



Tuag at Ragoriaeth
Towards Excellence

REPORT ON OUTCOMES 2019

Flintshire



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1. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

The Welsh Government alongside several partners and experts has undertaken a fundamental review of the accountability system for schools in Wales.

Findings highlighted that the existing system and its use of performance measures has many negative unintended consequences, such as:

- narrowing curriculum choice;
- disproportionate focus on particular groups of learners;
- the way in which benchmarking is used driving competition between schools rather than encouraging collaboration;
- an increased and unnecessary workload for teachers and others in the system, without the necessary impact or benefit for learners; and
- an aggregation of data for *accountability* purposes where it was designed for *improvement* purposes.

As a result, schools have heard conflicting messages from the various parts of the system about what matters. This has often diverted effort from learning and teaching and moved us towards a culture of compliance and bureaucracy.

A joint communication from **Welsh Government, the WLGA and Estyn** to Chairs of Scrutiny, Cabinet Members, Directors of Education, Chief Executive Officers, and Managing Directors of Regional Education Consortia, published on **16 July 2019** stated that:

“It is counter-productive for schools to be placed under disproportionate pressure on the basis of individual measures. It is not in the interest of school improvement and risks undermining the ongoing change in culture that we are working together to achieve. We expect local authorities and regional consortia to support schools to make appropriate decisions about their curriculum to avoid narrowing choice for learners.”

Collectively, we have agreed that this is the right approach to take and strongly advise you to use a broad range of un-aggregated data and information to enable you to discharge your duties when reporting on school performance. Evaluating the performance of individual schools rather than generating aggregated data at local authority level will be more helpful to supporting and challenging individual schools with their improvement.”

This report on performance across North Wales will adhere to this guidance.

Reporting on KS4 results

New interim KS4 measures have been introduced for 2019 as part of the significant education reform programme in Wales.

National data capture for individual schools will be based on first entry results. The data provided regionally for individual school and LAs will also be based on first entry results. JCQ/WJEC have published their data and press release based on the ‘best outcome’ obtained by 16 year olds across both the November and summer series. There will be differences between first entry and best outcome data.

As a result, across several indicators, it will not be possible to compare 2019 figures with previous performance.

The table below shows the new interim measures and the methodology used for calculating. It also demonstrates the key differences with previous years.

Interim Measure	How it is calculated	Differences from previous years, and why comparisons cannot be made
Capped 9	<p>The Capped 9 Points Score is a performance measure calculating the average of the scores for the best awards for all individual pupils in the cohort, capped at a specified volume of GCSEs or equivalent qualifications.</p> <p>Three of the nine slots require the awards of specific subjects and qualifications in order to contribute any points towards the measure. These slots are each one GCSE in size, specifying requirements in literacy, numeracy and science GCSEs only.</p> <p>The best grade from any of the literature or first language Welsh or English GCSEs can contribute towards the literacy slot.</p> <p>The best grade from either of the mathematics or mathematics – numeracy GCSEs can contribute towards the numeracy slot.</p> <p>The best grade from a science GCSE can contribute towards the science slot (currently this is limited to awards in the WJEC suite of science GCSE qualifications currently available to learners: biology, chemistry, physics, science (double award) applied science (double award) and applied science (single award).</p> <p>The remaining six qualifications will include the pupil's best performance in either GCSE and/or vocational equivalent.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Only a pupil's first entry will count ✓ WJEC Science GCSE only
Literacy measure	Calculating the average of the scores for all individual pupils in the cohort, taking the best grade from any of the literature or first language Welsh or English GCSEs awarded to a pupil.	New 2019 measure, first entry only will count, with Literature also accepted within this measure
Numeracy measure	Calculating the average of the scores for all individual pupils in the cohort, taking the best grade from either of the mathematics or mathematics – numeracy GCSEs awarded to a pupil	New 2019 measure, first entry only will count
Science measure	Calculating the average of the scores for all individual pupils in the cohort, taking the best grade from a science GCSE awarded to a learner (currently this is limited to awards in the WJEC suite of science GCSE	New 2019 measure, first entry only will count

	qualifications available to learners: biology, chemistry, physics, science (double award) applied science (double award) and applied science (single award) - these are identified as being able to contribute towards science measures.	
The Welsh Baccalaureate Skills Challenge Certificate measure	Calculates the average of the scores for the Welsh Baccalaureate Skills Challenge Certificate awards for all individual learners in the cohort, whether it is the Foundation (Level 1) or the National (Level 2) award.	Reported separately as a main indicator for the first time in 2019

In this context, the data should be analysed on a local level and as a starting point to question local priorities.

