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CENTRAL SOUTH CONSORTIUM CONSORTIUM CANOLBARTH Y DE



A guide to good practice

in creating effective
school – community links
and multi-agency working



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Introduction

The purpose of this guide is to share the good practice and findings of a selection of schools which chose to focus on creating effective school – community links and multi-agency working as part of RAISE funded initiatives.

The guide offers the reader:

- an outline of how community and multi-agency working is highlighted in the *School Effectiveness Framework*, *Children and Young People: Rights to Action* and *Community Focused Schools*;
- tried examples of ways in which schools can strengthen current practices; and
- a catalogue of useful programmes and agencies.

The School Effectiveness Framework

In its statement of national purpose for schools, the SEF outlines the need for schools to:

- provide a learning community for all engaged in school life, with children and young people and their families at the centre, and including governors, teachers, other school staff and adults training to work in school;
- be a key player with other schools and partner service providers in planning and delivering integrated services for children and young people to improve their well-being; and
- provide or facilitate education so that schools contribute to meeting the needs of the community and engage the community as partners to ensure that all schools are community focused.

Most significantly in the context of RAISE, in the key element of *Working with Others* it goes on to stress that,

“Whilst the need for community focus applies to all schools, it is particularly important in our most disadvantaged communities, where schools have a major role to play in offering children and young people the experiences and opportunities that their more privileged peers take for granted.”

In tackling this issue, it suggests that,

“Schools should engage with families and the broader community, including businesses, other statutory agencies and the voluntary sector. Schools also need to work with other agencies to address the well-being and citizen aspirations of individual learners. When schools work with other agencies to deliver joined-up programmes, the full range of resources and expertise can be harnessed to deliver improved learner outcomes and well-being.”

In practical terms, this means that,

“The expertise and resources of other agencies need to be aligned in support of school programmes.”

Furthermore,

“Local authorities should encourage schools to be community schools, promoting a range of out-of-hours activities for young people and their families.”

The School Effectiveness Framework stresses that education outcomes do not just depend on schools, and that addressing the needs of socio-economically disadvantaged learners necessitates collaborative work across local authorities and within communities to find common solutions to the challenges presented.



Children and Young People: Rights to Action

Aim 2:

Community Focused Schools states that,

“Schools are a valuable resource that can play a full part in the life of the communities they serve. The Assembly Government wants to see schools rooted in the wider community, drawing on the community for support and demonstrating the importance of education and training for people of all ages.

“Many schools recognise the influence of family, peers and the community on pupils’ learning and consider the wider needs of learners, including family well-being and health promotion for example.

“The Assembly Government sees schools as providing a base for education and training as well as a range of family services such as family support, childcare, health and enterprise promotion, which might include training courses and even commercial use.

“This expansion of activity is particularly important in areas of deprivation where alternative facilities often do not exist.”

Community Focused Schools: Making it Happen

The 'toolkit' for Community Focused Schools expands on this vision:

“Community Focused Schools work is a key part of providing better services for children and young people, as outlined in the Children Act 2004. It can provide an umbrella for helping to achieve the seven core aims of Rights to Action, and thus to improve life chances for families and people in the wider community.

“There are deeper reasons why Community Focused Schools are important, to do with social justice and developing skilful communities.

“Work in Communities First Areas and elsewhere has shown that effective education is a vital component of successful regeneration. To be effective, it needs, as far as possible, to be anchored in and relevant to the communities the education provider is serving - it needs to be community based. Community Focused Schools potentially provide an opportunity to be in the vanguard of a cultural revolution in community based learning.

“The focus has initially, and often understandably, been on schools providing for communities.

“However, evidence from early work in Wales and elsewhere has shown that significant work needs to be done within communities to enable people in those communities to engage with schools in a positive way. This is vital if Community Focused Schools development is to be based on the needs of a particular community and not something that is deemed by others to be right for the community.

“This work will enable Community Focused Schools development to be owned locally and seen as home grown rather than as something which has been parachuted into the community from outside. It will help to secure a sustainable future for Community Focused Schools.”



Bedwas High School, Caerphilly

Developing a whole school approach

Bedwas High School is an 11 -18 community school maintained by Caerphilly County Borough Council. There are 818 on roll and this includes 109 in the Sixth Form.

The school is situated in Bedwas. The majority of pupils come from the surrounding area, a large proportion of which is socially and economically disadvantaged.

A significant number come from the most economically deprived area of Caerphilly. Just under 21% of pupils is entitled to free school meals. Almost all pupils have English as their first language.

The school's intake includes the full range of ability. On entry, pupils' numeracy and literacy skills are lower than unitary authority and national averages.

There are more children of average and lower ability than higher. Across the key stages 39 have a statement of special educational need and a further 146 receive additional support.

Despite this, pupils make very good progress in their learning across the key stages and almost all achieve their agreed goals, with many achieving beyond what is expected.

The main objective of RAISE funded initiatives in the school has been to increase the support available for disaffected, disengaged and underachieving pupils through increasing the number of strategies available across the key stages; whilst ensuring that any new initiatives complement the strategies that already exist. And, in doing so,

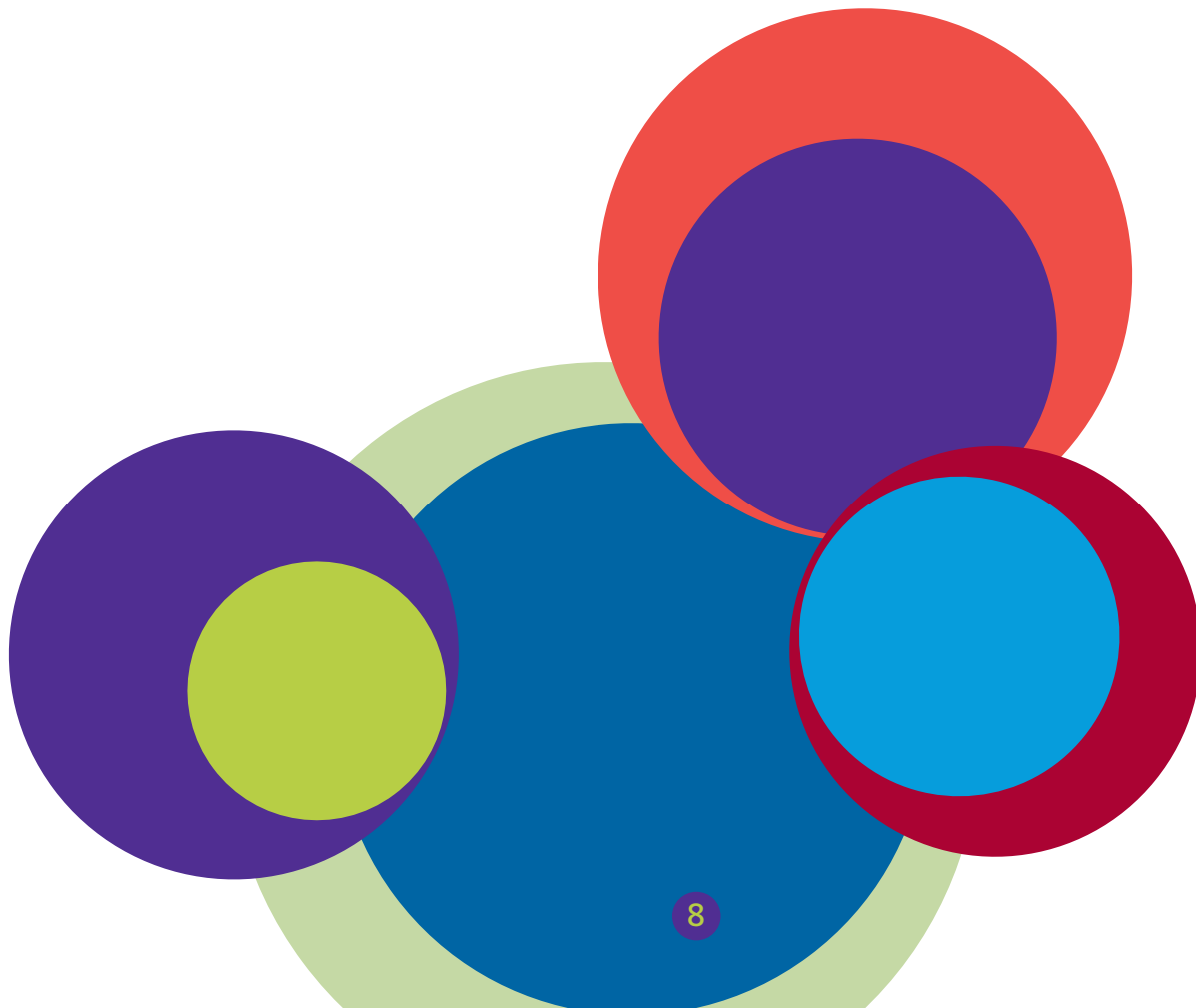
- Lessen the number of pupils rapidly accelerating through the reporting system
- Reduce fixed term exclusions
- Reduce permanent exclusions
- Impact on level of attainment.

