



## EDUCATION FOR LIFE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 8TH APRIL 2014

**SUBJECT: NATIONAL READING AND NUMERACY TESTS 2013**

**REPORT BY: ACTING DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

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### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To inform members of Caerphilly schools' 2013 performance in the new national reading and numeracy tests.

### **2. SUMMARY**

- 2.1 This report presents Members with the final published results for the new national reading and numeracy tests implemented by all schools for pupils in year groups 2-9.

### **3. LINKS TO STRATEGY**

- 3.1 These plans link to the local authority's duty to monitor and improve standards of education. The strategies for achieving this are described in the Children and Young People's Plan 2011-14, the Education, Lifelong Learning and Leisure Directorate Plan 2013-14 and also the Learning, Education and Inclusion Service Improvement Plan.

### **4. THE REPORT**

- 4.1 New national reading and numeracy (procedural) tests were introduced for all pupils in Years 2 to 9 in 2013. The Welsh Government defined the results for the first year of these tests as 'experimental statistics' to reflect the nature of the tests and the data collection processes:

*"This is the first year in which data on National Tests has been collected. In addition, results for the National Reading Tests and National Numeracy Tests were obtained through separate data collections. For these reasons, this statistical release is being classed as "experimental statistics".*

- 4.2 Pupils' raw scores obtained from the test papers were converted into standardised scores which take into account the pupil's age at the time of testing and place all pupils on the same scale, meaning comparisons can be made between pupils regardless of age, year group or the particular test paper sat. The standardised results provide a measure of relative performance only. Therefore the data should be used to compare the relative performance of different cohorts rather than to assess overall performance against a particular indicator.
- 4.3 Results are presented in three bands of standardised scores. "Less than 85" represents pupils with standardised scores more than one standard deviation less than the mean. "Between 85 and 115" represents pupils with standardised scores within one standard deviation either side of the mean. "More than 115" represents pupils with standardised scores more than one standard deviation above the mean. As a general rule, the expectation is that

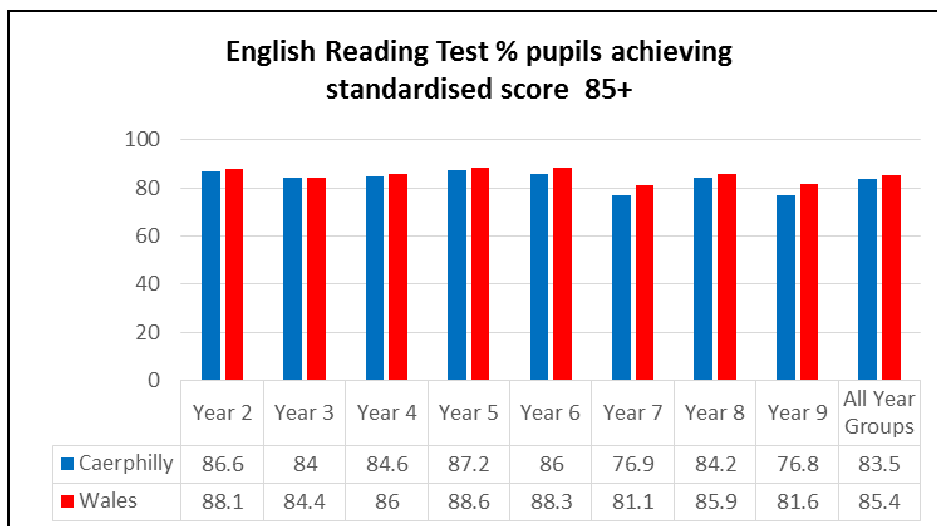
15% of pupils would attain scores below 85, 70% of pupils would attain scores in the range between 85 and 115 and 15% would attain scores above 115.

