# Tackling deprivation and raising standards

**Estyn**

*Rhagoriaeth i bawb ~ Excellence for all*

Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg
a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru

Her Majesty's Inspectorate
for Education and Training in Wales

# Promoting good practice in tackling poverty and disadvantage

## INSET materials for primary schools

### May 2014

The purpose of Estyn is to inspect quality and standards in education and training in Wales. Estyn is responsible for inspecting:

- nursery schools and settings that are maintained by, or receive funding from, local authorities;
- primary schools;
- secondary schools;
- special schools;
- pupil referral units;
- independent schools;
- further education;
- independent specialist colleges;
- adult community learning;
- local authority education services for children and young people;
- teacher education and training;
- Welsh for adults;
- work-based learning; and
- learning in the justice sector.

Estyn also:

- provides advice on quality and standards in education and training in Wales to the National Assembly for Wales and others; and
- makes public good practice based on inspection evidence.

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## Introduction

Over a number of years, Estyn has drawn attention to the challenges that schools face in raising the achievement of disadvantaged pupils.  Our reports have also shown what effective schools in challenging circumstances do well.  Inspection and research suggest that it is the 'quality' of classrooms and schools, rather than the 'quantity' of the people in them that matters for all pupils and for disadvantaged children especially.

Two 'quality' issues stand out as important for disadvantaged pupils. These are:

- maximising teaching quality; and
- maximising school quality.

These INSET materials have been produced for schools in order to promote good practice more widely as well as make fuller use of the information contained in our reports on tackling poverty and disadvantage.

The INSET materials are based mainly on our reports on poverty and disadvantage. These are:

- Tackling poverty and disadvantage in schools: working with the community and other services (2011);
- Effective practice in tackling poverty and disadvantage in schools (2012);
- Working together to tackle the impact of poverty on educational achievement (2013); and
- Pupil deprivation: a summary report (2014).

The reports are available on our website at: www.estyn.gov.uk

The training materials also refer to other materials and information, including those published by the Welsh Government and the Sutton Trust.

Section one contains guidance for the 'school trainer' who will lead the INSET. Section two contains materials for participants.

## What do we mean by disadvantaged pupils?

It is important to use a broad range of criteria for identifying disadvantaged pupils. Many schools identify disadvantaged pupils as only those entitled to free school meals.  However, disadvantaged pupils also include those from minority groups, pupils in families on low income, looked-after children and traveller children.

It is also important to understand the distinction between disadvantaged pupils and underachieving pupils.  While schools are generally effective in identifying where pupils are not achieving as well as they should, they do not always ensure that disadvantaged pupils receive the support they need.  For example, many schools focus only on developing the basic skills of disadvantaged pupils and few schools do enough for more able and talented disadvantaged pupils.

## What are the aims of the training?

The overall aims of the training are to help schools share best practice in tackling poverty and disadvantage as well as support the development of a whole-school structured, coherent and focused approach to raising the achievement of disadvantaged pupils.

Each of the four training activities identifies specific objectives and outcomes for participants.

## Who are the materials for?

The materials aim to provide resources for whole-school training on tackling poverty and disadvantage.  The materials may be used by:

- practitioners and senior managers;
- learning support assistants;
- local authority advisory officers; and
- governors.

Schools will be aware that the Pupil Deprivation Grant may be used for whole-school initiatives that will particularly benefit learners who are eligible for free school meals (e-FSM) and looked after children (LAC).  These initiatives include whole staff development activities such as INSET days, which focus on the impact of deprivation on attainment and train staff to use strategies known to be particularly effective.  The materials will support schools in meeting the Welsh Government expectation that schools will make use of evidence-based approaches, such as those highlighted in Estyn's reports on deprivation and disadvantage as well as those described in the Education Endowment Foundation Sutton Trust toolkit.

In working towards effective continuous professional development (CPD), schools should consider how they can collaborate with others to share the training as well as learn from each other's best practice.  These materials may be used for this kind of collaborative form of CPD.  Schools may also wish to consider how they can share experiences and learning with their existing local partners (such as Communities First, Flying Start and Families First etc.) as well as voluntary and community groups that may help with many school activities.  The INSET materials may also contribute to collaborative work in professional learning communities, including promoting action-based enquiry research and the use of coaching and mentoring by the most effective practitioners.

Prior to the training, schools should consider the desired outcomes, for example targets for improved attainment and inclusion of disadvantaged pupils.  In working with a range of partners, senior managers will need to establish processes for assessing success in achieving improved outcomes as well as share information about lessons learned with others.  More information about monitoring and evaluation is included in this guidance.

## How does the training link to school improvement?

The processes of self-evaluation, development planning and CPD should be a regular part of a school's working life and improvement cycle.  This training links to the improvement cycle by supporting the active engagement of staff in increasing their professional knowledge, understanding and skills, including participation in whole-school professional learning experiences.  The training provides opportunities for schools to share good practice within and beyond the school, encouraging staff to reflect on their own practice as well as to evaluate the impact of professional learning on pupils' learning and wellbeing.

## What is the role of the school trainer?

In your role as the school trainer, you are not expected to be an expert on poverty and disadvantage.  However, you are likely to be a senior teacher in the school, capable of leading and guiding discussion, encouraging participants to reflect on their own practice as well as evaluate how effectively the school is tackling disadvantage. You should be able to respond to feedback from participants and use the outcomes of the training to contribute to the school's planning for improvement.  This guidance includes references to a range of related documents that may be helpful to you in preparing for the training.

The materials are structured so that you can deliver them without the need for extensive preparation.  However, in order to make the training pertinent to each school, you will need to provide some specific information, such as school performance data on pupils eligible for free school meals and the school's priorities for tackling disadvantage and raising attainment taken from the school improvement plan.  The materials indicate where this information is needed.

## What does the training focus on?

The training focuses on best practice and taking a whole-school strategic approach to tackling disadvantage.  The topics include:

Part 1:    What do we know about disadvantaged pupils?
Part 2:    How well do disadvantaged pupils achieve?
Part 3:    What do effective schools in challenging circumstances do well?
Part 4:    How can we tackle disadvantage more effectively?  Action planning for school improvement

## How are the materials organised and how can they be used?

The materials are organised for ease of use and delivery.  They identify objectives and outcomes for participants as well as the resources needed for the activities.  The table below illustrates how the materials are set out and the information that is included.  An approximate indication of the timing of tasks is provided for each activity.  Within the overall confines of the time for INSET, you should aim to be flexible in order to respond to the needs of the participants involved in the training. As the school trainer, you should read through all the materials carefully and note the requirements for each activity.

| **Aims, objectives and outcomes** | *How will the INSET help the school to tackle disadvantage?* The materials include the objectives for each session as well as the expected outcomes. You should also consider targets for improved attainment and inclusion of disadvantaged pupils. |
|---|---|
| **Time** | *How much time do you have available for the training?* The activities are planned to take up to four hours from start to finish. You may wish to plan breaks between the training activities that are most convenient for participants. |
| **Place** | *Where will the training take place?* You will need sufficient space for plenary sessions for participants as well as accommodation for workshop-type group activities. |
| **Resources** | *What resources will you need to have available for the participants?* Specific resources are listed for the training. You will need to decide how many copies to have available and how you will use the resources; for example, you may want to use flip charts or interactive whiteboards etc. Some activities require you to photocopy handouts for participants. |
| **Guidance for the trainer** | *How will the training be delivered?* Each session provides a step-by-step guide on how to deliver the training. There are prompts to remind you of when to provide handouts for participants. |

The INSET materials have been designed so that they provide a flexible approach to training for schools. For example, schools may choose to use all of the materials on one of their INSET days in the autumn term or spread the training sessions across INSET days over the school year. Schools will be at different stages in their work to improve the achievement and provision for disadvantaged pupils and can adapt and use sections which would be most beneficial for staff. The materials may be used by the whole-school and school clusters, as well as by focus groups and professional learning communities within and across schools.

## Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation are important if you and others are to establish if the training has brought about improvements in pupil outcomes, staff knowledge and skills and organisational changes. Where evaluation is only confined to the end of the training event, such as through a staff satisfaction questionnaire, this approach misses opportunities to judge important longer-term effects on pupils' achievement as well as staff skills and practice. For this reason, the training materials do not include a staff satisfaction survey. You may wish to use your existing approaches to gain feedback on the quality of the training you have provided for participants.

Monitoring and evaluating the action plans and amendments to the school improvement plan, produced as a result of the training, will provide an important source of information on the progress the school has made and the areas still to improve. Using the actions identified, you should consider the impact of the training

on disadvantaged pupils, such as their overall achievement and attainment and how well their literacy and learning skills are developing.  Monitoring and evaluation processes will enable you and other colleagues to judge how developing the expertise of staff is enabling disadvantaged pupils to achieve more.

If you are collaborating with others for this training, for example, in a cluster primary and secondary group, you should agree the desired outcomes, such as targets for improved attainment and inclusion.  You should also agree the processes for assessing success in achieving those outcomes.  These actions will help you and others to judge the impact and benefits of the combined work.

You will be aware that new performance management arrangements came into force on 1 January 2012, which enable a link to be made between individual headteacher and teacher objectives and the school's improvement priorities.  Schools that have made successful journeys to improvement have integrated systems so that INSET, and other forms of professional development, link naturally with performance management and self-evaluation for all staff.  You should consider how your school's performance management processes will help leaders and managers to judge the impact of the training.  For example, all staff may have a performance management objective to raise the achievement of disadvantaged pupils.

## Dissemination of training outcomes

Sharing information about what works best in terms of improvements in teaching and learning, is important for school improvement.  Following the training, you may wish to collate information from participants and disseminate this to all staff.

Sharing information beyond the school is also important, particularly where you have worked in collaboration with others, such as other schools, the community, partners and a range of organisations.  Prior to the training, you and your partners should agree how information will be shared. This approach will help to promote mutual professional learning and increase the school's capacity for effectiveness.

## Useful background reading for the school trainer

You may find it helpful to familiarise yourself with a range of related documents, including:

Communities, families and schools together:  A route to reducing the impact of poverty on educational achievement in schools across Wales, D Egan (Save the Children Wales, 2012) www.savethechildren.org.uk

Effective practice in tackling poverty and disadvantage in schools, Estyn (2012) www.estyn.gov.uk;

Improving schools, Welsh Government (2012) www.learning.wales.gov.uk;

No Child In Wales Born Without A Chance (2013) Save the Children www.savethechildren.org.uk/.../Communities-families-and-schools-together-report.pdf

Working together to tackle the impact of poverty on educational achievement, Estyn (2013) www.estyn.gov.uk

Pupil deprivation a summary report, Estyn (2014) www.estyn.gov.uk

School Effectiveness Grant and Pupil Deprivation Grant 2013–2015 Guidance 101/2013 Welsh Government (2013) www.cymru.gov.uk

Tackling poverty and disadvantage in schools: working with the community and other services, Estyn (2011) www.estyn.gov.uk

The Sutton Trust Toolkit of Strategies to Improve Learning, Higgins, Kokotsaki and Coe Toolkit (2011) www.educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/toolkit.

## Taking a whole school strategic approach to tackling disadvantage

### Part 1: What do we know about disadvantaged pupils?

**Objectives for participants:**

By the end of this session, participants will have:

- considered the characteristics and impact of poverty and disadvantage on pupils; and
- reflected on how pupils in the school are affected by disadvantage.

**Outcomes for participants:**

By the end of this session, participants should:

- understand how poverty and disadvantage impact on pupils' achievements and progress; and
- know the school priorities for tackling disadvantage identified in the school improvement plan.

**Time:** Approximately 25 minutes

**Preparation by the school trainer:**

- read through the whole of the training materials so that you are familiar with them;
- email or photocopy the briefing paper and questionnaire and send to participants for them to read and complete before the training. They should bring these materials to the first training event;
- insert information from the All Wales core data sets and the percentage of pupils entitled to FSM into the table in PowerPoint slide 2;
- insert the school improvement plan priorities relating to disadvantaged pupils into PowerPoint slide 7; and
- load the PowerPoint slides for the plenary sessions.

**Resources:**

- Whiteboard and computer
- Flip chart (optional)
- The school's All Wales core data sets for the Foundation Phase and key stage 2
- Briefing paper and questionnaire

**Introduction**

In this plenary session, begin by explaining that the training focuses on promoting good practice in tackling poverty and disadvantage.  The INSET materials that are being used have been devised by Estyn and are based mainly on our published reports on tackling poverty and disadvantage.

Show **PowerPoint slide 1,** which outlines the specific objectives and outcomes for this session. Remind participants of the main content of the **briefing paper** on poverty and disadvantage. Participants may wish to offer comments.

Tell participants that, while free school meal (FSM) entitlement is taken as a measure of the socio-economic conditions of a school's population, there are also other groups of disadvantaged pupils. Show **PowerPoint slide 2** to show these groups. Now show **PowerPoint slide 3** to remind participants of the past and current rates of percentage of pupils in the school entitled to FSM.

Give out the **handout** that contains PowerPoint slides 4, 5 and 6 and talk through **PowerPoint slides 4 and 5** on the characteristics of disadvantaged pupils. You may wish to draw on your background reading to add more detail. Tell participants there will now be an activity when they will use this information.

**Activity: Recognising the characteristics of disadvantaged pupils**

In pairs, invite participants to use the information from the PowerPoint slides to consider to what extent these characteristics reflect disadvantaged pupils within the school.

Ask participants to complete the sentences in PowerPoint slide 6.

Plenary – leading the feedback, ask participants to share their reflections on the issues raised by the characteristics of disadvantaged pupils. You may wish to highlight the most significant similarities with pupils in the school reported by participants on slides 4 and 5 or separately on a flipchart. Show the completed version of **PowerPoint slide 6**.

Now ask participants to spend a few minutes to reflect on how the school is currently prioritising work to tackle the achievement of disadvantaged pupils. Then show **PowerPoint slide 7**, to remind participants of the priorities in the school improvement plan.

NOTE: You may wish to consider discussing the appropriateness of the school targets for raising the achievement of disadvantaged pupils. For example, a target that is expressed as *'reduce the gap in performance between FSM and non-FSM pupils'* is not as precise and useful as *'increase the performance of FSM pupils in end of key stage assessments by ten percentage points'.*

To finish, participants should complete Part two of the questionnaire, which will help them reflect on their knowledge and understanding of issues to do with disadvantaged pupils as well as help to establish future training needs.

## **PowerPoint slide 1**

### **Overall aims of the training:**

The overall aims of the training are to promote best practice in tackling poverty and disadvantage as well as support schools in developing a whole-school structured, coherent and focused approach to raising the achievement of disadvantaged pupils.

### **Objectives for participants:**

By the end of this session, participants will have:

- considered the characteristics and impact of poverty and disadvantage on pupils; and
- reflected on how pupils in the school are affected by disadvantage.

### **Outcomes for participants:**

By the end of this session, participants should:

- understand how poverty and disadvantage impact on their pupils' achievements and progress; and
- know the school priorities for tackling disadvantage identified in the school improvement plan.

## **PowerPoint slide 2**

### **How should we define disadvantaged pupils?**

It is important to have a broad range of criteria for identifying disadvantaged pupils. Disadvantaged pupils include:

- those eligible for free school meals;
- those from minority groups;
- those in families on low income;
- looked-after children; and
- traveller children.

## PowerPoint slide 3

**The school's percentage of statutory school age pupils entitled to FSM – three year average**

*You should insert chart 1.2b from the school's All Wales core data set. The following chart shows an example of this table.*

**1.2b** % of pupils of statutory school age entitled to free school meals - 3-year average



## PowerPoint slide 4

Studies on child poverty tell us that:

- the gap between pupils from richer and poorer backgrounds widens especially quickly during primary school;
- disadvantaged pupils in primary schools are more likely to lack ambition and self-esteem, and to have behavioural problems and difficulty relating to their peers;
- boys as young as nine in disadvantaged schools become disenchanted with school and start to disengage; and
- pupils in disadvantaged schools have limited access to music, art and out-of-school activities that pupils in advantaged schools generally take for granted.

## **PowerPoint slide 5**

We also know that pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds:

- are more likely to have a poor attendance record;
- often perceive the curriculum as irrelevant;
- are less likely to accept the school culture;
- are more likely to have additional learning needs;
- have parents who are less likely to be involved in their children's education;
- have parents who are more likely to have a negative perception and experience of school and education; and
- are less healthy.

## **PowerPoint slide 6**

Research shows that:

- the gap between the achievement of disadvantaged children compared to advantaged children is present at …months old and significant by the age of … years.  When disadvantaged children enter school, they are often a … behind their more privileged classmates.

