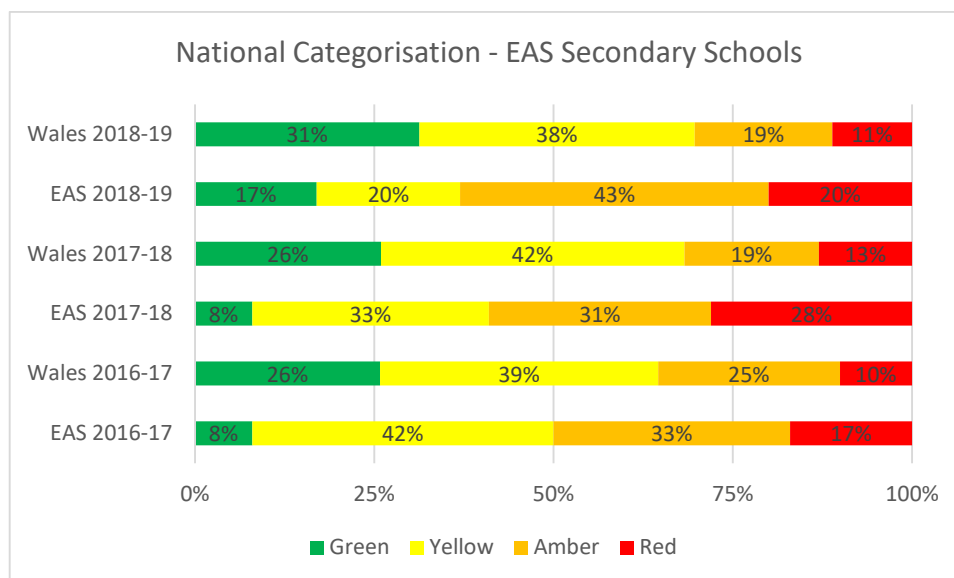
**Categorisation:**

The National School Categorisation System was introduced in September 2014. The system places schools into four categories green, yellow, amber and red in descending order of the amount of support they are judged to require. Thus, green schools are judged to require the least support and red schools the most support. The system is not purely data driven, it also considers the quality of leadership and teaching and learning in schools. The model was jointly constructed between Welsh Government and the four regional consortia.

The categorisation outcomes go through a rigorous moderation process that allows valid comparison to be made within the region over time and between regional and national outcomes. The picture for schools in the region is illustrated below:



The above table illustrates that the combined percentage of primary schools in the green and yellow categories has remained consistent over the last three years and is now broadly in line with the Wales average. However, within this picture of consistent performance it is worth noting that the percentage of primary schools in the green category has risen by 23 percentage points over the last three years resulting in the extent to which the percentage of green schools in the region exceeds the Wales average increasing from 4 percentage points to 11 percentage points.



The above table illustrates that the percentage of secondary schools in the green and yellow categories has fallen from 50% in 2016 to 37% in 2019. This is despite an increase from 8% to 17% for schools in the green category; an improvement that has narrowed the gap between schools in that category across the region and those across Wales. However, the gap between secondary schools in the green and yellow categories across the region and schools across Wales has widened over the three-year period.

Another measure of school improvement is Estyn inspection outcomes across the region. In September 2017 Estyn introduced a new framework for judging school performance based upon assessments across the following five categories:

- Leadership and management
- Care, support and guidance
- Teaching and learning experiences
- Well-being and attitudes to learning
- Standards of achievement

For each category school performance is judged to be either excellent, good, adequate or unsatisfactory. As part of the new framework no overall judgement is arrived at and no assessment is made of prospects for future improvement. This marked divergence from the previous approach means that valid comparisons cannot be made with past judgements. While valid historical or trend comparisons cannot yet be made it is still possible to make comparisons between the judgements arrived at across the region compared with those across Wales; and between primary schools and secondary schools.

In terms of these comparisons the following picture emerges for 2017-19 based on the inspection of 47 primary schools and 9 secondary schools:

- Of the 47 primary schools inspected, 36 were judged to be either excellent or good in every category.
- Every primary school inspected in 2018-19 was judged to be either excellent or good in terms of well-being and attitudes to learning.

- Of the 9 secondary schools inspected, 4 were judged to be either adequate or unsatisfactory in every category.
- 8 out of the 9 secondary schools were placed in a follow-up category.

While this picture of inspection outcomes is a snapshot based upon a relatively small sample, particularly in the case of secondary schools, it does serve to further highlight the differentiation in performance between primary schools and secondary schools across the region.

In addition to the support provided to maintained schools EAS also provides support to 82 Non-Maintained Settings (NMS), which provide education for children before compulsory school age, across the region. These settings are subject to inspection (formerly by Estyn and currently jointly by Estyn and Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW)) with judgements made about performance. Under the joint inspection regime Estyn leads on the quality and standards of education and CIW focuses on childcare, with both aspects covered in a single report. The move to joint inspection has been accompanied by a revised inspection framework that makes historical comparison or trend analysis of specific areas of provision very difficult. However, the one constant measure is the proportion of setting that are placed in a follow up monitoring category as a result of inspection. A summary of performance, based upon this measure, over the last five years is shown below:

Year	No. Inspections	No. Monitoring	%Estyn Monitoring
2014/15	21	0	0.0%
2015/16	17	1	5.9%
2016/17	12	2	16.7%
2017/18	7	1	14.3%
2018/19	12	3	25.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>10%</b>

The table clearly shows that performance in some 90% of settings was judged to be of a standard that required no follow-up monitoring. It is also worth noting that 3 out of the 7 settings that were placed in a follow-up category have subsequently been removed meaning that only 4 or 6% of settings remain in a follow-up category.

In keeping with the EAS practice of fostering school to school support, settings who have good and excellent inspections are invited to share in network meetings; and support from one lead setting has resulted in another setting being removed from Estyn monitoring.

As stated earlier, in addition to looking at school-based measures, one fundamental indicator of effectiveness is pupil outcomes and a summary of the data relating to these outcomes is presented below.

#### *Foundation Phase<sup>2</sup>:*

Regional performance in the Foundation Phase Indicator (FPI) has exceeded the all-Wales average for each of the last five years. In 2018 the gap had grown to +3.4pp – representing the largest margin achieved over the 5-year period.

<sup>2</sup> Comparison with the rest of Wales is no longer possible for Foundation Phase, Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3 because the Welsh Government ceased publishing benchmarking information after 2017

The percentage of schools in 2017 placed in top 25% of similar schools (34.4%) and in the top 50% of similar schools (66.1%) for the FPI are both above expectation. The percentage of schools in the bottom 25% of schools (10.6%) is also significantly lower than expectation.

#### *Key Stage 2:*

Regional performance in the Core Subject Indicator (CSI) has also exceeded the all-Wales average for each of the last five years. In 2018 the gap was +1.2pp representing the second largest margin achieved over the 5-year period.

The percentage of schools in 2017 placed in top 25% of similar schools (31.6%) and in the top 50% of similar schools (57.3%) for the CSI are both above expectation. The percentage of schools in the bottom 25% of schools (18.2%) is also slightly lower than expectation.

#### *Key Stage 3:*

In 2018 performance in the Core Subject Indicator (CSI) was above the all-Wales average for the first time in the last 5 years. This was the result of performance across the region improving at a faster rate over the 5-year period (+9.5pp) than across Wales as a whole (+7.1pp).

The percentage of schools in 2017 placed in top 25% of similar schools (37.1%) and in the top 50% of similar schools (57.1%) for the CSI are both above expectation. The percentage of schools in the bottom 25% of schools (14.3%), is much lower than expectation.

#### *Key Stage 4:*

Performance in the Level 2 threshold including English/Welsh and mathematics (L2 inc E/W and M) has been below the national average every year for the last five years. The relative gain achieved in 2017 when the gap narrowed to -1.7pp was reversed in 2018 with the gap increasing to -3.7pp which was slightly higher than the average gap over the period of -3.2pp.

