

**s c r u t i n y**



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**A Report of the  
Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee**

**The Impact of Poverty on Educational  
Attainment In Cardiff**

**May 2013**



**Cardiff Council**

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## CHAIR'S FOREWORD

The Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee agreed to undertake a Task and Finish Inquiry into educational attainment and poverty as part of its 2012-2013 work plan.

The committee recognises that children have very different socio economic backgrounds and as a result, their educational outcomes inevitably differ. However, education is the prime route out of poverty and high quality education can ensure children and young people achieve the learning outcomes they need. A good quality education can also ensure that children and young people become socially and economically active citizens.

Although child poverty has reduced throughout Wales, it still affects more than one in four children. Disadvantaged children are not enjoying the rate of progress experienced by privileged peers. The link between low educational attainment and deprivation is well known, however, there are strategies and innovative policies that can address the low attainment rates for children from poorer backgrounds. School experiences for children and their parents can be key in increasing the social and educational divide and the committee felt that the education service should ensure children have a positive, nurturing and stimulating environment in order to address the link between the educational attainment and poverty.

The Welsh Government launched 'Our Tackling Poverty Action Plan 2012 – 2016' in 2012. It set out three key objectives which include prevent poverty, help people to improve their skills to secure employment and mitigate the impact of poverty. In addition the three priorities for education within the action plan include improved literacy skills, improved numeracy levels and breaking the link between educational attainment and poverty. The committee felt that the task and finish inquiry would identify how the education service is meeting the priorities of the Welsh Government's action plan.

The inquiry received evidence from a range of sources including the Welsh Government, Save the Children, People and Work Unit, Cardiff University, Families First, Cardiff Youth Council, Student Volunteering Cardiff, Flying Start, ISOS partnership and a number of Cardiff Primary and Secondary schools. I wish to express my thanks to all those who contributed to this Inquiry, either in person or in writing. I also thank fellow committee members and scrutiny officers for their hard work during this Inquiry.

The task and finish report into educational attainment and poverty sets out key findings and recommendations that will assist and support Cardiff Council to ensure the educational outcomes of all children are improved and every child's outcomes, regardless of their socioeconomic background, reflect their true potential.



**Councillor Siobhan Corria**

Chairperson, Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee

## INTRODUCTION

On July 26<sup>th</sup> 2012 the Members of the Committee met to consider items and issues for inclusion on the work programme for the forthcoming municipal year. It was agreed to undertake inquiry an in-depth inquiry into the subject of Educational Attainment in Cardiff's Schools.

In scoping this inquiry it became apparent that the agreed brief was too broad and on reflection scrutiny officers felt that this may make it challenging to deliver outcomes on all the areas initially agreed. A briefing paper was received by Committee on 11<sup>th</sup> September 2012 which outlined the range of issues that fall under the broad heading of Educational Attainment in Cardiff, and required the Members of the Committee to agree a more focussed scope for the task and finish inquiry to be undertaken.

The Committee was particularly interested in exploring the figures showing that pupils eligible for Free School Meals (FSM) are outperformed by those not eligible at each key stage in Cardiff schools, and it was agreed to undertake an in-depth inquiry into the links between poverty, deprivation and the educational attainment of young people in Cardiff schools.

The agreed scope of this inquiry focussed on assisting Members to develop a comprehensive understanding of the issues faced by young people living in poverty, specifically in relation to their educational attainment, and the barriers it creates. The inquiry was also to focus on initiatives that have successfully helped young people living in poverty overcome these barriers and achieve their full potential.

## INQUIRY TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Inquiry was undertaken with the following terms of reference:

To explore how to close the attainment gap in Cardiff created by deprivation and poverty (where the attainment gap refers to the difference in educational attainment achieved by pupils eligible for free school meals [FSM], compared with those who are not). The Task and Finish group will:

1. Gain an understanding of:

- How poverty can be defined and how many young people in Cardiff are affected
- Why poverty has an effect on the educational attainment of young people
- The scale of the educational attainment gap in Cardiff and how it is linked to poverty and deprivation
- Initiatives the Council has in place to address the barriers to attainment created by poverty.

2. Consider evidence from teachers, schools management, governors, student representatives and other key stakeholders.

3. Examine good practice and successful initiatives in Cardiff and across comparable local authorities in the UK.

4. Use the evidence collected above to make informed recommendations to the Cabinet and other relevant stakeholders aimed at closing the attainment gap created by poverty in Cardiff.

5. Report the findings of the Committee to the Cabinet and stakeholders.

Members of the Task & Finish Group were:

- Councillor Siobhan Corria (Chair)
- Councillor Bill Kelloway
- Councillor Sue Lent
- Councillor Cecelia Love
- Councillor Chris Davis
- Mrs Patricia Arlotte – Co-opted Member (Roman Catholic Representative).

## KEY FINDINGS

Having received evidence from 19 different witnesses, visited 10 schools in Cardiff and undertaken a visit to Swansea Council, the following were identified as key findings for the Inquiry:

### The Impact of Poverty

#### Overview

- KF1. Poverty is more than a lack of financial resources and income; it can also mean a lack of material, cultural and social resources which affect the aspirations, experiences and life opportunities of individuals. The European Union's definition of poverty states that, "*People are said to be living in poverty if their income and resources are so inadequate as to preclude them from having a standard of living considered acceptable in the society in which they live. Because of their poverty they may experience multiple disadvantages through unemployment, low income, poor housing, inadequate health care and barriers to lifelong learning, culture, sport and recreation.*"<sup>1</sup>
- KF2. Research was commissioned with the Cardiff Youth Council as part of this Inquiry. A 'youth friendly' definition of poverty was developed by the young researchers to help the individuals consulted understand the issue being considered. The definition of poverty developed was, "Poverty is not only about a lack of money but also an unacceptable level of other things such as belongings, friendship, family, support and lifestyle needs."
- KF3. It is widely acknowledged that there is a link between poverty and low educational attainment. This is evidenced through what is known as the 'attainment gap' – the difference in attainment between children eligible for

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<sup>1</sup> Joint Report by the Commission and the Council on Social Inclusion, 2004

free school meals and those not eligible. Free school meal eligibility is widely accepted as the best available proxy indicator for young people who live in poverty. In Wales there is a 34% attainment gap at Key Stage 4 between pupils receiving free school meals and those who are not.

- KF4. The relationship between poverty and educational attainment is complex, with a large number of variables influencing each young person's attainment at school. Poverty is linked to, but not causal to, poor educational attainment. Being born into a deprived area does not have to automatically mean that a person will not achieve academically, and work is being done to show that this link can be broken.
- KF5. The impact of poverty on young people has been known for many years, and it has been the aspiration of many governments to address the problem. There are, however, still significant numbers of young people living in poverty. A new approach is needed where services are built around the whole family; schools, libraries, voluntary organisations, family support services all need to work together in order to make an impact on the effects of poverty on educational attainment.

## **Barriers**

- KF6. Living in poverty creates a number of barriers to attainment in school that are not faced by young people from more affluent backgrounds. These can be categorised as material, social and personal barriers. Material barriers include a lack of educational resources at home, such as books, internet access, and a lack of money to pay for school trips and experiences. Social barriers include a poor home learning environment, and low levels of parental education and support for education. Personal barriers include low self esteem, lack of confidence, and a lack of social and emotional maturity. If these barriers can be addressed, there is no reason why young people can't achieve at school.
- KF7. Addressing the impact of poverty on educational attainment in Cardiff is

made more complex by the additional barriers created through the diverse range of cultural and ethnic backgrounds. For many young people, English is an additional language and their parents may not be able to understand what their child is learning and therefore be unable to provide the support needed. Schools in Cardiff are using a number of initiatives to address these barriers and engage with parents who do not have the necessary English skills, including the employment of staff who share the same ethnic background, and using sixth form pupils who speak both English and community languages.

KF8. Parents, families and the home environment have a significant impact on the educational attainment of young people. The major source of careers advice a young person receives is from their parents and a child is highly influenced by their parents' attitude towards, and value of, education and school. It is, therefore, vitally important for schools to actively engage and reach out to parents, making them feel involved with their child's education. This process can promote a positive relationship between home and school and provide enhanced opportunities for parents to support their child's learning.

### **Impact of Poverty on Educational Attainment**

#### **Impact**

KF9. Poverty is linked to delayed development. This leaves young people from a lower socio-economic background behind those from a wealthier background prior to entering education, with studies showing a gap in development by the age of 18 months. Before reaching his or her second birthday, a child from a poorer family is already more likely to show a lower level of attainment than a child from a wealthier family, and is more likely to leave school at 16 with fewer qualifications

KF10. This 'attainment gap' is then present throughout a person's life and widens as they progress through the school system. Intervention is required to support families from a deprived background as early as possible. Schools,

alone, cannot have full responsibility for narrowing the attainment gap, so a holistic approach is required which includes school level interventions as well as programmes which focus on parents and the wider community.

KF11. The barriers to attainment created by poverty do not impact on a young person in isolation, but can have a negative cumulative effect. A young person may miss school for health reasons, fall behind in school and not receive support or challenge at home to catch up. As a result they may not understand what is going on in lessons when they return, get bored, become disruptive, be taken out of the class, and fall further behind; this cycle can repeat itself if action is not taken to address the barriers. The effects of poverty are unique to each child and the support they receive must reflect their individual needs.

KF12. Research shows that the aspirations of poorer young people are not radically different to those of other students. However, a difference becomes apparent in understanding how to achieve these aspirations, what role education plays, its links to their future employment, and the effort that is required from them as a learner. Young people from deprived backgrounds are less likely to be exposed to the breadth of the labour market and may lack the support and role models they require in their home environment.

### **Free School Meals**

KF13. Children and young people whose parents or carers receive certain benefits, are entitled to free school meals. Free school meals are a crucial entitlement as they provide a hot, nutritious meal during the day that can help children stay healthy and learn. Evidence shows that when children eat better, they perform better in class. Poor diet and hunger have a marked detrimental impact on a child's ability to reach their full potential. For many young people, the free meal they receive in school may be their only hot meal of the day.

KF14. A concern consistently highlighted throughout the Inquiry was that many young people and families who are eligible for free school meals are not claiming them. There are two gaps that exist in free school meal take-up; firstly, many families are eligible for their child to have free school meals but have not completed the necessary paperwork to claim them; secondly, there are children registered for free school meals who choose not to take them. A number of reasons have been put forward as to why this entitlement is not being claimed, including social stigma to the family, social stigma to the individual pupil, the inconvenience pupils are put under to take meals, and religious concerns surrounding the food provided.

### **Young People's Views**

KF15. The views of young people were obtained as part of this Inquiry, the majority of whom recognised that their education was important in terms of future employment and jobs. Many young people indicated that motivation and self confidence were barriers to their participation in class and their overall achievement. It was felt that schools and teachers could be doing more to support young people on a personal level, and that more could be done to raise pupils' awareness of the long term importance of their education.

KF16. These views were supported by the research from the Participation Unit<sup>2</sup> which showed that low confidence can lead to individuals acting up in lessons, and disrupting their own education as well as that of their peers. The research shows that young people who live in poverty often don't have access to a quiet, safe place with access to modern technology to study. They often feel embarrassed or shy about being poor, which discourages them from making friends and increases the likelihood of them failing to attend school.

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<sup>2</sup> Participation Unit – Small Voice : Big Story (2012)

## **Addressing Educational Attainment**

### **School Initiatives / Pupil Deprivation Grant**

KF17. Schools' focus must be on preparing young people for adult life and considering what their pupils will go on to do once they have completed statutory education. Achieving five or more GCSEs at grade A\* to C is essential for young people as it unlocks future opportunities for employment, apprenticeships, higher education and further training. This is particularly important in the present economic climate as the number of unskilled jobs is declining, and most job creation is occurring in higher skilled jobs. In Cardiff, only 18% of pupils who receive free school meals are achieving this level of educational attainment, meaning that 82% have not achieved the basic qualifications that will set them up to achieve in their adult lives.

KF18. The Pupil Deprivation Grant (PDG), introduced by Welsh Government in 2012, was aimed specifically at reducing the attainment gap by providing additional funding and support to the efforts of schools and local authorities to break the link between deprivation and educational attainment. Each school receives a grant allocation according to the number of pupils who are eligible for free school meals, with 100% of the funding going directly to school budgets. The grant equates to an additional £450 per eligible pupil. Schools have flexibility on how to spend the extra pupil deprivation funding, provided they can demonstrate it will reduce the impact of poverty on educational attainment.

KF19. In 2012/13, every school in Cardiff received an allocation of the PDG, ranging from £195,000 in one school to just over £1,500 in others. There are a variety of initiatives and schemes that schools in Cardiff are investing in through the additional PDG funding. The needs of each school and its pupils are different, so the spending by each school is different. Initiatives being invested in include pupil tracking, counselling, school trips, reading resources, family engagement officers and events, attendance officers, extending language and play schemes, and out of hours clubs.

KF20. It is vitally important that schools robustly monitor the effectiveness of initiatives put in place through their PDG allocation. It is important that the money is used to help the children in most need, ensuring it is not being mis-spent or wasted. It is also vital that the initiatives put in place have a long term effect, should the grant ever be removed; the employment of additional staff may not be a sustainable use of the grant. A number of witnesses indicated that the 2012/13 spending plans of some schools did not give enough clarity about the relationship between the activities being supported and tackling the impact of poverty on educational attainment. The Sutton Trust – Education Endowment Foundation Toolkit<sup>3</sup> is available to provide schools with evidence based advice on how to allocate funding. Welsh Government direction on how to spend the money is going to become more prescriptive in future years.

KF21. Social and emotional support is regarded by many as being just as important as initiatives that focus on the academic or cognitive elements of learning. Many schools in Cardiff have pupils who are vulnerable and their potential for learning is hindered by their confidence, self-esteem and well-being. Initiatives to target this include counselling services, increasing the number of male role models in the school, and encouraging pupils to express their opinions and feelings.

KF22. Schools are judged on the attainment of their pupils, rather than their well-being. This is a challenge for infant and primary schools in particular, where teachers and support staff may be required to teach pupils how to brush their teeth or have pupils that are still in nappies at the age of four. Schools in deprived areas must focus on more than just the academic needs of their pupils.

KF23. A number of schools visited during the Inquiry commented that much of the progress made in breaking down barriers from poverty and raising

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<sup>3</sup> Sutton Trust EEF Toolkit - <http://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/toolkit/>

attainment is lost in the transition from primary to secondary school. Pupils who have received additional emotional and academic support throughout primary school, and have caught up with pupils from a less deprived background, struggle to adjust to secondary school or do not receive the support they need. It was, however, seen that this was not the case in all schools and the transition is more successful where transitional support between primary and secondary schools begins early in year six with effective analysis of pupils' needs,.

## **Leadership**

KF24. Schools that are to be successful in deprived areas need to have a head teacher who is passionate about disadvantaged pupils, who leads from the top and provides an ambitious and positive vision for the school, embedding a culture of high expectations and professionalism. Head teachers need to introduce clear lines of responsibility so that everyone within their school is aware of their role in improving the school and narrowing the attainment gap. The senior leadership of a school must have a clear strategic view and an understanding of the school's needs in order to allocate resources in the most effective manner.

KF25. Good practice to support young people who live in poverty is undertaken in schools across Cardiff. A number of witnesses commented that the sharing of this good practice is, however, weak. It has been suggested that a 'directory of good practice' would enable schools to share practice, initiatives and success stories with one another. While inspection reports may focus on the negatives in schools, this would be a way to share and highlight the positives and create a peer support network within Cardiff.

KF26. A number of areas across the UK are moving towards the federation of schools, where a number of schools are grouped under a single executive principal/head teacher. The schools then work in partnership and collaboration to share and embed outstanding teaching and learning strategies. Staff are employed by the federation rather than by a single

school, allowing for the movement of staff between the federated schools to meet a school's needs. This is an option which is being explored by the governing bodies of Cardiff High School and Willows High School.