Research also tells us that disadvantaged pupils are more likely to do well if the young person:

- has a belief in …;
- finds school …;
- is supported by …; and
- does not experience ….

## **PowerPoint slide 6 (completed)**

Research shows that:

- the gap between the achievement of disadvantaged children compared to advantaged children is present at **nine** months old and significant by the age of **three** years.  When disadvantaged children enter school, they are often a **year** behind their more privileged classmates.

Research also tells us that disadvantaged pupils are more likely to do well if the young person:

- has a belief in his/her own ability at school;
- is supported by the engagement of his/her parents in their education;
- finds school worthwhile; and
- does not experience bullying.

## **PowerPoint slide 7**

The school's current priorities for tackling disadvantage include:

- …
- …
- …
- …

*(You should complete this slide with information taken from the school improvement plan.)*

## What do we know about disadvantaged pupils?

### A briefing paper on poverty and disadvantage

The influence and reach of poverty extends beyond the impact of income alone.  It can play a role in learner confidence, aspiration and future employability.  Currently, poverty affects one in three children and young people in Wales.  This represents around 200,000 children in Wales, who may have reduced choices and life chances.  The Welsh Government has drawn together a range of initiatives designed to improve the educational progress of pupils from deprived backgrounds in the Tackling Poverty Action Plan.  These initiatives and plan recognise that schools have an important role to play in helping to improve the outcomes for children from deprived backgrounds both independently of, and in partnership with, other initiatives designed to tackle the root causes of deprivation.

Research shows that socio-economic disadvantage is the single biggest obstacle to achievement in education.  The link between disadvantage and educational underachievement is strong.  However, besides poverty, there are also other factors which affect school assessment outcomes and examination results.  These factors include low aspirations for these pupils and a lack of understanding of the distinction between disadvantaged pupils and underachieving pupils.

Free school meal (FSM) entitlement is taken as a measure of the socio-economic conditions of a school's population.  In Wales, the performance of pupils eligible for FSM is lower than their non-entitled peers at all key stages and in all performance measures.  This attainment gap is evident by seven years of age and gradually widens.  By age 16, pupils eligible for free school meals are about half as likely to get five A*-C grades at GCSE than others.  However, being entitled for free school meals does not mean that a child is destined to underachieve.  Pupils from relatively poor backgrounds can and do achieve at the highest level and schools serving poor neighbourhoods can outperform schools with more affluent catchment areas.

For many years, raising the achievement of disadvantaged pupils has been one of the big challenges for schools in Wales.  There is no single explanation for why pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds perform less well than their peers because of a range of complex factors that are often interrelated.  This means that there is no single easy solution.  While Wales has a Child Poverty Strategy, there is no national programme for schools to follow for tackling issues of poverty and disadvantage.  However, schools are supported through the School Effectiveness Grant (SEG) and the Pupil Deprivation Grant (PDG), which are the Welsh Government's principal means of providing financial support for the national priority of reducing the impact of poverty on educational attainment.  Schools in disadvantaged areas are strongly encouraged to work with their local Communities First Clusters and with Families First and Flying Start provision to support families in their communities.  All schools have a key role to play in tackling disadvantage and they can make a difference.  In particular, schools have an important and powerful influence on raising attainment and aspirations and can provide a powerful ladder of opportunity for young people.

Inspection and research tell us that it is the 'quality' of our classrooms and schools that matters for all pupils and for disadvantaged pupils especially.  The schools that

make a difference to the achievement of disadvantaged pupils do what all successful schools do to secure the achievement of pupils. In addition, they also create an outstandingly positive ethos that allows disadvantaged pupils to achieve well.  These schools employ strategies specifically to combat the factors that disadvantage pupils. Also, by helping disadvantaged pupils, all pupils in a school do better.  Effective family and community engagement can have a positive impact on outcomes for all but especially for pupils from more deprived backgrounds.  Successful schools recognise that serving all pupils equally is not enough – there needs to be a specific focus on those pupils and young people who are growing up in poverty.  Schools that seem to 'buck the trend', tackle the impact of disadvantage using a wide range of approaches and interventions that help them to address a complex set of problems.

# PROMOTING GOOD PRACTICE IN TACKLING POVERTY AND DISADVANTAGE

## What do we know about disadvantaged pupils?

### Questionnaire for staff

Use part one of this questionnaire before the training to establish how much you understand about the effects of poverty and disadvantage on pupils.  You should complete part two of the questionnaire following the training.

**Part one:  Tick the box that reflects your agreement with the statements.**

|  | Strongly agree | Agree | Sometimes agree | Do not agree | Don't know |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I have a clear understanding of the association between poverty and pupils' low levels of educational achievement. |  |  |  |  |  |
| Disadvantaged pupils include different groups of pupils, such as those receiving free school meals, those from minority groups, in low income families, looked-after children and traveller children. |  |  |  |  |  |
| I understand the distinction between disadvantaged pupils and underachieving pupils. |  |  |  |  |  |
| I know how to identify disadvantaged pupils in my class. |  |  |  |  |  |
| I know how well disadvantaged pupils achieve in my class in relation to their non-disadvantaged peers. |  |  |  |  |  |
| I know how well disadvantaged pupils achieve in our school in relation to disadvantaged pupils in other schools. |  |  |  |  |  |
| I understand the influence of low expectation, low self-esteem and aspiration on disadvantaged pupils. |  |  |  |  |  |
| I know the value of out-of-hours learning to raising disadvantaged pupils' standards and improving their wellbeing. |  |  |  |  |  |
| I understand the importance of working with families, the community and services to support disadvantaged pupils. |  |  |  |  |  |

| I regularly evaluate the strategies I use to raise the achievement and aspirations of disadvantaged pupils and share my findings with others. | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | |

## Part two (to be completed after the first section of the training)
**Tick the box that reflects your agreement with the statements.**

| | Strongly agree | Agree | Sometimes agree | Do not agree | Don't know |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I have a clear understanding of the association between poverty and pupils' low levels of educational achievement. | | | | | |
| Disadvantaged pupils include different groups of pupils, such as those receiving free school meals, those from minority groups, in low income families, looked-after children and traveller children. | | | | | |
| I understand the distinction between disadvantaged pupils and underachieving pupils. | | | | | |
| I know how to identify disadvantaged pupils in my class. | | | | | |
| I know how well disadvantaged pupils achieve in our school in relation to disadvantaged pupils in other schools. | | | | | |
| I understand the influence of low expectation, low self-esteem and aspiration on disadvantaged pupils. | | | | | |
| I know the value of out-of-hours learning to raising disadvantaged pupils' standards and improving their wellbeing. | | | | | |
| I understand the importance of working with families, the community and services to support disadvantaged pupils. | | | | | |
| I regularly evaluate the strategies I use to raise the achievement and aspirations of disadvantaged pupils and share my findings with others. | | | | | |

## Part 2: How well do disadvantaged pupils achieve?

**Objectives for participants:**

By the end of this session, participants will have:

- explored a range of national and local data on the performance of disadvantaged pupils; and
- considered the performance of disadvantaged pupils in the school in the Foundation Phase and key stage 2.

**Outcomes for participants:**

By the end of this session, participants should:

- know how well disadvantaged pupils in Wales perform in relation to their non-FSM peers; and
- understand how well disadvantaged pupils in the school perform in relation to their peers in the school, in the family of schools and nationally.

**Time:** Approximately 60 minutes

**Preparation by the school trainer:**

- read through the whole of the training materials so that you are familiar with them;
- write the headings **'Strengths'** and **'Areas for improvement'** on card to be displayed for the post-it notes;
- insert data into PowerPoint slides 3, 4, 5 and 6 from  Section 1.2a and 1.2b from the All Wales core data sets for the Foundation Phase and key stage 2;
- photocopy PowerPoint slides 1 and 2 if desired for participants;
- photocopy Section 8 of the All Wales core data sets for Foundation Phase and Section 9 of the All Wales core data set for key stage 2 for participants;
- collate any other data that the school collects on the performance of disadvantaged pupils and prepare a PowerPoint slide with this information; and
- load the PowerPoint slides for the plenary sessions.

**Resources:**

- Whiteboard and computer
- Flipchart
- Photocopies of PowerPoint slides 1 and 2 (optional)
- Section 1.2a/1.2b (FSM/non-FSM trend and family comparison) from the All Wales core data set for the Foundation Phase and key stage 2
- Section 8 (benchmarking) of the All Wales core data sets for the Foundation Phase and Section 9 (benchmarking) of the All Wales core data sets for key stage 2
- Other school data on the performance of disadvantaged pupils
- Title cards and post-it notes for each group

**Summary of Part 1**

If Part 2 of the training does not follow on immediately from Part 1, you may choose to begin this session by summarising the earlier training using the PowerPoint slides provided in this pack.

**Introduction**

Begin the plenary session by explaining that this part of the training focuses on the achievement of pupils eligible for FSM, examining performance data at national, local and school levels.

Show **PowerPoint slide 1** that outlines the objectives of the session.  Show **PowerPoint slide 2** about key outcomes for disadvantaged pupils in Wales.  You may wish to provide a **handout** of these PowerPoint slides for participants.

Remind participants that the Welsh Government has produced data sets for schools known as the All Wales core data sets.  These data sets provide a wide range of contextual performance information, including the performance of disadvantaged pupils.  Remind participants that data alone does not provide solutions to identified issues.  Instead, it raises questions, the answers to which might provide a solution.  The following slides show school data taken from these core data sets.  Show **PowerPoint slides 3, 4, 5 and 6** that refer to performance of FSM/non-FSM pupil trends and family comparisons in the school.  Draw attention to key features of the school's performance in these areas.  If you have prepared a PowerPoint slide on other data on the performance of disadvantaged pupils, show this now.

Tell participants that the activity that follows requires them to analyse aspects of the performance of disadvantaged pupils in the school.  Now set up the arrangements for the group activity. Give out the **handout** from the All Wales core data sets as well as a **copy of the discussion prompts**.  Ask the groups to nominate a recorder so that each group has a list of strengths and areas for improvement.  These should be written onto post-it notes under two titles.

**Activity:  Analysing the performance of pupils entitled to FSM          (35 mins)**

In groups, participants should use the handouts on performance data and the discussion prompts to analyse the performance of pupils eligible for FSM. They should identify the strengths in the performance of disadvantaged pupils and areas for improvement.

Plenary – ask the recorder from each group to display the post-it notes under the two titles of strengths and areas for development.  Participants should circulate to read the notes produced by each group.  Then, lead the discussion on the group findings.  Participants should be asked to note this information to aid their work in the next training activity.

## Revision of Part 1

## PowerPoint slide

## How have we defined disadvantaged pupils?

It is important to have a broad range of criteria for identifying disadvantaged pupils. Disadvantaged pupils include:

- those entitled to free school meals;
- those from minority groups;
- those in families on low income;
- looked-after children; and
- traveller children.

## PowerPoint slide

## What do we know about the effects of poverty and disadvantage?

Disadvantaged pupils are more likely to lack ambition and self-esteem, and to have behavioural problems and difficulty relating to their peers.

Disadvantaged pupils are more likely to see the curriculum as irrelevant.

Pupils in disadvantaged schools have limited access to music, art and out-of-school activities that pupils in advantaged schools generally take for granted.

Pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds are more likely to have a poor attendance record and are often less likely to accept the school culture.

Pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds are more likely to have parents who are less involved in their children's education and have a negative perception and experience of school and education.

### PowerPoint slide 1

**Objectives for participants:**

By the end of this session, participants will have:

- explored a range of national and local data on the performance of disadvantaged pupils; and
- considered the performance of disadvantaged pupils in the school in the Foundation Phase and key stage 2.

**Outcomes for participants:**

By the end of this session, participants should:

- know about the performance of disadvantaged pupils in Wales; and
- understand how well disadvantaged pupils are achieving in the school.

### PowerPoint slide 2

**Key results for disadvantaged pupils in Wales**

- Overall, the performance of both FSM and non-FSM pupils has improved since 2005. However, the performance of pupils entitled to FSM is lower than their non-entitled counterparts at all key stages and in all performance measures. The gap in performance increases as pupils get older.

- In the Foundation Phase, in 2013, the area of learning with the widest gap in performance between FSM and non-FSM pupils was "Language, literacy and communication skills" (English) with 16.5 percentage points. The area of learning with the narrowest gap was "Personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural diversity" with 8.6 percentage points.

- In key stage 2, in 2013, for individual subjects the gap is widest in Welsh (20.3 percentage points) and narrowest in science (14.4 percentage points); Looking at the core subject indicator, the gap in performance has generally narrowed over the last six years at key stage 2 but is still wider than in the Foundation Phase.

**PowerPoint slide 3**

**Foundation Phase – school performance data**

*(Insert data from Section 1.2a/1.2b (FSM/non-FSM trend) from the All Wales core data sets for the Foundation Phase.)*

*The following table shows an example.*

**PowerPoint slide 4**

**Foundation Phase – school performance data**

*(Insert data from Section 1.2a/1.2b (FSM/non-FSM family comparison) from the All Wales core data sets for the Foundation Phase.)*

*The following table shows an example.*



**PowerPoint slide 5**

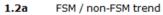**Key stage 2 – school performance data**

*(Insert data from Section 1.2a/1.2b (FSM/non-FSM trend) from the All Wales core data sets for key stage 2.)*

**PowerPoint slide 6**

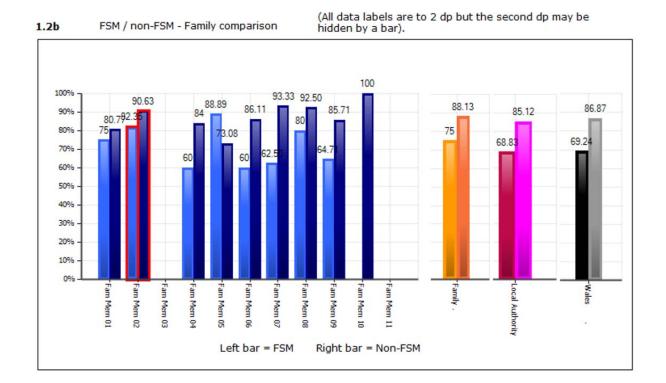**Key stage 2 – school performance data**

*(Insert data from Section 1.2a/1.2b (FSM/non-FSM family comparison) from the All Wales core data sets for key stage 2.)*

**Part 3: What do effective schools in challenging circumstances do well?**

**Objectives for participants:**

By the end of this session, participants will have:

- reflected on good practice in the provision for disadvantaged pupils; and
- evaluated aspects of the school's provision for disadvantaged pupils.

**Outcomes for participants:**

By the end of this session, participants will have identified:

- strengths in the school's provision for disadvantaged pupils; and
- areas for improvement in order to help raise the standards of disadvantaged pupils' achievements.

**Time:** approximately 60- 90 minutes

**Preparation by the school trainer:**

- read through the whole of the training materials so that you are familiar with them;
- determine the composition of the groups. You will probably find it useful to maintain the organisation of groups from the previous activity. However, you may wish to consider separately the membership of the group examining leadership and management issues to include staff such as key stage leaders and the ANCo etc.
- decide which good practice case studies would be most useful and photocopy these and the discussion points for the five topics. Distribute these before the training; and
- load the PowerPoint slides for the plenary sessions.

**Resources:**

- Whiteboard and computer
- Photocopies of good practice and discussion points for the five topics

**Summary of Part 1 and Part 2**

If Part 3 of the training does not follow on immediately from Part 1 and Part 2, you may choose to begin this session by summarising the earlier training using the PowerPoint slides provided in this pack.

**Introduction**

Begin the plenary session by explaining that this part of the training focuses on what effective schools in challenging circumstances do well. Show **PowerPoint slide 1,** which outlines the objectives of the session.

**Strategies that can be implemented by the school alone**

Show **PowerPoint slide 2,** which illustrates the characteristics of effective practice in tackling disadvantage implemented by schools working on their own. There are a number of strategies that schools can introduce and implement through the usual structures, system and processes that are found in all schools. You may wish to refer to the school's current practice in relation to these characteristics. You may also want to draw on your background reading to add further information for participants.

