Estyn

Education other than at school: a good practice survey

June 2015

PHOTO REDACTED DUE TO THIRD PARTY RIGHTS OR OTHER LEGAL ISSUES
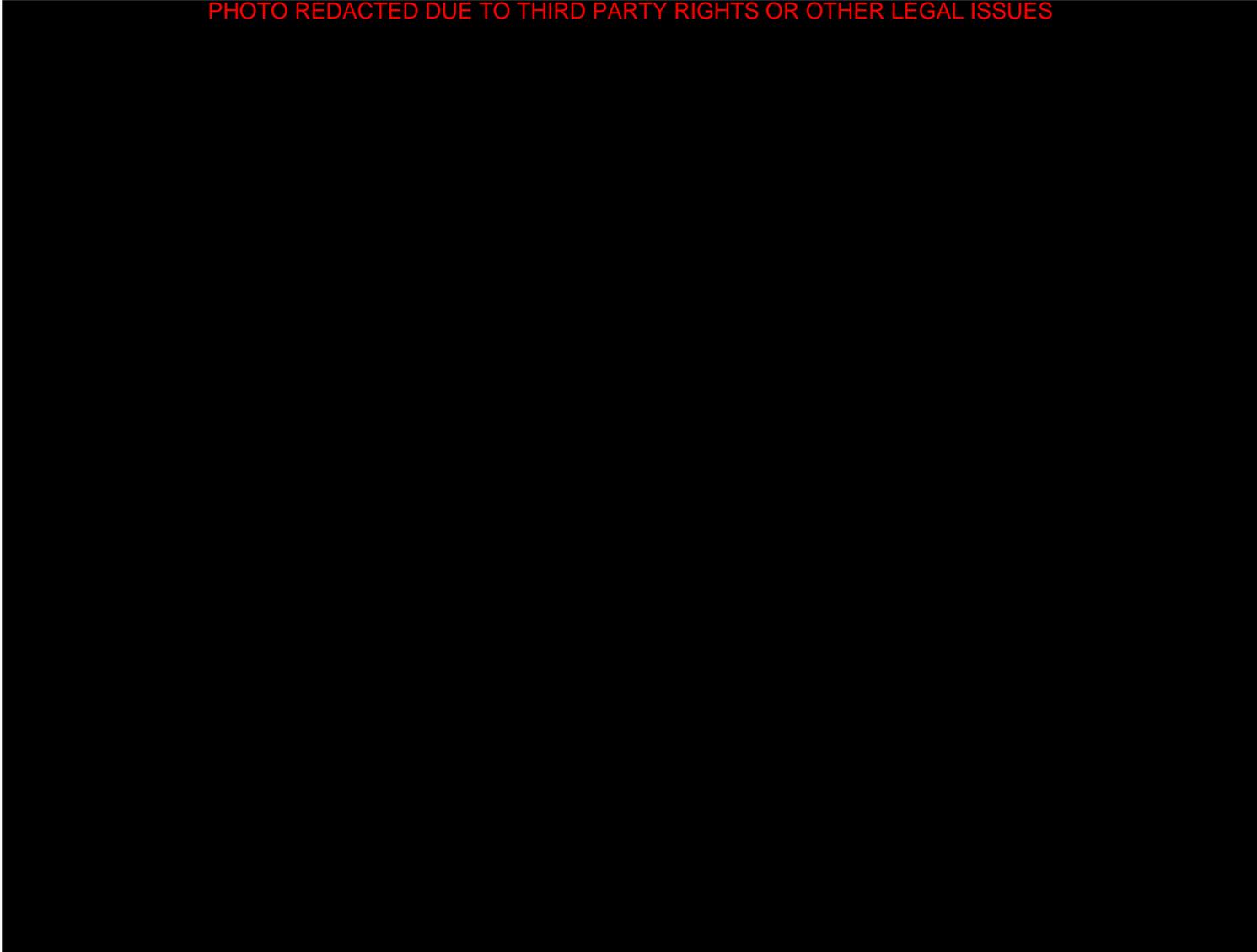
The purpose of Estyn is to inspect quality and standards in education and training in Wales. Estyn is responsible for inspecting:

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

⅄ makes public good practice based on inspection evidence

Contents	Page

Introduction

In 2011, the Welsh Government commissioned a research team from the University of Edinburgh to examine the process of exclusion from school in Wales and the delivery, planning and commissioning of education provision for children and young people educated other than at school (EOTAS). This resulted in a report – 'Evaluation of Education provision for Children and Young People Educated Outside the School Setting' (McCluskey et al., 2013).

The concerns identified in the report include a lack of consistency in EOTAS provision in relation to the quality of the curriculum, approaches to behaviour management, and reintegration strategies.

The report recommends that:

> Good practice in EOTAS provision should be identified and promoted and regular meetings of providers should encourage dissemination of good practice. This should include sharing of good examples of curricula which meet current standards, and of effective child-centred behaviour management (McCluskey et al., 2013, p.9).

This thematic report is published in response to a request for advice from the Welsh Government in the Ministerial remit letter to Estyn for 2014-2015. The aims of the report are to:

- identify examples of good practice in early intervention strategies from primary and secondary schools, pupil referral units (PRUs), and local authorities, which seek to reduce the number of pupils going into EOTAS

- identify examples of good practice in EOTAS provision in relation to:

  ➢ curricula that meet the needs of all pupils
  ➢ effective behaviour management strategies/approaches for minimising time spent in EOTAS
  ➢ effective reintegration strategies.

Nearly half of pupils receiving EOTAS attend PRUs, and this survey focuses on PRUs rather than the broader range of other EOTAS provision. The PRUs chosen for the survey visits include PRUs that had recently had good inspection reports or PRUs that had been placed in follow-up after their core inspection but were showing improvement. The PRUs visited provide mainly for pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties (SEBD), mental health, anxiety or attendance issues. Inspectors carried out visits to 20 providers. During the visits, inspectors scrutinised documentation and held interviews with managers and pupils.

Background

The term EOTAS refers to any type of education outside the school where local authorities fund individual pupil placements. 'Pupils educated other than at school 2013/14' (Welsh Government, 2014a) refers to the following categories of EOTAS provision:

- Pupil referral unit
- Further education college
- Maintained school
- Non-maintained special school
- Individual tuition
- Youth Gateway
- Work-related education
- Training provider
- Voluntary organisation
- Bought in private sector provision
- Independent school
- Provision not maintained by, or is outside of, authority
- Other

The term EOTAS does not apply to pupils who receive elective home education.

Some pupils receive part of their education in a school and part in EOTAS. In 2013/14, there were 2,367 pupils accessing EOTAS either full-time or part-time (5.1 out of 1000 pupils), with 1,225 of these (2.6 out of 1000 pupils) receiving their main education other than at school (Welsh Government, 2014a).

PRUs remain the most frequently used education provision for pupils whose main education is other than at school. In 2013/14, 1,084 pupils in Wales attended PRUs, on either a full-time or part-time basis. Of these pupils, 639 were registered at a single PRU, while 445 pupils were dually registered at a PRU and another setting. Around 200 of these pupils were 11 years or under (Welsh Government, 2014a).

PRUs are legally both a type of school and EOTAS. Whereas schools have governing bodies, PRUs have management committees that play a major role in the governance of the PRUs. The guidance that reflects 'The Education (Pupil Referral Units) (Management Committees etc.) (Wales) Regulations 2014' states that:

> Management committees are intended to fulfil an advisory role with statutory responsibility for certain specific functions or tasks. They are expected to be actively involved in most decision making to ensure that their PRUs are run effectively and that they provide a suitable education for learners (Welsh Government, 2014b, p.11).

PRUs are intended to provide short, medium or long-term placements with a view to reintegrating pupils, as soon as practicable, in a primary, secondary or special school or to prepare pupils for transition to further education, training or employment. For

many pupils at key stage 4, as well as pupils who have been out of school for a significant length of time, return to a mainstream school may not be practical or appropriate.

'Inclusion and Pupil Support' (National Assembly for Wales, 2006) describes PRU provision as:

- provision on a single site
- provision on several sites under a single management structure
- peripatetic Pupil Referral Service (particularly in rural areas)
- 'e-learning' provision using ICT and web-based resources
- hospital and home teaching services, or discrete parts of a service that provide education in a unit or school-type setting
- some hospital provision
- separate provision for young mothers / or pregnant pupils
- umbrella provision to register pupils who follow individual programmes

In September 2014, there were 31 PRUs in Wales, although this number has varied considerably over recent years. This is due partly to the registration of previously unregistered PRUs and the amalgamation of several PRUs by local authorities to create 'portfolio' PRUs with a number of provisions on different sites.

Many of the pupils who attend EOTAS have either been excluded from mainstream education or are at risk of exclusion. There has been a significant drop in the rate of permanent exclusions in Wales, from 149 (2003/04-2005/06) to 29 (2009/10-2012/13) for primary age pupils and from 1,141(2003/04-2005/06) to 323 (2009/10-2012/13) for secondary age pupils (Welsh Government, 2014c).

Local authorities are required to provide pupils who have been permanently excluded from school with full-time education 15 days after being excluded, either at another school, at a PRU or other alternative provision. Of those permanently excluded from school in 2012-2013, over 30% went to a PRU, around 25% moved to a new maintained primary or secondary school, and around 15% were provided with home tuition. However, 12% of permanently excluded pupils were receiving no educational provision on day 16 after exclusion (Welsh Government, 2014c).

Between September 2010 and July 2014, Estyn inspected 26 PRUs. These inspections show that there is significant variation in the quality of education provided by PRUs. The following chart shows that, during this period, Estyn placed nine PRUs in a statutory category of causing concern, being either in need of significant improvement or requiring special measures. Eight PRUs were judged to require Estyn monitoring but five PRUs had examples of excellent practice.

Number of PRUs in follow-up category, September 2010 - July 2014
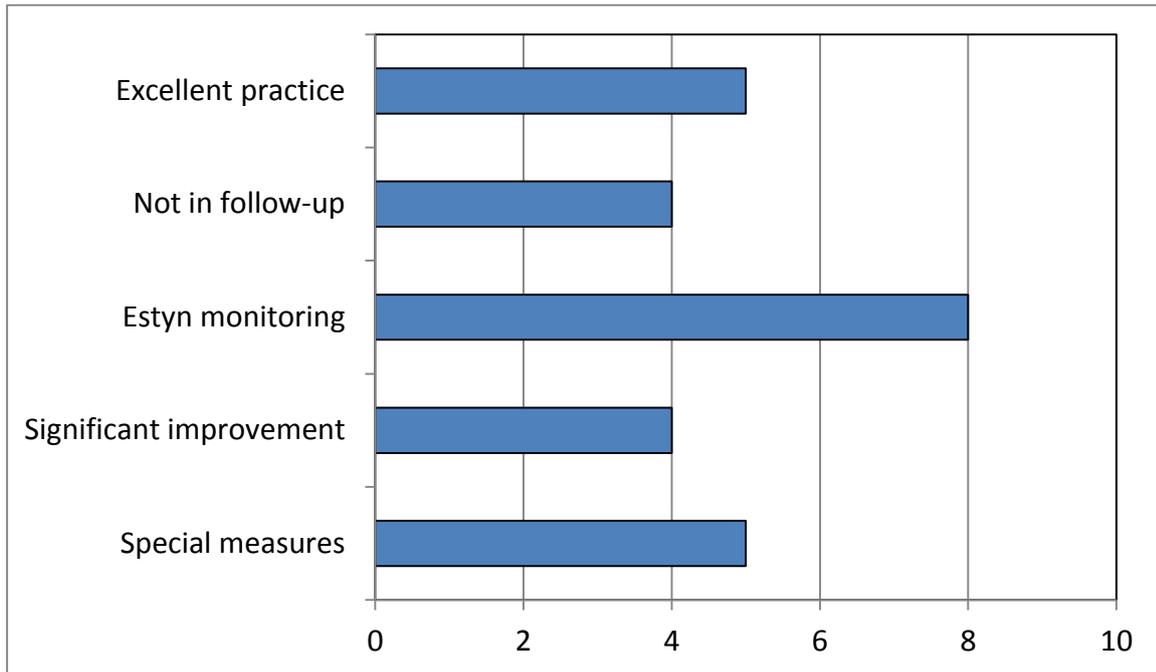
In her Annual Report for 2013-2014, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector for Education and Training in Wales reported that:

> In general, inspection outcomes are worse for PRUs than for other sectors. This is similar to the picture last year and there is still an urgent need for stronger leadership from local authorities. Local authorities manage PRUs directly and are well positioned to influence the quality of provision. However, too few local authorities have a clear vision or strategy for how their PRUs fit into their range of services to support vulnerable pupils. Strong leadership is the key to improving teaching, the curriculum and outcomes in PRUs, but there is not enough leadership development training or support for teachers-in-charge (Estyn, 2015, p.101).

