

Report content for Scrutiny: Newport City Council

Report Title: School Accountability Information 2021-2022

Purpose of this Report

To inform members of Welsh Government: School Performance Reporting Arrangements for 2020-2021 - supporting renewal and reform.

Background and Context

Changes to the accountability framework will impact on the information that both Local Authorities and the EAS will have access to during the academic year, 2021-2022.

There will be a new curriculum for schools and funded non-maintained settings in Wales from September 2022, Curriculum for Wales (CfW). The new curriculum is designed to prepare young people to thrive in a future where digital skills, adaptability and creativity - alongside knowledge - are crucial. Fundamental to the new curriculum are the four purposes: the shared vision and aspiration for every child and young person. The aim of a school's curriculum is to support its learners to become:

- ambitious, capable learners, ready to learn throughout their lives
- enterprising, creative contributors, ready to play a full part in life and work
- ethical, informed citizens of Wales and the world
- healthy, confident individuals, ready to lead fulfilling lives as valued members of society.

'Robust evaluation and accountability arrangements to support a self-improving system' is one of the four enabling objectives of the National Mission. To be successful, it is crucial that all aspects of the schools' system are aligned with reform and support the new curriculum and its underlying principles. The OECD's report to Welsh Government, 'Achieving the new curriculum for Wales', emphasised this point. The report is clear that the accountability framework, along with school-leaving qualifications, need to align with the new curriculum principles in order to avert the risk that misaligned accountability and qualification measures undermine the curriculum.

In March 2020 Welsh Government consulted on the draft school improvement guidance. At this stage, the guidance is non-statutory, in order to provide schools and others in the education system time to test the new approaches to school improvement and accountability, and start to change and embed practice to support the transition to Curriculum for Wales in September 2022.

Welsh Government wants to ensure that the framework for evaluation, improvement and accountability drives behaviour and a culture that align to the new curriculum. The guidance therefore sets out clear expectations of the different bodies in the school system with regards to evaluation, improvement and accountability, alongside a vision for how the system as a whole should operate, in the context of Curriculum for Wales. The new proposals aim to:

1. Strengthen the importance and effectiveness of self-evaluation and improvement planning by schools, which draws on a broad range of evidence

2. Focus on schools' self-evaluations and improvement priorities as the starting point for work with local authorities and regional consortia.
3. Consider school performance in its widest sense, with schools evaluated in their own context, supported by a broad range of evidence, bespoke improvement planning and support.
4. Ensure that the school's self-evaluation processes identify areas of strengths and priorities for improvement, which are drawn together in a single, strategic school development plan.
5. Build on schools' self-evaluations and development plans to work with local authorities and regional consortia to agree the additional support they need to improve.
6. Identify where schools have strengths and capacity to collaborate with other schools to support them

Why is the Accountability system changing? Creating a culture of trust and collaboration

One of the key reasons why the accountability system is changing in Wales, is because it is understood from research in many countries across the world that 'high-stakes' external accountability systems have largely failed to lead to sustained improvement in schools, often due to an over-reliance on a narrow range of performance data and the behaviours that this drives within the school system.

Research evidences that:

“External accountability fails to motivate people; individualistic policies (standards and other methods to increase the quality of individuals) do not affect cultures; technology skims the surface; and ad hoc policies undercut coherence and focus. We all know what happens next. The end result is exhausted, discouraged teachers and leaders, stretched on the rack of contract accountability but not given the capacity – the time, resources or support – to make any of this really work.” (Fullan and Munby, 2012)

“Punitive accountability generates negative anxiety that stunts cognitive and emotional growth, while transparent, supportive specific feedback causes a degree of anxiety that has the right blend of pressure and support that moves us forward.” (Fullan 2019).

Since Graham Donaldson conducted the review of Curriculum and Assessment arrangements 'Successful Futures' in 2015, Wales has seen a number of reforms which have sought to address these challenges and begin to develop the conditions within which trust and collaboration can thrive. This is evident within the Schools as Learning Organisations approach, which provides a self-evaluation framework against which leaders can assess and begin to address the conditions that exist within schools to support a growth culture within schools.

This is also evident with the curriculum for Wales, which has sought to decouple assessment, the primary function of which is to 'support the progression of each individual learner in relation to the 3-16 continuum' (Curriculum for Wales guidance) from the accountability system. As the curriculum for Wales is introduced in 2022/3, schools will have greater autonomy in developing their own approaches to assessment and will not be required to report progress data at specified points in time e.g. at the

end of the existing phases or key stages. Although the information derived from assessment of learner's progress will be utilised to support effective self-evaluation.

The recent Welsh Government Consultation (Assessment arrangements: subordinate legislation resultant of the Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Act 2021

(<https://gov.wales/assessment-arrangements-subordinate-legislation-resultant-curriculum-and-assessment-wales-act-2021>) (now closed) proposed that:

“In contrast to the current approach to assessment, assessment in CfW is intrinsic to curriculum design and an indistinguishable part of teaching and learning. It should contribute to developing a holistic picture of the learner – their strengths, the ways in which they learn, and their areas for development – in order to inform next steps in learning and teaching. Importantly, assessment should not be used to make a one-off judgement on the overall achievement of a learner at a set age or point in time against descriptors or criteria on a ‘best-fit’ basis.”