Successful schools in challenging circumstances:

- take a **whole-school, strategic approach** to tackling disadvantage – they have a structured, coherent and focused approach to raising the achievement of disadvantaged learners, and ensure that a senior leader has managerial responsibility for overseeing and co-ordinating the school's work on tackling the impact of disadvantage;
- **use data to identify and track the progress** of disadvantaged learners – they gather information from a range of sources and use it to analyse the progress of groups of learners, including monitoring how well disadvantaged learners do against benchmarks and prior attainment, and tracking the progress of individual disadvantaged learners;
- focus on the development of disadvantaged learners' **literacy and learning skills** – they appreciate that an initial literacy deficit lies at the root of many other types of educational disadvantages;
- develop the **social and emotional skills** of disadvantaged learners – they understand the relationship between wellbeing and standards, and often restructure their pastoral care system to deal more directly with the specific needs of disadvantaged learners;
- improve the **attendance, punctuality and behaviour** of disadvantaged learners – they have suitable sanctions, but find that reward systems work particularly well;
- **tailor the curriculum** to the needs of disadvantaged learners – they have mentoring systems that guide learners through their programmes of study and help them to plan their own learning pathways;
- make great efforts to provide **enriching experiences** that more advantaged learners take for granted – they offer a varied menu of clubs, activities and cultural and educational trips;
- **listen to disadvantaged learners** and provide opportunities for them to play a full part in the school's life – they gather learners' views about teaching and learning, give learners a key role in school development, and involve learners directly to improve standards;
- engage **parents and carers** of disadvantaged learners – they communicate and work face-to-face to help them and their children to overcome barriers to learning; and
- **develop the expertise of staff** to meet the needs of disadvantaged learners – they have a culture of sharing best practice, provide opportunities for teachers to observe each other, and have performance management targets that are related to raising the achievement of disadvantaged learners.

The strategies above are relatively generic in nature, but if the school wants to make an impact on the achievements and wellbeing of learners, then just doing these things is not enough. Successful schools do something extra and focused for disadvantaged learners in each of these strategies. Their work is intensive, specifically targeted on disadvantaged learners and sharply focused on the individual needs of disadvantaged learners.

## Strategies that involve working with partners

Show **PowerPoint slide 3,** which illustrates the characteristics of effective practice in tackling disadvantage by working with partners. Tell participants that it is widely recognised that schools alone cannot break the link between disadvantage and achievement. Although the school has an important role to play in improving the achievements of disadvantaged learners, research stresses the need for broad-based approaches that involve a number of agencies working together to address community-based issues. In addition to the school, these include other educational, social and health services.

Successful schools in challenging circumstances:

- engage **parents and carers** of disadvantaged learners – they communicate and work face-to-face to help them and their children to overcome barriers to learning;
- engage the families of vulnerable new learners – they create an environment that is welcoming, often establishing family or nurture rooms where children can learn with their families for a period;
- understand what it means to be **community-focused** – they strengthen community links with the express intention of raising attendance rates, improving behaviour, and raising the level of parental support;
- carefully design a range of **out-of-hours learning** – they ensure that the activities match the needs of learners, complement the curriculum and increase learners' confidence, motivation and self-esteem;
- co-ordinate and manage **multi-agency working** systematically – they develop the leadership skills needed for partnership working, establish protocols and processes, identify a senior member of staff to co-ordinate the work with partners, understand the support that the pupil receives from an external partner, and monitor progress carefully;
- use specialist support where learners have complex needs that the school cannot meet on its own – they focus on the needs of each individual learner, work with agencies to provide broad family-related services to meet those needs, and work with specialist services to meet specific health or wellbeing needs;
- engage in '**Team around the family'** approaches – they use the pool of skills within the team to address the health, domestic and social welfare concerns of learners and their families;
- **pool their resources,** such as funding from the Pupil Deprivation Grant, in joint strategies and training – they systematically address disadvantage in their cluster of schools, including designing approaches to enable the smooth transition from primary to secondary school by supporting them, for instance in their social and emotional learning, and in literacy;

- evaluate their own work and that of external agencies against clear measures of learner performance – they use data to evaluate the impact of new initiatives and share performance information with partners to help to join up the school's approaches with other interventions; and
- focus the use of the **Pupil Deprivation Grant** – they direct the grant specifically towards disadvantaged learners and not low achievers, use the precise strategies that are known to be most effective, work with partners and parents, and evaluate the impact of the work.

Tell participants that they will now work in groups on an activity, which will require them to use this information to analyse examples of good practice, respond to discussion prompts and consider the strengths and areas for development for tackling disadvantage in the school.  To facilitate the training, these characteristics have been organised into five broad areas with a good practice case study and prompts for discussion for each area.  Show **PowerPoint 4,** which illustrates these areas.

You should now organise participants into groups for the activity.  You will probably find it useful to maintain the organisation of groups from the previous activity.  However, you may also wish to consider separately the membership of the group examining leadership and management issues.   This group may also consider spending for learning in relation to the use of the School Effectiveness Grant (SEG), the Pupil Deprivation Grant (PDG) and the Communities First PGD match funding.

**Hand out** the case studies of best practice and the discussion prompts on the characteristics of effective practice.  When in their groups, participants should read the case study and use this information as they respond to the discussion points.  Ask the groups to nominate a recorder so that the school's strengths and areas for improvement can be noted.  This information will be needed by participants for the final training session.

| **Activity: Identifying effective practice** | **35 mins** |
| --- | --- |
| Participants should read the case study of best practice and use the discussion prompts to consider the way the school currently provides for disadvantaged pupils. They should record the strengths in the school and the areas that the group determines needs development. | |

Plenary feedback – leading the feedback, ask the recorder from the groups to provide one/two examples of the strengths and the areas for development that they have identified.  Discuss questions and comments on the points raised.  Tell participants that the final part of the training requires them to respond to these areas through planning for improvement.

## Revision of Parts 1 and 2

## PowerPoint slide

### How have we defined disadvantaged pupils?

It is important to have a broad range of criteria for identifying disadvantaged pupils. Disadvantaged pupils include:

- those entitled to free school meals;
- those from minority groups;
- those in families on low income;
- looked-after children; and
- traveller children.

## PowerPoint slide

### What do we know about the effects of poverty and disadvantage?

Disadvantaged pupils are more likely to lack ambition and self-esteem, and to have behavioural problems and difficulty relating to their peers.

Disadvantaged pupils are more likely to see the curriculum as irrelevant.

Pupils in disadvantaged schools have limited access to music, art and out-of-school activities that pupils in advantaged schools generally take for granted.

Pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds are more likely to have a poor attendance record and are often less likely to accept the school culture.

Pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds are more likely to have parents who are less involved in their children's education and have a negative perception and experience of school and education.

You may also choose to use PowerPoint slides 3,4,5 and 6 from Part 2 of the training, in order to provide a recap on the performance of disadvantaged pupils in the school.

**PowerPoint slide 1**

**Objectives for participants:**

By the end of this session, participants will have:

- reflected on good practice in the provision for disadvantaged pupils; and
- evaluated aspects of the school's provision for disadvantaged pupils.

**Outcomes for participants:**

By the end of this session, participants should have identified:

- strengths in the school's provision for disadvantaged pupils; and
- areas for improvement in order to raise the standards of disadvantaged pupils' achievements.

**PowerPoint slide 2**

**Strategies that can be implemented by the school alone**

**Ten in-school strategies**:

- Whole-school approach
- Using data to identify and track progress
- Literacy and learning skills
- Social and emotional skills
- Attendance, punctuality and behaviour
- Tailoring the curriculum
- Enriching experiences
- Listening to learners
- Engaging parents
- Developing staff expertise

**PowerPoint slide 3**

**Strategies that involve working with partners**

**Schools alone cannot break the link between disadvantage and achievement.**

**Ten multi-agency strategies:**

Community leadership

Nurture groups

Team around the family – support for vulnerable pupils

Family learning

Pooling resources and use of Pupil Deprivation Grant

**Ten in-school strategies**:

- Whole-school approach
- Using data to identify and track progress
- Literacy and learning skills
- Social and emotional skills
- Attendance, punctuality and behaviour
- Tailoring the curriculum
- Enriching experiences
- Listening to learners
- Engaging parents
- Developing staff expertise

Parenting programmes

On-site services

Community participation

Out of school hours learning

Evaluation

**PowerPoint slide 4**

**What do effective schools in challenging circumstances do well?**

1 Identifying, tracking and monitoring disadvantaged pupils' progress
2 Tailoring the curriculum to the needs of disadvantaged pupils
3 Engaging with parents and the community
4 Partnership working
5 Leadership and management in tackling disadvantage

## Group 1: Identifying, tracking and monitoring disadvantaged pupils' progress

**Case study 1: Llwynypia Primary School in Rhondda Cynon Taf uses data collection and a process that tracks pupils' progress in wellbeing and academic performance.**

**Context of the school**

Llwynypia Primary School, with 208 pupils aged three to 11 years of age, serves the village of Llwynypia in Rhondda Cynon Taff. Most of the pupils who attend the school come from the immediate area. The area is described as being one of the most deprived in Wales as measured by the Welsh Index of Deprivation. Twenty-six per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals. Thirty-four per cent of pupils have special educational needs.

**Strategy**

The school and the school's aims and values reflect the development of the whole child. The school ethos is based on the wellbeing of all pupils and staff, and the school motto, "We all believe, we all achieve!" is evident throughout the school. To ensure effective support for its disadvantaged pupils, the school has developed a systematic approach to developing pupils' wellbeing.

**Action**

Staff worked in groups to identify the current provision for wellbeing across the school. Pupils then undertook the same process.

Staff have devised a tracking system to monitor wellbeing across the school. Teachers assess pupils' wellbeing and participation in all areas of learning. They then use a traffic light system to highlight pupils who need a detailed assessment of needs. Staff then assess individual pupils based on how much support they need in different areas including, for example their sensitivity to the needs of others and their ability to express their emotions. The tracking system allows staff to evaluate pupils' wellbeing and to support pupils when necessary. School support strategies include counselling programmes and referral to specialist services.

The school has worked with other schools from its cluster to develop this approach further and agree a cluster policy. All of the schools involved use the Pupil Attitude to Self and School (PASS) survey, alongside the school identification system, to improve wellbeing across the cluster and within schools. This system provides a consistent approach to support the emotional and wellbeing needs of disadvantaged pupils by identifying issues that might have a detrimental effect on learning. By collating both sets of data, the school can refine its target-setting and strategies for supporting the learning of disadvantaged pupils.

The wellbeing tracking is linked to academic tracking systems and is used to inform differentiated learning and teaching. Achievement is tracked from nursery to Year 6 and is reviewed regularly. The school tracks the achievement of groups of pupils

(pupils entitled to free school meals, those with English as an additional language, pupils with additional learning needs and more able and talented pupils) and their attendance, and identifies trends across groups of pupils.  Staff have class profiles in their planning files and these provide an overview of pupils and the support they receive.

The cluster of schools works together effectively to ensure a smooth transition for pupils.  Information about pupils' wellbeing and levels of participation, as well as levels of attainment, are transferred to the secondary school at the end of key stage 2.  Staff from both schools meet to discuss any individual needs.

Staff review pupils' progress regularly.  They monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of intervention strategies on a termly basis.  Staff check wellbeing tracking regularly and evaluate the impact of strategies such as mentoring programmes.  Listening to pupils is an integral part of the school monitoring and self-evaluation process.

**Outcomes**

At key stage 2, performance in the core subjects has improved significantly over the last four years and is now in the top quarter of that for similar schools.  At key stage 1, results have improved and are in the top half of those for similar schools.  In the last two years, the performance of pupils entitled to free school meals at both key stages has improved.  These pupils have achieved better than the average for free-school-meal pupils in the family of schools and the all-Wales average.

The systematic approach to ensuring pupils' wellbeing is embedded across the school.  Pupils know that they have a voice and that their contributions are valued.  Learner participation is regularly promoted.  The wellbeing tracking has shown an improvement in pupils' self-esteem and self-confidence, and a sense of responsibility and pride in their achievements.

# Group 1:  Identifying, tracking and monitoring disadvantaged pupils' progress

**Case study 2:  The 'Blue Skies Project' in the Dyffryn Aman cluster in Carmarthenshire**

**Context**

Pupils from the Dyffryn Aman cluster of primary schools move on to their next stage of learning at 11 years of age when they enter Dyffryn Aman Comprehensive School.  All primaries within the cluster provide education mostly in Welsh or bilingually.

**Strategy**

The co-ordinator for the more able and talented pupils in the secondary school leads a project to share information and provide a programme of challenging activities for pupils.  The co-ordinator is supported by staff from the primary schools and specialist providers.

**Action**

In the summer term of every year, each primary school in the cluster uses standardised tests, teacher observation and staff discussion to identify the most able 10% of its Year 5 pupils, which may include disadvantaged pupils.  The pupils in Year 6 and Year 7 take part in a programme of challenging activities, including team-building, development of leadership skills, mathematical investigations, drama workshops and a residential visit.  All aim to improve the critical-thinking skills and higher-order learning skills of the more able pupils, and also to encourage the development of their personal, social and emotional skills.

Teachers ensure the support of parents through good communication by letter and personal contact.  The success of the project is monitored through pupil questionnaires and analysis of standardised skills tests in Year 7.  Teachers track pupil progress throughout the primary schools and into the secondary school using the same, colour-coded system.

**Outcomes**

There are very positive and strong relationships between the primary and secondary school in the cluster.  There is consistency between the primary schools in how they identify more able and talented pupils as well as consistent use of an agreed electronic tracking system by all schools enabling effective data transfer, and monitoring of pupils' progress.

As a result of this work there has been an improvement in pupils' learning skills, especially oracy, listening and thinking.  Pupils have also developed their personal, social and emotional skills effectively and cope well with transition.  There is effective transfer of data from primary to secondary school, which gives teachers accurate information.  This information helps them to establish high expectations of more able and talented pupils.

## Group 1: Identifying, tracking and monitoring disadvantaged pupils' progress

Please ensure you have nominated a recorder for the group in order to list the strengths and areas for improvement in relation to the discussion points and the case study of best practice.

**Discussion points:**

1   What mechanisms do we use for identifying disadvantaged pupils?  How effective are these?
2   Do we use quantitative and qualitative data and information, including that on pupils' wellbeing and perceptions?  How well do we use the information?
3   How well do we track and monitor disadvantaged pupils' progress systemically?
4   Do we use external benchmarks to measure progress against other schools?
5   How well do we monitor and evaluate the support and interventions we provide for disadvantaged pupils?  If strategies are not resulting in pupils' improvement do we refine or change them?
6   Do we have a strong understanding of the relationship between wellbeing and standards? How would we explain this?
7   How well do our mentoring processes support the overall development of pupils?

**Where are the strengths in the identification, tracking and monitoring of our disadvantaged pupils?**

**Where are improvements needed?**

## Group 2:  Tailoring the curriculum specifically for disadvantaged pupils

**Case study 1:  Ysgol Y Castell Primary School in Carmarthenshire organises trips to Germany and France to enrich the learning experiences of its disadvantaged pupils.**

**Context of the school**

Ysgol y Castell is an English-medium community primary school with an integrated nursery.  There are about 240 pupils at the school, aged three to 11, with a growing school roll.  The school is situated in Kidwelly in West Wales, in an area of high deprivation.  Thirty-eight per cent of pupils are currently entitled to free school meals.

**Strategy**

The school's strategy was to:

- introduce French in Year 6 and also introduce very basic German in Year 5 in order to correspond with penfriends in link schools in Europe;
- raise aspirations, increase participation and broaden the experiences of disadvantaged pupils, by offering all pupils one opportunity to travel overseas during key stage 2; and
- develop global citizenship by linking with schools in Germany and France.

The school also planned to improve the attendance rates of its disadvantaged pupils and to involve parents in their strategy.

**Action**

French has been taught in Year 6 since 2005 when the school was part of a CILT (National Centre for Languages) Cymru pilot for introducing modern foreign languages into the primary curriculum.  Throughout the four year pilot, the school worked closely with the modern foreign languages department at Glan y Mor Comprehensive, and its cluster of primary schools.  At the end of the funded pilot, Ysgol y Castell continued the programme as it had been so successful in inspiring all pupils.  The focus is on listening, speaking simple sentences, singing simple songs and playing games.  The aim of the project is to communicate with penfriends in link schools.

Through links with the Kidwelly Town Twinning Association, the school planned a trip to Brittany.  The first visit to the twin town of St Jacut de la Mer in Brittany took place in 2006.  The headteacher and the special educational needs co-ordinator took a group of pupils from Years 5 and 6.  During a third visit, some parents came along.  These visits had been largely taken up by parents who either could afford to participate or who felt motivated for their children.  As a result, the school applied for a Comenius multilateral grant to get funding for more disadvantaged pupils to participate.  The school decided to prioritise the participation of pupils whose social skills needed development and who had never had the opportunity to travel.  Of the 23 pupils who participated in the 2011 overseas visits, only four had previously flown,

and none had travelled without their parents.  The majority had never stayed away from home.  Pupils were also identified from the Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) programme for tracking wellbeing.  As a result, the visit included pupils with a range of problems, such as poor self-esteem and a tendency for aggressive play, and those who were easily distracted.