The percentage of schools in 2018 for the L2 inclusive threshold, placed in top 25% of similar schools<sup>3</sup> (20%), is lower than 2017 and lower than expectation (7 schools out of 35). The percentage of schools in the top 50% of schools is 45.7%, slightly lower than expected (16 schools), and in the bottom 25% of schools the figure of 28.6% is the same as 2017, and slightly higher than expected (10 schools).

When looking at school performance at the L2 inclusive threshold against Welsh Government Modelled Estimates<sup>4</sup>, nine schools in the region performed above or in line with prediction. This is an improvement on 2017 when only five schools performed above modelled estimates. Five schools reported performance more than

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<sup>3</sup> All secondary schools are placed in one of 5 Free School Meal (FSM) groupings based on the average percentage of pupils entitled to FSM over a three-year period. Similar schools are those in the same grouping, for example FSM between 10% and 15%.

<sup>4</sup> Model 2b estimates show how a particular cohort of pupils would be predicted to perform in future assessments, given the prior-attainment and characteristics of pupils in the cohort

10% below their modelled estimates and fifteen schools reported performance within 5% of their modelled estimates, either below or above.

In summary, and as illustrated in the table below, attainment at Foundation Phase and Key Stage 2 has been above the national average for each of the last 5 years. Between 2015-18 over 90% of pupils across the region made the expected progress between KS2 and KS3, resulting in attainment at Key Stages 3 rising above the national average for the first time. However, attainment at KS4 remains a cause for concern.

		2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
<b>Foundation Phase FPI</b>	EAS	88.2	88.0	88.8	89.2	86.0
	Wales	85.2	86.8	87.0	87.3	82.6
<b>KS2 CSI</b>	EAS	87.0	88.1	89.9	90.2	90.7
	Wales	86.1	87.7	88.6	89.5	89.5
<b>KS3 CSI</b>	EAS	79.0	82.2	83.8	86.4	88.5
	Wales	81.0	83.9	85.9	87.4	88.1
<b>KS4 L2 Threshold E/W/M</b>	EAS	52.2	55.1	55.5	52.9	51.4
	Wales	55.4	57.9	60.3	54.6	55.1

In all regions there will be some schools that perform less well than others and this is something that regional consortia have to address. EAS is attempting to address the problem of underperforming schools across the region through its Schools Causing Concern (SCC) process. While both primary and secondary schools can be a cause for concern, it has to be recognised that on all outcome measures; categorisation, inspection judgements and Key Stage results, the performance of secondary schools across the region is significantly below that of primaries.

SCC are placed on the Schools Causing Concern Register which is used regularly to review the actions taken by local authorities, EAS and religious authority (as appropriate) for each school identified at risk to ensure that appropriate support and challenge has been provided to secure the necessary pace of improvement and to improve regional consistency, particularly in the use of statutory powers. Schools listed on the register are agreed by local authority Directors of Education and the EAS Managing Director. The Headteacher and Governing Body are notified in writing if their school is placed on the Schools Causing Concern Register, this letter will note the reasons why the school is included and the support that both the local authority and EAS will provide. This information will already be included on the school's support or intervention plan.

The register considers a range of criteria to identify schools at risk including:

- pace of progress against current school support or intervention plan;
- national categorisation outcomes (3-year period);
- current Estyn category (e.g. statutory category / remaining in a category for a longer than anticipated period of time);
- pupil outcomes for relevant age phase including a comparison to Welsh Government modelled estimates at KS4;
- information provided through the target setting and progress towards targets process;
- attendance (Benchmarks over a 3-year period);
- exclusions; and

- any other LA specific concerns linked to: Finance, Safeguarding, Human Resources, Additional Learning Needs.

The register is reviewed on a half termly basis by senior officers within the local authorities and EAS to ensure that levels of support and challenge are consistent. Progress of schools will also be discussed at the meetings with all Cabinet Members for Education on a termly basis. Following these meetings schools will be notified if there are any changes to their inclusion on the register or any updates regarding support.

The composition of the register as of autumn 2018 can be summarised as;

- In total there are now 28 schools on the register. Of these 19 are secondary schools. This reflects both outcomes in the sector and the greater risk associated with underperformance in secondary schools.
- Of these 28 schools, 3 have been added, during the year.
- 18 schools have been removed from the register as they have made sufficient progress for their inclusion to be no longer warranted.

While the fact that the number of schools being removed exceeds the number being added is positive overall, this cannot mask concerns over secondary school performance across the region. Secondary schools account for 32 (13.5%) of the 238 schools across the region but 19 (68%) of schools on the SCC register. This means that over half (59%) of secondary schools are on the SCC register.

EAS has identified the following potential causes for underperformance at secondary school level across the region and the slow progress in addressing it:

- Agreed actions are not carried out in a timely manner by EAS and/or LA e.g. Schools Causing Concern Register actions.
- EAS and LA staff do not demonstrate a united front when dealing with schools, particularly those that give cause for concern.
- Schools are not held to account in a timely manner.
- There is not consistent application of agreed regional protocols.
- Timely consideration is not given to the use of LA Statutory Powers e.g. low standards, attendance, exclusions, leadership
- Limited impact of the work of EAS in schools where underperformance in leadership is not challenged effectively.

This list of potential inhibiting factors reinforces the earlier point that achieving better outcomes requires acceptance of collective responsibility and accountability for improving performance. This collective responsibility and accountability extend to the role of EAS, its constituent local authorities, school leaders and governors. Within this context of joint working the primary role of EAS is to provide support and challenge through the work of its Challenge Advisors and to support improvement in school leadership through its extensive programmes of professional development that are covered in more detail elsewhere in this report.

While work on SCC is included here in relation to improving outcomes it could be included in the following section on equity because, as last year's VfM report noted... *'equity demands that all pupils are able to achieve their potential irrespective of their background, personal circumstances or the school they attend...One of the biggest*

*barriers to equity is variability in school performance and the aim has to be that all pupils attend a good school'.*

**Equity: A comprehensive programme designed to better equip schools to support vulnerable learners has been established across the region, based upon cluster working and reinforced by the distribution of wellbeing grants to every cluster.**

As stated earlier, the overriding purpose of EAS, as set out in its mission statement, is to *'transform the educational outcomes and life chances for all learners across South East Wales'*. In considering equity then the crucial word in that mission statement is the word *'all'*. Equity in education has two dimensions. The first is fairness which basically means making sure that personal and social circumstances, for example, gender, socio-economic status or ethnic origin, should not be an obstacle to *all* learners achieving their educational potential. The second is inclusion, in other words ensuring a basic minimum standard of education for *all*.

In keeping with its mission statement to ensure equity EAS has appointed an Equity and Well-being Lead and developed a Wellbeing and Equity Strategy. This strategy sets out how it will support schools and clusters to build capacity to provide high quality support and resources to ensure all pupils have equal access and that those requiring support, receive appropriate provision.

One way in which EAS is proactively working to implement this strategy, to ensure the needs of all learners are met, is through The Cluster Wellbeing and Equity project. This project provides an opportunity for clusters to develop the Wellbeing agenda and to appoint Wellbeing leads within their own schools and within the cluster. The project involves both termly network meetings and the provision of training and is funded by EAS, based on the cluster funded formula model. This formula sets out conditions that have to be met in order for funding to be accessed, including the stipulation that the grant must be used in a sustainable way and must be focussed on developing the capacity of the cluster to implement the agreed wellbeing strategy. To date only one cluster has not engaged in the regional Wellbeing Network Meetings.

In addition to attending the Network meetings many clusters are using their Wellbeing and Equity grants to finance the release of staff to attend the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) 'train the trainer' programme. This training is designed to encourage schools to become trauma aware and to consider their provision for supporting such vulnerable learners.

