

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE REPORT

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To: Chair, Ladies and Gentlemen

Performance Report – Executive Summary – Corporate Plan: Standards of attainment 2018

1.0 SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 This report provides highlight information about the performance indicators relating to children and young people in Merthyr Tydfil. A full and detailed report is attached as Appendix 1, as requested after the previous scrutiny of performance in September 2018.
- 1.2 The purpose of the report is to inform elected members and colleagues of the performance outcomes of Local Government Education Services (LGES).
- 1.3 The judgements for each performance indicator are as follows:-
- Flying Start – Good
 - Foundation Phase – Adequate
 - Key Stage 2 – Adequate
 - Key Stage 3 – Adequate
 - Key Stage 4 – Unsatisfactory
 - NEETs – Good
(Not in Education, Training or Employment)
 - Youth Service – Good
 - Attendance – Unsatisfactory
 - Exclusions – Unsatisfactory
- 1.4 Definitions for judgements as used by Estyn
- Excellent; very strong, sustained performance and practice
 - Good; strong features, although minor aspects may require improvement
 - Adequate and needs improvement; strengths outweigh weaknesses, but important aspects require improvement

- Unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement; important weaknesses outweigh strengths

1.5 Key areas for improvement have been identified.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 The judgements and evaluations are discussed and noted.

3.0 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

3.1 All local authorities in Wales are required to secure continuous improvement in the exercise of their functions by identifying their own priorities for improvement. This legal requirement is set out in the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009.

3.2 In line with the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, the Corporate Plan has 4 Wellbeing Objectives, including an objective linked to Best Start to Life:

- Children and young people get the best start to life and are equipped with the skills they need to be successful learners and confident individuals

3.3 The focus on raising standards contributes to the Wellbeing Objective and is achieved through;

- the Merthyr Tydfil CBC Learning Strategy 2017 to 2020;
- strategies developed in collaboration with internal and external partners; and
- wellbeing projects focusing on key areas for improvement identified through wellbeing assessments.

3.4 To achieve better learning outcomes for all children and young people, the Learning Strategy key priorities are to achieve:

- excellent leadership in all schools; and
- excellent leadership in education services.

3.5 In October 2014 the Foundation Phase Areas of Learning (AoL) for Language, Literacy and Communication skills and Mathematical Development were revised to align them with the National Literacy and Numeracy Framework (LNF) as well as make them more demanding. In line with this, the Foundation Phase outcomes were recalibrated to align with the increased expectations of the revised AoL. The revised AoL were introduced on a statutory basis from September 2015. This means that the cohort of children that started Reception in September 2015 were the first children to be formally assessed against the revised outcomes at the end of the Foundation Phase in the summer of 2018. Comparisons of Foundation Phase outcomes with previous years should, therefore, be avoided as they are not measured on a comparable basis.

3.6 From 2016/17, changes have been made to the Key Stage 4 performance measures, which impact on comparability with previous years.

4.0 WHERE WE WERE

- 4.1 The Estyn inspection in November 2012 determined that the Local Authority's Education Services were unsatisfactory.
- 4.2 There is no national expectation for assessment at Flying Start. Merthyr Tydfil CBC took the decision to use the Foundation Phase Compact Assessment to ensure a standard baseline for children entering maintained education.
- 4.3 In 2013 in Merthyr Tydfil CBC, outcomes across the board were unsatisfactory with most key indicators below the Welsh average and ranked 22 out of 22 authorities across most indicators.
- 4.4 In 2017 in Merthyr Tydfil CBC school attainment outcomes were adequate. Significant improvements in outcomes have been made because of the process of self-evaluation and planning for improvement. Standards were above the Welsh average in key indicators at Foundation Phase, Key stage 2 and Key Stage 3.
- 4.5 Since 2013 Merthyr Tydfil CBC NEET figures have been consistently above the Welsh average.
- 4.6 Since 2013, the percentage of 11-25 year olds gaining an accredited outcome through the Youth Service has been consistently above the Welsh average.
- 4.7 In the Local Authority Education Services Inspection 2012, Estyn reported that attendance was unsatisfactory and school exclusion rates were too high.
 - In 2017 attendance is adequate. Despite there being improvement, it remains below the Wales average for both primary and secondary with primary attendance being ranked 21 out of 22 authorities and secondary attendance 22 out of 22.
 - In 2017 exclusions are unsatisfactory. There has been a reduction in the use of lengthy exclusions, however, the rate for exclusions of five days or more is still too high

5.0 WHERE WE WANT TO BE

- 5.1 Our ambition is for all performance indicators relating to children and young people in Merthyr Tydfil to be consistently higher than the Welsh average. We strive to ensure the children and young people of Merthyr Tydfil acquire the skills necessary to become ambitious and capable learners who are healthy confident individuals.
- 5.2 The current Key Performance Indicators for the Learning Department are included in Appendix 1.

