

Good Practice Pack (Item 1c on Agenda)

Schools Performance Scrutiny Panel

Secondary Schools in Swansea

Good Practice as identified by Estyn

See below/attached some examples of good practice that have been identified by Estyn while inspecting Swansea secondary schools. Estyn regularly publish case studies of sector leading practice identified during inspections. These case studies are written by schools and explain how they have excelled in a specific area of education.

1. Good practice highlighted by Estyn: Secondary Schools in Swansea

- i. **YGG Bryntawe: Affective strategies to improve behaviour and wellbeing.** Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Bryn Tawe, Swansea, has worked hard to improve pupils' standards, attitudes, behaviour, confidence and wellbeing. Staff including teachers, administrative staff, site staff, technicians and lunchtime staff were all trained to help pupils develop skills to problem solve and manage their own behaviour. See full document attached.
- ii. **Bishop Gore: Developing thematic projects and Community partnership supports disadvantaged learners.** Bishop Gore School has taken a personalised approach to learning, by completely redesigning the key stage 3 curriculum model. Development blocks now allow pupils to apply subject-based skills to cross-curricular thematic projects, enabling them to develop wider problem solving skills and work with others. As a result of this approach, end of key stage levels and feedback from tests have shown significant improvement. See full document attached
- iii. **YGG Gwyr: Raising standards in literacy and numeracy.** Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Bryn Tawe, Swansea, has worked hard to improve pupils' standards, attitudes, behaviour, confidence and wellbeing. Staff including teachers, administrative staff, site staff, technicians and lunchtime staff were all trained to help pupils develop skills to problem solve and manage their own behaviour. See full document attached.

2. Swansea's 'Excellent/Excellent' Secondary Schools and a correlation of their Estyn summaries

Conclusions and commonalities

From looking at the summaries found in the Estyn inspections below the following commonalities/learning points have been found

- Effective Leadership and shared vision across school
- Governing body setting strategic direction, being supportive and providing effective challenge/critical friend to the school
- Strong systems in place to ensure good accountability and understanding of roles
- Strong partnership working with other schools
- Innovation and enthusiasm among teaching staff
- Effective process of self-evaluation
- Effective learning culture and focus on improving outcomes

Secondary School	Estyn summary
Bishop Gore	<i>The current performance is excellent because:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Performance at key stage 4 has been consistently outstanding for the

	last four years
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils make exceptional progress based on their prior attainment • The school is very successful in reducing the impact of deprivation on outcomes • Most pupils have very good literacy and numeracy skills • Provision for pupils for whom English is an additional language is a particularly highly effective feature <p><i>The prospects for improvement are excellent because:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The impact of leadership at all levels has had a significant impact upon standards and wellbeing • Leaders seek to innovative in order to improve the learning experiences of pupils • The school uses partnership very effectively to support its work • The school's capacity to take rapid and effective action to address priorities and any shortcomings <p><i>Recommendations</i></p> <p>R1 Improve key stage 4 performance in the level 1 threshold indicator and in science</p> <p>R2 Provide more opportunities for pupils to practise their Welsh language skills outside of Welsh lessons</p> <p>R3 Simplify the marking policy</p> <p>R4 Improve attendance</p>
Ysgol Gyfun Gwyr	<p><i>The school's performance is excellent because:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pupils' outcomes in the main indicators at the end of key stage 4 have often placed the school among the top 25% of similar schools over recent years; • the achievements of groups of pupils show significant progress by the end of key stage 4; • nearly all pupils participate fully and work productively in lessons, and make consistent progress against lesson aims; • pupils' standards of behaviour are high; • attendance rates place the school among the top 25% of similar schools over the last five years; • the provision for developing literacy and numeracy skills is a significant strength; and • the school promotes pupils' wellbeing very successfully. <p><i>Prospects for improvement are excellent because:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the effective leadership of the headteacher and the senior management team has maintained the high outcomes over recent years; • the school's governing body acts effectively in terms of setting the school's strategic direction; • thorough systems ensure strong accountability among the school's middle managers and consistency in the quality of leadership; • quality improvement processes are composite and lead to setting priorities for improvement that focus on standards, teaching and developing leadership; • the school works effectively with a number of partners to widen pupils' learning experiences and ensure cost effectiveness; and

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the way in which the school develops expertise through learning communities is a significant strength. <p><i>Recommendations</i> R1 Disseminate best practice in aspects of teaching and assessment R2 Ensure that information that arises from classroom observations and scrutinising books leads to setting improvement targets in departmental development plans</p>
Ysgol Gyfun Bryntawe	<p><i>Ysgol Gyfun Bryn Tawe is an excellent school because:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the school's performance, particularly in key stage 4, over three years, compares very well with that of similar schools; there are excellent opportunities for pupils to voice their opinion on all aspects of the school's development; the quality and consistency of teaching are exceptional features, and over half of the teaching is excellent; there are consistent and effective assessment arrangements across departments that make a significant contribution to pupils' progress; pupils behave very well within and beyond the classroom; and the school's remedial strategies promote excellent behaviour by pupils. <p><i>Prospects for improvement are excellent because:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the headteacher communicates the school's mission consistently and very effectively; the senior management team share an agreed vision in order to achieve the objectives of the development plan; leaders understand their roles and responsibilities clearly in order to insist upon the highest standards of pupils' attainment and wellbeing; there is extremely effective co-operation between staff, managers and governors; leaders demonstrate enthusiasm and effectiveness to experiment, learn from colleagues and reflect upon their own practices in order to enrich pupils' experiences; the school works very effectively with other schools in order to share best practices; and there are mature and successful partnerships, which support pupils' needs extremely effectively. <p><i>Recommendations</i> R1 Narrow the gap between boys' and girls' performance R2 Strengthen performance in key stage 3 R3 Disseminate excellent practices in planning for improvement</p>

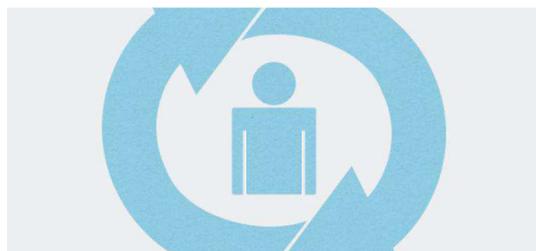
	<p><i>Bishopston Comprehensive School is excellent because:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the standards achieved by pupils are consistently very high and well above expectations; pupils, including the more able and those with additional learning needs, make very good progress; • pupils' behaviour is exemplary and they have a well-developed sense of responsibility; • the quality of teaching is consistently high and has a significant impact on raising standards; • the arrangements for care, support and guidance are very well co-ordinated and highly effective; and • the inclusive ethos of the school contributes significantly to pupils' mature attitudes and strong awareness of the needs of others.
Bishopston	<p><i>Bishopston Comprehensive School's prospects for improvement are excellent because:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • it is led very well by a dedicated headteacher; • the headteacher is ably supported by a strong senior leadership team, effective middle leaders and an experienced governing body; • the staff are well trained and working groups are successful in improving the quality of teaching; • the school has a very strong track record in securing improvement; and • there is effective co-operation between staff, managers and governors. <p><i>Recommendations</i></p> <p>R1 Ensure that all pupils have the opportunity to gain a recognised qualification in Welsh second language</p> <p>R2 Improve the consistency of written feedback to pupils</p> <p>R3 Strengthen the rigour in monitoring improvement plans and in the evaluation of their success.</p>
Olchfa	<p><i>Olchfa School is an excellent school because:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pupils make very good progress and achieve high standards; • there is a very effective provision to develop skills which enables pupils to become reflective, confident and independent learners; • teaching in the school is very effective and has a considerable impact on raising and maintaining high standards; and • there are very good procedures to develop and maintain pupils' wellbeing. <p><i>The school's prospects for improvement are excellent because:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the outstanding leadership provided by the headteacher; • the leadership team is very effective and has a significant impact on outcomes; • there are very effective processes for self-evaluation and improving quality that are clearly focused on improving teaching and learning; • the school has an excellent track record in securing improvement; and • the school has developed an effective learning culture where staff identify and share good practice very well. <p><i>Recommendations</i></p> <p>R1 Improve outcomes in mathematics and science at key stage 3</p> <p>R2 Strengthen the delivery of numeracy across the curriculum</p> <p>R3 Refine the school improvement plan to clarify key priorities for the school</p>
Cefn	<i>The current performance of Cefn Hengoed Community School is excellent</i>

Hengoed	<p><i>because:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The overall standards achieved by pupils are well above expectations • Pupils eligible for free school meals achieve remarkably high standards when compared with similar schools and national averages • In relation to their age and ability, most pupils have extremely strong reading skills • Most pupils have a high level of interest in their work and a positive attitude to their learning • Pupils' attendance has placed the school in the top quarter of similar schools for three of the last four years • Pupils have an exceptional sense of belonging to the school community and a high level of awareness of their own wellbeing and the impact of their behaviour on others • Consistently high quality teaching enables pupils to make very good progress based on their attainment prior to entry to the school • The high quality care, support and guidance provided makes an outstanding contribution to pupils' wellbeing, enjoyment in learning and achievement • The exceptionally caring and inclusive ethos based on mutual respect and strong relationships between pupils, staff and the community makes a significant contribution to pupil outcomes <p><i>The school's prospects for improvement are excellent because:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leaders at all levels share a clear and precise vision, with an extremely clear focus on raising standards and giving every pupil the best chance possible to succeed • The headteacher and senior leadership team provide exceptional strategic direction for the school • The governing body provides extremely effective leadership and acts as an outstanding critical friend to the school • The school's strong emphasis on consistency and rigour in self-evaluation and improvement planning underpins the school's relentless focus on improving pupil outcomes • The school has an outstanding track record in responding to national priorities to improve pupil outcomes further • The school's arrangements for partnership working are exceptionally strong and make a significant contribution to both the standards that pupils achieve and their wellbeing <p><i>Recommendations</i></p> <p>R1 Improve pupils' writing skills to match the high standards they achieve in reading</p> <p>R2 Improve the performance of more able pupils, particularly at key stage 4</p> <p>R3 Reduce fixed term exclusions</p>
---------	--

Secondary Schools in Swansea - Good Practice Examples in detail

Affective strategies improve behaviour and wellbeing

Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Bryn Tawe, Swansea



Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Bryn Tawe, Swansea, has worked hard to improve pupils' standards, attitudes, behaviour, confidence and wellbeing. Staff including teachers, administrative staff, site staff, technicians and lunchtime staff were all trained to help pupils develop skills to problem solve and manage their own behaviour.

