

Tackling deprivation and raising standards



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 secondary schools

May 2014



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- ▲ 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 are our disadvantaged pupils achieving?
- 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 INSET materials organised?

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 key stage 3 and key stage 4
- Briefing paper

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 7.

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'*.

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:

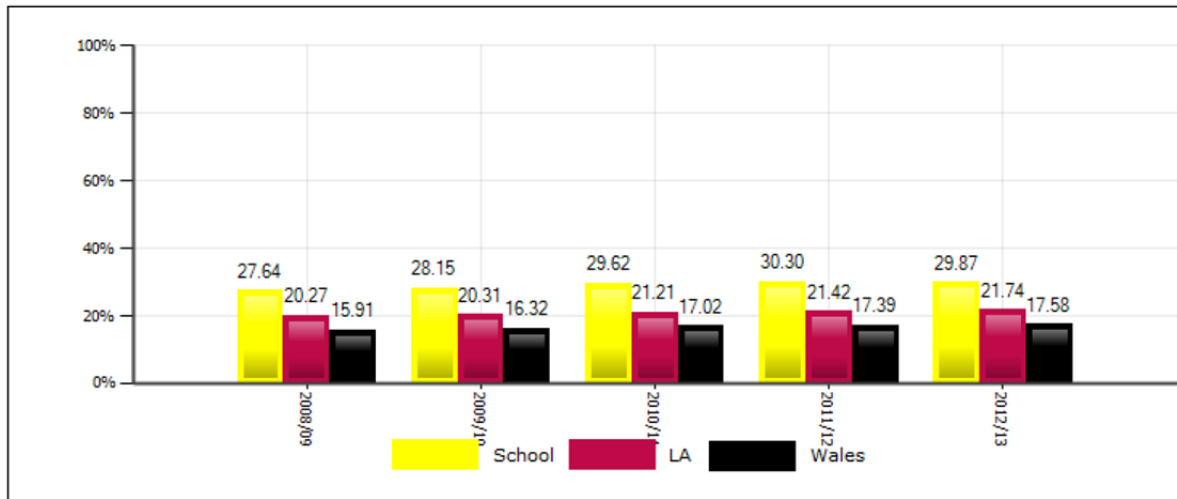
- those eligible for free school meals;
- those from minority groups;
- those in families on low income;
- looked-after children; and
- traveller children.

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;
- are less healthy;
- are more likely to be not in employment, education or training;
- are more likely to have a child in their teenage years; and
- in the case of white working class boys, are less likely to achieve their potential than any other group.

PowerPoint slide 6

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

- has a belief in ...;
- believes that ...;
- finds school ...;
- thinks it is likely that ...;
- avoids ...; and
- does not experience

PowerPoint slide 6 (completed)

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

- has a belief in his/her own ability at school;
- believes that events result primarily from his/her own behaviour and actions;
- finds school worthwhile;
- thinks it is likely that he/she will apply to, and get into, higher education;
- avoids risky behaviour such as frequent smoking, cannabis use, anti-social behaviour, truancy, suspension and exclusion; 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.

Part 2: How well are our disadvantaged pupils achieving?

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 at key stage 3 and key stage 4.

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;
- collect a range of data, such as FFT, on the achievement of disadvantaged pupils;
- insert data into PowerPoint slides 5 and 6 from the Section 1.2b from the All Wales core data set for key stage 3 and Section 1.4a/b from the All Wales core data set for key stage 4;
- photocopy PowerPoint slides 2, 3 and 4 if desired for participants;
- photocopy sections of the All Wales core data set for key stage 3 and key stage 4 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 2 and 3 (optional)
- Section 1.2a/1.2b (FSM/non-FSM trend and family comparison) from the All Wales core data set for key stage 3
- Section 1.4a/1.4b (FSM/non-FSM trend and family comparison) from the All Wales core data set for key stage 4
- Sections 10.1b (Level 5+ Level 6+ and Level 7+ benchmarking by subject), 10.2a (CSI benchmarking) and 10.3a (family comparison % of pupils achieving

CSI against modelled expectations based on FSM) from the All Wales core data sets for key stage 3

- Sections 1.7a/b (Level 1 FSM /non-FSM trend and family comparison), 1.8d/e (capped points score FSM /non-FSM trend and family comparison), 1.10a/b (CSI FSM /non-FSM trend) and 8.1a and 8.2a (benchmarking) from the All Wales core data sets for key stage 4
- Other school data on the performance of disadvantaged pupils, including any value-added analyses.

Summary of Part 1

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

Introduction

Begin the 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**, which outlines the objectives of the session. Show **PowerPoint slides 2, 3 and 4**, which display information and national data on the outcomes for disadvantaged pupils in Wales in key stage 3 and key stage 4. You may wish to provide a **handout** of these PowerPoint slides for participants.

Remind participants that there is a range of data available on the performance of disadvantaged pupils, including FFT and data packs for schools known as the All Wales core data sets. These data packs 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 two slides show school data taken from these core data sets. Show **PowerPoint slides 5 and 6**, which refer to performance of FSM/non-FSM pupil trends and family comparisons. Draw attention to key features of the school's performance in these areas. If you have prepared **PowerPoint slide 7** 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. You may choose to create groups of staff from different subject areas or organise groups of participants into subject departments. Give out the **handout** from the All Wales core data sets relevant to each subject group as well as a copy of the discussion prompts. Ask the groups to nominate a recorder so that each group returns to the plenary feedback with a list of strengths and areas for improvement.

Activity: Analysing the performance of pupils eligible for 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 – leading the feedback, record the strengths and areas for improvement from the groups onto a flipchart. Participants should 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 eligible for 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 be not in employment, education or training. They are also more likely to have a child in their teenage years.

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 at key stage 3 and key stage 4.

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

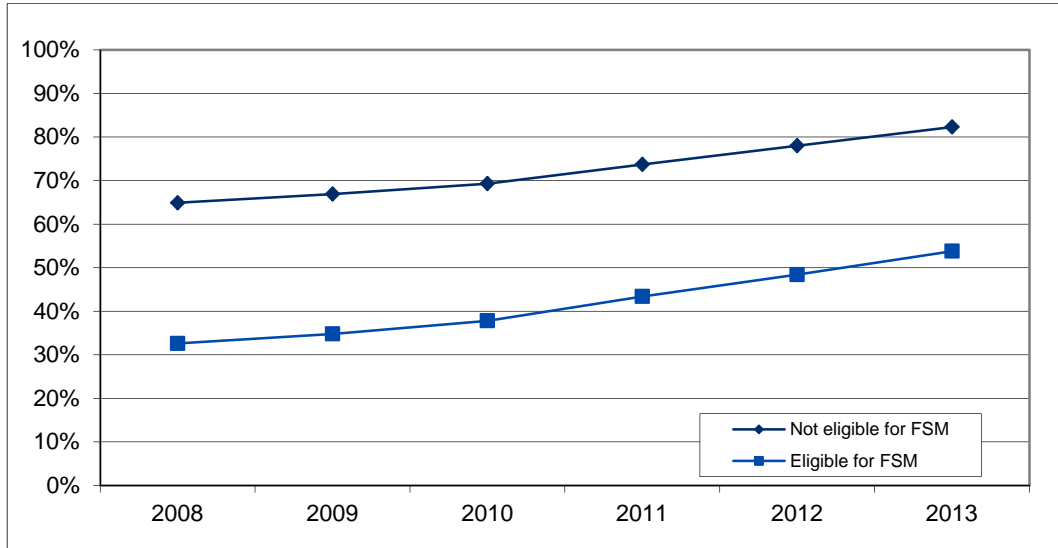
Key results for disadvantaged pupils in Wales

- Overall, the performance of both FSM and non-FSM pupils has improved since 2005. Looking at the core subject indicator, the gap in performance has generally narrowed over the last six years at key stage 3.
- 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 key stage 3, for individual subjects, the gap is widest in mathematics (23.1 percentage points) although historically it has been widest in English. The gap is narrowest in Welsh (17.8 percentage points).
- At key stage 4, the gap is now widest for the core subject indicator (32.1 percentage points) although historically it has been wider at the L2 threshold. The gap is narrowest at the L1 threshold (10.6 percentage points).
- There are 'gaps' in performance between learner groups such as looked-after children compared with all pupils: 10% attain the expected level in secondary school compared with 50% for all pupils.

PowerPoint slide 3

Key results for disadvantaged pupils in Wales in key stage 3

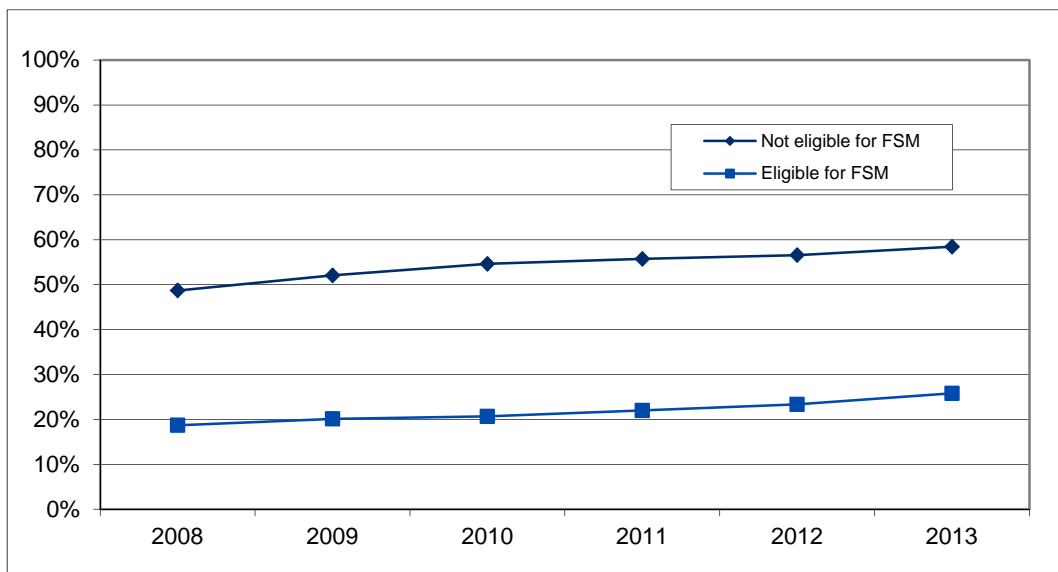
Difference between CSI performance of FSM and non-FSM pupils at key stage 3, 2008-2013



PowerPoint slide 4

Key results for disadvantaged pupils in Wales in key stage 4

Difference between performance in the Level 2 threshold including a GCSE A*-C in English / Welsh and mathematics of FSM and non-FSM pupils at key stage 4, 2008-2013



PowerPoint slide 5

Key stage 3 – school performance data

(Insert data from Section 1.2a/1.2b (FSM/non-FSM trend and family comparison) from the All Wales core data set for key stage 3.)

PowerPoint slide 6

Key stage 4 – school performance data

(Insert data from Section 1.4a/1.4b (FSM/non-FSM trend and family comparison) from the All Wales core data set for key stage 4.)

PowerPoint slide 7

Insert your own data on the performance of disadvantaged pupils, such as value-added data.

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 progress 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 wish to begin this session by summarising the earlier training using the PowerPoint slides provided in this pack.

Introduction

Begin the 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. The leadership and management 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. Ask for 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 Part 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 eligible for 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 be not in employment, education or training. They are also more likely to have a child in their teenage years.

