



Cwmclydach Primary School

Ministerial taskforce for the Valleys

22nd September

Education

Introductions from

- Andrew Llewelyn, Headteacher of Glenboi Primary school, Cynon Valley.
- Heather Nicholas, Headteacher of Ferndale Secondary school.
- Judith Evans, Principal of Coleg Y Cymoedd

Context issues: Financial

- High dependency on benefits
- Inability to pay tuition and exam fees
- Inability to pay for essential equipment and materials
- Inability to pay for childcare
- Lack of funds or access to transport
- Lack of funds to participate in educational visits
- **Shelter:**
- Homelessness

Context issues: Physical and Mental Health

- Poor nutrition or hunger
- Poorer health and wellbeing
- More likely to become parents at a young age
- Poor emotional and mental health resilience
- Lack of emotional support from within the family

Study Support, Aspirations, Habits

- Lack of study facilities at home e.g. computer with internet access
- Low literacy and numeracy skills
- Lack of aspiration e.g. to progress to HE
- Limited life experiences e.g. holiday travel
- Erosion of family and community values, habits and lifestyle limit growth
- Past educational performance tends to be lower
- Perception that anyone who's successful has left the area
- High unemployment and low engagement with school
- Jobs supported by European funding – drying up
- Parental expectations low, particularly of girls
- Few successful family role models in work or higher education

What works in education in the Valleys communities

- Focus on oracy – ability to present, speak and be heard
- Pupil self perception and wellbeing analysis and follow up in planning
- Peer coaching and mentoring models
- Uniform, school council, branding – building pride, resilience, independence and high expectations
- Focus on values, cultural curriculum and enrichment experiences
- Rigour in tracking, focused interventions on specific needs, profiling of vulnerable young people at transition particularly
- Community engagement – attendance, team around the family, literacy levels including third sector projects with impact (e.g. Save the Children FAST)
- Libraries in school, bringing books to children and ICT - outward facing
- Use of Pupil Deprivation Grant and Education Maintenance Grant critical to fund interventions, transport, community engagement and support
- **Above all**
 - **Teaching needs to be better than elsewhere**
 - **Leadership, high expectations and whole school strategies critical**

What would make a difference (1)

Focus on parents and families and their role in education

- Resources for parental engagement in basic skills, parenting and aspirations – mums and dads
- Employment opportunities and access to employment for parents/ adult role models (transport, readiness, literacy levels)
- Improved housing quality and availability
- Overly generous benefits create disincentives to work (for those who can work)
- Good quality Information Advice and guidance about post 16 and Higher Ed options to build confidence

Focus on workforce

- Campaign, support and funding for high quality workforce planning (the best teachers, leaders, community workers)
- Considerations for transport and access for public sector workforce

What would make a difference? (2)

Focus on provision

- Models to work with parents on building independence and resilience in young people
- Joined up focus to extra curricula opportunities across schools – with cultural, arts resources
- Resources to introduce and support HEI choices for more able and talented children
- Child and adolescent mental health services very overstretched and experiencing increased demand
- Reliable affordable transport to get to college post 16 and transition support
- Planning of provision within local community, not too far from it
- Information and funding for apprenticeships and pathways into skilled work to match demand in economy
- Routes for SMEs to engage in apprenticeship and employment with training routes
- Consideration of funding formulae disincentives and benchmark weighting for deprivation
- Long term profiling of jobs – higher skills, but young people need L1/L2 to progress to L3/L4

Finally – a joined up approach to funding for these communities, which builds skills, aspirations and removes barriers to achievement at school/college



Ferndale Comprehensive School