



A partnership between Cwm Ifor Primary School, Trinity Fields School and Resource Centre and Caerphilly County Borough Council

Background Report for Scrutiny Committee: June 4th 2015

Background report prepared by:

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Vision

Working in partnership to secure the best outcomes for all pupils.

Purpose

The key purpose for establishing the hub and spoke approach for ALN developments across the County Borough is to forge an enhanced and more formal working partnership between Trinity Fields School and Resource Centre, the Specialist Resource Bases (SRBs) and the local authority (LA) in order to raise standards and improve outcomes for all pupils with ALN across the county borough.

There is already a strong commitment through the ongoing ALN review to work in partnership to co-construct high quality systems between the LA's ALN services, Trinity Fields School and Resource Centre and the LA's SRBs to support and improve learning outcomes and the quality of teaching for all pupils with ALN.

Working and developing the LA's ALN provision in this new way will secure the most efficient and effective use of resources and will also ensure that all pupils with ALN wherever they are taught have equitable access to the very best teaching and learning opportunities and experiences.

Rationale

The LA recognises that Trinity Fields School and Resource Centre has a pivotal role in the current and future development of ALN provision across the LA. This new role is set against a backdrop of on-going local and national developments in terms of extending and enhancing the current role and functions of special schools across Wales and beyond so that they offer a broader range of support and services on behalf of the LA to other schools, specialist bases as well as to staff within the LA's central services.

The rationale for further developing these extended roles for Trinity Fields School and Resource Centre is based upon a number of Welsh Government developments, as well as including the 5 key objectives which were established by the new Caerphilly County Borough Council when the school was first established back in 1998.

The 5 key objectives are:

1. To continuously improve the quality of education provided for children and young people at Trinity Fields by developing it as a “learning school”.
2. To support and develop inclusive lifelong learning for children and young people with severe and complex needs in Caerphilly County Borough Council.
3. To foster and facilitate joined up, collaborative inter-agency policy and practice to support children and young people with severe and complex needs and their families in Caerphilly County Borough Council.
4. To promote and develop the social inclusion and leisure opportunities for children and young people with severe and complex needs in Caerphilly County Borough Council.
5. To maximise the potential for young people with severe and complex needs to develop into self-managing, autonomous and independent adults.

Key Welsh Government documents relating to the current developments with the LA and to the extended role of special schools include:

- The BEST for Special Education (WAG, 1999);
- Unlocking the Potential of Special Schools (WG, 2006);
- Williams Report (WG, 2014);
- Qualified for Life (WG, 2014);
- Donaldson Report- Successful Futures (WG, 2015);
- An assessment of special educational needs workforce development requirements (WG, 2015)

Since 1999 and the publication of “The BEST for Special Education” the Welsh Government has encouraged Special Schools through initiatives such as “Unlocking the Potential” to become,

'...confident, forward looking centres of excellence'.

Estyn has also made many positive references about the role of special schools within the wider field of education. The Impact of “Unlocking the Potential” funding (Estyn 2009) and HMCI Annual Report 2015 (Estyn, p. 34, 2015) acknowledges the impact of special schools across Wales:

“... standards in many are good or better: outcomes have improved year on year. The strong features of these schools exemplify effective practice that is relevant for all schools and providers. Good and excellent special schools have several common features. They have an ethos that focuses on achievement and learning.

Good behaviour often stems from this ethos, which is different from focusing only on managing poor behaviour. There is expert teaching and effective tracking of learners’ progress. Teachers are aware of learners’ different needs and abilities and this helps them to plan programmes and to suggest pathways for progression.

Leaders provide clear strategic direction and work in partnership with other schools and agencies to cater for their own school learners’ needs. These schools are self-directing but share expertise easily with others for the benefit of learners. They adopt a multi-agency approach to overcome challenges, especially those associated with relatively poor backgrounds.”

Further “Successful Futures” (Donaldson, p. 107, February 2015) states:

“Much of what is proposed in terms of continuity and progress is already a feature of teaching and learning in schools serving children and young people with special educational needs”.

The final report of “An assessment of special educational needs workforce development requirements” (WG, p.6, 2015):

“Educational outcomes for pupils with SEN are improving..... particularly in special schools”.