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 choose to use PowerPoint slides 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

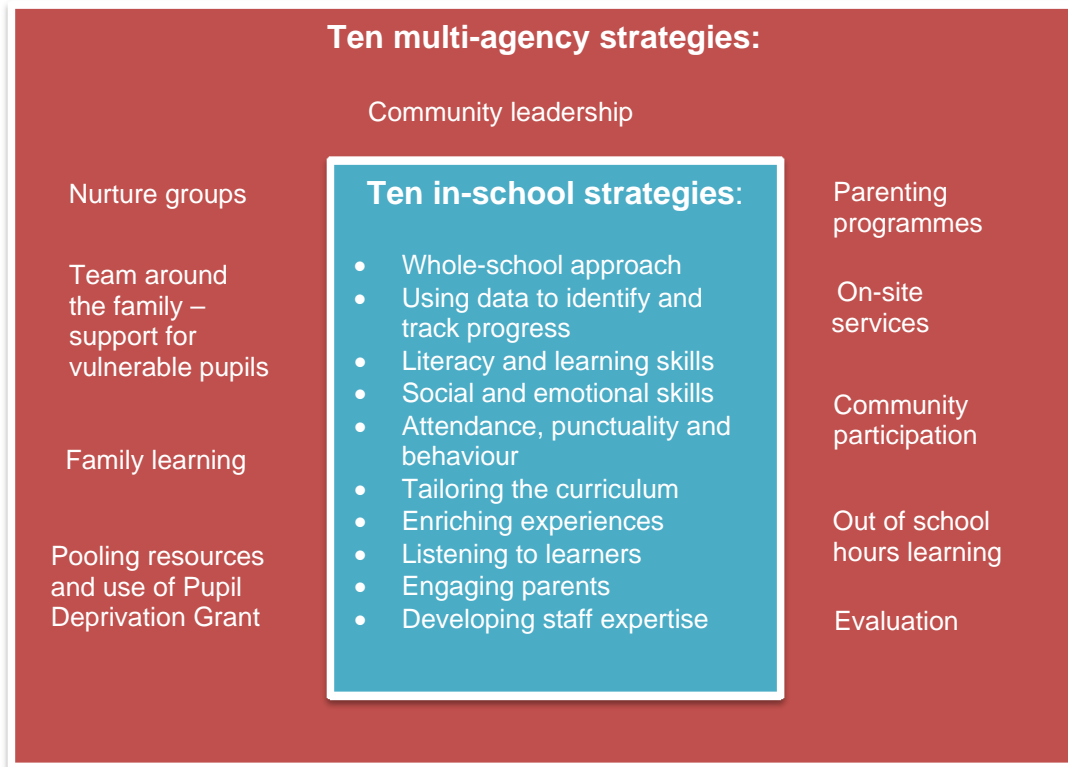
Ten in-school strategies:

- 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.



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: Cwrt Sart Community Comprehensive School in Neath Port Talbot has designed a system of profiling to track pupils' progress at key stage 4.

Context of school

Cwrt Sart Community Comprehensive School is an 11-16 community school in Briton Ferry, Neath Port Talbot. There are currently 500 learners on roll. Overall, the catchment draws from a number of socially disadvantaged areas and 34% of pupils are entitled to free school meals. Half of the pupils in Year 7 are entitled to free school meals. The school has two community first partnerships within its catchment. Twenty-four per cent of learners have additional learning needs.

Strategy

The school's aim is to "enable each individual to reach his/her full potential within a framework of high expectations". Part of the school's strategy to improve the outcomes for disadvantaged learners is to:

- reduce the variation in performance between subjects and groups of learners;
- analyse data effectively to set challenging targets and to track the progress of subject areas, individual learners and key groups of learners; and
- embed systematic target-setting and tracking processes.

Actions

Identification

The school identifies learners in the Year 11 cohort who are: eligible for free school meals; looked-after children; more able and talented; learners who require speech and language support; and hearing impaired learners.

Each learner has a profile. These profiles use the above information and a variety of academic data, including Fischer Family Trust (FFT) data and information from the Cognitive Ability Tests (CATs). This baseline data is used to allocate learners to a 'school band'. There are seven bands and each has a minimum expectation of performance. For example, if a learner is in band 5 their minimum expected performance at key stage 4 is to achieve a GCSE 'C' grade or equivalent. At key stage 3, the school expects that every learner will achieve a minimum of level 5. This target is reviewed twice a year during whole-school target-setting and adjusted to build in challenge for learners, where necessary.

At the end of Year 10, subject teachers provide an estimated grade for each learner, which is fed into the 'learner profile'. This is used to identify learners who are underachieving in any particular subject areas. This information forms the basis of the coaching groups formed for Year 11, which contain approximately six learners.

The more able and talented learners are placed in a separate group. Learners who are underachieving in English or mathematics are placed in a specific core subject coaching group of 10 learners. Any learners who are looked after by the local authority or entitled to free school meals are cross-referenced with these initial groups so that additional individual support can be given to these learners. Learners with speech and language and hearing impairment are coached by specialised staff. Forty per cent of Year 11 learners are coached in this way, with an additional 11% having coaching via the Reaching Wider scheme in association with Swansea University.

These learner profiles are shared with all members of staff to allow for a coherent system of support.

Coaching process

Seven members of staff, five of whom are trained as learning coaches, have a session to work with their mentees every fortnight. They work with individuals or with a group of learners, using a variety of strategies to meet specific needs. When needed, coaches work with subject teachers to develop further strategies. In mathematics, a 'peer mentoring' scheme is running in some classes for learners who feel less confident about numeracy. Literacy is developed with the more able and talented group through a debating society, which was set up in liaison with the literacy co-ordinator and culminating in a video submitted by the learners to a BBC Question Time competition.

The profiling system allows staff to refine strategies to tackle underachievement. When mock examination results are fed into the system, coaches reflect on the success of various strategies, and consider how to alter approaches and ways to share good practice.

Pupils complete a questionnaire at the start of each term that asks them to rate aspects of their self-esteem, confidence and goal-setting. Staff analyse the responses after the first term review and present their findings in graphical form. The graph indicates the percentage of students who identified positive development within each specific question area. Through evaluation the school has found that:

- although formative questionnaires provide a snapshot of how learners' personal feelings about themselves have changed, teachers need to find out more about why learners feel this change has happened, and
- the profiling process allocates time and support for learners to identify their own areas of weakness, develop strategies to overcome them and reflect on how else they can use these skills. The school is planning to build extra time for this personal and social education programme for Year 11 next year.

Outcomes

Pupils who are entitled to free school meals achieve well in Cwrt Sart. Over the last few years, they have achieved better results than those in similar schools. In 2011, 31% of free-school-meal-pupils achieved the level 2 threshold including English and mathematics, which was higher than the average performance of pupils entitled to free school meals across Wales (22%). Attendance levels have placed the school in the top 25% of similar schools for the last five years.

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

Case study 2: Ysgol Bryn Elian in Conwy has reorganised its pastoral system to help track and monitor the needs of its disadvantaged pupils.

Context

Ysgol Bryn Elian is an 11-18 mixed comprehensive school of 850 pupils. The school serves the eastern side of Colwyn Bay and the surrounding villages. The catchment area is diverse and includes an area of social deprivation, which is eligible for European convergence funding. Twenty-two per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals. Thirty per cent of pupils are on the register of special educational needs.

Strategy

The school recognised that the pastoral system needed re-shaping to suit the pupils. Disadvantaged pupils required particular academic and pastoral support to overcome their individual barriers to progress. A non-teaching learning mentor was appointed to each year group to assist a learning manager, a member of the school's teaching staff. In line with the school's strategic plan, all mentors were trained as learning coaches.

Actions

Learning mentors undertake a range of tasks. They:

- analyse data for their year group every six weeks, measuring performance and progress against set targets. Where pupils fail to reach their targets, strategies are reassessed and learning mentors target individuals for mentoring sessions;
- use Pupil Attitude to Self and School (PASS) test data to identify the barriers to learning for individual disadvantaged pupils. Through individual and group work, mentors work with the pupil to help address any issues;
- provide behaviour support for both staff and pupils by carrying out one-to-one sessions with pupils, which are then followed up in the classroom, particularly at key stage 4;
- supervise 'catch-up' sessions and 'coursework surgeries' with pupils who have been absent or require additional support;
- liaise with other agencies to work closely with pupils on the child protection register, on the looked-after children register and those who are under the remit of the Education Social Work Service;
- operate a first-day-absence calling system; and
- are an integral part of the pastoral structure of the school.

All mentors have also been trained by a clinical psychologist in cognitive behaviour therapy. Individual mentors are trained in an area of expertise. The mentors work as a team by referring groups of learners with specific issues to a mentor who has expertise in that area. Mentors run sessions for pupils in areas such as developing

friendships, positive thinking and behaviour and group peer support programmes. Mentors also engage pupils in projects designed to develop empathy and solve real-life problems.

The school also set up a 'pupil support centre' (PSC) in 2006-2007 to support pupils with behaviour issues. The school has recently changed the nature of support offered in the PSC to strengthen learners' emotional wellbeing.

The work of learning mentors is evaluated through analysis of:

- pupil performance data;
- PASS data;
- monitoring of behaviour and attendance; and
- feedback from pupils.

The evaluation of the work of learning mentors has shown that to improve the work that they do, the school needs to:

- identify further accredited training opportunities for mentors;
- strengthen the team by having key workers at key stage 3 and at key stage 5; and
- develop strategies to provide more after school sessions for free school meals pupils and for looked-after children.

Outcomes

Attendance levels have been in the top quarter of those for similar schools for the last four years. The attendance of disadvantaged pupils has improved. PASS data shows that pupils' attitude to learning has improved resulting in a reduction in the number of pupils with behavioural problems.

At key stage 4, the proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals achieving level 2 has increased significantly, from 25% in 2009 to 70%, and performance levels are now much better than family and all-Wales averages.

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

Case study 3: Cefn Hengoed Community School in Swansea has focused on raising attendance using a range of approaches.

Context of the school

Cefn Hengoed Community School is an 11-16 mixed comprehensive school on the east side of Swansea. The school lies in the eleventh most deprived ward in Wales and 73% of learners live in 30% of the most deprived parts of Wales. There are 664 learners on roll, 36% of whom are eligible for free school meals. Learner transfers in and out of the school are high.

Strategy

Improving attendance has been a strategic priority that has been explicit in the school development plan since being identified as an inspection recommendation in 2005. At that time, attendance was judged to be unsatisfactory. The inspection team also recommended that the school evaluate and improve curriculum provision in key stage 4 for learners of average and lower ability. The school regarded these recommendations as interrelated.

Key strategic actions to improve attendance have included:

- developing a curriculum relevant to needs at key stage 4;
- transforming the key stage 3 curriculum through changed schemes of work reflecting the skills curriculum;
- motivating Year 9 in the summer term with a programme of accredited key skills; and
- scrutinising the range of attendance issues to identify priorities and establish success criteria to measure improvement.

The school established an attendance focus group with a mission to:

- reduce unauthorised absences;
- define procedures for requests for holidays in term-time;
- reduce truancy and improve punctuality; and
- manage attendance through a business continuity plan.

Action

Attendance is the first item on the agenda on the governing body, leadership team, senior pastoral team and pastoral team meetings. To improve attendance the school developed a number of approaches:

- a team of pastoral support officers (PSOs), initially established through RAISE funding, was extended and subsequently funded by the school budget. PSOs and the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) hold frequent meetings. Form tutors

support the work of the PSOs on attendance. The PSOs and senior pastoral team hold support meetings aimed at targeted parents;

- the pastoral team was restructured and changes made to teaching and learning responsibilities and in the use of associate staff;
- the school trialled an attendance monitoring text messaging system and, following positive feedback from parents, this was developed for the whole school;
- ENGAGE funding (a European funding scheme, run through the Welsh Government) was targeted at the attendance of learners at risk of becoming not engaged in education, employment or training (NEET) in key stage 4;
- an attendance focus group met monthly, chaired by the headteacher;
- the school invested in staff training to improve consistent linking of attendance and progress in feedback to learners during the twice yearly academic reviews, to parents in parents' evenings and when completing learner reports;
- the school drew on the good practice of its partner primary schools in terms of learner welfare and support. It developed wrap around provision, including a breakfast club and after-school clubs, designed to develop learners' personal and learning skills; and
- a range of multi-agency working focused on attendance, including the 'So To Do' project, Youth Initiative Project, educational psychology service, behaviour support, Engaging Learners in Swansea and Ethnic Minority Language Advisory Service.

Pupils are also rewarded for good attendance through:

- major awards in Annual Awards Evening;
- termly letters to parents for learners with 95%+ attendance; and
- special awards for whole year 100% attendance.

Regular meetings ensure that staff monitor and evaluate attendance strategies. These include:

- weekly monitoring meetings of heads of lower, middle, upper schools;
- PSOs meeting prior to PSO/EWO meeting;
- weekly monitoring meetings of PSOs/EWO; and
- monthly monitoring meetings of the attendance focus group to identify issues from examining data by year group, gender and groups of learners (minority ethnic, special educational needs, looked-after children and learners eligible for free school meals).

Outcomes

The school's good outcomes include:

- improved attendance in every year group year on year: over the last five years, overall attendance levels have increased from 83.4% to 90.9%;
- improved attendance across groups of learners. In the last five years, Year 11 attendance levels have increased from 62% to 90.6%;

- reduction in the percentage of unauthorised absence by year group and overall. Overall, the percentage of unauthorised absences has fallen from 15.8% to 0.8% over the last five years;
- increased progression to post-16 as a result of improved attendance and engagement;
- reduction in the percentage of learners at risk of not being not in education, employment or training and in the percentage leaving without qualifications. There has been a steady reduction in the percentage of learners leaving with no qualification, from 7% in 2005 to 0% in 2011;
- closer relationships with parents/carers and individual learners through sensitive attendance monitoring; and
- improved learner wellbeing due to consistent and continuous engagement through improved attendance.