Although 2019 data is currently available on historical performance measures (L1, L2, L2+ and 5A*-A), comparison with previous years is not valid because of the first entry counting rather than best outcome.

Scrutinising Individual School Performance

Regular fortnightly Local Quality Board meetings are held between the GwE Core Lead and each LA. Any schools causing concern are discussed and any strengths and areas for improvement are noted. This links to the regular meetings held by the core lead with Supporting Improvement Advisers to discuss school progress. The regular communication between LA and GwE officers ensures shared intelligence about the capacity to improve of schools, and where concerns are identified that all parties work in partnership to review the standards and provision in the school and to set and monitor clear targets for improvement.

Each LA has its own monitoring processes to scrutinise the performance of individual schools. This includes the use of 'Accelerated Improvement Boards' for school's causing concern.

Each LA's monitoring arrangements is described within their individual standards report.

Schools Causing Concern

All schools are on an improvement journey and thus require differentiated and appropriate support and challenge to varying degrees. A few schools will require more intense targeted intervention.

The label 'schools causing concern' is very wide ranging and in its broader term has not been clearly defined in national guidance. For our own purpose within GwE, we have come up with the following definitions:

- Schools that need support to maintain or improve upon standards [i.e. moving from 'good' to 'excellent' or 'coasting schools'];
- Schools that are improving but need further support to sustain their improvement trajectory and/or further reduce within school variability;
- Schools that need more specific targeted support and intervention to prevent them being a cause of significant concern;

- Schools that have been identified as causing significant concerns and/or are in a statutory category.

GwE and the local authorities have an overall good track record in effectively supporting schools and specifically those causing concern. All secondary schools have a bespoke 'Support Plan' which ensures that GwE support is closely aligned with their SDP priorities. This allows for more effective deployment of resource, regional expertise and best practice.

High challenge and support is targeted in a timely and effective approach leading, in most instances, to an acceleration of the improvement journey in the identified schools, and, where relevant, their removal from Estyn follow-up category.

Local Quality Standards Board meetings are held on a regular basis between LA and GwE senior officers and used to share information around school performance and progress and to agree on any required adaptations to support plans. Interim Accelerated Improvement Boards provide challenge and intervention to those schools in serious categories of concern. Where concerns remain, escalated action is taken which could include the use of powers of intervention as defined by national guidance.

Current regional situation

The primary and special school inspection profile has been continuously strong and compares well with the Estyn profile for schools across Wales. All primary schools placed in a category over the past three years have been removed promptly as a result of the targeted high challenge and support.

Standards in the secondary sector remains a cause for concern. Over the past 18 months, GwE has:

- re-profiled its service to ensure that additional resource is targeted towards the secondary sector;
- strengthened its team of link secondary SIAs to ensure relevant experience and expertise;
- ensured all secondary schools have access to a generic and bespoke programme of support;
- facilitated access to curriculum, MAT, post 16 and subject networks to disseminate good practice;
- adopted a targeted 'wave' support for ensuring continued improvements in core subjects;
- enhanced the GwE offer of professional development opportunities [and especially for experienced, new and potential leaders of the future];
- led the *Assessment for Learning* regional initiative to improve teaching and learning with Shirley Clarke;
- ensured further support for head teachers via strategic forum meetings and for participating schools through the *Excellence and Innovation* forum;
- supported 12 regional schools to research and address in-school variance by improving data tracking and intervention. Lessons extracted from the pilot will be transferable to all schools across the LA;
- provided financial support for a more diagnostic approach to securing improvements at KS4 English and Mathematics via PIXL;
- provided specific training at behest of schools for curriculum middle leaders and pastoral leaders;
- supported bespoke training for targeted schools and departments to improve aspects of the teaching and learning, e.g., with Tom Sherrington, Olevi ITP and OTP.