“As a continuum of learning will replace the current phases and key stages, we will be moving away from end of phase and key stage summative teacher assessments taking place at the end of every year, towards a system where assessment is embedded into day to day practice and indistinguishable from teaching and learning.”

Performance measures that were suspended due to the Pandemic

Schools and settings have experienced their own unique set of circumstances during the pandemic. There is no one size fits all model and schools have adopted differing approaches which are best suited to the needs and circumstances of their school communities. During this time, the region has supported schools to reflect upon and refine their approaches to teaching and learning. There was no blueprint for what constituted effective distance and blended learning, nationally or internationally and it has been important to collaborate with schools, learning together.

It is important to note that many requirements for schools to report on a range of performance measures were suspended as a result of the pandemic. Welsh Government Information on suspended performance measures is available here: <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2021-06/210621-update-on-welsh-government-data-releases-2021.pdf>, but a high level summary for school, LA and regional level data is included below: (*TBD = To be determined)

Data	2020/21 Reporting year*	2021/22 Reporting year*	2022/23 Reporting year*
All Wales Core Data Set (AWCDS) – contextual	Continue	TBD	TBD
Teacher Assessment Data – FP, KS2, KS3	Suspend	Suspend	TBD
Attendance Data	Suspend	Suspend	TBD
KS4 and 6 th form performance	Suspend	Suspend	Suspend
Value Added analyses (KS2-KS4 / KS3-KS4)	Suspend	Suspend	Suspend
Target Setting	Cease	-	-

School based information

The quality and effectiveness of teaching and learning at a classroom level is key. Whilst the requirement on schools not to report on a range of performance measures, schools have continued to focus on the progress of learners. Where practice uses effective and nuanced formative assessment strategies, schools and settings adapt teaching practice to meet the needs of individual learners and continue to consult and inform their wider stakeholders. These schools use a range of evaluative information and progress data to inform and refine future practice and provision, shaping their priorities for improvement.

What information did Elected Members receive on the context and performance of schools?

- Outcome data at end of FP, KS2, KS3, KS4, KS5 (where applicable) at school, LA, regional and national level.
- Comparative data with similar schools (e.g. families and benchmarking based on FSM %)
- Analysis of the performance of vulnerable learners (e.g. FSM)
- Value added / progress data (FP to KS2, KS2 to KS3, KS2-KS4)
- National test data (up to 2018)
- Annual target setting at individual pupil, school and LA level, including progress towards targets and outcomes against targets
- National categorisation outcomes
- Estyn inspection outcomes
- Schools Causing Concern progress updates
- Bespoke local authority reports on Distance and Blended learning in LA schools.

Reports on the above prepared by the EAS for LA use in Scrutiny committees. Contextual and performance information available directly from WG, published in All Wales Core Data Sets and published on My Local School website. (This contained additional finance, staffing and pupil contextual information).

- LA Information on attendance, exclusions, finance, ALN, HR, EOTAS etc.

What information will Elected Members continue to receive on the context and performance of schools?

- Estyn inspection outcomes (from Spring Term 2022) and progress of schools in statutory categories (from Autumn Term 2021)
- Attendance information
- Exclusion information
- Contextual information (FSM %, All Wales Core Data set contextual data will be updated)
- My Local School with updated information including: (FSM%, SEN%, EAL% - 3 year rolling average covering 7 years)

- The progress of Schools Causing Concern (including those within the multi-agency approach and those within the regional Team Around the School approach)
- Local Authority information on Finance, HR, ALN, EOTAS.

What new information will Elected Members receive on the context and performance of schools?

SEWC directors have commenced discussions with EAS, around the full range of information that is currently available on the context and performance of schools. Further consultation will be required to identify the most relevant and meaningful information to share with elected members, recognising that once entering the scrutiny process, this information would be automatically made public.

Examples of information could include:

- Engagement and impact where appropriate of regional Professional Learning programmes, e.g. Senior and Middle Leadership programmes, RADY and Teaching Programmes.
- LA reports based on the outcomes of bespoke / thematic self-evaluation activity undertaken on a termly basis alongside the school (e.g. Curriculum for Wales, vulnerable learners)
- Case studies to exemplify practice worth sharing, including schools that deliver support on behalf of the EAS
- Engagement and impact where appropriate in the regional ALN transformational programmes and evaluations of readiness for individual schools.
- Aggregated Attendance information (to include a breakdown of vulnerable groups)
- School level exclusion information (to include a breakdown of vulnerable groups)

Summary of Key Points from Welsh Government:

- The calculation and publication of Key Stage 4 and legacy sixth form performance measures for 2020 to 2021 and 2021 to 2022 academic years is suspended.
- Qualification awards data will not be used to report on attainment outcomes at a school, local authority or regional consortium level and must not be used to hold schools to account for their learners' outcomes.
- There will be a direct impact on the usual data releases provided by the Welsh Government, with some releases suspended for one or more of the years disrupted by coronavirus or still to be determined.
- All schools and post-16 providers will continue to be required to undertake effective self-evaluation to support continuous improvement. This will involve schools, with support from local authorities and regional consortia, using the learner level information they have on attainment and other outcomes to reflect on and improve their existing arrangements.
- School categorisation will not take place in academic year 2021 to 2022. Regional consortia and local authorities will continue to work in partnership with

schools to help provide them with the support they need to improve and to successfully implement our ambitious reforms.

