

## Children, Young People and Education Committee

---

Meeting Venue:

**Committee Room 3 – Senedd**

---

Meeting date:

**Thursday, 13 March 2014**

---

Meeting time:

**09.15**

---

Cynulliad  
Cenedlaethol  
Cymru

National  
Assembly for  
Wales



For further information please contact:

**Marc Wyn Jones**

Committee Clerk

029 2089 8505

[CYPCommittee@wales.gov.uk](mailto:CYPCommittee@wales.gov.uk)

---

### Agenda

---

**Private Pre-meeting – 09.15 – 09.30**

**1 Introductions, apologies and substitutions (09.30)**

**2 Inquiry into Educational Outcomes for Children from Low Income**

**Households – Evidence session 8 (09.30 – 10.30) (Pages 1 – 15)**

CaST Cymru and Eirias High School

CYPE(4)-07-14 – Paper 1 – CaST Cymru

CYPE(4)-07-14 – Paper 2 – Eirias High School

Pam Boyd, Chief Executive – CaST Cymru

Dr Rachel Jones, Eirias High School (Via Video Conference)

**3 Inquiry into Educational Outcomes for Children from Low Income**

**Households – Evidence session 9 (10.30 – 11.30) (Pages 16 – 19)**

Secondary School

CYPE(4)-07-14 – Paper 3 – Sandfields Comprehensive School

CYPE(4)-07-14 – Paper 4 – Newport High School

Mike Gibbon – Headteacher at Sandfields Comprehensive School  
Karyn Keane – Headteacher at Newport High School

**4 Motion under Standing Order 17.42 to resolve to exclude the public from the meeting for the following business:**

**5 Inquiry into Childhood Obesity – consideration of draft report (11.30 – 12.00)**

**6 Additional information provided to the Committee**

**Inquiry into Educational Outcomes for Children from Low Income Households – Additional information from the Minister for Education and Skills following the meeting on 6 February (Pages 20 – 21)**  
CYPE(4)-07-14 – Paper to note 5

# Agenda Item 2

By virtue of paragraph(s) vi of Standing Order 17.42

Document is Restricted

# National Assembly for Wales

## Children, Young People and Education Committee

CYP(4)-07-14 – Paper 1 – CaST Cymru

### Inquiry into Educational Outcomes for Children from Low Income Households

#### A brief outline of CaST Cymru's parental engagement work

CaST Cymru is developing and delivering parental engagement work in the following 4 areas by providing materials, resources and training to schools/staff to deliver the programmes in their own schools/communities. This also includes 'train the trainer' models:

- **SmoothMoves** - This is a light touch support programme for year 5 and 6 parents to help them to be confident to support their child's transition to secondary school. It is suitable for general use (all parents) or for use with selected parents. It can also be used to support parents in other situations of transition, ie moving from one school to another, those with foster/Looked After Children, etc. SmoothMoves is a 5 week course usually delivered by trained staff, either teachers or teaching assistants, from primary, secondary or a combination of both.
- **Pyramid 4 Parents** - linked to our delivery of Pyramid Clubs for shy, withdrawn children lacking in self confidence, this 6 session programme provides parents with ways of building their child's self-esteem and emotional resilience. Pyramid 4 Parents is usually delivered by trained staff, either teachers or teaching assistants, from primary, secondary or combination of both. It is suited for use with parents of children in years 3 to 6.
- **FastForward** - is a nurture based intervention for families in years 5 and 6 who are identified as being vulnerable, in preparation for the challenges/additional stress associated with transition to secondary school. It has been developed in conjunction with schools and families. FastForward runs after school, once a week for 6-8 weeks and provides a nurturing space for a small group of year 5/6 children and their parent/carers to spend time together. Although structured, the focus of this "non-intervention, intervention" is to provide a protected nurtured space for parents and children alike to be together and as a group share and address their worries and concerns. FastForward works with a maximum of 6 families and is delivered by a team of 3 trained staff (minimum), one from each of primary, the 'receiving' secondary and CastCymru, or designated partner. This programme has been successfully piloted in Conwy over the past 2 years.
- **Consultancy** to individual schools to support their development of specific areas of parental engagement. This is often as part of a broader 'package' of support to an individual or cluster of schools and also as part of Communities First priorities.