In addition to the bespoke support delivered for secondary schools in the core subjects, generic regional and local guidance has also been available via subject networks and forums. Some of the key areas addressed include:

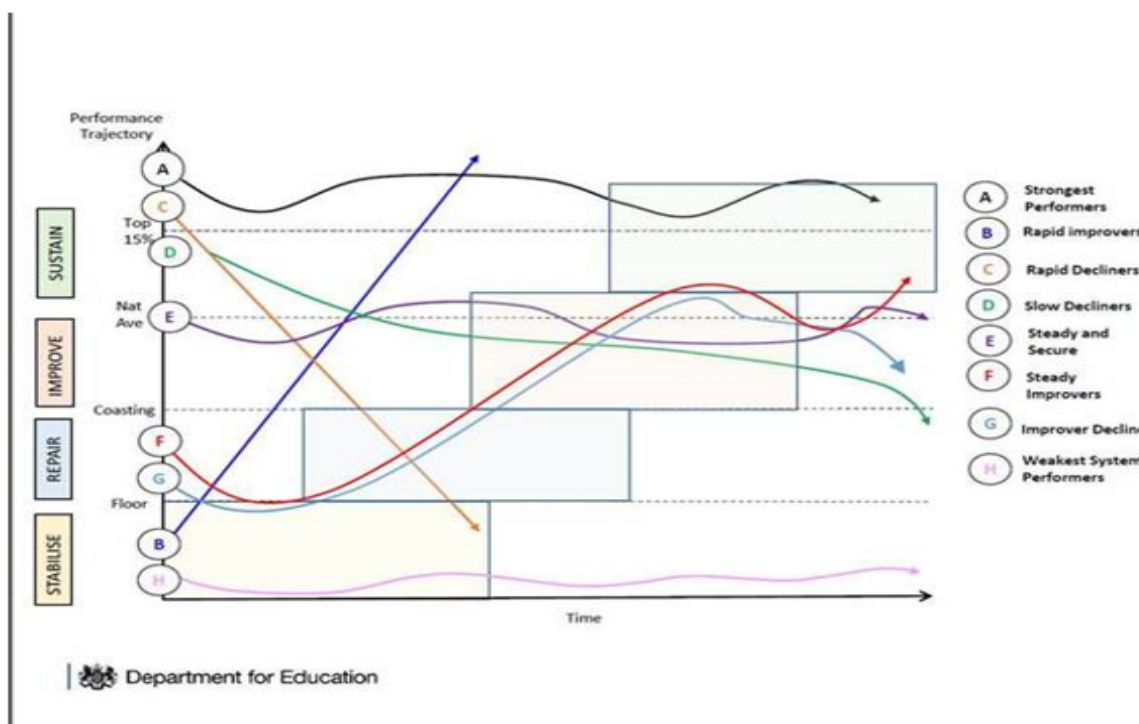
- English: A Level study support, Accelerated Reader training, developing literacy across the curriculum, improving oracy to support writing, improving tracking and intervention at KS4, improving standards of writing at KS4, guidance on MAT provision in English, development of resources e.g. *'Fix-it' resource to support the repair work required to address identified weak skills, Mastery Packs for KS4, Gothic SOW with grammar focus for Y7*
- Mathematics: leadership guidance and up-dates for new curriculum, sharing of best practice from Whiterose Maths Academies on the development of pedagogy within their cluster of schools, developing departmental pedagogy by 'deepening thinking', developing pedagogy at A level, supporting collaboration between numeracy co-ordinators to identify best practice in developing skills across the curriculum, develop leadership of numeracy co-ordinators who are within the first two years of being in post, developing understanding of the changes to the Numeracy Procedural tests.
- Science: excelling at GCSE Science – sharing best practice, sharing successful intervention strategies at KS4, developing scientific literacy – evidence based Research from Bangor University, developing strategies to engage learners in Science, working with schools to build scientific knowledge and supporting pupils in learning scientific concepts, developing reading skills in Science, sharing 'how to learn strategies' and retrieval practice, developing reading skills and the understanding of command and tier two words, developing deeper understanding of the GCSE specifications.

