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Wellbeing Strategies: Vulnerable Group Support

Case Studies of Good Practice

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

Ensuring that the children of Wales have every opportunity to succeed and flourish in a fair and equitable education system is at the heart of *Education Wales - Our National Mission 2017-2021*. The national education system aims to develop 'strong and inclusive schools committed to excellence, equity and wellbeing' (Welsh Government, 2017, p.3). At a regional level, the Education Achievement Service of South East Wales (EAS) is committed to improving pupil outcomes, particularly for vulnerable groups of learners, and to reducing the variance within and across schools/settings (particularly within the secondary phase) and local authorities within the region.

The EAS is the school improvement service for the five local authorities (LAs) in South East Wales (Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly, Monmouthshire, Newport and Torfaen). The number of pupils of compulsory school age in the region in 2018 was 71,970. This represents 19% of all pupils in Wales. In September 2018, there were 234 maintained schools in the region, 15% of all maintained schools in Wales. The percentage of pupils of compulsory school age eligible for free school meals (eFSM) is 18.4%, which is higher than the national figure of 17.4%. This level of eligibility is the second highest of the four regional consortia (North, West, Central South and South East Wales). The percentage of pupils aged five or over from an ethnic minority background is around 10%. Around 980 children in the region are looked after (LAC) by an LA and attend a school in the region. This represents 15% of looked after children in Wales (EAS, 2019a:3).

This guide contains eleven case studies of good practice collated following interviews with seventeen educators in South East Wales. Case studies are drawn from a range of settings including a nursery school, seven primary schools (including one federation), three high schools and a Pupil Referral Service. This collection includes case studies from each of the five local authorities of Newport (2), Blaenau Gwent (2), Monmouthshire (4), Caerphilly (2) and Torfaen (1). The selected schools/ setting were identified as sites of promising practice in consultation with the EAS. Interviews and case study visits were conducted in February and March 2020.

The case studies were commissioned to compliment the regional Wellbeing and Equity Strategy and to strengthen support for learners (See Appendix 1). It is important that all teachers understand the needs of learners with a particular focus on those who are deemed vulnerable. Estyn (2020a:1) defines vulnerable pupils as, 'those who may be more likely to experience emotional, social and developmental barriers to learning'. It may be helpful to read this guide in conjunction with the [Professional Standards for Teaching and Leadership](#) and the [Health and Well-being Area of Learning and Experience](#) of the Curriculum for Wales.

There are two sections to this good practice guide. The first section sets out what is meant by wellbeing and equity in education, and offers a succinct summary for a practitioner audience of key messages from research in three areas: (1) promoting pupil participation; (2) supporting More Able and Talented learners; and (3) supporting those learners who are in the Care system. These key messages are extracted from a review of over 70 research papers (see References).

The second section, presents illustrative case studies to share good practice in promoting the wellbeing of learners and supporting vulnerable groups from nursery to secondary education (3-18 years). Each case study includes consideration of why the initiative was needed, what was involved, school-generated evidence of impact, key points in regard to transferability, and sources of further information for professional learning. Given the influence of context on adaptability in education, a short description of the school/setting frames each illustrative case.

DEFINING WELLBEING & EQUITY

The *Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015* requires public bodies to work to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural wellbeing of Wales. Progress towards the achievement of the seven Wellbeing goals (below) is measured through 46 National Indicators, which include the development, health, education, social and material wellbeing of children and young people.

Table 1. Seven Wellbeing Goals

Wellbeing Goal	Description of the goal
A prosperous Wales	An innovative, productive and low carbon society which recognises the limits of the global environment and therefore uses resources efficiently and proportionately (including acting on climate change); and which develops a skilled and well-educated population in an economy which generates wealth and provides employment opportunities, allowing people to take advantage of the wealth generated through securing decent work.
A resilient Wales	A nation which maintains and enhances a biodiverse natural environment with healthy functioning ecosystems that support social, economic and ecological resilience and the capacity to adapt to change (for example climate change).
A healthier Wales	A society in which people's physical and mental wellbeing is maximised and in which choices and behaviours that benefit future health are understood.
A more equal Wales	A society that enables people to fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances (including their socio economic background and circumstances).
A Wales of cohesive communities	Attractive, viable, safe and well-connected communities.
A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language	A society that promotes and protects culture, heritage and the Welsh language, and which encourages people to participate in the arts, and sports and recreation.
A globally responsible Wales	A nation which, when doing anything to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural wellbeing of Wales, takes account of whether doing such a thing may make a positive contribution to global wellbeing.

Research suggests a strong association between wellbeing and educational outcomes. In this guide, we use Selwyn and Briheim-Crookall's (2017) definition of wellbeing, as 'how children feel (e.g. happiness, life satisfaction, life having meaning) and how they are functioning and flourishing (e.g. relationships, self-efficacy and life getting better)' (p.4). This definition encompasses both objective (hard outcomes) and subjective measures of wellbeing (how people feel about aspects of their lives). We acknowledge wellbeing as multifaceted including the following four dimensions: emotional (including fears, anxiety and mood), behavioural (including attention problems), social (including victimisation), and school wellbeing (including enjoyment and engagement) (Gutman & Vorhaus, 2012:3).

Wellbeing is higher is more equitable societies. In education, equity addresses the issue of fairness and the removal of barriers to achievement. The Welsh Government's *Education in Wales: Our national mission* states that, "each learner must be respected and challenged to achieve the best they are capable of … while being supported to overcome barriers that inhibit their learning" (Welsh Government, 2017, p.31)

> *"Equity in education means that personal or social circumstances such as gender, ethnic origin or family background, are not obstacles to achieving educational potential (fairness) and that that all individuals reach at least a basic minimum level of skills (inclusion)" (OECD, 2012, p.9)*

> *Equity does not mean that all students obtain equal education outcomes, but rather that differences in students' outcomes are unrelated to their background or to economic and social circumstances over which students have no control. (OECD, 2018, p.13)*

Reducing the impact of deprivation on education outcomes has been a key focus of policy in Wales for a number of years. *Rewriting the Future* (WG, 2014a) and *Building Resilient Communities* (WG, 2014b) sought to tackle the social gradient in attainment, especially the impact of child poverty. However, there are persistent differences in attainment, attendance and exclusion between disadvantaged students and their less disadvantaged peers in Wales. Disadvantaged pupils are defined by Estyn (2020:1) as those "pupils who may have barriers to succeeding in school because of detrimental circumstances beyond their control. These may include financial and social hardships within pupils' families including pupils eligible for free school meals (eFSM) and pupils from low income families".

For the three-year period ending in 2017/18, 29% of children in Wales were living in relative income poverty (Welsh Government, 2019). The performance gap between eFSM pupils and non eFSM pupils increased between 2016 and 2019 for the end of the foundation phase (age 7) and key stage 2 (age 11). At key stage 3 (age 14), the gap remained constant with around 20% point difference between eFSM and non eFSM pupils. At the end of key stage 4 (age 16), the percentage of eFSM pupils achieving the Level 2 inclusive (L2 incl) measure is half that of non eFSM pupils (i.e. achievement of five GCSEs at A*to C including English or Welsh First Language and Mathematics). The gap in performance at the level 1 (L1) measure (i.e. 5 GCSEs at A*-G) has widened in recent years (source: StatsWales, 2019). By the end of key stage 4, the number of LAC achieving the Level 1 and Level 2 inclusive thresholds is significantly below the level achieved by all pupils (up to 10% point difference). Education outcomes are correlated with school attendance. In 2017-2018, the gap between the percentage of eFSM pupils and non-eFSM pupil who are persistent absentees increased for primary and secondary schools. Between 2013 and 2018, the rate of exclusions was consistently four times higher for eFSM pupils than non eFSM pupils (Estyn, 2020a: 58).

In 2012, the Welsh Government introduced targeted funding to improve the progress, attainment and wellbeing of vulnerable and disadvantaged pupils. Grant funding includes the Pupil Deprivation Grant (now renamed the Pupil Development Grant, PDG) which provides additional funding to schools based on the number of pupils eligible for free school meals (eFSM) or who are looked after children (LAC). In 2019, the PDG was £1,150 for every pupil from Years 1-11 who is eFSM or in the care of a local authority. Since its launch in 2012, more than £475 million has been made available through the PDG to support over 530,000 children and young people (Welsh Government, 2019:10). £101m is allocated

to the PDG in the Welsh Government budget for 2020/21. PDG funding can be used to support: improving attainment, behaviour and attendance; making a positive impact on wellbeing and family and community engagement; extracurricular or aspiration raising activity or prevention of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET). Many of the wellbeing interventions and activities reported in this guide make use of grant funding to enhance their provision.

Collectively the case studies presented in this report address the two dimensions of educational equity – fairness and inclusion; and the four dimensions of learner wellbeing – emotional, behavioural, social and school wellbeing.

The case studies exemplify twenty characteristics of good practice in promoting wellbeing and equity in education (overleaf). Across the diverse range of initiatives undertaken there is a common commitment to improving communication with parents/carers to encourage parental engagement in learning, and to support smooth transitions between stages of education. Effective strategies are supported by high levels of professional collaboration and by targeting resource to clearly specified equity goals.

The eleven case studies in this guide exemplify the following twenty characteristics of good practice in promoting wellbeing and equity.

Table 2. Twenty characteristics of good practice

Case study	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Close monitoring of attendance, performance and participation (early identification).			X	X					X	X	X
Increased engagement develops spoken communication skills (oracy)	X		X			X					
Social and emotional gains e.g. greater empathy & improved peer interaction	X				X		X		X		
More diverse and flexible curriculum offer at upper secondary			X						X		
Systematic additional learning support & targeted interventions				X						X	
Encouraging community engagement						X		X			X
Encouraging parental involvement	X	X			X		X	X		X	X
Accessible and affordable wellbeing activities organised outside school hours	X							X	X		
One-to-one and group mentoring			X	X	X				X	X	
Improved communication with parents	X	X	X	X	X			X		X	X
Set targets for equity (RADY)									X	X	
Direct resources to learners with greatest need				X	X		X		X	X	
Professional learning opportunities for wellbeing education					X		X				
Smoothing transitions between stages of education	X	X	X	X					X	X	X
Better use of space to create bespoke safe environments for personalised learning & care					X		X	X			
Organise learning time differently to make space for wellbeing activities						X		X			X
High levels of professional collaboration	X	X		X		X	X		X	X	
Build strong external partnerships to enhance provision						X		X			
Support for more able learners			X			X					X
Support for Looked After Children and being ACE aware				X	X				X		

PROMOTING PUPIL PARTICIPATION: DRIVERS & BARRIERS

The following key messages are extracted from a review of research of the role of pupil participation in advancing wellbeing and equity in education. Full citations are contained in the References section. Key learning is presented using three themes to aid professional reflection.