The above work is beneficial to all schools but can have significant benefit for schools wishing to better address the needs and outcomes for children from low income households. There is some growing interest in developing this work as part of school Pupil Disadvantage Grant (PDG) and Communities First PDG Match Fund and includes CaST Cymru providing advice on the creation of new Family Engagement Worker type posts within schools/clusters. We have provided (without any funding) some networking opportunities for such posts and have identified this as an area for further support/development.

#### What worked well

**SmoothMoves:** Has been run extensively in England and is relatively new to Wales. There is growing interest as it simultaneously supports both transition and parent engagement.

- ✓ Can be PDG funded
- ✓ Low-cost
- ✓ Train the deliverer and train the trainer model so can be replicated within individual school settings

**Pyramid for Parents:** Has been run extensively in England and is relatively new to Wales. There is growing interest as schools are increasingly aware of the importance of both well-being and parent engagement and Pyramid for Parents supports both.

- ✓ Can be PDG funded
- ✓ Low-cost
- ✓ Train the deliverer and train the trainer model so can be replicated within individual school settings
- ✓ Supports Pyramid Clubs

**FastForward:** Has been extremely well received in its pilot phase in Conwy. Working with the child and parent together is an innovative approach.

- ✓ Families First funding has enabled this project to be piloted and developed in Conwy
- ✓ Delivering by a multi-partner team – primary, secondary and CaST Cymru
- ✓ Requirement for close working between primary and secondary
- ✓ Different approach to many interventions working with vulnerable families, a ‘non-intervention, intervention’
- ✓ Works with small groups of parents and their year 5/6 children together

**Consultancy:** This works very well with schools who have the foresight to enter into this type of arrangement with CaST Cymru. Unfortunately there are many schools that are still sceptical of working with third sector partners to effect change.

### **The challenges in taking forward work on parental engagement;**

**Funding/resourcing:** Unfortunately, there are many schools that still see PDG to fund numeracy and literacy and for maintaining support staff levels.

**Addressing the needs and outcomes for children from low income households:** Unfortunately there are many schools that still do not understand the differences between raising standards for all, addressing poverty and narrowing the gap, and the role that family and community engagement can play.

**Disjointed working :** There is the need for a forum to share good practice and develop skills and experience of teaching assistants/support staff in these new roles in parent/family engagement.

**Workforce development:** CPD and accreditation routes need to be established for staff (teaching and non teaching) working in this area.

**Evidencing impact:** Schools are still struggling to evidence the impact of their parent engagement work.

**Mixed messages:** There are mixed messages regarding the responsibility of engaging parents/families and mixed understanding of terminology – family engagement, family support and family learning.

### **The outcomes for pupils, especially any evidence of impact on educational attainment**

Children and young people need the support of families if they are to reach their potential. For some children and young people that support is still lacking for a range of reasons. Schools involved in delivering our projects and programmes report that parent/family engagement does make a difference, not only through building confidence, self –esteem and emotional well-being but by the impact that this has on educational achievement. This is particularly evident in addressing the needs and outcomes for children from low income households.

*‘It is my belief that this project has been the most successful in purposefully engaging both parents and pupils in the 16 years I have been a Headteacher. The process was so powerful that the engagement of very difficult parents was both developmental and self developing in*

*nature, the very obvious advantage was that the group dynamics developed empowering the families as the project went on. With parents actually looking forward to the sessions and providing very positive feedback. The attitude of parents has been excellent, some who had only previously had contact with the school on a superficial level now, as a consequence of the project engage more effectively for the benefit of their child....the clear evidence base of the pilot was a resounding success. More so in that I picked the most difficult families to facilitate the pilot. Imagine what could be achieved if further groups were in some way positive towards the learning experiences."*

Mike Mulvaney, head teacher Pendorlan Primary School, Fast Forward pilot with Eirias High School

*I found the team members very friendly, non-judgemental and honest and also good meeting parents in similar situations.* Year 6 Parent who took part in a FAST FORWARD group

*I have been able to discuss individual worries with parents and pupils and have already started to plan strategies to help the pupils when they come for their taster week in the summer term. I have also been able to start coordinating with relevant ALN staff within school to assist in their planning for next year. This information has been so welcomed. I would like to see this scheme extended to other of our feeder schools.*

