

Initial View of Performance in Cardiff Schools 2015-2016

Report Author: Angela Kent – Head of Achievement and Inclusion

Introduction

1. This report provides an initial analysis of educational outcomes for the academic year 2015-2016 and identifies the main strengths and shortcomings in performance. Results for the Foundation Phase, Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3 are final and taken from the actual performance data published by Welsh Government. Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5 analyses are based upon the provisional results reported by schools.

Overview of outcomes

2. These results for the 2015-2016 academic year build on the improvements seen last year. They indicate that the actions of schools, the local authority and consortium combined have consolidated and further improved provision and outcomes for learners. Despite the strengthening picture across the board, outcomes at the end of Key Stage 4, particularly for eFSM pupils and in the level 1 and level 2 thresholds, are not yet high enough.
3. In the **Foundation Phase** and **Key Stage 2** the rate of improvement over the last four years in Cardiff is greater than across Wales as a whole. Cardiff is now ahead of the national average in the two main indicators in the primary phase. In the FPOI the difference is almost two percentage points (2 ppt), in the CSI at Key Stage 2 the difference is nearly 1 ppt. At **Key Stage 3** performance in the CSI is still improving and the rate of improvement has increased this year.
4. At **Key Stage 4** outcomes improved in all the main indicators. In the level 2+ threshold Cardiff's performance rose by 3 ppt, making a 12 ppt improvement over the last three years. The wider level 2 measure continues to improve but the rate of improvement is too slow (2.8 ppt this year). Following the fall in the level 1 indicator in 2015, the currently available data on this measure shows an increase of 2.8 ppt to 94.9% which also represents an increase on that achieved in 2014.
5. At **Key Stage 5** the proportion of subject entries at A* or A fell slightly but the proportion achieving A*-C and A*-E increased. All measures compare favourably with the national averages.
6. An increasing number of pupils of all ages attain the highest levels at each key stage. **Girls** continue to outperform **boys** at all key stages and there has been an improvement this year, at the expected level, in the comparative performance of girls

with national averages. Where national comparators are available the performance of girls across Cardiff is now at least in line with the performance of girls across Wales.

7. The difference in performance of **eFSM** pupils and **nFSM** pupils continues to reduce at each key stage. The difference is smallest in the Foundation Phase but widens at each successive key stage. The performance of this group of pupils compared to their peers remains a concern. This year's comparative performance of eFSM pupils in Cardiff is not yet available, but in 2015, eFSM pupils' performance was slightly higher than the national averages at all key stages (see Appendix 1).
8. In the primary phase the number of schools in the lowest benchmarking quarter for at least one key stage has reduced from 23 in 2015 to 17 in 2016. In the secondary phase the three lowest attaining secondary schools achieved small improvements in their outcomes this year but they remain unacceptably low.

Factors Impacting on Outcomes

9. The concerted effort to engage school leaders and to develop a culture in which schools lead improvement across the system. Sharing individual school data across all schools has helped to raise expectations, develop greater accountability and strengthen the performance culture.
10. School leadership has strengthened, with a significant number of new appointments in recent years. Strengthened practice and new leadership in some schools has resulted in enhanced quality of learning and teaching, raised expectations and improvements in standards in schools. An increasing number of the most successful head teachers are taking responsibility for more than one school.
11. School to school support is having a positive impact, particularly in the primary sector where outcomes are improving, leading to a reduction in the number of red schools.
12. The six schools involved in the Schools Challenge Cymru Programme, which each are linked with a high performing school, all achieved improvements in the level 2+ threshold from between 1.8 ppt and 12.1 ppt.
13. In the ten secondary schools which have at least 90% of their pupils achieving the level 2 threshold and consequently compare favourably with similar schools, pupil tracking is accurate and where pupils are identified as underachieving provision has been carefully tailored to meet individual needs.
14. Improvements in the quality of teaching in mathematics in secondary schools, has led to an improvement in level 2 mathematics of 4.6 ppt to 67.8% in 2016.