Context and background to sector-leading practice

Ysgol Bryn Tawe is a designated Welsh-medium secondary school that provides education for pupils aged 11-18 years. The school is situated in the north of Swansea and it is maintained by Swansea local authority. Nineteen point six per cent (19.6%) of pupils live in 20% of the most deprived areas in Wales.

There are 746 pupils on roll, which includes 129 in the sixth form. About 12% of pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is lower than the national average, namely 17.4%. Eighteen per cent of pupils are on the school's additional learning needs list, and 2% have a statement of special educational needs. These figures are lower than the national figures.

Nature of strategy or activity identified as sector-leading practice

The school decided to adopt a specific way of interacting with pupils. The school established procedures to ensure that pupils are included in an active way in every aspect of pastoral processes. This strategy aims to give pupils more responsibility for their behaviour in order to improve behaviour and commitment to the learning process.

The school has set 3 main principles to support this work, namely:

- including pupils and teachers in the process;
- creation of a fair process to deal with incidents;
- use of questions to focus pupils on how they could improve any situation that arises and to encourage pupils to express emotions freely.

In January 2012, with the full support of the management team and the Headteacher, training on these methods was conducted for all members of staff, including teachers, administrative staff, site staff, technicians and lunchtime staff. Following this training, the pastoral team began to plan a whole-school strategy that included the following points:-

- Affective language – Staff were encouraged to use language that appeals to a pupil's emotion rather than giving orders.
- Staff were asked to try to use 10 'affective statements' every day and to begin to consider carefully the nature of language that is used with pupils. An attempt was made to develop a common useful vocabulary across the staff in order to avoid and reduce conflict and between pupils and staff.
- Quick chats – The main purpose of holding quick chats is to create opportunities for pupils to share and express emotions freely and to develop a beneficial working relationship between staff and pupils. As a result, teachers hold quick chats with pupils during every tutorial period on Monday mornings. Quick chats have also been used in a number of lessons, especially at the beginning of a unit or with more challenging groups.
- Restorative circles – The school has changed its practices of dealing with problems of discipline and conflict, by using 'restorative circles' to solve any conflict between staff and pupils or among groups of pupils. In these sessions, everyone has an opportunity to be a part

of a discussion, to express their opinions, share feelings and emotions freely in order to solve the problem in a fair and consistent way.

- Using restorative questions – When investigating and trying to solve problems, all members of staff received a card with examples of restorative questions on them, and posters with restorative questions on them were put in the corridors and in all classrooms in order to try to encourage everyone to use them when discussing problems and trying to solve them. Between January and July 2012, more staff were trained to specialise in various aspects of this practice, for example, restorative circles, restorative conferences and so on. In addition, a working party was established to lead and develop these practices across the school. The school's discipline policy has been adapted to ensure that these strategies are at its core.

Impact on provision and learners' standards

In Estyn's 2013 inspection, the inspectors noted that: "the school's restorative strategies promote excellent behaviour among pupils."

In addition, the implementation and effect of restorative strategies to promote positive behaviour across the school has reduced the number of exclusions considerably and has resulted in improvement in pupils' standards, attitudes, behaviour, confidence and wellbeing.

Since Ysgol Bryn Tawe adopted these practices, improvement has been seen in the school's ethos and atmosphere. In general, the school is more calm and peaceful. An improvement has been seen in pupils' responses to incidences of negative behaviour, pupils feel more positive about the school and consider that the school is fairer. There has been a reduction in the numbers of incidents of negative behaviour and in the use of the inclusion room. Although it is low every year, there has been a reduction in the number of temporary exclusions. The use of restorative circles is an excellent way of solving conflict – a very low percentage of reoffending was seen after solving it with this practice.

Developing thematic projects

Bishop Gore Secondary School, Swansea



Bishop Gore School has taken a personalised approach to learning, by completely redesigning the key stage 3 curriculum model. Development blocks now allow pupils to apply subject-based skills to cross-curricular thematic projects, enabling them to develop wider problem solving skills and work with others. As a result of this approach, end of key stage levels and feedback from tests have shown significant improvement.

Context and background to sector-leading practice

Bishop Gore School is an English medium 11 to 18 comprehensive school situated in the Sketty area of Swansea. There are 1,002 pupils on roll, including 112 in the sixth form, with around 26% of pupils eligible for free school meals, and 38% of pupils live in the 20% most deprived areas in Wales. Around 23% of pupils have a special educational need, including 4% with a statement of special educational needs. 12% of pupils speak English as an additional language.

The school's comprehensive intake requires a highly personalised approach to learning at all levels and, whilst the option choice system allows pupils to tailor their learning packages at key stages 4 and 5, the need to be able to do this at key stage 3 was identified as an important area for development. More importantly, it was felt that learning which was being undertaken through the 'traditional' subject structure was not portable, often remaining within the subject in which it

was taught. Two main reasons were identified for this. Firstly, in many cases, pupils were not having the opportunity to apply their acquired skills knowledge and understanding. Secondly, there were a great number of pupils who, despite being given the opportunity to synthesise their learning, did not have the skills to be able to so.

In order to accommodate the learning needs of pupils and to provide appropriate and challenging opportunities for skills development and application, it was decided to completely redesign the key stage 3 curriculum model.

Description of nature of strategy

The new curriculum structure was divided into Learning Blocks and Development Blocks. Learning Blocks focus on subject specific-based skills delivered through curriculum areas. Development Blocks allow pupils to apply their subject-based skills to a cross-curricular, thematic project.

Learning clusters are responsible for designing, delivering and assessing each Development Block, with the skills from the lead cluster providing the focus for the theme of the activities. One such Learning Block involves the pupils in planning an Antarctic expedition and is led by STEM cluster of subjects. Each pupil is provided with a 'challenge menu' comprising a series of tasks which they can choose to complete with each task being given a points value, reflecting the complexity of the activity.

Tasks all have a literacy, numeracy and ICT focus as well as reflecting the subject specific skills relevant to the lead cluster. Activities are designed to allow pupils to develop the wider key skills of problem solving, improving own learning and performance and working with others.

During the Development Block, teachers and support staff act as facilitators for the learning that is undertaken, supporting pupils as they progress through their action plan. In addition, pupils can choose to attend workshops which target literacy, numeracy, ICT or subject specific skills. Pupils who attend the workshops are expected to cascade their learning to others within their group.

All pupil work is assessed and feedback given to pupils and parents and carers in the form of a report. This provides pupils with an accurate statement of the skills covered and achieved and areas for further development.

What impact has this work had on provision and learners' standards?

The impact on provision and standards has been marked. In terms of subject specific skills, pupils have been able to access higher levels as the design of the development block units encourages autonomous learning where pupils are placed at the centre of decision-making, allowing a highly differentiated approach.

End of key stage levels and feedback from literacy and numeracy tests have all shown a significant improvement with a large number of pupils moving on to key stage 4 study early. Pupil attendance during development blocks has improved by between one and three percentage points.

Performance at key stage 4 has been consistently outstanding for the last four years. In the key indicator that includes English and mathematics performance is well above expected levels. Performance in this indicator has placed the school consistently in the top 25% of similar schools based on levels of eligibility for free school meals for the last four years. Over the last four years, performance in almost all other indicators has placed the school in either the top 25% or upper 50% of similar schools based on levels of eligibility for free school meals. Pupils make exceptional progress based on their prior attainment.

At key stage 3, performances in the core subject indicator and the separate core subjects have also been consistently strong. Pupils make very good progress from the previous key stage. Estyn judged that the key stage 3 curriculum is an effective and imaginative vehicle for the delivery of key stage 3 subjects and skills development. All elements of the National Literacy and Numeracy Framework are well embedded into lesson planning and in the Development Blocks. These provide pupils with interesting and engaging opportunities to develop their learning and skills within real life situations.

Community partnership supports disadvantaged learners

Bishop Gore Secondary School, Swansea



Bishop Gore Comprehensive schools commitment to supporting disadvantaged learners has made a significant impact on achievement, exclusion rates, understanding and tolerance. A close partnership with the local Ethnic Youth Support team has also helped to build strong community ties.

Strategy

To raise the achievement of a specific group of disadvantaged learners by offering learning support and establishing closer links to the local community

Action

The school identified a group of ethnic minority learners who are also disadvantaged and at risk of underachievement. The school works closely with the Ethnic Youth Support Team, a voluntary organisation which supports young ethnic males in the Swansea area.

Ethnic Youth Support Team provides a coursework and revision programme in English, mathematics and science to support this group of learners.