The school gave questionnaires to pupils and parents.  A group of pupils who were targeted to develop their social, emotional and behavioural skills were monitored to assess their development through their individual education plans.

Pupils' achievements in modern foreign languages are tracked into the secondary school.

**Outcomes**

The most notable outcome has been the raised self-esteem of pupils.  Underachieving boys and those with emotional and behaviour difficulties have gained greatly by encouragement to have a go at something completely new and by communicating with penfriends.  Wellbeing assessment tracking indicates that, following the visits, pupils have felt more motivated to succeed and take part in more extra-curriculum activities.

The secondary school notes a more positive attitude towards learning modern foreign languages and has had a greater uptake of modern foreign languages at GCSE level.

The pupils identified as having social and emotional difficulties have improved their skills and attendance.  A few have gained confidence to join out-of-hours provision.

The involvement of parents in school activities, meetings and events has also increased.

Pupils who are entitled to free school meals achieve very well in Ysgol Y Castell.  The gap between the achievement of pupils entitled to free school meals and those who are not is smaller than the Wales average at key stage 2.  In two out of the last three years, all pupils entitled to free school meals have achieved the core subject indicator.

Attendance rates are very good and have been in the top quarter of those for similar schools over the last four years.

# Group 2: Tailoring the curriculum specifically for disadvantaged pupils

**Case study 2: St. Woolos Primary School in Newport has an 'Aspiration Project' for disadvantaged pupils to find out more about the world of work.**

## Context

St. Woolos Primary School is situated close to Newport city centre in a Communities First area. It serves a very diverse population, both socially and culturally. Fifty-two per cent of pupils currently have English as an additional language (EAL) and around 59% come from an ethnic minority background, mainly Asian, covering 35 different home languages.

Within the vicinity of the school there are a local authority homeless hostel and two women's refuges. A significant percentage of the school's population is mobile and joins at a later stage than the Foundation Phase, due to the refugee and transient nature of some families. Around 34% of the pupils on roll are entitled to free school meals.

## Strategy

The school motto is "Celebrating achievement for all in a caring environment". However, school leaders recognise that, because they suffer disadvantage, many of their pupils have limited aspirations.

The school initiated the Aspiration Project in September 2007. The aim of the project is to provide pupils with employment knowledge beyond the boundaries of their usual life experiences. The project provides an informed introduction to the world of work and to raise pupils' aspirations through visits to the school from adults working in a range of fields. Whenever possible, the school uses the experiences of those who have a direct connection to the school. The visits provide an opportunity for pupils to develop their knowledge of the workplace and working life in general; to develop their communication skills; and also explore any individual areas of interest.

This is especially relevant for those children whose parents may not be working, or who may have very little knowledge of the career paths available. The school chooses visitors from a wide range of work places.

The Aspiration Project is part of the Year 6 personal and social education curriculum. It is just one aspect of intervention and support across the whole school to support disadvantaged pupils.

## Action

Visitors from the local community come in to talk about their job and their career paths. They meet with the Year 6 pupils to present their story, which may include discussion about equipment they have brought along. One such speaker was the Project Manager of the new university building in Newport. He spoke to the pupils

about health and safety, his job and his education.  The pupils asked him a range of questions, which broadened their knowledge of the world of work.

Following the presentations, pupils discuss their ideas and record their responses in their learning diaries.

Another aspect of the project is the 'World of work day'.  Newport City Housing provided the Year 6 pupils with a day of activity.  Pupils visited the head office in Newport and had a brief introduction to the company from the Managing Director. They were then split into one of six groups, which took part in a 'speed interview' meeting lasting five minutes each with six different workers.  The worker roles varied from 'plumber' to 'accountant' and 'receptionist', and each worker talked about their job and role in the company.

The project is evaluated through:

- assessment of the pupils' questioning skills;
- pupils' responses in their learning diary, to evaluate the success of each activity and give valuable evidence for the improvement in pupils' skills; and
- pupils' feedback through questionnaires.

**Outcomes**

Feedback from pupils has revealed changes in the career aspirations of some pupils. It also shows that children's understanding of the world of work increases considerably during the course of the year.

The performance of pupils in St Woolos Primary School has placed the school in the top quarter of similar schools in all key indicators for the past five years.  In 2011, 80% of pupils entitled to free school meals achieved the core subject indicator.

## Group 2:  Tailoring the curriculum specifically for disadvantaged pupils

Please ensure you have nominated a recorder for the group in order to list the strengths and areas for improvement in relation to the discussion points and the case study of best practice.

**Discussion points:**

1    How well do adapt the curriculum in order to support disadvantaged pupils? How do we know this meets their needs?
2    How well do we use the curriculum to explore themes of poverty and disadvantage and help pupils to understand how they may be affected in different ways?
3    How well do we adapt our teaching and learning strategies to match the needs of disadvantaged pupils?
4    Do we identify and target support for disadvantaged pupils in our work on transition between key stage 2 and key stage 3?  Is this work effective?
5    How well do we use out-of-hours learning to increase pupils' confidence, motivation and self-esteem?  Do we include cultural and sport enrichment as well as extra educational support, such as homework clubs?
6    Do we target specific disadvantaged pupils to encourage them to join a club that would be of benefit for them?
7    How well do we monitor the take-up of out-of-hours activities by disadvantaged pupils and evaluate the impact on their achievement and wellbeing?

**Where are the strengths in the curriculum for disadvantaged pupils?**

**Where are improvements needed?**

## Group 3: Engaging with parents and the community

**Case study 1: A family nurture room in Pillgwenlly Primary School, Newport, has helped to form better relationships between the school and its disadvantaged families**.

**Context of the school**

Pillgwenlly Primary School is a large, inner-city, multi-cultural school, which caters for pupils between three and 11 years of age. It serves the inner-city ward of Pill, which is south of Newport town centre. The catchment area, which contains Newport docks, is one of the most economically-deprived areas in Wales and has a high rate of unemployment. There is also a wide range of ethnic diversity. Currently, there are 675 pupils. The school prides itself on being a 'Nurturing School' offering two nurture classes: one in the Foundation Phase the second in key stage 2. There is a significant movement of pupils in and out of the school, other than children entering the nursery or pupils leaving at the end of key stage 2, at the designated times.

**Strategy**

Since 2010, there has been a significant increase in pupils arriving at Pillgwenlly who were new to English, new to the UK and new to the educational system. The school recognised the particular nature of these disadvantaged pupils and focused on a key strategy to engage their families in the life and work of the school.

**Action**

The school created an adapted version of a nurture room to assist those families requiring social and emotional support while settling into the local community and school. In partnership with GEMS (Gwent Ethnic Minority Support), the school established this Family Nurture Room in September 2012.

The Family Nurture Room provides a place where children can learn in a nurture setting and their parents can join them for part of the week. All pupils have a base class. They attend the Family Nurture Room for 55% of their week initially, learning alongside their parents for 10 to 20% of the week and learning in their base classes for the remainder of the week with home language support. As soon as pupils have acquired skills to support them with their learning and wellbeing, they transfer into their base classes full-time.

They start their day by having breakfast, where they discuss in both home language and English the plan for the day. This provides an opportunity to address any worries about their planned areas of learning for the day. The rest of the morning is focused on pupils acquiring the necessary literacy skills and knowledge to support them learning alongside their base class peers. Once or twice a week their families (parents or grandparents) come and learn alongside them. The parents also have the opportunity of attending other family learning workshops when their children are in their base classes.

**Outcomes**

The school has successfully engaged with some of the most 'hard to reach' and vulnerable families and formed trusting relationships.  Their participation in school life has resulted in an improvement in standards of disadvantaged pupils and has provided those pupils with the literacy, social and emotional skills they require to continue to achieve at secondary school.

There has been an increase in attendance levels.  Of those pupils attending the Family Nurture Room who attended the school in the previous academic year, their attendance has risen from a range of 47% to 84% to a range of 71% to 96% in the current year.

Parental attendance at joint learning sessions is in the range of 94% to 100%. Parental attendance at parental consultations and year group assemblies is more than 96%.

Pupils' attitudes to learning have significantly developed.  Pupils participate more in homework activities and now attend school visits and trips.  Pupils value the additional support they receive.

With the help and support of the nurture base staff, all families are registered with doctors and dentists.  All school based paperwork is completed on time, such as secondary school application forms and parental consent forms.

# Group 3:  Engaging with parents and the community

**Case study 2:  The impact of partnership between a primary school and a residential care home for the elderly**

**Context**

Blaengwawr Primary is a community school situated on the outskirts of Aberdare. Approximately 34% of its pupils are entitled to free school meals.

**Strategy**

The aim was to create strong links between the school and a residential care home for the elderly after residents expressed worries about anti-social behaviour near their home.  They did this by planning a joint project.

**Action**

Year 5 and Year 6 pupils work with the residents in their home on local history, literacy and creative projects.  The school has worked effectively with the health service, children's services and older people's services to ensure the success of the project.

**Outcomes**

Pupils have learnt about communicating sensitively with the residents and have developed their social skills very well.

The school and the residential home evaluated the project thoroughly.  The project was mutually beneficial.  The pupils helped the residents to engage in a range of activities, and pupils improved their oracy and writing skills as well as developing their motivation and self-confidence.

The school has effectively integrated the community link into the curriculum to create a 'community classroom'.  The project forms a significant part of the school's range of strategies to raise achievement.

Pupils achieve very well in the school.  The key stage 2 core subject indicator is well above the average for similar schools and has improved over the last three years. The gap between the performance of pupils entitled to free school meals and those who are not has narrowed steadily over the last three years.  Pupils' results in English at key stage 2 are above those of similar schools, and the percentage of pupils who achieve level 5 in English is significantly above that of similar schools and has improved over the last three years.

# Group 3: Engaging with parents and the community

**Case study 3: The development of a parent council**

**Context**
Herbert Thompson Primary School is situated in a deprived area of Cardiff, with approximately 58% of pupils entitled to free school meals.

**Strategy**

Staff were keen to encourage parents to play an active part in the life of the school and to take a close interest in their children's education. A parent council was established with objectives to:

- work in partnership with the school to create a school which is inclusive for all parents;
- promote partnership between the school, staff, pupils and all parents;
- develop and engage in activities which support the education and welfare of pupils;
- identify and represent the views of parents on the education and welfare of pupils; and
- consider other matters affecting the education and welfare of pupils.

The council provides an effective way to ensure that the school engages effectively with its parents by listening to parents' views and ensuring that parents feel valued.

**Action**

The effective parental links and knowledge of pupils' family backgrounds informs the pupil tracking system so that the school is able to identify specific strategies to improve pupils' achievement. The school collects and analyses data very well to provide evidence that strategies such as the parent council have an impact on pupils' wellbeing and academic progress.

**Outcomes**

The key stage 2 outcomes for core subjects have improved significantly over the past four years. Performance in the core subject indicator is well above the average for similar schools. The gap between the achievement of pupils entitled to free school meals and those who are not has narrowed over the past four years and is now smaller than the average for similar schools as well as the national average.

# Group 3:  Engaging with parents and the community

**Case study 4:  Mount Stuart School in Cardiff has developed a range of effective strategies to engage with parents and carers.**

### Context of the school

Mount Stuart Primary School serves the Butetown area of Cardiff and is close to Cardiff Bay.  There are approximately 330 pupils on roll, including nursery children.  The school is a diverse community with 96% minority ethnic pupils.  Forty-nine per cent of pupils who have EAL are new to English and 40% have early language acquisition levels.  Forty three per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals and 39% of pupils are identified as having special educational needs.

### Strategy

The school promotes its mission statement "Learning and Living Together" through building strong partnerships with its parents and the local community.  During the past three years, as part of its drive to improve standards in literacy, the school has made increasing parental engagement a priority.

The school's strategy to build strong partnerships with its families has two main aims:

- to enable parents to support their children at home; and
- to provide parents with varied opportunities to engage pro-actively in relation to their child's learning in school.

The headteacher's performance management objectives have included "improving parents' knowledge and understanding of their learner's learning and achievements through clear communication".  This is also a school-improvement priority.

### Action

### Open-door policy in practice

The headteacher and deputy headteacher maintain a high profile with parents at the start and end of the school day.  This enables senior leaders to talk to parents about their views and aspirations for the school.  The headteacher uses this information to formulate school improvement priorities, particularly in the areas of literacy and parent engagement.  The school regularly communicates with parents through email and newsletters.  In this way the school informs parents about the progress made in learning and teaching as well as organisational matters.

### Open-mornings to observe learning and teaching

All parents are invited to visit the school each term to observe an aspect of learning and teaching.  Parents meet the headteacher for a brief introduction, after which they are free to visit any classroom.  This provides parents with first-hand experience of the different learning and teaching strategies implemented by teachers and teaching assistants.  It also provides them with a good insight into the progression

experienced by pupils as they move from one year to the next. Open-mornings have focused on reading, numeracy, science and learning contexts.

**Family learning**

The school has a number of strategies to improve parent literacy and literacy awareness, including English for Speakers of Other Language (ESOL) classes, Family Literacy classes, 'Bookworm Club' and Language and Play. Staff have a willingness to be flexible with their timetables and classrooms in order to accommodate these groups.

The Family Literacy class is offered to parents of Year 2 pupils during the spring and summer terms. Parents meet their children once a week for a literacy session that introduces and explains important reading conventions and learning strategies through a shared text. Staff coach parents on how to read and share texts with their children. Each session begins with a focused introduction led by the teacher on how parents can support children's learning at home. This covers such aspects as correct letter-formation, letter sounds and opportunities to read in and outside the home. Parents then support follow-up work aimed at improving their child's written skills. The school engaged an Ethnic Minority and Traveller Achievement Service teacher, who also supported pupils in Year 2, to introduce and lead this project. However, the success of the project has also depended on the support of all staff through communicating directly with parents, flexible timetabling and creative use of space within the school.

The Bookworm Club is an in-school library for Foundation Phase pupils and parents. Not all parents are able to commit to a whole session and so a shorter session at the end of a specific day is arranged for parents to choose a book from the school library to share with their child at home (this is additional to the school's home-reading books). Teaching assistants are released during Bookworm Club to talk about strategies and share stories with children for parents to continue at home.

The school worked closely with its feeder secondary school to secure additional funding for the Family Literacy class and Bookworm Club through the School Effectiveness Grant.

Parents of pupils in the nursery are also given an opportunity to visit the nursery to learn with their children through the Language and Play programme.

In 2009, the school used RAISE funding to purchase a new guided group reading scheme. An important and additional benefit of this was that the existing guided group reading resources were used as a home-reading scheme. The school was able to respond directly to parents' requests for children to take books home more regularly.

**Inclusive assemblies and celebrations**

The school recently re-introduced class assemblies to provide regular opportunities for parents to engage with the school. The school also invites parents to assemblies and events that recognise festivals celebrated within its multi-faith community.

**Parent volunteers**

A number of parents volunteer to support learning in Foundation Phase classes. They listen to readers and support a range of activities.  The deputy headteacher manages this aspect and supports parents' applications for access courses or national vocational qualification training preparing them for work in schools.

The school regularly seeks the views of parents.  Feedback is requested from parents at parent evenings and their views are also sought more formally through an annual questionnaire.  This feedback is used to inform the school's self-evaluation report and school improvement priorities.

Senior leaders visit family literacy sessions to discuss attitudes to reading and pupils' views about the project.  This has provided useful feedback and informed the school's decision to continue the project.  Parents' attendance is also recorded in order to measure their commitment.  Each learner has an individual project book, which provides good evidence of the progress they make, particularly in writing and reading comprehension.  This is monitored by the project leader and class teacher as further evidence of the child's progress.

**Outcomes**

Monitoring of standards in Year 1 and Year 2 books identified improvements in presentation and standards of writing among pupils who attended the family literacy project.  Of the eight Year 2 pupils who attended, five achieved level 2 English and one learner achieved level 3 in writing.  All pupils in the group made good progress in their reading from January to July.  Benchmarked reading assessments indicated that six pupils improved by at least 10 book band levels (that is, through 10 incrementally more challenging reading books) and two pupils by at least 20 book band levels.  Parents were very positive about their involvement in the project.

The local authority's latest school review found that nearly all pupils were highly engaged, motivated and keen to learn.  They enjoy school, work hard and show pride in their work.

Feedback from parents during the previous parental consultation evening was very positive and included the following comments:  "great communication and interaction", "interaction between teachers and parents has increased", "we are kept informed of decisions and news", and "good to see the increased involvement of parents in school activities".