- The School Performance and Absence Targets (Wales) Regulations 2011 were revoked in 2020, this means that schools are no longer required to set and publish targets.)

Appendix 1: Welsh Government: School Performance Reporting Arrangements Important Update (First published 10 August 2020, Updated 8 October 2021)

<https://gov.wales/school-performance-reporting-arrangements-covid-19-update>

Further to the changes made to the publication of qualifications awards data and performance measures for 2019 to 2020 and 2020 to 2021, the Minister for Education and the Welsh Language issued a written statement (<https://gov.wales/written-statement-school-information-improvement-and-inspection-arrangements-supporting-renewal-and>) on 21 June 2021 announcing similar changes for the 2021 to 2022 school year.

In addition, The Relaxation of School Reporting Requirements (Wales) (Coronavirus) Regulations 2021 have been made to reduce burden on schools and local authorities for 2020 to 2021.

What are the key points?

- We have suspended the calculation and publication of Key Stage 4 and legacy sixth form performance measures for 2020 to 2021 and 2021 to 2022 academic years.
- Qualification awards data will not be used to report on attainment outcomes at a school, local authority or regional consortium level and must not be used to hold schools to account for their learners' outcomes.
- For post-16 performance measures, we will consider the best approach, in view of the range of providers and different types of programmes that are affected in different ways. The sector will be consulted, before any firm decision is taken, in order to consider what would be useful to help their own monitoring and quality assurance processes.
- There will be a direct impact on the usual data releases provided by the Welsh Government, with some releases suspended for one or more of the years disrupted by coronavirus or still to be determined. You can find a table below showing what information, with provisional timings, will be released by the Welsh Government. Where activities are marked to continue for 2021 to 2022 reporting, this is the planning assumption at the time of publication, which could be subject to change if these are affected by further disruption to school operations.
- All schools and post-16 providers will continue to be required to undertake effective self-evaluation to support continuous improvement. Our evaluation, improvement and accountability arrangements require consideration of a broad range of information relevant to a school's own context when undertaking self-evaluation and identifying improvement priorities. This will involve schools, with support from local authorities and regional consortia, using the learner level information they have on attainment and other outcomes to reflect on and improve their existing arrangements.
- School categorisation will not take place in academic year 2021 to 2022. Regional consortia and local authorities will continue to work in partnership with schools to help provide them with the support they need to improve and to successfully implement our ambitious reforms. Schools will not be assigned a published category as part of this support process. Non-statutory school

improvement guidance, setting out the Welsh Government’s plans for evaluation, improvement and accountability, will be published in the autumn.

- The Relaxation of School Reporting Requirements (Wales) (Coronavirus) Regulations 2021 came into force on 18 June 2021. These Regulations amend a number of other Regulations, which place duties on headteachers, governing bodies and local authorities to produce learner and school reports, as summarised below. (The School Performance and Absence Targets (Wales) Regulations 2011 were revoked in 2020, this means that schools are no longer required to set and publish targets.)

Regulations	Description of Regulations	Impact of Amending Regulations	Further details
The Head Teachers’ Reports to Parents and Adult Pupils (Wales) Regulations 2011	Require headteachers to make a report available to all parents or adult pupils about the educational achievements of pupils, each school year.	Amended (content of reports to a “reasonable endeavours” basis)	For the 2020/21 school year, the requirement to produce a report in respect of all learners will remain an absolute duty. Duties imposed on headteachers in terms of the content of reports relating to the 2020/21 school year are to be treated as discharged, if the headteacher has used reasonable endeavours to discharge the duty.
The School Information (Wales) Regulations 2011	Require local authorities to publish a composite school prospectus and schools to publish their own individual prospectus, and prescribes the school information that must be included	Amended	Provision made to exclude data on authorised and unauthorised absences in respect of pupils registered at the school in the 2020/21 school year from being published in any school prospectus.
The School Governors’ Annual Reports (Wales) Regulations 2011	Require school governing bodies to produce an annual report, including information about school performance against published targets.	Amended	Modified the content of reports produced in relation to the 2020 to 2021 academic year so that information may not be included in any school governors’ report. The statutory duty for governing bodies to produce a report will remain. Information to be disapplied/excluded in relation

Regulations	Description of Regulations	Impact of Amending Regulations	Further details
			<p>to pupils registered at the school in the 2020 to 2021 school year: *the most recent Summary of Secondary School Performance (SSSP) *the number of authorised and unauthorised absences in the school year.</p>
The School Performance Information (Wales) Regulations 2011	Provide for the reporting of teacher assessment and examination outcomes (from schools and governing bodies to local authorities and Welsh Ministers).	Amended	Removes the duties on governing bodies and local authorities to provide data to local authorities on teacher assessment outcomes for the pupils registered at schools in the 2020 to 2021 school year.