6.0 WHERE WE ARE NOW

6.1 Flying Start Foundation Phase outcomes

- Standards at the end of Flying Start are **good**. There is no current national benchmark for outcomes, however the service has been embedding the Foundation Phase Compact. In 2017-18, 52% of children achieved Outcome Level 1 in all four areas of development at final assessment using the Foundation Phase Compact – further analysis of the individual components of the framework identifies;
 - Personal & Social Development, Wellbeing & Cultural Diversity - 46% achieved expected outcomes at initial assessment and 79% achieved expected outcomes (Outcome 1 or above) at final assessment.
 - Language, Literacy & Communication Skills - 33% achieved expected outcomes at initial assessment and 69% achieved expected outcomes (Outcome 1 or above) at final assessment.
 - Mathematical Development - 13% achieved expected outcomes at initial assessment and 52% achieved expected outcomes (Outcome 1 or above) at final assessment.
 - Physical Development - 51% achieved expected outcomes (Gold or above) at initial assessment and 81% achieved expected outcomes (Outcome 1 or above) at final assessment.
- The gap between boys and girls has slightly narrowed between initial and final assessments across all areas of development. The gap between boys and girls narrowed by 5% in personal and social development; 1% in language, literacy and communication and 5% in mathematical development from initial to final assessment.
- English as an Additional Language (EAL) children attending Flying Start settings did not progress in line with their non-EAL peers.
- 42% of the population is eligible for Flying Start and of this 97% of those offered (99%) childcare take up the offer (2nd highest in Wales).
- A more detailed report on Flying Start is provided in Appendix 1.

6.2 Attainment in Foundation Phase

- Standards at the end of the Foundation Phase are **adequate**. This is because attainment in Language, Literacy and Communication, mathematical development and personal and social development at the expected outcome+1 has declined.
- The summary table for outcomes is provided in Appendix 1.
- Outcomes are 2.9 percentage points above the Welsh average in the Foundation Phase Outcome Indicator (FPOI).
- Outcomes in all areas of learning are above the Welsh averages at the expected outcome (Outcome 5+).
- Attainment at the expected Outcome +1 (Outcome 6) has declined in all areas of learning.
- The gap between the performance of boys and girls is smaller than at a national level; performance of both boys and girls is above the Welsh averages.
- 80.4% of pupils eligible for Free School Meals (FSM) achieved the FPOI in 2018 compared with 87.1% of pupils not eligible for FSM.
- 85.7% of Children Looked After achieved the FPOI compared with 85.5% not looked after.

- Pupils from ethnic groups other than white British make up 7.2% of the cohort, 3.3% of which are Polish. On the whole pupils from an ethnic minority do not perform as well as pupils from a white British ethnic background. 79.2% of Polish pupils achieved the FPOI compared with 85.9% of white British pupils.
- EAL pupils, categories A, B and E, do not perform as well as pupils who have English or Welsh as a first language. All other EAL pupils perform better than non-EAL pupils.
- At the end of the Foundation Phase three out of the four National Test results were below the Welsh average for >85, as shown in Appendix 1.
- At the end of the Foundation Phase most pupils make at least the expected progress from Reception Baseline, as shown in Appendix 1.
- Results for 2018 for each school identifying the targets set and actual attainment achieved are provided in Appendix 1.
- Comparative data of attainment achieved for each school for the past five years against their categorisation for the past five years is contained within Appendix 1.

6.3 Attainment in Key Stage 2

- Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 are **adequate**. This is because outcomes in English, mathematics and science are below the Welsh average at the expected level; along with the performance of pupils eligible for FSM.
- The summary table for outcomes is provided in Appendix 1.
- Outcomes have fallen by 1.9 percentage points compared to the previous year, and are 1.2 percentage points below the Welsh average.
- Outcomes in all areas of learning, with the exception of Welsh first language, are below the Welsh averages at the expected level (Level 4+).
- Attainment at the expected level+1 (Level 5) has increased in all subject areas.
- The gap between the performance of boys and girls has narrowed, however this is due to a decline in the performance of girls. The gap is smaller than at a national level. The attainment of boys is above the Welsh average.
- 75.8% of pupils eligible for FSM achieved the Core Subject Indicator (CSI) in 2018 compared with 91.0% of pupils not eligible for FSM.
- 61.5% of Children Looked After achieved the CSI compared with 88.8% not looked after.
- Pupils from ethnic groups other than white British make up 8.9% of the cohort, 3.4% are Polish and 1.3% Portuguese. On the whole pupils from an ethnic minority do not perform as well as pupils from a white British ethnic background. 78.3% of Polish pupils achieved the CSI compared to 88.9% of white British pupils.
- EAL pupils, categories A, B and C, do not perform as well as pupils who have English or Welsh as a first language. All other EAL pupils perform better than non-EAL pupils.
- At the end of the Key Stage 2 nearly all National Test results were below the Welsh average for >85, as shown in Appendix 1.
- At the end of Key Stage 2, most pupils make at least the expected progress from Foundation Phase, as shown in Appendix 1.
- Results for 2018 for each school identifying the targets set and actual attainment achieved are provided in Appendix 1.
- Comparative data of attainment achieved for each school for the past five years against their categorisation for the past five years is contained within Appendix 1.