In key stages 3 and 4, the school's performance has improved appreciably. Over the last five years, the percentage of learners achieving the core subject indicator at key stage 3 has improved from 45% to 63%, and at key stage 4 from 23% to 37%. Recent results at Cefn Hengoed have been well above the average for its family of schools.

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 How 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 achievements of our disadvantaged pupils?

Where are improvements needed?

Group 2: Tailoring the curriculum specifically at disadvantaged pupils

Case study 1: Sandfields Comprehensive School has designed a successful whole-school approach to literacy development.

Context of the school

Sandfields School serves the Sandfields estate in Port Talbot, one of the most economically deprived areas in Wales. There are currently 625 learners on roll. Thirty-nine per cent of learners are entitled to free school meals. Around 12% of learners have statements of special educational needs and 42% have a special educational need. The school houses an enhanced resource provision for 67 learners with moderate, severe and profound learning difficulties.

Strategy

On entry to the school, many of the learners do not have the reading skills to access the curriculum effectively. The school has developed effective strategies to improve learners' skills, particularly in literacy.

Action

The school has developed a whole-school strategy for teaching skills. Following staff training, staff scrutinise the programmes of study at key stage 3 to identify where skills are taught across subject areas. Staff then map the frequency and use of specific skills for each curriculum area in each half term throughout key stage 3. This allows the school to respond to any deficiencies in provision.

Senior leaders also analyse literacy and numeracy performance data. Using this information, staff design a structured support programme for those requiring additional help in these specific skills. The resulting language or mathematics workshops are run by the special educational needs co-ordinator in consultation with the heads of English and mathematics. Staff track learners' progress using literacy and numeracy tests. The aim of the language workshops is to improve the functional reading age of learners to above 10 years. This baseline target allows learners' access to the curriculum in key stage 4.

The school provides an individualised programme of withdrawal for both these workshops in key stage 3. Teachers refer learners to the workshops, but learners can also self-refer, and parents can request that their children attend. The school has also suspended French in Year 7 for selected classes experiencing significant language deficiencies. For a term, the French teacher works with the special educational needs team to develop reading skills. Learners follow a structured programme of intervention. This approach develops staff expertise while giving learners more time to develop their literacy skills.

In addition, the English department, having analysed learner data, has introduced a reading programme at key stage 3. All learners follow the programme and it enhances the curriculum by focusing on skills in a structured and measurable way. It

provides a uniform approach and ensures that all learners receive a consistent standard of delivery, using appropriate resources, throughout the key stage. The English department has taken a lead to rewrite the whole-school assessment policy. This has helped to improve the consistency of marking and feedback to learners across the school.

Teachers share good practice by uploading resources to the school intranet. For each language resource, there is an indication of readability. This allows staff opportunities to assess their resources and the suitability of the material they use.

At the end of key stage 3, all learners sit Essential Skills Wales qualifications in communication, application of number, and information and communication technology. The aim is for all to gain level 1 and those capable to attain level 2. This process provides a connection to the key stage 4 qualification framework, where all learners follow the Welsh Baccalaureate course.

Senior leaders review curriculum areas regularly to monitor the consistency and quality of provision for skills. The school gathers the views of learners frequently.

Outcomes

Learners make outstanding progress between the point of entry in key stage 3 to key stage 4. By the end of key stage 4, nearly all learners have reached the expected level of competency in reading. When the current Year 9 started at the school, around 73% had a reading age of below 10 years. The learners have made significant gains and currently only 14% of the cohort have a reading age of below 10 years.

In key stage 4, for the last three years, performance has been in the first or second quarter of that for all schools on the free-school-meal benchmarks for all the main indicators. Performance is among the best in the school's family.

The school is successfully narrowing the gap in attainment between learners who receive school meals and those who do not. Over the last five years, at key stage 4, the difference in performance in the core subject indicator between those learners who are entitled to free school meals and their more advantaged peers has decreased from 33% to 17%.

Group 2: Tailoring the curriculum specifically for disadvantaged pupils

Case study 2: Using the curriculum and other strategies to support disadvantaged pupils

Context

Bryngwyn School is an 11-16 community school situated in Dafen, on the north-eastern side of Llanelli. The school draws its pupils from parts of the town centre and from a number of outlying villages. There are 834 learners on roll. Overall, the catchment area is disadvantaged. Twenty-two per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals.

Strategy

The core aims of the school are to focus on improving the attendance, attitude and achievement of disadvantaged pupils.

Action

The school identifies its disadvantaged pupils using a wide range of criteria and tracks individual pupil's progress against baseline data on a termly basis. The progress of disadvantaged pupils is analysed specifically at the end of key stages 3 and 4 to inform planning.

Leaders and managers use a good range of processes to analyse a range of performance data, such as school tracking data and information from Cognitive Ability Tests (CATs) and National Federation for Educational Research (NFER) tests, to evaluate the impact of strategies on disadvantaged pupils.

Strategies for improving key skills, among disadvantaged pupils, include the following:

- identifying two members of the senior team dedicated to improving outcomes for pupils in communication and numeracy;
- increasing the numbers of sets for English and mathematics for Years 9, 10 and 11;
- creating withdrawal groups for numeracy and literacy in Years 7 and 8;
- introducing key Skills qualifications in Application of Number and Communication spanning levels 1-3;
- introducing a transition literacy project for key stages 2 and 3. Pupils from Years 6 and 7 are identified from data analysis to receive one-to-one 'catch up' sessions every week, plus early morning reading sessions every day;
- introducing a key stage 2/3 transition numeracy project. Pupils in Years 6, 7 and 8 are identified using data and small intervention groups are created. These pupils receive a weekly one hour session – following 'number workout programme'; and
- using key skills qualifications in key stage 3 to motivate pupils.

Other strategies for tackling disadvantage include the following:

- an emotional literacy project for key stage 3 learners who were identified by the head of year as disadvantaged learners in need of support. This group benefited from a range of intervention strategies to suit individual needs. Extra support for the project was given through links with other support services and voluntary agencies;
- a strong emphasis on learner voice to make changes to the curriculum. This has resulted in some learning being based on short 'task and finish' projects to motivate learners, and in other instances to setting a week-long project that included visits so that learners could have a richer learning experience;
- engaging boys more successfully in reading by developing a project linking football to reading. Learners involved in the project then took leadership of the task by mentoring Year 6 learners from the school's feeder primary schools;
- an attendance officer working with the school to ensure effective contact with parents. This officer also works with an identified group of learners whose attendance is poor to reduce the number of unauthorised absences;
- providing a base for social services in the school. This has resulted in better communication and an effective exchange of information between social services and the school and has a positive impact on the school's ability to support disadvantaged learners; and
- working effectively with the Carmarthenshire Youth and Children's Association to provide activities a wide range of out-of-hours provision for learners and their families.

Outcomes

The school is very successful at engaging pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds as a result of:

- the very effective development of pupils' key skills in their programmes of study;
- listening to feedback from disadvantaged pupils and acting very effectively upon this information;
- successfully adapting teaching and learning strategies to motivate pupils and allow them to complete their work successfully;
- the careful monitoring of the impact of these strategies on disadvantaged pupils; and
- the highly effective and extremely well attended out-of-school-hours programme.

The school has improved outcomes for disadvantaged pupils in the following areas:

- performance in the core subject indicator at key stage 4 has improved significantly over the past four years. In the last two years the school has been in the top 25% of similar schools in this performance indicator;
- in literacy the school has improved pupils' reading accuracy and comprehension skills significantly;
- in numeracy, Year 7 and Year 8 pupils improved their skills significantly, achieving results higher than predicted;

- there has been a marked improvement in the achievement of disadvantaged boys generally. At key stage 3, there is little difference between the performance of boys and girls. The headteacher attributes this success to changes in learning and teaching strategies;
- GCSE results for all pupils were significantly higher than predicted by the Cognitive Ability Test (CAT) data;
- the number of pupils achieving the level 2 threshold including English and mathematics has improved over the last three years and is now the highest within Bryngwyn's family of similar schools;
- the average wider points score for 15-year-olds in the school has improved significantly over the past four years and is now the highest in Bryngwyn's family of schools; and
- attendance has improved for pupils entitled to free school meals and the school recorded a fall in unauthorised absences.

Group 2: Tailoring the curriculum specifically for disadvantaged pupils

Case study 3: Out-of-hours learning to complement the curriculum

Context

The E3+ programme, 'Enrich, Extend, Excite', works with schools in Rhondda Cynon Taf where approximately 23% of pupils of school age are eligible for free school meals.

Strategy

The programme actively targets groups of young people with particular needs because they are at risk of exclusion, or have low self-esteem and poor social skills. The groups also include looked-after children or those who are more able and talented. The programme works with a range of partners to accept pupils who are referred onto the provision from various agencies.

Action

E3+ workers consult with pupils to adapt and improve the programme. A wide range of activities is offered including hockey, art, trampolining, street dance, creative crafts, sign language, netball, photography, theatrical make up, ballroom dancing, journalism, kick boxing, skiing, horse riding, golf, quad biking and cooking, as well as room where young people can relax in a safe and caring environment.

Outreach E3+ activities have been developed in isolated and deprived communities within school clusters. The provision is targeted at marginalised communities, groups and young people who are disinclined to attend activities that are located in school premises. The E3+ programme has provided transport, subsidised mid-evening meals, free activities and community-based activities to overcome barriers to participation.

Outcomes

Pupils involved in the programme identify the skills, such as team working and communication, that they have learnt through the activities. These activities engage pupils and foster a sense of worth and belonging in the school community, and enhance feelings of self-esteem and wellbeing. The number of learners engaged in E3+ provision has increased as the provision has expanded. In 2007-2008 there were a total of 101,360 contacts with young people engaged in E3+. In 2008-2009 the number of contacts rose to 227,405. The percentage of 15-year-olds who reach the level 2 threshold including English and mathematics in Rhondda Cynon Taf has improved at a much faster rate than that of Wales as a whole. Over the last three years, this performance indicator has increased by six percentage points.

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 we 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 our specific support for disadvantaged pupils?

Where are improvements needed?

Group 3: Engaging with parents and the community

Case study 1: Cathays High School in Cardiff has created stronger links with parents and the local community so as to ensure that disadvantaged learners are well supported.

Context of the school

Cathays High School is an 11 to 18 English-medium school located near the centre of Cardiff. There are 896 learners on roll, including 144 in the sixth form. The school receives learners from a wide geographical area, with approximately 40% of learners coming from out of the catchment area. They represent the full range of ability, but the attainment of a significant proportion of learners is below average on entry. Thirty-eight per cent of learners are entitled to receive free school meals.

The school has the highest proportion of secondary school age asylum seeker children in Cardiff, typically between 7% and 10% of the school population. This group has a particularly high level of mobility. On average, there is a 20 to 30% turnover of the learner population each year.

Over 30 languages are spoken by learners. These include Arabic, Bengali, Czech, Farsi, Punjabi, Somali and Urdu. No learners or students speak Welsh as their first language. Approximately half speak English as their first language. Support in English as an additional language is provided for 257 learners.

Strategy

Part of the school's strategic planning is to create stronger links with parents and the local community, so as to ensure that disadvantaged learners are well supported. The school has focused attention on learners' transition from key stage 2 to key stage 3 and monitors carefully learners' progress and wellbeing.

Action

The school makes extensive use of many agencies and community groups to help learners to settle and develop and to strengthen communication links with their parents.

Transition Saturday

The school runs many transition activities including 'Transition Saturday', when the school runs a range of activities for learners and their parents. Disadvantaged learners in key stage 2 are offered additional support in literacy and numeracy.

Bring a Parent to School Day

During Year 7 the parents are invited to spend a morning working alongside their children. Last year, 24 parents took part and this year the school is hoping to increase this number.

Family meetings

All learners in Year 7 are invited to school for a 'Family Interview' with a member of the senior leadership team. Issues such as transition, basic skills, and additional opportunities that are available are discussed. The outcomes from the meetings are

fed back to heads of department and heads of year, and are often incorporated into agenda items for leadership meetings. Family meetings are also arranged for learners in Years 10 and 11 to discuss learner progress, ambitions and aspirations. The school ensures that translators are present at such events. The translators also help the staff appreciate and understand particular cultural differences that may impact on teaching and learning.

Using expertise within the community

One minority ethnic group of pupils currently has very low attendance rate. In order to address this, the school has recently accessed the help and support of a local individual from the same ethnic group. He is volunteering his support to act as a link between the parents and the school. The school has previously used a similar scheme with another ethnic group and this did improve communication between the parents and the school.