The most recent parent surveys (January 2012) were very positive.  All parents believe that their children like school and that the teaching is good.  Nearly all parents feel they are kept well informed about their child's progress and are comfortable with approaching the school.  Most think that homework builds on what their child learns in school.

Pupils make very good progress from key stage 1 to key stage 2.  At key stage 2, performance has been above the average for the family of schools for five years. Pupils entitled to free school meals achieve very well.  At key stage 2, the percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals who achieved the core subject indicator has increased significantly recently from 62% to 91%.

## Group 3:  Engaging with parents and the community

Please ensure you have nominated a recorder for the group in order to list the strengths and areas for improvement in relation to the discussion points and the case study of best practice.

**Discussion points:**

1   How good is our understanding of the range of problems facing the families of our disadvantaged pupils?
2   How well are we supporting and improving the levels of family engagement?
3   Are we effective in increasing the capacity of parents to support their children's learning?  Is there more we could do?
4   What strategies do we use to engage with the local community?
5   How well have we identified challenges within our community?  How do we respond to these challenges?
6   Do all our staff have a clear understanding of what it means to be a community-focused school?  How do we define this?
7   How effective are we as a community-focused school, such as the level of our involvement with community groups, the sharing of facilities with the community and the way that we work together on community projects?
8   How does our work as community-focused school impact on disadvantaged pupils?

**Where are the strengths in our engagement with the parents of disadvantaged pupils and the community?**

**Where are improvements needed?**

## Group 4:  Working with a wider range of partners

**Case study:  Ysgol Melyd in Denbighshire has developed specialist language support for its pupils.**

**Context of the school**

Ysgol Melyd is situated in the village of Meliden near Prestatyn on the North Wales coast.  It provides education for pupils between three and 11 years of age.  The catchment area is disadvantaged and there are high levels of unemployment.  All pupils come from English-speaking homes.  There are currently 147 pupils on roll, including 15 who attend the nursery in the mornings.  Approximately 36% of pupils are entitled to free school meals.  Baseline data shows that attainment on entry to the school is below national and local averages.  Forty-three per cent of pupils have special educational needs.

**Strategy**

The school identified increasing numbers of pupils with speech and language needs on entry.  Since 2004, a language-resource provision has been sited at the school.  This caters for the needs of children in key stage 1 with specific, severe speech or language disorders.  The children join the rest of the cohort for various school activities.

Increasingly, parents were requesting that their children receive mainstream education at key stage 2 at the school.  More pupils with speech and language needs joined mainstream classes and their overall numbers increased.  As a result, the need for specialist training in teaching and supporting children with speech, language and communication needs became a school development priority.  The school's senior leaders decided to purchase a package of specialist training for all staff to provide the skills and knowledge required to teach and support pupils with speech and language needs.

**Action**

A children's communication charity has established a development programme to meet the needs of those who work with pupils who have speech and language needs.  In September 2009, the school purchased a package of information, consultancy and training for school staff which would lead to a level 2 enhanced level accreditation.  The project was led by the specialist teacher from the language resource provision and the school's special educational needs co-ordinator.  Over the following year all staff received training from a consultant.  The training was supplemented by in-house training courses.  Some staff successfully gained BTEC level 3 Advanced Diploma in paediatric speech and language therapy support.

In addition, the school supports disadvantaged pupils with social and emotional difficulties through nurture group activities.  A breakfast club was set up to develop positive links between home and school.

There are pictorial timetables in all classrooms, and staff use mind maps and other visual strategies to develop a wide range of pupils' communication skills.  Teaching assistants implement individual and group activities that are tailored to pupils' needs and address the targets on individual communication plans.

The culture of supporting communication has been developed across the curriculum.  Meeting the needs of pupils with speech and language needs is a core element of the ethos of the school.

An accreditation team visited in October 2010 and awarded the school Enhanced Level Status.  Since the accreditation, modifications and adjustments have been made as necessary to enable pupils with language needs to access the curriculum and reach their full potential.  Pupils' progress is tracked using the school's monitoring system.

**Outcomes**

Staff are more aware of individual pupils' speech and language needs.  This has resulted in a greater understanding of issues arising from word processing, auditory memory, receptive, and expressive language difficulties.  Behaviour has improved and is well managed.  Questioning and instruction techniques have been modified and information is delivered in ways that take account of a child's language needs.

By the time pupils reach key stage 2, they achieve well.  Some pupils integrated into mainstream from the resourced provision have reached National Curriculum (NC) level 4 in the core subjects at key stage 2.  In 2011, all pupils achieved NC level 4 in oracy, 25% of whom achieved NC level 5.  In four out of the last five years, performance at NC level 4 plus in all core subjects has been in the top quarter of that for similar schools.  No pupils have received fixed-term exclusions in the last year.

The resourced provision now attracts more pupils.  The number of pupils who are integrated into the mainstream provision of the school has also increased.

## Group 4:  Working with a wider range of other partners

Please ensure you have nominated a recorder for the group in order to list the strengths and areas for improvement in relation to the discussion points and the case study of best practice.

**Discussion points:**

1    Have we identified a senior member of staff who co-ordinates and develops the school's work with external partners?
2    Are we knowledgeable and well informed about the role and function of professionals in other agencies and services?
3    Are we active in seeking out agencies and services that will most effectively support the challenges faced by our disadvantaged pupils?
4    How could we work more effectively with a wide range of partners?  For example, could we create a 'hub' within the school for a range of services, including counselling services, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHs), the health service and Career Wales?
5    What information do we regularly share with external agencies and services?
6    Does the sharing of information with external partners ensure that partners' intervention strategies are consistent with school approaches?
7    How effective is our work with the local authority to overcome barriers to learning for our disadvantaged pupils?

**Where are the strengths in our work with a range of partners?**

**Where are improvements needed?**

## Group 5:  The leadership and management of disadvantaged pupils

**Case study:  Lliswerry Primary School, Newport takes a whole school approach to support disadvantaged pupils.**

**Context**

Lliswerry Primary School is situated in a semi-industrial area just over a mile south east of the centre of Newport.  There are 524 full time pupils in the school.  They come from a wide range of family backgrounds and approximately 25% of the pupils are entitled to free school meals.

**Strategy**

The school uses a number of interrelated actions across the whole school to tackle the underachievement of its disadvantaged pupils.  Examples of these actions are illustrated below.

**Action**

**A strong emphasis on staff training**

There is a 'research approach' to improvement strategies whereby all initiatives are piloted, monitored and evaluated before being introduced to the whole school.  Leading and/or implementing new initiatives is part of teachers' performance management targets.  This ensures that all staff take responsibility for tackling disadvantage.

The school places an emphasis on teachers working together to improve their practice.  Teachers use the outcomes of pupil tracking to share ideas and plan together in teams in Planning Preparation and Assessment (PPA) time.

The senior team work together to develop innovative practice.  They demonstrate new elements of practice to staff, for example through teaching 'demonstration lessons' with the class teacher observing.  The class teacher then has allocated time to develop particular teaching and learning strategies, and a member of the senior team observes them again to give feedback and support.  The senior team monitor planning and collect examples of good practice to share amongst the staff.

**A whole-school approach to reading**

There is a whole school strategy for guided reading.  All staff have been trained in this approach and older pupils are trained so that they can support younger pupils to read.  This consistency has had a positive impact on pupils' reading skills.

**Improving pupils' emotional wellbeing through SEAL (Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning)**

The school has identified that many of their disadvantaged pupils need to develop their emotional wellbeing.  The deputy headteacher introduced Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) to the whole school to support these pupils.

With support from the local authority, all staff are trained in SEAL approaches and specific strategies such as 'circle time' and 'stop, think, do'. SEAL activities are integrated into a two-year rolling programme of personal and social education and planned assemblies, so that all pupils experience SEAL.

In addition, RAISE money was used to fund extra withdrawal groups of particularly vulnerable disadvantaged pupils who would benefit most from more extensive SEAL work. Small groups of pupils are chosen for this support and are identified using the NFER emotional intelligence test. The pupils are then grouped according to need, for example social skills, anger management, and self-esteem. Teachers worked with these pupils using the SEAL plus materials, plus school facilities such as the Forest School. The school also has a designated 'Friendship Room', designed and decorated by pupils, as a 'sanctuary' for pupils when they feel vulnerable.

Pupils are reassessed at the end of the period against the NFER emotional intelligence test to ascertain whether they have made progress.

**The development of pupils' leadership skills**

The school takes opportunities to develop pupils' leadership skills. For example, pupils take responsibility for organising school play and school sponsored events. This has a very positive impact on disadvantaged pupils and contributes well to raising their self-esteem and aspirations.

**Assertive discipline**

There is a whole school strategy for assertive discipline where expectations of behaviour are consistent. Pupils who exhibit very bad behaviour go to 'lunchtime club' to reflect on their actions. Lunchtime club reinforces the idea of positive discipline.

**Outcomes**

Together, these strategies provide a whole school approach that has significant impact on pupils in Lliswerry Primary school. The gap in achievement between pupils who are entitled to free school meals and those who are not is significantly narrower than the national average and that of similar schools.

Over the last four years at least 88% of pupils achieved level 4 in English. This is above the average for similar schools and the national average. The number of pupils who achieve level 5 in English shows an improving trend over the last four years. In 2009-2010, 43% of Year 6 pupils achieved at least a level 5 in English. This is 15 percentage points above the average achieved by similar schools and 15 percentage points above the Welsh average.

The school has analysed referrals to lunchtime club against the NFER emotional intelligence test and noted that there has been an increase in social awareness and a decrease in aggressive behaviour over this time. There has been a significant decrease in numbers of pupils referred to the lunchtime club.

## Group 5: The leadership and management of disadvantaged pupils

Please ensure you have nominated a recorder for the group in order to list the strengths and areas for improvement in relation to the discussion points and the case study of best practice.

**Discussion points:**

1   How well do we lead, oversee and co-ordinate our work for disadvantaged pupils?
2   Do we have specific plans to raise disadvantaged pupils' aspirations? Do plans have focused and quantifiable targets for achievement and transition as well as detailed operational proposals?
3   Do we focus our Pupil Deprivation Grant funding on approaches that target specifically the needs of disadvantaged pupils?
4   How well are we building on the links we have with other schools to share and develop strategies to tackle disadvantage?
5   Are we working effectively as a cluster to make best use of grant monies and to maximise agency work in our school?
6   In what ways are we developing our workforce to tackle issues of poverty and disadvantage?
7   Are we knowledgeable and well-informed about the role and function of professionals in other agencies and services and do we oversee the co-ordination of partnership work effectively?
8   Do we deploy school and multi-agency staff effectively and quality assure the work of all staff?
9   How well do we review and evaluate the work of services and their impact on our disadvantaged pupils?
10  Do we evaluate the impact of strategies used to raise the achievement of disadvantaged pupils well enough to show if they have been successful?

**Where are the strengths in leadership and management of our disadvantaged pupils?**

**Where are improvements needed?**

> **Part 4:   How can we tackle poverty and disadvantage more effectively?   Action planning for improvement**

**Objectives for participants:**

By the end of this session, participants will have:

- reflected on their own and the school's provision for disadvantaged pupils; and
- considered research evidence on improving learning and attainment.

**Outcomes for participants:**

By the end of this session, participants will have:

- identified at least one change to their practice to benefit disadvantaged pupils; and
- proposed actions for department and school improvement plans.

**Time:** Approximately 50 minutes

**Preparation by the school trainer:**

- read through the whole of the training materials so that you are familiar with them;
- ensure that you are familiar with the Welsh Government's guidance on the School Effectiveness Grant and Pupil Deprivation Grant 2013-2015;
- load the PowerPoint slide for the plenary sessions;
- photocopy the action plans and proposals for improvement for participants; and
- photocopy pages 5-7 from the Sutton Trust Toolkit of Strategies to Improve Learning.

**Resources:**

- Whiteboard and computer
- Blank postcards
- Photocopied materials
- the Sutton Trust Toolkit of Strategies to Improve Learning
- Guidance on the School Effectiveness Grant and Pupil Deprivation Grant 2013-2015

**Summary of Part 1, Part 2 and Part 3**

If Part 4 of the training does not follow on immediately from Part 3, you should decide how you will summarise the earlier training using the information provided in this pack.

**Introduction**

The session provides an opportunity for you to guide participants into reflecting on the training and considering how they can embed changes into practice. The activity requires them to reflect on the areas covered in the training in order to identify actions to help improve provision and outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. They should consider how they may develop their own practice as well as make proposals for the priorities in subject or phase action plans and the school improvement plan.

Begin the session by explaining that this part of the training focuses on reflecting on the issues raised by the activities and discussion in order to identify and embed changes into practice. Show **PowerPoint slide 1,** which outlines the objectives of the session.

Remind participants that so far, the training and activities have helped them to identify the main questions of:

**1 How well are our disadvantaged pupils doing?**
**2 Where are improvements needed?**

In this final part of the training, the focus is on:

**3 What we must do to improve.**

Tell participants that the School Effectiveness Grant (SEG) and the Pupil Deprivation Grant (PDG) are the Welsh Government's principal means of providing financial support for schools for the national priority to reduce the impact of poverty on educational attainment. Investment made through these grants should make a lasting impact on outcomes for vulnerable pupils.

Give out the **handout** taken from the Sutton Trust Toolkit schools. Explain that this document has been produced to help schools determine the most effective way of spending the grants to help raise the achievement of disadvantaged pupils. However, research shows that links between spending and outcomes for pupils are complex and often unclear. By summarising research evidence on improving learning and attainment, the Trust aims to help schools to make more informed choices about how to support their pupils. In each area, the document identifies different approaches to improving learning, the strength of the existing research and an estimate of the costs of adopting the approaches.

Give out the postcards and action plans. Ask participants to write their name on the postcard and record at least one improvement that they can make to their practice within a six-month timeframe. They should return these to you at the end of the training. They should complete the personal action plan and may wish to store this in their staff development portfolio.

Ask the groups to nominate a recorder so that proposals for action for subject/phase action plans and the school improvement plan can be noted.

**Activity:  Identifying effective practice**                               **30 mins**

Ask participants to reflect on the areas for development identified in the last activity.
They should consider how they can make changes in their own practice to help
address these issues noting the guidance from the Sutton Trust handout.  They
should select at least one change that they could make within a six-month timeframe
and write it down on the postcard with their name.  They should complete the
personal action plan as well as propose actions for inclusion in subject/phase action
plans and the priorities in the school improvement plan.

Plenary – in the feedback share the outcomes of the session.  You should collect the
postcards and return them to staff in six months' time.  You should also arrange to
collate the information from the groups and disseminate this according to the
processes for sharing information in your school.

## **PowerPoint slide 1**

### **Objectives for participants:**

By the end of this session, participants will have:

- reflected on their own and the school's provision for disadvantaged pupils; and
- considered research evidence on improving learning and attainment.

### **Outcomes for participants:**

By the end of this session, participants will have:

- identified at least one change to their practice to benefit disadvantaged pupils; and
- proposed actions for department and school improvement plans.

## Personal action plan for improving provision and outcomes for disadvantaged pupils

| No. | Action | Responsible | Review date |
|-----|--------|-------------|-------------|
|     |        |             |             |

**ACTION PLANNING FOR IMPROVEMENT**
**Suggestions for subject/phase action plans**

**Suggestions for priorities in the school improvement plan**

## Acknowledgements

Estyn worked with primary and secondary schools to produce these materials.  We would like to thank the following schools for their contribution:

Alexandra Primary School, Wrexham
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Duffryn High School, Newport
Herbert Thompson Primary School, Cardiff
Pillgwenlly Primary School, Newport

# Section 2 – materials for participants

# What do we know about disadvantaged pupils?

## A briefing paper on poverty and disadvantage

The influence and reach of poverty extends beyond the impact of income alone.  It can play a role in learner confidence, aspiration and future employability.  Currently, poverty affects one in three children and young people in Wales.  This represents around 200,000 children in Wales, who may have reduced choices and life chances.  The Welsh Government has drawn together a range of initiatives designed to improve the educational progress of pupils from deprived backgrounds in the Tackling Poverty Action Plan.  These initiatives and plan recognise that schools have an important role to play in helping to improve the outcomes for children from deprived backgrounds both independently of, and in partnership with, other initiatives designed to tackle the root causes of deprivation.

Research shows that socio-economic disadvantage is the single biggest obstacle to achievement in education.  The link between disadvantage and educational underachievement is strong.  However, besides poverty, there are also other factors which affect school assessment outcomes and examination results.  These factors include low aspirations for these pupils and a lack of understanding of the distinction between disadvantaged pupils and underachieving pupils.