In order to achieve this, the school chose primarily to employ a full-time youth worker to offer a range of services to vulnerable pupils while engaging with a variety of external partnerships to support his work within the school.

Appointing/redeploying appropriate staff

The school was careful to employ a youth worker with sufficient breadth of experience to support students and develop a range of alternative provision while developing strong links with partner agencies.

The eventual aim was to ensure that the role became part of the staffing structure of the school. Therefore, the initial focus was to embed the role within the structure of the pastoral team.



Training, embedding and sustaining

When the Youth Worker was appointed the school sought someone who was highly qualified with excellent interpersonal skills. The Youth Worker completed a BA Hons: Youthwork and Community Studies within six months of being at the school. He also had a number of additional qualifications including: CTS (Certificate of Tutoring Sport), IAPS (Introduction to Assessing Practice in Sport), Foundation Apprenticeship in Sports and Recreation, and NVQ in Activity Leadership. Since joining the school, the Youth Worker has received training to complement the role such as Student Assistant Programme (SAP) Advanced Facilitator and Duke of Edinburgh.

From the outset the Youth Worker has liaised closely with all members of the pastoral team including Heads of Year and their Assistants, the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) and Behaviour Manager/SENCO and the Assistant Head: Inclusion.

This occurs informally daily with members of the team whenever necessary; during pastoral team meetings that take place weekly to evaluate the progress with pupils; and half termly to evaluate how effective the strategies have been and what level of support needs to continue or begin with individuals.

The Youth Worker also attends Parents' Evenings, Governors' Pupil committee (set up to monitor behaviour of the most challenging pupils) as well as participates in meetings with parents/guardians and agencies when appropriate for individual pupils, e.g. Social Services, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS).

Logistically, the Youth Worker has a room large enough to hold small group sessions adjacent to the Year Tutor's room where they are based with the EWO and next to the Assistant Head: Inclusion. The pupils are all aware that this is an area where one of the team will be throughout the day if they need to access support.

Raising awareness of the role with staff was immensely important and so as part of an INSET day an outline of the role was given to all staff; the intended objectives and how they would be fulfilled i.e. the referral of pupils and the use of curriculum time in particular. Year group assemblies introduced the Youth Worker to pupils and explained the purpose of role and the level of support that would be provided. Parents were informed through newsletters, letters and tutor days.

Effective timetabling and creative management of resources

The level of support given by the Youth Worker is crucial because this support is readily available to pupils throughout the school day, as well as before and after school. His open door policy has helped him to develop a trust with pupils who feel secure enough to self refer. However, a key aim is to ensure that involvement with outside agencies to access 'specialist' support for students runs concurrently with what is available in school. E.g Youth Inclusion and Support Panels (YISP) and Fusion.

The Assistant Head, Youth Worker and EWO have worked together to formulate and build working partnerships with non- statutory voluntary organisations, developing wherever possible links with key workers to support pupils with particular issues. Other members of the team are involved with sharing information with such organisations when pupils from their year groups are involved.

The school has a Youth Worker allocated by the borough for two days a week and a female youth worker was requested to complement the full-time male youth worker in school. The Hub team (youth partnership team from Caerphilly) also comes in to work for two hours a week with targeted groups of pupils for set periods of time.

Evaluation of pupils is carried out regularly using available data to judge the progress of individuals e.g. attainment (snap shot data such as achieving target grades/levels); registration certificate (% attendance/punctuality); behaviour database information, and the professional judgment of the pastoral team.

A review of strategies using all agencies and numbers of pupils involved ensures that those who are the most vulnerable are supported as needed.

Engaging the community

Bedwas High School began by focusing on the school community. Raising awareness of the role with staff was immensely important and so as part of an INSET day an outline of the role was given to all staff; the intended objectives and how they would be fulfilled i.e. the referral of pupils and the use of curriculum time in particular.

A similar presentation was also given to governors. Year group assemblies introduced the Youth Worker to pupils and explained the purpose of the role and the level of support that would be provided. Parents were informed through newsletters, letters and tutor days, although perhaps more effective than any of the above were 'word of mouth' commendations. Indeed, the positive impact of the Youth Worker's input was quickly disseminated throughout the community.

As a consequence of the development of the Youth Worker's role, links with both external agencies and the community have strengthened. The Youth Worker is now often, as a non-teaching member of staff, the first point of contact with the external agencies such as Llamau and YISP. His involvement is sought by the primaries to support with transition and input is required from agencies such as social services, CAMHS and the police.

Barriers and overcoming them

Staff objections to withdrawal of pupils were addressed by: ensuring that staff members are updated regularly with the names of those receiving support; scheduling support strategies taking into account the timetable commitments of individual pupils; and through the positive outcome on the behaviour of pupils.

Lack of space: a wider number of agencies involved necessitate a greater number of 'private' spaces. A successful bid by the pastoral team for new office space meant the creation of such in Spring 2009.

Successes

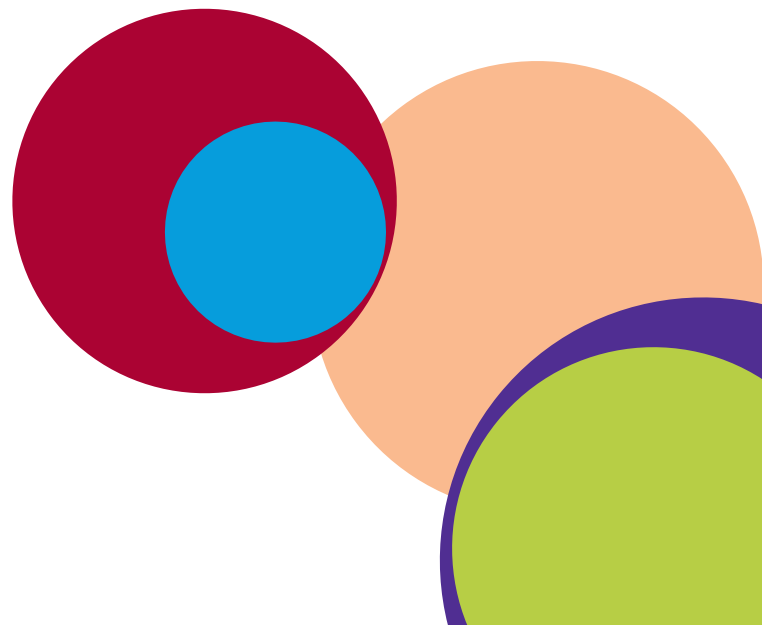
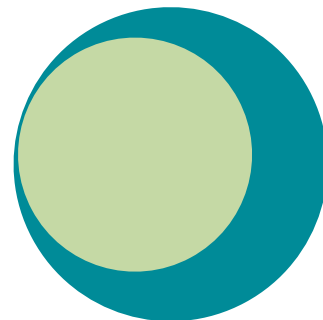
The impact of the Youth Worker's role has been recognised by pupils, parents, governors and staff. An outcome of this has been:

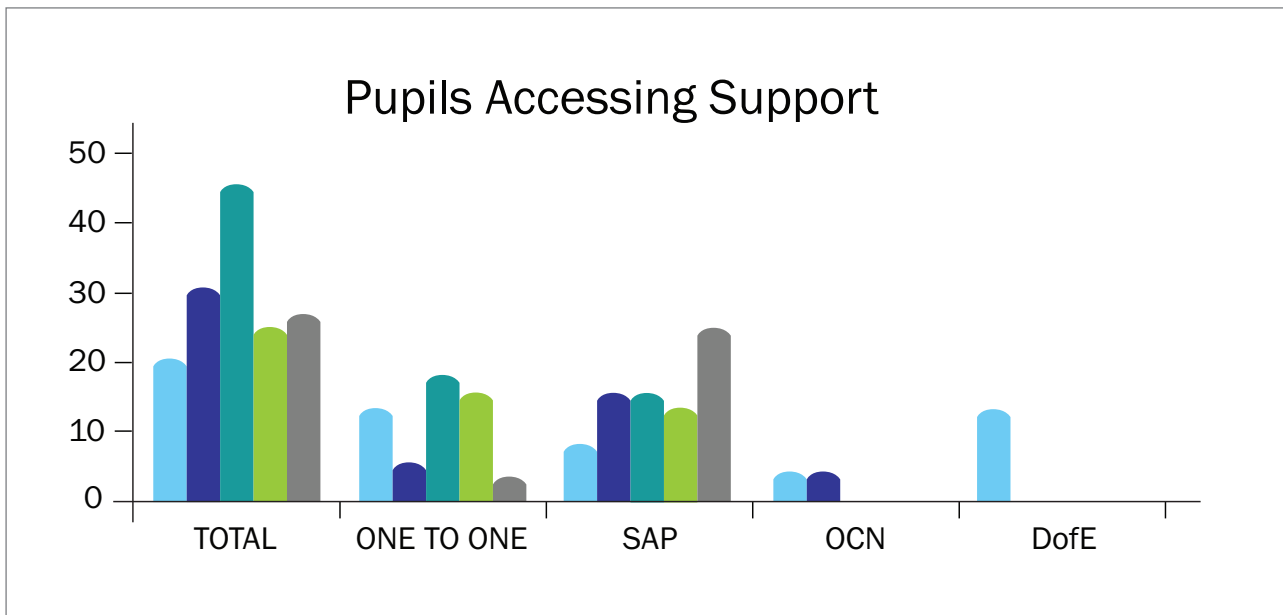
- Change of ethos –
The perception of all involved changed as a consequence of the overall impact on the behaviour of pupils. The staff is more receptive and accepting of new initiatives coming into school.
- Identification of need –
Led to bids for further support to be based in school. e.g. additional funds for ASD provision – creation of AXIS room for vulnerable pupils particularly during non-contact times and before and after school.
- Additional Training –
Students' Assistance Programme:
Teaching staff and non teaching staff are now trained to deliver SAP to provide group sessions across the key stages in order to allow a wider number of pupils to access the support. The school has also been able to timetable the SAP sessions as curriculum time for teaching staff.

A recent inspection report contained the following observations:

Key Question 4: How well are learners cared for, supported and guided?

- Youth Worker provides invaluable support to pupils through a range of initiatives
- The support and guidance of pupils is outstanding
- Pupils speak confidently and enthusiastically about the support offered to them and value it greatly
- Pupils in need of additional support are catered for effectively through a broad range of strategies
- Inclusion is at the heart of the school.





The tables reflect the number of pupils accessing support within Bedwas High School through the Youth Worker for the school year 2008/2009 Autumn and Spring Terms alone. The tables do not show the support that these pupils and others also access from other support agencies. Whereas there are a number of pupils who are supported constantly by the Youth Worker, others may need support for a relatively short period of time; others may need more specialist input; others may need a variety of support that can be provided at different times in different ways. There are a number of pupils who are always in receipt of support but not always from the same source. Providers could include: FIT, YISP, Llamau, Fusion, School Nurse, LAC Educational Support Worker and Learning Mentor.

An example would be:

One to one support given following family break up followed by group work with the Hub team focusing on self-esteem (8 week programme); Student Assistants' Programme (group session 8 week) to continue to build on self-esteem and develop supportive relationships with other pupils.

The access to one to one support is always available should the need arise.

Development planning

The school's plans for year four of RAISE are to develop the inclusion programme. Each year the number of pupils at Key Stage 4 are placed on 'Alternative Provision'. Whilst the school aims to be as accommodating as possible to their pupils the curriculum does not provide them with the flexibility they need to address the needs of less confident, more demanding pupils. During the first years of RAISE the school focused on developing the support strategies to enable such pupils to become more confident, positive members of the school community. The aim now is to take this further and develop a programme to provide pupils with an opportunity to access alternative learning opportunities within school, which will give them a positive experience and allow them to succeed and achieve qualifications that will benefit them in later life.

The initial plan is to offer a programme to a targeted pilot group of Year 11 and Year 10 pupils. It is envisaged that each group would be 16 maximum. The programme will become part of the option blocks at Key Stage 4 and will take place on one day a week for each year group.

The remainder of their timetable will be composed of the core curriculum. Not all pupils are suitable for alternative provision but there are those who struggle to cope with a 'traditional' curriculum. The aim is that the alternative programme will provide such pupils with the opportunity to succeed through a variety of different experiences. The Youth Worker is the 'key' to delivering the range of activities needed to make this successful.

The ultimate aim is to embed such a programme into the curriculum offered to pupils and encourage others to participate in developing such an initiative within their own schools. This would include a variety of qualifications such as: ASDAN: Certificate of Personal Effectiveness; OCN; and Youth Achievement Award.



Betws Primary School, Bridgend

Developing a whole school approach

The school is situated in a Communities First Area and is described as having high levels of socio-economic deprivation. 49% of pupils are entitled to free school meals and 52% of pupils are on the Additional Learning Needs (ALN) register. This includes children from outside the school's catchment area who attend the three Local Authority ALN resource bases at the school.

The community of Betws is situated in a semi-rural area north of Bridgend. Betws Primary School is a Community Focused School that has won awards from ContinYou and ContinYou Cymru for 'Community Cohesion' and 'Out of Hours' learning. The RAISE funding has been used to provide a variety of Basic Skills initiatives which are linked to the school's community learning agenda that focuses learning support for children and their families and to increase synergy between RAISE and community focused services at the school.

Appointing/redeploying appropriate staff

An additional Learning Support Assistant (LSA) was appointed, funded by the RAISE grant. To ensure capacity and sustainability throughout the school each separate initiative was assigned to different LSAs.

The additional LSA was timetabled to cover their daily duties whilst the RAISE initiatives were being delivered. Also, in order to provide an after school homework club flexible working hours were negotiated for the LSA in charge.

Engaging the community

The school plays host to many other agencies/service providers and has very strong partnerships with other groups/organisations within the community. The Community Focused Action plans have led to a development of a wide range of services as well as the provision of out of hours activities.

- Flying Start – a purpose built facility run by Action for Children on behalf of the Children and Young People’s Partnership. This allows the school to engage more purposefully with pre-school children and their families. The Flying Start Health Visitor is also based at the school which facilitates early interventions with ‘high’ needs families. The Nursery Teacher has liaison responsibility between Flying Start and the school and planning for future RAISE interventions takes place prior to a child’s admission to Nursery.
- Community Web Portal – the school has developed with its community partners a local web space that signposts children and their families to services/activities available within the community and also provides appropriate learning support.