Main findings

Strategic partnerships between local authorities, mainstream schools and PRUs

1   Provision for pupils at risk of exclusion or disengagement is most effective where local authorities, schools and PRUs work together to meet the needs of these pupils and to ensure that they remain in full-time education. Two examples of this are Ceredigion Council and Newport City Council. These local authorities have a clear strategy for support and reintegration and a continuum of provision [1] to meet these pupils' needs. PRUs and other forms of EOTAS play an important part in this continuum of provision. In the best practice, these settings have well-established referral processes and clear entry and exit criteria and stakeholders have a clear understanding of the role of PRUs.

2   Where pupils are reintegrated into school successfully, pupils, parents, PRU and school staff have a clear understanding that placement at a PRU is a short-term targeted intervention. However, for many pupils at key stage 4, a return to mainstream education is not an appropriate option.

PRUs

3   Where local authorities recognise the importance of PRUs, they ensure that they are well resourced in terms of staffing, accommodation and equipment. Most of the PRUs visited as part of this survey take part in local authority initiatives and access the professional development opportunities available to mainstream school colleagues. This enables them to keep up-to-date with important developments such as curriculum changes and the Literacy and Numeracy Framework. However, where PRU staff do not have these opportunities, they feel isolated and unsupported. Across the regional consortia, there are no consistent arrangements to involve PRUs in support and challenge activities.

4   In the best cases, the PRU is a centre for excellence for educating pupils with challenging behaviour. Local authorities use the expertise of PRU staff to provide support for individual pupils in mainstream schools as well as advice and training for mainstream staff.

5   The use of managed moves as a strategy to keep pupils in full-time education varies from one local authority to another. Only a few local authorities have a well-established managed moves panel involving local authority, school and PRU staff.

---

[1] A continuum of provision in the context of this report refers to graduated approaches for supporting pupils who struggle to stay in mainstream education. The first stage of this continuum is likely to involve whole-school strategies (for example mentoring, use of inclusion rooms or use of restorative approaches) and individual or group support for pupils who are beginning to display difficulties such as challenging behaviour or anxiety. With appropriate support, many pupils will overcome their difficulties without need for further intervention. Where pupils continue to experiences difficulties, they may require external support, for example from a behaviour specialist, educational psychologist or the child and mental health service (CAMHS). It is only when these strategies do not succeed that a pupil should be considered for the next stage of the continuum that is placement at an out-of-school setting, such as a PRU.

6   In the most effective PRUs, teachers-in-charge and headteachers are skilled leaders and managers, and staff have appropriate expertise and experience in teaching and learning as well as behaviour management.

7   Where the management committees of PRUs are effective, they have representation from a broad range of stakeholders, with relevant knowledge and expertise. In these committees, members have a clear understanding of the strengths and areas for development of the PRU and provide robust support and challenge.

8   The quality of education provided by PRUs varies significantly. Where there is effective practice, staff have high expectations for achievement and behaviour. They implement clear behaviour policies with a focus on praising and rewarding good behaviour. Pupils have a clear understanding of the PRU's policy for rewards and sanctions and all staff apply the policy consistently.

9   Where PRUs help pupils to manage their behaviour effectively, pupils have clear individual behaviour plans (IBPs) with appropriate targets. Staff involve pupils in setting and reviewing these targets, which helps pupils to understand their behaviour and to take responsibility for their actions. In these PRUs, staff encourage pupils to express their feelings and discuss their behaviour with each other and with staff.

10   At key stages 3 and 4, the range of subjects offered in the curriculum varies considerably between PRUs. Where there is good practice, PRUs offer a wide range of National Curriculum subjects and learning opportunities. They also offer vocational subjects such as construction, bicycle maintenance, carpentry, hair and beauty and food and hygiene. The range of options and an element of choice are important factors in engaging pupils who have previously lost interest in education and helps them to move on to further education, employment or training.

11   On their own, PRUs are unlikely to be able to provide as many options as schools. To increase the range of options available, a few PRUs liaise well with other providers, for example schools, further education (FE) colleges and training providers and ensure that pupils have well-planned learning pathways that meet their individual needs and keep them engaged. In a few cases, local authorities work together to extend the curriculum opportunities for PRU pupils.

12   In the PRUs where pupils make most progress, staff have a thorough knowledge and understanding of the pupils' literacy and numeracy levels and their additional learning needs. In these PRUs, staff plan appropriate interventions that improve pupils' standards.   The Literacy and Numeracy Framework (LNF) is at an early stage of development in many of the PRUs visited, partly because not all PRUs were included in local authority training or support when the LNF was first introduced. More recently, PRU staff have had opportunities to take part in literacy and numeracy initiatives and training.

13   The level of staff expertise to support pupils' additional learning needs varies between PRUs. In the best cases, staff receive regular, high-quality training that helps them to support pupils with, speech and language difficulties, autistic spectrum disorder, dyslexia and other learning needs

Good practice in schools

14   Schools use a range of different strategies to reduce exclusions and prevent pupils from going into EOTAS. These include having:

- bespoke learning programmes that are tailored to meet the needs of individual pupils
- a whole-school approach to behaviour management
- systems for identifying pupils at risk of disengagement and putting in place appropriate and timely intervention
- close working with other agencies to provide support for pupils and their families

15   All of the secondary schools visited as part of the survey recognise the importance of developing a curriculum that engages pupils at risk of disengagement. These schools develop programmes to meet the needs of individual pupils. These programmes generally include a focus on vocational options and relevant qualifications that prepare pupils for life after school. They also include a combination of in-school and off-site activities.

16   Nationally, the rate of exclusions has reduced over the past 10 years. Where schools are most effective at reducing exclusions and addressing the needs of pupils within school, they adopt a consistent whole-school approach to managing pupils' behaviour, for example by using restorative approaches.

17   Many pupils who are unable to maintain mainstream placements and spend time in EOTAS have a range of difficulties, including challenging family situations and personal issues. Others have underdeveloped literacy and numeracy skills or other additional learning needs. When schools have effective systems for monitoring and tracking pupil progress, which identify pupils who are at risk of disengagement at an early stage, they can put in place appropriate intervention that keeps pupils in the mainstream.

18   Close working between schools and other agencies, for example health, social services and voluntary agencies, helps ensure that pupils at risk of disengagement and their families receive appropriate, timely support.

Recommendations

Local authorities, schools and PRUs should:

R1   have a locally agreed strategy to support all vulnerable pupils so that they remain in full-time education

R2   identify pupils who are at risk of disengagement early and put in place appropriate, timely interventions

R3   work together to increase the range of learning options and experiences available to EOTAS pupils

Local authorities should:

R4   ensure that all stakeholders have a clear understanding of the role of PRUs and other forms of EOTAS within a continuum of provision, and that these provisions have clear entry and exit criteria

R5   appoint PRU staff who have appropriate experience and expertise in leadership, teaching and learning as well as behaviour management

R6   ensure that all PRU staff have access to the same training and development opportunities as staff in mainstream schools

R7   work with regional consortia to provide robust support and challenge for PRU managers and management committees

The Welsh Government should:

R8   provide framework guidance on the role of PRUs as part of a continuum of provision

R9   consider introducing a national professional qualification for teachers-in-charge of PRUs

R10   ensure that PRU staff benefit from national strategies to improve the quality of teaching and leadership in education

Strategic partnerships between local authorities, mainstream schools and PRUs

19   Where there is best practice, for example in Ceredigion Council and Newport City Council, local authorities, schools and PRUs work effectively together at a strategic level to meet the needs of pupils who are at risk of exclusion or disengagement and to ensure that they remain in full-time education. In these local authorities, there is a clear strategy and a 'continuum' of provision to meet pupils' needs. This continuum includes school-based strategies, support from external specialists and placement at PRUs or other forms of EOTAS provision. Another useful strategy is the 'alternative curriculum.' This is a tailor-made curriculum for individual pupils who find it difficult to access the mainstream curriculum. It may include courses delivered by a range of organisations outside the school, for example training providers, colleges or the third sector.

20   These authorities work effectively with schools to ensure that they have a clear understanding of their responsibilities and the role of the PRU as part of this continuum of provision. All stakeholders agree the principle that, where possible, PRU provision is a short-term intervention and that pupils will return to mainstream education or move on to other appropriate provision, for example college or work placements. These local authorities place pupils at the PRU only when mainstream schools have tried every possible intervention.

21   In the best cases, the PRU is used as a centre for excellence in relation to managing pupils with challenging behaviour. Local authorities use the expertise of PRU staff to provide support for individual pupils in mainstream schools as well as advice and training for mainstream staff.

22   Where there is an effective strategic approach to EOTAS, authorities have clear policies and procedures, including well-established referral processes, robust entry and exit criteria and effective reintegration strategies. They identify pupils at risk of exclusion at an early stage and provide them with appropriate support. They place the pupils promptly at a PRU or other EOTAS provision to ensure that they do not miss out on education. These authorities monitor provision regularly and use data effectively to ensure that there are enough EOTAS places to meet the needs of pupils across the authority.

23   There is wide variation in the quality of PRU management committees. Where they are effective, management committees have representation from a broad range of stakeholders who have relevant knowledge and expertise. In these committees, members have a clear understanding of the strengths and areas for development of the PRU and provide robust support and challenge.   The inspection of Ceredigion PRU in 2013 identified sector-leading practice in the work of the management committee. Ceredigion best practice case study

24   Recent inspections of PRUs and visits carried out as part of this survey indicate that many local authorities are developing more robust systems and criteria for placing pupils in PRUs. Schools are required to provide relevant data on pupil attainment, attendance and behaviour as well as detailed information about pupils' additional

learning needs. Importantly, schools are required to demonstrate that they have provided appropriate intervention and explored all avenues before making a referral for placement at a PRU.

25   Ceredigion Council reviewed EOTAS provision across the local authority at a strategic level. This included examining the purpose of the PRU and the role of schools in supporting pupils who are at risk of exclusion or who are no-attenders.

Case study 1: Ceredigion Council – taking a strategic approach

Context

The local authority carried out a comprehensive review of EOTAS provision in 2009. At this time, the rate of exclusions was high and there were too many pupils in the key stage 4 PRU provision. In addition, the local authority recognised the need to reduce expensive out-of-county placements.

Strategy

It was recognised at a strategic level that there was a need for a change in culture. It was important that attendance and behaviour should become part of the wider school improvement agenda.

Following the review, the local authority reorganised its provision for pupils with challenging behaviour. The main aims were to:

- develop schools' capacity to manage behaviour more effectively
- focus on early intervention and building links with pre-school providers
- introduce Hafan[2] and Encil[3] centres in secondary schools
- develop a counselling service in schools
- develop a strong peripatetic support service to schools
- restructure the PRU portfolio
- reduce the rate of permanent and fixed-term exclusions
- reduce the number of pupils registered as EOTAS pupils
- reduce the number of children and young people with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties placed out of the authority

As a result of the changes, Ceredigion Council now has a clear continuum of provision, including Hafan and Encil, the centrally-employed behaviour support service, the PRU and the alternative curriculum.

a) Hafan and Encil

The local authority established Hafan and Encil rooms at all secondary schools. The

---

[2] Hafan is the term used in Ceredigion schools to describe an 'inclusion centre', where pupils with a wide range of needs can receive support.
[3] Encil is the term used in Ceredigion schools to describe a facility that supports pupils with behavioural difficulties and serves as an alternative to exclusion.

