



EDUCATION FOR LIFE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 3RD NOVEMBER 2015

SUBJECT: STATUTORY NATIONAL TESTING FOR PUPILS IN Y2 –Y9

REPORT BY: JOHN RAWLINGS, EDUCATION ACHIEVEMENT SERVICE (EAS)

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To inform Members of the statutory testing process in mathematics and English and the outcomes for pupils in Caerphilly County Borough Council (CCBC) schools.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 The report outlines the scope of the testing process within primary and secondary schools, the pupil outcomes and comparisons to the teacher assessment process at Y2, Y6 and Y9.

3. LINKS TO STRATEGY

- 3.1 The tests complement the Local Authority's (LAs) strategy of securing continued improvement in pupil outcomes at Foundation Phase, Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3 and provide a further benchmark of performance of pupils and their ability to apply literacy and numeracy skills.

4. THE REPORT

4.1 Contextual information

- 4.1.1 The annual tests that all Y2-Y9 children take at schools in Wales, and are part of the National Literacy and Numeracy Framework (LNF). The tests were introduced in May 2013. Their main aims are to:

- Give schools an accurate gauge of individual children's skills and abilities.
- Help drive up literacy and numeracy standards in children throughout Wales.
- Provide a clearer picture of how children are performing nationally.

- 4.1.2 The tests are paper-based and take between 30 and 60 minutes each (although children who need longer because of additional needs will be given extra time). Although it is up to each school how to administer them, it is recommended that children in Y2 and Y3 have a chance to sit the tests in smaller chunks of 20 minutes or 30 minutes at a time.

- 4.1.3 The reading tests span year groups: Y2 and Y3 take the same test, as do Y4 and Y5, and also Y6 and Y7. Children read a passage before answering a mixture of multiple choice questions and questions needing short, closed responses like ordering, pairing and underlining. The numeracy part of the test last for 30 minutes; children are tested on addition,

subtraction, multiplication and division. A 30-minute reasoning test assesses how well they can apply calculation skills to everyday problems. Unlike the reading test, there is a separate numeracy test for each year group.

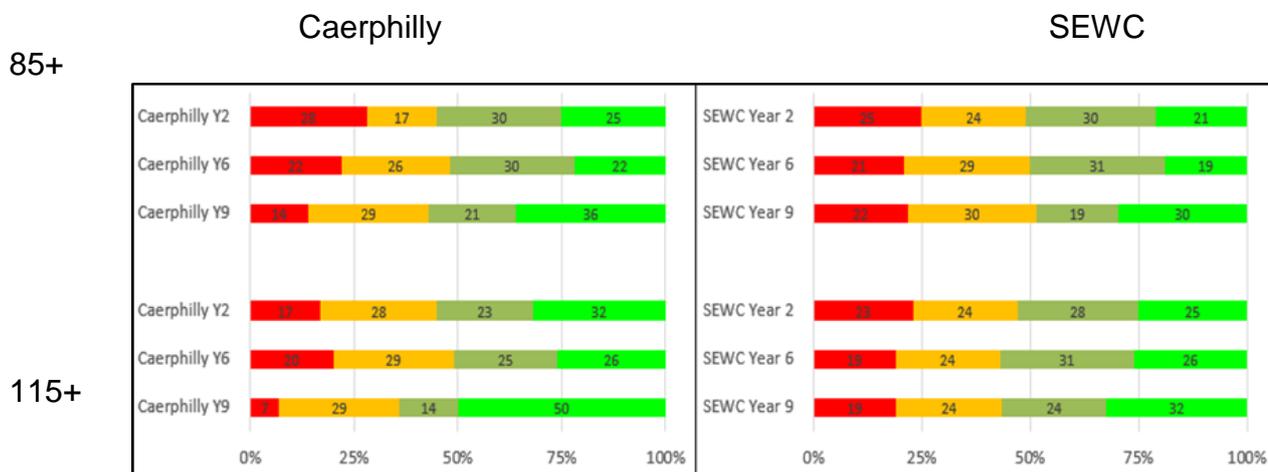
- 4.1.4 Primary schools administered tests between the 5 – 12th May; secondary schools between the 29th April and 12th May. The tests were marked internally at the school according to detailed guidance and the data was uploaded to the Welsh National Tests Data Collection. Provisional data was returned to schools by the end of the summer term in order to be shared with parents and carers.
- 4.1.5 EAS on behalf of the LA undertake the statutory responsibility to monitor the assessment arrangements in at least 10 per cent of their schools. The LA must ensure that assessment arrangements are in accordance with the test administration timetable and test administration guidance. EAS carry out a programme of monitoring visits during any of the following periods.
- The week before the tests are administered to learners.
 - The period during which the tests are administered to learners.
 - Up to 20 school days after the last day on which any of the tests have been administered to learners.

