

Post-16

Ward(s): ALL

Portfolios: Education and Skills Councillor Statham

1. Aim

1.1. This report provides an update on post-16 within Walsall LA

2. Summary

2.1. This report will provide scrutiny committee with an overview of the post-16 landscape in Walsall and the work of the Post-16 Strategy Group.

3. Report detail – Know

3.1. Within Walsall there are 19 secondary schools and Walsall College, which is a further education provider (FE). Walsall does not have a sixth form centre, the nearest provider being the Sutton Coldfield A-Level Centre, which is part of the Birmingham Metropolitan College. Brownhills Ormiston Academy* is the exception and does not currently have a sixth form.

1. Aldridge School
2. Barr Beacon School
3. Bloxwich Academy
4. Blue Coat Academy
5. *Brownhills Ormiston Academy**
6. Grace Academy
7. Joseph Leckie
8. Ormiston Academy
9. Pool Hayes Academy
10. Queen Mary's Grammar
11. Queen Mary's High
12. Shire Oak Academy
13. St Francis of Assisi R.C.
14. St Thomas More R.C.
15. The Streetly Academy
16. Walsall Academy
17. Walsall Studio School
18. West Walsall E-ACT
19. Willenhall E-ACT
- 20. Walsall College (FE)**

Schools and settings will have their own admission criteria for their sixth form that they will publish on their websites alongside their sixth form provision. Walsall College is an FE provider and offers a wide range of vocational and academic courses.

- 3.2. The Post-16 Strategy Group works to ensure that a broad and vibrant borough-wide offer of education and training is accessible for all students across the borough. It will seek opportunities to maximise the choice for the learner and actively engage with students to improve quality of the post-16 curriculum and therefore raise post-16 student outcomes across the borough.
- 3.3. Driven not only by local and regional employer need, the post-16 offer will raise aspirations and generate opportunity for diverse and rewarding career pathways into further and higher study, promoting social mobility and personal development.
- 3.4. The post-16 offer will see all providers working in collaboration to create an efficient and sustainable model of post-16 provision across the borough. In conjunction with high quality impartial career advice and guidance that meets all the statutory requirements. We will strive to ensure that every young person leaving school post-16 has a confirmed progression route.
- 3.5. The main aims of the group are:
1. To strengthen awareness of choice across a diverse portfolio of opportunity at post-16 education and training and to ensure that academic and vocational post-16 choices for all students in the borough are maximised.
 2. To ensure that all providers share provision plans to enhance curriculum development across the borough and our neighbouring authorities.
 3. To address barriers to accessing provision for post-16 learners across the borough and our neighbouring authorities.
 4. To ensure strategies which encompass the needs of all young people, including the most able and those with SEND (see SEND banding document for SEND definition) are all linked together.
 5. To ensure a high-quality post-16 provision for students with SEND and to target appropriate provision designed to support those with special educational needs and disabilities.
 6. To ensure that care leavers are catered for in all provisions.
 7. To generate parity of esteem across the post-16 offer by monitoring and sharing good practice, whilst respecting that different qualifications and training suits different learners, as linked to their intended career next steps.
 8. To establish an information sharing protocol.

9. To use destinations data and Labour Market Intelligence (LMI) to help inform the post-16 borough-wide offer on an annual basis.
10. To work with the Black Country LEP and Careers Hubs to ensure that Gatsby Benchmarks are prioritised, and provision meets the needs of the labour market.
11. To maintain an IAG network for the benefit of all students, including links with the Walsall apprenticeship strategy.
12. To monitor and report on the impact of the Walsall Post 16 Steering Group in order to improve progress against these aims.
13. To target appropriate provision for young people aged 16-19 years old who are at risk of becoming NEET or are identified as NEET.

3.5 The current priorities within the post-16 strategy group are:

1. Implementation of the SEND and AP plan in relation to post-16 to support effective transitions and sustainable post-16 placements. This will also encompass preparation for adulthood to ensure children and young people will have improved transitions and access to a range of suitable, ambitious pathways post-16.
2. Mapping Walsall's post-16 offer and work with all providers and the SEND team to ensure all young people have successful transitions into post-16 placements. The group are working with key delivery partners to gather relevant data on the post-16 courses offered and their pupil take up to ensure the group have a true picture of what courses are available, how many students are taking up the offer and how these compare against the labour market findings.
3. Updated Student Survey - in 2023, a survey was carried out to capture young people's experiences of careers advice, identifying appropriate placements and transitions into those placements. This year the group are reviewing the survey to capture the views of young people in Y11, rather than in Year 12 when the last study was conducted. The aim of undertaking the survey is to gather pupil voice to highlight any gaps in provision and what advice young people feel they need, to inform future planning and implementation in this area.
4. To assess the sufficiency of course places across the post 16 landscape to ensure that students can access the right course(s) to continue their studies within Walsall settings. With schools and the College working in collaboration with each other, the aim is to offer a broad range of provision, tailored to the needs of all students who are transitioning from KS4 into KS5. Using modelling and historical student preferences, we will have insight to trends in student course preferences and post 16 cohort sizes, to inform planning for future provision.