- 4.4 Comparisons between the reading and numeracy tests are not recommended due to differences in the standardisation procedures. The mean of the standardised scores for the National Reading Test is higher than both the reading test sample distribution and the distribution of standardised scores for the National Numeracy Test.
- 4.5 Overall, Caerphilly's rankings for the national tests are higher with the local authority's Free School Meals ranking of 21<sup>st</sup> in Wales. Overall, performance was stronger in numeracy than reading with Caerphilly ranked 18<sup>th</sup> in Wales for numeracy standardised scores of 85 or higher and 17<sup>th</sup> for numeracy standardised scores above 115. Performance in English reading in both standardised score ranges and Welsh reading standardised scores of 85 or higher was 20<sup>th</sup> in Wales. Performance at the higher standardised score range above 115 was 14<sup>th</sup> in Wales for Welsh reading.

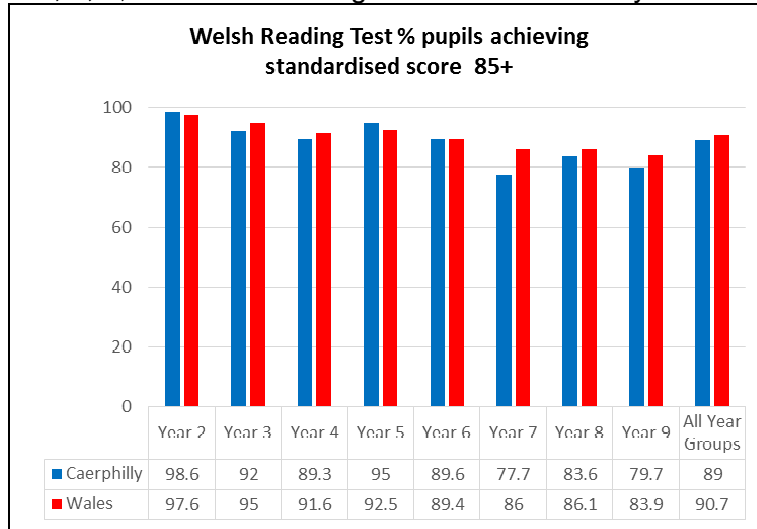
English Reading Standardised Score 85+	English Reading Standardised Score above 115	Welsh Reading Standardised Score 85+	Welsh Reading Standardised Score above 115	Numeracy Standardised Score 85+	Numeracy Standardised Score above 115
Monmouthshire	Monmouthshire	Merthyr Tydfil	Monmouthshire	Anglesey	Anglesey
Ceredigion	Vale of Glamorgan	Vale of Glamorgan	Cardiff	Vale of Glamorgan	Vale of Glamorgan
Powys	Ceredigion	Monmouthshire	Vale of Glamorgan	Gwynedd	Gwynedd
Vale of Glamorgan	Powys	Cardiff	Merthyr Tydfil	Monmouthshire	Monmouthshire
Anglesey	Anglesey	Powys	Powys	Powys	Ceredigion
Pembrokeshire	Pembrokeshire	Denbighshire	Denbighshire	Ceredigion	Carmarthenshire
Flintshire	Cardiff	Newport	Gwynedd	Carmarthenshire	Cardiff
Swansea	Newport	Pembrokeshire	Flintshire	Denbighshire	Swansea
Carmarthenshire	Flintshire	Conwy	Anglesey	Pembrokeshire	Newport
Gwynedd	Swansea	Neath Port Talbot	Pembrokeshire	Flintshire	Powys
Denbighshire	Bridgend	Swansea	Ceredigion	Swansea	Wales Average
Bridgend	Wales Average	Wales Average	Wales Average	Wales Average	Pembrokeshire
Conwy	Wrexham	Gwynedd	Carmarthenshire	Bridgend	Wrexham
Cardiff	Carmarthenshire	Flintshire	Conwy	Cardiff	Flintshire
Wales Average	Denbighshire	Ceredigion	Caerphilly (14)	Newport	Bridgend
Neath Port Talbot	Conwy	Wrexham	Swansea	Neath Port Talbot	Neath Port Talbot
Newport	Gwynedd	Bridgend	Bridgend	Conwy	Denbighshire
Wrexham	Rhondda Cynon Taf	Torfaen	Torfaen	Rhondda Cynon Taf	Caerphilly (17)
Torfaen	Torfaen	Anglesey	Neath Port Talbot	Caerphilly (18)	Conwy
Rhondda Cynon Taf	Neath Port Talbot	Carmarthenshire	Newport	Wrexham	Rhondda Cynon Taf
Caerphilly (20)	Caerphilly (20)	Caerphilly (20)	Rhondda Cynon Taf	Torfaen	Torfaen
Merthyr Tydfil	Merthyr Tydfil	Rhondda Cynon Taf	Wrexham	Merthyr Tydfil	Merthyr Tydfil
Blaenau Gwent	Blaenau Gwent	Blaenau Gwent	Blaenau Gwent	Blaenau Gwent	Blaenau Gwent