15. However, there remains too much inconsistency in the quality of middle leadership in secondary schools. This can lead to relatively high figures in some of the key indicators, but underachievement in others and variation in outcomes across different subject areas in the same school.
16. In four secondary schools, the results in the level 2+ threshold were more than 3 ppt lower than expected. In two of these schools this stems from lower than expected performance in mathematics. In the other two schools performance was lower than expected in English. In these subjects, the accuracy of teacher assessment within schools is still not consistently secure.

Moving Forward

17. Cardiff Local Authority in collaboration with headteachers, governors and other partners has developed a distinct strategy for educational improvement in Cardiff. **“Cardiff 2020 – A renewed vision for education and learning in Cardiff”** builds on the improvements made to date and provides a framework for a challenging programme of work over the next five years. The implementation of the strategy will be overseen by the local authority’s Education Development Board.

Glossary

Foundation Phase Outcome Indicator (FPOI) – Language, literacy and communication, mathematical development and personal and social development, well-being and cultural diversity in combination at outcome 5.

Core Subject Indicator (CSI) - English/Welsh, mathematics and science in combination at level 4 in Key Stage 2 or at level 5 in Key Stage 3.

Expected Outcome – Foundation Phase outcome 5, Key Stage 2 level 4, Key Stage 3 level 5.

Expected Performance – Four times each year secondary schools submit their current assessments of year 11 attainment to the local authority via the consortium. The actual GCSE results published in August should be at least in line with the final submission in May.

Level 2+ threshold – Five A*-C grades at GCSE including English or Welsh and mathematics.

Level 2 threshold – Five A*-C grades at GCSE.

Level 1 threshold – Five A*-G grades at GCSE.

Benchmarking quarter – The Welsh Government places schools into five groups based on proportions of FSM pupils. Each group is then divided into four quarters based on the performance of schools within each group.

FFT estimates – Fischer Family Trust is an organisation that uses a range of available data to provide estimates of the most likely outcomes for a pupil given their prior attainment.

eFSM pupils – pupils eligible for free school meals

nFSM pupils – pupils not eligible for free school meals

Appendix 1

Comparative performance of eFSM pupils

	Cardiff All Pupils 2016	Cardiff eFSM 2016	Cardiff eFSM 2015	Wales eFSM 2015
Foundation Phase Outcome Indicator	88.9%	80.3%	76.7%	75.1%
Key Stage 2 Core Subject Indicator	89.5%	78.8%	76.7%	75.1%
Key Stage 3 Core Subject Indicator	86.6%	70.7%	66.5%	65.9%
Key Stage 4 Level 2+ Threshold	62.8%*	35.4%*	31.9%	31.6%

*Provisional data from schools

Appendix 2

Foundation Phase

1. The proportion of pupils achieving the Foundation Phase Outcome Indicator (FPOI) is 88.9% (2016 target 86.0%). The improvement in the FPOI is 2.2 ppt which is greater than the national improvement (0.2 ppt) and takes the local authority above the Wales average (87.0%) for this indicator.
2. At the expected level the strongest area of learning continues to be Personal and Social Development Wellbeing and Cultural Diversity (PSDWCD) and the weakest area Language, Literacy and Communication - English (LLCE). This is not unexpected within the context of increasing numbers of English as an additional language (EAL) learners.
3. The performances of both boys and girls in the FPOI are above the national averages at the expected level (outcome 5+), but the performance of boys remains around 8 ppt lower than the performance of girls. Girls' performance is stronger than boys in all the areas of learning, with the greatest difference of nearly 8 ppt in LLCE.
4. In all areas of learning at least one third of pupils attain the higher level (outcome 6), in PSDWCD it is more than half the pupils. The proportion of pupils achieving the higher level compares favourably with the national average in all areas of learning.
5. The difference in performance between eFSM pupils and nFSM pupils has been reduced again this year from 13.3 ppt to 11.6 ppt and the performance of eFSM pupils improved by more than 3 ppt.
6. More than seventy percent of primary schools (68 out of 95) maintained or improved the FPOI in 2016 compared to 2015. In the remaining schools (27 out of 95) the proportion of pupils achieving the FPOI fell by an average of 4.8 ppt. In nine schools, the decrease is less than 3 ppt. Five of the schools which reported decreases in outcomes are categorised as red or amber and action is already being taken to raise standards. In the remaining schools, including three (Albany, St. Albans and Llysfaen) which reported decreases for the second consecutive year, the challenge adviser will visit early in the term to scrutinise each school's analysis of outcomes and the actions that are planned in response.
7. The improvements in performance in the majority of schools have led to another increase in the number of schools in the top benchmarking quarter from 21 in 2015 to 30 in 2016 and a reduction in the number of schools in the lowest quarter from 9 to 5.