Encil serves as an alternative to exclusion and is a means of keeping pupils in school where they can continue to learn. Pupils usually spend a short period of up to three days at the Encil. Hafan supports the more vulnerable pupils. Some of these pupils would previously have received tuition outside the school setting. An inclusion manager oversees the Hafan in each school. It serves as a hub for multi-agency meetings and individual support such as counselling.

b) Behaviour support service

One of the main aims of the local authority was to build the capacity of schools to meet the needs of pupils with challenging behaviour.   The behaviour support service provides a range of training for mainstream schools, including annual training of around 40 learning support assistants (LSAs) working with pupils with SEBD.

A team of social, emotional and behavioural support assistants (SEBSAs) provides support for individual pupils as well as advice for staff.

c) PRU

The PRU provides for pupils at key stage 2, 3 and 4. It is based at three sites, overseen by one teacher-in-charge. The key stage 2 provision is based at a primary school. All pupils at key stage 2 and key stage 3 have clear plans for reintegration into a suitable educational establishment.

There is a clear progression route for pupils accessing the PRU:

Mainstream > Hafan/Encil >PRU

Similarly, where appropriate, pupils leaving the PRU can access the Hafan provision before returning full-time to mainstream classes. This means that pupils have a greater chance of returning to school successfully.

PRU > Hafan > Mainstream

d) Alternative curriculum

Pupils on the alternative curriculum have a choice of provision delivered through the external provider framework, as well as an option to attend ongoing work experience placements. They have the opportunity to gain a range of qualifications including BTEC qualifications and NVQs.

Outcomes

As a result of the restructure:

- There have been no permanent exclusions in schools since 2008-2009
- The number of fixed-term exclusions of six days or more reduced significantly from 45 in 2010-2011 to none in 2011-2012; there were too few in 2012-2013 to record
- Attendance in secondary schools has been the highest in Wales for the last four

> years
> - The percentage of Year 11 leavers in Ceredigion becoming NEET was the lowest in Wales in 2013 and the second lowest in 2012

26   In 2011, Welsh Government produced guidelines on 'Effective managed moves: A fresh start at school for children and young people'. The document defines a managed move as:

> a carefully planned transfer of a pupil from one school into another' which 'is designed to help the pupil move forward and make a fresh start, (Welsh Government, 2011, p. 3).

27   A managed move can play an important role in helping pupils stay in mainstream education and preventing them from going into EOTAS.

28   The use of managed moves as a strategy to keep pupils in full-time education varies from one local authority to another. Only a few local authorities have well-established managed moves panels involving local authority, school and PRU staff. In other cases, managed moves are organised between schools, with little involvement from the local authority.

29   Key features which make a managed move successful include:

- early identification, so that a pupil can be identified before a placement has broken down completely
- careful planning to ensure that the move is appropriate and can meet the needs of the individual pupil in terms of curriculum, support and travelling distances
- effective sharing of information between the two schools
- involvement of the pupil and parents when deciding on a new school
- robust monitoring and review of the new placement

30   Newport City Council ensures that it identifies individual pupils at risk at an early stage and that the authority provides pupils with appropriate interventions through its managed moves panel.

Case study 2: Newport City Council - using the managed-moves panel

Context

Newport City Council has operated the managed-move process on behalf of secondary schools since 2008-2009. Since September 2010, senior leaders from each school have taken control of the panel, with school representatives acting as chair and vice chair. Prior to the establishment of the panel, moves between schools were organized on an individual basis rather than with the engagement of all schools. The PRU was also becoming a long-term placement for some pupils rather than a short-term provision.

Strategy

A managed move is the last in a series of interventions that can be used to prevent permanent exclusion. Managed moves are considered when there is a belief that a

---

fresh start would be beneficial for the pupil. Prior to considering a managed move, it is essential that schools can demonstrate that they have explored and utilised all strategies available to them and can provide evidence that these have met with limited or no success.

Not all pupils discussed at the panel move to another school. Where appropriate, pupils access the PRU (The Bridge Achievement Centre) for a limited period of time while a long-term placement is found. An important part of the process is that a number of different options are considered at the managed-moves panel. These include:

- support for the pupil in their mainstream school
- school-based intervention
- short-term placement at another school (sometimes just a few days)
- short-term PRU intervention
- a six-week period in the PRU assessment centre (known as Pontio – see case study 9)
- managed move to another school

Action

A member of every secondary school's senior leadership team attends the panel meetings, which are held weekly. The senior leader from each school is empowered to make decisions regarding admission. This ensures that cases are processed efficiently. For example, a decision made on a Wednesday could be actioned by the Friday.

In addition to school leaders and the head of the PRU, the multi-agency panel is attended by a broad range of representatives from the local authority and other organisations, for example the education welfare service, the youth offending service and social services.

Outcomes

Although the rate of permanent exclusions is still too high, the panel has helped to reduce the number. In addition, it ensures that pupils are provided with alternative provision promptly.

During 2013-2014:

- eight pupils were permanently excluded in 2013-2014 compared with fourteen in 2012-2013
- four of the pupils moved on to other mainstream schools, the rest to the PRU; all were placed promptly
- 26 pupils were moved through the panel, including those who had been permanently excluded
- 25 pupils accessed short-term intervention at the PRU

31   Where local authorities recognise the importance of PRUs as part of a continuum of provision, they ensure that PRUs are well resourced. This includes staffing, accommodation and equipment. Historically, the standard of accommodation housing PRUs has tended to be poor, and this has had a negative impact on the wellbeing and morale of staff and pupils and the ability of the PRU to provide an appropriate curriculum. Newport City Council took action to address these deficits. This has led to improvements in pupil outcomes and provision at the Bridge Achievement Centre.

Case study 3: Bridge Achievement Centre – moving to a new building

Context

The Bridge Achievement Centre, previously known as the Cylchdroi Centre, is a provision for pupils at key stages 3 and 4 who have difficulties with behaviour, disengagement from school and other barriers to learning.

Originally, the centre was based at three sites which stretched the capacity of staff and prevented seamless provision. These buildings did not provide an environment that was conducive to learning and positive wellbeing. However, in early 2013, a more appropriate building was identified and it was agreed that the PRU should move to this new site.

Strategy

The aims of moving to one site with a new building included:

- to improve the capacity of managers to lead the centre and ensure improvement in all key areas in a consistent manner
- to develop a safe and secure learning environment for some of Newport's most needy pupils
- to encourage children and their parents and carers to value time in the PRU and see it as a worthwhile intervention and not a 'dumping ground'
- to extend the curriculum and use specialist teachers in core subjects
- to ensure that staff raised their expectations of pupil progress and achievement
- to increase the confidence of schools in the work of the centre

Action

Staff and pupils were involved from the start of the project and worked closely with the local authority to identify what was needed in the building in line with the curriculum required by the pupils. This included a greater focus on a skills-based curriculum to increase engagement. The new building includes a purpose-built kitchen for the teaching of life skills, a science lab, a multi-use room for gym work and leisure time and a design technology and construction workshop. Pupils were involved in the choice of colours and design. They regularly visited the site to photograph progress. Pupils took part in a logo design competition and the winning entry is displayed on the building, paperwork and staff uniform.

While the building work was underway, managers set about remarketing the PRU to

---

pupils, parents, schools and external agencies in an attempt to change the attitudes of stakeholders. The PRU was renamed as the Bridge Achievement Centre, to reflect the idea that the PRU is a bridge to mainstream provision or employment as well as the fact that the centre is based near Newport's iconic transporter bridge.

Bridge Achievement Centre opened to pupils in April 2014.

Outcomes

The impact of the new building has been significant, as evidenced in the views of pupils, and staff. For example:

- staff morale has improved considerably
- teachers and teaching assistants (TAs) take pride in their classrooms, and displays are well-maintained and reflect current learning
- the centre offers a much broader curriculum, including BTEC sport and construction, photography, catering/life skills, hair and beauty tasters, gardening and childcare
- pupil attendance has improved by nine percentage points over the last year
- there has been a reduction in damage to the building
- the number of fixed- term exclusions fell by over 50% during the period from April to December 2014 compared to the same time period in 2013

32   Where there is good practice, local authorities ensure that PRU teachers-in-charge and headteachers have good or excellent leadership and management skills and that teachers working in PRUs are not only skilled in behaviour management but are also skilled teachers.

33   Most of the PRUs visited as part of this survey take part in local authority initiatives and the professional development opportunities available to mainstream school colleagues. This enables them to keep up-to-date with important developments such as curriculum changes and the Literacy and Numeracy Framework. However, where PRU staff do not have these opportunities, they feel isolated and unsupported.

34   There is considerable variation in regional support arrangements for PRUs. A minority of PRUs receive regular support and challenge from challenge advisers and local authority specialists. However, this is not consistent across Wales. One example of effective support and challenge is in Torfaen Pupil Referral Unit.

Case study 4: Torfaen Pupil Referral Unit – involving the challenge adviser in the improvement journey

Context

In the inspection of Torfaen Pupil Referral Unit in 2011, inspectors judged current performance and prospects for improvement to be adequate and placed the PRU in the category of requiring significant improvement. Since then, the PRU has been on an improvement journey. In 2013, Estyn removed the PRU from follow-up, as it had

made sufficient progress against the recommendations. In the monitoring report, inspectors recognised improvements in self-evaluation and improvement planning as well as the use of data to inform planning.

Strategy

Following the inspection, the local authority and regional consortium recognised the need to provide support to leaders and managers at the PRU. This has included ongoing support from a challenge adviser, who has worked closely with the headteacher to make improvements at a strategic level.

Action

The challenge adviser provides effective support and robust challenge. He attends meetings of the senior management team and management committee regularly. He has supported the PRU in quality assurance processes, for example by setting up a system of lesson observations, and carrying out joint observations with members of the senior leadership team.

A PRU network meets every half term, facilitated by the regional consortium. These meetings provide managers with valuable support in relation to issues such as the use of grants, curriculum changes and the Literacy and Numeracy Framework.

Outcomes

- In 2013, due to the progress made, Estyn removed Torfaen Pupil Referral Unit from follow-up activity
- The percentage of pupils achieving English GCSE increased from 28% in 2011-2012 to 71% in 2013-2014
- The percentage of pupils achieving mathematics GCSE increased from 36% in 2011-2012 to 62% in 2013-2014
- The percentage of lessons judged by the school to be good or better increased from 33% in 2011-2012 to 76% in 2013-2014
- In 2011-2012 the PRU only offered GCSEs in English, mathematics and science; by 2013-2014, the range of accredited subjects offered had increased, to include GCSEs in personal and social education, art and religious studies as well as BTEC cooking

Good practice in PRUs

35   Although the quality of education provided by PRUs varies too much across Wales, inspection evidence and evidence collected as part of this survey provide examples of good practice in relation to different aspects of PRU provision. These examples include:

- effective behaviour management strategies
- a curriculum that meets the needs of individual pupils
- a focus on developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills
- early identification of pupils' additional learning needs and timely intervention
- effective reintegration strategies

Effective behaviour management strategies

36   Where there is good practice, PRUs have high expectations for achievement and behaviour. A number of PRUs have recently changed their names to reflect this ethos. For example, Newport City Council changed the name of its PRU from Cylchdroi PRU to Bridge Achievement Centre, to reflect the idea of the PRU being a bridge towards a better future. In the same way, other local authorities have given their PRUs names that reflect the expectation that pupils are to make a new start and achieve, for example Ymlaen (Forward/Ahead), Step Ahead, New Start Skills Centre and Canolfan Enfys (Rainbow Centre).