### National Reading Tests

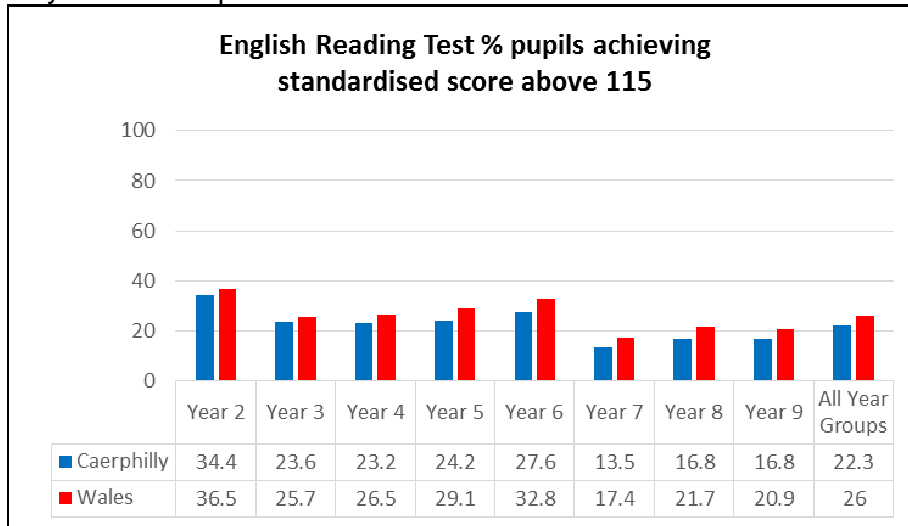
- 4.6 For all year groups, the proportion of Caerphilly pupils achieving a standardised score of 85 or higher in the English reading tests was lower than across Wales. The gap between Caerphilly and Wales was smallest in year 3 at 0.4 percentage points difference and greatest in year 9 at 4.8 points difference.



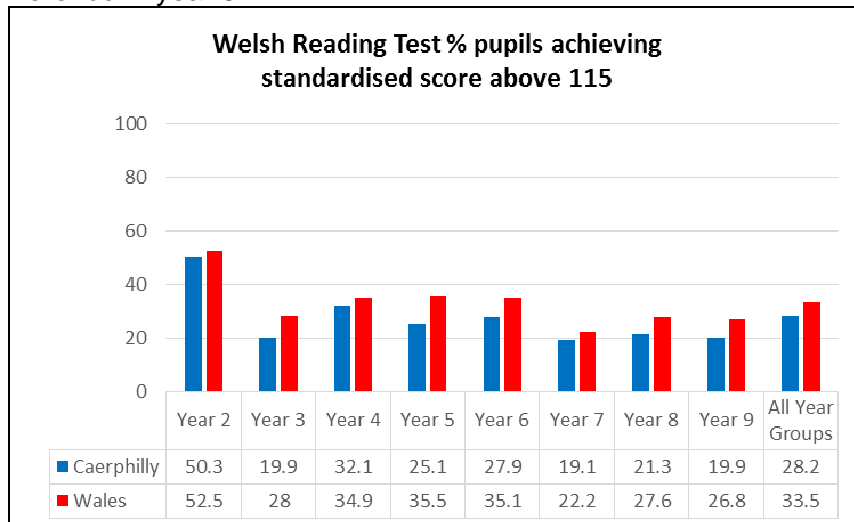
4.7 The proportion of Caerphilly pupils achieving a standardised score of 85 or higher in the Welsh reading tests was higher than across Wales for years 2, 5 and 6 but lower than across Wales for years 3, 4, 7, 8 and 9 with the greatest difference in year 7.



