

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

**REPORT TO CHILDREN'S DIRECTORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE**

5 JANUARY 2016

FREE SCHOOL MEALS (FSM) ATTAINMENT REPORT

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To provide information on the work that is being undertaken and the support that is being provided to target and raise educational performance for children from socially deprived backgrounds

2. Connection to Corporate Improvement Objectives/Other Corporate Priorities

- 2.1 The information in this report relates to strategic priority 2 in the Corporate Plan 'Working Together to Raise Ambitions and Drive Up Educational Achievement'.

3. Background

- 3.1 The report was requested by members to allow scrutiny of progress in relation to strategic priority 2.

4. Current situation / proposal

- 4.1 In the tables below, arrows are used to indicate improving or declining performance from one year to the next. The arrows are also colour coded so to allow general patterns to be identified from scanning across the data.

Pupils eligible for free school meals (eFSM) compared to those not eligible (nFSM)

Foundation Phase Indicator				
	2013	2014	2015	3 Yr Diff
Bridgend eFSM	69.8	74.5 ↑	78 ↑	+8.2
Wales eFSM	69.2	72.4 ↑		
Bridgend nFSM	86.6	88.3 ↑	91.9 ↑	+5.3
Wales nFSM	86.9	88.6 ↑		
Bridgend gap	-16.8	-13.8	-13.9	
Wales gap	-17.7	-16.2	0	

KS2 Core Subject Indicator				
	2013	2014	2015	3 Yr Diff
Bridgend eFSM	67.6	73.5 ↑	76.3 ↑	+8.7
Wales eFSM	69.8	71.9 ↑		
Bridgend nFSM	86.9	89.1 ↑	90.9 ↑	+4
Wales nFSM	88.1	89.7 ↑		
Bridgend gap	-19.3	-15.6	-14.6	
Wales gap	-18.3	-17.8	0	

KS3 Core Subject Indicator				
	2013	2014	2015	3 Yr Diff
Bridgend eFSM	51.5	56.7 ↑	68.4 ↑	+16.9
Wales eFSM	53.8	61.3 ↑		
Bridgend nFSM	78.7	85 ↑	88.2 ↑	+9.5
Wales nFSM	82.3	85.6 ↑		
Bridgend gap	-27.2	-28.3	-19.8	
Wales gap	-28.5	-24.3	0	

KS4 Level 2 Threshold Including English/Welsh and Maths				
	2013	2014	2015	3 Yr Diff
Bridgend eFSM	26.4	25.1 ↓	37.1 ↑	+10.8
Wales eFSM	25.8	27.8 ↑	31.3 ↑	+5.5
Bridgend nFSM	58.1	61.4 ↑	64.0 ↑	+6.8
Wales nFSM	58.5	61.6 ↑	63.7 ↑	+5.2
Bridgend gap	-31.7	-36.3	-26.9	
Wales gap	-32.7	-33.8	-32.4	

22/10/2015

eFSM

Level 2 + Threshold

Local Authority	School Ref	School Name	% FSM	2012	2013	2014	2015 Prov SSSP
Bridgend	6721102	Portfolio PRU		-	-	-	-
Bridgend	6724059	Cynffig Comprehensive School	29.7	29.0	30.3 ↑	24.3 ↓	34.4
Bridgend	6724068	Bryntirion Comprehensive School	14.4	11.5	26.1 ↑	22.6 ↓	52.9
Bridgend	6724071	Maesteg School	26.3	17.6	25.7 ↑	20.0 ↓	45.5
Bridgend	6724076	Pencoed Comprehensive School	15.2	50.0	50.0	50.0	36.8
Bridgend	6724078	Brynteg School	14.1	25.0	31.3 ↑	40.0 ↑	48.6
Bridgend	6724080	Porthcawl Comprehensive School	9.6	60.0	35.7 ↓	39.1 ↑	36.8
Bridgend	6724085	Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Llangynwyd	15.2	-	31.8	23.1 ↓	44.4
Bridgend	6724086	Coleg Cymunedol Y Dderwen	25.8	22.9	11.9 ↓	12.8 ↑	34.0
Bridgend	6724601	Archbishop McGrath Catholic School	16.1	25.0	38.1 ↑	21.1 ↓	31.6
Bridgend	6727003	Héronsbridge Special School		-	-	-	-
Bridgend	6727012	Ysgol Bryn Castell		-	-	-	-
Wales		Wales		23.4	25.8 ↑	27.8 ↑	31.3

Commentary

There is a three year improving trend in the performance of e-FSM pupils in all phases/stages of education.