Moving Forward

We recognise that all schools are on a continuum of improvement. Some are emerging and developing, others developing and strengthening whilst our strongest schools are more autonomous and empowered.

As a service we are often asked to synthesise a myriad of school improvement metrics into a single definition. However, it is just as important to capture the journey and not just the 'snapshot' of a school's position on that journey.

The following diagram, developed by the DfE in England, looks to define the stages of a school's journey and begins to define the trajectory of school improvement:



We feel that this type of diagrammatic trajectory representation is a more useful tool when discussing with schools the required level and nature of support required. Its application can also be an effective strategy to capture schools at the beginning of any 'downward' trajectory thus mitigating any need for them to be identified as '*causing concern*'.

We also believe that peer engagement and support should be an integral part of school improvement. Welsh Government's vision for an evaluation, improvement and accountability system is one that is fair, coherent, proportionate, transparent, and based on shared values for Welsh education. The National Mission commits us to work with Welsh Government and other key stakeholders to establish new evaluation and improvement arrangements at all levels. These arrangements will need to be robust and strong enough to bring about the required improvements and especially so within the secondary sector. There is a clear expectation that within these arrangements schools develop not only the required capacity and skills to effectively challenge themselves, but also the ability to work collaboratively and systemically in a school improvement model founded on professional peer review.

GwE and the six regional local authorities has undertaken a consultation process with head teacher representation around the various aspects of the *National Reform Journey*. In terms of developing a regional framework for peer-to-peer engagement and support, head teachers suggested the following principles:

- a peer review approach should be adopted regionally to further drive progress towards a self-improving system;
- the peer-review model should not be developed to deliver a *pseudo-inspection* system;
- all stakeholders should work effectively together to ensure that we create the right conditions for effective peer review;
- we should agree and adopt a regional set of principles and technical language for our model;
- we should agree framework parameters which will allow flexibility for schools to operate a range of models;
- schools should have the freedom and flexibility to choose their peers;

- the model should involve peer engagement at all levels within a school;
- the model should promote trust, honesty, transparency and professional confidence;
- engagement should be a supportive and sustainable process and not a one-off imposition event;
- the model should support a cultural shift towards collegiate responsibility

Steve Munby and Michael Fullen (2016) in their paper '*Inside-out and downside-up*' outline the critical success factors for an effective system-wide school collaboration as follows:

- the purpose of collaboration must be to improve outcomes;
- the partnership must be founded on a clearly articulated shared moral purpose;
- transparency, trust and honesty are crucial;
- a commitment to and capacity for effective peer review form the engine that drives improvement;
- peer review needs to be carried out within a long-term relationship and a commitment to continuously improving practice and systems through cycles of collaborative enquiry;
- the partnership must have a plan to move from collaboration to co-responsibility to a position of shared professional accountability;
- the partnership should go beyond school leaders and engage with students, teachers, families and communities;
- partnerships welcome scrutiny and support from other partnerships as their contribution to a connected local, regional and national system.

We firmly believe that peer engagement should underpin a rigorous cycle of continuous improvement and include:

- **Self-review:** effective peer review should start with how well the school knows itself and be led by the school being reviewed. The national self-evaluation toolkit developed by Estyn/OECD and the profession should play a key role in this aspect. Self-evaluation should focus on the learner, their achievements, progress and experiences in school and focus on learning and teaching, leadership, the development of a learning organisation culture, well-being of pupils and staff, equity and inclusion. In moving forward, the self-evaluation should also focus on the four purposes of the new curriculum and evaluate the progress the school is making towards realising the new curriculum. The self-evaluation processes should allow the school to identify areas of strengths and priorities for improvement. It should also identify aspects of their improvement journey that require peer support to aid improvement.
- **Peer-review:** the most effective peer reviews have an agreed focus. The purpose of the collaboration must be to improve outcomes and any agreed focus should be based on strong evidence of what's needed to improve and what outcomes would be most benefit to the school. Peer reviewers working as a team or trio work best where they can triangulate evidence and jointly analyse their findings. They are not there to pass judgement but to seek evidence and agree findings to be shared with the school. It is imperative that the peer review process does not become a *pseudo-inspection* system. The partnership must be founded on a clearly articulated shared moral purpose with transparency, trust and honesty crucial and integral to the process. The peer review should also provide professional development opportunities and include leaders at all levels.
- **School-to-school support:** if peer review is going to be a vehicle for ongoing improvement in school systems, then it must go further than the review itself and involve school to school or cluster support. Where the outcomes are owned by the staff, the long-term and sustainable impact will be greater. This helps to further build capacity and