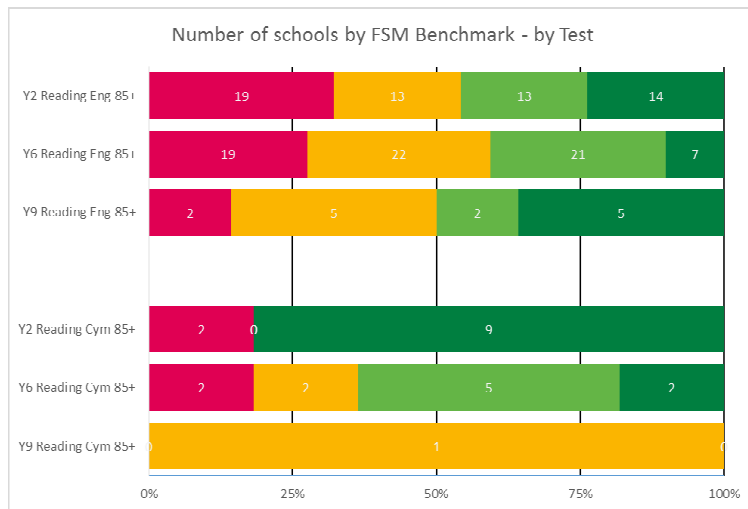
4.8 Performance was also lower than across Wales for the proportion of Caerphilly pupils achieving a standardised score of above 115 in the English reading tests. The gap between Caerphilly and Wales was smallest in years 2 and 3 at 2.1 percentage points difference and greatest in year 6 at 5.2 points difference.



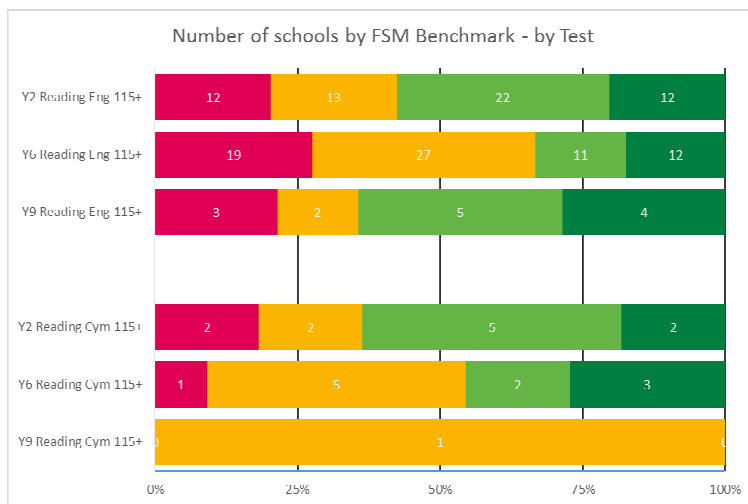
4.9 Performance at the higher standardised score of above 115 in the Welsh reading tests was below the Wales figure for all year groups, and was closest to Wales in year 2 with the greatest difference in year 5.



4.10 When FSM benchmark data is used to compare the performance of similar schools, the proportion of Caerphilly schools above the median for a standardised score of 85 or above is 50% or more in English reading in year 9 and Welsh reading in years 2 and 6. However, more than 25% of schools are in the bottom quarter for year 2 and 6 English reading.



4.11 Benchmark performance at the higher standardised score range of above 115 is stronger for English reading with more than 50% of schools above the median for English reading in years 2 and 9 and Welsh reading in year 6.