The reports also states (p.19):

“Staff in special schools were the most confident”.

And further (p.22):

“The Review of Education Services (Hill, 2013) highlights both the need to improve teaching and learning in mainstream schools and, in contrast, the strength of special schools (based upon Estyn inspections)”.

Background to the satellite class at Cwm Ifor Primary School

Initial discussions took place in the spring and summer of 2014 between the LA’s ALN manager, Mrs Jacky Elias and both headteachers; having agreed in principle to develop a satellite class of Trinity Fields School at Cwm Ifor School more formal consultation was undertaken with governors at both schools and with the parents of Cwm Ifor School.

Key objectives and developments

The key objectives for the satellite class at Cwm Ifor Primary were to improve inclusive opportunities and educational outcomes for identified pupils from Trinity Fields School and Resource Centre by ensuring:

- Pupils receive directly or indirectly any necessary specialist input from appropriately qualified personnel;
- That children and their families are involved in the setting of clear targets that focus on progression and outcomes;
- That the input from other services is coordinated and delivered effectively.

As from 1st January 2015, in partnership with Cwm Ifor School and the LA, Trinity Fields School successfully established a satellite class at Cwm Ifor. The pupils remain on the roll of Trinity Fields and the staff are employed by Trinity Fields School.

This ground breaking development for CCBC is underpinned by a signed partnership agreement that includes chairs of governors, LA legal and ALN services and both headteachers. Although still in its infancy some of the key benefits of the satellite class that are already emerging include:

- Increased opportunities for daily inclusion;
- Daily access to specialist support, knowledge and skills as part of the interaction between Cwm Ifor and Trinity Fields staff;
- Opportunities for Cwm Ifor pupils to access specialist Trinity Fields resources and support, as and when appropriate;
- Ongoing leadership support and development for both headteachers and their senior leadership teams.

There are a number of complex factors which have contributed towards success of this development in such a short period of time. These include:

- The positive ethos and inclusive culture of the host school;
- Commitment from the senior leadership teams and governing bodies of both schools;
- Commitment from and ongoing engagement with senior LA officers;
- The expertise of the staff in the satellite class.

From the outset both headteachers and their governing bodies were committed to developing a different type of provision to what already existed within the LA's SRBs which could become the blueprint for future specialist provision across the county borough.

By the end of the 2014 summer term the consultation with parents at Cwm Ifor had been successfully completed and both sets of governors were ready to embark in partnership on developing this new provision.

There was already a classroom identified to house the new class at Cwm Ifor but before we could begin to identify the pupils from Trinity Fields who would transfer to the new class some minor alterations were necessary which included fitting a ceiling hoist in the specialist

toilet area, some external fencing and providing designated parking/dropping off area for school transport.

In the latter part of the summer term senior leaders at Trinity Fields identified pupils who might be suitable for the satellite class and individual meetings were arranged with their parents to discuss the possibilities; this included visits to Cwm Ifor School to meet the headteacher and his staff. Whilst this might have been a somewhat lengthy process it was essential to establish firm foundations on which our new provision could be securely built. Great attention was given to every detail of the development and both headteachers were in regular contact to ensure success at every stage.

Initially 5 Trinity Fields pupils were identified who would benefit in terms of spending the majority of their week within a mainstream school. As the alterations were not fully complete the class was first brought together as a discreet class at Trinity Fields with effect from the beginning of the 2014 autumn term.

The staff who were asked to develop our new class were already experienced Trinity Fields staff and throughout the 2014 autumn term they made sure that the pupils were able to visit their new class at Cwm Ifor school as often as possible. As the term moved quickly on it was decided that the new class would officially transfer to Cwm Ifor at the start of the 2015 spring term.

What do Cwm Ifor pupils say about Dosbarth Carmarthen?

Comments from Cwm Ifor pupils about Dosbarth Carmarthen can be found as an appendix at the end of this this background report.

What do the pupils of Dosbarth Carmarthen say about their new class?

Pupils' comments about their new class at Cwm Ifor School can be found as an appendix at the end of this this background report.

What do parents think about the new provision?

“Having met staff involved with the satellite class- yourself (Mr Elliott), Trinity Fields teachers, Headteacher, Mr Rees, it obvious everyone has embraced the project with drive and embraced; I am pleased that the class has been integrated within the existing teaching environment and not separated.”