KF27. School governing bodies play an essential role in driving up school standards, promoting the highest standards of educational attainment and establishing the strategic framework of a school. Governing bodies must be kept well informed by school leaders, allowing them to evaluate progress being made and to ask challenging, searching questions of the head and their leadership team where necessary. Cardiff Council has a number of training opportunities available for governors of Cardiff schools. These are, however, generally poorly attended. The Welsh Government Minister for Education and Skills has expressed a commitment to mandatory induction for new governors and training for all governors.

## **Teaching**

KF28. Many commentators argue that the greatest improvement in attainment is made through changing and adopting the most effective teaching methods. The quality of teaching is essential to the whole learning experience provided by the school and the standards of teaching must be exceptional to reach those in greatest need. Schools must be working towards improvements in the quality of teaching that young people are receiving, and increasing the length of exposure pupils have to it. 'Satisfactory' teachers should be challenged to improve. It is, however, also important that the necessary help and support is in place to ensure success.

KF29. Teach First is an education charity that has partnered with schools in England for the past 10 years with the backing of the UK Government. It was founded on the basis that excellent teaching and leadership are key elements to overcoming the barriers to educational attainment that poverty creates. It aims to raise the quality and profile of the teaching profession, making teaching in challenging schools one of the most prestigious options for graduates. For the 2013/14 academic year, Teach First will be expanding

into South Wales, with the backing of the Welsh Government.

### **Free School Meals**

KF30. The figures for free school meal claimants in each school are used within the formula for allocation of the Pupil Deprivation Grant. Many schools throughout the inquiry commented that their funding is smaller than it could be because a proportion of pupils have not claimed their entitlement to free school meals.

KF31. Within primary schools, the receipt of free school meals is anonymous as all meals are prepaid and no additional transaction is required. In secondary schools, however, pupils who receive free school meals are visible and often inconvenienced by having to initially queue for free school meal tickets. As all but one school in Cardiff operate a cash-payment system for meals, pupils who receive free school meals are further singled out as they hand over vouchers instead of cash. A Council press release in April 2013 proposed that a biometric, cashless payment system is introduced into secondary schools across Cardiff which will bring benefits for pupils, parents, schools and the Catering team.

KF32. The Welsh Government Primary School Breakfast initiative was piloted in 2004 and introduced across the country in 2007. This provides a free, healthy breakfast for every participating child. Providing breakfast to those schoolchildren who don't necessarily receive it elsewhere is seen to improve their cognitive skills, enabling children to be more alert, pay better attention and perform better in class. Seventy five primary schools in Cardiff currently operate a free breakfast scheme. On average, however, only 25% of pupils take up the facility and many of the pupils that are in most need may not be receiving it.

### **Restorative Approaches**

KF33. Restorative Approaches are a range of practices used to manage behaviour

in schools. The restorative mindset presumes that challenging behaviour is a symptom of unmet needs. It allows the background to the behaviour to be understood and to get behind any issues at home. Restorative Approaches should not be an add-on to the practices of a school. They require a school wide holistic philosophy and buy-in. It is not sufficient to have one or two teachers trained in this approach. Everyone - from the head teacher to the caretaker - needs to be providing a consistent approach within the school.

KF34. Restorative Approaches have been shown to be effective in improving attendance and achievement across the UK and internationally. It reflects best practice as identified by Estyn and the Department of Education. There is a need for a clear strategy in Cardiff, which outlines a Council commitment to Restorative Approaches and sets out how schools and key partners will be trained in a consistent manner.

### **Partnership and non-school based initiatives**

KF35. Strong links exist between poor literacy and poverty. Young people from a poor background are more likely to have non-functionally literate parents, which will impact on their attitude to reading and their own literacy. Up to a quarter of 16 year olds in Cardiff fail to achieve functional literacy, and many young people are joining secondary school without the necessary literacy skills to access the curriculum. Research shows that children who are introduced to books from an early age make better progress when they get to school and that educational achievement is strongly influenced by a child's attitude towards reading. Libraries in Cardiff are places where young people can find a supportive reading environment, enjoy reading in their own space and time and find activities to stimulate learning, literacy and reading for pleasure. Resource and staff limitations, however, mean that there is only one dedicated children's librarian in Cardiff and promotional work within schools is therefore limited.

KF36. The Welsh Government aims to address the links between poverty and delayed development through Flying Start, a targeted early years programme

for families with children under four years of age who live in some of the most deprived areas of Wales. It is an important initiative for both the parent's and child's development, providing intensive health care, free part-time child care, parenting programmes and early language development.

KF37. Plans are in place to expand the number of young people reached through Flying Start by 70% over the next two years, with additional areas of Cardiff identified to be covered by the scheme.

KF38. Young people from a lower socio-economic background are less likely to have a supportive environment for learning in their homes, and a quiet area to study. Community homework clubs, such as the Adamsdown Communities First Club, supported by Cardiff University student tutors, provide an opportunity for young people to continue their learning, away from school, in a non-formal but supportive environment. Young people benefit from one-to-one support, a relaxed way of learning and the opportunity to ask questions that they wouldn't, necessarily, in a school environment.

KF39. Student Volunteering Cardiff is an independent charity, led by Cardiff University students, that aims to enhance the lives of disadvantaged and vulnerable members of the community in Cardiff. A significant number of initiatives are undertaken in partnership with schools in Cardiff, to provide additional support to pupils identified by the school, in areas such as literacy and numeracy. This provides additional support for those most in need and also provides role models for young people, who can relate to student volunteers better than their teachers.

KF40. A number of schools indicated that they take every opportunity to provide additional learning experiences to raise the aspirations of pupils, by working in partnership with other organisations. Visits to local businesses, workshops run with Cardiff-based universities, visits from authors and artists, and visits from ex-pupils were highlighted as opportunities to inspire pupils and help them understand the importance of their attainment in

school.

KF41. The development of school community hubs was mentioned at a number of schools as a potential opportunity to improve the service to families from lower socio-economic backgrounds. Often, parents miss appointments for speech and language tests, or pupils are taken out of class to meet with social services or have health checks. It was proposed that, if social workers, community police officers and/or health professionals were given a base within schools, it could improve the service provided and break down the negative perception that exists surrounding these services within the wider local community.

## **London**

KF42. Although it is important for capital cities to be leading the way for the nation, the underachievement of schools and pupils in Cardiff may be holding the city back. In 2003, the London Challenge school improvement programme was established to improve outcomes in low-performing secondary schools in London. Over the past ten years, results in London have continued to improve and the average attainment of pupils in secondary schools is above the national average. This improvement in average attainment applies to pupils eligible for free school meals and those who are not. There is no reason why this turnaround cannot be replicated in Cardiff.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Following the completion of this Inquiry, an analysis of the evidence gathered and an assessment of the key findings was undertaken. The Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee recommends that:

R1. The Authority, as a whole, acknowledges that there doesn't need to be a link between living in a deprived area and poor educational attainment, and that this link can be broken. The Cabinet must ensure that this mindset is embedded in the culture of all schools, and in all Council services that engage with young people and their families.

***Supported by Key Findings 4 and 42***

R2. The Cabinet must ensure that all schools, working closely with the Council and partner organisations, develop a holistic Family Engagement Strategy. This strategy should enable all parents to be fully engaged and involved in their child's education, break down any barriers that exist between home and school, and ensure that both parents and young people are getting the support they require.

***Supported by Key Findings 8 and 10***

R3. The Cabinet must ensure that, in spending their Pupil Deprivation Grant allocation, schools use guidance materials, such as the Sutton Trust Toolkit, to make informed decisions on the most effective use of the money they have available. Schools are accountable for the use of this money, and must be required to demonstrate the impact the spending has had, and clearly identify the future long term impact it will have for pupils who live in deprivation.

***Supported by Key Findings 18, 19 and 20***

R4. The Cabinet identify and share examples of good practice for transition of pupils from primary to secondary school across all schools in Cardiff.

***Supported by Key Finding 23***

R5. The Cabinet ensure that the quality of teaching in Cardiff schools is of the highest standard so that all children are supported to achieve educationally by:

- a. putting in place the necessary support mechanisms to enable head teachers to challenge their staff to improve, and
- b. supporting the expansion of Teach First into South Wales.

***Supported by Key Findings 28, 29 and 24***

R6. The Cabinet establish a process for sharing good practice across all schools to facilitate a culture of sharing teaching practices and initiatives that have successfully impacted upon educational attainment, and create a peer support network for teachers, support staff and governors in Cardiff.

***Supported by Key Finding 25***

R7. The Cabinet continue to explore the concept of Federated Schools, which are seen to facilitate the sharing of expertise, resources and practices.

***Supported by Key Finding 26***

R8. The Cabinet support the Welsh Government drive for effective school governors, and put in place appropriate training and support to equip governors in Cardiff with the necessary skills and confidence to drive improvements and hold school leadership to account.

***Supported by Key Finding 27***

R9. The Cabinet develop a city-wide campaign to ensure that all families who are eligible to receive free school meals are made aware of this entitlement and are supported to complete the necessary forms.

***Supported by Key Finding 13, 14 and 30***

R10. The Cabinet take every measure to remove the stigma or negativity attached to claiming free school meals, and continue to give full support and commitment to the introduction of biometric cashless catering in Cardiff secondary schools.

***Supported by Key Findings 33 and 14***

R11. The Cabinet explore strategies to raise awareness and promotion of the Free Breakfast Initiative, with a view to increase the uptake across the city and support families in most need.

***Supported by Key Finding 32***

R12. The Cabinet support a clear Council-wide commitment to the principles of Restorative Approaches within schools and other partner organisations across the city. This will include a clear vision, strategy for implementation and commitment to provide appropriate support resources.

***Supported by Key Finding 33 and 34***

R13. The Cabinet support Library Services to undertake promotion and outreach to schools so that young people have access to literature from a young age, with particular focus on deprived parts of the city.

***Supported by Key Finding 35***

R14. The Cabinet ensure that the expansion of Flying Start into communities most in need is not held back by inadequate facilities, and that the programme is delivered in the highest quality environments, recognising the importance of early intervention for young people living in poverty.

***Supported by Key Findings 36 and 37***

R15. The Cabinet support the work of volunteer organisations, such as Student Volunteers Cardiff, and raise awareness across all schools in Cardiff of the additional support they can offer.

***Supported by Key Finding 39 and 40***

R16. The Cabinet explore the possibility of co-locating health services and social services within a school setting, enabling a holistic approach to helping families in deprived communities, and raising the profile of these services.

***Supported by Key Finding 41***

R17. The Cabinet, through its responsibilities of monitoring and challenge, support school leaders to develop appropriate management and financial expertise to adapt to the increasing demands placed on schools.

***Supported by Key Finding 26***

R18. The Cabinet accepts these recommendations and in its response, identifies an action plan, including timescales, for the implementation of the accepted recommendations.

## EVIDENCE

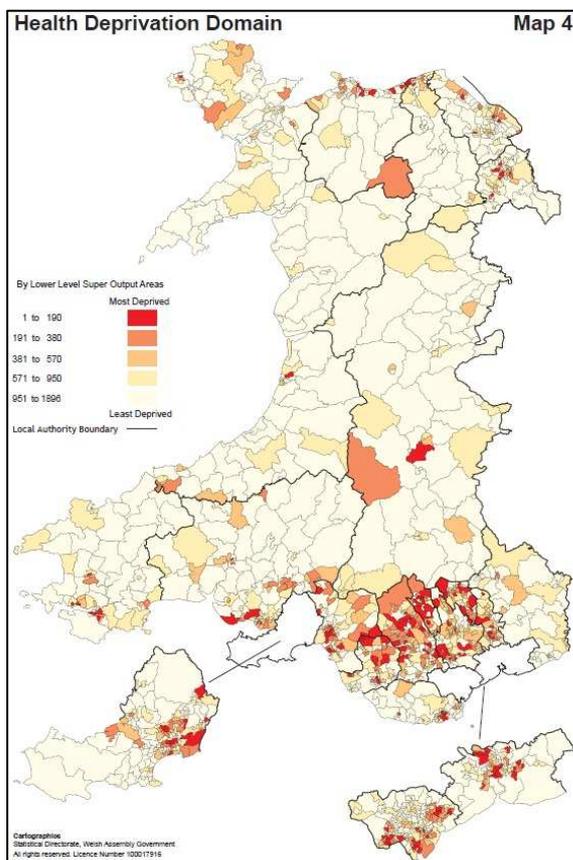
### Overview of Poverty

1. Data presented to the Members of the Inquiry shows that 31% of children and young people in Wales live in poverty, in households below average income (HBAI). These are households with income at 60% or less of the national median income. A representative of Save the Children met with the members of the Inquiry to discuss the scale of poverty that some young people are living in, and how it affects their lives. He presented figures that estimated that 18,289 young people in Cardiff live in relative income poverty; this is 26% of the 0-19 year old population of Cardiff.
2. Members were informed that living in poverty affects more than a family's ability to purchase material items. It also can create:
  - poverty of **aspirations**, where the ambitions of young people are limited by their family and peers and a defeatism exists in relation to future prospects;
  - poverty of **experiences**, where enlightening experiences such as trips to museums, the beach, and libraries are limited, or where family holidays do not happen; and
  - poverty of **opportunities**, where the opportunities for further education and future employment are restricted and diversity of social groups is limited.
3. The representative of Save the Children also informed Members that many people refuse to accept that poverty exists in the United Kingdom, with their concept of poverty framed by their understanding of poverty in many third world countries. However, according to the European Union definition of poverty, it clearly is a reality for many people in the UK; *"People are said to be living in poverty if their income and resources are so inadequate as to*

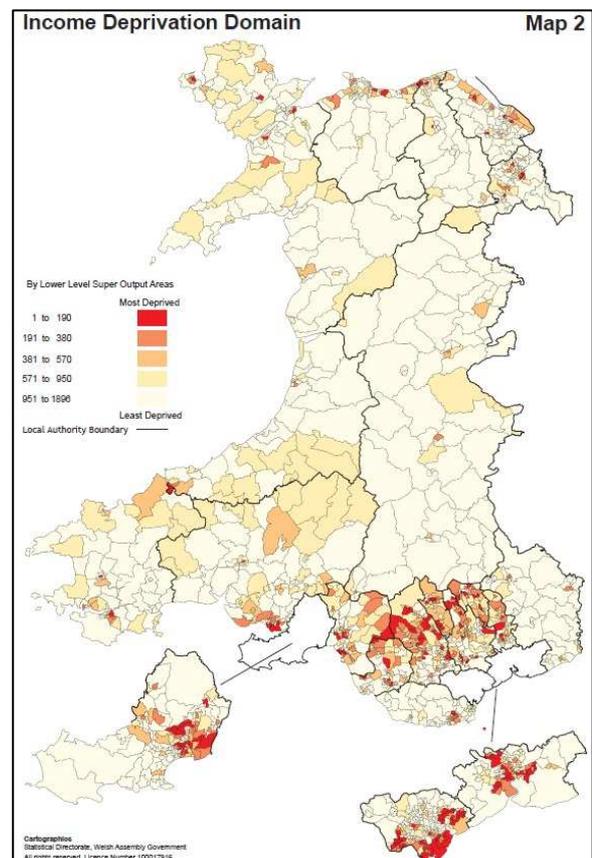
*preclude them from having a standard of living considered acceptable in the society in which they live. Because of their poverty they may experience multiple disadvantages through unemployment, low income, poor housing, inadequate health care and barriers to lifelong learning, culture, sport and recreation.*<sup>4</sup>

4. Data from the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation 2011 (WIMD), published on 31st August 2011 by the Welsh Government's Statistical Directorate can be used to map the most deprived areas in Wales in relation to a number of domains (or kinds) of deprivation. WIMD is the official measure of deprivation for small areas in Wales. Figures 1 – 3 map the most deprived areas for children in Wales in relation to income, health and educational attainment. The figures show that the same areas are deprived in each domain, and demonstrate a clear correlation (or link) between deprivation in income, health and education.