4.2 Pupil Outcomes

- 4.2.1 Standardised tests in English reading and maths measure the child's achievement compared to other children in all schools across Wales at the same age level. Scores below Standard Score (SS) (85) are considered below average, 85 -115 are considered to be within the average range and SS over 115 is considered to be above average.
- 4.2.2 In Caerphilly, performance was relatively stronger at Standard Score (SS)115+ than at SS85+ and LA rankings were similar to FSM rankings.
- 4.2.3 Overall, LA rankings at SS85+ align more closely to Teacher Assessment rankings in key stages 2 and 3 than to Foundation Phase. However, it is important to note that reading is only one of three attainment targets taken into account for Teacher Assessment in English and Welsh. LA rankings for Teacher Assessment at the expected level + 1 have not yet been published. (see appendix 1).
- 4.2.4 In the Welsh reading test, the performance across years 2 to 9 was similar overall in terms of LA rankings at SS85+ and SS115+. Test rankings matched or were similar to LA FSM rankings in Caerphilly. However, there is little correlation between LA rankings for Teacher Assessment.
- 4.2.5 **Progress measures in English and Welsh reading tests**
- 4.2.6 The progress measure shows whether a learner's improvement in reading or numeracy each year is in line with that of other learners taking the same test. No one performs consistently all of the time. Small changes are most likely due to how the learner performed on this particular test on the particular day of testing. Larger changes, or a trend in changes, may give a stronger indication of the learner's progress.
- 4.2.7 Overall, LA increases within the region at S85+ and SS115+ exceeded national increases in 6 out of 10 cases for English and 5 out of 10 for Welsh. Conversely, performance in the Welsh reading tests dropped by more than one point at SS115+ in Caerphilly.

| | Reading - En | | Reading - We | |
|---------------|--------------|------------|--------------|-------------|
| | 85+ | 115+ | 85+ | 115+ |
| Blaenau-Gwent | 2.6 | 1.2 | 0 | 4.1 |
| Caerphilly | 3.4 | 0.6 | 1.4 | -1.1 |
| Monmouthshire | 3.6 | -0.2 | 3.8 | -1.5 |
| Newport | 3.5 | 1.3 | 1.5 | -0.7 |
| Torfaen | 3.7 | -1.2 | -1 | 3.5 |
| Wales | 3.4 | 0.1 | -0.1 | -0.4 |

- 4.2.8 Regional Benchmark performance in national reading tests compared with Teacher Assessment performance LLC / English (Years 2, 6 and 9).
Regional benchmark performance for the reading tests was average overall in 2015, with roughly 25% of schools in each quarter in all key stages at both SS85+ and SS115+.
- 4.2.9 Performance was strongest in key stage 3, with nearly a third of schools in the top quarter. Conversely, benchmark performance for Teacher Assessment was stronger in Foundation Phase and key stage 2 than for key stage 3.
- 4.2.10 Significantly fewer schools were in the bottom quarter at the expected levels in years 2 and 6 for Teacher Assessment compared with performance in the tests at SS85+.
- 4.2.11 In key stage 3, more schools were in the top quarter for the test, than they were for L5+ Teacher Assessment . At level 6+, more schools were in the bottom quarter than for SS115+.
- 4.2.12 Primary benchmark performance in Caerphilly was average overall, with roughly 25% of schools in each quarter in year 2 and year 6. Performance in year 9 was above average, with less than 25% schools in the bottom quarter and half Caerphilly's secondary schools in the top quarter.



- 4.2.13 LLC / Welsh (Years 2, 6 and 9)
Regional benchmark performance in the Welsh reading tests was stronger in year 9 than years 2 and 6, but accounts for just two secondary schools (one in Caerphilly and one in Torfaen). Neither was in the top or bottom quarter at SS85+ or SS115+. There was no correlation between Teacher Assessment and test benchmarks. Both secondary schools were in the bottom quarter for Welsh at level 5+.
Test benchmarks in years 2 and 6 were well below average at SS85+, and also at SS115+ in year 2.

Teacher Assessment benchmarks at the expected and higher levels were relatively stronger than test performance at the end of Foundation Phase and key stage 2, but there were too few schools in the top quarter and none at level 4+ in year 6.

In Caerphilly, benchmark performance was below average in 6 year at SS85+, and well below average in year 2 (three-quarter of schools were below the median and no schools were in the top quarter). Performance was relatively stronger in both year-groups at S115+ and above average in year 6.