Barriers and overcoming them

The main barrier faced was providing additional staff for additional interventions outside normal classroom practice. As a ‘notional’ additional LSA was employed many members of staff were trained in a variety of interventions to ensure that no one person was responsible for all the RAISE programmes. Also the embedding of projects through whole school training ensures the continuation of good practice after direct RAISE funding has ceased.

Working with multi-agency groups, such as On Track, has been less sustainable as the team’s intervention time has been reduced since they have moved into other areas within the Local Authority. The best practice from this initiative has been identified and those aspects that can be continued within the normal school day, such as good attendance, are planned for circle time or work in small groups with the LSA.

Successes

The synergy of RAISE initiatives and the Community Focused School agenda has led to greater community cohesion and allowed greater involvement of families in children's learning.

The capacity of staff to deliver a range of learning initiatives and close monitoring of the progress made by identified pupils has led to greater focus on the link between pupil underachievement and disadvantage. By addressing some of the disadvantages faced by the community and by targeting initiatives that equalise learning opportunity for all pupils the school is beginning to see the gap narrow.

Development planning

As a Community Focused School Betws Primary School shall continue to focus on raising standards for the more disadvantaged pupils by developing a 'learning community' for Betws. This community will require strong relationships between partner organisations. They shall endeavor to embed in the normal working practices of the school the initiatives that have been delivered through RAISE funding. In Year four of RAISE the school hopes to collaborate with the secondary school and other associate primaries in the development of the Bridgend Talk Project.

Goetre Infant School, Merthyr

Developing a whole school approach

The school is situated in a Communities First Area and is described as having high levels of socio-economic deprivation. A large proportion of children begin their formal education with significant language delay. The school provides a compensatory education to offset their earlier disadvantages and support their holistic development. Currently the percentage of children on free school meals is at 65% and 55% of children are on the Additional Learning Needs (ALN) register under the various categories of the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice.

Working within this context, therefore, it is essential to develop strong links with all agencies. Some of the links that the school has already forged are:

- People In Communities (PIC) project is Communities First Funded. The project is made up of a multi-disciplined team based at Goetre Infant and Junior Schools. It was established to offer a joined up approach to breaking the cycle of deprivation. The family project works with families, children, schools and other agencies and focuses on the intellectual, personal and emotional development of the child.

The team liaises closely with schools and other agencies on site and both receive and make referrals to ensure that the needs of the whole child are met. The PIC Family project is made up of various professionals from three organisations – NHS Trust, Barnardos and the Local Education Authority. The staff supports children from 4-11 years of age.

- PAL (Partnership Accelerates Learning) involves bringing tutors into schools who engage directly with parents and their children. Parents work with tutors to develop their basic skills then parent and child join together so that they and their parents can learn together. The programme has proved very popular as the following quotation from a parent indicates:

“I have enjoyed learning how to help my child, meeting other people and knowing they share your concerns and worries.”

Appointing/redeploying appropriate staff

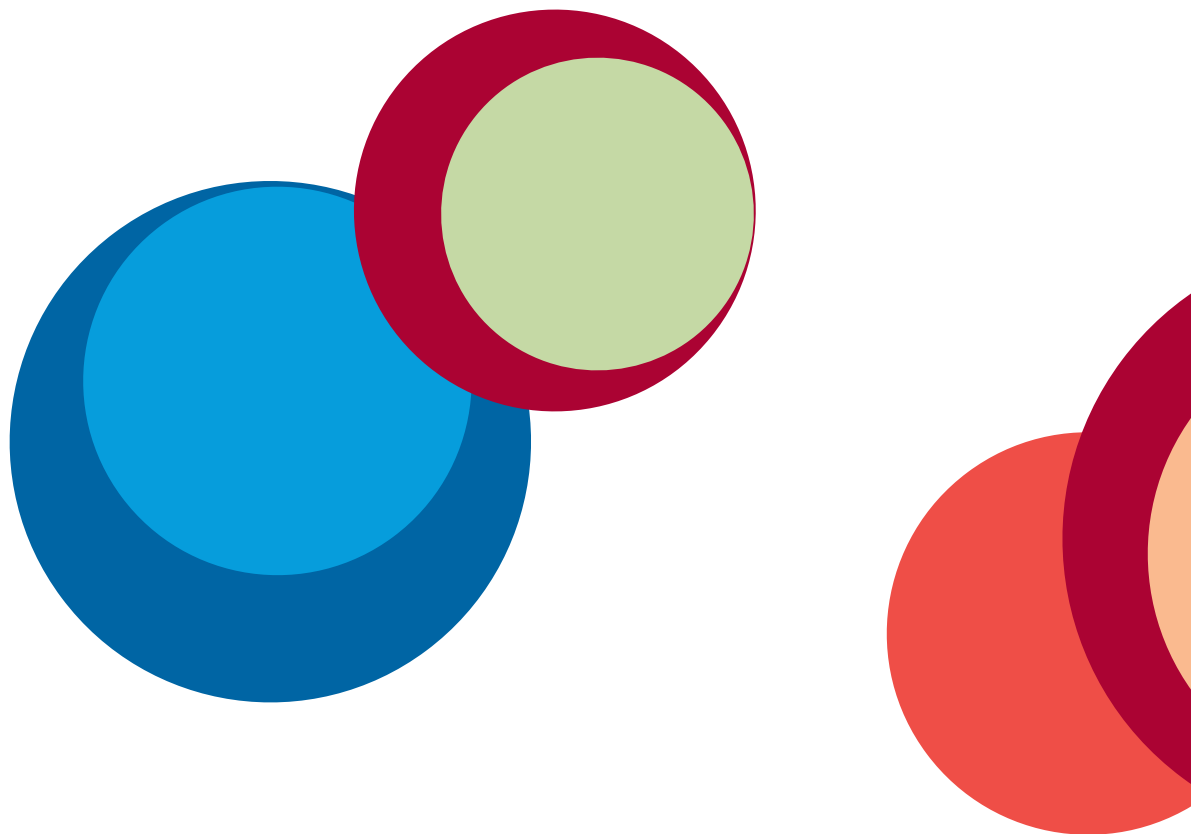
A Speech and Language Therapist was appointed as part of the People In Communities Team. It was made clear to the team that the therapist was not appointed to undertake statutory Speech and Language work with individual children or groups of children. Therefore staff considered creative ways of using the expertise for the benefit of the children. An LSA was appointed and trained and provided the sessions under the guidance of the therapist.

The therapist carried out diagnostic tests on the group of children. Following an assessment of each individual child a programme of work was planned meeting the needs of each individual.

Speech and language booster sessions were then developed with the cohort of Reception Class pupils, and undertaken by the LSA.

As part of the transition arrangements the school collected information on prior attainment from the feeder nursery school. This information identified the cohort of children with the most severe language deprivation. Approximately 30% of the Reception Class cohort was identified as having severe speech and language problems. The therapist interpreted the data and made comparisons from initial assessments. Children's attitudes to the group work/individual activities were monitored through informal observations.

In addition, a comprehensive set of resources was produced by the LSA and these resources are now used across the school.



Training, embedding and sustaining

An extensive training programme for the LSA was facilitated by the therapy service. The LSA also accessed other training through the BSF Fund and whole staff INSET. She communicated the project to all staff and was involved in training the new member of staff.

The RAISE project has become sustainable as it has linked to wider in-service training and other projects. It has provided the opportunity to empower staff, giving them responsibility, confidence and improved communication skills.

The project originally targeted a group of Reception Children in the first year of funding. The LSA has been able to support the transition of these pupils through to Year 2 and produce data that shows improvement. The project has been disseminated within the LA and outside the LA.

Effective timetabling and creative management of resources

Foundation Phase funding has been used to secure staffing. The involvement of the whole school in the RAISE initiative has raised staff awareness and secures an on-going commitment to raising achievement. The PIC, a multi-disciplinary team working on site, has also benefited the families. Families reported that there was easier and quicker access to services or expertise as a result of the initiative.