*Dr Rachel Jones, Pupil Transition Coordinator, Ysgol Eirias*

### **Recommendations for the Committee to consider in terms of how schools can better engage with parents from low income households.**

- **Funding/resourcing:** More proactive encouragement from the Welsh Government to schools re their responsibility for the family support/engagement role and how funding can be identified and used most effectively. Provision of a funded National support service (external to WG) for schools and stakeholders
- **Addressing the needs and outcomes for children from low income households:** Clearer support to schools in understanding poverty/disadvantage and closing the gap, potentially from a national support service
- **Less disjointed working:** Expansion and formalisation of a FESW support network with termly meetings in each of the consortia, for school staff delivering parent engagement, potentially part of a national support service
- **Clearer messages:** A clearer understanding of the terminology around family/parent engagement, support, learning
- **Workforce development:** Consideration given to the workforce development needed for the above - including accreditation routes
- **Evidencing impact:** Immediate need for a guide/survey on how schools can/are evidencing the impact of parental engagement on education attainment, potentially as part of a national support service

Pam Boyd  
Chief Executive  
February 2014

## REDUCING THE IMPACT OF POVERTY ON EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT:

<b>Name of Case Study</b> CaST Cymru's Fast Forward Family project: Supporting disadvantaged child and parent at transition to secondary school
<b>Type of Setting (pre-school/ primary school/special school/secondary school/community based/family based/other)</b> Secondary school and primary school working together
<b>Summary of Case Study</b> This project has been piloted by CaST Cymru with a number of schools in a Communities First area in a north Wales LEA.  Fast Forward Family has been developed in conjunction with schools and families to help address the issues that impact on many primary children at transition to secondary school.  The first pilot was undertaken with a large successful secondary school that had identified the need to offer additional support to more vulnerable families as their children moved from primary school. The primary school has high FSM and targeted a group of parents (8) who had remained particularly hard to engage with school despite a number of interventions/approaches over previous years.  The head was the lead within the primary school and head of year 7 and assistant head, fully supported by the Headteacher in the secondary school. The programme was delivered by CaST Cymru trained Teaching Assistants from the secondary and primary school and external input including CaST Cymru staff.  The programme was initially designed for 6 sessions, covering many of the myths and perceptions experienced by both child and parent. The selected child and parent attended the sessions together. In the event, the programme was running so successfully that an additional 2 sessions were provided at the parents request.  . In practical terms this has led to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Member of secondary pastoral support team taking on enhanced links with the primary</li><li>• Teachers and TAs developing skills and expertise in working with families</li><li>• Positive engagement with families that were traditionally the hardest to engage</li><li>• New working contacts and communication routes being established between staff in primary and secondary school</li><li>• New screening procedures being jointly devised to identify those families who could benefit most from such intervention</li><li>• Improved understanding of the transition process for children, teachers, TAs, parents</li><li>• Improved transition process for the children who settled in better than expected to secondary school</li><li>• Removal of many of the negative perceptions of transition</li><li>• Parents changing their secondary school choice to the school involved</li><li>• Increased parent engagement with schools</li></ul> The secondary school aims to introduce the programme for all main feeder primary schools

<p>The secondary school is now providing Pyramid Clubs for year 7 children.</p>
<p><b>Brief description of geographical/community context</b> One secondary and one primary in Communities First area</p>
<p><b>Description of the intervention undertaken.</b></p> <p>Support provided between April 2012 and March 2014.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Schools identified</li> <li>• Staff identified and trained (school staff and external staff)</li> <li>• Families selected on basis of staff knowledge with FSM targeted</li> <li>• Sessions run in primary school and secondary school including 'meet the head'</li> <li>• Post club data gathered</li> </ul> <p>Additional pilots have since been undertaken</p>
<p><b>Funding of the intervention.</b> Families First funding</p>
<p><b>Future development of the intervention ( including plans or potential to roll-out to other settings)</b> The current funding ends in March 2014. Additional sources of funding being explored.</p> <p>All schools involved in the pilot wish to continue and looking at PDG funding.</p> <p>Potential to roll out nationally if sufficient funding was available. Needs 'core' to complete development and promote.</p> <p>Development of accredited training for staff</p>
<p><b>Evidence of Impact</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved confidence, self esteem and well being in family</li> <li>• Improved transition process including settling in to secondary school</li> <li>• Individual children's personal success stories</li> <li>• Individual parents personal success stories</li> <li>• Increased engagement of parents</li> <li>• Improved confidence, self esteem and motivation of children – enhancing their learning</li> <li>• Skills development for staff</li> </ul>
<p><b>Key Contact</b> Pam Boyd, Chief Executive CaST Cymru</p> <p>pam.boyd@castcymru.org.uk</p>

