

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

MUNICIPAL YEAR 2012-2013

**EDUCATION & LIFELONG
LEARNING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Agenda Item No. 4

19th SEPTEMBER 2012

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF
EDUCATION & LIFELONG
LEARNING**

**KEY STAGE 2 & 3 AND PROVISIONAL
KEY STAGE 4 OUTCOMES FOR 2012**

Author: Chris Bradshaw - Tel: 01443 744001

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

The purpose of this report is to provide Members with initial feedback on the Key Stage 2, 3 & 4 outcomes for 2012.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members:

- 2.1 Note the information contained within this report.
- 2.2 Make any comments they would like Cabinet to consider when they receive this report on 24th September 2012.
- 2.3 Agree that the Education & Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Committee should receive the final data from the Welsh Government when available.

3. KEY STAGE 2

- 3.1 The table below sets out the achievements of 11 year olds for a number of the mandatory areas of learning based on teacher assessments. The Core Subject Indicator represents the percentage of pupils achieving Level 4 or above in English or Welsh (first language), mathematics and science in combination.

Percentage of pupils achieving the KS2 Core Subject Indicator	2009	2010	2011	2012
Rhondda Cynon Taf	74.1	76.3	77.1	79.3
Wales	77.0	78.2	80.0	82.6
Rank	19	18	19	20

Percentage of pupils achieving level 4 in Reading, Writing and Maths	2009	2010	2011	2012
Rhondda Cynon Taf	68.8	70.4	71.9	73.1
Wales	70.5	71.6	73.8	76.6
Rank	15	17	17	21

Percentage of pupils achieving level 4 or above in English	2009	2010	2011	2012
Rhondda Cynon Taf	77.8	79.2	79.6	81.7
Wales	81.0	81.9	83.4	85.2
Rank	19	19	20	21

Percentage of pupils achieving level 4 or above in Mathematics	2009	2010	2011	2012
Rhondda Cynon Taf	80.6	82.1	83.3	84.7
Wales	82.5	83.3	84.9	86.8
Rank	18	18	17	18

Percentage of pupils achieving level 4 or above in Welsh First Language	2009	2010	2011	2012
Rhondda Cynon Taf	78.3	82.5	82.5	80.9
Wales	79.9	81.0	82.0	84
Rank	17	14	15	17

- 3.2 The percentage of Rhondda Cynon Taf pupils achieving at least the level 4 in teacher assessments has improved for all indicators except for the Welsh First Language. However, in the majority of cases the Welsh average has improved faster than Rhondda Cynon Taf.
- 3.3 The focus in Rhondda Cynon Taf has been on improving standards of literacy and numeracy. The Council has introduced literacy tests, which were completed in September 2011 and in May 2012. The tests have evidenced that the majority of pupils have improved between the two test dates. From May 2013, the tests become statutory.
- 3.4 A separate analysis of the literacy and numeracy tests and progress against the Council's Literacy Strategy "Read Write Succeed" will be presented to a future

Cabinet meeting. The key objective of the Literacy Strategy is “*by 2018, all children that transfer from primary to secondary school will be functionally literate (a reading age greater than 9.6 years)*”.

3.5 In May 2012:

- 78.6% of the Year 6 pupils were functionally literate in English.
- 55.3% of the Year 6 pupils were reading English at or above their chronological age;
- 67.1% of the Year 6 pupils in Welsh medium schools were functionally literate in Welsh;
- 39.0% of the Year 6 pupils in Welsh medium schools were reading Welsh at or above their chronological age;
- 53.1% of the Year 6 pupils are at or above average for numeracy, (i.e. standardised score of 95+).

3.6 We clearly have to continue to focus our attention on improving literacy and numeracy for the foreseeable future.

4. **KEY STAGE 3**

4.1 The table below sets out the achievements of 14 year olds for a number of the mandatory areas of learning based on teacher assessments. The Core Subject Indicator represents the percentage of pupils achieving Level 5 or above in English or Welsh (first language), mathematics and science in combination.