37   A majority of PRUs have clear positive behaviour policies with a focus on praising and rewarding pupils. In these PRUs, staff apply rewards and sanctions consistently and pupils have a good understanding of how they should behave. At the Tai Education Centre, staff use a wide range of strategies to help pupils manage their own behaviour and take responsibility for their actions. See the Tai Education Centre inspection report

38   In effective PRUs, staff record behaviour incidents in detail and carry out robust analysis of this data in order to identify triggers for poor behaviour and provide appropriate intervention.

39   Where PRUs help pupils to manage their behaviour effectively, pupils have clear individual behaviour plans (IBPs) with appropriate targets. Staff involve pupils well in setting and reviewing these targets on a regular basis. This helps pupils to understand their behaviour and take responsibility for their actions. In these PRUs, staff encourage pupils to express their feelings and discuss their behaviour with each other and with staff. For example, at the Torfaen Pupil Referral Unit, pupils take part in daily social and emotional aspects of learning (SEAL) sessions and at the Bridge Achievement Centre, staff and pupils use restorative practice[4] effectively to resolve conflict.

---

[4] Restorative practice (also referred to as restorative approaches) focuses on resolving conflicts at the earliest possible stage, seeking to avoid blame and supporting people to take responsibility for finding a constructive solution to issues. It encourages effective communication and working towards positive outcomes.

40   In a few of the PRUs visited, pupils spend part of the week in a mainstream school. In these cases, PRU and school staff liaise closely to ensure consistency across the different providers in relation to behaviour management. In Ceredigion, social, emotional and behavioural support assistants work closely with schools and the PRU to ensure that there is a consistent approach to behaviour management across all settings. This helps pupils to improve their behaviour and facilitates successful reintegration.

41   In the best PRUs, the consistent approach to behaviour management extends to other adults involved in the lives of the pupils. For example, at the Tai Education Centre, close working with taxi drivers and escorts helps pupils to improve their behaviour not only during their journey to and from the PRU but also during the school day.

Case study 5: Tai Education Centre – using a "Taxi passport system"

Context

The Tai Education Centre provides education for around 60 pupils aged between four and twelve years who have emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Strategy

The PRU introduced the taxi passport system to improve pupils' behaviour on taxis. Challenging behaviour poses a health and safety risk for pupils, drivers and escorts. In addition, when it is allowed on journeys to and from school, the challenging behaviour often continues when pupils arrive at school or at home.

Pupils who conduct themselves appropriately during transportation receive a passport to travel, which allows them to travel, for example, to the leisure centre. Pupils who act inappropriately do not take part in trips for that week until they have earned their passport to travel.

In the case of serious incidents, the driver or escort provides a written report for the attention of the headteacher and transport department, who will take appropriate action.

Actions

On arrival at the PRU, pupils remain in the taxis until it is time to go in. The longer pupils have to wait the more chance there is of an incident, so it is important that taxis arrive on time and not too early.

Pupils go into school with their escorts. They report to the taxi liaison officers who give pupils a score from 0-2 for the journey, which staff record on an evaluation sheet and class register.

Pupils undertake a daily self-assessment against the set criteria, which includes the following questions: Did I wear my seat belt? Did I use kind words, hands and feet? Did I follow all instructions? Self-assessment is an important skill and the pupils are generally honest when completing this exercise.

The PRU has developed a digital tracking system that enables staff to track pupils' progress across the school year. This data is invaluable as it allows the PRU to identify when behaviour starts to deteriorate or improve.

Outcomes

The introduction of the taxi passport system has resulted in the following:

- There are strengthened links between taxi drivers and the school
- Over 85% of taxi drivers consider the strategy beneficial in improving behaviour
- Pupils have developed self-assessment skills and are able to reflect on their behaviour
- Behaviour on transport has improved for up to 90% of the pupils
- The local authority transport department has commented that this system is helpful, especially when looking back over the school year on the progress of pupils, and in planning for placing pupils on particular taxis

42 A few PRUs also advise parents on the positive behaviour management strategies used during the school day and support parents to use these strategies at home. Learning to manage their child's behaviour is a significant challenge for many parents and carers. Where parents receive support, this has a positive impact on pupils' behaviour both in the education settings and at home. An example of effective support for parents is the Parenting Support Service at Wrexham Pupil Referral Service.

Case study 6: Wrexham Pupil Referral Service – Parenting Support Service

Context

Wrexham Pupil Referral Service is a key stage 3 and 4 PRU for pupils with SEBD.

Strategy

A frequently occurring theme identified through pastoral support plan meetings was how parents were struggling to manage behaviour of their children in the home environment, which ultimately affected their engagement in education. Supporting parents in the key stage 3 provision was seen as a key factor to improve the behaviour, attendance and attainment of pupils.

The Parenting Support Service was established to provide flexible support to families, taking into account their varied and complex needs.

Actions

The Parenting Support Service started in the spring term 2013. Key features of the parenting programme are that:

- identification of the specific individual needs of the family is highlighted during the

initial assessments carried out during home visits and pastoral support plan meetings

- an individual parenting plan is developed and strategies are put in place for all parents engaged in the parenting programme; the plan is updated and reviewed termly to ensure that all advice and support is appropriate
- monthly coffee mornings are organised to engage parents and carers
- termly presentations are given by outside agencies, for example the educational psychology service, social services, child and adolescent mental health service (CAMHS) and the school nurse; input from the specific agencies is requested during meetings with parents and carers
- weekly craft therapy sessions with the child and parent/carer are facilitated to build more positive family relationships
- support is provided to parents when attending multi-agency meetings
- home visits are carried out on a regular basis to give support and advice to parents/carers who are unable or do not wish to attend the school
- parent and child contracts can be drawn up after consultation with the parent and child, reinforcing desirable behaviours at home and school
- a drop-in service is held weekly

Outcomes

By autumn term 2014-2015, 85% of parents were involved in the parenting programme. Outcomes include:

- almost 80% of the pupils whose families attend the programme improved their attendance, half of these by more than 20 percentage points

Parents report that:

- they have a better understanding of their child's needs through multi-agency input
- the parenting group discussions have been fun and have helped them gain confidence as parents
- by engaging in the learning skills programmes, parenting skills and craft therapy sessions, pupils have 'quality time' with their parents
- pupils develop strategies to deal with their anger issues and therefore improve their behaviour at home and in school

---

Curriculum that meets the needs of individual pupils

43   At key stages 3 and 4, the range of subjects offered varies considerably from one PRU to another. In the best cases, pupils have well-planned individual pathways that meet their needs effectively and keep them engaged. Most of the PRUs visited as part of this survey have increased the range of subjects and learning experiences offered over recent years. Where there is good practice, PRUs offer a wide range of National Curriculum subjects. They also offer vocational subjects such as construction, bicycle maintenance, carpentry, hair and beauty, food and hygiene. This range of subjects and an element of choice are important in engaging pupils

who have previously lost interest in education and helps them to move on to further education, employment or training. In a few cases, pupils have been able to continue with these vocational subjects at college.

44   For many pupils who enter PRUs at key stage 4, a return to their mainstream school is not appropriate. In many cases, the school will have explored every possible option prior to placing the pupil at the PRU. In addition, where pupils have missed a significant part of the curriculum, it is hard for them to rejoin their peers. For many of these pupils, a mainstream curriculum no longer meets their needs. For these pupils, it is essential that PRUs provide them with the necessary skills, knowledge and experience to enable them to move on to further education, employment or training. The Bridge Achievement Centre, for example, organises taster sessions in the afternoons, which gives pupils the chance to experience a range of activities and helps them make decisions about their future. These sessions include hair & beauty, cooking and photography. Outside speakers also come in to talk to pupils about career choices and college options. Penrhos Avenue Alternative Education Service offers enterprise activities, funded through the Prince's Trust, such as bicycle maintenance and craft-making. These activities give pupils the opportunity to interact with the local community and develop their social skills.

45   In many of the PRUs, pupils have opportunities to attain a broad range of appropriate qualifications. These include GCSEs, Entry Level, Welsh Baccalaureate, BTEC, ASDAN, Agored Cymru, Essential Skills Wales and CACHE. However, in a very few cases, pupils do not have the opportunity to attain qualifications at an appropriate level in relation to their ability.

46   Due to limited resources and small numbers of staff, PRUs are unlikely to be able to provide as many subjects as a school. In order to increase the range of options available to pupils at key stage 4, a few PRUs develop useful partnerships with local schools, colleges and training providers. Penrhos Avenue Alternative Education Service has developed effective links with mainstream schools and FE colleges through the 14-19 network. For example, pupils from the PRU follow construction and catering courses at Coleg Llandrillo alongside their mainstream peers.

47   In a few cases, local authorities work together to extend the curriculum opportunities for PRU pupils. For example, Torfaen Pupil Referral Unit has recently linked with the Bridge Achievement Centre in Newport City Council to enable pupils to access construction courses. This joint working between local authorities is a positive step.

48   In the best cases, PRUs and schools work closely together to ensure that pupils can continue to study subjects in the PRU that they have started in their mainstream school. In a very few PRUs, pupils can return to their schools to continue with courses that they were following prior to starting at the PRU, and that cannot be provided by PRU staff.

49   A few of the PRUs visited link effectively with community projects. For example, at Penrhos Avenue Alternative Education Service, pupils benefit from a project at a local art gallery.

Case study 7: Penrhos Avenue Alternative Education Service –increasing pupils' confidence and self-esteem through the 'Cylch' project

Context

Penrhos Alternative Education is a PRU for vulnerable pupils aged 14 to 16 years who are experiencing difficulties relating to social, emotional, behavioural or attendance issues.

Strategy

One of the aims of the PRU is to ensure that the curriculum engages all pupils. In addition to the National Curriculum, the centre offers an additional curriculum enrichment (ACE) programme that is delivered in collaboration with other agencies.

One particularly effective programme is the Cylch project, which takes place at a local art gallery. The project is designed to develop pupils as learners in a context other than at school and to increase their confidence and self-esteem.

Action

A group of pupils who lack confidence and self-esteem attend the gallery regularly, as part of the timetable but also in the evening and during summer holidays. Through working with other people in the gallery setting, pupils are given the opportunity to develop their confidence and self-esteem and learn skills that will be useful in the work place. Teaching assistants from the PRU, who have a good understanding of their needs, accompany the pupils. As part of the project, pupils curate exhibitions and attend meetings. They also develop their communication skills through seeking the views of people on the local high street, and giving presentations to a range of organisations, for example the local Council, Arriva Trains Wales and Arts Council Wales.

Outcomes

The project has had a significant impact on the confidence and self-esteem of individual pupils:

- One pupil was a school refuser but his latest report indicates that he achieved 97% attendance, is on course to achieve a range of qualifications including 5 GCSEs and 4 BTECs, and has secured a job in the gallery café
- Another pupil with severe anxiety issues successfully joined the group and participated in the activities alongside people at the gallery

50   Ensuring that pupils have appropriate opportunities for work experience is a challenge for many PRUs due to difficulties in finding local businesses or organisations that are willing to take on pupils with challenging behaviour. However, where there is good practice, PRUs do develop effective partnerships with local businesses and organisations. As a result, pupils have regular opportunities to take part in relevant work experience, for example in day nurseries, garages and hairdressing salons. In a few cases, this leads to long-term work placements and very occasionally employment.

Focus on developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills

51   In many of the PRUs visited as part of the survey, teachers and support staff have a clear understanding of the impact that underdeveloped literacy and numeracy skills can have on pupils' behaviour and engagement. In these PRUs, staff have a thorough knowledge and understanding of the pupils' literacy and numeracy skills and additional learning needs. This enables them to provide appropriately targeted interventions and monitor and track progress against individual targets. Staff use data effectively to track pupil progress and to assess the impact of interventions on pupil outcomes. A good example of this is Ceredigion PRU which, through the county's pupil data system (known as Teacher Centre), has effective systems for assessing and tracking the literacy and numeracy skills of all pupils. This means that staff have a robust knowledge of pupils' needs and abilities when they enter the PRU, and can put in appropriate interventions.