Outcomes

This strategy has had a significant impact on the achievement of these learners. In addition, the exclusion rates of minority ethnic learners are negligible as a result of the school's working partnership with Ethnic Youth Support Team. The work with Ethnic Youth Support Team has had a positive effect on the learners and the school. Team workers are available to respond to different ethnic groups, improve understanding and tolerance, and build learners' self-esteem. The team works in the school every week, and this helps the school to make effective links to the local community, and to support its ethnic minority learners well. The school is also more aware of any issues in the local community that might affect learners' achievement. Over the last four years, the gap between the achievement of learners eligible for free school meals and those who are not has narrowed in Bishop Gore. The performance of all learners has increased over the same period and all key performance indicators are above the average for similar schools.

Raising standards in literacy and numeracy

Ysgol Gyfun Gwyr, Swansea



Ysgol Gyfun Gwyr, Swansea, is committed to raising standards in literacy and numeracy as well as improving the level of achievement of more able and talented pupils. Teachers formed working groups to observe pupils and fed back in training sessions. Strategies were then

developed to help pupils develop their skills. As a result, not only have staff skills been strengthened but pupils results have improved.

Context and background to sector-leading practice

The school has committed to raising standards in literacy and numeracy and improving the achievement of more able and talented pupils (MAT) as its main strategic priorities for two years. In order to achieve effective work in these areas, professional working parties have been established to lead developments in terms of pedagogy in the classroom based on data evidence and empirical research which has had a direct influence on the achievement of pupils who were identified as more able and talented.

Description of nature of strategy or activity identified as sector-leading practice

The school's staff has been divided to be members of one of the working parties on literacy, numeracy and improving the achievement of MAT pupils. The nature of the strategy was that representatives of every department across the three areas would contribute to research work in the classroom that would lead to developing teaching strategies. In implementing the strategies, teachers would report back to the working party on pupils' achievement in the class and then share good practice that was developed in training sessions. Core to the work of the three working parties was the work of the peer observation trios who observed each other's lessons beyond their specialist subject with the aim of sharing good practice in the three areas in question across the curriculum. In doing so, teachers' ability to observe innovative strategies in other departments was promoted.

The focus of the literacy working party was researching standards in writing in Welsh and identifying the main weaknesses. Pupils' written work was scrutinised across the curriculum to identify the main weaknesses in language. Three sub-groups were formed and each one was responsible for one aspect, and to produce a strategy for raising standards. Then, the strategy was shared with the working party to in order to implement in the classroom before evaluating it and sharing it with the whole staff. The fruit of the sub-group's work was to create a punctuation ladder, concise verb mats and a video on the rules of mutation by pupils at the school.

The focus of the numeracy working party was to produce strategies to promote improvement in pupils' numeracy skills on the basis of data evidence, and also to develop teachers' confidence in dealing with numeracy across the curriculum. Plans were produced to encompass all the implications of implementing the Numeracy Framework. Weekly numeracy empowerment sessions were established to supplement the school staff's numeracy skills. Termly MA Thematics problem-solving sessions were held for Year 6 primary MAT groups. Peers' lessons were observed within the community and good practice was shared by leading whole-school training sessions for staff. Strategies were considered to hone pupils' skills of solving numeracy reasoning problems. Appropriate reasoning tasks were distributed to all departments to be trialled with different groups of pupils and the effectiveness of strategies was discussed, and good practice was refined according to feedback.

The focus of the more able and talented (MAT) working party was to consider ways of promoting the outcomes of the school's more able pupils on the basis of the school's data evidence. As a working party, research was carried out into effective strategies for challenging MAT pupils. This included a series of lesson observations to discover successful techniques within various subjects. The main findings were shared within the working party. Then, a handbook was produced for the use of the school's teachers to outline effective differentiated learning methods that are able to extend the able pupils within mixed ability classes. In addition, a consequence of the activity of the MAT working party is competing for the NACE Challenge Award.

What impact has this work had on provision and learners' standards?

By linking the activity of the working party with the school's main priorities, these areas were kept high on the whole-school development agenda over time. Research was conducted into effective learning and teaching strategies to raise standards in literacy and numeracy across the curriculum and also in differentiating for MAT pupils. The work of the three working parties has had a positive effect on our outcomes, not only through training and strengthening staff skills but also through improving our literacy and numeracy provision and improving the school's GCSE and A level results.

Item 3b

Good Practice as identified by Estyn Primary Schools in Swansea

See below/attached some examples of good practice that have been identified by Estyn while inspecting Swansea primary schools. Estyn regularly publish case studies of sector leading practice identified during inspections. These case studies are written by schools and explain how they have excelled in a specific area of education.

1. Good practice highlighted by Estyn: Primary Schools in Swansea

- iv. ***Christchurch (CIW) Voluntary Aided Primary School*** - Christchurch (C.I.W) Voluntary Aided Primary School, Swansea, uses music therapy to help children with emotional and behavioural problems. Staff use music to engage children in order to structure their social and emotional development and help them progress. See full document attached.
- v. ***Ynystawe Primary School: Innovative approach to supporting more able and talented pupils*** - Ynystawe Primary School, Swansea, uses an innovative approach to learning called the 'Leonardo effect.' It is designed to develop pupils' critical thinking and independent learning skills. Key to its success is motivational leadership, applying creative and consistent approaches to learning and a common understanding of the kind of teaching that supports and challenges more able pupils to achieve the best they can. See full document attached
- vi. ***Waunarlwydd Primary School: Pupils play a big part in their own provision*** - Waunarlwydd Primary School, Swansea, has involved pupils in improvement, self-evaluation and in an initiative to integrate 'children's rights' across the school. The latter has led to pupils taking ownership and responsibility for the integration of their own rights across the whole school, ensuring the success of the initiative. See document attached.
- vii. ***Penllergaer Primary School: Motivational leadership drives up standard*** - The new headteacher at Penllergaer Primary School, Swansea, is an excellent role model for leadership. She motivates, encourages and challenges staff, pupils and parents very successfully to aspire to and demonstrate a strong commitment to achieving her vision of high standards of teaching and learning throughout the school. See document attached.
- viii. ***Hafod Primary School: Respecting rights*** - Hafod Primary School, Swansea, has developed a framework of values to promote citizenship, tolerance, and diversity. Pupils are taught to respect every individual's rights. Teachers, governors and parents are all expected to adhere to the values and there has been a positive effect on the school community as a result. See document attached.
- ix. ***Hafod Primary School: Reducing anti-social behaviour in the community*** - Hafod Primary School, Swansea, has worked hard to help reduce anti-social behaviour in the community. The school works closely with other agencies to identify groups of pupils involved in anti-social behaviour. Staff then explore the reasons behind poor behaviour and develop intervention programmes to help individual pupils. See document attached.

2. Swansea's 'Excellent/Excellent' Primary Schools and a correlation of their Estyn summaries

Conclusions and commonalities

From looking at the summaries found in the Estyn inspections below the following commonalities/learning points have been found

- Effective Leadership and shared vision across school

- Governing body setting strategic direction, being supportive and providing effective challenge/critical friend to the school
- Innovation and enthusiasm among teaching staff
- Strong link with parents and carers
- Correct environment and ethos for pupils to learn
- Effective Self-evaluation

Primary School	Estyn summary
Cwmglas Primary School	<p><i>The current performance is excellent because:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • most pupils make very good progress and achieve high standards; • it is a very inclusive and caring environment for pupils to learn and prosper; • it is very well led; • nearly all pupils demonstrate exemplary behaviour and positive attitudes to learning; • learning support assistants make a significant contribution to pupils' learning and wellbeing; and • there are very strong links with parents and carers. <p><i>The prospects for improvement are excellent because:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the headteacher has a proven track record in maintaining high standards; • staff regularly update and share their knowledge with colleagues and other schools; • leaders rigorously analyse and use data to inform planning for improvement; and • governors make an important contribution to the life and strategic direction of the school. <p><i>Recommendations:</i></p> <p>R1 raise standards in writing in key stage 1;</p> <p>R2 further improve the quality of teaching by refining monitoring procedures; and</p> <p>R3 ensure greater consistency in marking so that comments identify how pupils can improve their work.</p>
Ysgol Crug Glas	<p><i>The school's performance is excellent because:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pupils achieve good standards across the school; • staff capture and build on pupils' very small steps of progress; • there is excellent provision for pupils' health and wellbeing; • staff management of pupils' behaviour is exemplary; • the school has outstanding systems for tracking and analysing information about pupils' progress; • parents and pupils receive outstanding care, support and guidance; • the school shares its good practice with a wide range of partners including those in other countries; and • the well-regarded graduate diploma course for teachers and staff who work with pupils with multiple or severe and complex learning difficulties has had a direct impact on the quality of teaching and learning. <p><i>Prospects for improvement are excellent because:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • senior managers and the governors have a very clear vision for the school which is shared by all staff; • leadership is well distributed across the staff; • there is an exceptional culture of rigorous self-evaluation that leads to

	<p>school improvement;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • staff performance is managed very carefully; • fundraising by parents has led to significant improvements in provision; • the school manages its resources rigorously and provides good value for money. <p><i>Recommendations:</i></p> <p>R1 continue to widen curriculum opportunities for the very few more able pupils;</p> <p>R2 make sure that the content of planned activities for young adults is always age appropriate; and</p> <p>R3 re-consider the disapplication of all pupils from learning the Welsh language.</p>
<p>Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Lon Las</p>	<p><i>Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Lon Las is an excellent school because:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the results of teacher assessments place the school amongst the best 25% in Wales during the last three years for pupils of seven years of age and for the last two years for pupils of 11 years of age, when compared to schools in similar social and economic circumstances; • many pupils achieve good and excellent standards in their lessons across the curriculum; • there is a caring, inclusive and happy ethos in the school, the contribution of all pupils and staff is appreciated and everyone is treated with respect; • pupils have very good bilingual skills in Welsh and English that allow them to turn easily from one language to the other; • pupils throughout the school develop well as independent learners; they build upon prior knowledge effectively and readily adapt their understanding and skills to new situations; • the very effective teaching has a positive impact on standards, especially on improving pupils' literacy, numeracy and other wider skills; • there is a very effective assessment system, focused on identifying individual learning needs, that supports and challenges pupils of all ages to achieve to the best of their ability. <p><i>Prospects for improvement are excellent because:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • there is a very effective management organisation which gives responsibility to staff at all levels and which involves pupils of all ages in deciding what and how they learn; • there is an agreed sense of purpose and direction; all staff work well together to improve outcomes for pupils; • the school has responded very effectively to the revised National Curriculum introduced in 2008, allowing teachers and pupils to make the most of learning; • self-evaluation focuses on raising pupils' standards, for example improving performance of more able boys to achieve as well as girls; • governors act very effectively as critical friends highlighting areas for further improvement; • there are appropriate arrangements in place to improve pupils' attendance; the school has a successful history of continuous improvement within buildings that have seen better days.