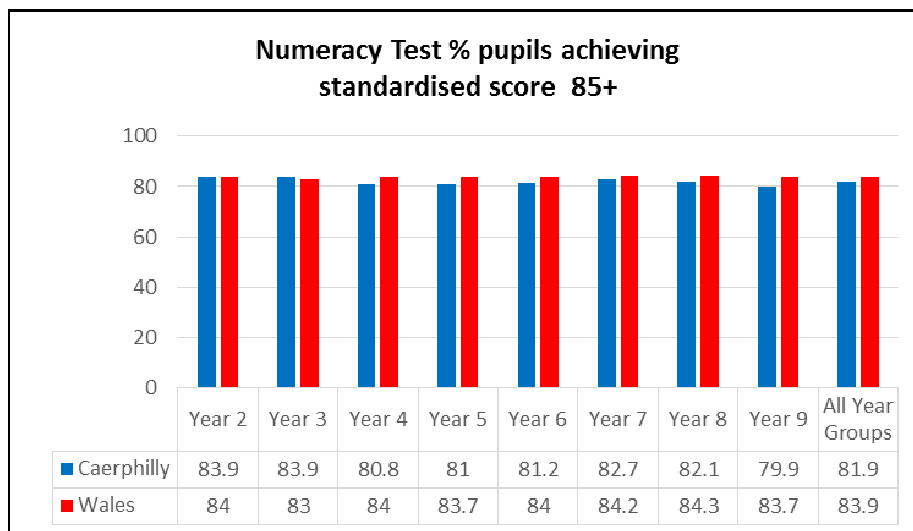


4.12 The proportion of pupils in Caerphilly who did not sit the reading tests during the specified two week test administration window was slightly above the Wales average for the English reading tests at 1.6% compared with 1.5% across Wales and below the Wales average for the Welsh reading test at 1% compared with 1.2%.

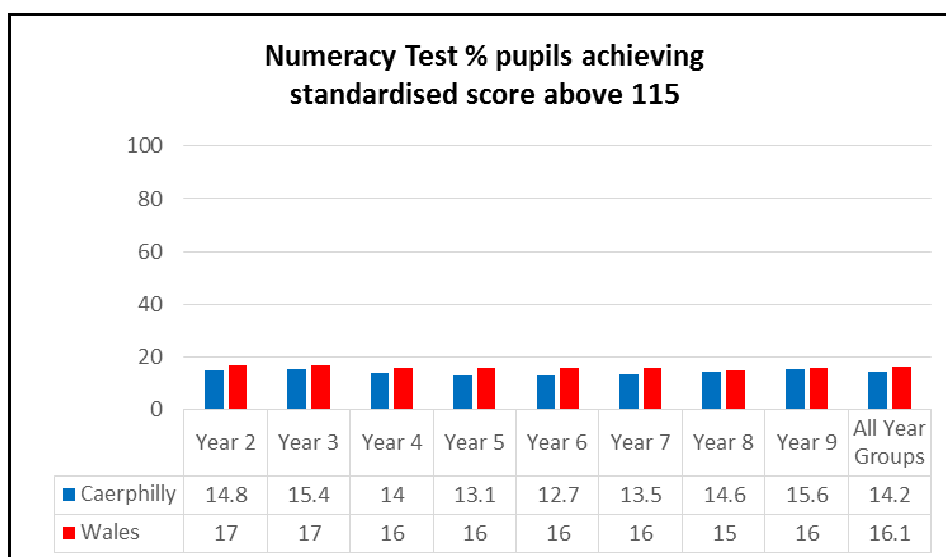
4.13 The proportion of pupils in Caerphilly who were disapplied from sitting the national reading tests due to additional educational needs, physical disabilities, or other access reasons such as new arrivals from a non-English or Welsh based education system, was the lowest in Wales for the English reading tests at 0.8% (Wales 1.9%) and slightly above the Wales average for the Welsh reading tests at 1% (Wales 0.9%).