52   The Literacy and Numeracy Framework (LNF) is at an early stage of development in many of the PRUs visited, due partly to the fact that PRUs were not all included in local authority training or support when the LNF was first introduced. However, more recently, PRU staff have had the opportunity to take part in literacy and numeracy initiatives and training.

53   Increasingly, PRUs have a clearer focus on the development of literacy and numeracy across the curriculum. The Bridge Achievement Centre has appointed lead teachers for literacy and numeracy who meet regularly with mainstream colleagues to discuss and share good practice. This PRU has also appointed two dedicated teaching assistants who have responsibility for supporting pupils' literacy and numeracy needs. These strategies help to ensure that there is a consistent approach across the PRU and help to improve pupils' outcomes.

Early identification of pupils' additional learning needs and timely intervention

54   In addition to literacy and numeracy difficulties, pupils who attend PRUs often have other additional learning needs. Where there is good practice, staff identify these additional learning needs at an early stage and where relevant, involve educational and child psychologists in the assessment of pupils. In these PRUs, staff pay careful attention to the assessed needs of the pupils. They put in place appropriate interventions. They monitor and review the effectiveness of the interventions rigorously. In these PRUs, pupils have appropriate targets linked to their additional learning needs as well as their behaviour.

55   The level of staff expertise to support pupils' additional learning needs varies from one PRU to another. In the best cases, staff receive regular high-quality training that helps them to support pupils with speech and language difficulties, autistic spectrum disorder, dyslexia and other learning needs.

56   Many of the PRUs visited provide a therapeutic curriculum to address the emotional needs of the pupils. This includes, for example, programmes on self-esteem, anxiety management and emotional literacy. These programmes help pupils to gain confidence, address their personal issues and improve their behaviour, attendance and standards.

57   Where there is best practice, PRUs work effectively and in partnership with a range of professionals to address the individual needs of pupils. In two of the PRUs visited, pupils receive highly effective support from a specialist team of speech, language and communication specialists. Another example of good partnership working is the close working between education and health at the North Wales Adolescent Service (NWAS), which supports pupils with mental health needs and enables pupils' individual needs to be assessed and supported appropriately. In 2013, Estyn recognised NWAS's excellent partnership work in a best practice case study.

58   Recently, the NWAS has developed its provision and now provides support for pupils in their communities.

Case study 8: North Wales Adolescent Service (NWAS) – multi-agency working

Context

NWAS is a child and adolescent mental health service (CAMHS) inpatient provision for 12 to 18-year-olds in north Wales who experience severe and complex mental health problems. While receiving therapeutic care and treatment, young people attend NWAS PRU for their education.

Strategy

In September 2013, the NWAS established an additional service, the Kite Education team, to support young people in the community. The aim of the service is to:

- help pupils to re-engage with mainstream education training or employment
- support young people so that they can stay in their locality for their education
- reduce the length of inpatient attendance in PRU education

Action

Where a young person is struggling to cope with mainstream education, but does not need inpatient provision, the Kite Education team supports these young people in their communities. This includes helping them to reintegrate into mainstream provision and negotiating adjustments to provision with local authority officers and school or college managers. Pupils also receive support from a learning coach, who offers one-to-one consultations with the pupils.

Where they continue to have difficulties accessing mainstream education, pupils have the option of attending afternoon sessions in the PRU. During these sessions, pupils have the opportunity to re-engage with classroom routines, work on mainstream assignments, discuss educational plans with the PRU teaching staff and meet with Careers Wales representatives.

Outcomes

During 2013-2014:

- The new model enabled 17 additional young people from across north Wales to

---

> access specialist support from the Kite Education team while remaining in their community
> - The creation of a discrete Kite Education group enabled the NWAS team to reduce the admission length of inpatients by 42%
> - The Kite Education pupils who were formerly inpatients benefited from a speedier transition while continuing to receive a high level of educational support once returned to their locality
> - The Kite Education service appropriately re-engaged young people with educational services in their localities in an effective way
> - By offering two discrete educational options for young people with mental health difficulties, either inpatient or Kite Education support, the NWAS education team expanded the opportunities for young people to access the least intrusive intervention possible for them as individuals

Effective reintegration strategies

59   The extent to which PRU pupils reintegrate successfully into mainstream schools varies considerably. Inspection evidence suggests that successful reintegration is more likely to happen with key stage 2 and 3 pupils. Where reintegration is successful, there is a clear understanding by all involved (pupils, parents, PRU and school staff) that placement at a PRU is a short-term, targeted intervention.

60   Where there is good practice, schools retain close links with their pupils and pupils stay on the school roll. Examples of these links include visits by school staff to the PRU, attendance at regular review meetings, the provision of coursework or specialist resources and the effective use of data to track pupil progress.

61   In a few of the PRUs visited as part of this survey, pupils continue to attend school regularly (for example, on one day a week) in order to maintain close links and to facilitate reintegration. This has a number of benefits:

- It ensures that schools continue to take responsibility for the pupils
- Pupils understand that the intention is for them to return to school
- Pupils continue to experience mainstream education
- Local authorities can evaluate when a pupil is ready to return to school
- School and PRU staff learn from each other's expertise

62   Where reintegration is successful, there is regular liaison between school and PRU staff and, where appropriate, other professionals. This includes pre-reintegration meetings as well as meetings to review the placement. All stakeholders agree clear transition plans.

63   In a few of the PRUs visited, outreach teams work with schools where pupils have reintegrated and provide on-going support for those pupils at risk of exclusion. For example, at the Bridge Alternative Provision, an outreach support team monitors re-integrated pupils regularly to prevent relapse and to ensure that pupils continue to attend.

64   In schools where there are inclusion centres, close working between the PRU and the inclusion centre is often key to ensuring successful reintegration. Where required, pupils may spend time at the inclusion centre before returning to mainstream classes.

65   The Bridge Achievement Centre has developed an effective model that encourages reintegration, through its six-week Pontio provision.

Case study 9: Bridge Achievement Centre – short-term intervention and reintegration through Pontio

Context

Following a review of EOTAS provision in 2011, Newport City Council recognised that too many pupils were spending extended periods of time in PRU provision rather than returning to mainstream school. This not only caused a shortage of placements but also led to pupils feeling demotivated.

Strategy

Alongside the establishment of a managed-moves panel (see case study 2), it was agreed that there was a need for short-term provision for pupils who were struggling to cope with mainstream school.

Action

An assessment group was established where pupils' needs could be assessed over a two-week period. This enabled staff to identify pupils' additional learning needs and assess their emotional competence. Intervention programmes were put in place and a decision made as to whether pupils should return to school or move into the main PRU setting. The centre employed two outreach workers who visited pupils in schools on their return to support a smooth reintegration.

Following the first year in operation, the provision was reviewed and, although 60% of pupils had returned to mainstream provision, it was felt that this figure could be increased further. This led to the development of the 'Pontio' provision, a six-week short-term intervention. As part of the programme, pupils return to their host school for one day a week, supported by staff from the centre who observe pupils in lessons, work alongside mainstream staff to discuss strategies and help to ease pupils' reintegration. School staff are also encouraged to come and observe pupils on the programme. Pupils and parents have a clear understanding that the aim of the programme is to enable them to return to mainstream provision.

Prior to admission, a pupil-centred planning meeting takes place. A range of partners work together to produce an individual development plan (IDP) which they review on the pupil's return to school. Outreach workers from the centre continue to support the action plan weekly with visits to school. After six weeks, the IDP is reviewed again and the school given complete ownership of the action plan from that point. Centre staff withdraw in most cases but will continue to support when required.

Outcomes

The main impact of the introduction of the Pontio provision is that:

- There has been a change in the mindset of school staff; staff now fully understand and accept that Pontio is a short-term provision
- There has been a significant reduction in the length of time spent by pupils at the PRU
- During 2013-2014, three quarters of pupils reintegrated successfully into mainstream, with 70% going back after the six-week intervention

66   Another effective model that promotes reintegration is where PRU provision is based at a school. However, there are very few examples of this in Wales. At Llwyn-yr-Eos Primary School in Ceredigion, PRU pupils can integrate into mainstream at certain times of the day, for example break and lunchtime. Where appropriate, they attend mainstream lessons. As the PRU is based at the school, staff can assess more easily whether pupils are ready to return to mainstream before a move takes place. The co-location of the school and PRU means that PRU staff can benefit from the expertise of mainstream staff in relation to, for example, curriculum developments. In addition, school staff can gain skills in behaviour management.

Good practice in schools

67   Schools that are effective in engaging pupils and helping them to manage their challenging behaviour have:

- a curriculum that engages all pupils
- a whole-school approach to behaviour management
- procedures to identify additional learning needs at an early stage and appropriate, timely intervention programmes
- effective partnership working

A curriculum that engages all pupils

68   All the secondary schools visited as part of the survey recognise the importance of developing a curriculum that engages vulnerable pupils. These schools develop programmes that are tailored to meet the needs of individual pupils. These generally include a focus on vocational options and relevant qualifications that prepare pupils well for life after school. They also include a combination of in-school and off-site activities.

69   Cymer Afan Comprehensive School links with a local college to enhance the range of options available to pupils in line with their individual needs and interests. For example, pupils can follow courses in construction, engineering and hairdressing.

70   In Ceredigion, key stage 4 pupils can access a wide range of alternative curriculum options, some of which lead to credits or qualifications. A very few targeted pupils

who are particularly vulnerable and at risk of becoming disengaged can access the alternative curriculum in Years 8 and 9. This helps them remain in full-time education.

71   As part of a whole-school approach to addressing the needs of pupils with behavioural difficulties, Fitzalan High School has developed a key stage 4 alternative curriculum. This is designed for pupils for whom a full traditional curriculum is not suitable. The programme consists of formal education in school (up to 10 level 2 qualifications including GCSE and BTEC), off-site vocational training and programmes aimed to develop social skills, self-esteem and emotional literacy. There are also effective links with a range of outside agencies to address pupils' specific needs.

72   In many cases, pupils with behavioural difficulties struggle to cope with the demands of a mainstream curriculum and the pressures of being in a busy environment such as a secondary school. Newport High School has addressed this issue effectively through establishing an off-site provision, Bettws in Bloom, for targeted pupils.

Case study 10: Newport High School – Bettws in Bloom

Context

Newport High School is an 11-18 community comprehensive school. Historically, the level of fixed-term exclusions at the school was high: 286 days in 2009 and 190 days in 2010. An average of two pupils received permanent exclusions each year. Attendance was also an area for development (86% in 2009 and 89% in 2010).

Strategy

Despite the 21st century teaching and learning facilities provided by a new school, there were still a number of pupils who required a programme of alternative provision to ensure they remained in education.

To ensure that they were able to meet the needs of these pupils, retain them on the school roll and secure them with as many level 1 and level 2 qualifications as possible, the school decided to develop its own community-based learning programme.

The intention was to create a programme that would engage pupils, improve the attendance of those with high levels of unauthorised absence, reduce the need to exclude pupils on a fixed-term or permanent basis and reduce the number of pupils accessing EOTAS provision. This provision was also designed to ensure that all school leavers achieved a recognised qualification.

Action

The school worked with community groups to identify a suitable base for a school-run community-based learning programme. This was found at Bettws in Bloom, a community environmental association with rooms being used by a full range of community groups.

28

A learning co-ordinator was appointed to lead and manage the provision and monitor the progress of all relevant pupils. Two additional full-time staff – a teacher and a teaching assistant with expertise in engaging pupils – were also appointed from existing Newport High School staff to work on the community-based learning programme.

The school worked with Bettws in Bloom community group to upgrade the facilities. This included the installation of a broadband line and kitchen area. They installed full classroom and IT facilities to ensure the level of provision matched the provision available in the main school.