Other examples of how the grants are being used to equip schools to deliver enhanced provision and support for vulnerable learners include:

- 35 schools engaging with the 'National Nurturing School Programme', including three clusters who are working together on this project. The National Nurturing Schools Programme is a programme that allows staff to develop personally and professionally whilst embedding a nurturing culture throughout their schools, enhancing teaching and learning, promoting healthy outcomes for children and young people. This is achieved by focusing on emotional needs and development as well as academic learning in a whole school environment. The programme is based on the six principles of nurture that have successfully underpinned nurture groups for over 40 years.

- 39 schools engaging with the regional Family and Community Network meetings. These have been focussed around the Welsh Government Family and Community Engagement (FaCE) toolkit. This toolkit is designed to provide practical support for schools to help them develop and strengthen their approach to FaCE. The emphasis is on engagement that helps families to actively support their child's learning, with a focus on how to engage with families of children who are currently underperforming, children from deprived backgrounds, and those receiving less support for their learning at home.
- 17 schools engaging with the Families Connect Programme, facilitated by Save the Children. Families Connect focuses on supporting parents and children to learn together. It helps parents to support their children's learning in three key areas:
  - Literacy and language development
  - Numeracy
  - Emotional development
- 39 schools engaging with, and regularly attending, the More Able and Talented (MAT) network meetings. These are focused on developing school to schoolwork by encouraging schools to lead meetings, showcasing their work and sharing the impact it has had upon their MAT learners.
- 6 MAT Learning Network Schools have been identified; three Secondary and three Primary schools. The direction of their work consists of:
  - school to school support via a self-referral system;
  - leading presentations at network meetings; and
  - participating in research work to inform future regional workings e.g. transition of more able learners, identifying 'most able' learners.

While the above serves to illustrate the extensive work being undertaken to better equip schools to support vulnerable learners it is too early in the programme to generate any longitudinal evidence of impact.

Currently, the most commonly used method for measuring the impact of poverty on attainment is the performance of pupils in receipt of Free School Meals (FSM). The percentage of pupils aged 5-15 eligible for FSM (PLASC 2018) in the region was 18.4%, which is above the Welsh average of 17.4%, and the second highest of the regional consortia, second to Central South Consortia (CSC).

FSM pupil performance across the region is adequate. Performance of both FSM and non-FSM pupils at foundation phase, key stage 2 and key stage 3 was higher than the Wales average last year, except for KS3 English and Maths, which were comparable. The gap between FSM and non-FSM pupils is narrower than the national gap at each phase. The gap widens as pupils progress through each phase. L2 inclusive threshold performance of FSM pupils in 2018 has declined by 2.2pp since 2017 to 24.3%. In comparison, the Wales FSM average improved by 0.9pp to 29.5%, therefore the gap between FSM performance across the region and that across Wales is now 2.0pp. In terms of comparison with non-FSM pupils the gap narrowed in 2018 at KS2, KS3, but widened at FP and KS4.

Another commonly used indicator for assessing outcomes for vulnerable pupils is that of outcomes for Looked After Children (LAC). The performance of LAC learners



has declined in primary schools, and remains below all pupils' performance, with the gap widening at both FP and KS2. At key stage 3 performance of LAC learners has improved considerably since 2015 and the gap between these pupils and all pupils is narrowing. Performance of LAC learners at key stage 4 between 2015 and 2018 improved for L2+ measure, but declined for core subjects, which was also mirrored by performance of non-LAC pupils. Numbers are very low across the region (between 40 and 80 pupils at each Key stage per year), so results can be volatile.

In terms of measuring the success of the EAS programme for improving support for vulnerable pupils it is too early to expect significant improvement in end of Key Stage outcomes. Given that, compared to their peers, vulnerable pupils have historically been more likely to miss school and more likely to exhibit challenging behaviour when in school, then attendance and exclusion rates might, in the short to medium term, be valid measures of success. To create a reliable evidence base for measuring success using the criteria of attendance and exclusion rates, it might be necessary to collect this information as a discrete data set based upon the identification of vulnerable pupils.

***Sustainability:* EAS has an agreed Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) that sets out a sustainable approach to financial management in the future and is concentrating upon preparing schools to meet the challenges of curriculum reform based upon a robust regional delivery network for professional learning that is intended to ensure that pupils needs will be met in the future and the workforce are well prepared and informed on all aspects of the reform agenda.**

In the context of service provision by EAS, sustainability or spending for the long term, has two fundamental dimensions. These dimensions relate to both ensuring the availability of future resources to enable services to continue to be delivered in the longer term and ensuring that current spending is directed towards meeting future needs.

In terms of ensuring the availability of future resources to enable services to continue to be delivered EAS has engaged in a significant financial planning and management exercise to develop an agreed MTFP. The MTFP is designed to ensure that:

- A. funding priorities align with the delivery priorities of the organisation as set out in the regional school improvement business plan;
- B. services can continue to be delivered in the face of financial pressures;
- C. the risk to service delivery in the future is minimised;
- D. progress that has been made in creating a self-improving system across the region becomes embedded;
- E. the delegation rate into school budgets is maximised; and
- F. collaborative opportunities for schools are extended to enable them to meet the demands of the curriculum reform agenda.

In relation to the final bullet in the list above there is clear recognition that those charged with meeting the needs of the curriculum reform agenda will require extensive support if it is to be successfully addressed. To this end EAS has embarked upon an extensive professional leadership programme. This programme comprises:

- Curriculum reform Support Programme activity sessions to support dissemination and discussion in schools. Over 300 teachers attended the sessions and 100% of partner (non-pioneer) schools have now engaged with the Curriculum Reform Support Programme.
- The awarding of a contract to the University of Stirling to develop a Cluster-based approach to professional enquiry CCPE (Critical Collaborative Professional Enquiry). The purpose of the project is for participants to develop the skills to complete professional enquiries across their cluster that will enable teachers to alter aspects of their practice on the basis of their research and evaluate the impact on pupil learning/outcomes. 29 of 35 clusters have engaged with the project.
- Working in partnership with Welsh Government to run a series of seminars with Headteachers to explain, in an appropriate level of detail, the structure of the new curriculum and how the different structural components of the new curriculum will align.
- Engaging with regional schools in the Schools as Learning Organisations (SLO) development. A representative school from each LA was involved in shaping the self-review survey tool that will support schools in reviewing how well they are developing as a learning organisation. The region has representation on the National SLO Implementation group and as a result has worked closely with 10 regional pilot schools that have been trialling the latest version of the SLO snapshot survey tool. The final SLO survey tool became available to all school across Wales from the beginning of April 2019. Across the region, during the spring term, the 32 Professional Learning cluster lead schools delivered over 40 workshops to all Headteachers and professional learning leads to enable them to prepare their own staff for engaging with the SLO survey in April 2019.
- The professional learning team has worked in partnership with schools to develop a programme to support the roll-out of the Excellence in Teaching and Leadership Framework (ETLF) for practitioners at different leadership and teaching milestones. The programmes have been designed to support individuals from Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) to Headteachers to be able to reflect against the professional teaching and leadership standards. This supports teachers in being able to identify their strengths and areas for development and, as a result, their relevant professional learning needs. The programmes also support schools in understanding how to use the frameworks to support self-evaluation and improvement planning processes and as a result, further develop staff understanding of the Professional Teaching and Leadership Standards. There has been a high level of engagement with the programme as the following summary illustrates:
  - Most schools (200+) engaged in familiarisation sessions
  - 18/21 red or amber Secondary schools are engaging with the ETLF Headteacher & Deputy Headteacher (HT/DH) professional learning programme. The schools that have not engaged to date have booked on to future cohorts.
  - 188 HT/DH participants, from 136 schools have started ETLF HT/DH programmes across 8 cohorts. Another 4 cohorts will begin at the end of spring term 2019 and run over summer term 2019. Total capacity for this programme will then have been 12 cohorts for 360 participants.

