



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

To:
Regional Education Consortium Managing Directors
Directors of Education

Cc:
Regional 14-19 Co-ordinators
Secondary School Headteachers
Her Majesty's Chief Inspector

30 January 2018

Dear Colleagues

School Performance Reporting – Early Entry Frequently Asked Questions and Bulletin 4

On 18 October 2017 I wrote to you setting out changes to Key Stage 4 performance measures following the [Cabinet Secretary for Education's announcement](#) on 16 October regarding changes to the early entry policy as a consequence of notable increases in GCSE early entry by schools in Wales.

As explained in my earlier letter, under the current Key Stage 4 performance measures the best entry of a qualification counts. However, the Cabinet Secretary's announcement ([link to record of proceedings](#)) explained that in 2019 this will change. **From summer 2019, only the results of the first awarding of a complete qualification will count towards performance measures.**

In response to queries from stakeholders, we have prepared the attached Frequently Asked Questions document to clarify the new policy and how it will impact on school examination entry processes. For instance, we have clarified that the 'first entry counts' policy will not apply retrospectively to pupils in the current year 9 and below who have already taken qualifications prior to the announcement of this policy in October 2017. However, for future years, all early entries will count for all year groups. **The learner will still be able to use their best result to access further learning.**

I would reiterate that these changes to how school performance measures are calculated should not discourage schools from using early entry for those learners where it is in their best interest.

In addition to the Frequently Asked Questions document, the Welsh Government updates Local Authorities and Consortia on school performance reporting issues via a school performance reporting bulletin. This is intended to keep you informed on decisions impacting on performance reporting policies and provide clarification on any complex issues. I am pleased to attach Bulletin 4 which covers the latest issues, including the changes to the early entry policy. Please share this information with your schools as appropriate. A separate bulletin will be issued shortly in relation to post-16 performance reporting.

Currently, interim changes are being made to the accountability and performance arrangements as part of education reform through Successful Futures. Working with the teaching profession, local government, consortia, unions and international experts, there is an ongoing review of the current accountability system. As set out in our action plan '*Education in Wales: Our National Mission*', we intend to publish a new evaluation and improvement framework for the entire education system during autumn 2018.

Would you please share this information with your colleagues in local authorities and schools as appropriate. If you have any queries about the contents of this letter then please email us at ims@gov.wales.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Steve Vincent'.

Steve Vincent
Deputy Director
School Effectiveness