In 2015 at key stage 4 the performance of e-E-FSM pupils improved significantly. At this indicator the rate of improvement in Bridgend is now greater than the national rate and the attainment of e-E-FSM pupils in Bridgend is higher than the Wales average. Bridgend in 2015 was ranked 3rd in Wales for the proportion of pupils e-E-FSM achieving the L2 threshold (provisional data).

The gap in performance between pupils eligible for free school meals and those not eligible in Bridgend increases at each stage of education as it does for Wales.

Despite these improvements in the performance of children eligible for free school meals performance is still not good enough. For example, in key stage 4, 37.1% of pupils eligible for free school meals met the level 2 threshold, 62.9% did not and this set of qualifications is key to accessing opportunities for further education and or employment.

The actions taken by schools

Secondary school senior leaders in Bridgend with a responsibility for e-FSM attainment were asked about what schools in Bridgend do to improve the attainment of these children. They responded as follows, (the authors comments in brackets):

- Effective use of data not just for data's sake but seeing pupils behind the data.
- Mentoring based on tracking data. (This refers to identifying pupils who are underachieving and providing a mentor to help them to understand that they are under achieving and what they need to do in order to get back on track. There is a strong research base that indicates that this approach works well).
- Making sure every teacher is aware of e-FSM pupils and including e-FSM progress on departmental meetings. (This essentially increases the focus and attention on e-FSM pupils which in turn impacts on how they respond to the learning situation. In research terms this is known as the Hawthorne Effect).
- Identify departmental strengths and areas for improvement in relation to e-FSM pupils and feedback to staff.
- Awareness of successful teaching and learning approaches with e-FSM pupils. Such as approaches that develop oracy skills as well as the understanding of the curriculum. For example paired discussion before whole class question and answer sessions. (A common trait in e-FSM pupils is poor language skills which is associated with a range of learning barriers including lack of confidence to answer questions in front of the rest of the class. Strategies such as paired discussion of a question before whole class question and answer allows pupils to develop and rehearse language patterns which then give them more confidence to speak in from of a wider audience.)
- Avoidance of the 'poor dab' syndrome – high expectations and challenge for all.
- High expectations of E-FSM pupils. (This is linked to the Hawthorne Effect but also to the need to install high expectations and a 'can do' attitude in e-FSM

pupils themselves. Low achievement linked to poor language development in the early stages of education can lead to pupils having low self-esteem in relation to education and low expectations of themselves. It can also lead to low expectations from their teachers. Successful schools challenge these low expectations, set high targets for all pupils and do not use e-FSM percentages as an excuse for poor performance).

- Effective feedback and meta cognition. (Metacognition refers to having an understanding of how you learn and the thinking skills involved in learning. in order to develop pupils as life-long learners we need to develop their understanding of how they learn and the skills needed to learn. The development of learning-to-learn skills benefits all pupils but especially e-FSM pupils).
- E-FSM under achievement is tracked and intervention planned for. (This is the most common approach used by schools. The interventions usually take the form of small group additional literacy or numeracy sessions).
- Significant in all categories of the National System for categorisation. (The national categorisation system drives schools to maintain a high priority on e-FSM pupils).
- Lots of one-to-one, specialist support, targeted interventions.
- The percentage of e-FSM can affect the gap due to the amount of intervention that may be needed. (This refers to the fact that some schools have a larger proportion of the cohort eligible for free school meals and so may need to plan a wider range of interventions than others.)
- Engagement with parents is key but difficult.
- Appropriate curriculum. (Pupils need to see the curriculum as being relevant to them in order to be motivated to work hard).
- E-FSM pupils' attendance is likely to be lower. (Therefore strategies to improve attendance have a disproportionate impact on the attainment of e-FSM pupils).
- E-FSM pupils may not have access to enrichment activities such as music, peripatetic lessons, trips etc. Curriculum choice – variety of courses. (A number of schools use their Pupil Deprivation Grant to provide the type of enrichment activities that would be normally experienced by non e-FSM pupils).
- Engaging parents is key and attendance.
- Providing enrichment is important.

