

Report to: Performance Scrutiny Committee

Date of Meeting: 1 February 2018

Lead Member / Officer: Lead Member for Education, Children & Young People/
Head of Education & Children's Services

Report Authors: Principal Education Manager and GwE Secondary Lead

Title: KS4 Examination Results

1. What is the report about?

The verified performance of Denbighshire schools external examinations results at Key Stage 4 and post 16. The report also provides analysis of results against benchmarked information and performance against other local authorities.

2. What is the reason for making this report?

To provide information regarding the performance of Denbighshire schools in the 2017 external examinations.

3. What are the Recommendations?

That members:

- 3.1 review and comment on the performance of schools against previous performance and the external benchmarks that are currently available, and identify any potential areas for improvement; and
- 3.2 confirm that they have read, understood and taken account of the Well-being Impact Assessment (Appendix [5]) as part of their consideration.

4. Key Stage 4 and Post 16 Results

Many GCSE qualifications changed in 2017, and as stipulated by Welsh Government a result based comparison with previous years is inappropriate. In 2017, there was a 40% contribution cap of any vocational qualifications counting towards L1, L2 and L2+ KPIs. From 2017, neither Welsh nor English Literature counted towards the Level 2 including Welsh, English or mathematics (L2+). Appendix 1

Key stage 4 attainment of Denbighshire pupils has been a strength over time and performance has been in line or above expectations.

Performance at the Level 2 inc. English or Welsh and mathematics has shown a steady and consistent trend of improvement annually between 2013 and 2016, of 5.3%. In 2017, there was a dip of 8.7%, in comparison with a national dip of 5.7%. In line with the national picture, there was a strong correlation between the 2017 dip in results and level of deprivation. Schools with the highest eFSM (entitled to free

school meals) (two coastal schools have in excess of 30%+) had a more significant dip.

Performance against the main indicators with the exception of level 1 has been good. Core subjects have performed in line or better than similar local authorities based on free school meals (FSM).

English in particular has performed well, however there was a greater dip in two schools, one being a traditionally high attaining school. The three schools with Welsh 1st language provision produced best ever results in 2017 at 79.3% exceeding national averages. As a result Denbighshire is the highest performing local authority in North Wales. This year pupils achieving mathematics or numeracy achieved 58.4% which is below the Welsh average of 62.5%.

Apart from one authority based on similar FSM, the benchmarking profile on the main KS4 indicators are similar, and in line with expected position.

Special schools

All Ysgol Tir Morfa pupils gained accreditation in nationally recognised qualifications and awards. KS4 pupils gained 67 WJEC Entry level qualifications from Levels 1 to 3. All 7 post 16 learners gained WJEC Entry level qualifications from Levels 1 to 3 as well. Pupils from Ysgol Plas Brondyffryn 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.

In 2017, (Entitled to free school meals (eFSM) performance at L2+ dipped following four years of improving performance. The local authority is addressing concern at Level 1 through ensuring that eFSM pupils gain the necessary qualifications to attain the measure.

Looked After Children (LAC)

In 2017, there were 16 children in local authority care (LAC) in year 11, 10 of these achieved formal qualifications including 5 who gained the L1 Threshold and 1 who achieved the L2+. Most of those who did not achieve a formal qualification were in secure accommodation or had significant health issues. All children except those in secure accommodation have places in college or 6th form. This is consistent with the profile of previous years.

PRU and EOTAS pupils

In 2017 a 100% of pupils from Ysgol Plas Cefndy achieved A*-G in Physics, RE, Fine Art and English. 83% achieved A*-G in Biology and 90.9% achieved A*-G in Mathematics. 100% of pupils sitting BTEC Home Cooking achieved a Level 2 pass. The effectiveness of the courses offered is evidenced by the fact that at the end of 2017, thirteen out of the fourteen learners accessing this provision, secured college placements. In September ten pupils took up placements and one pupil secured employment. Only one pupil has been identified as NEET due to serious mental health issues.

The number of Year 11 learners who are educated out of school (EPIC) in college placements has fluctuated over a five year period (between 33 and 60). Over this period many pupils have completed courses, with most pupils (96%) completing in 2017. None of these are 'not in education, employment and training' (NEET).

A Level

Six out of eight Denbighshire schools provide post 16 provision. In 2017, 10% of post 16 learners in schools gained at least 3A*- A at A Level or equivalence, this is in line with the Wales average, and our highest performance over the five year period. 2017 shows a 6% increase, a significant improvement that is replicated across all our providers. Over the rolling five-year period, performance has been in line or slightly below the Welsh average.

3A*-C, while performance has been consistently below the Wales average, the gap has closed significantly. A similar pattern can be seen on the wider point data with a significant reduction in the gap between Denbighshire and the national average. This steady consolidation and improvement trend can also be seen at Level 3 Threshold with Denbighshire performing slightly above the Welsh average. **Appendix 2**

Attendance

Overall absenteeism of primary school and special school pupils in 2016-17 is 5.1%, this ranks Denbighshire 9th in Wales and 2nd in the region. The proportionally high number of unauthorised absence (1.3%) is aligned to the attendance policy and agreement of headteachers to make all holiday absence unauthorised. **Appendix 3**

Secondary school absenteeism in 2016-17 is 6.3%, this ranks Denbighshire 17th in Wales and 6th in the North Wales region, and this is an area for improvement. **Appendix 4**

Exclusions

The number of fixed term exclusions 1-5 days is higher in comparison to similar local authorities at 46.6 rate per 1,000 pupils, this is above the Welsh average of 28 rate per 1,000 pupils. The number of fixed term exclusions that are over 5 days is lower in comparison to similar local authorities at 1.6 rate per 1,000 pupils, this is below the Welsh average of 1.7 rate per 1,000 pupils. There were no permanent exclusions.

5. How does the decision contribute to the Corporate Priorities?

This report contributes to the Corporate Priority of younger people want to live and work here, and have the skills to do so. Members need to be aware of the performance of schools and the LA against national benchmarks.

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

N/A

7. What are the main conclusions of the Well-being Impact Assessment?

A prosperous Denbighshire
A resilient Denbighshire
A healthier Denbighshire
A more equal Denbighshire
A Denbighshire of cohesive communities
A Denbighshire of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language
A globally responsible Denbighshire

See Appendix 5.

8. What consultations have been carried out with Scrutiny and others?

N/A

9. Chief Finance Officer Statement

N/A

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

The LA and GwE will continue to challenge Headteachers and managers in schools to ensure that schools are taking appropriate action to improve standards.

To reduce any risks to school support and challenge in Denbighshire schools, Education Officers within the Authority monitor and assess the quality of the regional education service (GwE).

Ensuring improvement in external examination results.

Ensure continued improvement against the reduction in 14-19 Learning Pathways Grant and ESF TRAC funding.

11. Power to make the Decision

Scrutiny's powers with respect to reviewing performance and policy objectives are outlined in Section 7 of the Council's Constitution.

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