In developing capacity within the school, the Speech and Language Therapist scheduled herself to coincide with the individual, small group or paired speech and language sessions held throughout the school day. The LSA first worked alongside her to observe best practice and also met with her before and after school to discuss assessments and evaluate resources. The LSA was then able to develop her own resources and expertise with which to continue to schedule independent sessions for the pupils targeted.

Engaging the community

The involvement of parents in the every day life of the school is a challenging task. Very simple straight forward parental questionnaires were used to provide examples of the children's speech and language difficulties from the parents' viewpoint. The evidence was collated by the therapist. The questionnaires were distributed at the end of the year. Similar questionnaires were also used for all staff.

The school organises open days whereby parents are allocated a timeslot to discuss their child's progress. The attendance at these days is rarely below 90%.

The staff also organised an open afternoon for parents and produced a PowerPoint linked to the development of language skills in the Foundation Phase. This was followed by a Mothers Day Concert and 100% of parents attended.

Barriers and overcoming them

The achievement of effective multi-agency working initially proved more difficult to achieve than was anticipated. In order to create a climate of change where professionals and agencies can work effectively we need to understand what the barriers to change are, for example:

- Professionalism
- Conflicting priorities of different agencies
- Dealing with risk
- The need to change the culture of organisations.

Working in collaboration with other professionals and agencies involves workers moving out of their comfort zone and taking risks:

- Multi-agency work is an integral part of early years work
- Discussions need to be open and transparent
- Organisations which support children's care, learning and development must develop a culture of collaboration
- There needs to be a trusting relationship between colleagues
- Professional skills should be drawn on but it is important not to lose sight of the agreed beliefs and values.

As a result of the project the school developed a shared philosophy with all agencies, through the use of key government documentation e.g. Young People's Plan, School Effectiveness Framework, Safeguarding Children, recognising links and planning to achieve the aims, and across multi-agency working. The conflicting priorities of different agencies were also an issue. Also, the range of work undertaken by the PIC Team is dependant upon the personnel and resources available through the funding.

Foundation Phase documents make it quite clear that multi-agency work is a key part of the Foundation Phase – effective in improving outcomes for children. It is important to develop and sustain strong links with the feeder nursery school and junior school to receive and forward information on individual pupils, to further develop their skills.

Multi-agency work takes place at many levels but it must be integrated /coordinated well if it is to be successful. It was important that the project was well-coordinated and communicated effectively to all agencies.

Successes

- Through providing an early identification and intervention programme it strengthened the approach to the skills development of the children and this undoubtedly goes some way to addressing the link between disadvantage and underachievement
- The RAISE project was successful because it focused on the child, targeted need and made best use of all available resources. The project was well led, planned and coordinated
- It helped to develop trust with all agencies, and an understanding of the role of each professional and how each one can assist the other to support the development of the whole child
- It increased parental involvement and the ability of parents to support their child in a non-threatening way
- Multi-agency working provides better support for parents and carers and therefore more appropriately addresses the needs of children and their families.

Development planning

The School Improvement Plan will address all the future development planning, along with other key plans and strategies. It will ensure:

- Use of the Provision Mapping strategy to develop a coherent approach by linking all the programmes/provision to ensure the needs of the most vulnerable group of children are being met
- Continued links with feeder schools, sharing information addressing multi-agency and community links work through transition plans
- Involvement in the Teaching Talking programme pilot, which is a screening, assessment and intervention programme for children with speech and language problems. This links very clearly with the RAISE strategy and also needs to be embedded into practice
- Clear links to the LEA Strategic Plan
- Basic Skills Agency Funding, for programmes such as Catch-Up/Spotlight Mathematics also link very clearly to the project
- The Investors in Families action plan also highlights the continued development of multi-agency working and developing community links
- Staff from the ALN Team are involved in training in the Programme of Phoneme Awareness Training (POPAT) and ELKAN speech and language programme to be disseminated to all staff
- Purchasing suitable resources to include in the planned programme for the development of speech and language activities, e.g. Chatterbox, Time to Talk.



Maesteg Comprehensive School, Bridgend

Developing a whole school approach

Maesteg Comprehensive School is co-educational, with a pupil age range of 11-18 years. The present roll is 1136 pupils, including approximately 200 in the Sixth Form. The pupil population has an even balance of boys and girls and a truly comprehensive intake. The school currently has 81 teaching staff and a further 40 support staff that include administrators, technicians and learning support.

In January 2004, the school was awarded the “Most Improved School in South West Wales”, for their continuing trend in raising standards at Key Stage 4. In January 2005, it received notification that this award had been won for the second year in succession. In summer 2007, GCSE results were the best ever with 5 A*-C, increasing by 12% on the previous year. This is an enormous tribute to the talented staff at Maesteg School. The school faces a big challenge in sustaining this improvement and building on it.

The school is situated in the Llynfi Valley, in a brand new building, situated in a very pleasant rural setting.

The school’s catchment area serves the town of Maesteg and surrounding villages in the Llynfi Valley and has 23% of pupils entitled to free school meals. The school enjoys close links with its main feeder primary schools and benefits from a supportive close knit community.

Partnership is a common thread running through the school, based on mutual respect and the sharing of good practice. It is very fortunate to serve a close knit community. The school has a strong commitment to being community focused. Another feature of the school is the focus on the development of skills.

The vision for RAISE funded initiatives in the school was to:

- increase the academic and emotional support for disaffected pupils through providing further opportunities for all pupils to achieve accreditation and therefore reduce the number of children not in education, employment or training (NEETS)
- complement the Community Focused Schools agenda by including community activities in the curriculum
- raise awareness of well-being and pupils’ health by working alongside the ‘Healthy School’ proposal.

Appointing/redeploying appropriate staff

Initially, the RAISE grant was used to fund a series of appointments aimed at tackling the broader needs of the disadvantaged community more holistically. The positions were: a Behaviour Support Officer; a Senior Learning Coach; a School Health and Welfare Officer, and extending the role of the Learning Support Officer.

- The Behaviour Support Officer set up an Isolation Unit where pupils who misbehave and are at risk of temporary exclusion would spend some time to reflect and be counselled on improving behaviour
- The Senior Learning Coach works with pupils struggling to achieve their potential

- The School Welfare Officer originally focused on health and welfare of pupils, liaising with parents on any relevant issues
- The Learning Support Officer works with selected pupils in the school's own Personalised Learning Centre, where pupils' timetables are designed specifically for the individual. ASDAN has been the focus for accreditation in this area. Also, outside agency visits such as the Fire Service have been made use of.

A professional counsellor visits the school one day a week to provide emotional support and she is also funded through RAISE.

Alternative curriculum packages for those pupils not suited to mainstream school have also been funded through RAISE.



Training, embedding and sustaining

Since the start of RAISE these roles have developed greatly:

- The Behaviour Support Officer is now working alongside the Restorative Justice Worker and using new skills to provide guidance for pupils in the Isolation Unit. Also, the worker, herself, links with some of the pupils placed in the unit and their parents, providing family support
- The Senior Learning Coach has been trained in the “Seasons for Growth” bereavement programme, anger management and an accredited course as a Learning Mentor. Her extensive training in emotional literacy means that she is able to offer a variety of support to pupils as well as helping them to achieve their potential academically and raising their self-esteem. She has developed close links with a number of external agencies to provide this support, including: Gloucester Learning Mentor and BIP Cluster, Bridgend Youth Services, the School Counsellor, the Education Psychology Department, LACE (Looked after Children), the Education Welfare Officer, Communities First, Seasons for Growth Bereavement Support, Winston’s Wish, Mental Health Matters Wales, CAMHS, ASDAN, Antidote Emotional Literacy, Tesco and Restorative Justice
- The School Health and Welfare Officer has developed skills in First Aid and now delivers training to groups of pupils. She also works on the school’s Healthy School Action Plan and runs classes such as “Smoking Cessation”. She and the Senior Learning Coach work together on providing guidance to vulnerable girls. She liaises with a number of agencies, including: WGCADA (West Glamorgan Council on Alcohol and Drug Abuse), School Nurses, Lisa Phillips - Nurse Specialist in Epilepsy, St John’s Ambulance Wales, Community Dental Service, the Education Welfare Officer, Validate, the School Counsellor, Schools Healthy Eating and Smoking Cessation Project
- The LSO too has developed his role as he now plays an active part in delivering ASDAN to pupils and has recently developed the Prince’s Trust initiative with some pupils, providing another opportunity for success and achievement. He has also developed links with: the Tidy Towns project, Bullies Out, Bridgend Youth Service, Communities First, Bridgend College, Ogwr DASH, the Fire Service, Positive Futures and Wise for Life.