The following case study extracts provide details of the sorts of things that Bridgend schools do to improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils.

Pencoed Comprehensive School

The school offers over 20 interventions, which the school uses to effectively map pupil progress and well-being on its data system.

All Year 7 pupils are tested on BKSB Live.⁸ The programme requires pupils to undertake an initial assessment, which then directs them to an appropriate diagnostic for their ability in literacy and numeracy. Following testing each pupil receives an individual printout of their strengths and areas for development in both

literacy and numeracy skills and hence provides a learning plan. Class teachers are able to use the profile data to plan lesson time to target key groups of pupils' needs and reinforce the gaps in the basic skills of the children in their classes.

Following on from BKSB, the school also has intensive one-to-one interventions such as 'Spotlight' and 'Catch Up'. Spotlight is an intervention programme designed to help pupils with numeracy skills. Many pupils accessing Spotlight have not picked up numeracy concepts and skills in primary school, some have misunderstood the way it was taught or missed school when the rest of the class shown key skills.

Pupils attend for 30 minutes each week and focus on a specific skill; they move on once they have fully grasped the concept and are able to effectively demonstrate it. 'Catch Up' literacy intervention is a structured, intensive one-to-one programme intended to develop and encourage good reading skills. The programme concentrates on phonics, sounds, and letters and includes a short written activity to develop sentence structure, and reading and writing comprehension. This intervention is complemented by the 'stAR Reader' scheme. All of Year 7 is now on this programme. After testing, pupils are given a ZPD (Zone of Proximal Development) which means that the books they are working with will neither be too hard, nor too easy and indicates the point to which they can be stretched. Sixth Form Buddy Readers work with targeted pupils to further encourage reading. Once pupils have read a book they complete an online quiz, which will assess if they have really understood the book. Individual reports on quizzes can be produced to inform progression. In addition, BKSB supply interactive solutions to improve English, maths and ICT skills. See: <http://www.bksb.co.uk/about/> .

The programme works in conjunction with the English department's scheme of learning. Each class in Key Stage 3 has one lesson per fortnight in the library to read and complete 'stAR Reader' tests and quizzes.

The school also currently offers the 'PUPIL Course'. PUPIL stands for 'Pupils Understanding Problems in their Locality'. At present this programme is targeting groups of pupils in Key Stage 3 by working on projects that raise pupil awareness of their actions and lower anti-social behaviour through improving communication and team building skills. Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) regularly attend to support pupils in school and in the community.

The data tracking system holds league tables for attendance- classes with the best attendance records get the 'Bacon Buttie Reward' every half term. Hot bacon sandwiches are delivered for the whole class. Pupils can also win a 'Fast Pass' to lunch. Pupils with 100% attendance can skip the dinner queue and go straight to the front to be served immediately for a whole week. 1000 club- at the start of term each pupil will get 500 points. Lesson by lesson they can earn positive points by either: high attendance, being active in class, being club members, and improving performance on half-termly tracking. The scheme is supported by sponsorship from local businesses and pupils get entered into a prize draw to win prizes such as bikes, scooters, electronic tablets, vouchers etc. The draw takes place at the end of term during the 'Celebrating Success Award Days' and attendance has dramatically increased at the end of term because of these days.

Pupil voice:

"We know that to do well you need to be here."

“The prizes are really good, you can win a bike, a tablet, vouchers, money, sweets, I really wanted to win the scooter last year.”

The full case study from which the above information was taken can be read by following the web link referenced below.