My Education project: engaging parents and developing learner voice (supported by Cardiff Metropolitan University)

The aim of the project is to engage with parents from different ethnic backgrounds, many of whom are reluctant to engage with the school about teaching and learning issues. Learners designed a piece of interactive media to inform parents and family members about their children's education and how better to understand the education system. Over the course of this year both a DVD and website have been produced. The learners were trained in the use of digital media at Cardiff Metropolitan University to design and direct the work. The next phase of the project will involve learners and their parents working together, so that parents can gain the confidence and skills to take a more pro-active role to support their children's education.

The school monitors and analyses parents' participation at events and parents' evenings. This information is monitored by ethnic group and by the learners' year group.

Following analysis of the evaluation, the school is extending its provision to improve transition from key stage 2 to key stage 3 by offering a three-day course during half term for key stage 2 learners and their parents. The sessions will include activities on accessing the school's library, fitness and sport opportunities, health issues supported by a local doctor and dentist, healthy eating with the aim of assessing needs and engaging and encouraging parents to become involved with the school.

Outcomes

Many parents feel that they have more confidence in talking to and questioning teachers. The school has employed additional bilingual teaching assistants to act as support and points of contact. The school's focus on learners from particular ethnic groups and their parents has increased attendance at parents' evenings for these parents from 50% to 86%. The performance of learners who are eligible for free school meals in those indicators that include English and mathematics is higher than the average for the family of schools.

Group 3: Engaging with parents and the community

Case study 2: Partnership working with a voluntary group in the community

Context

Pupils in Bishop Gore Comprehensive school in Swansea come from a wide range of backgrounds. Approximately 25% of pupils are entitled to free school meals.

Strategy

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

Action

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

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

Outcomes

This strategy has had a significant impact on the achievement of these pupils. In addition, the exclusion rates of minority ethnic pupils are negligible as a result of the school's working partnership with Ethnic Youth Support Team.

The work with Ethnic Youth Support Team has had a positive effect on the pupils and the school. Team workers are available to respond to different ethnic groups, improve understanding and tolerance, and build learners' self-esteem. The team works in the school every week, and this helps the school to make effective links to the local community, and to support its ethnic minority pupils well. The school is also more aware of any issues in the local community that might affect pupils' achievement.

Over the last four years, the gap between the achievement of pupils eligible for free school meals and those who are not has narrowed in Bishop Gore. The performance of all pupils has increased over the same period and all key performance indicators are above the average for similar schools.

Group 3: Engaging with parents and the community

Case study 3: The impact of community-focused school co-ordinators

Context

Cardiff is the sixth most deprived local authority in Wales where about 22% of pupils in schools are eligible for free school meals.

Strategy

Cardiff local authority has identified community-focused school co-ordinators in each of the secondary schools. Their remit is to co-ordinate, develop and monitor school and community provision across a transition cluster.

Action

The co-ordinators meet on a regular basis in a local authority team for training and to share practice. These meetings also give the opportunity for key partners from the community and other agencies to attend and inform co-ordinators of strategies, interventions and programmes that can support the different community focused school provision in particular communities. The community-focused schools co-ordinators also run practical workshops to develop the leadership skills of senior school staff.

The co-ordinators have developed a 'Quality Development Framework' to enable schools to self-evaluate their community-focused provision and to develop a portfolio of evidence to exemplify effective practice. This work has helped to strengthen schools' community focus. Many schools have developed closer links to various community projects, for example work with residents' groups and playgroups.

Outcomes

Schools have seen increased levels of participation from disengaged pupils, and many pupils have improved their social skills and self-esteem through these community-focused schools projects.

Cardiff continues to perform at a better level in most key stages, and particularly at key stages 1 and 3, than might be expected on the basis of comparative free school meals ranking when compared to other local authorities. Pupils in Cardiff schools achieve above the expected performance in all key performance indicators.

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? What more can we do?
- 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: Cefn Hengoed Community School in Swansea has succeeded in raising attendance by using a range of approaches with partners.

Context of the school

Cefn Hengoed Community School is an 11-16 mixed comprehensive school on the east side of Swansea. The school lies in the eleventh most deprived ward in Wales and 73% of learners live in 30% of the most deprived parts of Wales. There are 664 learners on roll, 36% of whom are eligible for free school meals. Learner transfers in and out of the school are high.

Strategy

Improving attendance has been a strategic priority that has been explicit in the school development plan since being identified as an inspection recommendation in 2005. At that time, attendance was judged to be unsatisfactory. The inspection team also recommended that the school evaluate and improve curriculum provision in key stage 4 for learners of average and lower ability. The school regarded these recommendations as interrelated.

Key strategic actions to improve attendance have included:

- developing a curriculum relevant to needs at key stage 4;
- transforming the key stage 3 curriculum through changed schemes of work reflecting the skills curriculum;
- motivating Year 9 in the summer term with a programme of accredited key skills; and
- scrutinising the range of attendance issues to identify priorities and establish success criteria to measure improvement.

The school established an attendance focus group with a mission to:

- reduce unauthorised absences;
- define procedures for requests for holidays in term-time;
- reduce truancy and improve punctuality; and
- manage attendance through a business continuity plan.

Action

Attendance is the first item on the agenda on the governing body, leadership team, senior pastoral team and pastoral team meetings. To improve attendance the school developed a number of approaches:

- a range of multi-agency working focused on attendance, including the 'So To Do' project, Youth Initiative Project, educational psychology service, behaviour support, Engaging Learners in Swansea and Ethnic Minority Language Advisory Service;

- a team of pastoral support officers (PSOs), initially established through RAISE funding, was extended and subsequently funded by the school budget. PSOs and the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) hold frequent meetings. Form tutors support the work of the PSOs on attendance. The PSOs and senior pastoral team hold support meetings aimed at targeted parents;
- the pastoral team was restructured and changes made to teaching and learning responsibilities and in the use of associate staff;
- the school trialled an attendance monitoring text messaging system and, following positive feedback from parents, this was developed for the whole school;
- ENGAGE funding (a European funding scheme, run through the Welsh Government) was targeted at the attendance of learners at risk of becoming not engaged in education, employment or training (NEET) in key stage 4;
- an attendance focus group met monthly, chaired by the headteacher;
- the school invested in staff training to improve consistent linking of attendance and progress in feedback to learners during the twice yearly academic reviews, to parents in parents' evenings and when completing learner reports; and
- the school drew on the good practice of its partner primary schools in terms of learner welfare and support. It developed wrap around provision, including a breakfast club and after-school clubs, designed to develop learners' personal and learning skills.

Learners are also rewarded for good attendance through:

- major awards in Annual Awards Evening;
- termly letters to parents for learners with 95%+ attendance; and
- special awards for whole year 100% attendance.

Regular meetings ensure that staff monitor and evaluate attendance strategies. These include:

- weekly monitoring meetings of heads of lower, middle, upper schools;
- PSOs meeting prior to PSO/EWO meeting;
- weekly monitoring meetings of PSOs/EWO; and
- monthly monitoring meetings of the attendance focus group to identify issues from examining data by year group, gender and groups of learners (minority ethnic, special educational needs, looked-after children and learners eligible for free school meals).

Outcomes

Outcomes include:

- improved attendance in every year group year on year: over the last five years, overall attendance levels have increased from 83.4% to 90.9%;
- improved attendance across groups of learners. In the last five years, Year 11 attendance levels have increased from 62% to 90.6%;

- reduction in the percentage of unauthorised absence by year group and overall. Overall, the percentage of unauthorised absences has fallen from 15.8% to 0.8% over the last five years;
- increased progression to post-16 as a result of improved attendance and engagement;
- reduction in the percentage of learners at risk of not being not in education, employment or training and in the percentage leaving without qualifications. There has been a steady reduction in the percentage of learners leaving with no qualification, from 7% in 2005 to 0% in 2011;
- closer relationships with parents/carers and individual learners through sensitive attendance monitoring; and
- improved learner wellbeing due to consistent and continuous engagement through improved attendance.

In key stages 3 and 4, the school's performance has improved appreciably over the last three years. Over the last five years, the percentage of learners achieving the core subject indicator at key stage 3 has improved from 45% to 63%, and at key stage 4 from 23% to 37%. Over the last two years, results at Cefn Hengoed have been well above the average for its family of schools.

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 1: Treorchy Comprehensive School in Rhondda Cynon Taf has focused on 'Closing the Gap'.

Context of the school

Treorchy Comprehensive School is a large 11-18 mixed comprehensive school in the county of Rhondda Cynon Taff. There are 1,600 pupils on roll and currently 354 students in the sixth form.

Most pupils come from local primary schools though over the past three years over 40 pupils a year have entered the school having attended primary schools outside the traditional catchment area.

The school's intake is from a varied social background and represents the full range of ability. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is 24%, which is well above the national average for secondary schools. Academic ability on entry is below national averages. The school has 16% of pupils on the special educational needs register, whilst most pupils come from English speaking homes approximately nine percent of pupils are fluent in Welsh.

Strategy

As a result of the diverse social background of the pupils of the school and the higher than average levels of poverty, it became necessary to provide a support system for pupils that is tailored to meet the needs of the individual. This involved developing a flexible holistic approach that allows every individual pupil's needs, both social and academic, to be addressed to allow them to achieve their potential. At the same time, there is a firm emphasis on producing literate and numerate pupils.

Action

The school takes a flexible holistic approach to Pastoral Care & Wellbeing based on individual needs. The approach includes varied strategies that address both the social and academic developmental needs of the pupils in the school. The priority is to ensure that pupils leaving Treorchy Comprehensive are both literate and numerate. The strategies used are listed below:

- Every member of SMT involved in every day pastoral care
- High Quality HOLS (Head of Learning and Skills) in Every Year Group including three in the 6th Form
- GLSOs (Guidance Learning Support Officers) in every Year Group including the sixth form
- Designated GLSO for Year 7 and for Year 11
- Learning coaches for pupils with Basic Skills issues employed by the school
- Attendance Support Officer employed by the school
- Interventions to support the most vulnerable (Nurture Group/Life Skills Group)
- Interventions to support those on FSM (Free School Meals) such as: mentoring

by HoLS; Be spoke projects to raise aspirations / esteem and self-confidence (Olympic initiative/Dragonfly Literacy Project)

- Guidance at key transition points
- Partnerships with multidisciplinary agencies
- Partnership with parents
- Internal and external PLCs for wellbeing (e.g. Cluster Attendance PLCs, Closing the Gap)
- Sixth form paired reading
- Sixth form buddy system
- Sixth form STEM mentoring
- Learning Pathways Progress Files for every year group
- Accreditation / recognition of excellence by over 10 awarding bodies

The key to the effectiveness of each of these strategies is the consistent level of monitoring and evaluation based on measurable outcomes for the pupils. Therefore there is a high degree of accountability and ownership by staff. The outcomes are monitored at intervention level and also at whole school level. This evaluation then enables the school to target effective interventions and improve resourcing/funding in these areas and allows for effective strategic planning.

An audit of interventions ensures that all pupils on FSM are involved in some degree of support or intervention. The progress of the pupils is then monitored this is done both quantitatively and qualitatively using data such as progress results, referrals and staff feedback on pupil social and emotional development.

Outcomes

The school has been very successful in narrowing gap between pupils receiving FSM and their non-FSM peers. At key stage 4 the percentage of pupils receiving FSM who attain Level 2 has improved over the last three years from 60% to 88%. This improving trend is also evident in key stage 3 where the proportion of pupils receiving FSM who achieved the CSI has increased from 41% to 50% over the same time.

Group 5: The leadership and management of disadvantaged pupils

Case study 2: Ysgol Dyffryn Ogwen in Gwynedd ensures high expectations of all pupils.

Context of the school

Ysgol Dyffryn Ogwen is a naturally bilingual community comprehensive school for pupils and students aged from 11-18 years. There are 360 pupils, including 50 students in the sixth form. The majority of pupils come from an area that is economically or socially disadvantaged. Nearly eighteen per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals.

Strategy

The school has focused on establishing a special inclusive ethos ensuring equal opportunities and success for all pupils. This focus is combined with an emphasis on providing education of the highest quality in order to improve standards and ensure that all pupils possess the important skills for life and work.

Evaluation

The homely and inclusive atmosphere is a very prominent and successful feature of the school. Staff know the importance of having high expectations of all pupils and plan activities that are highly engaging and promote high standards. There is also a strong emphasis on supporting all pupils and ensuring that they have equal access and opportunities to participate in every activity in which they are interested.

The school uses assessment data well in order to support and improve pupils' learning. Pupils' performance is tracked effectively and monitored regularly across the curriculum.