Theme 1: The perceived role of pupils
Theme 2: The perceived role of teachers
Theme 3: Characteristics of school culture that support pupil participation

THE PERCEIVED ROLE OF PUPILS	
SUPPORTING PUPIL PARTICIPATION	**INHIBITING PUPIL PARTICIPATION**
- Pupils are perceived as a co-contributor to curriculum, teaching and learning (Hulme et al., 2011) - Pupils are viewed as capable participants with the capacity to take ownership of their own learning. Pupil participation is regarded as useful for the development of metacognition, especially skilfulness (Wall, 2012) - Pupils possess freedom to choose whether they want to engage/participate or not; their voice is listened to and their opinions expressed (Simo et al., 2016). - Pupils are encouraged to launch their own ideas (Cincera & Kovacikova, 2014) - Pupils are allowed to become involved in activities resulting from their individual preferences and areas of interest (Katsenou et al. 2013) - Pupils play an active part in the life of the school, including appropriate levels of decision-making.	- Pupils have limited opportunities to ask questions, make their own suggestions, argue, interact and engage (Thornberg, 2010) - Practitioners view learners as subordinate and incompetent. - Learners are seen as too young to be involved in decision making (their age is perceived as an inhibiting factor) (Inglis, 2014) - Learner behaviour and experiences are shaped by controlling forces (Thornberg & Elvstrand, (2012). - Teachers under value the important role of pupil-to-pupil interaction/peer support when implementing adult-led interventions intended to enhance participation and promote inclusion (Garrote et al., 2017)

THE PERCEIVED ROLE OF TEACHERS	
SUPPORTING PUPIL PARTICIPATION	**INHIBITING PUPIL PARTICIPATION**
Teachers are perceived as co-contributors to curriculum, teaching and learning.	Teachers express a protectionist and/or guiding perspective on learner engagement: suggests a lack of trust in

• Teachers take on the role of the facilitator not manager. • There is a shift towards pupil-led classroom dialogue that gives pupils an opportunity to develop their intellectual freedom (Kerawalla, 2015). • Teachers are positioned as democratic participants in school and encouraged to put school democracy in practice. • Teaching staff can exercise agency to initiate important changes in school culture and structures in order to improve pupil participation.	learner competence and educator potential to motivate pupils (Inglis, 2012). • Where pupils perceive participation as contrived or engineered by adults, pupils often report dissatisfaction, frustration and conflict with peers. Teacher-led initiatives that limit pupils' freedom to choose and opportunities to change will not achieve their intended outcomes (Cincera & Kovacikova, 2014).

CHARACTERISTICS OF SCHOOL CULTURE THAT SUPPORT PUPIL PARTICIPATION

- School culture fosters creative collaboration between teachers and pupils. Recognition that pupil participation is inseparable from the school culture within which their action takes place (Katsenou et al. 2013)
- School culture can be described as participatory and concerned with "deliberate democracy" (Hulme et al., 2011)
- Participation is not linked to the age of a pupil but is related to the opportunities and spaces designed to make participation possible. Processes for increasing pupil participation represent a force for improving school inclusion (Ceballos López, 2016).
- Experiments with tools and activities that give pupils opportunities to express their experiences and allows teachers to get to know their pupils in a new way (Niemi et al., 2018)
- Pupils make a contribution to decisions regarding the spaces that they occupy in school e.g. playground design (Pearson & Howe, 2017).
- Pupil participation and school democracy are seen as a priority and taken seriously. Democratic experiences within the school are linked to the wider active citizenship agenda beyond school (McCowan, 2010).
- Relationships are based on trust and horizontal forms of cooperation between teachers and pupils that lead to a sense of wellbeing.
- Participation is not perceived as an outcome or end product, but is a process of deepening relationships, building mutual trust and positive interaction.
- Pupil participation strategies are sensitive to the particular issues facing children and young people who are most often marginalised in schooling through distinctions of social class, disability, gender, ethnic or linguistic background (McCluskey, 2017).
- Pupil participation has the potential to enhance positive health outcomes and improve pupils' perception of school. The more pupils participate actively in school life and decision-making, the more likely they are to report positive health and wellbeing outcomes (John-Akinola & Nic-Gabhainn, 2014).

SUPPORTING MORE ABLE AND TALENTED LEARNERS

The following key messages are extracted from research addressing strategies to support More Able and Talented learners (MAT). The review is organised using three themes.

Theme 1: Identification of MAT learners
Theme 2: Provision for MAT learners
Theme 3: Characteristics of school culture that support MAT learners

IDENTIFICATION OF MORE ABLE AND TALENTED LEARNERS

- Importance of holistic definition of MAT that leads to child-centred model of identification (Cathcart, 2018)
- Early identification is key. Learners are usually identified as MAT from age 7 (KS2 and above). Specifically devised teaching materials can support the identification of MAT, especially those learners who have difficulties in other areas of learning that may mask their ability/talent (Koshy and Pascal, 2011)
- Learners are overwhelmingly positive about being identified as MAT (Graham et al., 2012)
- Learners often have a narrow view of what it means to be MAT that focuses on cognition and intelligence and ignores broader social, communicative and interaction skills (Graham et al., 2012)
- Identification of MAT pupils tends not to use subject specific criteria (Lamb and Lane, 2013)
- Teacher engagement with research can address mixed levels of teacher understanding of terms such as 'talent', 'intelligence' and 'ability' (Koshy et al. 2012; Cain, 2015; Dimitriadis and Georgeson, 2018)
- MAT Identification is typically through in-house, local assessment – a random process that is not research-informed and narrows provision to measureable performances e.g. national and school testing (Koshy et al. 2012)
- Early identification may be aided by centralised materials for the identification of MAT pupils (Dimitriadis and Georgeson, 2018)

PROVISION FOR MORE ABLE AND TALENTED LEARNERS

- Advocate importance of working alongside other MAT learners(Koshy and Pascal, 2011)
- MAT learners need enrichment and acceleration (depth and intellectual rigour), needs-based differentiation and customised acceleration. Setting goals as a life vision: 'gifted pathway' (Cathcart, 2018)
- Reggio Emilia programmes can help to personalise learning/ enrichment activities for young learners (Koshy and Pascal, 2011)
- Older pupil mentors (MKO) and MAT peers make a positive contribution through sharing ideas and personal interests (Robins, 2011; Koshy and Pascal, 2011; Lamb and Aldous, 2014)
- Use of E-Mentoring to enable pupil voice and similar experiences to be shared (Lamb and Aldous, 2014)

- Mentoring supports both mentor and mentee in acquiring knowledge and practices relating to MAT identity: knowledge is constructed, re-contextualised and reproduced through the mentoring process (Lamb and Aldous, 2014)
- Some mentoring provision can be sparse and unstructured (Lamb and Lane, 2013)
- Provide targeted support for academic needs, especially managing academic workload/commitments out of school (Lamb and Lane, 2013)
- It can be difficult to meet the needs of very young MAT learners who need highly personalised provision (Koshy and Pascal, 2011)

CHARACTERISTICS OF SCHOOL CULTURE

- Teachers are encouraged to engage with MAT research, helping to transform research knowledge into pedagogical knowledge through 'enlightenment' (Cain, 2018)
- Most schools make special arrangements for MAT learners outside regular teaching (Dimitriadis and Georgeson, 2018)
- School culture plays a part in learners' feelings towards being identified as MAT and valued subjects (Graham et al. 2012)
- Acknowledges the importance of MAT learners sharing their interests with peers, teaching staff and parents (Koshy and Pascal, 2011)
- Supports parents/carers from lower socio-economic backgrounds and lower education to support their children's learning. Some parents feel unable to engage with their children's learning at home, feeling inadequate in their own knowledge and experience to help with subject choices and plans for higher education. (Koshy and Pinheiro-Torres, 2013)
- Identifies and addresses uneven support i.e. a disconnection between espoused school policy and day-to-day practice (Koshy et al. 2012)

SUPPORTING CARE EXPERIENCED CHILDREN

The following three themes were identified from a review of research pertaining to the educational experiences of care experienced children:

Theme 1: The perception of Looked After Children & Young People (LACYP)
Theme 2: Characteristics of effective provision in supporting LACYP
Theme 3: Practitioner roles regarding LACYP

THE PERCEPTION OF LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

SUPPORTING LACYP

- Each child is seen as individual and the context in which they live, learn and develop is taken into consideration (Brewin & Statham, 2011).
- LACYP individuality, strengths and competences are recognised and promoted (Fernandez, 2019; Rees, 2013).
- Care experienced children and young people are perceived as educationally aspirational, working to reject negative labels ascribed to them and wishing to be challenged in the realisation of their potential. LAC learners are not seen or made to feel different from other peers (Mannay et al., 2017).
- Seen as capable of informing the development of interventions and good practices regarding their school experiences; appreciated as competent decision-makers (Wigley et al., 2012).

CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVE PROVISION SUPPORTING LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

- Focuses on limiting school exclusions, bullying and stigmatisation (McClung & Gayle (2010).
- Adopts a holistic approach, tailored to the diverse needs (educational, emotional, psychological & behavioural) of individual children; and a coordinated approach with planning and information sharing by key stakeholders (Brewin & Statham, 2011).
- Adopts an integrated approach: interventions aim to enhance communication, cooperation and coordination between schools and child welfare systems (Fernandez, 2019).
- Minimises children's differences so they are not made to feel different or singled out.
- Places relationships and emotional wellbeing at the heart of whole system approaches (Drew & Banerjee, 2019).
- Development of individually tailored support plans to support youth transitions (Herd and Legge, 2017)
- Rejects tokenistic contribution of children and young people (Parker, 2017). Provision is informed by and co-developed in consultation with LACYPs (Liabo et al., 2013).
- Close (quantitative) monitoring of care experienced children's school performance and psychological health (in terms of behavioural development) to better support the needs of this vulnerable group (Brown et al., 2017).
- Extend the range of personal identifiers on looked after children data returns to enable strong linkage to health data (Clarke et al, 2017).