In year 9, performance in the one secondary school representing the LA was below the median at SS115+ (3rd quarter) and above at SS115+ (2nd quarter).

4.3 Performance in national numeracy tests (2014-15)

4.3.1 In four out of five LAs, the combined performance of all year groups was similar in the procedural and reasoning tests in terms of LA rankings for standardised scores of SS85+. (see appendix 2).

4.3.2 As with the reading tests, LA rankings in national numeracy tests at SS85+ align more closely to Teacher Assessment rankings at the expected level in key stage 3, than to rankings in Foundation Phase and key stage 2. This is particularly the case for Caerphilly. In four out of five LAs in the region, rankings in the numeracy tests were similar at SS85+ and SS115+. Caerphilly ranked slightly above its FSM ranking in the procedural test at 115+ (16th / 19th respectively). (see appendix 3).

4.3.3 Progress measures

4.3.4 Within the region, increases in LA averages at SS 85+ and SS 115+ for 2015 exceeded national figures in 45% cases. In the procedural test, increases were significantly higher than Wales averages. In Caerphilly, increases were above national averages for three out of four indicators. In the reasoning test, increases were larger than national figures in Caerphilly at 85+

| | Procedural | | Reasoning | |
|---------------|------------|------------|------------|----------|
| | 85+ | 115+ | 85+ | 115+ |
| Blaenau-Gwent | 3 | -0.1 | 3.5 | 1.4 |
| Caerphilly | 1.8 | 1.5 | 3.5 | 1.4 |
| Monmouth | 1.1 | 1.6 | 2.6 | 2.9 |
| Newport | 0.3 | 0.2 | 2.4 | 0.6 |
| Torfaen | 0.5 | 0.9 | 2.3 | 1.7 |
| Wales | 1 | 0.5 | 2.8 | 2 |

4.4 Benchmark performance: National numeracy tests compared with TA performance in mathematics.

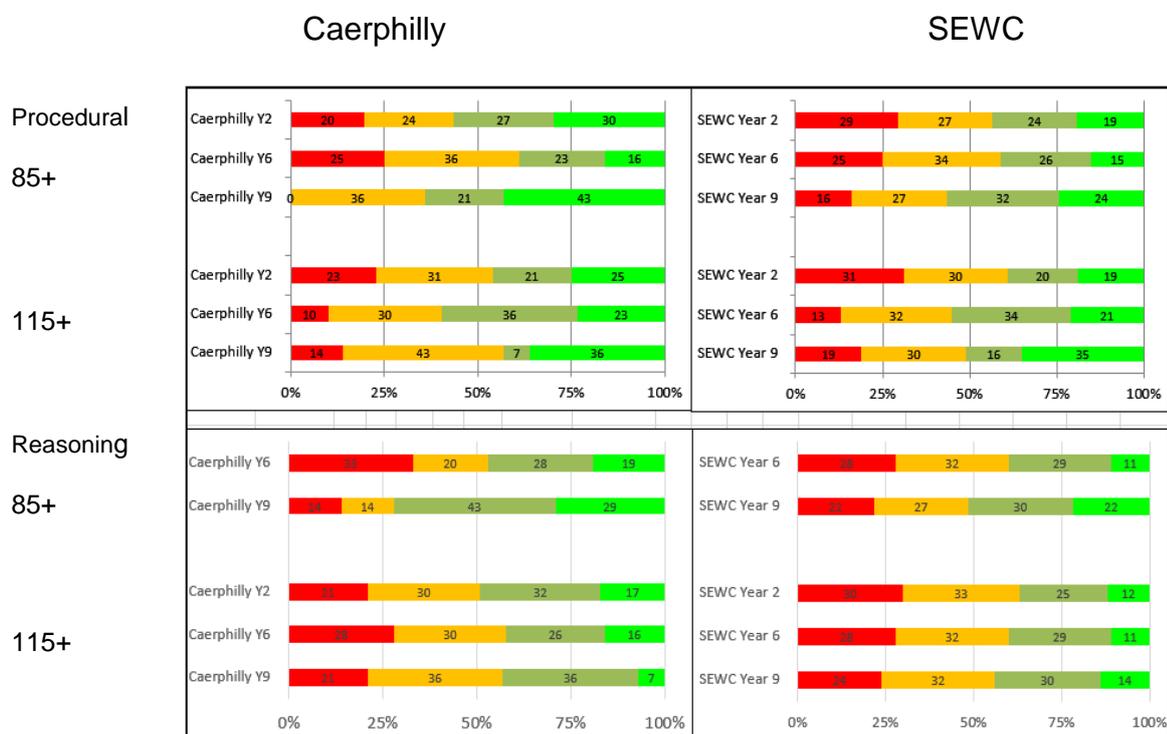
Consortium performance (Y2, Y6, Y9)

Regional benchmark performance in the national numeracy tests was below average overall in 2015, with more than half the schools below the median in 8 out of 12 indicators.