Percentage of pupils achieving the KS3 Core Subject Indicator	2009	2010	2011	2012
Rhondda Cynon Taf	55.4	59.2	61.5	66.9
Wales	61.3	63.7	68.0	72.5
Rank	20	18	20	20
Percentage of pupils achieving level 5 in Reading, Writing and Maths	2009	2010	2011	2012
Rhondda Cynon Taf	52.9	54.0	57.7	60.3
Wales	58.1	59.1	63.3	67.3
Rank	19	19	19	20
Percentage of pupils achieving level 5 or above in English	2009	2010	2011	2012
Rhondda Cynon Taf	64.4	69.0	69.4	74.7
Wales	70.6	72.5	76.0	79.3
Rank	21	19	20	20
Percentage of pupils achieving level 5 or above in Mathematics	2009	2010	2011	2012
Rhondda Cynon Taf	69.2	70.1	72.1	75.1
Wales	73.5	75.5	77.9	81.1
Rank	20	20	20	22
Percentage of pupils achieving level 5 or above in Welsh First Language	2009	2010	2011	2012
Rhondda Cynon Taf	71.6	71.2	71.7	76.8
Wales	75.1	76.8	81.3	84.2
Rank	12	15	18	17

- 4.2 At Key Stage 3, the secondary schools have made good progress in 2012, with 15 of the 19 secondary schools improving the percentage of pupils achieving the KS3 Core Subject Indicator. Whilst, the Council's overall ranking, when compared to the other 22 local authorities, has not improved, the gap between the Welsh average and the RCT average has reduced for English, Welsh and the Core Subject Indicator. Secondary schools need to continue to ensure more pupils are able to achieve the Level 5 at the end of Year 9 (14 years of age) but also increase the number of pupils achieving Level 6 and above.
- 4.3 Of those pupils that achieve a Level 5 in English, in Rhondda Cynon Taf schools, 66% achieve an A*-C at GCSE. However, 95% of those pupils that achieve a Level 6 at the end of KS3 achieve an A*-C in GCSE English. If we are to improve our KS4 results, we have to work to maximise pupils' performance in KS 2 and 3.

5 **KEY STAGE 4**

5.1 The table below sets out the **provisional** Rhondda Cynon Taf's Key Stage 4 results over the three years to 2012. The all Wales information will be available in December 2012 along with the secondary school bandings.

5.2 The results set out below may change by very small percentages over the next few weeks as final examination grades are clarified.

Key Stage 4	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	% change 2011 to 2012	% change 2010 to 2012
Level 1 threshold (A*-G at GCSE or equivalent)					
RCT	87	88	91	3.4%	4.6%
Wales	90	90	n/a	n/a	n/a
Level 2 threshold (5 A*-C at GCSE or equivalent)					
RCT	58	64	71	10.9%	22.4%
Wales	64	67	n/a	n/a	n/a
Level 2 threshold (5 A*-C at GCSE or equivalent) including English/Welsh and maths					
RCT	43	43	43	0%	0%
Wales	49	50	n/a	n/a	n/a
Core Subject Indicator (A*-C at GCSE or equivalent in English/Welsh, maths and science)					
RCT	43	43	43	0%	0%
Wales	48	49	n/a	n/a	n/a
A* - C in English					
RCT	59	59	54	-8.4%	-8.4%
A* - C in Welsh					
RCT	64	68	63	-7.4%	-1.6%
A* - C in maths					
RCT	49	51	52	2.0%	6.1%
A* - C or equivalent in science					
RCT	62	69	72	4.3%	16.1%

5.3 Good progress has been made by schools in Rhondda Cynon Taf against the Level 1 and Level 2 thresholds, primarily due to schools offering a varied curriculum that is tailored to pupils' needs and abilities.