- Highlight the importance of access to administrative data to support population-level research into the educational prospects of children in contact with Children's Social Care (CSC) services, especially from the perspective of the child's journey through CSC services (Jay & Mc Grath-Lone, 2019).
- Equally attentive to the support needs of learners in public care who remain in the family home (Connelly & Furnivall, 2013).

PRACTITIONER ROLES REGARDING LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

- **Teachers**: take responsibility for enhancing their own understanding of children's socio-emotional needs, are open to partnership working and knowledgeable about how best to guide and support LACYP throughout their education (Fernandez, 2019). Take a critically reflective approach to their work to avoid stereotyping and develop individualised strategies to support learning (Harland, 2014).
- **Corporate parent**: ensures that the life chances of specific groups of LACYP are, at least, equal to those of all other LACYP; work to reduce school mobility and stability of placements (McClung & Gayle, 2010).
- **Educational psychologists**: support staff in developing skills in children; involved in planning for children's transitions; work with school staff and carers to increase the awareness of the needs of LACYPs (Brewin & Statham, 2011).
- **Social workers**: continuously support LACYPs at a time of multiple transitions in their lives; work co-operatively on behalf of children (Driscoll, 2013). Consider the role of the education system in contributing to poorer outcomes (Jackson & Hojer, 2013). Continuity of assigned social worker helps children to feel more secure (Welbourne & Leeson, 2012).
- **Significant adults/mentors**: promote the value of education and provide emotional & psychological support when the child is struggling with educational demands (Francis et al., 2017). Designated teachers may provide LAC with a consistent professional to advise and support them in their educational career (Driscoll, 2011). At least one adult in children's social networks needs to consistently promote the value of education and provide emotional and psychological support when the child is struggling with educational demands (Mendis et al., 2018).

SUPPORTING FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT (FACE)

CASE STUDY 1. ORACY & PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT

Context of school

St. Josephs Roman Catholic Primary School is in the Ashvale area of Tredegar, Blaenau Gwent. The school has over one hundred pupils on roll. Nearly all pupils are white British. There are five classes, three of which are mixed age. Around 40% of pupils are eligible for free school meals, well above the Wales average. Around 20% of pupils have English as an Additional Language.

Rationale for intervention/practice

Teachers noticed that children were starting school with low levels of oracy. The school wanted to increase levels of parental engagement and to strengthen home-school relations.

> *"Developing oracy – the capacity to develop and express ideas through speech – is of central importance to both thinking and learning."* Donaldson (2015: 48)

> *"In general, pupils from economically deprived backgrounds are less likely to have had a rich talk experience in their home environment. As a consequence, when they start school, they are likely to have a more limited talk repertoire"* (Mercer & Manion, 2018:5).

School/setting approach to intervention/practice with examples

Foundation Leaders developed oracy packs to help to develop oracy at home and engage parents in learning. Each pack contains suggested activities linked to a story or a rhyme that can be done at home. Links are made to National Trust resources. A range of activities are linked to ten inexpensive and easy to replace books.

The activities are carefully designed to encourage children and adults to spend time together. All activities are intended to be fun and accessible. None of the resources are reliant on digital technology. Activities might focus on colour names or shape names, or involve searching the house, garden or a local park to fulfil simple tasks. Parents can respond in any way they wish. There is no pressure. Completing activities should never feel like homework.

> *"The delivery is at a low level to encourage the parents to engage in talking with children while they are carrying out these activities. We hope that after doing the activities they will want to spend more time doing things together independently"* Headteacher

The scheme started with sixteen children in the Nursery and has expanded to include the Reception class. The response from parents has been overwhelmingly positive. Following the success of the initiative, additional packs have been prepared specifically to support families to engage in learning activities outdoors with their children.

> *Parents look forward to receiving the packs and ask if they can keep them for longer so they can do more activities. That's their special time with their child. They've said thank you. They didn't know what to do to support learning at home but now they know, they'll do more"* Foundation Leader

Example: Wobble Bear Says Yellow, Ian Whybrow

This pack contains: Book (abebooks.co.uk) & sachet of instant custard

Brief suggested activity instructions to parents:

• Share the story, talk about it.
• Can you find yellow (melyn) things around your home? How many?
• Make the custard and enjoy it together. Slice up a yellow banana too if you have one.
• Respond in your 'Learning Adventure Book' with notes/photos/drawings.
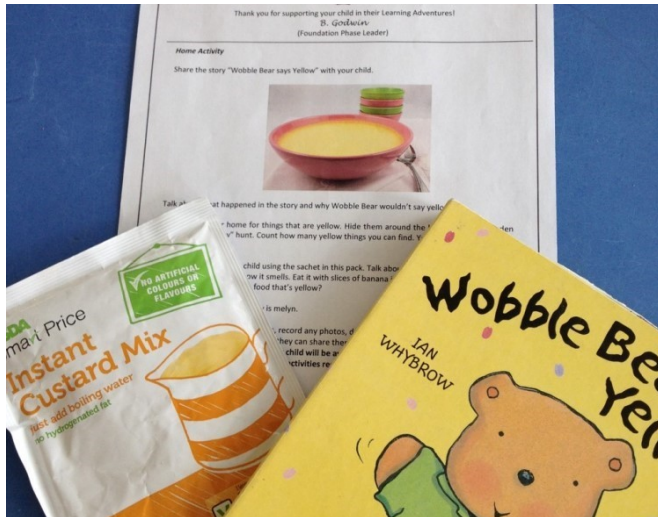
Children and parents record their learning adventures to share with each other and school staff. Activities completed at home stimulate talk in school. Children are proud and excited to share their activities and talk about their adventures e.g. going on a bear hunt in the park together at the weekend.
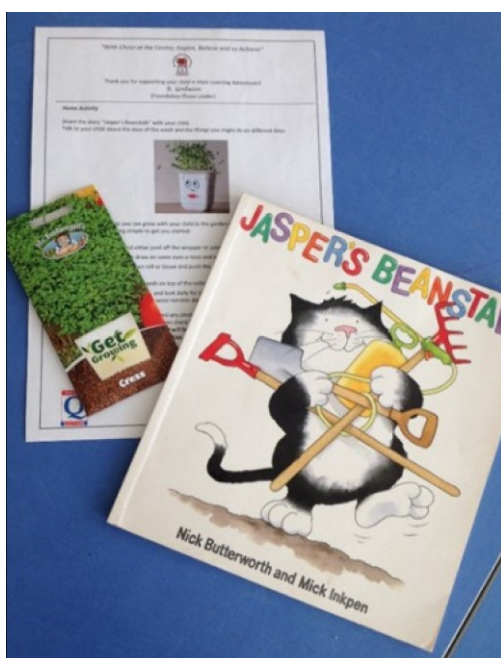
Points to consider
- Provide content that is non-threatening and accessible
- Choose inexpensive and replaceable content
- Schedule an engaging launch event to be held in school for parents and children
- Plan for pack assembly, distribution and return.

Impact of intervention
- Positive baseline measures at Nursery and Reception
- High demand for packs
- Positive evaluations in records of parental feedback
- Records of parent-child activity completed at home
- Helps to establishes positive home-school relationships at an early stage in the learner's journey

Further research and reading for professional learning
- Donaldson, G. (2015) Successful Futures. Independent Review of Curriculum and Assessment Arrangements in Wales. Cardiff: Welsh Government.
  https://dera.ioe.ac.uk/22165/2/150225-successful-futures-en_Redacted.pdf
- Mercer, N. & Manion, J. (2018) Oracy across the Welsh Curriculum. A research-based review: key principles and recommendations for teachers. University of Cambridge.
  https://oracycambridge.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Oracy-across-the-Welsh-curriculum-July -2018.pdf
- National Trust https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/50-things-to-do

CASE STUDY 2. HEALTHY NURSERY SCHOOLS: ADVENTURES IN FOOD

Context of school
Fairoak Nursery School opened in 1968. Throughout the year, there can be over 60 children on roll in the nursery. The school admits children at the beginning of the term following their third birthday and they spend up to five terms at the nursery before transferring to local primary schools. Children attend either a morning or afternoon session. The school takes great pride not only in its academic successes but also in participation in the local community.

Rationale for intervention/practice
Some parents reported that they struggled to help their children experiment and try some healthy foods at home. The nursery school decided to offer Adventures in Food workshops. If young children are actively involved in making food alongside an adult family member, they are more inclined to try it.

School/setting approach to intervention/practice with examples
Each term, parents or another family member are invited to come to school to make three simple recipes with their child. At the end of the year, participants receive a booklet containing all the recipes they have trialled throughout the year. It is important to make sure that each recipe can be completed using only cupboard staples and inexpensive ingredients. All the recipes can be prepared without the use of expensive cookware or kitchen gadgetry. Parents make a small donation of a pound a week or ten pounds a term, which pays for the cookery ingredients. Children also learn about the importance of hygiene - washing their hands properly, cleaning surfaces and washing up equipment. Children are taught how to use cutlery successfully.

All the food preparation is simple to follow, tactile and engaging. For example, children and family members make chocolate mud cakes and fruit kebabs. In the summer, a community barbecue was held around a campfire, where marshmallows were toasted and eaten with fresh strawberries and bananas.

The school aims to teach children at age three and four how to stay healthy, but also wants to share that message with family members in a way that is not judgemental. The school is equally committed to family, child and teacher/TA wellbeing. Each term, five Adventures in Food sessions are held on one day, three in the morning and two in the afternoon. Each session involves around twelve adults and children. Almost all the 64 families registered with the nursery take part in this initiative.

The nursery aims to build children's capacity for independent learning and investigative play. Within the children's kitchen and snack area, staff don't sit children down and pour their milk for them and distribute their fruit. The children choose when they want to have their milk and fruit. They help themselves and clear up after themselves. Children use utensils safely and under supervision. Cross-curricular links are actively exploited.