Effective timetabling and creative management of resources

By employing non-teaching staff to run the Personalised Learning Centre (PLC), Supervision Room and as Learning Mentors, it means the school has the flexibility to accommodate pupils as and when the need arises. This would not be possible if staff were timetabled for teaching. The PLC is able to provide support for those pupils for whom some mainstream lessons are not always accessible and the numbers fluctuate according to demand. Mentors initially focused on Year 11 students only with the emphasis on C/D borderline candidates. However, this field has now expanded to include whole school. Pupils and parents are aware of the support facilities the school provides, which would not have been possible to start without the RAISE funding.

Engaging the community

The school has very strong links with the local community and as part of those has been involved in a Restorative Justice project for the last two years. The Supervision Room member of staff liaises on a daily basis with the project worker, referring vulnerable pupils and so developing work with parents and the wider community. The Project Worker works closely with the Youth Offending Team so enabling the school to exchange information on issues with pupils in the community. This is a particularly successful partnership benefiting both the school and the wider community. Linked to this is the association with the Police through the Liaison Officer, who contributes to PSE lessons and helps mentor some of more problematic pupils.

One of the actions as a Community Focused School is to promote Healthy Eating and as part of that the Health and Welfare Officer is involved in this initiative.

The Learning Support Officer has started a course with some Year 10 pupils on the Prince's Trust accreditation. This has a community aspect as they are involved in a river project where they visit a section of the local community and help to clean it up, so improving their environment.

Barriers and overcoming them

One issue was the reluctance of some parents to come into the school to meet with staff to discuss the lack of progress/behaviour of their child. However, with the encouragement of a non-teaching member of staff who stressed the support that was available to support the pupil, parents are more willing to visit the school.

Successes

There is no doubt that there has been a reduction in exclusions as a result of the Supervision Room as a sanction and an increase in accreditation: last year the school had no pupil leave who did not achieve at least one GCSE or equivalent. This is testament to a team approach encouraging the pupils to achieve their potential. The Supervision Room and Restorative Justice (working with parents) have helped to keep reluctant pupils in school. The mentors have worked with them to produce quality coursework and provide them with practice on past papers.

Recently, the school experienced the sudden death of an ex-pupil and was able to provide services, through Winston's Wish and Seasons for Growth (two bereavement projects) as well as counselling from a trained counsellor employed by the LA (and paid for by RAISE) and also the Educational Psychology Service. As a result of the initiative Winston's Wish, Tesco provided the school with a Christmas Tree which was decorated with stars with messages linked to the ex-pupil or any loved ones who had died.

Pupils and parents have made positive comments about the Anger Management sessions and with the combination of a personalised timetable, some students have become more responsible citizens in the community, with a much clearer progression route.

Pupils have achieved accreditation such as ASDAN – COPE in practical 'real world' skills that they can draw on for life.

Support for those pupils with low self-esteem has enabled them to flourish and prosper as individuals. Some of this is as a result of working with the Prince's Trust and the training of the Learning Mentor through the Gloucester cluster where ideas and good practice are shared. Through working with these pupils and exposing them to a variety of situations provided by the Police, Fire Service and St. John's Ambulance, the school has been able to build their confidence so that they are more able to survive in the world of work.

Through the funding of a professional counsellor from the LA and the training of staff through SAP and ELSA and its links with the Educational Psychology Service, the school has been able to help pupils gain emotional support and sometimes other agencies' professional help too e.g. CAMHS and Primary Mental Health.

The alternative curriculum packages, involving pupils accessing a local Key Skills Centre, have contributed to the accreditation of all pupils.

The school tries very hard to be an inclusive school and RAISE has helped to achieve this.

Development planning

In order to build on the very solid foundations of the three years of RAISE, the school intends to further develop the extent of pupils' self-esteem.

Through RAISE funding the school has developed an integrated network of support for the pupils, ranging from Anger Management to Health Care to study support and mentoring, which has had a major impact on raising the self-esteem of the most vulnerable pupils. The aim now is to develop the programme of emotional literacy so that it is embedded across the school through the coaching of all staff.

Those staff members who have become experts through RAISE over the last three years will coach others to become more aware of how to raise pupils' self-esteem and to develop staff's understanding of emotional literacy. A programme will be established and, with the combined force of SAP and ELSA training, specific pupils will be identified and targeted by a range of staff for this support. This could involve working with external agencies such as "Changing Tracks", "On Track" and the Youth Service for specialised pastoral support.

Having received plaudits from the RAISE co-ordinator, with whom the school has worked on examples of good practice for the RAISE website, the school is confident it can build on this expertise developed as a result of the funding from RAISE over the last three years.

With staff receiving coaching on Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL), it will mean they will be able to be proactive in their work with pupils in a positive preventative way. This should result in raising pupils' sense of achievement and encouraging a positive future which for many would have seemed unattainable. With regular 'topping up' of this training, the project could be sustained for future cohorts of pupils in need of this support.



Mountain Ash Comprehensive School, RCT

Developing a whole school approach

The school is located on the outskirts of the town of Mountain Ash at the lower end of the Cynon Valley. It serves a catchment area consisting mainly of older private housing and a number of local authority housing estates. There are high levels of unemployment in the area with some 35% of pupils entitled to free school meals.

Mountain Ash Comprehensive School has a long history of working in partnership with both the statutory and voluntary organisations. The levels of deprivation in the Lower Cynon Valley were so great, the school needed to develop links in order to maximise the opportunities for pupils both in and out of school.

The RAISE funding came at the right time and gave the school the chance to extend, develop and secure different ways of working with pupils.

The RAISE projects are:

- The Keystart Appropriate Curriculum
- A Support Centre
- An alternative to exclusion programme
- A Transition Summer Camp
- A pre GCSE revision school
- Spotlight Maths programme.

Appointing/redeploying appropriate staff

The Keystart Programme is a partnership programme between the school and a community organisation, The Strategy and Careers Wales. To support the programme, RAISE funding covers the cost of:

- a tutor, who delivers the GCSE syllabus in both Maths and English, Keyskills, and is an NVQ assessor in customer care
- a youth worker, who is responsible for work experience placements. He works closely with Careers Wales who do all the risk assessments, check that employers have the necessary documentation i.e. employers insurance, public liability.

The RAISE funding has also enabled the school to develop a support area to address:

- behavioural issues, and
- emotional and social needs that some pupils experience

The funding has been used to employ:

- Two members of staff: one works two days per week on one of the estates that is in the catchment area; the second member of staff works three days per week and has a wealth of experience
- A School Support Officer (SSO) who is responsible for liaising with the Heads of Years 7-11. If a pupil needs support the pupil is referred to one or more of the following agencies:
 - Education Welfare Service
 - Eye to Eye Counselling
 - Youth Inclusion Support Project
 - School Nursing Service
 - On-Track
 - Primary Mental Health Service
 - TEDS (Treatment Education Drugs Service)
 - Young Carers
 - On-Track + (ten families work with their children on a ten-week programme)
 - E3 Programme (out of school hours learning).