increased resilience within a self-improving system. The partnerships built should therefore go beyond school leaders and engage with students, teachers, families and communities.

GwE and the six regional local authorities are currently working with schools to establish a regional peer engagement model which fully reflects the principles and values that have been identified by head teachers and which also harvests from best practice nationally and beyond. Supporting Improvement Advisers are central to the facilitation and the development of this model.

This articulates our approach within the 'accountability' aspect of the reform journey. It details how peer engagement can be used to underpin a rigorous cycle of continuous development and improvement. We believe that peer engagement and support should be an integral part of school improvement in moving to a self-improving system whilst also supporting those schools that are causing concern.

2. STANDARDS

Key Stage 4

Context

Year 11 school cohort for last year included:

- Pupils in PRU/EOTAS provision [performance of group included in all LA data]
- Seven secondary schools have FSM % which are lower than the national average of 16.5%. Four schools have a higher percentage than the national average.
- 181 eFSM pupils. Numbers in individual schools varied from 9 to 31. The size of the cohort should naturally be taken into consideration when analysing performance at individual school level.
- 'First entry' counting only towards performance measures has had a negative impact on scores in a number of schools, particularly around maths/numeracy.
- Schools were only made aware of changes to performance measures when the cohort were in the third term of their GCSE course (summer 2018).
- The contribution of non-GCSE qualifications to the C9 is lower in Flintshire schools than the national average (21.4% v 27.0%).

Capped 9

- The LA performance on the main indicator [Capped 9] is 347.2pts, -7.2pt below the national average of 354.4pt. 2019 performance is below the expected performance by -13.4pt whereas in 2018 (on the 'old' Capped 9 measure), Flintshire performance was below the modelled outcome by -8.5pt. The performance of boys and girls are both below the national average for 2019, though the gender gap is slightly smaller than in 2018 (-30.4 in 2018 v -27.7 in 2019) and lower than national average. The performance of eFSM and non-FSM pupils is both lower than the national average but there has been a slight decrease in the performance gap. It is still slightly higher than the national average [-79.3pt in comparison to -77.3pt nationally].
- Of the 11 secondary schools, seven have FSM % which are lower than the national average of 16.5%. In 2019, six schools performed above the national average with two of the six also above the expected performance. The two schools with the highest % of FSM both closed the gap in performance against modelled outcomes (school H from -38 to **-31**; school G from -77.1 to **-23.1**). Performance in School D remains a concern as the gap increased to **-37.0pt**. The performance of e-FSM pupils was higher than the national average in three schools but below in eight. The gap in performance between eFSM and

non-FSM pupils was reduced in three schools but remains significant in a number, although in some of the schools the number of pupils in this group is small

- The performance of boys was higher than the national average of 337.3pt in six schools, significantly below in one school (D) and significantly higher in two (B and J). The performance of girls outscored the national average of 370.4pt in four schools. The gender gap was reduced in six schools [Schools B, D, I, G, F and K] but significantly increased in School G. The gender gap in Schools B, C and E is wider than the national average. Boys outperformed girls in one school. The performance of e-FSM pupils was higher than the national average of **298.9pt** in **three** schools but below in **eight**; it is worth noting that this number of pupils is low in some schools.