> "We develop literacy, numeracy and science through Adventures in Food. A lot of the skills they are using in cooking they are practising in other areas. We have our mud kitchen, our potion station. They are stirring and pouring and measuring …
>
> It also about risk benefit, knowing when to take a risk and when to say safe, but not being afraid to challenge yourself to take a risk. We want our children to be resilient and resourceful" Headteacher

Points to consider
- Promote independence among children to enable them to participate well
- Don't underestimate the capabilities of children in the early years
- Select recipes that make few demands in terms of cost or equipment
- Signpost links to other areas of learning and involve all staff
- Approach health and wellbeing holistically, not as a bolt on activity
- Build staff capacity for innovation and enquiry-led practice.

"It needs to be a coordinated team effort. It's not about telling people what we've decided to do. It's not a bolt on to the curriculum. It's about ethos. As a staff, we talk a lot to each other and share ideas. Everyone has an input and takes ownership"
Nursery teacher

Following the success of Adventures in Food, the nursery was keen to generate stronger inter-generational links. Once a month a group of children visits a local nursing home. Residents participate in shared activities with the children, including painting, modelling with play dough, making bracelets out of pasta and string. The nursery also works with Investors in Families, Wales, to promote close family working. Other community activities include working in partnership with a food bank at a local church to support families in need.

Impact of intervention
- High levels of parental engagement/ take up at Adventures in Food sessions
- Positive feedback from workshop participants via questionnaires
- Stronger family engagement
- Development of confidence, creativity and basic skills in learners
- Children more able to move on to the next stage in their learning.
- Increase in Foundation Phase Outcome Three for Personal and Social Development, Wellbeing and Cultural Diversity Area of Learning in the Foundation Phase profile

Further research and reading for professional learning
- Carruthers, E., Keane, C., Ingleby, J. (2018). Young Children's Experimental Cookery. London: Routledge, https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315188782
- Investors in Families, Wales. https://iifwales.com/
- Welsh Government (2018) FaCE the challenge together: Family and community engagement toolkit for schools in Wales. Welcoming families to engage with school. Resources 1-9 https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-12/face-the-challenge-together-family-and-community-engagement-toolkit-for-schools-in-wales-main-guidance.pdf

SUPPORTING LEARNERS WHO HAVE ACCESS TO FREE SCHOOL MEALS
INCLUDING THOSE WHO ARE DISADVANTAGED BY POVERTY

CASE STUDY 3. RAISING THE ATTAINMENT OF VULNERABLE LEARNERS IN HIGH SCHOOL

Context of school

John Frost High School is an 11 to 18 mixed comprehensive school, serving the south-western part of Newport. The school has over 1,500 pupils. Around 36% of pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is much higher than the Wales average of 17.7% for secondary schools. Just over half the pupils live in the 20% most deprived areas in Wales. Around 30% of pupils are from a minority-ethnic background and a quarter come from homes where English is not the main language.

Rationale for intervention/practice

The school has a multi-lingual and multi-ethnic population and is located in an area of high deprivation. The school was concerned to raise the level of literacy, especially reading, across the school and sought to address the particular needs of less advantaged learners. A previous headteacher introduced Year 11 home visits following a learning tour of Boston to explore effective strategies to support vulnerable learners. Meeting students in their homes was identified as a key factor contributing to better home-school relations and improved outcomes. In 2017, the home visit scheme was extended and strengthened with a range of in-school strategies from transition (entry to Year 7) onwards, including individual and group mentoring

School/setting approach to intervention/practice with examples

Following a year of careful preparation, the school introduced six non-negotiable targets for Star Students in Y7 in September 2018, and the Y7 and Y8 cohort in September 2018. Star students are those who are eligible for Free School Meals or are care-experienced.

Star Student Non-negotiables:

- All star students to have an attendance of 96% or above
- All star students to receive a home visit in Y7 and Y11
- All star students to leave Y7 with a reading age equivalent to their chronological age
- All star students to receive literacy and numeracy intervention in KS3
- All star students to become times table masters
- All star students to receive a RADY target uplift upon entry to Y7

    "Wellbeing for us means ensuring that all students are happy and healthy, and have the support they require so they can achieve in school. Equity is about giving back. We will give vulnerable learners more support to help them overcome disadvantage"
    Deputy Headteacher

As part of the school's commitment to Raising the Attainment of Disadvantaged Youngsters (RADY), all Star Students are given a target uplift when they join Y7. Schools set target grades at GCSE dependent on levels of attainment at KS2. The practice of setting reinforces teacher expectations. The RADY uplift requires that each Star Student is given a target uplift to raise aspirations and expectations for learners eligible for Free School Meals and Looked After Children. In 2018, uplifts were given to all Star Students in years 7 and 8. Attention was then focused on how the school could support these learners to achieve their uplifted targets. That is the rationale for the introduction of the non-

negotiables. Star students access whole school strategies e.g. the accelerated reader programme and times table interventions, but also receive additional focused support. For example, alongside the mainstream Accelerated Reader provision extra support is offered once a fortnight for any star student who is falling below the average score, or who is identified as more able and talented.

> *"Even when we are doing something for the whole cohort there is something on the side to support vulnerable students more" Deputy Headteacher*

The school introduced a systematic mentoring system to support learner progression. Using primary school assessments, eighteen of the most vulnerable learners were paired with eighteen volunteer members of staff. Mentors and mentees meet once a week for 15 minutes (within PPA time). Mentors use activities from a pre-prepared pack of bespoke resources. For example, mentors and mentee may examine a print out of the mentee's attitude to learning scores from their first report in the autumn term and their second report in the spring term. They will talk with their mentors about the scores earned in particular classes, and if there is anything their mentor can do to help them achieve a higher score. All mentoring sessions are explicitly focused around wellbeing. Actions follow mentor meetings to ensure that young people are supported effectively e.g. a recommendation for bereavement counselling, or a meeting with a youth worker or family engagement officer.

In addition to one-to-one mentoring, group mentoring was introduced. Twenty-five Star Students are organised in groups of five, and a member of the Senior Leadership Team mentors each group. The groups meet with their mentor every Thursday morning and go through their scores for the week. English teachers give a score of 1-5 for individual effort each week on the accelerated reader programme. Maths teachers score effort in mastering times tables. Form tutors score attendance and general attitude to learning. The points are calculated for each group each week. The highest points scorer of each team receives a prize (e.g. a football or stationery items) and there is an overall group winner. Introducing an element of competition encourages the students to focus on the non-negotiables and monitor their own progress week-by-week. The school convenes regular RADY progress days to review processes and progress e.g. through learning walks in RADY classrooms, talking with students, undertaking book scrutiny with learners.

In addition, the school operates a Star Student Enrichment Programme i.e. a series of trips and visits paid for by the school. In 2019, fifty star students were selected who had not exhibited any adverse behaviour to visit Cardiff Museum and Cardiff's Winter Wonderland at Christmas. Eighteen mentored students accompanied mentees to the cinema. Enrichment activities and off-site excursions help to build positive staff-student relationships.

Points to consider
- Consider the possible negative consequences of setting on teacher expectations
- Provide training in effective mentoring practices & support mentor development
- Allocate a budget to cover the cost of prizes and enrichment activities
- Plan and resource time for mentoring, and literacy and maths interventions
- Draw on regional RADY support and training e.g. Challenging Education

Impact of intervention
- Home visits with a welcome pack enables positive home-school contact during the first term at high school
- The mentor system facilitates contact with harder to reach families
- In 2019, attendance at parents' evenings was the highest it has ever been for Y7 learners who are eligible for Free School Meals.

- Increase in Y7 FSM attendance rate
- Sixteen of the 25 students involved in group mentoring improved their scores across six weeks. Members of the leadership team are now mentoring nine students who showed no improvement on a one-to-one basis.
- Fourteen of the 25 students involved in group mentoring increased from a score of 3 to 5 for effort in English classes within six weeks.
- In 2019, eFSM students exceeded Wales and LA averages in national reading tests for the first time.

"Drill down into what your vulnerable students need. For us, it was drilling down into what is stopping these students from achieving? And what exactly can we do about that? It's reading age, lower attendance, lack of fluency in times tables and potentially the lack of high expectations from teachers. In order to get to these things we needed to support students through a one-to-one or group mentoring process" Deputy headteacher

Further research and reading for professional learning
- EEF Evaluation of the Accelerated Reader programme
  https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/projects-and-evaluation/projects/accelerated-reader/
- Challenging Education, http://challengingeducation.co.uk /
- Estyn (2020a) Effective school support for disadvantaged and vulnerable pupils – case studies of good practice
- EEF (2018) The Education Gap.
  https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/public/files/Annual_Reports/EEF_Attainment_Gap_Report_2018_-_print.pdf
- Department for Education (2015) Supporting the attainment of disadvantaged pupils: articulating success and good practice. Research report.
  https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/supporting-the-attainment-of-disadvantaged-pupils

SUPPORTING VULNERABLE LEARNERS WHO ARE AT RISK OF DIS-ENGAGEMENT IN LEARNING.

CASE STUDY 4. THE DALEN NEWYDD PROJECT

Context of school

Monmouthshire PRU offers temporary respite for primary school children at risk of exclusion or having been excluded, with a view to gradual reintegration into a mainstream school. It also provides education for a range of children of all ages unable to attend school because of physical and or mental illness, and supports pupils in secondary education at risk of exclusion, or having been excluded, who attend temporarily at off-site centres or who are maintained in their own mainstream high schools.

Rationale for intervention/practice

Monmouthshire Pupil Referral Service's (PRS) team of professionals offer a number of strands of support to local children and young people (CYP) across the age range. A lot of the learners the team supports have experienced a number of interventions through their school careers, most of which have not been effective.

Many of the children and young people the team supports have severe adverse childhood experiences (ACEs). In these experiences they, as vulnerable minors have not been able to control negative, distressing and sometimes dangerous situations, including, for example, bereavement, substance misuse or criminality in the home, or family break up where there has been significant emotional damage.