Free school meal (FSM) entitlement is taken as a measure of the socio-economic conditions of a school's population.  In Wales, the performance of pupils eligible for FSM is lower than their non-entitled peers at all key stages and in all performance measures.  This attainment gap is evident by seven years of age and gradually widens.  By age 16, pupils eligible for free school meals are about half as likely to get five A*-C grades at GCSE than others.  However, being entitled for free school meals does not mean that a child is destined to underachieve.  Pupils from relatively poor backgrounds can and do achieve at the highest level and schools serving poor neighbourhoods can outperform schools with more affluent catchment areas.

For many years, raising the achievement of disadvantaged pupils has been one of the big challenges for schools in Wales.  There is no single explanation for why pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds perform less well than their peers because of a range of complex factors that are often interrelated.  This means that there is no single easy solution.  While Wales has a Child Poverty Strategy, there is no national programme for schools to follow for tackling issues of poverty and disadvantage.  However, schools are supported through the School Effectiveness Grant (SEG) and the Pupil Deprivation Grant (PDG), which are the Welsh Government's principal means of providing financial support for the national priority of reducing the impact of poverty on educational attainment.  Schools in disadvantaged areas are strongly encouraged to work with their local Communities First Clusters and with Families First and Flying Start provision to support families in their communities.  All schools have a key role to play in tackling disadvantage and they can make a difference.  In particular, schools have an important and powerful influence on raising attainment and aspirations and can provide a powerful ladder of opportunity for young people.

Inspection and research tell us that it is the 'quality' of our classrooms and schools that matters for all pupils and for disadvantaged pupils especially.  The schools that

make a difference to the achievement of disadvantaged pupils do what all successful schools do to secure the achievement of pupils. In addition, they also create an outstandingly positive ethos that allows disadvantaged pupils to achieve well.  These schools employ strategies specifically to combat the factors that disadvantage pupils.  Also, by helping disadvantaged pupils, all pupils in a school do better.  Effective family and community engagement can have a positive impact on outcomes for all but especially for pupils from more deprived backgrounds.  Successful schools recognise that serving all pupils equally is not enough – there needs to be a specific focus on those pupils and young people who are growing up in poverty.  Schools that seem to 'buck the trend', tackle the impact of disadvantage using a wide range of approaches and interventions that help them to address a complex set of problems.

# PROMOTING GOOD PRACTICE IN TACKLING POVERTY AND DISADVANTAGE

## What do we know about disadvantaged pupils?

### Questionnaire for staff

Use part one of this questionnaire before the training to establish how much you understand about the effects of poverty and disadvantage on pupils. You should complete part two of the questionnaire following the training.

**Part one:  Tick the box that reflects your agreement with the statements.**

|  | Strongly agree | Agree | Sometimes agree | Do not agree | Don't know |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I have a clear understanding of the association between poverty and pupils' low levels of educational achievement. |  |  |  |  |  |
| Disadvantaged pupils include different groups of pupils, such as those receiving free school meals, those from minority groups, in low income families, looked-after children and traveller children. |  |  |  |  |  |
| I understand the distinction between disadvantaged pupils and underachieving pupils. |  |  |  |  |  |
| I know how to identify disadvantaged pupils in my class. |  |  |  |  |  |
| I know how well disadvantaged pupils achieve in my class in relation to their non-disadvantaged peers. |  |  |  |  |  |
| I know how well disadvantaged pupils achieve in our school in relation to disadvantaged pupils in other schools. |  |  |  |  |  |
| I understand the influence of low expectation, low self-esteem and aspiration on disadvantaged pupils. |  |  |  |  |  |
| I know the value of out-of-hours learning to raising disadvantaged pupils' standards and improving their wellbeing. |  |  |  |  |  |
| I understand the importance of working with families, the community and services to support disadvantaged pupils. |  |  |  |  |  |

| I regularly evaluate the strategies I use to raise the achievement and aspirations of disadvantaged pupils and share my findings with others. | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|

## Part two (to be completed after the first section of the training)
**Tick the box that reflects your agreement with the statements.**

|  | Strongly agree | Agree | Sometimes agree | Do not agree | Don't know |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I have a clear understanding of the association between poverty and pupils' low levels of educational achievement. | | | | | |
| Disadvantaged pupils include different groups of pupils, such as those receiving free school meals, those from minority groups, in low income families, looked-after children and traveller children. | | | | | |
| I understand the distinction between disadvantaged pupils and underachieving pupils. | | | | | |
| I know how to identify disadvantaged pupils in my class. | | | | | |
| I know how well disadvantaged pupils achieve in our school in relation to disadvantaged pupils in other schools. | | | | | |
| I understand the influence of low expectation, low self-esteem and aspiration on disadvantaged pupils. | | | | | |
| I know the value of out-of-hours learning to raising disadvantaged pupils' standards and improving their wellbeing. | | | | | |
| I understand the importance of working with families, the community and services to support disadvantaged pupils. | | | | | |
| I regularly evaluate the strategies I use to raise the achievement and aspirations of disadvantaged pupils and share my findings with others. | | | | | |

## Part 1:  What do we know about disadvantaged pupils?

### PowerPoint slide 1

### Overall aims of the training:

The overall aims of the training are to promote best practice in tackling poverty and disadvantage as well as support schools in developing a whole-school structured, coherent and focused approach to raising the achievement of disadvantaged pupils.

### Objectives for participants:

By the end of this session, participants will have:

- considered the characteristics and impact of poverty and disadvantage on pupils; and
- reflected on how pupils in the school are affected by disadvantage.

### Outcomes for participants:

By the end of this session, participants should:

- understand how poverty and disadvantage impact on their pupils' achievements and progress; and
- know the school priorities for tackling disadvantage identified in the school improvement plan.

### PowerPoint slide 2

### How should we define disadvantaged pupils?

It is important to have a broad range of criteria for identifying disadvantaged pupils. Disadvantaged pupils include:
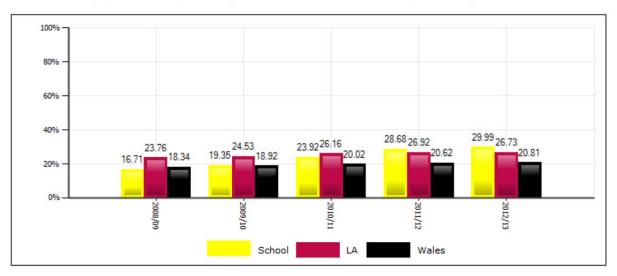
- those eligible for free school meals;
- those from minority groups;
- those in families on low income;
- looked-after children; and
- traveller children.

## PowerPoint slide 3

**The school's percentage of statutory school age pupils entitled to FSM – three year average**

*You should insert chart 1.2b from the school's All Wales core data set. The following chart shows an example of this table.*



1.2b    % of pupils of statutory school age entitled to free school meals - 3-year average

## PowerPoint slide 4

Studies on child poverty tell us that:

- the gap between pupils from richer and poorer backgrounds widens especially quickly during primary school;
- disadvantaged pupils in primary schools are more likely to lack ambition and self-esteem, and to have behavioural problems and difficulty relating to their peers;
- boys as young as nine in disadvantaged schools become disenchanted with school and start to disengage; and
- pupils in disadvantaged schools have limited access to music, art and out-of-school activities that pupils in advantaged schools generally take for granted.

**PowerPoint slide 5**

We also know that pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds:

- are more likely to have a poor attendance record;
- often perceive the curriculum as irrelevant;
- are less likely to accept the school culture;
- are more likely to have additional learning needs;
- have parents who are less likely to be involved in their children's education;
- have parents who are more likely to have a negative perception and experience of school and education; and
- are less healthy.

**PowerPoint slide 6**

Research shows that:

- the gap between the achievement of disadvantaged children compared to advantaged children is present at …months old and significant by the age of … years.  When disadvantaged children enter school, they are often a … behind their more privileged classmates.

Research also tells us that disadvantaged pupils are more likely to do well if the young person:

- has a belief in …;
- finds school …;
- is supported by …; and
- does not experience ….

**PowerPoint slide 7**

The school's current priorities for tackling disadvantage include:

- …
- …
- …
- …

*(You should complete this slide with information taken from the school improvement plan.)*

## Part 2:  How well do disadvantaged pupils achieve?

**PowerPoint slide 1**

**Objectives for participants:**

By the end of this session, participants will have:

- explored a range of national and local data on the performance of disadvantaged pupils; and
- considered the performance of disadvantaged pupils in the school in the Foundation Phase and key stage 2.

**Outcomes for participants:**

By the end of this session, participants should:

- know about the performance of disadvantaged pupils in Wales; and
- understand how well disadvantaged pupils are achieving in the school.

**PowerPoint slide 2**

**Key results for disadvantaged pupils in Wales**

- Overall, the performance of both FSM and non-FSM pupils has improved since 2005.  However, the performance of pupils entitled to FSM is lower than their non-entitled counterparts at all key stages and in all performance measures.  The gap in performance increases as pupils get older.

- In the Foundation Phase, in 2013, the area of learning with the widest gap in performance between FSM and non-FSM pupils was "Language, literacy and communication skills" (English) with 16.5 percentage points.  The area of learning with the narrowest gap was "Personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural diversity" with 8.6 percentage points.

- In key stage 2, in 2013, for individual subjects the gap is widest in Welsh (20.3 percentage points) and narrowest in science (14.4 percentage points); Looking at the core subject indicator, the gap in performance has generally narrowed over the last six years at key stage 2 but is still wider than in the Foundation Phase.

**PowerPoint slide 3**
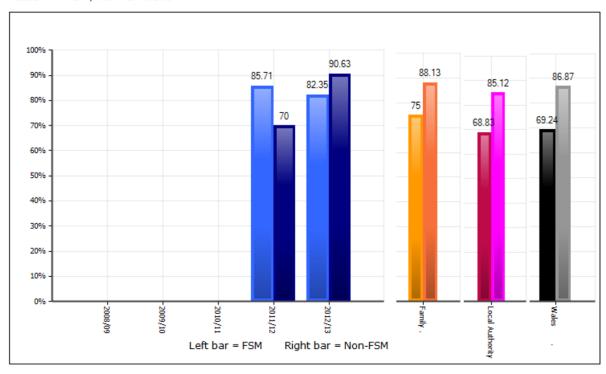
**Foundation Phase – school performance data**

*(Insert data from Section 1.2a/1.2b (FSM/non-FSM trend) from the All Wales core data sets for the Foundation Phase.)*
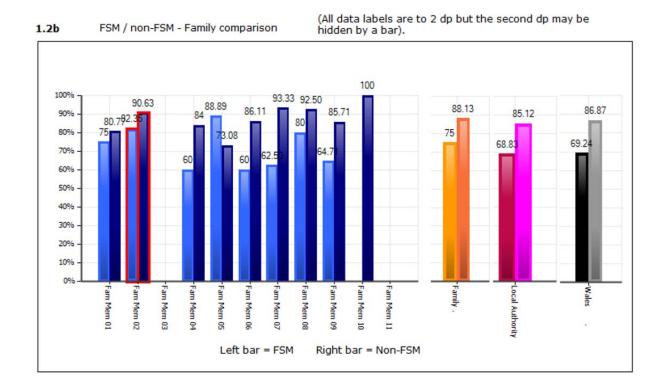
*The following table shows an example.*

**PowerPoint slide 4**

**Foundation Phase – school performance data**

*(Insert data from Section 1.2a/1.2b (FSM/non-FSM family comparison) from the All Wales core data sets for the Foundation Phase.)*

*The following table shows an example.*



**PowerPoint slide 5**

**Key stage 2 – school performance data**

*(Insert data from Section 1.2a/1.2b (FSM/non-FSM trend) from the All Wales core data sets for key stage 2.)*

**PowerPoint slide 6**

**Key stage 2 – school performance data**

*(Insert data from Section 1.2a/1.2b (FSM/non-FSM family comparison) from the All Wales core data sets for key stage 2.)*

## Part 3:   What do effective schools in challenging circumstances do well?

### PowerPoint slide 1

### Objectives for participants:

By the end of this session, participants will have:

- reflected on good practice in the provision for disadvantaged pupils; and
- evaluated aspects of the school's provision for disadvantaged pupils.

### Outcomes for participants:

By the end of this session, participants should have identified:

- strengths in the school's provision for disadvantaged pupils; and
- areas for improvement in order to raise the standards of disadvantaged pupils' achievements.

### PowerPoint slide 2

### Strategies that can be implemented by the school alone

**Ten in-school strategies**:

- Whole-school approach
- Using data to identify and track progress
- Literacy and learning skills
- Social and emotional skills
- Attendance, punctuality and behaviour
- Tailoring the curriculum
- Enriching experiences
- Listening to learners
- Engaging parents
- Developing staff expertise

**PowerPoint slide 3**

**Strategies that involve working with partners**

**Schools alone cannot break the link between disadvantage and achievement.**



**PowerPoint slide 4**

**What do effective schools in challenging circumstances do well?**

1    Identifying, tracking and monitoring disadvantaged pupils' progress
2    Tailoring the curriculum to the needs of disadvantaged pupils
3    Engaging with parents and the community
4    Partnership working
5    Leadership and management in tackling disadvantage

# Group 1: Identifying, tracking and monitoring disadvantaged pupils' progress

**Case study 1: Llwynypia Primary School in Rhondda Cynon Taf uses data collection and a process that tracks pupils' progress in wellbeing and academic performance.**

## Context of the school

Llwynypia Primary School, with 208 pupils aged three to 11 years of age, serves the village of Llwynypia in Rhondda Cynon Taff. Most of the pupils who attend the school come from the immediate area. The area is described as being one of the most deprived in Wales as measured by the Welsh Index of Deprivation. Twenty-six per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals. Thirty-four per cent of pupils have special educational needs.

## Strategy

The school and the school's aims and values reflect the development of the whole child. The school ethos is based on the wellbeing of all pupils and staff, and the school motto, "We all believe, we all achieve!" is evident throughout the school. To ensure effective support for its disadvantaged pupils, the school has developed a systematic approach to developing pupils' wellbeing.

## Action

Staff worked in groups to identify the current provision for wellbeing across the school. Pupils then undertook the same process.

Staff have devised a tracking system to monitor wellbeing across the school. Teachers assess pupils' wellbeing and participation in all areas of learning. They then use a traffic light system to highlight pupils who need a detailed assessment of needs. Staff then assess individual pupils based on how much support they need in different areas including, for example their sensitivity to the needs of others and their ability to express their emotions. The tracking system allows staff to evaluate pupils' wellbeing and to support pupils when necessary. School support strategies include counselling programmes and referral to specialist services.

The school has worked with other schools from its cluster to develop this approach further and agree a cluster policy. All of the schools involved use the Pupil Attitude to Self and School (PASS) survey, alongside the school identification system, to improve wellbeing across the cluster and within schools. This system provides a consistent approach to support the emotional and wellbeing needs of disadvantaged pupils by identifying issues that might have a detrimental effect on learning. By collating both sets of data, the school can refine its target-setting and strategies for supporting the learning of disadvantaged pupils.

The wellbeing tracking is linked to academic tracking systems and is used to inform differentiated learning and teaching. Achievement is tracked from nursery to Year 6 and is reviewed regularly. The school tracks the achievement of groups of pupils

(pupils entitled to free school meals, those with English as an additional language, pupils with additional learning needs and more able and talented pupils) and their attendance, and identifies trends across groups of pupils.  Staff have class profiles in their planning files and these provide an overview of pupils and the support they receive.

The cluster of schools works together effectively to ensure a smooth transition for pupils.  Information about pupils' wellbeing and levels of participation, as well as levels of attainment, are transferred to the secondary school at the end of key stage 2.  Staff from both schools meet to discuss any individual needs.

Staff review pupils' progress regularly.  They monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of intervention strategies on a termly basis.  Staff check wellbeing tracking regularly and evaluate the impact of strategies such as mentoring programmes.  Listening to pupils is an integral part of the school monitoring and self-evaluation process.

**Outcomes**

At key stage 2, performance in the core subjects has improved significantly over the last four years and is now in the top quarter of that for similar schools.  At key stage 1, results have improved and are in the top half of those for similar schools.  In the last two years, the performance of pupils entitled to free school meals at both key stages has improved.  These pupils have achieved better than the average for free-school-meal pupils in the family of schools and the all-Wales average.

The systematic approach to ensuring pupils' wellbeing is embedded across the school.  Pupils know that they have a voice and that their contributions are valued.  Learner participation is regularly promoted.  The wellbeing tracking has shown an improvement in pupils' self-esteem and self-confidence, and a sense of responsibility and pride in their achievements.