High-quality leadership has been a key factor in developing and maintaining a continuous and firm emphasis on improving standards for all pupils, which has permeated through all aspects of school life.

Outcomes

Over a period of six years from 2007 to 2012, the difference between the performance of pupils who receive free school meals and their non-free school meal peers, in the main indicators, is less than the averages for comparable schools in the family and for Wales as a whole.

In key stage 3, the proportion of pupils who achieve level 5 or higher in English or Welsh, mathematics and science in combination has increased significantly over the last four years. During this period, pupils' performance has placed the school among the top 25% of similar schools in terms of levels of entitlement to free school meals. In all individual core subjects, the performance of pupils that attain the expected level over the last three years has improved and performance in English and science has placed the school among the top 25% of its family of schools.

In key stage 4 in 2012, pupils' performance has been excellent and in the top quartile in all main indicators since 2010-2011. Since 2010-2011, results for the level 1 threshold, level 2 threshold and level 2 threshold including Welsh or English and mathematics, the core subject indicator and capped points score have improved and are higher than the family's average. This places the school among the top 25% in comparison with similar schools in all indicators. Pupils' progress is significantly better than expected from key stage 2 to key stage 4, and is excellent.

Since 2009-2010, no pupils have failed to gain a recognised qualification, and nearly all pupils stay in education, employment or full-time training after Year 11.

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 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 team 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 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 inform their own practice as well as the priorities in departmental 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 learners.

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 they can make to their own 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 departmental 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 departmental 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 departmental 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 contributions.

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

Section 2 – materials for participants

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.

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:

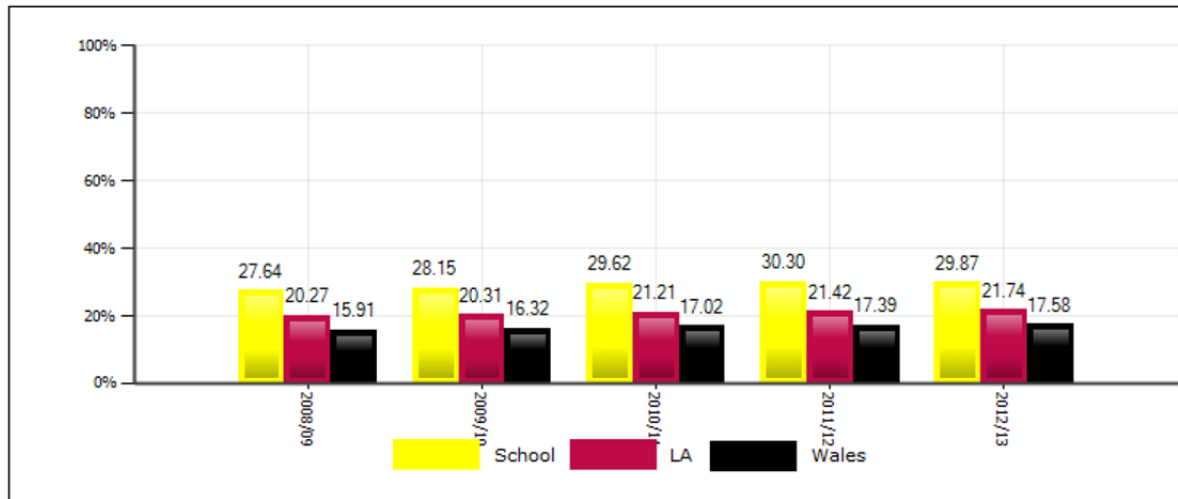
- those eligible for free school meals;
- those from minority groups;
- those in families on low income;
- looked-after children; and
- traveller children.

PowerPoint slide 3

The school's percentage of statutory school age pupils entitled to FSM - 3 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;
- are less healthy;
- are more likely to be not in employment, education or training;
- are more likely to have a child in their teenage years; and
- in the case of white working class boys, are less likely to achieve their potential than any other group.

PowerPoint slide 6

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

- has a belief in ...;
- believes that ...;
- finds school ...;
- thinks it is likely that ...;
- avoids ...; and
- does not experience

PowerPoint slide 6 (completed)

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

- has a belief in his/her own ability at school;
- believes that events result primarily from his/her own behaviour and actions;
- finds school worthwhile;
- thinks it is likely that he/she will apply to, and get into, higher education;
- avoids risky behaviour such as frequent smoking, cannabis use, anti-social behaviour, truancy, suspension and exclusion; 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.)

How well are our disadvantaged pupils achieving?

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 at key stage 3 and key stage 4.

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

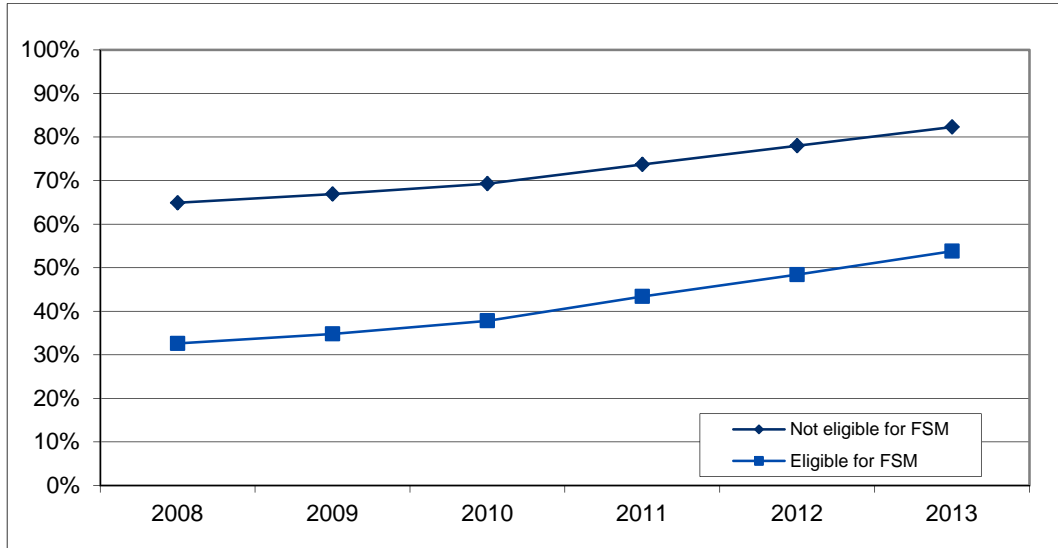
Key results for disadvantaged pupils in Wales

- Overall, the performance of both FSM and non-FSM pupils has improved since 2005. Looking at the core subject indicator, the gap in performance has generally narrowed over the last six years at key stage 3.
- 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 key stage 3, for individual subjects, the gap is widest in mathematics (23.1 percentage points) although historically it has been widest in English. The gap is narrowest in Welsh (17.8 percentage points).
- At key stage 4, the gap is now widest for the core subject indicator (32.1 percentage points) although historically it has been wider at the L2 threshold. The gap is narrowest at the L1 threshold (10.6 percentage points).
- There are 'gaps' in performance between learner groups such as looked-after children compared with all pupils: 10% attain the expected level in secondary school compared with 50% for all pupils.

PowerPoint slide 3

Key results for disadvantaged pupils in Wales in key stage 3

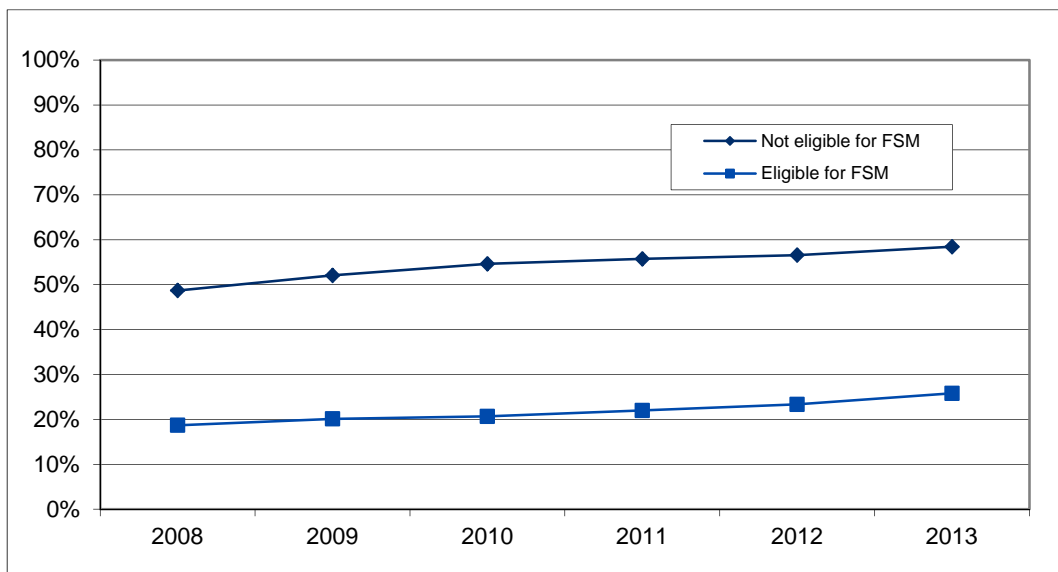
Difference between CSI performance of FSM and non-FSM pupils at key stage 3, 2008-2013



PowerPoint slide 4

Key results for disadvantaged pupils in Wales in key stage 4

Difference between performance in the Level 2 threshold including a GCSE A*-C in English / Welsh and mathematics of FSM and non-FSM pupils at key stage 4, 2008-2013



PowerPoint slide 5

Key stage 3 – school performance data

(Insert data from Section 1.2a/1.2b (FSM/non-FSM trend and family comparison) from the All Wales core data set for key stage 3.)

PowerPoint slide 6

Key stage 4 – school performance data

(Insert data from Section 1.4a/1.4b (FSM/non-FSM trend and family comparison) from the All Wales core data set for key stage 4.)

PowerPoint slide 7

Insert your own data on the performance of disadvantaged pupils, such as value-added data.

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:

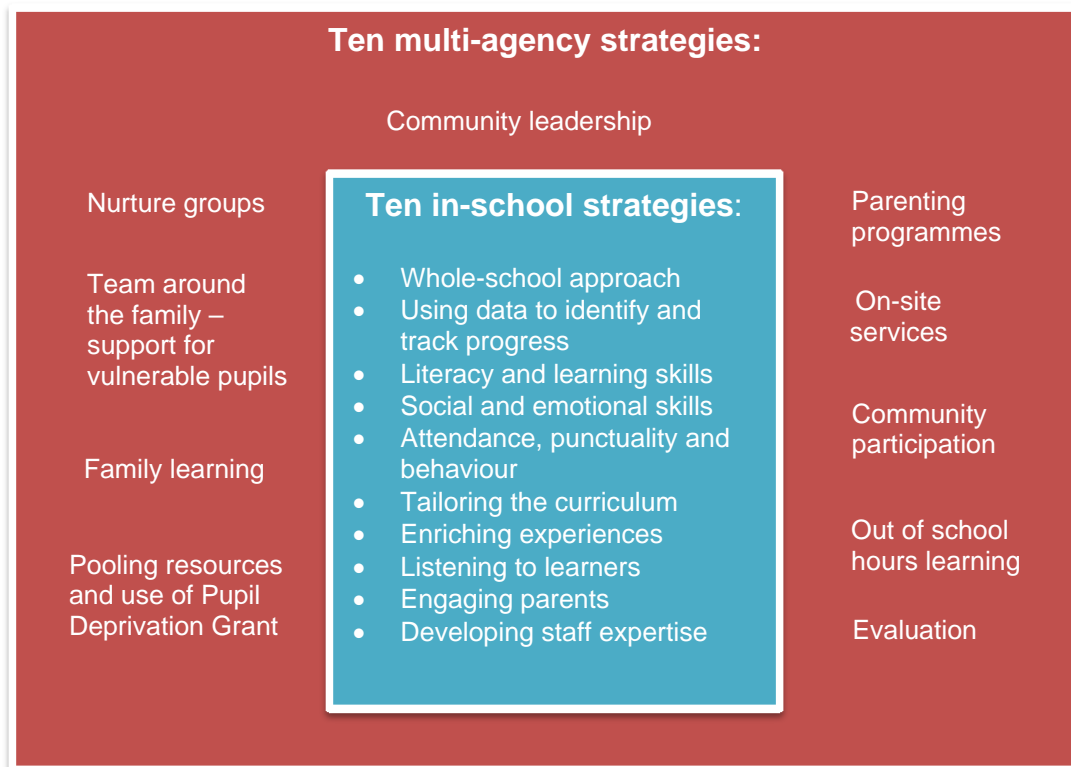
- Whole-school approach
- Using data to identify and track progress
- Literacy and learning skills
- Social and emotional skills
- Attendance, punctuality and behaviour
- Tailoring the curriculum
- Enriching experiences
- Listening to learners
- Engaging parents

- 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: Cwrt Sart Community Comprehensive School in Neath Port Talbot has designed a system of profiling to track pupils' progress at key stage 4.