These ACEs have left learners traumatised to various degrees, often with significant attachment issues and usually a deep mistrust of adults, including those attempting to support them. They generally feel helpless in the face of their experiences and when they do try to exercise some control over their lives, this can often manifest in disruptive and violent behaviour in and out for school, vandalism and other anti-social behaviours such as petty theft, as well as substance misuse. Many have not been attending school regularly, have been excluded, or are at risk of exclusion.

The PRS team recognised that these learners needed to rebuild trust and to regain a sense of control over their lives. The PRU team developed Dalen Newydd to address these wellbeing priorities.

School/setting approach to intervention/practice with examples

The Dalen Newydd Project was launched in September 2019 as a joint venture between the Monmouthshire PRS and the county's four high schools. It has two parts: assessing individual needs and a revised curriculum offer.

1. Assessing needs and building trust

The first part of the project was to recruit one teacher and one teaching assistant in each high school. Their role is to work specifically with young people whose response to ACEs is presenting as challenging behaviour. This staffing arrangement offers support for the equivalent of six full-time students. The idea of designating six 'full-time equivalent' places is that, using the support flexibly, the service can be offered to more than six young people in any one high school. The core role for the staff is establishing a positive relationship with each learner and developing trust.

Each intervention starts with a comprehensive assessment that addresses progress in literacy, numeracy and digital skills. An assessment is also made of the learner's level of social and emotional resilience. Measures include attainment in Maths and English, and Boxhall or Thrive profiling for social and emotional dimensions. These assessments offer a profile of strengths and need. Work will also include helping learners to recognise and manage their own emotions.

> "Those youngsters remain as members of the school. They wear school uniform, they go into mainstream lessons, spending a lesson a day, a third of a day or maybe at most half the day in our unit and so they are not having to leave school to access behaviour support … It may mean that the youngsters just have two members of staff with whom they can just 'check in' everyday"   (Headteacher)

2. A pupil-led approach to the Years 10 & 11 curriculum offer

Many learners referred to the PRS have not been attending school regularly. Sometimes they are missing significant periods of learning through physical and mental illness and consequently are falling behind. They are often also unable to engage with a curriculum diet with which they feel no identification and thus little motivation. Many of the young people referred to the service are not emotionally ready to commit to learning.

> "If a youngster is struggling to meet school's expectations: if they've got significant behavioural challenges, then what's in place hasn't worked… so let's start being person-centred'" (Headteacher)

There is still an expectation that all students will sit GCSE English and Maths. The schools expect that all referred learners are capable of achieving a G grade at least. However, beyond that, the young person is able to navigate a much more bespoke course with a BTEC pathway. The revised upper secondary offer features the 'Introductory Vocational' BTEC. This allows each student to develop a route most suited to his or her individual interests and aptitudes.

> "We've got youngsters who would do quite a lot of Art. Different youngsters are more employment-oriented … The second biggest employer in our area is tourism, so we look at Tourism and there are various units where they can get out and about and find out how those businesses work. So, they're bespoke for the older children. We make an effort to get their fourth, fifth and sixth qualifications bespoke to them and their need. It can be hidden in that title 'BTEC' but it's a genuinely mixed bag of different experiences." (Headteacher)

In addition, there are a series of sessions with outside speakers from organisations who explore issues such as substance misuse and homelessness: timely reminders of the potential consequences of making unwise choices. So, whilst the BTEC is the accreditation side of the package, there are key elements of Personal Health and Social Education built in, which are just as important.

Points to consider
- Everything starts with wellbeing. Children and young people traumatised by adverse childhood experiences will not feel ready to learn unless they are able to feel less anxious. The first task is lowering anxiety and building relationships.
- These learners need to feel that they are going to be able to get back on track and have some control over their own lives again.
- These learners need to feel a sense of investment in a curriculum that seems relevant to their lives, and their current and future plans. This can be achieved through negotiating

bespoke curriculum pathways offering genuine qualifications that can open doors to a positive future, post-16 and beyond.

Impact of intervention

The following impacts are reported at King Henry VIII School, Abergavenny:

- The school has used 6 full-time equivalent places to involve 18 young people in the project
- These learners are now spending as much time in mainstream lessons as they are with the specialist staff, if not more time.
- There has been evidence of a reduction in short fixed-term exclusions.
- There is evidence of improved rates of attendance.
- Teaching staff report improved levels of pupil engagement in classes.

Further research and reading for professional learning

- Children in Wales. Having a say in your education.
  http://www.childreninwales.org.uk/resources/looked-after-children/
- Estyn (2020b) Knowing your children – supporting pupils with adverse childhood experiences (ACES) https://www.estyn.gov.wales/thematic-reports/supporting-pupils-with-adverse-childhood-experiences-0
- Di Lemma L.C.G., Davies A.R., Ford K., Hughes K., Homolova L., Gray B and Richardson G. (2019). Responding to Adverse Childhood Experiences: An evidence review of interventions to prevent and address adversity across the life course.
- Simó, N., Parareda, A. & Domingo, L. (2016) Towards a democratic school: The experience of secondary school Improving Schools 19 (3) 181-196.

SUPPORTING LEARNERS WHO ARE LOOKED AFTER BY THE CARE SYSTEM

CASE STUDY 5. THE WELLBEING OF LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN IN PRIMARY SCHOOL

Context of school
Greenhill Primary School is a community school situated in the village of Gelligaer, a small valley community in the County Borough of Caerphilly. There are currently 186 pupils on roll including 31 part-time nursery pupils. On average, 50% of its pupils are eligible for free school meals. Thirty six per cent of the school's pupils are on the Additional Learning Needs Register, 21 with a Statement of Special Educational Needs. The school hosts two Special Educational Needs Resource Base Classes that cater for pupils with social and communication needs.

Rationale for intervention/practice
The goal of educational equity can only be achieved by providing enhanced support for vulnerable learners. In addition to catering for the academic needs of Looked After Children (LAC), the school was concerned to prioritise their social and emotional wellbeing.

> *"Assessment of the educational needs of LAC should be integrated with holistic assessment of their emotional, psychological and behavioural needs" (Welbourne and Leeson, 2012: 138)*

> *"Children cannot learn if they feel unsafe, vulnerable or unhappy because all these emotions have a negative effect on children's learning and actually block it" FaCE Officer*

School/setting approach to intervention/practice with examples
The school, being aware of the diverse needs of children, developed interventions addressing socio-emotional wellbeing. Members of staff undertook professional learning (Thrive programme & Talkabout) to provide enhanced support for pupil wellbeing. The school recognised that the engagement of parents, guardians, carers and the wider community was crucial to the success of the interventions. The role of Family and Community Engagement Officer (FaCE) was created to strengthen links between school and home, and to maximise opportunities to involve parents/foster parents in children's learning.

> *"It is imperative that both school professionals and carers are knowledgeable about how best to guide and support LACYP throughout their education" (Mannay et al. 2017: 695)*

> *"Identified staff had necessary qualities to be involved in these interventions: they are naturally very nurturing, very patient, very interested in the psychology and looking at the means behind the behaviour not just that behaviour" Headteacher*

> *"I always feel very privileged to be part of these children's lives because if you can make them just a little bit happier that's going to follow them through the rest of their lives" ELSA*

Points to consider
- Identification and deployment of staff who can devote time and attention to initiatives supporting the wellbeing of vulnerable learners
- Support the professional learning of staff engaged in LAC wellbeing

- Promote engagement of parents/carers and the wider community
- Consider the financial implications for running programmes e.g. the annual payment for online subscriptions and programme licenses
- It is important to have a specific room dedicated to the sessions/meetings so children know where they are going to and feel safe within that environment.

Impact of intervention

- Records of participation and positive reactions and feedback from children. The children enjoy and look forward to the sessions. They feel more confident and build friendship groups.
- Positive feedback from teachers who report changes in pupil behaviour. Children are more focused and concentrate more in the class. They are better able to express their feelings in a constructive manner.
- Positive feedback from parents: parents telephone the school to request structured programmes of support.
- Enhanced reach and capacity: 29 children have accessed wellbeing interventions in 2019/20 and three members of the teaching staff have undertaken sustained professional learning in this area.

Further research and reading for professional learning

- Welsh Government (2016) Raising the ambitions and educational attainment of children who are looked after in Wales
- ELSA: https://www.elsanetwork.org/
- Thrive approach explained https://www.thriveapproach.com/
- Talkabout: http://alexkelly.biz/alexs-work-and-talkabout/
- Mannay, D., Evans, R., Staples, E., Hallett, S., Roberts, L., Rees, A., & Andrews, D. (2017). The consequences of being labelled 'looked-after': Exploring the educational experiences of looked-after children and young people in Wales. *British Educational Research Journal, 43*(4) https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5596337/pdf/ BERJ-43-683.pdf

CASE STUDY 6. THE WELLBEING OF LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN IN SECONDARY SCHOOL

Context of school

Heolddu Comprehensive School is an English-medium, mixed 11-18 comprehensive school situated in the town of Bargoed. The school serves the surrounding areas including Gilfach, Aberbargoed, Deri and Tirphil. Heolddu Comprehensive School works in partnership with five other schools and the local further education college to provide a joint sixth form. Around 26% of pupils are eligible for free school meals. This figure is above the Welsh average of 17% for secondary schools. Forty-three per cent of pupils live in the 20% most deprived areas of Wales. Around 21% of pupils have additional learning needs, and just over 1% have a statement of special educational needs.

Rationale for intervention/practice

The school sought to enhance its wellbeing provision to better support the needs of vulnerable learners, including Looked After Children (LAC). An association was noted between fixed term exclusions and vulnerable groups. The school sought to enhance wellbeing through careful assessment of educational needs and targeted interventions to reduce barriers to learning.

> *"Academic progress can only happen once other barriers in regards to emotional wellbeing are addressed" Assistant Headteacher*

> *"Assessment of the educational needs of LAC should be integrated with holistic assessment of their emotional, psychological and behavioural needs" (Welbourne & Leeson, 2012: 138)*

School/setting approach to intervention/practice with examples

A strong pastoral team was established with a specific focus on addressing the wellbeing of vulnerable learners. The school worked in close partnership with a diverse range of external stakeholders to strengthen provision. A range of wellbeing initiatives was introduced and evaluated to monitor progress.

