



SCRUTINY COMMITTEE REPORT

Date Written	9 th December 2019
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Service Area	Learning
Committee Date	6 th January 2020

To: Chair, Ladies and Gentlemen

Review of the Education Other Than At School (EOTAS) Provision

1.0 SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 This report provides members with information regarding:
- the impact of the recent changes to provision for EOTAS; and
 - the impact on attainment for this group of young people.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 The content of this report is discussed and noted.

3.0 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Historically EOTAS pupils within Merthyr Tydfil have been educated in a variety of provisions under a variety of guises. However, what has remained constant is the increasing demand for bespoke support for those pupils with social, emotional and behavioural needs.
- 3.2 Nearly all EOTAS pupils in Merthyr Tydfil display challenging behaviour and as such require support for their wellbeing as well as their academic needs. To ensure that these pupils receive the education to which they are entitled, a decision was made in 2018 to register the provision for these challenging children and young people as a Pupil Referral Unit (PRU). This unit would therefore be subject to the same accountability framework as a mainstream school.

- 3.3 The same entitlement for education applies to those pupils in receipt of special tuition; many of these young people cannot access a fulltime placement due to their high level of needs, others may need special tuition for medical reasons. In order to build capacity a Service Level Agreement was made with Equity Solutions to deliver educational and social skills support for these pupils.

4.0 WHERE WE WERE

- 4.1 The PRU is a relatively new established provision serving the pupils of Merthyr Tydfil. It has been established as a result of a realignment of behaviour and EOTAS provision due to the increased demand for, and the gaps in provision for, pupils with Social Emotional and Behaviour Difficulties (SEBD).
- 4.2 The local authority registered a PRU for Key Stages 2, 3 and 4 pupils as of 1st September 2018. The provision is on two sites; Ty Dysgu Dowlais (the former Dowlais infant site) for Key Stage 2 and Ty Dysgu Homfray (the former Ty Homfray site) for Key Stages 3 and 4. The pupils formerly in the Dowlais Infant school moved to a new demountable building on the primary school site as of September 2018.
- 4.3 September 2018 saw the launch of Dysgu Newydd; an alternative provision for learners unable to access mainstream education or Merthyr Tydfil's PRU. Learners may have medical, wellbeing or behavioural considerations that make a school environment difficult to access.
- 4.4 With Dysgu Newydd there is the offer of one to one home tuition where this is deemed appropriate, or pairings/small groups where learners can access a more relaxed and personalised environment. Venues used include Ty Dysgu Dowlais, Cefn Community Centre and the 3Gs Community Centre, Gurnos. This places pupils in the heart of their communities and allows staff to support the development of social skills.
- 4.5 The curriculum offer is balanced to reflect the needs of learners and the opportunities offered if they were at school. A typical diet consists of GCSE English (also Literature where appropriate), mathematics, numeracy, BTEC SWEET, London Institute Business Finance (LIBF) Personal Finance and Agored courses where possible.

5.0 WHERE WE ARE NOW

- 5.1 As of November 2019, for those pupils on special tuition of which there are 60 approximately, most Y11 learners are predicted to exceed their school targets and some have already achieved LIBF Personal Finance and/or BTEC SWEET. This year has seen an increase in the use of group settings and Dysgu Newydd is developing ever closer links with schools in order to facilitate the potential of returning learners to schools where this is appropriate. Dysgu Newydd staff regularly meet with local authority officers and school staff to update on progress and contribute evidence to Panel, Social Services meetings, NEETS updates with the local authority and school parents'/open evenings.