Literacy Indicator

- The LA performance in the indicator is -0.5 pt below the national average of 38.0pt and below the expected performance by -1.6pt. The performance of both boys and girls is below the national average for 2019 [-0.2pt and -0.8pt respectively]. The gender gap has increased in 2019 (by 0.3) and is wider than the national average. The performance of eFSM and non-FSM pupils and the performance gap is smaller than the national average (-8.4 v -8.9).
- In the average point score for English, performance was 0.1pt above the national average with a -4.4pt gender gap in comparison to a national gap of -5.2pt. eFSM pupils performed better than their national counterparts by -0.6pt (31.0 v 30.4) **In English Literature the performance was the same as the national average with a gender gap of -4.4pt [-4.2pt nationally]**. Performance of eFSM pupils was the same as the national average. In Welsh First Language, performance was just below the national average by 0.4pt and there was a gender gap of -7.5pt in comparison to -4.0pt for Wales. eFSM pupils performance was in line with national averages – a very small number of pupils here. **Welsh Literature average points score was also higher than the national figure by +0.9pt; boys' performance was below national averages, girls' performance above.**
- On the literacy indicator, of the 11 secondary schools, seven were above the national average with four of the seven also above the expected performance [Schools A, E, G and J]. School C was below by -4.6 pt. The performance of boys was below the national average of 36.3pt in four schools. The performance of girls was higher than the national average of 41.8pt in six schools and lower in five. Performance of girls in School B, G and K was particularly strong. The gender gap has increased in five schools and is most pronounced in School G. The gap is wider than the national average of 5.5pt in three schools (C, G and I). The performance of e-FSM pupils was higher than the national average of 32.5pt in six schools with the lowest performance in School I where it is -5.2pt below the Welsh average. The gap in performance between eFSM and non-FSM pupils is better than the national average of 8.9pt in eight schools but wider in **three**.

Numeracy Indicator

- The LA performance in the indicator is 0.6pt above the national average of 37.2pt and very slightly below the expected performance by -0.2pt. The performance of both boys and girls is above the national average for 2019 [0.7pt and 0.5pt respectively]. The gender gap has increased slightly in 2019 to -1.2pt but is lower than the national average of -1.4pt. The performance of eFSM is higher than the national average of 29.4pt by +1.7pt and the gap in performance between eFSM and non-FSM pupils is lower than the national average [-8.8pt in comparison to -10.2pt nationally].
- In the average points score for Mathematics, performance was -0.8pt above the national average with a gender gap of -2.0pt in comparison to the national average of -2.1pt – both

boys and girls perform above the Wales average. eFSM pupils performed above the Wales average (29.4pt v 27.4pt) and the gap in performance between eFSM and non-FSM pupils was narrower in Flintshire than in Wales.

- In Maths-Numeracy, the authority performed above the national average (34.9pt v 34.2pt) with the performance of both boys and girls higher than their national counterparts and with no gap in performance. eFSM pupils also performed well above the national average (28.6pt v 26.2pt - +2.4pts)
- **In the numeracy indicator, of the eleven secondary schools, six were above the national average and three were close. Five schools [A, E, F and K] performed above the expected performance whilst schools I and C were within 1pt of the modelled outcome. School B was below by -3.8pt. The performance of boys was higher than the national average of 36.4pt in seven schools. The performance of girls was higher than the national average of 37.8pt in seven schools and within 0.1pt in school I. The gender gap has decreased in seven schools and is lower than the national average in six schools. In Schools B, F, G, I and J boys outperform the girls. The performance of e-FSM pupils was higher than the national average of 29.4pt in seven schools. The gap in performance between eFSM and non-FSM pupils is better than the national average of -10.3pt in eight schools.**
- **In the average points score for Mathematics, seven schools were above the national average of 35.4pt and four below. Performance of boys saw six schools above the Wales average; performance of girls was above national average in eight schools. Performance of eFSM pupils in was higher than national average in seven schools.**
- **In Maths-Numeracy seven schools performed above the national average of 34.2pt and four below. Performance of boys and girls was higher than national average in seven schools. Performance of eFSM pupils was also higher than or equal to the national average in eight schools.**