2016 Benchmark quarters for FPOI

	No of schools	% of schools
Quarter 1	30	31.57
Quarter 2	31	32.63
Quarter 3	29	30.52
Quarter 4	5	5.26
Total	95	100

2015 Benchmark quarters for FPOI

	No of schools	% of schools
Quarter 1	21	22.11
Quarter 2	32	33.68
Quarter 3	33	34.74
Quarter 4	9	9.47
Total	95	100.00

Key Stage 2

8. Last year, at this key stage, it was documented in the 'Annual Report on the Performance of Cardiff Schools' that compared to the national outcomes for girls and boys there is underperformance in the attainment of girls. In 2016 the performance of girls continues to be higher than boys and is now higher than national averages. However, the performance of boys is slightly lower than the national averages in mathematics (0.3 ppt) and science (1 ppt).
9. In 2016 the improvement in the core subject indicator (CSI) at Key Stage 2 is 1.8 ppt which is greater than the national improvement (0.9 ppt). The proportion of pupils achieving the CSI is 89.5% (2016 target 89.7%) which is now above the national figure of 88.6%.
10. At the expected level the highest performance is in Welsh first language with English having the lowest performance at this key stage. At the higher level (level 5) performance is also highest in Welsh and lowest in English. At least four out of every ten pupils attain the higher level in all four subjects which is noticeably above the proportions of pupils across Wales as a whole.
11. The difference in performance between eFSM pupils and nFSM pupils has been reduced again this year from 14.3 ppt to 13.6 ppt as the performance of eFSM pupils has improved by approximately 2 ppt.
12. Just over two thirds of primary schools (65 out of 95) maintained or improved their Key Stage 2 CSI in 2016 compared to the previous year. In the remaining third (30 out of 95) the proportion of pupils achieving the CSI fell by an average of 4.6 ppt. In nine schools, the decrease is less than 3 ppt. Seven of the schools are categorised as red or amber and action is already being taken to raise standards. In the remaining schools, including five which reported decreases for the second consecutive year, the challenge adviser will visit early in the term to agree the actions that are planned in response.

13. The improvements in performance in the majority of schools have led to an increase in the number of schools in the top benchmarking group from 21 in 2015 to 30 in 2016 and a reduction in the number of schools in the lowest group from 14 to 12. In 3 of these schools there has been persistent low achievement and focused action is being taken.

2016 Benchmark quarters for KS2 CSI

	No of schools	% of schools
Quarter 1	30	32.26
Quarter 2	34	35.79
Quarter 3	19	20.00
Quarter 4	12	12.63
Total	95	100.00

2015 Benchmark quarters for KS2 CSI

	No of schools	% of schools
Quarter 1	21	22.58
Quarter 2	28	30.11
Quarter 3	30	32.26
Quarter 4	14	15.05
Total	93	100.00