**Figure 1 - WIMD: Child Index, Health Domain**

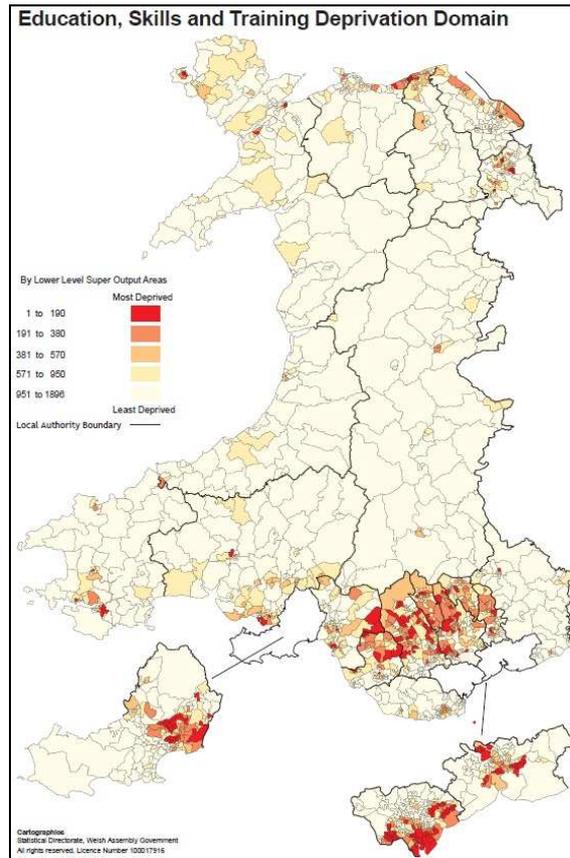


**Figure 2 - WIMD: Child Index, Income Domain**



<sup>4</sup> Joint Report by the Commission and the Council on Social Inclusion, 2004

**Figure 3 - WIMD: Child Index, Education Domain**



5. Members met with the Director of the People and Work Unit (a charity which undertakes research, evaluation and action research to identify and address economic and social issues), who informed them that poverty is linked to, but not causal to poor educational attainment. Living in poverty can be linked to delayed development, with studies showing that children from the lower socio economic groups are falling behind those from wealthier background by the age of 18 months. This evidence was supported by the Council's Chief Executive who informed members that, before reaching their second birthday, a child from a poorer family is more likely to show a lower level of attainment than a child from a wealthier family, and is more likely to leave school at 16 with fewer qualifications.
  
6. This evidence indicates that poor children are entering school with a disadvantage, and evidence shows that this disadvantage grows as a child progresses through school. Delayed development will impact on a child's ability to thrive in school because they may have lower levels of

concentration, poor communication skills, poor perception of acceptable behaviour, lower ability to adapt to different environments and weaker communication skills.

7. The Welsh Government 'Child Poverty Strategy for Wales' states that living in poverty can have an impact on the attainment of young people. *"Evidence demonstrates that income mediates with other factors that affect child development such as parental education and the home learning environment, and therefore low-income children experience poorer environments in terms of factors that would otherwise promote their cognitive, social and health development. They are more likely to begin school with deficits in their learning ability and social behaviour. As a result, they progress more slowly than their more affluent peers and achieve fewer educational qualifications, even in circumstances in which schools serve all learners equally."*<sup>5</sup>

8. One of the three strategic objectives of the Welsh Government identified within the 'Child Poverty Strategy for Wales' is:

*"To reduce inequalities that exist in health, education and economic outcomes of children and families by improving the outcomes of the poorest."*<sup>6</sup>

9. Comparison between the academic results of pupils who are eligible to receive free school meals and those who are not is widely accepted as the data used to highlight the effect that living in poverty has on a young person's educational attainment, often referred to as the 'attainment gap'. A number of witnesses recognised that, while this indicator does not fully capture the effects of poverty on education, it is the best proxy indicator available for comparison purposes. Members were informed that in Wales there is a 34% attainment gap at Key Stage 4 between pupils receiving free school meals and those who are not eligible.

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<sup>5</sup> Child Poverty Strategy for Wales, Welsh Government, Feb 2011 (page 20)

<sup>6</sup> Child Poverty Strategy for Wales, Welsh Government, Feb 2011 (page 5)

10. Statistics in the Cardiff Council Schools Performance Report 2011<sup>7</sup> show that pupils eligible for free school meals are outperformed by those not eligible at every key stage. The figures also show that this attainment gap widens as a pupil moves up through the key stages. Figures 4 and 5 show that at Key Stage 1, the attainment gap is just over 16%, while at Key Stage 4 this gap has increased to almost 38%. The data also shows that in Cardiff secondary schools, 55.4% of young people not eligible for free school meals are achieving the Level 2 threshold inclusive of English and Maths [where the Level 2 threshold is 5 GCSE's at grade A\* - C] and only 17.7% of young people who receive free school meals are achieving this level of attainment.

**Figure 4 – Cardiff 2011 Results, KS1-KS3**

	<b>KS1 - % achieving CSI</b>	<b>KS2 - % achieving CSI</b>	<b>KS3 - % achieving CSI</b>
<b>Eligible FSM</b>	69.2%	62.6%	47.6%
<b>Non-FSM</b>	85.5%	84.3%	76.1%
<b>Difference</b>	-16.3%	-21.7%	-28.5%

**Figure 5- Cardiff 2011 Results, KS4**

	<b>% ach Level 1 threshold</b>	<b>% ach Level 2 threshold</b>	<b>% ach Level 2 threshold incl. Eng/Wel &amp; Maths</b>
<b>Eligible FSM</b>	74.1%	34.4%	17.7%
<b>Non-FSM</b>	92.9%	70.6%	55.4%
<b>Difference FSM v non-FSM</b>	-18.8%	-36.2%	-37.7%

Source: All Wales Core Data Sets

11. Professor David Egan, an educational consultant and adviser who has been closely involved in education in Wales as a schoolteacher, academic, researcher and policymaker for many years, highlighted to the inquiry Members the importance of achieving this Level 2 threshold for young

<sup>7</sup> The Performance of Cardiff's Schools and the Youth Service in 2011, Cardiff Council

people. Achieving five or more GCSE's at grade A\* to C (including maths and English) unlocks the opportunity for pupils to go on to higher education, to undertake apprenticeships and to have further training opportunities. Having achieved this level of attainment "the world is your oyster", and young people can make the choices they wish. In light of this, the statistics in Figure 5 above make stark reading; 82.3% of young people in Cardiff who have grown up in poverty have not achieved the basic qualifications that unlock countless employment and training opportunities in their future.

12. Professor Egan also stressed that this level of attainment was particularly concerning in the current economic climate. A few decades ago, young people could leave school with no qualifications and find work in industry and manual labour. These jobs are, however, disappearing and being replaced with more technical or skilled jobs. Of the 130,000 jobs reported to have been created recently in Wales, the majority are middle to high end skilled jobs. These jobs would only be accessible to people who had achieved the Level 2 threshold in school.

13. The importance of achieving these grades is stressed within the Welsh Government 'Child Poverty Strategy for Wales' which states that, "*Children not gaining qualifications at school are more likely to be dependent on benefits as adults and there is strong evidence that those with disadvantaged backgrounds fare badly in terms of earnings and employment chances as young adults, even up to the age of 33.*"<sup>8</sup>

14. A literature review was commissioned with the Scrutiny Research Team to explore the relationship between educational attainment and poverty (a full copy of this report is available upon request). This report highlights that some commentators emphasise a cyclical nature of the link between poverty and low educational attainment. It points to a report by David Egan which states that:

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<sup>8</sup> Child Poverty Strategy for Wales, Welsh Government, Feb 2011 (page 19)

*“Low educational achievement itself perpetuates poverty through relegating ‘a significant proportion of the population to labour market failure and consequent patterns of low income, unemployment and benefit dependency’ (Adamson, 2008, p. 49).”<sup>9</sup>*

Low attainment in school means individuals are more likely to have worse job prospects, lower incomes and a higher likelihood of benefit dependency. Those who have low attainment in their youth are more likely to remain in poverty and their children have a higher likelihood of low attainment in the future.

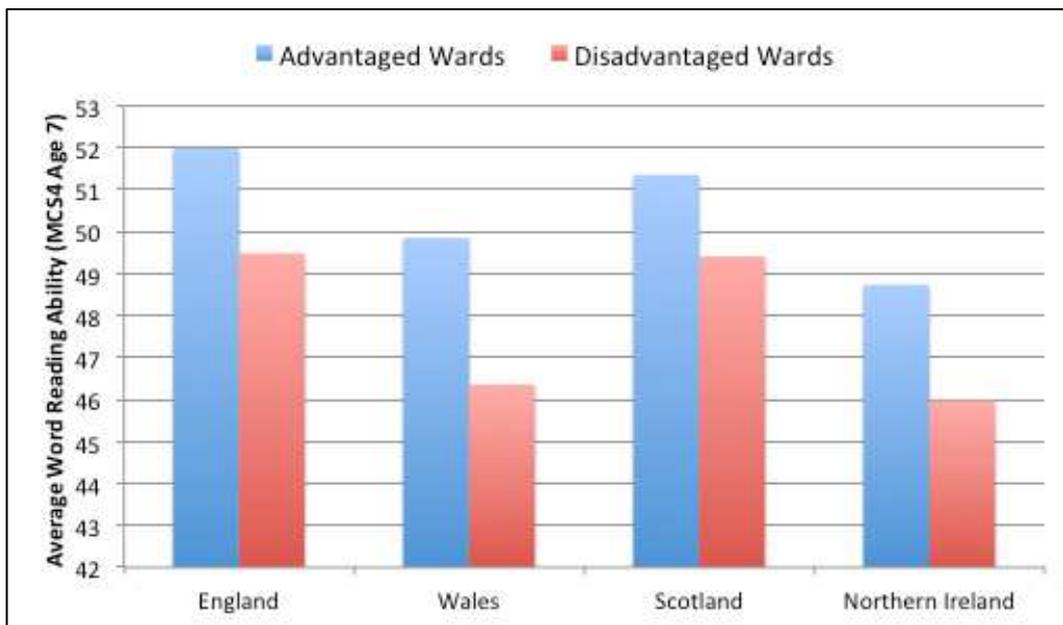
15. Professor Chris Taylor from Cardiff University School of Social Sciences met with the Members of the Inquiry to discuss the findings of the Millennium Cohort Study. The study followed a sample of young people from a number of socio-economic backgrounds across the UK born in 2000 or 2001, and an evaluation has been undertaken to see the progress they have made by the age of seven. Figure 6 shows the word reading ability of individuals at age seven in the Millennium Cohort, grouped into advantaged and disadvantaged wards within their respective countries. It shows that there is a gap in reading ability between advantaged wards and disadvantaged wards in each country in the UK. Members were concerned to note that the gap is widest in Wales, and that those in advantaged wards in Wales are attaining significantly lower than those in England and Scotland.

16. Figure 7 shows the Maths ability of individuals at age seven in the Millennium Cohort. Again it shows that those in advantaged wards attain higher than those in disadvantaged ones, and that the attainment gap is widest in Wales. This analysis is simply based on where people are born, and suggests that birth location does have an effect on a child’s educational attainment.

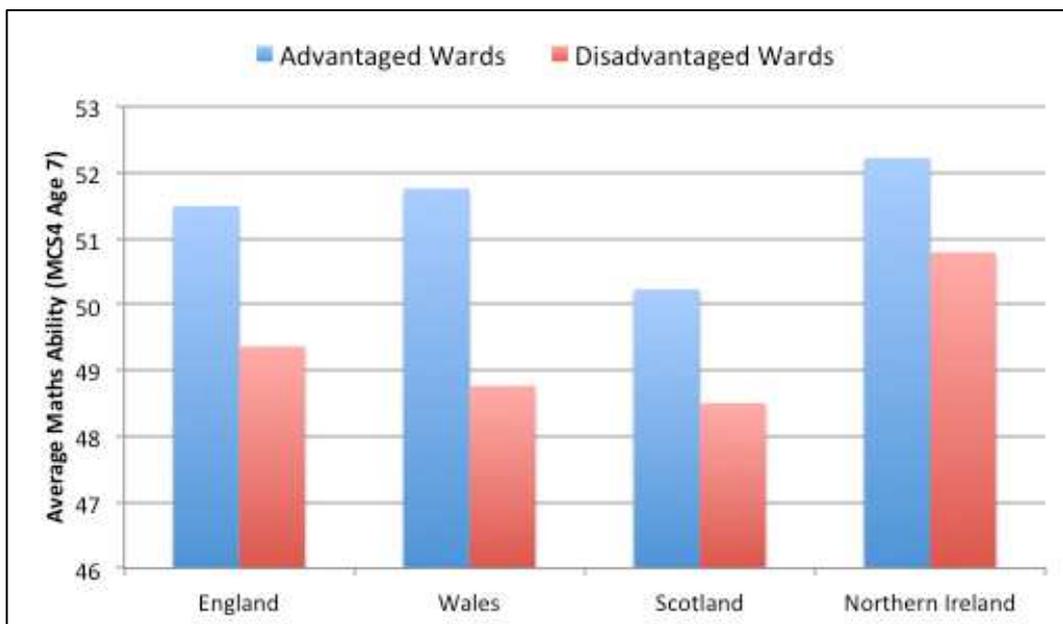
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<sup>9</sup> Communities, Families and Schools Together, Egan, May 2012

**Figure 6 – Millennium Cohort Study, Average Word Reading Ability**



**Figure 7 – Millennium Cohort Study, Average Maths Ability**

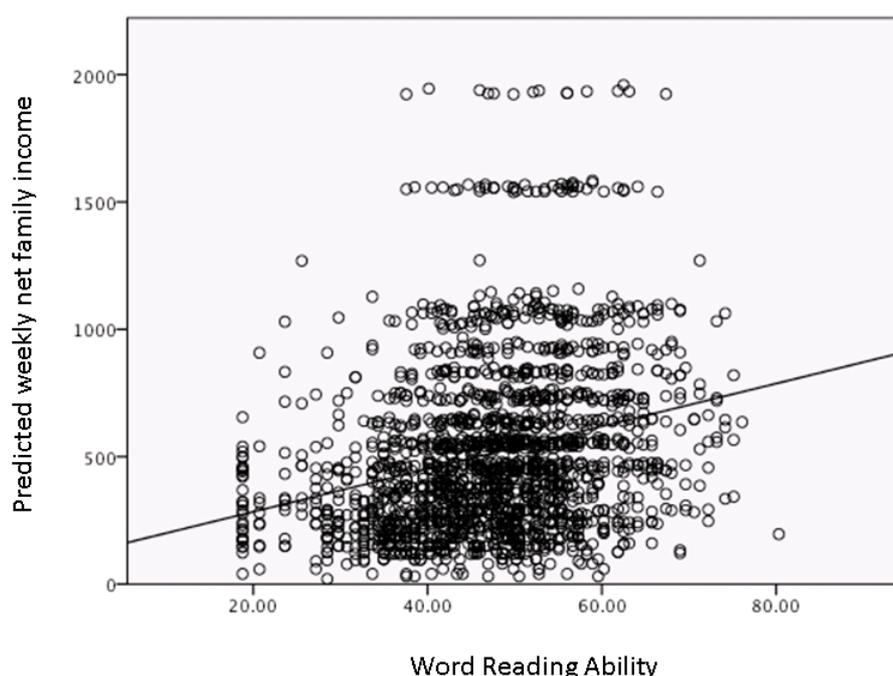


17. A number of witnesses felt it was important to stress that this relationship between poverty and low educational attainment can be broken, and that there are many young people who do achieve in school despite coming from a lower socio-economic background. The literature review undertaken by the Scrutiny Research Team states that *“this relationship is not a ‘fait accompli’*

*and [it] is perfectly possible for a pupil with a deprived background to achieve better results than comparatively wealthier children. [Data] only reflects average performance by postcode deprivation, and it is therefore possible for individuals or even whole schools to buck this trend.”<sup>10</sup>*

18. This point was stressed by Professor Taylor, who shared Figure 8 with the members of the Inquiry. This graph plots the individual word reading scores of young people in the Millennium Cohort Study against weekly net family income. While on average the relationship between income and attainment is present, the scattered nature of the graph demonstrates that there are many pupils from low income families who achieve highly, and a wide range of word reading ability amongst pupils from families with higher levels of income.