3.6. Walsall are working closely with the Combined Authority to implement The West Midlands Combined Authority all-age careers strategy. This is part of the wider

ambition to ensure that the careers education, advice and guidance offer across the region is fit for purpose and meeting the needs of all residents and employers now and in the future. This includes a mapping exercise to evaluate careers advice provision across Walsall schools to evidence the current offer and how it is being developed to feed into the wider post-16 strategy.

4. Key Stage 5 (KS5) Data Information

4.1. In KS5, young people undertake A-Level or Vocational Exams. These are generally reported as an average point score and are undertaken at the end of Year 13. (Non-Statutory).

4.2. Headline attainment measures for KS5 are the average point score (APS) per entry which report level 3 qualifications by four performance cohorts (A level, academic, applied general, and tech level). The average point score per entry is calculated by dividing the total number of points achieved by students in a particular cohort by the total size of entries for those students.

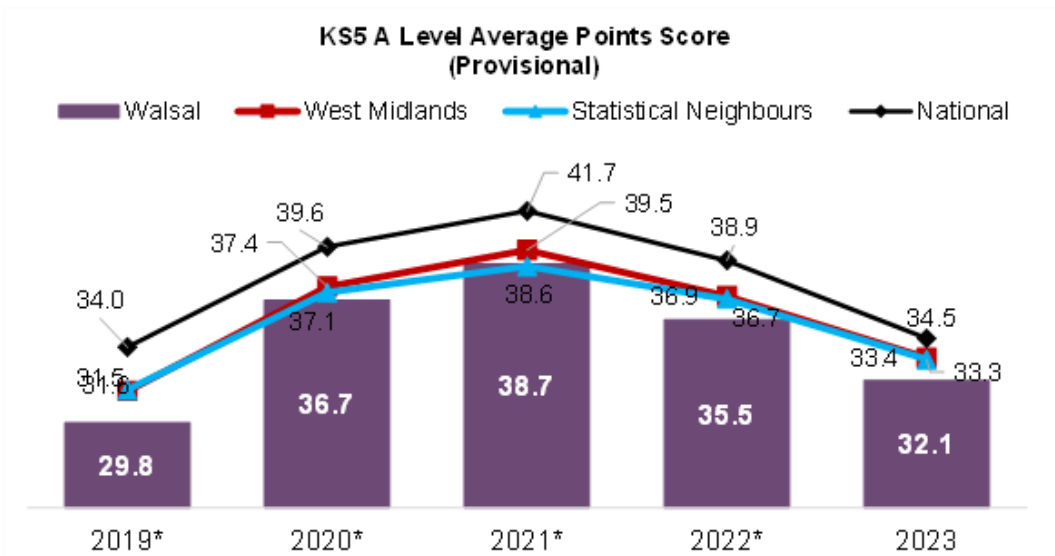
4.3. To be included in a particular performance cohort for a provider, the student must have entered for at least one of the following qualifications:

- **A Level** qualifications cover applied single award AS or A levels or applied double award AS or A levels. This covers students at the end of advanced level study who were entered for at least one A/AS level, applied single A/AS level, applied double A/AS level or combined A/AS level during 16-18 study. It does not include those pupils taking Tech levels.
- **Academic** qualifications cover A levels and a range of other academic qualifications taken at level 3, including AS levels, the International Baccalaureate, Applied A levels, Pre-U, Free-standing mathematics qualifications and the extended project.
- **Applied general** qualifications are defined by the DfE as 'rigorous level 3 qualifications for post-16 students who wish to continue their education through applied learning and that equip students with transferable knowledge and skills. These qualifications are reported in terms of a Distinction*/Distinction/Merit/Pass rather than a grade at A Level/Academic.
- **Tech levels** are defined by the DfE as 'rigorous level 3 qualifications for post-16 students wishing to specialise in a specific industry or occupation and that develop specialist knowledge and skills to enable entry to employment or progression to a related higher education course. These qualifications are reported in terms of a Distinction*/Distinction/Merit/Pass rather than a grade at A Level/Academic.

