



## **SCRUTINY COMMITTEE REPORT**

Date Written	5 <sup>th</sup> April 2021
Report Author	Sarah Bowen
Service Area	Inclusion
Committee Date	26 <sup>th</sup> April 2021

*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 Scrutiny members with information regarding: -
- the impact of changes to provision for learners identified as EOTAS
  - the impact of changes on the attainment for this group of young people
  - future considerations for curriculum delivery for this group of learners

## **2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 This report is discussed and noted.

## **3.0 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 Over the years the Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) has had several different names and venues and has gone by various guises. However, there remains a constant demand for bespoke support for those pupils who are unable to receive their education in school, whether it be for medical reasons or for those with social, emotional and behavioural needs.
- 3.2 Pupils who need EOTAS provision require support for their wellbeing as well as their academic needs and are entitled to the best start to life, as is any pupil in a mainstream setting. To ensure that these pupils receive the education to which they are entitled, the EOTAS provision became registered as a PRU in 2018 and therefore would be subject to the same accountability framework and also support as a school.

- 3.3 The same entitlement applies to those pupils in receipt of special tuition and in order to build capacity within the team and to meet demand, a Service Level Agreement (SLA) was agreed with Equity Solutions in 2018. This service became named Dysgu Newydd. The purpose of this provision was to provide high-quality teachers, tutors and/or support staff for bespoke 1:1/small groups of learners with complex emotional needs, anxiety and those on the cusp of exclusion.
- 3.4 The local authority has a statutory duty to provide an education for all pupils who are on the roll of a school, but who are unable to access mainstream education, as well as those who are permanently excluded. As a minimum, pupils enrolled on the Special Tuition programme, will receive the following:
- KS1, KS2 and KS3 - one hour per day or five hours per week
  - KS4 - two hours per day or ten hours per week
- 3.5 In the case of a pupil being permanently excluded, 25 hours needs to be offered, however, these pupils are not always able to engage with this amount of learning. Their poor levels of engagement may well have attributed to their permanent exclusion in the first place. In such cases the local authority will work with the pupil and the family to ensure that a bespoke package of education can be provided to suit the needs of the individual.
- 3.6 When a pupil is temporarily removed from a school and educated in such situations as special tuition or the PRU, the appropriate proportion of the pupil's age weighted pupil unit (AWPU) will also transfer with effect from the day of transfer.

## **4.0 WHERE WE WERE**

- 4.1 The local authority registered Ty Dysgu as a Pupil Referral Unit for pupils in Key stages 2,3 and 4 from September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2018. The provisions were set up on two sites: Key Stages 3 & 4 occupying the former Homfray site (now known as Ty Dysgu Homfray), and Key Stage 2 occupying the former Dowlais Infant School site (now known as Ty Dysgu Dowlais).
- 4.2 At the same time the local authority entered into a SLA with Equity Solutions to provide high quality education provision for those learners who require special tuition (now known as Dysgu Newydd). This provision is currently out to tender to continue this level of provision moving forward.
- 4.3 Ty Dysgu offers provision in a school style setting, while Dysgu Newydd offers 1-1 tuition in the home where this is deemed appropriate, or increasingly in pairs and small groups where learners can access a more relaxed, less busy environment. Venues used include Cefn Community Centre and the 3Gs Community Centre, Gurnos.
- 4.4 From September 2019 Greenfield School has provided its own tuition to those learners who are unable to access full time provision due to the complex needs of their pupils.

## 5.0 WHERE WE ARE NOW

- 5.1 From September 2020 the Foundation Phase (FPh) nurture class, which had been opened at Abercanaid Primary School, moved to Ty Dysgu Dowlais and the PRU is now registered to take children from Foundation Phase to KS4.
- 5.2 The bungalow situated on the Dowlais site has been refurbished and set up as a suitable learning environment for the delivery of special tuition. This was ready for September 2020, however, due to the Covid pandemic social distancing guidance it has not run to full capacity as of yet.
- 5.3 At Ty Dysgu there are currently 7 pupils in the FPh, 10 in KS2 and 21 in KS3/4, all of whom are male.
- 5.4 Ty Dysgu is registered as an examination centre, although pupils remain dual registered with their home school. Those pupils receiving special tuition who remain on the roll of their school, will sit examinations through their home school, otherwise they will do so via Ty Dysgu.
- 5.5 Nearly all pupils in Dysgu Newydd in Y10 and Y11 have achieved A\*-C in the London Institute of Banking and Finance (LIBF) Personal Finance in the Spring term. All pupils have also achieved BTEC Success with Employment Education and Training (SWEET) except for those learners who entered Dysgu Newydd after December 2020.
- 5.6 Ty Dysgu entered learners for GCSE numeracy in November 2020 prior to the stopping of examinations; five out of the seven achieving a pass.
- 5.7 During the academic year 2019/20 there were 68 pupils accessing special tuition – this has decreased to 57 in 2020/21 (see Appendix 1 & 2). This is partly attributable to the fact that schools have been shut for a period of time due to Covid and that as schools have become more adept at delivering education online, they have been able to deliver “inhouse” home tuition.
- 5.8 The learners in both Ty Dysgu Homfray/Dowlais and Dysgu Newydd are subject to change depending upon the needs across the local authority. The aim is for learners to return to their home school although this is increasingly difficult when learners reach KS4 and the aim of both provisions is to act as a ‘revolving door’.
- 5.9 Both provisions have remained open since September although attendance has been erratic. On average the weekly attendance to Ty Dysgu has been 48.18%. A number of pupils have found it difficult to adjust back to a school routine, so exclusion figures have increased this academic year. It is important to note however, that many of these learners have acute needs and/or medical conditions and that this will invariably have an impact on their engagement and behaviour.
- 5.10 Placements for Ty Dysgu and Dysgu Newydd are continually reviewed at either the Special Tuition Panel, Clearing Panel or the SEBD Placement Panel. There are robust lines of communication around pupil progress and wellbeing between the settings, Panel meetings and the schools.