**Figure 8 – Word reading scores against net family income**



19. A representative of Save the Children informed the Inquiry that there has been awareness of the issues surrounding poverty and education for many years, and that it has been the aspiration of many local and national

<sup>10</sup> The relationship between educational attainment and poverty; Scrutiny Research Team

governments to address them. Despite this, limited impact has been made to reduce the number of young people living in poverty. He recommended that a new way of thinking is needed, where outcomes for the young person and their family are central, and frameworks are built around supporting the whole family. This is a view shared by Professor Egan, who informed the Members that schools, family support services, Council services, voluntary organisations and many others need to work together to make a real impact in addressing the effects of poverty on educational attainment.

## **Barriers to attainment**

20. Members visited a number of primary and secondary schools in Cardiff, to meet with the head teacher and other senior staff and to discuss the barriers to attainment that young people in their schools face, and to learn about initiatives the school has in place to help them. A number of schools were contacted to contribute to the inquiry, focusing on schools that serve deprived areas of the city, and covering the range of schools that exist in Cardiff (primary, secondary, welsh medium, special and faith schools), with visits being arranged to all schools that responded expressing interest in being involved.
21. The head teacher of Roath Park Primary highlighted what was referred to as a 'Wall of Failure', as shown in Figure 9. This table captures barriers that were emphasised time and again throughout the Inquiry by numerous witnesses.
22. Young people who grow up in poverty are in a social setting that they have not chosen for themselves. The barrier preventing them from attaining academically and moving out of poverty is this 'wall of failure'. Each brick represents an issue that will prevent a young person from reaching their full potential in school. These barriers do not tend to be faced by young people from more affluent backgrounds. Members were informed that these barriers can be categorised as material, social and personal barriers.

**Figure 9 – ‘Wall of Failure’ – Factors that prevent a young person achieving their academic potential**

Poverty	Low educational aspirations	Family circumstances – dysfunctional or separated parents	Poor parental experience of education
Job prospects	Dependency on the state	Fear of personal failure	Low self image/esteem
Low expectations from the school community itself	Lack of human and physical resources – school budgetary problems	Poor state of school buildings – schools for the 21 <sup>st</sup> Century?	Lack of community agency cohesion
Peer group pressure	Lack of any joined up thinking within the community	School not at the heart of the community that it serves	Lack of community ethos, values and vision
Wasted local talent and ability	Adopting a global ‘one size fits all’ policy from the LA or WG	Negative view within the community of Social Services	Poor hygiene and nutrition

23. The role of schools, local and national government services and policy makers (and anyone else who has a role in the lives of young people and families in poverty) is to remove some, if not all, these barriers. The head of Roath Park also stressed that many pupils in Cardiff schools do not have English as their home language. This means that many of these bricks/factors will prevent them achieving even though their only real barrier is created by a lack of English skills.

24. Material barriers are defined as things that young people in poverty are more likely to lack than their classmates from a more affluent home. This includes a lack of educational resources such as books, internet access and a room of their own to study; a lack of money available to pay for school trips or activities outside of school, such as trips to the museum and beach; or lack of school uniform or equipment for school.

25. Social barriers are created by the home and community environment that young people live in. This includes overcrowding and noise at home that can

distract from learning or homework; low levels of parental education and lack of involvement in their child's education; low aspirations for their child and a negative perception of school and education. Young people from an affluent background are more likely to have access to family friends and a social network of individuals with higher skilled jobs

26. Personal barriers affect the behaviour and personality of young people.

Poverty can create low self-esteem and confidence within young people, which may come as a result of bullying within the school environment.

Members were also informed that young people living in poverty often have a lack of social and emotional maturity. They find it harder to adapt to the formal environment of school and tend to miss the long term picture of how their time in school will affect future job opportunities. The health and diet of young people in poverty also tends to be poorer than that of young people from a more affluent background.

27. Members were informed of a BBC documentary, '*Poor Kids*',<sup>11</sup> as a visual way to understand the types of social barriers to educational attainment that exist, the type of household that young people affected by poverty may live in, and to demonstrate the disruption that the home environment can present. The documentary follows three young people in different parts of the UK, allowing them to give testament to how having no money affects their lives: lack of food, being bullied and having nowhere to play. This documentary captures the reality of poverty in a way that discussions during meetings, or written reports, could not.

28. The Director of the People and Work Unit informed Members that these barriers do not affect young people in isolation, but can have a cumulative negative effect. Young people living in poverty face a number of barriers, and each barrier will impact on (or even create) others. The effects of poverty and the barriers faced are unique to each child, and the support they receive must reflect their individual needs.

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<sup>11</sup> Poor Kids, BBC One Documentary, 2011 (for link to documentary, please refer to Bibliography)

29. Members were given the example where a young person may miss school for health reasons or for a medical/social work appointment. They can fall behind in school and not receive support or challenge at home to catch up. Consequently, they may not understand what is going on in lessons when they return, get bored, become disruptive and be taken out of the class, or truant and fall further behind; this cycle can repeat itself if action is not taken to address the barriers.
30. The representative from the People and Work Unit informed the Members that the aspirations of young people from deprived backgrounds are similar to other pupils in school. A difference does become apparent, however, in understanding how these aspirations can be achieved, and how their current performance in school will directly affect their opportunities in the labour market in their later lives. Understanding what education can do for a person, understanding the role that the learner has to play and sticking with it when learning starts to get tough, are essential to success at school.
31. This view was supported in the academic literature review which sites a number of studies giving similar findings. *“Poorer children often have similar career aspirations to their better-off counterparts. However, the culture of low aspirations present in their surroundings can have a very negative effect. This can be attributed to a deficiency of employment opportunities and a lack of role models who could provide these children with the positive example they need most.”*<sup>12</sup>
32. The major influence and source of careers advice to a young person comes from their parents. Evidence was presented that many young people from a deprived background will grow up in a home where school is not valued and where there is no passion for learning and education; this will rub off on their own attitudes. Both Professor Egan and the representative of the People and Work Unit did, however, emphasise that many parents are highly aspirational for their children, but problems arise in knowing how to provide this support and how to effectively assist their child to succeed.

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<sup>12</sup> The relationship between educational attainment and poverty; Scrutiny Research Team

33. This is supported by the findings of the literature review, which states that *“[...] these investigations show that parents and children’s peers are the main factors influencing pupils when using their natural cognitive ability. Parents from poorer backgrounds, who have had a poor educational experience themselves, are less likely to be able to help with the education of their children than their more educated counterparts. This is not to question the parents’ care or desire for the child to succeed, but rather their ability to engage and assist with their child’s education.”*<sup>13</sup>
34. Parents from poorer backgrounds who have had a poor educational experience themselves are less likely to be able to help with the education of their children than their more educated counterparts. Professor Egan stated that this is a barrier that young people from a better-off family are not likely to encounter. Parents are generally better educated and are able to identify the additional need that their child requires, or can afford to pay for additional tutoring to support their child.
35. A number of head teachers commented that dealing with the barriers created by poverty is made additionally complex by the diverse range of cultural and ethnic backgrounds of pupils that attend Cardiff schools. For many young people, school is the only place that English is spoken, and their ability in English may be more advanced than that of their parents. This limits the additional support they can receive outside of the classroom.
36. Members were informed that various initiatives are in place in schools to address these barriers and engage with parents, providing them with the knowledge and ability necessary to support their child. These include classes run in local community centres, the employment of staff who have the same ethnic background as the community served by the school, and using the assistance of sixth form pupils who speak both English and local community languages.

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<sup>13</sup> The relationship between educational attainment and poverty; Scrutiny Research Team

## Home and Parents

37. Members were informed that the home environment, parents and families can make a huge difference to the attainment of young people. Young people are only in school a limited time each day, and the home environment has a big influence on a young person's attitude toward learning and their ability to study. As mentioned above, the major influence and source of careers advice to a young person comes from their parents. If parents have no passion for learning, this will inevitably rub off on the attitudes of the child.

38. The literature review highlights numerous commentators who stress the important role of parents and peers on a child's development. Research by Goodman and Gregg states that: "*Parents' cognitive abilities and other childhood circumstances play a very important role in explaining the gap between the test scores of rich and poor children today. [...] Nearly one fifth of the gap in test scores between the richest and poorest children is explained by an apparent 'direct' link between the childhood cognitive ability of parents and that of their children.*"<sup>14</sup>

39. A number of head teachers indicated that family engagement is becoming an ever more important role of the school. Two schools stated that they had created a dedicated post for a Family Engagement Officer/Family Support Worker within the school, recognising the importance of having parents/carers and the school working alongside each other to improve the child's learning. The role of this officer is to promote a positive relationship between home and school, provide enhanced opportunities for parents to support their children, and work with the community networks that support schools and families.

40. Engagement is more than a newsletter circulated to all families on a regular basis. Members were informed of a variety of initiatives put in place within

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<sup>14</sup> Poorer children's educational attainment: how important are attitudes and behaviour? Goodman and Gregg, 2010

schools to help engage more effectively with parents and families. Again, the importance of this is made more complex by the cultural and ethnic diversity of families in Cardiff. Some parents are disengaged from school because they cannot communicate effectively, rather than because of a lack of interest in their child's learning.

41. Examples of the initiatives for family engagement include:

- reading classes for parents where English is not their first language;
- ICT classes;
- sessions to help understand what and how children are taught in school;
- family literacy sessions where parents and pupils read together;
- open mornings where parents can sit in on lessons and see how their child is taught; and
- recruitment of teaching assistants who speak community languages.

42. A number of head teachers highlighted the importance of breaking down barriers and promoting a positive relationship between the school and home. It is recognised that the school must become part of the wider community, with a general 'open door' policy from schools, where it doesn't close its doors at 3.30pm and where parents can come and meet with teachers if they wish to.

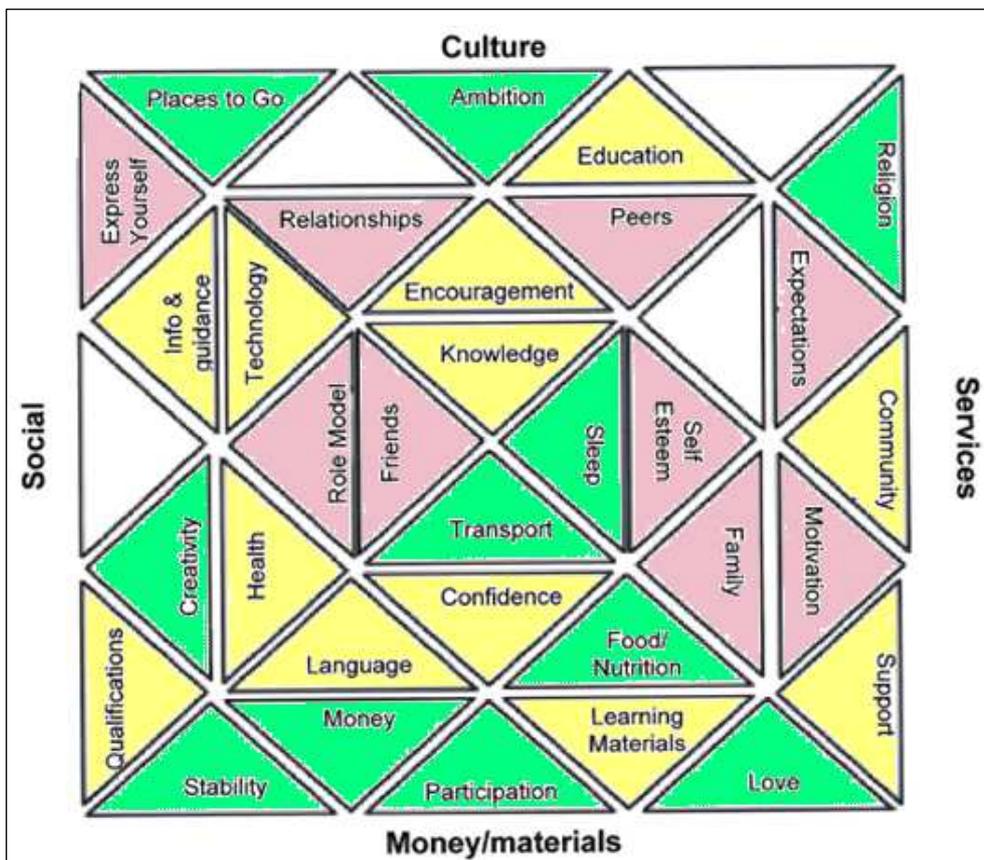
## **Young People's Views**

43. The Members of the Inquiry felt it essential that the views of young people were captured and considered, adding to the views of teachers, charity representatives, and other education professionals. Research was commissioned through the Cardiff Youth Council (CYC) where peer-to-peer interviews were carried out with young people in Cardiff to address the question *"How does poverty impact on the learning of young people and how can this impact be reduced or prevented?"*

44. The following definition was developed by the young researchers in order to stress that poverty isn't just a financial issue, "Poverty is not only about a lack of money but also an unacceptable level of other things such as belongings, friendship, family, support and lifestyle needs."

45. Eight young people from CYC volunteered to undertake this research, speaking with thirty young people who live and attend school in the 'Southern Arc' of Cardiff. Following a short questionnaire, the research was undertaken through face-to-face interviews, based on a Family Learning Signature method. As seen in Figure 10, young people were asked to shade the matrix of triangles using a green/amber/red system, based on the personal pressures they feel with regards to education. The young researcher then structured a follow up conversation on the areas shaded red.

**Figure 10 - Family Learning Signature method**



\* coloured example provided for information. This is not an actual form completed as part of the research.

46. The research found the following results from the initial questionnaire:

- 50% agreed that young people were solely responsible for their grades. The remainder also felt that teachers, family and peers have some responsibility.
- 70% of the young people recognised that education was important in terms of future employment and jobs.

47. The following were identified as the most significant issues and pressures the respondents felt regarding their education; Qualifications; Peers; Knowledge; Learning Materials; Resources; Confidence; Motivation; Role Models. In presenting the findings of the research to the Members, the young researchers stressed that throughout the follow up interviews, support and confidence were mentioned as key barriers to attainment. Members were informed that many young people lack self esteem or confidence in their abilities and do not want to make mistakes in front of their class. Members were concerned to hear that for some young people, reputation is more important than education – they would rather not succeed at school in order to please friends and peers.

48. The following quotes demonstrate that many young people feel much more could be done in school to support them and understand them on a personal level. They also show that many pupils do not feel the importance of education and the relevance to young people's futures is stressed enough.

*“the issue is that you're not motivated, then you don't want to do well in school. I think there should be more talks on motivation to inspire people to want to do well”*

*“If you haven't got the support then you can't talk to anyone about what stresses you and then you don't want to do work and come into school. I*

*think there should be a better support system in place in school and people for you to talk to.”*

*“We were never told what GCSE’s we needed to get into college and it was only when I had my college interview that I found out.”*

*“ [schools] should make it clear what will happen to pupils further down the line in terms of careers and the importance of grades”*

49. These views captured in the research undertaken by CYC are supported by the research findings of the Participation Unit report – Small Voice : Big Story. The research has been undertaken and the report written by individuals aged between 16 – 18 years old. These young people have been brought together by the Participation Unit and the Big Learning Company Wales to undertake research from a young person’s perspective about issues that directly affect children and young people in Wales.

50. The research showed that being poor may affect a young persons confidence in the school environment, and this lack of confidence may impact on their attainment confidence. It was also found that young people may not understand the importance of their attainment in school. <sup>15</sup>

*“people may feel embarrassed or shy about being poor and not make friends and not want to come to school so don’t get an education”*

*“you could be bullied which weakens your confidence in your work”*

*“If you don’t have confidence then you don’t join in with anything or take up the things that are there like after school things”*

*“they joke around and like pay no attention and they still expect to get a job.”*

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<sup>15</sup> Participation Unit – Small Voice : Big Story, 2013

51. The research also stresses the importance of a supporting home environment for success in school. 85.6% young people spoken to felt that a supportive family would help them reach their potential.

*“if they have a happy supportive family and a good home they will be happy and with support will do well at school”*

*“you don’t need money in life you need love which helps education.”*

The research also suggests that young people in poverty often don’t have a warm, quiet or safe place to study with access to new technologies and innovative ways of learning. The young people consulted stressed how important this is for learning and for motivating young people.