Criteria and referral processes were agreed. Pupils referred are either those who have had repeated fixed-term exclusions therefore are at risk of permanent exclusion, or pupils who have identified nurture needs and are vulnerable or reluctant learners. Pupils will have accessed a range of support and intervention prior to the referral for the community-based learning programme.

The curriculum is personalised for those pupils accessing the provision. Two main types of programme are available – nurture and achievement. Nurture provision provides small groups of pupils with high levels of pastoral and emotional support whilst focusing of the development of literacy and numeracy skills and the level 1 threshold. The achievement programme provides pupils with access to a personalised vocational curriculum that builds on prior learning. This programme provides pupils with courses leading to the level 2 threshold and a qualification in English and mathematics. Some pupils access the Info Shop which is run by the youth service and the Peak project which focuses on life skills on a part-time basis. Pupils are also able to access Coleg Gwent programmes on a part-time basis where they pursue a range of level 1 and level 2 qualifications. Relevant and engaging work placements are also established based on interest and prior achievement.

Where possible, individual pupils access the community-based programme on a part-time basis, allowing them to continue to follow core or option provision at school.

The community based learning co-ordinator provides a half-termly progress report to the deputy headteacher on pupil progress. The performance of pupils is tracked across all subjects against their end of key stage targets and a robust self-evaluation and improvement plan is produced and monitored as with all other departments in the school.

Community-based learning pupils meet regularly with representatives of Careers Wales to discuss post-16 options and career pathways. All pupils have access to a work experience programme. Staff work closely with Careers Wales to identify potential NEETs. Pupils are supported to make informed choices about the courses they follow and the options available to them at the end of Year 11. Pupils have access to a trained learning coach. Regular reviews of attendance take place with the educational welfare officer.

Outcomes

The main impact of the provision is that:

- Thirteen pupils in the 2014 Year 11 cohort accessed full-time alternative

- provision or a combination of mainstream and community-based learning programmes
- Seven of these pupils achieved the level 2 threshold
- For the last four years, no student has left school without a recognised qualification
- All pupils admitted over the past three years as part of the managed moves process have successfully maintained their placements and left with qualifications
- Attendance of pupils at the provision is significantly higher than before they entered Bettws in Bloom
- There is a significant decrease in the rate of exclusion for pupils accessing the provision

A whole-school approach to behaviour management

73   Nationally, the rate of exclusions has reduced over the past 10 years. Where schools are most effective at reducing exclusions and addressing the needs of pupils within school, they have adopted a whole-school strategic approach to managing pupils' behaviour. A good example of this is the five-step approach at Fitzalan High School, where there is a shared understanding of the graduated response to challenging behaviour.

Fitzalan High School – graduating response to challenging behaviour

STEP 1
Behaviour points/department detention/whole-school detention

STEP 2
Learning support unit/individual behaviour plans, pastoral support plans/on-call restorative procedures

STEP 3
Alternative curriculum/extended opportunities/virtual PRU (pupils are removed from mainstream lessons for six weeks during which time they follow a curriculum with core subjects and intensive mentoring)

STEP 4
An off-site education programme, facilitated by Fitzalan staff, but also using outside agencies to develop social skills and post-16 progression routes

STEP 5
County specialised provision
PRU/Greenhill Special School

74   In the schools visited where behaviour management is effective, they have high expectations for pupils' behaviour and clear behaviour policies and procedures that all staff implement consistently. Pupils and parents understand these policies and procedures well. While these schools have clear and appropriate sanctions, they place a greater emphasis on positive behaviour and rewarding pupils for making good choices.

75 In these schools, staff receive effective training on behaviour management. As a result, over time, they develop their capacity to meet the needs of pupils without the need for outside support or intervention.

76 A few schools visited as part of this survey use restorative approaches effectively to resolve issues within school and help pupils to develop improved relationships with their peers. This practice contributes to improved behaviour and a reduction in the level of exclusions.

Case study 11: Fitzalan High School – introducing restorative approaches

Context

Fitzalan High School is a large, multi-cultural secondary school in Cardiff. It serves some of the most diverse and deprived areas of the city. Fixed-term exclusion rates were high and the same pupils were being excluded repeatedly without any impact on their behaviour.   Absence rates were also too high, in part caused by the high number of exclusions.

Strategy

The aim was to introduce restorative approaches (RA) across the school in the hope of reducing areas of conflict, rates of fixed-term exclusion and absence rates. RA was seen as a tool to change behaviours by building and maintaining relationships thorough positive interactions and mutual respect. RA ensures that all parties are heard, feelings discussed, impact of behaviours on others covered and then all parties become part of the solution together. Initially RA was seen as a response to incidents that have happened.   However it is now used more proactively to avoid incidents happening in the first place.

Action

The school initially trained a number of key staff (pastoral staff, senior management team, teaching assistants).   It was soon recognised that, in order to be fully effective, the approach would need to be adopted across the whole school. An ongoing programme of training now takes place. At the end of each phase of training, staff are assessed and it is only when 80% of staff feel confident that they move on to the next phase. Each phase involves embedding RA further into the school's practices and policies.

As new staff arrive, they are also given training in RA. RA is now used routinely by a significant number of staff. RA is also being embedded into form time and teaching and learning.

Outcomes

There have been significant positive changes in relationships at Fitzalan High School as well as significant improvements in relation to attendance and fixed-term exclusions. For example:

- attendance increased from 90.9% in 2010-2011 to 93.7% in 2013-2014
- the number of days of fixed-term exclusions reduced from 984 in 2010-2011 to

---

> 84 in 2013-2014
> - the number of pupils given fixed-term exclusions reduced from 140 in 2010-2011 to 59 in 2013-2014

77 A strategy commonly used by secondary schools as an alternative to fixed-term exclusion is 'internal exclusion'. There is variation in the terminology used to describe such provision, as well as the way in which this type of provision is used. It may refer to an 'internal exclusion room' to which pupils can be sent when their behaviours are such that they cannot contribute to work in a classroom with their peers. Pupils work in these rooms under supervision for a fixed period and do not mix with the wider school population. Another form of internal exclusion is when, instead of being sent to a designated room, pupils are required to spend a fixed period of time with a senior member of staff.

78 The principle of keeping pupils on the school site and ensuring that they do not miss out on education is a very important one. However, where most effective, internal exclusion is not simply a punishment facility, but one that offers pupils an opportunity to explore the reasons for their actions and provides them with strategies to modify their behaviour.

Early identification and intervention

79 Many pupils who find it difficult to remain in mainstream schools have a range of difficulties, including challenging family situations and personal issues. Others have underdeveloped literacy and numeracy skills or other additional learning needs. When schools have effective systems for monitoring and tracking pupil progress, which identify pupils who are at risk of disengagement at an early stage, they can put in place appropriate intervention that keeps pupils in the mainstream.

80 Many of the schools visited have robust data systems, which include attainment data as well as information on attendance and behaviour. They use a range of methods to analyse this data, for example by using a RAG (red, amber, green) system to identify pupils likely to require additional support or intervention.

81 For some pupils, it is apparent at an early age that they are likely to have difficulties as they move through the school. Holton Primary School was involved, along with other schools in Bridgend and the Vale of Glamorgan, in a National Behaviour and Attendance Review (NBAR) project. This has enabled the school to identify pupils at risk and provide appropriate intervention for pupils at an early stage.

Case study 12: Holton Primary School – offering early assessment and intervention

Context

Holton Primary School is situated in the centre of the town of Barry in the Vale of Glamorgan. The ward in which the school is situated has been identified as being in the top ten per cent of most deprived wards in the Index of Multiple Deprivation for Wales, 2014. Currently 31.9% of pupils are claiming free school meals.

Strategy

In 2011, the school, with the support of the local authority, began to use the National Behaviour and Attendance Review (NBAR) Online Assessment developed by the University of Sussex. This enables the school to identify pupils with social and emotional difficulties, particularly those who have higher than average anger, anxiety and depression and lower than average self-worth. The assessment also identifies whether the negative feelings are more prevalent in the home or school environment.

Over the past three years, the school has developed its analysis of individual, year group and whole-school need using the NBAR assessments. At the same time, it has introduced a range of interventions to meet the needs identified.

Action

The Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) programme has been introduced and used by the whole school to develop understanding of relationships and emotional literacy. Weekly activities are carried out in class and assemblies are used to consolidate and reinforce the half-termly themes. Circle time is also used regularly in classes to explore feelings and ensure that every pupil has a voice.

The behaviour policy has been reviewed by senior managers. All staff, including dinner supervisors, have received training. A cohesive whole-school approach has been adopted, ensuring that expectations, rewards and intervention strategies are consistent. Class teachers have received bespoke training to meet the needs of their pupils if specific whole-class traits have been identified by the NBAR assessment.

The deputy headteacher has the role of "wellbeing champion" in the school and is responsible for analysing the data provided by the NBAR assessment, liaising with the local authority and co-ordinating the response to need within the school. Close liaison is maintained with the school's additional learning needs co-ordinator (ALNCo), outside agencies and parents.

The school has used the pupil deprivation grant to employ a nurture mentor who has been trained in specific interventions to address pupils' social and emotional difficulties. The nurture mentor works with small groups of pupils identified with similar needs. Each group has 30 minutes specific support per week throughout the year.

Nurture groups have been set up to address the needs of pupils whose NBAR

assessment results have shown that they have needs in a number of emotional areas. These pupils are assessed and monitored using the Boxall Profile. There are currently two nurture groups in the school each running for two afternoons a week.

A team of peer mentors from Years 5 and 6 have had training to support other pupils when they have friendship difficulties in the playground.

Outcomes

These interventions have had a positive impact on the wellbeing of pupils. For example:

- Pupils display good behaviour around the school
- Pupils who feel anxious or vulnerable develop stronger levels of confidence
- No pupils have left the school for EOTAS in the past three years
- The number of referrals to the local authority behaviour support team has fallen
- Around 80% of pupils who are school action plus for SEBD issues have made expected progress or more than expected progress in their learning in the last academic year
- Attendance has risen from 92.6% in 2011-2012 to 94.1% in 2013-2014

82   A key point in the lives of vulnerable pupils is the transition from primary to secondary school. Many vulnerable pupils find it difficult to cope with the move to a large unfamiliar setting. The Upper Afan Federation has addressed this issue successfully by identifying at-risk pupils when they are in primary school and providing appropriate support on transition and during the secondary phase.

Case study 13: Upper Afan federation – helping pupils to make transitions

Context

Cymer Afan Comprehensive School is an 11-16 school situated in the Upper Afan valley, approximately nine miles north of Port Talbot. It is one of the smallest secondary schools in Wales with a pupil roll of 244 pupils. In order to sustain education across the Upper Afan Valley, four primaries and the comprehensive were formally federated in September 2013.

The catchment area has several council wards that contain significant levels of deprivation – two of the four are in the lowest 10% in Wales. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is 42% across the federation.

Prior to federation, exclusion rates across the schools were high with over 300 days lost to exclusion in 2010. Linked with this were poor attendance rates with all schools being in the lower quarters for attendance. Many of the pupils required greater support and intervention to allow them to access the curriculum because of the high levels of poverty, social services involvement and family circumstances.

Strategy

It was felt that a continuum of seamless support across all key stages was needed to

lower levels of pupils' disengagement.   As a federation of schools, it is possible to ensure consistent practice and policies across each campus. The continuum of seamless support starts with nurture provision across the four primary schools, continuing with cross-phase 'Place of Development' (POD) support at key stage 2 and 3 and leading into a pathways curriculum plan from Year 9.

Action

Pupils' needs are identified very early in their school careers and information is shared formally and informally in half-termly federation ALNCo meetings and by email. In addition to the ALNCo based in each primary school, there is a lead ALNCo who works across the federation. The additional learning needs registers for the five schools are collected termly and used to update the school information management system. This information has proven invaluable to secondary school staff because it allows them to predict, with accuracy, the additional learning needs provision required for the next five years. This is crucial when planning future LSA needs and option choices.