- 32 schools are leading the ETLF professional learning programmes across the region. In addition to this, 7 schools host 'pedagogy in practice' learning visits to support the ETLF teacher programme.
- The ETLF 'online school' has been established and contains access to completed forms for school to use to support their own self-evaluation and is used as part of the ETLF PL programmes for Headteachers.
- An ETLF online system trial for Challenge Advisors to support them in their work began in January 2019 and was reviewed at the end of Spring term 2019.

Once again it is worth noting that this approach to developing professional leadership is entirely consistent with the recommendation to EAS in the August 2018 report on cluster working from Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU) to '*Continue to support the development of collaborative leadership capacity through the provision of rich professional learning opportunities and coordinated cross-network activity.*'

**Conclusion:**

While the report is written in discrete sections, to mirror the constituent parts of a VfM evaluation, it is important to recognise that discrete does not mean unconnected. On the contrary, achieving value for money requires delivery strands to complement and reinforce one another to create a coherent and consistent overall approach that makes the best use of resources.

For EAS this coherence and consistency comes from its ever-evolving approach to supporting the emergence of a self-improving system based on cluster working. This approach runs as a consistent theme throughout the report as illustrated by the following examples:

- Financial underpinning through maximisation of delegation rates and remodeled approaches to cluster funding.
- The development of a Wellbeing and Equity Strategy centred around a cluster-based approach.
- The creation of Learning Schools Networks and enhanced peer working arrangements.
- A professional Leadership offer that emphasises collaboration and shared development in a cluster-based context

The above demonstrates that the approach adopted by EAS is consistently centred around attempting to create additional capacity in schools, utilise external support and research to shape service delivery, focus sharply on interventions that provide support and challenge to underperforming schools and to ensure that the demands of curriculum reform can be met in a sustainable way that does not compromise current provision. In financially constrained times, with impending major curriculum reform, this would appear to represent a very sensible use of resources.

## **Appendix**

### Pen Portrait: Rod Alcott

Rod Alcott is a former senior manager with the Wales Audit Office who has become a self-employed education and local government consultant. Between 2014 and 2016 he was appointed to two Ministerial Education Recovery Boards (Blaenau Gwent and Monmouthshire) and was Chair of the independently established Powys Education Recovery Board. In 2016 he was appointed to succeed Robert Hill as Chair of the Education Development Board for Cardiff. Between 2016 and 2017 he carried out two National Studies for the Welsh Government under contract to the Welsh Local Government Association. The first of these was a study into the role of School Business Managers in school improvement across Wales and the second was a study into the role of Pupil Referral Unit Management Committees across Wales.

DRAFT

# Agenda Item 5

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: **6<sup>th</sup> November**  
Report Subject: **Youth Service Performance Report 2018 – 2019 (Financial Year)**  
Portfolio Holder: **Cllr J Collins, Executive Member for Education**  
Report Written by: **Joanne Sims, Youth Services 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)
✓	15.10.19	28.10.19			06.11.19	18.12.19		

## 1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide an update on the performance of the Youth Service and for Members to scrutinise the impact of the service. The 'Youth Work in Wales Statistical Release 2018-19' is not published at time of writing the report but should be available early November to use as a comparison.

## 2. Scope and Background

- 2.1 The report will update Scrutiny on the continued progress of the Youth Service, including its Open Access provision and Targeted Provision. The report will outline the most recent data linked to the Reach, Accreditation outcomes and reduction of number of young people becoming NEET. Key legislation and guidance underpinning Youth Work in Wales includes the new National Youth Work Strategy for Wales, Youth Work in Wales: Principles and Purposes, the Welsh Government's Youth Engagement and Progression Framework, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) Act 2015.
- 2.3 Blaenau Gwent Youth Service provides information, support and learning opportunities for young people aged 11-25 and also supports young people through earlier transitions from 9 years old, based on a voluntary relationship between the young person and youth worker. In addition, the Youth Service co-ordinates the 11-18 Counselling Service and the Youth Engagement and Progression Framework (YEPF), which aims to reduce the numbers of young people who become NEET (not in Education, Employment or Training) up to the age of 25. The Youth Service provides both open access and targeted programmes of work.
- 2.4 The Youth Service is a community based provision, housed in the Ebbw Vale Cultural Centre and Abertillery Youth Centre, with support offered to young people across all mainstream secondary schools and the River Centre 3-16. Youth Clubs are provided in Abertillery, Cwm and Ebbw Vale, being developed in Tredegar and Brynmawr and a small street based Detached Youth Team working across hot spot areas in Blaenau Gwent.

- 2.5 Open Access youth provision includes D of E (Duke of Edinburgh), Detached and Outreach, Youth Information Service, Young Reps Volunteering programme, Youth Ambassadors (YAMs), Health and Well-being workshops and training, Youth Clubs, Open for Youth Nights, school holiday programmes and the 11-18 Counselling Service.
- 2.6 Targeted Youth Provision includes Inspire to Achieve 11-16, Inspire to Work 16-24 and the Positive Futures anti-social behaviour programme.
- 2.7 Since 2013, the Youth Service has played a leading role in implementing the Welsh Government's Youth Engagement and Progression Framework (YEPF - NEETs). This has included maintaining and developing the Raising Aspirations Group, the strategic multi-agency forum to oversee the YEPF, implementing the Early Identification Tool to ensure that young people at risk of becoming NEET are known and supported, overseeing the lead worker role, and monitoring progress to ensure that the numbers of young people becoming NEET are reduced.
- 2.8 The Youth Service line manages the local delivery of two ESF youth programmes, Inspire 2 Achieve and Inspire 2 Work. This funding has secured sustainability for the Youth Service's work linked to the Youth Engagement and Progression Framework (YEPF). The funding is in place until 2022, with an extension expected until 2023, which ensures continued support for young people both at risk of becoming and currently NEET.
- 2.9 The Youth Service has recently appointed additional youth workers in the Inspire projects to support young people who need additional support with their emotional and mental health. Further posts are soon to be appointed to work alongside this team focussing on issues of youth homelessness and mental health.
3. **Options for Recommendation**
- 3.1 **Option 1**  
Members are asked to scrutinise the information detailed within the report, thereby contributing to the continuous self-evaluation of the service prior to making appropriate recommendations to the Executive Committee.
- Option 2**  
Accept the report as provided.
4. **Evidence of how does this topic support the achievement of the Corporate Plan / Statutory Responsibilities / Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan**
- 4.1 The Youth Service contributes to all 5 areas of the Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan through supporting young people to overcome barriers in their life enabling them to become positive members of their community. The service also contributes to key objectives within the Corporate Plan, in particular those within Education and also Regeneration. The programmes provide support to some of the most vulnerable young people in Blaenau Gwent, supporting them to overcome significant barriers to their learning, training and/or employment.

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:

In 2018/19 the Youth Service was funded partly through a core budget of £349,541, and external grants of £1,061,047 (from ESF - European Social Fund, Positive Futures and Welsh Government Youth Support Grant). Therefore, the total income for the Youth Service in 2018/19 was £1,410,588. All grants have been secured for the next financial year, with the ESF funding secured up until 2022 and additional funding sourced from Welsh Government to enhance the youth work offer to young people around youth homelessness and mental health.

### 5.2 Risk Including Mitigating Actions:

The reliance on external funding is identified as a risk. Securing ESF monies until 2022 provides some stability for targeted services. However, the majority of grants are funded on an annual basis, with annual action plans, which does not allow long term financial planning. This has been flagged up as a concern and needs to be considered in future planning.

### 5.3 Legal:

There are no legal implications for this report.

### 5.4 Human Resources:

There are no direct staffing implications associated with this report.

## 6. **Supporting Evidence**

### 6.1 **Performance Information and Data:**

The comparative data for the Youth Service across Wales is not available yet but year on year comparison demonstrates the service is good, taking account of its statutory duties and meeting them effectively, providing a wide range of universal and targeted opportunities for young people aged 11-25.