Context of school

Cwrt Sart Community Comprehensive School is an 11-16 community school in Briton Ferry, Neath Port Talbot. There are currently 500 learners on roll. Overall, the catchment draws from a number of socially disadvantaged areas and 34% of pupils are entitled to free school meals. Half of the pupils in Year 7 are entitled to free school meals. The school has two community first partnerships within its catchment. Twenty-four per cent of learners have additional learning needs.

Strategy

The school's aim is to "enable each individual to reach his/her full potential within a framework of high expectations". Part of the school's strategy to improve the outcomes for disadvantaged learners is to:

- reduce the variation in performance between subjects and groups of learners;
- analyse data effectively to set challenging targets and to track the progress of subject areas, individual learners and key groups of learners; and
- embed systematic target-setting and tracking processes.

Actions

Identification

The school identifies learners in the Year 11 cohort who are: eligible for free school meals; looked-after children; more able and talented; learners who require speech and language support; and hearing impaired learners.

Each learner has a profile. These profiles use the above information and a variety of academic data, including Fischer Family Trust (FFT) data and information from the Cognitive Ability Tests (CATs). This baseline data is used to allocate learners to a 'school band'. There are seven bands and each has a minimum expectation of performance. For example, if a learner is in band 5 their minimum expected performance at key stage 4 is to achieve a GCSE 'C' grade or equivalent. At key stage 3, the school expects that every learner will achieve a minimum of level 5. This target is reviewed twice a year during whole-school target-setting and adjusted to build in challenge for learners, where necessary.

At the end of Year 10, subject teachers provide an estimated grade for each learner, which is fed into the 'learner profile'. This is used to identify learners who are underachieving in any particular subject areas. This information forms the basis of the coaching groups formed for Year 11, which contain approximately six learners.

The more able and talented learners are placed in a separate group. Learners who are underachieving in English or mathematics are placed in a specific core subject coaching group of 10 learners. Any learners who are looked after by the local authority or entitled to free school meals are cross-referenced with these initial groups so that additional individual support can be given to these learners. Learners with speech and language and hearing impairment are coached by specialised staff. Forty per cent of Year 11 learners are coached in this way, with an additional 11% having coaching via the Reaching Wider scheme in association with Swansea University.

These learner profiles are shared with all members of staff to allow for a coherent system of support.

Coaching process

Seven members of staff, five of whom are trained as learning coaches, have a session to work with their mentees every fortnight. They work with individuals or with a group of learners, using a variety of strategies to meet specific needs. When needed, coaches work with subject teachers to develop further strategies. In mathematics, a 'peer mentoring' scheme is running in some classes for learners who feel less confident about numeracy. Literacy is developed with the more able and talented group through a debating society, which was set up in liaison with the literacy co-ordinator and culminating in a video submitted by the learners to a BBC Question Time competition.

The profiling system allows staff to refine strategies to tackle underachievement. When mock examination results are fed into the system, coaches reflect on the success of various strategies, and consider how to alter approaches and ways to share good practice.

Pupils complete a questionnaire at the start of each term that asks them to rate aspects of their self-esteem, confidence and goal-setting. Staff analyse the responses after the first term review and present their findings in graphical form. The graph indicates the percentage of students who identified positive development within each specific question area. Through evaluation the school has found that:

- although formative questionnaires provide a snapshot of how learners' personal feelings about themselves have changed, teachers need to find out more about why learners feel this change has happened, and
- the profiling process allocates time and support for learners to identify their own areas of weakness, develop strategies to overcome them and reflect on how else they can use these skills. The school is planning to build extra time for this personal and social education programme for Year 11 next year.

Outcomes

Pupils who are entitled to free school meals achieve well in Cwrt Sart. Over the last few years, they have achieved better results than those in similar schools. In 2011, 31% of free-school-meal-pupils achieved the level 2 threshold including English and mathematics, which was higher than the average performance of pupils entitled to free school meals across Wales (22%). Attendance levels have placed the school in the top 25% of similar schools for the last five years.

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

Case study 2: Ysgol Bryn Elian in Conwy has reorganised its pastoral system to help track and monitor the needs of its disadvantaged pupils.

Context

Ysgol Bryn Elian is an 11-18 mixed comprehensive school of 850 pupils. The school serves the eastern side of Colwyn Bay and the surrounding villages. The catchment area is diverse and includes an area of social deprivation, which is eligible for European convergence funding. Twenty-two per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals. Thirty per cent of pupils are on the register of special educational needs.

Strategy

The school recognised that the pastoral system needed re-shaping to suit the pupils. Disadvantaged pupils required particular academic and pastoral support to overcome their individual barriers to progress. A non-teaching learning mentor was appointed to each year group to assist a learning manager, a member of the school's teaching staff. In line with the school's strategic plan, all mentors were trained as learning coaches.

Actions

Learning mentors undertake a range of tasks. They:

- analyse data for their year group every six weeks, measuring performance and progress against set targets. Where pupils fail to reach their targets, strategies are reassessed and learning mentors target individuals for mentoring sessions;
- use Pupil Attitude to Self and School (PASS) test data to identify the barriers to learning for individual disadvantaged pupils. Through individual and group work, mentors work with the pupil to help address any issues;
- provide behaviour support for both staff and pupils by carrying out one-to-one sessions with pupils, which are then followed up in the classroom, particularly at key stage 4;
- supervise 'catch-up' sessions and 'coursework surgeries' with pupils who have been absent or require additional support;
- liaise with other agencies to work closely with pupils on the child protection register, on the looked-after children register and those who are under the remit of the Education Social Work Service;
- operate a first-day-absence calling system; and
- are an integral part of the pastoral structure of the school.

All mentors have also been trained by a clinical psychologist in cognitive behaviour therapy. Individual mentors are trained in an area of expertise. The mentors work as a team by referring groups of learners with specific issues to a mentor who has expertise in that area. Mentors run sessions for pupils in areas such as developing

friendships, positive thinking and behaviour and group peer support programmes. Mentors also engage pupils in projects designed to develop empathy and solve real-life problems.

The school also set up a 'pupil support centre' (PSC) in 2006-2007 to support pupils with behaviour issues. The school has recently changed the nature of support offered in the PSC to strengthen learners' emotional wellbeing.

The work of learning mentors is evaluated through analysis of:

- pupil performance data;
- PASS data;
- monitoring of behaviour and attendance; and
- feedback from pupils.

The evaluation of the work of learning mentors has shown that to improve the work that they do, the school needs to:

- identify further accredited training opportunities for mentors;
- strengthen the team by having key workers at key stage 3 and at key stage 5; and
- develop strategies to provide more after school sessions for free school meals pupils and for looked-after children.

Outcomes

Attendance levels have been in the top quarter of those for similar schools for the last four years. The attendance of disadvantaged pupils has improved. PASS data shows that pupils' attitude to learning has improved resulting in a reduction in the number of pupils with behavioural problems.

At key stage 4, the proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals achieving level 2 has increased significantly, from 25% in 2009 to 70%, and performance levels are now much better than family and all-Wales averages.

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

Case study 3: Cefn Hengoed Community School in Swansea has focused on raising attendance using a range of approaches.

Context of the school

Cefn Hengoed Community School is an 11-16 mixed comprehensive school on the east side of Swansea. The school lies in the eleventh most deprived ward in Wales and 73% of learners live in 30% of the most deprived parts of Wales. There are 664 learners on roll, 36% of whom are eligible for free school meals. Learner transfers in and out of the school are high.

Strategy

Improving attendance has been a strategic priority that has been explicit in the school development plan since being identified as an inspection recommendation in 2005. At that time, attendance was judged to be unsatisfactory. The inspection team also recommended that the school evaluate and improve curriculum provision in key stage 4 for learners of average and lower ability. The school regarded these recommendations as interrelated.

Key strategic actions to improve attendance have included:

- developing a curriculum relevant to needs at key stage 4;
- transforming the key stage 3 curriculum through changed schemes of work reflecting the skills curriculum;
- motivating Year 9 in the summer term with a programme of accredited key skills; and
- scrutinising the range of attendance issues to identify priorities and establish success criteria to measure improvement.

The school established an attendance focus group with a mission to:

- reduce unauthorised absences;
- define procedures for requests for holidays in term-time;
- reduce truancy and improve punctuality; and
- manage attendance through a business continuity plan.

Action

Attendance is the first item on the agenda on the governing body, leadership team, senior pastoral team and pastoral team meetings. To improve attendance the school developed a number of approaches:

- a team of pastoral support officers (PSOs), initially established through RAISE funding, was extended and subsequently funded by the school budget. PSOs and the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) hold frequent meetings. Form tutors

support the work of the PSOs on attendance. The PSOs and senior pastoral team hold support meetings aimed at targeted parents;

- the pastoral team was restructured and changes made to teaching and learning responsibilities and in the use of associate staff;
- the school trialled an attendance monitoring text messaging system and, following positive feedback from parents, this was developed for the whole school;
- ENGAGE funding (a European funding scheme, run through the Welsh Government) was targeted at the attendance of learners at risk of becoming not engaged in education, employment or training (NEET) in key stage 4;
- an attendance focus group met monthly, chaired by the headteacher;
- the school invested in staff training to improve consistent linking of attendance and progress in feedback to learners during the twice yearly academic reviews, to parents in parents' evenings and when completing learner reports;
- the school drew on the good practice of its partner primary schools in terms of learner welfare and support. It developed wrap around provision, including a breakfast club and after-school clubs, designed to develop learners' personal and learning skills; and
- a range of multi-agency working focused on attendance, including the 'So To Do' project, Youth Initiative Project, educational psychology service, behaviour support, Engaging Learners in Swansea and Ethnic Minority Language Advisory Service.

Pupils are also rewarded for good attendance through:

- major awards in Annual Awards Evening;
- termly letters to parents for learners with 95%+ attendance; and
- special awards for whole year 100% attendance.

Regular meetings ensure that staff monitor and evaluate attendance strategies. These include:

- weekly monitoring meetings of heads of lower, middle, upper schools;
- PSOs meeting prior to PSO/EWO meeting;
- weekly monitoring meetings of PSOs/EWO; and
- monthly monitoring meetings of the attendance focus group to identify issues from examining data by year group, gender and groups of learners (minority ethnic, special educational needs, looked-after children and learners eligible for free school meals).

Outcomes

The school's good outcomes include:

- improved attendance in every year group year on year: over the last five years, overall attendance levels have increased from 83.4% to 90.9%;
- improved attendance across groups of learners. In the last five years, Year 11 attendance levels have increased from 62% to 90.6%;

- reduction in the percentage of unauthorised absence by year group and overall. Overall, the percentage of unauthorised absences has fallen from 15.8% to 0.8% over the last five years;
- increased progression to post-16 as a result of improved attendance and engagement;
- reduction in the percentage of learners at risk of not being not in education, employment or training and in the percentage leaving without qualifications. There has been a steady reduction in the percentage of learners leaving with no qualification, from 7% in 2005 to 0% in 2011;
- closer relationships with parents/carers and individual learners through sensitive attendance monitoring; and
- improved learner wellbeing due to consistent and continuous engagement through improved attendance.

In key stages 3 and 4, the school's performance has improved appreciably. Over the last five years, the percentage of learners achieving the core subject indicator at key stage 3 has improved from 45% to 63%, and at key stage 4 from 23% to 37%. Recent results at Cefn Hengoed have been well above the average for its family of schools.

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 How 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 achievements of our disadvantaged pupils?

Where are improvements needed?

Group 2: Tailoring the curriculum specifically at disadvantaged pupils

Case study 1: Sandfields Comprehensive School has designed a successful whole-school approach to literacy development.

Context of the school

Sandfields School serves the Sandfields estate in Port Talbot, one of the most economically deprived areas in Wales. There are currently 625 learners on roll. Thirty-nine per cent of learners are entitled to free school meals. Around 12% of learners have statements of special educational needs and 42% have a special educational need. The school houses an enhanced resource provision for 67 learners with moderate, severe and profound learning difficulties.

Strategy

On entry to the school, many of the learners do not have the reading skills to access the curriculum effectively. The school has developed effective strategies to improve learners' skills, particularly in literacy.

Action

The school has developed a whole-school strategy for teaching skills. Following staff training, staff scrutinise the programmes of study at key stage 3 to identify where skills are taught across subject areas. Staff then map the frequency and use of specific skills for each curriculum area in each half term throughout key stage 3. This allows the school to respond to any deficiencies in provision.