Key Stage 3

14. The proportion of pupils reaching the expected level at this key stage also continues to increase. In 2016 the proportion of pupils achieving the CSI was 86.6%, an improvement of 3.2 ppt on the 2015 figure. The improvement was larger than the national improvement (2 ppt).
15. The highest core subject performance is in science and the weakest performance is in English. At the higher levels (level 6+ and level 7+) there have also been significant improvements in each of the core subjects.
16. At Key Stage 3 the performance of boys is 6 ppt lower than the performance of girls in the CSI. Girls' performance is stronger than boys in all of the core subjects but the greatest differences are in English and Welsh first language. Compared to the national outcomes for girls and boys the underperformance in the attainment of girls seen in English in 2015 has been addressed and the performance of both boys and girls in 2016 is at least in line with the national averages.
17. The difference in performance, at this key stage, between eFSM pupils and nFSM pupils continues to reduce from 21.6 ppt in 2015 to 20.1 ppt in 2016. However the gap remains significantly wider than in the primary phase.
18. More than seventy percent of secondary schools (14 out of 19) maintained or improved their Key Stage 3 CSI in 2016 compared to the previous year. In the remaining schools the proportion of pupils achieving the CSI fell by up to 3 ppt. No schools reported decreases for two consecutive years.

19. The improvements in performance in the majority of schools have led to a further increase in the number of schools in the top benchmarking group from 8 in 2015 to 11 in 2016 and a reduction in the number of schools in the lowest group from 3 to 2.

2016 Benchmark quarters for KS3 CSI

	No of schools	% of schools
Quarter 1	11	57.89
Quarter 2	4	21.05
Quarter 3	2	10.52
Quarter 4	2	10.52
Total	19	100.00

2015 Benchmark quarters for KS3 CSI

	No of schools	% of schools
Quarter 1	8	42.11
Quarter 2	4	21.05
Quarter 3	4	21.05
Quarter 4	3	15.79
Total	19	100.00

Key Stage 4

20. The improvements seen in Key Stage 3 over the last few years have been translated, in the last two years, into noticeable improvements at Key Stage 4. At the level 2+ threshold, there has been an improvement of 3.5 ppt to 62.8%.
21. 10 out of 18 secondary schools met or exceeded their expected performance for the level 2+ threshold. In the 8 schools where performance was below expectation, 3 schools had outcomes below expectation by more than 4 ppt.
22. However, nearly four out of every ten pupils still end their compulsory education without having achieved five good GCSEs including English/Welsh and mathematics. There remain four schools where more than half of the pupils failed to reach the level 2+ threshold.
23. In 2016 there was a smaller improvement of 2.8 ppt in the level 2 threshold and performance in this wider measure continues to be below regional and national averages. The decrease that occurred last year in the level 1 threshold has been rectified with an increase of 2.8 ppt taking the overall performance to 94.9% in this measure. There continues to be little correlation between school outcomes in these measures and the proportion of eFSM pupils.
24. The performance of both eFSM pupils and nFSM pupils has continued to increase this year in the main indicators. However, the difference in performance between eFSM pupils and nFSM pupils has remained at around 34 ppt for the last three years. There continues to be marked variations between schools in the attainment of eFSM pupils. Five schools have less than 30% of eFSM pupils achieving the level 2+ threshold.

25. There were also improvements in outcomes in the individual subjects of mathematics, English, and science at level 2. However performance in Welsh first language declined as a result of a decrease in performance in one of the two Welsh medium schools' results.
26. The performance of girls is higher than boys in all the main indicators. Outcomes for both boys and girls improved in the three threshold indicators and in the separate subjects of English, mathematics and science. Outcomes in Welsh first language were lower in 2016 than in the previous year. Of particular note is the improved performance of girls in mathematics by nearly 7 ppt to 69.4%. This should lead to an improved comparative performance when the national results are published.

Key Stage 5

27. The proportion of subject entries at A* or A fell in 2016 by 3 ppt to 28.1% but the proportion achieving A*-C rose by 1.9 ppt to 80.3%. At A*-E, considered the 'pass rate', the proportion of subject entries was 98.2%. The proportion of students achieving the level 3 threshold was 97.8%. Both figures are very slightly higher than those achieved in 2015.
28. The results achieved at Key Stage 5 compare positively with the national figures for Wales. The proportion of subject entries at A* or A was 22.7% and at A*-C the average was 73.8%. The national pass rate in Wales remained at 97.3%.