> *"Members of the pastoral-wellbeing team have a forensic knowledge of the smaller groups of people they work with day in and day out" Assistant Headteacher*

Examples of school wellbeing initiatives:

- Additional transition programmes. For example, if the young person (YP) is transitioning from Y6 to Y7 the school would apply an additional transition programme where the YP and carer could attend the school for an individual tour so they feel settled when they arrive.

  > *"Transition between primary and secondary school is probably the biggest transition in education" Assistant Headteacher*

- Health & Wellbeing drop down weeks
- Special Days to support mental health: A School Nurse with a background in mental health is based at the school.
- Mediation: A Youth Worker and Family Engagement Officer lead mediation sessions. Many learners arrive at school with barriers to their learning. School staff feel these learners are not going to fulfil their potential until the school supports their emotional wellbeing.
- School based Counsellor: 1.5 days per week based on-site.

Points to consider
- Team composition: Importance of having an effective team of like-minded people who want the best for all young people
- Strategic leadership is a key ingredient of success. Effective school leadership is crucial to improved learner outcomes. Effective leaders model high expectations and demonstrate adaptive expertise.
- Be prepared and willing to work with external agencies with expertise in LAC support. External partners may offer additional in-house /school provision for learners.
- Be creative and look for external funding opportunities that could finance wellbeing initiatives.
- Clear communication: there can be multiple and diverse agencies working with each young person and their family. Consistent communication between all stakeholders is vital.
- Accurate record-keeping: It is advisable to keep a detailed chronological record on each young person. Chronologies are very detailed accounts of Looked After Children from the day they arrive at school. Chronologies contain any communication and work with external agencies. Keeping chronologies enables school and agency staff to maintain continuity for the young person.

    "Generally, 8 out of 10 pupils with permanent or fixed exclusions are from the vulnerable category. We are very lucky at our school to have very passionate, dedicated team who have a detailed knowledge about the pupils and wider context"
    Assistant Headteacher

Impact of intervention
- Improved rates of attendance
- Academic progress: outcomes at GCSE, A Levels KS3 assessments
- Reduction in behaviour sanctions/increase in reward points among target group
- Reduction in exclusion rates
- Wellbeing index: completed by the vulnerable learners before and after interventions

Further research and reading for professional learning
- Estyn (2020a) Effective school report for vulnerable and disadvantaged pupils— case studies of good practice.
- Welbourne, P., & Leeson, C. (2012). The education of children in care: A research review. Journal of Children's Services, 7(2) https://www.emerald.com/insight/content/doi/10.1108/17466661211238682/full/pdf?title=the-education-of-childrenin-care-a-research-review
- Brewin, M., Statham, J. (2011). Supporting the transition from primary school to secondary school for children who are Looked After. Educational Psychology in Practice, 27:4 https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/02667363.2011.624301?needAccess=true

LEARNER VOICE, PARTICIPATION AND ENGAGEMENT

CASE STUDY 7. A SCHOOL FARM & THREE TIER INTERVENTION MODEL

Context of school

The Dell Primary School is a community primary school in Chepstow, Monmouthshire. There are approximately 400 pupils on roll between the ages of four and eleven. Approximately 6% of pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is below the Monmouthshire average (11%) and well below the Welsh average (19%). Five pupils have English as an additional language; 94% of pupils describe themselves as White British. The school serves a local area where there is a degree of social and economic advantage. The Dell School is currently in the Green support category. In 2019, the school was awarded 'Beyond The Basics' status by the Young Carers' Trust, and the Bronze School Mental Health Award from the Carnegie Centre of Excellence for Mental Health in School.

Rationale for intervention/practice

The school has a multi-tiered approach to wellbeing, which includes the Dell Farm, and two designated spaces for pastoral work: the sunshine room and rainbow room. The Dell Farm started three years ago as an inclusion project. It now has a livestock area (chickens), an arable area (fruit and vegetables), and a pear orchard. The Farm project developed in response to the need to offer alternative lunchtime provision for those pupils who struggle in the playground. The Dell Farmers are a small group of 5-6 children who do not find playtime easy. They prefer small groups away from the bustle of the playground. When the school opened, it was intended to accommodate 240 children. The Dell is now the largest primary school in Monmouthshire with a roll of around 400 pupils. As the school grew, classrooms were built on the playground. Twice as many pupils now have access to roughly half the playground space. The Dell Farm is an outdoor nurture activity that helps to keep some children in school by meeting their particular needs.

School/setting approach to intervention/practice with examples

The farm began when the headteacher purchased an old caravan, painted it to look like a Friesian cow, and fenced in a small enclosure. The caravan provides storage for tools, wellington boots and animal feed. It is also a farm office, where farm meetings are held and board games played. It is a small space that provides a short respite for some children. The caravan was followed by a chicken coup and run. Five chickens were supplied through a chicken incubation project in the school nursery. The Dell Farmers feed and water the chickens each day, and check their bedding. Looking after a living being helps to develop empathy. The children gather, clean and box the eggs, and sell them to parents or staff. They learn that the income from the eggs generates money to buy food for the chickens and de-licing spray, if needed. Fruit and vegetables are grown in the arable area. A local garage provided tyres for raised beds, which have been supplemented with two polytunnels. The children made scarecrows and held a 'name the scarecrow' competition. The Dell Farmers grow marrows, tomatoes, peas, beans, aubergines and courgettes. In 2020, a daffodil farm was planted. The children will harvest the daffodils and prepare bunches for sale. The school also planted pear trees, creating the Dell orchard.

The farm start-up costs of around £1,000 were covered by donations from grandparents and local businesses. No funds were extracted from the core school budget. The farm is staffed at lunchtimes by a rota of Teaching Assistants supported by four volunteer parents/grandparents. Over the holidays, the school hosts a play scheme so a play leader and/or caretaker are on-site. Pest control is covered by the school pest control contract. The headteacher cares for the hens during vacation periods.

In making funding requests to parents, the Parent-Teacher Association and wider community, the school was aware that the farm initiative could not just focus on a very small group of children. As a result, the Dell Farm is both an inclusion project and a strategy to embed environmental learning in mainstream classes. For example, at the start of term in Year 1 children bury the contents of a lunch box. At the end of the summer term, they dig it up and see what is still there and what has rotted away. Year 2 complete a project on 'living and growing' through looking at the flowers and vegetables on the farm. The Dell Farm is not an exclusive club for a few children. Over the course of a year, all pupils will do something on the farm as part of their class learning.

> *"We do a lot of work with the children on what kind of learning works best for them and they all want to be doing more outdoors and less sitting down. Getting a bit dirty, using their hands more. The curriculum in Wales provides a great opportunity. This is another strategy we can use to make that curriculum come to life for the children" Headteacher*

> *"We have some great success stories of children who were troubled or troubling. You give them some responsibility and they come up with the goods. They've become great role models. They help other children learn about the importance of being responsible when looking after animals. There are no magic wands but it certainly keeps them in school. It's a reason to be pleased, proud and happy with them, rather than chastising or sanctioning them" Headteacher*

The Dell Farm is only one part of the school's wider wellbeing provision. The school has established a Three Tier Intervention Model that provides a graduated response to pastoral support. The school has designated spaces for pastoral work. The **rainforest room** addresses tier one and tier two referrals. Within this space strategies are developed to build resilience around friendship (falling out with friends), or family illness. Tier three support is offered in the **sunshine room** and led by a family and pastoral support leader who is currently completing a masters degree in counselling and psychotherapy. The sunshine room is a space for one-to-one support for children experiencing trauma, parental physical and mental health issues, bereavement, family breakdown, or emotional dysregulation.

Professional learning to support wellbeing includes staff training on mindfulness for pupils and adults within and beyond the school. Wellbeing themes, including the impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), are regular themes at meetings and training events in school.

Points to consider
- Embed outdoor learning opportunities in the mainstream curriculum
- Plan ahead to ensure a pipeline of volunteers with level 1 safeguarding training
- Be resourceful in identifying suppliers and community donors
- Provide & evaluate professional learning opportunities to support wellbeing

Impact of intervention
- Reduced lunch time incidents through tailored alternative provision
- Increased opportunities for authentic outdoor learning
- Increased environmental/sustainability and entrepreneurial awareness among pupils
- Growth in empathy and responsibility among participating pupils

- In 2019, the Sunshine Room provided 74 one-to-one pastoral support sessions for 17 children from Reception to Year 6.

Further research and reading for professional learning
- School Farms Network (2017) Get Your Hands Dirty. A guide to growing plants and keeping animals in schools. https://www.farmgarden.org.uk/sites/farmgarden.org.uk/files/get_your_hands_dirty_2017.pdf
- Learning through landscapes, Wales. https://www.ltl.org.uk/cymru/
- Countryside classroom https://www.countrysideclassroom.org.uk/
- Garden organic school resources. https://www.gardenorganic.org.uk/schools

CASE STUDY 8. STAYING FIT TOGETHER

Context of school

Cwm Primary School is in the village of Cwm in Blaenau Gwent local authority. There are 211 pupils on roll, aged from 3 to 11 years, including 22 nursery pupils. There are nine classes, including the nursery class. Over the past three years, around 24% of pupils are eligible to free school meals. This figure is above the Welsh average of 17%. The school identifies about 16% of pupils as having special educational needs. This is below the average for primary schools in Wales (21%).

Rationale for intervention/practice

Physical activity is associated with better physiological, psychological and psycho-social health among children and young people. The school aims to build a learning culture where all enjoy physical activity. Wellbeing is central to the school's commitment to being a happy healthy school at the heart of the community. The school started a fitness programme and subsequently developed a range of activities to reduce inactivity and promote children's physical and subjective wellbeing. Community engagement is promoted through an inter-generational walking group and a beginners' running group for parents.

School/setting approach to intervention/practice with examples

Every child takes part in a fifteen-minute fitness programme at the start of the day. The activities help pupils get ready to learn and settle quickly into their class work. Pupils can choose from running, walking, fitness stations, Zumba and yoga. Year 5 and year 6 children, 'sport's ambassadors', have received training to organise games over lunchtime for younger children. In addition, every KS 2 child has at least one session of yoga each week. The school provided a low cost, easy to use pedometer for every child in school using Pupil Development/Deprivation Grant (PDG) funding. The children are excited to count and compare step rates. The pedometers increased their level of motivation. Children began to choose fitness activities dependent on the number of steps they generated. Teachers noted the development of the children's numeracy skills. The school made the decision not to measure weight within the pedometer project.