The POD (or inclusion centre) plays a particularly important role in helping pupils on transition into the secondary phase. Although based in the secondary school, it is also accessed by primary aged pupils. Currently it serves several groups of pupils including a Year 6 transition group of pupils who visit the POD every Friday morning to help develop their social skills and self-confidence.

Pupils at risk of disengaging with school because of social, domestic or behaviour issues also attend the POD at designated slots in their timetable. Depending on their specific needs, they either carry on with their class work or receive support from staff on self-esteem, anger-management and specific child protection issues.

Outcomes

Targeted intervention has resulted in increased attendance and reduced exclusions:

- Primary attendance across the federation has improved from 92.6% in 2011-2012 and 92.3% in 2012-2013 to 94.3% in 2013-2014
- Secondary attendance has increased from 90.5% in 2011-2012 to 91% in 2013- 2014
- Exclusions in 2010 totalled 303 days and involved 39 pupils; exclusions in 2013-2014 totalled to 28 days involving four pupils

83   The schools visited as part of this survey use a range of interventions to address the needs of targeted pupils at an early stage. For many pupils, this early support prevents their difficulties from escalating. A few of the strategies observed involved:

- inclusion centres
- nurture provision
- peer support

84 For the purpose of this report, the term 'inclusion centre' will refer to a school-based resource, which supports pupils with a range of needs. Many secondary schools use inclusion centres effectively to support pupils who are, for one reason or another, are vulnerable. Inclusion centres vary from one school to another, in terms of size and purpose. They usually serve as a provision where pupils can go if they require one-off help and advice or longer-term support. This support can include individual or group literacy programmes, counselling, input from specialist teachers or educational psychologists as well as other services such as child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) or education welfare services (EWS).

85 Following its review of behaviour support services, Ceredigion Council established Hafan provision in all secondary schools (see case study 1). At Ysgol Bro Pedr, which was visited as part of the survey, the Hafan provision is run by two teaching assistants who have also received training as learning coaches. Pupils interviewed as part of the visit said that the Hafan is a safe place where they feel confident to express their anxieties and discuss personal issues. The Hafan also serves as a hub for multi-agency meetings. Parents who are reluctant to go into school feel able to discuss their children here.

86 Another important strategy to support identified pupils is nurture. Nurture groups help pupils who, due to their early experiences, find it difficult to build positive relationships. Through targeted intervention, they learn to relate to others, modify their behaviour and develop the skills they need to cope with challenges and achieve. One example of effective nurture provision is at Pen Afan Primary.

Case study 14: Pen Afan Primary – providing nurture groups

Context

Pen Afan Primary is one of four primary schools within the Upper Afan Federation. Historically, attendance across the schools has been poor and exclusion rates high.

Strategy

As part of the overall strategy to address the needs of vulnerable pupils, managers recognised the need to identify pupils at risk of disengagement at an early stage and address their needs through nurture provision.

Action

The first nurture group, known as the Space Club, was set up at Pen Afan Primary School. It has since been replicated in all the primary schools within the federation Pupils who are underachieving for social, emotional or behavioural reasons receive targeted support from trained staff, to enable them to access the curriculum, participate fully in school life, and return to mainstream classes.

The 'Space Club' is based in a carefully designed room, with a home-like area and an area set aside for formal learning. Pupils attend the group part-time (one or two mornings a week) for a minimum of one term, but can remain within the group as long as progress is being made. If there are still concerns despite attendance at the group, a referral may be made for further assessment.

Pupils are identified for the 'Space Club' using a combination of the Boxall Profile test and initial teacher referrals. The learning support assistant in charge of the provision analyses the data and meets with staff to discuss the findings. Further advice can be sought from the lead additional learning needs coordinator or the local authority additional learning needs team.

When selecting pupils for the nurture groups, a careful balance is made to ensure the pupils will be able to work as a group. There are six to eight pupils in the nurture group at any one time. Sessions are highly structured with a clear routine, which is vital for pupils' development. During these sessions, there is a well-planned range of activities, with a focus on developing teamwork, learning to take turns, speaking and listening and sharing. Pupils are encouraged to speak openly with their peers about their feelings and to manage their emotions.

When pupils have made sufficient progress to return to the mainstream classroom on a full-time basis, arrangements are made for a phased withdrawal. The learning support assistant in charge liaises closely with class teachers, so that they can work towards the same targets and adopt the same strategies when working with these pupils.

Outcomes

The Space Clubs have had a significant impact on the pupils involved:

- Nearly all pupils learn to manage their feelings and develop positive relationships with their peers
- Most pupils return successfully to their mainstream classes

87   Another effective strategy, which can have a very positive impact on engaging pupils, is peer support. Peer mentoring takes place at most of the schools visited, although it is not yet well established in all schools. Different types of peer mentoring observed include informal mentoring as well as timetabled sessions. Pupils interviewed at one school visited felt that this had an important impact on their happiness and confidence in school, as they often found it easier to talk to other pupils rather than members of staff.

88   Where it is most effective, peer mentoring forms part of an overall strategy to develop the wellbeing of all pupils. In its recent inspection, Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Plasmawr was identified as having sector-leading practice in relation to the support provided for pupils by their peers and the impact this has on their wellbeing. The school uses a range of innovative strategies which allow pupils to support their peers while at the same time helping them develop their own confidence, leadership skills and self-esteem.

Case study 15: Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Plasmawr – empowering pupils

Context

Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Plasmawr is a Welsh-medium secondary school situated in Fairwater in Cardiff. The school serves the western side of the city and has a very wide catchment area. Around 22% of pupils live in the 20% of most disadvantaged areas in Wales and about another third come from the city's privileged residential areas.

Strategy

The school recognised that one of the most effective ways of improving the wellbeing of all pupils was by empowering pupils to support each other and take on leadership roles. In order to achieve this, the school introduced a wide range of strategies.

Actions

"Bechgyn Bonheddig" – "Gentlemen's Group"

Individual boys are chosen following concerns regarding their behaviour and relationships with peers and adults. They are trained to lead groups of young pupils who require support to develop their self-esteem. The scheme has seen a major change in the attitudes of the young men, and this has transferred to their school work and resulted in academic progress.

"Merched Mentrus" – "Girl Power"

Merched Mentrus are a group of girls who were selected to promote healthy relationships and equality. They have done significant work on violence towards women and women's rights. As a consequence of this opportunity, they have had a voice and an opportunity to enjoy school life and be a central part of the school community. Through preparing and presenting PSE lessons and representing the school at conferences, they have grown in confidence and inspired others within the school community.

Mentoriaid academaidd Plasmawr (MAPs) – peer mentors

Pupils from Year 9 attend registration periods with the younger pupils and support them with any difficulties with their school work. During lunchtime they support pupils with their homework and this has had a very positive impact on pupil progress.

Cynghorwyr cam cyntaf (CCCs) – peer counsellors

Older pupils in the school make themselves available during their lunchtimes to support pupils who have any concerns about school life or feel that they are being bullied. These pupils have won awards for anti-bullying schemes and are a vital part of the school anti-bullying procedures.

DIGON (ENOUGH) anti homophobic group

The purpose of the group is to make people aware of the effect that homophobic language can have on individuals and eliminate the casual use of homophobic

language. Pupils in the group work to create a safe environment in school in which people can talk comfortably about sexuality without feeling that they are alone.

Other strategies include: Darllenwyr Ifanc Plasmawr (DIPs) Young Readers; BALCH (PROUD) Celebrating a Multi Cultural Society; and Llyfrgellwyr Ifanc Plasmawr (Young Librarians).

Outcomes:

- Attendance is consistently high – 94.7% in 2012-2013 and 94.8% in 2013-2014
- Fixed-term exclusions are consistently low (a total of 45 days exclusion in 2012-2013 and 84 days in 2013-2014) , and there have been no permanent exclusions since 2009
- NEETs figures for the school are extremely low
- Individual pupils learn to overcome their difficulties and achieve well

---

Working with partners

89 Close working with other agencies, for example health, social services and voluntary agencies, helps to ensure that vulnerable pupils and their families receive appropriate, timely support.

Case study 16: Woodlands Community Primary School – working with partners

Background

The school is located in a Communities First Area. Sixty-three per cent of the pupils live in the 20% most deprived areas of Wales. Within the catchment of the school, there are approximately 200 children eligible for Flying Start support and services. Thirty seven per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals.

Teacher assessment and nursery baseline indicate that a significant number of children enter nursery with very poor speech and social skills and an inability to cater for personal needs. As a result, a disproportionate time is spent on toileting and teaching children how to communicate and how to play with each other.

Strategy

All professionals involved in Flying Start from areas such as education, health, childcare, language development and parenting programmes meet half termly as part of a multi-professional panel (MPP). The purpose of these meetings is to share the knowledge and expertise of the professionals involved in order to provide essential support and services for children and their families.

All children aged 0 to 3 in the Woodlands catchment area that are assessed as having high or medium needs that may impact on their future learning and development are discussed and actions and targeted support are agreed. Information on a child comes from a range of sources.

The nature of the support offered depends on the needs of the child and their families. For example, a child may need toileting support from the community nursery nurse or speech development support from the early years language development officer or a parent may need language and play (LAP) outreach work due to mental health difficulties. In addition, professionals take responsibility for signposting appropriate services, for example a parenting course for a mother who is finding her child's behaviour difficult.

Receiving information on a child and their family before they start at Woodlands has been invaluable. It enables the school to take the lead in co-ordinating the use of support and services for needy families and their children before they start school, thus minimising the impact of any barriers to learning. In addition, transition is improved as staff are fully aware of vulnerable children before they enter nursery and support is more carefully targeted at individual children's needs.

Children are given targeted support with speech, social skills and toileting before entry to nursery, which enables teaching staff to concentrate more on teaching and learning. This early intervention is an essential and invaluable extension of a comprehensive range of intervention programmes that exist throughout the school.

Outcomes

- Standards at the school have improved and school performance places the school consistently in the top 25% of schools.
- There has been a significant reduction in the number of children on the special needs register at school action.
- Most children make very good progress across the school and leave the school with a good standard of literacy and numeracy skills
- The achievement of pupils who are entitled to free school meals is equal to, or better than, the achievement of pupils who pay for their meals

90   Parents and carers are also key partners. Where schools engage families effectively, this is likely to lead to improved outcomes for pupils.

Case study 17: Clase Primary School – engaging families

Background

The school is located within a large housing estate in a Communities First area. Within the school, there are four specialist teaching facilities (STFs). Fifty-eight per cent of pupils are eligible to receive free school meals. Thirteen per cent of pupils have a statement of special educational needs.

Strategy

In order to engage pupils who are at risk of low attendance and underachievement, the school places a strong focus on working with families.

Actions

The Derbyshire Play Project (DPP) and nurture groups help the school to engage in

activities with whole families, including outdoor activities, for example trips to the beach. Many of the families have not previously had the opportunity to experience such activities. The pastoral worker in the DPP is also the attendance officer and keeps in contact with families when attendance is a concern.

The school works effectively with a range of organisations such as The Exchange and Barnado's to increase family engagement through access to parent support groups and by arranging self-esteem groups and individual play therapy sessions for pupils.

Flying Start is based in rooms integral to teaching areas and this has encouraged close working with vulnerable families. A health visitor is based on-site. This facilitates very good links between the school and parents. Parents whose children attend Flying Start are introduced to the headteacher and other key staff before children are registered for a school place.

The school holds weekly, well-attended, sessions for parents and invites experts to talk about a range of issues, for example managing behaviour, understanding how children learn and developing strategies to support pupils with speech and communication difficulties.

Outcomes

- Parents are highly supportive of the school and have high expectations of their child's standards
- Parents feel confident to ask staff for help with their child's learning and behaviour
- There has been an increase in the attendance of vulnerable pupils; for one pupil, attendance rose from 76% to 97% in 2013-2014
- There has been an upward trend in attendance figures since 2010 from 88.1% in 2010 to 92.4% in 2014; attendance so far this year has continued to rise
- The school has had no exclusions in the last five years

Appendix 1: References

Estyn (2015) *The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales 2013-2014.* Cardiff: Estyn. [Online]. Available from: http://www.estyn.gov.uk/english/annual-report/annual-report-2013-2014/ [Accessed 12 May 2014).