## **National Assembly for Wales**

### **Children, Young People and Education Committee**

**CYP(4)–07–14 – Paper 2 – Eirias High School**

#### **Inquiry into Educational Outcomes for Children from Low Income Households**

**Review of Fast Forward/Pyramid – a collaborative project run by Ysgol Eirias (secondary) and Ysgol Pendorlan (feeder primary) – funded by CaST Cymru.**

#### **Background to the project:**

Angela Davies (CaST Cymru) worked with the head teacher of Ysgol Pendorlan (primary school) to identify a small group of parents and children who were deemed to be disadvantaged and would possibly struggle with the transition from primary to secondary. These parents and children were then invited to attend a weekly activity based group (Fast Forward) held at the primary school.

Dr Rachel Jones, Pupil Transition Coordinator at Ysgol Eirias (secondary school) was invited to attend one of the meetings and to run a Question and Answer session with the parents and pupils.

Rachel Jones does make regular visits to meet the Y6 pupils and their teachers but only normally has the opportunity to meet parents if they come along to the induction evening at the secondary school in July of Year 6. Past experience has shown that parents from disadvantaged backgrounds find it difficult to attend these large meetings due to a variety of reasons e.g anxiety, child care commitments, work commitments, it might have been the secondary school they attended and they didn't have a very positive experience.

The Q and A session went extremely well. It was well attended by parents and they were able to ask questions centred around their main concerns about the transition to secondary school. The main concerns were related to homework, discipline/detention, punctuality, uniform, PE kit and bullying. Rachel Jones was able to prepare resources beforehand and took along examples of uniform, PE kit, school bags and pupil planners.

The group were then invited to visit the secondary school on a subsequent session. The primary head teacher brought the pupils up in their mini bus and parents made their own way. Again the session was well attended. Pyramid trained 6<sup>th</sup> formers planned a series of activities for the pupils whilst the parents took part in a relatively informal discussion with staff from Ysgol Eirias. The session was overseen by Rachel Jones (Pupil Transition Coordinator) and was attended by Angela Davies (CaST), Phil McTague (Ysgol Eirias head teacher), Mike Mulvaney (Ysgol Pendorlan head teacher), Louise Kerfoot-Robson (Ysgol Eirias ALNCO) and David Bowen-Jones (Ysgol Eirias Head of Year 7). The parents were relaxed because they had met Dr Jones before and were willing to open up and discuss any concerns that they had. Again they required reassurance about the routine of the day, expectations that the secondary school has on attendance and punctuality, bullying and how it is dealt with. The secondary school had the opportunity to explain about the different support mechanisms that they offer. All parents and pupils were asked by CaST Cymru to evaluate the course and feedback was very positive.

The success of the first Fast Forward group meant that Angela Davies went onto select another group and Ysgol Eirias had the same input as before.

**The challenges in taking the work forward:**

- To maintain the positive relationship with the parents/carers
- To inspire the pupil to aspire to reach their full potential
- To maintain the atmosphere that pupils are seen as individuals even though they are now part of a much larger school community

Ysgol Eirias are taking many innovative steps to address these issues.

- A Pyramid group has been set up in Year 7 - funded initially by CaST Cymru. Some pupils who will attend have already had experience of Fast Forward. Others pupils will have attended other feeder schools and this will be their first experience of an intervention group.
- The Year 7 Pastoral team publishes Form Tutor Focus groups each term. The form tutor is asked to monitor pupils within their class on a variety of issues ranging from attendance, punctuality, homework completion through to friendship issues. The form tutors then report back to the team at Learning Team meetings and the groups of pupils are reviewed on a termly basis. Letters are sent home to inform the parent that their child is receiving extra support and they are invited to phone school or come in for a meeting if they feel the need to discuss the intervention further.
- Ysgol Eirias collects Midyis data on the pupils as they enter Year 7. This data, along with other data received from the primary school, allows the school to identify the MAT pupils. The Head of Learning then writes to inform the parents that their child has been highlighted as being MAT and that staff will be working with them to ensure that they reach their full potential.