52. A number of recommendations were made as part of this research including:

- A safe place to learn, a home to home study centre in every school
- One to one support from other students
- Somebody to talk to about home and school
- A special fund for children to ‘join in’
- Real life careers advice and a free “app” for information on careers and training.

## **Pupil Deprivation Grant**

53. The Pupil Deprivation Grant (PDG) was introduced by the Welsh Government for the 2012/13 academic year. Guidance for this grant states that *“The creation of the Pupil Deprivation Grant reinforces the Welsh Government’s intention to reduce the impact of poverty on educational attainment. By creating a distinct grant to support this priority, we expect*

*local authorities to place greater emphasis on mitigating the effects that poverty has on educational attainment.”<sup>16</sup>*

54. The PDG sits alongside the School Effectiveness Grant (SEG) as the principal means of support for the Welsh Government’s three national priorities for schools. These are:

- Improving standards in literacy
- Improving standards in numeracy
- Reducing the impact of poverty on educational attainment.

55. Members of the Inquiry were informed that each school receives a grant allocation according to the number of pupils within the school who are eligible for free school meals. The grant equates to an additional £450 per eligible pupil, with 100% of the funding being delegated directly to school budgets. A total of £4,072,950 has been allocated to schools in Cardiff, with the amount of grant received ranging from £195,300 in one secondary school, to just a few thousand pounds in some smaller primary schools.

56. The PDG funding should support schools raising standards across the whole school and narrowing the attainment gap. Guidance provided by the Welsh Government states that this should be done by;

- supporting the development of disadvantaged learners through curriculum content and delivery, with a particular focus on literacy and numeracy as outlined above;
- putting in place effective pupil tracking systems for attainment and wellbeing to help ensure learners progress regardless of their background;
- establishing or strengthening professional learning communities that enable the school to engage with other statutory and voluntary agencies

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<sup>16</sup> School Effectiveness Grant and Pupil Deprivation Grant 2012–2013, Guidance; Welsh Government, May 2012

to gain a clearer understanding of young people's needs and how to address them;

- supporting and improving the levels of family engagement and the capacity of parents to support their children's learning;
- using community resources more effectively to support the particular needs of learners in local communities, especially in areas of high socio-economic disadvantage where the Communities First Programme and schools are strongly encouraged to work closely together to maximise available resources; or
- strengthening engagement with parents and carers to promote more effective home learning.

57. Schools have the flexibility to determine how their allocation of PDG is spent within the school, based on the particular needs and issues faced by pupils within the school. Schools are required to submit an Annual Costed Plan to the Local Authority Education Service in order to demonstrate that their allocation of the PDG is being spent on initiatives that will help raise the attainment of pupils from deprived backgrounds and help overcome the barriers they face.

58. Information provided by the Cardiff Council Education Service showed that it is expected that schools will develop a range of provision that will reflect the particular needs identified by the school. Guidance notes from the Education Service showed that spending of the PDG should include:

- clear identification of need with regard to disadvantaged pupils, circumstances, current achievement and progress;
- clear procedures for tracking individuals' progress and a systematic approach to intervention and support;
- access to enrichment activities and the removal of any financial barriers to participation;
- the provision of additional tuition, small group tuition and other strategies designed to personalise learning and target support;

- the provision of curricular activities and opportunities through out-of-school hours provision and holiday programmes;
- access to facilities during the school day that support learning
- the development of pastoral support, learner support and mentoring to meet pupils physical, emotional and social needs, to remove barriers to learning and improve well being and readiness to learn
- the development of strategies that involve the family and community, including those that signpost learning opportunities
- the embedding of opportunities within the curriculum and in wider learning for pupils to be fully involved in informing decisions that affect their education; and
- the strengthening of strategies that promote the school at the heart of its community.

Local experience demonstrates that such features are particularly important with regard to schools serving areas of significant socio-economic challenge, but also have much to offer to all schools.

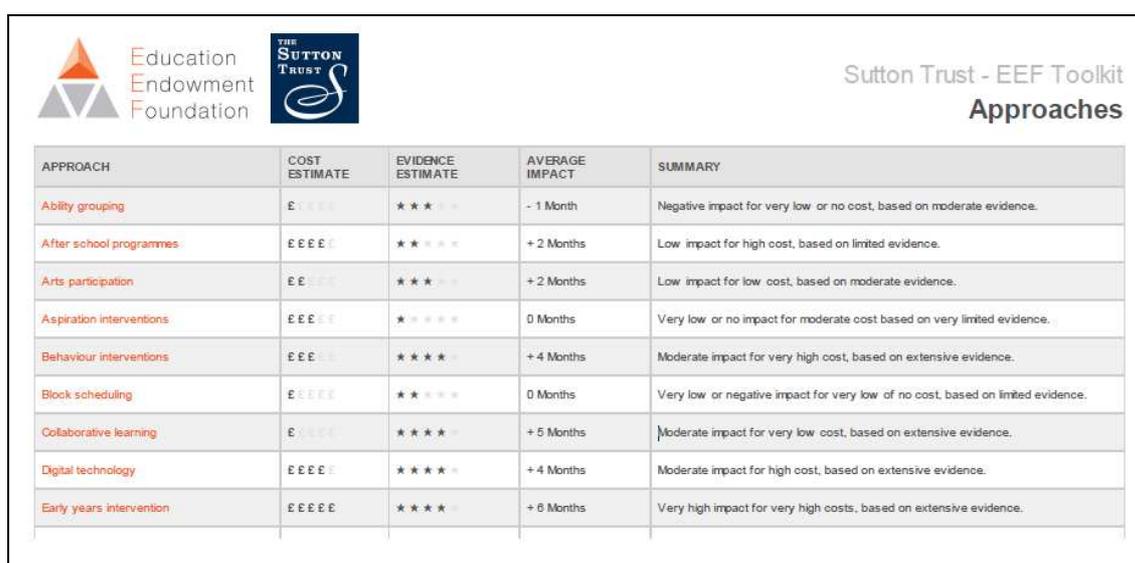
59. A number of witnesses to the Inquiry felt that some schools may not be targeting the additional PDG in the most effective manner. A representative of the Education Service stated that often the intended impact of interventions was not clear in the spending plans; there was a lack of clarity in the relationship between the activities being planned and overcoming the impact of poverty on educational attainment. This was a view supported by Welsh Government representatives who felt too much PDG money was being spent on overseeing pupils rather than putting initiatives in place that will develop skills for life and develop self regulated learning skills.

60. Representatives of the Welsh Government stated that PDG spending should be going on initiatives that will have a long term impact, rather than additional bodies in the classroom. Should this funding ever be withdrawn in the future, there should still be benefits evident to future pupils, rather than the school being left with staff they cannot afford to continue employing.

Members were informed that guidance provided to schools may become more prescriptive in future years, with schools required to demonstrate the long term impacts of their spending.

61. The Sutton Trust Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) Teaching and Learning Toolkit<sup>17</sup> was highlighted by a number of witnesses, including officers from Education Services, Welsh Government officials and Education consultants, as an important tool for schools to use in determining their PDG allocation. This toolkit is an accessible summary of educational research which provides guidance for teachers and schools on how to use their resources to improve the attainment of disadvantaged pupils. The Toolkit currently covers 30 topics, each summarised in terms of their average impact on attainment, the strength of the evidence supporting them and their cost. The Toolkit is a live resource which is updated on a regular basis as findings from EEF-funded projects and other high-quality research become available. The Toolkit was developed to inform decisions on how to spend the Pupil Premium in England, and it is now being promoted as a way to inform Pupil Deprivation Grant expenditure in Wales.

**Figure 11 – Snapshot from Sutton Trust Toolkit**



The table is titled 'Sutton Trust - EEF Toolkit Approaches'. It features logos for the Education Endowment Foundation and The Sutton Trust at the top left. The table has five columns: APPROACH, COST ESTIMATE, EVIDENCE ESTIMATE, AVERAGE IMPACT, and SUMMARY. It lists ten different educational approaches with their respective cost estimates (represented by 'E' characters), evidence estimates (represented by stars), average impacts (in months), and a brief summary of their effectiveness.

APPROACH	COST ESTIMATE	EVIDENCE ESTIMATE	AVERAGE IMPACT	SUMMARY
Ability grouping	£ E E E E	★ ★ ★ ● ●	- 1 Month	Negative impact for very low or no cost, based on moderate evidence.
After school programmes	£ E E E E ●	★ ★ ● ● ●	+ 2 Months	Low impact for high cost, based on limited evidence.
Arts participation	£ E ● ● ● ●	★ ★ ★ ● ●	+ 2 Months	Low impact for low cost, based on moderate evidence.
Aspiration interventions	£ E E E E ●	★ ● ● ● ●	0 Months	Very low or no impact for moderate cost based on very limited evidence.
Behaviour interventions	£ E E E E ●	★ ★ ★ ● ●	+ 4 Months	Moderate impact for very high cost, based on extensive evidence.
Block scheduling	£ ● ● ● ● ●	★ ★ ● ● ●	0 Months	Very low or negative impact for very low or no cost, based on limited evidence.
Collaborative learning	£ ● ● ● ● ●	★ ★ ★ ● ●	+ 5 Months	Moderate impact for very low cost, based on extensive evidence.
Digital technology	£ E E E E ●	★ ★ ★ ● ●	+ 4 Months	Moderate impact for high cost, based on extensive evidence.
Early years intervention	£ E E E E ●	★ ★ ★ ● ●	+ 8 Months	Very high impact for very high costs, based on extensive evidence.

<sup>17</sup> Sutton Trust Toolkit <http://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/toolkit/>

62. A snapshot from the toolkit can be seen in Figure 11. The document goes on to expand on each 'approach' in more detail and gives additional information that any school considering using this approach should be aware of.

## **Schools**

63. In meeting with a number of head teachers, Members discussed the ways in which the school was allocating its PDG funding to help pupils from deprived backgrounds within the school. It was clear to Members that the initiatives and schemes prioritised were unique to each school, in recognition that the needs of the pupils in different communities in Cardiff are different.

64. The Members met with officers from Education Services who stated that all schools were required to submit spending plans for approval by the local authority. A variety of initiatives were identified that could either raise the attainment of all pupils within the school, or target just those receiving free school meals to close the attainment gap. In introducing school-wide initiatives, it was considered important for head teachers to remember that the intention of this additional funding was to help those in most need.

65. Members were informed that examples of initiatives that would bring benefit to all pupils within a school include:

- Effective pupil level tracking
- Influential assessment for learning approaches
- High quality personalised learning and teaching
- Developing an engaging curriculum
- Effective senior leadership team and middle leadership
- Good practice and policy in relation to attendance and behaviour
- An inclusive and positive school culture.

66. Examples of initiatives that are more focussed on pupils from a deprived background and narrowing the gap include:

- One-to-one tuition
- Targeted learning interventions
- Extending school welcome, breakfast clubs, other clubs and extra-curricular activities
- Targeted parental engagement
- Dedicated in-school wellbeing support with outreach
- Subsidising school trips and other learning opportunities
- Subsidising elements of school uniform, equipment and kit and learning resources
- Funding additional residential summer and transition camps
- Developing approaches to raising self-esteem and confidence

67. The Officers from Education Services also recommended that the Sutton Trust Toolkit was an effective way for schools to evaluate whether the interventions they were proposing were likely to have an impact in the intended way.

68. Information for primary schools' spending of PDG, provided by Education Services showed that:

- Over half of primary schools are spending some or all of their PDG to improve literacy – mainly through the appointment of additional teaching assistants;
- Over a third of schools are developing their procedures for tracking pupils' progress and a similar proportion are developing a range of strategies to improve the engagement with, and support for, families;
- About a quarter of schools are investing the PDG in provision that supports the development of pupils' emotional literacy and emotional wellbeing;
- A quarter of schools are spending a portion of the grant on supporting the costs associated with educational visits and residential visits for these pupils;

- About a fifth of schools are seeking to improve access to ICT facilities, particularly through the purchase of tablet computers for these pupils.

69. In terms of secondary schools, Members were informed that over a third of schools are spending the PDG in the following areas:

- extra teaching provision in mathematics;
- out-of-school-hours provision in English and mathematics;
- targeted interventions/ revision/ booster support;
- extra teaching assistant support;
- financial support for uniform purchase, equipment, trips, residential activities.

Around a quarter of schools were allocating a portion of their PDG on support for engagement with families and on enhancing access to ICT provision to support learning, including after school.

70. A number of witnesses, including Professor Egan and a representative of Education Services indicated that pupil tracking is an important initiative that should be embedded within all schools. Pupils who are underachieving should be easily identifiable, and relevant support mechanisms put in place to support them. The findings of the Literature Review support this view, stating that *“one of the most effective strategies in reducing the achievement gap is to monitor this data regularly and use it to target resources and interventions to the children requiring most need. [...] The literature stresses that the earlier that skills deficiencies can be recognised and targeted, the far greater impact they can have on reducing the attainment gap.”*<sup>18</sup>

71. A number of schools visited by Members indicated that they have introduced effective monitoring and are finding it very useful in tracking the performance of pupils. One school indicated that they have moved towards a pupil tracking system that contains full information on each child including free school meal eligibility and reading age. At a classroom level, every teacher

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<sup>18</sup> The relationship between educational attainment and poverty; Scrutiny Research Team, December 2012

is aware of who has FSM, who has low literacy and so on; this allows them to plan for individuals and individual groups. Responsibility for pupil performance monitoring is no longer just for leadership but on every teacher.

72. A number of head teachers identified that a significant amount of time and effort goes into providing emotional and social support to pupils. There are pupils in Cardiff schools who are vulnerable and suffer from low confidence, self-esteem and well-being; often this emotional baggage prevents a child from learning, and it must be addressed outside of normal lessons. Relationships must be built with these children, who may not have any meaningful relationships outside of school, may have no trust in adults and have not learnt or been allowed to express feelings or an opinion.

73. Members were informed that a number of schools have used a portion of their PDG funding to address these needs. This includes the employment of child psychotherapists and counselling services, and charitable organisations that provide male role models through sporting activities.

74. One head teacher indicated that this focus on emotional wellbeing of pupils can mean teachers' attention is diverted from literacy and numeracy. The school suffered as a result in its inspection reports. A school is judged on the attainment of its pupils, and the wellbeing of pupils is not as quantifiable. However schools in deprived areas must focus on more than just the academic needs of their pupils, particularly where staff are required to support pupils that have not yet learnt how to brush their teeth or are joining the school still wearing nappies.

75. In meeting with Head Teachers, a message heard from a number of Primary school Heads was that they felt a lot of hard work undertaken to bring pupils from a deprived background up to speed with those from a more affluent background was lost when they move on to secondary school. Pupils who have been receiving additional emotional and academic support, and worked hard to build relationships with their teachers, struggle to adjust

when moving to a much larger school where they do not receive the same levels of support.

76. However it must be noted that members visited one primary school where the Head was complimentary regarding the links in place with the secondary school its pupils feed into. It was commented that pupils were well supported in school, and that year 6 pupils had visited the school a few times already (with this meeting taking place three months into the school year). Members were informed that the schools work together to share attendance concerns and to pass on information on pupils who require additional emotional support. In visiting the secondary school in question, Members were informed that the school recognises the importance of being prepared for pupils who require extra support, and the upcoming head of year 7 works to build links with all feeder schools. It was also commented that the school shares its sports facilities and French teachers with primary schools, which also helps aid transition into secondary school.

## **Leadership**

77. A number of witnesses to the inquiry stressed the importance of strong leadership arrangements and governance within schools. Professor Egan commented that successful schools in deprived areas have a head teacher who is passionate about helping disadvantaged pupils. This is a view supported within the literature review which found a number of commentators that draw attention to the role of head teachers and senior leaders within schools. They should be providing strong leadership and a positive vision to drive whole school improvement.

78. Members were informed that head teachers need to introduce clear lines of responsibility so that everyone is aware of their role in improving the school and narrowing the attainment gap. This involves allocating specific responsibilities to particular teachers for specialist areas such as literacy, maths or social development.