#### 6.1.1 **Youth Service Impact:**

In 2018/19, 17% (2010 individual young people) of 11-25 year olds were registered (Reach) and supported by the Youth Service, with an additional 7298 contacts made with anonymous young people (1000 more than the previous year). The 'Reach' has stayed the same as last year with a slight increase of 11 young people. We do not yet have the all Wales comparison, which will be available in November.

Out of the 2010 individuals, 15% (301 young people) gained 456 nationally recognised accreditations. The number of young people gaining a qualification stayed the same as last year, which was not expected as this is not the focus of the work. The outcomes for each programme are now measured on improved well-being as well as improvement in either attendance and behaviour, rather than accreditations.

**Numbers of individual young people gaining nationally recognised accreditations**

	Level achieved at 31 August							Total 2017-18
	Entry Level	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Duke of Edinburgh Award	Any other National Accreditation	Total 2018-19	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
<b>Gender</b>								
Male	6	129	2	6	1	0	144	142
Female	8	135	8	4	2	0	157	164
Total	14	264	10	10	3	0	301	306

**Numbers of nationally recognised accreditations gained by young people**

	Level achieved at 31 August							Total 2017-18
	Entry Level	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Duke of Edinburgh Award	Any other National Accreditation	Total 2018-19	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
<b>Gender</b>								
Male	6	219	2	6	1	0	234	205
Female	8	200	8	4	2	0	222	243
Total	14	419	10	10	3	0	456	448

Out of the 301 young people gaining accreditations, 144 males gained 234 accreditations and 157 females gained 222 accreditations. This is similar compared to last year. Except for a spike in figures two years ago, the service has seen a year on year increase in young people gaining accredited outcomes, levelling out for the last two years.

Of those supported by the Youth Service, 69% (1533 young people) were aged 11-16 and 31% (477 young people) were aged 17-25 years old. This reflects the funding focus on school age young people and transition support for year 11 young people. These figures are recorded through the work with young people in the following projects: Inspire 2 Achieve, Inspire 2 Work, Health and Wellbeing, Duke of Edinburgh, Positive Futures, Young Ambassadors, the BYG Editorial Group, Youth Clubs and Young Reps Volunteering programme.

In addition, in 2018/19 the Youth Service recorded supporting young people *anonymously* (not registered) through the 11-18 Counselling Service, C Card, detached youth work, outreach and out of school activities and events. The Youth Service had 7298 anonymous contacts with young people (one contact is between 1-3



hours).

#### 6.1.2 **Effective use of core funding and grants:**

The Youth Service's core Council budget is effectively used to employ a small core team to access and administer external grants to meet identified need. These grants include European Social Funding, Welsh Government Youth Support Grant, Positive Futures and Children in Need. The grants enable the service to provide support to the most vulnerable young people in the community through providing individual tailored support as needed.

Over the last year, both core and external funding has been secured to continue a variety of projects to meet identified needs which include Inspire 2 Achieve, Inspire 2 Work, Health and Wellbeing, Duke of Edinburgh, Detached and Outreach Youth Workers, Positive Futures (ASB programmes), Open for Youth Nights, Youth Clubs, Youth Information Service (including the 'BYG' Editorial group), Young Ambassadors (YAMs), the 11-18 Counselling Service, the Young Reps Volunteering Programme and the school holiday programme. Additional funding has been awarded to recruit in the following financial year youth workers focussing on youth homelessness and mental health.

#### 6.1.3 **Youth Engagement and Progression Framework:**

The Youth Service co-ordinates the Welsh Government's 'Youth Engagement and Progression Framework' through a strategic multi-agency partnership the Raising Aspirations Group (RAG). The partnership is mature and effective and continues to address all 6 key areas of the Framework. This includes using the Early Identification Tool (6th year), updating the provision map (6th year), updating the online directory of support (6th year), further developing the 'lead worker' role and further refining the tracking and support of young people. All areas of the Blaenau Gwent action plan are developing well and either met or are on track.

The Youth Service also facilitates two practitioner forums: the NEET Practitioner Forum and the Vulnerable Learners Transition subgroup, which are operational multi-agency partnerships, sub groups of the RAG, which co-ordinates the Early Identification process, allocation of lead worker role, and robust tracking and monitoring of transition from year 11 to post 16 provision.

As a result of this co-ordinated approach with partners, there has been a steady reduction of numbers of young people becoming NEET, reaching 1.9% (11 young people) in 2018. This was an increase of 3 young people from the previous year, but is the second lowest figures ever achieved. We are unable to compare this information nationally, as the process used to collate the information by Careers Wales that year was different to those in previous years.

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

If the project targets are achieved, 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. Additionally, as the additional posts are based upon identified gaps in provision in areas such as health and wellbeing, mental health and key transition phases in young people's lives, young people will be better supported to overcome barriers to reach their potential.

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)**

Involving young people is a core principle of youth work. A bi-annual consultation takes place with young people across the borough to understand what they need. In addition, the Youth Service's Advisory Group (YAMS) help decide on how priorities are set and what gaps need meeting. Each project works with young people, both in groups or as individuals to ensure they influence the delivery and design of their particular project. Additionally, young people have been directly involved in the recruitment of all key staff for the past 6 years.

The Youth Service also works collaboratively with a range of partners, both external and internal to the Council. This partnership approach is essential to ensure that young people are well supported and to meet the needs of both external funders and Council priorities.

**6.4 Thinking for the long term**

Funding for ESF 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**

All the work of the Youth Service is preventative in nature. At a very basic level, the support and opportunities can help young people to meet with each other and with trusted adults, feel part of their community which can prevent low levels of mental health, prevent incidents of anti-social behaviour and help young people become active citizens. Both Inspire programmes are preventative in their approach. Inspire 2 Achieve exist to help 'prevent' young people from becoming NEET by focusing on their wellbeing, attendance, behaviour and attainment. Inspire 2 Work exists to 'prevent' young people from developing ingrained negative behaviours and lifestyles into their future.

**6.6 Collaboration/Partnership Working**

The Youth Service facilitates a number of partnership forums including the Raising Aspirations Group (multi-agency partnership). Working in partnership is fundamental to providing a co-ordinated, effective service. The service is continually looking at how it can better develop this area as partners evolve and change.

**6.7 Integration**

This service impacts upon key objectives for both Education and Environment and for 11-25 year olds.

**6.8 EqIA**

N/A

## 7. Monitoring Arrangements

- 7.1 The Youth Service reports to a number of external funders and provides an annual audit return to Welsh Government. 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 Scrutiny to scrutinise the Youth Service performance. Annual reports and evaluation reports are also provided to Education DMT. Feedback is provided to young people on a regular basis.

### Background Documents / Electronic Links

National reports are due to be published in November 2019 which can be used as a comparative.

### List of Acronyms

RAG:	Raising Aspirations Group (strategic, multi-agency partnership)
NEET:	Young people not in education, employment or training
YEPF:	Youth Engagement and Progression Framework; a Welsh Government initiative across Wales which outlines the processes and support that needs to be in place to support young people aged 11-25 to prevent them from becoming NEET
UNCRC:	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
D of E:	Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme
The BYG:	A young people's editorial group called 'the Byg' meaning Blaenau Youth Gwent
ASB:	Anti-Social Behaviour
EIT:	Early Identification Tool which is run twice a year to identify which young people are at risk of becoming NEET



# Agenda Item 6

*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: **6<sup>th</sup> November 2019**  
Report Subject: **Management of Pupil Places and the School Estate 2018/19**  
Portfolio Holder: **Councillor J Collins, Executive Member Education**  
Report Submitted by: **Claire Gardner, Education Transformation Manager**

Reporting Pathway (Dates to be Entered)								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
	15.10.19	28.10.19			06.11.19	18.12.19		

## 1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide Scrutiny Committee with the opportunity to scrutinise the management of pupil places focussing on both processes and outcomes.