**The positive outcomes:**

The pupils who participated in the scheme, have in the main, settled in well and are progressing well. They continue to build positive relationships with staff and pupils around them. In some cases, the pastoral team still monitors their individual progress closely and are in regular phone contact with some parents that they have met at the sessions.

Approximately 80% of the parents who attend fast Forward also attended the first parents evening at Ysgol Eirias that was held in the October of Year 7. This exceeded all expectations and it was felt that the parents had remained positively engaged with Ysgol Eirias even over the summer break.

The Year 7 pastoral team have found that this particular group of parents are also more willing to contact school with any concerns that they have. They have been found to be very accepting of any support or advice given.

Rachel Jones has liaised with Michelle Jayman, a PhD student working with a team at the School of Psychology, Social Work and Human Science, University of West London. As part of Ms Jayman's research, she is conducting an evaluation of the impact of Pyramid club interventions on the emotional well-being of pupils in early secondary education. In addition to assessing this primary outcome, the

research will examine the effect of socio-emotional health on other domains, specifically pupils' educational performance. Ysgol Eirias have agreed to supply data to Ms Jayman and she will in turn analyse the data and present back to the school.

Dr Rachel Jones  
21<sup>st</sup> February 2014

# Agenda Item 3

## National Assembly for Wales

### Children, Young People and Education Committee

#### CYP(4)–07–14 – Paper 3 – Sandfields Comprehensive School

#### Inquiry into Educational Outcomes for Children from Low Income Households

##### Sandfields Comprehensive parental engagement

1. Scheduled events published on web easy access for parents.
2. Learning resources accessible through web site.
3. Use of texting system to inform parents on variety of issues.
4. Open door policy.
5. Pastoral behaviour system integrated into intranet hub of school life early identification of issues/allows early strategic intervention with parents. Parents have restricted access to appropriate areas linked to pupil progress.
6. Pastoral systems holds wealth of data on pupil progress informs confident intervention/support with parents.
7. Structure to pastoral system roles clearly defined, supported with effective data.
8. Induction programme KS2/3 has unique role of transition teacher establishes parental contact pre year 7.
9. Induction programme new intake evening outlines expectations of parental role.
10. Bespoke designed pupil planners, effective link to home with tips on learning.
11. Positive discrimination of feel good events involving parental visits to school to participate in and observe pupil achievements including ERP provision.
12. On site adult learning centre promotes lifelong learning and breaks down barriers to education which in turn alters parental perceptions of schooling.
13. Significant promotion of positive reinforcement of pupil achievements cumulating in 300+ awards given in presentation evening, resulting in large parental participation.
14. Close partnership with other agencies such as team around the child to challenge and support parents.
15. Bespoke roles such as youth support worker, behaviour support LSA, school counsellor, EWO and learning coach offer another dimension to engagement of parents. The Bridge nurture group targets and supports specific parents.
16. Positive use of exclusions to engage parents and establish mutually agreed action plans.
17. Revision sessions for parents to aid pupil KS4 learning.
18. SMT “take the mountain to Mohammed” in specific cases ensuring contact with parents, by, visiting them at home announced or unannounced.
19. Welcoming well trained administration staff at front of house promote ethos of school and place parents at ease, establishing a critical friend role with the confidence to advise and support.
20. Effective use of PDG grant within constraints imposed.

## Parental engagement at Newport High School - A whole school strategy

At Newport High, we recognise parents as essential partners in their child's learning. We view parental involvement as an integral part of our work to improve students' achievement, attendance and behaviour. Over the last three years we have worked to develop a range of approaches to improve parental engagement, particularly in relation to those parents who rarely become involved in their child's education. This paper details five of the whole school strategies implemented to address this priority.

### Context

Feedback from a parental survey highlighted that other than termly progress reports or whole school letters, many parents rarely received any communication from the school. Consequently, we recognised that if the school wanted to increase the level of parental engagement, it was essential that we introduce a range of strategies to improve our communication and links with all parents.