Maesteg Comprehensive School

One of the approaches that the school has taken on board, is the Growth Mindset work of Carol Dweck. This is the idea that you can improve people’s ideas of what they can achieve. Therefore, it is raising their expectations of what they can achieve. To translate this idea to the classroom, in order to have an impact, they looked to marginal gains theory and the idea that little things can come together to make a big difference. The school has laid out 5 ideas that teachers can implement in their classrooms, to help underachieving pupils. For instance one is to mark underachieving pupils’ books first, when the teacher has more energy. As well as informing their own school activities with this approach, the school speaks to external audiences about this work. This year they held a conference on the topic.

Parental engagement is a key part of the school’s strategy to raise attainment. Education classes are given to parents to help them engage with school life, as well as give them the confidence to help their children with school work. Several parents have gained GCSEs through these lessons.

A family engagement officer also works with those families who are facing the most difficulties. Part of the advantage of her role is that she provides a link from the families to the school, which allows teachers to understand what their pupils are going home to. Some teachers have started to shadow the engagement office whilst she makes family visits, which, as one teacher comment allows you to: “walk in a child’s shoes for a while.” It therefore means that teachers can tailor their teaching and behaviour management accordingly.

The engagement officers role is also to improve attendance. Every Friday she coordinates a group of staff members to make contact with all unauthorised and authorised absentees. For those who are unauthorised, they will visit the family homes to see where a child is and take them into school if necessary.

Specific interventions have been implemented specifically for LAC and FSM pupils. When interventions are for all pupils, LAC and FSM pupils are tracked to assess progress within these programmes. Interventions for students include a focus on literacy and numeracy development. The school’s literacy and numeracy framework has clear initiatives to raise attainment in literacy and numeracy across all years. This includes the introduction of three extra lessons of numeracy for Key Stage Three pupils, which is taught by both specialist and non-specialist members of staff. This is so that numeracy can be approached differently by non-specialists. It also ensures consistency in the numeracy approach, across the school. Non specialist teachers in these areas have been equipped with the tools (such as video tutorials) to be able to assist pupils.

Technology is also put to good use. The school's popular Facebook page posts information about numeracy tests and sets daily maths challenges for pupils and parents. All Year 7s this year have been given iPads, as part of a pilot. These are used to access apps such as Maths Watch or Socrative, which allow pupils to work through exercises, as well as revise topics. As well as being an accessible medium for young people, the digitisation allows teachers to easily gather data from the app, to measure student's progress. This can be immediate so teachers can see who is getting more questions wrong at a particular point, so a teacher could go over to that pupil and assist them with their work. The use of apps also ensures that a consistent approach to literacy or numeracy is used in the school. Furthermore, the iPad ensures that pupils have a computer at home – something which not all pupils already have.

Bryntirion Comprehensive School

The school's main strategy is to **raise the aspirations** of both the pupils and teachers, so that pupils are stretched to achieve higher grades. This is achieved through setting higher grade targets, making staff accountable for these targets and monitoring achievement at regular intervals. The school's previous strategy was focussed on wellbeing, which although was beneficial for students, was not increasing their attainment. Although raising grades is currently the main focus, the school still sees itself as strong on pastoral care and offering a holistic education, therefore embodying the "we learn how to live" motto.

In order to bring FSM pupils up to a higher grade, the school ensures that all teachers understand who the FSM pupils are, so that they can be better supported in lessons. However, the head stressed that many families not eligible for FSM are not necessarily at more of an advantage than FSM families. There are also some students on FSM who are on A* and therefore don't need as much support as others. Therefore the school's aim is to target all children who are underachieving – not just those on free school meals.

Raising attainment in literacy and numeracy is a key activity for the school. The desired outcome is to raise standards in tests in KS3 to close the gap in KS4. During KS3, small groups are taken out of lessons to work on literacy and numeracy skills. Revision sessions are also a key part of the strategy to raise attainment in this area. As well as having internal revision sessions, the school sent pupils on revision sessions at the University of Glamorgan, as well as the Central South Consortium.

The school found that some pupils did not have suitable places at home with which to do their homework. To help with this, the school library is often open after school, until 5pm, to allow students a place to work.

Students in year 11 are also assigned a mentor from the teaching staff (each mentor has 6 students). Students and mentors agree targets, which they then revisit regularly (usually once a fortnight).