	<p><i>Recommendations</i> R1 maintain the good and excellent standards; R2 raise boys' achievement; R3 improve pupil attendance; and R4 work with the authority to improve the condition of the school's buildings.</p>
Hafod Primary School	<p><i>Hafod Primary School is good because:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • most pupils, including those who are eligible for free school meals, make good progress from their starting points and achieve the age-expected level in English, mathematics and science, by the end of Year 6; • most pupils with additional learning needs and those who learn English as an additional language make good progress from their individual starting points; • standards of pupil participation are very good, resulting in consistently high attendance; • the quality of teaching across the school is good; and • the school's curriculum is exciting and engaging. <p><i>Hafod Primary School's prospects for improvement are excellent because:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the headteacher has a passionate, clear vision for improvement, which is shared by the whole school and the wider community; • leaders use data particularly effectively to inform interventions, resulting in improvements to pupils' outcomes and wellbeing; • sector leading partnership work promotes excellent standards of wellbeing and improving academic standards; and • the strategic approach taken by the school has significantly improved the achievements of disadvantaged pupils. <p><i>Recommendations</i> R1 Improve standards in writing, especially of more able pupils R2 Ensure that teaching consistently challenges pupils of all abilities R3 Ensure that all action plans have clear, measureable success criteria, which focus explicitly on improving outcomes for pupils.</p>

Primary Schools in Swansea Good Practice Examples in detail

Music therapy helps emotional and behavioural development Christchurch (CIW) Voluntary Aided Primary School, Swansea



Context and background to sector-leading practice

Christchurch (C.I.W) Voluntary Aided Primary School serves the central area of Swansea. Of the 140 pupils on roll, 67% are live in areas of high social deprivation), 12% are entitled to free school meals, 22% speak English as an Additional Language and around 27% have Additional Learning Needs.

In Christchurch School we strive to meet the needs of all pupils and enable them to reach their full potential intellectually, socially, spiritually, emotionally and physically. With 27% of children identified as having Additional Learning Needs including emotional and social difficulties, we introduced an innovative approach to address the underlying influences that affect pupils' behaviour and sometimes limit their ability to reach their potential.

Nature of strategy or activity identified as sector-leading practice

Music and Music Therapy are used to counteract two major barriers to learning: emotional turmoil and the associated inappropriate behaviour. Music is the medium through which the children are engaged. It is used to structure their social and emotional development and in turn, their progression. This process involves four main stages.

1. Developing a relationship through improvisational music therapy.
2. Talking about emotions and exploring difficulties.
3. Starting to learn as a group through music.
4. Performance.

Pupils receiving music therapy are identified by the class teacher in communication with the SENCo, a qualified music therapist and the headteacher. Sessions take place individually, in pairs or small groups depending on the needs of the child. The pupils find a safe place through the music to explore their feelings and to learn strategies for managing their own behaviour.

Pupils receiving music therapy also perform in the 'Bell Group'. This group work helps pupils improve concentration, develop relationship skills and experience how rules are made in a group. In addition, it builds self-esteem and gives the opportunity for performance and achievement.

Impact on provision and learners' standards

Pupils are assessed at the beginning of the therapy under four development headings; cognitive, emotional, social and musicality. After just six months of music therapy all pupils showed a significant improvement from their baseline scores. This was evident in their day to day behaviour in school. We noted a heightened sense of justice, increased empathy for others and improved ability to trust others whilst allowing others to rely on them. In turn, we noted that their behaviour in the classroom was improved, with better concentration being the major benefit.

Pupils themselves feel that they have made progress and they look forward to the sessions. Below are a few quotes from the pupils themselves.

'It calms your brain down so you can think more'. - Year 6 pupil

'The music pushes the worries out of my head and my head feels full of music'. - Year 5 pupil

'It helps me to calm down, sometimes I feel upset about things and the sessions help me to deal with things'. - Year 6 pupil

'We are better at working as a team'. - Year 5 pupil

Both research and practice have demonstrated music therapy to be an effective means of reducing the anxieties and associated behaviours that result from emotional turmoil. This has been evident in the progress made by the children at Christchurch who were identified as having social and emotional difficulties. We have seen improvements in the classroom and at play time and believe that targeting the root of the problem is a more effective and longer term solution than managing the symptoms with more traditional discipline.

Innovative approach to supporting more and able and talented pupils *Ynystawe Primary School, Swansea*



Ynystawe Primary School in the lower end of the Swansea valley has 195 pupils on roll from a wide range of social backgrounds. The school is committed to challenging all pupils to achieve the highest standards, including 17 pupils identified formally as more able and talented. The headteacher, the additional learning needs co-ordinator and the co-ordinator for more able and talented pupils ensure that all staff are fully committed to the school's approach, and provide training and mentoring for new staff.

Activity

A whole-school approach to learning, called the 'Leonardo effect', develops pupils' critical thinking and independent learning skills. During the first term of each year, pupils acquire skills and knowledge about a specific topic. In the second term, they manage their own learning about the topic. The third term is used to develop science and creative skills in relation to the topic. Teachers encourage pupils' creativity, research, investigation and problem-solving skills throughout the year.

The headteacher evaluates standards through direct observation of lessons and through monitoring pupils' output. This information is used to ensure smooth transition between year groups and key stages. The school uses an in-service training day each year for staff to evaluate their work, analyse pupil outcomes, and to plan for the year ahead.

Good and excellent features

The good and excellent features include:

- motivational leadership that ensures a whole-school approach and staff commitment;
- shared understanding of the kind of teaching that supports and challenges more able pupils to achieve at the highest levels;
- consistent approaches that pupils and parents understand; and
- creative approaches to developing higher-order thinking, problem-solving and oracy skills.

Impact and benefit

As a result of this work:

- the most able pupils achieve level 6 in one or more core subjects at end of key stage 2;
 - many pupils demonstrate very good knowledge and understanding of specific topics and their skills in oral and written English are often above the levels expected for their age; and
 - pupils' work in art and design is creative and imaginative.
-

Pupils play a big part in their own provision

Wanarwydd Primary School, Swansea



Context and background to sector-leading practice

About 21% of pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is close to the average for Wales. The school serves an area where just over 40% of pupils come from the 20% most deprived areas of Wales. Almost 40% of its pupils choose to come to the school from other catchment areas.

“From their point of entry, pupils begin to make informed decisions, contributing increasingly to their learning community as they progress through the school.”

They consult with governors about the annual draft improvement plan and brief them on its progress throughout the year. As well as this, pupils play an important role in day-to-day decision making. For example, pupils were involved in the design process of a new school wing. They make decisions about their own learning by selecting the most appropriate learning tools from a thinking skills continuum*, which is a well-established feature. Furthermore, they are actively involved in the school's self-evaluation for example by contributing to book scrutiny sessions. Pupils also offer their views matters such as the consistency of practice across the school, as evidenced through displays, etc. Their role is well-established and enhanced by a clear understanding of the roles and function of School Council, Eco Committee and School Ambassadors.

Nature of strategy or activity identified as sector-leading practice

The school adopted the concept of 'children's rights'† as a key driver for school activity. This became the natural vehicle for developing the initiative. The first step was the identification of our core rights and values. This was achieved by staff and pupils working alongside each other to consider the issues and options involved. Establishing an agreed 'language of rights' played a crucial role in this process. Whole staff training to develop a clear understanding of these rights was an important part of this stage, so that each individual didn't just know what these rights were but most importantly, also what they meant. Pupils' helped check that the language made sense and could be clearly understood by all.

Our next step was to integrate these core rights into every aspect of overall provision. Identification of children's 'core rights' now forms the basis of all planning from strategic plans through to day-to-day classroom activities. The rights are integrated into schemes of work and are the starting points for all learning. More specifically, children learn about these rights through effective personal and social provision where children's rights remain at the forefront.

The 'core rights' provide a context for whole school self-evaluation and are used as subheadings under which key outcomes reports are organised. They also guide our school improvement planning. For example, children's rights are highlighted as a thematic stream in displays across the school and in assemblies. They inform key policies and practices, such as those associated with the promotion of positive behaviour and learning experiences. Pupils learn from the earliest age to reflect on overall provision by evaluating this provision against their rights. The school community as a whole is continually reminded about them, for instance by their inclusion in newsletters, the school website, holiday request forms and the school prospectus.