(Jenny Watkins, Parent Governor, Trinity Fields, April 2015)

“My daughter is really part of the Cwm Ifor School community- she’s accessing the best of mainstream and specialist provision so that all of her needs are met. I’m seeing first-hand the impact of inclusion on Paige’s progress”.

(Mrs Jenkins, parent, Trinity Fields, April 2015)

How has it been for staff?

“The class has provided an opportunity to enable us as a special school to share and celebrate every child's success, no matter what the difficulty or difference. We have been able to break down barriers in learning and attitudes, within a positive and practical sense and had the opportunity to demonstrate the importance of a happy learning environment, where every child's needs and personalities are valued, respected and catered for as fully as possible.

Staff have challenged children in order to develop their confidence and further develop their independent learning skills; the new class also provides opportunities for children from Cwm lfor who may have additional learning needs to access resources within Trinity Fields.

It is amazing to observe the children settling so well into a completely different environment, being happy and making new friends. We all are watching them grow in confidence and take ownership of what this opportunity has offered them”.

(Dosbarth Carmarthen staff, May 2015)

“The new class has enabled the children to gain a better understanding of children with different needs to their own. The shared resources and expertise of the staff has been beneficial to the mainstream pupils with SEN.

Having Dosbarth Carmarthen has had a positive impact on our mainstream. Even our most challenging children have developed their social and emotional skills. Our pupils now display greater levels of tolerance and acceptance not only towards the class but also towards each other. It is amazing how quickly they have become part of our school and to see our children working and playing alongside each other in harmony”.

(Cwm lfor staff, may 2015)

How do governors and senior leaders see the new provision?

“The children and staff of Dosbarth Carmarthen are a credit to you and have settled in really well. They have brought a new dimension that has impacted positively on everybody involved at Cwm lfor! Looking forward to a successful summer term”.

(Gareth Rees, headteacher, Cwm lfor Primary, March 2015)

“We recently opened a new class at Cwm lfor School, which will serve pupils as part of Trinity Fields’ provision. Although based in Cwm lfor, this class will be led and managed by Trinity Fields; this will help us to share the expertise of our staff to help pupils further afield. This is an exciting new development for all and we are rightly proud of the work shown by our Leadership and staff teams. We look forward to the future with big expectations and huge confidence”.

(Mike Cook, Chair of Governors, Trinity Fields, March 2015)

“Every time I visit Dosbarth Carmarthen at Cwm Ifor there are new developments that the pupils and staff are keen to tell me about. Having been in the field of special education for over 25 years this is probably the best inclusion that I have observed and all of this in just over 15 school weeks. This is a development that we are all very proud of!”

(Ian Elliott MBE, Headteacher Trinity Fields, May 2015)

“It is brilliant to see how Cwm Ifor pupils have accepted our children; they see their personalities and not their disabilities. Both schools have benefited significantly already. This is the way forward in creating and fostering a child centred approach where disabilities are secondary and the child is at the focus of what we all do. As the partnership continues the benefit to both school communities is the developing of professional skills for both teams of staff and a strengthened learning community. It has been a privilege to have work with such an accepting school as Cwm Ifor”.

(Tracey McGuirk, Deputy Head, Trinity Fields, April 2015)

A possible blueprint for future ALN developments across the LA

Working in partnership with LA senior managers, schools with SRBs, the senior leaders and governors at Trinity Fields and using the experience and knowledge that was gained through the development of the first satellite class at Cwm Ifor Primary School, the future provision for ALN across the county borough could include all or some of the outcomes identified below:

- Consultation with key stakeholders (pupils, governors, parents) around the vision, purpose and rationale for hub and spoke developments across the LA, as the key outcome of the ALN review.
- Any new staff appointed after the initial consultation will be automatically recruited and employed by Trinity Fields School and Resource Centre; this would ensure that the future ALN workforce are all suitably qualified and have the necessary experience to work in rapidly changing and challenging context.
- Following on from a successful consultation and subsequent CCBC Cabinet approval Trinity Fields School would provide the leadership and management support for the staff at all secondary SRBs (Risca, Pontllanfraith and St. Cenydd).
- Pupils attending the secondary SRBs would then transfer onto the roll of Trinity Fields School. This would have a positive impact on the secondary school’s national categorization.
- Again as one of the outcomes from the ALN review we would re-align the non-statutory central specialist staff to the Resource Centre function of Trinity Fields School.
- Establish stronger strategic and day to day links with the assessment unit at the Children’s Centre.
- Develop robust partnership agreements based upon the successful Cwm Ifor-Trinity Fields-Caerphilly agreement for the SRBs and services provided by Trinity Fields School and Resource Centre to other schools.
- Develop a KS3 satellite class to compliment the successful KS2 provision at Cwm Ifor Primary School.

- The same principles, as outlined above will be adopted to extend the leadership and management to primary complex needs and ASD bases; although at this initial stage it is not envisaged that the pupils in the primary SRBs would transfer onto the roll of Trinity Fields School.

Appendix: Quotes from Cwm Ifor pupils about Dosbarth Carmarthen

They have made us more happy inside by making us laugh and smile!

My school is now a better place.

Dosbarth Carmarthen are as sun to the sky. They make us laugh and they make us happy.

Dosbarth Carmarthen pupils are very kind and well-mannered and always smile. They are amazing and it is an honour to have them in our school.

All of the pupils in Dosbarth Carmarthen makes me extremely happy and they always cheer me up when I'm sad.

Dosbarth Carmarthen are so enthusiastic and it has rubbed off on our school.

One of the pupils came up to my friends and I asked if they could play catch. We got along well and made our friendship circle bigger.

Dosbarth Carmarthen has changed our school like I cannot explain.

One of the pupils in Dosbarth Carmarthen is my best friend.

Dosbarth Carmarthen has made our school shine by being so happy and excited.

The children ion Dosbarth Carmarthen have made every day a great day.

One of the pupils in Dosbarth Carmarthen is funny, jolly, outgoing and it is lovely to see they like our school because that makes us proud.

The pupils in Dosbarth Carmarthen have made the pupils of Cwm Ifor more compassionate towards others.

The pupils of Dosbarth Carmarthen have made people more thoughtful towards our surroundings.

The pupils in Dosbarth Carmarthen have made Cwm Ifor a kinder place to be.

The pupils of Dosbarth Carmarthen have made me a happier person and all the pupils around me as well.

They are good at tennis and we love them participating in our lessons.

The pupils in Dosbarth Carmarthen have made pupils in Cwm Ifor come closer together.

The pupils in Dosbarth Carmarthen have made a great impact on us.



I like my new

school because:

* I made new friends.

* Nice food - 'delicious'.

* Lovely yard

* Join in year 6 p.e.

Robbie

Blue box



I like my new
School because:

- * Fantastic friends
- * Great classroom
- * Very happy here
- * Everyone is kind.

Oliver



I like my new school

because:

* NEW FRIENDS

* school is awesome

x NEW wonderful teachers

x IS it by my new friends

at LUNCH time

x COTTETINE



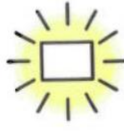
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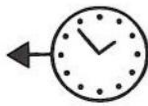
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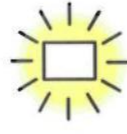
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Dinners



are yummy



Its

Fun



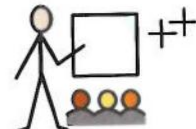
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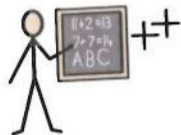
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Teachers are



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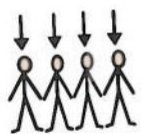
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friends



Everyone



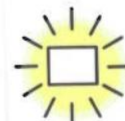
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New



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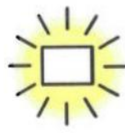
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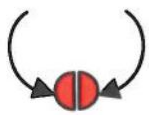
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school



because



Makes



me



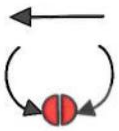
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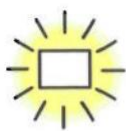
Its good



its amazing



Made



new



friends



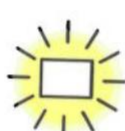
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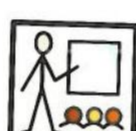
love



my



new



classroom



Its super



brilliant

Aron