Teachers employ arts, play-based activities and trust building exercises and games to help children build confidence and team skills. The school Wellbeing Lead is introducing mindfulness throughout the school and completing the Thrive Practitioner course to strengthen support for children's social and emotional development. The school wellbeing officers do not take break times with other staff but remain available for any child needing support. In response to increased take up on Mondays, the school opened a 'Happy Café' each Monday lunchtime. Wellbeing officers and volunteer staff take their lunch with pupils and organise activities. The Happy Café is a safe space for children who might need additional support and an alternative to the playground.

> *"If something has happened at home they've got time for themselves to forget about that and it puts them in a good place to start school" Headteacher*

The school worked with a local running group, the Blaenau Gwent Sole Sisters, to set up a beginners' 'couch to 5k' running programme. The Chair of Governors is actively involved in supporting the group. In partnership with Aneurin Leisure and the Sole Sisters, the school also set up a community walking group. This group fills a need for an activity deemed less daunting than running and attracted participation from grandparents as well as parents. The launch of the walking group was extremely successful, well over fifty people attended on a regular basis. If family members attended twenty sessions with their child, they earned a Fitbit fitness tracker at the end of the programme. As a celebration event, the school hosted an enjoyable community sports evening with parents

participating in organised games with their children. The walking group held themed walks e.g. a Halloween walk, scavenger hunt, litter pick, nature walk, and organised games in local woods.

The school promotes intergenerational links through close work with a local housing association. A gentle exercise class for elderly residents is offered in the school library. Year 6 pupils take part in a citizenship award that involves listening to the views of senior citizens and participating in activities requested by them. Last year, a series of events was held each month including bingo afternoons, tea dances, coffee mornings, and a games afternoon when children and senior citizens played board games together. The school choir performs for residents at their home and conducts a number of concerts to raise money for charity. Each Friday children can choose from a wide range of clubs, many of which involve community members. For example, volunteers teach the children to knit and sew. Plans for the future include developing links with allotment holders to involve learners in gardening at local allotments or at school. Anglers at a nearby lake are keen to support an afternoon club for the children.

Points to consider
- Consider carefully the most appropriate level of activity for your target groups (e.g. accessible to grandparents)
- Involve children and parents in decision making, and gain parental support
- Secure start-up funds to offer an incentive or 'hook' for participation
- Collaborate with existing community groups and outside agencies who have the experience and resource to support activity

Impact of intervention
- Increased attendance rates
- Improved numeracy skills (pedometer project)
- Strong family engagement
- Enhanced community links

Further research and reading for professional learning
- Simple steps to success. A guide to using pedometers with young people https://www.pathsforall.org.uk/resources/resource/simple-steps-to-success
- Happy Feet: A Resource for Primary Schools https://www.pathsforall.org.uk/mediaLibrary/other/english/happy-feet-aresource-for-primary-schools.pdf
- Welsh Government (2016) FaCE the challenge together: Family and community engagement toolkit for schools in Wales. https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-12/face-the-challenge-together-family-and-community-engagement-toolkit-for-schools-in-wales-main-guidance.pdf

CASE STUDY 9. THE CHILDREN'S CONFERENCE

Context of school
In September 2016, Blenheim Road Community Primary School and Coed Eva Primary School formed the Federation of Blenheim Road Community and Coed Eva Primary Schools. Both schools share the same executive headteacher and governing body. The federation is located in Cwmbran in the Torfaen local authority.

Blenheim Road has over 250 pupils. There are eight classes, including one mixed-age class. There is also a separate class for pupils who have additional learning needs or need additional support. The three-year average of pupils eligible for free school meals is around 35%, which is well above the national average of 19%. The school identifies that around 25% of pupils have additional leaning needs, which is slightly above the national average of 21%. Most pupils are of white British ethnicity. There are over 450 pupils on roll at Coed Eva. There are 16 classes, including three mixed-age classes and one class for pupils with additional needs. About 20% of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is similar to the Wales average. The school has 12% of pupils on its register of pupils with additional needs. This is lower than the Wales average. Most pupils are of white British ethnicity and a very few pupils have English as an additional language. Coed Eva is currently a pioneer school and is working with the Welsh Government and other schools to take forward developments relating to health and wellbeing.

Rationale for intervention/practice
The Children's Conference aims to develop pupil participation and wellbeing through curriculum enrichment. Throughout the preparation and execution of the event, children develop confidence, motivation, resilience, oracy skills and leadership skills. Learners are involved in every stage from planning and preparation behind the scenes to leading the event on the day.

> *"The children's Health and Happiness conference is run by children for children. The children came up with the slogan 'Putting Children in the Driving Seat'" Curriculum Imagineer*

School/setting approach to intervention/practice with examples
The children's conference is an annual one-day event hosted at a primary school in close collaboration with its partner school in a federation. The 2020 Conference will welcome 360 children and teachers from schools across the local authority. Student attendees are aged from 6 and 7 years through to 14 years of age. The Conference is supported by £1,000 grant from the Education Achievement Service of South East Wales.

There is a wide range of opportunities for children to take an active part in the Conference. Both schools in the federation have an elite committee, the children who run the conference. Sixteen children in Y5 and Y6 are elite committee members. The Arts Council for Wales is supporting the elite committees with creative ideas for the conference. Literacy and digital media skills are developed through event marketing and recording. An editorial team creates magazine articles that document the day supported by journalists from South Wales Argos. The editorial team is part of a wider programme of support for more able children to develop their writing skills. The digital leaders' team (membership drawn from Y1 to Y6) create flyers for the event, tweet throughout the day, and produce an e-book in partnership with the University of South Wales. A local photographer is supporting the digital leaders with event photography. Children have made podcasts of interviews with children across the federation that address aspects of child health and wellbeing. The schools' anti-bullying teams will deliver a pupil-led workshop.

The family engagement officer organises a health and wellbeing stall with parents. Community Police Officers offer a presentation on e-safety. Torfaen Play and Torfaen Sports promote the benefits of children being active.

Keynote adult speakers for 2020 include Kirsty Williams, Education Secretary, who will take part in a Q-A session with children. Sally Holland, the Children's Commissioner for Wales, will work with the children on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

A large number of teachers within the federation supports the Children's Conference. Coordination of the event presents opportunities for distributed leadership. Two teachers are responsible for workshop bookings. Others take responsibility for the budget, resources and logistics i.e. capacity, seating plans, rooming allocations, timings, room turnover. Teachers also support the children with the elite committees. It is important that both children and staff contributors have clear roles and responsibilities.

The conference provides opportunities for school-to-school learning. For example, last year staff and pupils at Blenheim Road were introduced to the Heddlu Bach mini-police scheme. They have now adopted the scheme to introduce the green parking cone system to ease traffic issues outside the school.

Points to consider
- Be open to sharing creative ideas and good practice through school-to-school collaboration.
- Do not be afraid to embrace pupil-led activity and plan appropriate levels of adult support.
- Make conference activity part of the wider curriculum so it does not feel like an additional time pressure.
- Be realistic about the time commitment involved. This level of activity cannot happen in a lunchtime club.
- Secure strong administrative support to facilitate efficient registration. CPD Online is limited to adult registrations.

Impact of intervention
- Registration for conference places doubled in 2020 compared with 2019
- There is a high level of pupil participation across the two schools in the federation.
- Extensive community links are forged with local businesses, external agencies and speakers.
- Positive evaluation comments are recorded in survey responses from pupils from visiting schools: 100% learned something new, 97% enjoyed day, 97% were inspired.

Further research and reading for professional learning
Estyn (2016) Pupil participation: a best practice guide, www.estyn.gov.wales/thematic-reports/pupil-participation-best-practice-guide

Education Scotland (2019) Learner Participation in Educational Settings (3-18).
https://education.gov.scot/improvement/Documents/learnerparticipation.pdf

Barnardo's Cymru (2019) A toolkit to support and enhance pupil voice in schools.
https://www.barnardos.org.uk/sites/default/files/2019-08/FINDING_YOUR_VOICE.pdf

Unicef, Rights Respecting Schools. https://www.unicef.org.uk/rights-respecting

Convention on the Rights of the Child, https://www.unicef.org/child-rights-convention/what-is-the-convention

CASE STUDY 10. ENRICHING THE PRIMARY CURRICULUM FOR MORE ABLE LEARNERS

Context of school

Shirenewton Primary School is in the village of Shirenewton, near Chepstow in Monmouthshire. It has 200 pupils aged from 4 to 11 years. There are seven single-age classes. The three-year average for pupils eligible for free school meals is about 1%, and the school has identified approximately 15% of pupils as having additional needs. The governing body appointed a co-headteacher for the school in 2017 to work alongside the existing headteacher who acts a co-ordinator for a cluster of local schools. The school is currently a pioneer school and is working with the Welsh Government and other schools to take forward developments relating to the curriculum and professional learning.

Rationale for intervention/practice

The school was aware that although they had strategies in place to support more able learners, they wanted to do more to celebrate and promote learners with talent. They wanted to address questions such as: How do we know what talents the children have? How can we develop talent? How can children improve if we are not giving them the chance to show us what they can do?

> *"For the school, equity means all the children having opportunities to shine and make progress. We want all the children to be healthy and happy, enjoying the work they do. " Headteacher*

> *"The mission should be to enable everyone, without exception, to develop all their talents to the full and to realise their creative potential" (Koshy et al. 2013: 956).*

> *"Providing opportunities for children to share their interests with their peers, parents and teachers can contribute significantly to children's general motivation and attitude to work" (Koshy and Pascal, 2011: 448).*

School/setting approach to intervention/practice with examples

Enrichment afternoons were organised for the younger children to develop a platform to display their talents and to give all children an equal opportunity to shine and make progress across the curriculum. As the initiative progressed, teachers realised the importance of the children selecting their own choice of activities and developing their own interests. As a result, pupil voice has strengthened across the school.