As pupil understanding of their rights has developed, they have assumed responsibility for disseminating information, for instance through initiating learning networks of their own with other schools. They regularly present to governors, parents and the wider community and this also helps to develop a sense of pupils' ownership of the whole process.

Impact on provision and learners' standards

At the time of inspection, 100% of pupils reported that they felt safe. The impact of integrating 'children's rights' into the school's philosophy and culture has made a marked difference to pupils' ability to stay safe and to learn effectively, both inside and out of school. They actively subscribe to a culture of rights which leads to the consideration of responsibility to others. Pupils have a very strong knowledge, understanding and awareness of the rights of children. They use these ideas very well in many aspects of their work and in discussion. Through this work, pupils have a very strong awareness of fairness, honesty and respect. They develop good moral, social and life skills, often underpinned by their awareness of their rights and responsibilities. Many pupils have internalised this understanding to a very high degree and apply it very well in their lives in school, at home and in the wider community.

Pupils feel valued and consequently contribute more enthusiastically and effectively to the life of the school. Pupil engagement levels have increased dramatically and in a nutshell, pupils at Waunarlwydd Primary School feel happy and safe. All of this has also impacted on the value being added to pupil performance levels, with end of key stage 2 performance levels placing the school mainly in the top 50% of schools for two out of the past three years.

Above all, a focus on 'pupils' rights' ensures well-being remains at the heart of all that we do.

*The school has developed their own 'thinking skills continuum' which combines some of the strategies of the national thinking skills framework with some they developed ourselves. The continuum is cumulative and is aimed at ensuring consistency of practice / progression from YN through to Y6. These strategies increase in complexity and depth as pupils progress through the phase groups. †The term 'Pupils' rights' refers to a set of rights devised through consultation with pupils and staff.

Motivational leadership drives up standard

Penllergaer Primary School, Swansea



Penllergaer Primary School serves the growing village of Penllergaer, in Swansea. The school has a diverse catchment area and 13% of pupils are eligible for free school meals. The school has two specialist teaching facilities for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties. Around 24% of pupils are identified as having additional learning needs with about 5% of pupils

having a statement of special educational needs. English is the predominant language for all pupils. Around 7% of pupils are from ethnic minority backgrounds.

This case study is a particularly good example of how a new head teacher has established a common vision and built leadership capacity very successfully within the school. There is a strong commitment to securing improvement and expectations of high standards in all aspects of school life. As a result, many pupils achieve above expected levels in National Curriculum teacher assessments, standards of wellbeing are excellent and procedures for self-evaluation are highly effective.

The school is a community built around openness, trust, respect and appreciation for others. The new head teacher is an excellent role model who shows great commitment and has very high expectations for all areas of the school's work. She provides clear and astute strategic leadership, particularly in encouraging staff at all levels to show initiative and take responsibility for specific aspects of the school's work.

The factors which support this approach are the:

- very effective communication between members of the senior leadership team and other staff;
- willingness of leaders and staff to adapt and refine strategies and approaches, and to challenge themselves and others to improve provision and outcomes; and
- confidence and knowledge that all individual contributions are valued.

Pupils are given frequent opportunities to undertake leadership roles within the classroom and do so with confidence. Pupil participation groups are effectively involved in decision making. There are useful mechanisms such as the head teacher message board, cook's comments board, and feelings and suggestion boxes that provide pupils with good opportunities to voice their opinions.

Description of nature of strategy or activity:

The new head teacher viewed her first term as crucial in securing the confidence and support of all colleagues for the improvement strategies she wished to establish. The first step was to share her vision and aims for the school with staff, parents and governors. Stakeholders were consulted in developing a 'Values Policy' and systems that supported this vision. The learning and teaching policy was revised to ensure a common understanding of what constitutes effective teaching and learning that supports and challenges all pupils to achieve the highest levels.

The existing senior leadership team was reorganised and re-invigorated while a programme of weekly meetings was planned throughout the year, focussing specifically on strategic issues. The school has mixed-aged classes throughout with teachers organised into 'trust trios'. A senior leader is strategically placed in each trio to assist communication and secure a corporate approach to practices and planning. This approach ensures that all members of staff feel that their views are valued and listened to and that changes in practice are implemented quickly and whole-school policies and procedures monitored closely.

The senior leadership team has responsibility for performance management, monitoring, driving school improvement and ensuring all staff access high-quality continuous professional development both within and outside school. Subject leaders' roles were revised and reallocated. There are two leaders per subject, one with responsibility for the Foundation Phase and the other for key stage two. This helps ensure continuity and progression in the subject throughout the school.

All staff share their expertise and provide internal training through meetings, modelling, coaching and supporting other colleagues. For example, teaching assistants model and coach others in leading literacy and numeracy 'catch up' groups.

The school facilitates cross-school peer observation to enable teachers to see best practice and learn from each other. This has increased the level of autonomy of all staff and increased the pace of change in the school, raising everyone's expectations of what is possible.

The senior leadership team led the process of formulating a new school development plan which outlines the school's priorities for the next three years and focuses in depth on the current year's objectives. These were identified through analyses of data, performance management records and evidence from head teacher, senior leadership team and subject leader monitoring. These objectives also reflect local and national priorities and the results from stakeholder questionnaires. Plans include specific actions that are carefully costed and indicate monitoring timescales and expected outcomes.

Governors are extremely well informed and receive clear information about school performance from subject leaders and pupil presentations, head teacher reports and feedback from classroom visits and subject-linked governor meetings. A new governing body data committee was established to analyse the school's data to identify strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning, track individual and cohort progress and set measurable improvement targets. This committee has been successful in improving significantly governors' understanding of data and raising their expectations of what pupils can achieve. Governors now challenge senior leaders more rigorously in relation to pupil outcomes.

What impact has this work had on provision and learners' standards?

"Motivational and energetic leadership ensures a whole-school approach and staff commitment to raising standards in all areas."

Many pupils express their views on a range of matters confidently and maturely. Many achieve standards above expected levels in numeracy and literacy. The quality of teaching across the school is at least good and in a few lessons is excellent. The quality of self-evaluation and improvement planning is excellent. Various awards from external agencies validate the robust processes.

Respecting Rights

Hafod Primary School, Swansea



Hafod Primary School is located on the outskirts of Swansea, in one of the 30% most deprived areas of Wales. Hafod is located in a designated Communities First area. There are 242 pupils on roll aged between three and eleven. In addition, the school manages the on-site Flying Start provision. Around 38% of pupils are entitled to free school meals. Approximately 50% of pupils are White-British, 45% are of Asian heritage, predominantly Bangladeshi. Just under half of the pupils speak English as an additional language. There are fifteen different languages spoken by pupils at the school. About 30% of pupils have additional learning needs.

The school bases its philosophy and values/rights based approach on a moral obligation to respond to the rights of the pupils, and not just in terms of their needs and areas of development. Many pupils are vulnerable to poverty and other risks. Many pupils were not always understood by their peers, and became excluded simply because they had different coloured skin, spoke a different language or came from a different country. Negative home influences were having a detrimental effect on pupils' attitudes to others and learning.

The aim of the school was to develop a framework of values, based on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) that would allow it to link active citizenship, tolerance, and healthy and sustainable living, together, in a community of families who come from diverse cultures and backgrounds.

Nature of strategy or activity identified as sector-leading practice

The school has created an environment and ethos where children's rights are respected. Staff and pupils understand that children's rights are only realised if everyone, including the children themselves, learn to respect them and understand that their rights are everybody's rights.

Example: - Rights cannot be taken away, but the experience of education might be taken away if pupils continue to disrupt, disturb or deny other children the right to their education.

The school negotiated a home school agreement with parents, based upon the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) – it includes the responsibilities of parents, school staff and pupils to ensure that all children receive their rights.

Example: - All children have the right to healthy food - school has the responsibility to provide healthy meals. Parents have the responsibility to provide healthy lunchboxes.

Members of each class have their own agreement, which drills down to the specific nature of the class. Children create their own 'charters' with their teachers, based on rights, respect and responsibilities.

Every corner of the school displays a child's version of an article from the convention – usually held up by 'Ronnie our Rights Respecting Raindrop'.

Example: - In the religious corridor, where the major world religions are displayed, An image of 'Ronnie' shows him reinforcing the article that all children have the right to practice their own religion and culture.

Engaging stakeholders.

The school expects all its pupils, staff, governors and parents to engage in this approach.

Examples: - Pupils gave the governors an exhaustive list of values and then asked them to write down their top ten values, reminding them that they were responsible for their education and well-being. The pupils then proceeded to ask the governors to throw values away until they were left with one. This was a powerful exercise for all involved.

Pupils carried out similar exercises with pupils, staff and parents, which gave us our Hafod Top Ten Values, which we then linked to children's rights.

We focus on one value/article a month. All assemblies and other aspects of the curriculum are based around it.

The whole school assembly is central to the development of the approach. Music is played as pupils enter the hall – a candle is lit for reflection and we say a prayer based on the value/article and religion.

Example: - When the value is 'Friendship', the right is to play and have friends.

Pupil voice

The school's pupil participation group is made up of older members of the school councils who are given leadership opportunities, which go beyond agendas set for school council. Pupils take an active part in monitoring and evaluating; they observe lessons and offer feedback to staff and governors. They have evaluated the school development plan and written their own improvement

plan, policies and a children's prospectus. They attend the first part of the termly governing body meeting and give presentations on their reviews. These powerful relationships between pupils, staff and governors are mutually respectful and pupils know that their ideas/opinions are respected.

Impact on provision and learners' standards

The school's values and rights based approach to education has enabled it to provide a more socially inclusive, engaging, motivating and rewarding school experience. It has had a positive effect on the school community, being more harmonious and reflective.