79. The Ofsted report 'Twelve Outstanding Secondary Schools; Excelling Against the Odds', states that "*successful head teachers need a range of [attributes] and skills if they are to succeed in dealing with the challenges presented by turbulent and complex communities. What stands out in the head teachers of the outstanding schools, and is reflected by their colleagues and students, are characteristics such as:*

- *clear and unshakeable principles and sense of purpose*
- *vigilance and visibility*
- *courage and conviction*
- *predisposition to immediate action, letting nothing slip*
- *insistence on consistency of approach, individually and across the organisation*
- *drive and determination*
- *belief in people*
- *an ability to communicate*
- *leadership by example*
- *emotional intelligence*
- *tireless energy.*

*These characteristics are evident in each school's values and ethos. The head teachers live the vision and model good practice. Their approach is infectious, starting with the senior leadership team. In time the values become central to the school's ethos, underpinning everything it stands for and does."*<sup>19</sup>

80. A representative from ISOS Partnership (a small advisory company, specialising in work for the public sector), highlighted the importance of a strong vision and ethos for attainment of all pupils. Many young people from deprived backgrounds will be told at home not to bother with school and that

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<sup>19</sup> 'Twelve outstanding secondary schools; Excelling against the odds', Ofsted, 2009

there is no hope that they will achieve good grades – this is a message that must be challenged within the school. Teachers cannot assume any pupil will do badly and there should be no acceptance that some pupils will not achieve.

81. Members met with a number of head teachers through the course of the Inquiry and were impressed by the energy and commitment to the attainment of the pupils in their school. Figure 12 demonstrates how an ethos of achievement has been introduced in Roath Park Primary. While it shows a very simple sign, it underlines the belief that every one of their pupils can do well.

**Figure 12 – Sign on display at Roath Park Primary School**



82. The Operational Manager for Management Standards and School Effectiveness informed the members of the Inquiry that many head teachers comment that the financial management of the school is one of the hardest parts of their role. It was commented that no formal training is provided regarding the deployment of the schools budget. With schools receiving

increased financial resources through the PDG, this places even more responsibility on head teachers to manage their schools finances effectively.

83. Both Professor Chris Taylor and Professor Egan highlighted that school governing bodies also play an essential role within the leadership of a school. Governing bodies should be challenging the senior leadership of schools to drive improvements, however it was felt that too often governors wholeheartedly support everything the head proposes.

84. Members of the Inquiry met with the Chair of Cardiff Governors' Association (CGA) to discuss the role and quality of governing bodies in Cardiff. He informed Members that one of the key roles of governing bodies is to review and challenge the School Improvement Plan put forward by the head teacher. He stated that too often governors will just approve it without looking through it in much detail; governors trust that the head knows what they are doing and don't feel confident enough to challenge it.

85. This is a view also found in the Estyn Annual Report 2010/11, which states that *"while governors may be well informed about many aspects of school life, they generally have limited knowledge of the school's performance data or do not make comparisons with outcomes in similar schools, and rarely challenge or hold leaders to account. [...] In too many cases, head teachers present school performance data and other contextual information in a way that hides the real issues. [...] By engaging with the local authority and taking part in training, governors can learn more about their role and improve their skills."*<sup>20</sup>

86. The Chair of CGA stated that in his opinion many governing bodies only receive the information head teachers feel it necessary to tell them; with information held back because governors may not understand the full picture of what goes on in running a school, or that parent governors may lack the ability to understand complex information. He felt that this view

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<sup>20</sup> Estyn Annual Report 2010-2011 / Section 1: Insights and issues, pg 17

should be challenged and stated that the Council has training in place to develop governor skills, although it is often poorly attended.

87. Some Members of the Inquiry indicated that they are also members of school governing bodies and questioned whether the training being provided by the Council was of an appropriate standard in order to help develop the required skills in areas such as finance, safeguarding and monitoring trends in performance and attainment. The Chair of CGA commented that some governing bodies are moving towards sub committees, where governors look to focus on certain aspects of schools performance and specialise in one or two areas.

88. The Chair of CGA informed members that the Welsh Government is exploring the possibility of compulsory attendance for school governors and improvements being made in the standard of this training. An independent Task and Finish Group report in 2011, 'The Structure of Education Services in Wales', recommended that: *"compulsory and standardised training of governors and clerks to governing bodies is required. [...] Training for chairpersons, new governors and governors involved in the performance management of head teachers should be a priority.*

*We recommend that all governors should be provided with at least a standardised set of performance data to enable them to undertake effectively their challenge and support role.<sup>21</sup>*

89. In November 2012, it was announced by the Welsh Government Minister for Education and Skills that a Task and Finish Group was being established to review the roles and responsibilities in relation to school governance.

90. Members were informed by the representative of ISOS Partnership that a number of areas across the UK were moving toward the use of Federated schools, where a number of schools are grouped under a single executive

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<sup>21</sup> The structure of education services in Wales; Independent Task and Finish Group Report (March 2011)

principal/head teacher. Members were informed of the Cabot Learning Federation (CLF) in Bristol, where a number of primary and secondary schools sit under the same executive principal. The Federation is responsible and accountable for the education of over 5500 students between the ages of four and 19, and for the employment and support of nearly 1,000 staff.

91. The representative of ISOS Partnership stated that an important part of this Federation is that all staff are employed by the CLF, which enables staff to work in more than one school/academy, either for their own development, or because teachers have the skills that are needed in more than one school. This sharing of staff and movement of the best teachers allows for improvements in a whole area or cluster of schools rather than pockets of excellence in single schools.

92. A Cardiff Council press release in April 2013 stated that the governing bodies of two Cardiff secondary schools (Cardiff High School and Willows High School) had agreed to investigate the potential of a federation between the two schools with a view to extend greater opportunities for children and young people in the areas to fulfil their educational potential. It stated that *“the benefits of federation include the opportunity to combine forces to raise standards of achievement quickly, exploiting best practice and sharing ideas and challenges.”*

93. A number of witnesses to the Inquiry recognised that there is good practice undertake in schools across the city, and in visiting a number of schools the Members were able to see for themselves that different approaches and priorities face each school, dependant on the needs of the community and area of Cardiff they serve.

94. It was suggested at Roath Park Primary that schools would benefit from the creation of a ‘directory’ or mechanism to share good practice across schools in Cardiff. Often Inspection reports focus on the negative aspects of school conduct, and this could be a way for schools to share the positives. It was

felt that this 'directory' would allow schools to share practice, initiatives and success stories in raising the attainment of young people and would help create a peer support network for teachers, support staff and governors across schools in Cardiff.

## **Teaching**

95. A consistent message heard throughout the Inquiry was that the quality of teaching received by young people from deprived backgrounds is vitally important in helping them successfully overcome the barriers they face. This was stressed by Professor Taylor, Professor Egan and a representative of ISOS Partnership, and is supported in the findings of the academic literature review undertaken by the Scrutiny Research Team.

96. 'Communities, Families and Schools Together', a research report by Professor Egan, states that "*When students are in school the greatest influence upon them will be their teachers and all studies on school effectiveness point to the quality of teaching as being the most important factor leading to student achievement. It is likely that this will be particularly so for students from disadvantaged backgrounds who generally will require highly skilled teaching in order to motivate and support them in their learning. This suggests that our most challenged schools require the most competent teachers [...]*"<sup>22</sup>

97. The Literature Review shows that a number of commentators (Egan, 2012; Hockings and Pirrie, 2012; Misia, 2008) argue "*that the greatest improvement in attainment is made through changing and adopting the most effective teaching methods. These include cooperative learning, phonic instruction and frequent assessment.*"<sup>23</sup> This is seen to be more effective that changes to the delivery of teaching, such as increased use of ICT or changes made to the curriculum. A number of commentators therefore

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<sup>22</sup> Communities, Families and Schools Together, David Egan, May 2012

<sup>23</sup> The relationship between educational attainment and poverty; Scrutiny Research Team

stress the importance of continual development of teachers, pushing them to improve teaching practices and raising awareness of new methods and interventions.

98. A representative from ISOS Partnership stressed the importance of teaching, saying that if only one factor was focussed on, it should be this. It was felt that head teachers should be challenging teachers within their school to improve their teaching practices, with the relevant support mechanisms in place to assist with this. Satisfactory teachers should be pushing to become good teachers; good teachers should be challenged to become excellent teachers.

99. He also stressed that the length of exposure to high quality teaching and learning environments was also important. Students should be receiving the highest quality teaching and be exposed to it for the longest amount of time possible. Schools should have educational opportunities available to pupils beyond the end of formal school hours; this can help compensate for the support and attention many young people from deprived backgrounds miss out on.

100. The importance of teaching was also a view supported during the meetings held with head teachers. One primary head stated that, despite their lack of male staff (and male role models for pupils) in the school, they would always choose to employ the best quality teacher rather than look to address this imbalance. A number of Head Teachers indicated that peer observation by other teachers was important, and that teachers should be looking learn from each other's expertise.

101. A report by Ofsted, entitled, 'Twenty Outstanding Primary Schools; Excelling Against The Odds' states that outstanding schools generally have a very good sense of what it takes for lessons to be outstanding. The report indicates that a number of common features of outstanding teaching and learning. These include:

- stimulating and enthusiastic teaching which interests, excites and motivates pupils and accelerates their learning;
- high expectations of what pupils can do;
- consistency in the quality of teaching across the school;
- development of good learning habits, with many opportunities for pupils to find things out for themselves;
- highly structured approaches to reading, writing and mathematics, with some ability grouping;
- well-planned lessons which provide for the differing needs of pupils
- stimulating classroom environment;
- frequent praise and a valued reward system; and
- well-trained and deployed teaching assistants.<sup>24</sup>

102. A separate Ofsted report 'Twelve Outstanding Secondary Schools; Excelling Against The Odds', supported the view that peer reviews of teaching practices are important. It cites one 'outstanding' secondary school where, "*Teachers are expected to make good practice visits to other schools and disseminate their findings on their return. They undertake peer observations across departments so that good practice is widely shared and inter-disciplinary collaboration fostered.*"<sup>25</sup>

103. A report by Estyn, 'Effective Practice in Tackling Poverty and Disadvantage in Schools', also highlights the importance of developing the expertise of staff to meet the needs of disadvantaged learners. It states that many successful schools have "*a strong culture of sharing good practice, both within and outside the school. These schools provide plenty of opportunities for teachers to observe one another and to share approaches to planning across the school. [...]. They have also identified training opportunities for staff to develop specialist skills such as those in play therapy or anger management.*"<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> 'Twenty outstanding primary schools; Excelling against the odds', Ofsted, 2009

<sup>25</sup> 'Twelve outstanding secondary schools; Excelling against the odds', Ofsted, 2009

<sup>26</sup> 'Effective practice in tackling poverty and disadvantage in schools', Estyn, November 2012

104. The Estyn report goes on to say, *“successful schools use performance management processes to improve the standards and wellbeing of their disadvantaged learners. In these schools, all staff have specific and measurable improvement targets that are related to the school target of raising the achievement of disadvantaged learners. This makes all staff accountable for raising the achievement of disadvantaged learners and helps these schools to evaluate their progress.”*

105. A number of witnesses throughout the Inquiry highlighted Teach First as an organisation that is having significant impact in England in promoting the highest quality standards of teaching in schools in deprived areas. Teach First was contacted to contribute to this Inquiry and subsequently provided a written submission for the Members’ consideration.

106. Teach First recognised that their vision – “that no child’s educational success should be limited by their socio-economic background” – is very much aligned with the aim of this Inquiry. Teach First is an education charity founded on the basis that excellent teaching and leadership are key elements in overcoming the barriers that poverty creates. It works with like-minded partners to give every child the right to an excellent education.

107. Teach First has worked hard over the past 10 years to build a strong brand which not only profiles the critical need to address educational disadvantage but also begins to instil in the minds of top graduates that only a social movement will fix this problem and that they can have a direct impact and make a difference. As a result Teach First is seen to be raising the quality and profile of the teaching profession, and to have made teaching in schools in challenging circumstances one of the most prestigious options for graduates. Applications are open to graduates, young professionals and career changers, with a minimum 2:1 degree qualification, and subject to a rigorous recruitment and selection process.

108. Research for Teach First by the University of Manchester (2010) found:

- a significant correlation between participation in Teach First and improved pupil achievement, which appears one to two years following the first year of partnership with the school;
- a positive relationship between the number of Teach First teachers in a school and pupil achievement at Key Stage 4, with schools with more Teach First teachers performing better than those with fewer Teach First teachers;
- Observations that the teaching practices of Teach First teachers in their first year are good to excellent – in international comparisons they were generally on a par with or ahead of more experienced teachers.

109. In 2013, with the support of the Welsh Government, Teach First will begin working in South Wales, with plans to cover the whole of Wales from 2014. The target is to recruit 40 teachers for 2013, who will be placed in schools that have a high percentage (40% plus) of pupils living in 20% of the most deprived areas of the country with a significant percentage (25% plus) of pupils entitled to free school meals and / or band 4/5 secondary schools to support literacy, numeracy and Welsh.

110. The Leadership Development programme will follow the core Teach First model but the programme curriculum will be specific to Welsh school and education system context and the content and delivery design of the Summer Institute will be specific to the Welsh context and the needs of schools.

111. A concern mentioned during the Inquiry was that often newly qualified teachers (NQTs) do not possess the skills required to work in the most challenging schools and that the traditional Post Graduate Certificate of Education (PGCE) route into teaching does not prepare NQTs for these schools. This view was supported by a representative of the ISOS Partnership, who felt that training may be out of step with what is needed,

but that effective schools use arrangements for continual professional development (CPD) to support teachers to develop the skills needed.

112. The literature review undertaken by Scrutiny stresses that some commentators warn against placing too much emphasis on the role of individual teachers, and that this is one of many things that can contribute to closing the attainment gap. Excellent teachers and teaching practices must be supported by strong leadership and expectations across the school. In meeting with the Members of the Inquiry, Professor Egan commented that all the good work through exceptional teaching could be lost as soon as a pupil walks out of the classroom if the leadership in the school is weak, and if the families and communities of these young people are not engaged in their education.

#### London

113. Professor Egan informed the members of the inquiry that it is important for Capital cities to be at the forefront of educational attainment and leading the way for the nation. The underachievement of schools and pupils in Cardiff could be holding the city back in terms of the economy and future labour market. Members were informed that the London Challenge school improvement programme was established in 2003, with Government backing, to target low performing secondary schools in London. An emphasis was placed on effective leadership, networking and collaboration, advice provided by academic advisors, outstanding teaching practices and data monitoring. As a result, over the past ten years, results in London secondary schools have improved and the average attainment of pupils is above the national average. Improvements have been made in the attainment of both free school meal pupils and those who are not eligible for them.

114. The representative of the ISOS Partnership commented that one of the keys to the success was the use of 'challenge advisors' who challenge low expectations from teachers, provided coaching to head teachers and challenged schools performance data. He stated that there was a positive

energy surrounding the London Challenge; it was recognised that it was essential that for pupils to achieve. Poor schools were not branded band 5 schools, or the worst schools in such and such an area, but were termed 'keys to success' schools. Both he and Professor Egan stated that there is no reason this turnaround could not be replicated in Cardiff.

## **Free school Meals and Cashless Catering**

115. Free school meals are an important entitlement to young people who live in poverty as they provide a hot and nutritious meal during the school day. While providing important financial support for families of over £400 per year, they also have important health and educational benefits for the young people receiving them. *"Evidence shows that eating a healthy school meal improves children's concentration during afternoon lessons and can have a positive impact on classroom behaviour. Nutritious school meals for disadvantaged children can also help children to develop healthy eating habits and have the potential to decrease health inequalities."*<sup>27</sup>

116. A representative of Education Services informed the Members of the Inquiry that free school meals are vitally important to many young people as it may be their only cooked meal of the day. Often young people turn up to the morning breakfast club who have clearly not eaten a full meal since they received their free school meal the afternoon before.

117. In Wales, children whose parents receive the following support payments are entitled to receive free school meals:

- Income Support
- Income Based Jobseekers Allowance
- Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance

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<sup>27</sup> Fair and Square, A policy report on the future of free school meals, The Children's Society

- Child Tax Credit, provided they are not entitled to Working Tax Credit and their annual income does not exceed £16,190.
- Guarantee element of State Pension Credit.
- Working Tax Credit 'run-on' - the payment someone may receive for a further four weeks after they stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit.