### School strategy 1: Transition into Year 7

Our Year 7 curriculum has been designed with the aim of ensuring students feel safe, happy and successful from the start of their secondary education. Students work with their Tutor for over half of their timetable covering the English, History, Geography, Religious Studies, ICT and PSE elements of the National Curriculum. To complement this, students access specialist teaching in Maths, Science, PE, Design & Technology, Welsh, French and Music. This means that Year 7 students will be taught by around eight teachers, more than in primary school but less than in many secondary schools. This approach ensure that the child's Tutor is the person who teaches them the most, knows them the best and as the named first point of contact, gets to know their family well.

Year 7 tutor groups are made up of students from usually two but no more than three feeder primary schools. To build good relationships with students before they start Year 7, Tutors visit primary feeders one lesson per fortnight during the summer term; teaching, team-teaching and meeting parents.

This approach - a small number of key teachers who get to know students and their families from Year 6 onwards, helps to ensure students feel well-known and also helps to build relationships with families prior to transition to Newport High.

Parental surveys on the transition process and first month of Year 7 provide a clear indication of the success of this approach.

#### Y6 into Y7 Transition Survey (completed after 1 month at Newport High School)

	2012	2013
My child has settled well into Newport High School	68% strongly agree 30% agree	66% strongly agree 34% agree
The Tutor's visits in Year 6 were helpful	62% strongly agree 37% agree	61% strongly agree 37% agree
I have had contact with my child's tutor since the start of term (in the last 4 weeks)	32% strongly agree 29% agree	25% strongly agree 25% agree
I know who to contact if I have any concerns	51% strongly agree 41% agree	50% strongly agree 42% agree

### School strategy 2: Home Contact

Each teaching member of staff has a one hour Home Contact session on their timetable. During this session, three positive telephone calls are made to parents of students in the member of staff's tutor group. One other call is made sharing any concerns they may have. This gives a 3:1 ratio of positive and negative phone-calls made to parents. The positive phone-call is intended to highlight one encouraging aspect of the students' academic achievement, approach to school life, behaviour, etc. All home contacts are logged on the school Management Information System (MIS) to allow effective tracking of this practice. If a Teacher is unable to reach the parent by phone then a card, letter or email is also sent.

### Number of Home Contact Phone Calls/Messages made 2010-2014

Academic Year	Positive	Negative	Total
2010-2011	10923	1591	12514
2011-2012	13316	1998	15314
2012-2013	15887	1452	17339
2013-2014 (to 31.01.14)	7568	724	8292

Analysis of data shows that positive phone calls home are now an embedded feature of our school practice.

#### School strategy 3: Family Engagement Officer

In order to increase the level of engagement of parents of those students eligible for free school meals (eFSM) and those facing deprivation, the role of Family Engagement Officer (FEO) was introduced. This role is currently a Pupil Deprivation Grant (PDG) funded position. The FEO is tasked with:

- increasing the involvement in school life of the parents and families of eFSM students;
- working closely with pastoral staff if there is a need to improve the attainment, behaviour and attendance of these students; and
- providing a link between home and school.

Where eFSM students are targeted to achieved Level 2 threshold including English and Maths their families are prioritised for support.

A key element of the work of the FEO has focused on providing opportunities for parents to learn how to meet the educational needs of their children through the provision of community and school based workshops. These include revision and study skills workshops and parenting workshops.

#### School strategy 4: Parents' meetings to review academic progress

Annual meetings with parents to discuss their child's academic progress are an integral part of the school calendar. The school views these meetings as an opportunity to share with parents details of progress made, targets for improvement and how we can work together to support their child's learning.

Parental attendance at traditional style academic review meetings previously averaged 30%. We discussed with parents their reasons for non-attendance at these events and learned that many parents were reluctant to attend meetings where they may be expected to talk to specialist teachers about a subject they lacked confidence in.

We worked with parents to develop academic review days and now host two of these each year, one in the autumn term and another in the spring term. Each parent is asked to arrange an appointment at a time between 8.30am and 8.00pm. They then meet with their child's Tutor and discuss academic progress in all subjects in a meeting that lasts between 10-15 minutes. If parents wish to access subject specific advice they are able to attend a subject surgery held on the same day. Consecutive appointments are also made on the same day to complete Individual Education Plan (IEP) reviews or Additional Needs reviews with relevant students and parents. Parental attendance to Academic Review Days now averages 77%.