The effect on individuals is that:

- pupils take greater responsibility for behaviour and learning;
- pupils value themselves, others and the environment;
- pupils are more confident;
- pupils develop ethical intelligence;
- pupils have an increased knowledge of rights, respect for others rights and positive attitudes to diversity;
- pupils' learning and standards have improved;
- pupils' relationships with each other have improved;
- parents' engagement and community involvement in the life of the school has improved.
- pupils' attendance has improved;
- pupils behave better and are more able to solve problems, make good judgements and have good ideas about fairness and democracy;
- the curriculum is more exciting and linked well to rights; and
- there have been no exclusions.

The school uses a recognised programme as a means of monitoring and tracking pupils' attitudes to themselves and school. Results indicate that almost all pupils make at least the expected progress year on year.

The school uses appropriate programmes to track each pupil's progress. Nearly all the pupils attain the expected level for their age by the end of key stage 2. Pupils eligible for free school meals and those with English as an additional language perform as well and often better than their peers.

Pupils' attendance has improved significantly from low baselines, and has been in the top 25% for the past three years when compared with similar schools.

Reducing anti-social behaviour in the community

Hafod Primary School, Swansea



Hafod Primary School is located on the outskirts of Swansea in an area which is among the 30% most deprived areas of Wales. Hafod is a Communities First area. There are 242 pupils on roll aged three to eleven. The school manages the on-site Flying Start provision. Around 38% of pupils are entitled to free school meals. 50% of pupils are White-British, 45% are of Asian

heritage, predominantly Bangladeshi. Almost half of the pupils speak English as an additional language. Fifteen languages are spoken. 30% of pupils have additional learning needs.

Nature of strategy or activity identified as sector-leading practice

“Kids in the Neighbourhood” (KIN) is a multi-agency approach to early identification, prevention and intervention. It began in 2011 when the Chief Superintendent of police approached the school with concerns of increased levels of antisocial behaviour/criminality in the community. The school had also identified pupils involved in these activities and tracked them through the secondary phase. Many of these pupils were not in education, employment or training (NEET).

The community has been informed that the school, police and other agencies are working together to eradicate antisocial behaviour and crime. Members of the community have accepted and embraced the project and now use the school and its contacts effectively to share information and report incidents.

The project has evolved over three years, and now attempts to assess any potential barriers to learning. The school or its partner agencies identify and assess the pupils and their families and share information appropriately, effectively and confidentially, with the consent of all parents/carers. Staff analyse data from a variety of sources, such as: the ‘vulnerable analysis profile’, teacher assessments, attendance, and national tests. It also takes into account any other information from appropriate sources such as: the police, the antisocial behaviour unit, the local health department, the education welfare officer, the fire service, social services, and the local comprehensive school.

Agencies meet monthly at the school and contribute to the school's monitoring/tracking systems, offering additional information, providing support or prevention interventions. During the first screening and identification task, the school discovered that:

- 100% of the identified pupils were from deprived family backgrounds;
- 60% had attendance below 89%;
- 100% were not confident in core subjects;
- 100% were not achieving their expected level;
- 60% of pupil interviews did not match parent interviews;
- 100% felt that they did not have anyone to talk to or positive role models;
- 100% had been involved in antisocial behaviour in the community or playground; and
- 100% were known to police or social services.

The school shared the information with its partner agencies along with its research on deprivation being strongly associated with poorer performance in education.

The school's work has found that that:

- low levels of educational achievement have a negative impact on an individual's engagement with society and it is highly likely that these individuals will engage in criminal activity;
- FSM pupils are three times as likely to have SEN. Eligibility for FSM is particularly high for three types of SEN – behavioural, emotional and social;
- income and material deprivation influences educational outcomes reducing the number of educational resources and the home environment;
- deprivation is associated with ill health, family stress, low levels of parental education and involvement in their children's education, low levels of cultural and social capital and low aspirations;
- pupils are at greater risk of low birth rate, which can influence cognitive/physical development;
- low income has adverse effects on parents well-being which affects the quality of their parenting. Family stress can lead to problems with children's education/emotional development. There is a higher chance of pupils being exposed to multiple risk factors e.g. depression, domestic violence, unemployment, overcrowding, substance misuse;

- knowledge/skills/interests of pupils from different backgrounds (social/cultural) may be limited, possibly resulting in poorer social connections/opportunities; and
- low levels of literacy on entry means pupils are more likely to fall behind and will find it difficult to catch up. This impacts on their levels of attainment, and engagement and ability to access the curriculum.

On completing the assessments and sharing the information and research findings. staff used Boxall profiles, attendance data, PASS data, teacher assessments, family engagement and analysis and analysis from the reading tests to measure individual progress and the success of the project as a whole. Staff devised an effective matrix to share information from/with partner agencies at monthly meetings.

Staff identify each individual's needs and implement and monitor appropriate intervention programmes to improve outcomes for those individuals.

Impact on provision and learners' standards

Since introducing the project:

- attendance has improved from 87% to 94.7%;
- all pupils make significant progress from baseline and nearly all attain expected levels for their age. Pupils eligible for free school meals and those with English as an additional language perform as well or better than their peers;
- the school has not excluded any pupil;
- relationships between those involved are excellent, with pupils experiencing seamless transition from pre-school settings to primary school to secondary school.

Some Examples of Good Practice from Across Wales

Summarised below are five good practice examples from across Wales (See attached the full write ups):

- 1. Tackling the impact of deprivation on pupil attainment** (*see attached*)
Hafod-y-Wern Primary School, Wrexham
Hafod-y-Wern Primary School carefully manages and monitors the impact of deprivation on pupil attainment. As a result, the school has increased attendance, lowered exclusion rates, improved standards in key subjects and built positive working relationships with parents.
- 2. Supporting pupils with additional learning needs through integrated strategies**
Dolau Primary School, Rhondda Cynon Taf
Ensuring all pupils reach their potential is central to the aims of Dolau Primary School. Staff have ensured that many pupils with additional learning needs achieve well and make significant progress which has improved motivation across the curriculum.
- 3. A nurturing and caring community improves behaviour and learning**
Pencaerau Primary, Cardiff
Pencaerau Primary in Cardiff found that the right encouragement, combined with additional pupil support, can improve behaviour and attendance.
- 4. Using distributed leadership to drive improvement**
Glasllwch C.P. School, Newport
Glasllwch C.P. School, Newport, has restructured its leadership team to build capacity throughout the school. Staff and governors work together in annual INSET days to identify areas for development. Governors play a key role in improving standards and pupils are given frequent opportunities to undertake leadership roles in the classroom.
- 5. Partnership with parents**
Ysgol y Foryd, Conwy
Ysgol y Foryd, Conwy, uses a number of strategies to involve parents in school life in order to raise standards, provide early intervention and tackle disadvantage. The school works closely with families and both the self esteem and attainment of pupils has improved.

Tackling the impact of deprivation on pupil attainment

Hafod-y-Wern Primary School, Wrexham



Hafod-y-Wern Primary School carefully manages and monitors the impact of deprivation on pupil attainment. As a result, the school has increased attendance, lowered exclusion rates, improved standards in key subjects and built positive working relationships with parents.

Hafod-y-Wern Primary School is in the Caia Park area of Wrexham. The school provides education for 276 pupils between the ages of 3 and 11 years. There are six single-age classes, three mixed age classes and a nursery class. There is also a local authority resource class catering for pupils with specific learning needs. Nearly 56% of pupils are eligible for free school meals. This is considerably above the national and local authority averages. There are about 25% of pupils as having additional learning needs. A very few pupils have a statement of special educational needs. Nearly all pupils come from English-speaking homes and very few speak English as an additional language. No pupils indicate that they speak Welsh at home. Very few pupils are looked after by the local authority.

Context and background to sector-leading practice

The school needed to ensure that there were mechanisms in place to identify and monitor the impact of deprivation on pupil attainment.

Description of nature of strategy or activity

The school set up a 'concern and action' team. The team consists of the educational social worker, parent support, pastoral support worker and headteacher. The team invites the school nurse and attendance officer to meetings when required. The 'concern and action' team meets once every two weeks. As a school in an area of multiple deprivations, the group of professionals are involved in many meetings and activities during the school week. It is essential that the 'concern and action' team meet every two weeks to share relevant information linked to meetings, incidents and activities. During these meetings, the sharing of information often explains why some pupils and parents behave in a particular way.

As a school, we have developed a document that we have named the 'Engagement Progression and Assessment matrix'. This is a spreadsheet that uses the following headings to map the needs of the pupils:

- attendance percentage
- attendance authorised
- attendance unauthorised
- exclusions
- additional needs level
- Welsh national test standardised scores for English and numeracy
- social service involvement, including child protection,
- child in need
- CAHMS
- team around child
- parent support involvement
- free school meals
- looked after children
- English as an additional language

Staff allocates a score for each of the headings. This score depends on its significance in terms of the well-being of the child. For example, the child protection register will register a high mark. The spreadsheet then ranks all pupils in order of need. It is easy to update the spread sheet when new information comes to light or when circumstances change.

At the start of each term, staff use the document in the 'concern and action' meeting to identify the needs of individual pupils. The team works through each individual class to ensure that they scrutinise all pupils in terms of possible needs. The team then uses a class monitoring form with matching headings, and highlight the pupils' specific needs as red, amber or green. When staff recognise a particular level of need during the meeting, the team agrees on specific actions to support the pupil or family.