Science Indicator

- The LA performance in the indicator is higher than the national average of 36.8pt (by 0.9pt), lower than with modelled outcomes (provisional), with the performance of both boys and girls both higher than their national counterparts. The gender gap is also less than the national average of -2.7pt. The performance of eFSM is **+1.3pt** higher than the national average of 28.2pt and the gap in performance between eFSM and non-FSM pupils is also better than the national average [-10.7pt in comparison to -11.6pt nationally].
- Of the eleven secondary schools, six were above the national average. School C was below by **-3.5pt**. The performance of boys was higher than the national average of 35.5pt in eight schools except Schools C,,F and H . The greatest gap with the national average is seen in School C. The performance of girls was higher than the national average in six schools. The gender gap [girls outperforming boys] has increased in five schools since 2018. The performance of e-FSM pupils was higher than the national average of 28.2pt in seven schools. The gap in performance between **eFSM and non-FSM pupils is also lower than the national average in eight schools and higher in three.**

Welsh Bacc SCC Indicator

- The LA performance in the indicator is -3.3pt below the national average of 36.4pt and below the expected performance by -4.3pt. The performances of girls and boys are both lower than their Welsh counterparts. The gender gap has increased in 2019 to -6.65pt and is higher than the national average of -6.0pt. The performance of eFSM is lower than the national average of 29.5pt by 4.9pts and the gap in performance between eFSM and non-

FSM pupils is also higher than the national average [-11.1pt in comparison to -9.6pt nationally].

- Of the eleven Flintshire schools, **seven** were above the national average [**School C -5.3pt** below] and two schools [D and H] performed above the expected performance. The performance of boys was higher than the national average of 33.5pt in six schools with the lowest performance in School F. The performance of girls was higher than the national average of 39.5pt in five schools [School J being +2.8pts]. The gender gap is greater than the national average in four schools and greatest in School F [-11pt). The gender gap decreased in six schools. The performance of e-FSM pupils was higher than the national average of 29.5pt in two schools.

Emerging Questions:

Whole schools:

- Why are there variances in performance between individual schools in Flintshire?
- How confident are we that all Flintshire schools effectively evaluate the impact and contribution of individual non-core subjects into the revised C9 measure and to what extent do their accountability processes robustly challenge *In School Variance*?
- What are the effective actions currently being taken by leaders with departments that are outperforming the school average and with those that are underperforming and how can we best ensure that schools learn from each other?
- To what extent do individual departments within schools forensically analyse the data shared by WJEC on subject performance and to what extent do all departmental staff, across the range of subjects, understand the assessment weighting for each specification? How does this effectively impact on their planning and delivery and, where relevant, the understanding of grading, awarding and reporting?
- How appropriate is the provision across schools for boys and pupils in receipt of FSM and particularly those in danger of becoming disengaged?
- How well do current 14-19 local strategies ensure that funding is effectively used to deliver appropriate experiences and qualifications for targeted groups of pupils and to what extent do they contribute to the revised interim measures in each local authority?
- How do we best support our schools in ensuring their most able learners achieve well?

Literacy:

- How effectively do all schools develop 'higher-order writing skills' to improve performance?
- How can we best support classroom teachers and departments in improving the teaching of identified examination skills?
- What are the most effective strategies to further reduce the gender gap?
- Do all departments have a common and effective approach to the teaching of writing?
- How can we further empower Heads of Departments to lead teaching and learning?
- How can we improve the quality of literacy Intervention at KS3, particularly for FSM learners?
- How can we support departments in increasing the level of challenge at KS3?

Numeracy:

- How can we best support classroom teachers and departments in improving the teaching of identified examination skills?
- What are the most effective strategies to further reduce the gender gap?
- How can we support departments in increasing the level of challenge at KS3?
- How can we further improve the teaching of numeracy and mathematics at KS3?

- How can we best support collaborative working at KS4?
- Schools have effectively engaged with the MEI TGM programme over the past few years. How can we further support teachers within the county?