#### School Strategy 5: Parents' meetings to provide information and support with learning

In addition to Academic Review Days we aim to provide regular parent workshops and learning events. At a meeting held for Year 10 parents during the previous academic year, families were invited to meet with key staff to learn about the GCSE Maths and English exam, its structure and assessment and to access revision and support materials for their son/daughter. 20% of the parents who were invited to this workshop attended on the evening. Similarly, we held an English and Maths progress evening for a target group of Year 11 parents with 32% of those invited attending on the evening.

We discussed with parents their reasons for non-attendance at both events and learned that many parents were reluctant to attend parents' meetings when they were invited by senior staff, this gave the impression of a formal event and again, one where they may be expected to talk to specialist teachers.

We made use of these findings at the English and Maths workshop held for Year 11 parents earlier this year. On

this occasion, the FEO contacted all parents by phone as a follow up to the letter sent out. The FEO also arranged to meet with those parents who were reluctant to attend and sit with them at the meeting and offered a follow up workshop. 46% of the parents who were invited to this workshop attended on the evening including a number of parents of eFSM learners we had been unsuccessful in engaging prior to this.

### Conclusion

If the school wishes to engage as many of its parents as possible it is essential that current practice is consistently refined and views from parents both sought and acted upon. Feedback from parents has helped us to identify that when meetings have a generic focus on providing information about school or progress, there is good support from parents. When meetings allow parents and staff to meet and discuss subject-based information, attainment or progress, there are lower levels of parental support. It is therefore essential for us to make use of both styles of activity if we are to engage all parents and ensure they can support their child’s learning.

As part of our November 2013 Estyn Inspection, parents were asked to complete a questionnaire. Their feedback highlights the impact of our approach.

	Number of respondents	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
I am kept well informed about my child’s progress	51	35%	49%	10%	0%	6%
I feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions, suggestions or a problem	51	53%	43%	0%	0%	4%

We have yet to engage all parents, but nevertheless acknowledge this is a strategic responsibility and consequently are working towards completion of the Investors on Families Award in recognition of this.

Huw Lewis AC / AM  
Y Gweinidog Addysg a Sgiliau  
Minister for Education and Skills



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref: SF-HL-0112-14

Ann Jones AM,  
Chair,  
Children, Young People and Education Committee,  
Cardiff Bay.  
CF99 1NA

03 March 2014

Dear Ann,

## **Children and Young People Committee: Inquiry into Educational Outcomes for Children from Low Income Households**

During my meeting with Committee on 6 February 2014, I undertook to provide further information on those schools referred to in a presentation given on the day.

In all, 5 schools were referenced during the presentation. Committee requested details, without making the identity of the schools obvious, of banding and Estyn inspection for the schools.

The first school referenced was highlighted as achieving relatively good outcomes for learners from deprived backgrounds. This school is currently in Band 3. The school's last Estyn Inspection took place in November 2010. At that time the school's performance and prospects for improvement were both rated as adequate. The school was asked to produce an action plan to demonstrate how it would address the recommendations with progress monitored by Estyn.

The second school referenced was one where both overall performance and the performance of FSM learners was low. This school is currently in Band 5. The school's last Estyn inspection took place during March 2013. At that time the school's performance was judged as unsatisfactory and prospects for improvement as adequate. The school was asked to produce an action plan to demonstrate how it would address the recommendations with progress being monitored by Estyn.

The third school was one where there were lower levels of FSM learners but as a group they seemed to be performing well. This school is currently in Band 4. Estyn last inspected the school in October 2008 and determined that the school at that time was very good with outstanding features in learners' achievements, the quality of education provided and in the leadership and management of the school.

The final two schools to be referenced were two with the lowest FSM levels of the schools represented in the presentation. The first of these is currently in Band 2. Estyn last inspected the school in March 2010 and reported that it was an outstanding school that achieves exceptionally high standards of achievement as a result of innovative and consistently high quality teaching and leadership. The second of these schools is also in Band 2 and when last inspected in March 2011 Estyn reported that performance was judged as excellent and the school's prospects for improvement were rated good.

I hope this information is helpful.

Yours sincerely



**Huw Lewis AC / AM**  
Y Gweinidog Addysg a Sgiliau  
Minister for Education and Skills