The school also used RAISE funding to develop an alternative to fixed term exclusion. The RAISE Funding provides the money for a detached youth worker (hourly pay rate). It is a partnership programme between Community First, On-Track, RCT Detached Youth Team and the school. Pupils that would have been excluded work on a one-to-one basis with a member of staff. The aim of the programme is to give the pupils the opportunity to look at the consequences of their actions. Parents are involved in the programme because the member of staff goes to the home to collect the pupil and returns them home at the end of the session.

Furthermore, RAISE funding has been used to pay for vulnerable pupils to attend a Transition Camp. The staff members that attend are from the community organisations within the cluster. The school support officer is responsible for:

- coordinating the camp
- visiting the families of the identified pupils, prior to the camp
- visiting the pupils in the feeder primary schools

The pupils that are identified to attend the Camp are:

- from poor home backgrounds
- have low confidence/self-esteem.

One pupil from each school is chosen because of their contribution to school or the community.

Training, embedding and sustaining

Partly as a result of RAISE funded work, the school has developed its capacity to work with other agencies to support pupils with social, emotional or behavioural difficulties. The aim of the work is to enable pupils to work with highly trained professionals to address their particular needs. These professionals are based outside the school, but come into school to work with the pupils and the appointments are timetabled.

The school is now working in partnership with On-Track. There are three staff members and they are based in the school. One member of staff:

- co-ordinates the programme and carries out the initial assessment
- works with families
- works in the feeder primary schools and concentrates primarily on transition.

Staff which includes the Intensive Behaviour Support Tutor, the School Support Officer, the On-Track Staff, the Community Youth Workers and the Detached Youth Team has been trained to use the Pathways Programme.

The school has been actively involved in events designed to disseminate the lessons of RAISE across Wales. The Headteacher and Assistant Headteacher delivered a workshop at the national conference in Llandrindod Wells in November 2007.

Effective timetabling and creative management of resources

Keystart/Appropriate Curriculum

The project has now been relocated to the Bryncynon Strategy, which is effectively functioning as a satellite site for the school in relation to this intervention. Funding for the co-ordinator post has been secured for three years from the Cymorth Fund. Currently the school and Bryncynon Strategy are working on a bid 'The Outcome Fund' for the funding for the project tutor and the work placement co-ordinator.

Support Centre

The staff has been trained to run the Pathways Programme and Pacific Institute. To continue this provision the school will fund the two main posts: the Intensive Behaviour Support Tutor and the School Support Officer. The role of the School Support Officer is critical in ensuring pupils with specific needs are referred to the appropriate agency.

Agencies that work in the school are:

- Young Carers
- Eye-to-Eye Counselling Service
- Educational Psychologist
- Behaviour Support
- Youth Inclusion Support Project (YISP)
- Youth Offending Service (YOS)
- On-Track
- Treatment Education Drugs Service (TEDS)
- School Nurse
- Primary Mental Health Team (PMHT)
- Education Welfare Service
- Restorative Justice
- Families First
- Children's Services – Looked After Team (LAC).

Pupils with difficulties are discussed at the Heads of Year meetings every Monday. The School Support Officer then refers pupils on behalf of the Heads of Year. She also runs nurture groups and works on one-to-one programmes with pupils that require this type of intervention. Pupils are referred to the Educational Psychologist and Behaviour Support by the SENCO.

An Alternative to Exclusion Programme (A to E)

This programme was developed as an alternative to fixed-term exclusions. Partners and school staff were trained to use the Pathways Programme, which is based around consequential behaviour. An 'on call' system has been developed and three staff members are involved. These are:

- the School Support Officer
- a detached youth worker
- a youth worker that works in the community.

If pupils are referred because of a behavioural problem, the parents are contacted and the programme is explained to them. The next day the pupil is collected from home and the 'on call' staff works with the pupil on the Pathways Programme in an off site centre. The pupils are then taken home after the Pathways Programme and the member of staff will outline to the parents the work that has taken place with their child. The pupil will attend the Support Centre for half days on return to school.

Transition Summer Camp

The feeder primary schools in the main identify the pupils, but some pupils are identified by other agencies e.g. Families First, Young Carers, On-Track. The identification is done during the transition meetings in all the Feeder Schools in May. The School Support Officer visits all the parents of the identified pupils prior to the Transition Camp. The camp is over four days and is staffed by community youth workers, the E3 Co-ordinator, the 5 x 60 Officer and the Detached Youth Worker.

GCSE Revision School

Pupils in Year 11 are identified by the English and Maths Departments. The pupils are C/D borderline pupils. The Revision School is run as a consortium i.e. pupils from all the secondary schools in the valley attend.

Engaging the community

Since 1999 the school has worked closely with the community to develop a partnership – MAP for Lifelong Learning. The partnership meets every term. The sub-groups meet on a more frequent basis. Initially, within the school there was a level of cynicism, but over the years staff members have witnessed the positive effect that partnership working has on pupils and on the school as a whole.

Barriers and overcoming them

Due to the fact that the MAP for Lifelong Learning had been established in 1999 and was well and truly embedded into the school and community pre-RAISE, the school did not encounter any barriers.

Successes

As stated earlier, Mountain Ash Comprehensive School has developed strong links with community partners. The success of all the following projects has depended upon the collaboration and co-operation of external partners:

Keystart Appropriate Curriculum

- Outcomes have surpassed expectations. 75% of the target group achieved NVQ Level 1 against a target of 50%
- 90% achieved at least a GCSE in English and/or Maths
- The behaviour of pupils improved along with attitude and attendance
- Discussion with pupils and parents revealed that they had a very positive attitude to the programme and felt that they had achieved a great deal from school. They stressed that without Keystart they would have been unsuccessful in school
- A significant number of pupils have used Keystart as a 'springboard' to secure apprenticeships or further training and/or employment.

Support Centre (Intensive Behaviour Support)

The improvements in fixed-term exclusions speak for themselves:

Autumn 05	28
Autumn 07	15
Spring 06	49
Spring 08	8
Summer 06	31
Summer 08	12

Alternative to Exclusion (A to E)

Autumn Term 2008 – seven pupils were referred to the programme while ten pupils received fixed term exclusions. This shows a reduction on the previous year's fixed-term exclusions of 33%.

Transition Camp

- The majority of pupils that attended the camp had a successful transition from primary to secondary school
- The pupils that attended the camp developed positive relationships with both school staff and community partners that attended the camp
- A significant number of pupils engaged in activities within their communities after the camp. This indicated that the presence of community youth workers at the camp is extremely beneficial
- Excellent relationships were established with parents even before their children attended the comprehensive.