5.4 However, no progress has been made on the two key indicators, Estyn and the School Standards Unit place considerable emphasis on in forming an opinion on the standard of education provision. The two key indicators are:

- Level 2 threshold (5 A*-C at GCSE or equivalent) including English/Welsh and mathematics (L2T including E/W & m); and
- Core Subject Indicator (CSI) (A*-C at GCSE or equivalent in English/Welsh, mathematics and science).

- 5.5 The table shows that schools have made progress in improving the number of pupils achieving A*-C in maths and science. However, in 2012, performance has fallen by 8% and 7% in English and Welsh respectively. This has had a significant impact on the targets to improve the two key indicators the L2T including E/W & m and the CSI.
- 5.6 For many schools the fall in the number of pupils gaining an A*-C in English and Welsh has been a surprise. Following a UK fall in the English grades, the Welsh Government has announced that it will be investigating why this has occurred and quantifying its impact on pupils. The Council has provided details to the Welsh Government's Schools Standards Unit from those schools affected by the alleged change in grade boundaries by the Exams Regulator OFQUAL.
- 5.7 Irrespective, of the review of the English results, the provisional results highlight the need for our schools to focus on improving education standards in English/Welsh and maths. As set out in the September 2011 report to Cabinet, "Raising Educational Standards in Rhondda Cynon Taf", the focus over the next few years is to improve literacy and numeracy standards and improve the number of pupils that pass English, Welsh, Mathematics and Science GCSEs or equivalent.
- 5.8 In 2011/12, the Council's School Improvement Service (ESIS) reviewed ten of the nineteen secondary schools core subject departments. The new Joint Education Service will continue this programme and will follow up on the action plans already prepared by schools to improve the standards of teaching and learning in these departments.
- 5.9 A number of secondary schools are consistently underperforming when compared to similar schools. Warning Letters in accordance with the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 will be issued to at least four secondary schools in September. Over the next few weeks, key targets for KS 3 & 4 will be discussed and agreed with each school. The Warning Letters will specify that the Council will expect the agreed education performance targets to be met by the schools in 2013, otherwise the Council will consider whether it is appropriate to use its powers of intervention under the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.
- 5.10 Final examination information on each of the 19 secondary schools in Rhondda Cynon Taf will be presented to Cabinet and the Education and Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Committee on receipt of the final data in December. This will include the Welsh Government's family of schools data that contextualises the performance of each school taking into account various external influences.

6 CONCLUSION

- 6.1 Education performance in Rhondda Cynon Taf is improving but is not keeping pace with the rest of Wales. Too many schools, when compared to similar schools across Wales, are in the third and fourth quartiles. There are schools that perform very well, and are consistent first quartile performers. We all have an obligation to share and implement this best practice, for the benefit of all pupils in Rhondda Cynon Taf.
- 6.2 The KS2 - 4 results illustrate that we still have much to do before we can ensure that all children that leave school in Rhondda Cynon Taf have had an education that enables them to compete on an equal basis for a job, apprenticeship, college or university place with any other child from across the UK. Nevertheless, the pupils,

governing bodies, headteachers and the school staff should be recognised for the progress made in 2012.

- 6.3 Reviewing Estyn or OFSTED inspection reports of the best schools, it is evident that the best schools have strong leadership and an unwavering resolve to improve standards. The inspectors' continually and consistently use words like disciplined, rigorous, dogged, determined, systematic, consistent, focused, accountable, diligent, precise etc.
- 6.4 There is no panacea to success in education it is achieved through incremental improvement across everything the schools, subject areas, individual teachers and teaching support staff undertake. Rhondda Cynon Taf's educational results will not be transformed over night, but with a small number of priorities and the commitment to deliver these priorities, educational performance will continue to improve at all key stages.
- 6.5 Schools have embraced the need to focus on literacy and numeracy and improving educational standards in English and maths. Headteachers now need to ensure that the changes and improvements they have introduced are implemented in a disciplined and rigorous manner. The Joint Education Service will be focusing its visits to schools on ensuring that all schools focus on literacy and numeracy standards, have robust pupil tracking systems in place that are used effectively for the benefit of individual pupil attainment.