Young people who receive Income Support or Income Based Job Seekers Allowance in their own right are also entitled to receive free school meals.<sup>28</sup>

118. A concern highlighted throughout the Inquiry is that there are many young people and many families in Cardiff who are eligible for free school meals but are not claiming them. This was highlighted in a number of schools visited, by representatives from Education Services, Catering Services and the Welsh Government. Two gaps were identified by the Operational Manager for Schools Catering. Firstly, where families are eligible for free school meals but have not completed the necessary paperwork to claim them, and secondly, where a child has been registered to receive free school meals but chooses not to claim it when in school.

119. This is not only an issue in Cardiff, but a nationwide problem. 'Fair and Square', a policy report on the future of free school by The Children's Society<sup>29</sup> estimates that half a million young people in England are entitled to free school means but do not take them up. The breakdown of this is that around 200,000 eligible children are not registered for free school meals, and 300,000 children are registered but choose not to take up their meals.

120. A variety of reasons were given to the Members as to why this free entitlement is going unclaimed. In terms of why eligible children are not being registered, it was commented that often families where English is an additional language have problems understanding and completing the necessary paperwork. A number of head teachers indicated that their school actively sends letters out to families informing them that parents receiving

<sup>28</sup> <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/schoolshome/foodanddrink/freeschoolmeals/?lang=en>

<sup>29</sup> Fair and Square, A policy report on the future of free school meals, The Children's Society

certain benefits can claim free school meals, and that support is available in the school to help them complete the forms. It was also felt that some families choose not to claim free school meals because of the social stigma their family would face as a result.

121. Children who are registered for free school meals that choose not to claim them tend to primarily be an issue in secondary schools. Within primary schools all school meals are pre-paid, with no additional transactions required by the child, therefore those who are claiming free meals are anonymised. However, in secondary schools pupils face significant social stigma and bullying from their peers because their claiming of free school meals is highly visible. All but one secondary school in Cardiff operate a cash based system, where pupils claiming free school meals are required to hand over vouchers rather than cash. Many pupils would rather not eat than face the bullying and embarrassment of claiming free meals.

122. Pupils who choose to claim their free meals also face significant inconvenience in order to obtain the necessary voucher/ticket. This often requires queuing twice, once for the voucher, and then joining the queue for food; this practice was seen as concerning particularly in schools where lunch breaks have been cut to half an hour or where sports clubs take place during the lunch break.

123. It was also highlighted in one school that parents have religious based concerns about the food that is provided, and the way in which it is prepared. As a result, parents choose to provide their children with sandwiches rather than claim free meals.

124. The Operational Manager responsible for Schools Catering informed the Members of the Inquiry that she had proposed the introduction of cashless biometric payment systems in schools for many years. The benefits of introducing this type of system would be seen by pupils, parents, teachers and the catering service. Pupils claiming free school meals would be anonymised, reducing the threat of bullying for many pupils; there would

also be no risk of losing money or a payment card because biometric systems would use finger print recognition. Parents and schools would be able to monitor what food is being purchased, and subsequently make recommendations to pupils about healthier ways to spend their money. There would also be no need for pupils to carry cash or for cash collections to take place. The system would not only be useable for school meals, but also for payment for school trips or school uniform, again anonymising those who receive additional financial support.

125. In April 2013, a Cardiff Council press release stated that;

*“Cardiff Catering, the council's catering service, had been given the green light to progress a biometric payment system which will enable parents to pre-pay for their children's school meals via a web-based account.*

*Using the latest technology, children and young people will be able to pay for their school lunches by placing a thumb or finger on a digital scanner, giving secure access to their own account to be used to buy foods or other school expenditure like trips or uniform.*

*The Council has been keen to deliver a cashless payment system for school meals for some time in a bid to remove the potential for stigma and bullying which, we are aware, can sometimes be associated with receiving free school meals.”<sup>30</sup>*

It is hoped that this system will be operational in four secondary schools in the city by September 2013.

126. Maximising the take up of free school meals is not only important in terms of providing additional financial support to the families who are in most need, and to pupils who may not otherwise receive full cooked meals. It is also

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<sup>30</sup> Cashless Catering Press release  
[http://www.cardiff.gov.uk/content.asp?nav=2,2874&parent\\_directory\\_id=2865&id=14238&Language=](http://www.cardiff.gov.uk/content.asp?nav=2,2874&parent_directory_id=2865&id=14238&Language=)

important in the interest of every school and the catering service to ensure every child possible is claiming the meals they are entitled to.

127. The Operational Manager responsible for Schools Catering estimated that £250,000 worth of school meals goes unclaimed every year. The Welsh Government will only reimburse the value of meals that have been claimed rather than all the meals registered for. This is a significant amount of money for a service aiming to offer competitive prices and high quality meals.

128. As previously highlighted in this report, schools receive an allocation of the pupil deprivation grant based on a formula which takes into account the number of pupils who are eligible for free school meals. A number of head teachers stated their school receives less PDG allocation than it should because a number of pupils are eligible but not registered for free school meals. One head teacher also commented that they are aware of a number of pupils whose parents are working two or three jobs, and are living just above the FSM threshold but living in 'in-work' poverty. Consequently the additional PDG funding has to be spent assisting more pupils than the allocation is intended for.

## **Breakfast Scheme**

129. Introduced in 2004, the Welsh Government Primary School Breakfast initiative provides for all children in primary schools to have a free, healthy breakfast at school each morning. The Welsh Government website states that, *“Breakfast has long been recognised as the most important meal of the day and evidence shows that a healthy breakfast is linked to*



*better health, concentration and behaviour in our schools.*"<sup>31</sup> It is intended that this initiative will particularly help pupils from deprived backgrounds who may not otherwise receive breakfast in the morning and who may not have eaten properly since their free school meal the previous day. It is seen to improve their cognitive or mental abilities, enabling children to be more alert, pay better attention, and to perform better in class.

130. The Operational Manager responsible for Schools Catering informed the Members that there are rigid regulations from the Welsh Government on what can be served to children and how. Children can have a bowl of cereal (not sugar or chocolate coated); toast and fruit juice, and schools are given an allocation of 28p per breakfast. Staff are employed for one hour only, including the time to set up and clear up. Members were informed that there is no stigma attached to this scheme because the provision is universal and often it is used as a way of childcare for parents who need to get to work earlier.

131. The number of schools offering breakfast schemes has risen since its introduction, with many breakfast clubs where parents have to pay a small amount being replaced by the free breakfast scheme. Currently there are 75 primary schools in Cardiff offering the scheme. However it was commented that in many cases the children who most need this breakfast are still not receiving it. On average the take up of free breakfast is around 25% of a schools total pupil number and often the young people from deprived backgrounds are the ones not made to get up early and miss breakfast at home and in school. It was suggested that the money spent on free breakfasts could be better targeted in providing more substantial and more nutritious meals at lunch time, when more young people from deprived background are likely to be in school and reached by this initiative.

132. One head teacher the Members met with commented that a good opportunity is being lost in breakfast schemes. The Welsh Government is

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<sup>31</sup> <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/schoolshome/foodanddrink/breakfast/?lang=en>

committed to funding an initiative for young people to get into school earlier, however time is only allocated for eating and no provision is made to link this time in school to learning or to teaching the curriculum in a non-classroom environment. Members were informed that in New York every effort was made to link initiatives to learning opportunities. All pre school and after school initiatives are linked to addressing literacy and numeracy skills rather than being seen as separate from the school day.

## **Libraries**

133. In the overview of poverty given to Members by a representative of Save The Children, it was highlighted that there are strong links between poor literacy and poverty. Young people from a poor background are more likely to have non-functionally literate parents and may therefore lack the support they require at home. Without the literacy of a 9 year old, a young person cannot access the Secondary School Curriculum, and figures provided by senior officers from Library Services informed Members that 23.8% of young people enter secondary education without this functional literacy level. If a young person is unable to understand instructions they receive in class and textbooks for study, it should come as no surprise that their learning will suffer.

134. Officers from Library Services informed the Members of the Inquiry that one in three children do not have any books at home, and 25% of households do not have access to the internet. Young people from deprived backgrounds have less access to learning resources than their wealthier peers, and so will fall behind in school. However these are services that libraries in the city offer, and free of charge. Libraries offer supportive reading environments in a safe and quiet environment, and promote positive attitudes towards reading and learning. Members were informed that research has proven that children who are introduced to books from an early age make better progress when they get to school and that educational achievement is strongly influenced by children's attitude towards reading.

135. Members were informed that many schools in Cardiff undertake visits to their local library, with 169 class visits undertaken during the first two quarters of 2012/13. However Members were concerned to hear that there is limited budget within Libraries for outreach and promotion, with decisions being made between stock renewal and outreach. Cardiff has a single dedicated Children's Librarian to cover the whole city, and staff limitations within libraries mean that promotional activity within schools is not a feasible option.

## **Restorative Approaches**

136. The Council's Restorative Approaches Development Manager outlined a new approach that is being used in schools and organisations across the United Kingdom and an effective means of managing the behaviour of young people. Members were informed that traditionally schools behaviour policies tend to reflect the legal system, with the use of terms such as detention, punishment and blame. Restorative Approaches provides a different mindset and toolkit that aims to build, maintain and repair relationships within the school and encourages people to take responsibility for their actions.

137. This is linked with the effects of poverty on educational attainment and schools in deprived areas tend to have higher exclusion rates as a result of worse behavioural records. Sending a pupil out of lessons, or excluding them from school does not help with a young person's educational attainment, it means pupils will spend less time in a learning environment and will be more likely to fall behind in class. This will then increase the likelihood of inappropriate behaviour if a young person cannot understand what is going on in lessons.

138. The restorative mindset presumes that challenging behaviours are symptoms of unmet needs. The approach attempts to understand the

background to this behaviour, to understand what is going on in a young person's life or at home and provide support to overcome it.

139. Within schools Restorative Approaches means; the use of 'circles' to discuss issues, where one person at a time speaks and everyone listens and pays attention to what they are saying; morning 'check ins' where everyone has an opportunity to share how they are feeling, allowing other people to know where their peers may need additional support; restorative meetings following incidents such as fights or bullying, which allow everyone to speak, to share how they have been effected and to involve people in deciding the consequences of their actions. These restorative meetings often involve parents / carers and teachers, so everyone can share how they are feeling and how they have been affected.

140. Members were informed that the following are key principles of a Restorative mindset within schools:

- Mutual respect, inclusion, openness and transparency, non judgement
- Expectations of high support and high challenge
- Working with rather than to or for as a priority
- Honour unique perspectives
- All are accountable and responsible for their behaviours and how they affect others
- We model the values and behaviours we desire in others.

141. Restorative Approaches requires the buy in of the whole school, and needs to be embedded as a school-wide ethos, rather than one or two members of staff trying to make an impact in their lessons. Training is required to equip teachers and members of staff with the tools, language and mindset to ensure Restorative Approaches will have an impact in the school. This point was stressed many times during a visit the Members of the Inquiry undertook to Swansea to view Restorative Approaches in practice within a primary school and to meet with relevant Cabinet members,

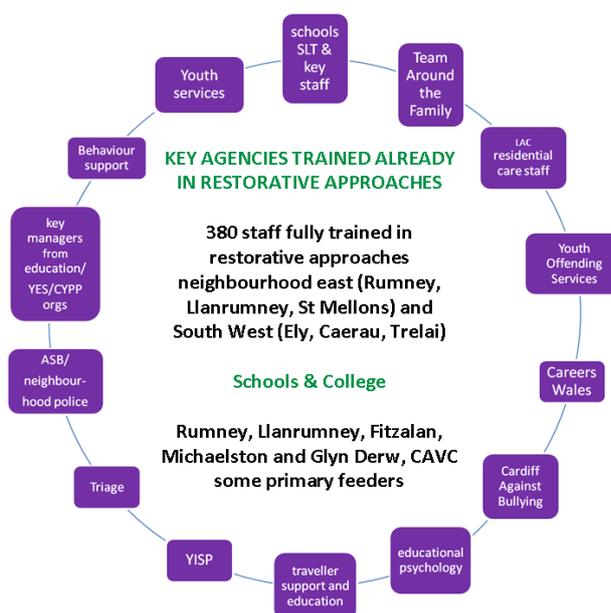
the Chief Executive and senior officers. Members were informed that everyone from the head teacher to the caretaker must provide a consistent approach within the school for it to be successful.

142. Members were also informed that Restorative Approaches has the potential to change the behaviours of whole communities if the tools are consistently applied. If local Police Community Support Officers, Health and Social workers are also using consistent methodology and language, real progress can be made within 'problematic' communities.

143. Within Cardiff, Restorative Approaches have been trialled and embedded in a number of schools, with very positive outcomes being achieved. Fitzalan High School has seen a reduction in 'days lost to exclusions' down from 412 to 42, by offering restorative meetings rather than instant exclusions and attendance has increased to 94%. The head teacher of Fitzalan commented that it would be good to see this practice embedded within cluster schools in the area and the wider community in order to make a real coordinated improvement for families in that part of the city.

144. Figure 13 shows the significant number of schools and organisations that have been trained in Restorative Approaches. However, the Council's Restorative Approaches Development Manager informed members that there is a backlog of requests from Council services, schools and organisations that work in the most deprived communities to undertake the training. This demand far exceeds the ability within the Council to supply training and there is concern that delays will mean that schools or services may try and introduce the approach without the necessary training or support in place, which may well do more harm than good in the long run. A clear strategy and commitment is required across the Council and city in order to really make an impact on those most in need in the Cardiff.

**Figure 13 – Agencies and School in Cardiff trained in Restorative Approaches**



145. In meeting with senior officials at Swansea Council, Members were informed that there has been a move to make Swansea a Restorative City. Since March 2010, 45 of the 94 schools in Swansea have been trained in Restorative Practices, the majority of which are primary schools, with over 3,500 individuals who work in schools or teams that have contact with children and young people trained. The results that have been seen in Swansea include; improved attendance and behaviour in schools; children parking their baggage at the classroom door and being ready to learn; an alternative to the grievance process; and a general improved atmosphere in schools with stronger relationships between staff, pupils and parents.

146. Members were advised that a citywide implementation of Restorative Practices requires a consistent approach within each school and organisation, or within a cluster of schools, supported by the leadership of the Council. Restorative Approaches must become the central philosophy within schools and must compliment and support other strategies in place within schools, such as literacy and numeracy. The approach will not be

successful if it is a 'bolt on' to schools everyday practice, but must become central to the philosophy or vision of a school. The quality of the training and support that can be provided to schools staff was highlighted as being crucial to successful implementation of the approach.

147. The Inquiry was also informed that Hull is recognised internationally as the first Restorative City, with a consistent drive for this practice and cross sector adoption of the practices. Central to this success was the establishment of the Hull Centre for Restorative Practices. The Council's Restorative Approaches Development Manager informed the Inquiry Members that it would not be unrealistic vision for Cardiff to develop a centre of excellence within Wales, offering training to other local authorities and across sectors.

## **Flying Start**

148. Flying Start is the Welsh Government targeted early years programme for families with children under 4 years of age in some of the most deprived areas of Wales. It supports parents by providing health advice, learning skills, support and practical ideas to help them guide their children towards a brighter future. Throughout the Inquiry the importance of this scheme was highlighted to Members given the strong links between poverty and delayed development in language, emotional and social skills, and poor general health. Flying Start is in place to provide additional support to these young people and set them up for the best possible start to life.

149. The programme is delivered through four key strands of support; free quality, part-time childcare for 2-3 year olds; enhanced Health Visiting service; Access to Parenting programmes and Early Language Development.

150. The Operational Manager responsible for the Flying Start Programme met with the Members to discuss the work undertaken in Cardiff. Free childcare

was highlighted as being important for both parents and the child's development; it encourages families to establish early attendance routines that it is hoped will be continued when the child enters school and provides high quality care from professionals in a caring environment.

151. A multi skilled approach is used within Cardiff through the Flying Start health care visitors. This includes; health workers, who stress the importance of daily routines and play; midwives, who provide pre birth advice; dieticians, who inform parents of the links between good dietary habits, a child's health and their concentration levels; and safeguarding nurses.