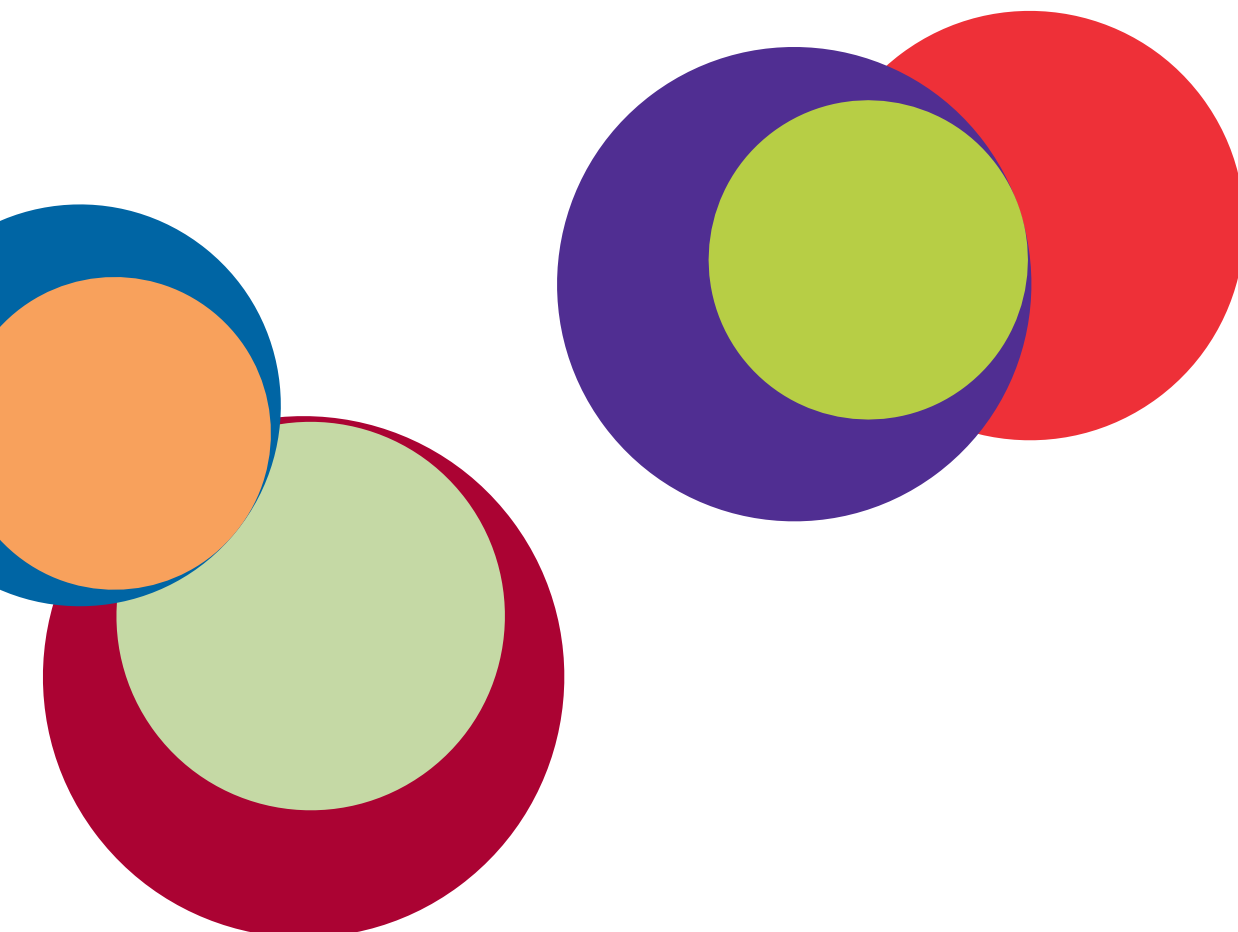
GCSE Revision School

This is a consortium run project. Working with all of the secondary schools in the Cynon Valley, of 35 of the pupils who attended the Easter School:

- 49% achieved C or above in Maths
- 74% achieved C or above in English Language
- 49% achieved 5 or more A-C grades

26 pupils were entered for DiDA or BTEC (equivalent to 4 GCSEs)

- 19% achieved a Merit
- 77% achieved a Pass
- 4% achieved 1 Merit and 1 Pass



Development planning

Since 1999 the school has worked closely with the community to develop a multi-agency partnership – MAP for Lifelong Learning. This partnership meets every term and has 55 members from both statutory and voluntary organisations. There are sub-groups that meet on a more frequent basis.

Initially within the school, there was a level of cynicism amongst staff regarding other agencies involvement with pupils. Over the years there has been a dramatic change in the ethos as staff have witnessed the positive effect that partnership working has on individual pupils and on the school as a whole.

The unanimous view of the staff is that any reduction in the support activities funded by RAISE would be a significant step backwards and would have a negative impact on teaching and learning in the school community. Therefore, planning for life after RAISE is in progress.

Some of the posts will be funded through the core budget. These are:

- Intensive Behaviour Support Tutor
- School Support Officer
- Spotlight Maths Learning Assistant

The Keystart posts will be funded as follows:

- The Keystart Co-ordinator – funded by Cymorth for 3 years
- Keystart Tutor and Work Placement Officer
 - bids have been submitted to Paul Hamlyn and Esmee Fairburn
 - currently working in partnership with Bryncynon Strategy on a bid to Communities First – Outcome Fund
 - discussions with LA regarding Convergence Bid

Appendix

Useful Resources

Antidote Emotional Literacy	Emotional Literacy project: www.antidote.org.uk
ASDAN	Approved awarding body offering programmes and qualifications to develop key skills and life skills. www.asdan.org.uk
Barnardos	Charity for vulnerable children: www.barnardos.org.uk
Bullies Out	Voluntary support for schools, pupils and families: www.bulliesout.com
CAMHS	Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services: www.camhs.org.uk
Careers Wales	Gives free careers information, advice and guidance: www.careerswales.com
Changing Tracks	Bridgend Youth Services: nicola.lewis@bridgend.gov.uk
Children's Services	Locally based
Communities First	WAG initiative to help communities: 0800 587 8898 help@wcva.org.uk
Community Dental Service	Locally based
Community Police	Locally based
ContinYou Cymru	A community learning organisation offering opportunities to people who have gained the least from formal education and training. www.continyou.org.uk

Duke of Edinburgh	A youth charity that offers achievement awards for young people. www.dofe.org.uk
E3	RCT out of hours learning programme: www.rhondda-cynon-taff.gov.uk
Education Welfare Officer	Locally based
Educational Psychologist	Locally based
ELKLAN	Trains people to help children with speech and language difficulties. www.elklan.co.uk
Eye to Eye Counselling	www.eyetoeyewales.co.uk
Fire Service	Locally based: Provides activities such as Arson Rap Project
FIT	Family Intervention team: www.childreninwales.org.uk/inyourarea
Fusion	Voluntary drug and alcohol support: www.volunteering-wales.net
Gloucester Learning Mentor	Training Scheme: www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/learningmentors
Hub	Community First Youth Partnership at Caerphilly County Borough Council: 01443 863116
LAC Support Officers	Looked After Children Services (locally based/WAG)
Llamau	Aid for young people when families break down: www.llamau.co.uk
Mental Health Matters Wales	Mental health support agency: www.mhmbcb.com
National Health Trust	www.nhs.uk
OCN	Open College Network: www.ocn.org.uk
Ogwr DASH	Drug and alcohol support agency: www.cvmhdp.org.uk/content/public/
On-Track	Community-based family aid project: www.dcsf.gov.uk
PAL	Partnership Accelerates Learning: Basic Skills Literacy Programme
POPAT	Programme of Phoneme Awareness Training – used as a remedial programme for children with speech and language difficulties. www.popat.co.uk

Positive Futures	www.bridgendsportingchance.org/positive%20futures.html
Primary Mental Health Service	Locally based
Princes Trust	An accredited course for pupils: www.princes-trust.org.uk
Restorative Justice	www.restorativejustice.org.uk
SAP	Student Assistance Programme: www.sap.state.pa.us
Seasons for Growth	Bereavement Support: www.seasonsforgrowth.co.uk
School Nursing Service	Locally based
Schools Healthy Eating	www.healthyschools.gov.uk
Smoking Cessation Project	All Wales smoking cessation services: www.wales.nhs.uk
St John's Ambulance	Provides First Aid training for staff and pupils: www.sja.org.uk
TEDS	Treatment Education Drugs Service: webapps.rhondda-cynon-taff.gov.uk
The Strategy	RCT drop in centre: www.bryncynonstrategy.org.uk
THRASS	Teaching Handwriting, Reading and Spelling Skills: www.thrass.co.uk
Tidy Towns Project	Community initiative: www.keepwalestidy.org
Validate	An identity card service for young people: www.validateuk.co.uk
WGCADA	West Glamorgan Council on Alcohol and Drug Abuse: www.wgcada.org
Winston's Wish	Bereavement Support: www.winstonswish.org.uk
Wise for Life	Deryn Howell, Bridgend Co-ordinator, Unit 32, CF32 9BS
YISP	Youth Inclusion and Support Panels: www.yjb.gov.uk/en-gb/yjs/Prevention/YISP/
YOT	www.yjb.gov.uk/en-gb/yjs/YouthOffendingTeams/
Young Carers	Online service for young carers: www.youngcarers.net