

Report to: Performance Scrutiny Committee

Date of Meeting: 24th September 2015

Lead Member/Officer: Head of Education /Lead Member for Education

Report Author: GwE Senior Challenge Adviser

Title: Teacher assessments and provisional examination results.

1. What is the report about?

The performance of schools at all Key Stages and provisional external examination results at Key Stage 4 and post 16. A detailed analysis of results will be provided to committee members when verified and benchmarked information is available in December for Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5.

2. What is the reason for making this report?

To provide information regarding the performance of Denbighshire schools teacher assessment and external examinations on the basis of final verified data of Foundation Phase, Key Stage 2/3 and external examinations at KS4 and Post 16.

3. What are the recommendations?

That members review the performance of the schools against previous performance and external benchmarks and make recommendations.

4. Verified Teacher Assessments Foundation Phase to Key Stage 3

When ranked against other Local Authorities, the Free School Meals (FSM) measure is taken as the benchmark. This would indicate that Denbighshire should be performing around 13th when ranked against other local authorities in Wales and 6th out of the 6 North Wales Local Authorities.

5. Foundation Phase

In 2015 performance has improved to 87.6% compared to 86.1% in 2014, this indicator improved by 1.5%. Denbighshire's rank position has dropped from 9th in 2014 to 13th in 2015 compared with Welsh local authorities (LAs). Welsh Language, Literacy and Communication, English Language, Literacy and Communication and Physical Development all improved in 2015, however Mathematical Development dropped by 1.2%. The rank position for this measure was 13th as opposed to 14th in 2014.

All other measures were ranked in the top 11 LAs in Wales. All measures also showed an increase in the higher outcomes. In terms of percentage of pupils achieving

Foundation Phase Indicator (FPI), this is the 4th year of improvement. Mathematical Development will be a focus this year. (Appendix 1)

6. Key Stage 2

In 2015 performance has improved to 87.9% compared to 86.6% in 2014 for the Core Subject indicator (CSI). Despite improving by 1.3%, Denbighshire's rank position has dropped from 10th in 2014 to 11th in 2015 compared with Welsh LAs. All measures (English, Cymraeg, Maths and Science) improved on 2014 figures in both the expected and higher levels. Despite this all rank positions decreased slightly. All measures were ranked in the top 14 LAs in Wales. In terms of percentage of pupils achieving CSI, this is the 5th year of improvement. (Appendix 2)

7. Key Stage 3

In 2015 the Core Subject indicator (CSI) performance improved to 84.1% from 83.2% in 2014. This is the seventh year of improvement. This ranks the performance 11th when compared to other LAs. However, English (87.5 from 88.5%) and Science (93.1 from 93.5%) decreased slightly. There has been a percentage increase in the higher levels in Cymraeg, Maths and Science and a slight decrease in English. (Appendix 3)

8. Unverified external examination results

Level 2 / GCSE

The Level 2 Threshold including English / Cymraeg and Maths has remained static this year at 55.6% compared with 2014. This places the LA fourth in North Wales behind Gwynedd, Anglesey and Flintshire. This is likely to place the LA just below its benchmarked position subject to verification.

The Level 1 and 2 thresholds dipped slightly for the first time in eight years. The Level 2 threshold (5A*-C or equivalent) has provisionally dipped from 89% in 2014 to 87.2% in 2015. The Level 1 threshold has decreased slightly to 94.6% in 2015 from 95.2% in 2014.

Level 2 Threshold including English / Cymraeg and Maths increased in three schools; with Denbigh High School 58.4% (+0.4%), Ysgol Dinas Bran 68.0% (+7.7%), Prestatyn High School 57.7% (+6.7%) showing an improvement. Rhyl High School (-8.2%) and Blessed Edward Jones Catholic High School (-8.2%) have declined for the second consecutive year. (Appendix 4)

Pupils from Ysgol Plas Brondryffyn sit examinations when they are ready, which means few pupils gain a GCSE qualification at the age of 15 so miss the Welsh Government performance indicator. This year 3 pupils achieved a grade C GCSE in a core subject and all pupils entered for a GCSE passed. All pupils who could access Entry Level qualifications in core subjects were successful.

For the second year running 100% of year 11 pupils at Ysgol Tir Morfa have successfully gained a recognised qualification / accreditation at Entry Level. All pupils this year gained at least one entry level qualification at Level 3.