## 2. Scope and Background

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

primary and secondary sector are projected to decrease further over the next 2 years, taking the primary percentage to 9% and secondary to 11%, by the 2022/23 academic year – with the overall combined projected status as 10%.

2.6 Live birth rates have fluctuated over the last ten years, with a downward trend noted between 2012 and 2019 (**Appendix 1**). However, there has been an upward trend in inward migration over the last academic session, with approximately 215 pupils – 168 of which were primary pupils, moving into Blaenau Gwent between September 2018 and August 2019 and requesting a school place via in-year transfer.

2.7 The School Organisation Policy (2017) sets a target of reducing surplus places to 15% by 2020 by which time the primary sector is projected to have 10% and the secondary sector 15% surplus places. The Education Transformation team targeted the following schools whereby the percentage was over 15%, during the 2018/19 academic session:

- Coed y Garn Primary School – Admission number reduced from 270 to 246 resulting in the surplus % reducing from 24% in 2017/18 to 20% in 2018/19
- Sofrydd Primary School – Admission number reduced from 174 to 162 resulting in the surplus % reducing from 18% in 2017/18 to 13% in 2018/19
- Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Helyg – Admission number reduced from 360 to 258 resulting in the surplus % reducing from 41% in 2017/18 to 17% in 2018/19

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

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

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

- Glyncoed
- Coed y Garn Primary School
- Abertillery Learning Community Secondary Campus

2.10 All of which will be addressed via the annual assessment of school capacity.

- 2.11 Over the last academic session the team has submitted the following Section 106 requests for developer contributions, in-line with securing increased capacity in schools within the development area:
- Ebbw Fawr Valley – 5 for primary provision
  - Tredegar Sirhowy Valley – 1 for primary provision

2.12 **Condition and Suitability**

The 2018/19 position for school building condition and suitability continues to improve. Condition and suitability assessment criteria range from A (good) - D (bad). Blaenau Gwent has only 1 school categorised as 'D' for condition. Figure 1 (on page 6) highlights the latest position in respect of the Blaenau Gwent school estate.

The condition and suitability programme for the 2019/20 academic session, will be planned for implementation from January 2020. This will also inform the prioritisation of projects within Band B and C of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools Programme, along with potential further school organisation priorities, minor and planned works programmes etc.

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

3. **Options for Recommendation**

3.1 **Option 1:** Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee considers and accepts the report.

3.2 **Option 2:** Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee considers the report and provides comments relating to improvements that can be made to the current monitoring processes.

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

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

5. **Implications Against Each Option**

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

Welsh Government has indicated that there will be a further Schools Capital Maintenance Grant allocated to Local Authorities in 2019/20 financial year. The Education Minor Works budget is monitored, with planning already underway for the 2019/20 academic session.

## 5.2 **Risk including Mitigating Actions**

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

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

## 5.3 **Legal**

There are no direct legal implications associated with this report.

## 5.4 **Human Resources**

There are no direct human resource implications associated with this report.

## 6. **Supporting Evidence:**

### 6.1.1 **Performance Information and Data**

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

6.1.2 Surplus places are set to decrease further to within and below target over the next 5 years (Please refer to the graph and percentages detailed within **Appendix 2**, along with **Appendix 3** for pupil projection data as at January 2019).

### 6.1.3 **All Wales Position**

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

- 19<sup>th</sup> (out of 22 Local Authorities) for primary;
- 8<sup>th</sup> (out of 22) for secondary; and,
- 14<sup>th</sup> (out of 22 Local Authorities) in terms of the combined primary and secondary position.

6.1.4 The January 2017/18 surplus places comparative data for Wales (Please refer to **Appendix 4** All Wales Primary and Secondary Data; All Wales



Primary Data, and All Wales Secondary Data - for more information).

6.2 **Expected outcome for the public**

The management of pupil places aims to secure continued access to education places in Blaenau Gwent for current and future pupil populations.

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

A schools engagement programme, which considers the needs of current and prospective pupils, staff etc. is in place i.e. school facilities action planning sessions, capacity review sessions, medical needs and accessibility reviews etc.

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

The planning of pupil places and management of the school estate takes account of short, medium and long-term planning arrangements. informing:

6.5 **Preventative focus**

Management of pupil places and the school estate is focused on early identification and planning, in order to secure a school estate that is fit for purpose that contributes to raising educational standards, which is a Council priority.

6.6 **Collaboration / partnership working**

Key management and operational staff across the Council and school estate, are involved in detailed annual reviews of facilities and pupil places

6.7 **Integration** (*across service areas*)

The process is cross-cutting in the sense that it impacts upon Education, Schools, Estates, Planning and Building Control, Community Services, and Social Services etc.; therefore, service area involvement is key to effective implementation.

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

Equality impact assessments are continuously carried out in line with both the management of pupil places and the school estate.

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

Education review and monitor both the planning of school places and management of school estate processes and outcomes consistently throughout each academic year, incorporating learning from the previous year.