6.4 Attainment in Key Stage 3

- Standards at the end of Key Stage 3 are **adequate**. This is because outcomes in English at the expected level and expected level+1 are below the Welsh averages. The performance of pupils eligible for FSM is still a cause for concern.
- The summary table for outcomes is provided in Appendix 1.
- Outcomes in the CSI have risen by one percentage point and are now in line with the Welsh average.
- Outcomes in mathematics and science are above the Welsh averages, but are below the Welsh averages in English at the expected level (Level 5+).
- Attainment at the expected level+1 (Level 6) has increased in mathematics and science but decreased in English.
- The gap between the performance of boys and girls has narrowed, but is still wider than at the national level. The attainment of boys is below the Welsh average, whereas the attainment of girls remains above the Welsh average.
- 78.9% of pupils eligible for FSM achieved the CSI in 2018 compared with 90.4% of pupils not eligible for FSM. The performance of pupils eligible for FSM improved in 2018 resulting in the gap narrowed.
- 85.7% of Children Looked After achieved the CSI compared with 88.1% not looked after.
- Pupils from ethnic groups other than white British make up 8.8% of the cohort, 3.2% of which are Polish. On the whole pupils from an ethnic minority achieve the same outcomes as pupils from a white British background; however the performance of Polish pupils is slightly better, with 88.9% of Polish pupils achieving the CSI compared with 88.1% of white British pupils.
- EAL pupils, categories C and E do not perform as well as pupils who have English or Welsh as a first language. All other EAL pupils perform better than non-EAL pupils.
- At the end of the Key Stage 3 all National Test results were below the Welsh average for >85, as shown in Appendix 1.
- At the end of Key Stage 3, most pupils make at least the expected progress from Key Stage 2, as shown in Appendix 1.
- Results for 2018 for each school identifying the targets set and actual attainment achieved are provided in Appendix 1.
- Comparative data of attainment achieved for each school for the past five years against their categorisation for the past five years is contained within Appendix 1.

6.5 Attainment in Key Stage 4

- Standards at the end of Key Stage 4 are **unsatisfactory**. This is because attainment has decreased in 2018 and is well below Welsh averages for nearly all indicators.
- The summary table for outcomes is provided in Appendix 1.
- Performance at the Level 1 threshold has declined slightly (0.4 percentage points) and is above the Welsh averages.
- Performance at the Level 2 threshold is below the Welsh average by 8.2 percentage points.
- Performance at the Level 2+ threshold is below the Welsh average by 12.2 percentage points.

- Performance at Level 2 English fell again in 2018 to 48.9%. This is below the Welsh average by 14.7 percentage points.
- Performance at Level 2 Mathematics increased to 55.5%. This is below the Welsh average by 8.1 percentage points.
- The percentage of pupils achieving five A*- A grades remains the same at 9.3% however, this is below the Welsh average by 8.7 percentage points and the gap has widened from previous years.
- When comparing with similar schools, two schools are below the median for the Level 2+ threshold, one school is in the top quarter and one school is in the top 50%.
- The gap between the performance of boys and girls has increased, and is still wider than at the national level.
- 23.8% of pupils eligible for FSM achieved the Level 2+ Threshold at KS4 in 2018 compared with 50.7% of pupils not eligible for FSM.
- 37.5% of Children Looked After achieved the Level 2+ Threshold at KS4 compared with 46.5% not looked after.
- Pupils from ethnic groups other than white British make up 7.1% of the cohort, 3.2% of which are Polish. On the whole pupils from an ethnic minority perform better than pupils from a white British ethnic background. 56.8% achieved the Level 2+ Threshold compared to 45.5%. Pupils from a Polish ethnic background performed slightly below this with 44.4% of Polish pupils achieved the Level 2+ Threshold.
- Pupils with EAL (Categories A-E) performed better than non-EAL pupils for the L2+ Threshold at KS4. 53.3% compared to 46.5%.
- At the end of Key Stage 4, 57.2% of pupils working at Level 4 at the end of Key Stage 2 achieved A*-C in English, 65.3% in mathematics and 60.9% in science, as shown in Appendix 1.
- There are no national test results for Key Stage 4.
- Results for 2018 for each school identifying the targets set and actual attainment achieved are provided in Appendix 1.
- Comparative data of attainment achieved for each school for the past five years against their categorisation for the past five years is contained within Appendix 1.