From the meeting the following actions can take place

Support for the family:

- inform teachers of any issues
- contact the parents
- support from social service
- organise 'team around the child' meetings
- arrange visit by educational social worker
- arrange parent support visit/meeting
- arrange pastoral support

Support for the child:

- produce an individual education plan
- produce an individual behaviour plan
- arrange a teacher/parent and child meeting
- arrange a parent support advisor to work the child
- arrange 1:1 mentoring or group support with school pastoral support
- arrange mentoring sessions within the local community
- arrange counselling with in-house school counsellor
- arrange a young carers group in school
- arrange a student assist programme- SAP
- arrange a fishing mentoring group

What impact has this work had on provision and learners' standards?

Introducing and employing the parent support advisor and pastoral support worker in the school has had a huge impact. There are now positive relationships with a large number of parents and carers within the school. The parent support worker is able to engage with families at many levels and include the child's wellbeing and educational attainment as part of small group activities. A thriving group meets each week throughout the school year. The relationship that the parent support advisor has built up with the parents enables the school to address a range of issues in a positive manner.

The pastoral support worker is able to work with vulnerable pupils to ensure that they are well prepared to work in a classroom environment to help resolve issues that may be influencing the pupils' behaviour in school. The pastoral support worker uses a wide range of intervention strategies and group activities well to develop confidence and address individual needs. Early identification of need and specific intervention ensures that problems are less likely to escalate and affect the child's attainment.

We have developed a fishing mentoring group and over the last six years, we have taught over 260 pupils to fish. We have developed close links with the local coarse fishery that is owned by an ex-pupil of the school. We take groups of pupils fishing for one afternoon per week, over six weeks. The headteacher, pastoral support worker and two governors use the sessions to engage pupils in the activity, teaching them the technical skills of fishing, taking part in an activity with members of the local community and to experience an outdoor activity. We fish in all weathers throughout the whole of the year. The group is selected from the concern and action meetings but also with all year six pupils taking part throughout the school year. We hold the sessions every Friday afternoon. This provides an incentive for the pupils to work hard and

behave well through the week to ensure they keep their place on the course. Many pupils have taken up fishing as a hobby outside of school.

- The attendance figure at the school for the last academic year is the highest we have had since the schools amalgamated in 2007.
- The academic year of 2014/15 had no fixed term exclusions. This is the first time since the schools amalgamated in 2007 that there have been no exclusions.
- Standards:
- The end of key stage 2 standards in Maths, English and science for the academic year 2014/15 are the highest since the school amalgamated in 2007.

Publication date: Friday, November 27, 2015

Supporting pupils with additional learning needs through integrated strategies

Dolau Primary School, Rhondda Cynon Taf



Ensuring all pupils reach their potential is central to the aims of Dolau Primary School. Staff have ensured that many pupils with additional learning needs achieve well and make significant progress which has improved motivation across the curriculum.

Ysgol Gynradd Dolau Primary School is a bi-lingual primary school in the village of Llanharan, in Rhondda Cynon Tâf. Currently, 468 pupils between the age of three and eleven years attend the school. Nearly all pupils come from English-speaking homes. The school provides education through the medium of Welsh and English where pupils from both departments integrate on a regular basis. Although approximately half of the school's pupils attend the Welsh department, only a very few speak Welsh as a first language at home. Around 2% of the school's pupils come from an ethnic minority background. Approximately 21% of the pupils have additional learning needs and there are very few pupils with a statement of educational needs. Fourteen and a half per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is lower than the national average of around 26%.

Context and background to sector-leading practice

Ensuring all pupils realise their potential is central to all our aims. By integrating a number of reading strategies effectively, the school has ensured that many pupils on the additional learning needs register achieve well and make significant progress. This includes improved motivation and engagement across the curriculum.

At Dolau, we have developed a strong ethos of support for pupils throughout the school. Staff identify all pupils' additional learning needs through observations and informal assessments, standardised testing, diagnostic testing, and the National Behaviour and Attendance Review (NBAR) questionnaire for Wellbeing. We find that identifying pupils' needs early is crucial to the success of the strategy. The process starts with a detailed discussion of pupils who teachers or

support staff identify as having additional needs. The additional learning needs coordinator and class teachers undertake this task twice a year. They consider all test data and assessments (formal and informal), analyse it and use this information effectively to identify any trends and common areas which pupils find difficult. The discussion document provides a profile of pupils as they progress through the school. The data gathered allows us to plan our intervention groups effectively. Intervention groups include Language Support Groups supported on a weekly or twice-weekly basis by our language support teacher. Diagnostic tests provide information for specific targets. Staff create personal plans jointly using a child-friendly format involving the pupil, support teacher, class teacher and parents. Learning support assistants support these pupils effectively, either within the classroom setting or by working with them outside the main classroom for short periods on a regular basis, daily where possible. Our learning support assistants have received a great deal of training whether during whole school staff training sessions for new schemes or initiatives, specifically by the additional learning needs coordinator or by attending local authority based courses. Thorough and detailed joint planning by all staff involved, generally takes place on a fortnightly basis, although they do adapt it as and when they feel it is necessary to ensure consistency. Support is generally of a multi-sensory nature. Dolau piloted The Catch Up Project in English in 2003. Since then, we use it effectively in both languages. This provides effective support to pupils of all ages throughout the school. Rather than taking support staff from class to provide Catch Up sessions, we originally trained our language support teacher and a teaching assistant as well as a number of parent volunteers. They also received training by the local authority and have since gained qualifications to train others. The school has consequently employed a few on a full-time basis to provide support throughout the school.

The identification process also highlighted a few pupils who did not meet the criteria for established interventions. They did not have sufficient home support. Recognising this, we trained our teaching assistants on using strategies to improve pupils' reading, phonics, spelling, comprehension and higher order reading skills. Each assistant works with three pupils for a ten-minute session working in a similar way to a parent at home. Following the initial success of the project, it has developed into a more structured session involving multi-sensory activities to enhance the reading session. The school provides staff with a simple data pack for their pupils. This includes measurable data based on reading, spelling and comprehension ages and specific projected targets for each pupil. They also have non-measurable targets, such as improving pupils' fluency or confidence.

The NBAR Project has been implemented effectively during the last two years, initially for the two Year 5 classes, but then throughout key stage 2. The school used some of the Pupil Deprivation Grant to train assistants as Emotional Literacy Support Assistants (ELSAs). They now work throughout the school to support pupils with emotional and behavioural needs. The NBAR is an excellent tool to identify the emotional needs of our key stage 2 pupils, with teacher and parent observations informing support for our younger pupils. The ELSA training is invaluable in dealing with the wellbeing of our pupils, and the standard of support that the assistants, psychologists and supervision staff provide is very effective. The ELSAs and additional learning needs coordinator are effective in supporting any of our pupils who have behavioural needs. Staff create pupil-friendly plans for these pupils jointly with all parties involved. Where pupils need individual support, such as those with statements of educational need, the additional learning needs coordinator and class teachers guide support staff well. They plan on a daily and weekly basis with assistants having their own planning file and resources. Outside agency staff also provide training within the classroom setting.

Effective communication between all concerned is fundamental to the success of all of these intervention strategies. All support staff are involved in planning and record keeping and discuss individual pupils regularly. Parents are involved throughout the processes and play a vital part in support.

The impact of the strategies

The impact of all the strategies and interventions are measured in a number of ways:

- Staff are motivated by the success pupils achieve and are keen to pursue further training to improve provision and standards
- Pupils are motivated by the success they achieve and this is measured not only in the rate of progress in numerical terms but also in the way they engage in all areas of the curriculum
- A key feature of impact as far as the school is concerned is the enjoyment and the enthusiasm shown for reading by all our support pupils and their ability to access all areas of the curriculum thereafter
- The data provided shows very good progress across all intervention strategies and the majority of pupils make significant gains above the average improvement target of 9 months per year

Publication date: Friday, November 27, 2015

A nurturing and caring community improves behaviour and learning **Pencaerau Primary, Cardiff**



Pencaerau Primary in Cardiff found that the right encouragement, combined with additional pupil support, can improve behaviour and attendance.

Working closely with professional organisations relating to health and wellbeing, staff at Pencaerau Primary have developed and improved their provision for the health and wellbeing of all pupils. Pencaerau Primary school offers a wide range of opportunities for pupils to develop their moral and social skills through accessing new initiatives and provisions within the school setting. Pencaerau Primary positively promotes and encourages pupil voice. This has been instrumental in increasing children's self-esteem, self-value and independence.

Nature of strategy or activity identified as sector-leading practice

"The school is a nurturing and exceptionally caring community".

The school has long had a very strong emphasis on developing its pupils' health and wellbeing along with their spiritual, moral and social development. Staff at Pencaerau have very high expectations of pupils' behaviour, and its pupils respond well to this, showing a high level of care and concern for each other. Systems in school that promote positive behaviour permeate the life and work of the school to create an ethos where pupils understand boundaries and take responsibility for their actions.

By using a range of specialists appropriately, the school ensures that there are highly effective arrangements in place to enable pupils to receive extensive levels of support and practical guidance. The school uses the Pupil Deprivation Grant effectively to provide Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA) counselling to support pupils with social and emotional needs. The school has a designated "Chill Out" room in which pupils who experience social issues at break times and lunchtimes can retreat for specialised supervision and guidance. The room provides space for quiet interaction, to spend time reflecting, a chance to speak to someone in confidence or mediated conflict resolution. Targeted training of teaching assistants has increased the school's capacity and expertise in dealing with issues around wellbeing.

The school provides a wide range of targeted enrichment activities in the form of After School Clubs, which it offers to pupils within the Foundation Phase and key stage 2. Participating in these extra-curricular activities helps pupils understand the importance of a healthy diet and an active lifestyle. The school also offers pupils many off site activities during the school day that reward positive behaviour and excellent attendance.