McCluskey, G., et al. (2013) *Evaluation of Education Provision for Children and Young People Educated Outside the School Setting: Final Report.* Cardiff: Welsh Government Social Research. [Online]. Available from: http://www.docs.hss.ed.ac.uk/education/creid/Reports/31_WAG_EOTAS_FinalRpt.pdf [Accessed 12 May 2014].

National Assembly for Wales (2006) *Inclusion and Pupil Support.* [Online]. Available from: http://learning.wales.gov.uk/docs/learningwales/publications/121128inclusionen.pdf [Accessed 12 May 2014].

Welsh Assembly Government, Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills (2011) *Effective managed moves: A fresh start at school for children and young people.* Cardiff: Welsh Assembly Government. [Online]. Available from: http://learning.wales.gov.uk/docs/learningwales/publications/121128effectivemovesen.pdf [Accessed 12 May 2014].

Welsh Government (2014a) *Pupils educated other than at school, 2013/14.* Cardiff: Welsh Government. [Online]. Available from: http://gov.wales/docs/statistics/2014/140730-pupils-educated-other-than-at-school-2013-14-en.pdf [Accessed 2 January 2015].

Welsh Government, Department for Education and Skills (2014b) *The Education (Pupil Referral Units) (Management Committees etc.) (Wales) Regulations 2014: Statutory guidance for local authorities and pupil referral units.* Cardiff: Welsh Government. [Online]. Available from: http://gov.wales/docs/dcells/publications/141023-pupil-referral-unit-guidance-en.pdf [Accessed 11 May 2015].

Welsh Government (2014c) *Exclusions from schools in Wales 2012/13 – Revised.* Cardiff: Welsh Government. [Online]. Available from: http://gov.wales/docs/statistics/2014/140305-exclusions-schools-2012-13-revised-en.pdf [Accessed 2 January 2015].

Appendix 2: Evidence base

The findings in this report draw on visits to local authorities, primary and secondary schools and PRUs. In these visits, HMI:

- met with relevant members of staff and, where appropriate, groups of pupils
- reviewed LA, school and PRU documentation

Additional evidence was drawn from:

- Welsh Government statistics relating to EOTAS and exclusions
- Estyn inspection reports from LAs, schools and PRUs

Local authorities visited:

- Ceredigion Council
- Pembrokeshire Council
- Newport City Council Managed Moves Panel

PRUs visited:

- Bridge Achievement Centre, Newport
- Bridge Alternative Provision, Bridgend
- Ceredigion PRU
- North Wales Adolescent Service (NWAS), Conwy
- Penrhos Avenue Alternative Education Service, Conwy
- Tai Education Centre, RCT
- Torfaen Pupil Referral Unit
- Wrexham Pupil Referral Service

Schools visited:

- Clase Primary School, Swansea
- Holton Primary School, Vale of Glamorgan
- Pen Afan Primary School, Neath Port Talbot
- Woodlands Community Primary School, Torfaen
- Bettws in Bloom, Newport High School
- Cymer Afan Comprehensive, Neath Port Talbot
- Fitzalan High School, Cardiff
- Ysgol Bro Pedr, Ceredigion
- Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Plasmawr, Cardiff

Literature review

In addition to the publications referenced in the main report, the following documents were also consulted:

Children's Commissioner for Wales (2014) *The right to learn: Supporting children and young people at pupil referral units to reach their potential.* Swansea: Children's Commissioner for Wales. [Online]. Available from: http://dera.ioe.ac.uk/20396/1/456.pdf [Accessed 11 November 2014].

Estyn (2005) *Thematic survey of pupil referral units and similar provision.* Cardiff: Estyn. [Online]. Available from: http://www.estyn.gov.uk/english/docViewer/173491.5/thematic-survey-of-pupil-referral-units-and-similar-provision-2005/?navmap=30,163, [Accessed 12 May 2014]

Estyn (2007) *Local education authority practice in monitoring the location of pupils being educated outside the school setting and those missing from education.* Cardiff: Estyn. [Online]. Available from: http://www.estyn.gov.uk/english/docViewer/173218.5/local-education-authority-practice-in-monitoring-the-location-of-pupils-being-educated-outside-the-school-setting-may-2007/?navmap=30,163, [Accessed 12 May 2014]

Estyn (2012) *A survey of the arrangements for pupils' wellbeing and behaviour management in pupil referral units.* Cardiff: Estyn. [Online]. Available from: http://www.estyn.gov.uk/english/docViewer/231749.7/a-survey-of-the-arrangements-for-pupils-wellbeing-and-behaviour-management-in-pupil-referral-units-january-2012/?navmap=30,163, [Accessed 12 May 2014]

Estyn (2013) *Effectively supporting pupils with social, emotional and behavioural needs.* Cardiff: Estyn. [Online]. Available from: http://www.estyn.gov.uk/english/docViewer/294539.7/effectively-supporting-pupils-with-social-emotional-and-behavioural-needs/?navmap=33,53,248, [Accessed 12 May 2014]

Estyn (2013) *Helping young people to manage emotions and relationships.* Cardiff: Estyn. [Online]. Available from: http://www.estyn.gov.uk/english/docViewer/287114.1/helping-young-people-to-manage-emotions-and-relationships/?navmap=33,53,248, [Accessed 12 May 2014]

McCluskey, G., et al. (2013), *Evaluation of Education Provision for Children and Young People Educated Outside the School Setting: Final Report.* Cardiff: Welsh Government Social Research. [Online]. Available from: http://www.docs.hss.ed.ac.uk/education/creid/Reports/31_WAG_EOTAS_FinalRpt.pdf [Accessed 12 May 2014].

Ofsted (2013) *Pupils missing out on education.* Manchester: Ofsted. [Online]. Available from: http://dera.ioe.ac.uk/18825/1/Pupils%20missing%20out%20on%20education.pdf [Accessed 12 May 2014].

Reid, K. (2008) *National Behaviour and Attendance Review (NBAR) report: An independent review conducted on behalf of the Welsh Assembly Government.* Cardiff: Welsh Assembly Government. [Online]. Available form: http://gov.wales/dcells/publications/publications/reports/3773934/nbarreport?lang=en [Accessed 12 May 2014]

Welsh Assembly Government, Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills (2009) *Behaving and Attending: Action Plan responding to the National behaviour and Attendance Review.* Cardiff: Welsh Assembly Government, (Doc: 076/2009). [Online]. Available from: http://gov.wales/docs/dcells/publications/090327nbaractionplanen.pdf [Accessed 12 May 2014].

Welsh Government (2011) *Review of education otherwise than at schools and action plan.* Cardiff: Welsh Government. [Online]. Available from: http://gov.wales/docs/dcells/publications/110815reviewandplanen.pdf [Accessed 12 May 2014]

Welsh Government (2011) *Behaviour and attendance action plan for 2011-2013.* [Online]. Available from: http://gov.wales/topics/educationandskills/schoolshome/pupilsupport/nbaractionplan1113/?lang=en [Accessed 12 May 2014].

Summary of relevant literature not included in main body of report (References above):

In 2011, the Welsh Government commissioned a research team from the University of Edinburgh to examine the process of exclusion from school in Wales and the delivery, planning and commissioning of education provision for children and young people educated outside the school setting (EOTAS) (McCluskey et al, 2013).

The report suggests that *'*some good progress has been made in implementing the recommendations of these reports (NBAR, Review of Education Other Than At School etc) but that significant issues remain' (p.1). Issues identified in the report include a lack of consistency in EOTAS provision in relation to the quality of the curriculum, approaches to behaviour management and reintegration.

The report recommends that:

> Good practice in EOTAS provision should be identified and promoted and regular meetings of providers should encourage dissemination of good practice. This should include sharing of good examples of curricula which meet current standards, and of effective child-centred behaviour management (p.9).

The NBAR report (Reid, 2008) draws attention to significant issues in this aspect of education:

- The position on behaviour and attendance is not helped by the significant numbers of pupils at primary or secondary school whose literacy and numeracy levels are well below the average attainment targets for their chronological age. All the evidence suggests that more pupils with low levels of literacy and numeracy have a greater tendency to develop into pupils who develop behavioural and/or attendance problems (p.4).

- Large numbers of existing professionals have received little or no training for their roles in managing attendance or behaviour (p.4).

- There are a number of pupils who are out-of-school for a variety of reasons, whose educational provision is not being properly monitored and who are not receiving an appropriate education (p.5).

- Although some excellent alternative curriculum and out-of-school provision exists, this too, tends to vary from authority to authority (p.5).

- Many interventions with pupils who exhibit behaviour and/or attendance problems occur much too late, often after a situation has reached the persistent or crisis stage (p.6).

In 2011, Estyn and CSSIW carried out a survey of a selection of PRUs across Wales. This survey highlighted the lack of consistency in relation to behaviour management and pupil wellbeing within the PRUs visited (Estyn, 2012).

Findings from the survey included:

Teaching and support staff in PRUs do a difficult job with pupils whose behaviour is challenging. Many do it well. PRUs generally have the appropriate policies in place to help them in their work with vulnerable pupils, many of whom have challenging behaviour. However, not all policies contain enough helpful guidance for staff (p.2).

In the best practice, PRU staff teach pupils how to manage their own behaviour and use agreed behaviour management plans and individual pupil risk-assessments to help them. However, in most cases PRU pupil-planning systems do not address the management of difficult behaviour with individual pupils well enough, (p.2).

Local authority arrangements for the line management and governance of PRUs are not robust enough. Line managers and management committees do not do enough to hold teachers-in-charge to account for the day-to-day running of the PRU, (p.3).

Local authorities do not always follow their own advice in helping PRUs to monitor and evaluate the way behaviour management strategies are used. They do not identify well enough the impact of these strategies on the wellbeing of pupils or staff or on improving behaviour management practice in PRUs through better-targeted training, (p. 3).

In 2014, the Children's Commissioner for Wales carried out a survey with children and young people who attended PRUs as well as a survey with teachers in charge of PRUs.

Findings from the children and young people's survey included:

- Children and young people said that that they had difficulties in coping with mainstream education because of their behaviour and poor relationships with teachers, because of bullying and because of anxiety. The experiences they

described suggest that mainstream schools were not able to accommodate their additional learning needs or provide the level of support learners needed to engage in education (p.18).

- Most children and young people were positive about their experience of receiving their education at a PRU and in particular about the quality of their relationship with teaching staff. However, a minority of learners do not enjoy attending a PRU. The most common problem associated with receiving education at a PRU that was identified by learners was a lack of things to do and being bored (p.18).

- Most felt that the consequences of misbehaving are generally fair (p.18).

Findings from the teacher in charge survey included:

- The quality of partnership working relationships with other agencies is inconsistent (p.27).

- All of the sites reported on have a Behaviour Management Policy in place and staff in all sites have received behaviour management training (p.27).

The main challenges of delivering education in a PRU were identified as:

- Capacity to deliver the curriculum because of small staff numbers
- Difficulties in recruiting teaching staff
- Poor dissemination of information about curriculum developments
- Difficulties in securing quality alternative and vocational provision to deliver on the 14 to 19 Pathway
- Difficulties in getting timely support for children and young people from other agencies (p.28).

Appendix 3: Glossary

Alternative curriculum	In the context of this thematic report, alternative curriculum refers to a tailor-made curriculum for individual pupils who find it difficult to access the mainstream curriculum. This may include courses delivered by a range of organisations outside the school, for example training providers, colleges or the third sector.
Boxall Profile	An assessment tool used to develop an understanding of children's emotional and behavioural difficulties and plan effective interventions and support activities.
CACHE	Council for Awards in Care, Health and Education
NEET	Not in education, employment or training

The remit author and survey team

Caroline Rees	Remit author
Huw Davies	Team inspector
Sw Roberts	Team inspector