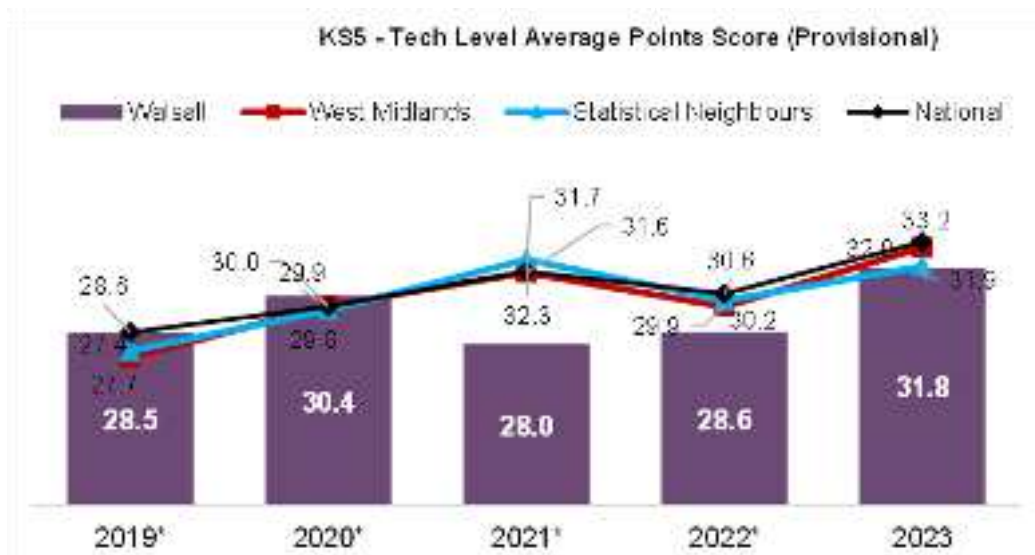
4.4. The latest provisional KS5 dataset was released by the Department for Education (DfE) on 16th November 2023. Validated data is expected to be released in January 2024 and changes to results are highly likely.

4.5. There was a reduction in the average points per entry for the A Level cohort, reflecting national trend. However, both national and Walsall rates are higher than pre-pandemic levels.

4.6. The gap between Walsall and national performance narrowed again in 2023, to 2.4 points gap for A Level average points score.

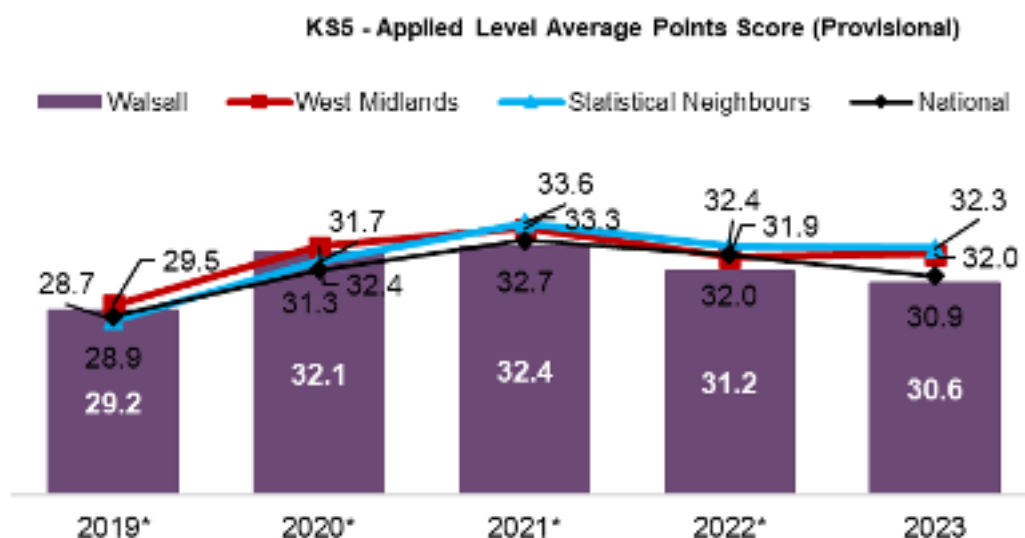


4.7. The average point score for Tech has improved from 28.5 points in 2019 to 31.8 points in 2023. However, the gap to national has increased when compared to pre-pandemic.



4.8. The average point score for Applied General in Walsall has improved on pre-pandemic levels. This is also true at national level.

4.9. The gap between Walsall and national performance has closed to 0.3 points in 2023, from 0.8 percentage points in 2022.



5. Conclusion

5.1. In conclusion, post-16 provision and outcomes remain a focal area for our Local Authority. We have made progress by creating the post-16 strategy group to drive priority areas forward and build relationships and trust between our providers.

A key focus moving forward is the mapping of post-16 provision across Walsall, to ensure the retention of Walsall learners within Walsall post 16 providers. By closing the loop between the requirements of the local labour market, careers advice in schools and the post 16 course offer, we will have school leavers with the right qualifications to enter workplace or move on to higher education.

The next 12 months will see further efforts to further develop our post-16 offer, to ensure good quality and positive outcomes across all post-16 settings in our region to ensure pupil's get the right support, in the right place and at the right time.

6.0 Decide

6.1 The committee may decide to request further information on the education outcomes of children within Walsall.

7.0 Respond

7.1 Any recommendations made by the committee will be responded to by the appropriate service area.

8.0 Review

8.1 The actions and outcomes within this report are monitored by Access & Inclusion SMT and by individual schools.

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