The school has supportive procedures in place for pupils on admission to both Nursery and Reception classes. Visits to school and class prior to starting and talks to parents to familiarise them with school routines are part of the admission process. This ensures that pupils are more comfortable and secure when they start school.

The school council is an integral part of sharing pupils' voices. They have been involved in implementing new strategies such as the 'Buddy system' that the school uses to provide peer support with reading and writing skills and to aid the transition between the key stages. Staff scrutinise registers and take appropriate action where attendance and punctuality is an issue. It has established a system of "Meet and Greets" whereby they make enquiries into pupil absences and their causes as well as why some pupils frequently arrive late for school. They follow up these enquiries vigorously. These include first day response for absences, regular meetings with parents, home visits and meetings with the education welfare officer. The school promotes excellent attendance through award systems and provides termly attendance reports for parents.

Impact on provision and learners' standards

Staff and the senior Leadership team monitor behaviour closely and identify problems within school, or more often brought into school from home, quickly. Staff use team meetings effectively to put appropriate strategies and support in place to address the issues identified. The standards of behaviour in the school are very high. Attendance is excellent and the school continues to set itself more and more challenging targets. Pupil questionnaires show that pupils feel happy and safe in school and that the staff listens to them when they have concerns or problems. This is having a positive impact on their learning.

Publication date: Monday, November 16, 2015

Using distributed leadership to drive improvement

Glasllwch C.P. School, Newport



Glasllwch C.P. School, Newport, has restructured its leadership team to build capacity throughout the school. Staff and governors work together in annual INSET days to identify areas for development. Governors play a key role in improving standards and pupils are given frequent opportunities to undertake leadership roles in the classroom.

Glasllwch Primary School is in a residential area on the north side of the city of Newport. There are 210 pupils aged 4 – 11 years at the school, taught in seven single aged classes. Currently, 1% of pupils are entitled to free school meals. 16% of pupils have additional learning needs. Most pupils come from English speaking homes. No pupils speak Welsh as a first language and very few are from a minority ethnic background or learn English as an additional language.

Leadership at all levels is integral to the consistently high standards achieved across school. The Head Teacher has communicated a clear vision to staff, governors and parents about high expectations. This ensures a relentless drive for improvement which is central to school life. As a result, many pupils achieve above expected levels in National Curriculum teacher assessments, standards of wellbeing are excellent and procedures for self evaluating and planning for improvement are excellent.

The school places a strong emphasis on effective distributed leadership. This promotes a strong professional learning culture throughout the school. All staff have well defined roles and job descriptions which are reviewed regularly through performance management arrangements and tailored to drive forward school development plan priorities.

Nature of strategy or activity identified as sector-leading practice

The existing staffing structure has been reorganised to build leadership capacity across school and to meet the needs of the school more effectively. All members of the leadership team have clearly defined job descriptions and a good understanding of their strategic responsibilities and accountability, including performance management, monitoring, evaluation and review. Staff receive useful professional development to assist them in their leadership roles within their areas of responsibility. Weekly management meetings focus on school improvement and raising standards according to school development plan priorities.

Curriculum Subjects are grouped together under the following areas of learning: communication and culture, innovation and problem solving, and Exploration and Enquiry. All staff and governors are allocated to these teams according to their expertise or areas of interest.

Individual staff lead on specific subjects within each area. A focused staff meeting and training schedule ensures that all staff are kept well informed of school issues (priorities) and have effective professional development according to the needs of the school. Foundation Phase and key stage 2 leaders also meet regularly with staff to ensure initiatives are implemented effectively with positive outcomes. Teams work together to reflect on current practice and amend or improve in order to achieve high standards of teaching and learning.

Continual reflection is encouraged and practiced by all staff. The sharing of best practice through classroom observations, professional dialogue and team working creates a supportive climate based on openness and honesty.

The staffing structure includes a team of well qualified and experienced teaching assistants. Three HLTA's and two level three TA's provide excellent cover for PPA, management release, CPD and sickness. This ensures continuity in approach to teaching and learning and has a positive impact on pupil well being and standards. The school has had no supply budget for the past six years as all cover is carried out within school. The HLTA's have leadership responsibilities for Welsh second language, intervention programmes/testing for pupils with ALN. A designated annual INSET day in May each year, involves all staff and governors working together to evaluate the previous years action plans and to identify strengths and areas for development across school. As a result, priorities are identified for the following year and action plans drawn up.

The involvement of all staff and governors working together throughout allows for an effective and transparent process. The governing body works very closely with the leadership team and holds the school to account rigorously. Governors have an excellent understanding of provision across school and are persistent in seeking improvements in standards and quality. They have developed an innovative, online document management and information system to provide them with quick access to all relevant material. This system enables traceable collaboration on governing body documents which promotes broader participation and increases efficiency. Pupils are given frequent opportunities to undertake leadership roles within the classroom and across school. Regular pupil voice activities are planned into the curriculum. Pupils have a say in what they want to learn, how they want to learn and how they want to record their findings. This impacts positively on pupil wellbeing and standards.

Pupil Participation groups play an active role in communicating research projects and their findings to school leaders, staff, parents and other schools. They are effectively involved in decision making about the learning environment, how pupils learn best, health and hygiene, improving reading, school behaviour and the impact of breakfast on pupils concentration in class.

Impact on provision and learners' standards

The school's practice of distributed leadership has positively impacted on:

- Consistently high standards, significantly above local and national standards
- Consistency in planning, teaching and learning and assessment
- A shared professional learning culture
- A climate based on mutual respect, openness and trust

Partnership with parents

Ysgol y Foryd, Conwy



Ysgol y Foryd, Conwy, uses a number of strategies to involve parents in school life in order to raise standards, provide early intervention and tackle disadvantage. The school works closely with families and both the self esteem and attainment of pupils has improved.

Ysgol y Foryd is situated in Kinmel Bay in Conwy and caters for pupils aged from 3 to 7 years. The school currently has 237 pupils on role arranged into eight classes. These include 59 part time nursery pupils. Approximately 42% are eligible for free school meals and 49% are on the register of pupils with additional learning needs. A majority of pupils on entry have speech difficulties or other developmental needs and challenges. Size of cohorts and level of transience (typically 25% per year of school population) means that close communication with parents and other agencies is imperative to enable early support for families and appropriate interventions for pupils. During the past two years many nursery pupils have not attained Outcome 1 by mid-Autumn term and therefore a small steps assessment tool has been implemented. This has quantified that on entry over half of our pupils are at a lower level of development than would normally be expected.

Developing the partnership with parents; its impact on pupil standards and tackling disadvantage. During the term following the inspection of 2007, over 25% of the large and transient Year 2 cohort displayed challenging behaviours. In February 2008, a behaviour class was implemented. The key to its success was developing a close partnership with parents. The strategy was instrumental in guiding the development of nurture work and family liaison. These initiatives have raised pupils' standards significantly.

Nature of strategy or activity identified as sector-leading practice

- In 2011, a community School Vision Day was held involving parents and the school motto and vision was generated: Dreaming, Believing, Succeeding, Together; to raise pupils' aspirations.
- Foryd Values, invented by pupils and staff, reinforce the behaviour and work of everyone in school. Staff use these with parents to assist with approaches at home. Because they are communicated in ways that the pupils understand, nearly all pupils know them by rote and share them.

- Assessment Profiles and intervention packages for the new nursery pupils are initiated before pupils begin school through linking with health visitors, playgroups and parents. Home visits prior to admission have been effective in assessing and planning for pupils' requirements.
- Approximately 20% of our pupils each year are identified for Nurture intervention and are managed in class groups by nurture leaders who liaise closely with parents. Nurture plans address potential barriers to learning such as pupils' personal, social and emotional needs.
- Parents are encouraged to take part in school life. A Parents' Forum has been established that has encouraged parents to lead and support many aspects of School Improvement. 'Parent Reps' encourage other parents. A range of extra-curricular activities including Relax Kids, Information Technology, Pyramid and Cookery Clubs have also involved parents.
- Family courses, some of which are college accredited, are available. Around half of parents involved have progressed to access other courses.
- Seven current members of school staff started their 'return to education' experiences as parents attending our courses.
- The school's full time Family Liaison Officer works with parents to improve attendance and to reduce pupils' potential barriers to learning. Her role enables and encourages links between parents and other agencies. She has developed behaviour programmes for parents at home and has encouraged parents' involvement in school. Her presence on the yard at the start of the day has been effective in enabling children to settle well on arrival at school regardless of external circumstances and to engage in lessons or nurture activities appropriately.
- Impact on provision and learners' standards:
- During the past three years nearly all pupils gained at least four outcomes of progress during their time in school. Expected end of Foundation Phase outcomes are achieved by nearly all pupils and there is no significant attainment gap between pupils in receipt of free school meals and those not in receipt of free school meals. Even though the past four years has seen a steady rise in deprivation at our school, standards have improved regarding pupils' attainment and wellbeing.
- Nearly all pupils who have attended parents' courses have improved self-esteem and this has been evident from a range of relevant assessments. Nearly all parents' questionnaires demonstrate increased enjoyment and confidence in supporting their children.
- School cluster group working has enabled the sharing of good practice regarding parental partnerships. Our school has recently initiated the Family Liaison Forum, hosted half-termly by our Family Liaison Officer. Staff in similar roles from other areas and senior leaders from at least ten schools have visited our school to see and discuss the initiatives we have implemented. All have said that they have been able to use some of the good practice shared, including attendance strategies, multi-agency working and the Relax Kids programme in their own settings.