Senior leaders also analyse literacy and numeracy performance data. Using this information, staff design a structured support programme for those requiring additional help in these specific skills. The resulting language or mathematics workshops are run by the special educational needs co-ordinator in consultation with the heads of English and mathematics. Staff track learners' progress using literacy and numeracy tests. The aim of the language workshops is to improve the functional reading age of learners to above 10 years. This baseline target allows learners' access to the curriculum in key stage 4.

The school provides an individualised programme of withdrawal for both these workshops in key stage 3. Teachers refer learners to the workshops, but learners can also self-refer, and parents can request that their children attend. The school has also suspended French in Year 7 for selected classes experiencing significant language deficiencies. For a term, the French teacher works with the special educational needs team to develop reading skills. Learners follow a structured programme of intervention. This approach develops staff expertise while giving learners more time to develop their literacy skills.

In addition, the English department, having analysed learner data, has introduced a reading programme at key stage 3. All learners follow the programme and it enhances the curriculum by focusing on skills in a structured and measurable way. It

provides a uniform approach and ensures that all learners receive a consistent standard of delivery, using appropriate resources, throughout the key stage. The English department has taken a lead to rewrite the whole-school assessment policy. This has helped to improve the consistency of marking and feedback to learners across the school.

Teachers share good practice by uploading resources to the school intranet. For each language resource, there is an indication of readability. This allows staff opportunities to assess their resources and the suitability of the material they use.

At the end of key stage 3, all learners sit Essential Skills Wales qualifications in communication, application of number, and information and communication technology. The aim is for all to gain level 1 and those capable to attain level 2. This process provides a connection to the key stage 4 qualification framework, where all learners follow the Welsh Baccalaureate course.

Senior leaders review curriculum areas regularly to monitor the consistency and quality of provision for skills. The school gathers the views of learners frequently.

Outcomes

Learners make outstanding progress between the point of entry in key stage 3 to key stage 4. By the end of key stage 4, nearly all learners have reached the expected level of competency in reading. When the current Year 9 started at the school, around 73% had a reading age of below 10 years. The learners have made significant gains and currently only 14% of the cohort have a reading age of below 10 years.

In key stage 4, for the last three years, performance has been in the first or second quarter of that for all schools on the free-school-meal benchmarks for all the main indicators. Performance is among the best in the school's family.

The school is successfully narrowing the gap in attainment between learners who receive school meals and those who do not. Over the last five years, at key stage 4, the difference in performance in the core subject indicator between those learners who are entitled to free school meals and their more advantaged peers has decreased from 33% to 17%.

Group 2: Tailoring the curriculum specifically for disadvantaged pupils

Case study 2: Using the curriculum and other strategies to support disadvantaged pupils

Context

Bryngwyn School is an 11-16 community school situated in Dafen, on the north-eastern side of Llanelli. The school draws its pupils from parts of the town centre and from a number of outlying villages. There are 834 learners on roll. Overall, the catchment area is disadvantaged. Twenty-two per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals.

Strategy

The core aims of the school are to focus on improving the attendance, attitude and achievement of disadvantaged pupils.

Action

The school identifies its disadvantaged pupils using a wide range of criteria and tracks individual pupil's progress against baseline data on a termly basis. The progress of disadvantaged pupils is analysed specifically at the end of key stages 3 and 4 to inform planning.

Leaders and managers use a good range of processes to analyse a range of performance data, such as school tracking data and information from Cognitive Ability Tests (CATs) and National Federation for Educational Research (NFER) tests, to evaluate the impact of strategies on disadvantaged pupils.

Strategies for improving key skills, among disadvantaged pupils, include the following:

- identifying two members of the senior team dedicated to improving outcomes for pupils in communication and numeracy;
- increasing the numbers of sets for English and mathematics for Years 9, 10 and 11;
- creating withdrawal groups for numeracy and literacy in Years 7 and 8;
- introducing key Skills qualifications in Application of Number and Communication spanning levels 1-3;
- introducing a transition literacy project for key stages 2 and 3. Pupils from Years 6 and 7 are identified from data analysis to receive one-to-one 'catch up' sessions every week, plus early morning reading sessions every day;
- introducing a key stage 2/3 transition numeracy project. Pupils in Years 6, 7 and 8 are identified using data and small intervention groups are created. These pupils receive a weekly one hour session – following 'number workout programme'; and
- using key skills qualifications in key stage 3 to motivate pupils.

Other strategies for tackling disadvantage include the following:

- an emotional literacy project for key stage 3 learners who were identified by the head of year as disadvantaged learners in need of support. This group benefited from a range of intervention strategies to suit individual needs. Extra support for the project was given through links with other support services and voluntary agencies;
- a strong emphasis on learner voice to make changes to the curriculum. This has resulted in some learning being based on short 'task and finish' projects to motivate learners, and in other instances to setting a week-long project that included visits so that learners could have a richer learning experience;
- engaging boys more successfully in reading by developing a project linking football to reading. Learners involved in the project then took leadership of the task by mentoring Year 6 learners from the school's feeder primary schools;
- an attendance officer working with the school to ensure effective contact with parents. This officer also works with an identified group of learners whose attendance is poor to reduce the number of unauthorised absences;
- providing a base for social services in the school. This has resulted in better communication and an effective exchange of information between social services and the school and has a positive impact on the school's ability to support disadvantaged learners; and
- working effectively with the Carmarthenshire Youth and Children's Association to provide activities a wide range of out-of-hours provision for learners and their families.

Outcomes

The school is very successful at engaging pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds as a result of:

- the very effective development of pupils' key skills in their programmes of study;
- listening to feedback from disadvantaged pupils and acting very effectively upon this information;
- successfully adapting teaching and learning strategies to motivate pupils and allow them to complete their work successfully;
- the careful monitoring of the impact of these strategies on disadvantaged pupils; and
- the highly effective and extremely well attended out-of-school-hours programme.

The school has improved outcomes for disadvantaged pupils in the following areas:

- performance in the core subject indicator at key stage 4 has improved significantly over the past four years. In the last two years the school has been in the top 25% of similar schools in this performance indicator;
- in literacy the school has improved pupils' reading accuracy and comprehension skills significantly;
- in numeracy, Year 7 and Year 8 pupils improved their skills significantly, achieving results higher than predicted;

- there has been a marked improvement in the achievement of disadvantaged boys generally. At key stage 3, there is little difference between the performance of boys and girls. The headteacher attributes this success to changes in learning and teaching strategies;
- GCSE results for all pupils were significantly higher than predicted by the Cognitive Ability Test (CAT) data;
- the number of pupils achieving the level 2 threshold including English and mathematics has improved over the last three years and is now the highest within Bryngwyn's family of similar schools;
- the average wider points score for 15-year-olds in the school has improved significantly over the past four years and is now the highest in Bryngwyn's family of schools; and
- attendance has improved for pupils entitled to free school meals and the school recorded a fall in unauthorised absences.

Group 2: Tailoring the curriculum specifically for disadvantaged pupils

Case study 3: Out-of-hours learning to complement the curriculum

Context

The E3+ programme, 'Enrich, Extend, Excite', works with schools in Rhondda Cynon Taf where approximately 23% of pupils of school age are eligible for free school meals.

Strategy

The programme actively targets groups of young people with particular needs because they are at risk of exclusion, or have low self-esteem and poor social skills. The groups also include looked-after children or those who are more able and talented. The programme works with a range of partners to accept pupils who are referred onto the provision from various agencies.

Action

E3+ workers consult with pupils to adapt and improve the programme. A wide range of activities is offered including hockey, art, trampolining, street dance, creative crafts, sign language, netball, photography, theatrical make up, ballroom dancing, journalism, kick boxing, skiing, horse riding, golf, quad biking and cooking, as well as room where young people can relax in a safe and caring environment.

Outreach E3+ activities have been developed in isolated and deprived communities within school clusters. The provision is targeted at marginalised communities, groups and young people who are disinclined to attend activities that are located in school premises. The E3+ programme has provided transport, subsidised mid-evening meals, free activities and community-based activities to overcome barriers to participation.

Outcomes

Pupils involved in the programme identify the skills, such as team working and communication, that they have learnt through the activities. These activities engage pupils and foster a sense of worth and belonging in the school community, and enhance feelings of self-esteem and wellbeing. The number of learners engaged in E3+ provision has increased as the provision has expanded. In 2007-2008 there were a total of 101,360 contacts with young people engaged in E3+. In 2008-2009 the number of contacts rose to 227,405. The percentage of 15-year-olds who reach the level 2 threshold including English and mathematics in Rhondda Cynon Taf has improved at a much faster rate than that of Wales as a whole. Over the last three years, this performance indicator has increased by six percentage points.

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 we 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 our specific support for disadvantaged pupils?

Where are improvements needed?

Group 3: Engaging with parents and the community

Case study 1: Cathays High School in Cardiff has created stronger links with parents and the local community so as to ensure that disadvantaged learners are well supported.

Context of the school

Cathays High School is an 11 to 18 English-medium school located near the centre of Cardiff. There are 896 learners on roll, including 144 in the sixth form. The school receives learners from a wide geographical area, with approximately 40% of learners coming from out of the catchment area. They represent the full range of ability, but the attainment of a significant proportion of learners is below average on entry. Thirty-eight per cent of learners are entitled to receive free school meals.

The school has the highest proportion of secondary school age asylum seeker children in Cardiff, typically between 7% and 10% of the school population. This group has a particularly high level of mobility. On average, there is a 20 to 30% turnover of the learner population each year.

Over 30 languages are spoken by learners. These include Arabic, Bengali, Czech, Farsi, Punjabi, Somali and Urdu. No learners or students speak Welsh as their first language. Approximately half speak English as their first language. Support in English as an additional language is provided for 257 learners.

Strategy

Part of the school's strategic planning is to create stronger links with parents and the local community, so as to ensure that disadvantaged learners are well supported. The school has focused attention on learners' transition from key stage 2 to key stage 3 and monitors carefully learners' progress and wellbeing.

Action

The school makes extensive use of many agencies and community groups to help learners to settle and develop and to strengthen communication links with their parents.

Transition Saturday

The school runs many transition activities including 'Transition Saturday', when the school runs a range of activities for learners and their parents. Disadvantaged learners in key stage 2 are offered additional support in literacy and numeracy.

Bring a Parent to School Day

During Year 7 the parents are invited to spend a morning working alongside their children. Last year, 24 parents took part and this year the school is hoping to increase this number.

Family meetings

All learners in Year 7 are invited to school for a 'Family Interview' with a member of the senior leadership team. Issues such as transition, basic skills, and additional opportunities that are available are discussed. The outcomes from the meetings are

fed back to heads of department and heads of year, and are often incorporated into agenda items for leadership meetings. Family meetings are also arranged for learners in Years 10 and 11 to discuss learner progress, ambitions and aspirations. The school ensures that translators are present at such events. The translators also help the staff appreciate and understand particular cultural differences that may impact on teaching and learning.

Using expertise within the community

One minority ethnic group of pupils currently has very low attendance rate. In order to address this, the school has recently accessed the help and support of a local individual from the same ethnic group. He is volunteering his support to act as a link between the parents and the school. The school has previously used a similar scheme with another ethnic group and this did improve communication between the parents and the school.

My Education project: engaging parents and developing learner voice (supported by Cardiff Metropolitan University)

The aim of the project is to engage with parents from different ethnic backgrounds, many of whom are reluctant to engage with the school about teaching and learning issues. Learners designed a piece of interactive media to inform parents and family members about their children's education and how better to understand the education system. Over the course of this year both a DVD and website have been produced. The learners were trained in the use of digital media at Cardiff Metropolitan University to design and direct the work. The next phase of the project will involve learners and their parents working together, so that parents can gain the confidence and skills to take a more pro-active role to support their children's education.

The school monitors and analyses parents' participation at events and parents' evenings. This information is monitored by ethnic group and by the learners' year group.

Following analysis of the evaluation, the school is extending its provision to improve transition from key stage 2 to key stage 3 by offering a three-day course during half term for key stage 2 learners and their parents. The sessions will include activities on accessing the school's library, fitness and sport opportunities, health issues supported by a local doctor and dentist, healthy eating with the aim of assessing needs and engaging and encouraging parents to become involved with the school.

Outcomes

Many parents feel that they have more confidence in talking to and questioning teachers. The school has employed additional bilingual teaching assistants to act as support and points of contact. The school's focus on learners from particular ethnic groups and their parents has increased attendance at parents' evenings for these parents from 50% to 86%. The performance of learners who are eligible for free school meals in those indicators that include English and mathematics is higher than the average for the family of schools.