**Background Documents / Electronic Links**

Appendix 1 - Live Birth Graph

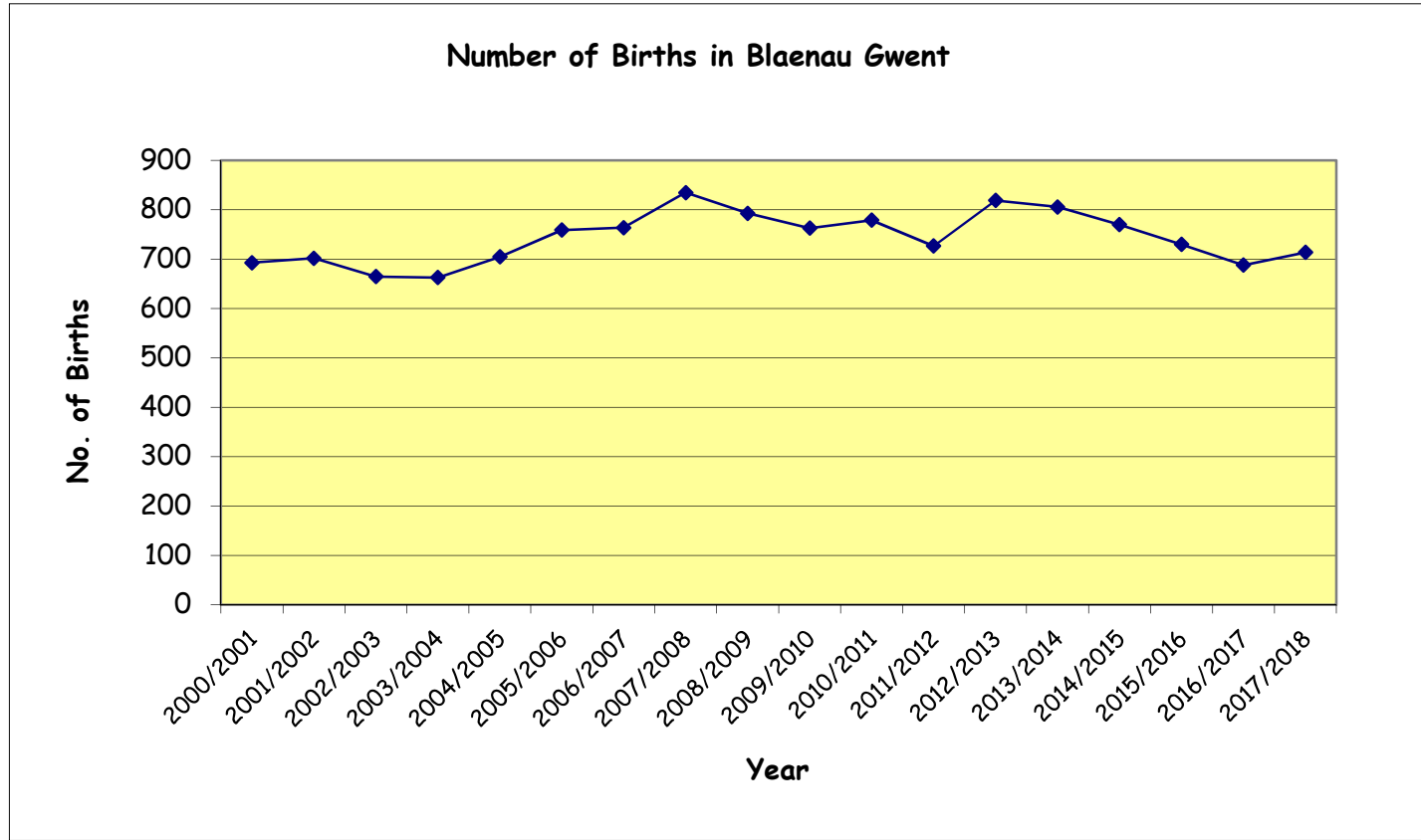
Appendix 2 – Surplus Reduction Graph

Appendix 3 – January 2019 Pupil Projection Data

Appendix 4 – All Wales Primary and Secondary Data

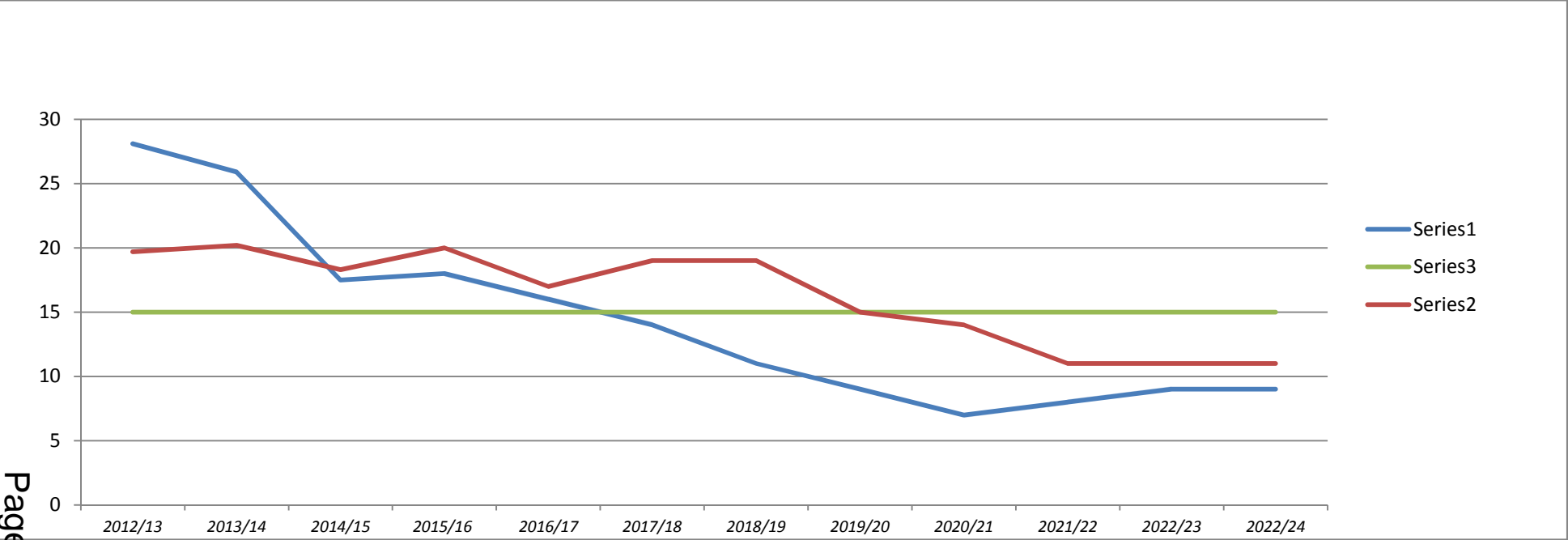
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Year	No of Births
2000/2001	693
2001/2002	702
2002/2003	665
2003/2004	663
2004/2005	705
2005/2006	759
2006/2007	764
2007/2008	835
2008/2009	793
2009/2010	763
2010/2011	779
2011/2012	727
2012/2013	819
2013/2014	806
2014/2015	770
2015/2016	730
2016/2017	688
2017/2018	714



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# Annual Surplus Places Summary



Page 03

Year	Primary %	Secondary %	Target %
2012/13	28.1	19.7	15
2013/14	25.9	20.2	15
2014/15	17.5	18.3	15
2015/16	18	20	15
2016/17	16	17	15
2017/18	14	19	15
2018/19	11	19	15
2019/20	9	15	15
2020/21	7	14	15
2021/22	8	11	15
2022/23	9	11	15
2022/24	9	11	15
2022/24	9	11	15

2012 - 2022 projected figures

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**Blaenau Gwent Schools – Projected Pupil Numbers & Surplus Capacity from Jan 2019 - 2024**

Showing Key based on Jan 2019

School	Capacity	actual NOR JAN 2019 (exc. Nursery & SEN)	%surplus places as at Jan 2019	2019 - 2024											2020 - 2024					CONDITION	SUITABILITY								
				2019	Jan	2020	Jan	Jan	Jan	Jan	Jan	Jan	Jan	Jan	2020 %	2021 %	2022 %	2023 %	2024 %			2020	2021	2022	2023	2024			
<b>Abertillery</b>																													
Aber 3-16	980	884	10	980	905	980	899	886	892	890	8	8	10	9	9	980	905	980	903	894	905	906	8	8	9	8	8		
Sofydd Primary	162	141	13	162	144	162	124	111	93	82	11	23	31	43	49	162	144	162	137	143	143	144	11	15	12	12	11		
St. Illtyds Primary	210	194	8	210	194	210	198	198	191	195	8	6	6	9	7	210	194	210	189	179	164	161	8	10	15	22	23		
<b>Abertillery Cluster</b>	<b>1352</b>	<b>1219</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>1352</b>	<b>1243</b>	<b>1352</b>	<b>1221</b>	<b>1195</b>	<b>1176</b>	<b>1167</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>1352</b>	<b>1243</b>	<b>1352</b>	<b>1229</b>	<b>1216</b>	<b>1212</b>	<b>1211</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>		
<b>Blaina/Nantyglo/Brynmawr</b>																													
Blaencwm Primary	270	280	-4	270	270	270	271	278	276	274	0	0	-3	-2	-1	270	270	270	265	266	263	258	0	2	1	3	4		
Coed y Garn Primary	246	196	20	246	197	210	207	205	220	219	20	1	2	-5	-4	246	197	210	207	203	216	215	20	1	3	-3	-2		
St. Marys CIW Primary	210	209	0													210	209	210	208	210	206	204	0	1	0	2	3		
St. Marys RC Primary	210	175	17													210	177	210	175	170	165	168	16	17	19	21	20		
Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Helyg	258	213	17													241	210	215	215	207	192	195	13	0	4	11	9		
Ystruth Primary	294	274	7	294	273	294	284	284	285	286	7	3	3	3	3	294	273	294	276	263	261	256	7	6	11	11	13		
<b>Brynmawr/Nantyglo Cluster</b>	<b>1488</b>	<b>1347</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>810</b>	<b>740</b>	<b>774</b>	<b>762</b>	<b>767</b>	<b>781</b>	<b>779</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>-1</b>	<b>-1</b>	<b>1471</b>	<b>1336</b>	<b>1409</b>	<b>1346</b>	<b>1319</b>	<b>1303</b>	<b>1296</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>		
<b>Ebbw Vale</b>																													
All Saints RC Primary	188	180	4													188	180	188	183	183	183	185	4	3	3	3	2		
Beaufort Hill Primary	210	214	-2	210	214	210	210	211	203	201	-2	0	0	3	4	210	214	210	207	203	191	186	-2	1	3	9	11		
Cwm Primary	242	194	20	242	195	242	196	185	178	186	19	19	24	26	23	242	195	242	189	174	161	165	19	22	28	33	32		
Ebbw Fawr L.C -Primary Phase	360	270	25	324	263	284	272	295	307	329	19	4	-4	-8	-16	324	263	284	249	252	240	245	19	12	11	15	14		
Glyncod Primary	320	307	4	320	310	320	297	289	278	259	3	7	10	13	19	320	314	320	320	326	330	324	2	0	-2	-3	-1		
Rhos Y Fedwen Primary	177	136	23	177	140	177	151	156	163	165	21	15	12	8	7	177	140	177	151	153	152	152	21	15	14	14	14		
Willowtown Primary	420	379	10	420	392	420	400	404	405	404	7	5	4	4	4	420	392	420	400	404	405	404	7	5	4	4	4		
<b>Ebbw Vale Cluster</b>	<b>1917</b>	<b>1680</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>1693</b>	<b>1514</b>	<b>1653</b>	<b>1526</b>	<b>1540</b>	<b>1534</b>	<b>1544</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>1881</b>	<b>1698</b>	<b>1841</b>	<b>1699</b>	<b>1695</b>	<b>1662</b>	<b>1661</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>		
<b>Tredegar</b>																													
Brynbach Primary	210	197	6	210	198	210	203	209	202	201	6	3	0	4	4	210	198	210	203	209	203	202	6	3	0	3	4		
Deighton Primary	188	147	22	188	156	210	163	165	178	188	17	22	21	15	10	188	156	210	161	158	165	171	17	23	25	21	19		
Georgetown Primary	420	380	10	420	379	420	393	383	388	383	10	6	9	8	9	420	379	420	393	393	406	405	10	6	6	3	4		
Glanhowy Primary	296	256	14	296	262	296	280	268	270	275	11	5	9	9	7	296	262	296	277	260	257	258	11	6	12	13	13		
St. Josephs R.C Primary	107	100	7													107	100	107	99	102	98	89	7	7	5	8	17		
<b>Tredegar Cluster</b>	<b>1221</b>	<b>1080</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>1114</b>	<b>995</b>	<b>1136</b>	<b>1039</b>	<b>1025</b>	<b>1038</b>	<b>1047</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>1221</b>	<b>1095</b>	<b>1243</b>	<b>1133</b>	<b>1122</b>	<b>1129</b>	<b>1125</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>9</b>		
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5978</b>	<b>5326</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>4969</b>	<b>4492</b>	<b>4915</b>	<b>4548</b>	<b>4527</b>	<b>4529</b>	<b>4537</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>5925</b>	<b>5372</b>	<b>5845</b>	<b>5407</b>	<b>5352</b>	<b>5306</b>	<b>5293</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>9</b>		