- 5.2 There are currently eight pupils in the KS2 setting and approximately 30 pupils in the KS3/4 setting at the PRU. Both cohorts are subject to change depending upon the need across the local authority. The PRU operates upon a revolving door policy and pupils remain on the roll of their home school.
- 5.3 Approximately 50% of pupils are entitled to free school meals and 2% of pupils are Children Looked After (CLA). All pupils that attend the school have been identified as having significant social, emotional and behavioural needs. Across the academic year several pupils have received Statement of Special Education Needs for a range of learning needs ranging from ASD, SLD and PMED. The academic baseline of nearly all pupils is extremely low.
- 5.4 Despite the significant improvements made at the PRU in respect of leadership, vision, ethos, staffing, wellbeing and curriculum the school continues to require the highest level of support from the Consortium.
- 5.5 Attendance is a priority for the local authority and so far this is at approximately 70% for those on special tuition and approximately 60% for those attending the PRU. Any attendance figure for learners needs to recognise the acute needs of the individuals and medical conditions that have an impact upon attendance. Furthermore, due to the small numbers, a persistent absence by one pupil will have a significant effect on the overall attendance of the cohort. However, it should be noted that for most of the pupils there is a marked improvement between attendance figures of those on Dysgu Newydd and at the PRU when compared to their attendance at school.
- 5.6 During the academic year 2018/19 the Headteacher and school staff worked hard to embed several policies into the setting, one of which was the Behaviour Policy. This resulted in an increase in exclusions, but now that this policy is firmly understood by all there has been a decrease in exclusions during 2019/20.
- There has been a **decrease** in the total number of exclusions issued from 19 in 2018/19 to 16 in 2019/20.
 - There has been a **decrease** in the total number of days lost 34.5 in 2018/19 to 22 in 2019/20.
- 5.7 The curriculum offer for pupils receiving special tuition and for those attending the PRU has been extended and has been adapted to meet the needs of the challenges of these learners. The progress of all pupils is tracked and reported to the Management Committee and at Special Tuition Panel. Tailored intervention programmes to raise basic skills are delivered. It should be noted that the Year 11 pupils who left Ty Dysgu in July 2019, would only have had two and half term's worth of support under the new structure. Of the five Year 11 leavers in 2018/19, four pupils left with at least one recognised qualification at L1. Of the four pupils entered for examinations three pupils (75%) achieved the equivalent of 5 GCSEs A*-G. This is a significant improvement on the previous year where this was achieved by 37.5% of the pupils. There are higher expectations for those in Year 11 currently. The total pupil population from 2017/18 to 2018/19 had increased from 32 to 37, which now includes pupils at KS2. There is no comparative data for those in KS2.

5.8 For those receiving special tuition the total pupil population number has also increased over the two-year period as has the levels of attainment.

6.0 WHERE WE WANT TO BE

6.1 The local authority needs to enable improved outcomes for the pupils in these provisions in respect of wellbeing, attainment, attendance and behaviour and ultimately for more pupils to be ready to return to their home school.

7.0 WHAT WE NEED TO DO NEXT

7.1 The following will need to be undertaken in order to enable further improvements:

- Continued support from the Central South Consortium for the PRU;
- Further development of a collective vision across both sites of the PRU;
- Develop the curriculum offer for all EOTAS pupils;
- Provide appropriate training opportunities for PRU staff;
- Tender for the continued support for high quality tutors to support those pupils in receipt of special tuition; and
- Build capacity within the team of tutors to ensure that high standards are maintained for pupils in receipt of special tuition.

8.0 CONTRIBUTION TO WELLBEING OBJECTIVES

8.1 The content of this report relates to the following Wellbeing Objectives:

- Best start to life - Children and young people are equipped with the skills they need to be successful learners and confident individuals.
- Living Well - tackling adverse childhood experiences and developing community resilience; improving emotional wellbeing and mental health.
- Working Well - preparing learners for the life of work.

SUE WALKER
CHIEF OFFICER(LEARNING)

COUNCILLOR LISA MYTTON
CABINET MEMBER FOR LEARNING

BACKGROUND PAPERS		
Title of Document(s)	Document(s) Date	Document Location
Does the report contain any issue that may impact the Council's Constitution?		No

Consultation has been undertaken with the Corporate Management Team in respect of each proposal(s) and recommendation(s) set out in this report.