6.6 NEETs

- Standards are **good**. For 2017, the published Welsh Government NEET figure for Merthyr Tydfil was 1.3%, equating to seven young people. This placed the local authority in joint 5th position and continues the sustained performance of the service area in reducing NEETs.
- For the 5th year in a row there were no young people with an unknown destination.
- At year ending March 2018 (Stats Wales), the annual population survey identified that the unemployment rate for 16-24 year olds in Merthyr Tydfil was 13.5% (600), equalling the Welsh average. This figure has decreased by 23.4% since 2012 meaning Merthyr Tydfil's improvement has been at an accelerated pace in comparison to the rest of Wales which had decreased by 10.4%.
- A more detailed report can be found at Appendix 1.

6.7 Youth Services

- Standards are **good**. 26% (569) of young people achieve recognised qualifications within the Youth Service which is significantly above the Welsh average of 9% and places Merthyr Tydfil in the top quartile.
- 21% (2190) of young people aged 11-25 across the borough engage with the Youth Service which is 5% above the Wales average.
- Outcomes for targeted services is good with often 100% of young people achieving qualifications on offer if they have completed the programmes of learning.
- A table outlining accreditations achieved is provided in Appendix 1.

6.8 Attendance

- Attendance at both primary and secondary is **unsatisfactory**. This is because attendance at both Primary and Secondary has decreased in the past year and we are 21st for Primary and 22nd for Secondary against other authorities.
- Primary attendance for 2017-2018 was 94.0%.
- Secondary attendance for 2017-2018 was 92.4%.
- A more detailed report is provided in Appendix 1.

6.9 Exclusions

- Exclusions at all levels across the authority are **unsatisfactory**. This is because there has been an increase against nearly all reported indicators.
- The number of fixed-term exclusions of five days or less has risen over the past two years, by 252 exclusions.
- The number of fixed-term exclusions of more than five days has decreased over the last five years and the rate has remained well below the Welsh Average for the last two years.
- A more detailed report can be found at Appendix 1.

7.0 **WHAT WE NEED TO DO NEXT**

- Ensure Flying Start providers continue to strive for excellent outcomes for all children. This will be achieved through clear action planning, training and support for all providers.
- Ensure schools focus on improving outcomes for all children in all age phases. This will be achieved through focussing on improving teaching.
- Present to Scrutiny on the progress of the NEET Strategy 2018-20. This will be discussed in April.
- The Youth Support Services Steering Group undertake a mapping exercise to refresh information currently held on services for young people in order to plan future activities.

- Continue to work with Corporate Communications and Schools to promote the importance of school attendance. All Governing Bodies are being asked to respond to the Attendance profile as part of their Spring term meetings.
- Continue to develop the School Support Service (incorporating Behaviour Support and Greenfield Outreach Service) in order to enhance the strategies used by schools to manage behaviour issues which could lead to exclusion.
- There is also a need to:
 - continue to focus on improving the quality of leadership in all schools including Governance. This will be achieved through school to school working and the work of the Governor Improvement Groups (GIGs);
 - implement a Borough wide resilience strategy to improve the resilience of the learners in Merthyr Tydfil. This will be achieved through each service area continuing to focus on resilience through their work streams; and
 - continue to ensure the Central South Consortium (CSC) delivers a good School Improvement Service. This will be achieved by continuing to hold the CSC to account through regular meetings at all levels.

8.0 CONTRIBUTION TO WELLBEING OBJECTIVES

8.1 There is a strong relationship between Wellbeing and Attainment. The improvement activities detailed in this report to help raise standards contribute directly to our wellbeing objective:

Best start to life: Children and young people get the best start to life and are equipped with the skills they need to be successful learners and confident individuals.

Working Life: People feel supported to develop the skills required to meet the needs of businesses, with a developing, safe infrastructure that establishes Merthyr Tydfil as an attractive destination

Living Well: People are empowered to live independently within their communities, where they are safe and enjoy good physical and mental health.

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BACKGROUND PAPERS

Title of Document(s)	Document(s) Date	Document Location
Welsh Government Statistical First Release - Examination Results in Schools in Wales, 2017/18 – SFR 120/2018	5 December 2018	https://gov.wales/docs/statistics/2018/181205-examination-results-2017-18-en.pdf
Welsh Government Statistical First Release – Absenteeism in Secondary Schools, 2017/18	30 August 2018	https://gov.wales/docs/statistics/2018/180830-absenteeism-secondary-schools-2017-18-en.pdf
Welsh Government Statistical First Release – Absenteeism in Primary Schools, 2017/18	13 December 2018	https://gov.wales/docs/statistics/2018/181213-absenteeism-primary-schools-2017-18-en.pdf
Does the report contain any issue that may impact the Council's Constitution?		No