

Committee: **Education and Learning Scrutiny**

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

Report Subject: **Final Performance Key Stage 4 2019**

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

Report Submitted by: **Lynette Jones, Corporate Director of Education and Michelle Jones Strategic Education Improvement Manager**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
	11.02.20	14.02.20			26.02.2020	22.04.20		

1. Purpose of the Report

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

2. Scope and Background

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

2.2 Accountability Arrangements

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

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

2.2.3 The arrangements are based on the following four key principles. They will be:

- fair – they will promote equity, inclusion, choice, individual pathways to learning and never losing sight of the learner;

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

- 2.2.11 The best interest of the learner must always be the main factor in any decision about the qualifications chosen and learners' choices must not be dictated by changes to performance measures.
- 2.2.12 As previously reported, Welsh Government will commission an independent research project to review the performance measurement system. Decisions on future indicators, and the associated systems that will supersede the interim arrangements, will be informed by this research, in conjunction with the responses received in response to a full consultation with schools and key stakeholders.
- 2.2.13 The content of this scrutiny report is therefore intended to be used within the context of a wider range of information and a range of regional processes that the local authority will use to evaluate individual school performance, and therefore support and challenge more appropriately to secure improvement.
- 2.2.14 For all schools the school development plan (SDP) is the school's strategic plan for improvement. It sets out the actions a school will take to improve learner outcomes based on whole school self-evaluation, using a range of performance information. Through a series of workshops, surgeries and professional panels during the summer and autumn terms 2019, this regional review and evaluation process has supported schools to ensure that the processes for school improvement planning are effective and supports the national reform and target setting arrangements. Consequently, a joint review and evaluation of a sample of school development plans with schools, local authorities and the EAS has taken place during the autumn term 2019.

3. **Options for Recommendation**

3.1 **Option 1**

Members are asked to scrutinise the final Key Stage 4 performance data and contribute to the continuous assessment of effectiveness by making appropriate recommendations to the Executive Committee.

Option 2

Accept the report as provided.

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

4.1 **Corporate Plan**

• **Education Aims**

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

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

One of the objectives in the Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan aims for every child to have the best start in life. Through our Education provision we seek to ensure that

provision is appropriate and able to meet the needs of children and young people so that their progress and performance is as good as it ought to be.

5. **Implications Against Each Option**

5.1 **Impact on Budget**

There are no direct financial implications for this report. However, the Council allocates approximately £48.2 Million (2019/20) to schools via the Individual Schools Budget (ISB) to provide high quality education and to improve pupil outcomes. Blaenau Gwent continues to make a financial contribution to the regional EAS arrangements of approximately £364,000 from the core Education Directorate Budget. The EAS is the Council's commissioned school improvement service commissioned to work directly with schools to provide professional challenge and support to improve. The Education Directorate holds the EAS to account for the impact and effectiveness of their work in schools in Blaenau Gwent.

5.2 ***Risk including Mitigating Actions***

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

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

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

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

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

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

5.3 ***Legal***

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

5.4 **Human Resources**

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

6. **Supporting Evidence**

6.1 **Performance Information and Data**

6.1.1 **Overview of headline measures**

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

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

Capped 9 Measure

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

*Each slot is the equivalent of one GCSE in size.

The literacy, numeracy and science slots are also standalone performance measures.

**Where multiple awards can count, the best grade achieved by a learner is taken. Only the result for the first complete awarding of that qualification is considered when identifying the best grade.

*** There is no cap on total volume of non-GCSEs contributing to the 'Other six' slots.

6.1.2 **Capped 9 Performance Overview**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

6.5 ***Preventative focus***

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

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

6.6 ***Collaboration / partnership working***

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

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

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

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

The Council commissions its school improvement function on regional basis.

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

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

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

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

Background Documents /Electronic Links

Appendix 1 – Final Key Stage 4 Performance