Provisional results indicate that 8 out of 9 Looked After Children (LAC) pupils gained at least a Level 1 qualification and three pupils gaining the Level 2 Threshold including English and Maths. All pupils except for one gained at least a Level 1 GCSE grade in English or Welsh and Maths. The majority of LAC pupils also gained a range of vocational qualifications at Level 2. (Appendix 4)

All results at Key Stage 4 are provisional, verified results will be available in November and benchmarked data in December.

9. Level 3 threshold results (A level and vocational equivalent)

The performance indicator for post 16 is the Level 3 threshold which equates to 2 A levels or vocational equivalents. The percentage of candidates achieving the Level 3 threshold decreased slightly to 97.7% this year from 98% in 2014.

In addition to A level results, 98.3% were awarded the Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification's Advanced Diploma in 2015, this is a 0.7% decrease on last year.

The performance of students in Rhyl 6th improved again this year with 97.2% of students gaining level 3 threshold and 100% achieving the Welsh Baccalaureate Advanced Diploma. Rhyl 6th results are not included in local authority averages. (Appendix 5).

10. National Reading and Numeracy tests

The National Reading and Numeracy Tests are implemented on a statutory basis and are based on the National Literacy and Numeracy Framework. All 7 to 14 year old learners in Wales take the tests annually during May. There is a reading test which test the learners' reading ability and understanding of text. The numeracy test is split into two papers: numerical procedures and numerical reasoning. The reading / numeracy standardised score calculated from the tests are a snapshot of the ability of a child at that moment in time. This is different to the teacher assessment outcomes, which measures a child's ability and development over time. Although there is some correlation between a child's reading and numeracy test results and teacher assessment outcomes / levels, they cannot be compared as they measure different aspects of a child's development

For the third year all eligible learners in maintained schools sat the National Reading and Numeracy tests for all learners in Year 2 to 9 (7-14 year olds). The Numeracy test consists of a procedural and a reasoning test.

For the English reading test, Denbighshire achieved 82.6%; this has seen a slight decrease on 2014 (83.25%). This places Denbighshire 15th when compared to other Local Authorities and pupils in Denbighshire make the 14th best progress. However, Denbighshire schools showed the highest percentage of absenteeism in Wales during this period which will have had an impact on these results.

The LA is ranked 5th in Cymraeg and the pupils make the 4th best progress when compared to other LAs. 88.1% of pupils achieved the expected scores. This was an improvement on last year's 87.4%.

In the National Numeracy reasoning tests the percentage of pupils who achieved the expected scores increased to 85.2% in 2015 from 82.5% in 2014. This will rank the LA 13th against other authorities, while pupils showed the 12th best progress. In Numeracy Procedural tests, the number of pupils who achieved the expected scores improved again to 82.5% in 2015 from 81.9% in 2014. This places Denbighshire 17th when ranked against other authorities and showing the 16th best progress. However, absenteeism in Denbighshire during the testing period was again the highest in Wales. This will have had an impact on the percentages.

11. How does the decision contribute to Corporate Priorities?

Modernising the education service to achieve high level performance across the county is one of the corporate priorities. The raising of attainment at all Key Stages, particularly Key Stage 4 is a key objective.

12. What will it cost and how will it affect other services?

N/A

13. What are the main conclusions of the Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) undertaken on the decision? The completed EqIA template should be attached as an appendix to the report.

Early indications show that boys and girls performed in line with Welsh averages at all key stages and the Level 2 threshold including English / Cymraeg and Maths. Provisionally, 27.2% of FSM pupils have achieved the Level 2 threshold including English / Cymraeg and Maths. At this time gender and FSM performance in the national literacy and numeracy tests have not been calculated. See Appendix 6 attached.

14. What consultations have been carried out with scrutiny and others?

N/A

15. Chief Finance Officer Statement

N/A

16. What risks are there and is there anything we can do to reduce them?

A detailed analysis for the reasons for underachievement is being conducted by the LA and GwE. The school classification process ensures underperforming and high risk schools are regularly monitored and are provided with additional support. Increased capacity within GwE during 2015/16 will ensure that high performing schools will receive more support and challenge during the period.

A new National programme to strengthen teacher assessment and moderation was piloted in 2105 and will become policy in 2015/16. This should ensure more rigorous moderation of teacher assessment and consistency of levelling across Wales.

17. Power to make a decision

Scrutiny's powers with respect to reviewing performance and policy objective is outlined in Article 6.3.4(b) of the Council's Constitution. Article 6.3.4(d) outlines Scrutiny's powers with respect to reviewing and scrutinising the performance of other public bodies in the area.

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