# Group 1:  Identifying, tracking and monitoring disadvantaged pupils' progress

**Case study 2:  The 'Blue Skies Project' in the Dyffryn Aman cluster in Carmarthenshire**

**Context**

Pupils from the Dyffryn Aman cluster of primary schools move on to their next stage of learning at 11 years of age when they enter Dyffryn Aman Comprehensive School. All primaries within the cluster provide education mostly in Welsh or bilingually.

**Strategy**

The co-ordinator for the more able and talented pupils in the secondary school leads a project to share information and provide a programme of challenging activities for pupils.  The co-ordinator is supported by staff from the primary schools and specialist providers.

**Action**

In the summer term of every year, each primary school in the cluster uses standardised tests, teacher observation and staff discussion to identify the most able 10% of its Year 5 pupils, which may include disadvantaged pupils.  The pupils in Year 6 and Year 7 take part in a programme of challenging activities, including team-building, development of leadership skills, mathematical investigations, drama workshops and a residential visit.  All aim to improve the critical-thinking skills and higher-order learning skills of the more able pupils, and also to encourage the development of their personal, social and emotional skills.

Teachers ensure the support of parents through good communication by letter and personal contact.  The success of the project is monitored through pupil questionnaires and analysis of standardised skills tests in Year 7.  Teachers track pupil progress throughout the primary schools and into the secondary school using the same, colour-coded system.

**Outcomes**

There are very positive and strong relationships between the primary and secondary school in the cluster.  There is consistency between the primary schools in how they identify more able and talented pupils as well as consistent use of an agreed electronic tracking system by all schools enabling effective data transfer, and monitoring of pupils' progress.

As a result of this work there has been an improvement in pupils' learning skills, especially oracy, listening and thinking.  Pupils have also developed their personal, social and emotional skills effectively and cope well with transition.  There is effective transfer of data from primary to secondary school, which gives teachers accurate information.  This information helps them to establish high expectations of more able and talented pupils.

## Group 1: Identifying, tracking and monitoring disadvantaged pupils' progress

Please ensure you have nominated a recorder for the group in order to list the strengths and areas for improvement in relation to the discussion points and the case study of best practice.

**Discussion points:**

1  What mechanisms do we use for identifying disadvantaged pupils?  How effective are these?
2  Do we use quantitative and qualitative data and information, including that on pupils' wellbeing and perceptions?  How well do we use the information?
3  How well do we track and monitor disadvantaged pupils' progress systemically?
4  Do we use external benchmarks to measure progress against other schools?
5  How well do we monitor and evaluate the support and interventions we provide for disadvantaged pupils?  If strategies are not resulting in pupils' improvement do we refine or change them?
6  Do we have a strong understanding of the relationship between wellbeing and standards? How would we explain this?
7  How well do our mentoring processes support the overall development of pupils?

**Where are the strengths in the identification, tracking and monitoring of our disadvantaged pupils?**

**Where are improvements needed?**

## Group 2: Tailoring the curriculum specifically for disadvantaged pupils

**Case study 1: Ysgol Y Castell Primary School in Carmarthenshire organises trips to Germany and France to enrich the learning experiences of its disadvantaged pupils.**

### Context of the school

Ysgol y Castell is an English-medium community primary school with an integrated nursery. There are about 240 pupils at the school, aged three to 11, with a growing school roll. The school is situated in Kidwelly in West Wales, in an area of high deprivation. Thirty-eight per cent of pupils are currently entitled to free school meals.

### Strategy

The school's strategy was to:

- introduce French in Year 6 and also introduce very basic German in Year 5 in order to correspond with penfriends in link schools in Europe;
- raise aspirations, increase participation and broaden the experiences of disadvantaged pupils, by offering all pupils one opportunity to travel overseas during key stage 2; and
- develop global citizenship by linking with schools in Germany and France.

The school also planned to improve the attendance rates of its disadvantaged pupils and to involve parents in their strategy.

### Action

French has been taught in Year 6 since 2005 when the school was part of a CILT (National Centre for Languages) Cymru pilot for introducing modern foreign languages into the primary curriculum. Throughout the four year pilot, the school worked closely with the modern foreign languages department at Glan y Mor Comprehensive, and its cluster of primary schools. At the end of the funded pilot, Ysgol y Castell continued the programme as it had been so successful in inspiring all pupils. The focus is on listening, speaking simple sentences, singing simple songs and playing games. The aim of the project is to communicate with penfriends in link schools.

Through links with the Kidwelly Town Twinning Association, the school planned a trip to Brittany. The first visit to the twin town of St Jacut de la Mer in Brittany took place in 2006. The headteacher and the special educational needs co-ordinator took a group of pupils from Years 5 and 6. During a third visit, some parents came along. These visits had been largely taken up by parents who either could afford to participate or who felt motivated for their children. As a result, the school applied for a Comenius multilateral grant to get funding for more disadvantaged pupils to participate. The school decided to prioritise the participation of pupils whose social skills needed development and who had never had the opportunity to travel. Of the 23 pupils who participated in the 2011 overseas visits, only four had previously flown,

and none had travelled without their parents.  The majority had never stayed away from home.  Pupils were also identified from the Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) programme for tracking wellbeing.  As a result, the visit included pupils with a range of problems, such as poor self-esteem and a tendency for aggressive play, and those who were easily distracted.

The school gave questionnaires to pupils and parents.  A group of pupils who were targeted to develop their social, emotional and behavioural skills were monitored to assess their development through their individual education plans.

Pupils' achievements in modern foreign languages are tracked into the secondary school.

**Outcomes**

The most notable outcome has been the raised self-esteem of pupils.  Underachieving boys and those with emotional and behaviour difficulties have gained greatly by encouragement to have a go at something completely new and by communicating with penfriends.  Wellbeing assessment tracking indicates that, following the visits, pupils have felt more motivated to succeed and take part in more extra-curriculum activities.

The secondary school notes a more positive attitude towards learning modern foreign languages and has had a greater uptake of modern foreign languages at GCSE level.

The pupils identified as having social and emotional difficulties have improved their skills and attendance.  A few have gained confidence to join out-of-hours provision.

The involvement of parents in school activities, meetings and events has also increased.

Pupils who are entitled to free school meals achieve very well in Ysgol Y Castell.  The gap between the achievement of pupils entitled to free school meals and those who are not is smaller than the Wales average at key stage 2.  In two out of the last three years, all pupils entitled to free school meals have achieved the core subject indicator.

Attendance rates are very good and have been in the top quarter of those for similar schools over the last four years.

# Group 2:  Tailoring the curriculum specifically for disadvantaged pupils

**Case study 2:  St. Woolos Primary School in Newport has an 'Aspiration Project' for disadvantaged pupils to find out more about the world of work.**

## Context

St. Woolos Primary School is situated close to Newport city centre in a Communities First area.  It serves a very diverse population, both socially and culturally.  Fifty-two per cent of pupils currently have English as an additional language (EAL) and around 59% come from an ethnic minority background, mainly Asian, covering 35 different home languages.

Within the vicinity of the school there are a local authority homeless hostel and two women's refuges.  A significant percentage of the school's population is mobile and joins at a later stage than the Foundation Phase, due to the refugee and transient nature of some families.  Around 34% of the pupils on roll are entitled to free school meals.

## Strategy

The school motto is "Celebrating achievement for all in a caring environment".  However, school leaders recognise that, because they suffer disadvantage, many of their pupils have limited aspirations.

The school initiated the Aspiration Project in September 2007.  The aim of the project is to provide pupils with employment knowledge beyond the boundaries of their usual life experiences.  The project provides an informed introduction to the world of work and to raise pupils' aspirations through visits to the school from adults working in a range of fields.  Whenever possible, the school uses the experiences of those who have a direct connection to the school.  The visits provide an opportunity for pupils to develop their knowledge of the workplace and working life in general; to develop their communication skills; and also explore any individual areas of interest.

This is especially relevant for those children whose parents may not be working, or who may have very little knowledge of the career paths available.  The school chooses visitors from a wide range of work places.

The Aspiration Project is part of the Year 6 personal and social education curriculum.  It is just one aspect of intervention and support across the whole school to support disadvantaged pupils.

## Action

Visitors from the local community come in to talk about their job and their career paths.  They meet with the Year 6 pupils to present their story, which may include discussion about equipment they have brought along.  One such speaker was the Project Manager of the new university building in Newport.  He spoke to the pupils

about health and safety, his job and his education.  The pupils asked him a range of questions, which broadened their knowledge of the world of work.

Following the presentations, pupils discuss their ideas and record their responses in their learning diaries.

Another aspect of the project is the 'World of work day'.  Newport City Housing provided the Year 6 pupils with a day of activity.  Pupils visited the head office in Newport and had a brief introduction to the company from the Managing Director.  They were then split into one of six groups, which took part in a 'speed interview' meeting lasting five minutes each with six different workers.  The worker roles varied from 'plumber' to 'accountant' and 'receptionist', and each worker talked about their job and role in the company.

The project is evaluated through:

- assessment of the pupils' questioning skills;
- pupils' responses in their learning diary, to evaluate the success of each activity and give valuable evidence for the improvement in pupils' skills; and
- pupils' feedback through questionnaires.

**Outcomes**

Feedback from pupils has revealed changes in the career aspirations of some pupils.  It also shows that children's understanding of the world of work increases considerably during the course of the year.

The performance of pupils in St Woolos Primary School has placed the school in the top quarter of similar schools in all key indicators for the past five years.  In 2011, 80% of pupils entitled to free school meals achieved the core subject indicator.

## Group 2:  Tailoring the curriculum specifically for disadvantaged pupils

Please ensure you have nominated a recorder for the group in order to list the strengths and areas for improvement in relation to the discussion points and the case study of best practice.

**Discussion points:**

1    How well do adapt the curriculum in order to support disadvantaged pupils?  How do we know this meets their needs?
2    How well do we use the curriculum to explore themes of poverty and disadvantage and help pupils to understand how they may be affected in different ways?
3    How well do we adapt our teaching and learning strategies to match the needs of disadvantaged pupils?
4    Do we identify and target support for disadvantaged pupils in our work on transition between key stage 2 and key stage 3?  Is this work effective?
5    How well do we use out-of-hours learning to increase pupils' confidence, motivation and self-esteem?  Do we include cultural and sport enrichment as well as extra educational support, such as homework clubs?
6    Do we target specific disadvantaged pupils to encourage them to join a club that would be of benefit for them?
7    How well do we monitor the take-up of out-of-hours activities by disadvantaged pupils and evaluate the impact on their achievement and wellbeing?

**Where are the strengths in the curriculum for disadvantaged pupils?**

**Where are improvements needed?**

# Group 3: Engaging with parents and the community

**Case study 1: A family nurture room in Pillgwenlly Primary School, Newport, has helped to form better relationships between the school and its disadvantaged families**.

### Context of the school

Pillgwenlly Primary School is a large, inner-city, multi-cultural school, which caters for pupils between three and 11 years of age. It serves the inner-city ward of Pill, which is south of Newport town centre. The catchment area, which contains Newport docks, is one of the most economically-deprived areas in Wales and has a high rate of unemployment. There is also a wide range of ethnic diversity. Currently, there are 675 pupils. The school prides itself on being a 'Nurturing School' offering two nurture classes: one in the Foundation Phase the second in key stage 2. There is a significant movement of pupils in and out of the school, other than children entering the nursery or pupils leaving at the end of key stage 2, at the designated times.

### Strategy

Since 2010, there has been a significant increase in pupils arriving at Pillgwenlly who were new to English, new to the UK and new to the educational system. The school recognised the particular nature of these disadvantaged pupils and focused on a key strategy to engage their families in the life and work of the school.

### Action

The school created an adapted version of a nurture room to assist those families requiring social and emotional support while settling into the local community and school. In partnership with GEMS (Gwent Ethnic Minority Support), the school established this Family Nurture Room in September 2012.

The Family Nurture Room provides a place where children can learn in a nurture setting and their parents can join them for part of the week. All pupils have a base class. They attend the Family Nurture Room for 55% of their week initially, learning alongside their parents for 10 to 20% of the week and learning in their base classes for the remainder of the week with home language support. As soon as pupils have acquired skills to support them with their learning and wellbeing, they transfer into their base classes full-time.

They start their day by having breakfast, where they discuss in both home language and English the plan for the day. This provides an opportunity to address any worries about their planned areas of learning for the day. The rest of the morning is focused on pupils acquiring the necessary literacy skills and knowledge to support them learning alongside their base class peers. Once or twice a week their families (parents or grandparents) come and learn alongside them. The parents also have the opportunity of attending other family learning workshops when their children are in their base classes.

**Outcomes**

The school has successfully engaged with some of the most 'hard to reach' and vulnerable families and formed trusting relationships.  Their participation in school life has resulted in an improvement in standards of disadvantaged pupils and has provided those pupils with the literacy, social and emotional skills they require to continue to achieve at secondary school.

There has been an increase in attendance levels.  Of those pupils attending the Family Nurture Room who attended the school in the previous academic year, their attendance has risen from a range of 47% to 84% to a range of 71% to 96% in the current year.

Parental attendance at joint learning sessions is in the range of 94% to 100%.  Parental attendance at parental consultations and year group assemblies is more than 96%.

Pupils' attitudes to learning have significantly developed.  Pupils participate more in homework activities and now attend school visits and trips.  Pupils value the additional support they receive.

With the help and support of the nurture base staff, all families are registered with doctors and dentists.  All school based paperwork is completed on time, such as secondary school application forms and parental consent forms.

## Group 3: Engaging with parents and the community

**Case study 2: The impact of partnership between a primary school and a residential care home for the elderly**

**Context**

Blaengwawr Primary is a community school situated on the outskirts of Aberdare. Approximately 34% of its pupils are entitled to free school meals.

**Strategy**

The aim was to create strong links between the school and a residential care home for the elderly after residents expressed worries about anti-social behaviour near their home. They did this by planning a joint project.

**Action**

Year 5 and Year 6 pupils work with the residents in their home on local history, literacy and creative projects. The school has worked effectively with the health service, children's services and older people's services to ensure the success of the project.

**Outcomes**

Pupils have learnt about communicating sensitively with the residents and have developed their social skills very well.

The school and the residential home evaluated the project thoroughly. The project was mutually beneficial. The pupils helped the residents to engage in a range of activities, and pupils improved their oracy and writing skills as well as developing their motivation and self-confidence.

The school has effectively integrated the community link into the curriculum to create a 'community classroom'. The project forms a significant part of the school's range of strategies to raise achievement.

Pupils achieve very well in the school. The key stage 2 core subject indicator is well above the average for similar schools and has improved over the last three years. The gap between the performance of pupils entitled to free school meals and those who are not has narrowed steadily over the last three years. Pupils' results in English at key stage 2 are above those of similar schools, and the percentage of pupils who achieve level 5 in English is significantly above that of similar schools and has improved over the last three years.

# Group 3:  Engaging with parents and the community

**Case study 3:  The development of a parent council**

**Context**
Herbert Thompson Primary School is situated in a deprived area of Cardiff, with approximately 58% of pupils entitled to free school meals.

**Strategy**

Staff were keen to encourage parents to play an active part in the life of the school and to take a close interest in their children's education.  A parent council was established with objectives to:

- work in partnership with the school to create a school which is inclusive for all parents;
- promote partnership between the school, staff, pupils and all parents;
- develop and engage in activities which support the education and welfare of pupils;
- identify and represent the views of parents on the education and welfare of pupils; and
- consider other matters affecting the education and welfare of pupils.

The council provides an effective way to ensure that the school engages effectively with its parents by listening to parents' views and ensuring that parents feel valued.

**Action**

The effective parental links and knowledge of pupils' family backgrounds informs the pupil tracking system so that the school is able to identify specific strategies to improve pupils' achievement.  The school collects and analyses data very well to provide evidence that strategies such as the parent council have an impact on pupils' wellbeing and academic progress.

**Outcomes**

The key stage 2 outcomes for core subjects have improved significantly over the past four years.  Performance in the core subject indicator is well above the average for similar schools.  The gap between the achievement of pupils entitled to free school meals and those who are not has narrowed over the past four years and is now smaller than the average for similar schools as well as the national average.

# Group 3: Engaging with parents and the community

**Case study 4: Mount Stuart School in Cardiff has developed a range of effective strategies to engage with parents and carers.**

**Context of the school**

Mount Stuart Primary School serves the Butetown area of Cardiff and is close to Cardiff Bay. There are approximately 330 pupils on roll, including nursery children. The school is a diverse community with 96% minority ethnic pupils. Forty-nine per cent of pupils who have EAL are new to English and 40% have early language acquisition levels. Forty three per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals and 39% of pupils are identified as having special educational needs.

