Agenda item 6

SUBJECT: Review of School Examination Performance at Key Stages 4 and 5 and Specific Pupils Groups across all Key Stages during academic year 2013/14

MEETING: Children and Young People Select Committee

DATE: 23 June 2015

DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED: ALL

1. PURPOSE:

1.1 To provide Members of Children and Young People’s Select Committee with a summary of:
   - performance of pupils at the end of Key Stages 4 and 5
   - a breakdown of performance all key stages for the following groups:
     - Girls and Boys;
     - Pupils who are eligible for free school meals (eFSM);
     - Pupils who are looked after by a Local Authority (LAC);
     - Pupils for whom English is an additional language (EAL) and;
     - Pupils with Additional Learning Needs (ALN)

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

2.1 It is recommended that Members scrutinise the information in this report and, if required, the attached appendices A and B in order to review the progress made in key areas of educational performance and challenge performance issues arising from it.

3. KEY ISSUES:

3.1 A summary follows which draws together the headline findings of the wider reports attached as appendices A and B.

Key Stage 4

3.2 Key stage 4 results indicate that Monmouthshire schools made good progress in 2014 with significant increases in all indicators. One out of four targets for the main combination indicators of level 2 inclusive, level 2, level 1 and Core Subject Indicator was met or exceeded and three were not met.

3.3 As has already been reported the proportion of pupils achieving the Level 2 threshold inclusive of English/Welsh and mathematics has improved from 57.3% in 2013 to 65.6% in 2014, placing Monmouthshire first in Wales for this indicator. Results for all key stage 4 indicators are at their highest ever levels and this is reflected in the highest Welsh rankings ever achieved.

3.4 Monmouthshire remains ranked below third (its comparable position in eFSM eligibility) in Wales for Level 1 Threshold, Level 2 Threshold and Capped Points Score and is ranked below the
majority of its ‘family’ of similar Local Authorities for these indicators. Despite these relatively disappointing comparative positions these indicators have seen a significant uplift in ranking between 2013 and 2014 of between 6 and 13 places.

3.5 Below the local authority level, individual schools have made positive progress with only one of four schools being placed below the median across half of the indicators show. This represents a significant improvement on last year when three out of four schools were below the median. This marks good progress towards the Local Authority’s target of all secondary schools performing above the median.

3.6 Whilst localised improvements have been seen there remains work for all of the secondary schools to ensure that they are successful across the full range of indicators. For example two schools were below the median for Level 2 Threshold and three out of four schools performed below the median for Level 1 Threshold and Average Capped Points Score. This focus on improvement outside the ‘Gold Standard’ of Level 2 inclusive will ensure that pupils achieve across the curriculum.

**Key Stage 5**

3.7 Performance at Key Stage 5 improved marginally in 2013/14 with 95.3% of pupils attaining the level 3 threshold but there has been no upward trend in the past five years. Results are largely cohort led and therefore volatile. It is consistently worse than performance across Wales and the majority of the similar Local Authorities although the number of pupils taking the exams at key stage 5 has been increasing.

**Pupil Group Performance**

**Eligible for Free School Meals**

3.8 The difference in outcomes for those who are eligible for free school meals (eFSM) and those who are not is significant and increases throughout the key stages. Across Wales and across all key stages the performance gap is closing. In Monmouthshire 82.7% of eFSM pupils achieve the Foundation Phase indicator, at this stage the gap is the narrowest at 9.5%.

3.9 From 2009/10 until 2012/13 there had been a narrowing of the gap at Key Stage 2 at a rate faster than the Welsh position. However in 2013/14 performance fell back and the gap is now greater in Monmouthshire than across Wales.

3.10 At Key Stage 3 Monmouthshire has continued its trend of closing the gap although it should be noted that whilst narrower than the comparative Welsh position the gap of 20.6% is significant given pupils will be starting their first formal exam diet at the next stage.

3.11 At Key Stage 4 level 2 inclusive, the Monmouthshire difference is at its greatest and remains larger than across Wales as a whole. The wider gap in 2013/14 can be attributed to the big gain in the attainment of pupils not eligible for free school meals.

3.12 The performance gap at all levels remains a challenge and continues to be an area of focus for ongoing intervention in order to address this. Schools are utilising the Pupil Deprivation Grant funding to support interventions for pupils who are eligible for free school means in conjunction with support from EAS implementation strategies. It is likely that the impact of this is yet to be seen.
Gender

3.13 The gender performance gap is more pronounced in Monmouthshire than across Wales as a whole. This gap is narrowing at KS3 and at KS4, where the gap is widest but increased at Foundation Phase and Key Stage 2 in the last year.

3.14 Performance of girls is generally better than boys in Monmouthshire and across Wales at all Key Stages at expected and higher levels. This is particularly significant in terms of literacy where the performance gap widens as pupils progress through the key stages. Comparatively the gender performance gap is much less significant for numeracy, science and Personal and Social Development (PSD) and is more in line with the performance gap seen across Wales.

Children Looked After

3.15 The disparity between the achievements of children who are looked after in comparison with achievements of all pupils in Monmouthshire is significant. Historically performance is volatile, largely due to small cohort sizes of pupils with wide ranging abilities and educational needs.

English and an Additional Language

3.16 The difference in performance between pupils with English as an additional language (EAL) and those for whom English is the main language is largely similar across all key stages. This is largely dependent on the level of acquisition of English at the point at which pupils enter the school and at which key stage. It can be noted that pupils with EAL fare as well or better than their peers who speak English as their first language.

Additional Learning Needs

3.17 There has been a slight decline last year at Key Stages 2, 3 and 4 (for Level 2 inclusive) although Monmouthshire has seen overall performance improvement across all Key Stages over the last three years. This overall improvement has largely matched or exceeded that across Wales. In 2014, the performance of pupils with ALN in Monmouthshire slightly exceeded that seen across Wales for most Key Stages and Indicators.

4. REASONS:

4.1 To ensure that Members are able to understand and scrutinise performance and hold officers to account.

4.2 The improvement of educational outcomes and closing the performance gap remains central to the Local Authority’s vision of sustainable and resilient communities.

5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

None.

6. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

This report does not propose a change of policy or service delivery.

7. CONSULTEES
8. BACKGROUND PAPERS


Analysis of School Examination Results at the End of Key Stages 4 and 5 2013/14 (appendix A)

Analysis of Teacher Assessments and Examination Results from Foundation Phase to Key Stage 4 – Specific Pupil Group Performance 2013/14 (appendix B)

9. AUTHORS:

Matthew Lloyd

10. CONTACT DETAILS:
Tel: 01633 644949
Mob: 07816955174
E-mail: matthewlloyd@monmouthshire.gov.uk