- 5.11 Both groups of learners have benefitted from stronger links with outside agencies and providers.
- Extra activities have been delivered via Stephens and George Charitable Trust (S&GCT) as part of their work with the local authority on promoting literacy.
  - This has included pupils in Ty Dysgu working with the author Karla Braling during the Autumn term to explore the dreams and aspirations through writing activities. One Year 6 pupil was so inspired that he continued to write stories after these sessions ceased.
  - As part of the local authority and S&GCT Christmas literacy project Tee2Sugars, a graffiti artist worked with learners at both provisions on Christmas themed art murals for public display.
  - In the Spring term the learners in Ty Dysgu and Dysgu Newydd worked with Mike Church, a children's writer, on designing and creating their own pieces of inspirational fiction. These have been turned into artistic posters for World Book Day for display across the County Borough.
- 5.12 Learners from Ty Dysgu Newydd also access the Dowlais Community Centre site when available to use the facilities.
- 5.13 Wherever possible all pupils have access to Social and Emotional Literacy sessions, counselling, Inspire 2 Achieve (I2A) and Personal Social and Emotional (PSE). Both provisions work closely with the Education Psychology Service and with ALN department to ensure that Statement reviews are held in a timely and meaningful manner. However, reticence and reluctance to engage has been a barrier for pupils in accessing this support. Neuro Development Team (NDT) & Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) referrals are made, and appointments are followed up, but the waiting lists for these are invariable long.
- 5.14 Within both provisions there is a heavy emphasis on developing positive social engagement. Ty Dysgu is part of the Nurture Schools Project with other schools across the local authority. This project supports staff to develop and embed a nurturing culture throughout the provisions, enhancing teaching and learning, promoting healthy outcomes for children and young people, all by focusing on emotional needs and development, as well as academic learning in a whole-school environment. The aim is for Ty Dysgu to achieve the National Nurture Schools Quality Mark.
- 5.15 Participation in the Rights Respecting Award Scheme has taught pupils about both their rights and responsibilities. Both sites will be aiming to achieve their Bronze Award initially, which recognises the provision as creating safe and inspiring places to learn.

## **6.0 WHERE WE WANT TO BE**

- 6.1 The local authority needs to better 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 mainstream setting.
- 6.2 Develop Ty Dysgu as an Outreach Service to support mainstream schools.

## 7.0 WHAT WE NEED TO DO NEXT

- 7.1 The following will need to be undertaken and/or further developed to allow for further improvements:
- Urgently secure a more suitable setting for Ty Dygsu Homfray – possibly utilising the Ty Dysgu Dowlais site more fully.
  - Work with Social Services more effectively to secure support for those learners with increasingly challenging needs.
  - Develop stronger links between Ty Dysgu, Dysgu Newydd and mainstream schools to encourage more opportunities for young people to access aspects of the mainstream curriculum.
  - Develop more robust packages to support those learners permanently excluded.
  - Produce a Directory of Alternative Placements for all schools to utilise as a way of offering additional learning pathways.
  - Work in partnership with CSC and other agencies to develop Ty Dysgu more fully.
  - Develop Ty Dysgu as more of a cohesive unit although currently based across two sites.
  - Ty Dysgu Dowlais is a developing provision and needs further support to ensure it meets the needs of these vulnerable learners.
  - Finalise the procurement process for Dysgu Newydd to ensure continued support for high quality tutors to support those pupils in receipt of special tuition.

## 8.0 CONTRIBUTION TO RAISING ASPIRATIONS RAISING STANDARDS STRATEGY

- 8.1 The contents of this report relate to the following RARS Themes and Goals
- Themes – Partnership and Collaboration; and Pandemic Recovery
  - Goals – Developing the Education Workforce; Supporting Learners' Health and Wellbeing; Improving Achievement and Progression; Developing the Environment for Learning

## 9.0 CONTRIBUTION TO WELLBEING OBJECTIVES

- 9.1 The contents of this report relate 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**

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**LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**  
**PORTFOLIO LEAD**

<b>BACKGROUND PAPERS</b>		
<b>Title of Document(s)</b>	<b>Document(s) Date</b>	<b>Document Location</b>
<b>Does the report contain any issue that may impact the Council's Constitution?</b>		