**Strategy**

The school promotes its mission statement "Learning and Living Together" through building strong partnerships with its parents and the local community. During the past three years, as part of its drive to improve standards in literacy, the school has made increasing parental engagement a priority.

The school's strategy to build strong partnerships with its families has two main aims:

- to enable parents to support their children at home; and
- to provide parents with varied opportunities to engage pro-actively in relation to their child's learning in school.

The headteacher's performance management objectives have included "improving parents' knowledge and understanding of their learner's learning and achievements through clear communication". This is also a school-improvement priority.

**Action**

**Open-door policy in practice**

The headteacher and deputy headteacher maintain a high profile with parents at the start and end of the school day. This enables senior leaders to talk to parents about their views and aspirations for the school. The headteacher uses this information to formulate school improvement priorities, particularly in the areas of literacy and parent engagement. The school regularly communicates with parents through email and newsletters. In this way the school informs parents about the progress made in learning and teaching as well as organisational matters.

**Open-mornings to observe learning and teaching**

All parents are invited to visit the school each term to observe an aspect of learning and teaching. Parents meet the headteacher for a brief introduction, after which they are free to visit any classroom. This provides parents with first-hand experience of the different learning and teaching strategies implemented by teachers and teaching assistants. It also provides them with a good insight into the progression

experienced by pupils as they move from one year to the next. Open-mornings have focused on reading, numeracy, science and learning contexts.

**Family learning**

The school has a number of strategies to improve parent literacy and literacy awareness, including English for Speakers of Other Language (ESOL) classes, Family Literacy classes, 'Bookworm Club' and Language and Play. Staff have a willingness to be flexible with their timetables and classrooms in order to accommodate these groups.

The Family Literacy class is offered to parents of Year 2 pupils during the spring and summer terms. Parents meet their children once a week for a literacy session that introduces and explains important reading conventions and learning strategies through a shared text. Staff coach parents on how to read and share texts with their children. Each session begins with a focused introduction led by the teacher on how parents can support children's learning at home. This covers such aspects as correct letter-formation, letter sounds and opportunities to read in and outside the home. Parents then support follow-up work aimed at improving their child's written skills. The school engaged an Ethnic Minority and Traveller Achievement Service teacher, who also supported pupils in Year 2, to introduce and lead this project. However, the success of the project has also depended on the support of all staff through communicating directly with parents, flexible timetabling and creative use of space within the school.

The Bookworm Club is an in-school library for Foundation Phase pupils and parents. Not all parents are able to commit to a whole session and so a shorter session at the end of a specific day is arranged for parents to choose a book from the school library to share with their child at home (this is additional to the school's home-reading books). Teaching assistants are released during Bookworm Club to talk about strategies and share stories with children for parents to continue at home.

The school worked closely with its feeder secondary school to secure additional funding for the Family Literacy class and Bookworm Club through the School Effectiveness Grant.

Parents of pupils in the nursery are also given an opportunity to visit the nursery to learn with their children through the Language and Play programme.

In 2009, the school used RAISE funding to purchase a new guided group reading scheme. An important and additional benefit of this was that the existing guided group reading resources were used as a home-reading scheme. The school was able to respond directly to parents' requests for children to take books home more regularly.

**Inclusive assemblies and celebrations**

The school recently re-introduced class assemblies to provide regular opportunities for parents to engage with the school. The school also invites parents to assemblies and events that recognise festivals celebrated within its multi-faith community.

**Parent volunteers**

A number of parents volunteer to support learning in Foundation Phase classes. They listen to readers and support a range of activities. The deputy headteacher manages this aspect and supports parents' applications for access courses or national vocational qualification training preparing them for work in schools.

The school regularly seeks the views of parents. Feedback is requested from parents at parent evenings and their views are also sought more formally through an annual questionnaire. This feedback is used to inform the school's self-evaluation report and school improvement priorities.

Senior leaders visit family literacy sessions to discuss attitudes to reading and pupils' views about the project. This has provided useful feedback and informed the school's decision to continue the project. Parents' attendance is also recorded in order to measure their commitment. Each learner has an individual project book, which provides good evidence of the progress they make, particularly in writing and reading comprehension. This is monitored by the project leader and class teacher as further evidence of the child's progress.

**Outcomes**

Monitoring of standards in Year 1 and Year 2 books identified improvements in presentation and standards of writing among pupils who attended the family literacy project. Of the eight Year 2 pupils who attended, five achieved level 2 English and one learner achieved level 3 in writing. All pupils in the group made good progress in their reading from January to July. Benchmarked reading assessments indicated that six pupils improved by at least 10 book band levels (that is, through 10 incrementally more challenging reading books) and two pupils by at least 20 book band levels. Parents were very positive about their involvement in the project.

The local authority's latest school review found that nearly all pupils were highly engaged, motivated and keen to learn. They enjoy school, work hard and show pride in their work.

Feedback from parents during the previous parental consultation evening was very positive and included the following comments: "great communication and interaction", "interaction between teachers and parents has increased", "we are kept informed of decisions and news", and "good to see the increased involvement of parents in school activities".

The most recent parent surveys (January 2012) were very positive. All parents believe that their children like school and that the teaching is good. Nearly all parents feel they are kept well informed about their child's progress and are comfortable with approaching the school. Most think that homework builds on what their child learns in school.

Pupils make very good progress from key stage 1 to key stage 2. At key stage 2, performance has been above the average for the family of schools for five years. Pupils entitled to free school meals achieve very well. At key stage 2, the percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals who achieved the core subject indicator has increased significantly recently from 62% to 91%.

## Group 3:  Engaging with parents and the community

Please ensure you have nominated a recorder for the group in order to list the strengths and areas for improvement in relation to the discussion points and the case study of best practice.

**Discussion points:**

1   How good is our understanding of the range of problems facing the families of our disadvantaged pupils?
2   How well are we supporting and improving the levels of family engagement?
3   Are we effective in increasing the capacity of parents to support their children's learning?  Is there more we could do?
4   What strategies do we use to engage with the local community?
5   How well have we identified challenges within our community?  How do we respond to these challenges?
6   Do all our staff have a clear understanding of what it means to be a community-focused school?  How do we define this?
7   How effective are we as a community-focused school, such as the level of our involvement with community groups, the sharing of facilities with the community and the way that we work together on community projects?
8   How does our work as community-focused school impact on disadvantaged pupils?

**Where are the strengths in our engagement with the parents of disadvantaged pupils and the community?**

**Where are improvements needed?**

## Group 4:  Working with a wider range of partners

**Case study:  Ysgol Melyd in Denbighshire has developed specialist language support for its pupils.**

**Context of the school**

Ysgol Melyd is situated in the village of Meliden near Prestatyn on the North Wales coast.  It provides education for pupils between three and 11 years of age.  The catchment area is disadvantaged and there are high levels of unemployment.  All pupils come from English-speaking homes.  There are currently 147 pupils on roll, including 15 who attend the nursery in the mornings.  Approximately 36% of pupils are entitled to free school meals.  Baseline data shows that attainment on entry to the school is below national and local averages.  Forty-three per cent of pupils have special educational needs.

**Strategy**

The school identified increasing numbers of pupils with speech and language needs on entry.  Since 2004, a language-resource provision has been sited at the school.  This caters for the needs of children in key stage 1 with specific, severe speech or language disorders.  The children join the rest of the cohort for various school activities.

Increasingly, parents were requesting that their children receive mainstream education at key stage 2 at the school.  More pupils with speech and language needs joined mainstream classes and their overall numbers increased.  As a result, the need for specialist training in teaching and supporting children with speech, language and communication needs became a school development priority.  The school's senior leaders decided to purchase a package of specialist training for all staff to provide the skills and knowledge required to teach and support pupils with speech and language needs.

**Action**

A children's communication charity has established a development programme to meet the needs of those who work with pupils who have speech and language needs.  In September 2009, the school purchased a package of information, consultancy and training for school staff which would lead to a level 2 enhanced level accreditation.  The project was led by the specialist teacher from the language resource provision and the school's special educational needs co-ordinator.  Over the following year all staff received training from a consultant.  The training was supplemented by in-house training courses.  Some staff successfully gained BTEC level 3 Advanced Diploma in paediatric speech and language therapy support.

In addition, the school supports disadvantaged pupils with social and emotional difficulties through nurture group activities.  A breakfast club was set up to develop positive links between home and school.

There are pictorial timetables in all classrooms, and staff use mind maps and other visual strategies to develop a wide range of pupils' communication skills. Teaching assistants implement individual and group activities that are tailored to pupils' needs and address the targets on individual communication plans.

The culture of supporting communication has been developed across the curriculum. Meeting the needs of pupils with speech and language needs is a core element of the ethos of the school.

An accreditation team visited in October 2010 and awarded the school Enhanced Level Status. Since the accreditation, modifications and adjustments have been made as necessary to enable pupils with language needs to access the curriculum and reach their full potential. Pupils' progress is tracked using the school's monitoring system.

**Outcomes**

Staff are more aware of individual pupils' speech and language needs. This has resulted in a greater understanding of issues arising from word processing, auditory memory, receptive, and expressive language difficulties. Behaviour has improved and is well managed. Questioning and instruction techniques have been modified and information is delivered in ways that take account of a child's language needs.

By the time pupils reach key stage 2, they achieve well. Some pupils integrated into mainstream from the resourced provision have reached National Curriculum (NC) level 4 in the core subjects at key stage 2. In 2011, all pupils achieved NC level 4 in oracy, 25% of whom achieved NC level 5. In four out of the last five years, performance at NC level 4 plus in all core subjects has been in the top quarter of that for similar schools. No pupils have received fixed-term exclusions in the last year.

The resourced provision now attracts more pupils. The number of pupils who are integrated into the mainstream provision of the school has also increased.

## Group 4:  Working with a wider range of other partners

Please ensure you have nominated a recorder for the group in order to list the strengths and areas for improvement in relation to the discussion points and the case study of best practice.

**Discussion points:**

1    Have we identified a senior member of staff who co-ordinates and develops the school's work with external partners?
2    Are we knowledgeable and well informed about the role and function of professionals in other agencies and services?
3    Are we active in seeking out agencies and services that will most effectively support the challenges faced by our disadvantaged pupils?
4    How could we work more effectively with a wide range of partners?  For example, could we create a 'hub' within the school for a range of services, including counselling services, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHs), the health service and Career Wales?
5    What information do we regularly share with external agencies and services?
6    Does the sharing of information with external partners ensure that partners' intervention strategies are consistent with school approaches?
7    How effective is our work with the local authority to overcome barriers to learning for our disadvantaged pupils?

**Where are the strengths in our work with a range of partners?**

**Where are improvements needed?**

## Group 5:  The leadership and management of disadvantaged pupils

**Case study:  Lliswerry Primary School, Newport takes a whole school approach to support disadvantaged pupils.**

### Context

Lliswerry Primary School is situated in a semi-industrial area just over a mile south east of the centre of Newport.  There are 524 full time pupils in the school.  They come from a wide range of family backgrounds and approximately 25% of the pupils are entitled to free school meals.

### Strategy

The school uses a number of interrelated actions across the whole school to tackle the underachievement of its disadvantaged pupils.  Examples of these actions are illustrated below.

### Action

### A strong emphasis on staff training

There is a 'research approach' to improvement strategies whereby all initiatives are piloted, monitored and evaluated before being introduced to the whole school.  Leading and/or implementing new initiatives is part of teachers' performance management targets.  This ensures that all staff take responsibility for tackling disadvantage.

The school places an emphasis on teachers working together to improve their practice.  Teachers use the outcomes of pupil tracking to share ideas and plan together in teams in Planning Preparation and Assessment (PPA) time.

The senior team work together to develop innovative practice.  They demonstrate new elements of practice to staff, for example through teaching 'demonstration lessons' with the class teacher observing.  The class teacher then has allocated time to develop particular teaching and learning strategies, and a member of the senior team observes them again to give feedback and support.  The senior team monitor planning and collect examples of good practice to share amongst the staff.

### A whole-school approach to reading

There is a whole school strategy for guided reading.  All staff have been trained in this approach and older pupils are trained so that they can support younger pupils to read.  This consistency has had a positive impact on pupils' reading skills.

### Improving pupils' emotional wellbeing through SEAL (Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning)

The school has identified that many of their disadvantaged pupils need to develop their emotional wellbeing.  The deputy headteacher introduced Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) to the whole school to support these pupils.

With support from the local authority, all staff are trained in SEAL approaches and specific strategies such as 'circle time' and 'stop, think, do'. SEAL activities are integrated into a two-year rolling programme of personal and social education and planned assemblies, so that all pupils experience SEAL.

In addition, RAISE money was used to fund extra withdrawal groups of particularly vulnerable disadvantaged pupils who would benefit most from more extensive SEAL work. Small groups of pupils are chosen for this support and are identified using the NFER emotional intelligence test. The pupils are then grouped according to need, for example social skills, anger management, and self-esteem. Teachers worked with these pupils using the SEAL plus materials, plus school facilities such as the Forest School. The school also has a designated 'Friendship Room', designed and decorated by pupils, as a 'sanctuary' for pupils when they feel vulnerable.

Pupils are reassessed at the end of the period against the NFER emotional intelligence test to ascertain whether they have made progress.

**The development of pupils' leadership skills**

The school takes opportunities to develop pupils' leadership skills. For example, pupils take responsibility for organising school play and school sponsored events. This has a very positive impact on disadvantaged pupils and contributes well to raising their self-esteem and aspirations.

**Assertive discipline**

There is a whole school strategy for assertive discipline where expectations of behaviour are consistent. Pupils who exhibit very bad behaviour go to 'lunchtime club' to reflect on their actions. Lunchtime club reinforces the idea of positive discipline.

**Outcomes**

Together, these strategies provide a whole school approach that has significant impact on pupils in Lliswerry Primary school. The gap in achievement between pupils who are entitled to free school meals and those who are not is significantly narrower than the national average and that of similar schools.

Over the last four years at least 88% of pupils achieved level 4 in English. This is above the average for similar schools and the national average. The number of pupils who achieve level 5 in English shows an improving trend over the last four years. In 2009-2010, 43% of Year 6 pupils achieved at least a level 5 in English. This is 15 percentage points above the average achieved by similar schools and 15 percentage points above the Welsh average.

The school has analysed referrals to lunchtime club against the NFER emotional intelligence test and noted that there has been an increase in social awareness and a decrease in aggressive behaviour over this time. There has been a significant decrease in numbers of pupils referred to the lunchtime club.

## Group 5: The leadership and management of disadvantaged pupils

Please ensure you have nominated a recorder for the group in order to list the strengths and areas for improvement in relation to the discussion points and the case study of best practice.

**Discussion points:**

1   How well do we lead, oversee and co-ordinate our work for disadvantaged pupils?
2   Do we have specific plans to raise disadvantaged pupils' aspirations?  Do plans have focused and quantifiable targets for achievement and transition as well as detailed operational proposals?
3   Do we focus our Pupil Deprivation Grant funding on approaches that target specifically the needs of disadvantaged pupils?
4   How well are we building on the links we have with other schools to share and develop strategies to tackle disadvantage?
5   Are we working effectively as a cluster to make best use of grant monies and to maximise agency work in our school?
6   In what ways are we developing our workforce to tackle issues of poverty and disadvantage?
7   Are we knowledgeable and well-informed about the role and function of professionals in other agencies and services and do we oversee the co-ordination of partnership work effectively?
8   Do we deploy school and multi-agency staff effectively and quality assure the work of all staff?
9   How well do we review and evaluate the work of services and their impact on our disadvantaged pupils?
10  Do we evaluate the impact of strategies used to raise the achievement of disadvantaged pupils well enough to show if they have been successful?

**Where are the strengths in leadership and management of our disadvantaged pupils?**

**Where are improvements needed?**

## Part 4: How can we tackle poverty and disadvantage more effectively? Action planning for improvement

**PowerPoint slide 1**

**Objectives for participants:**

By the end of this session, participants will have:

- reflected on their own and the school's provision for disadvantaged pupils; and
- considered research evidence on improving learning and attainment.

**Outcomes for participants:**

By the end of this session, participants will have:

- identified at least one change to their practice to benefit disadvantaged pupils; and
- proposed actions for department and school improvement plans.

## **Personal action plan for improving provision and outcomes for disadvantaged pupils**

| No. | Action | Responsible | Review date |
|---|---|---|---|
|  |  |  |  |

**ACTION PLANNING FOR IMPROVEMENT**
**Suggestions for subject/phase action plans**

**Suggestions for priorities in the school improvement plan**