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TREFFYNNON

Closing the Gap Policy

Reviewed by: Well-being Committee

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Signed by:

(Chair of Governors)

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Philosophy

Research has shown that social disadvantage often leads to educational underperformance; and as such it is incumbent upon Schools to ensure that all pupils will have equality of opportunity and educational provision according to their circumstance in order to ensure excellence in learning experiences and future prospects.

In most cases those who underachieve and for whom the gap is particularly increased are those who are entitled to Free School meals. Not all take up that entitlement; however, they will need particular actions in their favour if they are to close the gap and the School is in a position to do this using the PDG.

What constitutes the 'Gap'?

The gap is the underperformance of pupils from deprived social & economic backgrounds, traditionally identified by their entitlement to free school meals (FSM), compared to other pupils within the school.

Evidence:

Joseph Rowntree Foundation

Poverty and Low Educational Achievement in Wales:

Student, Family and Community Interventions 2013 [Page4]

- Living in poverty has a major impact upon levels of educational achievement in Wales. The most widely-used indicator of the number of children who live in relative poverty in Wales is the percentage receiving free school meals (FSM). On average this is about 17 per cent of children in Wales.
- The educational performance of these children compared with those who come from more prosperous backgrounds, provides clear evidence of the effect of poverty on achievement.
- Educational under-achievement by children living in poverty in Wales can be seen as early as the age of three, when they enter nursery. Here the scores in standardised tests for those on FSM can be up to a year behind those of children not receiving FSM. This gap is often closed in the early years of primary education, but it widens again by the age of eleven.
- At ages 14 and 15/16, standardised tests and examination results reveal that on average there is a gap of 32 to 34 per cent between what children living in poverty achieve compared with other children (Egan, 2012b; Estyn, 2010).

- The percentage of 15 year olds achieve the equivalent of five or more higher-grade GCSEs, including English (or Welsh) and Mathematics is increasingly regarded as a key indicator of educational attainment. This is because having literacy and numeracy skills at this level is critically important for progression to further study and into employment. Here, too, there is a significant gap in achievement. In 2011, for example, 21 per cent of young people receiving FSM in Wales achieved this outcome compared with 55 per cent not receiving FSM.
- Findings for 15 year olds in Wales participating in the OECD's (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) PISA programme (Programme for International Assessment) point to broadly similar trends (Bradshaw et al., 2007 and 2010).

Policy Statement

Ysgol Treffynnon will ensure that social disadvantage does not impact upon educational experience, progress and achievement.

Policy Aims

Ysgol Treffynnon will provide a focus on the development of disadvantaged pupils with regard to literacy and learning skills and the Development of their social and emotional skills.

Ysgol Treffynnon will adopt strategies to improve their attendance, punctuality and behaviour and to tailor the curriculum to their needs.

Ysgol Treffynnon will listen to the needs of disadvantaged pupils and provide enriching experiences as well as provide opportunities for them to play a full part in the school's life.

Ysgol Treffynnon will engage parents and carers of disadvantaged pupils – e.g. communicating and working face-to-face to help them and their children to overcome barriers to learning.

Ysgol Treffynnon will develop the expertise of staff to meet the needs of disadvantaged pupils.

Ysgol Treffynnon will ensure that full use is made of all Government and local Grants in pursuance of closing the poverty gap in order to improve the life experiences of these pupils and encourage their engagement with the School.

Aims

All Teaching and Support Staff will be aware that pupils who are most to fall into the 'Gap' are principally Boys, FSM, and LAC and all Heads of Faculty, Key Stage Leaders and Subject Area Teachers will identify these pupils and make appropriate provision.

All Teachers will work to close the 'Gap' by using Data to track progress of FSM, LAC and Boys compared with Girls. They will ensure lessons have differentiated activities and questioning together with features which allow FSM and Boys who are likely to underachieve to make good progress and Close the Gap.

All Schemes of Work will allow for either, more boy centred themes to be explored or, more boy friendly activities as part of a differentiated approach to learning and questioning.

Social and Emotional Skills will be developed by targeted action and specialist support, provision and intervention either, from inside School or, from external agencies with Specialist Staff input.

Excellent punctuality, attendance and behaviour will be supported by monitoring from Heads of Faculty, Key Stage Leaders and Subject Area Teachers; Key Stage Leaders will take the lead in liaising with colleagues. Appropriate action will be taken in accordance with the relevant School Policies.

Specific Curriculum needs will be met by tailoring the curriculum to fit the requirements of these pupils and the most suitable learning pathway will be put in place for them. Their Form Teachers and Key Stage Leaders will support them throughout and Heads of Faculty will focus on their progress and possible interventions to support learning and attainment.

Enriching experiences for these pupils will be provided and the School will ensure that they gain equity of access, by ensuring the SEG/PDG is spent in a targeted way to support such enrichment and also to ensure that regular activities and experiences take place annually either, within faculties or, across the School.

The School Council will be inclusive and wholly representative and that, where this has not happened and is necessary, FSM, Boys and LAC pupils will have opportunities to express their opinion via alternative canvassing strategies.

The School will ensure that parents of disadvantaged pupils are engaged more directly through the work of the Parental Support Adviser and that they engage fully with initiatives.

All Staff will have appropriate CPD and guidance which will allow Staff to make provision appropriate to the needs of disadvantage pupils.

Bibliography:

- Estyn - Effective practice in tackling poverty and disadvantage in schools November 2012
- Estyn - Promoting good practice in tackling poverty and disadvantage INSET materials for secondary schools May 2014
- Estyn - Pupil deprivation May 2014
- Estyn - Tackling child poverty and deprivation in schools January 2010
- Estyn - Tackling poverty and disadvantage in schools: working with the community and other services July 2011
- Estyn - Working together to tackle the impact of poverty on educational Achievement December 2013
- Joseph Rowntree Foundation
Poverty and Low Educational Achievement in Wales:
Student, Family and Community Interventions 2013
- At What Cost? Exposing the Impact of Poverty on School Life Through young Eyes – The Children’s Commission on Poverty October 2014

Ysgol Treffynnon Policies

AMF Policy

Attendance Policy and Action Plan

Literacy and Numeracy Policy

Respecting Others Policy