Performance was above average in the procedural test in KS2 at SS115+, both tests at SS85+ in KS3 and the procedural test at SS115+ in KS3.

Performance was stronger in year 9 than in years 2 and 6, contrary to Teacher Assessment benchmarks where key stage 3 performance was well below average at the expected level (only 36% schools above the median compared with 61% in Foundation Phase and 56% at key stage 2).

In the primary phase (years 2 and 6), with the exception of the year 6 procedural test at SS115+, there were fewer than 50% of schools above the median, and significantly more schools in the bottom quarter than in the top quarter.



4.4.1 Year 2

Regional performance in year 2 was broadly similar across the four measures, but below average overall. Performance was strongest in Caerphilly with around 50% schools above the median for all measures, with more than 25% schools in the top quarter for most measures and fewer than 25% in the bottom quarter.

4.4.2 Year 6

Regional performance was above average in the procedural test at SS115+, but below average for three of the four measures and weakest in the reasoning test at SS115+. LA performance was above average in the procedural tests at SS115+ in Caerphilly (59% of schools above the median).

4.4.3 Year 9

Regional benchmark performance was above average in year 9, with over a third in the top quarter in the procedural test at SS115+ and only 16% schools in the bottom quarter at SS85+. Performance was strongest and well above average in Caerphilly at SS85+.

4.5 Attendance and disapplication (Reading and numeracy tests)

In order for national test data to include all pupils in years 2 to 9, a standardised score of 'below 85' is awarded to any pupil disappplied from the tests at the discretion of the headteacher, as well pupils who were absent throughout the test period.

In 2015, the combined absence/disapplication figure was lower than last year in Caerphilly for all three tests, (reading, procedural and reasoning tests). Caerphilly had the lowest proportion of pupils absent or disappplied from the national tests in 2015 with figures well below national averages and below those of Monmouth for all but the reasoning test

4.6 Addressing the variation between teacher assessment and test results

4.6.1 Literacy and numeracy team members have analysed the data for all schools in the region and compared it against the teacher assessment in school.

- 4.6.2 For Year 2 classes the EAS English and Literacy team will focus on narrowing the gap by working with schools who all have a Benchmark Quartile (BQ) difference of 2-3 using schools with less variation within their LAs to support. Language coordinator meetings will focus more specifically on Teacher Assessment supporting and guiding teachers in the teaching and assessment of reading including evidence gathering for verification purposes.
- 4.6.3 **English:** Immediate support with Teacher Assessment and teaching within KS3 and KS4. EAS planned intervention is currently taking place to support the new Head of Department and their staff. Visits to schools have been arranged to view good practice.
- 4.6.4 **Mathematics:** Issues to be discussed as part of the 'professional interviews' taking place with mathematics adviser, head of mathematics and senior leaders during the autumn term. National moderation materials will be disseminated to all Heads of Departments in November network meetings. Spring term visit to schools where performance at Teacher Assessment is significantly different to that of their tests results will take place.
- 4.6.5 Challenge Advisers will address the issue with headteachers in their schools as part of the categorisation process. Where there are significant differences between test results and teacher assessment, Step 2 of the categorisation process will potentially alter.
- 4.6.6 In response to the outcomes of the Literacy tests, the LA is working with the Literacy Team to design bespoke project which will be piloted in 2 clusters and will begin in January 2016.

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 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.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

7. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no personnel implications arising from this report.

8. CONSULTATIONS

- 8.1 All responses from consultations have been incorporated into this report.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1 Members are requested to note the content of this report.

10. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 10.1 To apprise Members of the statutory testing process in mathematics and English and the outcomes for pupils in CCBC schools.

11. STATUTORY POWER

- 11.1 Children and Families Measure (Wales) 2010.
- 11.2 Local Government Measure 2009
- 11.3 Education Act 1996

Author: John Rawlings, Principal Challenge Adviser - EAS
Consultees: Keri Cole – Chief Education Officer, Education
Bleddyn Hopkins - Assistant Director – 21st Century Schools
Chris Burns, Interim Chief Executive
Councillor Rhianon Passmore – Cabinet Member for Education
Councillor Wynne David – Chair - Education for Life Scrutiny Committee

Appendices:
Appendix 1
Appendix 2
Appendix 3