Group 3: Engaging with parents and the community

Case study 2: Partnership working with a voluntary group in the community

Context

Pupils in Bishop Gore Comprehensive school in Swansea come from a wide range of backgrounds. Approximately 25% of pupils are entitled to free school meals.

Strategy

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

Action

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

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

Outcomes

This strategy has had a significant impact on the achievement of these pupils. In addition, the exclusion rates of minority ethnic pupils are negligible as a result of the school's working partnership with Ethnic Youth Support Team.

The work with Ethnic Youth Support Team has had a positive effect on the pupils and the school. Team workers are available to respond to different ethnic groups, improve understanding and tolerance, and build learners' self-esteem. The team works in the school every week, and this helps the school to make effective links to the local community, and to support its ethnic minority pupils well. The school is also more aware of any issues in the local community that might affect pupils' achievement.

Over the last four years, the gap between the achievement of pupils eligible for free school meals and those who are not has narrowed in Bishop Gore. The performance of all pupils has increased over the same period and all key performance indicators are above the average for similar schools.

Group 3: Engaging with parents and the community

Case study 3: The impact of community-focused school co-ordinators

Context

Cardiff is the sixth most deprived local authority in Wales where about 22% of pupils in schools are eligible for free school meals.

Strategy

Cardiff local authority has identified community-focused school co-ordinators in each of the secondary schools. Their remit is to co-ordinate, develop and monitor school and community provision across a transition cluster.

Action

The co-ordinators meet on a regular basis in a local authority team for training and to share practice. These meetings also give the opportunity for key partners from the community and other agencies to attend and inform co-ordinators of strategies, interventions and programmes that can support the different community focused school provision in particular communities. The community-focused schools co-ordinators also run practical workshops to develop the leadership skills of senior school staff.

The co-ordinators have developed a 'Quality Development Framework' to enable schools to self-evaluate their community-focused provision and to develop a portfolio of evidence to exemplify effective practice. This work has helped to strengthen schools' community focus. Many schools have developed closer links to various community projects, for example work with residents' groups and playgroups.

Outcomes

Schools have seen increased levels of participation from disengaged pupils, and many pupils have improved their social skills and self-esteem through these community-focused schools projects.

Cardiff continues to perform at a better level in most key stages, and particularly at key stages 1 and 3, than might be expected on the basis of comparative free school meals ranking when compared to other local authorities. Pupils in Cardiff schools achieve above the expected performance in all key performance indicators.

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? What more can we do?
- 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: Cefn Hengoed Community School in Swansea has succeeded in raising attendance by using a range of approaches with partners.

Context of the school

Cefn Hengoed Community School is an 11-16 mixed comprehensive school on the east side of Swansea. The school lies in the eleventh most deprived ward in Wales and 73% of learners live in 30% of the most deprived parts of Wales. There are 664 learners on roll, 36% of whom are eligible for free school meals. Learner transfers in and out of the school are high.

Strategy

Improving attendance has been a strategic priority that has been explicit in the school development plan since being identified as an inspection recommendation in 2005. At that time, attendance was judged to be unsatisfactory. The inspection team also recommended that the school evaluate and improve curriculum provision in key stage 4 for learners of average and lower ability. The school regarded these recommendations as interrelated.

Key strategic actions to improve attendance have included:

- developing a curriculum relevant to needs at key stage 4;
- transforming the key stage 3 curriculum through changed schemes of work reflecting the skills curriculum;
- motivating Year 9 in the summer term with a programme of accredited key skills; and
- scrutinising the range of attendance issues to identify priorities and establish success criteria to measure improvement.

The school established an attendance focus group with a mission to:

- reduce unauthorised absences;
- define procedures for requests for holidays in term-time;
- reduce truancy and improve punctuality; and
- manage attendance through a business continuity plan.

Action

Attendance is the first item on the agenda on the governing body, leadership team, senior pastoral team and pastoral team meetings. To improve attendance the school developed a number of approaches:

- a range of multi-agency working focused on attendance, including the 'So To Do' project, Youth Initiative Project, educational psychology service, behaviour support, Engaging Learners in Swansea and Ethnic Minority Language Advisory Service;

- a team of pastoral support officers (PSOs), initially established through RAISE funding, was extended and subsequently funded by the school budget. PSOs and the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) hold frequent meetings. Form tutors support the work of the PSOs on attendance. The PSOs and senior pastoral team hold support meetings aimed at targeted parents;
- the pastoral team was restructured and changes made to teaching and learning responsibilities and in the use of associate staff;
- the school trialled an attendance monitoring text messaging system and, following positive feedback from parents, this was developed for the whole school;
- ENGAGE funding (a European funding scheme, run through the Welsh Government) was targeted at the attendance of learners at risk of becoming not engaged in education, employment or training (NEET) in key stage 4;
- an attendance focus group met monthly, chaired by the headteacher;
- the school invested in staff training to improve consistent linking of attendance and progress in feedback to learners during the twice yearly academic reviews, to parents in parents' evenings and when completing learner reports; and
- the school drew on the good practice of its partner primary schools in terms of learner welfare and support. It developed wrap around provision, including a breakfast club and after-school clubs, designed to develop learners' personal and learning skills.

Learners are also rewarded for good attendance through:

- major awards in Annual Awards Evening;
- termly letters to parents for learners with 95%+ attendance; and
- special awards for whole year 100% attendance.

Regular meetings ensure that staff monitor and evaluate attendance strategies. These include:

- weekly monitoring meetings of heads of lower, middle, upper schools;
- PSOs meeting prior to PSO/EWO meeting;
- weekly monitoring meetings of PSOs/EWO; and
- monthly monitoring meetings of the attendance focus group to identify issues from examining data by year group, gender and groups of learners (minority ethnic, special educational needs, looked-after children and learners eligible for free school meals).

Outcomes

Outcomes include:

- improved attendance in every year group year on year: over the last five years, overall attendance levels have increased from 83.4% to 90.9%;
- improved attendance across groups of learners. In the last five years, Year 11 attendance levels have increased from 62% to 90.6%;

- reduction in the percentage of unauthorised absence by year group and overall. Overall, the percentage of unauthorised absences has fallen from 15.8% to 0.8% over the last five years;
- increased progression to post-16 as a result of improved attendance and engagement;
- reduction in the percentage of learners at risk of not being not in education, employment or training and in the percentage leaving without qualifications. There has been a steady reduction in the percentage of learners leaving with no qualification, from 7% in 2005 to 0% in 2011;
- closer relationships with parents/carers and individual learners through sensitive attendance monitoring; and
- improved learner wellbeing due to consistent and continuous engagement through improved attendance.

In key stages 3 and 4, the school's performance has improved appreciably over the last three years. Over the last five years, the percentage of learners achieving the core subject indicator at key stage 3 has improved from 45% to 63%, and at key stage 4 from 23% to 37%. Over the last two years, results at Cefn Hengoed have been well above the average for its family of schools.

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 1: Treorchy Comprehensive School in Rhondda Cynon Taf has focused on 'Closing the Gap'.

Context of the school

Treorchy Comprehensive School is a large 11-18 mixed comprehensive school in the county of Rhondda Cynon Taff. There are 1,600 pupils on roll and currently 354 students in the sixth form.

Most pupils come from local primary schools though over the past three years over 40 pupils a year have entered the school having attended primary schools outside the traditional catchment area.

The school's intake is from a varied social background and represents the full range of ability. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is 24%, which is well above the national average for secondary schools. Academic ability on entry is below national averages. The school has 16% of pupils on the special educational needs register, whilst most pupils come from English speaking homes approximately nine percent of pupils are fluent in Welsh.

Strategy

As a result of the diverse social background of the pupils of the school and the higher than average levels of poverty, it became necessary to provide a support system for pupils that is tailored to meet the needs of the individual. This involved developing a flexible holistic approach that allows every individual pupil's needs, both social and academic, to be addressed to allow them to achieve their potential. At the same time, there is a firm emphasis on producing literate and numerate pupils.

Action

The school takes a flexible holistic approach to Pastoral Care & Wellbeing based on individual needs. The approach includes varied strategies that address both the social and academic developmental needs of the pupils in the school. The priority is to ensure that pupils leaving Treorchy Comprehensive are both literate and numerate. The strategies used are listed below:

- Every member of SMT involved in every day pastoral care
- High Quality HOLS (Head of Learning and Skills) in Every Year Group including three in the 6th Form
- GLSOs (Guidance Learning Support Officers) in every Year Group including the sixth form
- Designated GLSO for Year 7 and for Year 11
- Learning coaches for pupils with Basic Skills issues employed by the school
- Attendance Support Officer employed by the school
- Interventions to support the most vulnerable (Nurture Group/Life Skills Group)
- Interventions to support those on FSM (Free School Meals) such as: mentoring

by HoLS; Be spoke projects to raise aspirations / esteem and self-confidence (Olympic initiative/Dragonfly Literacy Project)

- Guidance at key transition points
- Partnerships with multidisciplinary agencies
- Partnership with parents
- Internal and external PLCs for wellbeing (e.g. Cluster Attendance PLCs, Closing the Gap)
- Sixth form paired reading
- Sixth form buddy system
- Sixth form STEM mentoring
- Learning Pathways Progress Files for every year group
- Accreditation / recognition of excellence by over 10 awarding bodies

The key to the effectiveness of each of these strategies is the consistent level of monitoring and evaluation based on measurable outcomes for the pupils. Therefore there is a high degree of accountability and ownership by staff. The outcomes are monitored at intervention level and also at whole school level. This evaluation then enables the school to target effective interventions and improve resourcing/funding in these areas and allows for effective strategic planning.

An audit of interventions ensures that all pupils on FSM are involved in some degree of support or intervention. The progress of the pupils is then monitored this is done both quantitatively and qualitatively using data such as progress results, referrals and staff feedback on pupil social and emotional development.

Outcomes

The school has been very successful in narrowing gap between pupils receiving FSM and their non-FSM peers. At key stage 4 the percentage of pupils receiving FSM who attain Level 2 has improved over the last three years from 60% to 88%. This improving trend is also evident in key stage 3 where the proportion of pupils receiving FSM who achieved the CSI has increased from 41% to 50% over the same time.

Group 5: The leadership and management of disadvantaged pupils

Case study 2: Ysgol Dyffryn Ogwen in Gwynedd ensures high expectations of all pupils.

Context of the school

Ysgol Dyffryn Ogwen is a naturally bilingual community comprehensive school for pupils and students aged from 11-18 years. There are 360 pupils, including 50 students in the sixth form. The majority of pupils come from an area that is economically or socially disadvantaged. Nearly eighteen per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals.

Strategy

The school has focused on establishing a special inclusive ethos ensuring equal opportunities and success for all pupils. This focus is combined with an emphasis on providing education of the highest quality in order to improve standards and ensure that all pupils possess the important skills for life and work.

Evaluation

The homely and inclusive atmosphere is a very prominent and successful feature of the school. Staff know the importance of having high expectations of all pupils and plan activities that are highly engaging and promote high standards. There is also a strong emphasis on supporting all pupils and ensuring that they have equal access and opportunities to participate in every activity in which they are interested.

The school uses assessment data well in order to support and improve pupils' learning. Pupils' performance is tracked effectively and monitored regularly across the curriculum.

High-quality leadership has been a key factor in developing and maintaining a continuous and firm emphasis on improving standards for all pupils, which has permeated through all aspects of school life.

Outcomes

Over a period of six years from 2007 to 2012, the difference between the performance of pupils who receive free school meals and their non-free school meal peers, in the main indicators, is less than the averages for comparable schools in the family and for Wales as a whole.

In key stage 3, the proportion of pupils who achieve level 5 or higher in English or Welsh, mathematics and science in combination has increased significantly over the last four years. During this period, pupils' performance has placed the school among the top 25% of similar schools in terms of levels of entitlement to free school meals. In all individual core subjects, the performance of pupils that attain the expected level over the last three years has improved and performance in English and science has placed the school among the top 25% of its family of schools.

In key stage 4 in 2012, pupils' performance has been excellent and in the top quartile in all main indicators since 2010-2011. Since 2010-2011, results for the level 1 threshold, level 2 threshold and level 2 threshold including Welsh or English and mathematics, the core subject indicator and capped points score have improved and are higher than the family's average. This places the school among the top 25% in comparison with similar schools in all indicators. Pupils' progress is significantly better than expected from key stage 2 to key stage 4, and is excellent.

Since 2009-2010, no pupils have failed to gain a recognised qualification, and nearly all pupils stay in education, employment or full-time training after Year 11.

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 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 departmental action plans

Suggestions for priorities in the school improvement plan