Key is based on the highest or lowest trend data in any one year, over a 5 year period

	= over 25% surplus places
	= 10-24% surplus places
	= less than 10% surplus places
	= insufficient pupil places

Jan-19

School	2018/19 capacity	actual NOR Jan 2019 (exc. SEN)	% surplus places as at Jan 2019	2019/20 capacity	Jan 2020	2020/21 capacity	Jan 2021	Jan 2022	Jan 2023	Jan 2024	Jan 2025	Jan 2026	Jan 2020	Jan 2021	Jan 2022	Jan 2023	Jan 2024	Jan 2025	Jan 2026	
<b>SECONDARY SCHOOLS</b>																				
Abertillery Learning Community, Secondary Campus	750	567	24	750	635	750	676	722	736	759	753	765	15	10	4	2	-1	0	-2	
Brynmawr Foundation School	755	663	12	755	716	755	711	713	696	730	715	714	5	6	6	8	3	5	5	
Ebbw Fawr Learning Community Secondary Phase	1191	897	25	1191	903	1191	917	960	982	937	956	934	24	23	19	18	21	20	22	
Tredegarr Comprehensive	758	660	13	767	676	767	664	701	663	672	684	710	12	13	9	14	12	11	7	
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>3454</b>	<b>2787</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>3463</b>	<b>2930</b>	<b>3463</b>	<b>2968</b>	<b>3096</b>	<b>3077</b>	<b>3098</b>	<b>3108</b>	<b>3123</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	



	Jan-19			Jan-20			capacity 2020/21	Jan-21		Jan-22		Jan-23		Jan-24	
	Capacity 2018/19	actual No on Roll	Overall Proj No	capacity 2019/20	Proj No	Overall Proj No		Proj No	Overall Proj No	Proj No	Overall Proj No	Proj No	Overall Proj No	Proj No	Overall Proj No
Primary	5978	5326	11	5925	5372	9	5845	5407	7	5352	8	5306	9	5293	9
Secondary	3454	2787	19	3463	2930	15	3463	2968	14	3096	11	3077	11	3098	11
Total	9432	8113	14	9388	8302	12	9308	8375	10	8448	9	8383	10	8391	10

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## Oversubscription January 2017

All schools

Local Authority	Total number of schools	Primary			Total number of schools
		Number of oversubscribed schools	Number of overfilled places	Percentage of total capacity overfilled	
Anglesey	47	13	127	2.2	5
Blaenau Gwent	21	3	21	0.3	4
Bridgend	48	19	353	2.9	9
Caerphilly	75	4	39	0.2	13
Cardiff	98	30	440	1.4	19
Carmarthenshire	100	15	173	1.1	12
Ceredigion	44	2	2	0.0	7
Conwy	54	10	144	1.6	7
Denbighshire	47	9	154	1.8	8
Flintshire	64	5	42	0.3	12
Gwynedd	94	17	261	2.5	14
Merthyr Tydfil	22	3	39	0.7	4
Monmouthshire	30	0	0	0.0	4
Neath Port Talbot	57	4	36	0.3	9
Newport	44	3	14	0.1	9
Pembrokeshire	61	11	160	1.5	8
Powys	84	7	54	0.5	12
Rhondda Cynon Taff	103	0	0	0.0	17
Swansea	79	11	183	0.9	14
Torfaen	26	4	29	0.3	6
Vale of Glamorgan	46	6	105	0.9	8
Wrexham	58	7	130	1.0	9
Wales	1,302	183	2,506	0.9	210

## Oversubscription January 2017

All schools

Secondary		
Number of oversubscribed schools	Number of overfilled places	Percentage of total capacity overfilled
0	0	0.0
0	0	0.0
0	0	0.0
1	71	0.5
2	151	0.6
1	35	0.3
0	0	0.0
1	54	0.7
1	6	0.1
2	148	1.3
0	0	0.0
0	0	0.0
0	0	0.0
1	34	0.4
1	29	0.3
0	0	0.0
0	0	0.0
1	70	0.3
0	0	0.0
0	0	0.0
1	169	1.6
1	72	0.9
13	839	0.4

All Schools - Prim	
Local Authority	Total number of schools
Anglesey	52
Blaenau Gwent	25
Bridgend	57
Caerphilly	88
Cardiff	117
Carmarthenshire	112
Ceredigion	51
Conwy	61
Denbighshire	55
Flintshire	76
Gwynedd	108
Merthyr Tydfil	26
Monmouthshire	34
Neath Port Talbot	66
Newport	53
Pembrokeshire	69
Powys	96
Rhondda Cynon Taff	120
Swansea	93
Torfaen	32
Vale of Glamorgan	54
Wrexham	67
Wales	1,512

Primary and Secondary		
Number of oversubscribed schools	Number of overfilled places	Percentage of schools overfilled
13	127	1.2
3	21	0.2
19	353	1.5
5	110	0.4
32	591	1.1
16	208	0.7
2	2	0.0
11	198	1.2
10	160	0.9
7	190	0.8
17	261	1.3
3	39	0.4
0	0	0.0
5	70	0.3
4	43	0.2
11	160	0.8
7	54	0.3
1	70	0.2
11	183	0.5
4	29	0.2
7	274	1.2
8	202	1.0
196	3,345	0.7

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