### National Numeracy Tests (Procedural)

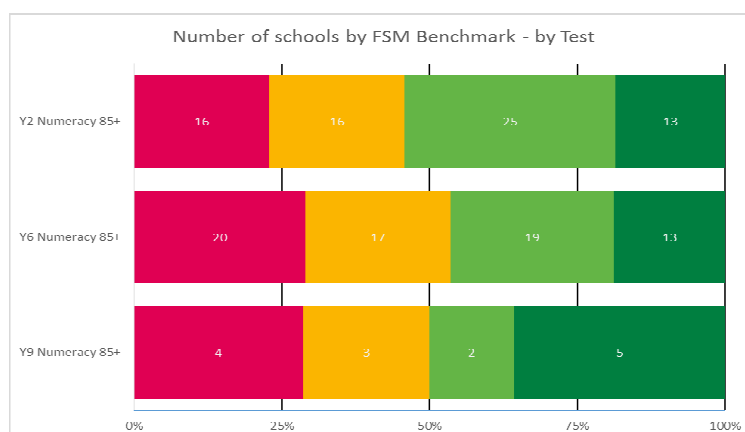
4.14 For all year groups other than year 3, the proportion of Caerphilly pupils achieving a standardised score of 85 or higher in the numeracy tests was lower than across Wales. The gap between Caerphilly and Wales was smallest in year 2 at 0.1 percentage points difference and greatest in year 9 at 3.8 points difference.



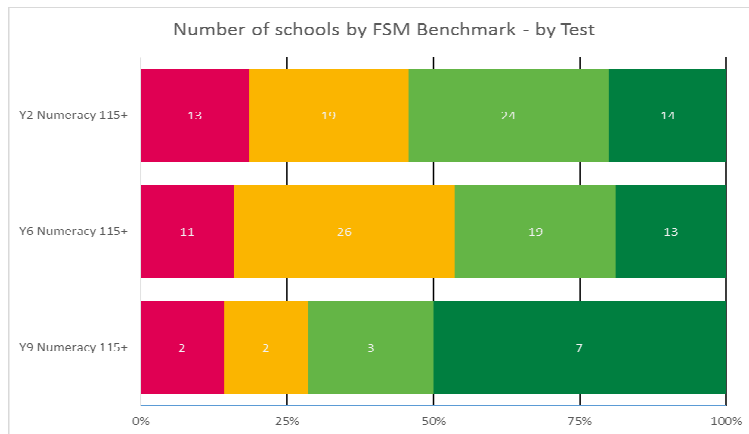
4.15 Performance was also lower than across Wales for all year groups for the proportion of Caerphilly pupils achieving a standardised score of above 115 in the numeracy tests. The gap between Caerphilly and Wales was smallest in year 8 at 0.4 percentage points difference and greatest in year 6 at 3.3 points difference.



4.16 When FSM benchmark data is used to compare the performance of similar schools, the proportion of Caerphilly schools above the median for a standardised score of 85 or above is similar across years 2, 6 and 9.



4.17 Benchmark performance at the higher standardised score range of above 115 is slightly stronger with fewer schools in the bottom quarter.



4.18 The proportion of pupils in Caerphilly who did not sit the numeracy tests during the specified two week test administration window was the joint fourth highest in Wales at 1.9% compared with 1.5% across Wales.

4.19 The proportion of pupils in Caerphilly who were disapplied from sitting the national tests due to additional educational needs, physical disabilities, or other access reasons such as new arrivals from a non-English or Welsh based education system, was the joint lowest in Wales (0.8%, Wales 1.5%).

## 5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no specific financial implications.

## 6. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are no specific personnel implications

## 7. EQUALITIES

7.1 There is no specific equalities impact in relation to the content of this report. When performance information is discussed with schools as part of the monitoring, challenge, support and intervention programme, equalities issues, such as gender and ethnicity are taken into account. Similarly the Local Authority self-evaluation considers all equalities issues.

## 8. CONSULTATIONS

8.1 All comments have been reflected in the report.

## 9. RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 Members are asked to note the contents of the report.

## 10. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1 These plans link to the local authority's duty to monitor and improve standards of education.

## **11. STATUTORY POWER**

11.1 Schools Standards and Organisation (Wales) 2013

11.2 Schools Causing Concern Guidance 2013

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Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning  
Chair of Scrutiny Committee