As noted above, the school still has a strong focus on pastoral care and wellbeing. Various activities, such as art and music therapy are held for students, to work on

behavioural issues such as anger management. These activities are also a chance for mixed ability students to be able to work together, therefore following the recommendation by the Sutton Trust that One successful example of this, is a Rock Academy, where they put low achieving students with high achieving students and they spend a week in the holidays, with an external agency, forming a rock group. Students also attend classes which equip them for life beyond academics, such as cookery classes.

The school also works to improve the students' wellbeing by having two counsellors. A host of local agencies, such as CAHMS, the fire service, Young Carers, the Inclusion service, Barnardos and Women's Aid are also worked with, in order to best support pupils and their families.

As well as working with pupils and parents, the school ensures that staff feel confident that they can stretch pupils, in order to raise attainment. Teachers work in triads and provide co-coaching using the Iris technology, which films lessons and allows teachers to easily look back at the video, in order to assess where they could improve.

Full details of the case studies can be accessed via

<http://www.cscjes.org.uk/News/2015/November/Ipsos-MORI-Closing-the-Gaps-Report.aspx>

Garth Primary School

The school uses pupil interviews and focused class observations very effectively to identify what works well for e-FSM pupils and what could be to be improved. They then use this information to adjust approaches to the curriculum and resources to improve the way in which the school meets the needs of these pupils.

From the pupil interviews they discovered that even though the pupils had computers at home, because the household only had one computer, they did not have access to it to the extent needed to allow them to use the Mathletics interactive mathematics programme. From the interviews the school discovered that the e-FSM pupils were aware that other pupils in their class were developing at a faster rate than they were because they were using Mathletics at home and the impact on their class work was clear. This is an example of how e-FSM pupils can easily become disaffected from education. After all, if you cannot win at a game; why play? In response the school provided tablet computers for the e-FSM pupils and monitored the extend to which they engaged with the Mathletics programme. They found that the pupils were using the programme extensively and it had a direct impact on improving their progress in mathematics.

The school has a 'nurture class' to provide small group teaching to pupils vulnerable to under achievement . The nurture group is predominantly made up of e-FSM pupils. The school has found that attendance has improved in general, it has improved most by e-FSM pupils. The improved attendance has in turn impacted on improved achievement which has resulted with many pupils no longer requiring 'nurture group' support because they can succeed within the whole class situation.

The school is in the process of writing up a case study to fully illustrate the work they do in improving the attainment of e-FSM pupils.

Other factors contributing to improved performance of e-FSM pupils

- All challenge advisers have a corporate performance management objective 'To ensure all schools in the local authority to which the challenge adviser is attached plan, monitor and evaluate strategically and improve the attainment of e-FSM pupils.'
- All schools are required to publish their plans in relation to how they are using the pupil deprivation grant.
- Schools that are particularly successful in improving outcomes for pupils eligible for free school meals are used as good practice examples for other to learn from.
- Resources developed by Bridgend secondary schools in relation to improving the performance of pupils eligible for free school meals have been placed on the CSC web site for all schools to benefit from <http://www.cscjes.org.uk/Knowledge-Bank.aspx> under 'Closing the gap.'
- Garth Primary is engaged with the South Wales e-FSM Valleys Project and will disseminate the good practice emerging from the project.
- All schools have access to the Sutton Trust Toolkit, which exemplifies effective approaches to improving outcomes for e-FSM pupils.
- The improvements in attendance across the borough are contributing to improvements in the attainment of all pupils but particularly those e-FSM pupils.

Annex 1 illustrates the draft CSC Strategy for Closing the Gap.

5. Effect upon Policy Framework & Procedure Rules.

5.1 There is no impact on the Council's policy framework or procedure rules.

6. Equality Impact Assessment

6.1 There are no direct equality impact issues arising from this report.

7. Financial Implications.

7.1 There are no financial implications.

8. Recommendation

8.1 It is recommended that Members note the information contained within this report.

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Background documents

Draft Central South Consortium Closing the Gap Strategy. Attached pdf

Iposos-MORI Closing the Gaps Report

<http://www.cscjes.org.uk/News/2015/November/Iposos-MORI-Closing-the-Gaps-Report.aspx>