Science:

- How can we more effectively support the development of numeracy skills (30% assessment of mathematical skills in Science across the GCSEs)?
- How can we more effectively develop literacy skills in Science to support lowest ability learners to deal with the high volume of text across the examinations papers?
- What are the most effective strategies to further reduce the gender gap?
- How can we implement more effective action research within classrooms to improve teaching and learning?
- What are the best strategies for engaging boys in Science?
- What are the best strategies for engaging girls in Science?
- What is this most effective way to start a Science lesson? (linked to EEF research project)
- How can we use modelling to raise attainment in Science?

Key Stage 5

The total number of entries at A-level in Flintshire schools in 2019 was 1,164. Outcomes increased at grades A*, A*/A and A*-B. At A*/A outcomes improved significantly by 4.7% to 25.9%, now only 1.1% below national average. The gap between Flintshire and Wales averages has closed at these grade boundaries. At A*-C outcomes fell 0.5% to 76.2% by 2.9% from 2018 at A*-E from 99% to 98.5%. Performance at A*-E remains higher than national averages.

The % of pupils achieving three A*/A grades rose from 11.6% to 15.2%, now above the national average of 13.2%; at three A8-c grades there was a drop from 56.3% to 54.8%, below national average of 58.4%.

While 'raw' performance continues to be below Wales averages at A*-C grades, value-added data suggests that student progress from GCSE to A level is strong. ALPS value added data (unverified) based on information submitted by schools suggests progress of students post-16 is strong. This data suggests that on the 'T' score, Flintshire schools scored a 4, placing them in the top 40% of performers within the sample of schools. The Provider A level Quality indicator was a grade 3. Three of the six schools similarly were classified in the top 25% of performers ('T' score of 3) whilst had one had a 'T' score of 2, placing them in the top 10% of providers. This is reinforced in the Welsh Government value-added report for 2019 (provisional) which reports the average points score for Flintshire A level entries is 'significantly higher' than expected.

3. EMERGING QUESTIONS TO HELP THE JOINT COMMITTEE, LA OFFICERS AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEES TO EVALUATE PUPIL PROGRESS, STANDARDS AND PERFORMANCE

Key Stage 4

- To what extent are all schools embracing the national change in direction and behaviour to maximise the performance of individual pupils across the ability range? Do school leaders have a clear vision for what to change and why?
- Have all schools developed effective self-evaluation arrangements which go beyond examination performance data to identify what they are doing well and what needs to change?
- How appropriate is the schools' curriculum across the region? Have all schools robustly evaluated the impact and contribution of individual non-core subjects into the revised C9 measure? Is this supported by leaders making effective and timely use of Welsh Government bulletin up-dates?
- Are current internal accountability and QA processes robust enough to ensure consistent performance by individual pupils across their option choices i.e. are leaders effectively addressing In School Variance?
- What actions are leaders undertaking with departments that are outperforming the school average and with those that are underperforming?
- To what extent do individual departments forensically analyse the data shared by WJEC on subject performance?
- To what extent do all departmental staff, across the range of subjects, understand the assessment weighting for each specification? How does this effectively impact on their planning and delivery and, where relevant, the understanding of grading, awarding and reporting?
- To what extent are departments making effective use of the Chief Examiner's annual report which highlights strengths and weaknesses of performance?
- Many schools have members who are WJEC examination markers. To what extent are their expertise fully utilised within and across schools?
- Why has the performance in English dropped significantly in a number of historically strong performing departments?
- Why is there a variance in a number of regional schools between the performance of Mathematics and Maths-Numeracy?
- How well do current 14-19 local strategies ensure that funding is effectively used to deliver appropriate experiences and qualifications for targeted groups of pupils and to what extent do they contribute to the revised interim measures in each local authority?
- Are we confident that the national change in direction has sufficiently impacted on the local provision for EOTAS? To what extent has their performance in 2019 impacted on local authority outcomes?
- Are we confident that the national change in direction has sufficiently impacted on the local provision for Special Schools (145 pupils in Year 11) and Units? To what extent has their performance in 2019 impacted on local authority outcomes?
- Within the region there are 247 EOTAS pupils in year 11 – by grouping them together this is a larger cohort than what we have in any school. To what extent are leaders and staff within PRUs supported and skilled to clearly identify how best to maximise the performance of individual pupils across the revised performance measures?