> *"There are just some things that you want to do, just because they are fun. These choices were part of the wider curriculum as there was much to celebrate about the talented children in school. This is important in maintaining a healthy and happy school. " Headteacher*

The enrichment afternoons were initially offered to the younger children in school, however as the initiative grew, the children in Key Stage 2 wanted to become involved. Now older learners have their own enrichment activities that have a slightly different focus: they are based on life skills/ health and wellbeing. Community members are directly involved in delivering some of the activities and this has helped strengthen community links.

> *"It has created a great enthusiasm amongst staff, parents, community and children for developing new skills and showcasing individual talents." Headteacher*

Examples of the enrichment activities:
- Music Makers
- Gym Stars

- World Explorers
- Horrible Historians
- Roving Reporters
- Maths Detectives
- Mad about Science
- Master Chef

Example of Key Stage 2 Life Skills Enrichment:
- Hems/Badges
- Safe Cycling
- Cookery
- First Aid
- Garden/Home Maintenance
- Budgets & phone safety
- Animal Husbandry
- Spanish

Points to consider
- There needs to be a shared commitment to enrichment through prioritising staffing and providing people time to plan and resource activities
- Enrichment time needs to be clearly organised within timetables and roles for all staff.
- Resource implications need to be considered.
- Can be adapted to any school/age phase.

Impact of intervention
The school knew right from the start that the enrichment sessions had positively influenced the children's confidence and self-esteem. Relationships changed in the classroom, new friendships have formed and children are more willing to have their voices heard. A school case study of targeted pupils has also shown a positive impact on attainment.

Impact is measured through questionnaires completed by the children. These are carried out twice a year and have shown a positive impact on the health and wellbeing of the children taking part.

The impact on staff wellbeing has also been positive. Teachers enjoy being involved in enrichment afternoons, off timetable. The school has looked at the strengths of staff and organised activities based on these strengths. The passion staff have for their chosen activities inspires the children.

Further research and reading for professional learning
- Estyn (2019) Learning through play to support independent learning
  https://www.estyn.gov.wales/effective-practice/learning-through-play-support-independent-learning
- Koshy, V. & Pascal, C. (2011) Nurturing the young shoots of talent: using action research for exploration and theory building, European Early Childhood Education Research Journal, 19:4, 433450, https://bura.brunel.ac.uk/bitstream/2438/8677/2/Fulltext.pdf
- Koshy, V. & Pinheiro-Torres, C. (2013) 'Are we being de-gifted, Miss?' Primary school gifted and talented co-ordinators' responses to the Gifted and Talented Education Policy in England. British Educational Research Journal, 39(6), 953-978, https://bura.brunel.ac.uk/bitstream/2438/9814/2/Fulltext.pdf

Case Study 11. KS3-5 More Able and Talented Programme: Raising aspirations

Context of school
Monmouth Comprehensive School is an 11 to 18 mixed community school maintained by Monmouthshire County Council. Pupils come from the town of Monmouth and the surrounding rural areas of Monmouthshire, Herefordshire and Gloucestershire. Around 26% of pupils live in England. Around 7.8% of pupils are eligible for free school meals. Fifteen per cent of pupils have special educational needs, which is below the national average of 25%.

Rationale for intervention/practice
The school wanted to build the profile of More Able and Talented (MAT) learners among the student body to empower and raise the expectations and aspirations of pupils. To achieve these aims, the school worked with staff on how to stretch and challenge MAT learners. Aspirational targets were set for MAT learners, supported through the sharing of target data with pupils and parents/carers. A structured MAT programme has helped MAT learners develop the drive and motivation to achieve personalised targets.

> *"Teachers need to plan for systematic enrichment to ensure students are faced daily with appropriate challenges, customized accelerated pacing, and setting personal excellence goals" (Cathcart, 2018: 43)*

> *"Stimulating and challenging learning experiences that promote pupils' independence, problem-solving, decision-making, thinking and collaboration are effective experiences for more able and talented pupils" (Estyn, 2018)*

School/setting approach to intervention/practice with examples
The pastoral programme for MAT learners consists of fortnightly meetings with identified learners from each year group run by the MAT Coordinator. MAT learners are identified from school entry assessments, although some individuals are encouraged to attend the MAT programme if they are considered to have high aspirations and the potential to achieve. The premise of the programme is that through raising expectations, it will become a normal expectation that these learners will have high aspirations of themselves and their progress throughout their education.

> *"The aim is to set higher expectations and to give students the confidence that they can get there and achieve it." MAT Coordinator*

The programme is developed with Oxbridge criteria in mind, highlighting a proactive, independent approach to learning. MAT learners become aware of 100% as a target in assessments. It is normalised and considered achievable, improving learner progression. MAT learners are encouraged to choose mentors from the staff with whom they have a connection. These teachers support the development of MAT learners' subject-specific interests, whilst also helping to build positive relationships.

A rolling MAT programme has "encouraged networking as part of pupils' everyday academic life", helping to develop independence in their learning. An example of this has been where MAT learners have been encouraged to 'Bother a Boffin'. Here, learners develop their own networks to gather information about areas of interest, and connect with leading academics in their field of interest. There has also been a focus on building relationships, how to manage themselves and others, and how to communicate effectively. Additionally, sessions focus on exam preparation and exam technique.

The MAT programme supports pupils applying for Oxbridge through providing preparation for exams and college admissions interviews. MAT learners have benefited from visits to the school from Jesus

College. The bespoke programme provides MAT learners with the skillset and toolkit to maximise their own success and achievement.

> *"There has been a lot of work from the ground up, from the student body themselves, trying to get information to parents and trying to support staff In being more aspirational."* MAT Coordinator

Parents and community members have supported work experience sessions, including role-playing a trial. The school is looking to develop parental links in the future. Former pupils now studying at Oxbridge have returned to school to speak to the MAT learner group about their experiences. This has had a significant impact on the academic and personal aspirations of this group.

Points to consider
- There needs to be a shared commitment to any MAT programme by prioritising sessions on the timetable and through adequate resource allocation.
- Where possible, the involvement of parents is important in raising aspirations for all.
- Encourage older MAT learners to interact with younger MAT learners to consolidate learning and broaden school subject knowledge.
- MAT programmes can be adapted to any school/age phase.

Impact of intervention
- The programme has encouraged an aspirational work ethic and is allowing MAT learners to achieve more than the data suggests.
- MAT target setting has supported the internal recording of student progress beyond grade 7. Internal targets have risen greatly and this has had a positive impact on GCSE grades.
- The teachers' approach to MAT learners has developed. Teaching staff are more willing to give a higher predicted grade, have higher expectations for all learners and are gaining a greater understanding of what is achievable: 'normalising 100%'.
- There is an increase in learners from the school gaining places at Oxbridge colleges
- Staff are using more open-ended activities to scaffold learning beyond grade 7.

Further research and reading for professional learning

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- Monmouth Comprehensive School

- Heolddu Comprehensive School

- Monmouthshire Pupil Referral Service

Appendix 1: EAS Regional Equity and Wellbeing Strategy – Key Features

The regional Equity and Wellbeing Strategy encompasses all the approaches that are being implemented across the region to support schools in promoting improved outcomes for vulnerable learners. The strategy was formulated with a wide range of partners (including local authorities, Health Board, Gwent Police) and continues to be reviewed and updated. A summary of some of the areas contained within the regional strategy is noted below:

- A regional professional panel (including local authorities and EAS) that discusses and approves school grant plans (Pupil Development Grant (PDG), Looked After Children (LAC), Educated other than at school (EOTAS)) with headteachers and chairs of governors.
- A regional professional learning offer for schools and settings that covers all aspects of the wellbeing and equity agenda, grant planning and interventions.
- Support for schools to interrogate data on groups of learners to assist with planning for improvement.
- Regional delivery schools for wellbeing and equity, a cluster that delivers professional learning to support the LAC agenda and a Lead Pupil Referral Unit that offers support and professional learning across the region.
- The delivery of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) professional learning.
- Pilot programme working in partnership with Children's Commissioner on the Rights to Education.
- Partnership work with Young Carers Wales to design lessons for both primary and secondary phases to raise awareness of young carers.
- A regional 'Wellbeing Toolkit' has been used across schools to audit provision and engagement in learning for all vulnerable learners. In addition, all clusters of schools have developed 'Wellbeing Plans' that are bespoke to the priorities within their community.

Between eligible for free school meals (eFSM) pupils and other pupils:

In addition to the information provided above the region has:

- Completed regional based research on provision and performance of FSM learners which has been shared with all schools to support PDG planning and the provision for pupils eligible for FSM.
- Introduced Professional Panels (including LA and EAS) to discuss with headteachers and chairs of governors their PDG and LAC grant plans.
- Provided termly sessions, in collaboration with the regional Additional Learning Needs Transformation Lead for governors to assist them in scrutinising school grant plans and to be cognisant of the latest research and effective practice.
- Partially funded a vulnerable learner lead practitioner in every secondary school to engage in a 12-month professional learning programme.
- Introduced the RADY (Raising attainment of disadvantaged youngsters) programme in 6 secondary schools.
- Engaged with 'Children in Wales' and 'Poverty Proofing' to support schools to review the 'cost of the school day'.
- Engaged with Education Endowment Foundation to host regional research events.

Between Looked After Children and other pupils:

- Effective working practices between EAS, local authority LACEs, the Additional Learning Needs (ALN) Transformation Officer and the regional Social Care Transformation Officer to align support and roles and responsibilities.
- Each cluster across the region has submitted a plan noting their priorities for PDG LAC funding, the plans have been approved via a regional professional panel.
- There is a regional professional learning programme available to schools and settings that focuses on ACEs, trauma, attachment and creating safe spaces within schools to support the provision for LAC and known adopted children.
- The EAS is working in partnership with 'New Pathways' to design and deliver a five-module professional learning programme for wellbeing leads in schools to upskill staff on trauma attachment and relationships.
- The current EAS Business Plan has a focus on developing links with Adoption UK. The plan also focuses upon the National Nurturing Schools Programme with 42 schools across the region nearing completion

(Source: EAS, 2019b:8-9)

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