152. Flying Start recognises that parenting is not easy, and that parents often require encouragement to take up support, advice and assistance. A number of parenting programmes are available, each with different focus, such as supporting families with children who have behavioural/developmental difficulties, or programmes that focus on raising self esteem and appropriate expectations of their child.

153. The Early Language strand of Flying Start encourages parents to talk to their child, to use appropriate language and help their child develop listening and communication skills. Speech and language therapists are also involved to help identify children who have delayed development of their language skills at as early a stage as possible.

154. Access to the Flying Start Programme is not means-tested but is available to all families who have a postcode within a Flying Start catchment area. Targeting the scheme on a geographical basis ensures that it is non-stigmatised in the local area, and creates a social mix of families attending the various sessions. Catchment areas are determined based on a number of indicators including the Welsh indices of multiple deprivation (WIMD), the proportion of families eligible for free school meals, Core Subject Indicators/Key Stage 1, numbers of 'children In need' in an area and child protection numbers.

155. Currently eight primary schools fall within Flying Start catchment areas, these are; Adamsdown, Mount Stuart, St Mary the Virgin, Trelai, Windsor Clive, Herbert Thompson, Greenway and Glan yr Afon. Within Cardiff the Welsh Government target for the number of children reached is 2,859; a figure that has been exceeded in Cardiff by approximately 150, with no additional funding allocated.

156. National indicators suggest that Flying Start is having an impact on the lives of young people living in deprived areas, although it must be noted that it is hard to prove conclusively that Flying Start is the reason a child is improving. Children in Flying Start areas are assessed at the age of three years old to establish whether they are meeting developmental milestones. The data for Cardiff can be seen in Figure 14. This shows that there has been an increase from 35% to 51% in the number of young people in Flying Start areas about the developmental threshold. The Operational Manager responsible for the Flying Start Programme commented that there is clearly room for further improvement with 49% of young people on Flying Start areas below their developmental milestones.

**Figure 14 – Children Achieving Developmental Age**

**Flying Start - Cardiff**  
Children Achieving Developmental Age by Financial Year Cohort  
01/09/2009 - 31/12/2012

	2009-2010		2010-2011		2011-2012		2012-2013		Total	
<b>Above</b>	112	35%	174	42%	232	47%	87	51%	605	43%
<b>Below</b>	205	64%	235	57%	252	52%	82	48%	774	56%
<b>Total</b>	317	100%	409	100%	484	100%	169	100%	1,379	100%

157. Comparative data is also available for each school catchment area, allowing for comparisons in progress and to allow programme coordinators to target improvements and resources on a micro level. Data is also available for the number of children fully vaccinated within each catchment area. This also shows improvements over the past four years.

158. The Operational Manager responsible for the Flying Start Programme indicated that important links are being made with the health board, voluntary sector, and private sector to work in partnership and helping to avoid duplication and share good practice. Training is also being shared across different teams and organisations who will have contact with the same families, ensuring consistency in the services they receive.
159. Members were informed that over the next two years there is a commitment to expand the Flying Start programme in Cardiff, with a target of 4,135 children reached in 2013/14 and 4,879 in 2014/15. This represents a 70% increase over the next two years. The programme will continue to be delivered in the current areas, with expansion into lower super output areas that have the highest proportion of families living with 0-4 year olds living in households receiving income benefits.
160. The Operational Manager responsible for the Flying Start Programme highlighted concerns that some areas identified for within the expansion do not have facilities suitable for the programme. The various strands of the programme cannot be carried out in any building but must meet hygiene standards, childcare standards and should ideally be welcoming and family friendly. The ideal situation is for a Flying Start programme is for it to 'bolt on' to a nursery or primary school; however it is recognised that this comes at significant cost if additional buildings are required.

## **Partnership**

161. A number of witnesses to the inquiry stressed that schools alone cannot be expected to overcome the barriers to attainment created by poverty. Pupils are only in lessons five hours of the day, five days a week; a holistic approach is required where other agencies and organisations also play an important role in working with schools to extend the exposure to learning and support that pupils from a deprived background receive.

162. Members met with two representatives of Student Volunteering Cardiff (SVC) to discuss the work that is undertaken within schools in Cardiff. SVC is an independent student-led charity that aims to enhance the lives of disadvantaged and vulnerable members of the community in Cardiff. SVC is currently running over 36 different projects in the city and provides volunteering opportunities for over 1,000 Cardiff University students, staff or alumni.

163. Members were informed that SVC currently works with nine primary school and eight secondary schools in Cardiff and also runs a number of area based initiatives. In Primary schools, SVC volunteers work as a classroom assistant for one morning or afternoon per week. It is left to the school to decide the allocation and jobs the volunteer is given. The work undertaken in secondary schools at KS3 is very much determined by the needs of the school, which may be focussing on literacy, numeracy or providing additional support to pupils with special education need. At KS4, a pilot homework club is run in Llanrumney where pupils are handpicked and matched with a mentor to cover core subjects.

164. Members were shown evidence of the impact this work can have, with the SVC 2011/12 End of Year Report giving data from one secondary school in Cardiff that shows significant increases in the reading and spelling ability of pupils who have worked with SVC volunteers. In some cases, reading ability has increased by over five years. Feedback from the school involved recognised that the improvement was "*mainly through the help of [SVC] volunteers*".

165. Members were informed that SVC do not actively publicise the volunteer service because there are limitations on the number of projects that can be undertaken. The amount of projects that can be undertaken is very much dependant on the number of volunteers who sign up each year. However, the representatives stated that SVC will try to work with any school that approaches them, even if it means just initiating a very small scale project.

166. The director of the People and Work Unit informed Members that the Homework Club run in Adamsdown is a good example of engaging the community in education. Members of the Inquiry met with the Communities First Coordinator responsible for this homework club and had the opportunity to meet with the young people and student tutors involved in the Club.

167. The Homework Club was initiated by parents in the community who had been paying for tuition, but the tutor had moved away from the area. A meeting was held with Cardiff University Widening Access Team to explore partnership arrangements, where students are paid by the University to run a homework club in the Communities First Centre for students who live in Adamsdown. Parents and community members are also welcomed to volunteer at the Club.

168. Four sessions are run each week, two for primary school children and two for secondary school pupils. At the start of the year, the Club is open to all young people who live in Adamsdown, but places are limited and are allocated on a first-come first-serve basis. Young people bring along homework set by the school and are given support to complete it. If all the work is completed, the student tutors are responsible for setting additional tasks and furthering the young peoples' knowledge

169. This partnership work is separate from the work of SVC as student tutors are paid by the University and there is a need to address the University targets of encouraging and assisting young people from deprived backgrounds into the University through the scheme. It was commented that the payment may also ensure that tutors are there every week, including on weekends, where volunteers could be more unreliable. Tutors are chosen who can relate to the young people, who have recently completed A-Levels themselves and may be from similar social backgrounds.

170. Members had the opportunity to meet and talk with the young people who attend the homework club. Pupils identified the following reasons for why they enjoy the club;

- It helps build confidence in ability
- It provides additional help if stuck with homework
- Tutors are more like friends than teachers
- One-to-one support is provided
- There is a relaxed atmosphere for learning
- I can ask questions that I wouldn't in a class of 30 in school

The student tutors stated that they are committed to the homework club because it provides essential teaching experience, experience working with young people and is good for their curriculum vitae.

171. During a number of meetings held with head teachers, it was mentioned that schools could benefit from having stronger links with health, social services and local Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs), particularly in deprived areas where families and young people are more likely to need access to these services or have appointments to attend. It was felt that multiple agencies working in a school setting would help break down some of the barriers and poor perceptions that exist around these services within the community. Social workers or PCSOs who have a local caseload could be based or collocated within a school.

172. The head teacher of one secondary school felt that it is often very difficult to get all partners working together in the best interest of the child, and a solution could be to get all services on one site. If the school, doctor, police and Children's Services were all in one location, a much better service could be provided.

173. This would help address an issue raised by the Director of the People and Work Unit, who felt that education was often given a low priority by other services, with medical or support appointments being made during school hours and pupils missing important hours of learning being lost. Much less time would be lost if services were all on one site. Members were also informed that parents often forget appointments or cannot afford to come and get their child and transport them to appointments at St David's Hospital. If services were colocated, far fewer important appointments would be missed.

174. This is supported by the findings of the Scrutiny Research Team's literature review which states that, *"It [could] be argued that schools, social workers, carers, health visitors and all agencies involved with families, need to work together to:*

- *stress the importance of education*
- *improve the home working environment for the child*
- *address any family issues that could impact upon the child's education*
- *inform parents of their responsibilities for their child's education alongside that of the schools.*<sup>32</sup>

175. Members of the Inquiry met with the Strategic Coordinator for Team Around the Family (TAF); a multi agency approach supporting families with complex problems, which brings a wide range of professional together to work with a family in order to help them address the breadth of challenges they are facing. Families that are referred to TAF undertake an intensive assessment and are linked with all the relevant agencies to support them. A pathfinder year was carried out in 2012/13 prior to a wider rollout; with families reporting improved attendance, improved relationships with school and within the family and improved achievement in school. Schools reported improved attendance and behaviour for young people supported by TAF.

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<sup>32</sup> The relationship between educational attainment and poverty; Scrutiny Research Team, December 2012

176. A number of schools indicated that they will take every opportunity to develop partnerships with other organisations or individuals that may help raise the aspirations of their pupils and give them experiences they would otherwise miss out on. Examples include working with local engineering companies, technology companies, Cardiff based universities, local artists and authors and the armed forces. Often this work links to educational projects while also helping to raise aspirations and raise awareness of the potential careers available to the young people.

## INQUIRY METHODOLOGY

177. The task group set out to explore how to close the attainment gap in Cardiff created by deprivation and poverty (where the attainment gap refers to the difference in educational attainment achieved by pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM), compared with those who are not).

178. In undertaking this inquiry the Members held 10 meetings, receiving evidence from 19 witnesses. This included meeting with Welsh Government Officers, charities, Council Officers, University academics, consultants and young people. Members of the inquiry have visited 5 primary schools and 5 secondary schools in Cardiff and undertook a visit to Swansea to visit a primary school and meet with the Chief Executive, Cabinet members and senior officers. Research was also commissioned with the Scrutiny Research Team and Cardiff Youth Council, and a number of policy documents have been considered.

179. Over the course of the Inquiry, Members received information from the following witnesses:

### **Internal**

Cllr Julia Magill	Cabinet Member, Education & Lifelong Learning (inc Libraries)
Jon House	Chief Executive, Cardiff Council
Robert Hopkins	Operational Manager, Management Standards and School Effectiveness
Sarah Peddle	Performance & Governance Manager

Julia Houlston Clark	Restorative Approaches Development Manager
Sue Eakers	Service and Compliance Manager, Education
Judith Gregory	Senior Client Officer, Catering Services
Llinos Davies	Team around the Family Strategic Coordinator
Elsbeth Morris	Operational Manager, Libraries
Laura Wood	Libraries & Information Development Officer
Emyr Williams	Principal Research Officer, Scrutiny
Avril Hooper	Operational Manager, Flying Start Programme
Leslie Leckie	Head Teacher, Trelai Primary School
Colin Skinner	Head Teacher, Roath Park Primary School
Sarah Ivens	Family Engagement Officer, Roath Park Primary School
John Hayes	Head Teacher, Plasmawr High School
Peter Morris	Head Teacher, Mount Stuart Primary School
Mrs A Tucker	Deputy Head Teacher, Greenway Primary
Jane Counsell	Head Teacher, Greenhill School
Cllr Jayne Cowan	Councillor for Rhiwbina / Chair of Governors, Greenhill School
Carrie Jenkins	Head Teacher, Gabalfa Primary School

Cath Bradshaw	Head Teacher, Fitzalan High School
Rod Phillips	Head Teacher, Cathays High School
Mr S Davis	Asst. Head teacher – Inclusion & Well-Being, Cathays High School
Dr Llinos Jones	Asst. Head teacher – Achievement & Standards, Cathays High School
Mrs E Davis Scott	Head of Community Education, Cathays High School
Joy Ballard	Head Teacher, Willows High School

### **External Witnesses**

Ross Chamberlain	Child Poverty Solutions Coordinator, Save the Children
Sarah Lloyd Jones	Director, People and Work Unit
Prof Chris Taylor	Wales Institute for Social & Economic Research, Data & Methods Cardiff University School of Social Sciences
Emma Williams	Head of Support for Learning Division, Welsh Government
Christine Grimshaw	Head of Deprivation and Engagement Branch, Welsh Government
Sarah Pritchard	Project Worker, Student Volunteers Cardiff
Alison Davies	Project Worker, Student Volunteers Cardiff

Cardiff Youth Council Research group

(Bethan Domaille, Lindsey Gibbs, Steph Pinnell, Dan Boughton, James Humphry, Emma Congalves, Faran Cox)

Lee Patterson Cardiff Youth Council, Community Education Officer

Carey Davies Cardiff Youth Council

Taela-Mae Hindle Cardiff Youth Council

Prof David Egan Educational Consultant and Adviser

Leigh Sandals ISOS Partnership

Ian James Interim Director Education, Swansea Council

Cllr Mitch Theaker Cabinet Member, Opportunities for Children and Young People, Swansea Council

Cllr Will Evans Cabinet Member Learning & Skills, Swansea Council

Jack Straw Chief Executive, Swansea Council

Hilary Davies Restorative Practices Project Manager, Swansea Council

David Williams Restorative Practice Lead Trainer, Swansea Council

Peter Griffin Chair, Cardiff Governors Association

Su West Coordinator, Adamsdown Community Project

Allan Herbert Riverside Communities First

Written Submission Teach First

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Part 3 – <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E0GYhYA7Eag&feature=relmfu>

Part 4 – <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PajiEd5ZPXs&feature=plcp>

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

180. The Scrutiny Committee is empowered to enquire, consider, review and recommend but not to make policy decisions. As the recommendations in this report are to consider and review matters there are no direct financial implications at this stage in relation to any of the work programme. However, financial implications may arise if and when the matters under review are implemented with or without any modifications.

## **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

181. The Scrutiny Committee is empowered to enquire, consider, review and recommend but not to make policy decisions. As the recommendations in this report are to consider and review matters there are no direct legal implications. However, legal implications may arise if and when the matters under review are implemented with or without modification. Any report with recommendations for decision that goes to Executive / Council will set out any legal implications arising from those recommendations. All decisions taken by or on behalf of the Council must (a) be within the legal power of the Council; (b) comply with any procedural requirement imposed by law; (c) be within the powers of the body or person exercising powers on behalf of the Council; (d) be undertaken in accordance with the procedural requirements imposed by the Council e.g. standing orders and financial regulations; (e) be fully and properly informed; (f) be properly motivated; (g) be taken having regard to the Council's fiduciary duty to its taxpayers; and (h) be reasonable and proper in all the circumstances.

## COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE

- To scrutinise, measure and actively promote improvement in the Council's performance in the provision of services and compliance with Council policies, aims and objectives in the area of children and young people, including :
  - School Improvement
  - Schools Organisation
  - School Support Services
  - Education Welfare & Inclusion
  - Early Years Development
  - Special Educational needs
  - Governor Services
  - Children's Social Services
  - Children & Young Peoples Partnership
  - Youth Services and Justice
  - Play Services
  
- To assess the impact of partnerships with and resources and services provided by external organisations including the National Assembly for Wales, Assembly Sponsored Public Bodies and quasi-departmental nongovernmental bodies on the effectiveness of Council service delivery.
  
- To report to an appropriate Cabinet or Council meeting on its findings and to make recommendations on measures, which may enhance Council performance in this area.

**CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP**



**Councillor Siobhan Corria**  
(Chairperson)



**Councillor Paul Chaundy**



**Councillor Chris Davis**



**Councillor Jonathan Evans**



**Councillor Andrew Graham**



**Councillor Phil Hawkins**



**Councillor Bill Kelloway**



**Councillor Sue Lent**



**Councillor Cecelia Love**

**Co-opted Members:**



**Mrs P Arlotte**  
Roman Catholic  
Representative



**Mr Bill John**  
Church in Wales  
Representative



**Mrs Catrin Lewis**  
Parent Governor  
Representative



**Mr H Jukes**  
Parent Governor  
Representative



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